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**Implementation of the project for the introduction of universal primary education in the Russian province during the early twentieth century**

Marina A. Sergienko, Inna G. Onoprienko, Vladimir S. Kylabuhov, Lyudmila S. Polovneva,  
Elena Yu. Prokofieva  
Belgorod State University

**Abstract**

The development of capitalist relations, the processes of industrialization in the Russian Empire during the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries advanced the development of public education system as one of the main factors in the modernization process. The carrying out of bourgeois reforms in 1860-ies and 1870-ies required competent, educated people and specialists in various fields. In this regard, the problem of educational institution network is the key one. The authors of the article suggest to consider the implementation of the project for the introduction of universal primary education in Russian Empire during the early twentieth century, using the example of Kursk province. The team of authors comes to the conclusion that due to the activities of local government in the Russian province, primary education became more accessible. In the course of the study, it was established that the activities of the city and local self-government bodies created the conditions for the accelerated development of the public education system as a whole and prepared the organizational material that was used during the first years of the Soviet power.

**Key words:** bourgeois reforms, universal primary education, province, education, local government bodies, province.

**Introduction**

The second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century is a complex and contradictory period in the history of the Russian Empire. The development of industry, trade, agriculture, the army and the navy demanded some increase in the general cultural and educational level of all population layers. An important step in this direction was the adoption of the Regulations on the initial public schools in 1864, which allowed to build the system of organization and management by the institutions of primary public education with the involvement of local governments in this process. However, the issue of universal primary education introduction was not removed from the agenda. In addition, the process of universal education implementation on the territory of the Russian Empire took place without precedence, without legislative changes and was based primarily on departmental orders.

At the moment, the study of the government and city and local self-government bodies in the development of public education at the turn of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is still relevant. The attraction of regional material allows to reveal the features of the project realization on the introduction of universal training in separately taken province and to trace the laws of set tasks solution in general within the territory of Russian empire simultaneously. Nowadays there are no special works on the activities of local government of the Kursk province concerning the introduction of universal primary education. The degree of their participation in this process was considered only partially in the studies on the history of public education in the Kursk province, in particular, by T.P. Mamaev [1], A.A. Tereshchenko and D.A. Tereshchenko [2].

We believe that the state of provincial education in the period under study on the whole corresponded and consistently reflected the development of the all-Russian system of public education. Locally, the process of universal primary education introduction and the spread of educational institution network is depended on the level of a given province development directly, on the degree of regional industry modernization. During the period under study, the positive dynamics of the primary education network expansion in the Kursk province is noted, which was a direct result of local self-government body practical activities.

**Methods of the study.** The performed study is based on the principles of objectivity, historicism and scientific character, which allow us to reveal the patterns of public education development in Russian province during the period under study. Logical, comparative-historical and problem-chronological methods were used for a consistent proof of the hypothesis put forward. These methods allowed to reconstruct the activities of local governments completely and reliably in the introduction of universal primary education during the period under study.

Main part. During the second half of the nineteenth century, various types of primary schools developed in the Russian Empire simultaneously (local, ecclesiastical, private and ministerial ones). The educational activity was performed by the institutions of the Ministry of Public Education (hereinafter referred to as MPE), funded by the State Treasury with a significant share of funding from local sources on the territory of the Kursk Gubernia; local schools that existed from the means of county councils with the financial investments of rural societies; parish and volost schools, which were supported by district counties and, finally, the schools, which were exclusively financed by private individuals. The most stable position was among ministerial schools, since they were established only under the condition of annual financing from the sums of the local budget in the amount of 400 rubles at least. This allowed to maintain a school without any interference from the ministry.

The result of county council activities in the field of public education during 1890-ies is the first rank for county council schools in the Russian Empire in terms of the number of children educated there. But the primary school could not satisfy the demands of developing capitalism both quantitatively and qualitatively. Therefore, starting from 1860-ies, the Russian Empire faced the issue not only of public school network expansion, but of universal compulsory education.

During the period under study Kursk province was a typical agrarian region of the Central Chernozem region with a developed system of provincial cities. Already during the first decade of the county council body functioning in the Kursk province, the number of primary schools increased tenfold in comparison with the period before county councils. The number of county council schools was increasing steadily and by the beginning of 1896 there were 552 county council schools in the province with 42081 pupils of both sexes. Besides there were 21 ministerial schools with 2329 pupils. By the amount of population Kursk province occupied one of the first places among county council provinces - 2312839 inhabitants. One county council school accounted for 4190 inhabitants of both sexes, and if we take into account the ministerial schools, then there were 4045 inhabitants per school [3]. By the number of students per 100 inhabitants Kursk province occupied the 25th place among 34 county council provinces, considerably behind in comparison with other county council provinces, which raised an acute issue of the need for universal primary education.

The main problem for city government bodies in the implementation of the project for the introduction of universal primary education was the construction of new buildings and the acquisition of premises for schools. In April 1899, the applications were submitted to the cities of the Kursk Gubernia about the allocation of funds for the construction and the maintenance of new buildings which must be considered by the Department for the Ministry of Education primary schools. Starooskolskaya city government applied for an annual subsidy from MNP funds in the amount of 12,423.33 rubles, which was necessary for the opening and the maintenance of 57 new schools. Schigrovskaya city government applied about the acceptance of  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the expense for the maintenance of schools to the government account. There were also the petitions for the Ministry to take part in the expenses of the Fatezh county council for the salaries of teachers and teaching aids in new schools; About the acceptance of expenses to the government account on the maintenance of 45 schools expected to open in Sudzhan district at the amount of 18000 rub. The Provincial county council petitioned for subsidies from MNP for the maintenance of annually opened new schools at half of the costs on maintenance. Annually it was planned to open at least three schools in the district, the maintenance of which was determined at 200 rubles per year for each. Thus, the amount of the annual subsidy would be 9,000 rubles [4].

But the ministry refused because of the lack of financial resources. Only 45,000 rubles were deducted on the needs of the Kharkov academic district. This amount was intended to satisfy all the petitions for the assistance of the treasury on the maintenance of colleges in the six provinces that make up the district.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the Russian Empire has been discussing actively the introduction of universal education. But only in 1907 the IIIrd State Duma considered the MNP draft "On the introduction of universal primary education in Russian Empire". The project envisaged the development and the plan of the school network, the creation of which was assigned to local government institutions in a two-year period; free education in schools, included in the school network, etc. [5].

May 3, 1908 the law on 6900000 rub. provision was adopted by the Ministry of Public Education for the needs of the people's education, which were sent to county council and city self-government bodies. After the adoption of this law in the Russian Empire, they begin the process of the project implementation for the introduction of universal primary education, which assumed the creation of primary school networks. Since 1909 the projects of school networks, necessary for the transition to universal education, developed on the local level by the county council bodies and city governments, begin to arrive at the Ministry.

The Kursk City Duma was one of the first implementing the project in the province, undertaking a commitment to open 2 new schools for 2 sets on September 1, 1908. The ministerial allowance was supposed to be contributed annually to the city budget for school and construction needs.

In accordance with the law issued on May 3, 1908, the Belgorod City Council approved a school network project in December 1909, according to which the government assumed obligations to allocate the benefits for the introduction of universal primary education in the city and the construction of new schools. An annual construction of one 4 building school was planned between 1914 and 1920. However, the project implementation was repeatedly postponed due to the lack of funds. In November 1912, during the meeting of the city government, the school network of the city of Belgorod was approved again. But the project stopped at the stage of resolutions, and the issue of universal primary education introduction was not resolved. Thus, in 1913, at the meeting of the Belgorod City Duma, the issue about the introduction of universal primary education in Belgorod was raised again. In order to implement the project, it was intended to apply to the treasury about the provision of 7000 rub. to the city for the construction of each 4 building school as an irrevocable allowance. And, in addition, the loan at the amount of 25,000 rubles was planned to provide for the period of 20 years [6]. The city council was commissioned to provide 8,000 rubles to city budgets for the construction of school buildings in 1914, 1916, 1918 and 1920. In accordance with the accepted commitments, the bulk of the costs for new school facility creation fell on the city government bodies. The implementation of this project would allow the completion of universal primary education introduction in the city of Belgorod by 1920.

In 1912 a draft of the Belgorod Uyezd school network prepared by the county council administration was presented for the consideration of the next Belgorod County Council Assembly. The calculation was based on a 16-year period of universal education. According to the project, it was planned to build 97 schools with 149 sets or 6 schools with 10 sets per year. According to existing rules all expenses for school construction and further maintenance of schools were covered from three sources: the appropriations from the treasury, the provincial and district county councils. The implementation of the project required 3,772,000 rubles. The bulk of the costs fell on the county council (62.5% of the total amount) [7]. Assuming the obligation to introduce universal education, the county council was obliged to contribute to the cost estimate the amount for the maintenance of one set, which made 455 rubles by 1912. If, according to the project, it was planned to open 149 new school kits, then it would be 276 kits in total with the existing ones. Consequently, the county council expenses for their maintenance would have amounted to 125,000 rubles per year. At that, until 1912 no more than 100 rub. per set were spent instead of 455 planned ones [8]. Thus, the decree of the estimating and audit commission on September 28, 1912 decided to abandon the introduction of universal primary education in Belgorod Uyezd.

Simultaneously, the work was carried out to develop school network projects in other cities of the province.

Thus, there was a parish school for primary education with a 3-year course for boys and a women's parochial school for 2 sets in Sudzha by 1909 [9]. Some of the children attended a women's Sunday school. But the overcrowding of schools did not make it possible to receive timely primary education for all. According to the plan of universal education introduction, 2 parish schools were supposed to function. During the implementation of the project in 1909, 313 people would have received education in 2 schools out of the number of children at the age of 8-11 years old (86.9%).

The county council body was in charge for the implementation of universal education project in the whole. The draft of the school network within the Sudzhan Uyezd was approved by the Minister of Education, and the county council board was assigned an annual state subsidy in accordance with the number of school kits. The network included 2 Sudzhan municipal parish schools for 6 sets and a parish school within the Cathedral Church for 2 sets [10].

By that time, the Sudzhan City Council had not developed yet its own school network project and, taking into account the financial situation of the city, the Duma expressed its consent to the inclusion of Sudzha in the general school network for the county. The City Duma undertook not to reduce the amount of urban appropriations assigned for the maintenance of primary schools by the estimate of the corresponding year for the following years. The balance of the amounts from the ministerial allowance was to be spent on the maintenance of primary schools, on the provision of additional allowance to teachers, for the construction and other needs. The expenditure of the allowances provided by the Ministry was strictly controlled. The city self-government bodies provided the excusing documents to the local Control Chamber in a strictly established time frame. The Sudzhan City Duma undertook the obligation to provide a list of teachers to the local inspector of primary schools by January 1. This was the list of teachers who were supposed to have salaries from the allowance of Public Education Ministry. With the introduction of universal primary education, the maintenance of the economic content of Sudzhan ministerial schools was entrusted to the city дума. The most important was the obligation not to form a special school network in Sudzha [11]. Thus, by the joint efforts of county council and city government bodies, it was possible to solve the issue on the introduction of universal primary education in Sudzha.

In 1910 MNP developed a uniform sample of the school network and financial plan form. City public administrations were obliged to develop a school network draft and a financial plan to implement the project for the introduction of universal primary education within 2 years. The members of the boards could apply to directors and inspectors of public schools to help in the drafting of school network and financial plan. The project of the school network and the financial plan for the implementation of the project was approved by the city council or by the meeting of city commissioners and was approved by the academic council or by the director of primary schools. And only after a governor's approval, and then the approval of MNP, the project became valid [12].

By 1910 with the implementation of the project for the introduction of universal education, certain success was achieved in the provincial Kursk. In primary schools 2,273 children were admitted, which was 22 pupils more than it was planned. Two new school kits were opened. The funds for the opening of new kits came from the Ministry. Unfortunately, it was possible to implement universal primary education in the difficult financial situation of cities, both in the province and in Russia as a whole, only with the funding from the state treasury [13].

Despite financial difficulties, by 1914 the project of universal education introduction in the Kursk Gubernia was implemented in 9 out of 15 districts, including Dmitrievsk, Kursk, Lgov, Rylysk, Starooskol, Sudzhansky, Timsy, Fatezh and Shchigrovsky one. The events of the First World War suspended the completion of the school reform, since the local government was responsible for the provision of refugees and prisoners of war. Besides, during this period of time the financing of public education was reduced sharply. When Bolsheviks came to power, the bodies of local and city government were completely eliminated.

**Conclusions.** It should be noted that with the organization of the county council and city governments respectively, primary education begins to take on a mass character. Despite the fact that the Ministry of

Public Education determined and controlled the organization and the content of the educational process, these types of secular schools were built and kept almost exclusively at the expense of local government. The implementation of the program for the introduction of universal primary education required significant investment. Given the weak government funding and the critical situation of many municipal budgets, the attraction of financial means only from the local self-government bodies to solve the problem of population illiteracy was clearly inadequate.

**Summary.** Thus, the expansion of primary school network and the increase of population literacy level showed that local self-government bodies have moved from point-based financing of educational institutions to the systematic work on the development of the public education system. And although the bodies of county council and city governments failed to implement the universal primary education program developed throughout the years, the work of local self-government bodies in this direction was not in vain, as the professional and material base was prepared and the organizational material was collected which was used in Soviet times.

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