

## Innovative practices in children's voluntary associations aimed at preparing schoolchildren for professional self-determination

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**Abstract:** This study aims to examine new forms of professional self-determination among youths and to discuss the participation in this work of all social institutions. The authors focus on activities carried out at children's voluntary associations which, in their view, have an important educational potential and as such can be very productive in this field. The objective of this research is to study and to systemize existing and innovative experiences of children's voluntary associations in shaping perceptions about careers among children and teenagers. The article regards this topic in general pedagogic and historical terms. In an effort to comprehend the long-term game method, the authors draw extensively on the pedagogical legacy of Innokenty N. Zhukov, a Russian educator from the 1920s. The article gives a detailed analysis of Zhukov's works on the development of long-term games. The authors use a number of research methods, such as the comparative historical analysis, project development and modelling, to discover how to upgrade the long-term game method in educational practices adopted in present-day voluntary associations. The article provides an in-depth description of the development methodology of long-term games and presents the methodological technique known as "the wheel of deployment of long-term games" and its significance for various career-related projects and quests. The authors present and accurately describe educational games, such as Children's Expeditionary Force and Volgaryata, developed taking into consideration the career choices of children and teenagers. An experimental project was undertaken at the Republic of Young Transbaikalians, a local children's voluntary organization involving over 3,000 schoolchildren, and Volgaryata, the urban voluntary organization of the city of Togliatti involving 100 teenagers. It was proved that long-term career educational games can have a positive impact on young people's professional self-determination and help them focus on careers in high demand on the present-day Russian job market. As a result, the participants in children's voluntary associations improved their ideas about careers in high demand and identified reasons for their future career choices. The development methodology of educational games can enrich activities in use at children's voluntary associations. This article targets heads and employees at education management bodies and voluntary organizations as well as all specialists and citizens interested in developing the children's movement. **Keywords:** professional self-determination, children's voluntary associations, long-term educational game, wheel of deployment of long-term games, personality and activity approach.

## 1. Introduction

Over the past years, professional self-development of young people and its relation to regional job market forecasts have again become relevant in Russia. According to the data provided by the Institute for the Development of Education and confirmed by other sources (such as Russia's Ministry of Health and Social Development and the Center for Labor Market Studies affiliated with the Higher School of Economics), 50% of schoolchildren do not usually relate their career choices to their real opportunities and needs of the job market. 46% of respondents rely on support from adults (parents, relatives and acquaintances); 67% have no idea about the scientific foundations of the career choice, and 44% are unaware about learning possibilities in the world of work [26]. According to academician S. N. Chistyakov, the reasons for this situation are the following:

- ostentatious nature and absence of the state status of career counselling for Russian youths; the episodic nature of its implementation;
- lack of training in career counselling among teachers and other related employees;
- insufficient communication and continuity between the school, parents, the vocational training system, industry, the employment service and other social institutes;
- duplication of functions between various bodies in charge of employment,
- employment security and general responsibility for the younger generation [15].

Russian [1; 2; 25] and foreign [28; 29; 30] psychological and pedagogic literature regards professional self-determination of learners as a process of educating, developing and shaping personal maturity which manifests itself in the independent process of a person's planning his or her own future. The content of professional self-determination comprises awareness about the world of careers and ways of choosing and building a career. Activities of vocational organizations [16; 17] can serve to shape readiness for choosing an occupation while taking into consideration the specific nature of the job market and young people's interests in education and careers. The methodological recommendations [24] of Promoting occupations among schoolchildren, the activity framework of voluntary organizations in this field is represented by three blocks: targeting, regulating and controlling. The tasks of the first block include stimulation and motivation of people participating in related associations and organizations to develop their professional self-determination. The second block aims to improve children's and teenagers' knowledge about employment, careers and the basics of professional self-determination. Thus, young people's problems with career choices come to the attention of educators and become relevant and demanded in terms of implementing educational work with modern children and teenagers.

Our analysis leads us to raise the main issue to be discussed in this study: what are modern approaches and methods for work in children's voluntary organizations which can affect teenagers' professional self-determination and the formation of their readiness for choosing their future occupation.

## 2. Materials and methods

This study aims to examine and to systematize the innovative experience of children's voluntary associations in shaping children's and teenagers' ideas about the world of careers. The study was carried out with financial support from the RF President's grant for the development of civil society provided by the Presidential Grant Foundation.

### 2.1. Objectives of the study

We defined the following objectives of the present study: the study of the historical background and practice of long-term educational games in the work of Innokennty N. Zhukov, a Russian educator from the 1920s, as being a prospective activity in voluntary associations; the development of long-term educational games directed at improving children's and teenagers' perceptions of the world of careers for the purposes of present-day children's associations; and the examination of how children's participation in the activities of children's associations influences their professional self-determination.

### 2.2. Theoretical and empirical methods

The study adopted the following theoretical approaches: comparative historical analysis of the literature and experience in developing long-term educational games; and empirical methods (practical work, modelling and project development).

### 2.3 The Stages of the research

The study was conducted in three stages. At the first stage, theoretical approaches and Zhukov's use of long-term educational games in the historical retrospective were investigated; and the significance of long-term educational games was studied and such games were developed for use in children's associations targeting schoolchildren. At the second stage, practical work involving long-term educational games was developed and tested in the cities of Chita and Togliatti. The third stage included the performance monitoring of work undertaken.

### 2.4 The basis of the research

Practical work took place between 2017 and 2019 at the Republic of Young Transbaikalians, Children's Transbaikal Voluntary Organization, located in the city of Chita, Russia and involving over 3,000 teenagers. Practical work also took place from 2006 to 2019 at Volgoryata, a children's association for elementary schoolchildren, located in the city of Togliatti and with the participation of 12 schools.

### 2.5. Proceedings and description of the experiment

At the first stage, historical and pedagogical literature on the pedagogic experience of Innokenty N. Zhukov was his views, in theory and in practice, on the implementation of long-term educational games in the 1920s in Russia [21].

Zhukov's pedagogical ideas on the development of the children's movement in Russia and its organization were influenced by social transformations that were taking place in Russia at that time and by his own hands-on experience. In studying existing extracurricular activities, Zhukov discovered, in early 20th century teaching practices, some activities for children that he regarded as progressive and entertaining – long-term educational games.

Their significance resided in the fact that they took into consideration the psychological and pedagogical nature of children, met their needs and interests and created for children a meaningful and organized “life, filled with work and active altruism habits and considerably superior, in methodological terms, to the then bureaucratic school” [6].

The biogenesis theory, put forward in the 1870s, served as the scientific foundation for long-term educational games. This theory rejected the social aspect of child development and the leading role of child-rearing in personality development, arguing that individual development (onthogenesis) is a reduced development of humankind (philogenesis). Children, who reproduce the history of humankind in their development, would supposedly have to

experience all these stages. This concept formulated by Ernst Haeckel, was proclaimed the only law. Supporters of the biogenetic theory regarded games as a powerful instinct proper to childhood and the rationale for using long-term games was the need to develop the atavistic instincts among children aged 8 to 12 (hunter and shepherd atavism) and children aged 12 to 16 (medieval atavism manifesting itself in children's interest for all things heroic). Given that children were thought to shift from one stage to another in their development, the task of educators was, naturally, to give them the opportunity to “outlive” these stages [3; 5].

Zhukov considered brilliant this methodological approach to children. Indeed, long-term educational games excited children and organized their lives in a way the then school system was unable to do. Long-term games smoothed the way for the social child-rearing system which created the children's movement and was powerful in its pedagogical impulses. Its emergence opened a new and important page in pedagogics.

In the 1920s, Zhukov promoted - among provincial democratic teachers in Transbaikal – long-term educational games which he regarded, above all, as a pedagogical technique aimed at taking children off the street. Zhukov sought support for his pedagogical conception among community members and parents, he would often publish articles in newspapers and magazines, encouraged adults to support children's associations and help them mature. He thought that “the children's movement is to play a significant role in education and child-rearing. The dominating system of, mostly, forced instruction has to be replaced by the voluntary participation of all children around the world in a common long-term educational and international game played by children from all over the world” [7].

It is in Chita that he accidentally found and developed a game, known as the Expeditionary Force, which brought together children from the city's schools and came to be Russia's first – after scouting – pedagogical experience in implementing long-term educational games in teaching practices [7]. Zhukov examined from different aspects how to develop and implement such games and considered that the term “long-term game” is not fully satisfactory. Games are usually viewed as the opposite of life and work. In long-term games, it becomes synonymous to life, creating an organized and entertaining environment for children without, however, being indolent. Zhukov worked on its framework and, building on the hypothesis that “a long-term game is the deployment of a name and a motto in children's psyche”, he used the visual notion of the “Wheel of deployment of long-term educational games” [6].

In a number of his articles published between 1920 and 1922, Zhukov argues that long-term educational games are the way to be followed to develop children's organizations in Russia.

In these games, the Wheel of Deployment would include the following:

- the game's motto: “Be prepared!”;
- activity areas: (school) knowledge, sanitation, physical education, character building, self-education and state aid;
- forms of work corresponding to the activity areas: work at school, assistance, sport, camps, talks by the fire about heroes, group competitions, club workshops and Republic Help Weeks.

In his articles entitled School and two ways of child-rearing (1917), New foundations for social child-rearing (1921), Long-term games as a basis for child-rearing (1923) and Children's movement and labor school (1924), among others, Zhukov highlighted the importance of long-term games in terms of pedagogics because they enrich the one-sided,

rationalist nature of the contemporary school system, contribute to the formation of young people, develop a strong sense of responsibility for others and altruism. This is why he encouraged teachers to try educational experiments and raise awareness of long-term educational games [22]. Zhukov based his ideas on the experiences of Scouting.

The early 20th century theoretical pedagogical message became relevant in the early 21st century due to the present-day development of the children's social movement. Work practices of children's organizations in Transbaikal and in the city of Togliatti updated Zhukov's ideas on long-term games. A group of researchers from the Transbaikal State University and the Togliatti State Universities as well as heads of the voluntary organizations - *Republic of Young Zabaikalians* and *Volgaryata* - developed and tested long-term educational games [23] for a number of years. Let us address this experience in more detail.

*Volgaryata*, a learning association for elementary schoolchildren [20], has been carrying out its educational activities in the city of Togliatti since 2003. The association brings together over 1,000 elementary schoolchildren from 12 schools. Long-term games, developed with regard to past teaching experiences and Zhukov's pedagogical ideas, provided the methodological framework for the program of activities. The games' motto is We study. We preserve. We act. This motto is also present in *Volgaryata's* activity areas and forms of work.

At the core of the program are research activities centered around the region's memorable dates related to the activity of local enterprises such as the Zhiguli Hydroelectric Station (55th anniversary of its entry into service) and Togliattikhleb OAO. Elementary school children spend a year conducting research on a suggested topic: they look for information in city or school museums, family archives, on the Internet or during meetings with people working in relevant enterprises. Next, children analyze the information obtained, work on it and, finally, submit their projects to Our Togliatti: My Small Fatherland, a competition for participants in the research expedition. They present the results of their research work as creative reports, research papers or presentations. While carrying out their research, children get familiar with different occupations that are in high demand at enterprises and learn how they themselves can contribute to the region's development.

At the end of each school year, all *Volgaryatas* from the city of Togliatti come to the *Volgaryata Festival*, later renamed *Children's Organizations Day*. These festivities aim to review the association's activities undertaken in the past year. The festival is organized as a game by station. Proactive members of associations are invited to the festival where they are presented well-deserved awards for their participation in research activities. Parents also take an active participation in the activities of the *Volgaryata Association* and become their children's main helpers in the attainment of the goals set. Parents participate in the organization's activities and help organize festivals, exhibitions, events, project and so on. Parents accompany their children on out-of-town excursions, visit city museums and theatres and help children get a sense of different occupations. In this way, the historical traditions of long-term educational games are maintained, which is manifest mostly in the "deployment" of the activities of the children's organization around content "based on interests proper to adolescence and in the form corresponding to the specific perceptions of this age group" [6].

The *Republic of Young Transbaikalians* is a children's regional voluntary organization active in Transbaikal Krai since 2002. It is a well-established leader in the children's movement among non-profit organizations not only in Transbaikal Krai but also in the Russian Federation. *The Republic of Young Transbaikalians* consists of 117 children's voluntary associations active in 26 regions of Transbaikal Krai and bringing together over 25,000 children and adults. The Republic of Young Transbaikalians is part of the Union of



Pioneer Organizations-Federation of Children's Organizations, the International Union of Children's Public Associations. The very name of the organization has long made it, so to say, an avant-garde of Transbaikalian teenagers. This being a "republic", it provides opportunities for the implementation of different interests. It is no coincidence that, according to Zhukov, "long-term games become synonymous to life, creating an organized and entertaining environment for children without, however, being indolent" [6]. Among the main activity areas having in their orbit numerous forms of work are the following: implementation and awareness of civil right and duties; development of the creative and intellectual potential; self-fulfillment; acquisition of knowledge about future work-related competitive activities. The framework of these areas determined the organization's forms of work which have proved effective in pedagogical terms and are in high demand among the movement's participants: these are specialized sessions and programs developed as part of children's regional projects.

The organization carries out projects of different scales and levels: international (*Childhood without Borders Festival, World Culture in a Backpack*), interregional (*Children's Express, Union*), regional, municipal, urban and neighborhood. Below is the information about some projects which, in our view, have considerably influenced the professional self-determination of this organization's members.

*Adventure itineraries* is a cultural and educational project for children during school holidays. The program promotes the attractive image of the hometown, encourages youths to choose occupations that are in demand in the region and to be proactive, and provides children with leisure activities during school holidays.

*Children's Express* is a project aimed at providing outdoor and socialization activities to children, teenagers and adults during a long educational trip beyond Transbaikal Krai by train and other means of transport (ferry, bus and airplane), combined with excursions in the capitals of Russia and its neighbors (Finland, Sweden, China and the Republic of Korea). During the trip, participants are involved in various general intragroup activities; self-governing bodies are in full operation; each participant's cognitive interest is encouraged; training is provided in a number of clubs; participants can attend trainings, workshops, counselling sessions, excursions, quests and meetings with representatives of Russian and international youth movement.

*The 21st Century Leader* is a project that has been carried out since 2003 within the framework of standard camp program in which every teenager has a unique opportunity to participate in the interactive educational platform developed for all those who want to act, advance and realize their ideas and projects. The program comprises the 21st Century Leader, a learning course for teenagers who participate in master classes and interactive sessions aimed at developing and improving their organizational and leadership competencies on the following topics: Team-Building, Game Technology, Planning, Communication Skills, Information Security, Mass Media and PR, among others. Teenagers become familiar with social planning and the idea development process as part of a big game on project development and implementation.

The *Heirs* project is a launch platform for children preparing for participation in the regional competition for leaders and heads of the 21st Century Leader, children's and youths' voluntary association; Russian Schoolchildren Movement: A Self-Governing Territory, a competition; Volunteer of Russia; From Transbaikalians to Transbaikal, a civil forum; Norknikel's World of New Opportunities and so on.

*Navigator* is a project aimed to create the environment for promoting proactive attitudes among teenagers, based on the interest for the natural, historical and cultural heritage

of their small homeland and of Russia as a whole; promotion of tourism and healthy lifestyles; and activities related to regional tourism and history.

The above-mentioned projects also influence the professional development of heads of primary teams/leaders. The following attests to the leader's high professionalism:

- positive outcomes of the leader's activity (presence of award winners of various competitions organized by children's voluntary organizations and self-management, award winners of creative competitions, festivals, parades, shows and so on);
- high level of events organized by them; active interaction with all participants in the educational process, outstanding professional achievements (award winners at professional skill competitions);
- publications on leadership, general work experience as a leader, participation as methodologists (programs, protocols and so on) in seminars, conferences, forums, pedagogical readings, etc. (presentations, organization of exhibitions, open lessons, master classes, etc.),
- program development (clubs, extracurricular activities, etc.), and
- recognition of the leader's professionalism by learners and their parents.

Quests have become one of the most demanded activities in children's organizations. Based on analysis and study of various aspects of quests focused on schoolchildren's career orientation, it was decided to use the following:

- educational quests [12; 19];
- adventure or game quests [11; 17; 18];
- live quests [4; 13].

I.V. Radetskaya and E. A. Igumnova put forward recommendations, in the form of a task card, for developing educational quests to be used in children's associations and voluntary organizations

*Table 1 - Educational quest task card*

<i>Structural elements</i>	<i>Requirements for quest development</i>
Title	Should be short, eye-catching and original.
Quest orientation	A subject matter or one of the areas of educational activity such patriotic, ecological or esthetic (mono quest) or a group of subject matters or areas of educational activity (interdisciplinary or comprehensive quest) are specified as priority one (ones).
Objective(s)	The objective should be generic and diagnostic. Educational standards should be taken into consideration when defining the objective(s).
Length	Educational quests can be devised for one lesson, several lessons, one week, one camp session or any other time period (short-term or long-term).
Age of learners/Target group	Consideration should be taken of learners' age (pre-school, elementary, high or senior high school, youth or adults) and their educational needs, including their health condition.

<i>Structural elements</i>	<i>Requirements for quest development</i>
Pre-plot	A plot is a fictional story about events or characters preceding the start of the game. Creativity is encouraged for the development of the plot: exaggeration of events, modification of well-known characters and so on. Thus, an imaginative quest can take participants to any location or to an invented planet.
Quest characters	The authors of a quest suggest a list of characters and their description. Quest characters can be either fictional or real. The quest participants' choice of roles follows certain rules: lot drawing or distribution by this or that aspect depending on the specific quest's objective or content.
Main task/Main idea	The main task should be challenging. The types of tasks described by G. A. Ferreni can be used when developing the main task. A creative approach and inspiration will help you produce varied types of tasks.
Plot structure and movement along it	A plot is a number of events in the game (basic diagram), for instance, a sequence of stages which players have to pass following certain rules; bonuses or penalties can also be part of the plot. Traditional plot elements – introduction, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution – should also be part of the plot. The plot is limited, in terms of time, both historically (the game can take place in any historical period) and physically (see Length).
Challenges/impediments	Complementary tasks are developed to move along the plot in addition to the main challenge; preferably, they should be challenging too.
Navigators	Various hints, marks and references aimed at helping players to find solutions for the main and complementary challenges.
Sources	Learners can be offered various sources such as a list of references, including the Internet and educational websites; multimedia presentations; video clips, including public service videos; electronic gadgets; tools and so on.
Criteria for assessing learners' performance	Criteria are developed by teachers depending on the type of tasks and the educational “product” in process. As an example, in case of multimedia presentations, research studies and so on, teachers can find the requirements in various sources and present them to learners in advance.
Outcome of the quest: educational “product” and analysis	The outcome should be related to the execution of the main task. For instance: an issue is settled, a riddle is solved, a discovery is made and so on. Public service videos, booklets and research results, among others, can be educational “products”. Teachers organize the analysis part of the game by assessing its different (cognitive, emotional, volitional or social) aspects and, also, by using various techniques such as the reflexive screen, self-evaluation, emoticons and so on. The choice of analysis options depends on the specific quest's objectives.



Thus, the quest technique – like any other teaching technique – has an invariable part, represented by structural elements and requirements for its content as reflected in the task card. The variable part is implemented in the teacher’s creative approach to the legend, the plot and so on, taking into consideration his teaching competency, the learners’ specificities and the capacities of the relevant educational organization.

In determining the objectives of a quest, its content and tools, the development of an educational quest implies, within the framework of the systemic and activity approach, focus on the educational outcomes as a major component of the Standard, i.e. subject, meta-subject and personal outcomes as defined by Russia’s Federal Educational Standard (FES). The development and implementation of educational quests is based on the didactic principles of the systemic and activity approach.

1. The development of quests is based on the education quest task card which includes a step-by-step structure of the quest and the description of the requirements for the quest’s content in compliance with modern educational standards related to the organization of learners’ cognitive activity starting from the objective and through to the analysis part.

2. Building on the systemic and activity approach when developing education quests will help determine the objectives of the quest with regard to subject, meta-subject and personal outcomes, as defined by Russia’s Federal Educational Standard, and to successfully implement its didactic principles in practice. These include activity, continuity, integrity, min-max, psychological comfort, variability, creativity as well as the principle of human congruity, introduced by the Russian educator Andrey V. Khutorskoy.

3. Keep in mind the classical principle of natural congruity: take into consideration the “laws of nature”, the “laws of human nature” and the “laws of the nature of child-rearing itself” (according to Y. A. Komensky). Your familiarity with developmental psychology will help you produce an entertaining quest that will be of interest to your students.

4. When seeking a plot for your quest, its legend and imaginative title, turn to fiction, film and computer game plots and draw upon the variations of the education quest’s main task suggested by G. A. Ferreni (compilation, reinterpretation, conviction, investigative journalism, analytical research, key to a mystery, creative investigation, search for truth, scientific research and so on).

Table 2 – Possible options for combining different types of the main task [19]

Type of the main task	compilation	reinterpretation	conviction	investigative journalism	analytical research	key to a mystery	creative investigation	search for truth	scientific research
compilation		+	+						
reinterpretation	+		+				+		
conviction	+	+		+	+	+		+	+
investigative journalism			+			+		+	
analytical research			+						
key to a mystery			+	+			+	+	
creative investigation		+				+			
search for truth			+	+		+			+

5. Given your plot, determine the type of quest by content (mono- or poly-subject), by structure (linear, assault or circular) and by length of time (short-term or long-term).

6. In working on the plot of an educational quest and on tasks, it is important, in order to move along the plot and to carry out the final analysis, that the adopted techniques, methods and forms of the main (“central”) and complementary challenging tasks be developed in accordance with O N. Krylova’s typology of knowledge (information, procedure, evaluation, reflection/personality knowledge), different types of questions (E. A Igumnova et al.) and James Martin’s Knowledge Pyramid.

7. As a teacher, you will need to be precise and concise in your assignments and evaluation criteria, creative in making up a legend, distributing roles, developing navigators, hints and the design of the environment.

*A sample legend.* “Dear friends! We welcome you to our friendly galaxy – the Milky Way! *Holds on to his ear, listening to something.* I just got word that we have a direct line to the news center of our Galaxy. Live broadcast. Let’s see what they have to tell us...” *Video clip (a newscast showing a map of Transbaikal Krai, 2 spaceships and recorded presentation of the announcer):* Good afternoon! We interrupt this program to bring you a breaking news story. Today, at 3:15 local time, NASA satellites recorded some energy activity near the Earth’s orbit. The International Space Station photographed the entry of two shining objects, supposedly, two spaceships into the atmosphere of our planet (*here you can show the moment space objects enter the atmosphere – it can be a cartoon or movie fragment*). The space objects landed on the territory of Transbaikal Krai (52°02’00 degrees North, longitude 113°30’00 East of Greenwich). These are the geographic coordinates of the city of Chita, in Transbaikal Krai.

Our guests from space have not done anything yet and the aim of their visit to our planet is not yet known. Contact is being established with them now. *The teacher “turns off” the screen or the TV with his remote control and addresses the teams.* “Dear guests, we would like to apologize for any discomfort and we thank you for your interest in our planet, region

and city. It is a great honor for us. Now we know that you are lost and this is the reason for your visit.

Your spaceships are waiting for you in the indicated locations. To get to them, you'll have to complete several assignments by overcoming a number of obstacles. Along the way, you'll be drawing the map of your itinerary from your current location to your ship. Upon successful completion of each assignment, the teams will be handed out a puzzle. When you have completed all assignments and have put all the details together, you'll have the image of your ship's location. Good luck!" [9].

8. Select thoroughly and carefully the online educational resources that you will offer to learners.

9. Make sure you have learners use their electronic gadgets during the quest. School-children like using them, so let us give learners more opportunities for using gadgets during the learning process. *Sample use of gadgets*. For instance, on the day of the assignment, the teacher sends a video (a fragment from the cartoon *The Good Dinosaur*, 7.06 to 8.25 min) to his students' cell phones or to the class's account on social media, asking them this question: "Is the hen a bad monster or...? [10]".

10. In developing and carrying out educational quests, conduct a creative search together with learners as project makers for their peers and with your colleagues.

The above recommendations for educational quests are best for use in children's voluntary organizations, children's associations and various educational organizations, which has been tested as part of our experimental work. Living quests have become particularly effective and demanded by teenagers in career orientation activities. A living quest is a quest project that implies the accomplishment of a challenging educational assignment that has a plot, is similar to a role play and involves search for locations, people or information. To achieve the goal, use is made of resources of the territory, on which the quest or other actions by the participants take place, or information resources. Below are some examples of such quests.

Questories are role plays taking place in a café or a class. Being a variety of living quests, questories open up many opportunities for players and, among them, the opportunity to achieve unique goals. As an example, members of the *Republic of Young Transbaikians* were offered a quest in which all children participated with enthusiasm. In specially equipped premises, participants had to find the reason why extraterrestrials came to visit the Earth and to accomplish this mission by completing the assignments of the quest entitled *Space Odyssey* and focused on career orientation. At their respective locations, the teams had to show competencies and skills that any astronaut is expected to have: physical training, specialized theoretical knowledge, decision-making in extraordinary situations and the ability to quickly adapt to the environment.

Quest excursions with a career orientation element in them to workshops of Transbaikalian artisans contributed to children's knowledge about the regional job market. Artistic folk handicrafts refer to creative activities of artisans directed at creating unique objects of art that are traditional in Transbaikal Krai, by using hand tools, skills, quick thinking and the inner perception of beauty. When visiting the Handmade Gift Studio, quest participants not only learned about different types of painting but also adopted a creative approach in making their own souvenir spoon. During a quest marathon, each child acted as the designer and producer of an individual football print and, thus, became acquainted with a new occupation – that of clothing designer.

During the quest excursion entitled *Among us there are men worthy of the name Rescuer* [14], young Transbaikalian children explored the inside of the fire truck and discovered how specialized tools work. For example, each out of 115 children gave it a try to release water out of the fire hose. Many children also sat for a while in the driver's seat. Rescue service members showed their battle suits to the children and let them try on head covers. Children learned that fireman clothing is made out of special fire-proof and unheated material.

During the quest *Here cities are filled with the sun!*, children learn from where cities obtain energy and heat and who works at the Heating Electrical Station (HES-1). After the excursion, the most curious and interested children asked questions about where and how they had to study to become energy workers.

The quest excursion Detective Sciences was organized with the support of the partner of the children's voluntary organization, the Forensic Science Center of Zabaikal Krai Regional Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia. During the excursion, each department of the Forensic Science Center turned into a separate location with its own challenging assignment or question to which children answered by using the information they heard or saw at the time of the excursion. Children and teenagers discovered where the thin-layered ascending chromatography technique was used and visited the laboratory in which research was conducted on virtually all organic and inorganic compounds: narcotics, psychedelic high-toxic substances, explosives, alcoholic products, dyeing substances, gunshot residue, metals and alloys, glass and ceramics and combustion products. The participants in the excursion were highly surprised by the molecular and atomic spectrometer, a room-sized device which decomposes any substances and their micro-components into elements and helps find traces of various substances in them. Children also discovered what occupations are demanded to work in this center.

On-site quests are also sought in career orientation activities. In such quests, players move from one location to another, completing different assignments with a common scenario. A quest is an itinerary centered around riddles and pictorial puzzles. It is aimed at getting children to get to the finish line by finding the code word and the telephone number using interim assignments with hints, their knowledge, intelligence and sagacity. Proposed assignments do not require any special knowledge or skills, yet they are as original and interesting as possible. The answer to each assignment is a digit showing the number of the following assignment. The winner is the player who is the first to call the combined telephone number and to say the code word. Such quests can be arranged not only in cities but also in any other location. As an example, the Republic of Young Transbaikalian children once organized a quest excursion to the ecosystem of Khaland Lake. This quest introduced children to local nature and allowed them to observe interactions of living organisms between themselves and with other ecologic components. To complete their assignments, children had to note down, photograph and draw wildlife species. As part of the quest, laboratory investigation was made of the information collected, wildlife species – animals and plants living in that location - were identified using reference books and atlases.

The value of the described forms of work lies in the fact that they take into consideration the psychological and pedagogical nature of children, meet their needs and interests and create for children a meaningful and organized life, filled with work and active altruism habits and, as such, are an essential complement to modern child-rearing practices.

### 3. Results

During the implementation of the pilot experiment aimed at developing teenagers' readiness for their professional self-determination, changes and increments took place in their

minds resulting from their improved self-analysis of their job-related interests, their ability to analyze learning and professional activities, and the acquisition of pre-professional, and sometimes professional, experience during their participation in games.

The personality and activity approach is the main method for developing a long-term educational game. As a result, participants in children's voluntary associations have broadened their understanding about occupations in demand and formed an objective opinion about their opportunities in terms of professional interests. Deliberate reasons for choosing this or that occupation in the future were also given. Long-term educational games made it possible to achieve these objectives in an entertaining, consistent and focused manner while taking into consideration children's age and perceptions. Moreover, the exploration of real-life occupations during their research activities allowed children to understand the specificities of the regional and urban job market, to pursue careers and to understand the significance of this or that occupation for a specific territory and, in general, for the economic development of Russia. The ideas put forward by Innokenty N. Zhukov on the educational role of game for children, on various techniques for working with children of different ages, on activities bringing together children and adults within the organization and, finally, on management are all in line with the present-day children's movement and offer ample opportunity to creatively implement them in modern practices.

#### 4. Discussion

The authors consider important the following approaches to the development and implementation of long-term educational games in children's voluntary associations which, being social institutions, can prepare schoolchildren to make a conscious choice of their future occupations by performing the following key functions:

- Study of the region's traditions and socio-economic environment;
- Strengthening children's motivation in implementing job-related potential while discovering occupations;
- Focus on the type of occupation and its choice subject to the child's preferences and the region's socio-economic needs;
- In the context of role-playing social interactions at children's voluntary associations, children and teenagers shape their own idea about their future occupations, based on their real-life experiences;
- Long-term educational games and their plots are elements of learning through play. Games help to maintain learners' high cognitive activity and learning motivation; over a sufficiently long period of time, long-term games encourage cooperation, promote values, teach children integrity and help reveal their creativity;
- The following are the main components of the work of children's voluntary organizations in terms of professional self-determination: giving, in the form of games, information about occupations and their typology; providing counselling services about occupations in high demand in the specific region; shaping children's and teenagers' perceptions of different areas of employment, careers and basic career-building notions.

#### 5. Conclusions

The professional self-development of schoolchildren and their preparation for choosing an occupation should be implemented in conformity with socio-economic challenges and



learners' personal needs, which points to the need to develop, in terms of organization, an innovative work scheme that would correspond to such challenges and present-day youths' interests. The long-term educational game methodology can complement activities in use at children's voluntary organizations and serve for learners as their guide to the huge world of traditional and new careers. Consequently, promotion of professions refers mostly to informing learners and expanding their perception about careers and the specificities of the local job market. When children realize their capacities and opportunities based on their learning, play and work experience, they form a better idea about their dream profession. At children's voluntary associations, activities aimed at introducing learners to different occupations also addresses other tasks related to established educational standards, i.e. the formation of universal competencies contributing to future professional efficiency:

- Oral and written communication skills for better interaction with others;
- Team-working skills and tolerance for ethnic, social and cultural difference;
- Self-organization and self-learning skills.

In our view, a creative approach towards long-term educational games modifies, in the current context, its content and could promote new directions in organizations' activities, contribute to the emergence of original ideas and vary the theory and practice of the children's movement.

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