

# Understand, Assess, Implement...

In the pages of ECO, we constantly emphasize that human beings are both the goal and the most important “engine” of economic processes. The goal of economic development is the creation of decent living conditions for present and future generations. Without the provision of such conditions, starting from the living environment and up to “passing” their life path by each individual – there isn’t and can’t be either acceptable demographic dynamics (physical reproduction of the population of these or those territories – from municipalities to the country as a whole), or acceptable sedentarization (propensity to live in a certain place for any length of time), or socioeconomic returns (social and economic effects and benefits of a very different nature).

Circumstances of life and realization of human potential (especially in such a spatially diverse country as Russia) are formed in close interconnection and interaction of numerous factors and conditions. For example, the presence of an efficient health care system is the most important condition not only for the preservation of the population, but also for its consolidation in some or other areas.

The development of education and the formation of new workers is of paramount importance. It is senseless to speak about the development of education and formation of new skills and competences in workers in the absence of a realistic economic policy connected with the creation and development of modern types of activity in the territory and the demand for the received knowledge and skills. It is extremely important to take into account the specifics of living in a certain historical and cultural environment.

Alas, if the above circumstances are not taken into account, the skills and knowledge of the working population quickly depreciate, while the growth prospects of human potential are reduced both by replenishing them with young workers from among their fellow citizens and by attracting migrants, even educated and competent ones (paper by Yu. M. Slepikova).

The territories remote from the centers of socio-economic development and/or having unfavorable economic structure in terms of modern priorities face special difficulties in solving the complex problems of retaining motivated population and increasing its contribution to the

development of economy and social sphere. This is due both to the low level of development of “basic” prerequisites (from housing conditions and access to the latest medical services to the possibility of obtaining quality school education), and to weak “complementary” circumstances (lack of cultural centers and, in general – conditions of development of personal potential of a person). These and other factors are clearly demonstrated by the authors of this issue of “ECO” through the examples of the Republic of Buryatia (Y.G. Byuraeva’s paper) and the Republic of Tyva (T.M. Oidup’s paper).

The fact that these problems are not of a predetermined natural and geographical nature, but have developed as a result of changes in the economic structure of the Republic of Buryatia and its place in the system of foreign economic relations is eloquently demonstrated, for example, by the history of Kyakhta, once a prosperous city on the border with Mongolia. As I. I. Popov writes:<sup>1</sup> “Despite the constraints and customs outposts, Kyakhta was getting rich. In the 20–30’s of the last century the citizens of Kyakhta built a huge Gostiny Dvor (Guest House), a fire station, a great cathedral and Italians were commissioned to build it. At that time British missionaries lived in Kyakhta and Selenginsk. They were deported from Russia after the revolution of ‘48. In the 30s the names of the Bitkins, N. M. Igumnov, N. D. Sitnov, V. N. Basnin, N. M. Kandinsky, Molchanovs, etc. had already come forward in Kyakhta. During the same years N. M. Igumnov, who was a petty officer of merchants, persuaded Kyakhtins to build the Circum-Baikal railway at their expense instead of the existing trails. A contemporary of Kyakhtins in the 20–30s. S. I. Cherepanov in his memoirs called them “highly educated people, such as there were no Russian merchants”. This testifies to the potential (but alas, lost in his time) possibility of overcoming the “oppression of distances” in the creation and development of human potential in the outskirts of the Russian Empire.

And the creation of such conditions and their development is a very complex, multidimensional problem. It is not only the construction of schools, hospitals, and the creation of new jobs, but also an ongoing process of “training” for all parties involved – government, business, and local communities. Learning consists in a constant search for and implementation of new mutually acceptable

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<sup>1</sup> I. I. Popov, “The Past and the Experience. Siberia and Emigration. Memories for 50 Years. Leningrad: Kolos Publisher, 1924. 290 p. [P. 20–21].

solutions – each previous step should open a “window of opportunity” and lead to the next step.

For example, the allocation of plots of agricultural or taiga land (not to be confused with “Far Eastern hectare”!!!) should be accompanied by the provision of opportunities for agronomic and forestry assistance and support (in the form of credit, counseling, assistance in marketing products and the formation of cooperative relations). Similarly, the development of, for example, low-rise housing construction, should go hand in hand with the promotion of the production of building products from local natural materials, etc.

The complex of issues is so multidimensional and multifaceted that when justifying and implementing decisions in terms of human development, it is simply impossible to be guided only by macroeconomic trends, despite their importance (see the paper by Yu. M. Slepenskova or a more than simplified picture based on Rosstat data (papers by Yu. Byuraeva and T. M. Oidup).

No one, perhaps, better than Theodore Shanin<sup>2</sup> has said about what the dogmatic view of the development of human potential of rural workers leads to: “The obvious fact that the well-known theories, which try to give a general picture of the development of agriculture in Russia, do not agree well with the real facts may have three reasons: the authors either do not admit the existence of the problem at all, or believe that the natural process was somehow artificially slowed down, or they introduce some new conditions into their analysis”.

The way out of this situation is seen, among other things, in the creation and development of integrated research and consulting agencies and organizations in the territories of Russia. As an example, we can cite the activity of the Amur expedition, the works of which even today amaze with the depth of analysis and balanced approach<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Theodore Shanin. *An Inconvenient Class: Political Sociology of the Peasantry in a Developing Society: Russia, 1910–1925* / T. Shanin; translated from English by A. V. Solovyov; edited by A. M. Nikulin. M.: Publishing house “Delo” RANEP, 2019. 408 p.

<sup>3</sup> I. F. Kryukov. *The Lands of the Amur Railway Area: The Amur Region, Eastern Transbaikalia and the Southern Part of the Yakutsk Region* // *Proceedings of the Amur Expedition Sent by the Imperial Command. Issue 3. S.* – Petersburg: printing house of V. F. Kirshbaum. 1911. 371 p.

Mitinsky A. N. *Materials on the issue of supplying the Far East with Siberian bread and meat. Supplement to the issue 8. S.* – Petersburg: printing house of V. F. Kirshbaum, 1912. 180 p.

*Private property management in the Amurskaya Oblast* // *Proceedings of the Amur Expedition dispatched by the Imperial order. Amur Expedition sent by imperial order. Issue II. Vol. III. St.-Petersburg: Printing house of the Ministry of Finance, 1913. 305 p.*

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In this connection it should be noted that one of the key tasks of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences has always been the monitoring, analysis and evaluation of the processes taking place in the socio-economic sphere of the vast macroregion – from the Urals to the Far East. A significant role in the formation, and promotion of the conclusions and considerations both on the issues of formation and development of human potential of Siberians and Far East residents and on the creation of conditions for its realization was played by the research of the Institute of Economics and Organization of Industrial Production of Siberian Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences.

Thanks to the consistent, progressive research work of the team, which in the most difficult 1990s and 2000s, headed by Professor, Academician of RAS Valery Vladimirovich Kuleshov, the Institute has managed not only to keep, but also to multiply knowledge and understanding of the processes noted above. In particular, in this connection it is impossible not to mention a cycle of monographic works on the problems of development of Siberia's economy and, in particular, social processes on its territory<sup>4</sup>.

Valery Vladimirovich in November celebrates a significant date – 80 years since his birth. During these days the editorial staff expresses words of gratitude, appreciation and respect to our colleague – editor-in-chief of “ECO” in the “stormy” 1990s.

Editor in chief of ‘ECO’



V.A. Kryukov

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<sup>4</sup> Modern role of Siberia's economy in the national economic complex of Russia / Ed. by V. V. Kuleshov. V. Kuleshov – IEIE SB RAS: Novosibirsk, 2014. 326 p.