

DIDACTIC ASPECTS OF TRAINING HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS FOR ACTIVITIES RELATED TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL COHESION OF COMMUNITIES

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INTRODUCTION

The growth of humanitarian diversity in modern communities and the related trends of differentiation and social integration among participants of different members of local communities pose important tasks for educational institutions and public opinion leaders to find ways and technologies for the development of social cohesion and social inclusion, taking into account the requirements for strengthening the socio-economic competitiveness of local communities, in accordance with the modern concepts of “Society for All”¹. Social inclusion here acts as a mechanism and factor for the implementation of social tasks stipulated in the Global Sustainable Development Goals². In particular, Goal 10 states the aspiration by 2030 to legally support and encourage the active participation of all people in social, economic and political life, regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic or other status, and to ensure equality of opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including through the abolition of discriminatory laws; Goal 4 – to ensure equal access to education and vocational training at all levels for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations; to create and improve educational institutions that take into account the interests of children, the special needs of people with disabilities and gender aspects, and to provide a safe, violence-free and social barrier-free and effective learning environment for all, which allows for the achievement of sought-after and effective learning outcomes for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship.

The concept of "vulnerable groups" used in international law – individuals from unprotected or socially vulnerable groups – here means groups of people who, due to certain circumstances (for example, due to their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, physical, mental or other disability, social, civil status or

¹ UN. Education for All (EFA, 2012). [Online]. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000217542>.

² UN. The Sustainable Development Goals (2015). 17 Goals to Transform Our World. [Online]. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>.

health status, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic situation or status of indigenous people, and/or dependence on unique natural resources or persons experiencing economic hardship), may be more likely to experience adverse external socio-economic impacts and/or are more limited than others in their ability to benefit from social benefits and have an increased risk of falling into difficult life circumstances and need support and protection from society (ESF, 2018³; The World Bank, 2021⁴).

Increasing the diversity of students in the process of higher education, including students from socially vulnerable groups, requires the use of inclusive pedagogical approaches in teaching, as well as appropriate training of higher education teachers/lecturers for such inclusive activities in the field of social inclusion, taking into account local contexts. At the level of real policy of local communities, the issues of social inclusion and social cohesion of all community members for the sake of the idea of education for all and social competitiveness have not yet been sufficiently reflected. This creates risks for increasing social exclusion and segregation of many participants of socially vulnerable groups in difficult life circumstances, which reduces the socio-economic efficiency and quality of life of the local environment.

Educational institutions, as the most widespread and authoritative social institution in Ukraine, are of great importance for the implementation of social inclusion tasks⁵. The role of education in this context should be considered from at least two sides: to achieve the subjective goals of the participants in the training and to implement social goals (increasing social cohesion and socio-economic competitiveness of communities, the quality of labor resources, their sustainability and qualifications⁶, which determines the improvement of the quality of the educational and social environment. Accordingly, the role of teachers and lecturers of educational institutions in

³ EU. The European Pillar of Social Rights in 20 principles (EPSR, 2016) . Retrieved from https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/european-pillar-social-rights-building-fairer-and-more-inclusive-european-union/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en.

⁴ The World Bank (2021). *Fostering the Inclusion of Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Individuals or Groups in Project-Level Grievance Mechanisms* (p.6). International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. 202-473-1000 [Online]. Retrieved from [https:// www.worldbank.org](https://www.worldbank.org).

⁵ Балакірева О.М., Дмитрук Д.А. Війна в Україні : сприйняття населенням та її вплив на якість життя. *Український соціум*. 2022. № 1 (80). С. 116–122. DOI: 10.15407/socium2022.01.116.

⁶ Uslukaya A., Zincirli M. Reciprocal relationships between job resources and work engagement in teachers: a longitudinal examination of cross-lagged and simultaneous effects. *Social Psychology of Education*. 2025. 28. p.127. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-025-10085-x>.

increasing the inclusiveness of local communities is also increasing. "Inclusion" in the expanded sense, in the context of our study, means the desired effectiveness of social inclusion, a certain result of social transformations, which is expressed in ensuring the active participation of all people in social, economic and political life, regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion and economic or other status, in accordance with paragraph 10.2. of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In accordance with the above problems, there is a need to train higher education teachers to work in conditions of social inclusion, taking into account the specifics of the perception by education seekers of the essence and content of social inclusion and social cohesion at the levels of local communities and the educational environment. In this aspect, the activities of a higher education teacher should also respond to public demands for the creation of didactic principles for the formation of best practices of an inclusive culture of students in the process of higher education and professional training. In connection with the above, the purpose of this umbrella study is to highlight the socio-psychological aspects of the need to strengthen the role of higher education and training of higher education teachers on the implementation of social inclusion in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Methodology and methods

To achieve the goals and objectives of our study, we used methods of an integrated approach, including thematic analysis of scientific publications⁷, the use of secondary primary sources, a comprehensive analysis of literature and documents based on publications in various databases (Science Direct, SCOPUS, Springer, Tandfonline, Taylor & Francis, Routledge Google Scholar, etc.), as well as an analysis of the author's previous pedagogical experience. Virtual surveys were conducted using Google Forms. The survey results were also discussed orally with interested participants. Limitations exist due to the short-term data collection and umbrella approach to respondent participation (using random selection with their consent), as well as the insufficient development of quantitative methodology for research on the inclusion of higher education and the local environment in a broader interpretation of this concept in the context of "Education for All".

⁷ Nowell L.S., Norris J.M., White D.E., Moules N.J. Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. 2017. Vol. 1-13. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>.

1. Theoretical and legal basis of the study. Conceptual approaches to defining social inclusion for ensuring education for all

The fundamentals for our research were selected from contextually significant publications on the essence and content of social inclusion, inclusive education, inclusive subjects and target groups, the importance and role of educational institutions and teachers/lecturers, in particular higher education, in ensuring and implementing social inclusion, and the place of social inclusion in the system of social development and social cohesion.

For the purposes of our study, a thematic analysis was carried out (Delgado A.R., 2013⁸) scientific publications on individual aspects of social inclusion. We also take into account the recommendations of Kreitz-Sandberg and Lahelma (2021)⁹ that understanding both practical and theoretical approaches in the study of equality in teacher education can help in developing effective strategies. For the thematic analysis of literature and scientific works, primary sources were selected on publishing and metric platforms and in various databases according to the concepts: “social inclusion”, “inclusive learning”, “socially sensitive groups”, “inclusivity of higher education”, “university”, “inclusive environment”, “inclusive learning methods”, “inclusive teacher effectiveness”, etc. The selection was carried out according to the criteria of compliance with the keywords of our study, the highest citation rate, the highest reading rate, and the ability to take into account the conclusions and recommendations in the Ukrainian context of higher education.

The main line of our research was consistent with the concepts of the UN “Society for All”¹⁰, the Recommendations of the European Commission “Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching”, the UN Declaration of Human Rights¹¹ (1948), and the ideas of social development and social economy (Social Economy Action Plan, 2021¹²). The development of

⁸ Delgado Ana R. Why include phenomenological analysis in a Research Methods course? *Psicothema*. 2013. Vol. 25. No. 2, 227-231. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2012.180>.

⁹ Kreitz-Sandberg S., Lahelma E. Global demands – Local practices: Working towards inclusion of gender equality in teacher education in Finland and Sweden. *Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education* (NJCIE). 2021, Vol. 5(1). Article 1. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7577/njcie.4052>.

¹⁰ UN. Strategic agenda 2024-2029. [Online]. Retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/european-council/strategic-agenda-2024-2029/>.

¹¹ UN. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). [Online]. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/ru/universal-declaration-of-human-rights/illustrated-universal-declaration-human-rights>.

¹² EU. Social Economy Action Plan (2021) Retrieved from https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/eu-employment-policies/social-economy-and-inclusive-entrepreneurship/social-economy-action-plan_.

inclusiveness in education generally corresponds to the UNESCO concept “Education for All”¹³ and is one of the measures for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals¹⁴ (SDG-4, SDG-10).

The place and importance of inclusive education in social relations is emphasized in the documents of the EU Council (Inclusive education). In particular, the value of quality inclusive education is recognized as the basis for social cohesion, social mobility and a fair society (Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth, Sweden, 2017¹⁵). Inclusive education, equality, justice, non-discrimination and the development of civic competences are identified as priority areas of European cooperation in the field of education and training, for building a strong social Europe, fair, inclusive and full of opportunities. This is stated in the Recommendations of the EU Council of 22 May 2018 “On the promotion of common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching” (2018/C 195/01¹⁶). The achievement of these objectives aims to: promote common values at all levels of education; promote more inclusive education; encourage the European dimension of teaching while strengthening the competence of national administrations in this field; provide diverse support to teachers and educational institutions. One of the ET2020¹⁷ objectives for European cooperation in education and training, namely promoting equality, social cohesion and active citizenship, was defined on the basis that education should contribute to the development of intercultural competences, democratic values and respect for fundamental rights, prevent and combat all forms of discrimination and racism, and enable children, young people and adults to interact positively with peers from different backgrounds. So, the guiding idea running through EU documents and conferences is that inclusive education is a transformative process that ensures that education systems meet the needs of all learners and are able to provide quality education for all in an environment where all children learn together, without segregation and discrimination.

Taking into account the above-described expanded interpretation of the concepts of "inclusion", "social inclusion" and "inclusive education" serve as a

¹³ UN. Education for All (EFA, 2012). [Online]. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000217542>.

¹⁴ UN. The Sustainable Development Goals (2015). 17 Goals to Transform Our World. [Online]. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>.

¹⁵ UN. Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth, Sweden (2017, November 17). Retrieved from https://commission.europa.eu/publications/social-summit-fair-jobs-and-growth-factsheets_en/.

¹⁶ EU. Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European Dimension of Teaching (2018/C 195/1). [Online]. Retrieved from [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0607\(01\)&from=EN/](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0607(01)&from=EN/).

¹⁷ EU. ET2020. [Online]. Retrieved from <https://efvet.org/education-and-training-2020-et2020/>.

general guiding principle for ensuring equal access to quality learning opportunities for all learners, for maintaining diversity among students, for eliminating social isolation and marginalization, for promoting social justice, because education is among the fundamental human rights and a factor in community cohesion. The subjects and target groups of inclusive education are participants in socially vulnerable groups, the definitions of which are given in many regulatory documents at the global and national levels and recommendations of the World Bank. In accordance with the Environmental and Social Framework¹⁸ (ESF, 2018), social development and inclusiveness are crucial for achieving sustainable development. Inclusion means giving all people the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the development process. Inclusion encompasses policies aimed at promoting equality and non-discrimination.... According to the World Bank analytical documents identify “socially vulnerable groups” and provide a classification of them. In particular, the World Bank’s Directive on Addressing Risks and Impacts on Vulnerable Persons or Groups (2021¹⁹) defines a wide range of characteristics that can make individuals or groups vulnerable, including age, gender, ethnicity, religion, physical or mental disability, social status, sexual orientation, economic disadvantage, and dependence on natural resources.

Ukrainian legislation also provides for the categorization of participants in socially vulnerable groups (43 categories are defined) and their number is constantly growing (Ministry of Social Policy, 2025²⁰), which strengthens the role of the social economy in addressing the problem of social isolation, providing quality jobs and greater social resilience, promoting equal opportunities and socio-economic integration of disadvantaged groups (including people with disabilities), as provided for in the measures to implement the Social Economy Action Plan²¹ and the main Goals by 2030 (Agenda 2030²²).

¹⁸ The World Bank. Environment & Social Framework for IPF Operations Non-Discrimination and Disability. *Good Practice Note* (ESF, 2018). [Online]. Retrieved from <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/573841530208492785/Environment-and-Social-Framework-ESF-Good-Practice-Note-on-Disability-English.pdf>.

¹⁹ The World Bank (2021). *Fostering the Inclusion of Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Individuals or Groups in Project-Level Grievance Mechanisms* (p.6). International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. 202-473-1000 [Online]. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org>.

²⁰ Кабінет Міністрів України. Мінсоцполітики України. (2025). Отримувачам соціальної підтримки [Online]. URL: <https://www.msp.gov.ua/otrymuвачam-soc-pidtrymky>.

²¹ EU. Social Economy Action Plan (2021) Retrieved from https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/eu-employment-policies/social-economy-and-inclusive-entrepreneurship/social-economy-action-plan_

²² UN. Strategic agenda 2024-2029. [Online]. Retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/european-council/strategic-agenda-2024-2029/>.

In today's reality, educational institutions are only ones of all public institutions where all of the above-mentioned vulnerable groups can be present at the same time, which imposes special tasks and responsibilities on teachers and educators (Kovalchuk H., 2025²³). Inclusive education encompasses universal access to knowledge, ensures the active participation of all in the decision-making process, and addresses not only the needs of individuals with special educational needs, but also those of all students, taking into account their different needs, with the aim of achieving effective education for all. Inclusive education also plays an important role in shaping human attitudes, creating the prerequisites for the development of empathetic thinking and acceptance of the diversity of human society (Inclusive Higher Education, 2018²⁴). Modern practices for the development of inclusiveness in education comprise collaborative learning, meeting social and educational needs, creating communities for mutual learning and participation in public life²⁵. This article presents a systematic methodological study of the theory of inclusive education, which reveals some of the problems of inclusion, building classes to cover all learners, improving pedagogical practice to increase inclusivity, etc.

The goals of inclusiveness in the process of higher education are discussed in the study by Nieminen J. H. (2022²⁶). The author emphasizes the importance of academic *assessment for inclusion (AfI)*: in terms of promoting the inclusion of marginalized students as full, active members of academic communities, the inclusion of students from increasingly diverse backgrounds, and promoting the learning and inclusion of students from different social groups. AfI contributes to the development of inclusive higher education by viewing diversity as an enriching factor in the academic environment. The paper presents five practical principles for promoting AfI: rethinking accommodation, working against ableism, recognizing human diversity, student partnership, and interdependence²⁷. To implement inclusion in the educational process, it is important to understand the strategies, theory, and goals of the subjects and beneficiaries of learning.

²³ Ковальчук Г.О. Соціальне лідерство університету в реалізації соціальної інклюзії та згуртованості громад. *Міжнародний науковий журнал «Університети і лідерство»*. 2025. (1)19. С. 61-77. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.31874/2520-6702-2025-19-61-77>.

²⁴ Inclusive Higher Education. Ed. Z. Čerešňová. Prague, 2018. P.14.

²⁵ Nilholm C. Research about inclusive education in 2020 – How can we improve our theories in order to change practice? *European Journal of Special Needs Education*. 2020. Vol. 36(3). 358–370. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2020.1754547>.

²⁶ Nieminen J.H. Assessment for Inclusion: rethinking inclusive assessment in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*. 2022, Vol. 29(4), p. 841–859. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.2021395>.

²⁷ Ibid.

Molbaek M. (2017²⁸) explores the importance of effective teaching and classroom management strategies for new opportunities to create more inclusive educational institutions and improve inclusive learning environment practices. It is stated that strategy and classroom management should be seen as opportunities for teachers to have a greater impact on student learning outcomes and their opportunities for active academic and social participation. The article notes that the use of active learning strategies increases understanding of the learning material, increases positive attitudes toward learning, improves student performance, and promotes the independent selection of effective strategies for self-learning.

Ghosh S., Sankar C. S. (2024²⁹) write about the need to use a competency-based approach (Competency-Based Teacher Education – CBTE) for inclusive teacher training. The authors note that CBTE programs are aimed at preparing future teachers to respect and accept gender diversity in their classrooms and can contribute to the creation of an inclusive and supportive learning environment. This approach ensures that teachers will be well prepared to meet the diverse needs of their students and create an inclusive learning environment. The role of teachers in implementing inclusiveness in education, the need to improve their qualifications in this regard, and the need for intersectoral interaction for inclusion are highlighted in the systematic study by Chow W.S.E. et al (2024³⁰). Scholars emphasize that inclusive education requires a transformative approach from educational institutions and teachers, and its success depends on the implementation of inclusive practices for the benefit of all learners. Educators play a crucial role here, implementing quality education for all, providing targeted assistance, and providing additional adaptation and support.

2. Psychosocial aspects of teacher training in socially inclusive education for sustainable development

The importance of psychosocial aspects of inclusive education, along with the development of modern competencies and skills, is also emphasized by Ravenscroft A. et al (2018³¹). The psychosocial improvements resulting

²⁸ Molbaek M. Inclusive teaching strategies – dimensions and agendas. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. 2017. Vol. 22(10), p. 1048–1061. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2017.1414578>.

²⁹ Ghosh S., Sankar C.S. Competency-Based Teacher Education in Gender and Inclusive Practices. *Social Science Journal for Advanced Research*. 2024. Vol. 4 Issue-5. P. 18–25. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13643389>.

³⁰ Chow W.S.E., de Bruin K., Sharma U. A scoping review of perceived support needs of teachers for implementing inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. 2023. Vol. 28(13), 3321–3340. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2023.2244956>.

³¹ Ravenscroft A., Dellow J., Brites M. J., Jorge A., Catalão D. (2018). RadioActive101-Learning through radio, learning for life: an international approach to the inclusion and non-

from inclusive education were identified by the study participants as: *increased confidence, self-efficacy and self-esteem, which is important for supporting socially isolated youth.*

Local community programs are important for the effectiveness of social inclusion, which contribute, among other things, to the development of social and emotional needs and skills of people with special needs – this is covered in detail in the article by Jaiswal, N.K. & Sah Sh. (2021)³². Based on their empirical research, the scientists identify *the subjective goals of inclusive education for participants from socially vulnerable groups:*

- expanding opportunities for the future;
- increasing social activity, self-esteem and social acceptance;
- improving peer interaction skills and family dynamics.

From the analysis of these primary sources, we can draw some important preliminary conclusions for our research: inclusion concerns all members of socially vulnerable groups who are full members of local communities. At the societal level, the beginning of social inclusion is laid in the activities of educational institutions through the educational and social interaction of all participants in the educational process, primarily teachers, lecturers and participants in educational groups/students. Based on scientific publications on the subject, we can assume that researchers focus primarily on a narrow understanding of social inclusion, but there is insufficient research on measures and methodologies for achieving social inclusion goals in the context of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, on socially vulnerable groups, which also have their own “inclusive” needs and are part of the local community interested in social cohesion and socio-economic competitiveness.

Since teachers often lack sufficient knowledge about students, the skills needed for inclusive teaching, and the expectations or requirements of their teaching institutions, it is difficult for higher education teachers to adapt their teaching to create a more inclusive learning environment³³. Therefore, the requirements for teacher development are determined by the following *conditions*: Society’s demands for inclusive teaching; The demands of the participants of the learning groups themselves for an inclusive environment

formal learning of socially excluded young people. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. 2018, Vol. 24(9). 997–1018. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1503739>.

³² Jaiswal N.K., Sah Sh. Empowering Futures: Advancing Social Inclusion for Children with Intellectual Disabilities Through Community-Based Programs. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education (INT-JECSE)*. 2021. Vol. 13. Pp.4078-4090. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.48047/intjecse/v13i2.318>

³³ Korthals Altes T., Willemse M., Goei S.L., Ehren M. Higher education teachers’ understandings of and challenges for inclusion and inclusive learning environments: A systematic literature review. *Educational Research Review*. 2024. Vol. 43 p. 1–16. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2024.100605>.

and quality results; The needs of the teachers themselves; The local context; Social development policies and strategies.

From the range of analyzed scientific works and regulatory documents (Government of Ukraine, 2025³⁴), we can make a certain generalization that the majority of research and publications concern inclusive education and training for persons with disabilities (with special educational needs (SEN). Important factors in the development of an inclusive environment are the attitudes of target group participants, their interaction, and the socio-pedagogical influences of the teacher. Accordingly, this process should be appropriately prepared and organized. Its essential part is the training of teachers/lecturers, including for higher education/professional training. At the same time, not enough scientific research has yet been devoted to increasing the inclusiveness of higher education, taking into account the expanded interpretation of the concept of "inclusion" in accordance with international law.

Modern trends of social relations in the world and in Ukraine lead to increased interest in the issues of inclusive environment, social isolation as factors of social cohesion and mental health of community members, in particular – representatives of socially vulnerable groups. Therefore, social inclusion is both an urgent need and a powerful tool for overcoming negative social trends, such as segregation by property or class, marginalization of representatives of vulnerable groups, increased crime and pathological loneliness, which often determine risks for the mental health of a significant part of the population and put pressure on the social systems of society.

Education is one of the main factors and resources of social inclusion and, accordingly, strengthening social cohesion, as it provides integrated social platforms for productive collaboration and personal and social development. The Horizon Europe – Work Programme 2023–2025³⁵ projects emphasize that the development of cultural awareness and ways of self-expression are important competences for lifelong learning, for inclusive education and training systems, democracy and civic engagement, for building an inclusive society through social dialogue, partnership and collaboration.

Such tasks require increasing inclusiveness, primarily in higher education. In the process of higher and vocational education, competent professional training of labor market participants takes place, as well as the formation of their ability for social self-representation and social integration.

³⁴ Кабінет міністрів України (2025). Інклюзивна політика : Матеріали. [Online]. URL: <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/diyalnist/inklyuzivna-politika>.

³⁵ EU. Horizon Europe – Work Programme 2023-2025. «Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society». [Online]. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-5-culture-creativity-and-inclusive-society_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf.

This is of particular importance in connection with the trend of decreasing social and communicative motives in the education of higher education applicants. In our study (Kovalchuk G., Semyonov Ya., 2024³⁶) among students of higher education institutions of engineering and economic specializations, the motives of sociality and self-expression received the lowest indicators (half as much as the motives of professional and cognitive orientation). Our current study (2025), presented in this article, also demonstrates a certain social indifference revealed by respondents to the violation of the principles of social inclusion and social rights of other people. This can be explained by general social insensitivity (as a form of self-protection due to the war in Ukraine, which includes detachment from the suffering of others, lack of empathy, refusal to take responsibility for common problems, etc.), and/or underdeveloped social-emotional competence due to insufficient social-emotional learning (SEL) and its competition with academic learning.

3. Ensuring the development of an inclusive and equitable environment through education for all

To identify general trends in understanding the essence, content and significance of social inclusion for the development of communities and the appropriate consideration of these factors in the work of teachers, we conducted preliminary discussions and surveys among higher education students. The questionnaire developed by the author includes 19 questions, of which 3 are open-ended questions, 16 are closed-ended questions (with formalized dichotomous answers and “Checkmark Selection”).

The survey participants were invited by random selection: links to the test materials were provided via E-mail and Telegram to teachers of six higher education institutions of Ukraine, students, graduates, as well as representatives of the business environment from the circle of communication of education seekers. Teachers from secondary schools also took part in the discussion during the IV All-Ukrainian Scientific and Practical Conference “Variable Models and Technologies for the Transformation of Professional Development of Specialists in the Context of Open Education” (Kyiv, 2025, June³⁷).

³⁶ Ковальчук Г.О., Семьонов Я. Навчальна мотивація та самоєфективність як фактори формування академічної успішності студентів. *Pedagogical Discourse*. 2024, № 36. С. 49–55. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31475/ped.dys.2024.36.07>.

³⁷ Ковальчук Г.О. Університет як освітній оператор у сфері соціальної інклюзії: чинники соціального впливу. *Варіативні моделі й технології трансформації професійного розвитку фахівців в умовах відкритої освіти* : Колективна монографія / за заг. ред Муранової Н.П. Київ : Університет менеджменту освіти НАПН України, 2025. 452 с. (С. 239-262). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18406991>.

The results of the survey revealed that respondents demonstrate the following attitudes towards social inclusion at the local level of local communities and work collectives:

- they are quite detached from the phenomenon of social inclusion and believe that it does not apply to their lives. This is a false assumption, since in the context of the military conflict in Ukraine, almost 70% of the population are members of socially vulnerable groups in terms of property and socio-psychological status;

- demonstrate a certain emotional indifference to the violation of social rights of other people that they have witnessed;

- are not familiar with the system for ensuring social rights and social inclusion on the ground (in social networks and at the place of work and study);

- themselves often need many social support measures (emotional, legal, etc.);

- prefer joint economic activity and social interaction to solve their own issues regarding social inclusion.

Despite the fact that socially vulnerable groups make up (according to some data) up to 60% of the population and their share is steadily growing in the context of the war in Ukraine, respondents in the survey indicated that they do not encounter such people in their social and work circles. This may indicate their social insensitivity and/or ignorance about the subjects of social inclusion and the socio-economic risks of their status. It may also indicate a weak understanding of their role in models of social responsibility and social support from the community as a whole, which helps socially vulnerable groups overcome difficulties, motivates them to be self-effective, and achieve common sustainable development goals (in line with the Sustainable Development Goals). In addition, respondents noted that they did not observe any targeted explanatory work during their education (during higher education and professional training). About 34% indicated that they considered certain aspects of social inclusion at their workplace.

From the responses of the survey participants, we can make certain generalizations that a trend is developing towards stereotyping attitudes towards issues of social inclusion: “this is something related to disability and special (special) needs”; “this does not concern me”; “this is not in my life (yet)”. A lack of understanding of the essence and content of social inclusion in relation to social cohesion and socio-economic development leads to the fact that this social position, represented by the respondents, is transferred to the working environment (workplace) and determines discriminatory relations, namely, the enterprise is labeled “discriminatory,” which may also be the subject of jurisdictional clashes.

Based on an analysis of the websites of state and local government bodies in Ukraine (the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, regional military administrations, etc.), we can conclude that the issue of social inclusion is mainly attributed to the social work sector in accordance with legislation on social services, and this work is carried out post facto in cases of difficult life circumstances.

Individual higher education institutions implement inclusive cultural and educational activities “on the ground” in their locations, and the formation of socially responsible behavior of higher education students (for example, Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman (KNEU³⁸), Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, G. Kovalchuk, V. Syrovatko³⁹; Department of Socioeconomics and Personnel Management, University “Social Initiatives” (2025), G. Lopushnyak, O. Kyryanova, etc.). Often, however, this takes place within the framework of extracurricular work of education students and is not related to the study of disciplines and main teaching.

Mostly such support is of an administrative and explanatory (consultative) nature. As for material support, it can be weighed in comparison with the official wage in Ukraine (2025). In particular, the minimum monthly wage is 8,000 hryvnia (₴) per month (\$193.19), 48 hryvnia per hour (\$1.15 per hour). Financial assistance in difficult life circumstances (as decided by the local government) can amount to 2,500 hryvnia per year as a one-time payment (\$60). Social services provided by law are paid for by many recipients. Educational and social services in the context of social inclusion are still being coordinated spontaneously and contextually.

In the context of the military conflict in Ukraine, cognitive overload, and massive psycho-emotional traumatic experiences, it can be assumed that in this regard, social competition is also increasing between representatives of different social groups and between representatives of different generations, which requires some public attention. According to our survey, the greatest emotional alienation among respondents regarding issues of social inclusion is observed among representatives aged 20-30, because their personal and social formation occurred precisely during the period of increasing maximum competition and personal commodification, which have a great impact on increasing social inequality and a sharp decrease in social cohesion, socio-economic efficiency, and competitiveness of local communities.

³⁸ Університет «Соціальні ініціативи» (2025). Київський національний економічний університет імені Вадима Гетьмана: Кафедра соціоекономіки та управління персоналом. [Online]. URL : https://fupstap.kneu.edu.ua/ua/kaf_fupstap/k_upravlinnja_personalom/socinituniver/.

³⁹ Ковальчук Г. О. *Технології навчання економічних дисциплін в системі неперервної освіти* (теоретико-методичний аспект) : монографія. Київ : КНЕУ, 2014. 511 с.

In the context of the perception of equality of rights, 19.4% of respondents in Ukraine believe that they had less chance than others to have their rights not violated. This indicator is higher among Ukrainians abroad: here 25.3% of respondents perceive their conditions as unequal compared to compatriots in Ukraine. Ukrainians (in Ukraine) are most sensitive to social discrimination on the following grounds: language (41.5%), religion (16.9%), place of residence (15.9%), gender (12.9%), citizenship (9.8%), age (9.3%), disability (7.9%), sexual orientation (4.8%), national or ethnic origin (4.5%), gender identity (2%), skin color or race (2%), other (20.2%). According to this survey, the main role for social cohesion of society belongs to the media and civil society organizations (CSOs).

These trends are also reflected in data from sociological studies conducted by the non-profit organization «Опора» (2024⁴⁰). For example, 70.3% of respondents believe that they belong to a group that does not experience social discrimination, while “every 10th respondent in Ukraine and every 5th respondent abroad believe that they systematically experience prejudice against themselves based on their belonging to a certain group in society.” This represents 10-20% of respondents.

It is noteworthy that in this survey, education is not included among the significant state institutions that determine social cohesion, unlike state authorities, local self-government bodies, civil society organizations, and the media. At the same time, only 35-36% of respondents trust the media (press, social networks, and media), while about 70% trust charitable and humanitarian organizations. The majority of respondents (almost 93% in total) indicate that the news does not sufficiently cover issues similar to their political views, age, gender, profession, ethnicity, socio-economic class, place of residence, and experience.

Social networks also pose some competition for educational activities. According to the study “Resilience, Defense, Security: A View from Ukraine and Sweden” (2024⁴¹), 27.5% of respondents identified themselves as belonging to a social network. It was also found that, in general, respondents demonstrate a low level of general interpersonal trust. Only 20.9% of respondents in Ukraine and 18% abroad believe that people can be trusted. The majority of respondents (more than 2/3 in Ukraine and more than 3/4 abroad) believe that one should be very cautious with people. This

⁴⁰ Соціальна згуртованість в українському суспільстві : Якісне дослідження. [Online]. URL: <https://www.opora.ua/en/viyna/social-cohesion-in-ukrainian-society-challenges-and-barriers-for-vulnerable-groups-25748>.

⁴¹ "Resilience, Defense, Security" : Всеукраїнське соціологічне опитування (2024, 29 листопада – 14 грудня) // Ілко Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation – Marie Cederschiold University. Published on May 21, 2025. [Online]. URL : <https://dif.org.ua/article/stykist-oborona-bezpeka-poglyad-z-ukraini-ta-shvetsii>.

pattern does not show statistically significant differences by gender, internally displaced person (IDP) status, experience of disability, or war. Other important trends identified in these studies include the declared ability of respondents to influence their own lives (76.1%), exercise social influence on their environment (82%), and feel needed by the community (about 68%). Among representatives of socially vulnerable groups, these indicators are lower (by approximately 10%), and their dependence on humanitarian organizations is also increasing. Thus, the issues of implementing social inclusion in communities are associated with the self-perception of community members through social comparison, their ability to influence their own lives and social environment, with trust in other people, in public institutions and local authorities at the place of their location. It is important that people of a different nationality and religion cause almost complete distrust in respondents (about 95%).

4. Ensuring the development of an inclusive and equitable environment through education for all

The importance of social inclusion in the current context is heightened by events caused by the armed conflict in Ukraine, namely: the growing number of veterans, persons with disabilities as a result of the war, persons in difficult life circumstances, migrants, internally displaced persons, etc.

Since the problems of social inclusion and social cohesion affect a significant part of the population, social institutions with mass coverage, the main one being the education sector, in particular higher and vocational education, need to be involved in order to solve and prevent them. The current work of higher education institutions currently does not systematically reflect the educational goals and needs of students who are members of all socially vulnerable groups in difficult life circumstances, as provided for in the concept of “Education for All”. Ukrainian legislation specifies a list of factors of difficult life circumstances, which is not exhaustive and is constantly expanding. The list of categories of individuals/families who are members of socially vulnerable groups and require additional social attention and support of various kinds (according to the competences of state authorities and local self-government bodies) is also increasing.

Given the limited scientific publications on the inclusion of higher education, in our study we rely on scientific works on the systematic analysis of humanitarian problems of social inclusion in education and society (All-Ukrainian Sociological Survey, 2024⁴²) in the context of the

⁴² "Resilience, Defense, Security" : Всеукраїнське соціологічне опитування (2024, 29 листопада – 14 грудня) // Ілко Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation – Marie

Sustainable Development Goals, and local studies on the expectations of education seekers⁴³ and teachers⁴⁴ in the development of inclusive education. Conceptually, in this article we use an expanded interpretation of the concept of "social inclusion", which sets new tasks for educational institutions and science to develop inclusive methodological and didactic approaches to improving teaching practice in higher education.

Based on a theoretical analysis of regulatory acts and publications on the implementation of inclusive education (highlighted in the literature review of this article), we can argue that among the important didactic factors for increasing the inclusiveness of higher education should be the following: advanced training of higher education teachers for activities in the field of social inclusion and a mandatory "inclusive" component in all academic and professional programs (EPP) for applicants of different levels of higher education.

Higher education teachers play a critical role in implementing inclusive education in the training of professionals. Teachers are often the primary individuals responsible for implementing strategies that reach all students in their classrooms, so it is crucial that they are well-prepared and feel supported in implementing inclusive education⁴⁵. Teachers play a key role in implementing inclusive education by providing high-quality instruction for all, offering targeted assistance and accommodations where necessary to those who need additional support. It has been found that teachers' knowledge of social inclusion has a positive impact on the academic performance, self-perception, and self-efficacy of learners.

During our discussions at conferences and seminars, teachers revealed insufficient awareness of social inclusion issues and their willingness to receive advanced training in these aspects of their professional activities. That is, the competency-based approach, which is the main one in the training of specialists in higher education institutions, should also include

Cederschiold University. Published on May 21, 2025. [Online]. URL : <https://dif.org.ua/article/stiykist-oborona-bezpeka-poglyad-z-ukraini-ta-shvetsii>

⁴³ Jaiswal N.K., Sah Sh. Empowering Futures: Advancing Social Inclusion for Children with Intellectual Disabilities Through Community-Based Programs. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education* (INT-JECSE). 2021. Vol. 13. Pp.4078-4090. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.48047/intjecse/v13i2.318>.

⁴⁴ Molbaek M. Inclusive teaching strategies – dimensions and agendas. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. 2017. Vol. 22(10). p. 1048–1061. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2017.1414578>.

⁴⁵ Chow W.S.E., de Bruin K., Sharma U. A scoping review of perceived support needs of teachers for implementing inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. 2023. Vol. 28(13), 3321–3340. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2023.2244956>.

knowledge about inclusive education and the creation of an inclusive learning environment.

In ensuring advanced training, the main focus is on the preparation of teachers for secondary education to teach people with disabilities. This area is fully regulated by regulatory acts at both the global and regional and local levels. At the same time, it is important that, in particular, the National Strategy for the Development of Inclusive Education (2024⁴⁶) emphasizes the importance of forming public attitudes towards socially vulnerable groups and preparing teachers for professional activities in the field of social inclusion. A major role in the implementation of teacher training for these tasks in Ukraine is played by higher education institutions (for example, The Institute of Postgraduate Education of Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University), non-profit (public) organizations, international grant programs (for ex., Utterly Education⁴⁷), and private entrepreneurs – teachers, trainers and coaches (for ex., AtomsHub⁴⁸), etc.

To determine the main areas of training teachers for activities in the field of social inclusion, we took into account the following social predictors:

- Goals and expectations of students of inclusive education;
- Strategic prerequisites for the implementation of inclusive education in an educational institution;
- Expressed needs of higher education teachers regarding inclusive education;
- Perceptions of social inclusion and the attitude of other students of “normal development” education;
- Social requirements for the implementation of inclusive education in accordance with national strategies and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Taking into account the established practice of training specialists in higher education and developing their professional competencies for self-realization in various spheres of the economy and business, it is advisable to identify certain areas of educational influence to enhance the inclusiveness of higher education in the context of students’ professional training:

- formation of students’ emotional and value-based attitude to the content of social inclusion and social cohesion;
- formation of an inclusive culture and inclusive thinking of higher education and professional training students;

⁴⁶ Національна стратегія розвитку інклюзивного навчання на період до 2029 року (2024). Схвалено розпорядженням Кабінету Міністрів України від 7 червня 2024 р. № 527-п. [Online]. URL : <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/527-2024>.

⁴⁷ EU. Utterly Education (2025). [Online]. Retrieved from <https://utterly.education/>.

⁴⁸ AtomsHub. (2025). [Online]. URL : <https://hub.atoms.com.ua/category/inkluzia/>.

- promotion of joint activities, developing of creative cooperation skills⁴⁹;
- formation of socio-emotional skills and a culture of inclusive interaction, etc.

The above-mentioned areas of inclusive educational influence in professional training require the inclusion of relevant topics and modules in the content of all educational and professional programs of academic disciplines and the development of methodological models for the implementation of these areas and the relevant training of teachers in higher education practice. It is also necessary to involve local communities in this process, as they are also beneficiaries and gainers from ensuring an inclusive environment, social development, and competitiveness of communities.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights a number of contextual issues related to the need to train higher education teachers to work in conditions of social inclusion at the levels of local communities and the educational environment. The basis of this study is the understanding that inclusion is a complex and comprehensive phenomenon that covers all spheres of human activity and is implemented at many levels using political, social, economic and social resources, among which higher and professional education is important. In this aspect, the activities of higher education teachers must also respond to social demands for the creation of didactic foundations for the formation of best practices of inclusive competence and culture among students in the process of higher education and professional training, taking into account the specific attitudes of students towards the essence and content of social inclusion and cohesion.

According to the results of the presented study, the main areas of inclusive activity of a higher education teacher include the following: forming students' emotional and value-based attitudes towards the content of social inclusion and social cohesion; forming an inclusive culture and inclusive thinking among students of higher education and professional training; promoting joint activities among students; the formation of creative entrepreneurial cooperation skills; the formation of social and emotional skills and a culture of inclusive interaction of students in the educational process, etc.

⁴⁹ Ковальчук Г.О., Баніт Ю.С. Від власної справи до спільних соціальних проєктів: психолого-педагогічні пре диктори локального соціально-економічного розвитку. *Наукові праці Міжнародної Академії управління персоналом. Психологія*. 2023. № 4 (61). С. 16–21. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32689/maup.psych.2023.4>.

The need to raise awareness among higher education teachers is becoming increasingly relevant due to the influence of socially vulnerable groups' demands regarding their own educational goals; local communities on the implementation of social cohesion through social inclusion; other participants in the learning process who also benefit from increasing the inclusiveness of education by expanding their own axiosphere, communicative field, improving inclusive competence, social and emotional skills. This study contributes to the methodology of pedagogy for social inclusion by proposing new approaches to organizing inclusive training for higher education teachers. In view of the above, the outlines of the analytical framework of our study will contribute to the further development of inclusive methodological approaches in the training of higher education teachers and to increasing the inclusiveness of higher education.

SUMMARY

The article is devoted to the issues of implementing the principles of education for sustainable development in accordance with the 2030 Agenda and the UNESCO concept of "Education for All" (EFA, 2012) and the related requirements for improving the professional training of higher education teachers (vocational and technical teachers) and introducing an inclusive component into all educational and vocational training programs for specialists, in order to prevent the problem of stigmatization of social isolation and ensure community cohesion. The psychological and pedagogical aspects of increasing the cohesion of the local environment of local communities through higher education are considered. The need to develop the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in Ukrainian higher education in accordance with modern concepts of social development and education for all emphasizes the importance of social inclusion for social cohesion and socio-economic competitiveness of communities and territories, and therefore directs the attention of educators and researchers to the development and use of innovative approaches to improve the quality of education for sustainable development and the appropriate training of teachers. The main areas of advanced training of higher education teachers in the field of social inclusion for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been identified: the formation of an emotional and value-based attitude to the content of social inclusion and social cohesion; the formation of an inclusive culture and inclusive thinking of students of higher educational institutions and vocational and technical educational institutions; promoting joint activities of education students, the formation of skills of creative entrepreneurial cooperation; the formation of socio-emotional skills and a culture of inclusive cooperation as elements of social competitiveness.

It is concluded that an important condition for socially inclusive education is the need to raise the awareness of higher education teachers, which is becoming increasingly relevant due to the impact of the requests of participants from socially vulnerable groups on the implementation of their own goals, local communities on the implementation of social cohesion through socially inclusive education for sustainable development, other participants in the educational process who also benefit from increasing the social inclusiveness of education through the expansion of their own axiosphere, communicative field, improvement of socially inclusive competence, socio-emotional skills, etc.

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