

APA comparative study

Russia

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About Russia



Russian Federation is a country in Northern Asia with its part west of the Ural mountains included in Europe. Russia is the largest country in the world in terms of area. The total area of Russia is 17,075,200 square kilometers. Russia ranks eighth in the world in population, which is about 143,4 million people (July 2005 estimate). Russia has a low average population density due to its enormous size; population is densest in the European part of Russia, in the Ural Mountains area, and in the south-eastern part of Siberia. The Russian Federation is home to as many as 160 different ethnic groups and indigenous peoples. As of the 2002 census, 79.8% of the population is ethnically Russian, 3.8% Tatar, 2% Ukrainian, 1.2% Bashkir, 1.1% Chuvash, 0.9% Chechen, 0.8% Armenian, and the remaining 10.3% includes those who did not specify their ethnicity as well as (in alphabetical order) Avars, Azerbaijanis, Belarusians, Chinese, Evenks, Georgians, Germans, Ingushes, Inuit, Kalmyks, Karelians, Kazakhs, Koreans, Maris, Mordvins, Nenetses, Ossetians, Poles, Tuvans, Udmurts, Yakuts, and others.

The Russian language is the only official state language, but the individual republics have often made their native language co-official next to Russian. Cyrillic alphabet is the only official script, which means that these languages must be written in Cyrillic in official texts. The Russian Orthodox Church is the dominant Christian religion in the Federation;

other religions include Islam, various Protestant faiths, Judaism, Roman Catholicism and Buddhism.

Russia has borders with: Azerbaijan 284 km, Belarus 959 km, China (southeast) 3,605 km, China (south) 40 km, Estonia 294 km, Finland 1,340 km, Georgia 723 km, Kazakhstan 6,846 km, North Korea 19 km, Latvia 217 km, Lithuania (Kaliningrad Oblast) 227 km, Mongolia 3,485 km, Norway 196 km, Poland (Kaliningrad Oblast) 206 km and Ukraine 1,576 km. Russian Mount El'brus is Europe's tallest peak.

The Russian Federation consists of a great number of different federal subjects, making a total of 89 constituent components. There are 21 republics within the Federation that enjoy a high degree of autonomy on most issues and these correspond to some of Russia's ethnic minorities. The remaining territory consists of 49 oblasts (provinces) and 6 krais (territories), in which are found 10 autonomous okrugs (autonomous districts) and 1 autonomous oblast. Beyond these there are 2 federal cities (Moscow and St. Petersburg). Recently, 7 extensive federal districts (four in Europe, three in Asia) have been added as a new layer between the above subdivisions and the national level.

The Russian Federation is a federal republic with a president, directly elected for a four-year term, who holds considerable executive power. The president, who resides in the Kremlin, nominates the highest state officials, including the prime minister. Russia has a bicameral parliament, that consists of an upper house known as the Federation Council and a lower house known as the State Duma.

The climate in Russia ranges from steppes in the south to humid continental in much of European Russia; subarctic in Siberia to tundra climate in the polar north; winters vary from cool along Black Sea coast to frigid in Siberia; summers vary from warm in the steppes to cool along Arctic coast.

Russia has got wide natural resource base including major deposits of oil, natural gas, coal, and many strategic minerals, timber, though formidable obstacles of climate, terrain, and distance hinder exploitation of natural resources. Russia has a complete range of mining and extractive industries producing coal, oil, gas, chemicals, and metals; all forms of machine building from rolling mills to high-performance aircraft and space vehicles; defense industries including radar, missile production, and advanced electronic

components, shipbuilding; road and rail transportation equipment; communications equipment; agricultural machinery, tractors, and construction equipment; electric power generating and transmitting equipment; medical and scientific instruments; consumer durables, textiles, foodstuffs, handicrafts.

APA in Russia: Introduction

Over the past 10 years the number of disabled persons in Russia has increased by 6 million people and today the Ministry of Labour and Social Development reports 10 million disabled persons living in Russia, over a half of whom are of working age. There are three disability groups in Russia. The proportion of persons who belong to the first and the second disability groups, which means that their impairments prevent them from being able to work, has reached 75 percent. There are over 592,000 disabled children.

Organisation of APA in Russia

Since 1992 Russia has adopted a number of completely new laws for the disabled. One of the key documents, the law "On the social protection of disabled persons in the Russian Federation," entered into force in 1995. The Law focuses on protecting the rights of disabled people in the following major areas: access to information resources, education, decrease of restrictions related to traveling and transportation, access to social infrastructure, housing, employment, development of social organizations for people with disabilities. Under the law disabled persons enjoy medication benefits, reduced entrance fees to cultural institutions, a 50% discount on accommodation and communication services, besides, they are entitled to free medical and health resort treatment and free use of city transport. The Law also gives disabled people and families with a disabled child priority in receiving municipal residences that are equipped in accordance to the needs of people with disabilities. According to the Law, every five years the Government shall adopt a federal-targeted program of social support and rehabilitation of people with disabilities. The program that is currently in force was passed in the year 2000. The program implements provisions of the Law through the resolution of particular problems that shall help to integrate people with disabilities into society. The goal of the program is to rehabilitate and return people to work annually and to increase the quality of their lives by up to 15 percent.

In 1996 corrections and additions were made concerning people with disabilities in Federal laws “On physical education and sports in Russian Federation” and “On education”. According to the latter the government guarantees disabled people the fulfillment of necessary conditions in order to get general and vocational education for free.

The law “On functioning of schools of 1-8 type” was issued in 1997. According to this law persons with special needs have a right to get free general and higher education and free APA-activities in government sponsored organisations.

Today the Russian Government no longer restricts its activity to providing social security for the disabled alone, but aims at ensuring the equality of opportunities and conditions for the disabled to lead a normal life, lifting obstacles for adequate participation of the disabled in the economic and social life of the country.

Training in APA

The specialists in the field of APA are trained in three universities and a few colleges all over Russia. The three universities are: Russian State University of Physical Education, St.Petersburg State Academy of Physical Education and State Medical Institute.

Russian State University of Physical Education and St.Petersburg State Academy of Physical Education offer a 5-year course in APA, rehabilitation or physical education for the disabled. The course includes lectures, research work and teaching practice in different state institutions – hospitals, special schools and sports centers, where the students can learn all the aspects of working with various disability groups. After the course the students may choose to continue their studies to obtain master’s degree in two more years of study or a candidate for doctor degree, available after three more years of study.

Training courses of various duration are also organized all over Russia for physical education teachers wanting to become APA specialists.

Research Structure

Research in the field of APA in Russia is conducted in the three universities that provide training in APA. The research is normally done in cooperation with various Chairs and Faculties related to APA – Chairs of different kinds of sports, of physiology, psychology, and in cooperation with state and private organisations, providing physical

education, rehabilitation, recreation and sports activities for the disabled. The research projects are sponsored by the government.

Physical education

There are eight different types of pre-schools and primary and secondary schools accordingly for children with disabilities in Russia.

I – for deaf children

II – for children with hard hearing

III – for blind children

IV – for children with low vision

V – for children with speech impairments

VI – for children with locomotor impairments

VII – for children with delayed psychic development

VIII – for children with mental retardation

All types of schools are sponsored by the government and most of them are boarding schools. APA is included in the curriculum plus the children can choose to take additional physical education lessons after classes. Children with special needs are also encouraged to participate in various sports events organised by the government or private sponsors. Some of these competitions are held between pupils from ordinary schools and children with disabilities, as for example Moscow streetball cup. However, not all schools pay necessary attention to the participation of their pupils in APA.

Private schools for children with disabilities are few. There are some attempts though to integrate pupils with a handicap in regular schools. Government sponsored regular schools are still unable to accept children with disabilities according to the law. There is no such restriction for private sponsored regular schools and it is possible for them to accept pupils with disabilities.

Recreation

Under the law "On the social protection of disabled persons in the Russian Federation" adults and children with disabilities have a right to receive free health resort treatment once a year. Children with special needs are entitled to a stay at a camp during

summer and winter holidays, where various outdoor activities are organised. For adults different recreational activities are provided in sanatoriums and health centres.

There are also charity organisations that provide recreational activities for persons with disabilities. For example "The Living Thread" organisation offers children and adults with cerebral palsy, oligophrenia, Down syndrome and some other impairments to attend therapeutic riding courses. The "The Living Thread" also organises integral family summer camps of therapeutic riding for invalid children and "normal" children of their age. In 1999 the organisation received a grant from for the development of professional education for persons with disabilities program. It was attended by 110 invalids.

Elite sports

50 sports events for the disabled are held annually in Russia and members of Russian clubs for the disabled take an active part in various international competitions, such as Paralympic Games, Special Olympics, Deaflympics and others.

85 athletes were representing Russia at the Paralympic Games in 2004 in Athens. Russian athletes won 41 medals (16 gold, 8 silver and 17 bronze) taking 11th team position. At 2002 Salt Lake City Games Russia took the 5th place according to the amount of medals in overall performance, even though Russian team only started participating in Winter Paralympics in 1988. The age of Russian athletes four years ago varied from 23 to 53. Now the team is getting younger and the age frames are from 16 to 43.

During the year 2003 Russian disabled athletes won 55 medals (20 gold, 14 silver and 21 bronze) in international competitions in sports that are included in the Paralympic program. 174 athletes from 34 regions of Russia with vision and spine impairments were preparing for competitions as national team members. The Headquarters for preparation for Paralympic Games adopted the plan featuring 52 training sessions, 110 All-Russian competitions and 53 international official competitions. In 2003 Russian disabled athletes took part in competitions in Paralympic sports and 85 of them won the right to participate in the Games.

The year 2003 was declared "Year of disabled" in Russia according to the Decree of President of Russian Federation issued in April 2003. It encouraged different state and social organisations to plan and promote sports events and activities and stimulated further

development of sports programs and competitions for disabled in all of Russia. So a number of large-scale sports competitions for disabled were held in different parts of Russia that year: Parasibiriad in Omsk with 338 athletes competing in 9 kinds of sports; All-Russian Sports Festival in Adler for persons with loco-motor disabilities; All-Russian festival called "Life with sport" in Marij El, where disabled children from different cities took part in swimming and table tennis competitions; All-Russian Open Football President Cup Tournament in Moscow for visually impaired, deaf and intellectually disabled athletes. Other competitions were organised as well in various Russian cities to involve and inspire the greatest possible number of disabled children and adults for regular sports activities at all levels.

Rehabilitation

A network of rehabilitation institutions is being set up within the framework of the program to help restore the lost abilities and provide professional advice to disabled people and their families. As a result of means, taken by Russian Government to increase the number of sports clubs for disabled, it went up from 176 five years ago to 688 at present with 96 thousand persons with functional physical disabilities training there. Over the past two years the number of persons with disabilities going in for sports has doubled. 605 rehabilitation centres and offices are successfully operating, 179 of which are for adults and 426 for children. During the time children and adults spent there most of them improved their physical abilities considerably. And steps are being taken to ensure further increase in the number of sports centres and rehabilitation centres for the disabled in the future.

For the first time in Russia 30 specialized centres for disabled children were set up at cultural institutions to help disabled children develop their creative abilities and learn various crafts. It is believed that even greater results can be achieved if the actions of various ministries, state and social organisations engaged in work with disabled are co-ordinated and closer relations are established between ministries, departments and social organisations developing and controlling the physical education in general and practice of sports for disabled.

Much attention is paid to foundation of sports schools for children with disabilities, where highly qualified specialists develop effective rehabilitation programs for each child individually. Such schools already exist in Moscow, Tula, Saratov, Omsk and other cities.

Adapted employment in the field of APA

Russia is only starting to create a social infrastructure which will provide the disabled with proper rights to ensure their integration into society and possibility to find a job according to their choice. One of the issues which worries social organizations is low demand for disabled people in the labor market and restricted opportunities for acquiring higher education. Only 10% of disabled people have jobs and there are only 2,000 disabled university students. Another 2,000 disabled students per year graduate from vocational and technical schools. In 2000 the "Social support for disabled persons in 2000-2005" federal program was adopted to solve higher education problems of the disabled. Apart from the federal program, legislative acts and target programs were worked out and implemented at the regional level.

Most of the disabled people working in the field of APA, recreation or sport are employed by social organizations, schools and sports centers for people with disabilities. For example the All-Russian Society for the Blind operates 174 companies nationwide employing 90 percent of all the working blind people in the country. The largest organization is the All-Russian Society for the Disabled, which runs 3,000 enterprises employing 32,000 disabled people. Most of these enterprises are small, and their ability to compete on the job market is limited. Adapted employment in the field of APA is also restricted due to existing barriers to an adequate university education for persons with disabilities. Firstly, parents of disabled children have little or no information on how to ensure that their children have access to higher education. Secondly, lack of access to education is closely related to the inaccessibility of school buildings and public transportation. The other problem is that there are only three universities and a few colleges in Russia preparing qualified specialists in the field of APA and they are unavailable for students with locomotor impairments because of lack of special facilities.

Attitude of the people towards persons with disabilities

The attitude of the society in Russia towards persons with disabilities cannot be called very open yet. Much remains to be done to promote the social and political participation of disabled people in their communities. However, during the past years many myths and misconceptions about people with disabilities were shattered in Russia, in part, because disabled people are less isolated and excluded from community activities nowadays than they were before. More projects and programs are launched every year, in which persons with disabilities and ordinary people participate together, and it helps establish mutual understanding and acknowledgement.

Conclusion

During the past 10 years Russian government has been making active steps to ensure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as the other Russian citizens. A considerable progress can be observed in the development of the physical education, rehabilitation and sports for the disabled area. It is believed that in years to come Russia will only increase its participation in the international programs and research trends concerning APA.

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