

## THE ORGANISATION OF THE EDUCATION OF RETURNED EMIGRÉ PUPILS IN A PROGYNNASIUM

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### ABSTRACT

The article focuses on the issue of the education of returned emigré pupils. A progymnasium is part of the Lithuanian system, a general education institution (grades 1 to 8), an intermediate link between primary school and a gymnasium, which differs from basic schools in the higher quality of the activities and the created added value. A quantitative study was conducted: 106 progymnasium teachers working with returned emigré pupils took part. The research revealed that individual plans were made for returned emigré pupils in progymnasiums, and school education specialists (psychologists, social pedagogues, etc) assisted them during the adaptation period. For the teachers working with returned emigré pupils, the competences of recognising their diverse abilities and the management of (information) technology were especially important. Additional formal (Lithuanian language and literature, mathematics) and informal activities, the development of the digitalised content of education, cooperation, and the dissemination of best practices created the preconditions for the streamlining of the education of returned emigré pupils in progymnasiums.

KEY WORDS: *re-emigration, returned emigré pupils, organisation of education, progymnasium.*

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### Introduction

Due to intensifying globalisation, the development of science and technology, and increasing competition between countries, societies are undergoing changes that pose challenges to education. One determiner of social change is migration, which has been leading to greater ethnic and cultural diversity in the country. Lithuanian education is also challenged by return migration, or re-emigration.

For the notion of *reverse migration* (Strumickienė, 2019), different definitions can be found in scientific literature: *back migration, re-emigration, reemigration*, etc. According to the definition proposed by the United Nations, returned emigrés are ‘persons returning to their country of nationality who have been international migrants (short-term or long-term) in another country and intend to spend at least one year in their own country’ (Sipavičienė, Gaidys *et al.*, 2009: 7). Four aspects emerge in this definition: country of origin, place of residence abroad, length of stay in another country, and length of stay after return. The term *re-emigration* describes the return of a person from the host country to the country of origin (Kunuroglu *et al.*, 2016). In the ‘Dictionary of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language’ (2021), the term *re-emigration* is defined as a return from emigration to the homeland. In the study presented in this article, the notions of *re-*

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*emigration* and *returned emigré* pupils, that is, those who have returned from emigration and are studying in Lithuania, have been chosen.

Based on data on international migration presented in the Official Statistics Portal Lithuania (2021), in 2020, 20,800 citizens of the Republic of Lithuania (48.3% of all immigrants) returned to live in Lithuania, which is 400 (2%) more than in 2019. In her interview for the publication 'Education News', Daiva Jakavonytė-Staškuvienė, a professor at Vytautas Magnus University, noted that every year, more and more children return to Lithuania to study. Thus, for example, on 1 September 2021, in accordance with preliminary data, 1,924 pupils, having come from abroad, started the new school year in Lithuanian schools (Praninskas, 2021: 1). Therefore, the problem of educating pupils who have experienced re-emigration is relevant.

The 2018 Resolution of the Government of the Republic of the Lithuania 'On the Approval of the Inter-Institutional Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Demographic, Migration, and Integration Policy for 2018–2030' (Chap 2, Article 2.1.10.) outlined guidelines for the preparation of educational institutions to provide the necessary support to pupils in the process of the implementation of the policy of the promotion of homeward migration, integration, and the maintenance of communication.

The relevance of the issue was supported by the Eurydice Report *Integrating Students from Migrant Backgrounds into Schools in Europe: National Policies and Measures* (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019), in which the priorities for migrant pupils' successful integration were identified: the increasing accessibility of formal education, various support in the organisation of education for teachers and schools, improving teachers' competence to work in a multicultural and multilingual environment, and developing inclusive education. The order of the minister of education, science and sport of the Republic of Lithuania 'On the Approval of the Strategic Action Plan of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport for 2020–2022' (2020) specified the goals of improving access to learning, developing non-formal education, and increasing learning opportunities for Lithuanians from abroad.

The issue of re-migration has been studied both abroad (Kunuroglu *et al.*, 2016; Pichler *et al.*, 2018) and in Lithuania. The Lithuanian researchers Barcevičius (2012), Garbenčiūtė (2012), Strumickienė (2019) and others analysed individual aspects of the reverse and repeat migration of the Lithuanian population. Juozeliūnienė *et al.* (2019) investigated the issue of return policy implementation in Lithuania. Szydłowska *et al.* (2019) discussed the feelings of returning migrant children at school. Lukočiūtė *et al.* (2009) explored the issue of the identity of pupils returning from abroad. Ruškus *et al.* (2016) looked into the challenges of re-emigration for the education of children. And Bagdonaitė (2020) delved into the preparedness of the education system to accept children from returned emigré families.

**Research problem.** Changing school due to re-emigration is a complicated process, because in addition to the usual problems of changing school, specific issues of differences in language, subject systems, cultural environments, etc, emerge. Successful integration at school can have a positive impact not only on a child's academic achievements and well-being, but also on the further relationships they are to develop under different settings. A legal framework has been created in Lithuania, and documents regulating the work of educational institutions with returned emigré pupils have been adopted; however, the phenomenon is unique, and research is needed for an in-depth understanding of it. The research question is: how is the education of returned emigré students organised in progymnasiums, and what are the preconditions for its streamlining in this type of school?

The object of the research is the organisation of the educational process of returned emigré pupils in progymnasiums. The aim of the research is to reveal the experience of organising the education of returned emigré pupils in progymnasiums, and the preconditions for its efficiency. The methods of the research include content analysis and synthesis of scientific literature and documents, questionnaire survey (written), statistical analysis, and a summary of the quantitative research data.

## 1. Prerequisites for organising the education of returned emigré pupils in a progymnasium

The ‘Concept of a Good School’ (2015: 2) defines it as a school based on the development of fundamental humanistic values, striving for meaning, discovery and personal development, which is guided by the agreement and learning of the school community. The concept defines the values of a school and the direction of the improvement of activities: to strive for meaning, discovery and the success of education and self-education. In the analysis of the educational activities of an institution, it is important to take into account the dimensions of a good school, and the purpose of the school, the context of its activities, and its culture (Targamadžė, 2017: 35).

A progymnasium is a general educational institution for pupils in grades 1 to 8, the purpose of which is to implement the basic educational curriculum (or part of it), and to prepare students for further education (Republic of Lithuania Law on Education, 2011, Article 41). A progymnasium differs from a basic school in the higher quality of activities and the created added value. *The goal of a contemporary progymnasium* is to organise activities efficiently and purposefully, to mobilise the community for the solution of relevant educational problems, to anticipate how the requirements of educational activities will be implemented, to select the necessary directions and priorities, and to anticipate and plan changes in teaching (National Education Strategy, 2014). In a progymnasium, as in any other ‘[...] knowledge organisation, it is important to adapt to changing situations, to create the environment, whenever necessary, to find a new one or to transform, to create a transparent network of cooperation, and to develop spaces in which activities take place’ (Jucevičius, Ilonienė, 2009: 790). One of the management functions of educational institutions (including progymnasiums) is the organisation of education with the aim of optimising activity and creating the preconditions to increase its efficiency by selecting the most suitable people, working methods, sufficient resources, the most convenient place, and the most favourable time (Braslauskienė, Norvilienė, 2021: 53).

In Lithuania, the education of pupils who have completed part of the curriculum abroad is organised on the basis of the order of the minister of education, science and sport of the Republic of Lithuania ‘On the Approval of General Education Plans for Basic and Secondary Education Curricula for School Years 2019–2020 and 2020–2021’ (2019, current version 2020, Chaps 6–8). The integration into general education schools of pupils returning from abroad includes the evaluation of the content of their education and knowledge, additional funding for Lithuanian language lessons, and non-formal activities, etc (Analysis of Migrant Integration into General Education Schools, 2020).

Based on the project ‘Development of General Education Content and Organisation Models and their Testing in General Education’ implemented by the National Education Agency, a new document was drafted, ‘Description of an Education Organisation Model for Returned emigré Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania’ (2020), which outlined guidelines for the activity of general education schools (including progymnasiums) in the area. Jakavonytė-Staškuvienė (quoted in Praninskas, 2021: 1) confirmed that the educational models for pupils re-emigrating from abroad or coming to live in Lithuania had been tested by various types of schools in 12 different Lithuanian cities and districts, and some schools have already made significant progress. A total of 19 progymnasiums operating in different cities and districts of Lithuania have experience of accepting returned emigré children (Educational Assistance for Returned Emigré Children. Migration Information Centre I Choose Lithuania, 2021).

The preconditions for the organisation of activities with returned emigré pupils identified in the ‘Institutional Action Plan of the Strategy for Demography, Migration, and Integration Policy 2018–2030’ (2018) included: a) creating a network of schools admitting returned emigré pupils in order to share experience in identifying children’s needs and strengthening integration; b) developing recommendations to schools on admission and integration; c) expanding the distance learning network for working more efficiently with pupils planning to return to Lithuania; d) developing syllabi for Lithuanian studies (the integration of the Lithuanian language, and Lithuanian history, geography and civil education); e) organising seminars for in-depth studies on the integration process of returned emigré pupils, involving representatives of adminis-

tration, teachers, social pedagogues and psychologists; and f) creating the legal possibilities for two teachers and a teacher's assistant to participate in the educational process.

In order to ensure the legal preconditions for the integration of returned emigré pupils into a school, it is necessary to take into account the following aspects of educational organisation: a person is assigned to provide assistance to a pupil; an individual education plan is drawn up; wherever necessary, intensive Lithuanian language lessons are scheduled (in academic levelling classes, groups, or other forms); an adaptation period is planned; in the event of difficulties, the Schoolchildren's Wellbeing Commission, the class teacher, teachers working with the returned emigré pupil, and the pupil's parents must be involved in the process (see the order of the minister of education, science and sport of the Republic of Lithuania 'On the Approval of General Education Plans for Basic and Secondary Curricula in the 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 School Years', 2019).

Only progymnasium teachers who understand the goals of educational change and the diverse abilities of children will be professionally prepared and will organise their activities effectively. The 'Description of Teachers' Professional Competence' (2015) identified the competences necessary for a teacher: *generic competences* (personal development and the ability for lifelong learning, cultural competence, a creative approach to activities, the management of new technology and information, and professional communication); *didactic competencies* (recognition of pupils' diverse abilities and their engagement in learning, the creation of a motivating learning environment, the evaluation of pupils' achievements and progress, the exploration and evaluation of professional activity); and *subject-specific competences* (the implementation of the syllabus in a respective educational centre [in the present case, a progymnasium], the recognition and updating of special abilities) ('Description of a Teacher's Professional Competence', 2015: 3–4). Equally important for the teacher are the competences of leadership, multiculturalism and multinationalism, which consist of the experience of international activities, global thinking, and tolerance of cultural diversity (Jucevičius, Ilonienė 2009: 789). The competences of a progymnasium teacher in organising the education of returned emigré pupils create the preconditions for the holistic education of children and their preparation for further life. Today, a progymnasium must meet the requirements of a modern educational institution, develop activities that meet the needs of contemporary society, and contribute to the formation of a new school management culture which is difficult to imagine nowadays without the effective organisation of the process of education and continuous learning.

## 2. Research methodology

To achieve the aim of the research, a quantitative study was conducted that relied on the theory of positivism (Conte, 1892), as it sought to describe a phenomenon rather than to answer the question whether it exists or not. The developer of the idea of positivism J. W. Creswell (2009) noted that quantitative research was appropriate for revealing the relationships between various traits. Based on that positivist provision, the empirical study conducted revealed the characteristics of the organisation of returned emigré pupils' education in the progymnasium and the factors for its streamlining. *The method of questionnaire survey (written)* was chosen for the study.

**Survey sample.** At school, the deputy director for education is responsible for the organisation of the educational process, and teachers organise pupil activities, communicate and cooperate with parents and other specialists, and take decisions (Braslauskienė, Norvilienė, 2021: 54). The respondents chosen for the study were progymnasium teachers who organised the process of educating returned emigré pupils.

The study was carried out in six Lithuanian progymnasiums that worked with returned emigré pupils. The sample for the quantitative study consisted of 106 progymnasium teachers who were selected by purposive sampling. The researchers identified elements of the selected population that could provide the necessary information. The following criteria were taken into account: teachers who 1) worked in a progymnasium, and 2) had experience of working with returned emigré pupils.

**Characteristics of the study participants.** The relevant characteristics of the progymnasium teachers chosen for the study included three factors: education, length of work experience, and qualification ca-



tegory. The majority (92%) (97) of the respondents had a higher university education, while others (8%) (9) had a higher non-university education. One-fifth (20%) (21) of the respondents had up to five years of work experience, slightly more than a quarter (27%) (29) five to ten years, and a similar number (23%) (24) ten to 15 years; the largest share (30%) (32) of respondents had 15 or more years' work experience as teachers. In terms of the qualification category, 38 respondents (36%) were senior teachers, 35 (33%) were teacher-methodologists, and 32 (30%) were teachers. One study participant (1%) had the qualification category of expert teacher. A significant number of respondents had the category of a senior teacher; therefore, they were considered to be able to reveal the characteristics of the organisation of returned emigré pupils' education and to have sufficient competences to judge the efficiency of the organisation of education.

Collection and analysis of the research data. The questionnaire for the research was developed based on the recommendations of Juozeliūnienė *et al.* (2019), Ruškus *et al.* (2016), Targamadzė (2017), and other researchers, as well as the provisions of the 'Description of the Organisational Model for the Education of Returned emigré Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania' (2020). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated, which reflected the reliability of the test instrument and the internal compatibility of the scales. The questionnaire was properly designed and reliable, because the value of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.884. A statistical analysis of the survey data was performed.

### 3. Research findings

The first step was to find out in *what form the progymnasium teachers worked with returned emigré pupils (in a regular, levelling, mobile class or otherwise)*. The majority (95%) of respondents indicated that the returned emigré children were educated in a regular classroom. The rest of the respondents (5%) educated the children individually, with the help of the school education specialists (psychologist, social pedagogue or special pedagogue) during the adaptation period. Levelling classes or mobile groups were chosen less frequently. The progymnasiums whose teachers participated in the study had to deal less frequently with a situation when a larger number of returned emigré students arrived simultaneously who needed a basic course in the Lithuanian language, and therefore a levelling class had to be established.

It was important to find out whether *a knowledge test for returned emigré pupils was held at the progymnasiums*. The majority (60%) of respondents indicated that interviews were organised with a pupil. About a quarter (23%) of the respondents pointed out that a knowledge test was held depending on the situation. Some respondents (17%) said that tests were used to test the knowledge. The findings of the research responded to the requirements of the document 'On Education and the Integration of Persons Returning to Lithuania' (2019), which provided for an evaluation of the knowledge of individuals re-emigrating from abroad.

In the context of the organisation of education, it was important to find out *how long it took for returned emigré pupils to adapt to the progymnasium*. According to the majority, (68%) of the respondents, the adaptation of a student took one school year. Slightly more than a tenth of the respondents (16%) indicated that the adaptation took up to two years or more. The rest of the respondents (16%) chose the version *other*, and noted that the adaptation time for returned emigré pupils depended on each child individually; the time for adaptation was associated with the creation of the appropriate conditions for each pupil, and with the integration measures on which the engagement of pupils in the educational process depended.

*When evaluating the difficulties faced by progymnasium teachers in organising the education of returned emigré pupils*, we found out that the majority of respondents (65.1%) faced a lack of information about the education of pupils returning from abroad. More than half (60.5%) the respondents lacked methodological material for working with returned emigré pupils. The integration process was further complicated by the lack of time for teachers (58.1%) to differentiate tasks. Other difficulties named by the respondents included: the lack of a clear evaluation system for returned emigré pupils (53.5%); learning difficulties due to a poor knowledge of the Lithuanian language (46.5%); knowledge gaps of returned emigré pupils (in compliance with the Lithuanian curriculum of general education) (41.9%); and the strong influence of another culture (33.7%). When organising the education of returned emigré pupils, progymnasium teachers usually faced

problems of individualisation and differentiation: they were not always able to choose appropriate tasks for each returned emigré pupil according to their level of knowledge and abilities. The respondents who chose the answer *other* indicated that they faced challenges in organising educational activities, especially when pupils from different countries came to school at the same time and there was a need to have teachers who spoke two or more foreign languages. The *chi-square* criterion was used to analyse the obtained data. Statistically significant differences were established between the respondents' length of work experience and the difficulties in organising the education of returned emigré pupils ( $\chi^2 = 20.549$ ,  $df = 9$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ).

One of the aims of the research was to find out what kinds of assistance progymnasium teachers received in organising the educational process for returned emigré pupils (see Figs. 1 and 2).

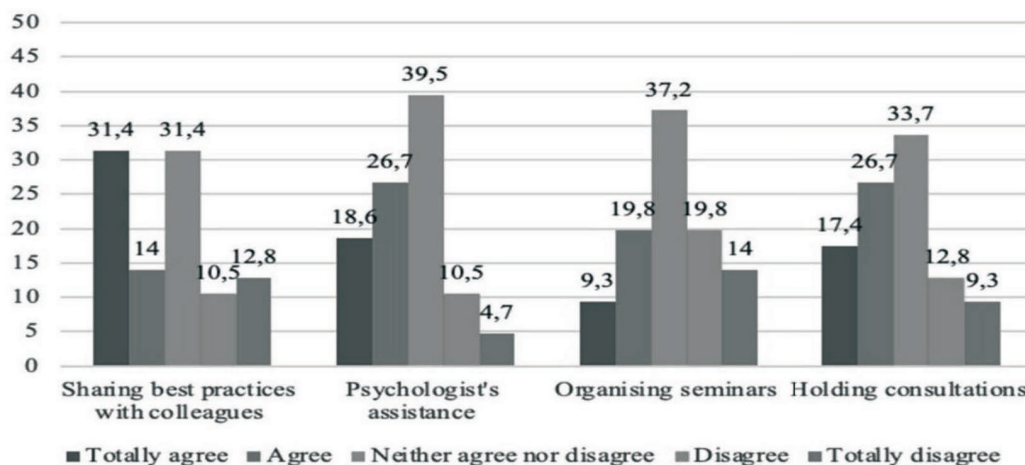


Figure 1. Assistance for teachers who organise the educational process for returned emigré pupils (1)

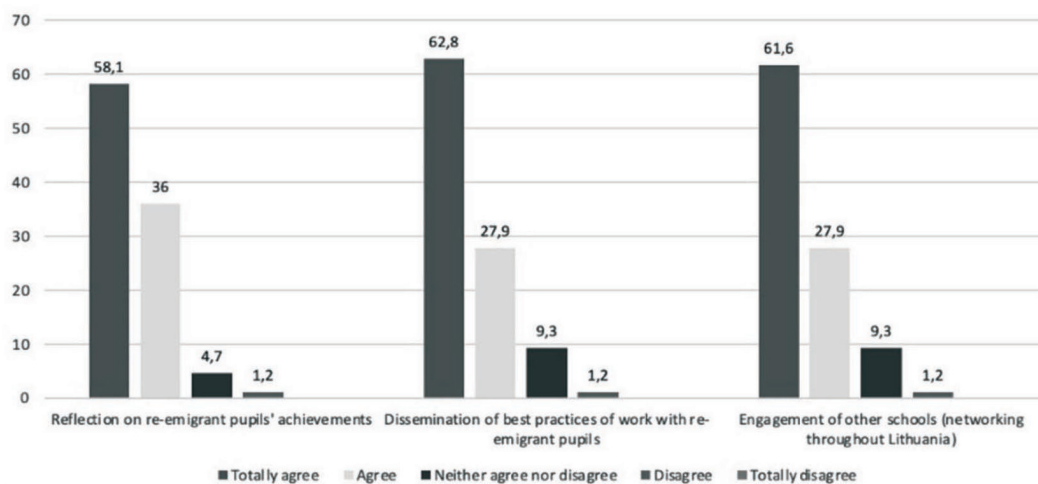


Figure 2. Assistance for teachers who organise the educational process for returned emigré pupils (2)

As can be seen in Figs 1 and 2, some respondents (31.4%) stated that they had an individual schedule for work with returned emigré pupils. The same number (31.4%) of respondents indicated that they shared their experiences with other teachers in the progymnasium. About a fifth (18.6%) of the respondents pointed out that they always received the assistance of a psychologist. The participants in the study also noted that consultations were held at their progymnasium to discuss activities with returned emigré pupils. On the other hand, more than a third (36%) of the respondents did not have a teacher-assistant when working with returned emigré pupils.

A similar number (33.7%) of respondents would have liked an online lesson schedule. The respondents had doubts about the seminars held in the progymnasium on the subject of the education of returned emigré pupils; they missed the managerial decisions of the progymnasium administration on the issue.

On calculating the Spearman's correlations, statistically significant, positive, weak correlations were established between the respondents' length of work experience and the issue of assistance in the process of returned emigré pupils' education ( $r = 0.279$ ) ( $p = 0.01$ ). The progymnasium teachers with longer work experience were more likely to agree that they received assistance in organising the educational process for returned emigré pupils (see Table 1).

*Table 1.* The correlation between teachers' length of work experience and the characteristics of assistance in the organisation of the process of the education of returned emigré pupils

|                                            |                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                            | Assistance to teachers in the organisation of the process of education of returned emigré pupils |
| <b>Length of teacher's work experience</b> | $r=0,279^{**}$                                                                                   |

**\*\***the correlation is significant at the 0,01 level

The study sought to reveal *how progymnasium teachers organised cooperation with the parents of returned emigré pupils*. It was found out that half (50%) of the respondents cooperated with the parents by holding consultations. It should be emphasised that continuous cooperation in organising the education of returned emigré pupils was a prerequisite for their successful integration into the school. Slightly less than half (40.7%) of the respondents encouraged parents to be involved in the child's education. Some respondents (34.9%) involved the class teacher in cooperation with the parents. To quote the respondents, cooperation with parents was weak when the pupil was still abroad (30.2%), while acknowledging that this was an important initial stage of cooperation, organised in the form of online consultations. In the analysis of the obtained data, the chi-square criterion was applied, and statistically significant differences were established between the length of the teacher's work experience and the cooperation between the research participants and the parents of returned emigré pupils ( $\chi^2 = 16.704$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p = 0.0161$ ).

The study also sought to reveal the factors that influenced teachers in organising the educational process for returned emigré pupils. Two groups of factors emerged: one was related to the assistance of the progymnasium director, and the other to the dissemination of best practices and the reflection on pupils' achievements. The factors that respondents associated with the assistance of the *progymnasium administration* and which promoted the process of returned emigré pupils' education were the following: the majority of respondents (66.3%) had sufficient systemic-methodological material on the organisation of the education of returned emigré pupils; more than half the respondents (55.8%) indicated the online lesson schedule drawn up by the administration; moreover, they noted the monitoring of returned emigré pupils' education in the progymnasium (57.0%). The respondents identified factors that did not encourage (hindered) the organisation of the educational process for returned emigré pupils. Faced with the challenges of educating these pupils, the teachers needed more detailed information from the administration about the pupil(s) (59.3%), as well as the participation of two teachers or a teacher-assistant in the educational process (59.3%).

Other factors were associated by respondents with a reflection on the children's achievements and the dissemination of the teachers' experience (see Fig. 3).

As is demonstrated in Fig. 3, in the process of the organisation of the education of returned emigré pupils, teachers were encouraged by the dissemination of best practices (62.8%), the engagement of other schools in networking throughout Lithuania (61.6%), and by reflection on the achievements of returned emigré pupils (58.1%). The analysis of the research data using the chi-square criterion resulted in statistically significant differences between teachers' length of work experience and the issue of factors organising the education of returned emigré pupils ( $\chi^2 = 24.367$ ,  $df = 9$ ,  $p = 0.0004$ ).

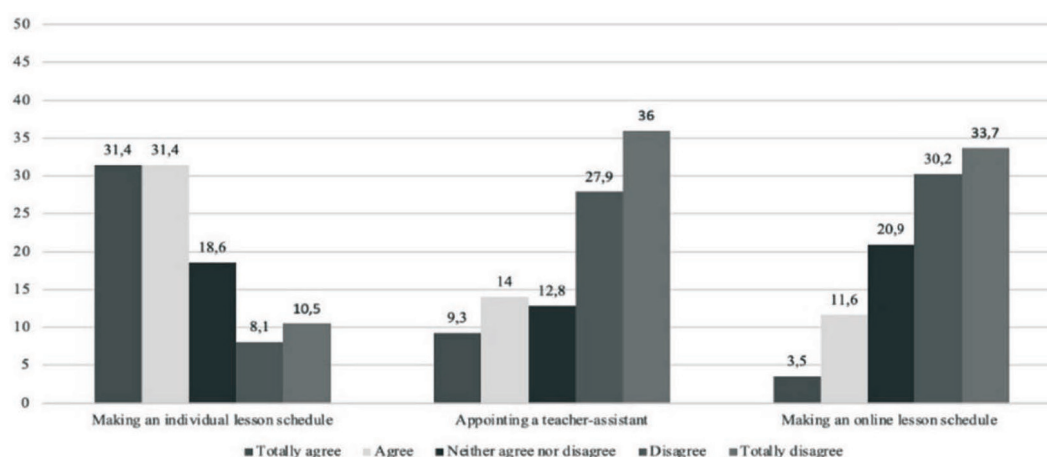


Figure 3. Factors promoting the organisation of the education of returned emigré pupils

The study aimed to reveal the competences of progymnasium teachers that were necessary for the organisation of the education of returned emigré pupils. The respondents identified the following teacher competences as the most important: recognition of pupils' diverse abilities (66.3%); technology and information management (66.3%); and the creation of diverse educational environments and content (situations) (62.8%). Among the general competences of a teacher, the respondents indicated culture (intercultural) (62.8%), and personal development and the ability to learn (61.6%). Fewer respondents indicated professional communication (59.3%) and the evaluation of pupils' achievements and progress (58.1%). The respondents who chose the answer *other* noted that leadership and multiculturalism were important for a progymnasium teacher organising the process of educating returned emigré pupils. On calculating the Spearman's correlations, statistically significant, positive, weak correlations were established between respondents' length of work experience and the item about the teacher competences necessary for working with returned emigré pupils: recognition of diverse abilities ( $r = 0.216$ ) ( $p = 0.05$ ) and new technology and information management ( $r = 0.274$ ) ( $p = 0.05$ ) (see Table 2). Respondents with longer work experience more frequently agreed that teachers working with returned emigré pupils needed the competences of *recognising pupils' diverse abilities* and *management of technology (information)*.

Table 2. The correlation between teachers' length of work experience and the characteristics of competences

|                                     | Recognition of pupils' diverse abilities | Management of technology and information |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Length of teacher's work experience | 0,216*                                   | 0,274*                                   |

\*the correlation is significant at the 0,05 level

Quality education for returned emigré pupils in progymnasiums called for teachers' preparedness and for their general, didactic and managerial competences.

The questionnaire included an open-ended question for respondents' proposals regarding the more efficient organisation of the process of the education of returned emigré pupils in a progymnasium. On analysing the respondents' proposals on how to improve the organisation of the process of the education of returned emigré pupils in a progymnasium, three categories were identified: the development of a model for the education of returned emigré pupils; the assistance of education specialists (psychologist, social pedagogue, special pedagogue); and strengthening cooperation with parents (see Fig. 4).



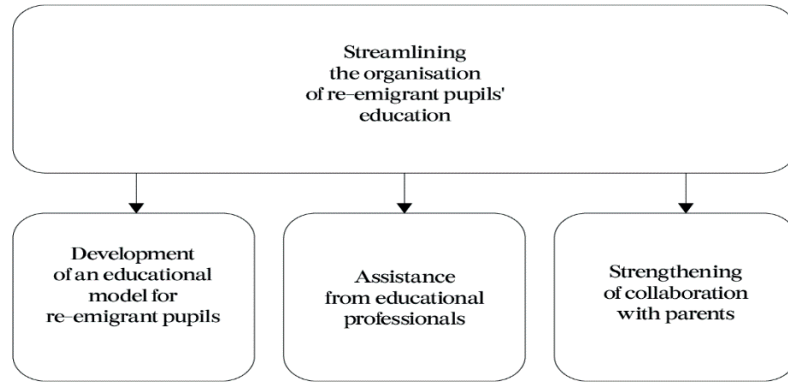


Fig. 4. Streamlining the organisation of the education of returned emigré pupils

In the first category, the development of a model for the education of returned emigré pupils, three sub-categories were identified: the organisation of educational activities, the integration of informal activities, and the development and implementation of educational content. According to the respondents, the process of educating re-migrants could be streamlined by ‘... additional assistance in learning the Lithuanian language and literature and mathematics’ (R22; R49); ‘... the assistance of specialists in organising additional educational activities, lessons, especially of the Lithuanian language’ (R58); ‘... additional hours should be devoted to improving the organisation of educational activities with returned emigré pupils’ (R17). The sub-category of the integration of informal activities was identified, based on the following statements of the respondents: ‘[...] to organise more diverse informal education activities for returned emigré pupils to facilitate new contacts and to maintain relationships with other pupils and teachers, which would allow the child to be a fully fledged member of the school’ (R3); ‘... to engage them in informal activities to facilitate the child’s integration’ (R94); ‘... informal activities are an effective means of pupils’ adaptation to school and successful education’ (R134). The sub-category of educational content development and implementation was based on the following statements by the respondents: ‘The development of educational content, tailored to each student according to their abilities’ (R75); ‘the development of (integrated) educational content and its implementation in the classroom’ (R22); ‘... the development of digitalised educational content would help both pupils abroad and those returning to learn in Lithuanian schools’ (R94). The respondents identified additional lessons (in the Lithuanian language and literature, and mathematics), informal activities, and the development of educational content (integrated and digitalised) as a precondition for the more efficient organisation of the education of returned emigré pupils.

In the second category, with the help of education specialists (psychologist, social pedagogue, or special pedagogue), two subcategories were identified: a psychologist’s assistance (monitoring the adaptation period) and a teacher-assistant’s activities in the educational process. According to the respondents, ‘[...] it is necessary to engage the child in the learning process with the help of a psychologist. Continuous monitoring during the adaptation period’ (R134); ‘... the assistance of school professionals to the pupil and the family’ (R48; R50; R62); ‘... collaboration of education specialists and parents’ (R77; R81). According to the respondents, the organisation of returned emigré pupils’ education would be streamlined by the activities of a teacher-assistant in the educational process: ‘[...] a teacher-assistant could help to organise additional lessons’ (R3); ‘[...] an assistant is necessary, especially for a pupil who does not speak Lithuanian’ (R1; R6; R17; R38); ‘... a teacher-assistant is needed’ (R77; R50; R134). From the respondents’ viewpoint, ‘monitoring returned emigré pupils and reflection as well as cooperation with parents living abroad’ were important for the more efficient organisation of education (R48; R50; R62; R81). According to the respondents, the assistance of education specialists was necessary for returned emigré pupils, and especially the assistance of a psychologist, because children experienced adaptation problems. Assistance and cooperation with the family and with parents living abroad were equally important.

In the third category, *strengthening cooperation with parents*, two sub-categories stood out: partnership (communication) with parents and a variety of forms of cooperation. The respondents noted '[...] *cooperation in anticipating and discussing the optimal time for pupil adaptation, pupil achievements*' (R70; R84; R31); '*... cooperation with parents planning to re-emigrate*' (R48; R62); '*... parent-teacher communication and cooperation, tripartite cooperation, dialogue*' (R70; R84; R31); '*seeking various forms of cooperation with parents, strengthening mutual relations*' (R6; R18; R27). The variety of forms of cooperation with parents would help to improve the organisation of the educational process for returned emigré pupils, while maintaining contact (partnership) would create preconditions for the successful integration of pupils into the progymnasium.

Summary of the research findings. The research revealed that teachers faced the following challenges in organising educational activities: learning difficulties by returned emigré pupils due to gaps in the knowledge of the Lithuanian language and other subjects; the strong influence of another culture; and the individualisation and differentiation of tasks. Another challenge was when students from different foreign countries came to the progymnasium simultaneously, and the need emerged to have teachers who spoke two or more foreign languages. These findings corresponded with the conclusions of Ruškus *et al.* (2016) on the challenges of re-emigration to the educational process of children.

The study disclosed teachers' need to share the best working practices with returned emigré pupils with their colleagues, to reflect on pupils' achievements, to improve their competence in cooperation in order to involve parents in the educational process, to maintain contact with the local community and other schools, and to monitor pupils' achievements. These findings conformed with the ideas of Targamadžė (2017) on the importance of a school's collaboration with other educational institutions and the local community, as well as on the appropriateness of monitoring school performance.

The progymnasium teachers who participated in the study identified competences necessary for organising the education of returned emigré pupils: *generic competences* (cultural [intercultural] and those of personal development, professional communication, learning to learn, and technology and information management); *didactic competences* (the recognition of pupils' diverse abilities, the evaluation of pupils' achievements and progress, and the creation of educational environments); and *subject-specific competences* (competence in the implementation of educational content in the centre of the progymnasium). They corresponded to the competences highlighted in the 'Description of Teacher's Professional Competence' (2015: 3-4). The participants in the study added the competences of *leadership* and *multiculturalism*. This reflected the ideas of Jucevičius and Ilonienė (2009: 789) on the competences of teacher leadership, multiculturalism and multinationalism, which consisted of experience in international activities, global thinking, and tolerance of cultural diversity (Jucevičius, Ilonienė, 2009: 789).

The assistance of the school administration and education specialists (a psychologist, a social pedagogue, a special pedagogue) was important for the education of returned emigré pupils in progymnasiums. A community spirit and partnership could help to organise the educational process for returned emigré students in a progymnasium more effectively. These findings were in line with the conclusion of the research by Bagdonaitė (2020) that the creation of a collaborative environment was one of the most successful ways to facilitate the work of teachers with returned emigré pupils.

The integration of returned emigré pupils into general education schools is a phenomenon that should be deepened and broadened by exploring their academic, social and psychological problems, their experiences, and the preparedness of various types of educational institutions to provide assistance to returned emigré pupils.

*Limitations of the study.* The study to address the issue of the education of returned emigré pupils was conducted only with progymnasium teachers. Their evaluation could have been supplemented by interviews with the heads of progymnasiums, deputies for education, and with school specialists (social pedagogues and psychologists).

## Conclusions

Due to the increased migratory mobility of the population, re-emigration (return from the host country to the country of origin) is becoming common in the contemporary world. The impact of re-emigration is also manifested in the field of education when organising the educational process for returned emigré pupils in educational institutions. A progymnasium is an educational institution where the managerial function of organisation is important for successful educational activities with returned emigré pupils.

*The study conducted revealed* the experience of and prerequisites for streamlining the education of returned emigré pupils in a progymnasium. In the progymnasiums participating in the study, re-migrant pupils were most often educated in regular classrooms by drawing up individual plans and making use of the assistance of school education specialists (a psychologist, a social pedagogue, a special pedagogue) during the adaptation period. Levelling classes and mobile groups were less frequent. The pupils' knowledge was tested in interviews, and tests were used whenever necessary. The adaptation of returned emigré pupils usually took one school year; however, it also depended on the child's individual characteristics and abilities. Individual schedules for working with returned emigré pupils were drawn up at the progymnasiums, the teachers shared their experience with colleagues, consultations were held, and the self-education of returned emigré pupils was monitored. Statistically significant, positive, weak correlations were established between respondent teachers' length of work experience and the assistance received (from the administration and school specialists) in the process of the education of re-migrant pupils ( $r = 0.279$ ) ( $p = 0.01$ ); that is, teachers with longer work experience tended to agree more often that they received assistance in organising the educational process for returned emigré pupils.

The progymnasium teachers cooperated with parents by holding consultations, they involved class teachers in the cooperation process, sought to build partnership-based relationships, and encouraged parents to become more actively engaged in the children's education process. The education of returned emigré pupils was a specific process, requiring the knowledge and preparedness of teachers. The study revealed that cultural competences and those of personal development, learning to learn, the recognition of pupils' diverse abilities, technology and information management, the creation of learning environments, leadership, and multicultural education were important for teachers in organising activities. Statistically significant, positive, weak correlations were established between the respondent teachers' length of work experience and their competences of *recognising pupils' diverse abilities* ( $r = 0.216$ ) ( $p = 0.05$ ) and of *mastering new technologies and managing information* ( $r = 0.274$ ) ( $p = 0.05$ ); that is, respondents with longer work experience tended to agree more frequently that teachers working with returned emigré children need the competences of *recognising pupils' diverse abilities* and of *managing technology (information)*.

The education of returned emigré pupils in a progymnasium would be streamlined by additional formal (Lithuanian language and literature, mathematics) and informal activities, the development of digitalised educational content, the search for more diverse forms of cooperation with parents, dialogue in the school community (between pupils, parents, teachers, and administrators), reflection on pupils' achievements, and the dissemination of teachers' best practice in the education of returned emigré pupils. The continuous provision to teachers of systemic-methodological material on the organisation of the education of returned emigré pupils, online lesson schedules, the participation of two teachers or teacher-assistants in the education process, and the creation of a collaborative environment, serve as preconditions for the more efficient education of returned emigré pupils in progymnasiums.

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## REEMIGRANTŲ MOKINIŲ UGDYMO ORGANIZAVIMAS PROGIMNAZIJOJE

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### Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojama reemigrantų mokinių ugdymo organizavimo progimnazijoje problema. Progimnazija yra Lietuvos švietimo sistemos grandis, bendrojo ugdymo (nuo 1 iki 8 klasių) įstaiga, tarpinė grandis tarp pradinės mokyklos ir gimnazijos, kuriai tenka priimti reemigracijos iššūkius. Mokyklos keitimas dėl reemigracijos yra sudėtingas procesas, nes be įprastai patiriamų mokyklos keitimo problemų, iškyla visiškai specifinės – kalbos, dalykinės sistemos skirtumų, kultūrinės aplinkos ir kt. Sėkminga integracija mokykloje gali teigiamai paveikti ne tik vaiko ugdymosi rezultatus ir jo savijautą, bet ir tolesnius jo santykius, kuriuos jis vėliau kursis kitoje aplinkoje.

Vadovaujantis pozityvistine nuostata, atliktas kiekybinis tyrimas, siekiant atskleisti reemigrantų mokinių ugdymo progimnazijoje organizavimo patirtį ir efektyvinimo prielaidas. Tyrimas vykdytas šešiose Lietuvos progimnazijose, kurios dirba su mokiniais reemigrantais. Tyrime dalyvavo 102 progimnazijų mokytojai, turintys darbo su reemigrantais mokiniais patirties.

Atlikus tyrimą atskleista, kad tyrime dalyvavusiose progimnazijose mokiniai reemigrantai dažniau ugdomi įprastoje klasėje, sudarant individualius planus ir adaptaciniam laikotarpiui pasitelkiant mokyklos švietimo specialistų (psichologo, socialinio pedagogo, specialiojo pedagogo) pagalbą. Mokinių žinios tikrinamos pokalbių metu, prireikus naudojami testai. Darbui su mokiniais reemigrantais progimnazijoje sudaromas individualus tvarkaraštis, mokytojai dalijasi patirtimi su kolegomis, konsultuojasi, vykdoma mokinių reemigrantų ugdymosi stebėseną. Nustatyti statistiškai reikšmingi, teigiami, silpni koreliaciniai ryšiai tarp respondentų darbo stažo ir gaunamos pagalbos (vadovų, mokyklos specialistų) mokinių reemigrantų ugdymo



processe ( $r = 0,279$ ) ( $p = 0,01$ ), t. y. didesnį darbo stažą turintys progimnazijos mokytojai dažniau sutinka, kad sulaukia pagalbos dėl mokinių reemigrantų ugdymo proceso organizavimo.

Progimnazijos mokytojai bendradarbiauja su tėvais, organizuodami konsultacijas, įtraukia į bendradarbiavimo procesą klasės vadovą, siekia kurti partnerystę grįstus santykius, skatina pačius tėvus aktyviau įsitraukti į vaiko ugdymo procesą. Organizuojant veiklas, mokytojams svarbios kultūrinė, asmeninio tobulėjimo, mokymosi mokytis, mokinių skirtybių (galimybių) pažinimo, technologijų ir informacijos valdymo, ugdymosi aplinkų kūrimo, lyderystės ir multikultūriškumo kompetencijos. Nustatyti statistiškai reikšmingi, teigiami, silpni koreliaciniai respondentų darbo stažo ir mokytojų kompetencijų *pažinti mokinių skirtybes (galimybes)* ( $r = 0,216$ ) ( $p = 0,05$ ) ir *įvaldyti naujas technologijas bei valdyti informaciją* ( $r = 0,274$ ) ( $p = 0,05$ ) tarpusavio ryšiai, t. y. didesnį darbo stažą turintys respondentai dažniau sutinka, kad mokytojams, dirbantiems su reemigrantų vaikais, būtinos *mokinių skirtybių (galimybių) pažinimo* ir *technologijų (informacijos) valdymo* kompetencijos.

Reemigrantų vaikų ugdymą progimnazijoje teigiamai veiktų papildomai organizuojamos formalios (lietuvių kalbos ir literatūros, matematikos) ir neformalios veiklos, skaitmenizuoto ugdymo turinio kūrimas, įvairesnių bendradarbiavimo su tėvais formų paieška, dialogas mokyklos bendruomenėje (mokiniai, tėvai, mokytojai, vadovai), mokinių pasiekimų refleksija ir platesnė mokytojų gerosios mokinių reemigrantų ugdymo patirties sklaida. Mokytojų aprūpinimas sistetine-metodine medžiaga apie mokinių reemigrantų ugdymo organizavimą, internetinis pamokų tvarkaraštis, dviejų mokytojų ar mokytojo padėjėjo dalyvavimas ugdymo procese, bendradarbiaujančios aplinkos kūrimas sudaro veiksmingo mokinių reemigrantų ugdymo organizavimo progimnazijoje prielaidas.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: *reemigracija, mokiniai reemigrantai, ugdymo organizavimas, progimnazija.*

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