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PROJECT «POPULATION CENSUS» FOR POLICULTURAL EDUCATION FIVE
TO EIGHT YEARS OLD CHILDREN

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Annotation. *The article depicts a pedagogical project named «Population Census». The project coincided with the census of Russian Federation in November 2021 and was conducted in kindergartens of Moscow school number 1517. The aim of the project was development and test the methodology for multicultural education of five to eight years old children. Objectives were to teach patriotism and citizenship; to familiarize children with the census in Russia, to outline the awareness of their ethnicity in children; to study the importance of ethnicity in the lives of adults (preschool teachers and parents), to determine the ethnicity of parents and preschool teachers. Project methods included storytelling, conversations, games, children's drawings, and questioning of adults. Researchers used digital technologies for questioning adults, and for project information sharing within parental and pedagogical communities. Educational events conducted for the children, their parents, and preschool teachers were storytelling about the census in Russia, a meeting with a census worker, a discussion about census work, a conversation about the ethnic groups living in the Moscow metropolis, children's play imitating census, children's drawing «I am wearing dress of my ethnic group», selection and coloring of different ethnic costumes templates, questioning for parents and teachers about*

their ethnicity and meanings of it. These events enabled pedagogical works to organize inter-cultural dialog, introduction social norms to children, raising them as citizens of Russia.

Keywords: *multicultural education, intercultural dialogue, citizenship education, kindergarten, ethnicity.*

ПРОЕКТ «ПЕРЕСПИСЬ НАСЕЛЕНИЯ» ПО ПОЛИКУЛЬТУРНОМУ
ОБРАЗОВАНИЮ ДЕТЕЙ ОТ ПЯТИ ДО ВОСЬМИ ЛЕТ

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Аннотация. *В статье описывается педагогический проект «Перепись населения». Проект совпал с переписью населения Российской Федерации в ноябре 2021 года и проводился в детских садах московской школы № 1517. Целью проекта была разработка и апробация методики поликультурного образования детей от пяти до восьми лет. Задачи: воспитание патриотизма и гражданственности; ознакомление детей с переписью населения в России; формирование у детей осознания своей этнической принадлежности; изучение этнической принадлежности родителей и педагогов дошкольного образования. Методы проекта включали рассказывание историй, беседы, игры, детские рисунки и анкетирование взрослых. Исследователи использовали цифровые технологии для анкетирования взрослых и для обмена информацией о проекте в родительских и педагогических сообществах. Образовательные мероприятия, проведенные для детей, их родителей и педагогов дошкольного образования, включали рассказ о переписи населения в России, встречу с переписчиком, обсуждение работы переписчиков, беседу о национальностях, проживающих в московском мегаполисе, сюжетно-ролевую детскую игру,*

детский рисунок «Я в одежде своей национальности», подбор и раскрашивание шаблонов различных национальных костюмов, анкетирование родителей и педагогов об их этнической принадлежности и ее значении. Эти мероприятия позволили организовать межкультурный диалог в педагогической работе, познакомить детей с социальными нормами, воспитывать граждан России.

Ключевые слова: поликультурное образование, межкультурный диалог, гражданское образование, детский сад, этническая принадлежность.

Introduction

The multicultural education of children is essential for successful inter-ethnic interaction in the future. Moreover, multicultural education is the basis of being a prolific human in the diverse world. The first ideas about the diversity of cultures, understanding their place in the multicultural world, the competence of intercultural dialogue appear in preschool age.

An analysis of multicultural education in daycares, preschools, kindergartens in Russia shows a contradiction. On the one hand, the state in regulatory documents speaks about the need for multicultural education of preschoolers. On the other hand, the technology of multicultural education is practically absent. To solve this contradiction, our pedagogical project «Population Census» was created and performed in the Moscow school No. 1517 in November 2021. The pedagogical project was implemented in the course of work on multicultural education of preschoolers together with the Moscow City University.

During the project, preschoolers were asked to know, or learn, about their own ethnic origin, feel a spiritual connection with their ethnic group, learn about their own and other ethnic groups in kindergarten. Before the start of the project, preschoolers were taught how people live in various parts of the world, what traditional clothes they wear, what they like to cook, what their children play, what they like to do and what they dislike.

The purpose of the project is to develop and evaluate a polyculture education program that educates a patriotic citizen, who is ready to constructively interact with representatives of different ethnic groups in the multicultural environment of the

Moscow metropolis, raises awareness of the citizen involvement in social processes in the country. The project involved 217 children, ages from 5 to 8 years old, 433 parents of these children, and 195 preschool teachers.

The project was based on activity approach (Remorenko et al., 2018), scientific provisions in socialization (Davis-Kean and Tang, 2016; Kurtz, 2022; Romanova et al., 2021; Savenkov and Gavrilova, 2020), ideas of multicultural education (Bradley and Green, 2020; Fine and Lee, 2000; Halford and Van De Vijer, 2020; Nagayama, 2020), theories of teaching national culture to young children (Polkovnikova et al., 2021).

Methods

Methods used to meet objectives 1 and 2 included teachers' stories, conversations with children, questions for children, and games. For objective three, researchers used analysis of children's drawings. Google templates-assisted questionnaires were used for objectives 4 and 5. The questionnaires were developed using learnings from our previous pilot study (Lesin et al., 2020). The questioner example is as follows. Overall, the information about the work of the project for the public was posted on the school's website page. Communication with parents and informing them about progress was done using the digital messenger.

Questionnaire for preschool teachers

Dear colleagues! Please answer the questions for the multicultural education project. Thank you in advance for your time.

1. Name your ethnic origin.
2. Is the awareness of your ethnic origin important for you?
3. Does your ethnic origin manifest itself in ordinary life, in work, in personal appearance, in words, in actions?
4. How exactly does your nationality show?

Results

The project had three stages: planning, implementation, conclusions, and discussion.

Planning

1. Conversation with the teachers about the content of the project, discussion of organizational issues.

2. Informing the parents about the project, for example, via the digital messenger in verbal message as follows.

Dear parents! Our school introduces children to cultures of nationalities living in Moscow. Therefore, we would like to ask you and your children about your own roots and their significance. We will be grateful for your support and assistance.

Signed: Administration and teachers.

Implementation

1. Questionnaire for teachers and parents (195 preschool teachers and 433 parents).

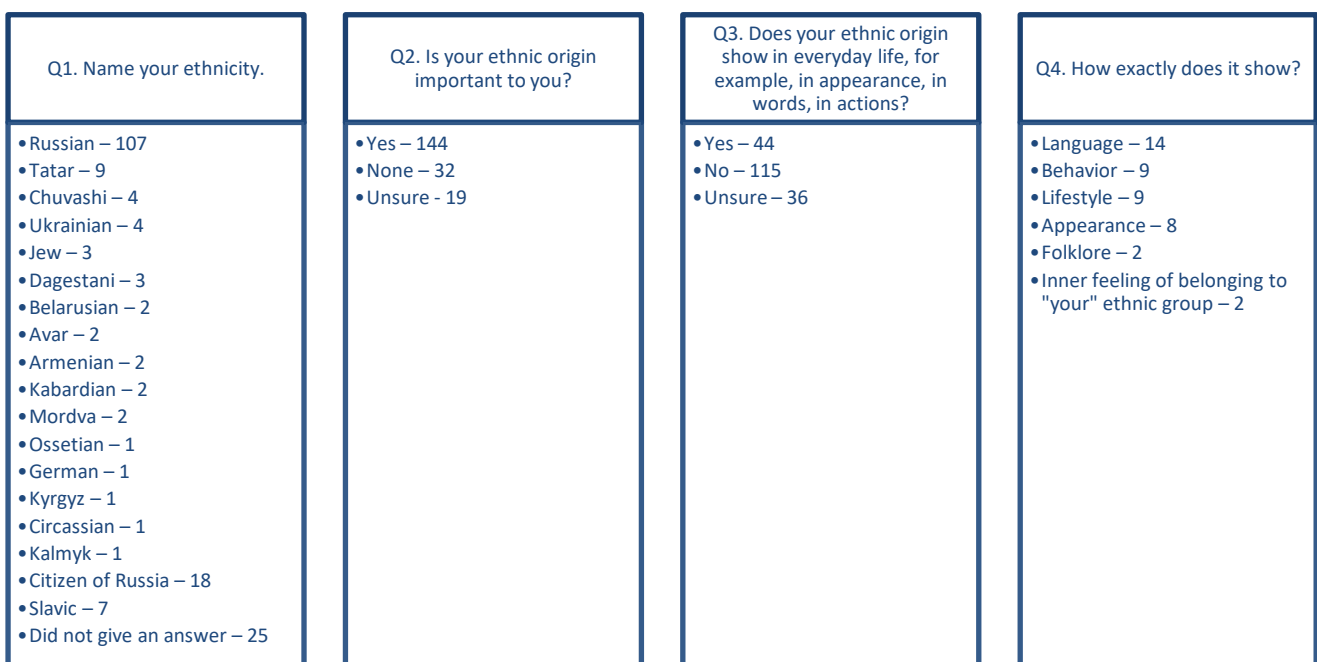


Figure 1 – Quantitative results of teachers survey

Figure 1 shows that the ethnic composition of the teachers was heterogeneous, with the Russians as a majority (more than half of the respondents) and small number of the others. Twenty-five teachers did not answer the question about belonging to an ethnic group.

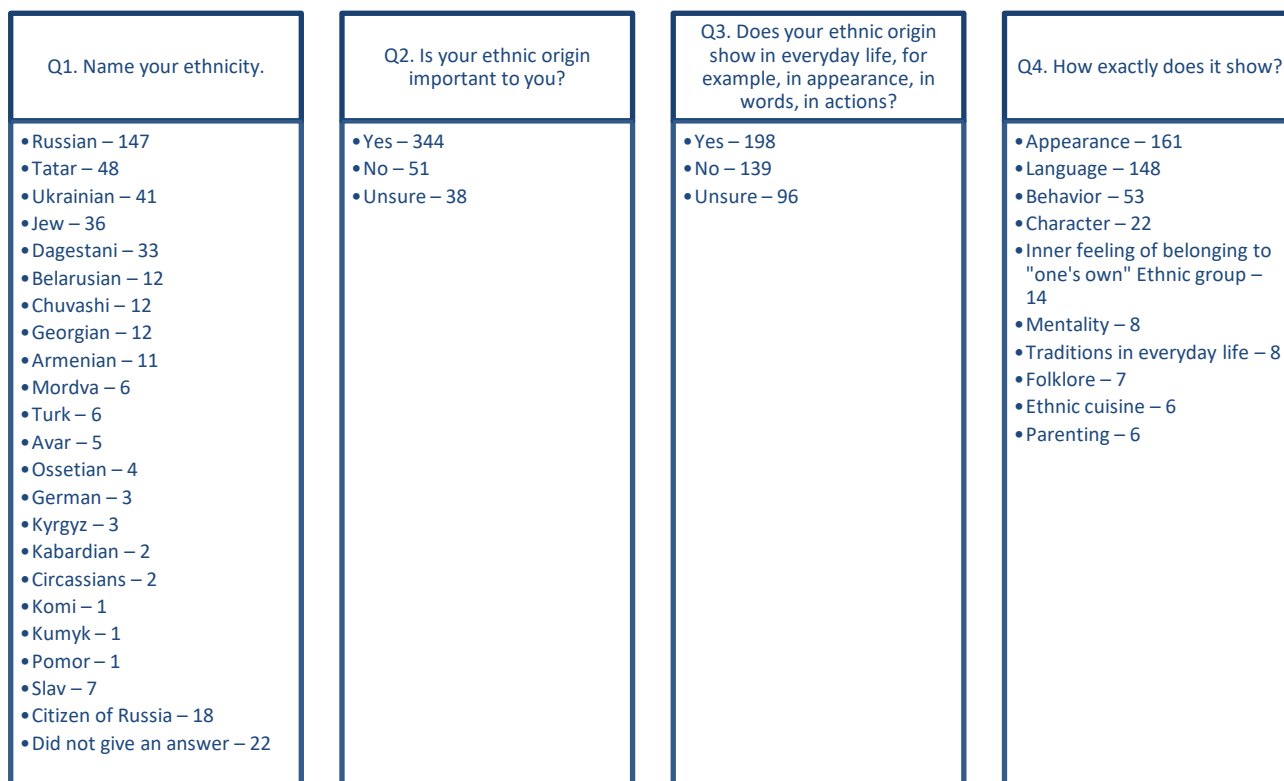


Figure 2 – Quantitative results of parents survey

Figure 2 shows that ethnic diversity was widely represented. More than a quarter of the parents said they were Russian. Eighteen parents identified themselves as citizens of the country. Twenty-two people did not give an answer about their ethnicity.

The adults’ ethnicity data was used in working with children when stories, games, drawing and other pedagogical methods were conducted. For example, when teachers talked about ethnic groups living in Moscow, or when teachers gave templates of the costumes, belonging to different ethnic groups, to the children for coloring.

Question 2 data (Is your ethnic origin important to you?) are presented in Figure 3 as a percentage.

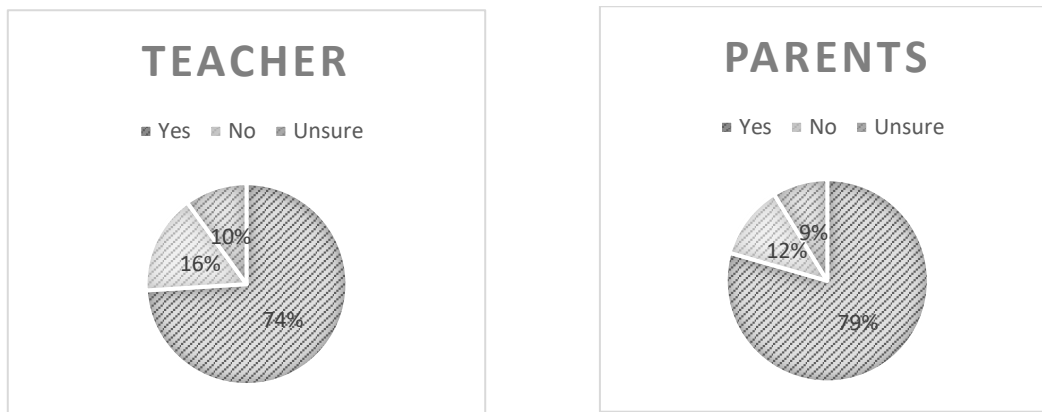


Figure 3 – Parents’ and teachers' responses to Question 2 (Is your ethnic origin important to you?)

Apparently, being aware of one's ethnicity is important for more than 70% of adults.

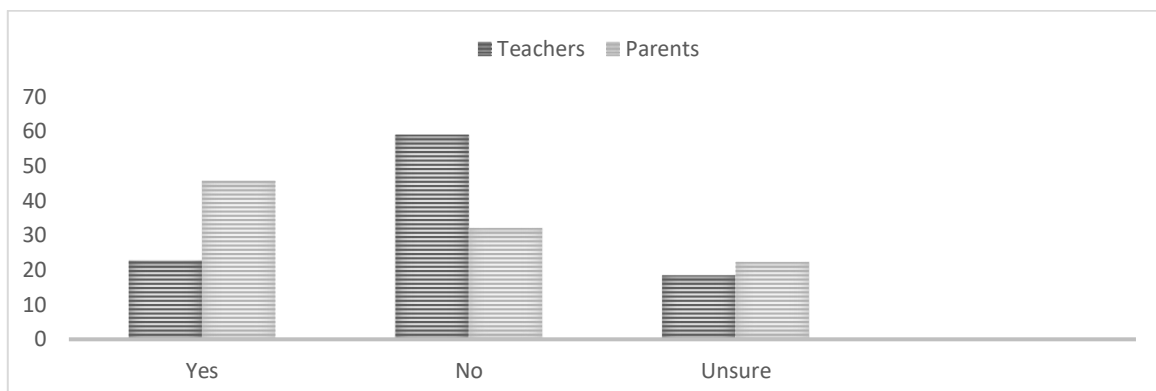


Figure 4 – Parents’ and teachers' responses to Question 3 (Does your ethnic origin show in everyday life, for example, in personal appearance, in words, in actions?)

Obviously, the responses of teachers and parents regarding the manifestation of their ethnicity differ significantly. The fact that their ethnicity is manifested in everyday life, said 22.6% of teachers and twice as many, 45.7% of parents. An equal number of respondents found it difficult to answer this question, 18.5% of teachers and 22.2% of parents.

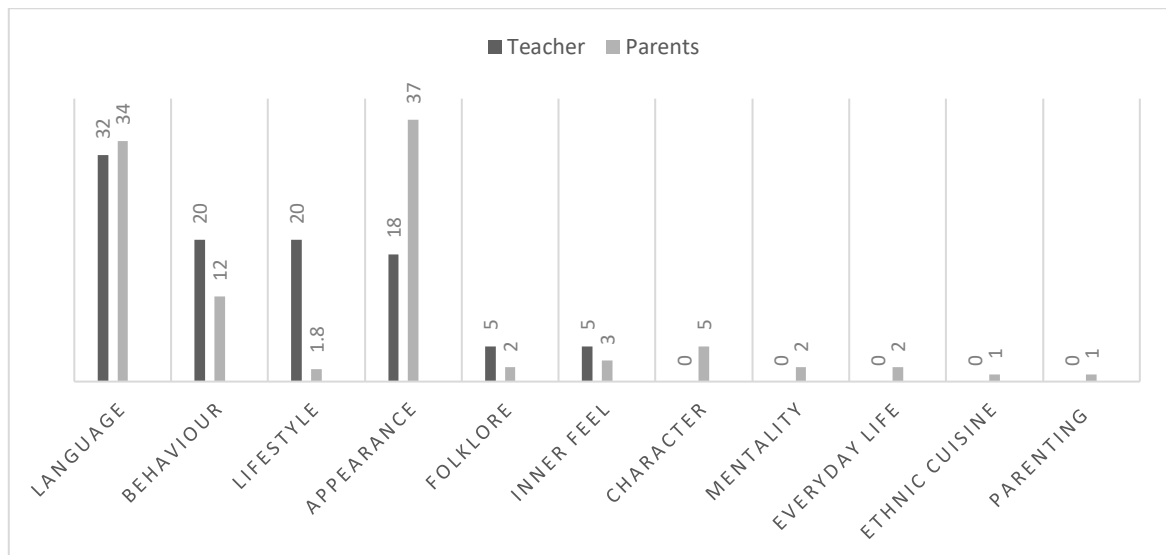


Figure 5 – Parents’ and teachers' responses to Question 4 (How exactly your ethnic origin was showing in everyday life?)

In question 4 did not have multiple choice answer options, answers were written by the respondents. Figure 5 shows that the language was the leading differentiator, equally chosen by each group of respondents (32% for preschool teachers and 34% for parents of preschoolers). Next larger indicator for both parents and teachers were behavior. Similar quantitative data were obtained on the indicator of appearance. The data on the lifestyle indicator was distributed differently. Furthermore, parents named significantly more ethnic origin indicators than teachers. For instance, a small number of parents thought that character, mentality and traditions in everyday life, ethnic cuisine and upbringing of children are necessary attributes.

2. Conversations with children.

The children were asked several questions (e.g., Children, do you know that the All-Russian Population Census is taking place in our country and in our city?). Children were shown the official All-Russian Population Census video. Teachers told the census story. The children then were asked questions (e.g., What is a "census"?).

3. Children met with a teacher who works as a census taker.

The teacher told a story about the work of a census taker, showing census

forms to children, showing the uniform of the census taker.

4. Children's play the game "Population Census".

The game aims to consolidate the knowledge of children about the population census in Russia. A preschool teacher invites children to play Census game. The teacher helps parents and children to make the attributes of census takers, which the children learned about earlier. The teacher asks the children questions about where the census taker comes, how to meet and greet the uniformed official, what questions the official should ask and how the answers should be documented. Then the teacher invites the children to take the attributes of the census taker and play with the peers as a character of the census taker, asking questions, marking answers on a form sheet or in a tablet. Other children could play characters of different family members greeting the census taker and giving the answers.

5. Children's drawings "I am in the dress of my ethnic group".

Drawing lessons asking children to draw yourself in ethnic dress, but necessarily in the dress of their own ethnic group, were conducted in school.

Parents were asked to conduct drawing sessions with their children at home asking children to draw yourself in ethnic dress, but necessarily in the dress of their own ethnic groups.

When ready, teachers discussed the drawings with the children asking targeting questions (for example, who is drawn here? Why are you wearing special clothes? What is your ethnicity?).

6. Conversation with children about the ethnic groups of the Moscow metropolis. Children were asked specific questions and then the teacher tells the stories explaining what ethnic groups live in Moscow.

7. Children were asked to color sketches of ethnic dresses. The equipment used for this task was painted samples and unpainted sketches of women's and men's dresses. The teachers were asked to place the sketches on a table and invite kids to choose a sketch for coloring and coloring pencils suitable for the typical dress color for the dress outlined on the sketch. After the child finished coloring, the teacher asked questions (for example, why did you choose this ethnic costume for coloring).

If a child found a question difficult to answer, the teacher asked other children to help with the answer, then clarifies and supplements the children's answers.

Conclusions and discussion

1. Round table meeting for kindergarten teachers was conducted to finalize and summarize the results of the project. During the round table, the teachers reported the number of participants, forms and methods of work, and the results of a survey of preschool teachers and parents of pupils. They also openly voiced their professional opinions about successes and lessons learned during the pedagogical activities conducted during the project. Participants noted the forms and methods of pedagogical work liked or disliked by children, parents, teachers. Comments and suggestions on the draft of the project report were made. The opinion of all participants in the round table about the project, their own attitude to its organization and implementation, wishes for the future were expressed. A press release for publication on the website and a digital message for the group of parents regarding further release of the project report were drafted.

2. Parents with children and the pedagogical community were informed about the completion of the project and its results by publications on the school's website. A copy of the WhatsApp chat was emailed to the parents. Researchers then collected project feedback from parents and teachers via electronic communications.

Discussion

The project had three stages: start-up, project implementation and reflection. The start-up began with a conversation with preschool teachers about the goals and objectives, content, and technology of the project. Teachers were informed about the work they needed to do. This stage was also used for moral motivation and incentive purposes. The teachers showed interest and readiness for active participation. They were asking questions regarding the reasons why young children should be taught about the census in the country, the role of the parents in the project, and expected results. Pedagogical forms and methods use, and effectiveness, were widely discussed. Games and drawings for children were chosen by the teachers as the most effective, and were confirmed on practice during the project. Games in the census

and drawing ethnic costumes aroused great interest among preschoolers.

The next activity of the start-up stage was to inform parents about the project. The project was supported by most parents. Parents assured that the children knew about the census in the country from television news releases, from conversations between parents and preschool teachers, who work as census officers at the same time. Some parents said that census takers had already come to their homes. Others – that they filled out the census electronic forms on the state portal, and the children saw parents doing census forms and asked questions. Small groups of parents, however, suggested that the children were not interested in the census, or children should not know about it. Such opinions were not further developed to allow further discussions upon completion of the project.

The project implementation phase began with a survey of two groups of respondents: 195 teachers, and 433 parents. Ethnicity issues were the basis of the multicultural education of preschoolers of a modern metropolis. In addition, census workers ask about ethnicity during the census. Therefore, teachers and researchers needed the knowledge of the major ethnic groups to develop knowledge base and educational methodology. Researchers were interested in finding out whether their own ethnicity was important for adult raising and teaching the children how the ethnicity was expressed. With this knowledge, in the future, researchers will be able to identify how ethnicity is transmitted from parents and teachers to children.

Results of questioning show that the sample group had diverse structures. Respondents or the questionnaires were predominantly Russian – more than half of the teachers surveyed and more than a quarter of parents. The ethnic diversity of the sample was represented by Tatars, Chuvashes, Ukrainians, Jews, Dagestanis, Azerbaijanis, Belarusians, Armenians, Georgians, Kabardians, Mordvins, Ossetians, Kyrgyz, Circassians, Komi, Kumyks, Germans, Polish, Pomors and others.

Number of respondents called themselves citizens of Russia. This may indicate that they define themselves not as representatives of an ethnic group, but as members of the Russian nation, or in this way respondents evaded to answer. Furthermore, number respondents did not answer the question regarding their ethnic group. As a

result, based on the collected data, the researchers selected certain ethnic groups for the next children's activities, drawings, storytelling, and discussions.

After interviewing adult respondents, the project implementation part was conducted in collaboration with 5–8 years old preschoolers. A conversation with children showed that most children know about the population census. The conversations helped to expand the knowledge of preschoolers about the current social situation. Children learned that the census is required by the government to take care of the people. The census officers told the children about the questions they were asking people, about their answers. Among the questions that the children themselves would like to ask if they worked as census takers were how many children live in your house, how many boys and girls, what are your children's names, what toys do your children have, what do your children play, do children quarrel or live amicably, what dishes do you cook for your children and others. Preschoolers were active during conversations. They explored census forms, the attributes of census takers, listened to stories and answered questions from adults, and asked questions to preschool teachers. This behavior led to the conclusion that children 5-8 years old show interest in the population census, understand its essence.

During the implementation phase of the project, after the teachers clarified and expanded the children's knowledge of the census in conversations, the children were invited to play the "Population census" game. The game was aimed at deepening the children's knowledge about the population census. At first, teachers, together with children, and with the help of parents, selected objects for the game. In other cases, the children played how the census officers came to the house, asked questions, and wrote down the answers. During the games, the children were asked questions about what ethnic groups they think adhere. Researchers noted that, in the game, the children always answered that they were Russians, even if they, in fact, were members of a different ethnic group. This can be interpreted as the repetitiveness of other children's answers, or as the popular social preferences (Russians are fine, because everyone around them says they are Russian). These responses of children during the games cannot be attributed to the children's ignorance of their ethnicity

because in earlier interviews, children correctly named their ethnicity. Earlier, for example, a preschooler could answer: "I am Georgian, and my father is Georgian, and my brother, and our mother is Russian", "I am Kyrgyz", "I am German, my father is from Germany".

Children's games and children's drawing were conducted at the same time. Drawings on the theme "I am in ethnic costume" exercise was made mainly at home. In the drawings, all the children depicted themselves only in costumes of the ethnic group to which they belonged.

Ethnic costumes templates coloring showed that the children tend to pick image templates for different ethnic groups. Teachers did always ask children why they chose certain images. Preschoolers replied that they chose costumes that they liked better. While the children were coloring, the teacher used the time to teach and tell the story of the ethnic group of the choice.

The results were summarized on the final, or reflection, stage of the project during round table meetings with researchers and teachers. The teachers pointed out that the project was useful for children. Children received new knowledge; their cognitive interests were extended. The project created conditions to continue intercultural dialogue between children and adults in school. It was said that the most successful methods were meeting census officers, and the game "Population census." The teachers noted that the parents showed elevated interest in participation in this project. Computer-based presentations with photographs and videos describing the project were shown to teachers in different schools in Moscow. The organizers of the project proposed to continue working on multicultural education of young children. School teachers agreed and expressed interest in this pedagogical work.

The final stage of the project was documented. The photo report was published on the school's website page and distributed via the parent chats in the digital messenger. The parent and pedagogical community supported the project with excellent reviews and "Like" marks under the digital publication.

Conclusion

The research resulted in the development of novel methods in polycultural

education of 5-8 years old children and evaluating these methods in practice. All objectives were met. The first and second objectives were achieved due to the use of activities on multicultural education of children with the participation of their parents and preschool teachers. This resulted in patriotic and citizenship education, familiarization of preschoolers with the population census in Russia. The use of analysis of children's drawings "I am wearing my ethnic dress" for objective three gave clear understanding that the children comprehend their ethnic origin. The selection of questioners for objectives 4 and 5 allowed to include large sample size.

The results of the survey suggest the importance of ethnicity for most adults raising children. External, direct mechanisms of transmitting ethnicity issues from adults to preschoolers were language, behavior, features of appearance, and the use of folklore; non-obvious, indirect mechanisms were an internal sense of belonging to "their" ethnic group, ethnic character traits, ethnic mentality, household traditions, for example, ethnic cuisine and traditions of raising children. These hypotheses are to be assessed. Pedagogical project "Census" enables our future work to research polycultural education for young children in Moscow metropolis.

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