



Youth Development in Russia

Summary report

The Analytical Report "Youth Development in Russia" was prepared on the UNESCO initiative with the assistance of the German Technical Cooperation Society (GTZ), and deals with the youth status in modern Russia. The issue is of concern for any society: what is the "modern youth" like? How different they are from the previous generation? What are their aspirations and potential?

The modern Russian youth is actually the first generation born and grown up in a new, post-Soviet Russia. This generation was growing up in a complicated situation of collapsing behavioral stereotypes, impetuous and not always smooth socioeconomic transformation. Therefore, such issues as "What is the modern youth like?" and "What is their potential?" – are especially important in Russia today.

The current picture of youth development is rather ambiguous. On the one hand, the modern Russian youth is noted for growing independence, practicality and mobility, responsibility for their own lives, drastically increasing interest in getting high-quality education and professional training affecting further employment and career. Young people strive for integration in the international youth community, worldwide economic, political and humanitarian processes.

On the other hand, the number of deaths by external causes among the young generation is increasing. The main risk group includes young people aged 15 to 24 years old; the greatest number of unnatural deaths, including those caused by drug use and AIDS, falls within the above group. Young people demonstrate low interest to political, economic and cultural events. The youth community is getting highly criminalized, with increasing influence of destructive subcultures and communities.

Social integration of young people with limited capabilities, orphan children, and teenagers from unsuccessful families still remains an acute problem.

The Report reviews issues of youth education, health, situation on the labor market, involvement in social life, and asocial behavior in the youth community. All these aspects of youth status and development are considered in the regional context, which enabled to reveal a number of important dependences and trends, and analyze interregional differentiation of the youth situation in Russia

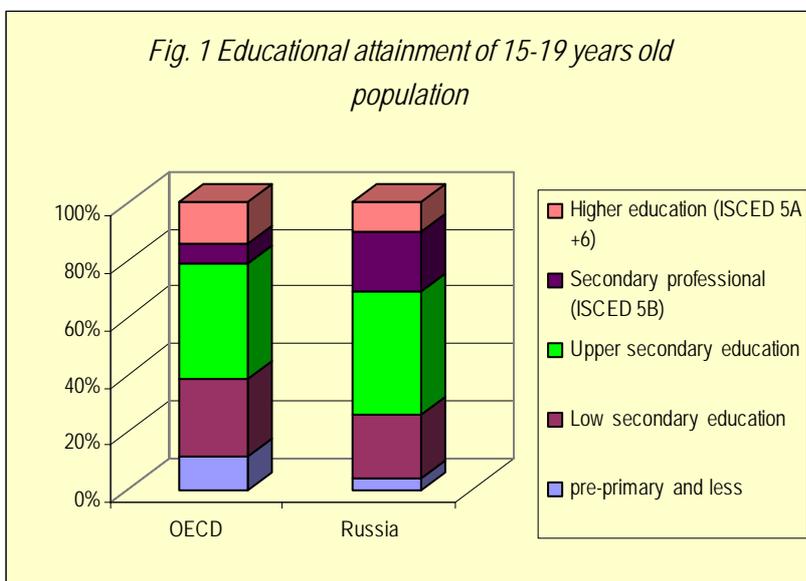
The Report was prepared using the Russian statistics and social surveys, as well as data of international organizations engaged in education, employment and health issues (WHO, World Bank, East-West AIDS Foundation, UNESCO, UNDP, etc.).

* The Report has been prepared by a team of consultants: Mark Agranovitch, Ph.D (economics), team leader, Natalia Koroleva, Ph.D. (health), Andrey Poletaev, DS (economics), Irina Seliverstova, M.S. (Cultural Management), Igor Sundiev DS (philosophy), Anna Fateeva

Education – an important element of the human development – could be considered in two aspects as applied to the youth. First, to what extent the modern youth, from the education viewpoint, is prepared in the near future to take the lead in the formation and development of the knowledge-based economy. And, second, how education could help the young people to successfully achieve self-fulfilling, and integrate in modern social life and economic reality. In this respect, the Report reviews three groups of issues: youth education level, accessibility and quality of education.

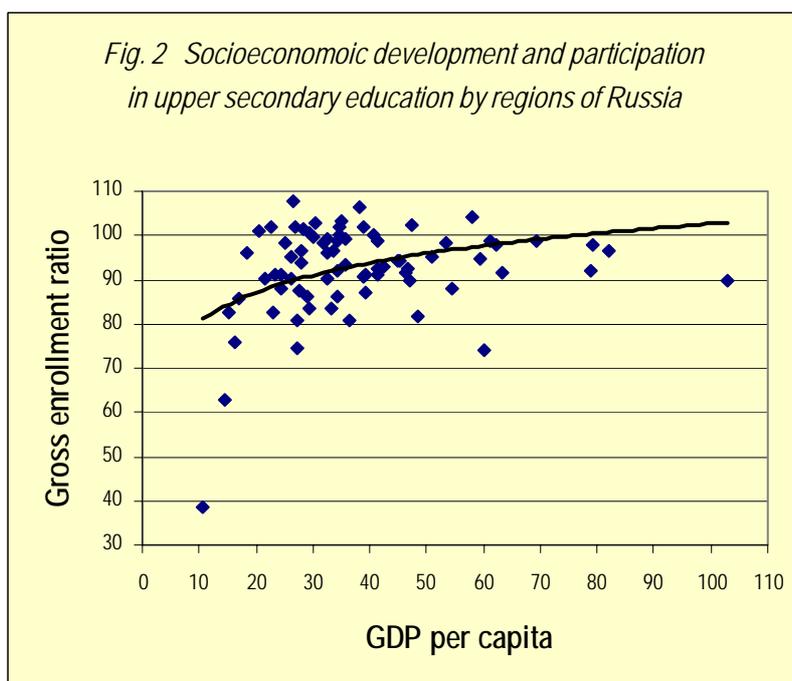
The level of youth education in Russia is rather high. In terms of received education, the young population in Russia compare well to people of their age in OECD countries (fig. 1). The proportion of Russian population with education higher than upper secondary one is 12 percentage points larger than in OECD countries (42% vs. 30%), which is achieved due to more widespread secondary professional education.

The education level of young people considerably varies among the regions: from 26% of young men and girls aged 16-29 with tertiary education in Dagestan to 51% and 53%, respectively, in Lipetsk Oblast. With rare exception, education level of girls is somewhat higher than that of young men in all regions.



Equity of access to education can be viewed in several aspects. First, as an opportunity to get education, i.e., to study at an educational institution of a certain level, depending on gender, socioeconomic status, and place of residence. And, second, as the equality of access to education of a certain quality.

Equality of access based on the territorial factor is the most critical issue demonstrating a considerable interregional difference in major access indicators (coverage, number of graduates, etc.), *inter alia*, in respect to accessibility of advanced-level general education, higher education due to uneven distribution of educational institutions over the Russian territory, access to high quality education for rural and urban youth.



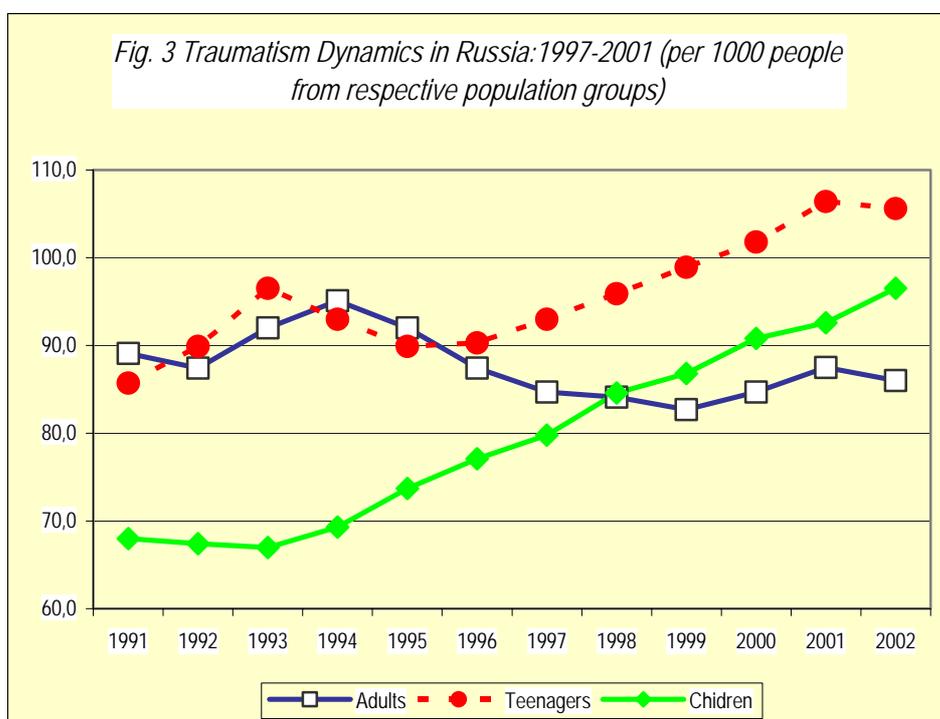
Russia's participation in international studies PISA and TIMS provides a certain understanding of *education quality* in Russia as compared to other countries. Despite the relative nature of ratings, and difficulty of comparison between countries with different socio-cultural traditions, education models and standards, etc., the results of recent studies have caused concern of both the specialists and managers of the education system: according to the survey, the performance of 15-year-old

Russian students by most indicators still remains significantly lower than that of students in both the leading countries (Finland, Hong Kong, Republic of Korea, and Japan), and the average performance of students in 30 OECD countries. Moreover, the 2003 results deteriorated as compared to the previous 2000 survey.

The review of vocational training quality and youth employment showed that the profile of graduates by education levels, and the contents of both general and professional education fail to meet the requirements of labor market and socialization of the young generation. As a result, young graduates are increasingly seeking employment beyond their specialty; occupy jobs not requiring such high level of education, and refuse jobs due to excessively high expectations and self-appraisal.

Health status of the young generation. The pattern of disease incidence among the Russian youth is largely related to the current socioeconomic situation in the country. Among the infectious diseases, TB, HIV/AIDS, and STD occupy the first place. Of great concern are respiratory diseases whose incidence rate is increasing from year to year. Tobacco smoking is the main cause of respiratory diseases.

External factors remain one of the most frequent causes of mortality among the young workable age population in Russia. Traumatism, both intentional and unintentional, is a social problem suffering the greatest deficit of attention on the part of health care systems on a worldwide scale while traumatism is the cause of the largest share of the total disease severity expressed in the loss of active years of life. A certain growth in the number of traumas and poisoning among the young population (children and juveniles) has been noted in Russia in recent years (fig.3).

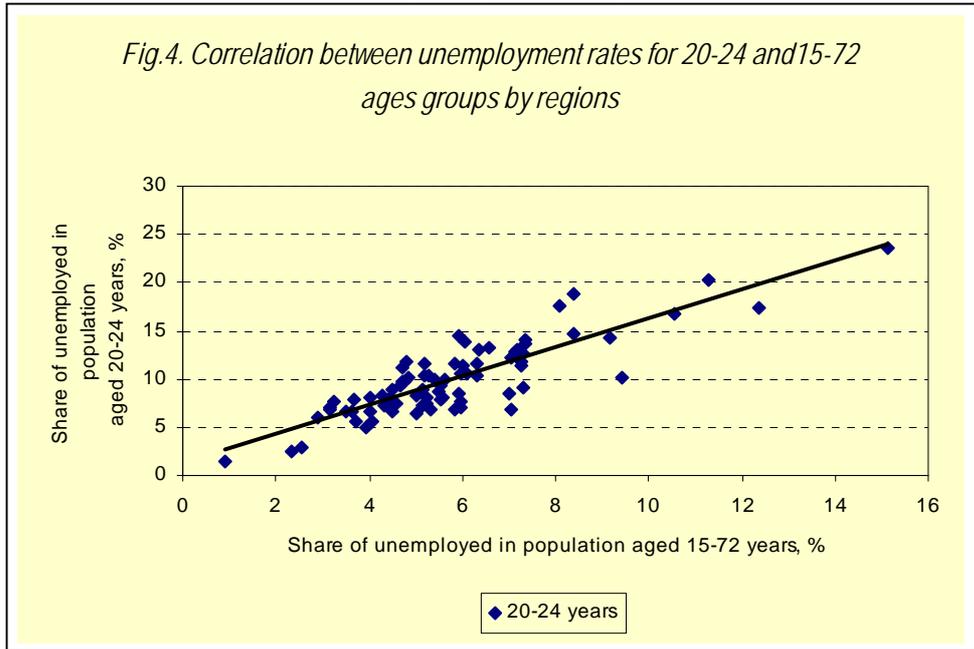


The health status of youth, and especially the incidence of TB, smoking and alcoholism, traumatism and mortality due to external causes, demonstrates explicit regional variations also directly related to the level of regional socioeconomic development.

Youth on the labor market generally acts as the most mobile part of the population noted for a relatively higher rate of adaptation to market requirements. Therefore, the youth, even despite the lack of experience, currently has at least the same (if not greater) employment opportunities as the people from middle and older age groups.

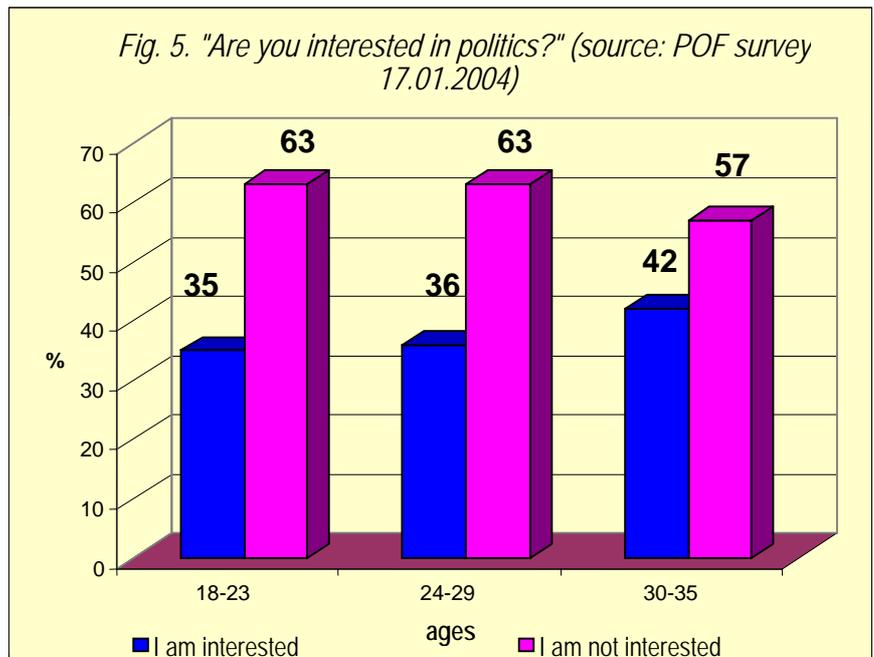
The available data evidence to significant differences in the youth employment across the country. High regional differentiation of employment is partially attributed to objective regional economic conditions – overall economic situation, labor market status, sectoral structure of the economy, etc. However, the territorial location of educational institutions (especially HEIs) also has a significant impact on the regional youth employment.

Youth unemployment rate, above all, depends on the overall labor market situation in the given region, i.e., is closely related to the unemployment rate of the general population (Fig. 4). At the same time, like in older age groups, the parameters of youth situation on the labor market are improving with the improved education level. The higher the education, the higher the employment rate, and the lower the share of the unemployed in the respective group. HEI graduates face the least difficulties in finding jobs (thought, unfortunately, we are not always dealing with employment according to the graduate's specialty). Graduates from secondary and initial vocational training institutions are facing somewhat greater employment difficulties; however, on the average, the above difficulties are not of a critical nature in Russia.



The most "problematic" regions from the viewpoint of youth employment policy are grouped in several relatively compact (as far as such definition is applicable to Russia) geographic areas (Northern Caucasus, Southern Siberia, and the Far East). Therefore, improvements in the employment and education coverage of the young population in the regions should be addressed both at the sub-national and interregional levels (in particular, at the level of Federal Okrugs).

The review of sociological surveys and statistics allows a statement on the political passivity, and *low level of youth inclusion in social life*; suffice it to say that the youth is the least active age electoral group (fig. 5). At the same time, the experience of many countries shows that young people are disposed to extremism, which creates a real threat of stirring up the activities of nationalistic groups in modern Russia, especially in regions with the low level of socioeconomic development, as well as in areas of major inflows of immigrants from Caucasian countries and regions and Middle Asia.

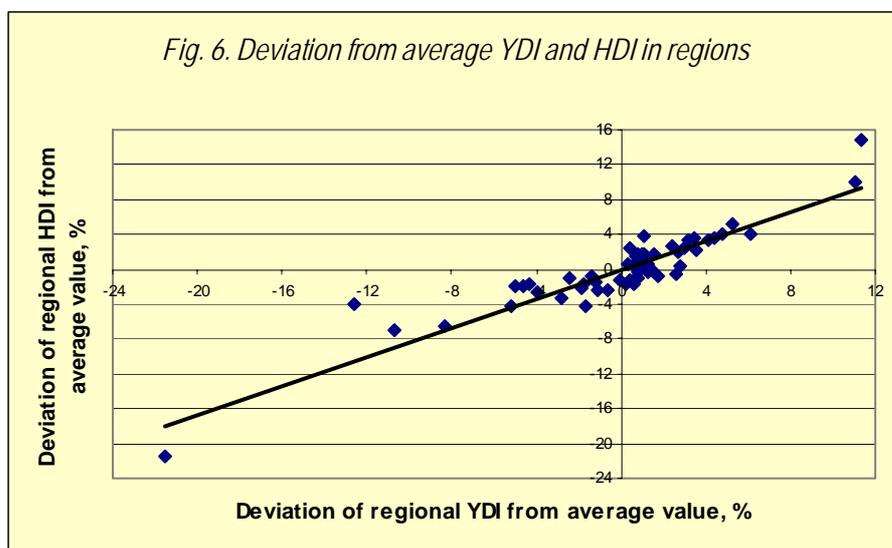


The problem of youth delinquency also has a regional aspect, and requires individual approach in the work with young people from social risk groups at the local level. At the same time, some dangerous trends are evolving in the youth delinquency, which require immediate response. Such trends include the growing share of grave crimes and increased severity of crimes,

growing share of crimes committed by groups, as well as increased recidivism. The latter is caused by multiple factors; however, active measures aimed at helping those who had committed a crime to return to normal life can and should become an important element of the youth policy.

The Report presents an experimental calculation of a **Youth Development Index (YDI)**, which is close in concept and methodology to the widely used Human Development Index (HDI). The Youth Development Index is an integrated index estimating the development of the human potential of the young population (young people at the age of 16 to 24 years old) in three major areas: life expectancy and health, education, and living standard. The YDI calculation methodology is based on the calculation methodology of a similar index developed by the UNESCO Latin American Department and used when preparing a similar report for Brazil. YDI calculation methodology requires verification and probably further elaboration. However, even as it is, the index enables to evaluate interregional differentiation in the youth situation, and reveal major directions of youth policy at the regional level. Comparing YDI and HDI values by regions also allows a judgment on the efficiency of youth policy in Russian regions.

The difference between the highest and lowest YDI values made up 42%. The largest deviations from the index meaning among the reviewed Russian regions are noted in the Tyva Republic (-21.55%), Altai Republic (-12.57%), Tyumen Oblast (11.32%), Moscow City and Moscow Oblast (11.08%), Chita Oblast (-10.70%) and Jewish Autonomous Oblast (-8.36%). Therefore, 4 of 6 regions with the largest deviations from the average value are those with the lowest YDI (4 last places in the rating). In addition, only 19 regions also have YDI lower than the Russia's average (for comparison, 38 regions have YDI exceeding the Russia' average). Thus, the high regional



differentiation in youth development is attributed to a considerable lag of the least developed regions rather than to the outpace of some "developed" ones. Here lies a significant difference between the Youth Development Index and Human Development Index, which is, first of all, defined by the high performance of the most socially and economically developed regions.

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By the majority of indicators, Russian young people status and potential are similar (and in some cases even higher) to their age group in OECD countries.

At the same time, the substantial and growing interregional differentiation in youth status becomes an obstacle to socioeconomic development in regions and source for destructive processes in youth communities

These challenges, as well as some others specified in the Report, should become main targets of the National Youth Policy.