

## Perspectives of Kazakhstan higher professional education on the competitive market of educational services

Nowadays all countries either developed or developing, live in market economy environment which affects all spheres of life including education, the latter being in great demand in today's educated technological age. In this situation, educational institutions in developed countries are willing to promote their services around the world in order to attract foreign students selling them high quality education services. Globalization of higher education including internationalization, integration and informatization, became the major peculiarity of forming market relationship in higher education sphere, as these processes are characterized by some concrete components, such as distant learning development and international cooperation between universities. Thus, the world tendency of expanding economic freedom of universities activity transformed commercial education sphere development into one of the components of higher education globalization.

Kazakhstan is not either a market leader or market challenger on the globalized education market. Not even a market follower, providing its massive services to foreign students. Though many students from India and Arabic countries chose education in Kazakhstan in Soviet times, today only about ten thousand foreign students study in the republican higher education institutions. There are objective reasons for that – firstly, Kazakhstan is not a member of WTO and can't enjoy the advantages of its membership while providing its services in the sphere of education in other countries in most favourable conditions; and, secondly, the level of higher education in Kazakhstan still leaves much to be desired.

At the same time, young people in Kazakhstan are willing to study abroad, as foreign education is known as prestigious in Kazakhstan business environment and can boost their future earnings. Human development is one of the main strategies in a country development. So, Kazakhstan government provides some programmes and grants for young people in Kazakhstan for educating them abroad, for example the 'Bolashak' programme, initiated by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, gives the talented young people the opportunity to study in the best world universities. So, about 3000 scholarship holders currently study in 27 countries of the world. The total number of

young people studying abroad is more than 20 thousand people according to statistics.

From the above, the certain conclusions can be made. Having the leading position in the system of continuous education, the higher education directly and indirectly is connected with economy, science, technologies and culture of any society. Consequently, the higher education development is an important part of the strategy of general national development.

However, globalization of higher education removes national boundaries and cultural peculiarities of any country striving to preserve its national and cultural identity, and is completely unacceptable in such an important sphere as educating a future citizen of a country. There also exists a problem of the so called '*brain drain*', when young people having been educated abroad, sometimes are not eager to come back to their country and prefer staying in a foreign country.

So, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is necessary to understand clearly the format of higher professional education in a country, and competencies of professionals graduating from higher education institutions in near and distant future, in order to provide high quality education to people, and as a result, to contribute to the country development in general. On the other hand, higher educational institutions should have the opportunity to provide their services to young people in other countries.

What shall Kazakhstan higher education institutions do in order to enter the international education market and provide high quality education services not only to Kazakhstani, but also to foreign students? In 2004 the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan declared new strategies to be introduced in the country, which said: *going ahead towards competitive Kazakhstan, competitive economy, competitive nation*. In the light of that mission statement, there was elaborated the national programme of education development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2005 – 2010. The outcomes of the programme realization are as follows:

- There was issued the Law of RK "On Education" in new edition.
- There was created the National system of education quality assessment.
- ENT and PGK testing were introduced.
- Kazakhstan joined the Bologna process.

- Bachelor – Master – PhD doctor preparation system was implemented.
- Credit technology educational system was introduced.
- There was created the national model of educational institutions accreditation.
- There was introduced university ranking.

Recently, there was worked out and approved by the President of Kazakhstan *The National Programme of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011 – 2020.(01.02.2010)*

The main goals of this programme are stated to be: cardinal modernization of educational system, steady increase of investments into education, improving quality of education in accordance with best practices in Europe. Consequently, the following tasks related to higher education system are set to be fulfilled:

- Introduction of new institutional and economic mechanisms into the sphere of education;
- Increase of education management efficiency;
- Development of educational infrastructure;
- Faculties quality improvement;
- Introduction of e-learning system;
- Improvement of educational structure, content and technologies and adjusting them in accordance with Bologna process parameters;
- Accreditation of higher education institutions in appliance with international educational standards, thus entering the rating of the best world universities;
- Relationship of educational system with scientific technological and innovative policies;
- Creation of the system of non-stop education for life.

The Programme is going to be implemented in two phases: the first stage – in years 2011 2015, and the second within the years 2016 – 2020. As the organizational basis of the national policy in educational sphere, the Programme will provide continuation of Kazakhstan education modernization. The Programme is, in fact, the system of interrelated - in terms of resources and time - measures, embracing changes in the structure, content and technologies of education, management system, organizational and legal forms of educational institutions, and financial and economic mechanisms.

Besides, the Programme implementation has an intersectorial nature aiming all the stages of educational system that allows conducting the common educational policy in the country, solution of all problems of disproportion in development of regional educational systems and formation of the common educational and informational space.

Currently Kazakhstan joined all the main international acts in different spheres, such as education, protection of human rights and rights of children. Among them there are General Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on Children Rights, International Declaration of Economic, Social and Cultural Human rights, Bologna and Lisbon Conventions in the sphere of education and some others.

In 2010 Kazakhstan undertook the leadership in the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) which gives the Republic new opportunities for entering the world educational space.

According to the Report on development of UNO (2009) Kazakhstan belongs to the group of countries with high level of human development, occupying the 82<sup>nd</sup> position among 182 countries.

Human resources development is determined to be the highest priority for our country in the Strategic development plan of the Republic for years 2010 -2020. In the future, getting economic benefits is closely connected with investments into education, which is supposed to increase significantly quality and productivity of labour force. That is why in the current decade particular attention will be paid to improvement of education services quality.

One of the factors and consequences of globalization is free flow of information, intellectual produce and ideas. Young generation of Kazakhstan is open for new ideas and thinks globally. Today in Kazakhstan there are many opportunities for creating new innovative infrastructure as well as using existing one. The country continues to develop modern information, telecommunication and other science intensive technologies and their implementation into scientific and technical activity and industry processes. Technologies in the country today provide good and fast movement of information

Higher education system in Kazakhstan should strive to achieve the world high educational standards and become a full member of the international education space. One of the mechanisms of achieving this objective is implementing the parameters of the Bologna process that include three level system of higher education, credit technologies in education, academic mobility of teachers and students and quality control of higher education system.

Creation of Nazarbayev University, a prestigious education institution of the world level, in Astana will provide qualitative breakthrough in preparation of national engineering, technical and scientific personnel and formation of modern research infrastructure.

Unfortunately, there still exist the state compulsory standards in the country which strictly regulate educational process and its content, and do not allow higher education institutions adjusting the current changes in economics. On the other hand, universities and institutes are given certain freedom in defining the content of their working curricula today, for instance, elective component in baccalaureate is increased from 40% to 50%, in post-graduate course from 50% to 60% and in doctoral course – from 70% to 80%.

Among other disadvantages of higher education in Kazakhstan there are also:

- dissatisfaction of employers with professional skills of specialists since educational programmes do not always correspond to economy demands;
- negative tendencies in faculty composition at universities, such as work for more than one employer, insufficient quality of teachers;
- outdated material and technical basis at universities, which do not allow to conduct qualitative research work;
- higher educational institutions are focused rather on educational functions than research work, and some others.

Nevertheless, the work on eliminating existing problems in higher education is being conducted currently. Higher education institutions establish long-term relationship with their counterparts abroad – in the USA, UK, Europe, China Malaysia,

Korea, etc. There have been signed more than 130 international contracts in the spheres of education and science; more than 150 universities have direct relationship with foreign partners. The effective cross-pollination takes place within this cooperation that leads to improvement of education level.

Among opportunities for universities to participate in research work is creation of research laboratories under universities, commercialization of the results of research work and financing of research projects. The programme implies decentralization of management principles in science and its orientation to the market which will lead to fruitful cooperation between business and science and creation of the mechanism for developing new technologies and providing their practical use. The good proportion between educational and scientific purposes at universities will result in scientific development in general.

The programme also includes further modernization of the system of education and its quality improvement with the perspective of conformity of education in Kazakhstan and Europe.

The progressive development and modernization of education system in Kazakhstan are possible due to understanding of necessity and importance of human capital development by the leadership of the Republic, as well as due to comprehensive support of reforms in the sphere of education by the President of Kazakhstan and the government of RK.

## **Literature:**

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