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Development of network consortiums as the overcoming of the elitism of Master's programs at the international level

РАЗВИТИЕ СЕТЕВЫХ КОНСОРЦИУМОВ КАК ПРЕОДОЛЕНИЕ ЭЛИТАРНОСТИ МАГИСТЕРСКИХ ПРОГРАММ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОГО УРОВНЯ

Тармактык консорциумдардын эл аралык денгээлдеги магистрдик программалардын элитардуулугун жөнү катарында өнүгүүсү

***Abstract:** the article refers to network consortia, where Jusup Balasagyn Kyrgyz National University is a member. Network universities present a progressive tendency toward integration and approbation of the best practices of higher educational institutions. The author recognizes the need for internationalization of higher education, a combination of national academic traditions and modern methods of the educational process. In addition, the article explores the benefits from joint educational programs.*

***Аннотация:** в статье говорится о сетевых консорциумах, участником которых является КНУ им. Ж.Баласагына. Сетевые университеты рассматриваются как прогрессивная тенденция интеграции и апробации лучших практик высшей школы. Автором признается необходимость интернационализации высшего образования, сочетания национальных академических традиций и современных методик образовательного процесса. Кроме этого, совместные образовательные программы приносят выгоду отдельным индивидуумам.*

***Аннотация:** макалада Ж.Баласагын атындагы КУУ катышуучусу болгон тармактык консорциумдар жөнүндө баяндалган. Тармактык университеттер жогорку мектептин мыкты практикасынын интеграциясы менен апробациясынын прогрессивдүү тенденциялары катары каралат. Автор тарабынан жогорку билим берүүнү интеграцияландыруу, улуттук академиялык салттарды жана билим берүү процесстеринин заманбап методикаларын айкалыштыруу зарылчылыгы таанылган. Мындан тышкары биргелешкен билим берүү программалары айрым индивидуумдарга пайда алып келет.*

***Keywords:** network consortia; academic mobility; higher education.*

***Ключевые слова:** сетевые консорциумы; академическая мобильность; высшее образование.*

***Негизги сөздөр:** тармактык консорциумдар; академиялык мобилдүүлүк; жогорку билим.*

Jusup Balasagyn Kyrgyz National University is a member of many consortia. Our students can participate in various educational programs

through academic mobility.

Here I would like to dwell in more detail on network consortiums that are operating in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organizations (SCO). The Russian Federation with the support of the Interstate Humanitarian Cooperation Fund started a project called "Creation of Network University of the CIS» in 2008, in the framework of the Development of humanitarian cooperation among the participating States of the Commonwealth. This university network gives an opportunity to receive Master's degrees of international level in such universities as Russian University of People's Friendship (RUPF), Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MSIIR), Moscow State Linguistic University (MSLU), Novosibirsk State University (NSU) and others.

Objectives of the project are:

- Creation of a common educational space of CIS through the implementation of joint education programs, the organization of "inclusive education", new forms of inter-university cooperation;
- Formation of mechanisms for the development of student and teacher mobility within the framework of the Commonwealth;
- The expansion of academic mobility, contributing to qualitative training of highly qualified specialists in humanitarian, socio-economic, technical and scientific areas that are of need in the CIS;
- The promotion of the intercultural dialogue in the student environment; the development, and mutual enrichment of cultures, languages, historical and national traditions of the people of the Commonwealth states.

The project provides students of different countries with the right to independently choose time and place of training, allowing them to get two Master's degree diplomas, which in turn ensures their competitiveness in the Commonwealth labor market. Currently there are 28 leading universities from 9 CIS participating in the Consortium. In addition, our university is a member to the University of Shanghai Cooperation Organizations (SCO).

The University of Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a network university and an international educational program in Asia. At the meeting of education ministers of the CIS member states (Astana, October 28, 2008) documents were signed to establish the University of SCO, as well as confirming the general concept of the SCO University training boards: Regional Studies, Power Engineering, Nanotechnologies, IT, Ecology, Pedagogy, Economics. The University of Shanghai Cooperation Organization is an Asian analogue of the common European educational space, created within the framework of the "Bologna Transformation of the Educational System".

SCO Charter was signed in November 2011, within the "Education without borders" program in Moscow, at RUPF.

The main mission of the University of SCO is to implement joint

training of highly qualified specialists based on innovative education programs in the fields of priority interest for the economic and social development of Member States of Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The university functions as a network of existing universities in the SCO member states, and in the future - in the observer countries (Mongolia, India, Iran, Pakistan). Special training of the highest qualification in the framework of the University of SCO is done on priority areas of cultural, scientific, educational and economic cooperation of the member countries of the Organization (Power Engineering, Ecology, Machine Building, Metallurgy, Material Science, Construction, Transport, Fuel and Energy Complex, History, Linguistics, IT).

Currently there are 79 universities from 5 countries the consortium.

The goals of the SCO University creation are:

- strengthen mutual trust and good neighborly relations between the member countries of the SCO;
- integrate development processes in the fields of education and technologies;
- give a new impetus to the expansion of multilateral scientific and cultural cooperation;
- empower young people to receive qualified modern education; for teachers and scientists - to develop scientific contacts;
- promote effective cooperation among the member countries of the Organization in the political, trade-economic, scientific-technical and cultural fields.

Network University of the CIS and the University the SCO provide opportunities to socially less protected members of society to participate in the high quality educational process. In the unique project such as Network University of the CIS, the overcoming the elitism in training of highly qualified specialists is evident. We have examples of the “social elevator”, through training in a joint master program in a Russian university and our university.

A young man from the village, who graduated from a rural school and received a bachelor's degree at our university, successfully graduated with Master's degree from RUPF and KNU, had received two diplomas and, presently works in one of the leading Russian banks in Moscow.

Within the framework of the Network University of the CIS, the international fund for humanitarian cooperation gives grants for training, which helps overcome the elitism of the international academic mobility. By Grant of the IFESCO (the Intergovernmental Foundation for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation) a student is sufficiently socially protected: the fund buys a round-trip air ticket for him/her, pays a year tuition at a Russian university, buys a medical insurance and provides a good hostel. That is how good conditions for studying are created and the student is not forced to work illegally to ensure daily bread.

Education expenditures are one of the key indicators of social development. In this case, when parents are not able to provide such expenses, the help in obtaining a quality education is provided by the States members of the consortium and IFESCCO. For Kyrgyzstan it is good practice, wherein we can democratize the master's degree education and make acceptable for our country to participate.

Traditionally, our youth strive for education and have equal rights and access to education as guaranteed by the Constitution. In this regard, we must fully develop and strengthen our participation in the projects of academic mobility of two-diploma programs to educate specialist of the international level.

Development of joint curricula, other teaching methods and joint state certification, gives us an opportunity to learn from the experience of colleagues from leading universities of CIS countries. The joint education activities within the Network University of the CIS resulted in a remarkable cooperation in the field of research and obtaining academic degrees. Professors from our university defended Doctoral theses at the academic council in the RUPF.

The preparation of Master's programs in the Network University of the CIS and the University of SCO is important for further professional development of our university faculty members. At present, two professors who graduated from the Network University of the CIS work in our university.

Table 1. CIS statistics of the CIS

Fields of study	Years	Type of Funding	of participants
Jurisprudence (International Law); International Relations (World Economy); Economy (International Trade); Management (International Management, International Project Management); Philology (Russian language and literature); Tourism (Planning and development of tourism at the state level).	2010-2011	Budget of the Russian Federation Grant IFESCCO Total	9 6 15
	2011-2012	Budget of the Russian Federation Grant IFESCCO Total	10 6 16
	2012-2013	The budget of the Russian Federation Grant IFESCCO Total	10 11 22
	2013-2014	The budget of the Russian Federation	7
	2014-2015	Budget of the Russian Federation Grant IFESCCO Total	8 7 15
	2015-2016	Budget of the Russian Federation Grant IFESCCO Total	8 7 15
	Total:		

The statistics show that the number of students in the Master's programs in the Russian universities of the Network University of the CIS increased in 2012-2013 and reached 22 people a year. Unfortunately, now the annual number of students dropped to 15 people. It should be noted that the number of students enrolled in the Master's program as funded from the Russian Federation budget and IFESCCO grants is sufficiently large (within the framework of one university). Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan allocate quotas for studying in the network university at the expense of the public budgets, but they practically exist only on paper. Only due to the Russian Federation, our students have real possibilities. If we fully implement bilateral agreements, this would multiply the number of students in joint programs and further increase the academic mobility within CIS.

Student mobility of is the main aspect of internationalized higher education. During the Soviet period, our university attracted students from states with a similar ideology. According to experts, in 2025, the number of students studying abroad will reach five million people. The most famous European programs are "Erasmus" and "Socrates". Student exchange is a powerful tool for development of the European specialist market and qualified workers. Within the framework of "Erasmus", there is a special project "Erasmus Mundus", which works with students from third countries that are not members of the European Union.

The international education services market becomes a rapidly developing sector of economics, where the main elements are active international marketing, the search and recruitment of international students. This practice is productive from the economic point of view.

One of the aspects of the academic mobility programs development is the need for the internationalization of curricula, the changes in curricula that are in line with the spirit of the time. Undoubtedly such work is likely to improve the level and quality of the national programs. Curricula and national educational should not be limited to internal problems. If we want recognition of our diplomas and the growth of competitiveness of our specialists, then we must meet certain international standards and organize our activities at the international level, guaranteeing minimum standard requirements, quality of education and professionalism, accreditation and other things.

At last, the joint work on methodological documents leads to an increase in qualifications of our university faculty and staff, solution of complex global challenges of harmonization and international integration of national system of higher education, creation of the unitary educational

space, at least, within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC).

The dissemination of best practices in the university environment, in our point of view, stimulates the quality of educational programs. Currently many national universities are trying to form and join Consortia, which bring the maximum benefit to higher education institutions in various directions. For example, there are new Network associations, including Russian-Kyrgyz Consortium of Technical Universities and the Network Institute in the field of countering the legalization of crime profits and terrorism financing. These are narrowly specialized consortia that have specific missions.

National universities will be able to fit the requirements for internationalization of [higher education, including both mobility and coordination of curricula, compliance with international systems of quality control and accreditation], only through integration with representatives of higher education, combining national academies of traditions and modern methods of the educational process.

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