

The NGOs and the university's partnership

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Introduction

There were several discussions many years ago in Hungary too, about what was more important in a University: to operate as entrepreneurs, I mean to do business, or teach or research. Nowadays we already do know the correct answer: You could be doing all these, parallel and at the same time: There are two different subjects here: one is teaching, and other one is doing business.

Finally, the University must begin to make businesses systematically. enterprising Universities could be good enough, with big help, from the so called non-profit organisations, like associations, foundations (in one word: NGO's) The new philosophy of Higher Education in Hungary is: PPP. (Public-private partnership) The civilian sphere can serve the interests of the state well. How could you make money? What kind of methods could we use to make money from different dreams and ideas?

Main Part

One of the consequences of the political changes that impacts higher education is that:

- the horizon has been expanded, the COCOM embargo list was eliminated
- an IT and communication explosion happened in higher education (as well)
- we shifted to market economy, one of the external signs of the that is a change in cars: university presidents have changed their old, Soviet made cars for state-of-the-art Western ones;
- opportunities have opened up to foreign stipends (these were no longer necessarily restricted to the former Communist countries, even more important, „Socialist connections” became increasingly unnecessary to get them);
- we have become signatories to international treaties (also) affecting higher education;
- the prestige of knowledge has decreased parallel with the spread of dubious opportunity seekers of privatisation;
- social differences have increased, the process has started whereby universities are becoming poorer and poorer;
- lack of funds in scientific research and higher education;
- the ratio of budget appropriations spent on education has been pushed down compared to the non-productive sphere (speculation);
- the support given to state universities has been decreasing year by year;
- the interest of the state as the owner has decreased (major state assets became the interests of private individuals or local governments, for example, the sports facility of the domestic sports university, known as TF, is also changing owners);
- at first, the state universities applied the method of staff reduction, however, they soon realized that they simply cannot lay everybody off, somebody has to teach the students, too;
- there had been successive eras of forced solutions, such as: system of support from foundations, cooperation with associations, agreements for the transfer of tasks, forms of public benefit company (ways to escape), and financially, PPP (public private partnership). (It has been a characteristic feature of every era that after a short boom financial austerity followed) (one escape route has been closed down);
- the universities devised several tricky ways to economize: for example, they charged the public dues on the tutors, i.e. some of the lecturers had to work as entrepreneurs. Later on they incurred so-called internal debts (they did not pay wages to their employees to elicit some pity from the state, then they failed to pay taxes on them);
- the indebted universities escaped into integration, however, integration is not efficient.

References

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