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WP3: Establishment/Enhancement of the Careers, Employability and Enterprise Services (CEES)

D 3.1 Report on graduate's employability support through careers, employability and enterprise services at the Branch of Lomonosov Moscow State University in Dushanbe, Tajikistan

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1. General information on BLMSUD

Branch of Lomonosov Moscow State University in Dushanbe was established in 2009. It has a license issued by both the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

Administration: Director, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director for Science, Innovation and International Relations, Deputy Executive Director for Academic Affairs, Deputy Executive Director for Student Affairs.

Divisions: Department of Education and Curriculum Development, Department of Science, Innovation and International Relations, Department of Student Affairs, Library, Human Resources Department, Accountant Department, Administrative and Maintenance Department, Publishing and Printing Department, Trade Union Committee.

Number of Teaching Faculty – 156 (36 – full-time; 16 – external, part-time; 108 – MSU Visiting academics, part-time). Number of Non-Academic Staff - 104

The BLMSUD has two faculties: Faculty of Natural Sciences, which offers three bachelor degree programs: 1*)* Applied Mathematics and Computer Science; 2) Chemistry and Physics of Materials; and 3) Geology. The Faculty has a Department of Fundamental and Natural Sciences, and attached to the Department there are Physics Laboratory, Chemistry Laboratory and Geology Laboratory.

Faculty of Humanitarian Studies offers three bachelor degree programs: 1) International Relations; 2) Public Administration; and 3) Linguistics. The Faculty has a Department of Social and Humanitarian Disciplines, a Department of Linguistics and Language labs.

Teaching of students is carried out by visiting academics from Lomonosov Moscow State University (70%) and highly qualified educators from Tajikistan (30%). Students have the opportunity to take their final term in the main campus - Lomonosov Moscow State University.

Number of Alumni: 105 students graduated from BLMSUD in 2020, 36 were employed, 55 were enrolled in Master degree programs in Tajikistan or abroad. 112 students are expected to graduate in 2021.

Main employers of graduates: Government offices, Embassies, NGOs, Financial institutions, Research centers, Roghun and Nurek Dams etc.

The **BLMSUD is located** in the capital city of Tajikistan. The city has large industrial, financial, retail, and tourism sectors. **Light industry** is the most mature industry in the city, aided by the location of raw materials in the country. Some large companies in light industry are Nassoch, which processes large amounts of cotton fiber, Chevar and Guliston, which both produce garments, and Nafisa, which

produces hosiery. The **electrical, engineering, and metallurgical industries** are also prominent in the republic. Tajiktekstilmash, which produces varied products for agriculture and electricity, and Tajikcable, which produces cables, are two well-known companies from that sector of the economy. Somon-tachkhizot, which produces electronic goods, Torgmash, which produces goods for trading companies, and Valve Plant, which produces iron products are some other prominent companies in the industry. The **food processing industry** also has a presence in the city with many wineries, dairy and meatpacking plants, canneries, and bakeries all in the city. Other industries include the building materials industry, which produces cement, oil and plastics.

Dushanbe is the capital of **tourism** of the Economic Cooperation Organization and is served by more than 40 hotels. The building of new modern hotels is being planned. Other sectors of tourism industry are also becoming large in number and modernised.

2. Information on audit

The audit - Graduate's employability support through careers, employability and enterprise services at BLMSUD was carried out from April 22 up to June 9. The number of respondents involved 14 employees: 2 top managers, 2 deans of faculties, 5 professors/teachers, 5 professionals and support staff. In terms of the mode of auditing it has to be noted that first of all a meeting was organized for the focus group to explain the aim of the survey and give instructions for completing the survey. Most of the respondents completed the survey online (via email). There were some respondents, who preferred the paper version, but they were offered the interview format and they agreed. Out of 14 employees, 3 are experienced in students' practices and employability.

3. Analysis of graduate's employability support through careers, employability and enterprise services and HEI-business cooperation.

3.1 Framework of Careers, Employability and Enterprise Services in Tajikistan on country level

Most of the respondents indicate that there is not a framework for the **Center** for Graduate Employment and Career Development at the national level. But as mentioned by some other respondents the issue of Career and employability is addressed in the documents Law on Education, National Strategy for Education Development, and all HEIs have a Department responsible for students' practices and employability.

3.2 Current Careers, Employability and Enterprise Services in HEIs in the country on HEI level

Services and activities relating to enhancing student and graduate employability

Organisational structure, number of staff, scope and main activities of the career and liaison office of BLMSUD

There is one person responsible for organising the students' practices in different organisations/companies. This person works for the Education and Curriculum department. It doesn't focus much on finding job places for the alumni, because BLMSUD provides only Bachelor Degrees. But it tracks the enrolment of students to Master Degree Programs and employment of alumni.

HEI strategy on matters of employment and career of students and graduates

BLMSUD touches upon this issue, i.e. it mentions the importance of preparing highly qualified specialists but it does not discuss how to reach this goal in any documents. Since BLMSUD is planning to start offering Master Degree Programs in 2022 it has just started to develop a plan defining the matters of employment and career of students and graduates.

Currently this issue is addressed mainly during students' obligatory practices in different industries and different cultural and social events organised by the administration of BLMSUD.

Support offered to students and graduates on their professional development

The office responsible for students' practices and alumni affairs conducts annual meetings of students with employers (mainly at the local level). Sometimes there are meetings organised at the request of an employer. Moreover, employers are invited to meet with students and observe their performance during final state exams and defence/presentation of diplomas.

BLMSUD doesn't provide counselling services (including on individual career planning) to students and graduates, through career counsellors. Two respondents (teachers) add this issue is discussed through teaching materials during classes.

BLMSUD doesn't have an online portal or database on matters of the labour market. Two of Professionals and support staff write that students are advised to visit the website of the Ministry of Labour Market. And one of the Top managers writes that such a portal is under consideration.

BLMSUD arranges students' practices in different organisations/companies, organises different social and cultural events with guest speakers (specialists from various industries), organises students' visit to company in career field, provides information and support for receiving different financial aids and scholarships, issues letters certifying a student's academic performance, gives recommendation letters.

Support offered to students and graduates on their educational development

Students have the opportunity to learn about the different academic programs in Educational Fairs organised in the BLMSUD or other HEIs, or during the meetings organised at the request of educational institutions/organisations/projects, official announcements on academic programs opportunities are attached to Information Boards. One of the respondents provides negative reaction by stating that 'some students were not given transcripts and diplomas on time', so that they could apply for further studying. This must be linked with the Coronavirus outbreak which occurred at the end of the academic year of 2019-2020.

The BLMSUD provides information and support for receiving different financial aids and scholarships, issues letters certifying a student's academic performance, gives recommendation letters.

Measures of tracking academic and professional progress of students and graduates

Not all respondents are aware of measures of tracking academic and professional progress of students and graduates. Some of them state that the tracking is not always kept. But the majority indicate that the office responsible for organising students' practices keeps the track of students' employment and enrolment in further studies. The tracking is conducted through phone talks, emails, and social networks. Sometimes the university receives thank you letters from employers.

The result is presented in a chart and attached to the annual report of the BLMSUD. Thus, as stated by respondents the tracking is done only for having statistics.

Additional information of services currently offered by the HEI on Careers, Employability and Enterprise cooperation

-

Services and activities relating to development of employability skills

Activities on employability skills development of students and graduates as part of the curriculum

Respondents indicate that employability skills development is embedded in the curricula and is under careful consideration during specific disciplines.

For example, students of International relations and Linguistics study the module "Labour Market" which covers such issues as Interview tips, Writing CV and Cover letter, global trends in labour market, skills relevant to labour market and so on. Students of Public Administration, as another example, study such subjects as Project management, Decision Making, Financial Management, Strategic Management that prepares students for their future profession.

Activities on employability skills development of students and graduates as part of organised social activities

BLMSUD sometimes organises career development seminars engaging employers, specialists, alumni, volunteers, or other stakeholders. BLMSUD doesn't organise career days. And it doesn't publish studies connected with the situation in the labour market. This issue is discussed as part of some disciplines.

Support offered to students and graduates on national or international mobility

According to the survey, the BLMSUD provides information about student mobility programs if it is a partner of the international mobility program.

Services and activities relating to development of innovation and entrepreneurial skills

Organisational structure, number of staff, scope and main activities of innovation and entrepreneurship office

There is a Department of Science and Innovation which does not focus on students' entrepreneurship. Their main focus is on innovation in scientific studies.

Services offered to students and graduates to develop their entrepreneurial skills

BLMSUD organises meetings (as mentioned above engaging employers, specialists, alumni, volunteers, or other stakeholders) on innovation and entrepreneurship but very rare.

Students studying Public Administration and International Relations have classes devoted to this issue.

Activities to support innovation and entrepreneurship of students and graduates

LMSUD students take part in innovation and entrepreneurship competitions which are organised by other organisations/companies or institutions.

The respondents speak of the absence of such a service - the provision of personalised support on designing or implementing business ideas.

Services and activities relating to establishing cooperation relationships with businesses

Liaison activities of the HEI with employability organisations

The survey suggests the collaboration requires improvement due to Limited number of partner companies

Networking activities with businesses

Students are invited to networking events organised by different organisations. The university organises only meetings hosting guest speakers.

Students visiting organisations/companies take place mainly during compulsory practices they should take, with the duration of 2 to 6 weeks.

Employers come to meet and observe/assess students' performance during final exams and presentation of diplomas.

Mentoring programme offered by the BLMSUD

Students of the Faculty of Natural Sciences conduct their final research in the institutions/organizations. The BLMSUD have partnership agreements with these institutions/organizations.

There are no trainings carried out for mentors or mentees.

Services offered to employers

At the request of employers BLMSUD provides them with recommendation letters, confirm the skills and knowledge of the applicants. Employers are given an opportunity to come to students' final exams and diploma presentation for observation and select students for offering a job place.

Additional information on cooperation procedures with companies

The respondents speak of the absence of such services as the provision of personalised support on designing or implementing business ideas with companies.

3.3 SWOT analysis of graduate's employability support through careers, employability and enterprise services at BLMSUD.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
- Staff who shares efforts on students' success - Students take number of practices in companies/organizations/institutions	- Lack of clear plan/strategy for CEES - The absence of Master degree programs - Limited number of partner companies - Lack of student mobility

starting from their second year of studying - Students have high rate of enrollment in further studying and employment - Even though the BLMSUD has only 12 years it is considered one of the prestigious universities in Tajikistan which provides quality education, and has accreditation of Tajikistan and Russia (graduates' diploma is acknowledged beyond Tajikistan)	- Lack of effective information in the BLMSUD website
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
- National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period until 2030 which focuses on education relevant to labour market demands - Exploring new regional and international partnerships - Creating Alumni association for bridging the gap between students and alumni - Bridging the gap between students and employers	- Financial resources - COVID related problems

3.4 SWOT analysis of BLMSUD cooperation with institutions outside HEIs.

STRENGTHS	**WEAKNESSES**
- Cooperation in the field of pedagogy and science: meetings, seminars, conferences, exhibitions, projects, publications	- Lack of staff with foreign language proficiency - Lack of effective information in the BLMSUD website with only one language
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREADS**

- Erasmus+ which brings together all CA HEIs for corporation and development - Education policy which supports collaboration of HEIs	- Financial resources

3.5 The suggestions for improvement of graduate's employability support through careers, employability and enterprise services at BLMSUD

- To develop an appropriate program/strategy on CEES
- To organise regular meetings of students with employers on improving career and employability skills
- To organise seminars on student professional development
- To enhance collaborations between university and employers
- To have a specific office for seeking student internship opportunities
- To support close communications of university and employers based on Triangle knowledge

3.6 The suggestions for improvement of HEI cooperation with institutions outside BLMSUD

- To take part in Erasmus+ programs and other international projects
- To invite other HEIs (teachers or students) to social and cultural events organised at BLMSUD
- To organise academic, social, cultural and sport events in corporation with other HEIs
- To cooperate in sharing resources, example inter library loan
- To support student and staff mobility

4. Analyses of Internship programmes

4.1 Institutional framework of internships on country level

According to most of the respondents there is a framework of internship at the country level. But at the same time some respondents try to explain that they mean not "internship" but practice which is an obligatory part of academic program. The duration of such practices is minimum 2 weeks and maximum 8/10 weeks. The types include educational practice, field experience, and pre-diploma practice. Of course they all take place in organizations (for example: students who major in economics they are placed at banks; those who major in pedagogy they are placed at schools).

The case is the term "internship" in Russian is "стажировка", but this term (стажировка) is not mentioned in the Education Law of Tajikistan and university academic programs (at least at my

university). Thus respondents in the questionnaire always use the term "практика" (practice) instead of the term "стажировка" which is indicated throughout the questionnaire.

Indeed in our context "стажировка" refers to such a case when a student on an individual basis finds the opportunity and applies for it. Usually they go for it after graduation. If they take "стажировка" during their study they will have to complete the courses they missed during their "стажировка" in order to obtain diploma.

4.2 Current internship programmes on HEI level

Management and administration of internships

Measures and requirements for student internships

University has a Practice Regulation Document which defines the purpose, tasks, types and duration of student practices.

The student practice, firstly, is regulated by the Law on "Education relevant to labour market demands" which was mentioned before. Secondly, based on this document each university devises its own practice regulation program. The BLMSUD practice regulation program, for instance, states that practice of students is an obligatory component of the educational program for obtaining a qualification level and is aimed at obtaining professional skills and knowledge. Furthermore, it underlines that the practice is carried out at modern enterprises and organizations of various sectors of the economy, science, education, health care, culture, trade and government management. In addition, it mentions that the practice is conducted under the organizational and methodological guidance of a BLMSUD teacher and a specialist in the industry. Finally, it states that the practice of students program, time and duration are determined by the curriculum and "Regulations on the procedure of conducting students practice at the BLMSUD", approved by the decision of the Academic Council in BLMSUD.

Internships´ duration, focus and credits offered

Types, as mentioned above, include educational practice, field experience, and pre-diploma practice. Duration: 2-10 weeks, from 108 up to 216 hours.

Management of internships

According to the respondents the management of practice is centralized.

Administration procedures

All students have to go for practice. Sometimes students are divided into several groups and placed in different organisations. Placement is decided according to the students' academic success. For example, most successful students are placed in more prestigious organisations.

Before the practice starts the Responsible person for organizing student practices together with Supervisors explain to students the aims and requirements of the practice. The aims and requirements for each practice are indicated in the program compiled by Supervisors and the Responsible person for organizing student practices beforehand.

Additional information on management and administration of internships

During practices students improve their employability skills in organizations, they like being exposed to the labour environment and, thus, there must be more opportunities for it. A respondent suggests that all types of practices have to be organised in organisations, not within the university.

Support given to students

Training activities to support internships

Not trainings but only some preparatory work (Information on workplace ethics, requirements, safety precautions, and some points of labor law, and etc)

Support given to students on finding internship positions

University finds and signs agreements with companies

Development of entrepreneurial skills through internships

Yes, but not all types of practices stress on it.

Monitoring and evaluation of internships

Management procedures during internships

Supervision and monitoring are carried out by the supervisors (one from university and another from the organisation) and Responsible person for organizing student practices

Procedures for evaluation of internships

By the end of the practice students have to submit a special diary book, report, and give a presentation. A supervisor from the university and a supervisor from the organisation decide the final mark. Sometimes organisations offer successfully accomplished students job opportunities. Supervisor from the organisation provides feedback in written form for each student. Sometimes organisations write a thank you letter to the administration of the university for preparing qualified students who were very helpful for the organisation.

4.3 SWOT analysis of internship

STRENGTHS	**WEAKNESSES**
- Different types of students practice in different stages of studying period - Knowledgeable and responsible students	- Limited number of partner companies - Lack of student mobility - Absence of Master Degree
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREADS**
- National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period until 2030 which highlights student mobility, internship opportunities abroad, entrepreneurial skills and etc, i.e. there is support from the government and acitivities - Exploring new regional and international partnerships	- Financial resources - COVID related drawbacks

4.4 The suggestions for improvement of internship programmes at BLMSUD

- Support staff with foreign language proficiency
- Improve the BLMSUD website with effective information and preferably with more than one language
- Establish cooperation with large number of organisations (think of common interests/mutual benefits)

- Exploring new regional and international partnerships

- To start master degree programs at BLM SUD
- To support student mobility at the national and international level
- To open Center for Graduate Employment and Career Development at university

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