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R95 **Russian Economy in 2021. Trends and outlooks. (Issue 43)** / [V. Mau et al; scientific editing by Kudrin A.L., Doctor of sciences (economics), Radygin A.D., Doctor of sciences (economics), Sinelnikov-Murylev S.G., Doctor of sciences (economics)]; Gaidar Institute. – Moscow: Gaidar Institute Publishers, 2022. – 568 pp.: illust.

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The review “Russian Economy. Trends and Outlooks” has been published by the Gaidar Institute since 1991. This is the 43th issue. This publication provides a detailed analysis of the most significant trends in the Russian economy, global trends in the social and economic development. The work contains 6 big sections that highlight different aspects of Russia’s economic development, which allow to monitor all angles of ongoing events over a prolonged period: global economic and political challenges and national responses, economic growth and economic crisis; the monetary and budget spheres; financial markets and institutions; the real sector; social sphere; institutional changes. The work is based on an extensive array of statistical data that forms the basis of original computation and numerous charts confirming the conclusions.

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5.8. Education system in Russia in 2021

In 2021, in the Russian education system the following main processes were underway:

- Ongoing adaptability of all levels of education to the coronavirus pandemic which contrary to expectations did not end up in 2020;
- Elaboration by the RF Ministry of Education and the RF Ministry of Education and Science of short-term and long-term measures for the RF Government’s Economic Development Strategy (hereinafter, EDS), addressing the challenges which are going to have an impact (or already have an impact) on the evolution of education in the near future;
- Selection of 106 higher educational establishments for the “Priority 2030” program, which pursues its own goals, apart from a set of measures specified in EDS.

5.8.1. The coronavirus pandemic and the development of education in Russia

If in 2020 the Russian education system survived a strong external shock related to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic and an expeditious shift to remote work, in 2021 the mixed mode of education, when in-person learning and distance learning were alternating, became quite customary and caused no such stress as in 2020. At the same time, adaptability of the education system at its different levels and segments had both similarities and differences.

In 2020, most school teachers, secondary vocational education instructors, lecturers of higher educational establishments (HEE), as well as learners believed that the pandemic would not last for long and, consequently, the adopted measures, including a shift to distance learning would be over soon. Late in 2020 and early in 2021, it became clear that the pandemic would continue for quite a long time and the existing approaches both to instruction and learning had to be adjusted. On one side, new technologies started to be utilized, while on the other side there was more comprehension of the existing resources being at the disposal of educational establishments, teachers and learners. Accordingly, the process of assessing shortages of technical equipment, skilled teachers and managers, as well as financial resources began.

1 This section was written by *Klyachko T.L.*, Doctor of Economic Sciences, Director of the Center for Economics of Continuous Education (CECE), IAES RANEPА.

5.8.2. General (school) education

The Center for Economics of Continuous Education, IAES RANEPA carried out a survey in which school teachers and parents of school pupils were asked about those difficulties and shortages which they encountered because of the pandemic and measures taken to ensure adaptability to a new situation.

It was found out that on average nearly 15% of teachers had no working place at home, while 38.8% of them had one, but it was not equipped enough for normal remote work and remote education. Specifically, the situation varies considerably across different types of settlements (*Fig. 32*).

As expected, insufficient equipment of a working place at home was observed with rural teachers. Quite unexpectedly, over 16% and 15% of school teachers of regional capitals and cities (not regional capitals), respectively, had no working place at home. This situation can be substantiated by the fact that 15%-16% of teachers have recently moved to towns or regional capitals from rural areas, rent apartments and therefor do not buy expensive equipment. Rural teachers have at their disposal a working place at home, but experience problems with equipment thereof. Also, it may be assumed that a number of teachers in regional capitals and large towns can use personal computers and the Internet at school and, consequently, do not find it necessary to have a well-equipped working place at home, while rural schools have no such equipment at their disposal and have to rely only on themselves.

Also, it is worth mentioning that academic staff did not take full advantage of distance learning technologies before the pandemic. Most teachers lacked experience in applying them and had to adjust to a new reality in haste (*Fig. 33*).

As we can see, two-thirds of teachers have never encountered the need to give remote classes before the pandemic and this was a substantial problem for

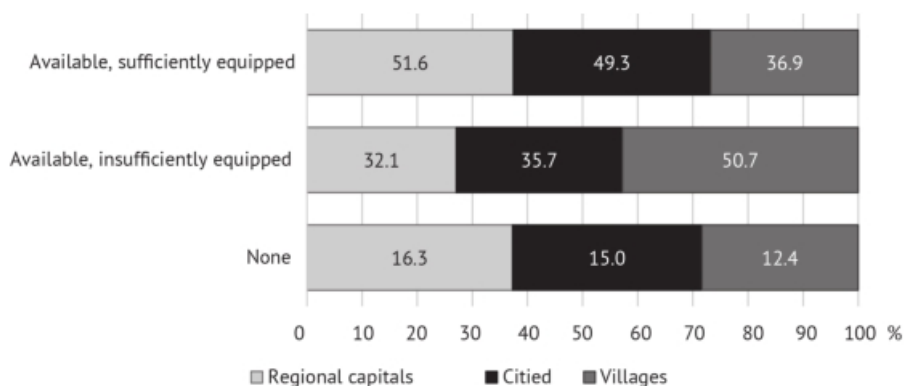


Fig. 32. Availability and adequacy of a working place at a teacher's home (across types of settlements), %

Source: General Education Monitoring by CECE IAES RANEPA.

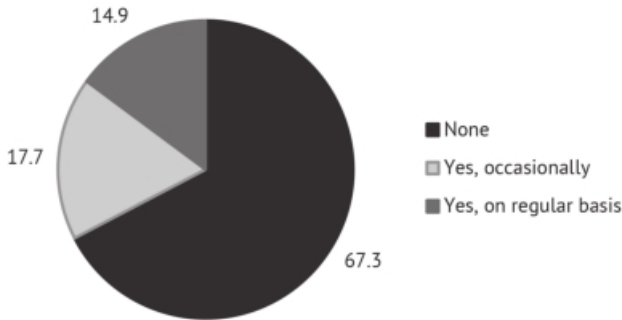


Fig. 33. Breakdown of the responses to the question: “Have you ever had experience in using distance learning technologies?”, %

Source: General Education Monitoring by CECE IAES RANEPА.

them in a new reality. It was established that in shifting to remote education in 2021, only 30.2% of surveyed teachers experienced serious difficulties, 54.1% of teachers faced small problems, while 15.7% of teachers encountered no problems at all. In other words, nearly 70% of teachers, as they noted, had no big problems when remote education was introduced to full extent. Specifically, in Russia, as in many countries, there was virtually a lack of digital didactics, remote methods of teaching of different subjects and networking between teachers and pupils in distance learning, as well as school pupils’ distributed educational activities. It seems we have got teachers’ erroneous assessment of the previous year’s situation. The shifting to remote education is not conceptualized and adaptation is largely formal: if required, they give remote classes in the general and senior secondary school, but the main emphasis is still made on in-person learning.

In elementary school, where pupils studied remotely only if someone in the class fell ill, teachers could ease off. However, occasional quarantines required from elementary school teachers to get familiar with distance learning techniques. At the same time, education of children at the age of 6—8 without involvement of their parents or other close relatives in distance learning is infeasible despite the fact that modern children are believed to be familiar pretty well with electronic gadgets. However, familiarity with gadgets and web-surfing for cartoons are not those skills which facilitate junior school pupils’ studies. Educational platforms, videoconferences and online learning require absolutely different competences and therefore parents (other relatives) have to be involved invariably in distance learning. It means that in case of shifting junior pupils to remote education, their parents are expected to help them and keep a check on time their children spend before a computer monitor. When a school class is switched over to the quarantine if at least one coronavirus case is found in the class, most parents have to give up their work or work remotely. If it happens, in numerous families parents and children have often to ‘compete’ with each other for an access to a PC or tablet. At the same time, lots of parents believed that they and their children were prepared well enough for a shift to distance learning (Fig. 34, 35).

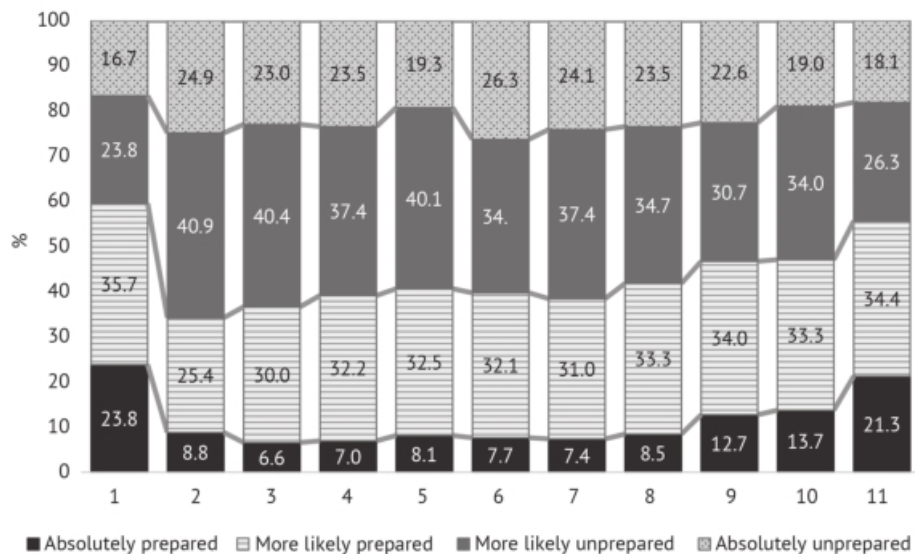


Fig. 34. Parents' preparedness to distance learning of their children across school grades

Source: General Education Monitoring by CECE IAES RANEPА.

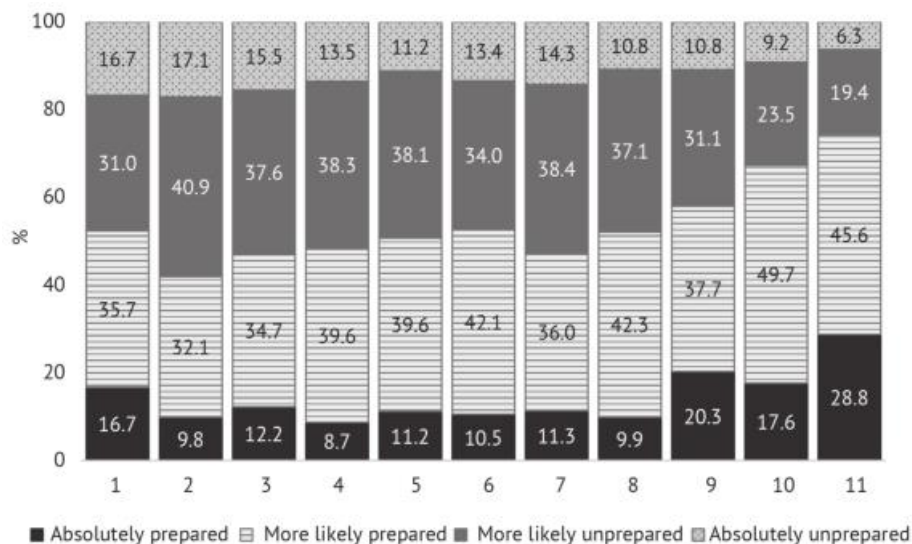


Fig. 35. Pupils' preparedness in their parents' opinion to distance learning across school grades

Source: General Education Monitoring by CECE IAES RANEPА.

As elementary school is concerned, it is noteworthy that parents of the 1st grade pupils believed that they were better prepared for a shift to distance learning than parents of the 2nd and 3rd grade pupils. Probably, an easy mode of training of the 1st grade pupils created illusions with nearly 60% of the parents that they coped without any problems with the emergency situation. The 2nd and 3rd grade pupils and their parents encountered more difficulties: only a third of parents and about 40% of children adjusted themselves without any problems to distance learning.

According to parents, starting from the 5th grade over 50% of children adapted quite easily to the external shock. Specifically, as parents noted, adaptability of the 7th grade pupils was somewhat lower than that of the 5th and 6th grade pupils. Probably, the 5th grade pupils are prepared, in principle, for changes because they leave the elementary school and go to the secondary school where they meet new teachers and acquaint themselves with the new organization of educational process. But this does not explain quite a high adaptability of the 6th grade pupils and the decline thereof with the 7th grade pupils. High preparedness of the 9th grade and 10th grade pupils is more likely substantiated by their good computer and Internet skills. At the same time, in the senior secondary school almost a third of the 10th grade pupils and a quarter of 11th grade pupils were not prepared well enough for distance learning. This can be largely explained by many parents' negative attitude to remote education both in 2020 and 2021. For this reason, distance learning in different subjects of the Russian Federation was introduced in 2021 only in case of a dramatic worsening of the epidemiological situation in a region/city/village. But epidemiological safety requirements introduced in order to curb the spread of the coronavirus infection affected schooling seriously. In particular, in 2021 the number of pupils studying on the second shift increased (*Fig. 36*).

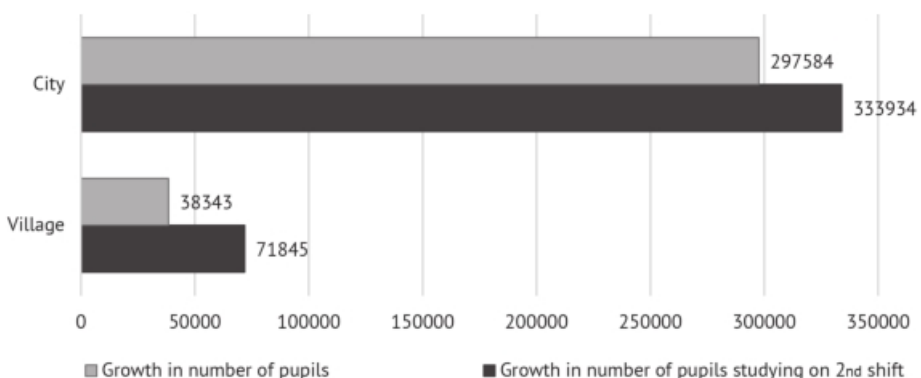
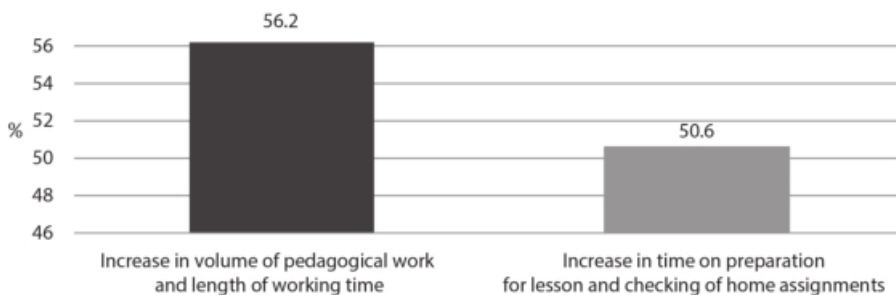


Fig. 36. Growth in the number of school pupils and those studying on the second shift in the 2020/2021 academic year

Source: Calculations based on the data of OO-1 2020.

As seen from *Fig. 36*, an increase in the number of pupils studying on the 2nd shift during the past year was higher than that in the overall number of pupils. Specifically, there was substantial growth in the number of pupils studying on the 2nd shift even in rural schools which are ungraded and few in numbers. By all appearances, this growth was evident primarily in basic schools where children are brought to by bus from several villages. Amid pandemic, this may lead to a rise in cases because of increased fatigability of children. Also, an increase in classes held in several shifts enhances a load on teachers. At the same time, the survey by the CECE IAES RANEPА have established that in 2021, on one side, teachers spoke about an increase in the volume of pedagogic work and length of working time (*Fig. 37*), while, on the other side, their actual workload decreased (*Fig. 38*).



Note. In teachers' opinion they were working on two paid positions if their academic workload amounted to 32 hours or more per week.

Fig. 37. The share of teachers who noted an increase in the volume of pedagogical work, working time and other workload, %

Source: General Education Monitoring by CECE IAES RANEPА.

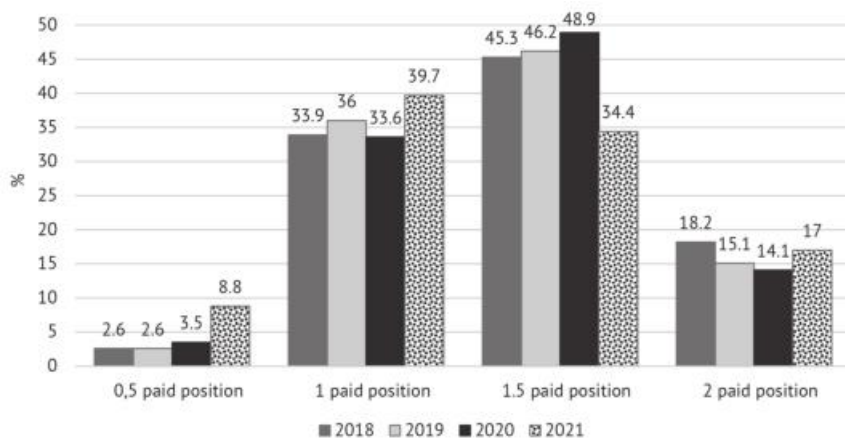


Fig. 38. Distribution of teachers' academic workload in 2018–2021, %

Source: General Education Monitoring by CECE IAES RANEPА.

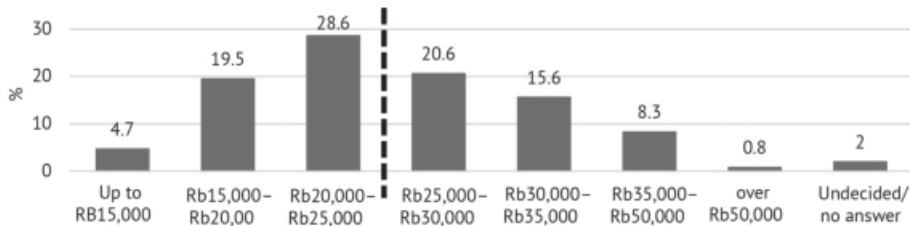


Fig. 39. Distribution of teachers' answers regarding their wage amount in 2021, %

Source: General Education Monitoring by CECE IAES RANEPА.

As seen from *Fig. 38*, the share of teachers who worked on 1.5 paid positions in 2021 decreased by 14.5 p.p. Specifically, the share of those who worked on 0.5 paid position and 2 paid positions increased by 5.5 p.p. and 2.9 p.p., respectively. Probably, the difference between the volume of pedagogical work and academic workload noted by teachers can be explained by the fact that the official workload was decreasing, while the actual one was growing.

It is noteworthy that judging by the survey the wages of nearly 53% of teachers were equal maximum to Rb25,000 in 2021 (*Fig. 39*).

Overall, in 2021 the general education system adapted more or less to a new reality though distance learning remained to a large extent a forced measure and is not expected to play an independent role for quite a long time.

5.8.3. Secondary vocational education

The secondary vocational education (SVE) which is considered to be practice-oriented was believed to be hit hard as a result of a shift to distance learning. However, SVE experienced no particular problems. In 2020 and 2021, the flow of the 9th grade and 11th grade school leavers kept growing (*Fig. 40*). Specifically, the shares of enrollees to private (nongovernment) SVE institutions and self-funded places at public SVE institutions started to grow (*Fig. 41*).

At the same time, the main flow of enrollees to SVE institutions (nearly 84%) are applicants for programs preparing mid-level professions rather than skilled workers and employees. It is to be noted that about 13.9% of them study extramurally and another 2%, full time/extramurally. Further, training programs for mid-level professionals include plenty of theoretical courses. Owing to these two factors, the SVE system managed to pass through the most critical period of the pandemic without any explicit problems, though, certainly, the situation in SVE was rather difficult because digital educational environment in SVE is less evolved by contrast with not only HEE, but also schools. It concerns particularly SVE institutions in rural areas.

As before the pandemic, a pickup in the flow of young people to SVE institutions was mainly driven by families' complicated financial situation, young people's intentions to enter as soon as possible the labor market to make a living

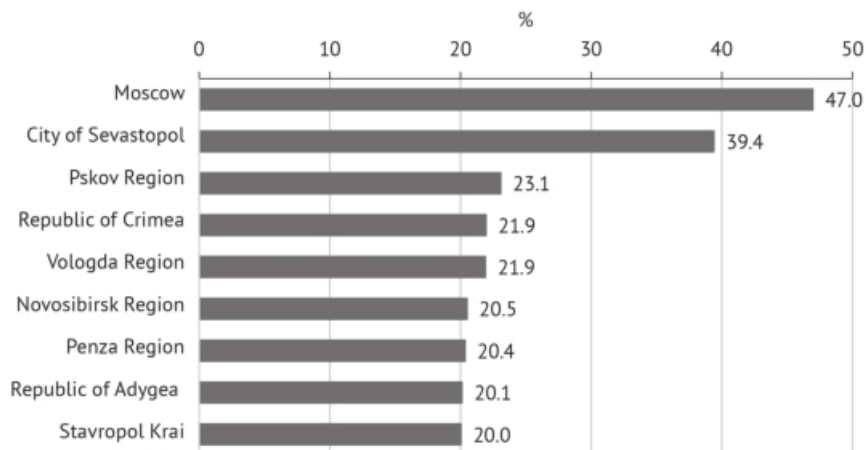


Fig. 40. Regions where enrollment to SVE institutions increased over 20% in 2020 on 2018

Source: Calculations based on SVE-1 data (2018–2020).

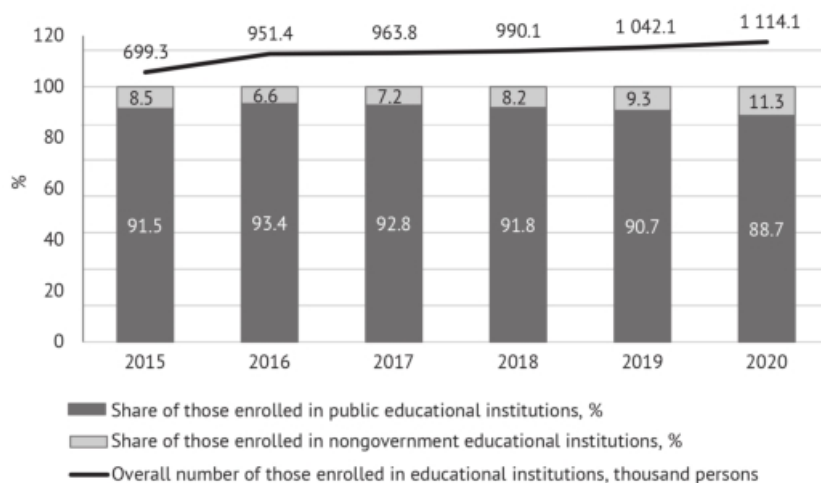


Fig. 41. Distribution of those enrolled in public and private (nongovernment) SVE institutions

Source: Calculations based on SVE-1 data (2015–2020).

and a lack of funds to pay coaches for getting prepared for taking unified state exams (USE) with flying colors in order to enter HEE.¹ Specifically, as most SVE

¹ The monitoring of employment of graduates from SVE institutions and HEE carried out by CECE IAES RANEPА (2020). In particular, the Monitoring identified the reasons for pupils' enrollment in SVE institutions, as well as the actual financial standing of respondents' families.

students come from low-income families, it is critically important for them to get enrolled on state-funded places. At the same time, as was stated above, there is growth in the share of SVE students on self-funded places at public and private SVE institutions. This can be substantiated by the fact that, on one side, SVE institutions have a shortage of state-funded places (though under the Constitution of the Russian Federation education at SVE institutions is generally accessible and free of charge) which situation leads to an increase in fee-based services in the public sector of the secondary vocational education, while, on the other side, SVE institutions often lack training courses in new lines of profession by contrast with private SVE institutions. In any case, fee for education at SVE institutions is much lower than at HEE, while at private SVE institutions it is 2-3 times lower than at public SVE institutions.¹

Top-15 regions with the highest shares of pupils enrolled in private SVE institutions include very different subjects of the Russian Federation in terms of their social and economic situation (*Fig. 42*).

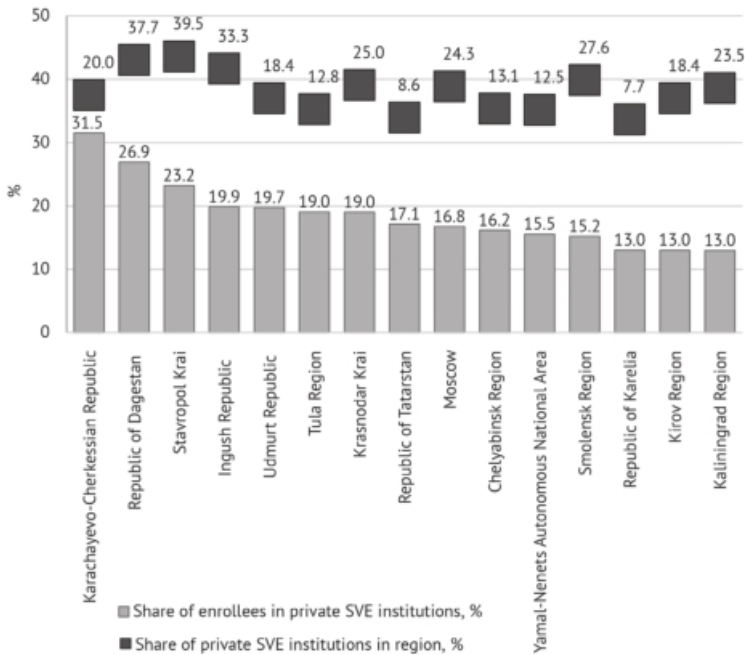


Fig. 42. The share of enrollees in private SVE institutions in some Russian regions and the share of private SVE institutions in these subjects of the Russian Federation, %

Source: Calculations based on SVE-1 data (2018–2020).

¹ In 2020, the average fee for education (more recent data are unavailable) amounted to Rb95,200 and Rb38,600 at public and private SVE institutions, respectively.

As seen from *Fig. 42*, the highest rate of enrollment in private SVE institutions was seen in the North-Caucasian federal okrug, the heavily subsidized Udmurt Republic, as well as the Republic of Tatarstan, Moscow and the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous National Area. In Moscow and the Krasnodar Krai, the share of private SVE institutions amounted to a quarter of their overall number, while in the Stavropol Krai, to about 40%.

It is reasonable to assume that in Moscow growth in the number of enrollees in private SVE institutions can be related with a very high influx of young people in this sector of vocational training (growth of 47% within three years, see *Fig. 40*) in a situation where public SVE institutions fail to meet demand. Further, in private SVE institutions school leavers after completing the 11th grade may, by avoiding conscription in the army, get prepared for entering HEE in circumvention of unified state exams. In Moscow, the situation is rather serious: the number of state-funded places in HEE is relatively declining (key figures of enrollment shift more and more to regional higher educational establishments), while the flow of high school straight A applicants and winners of Olympiads from subjects of the Russian Federation to prestigious Moscow-based HEE is growing. Consequently, it is getting more and more difficult for Moscow residents to be admitted to state-funded places, to say nothing of a rather high fee for education at prestigious Moscow HEE. The idea of leaving Moscow to study at a regional HEE (except for St. Petersburg where the situation is almost the same) is regarded a priori by Moscow residents as a failure in competition for getting a prestigious job. For this reason, young people favor private SVE institutions, particularly, because of a lower tuition fee and in a hope to be admitted upon completion of SVE training to state-funded places at prestigious Moscow-based HEE or at least to take an intra-extramural training mode making it feasible for them to work and pay for their education. A reduction in employers' requirements to applicants' level of education (many employers require no longer from applicants to have a higher education diploma) is consolidating this trend. As seen in *Fig. 42*, other regions have different considerations: for example, in the Kaliningrad Region after completing their studies at SVE institutions young people tend to go to the EU where such lines of professions as IT, design and other are in high demand; specifically, young people can major in these professions for a small fee at private SVE institutions at home.

In 2020, a three-month lockdown spurred the flow of young people to SVE institutions because Unified state exams were canceled for those who were not going to enter HEE. This prompted a portion of school leavers to get enrolled in SVE institutions and not to take exams. In 2021, this factor stopped working, but a portion of school leavers thoughtfully refused to take unified state exams and having received a high school diploma entered private SVE institutions.

So, the SVE system is largely following the way of higher educational establishments: on the back of growth in demand for higher education amid state financing shortages and households' low incomes, in the mid-1990s fee-based services at public higher educational establishments picked up and the evolution of the private sector of higher education sped up. At present, increased demand for training programs preparing middle-level professionals leads to a pickup in

fee-based services at public vocational training institutions and rapid evolution of private SVE institutions.

5.8.4. Higher education

Higher educational establishments were those academic institutions which were paid a particular attention to because of an urgent shift to distance learning at the outbreak of the pandemic and evolution thereof in 2021. As stated above, “digital inequality” is applicable to higher educational establishments and not to students.¹ In 2021, this inequality is largely justified by behavior of HEE amid the ongoing pandemic. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the fact that having more advanced qualifications (at least higher than those of school teachers and SVE instructors) faculty and academic staff (FAS) of higher educational establishments adapted quite quickly to distance learning. The factors which limited their adaptability are well-known: a failure to connect their home personal computers to the high-speed Internet, a lack of other necessary equipment and software programs (apps), unaffordability of fee-based videoconferences unless relevant apps were bought by HEE and a lack of equipment and the high-speed Internet with students. The latter is rarely paid attention to, but effective online classes depend largely on networking with a remote student audience and this is determined by technical specifications of the equipment and software of all participants in distance learning.

At the initial stages of the coronavirus pandemic, the faculty and academic staff had a negative attitude to distance learning. It was largely a reflection of a shock related with a shift to distance learning and therefore adoption thereof was rather complicated in psychological terms. A similar situation was typical of students as well, but with some adjustment to age and better familiarization with gadgets by contrast with academic staff, especially lecturers of pre-pension and pension age. But as faculty and academic staff of higher educational establishments was constantly in touch with modern ICT, its quick adaptability to a new reality was quite expected (and happened), the more so HEE had vast technological capacities at their disposal and a more evolved digital educational environment by contrast with schools and SVE institutions.

In Spring 2021, in cooperation with 12 leading Russian universities, including the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA), the Tomsk National State Research Institute carried out research by order of the RF Ministry of Education and Science into the effect of distance learning on the quality of students’ education, particularly, their educational outputs. Within the framework of this research, RANEPA sociologists surveyed 24,000 lecturers, while NRU HSE sociologists, 36,000 students from various Russian HEE.

According to the outputs of the survey of lecturers, slightly over a quarter (25.3%) of the respondents has a positive attitude to distance learning at higher educational establishments, while 43.4%, 27.0% and 4.3% of the respondents

¹ *T.L. Klyachko, S.G. Sinelnikov-Murylev. The Russian Higher Education and the Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic // The Universitetskoe Upravlenie: Practice and Analysis. 2020. Vol. 24. Issue No. 4. pp. 9–21.*

were of negative and neutral opinion and undecided, respectively.¹ Specifically, the most negative attitude to distance learning was found with lecturers of natural sciences (chemistry, biology, physics and other), math, engineering, industrial science, art and culture, health and medical sciences, physical culture and sports.² This result is largely consistent with that received in 2020: where a large volume of laboratory-based work is required, faculty and academic staff regards distance learning as an impediment to a normal educational process. The opinion of professors of math is clear, too, because traditional theorem proving and solving of math problems at practicals is done by lecturers on a blackboard in classrooms. A shift to distance learning makes these math teaching methods rather complicated, and, in lecturers' opinion, affects students' educational outputs and reduces supervising over their behavior.

A neutral attitude to distance learning was observed at pedagogical, humanitarian (philosophy, philology, linguistics, foreign languages, history and other) and agricultural sciences.³ In the sector of social, economic and computer sciences, lecturers' attitude to distance learning was quite positive because according to sociologists these disciplines do not require a constant classroom contact.⁴

Based on the results of the survey of lecturers, 70.5% of them said that in the 2020/2021 academic year the share of the remote education mode took almost a half of academic hours. Specifically, half of the respondents said that the optimal share of this mode should be equal maximum to 25%.⁵

As regards the assessment of students' academic performance, lecturers believe that it depended largely on the mode of training (*Table 11*).

Table 11

Dependence of students' academic performance, as assessed by the faculty and academic staff, on the mode of training, % by column

In 2020/2021 academic year, has students' academic performance generally improved, got worse or remained the same?	Mode of training			Overall
	Mixed form of training	Only remote	Only in-person	
Improved	14.2	17.3	20.7	15.2
Got worse	47.4	43.6	36.4	45.9
Remained unchanged	31.2	30.3	34.2	31.3
Undecided	7.2	8.8	8.7	7.6
Overall	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: M. Vyrskaya, D. Rogozin. The Fourth Wave of a Large-Scale Survey of Faculty and Academic Staff of Higher Educational Establishments of the Russian Federation Regarding the Evolution of Distance Learning Amid the Coronavirus Infection (COVID-19). July 5 – August 14, 2021. Vol. 2: The Survey's Informative Results / Edited by D. Rogozin. Moscow: RANEP, 2021.

1 *M. Vyrskaya, D. Rogozin. The Fourth Wave of a Large-Scale Survey of Faculty and Academic Staff of Higher Educational Establishments of the Russian Federation Regarding the Evolution of Distance Learning Amid the Coronavirus Infection (COVID-19). July 5 – August 14, 2021. Vol. 2: The Survey's Informative Results / Edited by D. Rogozin. Moscow: RANEP, 2021.*

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*

Most HEE lecturers (45.9%) believe that students' academic performance got worse in 2021; it is noteworthy that the largest decline was registered with those who studied both in-person and remotely (with a mixed mode of training, students' academic performance deterioration was stated by 47.4% of lecturers). In case of students who studied only remotely, 43.6% of lecturers noted a decline in students' academic performance. Specifically, according to lecturers, academic performance of over a third of students who studied only in-person declined, too. In other words, according to the academic staff, students failed to adapt easily to the modified mode of training and even reacted negatively to the situation even if the traditional mode of education (in-person) remained unchanged, but the prospects about the pandemics' development were uncertain. It appears, however, that the faculty and academic staff may project their own perception of the reality on students: professors start assessing more scrupulously students' progress because they are prone to constant stress, too. Further, the academic staff may probably fear being loyal in assessing students' academic performance owing to comprehension of the pandemic-induced problems which students encountered and therefore they try unwittingly to do something about it, believing, in particular, that students' academic progress has deteriorated.

As seen from the survey, lecturers also believe that students' involvement into educational process declined in 2021 (*Table 12*).

Table 12

**Correlation of the mode of training with involvement of students
into educational process, % by column**

In your view, has involvement of students in educational process in current year increased, decreased or remained unchanged?	Mode of training			Overall
	Mixed mode	Only remote	Only in-person	
Increased	10.5	11.3	19.8	11.3
Declined	53.1	53.5	37.3	51.9
Remained unchanged	28.9	26.6	34.1	29.0
Undecided	7.5	8.6	8.9	7.8
Overall	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: M. Vyrskaya, D. Rogozin. The Fourth Wave of a Large-Scale Survey of Faculty and Academic Staff of Higher Educational Establishments of the Russian Federation Regarding the Evolution of Distance Learning Amid the Coronavirus Infection (COVID-19). July 5 – August 14, 2021. Vol. 2: The Survey's Informative Results / Edited by D. Rogozin. Moscow: RANEPА, 2021.

As seen from the survey, according to the academic staff, students' involvement in academic process is higher only in case of in-person classes because only this mode facilitates a better contact between a lecturer and students and makes it feasible to hold longer the latter's attention.¹

¹ *M. Vyrskaya, D. Rogozin. The Fourth Wave of a Large-Scale Survey of Faculty and Academic Staff of Higher Educational Establishments of the Russian Federation Regarding the Evolution of*

Most students believe that the advantages of remote education are related with mobility and saving: one can study from anywhere, no need to spend money on traffic fares, it is easier to combine work with other activities, more free time, availability of learning materials in a digital format (nearly 50% of students specified it) and feasibility to do simultaneously other things.¹

As seen from the survey of students, they prefer the most a mixed mode of learning: if there was a choice, 50% of students would prefer this mode, while one student in five would like to study only remotely.² At the same time, about 40% of students preferred an in-person mode in terms of the quality of education, while a third of students found the mixed mode as the most quality one.³ Specifically, once again 40% of students noted that in distance learning they lacked communication with their groupmates, while 30% of students specified that they need in-person (not remote) interaction with lecturers.⁴

So, in 2021 the higher education system saw an explicit adaptation of the academic staff and students to remote and mixed modes of learning. However, in opinion of the academic staff, as a result of this adaptation students' academic performance and involvement in the academic process declined. At the same time, most lecturers and students believe that after the coronavirus pandemic is over the mixed mode of learning will remain and be evolving because there are groups of students (especially master degree students) and lecturers for whom it is more convenient than a traditional in-person mode.

5.8.5. New strategic initiatives in the education system

In 2021, the RF Government was actively developing plans to achieve national goals formulated in Executive Order No.474 of July 21, 2020 of the President of the Russian Federation. With the implementation of national projects, including the "Education" national project postponed till 2030, various agencies and subjects of the Russian Federation may become less interested in active implementation thereof. In view of this, the RF Government has developed the Economic Development Strategy specifying the projects to be implemented in short-, mid- and long-term.

Higher education and science

In 2021, the higher education and science sector saw a considerable reformatting of the "Education" national project from which all activities related with the development of higher education were withdrawn and assigned to

Distance Learning Amid the Coronavirus Infection (COVID-19). July 5 – August 14, 2021. Vol. 2: The Survey's Informative Results / Edited by D. Rogozin. Moscow: RANEP, 2021.

1 Quality of Education in Russian Universities: What did We Learn in the Pandemic: Analytical report / scientific editors: E.A. Sukhanova, I.D. Frumin. Tomsk: Publishing House of the Tomsk State University, 2021.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

the modified “Science” project which was called “Science and Universities.” In addition, with completion of the “5-100” project, a more large-scale and diversified program – “Priority 2030” – was initiated. Apart from the objective of further global positioning of Russian universities, the program pursues the goal of HEE’s active engagement in development of economic sectors and regions.

The commission of the RF Ministry of Education and Science selected 106 universities from 49 cities of the Russian Federation for participation in the “Priority 2030” program. All higher educational establishments included in the program will receive a base portion of the grant in the amount of Rb100 mn. It is noteworthy that regional HEE account for over 60% of these 106 HEE-participants; Moscow and St. Petersburg are represented by 28 HEE and 11 HEE, respectively. Until the end of 2022, apart from the base portion of the grant 46 HEE out of 106 HEE will receive a special portion of the grant in the amount of Rb1 bn. The selected HEE will carry out their own strategic projects with the overall number of projects being equal to 409 (approximately 4 projects per 1 HEE). A larger portion of these projects deals with digital transformation, monitoring and control over emission of greenhouse gases. Two trajectories of HEE’s participation in the Program were singled out: “research leadership” and “sectoral (territorial) leadership.”

Professionalitet and SVE transformation

Due to fast growth in applicants to SVE institutions and a growing lack of resources in this sector, the issue of transformation of the SVE sector has come on the top of agenda. The RF Ministry of Education has come out with a proposal to introduce a new level of education – professionalitet – and reduce considerably the period of training of students within its scope: on average by 50%. According to the RF Ministry of Education, this will facilitate to increase capacities of secondary vocational training institutions to fast-track preparation of young workers and employees for the labor market. Also, on the basis of SVE institutions it is expected to establish with assistance of the business (employers) such production sites where along with instruction students will be able to manufacture products which are in demand on the market and learn how to start their own business or realize their potential as self-employed.

However, it seems infeasible to increase considerably SVE institutions’ capacity with professionalitet introduced. Firstly, the RF Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Healthcare of the Russian Federation and RF Ministry of Transportation which have SVE institutions within their jurisdiction have already declared that they are not going to reduce the period of training for numerous lines of profession because it is either undesirable in terms of syllabus (the stance of the RF Ministry of Culture), or incompatible with the qualification and employment requirements (for example, with the training period reduced, the labor market will see paramedical personnel of girls and boys aged 17 who are unable to be employed until they reach adulthood; similar requirements are set to ship drivers and other). Consequently, training within the scope of professionalitet is likely to be limited by a small range of vocational and services professions (waiters, chambermaids, hairdressers and

other). At the same time, professionalitet leavers will encounter the problem of continuing their vocational training because the general education program at SVE professionalitet institutions will be reduced to 1 year for those who get enrolled after the 9th grade. This may lead to a situation where professionalitet leavers return later to SVE intuitions to get a comprehensive secondary vocational education, thus increasing even more the load on the system. We believe that senior secondary school leavers should be the basis for professionalitet.

Under the legislation, professionalitet should be introduced within a framework of an experiment because such innovations may affect various aspects of the educational process, including the substance thereof, so for implementation of the project further experimental verification and regulation are needed.

Vocational training schools, colleges, trainees and pedagogical staff, as well as potential employers will participate in the project. It is noteworthy that about 150,000 SVE trainees have taken part in the experiment since September 1, 2022.

General education: teachers' wages

Another line of the experiment is the introduction of a new system of labor remuneration of teachers. As shown above, wages of nearly 53% of teachers do not exceed Rb25,000. Based on results for January through September 2021, in many subjects of the Russian Federation teachers' average wages were short of the average ones in relevant regions, that is, below the target value. For example, teachers' wages were equal to 90.0% of average wages in the Novgorod Region, 93.0% in the Republic of Tatarstan and 92.8% in the Krasnoyarsk Krai. Overall, in 48 regions out of 85 regions, this indicator was below the norm. Taking into account the fact that tensions related with a low level of wages have been growing among teachers for a few years, a decision was taken to modify labor remuneration at schools. An experiment with a new system of teachers' labor remuneration will be carried out in 5 regions: the Belgorod Region, the Nizhny Novgorod Region, the Sakhalin Region, the Yaroslavl Region and the Republic of Mordovia. The main idea consists in unifying wages accounting approaches and reducing diversification of wages across regions. It is believed that labor remuneration of teachers will depend on qualification level-based wage rates, compensation payments and incentive payments. The procedure, amounts and conditions for such payments will be established by the RF Government. It is believed that a new transparent system of labor remuneration in general education will eventually be formed. However, teachers' wages are not expected to be increased because there is no growth in budget expenditures on education. Most probably, some redistribution of the levels of wages will take place inside regions and municipalities and teachers will get a better idea of the size of wages.
