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**КЫРГЫЗ РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫНЫН ЖОГОРКУ БИЛИМ СИСТЕМАСЫН ӨЗГӨРТҮҮ
ЗАРЫЛЧЫЛЫГЫ: КӨЙГӨЙЛӨР ЖАНА АЛАРДЫ ЧЕЧҮҮ ЖОЛДОРУ**

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**НЕОБХОДИМОСТЬ РЕФОРМИРОВАНИЯ СИСТЕМЫ ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ
В КЫРГЫЗСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКЕ: ПРОБЛЕМЫ И ПУТИ РЕШЕНИЯ**

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**THE NECESSITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM REFORM IN KYRGYZ
REPUBLIC: PROBLEMS AND WAYS OF RISING EFFICIENCY**

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Бул илимий макалада биз Кыргыз Республикасынын жогорку билим берүү системасынын көйгөйлөрү жана аларды чечүү жолдорун такуулайбыз. Бул макалада жогорку билим берүү системасын сүрөттөп, анализдеп жана чечүү жолдорун беребиз.

Негизги сөздөр: Кыргыз Республикасы, жогорку билим берүү системасы, жогорку окуу жайлары.

Данная статья посвящена анализу системы высшего образования в Кыргызской Республике, говорится о проблемах и о возможных реформах в этой сфере. Здесь мы представляем, анализируем и предлагаем пути решений данной проблемы.

Ключевые слова: Кыргызская Республика, система высшего образования, высшие учебные заведения.

This article analyses the higher education system of Kyrgyz Republic, its problems and possible reforms in this sphere. In this article we are showing, analyzing and solving these problems.

Key words: Kyrgyz Republic, higher education system, and higher education institutions.

**HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM OF
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

The development of higher professional education in the country is more dynamic. In 1991, the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic had 12 higher education institutions with 58 800 students whereas at present 55 higher education institutions. These higher education institutions include 31 public, 15 non-governmental and 8 branches of CIS higher education institutions, consist of 55 structural training subdivisions including 34 institutes and 10 centers with legal entity status, 9 branches and 2 technical schools and provide higher education programs to over 230 000 students. The number of students per 10 thousand head of the population has increased. In 1995 this figure was 141 whereas today it is more than 460, which is the highest rate in the world [1]. 42% of our population possesses higher education [2].

Over the past 20 years, priority was given to the development of regional universities in the country. In 1991, the majority of students (80%) were trained in the capital, and their number decreased to 53% currently,

while the remaining 47% are trained in the regions. The following training programs provided by higher education institutions in Kyrgyzstan: undergraduate, graduate, graduates, as well as postgraduate and doctoral studies.

Bachelor degree lasts 4 years - is a recognized academic degree of initial higher education, which gives access to training in the master degree and the related employment in the labor market. Master degree 2 years is a recognized academic degree that gives access to postgraduate studies (candidate of science) and related employment in the labor market.

Of the 217 000 students of state universities only 13.5% receive state scholarship, although this percentage began to rise.

The majority of students attend public higher education institutions – over 212 000 which is 91.7% of the total number of students in the country. Over 204 000 of them are paying for their tuition and only 12.1% receive state scholarships. Over 95 500 students are paying for their education in higher education institutions located in the capital city. 52.4% of students are full-time, 46% on correspondence courses, 0.4% attend evening classes and 1.2% is on distance learning. Over 200 specialties are offered, but there are imbalances in favor of certain specialties. For example, in Bishkek the majority of students are studying economic specialties – 32,299 students (or 28.7% of the total number of students), 16,807 - technical specialties (14.9%), 15,885 – law (14.1%) and 15,709 -teacher training (14%) [3].

One of the main problems of higher education that nowadays we have thousands of economists, lawyers, specialists in political sciences and international relations but they can't find job. The main problem is that Ministry of Education and Science has to plan or give approximate number of specialists that Kyrgyz Republic needs. The lack of specialists in some spheres is a real problem.

For several years the Kyrgyz Republic has been making efforts to introduce the main principles of the Bologna agreement. Higher education institutions have introduced a multi-stage continuous system of education, a system of credit hours and student and faculty

mobility. However, there are many problems with higher professional education.

Assessing the performance of higher education institutions, licensing and attestation of educational institutions remain serious problems. Practice shows that in recent years no higher education institutions have been refused a license and all have successfully passed attestation, but employers continually express discontent with the competence of graduates. There is no adequate system of guaranteeing higher education quality or its level when graduating and there are no independent accreditation agencies in the country. The existing higher education institutions management system has proved to be ineffective and the current system for choosing heads of higher education institutions does not correspond to the interests of the higher education institutions and self-governance bodies of higher educational institutions - Academic Councils, Boards of Trustees, disciplinary and financial committees - are ineffective. There is no suitable system for training education managers no institutions offer education management programs in the sphere of higher education [4].

In Kyrgyzstan from 2000 to 2012 the number of students increased by 19% or from 188 820 people to 231 562. At the beginning of 2012 - 2013 academic year, the number of the female was 126 213, male students - 105 349. The smallest number of students observed in the Osh region, so at the beginning of 2012-2013 academic year, their number was 606 people. Most students are in Bishkek, there were - 147 705 people.

According to the Labor Strategy Paper for 2009-2011 education remains a key priority for the country's development, and the Kyrgyz Republic confirmed its intention to adopt the principles of the Bologna process is advanced and proven principles within the framework of Tempus.

PROBLEMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

The main problem in the higher education system is **low quality** of higher education. There are many reasons as following: 90% of professors in HEIs are only Russian and Kyrgyz speaking. Also students are Russian and Kyrgyz speaking. There are no high quality materials in these languages, as we are aware all the world best literatures are in English. All the best articles and scientific documents are in English. Our professor staff and students are not capable of reading and using these teaching and research materials.

Among 55 higher education institutions only American University of Central Asia offers all the programs in **English**, University of Central Asia offers two programs in English. Others are using Russian and Kyrgyz languages while teaching and doing research. There is no good teaching and research in Russian and Kyrgyz. Also all the courses and programs are concerned by giving only education, but in order to find a good job, students need to acquire some skills. Kyrgyz Republic HEIs need to include skill-giving courses in their curriculum like academic writing, academic readings, time and stress management, etc.

As mentioned above there are many economists, political scientists and lawyers while Kyrgyzstan needs more technical educated young people. In order to solve this problem Kyrgyz Republic HEIs must cooperate with public and private business organizations to better understand which specialists are needed in the country. We need to **plan** how many economists; lawyers and other specialists are needed in our country. Also Kyrgyzstan needs to augment cooperation with the most developed countries like European Union states, USA, Canada, China, Japan, Russia, India, etc. The cooperation with developed countries will help to increase quality of education and increase research capacities.

Lack of research component in higher education institutions is the next problem. As we know the universities first created as research centers not as teaching organization. But nowadays in many Kyrgyz HEIs we are witnessing the absence of research component in their curriculums and syllabi. All they are concerned by earning money but none of them is not concerned with the absence of quality of education and research. Ministry of Education and Science must work hard in this way by forcing HEIs to integrate research in their activities, by giving financial resources for research development. If we look at Web of Science and Scopus databases there is no great number of publications done by Kyrgyz researchers and professors.

The next problem is the **corruption** in higher education institutions. No serious work is being done to fight corruption in education. Student places, points and diplomas are bought and sold and there is no procedure in place for putting an "electronic signature" on higher educations and "file freezing" does not exist. There are serious problems related to graduates finding jobs and the numbers of those who cannot get jobs in their specialty or find a job at all is growing from year to year. Graduates from higher education institutions with Bachelor's degrees cannot find jobs in their specialties because many enterprises do not recognize their diplomas and request a specialty diploma. Finally, although the higher education system operates on a fee paying basis it cannot provide the additional paid educational services demanded by the population.

The next problem is that our HEIs are **not recognized** in the region and in the world. Only one among 55 HEIs American University of Central Asia is in the QS EECA world university ranking, while 18 HEIs of Kazakhstan, 61 HEIs of Russian Federation are in the QS Emerging Europe and Central Asia university ranking [5]. Internationalization of higher education is a necessary step to augment quality of education by exchanging students, staff and faculty.

Most of graduates of HEIs can't find jobs in Kyrgyzstan. They need to leave country looking for opportunities in other countries. The brain drain is also a problem for Kyrgyzstan. All the best graduates left country because they are not good paid in Kyrgyzstan or they faced corruption in society. Most of international universities alumni, like Turkish, Russian, American

universities, left Kyrgyzstan in order to continue their education, find better life conditions, better jobs and high salary.

The main reason of all these problems is lack of financial resources in Kyrgyz Republic. Kyrgyz Government expends only about 9 million dollar per year to higher education that is not enough. There are many international donors trying to improve this situation, but because of corruption and ineffective state administration and policy, they are not so useful for instance. Among donors we can tell about the contribution of European Union, Asian Development Bank, USAID, etc.

Our recommendations: In order to solve these problems first, State must augment the budget dedicated to higher education. Kyrgyz HEIs must strive to be included in international rankings. There are many criteria that our HEIs must fulfill. If they fulfill all these

criteria it will conduct to improvement of quality of higher education in Kyrgyz Republic. Internationalization of higher education is also a best way to raise the quality of education. By attracting foreign faculty and students we can augment exchange of experience, education. Each HEI must be responsible for the quality of education that they give to their students.

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