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Having a blue-collar speciality does not mean being a laborer and doing some dusty unpleasant job as the majority of young people think. The worker's labor takes an entirely different character in the 21st century. He is required to demonstrate not only primitive mechanical skills, but also the ability to think critically and to find creative solutions, to create new ideas and timely adapt to rapidly changing technology and equipment.

Our realities

Over the recent years an opinion that having blue-collar speciality is not that prestigious dominates in the society. Kazakhstani youth's interest in technical and vocational education still remains at a very low level.

Thus, according to the results of the sociological survey, conducted by the Information Analytic Center JSC, only 22% of the population consider technical and vocational education prestigious.

Most parents spend big sums of money, and sometimes even their last savings to educate their child in university. However, this is not a guarantee of future employment and successful career. Thousands of university graduates entering the labor market face the challenge of employment. According to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, more than 30% of graduates in 2014 couldn't find jobs.

Along with that, each year 20,000 positions in oil, construction and agricultural sectors, where specialists with vocational education are required, remain vacant. According to the five-year forecast of the labor market development the demand for blue-collar workers will be growing^[1].

The review of vacancies web-sites also showed that 20 of 30 employer ads seek specialists of technical and service labor. However, these niches in the labor market remain unfilled because of a shortage of such specialists.

World practices

As world practice shows, effectively built system of technical and vocational education is the key to sustainable economic development and reduction of unemployment. In OECD countries at average about 50% of the adult population at the ages from 25 to 64 have post-secondary non tertiary education. In particular, in Germany this figure reaches 60%, in South Korea - 45% while in Kazakhstan it is only 33%.

Germany is one of the vivid examples where technical and vocational education is very popular. About 60% of school graduates prefer to continue studies at colleges than at universities as it guarantees their future employment. Almost 90% of large companies in this country hire apprentices trained under dual education.

The results of PIAAC - 2012 international study showed that in the USA the graduates with technical and vocational education are less subjected to unemployment than graduates of higher education institutions. In such countries as the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden income of workers may be equal to income of their peers with higher education.

A lot of blue-collar jobs and service work are creative that enables to realize one's potential. Construction workers are those who make designers' ideas true creating chic and unusual interiors. Today a cook is not just a cook but a creator and author of culinary masterpieces. There are a lot of outstanding examples of Chefs as H. Blumenthal, A. Dyukass, James Oliver who are famous throughout the world and have become legends in their area.

Prospects for Technical and Vocational Education in Kazakhstan

In Kazakhstan analysis of employees' suggestion showed that a blue-collar worker can earn as much as a higher education professional. For example, today an employee is willing to pay an auto mechanic from 70 000 to 150 000 KZT depending on the region. A well driller earns from 100 000 to 200 000 KZT, hairdressers - from 60 000 to 150 000 KZT, and furniture assembler - about 150 000 KZT. In turn, the salaries of economists, lawyers, project managers at an average also vary in this corridor.

Obtaining of vocational education does not mean missed opportunities to achieve some certain success. There are many examples when vocational education became a good start for the future successful career of prominent politicians and activists. One of the striking example is the President of our country - N.A. Nazarbayev. In 1960, he graduated from a vocational school in the Dnieper metallurgical plant in Dneprodzerzhinsk. N.A. Nazarbayev started his activity from Karaganda metallurgical plant. Nursultan Abishevich started his career working in his specialization of metallurgist.

There are also other examples. Minister of Investment and Development, S.A. Issekeshv graduated from Ural special vocational school № 5 with a degree in "fitter". Director General of machine-building plant named after S.M. Kirov, K.K. Uskenov, also rose through the ranks of gas-electric welder of the 4th category to the chief engineer of agricultural management at Karaganda metallurgical complex in Temirtau. His first education he received at the vocational school with a specialization in "gas-electric welder".

Thus, technical and vocational education opens great opportunities and prospects for young Kazakhstani people. Indeed, a distinctive feature of such education is focus on getting the applicative knowledge and skills.

Currently, the government introduced a dual education system which provides 60% of learning time directly at the place of production, and only 40% - in college. Therefore, being students, young people have an opportunity to approve themselves at the employer and to find employment further at this enterprise. Besides, such training allows to acquire

knowledge and skills as close as possible to the realities of the labor market increasing the quality of specialist training and demand for specialists.

The start of "Serpin - 2050" program is an opportunity for young people not only to get a profession, but also social assistance from the State. The program is aimed at meeting the needs and interests of students. There is a free accommodation, scholarship and roundtrip costs for holidays.

Joining of Kazakhstan to the international movement of WorldSkills International has become a landmark event in technical and vocational education. WorldSkills International united around more than 70 countries around the world to increase the prestige of professional education through the harmonization of best practices and professional standards in the world. Twice a year the international competition for blue-collar occupations is held. This year for the first time Kazakhstan participated in the competition held in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Competing with the best competitors from around the world our team represented Kazakhstan in such a global arena. Our team has won 4 medals in the following nominations: "Turnery", "Catering trade (Cook)", "Best of the Nation", "Best Expert of WorldSkills International". Participation in such large-scale project provides a unique opportunity for our students to learn from international experience, to express themselves and compare with other highly qualified specialists.

It is obvious that the positive trends in the development of vocational and technical education are going on in Kazakhstan. However, the status and prestige of PTE will increase only when the society itself will change its attitude towards PTE.

[1] <http://erkindik.kz/nuzhnyie-rabotniki-stolyaryi-i-plotniki/> [1]



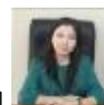
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