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**SPECIFIC FEATURES
OF INTERNATIONALIZATION
OF HIGHER EDUCATION
IN THE FRAMEWORK
OF THE NORTHERN
DIMENSION**

This article analyzes the internationalization of universities, taking part in international cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic region. The case analysis focuses on the experience of Murmansk State Technical University in the Barents Cross-Border University international project implemented together with Murmansk State Pedagogical University, the oldest university in the region, specializing in the Humanities.

Key words: internationalization of higher education, cross-border cooperation, international project.



The obvious state of crisis of contemporary higher education makes it appropriate to think about further development, which can both provide the opportunity to save the best of national educational traditions and determine the specifics of the university strategies. The internationalization of higher education poses itself in this context as a basic direction, structuring and defining research and educational activities of the modern university. From our point of view, the experience of the universities in the Barents region can be deemed positive; moreover, it has proved useful for identifying the main trends and challenges faced by any university considering international activities its top priority.

The higher education system in the Murmansk region includes two large public universities — Murmansk State Technical University (MSTU) and Murmansk State Pedagogical University (MSPU) — alongside about thirty private universities and small regional branches of other Russian universities. That is why MSTU and MSPU, deemed the largest universities in the Murmansk region and educational locomotives for its socio-economic development, face challenges of preserving the standards and practices of higher education in Russia in terms of modernizing and reforming the whole system of education.

Maintaining and developing a diverse system of higher education in the Kola Peninsula is a strategically important factor in supporting Russia's federal integrity, since the region borders on Norway and Finland and is located close to Sweden — the states whose modern national systems of education show a high degree of European and global development. The geographical remoteness of the Kola Peninsula from the center of the Russian Federation and its proximity to the European Union through the borders on Norway and Finland create, on the one hand, a favorable environment for the development of universities and help maintain their independence and autonomy; on the other hand, however, due to those factors the regional component inevi-

tably becomes central to the development of the whole university. The Russian system of higher education of the Murmansk region competes openly with the ones of Norway, Finland and Sweden, when a potential Russian applicant can be offered a variety of opportunities at available higher education institutions in neighboring countries.

The cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region originated in Kirkenes (Norway) in 1993, which is reflected in the Kirkenes Declaration. The region includes 13 provinces, or administrative regions in Norway (the provinces of Finnmark, Troms and Nordland), Finland (the provinces of Lapland, Oulu, Kainuu), Russia (the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Region, the Republics of Komi and Karelia) and Sweden (the provinces of Norrbotten and Västerbotten). More than fifteen years of international cooperation have confirmed the value of international cooperation at different levels — between governments, regions and people. However, cooperation in the Barents Sea region is used to strengthen and develop the Northern Dimension within the EU policy and cooperation with Canada, Japan, the United States and other Arctic regions in northern Europe. It seems that the problem of the Baltic and Barents regions are very similar and are intended to promote stability, environmental progress and peace in Northern Europe through improved quality of life and sustainable socio-economic development. These objectives can be achieved only through sustained efforts in various areas — from global security, ecology and economy to ultimate human values [12].

In 1997 the European Union put forward the Northern Dimension initiative whose aim was to develop and define the interests of the EU in Northern Europe, from Iceland to the North-West Russia and from the Barents Sea to the south coast of the Baltic Sea. The Finnish party presented the concept of Northern Dimension as a background for a dialogue between the EU and other countries to prevent a divide between Europe (including Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, as EU member-countries) and Russia, which could hardly aspire for the EU membership. In terms of higher education policy it is especially important that science, education and culture are considered as top priorities and interpreted as channels to promote cooperation in the framework of research programs, educational and cultural exchange.

The image of the Murmansk State Pedagogical University as the oldest university in the north of Europe has been taking shape gradually. MSPU traces its history to 1939 when the government created the Murmansk Teachers Institute. This fact reflected the rapid development of both the territory, which received the status of an administrative region in 1938, and the country then implementing the unprecedented in Russian history industrialization and literacy programs as parts of the ongoing culture revolution. The foundation of the Murmansk Teachers Institute addressed the shortage of teaching staff and provided two-year academic programs.

In the 50's of the previous century, in the transition from seven to eight years of compulsory education, the network of teachers institutes in the country gradually began to shrink, and by the order of the RSFSR Council of Ministers, the Murmansk Teachers Institute was reorganized into the Mur-

mansk State Pedagogical Institute, which initially had two faculties and no more than ten departments. By 1980's, MSPI became a leading university in the region boasting a significant material and technical base, highly qualified staff, and the undoubted potential for further growth.

New fields of study and faculties in the early twenty-first century, development of the whole university structure, including pre-university and post graduate education, brought about the need to change the university status. Obvious qualitative change in the MSPI allowed the institute to become the Murmansk State Pedagogical University in early 2003. The University development was primarily determined by promoting the humanities, including social and pedagogical fields, which turned the MGPU into a significant factor and prerequisite of humanization of the Russian Arctic.

This is especially important to the Murmansk region where climatic conditions, specific character of the economy, aimed primarily at the development of mining and timber industries, fisheries and food industries, ferrous metallurgy, as well as some features of demographic processes predetermined technical research environment. As early as the 1950s, Murmansk Teachers Institute began to actively promote another, humanities-related, image of the North. And today, perhaps only MGPU has the necessary intellectual resources and mental capacities for large-scale research into the history and culture of the European North.

The Murmansk State Pedagogical University, located in the center of the Barents region, has rather a wide geography of international cooperation. The university's major strategically important partners of cross-cultural cooperation are the higher education institutions in Finland, Norway and Sweden, which have signed long-term contracts and agreements on cooperation in joint research, education projects, and academic mobility. This fact can be explained not only by a particular geographical location of the MGPU, but also by the coexistence of the peoples of those countries within the Northern Dimension, which inevitably involves a special attitude. All this allows us to create a framework of academic cooperation and dialogue considering the principles of the Northern Dimension.

The North has become a cultural mental background, structuring a variety of areas — from the consciousness of a northerner to the academic environment of the university, including living space and time. Northern identity at the level of figurative and ideological meaning is largely determined by the categories of "edge" and "limit", of the region, for which "the land and favorable climate end, Oikumena disappears and state ownership finishes. That is why the Arctic is an ideal platform for observing the changing Russia: here it is best seen when filled with power, it is suffocating for lack of space, trying to break out of the vast Arctic, or vice versa, is burdened with lifeless northern spaces and shrinks, trying to dissociate itself from them as of something too much "[22. 10].

The Kola polar region is seen as a public and historical phenomenon through the contrast, which is manifested in, among other things, the antithesis of the polar day and polar night. The state's attitude toward the North is, in a sense, a reflection of Russia's attitude to itself. In the terminology of Yu.

Slezkin, "the one who is looking in 'Arctic Mirrors' is able to see, even if sometimes in a misshaped or hyperbolic form, oneself, one's own history, everything that was happening in the southern polar latitudes, but in a new 'northern' light" [22. 11]. We believe that this "mirror" can be attributed to increased interest to the north of Russia, which we have seen in recent decades, and boosting international cooperation in general. The image of the mirror can and should be understood not only in the aesthetic sense, but also as a place of reflection and "external" self-monitoring to the Russians.

Cross-border cooperation at the level of higher education becomes the arena where both partnership attitudes and competition relations meet. The implementation of joint international projects in research and teaching areas, on the one hand, creates a powerful conglomerate of strong educational systems of Russia, Norway, Sweden and Finland; on the other hand it leads to open competition, which is manifested primarily in the struggle for undergraduate and graduate students. No doubt, this "fight" as one of the consequences of the Bologna Process, to some extent poses a serious problem for Russia, because it results in "brain drain" of both teachers and students.

Dramatic changes in today's high school related to changes in cooperation between market, state and various institutions in the context of globalization, are leading to re-evaluation of the university phenomenon, its specific role in the development of regional, national and international multicultural space. Today's growth of economic value of knowledge emphasizes the central position of higher education in defining the essence and quality of social life. The new challenges which universities face today evolve as a result of the increasing demand for educational services, new interdisciplinary educational problems which can be solved through the expansion of academic space based on a dialogue of different cultures. The situation is exacerbated due to the lack of public funding for high-quality free higher education in Russia.

According to G. Telegina and N. Shtykova, "all universities are somehow involved in the process of globalization — as its elements or even 'victims', but to a large extent — as its subjects and channels" [20, p. 63]. As a form of globalization, internationalization means developing a "sustainable interaction and mutual influence of national systems of higher education based on the higher purposes and principles" [8. 1]. This meets the needs of the international community and reflects the progressive tendencies of the new century. Internationalization becomes a way of development and "survival" of the university in a very tough economic environment in which higher education in Russia exists today.

The development strategy based on understanding of the defining values of internationalization processes can become a key factor for the university to escape the role of "victim" and to acquire a new dimension to "university" and its changing mission today. Modern university boundaries, in a sense depend on how open they are for multicultural cooperation, primarily in the academic field.

Strong distinctions among universities are obvious in contemporary Russia. The 'global players' of the level of major metropolitan universities, fed-

eral and research universities are distinguished from regional ones, which find themselves in a dramatically different political, economic and financial situation, determined by lack of faculty and funds.

The isolated existence of the university, which was restricted by the intra-institutional limits and diverted from supporting and developing the international space, is gradually receding into the past. Developing the international component of its activities, the university is shaping a new educational environment, where English is becoming the primary means of communication and dialogue. For the university faculty the English language proficiency is vital to cooperation of different cultures and different academic traditions while maintaining and strengthening the national component.

L. A. Verbitskaya points out that "the benefits of internationalization in higher education are obvious: the pooling of resources, especially when they are hard to access, as now; the avoiding of duplication and unnecessary copying topics of research, better identification of projects and growing confidence in their viability in terms of common surveillance" [5. 16]. The modern university has no right to be on the periphery of the global trends that determine the development of society in the new century. University development must refer to the choice of an internationalization strategy, or to a combination of these strategies depending on the regional and national objectives, a realistic assessment of available resources and priorities. The authors of the review, "Current issues of educational development in OECD countries," identify four strategies for the internationalization in higher education: a coordinated approach, a strategy to attract skilled labor, income strategy and a strategy of empowerment. It is noted that each of the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) follows one of these strategies [1].

While discussing the issue it is worth recalling an article by F.G. Altbach and J. Knight, where they stress that "within the EU space internationalization of higher education becomes a part of the overall process of economic and political integration" [2. 102]. The modern university cannot fail to respond to dynamic external changes affecting the global, subnational and intercultural levels. The institution that defines internationalization as one of the major trends in its domestic development in a natural way goes beyond their national borders, expanding and modifying their educational space.

Internationalization deepens and broadens the knowledge background of partner universities, expanding the limits of scientific research, and enriching implemented education programs [5. 16]. Urging faculty, staff and students to raise education to the world-class level is seen fairly by J. Knight, as "one of the most important benefits that higher education accrues from internationalization" [13. 80]. This, of course, is not about the "internationalization on the average level" [16].

The implementation of the basic principles of the Bologna process initially suggested that the international component would be a core element in all areas of the contemporary university: teaching, research, administrative, additional education, IT. According to M. Pevzner, "The present stage of internationalization is associated with the trend of globalization and characterized by

transition from episodic international contacts in the educational field between some countries to substantial scientific and educational cooperation and comprehensive partnership. Deepening this partnership is accompanied by a joint development of intercultural bilingual education programs with a didactic component, elaboration of new education technologies in the mode of open education, joint research in various fields of knowledge "[14. 56].

Interpreted in this way, the international scientific and educational cooperation is apparently a phenomenon more complex and multidimensional than just growing international communication. International activities conducted at a university on a sustained and long-term basis should be aimed at improving the quality of education and the scientific level of the research, at increasing the level of professional qualifications of the faculty and students.

Given this it should be noted that network projects reflecting some aspect of cross-border cooperation get the highest priority. According to M. Perkmann, "cross-border cooperation can be defined as more or less institutionalized process of interaction between the self-governing local authorities of the trans-border regions" [26. 156]. The term "trans-border" is used here as a synonym for "cross-border".

N. Mezhevich, however, points to the need to differentiate between the concepts "trans-border" and "cross-border", and opposes their conceptual confusion. Citing examples of different interpretations of the term "cross-border cooperation", given in the European Framework Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation among Territorial Communities or Authorities and the Government of the Russian Federation in the concept of cross-border cooperation, the author examines the views of Russian and Estonian experts and gives another, alternative definition: cross-border cooperation (or cooperation on the border) is a collaboration that takes place at the state level between two or more parties on the issues of the national border. "The aim of such cooperation can be cross-border negotiations, the border-crossing regime, an agreement on customs and visa regulations, joint operations in the border area, cooperative signalling systems, etc." [12. 20]. It is this definition which is seen as the key one in "Basic concepts of cross-border cooperation" by K. Tyuyr K [21]. N. Mezhevich notes that this point of view coincides with the Russian interpretation of "cross-border cooperation", that is cooperation, implemented primarily by border commissioners. At the same time, the researcher points out that one of the main purposes of cross-border cooperation is to neutralize and mitigate the negative impact of the border [12].

In research papers cross-border cooperation is often understood as joint activities aimed at strengthening and developing good-neighborly relations between the territorial authorities of neighboring states, which are implemented by the conclusion of regional agreements and arrangements. "Cross-border co-operation does not imply that the parties involved are the immediately neighboring federated entities, territories and municipalities. Moreover, this type of cooperation extends to the economic sphere, the environment, culture, education, population control, and other areas within the boundaries of a particular cross-border space... "[12. 21]. As a central definition of this concept it is postulated that "Cross-border cooperation is the communication

between regions, municipalities, enterprises and institutionalized interest groups and individuals, located on the both sides of the border as well as their joint actions aimed at achieving some goals "[21. 9]. Within this approach, the term "communication" becomes the key word; therefore the framework for cross-border cooperation is largely determined by the specific legislation, as well as the peculiarities of the socio-economic development of a region. Listen

While analyzing the international activities of the modern university the most current interpretation of the term in the context of border studies appears to be the one proposed by I. M. Busygina who understands cross-border cooperation as a form of inter-territorial, regional cooperation, international contacts, cross-border regions [4. 979]. It is obvious that the level of cross-border cooperation characterizes a certain stage in the development of political and economic integration, and suggests a gradual transition from individual contacts to a long-term strategic partnership. In some interpretations the concept of "border" is associated with the process of socialization and is regarded as a form of socialization of the population of neighboring regions in terms of cultural diversity and ethnic tolerance, the formation of a multi-ethnic community in the European regions [10. 168—180].

It seems that the analysis of this phenomenon within a university space allows saying that trans-border space can function as a "zone of innovation", which brings about innovation projects -both in terms of content and form. Thus, the modern university, developing a strategy of trans-border space, serves as an innovative platform that creates intellectual property in various projects and programs, which also determines the mechanisms for its protection.

From our point of view, it is important to address the philosophical understanding of the border phenomenon, which can significantly extend the idea of international cooperation in general and analyze the sources of trans-boundary characteristics as an integral part of an international project. Understanding an emerging field of knowledge "border studies" in the light of globalization suggests that "the defining dominant of... global understanding, determines the process of 'levelling' the quality of life and giving it a uniformity is the widespread phenomenon of getting rid of the borders. Removing any present and past barriers becomes the core of the progressive thinking "[19. 3].

The prefix *trans-* in the Latin infinitive *transcendere* (to cross, step over, go beyond) determines our understanding of some of the terms in European languages, delivering extremely important values, which become benchmarks of our existence. These are meanings of transition, transcendence, going beyond the boundaries [19. 4]. Of course, in some sense the barriers can't be overcome completely, but it is not necessary since the "border" allows you to update an idea of 'other' and 'alien' in your inner being. The common ground for trans-border dialogue is not the idea of a barrier but a contact as a key functional characteristic of the border, which includes a set of conditions and factors conducive to cross-border communications [7. 90]. Given these two characteristics four models of cross-border co-operation are distinguished: an active rapport, passive contact, the rigid barrier and the model of

"indifference" which regards the border as a neutral phenomenon (N. Mezhevich). It seems that the most successful and efficient in terms of development of international space project should be a model of active contact, which recognizes the positive role of the border. Read phonetically

The project area borderline is important as a symbol of distinction that separates cultural environments, and a certain line, which is the basis for a proper dialogue, bringing together the unique and the universal. Reflecting on the borderlines between cultures, Academician Dmitry Likhachev defines boundaries in two ways: "This is a place of communication, and the wall of disunity... As the area of most intense interaction of cultures, it marks the highest artistic sphere, where cultures both share their experience, and interact in a dialogue, enriching each other, and sometimes seek to preserve their own isolation "[11. 20].

Thus, the desire for dialogue becomes a mega-trend in the modern era, defining the very emergence of the phenomenon of cross-border network projects. Understanding of the fact that cooperation is most effective when the efforts are combined to increase the competitiveness of the partners, leads naturally to the idea of uniting in cross-border project space. It should be emphasized that the Russian Federation has the longest border in the world (61,000 km) and the largest number of neighboring countries — sixteen, -which creates the potential for cross-border cooperation. Forty-eight Russian regions have cross-border or coastal location and thirty-seven of them have land borders with fourteen countries.

There are a number of programs aimed at developing trans-border cooperation. Focusing on the analysis of the phenomenon of the North, it is worth mentioning the program "ENPI-PS Kolarctic" (Kolarctic ENPI CBC — European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, Cross Border Cooperation), which has the status of European external relations programs that encourage cross-border cooperation between the North Calotte and the North-West Russia. The program aims to level the peripheral character of border regions and related problems, as well as to promote cross-border cooperation. Practical implementation of the program is supported by cross-border projects. The program area is characterized by vast geography, low population figures, rich natural resources and traditionally broad international cooperation.

The program perspective has got a particular definition: the program area is the territory of developed and well known cross-border cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, which is characterized by a high standard of living. Activities are based on the principles of sustainable development. Projects carried out within the program must meet one of the three priorities: economic and social development (incl. the promotion of networks and contacts in business and higher education, as well as forms of business that support the culture of indigenous peoples), general tasks (general solution to the regional problems, which affect the interests of the absolute majority of the population in the areas of health, life safety, etc.), "people to people" co-operation and self-development (activities aimed at strengthening the interaction between people and civil society at the local level).

It is worth mentioning that at the beginning of the project cycle the cross-border situation faces different "sets of perception" (D.N Uznadze): on the one hand, there is a Russian partner, doomed to work in the current financial situation, typical for an absolute majority of Russian universities forced to prioritize saving policy; on the other, there is a Western partner, for whom it is not an absolute priority at all. If we consider the international project as a segment that occurs at the intersection of cultural fields from different countries, it becomes clear that such a situation, based on the idea of saving, restricts the category of equality proclaimed by the majority of the funds and programs that provide funding for projects. The internal content of the term "equality" is emended while the originally unequal partners are differentiated as "powerful" and "dependent". Of course, this problem is related to the regional peculiarities of Russian politics, substantially based on the principle of thriftiness. An example is the above-mentioned EU program "Kolarctic ENPI CBC", in which the first application round is carried out without any of Russia's national co-financing, and public financing is replaced by the allocation of funds from other sources, which might be the regional administrative bodies, cities, municipalities, public utility services, education institutions, universities and research institutes. We can surmise what problems any Russian grant applicant can face, especially if an educational or cultural establishment is involved. In our view, such a distortion in the understanding of the principle of equality leads to the fact that in cross-border cooperation, we "give in" part of the borders.

This article attempts to analyze the specific development of a large-scale international network project of cross-border orientation. Barents Cross-Border University (BCBU) originally carried the name Russian-Finnish Barents Cross-Border University, which had been changed due to the expansion of the project participants network through including the partner universities from Sweden, Norway, Canada, Denmark and Greenland. Now BCBU is a major international project based primarily on cooperation between universities in Northern Finland and North-western Russia [28—31]. The idea of the Consortium is based on the common interests of northern universities, on the principle of constructing the northern education space, taking into account the specifics of the Barents region, which involves cross-border crossings. The first phase of the project was financed by the Ministry of Education of Finland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the Ministry of Education of Russia. In addition, each university participating in the project significantly co-financed it from its own budget.

The main objective of the project is the creation and development of international multi-disciplinary master's degree programs with content that reflects the specifics of "Northern Dimension". All programs are developed on the principles of the Bologna Process. All the teaching is done in English. The Cross-Border University offer Master's programs in Social Work, Environmental Engineering, Information Technology, Circumpolar health and wellbeing. It is important to stress that this project is designed in accordance with the Strategy for the Internationalization of Universities in Finland, designed for the period until 2015 and approved by the Ministry of Education

of Finland. Of course, the strategy for the internationalization of Russian universities emphasizes the same priorities: the development of academic mobility, increased international research activities and the implementation of programs of joint and double degrees.

The history of BCBU confirms its focus on strengthening cooperation in the Barents Sea region, strengthening international ties through the establishment of a basic platform for the development of research and business cooperation. The implementation of Master's programs within the cross-border space provides guidance on the internationalization of the educational process and research through the constant updating of content and introduction of a comparative dimension consistent with such a perception of international cooperation.

At this stage, Murmansk State Pedagogical University is a member of the project (in two master's programs — "Comparative Social Work" and "Environmental Engineering"), along with other higher education institutions in Northwest Russia: Petrozavodsk State University, Pomor State University, Arkhangelsk State Technical University, Karelian State Pedagogical University, Murmansk State Technical University, Northern State Medical University. Higher education in Finland is represented in the project by two universities in Northern Finland: University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, and the University of Oulu. Both of these schools are traditional partners of Murmansk State Pedagogical University. This cooperation is implied in the most important for the University innovative education and research projects focused on the study of the phenomenon of the North.

Little experience of MSPU in the implementation of tier-system of higher education explains the university status position in the project of an associate member. The structure of the signed agreements provides a clear formal character of rights and duties of associate partners, which is manifested in their active participation in developing the content of Master's programs within the consortium, preparing materials for academic and research tutoring, addressing various administrative issues, preparing and disseminating information about the specific master's programs in the media and Internet resources. In addition, each associate partner of the Consortium is obliged to create all conditions necessary for the implementation of a master's program, through planning and organizing research activities of students and teachers in a particular subject area. Academic mobility, which is central to the project, is provided by the joint efforts of all full and associate partners through a rigorous selection of participants on the basis of jointly developed criteria. Moreover, each associate partner of the Consortium has the right of peer review of teaching.

The main conditions (principles) of co-operation on a particular degree under the agreement are as follows:

1. Each institution of the Consortium is a full or associate member of one or more of the above mentioned Master's degree programs.
2. An institution may apply for change of status to the Rector's conference of the Consortium.

3. In order to obtain a Master's degree, confirmed by a double diploma, a student must get 120 ECTS while undergoing a program, in accordance with the curriculum approved by the relevant universities, faculties and departments, as well as in accordance with national and institutional regulations. Students receive a dual degree from all the universities, which can confirm the availability of credit. At the same time, the student should be trained in a specific Master's program of at least two universities in the Consortium.

4. Students can get enrolled in any university of the Consortium, and the enrolment is done on the evaluation of applications in the program authority in accordance with the procedures and rules of the participating universities, institutes and departments.

5. Student mobility is an integral part of the curriculum of all the joint master's programs. The highest credits that can be obtained from a university are 60 ECTS, including theoretical and practical training, a qualification paper, research or any other type of work proposed by the Consortium and included in the curriculum.

Apart from student exchanges, Cross-Border University suggests teacher mobility, which is an integral part of a joint master's programs. In addition to the faculty working in universities of the Consortium academics from third countries will be invited.

It is worth mentioning that the value of such projects is doubtless despite their obvious problematic step-by-step implementation. Common understanding of this fact is seen in constant efforts of member countries in seeking funds for continuous participation in the design and implementation of joint Master's programs. Thanks to BCBU, Finnish universities are able to directly enter Russian education market and to increase the contingent of foreign students studying in universities of the country, greatly increasing the appropriations and the higher education system in Finland, giving further impetus to its development. Thus, investing in academic mobility bolsters the national education system of Finland due to the inflow of well-trained students. According to the expert opinion of the Finnish colleagues, repeatedly voiced during the negotiations on the project, cooperation with Russia within the framework of the Cross-Border University contributes to the overall rise in the prestige of higher education in Finland both within the country and abroad.

In its turn, it is important for the Russian university to move significantly towards implementing the basic principles of the Bologna Declaration through the introduction of tiered education system, a module and credit system of evaluation and quality management system. Cross-Border University allows you to see inside the process of shaping joint Master's degree programs to attract foreign academics to the educational and research activities of Russian universities. Participation in such cross-border educational projects naturally stimulates the academic mobility of both teachers and students. The educational process, carried out jointly by scientists from different countries, is another illustration of the profound dialogue character of education, the essence of which can be realized only in academic dialogue systems and dialogue of cultures.

The education process in BCBU, deeply dialogical in content and form, is focused on the formation of this truly dialogic mindset of modern man, which is understood as "an expansion of consciousness, which offsets the spiritual achievements of all times and cultures, to appreciate them according to their own logic, originality, uniqueness rather than their own superiority"[24. 23]. The ability to perceive other cultures in a variety of meanings promotes the growth of consciousness of individuals and peoples, the gradual realization of their own uniqueness and identity.

The value of such large-scale projects of cross-border orientation is difficult to overestimate in terms of building another line of dialogue or interaction between different cultures, brought together by the culture of the North and the unique specificity in the common education space. It seems that the development of the idea of cross-border university may result in a larger field, the concentration of which will be Barents pedagogy, combining secondary and higher education in partner countries.

Speaking about the specifics of the internationalization of higher education within the Northern Dimension, it should be noted that the most important form of international activity is cross-border cooperation, both at the level of international research projects, and at the level of academic mobility of faculty, staff and students. Northern universities in Russia, defining priority areas of development, build their scientific and educational activities with regard to the principles of good neighbourhood and mutually beneficial Northern cross-border cooperation. The internationalization of higher education is, on the one hand, a way to secure the university in extremely difficult economic conditions; on the other hand, it is a key to the development and expansion of the university's education space.

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