



Saparkhojaev N.P.,
PhD,
Chairman
of the Board - Rector
NAO «Rudny Industrial
University»,
Ore



Bozhko L.L.,
Ph.D.
in Economics,
Vice-Rector
for Academic Affairs
NAO «Rudny Industrial
University», Ore



Afanasyev M.A.,
Teacher
NAO «Rudny
Industrial
University»,
Ore



Abzhatova A.K.,
Senior Lecturer
NAO «Rudny
Industrial
University»,
Ore

SOCIAL POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF SDG IMPLEMENTATION IN COUNTRIES OF THE EAEU

The article examines approaches to the justification and implementation of national priorities in the field of sustainable development in the EAEU countries. The purpose of the study is to compare approaches to substantiating national priorities of state social policy of the EAEU countries, as well as identifying areas for their improvement, taking into account global international trends. The choice of the EAEU countries for comparison is justified by the identity of the parameters characterizing the socio-economic and political processes in these countries, as well as the presence of common borders. The concept of sustainable development, which involves ensuring a balance between economic, social and environmental goals, taking into account management efficiency, is adopted as the methodological basis for conducting a comparative assessment of the impact of various social factors on regional development. Particular attention is paid to the study of how national priorities in the field of social policy are embodied in management decisions taken at the national and regional levels. In conclusion, conclusions are made on ways to improve social policy mechanisms and the possibilities for disseminating the identified best practices. The article was prepared within the framework of the grant of the Science Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan under the project AP19679796 "Study of factors of regional development taking into account interregional relations and state regulation".

The processes of regional integration have become a daily practice of international life and have covered most of the planet's continents. Economic regional integration covers the territory of the former Soviet Union. A striking example of such an integration formation is the Eurasian Economic Union. The current task of the EAEU member states is to transform into a self-sufficient, harmoniously developed and attractive macro-region for all countries of the world, possessing economic, technological and intellectual leadership and maintaining a high level of well-being of the population.

Social policy is a priority area of development for the EAEU countries. The state's social obligations to its citizens are enshrined in the Basic Law. For example, Kazakhstan is a socially oriented state designed to protect the rights and interests of its citizens. This is reflected in the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan: «The Republic of Kazakhstan asserts itself as a democratic, secular, legal and social state, the highest values of which are man, his life, rights and freedoms» [1]. In the Russian Federation, the Basic Law states: «The Russian Federation is a social state, the policy of which is aimed at creating conditions that ensure a decent life and free development of man [2]. The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia reflects that «the Republic of Armenia is a sovereign, democratic, social,

legal state» [3]. Article 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus: «The Republic of Belarus is a unitary democratic social legal state» (Constitution of the Republic of Belarus of March 15, 1994) [4].

The implementation of the SDGs is considered as an element of more global goals related to ensuring the sustainable development of national economies. The concept of sustainable development, which involves ensuring a balance between economic, social and environmental goals, taking into account the effectiveness of governance, was developed in the initiatives of the UN General Assembly, in particular the Millennium Development Goals, the Sustainable Development Goals, which contain 17 global interrelated goals (SDG 1: «Eradicate poverty», SDG 2: «Zero hunger», SDG 3: «Good health and well-being», SDG 8: «Decent work and economic growth», SDG 10: «Reduced inequalities») and 169 corresponding targets in the field of sustainable development.

An analysis of international experience in localizing and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals by countries that are leaders in the SDG index showed different levels of SDG implementation. Some countries adopted a national sustainable development strategy back in 1997, while others did so only in the early 2000s. Countries are also at completely different stages of implementing the SDGs in strategic documents – from the absence of such work to the localization of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The reasons for these differences are largely related to the specifics of the implementation process management and the established models of governmental organization. However, these issues have not yet become the subject of active scientific discussions.

To fill the existing substantive gaps, a study was conducted of the governmental organization models used in the EAEU countries in the context of implementing social policy.

The existing body of literature on the problems of studying models of governmental organization in the context of implementing social policy can be divided into three groups.

The first group is -These are works devoted to problematic issues of assessing the implementation of SDGs at the national and regional levels. M. Stafford-Smith, D. Griggs, O. Gafni focus on the existing relationships in three areas (large business, public sector, civil society), as well as indirect confluence of interests of countries with low, middle and high income levels. Based on the results of the study, recommendations were developed aimed at improving the identified relationships, both at the global and national levels [5].

Savrukov A. N. identifies a number of shortcomings in assessing public administration in the regions, which can be partially transferred to assessing the achievement of sustainable development goals. For example, the list of indicators may be incomplete, i.e. not fully take into account certain aspects that influence one of the three directions (economic, environmental, social), or not take them into account at all, which may be due to the specifics of the country aspect. Studies that compare regions of different areas or populations without standardizing the data may be incorrect. In this case, it is more correct to use specific indicators [6].

In the work of Antonov M.A., an approximate list of indicators is presented that can relate to one of three groups of factors (economic, environmental and social) [7].

The second group of sources reflects the specifics of the implementation of social policy instruments. Barrientos A., Clasen J., Clegg D. analyze policies and programs of social assistance, considering their adaptation to regional characteristics [8, 10]. Issues related to the implementation of various social programs are reflected in the works of Hakovirta M. [11], Skinner C. [12], Hiilamo H. [13], Jokela M. [13], Clasen J. [14], Clegg D., Alderman H. [15].

Third group - results socio-economic studies of the subjective well-being of the population. The main benchmark in this area is the socio-economic research of scientists from the Higher School of Economics (Russian Federation), examining social life and economic activity in their interrelation and interdependence. In foreign science, this area is being developed by Amitai Etzioni and his numerous followers.

The study compares the experience of substantiating national social policy goals in the EAEU countries; the priorities of social policy of the analyzed countries are compared in the context of the implementation of the SDGs.

The article also presents the results of a sociological study aimed at determining the level of awareness of residents of the regions about the implementation of national projects within the framework of the SDGs, and also made it possible to assess the social well-being of residents of the regions.

The sample population was compiled on the basis of random selection, the general population was the entire population over 18 years of age permanently residing in the territory of the Republic of

Kazakhstan. The sample population size was 2000 respondents. This sample population size allowed us to obtain data with a statistical error of 2.8% (with a confidence level of 97%).

The main method of collecting sociological information was an online survey using an interactive standardized questionnaire posted on the website and filled out online from a computer or mobile device, based on the use of Internet technology in a remote form.

The information was processed by forming a database in the specialized computer program SPSS. The analysis of the obtained data was carried out using modern methods adequate to the goals and objectives of the study, as well as using the calculation of indices and rating scales.

The information base for the study was made up of five types of sources. Firstly, official statistics data from the EAEU countries. Secondly, documents that form the regulatory framework for the implementation of social policy and documents characterizing strategic national priorities in this area. Thirdly, strategic plans and programs of regional and local government bodies. Fourthly, works devoted to sustainable development issues. Fifthly, the results of the conducted sociological research.

In order to assess the impact of the social component on regional development, the study included an analysis of national and regional regulatory documents related to the global SDGs in countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Belarus, and Russia. (Table 1)

Table 1 - Institutionalization of SDGs in the national policies of the EAEU countries

Criteria	Republic of Kazakhstan	Kyrgyz Republic	Republic Armenia	Republic Belarus	Russian Federation
Main country strategic document	Strategy "Kazakhstan -2050"	National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2040	Strategy for the transformation of Armenia until 2050	National Strategy for Sustainable Development until 2035	Decree on national development goals of Russia until 2030
Priority areas of social focus set out in the main strategic document	Comprehensive support for entrepreneurship; building new principles of social policy ; comprehensive economic pragmatism based on the principles of profitability, return on investment and competitiveness; knowledge and professional skills (training and retraining of personnel); further strengthening of statehood and development of democracy; consistent and predictable foreign policy; support and development of Kazakhstani patriotism as the basis for the success of a multinational and multi-confessional society	Providing employment and stable income for the population ; creating productive jobs and competitiveness of the digital economy; creation of attractive conditions for entrepreneurs; application of innovative and environmentally friendly technologies; development of infrastructure, industry and the agro-industrial complex; digital transformation of the country	Increase in GDP; increase in population; creation of new jobs; overcoming poverty; increase in average wages; increase in life expectancy; development of education and technology; doubling of forest area; increase in annual influx of tourists	Sustainable development of the family institution and qualitative growth of human potential; employment and decent incomes of the population; digital transformation of the economy and large-scale dissemination of innovations; creation of a developed business environment and sustainable infrastructure; ensuring environmental safety, transition to rational models of production and consumption (circular economy)	Preservation of population, health and well-being of people ; opportunity for self-realization and development of talents; comfortable and safe living environment; decent, effective work and successful entrepreneurship; digital transformation

Regional bodies most actively involved in the implementation of the SDGs	Regional and city akimats	to the offices of the plenipotentiary representatives of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic in the regions, the mayor's offices of the cities of Bishkek and Osh	Yerevan administration and representatives of each region	Deputy Chairmen of the Regional and Minsk City Executive Committees	The implementation of the SDGs in the regions is carried out through the implementation of regional programs and projects that are consistent with the SDGs.
Number of SDG indicators	297 indicators (with the addition of 76 national indicators, 35 of which are proposed additionally)	514 indicators, including 219 of the 244 indicators on the Global List, 9 national indicators similar to the indicators on the Global List, and 286 additional national indicators	66 goals out of 169 SDG goals, i.e. 40% of these goals	225 indicators of the global list recognized as relevant for the Republic of Belarus, including 131 indicators that correspond to the global ones, 94 indicators have been replaced and/or supplemented	118 (120, including repetitions) global UN SDG indicators, of which 29 indicators are presented by subjects

Kazakhstan is actively developing institutions for sustainable development of the social sphere in its regional policy. One of the key institutions is the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Youth and Family Affairs, which coordinates and implements state policy in the field of youth development, also actively participates in regional policy. Regional executive authorities and local governments also play an important role in the development of the social sphere. They monitor and supervise the implementation of state policy in the social sphere, develop and approve regional development programs, and provide funding for social programs at the local level. The Development Plans of the Regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2021-2025 reflect such global goals for sustainable development of the social sphere as Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-Being, and Quality Education.

Sustainable development of the social sphere in the regional policy of Kazakhstan also provides for the active participation of civil society and public organizations. They play an important role in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the programs being implemented, as well as in representing the interests of the population and mobilizing resources to solve social problems.

It is important to note that in Kazakhstan's realities, demographic factors are of particular importance for the sustainability of regional development in the medium term. Demographic indicators are allocated to a separate block within the framework of assessing the social sphere of regions and the quality of human capital. Given the importance of introducing sustainable development issues into the regional governance system, a block of indicators has been additionally introduced to assess the quality of regional governance in terms of social development (taking into account the social component in regional strategies, development of public-private partnerships, the level of social well-being of the population, etc.).

Institutions of sustainable development of the social sphere in the regional policy of Kazakhstan are one of the important elements of the country's development strategy. They contribute to improving the quality of life of the population, ensuring social security and developing public cooperation.

In Kyrgyzstan, the key program documents reflecting the main directions of the country's development are the National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2040, the Development Program of the Kyrgyz Republic «Unity. Trust. Creation». The level of consistency of the National Strategy and the Program «Unity. Trust. Creation» with the global goals and objectives of sustainable development was assessed based on the number of global sustainable development objectives, one way or another taken into account in the relevant strategic document. The highest level of consistency (more than 80%) was identified for the following SDGs: 7, 9, 13. In the medium term, the General State Development Program of the country, as well as state programs at various levels, are being implemented.



The Government of Armenia considers the implementation of the SDGs to be one of the most important tools for the implementation of comprehensive domestic reforms launched in Armenia. Since 2015, the country has been actively taking steps to create substructures necessary for the implementation of the SDGs, such as the National Council for Sustainable Development, which operates under the leadership of the Prime Minister of Armenia, the Interdepartmental Working Group on the Achievement of the SDGs Taking into Account National Specifics, and an innovative platform – the National Innovation Lab on SDGs in Armenia.

In the Republic of Belarus, the National Sustainable Development Strategy 2035 is linked to the global SDGs. The main priorities of the NSDS 2035 are: sustainable development of the family institution and qualitative growth of human potential; productive employment and decent incomes of the population; digital transformation of the economy and large-scale dissemination of innovations; creation of a developed business environment and sustainable infrastructure; ensuring environmental safety, transition to rational models of production and consumption. In the medium term, the Program of Socioeconomic Development of the Republic of Belarus, programs of socioeconomic development of administrative-territorial units are being implemented.

In the Russian Federation, provisions of regulatory legal acts that are related to individual SDGs are implemented at the regional level. For example, the objectives of SDG 1 «Eradicate poverty» are related to the provisions of laws on social assistance and support for citizens and are addressed in a number of other legislative and regulatory legal acts of the subjects, the achievement of SDG 2 «Eradicate hunger» is integrated into the laws of the subjects on food security. In the subjects under study, regional plans for adaptation to climate change in the territory of the subjects have been approved or are at the stage of development and approval, which is related to the implementation of SDG 13 «Take urgent measures to combat climate change and its impacts».

At present, it is possible to conditionally identify several main directions for the implementation of sustainable development principles at the regional level:

- 1) taking into account the principles of sustainable development in strategic planning,
- 2) monitoring achievement and reporting on contribution to achieving the SDGs,
- 3) development of green economy sectors;
- 4) development of a low-carbon agenda;
- 5) involving businesses and other stakeholders in the sustainable development agenda, expanding interaction in this area with large banks and development institutions.

Direct implementation of the provisions of the Sustainable Development Agenda in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, as a rule, is not envisaged. The SDGs are implemented through the implementation of regional programs and projects that are consistent with the SDGs. Most of the SDGs related to the powers of the constituent entities are reflected in the goals and target indicators of the analyzed regional strategies, regional projects and state programs operating in the territory of the constituent entities. As a rule, the SDGs are not present as such in the strategic planning documents of the constituent entities. There are isolated examples of the inclusion in regional strategies of provisions directly aimed at implementing the Sustainable Development Agenda.

The EAEU countries show a wide range of priority areas set out in the main strategic documents, which indicates different levels of economic development in these countries. However, all countries give greater priority to issues of socio-economic development. The legal framework for SDGs at the national

levels is represented by a wide range of documents, including development strategies and concepts, but it should be noted that the regulatory documents have different time frames, which indicates the absence of a unified approach to this issue.

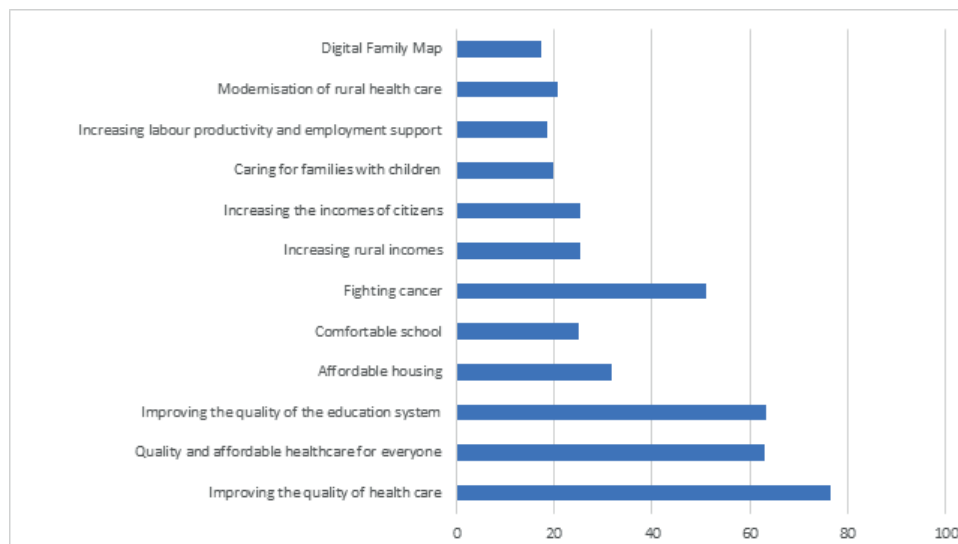
In addition, there is a different level of consistency of program documents with the sustainable development targets. For example, in Kyrgyzstan the highest level of consistency (more than 80%) is characteristic of SDGs 7, 9 and 13, in the Republic of Kazakhstan - SDGs 3, 4, 8.9 and 16, etc.

It should be noted that the depth of penetration of SDGs at the regional level is significant enough only in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

It is no coincidence that the results of the survey conducted by the authors of the study showed that in the Republic of Kazakhstan 31.2% of respondents believe that local and regional authorities should contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals to a greater extent, and only 27.3% of respondents noted that this is the prerogative of the republican authorities. 51.1% of residents of the regions of Kazakhstan are familiar with the term «UN Sustainable Development Goals» or the abbreviation SDG/ESG and are well aware of the conceptual apparatus of the SDG.

83.5% of respondents positively assess the social situation and quality of life in the country; 57.8% are satisfied with the social policy pursued by the local executive authorities. The most favorable (according to the participants of the sociological survey) in terms of socio-economic development are Kostanay, Aktobe, Atyrau, East Kazakhstan regions and the city of Astana.

As a result of the study, respondents assessed the areas of activity of local executive authorities related to the implementation of social policy (Pic. 1).



Picture 1 – Results of respondents' assessment of the directions of activities of local executive authorities

42,7% of respondents are not familiar with such a direction of the akimat's activity as the Digital Family Card. At the same time, residents of the regions speak positively about the activities of the local executive bodies in the field of improving the quality of medical care (76.6%), high-quality and accessible health care for everyone (63.1%), improving the quality of the education system (63%), and combating cancer (51.1%). According to respondents, over the past year, akimats have begun to pay more attention to the implementation of social policy. In the context of individual components of the data, the respondents' opinions were divided:

43% of respondents are satisfied with the quality of education (respondents are mostly satisfied with the quality of higher education);

49.9% of respondents give a satisfactory assessment of the solutions to issues related to improving the quality and accessibility of healthcare;

7.1% of respondents are satisfied with the implementation of social programs and policies in the field of social protection of the population.

Generally, 51.6% of respondents partially agree with the policy pursued by the MIO in the area of improving the quality of life, and 35.1% of respondents believe that the socio-economic situation of the region has not undergone significant changes in recent years.

Conclusions.

The approaches used by the EAEU countries to the formation of national priorities in the field of social policies are to a greater extent consistent with the letter and spirit of the approach declared by the United Nations.

An analysis of the main priorities of socio-economic development in the EAEU countries showed that in countries with a higher level of income of the population (Kazakhstan and Russia), priority is given to social goals (focus on humanitarian and social goals, creating a comfortable and safe environment for life, supporting self-realization and development of talents, etc.), while in other countries the emphasis is on solving priority tasks (overcoming poverty and unemployment, ensuring macroeconomic stability, increasing investment attractiveness, developing traditional sectors of the economy, etc.). All EAEU countries have adopted comprehensive documents reflecting priorities development of social policy. National goals in the field of social development are formulated in documents of direct action, decrees, national strategies and programs.

The population of the regions is quite critical of the measures taken in the area of social policy and places greater responsibility for the activities carried out on regional authorities. Regional assessments vary significantly across individual components of the social block. In order to achieve a synergistic effect, it is advisable to use work with the population in conjunction with the use of an existing set of tools in the field of social policy.

References

- 1 Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan. – URL: https://www.akorda.kz/ru/official_documents/constitution
- 2 Constitution of the Russian Federation. – URL: https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_28399/
- 3 Constitution of the Republic of Armenia. – URL: <http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=show&ID=2425&lang=rus>
- 4 Constitution of the Republic of Belarus. – URL: <https://president.gov.by/ru/gosudarstvo/constitution>
- 5 Kochetkova L.N. The theory of the social state of Lorenz von Stein // *Philosophy and society*. - 2008. - No. 3. - P. 69-79
- 6 .Stafford-Smith, M., Griggs, D., Gaffney, O. et al. Integration: the key to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: *Sustain Sci*, - 2017– vol.19. pp. 911–919. URL:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-016-0383-3>(Accessed 21.08.2024)
7. Savrukov A. N., Savrukov N. T. Methodological approach and criteria for assessing the effectiveness of public administration in the regions // *Finance and Credit*. 2017. Vol. 23. No. 7. P. 388–402.
8. Antonova M. A. Theoretical and methodological foundations for studying sustainable development of regions // *Regional Economics and Management: electronic scientific journal*. - 2013. - No. 4 (36).
- 9.Barrientos A. The future of social assistance in developing countries // *Social Assistance in Developing Countries*. – 2013. – R.201–223. – DOI:10.1017/CBO9781139856058.012
- 10.Boltvinik J. Counting the Poor: New Thinking about European Poverty Measures and Lessons for the United States // *Journal of Social Policy*. – 2013. – No. 42(4). – R. 852–855. – DOI:10.1017/S0047279413000433
11. Clasen J., Daniel C. European labor markets and social policy: recent research and future directions. – 2022. – DOI: 10.4337/9781802201710.00020
- 12 Hakovirta M., Skinner C., Hiilamo H., Jokela M. Child Poverty, Child Maintenance and Interactions with Social Assistance Benefits Among Lone Parent Families: a Comparative Analysis // *Journal of Social Policy*. – 2020. – No. 49(1). – R.19–39.
- 13 Barrientos A. The future of social assistance in developing countries // *Social Assistance in Developing Countries*. – 2013. – R.201–223. – DOI:10.1017/CBO9781139856058.012
- 14 Clasen J., Daniel C. European labor markets and social policy: recent research and future directions. – 2022. – DOI: 10.4337/9781802201710.00020
- 15 Alderman H. Multi-Tier Targeting of Social Assistance: The Role of Intergovernmental Transfers // *The World Bank Economic Review*. – 2001. – No. 15(1). – R. 33–53.