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Higher Education Taking Action towards the Sustainable Development Goals:
Perspectives from Asia and Europe

Opinion | Alina Bulatova

SDGs as Core Pillars of University Governance

The challenges of achieving the SDGs' require close attention in the world. Of course, there are examples of successful projects, but that is not enough. I believe that it is very important to share successful ideas and put them into practice in our countries so our development process would be faster. Firstly, I would like to share some of the projects that are taking place in Russia which I think bring us closer to achieving the SDGs, before I present you some of my ideas.

The first project example is the Sirius Educational Centre, which was founded in Sochi in 2014. It was based on the Olympic infrastructure. The purpose of its work is early identification, development and further professional support of gifted children who have shown outstanding abilities in the field of arts, sport, natural sciences, as well as success in technical creativity.¹

In 2010 a law named “On the Skolkovo Innovation Center” was signed, giving rise to the Skolkovo Foundation. Charged with providing the catalyst for the diversification of the Russian economy, the Skolkovo Foundation's goal is to create a sustainable ecosystem of entrepreneurship and innovation, enabling a start-up culture and encouraging venture capitalism. Dozens of start-ups have found success in international markets, for example companies delivering equipment for the dynamic modelling of oil and gas fields, next-generation screen displays and laser systems for soft-tissue surgery.²

The all-Russian sports programme "Ready for Work and Defence" (Its name connects with the one that was used in the USSR) is the basis of the system of physical education of the population, which establishes state requirements for the level of stamina and aimed at the development of improvement of the nation. It has stimulation bonuses for those students who would like to continue studying by adding

¹ <https://sochisirius.ru>

² <http://sk.ru>

points to the entering university rate.³

"Leaders of Russia" is an open competition for the leaders of the new generation. It is a management competition among the youth. The laureates receive a grant of 1 million roubles for training programmes and education. The winners receive a year of personal career consultations from the top managers of the largest companies and prominent statesmen. The winners are included in the country's top talent pool, some of which have already been appointed to high-rank positions in the Government Agencies.⁴

The Presidential Grants Fund supports the projects that focus on the development of civil society. The Foundation receives grants from the President of the Russian Federation to Russian non-profit non-governmental organizations for the implementation of projects in areas such as social support and protection of citizens, health protection, support for youth projects, support for projects in the field of science, education, culture and art, and the protection of human rights and freedoms, including the protection of the rights of prisoners.⁵

In 2017 Russia hosted the 19th World Festival of Youth and Students (I took part in that event). Based on that event the international community FUTURE TEAM was created. It is a meeting place for active young people from all countries, who strive to change the world. It is an online platform for discussing important topics, global and local problems. And now I would like to share some of my ideas on the topic of SDGs as Core Pillars of University Governance.

I think that during the student exchange scholars should be introduced to the all eco- solutions and innovations in the field of SDGs adopted at the host university. That will contribute to the promotion and spreading of useful ideas. In addition, it would be promising to transform universities into independent eco-clusters with renewable energy sources. That would give students time to practice and stimulate the development of the country's economy. Moreover, I would like to create working groups. They could consist of the best students of different specialities in the universities of different countries. The aim of such groups is to solve specific tasks of the SDGs (climate change, pollution of the oceans, etc.). The combination of students with an extensive list of specialities could stimulate the creation of new ideas. Then the groups could gather at the international forum for the exchange of experiences and the development of specific solutions with the subsequent presentation of the results to the leaders at the United Nations. These are some of my proposals and I hope that by combining ideas we will be able to come up with solutions that will bring us closer to achieving the SDGs.

³ <https://www.gto.ru/>

⁴ <https://лидерыроссии.рф/>

⁵ <https://президентскиегранты.рф>