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Foreign Higher Education Institutes in Kyrgyzstan

Introduction

Kyrgyzstan, formally the Kyrgyz Republic, is a country in Central Asia, which gained its independence in 1991. This mountainous country is landlocked. Unlike the other Central Asian countries, Kyrgyzstan does not have rich mineral resources. The country has a limited GDP (\$2.255 billion), and high foreign debt (\$2.247 billion), so the allocation of budget for education is limited (\$0.106 billion). Nevertheless, currently the country has 200,000 university students.

Despite these economy deficiencies, the country is very successful in attracting foreign direct investments (FDI) to the higher education system. The following rainbow of international institutions Kyrgyzstan is a good example of this success: International Ataturk Alatau University (Turkish private university), American University in Central Asia (American private university), Kyrgyz Russian Slavic University (Russian private university), Cavendish College London Bishkek (English private university), Kyrgyz Turkish Manas University (Turkish-Kyrgyz Joint State University), East University (Arabic private university), University of Central Asia (private university founded by Aga Khan), and Kyrgyz-Uzbek University (Uzbek private university). Moreover, China, South Korea and Iran are planning to open their universities in the country.

These foreign universities allow lots of Kyrgyz young people to have higher education. Although the majority of these universities are private, some of them provide fully free education, while others accept limited number of students free of charge according to their success.

The infrastructures of the international universities are different from the local universities and believed to be better. Thus, this diversification in the higher education system results in a better quality and more opportunities for Kyrgyz youth.

This study is analyzing the contribution of foreign universities to Kyrgyzstan.

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1. *Kyrgyz higher education*

The Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic had 12 higher education institutions (HEI) with 58,800 students, whereas in 2006 there were 49 HEI with more than 230,000 students (Ministry of Education, Science and Youth Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic 2006, 20).

The majority of the students attend public HEI – over 213,000, which is 92.4% of the total number of students in the country. The remaining 7.6% (17,500 students) is at private universities.

Table 1: Number of HEI

	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Total	41	39	45	48	46	47	49	49
Private	13	13	15	16	15	16	16	17

Table 2: Number of students in private and state universities

	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Total	129712	159209	188820	207420	199124	203002	218300	231100
Private	8726	13213	14341	15513	14245	15082	15806	17500
Percent	6,7	8,3	7,6	7,5	7,2	7,4	7,2	7,6
State	120896	145996	174479	191907	184879	187920	202494	213600
Percent	93,3	91,7	92,4	92,5	92,8	92,6	92,8	92,4

General National Examination is organized by the Kyrgyz Republic for both entrants and grant allocations. However, every university may organize its own entrance exams.

2. *Foreign higher education institutes*

Evaluating the Kyrgyz higher education system from FDI perspective, foreign organizations should be taken into consideration alongside with the foreign universities. For example, European Union's Tempus¹ program was established in Kyrgyzstan in 1993; since that time Tempus realized 17 large projects for a total sum of about €6 million.

Some foreign universities are the founders of some international universities in Kyrgyzstan. For example, San Francisco State University is one of the founders of the International University of Kyrgyzstan (IUK Guide for International Students 2002, 3). Furthermore, there are some faculties sponsored by foreigners at local universities. Hence, measuring the total size of FDI in higher education in Kyrgyzstan is hard, but it is obvious that Kyrgyz people are very successful in attracting FDIs.

¹ Tempus is one of a number of European Community programs, which focuses on the development of the higher education systems in the European Union's Partner Countries. For more information about Tempus program in the Kyrgyz Republic you may visit www.tempus.kg or for general information you may visit <http://ec.europa.eu/tempus>.

2.1. International Ataturk Alatau University (IAAU)

IAAU was established in February 1992 by Sebat International Educational Institutions¹ on the basis of an agreement with the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and Culture.

Table 3: Distribution of Local / International Students

Total Number of Students	Local Students	International Students
1345	1090	255
%100	%81,04	%18,96

Source: Student Service of IAAU

Table 4: Distribution of International Students According to Citizenship

Country	#	Country	#	Country	#
Afghanistan	20	Kazakhstan	14	Tajikistan	77
China	9	Germany	1	Turkey	99
Mozambique	1	Russia	10	Turkmenistan	12
Nigeria	3	Uzbekistan	7	Chad	1
Azerbaijan	1				
Total					255

Source: Student Service of IAAU

2.2. American University in Central Asia (AUCA)

In 1993, Kyrgyz-American School within the Kyrgyz State National University (KSNU) in Bishkek was established. In 1997, a three-way agreement between the government of Kyrgyzstan, the United States Department of State, and the Open Society Institute², turned it into the American University in Central Asia. AUCA graduated its first students in 1997 (www.auca.kg).

Table 5: Distribution of Local / International Students

Total Number of Students	Local Students	International Students
1274	951	323
%100	%74.64	%25.36

Source: Viewbook of AUCA

¹ Sebat International Educational Institutions is a Turkish NGO having several high schools around the Kyrgyz Republic. For more information about Sebat International Educational Institutions, you may visit www.sebat.edu.kg or you may read Keles, I. (2007) "The Contributions of the Sebat International Education Institutes to Kyrgyzstan", International Conference on Muslim World in Transition: Contributions of the Gьlen Movement, 25-26-27 October 2007, House of Lords, SOAS – University of London, & London School of Economics, London, United Kingdom

² The Open Society Institute (OSI), a private and grant making foundation, aims to shape public policy to promote democratic governance, human rights, and economic, legal, and social reforms. It was founded by George Soros. For more information about Open Society Institute and George Soros, you may visit <http://www.soros.org/>

Table 6: Distribution of International Students According to Citizenship

Country	#	Country	#	Country	#
Afghanistan	47	Israel	1	Tajikistan	24
Belorussia	1	Kazakhstan	23	Turkey	4
China	10	Pakistan	1	Turkmenistan	114
Germany	1	Russia	13	USA	23
Great Britain	1	South Korea	22	Uzbekistan	34
Iran	2	Sweden	1	Vietnam	1
Total					323

Source: Viewbook of AUCA 2007, 11

2.3. Kyrgyz Turkish Manas University (KTMU)

KTMU was founded in accordance with an agreement signed on September 30, 1995 in Izmir, between the government of the Turkish Republic and that of the Kyrgyz Republic. In 1997, the university started working. And in 2001, KTMU graduated its first students.

Table 8: Distribution of Local / International Students

Total Number of Students	Local Students	International Students
2067	1601	466
%100	%77,46	%22,54

Source: Student Service of KTMU

Table 9: Distribution of International Students According to Citizenship

Country	#	Country	#	Country	#
Afghanistan	1	Kazakhstan	17	Tajikistan	14
China	36	Mongolia	35	Turkey	222
Georgia	9	Russia	51	Turkmenistan	9
Iran	4	Uzbekistan	67	Ukraine	1
Total					466

Source: Student Service of KTMU

2.4. Mahmud Kashgari-Barskani Eastern University (MKBEU)

The International Organization of Social Reforms named “Green Ear” is doing an international charitable, noncommercial organization registered by the Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic in 1997. Its headquarters is located in Kuwait. In 1999, the Kyrgyz-Kuwait University was opened in Bishkek under the patronage of this organization. On September 14, 2004 this university was renamed into the Mahmud Kashgari-Barskani Eastern University.

Table 10: Distribution of Local / International Students

Total Number of Students	Local Students	International Students
424	413	11
%100	%97,41	%2,59

Source: Student Service of MKBEU

Table 11: Distribution of International Students According to Citizenship

Country	#
Kazakhstan	4
Tajikistan	3
Turkey	4
Total	11

Source: Student Service of MKBEU

2.5. Other Foreign Universities and Branches of Foreign Universities

Other foreign universities and branches of foreign universities in the country are as follows:

- Kyrgyz Russian Slavic University
- University of Central Asia
- Kyrgyz-Uzbek University
- Academy of Higher Education "TeachEx"
- Kyrgyz-Russian Academy of Education
- OSCE Academy
- Bishkek branch of Cavendish College London Bishkek
- Bishkek branch of International Slavic Institute
- Bishkek branch of Baltic State Technical University named after D.F.Ustinov – "Voenmech"
- Bishkek branch of Moscow Institute of Business and Law
- Bishkek branch of Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Information Technology
- Karakol branch of Moscow Institute of Business and Law
- Osh branch of Russian State Social University

Besides, there are faculties and schools performing on the basis of bilateral agreements.

The following map represents the geographical distribution of international HEI in Kyrgyzstan;

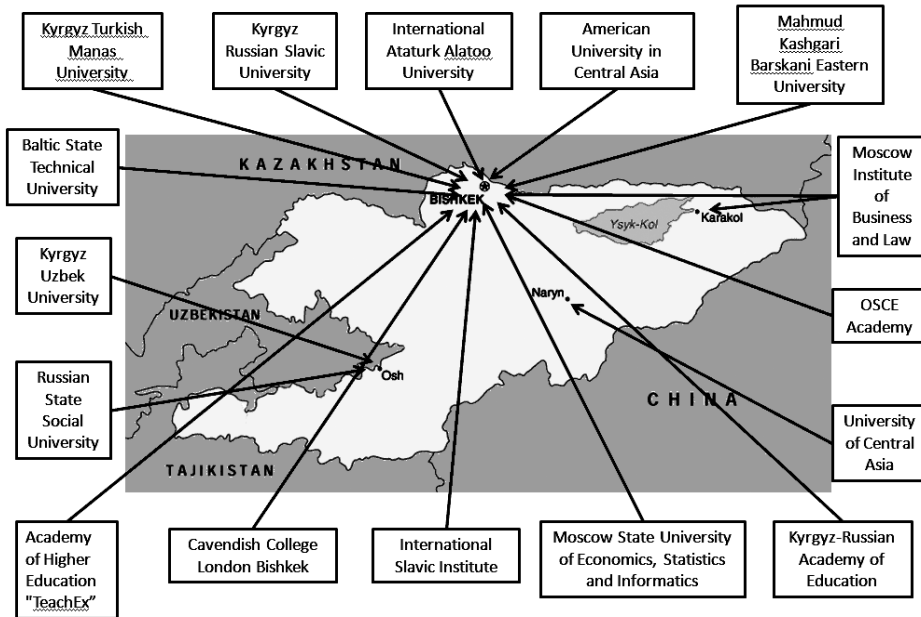


Figure 2.1. Geographical distribution of international HEI in Kyrgyzstan.

3. Conclusion

Kyrgyzstan has a high level of education. The contribution of foreign universities to Kyrgyz education system is not only quantitative but qualitative as well. These universities are adding value to Kyrgyz education system with their high quality education and creating a diversification in the system.

In developing and transition countries, many students are going abroad to pursue higher education. With the help of foreign universities, some of these students are staying in Kyrgyzstan and study.

This also increases the possibility of Kyrgyz students to get jobs in multinational companies.

Kyrgyzstan needs many skilled workers within a short time. Foreign universities are contributing a lot in this regard.

Many students from neighbouring countries are coming to study in those universities in Kyrgyzstan, which results in economic contribution.

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Вдумчиво и осмысленно использовать не-
восполнимое время жизни в соответствии
с осознанными личными ценностями и
приоритетами.

Г. Архангельский

Любой ресурс в ходе жизни может теряться и приобретаться. Время же только тра-
тится, и времени не так уж много.

Время – это материал, из которого «сделана жизнь». Время и поступки человека – не
обратимы. Сделанное можно переосмыслить, а иногда и исправить, но никто никогда

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