

A.V. Sharkova – Financial University, Moscow: COOPERATION OF RUSSIAN UNIVERSITIES WITH EMPLOYERS: EXPERIENCE AND PROSPECTS

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As the world is undergoing a period of innovative development the economic growth and competitiveness of a country is becoming to be determined by corresponding achievements in science and technologies. The main subjects of the innovative market are: organizations (enterprises) – acting as creators of innovative goods, and the state – acting as a mechanism of business support and stimulation. Integral participant of innovative processes between these subjects are higher education institutions because they provide organizations with highly qualified personnel, while the state coordinates and finances the system of education.

The level of public expenditure on education as a percentage to GDP in a number of innovatively developed countries is an important indicator and can be seen in Figure 1.

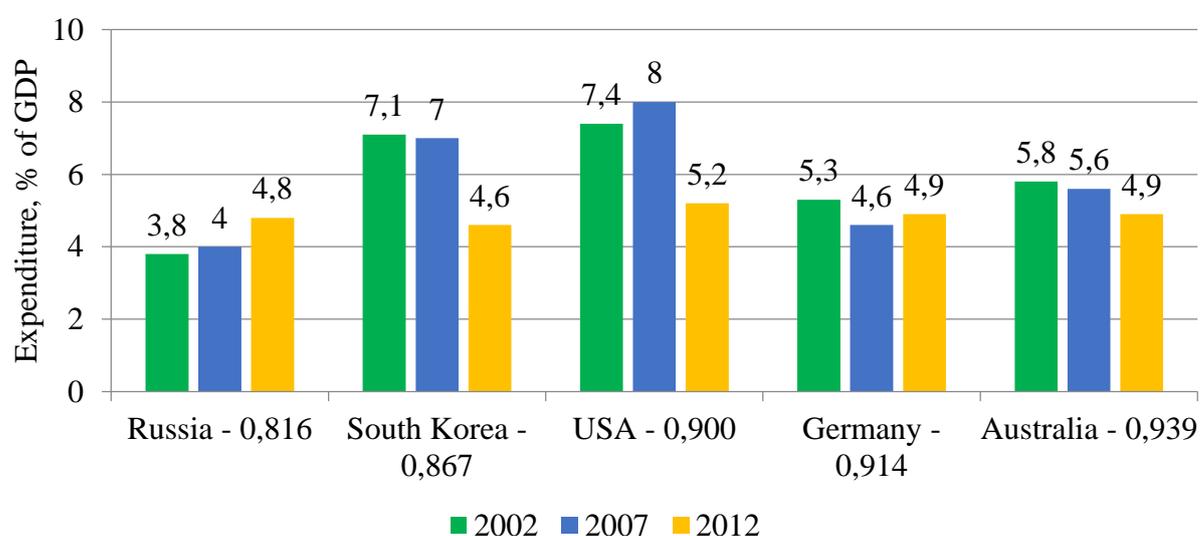


Figure 1 – Public expenditure on education as a percentage to GDP by country in 2002 - 2012 [14]

Comparing the volume of public expenditure on education it is also essential to consider qualitative indicators. It is in these countries that Education Index varied in 2015 from 0,816 in Russia to 0,939 in Australia, as is stated in the data prepared by online edition of the information and analytical agency "Center of Humanitarian Technologies" together with UNDP Project Support Office in the Russian Federation [16].

The level of expenditure on education as a percentage to GDP in innovatively developed countries has a very significant share, however by 2012 there appeared to be a tendency of the share to decrease which was triggered by the world financial crisis. In Russia the share of expenditure on education increases every year, which is related to a recently introduced country policy of innovative development requiring considerable investments in science and education.

The main directions of Russian innovation policy were introduced in 2005 and are to be implemented in several stages. By 2020 the country plans to make a breakthrough and increase global competitiveness of its economy.

In order to achieve the purpose set and in accordance with the world practice, the state prioritizes research activity and innovative development in the sphere of higher education. The state initiatives include not only financial support, but also assistance in fostering cooperation of higher education institutions with organizations (enterprises) – external consumers of educational services [1, 2].

Russian strategy of innovative development triggered a need to reform the system of education – a human capital creator, or, in other words, a need to foster competitive advantage of the country.

Correspondingly, in 2015 the state adopted the Federal target program of education development in 2016 - 2020 which states: "The purpose of the Program is to create conditions for effective development of Russian education aimed at providing availability of quality education meeting the requirements of modern innovative socially oriented development of the Russian Federation".

In particular, the expected outcomes of the program in the sphere of higher education are:

First, founding networks of higher education institutions guided by key industries of the regional economies particularly involved in research and innovations;

Second, introducing new mechanisms of employers' participation in providing enterprises with qualified personnel at the regional level [4].

In order to fulfill the goals mentioned target indicators are established. Thus, for example, by 2020 it is planned that all higher education institutions should introduce a system of graduates' career and employment monitoring. In 2015 this system functioned only in 2% of higher education institutions. Today this figure is 46%, given target indicators of 50% for 2017. Another indicator is "the share of students studying at educational programs realized in cooperation with potential employers", where under cooperation we understand that the employer is to organize and provide educational and work internship, provide equipment and

materials, participate in development of educational programs and assess their development, carry out studies. By 2020 this indicator is to reach 100%, while by the beginning of the Program implementation (in 2015) it amounted to 80,4%.

As a result, comparing values of actually achieved results of the indicator to the standard value of the same indicator we derive the effectiveness of a certain activity of the Program.

Therefore, the efficiency of the complex Program performance will be characterized by high degree of a ratio of investments into the Program and benefits from its implementation at the macroeconomic level, namely GDP growth, increase in the share of educational services in GDP, reduction of the unemployment rate among citizens with higher education.

Thus, it is necessary to emphasize that domestic organizations, enterprises and business are still experiencing a shortage of highly qualified personnel produced by higher education institutions. Although the share of population with higher education aged from 25 up to 64 years in Russia makes 54%, according to the data by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development for 2014, which is much higher than this indicator for other countries.

The discrepancy between education acquired and high requirements of employers results in unemployment among the population with higher education, or face an education-occupation mismatch. For this reason a close interaction of higher education institutions with potential employers at all stages and processes of training students become necessary.

As confirmation of the above, in Figure 2 the data of monitoring of employment among graduates of higher education institution in the federal districts, which was carried out by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation in 2015 – 2016, are submitted.

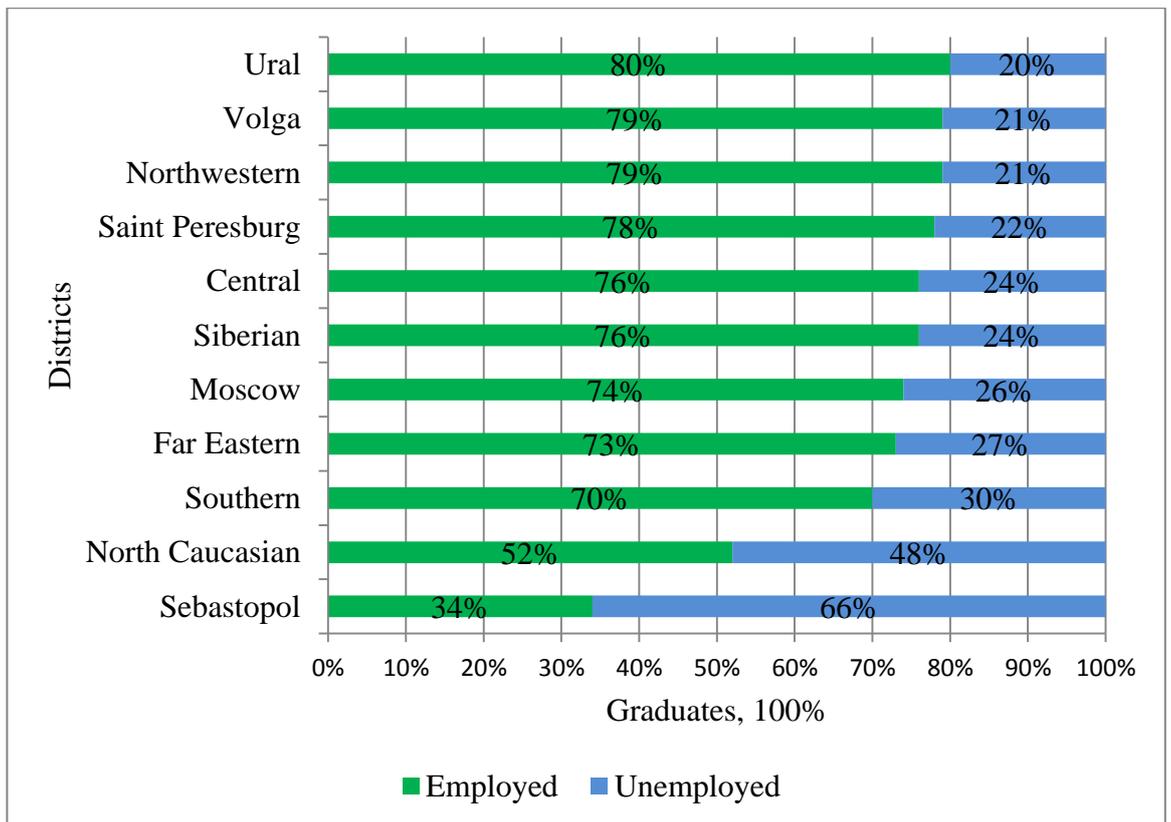


Figure 2 – Employment of university graduates by district in 2015 - 2016 [15]

According to the data on employment of the graduates provided by the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation, Rosobrnadzor and higher education institutions on average 70% of Russian graduates are employed, and 30% according to the statistics remain unemployed [15].

Nevertheless, one shouldn't judge about these challenges to the society too crucially.

First, the provided data are averages, and unfortunately, the monitoring involved not all higher education institutions. That is at the moment there are higher education institutions where the problem of employment of the graduates remains.

Secondly, work on interaction of the state, employers and higher education institutions is at the stage of formation of new mechanisms demanded by the current economic situation, but there are already some results.

Many higher education institutions in Russia have structural subdivisions for employment of graduates, for example, the Office of career planning and development in Financial university under the Government of the Russian Federation, Employment Department in Bauman Moscow State Technical University, Employment Department in I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University, etc. [18, 20,21].

Effective bilateral interaction between universities and employers at all stages of training students considerably simplifies employment of graduates on mutually advantageous conditions for all the parties concerned.

On such platforms of interaction, partners of higher education institutions (potential employers of students) provide opportunities for professional practice of students, career advice and jointly develop curriculum. Higher education institutions participate in employment of students and graduates, hold all various consultations on career planning and development, organize career events and traineeships.

Traditional forms of cooperation of higher education institutions and employers have also remained.

The process of integration of higher education institutions and employers begins with signing the contracts on joint activity with the enterprises, e.g. it starts with organizing professional practice of students which is an integral part of curriculum in compliance with FGOS of higher education.

Another type of contracts are contracts on cooperation which stipulate organization of various "round tables", master classes and seminars devoted to current problems and involving professionals.

For the involvement of potential employers, the staff of higher education institutions attends various exhibitions, fairs; commissions on protection of final qualification works are chaired by potential employers and graduates quite often find jobs at their enterprises. In higher education institutions representatives of enterprises are directly involved in educational process giving lectures and conducting seminar and practical classes.

One of the mechanisms used by higher education institutions is organizing and holding training events involving employers. Training events are understood as formation of "business etiquette" with graduates for effective behavior in the labor market. During such trainings, besides basic abilities – writing CVs, cover letters and creating portfolios, students are offered various business games. These games quite often model a real situation of communication with potential employers [13].

Nonconventional forms and methods of cooperation of higher education institutions and enterprises are widely used by the leading higher education institutions in Russia.

For example, there is a mechanism of inner sponsorship of the projects– creation of Endowment funds in universities. The Fund of the target capital of Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation founded in 2007 became one of the first funds of this type in Russia. Transfer of the gained income to Financial University is carried out on the basis of a contract of donation. The gained income is aimed at the development of material

and technical resources of the university, namely at technological re-equipment of the publishing house of the university, invitation of famous teachers from foreign higher education institutions and scientific centers, payment for participation of students in All-Russian and international contests and conferences and many other things. Since 2008 more than 155 million rubles have been transferred to Financial University. It should be noted that the Fund was founded and being sponsored by the representatives of such companies as Vnesheconombank, the Groups "Oneksim", "Sberbank of Russia", Vozrozhdeniye bank, etc. [7, 19].

Identical funds function actively in Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Lomonosov Moscow State University, National research university "Higher School of Economics", Saint Petersburg State University of Economics, etc. [22, 23, 24, 25].

Holding large competitions among students has already become a constant form of cooperation of higher education institutions and employers. The scope of these competitions varies according to orientation of higher education institutions, and the prizes are single and monthly grants, trainings, financial support and valuable prizes – smartphones, laptops, permits, etc.

The mechanism of the closest integration of employers and higher education institutions on the basis of long-term effective cooperation is organizing departments in higher education institutions by enterprises at their own expense, e.g. acquisition of the equipment, equipping the rooms, recruiting members of departments from the staff of the enterprise. These enterprises set for themselves priority tasks of exchange of knowledge and experience with students and professional development of graduates which will positively affect their career in the future. Students can receive practical skills – as close as possible to real processes in business environment.

Eventually coherent actions of higher education institutions and employers generate conditions for development of labor relations in a certain region and the country in general [13].

Many researches of N.N.Shevelyova, K.V.Vodenko, P.K.Moor, V.G.Getman, V.G. Zarubina, G.A.Volkovitskaya ,E.A.Morozova, etc. are devoted to the problem of integration of higher education institutions and employers. They also describe the prospects of further development of the problem [12, 5, 10, 6, 8, 11].

N.N. Shevelyov considers that before higher education institutions there have to be essentially new tasks set, e.g. providing not education for the rest of life but abilities for lifelong education. Therefore Shevelyov N.N. considers that at the output higher education institutions have to train experts who will at least obtain abilities to search and process

information, business etiquette, communication and self-presentation, knowledge of foreign languages. Influence of employers on education process is possible through the order of educational programs for training of exclusive experts focused on a certain enterprise. It is offered to invest resources into creation of joint educational and scientific laboratory complexes and centers [12].

K.V. Vodenko approached this issue as a philosophical problem with the leading role of the state in integration of higher education institutions and employers. The author suggests the state to pay more attention to creating bigger number of small innovative enterprises on the basis of higher education institutions which are capable to prepare graduates more effectively. Thereby the relations between higher education institutions and employers will find closer character that will serve further as a driver of development of Russian economy [5, 9].

P.K. Moor and S.M. Moor believe that cooperation of higher education institutions and employers in the long term has to be crossed in a key of electronic education. Authors note a need of acceptance of organizational measures and provisions to regulate advance of electronic education as innovative field of development of civilization [10].

The state program of the Russian Federation "Development of education for 2013 - 2020" sets the tasks that provide closer interaction of higher education institutions and employers at the regional level. The modern economy and inquiries of the society demand to form the system of continuous education both at the request of the population and at the request of enterprises [3].

Thus Russian higher education in the long term will supply the labor market with highly qualified specialists for employing them in high-performance workplaces created by employers. The state and business will continue to invest resources into scientific and innovative activity of higher education institutions. It will allow to increase the number of domestic higher education institutions functioning in the global market of higher education, science and innovations and entering the rating of the leading world universities.

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