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Social Functioning of Migrant Children in Polish Schools in the Opinion of Parents and Principals of Primary Schools

Funkcjonowanie społeczne dzieci-migrantów w polskiej szkole w opinii rodziców i dyrektorów szkół podstawowych

KEYWORDS

interculturalism, social integration, adaptation of children, early childhood education, education

ABSTRACT

The economic and political changes of the last dozen years resulted in the fact that Polish schools had to deal with the organization of education for children of different nationalities. The idea of intercultural education is implemented in various aspects; one of them is the correct process of adaptation to the new environment expressed in social functioning in the school environment. This article presents the functioning of children of different nationalities in the school environment in the opinion of parents and principals of primary schools. The presented research results show the described problem from the perspective of two periods: before and after Russia's attack on Ukraine. The results of the analysis of the collected research material show the attitudes of students before starting education in a new place, problems related to adapting to a new environment and actions taken to implement the idea of intercultural education, as well as differences in organizing education for students of different nationalities before

and after Russia's attack on Ukraine. This article presents the current image of the process of adaptation of children of different nationalities in intercultural education which is developing in the Polish school.

ABSTRAKT

Zmiany ekonomiczne i polityczne ostatnich kilkunastu lat spowodowały, że polskie szkoły musiały realnie zmierzyć się z organizacją kształcenia dla dzieci różnych narodowości. Idea edukacji międzykulturowej jest realizowana w różnych aspektach, jednym z nich jest prawidłowy proces adaptacji do nowego środowiska. Niniejszy artykuł ukazuje proces adaptacji dzieci różnych narodowości do środowiska szkolnego polskiej szkoły w opinii rodziców oraz dyrektorów szkół podstawowych. Zaprezentowane wyniki badań ukazują opisywany problem z perspektywy dwóch przedziałów czasowych: przed i po ataku Rosji na Ukrainę. Rezultaty dokonanej analizy zebranego materiału badawczego ukazują postawy uczniów przed rozpoczęciem edukacji w nowym miejscu, problemy związane z procesem adaptacji, podejmowane działania na rzecz wdrażania idei edukacji międzykulturowej oraz różnice w organizowaniu edukacji dla uczniów różnych narodowości przed i po ataku Rosji na Ukrainę. Przedstawiony artykuł ukazuje obecny obraz procesu adaptacji dzieci różnych narodowości w rozwijającej się edukacji międzykulturowej w polskiej szkole.

Intercultural education in Polish schools

The modern world is struggling with many problems, both local and global ones. Difficulties faced by societies refer to all areas of life although they may be of different intensity at different latitudes. Those problems affect the functioning of people, even if they are not directly related to them. One of the ways to combat the existing problems is to conduct preventive or educational activities which are addressed to people in various age groups, including children.

Unsurprisingly, educational institutions aim at shaping future generations of adults in line with social expectations. School institutions pursue not only didactic but also educational goals. At the turn of the last decade, it can be observed how many actions taken reflected the problems and expectations of a given society. Examples include the European Union guidelines on digital education (European Commission, 2018) or environmental education (European Commission, 2022). One of the assumptions of modern education includes multicultural education.

Although multicultural education currently occupies a special place in the construction of a multicultural society, considerations about its importance can be traced

much earlier. In 1939, Joseph S. Roucek (1939) pointed to the need to increase the effectiveness of multicultural education due to the national diversity of the American society. However, regardless of the previous considerations, the fact is that never before have the assumptions of multicultural education been treated as global recommendations for countries that want to build democratic societies.

The Eurydice Report (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019, p. 19) emphasizes that intercultural education supports a well-functioning learning environment by promoting the creation of a shared living space and the environment in which all students – regardless of their linguistic and cultural background – can engage in a dialogue. That makes it possible to see the similarities, not just the differences. All of this changes the way you perceive yourself and others. In turn, the document prepared by UNESCO (2006, pp. 31–37) contains detailed rules regarding implementing multicultural education. According to the guidelines, intercultural education respects the cultural identity of the learner by providing culturally appropriate and responsive quality education for all. It provides every learner with the cultural knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to actively and fully participate in the society. Moreover, it provides all learners with cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills to contribute to respect, understanding and solidarity between individuals, ethnic, social, cultural, religious groups, and nations.

The premise of multicultural education does not have a special global capacity, intended for many countries. It also takes into account the specific situation of a given country. For this reason, we introduce additional markings that are specific to Poland. One of the goals of intercultural education is to introduce learning what is "different." This entails developing the skills of dialogue, cultural exchange, and reflection on understanding others. Multicultural education is about learning skills and collaborating with people from other cultural backgrounds (Nikitorowicz & Guziuk-Tkacz, 2021). In other words, the goals of intercultural education should refer to attitudes, skills, and awareness. Shaping attitudes is connected with trying to awaken tolerance and eliminate the sense of cultural superiority of some people. The skills that are to be developed are related to distinguishing and understanding differences, as well as recognizing manifestations of inequality and injustice. The objectives in the field of awareness concern such issues as: objective equality and equality of all cultures (Grzybowski, 2009, pp. 80–81).

The undertaken analyses concerning goals, tasks, or guidelines regarding the organization of intercultural education always include one main message. Regardless of the latitude, education should offer the most objective and, above all, positive program of knowledge about different cultures and, at the same time, about shared values, opportunities for joint ventures, and benefits of cooperation (Lewowicki, 2013).

However, education focused on intercultural integration is not a part of daily work of educational institutions in all countries. The differences in the level of implementation of intercultural education do not result from the reluctance of a given society to cultural integration. In many cases, they are a consequence of the history of a given country and the policies pursued, which result in a small cultural diversity of a given society. According to the Educational Information System (Polish abbreviation: SIO), the number of foreign students was systematically increasing even before Russia's aggression against Ukraine. According to the data, as of September 30, 2019, the number of students who are not Polish citizens was 41,274; in 2020 it was 85,191; and in 2021 it was 135,801 (SIO, 2019, 2020, 2021). The increase in the number of students of other nationalities is associated with the need to increase activities for intercultural education. In efforts to build a multicultural school, a number of disruptive factors must be overcome. One of them is the insufficient preparation of teachers to implement intercultural education. In addition, according to the research conducted by B. Dobrowolska, teachers' dominant attitudes toward intercultural education are moderate. Positive attitudes are expressed by every fifth surveyed teacher (Dobrowolska, 2015, p. 48–49, 118). Another factor disrupting the implementation of intercultural education is the very process of educating children of foreigners. According to the audit carried out by the Supreme Audit Office (Polish abbreviation: NIK), the quality of educational activities undertaken needs to be improved to meet the needs of students. In addition to the problems related to the proper organization of the education process, insufficient activities for integrating international students were indicated, considering their specific cultural needs (NIK, 2020).

Poland is an example of a society that has only been measured for several decades by building a multicultural society and thus implementing the idea of intercultural education.

Development of a multicultural society

Poland, which is located in Eastern Europe, is a country where, due to historical and political conditions, the society is relatively homogeneous in terms of culture, religion and nationality. The dissonance in terms of social diversity is particularly visible when compared to other Western European countries where cultural diversity is much greater (Romijn et al., 2020). However, such a state of the society was not always characteristic of Poland. The very phenomenon of multiculturalism existed in Poland in the past, and it is closely related to the country's history. Even after World War I, the society was still diverse in terms of nationality, religion and even language; for example, in 1921 the population of Poland consisted of 69.2% Poles, 14.3%

Ruthenians, 3.9% Belarusians, 3.9% Germans, 7.9% Jews and 0.9% people of other origins (GUS, 2003, p. 382).

Rapid changes in the structure of the society took place after the Second World War. After the war, Poland became a socialist state under the strong influence of the USSR. The consequence of the political and economic changes of that time was the formation of a homogeneous society. According to the census carried out in 1947, the population of Poland by nationality was as follows: Poles 94.3%, Germans 5.5% and other nationalities by 0.2% (GUS, 2003 p. 394).

The changes that occurred in Poland at that time were definitely different from the changes taking place in Western European countries, where, mainly for economic reasons, the population migrated to other countries (Haas, 2018, pp. 5–7). In Poland, throughout the period of socialism, attempts were made to unify the society. The top-down tasks of the nation and the state in the education of young people were strictly subordinated to socialist ideals. In the Resolution of the Sejm of the Polish People's Republic of April 12, 1973 the tasks of upbringing were defined. They included, inter alia, the development of: love for one's own nation, dedicated work for the homeland and attachment to the culture of the nation. Deviations from established patterns of behaviour were treated as undesirable actions and attitudes that had to be institutionally corrected (Uchwała…, 1973). As a result of the political system that was in force until 1989, the Polish society was an example of a broadly understood homogeneous society (Buchowski & Chlewińska, 2012, pp. 11–15). During the 44 years of the socialist state, a closed and unified society was formed. It is worth adding that, at that time, the educational process was a tool for implement the idea of socialism.

The political transformation in 1989 initiated social changes in which cultural diversity was not perceived by the authorities as an objection to top-down arrangements (Buchowski et al., 2010, pp. 10–12). Thanks to the opening of borders, and then the accession to the European Union, foreigners gradually began to come to Poland. The number of people applying for a stay was not high: in the years 1992–1997 it was only 20,114 (Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców [Office in Charge of Foreigners], n.d.).

However, it should be remembered that even such a small increase was the first stage of change in the emerging democratic society. The number of migrants coming to Poland is also not the highest. In the years 2001–2005 it was 39,119, in 2005 it was 9,364, in 2008 – 15,275, and in 2009 – 17,424 (GUS [the Main Statistical Office], 2010). Despite the overall small number of migrants coming to Poland, the continuous increase is significant, especially in recent years. A significant difference in the change in the number of migrants can especially be seen in the last decade. According to the data of the Statistical Offices, the number of immigrants coming to Poland in 2010 was 54,499; in 2018 – 68,530, while in 2019 – 73,135 (GUS, 2019).

The changes taking place in the structure of the Polish society are reflected in educational institutions. With the influx of foreigners and the acceptance of ethnic minorities, the education system faced a new challenge, i.e. multicultural education. Unfortunately, as in the case of the transformation of the society, considerations on multicultural education began only after 1989. Indicating the beginning of research on multicultural education in Poland is extremely significant because it shows the differences in the level of advancement in this topic as compared to other countries.

At the time when Poland was just starting to analyze issues related to multicultural education, in other countries (including in Western Europe), the knowledge and activities in this area were already reinforced and improved. In 1956, Don J. Hager analyzed the multicultural education in the context of new requirements related to the politics of the time and the ongoing Cold War (Hager, 1956). In 1966, patterns of multicultural relations between countries with ethnically and nationally diverse societies were analyzed (Miller, 1966). In the 1980s, the Council of Europe undertook activities for the intercultural training of teachers of immigrant children, and theoretical and practical solutions for the organization of multicultural education were considered (Rey-von Allmen, 1986). Unfortunately, at the same time, the Polish education system was implementing the assumptions of a socialist state for which multiculturalism was a phenomenon that had to be denied.

The first legal act taking into account national, ethnic, linguistic or religious diversity was the Act on the Education System of 1991 (Ustawa..., 1991). The act allowed for actions to be taken to maintain a sense of a separate national, religious or ethnic identity. In 2005, a law was passed which recognized nine national minorities, including Ukrainian and Belarusian, and indicated four ethnic minorities (Ustawa..., 2005). On the other hand, one of the first publications devoted to reflections on multicultural society and multicultural education in the reborn democratic society of Poland was the study by Andrzej Janowski (1994). The author presented the ethnic diversity of the society and the state of teachers' preparation to conduct multicultural education. However, apart from the description of national minorities, the great homogeneity of Polish society was also emphasized. For this reason, it is difficult to talk about an analysis of extensive activities for multicultural education. This work was an example of a kind of "openness" to the coming phenomenon of multicultural society. In the latest publications dealing with the issues of national minorities in Poland, one can find not only reflections on the presence, location or perception of national minorities but also objective considerations on the implementation of minority rights. As Zbigniew Kurcz notes, one of the issues where discrepancies can be seen due to ethnic or national groups is the financing of individual groups. Another problematic issue raised by various nationalities is the adaptation of legal regulations to the changing expectations of individual national and ethnic groups (2022, p. 447–464).

Currently, the increasing diversity of Polish society is also visible in educational institutions. The data of the Ministry of National Education for the last three years show an increasing number of students who are not Polish citizens: in 2017 – 29,942, in 2018 – 43,999, and in 2019 – 41,272 (Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki [Ministry of Education and Science], 2020). The changes currently taking place in Poland allow us to observe the development of a multicultural society. In the pursuit of a democratic and tolerant society, it is particularly important to monitor ongoing processes and identify emerging problems. One of the places responsible for building the foundation of multiculturalism is school. The education system is recognized as the basic structure responsible for promoting dialogue and integration (Winoto, 2020). Intercultural dialogue can be implemented through projects and programs which shape our attitudes of openness, understanding and cooperation with other cultures, our experience with cultural otherness, and our sensitivity to it. Only then can we talk about the implementation of the idea of multiculturalism, when mutual existence will not be based only on coexistence but also on mutual interactions (Nikitorowicz, 2017, p. 276–278).

In activities undertaken for multicultural education, it is imperative to constantly monitor all its processes. Only then will it be possible to continue activities that bring the expected results and help us react properly in difficult situations. This study describes research on the social functioning of children of different nationalities in the school environment.

Methodological assumptions of the author's own research

A positively completed school adaptation cycle is pro-developmental, as it results in a new attitude of the student towards himself, other people and the world. This process is conditioned by appropriate social support, which can stimulate and direct the student's actions. In the adaptation process, it is essential that the younger the student, the easier it is to make changes, and as a person develops, he or she becomes less susceptible to changes (Michalak, 2019). School adaptation requires specific school skills and cognitive, emotional, and social development (Farnicka et al., 2016). Proper adaptation to the school environment, including social functioning, is one of the elements of intercultural education.

The above premises were the basis for formulating the research problem: the functioning of children of different nationalities in the school environment. Based on the defined research area, the main research question was formulated: What is the social functioning of students of different nationalities in the school environment in the

opinion of parents and principals of primary schools? Detailed questions supplement the problem under study:

- What, in the parents' opinion, were the attitudes of children of different nationalities before starting their education in a new school?
- Were there any problems, in the parents' opinion, while attending a Polish school?
- How, in the opinion of parents of children of different nationalities, was the process of social adaptation of their children to the Polish school?
- How, in the opinion of parents of children of different nationalities, do their children currently function in the school environment?
- In the opinion of primary school principals, what are the most common problems related to the presence of children of a different nationality?
- Are there any activities, and – if so – what activities supporting the adaptation process of children of different nationalities are undertaken in primary schools?
- In the opinion of school principals, have there been any changes in the organization of activities supporting the children's adaptation process before Russia's aggression against Ukraine and now?

In the conducted research, the diagnostic survey method was used, which makes it possible to obtain the opinions of the surveyed respondents on the issues we are interested in and how they assess them (Łobocki, 2006, p. 244). The obtained research material was presented in the form of sociography. "The aim of the sociographic analysis is not only the external description of facts but also the perception of the internal side of the studied phenomena, the sphere of ideas and motives that determine the behaviour of individuals" (Wejnert, 1987).

The research has been carried out in a group of 20 parents of children of different nationalities and 3 principals of primary schools. The research took place in different periods, i.e., interviews with parents were conducted at the turn of 2020/2021 (before the start of the Russian aggression against Ukraine), while interviews with primary school principals were conducted at the beginning of 2023. The selection of the research sample was purposeful. In the case of parents, the research group was selected through social media, gathering people from Eastern Europe who, for various reasons, emigrated to Poland. All the selected persons had children between 6 and 10 years old. The surveyed parents include: 16 Ukrainians, 2 Russians and 2 Belarusians. The interviews were conducted during an online meeting using popular instant messengers. The interviews with parents were conducted in Ukrainian or Russian. The empirical material obtained during translation was not linguistically corrected to present the parents' answers as faithfully as possible. Primary school principals were elected from the city of Bytom. The selected 3 schools were characterized by the highest number of children from Eastern Europe. In total, 119 students of different nationalities are educated in the surveyed institutions.

Results

The first thematic area considered concerned the attitudes of children of different nationalities regarding starting education in the Polish school environment. Analyzing the parents' answers made it possible to distinguish two categories representing possible children's attitudes. The first – the most frequent one – presented the child's positive attitude to starting education in a new school. In this category, factors were identified that had a positive impact on the start of education in a new school by children. It was the equipment of the school building and a new way of conducting classes.

> R19: "The child liked that the school has a swimming pool, a sports field, interesting themed rooms and a sports playground."

Another factor that caused a positive attitude towards the new school were the problems occurring in the Ukrainian school.

> R7: "When my daughter went to school in Ukraine, she had problems at school, she didn't like studying in Ukraine."

The second category meant the child's negative attitude towards starting education in a new country. The indicated factor of such an attitude was the lack of knowledge of new colleagues and language problems.

> R15: "She didn't want to go to school because she didn't have friends there."
> R17: "At first, she didn't want to, because she didn't have friends or classmates there."

The second thematic area referred to problems while learning in a new environment. The parents' answers were also divided into two basic categories: no problems and problems. Two subcategories were distinguished for the category of the presence of problems: language problems and socio-emotional problems. In the subcategory of language problems, parents indicated, e.g.

> R9: "She had trouble communicating with others at first, but not with everyone. A couple of classmates didn't want to play with her."
> R12: "Just some little-kid problems with other kids. Someone once told his son that he had a bad speech, but this conflict quickly ended. The teacher explained to the student how to behave with other students, especially from other countries. All in all, everyone in our city is good for Ukrainians."
> R20: "Language difficulties at the beginning, but now she speaks better Polish, although sometimes classmates do not understand her."

In the subcategory of social and emotional problems, difficulties related to peer relationships were indicated:

> R1: "My son, together with a friend from Ukraine who has leadership qualities, had a conflict with a Pole."
> R11: "Only one boy bullied everyone in the class and my son too."

In the subcategory of socio-emotional problems, there were also problems resulting from cultural differences:

> R6: "The child had problems only with getting used to the food that was new to him, i. e. Polish cuisine. He didn't like it at first. The child often refused to eat at school. But over time, he got used to it and now he eats everything, everything tastes good to him."

Another analyzed area concerned the parents' opinions on the course of the child's adaptation to the new environment. In this thematic area, three categories were distinguished: quick adaptation of the child at school, adaptation with difficulties at the beginning, and lack of adaptation to the new environment. In the absence of adaptation (the least frequently indicated answer), the parent reported that the child felt lonely in the new class.

In the case of adaptation with difficulties, two subcategories were distinguished. In the first, the teacher played a significant role.

> R9: "The first two months were very difficult for her, but the teacher, who knows a little Russian, helped my child a lot."

In the second subcategory, the adaptation process was related to peer relationsips.

> R17: "At first it was difficult to make friends, but then we managed to find some."
> R15: "It was difficult to adapt; the child did not talk to other children at first. It wasn't until two months later that the child started making friends with classmates."

In the quick adaptation category, parents, in addition to assessing the adaptation process, also emphasized the importance of other people or factors.

> R13: "All right. I had more fear that it might not adapt well. But the child didn't care".
> R3: "The child adapted very quickly thanks to the nice class teacher. Additional lessons in Polish were helpful."
> R6: "Very good, he likes his class very much."

R8: "He never said he didn't want to go to school. A good role was played by the teacher who is very nice. She never gave my son higher grades than the Poles, which is a good stimulus to learn on one level with others."

In the last analyzed area, the child's current functioning in the school environment was considered. In the opinion of all parents, their child functions well or very well in the school environment. Many parents emphasized getting good results in school.

R20: "He has good grades like 5 and 6."
R17: "He has grades like 5 and 6. Only 4 in English."
R13: "Yes, it is all right. The teacher praises him."
R11: "Very good. The boy is very smart, for example, he knows mathematics better than others."

The second stage of the interpretation of the collected research material was focused on the analysis of transcripts of interviews with primary school principals. As in the case of parents, the main themes and categories of responses were extracted from the principal's statements.

The first topic concerned the problems of children's adaptation to a new environment. All the surveyed principals indicated problems related to children and parents not knowing the Polish language, as well as to the war trauma. If the parents did not know the Polish language, problems arose already when the child was admitted to the facility. It was a period which, due to the accompanying circumstances, contributed to additional stress for parents and children. Not knowing the language significantly hindered everyday communication with children.

D1: "The problem was the lack of knowledge of the Polish language by the parents who wanted to enroll their child in a Polish school. Unfortunately, the school staff did not speak Ukrainian, and knowledge of Russian to a greater or lesser extent was not helpful. My parents, especially the younger ones, don't speak Russian."

Unfortunately, the indicated difficulties resulting from the war trauma were defined as the most significant and the most difficult to overcome.

D2: "Children coming to Poland are traumatized by the war, they suffer a lot because of separation from one parent, usually the father. They want to go home to dad. Unfortunately, a lot of action is needed to gradually eliminate this condition, although teachers agree that such hard experiences cannot be removed."

Activities undertaken for students of different nationalities play an essential role in the adaptation process. The analysis of the responses of all the surveyed principals

identified one category of responses – several activities are undertaken in schools to improve the process of adapting children of different nationalities to the school environment. These activities concern not only help in learning the Polish language, but also bring the culture of individual countries closer.

> D3: "School celebrations with the participation of Ukrainian children were organized, e.g. at the end of the 20021/22 school year. Polish and Ukrainian children performed together, sang songs, danced dances of two nationalities. The ceremony was attended by the mayor of the city and the head of the Department of Education. Class Christmas parties, women's day, boyfriend's day and others were organized. Together with the Aid Association in Katowice, integration through art was organised. Polish and Ukrainian children took part in workshops, making, among others, decorations, business cards, mosaics, etc."

The last thematic area under consideration was getting to know the opinions of primary school principals on possible changes in the organization of classes supporting the process of children's adaptation before the start of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and at the present time. The surveyed principals pointed to the difference in the organization of children's education before and after Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The indicated changes concerned top-down regulations regarding the education of children of different nationalities, including: increasing the number of hours of teaching Polish or employing a teaching assistant who speaks Ukrainian. The second indicated change is related to the increased involvement of parents in supporting Ukrainian children.

> D3: "The change is very noticeable, in particular in the statutory support for Ukrainian students. Before the aggression, the help of the local government was rare. After the test of students' knowledge competence, the number of additional hours of support in the subjects in which the deficit was noticed was determined. Then, the governing body was asked to assign individual classes to a given student. After the aggression, the situation changed, the number of lessons in Polish and other subjects was increased, help for teachers was hired, preparatory departments for Ukrainian children were created. Significantly greater involvement in the social dimension is also noticeable. Parents of Polish children are looking for flats for their mothers; they help with renovations and furnishing, etc."

Discussion

The implementation of the idea of intercultural education is a task that requires the involvement of many participants in the education process. In addition to planning appropriate actions, it is necessary to constantly monitor them, and thus

appropriately modify the actions taken. Poland is a country where the issue of inter-cultural education has been considered only for several decades. However, practicing multicultural education takes even less time. The political and economic changes in the last dozen years meant that educational institutions had to acquire the skills to or-ganize education for children of different cultures and nationalities. Intercultural edu-cation is associated with the process of children's adaptation to a new environment. As E. Ogrodzka-Mazur points out, enabling the satisfaction of the need for bonding, closeness, or acceptance becomes the basic determinant of the pace, dynamics, and direction of an individual's cognitive activity in their later life (2018). The year 2022 was exceptional in this respect when, due to the war in Ukraine, an unprecedented number of students of other nationalities started their education in Polish schools.

The conducted research shows the social functioning of children of different na-tionalities in the school environment. According to the surveyed parents' answers, the majority of children started learning in a new school with satisfaction. The observed problems related to starting learning in a new environment most often concerned insufficient knowledge of the Polish language. The obtained research material also showed a significant fact: among the given problems, there was never a situation in which children of different nationalities would feel a lack of acceptance due to their nationality. Regardless of the country of origin: Ukraine, Belarus, or Russia, all chil-dren adapted well to the new school environment.

Pupils function completely different in a situation where the beginning of educa-tion was caused by escaping from the war. Among the problems indicated by the principals, apart from communication difficulties, the main obstacle in the child's ad-aptation to the new environment was and still is the war trauma. The positive aspects of the implementation of the idea of intercultural education after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine certainly include the increase in social involvement and top-down changes regulating the organization of activities for children of different nationalities.

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that Polish students of lower grades, thanks to their kindness and lack of prejudice, play a significant role in ena-bling children of different nationalities to function properly in the school environ-ment. Thanks to their openness to new friends, children of different nationalities can satisfy their need for bonding, closeness, and acceptance. In addition, the parents' answers outline some problems related to functioning in the new school environment, but (which is especially important) they also show their transitory character. Thanks to this, pupils of other nationalities can, in most cases, function properly in the school environment.

The study of a small fragment of reality showed a positive image of children of dif-ferent nationalities in the school environment. Numerous activities are undertaken in the surveyed facilities to support the children's social functioning. However, it should

be remembered that the current situation does not mean that intercultural education does not require further monitoring. The key to ensuring the best conditions for functioning in the school environment is constant control, quick recognition, and elimination of new problems. Therefore, the presented research results show the current condition of intercultural education in Polish schools, which may still change in future.

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