

PREPARING VULNERABLE SOCIAL GROUPS FOR DIGITAL EDUCATION: ANALYSIS OF RUSSIAN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICIES

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Abstract <p>Digital learning technologies were boosted because of COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic also made global learning crisis worse, forcing more than 1.5 billion students to stay at home and become online learners. In these circumstances particular attention was paid to the vulnerable social groups and children with disabilities as it was important to sustain their right to education. The context of Russia was chosen due to the low indicators in inclusive education. Therefore, the ways Russian inclusive education policy claims to prepare vulnerable social groups for digital education were studied. To accomplish this objective, Russian policy documents were chosen for the analysis. These documents are Russian Education Policy, Russian Inclusive Education policy, Report on Inclusive education by the Ministry of Education of Moscow Region 2021, Reports on activities and events by the Ministry of Education of Moscow region. These documents were analysed using content analysis. Initial codes were formed, then categories were formed. After that these categories were analyzed based on the relation to the research questions. Findings reveal controversial results. On the one hand, Russian inclusive education policy presents readiness for the inclusive and digital education challenges. Inclusive education definition in the policy document is innovative and correlated with the definitions of the leading academics in the field. Findings also present the readiness to satisfy educational needs of children with disabilities. On the other hand, the scope of the research was limited to the Moscow region which is a benchmarking region in terms of innovation. Therefore, recommendations for the future research are to prepare a study based on the remote areas of the country.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

This thesis examines the inclusive education policies in relation to digital education. In the Introduction, I will first describe the background of the study and then discuss the starting point: inclusive education and digitalization in Russia. Afterwards, I will present the main research question and sub-questions.

The topic of digital education became vastly important due to the pandemic situation of COVID-19. It caused schools to close in 191 countries and forced at least 1.5 billion students and 63 million teachers to stay at home (UN News, 2021). Therefore, when the pandemic made schools close their doors to students and move classes online, most students were forced to become online learners (Hess, 2021).

Aspects of digitalization and inclusion are also stated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4, “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. Digitalization is stated in the target 4.3 (By 2030 ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university). It is also stated in target 4.4 (By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship). Inclusive education is referred to in target 4.5 (By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous people and children in vulnerable situations) Digitalization may assist inclusion in education

in a bigger scale, consequently, it could help form more whole societies in more countries around the world. The topic is precise and represents the contribution in most of the targets of SDG 4 (UN, 2015).

For me personally, being a leader of the online summer camp, which was a leisure educational project for younger schoolchildren during the summer of 2020 brought up many valuable insights of E-Learning. More than 80 children ages 7-12 participated in the camp. The initial plan for the summer camp was to be in the countryside, but due to COVID-19 it was forced to shift to the digital format. Most of the participants were from Moscow or Moscow region. Online summer camp aimed at the development of various skills. The main targets were English and Chinese language skills. Also, the foundation for ICT skills and programming was established. Transferring the format of the summer camp to the online environment unfolded the fact that unlike teachers, younger students were dealing with gadgets intuitively well and even complex features as logging into the platform, getting in various Zoom conferences and following the schedule were accomplished.

It became evident that access to digital educational software not only opens the opportunity to study but might be as efficient as face-to-face teaching. For many due to certain constraints it might be the only option. This practical observation raised my interest to study the topic implementing document analysis of the policy documents.

1.2 Starting point: Inclusive education and digitalization in Russia

It is evident that inclusive and digital education aspects are popular among higher income countries. These factors are mentioned in the progress of SDGs by United Nations, in OECD indicators on education, and in UNESCO Institute of Statistics. Higher income countries have made a significant success in the development of inclusive and digital education in their countries. Therefore, having the experience in organizing an online summer camp and witnessing the progress of other countries in inclusive and digital education, I decided to investigate the case of Russia in regard of its support for such initiatives countrywide.

On the one hand, the major UN body that deals with education and children, UNESCO, has issued a report where a group of researchers investigated inclusion in several countries including Russia: “Global Monitoring Report 2021 Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, Inclusion and Education: All Means All”. This report identifies two main issues in education and particularly in inclusive education. First, there is little support of the idea of equal access to education for both boys and girls from the citizens. Second, there is an anti-LGBTQ policy issued by the government which results in a negative impact on the lives of LGBTQ students (UNESCO, 2021).

On the other hand, in Russia, the government launched a project “Education” which is aimed at making Russian education system to be in the top 9 in the world (Russian Government, 2019). The project is publicly accessible. The main goals are the following: upgrade the schools, develop better extracurricular activities, support and educate parents, provide professional and educational development for teachers, reform vocational education by including applied approach in teaching, increase social activity, improve career development, ensure complete digitalization of schools including high-speed internet connection and create digital environment for learning (Russian Government, 2019). Russian government particularly addresses the topic of inclusion in the objectives for upgrading schools, since it aims at creating infrastructure for students with disabilities, as it is plans to provide a proper digital education and environment for all students. Teacher development and parent education also contribute to inclusion, although teacher expertise is not required.

Furthermore, Moscow Region Ministry of Education prepares the initiatives on inclusive and digital education (Moscow Region Ministry of Education). They develop activities to support inclusive secondary education, digital education for students with disabilities, organize events for students from disadvantaged societies, creating a safe inclusive environment at schools.

1.3 Research objectives and questions

As discussed above, the topic of inclusive education and digitalization in Russia is controversial. While UNESCO underlines challenges, the Russian government emphasizes the successes. Therefore, the research question is the following:

- In what ways does Russian inclusive education policy claim to prepare vulnerable social groups for digital education?

In this thesis I particularly address children with disabilities as the target group out of all vulnerable social groups. The problem with educating children with disabilities is one of the most relevant in inclusive education in Russia based on the project “Education” (Russian Government, 2019). Since the topic is complex there are also sub-questions to fully answer the main research question:

- What constitutes Russia’s inclusive education policy?
- How does Russia’s inclusive education policy address the education of children with disabilities?
- How is Russia’s inclusive education policy preparing children with disabilities for digital education?

Based on the UNESCO report: “Global Monitoring Report 2021 Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, Inclusion and Education: All Means All” it is hypothesized that Russia’s current inclusive education policy remains inadequate to satisfy the needs of vulnerable social groups and to meet the ‘demands’ of digital education for today’s world economy.

The research questions will be answered by analyzing the official policy and project documents from the Russian government. I will review Russian education policies and Russian inclusive education policies. I will also look at the implementation of the policy by looking at the report from the Ministry of Education of the Moscow Region. The data analysis method is content analysis.

After this Introduction chapter of the thesis where I present the background of the topic and the starting point of inclusive and digital education in Russia, I will continue with the Review of literature chapter where I discuss the notions of vulnerable social

groups in Russia, inclusive education, and digital education. I will then present the Theoretical framework of the study. Furthermore, in the Methodology chapter I will talk about methodological starting point, methods of data collection, authenticity, credibility, representativeness, meaning, description of data, methods of data analysis, ethical consideration, and positionality. I will present the Findings of my analysis and answer three sub-questions and the main research question. I will finish the thesis with the Conclusions chapter where I present conclusions and recommendations for further research and policy reforms.

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter I will review relevant literature and provide definitions of some central terms used in the study. I start with discussing the notion of vulnerable social groups in Russia. I continue with reviewing inclusive education and digital education as discussed in current reports and literature.

2.1 Vulnerable social groups in Russia

The term vulnerable social groups in Russia usually refers to the citizens whose homes were destroyed by natural disaster or are in emergency condition, orphans, large families, single mothers, people awarded “The honorary donor” sign, veterans of war, citizens, whose average per capita family income is below the subsistence level, citizens living alone, whose income is below the subsistence level, the elderly, students, victims of social and political conflicts, the people with disabilities (Presidential Grants Fund, 2019). In this thesis I will focus on one of them, which is the children with disabilities.

According to the biggest Russian statistical center Rosinfostat, there are over 1.1 million people with disabilities in Russia (Rosinfostat, 2020). According to BBC, there are 32 per cent of citizens with disabilities in Russia who live below the subsistence level (BBC, 2020). Demianova (2018) in her manuscript: “Employment of People with Disabilities: Role of the Disability Status” mentions the fact that typically it is as twice as hard for a person with disability to receive a job than for a person without any dis-

ability. According to her research, 36% of people with disability are employed worldwide, as there are 60% of people without disability which are also employed. Demianova (2018) mentions the Russian context which underlines worse numbers with 12% of people with disability and 68% of people without disability are employed. Based on the above, it is evident that Russia is falling behind even in the average percentage.

People with disabilities are afraid to apply for jobs, since they are frightened to lose their pensions and benefits (Delovaya Rossiya, 2021). These people are usually illegally employed and do jobs for low qualified personnel. Only 5% of the federal employment vacancy base "Rabota v Rossii" is suitable for persons with disabilities. Furthermore, 8% of teenagers with disabilities at the age of 15 have not completed the elementary school, 17.4 % have only elementary school education, and only 13.3% of people with disability have higher education (Delovaya Rossiya, 2021). According to the Federal Registry of People (2022) with Disabilities there are currently more than 732 579 children with disabilities. Out of this number there are 309 579 girls and 423 000 are boys. The statistics by age shows that there are 50 778 children with disabilities of ages 0-3, 156 067 children with disabilities of ages 4-7, 374 535 children of ages 8-14 and 151 199 children of ages 15-17. Deputy Prime Minister of Russian Federation Tatyana Golikova stated that there are more than 56% of children with disabilities who attend schools (TASS, 2021).

On the one hand, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) mentions that 96.3% of female and 95.7 % of male out of all students were enrolled in secondary education in Russia in 2018. However, UNESCO in their Global Monitoring Report 2021 Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, Inclusion and Education: All Means All elaborates on the statement and shows that Russia has separate schools based on language and ethnicity, youth prison schools, and special needs schools (UNESCO, 2021, 39). Therefore, the overall statistics for the secondary school enrollment present a stunning result. UNESCO Institute for statistics also mentions the literacy rate of 99.7 percent total of ages 15-24 in Russia. On the other hand, the employment rate stresses a severe issue to be battled as there is little opportunity for people with disabilities to get employed with 5% of jobs applicable for citizens with disabilities.

2.2 Inclusive education

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) first mentioned inclusive schools as an effective way to battle discrimination in teaching students with disabilities in 1994. Since then, an attitude towards inclusive education has evolved. International legislation and policies continued to resist exclusion and foster equity and great education for all (UNESCO, 2008). While UNESCO (2009) states that the only way to achieve inclusive education is to create an inclusive environment in ordinary schools, to teach all students in communities equally, article 24 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and UNICEF (2013) develops the idea stating that education must be equally accessible with an inclusive system at all levels. It appears to be that disabled students continue to be excluded from the educational process, get discriminated based on their background.

Scholars, governments and inter-governmental organizations such as UN, UNESCO and UNICEF have issued their own conceptualizations and definitions of inclusive education. UN, for example, in Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all) emphasizes ten targets leading to inclusive education: ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes; ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education; ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university; substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship; eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations; ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy; ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development; build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and

gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all; substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries; substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers.

Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) agree with UN and present six ways of thinking about inclusive education: as a concern for special educational needs for students with disabilities; as a reply to penalizing exclusion; as vulnerable groups that are at risk of exclusion; as schools improvement to suit all children needs; as education for all; as a fundamental approach for education and society.

Even though the concept of inclusive education is widely acknowledged, it is yet to become a basic human right in all parts of the planet. UNESCO has issued a Global Education Monitoring Report “Inclusion and Education: All Means All” (2020). One key message from the report is that discrimination, stereotyping and stigmatization mechanisms are similar for all learners at risk of exclusion. The important justification is that not only 68% of countries have a definition of inclusion, only 57% of those cover various marginalized groups (UNESCO, 2020, 1). It makes it 39% of countries which have a definition of inclusion that involves multiple excluded groups. Another key message is that teachers, teaching materials and learning environments often ignore the benefits of embracing diversity (UNESCO, 2020, 1).

Inclusion of marginalized social groups is seen as a necessary school orientation. Ideally, teachers are aware of the social issues and try to engage students into certain activities which would promote social development among children. Simultaneously, children are seen as empowered to develop various critical questions, values and even undertake actions which would lead to a more equitable society (Jones, 2013). This inclusive education model is understood as being potential to revolutionize the society and, consequently, the world (Kemmis et al. 1983).

In this thesis, the inclusive education is defined as “all children regardless of their social, physical, financial status, achievement pace should be allowed in participation of all different levels (placement, community, government, teachers, peers) in educational context”. This definition was elaborated based on the targets for completing SDG 4.

2.3 Digital education

In this thesis digital education is discussed as both means and ends. Therefore, the subchapter begins with the presentation of the aspect of digital education as means to obtaining education for children with disabilities and concludes with the demonstration of digital education as ends, meaning that children with disabilities in the process of acquiring knowledge through digital resources also gain digital skills.

With the development of an Information Technology (IT) many areas improved correspondingly, such as business, medicine, media, and education. Consequently, IT facilitated the creation of digital tools supporting educational process (Al-Fraihat, Joy, & Sinclair, 2017). These tools may represent usage of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), Virtual Learning Environments, Video Streaming Services, Virtual Instructor-led training, Learning Management Systems. The latter, for instance, are used by 99% of universities according to Dahlstrom, Brooks and Bichsel (2014).

Digital technology must be utilized efficiently to serve the educational needs. Bozalek (2009) argues that a combination of an e-learning environment with the use of innovative pedagogical practices has the potential to provide a context where relational and contextual learning can take place. Author mentions the importance of an e-learning environment experience where students from vulnerable societies could learn in a safe way. Students were educated through the context meaning economic, political, and social forces which are highly dominant in terms of information being taught in the classroom. Bozalek underlines the efficiency of created digital environment for the vulnerable societies. Wang and colleagues (2011) agree with Bozalek in the question of designing digital materials adding that pedagogical principles and organizational learning theories should provide the basis for the design and implementation of e-learning applications in work environments, since technology-oriented approaches make e-learning less goal oriented.

Cidral and colleagues (2018) agree with Bozalek and Wang. In their study Cidral and colleagues have researched the online courses from 2001 till 2016. They have realized that if earlier digital materials focused on intention to use, adoption, usability, course contents, customization, and later user satisfaction, recent courses focus more on the overall success of the student (Cidral et al., 2018). As the technology evolved

and became more accessible and reliable, the scope of digital education shifted from technology centered approach to the student experience centered approach, to their interactions. This is seen as the fundamental role in the success of digital education (Cheng, 2011, Liaw et al., 2007, Selim et al., 2007).

Continuing with the aspect of Digital education as ends must consider relevant skills and competences for the twenty first century. Martínez-Cerdá and colleagues (2020) mention merely ICT skills and technical education as being the most relevant topics. World Economic Forum (2015) develops on the idea and highlights three groups of skills which are foundational literacies, competences, and character qualities. The first group Foundational literacies includes literacy, numeracy, scientific literacy, ICT literacy, financial literacy, cultural and civil literacy. The second group Competencies consists of critical thinking and problem solving, creativity, communication, and collaboration. The third group Character qualities is presented by curiosity, initiative, persistence, adaptability, leadership, social and cultural awareness. All the above-mentioned skills should be developed by students.

In 1977, OECD organized a Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). It evaluated the knowledge and skills of students which are soon to be graduates regarding their contribution to society (OECD, 2005). OECD launched a project called Definition and Selection of Competences (DeSeCo), since it became evident that there are more than mathematics, reading, problem solving and science which identifies the success in life. DeSeCo agrees with the study of World Economic Forum and emphasizes the following important skills to be developed among students.

The first group of skills is using tools interactively. It includes using language, symbols, and texts interactively, using knowledge and information interactively and using technology interactively. The second group of skills is Interacting in Heterogenous Groups, and it is comprised of relating well to others, co-operating, working in teams, and managing and resolving conflicts. The third group of skills according to OECD is Acting Autonomously. This group is identified by the following skills: acting withing the big picture, forming and conducting life plans and personal projects, defending, and asserting rights, interests, limits and needs (OECD, 2005). DeSeCo project was highly popular in Finland during the time of reforming the educational system. Jari Lavonen from the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Helsinki mentions that

DeSeCo project reflected in the changes of the National Core Curriculum and in the Finnish development program for teacher education (Lavonen, 2020).

The study focuses on the children with disabilities group among other vulnerable social groups in Russia as I believe it is essential to include children at risk of exclusion as early as possible. It will lower the risk of exclusion of such children when they become adults as they will possess relevant skills and competences to succeed in both social interactions and professional career.

Inclusive education in the context of children with disabilities in Russia aims at providing a safe environment for children to learn. No child regardless of the medical condition can be excluded from education. It is government's responsibility to address the topic of education for children with disabilities. Currently, there are two ways of organizing education of a child in Russia. These are governmental and family education. Governmental education consists of municipal schools and special schools for children with disabilities. In these special schools, children receive education through adaptive programs. In family education, parents are responsible for the education of their own child (Russian Education Policy, 2018).

Elaborating on the article by Bozalek et al. (2009) digital education may provide a safe environment for children with disabilities. Therefore, launching projects which include children with disabilities in a safe manner will be a beneficial argument for inclusive education. Furthermore, if children with disabilities are able to obtain knowledge through digital channels and gain more knowledge about how these channels operate, they will also gain digital skills. It corresponds to PISA testing by OECD (2005) in the first group of skills: using knowledge and information interactively and using technology interactively.

The inclusive education in the context of this thesis refers to participation of all children regardless of their social, physical, financial status, achievement pace in all different levels (placement, community, government, teachers, peers) in educational context. Digital education, on its part, is understood as providing a safe environment for children to receive education with the usage of digital materials.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter introduces the theoretical approach to be used in this thesis. As the main concept of the study is inclusive education, I discuss selected theoretical approaches towards inclusive education. These are transition from special needs to inclusive education, deconstructing special education and theory for genuine inclusion. These three theories represent the transition process from special needs education to inclusive education. Russian education is situated in the exact same transition period. The Russian government identifies the importance of inclusion and claims to make education inclusive as stated in the project “Education” (Russian Government, 2019).

3.1 Transition from special needs to inclusive education

Kaufman (1993) claimed that inclusive education is a misguided movement. He stated that special education would not be affected by the inclusive education reform. Researchers and practitioners in the field of inclusive education decided to start their work without much change (Danforth & Jones, 2015).

Practitioners called such movement “Integration”, as the main goal was to put a student with disabilities in general classes without troubling the ordinary practices (Danforth & Jones, 2015). Later, researchers, academics, and practitioners shifted from the idea of integration towards the development of inclusive education.

Scholars, practitioners and organizations as UNESCO and UNICEF have provided conceptualizations and definitions of inclusive education. These definitions may be formed into two categories: conceptualizing inclusive education based on key features and conceptualizing inclusive education based on the removal of the factors that may exclude and marginalize students (Forlin & Loreman, 2014, 6).

Regarding the first category of definitions which is conceptualizing inclusive education based on key features, Loreman (2009) presents a synthesis of features of inclusive education. These topographies are: all children attend their neighborhood school; schools do not reject any child at the stage of registering or teaching him or

her; all children are welcome and valued; all children learn in regular classrooms with same-age peers; all children follow similar study programs which can be modified if needed; all children participate in class activities and school events; all children are supported to make friends and to be socially successful with peers; all staff receives proper training by the school and region to support inclusion (Loreman, 2009, 43).

Conceptualizing inclusive education based on the removing factors which may exclude and marginalize students require identification of such factors. Farell (2000) identifies several challenges. Firstly, there is not enough knowledge on how to create fully inclusive classrooms. Secondly, different teachers' opinions on adjusting to inclusive practices. Thirdly, segregated education principles continue to occur in classes. Göransson and Nilholm (2014) agree with Farell as they also emphasize the lack of knowledge on forming inclusive classrooms for all students in their review.

Challenges also emerge from the teachers' side. As Shaddock (2006) in his research conducted together with teachers in Australia underlines lack of time, difficulty in individualizing within the group, inadequate training and resources, and lack of school support. There exists teachers' opinions that inclusion lowers attention to other children in class, attracts negative attention to the differences of other students, does not prepare children to the challenges of the 'real world'.

3.2 Theory for deconstructing special education

The second theoretical approach to inclusive education articulated by Skrtic (1991, 1995) deconstructs special education. For instance, Skrtic deconstructs the fact that students may be categorised into several groups according to the special needs of such groups to respond to their educational request. Appropriate division according to Skrtic should mainly rely on professional division of labor between teachers and special educators who may particularly address the needs of students. Furthermore, laws, policies, and governance effect the school administration by bureaucratic mechanisms. These mechanisms restrict schools to be flexible in acting to satisfy the needs of all pupils. Skrtic particularly mentions that schools should be working as problem-

solving units, addressing the urgent challenges. This would allow teachers to create inclusive classrooms in such schools.

Clark, Dyson and Millward (1998) agree with Skrtic in deconstructing existing special education. They appeal to traditional special needs education irrationality. These authors confirm that professional interests, discourses, social aspects, and the malfunction of schools are the reason for existence of traditional special needs education. Therefore, the way to improve inclusive education is to make discourses, professional interests, social aspects and schools more inclusive (Clark, Dyson and Millward, 1998).

Danforth and Jones (2015, 4) add to the deconstruction of special education the fact that special education system was often a means to segregate and alienate students, especially from the African American community. Furthermore, Mercer's study (1973) stated that many African American students were labeled with the term "mental retardation".

Special education system in most cases serves as an exclusive system for the students. Schools are unable to provide a safe environment for students with disabilities since they are not flexible due to bureaucratic mechanisms. Therefore, inclusive education system where schools may be a problem-solving safe units and children may receive quality education and not be alienated is found to be the most efficient.

3.3 Theory for genuine inclusion

The third approach to inclusive education is labeled genuine inclusion, as it addresses the topic of inclusion from the perspective of including all students in the educational environment and embracing diversity.

Teachers, families, and researchers have realized that it is important to develop policies, research knowledge and practices for "genuinely inclusive schools". Ferguson (1995, 286), who introduced the term, suggested replacing the ranking and measuring students' ability with teaching for the diversity of students in biological and cultural ways.

Ferguson describes inclusion as a mix of general and special education in a way of forming a unified system for public education that incorporates all children and youth in the school community. School community should see diversity as a norm and ensure high-quality education for all by providing meaningful curriculum, effective teaching and necessary support for each student.

Ferguson described categories for diverse human identities as disability, gender, class, sexual orientation and religion. In his opinion, these identities must not be ranked or judged. Families, students, and professionals must work together to build communities where young people may safely grow and learn.

Therefore, building genuinely inclusive schools and environments is a contemporary challenge addressed at society and communities in particular. It is also important not to forget the tendency of classical school system to perpetuate social hierarchies and avoid such acts of exclusion (Danforth & Jones, 2015, 16).

Nes (2009) adds to that point and presents the experience of Norway where all students are allowed to attend free schools. Students are not measured based on their ability or disability, gender, ethnicity, social class. Education in terms of curriculum, methods and organization is adapted to the needs of any student. In Norway, most of the special schools needs have been closed down.

To sum up the theory for genuine inclusion, Grima-Farell, Bain, and McDonagh (2011) draw connection between special needs and inclusion. Researchers say that inclusive education is a concern that connects special needs education with general education. This connection is presented in a form of the most effective and efficient way of implementing quality education for all students.

3.4 The theoretical approach to inclusive education in this thesis

Taking into account theories in this chapter, inclusive education is defined in this thesis as a unified system for public education that incorporates all children and youth into school community and embraces diversity in forms of disability, gender, class, sexual orientation, and religion.

Schools should be a safe environment for all children and youth, provide high-quality education and restrict judging diversity. This theoretical approach is used as a framework to guide the study.

4 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I will first discuss methodological starting point. Second, I will discuss methods of data collection, which is constituted of authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. Third, I will provide a description of data. Fourth, I will state methods of data analysis which is content analysis. During content analysis I will first present initial coding, then I will show categories emerging from codes. After that I will show connection between categories and research questions. Fifth, I will examine ethical consideration and positionality.

4.1 Methodological starting point

Document analysis was chosen as the best methodology for answering the research question, because it provides fuller understanding about the policy and the implementation of it. Therefore, it requires an analysis of documents covering information about Russian Inclusive Policy, International Inclusive Policies, other official documents related to vulnerable societies, inclusive education, and digitalization in education (Bailey, 1994, 294). These are physical and online sources in the public access (Payne & Payne, 2004, 61).

Previous studies on inclusive education policies in different countries looked at the existing scholarly literature and policy documents (Brintnell & Talley, 2016, 367). While Carrington, Mann and Mavropoulou investigate national policy documents, responses to Senate inquiries findings from state reports, and published empirical research (2021, 44), Göransson, Magnússon and Lindqvist chose primarily policy documents

as their key documents for the study on the inclusive policies of Sweden (2019, 68). On the other hand, Braun in her research on Tanzania uses semi-structured interviews with policy actors of Dar es Salaam (2020, 7). Nevertheless, all authors agree on the content analysis to identify the gap between policy and practice.

Earlier reports mainly represent the document analysis as the main methodology for studying inclusive policies. These scholars researched African and European countries as well as Australia which illustrates that the chosen method is efficiently used in different parts of the world. Despite the fact that Braun selected a semi-structured interview method, in this study document analysis is used to explore the aspect of Russian inclusive education policy. Document study is more beneficial in the context of digital education as well, since it provides an overview of the policies in the aspect of accessibility and spread of technology among various social groups. Russian government holds exclusive rights on such actions as it relates to youth education.

4.2 Methods of Data Collection

In data collection methods for document analysis, it is essential to approach the policy documents data in the same way as any other data. Therefore, a scientific approach in data collection must be incorporated. In the study Scott's (1990) approach is utilized. He (*ibid.*, 19-35) has formulated quality control criteria in data collection for document analysis. These are authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. Scott refers to these criteria as a process rather than distinct phases in document quality assessment. Each aspect shall be described in more detail in turn.

4.2.1 Authenticity

Authenticity identifies whether the information is frank and has a trustworthy source (Mogalakwe, 2009, 52). This is the vital criterion for any study. And in the document analysis the researcher is responsible for checking documents for them being genuine and reliable. Similarly, it is a duty of the interviewer to check that interviewees are from a target group, and it is a duty of the observer to position oneself in the right time and place for the most efficient data collection. Although documents might seem

like reliable sources of information, they may be manipulated or even falsified (Platt, 1981). Platt introduced a list of circumstances which underline further inspection of the document. The circumstances are the following:

- When the document does not make sense or has obvious errors.
- When there are internal inconsistencies in terms of style, content and so on.
- When there are different versions of the same document.
- When the version available is derived from a dubious, suspicious or unreliable secondary source.
- When the document has been in the hands of a person or persons with vested interest in a particular reading of the text.

4.2.2 Credibility

Credibility represents if the data is free from alteration. It is essential for the researcher to choose the data source critically to get valid results (Scott, 1990). Additionally, a researcher's point of view should be unbiased in a sense of research findings. Documents must be produced in advance of the research and without researcher's involvement in the process. Also, they must not be produced for researcher's advantage or mislead the researcher (Mogalakwe, 2009, 53).

An example of poor credibility could be media publications. While they may be used in document analysis, author's comments might be manipulating to the reader and the researcher. Even during interviews respondents might alter their answers under the circumstances of threats, guilt, shame, rewards or other manipulative factors.

Likewise, documents may be modified to present better statistics. For instance, there are several Russian statistics centers. Liberal societies claim that most of them are affiliated with the government which they justify by government and presidential elections data. Conversely, as they base their answers by human answers at the polling station this could also present a case of manipulation. Therefore, the study utilizes the statistics of the University of National Research of Higher School of Economics which has a reputation of a relatively unbiased source.

4.2.3 Representativeness

Representativeness in document analysis refers to the fact that evidence presented in the data is usual in similar kind of research (Mogalakwe, 2009, 54). It is researcher's work to check the methodology of the studies he or she include in the data pool. Methodology must be suitable for the document a researcher investigates to consider the results relevant.

Some facts discovered in the data might represent the country, state or an organization in an unappealing manner. However, it should not be the case for stating the data unrepresentative if it shows different results from your expectations (Mogalakwe, 2009, 54). It should be thoroughly studied in case the methodology is consistent. Methodology as a series of methods should be applied in a logical and scientific way to thoroughly address the research question.

4.2.4 Meaning

Meaning refers to the evidence being understandable and coherent. The main purpose to research documents is to realize the meaning and importance of what the document consists of (Scott, 1990, 28). Documents may have a literal meaning and an interpretative meaning. Documents presenting literal meaning present precise data and the significance of such documents must be reassembled. But if documents have an interpretative sense, a researcher has to appeal to the literal meaning to realize the setting of the research (Scott, 1990, 28). This should be done in order to find out the meaning of the text as a whole.

Additional aspect in the decision of usage or non-usage of documents in the research is about the degree of the researcher's own interpretation. It is vital to put the factual data into context in order not to confuse the reader (Platt, 1981). For instance, while UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) shows that 96.3% of female and 95.7 % of male students enrolled in secondary education in Russia in 2018, Global Monitoring Report 2021 Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, Inclusion and Education: All Means All presents public opinion on gender parity in secondary education where only 54% of Russians enjoying it (UNESCO, 2021, 23).

These are two sets of data under one institution. On the one hand, it might appear that both boys and girls are receiving secondary education equally. While on the other hand, it is evident from the report that public opinion on such initiative is controversial. A researcher in this case interprets the results of the policy which positively effects both genders participating in secondary school and emphasizes the problem of poor public opinion shaping in the region.

Theoretical approach in such example is a way to handle and interpret the data correctly. Raw statistics could be formed in a message not only with a researcher's own perspective, hypothesis or research objective, but also with the support of theory. Finally, the language of documents emphasizes the meaning of the text. Social texts do not only represent the objects, events and factors of the social world, but also shape the images and new forms of such objects, events and factors (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Language, no matter written or spoken, puts the societal phenomenon in order and also takes part in creating distinct phenomena itself.

4.3 Description of Data

Data gathered for this study includes official documents related to vulnerable societies, inclusive education and digitalization in education, Russian Inclusive Policy, International Inclusive Policies. Below you can see a more precise overview of the collected data, and a Table 1 summarizing the research data.

In 2012 Russian government issued a Russian Education policy which constitutes the knowledge about the organization of education, legal aspects of education, collaboration with third parties in providing state education and organization of digital education. Russian inclusive policy is a part of the Russian education policy and it regulates education of children with disabilities.

The next set of data is from the Ministry of Education. The Ministry issues reports on practical incorporation of inclusive education policies. These incorporate inclusive secondary education, digital learning for children with disabilities, events for students with physical disabilities, inclusive environment creation for educational organizations

and federal standards for students with disabilities. Therefore, I will analyze the last issued report (Moscow Region Ministry of Education, 2021).

Table 1. List of policy documents analyzed

Name of the document	Short characterization	Justification for selection
Russian Education Policy	The main policy for organization of education in the Russian Federation.	Contains all necessary information regarding inclusive education policy and digital education policy.
Russian Inclusive Education policy	The policy is a part of a bigger policy which is Russian Education Policy. Contains information of organization of education for children with disabilities.	The document was chosen of a vital to the research as it contains all relevant information on the organization of inclusive education in Russia.
Report on Inclusive education by the Ministry of Education of Moscow Region 2021	The report contains practical information on the implementation of the inclusive policies in Russia and the organization of inclusive education. It also discusses digital education, especially regarding inclusive education.	The document is particularly important due to the fact of it representing official practical data. Furthermore, it draws connections between inclusive education and digital education.
Reports on activities and events by the Ministry of Education of Moscow region	The reports contain precise information on exact event and activity taken place in the Moscow region that involved inclusive education.	The documents are of great importance due to the fact that they represent every event that was carried out over the year that relates to the inclusive

		education, including teacher development events.
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4.4 Methods of Data Analysis

Documents supporting Russia’s inclusive policy, Russian Education policy and publications of NGOs writing about inclusion digital education in Russia go through the Scott’s (1990) framework. These documents are checked on authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. Other documents that were also checked based on this framework were not included in the document set for the study. Afterwards, the information is coded based on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks and patterns are identified.

Document analysis involves a series of activities. Firstly, it is necessary to choose the right documents. Every data source is analyzed before the decision of including it in the final document pool for the study (Bowen, 2009, 33). In this aspect Bowen (2009) agrees with Scott (1990) that documents must fulfill the series of criteria. Such factors consist of authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. I chose official documents issued by the government of Russian Federation for the analysis as I see them being the most authentic and credible. I also checked if these documents are representative and contain a meaning suitable for answering the research questions.

After I chose the documents and ensured that they are genuine for the study, further data analysis occurred. This activity included actions as skimming, reading and interpretation. These processes are included in content analysis. Content analysis requires a first-pass document review with allocation of expressive and appropriate passages of text. This is vital to show the ability to separate relevant data from irrelevant data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

I first read through the Russian Education policy to find the articles corresponding to the topic of the research and research question. The same actions were taken to the reports by the Ministry of Education of Moscow region. After the right passages of

texts were chosen, they were translated for a better understanding of an English-speaking reader.

Coding is one of the most popular methods in analyzing data in qualitative research (Williams & Moser, 2019, 45). Saldafia (2009, 3) defines a code as “A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data”. Coding involves a three-stage process: open coding, axial coding, selective coding (Williams & Moser, 2019, 47).

Open coding is the first phase of coding. During this stage distinct themes and concepts are identified for further categorization. Expressions as single words or a series of words as phrases, sentences or a sequence of sentences are analyzed to connect them with concepts (Flick, 2009, 307). My initial coding frame was developed based on the literature review, theoretical framework and research questions.

Table 2. Initial coding frame

Codes	Description	Example
Inclusive education	Inclusive education in the context of Russian inclusive education policy.	Inclusive education - ensuring equal access to education for all students, taking into account the diversity of special educational needs and individual opportunities.
Special education conditions	A system of education for children with disabilities reflected in the policy.	The special conditions for education by students with disabilities are understood as the conditions for the education, upbringing and development of such students, including the use of special educational programs and methods of training and education, special textbooks, teaching aids and didactic materials, special technical means of training for

		collective and individual use, the provision of services of an assistant, providing students with the necessary technical assistance, conducting group and individual remedial classes, providing access to the buildings of organizations engaged in educational activities, and other conditions without which it is impossible or difficult for students with disabilities to master educational programs.
Education	The attitude towards the concept of education in the Russian inclusive education policy.	Education - a single purposeful process of education and training, which is a socially significant good and is carried out in the interests of a person, family, society and the state, as well as a set of acquired knowledge, skills, values, experience and competence of a certain volume and complexity in order to intellectually, spiritually and morally, creatively, physically and (or) professionally develop of a person, satisfy his educational needs and interests.
Learning	Understanding of the concept of learning in relation to the Russian inclusive education policy.	Learning - a purposeful process of organizing the activities of students to acquire knowledge, skills, competencies, gain experience in activities, develop abilities, gain experience in applying knowledge in everyday life and form

		students' motivation to receive education throughout their lives. In this context the example would be when schools organize the educational environment based on the needs of the student.
Educational programs	Educational programs existing in the Russian inclusive education policy	Adapted educational program - an educational program adapted for training persons with disabilities, taking into account the peculiarities of their psychophysical development, individual capabilities and, if necessary, providing correction of developmental disorders and social adaptation of these persons.
E-learning	A set of digital educational activities and materials.	The list of professions and specialties of secondary vocational education, the implementation of educational programs for which is not allowed using exclusively e-learning, distance learning technologies, is approved by the federal executive body responsible for the development and implementation of state policy and legal regulation in the field of general education. The list of specialties and areas of higher education training, the implementation of educational programs for which is not allowed using exclusively e-learning, distance learning technologies, is approved by

		the federal executive body responsible for the development and implementation of state policy and legal regulation in the field of higher education.
Distance learning	Distant learning with a use of telecommunication technologies.	When implementing educational programs using exclusively e-learning, distance learning technologies in an organization engaged in educational activities, conditions must be created for the functioning of an electronic information and educational environment, including electronic information resources, electronic educational resources, a set of information technologies, telecommunication technologies, appropriate technological means and ensuring the development of educational programs by students in full, regardless of the location of students
Technical means	Everything related to technical tools or assistance.	The special conditions for education by students with disabilities are understood as ... the use of ... special technical means of training for collective and individual use ... providing students with the necessary technical assistance.

Standards of education	The aims of Russian education in the context of the policy.	Educational standard - a set of mandatory requirements for higher education in specialties and areas of training approved by educational institutions of higher education.
Educational requirements	Requirements in the aspect of education in the policy.	Federal state requirements - mandatory requirements for training programs for scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel in graduate school and additional pre-professional programs established by authorized federal executive bodies.
Disabilities	All aspects connected with the concept of disability in the policy.	Education of students with disabilities can be organized both jointly with other students, and in separate classes, groups or in separate organizations engaged in educational activities.
Students with disabilities	All passages of text related to students with disabilities.	A student with disabilities - an individual who has deficiencies in physical and (or) psychological development, confirmed by the psychological-medical-pedagogical commission and preventing education without creating special conditions.
Additional education	Development of skills other than responsible for the increase in the level of education.	Additional education - a type of education that is aimed at the comprehensive satisfaction of the educational needs of a person in intellectual, spiritual, moral, physical and (or) professional improvement and is not accompanied by an increase in the level of education.

Pedagogical worker	Teachers which are responsible for the inclusive education.	A pedagogical worker - an individual who is in labor, service relations with an organization carrying out educational activities, and performs the duties of training, educating students and (or) organizing educational activities.
Parents	Parents or legal representatives as participants in the educational processes.	Participants in educational relations - students, parents (legal representatives) of underage students, teachers and their representatives, organizations engaged in educational activities.
Individual curriculum	Distribution of study subjects, courses, disciplines based on the individual needs.	Individual curriculum - a curriculum that ensures the development of an educational program based on the individualization of its content, taking into account the characteristics and educational needs of a particular student. For example, if a student is not able to complete the selected course on time due to the medical conditions, the student receives an individual curriculum.
Means of education	Equipment used in the organization of education.	Means of training and education - devices, equipment, including sports equipment and inventory, instruments (including musical ones), visual aids, computers, information and telecommunication networks, hardware, software and audiovisual means, printed and electronic educational and information resources and other material

		objects necessary for the organization of educational activities.
Adapted program	Educational program adapted for the satisfaction for individual needs.	Adapted educational program - an educational program adapted for training persons with disabilities, taking into account the peculiarities of their psychophysical development, individual capabilities and, if necessary, providing correction of developmental disorders and social adaptation of these persons.
Social assistance	Assistance in the social adaptation to educational environment.	... social assistance is provided to children who experience difficulties in mastering basic general education programs, development and social adaptation ...
General education	Organization of general education for children with disabilities.	General education of students with disabilities is carried out in organizations that carry out educational activities according to adapted basic general educational programs. In such organizations, special conditions are created for the education of these students.
Non-educational children	Children not receiving education.	In the Moscow Region, at the beginning of the 2020/2021 academic year, there are no non-educational children aged 7 to 18 in general education organizations. At the beginning of the 2019/20 school year, there were no such children.

Number of students with disabilities	How many children with disabilities received education in the given time period.	At the levels of primary, basic and secondary general education in the 2020/21 academic year, 16,846 students with disabilities receive education under adapted basic general education programs, of which 10,582 students receive education under student education programs with mental retardation (intellectual disabilities), which is higher than the same indicators for the 2019/20 academic year by 6.1% and 2.4%, respectively.
Education environment	Learning atmosphere and facilities for students with disabilities.	Creating conditions for children with disabilities to receive a quality education (creating a universal architectural barrier-free environment in educational organizations, equipping them with special equipment and vehicles) is implemented within the framework of the state program of the Russian Federation "Accessible Environment".
Educational right	The aspect on how rights of children with disabilities are treated.	... measures have been taken to ensure the rights of children with disabilities, children with disabilities, children from large and low-income families during the period of introduction of restrictive measures in the Moscow Region aimed at reducing the risks of the spread of a new coronavirus infection.

Network learning	The way of organizing learning using educational programs of other organizations.	The network form of implementation of educational programs provides the opportunity for students to master the educational program and (or) individual subjects, courses, disciplines (modules), practice, other components provided for by educational programs (including various types, levels and (or) directions), using the resources of several organizations engaged in educational activities, including foreign ones, and, if necessary, using the resources of other organizations.
Legal regulation	Legal regulation in relations of the state organizations and private companies preparing educational programs and materials.	The procedure for organizing and carrying out educational activities in the network form of implementation of educational programs and the approximate form of an agreement on the network form of implementation of educational programs are approved by the federal executive body responsible for the development and implementation of state policy and legal regulation in the field of higher education, together with the federal executive body responsible for the development and implementation of state policy and legal regulation in the field of general education.
Remote work	The form of organization of work in a remote	In the Moscow region, the experience of remote work with children of pre-

	manner with the use of distant learning tools.	school age, including children with disabilities was formed. Sections were created on the official websites of the preschool educational institution, such as “We are sitting at home with benefit”, where, in accordance with the program content and thematic plan, educational and methodological material was placed, Internet marathons (“Playing together”, “Reveal your talent”), quest games, informative video tutorials and creative workshops, as well as entertaining materials in an accessible and understandable form for pupils and parents.
Zoom	The way the software was used to create a distant learning experience for students with disabilities.	Another form of communication and receiving educational services in a number of educational institutions was the work on the Zoom service. On a weekly basis, the preschool educational institutions websites posted a schedule of classes with scheduled video conferences for each age group, a link to which was sent to parents.
Medical assistance	Medical help provided by the state according to the policy.	Psychological and pedagogical, medical and social assistance is provided to children who experience difficulties in mastering basic general education programs, development and social adaptation, including minors who are recognized in cases and in the

		manner that are provided for by the criminal procedure legislation, suspected, accused or defendants in a criminal case or who are victims or witnesses of a crime, in the centers of psychological, pedagogical, medical and social assistance created by state authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, as well as psychologists, educational psychologists of organizations engaged in educational activities in which such children study.
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Axial coding was the second phase of coding. It developed the progress made during the first phase. During axial coding themes identified during phase one were categorized (Strauss, 1998, 109). During this stage of coding the more abstract categories emerged out of the initial codes.

Table 3. Second phase of coding

Codes	Categories
Education	Distinguishing between education, learning and upbringing
Learning	
Standards of education	Educational requirements and standards
Education requirements	
Educational programs	Educational programs
Additional education	
Students with disabilities	Stakeholders of education
Parents	
Pedagogical workers	

Individual curriculum	Curriculum and organization of education
Means of education	
Inclusive education	Vulnerable social groups and inclusive education
Adapted program	
Medical assistance	Assistance to vulnerable social groups
Social assistance	
Special education conditions	Organization of education for students with disabilities
General education	
Technical means	
Disabilities	
Non-educational children	Statistics on education of children with disabilities
Number of students with disabilities	
Education environment	Creating “Accessible Environment”
Educational right	Ensuring the right to education
Network learning	Legal base for network learning
Legal regulation	
Distance learning	E-learning
E-learning	
Remote work	Experience of remote teaching
Zoom	

Selective coding is the third phase of coding. Throughout the stage categories identified during axial coding are selected into meaningful expressions. Flick (2009) defined selective coding as “Selective coding continues the axial coding at a higher level of abstraction [through] actions that lead to an elaboration or formulation of the story of the case”. The scholar has a pleasure to codify and share the research results if conceptualizing of the outcome in selective coding made in form of a case or story (Strauss, 1998, 158). Therefore, it is vital for this study to incorporate the process of coding very carefully to obtain an opportunity to present results in the efficient and illustrative manner.

Table 4. Relation of categories to the research sub-questions

Categories	Research sub-questions
Distinguishing between education, learning and upbringing	What constitutes Russia’s inclusive education policy?
Educational requirements and standards	
Educational programs	
Stakeholders of education	
Curriculum and organization of education	
Vulnerable social groups and inclusive education	
Assistance to vulnerable social groups	
Organization of education for students with disabilities	
Statistics on education of children with disabilities	How Russia’s inclusive education policy addresses the education of children with disabilities?
Creating “Accessible Environment”	
Ensuring the right to education	
Legal base for network learning	How is Russia’s inclusive education policy preparing children with disabilities for digital education?
E-learning	
Experience of remote teaching	

As presented in the Findings chapter, I have conducted a systematic analysis of data gathered from Russian Education Policy, Russian Inclusive Education Policy, and reports by the Ministry of Education of Moscow region to form a coherent text that would answer three sub-questions and the main question by providing arguments from the documents.

4.5 Ethical Consideration and Positionality

Considering research ethics this study has a complete set. A research title was modified several times under the supervision of the thesis tutor to guide the process. Thesis outline was well thought through and approved by the tutor. Research questions are tailored and do not interfere with university's rules.

Literature for the literature review chapter was collected using university library sources. Scholar works are carefully cited, and authors ideas are elaborated on. Additional materials are used from the academic sources to enrich the chapter and provide a fuller understanding of the topic.

Methodology was considered carefully, and document analysis was chosen as a main research method. Documents were chosen according to the Scott (1990) framework. This requires authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. The researcher's duty was to check the documents if they follow the high standards for quality with the Scott (1990) criteria. The rights for data chosen for the study considers free usage for research purposes. Therefore, it is completely ethical to use this data for context and critical analysis purposes.

Ethical consideration in a study touches the critique of the national policies. I provided thorough, critical analysis of data. Therefore, I did not shift to bold critique based on the political views or personal attitude towards the reasonable for policy documents.

When conducting research in a native country it is important to critically evaluate own positionality, since the context is familiar and the experience in the field of education is obtained. This is something that resonates with me the most. I am the one speaking the language of the country and I was raised in Russia and went through the school system. I certainly have an experience of work in educational organizations in Russia. These were not state organizations, but private ones, where the principals had a western approach in terms of education. Therefore, my professional attitude towards Russian education was also influenced in a political way. Recent activities started in February of 2022 influenced them even more.

On the other hand, the aspect of inclusion in Russian context is a new topic to investigate. In this case, it is vital to fully immerse in the setting of inclusive and digital education in Russia. For that matter, during summer and autumn of 2021 I attended

webinars, seminars, and conferences. These conferences were “Mayovka” “Beri i Delay”, “Cplyat po Oseni Schitayut”, “Black and White Conf” and others. The topics of the events were in the field of private secondary education for children and digital education. Participation on such occasions enlarged the networking and many insights were gathered in informal talks.

These private educational organizations are sometimes attracted by parents with students who are not able to study in public secondary school. The reasons for such matter may be either physical or mental illness. Parents wish the best for their children and do not choose to study in public schools for disadvantaged children and choose an alternative option.

Commercial digital education in Russia now is flourishing due to the trend for life-long learning. People motivate themselves by an opportunity to start a new job, or simply try something new. Therefore, short online courses are very popular. In terms of digital education for inclusion, the topic is widely spread on the governmental level. It is believed that digital education might be a solution for children who are not able to attend school due to physical conditions.

The best approach for positionality in this circumstance is to establish a hypothesis which would suit the researcher mindset of the problem and research objective. In this study it is hypothesized that Russia’s current inclusive education policy remains inadequate to satisfy the needs of vulnerable social groups and to meet the ‘demands’ of digital education for today’s world economy. This serves as a general guideline for data interpretation.

5 FINDINGS

Russian education policy document was analyzed through the process of content analysis. I gathered appropriate passages of text related to the overall description of Russian education policy as it is critical for understanding the Russian inclusive policy and articles of the policy responsible for the inclusive education and digitalization. I have formed initial codes based on the theoretical framework, review of literature and research questions. Then I grouped codes to create more abstract categories. After that I related the categories to the research questions to answer them. Based on the revised data, I have grouped the information to first answer the sub-questions which contribute to the main research question:

- What constitutes Russia's inclusive education policy?
- How does Russia's inclusive education policy address the education of children with disabilities?
- How is Russia's inclusive education policy preparing children with disabilities for digital education?

The same approach is used to answer the main research question:

- In what ways does Russian inclusive education policy claim to prepare vulnerable social groups for digital education?

Furthermore, I have translated the most suitable parts of the text to justifying my conclusions.

5.1 What constitutes Russia's inclusive education policy?

Inclusive education policy in Russia is a part of the Russian education policy. Therefore, background of Russian education policy and Russian inclusive education policy is the same. To assess the policy, it is essential to underline the concepts mentioned in the text. Article 2 of the policy of education states the main concepts used in the policy text.

5.1.1 Distinguishing between education, learning and upbringing

Main definitions of the document relate to education, learning and upbringing. These are meant to be the most important as they are at the very beginning of the document. This category presents the differences between the definitions of education, learning and upbringing in Russian education policy. Below you can find the examples of the definitions.

Education - a single purposeful process of education and training, which is a socially significant good and is carried out in the interests of a person, family, society and the state, as well as a set of acquired knowledge, skills, values, experience and competence of a certain volume and complexity in order to intellectually, spiritually and morally, creatively, physically and (or) professionally develop of a person, satisfy his educational needs and interests. For example, secondary education.

Upbringing - an activity aimed at personal development, creating conditions for self-determination and socialization of students on the basis of socio-cultural, spiritual and moral values and rules and norms of behavior adopted in Russian society in the interests of a person, family, society and the state, forming a sense of patriotism among students, citizenship, respect for the memory of the defenders of the Fatherland and the exploits of the Heroes of the Fatherland, law and order, working people and the older generation, mutual respect, respect for the cultural heritage and traditions of the multinational people of the Russian Federation, nature and the environment. For instance, in Russian secondary schools there is an activity which is called a class hour. During this hour students together with the teacher work on the personal development of students, watch philosophical movies or just simply talk about the difficulties children face.

Learning - a purposeful process of organizing the activities of students to acquire knowledge, skills, competencies, gain experience in activities, develop abilities, gain experience in applying knowledge in everyday life and form students' motivation to receive education throughout their lives. In this context, the example would be when schools organize the educational environment based on the needs of the student.

5.1.2 Educational requirements and standards

The second category of definitions includes educational requirements and standards which constitute Russian education policy. Requirements and standards are essential as these are fundamental for understanding the goals of inclusive education as well. There are the examples of such standards and requirements from the policy below.

Level of education - a completed cycle of education, characterized by a certain unified set of requirements. For example, secondary education.

Qualification - the level of knowledge, skills, abilities and competence, characterizing readiness to perform a certain type of professional activity.

Federal state educational standard - a set of mandatory requirements for education of a certain level and (or) for a profession, specialty and area of training, approved depending on the level of education by the federal executive body, which performs the functions of developing and implementing state policy and legal regulation in the field of general education, or by the federal executive body responsible for the development and implementation of state policy and legal regulation in the field of higher education.

Educational standard - a set of mandatory requirements for higher education in specialties and areas of training approved by educational institutions of higher education. For example, educational standard for receiving a master's degree.

Federal state requirements - mandatory requirements for training programs for scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel in graduate school and additional pre-professional programs established by authorized federal executive bodies.

5.1.3 Educational programs

Below I present the third category of definitions from the policy which concentrate information about possible educational programs in Russia. These include the definition of the educational program itself, basic education, general education, vocational education, vocational training, and additional education.

Educational program - a complex of the main characteristics of education (volume, content, planned results) and organizational and pedagogical conditions, which is presented in the form of a curriculum, calendar curriculum, work programs of educational subjects, courses, disciplines (modules), other components, evaluative and methodological materials, as well as a work program for education, a calendar plan for educational work, certification forms.

An exemplary basic educational program - educational and methodological documentation (an exemplary curriculum, an exemplary calendar study schedule, exemplary work programs for educational subjects, courses, disciplines (modules), other components, an exemplary work program of education, approximate calendar plan of educational work), which determines the recommended volume and content of education at a certain level and (or) a certain direction, the planned results of the development of the educational program, approximate conditions for educational activities, including approximate calculations of the standard costs of providing public services for the implementation of the educational program.

General education - a type of education that is aimed at developing the personality and acquiring, in the process of mastering the basic general educational programs, knowledge, skills, and the formation of competencies necessary for a person's life in society, a conscious choice of profession and obtaining professional education.

Vocational education - a type of education that is aimed at the acquisition by students in the process of mastering the basic professional educational programs of knowledge, skills, and the formation of competence of a certain level and volume, allowing them to conduct professional activities in a certain area and (or) perform work in a specific profession or specialty.

Vocational training - a type of education that is aimed at acquiring knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to perform certain labor, service functions (certain types of labor, service activities, professions).

Additional education - a type of education that is aimed at the comprehensive satisfaction of the educational needs of a person in intellectual, spiritual, moral, physical and (or) professional improvement and is not accompanied by an increase in the level of education.

5.1.4 Stakeholders of education

Stakeholders of education in Russia category consists of the following definitions, which are: a student, a student with disabilities, education organization, organizations providing training and a pedagogical worker. These also include other participants of education. These add to the understanding of the Russian inclusive education policy especially since the student with disability definition is presented. It is underlined in the policy that such students require special conditions, and it resonates with definitions presented in further subchapters.

Student - an individual who is mastering the educational program.

A student with disabilities - an individual who has deficiencies in physical and (or) psychological development, confirmed by the psychological-medical-pedagogical commission and preventing education without creating special conditions.

Educational organization - a non-profit organization that carries out educational activities on the basis of a license as the main type of activity in accordance with the goals for the achievement of which such an organization was created. For example, a public school.

An organization providing training - a legal entity carrying out, on the basis of a license, along with the main activity, educational activities as an additional type of activity.

Organizations carrying out educational activities - educational organizations, as well as organizations providing training. Individual entrepreneurs engaged in educational activities are equated with organizations engaged in educational activities. For example, private schools.

A pedagogical worker - an individual who is in labor, service relations with an organization carrying out educational activities, and performs the duties of training, educating students and (or) organizing educational activities. For example, a teacher.

Participants in educational relations - students, parents (legal representatives) of underage students, teachers and their representatives, organizations engaged in educational activities.

Participants in relations in the field of education - participants in educational relations and federal state bodies, state authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, local governments, employers and their associations.

5.1.5 Curriculum and organization of education

The fifth category underlines the organization of education in terms of curriculum, individual curriculum, orientation of education, and means of education. The last point also includes the usage of digital devices in education as well as any other special equipment. Below are the definitions from the Russian Education policy.

Curriculum - a document that determines the list, labor intensity, sequence and distribution of study subjects, courses, disciplines (modules), practice, other types of educational activities and, forms of intermediate certification of students.

Individual curriculum - a curriculum that ensures the development of an educational program based on the individualization of its content, taking into account the characteristics and educational needs of a particular student. For example, if a student is not able to complete the selected course on time due to the medical conditions, the student receives an individual curriculum.

Orientation (profile) of education - the orientation of the educational program to specific areas of knowledge and (or) types of activities, which determines its subject and thematic content, the prevailing types of educational activities of the student and the requirements for the results of mastering the educational program.

Means of training and education - devices, equipment, including sports equipment and inventory, instruments (including musical ones), visual aids, computers, information and telecommunication networks, hardware, software and audiovisual means, printed and electronic educational and information resources and other material objects necessary for the organization of educational activities.

5.1.6 Vulnerable social groups and inclusive education

Adapted educational program and inclusive education are addressed in the main definitions of the policy. Definitions resonate with contemporary understanding of the inclusive education. Also ensuring the combination of special education needs and individual opportunities is also something correlating with the statement by Grima-Farell, Bain, and McDonagh (2011) presented in the Theoretical framework chapter.

Inclusive education - ensuring equal access to education for all students, taking into account the diversity of special educational needs and individual opportunities.

Adapted educational program - an educational program adapted for training persons with disabilities, taking into account the peculiarities of their psychophysical development, individual capabilities and, if necessary, providing correction of developmental disorders and social adaptation of these persons.

5.1.7 Assistance to vulnerable social groups

More precisely assistance to vulnerable social groups assistance is presented in the following articles of the policy. Article: 42 Psychological-pedagogical, medical, and social assistance to students experiencing difficulties in mastering basic general education programs, development, and social adaptation. This article states under chapter 4 Students and their parents (legal representatives). Below are the examples presented in the article.

Psychological and pedagogical, medical and social assistance is provided to children who experience difficulties in mastering basic general education programs, development and social adaptation, including minors who are recognized in cases and in the manner that are provided for by the criminal procedure legislation, suspected, accused or defendants in a criminal case or who are victims or witnesses of a crime, in the centers of psychological, pedagogical, medical and social assistance created by state authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, as well as psychologists, educational psychologists of organizations engaged in educational activities in which such children study. Local self-government bodies have the right to establish centers for psychological, pedagogical, medical and social assistance. For

example, if a minor experiences difficulties in completing any stage of education due to any of the above-mentioned conditions, he or she may receive qualified help.

5.1.8 Organization of education for students with disabilities

Article 79 particularly addressed the question of children with disabilities. It is named Organization of education for students with disabilities. This article goes under the chapter 11 Features of the implementation of certain types of educational programs and education by certain categories of students. The article explicitly describes the attitude of government towards children with disabilities. Below are the essential points from the document.

The content of education and the conditions for organizing the training and education of students with disabilities are determined by an adapted educational program, and for people with disabilities also in accordance with an individual program for the rehabilitation of a disabled person.

General education of students with disabilities is carried out in organizations that carry out educational activities according to adapted basic general educational programs. In such organizations, special conditions are created for the education of these students.

The special conditions for education by students with disabilities are understood as the conditions for the education, upbringing and development of such students, including the use of special educational programs and methods of training and education, special textbooks, teaching aids and didactic materials, special technical means of training for collective and individual use, the provision of services of an assistant, providing students with the necessary technical assistance, conducting group and individual remedial classes, providing access to the buildings of organizations engaged in educational activities, and other conditions without which it is impossible or difficult for students with disabilities to master educational programs.

Education of students with disabilities can be organized both jointly with other students, and in separate classes, groups or in separate organizations engaged in educational activities.

Professional educational organizations and educational organizations of higher education, as well as organizations that carry out educational activities in the main

programs of vocational training, must create special conditions for the education of students with disabilities.

When receiving education, students with disabilities are provided free of charge with special textbooks and teaching aids, other educational literature, as well as the services of sign language and sign language interpreters. The specified measure of social support is an expenditure obligation of the subject of the Russian Federation in relation to such students, with the exception of students studying at the expense of the budgetary allocations of the federal budget. For people with disabilities who study at the expense of the federal budget, the provision of these social support measures is an expense obligation of the Russian Federation.

The state, represented by the state authorities of the Russian Federation authorized by it and the state authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, provides training for teachers who own special pedagogical approaches and methods of teaching and educating students with disabilities, and promotes the involvement of such workers in organizations engaged in educational activities.

5.1.9 Key elements of Russian inclusive education policy

Russian inclusive education policy consists of the major definitions, and operations and organization towards children with disabilities and their education.

Starting with major definitions which include such important aspects as education, learning and upbringing. These three are essential and the most general definitions in understanding the educational processes discussed in the document. While education focuses on the development of competences, upbringing focuses on the personal development. Learning stands for the organization of activities for the comfortable acquiring of skills and knowledge by the student.

Describing the key elements which constitute Russian inclusive policy, it is essential to continue with educational requirements and standards. This is also an essential category that provides information on the level of education, qualification, federal state educational standard, and educational standard. These factors are fundamental for understanding as this is the aims of the educational process for all students receiving education in Russia.

Further description of the Russian inclusive policy includes educational programs. They consist of definitions of both general explanation of what educational program means in terms of Russian inclusive education policy context and examples of such educational programs which are general education, vocational education, vocational training, additional education.

Russian inclusive education policy continues with listing of the stakeholders of education. Stakeholders consist of students, students with disabilities, pedagogical workers, educational organizations, and other participants of education as parents, and the state. The most important definition out of these in the context of this thesis is the definition of a student with disabilities according to the Russian inclusive education policy. Therefore, a student with disabilities is an individual who has deficiencies in physical and (or) psychological development, confirmed by the psychological-medical-pedagogical commission and preventing education without creating special conditions. It goes under the definition of vulnerable social groups in Russia presented in the previous studies in the Literature review chapter (Presidential Grants Fund, 2019).

The fifth category forming the Russian inclusive education policy is curriculum and the organization of education. This category includes curriculum, individual curriculum, orientation (profile) of education, means of training and education. The most important for the context of this study is individual curriculum and means of training and education. Individual curriculum addresses the importance of individualized curriculum for any student that needs it. Mean of training and education definition particularly emphasizes that it does not only include sports equipment, but also digital devices for the organization of education.

The sixth category which shapes the policy is vulnerable social groups and inclusive education. It presents the definition of inclusive education in the context of Russian inclusive education policy and adapted education program which is designed for the students with disabilities. The definition of inclusive education in this policy corresponds to the challenges of the 21st century and is very modern. Inclusive education - ensuring equal access to education for all students, considering the diversity of special educational needs and individual opportunities. It is almost the

same as the definition presented by Grima-Farell, Bain, and McDonagh (2011) They also draw connection between special needs and general education.

Assistance to vulnerable social groups is also an essential factor in forming the Russian inclusive education policy. This point explicitly describes what kind of assistance students may receive. And the steps to get the assistance in education process.

The final category that was identified in the policy document was organization of education for students with disabilities. This category describes how the education is organized for students with disabilities. The most major finding our of this category is that education may be organized together with other students or in special organizations. As presented in the Literature review chapter, UNESCO in their Global Monitoring Report 2021 Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, Inclusion and Education: All Means All presents that Russia has separate schools based on special needs (UNESCO, 2021, 39). In this context, Russian policy responds to the statement in a way that current inclusive education policy responds to the fact of separate schools and tries to organize joint education for both categories of children.

5.2 How Russia's inclusive education policy addresses the education of children with disabilities?

The ways in which Russian inclusive education policy addressed the education on children with disabilities is, in this study, analyzed through the activities of the Ministry of education of Moscow Region. The focus was selected as Moscow and Moscow region are being the benchmark in innovations in wellbeing of Russians, the best possible results must be obtained from the official reports from the Ministry.

Ministry provides annual report on the actions made to support children with disabilities. I am presenting the data from the 2021 report as it is the most recent available. The report provides the following information.

5.2.1 Statistics on education of children with disabilities

The first category of the question on how Russian inclusive education policy addresses the education of children with disability presents statistics on the education

of children with disabilities from the report by the Ministry of Education of Moscow region. Examples of such statistical data are below.

In Moscow Region, at the beginning of the 2020/2021 academic year, there are no non-educational children aged 7 to 18 in general education organizations. At the beginning of the 2019/20 school year, there were no such children.

At the levels of primary, basic and secondary general education in the 2020/21 academic year, 16,846 students with disabilities receive education under adapted basic general education programs, of which 10,582 students receive education under student education programs with mental retardation (intellectual disabilities), which is higher than the same indicators for the 2019/20 academic year by 6.1% and 2.4%, respectively.

In the 2020/21 academic year, 2,303 students with disabilities study in inclusive programs, which is 7.5% less students with disabilities compared to the same indicator of the previous year, and 5,212 children with disabilities, which is 3.2% more children with disabilities compared to with the same indicator of the previous year.

The number of special correctional classes for students with disabilities in the 2020/2021 academic year was 1,351, in which 8,945 students with disabilities and 5,929 children with disabilities were enrolled. Compared to the 2019/2020 academic year, the number of classes increased by 5.7%, and the number of students with disabilities in them increased by 3.2%.

The final certification, which completes the development of the main educational programs of basic general and secondary general education is mandatory. At the same time, special conditions are created for students with disabilities and with disabilities, and they also have the right to undergo final certification in the form of a state final exam.

At the end of the 2019/20 academic year, final exams in the Russian language was passed by 302 students with disabilities, which is 0.3% less than in the 2018/19 academic year (of which 302 were in the form of a unified state exam), in mathematics - 150 students with disabilities, which is 0.4% less compared to the 2018/19 academic year (of which 150 are in the form of a unified state exam).

5.2.2 Creating “Accessible Environment”

The second category of Russian inclusive education policy effect on the education of children with disabilities is creating “Accessible Environment”. This stands for creating a comfortable learning atmosphere for children with disabilities. It resonates with one of the SDG 4 targets: provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all. Implementation of such practice in Russian context is below.

Creating conditions for children with disabilities to receive a quality education (creating a universal architectural barrier-free environment in educational organizations, equipping them with special equipment and vehicles) is implemented within the framework of the state program of the Russian Federation "Accessible Environment".

The number of educational organizations participating in the Accessible Environment Program in 2020 amounted to 10 educational organizations, including 5 preschool and 5 general education organizations.

Based on the results of the implementation of the Accessible Environment Program in 2020:

- the proportion of disabled children aged 1.5 to 7 covered by preschool education out of the total number of disabled children of this age is 100% (planned value - 100%);
- the proportion of disabled children aged 5 to 18 receiving additional education out of the total number of disabled children of this age is 58.7% (planned value - 50%);
- the share of disabled children who have the conditions for receiving high-quality primary, basic and secondary general education out of the total number of school-age disabled children will be 100% (the planned value is 100%).

5.2.3 Ensuring the right to education

The third category of the way Russian inclusive education effect on education of children with disabilities is ensuring the right to education. This example of such work is presented in the report by the Ministry of Education of Moscow Region.

In Moscow Region, measures have been taken to ensure the rights of children with disabilities, children with disabilities, children from large and low-income families during the period of introduction of restrictive measures in the Moscow Region aimed at reducing the risks of the spread of a new coronavirus infection.

Organization of visits to duty groups in educational organizations that implement the main educational programs, including adapted educational programs for children with disabilities, considering their psychophysical development, special educational needs, as well as in obtaining socio-pedagogical and psychological assistance.

Work continued:

- psychological, medical and pedagogical commissions for a comprehensive psychological, medical and pedagogical examination of children in the Moscow Region in the manner established by order of the Minister of Education of the Moscow Region and based on the recommendations of the Ministry of Education of Russia;
- 26 centers of psychological, pedagogical, medical and social assistance in the municipalities of the Moscow region;
- 2242 psychologists, 1174 of them in preschool organizations.

5.2.4 Russia's inclusive education policy effect on education of children with disabilities

Russia's inclusive education policy affects children with disabilities in a number of categories. The first category of presented statistics on education received by children with disabilities. The second category presents creating the "Accessible Environment". And third category is ensuring the right to education of students with disabilities.

The first category presents statistical data on education of children with disabilities. Statistical data shows that there are no students outside the education system. All of the students aged 7-18 are receiving education. The report also emphasizes on the increased percentage of classes with children with disabilities and an increased percent of children with disability taking a state unified exam as their final exam after school.

The second category presents the progress on creating "Accessible Environment". The plan is to provide a barrier-free environment for children with disabilities in

schools. The data shows that there is 100% of students with disabilities of school age receiving high-quality primary, basic and secondary level general education.

The third category addresses the topic from the legal aspect presenting the ways of ensuring the right to receive education for children with disabilities. This is done by the organization of duty groups which are meant to visit children with disabilities and implement educational programs.

5.3 How is Russia's inclusive education policy preparing children with disabilities for digital education?

Russia's education policy particularly emphasizes digital education in chapter 2 Education system. Article 15 provides legal background for using private education institutions and organizations as providers of learning materials. The article is named Network learning and it consists of the following points.

5.3.1 Legal base for network learning

The first category of the question of how Russian inclusive education policy prepares children with disabilities for digital education is legal base for network learning. Russian inclusive education policy first aims to find a legal base for implementing digital education. The examples of the features are below.

The network form of implementation of educational programs provides the opportunity for students to master the educational program and (or) individual subjects, courses, disciplines (modules), practice, other components provided for by educational programs (including various types, levels and (or) directions), using the resources of several organizations engaged in educational activities, including foreign ones, and, if necessary, using the resources of other organizations. In the implementation of educational programs and (or) individual academic subjects, courses, disciplines (modules), practice, other components provided for by educational programs (including various types, levels and (or) directions), using the network form of implementing educational programs along with scientific organizations, medical organizations, cultural organizations, physical culture and sports and other organizations that have the resources necessary to carry out

educational activities under the relevant educational program can also participate with organizations engaged in educational activities.

The use of the network form for the implementation of educational programs is carried out on the basis of an agreement concluded between the organizations specified in part 1 of this article, and which specifies the main characteristics of the educational program implemented using such a form (including the type, level and (or) orientation) (when implementing part of the educational program of a certain level, type and (or) directions, the characteristics of individual subjects, courses, disciplines (modules), practice, other components provided for by educational programs), the issued document or documents on education and (or) qualifications, the document or documents on training, as well as the amount of resources used by each of these organizations, and the distribution of responsibilities between them, the duration of this agreement.

The procedure for organizing and carrying out educational activities in the network form of implementation of educational programs and the approximate form of an agreement on the network form of implementation of educational programs are approved by the federal executive body responsible for the development and implementation of state policy and legal regulation in the field of higher education, together with the federal executive body responsible for the development and implementation of state policy and legal regulation in the field of general education.

The use of the property of state and municipal organizations by organizations engaged in educational activities, the financial support of which is carried out at the expense of the budgetary allocations of the federal budget, the budgets of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and (or) local budgets, in the network form of implementation of educational programs is carried out free of charge, unless otherwise established by the agreement on the network form of implementation of educational programs.

5.3.2 E-learning

The next chapter 16 Implementation of educational programs using e-learning and distance learning technologies underlines the usage of digital materials in educational process. The examples of such usage are below.

E-learning is understood as the organization of educational activities using the information contained in databases and used in the implementation of educational programs and the information technologies, technical means that ensure its processing, as well as information and telecommunication networks that ensure the transmission of the specified information over communication lines, the interaction of students and pedagogical workers. Distance educational technologies are understood as educational technologies implemented mainly with the use of information and telecommunication networks with indirect (at a distance) interaction students and teaching staff. For example, Coursera would be considered an E-learning tool in the context of Russian Inclusive Education policy.

Organizations engaged in educational activities have the right to use e-learning, distance learning technologies in the implementation of educational programs in the manner established by the Government of the Russian Federation.

When implementing educational programs using exclusively e-learning, distance learning technologies in an organization engaged in educational activities, conditions must be created for the functioning of an electronic information and educational environment, including electronic information resources, electronic educational resources, a set of information technologies, telecommunication technologies, appropriate technological means and ensuring the development of educational programs by students in full, regardless of the location of students.

The list of professions and specialties of secondary vocational education, the implementation of educational programs for which is not allowed using exclusively e-learning, distance learning technologies, is approved by the federal executive body responsible for the development and implementation of state policy and legal regulation in the field of general education. The list of specialties and areas of higher education training, the implementation of educational programs for which is not allowed using exclusively e-learning, distance learning technologies, is approved by the federal executive body responsible for the development and implementation of state policy and legal regulation in the field of higher education.

5.3.3 Experience of remote teaching

The final category is experience of remote teaching. Ministry of Education of Moscow Region in their report present the ways of implementing key features of remote teaching and its effects on children with disabilities.

In the Moscow region, the experience of remote work with children of preschool age, including children with disabilities was formed. Sections were created on the official websites of the preschool educational institution, such as “We are sitting at home with benefit”, where, in accordance with the program content and thematic plan, educational and methodological material was placed, Internet marathons (“Playing together”, “Reveal your talent”), quest games, informative video tutorials and creative workshops, as well as entertaining materials in an accessible and understandable form for pupils and parents.

Teachers remotely organized the following types of children's activities:

- didactic, role-playing and educational games;
- reading fiction;
- experimentation and cognitive research activities;
- creative activity in the format of master classes (drawing, modeling, application);
- design and modeling;
- musical development (listening, singing);
- theatrical performances;
- motor activity (morning exercises).

Another form of communication and receiving educational services in a number of educational institutions was the work on the Zoom service. On a weekly basis, the preschool educational institutions websites posted a schedule of classes with scheduled video conferences for each age group, a link to which was sent to parents.

The Zoom service was used not only for conducting developmental classes, but also for organizing online meetings of parents and administration, holding parent meetings in order to resolve issues of concern to all participants in the educational process.

In addition to group classes, specialists from educational organizations (teachers - speech therapists, psychologists) conducted individual remedial classes, which made it possible not to interrupt the educational process and not lose the previously achieved results. Parents received a clear action plan, worked through all the materials together with the child, the children remained included in the educational process.

During the pandemic, the issue of child-parent relationships was acute. Psychologists had the opportunity to answer questions of concern to parents and conduct individual conversations remotely. Specialists carried out educational and consulting work to reduce anxiety, apathy, fears, depression and aggression in children and adults.

Ministry of education also supports teachers working with students with disabilities and educational institutions which are the most inclusive. Over the 2021 Ministry presented six contests in inclusive education. Among others there are All-Russian competition of professional skills "Teacher-defectologist of Russia, The best inclusive school in Russia – 2021, Teacher-defectologist of Russia – 2021.

5.3.4 Key features contributing to preparing children with disabilities for digital education

The first feature presented in the Russian inclusive education policy is forming a legal base. In the legal base there is a definition of digital materials that may be used in the education process of children with disabilities. These are educational program and (or) individual subjects, courses, disciplines (modules), practice, other components provided for by educational programs (including various types, levels and (or) directions), using the resources of several organizations engaged in educational activities, including foreign ones, and, if necessary, using the resources of other organizations.

The second feature that emphasizes the preparing children with disabilities for digital education is E-learning. E-learning is a way of receiving knowledge with a use of digital devices. This type of learning is carried out remotely. This type of education is organized with the help of telecommunication hardware and software and connects students with teachers.

Third feature contains implementation of the e-learning practice in the educational process to children with disabilities. Report emphasizes on the number of educational activities with a gamified education process. The program name is “We are sitting at home with benefit”. Another experience of implementing distant learning was launching Zoom classes. Such classes were not only formed for the development purposes, but also for the remedial purposes as meetings with medical specialists were organized. Zoom was also used to interact with parents.

5.4 In what ways Russian inclusive education policy claims to prepare vulnerable social groups for digital education

I have hypothesized that Russia’s inclusive education policy is not able to prepare vulnerable social groups for digital education. I considered actions taken for vulnerable social groups unsatisfactory. I have based my initial thought based on the report by UNESCO. In the order of the research, I have identified critical points in the policy documents which are the following.

Firstly, Russian education policy constitutes the information about children with disabilities. Therefore, Russian inclusive policy is a part of the general policy about education in Russia. Particularly, in article 42 Psychological-pedagogical, medical, and social assistance to students experiencing difficulties in mastering basic general education programs, development, and social adaptation are discussed. More precisely, points as psychological-pedagogical, medical and social assistance which include psychological and pedagogical counseling for students, their parents (legal representatives) and teachers, correctional-developing and compensatory classes with students, speech therapy assistance to students, a complex of rehabilitation and other medical measures, assistance to students in career guidance, obtaining a profession and social adaptation.

Secondly, article 79 Organization of education for students with disabilities. Therefore, it describes the ways of shaping education processes for children with disabilities correctly. The article consists of such points as the place of studies, conditions for

placing a student with disability in the special education organization, adaptive education programs and other ways of obtaining different levels of education for students with disabilities.

Thirdly, digital education is presented in the article 15 Network learning. The article presents ways of collaboration between the state and private entrepreneurs on creation of web-based digital materials for learning. It also underlines what these materials may be as well as the reason for the usage and ways of regulation.

Fourthly, e-learning is presented in the article 16 Implementation of educational programs using e-learning and distance learning technologies. The article addresses the question of e-learning and the ways of regulating it. It emphasizes the need of creating a proper digital environment for the best possible engagement of students into the learning process.

Fifthly, I have looked at the examples of implementation of the policy regarding children with disabilities and digital education in Moscow region using official sources of the Ministry of education of Moscow region. From the 2021 report I have found that digital programs for children with disabilities already exist and started working during the pandemic of COVID-19. The programs are “We are sitting at home with benefit”, “Playing together”, and “Reveal your talent”. These programs include such activities as didactic, role-playing and educational games, reading fiction, experimentation and cognitive research activities, creative activity in the format of master classes (drawing, modeling, application), design and modeling, musical development (listening, singing), theatrical performances, motor activity (morning exercises). Teachers are using Zoom as their main digital option for the educational purposes. The percentage for students with disabilities aged 1.5 – 7 and 7 – 18 receiving education is 100% in Moscow region. This is the data from the official databases.

Therefore, on the one hand Russian Inclusive policy is covering necessary information of the research. It regulates digital and e-learning education and its collaboration with the state. Most importantly, it resonates with the students with disabilities supporting and assisting them on the way of receiving education. In this case the answer would be that the initial hypothesis was wrong, and Russia’s current inclusive education policy is adequate to satisfy the needs of vulnerable social groups and to meet the ‘demands’ of digital education for today’s world economy. On

the other hand, I have researched the benchmarking region. I may assume that other regions do not show results closely as good as outcomes of Moscow region. Furthermore, the intention of opening private education organizations for children with disabilities has not decreased. The demand for such organizations has only increased. It reflects poor implementation of the policy in each exact situation.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Conclusions

The importance of the topic “Preparing vulnerable social groups for digital education: analysis of Russian inclusive education policies” is not only justifiable by the Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education, but also by the OECD education quality indicators. Education quality indicators that represent inclusive education and digitalization in education for vulnerable societies are also present in the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. For instance, indicators “Percentage of female teachers”, “Percentage of female students in each ISCED level of tertiary education”, “Percentage of private enrolment”, “Out-of-school children primary”, “Dropout rate by grade”, “Gender parity index” refer to the challenge of fulfilling the inclusive education. Indicators that represent the education environment are the following: “Pupil-teacher ratio” and “Percentage of trained teachers” (UIS UNESCO, 2009).

Russian context is presented in the Global Monitoring Report 2021 Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, Inclusion and Education: All Means All. Report draws attention to PISA tests taken in the region in 2018, which shows that students who did not speak the language of test at home did 12% worse than those who did among bottom 20% of socio-economic status index (UNESCO, 21, 2021). While UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) show that 96.3% of female and 95.7 % of male students enrolled in secondary education in Russia in 2018, report presents

public opinion on gender parity in secondary education where only 54% of Russians enjoy it. Russia is also a region which opposes comprehensive sexuality education relying on 'spiritual and moral values' and 'historic and national-culture traditions' with less than 5% of population supporting same-sex marriages (UNESCO, 2021, 23).

Russia has separate schools based on language and ethnicity, youth prison schools, and special needs (UNESCO, 2021, 39). Russian government issued a project for education 2019-2024 which aims at making Russian educational system a top 10 in the world. The main goals are the following: upgrade schools, develop better extra curricula activities, support and educate parents, provide professional and educational development for teachers, reform vocational education by including applied approach in teaching, increase social activity, improve career development, ensure complete digitalization of schools including high-speed internet connection and create digital environment for learning (National Education Project, 2019).

In this research I have particularly addressed the question Is Russia's inclusive education policy effective in preparing vulnerable social groups for digital education? The answer is controversial.

On the one hand, Russian inclusive education policy is complex and corresponds to many up-to-date issues in inclusive education. As the main target group of the research were children with disabilities, which are covered in the policy, it is also important to underline that cultural, social and language barriers that might cause exclusion are also well thought of in the document. Russian inclusive education policy also reflects on the aspects of digital education and any forms of regulating the collaboration between the state and the entrepreneurs who prepare such materials. It represents readiness to satisfy the needs of children with disabilities collectively. Ministry of education of Moscow region reflects on the activities taken into place based on the digital learning of the students with disabilities. Ministry shows great results – 100% in educating children from 1,5 years to 18 years. While UNESCO in their Global Monitoring Report 2021 Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, Inclusion and Education: All Means All claims that Russia has segre-

gated schools based on the special needs. Russia's inclusive education policy confirms that there are special organization, but it also draws attention to the fact that there are more children studying jointly every year.

On the other hand, the region that was chosen for the research is the benchmarking region. Therefore, other regions further from the central area may be implementing the policy worse. Furthermore, the number of private education organizations appearing to assist children with disabilities in receiving knowledge is raising. Consequently, it is evident that governmental organizations that help children receive education might not be suitable for every child.

Russian inclusive education policies were in alignment with the theoretical approaches used in the study as the definition used in the Russian inclusive education policy corresponds to the definition by Grima-Farell, Bain, and McDonagh (2011) and Ferguson (1995) and addresses the feature of inclusion in its connection between special needs and general education.

Creating "Accessible Environment" also corresponds to the Ferguson theory on genuine inclusion. The creation of such learning environment supporting children with disabilities which has proven to be affective based on the data justifies it.

Furthermore, Ferguson (1995) also writes about the adaptive learning curriculum. It also may be found in the Russian inclusive policy. There are also adapted education programs and individual curriculums to support the needs of students.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 For further research

Based on the above-mentioned, I would encourage future researchers on the topic to investigate the implementation of the Russian inclusive education policy in distant regions. Afterwards, compare the data with the up-to-date data from Moscow region. It would also represent the gap between the regions in terms of education.

Furthermore, I would encourage future researchers to look at the state educational institutions for children with disabilities. Are they operating up to federal stand-

ards or not? If so, arrange meetings with directors from the private educational institutions for children with disabilities and ask questions on where the system is lacking. Why do parents choose not to go to the state organizations and approach private education?

6.2.2 For policy reforms/improvements

Based on the current research, Russian inclusive education policy is very well written. It resonates with the issues of the contemporary inclusive education and aims at satisfying the needs of every child. The biggest issue that requires the reform is adequate control and monitoring of the situation with inclusive education in the country as there are parents unwilling to choose state educational organizations for their own children with disabilities.

Besides improved monitoring systems for the implementation of inclusive education standards released in policy documents, training of adequate staff could be an asset for the implementation of the Russian inclusive education policy.

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