

SOME PROBLEMS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION UNDER CONDITIONS OF MODERN DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION IN RUSSIA

M.B. Glotov, N.A. Lobanov

Management of continuing education processes requires consideration of such factor as the existing demographic situation in the country. The main demographic process that has a direct impact on the functioning of the system of continuous education is reproduction of the age structure of the population. Functioning of the system of continuing education largely depends on the quantitative and qualitative composition of the population, the trends in fertility and mortality rates, directions and rates of migration.

According to the annual report of United Nations Fund for Population Activities, modern demographic situation in Russia is defined as the demographic crisis and depopulation. A sharp drop in the birth rate and an increase in mortality attest to the existence of a demographic crisis in Russia. The total fertility rate in modern Russia attests to the narrowed reproduction, which began in the 1990s. If the overall fertility rate is less than 16%, the birth rate is considered to be low. In 1961 in Russia the overall fertility rate was equal to 21.9%, in 1991 – 12.1% and in 2001 – 9.1%. Although in recent years the government has taken some of the socio-economic measures aimed at reducing the negative processes in the demographic situation, which resulted in slight increase in the birth rate in Russia (in 2012 – 13.3%), however the overall fertility rate still remains quite low. With such level of fertility, by the UN forecast, by 2050 the population of Russia as compared to 2010 could be reduced by 40 million people.

In Russia over a period from 1993 to 2002 the number of deaths exceeded the number of births by 6.8 million people (in St. Petersburg death rate exceeded the birth rate by 1.9 times). According to the census of 2010, compared with the census made in 2002, Russia's population has decreased by 2.2 million people. Over the last five years, in our country mortality each year increases by 1 million people, when compared with natality. Even migration growth do not compensate for the decrease caused by the excess of deaths over births. In 1994, in Russia immigration completely covered population loss due to natural causes, at present it covers only 24%.

According to the report “Global trends of human development up to 2015”, prepared by the US National Intelligence Council and leading American experts, in both developed and developing countries the percentage of elderly people in retirement age is increasing. Our statistics show the same. The increase in the proportion of elderly people in the age structure of the country puts forward high requirements not only for their socio-economic content, and medical care, but also to adaptation to the conditions of modern life. The latter is related to the practical implementation of the concept “Education of the third age people”. At present, every fifth citizen of the Russian Federation may be related to the elderly people. It is also true for St. Petersburg. Despite the fact that the Federal Law “On Education in the Russian Federation” adopted on December 29, 2012 includes the article concerning continuing education, education of the elderly is not mentioned. To estimate the quantity of elderly people in the country such indicator as the specific weight of residents over 60 years in the age structure of the country’s population is used. In Russia this index in 1959 was 9.0%, in 1979 — 13.7%, in 1999 — 18.1%, in 2002 — 19.4%, and in 2012 — 22.3%. And as this trend will remain, then in four to six years, one out of four in the country will be over 60 years old. And although from time to time in the press the issue of increasing the retirement age is discussed, but we think that this is not the main problem of population aging in Russia. To date, we have the proportion of 100 employees to 90 pensioners. It is expected that by 2020 the number of both employees and pensioners will become equal, and by 2040, 100 workers will provide pensions for 125 retirees (while industrially developed countries have the proportion of 100 employees to 50 pensioners). Thus, to solve problems of the population aging and the problem of the ratio of employees to retirees the state should, first of all, create in all Federal entities in the system of continuing education a new educational structure — “Educational clusters of the third age”, that will expand the scope of labor activities of the able-bodied retirees and reduce the financial burden on the workers.

With the development of computer technology and the Internet the elderly demonstrated a greater demand for acquiring skills to use them. In most cases, they are “educated” by their grandchildren, less often — they use the services of special educational courses. Some retirees would like to learn specific home crafts, acquire the skills of plant cultivation, gardening, animal breeding or the secrets of small business, medical self-service. Today in many ways they are aided by

the media and specialist literature. But if this training would have organizational state forms it would be even better.

According to the World Bank, Russia currently takes the second place in the world according to the number of migrants entering the country. According to the Russian migration services in 2012, officially there were more than 12 million immigrants. 90% of labor migrants who come to the Russian are men (18-29 years old — 74%, 30-36 years old — 26%). Among Russian immigrants 24% have incomplete secondary education, 37% — secondary education, 34% — specialized secondary education and 5% — higher education; speak Russian fluently — 34%, poor Russian skills — 52%, do not know the Russian language — 14%. According to statistics, 60% of St. Petersburg migrants do not have professional education, 20% — do not speak Russian, 50% — know the certain words and phrases. Among the arrived labor migrants 85% are follower of the religion of Islam.

The increase in the flow of labor migrants and members of their families, who in the vast majority do not speak Russian and have no special education, raises the problem of their education. At present, in general education school in Russian cities, classes are formed for children of specified nationality in which they are simultaneously studying Russian language, history and culture of Russia, and the number of subjects are taught in their national language. Adult migrants are offered training courses on the Russian language and history of Russia. The “State Migration Policy Concept of the Russian Federation for the period 2012-2025” approved on June 13, 2012, proposes to expand in Russian universities and institutions of secondary vocational education the number of foreign students, mostly citizens of CIS countries.

The existing modern demographic situation in Russia has set the state system of continuing education a number of important tasks. These issues relate to people of all ages and stages of continuous education: pre-school, school, university and postgraduate.

Recently outlined positive trend of increasing birth rate has strengthen the problem of providing pre-school age children with kindergartens that complement family education with specially organized forms of primary socialization. According to statistics, as of today more than 1.6 million families wait for a place in kindergarten. Women from the near abroad who come to Russia either to give birth or move to Russia with their little children because of their husband’s job increase the number of people in need of kindergartens. In the next three years active building of new kindergartens, which will provide 500,000 ad-

ditional places, is planned, but it is three times less than is required. The lack of kindergartens, in which children receive the necessary knowledge and skills of pre-school training and education, negatively affect the success of the first two years of teaching children in school, and this is the first stage of the system of continuing education.

In the course of the reform period almost 20 thousand villages were wiped off Russia map, coupled with a sharp drop in the birth rate in preceding years, it has resulted in a sparsely populated rural areas and reduction in the so-called “ungraded school”. After the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation considered that maintenance of these schools is too costly, 15,000 “unnecessary” schools were closed. Ungraded rural school is the most important social infrastructure of the village, performing educational and pedagogical function, not only for children but also for adults. Without these schools motivation to obtain both general and further education is significantly reduced. In addition, the closure of ungraded rural school has given rise to a number of additional problems in the education of rural learners: remoteness of schools from the place of residence of the learners and separation of children from their families (when they were living in a boarding school or with relatives) not only destroy, important for the upbringing, normal life in the family, but also negatively affect the success of training.

Due to the sharp decline in the birth rate during the last 20 years in Russia potential contingent of university entrants has reduced. In this regard, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, taking advantage of the accession in 2003 to the Bologna Process, has reduced the vocational training of highly qualified specialists by one year. Simultaneously with 2012 began the process of elimination of so-called ineffective universities and their numerous branches and minor faculties, unification of departments, and universities — into the university conglomerates, reducing the number of budget places.

In accordance with the new State Education Standard the amount of class work on a number of mostly minor subjects was reduced by half, the number of studied socio-humanitarian disciplines declined dramatically, teachers' hourly rates were increased as much as possible. As a result teaching staff of the university is significantly reduced. In order to stay on a full staff rate, teachers were forced to agree to conduct two or three related subject, some of them — on half or even quarter pay. In this situation, there is a problem not only of the job search or

retraining of dismissed teachers, but also the problem of additional training of remained in the university teachers in subjects which they had not previously taught. In this regard, the quality of teaching in many universities reduced noticeably, and as a consequence, knowledge of the learners. As a result, this can seriously affect the competence of graduates.

The above stated indicates that demographic situation in Russia is unfavorable, which will affect the economy and the social sphere, including education. Experts draw attention to the fact that in 10 years the number of women in the active childbearing age (20-29 years), which account for two thirds of births, will almost halve. At the same time a large decline in the working age population (2020 by 7-8 millions, by 2050 — more than by 26 million) is expected. This is one of the challenges of the XXI century.

Whether continuing education, and by that time it has to be formed in the state system, can respond to this challenge? We believe that, even if in general these population forecasts are correct, continuing education is able to significantly alleviate many of the negative economic and social consequences caused by the expected reduction in the population. Firstly, in the next decade continuing professional education will cover more than half of the working population, increasing the level of professional knowledge and the level of professional expertise, which will ensure the growth of labor productivity with fewer workers. Secondly, there will be a significant increase in the level of work processes computerization and the level of manufacturing automation, which will also require fewer workers. Thirdly, the expansion of governmental childbirth incentives and support to families with more than two children will positively effect the demographic situation, and enable the country to implement the strategy of extended demographic reproduction. Fourthly, the government will be forced to return to a policy of reconstruction and development of schools in sparsely populated rural areas, which will strengthen socioeconomic and demographic sustainability of rural communities. Fifthly, to create in all regions “Educational clusters” for the people of the “third age”.

Translated from Russian by M.N. Nepachatykh