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Inclusive Education in the Russian Federation

Scoping International and Local Relevance

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Preface

The book idea came to fruition as part of the ongoing discussions and collaboration between the Higher School of Economics (HSE) in Moscow, Russia and Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education in Astana, Kazakhstan. My visit, lead editor (Prof. Makoelle) to HSE in 2019 culminated in an identification of inclusive education as an emerging niche area for transformation and reform in education by the former USSR countries.

The post-soviet countries are undergoing radical changes as they attempt to internationalise their education practices. The Russian Federation has also embarked on this transition. The adoption of the new law of the Russian Federation on Education was the first step in the recognition of inclusive education as an educational phenomenon. While the approach of the former USSR was based more on the medical model of student support, this book sought to account for the transition from the emphasis solely on disability to a broader conceptualisation of inclusive education which encompasses other forms of educational barriers within the educational context of the post-soviet Russia taking into account global and international trends. This book presents a historical overview of the development of the notion of inclusive education as part of the internationalisation of education in Russia, and this is done by providing a holistic account of the changes the education system of the Russian Federation has experienced since the fall of the Soviet Union particularly since the advent of the introduction of inclusive education.

The editors of this book therefore bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experiences to share about the changing landscape of student support for educational access, equity and inclusion within the post-soviet world. For the lead editor (Prof. Makoelle), the editing of this book comes in the wake of the introduction of the notion of inclusive education in Central Asia. Having conducted research on inclusive education in Kazakhstan and the region, my experiences, observations and knowledge enrich the discussions, debates and recommendations.

Professor Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova is a widely recognised expert in the field of academic understanding of issues of inclusive culture and social policy. Her professional view allows us to fit the empirical research and the analysed cases presented

in the book into the framework of transformations of Russian culture and society in a modern crisis situation.

As for Dr. Kozlova, who is a sociologist and a practitioner within Russian higher education, this book presents her with the opportunity to share her experiences of student educational support with a broader community of educationists and practitioners in Russia.

This book, therefore, provides a comprehensive account of various aspects of student support and inclusion within the Russian schooling context. Knowledge and discussions in this book could be helpful to policymakers, education practitioners and researchers, students, school teachers, as well as community organisations with a vested interest in inclusive education, its understanding, conceptualisation, operationalisation and implementation.

Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan   Tsediso Michael Makoelle,
                                                                                          (Ph.D., D.Ed.)

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

Chapter 1: Introduction: Mapping Its Way Towards Inclusion

Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova

Although the reforms towards inclusive education in Russia as in the other former post-socialist countries are states policy, the reforms towards inclusive education in Russia began more than ten years ago, and there is a lack of critical research literature available to the international audience pertaining the Russian context. This introductory chapter traces the contours of the existing debates to identify the lacunas in the current academic knowledge in the area. The chapter outlines the structure of this book covering the variety of multifaceted and interrelated issues of equity, access and inclusion. The book is subdivided into four parts covering education policy, inclusive practice, inclusive culturally sensitive education and inclusive culture.

Part I: Policy of Inclusion

Chapter 2: Historical and Policy Perspective of the Current State of Inclusive General Education for Children with Disabilities in the Russian Federation

Svetlana Alekhina

Today in Russia, about half of children with special educational needs and disabilities attend regular schools. The chapter discusses the history and the evolution of inclusive education in Russia. This is done through putting into perspective the theoretical approaches to creating conditions for facilitating teaching and learning to children with special educational needs and disabilities. Public and pedagogical initiatives and

transformations of the legislative framework of Russian education in accordance with the international agenda of diversity, equality and inclusion are foregrounded.

In this chapter, challenges and opportunities experienced in the process of developing of an inclusive education system in Russia are highlighted. Among the key challenges presented are the problem of home education for children with disabilities, teacher professional competencies and specialists' capabilities in addressing of challenges of inclusion. Furthermore, the models of their training in the higher education system are discussed. The scientific concept of school inclusive educational environment and its evaluation criteria which is currently the subject of heated discussions among experts is illuminated. Following this chapter is a story that presents the practical nuances of implementing the policy of inclusion in Russian schools.

Chapter 3: Equality and Inclusion in Russian Secondary Education: Post-Soviet Policy Analysis

Sergey Kosaretsky

Chapter 3 presents an analysis of the impact of the reforms of the 1990s on the situation with educational inequality (from the point of view of the socio-economic situation of families). With a focus on cross-sectional analysis of educational inequality, indicators of equality of opportunities in general education in Russia compared to other countries, including academic and social inclusion (according to PISA data), are presented and analysed. A policy aimed at ensuring equal educational opportunities in general education in the twenty-first century is presented, an analytical review of the data from Monitoring the Education Economy and some qualitative studies, and the conditions for teaching children with disabilities are outlined. Data on the financing of special projects for working with children are also provided. Special attention is paid to the differences between regions, cities, villages and different groups of schools. The chapter is followed by a story from a mother of a child with ASD demonstrating the practical challenges of teachers lack of competencies to deal with ASD and the support that schools are able or unable to provide.

Part II: Inclusive Practice

Chapter 4: Inclusive Education and Early Childhood Development in Russia

Natalia Zaichenko, Elena Samsonova, Olga Kornienko and Liudmila Zaichenko

The chapter presents an empirical sociological study of the prospects and barriers to the formation of an inclusive educational environment in preschool institutions, as well as applied approaches to the study and assessment of an inclusive environment in preschool institutions. Educational inclusion, viewed through the prism of creating and maintaining a heterogeneous environment, is compared with the schemes of perception of this phenomenon by adult participants in the educational process. The harmonious involvement of different categories of children in a single educational environment should be supported by the special skills of teachers, as well as the correct attitude of the leadership of preschool organisations to inclusion and, more importantly, the foresight and maturity of parents in this regard.

The tools that are proposed to be used to assess and analyse the processes of introducing inclusive education into the practice of kindergartens allow us to indicate how the principles of inclusive education are implemented in specific measures and actions of educational organisations. The interpretation of the research results presented in the chapter demonstrates the growth points for the development of inclusion in preschool organisations. Following the chapter is a story that illustrates the intricacies of developing and inclusive and supportive early childhood inclusive environment.

Chapter 5: Inclusion and Equity in Secondary Education in Russia: How to Make Inclusion Assessment More "Inclusive"

Yuliya Kersha, Tatyana Mertsalova, Sergey Kosaretsky, Roman Zviagintsev and Ivan Ivanov

The aim of this chapter is to provide a detailed account of the state of affairs regarding the success of inclusion as a result of the social conditions in the Russian Federation. Statistical analysis as well as empirical evidence are provided to give a comprehensive overview of factors enabling and inhibiting the process of inclusion. The chapter considers the influence of socio-economic characteristics of families and the territory of residence of students on equality of opportunities in achieving high educational results and access to essential resources based on the data of PISA, the Federal Statistical Observation in the field of education, monitoring of the education economy by Rosstat, monitoring of the digital transformation of public education

organisations and the results of the Unified State Exam. The story that follows this chapter highlights the challenges of schooling within special and regular schools in Russia, showing enabling and disabling factors of student's learning experiences.

Chapter 6: Inclusive Vocational Education in Russia

Nikita Bolshakov

Throughout the twentieth century, a well-functioning mechanism of vocational education of persons with disabilities worked in the USSR, including segregated system of training and production enterprises. The result of the transition to market relations was the transformation of the vocational training system and the closure of most special educational institutions, which led to new challenges (and sometimes new achievements) for people with disabilities. This chapter analyses how the previous Soviet experience is reflected in the current system of vocational education in the context of an orientation towards international norms and the implementation of new institutional practices for equity and inclusion.

Chapter 7: Inclusive Higher Education

Bronyus Ajsmontas, Lada Aleksandrova, Maria Odintsova and Guzel Saitgalieva

In the context of the problematisation of inclusive higher education, the authors analysed the concepts used: "Inclusion", "Inclusive education in higher education institutions", "Inclusive environment", "Inclusive mixed learning environment". Theoretical and practical issues of inclusive higher professional education of students with disabilities using distance learning technologies, features and resources of student development in the context of inclusive distance learning are raised. The chapter highlights the experience of the Moscow State Psychological and Pedagogical University as a case in organising inclusive education using distance learning technologies. Special attention is paid to the psychological and pedagogical aspects of inclusive higher professional education of students with disabilities, including the significant professional qualities of teachers, working with students with disabilities. The chapter is followed by a narrative story of one faculty member an institution of higher learning sharing her lived experiences of implementing inclusion in a higher education context.

Chapter 8: The Development of Assistive Technologies and Its Role Towards Successful Inclusion: The Case of Russia

Oksana Sinyavskaya, Alina Pishnyak, Anna Chervyakova and Natalia Halina

Assistive technologies and devices (ATD) aim to overcome limitations of children and adults with disabilities and contribute to their successful inclusion. This chapter focuses on the key determinants of the development of the ATD market in Russia giving special attention to children with disabilities and the role of ATD in inclusive school education. The chapter reports on the study conducted qualitatively and quantitatively using the online expert survey and semi-structured interviews with Russian experts: producers of ATD, specialists of the State Bureau of Medical-Social Expertise, members of the all-Russian societies of people with disabilities and policymakers. In addition, demand for ATD is evaluated on the basis of the official Federal State Statistics Service data, and population surveys (Comprehensive Monitoring of Living Conditions (CMLC), Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS), etc.). According to experts, seven groups of factors influence the ATD market in Russia: demographic, social, economic, political (administrative), technological, ecological and environmental. Demographics, inclusion in education and employment, societal attitudes towards children and adults with disabilities seem to be key factors in the development of the Russian ATD market, which in turn is a necessary precondition for ensuring inclusion and expanding access to education for children with SEND. The story that follows shares thoughts by a support technology developer and how the role of technology may promote inclusion.

Chapter 9: Teacher Training and Professional Development for Inclusion in Russia

Svetlana Alekhina, Maria Kozlova

Teachers are seen as agents of change in the development of inclusive teaching and learning practices. Teacher training, skills, attitudes and beliefs are essential to the success of inclusive education.

This chapter analysed the main challenges of teachers' training for the implementation of inclusive educational practice. Based on the analysis of policy documents regulating the process of professional training and work activity of teachers, and the results of nationwide monitoring and a series of empirical studies, the structural and functional aspects of the readiness of Russian schools for the development of inclusive education in terms of their staffing are considered. Subsequent to this chapter, the story about the lived experiences of a speech therapist on how she navigated the journey of her professional training and development is shared.

Part III: Inclusion and Culture-Sensitive Education

Chapter 10: Educational Inclusion of Children in Migration

Maria Kozlova, Igor Mikheev, Natalia Tkachenko and Oleg Khukhlaev

This chapter presents an analysis of the attitude of Russian teachers to cultural diversity in challenging pedagogical situations. Russian teachers have four approaches to assessing cultural differences, which together represent two strategies based on different interpretations of cultures and intercultural interaction. It is established that cultural differences come into the focus of the teacher's attention in the situation of their problematisation, when they create complex pedagogical situations, mainly influenced by diverse student's cultural identities. In the final section of the chapter, we present a framework for the regulation of ethno-cultural diversity in the Russian school. Its reconstruction is based on the analysis of documents and state policies in the field of ethnic cultures and interethnic relations as well as the content of school textbooks. This framework will allow us to assess the prospects for the dissemination and development of the previously outlined strategies for regulating diversity in the school classroom. The chapter is followed by a story of refugee children and how they are affected by cultural integration and inclusion in Russian schools.

Chapter 11: Educational Inclusion of Indigenous Students in the Russian Federation

Maria Kozlova, Andrey Kozlov and Tatiana Vlasova

The chapter examines the accessibility and quality of education for representatives of the indigenous peoples of Russia. Based on the analysis of federal legislation and statistical data, the question of to what extent secondary education contributes to the preservation of the cultural heritage of the indigenous peoples of Russia and prepares students from among the indigenous population to study at a university is considered. Based on our own interdisciplinary research, we present cases of successful adaptation of indigenous people to study at a university in a large city and formulate principles for providing a favourable educational experience for indigenous students. The story about representation of indigenous people in social networks is presented to share light on challenges of indigenous with regard to both access and adaptation to institutions of higher learning.

Part IV: Inclusive Culture

Chapter 12: Cultural Context of Inclusion: Media Representations and Activism

Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova, Darja Prisyazhnyuk and Olga Kosova

In this chapter, we analyse the cultural context of inclusion based on media representations. Starting with a brief overview of the Soviet context later, we pay attention to the change in the cultural context in the post-Soviet period. During this time, many changes in the policy and cultural context took place with the participation and influence of public organisations, including associations of parents of children with SEND. The way cinema and media depict disability, children with SEND and their parents, on the one hand, reflects the policy and societal attitudes towards children with SEND and their families, and on the other hand, contributes to the cultural stereotypes creation and influences to social settings. Having discussed the findings in the research literature and analysing media representations, we substantiate our arguments and present the results of the analysis of representations of inclusive education in the Russian print media. The chapter is followed by a story that sort to indicate the significance of an enabling inclusive society and supportive communities.

Chapter 13: Textbooks as Tools for Inclusion or Exclusion: Representation of Socially Vulnerable Groups in Secondary School Textbooks

Maria Kozlova

The chapter is devoted to the analysis of the representation of socially vulnerable groups in school textbooks. The empirical basis of the study was made up of textbooks on the subjects "The world around us" and "Social Studies". Consideration of examples of the representation of socially vulnerable groups in school textbooks allowed us to trace a) the change in the representation of the topic in textbooks aimed at different age groups, b) to identify the degree of similarity in the representation of different groups united by the category of "social insecurity".

The results of the analysis of the representation of people with disabilities and people with low socio-economic status in textbooks demonstrated opposite trends in the transformation of pedagogical discourse. These trends are unmasked and explained with the involvement of the current Russian legislation as a framework.

Chapter 14: Extracurricular Education and Inclusion in Russia: Inclusion as a Right and a Resource

Sergey Kosaretsky, Ivan Ivanov, Angelina Zolotareva and Konstantin Anchikov

In this chapter, we discuss using statistical data, national conceptual documents and recommendations for inclusion in children's extracurricular education. We show the differences in participation in extracurricular education depending on one's place of residence (village, city), gender, family income and health characteristics. We discuss the reasons for the observed differences as well as possible and implemented measures to change the situation. An analysis of regulatory documents, programs, projects and case studies of Russian educational organisations in several regions provides two perspectives for discussing the problem of inclusion in the extracurricular education sector, one related to the availability of essential out-of-school education services for all children and the other to the form and content of extracurricular education.

Chapter 15: Conclusion

Tsediso Michael Makoelle

This concluding chapter compares the development and emergence of inclusive education in Russia with global trends. It also highlights the challenges of implementing inclusive education at school, post-school, and tertiary levels. Based on the findings of the previous chapters, some recommendations are made. These recommendations refer to knowledge, policy, and practice implications.

Contents

Editors and Contributors

About the Editors

Professor Tsediso Michael Makoelle is Full Professor and Vice Dean for Research at Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education. He is one of the recipients of the prestigious Nelson Mandela Scholarship to the United Kingdom (UK). He holds the degrees of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Inclusive Education from the University of Manchester, UK, and a Doctor of Education (D.Ed.) in Education Management and Leadership from the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Professor Makoelle started working at Nazarbayev University eight years ago in the capacities of associate professor, and then Director of Doctoral Studies and General Director. He is also a visiting research fellow at the International Laboratory for Social Integration Research at Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia.

Prof Makoelle's span of teaching and research experience stretches for over 30 years, with the focus being on secondary and higher education. At the beginning of his career, Dr. Makoelle started his pedagogical work as a high school teacher and then head of department, vice principal and principal in several secondary schools in the Education Department of the Republic of South Africa. He has notably worked as a lecturer and senior lecturer at Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, and the University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

He has written and published extensively on the topics of inclusive education and educational leadership, management, governance and administration for both national and international audiences and readership. Professor Makoelle has supervised many Master's and Ph.D. students. He is a member of several international research bodies. He reviews grants and funding applications for the South African National Research Foundation (NRF), reviewed papers for several international Scopus and Web of Science journals and evaluated research theses for several universities in South Africa and abroad. He has also reviewed postgraduate courses and programs for many universities and serves on the editorial boards of several international journals. He has collaborated with universities from Russia, the USA, the UK, Europe and Africa. He is passionate about inclusive education with a research

interest in conceptualising and operationalising inclusive pedagogy within disadvantaged South African classroom contexts and beyond. He has devoted his research work to the framework of Participatory Action Research, informed by notions of critical, reflective practitioner and transformative epistemologies.

Dr. Maria Kozlova holds degrees of Candidate of Ethnography, Ethnology and Anthropology (2004) and Doctor of Sociology (2023). She works as Chief Research Fellow at the International Laboratory for Social Integration Research and Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, National Research University "Higher School of Economics". Her research interests include, among others, social integration, educational inclusion, intergroup relations, sociology of culture and sociology of morality. Dr Kozlova has published over 50 research works and has edited six collective monographs.

Professor Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova is a Russian sociologist holding degrees of Candidate of Philosophy (1989), Doctor of Sociology (1997), Ph.D. in Social Work (2011), works as Head of the International Laboratory for Social Integration Research since 2019, Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Social Policy Studies* since 2003, Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, National Research University "Higher School of Economics" since 2008. In previous years, she was a head of the department of social anthropology and social work at Saratov State Technical University in Saratov, Russia, where she was also a co-founder and research director of an independent research organisation, Centre for Social Policy and Gender Studies. She specialises in disability studies, social policy, social work, sociology of professions, public sphere, gender, family and children, social anthropology, folklore, representations, qualitative methods and visual research. She has been a co-editor of *Disability in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union: History, Policy and Everyday Life* (Routledge 2014), special thematic issues of *International Social Work* (2014), *Girlhood Studies* (2015), *Europe and Asia Studies* (2023), *Children and Youth Services Review*, and published numerous articles and book chapters in both Russian and English, e.g. in *Post-Soviet Affairs*, *Social Policy and Society*, *Europe and Asia Studies*, *Voluntary Sector Review*, *European Journal of Social Work*, *Sexuality and Culture*, *European Journal of Social Policy*, *International Social Work, Equal Opportunities*, *Social Policy and Administration. Frontiers: A Journal for Women Studies.* She has been a grantee and a principal investigator of the projects supported by various international and national foundations and a member of International and European Sociological Associations, the International Federation of Social Workers, the International Association of Schools of Social Work and an editorial board member of academic journals *Woman in Russian Society*, *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*, *Herald of the Tomsk State University*, *Praxema: Issues of Visual Semiotics*. Professor Iarskaia-Smirnova is an active public scholar, who promotes the values of diversity, equity and inclusion. She collaborates with many non-governmental organisations in their endeavours to build an inclusive and just society.

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Chapter 1
Introduction: Mapping Its Way Towards Inclusion

Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova

Inclusion is a principle and a goal of public policy around the world. Such policy course is shaping up in media discourses and public opinion, scholarly reflections, social welfare and employment legislation, the creation of an accessible environment, and the reforms of the educational system. The reforms are implemented with different pace and varying effects under the influence of the common legacy of the state socialism and different socio-cultural, economic, and political conditions as well as diverging regimes of social policy.

In the 1990s, a large body of literature analysing challenges of inclusion in the world appeared, documenting the changes that followed the United Nations' strategy for 'Education for All' (UNESCO, 1990) and the adoption of the influential Salamanca Statement (UN, 1994) on inclusive education. A growing number of studies defined, analysed, and discussed the concepts of inclusion, revising the variations of how inclusive education has been conceived and implemented in various regions and countries (Ainscow, 1999; Hegarty et al., 1996; Mittler, 2000). The experts reflected on social disadvantage and inequality (Walker & Walker, 1997), the experience of excluded children, their parents, teachers, and classmates, raising the issues of advocacy and justice in society as a complex context for educational inclusion (Ballard, 1999).

The following decades saw the growth of comparative studies in various regions and countries that provided insights into the nature of categorisation, labeling, and discursive practices (Armstrong, 2003), demonstrating that many countries seem committed to inclusive education in their rhetoric, legislation, and policies, while in practice often fell short (Mitchell, 2005).

By critically assessing the very nature of the inclusive education discourse and practice from the practitioners' position (Quicke, 2007) and parents' perspective

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(Rogers, 2007), the researchers unpacked family narratives on the denial, disappointment, and social exclusion, presenting action research as the ways in which teachers have tackled inequalities in the wide range of real-life situations in school environment (Armstrong, 2004; Makoelle, 2019; O'Hanlon, 2003). Barton and Armstrong (2008) offered a series of examples, ideas, and questions concerning inclusive education in cross-cultural perspective based on a critical exploration of inclusion, human rights, and diversity in European and non-European societies. Various models, practices, experiences, first-hand accounts, and success stories from non-Western context, in particular, India (Jha, 2010; Puri & Abraham, 2004), and Cambodia (Kalyanpur, 2011) were analysed.

More than twenty-five years have passed since Salamanca's Statement. Current literature offers insights into international perspectives on inclusive educational policies, exploring attitudes and practices in relation to diverse student populations, i.e. refugee and indigenous peoples and students with special needs in Canada and Europe (Christou et al., 2022). Fu (2022) investigates the philosophy, policy, practices, and challenges of inclusive education in the Chinese contexts, recognising influences of Confucianism, collectivism, and familism. The studies are mapping the research literature on inclusive education (IE) highlighting the common trends and lacunas in the academic discourse (Hernández-Torrano et al., 2020). In particular, the analysis reveals a lack of research and policy agenda for children with the most complex and profound disabilities who still reside in segregated schools and for whom the practicalities of inclusive education are more difficult to achieve (Byrne, 2022). The debates on inclusion have been mostly addressing policies and practices of the global West with lesser focus on the non-Western regions. Little attention has been paid to post-socialist contexts, i.e. countries of Central and Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union republics.

Currently, Russia and other post-Soviet states gradually and unevenly integrate into the global processes of reforming educational systems towards inclusion. Inclusive education in post-socialist countries is a topic that the international research literature has only recently begun to delve into. A recent volume edited by Bahdanovich Hanssen et al. (2021) addresses challenges faced by the post-socialist educational systems in several CEE and FSU countries. These reviews demonstrate the variety of interpretations of inclusion in the educational policy documents. Those ambiguities, as well as the reported lack of competence among the pedagogues in the post-socialist states, leave room for further marginalisation and exclusion of children with SEND (Bahdanovich Hanssen & Khitruk, 2021). When the authors reveal the factors enabling or inhibiting inclusive education (Makoelle, 2020; Makoelle & Burmistrova, 2021), they come across these 'path dependencies' (Zimenkova & Jules, 2014). Focusing on representatives of Roma, and people with disabilities as the most excluded groups, Fylling et al. (2020) explore complex and conflicting experiences with inclusion policy implementation in seven post-socialist EU countries. These experiences are affected both by historical and cultural heritage from the communist period and EU inclusion policy, in particular in relation to the policies of deinstitutionalisation central for the political course towards inclusive education (Mladenov & Petri, 2020; Zaviršek, 2017). Historically, these are difficult to change, and there is a

risk that previous ideas and policies might be re-inscribed into the recent social relations and current reforms (Iarskaia-Smirnova et al., 2015; Kalinnikova Magnusson & Walton, 2021).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006) declared that the education of persons with disabilities should foster their participation in society and develop their personality, abilities, and creativity (UN, 2006, article 24). The development of regulatory frameworks has accelerated in Russia after the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2012. Attempts to create inclusive culture, produce inclusive policies and evolve inclusive practices do not always go smoothly; meanwhile, the sustainability of what has been achieved within educational organisations may be threatened by the external context (Iarskaia-Smirnova & Goriaynova, 2022). What way will Russia go towards inclusion? In order to answer this question, it is important to trace the historical and current stages of the development of education and public attitudes towards the other—persons who are different, having special educational needs and disabilities.

The *Inclusive education in the Russian Federation* aims to map the challenges of the transition towards inclusion in all levels and forms of education in contemporary Russia. Inclusion and exclusion are explored in the book along three interconnected dimensions of school improvement: producing inclusive policies, evolving inclusive practices, and creating inclusive cultures (Booth & Ainscow, 2002: 7).

While there are various approaches to a concept of inclusive education, for the scope of this book we will adopt the following definition: 'an on-going process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination' (UNESCO, 2009: 126). This definition emphasises a dynamic nature of inclusion, focuses on a communal dimension, and recognises a variety of needs and capabilities. Inclusion is a process that changes the system of education to fit the student, to acknowledge and respect all personal differences, to overcome barriers that limit the presence, participation and achievement of all learners (OECD, 2023).

In accordance with the principles of participation and inclusion—"Nothing about us without us"—the book includes the voices of people with disabilities and representatives of ethnic and cultural minorities, their family members, professionals, and leaders of civil society associations who support representatives of vulnerable groups and contribute to the development of inclusive education. Their stories presented in the book are not just illustrations to the chapters. Rather, they present a reflexive position of people who have their own lived experience of interaction with, challenging and transforming the educational environment, promoting and developing inclusion in various historical, regional and personal circumstances. The stories are included in the sections of the book according to their main thematic focus. However, the biographical accounts of the authors embrace multiple angles and layers of policy, practice and culture of inclusion, thus illuminating the complexity of individual experience and enhancing intersectionality of each particular theme.

The Book Outline

The first section, Policy of Inclusion, sets up the historical background and peculiarities of the contemporary policy of inclusive education in Russia and consists of as two chapters and two stories. Chapter 2, by Svetlana Alekhina, traces the origins and current developments of the conceptual framework and the legal arrangements, so that we may better understand the context of the current situation in inclusive education for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The attention is devoted to the challenges and advantages to create inclusive environments at the current stage of educational policy development in Russia. The nation-wide programs as well as local grassroots initiatives to support educational inclusion are described. Recognising the issues that education of children with SEND met in the past helps to draw the perspectives inclusive education should move in the future.

In Chap. 3, Sergey Kosaretsky demonstrate how the ideas of diversity, equality and inclusion have been introduced into in the national policy of secondary education in the Russian Federation over the thirty years of post-socialism. The authors consider discrepancies between the legislation and its implementation and explore the dimensions of structural inequality between the schools and the students. They highlight the issues of inaccessibility of quality education that limit opportunities for social mobility of various social groups that are partially embraced by the categorical approach of the state towards the target population clusters. However, those policies do not cover some of the disadvantaged social groups, whose chances for social mobility and inclusion remain limited.

The two stories included into the first section, highlight the role of individual agency in widening the opportunities of children with SEND. In her account of a long-term individual work with a boy with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) that she began in late 1980s, Anna Bitova shows how the commitment and a pioneering spirit of professionals was joined by the persistence and devotion of parents. Their joint efforts led to advocating disability rights, and the development of the inclusive services. Together with her colleagues from the non-governmental Center for Curative Pedagogy, Ms. Bitova provide high quality services for children with disabilities and their family members, promote inclusive education ideas and influence Russian legislation. The story of Anastasia Rozhdestvenskaya, a loving and persistent mother of a child with ASD, is a detailed biographical narrative where the individual attempts are collided with the structural deficits of educational policy. Growing up with ASD in Russia in the beginning of the twenty-first century, required hard joint efforts of the close ones and the professionals, who provided the boy and his mother with invaluable support.

The second section, Inclusive Practice, contains six chapters and three stories. It discusses the contradictions, difficulties and perspectives in implementing inclusion in preschool, secondary school, vocational college, and the university. In addition, the section embraces the studies on the resources and barriers in teacher training as well as in the development of assistive technologies. The stories illuminate individual experiences of persons with disabilities as students, researchers, software developers,

joined by the accounts of practitioners in the field of inclusion. In Chap. 4, Natalia Zaichenko, Elena Samsonova, Olga Kornienko, and Liudmila Zaichenko contend that in order to implement inclusion from the very early stages of child development, we need to take into account the unequal distribution of professional resources among various urban settings that differ by their economic well-being. In the following story, Katya Kokorina, who is a founder of the inclusive pre-school center SaVa, brings into light the issues of multiple exclusion of children with SEND whose parents are non-Russian refugees from Congo and other African countries.

Departing from the statistical data analysis as a starting point in Chap. 5, Yuliya Kersha, Tatyana Mertsalova, Sergey Kosaretsky, Roman Zviagintsev, and Ivan Ivanov, emphasise the need for recognition of the deep interregional inequality based on the disparity of resources possessed by the schools as well as of enablers of the academic achievements of the students. In his story that follows, Egor Kositsyn, a first year Law student, argues that his school years were good enough because of his self-confident attitude. However, in his narrative, the reader can see the agency of himself and of his parents in advocating for the right to be like anybody else. By changing the education policy conceptual framework from medical to social model, we empower youth with disabilities to continue training and get better jobs, to change their lives. Comparing the historical and current developments of vocational training for people with disabilities, Nikita Bolshakov in Chap. 6 traces the main obstacles that youth with SEND meets when choosing the program to prepare for a particular occupation. Some of the obstacles are inherent to the individual rehabilitation official guidelines. The barriers and resources that must be considered in the implementation of inclusive higher education are discussed by Bronyus Ajsmontas, Lada Aleksandrova, Maria Odintsova, and Guzel Saitgalieva in Chap. 7. A story by a young researcher Julia Melnik who has experience of living with disability, illuminates inspiration and the hard working that help develop persistence for success at school, university and doctoral program, as a visiting professor in USA, and in a large current research project.

Drawing from the empirical research and analysis of national experience the authors argue that special policy arrangements could increase the accessibility and effectiveness of inclusive education programs. In Chap. 8, Oksana Sinyavskaya, Alina Pishnyak, Anna Chervyakova, and Natalia Halina discuss several key factors that should be addressed for the development of the assistive technologies in Russia, in order to facilitate for students with disabilities the access to various forms and levels of education. In the story that follows, Ivan Bakaidov, a young talented Russian programmer, who communicates using speech generating software, narrates about his endeavors to develop technologies for people with impairments to open up opportunities for education and independent living. In Chap. 9, Svetlana Alekhina and Maria Kozlova offer their perspective on the challenges that the course towards inclusion brings to the realm of teachers' training. Referring to the analysis of regulatory documents and the interviews with the students of pedagogical departments, the authors reveal the lacunas in teacher training affective the attitudes and practices of school teachers. In the story that follows, Julia Kazdym who is a speech therapist working with children with SEND recalls how the deficits of her university training as a

special educator have been compensated by her internship at the non-governmental organisation Center for Curative Pedagogy. By learning from famous game therapists, she was able not only to develop her expertise and get professional experience, but most importantly, internalise the philosophy of inclusion.

The third section, Inclusion and the Culture Sensitive Education is devoted to the issues of diversity that constitute a controversial policy and practice, as well as understudied area in Russia. In Chap. 10, Maria Kozlova, Igor Mikheev, Natalia Tkachenko, and Oleg Khukhlaev explore the attitudes of Russian teachers towards the inclusion of children who have experienced migration. These authors ground their observations in the overview of the legislative framework regulating ethno-cultural policy in Russia, engaging in the discussion about the school teachers, and decoding the school textbooks. The story that follows discloses the complex issues of the education in a special camp for the children of refuges from Ukraine in Russia after February 2022. The author, whose anonymity is secured for political reasons, reflect upon her own involvement in working with the children who experienced trauma of the armed conflict and exile. In Chap. 11, Maria Kozlova, Andrey Kozlov, and Tatiana Vlasova explore the issues of university education for indigenous peoples from the angles of preserving cultural heritage and languages, on the one hand, and accessibility of higher education for representatives of indigenous minorities, on the other. In the following story, a young activist Maryam Alieva, tells about her efforts to change patriarchal social and cultural arrangements that deny girls their full right to education.

The fourth section, Inclusive Culture, concludes this book by considering the issues of inclusive education by reviewing the cultural context that both affects and is influenced by the processes implemented within education. By focusing on the images of children with disabilities and their parents in films and newspapers in post-socialist Russia, Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova, Darja Prisyazhnyuk, Olga Kosova in Chap. 12 reflect upon the contemporary cultural conflict between the proponents and opponents of inclusion. In their content analysis the authors reveal the contradictions and overlaps in contemporary discourses on disability and the role of activism in promoting the values of inclusion.

In Chap. 13, Maria Kozlova explores a hidden curriculum embedded in the school textbooks that contain the discourses of exclusion and inclusion that correspond with the wider cultural and ideological context. The section concludes with an account by Denise Roza, a founder and a director of the Russian non-governmental disability organisation Perspektiva, which promotes youth empowerment; universal design; equal access to education; inclusive employment and sports; and public education for communities about various disability issues. Together with her staff of more than 70 employees with and without disabilities, she has developed and implemented programs for hundreds of thousands of people across Russia.

In Chap. 14, Sergey Kosaretsky, Ivan Ivanov, Angelina Zolotareva, and Konstantin Anchikov discusses the significance of extracurricular activities in enabling an inclusive education environment. Through the analysis of statistical data and official documents the participation of students with disabilities and special needs are analysed

according to student's residential locations in towns and regions. The implications of extracurricular inclusion and exclusion are highlighted. In Chap. 15, Tsediso Michael Makoelle, based on the book's findings, provides a comparative analysis of inclusive education developments in Russia and internationally. The concluding chapter makes recommendations for knowledge, policy, and practice.

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Policy of Inclusion

In this part, a comprehensive history of the development of education for children with special educational needs in Russia, based on the development of social and pedagogical ideas, and the regulatory framework for supporting inclusive education is presented. The stories told by Anna Bitova and Anastasia Rozhdestvenskaya represent the early and contemporary periods of the development of inclusive education in Russia, through the eyes of a practitioner and a mother of a child with disability.

Chapter 2
Historical and Policy Perspective of the Current State of Inclusive General Education for Children with Disabilities in the Russian Federation

Svetlana Alekhina

Abstract The chapter presents the main stages of the development of the Russian education system, considering the steps taken in different periods of Russian history towards overcoming inequality in access to education for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The long period of exclusion from the education of children with disabilities was replaced in the second half of the nineteenth century by a stage when their education remained dependent on the efforts of individual enthusiasts-ascetics, who prepared the onset of stages of state control and support of special education, which over the century-long period of its development passed the stages detailed in the first chapter. This periodisation is accompanied by an analysis of educational institutions' challenges at each stage and of the transformation of structural and methodological guidelines in response to these challenges. Thus, on the one hand, continuity is demonstrated, on the other—cardinal differences between the periods of "special", "integrated" and "inclusive" education are exemplified. In conclusion, the inclusive stage is represented in more detail: the effects of grassroots initiatives and state programs to support education taking into account the special needs of students are described, and the main barriers and largely innovative ways of overcoming them within the theoretical framework and experimental educational practices are presented.

Introduction

The education system in contemporary Russia has undergone profound changes since the enactment of Federal Law No. 273-FZ On Education in the Russian Federation on 29 December 2012 (Government of the Russian Federation (GRF), 2012). In this law, Russia enshrined inclusive education at the national level as "equal access to

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education for all students, taking into account the diversity of their special educational needs and individual abilities". This progressive step in the development of education in Russia, which requires a review of the methodological basis of pedagogical activities and the values of general education itself, has entailed a change in the entire legal area regulating the educational and social policy for protecting the rights and interests of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

In Russia, the deeply humanistic idea of including children with special needs in education has its own specific and long history closely connected with the evolution of special/defectology (soviet form of special education). This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the history of special needs education and, more recently, inclusive education in the Russian Federation.

Historical Developments

The first special school, the Experimental School for the Deaf-Mute, opened in Pavlovsk near St. Petersburg in 1806. From 1806 to the 1930s, a network of three types of special educational institutions for blind, deaf, and "mentally retarded" children (the way they were called at the time) was created. After the 1917 Revolution, special education became a part of the public education system for the first time, being implemented in live-in boarding schools where students found themselves in complete isolation from their families, non-disabled peers, and broader society. In the 1920s, special education began to develop more actively (Malofeyev, 1996).

Children with hearing, visual and mental disabilities were included in the learning process. Later, education of children with musculoskeletal disabilities (MSD) and severe speech disabilities began. Education of children with MSD started in the late 1950s when the first schools appeared in Moscow and Leningrad. In the twentieth century, people with disabilities also gained access to higher education. The first education centre for the hearing-impaired appeared at Imperial Technical School, now called Bauman Moscow State Technical University. Special education in this university goes back to 1934 when the first 11 hearing-impaired students were admitted (Leonhard et al., 2011).

In Russia, the schooling of children with learning disabilities and developmental disabilities, or "non-typical children", has been administered, in theory, and practice, by defectologists (special education support specialists) since the beginning of the twentieth century. Going hand in hand with defectology, paedology (called pedology at the time) (study of children's behaviour and development) focused on the study of "non-typical" children in the 1920s and through the 1930s. Paidology and defectology share not only theories but also teaching practice. A huge contribution towards the development of these two scholarly disciplines was made by many prominent scientists in the early twentieth century (Bekhterev, 1928; Blonsky, 1934; Kaschenko, 1992; Rossolimo, 1914; Vygotsky, 1929). Lev Vygotsky at the beginning of the twentieth century pointed out the need to include children with special needs in

the regular learning environment together with their peers: "From the psychological point of view, it is extremely important not to confine atypical children to special groups, but to maximise their communication with other children"; and further on: "… it is deeply anti-pedagogical that for the sake of convenience, we select homogeneous groups of atypical children. By doing so, we not only go against the natural tendency in the development of such children but, more importantly, we deprive the child of collective cooperation and communication with other children superior to him/her in skill, we rather aggravate than facilitate the immediate cause responsible for the underdevelopment of his/her higher functions" (Vygotsky, 1983, 367–368). Vygotsky's ideas and the principles of his cultural-historical psychology were further elaborated in the works of Rubtsov (1996), Elkonin (1956), Slobodchikov (1991), Porter (2005), Muller Mirza and Perret-Clermont (2009) and Veresov (2010). Daniels and Hedegaard (2011) notice in their book, that they "build their understanding of children's learning and development in school on Vygotsky's theory of multiple pathways for children's development. This theory builds on the conception that there is a wide diversity of biological and social conditions for children's development but development through educational support can always be directed forward, propelling children towards realising the appropriate motives and competencies appreciated in the societal institutions that the child is part of" (Daniels & Hedegaard, 2011, 15).

In this chapter, we will touch upon those aspects of the cultural-historical theory that contain a positive potential for the development of the concept of inclusion and overcoming some of its limitations and contradictions. The first is the idea that the development of higher mental functions in a person is the result of mastering the culture of the society in which the child develops. The second is that in the process of the formation of higher mental functions, a qualitative leap takes place that separates the human psyche from its natural basis. This leap marks the social nature of the human personality and its higher mental functions. It is associated with the formation of conceptual thinking, the phenomenon of the sign. The same qualitative leap is also associated with the development of human emotions, the human type of motivation, and the phenomenon of conscious will, which was expressed, in particular, in Vygotsky's disputes with Kurt Lewin and his field theory (Zavershneva & van der Veer, 2018).

The third point is well articulated in the words of Vygotsky's disciple Luria (2003, 247), who wrote:

> The source of voluntary movement and active action lies not within the organism and not in the direct influence of past experience, but in the social history of a person, in those forms of social labour activity that were initial for human history, and in those forms of communication between a child and an adult that lay at the origins of voluntary movement and meaningful action in ontogenesis.

In this quote of Vygotsky's concept, an essential principle for inclusive education was formulated: the cultural and historical experience of humans act as a mediator of conditions for inclusion in the community and society. In it, one should understand mechanisms which are influential to human's attitude to reality and the manner in which human behaviour and thinking are mediated.

In the 1920s and 1930s, defectology was separated from paidology while preserving and augmenting the scholarly achievements inherited from paidology (Romaeva & Romaev, 2014). In the 1950s and 1960s, the special education system developed further. In mainstream schools, from the late 1970s and early 1980s, there were the first experimental classes opened for children with mental disabilities. That period is recognised as the time of effective development of the public system of special education, the emergence of new types of special schools and new learning opportunities in special needs education (Malofeyev, 1996).

Already in the early 1930s, as the Soviet special education system shaped up, the earliest prototypes emerged of what would later become the official bodies allotting school placements to children then described as "defective". Later, in 1969, the Soviet minister of education signed into law the Policy on Medical Pedagogical Commissions in Republics and Regions, and the School Admission Guidelines on Children with Mental and Physical Disabilities. The task of the commissions was to screen children with mental and physical disabilities and place them in special general boarding schools and special preschools, which were all part of the general secondary schooling system. For children found unfit for learning in a regular public school or preschool on account of their health condition or mental state, the commissions would recommend placement in health institutions for preventive or medical treatment, or in social security institutions. They offered parents and teachers counselling in matters of teaching, socialisation and treatment for children with minor developmental issues, who did not require placement in special schools or preschools.

As an experiment, integration had long been a subject of research at the Research Institute of Defectology of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the USSR (in the 1970s by E. I. Leonhard under the supervision of Prof. F. F. Rau, and from the 1980s on, by a team of researchers led by N. D. Shmatko). Since the early 1990s, a number of schools in Russia (in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, and elsewhere) have operated in an inclusive integrative mode. Integration became a form of alternative education, with the basic principles of early intervention; professional support from educators for each child, well-justified psychological, medical, and pedagogical selection of children for integrated education, societal integration system, etc.

Moving Towards Integration

Since the early 1990s, Russia has recognised integration as a promising trend in the development of the education system, and the state has offered children with special learning needs the right to choose special or integrated education. Integrated education has proven to be more effective for children with minor developmental disabilities (e.g., visually impaired, hearing impaired, mild cerebral palsy, etc.) where there exists a well-established student support service in schools. The project titled "Integration of People with Special Needs" was launched in Russia in the autumn of 1992.

The term Integrated Education was enshrined in the model law On Education for Persons with Disabilities (Special Education), passed at the 20th Plenary Meeting of the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of the CIS Member States (Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States, 2002). "Integrated learning is when students with disabilities learn together with students without same, which is made possible by the provision of special facilities that enable students with disabilities to learn". The concept of integrated education for people with special learning needs was adopted at this conference. It was noted that the domestic concept of integrated education was based on three principles: integration through early diagnosis, compulsory corrective assistance for each child, and multilevel integration models. Here is the definition of integrated education given by Nazarova (1998):

> At every tier of the education system, integration provides a real, not just declared, opportunity for children, teens and young adults with developmental issues to benefit from a minimally restrictive learning alternative by learning either in a special education institution or in an equal opportunity regular school, such as a general secondary public school. (Nazarova, 1998, 12)

Concurrently with the advent of integrated learning, changes have occurred in social policy on children with disabilities. The 24 November 1995 Federal Law No. 181 On Social Protection for People with Disabilities in the Russian Federation enacted the term "rehabilitation of persons with disabilities". Article 11 of the law is devoted entirely to individual rehabilitation (term used instead of remediation) programming (GRF, 1995).

The individual rehabilitation programme of a disabled person is a set of rehabilitation activities deemed optimal for the disabled individual. It may include multiple types, forms, volumes, timelines and sequences of medical, career-focused, or other rehabilitation measures designed to facilitate physical recovery or compensate for the bodily functions impaired or lost, or promote enhancement of the disabled individual's ability to perform certain activities. The order to design such a programme comes from the authority that runs federal health and social audit institutions.

The era of integrated education gradually took on the features of inclusion as a result of the efforts by local projects and public initiatives. In 1996, through the efforts of parents, the Kovcheg (Ark) school, whose philosophy reflected the principles of inclusion, was created in Moscow (Moscow State Budgetary Educational Institution School No. 1321 "Kovcheg", n.d.). In addition, the possibility of education for children with and without disabilities in ordinary preschool institutions was enshrined in the Law of the Russian Federation On Social Protection for People with Disabilities in the Russian Federation dated November 24, 1995 No. 181-FZ (GRF, 1995).

It should be noted that the system of psychological, medical and pedagogical support for children with special needs in secondary schools started to progress actively with the introduction and the establishment of the position of educational psychologist and the opening of psychological support centres in the regions. In 1998, the Ministry of Education approved a Standard Charter for such centres. It was through the operation of these organisations that expertise in comprehensive

support for children with developmental disabilities, interdisciplinary practices in working with them, and strategies for creating programmes for psychological and pedagogical support to such students began to build up (GRF, 1998). The system was based on the concept of all-around support that Elena Kazakova developed and first presented at the conference in 1998 and 2001 (Kazakova & Polyanski, 2001). The starting point of Kazakova's theory and practice was a system-oriented approach, whose most important position was the priority of reliance on the subject's inner potential for development. "Support is to help the subject decide in a life choice situation. This complex interaction process between the person offering support and the person receiving the same leads to progress in child development" (Kazakova, 1998, 3).

The Russian trajectory of inclusive education development is consistent with Russia's accession to the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities on 26 September 2008 and its accession to the critical international decisions reflected in the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policies and Practices in the Field of Education of People with Disabilities.

In 2010, the Education Act of Moscow introduced a statutory definition of inclusive education for the first time. That same year, the 2010 national education programme "*Our New School*" emphasised inclusion: "*The new school*" is a school for everyone. In this program, schools are believed to ensure the successful socialisation of children with special needs, children with disabilities, children without parental care and children in difficult life situations (GRF, 2010). In 2011, the Accessible Environment national programme was adopted, which still serves as a central document in solving the main tasks of ensuring accessibility at all levels of education (Ministry of Labor of the Russian Federation, 2017).

Inclusion as a New Legal Norm

In 2012, Russia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and in the last days of the same year, President Putin signed a new law into effect. Federal Law No. 273-FZ On Education in the Russian Federation, adopted on 29 December 2012, introduces the concept of "inclusive education" into the Russian education system. Paragraph 27, Article 2 of this Law reads (GRF, 2012): "Inclusive education means ensuring equal access to education for all students, considering the diversity of their special educational needs and individual abilities". This is an essential milestone in the history of human rights advocacy in Russia: the policy of including people with special needs and learning difficulties in the comprehensive education system is now included at the national level and guarantees the necessary conditions for obtaining high-quality education (see Article 5.1 of the law). The law has not only consolidated the concept but has also put in place several important mechanisms that strengthen the inclusive potential of education in Russia, albeit still showing the hallmarks of specialised education.

The first important aspect is the definition of special educational conditions, i.e.

> conditions for teaching, education and development of such students that include the use of special curricula and methods, special textbooks, study guides and didactic materials, special technical teaching aids for collective and individual use, assistant services to provide technical support, group and individual corrective (meaning remedial) classes, access to buildings of educational establishments and other conditions without which it would be impossible or difficult for students with special needs to cope with the curriculum. (GRF, 2012)

The second is the requirements for adapting curricula for teaching students with special needs, taking into consideration the peculiarities of their psychophysical development and individual capabilities and, if necessary, ensuring the correction of developmental disabilities and social adaptation of such students. The type of adapted curriculum is determined based on the recommendations of the psychological, medical and pedagogical commission according to the results of a comprehensive assessment of the child and, if they have a disability, individual rehabilitation (remediation) and habilitation (support) programmes and the opinion of parents. An adapted primary school curriculum can be implemented in inclusive classes or separate classes, groups or organisations.

In 2014, two educational standards were developed, representing a set of mandatory requirements for the content and conditions of education: the Federal State Educational Standard for Teaching Students with Intellectual Disabilities and the Federal State Educational Standard of Primary Education for Students with Special Needs. Both standards involve teaching children with special needs in a co-educational environment (inclusion), in a separate classroom (integration) or a separate educational organisation (segregation). The standard for children with intellectual disabilities introduced the concept of a "Special Individual Development Programme", which is based on the acquisition of life competencies. This made education accessible to children who had not previously studied and were in the care of social security institutions.

The central provision, enshrined in the law, is that it is the parents who choose the organisation for their child's education. Recommendations on the type of adapted curriculum and the necessary special conditions are given by a team of specialists working outside of school. This psychological, medical and pedagogical commission has the right to determine whether a child is a student with special needs. The purpose of such a commission is to recommend a version of the adapted curriculum, complete with the requisite special conditions.

As of 2021, according to the Ministry of Education, students with special needs numbered more than 1.15 million in Russia, of which 53% are enrolled in regular schools. Over the past decade, the number of schools attended by children with disabilities has increased 4.8 times, from 2000, 2011 to 9800 in 2021, approximately 23% of the total number of schools (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, n.d.).

Barriers and Prospects for Inclusive Education in Russia

Analysing the current state of inclusive education in Russia, it is essential to note that it is developing in the direction of considering the interests of children with special needs and disabilities. Such an understanding of the idea of inclusion is varied considering the diversity of approaches internationally, hence there are several practical questions that emerge. Nazarova (2010) expresses grave concern about the inability of the general education system to adopt the principles of inclusion: "Russia's mainstream education system currently has no concept, no knowhow, no drivers, no means and, most importantly, no attractive motivation to make the changes necessary to pave the way for inclusive education" (Nazarova, 2010).

As noted above, the introduction of inclusive education is directly related to the presence of a well-established system of early intervention in the country. Only children who have received early comprehensive care are primarily prepared for school and meet the high requirements of an inclusive environment. A concept of early care was approved in 2016, and it is aimed at identifying children with special needs, as well as children at risk of developing such disabilities as early as possible in order to support them and promote their development and inclusion in the peer environment (Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States, 2002).

The development of inclusive education is impossible without the support and participation of civil society organisations representing the interests and defending the rights of children with special educational needs and their families. Parent communities, public organisations of people with disabilities and the Institute of Commissioners for the Rights of the Child play a significant role in this activity. In Russia, since the 1990s, the parents of children with special needs, with the support of non-governmental organisations, have initiated the first practices of teaching their children in preschool and secondary mainstream educational institutions. The activities of the All-Russian Organisation of Parents of Children with Disabilities are of great importance for determining the strategy for developing inclusive education in modern Russia (Russian Organisation of Parents of Children with Disabilities, n.d.).

Since 2013, the All-Russian competition "The Best Inclusive School in Russia" has been held annually to identify best practices in organising inclusion in kindergartens and schools nationwide. To develop inclusivity in educational institutions, the Institute of Inclusive Education of the Moscow State Psychological and Pedagogical University (MSPPU) is developing a system of criteria for evaluating inclusive educational environments and technologies with proven effectiveness (Alekhina et al., 2021).

Analysing the current state of inclusive schools in Russia, we know that schools are not ready to meet all the requirements for inclusion. Due to the unpreparedness of schools for inclusive education, negative consequences are inevitable. One of them is the official admission of a child with special needs to a school, followed by the pressure to send him/her away to study "at home". The Education Ministry

issued Home-Based Learning Recommendations in 2021 (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, 2021).

The importance of architectural barriers, that is, the physical inaccessibility of the environment (for example, the absence of ramps and elevators at home and school, the unavailability of transport between home and school, the absence of traffic lights at the intersection on the way to school, etc.), is conspicuous. Nevertheless, even more significant are the "barriers" that arise in people's relationships. Social barriers are not external, and they are not directly related to material or financial costs. They can be found both in schools and in the parent community. The attitude toward children with disabilities is a problematic issue, first of all, for adult participants in the educational process because due to historical segregation, there is no experience of interaction and communication with people with disabilities, and a cultural tradition of inclusion is yet to arise. Having at least a little personal experience changes the attitude and perception of people with disabilities and gives rise to a psychological readiness to accept them and interact with them.

The most important task at the present stage of the development of inclusive education is professional training for teachers planning to work in an inclusive educational environment. In 2016, a Professional Standard for Teachers was adopted, defining many of the teacher's competencies necessary for inclusive education: knowledge of inclusive technologies, ability to work in a team and evaluation of individual students' progress (Order of the Ministry of Labor of the Russian Federation, 2013). In 2017, a professional standard was developed for a tutor, i.e., a specialist in one-on-one schooling (Order of the Ministry of Labor of the Russian Federation, 2018). The idea of inclusion has become part of the methodology for developing all professional standards in teaching.

Turning to the idea of continuity of the inclusive educational trajectory of a student with disabilities, it should be noted that since 2016, an inclusive policy in the field of secondary vocational and higher education has been actively developing in the country (GRF, 2016). Resource centres for the development of inclusive education have been established at 21 universities (Inclusive Education, n.d.). Their activities are supported by the Accessible Environment national programme, due to run until 2024.

Despite the well-articulated policy, inclusive practices are still in their infancy in higher education. As Alekhina states:

> As we usher in inclusion in higher education, we must proceed from the fact that this is vocational education we are dealing with and, as such, is geared towards all students mastering the competencies required by the pertinent professional standards. This means that, in higher vocational education, the professional competencies must be absorbed in their entirety by all students within the time allowed by law. Where necessary, special conditions may be implemented to make higher vocational education accessible for people with disabilities. However, it would be unacceptable to adapt the curriculum in any way for people with disabilities. (Alekhina & Shemanov, 2018)

The development of inclusive vocational education is monitored and actively promoted by the Government of the Russian Federation. This is evidenced by two documents adopted in 2021: the Interdepartmental Comprehensive Action Plan for

the development of inclusive general and extracurricular education, children's recreation, the creation of special conditions for students with special needs for the long term until 2030 and the Interdepartmental Comprehensive Action Plan to improve the accessibility of secondary vocational and higher education for people with special needs, including career orientation and employment (Institute for Problems of Inclusive Education, n.d.). These strategic documents have defined a system of changes in human resources policies, scientific and methodological support and regulatory framework that will make general, continued and vocational education accessible for people with disabilities in Russia.

Conclusion

On the whole, despite development difficulties and explicit problems, by the early 2020s in Russia, there had emerged a domestic model of inclusive education as a strategy for accessible education that relies on parents' and students' choice of educational paths and organisations and is based on the adaptation of course curricula, creation of special educational conditions, continuous psychological and pedagogical assistance and social support. Despite this, it must be said that the problematic field of inclusive educational practice is quite meaningful.

Let us name the most complex and systemic issues affecting the development of the process of inclusion in education. This is primarily a question of exclusion—the problem of home-based education for children with disabilities. It is necessary to study the range of reasons why the school sends a "special" student away to be schooled at home, the search for strategies for managing and controlling such phenomena, the development of psychological and pedagogical technologies for the "withdrawal" of children from home-schooling to school. The second is the issue of the professional competencies of teachers and specialists capable of solving the problems of inclusion and models of their training in higher education.

The third is the scientific concept of the inclusive educational environment of the school and the criteria for its evaluation, which is currently the subject of heated debates among experts (Alekhina et al., 2021).

The StoryStory (A)

An Opportunity to "Twist Your String". Inclusion Begins with Understanding

A story of Anna Bitova, Head of the Center for Curative Pedagogy

Anna Bitova has been working in the field of rehabilitation and education of children with mental disabilities since 1980. Since the beginning of the work of the Center for Curative Pedagogy "Special Childhood" (CCP) in 1989, for many years she led a group of intensive comprehensive care for children with organic lesions of the central nervous system and severe speech disabilities. Since 1989, CCP has helped over 15,000 families and in doing so, has given this very large number of children a unique opportunity to learn, develop and live a good and decent life. Nowadays the CCP makes a huge contribution to the development of inclusion at all levels of society, culture and policy.

In an interview, Anna talks about her first experience of long-term individual work with a child with ASD. It was with this case that the history of the famous Center for Curative Pedagogy began.

Anna Bitova, one of the founders of the Center for Curative Pedagogy "Special Childhood", which nowadays makes a huge contribution to the development of inclusion at all levels of society, culture and policy, talks about the history of the Center's creation through the prism of long-term individual work with a boy with ASD. This representation of individual experience is embedded in the history of the development of inclusive education in Russia, drawing attention to the challenges of conceptualising the phenomena of integration and inclusion, institutional and cultural barriers in ensuring equal access to education for children with disabilities.

An Acquaintance with Kostya

I met Kostya around 1985. At that time, I was working as a speech therapist in a children's psychiatric hospital.[1] And the head of the ward brought a boy to me, he was completely unusual for us, with a diagnosis of "children's schizophrenia". Now it would be diagnosed as autism, of course, but then such a diagnosis was unknown. He was five and a half years old, absolutely absorbed in his inner world, walked around the square all the time: just let him go, and he starts making a square with his feet around the room. He responded very poorly to appeals, it was necessary to approach and take his hand, he avoided eye contact, did not use speech. Thus, there were features of the autistic spectrum. It was a completely new format for me. I worked with children with autism spectrum disabilities more, in the format of diagnosing and counselling the parents, but in that case, I had to deal with the child in person—this was a new, exciting task for me.

I taught classes with a group of children with stuttering, about his age or slightly younger. There were twelve children in the group, and Kostya became the thirteenth. The morning began with a group being brought to me by a staff, the children were set at a common table, the door was locked from the outside, since this was a psychiatric hospital, and I was left alone with the children. And then—do as you want, but everything should be ok. I must say that it was a full day care ward: children were brought in in the morning, they studied there, slept, ate, and in the evening they were taken away. There was a certain program for children with stuttering, but Kostya was kind of a little different. Nevertheless, he sat with everyone, and was obedient. The general lesson lasted an hour, then the children went to music, then they were picked up by a tutor, and I took turns with each of them conducting an individual lesson.

The Way to Kostya's Inner World Lay Through the Subway

Kostya was absolutely amazing! He had his own interests, he was interested in transport, and it was the subway, the metro. So, we began to draw the subway, describing the metro stations and even write their names, although Kostya was not really interested in writing. In general, a year later, Kostya was able to draw the entire metro map on his own, write the names of all stations on the map. It became possible to talk to him—mainly, also on the topic of the subway. We played this theme: as you enter the subway, you pay, you throw a coin, then he began to repeat how they announce in the subway: "The doors are closing. The next station is Frunzenskaya." Such automated phrases began to appear. He started talking—so that it was possible to have a dialogue with him—by about the age of eight.

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[1] Now—the Scientific and Practical Center for Mental Health of Children and Adolescents named after G.E. Suhareva of the Moscow Department of Health https://suhareva-center.mos.ru/.

All these years we spent "in the subway" with him, in a virtual sense: we discussed the subway, the platform, the driver, passengers, doors, seats, the whole environment. Then I realised that he had practically no ordinary vocabulary, and I began to expand it on a base on the stations' names: "Do you know that this is the Botanical Garden station, and why is it called that? - Because there is a Botanical garden there. – Right, let's see what plants live there." And so, through the subway, we began to learn about plants. We imagined as if we were getting off the train at the station, and there trees, bushes and grasses sprouted underground … and we need to see where the fruits and vegetables are. Then we went to the Krasnopresnenskaya metro station as if the animals had escaped from the zoo[2]—the names of the animals were taught that way. Thus, it went on for several years, and gradually, Kostya began to use speech. He is a very industrious, and he had a brilliant mom who worked out everything we gave her—they practised whole days at home with mom, too.

How the CCP Was Launched

Then, the authorities closed our full day care ward in a psychiatric hospital. They closed not only ours but all such wards: for teenagers, for children with anorexia. Such branches were economically unprofitable. It was an absolute disaster! Imagine if a parent wants to continue the development of a child, s/he must hospitalise the child! Moreover, there were no other services back in 1988. It was possible to send the child to kindergarten, but there was no medical doctor there. but Kostya needed a doctor, a psychiatrist. Moreover, together with many parents whose children needed such services, we decided that we shall establish something so that children can live at home and go to classes and receive comprehensive services. As a result, we found a facility near the Park Kultury station (just an apartment) and went there.

I quit my job, my parents supported us, and we recruited a team. We had a doctor, a psychologist, to provide a comprehensive approach. It was 1989. And Kostya, as it turns out, was among the founders of the Center.[3] It is because of Kostya, as it appears, that we launched our Center. And Kostya's mom was our first assistant. She [Kostya's mom] was a very simple person, but very intelligent. She became our caretaker, we mastered all our tasks with her, she spent all the time with us, and I did not face any economic issues at all—she solved everything.

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[2] The Moscow Zoo is located near the Krasnopresnenskaya station.

[3] Non-profit organization Center for Curative Pedagogy "A Special Childhood" was established in 1989 by the initiative of parents of children with SEND, and professionals https://ccp.org.ru/.

Be 'Special' but Go to a Regular School

When it was time to send Kostya to school, she went to the nearest school and found a teacher whose class she wanted to send Kostya to. We used our opportunities to arrange a medical card for Kostya so that information about his psychiatric status was absent there. And in 1991 Kostya went to school. There was an agreement with the teacher, that Kostya's mother would sit in the hallway near the classroom throughout the school day, and Kostya sat quite quietly in the classroom.

Of course, he continued to be a 'special child'—he did not grasp everything at once, did not understand the hidden meaning, performs a lot of stereotypical actions. For example, he was twisting a string. But he knew that it was prohibited to twist the string in public. Because this is a socially unacceptable behavior. Well, his mom was right that she was afraid that if he did this at school, he would not be treated very well. We had an agreement with him: I told him: "we'll do our studies now, and then you'll twist the string." Oh, how he filigreed it, in such beautiful waves …

I think every person should have an opportunity, to take time to twist their own string. It is necessary to give each person with autism to twist his or her string. And you and I, we also need to twist our string. Everyone has their own.

Teacher, Mother and Classmates

While Kostya studied at school, the first two years he continued also to attend classes at our Center. He has regularly seen a psychiatrist, because there were breakdowns, prescribed therapy, and so on. But, in principle, he held on. The teacher consulted with us and with his mother. She asked Kostya to sit next to her so that she could hold him by the shoulder—it was calmer for him that way. The teacher made sure that he was not offended. She would rarely call him to answer by the blackboard, but rather would give him time to think more. And she understood what his problems were. It is important. So, they worked closely with the mom: the teacher gave her homework, just like we did. And his mother for the first three or four years was his assistant. There were no assistants then. Besides, the teacher set up the class so that the classmates could see Kostya as an interesting person. And he was really very interesting. He has a wonderful memory. He knows all the stations along the route of all the commuter trains in almost all directions. If a new station opens, he will definitely go to this new station to learn more about it.

When primary school ended, it was very difficult for Kostya, because for an autistic person, changing the routine is difficult. He could not cope with the need to move to a new classroom at every change. At this point, his classmates helped a lot, they were very supportive of him. The class perceived him as belonging to their group, this feeling was developed due the influence of the teacher and, probably, Kostya's mother. He was part of the group, albeit strange, but an integral part. And

his classmates looked after him. Thanks to them, he studied for nine grades, graduated from school, received a certificate.

Kostya Has a Big Team

Kostya did not study very successfully. While he was in elementary school, his mother did homework with him at home, but then, when high school started, our entire Center took care of it. Our employee, a chemist by education, did chemistry with him, another one was engaged in physics, mathematics, We helped him with all subjects, because my mother could no longer help with mathematics and physics, she graduated from school a long time ago.

He has friendly relations with a couple of guys from his group, still from the Center: with Lyosha, a guy of his age, they were in a psychiatric hospital together for three years and came to the Center together and then went to school together. Lyosha also studied at a mainstream school, although he has a mental delay. They are friends, as much as Kostya knows how to be friends. He doesn't telephone anybody, but they sometimes meet. Kostya doesn't let anyone into his house, but he can come to visit. Kostya congratulates me on all the holidays, for the New Year he always gives me a postcard and a box of chocolates. Apparently, as mom set up such rule, so it continues.

Risk of Exploitation

After graduating from the ninth grade, it was clear that he was completely immature. We decided to employ him in the Center, at the reception. He spent a year there, matured a little, and then entered a printing college. He graduated from it, and his mother got him a job in a printing house. But he is very reliable, and employers often exploited him. When his mother was alive, she talked with his bosses periodically, apparently. But after she suddenly died; he was all left alone. It became clear that he could not stay there because all the work was dumped on him.

Assisted Independence

Now Kostya works at CCP, at the reception for two days and assisting with various chores for three days. His mother died more than 10 years ago and Kostya lives alone. He performs everything that his mom told him to do. He is an autistic person who knows the rules. He cooks himself a full breakfast, lunch and dinner every day.

Sometimes he gets in troubles, for example, flooded neighbors and does not know what to do in such a situation. We have an employee in the organisation who is responsible for Kostya. Kostya calls her, tells her about his problem, and she solves his problems: if the washing machine has leaked, she calls a repair specialist. But this happens infrequently. He mostly lives on his own. The only thing is that we cannot bring him to the open labor market, because he is very simple-minded. In theory, he needs this personal assistance service, which we are now trying to lobby in the law.[4] Moreover, he needs it in the minimum version: it is enough that once a month someone talks to him, and there is a phone number of a contact person to whom he can call.

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[4] CCP specialists are trying to ensure that assistance services is approved at the legislative level.

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Chapter 3
Equality and Inclusion in Russian Secondary Education: Post-Soviet Policy Analysis

Sergey Kosaretsky 📖

Abstract This chapter is devoted to the analysis of the design and implementation of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the field of inclusion and equity in education over the past 30 years (i.e., the post-Soviet period) in secondary education. The analysis covers legislation, conceptual policy documents, and programs at the national level. We discuss how the principles of inclusiveness and equity in education are institutionalised in the state regulation system. We considered which categories of children were identified as groups at risk of limited access to educational resources and educational exclusion and became target support groups. We demonstrate in which areas success has been achieved and how the limitations of a policy's effectiveness relate to overall progress in institutional reforms. The presented case may be interesting to other countries, especially countries in transition facing a growing wealth gap, rising poverty, and migration processes.

Introduction

The move to define *inclusive education* is challenging in most countries, because not only is inclusive education defined in terms of disability as a barrier to education, but it is also described in how it contributes to high-quality learning opportunities for all children to respect and value diversity (OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2019; Wan, 2008).

However, the quality and timeliness of the response to it depends on the history of the countries, the current sociocultural and political situation, and the background of education systems. In this section, we attempt to answer questions about how Russia's policy in the field of educational inclusion and equity was formed and transformed

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over the past 30 years. The starting point of the analysis is the beginning of the 1990s, the USSR's collapse, and the beginning of the sovereign Russian Federation. We think it is essential because even though Soviet society was not free from inequality in its education system, the high level of social justice was a distinguished characteristic of the Soviet school model. There has been universal accessibility to general education in the USSR since the early stages of the development of the Soviet state. A high degree of uniformity characterised education conditions in Soviet schools (teaching staff and infrastructure). The level of social inclusion in schools (uniformity in the social characteristics of the contingent of students) is also high. The political and economic changes that followed the collapse of the USSR significantly affected the field of education, particularly inclusion and equality.

The presented case of policy transformation in the Russian Federation in the field of inclusion and equity may interest other countries, especially those in transition. These countries had several advantages regarding equal opportunities—a fee-free education for all children and nearly universal general education enrollments (Silova, 2009)—faced with a growing wealth gap, rising poverty, and migration processes. They sought answers to these challenges, overcoming the contradictory legacy of the socialist/Soviet period, joining the sphere of influence of ambiguous global educational reforms (Chankseliani & Silova, 2018; Gerber & Hout, 1995; Kotásek, 1993; Silova, 2002).

We observe these countries experiencing similar difficulties in conceptualising inclusion and justice in education, defining key terms and enshrining them in legislation, and identifying and monitoring the situation of vulnerable groups (Hanssen & Khitruk, 2021). Most have taken steps toward focusing their definitions on multiple marginalised groups, going beyond learners with disabilities and special educational needs. However, in practice, there remains a focus on certain groups and uncertainty or inconsistency in supporting others (UNESCO, 2021b). Even more challenging is to back political declarations with strategies and plans that address the diversity of at-risk groups and their needs. In this regard, the Russian Federation provides valuable experiences (both positive and negative) in the development and implementation of programs and projects to support children in rural and remote areas and children with disabilities and special educational needs (Alekhina, 2016; Iarskaia-Smirnova & Romanov, 2007).

Methodology

We analysed educational policy in Russia at the state level, which allowed us to formulate a conclusion regarding the norms and trends common to diverse countries. This approach also has limitations due to the transfer of leading powers in primary, general, and extracurricular education to the regional and municipal levels, where it is possible to find features beyond national vectors. We plan to analyse them in the future.

For the analysis, we used primary educational policies passed by the Government of the Russian Federation (subsequently referred to as GRF in this chapter): laws from 1992 to 2020, the Presidential Decree of May 7, 2012 (Putin, 2012), the Law of the Russian Federation of July 10, 1992, No. 3266-1 "On Education," the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" of 2012 No. 273-FZ, and concepts, strategies, and programs: the concept of modernisation of the education system until 2010, federal target programs for the development of education (GRF, 2000–2005, 2006–2010, 2011–2015, and 2016–2020), the National Educational Initiative "Our New School" (2010), the State Program for the Development of Education 2012–2020, the concept of a nationwide system for identifying and developing young talent (2012), and the national project "Education" (2018–2024).

We were interested in the following questions: How deeply were the principles of inclusion and fairness embedded in the state regulation system? What categories of children were identified as being at risk of exclusion and educational exclusion? How were the barriers to inclusion and equality formulated? What measures were proposed for implementation to eliminate risk factors? What levels of the education system and critical elements did they cover?

We focus on analysing the tasks, measures, and results stated in the documents, in some cases characterising their practical implementation but not fully setting the task of correlating intentions and their implementation. We used the framework of inclusion and equity set by UNESCO and the OECD. Inclusion is considered a transformative process that ensures full participation and access to quality learning opportunities for all children, young people, and adults, respecting and valuing diversity, and eliminating all forms of discrimination in and through education (UNESCO, 2019). Equitable education systems such as those that ensure the achievement of educational potential do not result from personal and social circumstances, including factors such as gender, ethnic origin, indigenous background, immigrant status, sexual orientation and gender identity, special education needs, and giftedness (Cerna et al., 2021).

The modern policy framework of inclusion and equity covers all levels of the system and its elements: increased funding, considering the level of deprivation of the territory and the presence of students from vulnerable groups in the contingent of schools; attracting the most qualified teachers and additional specialists to such schools; remedial training programs; subsidies for participation in extracurricular programs; partnerships between schools; engagement with parents and communities; monitoring; and evaluating diversity (Brussino, 2020; Meijer & Watkins, 2019; OECD, 2021, 2023; Shewbridge, 2016).

The essential condition for developing and implementing policy measures is monitoring the access, participation, and achievement of all learners. This implies a regular collection of contextual data (family completeness, parents' employment, family's financial situation, the language spoken by students at home, socioeconomic or ethnic/Indigenous background, etc.) (OECD, 2008; Yastrebov et al., 2014).

Legislation is a vital part of developing a more inclusive and equitable education system (UNESCO, 2017). Legislation provides the recognition of diversity and the need for specific provisions, the rights of particular student groups, and a framework for inclusion and for reforming those elements in the existing system that may

constitute significant barriers to the equitable distribution of responsibilities, stakeholder engagement, organisation, and supervision (Makoelle, 2020). We do not give a detailed overview of the policy regarding children with disabilities and special educational needs. A separate chapter in this book is devoted to this.

Inclusion and Equity in Education: Place on the Political Agenda and Ensuring Mechanisms

The 1990s: High Ideals and Disturbing Trends

The most important vector of the reform of the Soviet education system of the late 80s–early 90s is the expansion of independence, autonomy, and variability—the 1992 Law "On Education" made these principles prominent. Simultaneously, the law enshrined some essential principles of inclusive and fair education: "protection and development by the education system of national cultures, regional cultural traditions, and peculiarities in a multinational state" as well as "accessibility of education [and] adaptability of the education system to the levels and peculiarities of the development and training of students [and] learners."

The law created special conditions for "citizens with disabilities" and "citizens who have shown outstanding abilities" to receive an education. In addition, the right of citizens to receive primary general education in their mother tongue was secured, which, following the law, was ensured by "creating the necessary number of appropriate educational institutions, classes, groups, and conditions for their functioning" (GRF, 1992).

Meanwhile, political attention to education has omitted the growing processes of social differentiation in Russian society. They resulted from economic changes; however, the state's position on education in the period under review played a significant role. In the context of the deterioration of the state's economic situation, on the one hand, and the policy of expanding the schools' autonomy and the educational services market's formation, on the other, the state has ceased to fulfil the role of a regulator of relationships in the education system, including issues of equal educational opportunities (Kolesnikova, 2008).

Many of the decisions implemented helped strengthen the opportunities of some social groups and reduced others during the school education reform (the beginning of the 1990s). It comprised the rejection of unification favouring various types of schools and programs, the expansion of opportunities for families to choose schools regardless of their place of residence, the legitimisation of the Institute of Selection for Admission to Schools, and the introduction of paid services. Groups with a high level of education, income, and social capital obtain natural advantages in unstable environments (Kosaretsky et al., 2016).

The opinion is that "the Soviet school, imbued with the ideology of social equality, sought to provide young people with equal starting conditions for entering working

life." The new state policy principles in the field of education in actual practice contributed to the division of students in which the "gifted and the deprived of talents inevitably generate a social selection, which only outwardly takes the legitimate form of adaptation to the opportunities and academic performance of students" (Cherednichenko, 1999).

In post-Soviet Russia, there has been increased educational inequality in general education. There is also school segregation. Schools that differ in the social characteristics of their contingent have noticeable differences in conditions, such as the level of funding, qualifications of personnel, wages, availability of specialists for individual work with students, educational results (OGE, GIA, PISA), and the educational trajectories of children (transition to the 10th grade, admission to secondary vocational education or university; Cherednichenko, 1999; Konstantinovsky et al., 2006; Pinskaya et al., 2013). However, the topic of inequality and justice in this period does not turn out to be significant for state policy, which laid the foundation for the post-Soviet model of education risks that persisted over the following decades.

Early 2000s: Concern and Declaration of Intent

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, a new stage of state policy in education has started, within which, unlike in the previous period, policy tends to be more realistic and related to objective problems, including the unequal growth of education opportunities. The First Federal Program for the Development of Education in 2000 for the first time openly discussed the barriers to obtaining high-quality education and socialisation. There are some examples: "difficulties with the preparation and publication of textbooks in the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation," the increase in the number of children with disabilities and children in need of psychological and pedagogical support, and children who do not attend school for various reasons (e.g., unequal mobility due to socioeconomic conditions; GRF, 2000).

Respectively, the program suggests measures aimed at removing barriers and ensuring the inclusive nature of education, in particular, concerning children with limited health opportunities and special features of development, orphans and children left without parental care, children of the small ethnic groups of the North and children from low-income families, ethnic groups, and refugees from the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The Concept of Modernisation of Russian Education until 2010, which was approved in 2001, noted that the potential for education should be fully used for "consolidating society, preserving a single sociocultural space of the country, overcoming ethnic and national tensions and social conflicts on the basis of the priority of individual rights, [and] equality of national cultures and various faiths, limiting social inequality." The priority of modernisation was stated to ensure state guarantees of accessibility and equal opportunities for obtaining a full-fledged education "regardless of the material wealth of the family, place of residence, nationality, and state of health" (Order of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation No.

393, dated 11.02.2002). The composition of the declared guarantees included, among others, "subsidies to expand the opportunities for children from low-income families to receive secondary and higher vocational education," "targeted payments for low-income students," measures to support students of rural schools, "individual psychological and pedagogical support for children with asocial problems," "medical and psychological support and special conditions for teaching children with disabilities mainly in a comprehensive school at the place of residence, and if there are appropriate medical indications—in special schools and boarding schools" (GRF, 2002). Thus, until 2010, the Concept of Modernisation of Russian Education identified the most significant number of groups with particular problems and needs compared with others for the entire period under review.

The Federal Target Program for the Development of Education for 2006–2010 continued the state's focus on inequality in the availability and quality of education related to social differentiation. The document noted "the growth of social tension caused by the preservation of unequal access to education and the differentiation of the quality of education for different regions and population groups," as well as that "social differentiation leads to a significant gap in the education of children whose families belong to different social groups, which lays the prerequisites for deepening this differentiation in the future." The program focused on "achieving social equality in education," "reducing the differences between urban and rural education" (based on the results of the unified state exam), and "expanding the possibility of education for children with disabilities" (GRF, 2005). The beneficiaries of the Federal Target Program and the National Project "Education" were children in rural schools (school transport), gifted children (grants), and children with disabilities (accessible school infrastructure).

The 10th Year of the Twenty-First Century: Attempt at Systemic Solutions

The next stage of state policy refers to the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century. The national educational initiative "Our New School" set its vectors (Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation (GRF) No. 1507-r of September 7, 2010). The text of this mainly ideological document contains the credo "of an inclusive school"; a new school is a school for everyone. Any school will ensure the successful socialisation of children with disabilities, disabled children, and children left without parental care who are in difficult life situations. However, the declared main directions of updating the Russian school did not include forming an inclusive and fair school. That is, measures ensuring equality were not specified.

However, another direction was "The development of a support system for talented children." The "concept of a nationwide system for identifying and developing young talents" manifested the special significance of the group of talents for the state in 2012. It attempted to consider the principle of inclusion and equality—it declared "the

creation of conditions for the development of the abilities of all children and young people, regardless of their place of residence, social status, and financial capabilities of the family." However, in this and the subsequent "Set of measures to implement the concept of a nationwide system for identifying and developing young talents," measures that implemented this approach were not formulated, perhaps except for "the development of electronic educational resources for children with disabilities in various programs of extracurricular education for children" (GRF, 2010).

The Federal Target Program for the Development of Education for 2011–2015 presented an agenda of inclusive and equal education opportunities in a more stream-lined way than the previous stage (GRF, Decree of the No. 61 dated 07.02.2011). It fixed problems requiring attention regarding the "unequal access to quality educa-tion, which is one of the factors aggravating the emerging social inequality," ensuring the "successful socialisation of children with disabilities, disabled children, children left without parental care, as well as children in difficult life situations."

One of the target program's indicators was the "level of accessibility of education according to modern standards for all categories of citizens, regardless of their place of residence, social and property status, and health status." The program introduced modern educational, organisational, and legal models that ensure the successful socialisation of "children with disabilities and disabled children [and] orphans and children left without parental care" (GRF, 2011). In practice, measures continue to create an accessible educational environment in schools. Distance learning for children with disabilities has also started to develop.

The most important event at this stage was the adoption of the new Federal Law on Education in 2012 (GRF, 2012a). It has taken significant steps to institutionalise special rights and conditions for the education of children with disabilities and gifted children in general, with articles of the law describing the rights and guarantees and two separate new articles addressing these groups directly. An important innovation was the consolidation of the right to study according to an individual curriculum. Moreover, the law has defined special conditions for regulatory funding for students with disabilities and small rural schools.

A set of measures has been developed to introduce inclusive education for students with disabilities, including training teachers, and creating modern material, and tech-nical conditions for training (specifically discussed in Chap. 2). Conversely, at this stage, children of small and indigenous peoples, the problems of native languages, and cultural characteristics fell out of the attendance zone. The policy did not focus on children from migrant families, despite their numbers increasing during this period.

The policy agenda has included school inequality related to contingent character-istics for the first time since 2012. The President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, wrote in his program article "Building Justice. Social Policy for Russia":

> In a number of our major cities, groups of schools with persistently low learning outcomes have been formed. There are almost no excellent students or participants of Olympiads in such schools, but many children have learning difficulties, a non-native Russian language, and deviant behavior. If schools work in difficult social conditions, then they, and not only gymnasiums and lyceums, working, as a rule, with well-off children, should receive special support—both methodological, personnel, and financial. (Putin, 2012)

The decree of the president of the Russian Federation of May 2012 was intended to support teachers working with children from socially disadvantaged families (GRF, 2012b). The Federal Target Program for 2016–2020 (GRF, 2015) and the State Program for the Development of Education (GRF, 2017) included a project to support (subsidies and methodological assistance) regions that developed programs to improve the quality of education in schools operating in unfavourable social conditions. More than 50 regions received support. Regional projects differed significantly in scale and elaboration. There were examples of a frankly formal approach, along with effective practices (Yaroslavl, Moscow, Tambov, Tomsk Regions, Krasnoyarsk Territory). In addition, the funding for the programs was insufficient and did not meet real needs.[1]

In the direction of educational standards (curriculum), we should note the institutionalisation of adapted educational programs and federal standards of general education for students with disabilities. The law implements the most important mechanism of individualisation for the policy of inclusion and equality: There is the possibility of drawing up an individual curriculum to consider a particular student's characteristics and educational needs. However, the practice of using it is still quite limited. The individual child support or intervention plan, widely used in many leading educational systems (e.g., STAR, n.d.), has not been legally established.

As for the preparation and evaluation of teachers, the policy has become more advanced only concerning children with disabilities and special educational needs. Federal law establishes the obligation to ensure the training of pedagogical workers who possess special methods of teaching children with disabilities and to promote such workers' involvement in organisations. The Federal Standard of Higher Education's bachelor's degree in Pedagogical Education does not contain detailed requirements for preparing a teacher to work with students in the classroom, considering differences to ensure inclusion and equality. General expectations regarding the ability to use the technologies necessary to individualise training, including students with special educational needs, are formulated in their professional activities.

The professional standards of a teacher are very progressive, targeting the use of particular approaches and learning technologies "to include all students in the educational process," including those with special educational needs: the gifted, those for whom Russian is not their native language, students with disabilities, the socially vulnerable, youth who have fallen into difficult life situations, migrant children, orphans, children with behavioural deviations, and children with addiction. The teacher should "build educational activities taking into account the cultural differences of children." It also should "show a positive attitude to the native languages of students" and "use special remedial teaching methods for children with disabilities." However, the Russian professional standard, itself, has not become a real tool that determines the framework for assessing the competencies of a teacher and the content

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[1] The subsidies in 2017 totaled 65 million rubles and, in 2018, 114 million rubles. For comparison, the City Challenge project, implemented from 2002 to 2011, was financed in England (London, Manchester, and groups of districts) to ensure equal educational opportunities and the convergence of educational results of children from well-off and low-income families. It amounted to 80 million pounds in London and 50 million pounds in Manchester.

of his professional development. Measures to attract qualified personnel only affect rural and remote schools.

Actual Situation: Seeking the Relevant Version of Equity in Education

The current stage of state educational policy starts with the Presidential Decree of May 2018, the key provisions of which in terms of education are specified in the National Project "Education" (GRF, 2018). At this stage, there have been no changes in the principles of inclusion and equality policy. Attention should be paid to the emphasis on working with gifted children, where the system is proposed to be built on the principles of "justice [and] universality" and the strengthening of rhetoric regarding equality in the sector of children's extracurricular education, where the task is stated to "ensure equal access … for different categories of children in accordance with their educational needs and individual capabilities."

The federal Modern School project in 2018–2023 updated the material and technical basis of organisations that implemented adapted general education programs. The federal Success of Every Child project includes "the introduction of models for equalising the availability of additional general education programs for children with different educational opportunities and needs, including for gifted children from rural areas, disadvantaged children," and the introduction of remote technologies to develop additional programs for children with disabilities.

During this period, the group of children with learning difficulties was fixed as the target group for support. In 2022, the concept of the School of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation was approved. It is considered a mechanism for the implementation of the principle of equity as a basic for the Russian education system in terms of the availability of a quality education for every child according to his interests and abilities, regardless of place of residence, school of study, social status, and income of parents.

Differences in educational opportunities in the concept are associated with the heterogeneity of the educational environment, teachers' professional competence levels, a variety of software and educational and methodological support, and a shortage of individual groups of teaching staff. Hence, the key solution seems to be the "formation of a single educational space," with uniform requirements for the content and conditions of education. Meanwhile, achieving uniformity, in our opinion, does not sufficiently consider the need to adapt to different needs in a situation of the contingent's growing heterogeneity. The government used rhetoric to restore the Soviet model of education in various aspects of educational policy. However, as for the "principle of equity," there are doubts that its Soviet version will be relevant to current socioeconomic conditions.

Conclusion

After changes in its political and economic model, Russia has faced a growing gap in opportunities for disparate population groups in their access to public goods, including quality education. The state sought to respond to this challenge by building a model of inclusive and equitable education that differed from the Soviet one. Our research found that the goal of ensuring equal educational opportunities in the general and extracurricular education systems was represented in the state educational policy during the 1990s and the initial decades of the twenty-first century. The composition of the groups in which the policy focuses on changes during the period is under review. The most consistent policies were realised for children with disabilities and special educational needs, gifted children, and children from rural areas, but to a minor extent concerning children from low-income and disadvantaged families. The group of indigenous children included in policy in the early 2000s has not been considered a target of equality policy in recent years. Attention to ethnic minorities as a whole, accounting for the cultural and language characteristics and needs of children, has weakened in recent years. Children with immigrant status, sexual orientation, and gender identity are not identified as groups at risk of exclusion and educational exclusion and as target groups to protect rights and support. There is no permanent continuity between various initiatives and projects in terms of widening accessibility and ensuring equal educational opportunities in the general education system for many categories.

We did not discover a consistent policy framework for inclusion and equity in education with strict definitions of concepts. The inclusion framework was used only for the categories of children and adults with disabilities and special educational needs. The idea of equity was on the periphery of educational policy, perhaps because of associations with the "equalisation" of the Soviet period, but also because of the fascination with neoliberal values. In recent years, this principle has been actively proclaimed; however, its content and practical implementation seem contradictory. Pointing out the different needs and interests of children is widespread in policy documents. Conceptually, the topic of diversity is not initially integrated into the Russian educational agenda. At this stage, it is increasingly interpreted negatively as an element of globalisation policy, an alien value.

Specific categories (low-income families and disadvantaged families) receive different definitions at the level of federal and regional regulations. Their accounting is conducted differently. There is no full-fledged system for identifying risk groups and barriers to inclusion and achieving excellent educational results. The policy has achieved its greatest success in the development of infrastructure: educational centers for talented children; an accessible environment for children with special needs; repairs of school buildings, education equipment, and transport for rural and remote schools; and modern boarding schools for indigenous children. For this purpose, the tools of federal programs and national projects were used. The design of such programs and projects may be interesting in a comparative international context. A vulnerable aspect of the policy of the post-Soviet period in Russia was

the creation of new principles to distribute resources, which would allow the allocation of resources considering the differences in the needs of groups of students and schools. The examples of its implementation are contradictory in Russia and the countries of Central Asia and Moldova (formula financing with coefficients regarding rural schools and schools for teaching children with special educational needs) and Georgia (voucher system; Tabatadze & Gorgadze, 2018). It has not yet reflected the approaches that have become generally recognised—providing differential funding for student groups depending on their needs and the needs of the schools (social composition of school students, the level of deprivation of communities, and diverse locations in remote rural or mountainous areas; Alonso & Sánchez, 2011; Meijer & Watkins, 2019; OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2021a, 2021b). In particular, the tools of formula financing (with an increased coefficient) of schools working with children from low-income families and socially disadvantaged families are not used. The other weak point of the policy is the lack of data reflecting the situation of vulnerable groups, including changes due to the implementation of policy measures. Monitoring and evaluating diversity, inclusion, and equity outcomes at the local and school levels of inclusion and equality have not taken shape as an independent direction. Separate accounting systems have been formed for children with disabilities and gifted children; however, their completeness and reliability cause discussion. In the regular presentation of the official data from national and regional monitoring of the quality of education, there are no sections of analysis according to the category of students, which would have allowed us to reveal the differences in academic performance associated with the characteristics of these groups. In general, policies for vulnerable groups are not evidence based. These difficulties in collecting meaningful data for the inclusion of educationally vulnerable populations, identifying students needing additional resources and support, and monitoring their academic progress characterise most former USSR countries (UNESCO, 2021b).

Current limitations of quality assessment systems further hinder the generation of information about the influences that affect the inclusion and exclusion of students within education systems (Ainscow, 2020a, 2020b). The support of schools as centers of comprehensive, inclusive practices has not taken shape as a separate direction. Schools often included in projects to develop inclusive education for children with disabilities work with talents to a lesser extent—in projects to support children in difficult life situations or children with a non-native Russian language (in terms of integration). However, these practices are not united by a common framework of inclusive, fair education at the school level, which guarantees flexible curricula, tolerance, and highly professional teachers, and a broad approach to assessment and individualisation to the extent necessary to ensure an optimal educational experience for all students, regardless of the difficulties hindering their studies. We attribute these limitations to the low success of Russia's policy and many post-Soviet countries' policies in ensuring school autonomy.

As for school staff, the task of forming inclusive values and paying attention to diversity is reflected in professional teachers' standards and standards of teacher training. Nevertheless, its practical implementation is limited in situations of chronic problems with teacher recruitment and salaries (UNICEF CEE/CIS, 2011).

The Russian case is a good example of how the implementation of the policy of inclusion and equity in education requires not only basic goal setting and rhetoric but also institutional solutions. Its success is closely related to overall progress in the reforms of financing, monitoring, and quality assessment as well as the employment contracts of teachers.

The Story (B)

"This Shell in Which a Child Sits Alone Needs to Be Cracked Open". How to Help a Child with ASD Live a Full Life

Anastasia Rozhdestvenskaya on raising her son with autism spectrum disorder (thereafter ASD)

Anastasia talks about the upbringing and training of her son with ASD from the moment she discovered his behavioral difficulties until today, when her son became a university student. The story focuses on the accessibility and quality of educational services that Anastasia's son received at different stages of his growing up, the barriers to access to education that her family had to overcome, and the assistance to her son and the whole family from educational and medical organizations and NGOs.

Anastasia Rozhdestvenskaya, a mother of a child with ASD, talks about her 20 years of experience in raising and supporting her son and going through all stages of education with him during the period of the birth of integrated, then inclusive education. Anastasia places special emphasis on the huge gaps in the professional training of Russian teachers and the invaluable help her family received in the end of 1990s–beginning of 2000s from NGOs, specialising in early care and providing educational services for children with disabilities.

The Search for a "Magic Pill": "It Seemed Like We Were Going to Get on Top of It and Fix It …"

Antosha was born in 2002. When he was one year and eight months old, in winter of 2004, he got infected. We went to the hospital, and then again, and with such serious illnesses we didn't notice immediately that he stopped talking. He naturally did not speak in the conventional sense, but he had a lot of his own signs, you could understand what he wanted, he would point and turn to other people, he understood people's appeals to him. Then, after infection and hospitals, so coincidentally, he was diagnosed with autism. We were so much concerned about his physical condition, and did not at once notice the changes taking place, but within three months, in addition to speech, his understanding of appeal, or at least his reaction to appeal was gone. He did not react when somebody offered something. I used to say to him: "Bring a book, we'll read it," and he would bring a book, but that form of communication, too, has gradually disappeared. So, by his birthday, by June 1, it was clear that the child changed, he was just wandering around on his own somewhere. So called "field behaviour",[2] i.e. a person wanders around, takes something arbitrarily, does not perform any consistent task. Of course, it was immediately clear that something was wrong, but it was not clear that this "something" was for the rest of life. It seemed that we were going to get on top of it and fix it …

By the end of the summer, we found our way to Solnechnyi Mir[3] because the daughter of friends of my parents worked there. Thus, the acquaintances, some connections helped us a lot. If it hadn't been that woman, it would have taken much longer to get there. We still would have gone through it, but it would have been longer, more painful, perhaps not getting to the relevant places right away …

My husband and I realised that we needed to look for help where the rationale was clear. The following offers would not work: "An intensive course: three weeks and your child will speak, go to school and win a Nobel Prize". We realised that it would not work. But we, as parents, were still panicking and rushing around, trying

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[2] Field behavior is a concept introduced by Kurt Lewin to denote a set of impulsive responses to external stimuli to situationally significant objects of the perceived environment as opposed to orientation to the accepted goal of activity.

[3] Nash Solnechnyi mir, an NGO, helps children and young people with ASD, https://solnechny mir.ru.

everything, and falling for charlatans. In particular, we were told to conduct blood mercury level test, as there was a hypothesis that our child was allegedly given some vaccinations containing mercury, and that is how he got sick. We spent quite a lot of money to make tests on his nails, hair, urine, to procure some medication prescribed to us. Eight times a day we had to take some medication. We were offered special diets, gluten-free, lactose-free diets, we bought coconut milk, corn flour, who knows what. And the baby wouldn't eat any of it …

We've got a final diagnosis in Winter of 2005, when my son was three years old. That is, we received a preliminary diagnosis almost immediately, and although we were distracted by silly things like 'mercury' and diets, the main path was still the right one, we were directed to the right place. And at two years and two months we have already got in the Institute of Corrective Pedagogy,[4] which was a very fast track, as people stand in line for months to get there. We were lucky to know a specialist who understands at once what we're talking about, without talking all that nonsense that the child 'will grow out of it'. I've heard an incredible amount of this nonsense in previous contacts with the others. If I wanted to put on rose-coloured glasses and listen to all these things I was told about "growing out of it", I would have a non-verbal child now.

Accepting the Diagnosis: "From that Moment on We Knew It Was Forever"

So, we had an introduction at the 'Sunny World' and were referred to holding therapy and play therapy at the Institute of Correctional Pedagogy.[5] We were led there simply by the hand to Elena Rostislavovna Baenskaya.[6] Holding therapy consists of a parent taking a comfortable position and holding the child. If it is an autistic child, s/he is not ready to sit for a second, so that s/he is cuddled, because s/he has to wander somewhere. And he can't sit for a while and listen to something, and starts crying. But such a child should never be released until he calms down and looks at you. The session ends when the child feels that it is not bad to sit in your mother's arms, listen to her singing or telling a story, look into her eyes and just be quiet without moving. This technique gave me (a) an opportunity to be in contact with my child in general and (b) an opportunity to influence him somehow, because when the wildest tantrums happened, I would drop everything, in a shop, no matter where, I would cradle him and say: "You're the best, you're the most wonderful Antosha. Don't worry. You're sad now, but it will pass. I am with you. I'm your mother", and he already knew that I wouldn't let him go until his tears dried up, until he looked at me, and he did it

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[4] State based "Institute of Correlational Pedagogy" (thereafter ICP) is a Research Centre for the Study and Education of Children with Disabilities, https://ikp-rao.ru/#merop.

[5] Federal State Budgetary Scientific Institution "Institute of Correctional Pedagogy of the Russian Academy of Education". Official website: https://ikp-rao.ru/#merop.

[6] Elena Baenskaya, Doctor of Psychology, Institute of Corrective Pedagogy (since 1978).

with lightning speed. All I had to do was hold him close to me and say that for five or three minutes, and then the child would calm down and we would move on.

Of course, our dad is exhausted at this stage, because it's very hard to hold a child by force, and we had a three-year conflict, where I knew it was autism and I should do what smart people say, while he thought I was talking nonsense and just didn't want to go back to work after maternity leave. But, you see, any other job is easier than staying at home with an autistic child. I am absolutely confident to say that a person sitting at home with an autistic child should be paid a salary, and a very large one, because it is a huge work, every second of a day.

We started a holding therapy and then an important thing came in—play therapy, because in order to establish contact with a child, you have to play with him, but play, of course, at his level of understanding. This is a kind of excessive, active movement, because otherwise he won't even turn an eye in your direction. At first, it's some grabbing, catching up, rocking in the canvass, shouting, just to get the child's attention. We played for at least five or seven years straight until we had a story game.

At the same time, in about three years old, we got into the Scientific Centre for Mental Health,[7] with its legendary psychiatrist, Vera Mikhailovna Bashina.[8] She diagnosed us with early childhood autism. From that moment on we realised that it was forever. By the age of three we were in the Centre for Curative Pedagogics,[9] we continued our classes in the ICP. All in all, we luckily spent much less time looking for specialists than if we lived, let's say, in the Yaroslavl[10] region in some village. This is wildly unfair, this is an advantage for Moscow over all other regions, and even in Moscow, we had a huge advantage over other people, because our friends turned out to be from these circles.

In 2006, when Anton was 4.5 years old, we started traveling with the Center for Therapeutic Pedagogy to the camp "Fairy Tale"[11] for 10 days in the company of parents with the same children and teachers. Here we got to know each other, talked in an environment where people don't look at us with rage, and it's such a huge relief, because it's a huge burden when you constantly face hostility, surprise, a desire to scold you for the wrong upbringing of a child if they lie down in a puddle and drink from it. This is very inconvenient, even though you will quickly learn to spit on it.

That's how we got things off the ground—it was thanks to these sessions. The most important thing was to make the child understand that other people can also

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[7] State based 'Scientific Centre for Mental Health' is a medical research organisation in Russia, specialising in the research and treatment of mental illness, https://www.psychiatry.ru.

[8] Bashina Vera Mikhailovna (1927–2014)—Chief Researcher in the Department of Child Psychiatry (1992–2010), Fellow of the Scientific Centre for Mental Health (1955–2010), https://m.ncpz.ru/sotr/3.php.

[9] Non-profit organization Centre for Curative Pedagogy 'A Special Childhood' (CCP) helps children with ASD, cerebral palsy, epilepsy and other conditions, https://ccp.org.ru.

[10] *Yaroslavl* is a city in Russia, located 250 km northeast of Moscow.

[11] Camp "Forest Fairy Tale" («Lesnaya Skazka»)—has been organised by the Centre for Curative Pedagogy in the Valdai District of Novgorod Region since 2003, https://ccp.org.ru/integrativny-j-letnij-lager-3.

be allowed into his circle. This shell, in which the child is sitting alone, needs to be split, and preferably gently and gradually, but if this does not work, something needs to be done with it anyway. You can't leave him there alone; you have to get to him. I even received a lot of comments from my relatives that it was abuse, bullying of a child. And at some point, I started thinking, what if I'm wrong? And in the camp, we found ourselves in the company of like-minded people. What an incredible job it took to create this place, because initially it was a piece of land in terrible condition, littered with broken glass and garbage, and we ourselves cleaned it step by step. And so we created a place where we could have breakthroughs and a sense that we are not alone, a sense of security and support.

A Kindergarten for a Child with ASD: "It's Not Enough to Want, You Have to Be Able to"

As for education, I underestimated Antosha's prospects all the time, I thought it would be good if we found a correctional (Remedial) kindergarten for him, and then a correctional (Remedial) class at school. And he is currently studying at the institute, in his second year.

In 2005, my husband tried to send Anton to a regular kindergarten, because he believed that Antosha, having joined the children's society, would quickly learn to speak and everything would be fine. Well, of course, from the usual kindergarten, which is located next to the house, we were kicked out right on the third day, although I went with the child all the time. Not rudely kicked out, of course, because they had no such right, but persuaded to leave. Because Antosha did not stop for a second: he opened the box—shook everything out of it, opened the next one—the same thing, took a glass of water—poured it out, saw some piece of paper—tore it, a book—tore it. And, with all the desire to reduce all this, I did not have time. Then we went to a kindergarten for children of employees of the Russian Academy of Sciences, with a partial stay. Anton came there 2 times a week for half a day. In this kindergarten, we were somehow accepted, apparently, these 4 h could somehow be endured. But we went to the second kindergarten after a year of classes at CCP, that is, the child was already more systematic, and we were lucky—we got an amazing teacher. But there are no specialists in kindergartens who know how to work with such children.

Then we had a third kindergarten, where we went at the age of 5–6 years. There was a group for special children, and the kindergarten was wonderful. The director decided that there are a lot of such children now, and indeed, something needs to be done for them. And she did it. The problem was that the teachers there were wonderful, patient, lovely ladies who … didn't know how to work with special children. You don't send a person for surgery just because they really want to help. It's not enough to want to help, you also need skills and knowledge.

All the kindergartens that we visited showed a different degree of acceptance: in the first it was negative, in the second it was average, in the sense that they understood

that they could not expel us, and the child was somehow included in the environment. And finally, the last one, already before school, when the teachers tried their best to help, everything was at our service. This is 100% acceptance, but the result is probably almost the same, because it's not enough to want, you need to be able. What is the point of working with a speech therapist for someone who does not use speech? He can learn everything "la-la-la", or "ru-ru-ru", or something else, but he does not understand the meaning of these actions. So, this is not the right approach at all.

We studied at the CPC until Antosha was 5 years old, and then we were told that there was no suitable group for him. And we fell into the deepest despair, because when a child does not have any activities during the day, you feel that the day has disappeared and, perhaps, not just disappeared, but a step back has been taken. At this stage, we started consulting with a psychiatrist. We went to apply for the status of a disabled person. Which, by the way, I don't regret for a second, because all those who believe that disability further deprives a child of the opportunity to get a driver's license, take a close look at the child and think, does he/she really need this license? Disability registration is an important point. This also protects the child, because when you register a disability for a 5-year-old child, no one will force the child to go to the hospital, and when a 20-year-old, he/she will be hospitalised in a psychiatric clinic for a month. Unfortunately, it is difficult to do without disability in adulthood, not because of financial aspects, but because somewhere there is a special program for people with disabilities, somewhere, for example, you can find some kind of work and so on.

The Road to School: "To Refuse Us to Be There Is a Disgrace"

We applied to the Children's Psychiatric Hospital No. 6[12] in order to a disability, and we were referred for a consultation to the candidate of medical sciences, psychiatrist Irina Petrovna Kireeva,[13] and she, as a medical professional, finally explained to me that our classes have an effect, but speech is not added, while Anton is already 5 years old. And if a child does not speak by the age of 7, then after that—what kind of school without speech?! Even, say, in a special school, speech is still needed, there is nothing to do in school without speech. There must be contact, and the child must use some means of communication. If this is not resolved by the age of 7, we will be left without a school. The psychiatrist explained to me that we are stuck in the range when the child does not use speech at all, because his painful condition interferes with him, i.e. he looks at everything as if through a veil or is overly sensitive to

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[12] Children's Psychiatric Hospital No. 6, Moscow, https://clinics.medsovet.info/msk/76723-det skaya-psihiatricheskaya-bolnica-6.

[13] Kireeva Irina Petrovna—psychiatrist, MD, doctor of the highest category, associate professor at the Russian State Medical University, https://www.nevromed.ru/specialists/kireeva.

noise, smells, and so on. A person who is in such an uncomfortable situation, when everything is difficult, everything is bad, will not learn anything.

I was told: "Anton needs to take pills," but I thought that only negligent parents who do not care about their child and need their own comfort use pills, and I am not that kind of parent. And the psychiatrist explained that it was necessary to eliminate this monstrous discomfort that interfered with learning. And at that moment I understood it logically, and we started giving pills. And from that moment everything began to change. Slowly, but surely. We also worked with a defectologist, who also helped us.

We came to CCP a year later, and Anton was taken to prepare for school. And that in itself was fantastic—preparing for school! The number of manuals I've done during this period is incredible. Each time I had to do it myself, because these manuals should be individual: it should be a photo of Anton himself and the captions in large letters: "I woke up" and a photo of him sitting in a crib, "I'm washing" and a photo of him standing by the faucet. That is, visualisation. And by the way, by school, he already had a global reading. He didn't spell the words, but read them all at once, because we signed everything, everything was in photos. When it was necessary, for example, I do-I did, the perfect/imperfect form of the verb, and so on, it's all in his photos too: I put on tights/I'm wearing tights, I'm cooking vermicelli/I cooked vermicelli, I sit and eat at the table. And we had a billion such manuals. And all this was constantly being cut out, glued, photographed, they ran to print. We bought manuals where a large image of fruits, vegetables, machinery, and also signed large everywhere. And in CCP they made more manuals, because it was necessary for him to finally understand what letters are for, what numbers are for.

And here Anton started to use speech a little. In general, the first time he reacted to my abstract speech, not to action, when he was already in the third grade. Before that, the speech was auxiliary, that is, everything we did, we pronounced. We were walking down the street, and I started: "Antosha, we're coming with you. Look, the road is flat, because there is asphalt on it." He won't even understand, but I had to say everything: "here's a pigeon sitting, here he has seeds here, he eats," and so on.

Lyudmila Vyacheslavovna Shargorodskaya,[14] who organised an experimental class at school No. 169,[15] came to school preparation classes one day, and there she recruited 6 people. And suddenly I was told that she was interested in Anton, because at that time he was not yet able to communicate, but he was very eager and it was obvious from him, he was positive towards people, and she said that she was taking Antosha to school. And he went to the first class. At exactly 7 years of age.

I was terrified. I was completely unprepared for the fact that he would go to school at 7. I thought we needed to wait another year. And I was told that this year it is unlikely to advance, on the contrary, everything will roll back, because another important point, in addition to the desire, should be a competitive environment, no matter how strange it may sound. It is extremely difficult for children who switch to home schooling to maintain motivation, and if a child is engaged in what he/she

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[14] Lyudmila Vyacheslavovna Shargorodskaya—teacher at the Centre for Curative Pedagogy, leading specialist (1995–2006), https://ccp.org.ru/ids/27766.

[15] Secondary General Education School No. 169, Moscow, https://www.ucheba.ru/uz/22840.

already knows, or is engaged in what he/she does not know and cannot, in principle, he/she will not be engaged, because in the first case he/she is bored, and in the second it is hopeless and it turns out that the only way to work is to work in the zone of immediate opportunities. And Lyudmila Vyacheslavovna was guided by this principle, all the time we were doing what we didn't know how to do yet, and we were actually doing it according to the usual program, that is, we bought notebooks in an ordinary store, normal notebooks in mathematics, in the surrounding world. And the child does not speak at the same time. He has single words, does not build phrases, does not answer questions, how can such a child study at school? But it was obvious that he really wanted to. He already knew how to behave by that time, he knew how not to break down, not to tear up textbooks, not to sit under the table, not to yell. And there are other children around, I want to be no worse than them. This desire fantastically complemented the efforts of teachers who knew how to work with it.

The experimental class was inside a regular school: on the ground floor in a separate corridor as a small system of rooms, 3 or 4 rooms, but it is all in a school with regular children of all ages running through the corridors.

They've already had such an experience before us for three years. The idea was as follows: a child comes to a group of six children and can adjust, s/he is being trained, prepared, and already by the second grade, or even already in the first grade, by the second half of the year, s/he can be included in a mainstream class for certain subjects. At the end of the second grade, Anton was placed in a regular class for music, physical education, and labor.[16] He came there with a tutor, of course. And for the other subjects he went to his own class. In the third grade we were already attending all subjects in the regular class, except Russian, Math, and English, and in the fourth grade we were attending all subjects, plus we had other classes—with a neuropsychologist, with a defectologist.[17] That is, the idea is not to teach a child according to a special methods and programs, but to prepare and gradually implant the child into a regular class of the same age.

The first experiment, three years before we came into that school, was difficult. The whole school was against this class: teachers, children, parents, cleaners, everyone was against. Three years past to accustom the school to the fact that this class would be there. So, for three years, they've been doing it, but they didn't move any child to a general class. First of all, it happened so because there were difficult children there. And secondly, it took three years for the other parents to stop hystericise about the existence of those children. So, the school was already accustomed when we came in. We came at a stage when for everybody it was clear that it would be a huge disgrace to refuse us to be there.

Anton and his friend Egor were the first learners to get into a mainstream class. We had an amazing tutor with university diploma in psychology, Katya. She was such

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[16] The curriculum includes 'Labor' classes where children practice household activities of cooking, sewing, doing simple carpentry tasks, etc., usually these classes are arranged separately for girls and boys.

[17] A special education teacher.

an 'ice-breaker' who paved the way for the next cohort, those who came after us, because she was a person who managed to cope with teachers' aversion. Of course, we were lucky with the children as well, because, I think, twenty years ago, the children would not have just come up to our kid and asked why he was like that and what was wrong with him, rather, they would have punched him in the eye without saying anything. And after us Lyudmila Vyacheslavovna was recruiting a new group every year. Everything in this school was going so well. The school was completely accustomed, everybody got used to the fact that we were not the enemies, that we did not interfere.

But then a real disaster struck, it was some kind of revision of a budget scheme took place.[18] It turned out that working with a small class with six students, the teacher would get 10,000 rubles a month.[19] They started calculating hours per person there. At the same time, no money could be collected from parents. Of course, we were collecting money, because it was important for us to keep going. But that was an illegal act, so that we were doing it in secret for some time. But there were people who complained about it. And that was the end. Soon after that this school was closed, it merged with another school in 2015.

A new principal said nobody plans to kick our children out, of course, she said, all children are equal and have the right to education.[20] She was impeccably polite and perfectly legally trained; she understood perfectly well that she could not require us taking our children away. But there was a nuance: according to the existing rules, a tutor was only allowed for a child with autism in the first grade. So, the lady principal didn't kick the children out, but she did not help them with a tutor. In our case it would have meant the end of schooling. If Anton hadn't been guided by Katya, if he hadn't had a tutor in the second grade, nothing would have happened, because as soon as a person stops catching the meaning of what's going on, s/he loses an interest and cannot behave decently. As soon as Anton would lose the ability to sit still and behave perfectly, he would be kicked out, sure. Well, this is right. Because if a person hinders the learning process for thirty 30 kids, s/he has to be somehow corrected or removed. It is absolutely right.

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[18] The Decree of the President of the Russian Federation N 599 'On the measures to implement state policy in the field of education and science' was issued on May 7, 2012. This Decree introduced per capita financing system of education. See the Introduction chapter and Media and Culture chapter for the reflection of this decree impact.

[19] In 2012, 10,000 Rubles = 250 Euro, just a little exceeding the subsistence minimum.

[20] In September 2015, the Russian law on education (passed at the end of 2012) has entered into force that legalized inclusion in education.

New School and Final Exams: "As Soon as the Children Got Used to It, Their Parents Stopped Resisting"

Lyudmila Vyacheslavovna managed to transit her classes, including teachers, tutors and children, into Yasenevo school.[21] But not everyone was able to go there. Someone bought a flat in that district specially to move to this school. You see, a child gets very tired of long journeys by public transport. But it was possible to save the core specialists. And, our wonderful Katya continued with us in Yasenevo.

There, I must say, we adjusted quite quickly, maybe that school was morally prepared, but there were wonderful people there: both children and parents. And the legal framework also helped us at some point. By the time we finished the 11th grade, everything was already prescribed in the education system: how such a person had to pass the state final exams[22] in order to receive a diploma of secondary education. A person with a special health status has the right to take these exams in special conditions, so we did pass them in special conditions. That means that a child comes to the exam with his/her tutor. Naturally, the tutor doesn't prompt, that's impossible, as there's strict monitoring there. But, there's no such a goal, to cheat. The goal is to give a child such opportunities that other kids have from their birth, to pass this exam. What you need, is someone who will just tug on your sleeve and say: 'Anton, stop looking out the window, you might run out of time for the exam'.

At the end, they passed the exam perfectly. Naturally, we had private teachers in Maths, in Russian, in all other subjects. The fact that he wrote dictation with a B is fantastic, it is the merit of all teachers, no doubt. Because he doesn't use Russian language in natural way, like you and me. He uses Russian as a language in which you have to think before you say a phrase.

At the time when Anton was studying, the school itself was also changing. I have a feeling that it was very important that children got used to seeing children with special needs around them all the time. Here, for instance, I see a person in a wheelchair, and I don't know how to communicate with him/her. But if I had a friend in a wheelchair, I would know exactly what I could do and what I should not in communicating with her. Now I can read about it, for example, that you shouldn't grab a wheelchair and take it somewhere, because the wheelchair is part of that person. But I have never had a contact with a person in a wheelchair in my life, so I don't know how to behave with them. It's the same with autistic people. And this is what children who have no special needs should know from a very early age, what is not dangerous, what to expect.

When other children started to get used to be with our kids, their parents automatically got used to it, because parents just want their child to learn normally, not to be a substratum for some other child to grow up, and for teachers to take care of their child, not just of a child with a disability. And as soon as the children got used to

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[21] School 1206 in Yasenevo district of Moscow.

[22] The Basic final exams at the end of the 9th grade and the Unified final exams at the end of the 11th grade.

study together, their parents immediately stopped resisting. Because this is Moscow, this is a modern society in general, these are young people, modern city dwellers, as a rule, they are with intellectual professions, these are people who have already read and somewhere heard about all this. When they encountered it in practice, they got a little tense, but when they realised that for their children, it did not reduce the quality of education, they relaxed, calmed down and accepted it.

We cared equally both about safety and peace of others and the safety, peace of mind and benefit of our children. Not even we cared, but the teachers and the wonderful tutors, people who knew very well what they were doing and how to keep that balance. Work was done in these schools; our teachers were present at all the pedagogical councils. If there was any wave of resentment, they were there, talking, explaining. Moreover, initially they came to these schools and started explaining from the ground up what they were going to do, how they were going to do it, why it would be safe. First, the principal had to agree to let them in at all.

The legal consciousness has also changed a lot over the last thirty years, of course, now people know their rights and no one would even try to say, "Take your stupid child away". Naturally, there will be an immediate complaint and such a kindergarten director will be dismissed. Everything is fine in this respect. But you have to understand that nothing will work anyway, if there is no contact between teachers, children, parents, nothing will work.

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Inclusive Practice

This part combines chapters representing practices, problems and prospects for the development of inclusive education at different stages of a person's educational path: preschool education, secondary education, vocational education and higher education. The stories included in the part represent different subjective experiences of people with disabilities and specialists in the field of inclusive education. The part also includes two chapters devoted to "cross-cutting" issues for all stages of education. One chapter analyses the development of the market of assistive technologies and increasing their accessibility. Ivan Bakaidov, a programmer and blogger who develops devices for speech transformation and enabling people with speech disorders to communicate, emphasises the role of inclusive education and the importance of transforming the culture of society as a whole so that technologies can really change the lives of people with disabilities. The last chapter of this part presents the topical issues of teacher training for inclusive education. The part ends with Julia's story, which tells about how young teachers fill in the gaps in knowledge gained at the university and overcome psychological barriers in working with children with SEND with the help of colleagues.

Chapter 4
Inclusive Education and Early Childhood Development in Russia

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Abstract Considering inclusion as a dynamic educational environment that involves children with diverse special needs: children with disabilities, gifted children, bilingual children, children from families with low socio-economic status, and others, authors present a comparative analysis of the views of key stakeholders about inclusion in small and large cities of Russia. Three urban communities with different statuses and territories were compared. An online survey of teachers and heads of pre-school organisations was conducted. The survey revealed significant differences in the respondents' views on the main challenges of the development of inclusion in pre-school institutions and teachers' competence levels in inclusive education. The trend in the development of inclusive education in different regions of Russia (in small and large cities) demonstrates the uneven evolution of this process. The resources that ensure effective inclusive strategies and strategic human resource development vary depending on the region's status. The potential causes of the identified challenges are proposed.

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Introduction

The notion of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) has become a subject of intense research in countries of the North (Paananen et al., 2019). In Russia, Early Childhood Education (ECEDU) involves the education and upbringing of children aged two months to 7 years. Following the legislation of the Russian Federation, it is an integral process to ensure the comprehensive development of a preschool-age child by the capabilities, inclinations, abilities, and individual, mental and physical characteristics. Also, the fundamental task of this phase, which is legally fixed, is the formation of moral norms in a pre-school-age child and acquiring social experience. The Federal State Educational Standards (FSES) (Government of Russian Federation (GRF 2012a, 2012b) reflect certain social and cultural expectations regarding the quality of pre-school education for such students. This chapter highlights structural and relational aspects of the development of pre-school-inclusive education in Russia.

It has been 30 years since the concept of inclusive education started circulating in the professional community,[1] and as a result, its importance in education systems and political discourse has also gained momentum in Russia (Averina et al., 2011; Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Goriainova & Iarskaia-Smirnova, 2020; Lubovsky, 2016; Pershina et al., 2019; Remizova, 2018; Samsonova, 2017; Zaichenko & Sapunova, 2018). There is a wide range of studies from Russian and international scholars in Special and Inclusive Education about what inclusive education means. There is evidence of a lack of general agreement about the definition of 'inclusive education'. This is also evident in Russia, where contradictory connotations of the definition of inclusive education still persist. There are two main discourses or perceptions about how 'inclusion' as a phenomenon is understood i.e., the definition with a narrow understanding that inclusion is related only to disability and the broader understanding that it deals with diverse barriers beyond disability.

The narrow scope of perceptions about inclusion is focused on physical disability and follows the medical model (Giddens & Sutton, 2014). In this case, inclusion presupposes that the children with diagnosed developmental barriers and health limitations are segregated from those without such barriers. In Russia, some scholars' understanding of inclusion mostly centres around this narrowly specified definition informed by the medical model (Malofeev, 2010; Shmatko, 2010). This view seems to permeate other world contexts.

On the other hand, the wider understanding regards 'inclusion' as a diversity of children's communities, where possibilities for all children's diverse capabilities and needs, in terms of physical, social, intellectual, language, and emotional development are respected. Such communities may include children with health barriers, gifted children, and bi-lingual children, as well as children from socio-economically disadvantaged families.

In this chapter, the latter understanding is adopted by the authors. A broader view of inclusive education means inclusion is seen as a means of social support provided in an integrated manner to the child and for all participants in the educational community

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[1] The authors refer to the Worldwide Conference in Inclusive Education of 2014 held in Salamanca.

(teachers and parents) to ensure equality of rights, accessibility and provision of equitable education.

Educational organisations in Russia are supposed to create conditions for inclusive education, including for early childhood institutions. At the same time, the educational policy goes simultaneously in two directions. The first direction is implemented through the creation of special educational conditions, the adaptation of basic general educational programs for different categories of students with health barriers and disabilities, while other children with special educational needs (children with behavioural difficulties, children from poor socio-economic background, children from migrant families, etc.) are not being catered for. The second direction doesn't only require educational program adaptation but also takes into account the individual development approach and, therefore, demands corresponding changes in the program's form and content. Noteworthy to mention, in Russia, according to the Ministry of Education, of the 7.4 million children attending pre-school educational organisations, 544.5 thousand children (7.3%) are children with special needs and (or) disabled children. The largest number of them—407,210 pupils—currently receive education in special pre-school organisations or groups; 102,040 pupils receive pre-school education in an inclusive format. In this chapter, we assess the quality of education in kindergartens in regards to ECE using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale to ascertain the level of inclusiveness and support. This we do in the context of accessibility of educational environment and identifying barriers to inclusion in ECE in Russian cities. We then identify enablers and disablers of inclusion in the Russian ECE context.

Inclusive Education Development in Kindergartens in Russia

To assess the development of inclusive pre-school education, which is necessary for making coordinated management decisions, such tools that allow the assessment of both the quality of special educational conditions created for children with disabilities and conditions that support the individual development of each child must be used.

One of the modern international tools for assessing the quality of pre-school education is the "Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale" (ECERS-R) (Harms et al., 2015). The procedure of assessment is quite simple: during observation in a pre-school group for 5–7 h, a trained expert records everything he/she sees, taking into account indicators for 7 areas, using a 7-point rating (from "unsatisfactory" to "excellent"). ECERS-R scales were tested in pre-school organisations in Russia (Harms et al., 2015; Remorenko et al., 2017; Shiyan et al., 2016).

The assessment areas and indicators of the ECERS-R scale are described through the prism of active actions of teachers, children, including children with disabilities, and the administration, so they are very close to the principles and ideas of the early childhood education and Federal State Educational Standards (ECEDU FSES). At the same time, both in the ECERS-R and in the FSES, the main idea is a "student

community" in which children and adults are equally included in the educational process.

ECERS-R's inclusion indicators correlate with the quality indicators of the inclusive educational environment according to the FSES (Table 4.1).

The ECERS-R indicator "Conditions for children with disabilities" was allocated as a separate indicator, evaluated by an expert only if there are children with disabilities/special needs in the pre-school educational organisation (PEO). Interestingly, in the latest version of the scales—ECERS-3 (2017)—this indicator is not singled out, but all its components are distributed on other scales. This situation indicates that the latest version of the tool is closer to the principles of inclusion and considers the quality of the educational environment, taking into account the conditions of the children's development with diverse opportunities.

The indicator "Monitoring the assessment of staff efforts to create an inclusive educational environment" is embedded in the assessment procedure itself since it is intended not for external control but for providing actors with the necessary information about the quality of the educational environment so that they can make the necessary changes towards its improvement.

We will briefly present the results of the empirical studies conducted as an evidence base for the development of inclusive ECEDU in Russia. The research sample included 423 pre-school institutions from 40 regions of Russia. The regional coordinator compiled the sample of each region. The minimum number of PEOs in the region was 8, 3 representing the "Best" stratum, and 5 representing the "Random" stratum. The average score obtained in the study indicates that the quality of education in the kindergartens is, on average, higher than the "minimum quality" level—the quality index is 3.35. This generally indicates a relatively low quality of the environmental conditions created in pre-school organisations according to the parameters proposed in the scales.

Table 4.1 Comparison of indicators of measuring scales and requirements of the ECEDU FSES

ECERS-R's indicators	FSES's indicators
Space and its arrangement	Accessibility of the educational environment
Child care	The inclusive principle of supporting diversity
Speech and thinking	Support for the participation of children in the life of the group
Children's activity	Support for children's activities and initiatives
Interaction	Conditions for cooperation of children among themselves and with teachers
Structuring the program	Individualisation of the educational process
Parents and staff	Interaction of teachers and specialists to develop effective ways to include children in the educational process, cooperation of teachers with parents Continuous professional growth of the staff

We will analyse the results of the ECERS-R (Shiyan et al., 2016) from the position of inclusiveness of the educational environment (Alekhina et al., 2019).

Accessibility of the Educational Environment

To implement the principles of inclusive education, first of all, the room should be accessible to all children and adults currently using it, e.g. it must be equipped with ramps and handrails for people with disabilities, magnifying devices, sound amplifying equipment, etc. Children with disabilities should have the necessary adapted furniture to engage in joint activities with their peers.

According to the ECERS indicator "Space and its arrangement", the average mean was 3.69 for the "best" stratum and 3.17 for the "random" stratum; this mean stands between the unsatisfactory and minimal rating.

Since 2011, much work has been carried out in the Russian Federation to change the architectural conditions and provide educational organisations with all necessary equipment within the framework of the State Program "Accessible Environment". However, the contradiction between the principle of accessibility for *all* children and providing conditions for children with special needs leads the heads of PEOs to inconsistent decisions. Following the principle of per capita financing and reducing the queue for kindergartens, they increase the number of children in the group, occupy specially equipped classrooms for specific categories of children for general development groups, and lower the rates for medical staff. Meanwhile, inclusive education presupposes the mentioned principles of accessibility and quality, which require adjusted solutions.

In addition, some requirements of the ECERS-R are generally atypical for Russian kindergartens, for example, about half receive the lowest score on the indicator "Places for privacy". For the rating "good" there should be a space in the room for a separate game for one or two children, protected from the interference of other children. For the rating "excellent" the staff should support the activity of one or two children using a secluded place (for example, two board games on a table in a quiet corner; a computer for use by one child or two children).

Because now children with disabilities, including children with autism spectrum disorders, come to kindergartens, educators have begun to pay attention to the fact that these children often get tired of the oversaturated environment and the presence of a large number of children in the group and they need places for privacy. These circumstances lead educators to realise the need to organise individual places in the room—sometimes called "space of solitude". Often, typically developing children go to such corners, which suggests that many children require places of solitude. Thus, the need to create special conditions for children with special needs reveals a demand that is characteristic of many children.

In summary, developing this indicator should result in efficient management decisions which take into account the individual development of a child in organising the availability of education.

Support for Diversity

The principle of diversity, in focusing on educational needs and creating an educational environment, is the basis of inclusive education and can manifest itself in various workplace formats. The principle of diversity gives different children chances to develop various opportunities and empowers them from restrictions.

However, the implementation of this principle in Russian kindergartens, according to the ECERS-R, receives a shallow score. Some of the indicators of the "Space and its arrangement" scale are sensitive to the lack of diversity and individualisation of the educational environment. The indicator "Promoting the acceptance of diversity" has a meagre value—in the "best" kindergartens—1.64, and in "random" ones—1.46. The design of the rooms is pervasive and bland; there are children's exhibitions with the same crafts throughout every kindergarten in the country, and even furniture is rarely placed conveniently and creatively.

Data on implementing diversity support can be seen in the subscale "Supervision and care of children". So, the average score on this subscale for the "best" stratum is 4.11, and for the "random" one—it is 3.64. The general conclusion for inclusion is that it is necessary to have conditions for supervision and care that meet the children's individual needs.

However, the contradiction between security measures and the conditions for making the environment more diversified can be observed here: when the groups are overcrowded (one teacher for 30 children), all children are placed under the same conditions, primarily due to security concerns. As a result, all children come to the group simultaneously, eat food, go to the toilet, and go for a walk.

Diversity should also be taken into consideration in the content aspects of the educational process (the breadth, diversity of choice, and age-appropriate literature available to children) (see the section "Inclusion and Culture-Sensitive Education" of this book). Even though the Russian Federation is a multinational and multicultural country, there are practically no books, toys, materials or manuals that introduce children to different cultures, traditions and customs in the kindergartens. Rarely cultural customs are included in the educational process (for example, cooking traditional food, inviting parents with stories about family and cultural customs, etc.). This means that multicultural conditions are not correctly created at this stage. Notably, mini museums of traditional culture are sometimes created in kindergartens, but they are not a place of free activity for children. Their visits are strictly regulated and most often have a formal character.

Support for Children's Activities and Initiatives

This is one of the most important principles of inclusive education; therefore it is necessary to organise conditions for various types of activity, taking into account cultural diversity:

- there should be many materials so that several children can simultaneously develop an enjoyable activity
- materials should be available for a significant part of the day
- materials should be well organised so that children know where everything is stored: there should be notes on the boxes in the form of inscriptions or pictures addressed to children
- materials must be of different levels of complexity
- materials should be changed from time to time to provide for children's involvement
- materials should stimulate communicative skills: discussing thoughts of children and adult logic of problem-solving
- communication activity should be supported by changing the materials from time to time
- the average score for the subscale "Children's activities" is 3.22 in the 'best' stratum and 2.72 for the general group.

In inclusion, the main emphasis is on speech and thinking stimulation through the organisation of a diverse environment. Therefore, the application of critical didactic methods would help children to show their potential whereby the means available to them are of prime importance. According to the scales, the mean value for the subscale "Speech and thinking" for both "random" and the "best" samples is higher than the minimum satisfactory result (3.26 and 3.86). Only 20% of PEOs arrange their activities in line with the principle of stimulating child thinking, helping children to express ideas, writing down children's stories, and making them initiators of choosing games for themselves.

For inclusion, it is essential that the child can have the opportunity to express herself through various cultural means. However, the principle of organising general educational activities in Russian kindergartens often limits this opportunity. Classes are frequently organised with a frontal approach; materials are not accessible or diverse and do not stimulate spontaneous expression employing art.

Conditions for Children's Collaboration with Themselves and the Teachers

An essential criterion for the quality of inclusive education is the indicators related to interaction. The indicator "Group classes" includes the following:

- the length of time spent in the group;
- the possibility of dividing children into subgroups;
- a variety of activities carried out in small groups;
- the number of opportunities for children to unite in small groups of their own choice.

The "good" level assesses how much educators help children to master acceptable models of social behaviour (for example, they motivate socially isolated children to find friends and help children to understand others' feelings). The "excellent" level means the extent to which educators create conditions for children to cooperate (offer children complicated collaborative tasks).

The average score for this indicator in the "random" stratum is 4.39, in the "best"— 4.65, which is close to the "good" level. Thus, the interaction of educators with children is generally assessed above the minimum level. Teachers mainly pay attention to the issues of supervision and discipline of children. However, for teachers, organising the interaction of children with various characteristics is difficult. The development of communicative tasks which would make children collaborate raises the main questions for most educators. The prospects for development in this direction are associated with a systemic change: the shift from child care to developing children's social capital.

Conditions for Individualisation of the Educational Process

For inclusive education, it is necessary to provide conditions which allow consideration of children's regulatory characteristics and organising children's activities accordingly. Essential positions are recorded in the indicator "Daily routine" in the subscale "Structuring of the program":

- a combination of strict orderliness and flexibility in the daily routine;
- conditions for children to be able to orient themselves in the sequence of events of the day, week (posting a written schedule in a group room, the presence of a schedule known to children, in which planned activities are carried out in approximately the same sequence);
- the presence of both activities organised by teachers as well as children themselves;
- the percentage of time allocated for gaming activities;
- smooth transitions from one activity to another (the ability to work in groups);
- changing the daily routine taking into account the individual characteristics of children (reducing the time for reading fairy tales for a child who is unable to concentrate for a long time, providing additional time for a child working on a project).

The average score on the "Structuring the program" subscale is 3.92, slightly higher than the average score in the 'best' kindergartens sample—3.88. This means that in most kindergartens, educational conditions are designed for child interaction as a single collective entity, and taking into account the individual needs of children is scarce, therefore most of the special developmental activities are carried out within the framework of regular group classes. However, if these conditions are not created, providing a comfortable stay for children with disabilities will not be effective. Therefore, this quality indicator is closely related to the high ratings of indicators

for the other subscales. The average score in this study according to the indicator "Conditions for children with disabilities" is 3.12.

The data on the samples indicates that there are no satisfactory conditions for the integration of children with disabilities. The presence of unsatisfactory conditions is stated if:

- teachers do not try to assess the needs of children or get access to assessments of their development;
- special needs of children are not taken into account (changes in interaction with the teacher, changes in the environment, classes, daily routine are not made);
- parents are not involved to help educators understand the special needs of children;
- children with disabilities interact very little with the rest of the group.

A low score indicates that in most kindergartens teachers have very few opportunities to interact with individual children or small groups, which significantly reduces the quality of inclusive education.

Nevertheless, there are practices that create high-quality conditions for the integration of children with disabilities, which involve the consolidation of the efforts of various specialists, parents and teachers. For the successful implementation of inclusive education, cooperation with parents, team interaction of teachers, and specialists aimed at developing effective ways of inclusion are essential indicators. Inclusive education also requires constant professional development of staff and adequate tools for evaluation of the staff's efforts to create an inclusive environment.

The average mean for the "Parents and Staff" subscale is one of the highest in both samples: in the "best" sample it is 4.40, and in the "random" one it is 3.86.

The subscale "Interaction and cooperation of staff" results show that they recognise the lack of collaborative models among the staff of educational organisations as one of the most significant factors hindering the professional development process, which also blocks the 'creative component' of their profession. Among the significant characteristics of internal relations in PEOs, experts emphasise the lack of institutionalised collaborative practice together with internal competition, which leads to prejudices, lack of unity and coherence in combining efforts for shared corporate interests. Such collaborative practice between the staff and the parents in inclusive education may come as a psychological and pedagogical Concilium. Organisations where such informal practice takes place show high marks in terms of staff cooperation and their cooperation with parents.

We may conclude that the following conditions are significant for creating an inclusive educational environment in pre-school education:

- the accessibility of the environment (ramps, handrails, the width of doorways) should be provided, even if there are no children with disabilities in the group. Children with disabilities should have special furniture, and equipment for the development of gross motor, and play centres should be adapted to the characteristics of children.

Conditions for individualisation of the educational process:

- Flexible daily routine.
- A variety of didactic materials.
- A variety of types of activities, taking into account the needs of different children.
- Support for individual types of activity.
- Cultural means are offered to the child for self-expression.

    Promoting the cooperation of children:

- Educators should help children master acceptable models of social behaviour, create conditions for children to cooperate, and offer children tasks that require the consolidation of the efforts of different children.
- Inclusion of children with disabilities in a common group (eating at a typical table, joint activities with peers).
- Promoting the interaction of children in small groups.
- Specialists participate in the general classes of the group, helping children with disabilities get involved in joint activities with their peers.
- Ensuring the parents' participation: exchange of information with educators, setting educational goals.
- Collaboration of teachers and specialists to develop effective ways of inclusive education.
- Staff professional growth and monitoring.

The study results show that the quality of pre-school education in the surveyed kindergartens is, on average, higher than the "minimum quality" level. A comparison of requirements for the educational environment formulated in the FSES and principles of inclusion show they do not contradict each other. However, their realisation calls for consistent managerial solutions which will guarantee the implementation of regulations in practice.

Barriers to the Development of Inclusion in Pre-school in Large and Small Cities in Russia

Turning to the challenges of inequality as a barrier to inclusive education development, we rely on two key concepts: a broad interpretation of inclusion, conceptually disclosed in the introductory section, and the "universal design" concept (Steinfeld & Maisel, 2012). The concept had been proposed by the architects Ronald Mace and Selwyn Goldsmith. In their interpretation, the critical point in creating a human environment is the denial of 'middle points' and applying the principle of 'extreme points'. Although this principle has never initially been involved in the discussion on education, it may present an accurate approach to how shaping an inclusive education environment with diversity and equal accessibility to education may be possible.

As Hayhoe (2020) has mentioned elsewhere, the paradigm of 'universal design' comprises the idea that everything we create should take into account the demands

of people with extreme forms of disability as well as those who have been highly discriminated against.

Inequality and asymmetrical opportunities are distinctly connected with education (Bohndick et al., 2020; Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018). Alienation does not only circumscribe the accession to social benefits. In education, it becomes a barrier with an extended negative impact on personal development, socialisation and the inclusion of a child in social relations. Asymmetrical educational opportunities form a fertile ground for social inequalities and eventually label individuals as physically invalid and socially isolated (Beach, 2017).

The current discussion accentuates a range of challenges connected with ECEDU inclusion. A bulk of the research evidence that the education environment in which the pre-schooler develops may influence her well-being in both the long-term (Doyle et al., 2009) and the short-term pre-school perspectives (adaptation to school, emotional intellect and communication skills development, self-regulated learning, etc.) (OECD, 2020).

The influence of the learning environment is multidirectional, the unique role in its creation as being comfortable for the pre-schooler rests on the significant adults: the parents and the teachers. Their collaboration and mutual understanding are the triggers for the pre-schooler's successful development, whereas controversies about the challenges of inclusive education among the 'significant adults' result in barriers and the asymmetry of opportunities.

Booth and Ainscow (2002) have mentioned the 'three aspects of inclusion': (1) creation of inclusive culture; (2) development of inclusive politics; (3) implementation of inclusive practice. All mentioned issues remain important but, in postmodernity, they still represent only an ideal model of an 'inclusive society'.

The predisposition of significant others (parents and teachers) to label individual peculiarities of children from their pre-school age, drawing on such categories as 'ethnic affiliation', possession of 'titular language', cultural and religious 'otherness', family socio-economic status, physical disability, require particular policies which would form the inclusive culture at the national and organisational levels.

Inclusion must become recognised as the most effective form of providing education services, considering the opportunities for creating heterogeneous communities of children. In such communities, a student might not have a disability. However, they may exhibit special education needs such as, not only children with health limitations, but also immigrant children who do not speak the local language, culturally diverse, gifted children, as well as children from families with various socio-economic backgrounds (Zaichenko & Sapunova, 2018).

International practice demonstrates that the transition from exclusive education to the inclusive form has been recently globalised. However, these transformations largely depend on the social norms and practices of a particular country. International research in the scholarship of inequalities in inclusion accentuates the lack of potential for implementation of such education because of the highest deficits of resources: poor budgeting; lack of professional preparation of teachers or their insufficient knowledge; top-down administrative approach; socio-cultural filters (Armstrong

et al., 2010; Hayhoe, 2019; Kalyanpur, 2014; Sharma et al., 2017; Wolff et al., 2021).

In this chapter, we propose a comparative framework for studying the asymmetry of opportunities in ECEDU inclusion in different territories of a country. Making the comparison between the large and small cities of Russia, we assume that with the availability of resources inclusive education may be successfully implemented if perceived positively by the prominent significant others—the teachers and the parents (Azhinova, 2019).

Cities and Agents of Change: Main Features[2]

At the current stage of the development of the education system in Russia, inclusion can be described as innovation (Nesyna & Starovojt, 2015; Ryapisova, 2017).

The development of inclusive education in the territories of Russia with different socio-economic statuses (i.e. in large and small cities) runs unequally. The resources for implementing successful inclusive strategies and human resource development vary. Regional models of inclusion development in education differ in such factors as:

- attitudes and dispositions of the administrative authorities in education;
- financing options for education organisations;
- development of the counselling services;
- proactive attitudes of social agencies;
- professional cadre;
- value paradigms.

The attitudes and dispositions, as well as the perceptions of the significant agents who support transformations in the education milieu and manifest themselves as the agents of change, would shape the success of these transformations in inclusion. Furthermore, just the same agents are, and vice versa, able to be in a predicament on the path of transformation. Further, we will turn the lens to the attitudes and perceptions of the key 'agents of influence'—pre-school organisations' administrators and teachers.

To elicit the differences in attitudes of the pre-school teachers about the deficits in the implementation of inclusive education, the study was conducted in different regions of Russia, which may be referred to as the 'large' and 'small' cities of the Russian Federation.

For comparison, the territories with similar socio-economic features but diverse statuses according to the Urban Planning Code of the Russian Federation (2020) were chosen, according to which 'small cities' would comprise under 50,000 residents, while the 'large' ones account for 100–250,000, and a megapolis would number over one mil. inhabitants.

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[2] The first theoretical framework is described in the study by Zaichenko and Kornienko (2020).

Table 4.2 Comparative analysis of the city territories by status: small city; large city; large city in megapolis

Status according to the Urban Planning Code	Small city	Large city	Large city in megapolis
The name	Kotovsk	Rybinsk	Kolpino
Year of foundation	1915 (as industrial community)	1777	1722
City's major enterprise	"Tambovsky powder-mill" (defence enterprise)	"State airline manufacturer No. 6" (military and civil aviation)	"Izhora manufactory" (iron and steel enterprise)
Number of residents (as of 1.01.2020, thous. of people)	31.8	184.6	149.1
Share of child population (under 18 years of age as of 2019) (%)	17.0	31.3	24.2
Average age of residents (y. of age)	42.7	42.0	40.4
Average monthly income (as of 01.03.2020, thousand RUB)	32.0	33.0	36.0

While the concept of 'megapolis' implies the largest form of urban settlement resulted from urban sprawl, today we may evidence that each third resident of Russia lives in a megapolis, each forth resides in a 'large city', and each fifth in a 'small city'.[3] A comparative analysis of the city territories (Kotovsk, Rybinsk, Kolpino), where the empirical part of the study was held is introduced in Table 4.2.

The survey was held in 2017–19 among the administrative staff and teachers of pre-school organisations of different types: educational, mixed, compensatory, and particularly adapted for children with health barriers ($n = 858$) (Table 4.3).

The questionnaire comprised five blocks of questions about the respondent's professional experience (including working with children with special needs); her evaluation of possible reasons for having difficulties with the implementation of inclusive education, the competence of teachers required for work in inclusive education; her attitudes about possibilities of collaborative learning in mixed groups of children, and her perception of inclusive education at large.

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[3] As of January 1, 2020 the number of small cities of Russia is 793, where 20.0% of residents of Russia live, the number of large cities is 93 (approx. 14.0% of residents of RF) and there are 15 of the cities with a million-plus population (over 32.0% of residents of Russia) (Urban Planning Code of the Russian Federation, 2020).

Table 4.3 Characteristics of the sample by territories, practices, staff composition

	Small city	Large city	Large city in megapolis
Territories	Kotovsk	Rybinsk	Kolpino
Number of respondents	241	52	565
Number of PEOs (total, units)	7	56	48
Number of children who get the ECEDU	1732	10,483	11,793
Inclusive practices in the organisation	For the children with health barriers and physically challenged	For the children with health barriers and physically challenged	For the children with health barriers, physically challenged and migrants
Average age of the head of the organisation (in years)/ professional experience (in years)	45/7	50/10	50/7

Teachers as Agents of Change and Development of Inclusive Education

It is logical to assume the teachers-tutors of PEOs form certain perceptions and attitudes towards each child in their work process. The responses to the question about types of children with whom the teachers work most, frequently made it possible to draw preliminary conclusions (Table 4.4):

(1) Regardless of the territory status ('large'/'small' city)

- majority of teachers accentuate children of inclusion in their practice;
- teachers don't pay special attention to the gifted children as to someone who needs an individual approach, i.e. these children are not seen as stakeholders of inclusive education.

Table 4.4 Breakdown of the responses regarding the categories of children frequently encountered in their professional practice who need inclusive education

Categories of children	Small city (%)	Large city (%)	Large city in megapolis (%)
Physically challenged	24.8	26.1	12.6
Migrants	24.8	7.7	15.4
Culturally diverse	35.2	8.4	6.7
With health barriers	50.5	44.2	84.7

(2) Teachers of the 'small city'

- associate inclusive practices with children who have health barriers and migrant-children;
- are able to 'read' and accept the diversity of children as well as the heterogeneity of children community.

(3) Teachers of the 'large city' almost don't highlight children-migrants as someone who needs inclusive practices.

(4) Teachers of the megapolis report inclusive practices connected with children with health barriers in their work one-and-a-half or two times more frequently than their colleagues from the 'small' and 'large' cities.

Teachers' perceptions about the potential capacity of inclusive education also differ among the types of settlements (Fig. 4.1).

The vast majority of teachers of the 'small city' (81.0%) do not see any predicaments in the heterogeneity of children inside one group, fewer than half of the respondents in the 'large city' agree with them (48.1%), and only 28.4% of the megapolis representatives support this view. A major part of the representatives of 'large city in megapolis' (86.0%) believe that children with special needs must be taught in particular groups or educational organisations. 'Small city' teachers also differ in perceptions of the barriers for inclusive education. The majority of them (82.8%) consider parents to be the main antagonists of children's collaborative learning in heterogeneous groups. Their colleagues from the 'large city' only agree with them in 33 cases out of 100; concurrently, the larger the city, the less teachers-respondents are prone to assume that parents' attitudes circumscribe the development of inclusive education.
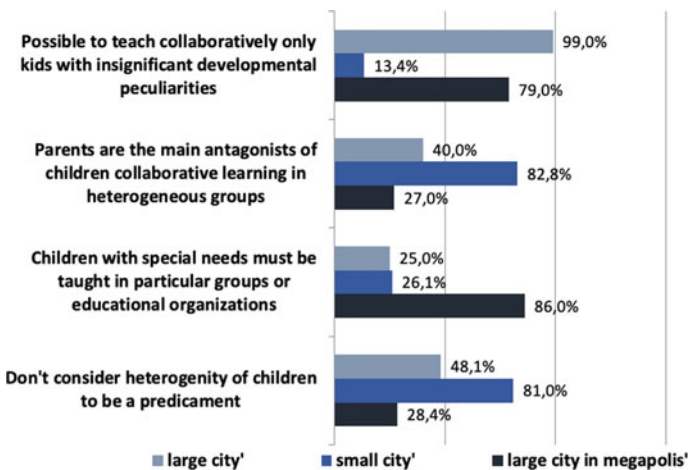
Fig. 4.1 Breakdown of responses about attitudes to inclusive education in diverse children's communities (%)

During the survey, a significant difference in perceptions of the teachers from the 'small' and 'large' cities has been revealed: the larger the city where the pre-school organisation is based the less tolerant the teachers and administrative staff are to the practices of inclusion, and the more they are inclined to working with homogeneous groups of children. These teachers mostly agree to only collaboratively teach kids with insignificant developmental peculiarities. In sum, the 'small city' professional community expresses more loyal attitudes to inclusion practices.

To delineate the differences in perceptions of the administrators and the teachers about the resources and constraints of inclusive education in the cities of different statues we have distinguished the 'small city' (Kotovsk) and the 'large city in megapolis' (Kolpino). Teachers in the 'small city' emphasise cadre, administrative and financial resources deficits, such as deficiency of specialist teachers (over 78.3%); lack of administrative support (68.4%), and unavailability of finances (61.2%). In the 'large city in megapolis', the respondents mostly emphasise the deficit of human capacity and normative errors: inadequacy of the professional development system in the field of inclusive practices (81.0%); standards of maximum number per group (81.0%); old material facilities (62.1%), and absence of a counselling service for children (61.0%) (Fig. 4.2).
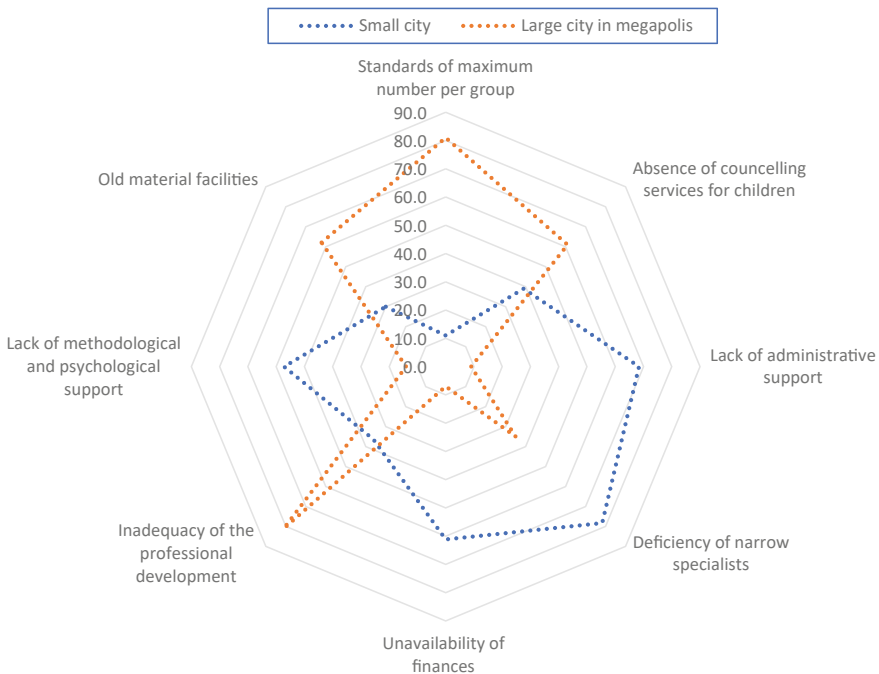
Fig. 4.2 Breakdown of the respondent's evaluation of the deficit of resources in the 'small city' and the 'large city in megapolis' (%)
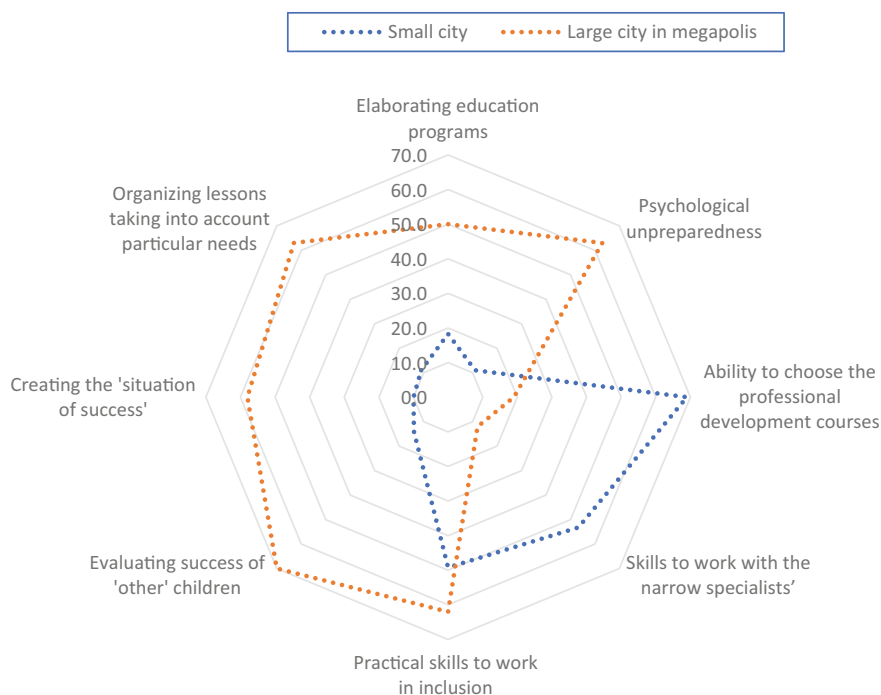
Fig. 4.3 Breakdown of the perceptions about the sufficiency of the professional competence of respondents in the 'small city' and the 'large city in megapolis' (%)

The question about teachers' readiness to implement inclusive practices at work deserves special attention. The differences in perceptions about the lack of professional competence to develop inclusion among colleagues have been revealed (Fig. 4.3).

A major part of the administrative staff and teachers (70.0%) in the 'small city' focus on challenges connected with the absence of the 'ability to choose professional development courses' and highlight the deficits of 'skills to work with the specialist teachers' (53.2%), and 'knowledge of the methods and competence in how to define inclusion and work with it' (49.2%).

Teachers of the pre-school organisations from the 'large city in megapolis' sample pay attention to such challenges as lack of skill 'to evaluate the success of 'other' children' (70.0%), as well as their psychological unpreparedness to work with heterogeneous groups (63.0%), as a consequence it was a challenge 'to organise lessons taking into account children's particular needs' (over 63.0%).

Therefore, on the one hand, the challenge of inclusion development at the preschool level is relevant for any city, and on the other, the territorial status specifies the resource shortages and teachers' attitudes concerning this process.

Kindergarten Education Programs and Resource Shortages for the Development of Inclusion

PEOs deliver several types of education programs: general enrichment, mixed programs, programs with a compensatory focus. As evidenced from the survey the pre-school teachers' perceptions about the resource shortages for inclusion development differ not only by the territorial status but also depending on the type of program delivered by the PEO. Notably, the perception of these shortages by the administrative staff (Fig. 4.4) and teachers (Fig. 4.5) also differs.

The executive staff highlight three types of resource shortages for the development of inclusion depending on the three forms of PEO:

(1) with general and mixed programs—the lack of a relevant teachers professional development system (88.0% of responses);
(2) with mixed types of programs only—the insufficiency of the methodological support programs (80.5% of responses);
(3) with types of programs with compensatory focus—absence of counselling departments for the support of children of diversity (99.0%).

As the main barriers for the development of pre-school inclusion, the teachers from PEOs with various types of programs elicit the following:

(1) with general programs focus—lack of the material and technical resources for inclusive space (62.0%) and groups overcrowding (57.0%);
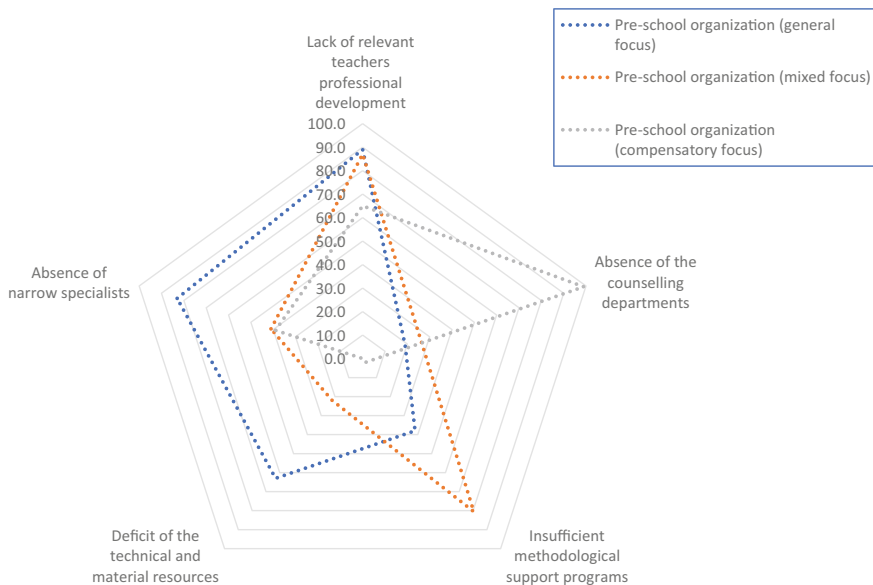
Fig. 4.4 Breakdown of the responses of the kindergartens administrative staff with various types of programs connected with the main challenges of the ECEDU inclusion (%)
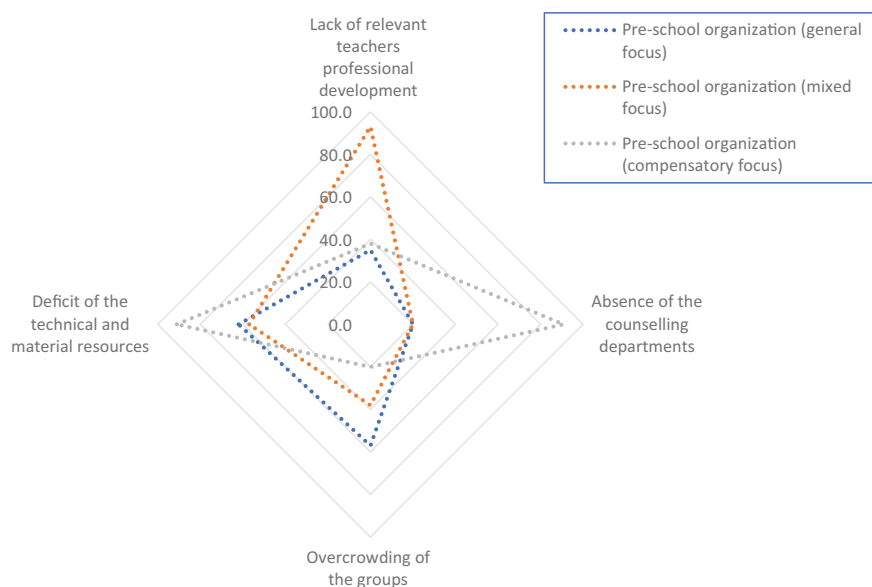
Fig. 4.5 Breakdown of responses of the PEO teachers with various types of programs related to the main challenges of the pre-school inclusion (%)

(2) with mixed types of programs—the lack of relevant professional development (93.0%);
(3) with compensatory focus programs—'the absence of counselling departments for support of children of diversity (91.0%), the 'deficit of the technical and material resources' (91.0%).

Territorial Statuses and/or the Types of Education Programs: Opportunities for Inclusion Development

Among the challenges there is a need to mention the backbone indicator of the unpreparedness of both the teachers and the pre-school organisations administration to work in the 'universally designed' inclusive environment: potential agents of change tend to reproduce the historically path-dependent national pedagogical attitude towards inclusion, defining it as a 'process of collaborative learning of commonly developing children together with the children possessing health barriers. Only under 20% of respondents consider 'inclusive environment' to denote 'possibility for all kinds of diversely developed children to be included in one educational space'.

The asymmetry of opportunities for the development of inclusion among the cities with different statuses across Russia can be distinguished as:

- The smaller the city, the higher the willingness of the professionals to deal with the challenges of inclusion and the higher their psychological preparedness for work with heterogeneous groups;
- The smaller the city the more the teachers perceive the parents of commonly developing children displaying intolerant attitudes towards pre-school inclusion as one of the main risks;
- The smaller the city the more attention is paid to the difficulties of working with the children-migrants;
- The smaller the city the more the teacher's cadre demand administrative support of such innovative practices as inclusion and the more they are constrained with the financial and methodological shortages;
- The larger the city the more frequently both the teachers and the administration emphasise the limitation of the absence of standards for maximum number per group, psychological unpreparedness and irrelevant system of professional development for teachers in inclusion;
- The larger the city the less attention the teachers' pay to such an evident deficit as financial and administrative support for the proper development of inclusion;
- The larger the city the more highlighted, in the perceptions of teachers, the insufficiency of their own professional competence, particularly their inability to evaluate the progress of children in heterogeneous groups and elicit individual educational needs.

The current study may let us assume that the resource shortages for the pre-school inclusion development may also differentiate depending on the type of the education program delivered by the pre-school establishment. Given that the scope of these deficits varies greatly, the lack of the relevant professional development programs that would consider the tasks and practical skills needed for inclusive education remains the primary one.

However, the diversity of children communities in terms of all types of parameters for comparison doesn't only pose a set of challenges but also a set of requirements for the development of the education system, becoming a task for the teachers' professional growth.

We have to admit that it is impossible to consciously talk about the children's needs without taking into account the social context, its values and norms.

Conclusion

Inclusion has become a new code for designating the social aspiration to overcome inequality, gaining liberty and a new quality of life. More often, social discourses about inclusion don't only indicate a civilised country and responsible civic position but are also an attribute of a modern type of rationality. From the current studies, we have evidence that educational organisations need comprehensive support which can address institutional challenges. Transforming existing barriers into strengths calls

for consistent collaboration of all stakeholders—administration, teachers, children and their families. Existing challenges can be tackled with a comprehensive approach to inclusion, where not only children with disabilities, but all kinds of children with various needs receive professional support and this leads ECEDU development to cultural and ideational diversity.

The Story (C)

Integrative Kindergarten Is a "Piece Work"

A story of Katya Kokorina, founder and one of the heads of the children's integrative center "SaVa"[4]

Katya talks about the origin of her idea of creating an integrative kindergarten and about the work on bringing this idea to life. She focuses on an intersectional approach to understanding the experience of a child with special educational needs and his/ her family and an individual approach to dealing with each case.

Migrant and Refugee Children Need Communication with Russian-Speaking Peers

There are hundreds of thousands of families in Russia from Afghanistan, Congo, Syria, Ukraine and other countries where military operations are underway. As a rule, children from refugee families are subjected to multiple discrimination: on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, gender, socio-economic status of their families, language proficiency, disability. The uncertainty of legal status becomes a difficult obstacle to overcome for access to education. Children from these families, as a rule, do not attend kindergartens: to get into the kindergarten, registration is required. They find themselves isolated, unable to communicate with their peers. Hence the characteristic difficulties: attention deficit, inability to communicate, difficulty in accepting rules and boundaries, cognitive challenges. I have worked for a long time in the organisation of assistance to refugees, in the "Civil Assistance".[5] The idea of an integrative group grew out of our work at the Center for Adaptation and Education

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[4] The Integrative Childrens Center "SaVa" is a place where different children can meet, communicate and play and where everyone is important. The project has been running since September 2016 https://cavakindergarden.com/#rec294014572.

[5] The "Civil Assistance" committee is a regional public charitable organization which provides assistance to refugees and migrants from 1990. The Civic Assistance Committee team consists of immigration consultants, lawyers, interpreters, aid program coordinators, a doctor, psychologists, teachers of Russian as a foreign language, etc. https://refugee.ru/en/.

of Refugee Children of the Committee "Civic Assistance" since 1996. It all started with an informal school for refugee children, a project of "Civic assistance" (now it is called "The same children"). I worked there, and it became clear to me: if we want to arrange children in schools, we need them to speak Russian by the age of seven. This means that we need to start studying earlier. We need a kindergarten.

So, after the birth of my own child, I had the idea to combine professional and private: to gather my children, children of my friends, children of refugees, and to receive a wonderful common life in an integrative kindergarten. As soon as the idea to create an "integrative group" appeared, I immediately recalled about the "Center for Curative Pedagogy" (CCP), went to study with them and began to think how to include migrant children in the group created according to their methodology. The idea was to create some kind of open space in which very different children with different peculiarities could spend time together. Since they are all different, no one feels too much in the spotlight, but everyone looks at each other and gets used to the fact that children are different …

The main challenge for refugee families is the issue of access—the inability to arrange a child in kindergarten and sometimes even in school, since many parents do not have any documents at all. When we started thinking about it, it became clear that we need to expand the number of categories of children who have difficulties with access. So, children with special needs also do not always understand where to go to study. Something depends on the capabilities of the child, but in general there are very few organisations where parents can arrange him/her. Inclusion is now declared in state kindergartens, but questions arise: even if the child is accepted there, do the employees understand how to work with the child? are there enough specialists and other resources there? And the answers to these questions are not always positive. Therefore, parents often do not trust state kindergartens, and private kindergartens have the right to refuse to accept a child. We need more places where children can get to. In this sense, it seemed to me that the appearance of alternative formats in the form of some private gaming groups was the way out.

And so, we recruited a group that consisted of children without special needs, refugee children and children with disabilities. At first, refugee children predominated, while we were working as a program within the framework of a charitable foundation. And then, when we completely switched to self-financing there were only two such free places left. That is, in a group of twelve kids, two of them are refugees, and two or three more are children with disabilities.

Cultural and Social Distance When Working with Refugees

We opened the kindergarten in 2016, called it "SaVa", the name means greeting "How are you?" in French. After all, most of the refugee children here are French-speaking. At first there were a lot of questions, we probably didn't do something very well, somehow everything was built up gradually. We often went on about our

desire to take everyone at once. Then we have already gained experience, methods, began to integrate children through individual play sessions and gradually include them in the group. And thus, another group was born—a group to prepare children for a kindergarten. Classes were not held there every day, twice a week. And it turned out to be a good format: an integration route—from an individual game, where some opportunities are developed to prepare the child for inclusion in the group; then the child with an accompanying teacher comes to the group, then the accompanying teacher gradually transfers his functions to the leading teacher of the group, and then the whole group lives a normal kindergarten life. At first, more support is needed, and then the children turn on, get involved in games, can already maintain relationships with other people themselves, and no longer need so much support. But we could not take children with severe disabilities, mostly they were children with Asperger's syndrome, children with motor difficulties, developmental delays, speech or mental, with difficulties with self-regulation.

Then we had a lot of children from Africa. They came to us once a week for three hours. They spoke Russian with the volunteers, but among themselves they immediately switched to French or even to African lingala. And it became clear: inclusion is very lacking; children need to communicate with Russian-speaking peers. In general, it is necessary that they play with children, and not just hang out with their parents at their jobs. So that they have some kind of children's culture.

Refugee parents often have no education, they do not speak Russian, they do not have the opportunity to deal with children, they have to take care of survival. And this is a big problem: with a generally large cultural and social distance, parents do not, as a rule, try to delve into what we do in kindergarten. They brought the child and went about their business, they have no questions, only whether the child ate and behaved well.

Children from refugee families often have very problematic behavior. Our African children demonstrate some amazing combination of lack of attention and wild looseness. On the one hand, they have a great hunger for communication, and therefore at the second meeting they already run to you, hang themselves on your neck and love you. On the other hand, this is terrible selfishness. They have less respect for the boundaries of others, they are less willing to negotiate, even discuss their own needs, they have more impulsive actions: they ran, grabbed what they wanted, and then ran. It's just a completely different way of life, when 15 people live in a room, what boundaries can we talk about at all. They don't have anything of their own. They can take something away from another child by using force. Because their families have different situations, different attitudes, and, as a rule, children have such an experience of hard attitude towards them.

Of course, other children don't like such behavior and it causes complaints, and some kinds of coalitions are being built against such a child. Over time, it is possible to overcome this either through some kind of personal positive contact, or through adults who somehow channel it.

There were, of course, different cases: someone did not go to us for a long time, someone successfully reached school, but getting to school is a separate story. Probably the longest experience: there was a girl from the Congo, she came to us at

the age of four and studied until she was seven, and then we and Civil Assistance helped her get into school. But it turned out that she could not cope with the school curriculum. She always had difficulties with speech, in the Russian language. She is sociable; she quickly mastered everyday communication, but when math, reading and writing began, it became clear that she had a serious delay. We took her through the medical, psychological and pedagogical commission, and she was transferred to a correctional class. There, the teacher was kinder, more understanding, and there were fewer children …

She had a very strange situation in general: Russian was born in Moscow, she speaks Russian, and her parents don't speak Russian. They had no common language at all. Her parents speak French and Lingala, she speaks Russian, she mastered French only later, and Lingala appeared even later. How they communicated remains a mystery. This is absolutely some kind of semi-linguism, not bilingualism, but on the contrary—neither this nor that. Everything that was connected with the development of the cognitive sphere was given to her with difficulty. But … in terms of interpersonal relations, she made great progress, then she came to our communication group when she went to school, and it was clear that she could behave quite adequately. Although, of course, difficulties persisted due to the fact that her hard life did not become easier. The child definitely needs communication skills. And a kindergarten group or at least a short-term stay group is good because there is a regime there. School is still not an hour of classes, but much more; the child should be ready for such a load.

When I started all this, I had a rush of enthusiasm—it seemed to me that now we will build a community of integrative gardens, we will train specialists, they will open their gardens … But it didn't go wide. Then I realised that this is a very "piece work", it should not be "on stream". All successful examples: the kindergarten of the CCP or the "Folding Giraffe",[6] or other integrative groups, are successful precisely because of their uniqueness. As a rule, cool specialists come to work there. In general, there is a unique situation in CCP: all educators working in kindergarten are both psychologists and holders of some additional qualifications and competencies. This is an issue, of course, of training specialists, but also of the commitment of these people to the idea. You can't run this as a conveyor production.

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[6] "Folding Giraffe" is a community of speech therapists, speech pathologists, psychologists and teachers who have been working with a variety of children since 2012, specializing in conducting integrative groups and helping children with various developmental disabilities https://www.skladn ojzhiraf.ru/школа.

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Chapter 5
Inclusion and Equity in Secondary Education in Russia: How to Make Inclusion Assessment More "Inclusive"

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Abstract In this chapter, we use statistical data and surveys to show differences in access to educational resources and the quality of the academic achievements of students living in different regions of Russia. We demonstrate that behind the benign indicators of inclusion (academic and social) used for international comparisons, there may be noticeable intra-country imbalances. Using Russia as a case, we argue for the need to consider intra-country differences in international comparative studies and the obligation to consider the diversity of conditions within countries when implementing policies and inclusion and justice.

Introduction

The concept of inclusive education has expanded over the years beyond the inclusion of students with special educational needs in the mass system of general education to include those with other barriers. This aims to bring equality and equity in education (Ainscow, et al. 2006; Amor et al., 2019; Domingo-Martos et al., 2022). Equity in education assumes that the realisation of a person's educational potential should

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not be limited by social circumstances, including place of residence, ethnic origin, migration status, special educational needs, and economic opportunities of families (Brussino, 2020). This should be achieved despite the fact that schools in different regions of Russia differ in educational resources (educational programs, staff, the condition of buildings, equipment, etc.), depending on the region's economic opportunities. For example, a remote place of residence may limit the access of children from rural areas to modern educational infrastructure and qualified personnel, compared to families from urban areas. Families with low socioeconomic status may need more resources to support their children. They also often lack the cultural and economic capital to enrol their children in well-equipped schools.

The impact of socio-economic differences between families and territories on children's access to educational resources and become obstacles to obtaining education of proper quality, however, has been well studied (Amini & Nivorozhkin, 2015; Hanushek, 1997; Muys et al., 2004; OECD, 2013). However, there could be specific issues manifesting inequality pertinent to different countries.

In this chapter, we will consider the peculiarities of the influence of students' residential location (rural or urban areas, regions) and families' socioeconomic characteristics on the equality of opportunities in accessing key educational resources and achieving high academic results in Russia. Differences in students' access to educational resources and the quality of educational achievements between urban and rural schools are not only prevalent in Russia but existent almost in all post-socialist countries (Gerry & Mickiewicz, 2007; Milanovic, 2013; Schafft et al., 2020; Simai, 2006).

Context

There are attempts to reduce this gap by restructuring the network of educational organisations (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Latvia, Kazakhstan, Estonia, and Lithuania) and implementing national projects and programs. These efforts are aimed at improving rural schools, equipping them with educational equipment, and high-quality Internet connection (National Project "Education" (2006) and developing a "Modern school" (2018) [Russia]; "Quality Education in the Rural Areas of Moldova" [Moldova]; "Auyl mektebi" [Kazakhstan]), recruiting teachers ("With a Diploma—to the village" [Kazakhstan], "Zemsky Uchitel" [Russia], "Teacher for Belarus" [Belarus]), and developing transportation (National Development Plan of Latvia for the period from 2014 to 2020).

Notably, the cross-regional differences observed in Russia are comparable to large national education systems, such as the USA (Matheny et al., 2023) or China (Qian & Smyth, 2008). In European countries there is internal socio-economic heterogeneity, for example, the United Kingdom (Garner & Raudenbush, 1991), Italy (Ballarino et al., 2014), Turkey (Tomul & Çelik, 2009). Similarly, intra-country inequalities in access to quality education have been identified in Central Asian countries (Kopeyeva, 2020). An important question is how do intra-country differences

in equality of educational opportunity impact the assessment of equity and inclusion within the country and across-country levels (Xiang et al., 2020; Zair-Bek et al., 2019; Zakharov & Adamovich, 2020). It is evident that the comparative analysis may influence how inclusion, equity and access are understood (Ciccia & Javornik, 2019; Inequality Index, 2022).

This chapter begins by discussing how differences in the socioeconomic characteristics of families and the characteristics of the student's residential location (village, city) are related to the quality of education provision to Russian schoolchildren to that of their international counterparts, as evidenced in studies conducted internationally on the quality of education. We then consider the impact of differences in access to modern educational resources (such as personnel, equipment, and digital environments) among students of urban and rural schools in different Russian regions. We conclude with the analysis of interregional differences in the level of achievement based on the comparison between the variables of socioeconomic status and academic results.

Methods

We analysed data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)'s international comparative study and official statistics, data from the Federal Statistical Observation (FSO) in the field of Education (provided by the Ministry of Education of Russia), and demographic data provided by the Federal State Statistic Service (Rosstat). To ensure the consistency of our analysis, data from 2016 onwards were used to avoid significant deviations associated with changes in data collection methodologies. We also analysed data from HSE University research projects, such as:

- Monitoring of the digital transformation of public education organisations conducted by the Ministry of Education of Russia and HSE University in the 2020/2021 academic year. The monitoring was conducted across 729 schools from 85 regions of Russia. These schools were distributed based on the type of locality (urban and rural) and the size of the educational institution in proportion to the general population. The monitoring encompassed surveys conducted with heads of general educational institutions (more than 2300 individuals), teachers (over 15,000), and senior students (grades 9–11, more than 20,300). It also involved gathering statistical information about schools (school profiles) and on-site inspections of schools conducted in the form of expert visits.
- Monitoring of education markets and organisations (MEMO) implemented by HSE University during the 2020/2021 academic year. The study used about 9400 questionnaires from parents whose children attend general education institutions across 8 federal districts of the Russian Federation. The sampling of educational institutions was stratified based on three parameters: (1) geographical location,

(2) type of locality, and (3) type of educational institution. Sampling was proportionally distributed across strata, defined by "administrative-geographical characteristics" and "type of locality," according to the population size of these strata. The surveys were conducted in an online format, leading to some bias due to the tendency toward an Internet-based audience. The use of the river sampling method further poses the risk of skewing the sample toward more active individuals. This influenced certain monitoring outcomes. To mitigate these biases, the weighting of the teachers' and parents' sample was performed. Weighting coefficients were calculated using the random iterative weighting method, limiting the maximum individual weight to 3.

- Data collected by the Pinsky Centre of the Institute of Education in five different regions of the Russian Federation, including the results of the Unified State Exam and data on the socioeconomic status of students in schools. The composition of the data and the methodology of their analysis are described in more detail in the relevant sections.

Indicators of Educational System Equity in International Assessments: The Case of PISA 2018

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a widely recognised study that has been evaluating the quality of educational systems in over 70 countries worldwide since 2000. This assessment not only evaluates the skills and knowledge of 15-year-olds but also collects a diverse range of contextual data related to educational processes, encompassing information from schools, students, and their families. The primary aim of this assessment is to enhance evidence-based decision-making in the field of education, providing each participant with access to a comprehensive dataset and the opportunity to make reliable comparisons of educational performance with other countries.[1]

Background questions included in PISA context questionnaires typically address the most significant topics in the educational agenda. As a matter of global concern, equity in education has been a central and enduring theme in international assessments. In PISA, the concept of equity is grounded in the principles of inclusion and fairness. Inclusion entails ensuring that all students, regardless of their backgrounds, have access to high-quality education. Fairness means the removal of barriers to success within the educational system that are beyond students' control. To evaluate these, PISA measures the relationship between students' background characteristics and their academic performance, along with assessing access to educational resources in terms of academic and social segregation levels within schools.

In this section, using Russia as an example, we illustrate insights from the PISA 2018 results regarding equity in the educational system. To accomplish this objective,

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we juxtapose data with that of other countries, focusing on: we will compare with other countries' data on: (1) the relationship between students' socio-economic background and achievement, (2) levels of academic and social inclusion, (3) achievement of students with diverse immigrant backgrounds, and (4) achievement of students from urban and rural schools.

PISA uses the so-called socio-economic gradient to show the *relationship between socio-economic background and academic achievement* at the individual level. The gradient reflects what percentage of the result variance is explained by the social origin of the student. Regarding the socioeconomic gradient, PISA results in 2018 (reading) are explained by the socioeconomic status of Russian students by only 7% (Fig. 5.1). This differs from the OECD national average of 12% in the direction of greater equity in the education system. Further, the graph demonstrates that countries such as Canada, Estonia, and China not only demonstrate lower disparity but also higher academic performance in comparison to Russia.

Academic and social inclusion are measured with the isolation index, which shows how students with the same characteristics are distributed among schools. The isolation index ranges from 0 (no segregation) to 1 (full segregation). Therefore, high values of the index indicate that students from the indicated group are concentrated in a few schools. In the case of academic inclusion, the groups are defined as high- and low-achieving students, while for social inclusion, the groups are defined as advantaged and disadvantaged students.
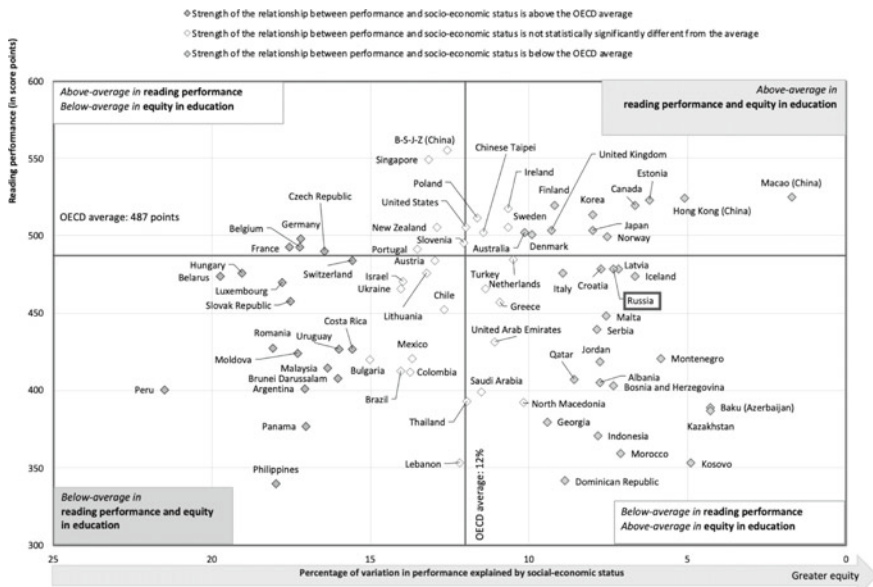
Fig. 5.1 Strength of the socio-economic gradient and reading performance. *Source* OECD (2019)

In 2018, Russian schools showed slightly higher values of isolation index for low-achieving students than the average in OECD countries—0.23 (Fig. 5.2). However, the same indicator for high-achieving students was lower compared to those in OECD countries (0.18). This suggests that in Russia, there is a more notable concentration of low-achieving students in a relatively small number of schools compared to high-achieving students. In comparison to Russia, countries with greater equity in 2018, where isolation indexes are lower than 0.10 for both groups, were Iceland, Finland, and Norway.

As for the indicators of social inclusion, in 2018, Russian schools demonstrated higher values of isolation index for disadvantaged students (0.19) than OECD countries on average (Fig. 5.3). Further, the isolation index for advantaged students (0.16) did not exceed the OECD average values. This pattern highlights that segregation is more pronounced among disadvantaged groups of students in Russia. The greater equity in 2018 than in Russia in terms of social inclusion was found in Montenegro, Canada, and Norway, where isolation indexes for advantaged and disadvantaged students were 0.12 or less.

The gap between students from different ***immigrant backgrounds*** is extremely important in such a diverse country as Russia. Nevertheless, the data tell us that in the Russian PISA 2018 sample, there were only 5.8% of students with immigrant backgrounds (OECD, 2019). On average, in OECD countries, this share reaches 13%, with a maximum of almost 63% of immigrant students in Macao (China). The difference in academic performance associated with immigrant status was found to be 7 points in the Russian sample. It is not statistically significant and much lower than the OECD average of a 24-point decrease in achievement for immigrant students compared with non-immigrants.

There are different types of settlements in Russia, and they differ dramatically not only in the educational resources that schools have but also in the achievement of their students. In the results of the achievement of students from different types of settlements, we consider the gap in achievement between ***urban and rural*** schools.
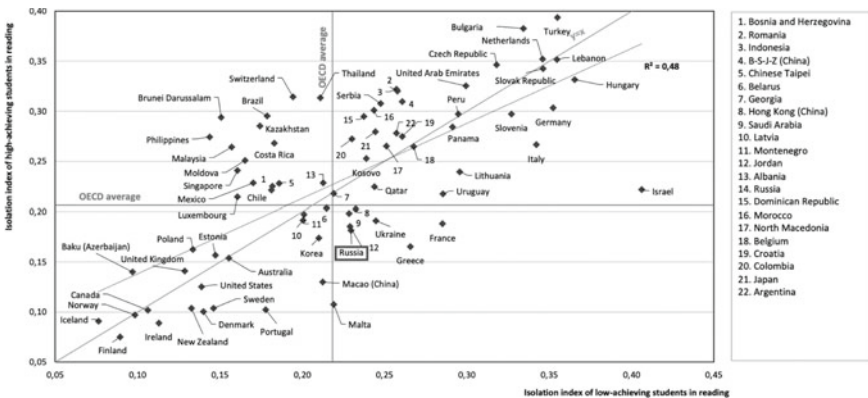
Fig. 5.2 Isolation index of low- and high-achieving students in reading. *Source* OECD (2019)
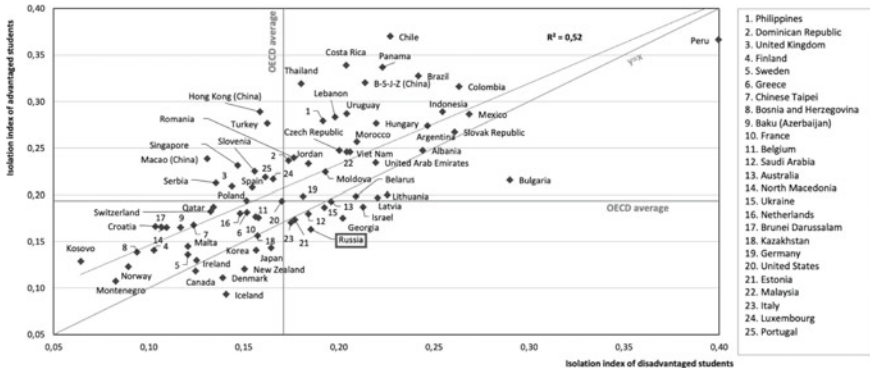
Fig. 5.3 Isolation index of advantaged and disadvantaged students. *Source* OECD (2019)

According to the PISA 2018 results, this gap is almost 1.5 times higher in Russia than the average in OECD countries. It constitutes 37 points in mathematics, 45 in reading, and 22 points in science, in contrast with OECD averages of 24, 27, and 22 points, respectively.

In summary, in this section, we have observed that most equity indicators in PISA for Russia are similar to the OECD averages, with the exceptions of immigrant backgrounds and the urban–rural divide. In the case of immigrant backgrounds, the situation is not as acute as in OECD countries, while for the urban–rural divide, we identified greater differences among students. Therefore, while the overall picture suggests greater equity, the situation is significantly different when we consider various student groups and regional disparities within the educational system. This raises the question: Are the data from international comparative assessments sufficient to draw conclusions about equity in educational systems? In the following sections, we utilise additional data to delve deeper into variations in student achievement within the country and compare it with the insights gained from PISA.

Educational Resources

Consider the extent to which students in Russian schools are provided with equal access to educational resources, regardless of the territory of residence (region, city, village). This theme has been the subject of various publications, primarily focusing on disparities in the opportunities available to students in rural and urban schools (Zvyagintsev et al., 2020). The topic of interregional differences has been comparatively less explored (Zair-Bek et al., 2018). International studies on educational inequality mainly consider three main groups of school resources: the school's physical environment (buildings, premises, educational equipment), the learning environment (including educational programs), and the teaching staff (including support staff) (Lu et al., 2022; Omoeva et al., 2021). The analysis of the situation in Russian education will further focus on these conditions.

Physical Environment

According to international studies, the organisation of school premises plays a crucial role in providing high-quality education to students and ensuring the effective and equitable use of school resources (OECD, 2018). On average, school building improvement indicators in Russia appear positive. Nonetheless, a closer examination of specific Russian territories reveals distinctions. Some regions show a high prevalence of schools needing major repairs (more than half), while others have just around 50% of schools with even basic amenities, such as water supply, heating, and sewage. The North Caucasus region presents the greatest challenges. The likely causes of this disparity are the region's weaker economies and, at times, challenging natural and climatic conditions, notably hard-to-access areas.

In some areas, school buildings do not accommodate all students, and lessons have to be conducted in two, and in some cases, three shifts. This creates unequal conditions for children's education. Currently, the proportion of schoolchildren studying in the second and third shifts is about 15.5%. This index's spread of regional values ranges from 0% in capital cities to 38–39% in the Chechen Republic and the Republic of Tuva. In these subjects of the Russian Federation, second- and third-shift lessons are maintained in both urban and rural schools, which may be due to a significant proportion of the population living in rural areas, a low level of outflow to cities, and high values of the natural growth coefficient. The presence of specialised facilities for learning activities and the development and preservation of the participants' health in schools in the educational process also vary across different areas in the region. Rural schools lag behind urban schools by more than twice the margin.

Modern education is increasingly shifting the focus from theoretical knowledge toward students' competencies and skills needed in practice, which allows graduates of educational organisations to better adapt to professional activities. In this context, it becomes fundamentally important to have physics, chemistry, and biology laboratories in schools, as well as workshops, training, experimental sites, and computer classes. However, there is a substantial disparity in the provision of such facilities among schools across various regions in Russia. The variation in the availability of specialised facilities in schools—such as physics, chemistry, biology laboratories, workshops, and educational and experimental sites—exceeds a 60-percentage-point difference among these regions (Fig. 5.4).

Only 40% of schools in some regions are equipped with chemistry, physics, and biology classrooms. The shortage of workshops, training, and experimental sites is even more significant. The absence of training and experimental sites is typical of large cities, but it is often found in rural areas. The result of such inequality in conditions is, among other reasons, the low results of schoolchildren at the final certification in these subjects.
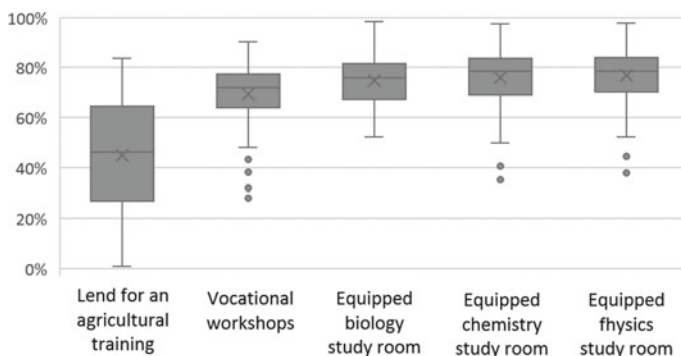
Fig. 5.4 Differentiation of regional indicators of the share of schools with these premises, the maximum and minimum regional values, and the average for Russia in percentages of the total number of schools. *Source* Ministry of Education of Russia, 2020

Digital Learning Environment

Differences in learning conditions between rural and urban schools are a severe problem for many countries (Echazarra & Radinger, 2019). The efforts of Russian state policy to equalise educational conditions have led to specific successes in forming the digital infrastructure of rural schools. Regarding the availability of digital and computer equipment, the situation in rural schools is better than in urban schools. In the 2020/2021 academic year, there were, on average, about 24 personal computers per 100 schoolchildren in rural schools and 17 in urban schools. The availability of these computers during extracurricular hours for rural schoolchildren is two times higher, on average than for urban schoolchildren in the country.

However, the presence of computers does not guarantee their quality. According to the monitoring of the digital transformation of educational organisations, the share of serviceable computers in some schools is at most 10% of the total available fleet. The renewal of the school's computer fleet is uneven. It only sometimes compensates for the existing shortage of equipment. In some regions with a high number of schools with computers, their update and supply are maintained, often due to the economic opportunities of the regions themselves but largely with the participation of the regions in federal projects involving subsidies for updating the digital equipment of schools. The situation with audiovisual equipment in classrooms is somewhat different. Rural schools are provided with stationary interactive whiteboards and multimedia equipment (digital projectors) to a lesser extent (about 1.5 times) than urban schools. The interregional differentiation in the equipment of the study room with stationary interactive whiteboards reaches 9.4 times (the minimum value is 8.4% of offices; the maximum is 79.3%).

Effective use of digital equipment is impossible without high-quality Internet access. According to this indicator, there is also a severe differentiation between urban and rural territories, regions, and schools. Among rural schools, about 15% of
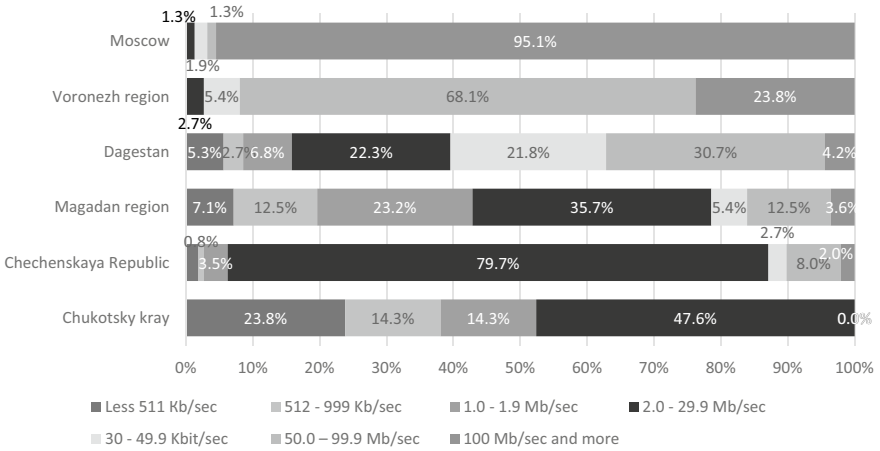
Fig. 5.5 The share of schools with the specified Internet connection speed in some regions of Russia in percentages of the total number of schools in the region. *Source* Ministry of Education of Russia, 2020

buildings' Internet connection speed is below 1 Mb/s, compared to only 2.6% among urban schools. Internet connection via Wi-Fi (if available) in 2/3 of rural schools does not cover even half of the school premises. Half of the schools met such limitations in urban areas. Internet speed distribution within individual regions shows severe differences (Fig. 5.5). For example, in the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, almost a quarter of schools have a maximum connection speed below 511 Kb/s, and in Moscow—almost all schools have a speed of 100 Mb/s or higher. In most cases, low speeds are associated with objective reasons (natural and climatic features of the territories).

Teaching Staff

Teachers, especially subject teachers, are one of the most critical factors determining the equality of opportunities for obtaining school education (OECD, 2019), depending on how the existing educational equipment capabilities will be used or how infrastructure deficits will be compensated. School provision with teachers of all subjects differs noticeably across the nation. For example, foreign language teachers are in an acute shortage in rural areas. A grave marker of the shortage of personnel in rural schools is a relatively high proportion of external part-timers, including in critical basic subjects: chemistry, physics, and biology. In computer science, the proportion of part-time students in rural schools is two times higher than in urban schools, and in foreign languages, it is five times higher. The difference between regions in terms of the shortage of schoolteachers sometimes reaches dozens of times. Attracting part-timers to rural schools is often related to the size of the schools. It is among rural schools there are many small schools with fewer than 150 students.
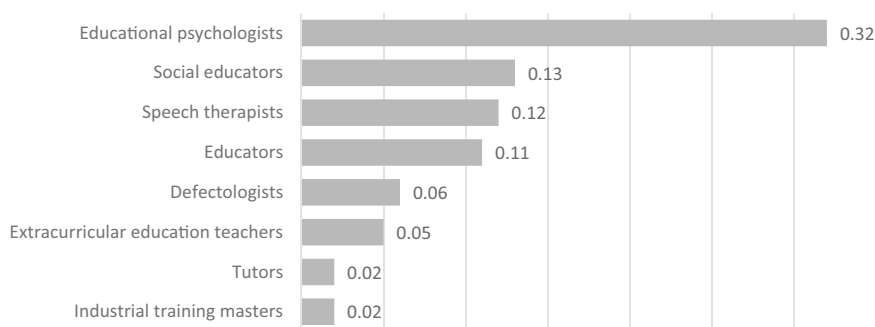
Fig. 5.6 The differentiation of regions by the number of students per psychological, medical, and social support specialist is calculated as the ratio of the average value of 10% of the minimum regional values to the average value of 10% of the maximum (the closer the value to 1, the smaller the differentiation is). *Source* Ministry of Education of Russia, 2020

Such sizes only allow a partial load and, accordingly, a salary for teachers teaching subjects with a small number of hours in the curriculum. The differences between regions in the provision of psychological, medical, and social support specialists are even higher (Fig. 5.6).

The teacher shortage is most sensitive in rural areas. According to the MEMO, the opportunities for rural teachers to obtain advice from such specialists on the issues of teaching lagging students and children with special educational needs (children with disabilities, disabled people, children with non-native Russian, children with pedagogical neglect, etc.) are much lower than those of urban teachers (Kosaretsky et al., 2022). The assessments of parents interviewed within MEMO show an increasing problem of obtaining advice from psychological, medical, and social support specialists as the size of the settlement decreases (Fig. 5.7).

Given the quantitative shortage of personnel, differences in their quality (such as age composition, length of service, and qualifications) appear to be less critical, on average, in Russia. However, there are also some regions whose indicators differ significantly from the national average. A large proportion of young teachers is typical in regions with the highest values of natural growth, which determines a significant "rejuvenation" of the population as a whole. In the "aging" regions (with low rates of natural growth), teachers over 50 years of age predominate. The proportion of teachers with the highest qualification category in regions differs from 9% (in the Chechen Republic) to 57% (in Karachay-Cherkessia). Similarly, the proportion of teachers with "effective" work experience (5–20 years) differs from 20% (in the Smolensk region) to 43% (in Ingushetia).
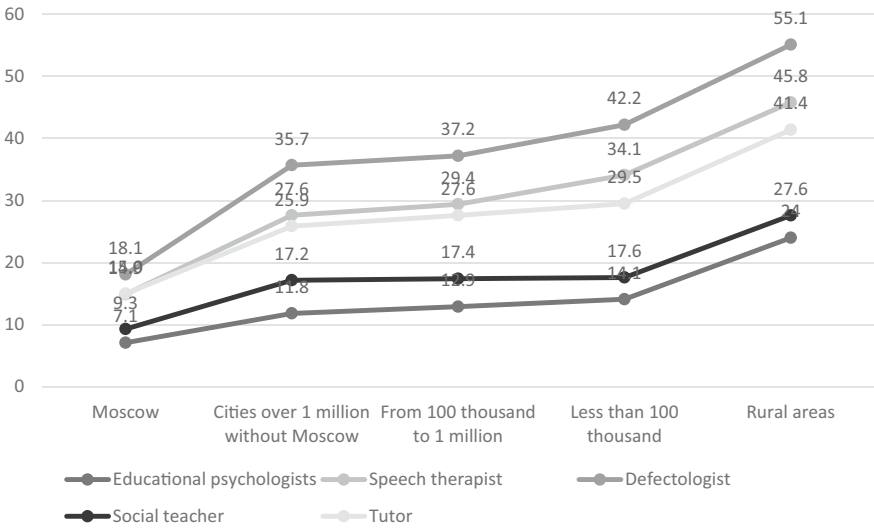
Fig. 5.7 Parents who indicated that they and their children do NOT have the opportunity to obtain advice from psychological, medical, and social support specialists at school, by type of localities, in % of the number of respondents. *Source* MEMO, Survey of Parents, 2021

Educational Programs

Great differences that exist between the regions, as well as between the urban and rural schools, are observed in the opportunities to study on specialised/advanced programs. The reason for such differences is, among other things, the shortage of highly qualified personnel who are ready to work in such programs. Distance education technologies are considered a mechanism for overcoming this deficit in international studies (Haleem et al., 2022; Rodrigues et al., 2014). By enrolling in distance learning programs, gifted and highly motivated schoolchildren from remote and hard-to-reach territories can engage in advanced study programs with teachers from other schools and university teachers, including those from the capital cities. However, there is also a territorial disparity in distance learning. According to the FSN data, the share of students using distance learning technologies in Russia in September 2020 was 15.5%, in urban schools—18.2%, and in rural schools—almost three times less (6.8%).

Profile or specialised programs in high schools are mandatory according to federal state standards, but their implementation differs between regions. On average, only two thirds of high school students (63.2%) in Russia study in specialised classes. In many schools, specialised classes are not opened, and specialised training is provided due to a flexible schedule when students are listed in regular classes, changing classrooms only for specialised subjects. In some regions, the share of such students reaches 85%.

Interregional Differences in Academic Achievement and Its Connection to Socio-economic Status

In this section, we present the results of our study of interregional and intraregional differences in educational inequality as a separate parameter of the inclusiveness of Russian general education using the example of five different regions of the Russian Federation. The available palette of regions represents regional differences in the country: prosperous regions of the European part of the country, a remote sparsely populated ethnic region, and a region from the central part of the country.

To assess the traditionally used indicators of educational inequality—the level of academic achievement depending on the rural/urban status, the strength of the relationship between socio-economic status and academic results, and the differentiation of educational resources (OECD, 2018)—in certain regional education systems of the Russian Federation, the Institute of Education (NRU HSE) collected data on academic performance and school conditions. We were not able to collect individual PISA-like data to shed light on these issues, which is why we used school-level data in our analysis. The data were obtained from regional centers for the assessment of the quality of education (parts of the regional Ministries of Education).

To identify the schools' socioeconomic status, we used SEC (school socioeconomic composition, the share of students in school whose parents have higher education), a variable traditionally used in educational research (Kersha, 2020; Palardy, 2008). According to this variable, all schools are divided into quartiles in each region separately to show the significance of intraregional differentiation and, more importantly, interregional differentiation. The main variables used in the analysis are the proportion of teachers with the highest qualification category, the share of teachers of retirement age, and the proportion of students from families where parents have higher education. The school's academic performance index for the 2018 academic year is the average USE scores (9 and 11 grades) in reading and mathematics at the school level (for more details, see Appendix Table).

To assess and compare the inclusiveness of the general education system in different regions through the prism of inequality, it is necessary to assess the difference in achievements and the level of inequality expressed through the percentage of variance in school performance in the region, as explained by their SEC. Following the example of the OECD study (OECD, 2019), we provide a scatterplot that shows the average performance of schools in the region, as well as R2 (percentage of variance mentioned earlier). The highest results are found in the two most prosperous regions of the European part of the country, located around the largest cities of the Russian Federation, the Moscow and Leningrad regions. However, the level of equality is much higher in the latter region. Average results are observed in the Kaliningrad region, but the level of inequality is significantly higher there. The highest level of inequality is in the Tyumen region. We observe the lowest results in the most remote region of all presented—the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), but the level of inequality is also shallow. Both indicators vary significantly from region to region.
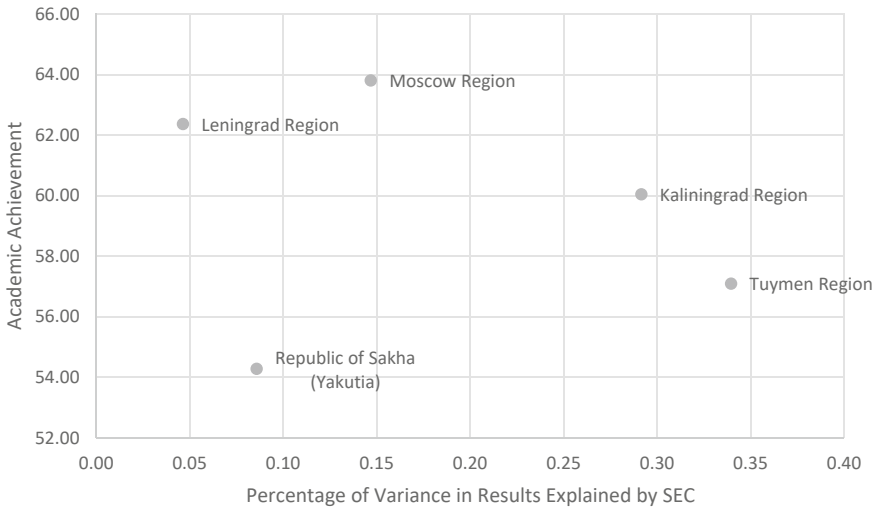
For a more detailed understanding of these outcomes, it is worth looking at the variables that describe both the inequality of conditions and the inequality of results. Complete data in the context of the SEC and territorial affiliation of schools are given in the appendix. In this section, we discuss only the most essential points. Most of the attention needs to be paid to the composition of the schools. First, the proportion of students from families with higher education is, on average, significantly higher in the Moscow region. This also leads to less differentiation of schools in the regions—the average number of such children in schools of the first SEC quartile is 0% in Yakutia and Tyumen (in 25% of schools in the region, there are no children from such families at all!), slightly more (2%) in Leningrad/Kaliningrad region and 10% for Moscow. Most important in this sense is the understanding that disadvantaged schools, by Moscow's regional standards, will be the usual norm for almost any other region. Intraregional differences in this indicator are also noticeable—the differences between urban and rural schools range from 15% in the Leningrad region to 30% in the Tyumen region. Obviously, territorial inequality is doubly exacerbated by human resources and the education of students' families.

Further, we refer to the data on the school's human resources—teachers and their qualifications. As expected, the most favourable situation is in the Moscow region: on average, in regional schools, about half of the teachers have the highest qualification category, and this parameter does not change either depending on the urban/rural status of the school or its SEC. In all other regions, the inequality of resources is worse—the difference between rural and urban schools is about 10% on average, and the connection with the SEC looks even worse. For Yakutia and the Kaliningrad region, for example, the average percentage of such teachers in the least favorable schools is one-fifth or less of all teachers. In none of the regions does the average percentage of such teachers, even in the most favorable group of schools, reach the level of the Moscow region, although, within the region, there is a clear connection between the SEC of a school and the share of qualified teachers.

Naturally, the conditions described above are also associated with the regional differentiation of the results. Even the results of the least prosperous schools in the Moscow and Leningrad regions are equal to or higher than the results of the most prosperous Yakut or Tyumen schools. In schools with a high SEC in any region, the results are higher than in schools with a low SEC, but this difference differs significantly from region to region—which was clear even when assessing the level of inequality in the first place. For example, in the Leningrad Oblast, it is less than 3%, and in the Kaliningrad Oblast, it is more than 8%. Thus, it turns out that in the most prosperous regions, both the results in general and the availability of a good education are higher, even for schoolchildren from disadvantaged schools. Further, a high level of equality is observed in the region with the lowest results—Yakutia; however, in this case, equality means that everybody is not performing very well. Regions with average results exhibit the price of a huge gap in achievement—high-achieving children perform very well, extending the average level of the region.

Conclusion

The concept of educational inclusion today emphasises equity and access to high-quality education as fundamental human rights. In Russia, a commitment to this priority is declared at the national level. The fundamental principle of Russian education is that every child, regardless of their background, should receive a high-quality education tailored to their abilities and interests. However, when we examine objective data measuring inclusion in the education system, we encounter an ambiguous picture. Data from international comparative studies of educational quality reveal that, at the national level, Russia's average in fairness and inclusion compares favorably to that of OECD countries. Schools exhibit relative homogeneity with regard to academic achievements, social composition, and access to educational resources. However, behind this 'average' picture, based on a specific sample of schools in PISA, there are discernible disparities in crucial indicators related to the availability of educational resources, as evident from national statistics and empirical studies within the country.

Our work shows that under current conditions, Russian education can hardly be called inclusive in terms of equal educational conditions in different regions of the country and, moreover, in terms of ensuring equal access to quality education for children from families with different SES. The most significant and widespread issue, according to this data, pertains to establishing equitable conditions in the quality of school staffing, especially in terms of highly qualified subject teachers and specialists in psychological, medical, and social support. Pronounced disparities in the quality of education are also observed among schools in different regions. We also see that a high level of equality within a region is not necessarily a positive characteristic. In some cases, this simply shows that all or almost all schools, regardless of SEC, perform equally poorly. Such a situation, as we already wrote above, can hardly be called inclusive. It is also interesting that the most unequal in our study are regional

systems with an average level of both results and resources; these regions show the strongest relationship between SEC and the results.

The observed differences are probably related to the diversity of territories' demographic, socio-economic, and cultural characteristics. These diversity parameters often remain without sufficient attention and consideration in educational policy, which is unacceptable in states with such a high level of intra-country heterogeneity. When the bar of requirements rises at the federal level, the least most-deprived territories face the greatest difficulties in achieving them (ensuring), and the general growth of the "average" hides a growing gap. Efforts to form inclusion at the school level are undoubtedly significant, but when schools, like children, have such an apparent connection with the background of their territories, understanding this connection and the possibilities of managing it becomes critically important for a policy focused on justice.

The observed differences between the capabilities of schools and students in different territories raise the question: To what extent does this approach to assessing equality and inclusivity—that is, "fair" and "inclusive"—take into account the diversity of contexts in which schools operate and their sensitivity to the challenges of geographical conditions or the risks of economic deprivation? How can the growth of inclusivity be made more "inclusive," and what indicators allow us to track this?

The Story (D)

As Anybody Else

Egor tells how his schooling took place

Egor Kositsyn is 19 years old. He is a first-year student of the Academy of Law in Saratov, located on the Volga River about 1000 km South-East of Moscow. In his account, he claims that he is not very different from anybody else.

Egor Kositsyn, a first-year student of the Academy of Law, talks about his experience of studying at a special school for students with disabilities and at a regular school. Egor presents his experience of social relations in different contexts as a set of events that could happen to any student.

A Special Education School as a Different World. 'But Then You Get Used to It Somehow'

If we talk about education, there is nothing unusual here. At first, I was at home, and my parents went to work, I was usually alone. There were some nannies, the same as with ordinary children. Then at the age of six, I went to a kindergarten, to the oldest preschool group. And at the age of seven, I went to the first grade of school, but it was a special education school. Somebody advised parents that it would be better there. They were afraid that in an ordinary school, other kids might push me, so I would fall, hurt myself, and so on. Parents found this school, went there, looked, and they liked everything there. In general, this was a boarding school. There were also orphans and children whose parents were deprived of parental rights. And these children lived there. And my parents just found this school, they said it was good there, it was like a big family, there are clubs, an extended day group …

Of course, I was a little shocked when I went there because there were people there on crutches, in wheelchairs, with mental disabilities, and so on. So, it was a little shock for me when I got there, and I would even say a shock of my life. But then you get used to it somehow. Well, there is a dissonance, because you spend a day there, then you come out of the boarding school into the ordinary world and see completely different people.

'You Look up for Different Ways'

In a special education school, of course, teachers focus on weak students, and if you learn the material well, then they will practically not pay attention to you. A teacher would explain to someone else who understands nothing. In a mainstream school, on the contrary, it is easier for teachers to take groups of successful students and work with them than to explain the material to a laggard.

I studied at a special education school for four years, finished elementary school there, and moved to a regular school, where I studied until the 11th grade. There was no longer any special approach in an ordinary school. Sometimes other children would ask me why I didn't walk like everyone else. I explained. But in principle, all people treated it calmly.

At first, I was a little scared that the children were running, and jumping like mad at breaks, when at that special school they just ate, drank and moved around calmly, and I was some kind of racer for them there. And here, in a regular school, they were running even harder. So, I was thinking, it's a bit of luck they didn't hit me. It was some kind of dissonance. And so, if talk about relationships with my classmates, at the beginning, in the 5th grade, someone said, don't touch him at all. Someone looked with such pity, someone with aggression, and then you join in and realise that everything is fine. The main thing is to assert yourself in the right way, and no

one will be able to infringe on you. They quarrelled, talked, and someone from the adults stood up for you … So, you look up for different ways, and gradually you get used to it, and everything normalises. And after the 9th grade, all the bullies left, and normal guys remained. In some schools, they bully all the time, but I have not got into that.

Teachers Are Different

There were some teachers, especially sport teachers, who said they were afraid to take responsibility for me, and therefore asked me not to go to their classes. I remember my first physical culture [sports] teacher at a regular school said: 'you can only go to a special group, and we don't have such a group, so you'll be sitting on a bench'. But the physical culture of teachers often changed, and a new teacher has allowed me to study.

When I just moved from a special school, I had problems with many teachers, with a teacher of the Russian language, for example. She thought I didn't know anything, because my handwriting was terrible, and there were a lot of mistakes in words. But, in principle, all teachers treated me normally, as well as all schoolchildren: at first, they somehow got used to it, and then everything normalised. At first, it seemed to me that my relationship with the English teacher of Russian was not going well, but then she stood up for me and helped me when I had a difficult time with the Math teacher.

I attended and studied all subjects without any problems. The only thing was a special way: I took an opportunity to write an application for an increase in time on the Unified State Exam.[2] But, as experience has shown, I didn't need it, I even finished my tests before other guys. In principle, I didn't really use the privileges that were assigned to me due to my disability. Now I am studying at a university, and the only thing here is that I am engaged in a special physical culture [sports] group. But there are a lot of people in it, about whom you can't say that they have any special features (like with chronic conditions, for example). There is no such thing as a person walking on crutches or something like that. If we are talking about education, then there is nothing special. Like everyone else.

School-level academic performance index. The index was obtained as follows: the average school-level results—USE scores (9 and 11 grade) in reading and mathematics—were normalized to the maximum possible result (total—share), multiplied by 100 and rounded to the second decimal place (total—percentage of completion).

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[2] Unified State Exam is to be passed by school students at the end of the 11th grade. Students with disabilities have the right to pass it with special conditions, to have more time, in presence of a tutor, etc.

	Urban	Rural	SEC (Q1)	SEC (Q2)	SEC (Q3)	SEC (Q4)	Mean
Share of teachers with the highest qualification category							
Kaliningrad region	0.35	0.19	0.15	0.23	0.32	0.41	0.28
Leningrad region	0.42	0.32	0.33	0.33	0.39	0.41	0.36
Moscow region	0.51	0.53	0.53	0.50	0.51	0.53	0.52
Tuymen region	0.42	0.30	0.28	0.28	0.33	0.43	0.33
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	0.41	0.30	0.21	0.28	0.34	0.44	0.32
Share of teachers over retirement age							
Kaliningrad region	0.35	0.40	0.44	0.34	0.35	0.37	0.38
Leningrad region	0.29	0.32	0.31	0.32	0.30	0.31	0.31
Moscow region	0.33	0.39	0.41	0.34	0.33	0.31	0.35
Tuymen region	0.20	0.20	0.22	0.21	0.17	0.19	0.20
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	0.37	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.33	0.34	0.33
Share of students from families where parents have higher education							
Kaliningrad region	0.38	0.11	0.02	0.13	0.31	0.58	0.26
Leningrad region	0.30	0.14	0.02	0.12	0.24	0.48	0.21
Moscow region	0.41	0.20	0.09	0.24	0.39	0.63	0.34
Tuymen region	0.39	0.09	0.00	0.04	0.15	0.46	0.16
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	0.33	0.11	0.01	0.05	0.12	0.40	0.15
Academic achievement index							
Kaliningrad region	62.83	56.70	56.02	58.50	61.48	64.24	60.08
Leningrad region	63.58	61.53	61.66	60.92	62.25	64.58	62.40
Moscow region	64.68	62.07	61.57	62.39	64.66	66.59	63.79
Tuymen region	62.89	55.29	53.25	55.16	58.38	61.96	57.09
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	58.05	53.48	52.34	53.39	53.87	57.50	54.33

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Chapter 6
Inclusive Vocational Education in Russia

Nikita Bolshakov

Abstract The chapter presents the experience of special vocational education for people with disabilities during the Soviet period. Its significance as a valuable resource for the development of inclusive vocational education in modern Russia is highlighted. The historical review is divided into three periods i.e. the emergence of a system of vocational training for people with disabilities, covering the Imperial (since 1806) and Soviet periods, and the current state of vocational education. The chapter pays particular focus to the challenges of the disparities between the professional qualifications obtained by a person with disabilities and the supply of unskilled jobs on the market, and to the analysis of special individual rehabilitation (remediation) and habilitation (support) programs, which often act as barriers to the employment of people with disabilities. At the heart of these and several other challenges faced by people with disabilities in obtaining vocational education and employment is the inherent and dominant medical approach to disability that persists at the political level. In conclusion, we also highlight the transformation of social policy in accordance with the principles of independent living and improving the quality of life of people with disabilities, as well as the transition of the Russian education system towards inclusion, discussed later in the chapter, which are the results of the ongoing transition to the adoption of the social model approach to inclusion and disability.

Introduction

Throughout the twentieth century, the delivery of vocational education for people with disabilities in the USSR included a segregated system of training and production enterprises. The result of the transition to a market economy was the transformation of the vocational training system and the closure of most special educational institutions, which has led to new challenges (and sometimes new achievements) for people with disabilities. This chapter analyses how the previous soviet experience is reflected in

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the current system of vocational education in the context of an orientation towards international norms and the implementation of new institutional designs for inclusion. The story below serves as a signpost for this chapter:

> I met Nastya[1] for an interview at a coffee shop near the metro. When I arrived, she was already eating a cake. Nastya, herself has a pastry-cook education. She attended college for 4 years and received an excellent education, but now has to work from home. "I tried to get a job as a pastry cook in a hotel," says Nastya "They (HR specialists) began to take my documents, and then they came up five minutes later and said that it was necessary to talk to the chef. They had already taken the documents and were ready to hire me. However, when they found out that I had a hearing disability, I was told that I was not suitable for that job". Nastya notes that only a few of those with disabilities she studied with have managed to get a job after graduation—especially a job corresponding to their profession.

In recent decades, under the influence of various structural changes, such as industrial transformations, competitive labour relations, supply in the labour market, and the transformation of educational and social policies, the employment of young people has become significantly more difficult (Assanbayev & Makoelle, 2018). Particularly acute in the context of the differences in the professional trajectories of socially advanced and socially disadvantaged groups (Cherednichenko, 2014). One of these groups is the youth with disabilities. According to the Federal Register of Disabled People, in 2021, only 26.3% of all people with disabilities of working age in Russia had paid work (Pension Fund of the Russian Federation, 2021). An increase in the chances of following a stable professional trajectory and entering the labour market can be facilitated, first of all, by obtaining a high-quality professional education. Recently, these issues have become a matter of attention for the government and civil society.

At present, the special education system in Russia is being transformed as a result of the adoption of the new Law on Education in the Russian Federation (2012). In recent years, the main concerns of parents, and the people with disabilities themselves have been associated with the introduction of inclusive education. Many activists opposed the closure of special schools ("*korrektsionnye shkoly*", where children with disabilities study separately from their peers), and in some cities, protest rallies were held to preserve the existing education system for children with disabilities (Boitsov, 2013; Lemutkina, 2015). Later, it was decided to abandon this so-called "forced inclusion" and today, parents of children with disabilities have the opportunity to choose between inclusive or specialised schools and vocational schools. However, the process of reforming the system of special education is not yet complete. It is important to remember that Russia has a very strong tradition of teaching, and especially, the vocational training of people with disabilities.

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[1] Names have been changed to protect the identity of the study participants.

The Emergence of a Vocational Training System for People with Disabilities

The official history of teaching children with disabilities in our country goes back several centuries. In 1806, at the behest of Empress Maria Feodorovna, a school for the deaf and dumb was opened in Pavlovsk (Bazoev, 1999). Later, in the nineteenth century, Empress Maria Alexandrovna's Guardianship of the Blind was opened in St. Petersburg (Kerzum, 2016). Although attempts to educate and teach children with various disabilities, crafts were undertaken earlier at monasteries, and later in orphanages in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novgorod and other cities of the country and in a number of private schools in large cities. In specialised schools, opened during the nineteenth century in St. Petersburg, Warsaw, and Moscow, programs were developed that allowed students to learn carpentry, printing, shoe-making, and other crafts, as well as floriculture, gardening, beekeeping, and so on (Bazoev, 1999).

An important event for the development of the vocational education system for people with disabilities was the Second Congress of Russian Leaders in Vocational and Technical Education, held in Moscow at the end of December 1895. It is sometimes considered the first Congress of Russian defectologists (special needs educational experts in Russia). For the first time, the issues of teaching disabled children were discussed actively (Palenniy, 2011, p. 7).

After the revolution, the tasks of vocational training and eliminating the illiteracy of people with disabilities became urgent. At that time, as a rule, three key categories were distinguished—deaf and dumb, blind, and mentally disabled people (Malofeyev, 2010). The system of special education was becoming part of the state educational system (Perevoznikova, 2012). Already in the first decades of the Soviet state, the new government started organising work on the vocational training of disabled people, the creation of factory departments and schools, and later, the recruitment of certain groups of people with disabilities to higher educational institutions (Malofeyev, 2010).

In the post-war period, the system of professional training, as well as scientific and methodological support for the training and employment of people with disabilities, continued to develop (see Zimin, 1962). At this time, methodological guidelines for the medical selection of persons entering educational institutions and lists of specialities for which it is possible and for which it is impossible to train people with different forms of disability were introduced (Palenniy, 2011, p. 165). The consequences of a number of restrictions of that period remained even after the collapse of the USSR. For example, only in 2015, the All-Russian Society of the Deaf and activists of the deaf community managed to achieve the lifting of job restrictions for the deaf (VOGInfo, 2015). These restrictions had been imposed by the Ministry of Health and Social Development in 2011 and were in many ways similar to the restrictions of 1963.

Historically, people with disabilities, primarily those with hearing and vision disabilities, received a decent professional education in the USSR. There were only two options for education beyond the level of secondary education: to study

in specialised (sometimes residential) vocational or technical schools or to enrol in training courses designed especially for people with disabilities. The possibilities of getting a university education were strongly limited (Phillips, 2009). People with disabilities studied at vocational schools, technical schools, workers' schools, or educational and industrial enterprises, including in the All-Russian Society of the Deaf and All-Russian Society of the Blind systems. Moreover, education and employment were often directly related to these Societies (Nosenko-Stein, 2018). As a result, many people subsequently successfully worked as turners, milling cutters, seamstresses, and in many other professions. A very close connection was built between schools and educational and production enterprises: for example, the work of schoolchildren was included in the production plan of enterprises.

The Current Vocational Education System

By the end of the twentieth century, there were several dozen specialised secondary educational institutions (vocational schools, colleges, technical schools), that trained people with disabilities in Russia. Over the past decades, the number of institutions formally declared as inclusive and providing vocational training for young people with disabilities, has increased. However, not all of them actually provide training for young people with disabilities or have created the necessary conditions for learning. The social situation of people with disabilities continued to deteriorate. As Iarskaia-Smirnova and Romanov (2007, p. 92) stated, "Only one in five (of young people with disabilities) enters a vocational educational institution for further qualification, and one in 10 gets employed".

These newly appeared class and structural barriers were limiting access to various resources: the 2000s were marked by a deterioration in the general state of affairs in the field of employment for disabled people, as well as the adoption of a number of laws that aggravated the situation for different categories. These included the Order of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation No 90 of March 14, 1996, and the Order of the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation of April 12, 2011, No. 302n. The conditions for providing employment were also significantly worsened by the removal from the federal law "On social protection of disabled people in the Russian Federation" an article on the procedure and conditions for recognising a disabled person as unemployed and on state incentives for the participation of enterprises and organisations in ensuring an acceptable standard of living for employees. Many people with disabilities had received high-quality professional education by that time, but the adoption of a mandatory quota of jobs for people with disabilities led to employers offering them unskilled jobs that did not correspond to their professional levels.

Special attention should be paid to Individual Programs of Rehabilitation (remediation) and Habilitation (support) (IPRA, until 2016—IPR—the document with recommendations on ways to adapt people with disabilities to life in society, study, work etc.), which often act as a barrier to the employment of people with disabilities.

IPRA is issued by the Bureau of Medical and Social Expertise (MSE) and contains information about the medical rehabilitation (remediation) program for a disabled person (e.g., rehabilitation therapy, the necessary technical means of medical rehabilitation, spa treatment), about the social rehabilitation program (providing legal assistance, socio-cultural and psychological rehabilitation, informing and consulting on rehabilitation issues), as well as about psychological and pedagogical rehabilitation for children under 18 years old. Most importantly, IPRA contains information about the vocational rehabilitation program: recommendations on contraindications and the available conditions and types of work, vocational training opportunities, the need for assistance in finding a job, etc. In their conclusions, MSE specialists rely on the legislation, however, its interpretation is highly dependent on the specific bureau and decision-making specialists. For example, there are cases when doctors refused to write in IPRA the need to provide sign language interpreter services. Despite the client's hearing loss, the doctors felt that he or she would be able to communicate well without a sign language interpreter (Glukhikh.net, 2009). In addition, doctors can write in the IPRA, for example, such vague wording as "can work in positions that do not require communication with people", thereby greatly limiting employment opportunities. Another example, when in the section, "vocational training", doctors without the consent of the client, wrote "can be trained as a computer operator", thereby giving grounds for refusing to admit a person to any other profession (not specified in the IPRA) (Perspektiva, 2017).

Thus, at the policy level, the medical concept of understanding disability has remained dominant in the Russian education system. If we consolidate all the many models of disability (Tarasenko, 2004) in several larger directions, in the framework of the medical concept, disability is considered as a disease or pathology, and people with disabilities themselves, as deviants, are necessarily subject to treatment or even isolation. The medical approach has been criticised for its focus on "fixing" the impairment (barrier) and therefore assumes that people with impairments (barriers) cannot live a fulfilling life. In contrast to the medical one, the social approach views disability not so much as a defect or disease, but rather as a kind of social label. The whole system of raising children with disabilities was aimed, in Russia, not so much at education as at socialisation and adaptation to life in society. The transformation of social policy, in accordance with the principles of independent life, and improving the quality of life of people with disabilities, as well as the transition of the Russian education system towards inclusion, are the results of the development of the social model. This indicates a systemic shift in approaches to working with students with disabilities. Due to the coexistence of medical and social discourses at the macro level of policy, the special vocational education system is regulated by normative acts, the logic of which contradicts each other. On the one hand, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by Russia, and the Law on Education in the Russian Federation presupposes that people with disabilities should have the same opportunities as non-disabled students and any speciality should be available to them. On the other hand, the life of people with disabilities depends on regulations and public institutions, according to the logic of which they are "sick" and incapable of full-fledged professional activity. Thus, a barrier to making a professional choice and

building a career is the need to obtain an IPRA, determining, among other things, individual restrictions on hiring as a barrier to making a professional choice and building a career.

The need to reform the vocational education sector for people with disabilities is long overdue: the limited education in special schools manifested itself in the poor learning outcomes and employment of young people with disabilities in general (Banning-Lover, 2016). Since 2013, the primary vocational education system has been merged into the structure of secondary vocational education. The vocational education of people with disabilities is regulated by many legal acts. In addition to the laws mentioned above, the state program "Accessible Environment" ("*Dostudnaya sreda")* for the years 2016–2020, included sections on vocational education for people with disabilities. For example, for the first time, attention was paid to the issues of interpretation into sign language and adapting existing programs to the needs and characteristics of deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Over the past years, there have been positive changes in the vocational training of people with disabilities. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation has implemented a number of measures (Manuylova, 2018). During 2016 and 2017, more than 80 Basic Vocational Educational Organisations were created. These organisations ensure the development of regional systems of inclusive education through network interaction with vocational educational organisations and social partners (Manuylova & Guseynova, 2017). Specialised Resource Educational and Methodological Centres of secondary vocational education were created, which ensure the renewal of educational and methodological support in the most popular areas of training according to the needs of the regions. Finally, the Federal Methodological Centre was created, which provides organisational, methodological, and expert advisory support to these institutions. The number of professions available for young people with disabilities, as well as the number of students with disabilities enrolled in secondary vocational educational programs (Fig. 6.1) have increased. Moreover, in the next few years, in accordance with the adopted program, the opportunities for people with different disabilities have to expand even more.

According to Rosstat data, the number of students with disabilities enrolled in secondary vocational education programs has doubled over the past 10 years. Moreover, the most active growth began after 2015 and is associated with the transformations mentioned above. Despite this, there are still systemic barriers to education and employment that block the path of young people with disabilities, reduce their motivation and limit professional choices. It is not entirely clear whether the reforms of recent years have really qualitatively improved the prospects for the professional integration of young people with disabilities. As noted, the closure of many special schools and classes raised alarm among activists concerned that the basic education system is ill-prepared to include children with disabilities. In this context, the activities of individual activists and parents, who united to discuss and criticise the reforms, led to their empowerment and, as a result, to a change in educational policy at the macro level. More broadly, while the rights of young people with disabilities to education, health care, equal pay, and other benefits have improved, in practice, the legal implementation of these rights is still limited (Fröhlich, 2012). On the one hand,
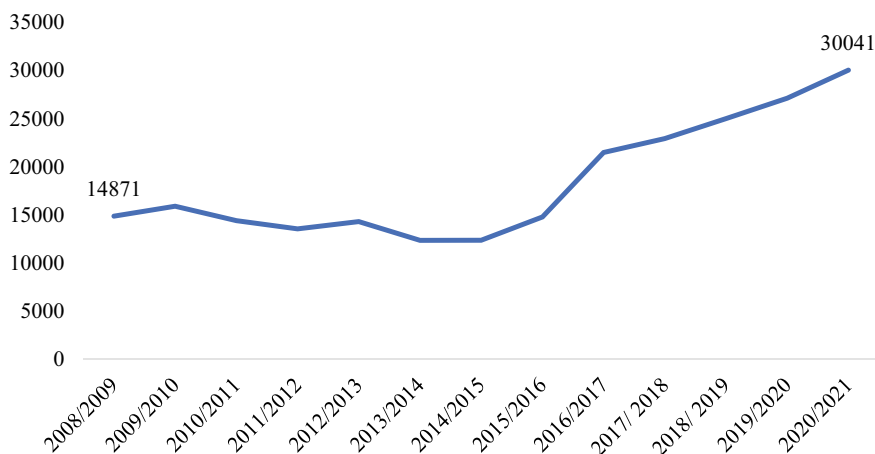
Fig. 6.1 Number of students with disabilities enrolled in secondary vocational education programs (Rosstat, 2021)

Russian social policy today supports people with disabilities in an active position concerning their employment and independent life, on the other hand, the efficient mechanisms of realisation of the legislation do not work well. As the researchers note, there is no system of an assessment of the efficiency of the implementation of acts in practice and the suppression of violations of the rights of disabled people in the field of the available professional educational system. In the field of vocational education and employment, there are various institutional and dispositional barriers, as well as widespread discrimination: the gap in employment between able-bodied people and people with disabilities in Russia is higher than in most countries (Banning-Lover, 2016). People with disabilities face significant discrimination in employment, which can explain up to 25% points of the employment gap (Dem'yanova & Luk'yanova, 2017).

The Case of Vocational Education for the Deaf Youth

In 2018–2019, we conducted a study of vocational students who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHOH). The aim of the study was to find out the main factors that determine the occupational choice of people with disabilities, in the case of the DHOH, who are understood as an internally heterogeneous group with special educational needs and socio-cultural characteristics in contemporary Russia. The results allowed us to draw conclusions about how modern vocational education for people with disabilities is organised in Russia. This research was conducted using mixed research methods i.e., quantitative and qualitative. The total sample size was 187 people, studying in educational institutions located in 17 different settlements: Moscow, Ufa, Kazan,

Samara, St. Petersburg, Perm, Novaya Usman, Biysk, Kostroma, Stavropol, etc. The total sample of the qualitative stage was 24 interviews, including seven expert interviews with specialists in the field of vocational education for DHOH from different fields: teachers and interpreters in inclusive schools, NGO and public organisation managers, and also a department head in a scientific organisation engaged in the development of professional education (Bolshakov and Walker, 2022).

As mentioned, above, throughout the twentieth century, a well-functioning mechanism of reproduction of the class of workers among the DHOH worked in Russia. The result of the transition to market relations was the transformation of the vocational training system for the DHOH and the closure of most educational institutions, which greatly reduced the chances of DHOH youth building a consistent trajectory from education to profession. Despite this, the attitude towards secondary vocational education is still rooted in the community, including at the level of the All-Russian Society of the Deaf, according to the results of the study. The strategy of obtaining secondary vocational education is the main one for young people with hearing disabilities. The decision on admission is, as a rule, predetermined, especially among students from small towns. Almost 60% of the surveyed students say that the decision to study at a particular institution was made by them more than six months earlier. This indicates that the chosen strategy was predefined. Employment is viewed by the DHOH as a major trajectory after college graduation. While DHOH students mostly approach vocational education as a bridge that will enable them to combine work with higher education (Cherednichenko, 2019; Konstantinovskiy & Popova, 2018; Walker, 2018), DHOH youth consider it to be an endpoint in the education system intended primarily to get them into work, with only 19% in our survey indicating plans to continue their education after vocational school. For the vast majority of students, secondary vocational education is the final stage before entering the labour market. The system of secondary vocational education itself is largely focused on the subsequent admission of graduates to universities, which is not relevant for the DHOH, who perceive secondary vocational education as sufficient to achieve success in life.

At the macro level, internal contradictions were found in the vocational education system. They arise from divergent discourses of the medical model. The social model is based on the principles of independent living and improving the quality of life of people with disabilities. This conflict is inherent in the legal discourse. As a result, macro-level policies do not fully ensure one of the leading rights of persons with disabilities—the right to choose their path of well-being. This is the reason for the extremely low assessment of employment opportunities due to the closed nature of positions requiring high qualifications, the presence of stereotypes about deaf workers, and discrimination against employees with any form of disabilities, including the possibilities of career growth.

In addition to the problems mentioned above, it can be noted that systemic gaps at the macro- and meso-levels of the educational system become barriers that limit the competencies of young people and minimise the chances of optimising the choice of a profession at the micro-level. One of the key barriers is the narrow corridor of opportunities at all stages of building a professional trajectory. Informants talk

about the low level of school training for the deaf and point out that in special schools "things are not taught the right way". Because of the abolition of benefits for admission, the chances of getting a professional education were reduced. Students also talk about the perception of mass schools (even inclusive ones) as inaccessible due to the lack of special conditions. At the vocational level, barriers are the lack of systematic training of teachers and the negative attitudes of specialists to work with people with disabilities. This is a challenge to colleges as they do not have enough teaching specialities.

In addition, students talk about the lack of systematic support for employment. Students, including those with work experience, noted that obtaining a professional education is not a guarantee of further employment. The practice of hiring people with disabilities is typical for large corporations, however, the proposed positions involve, as a rule, manual labour and do not correspond to the education received by students. All-Russian societies of the Deaf, Blind and Disabled persons play an important role in the development of inclusive employment. They enter into agreements with potential employers from large retailers, fast food chains, and transport companies, which allows them to solve many employment challenges in the short term. In the long term, this leads to gaps between vocational education and the future place of work. Currently, there are limited practices of systemic institutionalised support for employment of the youth at the meso-level—through vocational schools or other organisations, with the exception of a few private initiatives that are unable to meet the growing demand. As a result, micro-level agents, like parents and the social environment of the student, are involved in deciding the issue of further employment. At the meso-level, public organisations that help with job search have good potential, but, at the moment, they are not able to fully meet the demand from graduates. Thus, the non-governmental sector's support of people with disabilities is not as weak as ten years ago (Borodkina, 2014), but still does not have enough resources to solve the problems of vocational education.

Professional skill contests are an effective tool for the employment of graduates with disabilities. The Abilympics movement, an international Olympiad in professional skills among people with disabilities, has been developing in Russia since 2014. Competitions are held in several dozen specialties: from beading to dentistry. Every year, championships are held both at the regional and national levels, so this tool can be effectively used for career guidance and assistance in the employment of young people from different regions (Bikbulatova, 2019). Participation in such competitions of professional skills allows students to develop self-presentation skills, gain experience, demonstrate skills, and prepare a portfolio for future employment. In addition, the competition website aggregates information on vacancies available for people with disabilities. At the same time, often during the learning process, more attention is paid to students who are sent from vocational schools to various competitions for professional skills. Students may be removed from some classes in order to better prepare for the competition, which interferes with the educational process. These contests also perform a selective function. They allow only the most prepared and talented students to get a job and do not solve the problem of mass employment of graduates.

Problems with employment are part of the lack of elaboration of the state support system for people with disabilities. Political barriers also manifest themselves at the meso-level of specific educational institutions, due to insufficient elaboration of institutionalised rules. This is compounded by the low legal literacy of young people at the individual level. According to our research, DHOH young people are not inclined to fight for their rights. This is compounded by the low legal literacy of other youth with disabilities (Baskakova et al., 2012).They perceive refusal in hiring or restrictions on admission to a certain speciality as a natural difficulty. Our deaf informants in the regions of Russia, in a number of cases, do not know that they have the right to receive higher education and enter a university, or, knowing about such an opportunity, do not consider it. They assume that higher education "*is not allowed*" said Lena (18) from Perm. Similar problems are typical for teaching people with other forms of disability due to the common legal context.

Conclusion

Throughout the twentieth century, a well-functioning mechanism of vocational education of people with disabilities worked in the USSR, including a segregated system of training and production enterprises. The result of the transition to a market economy was the transformation of the vocational training system, the closure of most special educational institutions, and an increase in the number of inclusive educational institutions, which lead to new challenges (and sometimes new achievements) for people with disabilities. Among the main problems of the modern vocational training system for people with disabilities could be insufficient interaction between various government agents on education and subsequent employment of persons with disabilities; a lack of understanding of the needs and demands of young people; insufficient staffing; insufficient awareness of people with disabilities and their parents about the possibilities of obtaining vocational education; the lack of a unified system of vocational guidance for applicants; the low quality of the information provided by professional educational organisations on quantitative and qualitative indicators for students with disabilities; and serious problems with the employment of graduates with disabilities (Manuylova, 2018).

The previous Soviet experience is positively evaluated by some people with disabilities and related organisations. It includes such stages as supervision, on-the-job training and positive reinforcement prior to potential employees entering the workplace, which are crucial for successful integration of disabled workers into work processes according to current international researches (Bartram & Cavanagh, 2019). At the same time, precise restoration of this model is not possible today, and the undertaken by some organisation attempts are a further reflection of the continuing legacy of old paternalistic systems, whether through institutional inertia or as a novel response to market failure (Bolshakov & Walker, 2022). All these limitations are not critically reflected while the old Soviet experience is not reproducible in the context of an orientation towards international norms and the implementation

of new institutional designs. This requires the development of new approaches both reinforcing new bureaucratic processes and promises to people with disabilities new forms of self-realisation.

The development of inclusive vocational education will allow solving some of the problems mentioned above, however, for the formation of effective institutions for the professional adaptation of people with disabilities, it is necessary to develop comprehensive programs. These programs should consider the legal framework and the specific local conditions for implementing changes and the needs of the students. At the moment, there is weak legal regulation of the professional education of people with disabilities, especially in the context of the massive stimulation of inclusive education and the shift of the main focus of attention to the secondary school level of education. Inclusive education is not a sufficient condition for the integration of disabled youth, but they must navigate the world better. In addition, the general requirement for vocational education beyond the national contexts is systematically supporting inclusive employment, the critical role which may belong to the state, for example, through the creation of a system of educational and production enterprises, specialised resource centres for assistance in employment based on educational institutions.

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Chapter 7
Inclusive Higher Education

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Abstract This chapter focuses on understanding the trajectories and prospects for the development of inclusive higher education in Russian universities based on the analysis of scientific and methodological publications, statistical data and the results of a series of empirical studies. The chapter analyses in detail the mission and tactical tasks of Resource Training and Methodological Centers, the network designed to support universities in the development of inclusive higher education. The main observations obtained during an empirical study of the impact of distance-inclusive education on the personal characteristics associated with achievement and motivation of students with disabilities are presented. In conclusion, the chapter discusses barriers and challenges in the development of inclusive higher education.

Introduction

Internationally inclusive education in higher education may involve a variety of issues. According to Makoelle (2016), aspects such as structural constraints, cognitive justice, curriculum, epistemic access and finance may impact the institution's ability to implement inclusion fully. Shutaleva et al. (2023) caution about the faculty

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competencies and readiness to practice inclusive teaching and learning. Morina (2017) postulates that when the university changes its approach towards inclusion appropriate policies, strategies, processes and actions that contribute to ensuring the success of all the students are a prerequisite.

The ideas of inclusion in higher education in Russia began to spread following the progress that was made in implementing the principles of inclusion in secondary school education. As more and more students with special educational needs successfully graduate from secondary schools and enter universities, the need for a transition to inclusive practice in higher education has increased.

Meeting the educational needs of people with disabilities in the field of higher education is a priority task of the state's social policy and an important prerequisite for the further development of the education system. The responsibility of higher education to meet the needs of people with disabilities leads to increased requirements for programs and the need to re-organise educational processes in order to make education accessible to all. This chapter begins with a brief historical background presenting the stages of special and integrated higher education for people with disabilities in Russia. Further, the prerequisites and structural aspects of the transition to an inclusive approach to higher education are considered. Based on the review of literature and empirical studies, the prospects for the development of inclusion in Russian higher education are evaluated. A special focus on the use of online education to ensure accessibility to education for students with disabilities is foregrounded. Through a survey of students, with and without disabilities, the authors aimed to show the effects and limitations of online and blended learning towards inclusion and access.

The History of Inclusive Higher Education in Russia

In Russia, higher education for students with disabilities (HESD) has a long history. It was initiated in the 1930s by the Moscow Institute of Chemical Engineering, The Bauman Moscow Higher Technical School and the Moscow Mechanical Engineering Institute. Later, training for groups of students with disabilities (exactly for deaf students) was organised at the Leningrad North-Western Polytechnic Institute, Moscow State University, Timiryazev Agricultural Academy, Leningrad Industrial Institute, Leningrad Chemical-Technological Institute and the Tomsk Industrial Institute. However, HESD at that time was peripheral to the state policy, public opinion, and system of higher education management.

The attitude of society towards the possibility of university education for people with disabilities changed in the 1960–1980s (Margolis et al., 2017). During that period, the number of students with disabilities increased significantly. At the same time, the state did not provide them with special rights and conditions for admission and training, as well as psychological and pedagogical assistance.

In the 1990s, with the adoption of the Federal Law "On Social Protection of People with Disabilities in the Russian Federation" (November 24, 1995, 181-FZ) (Government of the Russian Federation (GRF), 1995), not only the number of universities admitting people with disabilities increased, but also the diversity of forms of organising their education: centres of preparation for admission to universities; centres for psychological and pedagogical assistance to students with disabilities; specialised universities for people with disabilities [e.g. Specialised Institute for Physically Disabled People (Moscow), the State Specialised Institute of Arts (Moscow) and the Institute of Social Rehabilitation of Novosibirsk State Technical University]; and specialised departments at universities, offering students with disabilities a variety of learning paths. For example, at Bauman Moscow State Technical University, students with disabilities first study separately, and then gradually join the mainstream of students—first at lectures, and then at all classes. At the same time, they study for a year longer than students without disabilities. The Moscow State University of Psychology and Education (MSUPE) has consistently established two faculties specialising in inclusive education: the Faculty of Information Technologies, where students with disabilities study in inclusive groups of traditional full-time education, and the Faculty of Distance Learning (2006), where students with disabilities study in an inclusive environment, using distance and online technologies. Students with disabilities study at MSUPE for the same number of years as students without disabilities. The specifics of inclusive education at the Faculty of Distance Learning of MSUPE will be discussed in more detail later.

With the exception of specialised universities, where conditions for teaching students with disabilities were purposely created, all other universities trained students with disabilities on a common basis—according to the dominated integration model, a student with special educational needs had to adapt to the university. In recent decades, the opposite trend has been observed—the universities create conditions for students with disabilities and adapt the educational process and learning environment to their special needs.

Structural Support for Inclusive University Education

In 2016, by order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, three Resource Educational and Methodological Centres for Teaching Disabled People (hereinafter, REMC), aimed at broadcasting best practices in working with students with disabilities (Saitgalieva et al., 2019), were created based on joined resources of three Russian universities: Moscow State University of Psychology and Education, Bauman Moscow State Technical University and Russian State Social University.

REMC's work is structured in the following areas:

- formation of competencies of university managers and staff in the areas of development of adapted educational programs, programs of socio-psychological

support, vocational guidance and assistance in the employment of students with disabilities;

- testing and implementation of the developed educational programs, advising universities on the accessibility and quality of higher education for people with disabilities;
- provision of educational and methodological resources and auxiliary technologies, coordinating the development of an inclusive system of higher education (Rubtsov et al., 2017; Margolis et al., 2017).

The year following the appearance of the first REMCs was characterised by the creation in Russia of 13 more REMCs, the formation of a territorial infrastructure of inclusive higher education, including universities, schools, secondary vocational education organisations, public organisations of people with disabilities, employment services, regional executive authorities and the testing of a comprehensive model of organising the university education of students with disabilities. Currently, in the RF, there are 21 REMCs which have partnership agreements with 574 universities.

It can be stated that today, the creation of REMC supports universities in teaching and supporting students with disabilities. In addition, throughout the entire period of study of students with disabilities, universities provide them with social support: students with disabilities receive special allowances for academic scholarships; they are given priority to obtain places in student dormitories; and consultations on the provision of services and employment. As part of recreational support, students with disabilities receive free vouchers for summer holidays to university recreation and wellness centres.

At the same time, with the development of the described forms of higher education, the stream of studies characterising the challenge of obtaining vocational education for people with disabilities is also expanding. The current state and prospects of the development of vocational rehabilitation (remediation) for students with disabilities, based on integrated and inclusive higher education, have been analysed (Egorov & Panfilov, 2017). The best practices for introducing inclusive education in higher educational institutions in Russia are described in terms of assessing its role in the development of inclusion in different regions of Russia (Goryunova et al., 2017). Much attention is paid to the social and psychological adaptation of students with disabilities to the conditions of the university (Odintsova et al., 2019) and accessibility to vocational education for students with disabilities (Alekhina et al., 2020; Kantor, 2019). At the same time, various forms of inclusive education strategies are tested and analysed, among others strategies using digital (online) education.

Challenges of "Digital Inclusive Education"

The use of online technologies to ensure the accessibility of education is seen as an essential step in the implementation of inclusion (Edwards, 2019), however, this may also present a challenge (Clouder et al., 2019; Shemanov et al., 2020; Stentiford &

Koutsouris, 2020). The application of e-inclusion is often associated with technological and socio-psychological barriers, such as a shortage of necessary technical equipment, lower economic status of those families from which students with disabilities sometimes come, low user competence, difficulties in coordinating several sources of competing information, a shortage of appropriate technical support (McNicholl et al., 2021), and the lack of the development of the concept of using such technologies in the field of inclusive education (Plotichkina, 2020; Shemanov et al., 2020; Tsatsou, 2020).

The question that arises is whether digital (online) practices may be truly inclusive given the challenges of lack of interactive communication between students and teachers. According to Thomas and Bryson (2021) blended learning, combining offline and synchronous online classes, may provide an equal learning experience for all students, foster fruitful interactions and group cohesion, and strengthen interpersonal trust which expands educational inclusion. Similarly, McNicholl et al. (2021), Tsatsou (2020) postulate that assistive technologies, including digital tools, have a positive impact on academic and social activity, and the psychological well-being of students, both with and without disabilities. Their use contributes to the development of a sense of belonging in students with disabilities, reduces the severity of the perceived pressure of stigmatisation and works as a driver of psychological change and a tool for empowerment. Thus, a positive point of view is expressed: in higher education, any digital technology is a potentially inclusive tool (Clouder et al., 2019).

Since 2006, digital technologies have been widely used at the Faculty of Distance Learning of Moscow State University of Psychology and Education (MSUPE). The created learning design, successfully combining both distance and traditional technologies, is flexible, affordable, and easy to use. Educational and methodological support of the educational process (electronic textbooks, videos of lectures, video tutorials on diagnostic, professional consulting techniques); the use of special Internet technologies (online broadcasts, Internet seminars, Skype consultations, video conferences, teleconferences, etc.); psychological and pedagogical support (individual support and counselling of students on organisational and educational issues); working with the student's family; methodical work with teachers; organisation of extracurricular work with students; social projects, etc.—all these opportunities presuppose a significant change in the model of the educational process. Our previous studies have shown that distance learning becomes a resource for developing resilience and self-activation of students with disabilities (Ajsmontas & Odintsova, 2018), improving their psychological well-being and developing more constructive strategies for overcoming stressful situations (Odintsova & Kulyackaya, 2019).

However, the question of the potential benefits and limitations of such education to promote inclusion still requires additional empirical research. In particular, not enough attention is paid to the dynamics of the development of psychological resources in such educational conditions. Moreover, it is not clear if most higher education teachers and students are skilled enough to use digital means for teaching and learning.

Considerations of Psychological Resources in Teaching Students with Educational Barriers and Disabilities

While a supportive environment is critical for inclusion, there seems to be a need to encourage and empower students with disabilities to be self-supportive. This could involve showing them how they could activate their personality resources: responsibility, freedom of choice, and independence (Fossey et al., 2017).

The environment can either support or hinder the personal development of people with disabilities (Levitt, 2017). The active disability model developed by J. M. Levitt assumes the inclusion of people with disabilities in the process of removing barriers and focuses on individual and joint activities, which reduces the passive attitude to reality, the general consumer attitude to the environment and allows the student to activate personal resources. M. Wehmeyer presents similar approaches in his book "Positive Psychology of Disability" (Wehmeyer, 2021). Russian experts hold the same opinion (Alekhina et al., 2018; Leontiev, 2014). The key factors in developing a person with a disability are psychological (personality) resources such as:

1. resources of sustainability (satisfaction with life, life meaningfulness, subjective vitality);
2. motivational resources;
3. self-regulation resources;
4. instrumental resources (abilities, skills, competencies, etc.).

Personal resources are considered to be multifunctional. They mediate a person's subjective assessment of the external situation (presence/absence of barriers, presence/absence of various types of support, etc.), maintain psychological balance and motivate them to overcome difficulties. The system of personality activation proposed by Magno (2008) made it possible to operationalise the concept of self-activation, considered as the basis for awakening the psychological resources of the individual, its "trigger mechanism". This term implies voluntary activity of the subject and includes: (1) independence in solving vital tasks (autonomy, independence, freedom of choice, self-organisation, etc.); (2) personal and behavioural activity (activity zeal, initiative, striving to achieve goals, interest in life, etc.); (3) the desire to maintain an optimally functional state (belief in one's own capabilities, despite limitations in health). Self-activation becomes the basis for the awakening of the psychological resources of the individual, its "trigger mechanism". Besides, self-activation reflects one of the self-determination aspects, developing the skills of detailed independent planning of one's life and the implementation of these plans. So, in the current conditions of the introduction of "digital inclusion" in higher education, there is a need to shift the paradigm from external resources to psychological ones.

Therefore, the study of the development of psychological resources of students with and without disabilities in digital inclusive education is especially relevant. In this regard, it is important to analyse the development of psychological resources among students with different levels of self-activation in the conditions of distance learning.

In this work, we adhere to the active model of disability, realising the complex interaction of the individual and environmental factors in the life of people with disabilities, as well as the limitations and possibilities of digital educational technologies. The theoretical framework of our research is based on the use of the concept of personal resources (personal potential) (Leontiev, 2016), the concept of overcoming the difficult conditions of development, considering the situation of disability as a variant of normal human development (Leontiev, 2014), the concept of self-activation (Odintsova and Radchikova, 2020), the theory of self-determination applied to the understanding of disability challenges, and the positive psychology of disability (Wehmeyer, 2021). We aim to show that the approaches listed above can become a productive theoretical, methodological and value basis for inclusive university education.

As an illustration, we briefly describe one of the studies conducted in May–June 2019 and 2020 at the Distance Learning Faculty of MSUPE, where a blended learning format is implemented in inclusive groups. A sample of the study involved 222 students (118 without disabilities and 104 with disabilities). At the first stage of training, students studied in a blended educational format. The second stage was characterised by the use of online learning technologies only in connection with the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information about the design of the study, the methods and indicators used, see the articles by the authors of this chapter: Ajsmontas and Odintsova (2018), Odintsova and Radchikova (2020).

The study showed the important role of self-activation in the development of personal and motivational resources of students, both with and without disabilities. The data obtained also indicate that:

1. there are no significant differences in the severity of self-activation, life satisfaction, subjective vitality, and resilience characteristics between students with and without disabilities,
2. there is a gradual reduction of differences between students in terms of life meaningfulness and educational motivation.

Thus, this study confirms the possibility of inclusion in the process of distance learning.

Our results are consistent with previous studies of the role of personal potential in overcoming barriers, conducted with the participation of students with and without disabilities in traditional (full-time) inclusive education classrooms (Leontiev et al., 2017).

As can be seen, the environment of online inclusive education provides expanded and equal access to almost all resources, which confirms research of other colleagues (Bajramov & Gerasimov, 2019). It also has a positive effect on social activity and the psychological well-being of students with and without disabilities.

In our previous studies, it was shown that the university's inclusive distance learning environment becomes a resource for the development of self-activation, vitality, and psychological well-being of students with and without disabilities (Odintsova & Kulyackaya, 2019). In the present study, we obtained similar results.

Thus, in an inclusive online environment, life satisfaction, resilient attitudes, and subjective vitality are significantly increased.

However, it is premature to speak unequivocally about the potential of inclusive distance learning to sustain academic motivation. This issue requires further detailed study, especially since the previously obtained data are contradictory (Bazaliy, 2020; Elkina, 2020). Special attention should be paid to the motivational sphere of students in inclusive online learning. This applies to students with and without disabilities. For example, in the conditions of distance learning, more than a third of students have a reduced level of achievement motivation and cognitive motivation; 15% of students have a high level of intrinsic motivation, and a third of students have a high level of extrinsic motivation (Shukshina & Frolova, 2021). In addition, it is possible to note the shallow interest of students; low assessments of the content of online classes; and shallow motivation to make efforts and solve complex tasks in online learning (Panferov et al., 2020). All these studies involved young students (under the age of 20). It is no coincidence that special attention was paid to age in studies on the effectiveness of introducing distance technologies in education. Mature students are more prepared for online education, can independently control their educational activities, and know the content of activities in their respective professional fields.

The presented review and analysis of the empirical data show that universities should continue to work on the accessibility of the environment using online technologies; simultaneously, it is necessary to rely on the psychological resources of students with disabilities. These resources enhance self-activation, which becomes a trigger mechanism for developing self-regulation of learning activity, hardiness, life meaningfulness, subjective vitality and energy, and satisfaction with life, despite the limitations that students with disabilities have to overcome.

Our research confirms that disability should be considered not as an obstacle but as an additional value for the university that recognises the relevance, importance and diversity of all its students. This diversity is manifested not only in the presence/absence of disability but also in the self-activation, sustainability resources, in the variety of motivational resources for students in a digital inclusive environment, which, in its turn, becomes the potential for achieving equal opportunities for all.

Conclusion

Thus, today we see the rapid and positive changes in the field of inclusive higher university education in Russia. In particular, state policy and legislation developed, special centres coordinating university inclusion were founded in the last decade and successfully work now, such as REMC, described above. Special conditions to meet the special needs of students with barriers and disabilities were built up, the appropriate training programs for lecturers, and university staff have been organised, and different models of inclusion are being developed and fulfilled at universities in all regions of the Russian Federation. Psychological and technical support for students in an inclusive environment are strengthening, the theory and methodology

of inclusion are evolving, the number of scientific investigations of inclusion and students' professional and personal development inside and due to inclusive education are growing constantly, with special attention towards digital inclusion, which gradually becomes more and more popular, necessary and relevant.

Today, students with disabilities can study in all universities of the Russian Federation, which must create special conditions based on accessibility requirements in accordance with the special educational needs of students. These conditions include architectural, transport accessibility, availability of educational materials, training sessions in an accessible format and scientifically based psychological and pedagogical support for students. However, these conditions have yet to be fully realised in all universities. The experience of some universities has shown the risks of educational inclusion, such as risks of reducing the quality of education, social dependence; threats of shallow and superficial implementation of inclusion. The lack of teachers' competencies is also a priority risk factor (Volosnikova et al., 2017).

The challenge of employment of university graduates with disabilities is still unresolved due to employers' stereotypical perceptions of disability, overprotective family and university environment, insufficient assistance of universities' welfare offices universities in their employment, breaks in the chain: "university-graduate-employer" (Denisova & Lekhanova, 2018; Zhdanova & Mozheikina, 2020).

Thus, the inclusive process is now actively developing in higher education. This task is a state priority controlled by the Russian Federation Government. Funding for these changes is included in the state program "The Accessible Environment" valid till 2024. The primary organisational resource for developing inclusion in universities is a network of resource educational and methodological centres (REMC) created based on 21 universities. The system of organisational and methodological tasks is developed by each university independently. Still, the criteria for the effectiveness of the inclusive process for all universities are familiar—the proportion of students with disabilities entering, studying at, and graduating from the university. In addition, all universities in the Russian Federation participate in the annual monitoring of their student's employment, including those with disabilities. An analysis of the difficulties and successes of the development of inclusive higher education indicates the need to consolidate the efforts of universities, regional public organisations, executive authorities, regional and city health institutions, educational institutions and social protection institutions to support young people with disabilities (Denisova & Lekhanova, 2017).

The Story (E)

"An Analytical Worldview Helps Me"

A Story of Julia Melnik

> Julia Melnik is a PhD in Pedagogy, an analyst at the *Centre* for *General* and Extracurricular *Education* HSE University, Moscow. In her story, Julia tells how her social experience shaped her personality and how through education and research she became the mistress of her life.

Julia Melnik, Ph.D. in Pedagogy, a researcher at the Centre for General and Extracurricular Education HSE University, describes how her social experience shaped her personality and how through education and research she became an architect of her academic life. Yulia pays attention to the importance in her life of teachers and peers who have managed to implement the principles of inclusion and explicates her own reflection on significant, sometimes supportive, sometimes potentially traumatic events in her academic life.

Beginning

The motto of my life is: "You need to learn to live with a disability, but at the same time not to be disabled."

I was born in 1988. When I was 6–7 months old, my mother had suspicions that "something was wrong" with me, as she observed some spastic hand movements and other alarming signs of the disease. My mother had no medical training, and the doctors calmed her down, pointing to excessive parental anxiety, and found nothing terrible. Who knows how the situation would have developed if at that moment my mother had not come across a magazine with the detailed description of the signs of

the disease, and they completely converged with my symptoms. After a consultation with a medical professor, my mother's fears were confirmed. The final diagnosis was cerebral palsy (CP).

Now I perceive this medical abbreviation CP as my individual norm and do not consider it something tragic. Initially, this information threw my parents into shock, they were overcome with despair and fear. But there was no time to indulge in despondency, since at that time I was already a year old, and this is a rather late for the beginning of the physical rehabilitation(remediation) of such a child. At that time in Russia there was no special psychological and pedagogical support for families who first encountered such a diagnosis of their baby, so my parents and older brother had no choice but to pull themselves together and try to accept the situation as it was. At that moment, all the forces of the family were thrown into somehow stabilising my physical condition, teaching me to turn, sit, stand, develop fine motor skills of my hands (my hands were also paralysed) and maybe even walk a little (although at that moment it seemed to be impossible at all). Mom had to leave her job to take care of me.

Growing up, over time I realised that I was different from others. In my childhood, there was a lot of medical and physical rehabilitation (remediation), daily practice for 2–3 h a day. But today I don't have any painful memory about disability. Instead, I remember raising a naughty kitten, cooking dinner with my mom, playing doll games and dancing with my dad. I don't remember being shunned by children at a playground. At an older age, when I was faced with a situation of rejection from peers or adults, I did not worry much, but mainly focused on finding solutions to difficulties: "And what to do about it?", "How to eliminate barriers?" This analytical view of the world helps me to adapt to society to this day, as well as to develop in a broad sense.

First Years at School

I felt the first stress from the encounter with the surrounding reality and the stigma due to my disability in the first grade. At the beginning of my school life, the concept of inclusive education did not exist and, as today, not all people had a positive attitude to teaching non-typical children in the same class with their peers. My first teacher did not share the ideology of inclusion either, she believed that the best place to teach a disabled child would be a special class. Her main tasks, as she put it, 'to teach reading and writing, and that's enough, the rest anyway is not necessary for such children.'

By that time, I was already able to read and write. Of course, some difficulties remained with the speed of writing, since there were challenges with fine motor skills of the hands, despite daily exercises. However, in general, my physical condition had improved significantly by the time I entered the first grade, I even managed to learn to walk with a little help (which previously seemed unattainable), thanks to constant

and sometimes exhausting practice, as well as trips to rehabilitation (remediation) at a specialised center for children with cerebral palsy in Kaluga.

Initially, it was assumed that I would study at home. However, since I was formally included in one of the first classes, I expected that I would be able to attend the solemn line-up on the 1st September (school-wide meeting) in the beginning of the school year. I sincerely wondered why the teacher asked my parents not to take me to solemn line-up. And how could I spoil the festive mood of others with my appearance? Before that, I communicated very well with the surrounding adults and children, without spoiling anyone's mood. I did not pay attention to the teacher's words and began to look forward to the beginning of classes.

My family decided that, despite the teacher's reluctance, I would still go to school. Unfortunately, there was no assistants and tutors at that time, so my mother had to take on the role of an assistant in the educational process. Today, considering the situation through the eyes of a professional, I understand that this was not quite the right decision, since the specifics of child-parent relations are completely different, and a parent should not be an assistant. But at that time there was no other way out, and this strategy helped me adjust at school.

I remember such an episode when I first came to school. There was a break, during which my mother led me by the hand to the classroom, and the children jumped out of the classroom and began shouting: '*Invalidka*[1]! The invalidka has come!' I remember my reaction at that moment. I was not offended because I could not understand at once that these words refer to me. After being surprised, my first thoughts were: 'What should I do with this now? How could I change their attitude? After all, I want to have friends at school, and I don't want to be alone at all.' I realised that it was not worth waiting for support from the teacher, so I decided to develop what I did best: study well in order to gain the trust of my classmates and make friends with them in this way. Therefore, my parents never had to force me to study. I saw great meaning in studying and opportunities to realise myself in society through it. Fortunately, the plan I developed to establish relations with classmates worked out pretty quickly. Soon they began to turn to me for help in their studies, and then we gradually became friends.

'Those Wonderful School Years'

From that moment, it became noticeably easier for me. The teacher has not changed, but I have changed, seeing the support of classmates. Since then, I could even do without my mom in class. My friends helped me (giving me a pen; picking up what fell out of my hands). So, the difficult years of elementary school have flown by.

Finally, the fifth grade has arrived, and with it a new era of my school life began. On the one hand, it has become much more difficult than in elementary school, as there is a need to move from one classroom to another. But all these difficulties

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[1] Invalidka, feminine of the word 'invalid' (disabled).

seemed nothing because of the joy I received from communicating with my new class teacher. Her attitude was crucially differing from the position of the first teacher. Here, finally, I saw the real desire of a teacher to help me somehow, to take into account the peculiarities of my condition and to unlock my potential, even under the conditions of a shortage of human, financial and technical resources in my school.

The change of the teacher could not but affect the cohesion of the class. Our house, which was located next to the school, became a branch of the class. All the holidays, fests, various activities that could not be possible to hold at school, were held at our place. And, parents had to be prepared for the fact that at any moment a crowd of children could descend on their home. In fact, both my parents and I were only happy about this, because it was from that time that the school gave me much more than knowledge of subjects. I was also involved in various competitions, theatrical performances and other events at school. In addition, I was an activist and a winner of the art festivals of children with SEND. The main teacher, knowing about this, arranged so that the whole class came to concerts where I performed. Today, it is customary to conduct 'lessons of kindnesses and inclusive workshops in schools. We had it informally then, in our friendly company of children. Other wonderful teachers have appeared in my life, to whom I am grateful, and to this day, I continue to communicate with them.

Of course, this does not mean that from that moment on in life everything was absolutely rosy and beautiful. Alas, there continued to be teachers who did not believe in me or did not want to understand that I could not perform some of their tasks (for example, some experiments in biology lessons). But I felt the support of both the main teacher and some other pedagogues.

Since childhood, I dreamed of becoming a teacher. During my schooling in Stavropol,[2] where I lived, the Russian-Canadian project "Through inclusive Education to an inclusive society" began to be implemented, it was, I think, in 2000. The school where I studied, was chosen as one of the pilot schools of this project. Canadians, having learned that in in that school a child with a disability was enrolled, showed great interest in this and wanted to visit my school, and then my family. I remember my feeling of awe and expectation of some miracle from their arrival. Then I met a well-known activist of independent living and disability rights advocate Henry Enns[3] and his wife Olga Krasyukova-Enns. I had already formulated for myself the motto "You need to learn to live with a disability, but not to be disabled," and this coincided with what Henry Enns said. By the way, he used a wheelchair to get around.

And then, the second truly wonderful event happened to me. When I was in the ninth grade, in 2003 I was invited to visit Canada so that I could see foreign realities with my own eyes and feel the Canadian atmosphere of inclusion. And now, my mom and I are already in Canada. And, I see that my desire to live a full life is considered

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[2] Stavropol is a city in the North Caucasus in Russia, located ~ 1400 km to the South from Moscow.

[3] Enns, Henry (1943–2002) Canadian activist, leader for the rights of the disabled, and leader for the independent-living movement in Canada.

the norm here, and people with disabilities study, work, have families as anybody else as well as contribute to the development of a society.

Meanwhile, time was running fast, the ninth grade was ending. At that time, an inclusive program began to be implemented at the lyceum for gifted children of the Stavropol region, and I was invited to study there. There was a friendly environment towards everyone. I didn't have any challenges with my peers either.

I remember my lyceum life mostly with a smile and gratitude to my teachers and class. Of course, there were difficulties, which, because not all teachers understood the limits of my physical abilities, and the learning process was not adapted to my needs. But, fortunately, my supportive, sensitive and professionally flexible main teacher, talked to the teachers, and they began to give me some extra time to do written work. Mostly positive moments in the lessons, tea parties on the occasion of the birthday remained in my memory…

These two years flew by imperceptibly and quickly. And here I am in 2005, already a graduate of the lyceum with a gold medal and big plans. I didn't have any doubts about which direction to study further. I clearly understood that I wanted to help people like me, who for some reasons, are at social risk. Therefore, although my mother was against such a choice of profession (she was afraid that I would not be able to get a job because of my conditions), I decided to enroll in the Faculty of Social Work.

At a University

At the university, alas, there was no such friendly environment as at the lyceum. Not all teachers understood my peculiarities, and some even openly said that they would create new difficulties for me for the so-called hardening (and did it in practice).

In the first year, I decided to enroll simultaneously in the specialty 'English translator in the field of professional communication'. As a result, I studied at the same time in two specialties. Although it was physically difficult due to the need to move between the classrooms and a large academic load (English classes were held in the evenings), psychologically I rested in these classes, feeling powerful moral and study support from the English teachers, as well as from the students' group. My English teachers have once again proved to me that for inclusion, in addition to professional competencies, a personal position of a teacher is of a crucial importance.

In the Labor Market

After graduating from the university with excellence in both fields of study, I went to work. I started my professional career at the University Center for the Support of People with Disabilities, it was such a mini-prototype of modern resource centers for

inclusion. Simultaneously, I entered PhD programme, where I worked on a dissertation on inclusive education in Russia and abroad. After I defended my PhD, I continued to work at the Center, and eventually I became the director of this center.

After working for some time, I began to actively look for ways of my new development and found a Fulbright Program for scholars and artists, which I consider another gift of fate for me. I passed all the stages of the competition and such a dream as an internship in the USA became a reality. I am very grateful to the American host party at Indiana University and the Russian organiser of the Fulbright program for not being afraid to send me on a long journey, for their active support both in organising the trip and during my stay in the USA with my mom.

That time was really wonderful. This trip gave me a lot both in terms of professional and in personal development: I found many friends there, with whom I am still in touch. There were many interesting and memorable moments both in Indiana and in Washington where I visited the World Bank. By the way, with the consent of the World Bank, I translated and published a book on inclusion in my student years.[4]

An academic year of my teaching in the USA arrived almost in one breath. After returning to Stavropol, I felt stagnation, because I wanted to grow further.

Here, fortunately for me, I was invited to participate in a project in Moscow. Of course, it was a little scary to plunge again into the unknown: a new team, no home nor relatives in Moscow, unclear prospects. Nevertheless, I gladly agreed to such an offer, because I understood that the capital city would give me more opportunities.

My mom and I moved to Moscow. Now I work at the Institute of Education of the Higher School of Economics. Here I am lucky to have wonderful people, my supervisors and colleagues, together with whom we study and implement inclusion. I was able to find new professional and personal meanings of my life here.

Epilogue

I ask myself the question: can a grown-up girl with cerebral palsy say that she is the mistress of her fate in the full sense of her word? Only partially. Despite the positive professional trajectory of my development, I understand that many mistakes have been made both personally and by my family. Strategic task number one, which I have not yet solved at the moment, is the issue of independent living. But the independence of a person with a disability does not mean doing everything on their own (not everyone will succeed), it means organising their life in such a way that other people, not parents, help solve social and everyday tasks. I don't have my own family yet, because I'm completely focused on my work. But everything is still ahead. I have goals-desires that seem unreal. Well. I don't know what lies ahead, but I hope I still have time and opportunities to achieve them.

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[4] Peters S.J. Inclusive education [Inkluzivnoe obrazovanie]. Translated from English into Russian by Julia Melnik. Stavropol: SevKav StateTechnical University, 2010. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/pt/269651468152079000/pdf/266900WP0RUSSI0ve0education0Russian.pdf.

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Chapter 8
The Development of Assistive Technologies and Its Role Towards Successful Inclusion: The Case of Russia

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Abstract The chapter analyses the current state of the use of assistive technologies and devices (ATD) aimed at supporting students with disabilities in overcoming educational barriers and promoting successful inclusion. This study was conducted using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including expert interviews, online surveys, and statistical data analysis. Five groups of factors affecting the use of ATD in Russia are identified: demographic, socio-cultural, economic, political (administrative), and, environmental. In conclusion, it is concluded that the attitude of society towards children and adults with disabilities is a key factor in the development of the Russian ATD market and a necessary prerequisite for ensuring inclusiveness and expanding access to education for children with disabilities. The Russian case can be relevant to other countries with similar levels of economic development and administrative capacities, as well as to societies, in which socio-cultural stereotypes regarding people with disabilities have not yet been overcome.

Introduction

Assistive technology (AT) or assistive technologies and devices (ATDs), as noted in a recent report by the World Health Organisation, are a subcategory of medical technology, a broad term covering the use of many different products and related systems and services, aimed at maintaining or improving individual's functioning

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and autonomy (WHO, 2022). Disabled persons constitute the main users of ATDs, although this demand is not limited to them and may include those who also experience difficulty in their daily activities. The OECD distinguishes between two large groups of assistive products: "low tech"— non-electronic devices such as manual wheelchairs and walkers, and "medium tech and high tech"—such as dedicated computers or intelligent wheelchairs (OECD, 2012). However, there is the view that in order to apply ATDs in facilitating inclusive teaching and learning a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) could be adopted as a theoretical framework to inform the choice and use of ATDs (MacMahon & Walker, 2019).

In Russia, at the official level, another term "technical means of rehabilitation of disabled people" (TMR) is used instead of ATDs. The definition of the TMRs is somewhat narrower than the ATDs and refers to different technical solutions and devices, including special ones, aimed at compensating or eliminating persistent functional limitations (disability) (Government of the Russian Federation (GRF), 1995). However, in this chapter, we will use both terms interchangeably when referring to the Russian situation.

Assistive technologies and devices (ATDs) are often viewed as promoting the successful inclusion of children and youths with health barriers or disabilities. They are also viewed as valuable instruments supporting their education (Hunt, 2021). Early childhood professionals underly the vital role of language and communication technologies (ex., switch technology, picture communication system) for children's participation in classroom discussion, expression of their ideas and opinions, demonstration of their personality, the formation of friendships in inclusive education environments (Judge et al., 2008). More globally, ATDs help provide a sense of belonging for students with disabilities which is seen to be a basic human need (Chambers, 2020). Besides, ATDs provide physical access to learning mitigate restrictions in movement-related functions and allow to management of the rate of learning by online materials and assessments for students with various abilities to perceive information (Mavrou, 2011). The benefits of using ATDs from early childhood extend to all areas of life and ensure that children and adults with disabilities are not only successfully included in education but later in employment and, as a result, they are less dependent on social protection (WHO & UNICEF, 2015). Therefore, it is important to understand the need and satisfied and unsatisfied demand for ATDs in all age groups particularly among children.

However, up to now empirical evidence on the effect of ATDs on the educational outcomes of children and young people with disabilities remains limited, fragmented, incomprehensive, focused on separate disability categories, particular technologies, special education, etc. (Sze, 2009; Øksnebjerg et al., 2020), and so does research on the demand and supply of ATD (Danemayer et al., 2021). In Russia, as well as in developing countries, evidence of the use of the ATDs and their ability to promote the independence of children and youth with disabilities and their better involvement in inclusive education is even more isolated and fragmented (Grönlund et al., 2010; Matter et al., 2017; Valeeva, 2015). Few studies reveal the unsatisfied need in ATDs for the better inclusion of disabled people in the labor market (Aleksandrova & Nenakhova, 2019; Martz, 2007), which is explained by the insufficient incentives

for employers to create workplaces for people with disabilities (Aleksandrova & Nenakhova, 2019), weak support of vocational and rehabilitation (remedial) services (Rahmatika et al., 2022), rigidity of medical and social expertise systems (Aleksandrova & Nenakhova, 2019). We may assume that at least a part of the revealed barriers to inclusion is vital for educational settings. For instance, among the factors of unsatisfied needs in AT, other authors mention that administrative procedures, regulating the process of obtaining and reimbursing the TMRs, are very complex and time-consuming (Bozhkov et al., 2013); prices for TMR are too high, particularly in relation to the incomes of families of children with disabilities (Bozhkov et al., 2013; Chupina, 2011). Furthermore, less use of ATDs in inclusive education includes a lack of methodological competencies by educators in using ATDs in the educational process. There is a general unfamiliarity among teachers with modern ATDs in education, and a low level of readiness to use ATDs among students with disabilities and teachers (Chupina, 2011; Filipovich & Borozinec, 2019; Valeeva, 2015).

To understand the role of ATDs in supporting successful inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in Russia, we need first to answer the question, what are the needs of people with disabilities in ATDs, and to what extent they are satisfied; and second, what are the key drivers and barriers of ATDs development in Russia. Hence, this chapter aims to discuss the major trends of the Russian market for ATDs from 2015 until now as well as up to 2030 that may contribute to successful school inclusion of children with disabilities. The research is based on the semi-structured interviews with experts in the field of the Russian ATDs market conducted in 2015. Besides, the authors attempt to estimate the actual and potential demand of ATDs in Russia with primarily focus on children and youths using Rosstat statistical and survey data of 2020–2021. We emphasise that although we elaborate on the development of ATDs and their role in successful inclusion based on the Russian case only, the results go beyond national borders and can be relevant to other countries with similar level of economic and administrative capacities development.

Overview of Factors of Demand for Assistive Technologies and Devices Based on Previous Studies

ATDs are the object of study of numerous scientific works in various fields of knowledge, including economics, government and technology. In the last decade, there is an increasing amount of research devoted to assessing the demand for ATDs, studying the factors which affect this demand and the relationship between ATDs and inclusive education. However, studies show that there is still inconsistencies in empirical definitions and measurement of ATD demand (Danemayer et al., 2021). Furthermore, some groups of the ATDs, particularly those that address cognition, communication, high-tech ATDs for mobility, and accessible software, remain under-researched (Matter et al., 2017; Danemayer et al., 2021).

Research on the relationship between ATDs and inclusion shows that the former is a necessary but not sufficient precondition of the latter (Grönlund et al., 2010; Hunt, 2021; Mavrou, 2011; Sze, 2009). The availability of the ATDs does not guarantee effective use. The use of ATDs implies active involvement of the team of professionals at all stages of the educational process: from preparation and introduction to potential users—children with health barriers—to feedback, modification, etc. Studies also underscore the importance of consumers' participation in the process of AT implementation—not only children, but also their parents who at least give their feedback about ATDs (Mavrou, 2011).

The factors and trends in the development of the ATDs market, including usage in special education, described in the international literature can be divided into 5 large groups: (1) demographic; (2) socio-cultural (which includes education); (3) economic; (4) political (administrative) and (5) environmental (or environmental conditions in the broader sense of the term).

The demographic factors described in the literature are one of the main drivers of increasing demand for ATDs (Flandorfer, 2012; Stack et al., 2009; Sugihara et al., 2015). This include several areas: population aging, primarily due to a decrease in mortality and increasing share of the "oldest old", the health status of the population of different ages, including children, the prevalence of deficits (Barriers) in autonomy and self-service, and accessibility to them outside home and long-term care (Productivity Commission, 2008; WHO, 2011; 2013). ATDs are seen in this context not as technological countermeasure to ongoing changes, but rather as measures to mitigate their consequences (Flandorfer, 2012). The UN European Commission emphasises the existence and the effectiveness of disease, injury and disability prevention programs as one of the criteria that directly affect the forecast estimates of the number of future users of assistive products (Stack et al., 2009). Despite the fact that life expectancy in Russia remains lower than in developed and many developing countries, the structure of the Russian population is also aging, and the onset of diseases that limit autonomy occurs at earlier ages (Sinyavskaya et al., 2022), which increases the demand of older adults for ATDs.

The socio-cultural group of factors includes (1) education, (2) public attitudes towards the use of ATDs and people using them, and (3) socially and culturally determined attitudes of people with disabilities toward having an active social, professional and cultural life. According to WHO and UNICEF forecasts (WHO, 2013; WHO & UNICEF, 2015), the level of education regarding such technology and interest in it among people with disabilities will increase, both in younger age groups (due to increased opportunities for inclusive school education for children) and in older age groups (on the one hand, due to the increased availability of various forms of inclusive and online education as well as state and international programs to support continuing education and advanced training, and on the other hand, due to increasing life expectancy, reducing mortality and an increasing number of people with disabilities in generations which are more educated than before).

Despite the fact that some researchers have recognised the importance of cultural factors in the use of ATDs for a long time (Parette et al., 1996), only in recent years, under the influence of the ideas of social constructivism, socio-cultural sociology,

and socioemotional selectivity theory, empirical studies of the role of ethno-cultural differences in the construction meaning of disability and attitudes towards ATDS have begun to develop (Asghar et al., 2020; Lindsay & Tsybina, 2011; Spinelli et al., 2019). The perception of disability and ATDs varies in individualistic and collectivistic societies (Asghar et al., 2020). Gender, ethnic group or language spoken, country or geographical location along education are among significant factors influencing the demand and unmet needs for ATDs (Lindsay & Tsybina, 2011). Cultural norms are considered an important barrier to using ATDs by girls and women (WHO & UNICEF, 2015; WHO, 2022). According to the WHO, it is possible to overcome existing socio-cultural barriers through special educational programs and the dissemination of information about modern ATD tools, their benefits, and how they work (WHO, 2011). There are many advocates of culturally-sensitive, culturally-competent and family-centered approach in provision of ATDs particularly to children with disabilities to enhance their access to inclusive school education (Desmond et al., 2018, p. 439; Parette et al., 1996, p. 106).

Economic factors are equally important to both ATDs demand and supply (WHO, 2011, 2013). A recent scoping review shows that the consistent information about ATDs supply is even more limited than about demand (Danemayer et al., 2021). From an economic perspective, demand for ATDs is largely determined by population incomes and the costs of ATDs (WHO, 2011); the latter is crucial for families with disabled children, who need to replace ATDs quite often because of their maturing (WHO & UNICEF, 2015).

Political (administrative) factors include different measures of tax and social policies aimed at regulating access to ATDs. It can include different approaches to licensing and standardisation of ATDs, reduced tax rates, state subsidies to ATDs producers (Flandorfer, 2012), as well as social benefits to people with disabilities, subsidised or free supply of ATDs to people who need it (ex., children with disabilities for school education) (WHO, 2011). To the contrary, state and non-profit programs which include the elderly and people with special needs in the cultural, political, labor and social life of society can also have a positive impact on growth in the consumption of assistive products—these groups increasingly demonstrate a desire to lead an active, mobile and independent life for as long as possible (OECD, 2012).

Finally, there is little research on *environmental (or environmental conditions in the broader sense of the term) factors*. According to WHO and UNICEF, these factors include availability of ATDs service centers, qualified staff for training disabled people, their family members, teachers, and social workers with new ATDs as well as the availability of environment—educational and health care services, public places, public transport, etc.—for children and adults with barriers in health status (WHO, 2011, 2013; WHO & UNICEF, 2015). Lahm and Sizemore (2001) note that in the tradition of functional approach to decision-making about AT, environmental expectations are the most important factor in choosing ATDs: the goal of AT is to help an individual to participate in the activities that she considers important, for instance, in inclusive education. A lack of information about available ATDs, and insufficient capacity development and training can increase barriers in using AT (WHO, 2013). Ignorance of modern AT by social workers, teachers and teaching assistants and their

inability to handle them are among the barriers to the more active use of ATDs in the care of people with disabilities (Alper & Raharinirina, 2006; Sugihara et al., 2015; WHO, 2013). To overcome this barrier, some authors propose to include special courses teaching future school teachers "to work with students who use ATDs to compensate for their specific learning disabilities" in the university curricula (Sze, 2009, p. 423).

Despite the growing number of publications on inclusive education and AT for educational purposes in Russia, most of them are based on the analysis of legislation and provide normative recommendations on how inclusive education should be developed, what role technologies should play in it, and how it should be changed for this offering of AT (Filipovich & Borozinec, 2019; Myasnikov et al., 2018; Ponomarenko & Vladimirova, 2019). There are only a few empirical studies that discuss possible factors of demand for AT in Russia, including economic (high prices on ATDs, low family incomes and insufficient school financing), political/administrative (too difficult and time-consuming procedure of obtaining ATDs or reimbursement costs of ATDs, a lack of methodological recommendations on the use of AT in inclusive education, etc.) and environmental (unfamiliarity of teachers with modern AT in education, and their unpreparedness to use AT in education) (Bozhkov et al., 2013; Chupina, 2011; Filipovich & Borozinec, 2019; Valeeva, 2015). Furthermore, these studies do not focus on the comprehensive analysis of the factors of demand for AT (including those used in special education) in Russia.

Method and Research Design

The study was carried out using a mixed qualitative-quantitative methodology. The qualitative part of the study allows us to answer the question about the most likely, from the point of view of experts, drivers and barriers to the development of ATDs in Russia. The quantitative part of the study focuses on assessing the current and potential demand for ATDs based on socio-demographic conditions and the degree of satisfaction of the needs of people with disabilities who already have appropriate technology.

Prospects for the development of the ATDs market in Russia, as well as factors that have a significant impact on the development of this industry, were determined through in-depth interviews with experts, conducted in the fall of 2015. During the course of the qualitative study, 12 experts were interviewed. They were employed in: government organisations, working with disabled adults and children, their rehabilitation (remediation) and inclusion in education, labour market and other areas of life; companies producing ATDs as well as means of rehabilitation; and the State Bureau of Medical and Social Expertise. In addition, people responsible for making decisions in the field of social support for the disabled and researchers in fields of demographics disability and special education in Russia were also interviewed.

In order to facilitate in-depth semi-structured interviews, a guide was developed, consisting of main and additional parts, prepared for interviews with individual

experts (depending on their type of activity). The guide included questions about the dynamics of the number of people with disabilities in Russia and the factors influencing this figure, state guarantees regarding the receipt of ATDs by disabled people, barriers to obtaining such devices, the quality of state regulation within this industry, the economic factors of supply and demand in the domestic market for ATDs including those necessary for the access to inclusive school education. The experts were also asked questions about the impact of technological progress, as well as changes in social attitudes towards children and adults with disabilities as well as the development of the AT market in Russia. The experts were asked to evaluate the impact of certain factors as of the time of the interview (2015) and in the future (by 2030).

The methodology of the study is grounded theory, which involves the simultaneous collection and analysis of data. Data was analysed through coding of the text of the interview transcripts. Firstly, open coding was used to identify categories. Secondly, axial coding was applied, during which the previously identified enlarged categories were supplemented and refined. For example, during open coding, social factors in the development of the AT market were identified, and during axial coding, subcategories were clarified: changing social norms in society, changing the practice of organising leisure activities for people with disabilities, etc.

To estimate the potential and actual demand for the ATDs we used the statistical data and microdata of surveys conducted by the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat), including: (1) Sample monitoring of the quality and availability of services in the areas of education, health and social services, promotion of employment (QAS), 2021 ($N = 112,963$ respondents from 48,241 households); (2) Comprehensive Monitoring of Living Conditions (CMLC), 2020 ($N = 127,456$ respondents from 59,994 households); (3) Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey of the Higher School of Economics (RLMS-HSE), 2020 ($N = 12,069$ respondents from 4839 households). All surveys are representative at the level of the Russian Federation and contain questions about health status, health limitations, and disability status, which allows us to estimate disability rates. Additionally, CLMC and QAS provide information about the reasons for disability. Furthermore, QAS has a wide range of questions about the demand for ATDs, both satisfied and unsatisfied, and their actual use.

Socio-Demographic Factors: The State of Health and Disability Among the Russian Population

One of the most predictable drivers of the potential demand for ATDs is the number of people with disabilities. From the perspective of inclusion, the share of children with disabilities, the age of the onset of disability, nature, and intensity of functional limitations as well as the share of disabled children in schools are also significant.
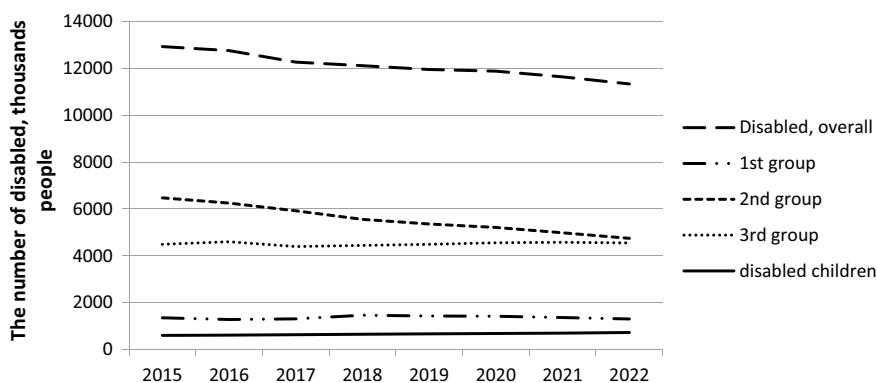
Fig. 8.1 Dynamics of the number of disabled people, by disability group, in Russia 2015–2022. *Source* Rosstatdata

The total number of disabled people of any age[1] in Russia has decreased from 12.9 million in 2015 to 10.9 million in 2023; from 884 per 10,000 people to 740 per 10,000 people (Fig. 8.1). The fall in the number of disabled people occurred mainly due to a reduction in the number of people in the 2nd group[2] from 6.5 to 4.7 million people during the period under review, i.e. more than 25%. At the same time, the number of children with disabilities increased: from 604,850 in 2015 to 728,988 in 2022, and then decreased to 716,962 in 2023.[3]

The share of children with disabilities in the total number of disabled people in Russia was 6.6%, including 1.8%—at the age up to 7 years and 4.8%—at the age of 8–17 years. The share of children with disabilities was almost twice higher among boys (8.6%) than girls (5.0%).

Sample surveys of the population make it possible to obtain estimates of the rate of disability of men and women in the context of five-year age cohorts. Since the RLMS 2021 shows the closest estimate of the general disability rate in Russia (8.2%) to the

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[1] The data on the total number of people with disabilities is published by Rosstat on basis of the Federal Register of Disabled People (https://sfri.ru/) that collects data from several sources including from the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation (Social Fund of Russia from 2023), the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, the Investigative Committee and the Prosecutor General's Office of Russia. This figure refers to people who have official status of disabled according to decisions of expert commissions from the State Bureau of Medical-Social Expertise.

[2] In Russia, there are four categories of disabled people, including children with disabilities (younger than 14 or in some cases 18 years old), and adults with disability of the first, second, or third group. Disability group is assigned according to the degree of health limitations; the first group means the most severe limitations while the third one implies mild limitations. Disabled children are re-examined once a year, every 2 or 5 years, depending on the nature of the disease, the cause and severity of the disability. Disabled adults of the 1st group must be re-examined every 2 years, while disabled people of the 2nd and 3rd groups—every year. The level of social guarantees varies depending the group of disability.

[3] Figures are given at the 1st of January of each year.
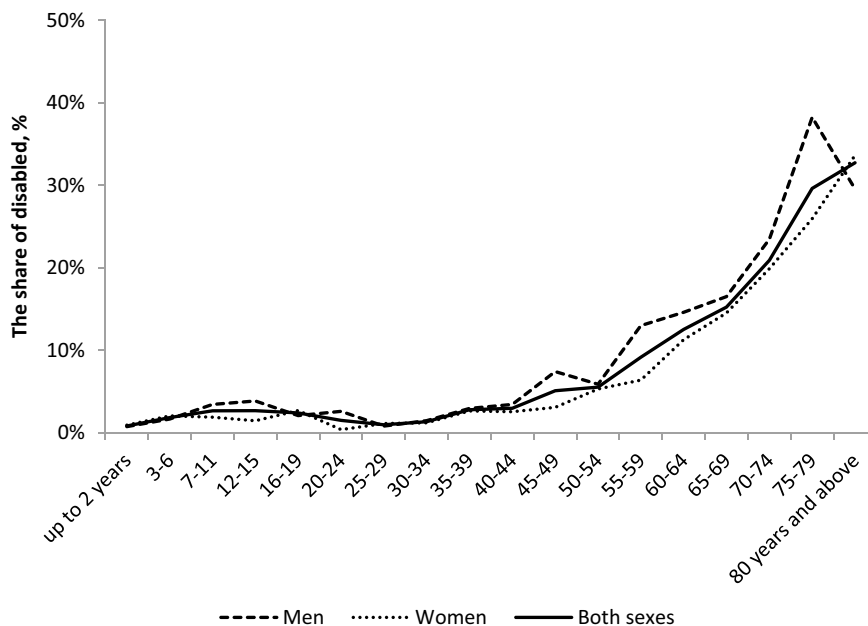
Fig. 8.2 Disability rate by sex and age, %. *Source* Authors' calculations, based on RLMS 2021 data

official indicator of Rosstat (7.8%in 2022), we present the corresponding estimates by sex and age based on this survey (Fig. 8.2). Naturally, with age, the level of disability increases. In almost all age groups, it is higher for men than for women, and these differences increase with age. The described trends were also identified on the basis of two other population surveys—CLMS 2020 and QAS 2021.

The potential demand for ATDs is varied by the reasons that caused it. Unfortunately, there is almost no official data to link the reason for disability in childhood and the need for particular ATDs. According to the Ministry of Labor of Russia data, in 2021 the most common type of persistent disability of body functions for both the first recognised and re-recognised disabled children was a mental disability (31.7%). Almost every fifth disabled child (both for the first time and repeatedly recognised) had a dysfunction of neuromuscular, skeletal and movement-related functions (19.1%). Dysfunctions of the cardiovascular system constitute disability of 8.6% in children; 8.0% of disabled children had dysfunctions of the blood system and the immune system; 7.9%—speech and language dysfunctions. From 2015 to 2021, the most remarkable growth of the following reasons for disability is observed: mental disabilities, dysfunctions of the blood system and the immune system, speech and language dysfunctions, vision dysfunctions and dysfunctions of the cardiovascular system.

The QAS 2021 questionnaire contains a list of the reasons for the assignment of the disability status, which differs from the Labor Ministry statistics. Furthermore, the

latter are based on medical conclusions about the establishment or re-examination of the main cause of disability, while the former uses subjective assessments of respondents. According to the QAS 2021, almost one in five disabled children indicated mobility restrictions as the main reason for disability, which is close to the official data; about 15%—cognitive abilities, almost 12%—communication, and over 40%—"other barriers". Disabled boys are more likely to become disabled due to restrictions in communication, and disabled girls—due to mobility restrictions.

The question of why a disability was diagnosed suggests there is only one possible answer, but a disabled person may experience several restrictions in everyday life at once. The prevalence of barriers in the ability to see, hear, move, remember and concentrate is expectedly higher among people with disabilities than among people who do not have a disability status (Fig. 8.3). Unlike older adults, children (below 16 years old) without a disability have practically no barriers in the ability to see, hear, and move, as well as in the ability to memorise and concentrate. This means that when assessing the potential and expressed demand for ATDs among children and youth, those with disabilities can be considered as the main target group.

Among children with disabilities, the most common types of barriers are mobility and cognitive barriers (in both cases, this was reported by approximately 40% of respondents) and hence the demand for the ATDs that can help to overcome these barriers will be higher. Besides, 22.8% of disabled children reported vision barriers and 16.2%—hearing barriers. The presented estimates are consistent with the respondents' answers indicated above for the major reason of disability—the ability to
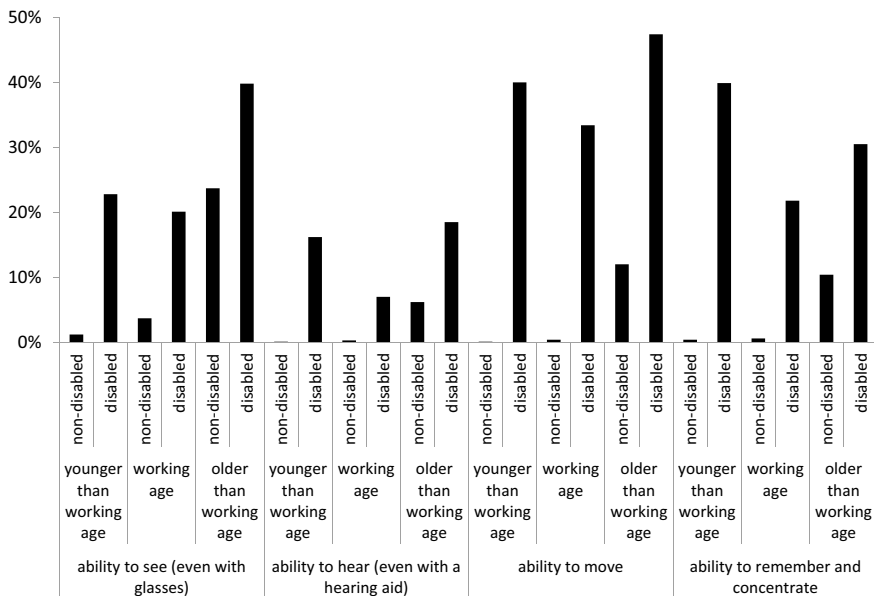
Fig. 8.3 Proportion of persons experiencing barriers in various abilities in everyday life, to some extent, by age and disability status, %. *Source* Author's calculations based on QAS 2021 data

move and cognitive abilities, but are not completely comparable. We should underline that for the purposes of estimating the demand for AT for inclusive education, the information about daily barriers is more relevant.

Thus, although the number of disabled children is growing only slowly, we might expect a growing demand for the AT aimed at overcoming cognitive, speech and language barriers, and vision disabilities, which are particularly important in inclusive education. Besides, motor barriers are widespread.

Another driver of the demand for AT is the share of disabled children attending kindergartens and schools. By Rosstat data (based on CLMS conducted in 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020), the share of disabled children under 15 not attending any educational organisations is constantly decreasing. A proportion of children with disabilities aged 8–14 attending schools has increased from 68.2% in 2014 to 74.2% in 2020. However, it is less clear whether they participate in inclusive education. For instance, although the share of disabled children at schools has increased to 72.2% in 2016, the proportion of them attending normal classes has decreased from 60.0% in 2014 to 52.1% in 2016.

Drivers and Barriers Affecting Demand for Assistive Technologies: Interview Findings

A certain segment of the population has a direct need for certain types of rehabilitation; their number and proportion directly determine the demand for ATDs. In terms of the size of the target audience that determines the demand for ATDs, the experts interviewed expressed that they expect it to increase due to several converging demographic processes: the ageing of the population, a decrease in child mortality, and an increase in the number of people with health challenges. Within the target audience of demand for ATDs, one can expect an increase in the proportion of older citizens due to an increase in life expectancy, as well as an increase in the proportion of children with disabilities and congenital diseases: *More and more children appear in our time who could not have been born 15–20 years ago just for medical reasons. … And accordingly, if medicine saved them, then they are likely to have such health conditions in which they constantly need support, throughout their lives.*

The number of children and adults with disabilities and, more generally, those in need of ATDs, according to experts, may also grow as a result of changes in the lifestyle of Russian society. In particular, a sedentary lifestyle leads to weight gain and obesity, which causes many diseases and disabilities. At the same time, unhealthy lifestyles are likely to have a greater impact on the demand for ATDs among the working population and retirees than children with disabilities.

Another factor influencing how the number of children and adults with disabilities fluctuates is the decreased availability and quality of public healthcare services. Reductions in the time spent receiving each patient in regional clinics and a lack of specialists have narrowed the possibilities for hospital treatment, which can have a

negative impact on the extent of disabled children and adults. The experts also noted the absence of a rehabilitation institution in Russia, as well as the imperfection of the existing rehabilitation system. However, in the future, according to experts, we can expect some positive developments in this area due to the appointment of a chief rehabilitation specialist in the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation. In addition, in certain areas of medicine (for example, perinatal medicine, the early diagnosis of diseases), certain technological advances have been made, which contribute to improving the quality of medical services provided and, consequently, reducing the scope of disability among the population.

Changes in the demand for ATDs can occur not only due to changes in the number of people who need them but also due to the lifestyle of people with disabilities and people who experience barriers in their daily activities (including their better access to inclusive education), which follows changing attitudes toward people with disabilities. According to experts, Russian society is becoming tolerant towards children and adults with disabilities, and people using ATDs, as well as disabled people themselves prefer to stay less and less excluded from social life. *"… due to a change in mentality, pensioners will understand that it is actually better to get to the store on an electric scooter calmly than to carry a heavy bag from one of the stores to the house."*

A likely driver of demand for ATDs, especially among children with disabilities and their families, could be school education. However, the attitude towards inclusive education is twofold: according to experts, there is reason to believe that neither disabled children themselves nor children without disabilities and their parents are psychologically ready for inclusion.

The transformation of the lifestyle of children and adults with disabilities can lead to an increase in the number of children attending inclusive schools, and adults willing to enter the labour market, which would lead to an increase in demand for ATDs, primarily among children and people of working age. However, experts have identified several barriers which simultaneously impede the active influx of people with disabilities into the labour market: the unwillingness of employers to hire people with disabilities, the lack of government policies that stimulate the employment of people with disabilities, periods of economic crises with high unemployment, and strong competition for vacant jobs.

A sweeping change in social norms is taking place not only in relation to the education and employment of the disabled, but also in the expansion of their leisure activities. At the same time, according to experts, the demand for individual ATDs will greatly depend on the provision of an accessible environment for people with disabilities (in sports, attending cultural events, organizing recreation and travel, etc.).

Opportunities for the acquisition of ATDs by individuals who need them are largely determined by economic factors in a broad sense—from individual incomes to the extent to which rehabilitation facilities are freely provided by the state. The main channel for obtaining technical means of rehabilitation (TMR) is state provision, so the amount of funding in this area directly affects the demand for ATDs. Experts note the often-inappropriate use of ATDs, i.e. their provision without reference to a

need for them. At the same time, one public health expert provided an example of the priority of certain groups of disabled people in the distribution of ATDs, in particular prostheses: *"The same prosthesis could be given not only to this young man, but it could also be given to a 60-year-old retiree. But no one will give him this prosthesis. … he will not use it to go to work."*

The individual incomes of people who need ATDs are a factor which limits the demand for these devices: *"Without the technical means for rehabilitation … what can a person do next? He sits within his four walls, and uses … improvised means if these means are available to him. They are expensive. Someone, of course, can afford it. … Elsewhere, there are rich people who help their relatives, but this is a different category, this is 5–10% of the total number, who may not receive either an individual rehabilitation program or a disability."* Households where people have disabilities, understandably, tend to have low income levels, and there are limited employment opportunities for people with disabilities, so even the commercial availability of ATDs does little to encourage their out-of-pocket purchase by disability sufferers.

The Russian market for ATDs is not limited to the products of domestic manufacturers and also includes imported products. In this regard, the development of the Russian market for ATDs is influenced by a number of macroeconomic factors that mainly determine the supply of ATDs. According to experts, the general macroeconomic situation as well as the import duties on imported ATDs will have a significant impact on the development of the domestic market for ATDs through 2030. Taking into account the economic sanctions imposed on Russia in 2022, the impact of these factors is likely to only increase.

The imperfect budgeting of public funds for the purchase of ATDs for disability sufferers is exacerbated by the uneven receipt of public funds (for example, during the year) for manufacturers of these devices, which complicates production processes. According to experts, tax cuts for their manufacturers could provide a good incentive for the production of ATDs: *"… tax cuts for the production of these types of technical means of rehabilitation. They shouldn't be taxed at all. No VAT, no income tax…. These are the economic incentives."*

In addition to the budgetary and tax policy of the state, the development of the Russian market for ATDs is influenced by a number of other political (administrative) and environmental factors. First of all, the legally established criteria for obtaining disability status and the conditions for registering an individual rehabilitation program, within which it is possible to receive ATDs free of charge, to a large extent "regulate" the demand for TMR. Many experts note the complexity of the procedures for registering a disability and individual rehabilitation programme (IRP), especially in the regions, as well as the difficulties in obtaining ATDs even with an IRP. According to experts, in order to improve the situation in this area and, accordingly, increase the demand for ATDs, it is necessary, on the one hand, to increase public awareness about the procedure for obtaining TMR, and on the other hand, to increase the level of competence of medical and social expertise among medical workers about the possibilities and conditions for using such funds: *"Difficulties in the competence of these same specialists, on the one hand, and the awareness of the disabled person, on the other hand."*

The list of ATDs offered to people with disabilities is rather rigidly fixed and does not provide for any changes, for example, in connection with the emergence of more innovative AT: *"While we, for our part, have made many proposals for other categories, the state list of these nosologies is not expanding. Again, there is a strict restriction on the part of the Ministry of Labor: we will remain within the limits in which we are now; we cannot expand it using public funds because they are absent. Again, one way or another, it all comes down to funding."* The current system of providing ATDs is more focused on unification than on individualization, which leads, on the one hand, to the curbing of demand for TMR (not all parents of disabled children are ready to receive less-than-suitable means), and on the other hand, to the inefficient spending of public funds (issuing available rehabilitation funds to those who are not suitable). *"… they provided the products, they have them lying around, gathering dust, and then they have to throw them away somewhere. The recipient receives, because we have such a mentality: it's given, it's taken. He takes, and it disappears, and the state spends money on it. It's a waste of money."*

Despite the identified barriers to obtaining free ATDs, experts note some progress in organising a system for providing the TMR (primarily in megacities and the larger cities of Russia), including due to the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the active work of public organisations with people who have disabilities: *"from this moment [since 2012—the ratification of the CRPD], we can say that systemic steps are being taken. … And accordingly, the state has taken on very serious obligations, not only on assistive technologies, but also in creating an accessible environment in general."*

The quality of state regulation in the Russian market for ATDs has been assessed by experts in different ways. Even if we admit that the state stimulates competition between manufacturers of AT, the result of this competition is a reduction in prices for ATDs, and not an increase in their quality: *"… a tender is allocated … And these intermediaries, the so-called suppliers of these products, are trying to win this tender by reducing the cost. … And, as a rule, companies with good products, which really have a good rehabilitation, are driven away, and only those that do not have this, which can be bought at a bargain price, win. … Therefore, those companies at the level of dumping benefit by reducing the quality of products."* According to experts, the state procurement system has had a negative impact on the development of the market for ATDs in Russia, making them cheaper. At the same time, there is reason to believe that the revision of measures to support entrepreneurs in the production of ATDs will not have a significant impact on increasing the supply of TMR, since they are not mass-produced products.

In 2015, experts ambiguously assessed the state policy of import substitution. Some experts were of the opinion that such a policy would limit the supply of ATDs on the Russian market, while another group of experts believed that stimulating domestic developments in the long term could change the ratio of domestic and imported products on the Russian market. In the context of economic sanctions in 2022, the import substitution policy is likely to be of paramount importance for the development of the domestic market for ATDs.

The development of new technology can significantly change the market for ATDs. Innovative high-tech AT can improve the quality of life of children and adults with disabilities, as well as make school and professional education, employment and various types of leisure activities more accessible to people with disabilities. New technological solutions can reduce the cost of production, but this requires huge investments from the state, so experts do not expect a significant reduction in the cost of ATDs by 2030. *"it's cheaper for us to buy abroad, as Lelkin, the deputy minister, was saying, than to organise domestic production, which will not pay for itself in the next 100 years due to the incredible costs of its creation. Because in order to create the production of high-quality, good products at the level of foreign analogues, huge investments are needed; their cost is calculated in millions of dollars."* In general, experts emphasize the dependence of technological changes on the development and production of ATDs on the political course: investments in the development of AT of better quality remain economically unattractive without a state request for the individualisation of ATDs, expanding the range, etc.

As another factor in the demand for ATDs, experts identified the accessibility of the environment for children and adults with disabilities—the possibility of barrier-free movement in the village or town, the availability of schools, social services, the Bureau of Medical and Social expertise, points of sale, rent, receipt, maintenance of TMR. Experts noted positive changes in connection with the implementation of the state program "Accessible Environment", however, the problem of barrier-free movement of children and adults with disabilities remains: not all infrastructure facilities are equipped with ramps and lifting mechanisms, and a significant part of the housing stock is not adapted for the use of wheelchairs. Many schools either do not have the necessary equipment and ATDs, or the available equipment is of insufficient quality and cannot be used by children with disabilities, which limits the possibilities of inclusive education.

The experts also mentioned that a change in the ecological situation may have an impact on the level of disability in the population and, accordingly, on the demand for ATDs, but it is not possible to assess the extent of such an impact. Firstly, the influence of the factors discussed above, according to experts, will be much stronger than ecological ones. Secondly, there is currently a lack of research on the relationship between the ecological situation and the onset of disability in Russia, which makes it difficult to make any forecasts.

Thus, based on the qualitative interviews with experts we can conclude that the demand for ATDs is mostly determined by socio-cultural, political (administrative), environmental (in a broad sense) and economic factors. The role of demographic factors is not so crucial although still important; and some social and environmental factors can either intensify or weaken it.

Assessment of the Current Level of Need for Assistive Technologies and Devices and the Degree of Satisfaction

Rosstat surveys allow not only to estimate the potential demand for AT using the information on disability status but also the perceived demand (those who report a need for a particular ATD) and prevalence of use of ATDs by different groups of the population. The QAS has information about the perceived needs of disabled people of any age as well as of people older than working age without a disability status for TMR (ATDs). This allows us to define four main groups of consumers of TMR: (1) disabled people younger than working age (disabled children), (2) disabled people of working age (disabled adults), (3) disabled people older than working age (disabled older adults) and (4) non-disabled over working age.

The QAS includes two lists of TMR, conditionally divided into (1) technical means or devices used in everyday life (List 1) and (2) means of care or medical rehabilitation (List 2). The greatest need for certain TMR, as well as care products, is experienced by older disabled adults (Table 8.1). The demand for ATDs is somewhat lower, although significant among disabled children and adults: more than 40% noted the need for TMR, while slightly less (38–39%) expressed the need for care and/or medical rehabilitation (Table 8.1).

A more detailed analysis of the demand for ATDs for the selected categories of consumers shows that children with disabilities have more need for prosthetic and orthopaedic products (13.7% of respondents) and wheelchairs (10.6%) which corresponds to the higher prevalence of mobility disabilities in this age group (Table 8.1). Almost every fifth young disabled person needs glasses or contact lenses, but the need for these among children and adolescents is still lower than among older age groups.

Among the means of care and/or medical rehabilitation (List 2), children with disabilities express higher need for exercise equipment (16.3% of respondents), absorbent underwear (10.3%), devices for hygiene and care (5.7%), and adjustable beds (2.9%) (Table 8.1). In addition, their need for blood pressure monitors is high (14.9%), although it is lower than in older age groups.

Persons needing ATDs can purchase them independently or receive them from the state as part of a developed individual rehabilitation program (IRP). It should be noted that only persons with disabilities for whom the IRP has been produced have the right to receive free rehabilitation funds from the state. The only option to get ATDs for a person with health or functional limitations without the IRP is to purchase them. According to QAS 2021 estimates, the majority of children with disabilities have IRP (84.1 and 91.4% among boys and girls, respectively). Among the older age groups, only two-thirds of the disabled have a developed IRP. Therefore, the accessibility and affordability of ATDs are potentially higher among children with disabilities, which is important from the perspective of inclusion.

The survey data on the prescription of ATDs to people with disabilities confirm that children have better legal rights for ATDs. The question of the assignment of TMR within the framework of the IRP in the QAS was asked: in list 1—technical means

Table 8.1 The share of people who indicated the need for a particular technical tool (device)/means of care and/or medical rehabilitation, %

	Disabled people younger than working age (children)	Disabled people of working age	Disabled people older than working age	Non-disabled over working age
Technical means (devices)—List 1				
The need for at least one	41.6	42.7	70.8	56.2
Glasses (contact lenses)	19.2	23.9	54.7	54.5
Hearing aid	4.7	3.7	7.5	2.1
Walkers, handrails, canes	6.6	13.6	26.3	4.3
Wheelchair	10.6	4.8	4.6	0.5
Prostheses	0.8	2.9	1.9	0.4
Prosthetic and orthopedic products	13.7	3.2	3.7	0.3
Other TCPs	6.8	4.7	3.7	0.5
Care and/or medical rehabilitation products—List 2				
The need for at least one	38.2	38.9	64.1	47.9
Tonometer	14.9	30	55.6	46.6
Simulators	16.3	7.3	5.6	1.2
Tracheostomy tube	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0
Device for introducing food through a stoma	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0
Oxygen bags	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.1
Glucometer	4.0	8.7	23.3	9.0
Home hemodialysis, hemosorption	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0
Pacemaker	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.1
Adjustable bed	2.9	0.8	1.2	0.1
Urinal	0.0	0.7	0.7	0.0
colostomy bag	0.0	0.2	0.6	0.0
Absorbent underwear	10.3	1.8	3.8	0.4

Table 8.1 (continued)

	Disabled people younger than working age (children)	Disabled people of working age	Disabled people older than working age	Non-disabled over working age
Devices for hygiene and care	5.7	2.2	4.8	0.4
Other means	4.2	2.2	3.4	0.7

Source Authors' calculations based on QAS 2021 data

(devices)—and in list 2—means of care and/or medical rehabilitation. In both cases, the prescription of TMR or care products by specialists from the Bureau of Medical and Social Expertise is higher among disabled children than among disabled people of older age groups. For example, 53.3% of disabled boys and 70.1% of disabled girls were prescribed ATDs under List 1 in total, another 33.7 and 16.9% partially (Fig. 8.4). For comparison, in general, for both sexes, < 50% of disabled adults and slightly more than 40% of disabled older adults were prescribed the same means of rehabilitation in full, 19.3 and 15.6%, respectively, were prescribed partially.

The legal right for means of care and/or medical rehabilitation (list 2) for all age groups of disabled people turns out to be somewhat worse. However, here, too, disabled children are better provided for with the indicated means than disabled adults: 25.0% of disabled boys and 17.4% of disabled girls were prescribed care and/or medical rehabilitation facilities in full, another 42.8 and 40.9%, respectively, were prescribed partially.

It should be noted that the refusal to prescribe TMR is more common among disabled people of working age than among younger or older people with disabilities (6.9% versus 3.4 and 4.9%, respectively, according to list the 1, and 9.9% against 5.2
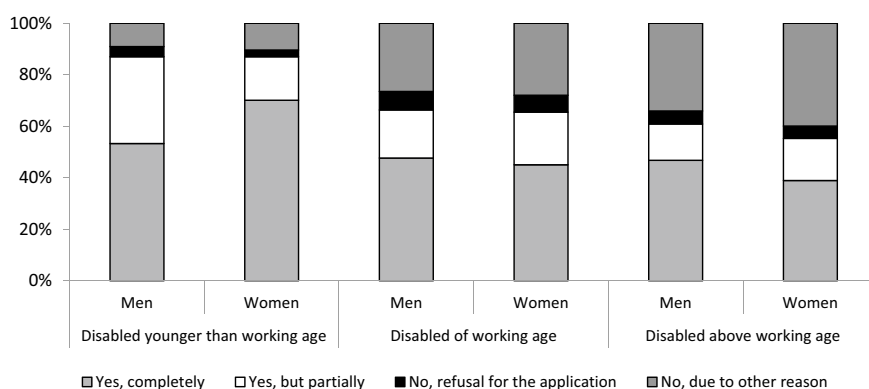
Fig. 8.4 Allocation of the necessary means of rehabilitation to disabled people within the framework of an individual rehabilitation program, by age groups. *Source* Authors' calculations based on QAS 2021 data

and 6.3%, respectively, according to the list 2). It is expected that the insufficiency of TMR due to the lack of an IRP or the lack of grounds for prescribing certain TMR is more common among disabled older adults since they are less likely to apply for IRP.

However, despite the more excellent coverage of children with disabilities by IRP and prescribed ATDs, in general, the provision of technical and care facilities for disabled children is worse than for disabled adults (Fig. 8.5). According to the QAS 2021, 6.6% of disabled children noted the complete absence of ATDs according to List 1, and 17.7%—means of care and/or medical rehabilitation according to List 2 (Fig. 8.5). Partial provision of the ATDs from List 1 was available for 22.8% of children with disabilities and from List 2—for 39.8%. These figures point out the unsatisfied demand (unmet need) for TMR, especially for disabled children, which is 29.4% to list 1 and 57.5% to list 2.

The available survey data do not provide an overall picture of the reasons for unsatisfied demand for AT. Among available reasons (Table 8.2), the most common is the denial of public services to provide TMR to disabled people due to a lack of physical availability, insufficient incomes of disabled people (lack of money to purchase), or AT unsatisfactory quality or unsuitability for use (Table 8.2). The rate of disabled children deprived of access to ATDs is impressive: in 2021, 27.5 and 41.3% of children with disabilities who need TMR, were fully or partially unsecured by TMR, according to lists 1 and 2, respectively, reported the refusal of public services
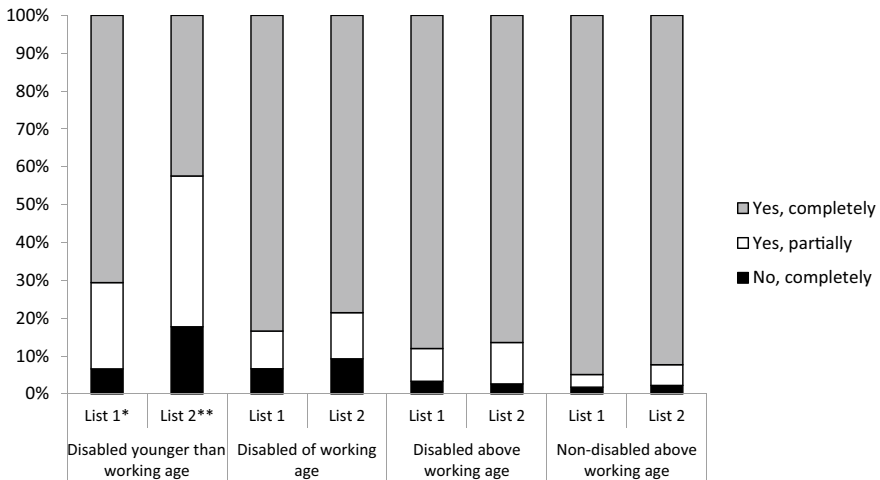
Fig. 8.5 Availability of technical means of rehabilitation, regardless of the availability of an individual rehabilitation program, by age group and disability status. *Notes* *List 1: glasses (contact lenses), hearing aids, walkers, handrails, canes, wheelchairs, prostheses, prosthetic and orthopaedic products, other technical means; **List 2: tonometer, simulators, tracheostomy tube, device for introducing food through a stoma, oxygen pillows, glucometer, home hemodialysis, hemosorption, pacemaker, adjustable bed, urinal, colostomy bag, absorbent underwear (diapers), devices for using the toilet, hygiene and care, other means. *Source* Authors' calculations based on QAS 2021 data

to provide them TMR due to a lack of available rehabilitation means. Insufficient incomes to purchase ATDs are typical for all age groups of disabled people and, especially for old age people without a disability status. However, a marked barrier in the acquisition of ATDs also exists among disabled children: 37.1 and 17.7% noted this reason concerning rehabilitation means in lists 1 and 2, respectively (Table 8.2).

As another popular reason for the unmet need for ATDs, respondents mentioned that they were not satisfied with the quality of the proposed TMR or it was unsuitable for their use. There is no evident relationship between the degree of satisfaction with the quality of ATDs and age-disability characteristics (Table 8.2). 14.7% of children with disabilities who demanded TMR were not satisfied with its quality according to list 1 and 22.0%—according to list 2.

Such a reason as the lack of TMR for sale was mentioned by all respondents much less frequently than the barriers indicated above. Hence, the unmet needs for ATDs are primarily due to economic (inadequate production and provision of ATDs and inefficient distribution of budgetary funds to ensure the uninterrupted supply of rehabilitation equipment from the state; insufficient population incomes for out-of-pocket purchasers) and administrative factors (rigidity/limited list of funds rehabilitation provided to disabled people free of charge).

The available TMR do not fully meet the needs of people who use it, which once again indicates the importance of administrative factors—both in terms of providing free TMR, and in terms of supporting innovative developments to improve the quality of manufactured ATDs. At the same time, the proportion of people who are completely dissatisfied with the available TMR is the highest among disabled children: 7.1 and 19.5% on lists 1 and 2, respectively (Fig. 8.6). Partial or complete dissatisfaction with the available TMR may increase demand for other ATDs available in the market.

Although better coverage of children with disabilities by IRP does not lead to better availability of ATDs, it influences their better financial affordability. Children with disabilities significantly more often than older people with disabilities receive TMR free of charge from the state or cover only a part of their expenses (Fig. 8.7). Only 28.9 and 41.0% of children with disabilities using TMR from lists 1 and 2, respectively, purchase them entirely at their own expense.

Conclusion

This chapter reveals the main trends of the Russian market of assistive technologies and devices (ATDs) over the period of 2015–2021 as well as in the projection up to 2030 that may influence the inclusion of children or youth with disabilities in education. The results presented here are based on both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis.

A significant driver of the potential demand is the dynamics of the number of people with disabilities of different ages. According to Rosstat, the number of disabled children in Russia has risen from 605 to 717 thousand from 2015 to 2023.

Table 8.2 Causes of lack of rehabilitation mean, %

Reasons of unmet needs	Disabled people			Non-disabled over working age
	Younger than working age (children)	Of working age	Older than working age	
*Technical means (devices)—List 1**				
Denial of public services due to lack of availability	27.5	20.0	18.4	4.1
Refusal of public services due to the expiration of the term of appointment	2.0	2.9	3.6	0.2
No money to buy	37.1	20.7	25.3	39.5
Not on sale	0.3	5.3	2.1	1.6
Unsatisfactory quality or unsuitable for use	14.7	17.0	24.6	11.1
Another reason	40.6	48.1	34.6	50.3
*Care and/or medical rehabilitation products—List 2***				
Denial of public services due to lack of availability	41.3	32.5	19.7	4.0
Refusal of public services due to the expiration of the term of appointment	0.8	3.1	2.2	0.7
No money to buy	17.7	26.4	36.8	42.4
Not on sale	0.0	1.4	2.4	2.1
Unsatisfactory quality or unsuitable for use	22.0	11.4	15.7	6.8
Another reason	23.7	34.3	32.2	47.5

Notes
*List 1: glasses (contact lenses), hearing aids, walkers, handrails, canes, wheelchair, prostheses, prosthetic and orthopedic products, other technical means
**List 2: tonometer, simulators, tracheostomy tube, device for introducing food through the stoma, oxygen pillows, glucometer, home hemodialysis, hemosorption, pacemaker, adjustable bed, urinal, colostomy bag, absorbent underwear (diapers), devices for using the toilet, hygiene and care, other means
Source Authors' calculations based on QAS 2021 data
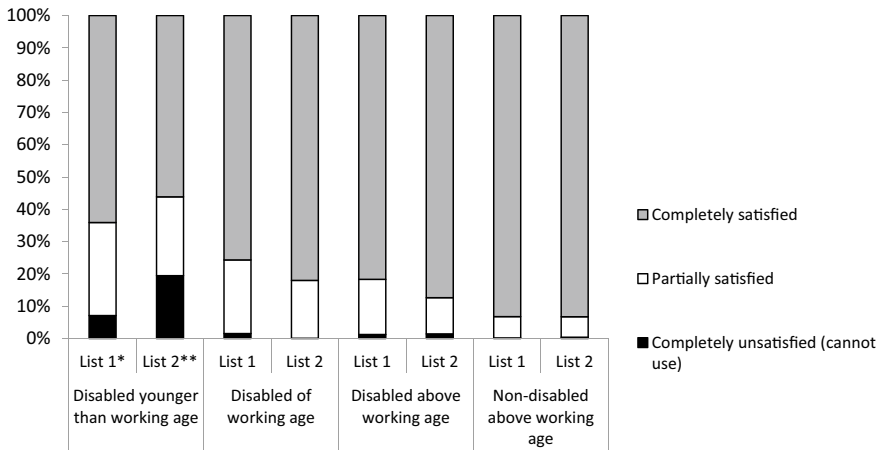
Fig. 8.6 Degree of satisfaction with the available technical means of rehabilitation, by age group and disability status. *Notes* *List 1: glasses (contact lenses), hearing aids, walkers, handrails, canes, wheelchair, prostheses, prosthetic and orthopedic products, other technical means; **List 2: tonometer, simulators, tracheostomy tube, device for introducing food through the stoma, oxygen pillows, glucometer, home hemodialysis, hemosorption, pacemaker, adjustable bed, urinal, colostomy bag, absorbent underwear (diapers), devices for using the toilet, hygiene and care, other means. *Source* Authors' calculations based on QAS 2021 data
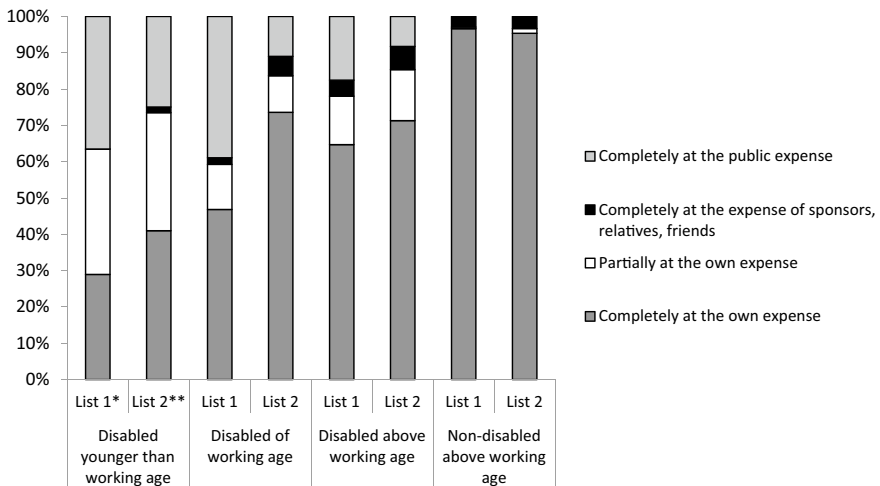
Fig. 8.7 The financial sources of rehabilitation mean by age group and disability status. *Notes* *List 1: glasses (contact lenses), hearing aids, walkers, handrails, canes, wheelchairs, prostheses, prosthetic and orthopaedic products, other technical means; **List 2: tonometer, simulators, tracheostomy tube, device for introducing food through the stoma, oxygen pillows, glucometer, home hemodialysis, hemosorption, pacemaker, adjustable bed, urinal, colostomy bag, absorbent underwear (diapers), devices for using the toilet, hygiene and care, other means. *Source* Authors' calculations based on QAS 2021 data

In 2023, the share of disabled children in the total number of disabled people was equal to 6.6%. The demand for AT might additionally increase due to the slowly increasing coverage of disabled children by schools and kindergartens.

The demand for particular ATDs varies with the causes of disability or the character of health limitations. Russian Labor Ministry statistics show that in 2021, as well as in 2015, the two most common persistent disabilities of body functions of disabled children were mental dysfunctions and violations of neuromuscular, skeletal and movement-related functions. According to Rosstat survey data, in 2021 most widespread causes of disability in childhood were mobility, cognitive and communication disabilities. From the perspective of inclusion, disabled children, who experience multiple restrictions in everyday life, seem to be the leading target group of ATD among children. The demand for ATDs from children with disabilities focuses on vehicles and devices that support cognition and mobility, which is vital from the perspective of inclusive education. The highly demanded by children with disabilities ATDs include prosthetic and orthopaedic products, wheelchairs, simulators, and absorbent underwear.

The results of the in-depth interviews with experts about the Russian market of ATDs, its features and critical tendencies substantially correspond with the existing international studies about factors that influence the ATD markets. The experts expect that the number of disabled people and the number of people in need of rehabilitation will grow due to a decline in infant mortality and population ageing. More positive attitudes towards disabled people and their use of ATDs in Russian society may also contribute to the growing potential demand for ATDs. The growing inclusion of disabled children in education increases the likely demand for AT. Overall, experts suggest that up to 2030, drivers of growing potential demand for ATDs are mostly socio-cultural and to a lesser degree, demographic.

At the same time, experts notice several constraints to greater inclusion of disabled people in Russia, including socially-determined prejudice against co-education of disabled and non-disabled children and youths, negative stereotypes among employers against hiring the disabled, and the lack of state measures promoting disabled employment. Besides the mentioned social and administrative barriers, the demand for ATDs is constrained by the relatively low incomes of people with health limitations and their families and by environmental restrictions.

One of the most critical barriers to satisfying the demand for ATDs is its insufficient supply. In 2022, under economic sanctions on Russia, the risks for developing the Russian ATD market have increased. Experts anticipate that import substitution of ATDs may further restrict the ATD's provision on the Russian market. The research and production of ATDs are relatively expensive, so they largely depend on the state demand for individualisation of ATDs, production of ATDs of better quality, etc. Under the conditions of declining real incomes, affordability of the technical means of rehabilitation (TMR) for people with disability can additionally decrease.

To sum up, according to experts' opinions, the demand for ATDs, including children or youth with disabilities, is likely to increase in the next 5–10 years. However, it is most likely to be accompanied by an increase of unmet needs since the dynamics

of coverage by ATDs substantially depend on the state policy in the production, purchasing and distribution of the ATDs.

Quantitative data analysis reveals that there is a lack of information about the needs and consumption of ATDs in Russia, which prevents estimating met and unmet needs accurately. Many conditions that require assistive products, as well as many specific ATDs, are out of the scope of surveys. It limits our analysis but even more importantly it reduces the efficient development of the ATD market in Russia.

Physical access of disabled children and youths to classrooms as well as their ability to perceive and process information, is a step toward their inclusive co-education with peers without disabilities. Although children with disabilities have individual rehabilitation programs (IRP) more often than the older disabled, they have the highest unmet needs for ATDs. Their demand is often not satisfied by public authorities because of the non-availability of ATDs. They do not have enough income to buy it. Children cannot use available ATDs because of their lousy quality or because they do not help them overcome existing environmental barriers and live actively, participating in education and leisure activities. Besides, children with disabilities, compared to other groups of AT users are on average, the least satisfied with the ATDs they use. To sum up, these findings point to a substantial unmet need for ATDs, especially among children with disabilities, which will most probably increase further in the future due to macroeconomic pressures and administrative rigidity.

There are several arguments, why the presented in this article case of Russia seems to be interesting to an international audience. On the one hand, Russia is a country with a growing demand for ATD, which is formed mainly by a growing number of children with disabilities as well as an increasing inclusion of these children in the education system. On the other hand, this demand for ATD is likely to be unsatisfied because of a limited ATD supply, financial constraints of families with disabled children and, finally, existing socio-cultural stereotypes.

Although the high cost of AT is often viewed as the only barrier to inclusive education in middle- or low-income countries, existing research shows that the lack of coordination, especially among ministries and between local and central government, is an even more severe constraint for successful inclusion (Grönlund et al., 2010). Thus, it seems that the crucial role in the development of the ATD market in Russia as well as in the promotion of inclusive school education, belongs to the role of the state as a central coordinator. The examined case of ATD in Russia can deepen the understanding of significant challenges in this area that go beyond national borders and are relevant to many countries with similar levels of economic and administrative capacities development.

The Story (F)

"New Technologies are Needed Not Only to Receive Education, But Also, to Get Out of Your Cocoon and Learn to Live Without a Mom"
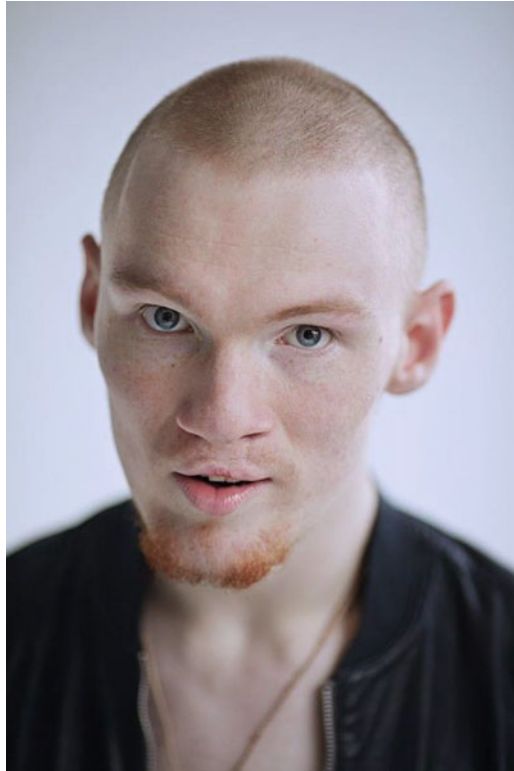
The story of Ivan Bakaidov.

Ivan Bakaidov is a Russian programmer and a public figure, a blogger. Together with a team of volunteers, he is working on services that can make life easier for people with disabilities. In 2018, Ivan received the UN World Summit Award. His story shows how modern technical solutions can help people to improve their lives, and promote inclusion.

The story of Ivan Bakaidov about how the technological devices he develops help people with speech disabilities to communicate with others. Ivan emphasises that his inventions will be able to fulfill their main task—to provide people with disabilities not just the opportunity to speak, but to find a full and independent life—only if Russian society becomes more friendly.

My name is Ivan Bakaidov, I am a programmer from St. Petersburg, actively engaged in the development of software tools for alternative and augmented communication for people with speech and psychomotor disabilities. Involvement in this area of development is related to my personal history. I was born with a rare maxillo-facial pathology, and at the age of one or two I was diagnosed with a hyperkinetic form of moderate cerebral palsy—a disease in which there is a constant involuntary contraction of muscles that creates difficulties with coordination of movements. Both of these problems hindered the mastery of verbal speech, and since childhood I have faced the problem that only my relatives can transcribe my moo into speech, and additional funds are needed to communicate with a wide social circle.

I started programming in elementary school, when a teacher gave me a computer science textbook. Having dealt with a simple program about a turtle crawling along given coordinates, I switched to the more serious tasks, and began to master the basics of various programming languages on my own. The first product, thanks to which the media began talking about me, was associated with solving an applied task that arose in my school routine. At the age of thirteen, I met Angelina Titova, a girl who studied at my school several grades younger and had a profound cerebral palsy, because of which she could only move her head. My first DisQwerty program was developed in order to communicate with her. This software allows people with motor disabilities to type text with just one button that can be pressed with any part of the body—Lina pressed it with her cheek. Later, DisQwerty was supplemented with two more similar developments: DisType (the program allows you to voice the text printed on the keyboard using a synthesized speech) and DisTalk (allows you to voice certain phrases when clicking on pictures). Now we elaborate further all the developed technologies of alternative communication within the framework of a single project LINKa, named in memory of my friend and inspirer.

The described assistive technologies are aimed at habilitation of people with different communication capabilities and needs:

- those who can only press one button ("LINKa. click")
- those who cannot type text using a regular keyboard, but can press large letters on a tablet ("LINKa. Paper keyboard")
- those who can type using the keyboard, but cannot verbalise the written text ("LINKa. write")
- those who cannot read or write, but are able to communicate using visual images ("LINKa. show me"). In the context of education, this technology can be used not only for habilitation of people with speech or psychomotor disabilities, but also for adaptation of foreign-speaking children to a new language environment.
- along with this, the development of the program "LINKa. look." It allows users to type text using eyetracking devices, holding their gaze on certain areas of the display. This technology is combined with traditional input methods—a person can freely combine the selection using buttons and an eytracker, as well as reconfigure various controls.

These programs can significantly expand the communicative capabilities of a person with speech disabilities. For example, she or he gets an opportunity to use

any words, not just simple ones, which she or he uses in their own verbal speech. This is a serious advantage in obtaining education, mastering new knowledge and using it in practice. But by itself, the use of alternative augmented communication programs is not a solution to many of the problems of this target group. The fact is that a typical user of these products has a limited circle of communication—usually she or he speaks only with their mother or a narrow circle of close ones who can understand her or him even without a speech synthesiser.

My goal is not only to provide technological support for communication, but also to help people to live more independent, emancipated lives, so that a person, with the help of these technologies, will be able to get out of their cocoon—to find a job, a partner, win a court and do all this without mom. To achieve this goal, we need a cooperative move on the part of society, the formation of a friendly educational environment and such general social climate that promotes the voices of people with speech disabilities to not only have their voice synthesised, but also heard.

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Chapter 9
Teacher Training and Professional Development for Inclusion in Russia

Svetlana Alekhina **and Maria Kozlova**

Abstract The chapter discusses professional training and advanced training of school teachers as a critical pillar of the development of inclusive education in Russia. Based on the analysis of normative documents regulating the professional training and educational activities of teachers, as well as the results of a series of empirical studies, the shortcomings of the existing system are explicated, slowing down the spread of inclusive practices, reducing the level of subjective well-being of teachers and indirectly affecting the well-being of students. Positive changes are also revealed both in the attitudes of Russian teachers towards inclusive education and in the development of their professional competencies and represented in comparison with the current situation in a number of post-Soviet countries.

Introduction

In the USSR, the education for students with disabilities and special educational needs was carried out as segregated special education within the framework of defectology (Iarskaia-Smirnova and Goriainova, 2021; Krause and Lapham, 2013; Makoelle, 2020), in the logic of the medical model of disability which was widely used in the Soviet period (Bolshakov and Dolgova, 2022). After the collapse of the USSR, the educational systems of the post-Soviet states began to develop independently of each other, and despite the formal unity of historical development and the common Soviet past, multiple scenarios of inclusive education development emerged. This chapter examines the barriers and successes in the training of Russian teachers for inclusive

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education and compares the findings with the situation of teacher education in a number of other post-Soviet countries.

Although it was stated in chapter one of this book that the transition to inclusive education in the Russian Federation is part of the state legislation, the views, according to researchers indicate that the barriers to the full implementation of the idea of inclusion still remain a conundrum. For instance, and firstly, there seems to lack of information about inclusive education and its culture in some parts of society, the low level of support for the recognition of the values of equality and diversity by citizens of Russia (Alekhina and Shemanov, 2018; Iarskaia-Smirnova and Goriainova, 2021).

Secondly, there seems to be a lack of consensus in the academy and practice regarding the values of educational inclusion. For instance, the understanding of the concept of the inclusive educational environment within the school and the criteria for its evaluation remain the subject of heated discussions among Russian experts (Alekhina et al., 2021).

Thirdly, the issue of the professional competencies of teachers as a result of irrelevant models of their training in higher education remains a challenge towards their capability of solving the challenges emanating from the adoption of inclusion (Makoelle & Burmistrova, 2021). In other words, special professional training is needed to support teachers who are faced with the responsibility of working in a fundamentally new inclusive educational environment. This may imply organising educational programs for children with special educational needs, and changing values, attitudes, policies and practices so that the students with SEND can become full participants in the classroom (Polat, 2011). Furthermore, a shortage of teachers with the knowledge, skills and motivation necessary for teaching in an inclusive classroom remains one of the major challenges (Gamayunova and Parvatova, 2019; Alekhina et al., 2022).

On the other hand, some studies draw attention to the role of resource and personnel provision in schools in relation to the success of inclusive education. For example, evidence points out that there are significant differences in the provision of education across schools as well as between classes of the same school (Shruti and Kumar, 2016; Shevchenko et al., 2020). Therefore, according to Scharenberg et al. (2019) the classroom being the everyday environment of learning, communication and student development, forms an immediate context of inclusive learning making it possible the create conducive conditions for students with SEND.

Be that as it may, inclusion in school is determined by a wide range of external and internal cultural, economic, organisational, material and technical factors. These multiple factors act as a lens to determine the readiness of teachers to work in an inclusive school, influencing teachers' understanding of inclusion and the interpretation of the goals of inclusive educational policy, through the collaboration of all participants in the educational process during the implementation of innovative educational programs largely determine its success (Lindner et al., 2019; Pančocha and Slepičková, 2012).

In this chapter, we provide an overview discussion on the developments regarding teacher training for inclusive education in the Russian Federation. This overview

discussion highlights the nature, structure and design of inclusive teacher education. In this chapter, we then present a discussion about teacher education and inclusive education by providing brief discussions on three teacher education research studies. First, the study results about pre-service teacher attitudes towards inclusive education. Second, the study of in-service teachers and their readiness for inclusive teaching. Lastly, the study of teacher professional development on inclusive education.

Teacher Education and Inclusive Education in the Russian Federation

Thirty-three pedagogical universities are responsible for the training of pedagogical personnel in the Russian Federation. For instance, speech therapists are trained not only at the pedagogical universities but also at the *defectology*[1] faculties of universities. On the other hand, there seems to be a growing interest in medical universities in the training of speech therapists and *defectologists* for inclusive schools and kindergartens. Speech therapists are trained in ninety-two universities, while defectologists—in thirty-four universities. However, there are only seven universities that train sign language teachers. *Typhlopedagogues*[2] are taught in only three universities in Russia. At present, schools and kindergartens do not have enough teachers and desperately need auxiliary staff to implement inclusive education. As of 2022, the Russian Federation has officially recognised a shortage of personnel in the field of inclusive education. At the beginning of 2022, about 65 thousand auxiliary specialists worked in general education organisations in the country, including 7 thousand speech pathologists, 19 thousand defectologists, 30 thousand psychologists, and about 8 thousand tutors. At the same time, the shortage of qualified tutors, speech therapists and defectologist reaches 17–20 thousand (GRF, Rasporyazhenie N 1688, 2022).

Although there is evidence of an acute shortage of auxiliary staff, special requirements are imposed on teachers of preschool education, primary school, and subject teachers of secondary school. New requirements for the professional competencies of a teacher are defined in the Professional Standard of a Teacher, which came into force on January 1, 2015. The professional standard "Teacher (pedagogical activity in the field of preschool, primary general, basic general, secondary general education) (educator, teacher)" imposes requirements on the personal qualities and professional competencies of the teacher, taking into account the inclusive educational environment in which the teacher will have to work. Among these requirements are; the formation of an attitude to help any child, regardless of his/her characteristics of behavior, mental and physical health, cultural (linguistic, religious, etc.) identity; the

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[1] For more information about what grounds defectology had as an applied scientific discipline and why, being internally contradictory, it is nevertheless so tenacious in the Russian educational system, see Byford (2018).

[2] Educators for the visually impaired students.

use of special approaches to learning in order to include all students in the educational process; the development of psychological and pedagogical technologies necessary for targeted work with various contingents of students; the ability to develop, in collaboration with other specialists and implement, in cooperation with the families of students, individual child development programs (MLSPRF, Prikaz, 2013). Thus, the willingness to carry out professional activities in a diverse educational environment, considering the individual characteristics, needs and experience of each child and his/her family, is a mandatory requirement for every teacher. In this regard, the "core of higher pedagogical education" includes the compulsory discipline "Training of persons with special educational needs", which is aimed at mastering the skills of implementing an inclusive learning model (Ministry of Education, 2021). However, the question of the adequacy of the training of pre-service teachers at a pedagogical university and their actual readiness to work in an inclusive education requires careful consideration. Therefore, next section discusses pre-service teacher readiness for inclusion.

Research Study 1: Attitudes of Pre-service Teachers Towards Inclusive Education[3]

Taking into account an important role of the teacher in advocating for the values of inclusion and in creating an educational environment in the classroom that can ensure equal access to educational experience for students with different educational needs, it is crucial to analyse the attitudes towards inclusive education of pre-service secondary school teachers i.e. students of pedagogical specialties of Russian universities. In the research findings in this chapter, we present the results of the qualitative, semi-structured interviews in order to make sense of the meanings pre-service teachers make in understanding educational inclusion and their own role in its practice.

This qualitative study was carried out in 2022 within which 27 interviews with 19–25 years old students of pedagogical universities, 21 females, 6 males were conducted. This gender disparity, in general, reflects the picture in Russian pedagogical universities and schools (TALIS, 2019). Participants study at the faculties of inclusive and correctional education (5 people), primary education (7 people), pedagogical education: foreign languages (4 people), physics (2 people), biology and chemistry (1 person), Russian language and literature (3 people), psychology (4 people), music education (1 person) (for detailed information about the design of the study and the results obtained, see Kozlova, 2021).

The analysis of data was conducted using a thematic context analysis framework. First, data was transcribed and coded. The themes were synthesised from the codes.

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[3] The research was conducted within the framework of the Academic Fund Program at HSE University (grant № 23-00-024 "Friendly educational environment: at the crossroads of the interests of the school and the city").

All ethical procedures were followed. The participants were informed about their rights to withdraw from the study. They agreed to participate voluntarily and consent forms were signed. We took reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of both participants and data. Pseudonyms are used instead of participants' names and data is strictly anonymised.

Findings

This section presents results of the interviews conducted. The discussion is presented by stating the finding and supporting it by a direct quote from data.

Factors Influencing the Attitudes of Pre-service Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education

Teaching Competence

The attitude towards inclusive education among the interviewed students is ambivalent:

> I think such children should be interviewed before school, and a professional should already decide there. If, during the interview, the specialist realises that a child with pathology will not be able to study in a regular class, then the child should be assigned to a special class. I believe that the Federal Law should reconsider this and still make certain "buts" (participant 1).

The dominant view that participants studying at the faculties of "general profile" demonstrated that when assessing pre-service teachers prospects for working with children with SEND there was doubt and confusion, possibly due to lack of confidence in their competence. This is how one of the teachers said, "*if I come to school now and they give me a class with such a child, I will be terribly scared because I don't want to hurt him/her*" (participant 23).

However, it is clear that for pre-service teachers to teach inclusively will require emotional and instrumental readiness. On the other hand, the "general profile" students (pre-service teachers for primary school or subject teachers) noted the insufficiency of the knowledge and skills they receive for their future work with children with SEND as one cited: "*During the bachelor's education we did not discuss working with such children much. I am not ready to teach such a child* (participant 7). Moreover, according to their observations, in some Russian schools teachers are not ready for inclusion, the following quote attests to this:

> Graduates of my course are not ready for this. And how can this be included in mandatory educational standards when teachers are not ready at all, the administration is not ready, schools are not equipped. It seems to me that society is not ready yet (participant 3).

Teaching Experience

According to the participants, their university teachers are not able to guarantee the readiness of the graduate to work in an inclusive school, as a result of their lack of sufficient experience in working with children with SEND as one averred "*The trick is that some of our teachers are already elderly, and someone has not been able to work with so many children with features in practice*" (participant 11). Moreover, the respondents express doubts about the sincerity of university teachers promoting the idea of inclusive education. As one postulated:

> Teachers say, "this is great, cool," but no one will tell the truth that no, I'm not ready <...> My classmates in 70% are not ready to go to school yet <...> Some are not ready, because "how is it?". Some are not ready, because like me, they are afraid of harm, but there are few of them (participant 7).

Lack of Dialogue About Inclusive Practice

The study has shown that there was lack of motivation to talk about inclusion and its practice among teachers and pre-service teachers. As one of them suggested: "*there is no dialogue about this at all. Even if you ask the teachers what they think about it, they won't say anything, because they don't know themselves*" (participant 24). As a result of the lack of conversation about inclusive practice, there is evidence of lack of relevant terminology for discussing issues of inclusive education in general and approaches to teaching children with SEND in particular. So, to designate children with SEND, participants use the expressions "*these children*", "*children with pathologies*", "*problem children*", etc.

Disability as Focus

When answering a direct question about who the primary focus of inclusion was, the participants only referred to "children with special educational needs, with the majority of them mentioning only children with disabilities; as one posited "*I think children who do not hear, do not see, do not talk, with cerebral palsy, with autism and some mental disabilities*" (participant 6). None of the participants mentioned foreign language speakers, children with migration experience, children left without parental care, children from poor families or children in difficult living conditions as needing support through inclusion. Moreover, one of the participants noted that it could be prudent if teachers could support such children. It was said, "*it seems to me that this is not a problem at all. Namely, some physical or mental disabilitiesthis can cause difficulties …*" (participant 12).

Dealing with Language Barrier

However, when the participants were asked how they would support student (one or more) in their class who did not speak Russian well, the strategies they proposed demonstrated that they had limited readiness to work with foreign language speaking children. Most participants saw additional segregated classes with the child as a solution to the problem as one indicated "*you need to ask parents to take a home teacher*" (participant 11). This response demonstrated contradictions in the perception and understanding of educational inclusion by pre-service teachers. It is clear that pre-service teachers do not have sufficient knowledge on how to carry out inclusive professional activities.

Dealing with Past Practices

The study has found that pre-service teachers did not understand fundamental differences between new inclusive and past correctional education. It is evident from their views that they still acquire pedagogical education that involves supportive and correctional activities (speech therapist, defectologist, psychologist) as one cited:

> If we are talking about correctional schools, then certain categories of people are gathered there. They communicate only with each other, and when they go out into the big world, where mostly ordinary people do not have such features, it is very difficult for them. They have a problem with accepting themselves and others, and how others perceive it. In inclusive education, the child is immediately immersed in the regular social environment. But we need the work of both a teacher and a psychologist. A psychologist should work with the child and the class (participant 14).

It was evident from the interviews that knowledge obtained at the university in combination with the experience gained in the training practice course devoted to working with children with SEND Students in the faculties of correctional pedagogy motivated pre-service teachers as one said:

> I am ready for this. I learned this (participant 9); This is my duty. Someone works in a bank, someone for lawyers, and I'm with the children with SEND. Everyone has their own profession (participant 8).

Thus, a series of semi–structured interviews conducted with students of pedagogical universities demonstrated a contradictory, and, therefore rather disturbing picture. Acceptance of inclusive education is shown only by pre-service teachers in areas that "by definition" involve segregated individual work with a child or work in small groups. Pre-service teachers of the "general profile" are not ready and not interested in obtaining additional qualifications in inclusive education. For instance, asked if they had the desire to learn something on this topic, to take courses one of them said: *due to the fact that it may not be useful to me, I probably wouldn't waste my time*" (participant 3). There was emphasis that this was an area of "special" competencies of "special" teachers as one indicated "*there are also special specialists,*

guys who go to these specialties probably know why do they go there" (participant 4). This was indicative of the narrowly understanding both inclusive education and its purpose.

Research Study 2: In-service Teachers' Readiness to Teach in an Inclusive Educational Environment

Researchers consider teachers' readiness for inclusive education through the assessment of professional skills and psychological traits. The following components are regarded as significant for professional readiness: proficiency in pedagogical technologies, knowledge of the basics of inclusive pedagogy and psychology of education, variability and flexibility in pedagogical thinking, consideration of age and individual characteristics of children, and reflective professional experience. Psychological readiness involves motivational readiness consisting of personal attitudes (moral principles of the teacher and attitude to inclusion), emotional acceptance of children with SEND and willingness to include them in educational activities (Alekhina, 2011; Pershina et al., 2018).

However, in conditions when inclusive education is in the evolving state, the requirements for professional skills and knowledge of teachers are constantly being redefined, impacting on the professional activities of an ordinary school teacher thus making them significantly more nuanced.

Studies show that the more teachers perceive the transition to inclusive education as a challenge, as they think it may cause emotional exhaustion and deterioration of general well-being (Etzion, 2020; Pinto and Alvarez, 2016). As a result, students' academic performance and their sense of well-being at school may be affected creating conditions for alienation, disorientation, academic failure and dropout of students (Boujut et al., 2016). Thus, the teachers experience of chronic stress and pressure may lead to a deterioration of the conditions for the implementation of inclusion in the classroom and the acceptance of inclusive values by all participants in the educational process (Dubbeld et al., 2017).

Some Meta-analytical studies show the results that indicate teacher burnout in inclusive education (Maslach et al., 2001). The role of both internal (for example, knowledge, personal characteristics, experience of interacting with people with special needs, pedagogical experience, learning experience) and external (for example, school climate) factors and their impact on teacher practice of inclusion (Ika, 2018; Wang et al., 2016).

There seems to be connection between teacher burnout and their attitude to inclusion (Ortan et al., 2021; Tatar and Horenczyk, 2003; Kristiana and Widayanti, 2017). Teachers' perception of school policy regarding diversity and inclusion and the school climate (Dubbeld et al., 2019), the attitude towards work (Viel-Ruma et al., 2010), their collective self-efficacy and decision-making related to students (Boujut et al.,

2017; Hutzler and Barak, 2017) are known to affect teachers' ability to implement inclusion.

However, these studies were conducted in socio-political contexts wherein there was established consensus by all actors in the educational process regarding the value-oriented aspects of inclusive education. In the Russian Federation the need and benefits of inclusive education for diverse children and for schools as centers of learning are affected negatively by the lack inclusive culture at the level thus inevitably affecting the nature of attitudes of participants in the educational process, in particular teachers and their satisfaction with the process and level of burnout.

Thus, guided by the goal of understanding the prospects for the development of inclusive education in the RF, taking into account the needs of teachers as key subjects of inclusion, the satisfaction of which will create sustainable support for the cultivation of inclusive values and practices to overcome educational inequality, we conducted a study of the relationship of inclusive attitudes and professional burnout of teachers of secondary schools in Russia.

The sample included 3301 teachers of secondary schools (Mage = 43.33, SD = 11.08, 6.7% males, 90.6% females, 2.8% did not specify their gender). The basic set of questions in the questionnaire was devoted to the attitude of teachers to inclusion, the assessment of the prevalence of inclusive practices, the experience of respondents' involvement in an inclusive educational space, as well as the assessment of the degree of general and diversity-related (Dubbeld et al., 2019; Tatar and Horenczyk, 2003) professional burnout of teachers. The questionnaire also included a block of questions about the respondent's professional experience: education, position, work experience, workload (in hours), as well as the questions of job satisfaction and of the frequency of events held at the school aimed at the professional development of teachers. To define different taxonomies of teachers that share common characteristics related to their work in general and to work with children with special needs, we use the Latent Class Analysis (LCA). LCA represents a person-oriented approach (Lanza and Cooper, 2016). It is a technique that allows identifying related cases, i.e., groups of people, from categorical data. Variables that are used for LCA include satisfaction with job, general burnout, diversity related burnout, attitudes, and support for the idea of diversity. They were recoded to three levels: low, medium and high. To test differences in scores on target variables (contacts, professional development and school inclusiveness) between identified subgroups we use a series of one-way ANOVA's. Details about the design and tools of the study, as well as the presentation of the results obtained, can be found in the article by Kozlova M. & Ryabichenko T. in "Children and Youth Services Review", in press. Here we briefly present the main observations of this study.

Findings

The results obtained demonstrate positive relationship between teachers' assessments of the quality of their working conditions and professional experience (job satisfaction, psychological well-being (lack of burnout)) and their readiness to professionally implement inclusive education in their classrooms. These results, in general, are consistent with those obtained by other authors in other contexts (Dubbeld et al., 2017; Monsen et al., 2014). As a result of analysis in this study three categories (clusters) of teachers were identified. First, teachers who support the idea of diversity and are ready to implement inclusive education, who show high job satisfaction, least burnout and are highly "Inspired". Second, teachers who generally accept diversity and are focused on inclusion, but are characterised by relatively pronounced burnout, have respect for diversity, a high job satisfaction, but show signs of being "Tired". Lastly, teachers who are least oriented and ready to promote the ideas of inclusion in the educational environment, characterised by pronounced burnout, less respect for diversity, and normally "Rejecting". The distribution of these categories was: "Tired" made up the largest group (60%), followed by "Inspired" (32%) and the smallest cluster "Rejecting" (8%).

A comparison of clusters demonstrates that while the majority of teachers waned to implement inclusion, there were issues of burnout maybe as a result of perceived amount of work brought by inclusion. The indication is that maybe collaboration between these categories of teachers may lead to exchange of experiences between teachers in the framework of everyday professional communication, as well as specially organised educational events that, as can be assumed, may contribute to the growth of teacher self-efficacy and a sense of support from colleagues.

The results confirm the connection between the teachers assessment of his/her ability to manage the learning environment in the classroom and the availability of support with the attitude towards the inclusion of students with SEND (Ewing et al., 2018; Monsen et al., 2014). We believe that teachers professional development opportunities are one of the factors reflecting a school culture as a whole, which undoubtedly contributes to the creation of a favourable organisational climate for inclusion.

The results also demonstrate an increase of inclusiveness of the school environment may be positively affected by teachers with positive professional images of themselves and the right attitudes. Furthermore, their respect for diversity and experiences with children with special needs (Tsakiridou and Polyzopoulou, 2014; Mellado et al., 2017). As a result, more experience with student with special needs may lead to positive attitudes and thus enable sustenance of inclusive culture. When assessing the school environment as inclusive, it is evident that the importance of the condition of institutional support for inclusion and positive inclusive attitudes are among the important aspects for the attainment of inclusive educational process.

Teachers implementing inclusive educational practice should be ready and aware of the need for self-development, mastering new knowledge, educational technologies, the ability to analyse previous and own experience, select effective methods of

working with children, look for compromise solutions to specific pedagogical situations, build classes according to the interests and needs of students, and contribute to their further social and professional self-determination. While teaching in an inclusive classroom is considered hard work, for teachers to be ready for it will require familiarity with the ideals of inclusive education which comes with the experience of being "immersed" in a real pedagogical situation (assessment of a school environment as inclusive, experience with children with special needs) combined with a sense of professional support (opportunities for professional development). The possibility of professional development and professional support from colleagues and the school administration thus become both a means of preventing burnout among teachers and the key to the successful implementation of inclusive practices.

Research Study 3: Professional Development of Teachers for Inclusive Education

The most important in concept in inclusive teaching and learning is the notion of inclusive practice which is regarded as important for teachers in the implementation of inclusive education. Teacher professional development programs in the Russian Federation are independently developed and implemented by educational development institutes, teacher training institutes, and pedagogical universities in different regions.

In this section of the chapter, we present a study conducted in 2022 by the Institute of Inclusive Education Problems of the Moscow Psychological and Pedagogical University under the direct supervision of one of the authors of this chapter, Svetlana Alekhina, in 10 regions of Russia to illustrates the challenges of professional development of teachers for inclusion. The study was carried out according to three indicators: training programs for the last three years, popular topics of programs and current types of support in professional development. A total of 13,880 teachers took part in the survey, of which 8775 (63.22%) have experience working with students with disabilities in schools. A survey of teachers showed that over the past three years, every fifth teacher who participated in the study (22.26%) completed advanced training courses in inclusive education and 34.5% of teachers took courses on teaching children with disabilities.

The analysis of teachers' request for thematic areas in professional development programs revealed several teacher training needs. The needs were as follows: topics related to inclusive education training was a top need every third teacher (of the sample); programs dedicated to pedagogical technologies of working with students for whom Russian is not their native language, issues of developing methods of assessment of students in an inclusive classroom, methods of identifying special educational needs and learning barriers, methods of working with parents and the finding applicable models and technologies to resource classes for inclusion. The

following table shows the results of the training needs of teachers for inclusion (Table 9.1).

Interviewed teachers stressed the importance of collaboration and support for colleagues. Every second teacher surveyed noted the need to receive methodological support from colleagues (54.61%) followed by the need for support by the school administration, 52.83%. However, 37.28% of teachers valued the support in the form of advice from support specialists while 5.51% of teachers thought the help from tutors in the classroom are important. Only 1.87% of teachers believed interacting effectively with assistant assistants was crucial.

So, the success or failure of implementing inclusive educational policy and practice is dependent upon what the classroom teacher believes about such initiatives and is determined by how well the school manages its own resources, including both internal and external support staff (Desombre et al., 2019; Forlin et al., 2008). It is evident that teachers who embrace personal responsibility and who are receptive to the notion of inclusion are more likely to adapt their classroom learning environment to meet the needs of a range of students through varied teaching approaches, high-quality and effective instruction, regular monitoring of progress, and focused teacher and parent/carer collaboration (Ryan, 2009).

In the ten years since the legislative consolidation of inclusive education, it has become clear that it is easier to create material conditions for accessibility, develop legal norms and necessary documents, adapt educational programs than to grow qualified teaching staff for effective activity in a systemic inclusive process. Therefore, the teachers training system itself should be focused on this need for professional development. The non-governmental sector and charitable foundations are actively involved in the system of professional development of teachers working in an inclusive educational environment. Public organisations of parents of children with disabilities on the basis of state grants are beginning to actively share insights

Table 9.1 Teacher needs for inclusive education

Topic	Area	Percentage of sample (%)
Teaching gifted children	Pedagogical technologies for teaching gifted children	40.4
Inclusive education in general	All areas	29.35
Teaching their native language	Pedagogical technologies	15
Developing adapted resources and training programs	Inclusive pedagogy	20
Methods of assessment students in an inclusive classroom	Inclusive assessment	16.4
Methods of identifying special educational needs	Inclusive support	21
Methods of working with parents	Collaboration with parents	28.4
The models and technologies of the resource class are relevant	Technologies for inclusion	9.6

with teachers on how to work with their children. Correctional schools (designated schools for students with special educational needs in Russia) in a number of regions also provide methodological support to teachers of regular schools.

Conclusion

In this chapter some lessons are drawn and conclusions made. First, it is evident that teachers implementing inclusive educational practice should be ready and aware of the need for self-development, mastering new knowledge, and educational technologies, the ability to reflect on their previous and current experience, identify effective methods of working with diverse children in the classroom and be creative about how they can widen the participation of all student within the teaching and learning process. Second, develop alternative ways to provide amicable solutions to specific pedagogical situations. Ensure that the interests and needs of students are address while also contributing to their further to their own professional development as teachers. While teaching in an inclusive classroom may appear to be hard work, teachers have to go through the experience of learning about how they can support students through inclusive teaching and inclusive learning.

As Forlin et al. (2008), Desombre et al. (2019) postulate, the success of inclusive education would depend on how well teachers invest in themselves, mobilise the relevant and appropriate resources for inclusion and ensure an equitable and inclusive educational environment for inclusive support, teaching and learning. Thus, adapting their classroom learning environment to meet the needs of diverse students through a variety of teaching approaches, high-quality inclusive pedagogy, continuous monitoring of progress, and focused teacher and parents collaboration (Ryan, 2009).

The broad picture of teacher training for inclusive education in Russia presented in this chapter may interest countries where the education approach of inclusive education began later. In particular, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are four post–socialist countries of Central Asia, which at various times after the collapse of the USSR, responding to global and local challenges, began to look for ways of developing inclusion in the field of education. Kazakhstan adopted the first legislative acts on inclusive education earlier than other countries in the region and ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2015. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have also recently ratified the Convention. Tajikistan is just setting itself such a task.

According to UNICEF (2017), the ratification of the Convention is becoming a driver for the development of social policy measures for children with disabilities aimed at reducing barriers to obtaining disability status, such as bureaucratic obstacles when applying for unique benefits, as well as discrimination and stigmatisation towards people with disabilities in general.

In addition, ratifying the Convention usually leads to the development of school inclusion and more positive attitudes towards inclusive education among various

stakeholders, including teachers. However, the results of recent studies show that the relationship between the ratification of the Convention and the attitudes of teachers can be ambiguous. The data show that teachers from Tajikistan, where the Convention has not yet been ratified, do not have a definite attitude toward inclusive education. Teachers attitudes towards school inclusion in Uzbekistan, where the Convention was ratified only in 2021, are ambivalent and even negative, which can be explained by the lack of formation of relevant institutions. Kyrgyzstan ratified the Convention in 2019, which may cause teachers to have a more positive attitude toward inclusive education. However, the position of Kyrgyz teachers is relatively moderate; they tend to believe that inclusion requires additional resources, and the teachers themselves are not ready for it. Following the logic of UNICEF, teachers from Kazakhstan, a pioneer of school inclusion in the region, should treat school inclusion more positively than respondents from other Central Asian countries. However, these teachers have different attitudes towards inclusion, both positive and negative, which reflects their daily life experience of school practice (Prisiazhniuk et al., 2024) and teachers assessments of the quality of working conditions and professional experience (job satisfaction, psychological well-being (lack of burnout)) and their readiness to implement professional activities in an inclusive classroom (Kozlova and Riabichenko, 2024).

The level of professional competence of teachers in the field of inclusive education also varies by country. Teachers in the post-Soviet countries of Central Asia must take advanced training courses at least once every five years. However, inclusive education curricula are not mandatory for all teachers in Central Asia. Some success in school inclusion has been achieved in Kazakhstan, where 7 out of 10 school teachers have undergone specialised inclusion trainings organised by the countrys leading universities, government organisations and NGOs. Trainings and programs are aimed at the introduction of inclusive teaching methods, the organisation of individual learning in a group, the assessment of the individual needs of different groups of children (UNESCO, 2021). Nevertheless, inclusion is perceived by teachers more as a challenge than as a norm of life (Allan and Omarova, 2021). In other Central Asian countries, advanced training courses for the development of inclusion are difficult for various reasons. There are no professional standards for teachers in Uzbekistan, and the topic of inclusion is not considered in the framework of teacher training (UN, 2019). Also, the curriculum of pedagogical universities in Uzbekistan does not include courses on the methodology of inclusive education, and students do not practice in educational institutions where children with SEND study (UNESCO, 2021). To date, there are no special state programs for the integration of children with SEND into primary, secondary and higher education in the country. The low level of qualifications, as well as the weak motivation of teachers, are identified as challenges in official government documents of Tajikistan (RT, Nacional'naya strategiya, 2012). Thus, the Central Asian states face the same challenges, attempts to solve which in Russia are presented in this chapter.

The transition from segregational practices to inclusive ones is of enormous importance as it implies considering the education of the child in totality and not focusing on isolated individual traits. This means a shift toward understanding diversity from

a social perspective with consideration for human rights as a respectful response toward teaching students with and without special needs (Tardi, 2012). While this chapter provided some hints about teacher education and inclusive education in the Russian Federation, it must be born in mind that the process of implementing inclusion is ongoing and some aspects may not be conclusive. However, the chapter contributes some valuable insights into the debate about the role of teachers and teacher education towards the implementation of inclusive education in Russia.

The Story (G)

Game Always Helps You to Build Bridges in Communication, Even if You Cannot Speak

A story of Julia Kazdym

Julia Kazdym—speech therapist at CCP,[4] *graduated from the Moscow Pedagogical State University in 2010 with a degree in sign language teaching, conducted her internship at the CCP, holds communication groups, play therapy classes, sensory integration with children with ASD, peculiarities of the development of the emotional and volitional sphere. Yulia talks about her professional development thanks to*

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[4] Center for Curative Pedagogy.

learning from and collaborating with the bright specialists of the CCP and obtaining the skills and knowledge necessary to work with children with SEND, and most importantly,adopting the philosophy of inclusion.

Julia Kazdym, a speech therapist, talks about her professional development and valuable experience of cooperation with qualified colleagues, which allowed her to overcome the shortcomings of knowledge and psychological unpreparedness, which she noted at herself as a graduate of a pedagogical university.

I have been working in the CCP for about twelve-thirteen years. After the graduation from the university, I did not understand what to do with children, because theory and practice are not compatible in a students head. In addition, at the institute where I studied to be a *defectologist*, I was taught about everything at once and very superficially. That is why I came as a volunteer to the CCP, because I knew that it was possible to become a real professional there. At first, I was just trying to play with the kids. But I didn't have enough understanding of what exactly and how to do it. I started reading books… but it was not enough… not every book can teach you something practical.

That's when I got to know Ima Zakharova and Elena Morzhina[5] better, I learned about game pedagogy. It became clearer for me thanks to their mentoring, then they began to structure my work, and it became even easier. Today, having a lot of experience, I already manage the new volunteers who come to my group in the CCP, and I use and develop tables from the book "Game Pedagogy" (Zakharova and Morzhina 2018).[6] They show the main milestones of the childs development as comprehensively and concisely as possible. This is a very good support in working with special children. Yet, I think it would be good to refine these tables further. To make them even more accessible for novice specialists.

In general, the game accompanies and contributes to life. If a person can play, then she or he lives well. Moreover, it's not just about children. The game is possible when a person feels good, safe, in comfort. This is a foundation for everything, for exploring the world, acquiring new skills. In the game, you can develop yourself a lot, having fun.

I teach classes in a communication group for schoolchildren with and without SEND. Mothers with children come to us, realising that socialisation and inclusion occur in communication. When I was in school myself, there was no inclusive education yet. However, sometimes there were special children in the classrooms. In addition, the most important thing was whether the child was communicating or not. If she or he can join the company of other children, then there will be such bridges. Therefore, my communication groups are aimed at this. I work with children based on game pedagogy. In a free game situation, children acquire such skills—to

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[5] Ima Zakharova and Elena Morzhina, the leading pedagogs in CCP, specializing in early childhood development, working with children with multiple disabilities, the authors of the Game Pedagogy system of methods, published as a book and taught as a series of courses.

[6] Zakharova and Morzhina (2018) Igrovaia pedagogika [Game Pedagody], Moscow: Terevinf. The book contains guidelines and systematized matrixes of various games that enhance the child's skills of interaction with social environment and other necessary aspects at every stage of the development.

communicate, to be friends with other kids. Any disabilitywhether intellectual or physical—matter less if there is a skill of communication through the game.

I used to lead another communication group in elementary school. Eight children, including several special ones, attended the group. These classes were important for all children. This is the key to psychological health as any other child needs the same as special children need. My dream is for every school to have a communication group. Then children would learn better, and there would be fewer behavioral challenges, and teachers would understand what is what. School psychologists could do this and it would even be beneficial in terms of workload.

There are several children from Ukraine in my group. In addition, if there is a special child, she or he feels double confusion. It is a trauma, because you left home. Besides, there are dark-skinned children from Africa. They are even more lost. The child experiences the same as the mother feels, because the parents do not know what will happen tomorrow and they are full of frustration and anxiety. This leaves a serious imprint in children. In such uncertainty, emotions are off the scale, they need to be poured out. And the game gives such an opportunity.

A game is always a game, even if you speak different languages or do not speak at all, this method builds bridges of communication for you. The game best expresses social relations, and children in the game recreate society. In this process, an adult helps, guides, so that the society turns out to be inclusive.

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Inclusion and Culture-Sensitive Education

The notion of inclusive education is interconnected with intercultural education as both seek to ensure the respect of diversity by the stakeholders in the educational process. It is assumed that education has to take into account the cultural differences of students and respond to their cultural capital. This part is aimed to demonstrate the prospects and limitations of introducing the principles of intercultural education into the daily life of Russian schools. Two aspects are considered: educational inclusion of children from families of foreign migrants and education for representatives of the indigenous peoples of Russia. The story of a teacher who worked in a temporary accommodation center for children from refugee families from Ukraine highlights the complex nature of the difficulties experienced by children and their relatives, the insufficiency of the implemented support measures and the absurdity of the slogan "education free from politics" declared in the Russian public space. The story of activist and writer Maryam Aliyeva emphasises the importance of bringing into public discussion issues of violation of students' culture rights and restrictions on their access to education.

Chapter 10
Educational Inclusion of Children in Migration

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Abstract The chapter analyses the attitudes of Russian teachers in relation to the educational inclusion of students from families with migration experience. The presentation of the results of the empirical study is preceded by a brief discussion on migration processes in the Russian Federation. In order to assess the prospects of maintaining or transforming attitudes and practices among teachers, we present the results of a series of semi-structured interviews with teachers with a broad framework determined by the normative context of intercultural education in Russian schools. To this end, we present an analysis of state documents regulating the ethnocultural policy of the Russian Federation, as well as an analysis of the content of school textbooks, which determine exactly how, in the opinion of state authorities, empirically recorded ethno-cultural diversity should be considered and interpreted by schoolchildren. Based on the analysis of the data obtained, possible prospects to develop the policies and practices for managing cultural diversity in the classroom are considered

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and recommendations aimed at developing an educational environment that supports diversity are presented.

Introduction

In the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Legal Migration adopted in 2018 and supported by nineteen EU member states and Russia (UN, 2018), priority tasks were identified in the transnational need to create conditions for migrants that ensure full social integration rather than only solve national security issues. The education of migrant youth is highlighted as one of the main issues because it is a key context for social and cultural integration (IOM, 2019), laying the foundations to promote equal opportunities for future citizens, preventing social marginalisation, and forming the understanding of collective identity and purpose.

To address the challenge of inequality between national and immigrant students in education, an approach is needed that ensures the implementation of the principles proposed by the OECD at different levels, from state policies to educational organisations. These policies include maintaining high expectations for all students, ensuring feelings of belongingness, increasing proficiency in the first and second language, acknowledging the importance of both heritage languages and the language of instruction, preparing teachers to handle linguistic and cultural diversity, and avoiding ability grouping (OECD, 2015).

Success in creating the conditions of such implementation is largely determined by the resource and personnel provision of schools (Dyson et al., 2004; Lindsay, 2007). That is why the peculiarities of the perception of the tasks of educational inclusion of migrant students and the everyday techniques of their implementation used by teachers, who work directly in classes where both children of representatives of the host population and children from families with migration experience study, are of academic interest and practical relevance.

Before presenting the design and the results of the study, we clarify the socio-demographic context of the research and describe the migration situation and diversity management in the educational institutions of Russia.

Migrants in Russia

Russia is characterised by a large influx of migrants and is in the worlds top 10 destination countries for international migrants (IOM, 2019). Migration flows to Western and to Eastern Europe, including Russia, differ in goals, directions of movement and composition of migrants. However, it is possible to identify a number of signs by which migration processes in European countries are comparable with each other. The key one is the transnational nature of migration flows. Most onward migrants in European countries are unsure about their plans. Their onward mobility appears

to be the product of a constant re-evaluation of opportunities rather than a carefully planned trajectory. Employment insecurity and lack of stable legal status appear to be important incentives for moving on within Europe, in addition to having social ties (family members, allies) in other European countries (Toma & Castagnone, 2015). The second feature that brings European countries closer together and is fundamentally important for our study is the high proportion of women (50–55%) and children in the composition of arrivals in different European countries (IOM, 2019).

Mass migration to Russia began after the collapse of the USSR. The first flows of migrants had a repatriation nature. Since the 2000s, this has changed: nowadays, many migrants from Central Asia and Transcaucasia in search of labour are choosing Russia as their first destination (Turaeva, 2019). In 2019, the number of migrants in Russia was 11.6 million, with 95% of them coming from the Commonwealth Independent States, of which about 5 million came from Central Asia (IOM, 2019). Central Asian migrants in Russia are often engaged in low-skilled labour, with low-paid positions. This causes the group to be perceived as culturally and socially distant from the host population (Zayonchkovskaya et al., 2014). The share of women in migration flows is growing, as is the number of children living in the host country; moreover, seasonal migration is also being gradually replaced by long-term migration, bringing to the fore the issues of adaptation and integration of these families (Mukomel, 2016). Official statistics on the number of migrant children studying in Russia are not publicly available (GRF, 2022). According to unofficial data, foreigners constitute 140,000 students in Russian schools and are concentrated mainly in Central Russia, where they constitute 3 to 16% of students. Most can be found in the Moscow region − 16.2% (Kostarnova & Starikova, 2021, p. 1).

In modern literature, a number of terms are used to characterise culture-sensitive education: cross-cultural education, multicultural education, and intercultural education. Without dwelling in detail on their comparative characteristics, to which a large number of works are devoted (see the review: Raţă, 2013), we consider the concept of intercultural education as the most relevant to the modern migration situation, which has a transnational character. Transnationalism shifts the focus of educational policy from "adjustment" (which is typical for cross-cultural education) and "tolerance" (for multicultural education) to cooperation and "a developing and sustainable way of living together". Contributing to the growth of ethno-cultural diversity and a departure from assimilation models, transnationalism challenges the political forces of the host countries since it redefines the concept of integration of migrants and sets new value orientations and goals. In attempting to create a shared cultural space as a condition, including individual freedom, the host society is expected to provide minorities with an opportunity to enter into a dialogue with other groups in order to reconcile different practices and express different needs. In this situation, school education and especially language teaching, along with solving educational tasks, is focused on the inclusion of children in migration in a new social and cultural space for them, which, in turn, helps to prevent marginalisation and create conditions for participation in the life of the country.

Intercultural education is defined in terms of "reciprocity" as developing an understanding of and valuing others and understanding of and valuing self: "Intercultural education aims to go beyond passive coexistence, to achieve a developing and sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies through the creation of an understanding of, respect for and dialogue between the different cultural groups" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 18). The main advantage of this approach lies in the idea that culture and identity are viewed "dynamically and as in constant evolution" (Portera, 2020, p. 8). That's why it becomes more and more relevant to education conditions in the modern era of globalisation and total increase in population mobility opportunities.

The Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" (GRF, 2012) declared that "the single purposeful process of education and training is a socially significant benefit, and it is performed for the benefit of the persons, families, societies and the states" (Article 2). While the management of cultural diversity is one of the priorities of education (CIS Legislation database), the law defines the boundaries of support for cultures across the spectrum of indigenous ethnic minorities ("protection and development of ethnocultural features and traditions of the people of the Russian Federation" (Article 3). Thus, the interculturalism of Russian education at the legislative level remains within the borders of the national state, without regulating the implementation of the educational interests of foreign cultural minorities (Poletaev et al., 2018). Only in 2021 the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation (MERF, 2021) published Methodological recommendations to the executive authorities of the subjects of the Russian Federation on the organisation of the work of educational organisations on the linguistic and socio-cultural adaptation of children of foreign citizens (MERF, 2021). Thus, although education in Russia is inclusive, migrant children do not have a status that allows them to take into account their special educational needs, and providing conditions for improving their educational experience is not included among the main priorities of state educational policy.

Specific initiatives aimed at educational inclusion (additional training in the Russian language, cooperation with social and psychological assistance centres, and other educational and sports organisations) still fall primarily on the local schools and depend on the sensitivity of the administration. There are NGOs or private educational organisations that offer such services; however, their action cannot fully meet the needs for adaptation and inclusion of all children, either because of the paid nature of the services provided (as a rule, migration experience coincides with the low socio-economic status of the family) or because of their spatial inaccessibility (Demintseva et al., 2017; Mikheev & Kozlova, 2020). As a result, according to the MIPEX (The Migrant Integration Policy Index), the situation of migrants' access to education in Russia is "Unfavourable": Russia scored 12 points out of 100 possible in the last wave of the study (MIPEX, 2020).

In the lack of institutionalised structures and methodological frames, teachers take the initiative to adapt their teaching and instructional methods when working with immigrant children. Attitudes of the teaching staff to inclusive education can promote or hinder the implementation of appropriate policies, determining the success of cooperation of all participants in the educational process during the implementation

of innovative curricula (Avramidis et al., 2000; Slot et al., 2018). However, professionals have different expectations, prejudices and values which are reflected both in the success of migrant children, the path of their integration, and in the quality of the inclusive culture of the organisation as a whole (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Taking into account the unprecedented role of the teacher in advocating for the values of inclusion and in creating an educational environment in the classroom that can ensure equal access to the educational experience for students with different educational needs, we turn to the analysis of the attitudes of secondary school teachers towards the educational inclusion of children with migration experience.

Teachers Attitude to Ethnocultural Diversity in the Classroom: Assessments and Interpretations

Based on sixteen semi-structured interviews with secondary school teachers, teachers attitudes regarding ethno-cultural diversity and the strategies they choose to deal with complicated pedagogical situations, including interaction with non-Russian-speaking children from families with migration experience, are analysed. Interviews were conducted with teachers who work in schools in Moscow and Voronezh. Both cities are located in the Central Federal District and are attractive for migrants. Teachers at these schools have long-term experience working with migrant children. Seven interviews were conducted with elementary school teachers (1–4 grades) and nine with subject teachers in secondary school (5–11 grades). The respondents included thirteen women and three men. Five participants were under 30 years of age, and the rest were 30–45 years old. The qualitative research method was chosen because it allowed us to focus on the analysis of the respondents' personal experiences, which corresponded to the model of inclusive education focused on the experiences of all participants and maintaining a dialogue.

Data were analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The IPA is concerned with the detailed examination of personal lived experience, the meaning of experience to participants, and how participants make sense of that experience (Smith, 2011). When coding the data of phenomenological research, specific statements were analysed and classified into clusters of values relevant to the research topic.

This study is based on the approach to diversity research in a school context called The Diversity in Organisations: Perceptions and Approaches model (denoted DOPA; Horenczyk & Tatar, 2011; Tatar et al., 2011), which includes four analytical categories, i.e., options for attitudes towards cultural differences in the educational space:

(1) **Asset**. It perceives diversity as an asset to be fostered, encouraged, and promoted.
(2) **Problem**. It perceives diversity as a factor that hinders, restricts, and prevents the organisation from attaining its goals

(3) **Challenge**. It considers diversity as potentially beneficial for the group's goals, though not without risks and demands the investment of efforts and resources to transform those risks into benefits (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2011).

(4) **Non-issue**. It ignores diversity or avoids dealing with it.

At the next stage, we will describe teachers generalised strategies for regulating ethno-cultural diversity in the classroom and try to assess, based on the analysis of normative discourse on diversity, the prospects for disseminating these strategies. We consider the primary orientation of teachers towards the assimilation or integration of students with migration experience as the basis for identifying generalised strategies.

Cultural Diversity as a Challenge

Russian teachers assess the academic success of migrant children, in general, as lower than that of children from the host society. They explain the lack of academic success by several objective factors, for example, the difference between school programs in general and the programs of single disciplines in the country of origin and the Russian Federation, and the insufficient level of proficiency in Russian:

> the children not only need to learn new material that is taught in a non-native language, but they need to connect all this in their heads—this constant translation in their heads from one language to another—and put this new knowledge to use somehow (f., English teacher).

However, to understand the attitudes of teachers, it is important to pay attention to their explanations of the performance of migrant children by factors based on subjective assessments of the cultural and psychological characteristics of students and their families. In particular, teachers interpret the low academic performance of migrant children as a consequence of cultural characteristics:

> Unfortunately, these children learn worse. And it depends, by the way, on the nationality, because the Armenians are smart, and this nation is more civilised. But Tajiks, Uzbeks, etc.,—they are completely different, not that worse, but… The same Armenians, Georgians, they somehow better fit into the environment, and you look at these (Tajiks, Uzbeks) and visually understand that in terms of status, in terms of level, they are much lower (f., Chinese language teacher).

In addition, teachers tend to explain the low educational motivation of students from families with migration experience by cultural factors:

> Very often, people who do not realise their actions come. < … > They do not worry at all about the fact that they may not pass the exam. They show laziness irresponsibility and do not read literary works, because they believe that the culture of the country they live in now is of little interest to them. They are proud that they are Azerbaijanis, and they have a sense of self-esteem, which, in my opinion, is a sign of lack of culture and unwillingness to master the Russian language < … > This is risky for a Russian person (f., Russian language and literature teacher).

In the above quote, the orientation of migrants towards their native culture and low motivation to learn the Russian language is interpreted as something deviating from the norm ("*people who do not realise their actions come*"), and is identified with a lack of education, "*lack of culture*". Thus, the culture of the host society is considered the only culture worthy of mastering. The different cultural backgrounds and the orientation towards self-segregation assumed by the teacher are interpreted as essential barriers that reduce the chances of migrants to achieve success in the host society and also make them dangerous for this host society ("*risky for a Russian person*").

The tendency to culturalised social relations is generally characteristic of social ideas implicitly based on the essentialisation of ethnicity and justifies inequality between "native" and "newcomers":

> I am really for the fact that people of their own nationality live in the country. I am annoyed by the dominance of these non-native people, not because they are bad, but just because I do not like them. With their accumulation, of course, they cause a sense of fear and danger. They will still never be treated as equals, this will not work. Such a large number of these migrants strongly affects the fact that they take jobs from Russian people, they flood, they flood everything (f., primary school teacher).

The emotional background of the teachers discourse, as we can see from the above quotes, is determined by a sense of anxiety, the sources of which are related to a perceived threat (Stefan & Stefan, 1985) and competition between groups, as well as personal inability to cope with the situation and low self-efficacy. The feeling of being unable to do anything and to positively affect an unpleasant situation is most likely the key factor in experiencing frustration, perceived by teachers as increased stress. So, the teacher describes the situation of the impossibility of convincing his/her student to stop resolving conflict situations through the use of force (fight).

> And when there are fights, and nothing is possible … it seems to me that this is all, the end of life. You tell him that he should not act by force, he should also act verbally. This is not proof for him (f., primary school teacher).

The main difficulty provoking a negative reaction from the teacher is associated with the immutability of the pedagogical situation, the idea of the impossibility of changing it in any way and, as a consequence, the absence of a sense of subjectivity, which manifests itself, among other things, in the inability to creatively relate to reality and transform it, including the professional field (Derkach, 2016). If, during the immersion in a difficult pedagogical situation associated with cultural diversity, a teacher does not feel himself/herself a subject of his/her own activity, he/she assesses what is happening as a challenge. Depersonalisation is a kind of reaction to emotional exhaustion; in the studied context, it manifests itself from the removal of migrant children from the challenges and all the way to the development of hostile attitudes towards them:

> He does not know a thing in Russian, why did he fall on my head at all, what am I going to do with him (f., teacher of Russian language and literature).

Thus, the attitude of educators to cultural diversity in the educational environment as a challenge increases the risks of emotional burnout, which is consistent with empirical data (Gutentag et al., 2018).

Cultural Diversity as a Challenge

It is also common for teachers to perceive cultural diversity as a challenge that requires effort and resources to turn it in a positive direction. According to the teachers, three factors contribute to the transition from the perception of cultural diversity as a challenge to attempts to cope with diversity relying on pedagogical methods.

(a)   Inclusive school environment

According to the statements made by Russian teachers, the school administration is primarily responsible for the adoption of inclusive values and the implementation of the inclusive development strategy. At the same time, teachers complain about the lack of support from the management apparatus:

> The administration closes its eyes and pretends that this is not their problem (f., Russian language and literature teacher).

The administrations support of teachers efforts aimed at helping to integrate migrant children is thus a "random" factor as it is hardly predictable and uncontrolled. It does not fit into any organisational and legal framework, except for the most general cases stipulated by the current legislation of the Russian Federation, in particular, the Federal Law on Education and the Federal Law "On Social and Cultural Adaptation and Integration of Foreign Citizens in the Russian Federation". At the same time, the abstractness of the provisions of Russian legislation sometimes does not allow teachers to appeal to it in specific professional situations.

(b)   Freedom of teachers in planning activities

This factor, according to the respondents, is extremely important for the adaptation of curricula and both structural and substantive aspects of the lesson to the tasks of integrating foreign-speaking children, strengthening the cognitive motivation of children, and increasing the educational results by referring to the reality and experience of the students:

> we got acquainted with their national writers, they read in their own language, we read in Russian, wrote what we thought, tried to compose something ourselves, read fairy tales. They sang lullabies that their parents used to sing to them… (f., teacher of Russian language and literature).

In addition to solving didactic and educational tasks, greater independence and freedom of the teacher, and egalitarianism and subjectivity of all participants in the educational process create the prerequisites for the transformation of the school community, including both the teaching staff and the children. In such conditions,

both children and teachers focus on the content of education and not on achieving formal performance indicators.

(c) The structure of the teaching staff

Teachers emphasise that a specialist in intercultural communication, motivated to facilitate the process of mutual adaptation of migrants and the host population, has to be included in the staff. In reality, in some cases, this role is assumed by a member of the teaching staff who has migration experience or considers himself/herself to be a representative of any ethno-cultural minority. Thus, we are once again faced with the action of an accidental and uncontrolled factor. Not all teaching teams are lucky enough to have a person on their staff who is focused on helping representatives of ethnic and cultural minorities and speaks different students mother-languages. The ethno–cultural heterogeneity of the teaching staff allows for partially overcoming the language barrier through mutual assistance and support by teachers of each other and students. In addition, it partially solves a deeper task, i.e., building an inclusive and culture-sensitive educational environment:

> The school where I work now is famous for the fact that we have a multicultural teaching staff. Relations between colleagues are positive, and this also affects our students, as we try to listen to them, get into the situation and establish contacts so that they feel comfortable and interested in learning (m., history and social studies teacher).

Cultural Diversity as an Asset

In difficult pedagogical situations, culture can act as a valuable resource that needs encouragement and assistance. First of all, culture is understood as a resource for teachers. The resourcefulness of cultural diversity in a challenging pedagogical situation is primarily manifested in the idea of the benefits that can be derived from the unique properties of a cultural group. Thus, cultural characteristics can "remove" some pedagogical difficulties, preventing their occurrence. Often, these are hospitality and respect for elders.

> I like Armenians in this respect. I believe that these are people with a high culture, with an ancient culture, and they have something that is not in us. There is this ability to understand that in front of you is an adult, an older person. They teach their children to be very respectful of elders and teachers. They are very servile; they are very welcoming (f., primary school teacher).

The specificity of the parental position can also be a unique cultural resource. For example, the respondent spoke about the peculiarities of interaction with the parents of Kazakh children.

> If you call parents, then the issue is resolved quickly. There are no conflicts at all! Just tell the parents that their child has such a disability, and that they should interfere. The next day the child is silk! And we do not return to this problem anymore (f., primary school teacher).

Secondly, culture is understood as a resource for the educational process. Teachers recognise that there are benefits associated with a culturally diverse learning environment.

> I conducted Basics of religious cultures and secular ethics, a module of secular ethics and a module of the foundations of world religious cultures, where 4 religions are studied. There was a Muslim boy, and when it came to Islam, if we got acquainted with video or audio fragments within the program, he could read in Arabic. Nobody understood, but it nevertheless brought some animation to the lesson, and the children with interest asked him to explain what he had read, what the prayer was about, what it meant (f., teacher of the Basics of religious cultures and secular ethics).

In general, we see a fairly pragmatic view of teachers on the resource potential of cultural diversity. Unlike Israeli teachers (Gutentag et al., 2018), the focus of Russian teachers is not on the general benefits associated with the situation when the educational environment becomes culturally diverse, but on the specific benefits of a particular cultural group.

According to the European Social Research 2012 (Magun et al., 2017), Russia tends to maximise (in comparison with other European countries) self-exaltation values, which are opposite to universalist values, including tolerance. Administrative pressure and the imposed need to declare the value of cultural differences in no way guarantees their real acceptance by the teacher at the leadership level for action. This situation is complemented by the fact that "despite the recorded decrease in migrant-phobias, the "margin of safety" of isolationist attitudes is considerable" (Mukomel, 2016, p. 463).

Therefore, the cultural diversity of the educational environment associated with migrant children belonging to foreign cultures is not perceived as an unambiguously positive fact. The key here may be the experience of coping with the problematic pedagogical situation associated with working with such children and their parents. Suppose a teacher perceives a difficulty as a challenge and tries to find an answer. In that case, it is likely that in the process of finding a solution, an educator will conclude that it is possible to use certain resources of a particular cultural group.

Cultural Diversity as a Non-issue

We did not find a tendency to ignore cultural differences in challenging pedagogical situations and evaluate this issue as not requiring attention. Indifference to cultural characteristics manifests among teachers not as a whole, but selectively, in relation to those children who are not clearly identified as representatives of a "different" culture.

> There are some children whose different ethnicities are not noticed at all (f., primary school teacher).

One of the discourses of ignoring cultural differences can be associated with the idea of assimilation, or "dissolution" of children who have moved into the culture of

the majority. Again, in this case, only those cultural differences that can be clearly observed are recognised as "real". Thus, a seemingly indifferent attitude to cultural differences is mostly an external and declared position. However, nearly any critical situation reveals the teachers attitude towards migrant children treating them as a problem. If children of foreign cultures do not pose any challenges, then the chances are high that cultural differences associated with them will go unnoticed. Thus, ignoring cultural differences in the educational environment exists as a precursor to their future challenge.

> There are children who are elusive…, in general, we do not see them. But if they do something bad, then we recall about them (f., primary school teacher).

The cultural differences are the focus of the teachers attention in situations of their problematisation and when they create challenging pedagogical situations in combination with bright external markers that allow the teacher to attribute what is happening to cultural characteristics. The further development of events is related to the extent to which a teacher maintains a subjective position in this situation. If they perceive it as "imposed", feel the impossibility to change anything or achieve an effective solution to the problem, all these lead to the consolidation of the assessment of what happened as a Problem. an assumption on this approach effectively blocks any possible action to resolve a pedagogical situation because it severs the teacher's contact with a child while centring on their personal agenda. In the case of going beyond the framework of a problematic discourse, understanding the situation of difficult pedagogical interaction with a foreign cultural child/parent as a challenge, the teacher proceeds to active steps to find a solution. The implementation of chosen tools requires additional resources which, in their absence, can reverse the situation back to the Problem. At the same time, the awareness of the lack of resources at the moment can be perceived as a new challenge requiring solutions. Finding an effective response to the challenge in a number of cases leads the teacher to realise the value of the unique cultural resources of individual cultural groups. At the same time, the universal value of cultural diversity is a declared trend rather than an internal attitude.

Having considered the peculiarities of teachers perception of cultural diversity in the educational environment through the prism of the model "Diversity in organisations: perception and approaches" by Horenchik and Tatar (2002), we identify broader categories, or strategies that teachers choose to manage cultural diversity in classrooms.

The Correctional (Enculturation) Trajectory of Educational Integration

This trajectory is realised by teachers for whom cultural diversity is a problem, or those who tend to ignore the unique cultural experience of their students. The specificity of the correctional trajectory is based on the assimilation or enculturation of minorities in the host society (Wieviorka, 1998). The essence of such rhetoric is

the need to achieve maximum replacement of the patterns and values of the culture of minorities with the patterns and values of the culture of the host society. At the level of pedagogical and educational practice, this looks like a motive for "re-education".

> Since they live in our country, we will re-educate them, they must get used to how we own it (f., primary school teacher).

In a more loyal form, such assessments are expressed in a strict conviction of the existence of "uniform rules" under which representatives of cultural minorities must be assimilated.

> We respect your traditions, but we have the same rules for everyone here. You integrate, you adapt—be kind (f., teacher of Russian language).

In the correctional trajectory, a special place is given to the language literacy of children from families with migration experience. Undoubtedly, knowledge of the Russian language is a basic condition for inclusion in Russian society, and teachers understand this.

> They came to study Russian, why—in order to live and work here (f., teacher of Russian language).

However, within the framework of the correctional trajectory, the native language and culture of migrants are often perceived as an obstacle that must, if not be eradicated, then precisely overcome by means of rigid pedagogical techniques and "levers". The correctional trajectory is characterised by the severity of the goal towards which the integration educational process is directed. Within the framework of this approach, inclusive elements of mutual cultural enrichment are not assumed, but only unidirectional subject-object communication, the final goal of which is the childs maximum linguistic and cultural assimilation. When combined with intersubjective essentialism, such a trajectory can produce a large number of traumatic cases for children, complicating the process of initial adaptation.

The Creative Trajectory of Educational Integration

This trajectory mainly corresponds to the cultural diversity perception as an asset and is represented in narratives of those teachers who either have personal experience of migration, or have already worked with children from such families. The creative trajectory tries to break with the essentialisation of cultural identity and has more inclusive potential than "correctionism". This trajectory mainly corresponds to the assessments and narratives of those teachers who either have personal experience of migration or have already worked with children from such families. Within the framework of this trajectory, more attention is paid to the equal comparison of cultures and the support of a heuristic dialogue between the teacher and children from families with migration experience, and between children in migration and students from the host society.

The creative trajectory is different in that educators, in its context, try to define egalitarianism and participation as the dominant discourse.

> Even in the process of teaching, be it Russian language classes or modelling, the values of democracy, the values of tolerance towards each other are constantly promoted (f., tutor).

The educator, within the integration trajectory of creativity, is an active cultural mediator maintaining the visibility of migrant children in the eyes of both the host society and school peers (Slot et al., 2018).

> I conducted "Friendship lessons" with them, we watched something, I placed them in pairs, one migrant—one host (f., tutor).

At the method level, creativity is characterised by a communication orientation. Teachers stimulate communication between children, focusing on individual and family experience, encouraging cultural exchange, and allowing the primary cultural identity of migrant children to organically exist along with the acquired experience of life in another country:

> most of them (children in migration) try to integrate. And parents understand and know what is necessary. And they try to work with them. The children (native and having migration experience) are socialising, creating a new culture and social relations (m., teacher of history and social sciences).

This position does not represent assimilation as an "ideal goal", but rather the integration of children from families with migration experience.

To assess the prospects for the dissemination of a particular strategy, it is important to determine in what normative framework the regulation of cultural diversity in the Russian school is inscribed (the research methodology and the results obtained are described in detail in the previous publications of the authors: Kozlova, 2022; Kozlova and Rjabichenko, 2021).

Normative Framework of Educational Inclusion of Children from Families with Migration Experience

Based on the documents regulating the ethnocultural policy of the Russian Federation, we present the key stages of its transformation and the dominant trends. From the late 1990s until 2012, the fundamental document in this area was the Concept of the State Ethnocultural Policy (*Koncepciya Gosudarstvennoj nacional'noj politiki*) of the Russian Federation (Putin, 1996), largely contradictory, affirming both the right of ethnicities to acquire sovereignty and their need to integrate into the Russian society. In a subsequent document entitled The Strategy of the State Ethnocultural Policy adopted in 2012 (GRF, 2012), one of the outlined vectors in the Concept was significantly re-worded, i.e., the "strengthening of the all–Russian civic consciousness and spiritual community of the multinational people of the Russian Federation (Russian nation)" is recognised as the key goal of the State ethnocultural policy of

the Russian Federation (Putin, 2012–2018). At the same time, a number of concepts of fundamental importance remain unclear, in particular: "national", "interethnic", "interethnic relations", "national and interethnic peace and harmony", "civil and interethnic peace and harmony", "ethnic and cultural diversity of the peoples of Russia", and "national and cultural development". The Strategy does not deal with challenge of ethno-cultural development, but, in accordance with the key value-target orientation of the concept—state security—only with the creation of state and municipal systems for monitoring the state of interethnic relations and early warning of conflict situations.

The new edition of the Strategy (Putin, 2012–2018) focuses on challenges and threats in the sphere of state ethnic policy of the Russian Federation, including international terrorism and extremism, illegal migration, and the formation of closed ethnic enclaves. Thus, the transformations of normative documents regulating the state ethnic policy spanning two decades indicate that the current policy of the Russian Federation focuses primarily on ensuring the security and territorial integrity of the country, reducing the risks of aggravation of interethnic contradictions and related manifestations of nationalism, extremism, and terrorism. At the same time, conceptually, all these documents have significant gaps, without providing definitions of key concepts.

School textbooks, however, compensate for this conceptual deficit by cultivating certain forms of comprehension and public discourse about ethnicity. The textbook defines "ethnicity" as follows: "The ethnos to which you belong is also a part of society. There are up to five thousand different ethnic groups on Earth. Among them are Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, British, French, Germans and many others. There are 160 ethnic groups in Russia alone. Each group has its own language, national costumes, fairy tales, songs, and dances; the representatives of many groups differ in skin colour and facial features" (Pleshakov, 2005: 17).

Such definitions, corresponding to the primordial understanding of ethnicity, indicate the certainty of an individual's ethnicity and the need for ethnic identification in accordance with the criteria of language, folklore, racial, and anthropological characteristics.

At the same time, as an imperative in determining the nature of social interaction in social studies textbooks, the "golden rule of morality" is indicated, i.e., "Do to another as you would like to be done to you". Such propaganda of a norm born in the Ancient World, monocultural in its essence and excluding diversity, reinforces the tendency to essentialise culture, dividing the world into "Us" and "Them" in the childs perception. The effects of such representation can be traced at all levels of diversity management, both on the level of the classroom and of society as a whole.

If culture appears to be an objective phenomenon that directly determines the perception and behaviour of an individual, and ethnic groups are seen as separate entities with not only their own languages but also a "mental warehouse", then understanding the behaviour of another person is reduced to acquiring knowledge about the traditional culture of their people. It also questions how much the individual is integrated into this traditional culture and what exactly motivates his/her behaviour, as "cultural values", situational influences, personal dispositions, etc., are not raised

at all, neither in front of schoolchildren nor the authors of textbooks in front of themselves. The concept of "culture", homogenised ("monochrome") and having lost semantic depth, thus becomes a marker of the opposition of "us" and "them" (Breidenbach & Nyíri, 2009), and therefore a convenient tool of manipulation, giving meanings to this opposition and providing simple explanations of individual and collective behaviour (Piller, 2011).

However, this objectification of cultural characteristics inevitably "leads further" to the formation of groups in a certain hierarchy based on gender, age, nationality, religion, etc. At the same time, "non-dominant" groups find themselves in a constantly reproducible and maintained state of fear of assimilation by dominant groups acting as "subjects and creators" of history. This fear/threat generates the need to defend oneself through defending one's own uniqueness, which also encourages minorities to adopt the essentialist view of ethnicity that is imposed by elites (Schnirelman, 2013). As a result, both the representatives of the dominant groups and of the "minorities" are convinced of the objectivity and of the irremediability of the differences between them, and of the justice of the established hierarchical social order. Thus, the objectification of cultural characteristics creates the ground for the assertion of discriminatory discourse in Russian textbooks, and through it, discriminatory practices.

Monolingual behaviour of others, both teachers and classmates, obviously minimises the likelihood of consolidation and dissemination of intercultural ideology, and devalues the biographical experience and human capital of children with migration experience and a cultural (linguistic) background different from the majority (Sadownik, 2018), creating symbolic opposition to the integration of people with migration experience from schools, which foreign-speaking students have to systematically overcome (Li, 2018).

In the Russian political space, this kind of discrimination is supported and developed. So, in 2022, the deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation Vitaly Milonov made a proposal to ban the children of foreign citizens from studying in Russian schools, since their presence reduces the effectiveness of education and the level of security (Politics today, 2022). This proposal has not received support yet. However, it did not cause a wave of criticism and did not discredit the author, whose political influence has not changed. Thus, the normative model offered to the participants of the educational process supports the established practices aimed at assimilation or segregation of children with migration experience, rather than integration of them.

Conclusion

The tendency to ethnicise and culturalise (Malakhov, 2014) social factors is characteristic of social ideas implicitly based on the essentialisation of ethnicity. Culturalism, attributes to children with migration experiences a persistent "inability", taking them beyond the "normality", justifying their exclusion and segregation in education and in society. Practices within the framework of an unspoken, but actually working,

policy of "pathologization" of children with migration experience, as well as representatives of other vulnerable groups, are obviously discriminatory. The context of globalisation, on the one hand offering a wide range of opportunities to groups whose access to education was previously difficult (Powel et al., 2009), under the slogan "Education for everyone" (UNESCO, 2006), on the other—generating new forms and grounds of social and economic inequality (Drilik, 1999), special and inclusive education are being integrated into the global inclusive agenda. However, despite the declaration of inclusivity and equality, the policy and practice of special education seem to be used to maintain hierarchical social orders by "creating the inability" of children who "cause problems" to existing educational systems. Both in everyday and expert knowledge, "culture acts as a marker of the opposition between "us" and "them", thus becoming an instrument of legitimising inequality and the realisation of power, as we see in the discourses of school teachers. This tendency to essentialist interpretations of culture and cultural diversity represents the legacy of academic and political traditions of the colonial era and can be traced in the discourses of schoolteachers in many European countries, as demonstrated by the results of empirical studies, including those conducted with the participation of the authors of this chapter (Kozlova, Bombieri, Ryabichenko).

Rejection of essentialism which overlooks contextualised and intersubjective interaction between complex personalities and leads to "multiple monoculturalism" (Sen, 2001) rather than dialogue, can thus be considered as a basic principle of diversity-based education. The concept of culture can regain its heuristic only if it is considered not as a thing, but as a process—from a dynamic point of view that takes into account both differences and similarities between individuals and groups, as well as including aspects that are "traditionally" separated from the concept of culture, for example, knowledge of political and economic systems, etc. The mindset to understand students also involves attention to multiple intersections of identity markers such as social class, age, gender, emotional state, etc. This can become the basis for the formation of teachers desire to build systematic active, equal and therefore mutually enriching relationships with students families and local communities. In this way, the school can become a subject of larger-scale changes, transforming attitudes towards minorities and practices of everyday interaction between the host population and people with migration experience through grassroots activity of local communities.

In the Russian educational space, discriminatory attitudes and practices are fixed as normative, which we find when analysing the content of school textbooks, as well as national strategies in the field of education, culture and management of ethnic diversity. The analysis of discourses on ethnocultural diversity in Russian textbooks intended for representatives of the majority and children from families with migration experience demonstrates the representation of culture as an objectified attribute, necessary and sufficient to define everyday practices, lifestyles and individual potential, fuels the pattern of welfare chauvinism for the majority and assimilation and segregation strategies for minority representatives. The likely changes in the nature of the representation of ethnicity and culture that have emerged in recent years are presented fragmentally and inconsistently in the textbook. Contemporary Russian

education faces a challenge caused by the contradiction between the actual growth of heterogeneity of the social environment and the individual's unpreparedness for the perception of such an environment and meaningful functioning in it. This contradiction is maintained at all levels of social regulation by prioritiing safety over well-being.

It is possible to define the current stage of development of the Russian school as an intermediate between monocultural and intercultural educational models. The ideology corresponding to this stage is internally contradictory. On the one hand, it admits diversity as a demographic fact and a set of practices. On the other hand, guided by the value of security, it does not recognise the possibility of mutual consideration of the interests of interacting actors. Moving away from the limitations of monoculturalism, the current model does not imply an equal dialogue of cultures. The danger of this contradiction lies in its inherent potential for a return to monoculturalism in any situation of instability. The obtained results demonstrate the need to rethink the content of school textbooks and include materials that contribute to avoiding assimilation, and set a task for the academic community to develop a clear and flexible system of theoretical and methodological guidelines.

One of the main principles is to increase diversity in the intra-school environment. At the same time, the teaching staff can become a kind of platform for building and "working out" the techniques of existence and activity in a diverse social and educational environment. The equality of participants, i.e. the most elusive condition for constructive contact owing to the existing external social constructs is achieved precisely by including people with migration experience in the teaching staff and allowing migrants to be perceived not as people engaged in low-skilled physical labour only. Unfortunately, this perception is currently reinforced by the content of some textbooks. Differences identified by participants in the educational process can be put into public discussion and reinterpreted in a way that will allow them to be presented as a value, subject and basis of social integration, and not as a barrier to mutual understanding. The inclusion of culture-sensitive material in the content of educational programs and books will work to the same effect. The presentation of materials reflecting the cultural experience of students empowers both the material itself and students who recognise this material as "their own", which, in turn, will act as an additional factor in strengthening the educational motivation and self-efficacy of students with migration experience, as well as open up additional ways and opportunities for dialogue.

The Story (H)

They Do Not Have Time to Wait Until We Solve Our Contradictions. Notes About Refugee Children Education in Russia After February 2022

The author is anonymised at his/her request

The author is a school teacher, and a social sciences researcher. Since the beginning of 2022, she has also been volunteering in NGOs working with migrants and refugee children in Russia. In the essay, she talks about her experience of work in an integration educational camp for refugee children who fled from the armed Russian-Ukrainian conflict to the territory of Russia. Based on her personal impressions, observations, and knowledge about the Russian educational system in general, she reasons about what young people go through when they have to grow up in wartime, how the school reacts on the crisis, and can education stay "out of politics" in the world politically divided to its very core.

The story of a teacher who worked in a temporary accommodation center for refugees from Ukraine.

School teacher describes and analyses his/her experience *of volunteering in an integration educational camp for refugee children who fled from the armed Russian-Ukrainian conflict to the territory of Russia. He/she emphasises the importance of supportive participation of the host community and analyses a number of structural and psychological barriers faced by refugee families.*

Introduction

Most of my professional experience is related to education. For nearly 5 years I worked as a school teacher, first in rural public schools, and after that in private gymnasiums. Thus, I gathered a rather diverse experience in a variety of educational environments. February 2022 left me, like many of my compatriots, stunned and disoriented. Once, in the spring, in one of my pedagogic chats appeared an invitation to volunteer in an "integration educational camp" for refugee children.

These children with their family members fled from the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict in the territories currently known as DPR and LPR (Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics). At the time, they lived in a temporary accommodation center (TAC) around 200 km from Moscow. The volunteers were invited to amuse and cheer up the refugee children, to help them become friends with local peers, and to ease the burden on parents a little bit. The camp was scheduled for the beginning of the summer holidays, in June.

My first reaction was contradictory. On the one hand, like many of my friends and acquaintances, I wanted to somehow help people affected by the war. On the other, there appeared to be some ethical inconsistency in it. Why have these people fled to the territory of the state that turned their cities into battlefields? Did they do it by free choice, or were they forced or deceived? Will I involuntarily participate in the state aggression by helping to "integrate" them? By the messages in the chat, I saw that some other participants felt similar confusion.

One message finally ended my doubts. An author wrote: whoever these people are and whatever brought them here, they are experiencing a tragedy and saving their lives while the "big guys with guns" divide the world for their interests. And the only thing that matters is that "it is possible right now to support the children and their parents where they are, without a home, relatives, in a new place, etc.". That was true. And that was why I, after some hesitation, decided to become a volunteer teacher in an educational-recreational camp for refugee children living in a TAC.

The following text is dedicated to this experience. It does not provide a comprehensive in-depth analysis of the situation in education or TACs, and I did not set such a goal. Moreover, it is not an expert assessment or an outcome of purposeful systematic observation. This is my deeply personal view on the topic that seems to me incredibly complex and significant: what happens to those who must continue to teach and learn in the context of the ongoing catastrophe. In the essay, I will try to present the situation from three perspectives: school education workers, children at school, and the community of refugee children in a TAC.

Schools and Teachers

All activities of the integration camp where I was about to take part were to be held at the base of a local rural school, not a big one by Russian standards. The young residents of the TAC were brought every morning by bus, and the local students came from home. In the afternoon the bus took the refugee children back to the TAC. By June, the local and refugee children had already studied together in this school for several months; however, our camp was the first attempt to purposefully help them with communication and integration—at least such was the idea.

The administration of the school where we were based, gave us, volunteers, great confidence by allowing us to work at our discretion, with very little control over our actions. We were allowed to plan any type of activities, to use any formats, and to do whatever we think is necessary for our purpose. In our turn, we felt responsible for not doing anything that could harm the school in any way. It meant not raising political issues with children or parents, not doing anything that might evoke negative reactions from the local community, and not saying anything provocative in any way. We did not intend to do so anyway; our purpose was just to help the children feel better after several stressful and tiresome months.

Before the camp started, we held an orientation meeting with the school teachers and administration. Contrary to my expectations, the teachers did not speak about

any tensions or xenophobic attitudes between the local and refugee children. As one teacher said, shortly before the first party of the refugees was expected to come, she gathered a class meeting and explained to the children what was happening. We do not know what exactly was said at that meeting, but according to the teacher, the children expressed understanding and readiness to welcome new classmates.

Nevertheless, later in the course of the camp, I repeatedly noticed that the teachers themselves referred to students as "our children" and "your children", thus dividing (most likely, unintentionally) the local and refugee ones. Was it because of the childrens background or because they just were new to the school? I think, both.

As I could see it, the identity and status of the refugee children stayed somewhat vague. Even though most of them spoke Russian fluently, the two childrens communitiesthe locals and the refugeeshad slightly different pictures of the world, different sets of commonly accepted concepts and metaphors. Talking to a foreigner from a distant place, we are ready for misunderstandings and contextual differences. But these children were not regular foreigners. Miscommunication with them often happened unexpectedly and thus was experienced sharply.

Yet, for schools the most troublesome side of accepting refugees was not related to language or so-called cultural differences. Much more challenging was adapting the school's daily order of life to the rapidly changed realities.

The residents of the TACs do not choose a school for their children, they can only accept or reject the study place they are offered. In their turn, the schools are obliged to accept all children whose parents provide all required documents. It means that the class size might change dramatically: today there are 15 students in a class, and a week later there are 25 of them. The workload on teachers increases dramatically; of course, for the students, it is a stressful situation, too. In addition, it all happened right in the middle of the study year, a few months before the exams.

Arriving at a new place, refugee children, especially those who used to study in Ukrainian, needed to quickly learn a lot of information and acquire skills that others have been training for years. This overlapped with a generally depressed and disorientated state, stress from leaving home, and feeling of the former life being ruined. All these factors are not conducive to academic success. As might be expected, in many classes that accepted refugees the average scores dropped. Of course, informally, everyone understood what was happening, but formal indicators looked as if the quality of education just fell. Meanwhile, the yearly final scores are important not only for the graduation certificates of the students. Russian schools regularly report on the progress of students and other demonstrable achievements. Based on these statistics, a school ranking is formed that affects the schools access to additional funding and various other benefits.

Teachers found themselves responsible for returning the indicators to normal as soon as possible, having neither experience, nor recommendations on how to do this. Under such circumstances, it may be challenging to cope with involuntary irritation directed to the new students, the "someone else's children" who have disrupted the normal course of life. It requires a great self-command and a lot of inner resources, not to put pressure on the student whose performance affects the well-being of the entire school, especially if you are the one responsible for it. Considering the specificity of

the teaching profession in Russia, often low-paid and always extremely demanding, having such inner resources is more the exception than the norm.

Also, in such conditions, it is hardly possible for the teacher to provide new students with the increased attention and individual attention they need. It becomes even more challenging if study difficulties are related not to the complexity or volume of the study material, but to its content. Is it permissible e.g. to allow discussion in history lessons if some historical facts were presented differently in the student's previous curriculum? Potentially it is a useful though challenging lesson of critical thinking, and also something that can help the student to reflect on what happened to him or herself. However, a few months before exams, teachers probably cannot afford to slow down the learning process to give the children time to critically rethink the previous knowledge. Also, moderating such discussions safely and constructively demands specific competencies that teachers do not always have. And even if such a discussion in the classroom arises, the teacher must ensure that it does not go into "dangerous" areas—those associated with political matters. The consequences of excessive carelessness for the teacher may vary from being reprimanded to termination of appointment and a legal action.

The easiest decision is to avoid discussion and to say that the student's previous knowledge was just wrong. If this happens the children get the implicit lesson: do not ask too many questions, learn the "proper" thinking rather than try to develop your own. I want to emphasise that such a worldview is not instilled in them on purpose. It is an unintended, though powerful, side effect of the high politicisation of the educational sphere, despite the declaration that the school is "out of politics".

It should not be concluded from my words that the main things preventing teachers from starting such discussions are fear and lack of time. I cannot speak for everyone, but at least in some cases, the teachers themselves sincerely believe that Russian textbooks give the only correct interpretations of the facts, and they should be explained to the children as accurately as possible. If earlier these children were told differently, then they were told lies. Here I want to stress that the main motivation of most teachers I know is to give children the best of what they have. This includes some axiomatic beliefs that should not be questioned.

For me, the topic of indoctrination instead of developing critical thinking in schoolchildren is extremely painful. But I must admit that it is my very personal concern. The teachers in the school where we organised the integration camp told us that most of the children did not need to be convinced of anything—they were eager to learn and never asked tricky questions. I can only assume that it could hardly be otherwise. When the whole habitual world is destroyed, children ask the adults for answers and have no other choice than to believe them. From this point, I would like to speak about how the children themselves experience the situation in which they find themselves.

Children at School

Before the camp started, we did not know where exactly the refugee children came from. In truth, we had no reason to be interested in our mentees' nationality or origin. It did not matter at all and didn't affect anything. Later it gradually became clear that among them were residents of the DPR and LPR, as well as the border regions of Russia and Ukraine from both sides.

Now, it is difficult to remember how I imagined a meeting with the refugees before it happened. The reality turned out to be so different that the fresher memories transform the older ones. Before the camp, I read articles about the psychological consequences of getting into a conflict, PTSD, the resolution of xenophobia-based conflicts, etc. Factually, the acquired ideas rather prevented me from seeing the situation impartially than made me ready for daily challenges.

Thinking of the "typical refugees", I imagined lost, helpless and unhappy children with sad eyes, and their thoughts focused on the hardships and suffering they have endured. I built my expectations based on the images from the TV news about the refugees from armed conflicts in other parts of the world. Correspondingly, I imagined my future role as a comforter and supporter in the first place. Also, I expected that they would need to be taught basic social and life skills for living in the new place. And probably, they would have questions about Russia and the Russian language.

And so, the first day of camp comes. We sit in a circle, the two volunteer teachers and about 12–15 children, some of them local and some refugees. And… I find myself unable to guess, by behavior or any other clues, who of them are refugees and who are locals. We say hello, laugh, make a circle of introductions (mainly for us, volunteers, because the children know each other), start doing team-building exercises… All children communicate openly and freely, they are active and involved, and they all look interested and quite relaxed. No signs of any "special work with refugees" being needed at this point.

It quickly became clear that here, too, the main difficulties experienced by the children were not rooted in the alienation between "us" and "strangers". Yes, in the course of the camp I saw the elements of such division. For example, at lunchtime, the children always sat at separate tables: one for locals and one for refugees. If an outsider appeared in one of these groups—someone that the rest did not want to interact with—she or he sat down elsewhere to eat alone rather than move to the table of another group. This division occurred with the unanimous support of both groups' members, and the refugees defended their table from strangers with the same enthusiasm as the locals. When we, the teachers, asked why they did so, all children answered that they simply wanted to sit with their friends.

To my view, it has nothing or very little to do with the background of the refugees. In early adolescence, children tend to form groups, their psychological priority is socialisation ("Me" and the "Others"). And here the determining factor is the norm of attitude toward strangers in society. In my view, the low culture of communication, unfriendliness, and alertness are big and deeply rooted problems in the Russian social environment. It starts in kindergartens, the first stage of socialisation, where

the teachers scold the children (and sometimes the parents, too) and force them to do what is needed without explaining why to do it. The same attitude is common for public institutions such as clinics, sports and music schools, and schools in general. In addition, very little is done to teach children the skills of self-regulation and constructive communication with others. I have heard many times the opinion that children should learn to solve their problems themselves, without the help of adults; otherwise, they will remain infantile and helpless. Parents often agree with this: "For my child, it is better to cry now than to grow up spineless". As a result, it is not surprising in the school years, in the period of intensive social self-identification, a person prefers to team up with tough and robust friends, sees unknown others as a potential threat, and does not easily demonstrate trust and openness.

Of course, I described the extreme manifestations of the phenomenon which is not universal or unavoidable. But even if children are taught the principles of kindness and healthy interaction, a lot depends on what exactly adults understand by these words. I would like to emphasise the important difference between "tolerating" others and accepting them as equals. Undoubtedly, it is a good and right thing not to offend newcomers because they are in trouble and deserve polite treatment. Much better, though, is to be oriented to active support, to put intentional efforts into helping the newcomers integrate. And it is something that I would not expect from my compatriots of all ages by default. Not because of some abstract hostility towards "strangers", but simply because the norms of social communication are different.

During the classes children usually do not have the chance to choose whether to team up with others or not. They perform joint tasks, participate in discussions and do what adults demand. Lunch time thus becomes a rare opportunity to show agency, to choose a company with whom to sit and talk. If the newcomers came from anywhere else, even from a neighboring city, I believe that in the given circumstances the effect would be very similar.

Not all refugee children, in their turn, were eager to "integrate". Before the start of the camp, I prepared primarily to work with the host community, which may be unfriendly to outsiders. It seemed obvious that the refugees would be glad to receive help in joining the local community. But I overlooked the fact that many of the children came from large multicultural cities with a population of several hundred thousand people. And after that, they found themselves in a small provincial place. Not surprisingly, for some of the children, this was a change for the worse. Among the refugee children, especially older ones, some felt a large and unpleasant difference not only in the conditions of life and learning but also in the everyday culture of communication between people compared to what they were used to at home.

It would be a mistake to say that nationality-related tensions between children did not arise. But they did not originate from the childrens "xenophobia" or other personal motives. One moment I remember very well happened in the middle of the camp. In our group, we had a tradition to greet each other every morning in the languages of different peoples of the world. The children could randomly pull a sticker with a greeting of the day from a bag or offer their own variant. One day a refugee boy said that he would like everyone to greet each other in Ukrainian. I knew this moment would come and prepared myself for taming an emotional storm

in my group. But, much to my surprise, the reaction of the group was quite calm and even passive. Everyone agreed to say "privit" ("hello"). However, this was the tensest circle of greetings I remember. The participants felt awkward, though no one objected directly. I had the feeling that the children vaguely felt that there was something wrong with the use of the Ukrainian language, while no one could name an adequate reason why this could be so.

This was the first clear encounter with a phenomenon that I have observed many times since then, especially close to the end of the camp. The children often reproduced the statements and copied the attitudes of their parents and other adults without questioning what was behind them. The resulting logic might look like this: why not speak Ukrainian? Because "something" is wrong with those who speak this language. It was striking evidence of how the hostility of adults penetrates the world of children.

At lunchtime, some children talked to us, teachers, about the bad things their parents say about refugees. The nuance was that often the children did not fully understand what exactly was wrong with these newcomers or how it was related to the places they had arrived from. They found their own childish explanations: we should not like them because they get everything for free, and we don't. As one local boy told me: "They live in a sanatorium, they are fed delicious food for free, they are brought clothes and toys, their parents are given money. Why is everything for them and nothing for us?" In response, I asked: "Do you think they wanted it all, given that they had to leave their home, leave all their belongings there, give up hobbies, leave old friends, and they do not know if they can ever have it all back?" A boy looked confused. "This is something I never thought about", he said.

Children in a TAC

After the end of each day at school, we came back to the TAC with the children living there. Here we were met by the children who could not (most often because of their too young age) or did not want to go to the school camp. They spent whole days with their older relatives, as a rule, mothers and grandmothers (less often with fathers). For the residents of the TAC, we organised creative and fun activities without specific educational purposes. The only purpose was to give children back a little sense of normality and to bring some diversity to their lives, in which the days were indistinguishably like each other.

I have kept notes of my reflections written at the end of the first week of the camp. Here I find it appropriate to cite some of them:

> The life here (in the TAC) seems quiet, it has little in common with what I expected to see. The residents come and leave the territory freely, no one monitors their arrival and departure, and the gates are always open. For a week I didn't notice incidents, quarrels, or fights, I didn't even hear that someone raised their voice at someone, except for mothers at children

> There is a medical building with doctors who are on duty around the clock. There are also police officers who are there to keep order, though I have not seen them have to work.

> In the lobby of the dining room (the main information point of the TAC) the information boards are located with information on where to go for psychological help, how to execute documents, where to ask for information about lost relatives, etc. Technically, the residents have access to all the most demanded types of support, though I do not know how well it works. There is also a list of vacancies "offered to displaced persons"—long, but rather of the same type: cooks at enterprises, cleaners, hawkers, workers.

> The atmosphere in the TAC is somewhat reminiscent of a strange pioneer camp or sanatorium. It is a quiet and nice place… full of bothered and upset people, where seemingly just nothing happens.

As can be seen by these notes, I expected to see in the TAC stereotypical pictures of refugee life: lack of basic resources, indifferent or cruel treatment of people, conflicts, or scarcity of essential information. None of this turned out to be true. Instead, we faced apathy and monotony, fatigue from uncertainty, restrained alertness, and isolation of people who realise that if they get into trouble, there is no one to stand up for them. And indeed, there was a lot of tension between people, but not openly. It was present in the background and became noticeable gradually.

On the territory of the TAC, there was a library with a play area for young children, which was open a few hours a day: the only employee could not be there often, stay for a long time, or watch over many kids at the same time. Once we noticed that the playroom had not been opened for a long time and asked the staff member why. The explanation was simple: the children played too carelessly, breaking toys and tearing beanbag chairs. I was impressed not by this fact itself, but by the tone in which it was spoken about. The message was that these children were "wild" and did not know how to behave, unlike "normal" children with whom the library staff worked before. She explained this by the fact that the children did not consider this place their home and did not care for someone else's property. In her view, they got everything for nothing and did not appreciate it.

I do not doubt that many of the children treated the property of the TAC carelessly, as if it belonged to no one and was worth nothing. However, this had nothing to do with bad manners. Children, especially the youngest of them, could hardly understand what happened and where they were now. For them, these were truly no one's properties, the things that "just existed" in this strange place. But reasoning in such a way is easy for me, a third-party observer. Those who are financially and juridically responsible for the destroyed property would inevitably feel outraged and irritated. It requires a developed emotional intellect and self-control not to transfer these feelings from the situation to the perpetrators—the children. And to their parents—those tired, depressed, and worried people—who are blamed for not teaching the children good manners.

Given the traumatic events these children had experienced, I initially expected them to have serious behavioral and discipline problems. We did not encourage them to speak about their terrible memories but did not stop them if they started talking themselves. Some children calmly, as if about something very simple and normal, spoke about their abandoned houses and pets, spending the nights in the basements, hunger and fear. One boy told us in a very matter-of-fact manner: yes, leaving the city they left a flat and a cat. And a grandmother, too. In the younger group, the children

colorfully retold horrors with shocking details, such as "a woman glued to the wall after a blast". I try to be very careful and restrained about such stories told by young children because at their age fantasy is closely intertwined with reality. But they do not lie anyway; for them, these pictures are real, even if in fact they only heard about them. Both imaginary and real tragedies and suffering left marks on these childrens souls.

Despite this, during the camp, I practically did not need the knowledge on working with the acute consequences of a crisis. Many children showed neither behavioral nor physical manifestations of any disability. I do not say that they were fine, at least not all of them. Some of them were sad, apathetic, and frustrated; others were hyperactive, unable to concentrate, overly excitable, and aggressive. There was a boy who could not stop running and shouting unless some adult would hold him in their hands. His mother said that it was not the direct consequence of witnessing something terrible or a forced departure from home. However, the life of a refugee was undoubtedly a powerful trigger for these personal traits to emerge.

We, volunteer teachers, did not know how to work with such children. They needed not short-term emergency help, which can be learned by reading a few books and taking online courses, but long-term professional intervention. Throughout the time spent in the TAC, I wondered: why is there no full-time psychologist, or at least a periodic supervision of the same type as regular medical examinations? At the same time, recalling the experience of working in a rural school, I have to admit that qualified social and psychological support is generally poorly available to Russian schoolchildren, so there is no surprise that the refugees access to psychological help is also very limited.

And yet, most children, when asked what is most difficult for them now, did not speak of terrible memories or painful regrets. Daily life was much harder, though in a less dramatic way. I am not talking about any physical deprivation: the residents of the camp where we worked were well-fed, they had regular supplies of humanitarian aid, and the accommodation center itself was located on a big and nice green territory. It is easy for an outside observer to forget that the availability of food, warmth and other vital necessities is a very important but insufficient component of human well-being.

Most of all the residents of the TAC lacked simple and cozy activities creating the feeling that everything is fine. They loved our meetings in the library with reading aloud and playing board games, they enthusiastically acted in self-made theatrical plays. In the workshops on making decorations and toys there sometimes were more those who wanted to participate than we could afford. The same was true of outdoor sports games: we teachers literally lacked the stamina to play as many of them as the children wanted.

Unfortunately, we had little opportunity to influence the main factor determining the well-being of children: the state of their significant adults. The adults in TACs are overwhelmed with worries. They need to deal with the documents, find permanent housing, get a job; they worry about friends and relatives left somewhere else, and they are filled with bitter thoughts and memories. In the new place, they need not only to go through tiresome bureaucratic procedures but also to rethink their own social identities. I think again about the list of vacancies for handymen and cleaners

on the information board and remember that in their homeland many of these people were engineers, managers, scientists, educators, etc. Of course, they are upset and have very little energy and optimism. And of course, their children feel it.

Sometimes the adults visited our activities, too. One man told us about a very simple principle by which he chose events to participate in for himself and his children: it should be understandable, safe, and relaxed. Safe in the first place.

Outcomes and Reflections

During the three weeks of the camp, its main idea changed a lot. The most obvious transformations had undergone the idea of integration. The factors that prevented refugees from integrating into the local community had very little to do with their cultural "otherness", or with the reluctance of our target group—childrento deal with strangers. The unsettled everyday life was much more traumatic than most of the things that frighten us when we try to imagine a refugees experience. The lives and destinies of these children were threatened much earlier and much more fundamentally than when they got into an interstate armed conflict. The constant danger comes from the order of life in which this conflict is a norm, as well as violence, ignorance, and prejudice.

In childhood and adolescence, the foundations of a person's attitude towards himself, others, and life are laid. Here is what the social reality I saw has to offer them:

– A young person develops an identity—the adults divide people into "good" and "evil" not by personal qualities, but by nationality.
– A young person learns how to communicate with others—the adults use hate speech and promote and Practice violence.
– A young person gets acquainted with the diversity of the world—the adults strive for unity and uniformity.
– A young person lives today and prepares him or herself to live in the future—the adults look for comfort and safety in the ideals and guidelines of the past.

Refugee children do not talk about war or politics, they cannot and are not obliged to understand such things. They talk about their personal experience and ask the adults: how should we live, what should we do so that this never happens to us again? My answer would be so banal that it's almost embarrassing: the most urgent need is to develop social skills and critical thinking. This, and nothing else, will best help to distinguish friend from foe, get support in need, safely resolve a conflict, and find the best solution in a dangerous situation in which little depends on you. And this is something that we, adults, can give them regardless of the political situation or any other outer factors, even regardless of our own beliefs. After all, the task of a teacher is not to share his or her worldview with the student, but to help to form one's own.

Afterword. "The School is Out of Politics"

There is a commonplace statement that the school is out of politics. This principle is enshrined in several Russian legislative acts, including the State Law on education (Article 50). The school has always been very sensitive to political matters, but until recently, its "apolitical" position was respected at least formally. Regretfully, it seems that currently the notion of "the school out of politics" is officially receding into the past. A year ago, the process was less explicit, and yet political discourse permeated all spheres of life. Today, undisguised ideological education is being introduced into schools in the form of obligatory extracurricular activities and so-called patriotic events; study books are being rewritten, etc.

In the distant past, the school was a place where young people under threat of punishment learned by heart the "undeniable truths". A modern school should be a place for facing different facets of a complex world in a safe environment and developing one's views and life strategies. Unfortunately, today's Russian school reminds me more of the first option. While it is so, I believe that the school cannot provide children with knowledge and skills that would best help them cope with the challenges of the current time.

Somewhat paradoxically, I would say that Russian state education laws are (mostly) progressive. A few years ago, as a research project, I did a discourse analysis of key Russian educational documents and was pleased to find that they are based on humanistic values, respect for all participants of the education process, and the most promising educational concepts. If these guidelines were followed everywhere and in full, the Russian school would be an excellent place.

That is why today the personal involvement of a teacher, as well as a parent or any other responsible and competent adult, is important as perhaps ever before. The sad thing is that to teach children the essential skills in communication and thinking, one needs to have them oneself. The good thing is that obtaining such skills is generally available and does not require any scarce resources—only the desire coupled, if not with help, then at least with the absence of hindrance from the authorities.

Children do not have time to wait until adults figure out how to teach them in a new reality. They live right now, grow up right now. The best thing a school can do for them is to give them a safe and healthy environment for exploring the world, society, and their own personalities. Creating such an environment in a world full of tension and conflict for children who have lost the most reliable life supports has become the teachers task—and their great challenge.

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Chapter 11
Educational Inclusion of Indigenous Students in the Russian Federation

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Abstract Consideration of the challenges of education for indigenous peoples in the chapter requires attention both to the topic of preserving cultural heritage and languages and to the issues of accessibility of higher education for representatives of indigenous minorities. First, we will briefly talk about ethnic and cultural diversity in the Russian Federation, then we will present the key provisions of the Russian educational policy regarding indigenous peoples. In the final part, we present the results of our empirical study of the educational integration of indigenous students at the university.

Introduction

Higher education for indigenous peoples is problematised in the modern academic literature in two directions. First, it is considered in the context of programs for the preservation of cultural heritage and languages which are implemented in different regions of the world and requires taking into account not only their cultural and psychological, but also social, economic, and political effects (Vančo & Efremov, 2020).

The second focus of the researchers' interest is the issues of accessibility of higher education for representatives of indigenous minorities. For example, studies indicate

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representatives of indigenous peoples to be among the most disadvantaged groups in this regard (Bradley et al., 2008).

If the state legislation provides for the possibility of obtaining higher education in the native language of students, both directions reinforce each other. As a result, higher education for indigenous peoples is becoming a tool for reviving ethnic cultures and languages. But if higher education is available only in the state language, the adaptation of indigenous students at the university is realised through assimilation, which implies orientation to the culture of the majority, through the rejection of the mother language and culture, significantly reducing the chances of indigenous students for academic success (Dreamson et al., 2017; Gilbert & Tillman, 2017; Weuffen et al., 2017).

Thus, both directions are closely connected, strengthening each other under certain circumstances, and eliminating each other under other conditions. Accordingly, consideration of the challenges of education for representatives of indigenous peoples requires attention to each topic.

However, before presenting the key provisions of the Russian educational policy in relation to indigenous peoples, as well as the results of our own empirical research, we will give a brief background on ethnic and cultural diversity in the Russian Federation.

The Indigenous Population of the Russian Federation: A Brief Reference

One of the specific features of the Russian Federation is the ethnic mosaic of space. The natural consequence of this peculiarity was the formation of a territorialised discourse in the interpretation of the relations of ethnic groups, but due to a whole complex of historical and social reasons, politicised views on ethnicity were formed and strengthened in Russian, and then Soviet and post-Soviet societies. They expressed themselves, among other things, in the formation of a certain hierarchy of ethnic groups, which was embedded in their administrative status.

According to Article 68 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation (Russian Federation, 1993), the state-forming people of Russia are Russians, who make up 77.7% of the population of the state (Rosstat, 2011).[1] Representatives of the other 190 ethnic groups (which is almost 32 million people) are part of the "multinational union of equal peoples of the country" (Russian Federation, 1993). The territories of relatively compact residences of representatives of sufficiently large peoples have the status of republics and autonomous regions and districts, that is, ethnically territorial entities. Republics and districts whose names include the corresponding ethnonyms

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[1] Here and further population data are provided based on the results of the 2010 census—the last one in which the respondent's ethnic identity was taken into account.

have become centres of "attraction" for the titular peoples[2] (Manakov, 2022). The formation of national-territorial regions in the Russian Federation began in 1918–19. By 1926, there were already 19 national autonomies with different statuses in Russia. Their number gradually increased (Trifonova, 2008). Today, the territory of Russia includes 85 territorial-administrative entities, designated (in descending order of autonomy) as a republic, region, district, of which 26 have the status of national: 21 republics, 1 autonomous region and 4 autonomous districts.

According to the 2010 census, almost all republics had more than half of the total population of representatives of titular peoples living within the borders of Russia. At the same time, however, representatives of the titular peoples are not the predominant group in all territories, unlike the Chechens and Ingush, whose share in the population of "their" republics is 95.3 and 94.1%. Yakuts, on the other hand, with their extremely high concentration within Yakutia-Sakha, make up only 50% of the permanent population of this republic of the Federation; Komi and Udmurts in their "own" republics23.7 and 28.0%, and ethnic Karelians—only 7.4% of the total population living in the Republic of Karelia (Manakov, 2022).

Formally, republics and autonomous districts are territories of historical residence of certain ethnic groups. However, the intensive industrial development of these territories in the second half of the twentieth century, and the influx of a large number of migrants from the European part of the USSR into them, led not only to a decrease in the share of the indigenous population, but also to a reduction in areas suitable for extensive farming. This was especially evident in the northern and Arctic regions, where traditional nature management was based on a combination of hunting, fishing and reindeer husbandry. With this type of management, the sustainable existence of small-numbered peoples is possible only with a nomadic or semi-sedentary lifestyle: the exploitation of a limited territory leads to an irreversible depletion of slowly renewable natural resources.

Attempts to find a compromise between the industrial development of territories and the support of the indigenous population engaged in traditional spheres of economy already in the 1920s led to important consequences. One of them is the formation of the "national districts" that we mentioned. The second is the approval of the "Temporary Regulations on the management of indigenous peoples and tribes of the northern suburbs", which introduced the concept and list of "indigenous small peoples" (USSR, 1926). Today, the Unified List of Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation includes 40 peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East, 6 ethnic groups of the North-West of the Russian Federation, the Urals, the foothills of the Caucasus and 14 peoples of Dagestan (Government of the Russian Federation (GRF), 2000a). According to the policy documents, indigenous small-numbered peoples are allocated to a separate group for the purpose of special protection by the state, are given a special status and receive a number of legally fixed benefits: preferential use of natural resources, earlier retirement, replacement of military service by alternatives, the list of forms of which includes reindeer herding, exemption from land fees, etc.

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[2] The concept of "titular people" was excluded from Russian legislation in 1999 (Federal Law No. 99-FL).

The issues of protection of the rights of national minorities are comprehensively regulated by Federal Laws "On Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Minorities of the Russian Federation" (GRF, 1999), "On General Principles of Organisation of Communities of Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation" (GRF, 2000b), "On Territories of Traditional Nature Use of Communities of Indigenous minorities of The North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation" (GRF, 2001). However, since political programs, reflecting the views of different social groups of Russian society were opposed at different stages and in various spheres of the formation of the legislative framework, experts regard the current legal situation in the field of protection of the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples as extremely unsatisfactory (Slezkine, 1994; Sokolovsky, 1997, 2006).

Let's turn to the history and current situation of the realisation of one of the basic human rights – the right to education, and we will present the key stages of the inclusion of representatives of the indigenous population in the Russian educational space. At the same time, we will pay special attention to the study of national languages and cultures, i.e. we will turn to the first of the identified challenging areas in the development of education for indigenous peoples.

History and Current State of Indigenous Education in the Russian Federation

The annexation of nearby territories by the Russian Empire, in the period from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, led to a significant increase in the diversity of the inhabiting ethnicities and required the creation of a legislative framework for building state national and educational policy. The first official document that defined the foundations of the ethnocultural policy of the Russian Empire was the Charter "On the Management of Aborigines" adopted in 1822 (Presidential Library, 1830), which united all non-Russian peoples under the name "aborigines". However, representatives of ethnic groups significantly different in political, socio-cultural and economic characteristics and, accordingly, in the degree of formation of educational systems, lived in the annexed territories: peoples with an established system of both religious and secular education (Kazan Tatars, Bashkirs, Chuvash, annexed to Russia as a result of the conquest of the Kazan Khanate), peoples with a developed confessional and the emerging secular education (Crimean Tatars, a number of peoples of Dagestan and the North Caucasus, Buryats and Kalmyks), peoples, without their own writing and alphabet (some peoples of Dagestan and the North Caucasus, the peoples of Siberia, the North and the Far East).

The tasks of territorial expansion and retention of the peoples inhabiting the annexed territories within the borders of the Empire were solved through their systematic and rather successful assimilation, primarily through the formation of

a unified educational space. Thus, the educational policy pursued by Russia was of a colonialist nature. The focus on secular education was established in the first half of the nineteenth century, when the state authorities began to realise that in order to strengthen their positions not only among Christian but also among other peoples, it was necessary to form a stratum, brought up in Russian educational institutions on the traditions of Russian culture and in the Russian language. By the middle of the nineteenth century, regional education systems had completely lost their autonomy. However, the demands of the capitalist economy in the late 19th— early twentieth centuries required an increase in the variety of types expansion of the network of educational institutions, and diversification of education levels. This has led to some democratisation of the access of children of the underprivileged classes to lower and middle-level educational institutions, as well as to the teacher training system for lower and primary schools. As a result, by the beginning of the twentieth century, in the national regions of Russia, a system of secular education was being formed, including several stages: primary general, primary professional, classic and real secondary, secondary pedagogical and higher.

However, only a small number of teachers saw, in "aboriginal schools", a potential tool for the development of cultures of the peoples inhabiting Russia and the introduction of children through native culture to Russian and world culture. In practice, the diversity of peoples inhabiting Russiaabout 150 different ethnicitieswas taken into account very poorly, the curricula almost did not differ from those for schools without the epithet "aboriginal", the language of teaching in all schools was only Russian. The result of this kind of educational policy is not surprising: for the development of the childs personality, it had a devastating effect—"children who differed in abilities before entering school, children with creative initiative, feel the abyss that separates them from their native hut and from the environment from which the teacher came, lose the ground under their feet" (Rusova, 1916, 23). The reaction of opposition to this educational policy is also predictable, both at the level of legislative initiatives of teachers participating in the 1913 First All-Russian Congress on Public Education, where the work of a special section was devoted to the issues of indigenous schools, and at the level of spontaneous protest actions of the population: "one Yakut trained his son to simulate deafness in order to save the child from having to attend school. The father's training was so good that the police officer, the doctor and the teacher could not open the simulation, although they had heard about it from the side. Only a shrewd trustee, obviously well acquainted with the local conditions, launched into a trick:—Well, okay, he says, as if to himself:—we'll take him and cure—we'll check the hole in his ear with a gimlet and he will hear. The boy began to cry, began to beg…" (Zelenko, 1916, 12). The introduction of the challenges of indigenous schools into public discourse, for example, at the All-Russian Congress on Public Education most often led to stricter rules governing the activities of schools intended for the education of representatives of indigenous peoples.

After the October Revolution, the next stage in the development of native education covered the period from 1918 to 1958. Education was especially actively developed in the indigenous regions in the first decades of Soviet power due to the

adoption of a number of important laws and legislative acts aimed at the preservation and development of ethnic languages and cultures (Zamyatin, 2017). In the 1920s and 1930s, "native schools" (educational institutions that provided teaching in the native languages of students) were created. Education in them was conducted with full or partial use of the ethnic component aimed at preserving, developing and promoting the native language and native culture. More often than not, native schools were created to support the language and culture of the indigenous people, who were in danger of disappearing or losing their native language and culture. By 1960, in Soviet Russia (it consisted of 15 autonomous republics, 6 autonomous regions and 10 national districts), school education was conducted in 47 languages (Kairov, 1960). In 1949, in accordance with the Decree of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR, the Scientific Research Institute of Native Schools was established as part of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, which coordinated the work of scientists and teachers of the Russian Federation and trained scientific and pedagogical personnel for the national regions of the RSFSR (APS, 1949), later 12 regional branches and laboratories of the Institute were opened. During this period, other measures were taken to support ethnic cultures: cultural centers were opened, scientific understanding of the phenomenon of national culture and ethnic identity began.

A gradual departure from the strategy of active development of native education was outlined with the school reform in 1958 and the adoption of the Law "On strengthening the connection of schools with life and further development of the education system in the USSR" and continued until the 1990s. The reform created a mechanism for the mass translation of native schools into the Russian language of teaching with the lowering of the status of the native language to the level of an academic discipline, which was ideologically justified by the statement of the resolution of the "ethnic issue" and the complete overcoming of ethnic disunity. As a result, the basic principle of the native school"school in the native language", implemented in the 1925–60s, was essentially replaced by another principle—"Russian school with the native language as an academic discipline". As a result, by the end of the 1980s, only 18 ethnic groups in Russia had retained education in their native languages, 14 of them within the primary school. Since the 1990s, the term "native school" has ceased to be used in regulatory documents and academic literature, or is noted as a historical fact (Boziev, 2017).

The period of political restructuring that followed the adoption of the Declaration of Sovereignty of Russia on June 12, 1990, introduced a liberal idea into the development of native education. Despite the fact that, while adopted in 1992, the Law "On Education" has practically abolished the category of native schools (the designation "schools with native (non-Russian) and Russian (non-native) language of teaching" appeared in the by-laws of the Ministry of Education) (GRF, 1992), in the wake of separatist movements, different regions began to independently determine the ratio of the components of the content of education and new educational institutions with different languages of teaching were opened. As a result, the ethnic component in the curricula began to take a predominant position, especially in those parts of the Russian Federation (Tatarstan, the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), etc.),

where republican elite groups were aiming to gain sovereignty. For a decade and a half, the federal authorities allowed this, especially since the Constitution of the RF enshrines the right of every person to study their native language and culture, to study in their native language (RF, 1993), along with compulsory study of native languages in the ethnic regions of the RF.

In the period from the mid-1990s to the end of the 2000s, a number of local initiatives were developed aimed at mastering the native language and culture by representatives of indigenous peoples, as well as strengthening the ties of indigenous children with the local community. Among these initiatives are the dissemination of the program utilising the "language nest" technique, which is regarded as an effective language maintenance mechanism, is grounded in childrens immersion in indigenous language, the formation of small ungraded schools in indigenous communities with 14 students per class to provide primary and, on rare occasion, secondary education, attempts to implement the model of 'nomadic kindergarten-school' to prepare children between the ages of three and six for entry into primary school through the use of the basics of indigenous pedagogy and indigenous language. It was assumed that such projects would grow into local cultural centers comprising kindergarten, school, study groups, library, first-aid posts and facilities for leisure activities, all under one roof. This would make it possible, by strengthening the ties between the school and the local indigenous community, among other things, to form a stable educational motivation among young indigenous representatives and, through the joint efforts of teachers, parents and the local community, to build a variety of educational trajectories, thereby ensuring both structural and relational aspects of the educational inclusion of indigenous peoples (Zamyatin, 2017).

However, in 2016, the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation adopted in 2012 (Putin, 2012) "On measures to implement state policy in the field of education and science" came into force, introducing the principle of normative per capita financing of schools, which dealt a serious blow to inclusive education in general and school education of indigenous peoples, abolishing small schools and classes. Then, on July 20, 2017, at a meeting of the Presidential Council on Interethnic Relations, Vladimir Putin stated that "Russian is the state language for us, and nothing can replace it; it is the natural spiritual framework of our entire multinational country" and "everyone should know it". At the same time, he stressed: "The languages of the peoples of Russia are also an integral part of the original culture of Russia. However, forcing a person to learn a language that is not his native language is just as unacceptable as reducing the level and time of teaching Russian. I draw the special attention of the heads of the regions of the Russian Federation to this" (Council on Interethnic Relations, 2017). The President's speech served as a signal for mass inspections of Tatarstan schools by the Prosecutor's Office. Many teachers of the Tatar language were dismissed. During the same period, the State Duma began work on amendments to the Federal Law "On Education". The adoption of the amendments was accompanied by protests of the population of ethnic republics: in some cases, as, for example, in Tatarstan, these protests were massive, in others, for example, in Udmurtia, they had local character, but tragic consequences (The scientist died…, 2019). However, the amendments were adopted. In accordance with the adopted amendments, the

choice of language as a discipline of study in secondary schools is the prerogative of the students parents. The choice is made by submitting a personal application before the child enters the 1st and 5th grades (GRF, 2012). The decision seems very democratic and balanced, if we do not take into account that, firstly, the range of choice is determined by the personnel and methodological capabilities of the school, which does not always have suitably qualified teachers and educational literature, and, secondly, that even if the school can provide children with the opportunity to learn languages other than Russian, the Federal State Educational Standard recommends allocating one hour per week for this (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, 2022). All preschool educational institutions provide education only in Russian. The low status of indigenous languages does not create incentives for their study and is detrimental to the educational motivation of indigenous students who do not feel the connection between the needs of local communities and the policies and practices of mainstream schooling. As a result, the level of education among the indigenous peoples is decreasing. At least 48% of indigenous youth have completed, or partially completed, only primary or secondary education, while 17% do not have even a primary education (Zamyatin, 2017). But experts are particularly concerned about the quality of school education available to indigenous peoples.

According to experts, school education, especially in the boarding school format, which is especially typical for regions where nomadic peoples live, breaks childrens ties with native cultures, rarely offering something in return: "*for them, the boarding school regime is not clear at all. Parents say that children return from boarding schools to the camps lazy. They don't want anything, no initiative, that is, we don't support the traditional culture in them. We kill everything we can in them […] They would be good reindeer herders, hunters, fishermen. And they have forgotten all this, they stay in the villages, hang out, drink, they can't apply themselves anywhere. That is, we are losing generation after generation*" (An interview with an employee of the Governor's Office of the KhMAD (other information about the expert is not disclosed for informant's security reasons). Field materials of the authors, 2022).

To assess the overall level of school preparation of indigenous students, let us turn to the results of a monitoring study, conducted by the Federal Service for Supervision of Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor) since 2019 (FSSES, 2022). Monitoring records, in particular, such indicators as achievement of the minimum level of training, achievement of the maximum level of training, educational equality (the ratio between 25% of schools with the highest and 25% of schools with the lowest indicators of student achievement). It should be noted that the ethnicity of students is not recorded during monitoring. However, studies show that the level of urbanisation and the proportion of the population with higher education in the regions are significant predictors of the choice of the academic trajectory by students after graduating from high school and the availability of educational resources in general (Zakharov & Adamovich, 2020). Since the proportion of people with higher education among the indigenous population of the Russian Federation is relatively small, and the level of urbanisation of the territories of compact residence of the indigenous population is lower than in the whole country, we can assume a low level of school preparation and a high level of educational inequality for the category of schoolchildren we

are interested in. Indeed, according to the all-Russian monitoring, according to all indicators, the regions of compact residence of the indigenous population are in the "orange" and "red" zones (with the results "bad" and "very bad"). The exception is Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District, which was in the zone of "good" indicators, but the share of the indigenous population here is about 2% (Khanty-1.3% of the population of the district, Mansi-0.8%) (Rosstat, 2011).

Thus, education in schools in the regions of compact residence of representatives of indigenous peoples does not contribute to the preservation of cultural traditions and language, but, at the same time, it does not provide a level of mastery of the curriculum and the development of educational motivation sufficient for admission to university on a general basis. In this regard, in a number of universities, both in regions of compact residence and in central cities, quotas are being formed for teaching students from among representatives of indigenous peoples, as well as individual educational institutions or faculties, which partially increases the accessibility of higher education for representatives of indigenous peoples (Sitnikova et al., 2018).

Accessibility of Higher Education for Indigenous Peoples

The introduction of quotas for representatives of indigenous peoples and the formation of specialised faculties in universities facilitate admission to higher education and thus contribute to increasing the accessibility of higher education for indigenous peoples, as one of the three most disadvantaged groups in this regard, along with students from remote administrative centres and hard-to-reach settlements, and students from families with low socio-economic status (Bradley et al., 2008). However, as the results of studies in different countries show, if an applicant from a family with a low socio-economic status is enrolled in a university, then his/her academic performance is generally comparable with the academic performance of students who do not belong to socially vulnerable categories, unlike indigenous students who have lower academic performances and a higher "dropout rate" (CSHE, 2008). This acutely raises the issues of creating an educational environment in schools and universities that is friendly to students from ethnic and cultural minorities, forming a positive educational experience for them and maintaining a high level of educational motivation (Tang & Tsui, 2018).

The data of our previous studies have demonstrated a high level of stressful pressure of the urban environment, which indigenous students are forced to resist. It was revealed that the majority (60%) of the surveyed students from among the indigenous population of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District (Western Siberia), have a low estimate of their social status, feel dissatisfaction with their surroundings (family and peers) and the work they do, have an increased level of personal anxiety and ideas about the surrounding world as unstable. Since the psychological manifestations of stress are caused by a complex of endocrine changes, the correlation of cortisol excretion with the degree of urbanisation found during the study is also natural: the content of cortisol in saliva samples is lower in Khanty and Mansi living

in national settlements and engaged in hunting and fishing than in students in the city. The revealed trends coincide with the patterns described in groups of other representatives of the indigenous population of Siberia (Kozlov et al., 2007; Pikovskaya et al., 1997). Russians in the north have a different cortisol content: a high level of hormone production is typical for Russians living in villages, and the lowest level of cortisol excretion characterises Russian university students in Khanty-Mansiysk (Kozlov et al., 2012). Thus, the research demonstrates the stressful potential of the inclusion of young Northerners in the life of a modern city associated with the need for higher education.

However, Komi-Permyak students, studying at a pedagogical university in another large Russian city, Perm (Northern Urals), showed exactly the opposite results when comparing stress indicators (anxiety and cortisol concentration) with Russian students of the same university who lived in rural areas and in Perm before entering the university (Table 11.1) (the organisation and methods of the study are presented in detail in Kozlova et al., 2022).

The data presented in Table 11.1 indicate that there are no significant differences in cortisol levels between samples of Russian students who lived before entering the university in the villages of the Perm Region (n = 62) and in Perm (n = 140) (p = 0.539). At the same time, the level of situational (Mann–Whitney (195) = 3497.5; p < 0.01) and personal anxiety (Mann–Whitney (195) = 3486; p < 0.01)) and median cortisol concentration levels in Komi-Permyaks are significantly lower (p < 0.0001) compared with Russian students.

Of course, the atypical nature of the situation prompted us to take a closer look at the case of Komi-Permyak students, paying special attention to subjective assessments of students educational experience, explicated as a result of semi-structured biographical interviews (N = 10).[3]

Of course, moving from villages located on the territory of the Komi-Permyak district to a large city is a non-trivial event for our informants, associated with strong, often negative, experiences and anxiety: "*when you come to this big city, you feel that you are completely alone… here everyone is a complete stranger, it is difficult to get used to. I still often go home, every month*" (fourth year). At the same time, as a strong motivator for continuing education and living in this "alien" big city, informants call the immersion in their native culture and language. Their understanding at a new, theoretically-based level is described by informants as a discovery or exciting adventure, which is perceived as a valuable cultural resource: "*It turned out to be very interesting! There are still a lot of mysteries in the Komi-Permyak language*" (fifth year). The informants' assessment of contacts with students of other departments and universities also focuses on language and culture: "*they thought I was Russian, and they were surprised that, next to them is a person of another ethnicity who knows another language and can speak it*" (third year).

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[3] Female students acted as informants: at the time of the interview—2020—only girls were studying at the Department of Komi-Permyak language and Literature of the Perm State Humanitarian Pedagogical University. In total, 50 people studied at the department (10 people per course), two students from each course took part in the interview.

Table 11.1 Salivary cortisol and anxiety in Komi-Permyaks and Russians with different places of residence before entering the university

Variables	Place of residence before university	n	Salivary cortisol (nmol/L)					State anxiety		Trait anxiety	
			Min	Q25	Me	Q75	Max	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Komi-Permyaks	Countryside	66	2.484	8.004	12.398	17.800	75.900	38.747	8.054	41.027	8.781
Russians	Countryside	62	5.100	13.550	18.750	32.150	67.600	42.190	9.818	44.885	8.801
	City	140	6.300	14.400	18.800	25.300	61.700	40.365	8.516	43.604	8.591

In the course of their educational activities, students of the Department of Komi-Permyak language and literature mainly interact within the department, meeting with students of other departments only at lectures: "*at a lecture you listened and left, you won't communicate much*" (first year). In the students hostel, Komi-Permyaks also live together. The informants told about two types of settlement in the hostel: in one case, they lived together with girls from the same village, who had arrived at the same time as them, former classmates; in the second case, in the first or second year, they lived with students of the Komi-Permyak Department of older courses, who became "guides" for them in the new cultural and social conditions: "*At first, in the 1st and 2nd years, I lived with girls also from the Komi-Permyak Department, they were studying in their 4th year, we communicated with them in Komi-Permyak completely, they showed me everything in the hostel, in the university and in the city. In the 3rd-4th years, we lived together with a girl who entered that year*" (fifth year). After the older students graduate from the university and left the hostel, the newly admitted students move into the room, and the informant herself becomes a "guide" for the first-year students.

Thus, the students of the Komi-Permyak Department in everyday life find themselves in a kind of cultural isolation. However, this isolation is not forced, on the contrary, students perceive the attempts of some teachers to "break" the spontaneously established cultural framework as a kind of pressure: "*let's say, the break, our group is all Komi-Permyak, of course, we communicate with each other in our language during our break, it happens if the teacher sits with us, he asked to speak Russian. Well, here is another teacher, he has been teaching his discipline to the Komi-Permyak Department for many years, it was quite easy to speak Komi-Permyak in his presence, and he was loyal to this, while others, on the contrary, asked to speak Russian*" (third year). The teachers who teach courses related to the Komi-Permyak language and culture, the Komi-Permyaks themselves, who were once graduates of the same department, on the contrary, act as a kind of guardians of the peace and well-being of the students: "*our teachers are very concerned about us*" (fifth year).

The described practices of organising everyday life, of course, cannot be defined as gettisation—the "gate" remains open. The informants are happy to talk about their participation in university-wide cultural events and the volunteer movement, which has an inter-university character: At the same time, they pay special attention to cases of fixation on cultural features, which, within the framework of inter-faculty and inter-university interaction of students, are certainly positively emotionally colored: "*we have creative festivals, a volunteer center, and I went to several events with the guys from this center and we communicate a lot. They were interested, they were very surprised, and now, here are some of my friends from the volunteer center, who know a few phrases in Komi-Permyak*" (third year). In part, the positive emotional color of such interactions is due, of course, to the exceptional—festive, solemn—nature of the events in which they take place. However, when talking about such cases, informants, being outside of this festive context, evaluate them as supporting their own ethno-cultural identity and encouraging cross-cultural interaction: "*Russians are very interested! They are very surprised and ask where our ethnic group lives, and are interested in culture, some ask to translate certain phrases…*" (fifth year).

The "openness" of cultural boundaries gives students, first, the opportunity to vary the degree of inclusion in the dominant culture, and secondly, contributes to their self-determination in the field of intercultural interaction, as a decision-making subject, capable of regulating the degree of proximity-distance, in relation to both the mother and the dominant culture. This experience of combining and regulating the comfort of "their" space and the challenges of the "big world" of new opportunities, supported by the "trump card", which has an unconditional (from the point of view of both the informants themselves and their parent families) instrumental value—higher education, gives the informants a sense of self-efficacy in coping with the stressful conditions of the multicultural environment of a big city, confidence in successful social mobility during the study period and after its completion, regardless of the place of residence. The result of creating a comfortable learning environment is a high proportion of indigenous students who have successfully completed their studies at the university: "*There were ten of us when we entered, we all finish our studies together*" (fifth year). At our request, the dean's office of the Department of Komi-Permyak Language and Literature provided information on the number of graduates of the department for different years and the number of students studying now (Table 11.2).

The data presented in Table 11.2 indicate a very low drop-out rate of the department's students, i.e. overcoming the main obstacle to the presence of indigenous students in the university's educational environment.

Note that the described case is expressive, but not unique. In the universities of the Udmurt Republic (Ural-Volga region), the authors recorded similar learning conditions (relative homogeneity of study groups—a "closed world" in the words of informants, combined with the presence of multiple channels of intergroup interaction) and effects: optimism of Udmurt students regarding careers, low dropout rate of students in the learning process, positive ethnic and linguistic identity (in more detail, the methodology and results of the study are presented in Vlasova &

Table 11.2 Data on the number of students of the educational program "Komi-Permyak language and literature"

Year of admission to the university	Number of students	Year of graduation	Number of graduates
2012–2013	13	2016–2017	13
2013–2014	13	2017–2018	13
2014–2015	15	2018–2019	11
2015–2016	15	2019–2020	15
2016–2017	10	2020–2021	10
Year of admission to the university	Number of students	Year of graduation	Number of students
2017–2018	10	2021–2022	9
2018–2019	9	2022–2023	9
2019–2020	13	2023–2024	13
2020–2021	11	2024–2025	11

Agafonova, 2017). The analysis of the case of the Institute of Udmurt Philology, Finno-Ugric Studies and Journalism allowed us to identify an additional trajectory of educational integration of representatives of the indigenous population—the experience of interaction in a linguistically relatively homogeneous, but socially heterogeneous environment. Such experience becomes the effect of the academic mobility of students to universities where representatives of other Finno-Ugric peoples of Russia (the Republic of Mordovia, Mari El, Komi), Hungary, Finland and Estonia are trained. According to the estimates of informants-professors, internships and other forms of mobility not only have an impact on the practical results of language acquisition, but also allow students to form a positive experience of awareness of ethnic identity: "*Internships affect the manifestation of themselves as Udmurts. The students felt their Udmurt identity there. They begin to love themselves as Udmurts*" (f, 55 years old, professor).

The involvement in the "closed world" of not only current students, but also graduates, makes the social context of education even more heterogeneous, and thus, contributes to the strengthening and development of professional ties. Mutual consultations, exchange of resources and methodological assistance are possible in the community of graduates of the Faculty-Institute of Udmurt Philology, who have now become teachers, employees of leading educational and cultural institutions, employees of the administrative apparatus.

Based on the results of the study, we will try to answer the key question about the optimal organisation of the educational process in higher education for indigenous people. We record a relatively weak stress response of the indigenous students, whose educational content involves additional immersion in their native linguistic and cultural environment, combined with a low intensity of contacts with representatives of other cultural groups, including the dominant population. These results are consistent with the data of numerous studies of correlations between aspects of intercultural attitudes and psychological well-being. Although the preference for integration, as a strategy of intergroup interaction is considered, as a reliable predictor of well-being, security and adaptability of representatives of different ethno-cultural groups (Abu-Rayya & Sam, 2017; Berry & Hou, 2016), a number of studies have shown that, in certain socio-cultural and political contexts, the strategy of separation may be more advantageous, in terms of well-being indicators than integration (Berry & Hou, 2016; Koja et al., 2019). For the students in the cases discussed in this chapter, the social environment provides the necessary and sufficient (according to the estimates of the informants themselves) level of acceptance and support. At first glance, this environment looks as monocultural, however, the interviews with the students demonstrated their vision of the wide possibilities of various social contacts with representatives of other socio-cultural groups. In other words, cultural "closeness" in the learning process is not actually closeness, but is an environment that is malleable for individual manipulations. Thus, conditions are created that allow the individual to independently vary the degree of closeness-openness, inclusion–exclusion. When this opportunity is successfully realised, conditions are created for the

development of communicative self-efficacy and sustainable attitudes towards integration into the dominant society, combined with a sense of resource support from the mother culture.

Thus, among the factors of maintaining the social and emotional well-being of indigenous students, we can emphasise, firstly, the inclusion of indigenous students in both culturally homogeneous and culturally heterogeneous interest groups. The second condition presented in this chapter is determined by the role of the intra-group academic mentoring and cooperation, which affects the sense of belonging and identity of indigenous students, and is highly appreciated by other researchers (Masika & Jones, 2016): in such conditions, students feel like significant members of the research group, form a deeper understanding of the role of science and education in solving socially significant problems (Carter et al., 2018; McMahon et al., 2018). The third condition is the inclusion in the curriculum of special academic courses, in particular on indigenous history, language and culture.

In the cases we have considered, the presence of the Department of the Komi-Permyak/Udmurt languages and literature expands the possibilities for integrating culture sensitive aspects both in the content of professional training and in the organisation of the educational process. However, such opportunities can be opened and are already being used in universities in Australia, the United States, Canada, and Northern Europe: for training managers taking into account regional and ethno-cultural contexts, economists considering traditional forms of environmental management, lawyers taking into account customary law, physicians taking into account traditional knowledge and environmental conditions of regions where indigenous peoples live compactly, designers and engineers integrating elements of indigenous cultures into the modern technological process (Sitnikova et al., 2018).

Described soft inclusion strategies reduce the risk of "forced happiness" of representatives of ethnic and cultural minorities on the part of the majority, allowing each student to realise the desired degree of integration and choose relevant communication strategies, i.e., by accepting the role of the subject of interaction, to engage in a conscious intercultural dialogue. Dialogue then becomes a form of recognition, a key to avoiding unintended negative consequences for members of minorities, and a mechanism for participation. For representatives of the majority, the possibility of such a dialogue becomes the key to successfully solving the tasks for modern educational institutions: introducing all the actors to the idea of diversity, demonstrating flexibility and creativity in working, preventing any risk of discrimination, and encouraging cooperation between all participants of the educational process (Council of Europe, 2011).

Conclusion

Representatives of the indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation in access to quality education, on the one hand, face problems typical of indigenous peoples in different regions of the world (Council of Interethnic Relations, 2017), on the other

hand, they are forced to overcome barriers caused by the inconsistency of the internal Russian policy in the field of ethno-cultural diversity.

Issues of equality and rights of indigenous peoples are central to most policy debates with direct implications on social justice issues, human rights, and education in general. Indigenous peoples' right to education is recognised in Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN, 2016). It emphasises the responsibility of states to adequately provide access to education for Indigenous people, particularly children, and when possible, for education to take place within their own culture and to be delivered in their own language.

Russian policy in relation to the indigenous population has been oriented towards linguistic assimilation throughout Russian history, but the idea of homogenisation of the countrys cultural space has been significantly strengthened in political discourse in recent years (Putin, 2022). However government policy that causes the assimilation of indigenous peoples into the dominant national culture is interpreted today using the term indigenous genocide (Jacob et al., 2015) to the decay of specific cultures, histories, and identities. In this regard, it is essential that federal and local authorities both promote native languages and expand the indigenous component in the curriculum, and diversify the ways of access to education for representatives of indigenous peoples.

As the results presented in this chapter show, the participation of representatives of indigenous culture in the planning of the curriculum and the organisation of classes phase for ownership, buy-in, and self-determination. However, at the level of preschool and general education indigenous peoples are not fully involved or even excluded from the curriculum development decision-making process. In Russia, as in many countries, national curricula have little relevance to indigenous peoples, therefore it is essential to know how to design a relevant indigenous education curriculum and ensure that indigenous peoples participate in the curriculum development. Simultaneously, it is necessary to utilise local human resources to participate in the process of teaching and school administration.

It is crucial for both government and indigenous communities to collaborate together in order to provide innovative and relevant approaches which can help protect and promote indigenous languages, cultures, and identities. For this purpose it is very important to minimise the using of boarding schools for nomadic indigenous children and to diversify the available learning formats in the form of small and nomadic school. Indigenous parents need to be made aware of their right to request the inclusion of indigenous languages and other ethnocultural subject-matter into curriculum and be involved in the role of educators in the educational process. The State should facilitate the upgrading of small rural schools into centres of local cultural life, where indigenous peoples' languages and traditions are maintained, and should facilitate the development of networking among such schools for the exchange and dissemination of the best educational practices and professional development of teachers in the field of culture sensitive education.

The Story (I)

Social Activism in Support of Culture Sensitive Education

The story of Maryam Aliyeva, a human rights activist, a blogger and a writer

Maryam is an author of a book on domestic violence in Caucasus based on the real stories of other women, and many articles and interviews social media about the violations of human rights. Being a young Muslim woman representing an ethnic minority in Russia, she is brave enough to support girls and women, their freedom of choice, and the right for education. This story shows how the patriarchal order can be challenged by a collective effort initiated by a courageous woman.

The story of Maryam Aliyeva, a human rights activist, *a blogger and a writer, demonstrates by the example of cases with a ban on wearing the hijab by Muslim female students, how attracting public attention to the problem through social networks can transform the situation and ensure equal access to* education *for representatives of groups subject to multiple discrimination.*

In Defense of the Right to Wear a Hijab by the Muslim Female Students

My name is Maryam Aliyeva, I am a human rights activist. I defend the rights of women and children and am involved in charity work. In January 2023, five female

students were expelled from Novocherkassk[4] Medical College for wearing hijabs. They studied well, they had no conflicts with other students. They were denied education only because of head hijabs… Lawyers from the National Association of Lawyers of Russia came to their aid, but the girls also turned to me, asking me to tell them more about this challenge. Then I decided to create a petition on Change.org and enlist the support of platform users.

It was all pretty simple—I scribbled a short text, indicated the recipients, picked up a picture and clicked publish. Then I distributed the link to the petition wherever I could. Here is the text of the petition addressed to the President of the Russian Federation V. V. Putin, the Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation V. N. Falkov and the Minister of Education of the Russian Federation S. S. Kravtsov:

«The pedagogical Council of the medical college in Novocherkassk expelled five female students for wearing hijabs, earlier it was reported about similar punitive methods at the Astrakhan Medical Academy, as well as in schools throughout Russia. Article 28 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation establishes freedom of conscience and religion for citizens and states: "Everyone is guaranteed freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, including the right to profess individually or jointly with others any religion or not to profess any, freely choose, have and disseminate religious and other beliefs and act in accordance with them".

Hijab is a sacred duty of every Muslim woman. To forbid schoolgirls and female students to wear it means to deprive them of their education! The consequences of such bans can be the most terrible not only for Muslim women, but also for a country with more than 40 million Muslims. The ban on wearing the hijab contradicts the laws of the Russian Federation, is nothing more than an insult to the feelings of believers and infringement of rights on religious grounds. In the modern world, in a legal society, such prohibitions cannot exist!

They violate the rights, infringe on a huge group of people, literally squeezing Muslim women out of social life, depriving them of basic rights and freedoms. All this will affect not only the emergence of new national and religious conflicts, but will also have a detrimental impact on the socio-economic life of the country.

We demand:

- to cancel the order on the expulsion of 5 female students from the medical college in Novocherkassk;
- stop the harassment of Muslim girls in schools and universities by the heads of educational institutions;
- prohibit the introduction of such rules in the charters of educational institutions that offend the feelings of believers, infringe on the rights and freedoms on religious grounds, violate the Constitutional rights of people».

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[4] Novocherkassk is a city in Rostov Oblast in South of Russia, located near the Don River. Novocherkassk is best known as the cultural capital of the Don Cossacks. Population is approximately 200,000.

The results: 11,275 people supported my appeal, mass media wrote about it, and the link was reposted by many communities on social networks. Thanks to the resonance that this story and the petition created, the Human Rights Commissioner in Chechnya[5] commented on the topic. And then the Ministry of Education got involved—the students were not only reinstated in their studies, but also allowed to wear the hijab in medical college. Everything was resolved without a trial, and as the lawyers emphasise, publicity played a decisive role.

This is a huge contribution to the fight against discrimination and violation of women's rights. Such a precedent gives hope to all Muslim girls to get education. But complaints about such discrimination on religious grounds continue. In another rural school in Dagestan, a teacher, on the contrary, forbade girls to wear headscarves. Moreover, he could not completely ban them, and he mocked them in every possible way, kicked them out of lessons. We have involved law enforcement agencies. I do not know if he was fired or not, but the problem was solved, and he did not do this anymore, although he had been doing this for several years before.

There were also reverse cases when girls were not allowed to study if they were without a hijab. In September 2021, a resonant video appeared on social networks about how the head teacher at the school in the village of Majalis of the Kaitag district of Dagestan[6] lets only those girls enter the school who came in headscarves into classes. The actions of the head teacher caused the indignation of the parents of the students. Officials of the Ministry of Education of Dagestan explained that even if the hijab is part of the school uniform, its absence cannot be grounds for suspension from classes.

The requirement to wear hijabs at school, as well as the requirement to take them off, is an obvious violation of girls' rights to education. And I want to emphasise that in the fight for justice and against discrimination, it is worth using all available tools. The petition is one of them. As my story shows, the petition creates resonance and publicity, and ultimately these factors can solve a difficult situation. So, if you encounter a problem, try to create a petition and find supporters on the platform. This could be the beginning of your winning story.

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[5] Chechnya is a republic of Russian Federation situated in the North Caucasus, close to the Caspian Sea.

[6] Dagestan is a republicof Russian Federationsituated in the North Caucasus, along the Caspian Sea.

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Inclusive Culture

The part presents the cultural context in which the processes of development of inclusive education in Russia are implemented. The representation of the contradictions of an inclusive society and social activism aimed at maintaining inclusion are discussed in detail in the first chapter based on the analysis of Russian media. The story by Denise Roza, Founder, and Director of Perspektiva, a Russian Disabled People's Organization talks about the mission of Perspektiva to fully include people with disabilities in all spheres of society, as well as to cultivate inclusive values in the culture of Russian society. The part ends with a paragraph devoted to the analysis of representations of the problem of social, including educational, inequality in school textbooks, which are considered as a source of a normative view of the issues covered earlier. Understanding how the authoritative—pedagogical—community invites children to reflect on the problems of inequality, social vulnerability and how it sees and represents inclusion allows us to reconstruct the deep cultural layers that are important for the dissemination of inclusive culture in the Russian school and society as a whole.

Chapter 12
Cultural Context of Inclusion: Media Representations and Activism

Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova, Daria Prisiazhniuk, and Olga Kosova

Abstract The chapter explicates the cultural foundations of the current public controversy regarding inclusive education. Based on the analysis of the ideological and cultural heritage of the Soviet era and the attempts made by NGOs and activists to form an inclusive discourse in modern Russian media, the authors present the content of contradictions in the attitude of Russian society to social and educational inclusion and the prospects for their constructive resolution. The discussions presented here may be relevant for other countries that are undergoing transition towards inclusive education.

Introduction

On the 1st June, 2022, an International Children's Day, the parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (thereafter ASD) took part in the Round Table arranged by the Ministry of Social Policy in Ekaterinburg, the Russian city situated near the geographical border between Europe and Asia. A non-profit service leader and other parents have strongly criticised the authorities for the lack of access to services that their children need in order to develop, go to school and integrate into society. The news about this event was presented in the regional online media in a sarcastic voice:

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'…in Ekaterinburg, parents of children with autism took the minister hostage… almost disrupted the round table of the regional ministry… turned the event into a rally and made a scandal…' (Popova, 2022). The journalist hints that the parents acted as terrorists and characterises their behavior as defiant. Such publications using expressive language not only evoke emotional reactions from the audience, but symbolically fix the attitude towards inclusion advocacy as an action that hinders the otherwise effective governance.

The transition to inclusion in Russia a decade ago still provokes a lot of debates. A cultural context for inclusion is gradually created due to the growth of awareness about barriers and disabilities, challenges of the development of infrastructure to support children, their parents, and adults with special needs and disabilities (thereafter SEND) to widen their opportunities for life in society. However, not all parents of children with SEND share the same opinion about the necessity for their child to study in a mainstream school. The disputes have not subsided for many years, and conflicts flare up in the media over and over again. To better understand the structural reasons for this culture struggle on inclusion, it is important to take into account the influence of the socialist legacy with its ideologies of segregation and paternalism, on the one hand, and the rise of neoliberal ideologies in modern Russian social policy, on the other hand.

The epistemological turn towards inclusion has created a clash of ideologies. Conservative circles, such as the All-Russian Parental Resistance (*Vserossiiskoe roditel'skoe soprotivlenie*, *RVS*) movement, regularly publish criticism of the idea of inclusive education depicting it as a harmful Western influence. The destruction of the Soviet system of special educational institutions for children with SEND, according to the RVS website, "could not and did not bring a positive effect, but only allowed officials to pretend that they were following the progressive Western direction, that allows them to report with the rise of quantitative indicators and receive more funding" (RVS, 2020). In such messages, "Western" ideals are opposed to Soviet principles of isolating children with SEND in special institutions. The inherited culture of segregation, coupled with a legacy of non-recognition of the citizenship rights of all, created a path dependency, facilitating the reproduction of exclusion at different levels of the education system (Kalinnikova Magnusson & Walton, 2021). Other claims originate from neoliberal ideology along with market economic reforms. Russia is not the only example of such a struggle. Other countries in Eastern Europe (Kaščák & Strouhal, 2023) and developing countries (Costello, 2010) are in transition to inclusive education manoeuvre between post-socialist, humanistic and neoliberal discourses of school inclusion.

In this chapter, we analyse the cultural context of inclusion based on media representations in Russia. We will start with a brief overview of the Soviet context in order to inform a reader more generally about media imagery of children with SEND, their access to education and the resources of families. Since the Chapter One 'History and current state of inclusive general education *for children with special needs in the Russian Federation'* reveals the evolution of policy towards children with SEND and the reform towards inclusive education, we do not dwell on the policy context in detail but pay more attention to the change in the cultural context in the post-Soviet period.

During this time, many changes in the policy and cultural context took place with the participation and influence of public organisations, including associations of parents of children with SEND. The way that cinema and media depict disability, children with SEND and their parents, on the one hand, reflects the policy and societal attitudes towards children with SEND and their families, and on the other hand, contributes to the cultural stereotypes creation and influences on social settings. Having discussed the findings in the research literature and the prospects for analysing media representations, we substantiate our approach and present the procedure and results of the study of representations of inclusive education in the Russian print media. In conclusion, we summarise the results of the study.

Children with SEND in Soviet Society and Culture

Children with SEND in the Soviet period were educated in specialised schools, but many of them with intellectual disabilities and difficulties in verbal communication were considered to be incapable of learning [*neobuchaemye*] and excluded from education. If their abilities were considered sufficient, children with SEND would be enrolled in boarding schools with a program adapted for certain disabilities: schools for the deaf, blind, with 'mental delay' [*umstvennaia otstalost'*]. However, resources were distributed very unevenly, much determined by the economic status of the region (Anderson et al., 1987). Support for families was not provided until the end of the 1970s, when the category "disabled child" appeared in Soviet legislation and benefits began to be assigned to mothers of children 'disabled from childhood' [*invalid s detstva*]. Parents often abandoned their children with SEND, leaving them in maternity hospitals or placing them in residential institutions because of the lack of support.

Representations were framed by propaganda, and mass culture, where cinema and the official print media, radio and television played a central role. In the mainstream Soviet fiction and documentary films, characters with disabilities were not often featured, mostly they were disabled soldiers or workers. Until the time of political restructuring, so called *perestroika* (1985), children and women with disabilities did not appear on the screen (Iarskaia-Smirnova & Romanov, 2011). They did not fit into the framework of the Soviet political and aesthetic project with its characteristic heroism of war and labour (McCallum, 2015). While previously Soviet cinema disability symbolised strength of mind, sacrifice, national identity, since the *perestroika*, a radical symbolism of protest and rebellion appeared. The heroines of Ayan Shakhmaliyeva's film "It Happened Near the Sea" (Shakhmaliyeva, 1989), released two years before the collapse of the USSR, were teenage girls, residents of rehabilitation institutions for children with spine disability, where they undergo examination and treatment under the vigilant supervision of doctors and educators. The rehab institution is shown here as a metaphor for a totalitarian society, with its strict rules and definitions. The girls united around their bright leader Svetlana, fighting against the system. Soviet visual culture in the late USSR changed its appearance, reflected

and influenced the social changes and used new expressive means. In this film, the images of girls with disabilities worked as a metaphor for a challenge, a violation of gendered and able-bodied hierarchies.

Post-soviet policy and culture

Civil society organisations, including parental associations, played an important role in the transformation of politics and culture in the post-Soviet era not only in Russia but also in other countries of post-Communism (Makoelle, 2020). The model of special education for children with SEND survived the collapse of the USSR and began to be reformed in Russia only after 2012. However, the first steps towards inclusive education began in 1990s. Parents' associations for children with disabilities appeared in Russia in those days joined by a number of professionals in child psychology, pedagogy, health care and rehabilitation. Such associations, including the Center for Curative Pedagogy (thereafter CCP) and the NGO Perspektiva, have played an important role in bringing about a shift towards values of inclusion, influencing government policy and public opinion, generating new interpretations of disability and offering new opportunities in socialising and learning (Iarskaia-Smirnova & Goriaynova, 2022).

The schools that practised inclusive education since the late 1990s, have been doing it as experiments of the federal or local ministries of education with support of non-governmental projects and active participation of parents. Although the legislation did not forbid children with disabilities to study at regular schools in those years, there was no national policy or law regulating the mainstreaming of children, and no services or support staff were guaranteed (Roza, 2009: 266).

International context shaped the implementation of legislation on inclusive education in Russia. Federal Law on Education #273 which was the first Russian legislation to mention inclusion was adopted on December 29, 2012, the same year Russia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (thereafter CRPD). The same year, on May 7, 2012, Decree of the President of the Russian Federation #599 'On the measures to implement state policy in the field of education and science' was issued. This Decree introduced a per capita financing system of education, the transition which began in the format of pilot projects in several regions in 2004 (Bychkov, 2008).

In fact, inclusive education was introduced along with a neoliberal reform that prioritised efficiency and cost-cutting. However, the per capita financing system of schools remained imperfect, especially in the transition from special education to inclusion (Alekhina & Zaretsky, 2010). Special education institutions were reformed, closed, and merged with mainstream schools, whose resources turned out to be insufficient for inclusion. Mainstream school principals and teachers lacked the skills, knowledge, and regulations to provide educational services to children with a variety of SEND. The progressive idea of inclusive education was planted on the unprepared ground.

In addition, the parents themselves often did not understand what the best way for their children with SEND would be to study and live. Especially it was true for many families of children with SEND with low social economic status and weak bridging social capital. Inequality and availability of services in Russia vary and depend on the region of residence (Kulagina, 2019). The most accessible and diverse support is concentrated in megacities: Moscow and St. Petersburg. The movement towards inclusive education is seriously hampered in the context of a lack of resources and deep structural inequality.

However, the capacity of parental associations gradually grew. In 2001, the National Coalition of Russian Disabled Organisations "For Education for All" as a result of interregional partnership projects to promote independent living in 1997–2001 at the initiative of the NGO Perspektiva. The coalition included more than 30 organisations in different Russian regions. The activists held events to promote inclusive values and culture. Young people with disabilities (thereafter PWD) conducted training on SEND issues for children and teachers in mainstream schools. NGOs shared experiences, information, films, teaching aids and programs on inclusion, monitored and consulted on accessibility issues, conducted information campaigns "Children should learn together", educating teachers, administrators, politicians and policymakers, as well as the wider community on disability and inclusive education (UNICEF, 2012: 60).

In such projects, parents of children with disabilities were not supported in their leadership development, awareness raising, and cooperation with schools to improve educational opportunities for children with SEND. They also acted as trainers, activists and consultants to support and defend the rights of other parents (Roza, 2009). In 2018, the All-Russian Organisation of Parents of Disabled Children was created, and by 2021 its regional branches were already operating in 75 regions (VORDI, 2021). During the years of reforming the school system, parents voiced their positions and questions in various ways: they went to rallies, participated in polls, gave interviews to journalists, spoke in their own blogs and channels, and took part in public councils to consult the government.

Public opinion polls in Russia show a gradual increase in awareness of inclusion and the level of acceptance of inclusive education. Judging by opinion poll data from 2010 to 2016, increased agreement is observed with the idea that teaching special needs children alongside other classmates is beneficial to the development of all students (Fond podderzhki detei, nakhodyashchikhsya v trudnoi zhiznennoi situatsii, 2017). This shift can be explained by media campaigns, and the wide process of restructuring of schools to facilitate the joint education of regular and special needs children (Iarskaia-Smirnova & Goriaynova, 2022). According to VTsIOM (2021) survey, 66% of Russians positively consider inclusive education.

Nonetheless, parents, their children, and adults with disabilities still experience stigmatisation in cultural contexts. For example, post-soviet fiction films often reproduce stereotypes about children with SEND as victims and an unbearable burden for the family and society, and their parents are shown as unhappy, voiceless, powerless in front of the blows of fate, or heroically fighting loners (Iarskaia-Smirnova, Romanov, 2014). The residents of children's home for deaf-blind-mute children

appeared in the film "The Night is Bright" (2004) as eternal infants, subject to care and experiments. One boy's mother takes him to this institution because she does not understand her son, has failed to learn the language of communication. In many TV shows and films, a child with a disability appears as a challenge for parents: a test of their relationships, a choice between their career and the care of a child. Some images of the parents of disabled children carry the meaning of punishment for sins and overcoming ("The Serpent", 2002). The image of a girl with a disability acts as a metaphor for charismatic strength, gaining the ability to 'stand up for herself', to resist the imposed images of a victim and a cog of a system in the film 'Correction Class' (2014). And while her 'miraculous recovery' is one of the cliches in the imagery that has nothing to do with the realities of life of children with SEND, it is important that the film provides a sharp critique of a school as an unfriendly space of competition between children, cruelty and indifference of adults.

Media events and films often catalyse public scandals, thereby activating public discussion, and helping to articulate concepts and issues that have previously been silenced in the public agenda. The film 'Temporary Difficulties' (2018) about a child with cerebral palsy, whose father leaves him in the forest to 'survive', caused a flurry of criticism in public reactions, indignation from parents of children with disabilities, and other viewers. The film also had supporters who were convinced that disability was just a weakness and cowardice, which should be replaced by perseverance and discipline. The symbolic code of disability as rejection, sacrifice and weakness that must be overcome, frames intolerant ableist values and beliefs relevant to neo-liberal ideology encouraging competition, individualism and personal responsibility.

In post-Soviet Russia, new film works appeared, challenging established stereotypes in the society. Practitioners and researchers whose voice was noticeable in the public sphere played a big role in these changes: NGO activists, PWD, and parents of children with SEND. Since 2002, Perspektiva has been holding the Biennial International Disability Film Festival 'Breaking Down Barriers'. About 100 feature films and documentaries about disabled people from more than 20 countries are shown at each of the festivals, as well as screenings and discussions in inclusive schools are organised (UNICEF, 2012: 60). These films are not for mass distribution, but some of them are becoming more popular, for example, the documentary 'About Love' (2003) by the famous Russian director Tofik Shakhverdiyev was discussed in schools at social studies classes.

The reasons for stigmatisation are ignorance, misunderstanding, and fear caused by stereotypes that are often spread in the media. These stereotypes catalyse social exclusion of people with SEND. Over the past decade, several projects have been implemented in Russia on how to properly present and discuss disability issues in the media, for example, the STOPSTIGMA project #Time to change (ASI, 2017). The way society sees disabilities and inclusion changes their meaning over time, and is it very important to convey information to people in an accessible and correct form. Well-known public figures, TV stars, and bloggers who are parents of children with SEND talk about their daily work with public opinion. The media largely

determine how attitudes are formed and public order regarding disability is consolidated (Goethals et al., 2022). In the next section, we will present a brief overview of existing studies of media representations of disability issues.

Media Representations of Persons with Disabilities and Their Parents

Mass media create discourses that could both facilitate and prevent institutional change in the field of inclusive education (Göransson & Bengtsson, 2023) as well as alter attitudes towards children with SEND. Thereby media discourses on inclusive education become a subject of research globally, and the research findings in one country could foster the development of this study area elsewhere. Much of the existing literature concerning media representations of children and adults with SEND and their families attends to its disablist discourse. This discourse is theorised in research in the key figurative categories of the other. Disability strategies use old medical discourses for this (Hodkinson, 2011). Characters with disabilities are contrasted with the norm and shown in terms of scarcity in Belgium (Goethals et al., 2022), given the role of patient or beneficiary in Indonesia (Priyanti, 2018). Media in different countries, when addressing the topic of disability, carry out othering as the construction of persons with disabilities as marginal, different from 'normal' and excluded from the privileged center or the 'top' (Kurbanov & Noskova, 2017; Milovanova & Svinkina, 2018). An alternative discourse is about an agent position of PWD and their families, but such topics usually are avoided in the studies. Over time, representations of PWD become more diverse, and the medical model is inferior to the social model of disability in discourses (Ciot & Van Hove, 2010; Devotta et al., 2013). However, it is difficult to change the persistent cultural cliches and prejudices of journalists themselves (Haller et al., 2006; Markina, 2015). On the one hand, it is important to raise awareness of the audience by critically highlighting the state of things, but if a discourse of rights and opportunities is muted or absent in media, then inclusion may be perceived as an unsolvable task (Walton & Mackenzie, 2020).

Political reforms are catalysing a surge of interest in targeted social groups. At the same time, the media often function as an arm of the state, legitimising unpopular reforms in public eyes (Briant et al., 2013). Media studies are not always limited by the content: some authors compare the representations with the social realities of the life of the depicted groups, and audience researchers analyse the attitude of PWD and their families to their representations in the media (Worrell, 2018; Younis et al., 2020). A study in Turkey (Dogutas, 2021) shows that with a positive image of PWD are beginning to appear in advertisements. However, this discourse contrasts with the values, requests and real experiences of PWD who face obstacles and restrictions in everyday life. Media can influence both alienation and cohesion of people with disabilities (Johanssen & Garrisi, 2020; Nelson, 2000). Respondents with disabilities interviewed in the United States believe that positive images, regardless

of their realism, lead to the strengthening of their identity, while negative ones—to the denial of identity (Zhang & Haller, 2013). When disablist representations turn to become public scandals (Verbilovich, 2018), they function as a new technology of constituting collectivities capable of advocating for themselves. Meanwhile, the issues of inclusive education and the agency of parents of children with SEND and civic associations as an alternative discourse remain largely understudied field of inquiry.

Research Question and Method

We are interested to know how inclusive education depicted in the Russian media over the past 15 years and what pros and cons of inclusion are highlighted there. We conducted content analysis of the six largest Russian print media. The dataset for analysis was derived from the full-text database of Russian mass media "Integrum" (http://www.integrumworld.com/). The newspapers were selected from three clusters: governmental (Rossiiskaia gazeta, thereafter RG, and Izvestia, thereafter Izv), liberal (Novaia gazeta, thereafter Novaya, and Nezavisimaia gazeta, thereafter NG), popular (Moskovskii Komsomolets, thereafter MK, and Komsomolskaia pravda, thereafter KP). Five of them are daily. Novaia Gazeta has been published three times a week and its license was totally stopped in September, 2022 after receiving an official status of 'foreign agent'.

The selection of articles was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, search queries were formed in order to select a dataset using the keywords for the period from 2005 to 2021. The time period is due to the fact that in the early 2000s several government documents on the education of children with SEND in mainstream schools were published (Decree, 2000; Letter, 2001; Concept, 2001). Since all selected newspapers have been available in the Integrum database since 2005, it was decided to analyse the data starting from this year.

In the second stage, reprints, legal acts and official reports were screened out, thus the only analytical and informational texts on inclusive education in Russia remained in the sample, while we were interested in those publications that mention parents of children with SEND. The final dataset contains 221 articles. The largest number of relevant data within the last 16 years was published in RG (61), and the smallest in Izv (23). All selected articles were coded. The total code sheet contained 42 codes from the following thematic blocks of analysis: inclusive education, parents of children with disabilities, NGOs in the development of inclusion in education as well as descriptive codes (the newspaper, date, authors etc.).

The coding and interpretation of data were carried out in the logic of thematic analysis (Guest et al., 2012). Primarily, we worked in line with quantitative thematic analysis, implemented in four stages. In the first stage, the initial acquaintance with the data was realised, and then in the second stage, the source codes were constructed. In the third stage, a search for topics was carried out, where the individual codes were combined into broader themes. In the fourth stage, clarification, description, and

labelling of the themes were implemented (Guest et al., 2012). As a result, each article was read multiple times and coded across all 42 codes. The quantitative thematic analysis was complemented by a qualitative analysis and interpretation of the content of the texts as well as the key themes. Further, in order to move from the analysis of language structures of individual sentences or phrases in order to understand the opinions and positions of the author, a sentiment analysis of publications was implemented. This kind of analysis is based on the notion that opinion includes a sentiment—positive, negative, or neutral—with respect to the target of opinion (Bing, 2012). The analysis of the tonality of publications was carried out by the authors by studying the lexemes used in the article in terms of their emotional valence. In order to decrease the level of subjectivity of interpretation, the study was conducted in iteration between the authors who have various personal and professional experiences regarding the issues of disabilities.

Results

Quantitative analysis shows several small peaks in the number of publications in all selected media in 2009 and 2013. In the liberal media, the share of publications of interest to us is significantly lower (26%) than in the other two clusters (38% and 36%). Publication peaks in 2009 and 2013 are the spikes in the number of articles in popular newspapers, KP and MK, these years account for 12% and 11% of the total number of relevant articles, respectively, which is explained by the adoption of landmark regulations on the eve (Fig. 12.1). Thus, in 2008, Russia signed the CRPD, and in 2012 it was ratified, and the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" regulating inclusive education in the country and the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation #599 'On measures to implement state policy in the field of education and science' was adopted.

We have grouped our sample into two periods: 2005–2011, and 2012–2021, due to the fact that the turning point in periodisation is 2012, the year of CRPD ratification and the adoption of the Law on Education. In all newspapers in the second period, there was a significant increase in the number of publications in our sample (Table 12.1).

About half of the publications do not use the term 'inclusive' or 'integrated' education. Until 2008, the concepts of 'accessible', 'universal', 'joint' education, 'studying with other children', and 'with healthy children' were used. The first mention of 'inclusive education' is found in a sample of a Russian newspaper in 2008 (Egorov, 2008), that is, in the year Russia signed the CRPD. Despite the fact that the concept of "integrated education" has been promoted by the Ministry of Education since 2001, this term was first heard in the media of our sample only in 2008 in the MK (School of Two Ends, 2008). In 2009, the concepts of 'inclusive education' and 'integrated' education were used in publications, while since 2010, 'integrated education' has been almost completely replaced by the term 'inclusive education'.
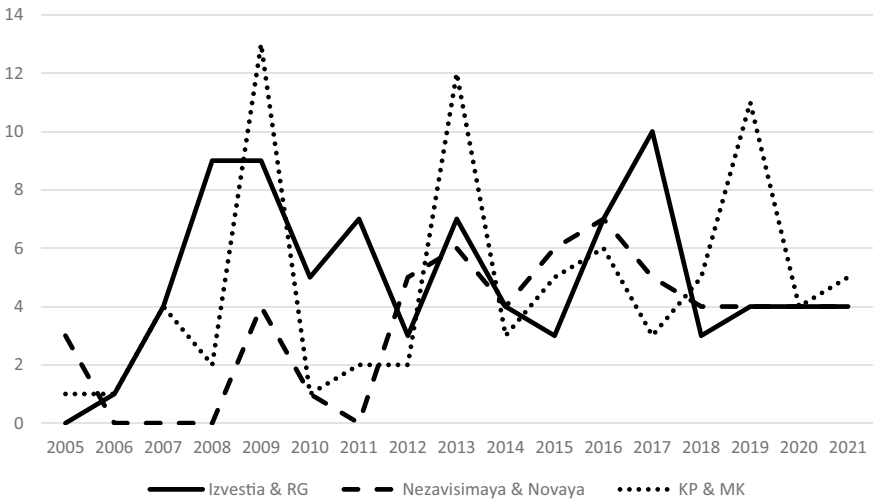
Fig. 12.1 Number of articles in three groups of media

Table 12.1 Distribution of relevant publications, by period and by newspaper clusters

Newspapers/Years	2005–2011	2012–2021
Izv & RG	35	49
NG & Novaya	8	49
KP & MK	24	56
Total	68	154

In general, the positive positions of parents towards inclusive education are most often represented in all clusters of publications, but the voice of critics is also noticeable, this is about a third of relevant publications in liberal and popular media and a quarter in pro–government media (Table 12.2).

The critical position of parents in relation to inclusive education has been manifested with the beginning of reforms, since 2012. In general, the opinions in support of and against inclusion in the sample fall into several groups, ranked by frequency

Table 12.2 Parents' positions on inclusive education in newspaper clusters

	Pros	Cons	Neutral	Total
Izv + RG	17	8	65	90
Izv + RG (%)	19	9	72	100
NG + Novaya	20	11	30	61
NG + Novaya (%)	33	18	49	100
KP + MK	26	9	54	89
KP + MK (%)	29	10	61	100

of occurrence. The arguments for and against inclusion are heterogeneous: within each cluster, there are ideas originating from different ideologies. We grouped the arguments against in the course of the analysis in accordance with the ideas of Booth and Ainscow's (2002) index of inclusion dimensions of politics-practice-culture. In the first place, there are claims about a culture at school which is less inclusive (and in society as a whole), in the second place there is a lack of school resources and a lack of support from the authorities, in the third place there is a lack of resources at the level of practice:

There is a less inclusive culture at school (46) aggression of children against people, fears and myths on the part of parents of non-disabled children, parents of children with SEND do not know their rights, and lack of inclusion in the country - Russians do not recognise a person with a disability as a full–fledged person, public disagreement with the ideas of inclusion as such.

Lack of resources at the policy level (41) shortage of funding, merging of schools, transition to per capita funding leads to staff reductions, teachers are not paid for additional workload, there is no prepared accessible environment at school, regional authorities do not support inclusion.

Lack of resources at the level of practice (34) lack of knowledge about teaching methods and materials, lack of skills and knowledge among teachers, inability to adapt curricula, and no well-established career routes for children with SEND.

Inclusion is supported primarily by the ideas of rights and opportunities, humanism, as well as claims about the benefits of inclusion for others:

Rights and opportunities (80) ensuring the right of children with SEND to quality education at all levels, a school near their home place, the opportunity to graduate from school and enter university, widening opportunities for PWD to actualise themselves and be useful in society.

Humanism (29) all children can study, communicate, and develop in a comfortable environment.

Advantages, benefits of inclusion for society as a whole (11) growth of the human capital of society, reduction of paternalistic and dependent attitudes.

Advantages, and benefits for non-disabled children (11) development of communication skills, tolerance, moral qualities, emotional intelligence, and mutual assistance among the non-disabled children who shall undergo 'moral training'.

Benefits for the state (9) education and employment of people with SEND reduce the financial burden on the budget.

Benefits for parents of children with SEND (2) an opportunity for parents of children with SEND to go to work, and live for themselves.

Who conducts the advocacy and in what ways? Representatives of the authorities and NGOs (41% and 30%) are shown as key factors of support for parents of children with SEND in the publications of pro-government media for the entire period under review. The role of officials is shown to be least significant in liberal newspapers (20%). Civil society organisations in liberal media most often (34%) act as a resource to support the demands of parents. Other parents of children with SEND, parents of able-bodied children, and school representatives are less frequently mentioned among the advocates or actors of support in all publications. However, in our sample,

there were 172 mentions of parents' actions as advocates of their positions. In most of these publications, we are talking about individual parents who give interviews, prepare petitions, and engage in volunteer activity in the interests of their child and other children. The majority (77%) of these mentions were found in the popular media, 65% in pro-government publications, and 55% in liberal ones. Collective actions are most often mentioned in the liberal media.

Following Toepler and Fröhlich (2020), we grouped the types of advocacies as follows. First of all, it is 'public advocacy' aimed to impact public opinion and views of people who are in charge of decision making in regards to the issues of inclusion. The articles mention round tables, discussions with scientists and professionals (24), interviews, posts, and other public forms of coverage of the problems of disabled children (45). The second type, 'program advocacy', aims to conduct changes for social groups and clients at the level of non-governmental and state-based programs and concrete services. To this type of advocacy, we attributed individual efforts to include a child in a school (29), participation in projects (5), charity activities, volunteering (3), establishment of a new non-profit service (2), seeking support from a church (1), participation in a public event (1). The third type, political advocacy, is related to advocating for civil rights and freedoms enshrined in the law at the local or federal level through appeals to the officials in the interests of social groups and individual clients. These strategies are the most frequently mentioned actions of parents: letters, appeals, petitions to authorities (56), as well as participation in rallies (7).

The discourse about the lack and gradual growth of inclusive culture in Russian society is often found in our sample as having strong explanatory potential, therefore, we decided to allocate it to a separate subgroup.

Culture of Inclusion

It is impossible to plant inclusion from above, one has to grow it, writes a journalist of Novaya Gazeta, pointing out that successful inclusion is expected where an initiative comes from the grassroots level. If an idea of inclusion is shared by 'the administrations of organisations, specialists and parents, if there is a service of psychological and pedagogical assistance, then inclusion may be real, not fictitious' (Lukyanova, 2014). The journalist of the NG continues the topic of inclusive culture in her reflections on parental resistance to inclusion. She raises the broader issues of an inclusive society: 'Scandals, rumours, battles of parents emerge here and there. …All this is due to the lack of a so-called inclusive culture in society (Gerasimova, 2019). After attending a seminar at the university she writes about inclusive culture as 'a presence of such an atmosphere in an educational institution that creates special relationships, values, cohesion' (Gerasimova, 2019).

Who is an agent of inclusive culture, an agent of social and cultural change? In some articles, public organisations of PWD, NGOs, professionals, schools, and inclusive theatres are depicted as such actors (School of Two Ends, 2008; Gorbacheva,

2009). Society is gradually changing its attitude towards people with special needs, but this is a long process. 'Invisible barriers still firmly rooted in people's heads', a journalist wrote (Feklistov, 2019). One of the arguments at the end of the period under review is the lack of enlightenment in society. The lack of inclusion in society leads to a lack of civilisation, fears and prejudices. Writing about a Russian cultural context in 2021, one journalist concludes: 'PWDs in Russia are still treated as dinosaurs. Everyone is embarrassed. But what if PWD were included from childhood, and were equal members of society, then such embarrassment, rejection, and fear would have definitely been less' (Krivyakina, 2021).

Media representations are the cultural context of inclusion, they reflect the state of affairs at the level of politics, and the attitude of society towards children and families of children with disabilities. Apart from contributing to the formation of cultural stereotypes and influencing social attitudes, the media promote the development of group identities voicing the opinions of those who historically were on the periphery of cultural ideas about the norm and priorities of the state social policy. In order to overcome the stigma and accept inclusion, Russia's society lacks education, services for PWD, and fruitful exchange between the media, professionals and civil society.

Conclusion

In our study, we sought to understand how the cultural and political structural contexts and human agency manifest themselves in media publications about inclusive education and what role these discourses attribute to parents and public associations. The arguments pro and counter inclusion are heterogeneous: within each frame there are ideas originating from different ideologies. In particular, both humanistic and human rights discourses and the neoliberal discourse of productivism sound in support of inclusion. People with disabilities, and parents of children with disabilities today create media representations themselves, communicate in the new social media, share experiences, formulate and achieve group goals, thus changing public opinion, and contributing to a sense of belonging and agency.

These findings contribute to the discussion of media discourses that are the push and pull factors of inclusive education. Evidence from Russia would be valuable in the development of the research, policy, and practice of inclusion in other countries in the transition towards inclusive education. This discussion may enhance an understanding of how tensions and struggles that arise in media discourses shape the cultural context of educational inclusion.

The Story (J)

Creating a Culture of Inclusion in Schools and Surrounding Communities

Denise Roza, Founder, and Director of Perspektiva, a Russian Disabled People's Organization talks about the Perspektiva mission for the full inclusion of people with disabilities in all spheres of society. The programs implemented by Perspektiva use the tools of art and education to help adolescents and youth with disabilities gain access to education and employment, as well as to raise awareness of the Russian society about a wide range of disability problems.

Denise Roza, Founder, and Director of *Perspektiva*, a Russian Disabled People's Organisations, talks about the programs implemented by *Perspektiva* to promote the ideas of inclusive culture and transform Russian education and society as a whole.

Perspektiva, founded in 1997, is a leading disabled people's organisation in Russia that has promoted an improved quality of life and the full inclusion of people with disabilities (PWDs) across Russia in their communities. We help teens and youth with disabilities to become more independent and to receive access to education and employment while also raising awareness about a wide range of disability issues. Our mission is the full inclusion of people with disabilities in all spheres of society. We often use the arts to promote our goals and a culture of inclusion in Russia. Some of our major projects are *the Biennial International Disability Film Festival Breaking Down Barriers,* our annual *Dance Marathon,* and *Theater Perspective.*

Theater Perspective

Every year since 2012, teenagers and young people with disabilities have participated in theater camps where they learn and do playwriting and stage acting under the guidance of professional playwrights and actors. After the plays are ready, professional theater directors stage the performances at one of the best theater venues in Moscow. Since 2015, the stage directors have included young participants with disabilities in the performances.

The work in the summer theater camp continues for five days, when the participants are divided into two teams (a team that is engaged in acting under the guidance of professional actors, and a team in which young people write plays under the guidance of professional playwrights), create scripts, and improve their acting skills.

In our youth theater camps, there is always an atmosphere of mutual understanding, personal support, community and acceptance of differences, but also excitement about creating something new and powerful. At the beginning of the theater camp, the participants discuss and volunteer for a particular task that they will have in addition to participating in camp workshops. For example, two people might serve as DJs and play music at evening gatherings, or one person might volunteer to hold the morning exercise sessions, others might volunteer to help in the cafeteria with anyone who needs help with their tray. At the beginning of the five-day theater camp, each participant receives a piece of paper with the name of another participant and throughout camp activities gives small gifts to this person (the camp organisers also participate). The identity of the secret friend is revealed at the end of the theater camp event.

Later, the camp participants use the knowledge and skills they have acquired in the process of rehearsals, to put on an inclusive performance based on the plays created during the camp activities. The stage directors consult with the playwrights about their plays and the roles in the plays are performed by professional actors alongside teens or youth with disabilities, which makes the performances truly inclusive. This project helps to unleash their creative potential and to increase the self-confidence of youth with disabilities.

On the day of the Premiere of *Theater Perspective*, the playwrights and budding actors with disabilities are the focus of attention for hundreds of people. The youth with disabilities sees for the first time how their story and creative ideas unfold on a stage in collaboration with a professional stage director and actors. They see how their play and story are received by the audience and get recognition and positive feedback from the audience. They also see how a situation they have been involved in as a disabled person looks from a different perspective.

Based on the results of each *Theatre Perspective*, an inclusive team of leaders is formed from among the youth with disabilities, actors and directors who have participated in the project. Each of them discovers something new and important for themselves. In addition, almost everyone becomes a friend of our NGO *Perspektiva*. This is important because professional performers have their own fan base and can carry the values of inclusion into society by their own example.

Today, our *Theater Perspective* takes place twice per year in Moscow—one performance is produced with teens with disabilities, the other with youth with disabilities. And the *Theater Perspective*, with support from *Perspektiva*, has been replicated in 5 other Russian cities.

Breaking Down Barriers International Disability Film Festival

The Biennial International Film Festival *Breaking Down Barriers* is *Perspektiva*'s signature program and Russia's only international disability film festival. *Perspektiva* has been organising the *Breaking Down Barriers* Film Festival in Russia since 2002. More than 800 films from 55 countries have been screened at the festival. More than 40,000 people have attended the Moscow Festival and more than 100,000 people have attended the Echo Regional Festivals in more than 30 cities of Russia. Every Festival has a prestigious jury with such famous film directors as Nikolay Lebedev, Vladimir Kott, Alexander Mitta, Vladimir Menshov, Sergey Mereshnichenko, Andrey Eshpay, Sergey Gorvorukhin, Vladimir Veledinsky, Vadim Abdrashitov and Jon Alpert.

The festival is truly inclusive as all screenings are accessible for all audiences with an accessible venue, audio description, captions, sign language translation and interpretation from many languages into Russian. The festival features films of a wide range of genres of different lengths from documentary to fiction and animation. The festival features authentic stories that are moving and entertaining, that make you laugh and cry and empathise with the main characters. In 2022, the *Breaking Down Barriers* Film Festival was held for the eleventh time. Its program included 104 films from 32 countries, which were watched by more than 3000 public audience viewers. In 2022, a record number of Russian films were received and screened at the festival. After each film, a Question-and-Answer session (both online and offline) was held with the film directors and main characters. Also in 2022, the film directors and main actors/characters traveled to Moscow from France, Armenia, Brazil, Iran, Japan, Argentina, Venezuela, India, Kazakhstan and many cities of Russia.

"We all are so different, and everyone has the right to self-expression. The whole path of civilization is one from intolerance to acceptance. The *Breaking Down Barriers* Film Festival breaks down these barriers with such enthusiasm, passion, and wit. It helps us to be kinder and more accepting of each other", said Nikolai Lebedev, a well-known film Russian film director and the 2022 Festival's Jury Chairperson.

Festival Screenings for Children

It should be noted that special attention is paid to the preparation of an inclusive program for children. We look for films in which the main characters are children and teenagers with disabilities. These films are captioned, dubbed and audio-described.

Traditionally, the Festival program for children is held in the morning hours and is conducted by experienced trainers from *Perspektiva*'s Inclusive Education Department. Children with and without disabilities from the city's schools are invited to attend. After screening a film, a discussion is held with the children. As a rule, approximately 500 children and teens with and without disabilities participate in Festival screenings.

This is just the beginning, as additional screenings of children's films are organised in local schools after the festival is completed.

Disability Awareness Trainings at Schools

Since 1998, *Perspetiva* has been leading disability awareness lessons in mainstream schools for children of different ages. When we started these lessons, inclusive education was still unheard of in Russia. These disability awareness lessons are led by youth with disabilities who have been through an intensive training course. The goal is to present to children the topic of disability and to discuss with them the barriers that disabled people face and how to remove these barriers. They also learn about the lives of people with disabilities—their abilities, interests, aspirations, and dreams.

There are a series of three interactive lessons that differ, depending on the age of the children. The topics of these interactive lessons are the same, but there are differences in the methods that are used to present the topic. Topics include a discussion of the different types of social, educational and physical barriers that people with disabilities face and how to remove these barriers. The children learn about technical aids, sign language, the braille alphabet, goal ball, sitting volleyball, wheelchair rugby, people with disabilities in different professions, and more. During the lessons, our trainers use video, photos, books in Braille, parasports equipment, a white cane, and more to give children hands-on experience.

In addition to these inclusive lessons, there are parasports days with a disabled athlete, professional orientation days with a disabled professional, a screening of a Disability Festival film, and inclusive hands-on exercises for students and teachers.

Finally, children have the opportunity to meet and ask questions of young adults with disabilities—the disability awareness trainers. The children ask the trainers about their hobbies, favorite movies or books, family, or friends. Inclusive film, theater, and disability awareness training helps us to develop a culture of inclusion at all schools and in surrounding communities.

Feedback from a School Administrator and Children

"We believe that holding inclusive lessons in mainstream schools is necessary. These lessons have changed the attitudes of children towards people with disabilities and

have helped them overcome their stereotypes. Our students are no longer afraid to talk about people with disabilities." Principal of High School No. 783, Mr. Golomazov.

"I would like to make friends with my peers with a disability, we could play together, watch a movie, and I could help my friend when he needs it." Student 4 "A" class, school number 305, Katya Grishchenko.

"I never thought that people with disabilities could play different sports or work and have families. Now I know that they can do all this just like everyone else. I really enjoyed the classes and the instructors." Student 3 "B" class, school number 302, Masha Antipova.

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Chapter 13
Textbooks as Tools for Inclusion or Exclusion: Representation of Socially Vulnerable Groups in Secondary School Textbooks

Maria Kozlova (ORCID)

Abstract This chapter analysed the representations of the challenges of social inequality and inclusion in school textbooks of Social Studies. A comparison of textbooks published in the last decade and earlier made it possible to present trends in the transformation of normative discourse in relation to different categories of vulnerable children. The identified trends are explained in the context of the content of legislative changes in Russian social and educational policy. This makes it possible to clarify the nature of moral attitudes which may be transmitted to children in a hidden curriculum. Considering textbooks as a section of literature that demonstrates not only the dominant paradigm of a particular discipline but also the discourse of power, we first pose a series of research questions and present evidence from empirical research. Thereafter, examples of the representation of socially vulnerable groups (first people with disabilities, then people with low socio-economic status) are analysed in relation to social policy measures taken. In conclusion, the findings are presented. Those could be of particular interest to countries in the post-soviet education space with a similar educational background and policy context.

Introduction

Textbooks present the "official knowledge of the communities" (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991), and contain behavioural patterns, norms and rules that adults want to convey to future generations to build the entire social order and form a common understanding of collective identity and purpose. So, textbooks can be considered as a branch of literature that demonstrates not only the dominant paradigm of a certain discipline but also a power discourse.

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If it is assumed that the school textbook determines what is worthy of being "seen" how it should be perceived correctly, and what should go unnoticed for aesthetic, political and social reasons, turning to the analysis of the content of the school textbook, we asked the following questions: "How does the textbook define educational and social inclusion?", "How does the textbook model contexts and determine the subjects of social participation and inclusion?", "What kind of attitude to individuals/groups with special needs does the textbook translate?". Our research is aimed at understanding the moral and structural aspects of the presentation of socially vulnerable groups in educational and broader—social—inclusion in school textbooks.

"Vision Mode", Proposed by a School Textbook, as a Politically-Based Means of Forming a Student's Personality

The school, participating in the creation of what society recognises as legitimate and truthful (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991), forms the personality and strengthens the moral order. In such a discourse, schools are the locus of contested ideas and symbols of collective self-understanding, providing a basis on which knowledge, culture, faith and morality are taken for granted.

In accordance with the Federal Standard adopted in 2014 and effective from 1.09.2016, a child can study at any educational institution of the parents' choice (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, 2014). Thus, educational inclusion is proclaimed and enshrined within the legal framework. However, the enhancement of real social inclusion in school requires the restructuring of the system of value orientations and moral norms of both the teaching and expert community, as well as parents and all participants in the educational process. However, publicly in Russia there are forms of contradictory agenda for achieving unity due to the symbolic exclusion of "others". This is how the transformation of the concept of the "welfare state" is initiated and supported in the context of "social protection of those who belong to an ethnically defined community and have made a contribution to the community" (Kitschelt, 1997, p. 14) and, thus, the trend of exclusion—"welfare chauvinism" (Mewes & Mau, 2013; Reeskens & Van Orschoot, 2012)—is spreading, supporting national solidarity through the exclusion of minorities, which directly opposes the idea of social inclusion.

Education has become one of the most discussed institutions focused on inclusion as a value and social norm, the range of functions of which includes the transmission of this norm to society. The normative models laid down by educational institutions, forming a common understanding of collective identity and goals, determine the trends of social transformations. This may promote pluralism, humanity, conformism or intolerance. It is natural that studies of education emphasise the importance of ideological factors and, more focused, moral interests, which, along with economic

and political, are understood as having their own impact and orientation (Dill & Hunter, 2010), since fundamental ideas about the nature of "bad" and "good" form and support a wide range of motives for individual and collective actions.

The interpretations of social phenomena and processes presented by the textbook have the character of a canon—"glasses" that educate the eye. The bases of social categorisation transmitted through textbooks become the foundation of management, maintaining or transforming the social order, and (re)producing or overcoming existing social inequalities (Tilly, 1998).

Based on the fact that the school textbook, along with the mass media, determines what is worthy of mention and discussion, how it should be perceived correctly, and what should go unnoticed for aesthetic, political and social reasons, it is important to analyse representations of socially vulnerable groups and the phenomenon and practices of inclusion in textbooks.

Methodology

This chapter is based on the result of the study of the analysis of the content of textbooks published by the publishing house "Prosveshchenie" ("Enlightenment"). "Prosveshchenie" is the oldest Russian publishing house of educational literature (it was very prominent in education textbook production during Soviet times). It produced the largest number of textbooks in the Russian Federation, according to which up to 85% of the country's schoolchildren were trained (Top 30 publishers by circulation volume, 2019). In this study, the subject of "Social Studies" for grades 5–11 subject areas were chosen:

- Social Studies. 5th grade/L.N. Bogolyubov (ed.). Moscow: "Prosveshchenie", 2019.
- Social Studies. 6th grade/L.N. Bogolyubov (ed.). Moscow: "Prosveshchenie", 2019.
- Social Studies. 7th grade/L.N. Bogolyubov (ed.). Moscow: "Prosveshchenie", 2019.
- Social Studies. 8th grade/L.N. Bogolyubov (ed.). Moscow: "Prosveshchenie", 2019.
- Social Studies. 9th grade/L.N. Bogolyubov (ed.). Moscow: "Prosveshchenie", 2019.
- Social Studies. 10th grade/L.N. Bogolyubov, A.Yu. Lazebnikova (eds.). Moscow: "Prosveshchenie", 2019.
- Social Studies. 11th grade/L.N. Bogolyubov, A.Yu. Lazebnikova (eds.). Moscow: "Prosveshchenie", 2020.

The analysis included sets of textbooks published after 2014 (2019–20). In some cases, to demonstrate the dynamics of social norms, we used the content of textbooks (the same academic discipline, the same publisher, the same authors) published before 2014. The choice of these periods is due to the fact that in 2014, changes were made

to the content of school textbooks in accordance with the Federal State Educational Standard that had changed by that time, the Ministry of Education evaluated all school textbooks, and based on its results, a federal list of textbooks approved for use in schools was compiled (the next such action-the re-classification of textbooks-took place in 2021, but according to these-the newest—at the time of the study, Russian schoolchildren had not yet been taught, so the kits published in 2021 are not included in the analysis).

Developing an Analysis Criterion and Analysis Approach

We considered not isolated cases of mentioning inclusion and socially vulnerable groups, but texts or fragments. The result of the first stage of the analysis was the grouping of the entire array of texts into mentioning and not mentioning "socially vulnerable groups". The set of textbooks for grades 5–9 includes 84 fragments, and for grades 10–11–19, there is a total of 103 textual fragments. The topic of social vulnerability was narrowly represented in textbooks published before 2014 (73 fragments).

To characterise the text (article), the following aspects were recorded in the textbook:

(1) Subjects: These include individuals and social groups or impersonal social structures: organizations or legislative authorities.
(2) Reasons and solutions: What the article is mainly focused on: solving the problem or analyzing its causes.

Results

The results of a quantitative analysis of the representation of socially vulnerable categories of the population in social studies textbooks are shown in Table 13.1.

According to the data presented in Table 13.1, less than half (38%) of mentions of socially vulnerable categories are centred on the subject, i.e. they are a narrative of a descriptive nature that does not contain an analytical statement of the reasons or recommendations for overcoming the situation. Most of the texts include normative prescriptions or a description of legal documents (which is typical for textbooks intended for senior grades), as well a description of state measures and social policy programs aimed at overcoming the situation of discrimination and vulnerability of a particular category, i.e. focused on real or potential solutions. However, depending on the discussion of a particular category, the emphasis on reasons and solutions differs.

Table 13.1 Frequency of references to socially vulnerable groups in social studies textbooks (grades 5–11) (absolute number/ % of the total number of analyzed texts)

Categories		Frequency of references
Socially vulnerable groups	People with disabilities	36/35
	Representatives of ethnic and cultural minorities	21/20
	People with low socio-economic status	26/25
	Orphaned children and those left without parental care	7/7
	Large families	4/4
	Single-parent families	7/7
including	Focusing on solutions	15/15
	Focusing on the causes	48/47

Let us consider concrete examples of the representation of the groups most often mentioned in textbooks: people with disabilities and people with low socio-economic status (considered in textbooks in the chapters on economics, in the sections "Poverty").[1]

Representation of People with Disabilities

The textbook for the 6th grade includes the most detailed representation of the social situation, including education, and people with disabilities, devoting a separate section to this topic. However, the textbook begins the introduction to this topic earlier—in the section "Is it possible to influence heredity?", including cases describing special education for children with disabilities: "…*there is a school for deafblind children. It is very difficult to imagine how a person who does not hear, does not see and does not speak can not only live, but also work, study, draw, compose poetry. But there is a group of scientists in Russia who teach such children to live a normal, full, creative life*", "*The girl Olya lived in the world. At the age of five she lost her sight, hearing, and then lost her speech. Olya was brought up in a special school-hospital, where she was taught to live without sight and hearing. Thanks to her great willpower, constant studies, and hard work, Olga Ivanovna Skorokhodova not only lived a full life, but also became a famous scientist, writer, and poet*" (6 gr., p. 13). The story ends with questions addressed to readers: "What qualities helped O. Skorokhodova to show her abilities? What role did the help of other people play in her life?", the discussion of which, to some extent, prepares readers for a more holistic representation of the topic. Thus, at the first mention of the topic of disability, we encounter elements of a glorifying discourse and the introduction of the topic

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[1] The representation of ethnic and cultural minorities in legal and pedagogical discourses is considered in the chapter "Inclusion and culture-sensitive education" of this publication.

of disability into the public space. However, if the second of the above fragments (about O. Skorokhodova) describes a fact related to the period when the practice of inclusive education was impossible, and all education for people with disabilities was of a special nature, then the first fragment describes special educational institutions in modern Russia: on the one hand, it minimises the psychological distance between schoolchildren without SEN-textbook readers and their peers with SEN, on the other hand, it fixes the organisational, structural distance. Herewith this discourse of hero-isation of people with disabilities living an ordinary life: those who "overcame", and became "the same as everyone else", "despite …" (the list of common cliches can be continued), does not bring anything good for social practice: such presentation of the material does not remove negative stereotypes regarding disability in general — on the contrary, it shows "exceptions" and through their "insignia" focuses on the "infirmity" of everyone else.

The section "When abilities are limited" opens with questions for discussion in the classroom: "*How can I help people with disabilities? What special needs do these people have?*" (6 gr., p. 40) and offers different interpretations of the concept of "abilities": "*In Ozhegov's Explanatory Dictionary, the word "abilities" is explained as a means, a condition, a circumstance necessary for the implementation of something. <…> Different people have different means, conditions and circumstances of life, study, and work. Some jumps better than others and run faster than others. And some guys are not allowed to run or jump. Health does not allow it. Their abilities are limited*" (6 gr., p. 41). Thus, the textbook relates the state of health to "circumstances", defining it as a factor that must be taken into account, but it is impossible to influence it.

However, further in the section "Limited abilities: about what they are, and those who try to overcome them" (pp. 42–49), the stories of the social success of people with disabilities are presented: both contemporaries (E. Smirnov, a participant in the TV show "Dancing", A. Vostrikov, a champion of Russia and the world in gymnastics among people with disabilities) and historical figures (I. Arnold, a hard-of-hearing artist who founded a boarding school for teaching deaf-mute children from poor families in the middle of the nineteenth century, in fact laying the foundations of special education in Russia, E. Asadov, poet, novelist who lost his sight as a result of being wounded during World War II, Helen Keller, a blind and deaf woman art critic who founded the Foundation for Helping Deaf and Blind Children in the nine-teenth century). This is how a problematic situation is constructed that can potentially actualise reflection on the social aspects of disability: the contradiction between the postulates about the insurmountable limitations imposed by disability and the possi-bility of high achievements of people with disabilities. The textbook demonstrates the way to resolve this contradiction: in order for high achievements with limited abilities (insurmountable circumstances) to be possible, people with disabilities need the help of other people. What is this recommended help?

The textbook presents social support for people with disabilities in the format of regulatory prescriptions, presenting as a negative aspect that is recommended to avoid: "*There are people who offend them, do not want to communicate. But the attention of others, and their kind attitude is what people with disabilities need first*

of all. It is important for them, it is simply necessary" (6 gr., p. 45), and the one that is recommended to follow: "*Every person with special needs requires as much praise, approval, encouragement as anyone else. Remember that without the help of other people, a person with disabilities simply cannot carry out many of the things that are necessary for life. And how their life will turn out depends on those who are nearby*" (6 gr., p. 45).

It is imperative that the textbook includes examples that bring the topic of disability from the private space of interpersonal relations with familiar people with disabilities to the public, representing the social inclusion and success of people with disabilities, as well as the potential of inclusive projects (inclusive theatre—Moscow Theater of Mimicry and Gesture, inclusive sports—Paralympic sports, inclusive education). The section ends with a description of state programs aimed at the social inclusion of people with disabilities: "*Today, a lot is being done for people with disabilities. In our country, there are special programs for them in education, culture, and sports. Their special needs are taken into account during the construction of new schools, the organization of transport, at various cultural events*" and the call to make an individual contribution to their support: "*Look around and think: you can also help someone with special needs*" (6 gr., p. 47).

Inclusive education is presented directly in the final paragraphs of the chapter through the presentation of examples of how schools are rebuilding their facilities and installing equipment in order to widen access for students with diverse abilities and barriers, with a proposal to find additional examples, make proposals for holding the "International Day of People with Disabilities" in their own school. In conclusion, a separate tab "Learning to interact with people with different abilities" is presented, describing the inclusion practices recommended by the authors, both in the context of school and in other social situations (in transport, theatre, etc.). Thus, in the private space, the attitude towards people with disabilities is represented in the context of individual moral duty, in the public space—as a clearly defined social norm that is supported (implemented and promoted) by the efforts of actors of different types and levels (individual efforts of people with disabilities themselves and their immediate environment (family, friends), public initiatives (NGOs, charitable foundations) and state and international programs).

To present the issue of the representation of people with disabilities in dynamics, let us turn to the content of textbooks on "Social Studies" produced in the previous decade, up to 2014 (in detail, the representation of socially vulnerable groups in Russian textbooks is presented in a previously published article by the author of this chapter, Kozlova, 2015).

Looking Back: The Representation of People with Disabilities in the Textbooks of the "Previous Generation"

Here it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that by 2014, crucial changes affecting the situation of people with disabilities had occurred in Russian legislation. Since 2011, the State Program "Accessible Environment" (Government of the Russian Federation, 2011), aimed at ensuring unhindered access of disabled people to social, infrastructure and other facilities and services, on an equal basis with other citizens, has been implemented in the Russian Federation. In 2012, Russia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, in the same year the "Law on Education in the Russian Federation" was adopted (entered into force in 2013 and partially in 2014) (Government of the Russian Federation, 2012). In 2014, two educational standards were developed: the Federal State Educational Standard for the Education of Students with Mental Retardation (Intellectual Disabilities) and the Federal State Educational Standard of Primary General Education for Students with Disabilities. The content of the listed documents and the effects of their adoption on the education system in Russia are described in detail in chapter one of this volume. Here it is important for us to demonstrate their importance for the transformation of the visibility and changes in the regime of people with disabilities and the ways of their representation in textbooks directed by the power discourse.

First, it should be emphasised that if the topic of disability is mentioned 36 times in a modern set of textbooks (Table 13.1), then in a set published before 2014, there were only six mentions of people with disabilities. In three cases out of six, people with disabilities were simply included in the list of those who are entitled to any state support, so they were presented as objects of custody and welfare–recipients of pensions, allowances, and other benefits. It is only in three cases that the narrative is focused on people with disabilities. In particular, people with disabilities are represented by the examples of Olympic champion V. Brumel and composer Beethoven (6 gr.).

Secondly, the topic of inclusive education was not discussed in the set of textbooks published before 2014. The unique case in the entire set (grades 5–11) is an assignment marked as optional, included in the textbook for the six grades, given at the end of the section "Human needs": "*Find information on the Internet about the meaning of the phrase " inclusive education*". *Think about how you and your friends can help children with disabilities*" (Social Studies, 2010, 6 gr., p. 40).

Thus, in textbooks published before 2014, the subjective and activist discourse regarding people with disabilities was practically absent: the elements of biographies of outstanding figures of culture and sports included in the textbook limited the topic to an individual level of representation of a socially significant problem. In combination with the rarity of references to people with disabilities, it was possible to talk about the taboo of the topic of disability and the denial of its significance. Denying its existence gave rise to social exclusion—it is not by chance that inclusive education in textbooks published before 2014 was removed from the main text, mentioned in passing. Thus, the avoidance discourse dominated the school textbook

in relation to people with disabilities. It is obvious that the inclusion of the rights of people with disabilities in the political agenda has significantly transformed the ways of their representation. It has expanded, the accents have changed—the discourse of avoidance has been replaced by the discourse of support. Whether the described dynamics give grounds to talk about the increasing humanity of Russian society and education in general, we can judge by considering the ways of representing other socially vulnerable groups.

Representation of People with Low Socio-Economic Status: Yesterday and Today

The textbook for the 6th grade opens the topic of economic inequality with the definition of poverty: "*Economists call poor a group of people whose income is not enough to purchase goods and services necessary for life*" (6 gr., p. 63). As key factors in managing someone's economic situation biographical events and individual economic strategies are called:

"*One was lucky, and he found a treasure. A rich relative left another a large sum of money in his will. The third was ruined as a result of flooding. The fourth lost his job and became unemployed. The fifth received trauma and became disabled*" (poverty as a result of an unfortunate combination of circumstances and events of biography);

"*It also happens that people use their own income with varying degrees of success. Let's remember the wise children's fairy tale "Puss in Boots". The father left a mill, a donkey and a cat to his three sons, as you remember. Initially, the value of the various shares of the inheritance was unequal. What did the hero of the fairy tale do with the Cat? He turned the Cat into his assistant. The reasonable use of his part of the inheritance ultimately affected the amount of income*" (overcoming poverty as an effect of individual entrepreneurship).

It is interesting that in the textbooks published before 2014, this story with the cat was presented in a more complex version, including an economic explanation of the initial inequalities—the passage about the reasonableness of using available funds was preceded by a fragment explaining the role of factors of production: "*People's income inequality is initially caused by the unequal value and the unequal volume of the factors of production owned by them. <…> Let us recall the wise children's fairy tale "Puss in Boots". The father left a mill, a donkey and a cat to his three sons, as you remember. Initially, the value of the various shares of the inheritance was unequal: capital in the form of a mill or a donkey can bring more income than capital in the form of a cat. And if we imagine that one inherited three mills, and the other only one, then the influence of the volume of capital as a factor of production on the amount of income will become even more obvious*" (Social Science, 8th gr., 2012), but in the 2019 edition, the authors left only a fragment explaining the inequality by the nature and intensity of individual efforts of actors.

The structural causes of poverty are out of sight of the textbook. The following picture is drawn: the state is doing everything in its power to ensure that vulnerable groups of the population escape poverty, and if a person does not succeed, it is his/her fault—he/she should have been more resourceful in using "the cat". Thus, modern textbooks on social studies insist on the individual responsibility of the subject in matters of his/her economic well-being, assuming an accusatory position regarding the individual's poverty.

The analysis of the social policy of the Russian Federation suggests that the image of the "magic cat" hides socially-oriented non-governmental organisations, which, under the Federal Law "On the basics of social services for citizens of the Russian Federation" adopted in 2014 and entered into force in January 2015, was assigned a wide range of tasks previously performed exclusively by state (Government of the Russian Federation, 2013).

The reform pursued several goals. Firstly, it was supposed to respond to deep public dissatisfaction with the existing state social services. Socially oriented NGOs were supposed to bring competition and customer choice to the social sector, creating a more diverse and high-quality service market. Secondly, outsourcing social services promises benefits for the government. The policy was based on the principles of neo-managerialism, that is, reducing costs and increasing efficiency. It tightened the requirements for the services provided and assumed more excellent initiative on the part of customers. Promises to improve the social sector were also the main symbolic challenge for attracting public support during election campaigns.

In accordance with the transformation of the course of social policy, responsibility for the low socio-economic status is shifted by the textbook to low-income families/individuals themselves or socially-oriented non-governmental organisations.

Conclusion

The school textbook, offering a specific "vision mode", is a powerful tool for influencing the audience through the discursive practices used. The analysis of the representation of people with disabilities and people with low socio-economic status in textbooks demonstrated oppositely directed trends in the transformation of pedagogical discourse.

One, which has been established in recent years concerning people with disabilities, can be called inclusive: people with disabilities are represented as having an unconditional value for society, and society is focused on "supporting inclusion", i.e. ready to rebuild institutions (primarily educational and cultural ones) taking into account the unique needs of people with disabilities. This distinguishes modern textbooks from those published nine years ago and earlier, where "discriminating" categories (dependence, charity and pity) prevailed in the images of people with disabilities. Thus, the representation of people with disabilities in pedagogical discourse has moved "from the freezing point", but it has not yet come to a broad understanding

of inclusion as a restructuring of the social (in particular, educational) environment in such a way that it can provide all the variety of educational needs of students.

However, a different type of discourse prevails about people with low socio-economic status. From a comprehensive coverage of the essence and causes of poverty, the textbook moved to an accusing discourse under the logic of neoliberal reforms in the form they are implemented in the Russian Federation.

Inclusion has increasingly become a focal frame to systemically foster social equality. Yet, despite increasing agreement that equality is needed (e.g., Equal Rights Trust, 2008; Fetterolf, 2017; Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe, 2011), tensions, controversies, and dilemmas about achieving it proliferate (Ferdman, 2017). This chapter, based on the materials of Russian social policy and the corresponding policy of representations of social diversity in textbooks, demonstrates the conflict between the declared agenda of social inclusion and neo-managerial reforms in the field of educational and social policy. This contradiction turns out to be typical for countries where civil society institutions are insufficiently developed and the scope of public discussion is narrowed (Islam et al., 2021; Toktomushev, 2023). The results obtained demonstrate that moral connotations in the representation of state policy towards vulnerable groups in a school textbook reproduce the pattern of hierarchisation, which characterises the stages of special education for students with special needs and does not sufficiently contribute to the formation and dissemination of an inclusive culture in Russian schools and society as a whole.

The discourse that prevails today in the Russian political and media spaces, which is formed as a result of discussions based on the dominance of the interests of some groups and the silencing of the opinions of others, is external and often discriminatory in relation to the "oppressed" group. This way the exclusive "vision mode" imposes on the next generation the angle of view, the rules of image and perception of the oppressed group. The concepts used in the educational literature and their value content turn into "learning modules" from which an integral system of a student's worldview is built, and on the basis of which more specific assessment systems and behavioural models are generated, allowing the children to quickly and almost automatically recognise examples of valuable virtues and vices and, accordingly, support or reject those or other social policy programs.

Appendix 1

School-level academic performance index. The index was obtained as follows: the average school-level results—USE scores (9 and 11 grade) in reading and mathematics — were normalised to the maximum possible result (total—share), multiplied by 100 and rounded to the second decimal place (total—percentage of completion).

Share of teachers with the highest qualification category	Urban	Rural	SEC (Q1)	SEC (Q2)	SEC (Q3)	SEC (Q4)	Mean
Kaliningrad Region	0.35	0.19	0.15	0.23	0.32	0.41	0.28
Leningrad Region	0.42	0.32	0.33	0.33	0.39	0.41	0.36
Moscow Region	0.51	0.53	0.53	0.50	0.51	0.53	0.52
Tuymen Region	0.42	0.30	0.28	0.28	0.33	0.43	0.33
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	0.41	0.30	0.21	0.28	0.34	0.44	0.32
Share of teachers over retirement age							
Kaliningrad Region	0.35	0.40	0.44	0.34	0.35	0.37	0.38
Leningrad Region	0.29	0.32	0.31	0.32	0.30	0.31	0.31
Moscow Region	0.33	0.39	0.41	0.34	0.33	0.31	0.35
Tuymen Region	0.20	0.20	0.22	0.21	0.17	0.19	0.20
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	0.37	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.33	0.34	0.33
Share of students from families where parents have higher education							
Kaliningrad Region	0.38	0.11	0.02	0.13	0.31	0.58	0.26
Leningrad Region	0.30	0.14	0.02	0.12	0.24	0.48	0.21
Moscow Region	0.41	0.20	0.09	0.24	0.39	0.63	0.34
Tuymen Region	0.39	0.09	0.00	0.04	0.15	0.46	0.16
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	0.33	0.11	0.01	0.05	0.12	0.40	0.15
Academic achievement index							
Kaliningrad Region	62.83	56.70	56.02	58.50	61.48	64.24	60.08
Leningrad Region	63.58	61.53	61.66	60.92	62.25	64.58	62.40
Moscow Region	64.68	62.07	61.57	62.39	64.66	66.59	63.79
Tuymen Region	62.89	55.29	53.25	55.16	58.38	61.96	57.09
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	58.05	53.48	52.34	53.39	53.87	57.50	54.33

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Chapter 14
Extracurricular Education and Inclusion in Russia: Inclusion as a Right and a Resource

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Abstract In this chapter, we discuss using statistical data, national conceptual documents, and recommendations for inclusion in children's extracurricular education. We show the differences in participation in extracurricular education depending on one's place of residence (village, city), gender, family income, and health characteristics. We discuss the reasons for the observed differences as well as possible and implemented measures to change the situation. An analysis of regulatory documents, programs, projects, and case studies of Russian educational organisations in several regions provides two perspectives for discussing the problem of inclusion in the extracurricular education sector, one related to the availability of essential out-of-school education services for all children and the other to the form and content of extracurricular education. The findings of this chapter may be useful as part of a global discourse on educational equity, especially in extracurricular education, and for public systems with the institutional tools to provide access to extracurricular activities for children with special educational needs.

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Introduction

Extracurricular education is attracting increasing attention among politicians and researchers because of its potential to broadly influence the development and social-isation of children (Eccles et al., 2003; Fredricks & Eccles, 2008; Holland & Andre, 1987; Kravchenko & Nygård, 2022). At the same time, extracurricular education is characterised as voluntary as well as responding to families' requests and following their choices. It is not guaranteed (nor is it always free), so there is a situation of opportunities and a risk of educational inequality (Kosaretsky & Ivanov, 2020). In this regard, there are two possible perspectives for discussing the challenges of inclusion in the extracurricular education sector. The first is related to the availability of essen-tial out-of-school educational services for all children, regardless of their gender, place of residence, health requirements, socio-economic status (SES), ethnicity, or prevention of exclusion. Such discussions concern ensuring children's right to educa-tion and equality and opportunities for them to participate in extracurricular education (Alexandrov et al., 2017; Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2014; Kosaretsky et al., 2016; Palumbo, 2004). Research on inequality and inclusion in extracurricular education, including on groups of children with special needs, is a growing segment, but it is still relatively small in scale. Such research focuses on accessibility barriers and measures to reduce them (Anaby et al., 2013; Popov et al., 2020; Zolotareva, 2021). The inter-national academic discourse includes discussions on general and specific barriers to participation in extracurricular education for children from families with low socioe-conomic status and from rural and remote areas as well as for girls, migrants, and Indigenous children (Behtoui, 2019; Chadwick & Rrurrambu, 2004). Challenges concerning children's participation in extracurricular education are common in most countries (Shann, 2001).

The second aspect of the challenge is related to the form and content of extracur-ricular education and how it is organised to realise its potential, taking into account the needs of individual groups and, optimally, the needs of all individuals. The poten-tial of extracurricular education in improving academic achievement, development of socioemotional skills, and psychological health, among others, for all children have been well studied (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Park et al., 2012; Shernoff, 2010). Extracurricular activities also foster wellness by inducing better food choices, increasing physical activity, and raising awareness of nutrition and health practices (Phillips et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the specific opportunities and effects of extracur-ricular education for groups of students with special educational needs have been studied to a lesser extent. The inclusion of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities is seen as a tool to ensure equity and the effectiveness of education in the context of meeting such students' special educational needs (Hash & Menendian, 2013). In this regard, extracurricular education is traditionally discussed from two sides—namely, its compensatory effects and its expanding, running-around func-tions (O'Donnell et al., 2022). The compensatory effects are associated with the possibility of reducing or bridging gaps in academic achievement and correcting behaviours (Lewis, 2004). Along with these effects, those of forming a sense of

belonging and raising self-efficacy and resistance are of particular interest (Griffiths et al., 2021), as are educational involvement and dropout reduction (Faircloth & Hamm, 2005). There has been exceptional interest in the possibilities of extracurricular education for professional self-determination, education, and career training for children with special educational needs (Algozzine et al., 2001). Extracurricular activities can play an essential role in assisting the integration and inclusion of migrants (Brown & Evans, 2002).

In this chapter, we aim to show the representation of both aspects, considering the development and current state of children's extracurricular education in Russia as well as policies concerning this sector. Using statistical data (a form of 2021 statistical observation, 1-DOP), we show the differences in participation in extracurricular education according to one's place of residence (village, city), gender, family income, and health characteristics. We discuss the reasons for the differences observed as well as possible and implemented measures to change the situation. To do this, we analyse regulatory documents, programs, and projects. We also consider implementing out-of-school educational opportunities to address special needs and strengthen the capabilities of groups of children (children from migrant families, children with ADHD, and children of Indigenous and small-numbered peoples). Here, we rely on case studies of individual Russian educational organisations in several regions.

Extracurricular Education: Conceptualisation, Regulation, and Organizational Structure

Extracurricular education, despite its recognised potential in the development and education of children, has yet to have a generally accepted definition or framework (Bartkus et al., 2012). UNESCO defines it as a series of activities organised outside the typical school day, curriculum, or course that are designed to meet students' interests. Such activities can help students become more involved in their school or community, develop social skills, and promote well-being (UNESCO, 2021). Researchers have noted the most critical characteristics of extracurricular activities to be voluntary, structured, and challenging, with adults as mentors, teachers, or tutors (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). Extracurricular activities can be school or community based (Eccles et al., 2003; Farb & Matjasko, 2012). They can be associated with a co-curriculum or meaningfully go beyond it (Haensly et al., 1985), support direct academic results, or be aimed primarily at developing personal and social skills (Ivanov, 2021).

In Russian practice, *extracurricular education* is defined by law as a type of education aimed at comprehensively satisfying the educational needs of a person in terms of intellectual, spiritual, moral, physical, and/or professional improvement that is not accompanied by an increase in the level of education.[1] The open nature of extracurricular education, its variability and flexibility, and the ability to promptly account

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[1] Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" dated 29.12.2012, No. 273-FZ.

for changes in the surrounding world are also significant for academic discussion (Asmolov, 1997; Popov, 2015; Slobodchikov, 2010).

In terms of institutional specifics, extracurricular education is not guaranteed, unlike preschool and general education. For states, the organisation of extracurricular education for children is not an international obligation within the framework of the right to education. There is no focus on the universality and accessibility of extracurricular education within countries' legislation. This is not due to a lack of understanding of its importance in the education of children but because of the political and financial capabilities of governments, and recognising the right to such education would entail their obligation to create and maintain appropriate systems (Knyaginina et al., 2022). This means that even if there are opportunities for participation in extracurricular education, territorial and financial accessibility barriers need to be removed, and families may not avail of it. Exclusion from extracurricular education may be related to a family's strategy conditioned by its social and cultural capital and economic opportunities (Kosaretsky et al., 2016; Lareau, 2015; Poplavskaya et al., 2018).

Another critical aspect of extracurricular education is its diversity (in terms of duration, content, and personnel). There is no uniform standard for the scope and content of services (except for sports and art schools as pre-professional education). Hence, inclusion in extracurricular education only sometimes means everyone has approximately the same benefits. For instance, highly standardised general and vocational education can mean losing out on competitive advantages compared to extracurricular education.

Extracurricular education in Russia includes classes at school in the afternoon, and specialised public and private organisations provide structured but not unified educational programs in six areas (sports, artistic creativity, technology, natural sciences, tourism and local history, social and humanitarian). According to official data from 2021, 78% of children aged 5–18 years participated in extracurricular activities. Russian extracurricular educational organisations form a reasonably dense and developed system. The "norm" of all children having access to extracurricular education has been passed to Russia from the Soviet Union.

In the last decade, Russian policy (since the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated 07.05.2012, No. 597) has focused on increasing the coverage of extracurricular education by implementing national projects, which has achieved some success. The participation rate in extracurricular activities is among the highest in post-Soviet countries (Ivanov & Kosaretsky, 2021). However, this raises the question of whether extracurricular education with such a sufficiently high level of coverage is accessible, inclusive, and fair for all groups of students. Can a policy of increasing coverage be equated with the success of the policy of inclusion? Furthermore, to what extent do the opportunities available for extracurricular education meet the diverse needs of children, including the special needs of vulnerable groups?

Conditions for Inclusion in Extracurricular Education for Children with Disabilities

In Russia, the concept of "children with special educational needs" is not legally stable, and students with potential or actual risk of educational or social maladaptation when receiving a formal education are generalised across all categories. Extracurricular education as a system has all the necessary opportunities for children with disabilities to successfully "enter" into it-these include freedom of choice, consideration of the interests and needs of children, and the ability to change a program and teacher. In Russia, the right of children with disabilities to participate in extracurricular education is regulated by the following documents: the Concept of the Development of Extracurricular Education of Children until 2030 (approved by the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation dated March 31, 2022, No. 678-r) and the Order of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation No. 629, dated July 27, 2022 "On the Approval of the Procedure for Organising and Implementing Educational Activities for Additional General Education programs."

Following this legislation, additional general education programs have been implemented for children and students with disabilities in the Russian Federation. At the same time, these can be included in programs with all other categories of children (inclusive programs), and *specially adapted additional general education programs* are being created. An *adapted educational program* is one adapted for teaching people with disabilities, taking into account the peculiarities of their psychophysical development and individual capabilities and, if necessary, remediation of the developmental barriers and social adaptation of students (paragraph 28 of Article 2 of Federal Law No. 273 "On Education"). The development of adapted additional general education programs is being carried out based on methodological recommendations at the national level.[2]

Special conditions for out-of-school education for students with disabilities are understood as those for the training, upbringing, and development of such students. They include using special education programs and methods for teaching and upbringing, offering assistance services, conducting group and individual remedial classes, and providing special access to buildings. Classes associated with students with disabilities may be organised jointly with other students or take place in separate groups.

At the same time, despite the rights and mechanisms for ensuring the participation of children with disabilities in extracurricular education, the scale of its uptake is still limited. According to statistics, the share of students with disabilities among the total number of students was 3.2% in 2021. Nevertheless, the dynamics of engagement are positive—in 2016, the share of students with disabilities was 2.1% (Fig. 14.1).

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[2] Methodological recommendations of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation on the implementation of adapted additional general education programs that promote the sociopsychological rehabilitation and professional self-determination of children with disabilities, taking into account their special educational needs (dated 29.03.2016, No. VK-642/09).
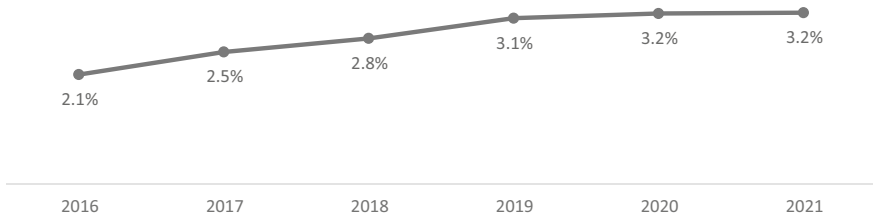
Fig. 14.1 Dynamics of the share of students with disabilities among the total number of students enrolled in extracurricular education programs (by cohort of children under the age of 18 years). *Source* Rosstat, FSN Form 1-DOD, 2016–2021
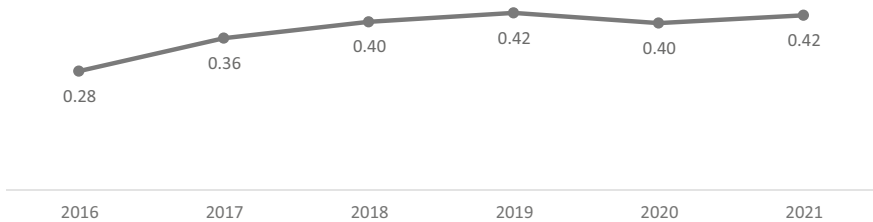
Fig. 14.2 Dynamics of the coverage of children with disabilities in extracurricular education programs (by cohort of children under 18 years). *Source* Rosstat, FSN Form 1-DOD, 2016–2021

The availability of extracurricular education programs for disabled children under 18 in 2021 was 0.42 services UP per disabled child. This indicator increased from 0.28 in 2016 to a maximum of 0.42 in 2019 and 2021 (Fig. 14.2).

According to a new system of personalised registration of children by the Unified Administrative and Information System of Extracurricular Education, at the end of September 2022, the share of students with disabilities among the total number of children engaged in additional general education programs was 0.6%. The share of disabled children was 0.1%. Students with disabilities are mainly engaged in socio-pedagogical programs—in 2021, their share was 31.3%. The minimum share of students with disabilities in preprofessional physical culture, sports, and artistic orientation programs was less than 1%, while their share in technical programs increased from 7.2% in 2016 to 10.3% in 2021.

Experts have identified the following barriers to introducing inclusive education for children with special educational needs into extracurricular education (Zolotareva, 2021), both of which are present in part of the education system. First, organisations are provided with insufficient resources and personnel to meet the needs of children with disabilities. There is also a lack of access to extracurricular education, such as to separate bathrooms and appropriate transport. Teachers' insufficient competence is a significant barrier due to their unwillingness to accept children with disabilities in the educational system and lack of knowledge of the critical issues involved in working with them. There are also limitations on the family side. These include parents' underestimation of their disabled children's abilities and ignorance

of opportunities for their participation in extracurricular education. Families also have limited opportunities to pay for paid services.

To overcome these difficulties, the Russian expert community has discussed some conditions for implementing additional general education programs following the peculiarities of entering children with disabilities into programs and training (Zolotareva et al., 2018). Thus, information conditions presuppose the inclusion in the educational process of unique means of communication with students, which contributes to the selection and development of a child's extracurricular education program. As we suggest, the adaptation of the content of additional educational programs for physical culture and sports orientation can be carried out based on the international and federal requirements for sports training programs for Olympic sports, such as the Deaflympic Games (for people with hearing impairment), Paralympic programs (for people with musculoskeletal disorders, visual impairment, and blindness), and Special Olympics programs (for people with intellectual disabilities).

It is essential to create an accepting and adaptive environment for children with disabilities so that the implementation of inclusive extracurricular programs is effective. Educational programs can be implemented for participants in the educational process (normatively developing children and their parents). Territorial conditions imply an increase in the implementation of forms of distance learning for children with disabilities in the presence of difficulties when attending classes in an educational organisation. Network interaction can be organised with organisations in an accessible environment to conduct classes with children with disabilities, as can mobile learning (mobile teacher, mobile group) and home learning.

Institutional conditions imply an expansion of the potential of organisations of higher and vocational education, culture, tourism, and sports in the process of working with children with disabilities as well as the involvement of socially oriented nonprofit organisations, such as regional public organisations for parents of disabled children, regional branches of the All-Russian Society of Disabled People, and organisations implementing activities under Paralympic sports and Special Olympics programs. We can assume that increasing the availability of extracurricular education for children with disabilities can also be realised through the development of club forms of work, primarily family clubs that include children with disabilities and their parents, brothers, and sisters. Another important aspect is the preparation of norm-typical children, children's, and pedagogical collectives for the admission of children with disabilities into extracurricular education associations. In this case, training, gaming technologies, and short-term mass-inclusive projects (concerts, festivals, exhibitions, holidays, promotions) can be used to contribute to the mutual social adaptation of children with disabilities and their norm-typical peers.

Approved in the spring of 2022, the Concept of the Development of Extracurricular Education of Children until 2030 stipulates the creation of conditions for disabled children's sociocultural rehabilitation and the expansion of opportunities for teaching children with disabilities. There will also be the formation of a register of approximately adapted additional general education programs for children with

disabilities. The aim is to increase the share of children aged 5–18 years with disabilities who master additional general education programs, including using distance technologies, from 2.9% in 2022 to 80% in 2030.

Participation in Extracurricular Education: Gender and Social Differences

Suppose the regulatory framework sets out the rights and conditions for ensuring the availability of extracurricular education for children with disabilities. In such a case, other categories of children with special educational needs have not been formulated or are present only at the local level. The policy documents formulate the task of ensuring fair participation in extracurricular education, but they are less specific than in the case of children with disabilities. There has been no discussion about particular conditions, adapted programs, targeted measures, or specific targets.

Gender inequality is not a highly rated issue in Russia, although it is significant in international discussions about inclusion in extracurricular education (Meier et al., 2018; Mello & Worrell, 2008). The differences in coverage are insignificant; on average, there are 1.75 extracurricular education services per boy and 1.95 per girl (Fig. 14.3).

Gender inequality is manifested in the intensity of extracurricular activities outside school. While an approximately equal number of boys and girls attend a single program outside school (48.4% vs. 51.6%, respectively), girls are more often involved in three or more programs (43.1% of boys vs. 56.9% of girls).

Girls participate mainly in arts and social programs (activities), while boys are mainly in programs of socio-pedagogical orientation and physical culture and sports. Girls are less involved in technical activities than boys (Fig. 14.4), which reflects the global trend (Brenøe & Zölitz, 2020; Mosatche et al., 2013). This gap has been bridged in recent years, with the participation rate having increased from 5.2% in
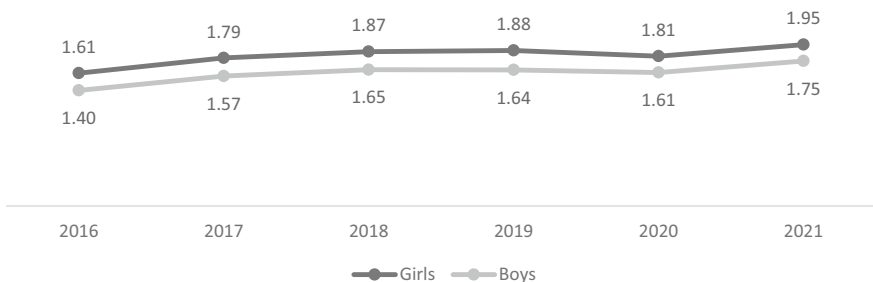
Fig. 14.3 Dynamics of the coverage of extracurricular education programs by gender of students (by cohort of children under the age of 18 years). *Source* Rosstat, FSN Form 1-DOD, 2016–2021
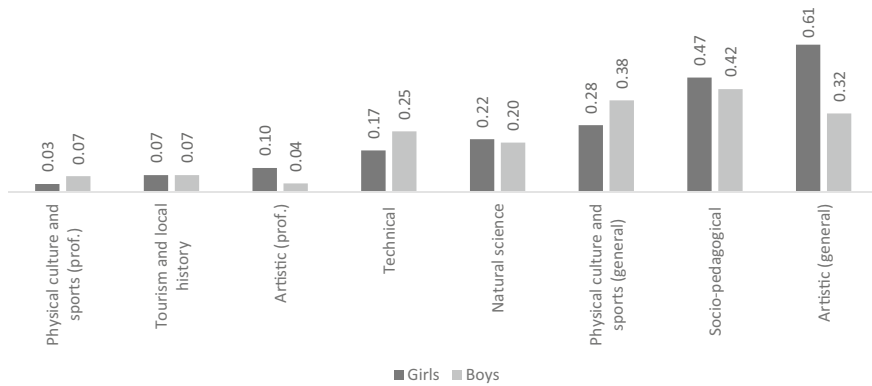
Fig. 14.4 Availability of extracurricular education programs by gender of students and program directions (by cohort of children under the age of 18 years). *Source* Rosstat, FSN Form 1-DOD, 2021

2016 to 8.8% in 2021. In addition, some growth in the participation of girls can be seen in natural sciences and socio-pedagogical orientation.

However, the inequality of opportunities associated with socioeconomic status is noticeable. Nonattendance in any extracurricular activities is more typical for children from families with low SES (40.1%), and children from families with high SES attend more often than others in extracurricular activities outside school, which are usually characterised by their variety and quality (Fig. 14.5).

The higher the SES, the more children there are engaged in free and paid programs. Children with high SES often attend more than one section. The difference is especially noticeable concerning extracurricular activities outside school; there, students from the most prosperous families with higher incomes are more often involved in foreign languages, technology, science, chess, and extracurricular classes in school subjects. The higher their parents' education level, the more often children will study foreign languages outside school.
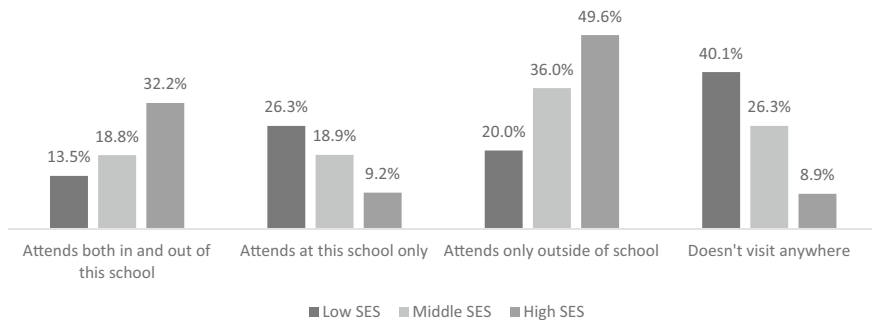
Fig. 14.5 Participation of children in extracurricular education depending on the SES of the family. (% of the total number of parents who chose this position)

A child's place of residence also largely determines their ability to participate in extracurricular education. Rural children are included in extracurricular education to a lesser extent than urban children, and as settlement size increases, the proportion of children attending extracurricular activities outside school, or both in and outside school, also increases. In rural settlements, more than half of children either do not attend extracurricular classes or do so only in school. As settlement size decreases, the proportion of children attending a single program outside school increases, and the proportion of those attending three programs decreases.

Rural children have little access to preprofessional programs at art schools and sports schools. Residents of Moscow and other large cities are more often engaged in physical culture, sports, foreign language learning, technology, and the in-depth study of school subjects. At the same time, in rural areas, arts, crafts, and social activities predominate. Unfortunately, there is no objective data on the participation of children from migrant families, small-numbered and indigenous peoples in statistics and surveys. Concerning migrant children, there is reason to believe that the problems of participation in extracurricular education resemble the main barrier to general education, which is registering for classes without registration documents from the place of residence (Omelchenko, 2021a, 2021b).

As for the children of Indigenous and small-numbered peoples, the situation is contradictory. The specifics of participation depend on the region and the general model of implementing inclusion in these categories—namely, education in a regular school, specialised boarding school, or nomadic school. In boarding schools, children participate in extracurricular education, but the choice is limited and sometimes imposed, and there are no opportunities for classes in extracurricular organisations. In nomadic schools, where teachers accompany local communities as they migrate with deer herds, extracurricular activities are practised less often. At the same time, in some regions, there is the practice of using extracurricular education to preserve languages, traditions, and ways of life by including relevant content (Dolganev, 2022).

We should also note that there are few real practices that form and develop a friendly learning environment for children with special educational needs. Nevertheless, they exist, and our analysis shows that an important element of a friendly learning environment is the inclusion of children with special educational needs in extracurricular education programs. In particular, there are practices that focus on specific groups of children (e.g., children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, children from Indigenous and nuclear families, and children from migrant families). For example, in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), a remote village school implements a practice aimed at preserving the language, culture, and traditions of Indigenous peoples. Extracurricular education includes region-specific topics, such as sewing traditional fur clothing and embroidery, jewellery making, and dancing from an Evenk epic. In terms of sports, children are engaged in such national sports as sledge jumping and lasso throwing. Most of the teachers are representatives of Indigenous peoples. Participation in extracurricular education allows one to maintain one's identity, connections with family, and traditional lifestyles and to realise

children's talents through relevant content. The challenges of education for Indigenous people are discussed in Chap. 10, and migrants' issues are elaborated upon in Chap. 9.

In the Kaliningrad region, a school in a small urban settlement does not use selection procedures for admission. This approach is the reason why, since the school first opened, a variety of children from remote villages in the district have enrolled in it, as have those who were "uncomfortable" at other schools, such as children with ADHD and dyslexia. The school is an all-day school, with the second part of the day spent on extracurricular programs, primarily football. The sport enables the development of self-discipline, behaviour self-regulation, communication, and team spirit. Extracurricular activities involving technical creativity also help students with behavioural difficulties to learn how to regulate their behaviour and build interactions with other students. A technopark that features the latest equipment is on the school's premises. Students with ADHD use its equipment to realise their creative ideas and create souvenirs. To integrate students from migrant families, a school in Chelyabinsk implements extracurricular programs for children who are very sick or who mostly do not speak the language of instruction (Russian). Extracurricular activities include rhetoric courses, a theater studio, as well as craft classes (pottery) and activities based on the school's museum of local history. Children from migrant families participate in extracurricular activities alongside Russian-speaking students.

Conclusion

Our analysis of policies and practices lets us pose the question of whether sufficiently high-level extracurricular education is accessible to all groups of students as well as inclusive and fair. Is it possible to equate the policy of increasing coverage with the policy of inclusion? Moreover, to what extent do the opportunities available for extracurricular education meet the diverse needs of children, including the special needs of vulnerable groups? Russian education inherited from the Soviet model of the organisation of extracurricular education, one of whose critical characteristics was universal coverage (Ivanov et al., 2021). In the difficult economic situation of the 1990s, this principle could not be implemented. However, since the second decade of the twenty-first century, the state has consistently expanded the availability of extracurricular education while avoiding the legislative consolidation of rights and guarantees in this area.

At the same time, a policy of increasing coverage and accessibility, both in the USSR and in post-Soviet Russia, was not targeted, differentiated, or linked to the risk of exclusion of certain groups. The overall high coverage rate hides the inequality of opportunities for rural children, low-income children, and children with disabilities. Although gender exclusion is not typical in Russia, the topic of girls' lesser participation in STEM worries researchers (Kosaretsky et al., 2019), but it is not on the official agenda.

The inclusiveness of extracurricular education concerning Indigenous students is contradictory. Diverse extracurricular education, including its modern types, is less accessible to them, but the opportunities for implementing ethnocultural features are comprehensive. In recent years, the state has focused on a policy of growing the coverage of extracurricular education for children with disabilities, securing the right to create special conditions for obtaining extracurricular education in this category, including a particular category of programs. In practice, the resource constraints of organisations and the low level of readiness of teachers hamper the implementation of these guarantees. Other categories, grouped into the concept of children with special educational needs, remain undifferentiated regarding the specifics of rights and measures to ensure them. This reflects the narrow interpretation of inclusion and its unique requirements in Russian educational legislation and policy (Alyokhina, 2013).

This analysis of progress in and the barriers to the implementation of inclusion in extracurricular education in Russia adds to the existing patterns of research on trends in inclusive education globally. The post-Soviet countries have in particular focused mainly on general education (Hanssen et al., 2021; Iarskaia-Smirnova & Romanov, 2007). This illustrates the specifics of the manifestation in this sector of known challenges with the conceptualisation of inclusion and inclusive education (Ainscow, 2020; Polat, 2011). At the same time, the specifics of extracurricular education related to the lack of state guarantees for its availability and financing in post-Soviet countries and most countries of the world (Knyaginina et al., 2022) opens up a significant aspect that was previously in the shadows of the global academic discussion.

Another specific constitutive characteristic of extracurricular education is associated with a lack of structuring and standards (greater flexibility in the formats of training organisations). It is interesting to consider these features through the lens of the universal design framework, which involves changing the teaching style and adapting the didactic and methodological foundations of teaching in accordance with the individual needs of students (Almeqdad et al., 2023; Karisa, 2023; Owenz & Cruz, 2023; Sewell et al., 2022). Russia's experience of centralised implementation of adapted educational programs and cases of organisations' grassroots initiatives to create a friendly environment is both useful and relevant. At the same time, the greater openness of extracurricular education can be considered from the perspective of a participatory approach that provides conditions for the conscious participation of those with special needs in the creation of inclusive practices (Edström et al., 2022; Schwab et al., 2022; Skinner et al., 2022).

The data presented on the inclusiveness of the extracurricular education system in relation to children from families with low socioeconomic status and from rural areas are embedded in an expanding array of evidence regarding the risks of inequality in extracurricular education (Ivanov & Kosaretsky, 2021). The integration of inclusive education practices into the existing state system of extracurricular education reduces the cost of creating a friendly learning environment and pedagogical community capable of meeting the special educational needs of children, ensuring the sustainability and consistency of positive changes. In particular, this became noticeable

during the lockdown period in spring 2020, when it was state support that allowed the extracurricular education system not only to rapidly switch to distance formats but also to fully include children with special educational needs in the education process (Ivanov et al., 2021). State support measures have not only financial and logistical assistance but also the development and implementation of methodological recommendations, such as creating modern, inclusive educational spaces for children with disabilities on the basis of educational organisations implementing additional general education programs in the regions of the Russian Federation. Subsidies for inclusive education, including for equipment, are common in international practice, such as in the USA, Canada, and Spain. At the same time, combining school-based and out-of-school extracurricular activities within a single system makes it possible to increase the diversity of nosologies and reduce the risks of territorial inequality and the lack of access to extracurricular education infrastructure. The use of an increased standard of funding for organisations implementing additional programs for children with disabilities is an important tool to support the development of inclusive education because it will enable a reduction in the costs required for organisations to launch such programs.

Personalised financing (vouchers) is an important tool for supporting children with special educational needs. This practice has been implemented in three countries of the former USSR—namely, Russia, Lithuania, and Kazakhstan. In Lithuania, vouchers support children from risk groups (i.e., targeted, individual assistance). The voucher tool itself is an opportunity not only to support children or families but also to provide a catalyst for the system and the development of organisations that provide services in the field of inclusive extracurricular education.

Even though in the practice of individual schools and extracurricular organisations, we find examples of extracurricular education meeting the diverse needs of children from vulnerable groups and even strengthening their potential, this approach has yet to be widely adopted. Its promotion, followed by studies of its effects, is essential for the future, and research on the inclusive potential of extracurricular education can significantly contribute.

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Chapter 15
Conclusion

Tsediso Michael Makoelle

Abstract This chapter provides a synthesis of conclusions drawn from previous chapters of the book. Conclusions are centered on the significance of the inclusive education policy that emerged in the context of the post-soviet milieu. Further, the conclusions regarding the conceptualization of inclusion in Russia its understanding of early childhood, primary and secondary, and higher education levels inclusion in other forms of education such as in teacher education are highlighted. Conclusions are also harvested from the discussion about educational culture, indigenous minorities, and the impact of curriculum on the success of inclusion.

The overview of the implementation of inclusive education in the Russian Federation follows the patterns seen in other countries in terms of barriers, challenges and opportunities. The overview of the implementation of inclusive education in the Russian Federation follows the patterns seen in other countries in terms of barriers, challenges and opportunities. The legislative and policy frameworks reflect the willingness of the government to move toward the implementation of inclusive education amidst challenges of the conceptualisation and the understanding of the notion of inclusion, its practices as compounded by aspects such as lack of teachers' skills, knowledge and competencies as well as unfavourable teacher attitudes and beliefs. It is evident that while the goal of the implementation of inclusive education in the Russian Federation is to ensure equality and equity, the gap posed by the urban–rural and regional divide seems to persist, as a result, the achievement of the goal of equal educational opportunities for all students of different abilities and needs is still far distant. While there have been efforts to ensure inclusion in early childhood institutions the indications are that for this goal to be achieved an inclusive early childhood education approach in Russia would require re-imagination and concerted effort to provide a coordinated process to ensure all stakeholders' involvement. This implies the stakeholders that are well-informed and can participate adequately to ensure equitable educational support that can guarantee the redress of inequality in regions

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of the Russian Federation. While there have been efforts to equalize opportunities in secondary education, the barriers to inclusion are not only centred on the teaching and learning process but the socio-economic context mediates how well schools in different regions achieve their goals of implementing an education model that addresses the needs of all students. As a result, an equitable distribution of resources across regions may be the starting point. It is evident that while schools providing secondary education are beginning to process inclusion, the impact of their locality, demographic composition, and cultural capital of students in the Russian Federation may not be underestimated.

Although historically in the Russian Federation specialised higher education institutions were established to create conditions for providing higher education to disabled students, the current scenario shows that generally, institutions of higher learning have embraced inclusion. However, it is evident that scepticism and the general attitudes towards students with disabilities, as well as conditions, infrastructure, access and beliefs and attitudes of teachers, have not transformed. As a result, more efforts are needed to continue the transformation process coupled with sufficient resources both human, physical, and financial. The use of assistive technologies seems to be on the rise in response to the student population with disabilities in Russia. While there are efforts to integrate assistive technologies to teaching and learning, the indications are that a coordinated process of the application of such is needed to ensure the supply and ability of educational practitioners to apply those in their classrooms.

Although teachers generally seem to embrace inclusion in Russia, problems of teacher preparation, teacher in-service training, skills and competencies seem to present a challenge for the successful implementation of inclusive pedagogy in the classrooms.

The influx of migrants from former USSR countries to Russia has seen an increase in migrant students in schools and other educational institutions. While efforts are made to socialize such students within the Russian educational system, a move away from accommodation and integration towards inclusion and assimilation is needed. However, a comprehensive, inclusive approach that would ensure such is needed.

The diversity of indigenous minorities in the Russian Federation brings dynamic language and cultural differences. It seems as though a need to address diversity as a result of indigenous minorities is a compelling obligation if the inclusive education system were to redress the inequitable provision of education based on segregation. It is clear that the achievement of this goal may raise hope for the promotion of equality, access and social justice.

While inclusive education has been adopted in the Russian Federation the hallmarks of the Soviet socialist education persist. The continuation of this line of thinking which one could refer to as "the clash of Western and Eastern schools of thought", has created a situation where educators, practitioners and parents are torn between the former special education based on ideals of the soviet legacy of medical model of support to the new ecological model of inclusion. The unfortunate issue is the association and labelling of inclusive education as "a Western system" without considering the merit of it based on scientific data. It is evident from the

discussions in this book that the success of the implementation of inclusive education would require an evolutionary change approach that takes into cognizance the fears of those for whom this change comes too fast and too radical for their stern beliefs and attitudes.

While the policies of the Russian Federation show that there is political will to implement and move forward with inclusive education much of what is not presented is the impact of covert curriculum which is mostly hidden in the educational material for teaching and learning. It seems as though a new front of change is required to ensure that discourses of exclusion are not disguised in the teaching and learning material. It would be prudent to be vigilant about forms of pieces of knowledge being privileged in such materials. The new forms of teaching a learning material should present alternative discourses that seek to embrace inclusion.

While this book has provided comprehensive coverage of the state of affairs regarding inclusive education in the Russian Federation, it is important to understand that the transition to inclusive education is a journey and may not happen overnight. The editors and authors are mindful that the process of implementing inclusive education in the Russian Federation is ongoing; however, this book should be viewed as contributing to debates about the prospects of inclusive education in the Russian Federation and perhaps in the post-soviet context and beyond.

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