

# Inequality in Extracurricular Education in Russia

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**Abstract:** The article considers the structure of the inequality of access to extra-curricular education in Russia and factors influencing it. Among the main barriers are the territorial context, urban and rural education, the families' socioeconomic status and cultural capital. It is also showed that the factors of the inequality are also produced with strong spatial (interregional, inter-municipal) differentiation; the sector's peculiarities of regulation and policy. Despite active measures of the state policy in increasing participation coverage of in extracurricular education and activities, the questions of social differentiation's risks remain not solved. Tools for identifying risk categories have not been developed.

**Keywords:** extracurricular education in Russia, extracurricular activities, inequality in extracurricular education

## Introduction

In Russia, in recent years, the growing inequality of educational opportunities is increasingly felt. This problem is not only a question of morality and justice, but also largely a question of the country's economic well-being. Ensuring equal access to education for all children, regardless of the social, economic and cultural level of their families, is one of the key challenges of modern education.

Since the second half of the 20th century, researchers have focused on the causes of significant achievement gaps between different groups of students within the same school, which are due to differences in the social background of students (Coleman et al., 1966).

Extracurricular activities (ECA) for children is usually considered in the context of inequality. Children for low-income families are more likely participate in school-based extracurricular activities. Their peers from middle-income families are more involved in the system outside of school, their choice is not due to a territorial factor (Bennett, Lutz, & Jayaram, 2012). Along with the family's financial situation and the community's social context, there is another focus on the parents' level of education (Ashbourne & Andres, 2015). The higher it is, the child involvement is higher (while the level of education of the mother is more significant from the point of view of child development) (Bartko & Eccles,

2003; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Lareau & Weininger, 2008; Randall & Bohnert, 2009). The ECA potential in overcoming social inequality is considered in the context of its effects on academic performance, school involvement, and school dropout (Eccles, Templeton, 2002), schoolchildren socialization (Eccles & Roeser, 2011), development of social skills (Larson, Hansen, & Walker, 2005; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000; Bohnert, Fredricks, & Randall, 2010; Gilman, Meyers, & Perez, 2004; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003).

The transformation of the sector of extracurricular education (ECE), its relation to socio-economic characteristics of inequality are poorly studied and understood. Meanwhile, these studies have a bilateral value and importance because they allow us to see the important part of inequality and through this focus to better understand the transition processes in post-Soviet countries in the context of children's education and development (Chankseliani, 2017).

In this article, for the first time, we aim to give a comprehensive picture of Russian studies of inequality in the extracurricular education sector, covering the entire structure of providers and directions. We also attempt to systematize data at the national level in order to present the current state of inequality and to generalize conclusions and hypotheses about the conditions and factors of inequality in the extracurricular education sector.

We should mention that "extracurricular" means the topics that are out of school curricular and are not obligatory according to the state educational standards. So extracurricular activities include different content that cannot be taught during the school hours. When we speak about inequality, we mean the inequality of access to services and the coverage (type of the activities: school based and out-of-school; content of the activities and programs: sports, arts, music and etc.) the target groups' involvement. In this article, we will look at the features of inequality at the inter-regional level, within regions depending on the settlement's type, between groups of children depending on the family background - level of education, income, cultural capital.

The article's topic is rather new for Soviet and post-Soviet research agenda. Russian studies of differences in ECE involvement and mechanisms of inequality reproduction are quite new and not numerous areas. The main corpus of Soviet and post-Soviet studies covers the extracurricular education potential for development and socialization, the organization of some ECE forms and methods using pedagogical research methods (Golovanov, 2001; Rozhkov, 2007). Focus to the problem of differences in access arises only in the second decade of the 21st century, it is also conditioned with the use of sociological research methods.

The very appearance of publications testifies to the actualization of the problem both in scientific and practical terms. It is important to mention the growth of research interest confirmed by the body of researches and publications analyzed in this article.

## ECA in Russia: Snapshot

One hundred years ago, the formation of extracurricular education for children (out-of-school education) as part of the state education system in the Soviet Union can be considered as one of the most interesting and (fortunately) successful social experiments of the