

# Cross-Cultural Communications of “Old Sarepta”: Ethno-pedagogical Museum Heritage

Nadezda Archebasova<sup>1,\*</sup>, and Elena Archebasova<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Volgograd State University, 400062, Universitetskiy Av., 100, Volgograd, Russia, nadezhda.archebasova@volsu.ru

<sup>2</sup>Kazan Federal University, 420008, Kazan, St. Kremlin, 18, Kazan, Russia, lenok776@mail.ru

**Abstract.** In the 18-19 centuries, the mass migration of the European Germans to Russia led to the creation of a sub-ethnos of the Germans in the Volga region. The “Old Sarepta” Museum-Reserve is currently an international center of studying the most famous German colony in the South of Russia. The authors of the article have used an interdisciplinary approach. They have analyzed the connection between cross-cultural communications of the Sarepta “cultural unit” and ethno-pedagogical methods of socialization of its representatives. The information sources of the research are documents of archival funds, memories of travelers and residents of the colony, biographies of the famous Volga Germans. The authors characterize the achievements of the educational system, generalize historical practices and reconstruction which have already been studied. The paper allows one to interpret better the value orientations and behavioral stereotypes of people brought up in the junction of different cultural societies. The obtained data are useful for studying behavior of people from multiethnic population groups in modern megalopolises.

## Introduction

In 1762 the Russian Empress Catherine the Great permitted a mass migration of Europeans to Russia. This policy took into account the following facts: low population density in the provinces, weak regional integration, economic successes of the Europeans in their colonies. In the 18th century, the Germans from different countries of Europe founded most of the foreign settlements in Russia. Now we know them as “German colonies” [1]. In the Volga region, there were 95 percent of the colonies. They became the basis for the formation of the sub-ethnos of the Volga Germans. Sarepta (1765-1920, near Tsaritsyn) was not a large, but the most famous colony. For the first hundred years of its existence, 1255 people came from abroad, 677 - returned; in Russia—1054 were born [2].

In the 19th century the most important works on the history of the German colonies in Russia were written by the colonists and their descendants. The organist's son, an employee of the Ministry of State Property of the Russian Empire, Alexander Klaus, published the book *Our Colonies* (1869). In the 19th century, researchers took into account the opinion of A. Klaus in their articles. Jacob Dietz, son of a colonist, lawyer and deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Empire prepared the following important work. The book *The History of the Volga German Colonists* was published only in 1997 [3], but in the 1880s J. Dietz published a number of journal articles.

In the 20th century, scientists from different countries conducted serious research on this issue only after the Second World War. We consider it necessary to indicate the contribution of historians from the Institute of Culture and History of the Germans of Eastern Europe at the University of Düsseldorf (Germany); D. Long

(USA) [4]; J.-F. Bourré (France), A.A. Herman and N.E. Washkau (Russia) [5, 6]. Now the historiography of this scientific problem is represented by a large number of works [7, 8]. However, cross-cultural communications in these publications have not been fully studied.

In this article we define the connection between cross-cultural communication and ethno-pedagogy, evaluate the cultural heritage and educational opportunities of the “Old Sarepta” Museum [9].

## Method

The main research methods are analytical: a) dynamic cross-cultural [10]; c) documentary, c) ethno-pedagogical [11-12]. The scope of the study is limited to the Sarepta colony, which demonstrated the best development results. Naturally reserved ethnic character of this settlement allows considering it as a “cultural unit” [13] for the historical period of the 18th - first half of the 20th century.

The main language of communication of the Sareptians is German. Native languages spoken by the neighbors of the Sareptians are Kalmyk, Ukrainian, Russian, Tatar. It is important to note that the main language of the studied written sources is Russian. Correct translation of written sources in different periods of history was carried out by native speakers of the region (regional and capital bilinguals [14], professional translators).

The preparatory period of our study contained the following steps. Foremost, we defined the field of research. Secondly, we formulated the scientific hypothesis that the synthesis of preferential international cross-cultural communication and national German pedagogy had a significant impact on the achievements

\* Corresponding author: nadezhda.archebasova@volsu.ru

of the Volga Germans. Thirdly, we analyzed documentary sources. We studied documents of archival funds, memories of travelers and colonial inhabitants, biographies of the famous Volga Germans. We examined historical practices and cultural reconstruction of important components within the education system and ethno-pedagogy in the region (so-called “cultural nests” [15]). The fourth, we found theoretical data support about the problem in interdisciplinary publications [16]. The choice of optimal methods of study completed the preparatory period. The main methods of research are analytical: a) dynamic cross-cultural; c) documentary, c) ethno-pedagogical.

The implementation of the study included: 1) data collection, analysis and systematization; 2) data interpretation; 3) construction of the research logical body; 4) the report on the results of the study and design of the reference.

### Results and Discussion

Cross-cultural communication plays an important role in the world. Regional aspects of the cross-cultural communication are traced in Russia from the 18th century until now. Social and economic problems in Germany and preferences in Russia became motivating for the migration of the Germans. Among them, the most important factors are: a) agricultural resettlement in Germany; b) religious persecution of Protestants in Europe; c) preferential taxation, administrative self-government and freedom of religion in Russia; d) the possibility of free cross-cultural communication with co-religionists in other countries [16]. The Sarepta colony was receiving financial assistance, construction materials, tools and news from foreign co-religionists throughout its existence. In the 1920s, the traveler A.F. Voenkov wrote the following about the Sareptians: *Every inhabitant knows the most important political events, new inventions* [17, p. 63-64]. Until the end of the 19th century, this condition of the cross-cultural communication was an exceptional sociocultural achievement for the provinces of Russia.

Under such favorable conditions, the colonists carried out the process of intensifying the development of the Volga region. It should be emphasized that it was the ethno-pedagogy of the European type of society that played a unique role in creating flexible cross-cultural communication with the Asian local societies. In Table 1, we correlated the achievements of the Sareptians with the basic elements of cross-cultural variables in five systems: ecological, habitat, sociocultural, individual, intra-individual.

**Table 1.** Communication and pedagogical achievements of the Sarepta.

System elements	Cross-cultural communication	Effects of social upbringing and education
<b>Ecological system</b>		

Physical environment	They applied a symbiosis of animate and inanimate nature in the design of the public space	They conducted a number of natural science studies
	They used partner relations in interethnic relations	They published ethnographic descriptions of the peoples of the Volga region
Resources	They conducted water supply from mineral springs	They never had cholera
	They invented prescriptions for medicines based on natural ingredients	They trained a number of local doctors and pharmacists
	They have opened the All-Russian balneological resort	They have reached a low mortality rate
Ggeography	They adapted in the steppe climatic zone	They used the advantages of the region to make the colony prosperous
<b>Habitat management system</b>		
Agriculture	They tested all possible agro-industrial cultures of the region: mustard, grapes, potatoes, tobacco, silkworm, shingles, etc.	They became the first successful entrepreneurs in many branches of the economy
	They introduced the European landscape design of the public space: gardens, parks, flower gardens	They organized a democratic recreational culture
Industry	They created new industrial products: mustard oil, the kind of fabric “sarpinka”	Many Sareptians received government and public awards for economic inventions
<b>Sociocultural system</b>		
Institutions, norms, roles and values that exist “outside” the individual	They advocated Protestant values: socio-centrism, practicality, orderliness. They assumed the role of educators of the peoples of the Volga region	They wrote a Kalmyk grammar, a German-Kalmyk dictionary

<b>Individual system</b>		
Perception, learning, motivation, subjective culture	On the one hand, the Sareptians used traditionalism in relations and upbringing, on the other hand, they introduced innovation in technical progress and training	They introduced compulsory universal education for the children of the Sareptians; trained many children of other nations. They brought up many outstanding scientists and economists
<b>Interindividual system</b>		
Patterns of social behavior	Public institutions helped people in difficult life situations. There have never been beggars and starving	Sarepta became the center of intellectual "pilgrimage" of the Russian aristocracy, scientists and travellers from Russia and other countries

Thus, the history of the Germans in the Volga region have demonstrated a direct dependence of socio-cultural achievements on the ethno-pedagogical methods of upbringing and education.

Neighbors of the Volga Germans (Russian, Kalmyks, Tatars and Ukrainians) helped the European colonists to adapt the economy to the natural and climatic conditions of the steppes. In turn, the Volga Germans explored the natural and climatic resources of the region, introduced European technologies and created a unique economy.

In the last third of the 19th century, the inhabitants of the colony were very rich. Six hundred colonists owned fifteen thousand dessiatines of land. Factories, a mustard oil plant and numerous workshops brought a good income. The weaving of the colonists spread to the Volga and Central Russia. Thus, in the 1860s, six Moscow and eight Vladimir spinning mills produced cloth "sarpinka" [18]. The Sareptians opened trading houses in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Astrakhan, Tsaritsyn and in other German colonies [8, p. 55; 13, p. 464-466].

The colonists belonged to a closed religious society, but they created jobs for local residents of the region. A. Klaus in the work "Our Colonies" found that many workers lived in the colony for decades, learned the craft and received a good salary [2, p. 80].

In the 19th century, representatives of different religions (Lutherans, Orthodox, Muslims and Buddhists) lived and worked in a colony in peace and harmony. It is important to emphasize that the Sareptians demanded that all guests and employees comply with their rules. This helped to spread the principles of democratic

partner cross-cultural communication to all spheres of people's lives in the region.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Sarepta was recognized as the spiritual and cultural center of all German colonies in the Volga region. The social institutions of the colony coordinated the process of education with other processes of social life. Childhood is the most important period of socialization of the individual. In Sarepta, schools were created earlier than in the provincial city of Saratov. All the children of the colonists were educated at the level of the gymnasium [19]. Landowners from various provinces of the country, the Astrakhan governor N.A. Beketov and even Lutheran pastors taught their children in Sarepta. Academician Ya.I. Schmidt, Doctor of Medicine I.Kh. Hamel, natural scientist A.K. Becker and other well-known scientists grew up and received a basic education in Sarepta.

A society of European type in the Asian steppes of the Lower Volga constantly attracted travelers [20]. In the 18th century, almost all the dignitaries from St. Petersburg and the scientists G.G. Gmelin, P.S. Pallas, I.G. Georges visited Sarepta. In the 19th century, representatives of the Romanov dynasty; scientists A. von Humbolt, H.G. Ehrenberg, G. Rose, G.F. von Parrot, E.A. Eversmann, H.G. Bunge were there. The attention of these famous figures to Sarepta better than other facts emphasizes its historical role.

The rise of Sarepta and its crisis were associated with a change in the conditions of cross-cultural communications. In the second half of the 19th century, the colonists were gradually deprived of special status and privileges in Russia [4, 8 p. 21-22]. In the 20th century, the sub-ethnos of the Germans in the Volga region could completely disappear due to political and administrative-territorial processes in Soviet Russia [21]. Among them one should name: repression, the Department of the Germans of the Volga region to Siberia, including of the territory of the former colony in the city district of Stalingrad [22].

The 21st century was a time of revival of interest in the Sarepta colony as a memorable place in the history and culture of the region. In 1990 in the city of Volgograd, the Russian government opened the State Historical Ethnographic and Architectural Museum-Reserve "Old Sarepta". It consists of a complex of residential and economic buildings. They were built in the 18-19th centuries on five hectares on the territory of modern Volgograd.

The museum is a research and educational institution. It is well-known in the scientific community and it has one of the best German literature libraries in Russia. National museum centers study the heritage of the inhabitants of the southern outskirts of Russia, preserved in different languages: Russian, Tatar, German, Ukrainian, Kalmyk, Belorussian. The staff of the museum conducts a serious study of the methods and elements of the education and training system of the Volga Germans. They organize cognitive quests, excursions, reconstruction of events and holidays for adults and children. Classes with children-bilinguals on the problems of interethnic communication and the

revival of traditions have, in our opinion, great pedagogical potential [23].

In the modern world, the number of bilingual people is constantly increasing. This is due to the processes of globalization, an increase in the flow of migrants, an increase in the level of education of the population. There are natural and artificial bilingualism. In the first case, people communicate with carriers of different cultures, in the second case, a person is taught another language specifically. As a result, the environment is increasingly affecting the lives of the urban population of different countries.

Tolerance in multicultural communication and xenophobia are examples of the positive and negative impact of a multicultural environment on a person. It should be noted that in all of Russia's long history no nation or ethnic group has disappeared. The original national culture of all the past has survived to this day. However, up to now the Russian education system has not paid enough attention to the development of intercultural competencies among educators and students. Multicultural education is a relatively new phenomenon for Russia [24]. For this reason, many educational institutions work on multicultural education intuitively. The educational activity of the staff of the museum "Old Sarepta" helps to choose the best methods and forms of cross-cultural communication and multicultural education.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Sarepta was a cultural innovator in the South of Russia for several centuries [25]. We determined the direct relationship between the wide free cross-cultural communication of the Sareptians and their national. German ethno-pedagogical system in the process of forming a highly developed sub-ethnos of the Germans in the Volga region.

Currently, the historical-ethnographic and architectural museum reserve "Old Sarepta" is the center of studying cultural heritage in the region. Take-home message for reflection to subsequent researchers how to take advantage of this historical experience in modern cross-cultural communications.

The authors would like to express deep gratitude to Professor Nina E. Washkau for many years of studying the history of education and traditions of the Volga Germans, for scientific advice and friendly support. We are grateful to the staff of the museum for active participation in the historical and cultural education of new generations of the Russians, including children of the ethnic Volga Germans.

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