

Session summary

THE ST. PETERSBURG INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC FORUM 2011  
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Session title: **EXECUTIVE TRAINING AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION: JOINING FORCES**  
Building Russia's Creative Capital

### **Theme**

The expansion of higher education in Russia is an important foundation to creating additional innovative capacity, but it also contains an inherent risk that the curriculum provided by universities and the skill-set acquired by the graduates do not meet the actual needs of an economy. Fundamental new approaches to the education and continuous training of the workforce may be required, including broadening the possibilities for executive education.

### **Moderator**

Yaroslav Kuzminov, Rector, National Research University – Higher School of Economics  
Andrei Volkov, Rector, Skolkovo Moscow School of Management

### **Panelists**

Isak Frumin, Academic Advisor, Institute for the Development of Education of the Scientific Research Institute of the Higher School of Economics, Lead Specialist at the World Bank  
Andrei Fursenko, Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation  
Mads Ingholt, Senior Director, Leadership Development, Group HR, A.P. Moller-Maersk  
Alan Kantrow, Professor of Management, Visiting Scholar, MIT Sloan School of Management  
Valery Katkalo, Vice-rector, Graduate School of Management of Saint-Petersburg State University  
Dale J. Stephens, Founder, UnCollege movement  
Andreas Schleicher, Head of the Indicators and Analysis Division at the Directorate for Education, OECD

### **Synopsis**

During this session, led by Mr. Kuzminov and Mr. Volkov, the main topics of discussion were the role of higher education as a foundation for economic modernization, the optimal levels of education funding necessary for future development, and possible ways of increasing the synergies between universities and executive education.

The session opened with a discussion of the importance of continuing education, which was unanimously supported by several participants. According to Mr. Kuzminov, university graduates are ready to invest in education for the chance to achieve membership in a particular social circle.

It was noted from 2005 to 2010 the share of Russian employers collaborating with institutions of higher education fell from 70% to 40%. Employers are currently looking for more effective ways of organizing corporate education programmes or restoring cooperation with universities.

Mr. Kantrow stressed that Russia is not unique in this educational challenge – which amounts to a competition between universities, vocational education and executive education. He also noted that higher education should deal more actively with science and technology. Several panellists also agreed that there exists a big gap between university knowledge and its application by students in the real world.

Another idea was raised by Mr. Frumin, who noted that education in Russia, like education in many emerging countries, could be an interesting case for analysis. He contended that higher education was actually much more corporate during Soviet times, with 80% of higher education programmes in the Soviet Union being linked to specific places of work. During the transition period following the collapse of the Soviet Union, this link between universities and places of employment largely disintegrated. Mr. Frumin described the positive current scenario whereby universities are re-establishing collaboration with corporations, considering students as their main consumers and offering them opportunities for more wide-ranging and flexible education.

The rest of the discussion was focused on the role of universities in the future development of the Russian educational system. Universities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century must become more open structures, ready for collaboration with corporations. As for corporate universities, their structure will also change as there is currently a lack of cross-industry corporate universities. The future will bring an educational landscape that is much more diversified than the classical university and corporate executive education.

Near the end of the session, Mr. Fursenko mentioned that the problems raised during the session are relevant not only to Russia but to other developed and developing countries, like the US, France, UK and China as well. The role of the government today is to change the approach to education and promote continuing education for adults, as today's labour market is not very well structured due to unstable economic conditions. To be more successful, education should be better financed and there should be more on offer in the education market. An integrated and balanced educational system is the responsibility of the government and several cases show how this can be achieved through intergovernmental structures.

The panellists concluded by agreeing that education today is underfunded. However, they stressed that simply investing more in an ineffective system will be an ineffective approach. They expressed the hope that increased cooperation with the businesses community and dialogue with big corporations will be a big step in improving the situation of executive training and university education.

#### Disclosures

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