

## **Baku Conference Report**

«21<sup>st</sup> Century Education: Dynamic Symbiosis between Education and Industry»

JACAFA's another annual conference took place in Baku this time. Due to my work I couldn't participate in previous conferences and meetings of JACAFA in Bishkek and Dushanbe. Hence I was looking forward to this event on this occasion.

At the very beginning of my trip I'd already felt myself as I'm a part of a big family. All the alumni from Kazakhstan and Kirgiz Republic were gathering at Almaty International Airport. We were happy to see each other after long time apart. So our adventure to Baku started in there.

After our pleasant and safe flight to Baku we were met by Azerbaijani alumni represented by Jeyhun-san and Aydin-san who were too kind to meet all of us at the Heydar Aliyev International Airport and to organize transfer bus to the hotel. I hereby sincerely thank them for that.

On the day of the conference on 1<sup>st</sup> March I was surprised by the number of people who came to take part in the conference. We used to be in a small group of JACAFA alumni and some invited guests in the previous JACAFA activities in Almaty and Bishkek. But this time I noticed that JACAFA is expanding in both ways: its importance as an organization and number of interested people.

An opening speech by Mr. Fariz Ismailzade, the Vice Rector of Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy (ADA), was the best possible beginning of the conference.



His ideas and thoughts about educational system in Azerbaijan were close and familiar to me. Because at the time being we experience almost the same problems in educational system in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan still uses test based exam system to evaluate knowledge of the graduates and the results of it are the main criteria to win a National Scholarship. But, as Fariz-san mentioned, we are

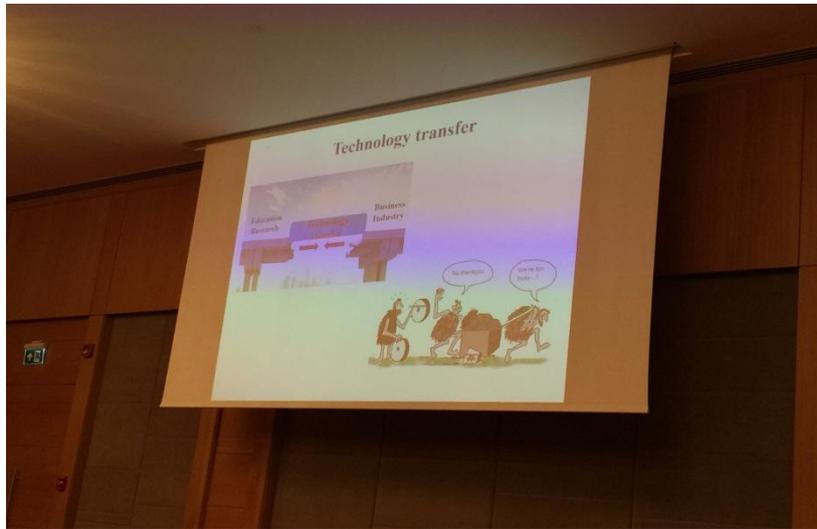
just growing robots who only can memorize the facts and not able to materialize their ideas in real life. Since Soviet Union had fallen all ex-soviet countries including Azerbaijan are trying to find the best educational system which will meet the needs of the country as well as the needs of the world too. On that way we have to choose the best system among the existing ones, implement and test it and see its results which requires decades of time in national wide scales. But we don't have any other ways to see which is best for next generation.

Prof.Vrboski's comment on this occasion was brilliant. He said that time and teachers are crucial moments in education. Since child's character and mindset are completely formed by age 6-7 it is very important to use that period of time to educate them in a right way. And who can help us in realization of this plan? Of course well educated and trained teachers.

It is a fact that education impacts almost all sectors of the country. Mr.Yuji Mori mentioned about it again by saying that there is nothing more important than education for nation. I totally support this idea. Because good education can grow up brilliant minds and that brilliant minds are the main wealth of the nation.

I would also highlight a presentation of Dr.Rahman Shahhuseynli from ADA University who touched on the issue of internationalization of the universities. His researches on that theme and results were interesting. Since he studied in Japan for a long time his biography and educational background were quite interesting too. During his presentation he expressed his wish to attract and invite more Japanese students to Azerbaijan with the aid of Mr.Yuji Mori and TNF. Maybe it will be the beginning of a new cooperation.

Assoc.Prof.Isa Gasimov's presentation entitled "University – Industry Cooperation and Intellectual Capital Development" best suited the theme of the conference. Thanks to his rich experience in educational system of Azerbaijan both in soviet period and nowadays it was pleasure to listen to his thoughts and ideas concerning past and future perspectives in education. He mentioned about lack of bridge between society and science by funny illustration in a photo below.

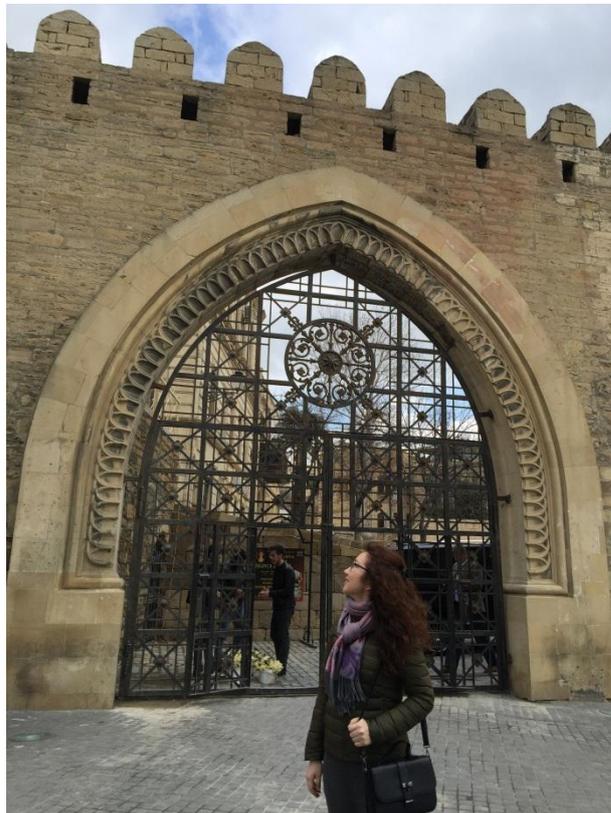


It is important to conduct researches that will make people's life easier and help the economy of the country. I mean research results should be implemented in practice, not only published in some journals with impact-factor and to be forgotten.

Another speaker who talked about the importance of practical realizations of ideas was Mr.Mammad Karim, Director, Business Incubator Centre "Innoland". He showed us a geographical advantage of Azerbaijan neighboring with Russia, Turkey and Iran which can help to cooperate with them in different areas. He also mentioned that investing in right projects and right people is crucial point of their center.

I was very glad to know from the speech of Kyoko-san and Mr.James Huffman that JACAFA and TNF are going to implement new projects in Central Asia like JACAFA's new scholarship program and master degree programs for CA students at Tsukuba University. I am really happy that our good old JATCAFA in Turkey is rapidly developing as JACAFA in Central Asia and Azerbaijan.

Next day of our staying in Baku we had a full day exploring the beauty of the city. Baku surprised me a lot. I expected to see one of the ex-soviet cities with similar architecture. But what I explored was absolutely different. Both old and new parts of Baku left a lasting impression on me. When we were walking in İçerişahar I could feel the rich culture and history of Azerbaijani people. The length of Baku's fortress walls is impressive. Historians believe that the wall was created in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century! And it still exists. That is amazing.



New Baku more looks like modern Dubai. Especially Heydar Aliyev Center impressed me by its futuristic design. We didn't have time to get in and walk inside the building but I am sure it is not less amazing like its outside. I cannot fail to mention a new symbol of Baku City Flame Towers. It amazed me by its lights and sparkles at night. It was hard to take my eyes off it!

Another place that left a deep impression on me was monument "Eternal Flame" for the victims of Black January. It was hard to walk through a long path where more than 100 people were buried. I felt deep respect to those people who fought and died for Independence of Azerbaijan. May their souls rest in peace.



At the end of the report I would like to thank all Azerbaijani Alumni, especially Aydin-san, Jeyhun-san, Konul-san, Leyla-san and Fariz-san for their great hospitality and for everything they have done during our stay in Baku. The conference and trip couldn't be the same without your support and help.

My special thanks to Kyoko-san and TNF for organizing the conference in Baku. The conference was held at very high level thanks to your efforts.



By Galiya Razym