

Higher Education and Employment - a broken link

One of the key problems in post-Soviet higher education is that it does not prepare graduates for the labor market. Studying the situation in Azerbaijan, Firdovsi Rzayev argues that one of the reasons for this is that there is no link between higher education and employers. Although in principle employers are willing to help develop curricula, organizing practical trainings for the students, and strengthening the material-technical base of vocational schools, there is no formal mechanism for doing this.

Rzayev argues that there should be a unit under the umbrella of the Cabinet of Ministers, bringing together the various ministries (economic development, labor, education) with other stakeholders (employers' associations), and researchers. This unit could help to set directives for a higher education that better meet market needs.

Arguably there remains, however, a chicken-egg problem: for such a mechanism to work, there needs to be a willingness to implement comprehensive reform; moreover, the employers themselves don't always have the most modern practices. Maybe the best way is to short-circuit this by importing recognized vocational certification from abroad, instead of trying to set up a similar system oneself. This does not work in all sectors, but should not be a major problem in some (computer skills, IT, financial services), which then can provide a role model.

Details of the study, in Azerbaijani, on the [CRRC website](#).