

## **ABOUT VI INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON TEACHER EDUCATION «PERSPECTIVES AND PRIORITIES OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN TIMES OF CHANGE, CHOICE AND CHALLENGE»**

*The VI International Forum on Teacher Education (vIFTE-2020) held by Kazan Federal University (May 27, 2020 – June 9, 2020)*

Kazan Federal University (KFU) was founded in 1804 and is one of the oldest higher education institutions in Russia, which is celebrating its 216th anniversary this year. The history of the University is deeply connected with such household names as Nikolai Lobachevsky, Lev Tolstoy, Vladimir Lenin, Nikolai Lobachevsky, Karl Klaus, Alexander Butlerov, just to name a few. In 1812, Kazan University opened its Pedagogical Institute which prepared teachers for Siberia, the Caucasus, and the Volga region of Russia. The University is situated in one of the biggest Russian cities, Kazan, which is often regarded as a bridge between Europe and Asia, Christianity and Islam.

Teacher Education at Kazan Federal University also has deep historical roots. It originated in 1812 and continues to develop by this day. The system of Teacher Education at KFU is one of the largest in modern Russia. Thanks to the developed international activity, publication activity, we are able to consistently increase the level of the academic reputation of KFU. The 94th position of the “Education” subject field in the Ranking of the best universities in the world, Times Higher Education, in 2020, is vivid evidence of this. This is the best indicator not only in Russia but also in the countries of Eastern Europe and the CIS.

The VI International Forum on Teacher Education (vIFTE-2020) held by Kazan Federal University (May 27, 2020 – June 9, 2020) in a virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic, completed its work.

The forum that started six years ago as a regional event (with only 165 participants),

is one of the most effective platforms in the world now. Nowadays IFTE has already become the largest forum on teacher education in Russia. According to Microsoft analytics, more than 32,000 online entries to section sessions, symposia, and workshops were registered. Thus, in the context of a pandemic, the Forum has become one of the world's largest conferences in the world. Among the major topics are life-long teacher education, foreign experience of innovations in teacher education, digitalization in education – the latter is the key topic at the forum this year.

Kazan Federal University became the first university in Russia that took up the challenge to hold such a large-scale international forum under current conditions. IFTE-2020 organizing committee literally in two months did a great job of reformatting the event from a traditional format to a virtual one. Dmitriy Tayurskiy, the vice-rector of Kazan Federal University, emphasized that «while all the international events are being cancelled around the world, Kazan Federal University takes the challenge to organize the forum in a virtual format».

Professor Conor Galvin from the University College Dublin has been to Kazan University for several times. He notes: «Kazan University is becoming the center of excellence in the field of teacher education in Russia».

Professor Axel Herrmann from Dresden University of Technology admits that the «Teacher of the XXI century» strategy being implemented by Kazan University is truly unique: «This approach helps to transform teacher training, develop all the aspects of

education and change the whole system of education. In Germany we are just looking for the same opportunity». Professor Nick Rushby from Conation Technologies Limited (UK) who has been working closely with Kazan Federal University since 2015, notes «that in the field of teacher education Kazan University is a clear leader. The research conducted here is highly appreciated around the world».

These words are confirmed by the fact that in 2020 Kazan University became one of the top-100 universities in «Education» of THE International Rankings, which is the best result not only in Russia, but also Eastern Europe and the CIS.

The main goal of the VI International Forum on Teacher Education (vIFTE-2020) is to present, discuss and promote relevant scientific and educational research in the field of teacher education in times of transformation, choice and challenge; exchange of experience and discussion of questions on promising forms of academic and methodological support for innovative teacher education, new developments and achievements in the field of educational technologies, as well as strengthening academic cooperation between Russian and foreign teachers.

Virtual IFTE-2020 included the following academic activities: digitalization of modern teacher education: strategies and risks; continuing professional development and additional training of teachers to bridge the digital divide; transformation of teachers' professional competences in the digital age of education; digital technology in teacher education; gamification and virtual reality in the educational process; psychological and pedagogical support of students in the digital educational environment; psychology of digital education; teacher training in the context of equality and social justice; advanced educational technologies, methods, innovations, and best practices in teacher education; inclusive education and its implementation: Russian and international practices; equal educational opportunities outside of school: the role

of stakeholders in the context of social justice, equality, and cultural congruence; multicultural teacher education for work with migrant children and their families; effective models, approaches and methods in teacher education within the context of social justice, equality, and cultural congruence; strategies, theory and practice of modern bilingual and language teacher education: Russian and international experience; models of bilingual education, didactic aspects, theoretical constructs and flexible bilingual practices; digital architectonics of bilingual and language teacher education; bilingual and language teacher education as a tool for professional development of teacher educators; cultural and professional identity of a teacher in the conditions of modern bilingual school; collaboration and need for a dialogue between bilingual families and teachers; professional formation and self-development of a teacher-linguist in the conditions of educational standards introduction.

Virtual format IFTE-2020 allowed the forum organizers implement all the possible forms – video lectures, virtual sessions, online symposia, research groups meetings and poster presentations. Despite the technical difficulties of the organization and the uniqueness of the event, about 900 scientists from 29 countries (120 foreign colleagues) became participants in the Forum. 17 international leading experts from Russia, UK, USA, Australia, Ireland and other countries became the forum keynote speakers. Some of the speakers of IFTE-2020 are Aleksey Lubkov (Moscow Pedagogical State University), Ian James Menter (University of Oxford), Margery McMahan (University of Glasgow), Maria Assunção Flores (University of Minho), Conor Galvin (University College Dublin), and Murat Tchoshanov (University of Texas at El Paso) and many others.

Within the framework of the VI International Forum on Teacher Education (vIFTE-2020) three conferences were held: «Informatization and digitalization in teacher education», «Pedagogical education in the interests of social justice, equality



Journalists were introduced to the innovative system of teacher training at KFU. They were also given a unique opportunity to test a virtual reality headset in order to see how the virtual classes can be organized. After the tour Ilshat Gafurov, KFU rector, and Aidar Kalimullin, director of the Institute of Psychology and Education, answered all the questions asked by the media representatives.

According to IFTE President, Organising Committee

and culture-like pedagogy», «Global trends and prospects of bilingual and language education in teacher training». Virtual IFTE-2020 included the work of 74 sections where recognized Russian and foreign experts discussed current challenges facing Russia and the world in the new decade in the field of education. Work was done in 14 study groups and 39 group meetings were held.

The current Forum has become the most representative not only in terms of coverage of participants, but also in the scope of the topics announced: 575 reports were made by scientists from 275 universities, scientific and educational organizations, including 79 foreign universities on the problems of modernization and development of the content of vocational and pedagogical education, personality modeling and professional the activities of a new type of teacher, the integration of professional pedagogical and classical university education in the preparation of a new type of teacher, the problems of improving the system of continuous teacher education and many other topics.

As part of the Forum closing ceremony the VR tour to the future was organized at the Institute of Psychology and Education of Kazan Federal University. During this tour virtual reality technologies that can be applied for future teachers training were demonstrated to media representatives.

Chairman, professor, academician of RAO, rector of KFU Ilshat Gafurov, such serious shocks as a pandemic should not disconnect researchers representing Russian and foreign universities in solving the problem of improving the quality of teacher training. «This is the first conference of this kind and scale, which was held in the Russian Federation. The capabilities of Kazan University allowed Russian and foreign participants to successfully present and discuss the results of scientific research of teacher education remotely. We did a great job, and the results are so impressive. So far, the forum was attended by 900 researchers from 275 universities in Russia and other countries, there were more than 32,000 entries, which is impossible to achieve offline. I think that after the end of the pandemic we will continue to hold some of our events online» – said KFU rector. In addition he added: «We are proud that a number of Russian and foreign experts of KFU are now assessed as one of the emerging international leaders in the field of teacher education. This is due to the creation of a serious team of reputable international and Russian researchers, both working in the scientific team of our university, and colleagues from other universities with whom we are united as part of joint projects».

The virtual IFTE-2020 format has boosted the development of pedagogical

science and the digital conference space of the Forum has become a unique platform for the effective exchange of experience in new developments and achievements in the field of educational technologies, and strengthened cooperation between Russian and foreign researchers. There is no doubt that the success of virtual IFTE-2020 consists of our joint efforts, the common desire for academic interaction in new conditions, titanic work of each Forum participant. The results of the forum are obvious: they will help build the learning process in different countries of the world, taking into account already new conditions. IFTE President, Organising Committee Chairman, professor, academician of RAO, rector of KFU Ilshat Gafurov noted this: «Online training will become an accompanying package of programs for deeper study. It will also save resources for teachers for research, and help students choose an individual trajectory».

Aidar Kalimullin, IFTE co-chair, director of the Institute of Psychology and Education of KFU, thanked the participants of the Forum for the work done and invited everyone to participate already at IFTE 2021: «Virtual IFTE-2020 was for KFU the first experience of holding a large-scale conference in a virtual format. And this experience did not come out lumpy. For the sixth time, IFTE provided an opportunity for scientists in the

field of teacher education to talk about their problems and plans, exchange views and develop a new understanding for solving pedagogical problems, especially in the context of active digitalization. On behalf of the Organizing Committee, I want to thank all the participants of the Forum: our partners, those who spoke from the online platform or took part in the discussion of some issues, and those who have simply been with us all these two weeks. We were glad to see a professional and caring audience: professionals who are worried about our common cause and are ready to share their experience. Many interesting and well-developed proposals have been received from you, both for inclusion in the Forum program and for holding extra-forum events. We are waiting for you in 2021 at the Kazan Federal University at the VII International Forum on Pedagogical Education».

The main theme of the VII International Forum on Pedagogical Education was chosen «Pedagogical Education: New Challenges and Goals». It is planned that the forum will return to its traditional format and will be held at Kazan Federal University from May 26 to May 28, 2021. But, given the accumulated experience of conducting in a virtual format, a number of meetings of research groups will be held online.

*E.Sh. SALIMZYANOVA*

*Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia*