

# SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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## Institutional Resources to Support and Develop the Institution of Student Family: Regional Dimensions



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**Abstract.** The article continues the set of demographic and sociological studies whose purpose is to analyze the value orientations and institutional resources that influence actors' marital and reproductive behavior. Theoretical basis of the study is represented by a wide range of works of Russian family scientists, demographers, specialists in the field of family sociology. We continue to develop the concept of a prosperous family within the framework of which we define the concept of "student family", substantiate the tools for the research and conduct an empirical study. The main objective of the study is based on the data of a questionnaire survey of students. Moreover, it has to determine the relevance of the social policy implemented by the state and universities in relation to the development and support of the institute of student family (on the example of the Republic of Tyva). Data were obtained characterizing students' ideas about social policy measures in the interests of student families, institutional resources for the support and development of the institute of student family, and students' awareness of social support measures for young people studying in higher educational institutions. That allowed us to draw conclusions about what kind of assistance can be demanded by student families. We received the answer to the question whether students consider it necessary to support those who get married while studying at a higher educational institution. We systematize the data on the main areas of implementation of marital and reproductive behavior of Tyva students. It is revealed that social support measures will be in demand by student families. This should be taken into account when developing and implementing management decisions aimed at stabilizing the demographic situation in the region.

**Key words:** Republic of Tyva, demographic situation, young family, student family, support measures.

### Introduction

Demographic transformations, economic crises, social and political upheavals necessitate the discussion and serve as a catalyst in identifying conditions for the full-fledged implementation of the reproductive potential and welfare of the family in the context of Russia's key national interests, which include ensuring demographic security. Practical significance of the research topic under consideration is determined by the fact that in recent years, as part of elaborating a long-term demographic policy strategy, measures are being sought and implemented to increase birth rate, including through its "rejuvenation", reduce the age of motherhood and increase the reproductive period of young generations. In particular, a one-time cash payment has been approved at the federal level for women bearing their first child at the age of 18–25 inclusive<sup>1</sup>; the measure is aimed at promoting

the birth of a first child. At the same time, Russia, as well as many other countries, is characterized by an increase in the age of motherhood. It should be taken into account that a significant part of women of this age group who make plans for the future are attending a college or university during this period. In 2021, 32.3% of people aged 17–25 were students of higher education institutions<sup>2</sup>. Young age is the period when, on the one hand, a person is developing professionally, which is largely associated with obtaining a quality education that requires time and effort. On the other hand, young age is reproductive age, which is important for marriage and family; it is the time to start a family and make decisions about having children. Strategies for

<sup>1</sup> Provision of a one-time cash payment to women bearing their first child at the age of 18–25. Available at: <https://www.gosuslugi.ru/401316/1/info> (accessed: October 5, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Calculated according to: Population of the Russian Federation by gender and age as of January 1, 2021: Statistics bulletin. Available at: [https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Bul\\_chislen\\_nasel-pv\\_01-01-2021.pdf](https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Bul_chislen_nasel-pv_01-01-2021.pdf) (accessed: October 22, 2022); Social status and standard of living in Russia 2021. Statistics collection. Available at: [https://gks.ru/bgd/regl/b21\\_44/Main.htm](https://gks.ru/bgd/regl/b21_44/Main.htm) (accessed: October 22, 2022).

the implementation of professional career on the one hand and marrying and starting a family on the other hand come into conflict, which is why questions arise regarding which models of family life support and marriage career formation are attractive for Russian students to ensure family well-being.

Unfortunately, Rosstat data do not allow us to get a complete answer to the questions posed and to characterize the prevalence of student families and their situation in Russia. Some conclusions can be drawn when interpreting the following statistics indicators. First, the number of marriages in Russia in 2020 by age of the groom in the cohort under 18 years increased by 6.03%, in the cohorts of 18–24 years and 25–34 years decreased by 19.10% and 20.54%, respectively. Second, the number of marriages by age of the bride for the same period decreased in each of the three selected age groups: under the age of 18, there was an 11.13% decrease; at the age of 18–24 – by 19.35%; at the age of 18 – by 20.60% (Rostovskaya, 2022). We can state that there is a reduction in the number of marriages at younger age.

Of course, the lack of statistical information cannot but affect the prospective estimates regarding the development of the student family, which though being one of the leading institutions of youth socialization and a significant part of young people's lives, is still not given due attention either in statistical analysis or in state and regional policy and support measures. All this requires separate research, preferably in monitoring mode. It is especially relevant to identify regional specifics due to significant regional differentiation of reproductive and marital behavior models in young people and measures to support student families. Assessing the scale and prospects of development of the institution of student family will be incomplete without taking into account the opinions of the youth themselves. Due to the fact that the socio-legal status of the student family is not defined at the federal level, regional legislative authorities take

their own measures to support this type of family. Measures to support the student family in Russia are manifested in the fact that educational institutions themselves are significant subjects of the policy. Thus, the assessments and opinions of students regarding the effectiveness of measures to support student families may vary significantly depending on the region of residence and place of study.

Consequently, in order to identify students' opinions on the relevance of social policy measures in the interests of the student family and form a promising strategy to support the institution of student family, a questionnaire survey was conducted. The work defines the student family as a family in which both spouses are married and are full-time students of higher education institutions (Rostovskaya, Knyaz'kova, 2022). The empirical basis of the article includes the results of the authors' regional study conducted by the staff of the Institute for Demographic Research FCTAS RAS in 2022 on the basis of Tyva State University among bachelor's and master's degree students. The project was implemented using quantitative (selective sociological) research by means of a questionnaire survey of persons aged 18–27.

The object of the research is resources and measures to support student youth and student families. The subject of the research is ideas of students (aged 18 to 27, enrolled in bachelor's and master's programs, receiving in-person training at Tyva State University) about the demand for institutional resources to support and develop the institution of student family. Young people's opinion about possible measures to support the family is very significant in the context of a decrease in the birth rate among young people who receive professional education, including higher education.

In the course of the study, a quota sample was used. Sample size of students (starting from the 2nd year bachelor's programs) from Tyva State University was 133 people (according to official statistics, this comprises 2.6% of students of higher

education institutions in the Republic of Tyva)<sup>3</sup>, the average age of respondents was 25 years (the share of those aged 18–21 years was 15.3%, 22–23 years – 34.3%, 24–25 years – 24.2%, aged over 25 – 26.8%). Among the respondents, 29.2% were men and 70.8% – women. According to the data of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation<sup>4</sup>, there is a preponderance of women in the total amount of students as well. The share of female students in the Republic of Tyva is 62.5%. Sampling error in this case exceeds 5%, we can guarantee the reliability of the results obtained only with a probability of 86.6%.

The sample included intramural students (80.4% – bachelor’s programs, 17.4% – master’s programs, 2.2% – specialty programs), including those who combine professional education and employment (52.1% of respondents are working, another 28.3% are going to get a job in the near future); 21.2% of respondents are already married, another 4.8% live alone, outside the family. The rest of the students live with their parents. Almost all married respondents already have children (18.5%), these are students aged 23 and older. As a result of the study, data were obtained that help to determine which tools for the development of the institution of student family can increase the effectiveness of social policy and fulfill students’ relevant needs. The study will reveal strategic directions for such a policy.

#### **Review of scientific approaches on the research topic**

In American and Western European scientific literature, early marriages have been studied since the mid-twentieth century. Back in the early 20th century, a marriage contracted before the partners

reached the age of 23 fit into the generally accepted norm, but the expansion and consolidation of women’s rights, the sexual revolution and other positive and negative social phenomena naturally led to an increase in divorce rates. In the middle of the 20th century, a pattern was revealed – early marriage increases the likelihood of divorce (Monahan, 1953; Booth, Edwards, 1985, etc.). In order to prevent early marriages and subsequent divorces, the U.S. introduced programs aimed at raising the age of first marriage (Carlson et al., Daire, 2019), which contributed to an increase in the marriageable age. As of 2008, more than a quarter of young women and more than 15% of young men still married before the age of 23 (Uecker, Stokes, 2008). Today, according to sociologists and anthropologists, people tend to get married while studying in educational institutions (Allison, 2023). There are various reasons underlying early marriages in American society: religious norms, social norms, young people’s desire to appear more mature in the eyes of society.

On the other hand, studies conducted in different countries show that young people’s intentions regarding the size of the family and the number of children often change as they gain experience in profession and family life. If respondents postpone having children until the age of thirty, then they are much more likely to decide on having fewer children than they would have intended to have if they had started their “childbearing career” earlier (Liefbroer, 2009). The ongoing changes in the family structure alter the structure of future families as the time goes by and generations change (Hofferth, Goldscheider, 2010).

Russian and foreign scientists consider early marriages in the context of educational strategies, although the term “student family” is not common in English-language literature. Russian sociologists and demographers use the concept of “student family”, defining it as a type of young family that is

<sup>3</sup> Statistical form VPO-1 “Information about an organization engaged in educational activities for educational programs of higher education – bachelor’s programs, specialty programs, master’s programs”, data for 2021. Available at: <https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/action/stat/highed/> (accessed: June 28, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

facing specific conditions, since the spouses fulfill family obligations along with studying at a college or university. However, regardless of practical problems and different methodological guidelines, foreign and Russian scientists agree that the desired model of student family, a family that has entered into an early marriage (in the United States – a Healthy Marriage and a functional family (Hawkins et al., 2013; Rostovskaya, Kuchmaeva, 2015) is in need of state support.

In the study, we proceed from the model of a functional young family developed during the preparation of the concept for state policy on the young family, adopted in 2007<sup>5</sup>. The model of functional young family was conceptualized by representatives of the Russian school of family studies (Klimantova, 2008; Antonov, 2010; Rostovskaya, Kuchmaeva, 2015; etc.) Scientists theoretically substantiated the model of functional family and identified its parameters: demographic (two-parent family, legitimate marriage, children, functional kinship); material (comfortable housing; satisfying the family members' demand for high-quality education, medicine, recreation, etc.); socio-psychological (absence of bad habits and illegal social practices; favorable psychological climate; involved parenthood), and value-based foundation. According to the results of the joint work of Russian scientists and government officials in 2007, the implementation of family policy by the state received a new foundation – the principle of creating conditions for the formation of sustainable family well-being as a factor promoting social and demographic security.

Elaborating the concept of functional family, including student families in its research field, studying the motivation of students to get married

<sup>5</sup> On the concept for state policy regarding young families: Letter AF-163/06 of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia, dated May 8, 2007. Available at: [http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_98438/](http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_98438/) (accessed: September 5, 2022).

and the attitudes implemented in building a model of family life are based on the achievements of Russian research in the 1970s and 1980s. One of them is the work *The Student Family: State, Problems and Prospects* by a team of sociologists, which included V. Baltsevich, S. Burova, A. Vodneva, L. Gorbatenkova, I. Degtyarik, N. Zalygina, Z. Koroleva, I. Levitskaya, N. Mestovsky, S. Sidorenko. The authors highlight several features of the student family, such as homogeneity of the social status of the spouses and its temporal nature, their common moral and ideological views, similar goals, constrained material conditions due to the fact that both of them are studying (Baltsevich et al., 1991). These features are formed due to objective factors affecting the life strategies of student youth, which is reflected in the current demographic situation in Russia – an increase in the age of first childbirth, postponed marriages and births, etc. (Gurko, 2006; Vishnevskii, Yachmeneva, 2018; Kuchmaeva, 2019; Rostovskaya, 2015).

Issues regarding the barriers to and resources for the functioning of student families, students' ideas about a young family, and analysis of the value orientations of student youth are covered in a number of works (Gareeva et al., 2021; Kovalchuk et al., 2018; Monastyrskaya, Tsvetkova, 2021; Uvarova, 2012); finding answers to these questions will help to substantiate promising areas of targeted demographic and family policy. We should also note regional studies on student families (Denisov, 2012; Saraliev et al., 2022, Tatarova, Bochiktueva, 2009). Research findings prove the complexity and heterogeneity of young people's reproductive behavior. The desire to get an education, employment, their value system, etc. – all this affects the creation of a family and its functioning.

Cultural studies of family and marriage relations in student families are divided into studies of students' ideas about ideal marriage and family life, studies on the formation of students' value

orientations to create a family, studies on the correlation between students' desirable ideas and actual value orientations<sup>6</sup> (Rusanova, 2012).

Our work is based on a survey of students of the Republic of Tyva. This Russian region still has a significant birth rate: the total fertility rate in 2020 was 2.97 children per woman of reproductive age<sup>7</sup>. Judging by the census data, marriage rate is quite high in young people of the Republic of Tyva (by the age of 25–29, more than 60% of young men and women are married). However, the demographic situation is complex and ambiguous. National traditions of Tyvans to a certain extent influence the fact that the average family size in the Republic is larger than the all-Russian indicators, although it is decreasing: in 2010, according to the population census, the average family size in the Republic was 3.9 people, in Russia as a whole – 3.1. Families of residents of the Republic had more children in comparison with the general situation in Russia; 70.8% of families in the Republic of Tyva had children under the age of 18 (44.1% in Russia); 42.0% (among those with children) had only one child, 33.3% – two, 24.7% – three or more children (in Russia as a whole, 65.5% had only one child)<sup>8</sup>. However, the average number of children in a family tends to decline. This makes it relevant to analyze the marital and reproductive behavior of young residents.

Studies of the ethno-demographic characteristics and value orientations of Tyva youth, including students (Persidskaya, 2019; Popkov, 2021), show that Tyva students are focused on

<sup>6</sup> Mikhailenko T.M. (2017). Culture of family and marriage relations in the youth (student) environment: Candidate of Sciences (Philosophy) dissertation. Rostov-on-Don

<sup>7</sup> Demographic yearbook of Russia 2021: Statistics collection. Available at: [https://gks.ru/bgd/regl/B21\\_16/Main.htm](https://gks.ru/bgd/regl/B21_16/Main.htm)

<sup>8</sup> Calculated according to the 2010 All-Russian Population Census. Available at: [https://gks.ru/free\\_doc/new\\_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis\\_itogi1612.htm](https://gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm); 2002 All-Russian Population Census. Available at: <http://www.perepis2002.ru/index.html?id=17>

preserving the culture of the peoples of the North and are family-oriented (Anayban, Balakina, 2022). On the other hand, researchers note unfavorable trends related to the increase in the number of postponed marriage registrations and the increase in out-of-wedlock birth rate (Natsak, 2022).

Of interest is how students of the region, which still retains a significant fertility potential, assess the role of social support measures for students and student families in maintaining welfare, balancing family, education and professional career. This will make it possible to determine an optimal strategy for social policy promoting the welfare of student families and preserving the birth rate.

It is necessary to identify strategies for the measures implemented so as to ensure the welfare of student families, determine their significance based on assessments given by young people and members of student families. Finding a solution to this problem requires conducting a wide range of sociological studies in Russia's regions.

### Research results

A detailed analysis of the value system of young people who continue their education goes beyond the scope of the subject field of this article, but the analysis of respondents' answers to some questions aimed at determining the place of family values among value orientations is undoubtedly relevant.

The first place in the rating of respondents' life goals belongs to material ones – good housing (4.97 points on a 5-point scale) and family welfare (4.93 points). The top five goals also include the following: “to be able to spend time with family” (4.87 points, 3rd place), “confidence in the future” (4.73 points, 4th place) and “to have a loved one” (4.71 points, 5th place). The goals such as welfare and the importance of psychological communication relate indirectly to the family. At the same time, the value of a registered marriage is much lower than the significance of “having a loved one” (3.93 points, 24th place). An interesting fact is that the goal of “providing children with a good education” ranks

higher in the rating (4.69 points, 7th place) than just “raising a child” (4.32 points, 18th place). That is, young people think first of all about the future social status and well-being of their child, which depends much on education, rather than the need to simply give birth and raise a child. The value of several children is even lower: having two children ranks 25th (3.86 points), having three children – 34th out of 35 positions (2.59 points). Therefore, when having children, students are guided primarily by psychological motives (against the background of economic and social ones); and in this case, one child is enough to satisfy the desire to have children. The value of a successful career ranks 10th (4.56 points), freedom and independence – 15th (4.44 points), the opportunity to travel – 17th (4.36 points), which is ahead of the values such as registered marriage and having several children.

Only 4.8% of respondents do not want to have their own family. For the vast majority, starting a family is an important step. A separate block of questions in the questionnaire identified students’ ideas about the desired model of family life (Tab. 1). The closer the score value is to 5, the more the respondents agree with this or that statement.

Students mostly have modern views on the organization of family life. They believe that a man should be actively involved in the upbringing of the child, and there is nothing wrong with the fact that a woman earns more than a man in a family. Young people realize that fatherhood is a significant part of a man’s life, “father is an important part in the life of a child; it is difficult for a child to grow up happy without a father”. This proves the need for the father’s participation in the child’s life, even if the parents break up.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents’ answers to the question: “How much do you agree with the following statements concerning family life?”, assessment on a 5-point scale

| Answer options (characterizing marriage and family life)  | Score |
|---|-------|
| Working on family relationships is a must for both spouses  | 4.82  |
| The man should be actively involved in the upbringing of the child  | 4.78  |
| There is nothing wrong with the fact that in a family the woman earns more than the man                           | 4.65  |
| Career and family are equally important in a man’s life and in a woman’s life as well                             | 4.52  |
| It is not shameful at all for a man to take on most of the household chores                                       | 4.48  |
| Not only women should do household chores, men should do them as well   | 4.42  |
| The mother’s responsibility for the welfare of the family should be the same as that of the father                | 4.30  |
| Father is an important part in the life of a child; it is difficult for a child to grow up happy without a father | 4.12  |
| Physical punishment of children is unacceptable even if applied to maintain discipline                            | 3.82  |
| Family can be happy without children  | 3.48  |
| A woman/man must have at least one child  | 3.22  |
| It is good for a family, if the man is its head   | 3.16  |
| Marriage should be registered; cohabitation is not a real family  | 3.00  |
| Marriage is a lifelong bond and should not be dissolved   | 2.82  |
| Creating a family is more important for a woman than for a man  | 2.70  |
| There should be many (three or more) children in a family   | 2.65  |
| If the mother goes to work before the child is 3 years old, this will negatively affect the child                 | 2.20  |
| Taking care of the child is the task of a woman rather than a man   | 2.05  |
| There is nothing wrong with the situation when the husband hits his wife if she deserves it                       | 1.60  |
| Compiled on the basis of own sociological research.   |       |

At the same time, some respondents believe that a family can be happy without children. The lowest number of points (for those characteristics that are not so frequently considered significant) were scored by a negative attitude toward the mother's going to work before the child reaches the age of 3, as well as the statements that "taking care of the child is a task for the woman rather than man" and "there is nothing wrong with the situation when the husband hits his wife if she deserves it" (1.6 points). Much more respondents admit that physical punishment of children is unacceptable even if applied to maintain discipline (3.82 points).

The respondents' answers about the characteristics of a desired family model are supplemented by their answers about the motives (reasons) for starting a family and having a child. First of all, young men and women want to start a family in order to have "a loved one and not to feel lonely" (62.8%) and "home comfort" (58.6%). The desire to have children is important to one third of respondents (35.9%). Economic motives ("material support from the spouse"), as well as the desire to feel like an adult do not play a significant role (16.4% and 12.3% of responses, respectively). The role of traditions is minimized ("this is what my parents (relatives) want", "this is the way the things are done"); they are relevant for no more than 5% of respondents.

The average desired number of children (an answer to the question: "How many children would you like to have if you have all the necessary conditions for this?") turned out to be quite significant – 2.8 children (12% of respondents refused to answer this question, which may indicate that young people have not yet decided, they find it difficult to answer). This value is comparable to the value of the total fertility rate in the Republic of Tyva (2.72 children in 2019, 2.97 children in 2020)<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Demographic yearbook of Russia 2021: Statistics collection. Available at: [https://gks.ru/bgd/regl/B21\\_16/Main.htm](https://gks.ru/bgd/regl/B21_16/Main.htm)

That is, the situation in the Republic is favorable for people to implement their reproductive intentions. At the same time, even at young ages, reproductive attitudes remain quite high. The effectiveness of support measures will determine whether young people will be able to maintain the reproductive potential of the region in the future. The clash of the traditions of having many children with significant difficulties in the life of a young family and the importance of professional success can prevent this.

Statistically significant differences (the test was carried out using the t-test, value 0.916, probability of error  $p \leq 0.02$ ) are observed in the perceptions of the desired number of children for respondents who are married and unmarried (3.3 and 2.7, respectively). This confirms that people who intend to marry earlier have higher reproductive attitudes. The implementation of reproductive intentions is a significant direction of regional demographic policy. Studies show that even a slight increase in the total fertility rate requires significant financial expenditures on the part of the state. Thus, A.H. Gauthier and J. Hatzius (Gauthier, Hatzius, 1997) conducted an econometric analysis of the correlation between family benefits and fertility and found out that an increase in the total fertility rate by 0.07 children requires an increase in the amount of child and family allowances by 25%. Tyva has a significant reproductive potential that requires favorable conditions for its implementation.

Among those who answered the question "would you like to have a child while you are studying at a university?" 16.4% said "yes", 4.8% answered "yes, if I get married". However, the majority of students are not ready for such a step (63.0% said "no", 15.8% found it difficult to answer).

The students' answers indicate that their decision to postpone childbirth for several more years after graduation is primarily influenced by the need to acquire the necessary socio-professional and economic status first, as well as the desire to "live for myself" (Tab. 2).

Table 2. Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: "If you want to postpone childbirth for a few more years after graduation, then why?", % of respondents (answer option: "affects very significantly")

| Answer option  | Proportion of those who chose the option "affects very significantly", % |
|--|--|
| First, it will be necessary to firmly "stand on our feet" financially                      | 76.8   |
| First, we will need to solve the housing issue   | 64.2   |
| It will be necessary to focus much on work and professional activity                       | 63.8   |
| We want to live for ourselves for some time  | 59.5   |
| If we have a small child, we will not be able to afford much of what we would like to have | 51.2   |
| It will be difficult to combine work and child care  | 49.4   |
| I don't think about starting a family life soon after graduation                           | 28.5   |
| Compiled on the basis of own sociological research.  |  |

The majority of respondents believe that it is best to enter into a registered marriage at the age of 25–29 years (68.5% of surveyed men and 63.1% of surveyed women), i.e. after they have gained professional education. Only 6.7% of young men and 16.5% of young women consider it appropriate to marry under the age of 24 that coincides with the period of obtaining professional education.

The formation of an opinion about the desired age of marriage is influenced by ideas about the following mandatory conditions for creating a family: there should be a strong feeling (68.5%); at least one of the partners (52.1%) or both partners (36.5%) should have a stable income; own housing (35.3%); at least one of the partners should complete their professional education before starting a family (31.4%). Parental approval is important only for 22.6% of respondents, and pregnancy as a factor stimulating marriage is noted by only 9.8%.

Due to the fact that the socio-legal status of the student family is not legally established at the federal level, regional legislative authorities independently take measures to support this type of family. The measures implemented are differentiated in terms of scale and quantity in the context of Russian regions. Specific features of the measures to support the student family in Russia are manifested in the fact that educational institutions themselves are important actors in the relevant policy. Higher

education institutions provide various forms of support, ranging from financial assistance, provision of a separate living space within the dormitory, and assistance in finding employment and organizing free time. Informal associations of student families receive support as well. Practice shows that against the background of a very discrete policy at the regional and federal level, educational organizations are one of the most important social institutions that support student families.

However, the survey results indicate that the majority of students are skeptical about the conditions that a higher education institution provides to support family life; 54.6% do not agree with the statement that "studying at the university prepares students for starting a family and getting married", only 12.3% of respondents gave the answer "I completely agree". The situation is somewhat better with the provision of assistance from the university to students who have to combine family responsibilities and studying: 37.4% do not think that "the university provides all the necessary conditions for those students who have a family (married, have children)"; however, 21.1% fully agree that their university has such conditions; 23.4% partially agree with this statement.

Assessing the general atmosphere in the educational institution in the context of orientation toward the formation of not only professional, but also

family career, only 19.5% of respondents fully agree and 25.2% partially agree that their university holds events that develop positive family values and attitudes toward marriage, family, childbirth and parenting.

The most common support measures provided by educational organizations to students include assistance in finding a job, and financial support for students with outstanding academic performance (Tab. 3). Student families, of course, also receive support intended for all students in general. There are, in fact, two specific measures aimed at helping young student families: additional payments for students with children and assistance in child care, the former being much more widespread.

Most often, students use such measures as additional scholarship payments and payments for students living in low-income families. Perhaps it is due to a lack of awareness: 28.5% of respondents found it difficult to answer the question about support measures provided by their university.

Young people’s answers allowed us determine to a certain extent the prospects of the policy in the interests of student families. According to respon-

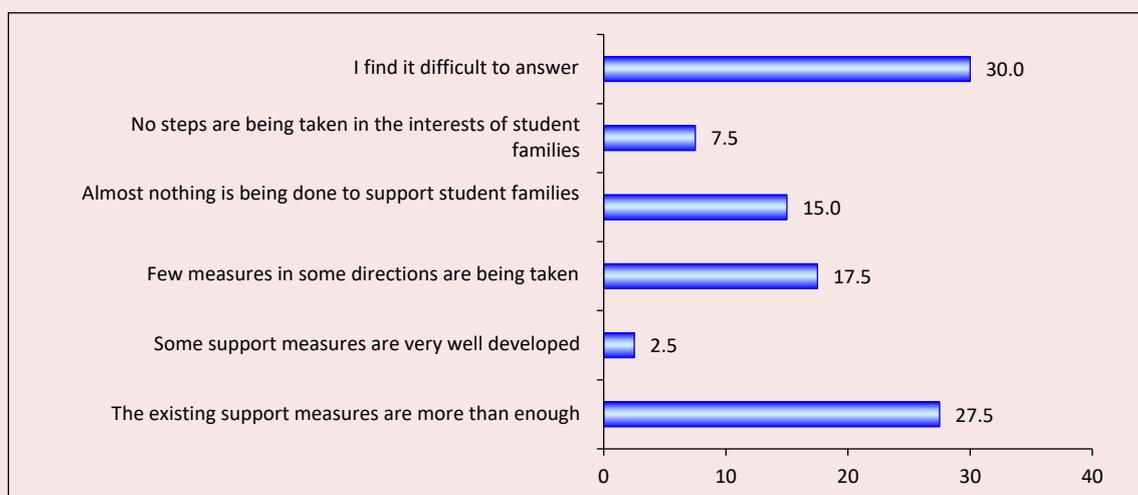
dents, young families need special comprehensive programs (54.1%). Another 2.8% believe that such programs “are needed, but I am not sure that they will help a young family in any way”. Only 9.8% gave a categorical answer that comprehensive programs are not needed. However, it is alarming that about a third of respondents (33.6%) found it difficult to answer the question. This may indicate certain information gaps in the knowledge of student youth about social policy and family support, problems in family life, as well as certain social immaturity. Apparently, some of the respondents have not yet seriously thought about this side of their present or future life.

Thirty percent of respondents found it difficult to answer the question about the current state of affairs regarding the development of the student family support system. Most respondents negatively assess the scale and effectiveness of existing measures; 30.0% assess the existing system of student family support positively, 40.0% do not consider the system complete and differentiated (Figure).

Table 3. Distribution of answers to the question “Are there any student support measures in your educational organization? Do you use them? (please, mark all suitable options for each column)”, % of respondents

| Forms of support  | Are there any student support measures in your educational organization? | Do you use or have you previously used any student support measures in your educational organization? |
|---|--|---|
| Assistance to students in finding employment  | 52.4   | 8.1   |
| Additional scholarship payments for students who have achieved success in academic, scientific, methodological, informational and organizational work | 40.2   | 28.4  |
| Additional payments for students with children  | 38.2   | 7.2   |
| Additional payments for students living in low-income families  | 33.8   | 32.3  |
| Meals at reduced prices for some categories of students   | 31.3   | 12.8  |
| Payment for medical care (medical insurance)  | 20.4   | 6.5   |
| Assistance in finding housing and paying the rent   | 17.3   | 6.5   |
| Assistance in organizing own business, co-working   | 13.0   | 8.7   |
| Assistance in child care for student families   | 10.8   | 6.7   |
| No such measures are provided   | 8.1  | -   |
| I find it difficult to answer   | 28.5   | -   |
| Source: own research findings.  |  |   |

Distribution of answers to the question: “How developed is the student family support system now?”, % of respondents



Compiled on the basis of own sociological research.

Significant obstacles to the development and implementation of measures to support the student family, according to respondents, are “lack of necessary information about the current state and problems of development of the institute of student family”, “unwillingness of the authorities to pay attention to the problems of student families” (4.2 points on a 5-point scale), “attitude of public authorities at various levels toward the effectiveness of such measures”, “poorly developed appropriate legal framework and regulations at the governmental level” (3.9 points), “attitude of teachers and staff of educational organizations toward the institute of student family” (3.7 points). However, such a possible obstacle as “absence of the need for measures according to the students themselves” scored only 2.3 points. Thus, respondents believe that poor elaboration of support measures can be due to a lack of information about real problems that student families have to deal with (which requires attention and monitoring), as well as a lack of attention of various actors of social policy implementation, including university management,

to the development of targeted measures and their expected effectiveness. It is possible to express doubts about the competence of students regarding the strategy and tactics of social and family policy implemented in the region, but this is an assessment of the effectiveness of the measures implemented by the targeted group. Accordingly, we can talk about the existing gaps in the current policy, insufficient effectiveness of the measures being implemented, and shortcomings related to the dissemination of information among the target groups.

A significant support measure provided to all students is assistance in finding employment for graduates of educational institutions. However, this type of assistance is especially relevant for young parents. To a greater extent, students expect state support in the implementation of programs to promote the creation of jobs for young people (34.5%), which provides greater freedom of choice regarding future employment; 24.6% of respondents believe that the state should provide support in finding a job at the request of a graduate. This means expanding the range of advisory services,

Table 4. Assessing the possible impact of family support measures on the probability of having a child in a student family on a 5-point scale

| Additional support measures  | Score |
|--|-------|
| Raise in scholarships (bonus to the scholarship) at the birth of a child for one of the spouses in a student family  | 4.44  |
| Additional increase in state allowances for a child under the age of 1.5 years for one of the spouses in a student family  | 4.38  |
| Assistance from an educational organization in the employment of spouses in a student family with the possibility of working remotely  | 4.30  |
| Assistance to student families in obtaining housing  | 4.25  |
| Provision of training opportunities according to an individual schedule for parents in a student family  | 4.20  |
| Assistance in organizing child care  | 4.15  |
| Expansion of distance education opportunities for parents in a student family  | 4.10  |
| Expansion of distance employment opportunities for parents in a student family (improvement of legislation)  | 4.0   |
| Assistance in organizing family vacations  | 3.85  |
| Provision of additional benefits on loans, including mortgages, for a student family   | 3.70  |
| Note: students answered the following question "Do you think that the probability of having a child in a student family may be slightly higher? If so, which of the possible additional measures to help families may be significant for you and to what extent? (evaluate the significance of each of these activities on a five-point scale, bearing in mind that "1" means that it practically does not matter, "5" – very significant, "0" – I find it difficult to answer). |       |
| Compiled on the basis of own sociological research.  |       |

measures to stimulate employers, development of special programs for employment services; 22.3% of students believe that, first of all, the state should provide graduates with their first job. In fact, the implementation of measures in this direction is close to the graduate placement scheme that was in effect in Russia until the early 1990s.

According to 67.4% of respondents, the implementation of special measures to support student families is very important and significant for changing the demographic situation in the country.

The implementation of measures to help student families may have an impact on the implementation of young people's reproductive plans, which will lead to an increase in the birth rate. Using a 5-point scale to assess the impact of possible additional support for families on the probability of having a child in a student family (*Tab. 4*), the respondents placed an increase in the spouse's scholarship at the birth of a child on the first position (4.44 points) and an increase in the amount of benefits for a child under the age of 1.5 on the second position (4.38 points).

Besides, the respondents believe that an increase in the probability of having a child in a student family will be influenced to a greater extent by financial support, assistance in finding employment and obtaining housing (4 points or more). Young people are concerned about the economic situation of their families in case of having a child. Young parents who continue to spend a significant part of their time on education will not be able to solve many problems if their incomes do not increase.

Assistance in the organization of child care also plays a significant role (4.15 points). "Assistance in organizing family vacations" and "provision of additional benefits on loans, including mortgages, for a student family" are considered the least significant measures, although their score is also very high (about 4 points).

### Conclusion

The reproductive potential of student youth in the Republic of Tyva is quite high. There still exists the influence of ethnic traditions; at the same time, a significant part of young people adheres to modern views on the organization of family life; psychological motives play an important role

in starting a family and having children. Many postpone marriage and childbirth, because they want to graduate and achieve a certain career growth, although the refusal to have children in general is rather an exception. This trend may lead to the fact that the fertility potential, supported by the traditions of having many children, will be exhausted. It is important to take this into account when developing a long-term strategy for targeted demographic policy.

Students are interested in support measures provided by the state to the family, but so far, they are quite skeptical about their effectiveness and about the strategy pursued by universities in relation to student families. From the respondents' point of view, it is necessary to develop special comprehensive programs to support a young family, improve their economic situation, ensure a combination of family and professional career. To a greater extent, student youth pays attention to the need for financial support, especially in the case of having a child. Family and demographic policy measures do not yet allow the existing reproductive intentions to be realized; and in the future, if the interests of young families are not taken into account and its welfare ensured, the birth rate will decrease.

The results of the research indicate certain information gaps in the students' knowledge about social policy and family support, about the problems of family life and ways to solve them, which requires

a serious attitude toward the implementation of an information campaign in the interests of young families. The major task for institutions implementing policies in the field of motherhood, fatherhood and childhood should be to promote the institution of a prosperous young (student) family, in which a married couple is created at a young age and has children. Starting a family at a young age, on the one hand, can stimulate the growth of the birth rate, which is very important in conditions of depopulation; on the other hand, it solves a number of social and psychological problems of a young person and counteracts the spread of loneliness.

It is expedient to conduct a larger-scale study, whose sample volume will reveal the ideas about the desired model of family life of students of various age and ethnic groups, religious denominations, forms of education, differentiated by their economic status. This will help to apply a more substantiated approach to the development of recommendations for the implementation of targeted family and demographic policy. Based on the results of the research, we can conclude that the targeted demographic policy, taking into account the opinions of students about the desired assistance from various social institutions (not only educational organizations) to student families, will allow implementing the reproductive plans of young people in the Republic of Tyva, ensuring the preservation of the region's reproductive potential.

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