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**MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL PROJECTS IN HIGHER
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: SETTING OBJECTIVES**

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Abstract

The article reveals the urgency of creating a structural unit engaged in educational work with students and teachers on the basis of social project activities in higher education institutions. The purpose and the objectives of the School of Social and Pedagogical Design in the Institute of Education at Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, the methodological basis of its activity are presented. The elements of educational work with the students as an essential means of implementing educational activities in higher education institutions and the didactic conditions for its successful implementation on the basis of the system-activity approach with a special focus on the multifunctional social skills, diversification of educationalists, and thorough consideration of the existing experience of multifunctional implementation and cooperation practices are described. The institution's socially educational projects and activities are, therefore, the instrument through which the significance of each envisaged activity and project are defined with reference to the elements of the treatment with the focus on required social skills and competences. The study encompasses theory and research within a paradigm that allows for the analysis of contemporary educational standards, the Professional standard of the teacher, the socio-cultural reality, policy addressing labour market studies, enrolment issues, and cooperation practices.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the quality of Russian higher education has been of paramount concern to both educational authorities and experts (report 2005). Education and upbringing are viewed as high-priority issues for the country's social and economic development in the government education policy of the Russian Federation. This is evident from the official documents. Complex changes in the system of teacher training, expressed in the development of the professional standard of a teacher, as well as the new Federal State Educational Standards in Pedagogics aim at the modification of the content and models of teacher training, which requires the coordination of the efforts of the pedagogical community and teacher training educational organizations on ensuring the high quality standards of professional training (Budarina, & Parakhina, 2017). Quality control in higher education by the Federal Service for Education and Science Surveillance (Rosobrnadzor) and the Federal Education Agency (Rosobrazovanie) reveals the necessity of implementing the goals of socially educational activities at all levels of teacher training programmes, into the content of curricula, assessing material and in-training practices of higher education institutions. In total, 4,804,000 people graduated from Russian higher educational establishments from 1999 to 2004. In this 5-year period the number of employed graduates increased by 4,631,000, and quite a high proportion of the graduates (15.4%) of this increment entered education (Bobylev, & Alexandrova, 2015), and the number has been constantly growing within the period of the recent decade. The project "Modernization of teacher education" in Russia targeted at overcoming the existing problems (Bolotov, Rubtsov, & Froumin, 2015), including the issues of low flexibility of teacher training system not providing versatile possibilities for shifting between pedagogical and non-pedagogical majors, lack of independent assessment of the quality of teacher training in Russia, and the ignorance for the need of setting social educational objectives for future educationalists.

Analysis of the reports from the subjects of the Russian Federation during 2015-2016 on the implementation of the Development Strategy of Upbringing in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025 (hereinafter – the Strategy) and the Strategy of the National Safety of the Russian Federation till 2020 has identified the need for specifying certain statements of the Strategies. Specified steps are required to implement tasks of upbringing development based on the principles of the system-activity approach, such as:

- creating conditions for consolidating the efforts of social institutions to educate the younger generation;
- the creation of conditions for increasing resource, organizational, methodological support of educational activities and responsibility for its results.

In addition, according to the "Concept of long-term socio-economic development of the Russian Federation for the period until 2020", the basis for the development of the education system should include, among other things, such principles of educational project activities implemented in the priority national project "Education", as the openness of education to external inquiries, competitive identification and support of leaders successfully implementing new approaches in practice, targeting of resource support tools and the integrated nature of the decisions made, transfer to innovative socially oriented type of educational development and human potential advancement in Russia.

2. Problem Statement

Under the condition of the educational system renewal, the problem of preparing highly skilled teachers who are able to provide socially educational activities has become urgent. The need of implementing variable social projects at all levels of education reflects the significant proportion of young people with low accessibility to leisure facilities and activities. Management of social projects in higher education institutions becomes not only an essential means of implementing educational activities into the curricula, but also leads to the reduction of antisocial attitudes and socially disapproved activities of young people for all levels of education. Thus, the existence of a structural unit on the institutional level gives a fair opportunity for designing flexible and variable educational activities for future educationalists suitable for all levels of education. The School of Social and Pedagogical Design can become such structural unit for a higher educational institution.

3. Research Questions

At the end of 2017, within the framework of the all-Russian monitoring of the sphere of youth policy organized by the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation, we conducted a survey in which 525 young people from the Kaliningrad region took part.

The survey was aimed at studying such parameters as: the coverage of youth by their involvement and participation in youth sections, study groups, associations and youth clubs, the coverage of youth by youth policy measures and the accessibility of leisure facilities and activities.

The prerequisites for the study of the indicator "the involvement of young people into youth sections, study groups, associations and youth clubs" were the ideas that the main characteristic of a young period of life is an excess of free time, which can be devoted to self-development, or possible - to the engagement in socially disapproved activities. In addition, the life of students is structured in such a way that they spend part of the time in major social institutions: family, university, first enrolment, and part of the time they are left to themselves. One possible way to constructively use this time is to attend clubs and participate in different leisure activities. In this regard, this indicator characterizes the percentage of young people who are guaranteed not to be engaged in socially disapproved activities in their spare time, because they regularly attend clubs, sections, etc., as there is simply no time for them for being involved in asocial activities and exercise destructive patterns of behaviour. According to the results, the involvement of young people in youth sections, study groups, associations and youth clubs financed by the regional Ministry of Education in the Kaliningrad region comprised 23%.

The indicator "young people's involvement in youth policy activities" is related to the fact that the lower the percentage of youth covered by youth policy measures, the greater the likelihood that government bodies responsible for youth policy in the subject of the Russian Federation are using the same students to participate in the youth events and activities of the region. According to the results of the survey, the proportion of students who have taken part in youth policy activities over the last 3 months in the Kaliningrad region is 34%.

The next set of research questions is related to free time employment. Most students devote much of their free time to social networking. The responses were also "watching movies" (41%) and "communicating with friends in favourite venues" (40%).

As can be seen from the results obtained during the survey, there is a need to create such structures that would meet the objectives of the Strategy for the development of Russian education and the needs of students. In the Kaliningrad region, one of such units becomes the School of Social and Pedagogical Design created on the basis of the Institute of Education at Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University in 2017 (hereinafter - the School).

4. Purpose of the Study

The educational activities and social projects of the School of Social and Pedagogical Design have been evaluated with the purpose to prove that they meet the objectives of the new Federal State Educational Standards in Pedagogics and the targets of the project "Modernization of teacher education" in Russia as well as the personal expectations of the future educationalists. The participants of the probation stage on the part of Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University are 1st to 3rd – year BA students, as a part of the BA programme 44.03.01 "Pedagogical education", 1st-year MA students as a part of the MA programme 44.04.01 "Pedagogical education", and 1st to 3rd-year PhD students, as a part of the PhD programme 44.06.01 "Education and pedagogical sciences". The undergraduate students within their scientific research practicum carry out a scientific research on the selected subject. They aim at studying the main stages of scientific work and acquiring different methods of collecting, analysing and processing their research data on the issues of upbringing and social project management.

5. Research Methods

In the course of the research observation, questioning of students at Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University and secondary school learners, parents and authorities were used as empirical research methods.

The methodological basis for the functioning of the School, following the Strategy, is the system-activity approach. The main goal of this approach is to awaken the young person's interest in the educational process as a whole, as well as to develop their skills of self-education. In the framework of the system-activity approach, the student is an active subject of this process. Ultimately, the result should be the education of a person with an active life position, not only in the course of training, but also in life. Such a person is able to set goals, solve educational and existence problems and be responsible for the result of their actions.

The system-activity approach assumes (Shumeyko, 2016):

- education and development of personal qualities that meet the requirements of the information society, innovative economy, the tasks of building a democratic civil society on the basis of tolerance, a dialogue of cultures and respect for the multinational, multicultural and polyconfessional composition of the society;

- transition to the strategy of social design and construction in the education system on the basis of the development of content and technologies of education that determine the ways and means of achieving the socially desirable level (result) of personal and cognitive development of students;

- taking into account the age, individual psychological and physiological characteristics of students, the role and importance of activities and forms of communication for determining the goals of education and upbringing and ways to achieve them;

- a variety of individual educational trajectories and individual development of each student (including gifted young people and students with disabilities), providing growth of creative potential, cognitive motives.

6. Findings

Educational work and the implementation of social projects with students on the basis of the system-activity approach, thus, should include:

- development of social and life experience, motivational sphere, social and communicative skills and abilities;
- formation of decision-making skills in the consistent and responsible implementation of their social functions as future educationalists;
- supporting professional growth and raising professional competence abilities;
- social and civil self-determination skills;
- the conscious implementation of socially acceptable activities.

The implementation of these objectives implies:

- optimization of the legal, methodological, organizational and economic foundations at a higher educational institution;
- development of the content, forms and methods of education, as well as professional models of future educationalists;
- providing necessary conditions for self-realization of students' personality in various spheres;
- a combination of personal interests and professional opportunities.

Proceeding from the above, the goal of the School of Social and Pedagogical Design is conditioning professional competence abilities of students of the Institute of Education at Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University by methods of social and pedagogical design with extracurricular activities.

The main objectives of the School are:

- support, development and popularization of initiatives and initiatives of students in the social and pedagogical spheres;
- development of models and variable training programmes, such as teacher specialties for students from non-pedagogical training programmes;
- providing methodological and informational support in the preparation for projects that promote the acquisition of social activity skills and social design skills;
- attracting students to participate in project, management, research activities;
- organization and implementation of activities related to raising the prestige of the profession of the teacher: career guidance, the development of tutoring and mentoring practices;

- increasing the academic mobility of students;
- development and support of cooperation with youth public organizations and student associations;
- involvement of students in the organization and implementation of socially-significant, cultural, media and leisure activities;
- encouraging students to tackle and research problems that are relevant for the university, the region and the development of the country.

The management of social projects by the School is seen as a way to organize ideas, focus on the majors in the upcoming activities, as a useful tool and guide to action.

A social project is a special form of organization of activities that contributes to the achievement of socially significant results in a timely manner by means of a predetermined sequence and methods of action. Project activities can be carried out individually or collectively. The ultimate goal of this activity is the positive transformation of the social environment and habitat conditions available to project developers.

To improve the quality of educational work and its goal-directed development within the School, its information and methodological support is necessary. The main directions of such work are the following (Zelko, 2017):

- development of educational and methodological support of the educational environment;
- creation of software and methodological kits of psychological and pedagogical support of personality development, processes of social adaptation;
- examination of the educational potential and educational models of the Institute;
- regular events and activities built into the curricula;
- compilation of information and analytical bases on the aspects of youth education, the results of sociological research;
- expanding cooperation with the media in the approval of the fundamentals of upbringing, the priority of universal human rights and values;
- cooperation with educational organizations of the city and the region;
- cooperation on information exchange with Russian and international organizations on dissemination of knowledge and best practices in the field of education and socially educational projects;
- the formation of the unified educational space of the region and the strengthening of the place and role of the university in the consolidation of the pedagogical community.

The following didactic conditions are necessary for the implementation of programmes at the university level:

- selection of the content of education conducive to becoming subjectivity of the future educationalist;
- unity of the principles of education at all stages of life-long learning;
- the focus of education on the self-development of students;
- technological security of the programmes and projects of the School;
- staginess and the differentiation of content, forms, methods of teaching, corresponding to the stages.

7. Conclusion

Taking into account the urgency of expanding the involvement of young people into youth sections, study groups, associations and youth clubs, youth policy activities and leisure activities, it is important to focus on the main forms of the School's activities and the presentation of its successful projects, and, having outlined the goals and objectives of its functioning, draw a conclusion that boils down to the following provisions.

Firstly, the main principle in the work of the School is voluntariness in deciding to launch a new project, or a partial reorientation of what is already being implemented, taking into account jointly developed theoretical and methodological grounds and social and pedagogical tasks.

Secondly, the system-activity approach to the project management of the School as a unit meeting the priorities of the Strategy is a common meaningful semantic context.

Thirdly, the results of the survey made it possible to formulate the goals and objectives of the School and make it extremely popular, taking into account those broad opportunities that are represented at the federal university and in the region as a whole.

Fourthly, the practices successfully implemented in the School can be productively extrapolated to other educational organizations on the regional national and international levels in order to foster their educational potential.

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