



9th Fulbright International Conference



Education for the New Age:
Tradition, Reform, Innovation

**The Role of
Academic Exchange and Mobility for
Scientific Capacity Development**

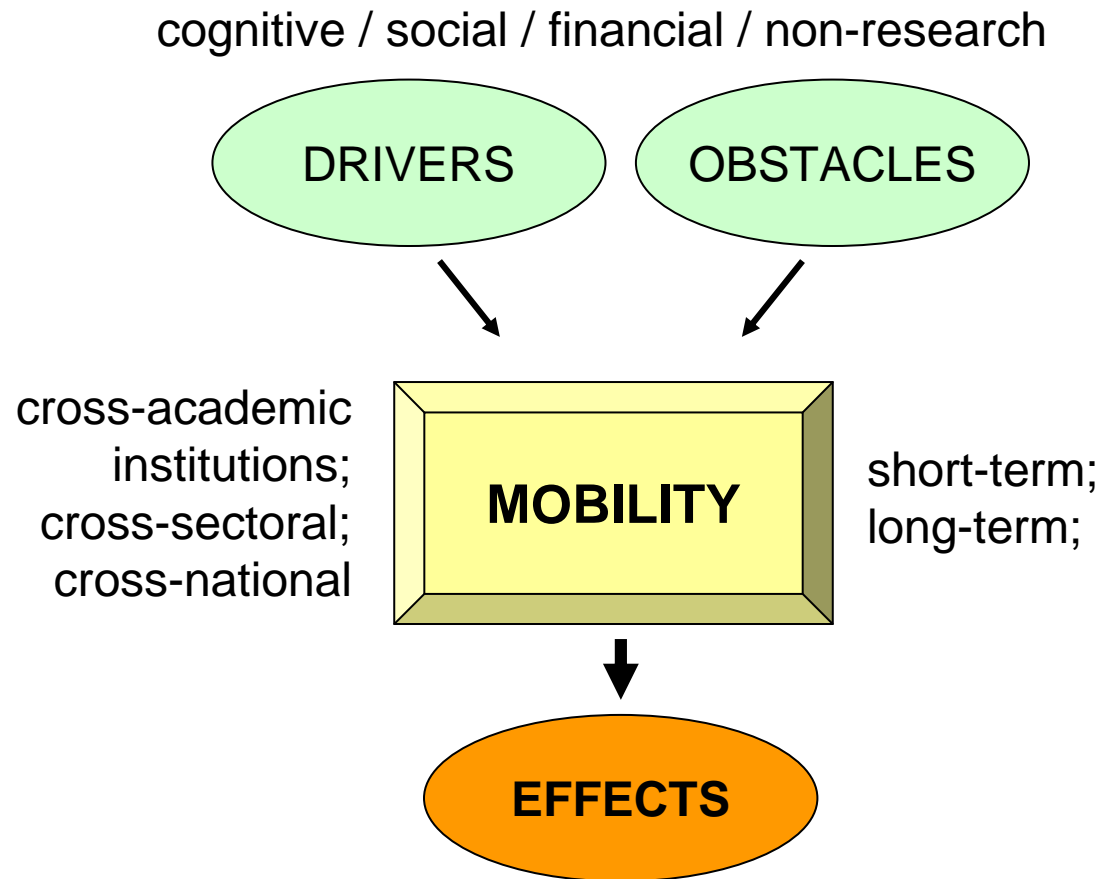
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7 - 8 August, 2010, Bansko

Basis of presentation

- Preliminary dissertation results:
 - Questionnaire survey (06.2009 – 12.2009) with Bulgarian PhD students and scientists;
 - Other scientific surveys about mobility.
- Presentation's question: To what extent the mobility influences the scientific capacity building?

Mobility diversity



Individual level / institutional level - country / global level

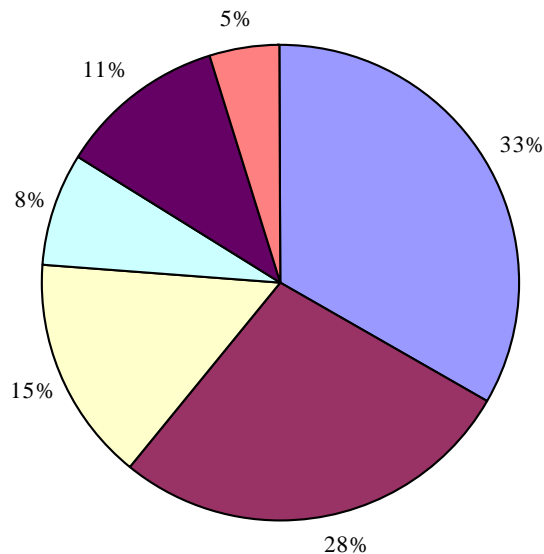
Empirical survey

- Period: Questionnaire survey 06.2009 – 12.2009
- Target group - Bulgarian PhD students and doctoral holders who have spent one month or more in an academic institution abroad
- Sample – explorative:
 - 114 respondents;
 - Workplace: Bulgarian research institutes (52.6%) and universities (44.7%);
 - Scientific field: Natural sciences (56.8%), social sciences and humanities (30.6%);
 - Age groups: younger than 35 years old (61.4%) and between 36 – 45 years old (25.4%);
 - Sex: women are predominantly (60.5%).

Results: Types of mobility

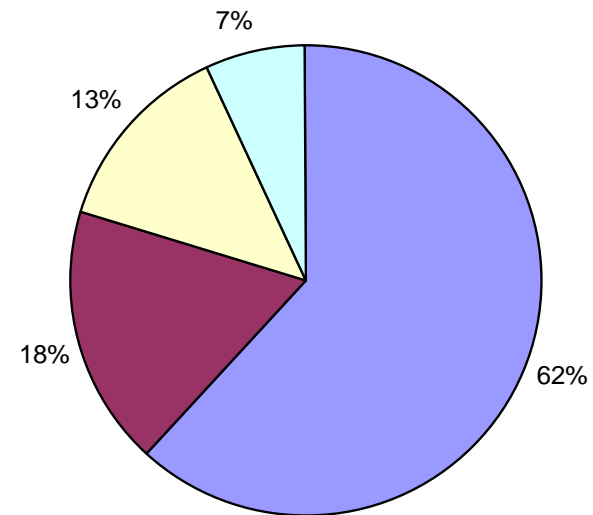
- Preference for multiple and short-term periods of mobility

Number of mobile periods



■ one ■ two ■ three ■ four ■ five ■ over five

Total duration of the mobile periods



■ up to 12 months ■ 13 - 24 months ■ 25 - 36 months ■ over 36 months

Results: Motivation factors for mobility

- “Opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills” (98.2%)
- “Enlarging the network of professional contacts” (91.1%)
- “Prestige of the host-institution” (90.9%)
- “Experiencing another culture and new social contacts” (86.4%)
- “Access to specialized equipment” (84.5%)
- “Publishing possibility in prestigious journals / patent registration” (83.6%)

Results: Conditions which facilitate mobility

- “Access to information” (92%)
- “Specificity of the research topics” (84.8%)
- “Previous contacts with the host-institution” (81.2%)
- “Previous experience within international projects” (75%)
- “Prestige of the team leader” (71.4%)

Results: Obstacles for mobility

- “Difficulties in finding a host institution” (27.7%)
- “Family issues” (26.8%)
- “Administrative problems with the sending institution” (25.9%)
- “Legislation” (25%)
- “Application deadlines” (24.1%)

Results: Effects on work motivation

- Mobility reflects the researchers' incentive for:
 - “Participation in international joint-research projects” (77.2%);
 - “Academic career development” (55.3%);
 - “Long-term placement and career development abroad” (43.9%).

Results: Career trajectory

- Researchers who returned in BG and continue to work in the same academic institution as before the period of mobility (88.4%)
- Researchers who returned in BG and have changed their workplace with another academic institution (8.9%)

Effects on individual level - positive and negative

- New ideas, new trends, new scientific skills (+)
- Professional networks (+)
- Social and linguistic skills (+)
- Expansion of the cultural horizon (+)
- Losing professional contacts in the home country (-)
- Obstacles for reintegration (-)
- Disinterest of the home-institution to the gained knowledge (-)

(Melin, 2005)

Effects on institutional level

- “Healthy” mix of:
 - Domestic and foreign researchers - a peak of publication rate – 20-40% foreign post-docs; 60% foreign PhD students (NetReAct, 2006);
 - Mobile and non-mobile for the same period
- Long term mobility – benefits for the host-institution (Edler, Fier, Grimpe, 2008)
- Short term mobility – benefits for the home-institution (Edler, Fier, Grimpe, 2008)

Conclusion

- The individual mobility of the scientists:
 - enables the individual growth and scientific career;
 - reflects the quality of the research in the institution where he or she works.
- Bulgarian scientists prefer short-term periods of mobility → Bulgarian scientists carry the knowledge from the host-institutions to BG
- In order to improve the quality of the research Bulgarian academic institution should undertake explicit measures to extract the best from the individual mobility of the scientists.

Supporting mobility initiatives in BG



**“Doctoral Training in Core Research and Transferable Skills – a
Groundwork for Dynamic Career Development Corresponding to the
Labour Market Requirements”**



Thank you for your attention!

Aneta Sakalova