

Management problems of the higher education in Kyrgyzstan

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan began experiencing serious problems in the education sector. These problems, on the one hand, are caused by social and economic situation in the country, and on the other hand, by the absence of qualified managers, who could be ready to carry out of social requirements of young generation in different branches of professional preparation.

At the same time the necessity of opposition to global nature of natural and social cataclysms sets for teachers urgent issues on preparation of the future generation for mutual understanding and mutual support in the conditions of the open society, for ability to preserve peace and socialization in the conditions of democratic and multicultural society.

Principles and general objectives of the education

Education in Kyrgyzstan is organized in a comprehensive system of upbringing and training established in the interest of the individual, the society and the State, to assure the moral, intellectual and physical health of the nation.

Law on Education established the following basic principles of education in Kyrgyzstan:

- all the citizens have the equal right to education regardless of sex, nationality, language, and social status, political or religious belief;
- mandatory and free primary and secondary education for every citizen in public and municipal educational institutions;
- education shall be humanistic in character, placing priority on universal values, fostering civic mindedness, diligence, patriotism and respect for human rights and freedoms;

Administration and management of education in Kyrgyzstan

The central executive body for State education management is the Ministry of education and Science (MES). Ministry is responsible for education policy and its implementation, education strategy development, state education standards, ensuring the right to education, introduction of innovative practices, curriculum development, and state examination procedures.

The Ministry is also responsible for the training and upgrading of teachers for general education, statistical support, monitoring and international cooperation. It also administers national education institutions (kindergartens, secondary schools, vocational and specialized secondary schools as well as higher education

institutions) and determines, according to norms, expenditure for education on behalf of the Government.

The Ministry is headed by a Minister. The departments in the Ministry are: higher and secondary professional education; general secondary education; and preschool education. The departments are independent structural subdivisions of the Ministry which perform executive functions and coordinate the State education policy. The departments are directed via decisions of the Government decrees and Ministry.

The structure of education

There are four main stages of educational process:

1. Preschool education, which occupies the children from two years till six.
2. Secondary education. It includes three stages: primary education, basic secondary education and complete secondary education.
3. Vocational education.
4. Higher education

Preschool education careers for children in the age group 2-7 years and is not compulsory. Basic purpose of preschool education is the preparation of children for school, namely training in literacy, numeracy, drawing and music. There are infant schools which admit children in age group 1.5-3 and kindergartens which cater for children aged 3-7.

Primary education.

It is the first stage of the secondary education. Primary education starts at school. Children start attending school at the age of 6 or 7. It lasts four years (grades 1 to 4). Primary education is compulsory. It should provide children with basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic, culture of behavior and speech, personal hygiene and healthy living.

Basic secondary education is the second stage of secondary education. It lasts 5 years (from grade 5 to 9). After getting basic secondary education a person has two options. First is to continue his/her education at school in order to obtain complete secondary education, which is the third final stage of secondary education. It lasts two years (grades 10-11). At this stage students are prepared for further higher education.

Vocational education

Second option after finishing basic secondary education is to enter vocational education school, such as professional lyceums vocational technical colleges. They offer three types of courses:

1. three-year programs, combining a vocational specialty with general education and providing students with the necessary certificate to study further in a higher education institution;

2. two-year programs that are designed for grade 9 graduates and provide vocational education with some general education, but without the necessary components required for higher education;
3. 10-month courses that strictly target vocational skills. Another type of vocational education institution is Technicum, for grade 11 graduates' offers diploma and bachelor's degree programs.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union Kyrgyzstan began experiencing serious problems in the education sector (De Young, 2004, Duishon Samatov , 2012). Almost 70% of Kyrgyzstan's population and 83% of schools are located in rural areas (UNDP, 2003).

Higher education

Higher education institutions include universities, academies and institutions. Admission to university is subject to the results of the entrance examination. There are two forms of education programs. First is traditional form. It is legacy of the Soviet education system. It lasts for five years. After graduation student gets a degree of specialist.

The second form of education system has two stages. First lasts for four years and provides with Bachelor's Degree and the second form is two-year program offering Master's Degree. Higher education institutions also offer *aspirantura* and *doctorantura* programs for the training of the scientists and researchers. Aspirantura programs lead to the candidate of science degree and doctorantura lead to the doctor of science degree.

This year by the Ministry of Education was declared the necessity of passing to European standards of Higher Education. That means that from the beginning of 2012-2013 teaching year every university in Kyrgyzstan should prepare bachelors. At present or to the beginning of 2012 there are many levered education system take place in Kyrgyzstan. They are:

- 2 years incomplete higher schools;
- 4 years basic higher education, which giving bachelor degree (correspond to undergraduate education of the USA);
- Full or complete higher education – giving master degree (correspond to graduate education of the USA);
- Some Institutions preparing specialists, for example art specialists, translators and others.

Higher education was free during the USSR and students were eligible for stipends. However, there were very few higher education institutions and only 15

percent of secondary school graduates were able to attend higher education institutions. (De Young, 2008)

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- **Current situation in Higher Education in Kyrgyzstan**
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	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
The number of Higher schools in:	49	50	54	56	54
Including governmental:	33	31	32	33	33
Including private:	16	19	22	23	21
Entered the higher schools:	55412	46210	46375	45112	51809
The number, who are Graduated:	26395	33540	38106	37966	41811

- This table shows that the number of post-secondary schools in the Kyrgyz Republic is increasing every year. For example, if in 1990 there were only 10 higher schools in Kyrgyz Republic, and now there are 54 higher schools for 5 million citizens of the Republic. These are Universities, Academies, Institutions, Colleges and their branches in different regions of our country. The whole number of students is more than 239 thousands.

Current social-economic and pedagogical problems of higher education

There are some common social-economic problems that beset the higher education system in Kyrgyzstan.

The first problem is connected with social and economic situation in the country (which transforming to social relations based on market economy) and may be characterized by the following:

- Most part of the economy belongs to private owners (including foreigners), who do not bear any concrete responsibility before the citizens;
- The State is gradually cutting off its social guaranties in education and upbringing of the youth;
- There is no state ideology of upbringing the future generation
- Level of external and internal migration is increasing and children are affected by this most of all;

- Big number of various religious movements and low spiritual culture of the people;
- There is ongoing process of globalization, which is in conflict with national identification processes etc.

All these processes are taking place alongside with open and transparent borders, which on one hand has some positive tendencies, but on the other hand has strong negative influence, which is often aimed to develop low demands and primitive attitudes among children and youth and consequently demoralize whole society.

In this situation social and pedagogical objective of teachers and society is to neutralize negative influence at young people, to harmonize the spiritual mood of growing person, to fill the inner world of young people with humanistic content, to form their social orients, aspirations and ethic ideals, and most important is to provide young person with timely psychological and pedagogical support in time of hardships. In order to implement such forming and stimulating activity it is required for all specialists involved in the work with children and youth to be socio-pedagogically competent.

- **The Second** problem is connected with the absence of qualified managers in Higher Education in Kyrgyzstan. There is no university which prepares educators to handle higher education administration yet. Most of the administrators and managers of Universities and departments in our country are not competent because of the lack of special education. It testifies vital demand of today's post-graduate schools in the preparation of new generation administrators with professional and creative abilities, who can work successfully in conditions of market economy and are able intellectually, culturally to hold leading positions in the society. The reason for such situation in our education system was a domination of an idea that administration is an unprofessional activity and no need in the special preparation for the administration work. As a result, administration of educational institutions is run by occasional people. Most of the administration people have any special knowledge, which is usual for all levels, including Heads of registrar offices, Heads of departments, principals and their deputies, Deans, their assistants and other officials, as well as junior personnel – secretaries and inspectors. Usually, as heads of administration structures are pointed those who are considered to be best teachers, but not managers. Heads of administration is the position, which is pointed out, selected by the same leveled administration members or by the known people's patronage. As a rule they do not have any special knowledge and skills in education administration. Such “managers” try to use their major education knowledge in administration processes, and then by methods of trying and mistakes gain some

experience in educational institution's administration. For gaining management experience, thus, one needs quite a long time, which is economically, socially, even psychologically not beneficial.

- Only at the Kyrgyz State National University the number of administration staff is around of a thousand people. In all educational institutions the administration work is run by people who have no special theoretical and practical education in management. Furthermore, it is quite well known for the developed countries that the number of graduates and higher educational branches are to correlate to economical, industrial and social needs of the society, so that graduates could find jobs related to their education. Unfortunately in our society this process is more chaotic than managed or regulated.

The third reason is the weak government control on the increasing number of private higher education institutions which cuts the opportunity of getting higher education from the young generation from the poor part of population. In Kyrgyz Republic poor 70% of the whole society consists of poverty. And at the same time it hampers the quality of higher education. It concerns also the other levels of education, beginning the kindergarten and ending with higher education. Governmental authorities often have no information about the background of them who are managing the educational institutions, are they have special pedagogical preparation for dealing the educational process, and respond for working with children. Most of them who open the private schools or other educational institutions are the people who have money, but not special preparation for that. And they have no any responsibility for survive, psychological and moral being and growing up of the students.

- At present there are 21 private higher schools according to 54 governmental higher schools. Rising of the number of private schools also causes the necessity of regulation and management of this process. But now the role of the Ministry of Education in Kyrgyz Republic in the regulation the educational system is decreasing, and as a result there is an increase of the number of non-special people in the administrative work. It definitely leads to of educational quality and giving way to corruption and crises.

The fourth reason is the presence of the joint universities, the number of which is increasing last years, and which are also needs special management considering the culture, the language and the backgrounds of the people operating in the universities. As for Kyrgyzstan it is a great problem, because the appearances of the joint universities are new programs and bench-marking which highlight the necessity of special higher education management. In our country

there a lot of joint universities, such as: Kyrgyz-Russian Slovenia University, Kyrgyzstan-Turkish Manas University, Kyrgyz - Turkish Ataturk – Ala-Too University, American University in central Asia, Kyrgyz–Russian Academy of Education, Kyrgyz-Uzbek University, Kyrgyz-Kuwait University, and International University of Kyrgyzstan. Study abroad opens somebody can gain the Linguistic and Intercultural skills that are essential for success in the globalized world of tomorrow. But at the same time Education in such situation also needs on special education management. The exceptional example of multicultural education I watch at the Kent State University where the number of the international student rising every year. From the perspectives of our republic the appearances of joint universities it is also a great problem, because which needs quite new experience of managing them.

The fifth reason it is necessity of management in the situation of democratization the educational system and ruling the relationship between participants of the educational process. Democratization of educational system is necessary in order to prepare youth for living, studying and working in democratic society, which supposes freedom of choice and responsibility of the students for your actions. Such educational activity has to be accompanied by pedagogical support, including giving youth information on democratic principles, offering them different ways of life self-identification, depending on the general level of development, social experience and culture. Today, it is important to strengthen the social component of educational program and technology and to actualize the problem of preparing young generation for democratic changes in society and in school (micro society) which models and reproduces richness of relationships in socio-cultural context.

Democratization of the educational system in Kyrgyzstan is characterized by the following:

- Big number of educational institutions and diversity of educational programs;
- wide range of alternative education, at schools and universities;

- the diversity of languages which needs freedom in choosing the language of study;
- distribution of democratic principles in education management;
- cooperative mood between subjects of the educational process;
- educational system is open for the society;
- starting up inclusive education etc.

In such conditions, the objective of a teacher, who is a mediator between social and cultural experience of humanity and the process of getting such experience by a person, is to render pedagogical support to student in making alternative decisions.

- **The importance of learning other experiences**
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In order to solve above mentioned problems it is necessary to learn the experience of other countries in preparation the specialists on higher education administration. At present the challenges in the sphere of higher education we are binding with learning and implementing the experience of the USA in preparation of specialist's higher education administration and on the basis of it to work out basic curriculum in the related field for the higher institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic.

I am full of hope that to study the experience of such Universities as Indiana University, Kent State University, and others, **as well as detailed analysis of the works of leading American scholars will help us to work out** similar educational programs in **our Republic**.

The education officials in Kyrgyzstan need to do systematic analyses and develop necessary safety nets to avoid anticipated or unanticipated fallout on testing. There is a need for more consolidated collaboration and joint work among stakeholders who work on education standards, curriculum development, textbook publication, teachers training and rerating, assessment and evaluation.

