

СЕКЦІЯ 5

РЕГІОНАЛЬНІ ІНІЦІАТИВИ ТА ГЛОБАЛЬНА ІНТЕГРАЦІЯ: НОВІ МОЖЛИВОСТІ УКРАЇНИ

SUSTAINABILITY AND INTEGRATION (UKRAINIAN REFUGEES IN GEORGIA FACING CHALLENGES)

ADAMIA Z., Doctor of Philology, Professor, Director of the Georgian-Ukrainian Institute of Languages and Culture of the Georgian International University

KALANDADZE G., PhD in Political Science, Associate Professor, Head of the Department of International Relations

Georgian International University (GIU), Tbilisi, Georgia

The war in Ukraine has led to significant displacement, and Georgia has become one of the countries providing shelter and support to Ukrainian refugees. According to official figures, Georgia has received more than 60,000 Ukrainian refugees since the start of the war, with around 27,000 still living in the country as of October 2022 (Glavcom). Since 2023, the number of Ukrainian refugees has decreased by 11.6% compared to 2022 (Georgian News). Official figures for 2024 have not yet been published. This article examines the socio-economic and cultural barriers faced by Ukrainian refugees in Georgia.

The aim of this study is to assess the effectiveness of integration and social adaptation policies. To analyze the main life challenges faced by Ukrainian refugees in Georgia; to appreciate the role of educational and cultural programs in integration; to assess the sustainability of policies supporting refugee adaptation; to provide recommendations based on best practices and EU policies.

The methods used in the study included:

1. Quantitative data collection, where online surveys (Google Forms) were conducted to collect data from Ukrainian refugees living in Tbilisi and Batumi (one of the major cities in Georgia where Ukrainian refugees reside).

2. Qualitative data collection, face-to-face interviews were conducted, which were conducted in Ukrainian language at the request of the respondents, which allowed to get a deeper insight into the integration problems of refugees.

3. Comparative analysis, where on the EU integration models through the Re-Direction project were analyzed to identify best practices applicable to the Georgian context. Findings and Discussion.

Preliminary results of our study indicate that while Georgia offers a welcoming environment, several barriers prevent full integration, including language difficulties, employment issues, and bureaucratic complexities. We hope our Georgian-Ukrainian Institute of Languages and Culture at the Georgian International University GIU in its research work as well as intercultural and linguistic direction can make a modest contribution to the integration of Ukrainian refugees in Georgia.

Challenges Faced by Refugees.

The survey revealed key difficulties faced by Ukrainian refugees in Georgia:

1. Housing: 57.9% of respondents reported experiencing difficulties finding housing, while 42.1% did not.

Чи відчуваєте ви труднощі з пошуком житла? / Do you experience difficulty finding housing?

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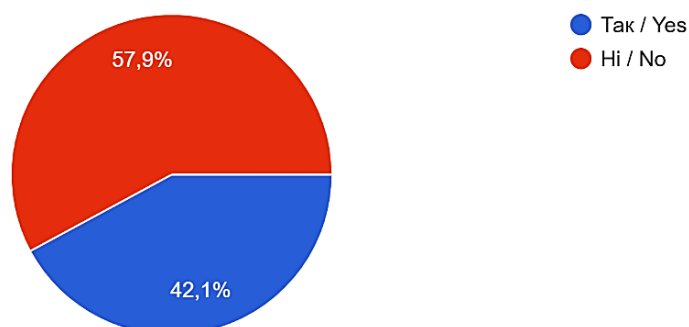


Figure 5.1 – Housing

2. Employment: 68.4% of respondents stated they faced challenges in finding a job, whereas 31.6% did not.

Чи відчуваєте ви труднощі з пошуком роботи? / Do you have difficulty finding a job?

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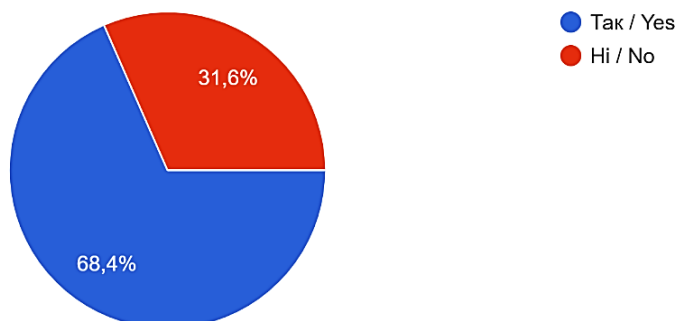


Figure 5.2 – Employment

3. Healthcare Access: 68.4% of respondents encountered difficulties accessing medical services, while 31.6% reported no such issues.

4. Education Access: 42.1% of respondents found it difficult to access education, while 57.9% did not face obstacles.

5. Social Assistance: 52.6% of respondents experienced difficulties accessing social support, while 47.4% did not.

Sample responses from the survey:

- "Digitalization allows quick access to updated news and job opportunities."
- "I would appreciate links to online resources for learning Georgian."
- "Better access to online medical consultations and insurance services would be beneficial."

– "There should be clearer communication about financial aid and benefits."

Чи відчуваєте ви труднощі з отриманням доступу до медичних послуг? / Do you have difficulty accessing health services?

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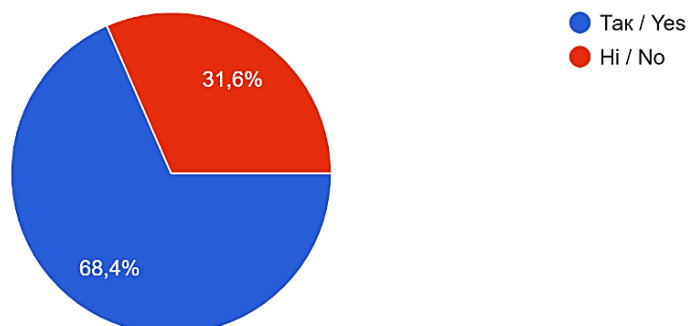


Figure 5.3 – Healthcare Access

Чи відчуваєте ви труднощі з отриманням доступу до освіти? / Do you have difficulty accessing education?

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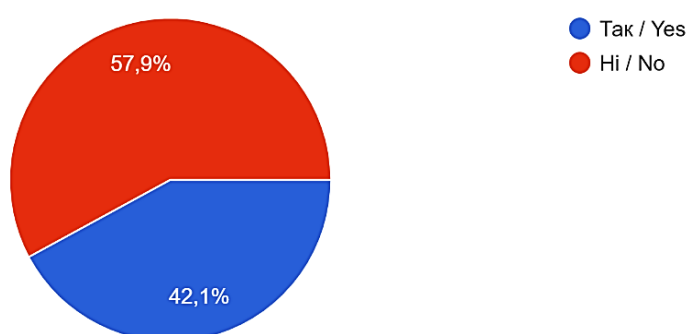


Figure 5.4 – Education Access

Чи відчуваєте ви труднощі з отриманням соціальної допомоги? / Do you experience difficulties in accessing social assistance?

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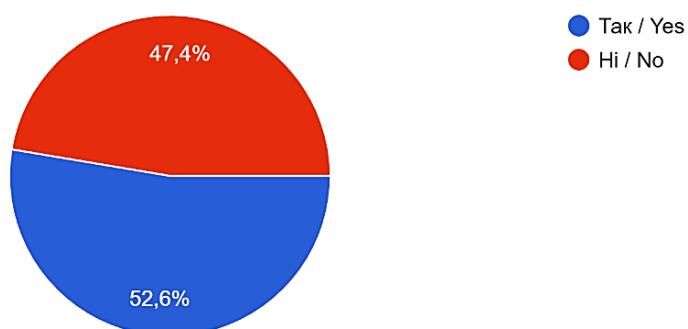


Figure 5.5 – Social Assistance

So, this study examines the challenges faced by Ukrainian refugees in Georgia and the sustainability of their integration into Georgian society. This study was conducted within the framework of the project "Redefining Higher Education on a Digital Context, while Promoting a Common, Inclusive, and Sustainable Framework Based on EU Best Practices and Policy Recommendations" initiated by the Georgian-Ukrainian Institute of Languages and Cultures at the Georgian International University (GIU). The study used online surveys and personal interviews with Ukrainian refugees, comparative analysis on the EU integration models.

The conclusions that can be drawn from the study are that the integration of Georgian refugees into Georgian society requires a more comprehensive approach, which should include all components, starting with learning the Georgian language and culture, healthcare, employment support, digital support.

One of the important factors for refugees is social and economic assistance - housing and medicine.

Education is also one of the most important components. Socio-cultural adaptation contributes to the integration of Ukrainian refugees into Georgian society, since without knowledge of the Georgian language it is very difficult to find a job.

With the help of digital technologies, Ukrainian refugees receive the necessary information in all areas, job search, search for necessary information, housing search, education and other necessary areas of sustainable development.

The Re-Direction project, based on best practices and EU policy recommendations, works in three main areas of higher education: digital context, inclusive and sustainable structure. This study can serve as a recommendation for improving the sustainability and resilience of Ukrainian refugees in Georgia.

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