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Shaping and Financing Educational Practices in Youth Development

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Abstract

Education, being a formalized continuation of upbringing, is a process aimed at the comprehensive development of an individual. Thus, in addition to comprehending the socially significant experience embodied in knowledge, an individual develops skills for creative activity and learns other forms of spiritual and practical exploration of the world. It is not surprising that over the time, characterized by the expansion of information fields, areas of responsibility and competencies, more attention is brought to discussions on the principles and components of policies that are focused on educating young people within the framework of educational activities at various levels of system education and training. The purpose of the research is to analyze principles and features of educational practices aimed at developing personal and social competencies in young people, as well as the specifics of their development and integration. The factors of social competence education of youth are considered as the objective of the research. The usability of the obtained results is in their potential application for creating a support system for comprehensive development of young people. The findings may have practical implications for developing policies used to create and support opportunities for comprehensive growth of young people. The research is conducted through general and special scientific instruments: dialectical approach, deduction and induction, statistical correlation and regression analysis.

Keywords: young people upbringing, educational organizations, young people growth, practical upbringing.

1. Introduction

The meaning of the “education of youth” concept can be interpreted in different ways. Thus, based on the context, the development of various competencies in young people can be understood as a process of natural personal development, all practices, methods and existing principles of

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youth education. All definitions have a logical connection, which in turn requires their separate consideration:

Education of youth as a natural process.

Youth development, a traditional and still the most widely used term, refers to natural processes for young people to develop their ability to understand the world around them and act in accordance with its rules, requests and restrictions. In this sense, this concept is identical to child and adolescent development. In other words, development is characterized by the activation of human potential under the influence of challenges and physical and social environment stimuli. It is not surprising that development lasts throughout the whole life (Damon, 2004).

However, when it comes to the level of social competence, it is important to consider the attribute of age, which implies significant differences in a person's preparedness for social life. While the level and the aspects of social competence are clear within the analysis of a formed, completely socialized person, the assessment of personality development for young people cannot always be conducted in accordance with ready-made instructions.

The point is, the state of competence of a youth representative depends on a wide number of factors. In this regard, the process of personal development, achieved due to the expansion of the circle of interests and acquaintances, the acquisition of new communication experience with peers and adults, the development of self-knowledge and self-awareness, is related to the gradual education of socially significant qualities – the ability to sympathize and empathize, to self-identify with a certain person or a group of people and, on the contrary, to separate oneself and one's own interests from the mass of other people's motives, etc. The particular importance at this stage of social development is paid to emotional perceptions, specified by impulsiveness, excitability, rapid mood changes and occurring experiences (Bulatnikov, 2012).

The above mentioned processes constitute the structure of a person's perceptions, where they, based on personal abilities and reasons for self-determination and self-awareness, determine their place in life and choose behavior patterns that are comfortable to adhere to within the framework of regular and work activities. However, in this aspect, an important role is attributed to school that offers experiential acquaintance with various components of social and labor competencies (see Figure 1).

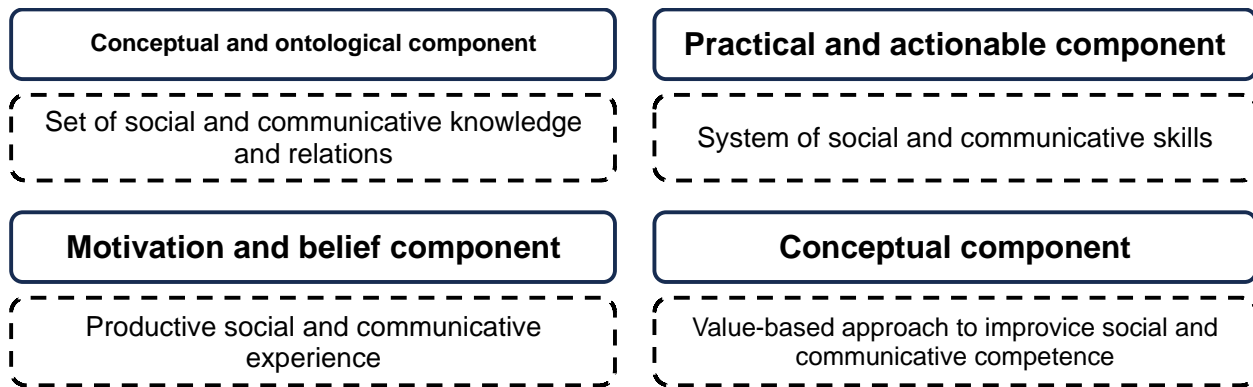


Fig. 1. The components of social competencies (Halberstadt et al., 2001)

As a consequence, the concept of competence of a young person can be defined as an integrative personality attribute that implies the presence of knowledge, experience, abilities and skills, formed as a result of socialization, which allow the person to effectively adapt to society and productively interact with its members. In turn, the content component of competence formation depends on the person's age.

The presence of the above mentioned competencies contributes to personal and professional growth, productive social interaction, increasing level of positive social activity and harmonious social life. A high level of social competence of young people as future professionals who provide value to society guarantees their successful adaptation to dynamically changing living conditions, forms the basis of life, and opens up prospects for effective social and professional fulfillment (Gedviliene et al., 2014).

Of particular note is the prism model of social competence that not only focuses on developing social competence, but describes various elements necessary for establishing good social interactions in general (see [Figure 2](#)).

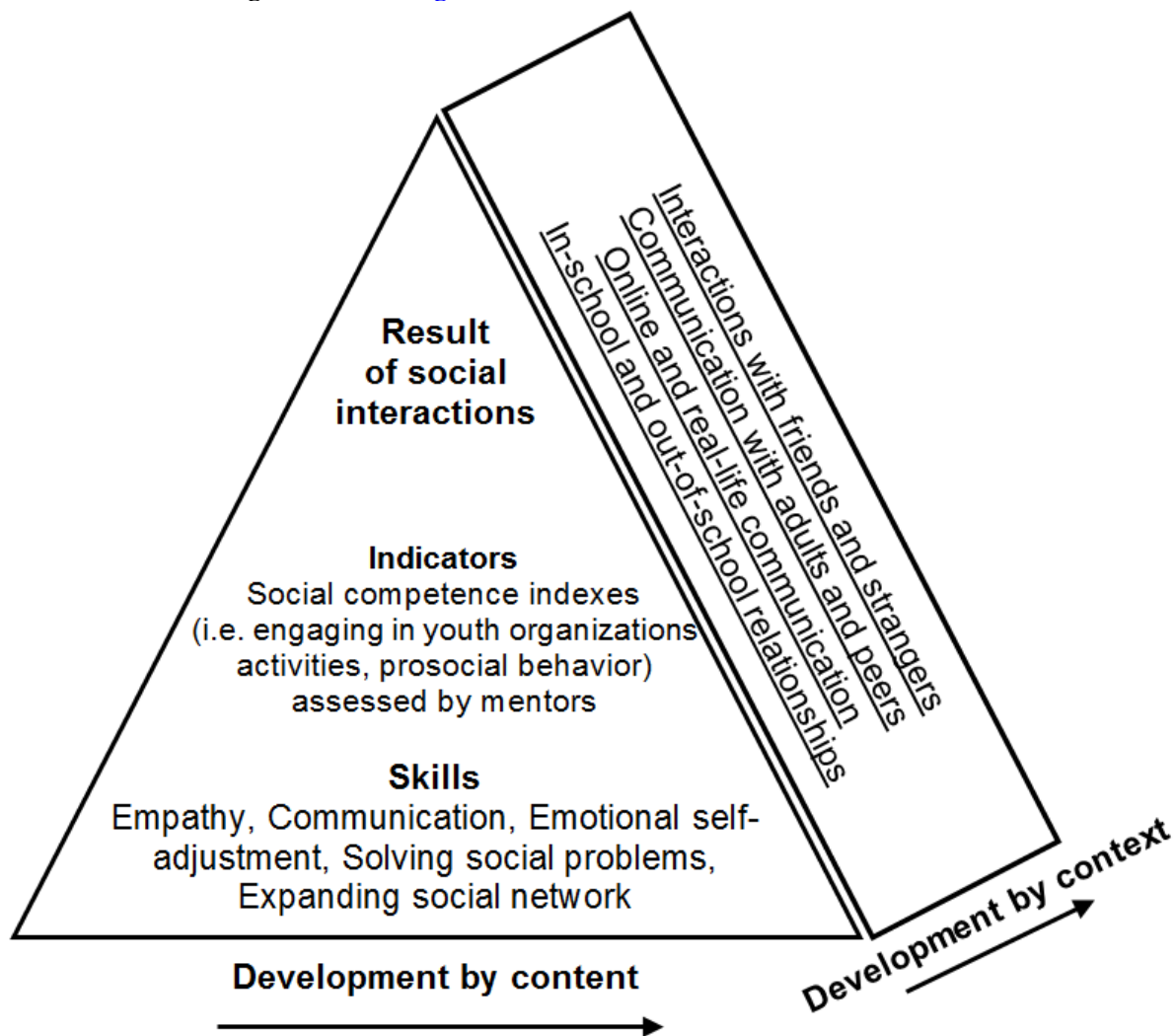


Fig. 2. Rose-Krasnor model of social competence ([Rose-Krasnor, 1997](#))

Various indexes of social competence, as well as multiple skills that support social competence and diverse contexts of social interaction, are relevant measuring methods of social competence that change through the process of development. For example, at the skill level, the authors consider those skills that create key foundations for effective social interaction, such as empathy, and emotional self-adjustment, each of those being a complex construct as is, and may also vary at different developmental stages ([Junge et al., 2020](#)).

Fundamental basics

An important role in youth development is assigned to the state, which strives to ensure that the majority of young people get education and necessary competencies in the process of their development and evolvement as professionals. This intention of the state in the development of youth is based on the principles of universality and inclusiveness of education, while the state policy in education covers all the youth of the country, interested in developing and evolving their professional and personal qualities.

The focus on youth development can be seen as a counterbalance to the emphasis on classifying young people according to their weaknesses and attempting to further transform them. The contrast between the approach to youth development and approaches aimed at preventing specific types of problems among groups of young people identified as 'higher risk' is somewhat similar to the contrast between public health and medical treatment ([Roth, Brooks-Gunn, 2023](#)).

Essential nature

At the heart of the approach to youth development is the governmental desire to ensure the successful involvement of as many young people as possible. This desire unites two principles – universality and inclusiveness. As a result, the policy should cover all young people and ensure a positive focus of events on the strengths of the youth.

Emphasis on youth development can be seen as a counterweight to programs that classify young people according to their weaknesses and strive for their further transformation. The contrast between the approach focused on youth development and the approach focus on preventing certain types of problems in high-risk youth groups is comparable to the fundamental difference between public health and medicine (Wheeler, 2011).

Practical component

The usage of the development of youth term is a priority for describing programs and initiatives. Youth development in this sense means the application of principles to a whole range of planned practices and events that contribute to the process of young people development. The development of personal and social competences occurs in a variety of settings, including family, peer groups, youth and religious organizations, educational institutions, and digital space. The specific methods used by adults to create and maintain these opportunities vary depending on the specific situation, but the principles are generally the same (Roth, Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

2. Materials and methods

Within the terminology used in this article, programs, organizations and initiatives represent broader sets of practices. For example, programs may be short-term or long-term, cover a large number of young people or small groups. Programs are often embedded in the value structure of an organization.

Ho, if an organizational policy is long-term and represents a complex structure of several components, its activity covers a larger number of young people and includes them in various programs. Meanwhile, initiatives imply multifaceted cooperation and inclusion of the widest possible range of people and organizations with the aim of making the whole society suitable for youth development, which at the same time is becoming more and more popular as a movement unifying a wide range of actions and measures for the formation of social policy. The latter includes the course of action adopted by competent organizations (usually represented by government authorities). The principles of youth development lie in the basis of policies at all governmental levels (local, regional and national) and in various organizations involved in supporting youth and creating opportunities for their advancement (Christens, Dolan, 2011).

Moreover, creators of youth development programs should remember that the development process as is cannot have a final result, described by a certain qualitative state of a specific group of people. In this regard, it is appropriate to talk about youth development in the context of providing opportunities for further development of personal competences (Benson et al., 2011).

3. Results

The set of human qualities to be developed in young people can be determined in various ways. If you present this list in a generalized form, then development leads to the formation of a system of five competencies: willingness, character, commitment, trust, and involvement (care and compassion).

Willingness (competence) includes knowledge and skills that allow people to sense the environment and use its resources for more effective performance of the intended activity. Competence allows a person under favorable external conditions to achieve what they set out to do, and to adapt to the situation in order to achieve as much as possible.

Character describes a penchant of an individual to do what they consider fair and necessary. In turn, commitment is related to a person's social relations with adults, peers, and youth, while self-confidence implies the presence personal qualities that allow a person to achieve goals and act in their own interests, while contribution implies the ability of a person to use the acquired knowledge and skills both for their own benefit and for creating favorable conditions for other people.

The described components, acting as a kind of goals, cannot be limited in their levels and, as a result, be developed enough so that it would be useless for a person to further process the information. For this reason, young people build new connections, develop competence and

character in the process of communicating with other people. In turn, confidence comes from the strength of character and personal principles, while the contribution to the common cause is necessarily connected to the need to apply the acquired skills and demonstrate competence.

These descriptions of key components give a brief idea of youth development goals and are useful as a reasonable checklist used to assess the outcome of young people participating in a particular program, organization or initiative. Of course, each component represents a very broad topic and creates difficulties for the development and evaluation of programs.

Despite the fact that program planning requires a broader and more detailed analysis of development goals, as well as comprehensive illustration of key directions of youth development, it is useful to clarify the personal and social assets terminology (see [Table 1](#)). Thus, social assets are divided into components in the following areas of development:

- physical,
- intellectual,
- psychological and emotional,
- social ([Benson, 2007](#)).

Table 1. Personal and social assets that contribute to positive youth development

Area of development	Target results
Physical development	Health-promoting habits
	Health risk managements skills
Intellectual development	Knowledge of basic life skills
	Basic professional skills
	Developing of critical thinking reflexion skills
	Adoption of experience of navigating in various cultural contexts
Psychological and emotional development	Assurance in personal efficiency
	Advanced skills of emotional self-direction
	Sense of personal autonomy/responsibility for actions
	Integral and positive personal and social identity
Social development	Commitment to participate in social life
	Respect to values and norms of various cultures
	High level of connectedness, involving good relationships and confidence with parents and peers
	Loyalty to prosocial institutions (school, church)

Source: created by authors

An asset is something that has value as is (in a broad sense, similar to money, real estate and property), but is also something useful for obtaining other desired things or effects that can be considered intrinsic assets (for example, purchase of an art piece, use of real estate as a security for a credit) ([Dimitrova, 2021](#)).

When it comes to youth development, it is impossible to focus on developing only one student or one university. It is a long and comprehensive process of creating an integrated complex system based on new types of education with the use of modern, game-changing tools that engage all young people.

Ideally, they create a system built on the principles of inclusiveness, sustainability, connectedness with each other, with a larger macrosystem surrounding them (for example, labor market, media, social and political institutions).

Finally, such system is durable, which implies reduced dependence on grants or subsidized money, which is especially important in the context of changes in the structure of government revenues and therefore a decrease in the amount of funding flow in certain areas, including education. To do so, it is necessary to consider the dynamics of spendings of the consolidated budget and state extra-budgetary funds on education in the Russian Federation (see [Figure 3](#)).

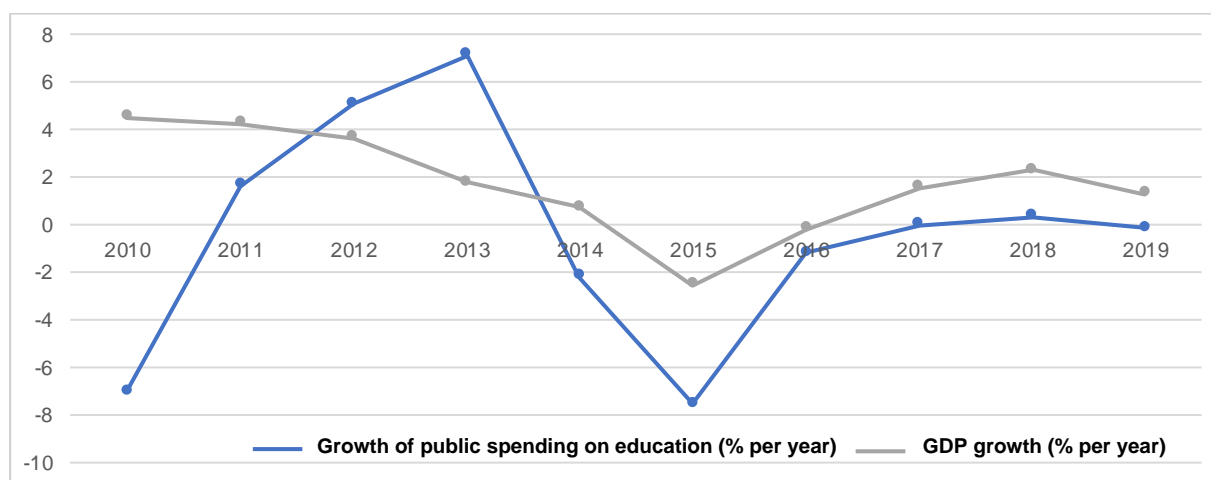


Fig. 3. Growth dynamics of GDP and government spending on education in the Russian Federation from 2010 to 2019

The dynamics of changes in expenditures and growth show that since the beginning of the last decade there has been an annual reduction in expenditures on education: if by the beginning of the decade the expenditure to GDP ratio was 4 %, then by the end it was only 3.5 % (see [Table 2](#)).

Table 2. Dynamics of consolidated budget spendings and state extra-budgetary funds on education in the Russian Federation (2010–2019)

Year	Budget spendings on education, total (% from GDP)	Growth of budget spendings on education (% per year)	GDP growth (% per year)
2010	4,09	-7,01	4,50
2011	3,99	1,66	4,26
2012	3,75	5,09	3,66
2013	3,95	7,12	1,79
2014	3,83	-2,19	0,74
2015	3,64	-7,52	-2,54
2016	3,60	-1,19	-0,17
2017	3,55	-0,02	1,55
2018	3,53	0,33	2,3
2019	3,49	-0,15	1,3

Source: Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation

Based on the statistical data available for the period 2010–2019, let's build a regression-correlation analysis model. The correlation coefficient is 0.36, a fairly low indicator, that is, in the period from 2010 to 2019, the correlation between growth of spendings on education and economic growth was weak. However, if we take data from 2013 to 2019 as the basis for the correlation and regression analysis, then the linear correlation coefficient is already 0.79. The results obtained indicate a serious dependence of the growth of expenditures on education from the growth of national economy, as indicated by the trend line of the described dependence (see [Figure 4](#)).

The difference between the results for the two periods studied, 2010–2019 and 2013–2019, is that the first covers the post-crisis years, when spending on education and many other social areas of national life has been drastically reduced. We should note the dynamics of changes in budget spendings on education: at the beginning of the decade, the indicator of spendings on education as a percentage of GDP was 4.09 %, then by the end it was reduced to 0.5 %.

Since spendings on education are mostly based on budgetary funds of different levels, it should be noted that budgets take an unequal share in the financing of educational institutions. Secondary schools receive 99 % of funds from the regional budget, while higher educational institutions, on the contrary, rely on federal budget funds (96 %). In some cases, extra-budgetary

funds from business activities, sponsorships and patronage, as well as donations and targeted contributions, are available; however, the volume of those cannot be predicted.

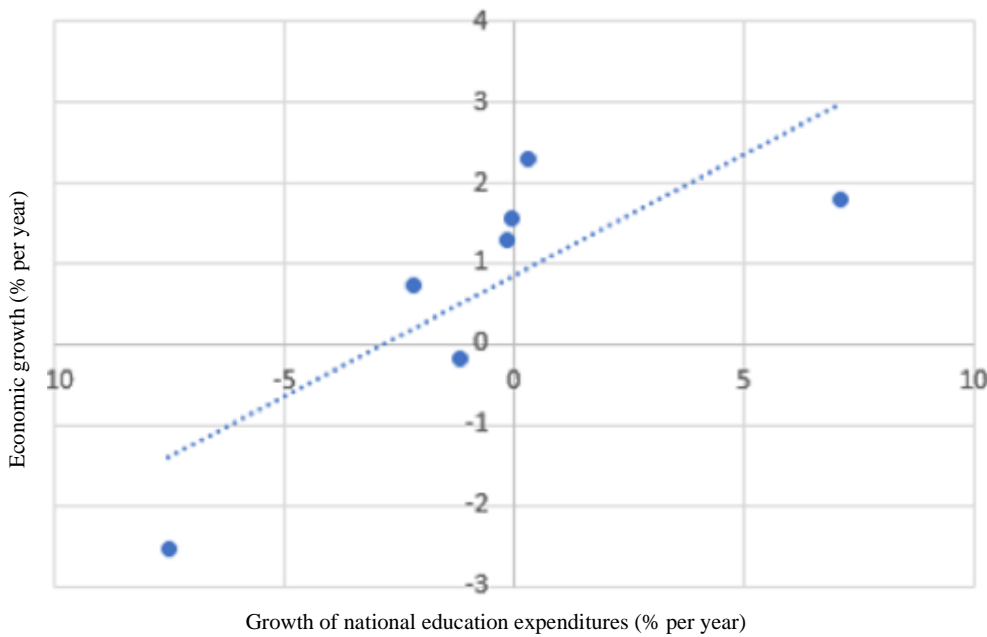


Fig. 4. Graphical representation of the correlation between economic growth and education expenditures for the period 2010–2019

Recent trends also indicate a more targeted reduction in costs associated with education and upbringing. Thus, the Development of Extended Education for Children and Implementation of Youth Policy program was funded by 8.5 % less in 2021 and by 15.7 % in 2022 compared to 2020. This program is being implemented under the guidance of the Education Development state project, and the goals of this project include both the development of youth policy and the support for various levels of education, from preschool to vocational.

It should be noted that previous periods show an increase in budget support for youth policy. So, if in 2019 the amount of funding was 32.9 billion rubles, then a year later 45 billion were already spent on education needs. Initially, the Government intended to maintain the upward trend and planned to spend 48.8 billion rubles on the Education Development program in 2021 and 46.6 billion rubles in 2020. However, due to the economic crisis related to the pandemic, many expenditure items were cut, and in 2023 the amount allocated for these purposes is 37.3 billion rubles.

At the same time, more attention is paid to a more comprehensive program of “patriotic, spiritual and moral education of young people”, taken into account for creating the National Goals Plan developed by the Government. Being of strategic importance, these activities involve an increasing coverage of the Internet segment of the youth audience in order to strengthen civic identity and promote spiritual and moral values, as well as promoting creative activities focused on identifying, supporting and developing abilities and talents of children and youth.

In this regard, of particular importance is to take actions targeted on creating an environment that will allow its members to implement the below mentions features of the educational system (see Table 3).

Table 3. Features of an effective enriching environment (Perkins, Noam, 2007)

Area	Description	Reverse
Physical and psychological safety	Ecological and health-friendly environment. State policy based on safe interactions	Physical condition and health, threats; fear; insecurity; verbal abuse
Proper organization	Strict limits and rules, consistent stages of control, regulatory compliance and modern predictable standards	Chaotic, unorganized, careless, rough, overcontrolled or autocratic environment

Enabling relationships	Maintaining the atmosphere of responsiveness and community, stimulating good mood and communication.	Atmosphere of excessive control and lack of trust, unresponsiveness to others and rejection of norms and rules
Shared interests	Opportunities for active involvement, regardless of gender, ethnicity and health aspects.	Discrimination, marginalization, limitations, derogation.
Positive social norms	Supporting rules of conduct, values, and moral standards.	Abnormity; anomy; antisocial and immoral norms; consumer attitude; conformism.
Support of activity	Giving young people independence and opportunities for their own influence.	Excessive emphasis on current results that undermines motivation and desire of young people for education.
Opportunities for competence growth	Developing competencies and skills through targeted educational experience, i.e. creating the social and cultural capital of youth.	Conditions that promote unhealthy physical and mental habits, as well as practices that undermine positive attitude to education and upbringing.
Unity of focuses and interests in school, society, family	Synergetic effect, coordinated and targeted actions	Divergence of interests, conflict situations

Source: created by the authors

The “unity of focuses and interests in school, society, family» area is the most difficult matter among those indicated above, and it also creates the need to systematize all educational processes at the specified levels while developing all members of this system. (Silbereisen, Lerner, 2007).

The most corresponding term for this area is “public youth development”, based on initiatives of the whole society (Kharchilava et al., 2021).

As a result, the very mentioning of a policy that includes "youth development" will attract more attention than its full design. To gain widespread support, any principle must be sufficiently comprehensive and include many provisions, from common and typical to field-specific.

4. Discussion

Thus, within the framework of this work, the authors updated and elaborated the concept of youth education, which includes several interpretations that are necessary to differentiate while developing programs and activities for the development of young people. As for the aspect of upbringing of youth as a natural process, special attention was paid to the essence of social competencies, applied within the framework of both regular and professional activities.

Moreso, the authors analyzed the structure of the components of personal growth – personal and social assets that contribute to the positive development of youth. Subsequently, the authors identified the key features of an effective educational system for young people, consisting of inclusivity, connectivity with other systems, programs and initiatives, as well as sustainability, which is especially important in the context of changes in the financing structure applied to educational programs and initiatives.

An efficient educational environment, according to the authors, includes interpersonal communication for young people, as well as compliance with various social norms and created opportunities for self-realization and self-expression, physical development. As a result, it is necessary to develop the concept of «public youth development» that will allow to implement major programs and initiatives aimed at the development of a wider range of young people.

To summarize, it should be noted that modern society has a multifaceted structure, and its participants are required to possess an increasing number of skills and abilities, imperative for a qualitative transformation of life. In addition to professional and innate qualities and talents, people are responsible for building a trajectory of coexistence in social space throughout their whole lives. The instruments used by an individual to achieve results, make choices and overcome

challenges, are competencies: the quality and efficiency of interpersonal interactions depend on the level of their maturity and prominence (Lerner, 2013).

As for the aspect of meeting community requirements among future representatives of youth, the most important issue is the development of social competencies. Among activities aimed at solving this issue are lectures, workshops and trainings, conducted in a more informal environment, as well as general and customized educational programs implemented by public and private organizations.

5. Conclusion

Despite the wide choice of channels used for the development of social competencies, organizers and mentors often do not pay enough attention to external circumstances and educational trends, and it results in increased fragmentation of youth development practices that cover only certain aspects of social competence development. Therefore, educational institutions around the world should be aimed at improving approaches to youth development, in particular through updating methodologies of working with young people, the foundation for those methodologies being built by scientific and practical studies.

Public authorities and society challenge universities and other educational institutions to satisfy the need for creating an approach to the development of social and personal competences of young people.

6. Limitations

The research was conducted within subject-semantic limitations, while the analysis was carried out on the basis of statistical data, without the use of experimental one. Thus, it is necessary to explore experimental data while analyzing approaches to the assessment of practices applied to the formation and financing of educational practices in youth development.

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