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*Информационная статья / Informational article*

**Сотрудничество  
Российской Федерации с Сирией и Вьетнамом  
в сфере образовательной политики в 2000-е гг.:  
результаты и перспективы**

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**The cooperation  
between the Russian Federation, Syria and Vietnam  
in the area of education politics in the 2000s:  
results and prospects**

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**Аннотация:** В данной статье прослеживается эволюция приоритетов, основных направлений и условий межгосударственного взаимодействия в сфере образования Российской Федерации с Сирией и Вьетнамом, анализируется исторический опыт сотрудничества данных государств. Авторы подробно рассматривают такие аспекты темы, как основные задачи и направления исследования сотрудничества Российской Федерации с государствами, контекстные приоритеты их развития, потребности рынка труда и особенности системы высшего образования. Особое внимание уделено сравнительному исследованию институционального и нормативно-правового ресурсов развития систем высшего образования рассматриваемых государств. Подчеркивается взаимосвязь высшего образования и национальной экономики. Новизна исследования заключается в переосмыслении концептуальных основ, задач и ключевых направлений взаимодействия стран, которые могут в комплексе составить необходимый задел для понимания основной сути сотрудничества Российской Федерации с Сирией и Вьетнамом в области образовательной политики, ее состояния и перспектив развития. Авторами выявлены особенности сотрудничества Российской Федерации с Сирией и Вьетнамом в сфере образовательной политики в 2000-е гг., которые выражаются в их ориентации на общие приоритеты, декларируемые международными документами о высшем образовании, и выработке консенсуса относительно необходимости наращивания объемов сотрудничества в области подготовки высококвалифицированных кадров в соответствии с требованиями современного рынка труда.

**Ключевые слова:** образовательная политика, межгосударственное сотрудничество, высшее образование

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**Abstract.** This article examines the evolution of priorities, main directions and conditions of the Russian Federation's cooperation with Syria and Vietnam in the sphere of education, and it analyzes the historical experience of the cooperation between these states. The authors analyze the main tasks and areas of research for the cooperation of the Russian Federation with other states, the contextual priorities of their development, the needs of the labor market and the characteristics of the higher education systems. Particular attention is paid to a comparative study of the institutional and regulatory resources for the development of higher education systems of the countries under consideration. The authors emphasize the relationship between higher education and the national economy. The novelty of the research lies in rethinking the conceptual framework, objectives and key areas of interaction between countries that can together form the necessary basis for understanding the basic essence of cooperation between the Russian Federation and Syria and Vietnam in the field of educational policy, its state and development prospects. The authors identified features of the cooperation of the Russian Federation with Syria and Vietnam in the field of educational policy in the 2000s, which are expressed in their orientation to common priorities as expressed in international higher education documents, and the development of a consensus on the need to increase the volume of cooperation in the field of training highly qualified personnel in accordance with the requirements of the modern labor market.

**Keywords:** educational politics, interstate cooperation, higher education

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## Introduction

The urgency of the research topic is determined by constantly growing interest toward the study of the historic experience of the Russian Federation's cooperation with other states in the educational sphere. This pertains according to our judgement, to the demand of comprehensive study of many directions of this cooperation as well as to the necessity of learning lessons from the international relations in the area of education problems. The problems and their practical side despite the presence of separate outstanding works would require the new comparative approaches to the further studies. In this regard one should take into consideration the fact that in domestic as well as moreover foreign historiography the Russian Federation's cooperation with other countries in the area of forming up and implementation of educational politics in the 2000s was studied in the view of separate aspects of this problem.<sup>1</sup>

The study of the Russian Federation's experience of cooperation with the states of South-East Asia and the Middle East in the sphere of education politics in the most

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<sup>1</sup> M. Nasser, "Razvitiye obrazovaniya v Cirii," [Development of education in Syria] *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriya: Pedagogicheskoye obrazovaniye*, no. 1 (2009): 120–132; G.B. Karasin, *Rossiya i V'yetnam druzhatuzhe 50 let. Yubiley diplomaticheskikh otnosheniy: na puti k strategicheskomu partnerstvu* [Russia and Vietnam have been friends for 50 years. Anniversary of diplomatic relations: on the way to strategic partnership] (Moscow: [S.n.], 2000); Dam Duc Vuong, Nguyen Quang Thuong, "Sostoyaniye, perspektivy i faktory razvitiya obrazovatel'noy sistemy V'yetnama," [State, prospects and factors of development of the educational system of Vietnam] *Vestnik Universiteta (Gosudarstvennyy universitet upravleniya)*, no. 14 (2012): 16–19; V.M. Mazyrin, "Ekonomicheskaya modernizatsiya vo V'yetname: ot industrializatsii k innovatsionnomu etapu," [Economic modernization in Vietnam: from industrialization to the innovation stage] in *Yugo-Vostochnaya Aziya: aktual'nyye problemy razvitiya* (Moscow: IV RAN Publ., 2012), 240–265.

difficult and breaking period of the domestic history is rather urgent and, in this regard, it has exceptionally demanded scientific and practical meaning. It was in the years studied there were formed and undergone practical approbation of the politics of the given countries where Russian Federation has played and is playing currently the most important significance.

It was comparative historic studies which enable to see the tendencies and problems which are less noticeable while they are separately studied. This in the complete view refer to the experience of the Russian Federation's cooperation with Syria and with Vietnam in the educational sphere being considered against background and under the eyesight angle of the prerequisites and significant achievements laid down in it.

Under the contemporary conditions the urgency of the study of Russian Federation's cooperation with such countries as Vietnam and Syria which are completely different from each other as regards political, economic and cultural aspects in the matter of forming and implementation of educational politics in the 2000s is increasing due to contemporary condition of the Russian historiography which is conditioned according to our view by the following circumstances: first, by the necessity of studying positive and in some cases also by the negative sides in the implementation of such cooperation, secondly, of the necessity of the use of its experience in the present and in the future in the Russian Federation and other countries with the aim of its effective realization and improvement , thirdly, by the demand for well-argued manner and academically with specific documents and actual examples to prove that the Russian Federation and Vietnam from one side and the Russian Federation and Syria from the other side are the actual partners, in particular in the sphere of education which is the basis of the humanitarian knowledge of any modern state.

### **The educational policy of the developing countries**

The educational cooperation in the interstate relations traditionally is attached with specific significance. It is being considered as an effective tool due to which a mutual understanding is reached as well as establishing and deepening of mutually profitable ties in many areas of spiritual, social as well as also political activities of any society. The underestimation of the questions of the educational cooperation can lead to mistrust and weakening of the partnership and this several times has been proved by history.

In accordance with the classifications of the countries suggested by UN Committee on policy in the area of development, International Monetary Fund and the World Bank based on the basic economic indicators Vietnam and Syria were included in the group of developing countries. The developing countries compose approximately 4/5 of all countries of the world and there are more than 77 % population of the planet are included in them.

For the last decades of the last century the rewash taken serious re-estimation of the values on the role of education in the strategy of national development in the developing countries. In 1950s the majority of the "third world" leaders considered the development of the education to be not mandatory as the necessary methods, scientific knowledge, technics and technology could be obtained in the developed countries but

the creation of the national system of education, developing technical newly features by own measures perceived over complicated, long lasting and expensive. In the basis of such simplified and pragmatic approach there was underestimation of the primary significance of the education for the solving most important political and economic goals which developing countries were facing.

In this regard it should be noted that scientific and educational potential of the Western countries developed as the result of long lasting and spontaneous evolution of the productive forces. The state only later began playing an active role in this process. The national scientific and technical and educational policy started to be developed already on the basis of highly developed scientific and technical potential. In its turn in the USSR and later in Russia the scientific and technical base was created on the basis of developed for the entire economy of the single scientific and technical policy.<sup>2</sup>

The cooperation of the developing countries in the educational sphere is aimed according to our opinion at the solution of several interconnected problems: 1. The creation of the educational potential and ensuring its growth in personnel, technical, information and organizational domain; 2. The selection of the main directions of the developing of the system of education in accordance with national developing targets; 3 ensuring of the effective application of scientific and educational discoveries in all areas of the civil life.<sup>3</sup>

The top task among first rate goals under the conditions of the developing countries is the training of the scientific technical intelligentsia cadres. The backwardness of the developing countries in this area is especially significant. The forming of the national cadres of Professors and lecturers faculty remains the main prerequisite of the efficiency of the education and science in the developing countries.

The talk here is about not only the quantitative increase of the graduate of specialists but also about deep qualitative restructuring of the entire education system – its structure, contents of the syllabus, methods of lecturing and teaching, the ratio of the number of undergoing teaching of the different profile and the level of qualification etc. Without true cultural revolution the developing countries hardly manage fully use the richest intellectual potential of their billion population.<sup>4</sup>

The other important prerequisite of the developing of higher education is pertaining to the creation of cutting edge scientific and educational infrastructure equipped by the advance means for conducting research in university labs, scientific institutes,

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<sup>2</sup> Dam Duc Vuong, Nguyen Quang Thuong, “Sostoyaniye, perspektivy i faktory razvitiya obrazovatel'noy sistemy V'yetnama,” [State, prospects and factors of development of the educational system of Vietnam] *Vestnik Universiteta (Gosudarstvennyy universitet upravleniya)*, no. 14 (2012): 16–19; V.M. Mazyrin, “Ekonomicheskaya modernizatsiya vo V'yetname: ot industrializatsii k innovatsionnomu etapu,” [Economic modernization in Vietnam: from industrialization to the innovation stage] in *Yugo-Vostochnaya Aziya: aktual'nyye problemy razvitiya* (Moscow: IV RAN Publ., 2012), 240–265.

<sup>3</sup> M.M. Musarskiy, *Ekonomicheskaya diagnostika v sisteme upravleniya vysshim uchebnym zavedeniyem* [Economic diagnostics in the management system of higher education] (Kostroma: Kostroma University Publ., 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Bui Minh Huyen, Vu Ngoc Hai, Dang Quoc Bao, *Upravleniye obrazovaniyem* [Education Management] ([N.p.]: Pedagogical University Publ., 2006).

information centers, design bureaus, experience and experimental base.<sup>5</sup> Without this developing countries will only train the professors and lecturers faculty and academics for the developed countries and carry losses which cannot be replenished due to the ‘brain drain’.

Only having created necessary material conditions and stimuli for the work of the professors and lecturers faculty one can decide according to our opinion the task of their effective usage.

One of the main tasks which is necessary to decide in prospect in the area of education is the creation of the national strategy of development in which the expenditures related to the education in total amount of capital investments into national economy, education and culture which will be substantiated.

The right choice of the main directions of higher education has a principle significance for the effective training of the professors and lecturers’ cadres.

As the final documents of the SCO summit in Tsindao in June 2018, in particular Tsindao Declaration of the Council of the Heads of States – Members of the SCO the main danger of the current phase of development is the spread of terrorism, extremism and separatism. Under these conditions the role of humanitarian education as the method of counteraction to radical Islam, mastering of the methods of information technologies under the conditions of upgrading the general literacy of the population and the growth of the level of political thinking of the vast majority of the population is essentially growing. The humanitarian essential feature of the educational process is being put on the important function of the counter-action against emotional potential of the “new nationalism”.<sup>6</sup>

The interests of the development of education in the developing countries require also providing the concentration of efforts in the key directions of the education and the creation of minimal “critical mass” of the teachers and professors in the chief directions. It is not easy to fulfil this condition even in the developed countries having small or medium scientific-pedagogical potential; moreover, it is difficult to implement it in the developing countries. That is why lecturers and professors and scholars in the developing countries rather justifiably put forward the question about joint development and implementation of scientific and educational policy by the efforts of several countries on sub-regional or regional basis with certain specialization, division of labor, mutually beneficial exchange of the results of national research and developments. They stand in favor of realization of the principle of concentration of educational and scientific efforts which are the needed condition of their efficiency instead of dispersion of forces and means to the multitude of directions. The road to this lies through the strengthening of national scientific and educational potential as well as through coordination of syllabus, enlarging ties and the exchange of information between the teachers of adjacent countries as well as of developed and developing countries.

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<sup>5</sup> A.S. Zaytseva, “V’yetnam v XXI veke: razvitiye institutov nauchno-tekhnicheskoy i innovatsionnoy politiki,” [Vietnam in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: developing institutes for science, technology, and innovation policy] *Forsayt*, no. 2 (2012): 44–55.

<sup>6</sup> *Tsindaoskaya deklaratsiya Soveta glav gosudarstv – chlenov Shankhayskoy organizatsii sotrudnichestva. 10 iyunya 2018* [The Qingdao Declaration of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Council of Heads of State. June 10, 2018], <http://www.kremlin.ru/supplement/5315>.

The idea itself of the educational policy is essentially represents maximal close tie-up of all national educational efforts with the development of society taken as a whole.<sup>7</sup>

It should be noted that together with the development of the industry 4.0 in separate countries of the developing world which in total are representing emerging centers of economic growth and political influence very slow evolution development of the educational sphere is taking place.

The direct reason which caused to life the revolutionary changes in the sphere of higher education was globalization of the economy which has intensified in 1990s, and which was based on contradiction between the national character of the traditional education as well as growing internalization of the economy and production of the educational services in the developing countries and extremely slow increase of the programs.

The implementation of the gigantic as per its difficulty complex task of the conversion of education into the production force under the condition of the developing countries would require certain socio-economic prerequisites and far-reaching organizational measures and combining national and international efforts. It is completely evident that the solving of these questions is within the reach of the developing countries provided close cooperation with other states.

One of the most significant objects of cooperation, instruments of creation and maintaining the positive country image abroad is the system of education, first of all, of higher education and after-university professional education.<sup>8</sup> The developed and developing countries adopt and implement the strategies of the internationalization of education which leads to the growth of internationalization practices and development of trans-border education in the world taken as a whole. Such factor as the demand of the labor market influences the development of cooperation between Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Russian Federation, and the Syrian Arab Republic and the Russian Federation in the sphere of the educational policy.

### **Historical Experience of Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the Field of Education**

In the mid-1980s the leaders of the Communist Party of Vietnam initiated economic reforms while remaining focused on construction of socialism. It was a kind of Vietnamese “perestroika.” Due to combination of market and state-planned elements in its economy, Vietnam managed to significantly increase the life level of its population, to preserve and strengthen its armed forces, and to perform several large-scale economic programs, such as full electrification, development of cellular communication and Internet, growth in export supplies of rice, coffee and other agricultural products, reconstruction of highways, mass private housing construction, creation of contemporary infrastructure for international tourism, development of national and international airlines.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> W. Taylor, Nguy Thu Hang, Pham Quang Tu, Huynh Thi Ngoc Tuyet, *Civil Society in Vietnam: A Comparative Study of Civil Society Organizations in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City* (Hanoi: The Asia Foundation, 2012), <https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/CivilSocietyReportFINALweb.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> *Kontsepsiya prodvizheniya rossiyskogo obrazovaniya na baze predstavitel'stv Rossotrudnichestva za rubezhom. 27 marta 2014 goda* [The concept of promoting Russian education on the basis of representative offices of Rossotrudnichestvo abroad. March 27, 2014], <http://legalacts.ru/doc/>.

<sup>9</sup> *Doy Moy – v'yetnamskaya perestroyka. Khronologiya* [Doi Moi – Vietnamese restructuring. Chronology], <https://ckychnovosti.livejournal.com/192325.html>.



A whole new stage in cooperation between these two countries in the field of higher education began in July 2012 when the status of strategic partnership between the countries became of a comprehensive, bilateral, contractual and legal nature based on more than eighty documents,<sup>10</sup> including the Convention on Recognition and Equivalence of Educational Certificates and Scientific Degrees between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.<sup>11</sup>

Firstly, it was facilitated by a large increase in the number of students and professors with scientific degrees – over 6 thousand PhD and Candidates of Sciences – conditioned by a stabilized political environment, increased life level among all sections of the population; secondly, emergence of Vietnam on the international education space, increase in the number of students studying in Russia, the USA and European countries.

Specialization of foreign students studying in Vietnam involves 50 different fields that may be roughly divided into three groups: 1. culture, education, healthcare, sports and tourism; 2. economics, trade, finance, banking; 3. engineering industries.<sup>12</sup>

By that time, the education system of Vietnam included 16 thousand primary and secondary schools with about 22 million pupils, over 700 specialist schools and colleges with 2 million students, 247 vocational schools and technical schools with 200 thousand students. As for the higher education system, in the 2012–2013 academic year there were 200 specialties taught to 650 thousand students in the higher education institutions. It is important that out of 11 % of the total number of universities there were 24 private universities, whose educational programs were studied by 120 thousand students.<sup>13</sup> Thus, following on from the results of the 2012 academic year, there were over 1.3 million graduates of institutes and colleges and 14 thousand postgraduates in Vietnam according to the official statistics.<sup>14</sup>

The above figures confirm that the National Education Development Strategy for 2008–2020 is successful. Based on the above Strategy, five Vietnamese universities entered the Top 100 Universities Ranking in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations – ASEAN, while two universities entered the Top 200 World Universities Ranking. Furthermore, by 2020, there should be at least 5 % of graduates, whose educational level is to be equal to the level of students studying in the leading ASEAN universities.

<sup>10</sup> *Rossiysko-v'yetnamskiye otnosheniya* [Russian-Vietnamese relations], <https://vietnam.mid.ru>.

<sup>11</sup> “Soglasheniye mezhdru Pravitel'stvom Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Pravitel'stvom Sotsialisticheskoy Respubliki V'yetnam o strategicheskoy partnerstve v oblasti obrazovaniya, nauki i tekhnologii,” [Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on strategic partnership in the field of education, science and technology] *Byulleten' mezhdunarodnykh dogovorov*, no. 3 (2015): 70–73.

<sup>12</sup> *Professor, doktor, vydayushchiy pedagog Hoang Van Chau – Eksport i import uslug vysshego obrazovaniya, Izdatel' informatsii i svyazi kommunikatsii-2011g.; Obyazatel'stvo V'yetnama v WTO obravozatel'noy uslugy* [Professor, doctor, outstanding teacher Hoang Van Chau – Export and import of higher education services, Information and Communication Communication Publisher-2011; Vietnam's commitment to the WTO educational service] (GS,TS,NGUT Hoàng Văn Châu – Xuất nhập khẩu dịch vụ giáo dục đại học-Nhà xuất bản thông tin và truyền thông – năm 2011; Cam kết Việt Nam trong WTO về dịch vụ GD ĐH).

<sup>13</sup> S. Khamzin, “Obrazovaniye vo V'yetname: skachok k svetlomu budushchemu.” [Education in Vietnam: a jump to a brighter future] *Moy universitet*, no. 4 (2012), <http://khamzin-fm.com/2012/07>.

<sup>14</sup> Thông báo tuyen sinh hdi hoc tai Lien Bang Nga. URL: <http://vied.vn/vi/tin-tuc/tuyen-sinh/865-thong-bao-tuyen-sinh-di-hoc-tai-lien-bang-nga-nam-2017.html>.

As mentioned above, the trust-based Vietnamese-Russian relations are clearly proved by cooperation between the countries in the field of modern higher education. Thus, in March 2013, the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam published a list of 212 programs of cooperation in the field of education and training between Vietnam and other countries licensed by MOETor such educational institutions as national universities in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh, Thai Nguyen University and the University of Danang.<sup>15</sup> There are world-renowned Russian universities among them.

In general, it should be noted that the system process of training Vietnamese specialists in the Russian higher education institutions began in 2013. It was built in the following way – expenses connected with this process were defined annually by the Ministries of Finance of Russia and Vietnam. The Russian Ministry of Education provided its colleagues in Vietnam with a list of higher education institutions and number of student spaces for the Vietnamese citizens. Moreover, as previously agreed there were covered not only expenses associated with the studies of Vietnamese students in Russia, but their Russian language studies before arrival in the Russian Federation, their roundtrip tickets and educational scholarships.

In 2014, Russia and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam signed an inter governmental agreement on strategic partnership in the field of education, science and technologies that defined its priorities and directions,<sup>16</sup> as well as functions to be performed by the Russian-Vietnamese Commission on Cooperation in the field of Education, Science and Technologies that substituted the Commission on Scientific and Technological Cooperation established under the Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation made by and between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on 31 July 1992.

Development of cooperation in the field of higher education between Russia and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was significantly facilitated by treaties and agreements on inter-university cooperation. Thus, for instance, back in 2010, there was created the Ho Chi Minh Institute at the St. Petersburg State University under the framework of the agreement made between the St. Petersburg State University and the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics. Fruitful activity can be confirmed by the conducted scientific and expert work, including multiple seminars aimed at publication of collections of scientific and teaching aids in the Russian and Vietnamese languages, research practices in the political, economic, historical and cultural spheres of Vietnam, as well as implementation of many labor-training programs.<sup>17</sup>

Activities held by the Ho Chi Minh Institute were highly praised by the representatives of professional community and by the political leaders of both countries. Thus, Truong Thi Mai, the Head of the Central Mass Mobilization Department of the

<sup>15</sup> *V'yetnam. Obrazovaniye, nauka* [Vietnam. Education, science], <http://vietnam-times.ru>.

<sup>16</sup> “Soglasheniye mezhdru Pravitel'stvom Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Pravitel'stvom Sotsialisticheskoy Respubliki V'yetnam o strategicheskoy partnerstve v oblasti obrazovaniya, nauki i tekhnologii,” [Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on strategic partnership in the field of education, science and technology] *Byulleten' mezhdunarodnykh dogovorov*, no. 3 (2015): 70–73.

<sup>17</sup> *Institut Ho Chi Minh* [Ho Chi Minh Institute], <http://heminstitute.spbu.ru>.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, who visited the Institute in the framework of her working trip to Russia on 14 September 2016, described the Institute as “a bridge connecting the friendship between Vietnam and Russia”.<sup>18</sup>

It is worth noting that within the period from 2012 to 2017 such agreements on the part of the Russian Federation were made, as a rule, on a complex basis – with several higher education institutions at a time, provided such institutions were functioning in one Russian region. In particular, starting from 2013, there were made several dozens of such agreements in the field of implementation of joint academic programs, interchange of experience in the scientific domain and foundation of joint summer schools. Thus, in 2014, the Tomsk State University made an agreement on cooperation with the Hanoi National University, the Tomsk State University of Architecture and Building concluded an agreement with the National University of Civil Engineering, while the Tomsk Polytechnic University made an agreement with the Hanoi University of Science and Technology.<sup>19</sup>

The extent of cooperation is also notable. Thus, for instance, the Kazan National Research Technical University alone established contacts with 18 Vietnamese higher education institutions in the cities of Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh, Danang and Viet Tri by 2014. There was opened a representative office of the Kazan National Research Technical University at the Viet Tri University within the framework of the agreements made with a view to further transform it into a branch and to expand cooperation with other universities of Vietnam.<sup>20</sup>

Specialist training programs in the field of atomic engineering, tropical medicine, environment, ecological safety, etc. were especially popular during that period. However, starting from 2016, the process of establishing contractual relations with foreign universities engaged Vietnamese education institutions having educational programs in the field of humanities and socio-legal studies, such as the Vietnam Academy of Justice and the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences that faced a task “to intensify work on theoretical investigation and predicting development tendencies, to provide scientific and theoretical reasons for defining the line and policy of the party and national acts and regulations” and to pay special attention to the activities in the field of “training and professional development of personnel and professors, elaboration and successful implementation of planning strategies for personnel training and development of high-quality human resources” within the framework of international integration. That task was personally set by President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Tran Dai Quang.<sup>21</sup>

In March 2014, there was launched a long-term educational project “Universities of Russia” under the support of the Ministry of Education and Training of the Socialist

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<sup>18</sup> *V'yetnam. Obrazovaniye, nauka* [Vietnam. Education, science], [http:// vietnam.vnanet.vn](http://vietnam.vnanet.vn). Accessed: 16.09.2016).

<sup>19</sup> *V'yetnam. Obrazovaniye, nauka* [Vietnam. Education, science], <http://vietnam-times.ru> (Accessed: 19.03.2014).

<sup>20</sup> *V'yetnam. Obrazovaniye, nauka* [Vietnam. Education, science], <http://regnum.ru> (Accessed: 08.09.2014).

<sup>21</sup> *V'yetnam. Obrazovaniye, nauka* [Vietnam. Education, science], <http://vietnam.vnanet.vn> (Accessed: 19.05.2016); *V'yetnam. Obrazovaniye, nauka* [Vietnam. Education, science], <http://vietnam.vnanet.vn> (Accessed: 07.12.2016).

Republic of Vietnam. The project addressed the intensification of the Vietnamese-Russian cooperation in the field of education-related connections, including organization and holding of seminars, conferences and academic Olympiads, elaboration of joint academic programs, exchange of academic teaching staff and implementation of student exchange programs between universities, and the like. Such Russian universities as the RUDN University, the Bauman Moscow State Technical University, the National University of Science and Technology MISIS, the Tyumen State University, the Tomsk State University, the Russian State Hydrometeorological University, etc. applied for joining the project. The federal targeted program “The Russian Language” has been and is implemented in Russia. It is aimed at supporting and consolidating the Russian language not only at the national level, but also abroad where the Russian language is being taught and studied, or where the fellow nationals speaking Russian live.<sup>22</sup> In November 2013, when the Russian President stayed on an official visit in Hanoi, the two heads of the states emphasized in their joint declaration that there was a “mood towards taking coordinated steps in intensification of teaching and studying the Russian language and the Russian culture in Vietnam”<sup>23</sup> where the world-famous school of Russian Studies was formed due to the traditionally close and long-term political, economic and cultural ties with Russia and with active involvement of the Russian Center of Science and Culture in Hanoi.

Participation of Vietnamese students in the National Olympiad in Russian as a Foreign language, which was held for the 15<sup>th</sup> time in 2017 and hosted by the RUDN University, became a tradition within the framework of cooperation between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and Russia in the field of higher education. Members of nineteen teams presented 31 countries.<sup>24</sup>

It should be noted that since 2015 cooperation with Russia in the field of higher education actually has been moving on to a whole new level due to the establishment

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<sup>22</sup> *O razrabotke proyekta federal'noy tselevoy programmy «Russkiy yazyk» na 2002–2005 gody: utv. rasporyazheniyem Pravitel'stva RF ot 5 yanvarya 2001 goda № 12-r* [On the development of the draft federal target program “Russian language” for 2002-2005: approved. Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of January 5, 2001 No. 12-p], <http://docs.cntd.ru>; *Kontseptsiya federal'noy tselevoy programmy «Russkiy yazyk (2006–2010 gody): utv. rasporyazheniyem Pravitel'stva RF ot 5 sentyabrya 2005 g. № 1355-r* [The concept of the federal target program “Russian language (2006–2010): approved. Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of September 5, 2005 №. 1355-p], <http://elementy.ru>; *Kontseptsiya federal'noy tselevoy programmy «Russkiy yazyk» na 2011–2015 gody): utv. rasporyazheniyem Pravitel'stva RF ot 7 fevralya 2011 g. № 164-r* [The concept of the federal target program ‘Russian language’ for 2011-2015): approved. By the order of the Government of the Russian Federation of February 7, 2011 №. 164-p], <http://rg.ru>; *O Kontseptsii federal'noy tselevoy programmy «Russkiy yazyk» na 2016–2020 gg: utv. rasporyazheniyem Pravitel'stva RF ot 20 dekabrya 2014g. № 2647-r* [About the Concept of the federal target program “Russian Language” for 2016–2020: approved. Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of December 20, 2014. №. 2647-r], <http://www.garant.ru>

<sup>23</sup> *Sovmestnoye zayavleniye o dal'neyshem ukreplenii otnosheniy vseob'yemlyushchego strategicheskogo partnerstva mezhdru Rossiyskoy Federatsiyey i Sotsialisticheskoy Respublikoy V'yetnam. 12 noyabrya 2013 goda* [Joint statement on further strengthening the relations of a comprehensive strategic partnership between the Russian Federation and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. November 12, 2013], <http://kremlin.ru>.

<sup>24</sup> *V'yetnam. Obrazovaniye, nauka* [Vietnam. Education, science], <http://ru.nhandan.com.vn> (Accessed: 13.12.2017).

of the ASEAN Economic Community.<sup>25</sup> In connection with this, representatives of 8 professions from Brunei, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Philippines acquired the right to freely travel and work in the Member States. Such a privilege was given to accountants, engineers, researchers, architects and nursing assistants, as well as to other specialists.

Thus, the level of competitiveness was increased not only in the labor market of the ASEAN Member States, but in their national systems of higher education as well, which was embodied in the implementation of accreditation standards of the ASEAN University Network (AUN). Subject to such standards, the quality of education was measured using 18 criteria. Thus, by 2017, the highest accreditation results expressed in the biggest number of gained points among the 65 Vietnamese educational programs accredited by AUN were shown by such fields of study as Electronics and Telecommunications, and Embedded System taught in the Polytechnic Institute at the Danang University.<sup>26</sup> The said fields of study for future engineers were the targeted projects launched by the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam 10 years ago.

As estimated by HCERES, the Hanoi Polytechnic College, Hanoi Construction Institute, Danang Polytechnic Institute and Ho Chi Minh Polytechnic Institute comply with the international accreditation standards.

Thus, in June 2017, within the framework of a formal visit of President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Tran Dai Quang to Russia, Vietnamese Minister of Education and Training Phung Xuan Nha underlined, during the working meeting with Minister O.Yu. Vasilieva, that there is an increasing necessity of the Vietnamese party to teach students programs in the field of culture (including tourism) and healthcare.

### **Education and Personnel Training as the Priority Context for the Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic**

The relations between Russia and Syria retain traditional partnership in diverse avenues, including culture and education.

Russia-Syria partnership during the period under review flourishes due to varied agreements in economics and culture which, in most cases, are of a long-term nature. One such agreement is the treaty for mutual recognition of academic credentials which has been in effect since 1966.<sup>27</sup>

Back in the late 1980s over 5000 of Syrians studied in the Soviet Union.<sup>28</sup> Aside from Moscow, dozens of Syrian students, apprentices, and postgraduates took their degrees in colleges of the former USSR.

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<sup>25</sup> *Ekonomicheskoye soobshchestvo ASEAN* [ASEAN economic community], <http://asiavector.ru>

<sup>26</sup> *V'yetnam. Obrazovaniye, nauka* [Vietnam. Education, science], <http://ru.nhandan.com.vn> (Accessed: 19.02.2017).

<sup>27</sup> *Protokol o priravnivanii svidetel'stv o vysshem obrazovanii v Soyuze Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik i Siriyskoy Arabskoy Respublike (Damask, 28 sentyabrya 1966 goda)* [Protocol on equating higher education certificates in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Syrian Arab Republic (Damascus, September 28, 1966)], [https://nic.gov.ru/ru/docs/foreign/confirmation/idokb\\_1128\\_225550](https://nic.gov.ru/ru/docs/foreign/confirmation/idokb_1128_225550).

<sup>28</sup> O.I. Volgin, *Damasskiy bulat. Siriya: 25 let puti revolyutsii* [Damask steel. Syria: 25 years of the revolution] (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya Publ., 1988), 88.

Besides, the Soviet Union contributed to training of the Syrian nationals by sending Soviet teaching staff to work in Syrian colleges, along with the Russian language tutors and counselors.

As part of teaching teams exchange programs, they pursued various scientific researches, exchanged scientific content and information concerning the economic, social, and academic life of the both countries.

According to official statistics, in 1990s–2000s most of the Syrian students studied in 5 state and 11 private universities, the largest of which are still the University of Damascus and the University of Aleppo. There is a tendency for an increase of the number of colleges and academic programs. For example, the development agenda of the Tartus University – opened in 2015 – provides for personnel training at Medical, Education, Economics, Arts, Pharmacy, Engineering, and Informatics Departments;<sup>29</sup> the University of Damascus opened a Russian Language Department.

It should be noted that the state policy concerning export education comprises measures which enclose all educational levels and all degree course schemes. Export education per se facilitates the implementation of the major geopolitical, economic, and social concerns of the state, and promotes its engagement in the global science advancement, and cultural and educational progress. An effective strategy of export education is one the significant policy trends and a social progress indicator set up as a strategic objective to be achieved in order to upgrade the quality of education and marketability of the Russian higher education.

Step by step, Russian colleges open up to new strategies of the foreign markets. One of the promising but most expensive and risky forms for a college to compete on a global scale is opening of a branch campus abroad.

The advantages of opening branch campuses abroad are clear – students are given an opportunity to get foreign education while staying home. However, there are certain complexities, for example, engagement of instructors to work in a branch campus, limited supply, and compliance with the parent institution standards. Moscow State University (MSU) takes the lead in this regard in Russia.

Russian colleges are represented in Gulf countries. For example, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are a starting point for many colleges to get to the local education market. UAE are striving to become the center of international education and are providing a supporting environment for higher education growth. There is a branch campus of the Saint Petersburg State University of Economics in Dubai, which offers three of the locally top requested academic degrees for the Syrian students: Bachelor of Business Management, Bachelor of Business Management in Tourism and Hospitality, and Bachelor of Logistics.

Russia has many large and prestigious universities offering a high-ranking education, which are popular with the Syrian students, for example, with a degree in economics, medicine, tourism, and military and technical degrees etc. Thus, the boards of the Saint Petersburg State University (SPBU) and the Syrian Youth Center underlined long-term benefits of joint academic programs in biomedical research,

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<sup>29</sup> *Gosudarstvennyy universitet otkroyut v siriyskom gorode Tartus* [State University will be opened in the Syrian city of Tartus], <https://ria.ru/20150105/1041525360.html>.

mechatronics, laser technologies, renewable energy sector, and digital technologies and communication, offered as online courses.<sup>30</sup>

These are the most needed degrees in Syria, which help advancing human resources.

In order to set up academic links and upgrade academic mobility the Syrian and Russian missions meet in form of routine visits and conferences. Thus, an agreement was reached concerning the prospects for cooperation between the Surgut State University (Russian Federation) and the Homs province colleges (the Syrian Arab Republic) during the meeting of the Homs province delegates headed by the Governor of Homs province Talal al-Barazi in December 2018.<sup>31</sup>

Each year the Government of Russia provides a guaranteed number of state-financed openings (state scholarship) for foreigners to study in institutions of the country. The Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia allocate quotas among 170 foreign countries. Over 500 Russian institutions managed by 12 ministries and agencies of Russia enrolls foreigners for intermediate vocational and higher education degrees, i.e. bachelor's degree, specialist's degree, Master's degree, postgraduate and further professional studies: advanced studies and occupational retraining. They generally select such degrees as philology, medicine, information technologies, tourism, economics, architecture, and construction. The most demanded are high-qualified health professionals and engineers.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, during the 2017–2018 admissions process foreigners filed over 96.000 applications to study in Russia of which 2.500 applications were from Syria. Subject to the state quotas, up to 15.000 foreigners may apply for a free higher education; that said, previous quota for Syrian students was 200, in 2017 it increased and by 2019 it reached 500.<sup>33</sup>

It seems clear that this factor will boost soon; this provides the students with an opportunity to exchange knowledge, strengthen mutual understanding and friendship between the nations. It makes it possible to create new labor force sources in order to industrialize and modernize the country, and to advance in living standards.

## Conclusion

Efficient development of the bilateral cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic is being facilitated by their commitment to common priorities as declared by the international documents on higher education. An example would be the attitude shown by the countries to the Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher

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<sup>30</sup> *SPbGU i Tsentr odarennoy molodezhi Sirii sozhdadut sovmestnyye obrazovatel'nyye programmy* [SPSU and Syrian Talented Youth Center will create joint educational programs], <https://experi.ru/spbgu-tsentr-odarennoj-molodezhi-sirii-sozhdadut-obrazovatelnye-programmy/08.06.2018>.

<sup>31</sup> *Turizm, tsitrusovyye, volonteriy i obrazovaniye – Surgut nametil sfery sotrudnichestva s Siriyey* [Tourism, citrus, volunteers and education – Surgut outlined the areas of cooperation with Syria], <https://ugra-tv.ru/ric/news/society>.

<sup>32</sup> *Zayavki na obucheniye v rossiyskikh vuzakh podali 2,5 tysyachi siriyetsev* [Applications for training in Russian universities have filed 2.5 thousand Syrians], <https://yandex.ru/turbo>.

<sup>33</sup> *Rossiya primet v svoi vuzy na byudzhet 500 abituriyentov iz Sirii* [Russia will take in its universities on the budget of 500 applicants from Syria], <https://ria.ru/20180526/1521430540.html>.



Education Qualifications. It should be noted that over the past several decades there were supported six conventions on the mutual recognition of academic certificates in six regions of UNESCO, whose aim was to reach the mutual recognition of higher education diplomas and certificates on the global scale.

In the course of official summit meetings and working meetings attended by the representatives of education authorities from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and Russia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Russia, the matters of cultural and education cooperation were always on agenda of official negotiations, during which there were pointed out new aspects of cooperation between the countries in the field of higher education, such as elaboration and implementation of joint master and aspirant programs, development of academic mobility, promotion of the Russian language, etc. on the basis of the existing inter-university agreements.

In general, it should be noted that during the period under consideration the Governments of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and Russia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Russia remain highly concerned of and interested in cooperation in the field of higher education. It may be confirmed by a wide range of lines and instruments for such cooperation. The most efficient can include the cooperation within the framework of forums and conferences on the higher education issues, as well as the implementation of the joint academic, scientific and educational projects and programs.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the enhancing efficiency and importance of the agreements on inter-university cooperation made by the higher education institutions of both states. The Governments are interested in popularization of higher education, including in the international education space. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Russian Federation have elaborated a specific consensus on the necessity to continuously expand cooperation in the field of training and developing highly-qualified professionals, who will be undoubtedly successful in the modern labor market.



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