



**Choices and Responsibilities:
Higher Education in the Knowledge Society**

Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE)

Challenges and Opportunities of Educational reforms: the case of Russia

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The paper aims to highlight the policy and management challenges the Russian higher education system faces, presenting the background, the major objectives, instruments and implications of the education reform, the options faced and rational for the choices made. It examines:

The most serious problems of professional education in Russia:

- ❑ Structural distortions
- ❑ Inadequate financing
- ❑ Distorted motivations
- ❑ Equity barriers, and hence failure of the education institutions to promote social mobility and cohesion
- ❑ Scaling down of research in the universities

The main objectives of the reform:

- ❑ Adaptation of the education structure to the social economic needs of society
- ❑ Restoring the innovative potential of the universities
- ❑ Achieving the minimum resource allocation
- ❑ Restoring of the academic and professional motivation

The economic models options:

- ❑ Maintaining the principle of free education – no tuition fees
- ❑ Maintaining the two sectors –free of charge and commercial education
- ❑ Co financing of the consumer's effective choice
- ❑ Introduction of tuition fees for all

The paper explores costs and benefits of each of the models as well as possible correction mechanisms and instruments of their implementation. It analyses the results of three years piloting of the two tools adopted by the Modernization program as elements of governance aimed at promoting equity in education:

The Unified National Test - an instrument of the school leavers' competencies assessment, the results of which are used for application and enrollment into the tertiary education institutions.

The Government Individual Financial Obligations - a subsidization mechanism allocating resources on an outcome-based principle.

The papers includes examples of strategies the universities develop to adapt to the new governance mechanisms.