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**SOPHIA RUSOVA ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS**

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*The article covers the issue of creation the kindergartens in rural areas of Kiev and Voronezh provinces of Tsarist Russia in the late XIX – beginning of the XX century. It describes the first steps in organization of the kindergartens by S. Rusova for rural children after World War I*

**Keywords:** rural preschool education, kindergarten, province, playground, management, teacher, shelters, public

*У статті розглянуто питання створення дитячих садків у сільській місцевості Київської та Воронізької губерній царської Росії в кінці XIX – початку XX століття. Описано вивчення Софією Русовою перших кроків організації дитячих садків для сільських дітей по закінченню Першої світової війни*

**Ключові слова:** сільське дошкільне виховання, дитячий садок, губернія, дитячий майданчик, керівництво, викладач, прихистки, громадськість

**1. Introduction**

The middle of the twentieth century can be characterized by historical and pedagogical research of the origins of public preschool education in the Ukrainian lands and is represented in the scientific works of S. Abromson, A. Zhyvotko, S. Siropolk.

**2. Problem formulation**

The purpose of publishing – to highlight some issues of the first steps of organization of the kindergartens in the rural environment of the Kiev and Voronezh provinces that were part of the Russian Empire in the late XIX - early XX century and has been the subject of study of Ukrainian educator Sophia Rusova.

**3. Literature review**

The state of public preschool education in pre-revolutionary period was covered by G. Larionova, I. Chuvashv. In the first decades of the twentieth century N. Lubenets, S. Rusova worked on attempts of preschool education in the village during the First World War, and S. Shatsky studied pedagogy of rural areas in the revolutionary era and justified the organization of children's life in rural conditions. Researches L. Batlina (1983) [1], N. Bidenko (1987) [2] reveal the dynamics of the development the network of preschool institutions, including rural areas in Soviet Ukraine in 20–80 years of the twentieth century. Studies of S. Nahachewsky (1995) [3], A. Rego (2006) [4] show the process of establishing seasonal institutions of public care education in Ukrainian villages in Eastern Galicia (period 1869-1939) and in Transcarpathia (1836–1918). V. Sergeyeva (1997) [5] investigated the development of the system of preschool education in Dnieper Ukraine in late XIX – early XX century. S. Popychenko (1998) [6] analyzed the experience of a public preschool education in Ukrainian lands in the late XIX – early XX century. T. Golovan (2008) [7] considers the formation of the public preschool education in Crimea in the second half of XIX – early XX century. O. Pshevratska (2002) [8], T. Kulish (2006) [9] and others dedicated the researches to studying the pedagogical principles of kindergartens in the works S. Rusova [10], N. Lubenets [11].

**4. The first kindergartens in rural areas in a study of S. Rusova**

It must be admitted that the fact of spreading the preschool education has not only important cultural value, but also great public importance: the school reform that will meet the needs of people should begin from the preschool level, noted Sophia Rusova in the early XX century [10].

The coeval of S. Rusova – V. Cherednychenko in their work “Shelters for peasant children in the summer”, wrote that the first children bring with them to the peasant's house not only joy but also severe anxiety, tears and grief. “Uneducated young mother don't know how to handle the infant, and he cries mostly all day, tearing the heart of a mother, engaged with economic work. Not surprisingly, that in our region there is the highest infant mortality in the world. As kids grow up a little and grief again comes! Marking feet, falling, welded with boiling water, baked, laming ... And then, after 4–5 years, a child in a warm hour harms outside with other children, fights, quarrels with neighbors because of the children. When there are less than older peasant children have no lumen – nursing little brothers and sisters. The implications of such nursing – damage, injury, illness and frequent guest – death and children who alive, do they have their own life?” [12].

The founder of preschool affairs in Ukraine S. Rusova studying the issues of educational activities of county councils, confidently stated that the county council has created a general public education, both in Ukraine and in Russia, but not all county councils were on a firm ground in this case, fearing that farmers will refuse to work for their masters if they are educated. Knowing well the state of preschool education in Skvirsky county of Kiev province and Valuiskey county of Voronezh province S. Rusova drew public attention to the attempts of the organization of a great cause – rural preschool education in major times for the county – times of World War I, when the need for preschool education for rural kids became increasingly apparent. Though, this issue was hotly discussed on the county meetings. In a report, which was held in the spring of 1915 in Skvirsky county, it was noted that the organization of baby-

shelters everywhere was caused by the circumstances of that time. Hundreds of villages were left without fathers and older sons. Severity of doing all the household troubles layed on women, that's why children's homelessness became natural and the consequences of it was just terrible. The county should send all their material and moral energy to organize such events, which would give shelter to thousands of rural children [10].

Kindergartens in rural areas would become the agents of culture and hygiene, the schools for mothers, they would save a lot of children's, open many children's abilities and bring light and joy for children of rural areas, noted N. Lubenets [11].

Love for children, care of their health, supervision, struggle with mortality, art education, elementary training in craft activities by means of manual labor, preparation for teaching in primary schools, but also educating the rural population prompted the public to show greater attention and vigilance on the organization of rural children's environment.

We will cover the issue of an external organization of kindergartens. As writes S. Rusova in a report of Valuisky county, it is noted the need of drawing the attention to "improvement of student staff" [10]. It was necessary to consider the questions of preschool education not only because of its separate importance, but also cause of its value for training the stuff for school and extracurricular education. It is said in the report that attendants of the kindergartens if they have better developed perception will better learn the school curriculum. Interesting results gave a questionnaire held among the kindergartens of Valuisky county. Answering the question: "what is the difference between children who attend kindergarten and does not?" pupils of 10 primary schools answered: "...the difference is in better development. Pupils do not do tricks during the breaks, but play games and sing songs, interested in books, share their experiences about what they have read. They immediately get used to school order. They have great vocabulary, sufficient supply of ideas, skills to express their views. They can immediately start teaching the reading" [10].

So, Valuisky county organized kindergartens all over the county since 1913 and in one of the big villages named Urazove such institution became regular and were held by a ministerial appropriations of 4,000 rubles. S. Rusova noted that generally Ministry of Public Education reacted with sensitivity to organization of preschool institutions of Valuisky county and in 1915 gave them 8,000 rubles. In addition to regular kindergartens in the 1914–1915 years 5 rural and 3 urban of them were equipped with the playgrounds. At 4 kindergartens worked nurseries. The number of preschool institutions had increased by 1916, so that few thousands of children were under the supervision. But Valuisky county did not stop on this and had a plan to open a set of kindergartens in the 18 villages of the county by 1920 with the help of appropriations of the Ministry of Public Education, which were still randomly given. The task of the county was to organize a proper set of kindergartens which would coincide with the school network. To do all this properly the county made out a plan [10].

Further S. Rusova enumerates the items of that plan:

1) "Kindergarten" is an educational institution for children of both sexes under school age, which aims to help families in the upbringing of children, to prepare them to attend school and ease the transition from family to school.

2) "Kindergarten" submits to the Director of public schools of Voronezh province and obey the rules of private institutions.

3) The course of the "Kindergarten" lasts for 2–3 years. Children of both sexes under 6–9 years are accepted to the kindergarten. The attendance is free of charge.

4) The largest number of children in "Kindergarten" for one tutor's may be 30 people.

5) The program session of the "Kindergarten" included comprehensive development of preschool children by means of manual labor, singing, outdoor games, gymnastics, interviews, stories, walks and various classes outdoors. Manual labor of the "Kindergarten" included modeling with the help of clay, drawing with pencils and paints, cutting and gluing paper figures, building with blocks, embroidery, mosaics, etc.

6) Classes in "Kindergarten" are held every day, except Sundays and public holidays, Christmas and Easter holidays. In order the children of primary school spend the summer time wisely they can be accepted to the "kindergarten" for summer holidays. Classes with such children consist of doing interviews, arranging games and various kinds of manual labor.

7) The county supplies such institutions with all the tutorials and needed materials.

8) The head of the "Kindergarten" and the main teaching staff are selected by the county council of people who have the rank of teachers of primary schools, they are approved by the director of schools of Voronezh province and are represented by the inspector of public schools.

9) "Kindergarten" is located in an apartment that meets the demands of school hygiene and provides spacious area for children's classes (yard or garden).

10) At the end of the school year the head presents a report in the specified form for the management of public schools [10].

To detect the favorable conditions in a particular village to accommodate preschool organizations they held a questionnaire. The natural apartments for them in summer time were schools of the county and parish schools and also some landowners willingly provided their homes and different buildings for this aims. For this case it was allocated 35450 rubles – the insurance capital from Russian nationwide trustees of a maternal and child health and rural assignments [10].

Some details of the inner life of children's institutions. By instructions kindergarten could accept only children aged 3–12 years, but in real it was in a different way. For example, could come a girl of 14 years and brings three children, caring one of them on her hands with a dummy made from soaked bagels, dressed in a rag and ask them all to write down, promising to babysit the smallest baby. Could come a boy of 5 years, holding the

hand of a two-year sister, who always goes after him. So, kindergartens had to accept everyone no matter what age, not paying attention to instructions. [10].

At one of the meetings the workers of preschool education and public education leaders from different counties expressed their opinion on the need for creation day care organizations in villages and adopted the following fundamental basis for their management:

1) Preschool education as general education must be a subject of united actions of rural and urban self-government and various cultural, economic and educational associations.

2) The heads of kindergartens and playgrounds should receive general and specialized education in Frebell's institutes and choose assistants among the teaching staff of primary schools. It was necessary to recognize the organization of short term courses on preschool education. To increase the number of trained personnel is desirable and if possible to have more number of Frebell's institutes and adopt county scholarships for students.

3) Kindergartens as well as playgrounds in villages are the necessary conditions for the proper physical, mental and moral health of children and for better preschool training.

4) The management of rural preschool education should take into account the needs of public life, local language, local habits and forms of industrial labor [10].

Skvyrsky county solved the case a bit differently: first of all it took care about preparing personnel for summer kindergartens. – “Usually, as it is said in the report, – the managers of children's organizations are invited from people, who has graduated from Frebell's institute, though the reporter thinks that it would be better not to invite such specialists. To its opinion, the students of the institute are mostly urban and even good prepared in theory and practice in urban conditions they can become strangers in the village for the first time because it is hard to expect full rapprochement of rural children and their mothers with these, though very committed to pedagogics, ladies. In this case it should be taken into account the local language and customs. It would be much better to introduce local teachers with the organization of kindergartens by “Frebell's” system, cause they are already familiar with all local people and came from the same local rural environment” [10].

It was organized short term courses in children psychology, preschool education and manual labor for teachers. To manage the organization of all the kindergartens and nurseries the county council invited instructors who has finished Frebell's institute and were well trained. As it is seen from the report about the functioning of baby-shelters of Skvyrsky county of 1915 it was scheduled the way to carry out the tasks, make so that children do not grow up homeless and, that children were well fed and received possible education in such a short period of training. Teachers faced the new work with great willingness, courses made a furor and caused their desire to work in the intended direction, to learn although a bit of the necessary knowledge for a new work. Instructors used all their experience and knowledge and at the same time treated with serious attention all the

conditions, among which they had to work. To make the very rural people trust more and be closer to a new case, economic-trust committee consisted of the employees of the organization and local peasants, priest and landlord took care of every “baby-shelter” [10].

The order of the city kindergarten requires furniture adapted to the age of children. However, rural children were not able to use it: lady-teacher could put babies on the low chairs and rejoice how well they sit on them but in a minute she could take a look and see that one child could slid from the chair on the floor and play there with greater convenience, the other fell asleep and fell down – just this “furniture adapted to the age of children” proved unnecessary. Often local intellectuals could not understand completely the most legitimate claims of the instructors of Frebell's institute – so the county doctor flatly refused the request of the instructor to visit and examine the pupils because he did not want to understand what kindergarten she told him about, noted in the article S. Rusova [10].

At the exhibition in Valuiky everyone could see the works which showed that in contradiction to the assumption of Skvira council, “city ladies”, graduates of Frebell's institute have made a big step forward in their own and children's ingenuity and do not use tutorial instructions but the surrounding environment: children grow beautiful vegetables, gather herbs in forests with , cut out great things with chalk great varying from simple imitation of books (a library with volumes of different sizes), squares with the contours of different letters (ABC) and ending with the whole Church in the local style; dolls made from grass, jewelry made from local shells – this all are the features relief from Frebell's scholasticism. Children's works from wood show thoughtful reproduction of the surrounding life – the perfect cart loaded with hay (peasants especially gathered around it and wondered at the accuracy of details, though they were simplified by children) [10].

Template, scholasticism, theoreticity in practice of rural preschool education give the way to nature, life, children's initiative and “wise graduates of Frebell's institutes” from Petrograd, Kyiv, Kharkiv managed to found the desired path for rural preschool education [10].

#### 4. The approbation of research results

So far, we can see that the pre-school education requires many things for its normal establishment:

1) broad social organization and involvement all the layers of the local population;

2) management should be given to scientifically trained people who can work collectively, not according to the topic or stencil, and work freely in accordance with scientific principles and requirements of local life and identity of a child;

3) deep respect not only to personality of students, but also to those peoples, among which pre-school education is imposed with full recognition of their native language, religion, art, festivals, forms of labor;

4) material of “studying”, which is taught in the pre-school institutes should be linked with the school curriculum in a flexible and adapted to local conditions and the nature of life concentric system.

If the organization of preschool education will really develop on such bases, bringing the county to its work, various urban and rural social organization, than in its distribution we can see one of the fruitful effects of our social and cultural life, and it's pioneers – the creators of new forms of life, new ways for the development of all creative forces of each nation. And S. Rusova saw the dawn of a new life the very in this [10].

### 5. Conclusions

So, the historical and pedagogical facts enabled us to conclude that ideas of S. Rusova for the regulation of preschool business do not dependent on time and historical period. Present times require us to overcome stereotypes and excessive regulation of Elementary Education.

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