



# 10

## Building Research Capacity at a TNE Institution: The Case of Westminster International University in Tashkent

Bakhrom Mirkasimov, Peter G. Malvicini,  
Odilbek Kattaev, and Ikrom Rikhsiboev

### Context

Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT) was founded in 2002 in partnership with the University of Westminster. It has successfully built an ambitious and dynamic international university in Uzbekistan, the first since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. For the first decade after its establishment, WIUT's priority was teaching. Industry links, student experience, employability of graduates and other factors of successful education were less attended to. Research was uneven, often project-oriented, and dependent on limited but active relationships with a few donors. Centralised control of higher education in Uzbekistan meant demands for a high number of enrolments and academic staff overloaded with teaching responsibilities. Uzbekistan's performance in

---

B. Mirkasimov (✉) • P. G. Malvicini • O. Kattaev • I. Rikhsiboev  
Westminster International University in Tashkent, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
e-mail: [bmirkasimov@wiut.uz](mailto:bmirkasimov@wiut.uz); [pmalvicini@wiut.uz](mailto:pmalvicini@wiut.uz); [okattaev@wiut.uz](mailto:okattaev@wiut.uz);  
[irikhsiboev@wiut.uz](mailto:irikhsiboev@wiut.uz)

science and education was weaker compared to other post-Soviet states such as Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kazakhstan.

An internal survey of WIUT conducted in October 2018 showed that academic staff spent most of their time teaching and had little time, willingness, capacity or motivation for research. It was decided that teaching loads and the number of students were the main reasons contributing to the lack of research output. For experienced colleagues, personal interests, motivation and promotion were more likely to be considerations.

The past three years of the government's economic and social reforms have created new opportunities and challenges in all spheres, including higher education. Research by Adambekov et al. (2016) considered the number of researchers, publications and development spending. It shows that Uzbekistan led in the number of publications among Central Asian countries until 2011, but from 2012 Kazakhstan significantly improved its performance by publishing more papers in reputable international journals (Suspitsin 2007). The low position of Uzbek universities in international rankings failed to recruit many international students. Suyunov et al. (2018) argue that low productivity of researchers, low incentives for R&D, lack of private R&D investments and inefficiency of research processes has led to low quality innovation, less global impact and unsustainable R&D culture in Uzbekistan relative to Kazakhstan. The authors conclude with three policy options to produce high-quality R&D impact.

The government of Uzbekistan recognised these issues and are therefore paying more attention to science, education and the reputation of higher education institutes in the global arena. Decrees of the President, government and Ministry of Higher Education introduced and implemented initiatives to improve Uzbekistan's research capacity and quality.

Establishing new branch campuses of well-recognised international universities and institutes renews education in Uzbekistan. More freedom to HEIs on enrolment policies, new program development and independent collaboration opportunities with international partners reflect current promises and challenges of higher education in Uzbekistan.

WIUT remains one of the most reputable HEIs in Uzbekistan and Central Asia because of its awareness and openness to new ideas, changes, opportunities and challenges.

## Comparative Cases and Approaches to TNE

TNE plays an important role in universities' internationalisation agenda (Observatory on Borderless Higher Education 2014). Institutions of higher learning extend their influence in international education TNE campuses.

The Cross-Border Education Research Team (C-BERT) definition of an international branch campus is 'An entity that is owned, at least in part, by a foreign education provider; operated in the name of the foreign education provider, engages in at least some face-to-face teaching, and provides access to an entire academic program that leads to a credential awarded by the foreign education provider' ([globalhighered.org](http://globalhighered.org) 2017). WIUT as a TNE institution meets these criteria with the exception of foreign ownership.

Lane (2011) discussed the motivations to open a TNE institution as "desire for new revenue streams" and "the pursuit of increased institutional prestige" for both countries. Home campuses often benefit from a TNE institution by financial support from the host institution and opportunities for research between countries (Marginson 2006). Host campus countries often benefit from an association with world-class institutions (Lawton and Katsomitros 2012) reducing brain drain to retain highly skilled and competent young individuals (Lien and Wang 2012).

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) discuss educational quality and global curriculum comparing these factors to their host universities. As most of the home campus countries are from the United States, United Kingdom and Australia, the quality of their higher education is considered world-class and is listed in international ranking tables compiled by Times Higher Education. Srikatanyoo and Gnoth (2002) discuss the home campus' country reputation (USA, UK, Australia) and the institution's

reputation in the home country. Stronger examples include New York University, Nottingham University and Monash University.

Comparative data on TNE capacity for research is not kept (Lane 2011). There is no systematically collected data for the qualifications of faculty and staff. Home campuses usually view host campuses as something different from their academic core (Coleman 2003). Administrators and staff at a TNE institution often feel disenfranchised and disconnected when they do not engage in the provider's institutional governance (Lane 2011). This may limit the host institution's research capacity as well as its experience in academic decision-making.

Broad differences and motivations of countries wanting to either import or export educational institutions is fraught with potential for failure in both teaching and research.

## Research Framework

TNE institutions in Uzbekistan as potential private higher education (PHE) institutions provide something different, are seen as elite institutions and absorb the demand for private university practices (Suspitsin 2007). These practices include teaching in the English language, providing market-orientated curriculum and access to international degrees.

Musial (2009) discusses that elite private institutions in Poland compete with the best public institutions to increase their academic legitimacy. Uzbekistan's TNE institutions have been seen as socially desirable with their high-quality programs. These practices relate to Uzbekistan because TNE institutions compete with elite local universities in the country in many ways. When applicants pass the state examination for elite public universities and at the same time pass all required tests in TNE institutions, they normally choose the TNE institution. WIUT consistently ranks as a top university for research after the National University and always in the top few universities in overall rankings in Uzbekistan.

In Uzbekistan, in the decentralised approach to TNE institutions, there is clearly less bureaucracy in management and decision making compared to local universities. As mentioned above, all TNE institutions

are tuition-dependent and their enrolments do not have limits or quotas as long as students pass the required entrance exams.

TNE institutions in Uzbekistan are a rather new type of institution and involve both public and private interest. Their goals and strategies fit into PHE practices (Levy 2013) since these institutions run with similar aims. Conversely, they may not fit with regulations of private institutions because they receive support and oversight from government entities.

However, the international degree diplomas make TNE institutions different compared to local universities. TNE institutions are open to thousands of students, providing access to international degrees at an affordable price. Before the growth of TNE institutions in Uzbekistan, an international degree was expensive for families and the government. The cost of tuition in a TNE institution is over two times cheaper than home campus tuition. While room and board expenses add significantly to the overall cost of education, competition from China and Eastern Europe, with the same or lower costs, gives prospective students more choice. Pricing supports the sustainability of the institution but it does not directly relate to the quality of teaching, yet alone research.

Another difference between TNE institutions and local Universities are all classes are taught in English. Since students study and complete assessments in English, most employers, parents and government officials view TNE institutions as providing something different compared to the local universities; the western style of teaching and learning, such as assessment tasks and the role of faculty as a facilitator, are core examples. However, the approach to teaching and learning is more important to the creativity needed for effective research.

## Critical Thinking

Different societies take different approaches to education. Uzbekistan is considered one of the more egalitarian approaches, though it is hampered by the 70-year Soviet legacy of hierarchy in government. Uzbekistan has TNE institutions with home campuses in the United Kingdom, Australia, South Korea, Singapore, the United States and Russia. Most cultures of Western countries take an egalitarian student-centered approach while

Southeast Asian home institutions prefer hierarchical structures embracing control over students and the actions of faculty. In the student handbook for the learning outcomes of WIUT, the phrase “critical thinking” is assessed in every learning outcome:

The ability to:

- Develop a critical understanding of the major management issues in international context;
- Critically appraise the practical implications of managerial decisions taken by a management team;
- Diagnose and critically analyse human resource-related problems and apply appropriate solutions, considering the implications of the local culture.

The role of critical thinking is important to fulfil host campus requirements in the following ways: being able to question and evaluate information, solving problems, thinking beyond the immediate situation, looking at theory and asking how it relates to practice, reading different viewpoints about issues and forming independent conclusions. Sustainability rests on being able to resolve these differences leaving a creative tension valuing different perspectives and approaches.

## Academic Freedom and Power Distance

Academic freedom links to these dimensions. Altbach (2011) raised a question about academic freedom at TNE institutions. While governments guarantee academic freedom, many faculties are worried. “What happens, if a faculty member writes a piece critical of authorities?” (Altbach 2011).

In teaching, faculty see the importance of academic freedom during curriculum development and research. In some Central Asian countries talking about corruption and human rights may seem inappropriate or against the government. But for department faculty from law or economics, these topics are important to explain when studying different theories or frameworks. The learning process creates a similar situation. Students,

when asked to write on the influence of corruption, human rights or challenge governmental policies, may feel insecure and not write on these topics. Alternatively, a student enrolled in the home campus in the US, UK or Australia, could write such a paper without feeling insecure.

In most Western cultures, students are expected to do their own work. In Non-Western cultures, students may learn by copying other people's work. Plagiarism is quite different, based on the cultural views. Such copying leaves little room for originality for research. The concept of plagiarism is a unique problem to Western universities operating in foreign countries. TNE institutions regularly identify cases of plagiarism. Like many Western Universities, WIUT has resorted to software such as Turnitin to detect student plagiarism or recycled work. This is one piece of evidence suggesting TNE institutions have far to go to set up educational communities and research cultures that reward innovative thinking. English is usually students' second or third language.

Western academic conventions forbid students from copying word for word from a source, but Arabs have a deep attachment to their language. Students may copy simply because they like the way the words are written and changing them might imply arrogance or that the student thinks he could do better (Fawley 2007).

## WIUT's Growing Experience with Research

On its founding in 2002 as the first TNE institution in Uzbekistan, the expectation was for international quality teaching, not international quality research. No one imagined research as central to WIUT's growth and sustainability as an institution. Faculty members who had studied at research universities at home or abroad took initiative for research, particularly the few but growing number who earned research doctorates. Academics, former professors and staff from the University of Westminster in London, began to encourage and eventually partner in research activities. The strength of this partnership over 16 years and four contracts has enabled WIUT to flourish.

While most recognise WIUT will remain a teaching institution, the role of research is changing it and will continue to influence change.

Some see the transformation as positive while many others would be happy to be left alone to teach. WIUT faculty engaged in research find new opportunities to work across universities, see their ideas spread through journal articles and other publications, find new content for their courses they teach and see the demand for their skills increase. Less engaged faculty may be content with owning their own business or using their WIUT affiliation to gain consulting contracts in their field.

What we know for certain is both the quality and quantity of faculty research is on a gradual but steady upward trend. Currently research is considered during review for promotion and will be considered more during regular performance reviews for academics. It is likely that faculty will soon face concrete expectations for having a productive line/s of research. Now, some see the relationship between research and WIUT's future growth and sustainability in a city crowded with a dozen competing TNE institutions as incidental. But if research were merely a requirement to count, WIUT should give it up—it is a culture to create and it will take time, commitment and focus.

## The Enabling Environment for Research at WIUT

Recently, WIUT used an “enabling environment for research” heuristic<sup>1</sup> with its faculty members in each subject area. They responded across eight dimensions of the enabling environment for research leading to deeper, more nuanced discussions and analyses with faculty members. Like most universities, WIUT is not immune from serious challenges to research. By frankly sharing some of these they hope to create an instructive case. This analysis yielded strengths, concerns, and potential actions. Below, some of the emerging themes are explained:

*Organisational framework.* WIUT provides a research office dedicated to support faculty members, supporting their capacity and organising research-related seminars and speakers for the community.

---

<sup>1</sup> Developed by Rudi Voss and adapted by Peter Malvicini in 2007 at the Asian Development Bank.



Interdisciplinary research is a struggle for most faculty members who complain they have little time and few incentives for research, both financially and accountability-wise.

*Culture and commitment.* Faculty members see a research culture emerging including more pursuing PhD degrees. They appreciate not having strict publication requirements. Still motivation is lacking and some complain financial support is inadequate for research and conference participation. Subject areas need their own vision.

*Institutional framework of stakeholders.*<sup>2</sup> The University regularly conducts international research conferences making it a leader in the region. Even so, external communication is inconsistent and without a clear plan. WIUT needs stronger engagement with the government and private sector as sources of research problems and audiences for sharing results.

*Research implementation capacity.* Research training is often available to faculty members including quantitative and qualitative software use supported by an electronic library with remote access. Seminars presenting cases show design, implementation, analysis and reporting which also strengthens capacity. However, faculty members want more specific training for specific subject areas. This will include the need to hire a statistician and an advance expert in qualitative methods. Experienced full professors are missing to mentor and guide senior faculty.

*Processes, procedures, and tools.* Faculty members are largely satisfied with the tools available<sup>3</sup> to support research, including the people engaged in support. Access to tools is also convenient with university licenses. There is some desire for specialised tools and databases. But to buy expensive tools, administrators need clear demand. Confusion exists in identifying legitimate from “fake” journals and conferences and finding publications that are a good fit for research. The University has begun clarifying requirements for internal and external fellowships appropriate for faculty to simplify helping faculty members explore

---

<sup>2</sup>This dimension refers exclusively to stakeholders outside the University.

<sup>3</sup>STATA is supported for quantitative work, while NVivo for qualitative analysis. Some faculty use SPSS, R, and Atlas software though these are only supported informally.

and pursue advanced graduate studies. Some suggest the library or the research department create a helpdesk to guide researchers in design and approaches to methods and analysis.

*Ensuring quality in research.* Subject area teams find support among senior team members with a record of solid research. Still, many faculty members have a weak understanding of how to measure and achieve quality in research processes and products. Subject specific criteria and mechanisms are lacking while for most faculty members, English is a foreign language which means the need for editing and proofreading is significant.

*Knowledge management.* Practice sharing is central to research effectiveness. Weekly training and research seminars provide strong opportunities to share approaches to research and real cases to learn from. Though some connections and settings are well-organised, a more systemic approach could fill knowledge gaps and help reduce repetition of research training across faculty members, research staff and students.

## **Results from Analysing and Assessing the State of WIUT's Research Capacity**

Several results begin to fill the knowledge gap and may have implications for peer institutions.

WIUT is building the research capacity of its faculty members using a graduated approach. Research capacity varies widely across disciplines and among faculty members. Some are fresh graduates with a Master's degree from a local university while others have a decade of experience and earned a doctoral degree from a prestigious international university. But training is not the only factor contributing to research capacity. The acts of publishing, mentoring and professional development in one's discipline contribute, gradually building the capacity of academics from diverse disciplines.

WIUT Research Facilitators are experimenting with research groups in different subject areas with mixed success. They are used to cultivate support for research and as a place to locate subject-specific capacity

building. Generic training on research design, methods, analysis and reporting have saturated most faculty members who now need more advanced training.

Uzbekistan is in a time of national transition, requiring theory applied to practice in a way that leads to positive national development. The government has undertaken ambitious financial and social reforms across all sectors. Similarly, the private sector is adapting to new sets of international standards and good business practices to keep pace with foreign investment opportunities and link better with international markets and organisations. Amid these rapid changes there is scant research and data to support evidence-based decision making. Currently, decisions link to practice in other countries, expert agreement or the insight of people experienced in a sector. This created steady demand for research matching much of WIUT's expertise: economics and finance, management, information systems, and legal policy. Also, diverse opportunities exist for faculty members to engage with research in the education sector.

To succeed, WIUT's research must carefully analyse international experience to decide which country experiences have potential transferability or adaptability to the context of Uzbekistan. This combination of original research using locally produced data and comparison with international experience and standards is challenging—and often too challenging for government institutions. So while WIUT's research may have important local implications for policy debate and formation, it claims a role internationally as a different point of comparison in a region that lacks research in many subjects.

For TNE institutions, research creates a space beyond teaching to cultivate critical reflection and discourse and carve its place in a host country university. This is a turning point signalling a more mature partnership with home institutions and a relationship toward interdependence. Thus, a robust research program is key to the sustainability and development of thriving TNE institutions.

## Research as Leverage to Sustain TNE

Several factors affect WIUT's ability to sustain itself. Our TNE agreement ensures funds are available to seed research, support research collaboration, particularly with the home institution, and support travel to present results at suitable fora.

Limited but growing editing, proofreading and translation services are available for academics who do not publish in English or for whom English is a foreign language.

The Learning Resource Center at WIUT is a hub for training and continuing support for statistical and qualitative data analysis tools; faculty members teach students to use them during regular class sessions.

WIUT strives to provide an adequate income for academics to support their families in Tashkent. Though the university pays faculty members about double that of those working in local universities, external consulting, business ownership or a spouse's job often supplement their income. Naturally, external income-generating competes with time for research but the University is creating more opportunities to earn fees from research supported by external sponsors and several academics focus on strengthening income with fees from WIUT's consulting, research, and outreach programs.

Another challenge for WIUT is to cultivate strong researchers to mentor and guide junior ones. So, a frequent complaint is, where are the "professors?" By this they mean "full professors" with long research experience to contribute and help strengthen junior colleagues' development. As a young university, WIUT has a young faculty driven by youthful energy. Even faculty members, having taught at the university for many years, experience this.

TNE institutions who do not recognise or discuss these challenges may not be on a path toward sustainability. But other TNE institutions in Tashkent are only now starting to create their own research centres. They see the government pressing public and private universities to produce more and more recognised research as they compete against neighbouring countries in Central Asia. This awareness and the need to respond to it is growing in TNE institutions.

## Internationalising Research Processes and Products: Examples from WIUT

WIUT has a number of past, current and emerging milestones that are individually worthwhile. However, when you consider these cumulatively, the effect on the university's research program is clearer. Many items below are part of concerted, yet sometimes coincidental, actions to build a research culture at WIUT. A few of these are highlighted below.

*Recognition.* Despite WIUT's modest size,<sup>4</sup> its economics department ranked number one in Uzbekistan.<sup>5</sup> It is consistently top ranked for research among Uzbekistan's 12 international universities. One faculty member is listed among the Top 100 Young Economists in the world. This person also received the President's Medal of Honour, named "Top Scientist in Humanities and Social Sciences" in Uzbekistan by the Elsevier Scopus Awards. The university seeks to be a mix of award-winning researchers and promising scholars.

*Silk Road: A Journal of Eurasian Development.* In 2018 WIUT launched its own journal promoting evidence-based scholarly research in social sciences and public policy across an eleven-country region.

*The Centre for Policy, Research & Outreach (CPRO).* The University recently launched its research centre to complement ongoing efforts with new internal and external collaboration. The demand for research from the government and private sector is growing rapidly. CPRO links our knowledge resources to agencies and organisations that need analysis and solutions.

*InnoWIUT Entrepreneurship and Bloomberg Labs.* The "innoWIUT Lab" a joint venture with SAP, expands applied research in ICT and business solutions. Bloomberg supports WIUT with 12 terminals and training for students and faculty on financial software.

*International Labour Organisation (ILO).* WIUT faculty members surveyed seasonal agricultural recruitment practices focusing on cotton.

---

<sup>4</sup> Under 4000 students and faculty members.

<sup>5</sup> By Economics Departments, Institutes and Research Centres in the World (IDEAS).

This research uncovered the extent, characteristics and results of recruitment practices and working conditions in agriculture.

*United Nations Sustainable Development Goal—Decent Work.* The UNDP released their study on employment at WIUT. Faculty experts conducted research and wrote the report designed for government ministries, development agencies and academia. Participants discussed labour issues from birth rates to education to pension systems and recommended policies to modernise the labour market.

*International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).* WIUT hosts the launch of IFPRI's International Global Food Policy Reports considering the impacts of global integration and highlighting the urgency of rural revitalisation to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, WIUT runs the Regional Training Course on Applied Econometric Analysis for economists and researchers sponsored by IFPRI. The aim is to strengthen the capacity of young economists in Central Asia for quantitative research, policy analysis, and econometric analysis of social policy.

*Pilot Agribusiness and Horticulture Training for Women.* WIUT worked with the World Bank and a local training partner to synthesise a week's training in a workshop for women entrepreneurs.

*International faculty.* WIUT faculty have international degrees and experience in international organisations. Faculty have earned doctoral degrees from leading universities in Australia, Belgium, China, Czech Republic, England, France, Germany, Iran, Korea, Spain and the USA.

*Women in research.* About 40% of WIUT's academic staff are women and the numbers are increasing. Year-by-year more women than men are taking up doctoral studies and 70% of research assistants are women. Many women are already productive researchers and more are expressing interest in strengthening and expanding their research. WIUT increasingly supports women in research and identifies opportunities to advance their careers.

*Joint Authorship.* WIUT has expanded faculty collaboration as co-authors with professors from leading Asian, European and American universities and research institutes. These include Duke University, the International Food Policy Research Institute, and Baylor University (USA), Adelaide and Griffith universities (Australia), University of

Westminster (UK), German Institute of Economic Research, Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (Germany), and the Higher School of Economics (Russia).

*Publications.* WIUT faculty have published research in respected international journals for example: *World Development*, *Development Policy Review*, *Journal of Biosocial Science*, *KYKLOS*, *Intelligence*, *Demography*, *Electronic Commerce Research*, *Journal of Development Studies*, *Review of Financial Economics*, *Forest Policy and Economics*, *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy* and *International Journal of Water Resources Development*.

UNESCO's MOST Program engaged WIUT researchers to conduct training on "Supporting young water researchers". These featured interactive workshops on academic writing for international publications.

*Distinguished speaker series.* In response to Uzbekistan's economic and social reforms, WIUT hosts various high-level speakers from international organisations. For example, Cyril Muller, World Bank Vice President for Europe and Central Asia; Albert Jaeger, International Monetary Fund Mission; Wencai Zhang, Vice President of the Asian Development Bank; Shenggen Fan, Director General, International Food Policy Research Institute; Vladimir Norov, Secretary General, Shanghai Co-operation Organisation; Helena Fraser, UN Resident Co-ordinator for Uzbekistan, and eminent economist Jeffrey Sachs.

*Students.* WIUT actively supports undergraduate research with collaboration between faculty and students. "New Economic Talent," recognises excellent undergraduate dissertations. Since 2014, the Center for Economic Research and Graduate Education – Economics Institute (CERGE-EI) hosts this competition. Our internal competition, "New Academic Talent," rewards best dissertations for undergraduate and postgraduate students.

## The Next 17 Years: Choices and Potentials

There are about 18,000 higher education institutions across the world vying for greater reputation, better students and more funding. The question is, how can WIUT continue to grow its research capacity and

productivity and link these to the school's mission of research-informed teaching and transformation? WIUT's ongoing challenge is for students and faculty to continue this evolution in thinking and practice by combining teaching and research to strengthen the development of Uzbek society. WIUT is in an interesting position, given its background and identity and this creates a unique platform for operations.

The rate of recent economic and social reform is uncommon for any country. Research, often a slow and meticulous undertaking, must rapidly respond by actively adapting to this fluid environment. Reforms also provide a new foundation for expanding academic freedom typified by growing access to government data. Researchers can help build the nation with research constructively challenging while recommending ways for better policy and practice across government ministries. An emphasis on research demonstrated by actions including outreach and strategic knowledge production. One can find this spread across departments, faculty members, student organisations and many offices of the university.

Like other TNE institutions in Uzbekistan, WIUT has a particular focus that was also negotiated with the government. Currently its departments are limited to business with a marketing option, business information systems, economics with a finance option, and law. There are parallel master's degrees in business, law and economics and a special certificate program in teaching and learning at graduate level. WIUT's TNE contract does not extend above the master's level. Programs at other TNE institutions such as engineering, computer science, auto making, the physical sciences and sports science are expensive to support, requiring more equipment, technology and infrastructure. WIUT's focus on human and social sciences is much less expensive to support than programs requiring the latest hi-tech.

Most of WIUT's faculty members studied in English-speaking institutions in Western countries giving them strong English competence and active academic contacts. This carries over to their ability to publish in international journals and participate effectively in academic conferences abroad.



## Lessons Learned: Considerations for Host Country Institutions

Cultivate a research culture by creating a supportive environment for critical thinking encouraging faculty members and students to question their assumptions.

Without creative relationships, WIUT's limited budget could not provide scholarships for all graduates, potential and active faculty members. The University works closely with foundations, government fellowships, research universities and other partners to fund further study. Recently when funding from the United States decreased, faculty members and students turned to Germany with many active scholarship opportunities. This funding tends to beget more funding as positive experiences encourage these institutions to actively look for our faculty members and graduates.

Developing research is a gradual but concerted effort. WIUT took about a decade for research to accumulate and begin to convince faculty and students of its value. This started with research seminars focused on faculty member's research, then specialised courses, supervising higher quality student dissertations and, finally, hosting international speakers and regional research conferences with international speakers.

In Uzbekistan, there is often a stark contrast between the government's educational practice and that of TNE institutions. This may extend to research stimulating new lines of inquiry beyond conventional topics and approaches.

WIUT has formed a base of internationally educated teachers who know by experience how to create a culture of international education leading to sustainability. When the faculty are engaged in local community driven research questions and evidence-based solutions, the sustainability becomes a reality and promises research impact. If academic reputational concerns are the primary driver of strengthening research capacity and productivity, sustainability may be unlikely. However, institutions doing research by strengthening their teaching and reaching out with public service and broader knowledge generation, may find this focus increases their sustainability. It is possible that manipulating

research reporting to make a university look more prestigious is playing a superficial ‘research game’ which might undermine the sustainability of host institutions. This begs the question, can and should TNE host institutions play this game or rewrite the rules toward different and better ways of evaluating research purposes and outcomes?

## References

- Adambekov, S., et al. (2016). Publication productivity in Central Asia and countries of the former Soviet Union. *Central Asian Journal of Global Health*, 5(1), 261.
- Altbach, P. G. (2011, July 15). The branch campus bubble? *Inside Higher Education*. Available from: <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2011/07/15/branch-campus-bubble>. Accessed 1 June 2019.
- Coleman, D. (2003). Quality assurance in transnational education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 7(4), 354–378.
- Fawley, N. E. (2007). Plagiarism pitfalls: Addressing cultural differences in the misuse of sources. *International Journal of Learning*, 14(7), 71–74.
- globalhighered.org. (2017). *My WordPress Blog*. Available from: <https://globalhighered.org/branchcampuses.php/>. Accessed 1 June 2019.
- Lane, J. E. (2011). Importing private higher education: International branch campuses. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, 13(4), 367–381.
- Lawton, W., & Katsomitros, A. (2012). International branch campuses: Data and developments. *The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education*.
- Levy, D. C. (2013). The decline of private higher education. *Higher Education Policy*, 26(1), 25–42.
- Lien, D., & Wang, Y. (2012). The effects of a branch campus. *Education Economics*, 20(4), 386–401.
- Marginson, S. (2006). Dynamics of national and global competition in higher education. *Higher Education*, 52(1), 1–39.
- Mazzarol, T., & Soutar, G. N. (2002). “Push-pull” factors influencing international student destination choice. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 16(2), 82–90.
- Musial, J. (2009). Polish Semielite private higher education institutions. *International Higher Education. The Boston College. Center for International Higher Education*, 56, 14–15.

- Observatory on Borderless Higher Education. (2014). *Publications*. Available from: [www.obhe.ac.uk/what\\_we\\_do/news\\_articles\\_reports/news\\_articles\\_reports](http://www.obhe.ac.uk/what_we_do/news_articles_reports/news_articles_reports).
- Srikatanyoo, N., & Gnoth, J. (2002). Country image and international tertiary education. *The Journal of Brand Management*, 10(2), 139–146.
- Suspitsin, D. (2007). Between the state and the market: Sources of sponsorship and legitimacy in Russian non-state higher education. In S. Slantcheva & D. C. Levy (Eds.), *Private higher education in post-communist Europe: In search of legitimacy* (pp. 157–178). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Suyunov, A., Mirkasimov, B., & Karimov, K. (2018). Research and Development reform: The case of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. *International Journal of Civil Service Reform and Practice*, 3(2), 60–84.