

UZDOC 2.0

Furthering Quality of Doctoral Education at Higher Education Institutions in Uzbekistan

External Quality Report of the third year (November 2018 - October 2019)

Introduction

The third report is covering the activities of the Project in the period January 2018 - December 2018. In that period five main activities took place: the 3rd Uzbek Local Coordination Board meeting (WP 5.3), a Knowledge sharing event at ELTE (WP. 2.3), the workshop on writing guidelines and visiting the VUB & ULB in Brussel, 10th UNICA PhD Master Class in Dubrovnik and Training on transferable skills and on career development for doctoral candidates in the framework of the official final event in Nukus (WP 2.6 and WP. 2.9).

Effectiveness, Quality and Efficiency

The third year has been proved as a high level of harmonisation among Uzbek partners as well as a full appreciation of openness and possibilities to exchange experience provided by the European partners. On one side, partners from Uzbekistan established a local network and the coordination of the project managed to be well functioning and focused on the content of the Project. The results of the local meetings were shared during the project meetings, as well as extensive minutes were available to all the members of the Project.

On the other side, European partners put a special emphasis on ensuring the opportunity for Uzbek partners to be able to learn about different approaches in doctoral education across European institutions and assured a ground for fruitful academic discussions. Actually, the third year of the Project was marked with an articulated shift, where a high level of convergence related to share understanding of doctoral education and all the main concepts and processes was observed among all the partners. A meeting in Budapest at the ELTE University opened a different level of discussion and sharing experience among Uzbek partners.

During the meeting in Brussel, a huge step forward was done toward operationalization of the virtual center for doctoral education shared by all the Uzbek partners. A high level of commitment as well as intrinsic motivation to establish it and to make it functional have been observed. A meeting in Brussel was paving a ground to assure a quality on one side, and the sustainability of the Project, on the other. Intensity of the commitments to build up the virtual Centre and to work jointly was a very comforting observation. Moreover, all the partners were very much open for the suggestions and advices how to proceed, so the overall impression was that we reached an important level of content, while moving away from the form only.

Especially the Dubrovnik Masterclass was an opportunity for the Uzbek partners to experience this international environment and link with the different participants from different EU countries to exchange experience, to build partnerships as well as to develop academic mobility.

The final event in Uzbekistan, Nukus, confirmed this attitude and the level of change. On one side, it has been issued the final document related to the establishment and functioning of the Center signed by the representatives from all the partners. More importantly, it was a clear message that the ownership was shared as well as readiness to keep working on further developments. All the trainings that had been provided did not only help individuals to develop additional skills but contributed largely to a general understanding of the concepts and relevance of such trainings needed to be a regular part of doctoral training.

Impact

It has been clear, confirmed and proved in different ways that the whole project with all its activities has affected significantly all the partners, leadership, institutions, but also individual academic staff and doctoral candidates. The Project was an eye and mind opener in many different ways regarding doctoral training. As much as direct contacts and sharing experiences, provided trainings, workshops were changing understanding of doctoral trainings, direct visits to the European institutions and experiences on site, contributed significantly to change and long term impact.

The Project also had an added value, both in terms of cultural experience, for European as well as for Uzbek partners, and language fluency. It was very noticeable how language skills improved for many Uzbek colleagues during the period of three years and that fact itself had a strong positive impact on much easier conversation and engagement in communication.

Recommendations and main Observations

Doctoral education is demanding in terms of resources, human, facilities and financial

It requires continuous change and improvement of quality

Project helped to identify and build champions in doctoral education spread across different Uzbek regions and across institutions

It is important for the national HE and doctoral education to continue to disseminate good practices and to involve more academic staff, as well as doctoral candidates

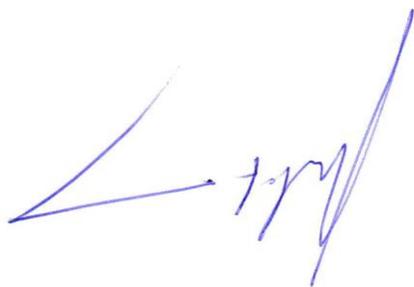
Virtual Joint Doctoral Centre is a good platform for further development but it will require continuous work, proper planning, activities plan, monitoring and transparent and operational distribution of roles and responsibilities

In order to implement further changes in doctoral education and in accordance to European and global doctoral education, it is important to have patience, to build up arguments and knowledge, but more than anything clear objectives.

For making doctoral education stronger it is necessary to build up networks on national, local, regional and international levels; research even being done locally, needs to be recognized internationally as well.

20 September 2019

Prof. Melita KOVACEVIC

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Melita Kovacevic', with a long, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.