

Russia and South Ossetia: Factors Influencing Cooperation in the Field of Education

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Annotation. The article analyzes Russian-South Ossetian cooperation in the field of education, in which great importance is paid to integration and internationalization. Characteristics are given to the official documents that make up the legal framework of this cooperation. The role of ministries and departments in the development of international educational interaction is shown. Various forms of cooperation are considered: scientific projects, the opportunity to enter Russian universities, joint Olympiads, competitions, conferences. The article pays more attention to the role of South Ossetian State University in the development of educational, scientific and social cooperation. The article reveals the role of interuniversity interaction in the development of Russian-South Ossetian cooperation. Non-governmental organizations and their projects play an important role in this process. Russian-South Ossetian cooperation demonstrates a wide range of opportunities and the growing potential for mutually beneficial activities in the field of education.

The article uses the materials of the annual monitoring of the communication regimes of post-Soviet countries. Monitoring is provided by the National Research Institute for the Communications Development (Moscow).

Keywords: Russia, South Ossetia, integration, education, humanitarian cooperation, interuniversity cooperation

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Introduction

In 2023, it was 15 years since the Russian Federation recognized the state independence of the Republic of South Ossetia and established diplomatic relations between the two states. A Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance was signed between the Republic of South Ossetia and the Russian Federation. In addition to the Russian Federation, South Ossetia was recognized by Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nauru, and Syria.

South Ossetia has long-standing allied relations with Russia. Being a part of the Russian Empire since 1774, the Ossetians have established strong Russian-Ossetian relations. Throughout its historical path, Ossetia has remained a loyal ally of Russia. Many South Ossetian experts believe that being part of Russia is a historical choice. At scientific events¹, dedicated to the 250th anniversary of Ossetia's entry into Russia, the transformations that contributed to the integration of the Caucasus region into the all-Russian space and the formation of a national intelligentsia and socio-cultural environment were analyzed.

Currently, the RF and the Republic of South Ossetia have more than 130 interstate, interdepartmental and intergovernmental agreements in various areas of cooperation in accordance with the long-term national interests of both countries.

Modern South Ossetia adheres to the same approaches as Russia in assessing the international situation and actions in international politics. On most foreign policy issues, South Ossetia and Russia demonstrate complete solidarity. South Ossetia is an ally of the Russian Federation in the Northern Military District and helps in the successful implementation of the military operation both with people and by regularly sending humanitarian aid to Donbass. Today, Russian and Ossetian military personnel and volunteers are fighting together on the battlefields of the Northern Military District. This allied support from the leadership and people of South Ossetia was especially noted by the President of the Russian Federation V. Putin.

One of the most important areas of cooperation is the field of education, on which the development of human potential, innovative development and competitiveness of the Republic of South Ossetia depend. Our article presents an analysis of factors influencing educational cooperation between the two countries.

Materials and Methods

In preparing the article, regulatory and legal sources, statistical data from the Office of State Statistics of the Republic of South Ossetia, analytical materials and reports of

¹ The annexation of Abkhazia-Ossetia to Russia: collection of scientific papers of the International Scientific and Practical Conference. On the 250th anniversary of the entry of Ossetia into Russia, Vladikavkaz, October 27-28, 2023. Vladikavkaz: K. L. Khetagurov North Ossetian State University, 2023:360. ISBN 978-5-8336-1086-2. – EDN OBEOLG.

the Government, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of South Ossetia, information materials of the South Ossetian Research Institute named after. Zakharia Vaneeva, South Ossetian State University named after A. A. Tibilova. World Bank reports on the modernization of the higher education system were analyzed.

Publications by South Ossetian and Russian researchers were also analyzed. The conceptual approaches chosen by the authors of the article were compared with approaches to the analysis of unrecognized states (A. G. Bolshakov [3], S. M. Markedonov [16], I. K. Dzhioeva, A. V. Tekhov, S. V. Bekoev [5], M. V. Bratersky, A. S. Skriba, A. I. Sapogova [4], etc.).

Scientific research into cooperation between the Republic of South Ossetia and the Russian Federation in the field of education, although not numerous, is still being conducted (Bukulova [15], M. R. Dzagoeva [7], E. V. Dumina [8], L. P. Ermolenko [20], A. K. Kardanova [9], S. A. Kovalenko [11], Zh. G. Kochieva [15], O. A. Oberemko [11], A. A. Tuaeov [7, 15], K. A. Tskhovrebova [20], O. I. Shafranov [20], etc.). The materials from these studies were used to analyze specific factors (specific to the Republic of South Ossetia) influencing cooperation with the Russian Federation.

In identifying general factors characteristic of most countries of the world, studies in the field of globalization, internationalization, and liberalization of education systems were analyzed. The greatest influence on the author's position was exerted by works that reveal the contradictions of these trends and works arguing the need for the development of national education systems based on the strategic priorities of the country's development (M. V. Boguslavsky [1, 2], A. M. Dzhurinsky [6], P. I. Kasatkin [10], V. V. Komleva [12–14], P. N. Osipov, I. M. Sinagatullin [17], T. M. Tregubova, V. M. Filippov [18]). Foreign studies were also analyzed that consider educational cooperation as a tool of "soft power" by H. de Wit, J. Knight and others [19, 21].

When preparing the article, methods of content analysis of documents and materials of official media, event analysis of cooperation practices, and systematization of materials from previously conducted research were used. A secondary analysis of data from monitoring communication regimes in post-Soviet countries conducted by the Communications Development National Research Institute (NIIRK, Moscow) was carried out.

Results

Analysis and systematization of processes in international cooperation of South Ossetia in the field of higher education allows us to identify two groups of factors that determine its features. Both general factors characteristic of all countries of the world and factors specific to South Ossetia have an influence. General factors include processes associated with globalization; internationalization; liberalization. Private factors are associated with the non-recognition of South Ossetia by most countries of the world; the need to increase human potential, investment in the social sphere; the need for investment

in the national education system; the need to increase the country's scientific potential; preservation of the Russian language as the language of the educational space; the need to educate a generation capable of preserving and reproducing the spirit of patriotism and love for the Motherland, fraternal relations with Russia. Let us take a closer look at both groups of factors.

General factors common to most countries

Globalization. The development of economic globalization has had an impact on the formation of the global labor market, the unification of requirements for the qualifications and competencies of specialists, the unification of standards for a number of economic sectors and industries, and the service sector. As a consequence, universalization and homogenization of education systems emerged (for example, by expanding Western education standards throughout the world, increasing funding for education and science in connection with the needs of the global labor market, which is changing from a technological and economic point of view, etc.). Russia also became involved in these processes. However, at present, in the context of the globalization crisis, regionalization processes are becoming more and more obvious. There is a clustering of educational systems competing with each other. For example, the cluster of the Bologna education system, the Russian system, the American system and others of a general order, characteristic of most countries². Turkey is increasingly promoting its education, especially within the borders of the Turkic world. In 2023, Saudi Arabia introduced a national system for assessing the performance of universities, becoming the sixth Arab country to develop its own university ranking (previously Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Iraq and Jordan did this).

Russia, having one of the most competitive and effective education systems, is actively involved in these processes. Indicators of this inclusion are internationally oriented programs and projects. For example, the priority project "Export of Education" (2017–2025) aims to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of Russian education in the international market of educational services and increase non-resource exports of the Russian Federation. Periodic reforms of the Russian education system³ are determined not only by internal, but also by foreign policy reasons. Reforms of the education system of the Russian Federation were carried out in the 1990s in connection with the collapse of the USSR and new directions in the development of society; in the 2000s after the Russian Federation joined the Bologna Agreement in 2003; currently – after the Russian Federation leaves the Bologna system in 2022. In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation "On some issues of improving the higher education system" dated May 12, 2023, a pilot project will be implemented in the 2023/24 and 2025/26 academic years aimed at changing levels of professional education.

² Komleva V. V. International competition of state policies in the field of higher education. Russia's position. Observer. 2018. №1 (336):69-87.

³ The development of the export of Russian higher education: the main contradictions. Questions of political science. 2020. Vol.10. 6 (58):1899-1907.

Russian approaches to education underlie clustering within the CIS, EAEU, SCO (network universities are developing) and various consortia. South Ossetia is also included in these processes. For example, South Ossetian State University became part of the Greater Caucasus consortium (the agreement was also signed by the North Caucasus Federal University, Abkhaz State University, and the National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia). The entry into this consortium of the University of Armenia, which has not recognized the statehood of South Ossetia, helps to expand the instruments of international contacts of the Republic of South Ossetia.

The education system of South Ossetia is integrated into the Russian one and, accordingly, follows the same changes as the Russian one. However, the pace of these changes is significantly lower than in Russia, based on the insufficient material, technical and personnel potential. In this regard, Russia's investments in the education system of South Ossetia are critical for its renewal and compliance with modern requirements for the quality of personnel training.

Internationalization. The national education systems of almost all countries of the world have been transformed under the influence of internationalization processes. The concept of internationalization was developed within the framework of globalizing education systems to rapidly unify educational standards and graduate competencies. The concept was mainly implemented in the higher education system. Internationalization involves a process of interaction and mutual influence between individual countries, national higher education systems, educational organizations and individuals. The result of this "exchange" is the development of joint educational programs, the implementation of international educational standards and projects, the introduction of a common teaching language, an increase in the proportion of foreign students and teachers, the adaptation of the university environment to interaction with foreign partners, etc. In a unipolar world, internationalization essentially led to "Angloization" and the expansion of the influence of the American and Bologna education systems on other educational systems. After some time, governments realized that internationalization could lead to the loss of the identity of national systems and, along with its advantages, has significant disadvantages. The disadvantages are associated with the loss of control over the competencies developed by graduates, the outflow of talented youth to other countries as a result of the implementation of joint training and exchange programs, and the introduction of ideological narratives into national education systems, sometimes incompatible with the public values and national interests of countries. Concepts of internationalization have begun to be adapted to each specific country context. As a result, we can say that education systems are currently moving from internationalization to "nationalization." Currently, the state policy of most countries, which have their own rich experience in building effective educational systems, is aimed at strengthening education for the priority tasks of the country's development, and not at ensuring the global labor market. Particular attention is paid to branches of knowledge that affect the scientific and technological sovereignty of countries and their international competitiveness. Russia is also following this path.

The influence of these trends on the education system of South Ossetia was minimal due to its weak involvement in international processes (due to the non-recognition of the Republic of South Ossetia by states competing with each other in the international educational space). The consolidation of national priorities and values of the education system is happening together with the Russian Federation. For example, when forming a state order for the training of qualified specialists with higher education, the Republic of South Ossetia is based on the needs in priority areas of development of the republic. The priorities are: economics, agriculture, tourism (especially in connection with the development of the Mamison resort complex). At the same time, the Republic did not avoid the risks of trained specialists not returning to the country.

Liberalization. National education systems have been influenced by the liberalization of higher education. The main idea of liberalization is to introduce market principles and reduce government intervention in education (including government spending on education), develop freedoms for participants in the educational process, introduce the principles of a "knowledge economy" and train people capable of adapting to a market economy. From these positions, international institutions have developed recommendations for Russia. The World Bank's 2005 analytical report, in addition to recommendations, also contains assessments of Russian education, stating that Russia has already achieved significant results in reforming the "successful in many respects, but inflexible, overly centralized and conservative education system inherited from the Soviet Union"⁴.

Trends in the liberalization of the Russian education system have manifested themselves in greater freedom of financial and economic activities of educational institutions; increasing variability (refusal of unification in education, in curricula, most of the content of which began to be determined by universities themselves); development of academic rights and freedoms of students and teachers, independence in choosing foreign and Russian partners. Education was decentralized and government spending was reduced; market principles of competition have been introduced and rules that impede the development of competition in education (in particular, freedom of choice) have been weakened. According to M. V. Boguslavsky "the innovative wave of reforming Russian education during the very controversial 1990s was carried out on an ideological Westernizing-liberal basis, which was dominated by the interpretation of Russian education as an organic part of the global world" [1:9]. Currently, the Russian education system is built on neo-conservative axiological principles. As P. I. Kasatkin notes, it is impossible to exclude the educational process from education and one cannot refuse the educational component associated with the general humanitarian cycle, which provides knowledge about national culture, spiritual and moral life [10]. Currently, Russia is significantly revising the principles of development of the educational system, based on the strategic goals of the country's development.

⁴ Modernization of Russian education: achievements and lessons. Analytical report of the World Bank group of experts. Available from: <https://www.hse.ru/news/1163613/1123251.html>

South Ossetia also did not escape the liberalization of the educational system. In particular, the Law of the Republic of South Ossetia "On Education" 2017 introduced a number of concepts and provisions that correspond to trends in Russian education (freedom of choice, academic rights and freedoms, a combination of state and contractual regulation of relations in the field of education, inadmissibility of limiting or eliminating competition in the field education, etc.)⁵.

The influence of the above factors on the Russian and South Ossetian education systems had contradictory consequences. Along with the negative consequences, it cannot be denied that the processes of liberalization, internationalization, and globalization contributed to the modernization of education in new socio-economic conditions; provided an opportunity to compare the advantages of different educational systems competing at the global level; allowed to realize their competitive advantages and the need to develop educational systems from the point of view of national interests and priorities.

Private factors characteristic of South Ossetia

The integration of the educational system of the Republic of South Ossetia into the educational space of the Russian Federation is due to a number of factors specific to the Republic.

Non-recognition of the statehood of South Ossetia by most countries of the world. Interstate cooperation of the Republic of South Ossetia in the field of education is limited by its status as a partially recognized state. Of the educational systems of countries that have recognized the Republic, only the Russian system is of high quality and competitive, taking into account modern requirements for the training of specialists. The Russian Federation is a major provider of educational services at the international level (the Russian Federation ranks 6th in the world in terms of the number of foreign students). In fact, the education sector of South Ossetia is integrated into the educational space of Russia. Integration processes with Russia are supported by legal acts in the field of science and education – treaties and agreements. Since 2017, an intergovernmental agreement on mutual recognition of education, qualifications and academic degrees of the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia has been in force. For the Republic, cooperation with the Russian Federation not only provides an opportunity to improve the quality of its education, but also to solve more complex problems, first of all, expand international contacts by establishing connections with educational institutions of friendly countries. In essence, an additional tool for promoting the Republic at the international level is emerging. For example, through the university consortium "Greater Caucasus", the Union State of Russia and Belarus, the participation of South Ossetian State University in the work of the Eurasian Association of Universities, the development of cooperation with Russian universities that have many foreign partners.

⁵ The Law of the Republic of South Ossetia "On Education". Adopted by the Parliament of the RSO on January 30, 2017. № 101. Available from: <https://parliamentrso.org/node/1299>

The need to increase the human potential of the Republic and invest in the social sphere. It is about developing opportunities for education and self-development. The development of the Republic depends on the quality of human potential (education, health, activity, creativity, ability to work of the population). Confirmation that adequate conditions for the development of human potential are still insufficient is the high level of migration from South Ossetia, especially among young people⁶. The need to solve these problems determines the fact that the Russian Federation has become involved in the process of training personnel for South Ossetia. Every year, the Government of the Russian Federation allocates quotas for foreign citizens to study at Russian universities, including South Ossetia. In addition, several relevant departments and organizations in South Ossetia form government orders and send citizens to Russian universities to train qualified specialists with higher education. Since 2015, school graduates in South Ossetia with Russian citizenship can take part in the Unified State Exam throughout the Russian Federation. If they pass successfully, then they can count on admission to Russian universities. Cooperation with Russia allows us to solve the most important problem of South Ossetia – the shortage of qualified personnel. During the period from 2003 to 2019, more than 2,000 South Ossetian graduates became students of the best universities in the Russian Federation.

In 2023, direct partnerships and network interactions developed between organizations carrying out educational activities in the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia, including advanced training for teachers, specialists, psychologists and professional retraining of speech therapists, for example, under the program of the North Ossetian Republican Institute for Advanced Training of Education Workers⁷.

The South Ossetian State University named after A. Tibilov, which is the scientific, educational and cultural center of the Republic, plays a major role in the development of human potential in South Ossetia. The University has signed more than 70 cooperation agreements with leading universities of the Russian Federation. These include Lomonosov Moscow State University, Bauman Moscow State Technical University, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia and others. Within the framework of the concluded agreements, experience is exchanged, various events, scientific and practical conferences, and advanced training of university employees are held (at Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, the State Medical Institute, the Institute of Integrated Programs of Higher and Postgraduate Education of Pyatigorsk State University, etc.). The agreements signed with leading universities of Russia make it possible to improve the level of educational, methodological and scientific training of teachers and students of South Ossetia. Every year, a group of university employees undergoes advanced training courses at the Institute of Integrated Programs of Higher and Postgraduate Education of Pyatigorsk State University in various

⁶ Doroshenko S. V., Jabiev V. V. Demographic development of the Republic of South Ossetia: trends, risks, strategic priorities. *Regionalism*. 2023. Vol. 10; 4:29-48.

⁷ Federal Service for Supervision of Education. Available from: <http://obrnadzor.gov.ru/novosti-regionov/respublika-severnaya-osetiya-alaniya-ministerstva-obrazovaniya-i-nauki-severnoj-i-yuzhnoj-osetij-podpisali-memorandum-o-namereniyah>

modules. The university staff actively participates in Russian scientific conferences and publishes in Russian publications.

For the development of human capital, education and, in general, society, the Republic “needs a socio-economic policy of the state, determined by a set of verified methods that contribute to improving the quality of life of the population, since the existing model of economic growth, which is 85% dependent on Russian investment, cannot contribute to the effective growth of the economy of the Republic of South Ossetia”⁸. In this regard, what is needed is not just investments, but consultations on the most optimal models for the country’s development and strengthening of human potential.

The need for investment in the national education system of the Republic of South Ossetia. To develop the education system, we need, at minimum material resources, human resources, modern teaching technologies, textbooks and educational and methodological developments. The state budget of the Republic of South Ossetia provides for an increase in spending on education⁹, however, these funds are not enough. Russia provides assistance in all necessary areas of educational development, including the renovation of premises, the acquisition of modern equipment, the provision of textbooks, advanced training, etc. The creation of socio-economic conditions for the development of education is facilitated by an agreement with the Russian Federation on promoting the implementation of the State Program for Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of South Ossetia for 2022–2025¹⁰.

Russia is also making a great contribution to the digitalization of education and the formation of the basis for the digital economy. With the support of Russia, the Republic of South Ossetia began implementing a large-scale project – the creation of innovative IT projects in South Ossetia (including the development and implementation of a state program for the development of the digital economy). At the same time, some experts note the problem of the lack of high-speed Internet, which hinders this project. “There are only two cities in the region (Tskhinvali and Kvaisa). The remaining populated areas of the country, including small ones, are either villages or ancient villages, mountainous areas, where rural residents do not have the opportunity to use modern communication services. This is where high-speed Internet is required” [8]. At this stage, Russia is the only and major investor in the formations of South Ossetia.

The need to increase the country’s scientific potential. Agreements in the field of science with Russia, Russian scientific organizations and foundations are considered

⁸ Dmitrichenko L. I., Chausovsky A. M., Dzhioeva I. K. The concept of transformation of the economic system of the Republic of South Ossetia: the main directions of implementation. Bulletin of the K. L. Khetagurov North Ossetian State University. 2023;4:152. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.29025/1994-7720-2023-4-149-159>

⁹ Statistical collection for January-September 2023. Republic of South Ossetia:86. Available from: <https://ugostat.ru/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/spravochnik-yanv-sent-2023-novyj.pdf>

¹⁰ Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation dated June 15, 2022 No. 1558-r “On signing an Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia on assistance in the implementation of the State Program for Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of South Ossetia for 2022-2025.

as a guarantor of the development of the scientific potential of South Ossetia. Currently, the only scientific institution in South Ossetia engaged in research activities is the South Ossetian Research Institute named after Zakharia Vaneeva. It was created on the basis of the South Ossetian Scientific and Literary Society established in 1922. The founding day of the “Scientific and Literary Society” (February 1) is the state National Science Day of South Ossetia.

The South Ossetian Research Institute is actively developing cooperation with leading scientific institutions of a similar profile in Russia and a number of other countries. South Ossetian scientists maintain close ties with the North Ossetian Institute for Humanitarian Research. V. I. Abaev, North Ossetian Institute of History and Archeology, Vladikavkaz Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Abkhaz Institute for Humanitarian Research named after. D. Gulia, Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of World Literature named after. Gorky Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Archeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Autonomous University of Barcelona, etc.

Scientists of the Republic take part in Russian scientific events, in particular, in 2023 – in the XV Congress of Anthropologists and Ethnologists of Russia.

The development of the scientific potential of South Ossetia is facilitated by a Cooperation Agreement with the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (2009). Over 15 years, 110 projects were implemented, 80 of them jointly with the Russian fund, 30 on a republican scale. Such cooperation is an effective support for fundamental scientific research, a quick and simple way to implement scientific tasks, creates conditions for the integration of South Ossetian and Russian science, the development of common scientific approaches and interpretations, and an increase in the interest of scientists and scientific organizations. But there is a downside – the “grant” system leads to a gradual reduction in that part of the scientific community that remains outside the system and does not stimulate independent scientific initiatives well. From these positions, along with Russian scientific grants, in the near future it would be advisable to develop a concept for the scientific policy of South Ossetia with the aim of developing the country’s scientific potential, information bases (scientific libraries, archives, museums, etc.), creating conditions for the development and relevance of young scientific personnel, scientific support for management decisions and projects of the Republic.

Thus, the scientific community of South Ossetia is integrated into a single scientific space with the Russian Federation. Russia helped the scientific sphere of South Ossetia to overcome the period of stagnation and begin its revival. To continue this process, it is necessary to determine the foundations of the scientific policy of the Republic, to specify the directions and targets for the development of the scientific sphere.

Preservation of the Russian language as the language of the educational space. The basis for the integration of educational spaces in South Ossetia and the Russian Federation is the Russian language of instruction. According to the national statistical

services of the CIS, the number of schoolteachers of Russian language and literature (in post-Soviet countries) is 83.3 thousand people. The largest share of them falls on South Ossetia, Armenia and Abkhazia. One of the indicators of the quality of school education and knowledge of the Russian language is the increase in the number of students taking part in Russian Olympiads and competitions, in which they achieve good results. Since the entire territory of South Ossetia does not have the same knowledge of the Russian language, in 2023 in the Leningorsky district (where a significant part of the population does not speak Russian) a Center for Open Education in Russian was opened. Residents have access to both entry-level courses and advanced programs designed for those who subsequently want to enroll in a Russian university.

South Ossetian State University became part of the Greater Caucasus consortium, which involves the development of scientific, educational, cultural and humanitarian cooperation in the field of studying and teaching the Russian language in South Ossetia. A decision was made to implement projects to teach Russian literature and language, including with the help of IT technologies.

Scientific publications of South Ossetia are published in Russian, incl. "Russian Word in South Ossetia", contacts are maintained with Russian scientific and educational centers.

One of the significant events in the development of humanitarian ties between South Ossetia and Russia was the opening of the Russian Center in Tskhinvali. The center was created based on South Ossetian State University on the initiative of the rector of the university V. Tedeev with the support of the Russian Embassy in South Ossetia and the representative office of Rossotrudnichestvo. The Russian Center is an international project created by the Russkiy Mir Foundation in collaboration with leading educational and educational structures in different countries. A network of Russian centers is being created to promote the Russian language and popularize Russian culture, disseminate knowledge about Russia. At the center they not only study the Russian language, but also gain access to Russian online libraries, are acquainted with Russian art, Russian films, participate in a variety of cultural events and meetings with interesting people¹¹.

The Republic hosts Days of Slavic Literature and the Russian Language, the international festival "Ossetia – Russia: Common Cultural Heritage", numerous exhibitions and anniversaries of Russian writers and poets, the organization of mass dictations, concerts of famous Russian masters of the performing arts, film festivals, tours of creative groups in the Russian Federation. South Ossetia, at the invitation of the Committee of Press and Mass Communications of North Ossetia, takes part in the book fair in North Ossetia and in Moscow on Red Square; the best works of South Ossetian writers are presented at the stands.

The need to educate the younger generation. The youth of South Ossetia takes an active part in forums held by the Russian Federation: the All-Russian Forum "Russia

¹¹ Rector of South Ossetian State University on cooperation with NGOs and the status of the Russian language. Available from: <https://www.kavkazsky-pozitiv.com/post/ректор-югор-о-сотрудничестве-с-нко-и-статусе-русского-языка/>

is a Country of Opportunities", the All-Russian Youth Educational Forum "Tavrida", the North Caucasus Youth Forum "Mashuk", the Interregional Youth Forum "Native Harbor", the International Youth Educational Forum "Eurasia", All-Russian Forum of Youth Self-Government Bodies "Youth Team of the Country", "International Volunteer Forum", "International Festival-Competition of Russian Culture "Origins", etc. Representatives of the youth of South Ossetia take part in seminars in the following areas: social design, increasing the competence of workers in the field of youth policy, international cooperation, etc. In 2024, 150 people from South Ossetia take part in the World Youth Festival in Sochi.

The talented youth of South Ossetia actively participates in Russian competitions, festivals, scientific and practical conferences: for example, the scientific and practical conference "Kolmogorov Readings", the Shegren International Student Readings, the Zvezda Engineering Olympiad, the international "Caucasian Mathematical Olympiad", the international summer project school "Zond" on the basis of the children's technology park "Kvantorium" in Vladikavkaz (as part of the all-Russian project "Campus of Youth Innovations"), the All-Russian festival "Christmas tree "Cossack Circle". In February 2020, schoolchildren from South Ossetia became prize-winners of the V All-Russian competition in mental arithmetic. 520 talented children from 23 Russian cities took part in the competition in Moscow. 11 children performed from South Ossetia.

At the invitation of the Russian Children's Fund, schoolchildren from South Ossetia visit Moscow and take part in events dedicated to International Children's Day. The "I Want to Believe" Foundation introduces children to Orthodox values shared by the population of South Ossetia. According to established tradition, schoolchildren from South Ossetia are invited to the Kremlin Christmas tree in Moscow.

Positive dynamics are observed in the field of children's recreation; for the third year now, about 100 children from South Ossetia have visited such largest children's centers as "Artek" and "Orlyonok". For the first time, "South Ossetia Day" was organized in "Artek". Schoolchildren from various parts of South Ossetia demonstrated to the audience the cultural achievements of their native land.

The demand for youth communications is high from both South Ossetian and Russian youth. The opportunities that Russia creates for South Ossetian youth are a condition for future fraternal relations and a condition for the development of the human potential of the Republic

Conclusions

Being in a single educational space with the Russian Federation, the South Ossetian education system is undergoing the same changes as the Russian one. Cooperation with Russia provides enormous benefits to the country for inclusion in innovative projects and programs, projects for the development of children and youth and improving the quality of personnel for South Ossetia. The most effective instruments of cooperation are programs and projects developed at the state level, as well as interschool and interuniversity agreements

and contacts. Joint projects with Russia, Russian investments in schools, universities, and science made it possible to overcome post-war stagnation.

At the same time, the Republic of South Ossetia, like Russia, is faced with new challenges for the education system related to the development of new technologies. We are talking about the digitalization of education, the influence of the ChatGPT neural network on school and university education, and the training of personnel for high-tech sectors of the economy. The second group of challenges is associated with cognitive wars, under the influence of which the consciousness, especially of young people, changes, and their behavior becomes radicalized, and their values change.

In this regard, a qualitatively new stage of cooperation between the two countries is predicted, aimed at creating conditions for the technological development of the education system and new models of educational work with youth.

It is advisable to train specialists with a focus on priority sectors of the economy stated in the State Program of Socio-Economic Development for 2022-2025, for example, to create competitive agriculture focused on environmentally friendly products, or the creation of tourism clusters.

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