

THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ADDRESSING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES OF FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS AND ITS LOCALIZATION IN ARMENIA * ¹

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This article analyzes global practices in addressing the socio-economic challenges of forcibly displaced persons and explores how these can be localized in Armenia, with a specific focus on forcibly displaced students from Artsakh. It aims to identify key integration barriers faced by these students in higher education, including socio-economic hardships, legal and citizenship issues, and psychological well-being.

A resource-based model for integration was developed, and field surveys involving over 200 Artsakh students were conducted. Quantitative and qualitative

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analyses revealed three main categories of challenges: socio-economic issues (e.g., lack of housing, employment difficulties), social and interpersonal barriers (e.g., negative societal attitudes toward displaced persons), and individual psychological struggles (e.g., uncertainty about the future).

The study concludes that sustainable integration requires a coordinated approach involving social support systems, legal protections, and tailored educational programs. Further research will continue to explore these adaptation processes and propose evidence-based policies.

By developing an interdisciplinary research tool, the study seeks to enhance understanding of the socio-economic and psychological needs of forcibly displaced students and improve long-term integration strategies.

Keywords: Forced displacement, Integration barriers, Socio-economic adaptation, Psychological well-being, Higher education, Artsakh students, Resource-based model, Social support programs.

Problem Analysis

Forcibly displaced persons are groups of individuals who have been compelled or forced to flee or leave their homes or places of residence to escape various forms of violence, widespread human rights violations, natural or man-made disasters, particularly wars and their consequences.

Displacement encompasses scenarios where individuals voluntarily flee their residences and situations where people are forcibly removed from their homes or compelled to relocate due to violent actions by specific actors. In essence, the defining factor is the absence of choice or consent.

At the international level, data on forced migration is collected by various intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) (Forced migration or displacement 2024).

According to the IOM, forced migration is defined as "a migratory movement that, although it may be influenced by various factors, involves force, compulsion, or coercion."

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines a forced migrant as any individual who migrates "to escape persecution, conflicts, oppression, natural and man-made disasters, environmental degradation, or other situations that threaten their life, freedom, or livelihood." (Pilbeam J. 2017)

According to UNESCO, forced displacement is "the violent relocation of people from their residence, environment, or place of employment," with armed conflict being the primary cause (Unesco, 2019).

From another perspective, researcher Olden Speer argues that even movements under immediate threats to life contain a voluntary element as long as there is an option to hide or evade persecution. He states, "Migration can only be considered involuntary when a person is physically transported out of their country and has no opportunity to escape from those relocating them." (Martin S. F. 2017)

Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, adopted on August 12, 1949, explicitly prohibits forced displacement. It states: "Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive." (Geneva Convention 2018)

On the other hand, according to the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, refugees are individuals who leave their

country due to a "well-founded fear" of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. These individuals are outside their country of nationality or habitual residence and are unable or unwilling to return due to this fear.

One of the major challenges of the modern world is the increasing number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) worldwide. Although there is no official definition of IDPs, the "Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement," adopted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1998, define IDPs as "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or habitual places of residence as a result of armed conflicts, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights, or natural or man-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border."

Thus, internally displaced persons are individuals forced to leave their homes, often for the same reasons as refugees - war, civil conflicts, political disputes, and gross violations of human rights. However, since they do not cross internationally recognized state borders, they are not eligible for protection under the same international systems as refugees.

Global migration patterns in the modern world have become increasingly complex, involving not only groups of people classified as refugees but also millions of economic migrants. However, despite often moving to other countries in similar ways, refugees and migrants are fundamentally different.

Migrants, particularly economic migrants, choose to relocate to improve the future prospects of their families. Refugees, on the other hand, must move if they wish to save their lives or preserve their freedom. Refugees lack protection from their own state and are often persecuted by their own governments. If other countries do not grant them entry or provide basic assistance, they may face death, starvation, or complete deprivation of rights.

Migration caused by the aforementioned disasters leads to "a serious disruption in the functioning of a community or society, involving widespread human, material, economic, or environmental losses" (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction 2009).

Another important term in this context is resettlement. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), resettlement is defined as "the transfer of refugees to other countries where they have sought protection, and which have agreed to admit them as refugees with permanent residence status" (IOM Migration Glossary 2019). Resettlement programs are implemented by both the IOM and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

According to UNHCR, the number of forcibly displaced persons due to persecution, conflicts, various forms of violence, human rights violations, or events that severely disrupt public order has more than doubled within the past decade, both within states and across borders. For instance, by the end of 2013, the number of forcibly displaced persons stood at 51.2 million (UNHCR 2014), whereas by the end of 2022, this number had risen to 108.4 million (UNHCR 2023). This is the highest recorded figure in recent years, reflecting an approximately 21% increase in the displaced population.

Notably, nearly 90% of forcibly displaced persons worldwide come from low- and middle-income countries.

According to statistics, refugees (35.3 million) and asylum seekers (5.4 million) make up about 38% of the 108.4 million people who are forcibly displaced due to persecution, wars, conflicts, various forms of violence, human rights violations, or events that severely disrupt public order (UNHCR 2023). Additionally, there are 62.5 million internally displaced persons and 4.4 million stateless individuals.

Notably, 76% of these displaced persons live in low- and middle-income countries, placing significant pressure on host nations and their available resources. The survival of these individuals largely depends on aid provided by governments, local communities, and humanitarian organizations.

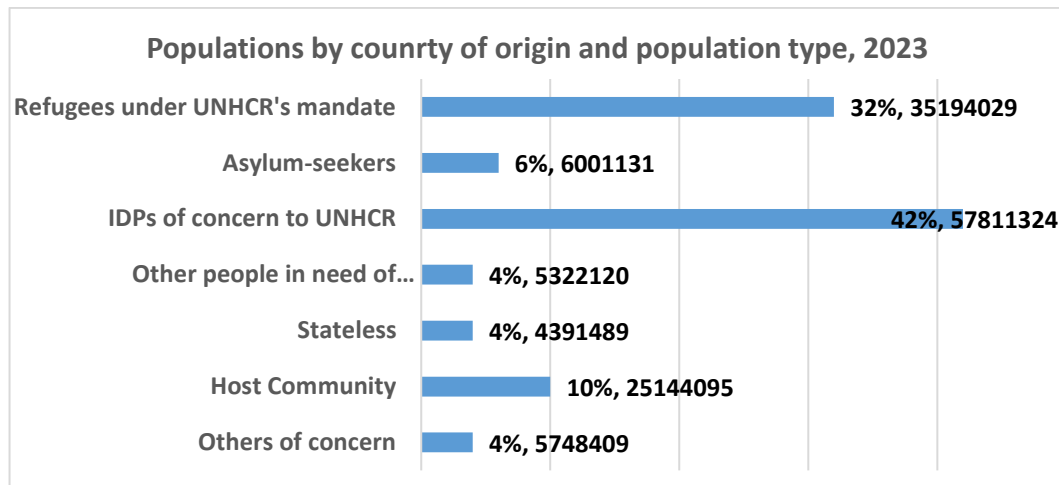


Diagram 1. Populations by country of origin and population type, 2023 (UNHCR, IDMC 2023).

These figures highlight a series of crises in recent years that have contributed to the rise in the number of displaced persons. For instance, the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine forced 5.7 million people to flee the country, resulting in the fastest and largest displacement crisis since World War II. Similar crises have also been observed with Afghan and Venezuelan populations¹.

In 2022, the five countries with the highest numbers of new displacements were Ukraine (16.9 million), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (4 million), Ethiopia (2 million), Myanmar (1 million), and Somalia (621,000).

By mid-2023, the total number of forcibly displaced persons was estimated at 110 million. This figure includes refugees, asylum seekers, individuals requiring international protection, internally displaced persons, stateless individuals, and others (Wain 1979).

Refugees, asylum seekers, vulnerable migrants, and internally displaced persons often face significant protection challenges, lacking shelter, food, and other basic necessities or living conditions. These challenges are frequently the result of their fragile legal status in the countries where they reside after displacement. Many displaced persons are forced to risk their lives, relocate, or move to other countries where they may face exploitation and abuse.

Finding sustainable solutions for forcibly displaced persons remains a major challenge in the modern world. Voluntary repatriation is considered the preferred long-term solution for refugees returning to their homeland. However, the absence of political resolutions to conflicts, ongoing violence, and instability often prevent this from being a viable option.

Numerous international organizations are working to provide long-term solutions to these situations by offering financial resources to address the urgent needs of refugees. For example, in 2023, the European Commission allocated the majority of its €1.7 billion humanitarian budget to programs addressing the needs of forcibly displaced persons and

¹ 60% of the total displaced population.

the communities hosting them. This funding helped meet the most urgent needs of highly vulnerable populations, including women, children, and people with disabilities (European Commission, 2024).

In this context, several examples of forced displacement caused by political conflicts and wars can be considered. These include the 1949–1956 Palestinian exodus, the Vietnam War, the migration of Jews from the Muslim world, the September 2023 displacement of Armenians from Artsakh, and the Russian-Ukrainian war, which began with the annexation of Crimea and Donbas in 2014 and escalated in February 2022 (Ghada 1999).

Key Demographic Data on the Forcibly Displaced Population from Artsakh

As a result of the one-day war on September 19–20, 2023, during which the dissolution of the Artsakh Defense Army and state institutions was announced, citizens were forcibly displaced from Artsakh to the Republic of Armenia.

It is worth noting that, as of now - one year later - there is no official statistical data regarding the forcibly displaced people from Artsakh. The basis for research has been information provided by various state bodies and officials to the press.

As of August 22, 2024, according to data from the State Revenue Committee's "Personalized Accounting System for Income Tax, Profit Tax, and Social Payments," 23370 forcibly displaced persons from Artsakh had signed employment contracts in Armenia following the events of September 19, 2023. Of these, 17470 are currently employed, meaning only 17470 individuals with contracts continue to work.

According to the Ministry's data, as of September 11, 8756 forcibly displaced persons from Artsakh were registered as job seekers at the Unified Social Service's territorial centers, of whom 3917 had unemployed status. Additionally, 4314 individuals were referred to employers and found employment, while 1325 beneficiaries were included in the state support program for ensuring employment for forcibly displaced persons from Artsakh.

As of July 1, 2024, 19570 forcibly displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh had left Armenia via air and land routes, with 8219 returning. This means that as of July 1, 11351 residents from Artsakh had left Armenia and not returned. These figures were obtained by *CivilNet* from Armenia's National Security Service.

According to data from the Migration and Citizenship Service of Armenia's Ministry of Internal Affairs, as of September 2024, 4473 forcibly displaced persons from Artsakh applied for Armenian citizenship, of whom 2846 were granted citizenship. Additionally, 121184 individuals have received temporary protection certificates.

As of July 15, 2024, 285 families forcibly displaced from Artsakh applied to benefit from the state housing assistance program. Of these applications, 29 were approved, and the families received certificates. The remaining applications are under review, with some being rejected due to applicants not meeting the program's conditions, according to Armenia's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

As of February 14, 2024, chair of the Committee on Higher Education and Science, reported that there are 4640 forcibly displaced students from Artsakh in Armenia. Of these, 2116 were previously studying in higher education institutions in Artsakh, while 2514 were enrolled in preliminary or middle-level vocational institutions. As of January 2024, 1897 forcibly displaced students from Artsakh have already continued their education in equivalent or related programs at various universities across Armenia.

State Support Programs

The Armenian government developed various support programs in multiple sectors, beginning with social assistance for forcibly displaced persons through housing

and utility support. This included six months of social aid: 40,000 AMD per month for temporary housing and 10,000 AMD per month for utility expenses. The program was later extended. In October, November and December 2023, the number of individuals who received compensation under this program amounted to 104027, 77503, and 82266, respectively.

In 2023, to ensure food and other essential supplies for forcibly displaced persons from Artsakh, over 4.4 billion AMD was allocated to regional administrations starting from October 2023. Additionally, under the decision to provide 100000 AMD in urgent monetary support, a budget of approximately 11.2 billion AMD was allocated.

Teachers forcibly displaced from Artsakh and employed in schools across Armenia's regions received a 30% salary bonus. Moreover, teachers working in schools located in specific regions, such as Syunik, Vayots Dzor, and Gegharkunik's Chambarak and Vardenis communities, as well as Tavush's Noyemberyan, Ijevan, and Berd communities, received an additional monthly allowance of 50,000 AMD on top of the 30% bonus.

On December 21, 2023, the Armenian government adopted Decision N 2291-L, which published the list of educational institutions where students forcibly displaced from Artsakh and enrolled in tuition-based programs before September 19, 2023, would receive tuition fee compensation. The compensation applied to the 2023–24 academic year.

Regardless of the previous academic year's Grade Point Average (GPA), students had their tuition fees for the first semester fully reimbursed, ensuring their right to continue education. Tuition fee reimbursement for the second semester (100%) was contingent on achieving at least 65% GPA in the first semester of the 2023–24 academic year. For students in preliminary (vocational) and secondary specialized educational institutions, reimbursement required earning at least 50% "excellent" or "good" grades during the same period.

As of December 31, 2023, 1897 forcibly displaced university students and 917 students from secondary specialized educational institutions benefited from full or partial tuition fee compensation under this program.

In 2023, approximately 34 billion AMD was spent from the state budget to implement support programs for forcibly displaced persons from Artsakh.

According to information collected by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports (MoESCS) of Armenia, 4640 students were forcibly displaced from Artsakh after September 19, 2023. Of these, 2,116 were enrolled in higher education institutions in Artsakh, while 2524 were studying in preliminary (vocational) or secondary specialized educational institutions.

As of October 19, 2023, about half of these students had applied to continue their education in educational institutions in Armenia. During the first semester of 2023, tuition fees were reimbursed for 1834 students, while this number increased to 2134 in the second semester for higher education students.

For students in vocational and secondary specialized education programs, tuition fees were reimbursed for 919 students in the first semester and 1133 in the second semester. In 2024, approximately 4000 beneficiaries remain under this program, consisting of university and college students.

Summary

Based on the main findings of the above analysis, an interdisciplinary and systematic research tool was developed to study the integration barriers faced by Artsakh students. The primary sections of this tool focused on:

1. Collecting information about the socio-economic situation of students and their families,
2. Examining the citizenship status and protection of students' rights,
3. Identifying the characteristics of socio-economic, civil, and political participation,
4. Assessing involvement in the educational process and perceptions of the educational environment,
5. Evaluating past socio-psychological risks and attitudes toward future risks,
6. Exploring time perspectives, and
7. Revealing perceptions of psychological well-being.

The selection of these factors was based on the resource-based model for the integration of forcibly displaced students, developed in an earlier analytical study.

The application of this tool is still ongoing. However, within the scope of this analysis, preliminary data from surveys of over 100 students have been summarized. These findings highlight the factors students identified as subjective challenges to their socio-economic adaptation.

In the first group, **socio-economic issues** are highlighted, including the lack of housing, poor social conditions, difficulty in finding jobs to meet personal needs, maintaining a normal standard of living, and long queues at passport offices.

In the second group, **social and interpersonal issues** are categorized. Students identified negative societal attitudes toward Artsakh residents, inadequate and insufficient responses from law enforcement agencies, the presence of undesirable negative elements in public discourse, and offensive distinctions made between "Artsakh residents" and "Armenians from Armenia."

In the third group, **individual psychological factors** are emphasized, such as uncertainty, longing for their homeland, and psychological adjustment to reality.

Under the framework of Yerevan State University's internal grant on the topic "Economic and Psychological Problems of Adaptation of Forcibly Displaced Students from Artsakh in Higher Educational Institutions," field research and data collection are still ongoing. Our research is progressing in several directions:

1. Ongoing collection and analysis of statistical data.
2. Field surveys of students: So far, over two hundred students from Artsakh who are continuing their education in Armenian universities have been surveyed.
3. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of data obtained from surveys using statistical packages.

In future analyses, we will provide more comprehensive information about the economic and psychological challenges faced by forcibly displaced students from Artsakh, as well as their adaptation and integration processes within higher education institutions.

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ԲՈՆԻ ՏԵՂԱՅԱՆՎԱԾՆԵՐԻ ՍՈՑԻԱԼ-ՏՆՏԵՍԱԿԱՆ ԽՆԴԻՐՆԵՐԻ ԿԱՐԳԱՎՈՐՄԱՆ ՄԻՋԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ՓՈՐՁԸ և ԴՐԱ ՏԵՂԱՅՆԱՑՈՒՄԸ ՀՀ-ՈՒՄ ¹

ԱՆՆԱ ՀԱԿՈՐՋԱՆՅԱՆ

Երևանի պետական համալսարանի կառավարման և գործարարության
ամբիոնի վարիչ, «Շուկայագիտություն» մագիստրոսական
կրթական ծրագրի ղեկավար, տնտեսագիտության թեկնածու, դոցենտ,
ք. Երևան, Հայաստանի Հանրապետություն

ՆԱՐԻՆԵ ՄԻՐՉՈՅԱՆ

Երևանի պետական համալսարանի տնտեսագիտության և կառավարման
ֆակուլտետի դեկանի տեղակալ, կառավարման և գործարարության ամբիոն,
«Կառավարում» բակալավրիատի կրթական ծրագրի ղեկավար,
տնտեսագիտության թեկնածու, դոցենտ,
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ԴԱԿԻԹ ՀԱՅՐԱՊԵՏՅԱՆ

Երևանի պետական համալսարանի փիլիսոփայության և հոգեբանության
ֆակուլտետի ընդհանուր հոգեբանության ամբիոն դոցենտ,
հոգեբանական գիտությունների թեկնածու,
ք. Երևան, Հայաստանի Հանրապետություն

¹ Հոդվածը պատրաստվել է Երևանի պետական համալսարանի ներքին դրամաշնորհի շրջանակներում. «Արցախից բռնի տեղահանված ուսանողների աղապտացման տնտեսական և հոգեբանական խնդիրները բարձրագույն ուսումնական հաստատություններում»:

Հոդվածում վերլուծվում է հարկադիր տեղահանված անձանց սոցիալ-տնտեսական խնդիրների լուծման համաշխարհային փորձը և ուսումնասիրում, թե ինչպես կարելի է տեղայնացնել այդ մոտեցումները Հայաստանում՝ հատուկ ուշադրություն դարձնելով Արցախից բռնի տեղահանված ուսանողներին: Հոդվածի նպատակն է բացահայտել բուհական համակարգում նրանց ինտեգրման հիմնական խոչընդոտները, այդ թվում՝ սոցիալ-տնտեսական դժվարությունները, իրավական ու քաղաքացիության հետ կապված հարցերը և հոգեբանական բարեկեցությունը:

Մշակվել է ռեսուրսահեն ինտեգրման մոդել, և իրականացվել է դաշտային հարցում՝ ընդգրկելով ավելի քան 200 արցախցի ուսանողների: Զանազակա և որակական վերլուծությունները բացահայտել են երեք հիմնական խոչընդոտներ՝ սոցիալ-տնտեսական խնդիրներ (օր.՝ բնակարանի պակաս, աշխատանք գտնելու դժվարություններ), սոցիալական և միջանձնային խոչընդոտներ (օր.՝ հասարակության բացասական վերաբերմունք տեղահանված անձանց նկատմամբ) և անհատական հոգեբանական դժվարություններ (օր.՝ ապագայի հանդեպ անորոշություն):

Հետազոտությունում եզրակացվում է, որ կայուն ինտեգրումը պահանջում է համակարգված մոտեցում՝ ներառյալ սոցիալական աջակցության համակարգեր, իրավական պաշտպանության միջոցներ և հատուկ կրթական ծրագրեր: Ապագա ուսումնասիրություններն ուղղված կլինեն այս գործընթացների հետագա վերլուծությանը և ապացուցողական քաղաքականությունների մշակմանը:

Մշակելով միջգիտակարգային հետազոտական գործիք՝ այս աշխատանքը նպատակ ունի խորացնելու ըմբռնումը հարկադիր տեղահանված ուսանողների սոցիալ-տնտեսական և հոգեբանական կարիքների վերաբերյալ և նպաստելու երկարաժամկետ ինտեգրման ռազմավարությունների բարելավմանը:

Հիմնաբառեր. *հարկադիր տեղահանում, ինտեգրման խոչընդոտներ, սոցիալ-տնտեսական ադապտացում, հոգեբանական բարեկեցություն, բարձրագույն կրթություն, Արցախի ուսանողներ, ռեսուրսահեն մոդել, սոցիալական աջակցության ծրագրեր:*

МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ ОПЫТ В РЕШЕНИИ СОЦИАЛЬНО-ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИХ ПРОБЛЕМ ВЫНУЖДЕННО ПЕРЕМЕЩЕННЫХ ЛИЦ И ЕГО ЛОКАЛИЗАЦИЯ В АРМЕНИИ ¹

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В статье анализируется мировой опыт решения социально-экономических проблем вынужденно перемещённых лиц и исследуются возможности локализации этих практик в Армении, акцентируя особое внимание на состоянии вынужденно перемещённых студентов из Арцаха.

Цель работы - выявить основные препятствия для интеграции, с которыми сталкиваются эти студенты в системе высшего образования, включая социально-экономические трудности, вопросы правового статуса и гражданства, а также психологическое благополучие. Для этого был разработан ресурсный подход к интеграции и проведены полевые исследования с участием более 200 студентов из Арцаха. Количественный и качественный анализ выявил три основные категории проблем: социально-экономические (например, нехватка жилья, трудности с трудоустройством), социальные и межличностные препятствия (например, негативное отношение общества к вынужденно перемещённым лицам) и индивидуальные психологические трудности (например, осознание неопределённости будущего).

В исследовании делается вывод о том, что для устойчивой интеграции необходим комплексный подход, включающий системы социальной поддержки, правовую защиту и адаптированные образовательные программы. Дальнейшие исследования будут направлены на углублённый анализ этих процессов адаптации и разработку политики состоятельных рекомендаций. Разрабатывая междисциплинарный инструмент исследования, данная работа преследует цель улучшить понимание социально-экономических и психологических потребностей вынужденно перемещённых студентов и способствовать совершенствованию долгосрочных стратегий их интеграции.

Ключевые слова: *вынужденное перемещение, препятствия к интеграции, социально-экономическая адаптация, психологическое благополучие, высшее образование, студенты из Арцаха, ресурсный подход, программы социальной поддержки.*