

Education Development in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan: Challenges and Ways Forward

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List of abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEDP	Albanian Education Development Program
AKF	Agha Khan Foundation
CA	Central Asia
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EU	European Union
FSU	Former Soviet Union
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Co-operation)
IFES	International Foundation for Election Systems
MLA	Monitoring of Learning Achievement
MOE	Ministry of Education (Tajikistan)
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture (Kyrgyzstan)
MOPE	Ministry of Public Education (Uzbekistan)
NGO	Non Government Organization
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSI-ESP	Open Society Institute Education Support Program
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SC	Save the Children
TACIS	Technical Assistance to (the) Community of Independent States
USAID/CAR	United States International Development Agency /Central Asian Region
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WB	The World Bank

Executive Summary

In the early 1990s three ancient, predominantly Islamic cultures – Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – emerged from the Soviet Union as new countries. They form part of Central Asia, a vast region that includes Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, which are not covered by this overview. Still relatively isolated internationally, with regional co-operation marred by rivalries and border disputes, the post-Soviet period in the region has been tumultuous and uncertain. The tasks and exact nature of transition in the three countries are as unclear as their economic prospects are bleak. Education spending suffered a rapid decline, rolling-back some of the achievements the sector enjoyed during the previous period. Pre-school enrolments have dropped to a fraction of their previous levels, school enrolment rates are slipping, education quality is at risk and vast numbers of youth, well over half the populations, have no prospects of finding work. As a consequence, the issues of access and equity in education have become more pronounced: women and girls are worse off, rural areas more marginalized and minorities more under threat.

However, although these countries remain largely authoritarian, there is a cautious movement towards change in education. Governments have supported curriculum changes and revisions, some of them to assert emergent nationalist agendas. Although, there are attempts to decentralize and de-bureaucratize, talk of implementing state examinations and some decrees about reform, there remains widespread lack of capacity and many reform attempts are half-hearted. A growing NGO sector is slowly gaining pace and experience, but still very much needing to find an active voice.

Carefully focused external funding, active partnerships with national governments, local organizations and nascent civil structures are unquestionably needed to turn around the situation in education and for new developments to take hold and have effect. In the longer term, this will require a coherent national framework for education policy and reform. However, responding to urgent, immediate needs can make an essential contribution to achieving education transformation goals. The parameters for international donor initiatives in the region appear to involve two-levels of approach. The first involves providing immediate support to existing programs in the three countries that have proven credentials; the second involves enabling the emergence of a broader policy framework and climate for ongoing reforms.

The *development of information systems* would appear to be an essential early step. The shortage of useable information and the lack of knowledge on how to analyze information to inform strategies for change are an area in which international technical skill and local knowledge can combine to provide useful and rapid remedies. Also, support for *skills and resources for independent policy analysis* will provide essential counter-balances to information sources long accustomed to being unchallenged. Available information on the teaching process is a pre-requisite for *quality assurance*. Support for developing curriculum standards, developing new content, designing examination systems, re-engineering teacher-training and improving schools, hinge, to a large extent, on effective information management systems as much as expertise and good training programs.

As local notions of civil society develop, *building social coalitions and institutional partnerships* around education goals are an essential support for reform and form fundamental criteria for education initiatives. Such processes are building blocks for democracy, essential for accountability and to combating corruption in education systems. Furthermore, they unlock potential new resources for infrastructure development. Over a decade of neglect has ensured that *investing in physical and virtual infrastructure* is an essential component of education reform. A combination of international experience and local knowledge should be sought to deliver the wisdom, skills and systems that are needed to strengthen local communities and earn support for education reform efforts.

Economic decline in the region re-emphasizes the relevance of *access, equity and human rights* issues in education. These issues may not be currently popular with governments but they are vital to sustainable development and stability in the region. Children everywhere, rural communities, the urban poor and women are at the gravest risk. Any education initiative that does not have their concerns at its core will be doing Central Asia and its people an enormous disservice.

Introduction

This overview was prepared for USAID/CAR to assist the preparation of an education initiative in Central Asia, focusing initially on Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Conducted over a one-month period (April 2002), it draws primarily on the available statistical data, various descriptive and analytical reports, and interviews with major education stakeholders in Central Asia conducted by national Soros foundations. In addition, a series of focus-group discussions were conducted in the region with parents, teachers, and students in order to understand their perceptions. Various quotations from these discussions are presented in boxes within the text.

It was a considerable challenge to find accurate and reliable data. The sources are frequently contradictory, and certain data are considered ‘state secrets’, especially in Uzbekistan. In order to provide a more reliable account of education trends in Central Asia, a combination of different data sources was used, including statistical data available from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank (WB), UNICEF, and UNESCO.

The Education Support Program of OSI Budapest (OSI-ESP), and various consultants prepared this overview. OSI national foundations in the three countries provided extensive comments and information. The OSI New York office for network programs, which has extensive operations in the region, also provided useful insights and help.

The overview introduces a general analysis of *primary and general secondary education*¹ in the three countries, combining comparative and country-specific data. It provides a brief regional context, describes apparent regional trends in education and offers a discussion of the education issues in the three countries. This provides a basis for an identification of strategic priorities facing education transformation in the region. A detailed list of currently active programs and possible program areas is then presented. The overview provides information on international donor involvement and national NGO activities in the region.

I. Political, Economic and Social context

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the newly independent Central Asian republics faced the challenging tasks of building nation states and the need to establish democracy, civil society, and market economies. These were very new ideas for the region and there were practically no historical precedents to draw from. The experience of the region over the last decade has shown that the historical legacy of the systems, processes and social attitudes from previous eras pose serious obstacles to change. Legacies from the Soviet period include a cultural and social legacy of distrust and intolerance; an institutional legacy of weighty bureaucracy, authoritarianism and mismanagement; and a government legacy of centralism and command. Quite alarmingly, the collapse of the Soviet system led to the reassertion of pre-Soviet patriarchal legacies such as the oppression of women, child labor, and clan-based and religious feuding.

Our children are not taught democracy, they are taught to adapt... (Parents from Uzbekistan)

In the post-independence period Tajikistan, the poorest of the three countries, has had the added problem of a 7-year civil war, and both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have had continuing battles against religious fundamentalists. The most recent *Nations in Transit* report, which provides a classification of countries in terms of their relationship to democracy, civil society, and a market economy, classifies both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as “least advanced, despotic” states, and Kyrgyzstan as a “middle, but moving downwards” state (Moty1, 2001:38).

¹ This overview does not deal with *vocational secondary* education. This is an important issue in all three countries, however, it is not within the remit of OSI-ESP.

In fact, since independence, the region has experienced catastrophic economic decline connected, in part, to the loss of traditional Soviet markets and the end of budgetary subsidies from Moscow – and made immeasurably worse by unequal terms of world trade and heavily monopolized international markets. This decline significantly lowered the living standards of the population and the employment level, and increased the inequity of income. The principal welfare indicators – such as average life expectancy, infant mortality, and general life standards -- worsened.

Following independence in the early 1990s, public expenditures in Central Asian countries plummeted, with education budgets being severely affected. In addition, there is lack of expertise about the fundamental changes that are required if education is to meet the demands of modern democracies, market economies and world trade. Consequently, educational institutions in Central Asia will continue to produce young graduates who are ill equipped with skills to strengthen democracy and build civil societies, and who possess few of the essential skills for new labor markets. Young people under 25 years of age constitute three-fifths of the population in each of the three countries (Annex 1, Table 5). By comparison, young people constitute around one third of the population in the Baltic States and Central Europe, and the percentage of youths under 18 is almost twice that of Russia and the Ukraine (Annex 1, Table 6). Central Asian children of this generation make up the majority of the populations in these countries. This is not a problem that can simply be ignored – “an entire generation is at risk” (Bauer, 1998:6), seriously curtailing the whole region’s potential for political, economic and social development.

If schools will be cold and education quality will continue to fall, educated people will disappear altogether...(Boys from Fergana region)

II. Access and Equity in Education

The education systems in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were severely affected by these dire conditions. It became impossible to sustain some of the successes that state-funded education achieved during the Soviet period. Previously high literacy rates have steadily declined; school-enrolment rates are decreasing; and rates of non-attendance and student-dropout are escalating.

This section discusses the context for learning in the three countries from two thematic perspectives:

- Issues of access;
- Issues relating to equity;

Issues of access

Decreasing enrolment

Marked declines in enrolment in *pre-higher education* across Central Asia, are in all likelihood related to the increased direct costs of education, reduced state subsidies for transport and food, and lower family incomes. *Pre-school* enrolment has declined catastrophically over the past decade, threatening the health, nutrition and school-preparedness of children who no longer have access to these services. The lack of *pre-school education* particularly increases the vulnerability of young girls, as early marriage and insufficient schooling combine to ensure a lifetime of subordination and servitude. In 1999, the overall *pre-school* enrolment rate in Central Asia was 14%—compared with 73% in Central Europe (Annex 1, Table 21). There is also concern that the lack of *pre-school education* adversely affects children’s learning at later stages of their education. Similarly, in *basic education* (1-9th grade), enrolment rates appear to be dropping across the region (Annex 1, Table 22) – most dramatically in Tajikistan, which saw a drop in over half the enrolment rate for the 15-18 age group, and almost 20% in Uzbekistan (Annex 1, Table 22). Compared with the rest of the former Soviet Union and Eastern and Central Europe, the Central Asian republics have some of the lowest student enrolment rates in *secondary education*, and are only slightly ahead of the Caucasus (UNICEF, 2000).

Increasing non-attendance and drop-out rates

In addition to reducing enrolment rates, there are growing problems with school non-attendance and students dropping out of education. While official data reflect relatively low dropout rates, unofficial estimates and anecdotal evidence point to considerably higher figures. It is widely known that rural schools close

completely during the cotton-harvest in certain regions, so that the children are able to provide labor in the fields. An ADB study (2000), reports that one third of the children aged 7-15 in Tajikistan were absent from school for two or more weeks during a single academic year. The same study showed a clear relationship between household income and the ability to pay for costs associated with education, such as textbooks and uniforms. Several studies (ADB, 2000; UNICEF & MOPE of Uzbekistan, 2001; SC, 2002), suggested that children in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are increasingly used as family labor to supplement declining family incomes. According to the WB poverty assessment of Tajikistan (WB, 2000), other reasons for school non-attendance were attributed to the perceived irrelevance of education, lack of clothing, the high direct costs associated with education, frequent illnesses, insufficient school supplies, and the absence of teachers.

Growing youth unemployment

Young people constitute a large part of the total number of unemployed in the Central Asian republics. Official and unofficial estimates of unemployment vary widely: registered unemployment rates are between 0 and 3%, less than in many OECD countries. However, in Kyrgyzstan, unofficial estimates are closer to 33%, a discrepancy of almost 30% (Annex 1, Table 17). UNICEF estimates of unemployment among out-of-school youth aged 15-24 range from 20% in Kyrgyzstan, through 40% in Tajikistan to 60% in Uzbekistan (Annex 1, Table 18). Youths' chances of being employed are largely connected to their levels of education. In particular, the data reflects the fall in demand for low-skilled workers, and employers' growing preference for youth with vocational education and professional experience. Overall, youth unemployment is determined by such factors as the lack of job-creation programs and the seasonal availability of unregistered jobs in the rural areas – mostly agricultural work requiring no professional qualifications. On the other hand, educational institutions are unable to respond to the actual needs of the labor market. Particularly, there are fewer opportunities for youth in rural areas to continue their education – there are fewer secondary schools and vocational education institutions. The issue of pupils' transition to the labor market is being addressed mainly through international assistance projects implemented by the EU's TACIS program in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and the ADB and GTZ in Uzbekistan.

Issues relating to equity

Increasing poverty and disparity among rural/urban areas

According to the UNDP (1999) report, poverty rates have been rapidly increasing in the CA region throughout the 1990s, reaching around 30-35% for Uzbekistan, 60% in Kyrgyzstan, and 70% in Tajikistan (Annex 1, Table 16). With the decline in state support for *basic and secondary education*, variations in enrolment emerged across income groups, with the very poor being less likely to enroll their children in school than the non-poor. In Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, the vast majority of poor households come from rural areas, whereas in Tajikistan poor households are equally spread across urban and rural areas.

The problem of education for youth is related to financial problems. There are parents who do not let their children attend school because they have no footwear, no clothes, and no money to buy textbooks... we are split into the rich and the poor...now only rich people's children can study (Parents from Karakalpakstan)

For example, 35% of urban children in Uzbekistan were enrolled in *pre-school* institutions, whereas only 10.6% of rural children had such an opportunity (State Department of Statistics, 2000). This can be largely explained by the fact that low income families from rural areas cannot afford to send their children to pre-school institutions, while better-off families in urban centers are able to seek private day care. Similarly, the majority of pupils who drop out in Kyrgyzstan are students from rural areas, unable to attend school because of insufficient food, lack of adequate clothing and an inability to afford learning materials. In Tajikistan, the WB poverty assessment report (2000) suggested that whereas 99.2% of households in the top 20% income bracket enroll their children in secondary education, only 79.6% of households in the lowest 20% income bracket do so.

Governments of all three republics made concerted efforts to reduce the negative effects of poverty on education equity. The Kyrgyz government developed specific programs aimed at overcoming poverty, including "Araket" (1998-2005), "Ayalzat" (1997), and "Madaniyat" (1996). The Uzbek government implemented a targeted policy of supporting children from low-income families by providing them with textbooks and school supplies from the state budget. Students from grades 2-11 are provided with textbooks

from the school library. The Tajik government implemented the WB's Poverty Alleviation Pilot project in Vaksh Rayon by supporting schools' involvement in income-generating activities.

Overall, however, a review of education research studies conducted in the region suggests that the deterioration in access to education due to poverty has, to date, been mainly tackled from the 'supply-side'. Examples are the ADB and WB projects supporting school improvements (such as school building rehabilitation and refurbishment), school supplies (textbooks) and expertise building (in-service teacher training in new methodologies). However, several reports (ADB, 2000; WB, 2000) suggest that it is urgent and necessary to focus on the constraints facing access to education in poorer communities.

Re-surfacing traditional gender roles

Attitudes regarding women's roles in society grew more conservative in the Central Asian republics during the post-independence period. Governments often straddle two conflicting positions – on the one hand claiming to promote the Soviet legacy of women's equality, but on the other, seeking to reassert national culture through selected aspects of pre-Soviet traditions (HRW, 2001). For women, this means the assertion of the more traditional role of caring for the family and rearing children, undoubtedly affecting their education opportunities. Negative effects of these re-emerging traditional roles begin to appear in the gender-related development index of the most recent UNDP Human Development Report (2001), where Tajikistan ranked 93 and Uzbekistan ranked 86 of 146 countries examined.

In a Muslim state, women cannot always decide themselves when, where and how to study and work... (Girls from Tajikistan)

According to the SC report (2002), more than a quarter of girls in Uzbekistan fail to continue education after they reach the working age (15 or 16). Girls enter academic lyceums half as often as boys do and in *higher education*, men outnumber women almost two to one (State Department of Statistics, 2002). Overall, women's educational opportunities are strongly affected by childbearing and their access to continuing education is affected by child rearing. The largest number of children are born to 20-year-old women, which explains why there is a sudden high drop in the number of women in secondary education (UNDP, 1999). The situation is similar in Tajikistan, where fewer girls than boys attend school. In 1998, 89 girls per 100 boys were enrolled in lower secondary education and 63 girls for 100 boys in higher secondary education (ADB, 2000). In post-compulsory education (technical and vocational education), the number of boys fell by a quarter, whereas the number of girls fell by a half, thus opening a significant gender gap (ADB, 2000). In both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, poverty seems to aggravate the gender gap, with girls' enrolment falling behind that of boys. Due to material hardships, many people, particularly in the countryside, cannot provide equal education opportunities for the education of all children, and traditionally make a choice in favor of sons (UNDP, 1999; ADB, 2000). Girls often stay at home to care for their younger siblings and take on a big share of household chores, which inevitably has an adverse effect on their educational opportunities.

More opportunities are given for the education of sons, because they will have to provide for their families... daughters will marry, while sons will support their parents (Boys from Uzbekistan)

Disparities relating to ethnicity and language

One of the Soviet legacies which continues to influence educational development in all countries in Central Asia, is an inherited education system guaranteeing instruction in several different languages. Schools that enjoyed subsidies from Moscow and technical support from other Soviet republics in the pre-independence period, now suffer from constantly shrinking education budgets. Although each country continues to pride itself in providing equal education opportunities for most of its minorities, there is evidence of inefficiency, ineffectiveness, and inequities in provision in the post-independence context.

In particular, a Monitoring of Learning Achievement (MLA) study conducted in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan revealed significant differences in learning achievement between students from different schools. For example, students from Russian schools scored higher on all dimensions of the test (numeracy, literacy, and life skills), compared to students from state language schools and other minority schools. In part, the

differences in learning achievement could be explained by the lack of textbooks in state² and minority languages, a lack of teachers (particularly state language teachers), and insufficient professional development opportunities. The MLA study (1999) confirms that approximately 40% of teachers in Tajik schools in Uzbekistan do not have appropriate qualifications. In Tajikistan, one of the main difficulties is the preparation of teachers for minority schools, which is now available for Russian and Tajik schools only. For other minority schools, Tajikistan can neither afford to educate teachers in other countries (Russia, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan) nor provide professional development opportunities in state pedagogical institutions.

Better education for the better-off

In an attempt to shift away from Soviet uniformity, education systems in Central Asia became increasingly diverse throughout the 1990s. New types of schools have emerged such as academic lyceums, gymnasiums, private schools (except for Uzbekistan), and schools for gifted children. An 'Innovative School' (in Kyrgyzstan) provides a chance for schools to shape the curriculum, and the right to 'select' students. Such schools often provide a better quality education, increasing their pupil's chances of entering prestigious higher education institutions. Schools of the 'old type' have remained; these are not nearly as competitive as the 'new type' of schools. Admission to the 'new type' of schools may depend on family income rather than academic abilities of the child, as many gymnasiums require additional payment from parents. Furthermore, most gymnasiums and lyceums are located in urban areas, further reducing the rural students' chances of attending a good school. Given the uneven distribution of social and economic capital in each country, it is evident that the diversification of the school system may progressively increase selectivity and tracking in the education system, further polarizing society.

III. Key Issues in the Education Systems

Reduction in GDP and state revenue led to a sharp deterioration in education and critical decline of per capita state expenditures. Capital infrastructure deteriorated rapidly; pedagogical materials, equipment and textbooks fell into short supply; curricula stagnated and management systems came to a standstill. With teachers' earnings seven times lower than the monthly average in Tajikistan and the work environment and social protection dramatically worsened, the better-qualified teachers left in large numbers. Efforts at funding education from other sources through non-governmental inputs, motivation of the population, and transferring funding responsibility to local authorities could not fill the financial gap. Moreover, due to varying economic and social situations in different regions, these efforts sharpened the regional imbalance in the provision and quality of education. In this situation of general decline, corruption has become deeply embedded at all levels of the education systems.

The main issues facing education can be summarized as follows:

- Education financing: insufficient funding; inefficient and ineffective systems of financing;
- Lack of reform capacity and non-participatory governance;
- Outdated curriculum;
- Outdated student assessment;
- Issues related to teachers: shortage of qualified teachers and antiquated system of teacher preparation and retraining;
- Poor quality and lack of textbooks;
- Crumbling infrastructure.

This section briefly discusses each of the listed issues in turn.

² In 1996, Uzbekistan switched from the Cyrillic to the Latin script, which has involved developing new school textbooks and teaching materials.

1. Education financing

Dramatic decline in public education financing

The dominating factor of the previous ten years, underpinning all other problems in education, is a dramatic decline in national income, and consequently in public educational expenditures in all three countries. Real gross domestic product (GDP) growth has been in consistent decline since 1989 (Annex 1, Tables 11 & 12). Consequently, the previous comparatively high level of coverage of public services during the Soviet era has also declined. In 1999/2000, the percentage of the GDP spent on education dropped more than four times in Tajikistan, fell by more than half in Kyrgyzstan and by a third in Uzbekistan (Annex 1, Table 19). Although these serious financial constraints will almost certainly persist for the foreseeable future (with Tajikistan at the point of possible collapse), governments prefer to understand the problem as a 'shortage of funds'. They opt for increased loans and spending on recurrent expenses, rather than trying to find ways to use existing funds in a more strategic and focused way.

Inefficiencies in financing

All three newly independent countries inherited a legacy of hierarchical systems of central planning, and rigid and inefficient patterns of resource allocation that are neither sustainable in the era of drastically reduced public budgets, nor suited to the flexible demands of freely competitive demands. One of the major obstacles to improved efficiency is that governments in newly independent countries in Central Asia have few technical and organizational resources for redefining funding priorities and making the system more efficient. Aside from the lack of skills and the centralized hierarchical structure, an additional obstacle to improved efficiency is the lack of transparency and clarity in resource allocation. This affects everything from the drawing up of a national education budget, through the movement of financial resources in the system, to school-level budgets and audited accounts of expenditures.

It should be also noted that the financing of education is closely guarded information. In Uzbekistan, for example, information on educational financing is the exclusive domain of the Ministry of Finance and is completely unavailable to officials in the Ministry of Public Education (MPE), who deal directly with policy development and implementation. Even once it is obtained, the information is remarkably difficult to analyze, presenting questions about its validity and reliability. For example, the "official" Uzbek government report indicates that education spending as a percentage of GDP has increased (up to 11.6%), whereas UNESCO/ADB data (2001) suggests that it has actually decreased (down to 6.8%).

Ineffective educational financing

All attempts to address scarce financing happened in an unsystematic ad hoc way, without clear regulations and appropriate support to schools. In addition, there is a severe lack of technical, organizational, and analytical skills for dealing with the complexities of the financial situation in education. This translates into an inability to address the problem of insufficient education financing, to work closely with policy-makers, and to develop cost-effective solutions. As a consequence, financial policies introduced in the past ten years have severely deepened differences in educational opportunities for students from rural areas, low-income families and girls. These include such things as: legalized private funding, decentralization that brought unequal financing; multiple financing schemes for schools; tendencies to shift education costs to parents (such as charges for extras and textbooks); and reduced state subsidies for transport and food. In addition, the increasing level of corruption in schools is one of the most urgent problems connected to the legalization of multiple finance sources. This includes the extortion of money from parents for the education of their children (usually referred to as "voluntary" contributions!). For example, in urban areas of Uzbekistan, "voluntary contributions" are reported to amount to as much as 55% of a school's total budget (UNESCO, UNICEF, MPE, 1999, p. 48).

2. Reform capacity, management and governance

Deficiencies in reform planning and implementing

Although the reforms in education are considered to be of high priority (and they do not lack political will, at least among some of the top Ministry officials), policy-makers struggle with a severe lack of policy-making skills, such as analytical and strategic planning capacities. Although many initiatives have been

launched in the past ten years, these deficiencies have meant that Ministries' concept papers and reform plans have mostly ended up as declarative documents stating broad and general goals. For example, current declarations of Ministry officials agree with all the general Dakar/Education for All goals, but they are rather vague on specific strategies for achieving the stated goals. Well-developed implementation strategies and mechanisms are generally missing.

Ineffective information management.

The lack of an adequate education management information system is another encompassing issue, tied to the lack of knowledge and skills for supporting education reform. Data is scarce in all three countries. It is generated throughout the system, but because much of it is unnecessary for any substantive policy making or analysis, it is reported on haphazardly or not at all, and is not checked along the way for reliability or validity. There is no system for collecting basic data in a meaningful and transparent way. At the same time, there is no system for collecting, analyzing and benchmarking student learning outcomes and teacher performance, and making this information available to all who need it locally as well as centrally. Ministries therefore receive no systematic information about the 'products' of their education systems.

The international organizations face similar difficulties when looking for basic data. For example, the World Bank is pressing for increases in teacher salaries, yet it has difficulty obtaining reliable data on the number of teachers per type of school, grade and subject, their qualifications and conditions of work.

Non-participatory governance

One of the main obstacles to effective educational change has been a centralized, top-down approach to education governance. Furthermore, education reform efforts are driven by political agendas. In Central Asia, the President and the government play a dominating role in initiating change. Ministries of Education are responsible for "leading" and "managing" the reform process, including developing the legislative base for education reform, defining national curricula and education standards, and acting as controlling and implementation bodies. Policy-makers fail to initiate reforms in an informed and transparent manner, on a level political and economic playing field.

A system of incentives for successful implementation is missing. Changes are usually introduced through a number of new laws and regulations, and imposed at local level. Since the responsibility of local authorities, school principals, teachers, parents, and students is limited to implementation of state directives, it is not surprising that educational changes initiated at the "top" are not readily accepted, supported, and implemented. On top of this, changes are not accompanied by necessary financial resources.

Key stakeholders, including NGOs, teachers, parents, and students are rarely involved, and they have only very limited influence on key decisions at the national level. Although numbers of NGOs have been established in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and to a lesser extent in Uzbekistan, they have no real "voice," or opportunity to actively engage in education policy formulation. Currently, only a few have sufficient expertise to become strong partners to the Ministry in the process of reform planning. The network of Soros foundations and their OSI spin-offs, especially the Step by Step NGO, is a rare exception (Annex 2). Strengthening the role of civil society in education reform will require the development of NGOs' capacities.

Incomplete decentralization

All three countries have recently made an attempt to decentralize education governance, including delegating some financial and administrative responsibility to local authorities, schools, and parents. However, there have been a number of serious problems hindering the implementation of decentralized governance and thus education reform process. The main problems include an incomplete decentralization process, insufficiency of local resources to benefit from the decentralization process, and a lack of the local preparation and culture necessary for engaging in decentralized decision-making

It is impossible to talk with teachers about the education of our children.... They begin to penalize the child or, sometimes, they say, "If you don't like it here, take your child's documents and go to another school." (Parents from Kyrgyzstan)

Burden of financial responsibilities shifted to local levels.

Often, decentralization shifts the responsibility for education financing to structures that are less able to cope than central government. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, financial decentralization has been equated with simply transferring the financial burden from state to local authorities (particularly in the case of school maintenance and repairs). In Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, local governments, especially in many rural and undeveloped regions, have great difficulty allocating sufficient resources to schools as extremely weak local taxes have led to local budget deficits. Even if additional central funding were made available to compensate for regional disparities, it is not sufficient and often the central funding does not reach these localities. According to estimates, only part of the requested budgets are covered from the republic budget in Uzbekistan. The above situation has resulted in arrears in teachers' wages, no money for school maintenance, no heat for school buildings and no educational materials for students.

Limited benefits of decentralization for schools and community

Not only has decentralization devolved very few new responsibilities to school and community levels; schools have insufficient financial and human resources or skills to benefit from new opportunities. All three countries have provided the legal basis for schools to engage in the fund-raising activities necessary for improving the teaching/learning process (textbooks, learning materials, etc.), school buildings, and equipment, but the actual control over the budget at the school level remains extremely limited. Schools also have the opportunity to develop school and regional curricula components, but the majority of schools do not know how to do prepare school development plans or school-based curricula. They also have no knowledge of how to involve parents and community members in school decisions. On top of the lack of skills, schools' very limited financial resources prevent them benefiting from these "new" opportunities. Most schools cannot afford extra learning materials. Furthermore, parents and communities are often unaware of their rights and responsibilities – this limits their involvement to raising funds or contributing to the repair of school facilities. Finally, there is a lack of a decentralized, participatory decision-making culture at all levels. As parent focus-group discussions revealed (see the quotation above), staff members are often unwilling to discuss school matters with parents.

3. Curriculum

Changes retain the traditional curriculum framework and pedagogical approach

Since the early 1990s, the Ministries of Education have initiated several curriculum revisions but these changes appear to be ad hoc rather than based on a sound reconsideration of the overall curriculum system and practices. For example, in Tajikistan, four such curriculum 'reforms' have been introduced in the past ten years. These changes refer mostly to the revised list of subjects. Some subjects were dropped and replaced with new subjects such as "History of Religion," "Basis of World Civilizations," and "Free-market Economy." In addition to Russian, students can now theoretically study English, French, Italian and German, although schools actually can offer only a limited choice because of the lack of teachers.

These initiatives, however, cannot be regarded as a major change in terms of curriculum *policy* – curriculum goals have retained a declarative nature, and there is little movement in the curriculum framework or the educational philosophy underlying it. In fact, current curricula still pay tribute to curriculum practices dating back to Soviet times: they are still excessively encyclopedic; knowledge-, content- and information-centered, instead of aiming at developing students' critical thinking skills, self-reliance and an attitude of "learning to learn". Curricula still pay no attention to the skills and knowledge required by students to be successful in the 21st century.

The curricula are designed and approved by the Ministry in a highly centralized procedure. The groups of curriculum designers are composed mostly of academics (university professors or researchers), some inspectors and a few teachers. There has been little or no communication or horizontal co-ordination across

the different groups working in different areas of study. Teachers' participation in the process has been minimal and therefore the reforms have little to do with the reality of the schools.

Attempts to decentralize the curriculum have little effect in schools and classrooms.

One of the major curriculum changes has been an attempt to move away from a centralized curriculum in order to give schools more freedom in deciding upon locally appropriate content. In practice, however, most schools are unable to develop and implement their own "school components" due to financial constraints, lack of technical resources and skills, and teacher shortages. Even if many teachers would like to develop materials, they lack the necessary training to design school-based curriculum. As a result, the majority of schools continue to teach from a largely centralized curriculum and only a few "schools of a new type" (i.e., lyceums, gymnasiums, and colleges receiving additional funding from parents) benefit from the curriculum reform. Even in these schools, however, it is not clear whether, how, and to what extent these changes have made student learning more relevant, effective and equitable.

Curriculum emphasis is on teaching rather than learning.

In most cases, the "curriculum" is merely a "list of content" to be "delivered" to students within a given number of hours on the timetable. The accent is on *teaching* content rather than students *learning* the kinds of skills they need to live a useful life in a changing society. No clear subject objectives, attainment targets, standards or learning outcomes are defined in the curriculum. Furthermore, the mostly narrow subject-based approach allows only limited interdisciplinary or cross-curricular connections. In Uzbekistan, some subjects at primary education level with similar features can be combined, for example Basics of Environmental Sciences, Mathematics and Designing etc.

The curricula offer a narrow range of learning opportunities and experiences. In most cases, education content continues to lack practical application and is only remotely connected to real life. Students have little or no choice of subjects. The results of focus groups conducted with students in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan confirmed that they perceive school knowledge as completely irrelevant to their lives. Some students thought that school was in fact a "waste of time." As one student from Uzbekistan explained, "Why do I have to know how many stripes a Colorado beetle has if I want to become a doctor? Why do I have to study Colorado beetles, if they do not even exist in my country?"

Furthermore, students are not encouraged to express their opinions: debate, discovery, problem solving, classroom interaction, group work, and individual or group projects are rare. Focus group interviews revealed that it is considered "impolite" for students in Kyrgyz, Uzbek, or Tajik schools to question their teachers' knowledge or even to ask questions during school lessons. As one parent from Uzbekistan stated, "The education system is a big, uncontrollable apparatus for suppressing individuality." Although the Ministries of Education in all three countries have publicly expressed their commitment towards more participatory and active teaching/learning, there have been no state resources allocated for these purposes. Some international organizations (Soros Foundation, IFES, UNICEF, etc.) have recently undertaken initiatives aimed at training teachers in interactive teaching/learning methods, but more support is necessary to scale up these initiatives.

4. Student Assessment

Emphasis on factual knowledge

Only at the of the 1990s, did countries started to develop "new" education standards in order to reflect newly revised education content and define specific learning objectives for each subject. In this process Tajikistan used the Russian experience, whereas Uzbekistan developed its own version of education standards. Kyrgyzstan is about to revise its standards as a part of its broader curriculum reform. In all three countries, however, the "new" standards are based on the "old" framework, thus continuing to emphasize factual knowledge over developing skills, attitudes, and values

The system of student assessment has not changed and remains restricted to the goals and objectives defined in official education programs – with a primary emphasis on factual knowledge, and very few tasks

assessing students' logical and analytical thinking or requiring students to use their general intellectual abilities.

Lack of common criteria for school-based internal assessment

There are no common criteria for school-based marking or assessment systems – as a consequence, results are not comparable or reliable. Internal assessment and evaluation is carried out by and in the school, and involves continuous marking of students in the classroom based on oral examinations, and some written tests prepared by the teacher. Sometimes inspectors who visit schools assess students' performance – but again, there are no criteria for comparing those results to previous results from the same pupils, the results of other classes or schools, national standards, or other benchmarks that are clearly communicated to teachers and students. Cases where a group of teachers decides on the type and content of a certain assessment are exceptions rather than the rule.

Lack of comprehensive evidence about students' achievements

Because the assessment of student learning is mostly decentralized and teachers are not trained in the systematic assessment of learning against agreed standards, very little is known about what students really know. Education outcomes have been chronically limited to students' ability to memorize facts and recite the learned information. In the last ten years, hardly any base line surveys were conducted, so it is difficult to get any reliable data on how the system is performing. There is some anecdotal evidence of good performances by high-ability students – for example, in “Olympiads” in various subjects, but there is only one recent study of students' actual achievements.

School does not prepare us for a future profession, because a lot of what is taught in school is irrelevant & unnecessary in real life... (students from Kyrgyzstan)

As illustrated in the results of the MLA studies conducted in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in 1999/2000, students scored considerably lower on life skills (health & hygiene, everyday life & environment, and social skills) than on literacy and numeracy tasks. For example, 81% of students in Kyrgyzstan were successful with the numeracy dimension of the test, whereas only 75% of students did well on the life-skills dimension. Furthermore, not a single student in Kyrgyzstan received the highest possible score on the life-skills test. Regarding literacy, students demonstrated an excellent ability to read – but the majority of students had difficulty summarizing and analyzing the reading material. One of the most shocking results was that only 14% of the students in Kyrgyz schools were actually able to summarize the text. As one of the students explained in a focus group, "we are taught to memorize facts, not to think." Although the MLA results are not available for Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, there is no doubt that they will be similar: satisfactory knowledge of factual data and a failure to analyze and synthesize it.

External testing as a selection mechanism

Despite the rising interest in assessment (especially in national testing and examinations) in all three countries, the actual in-country expertise in this area is severely limited. No national standardized tests are being applied, and independent bodies or institutions for developing and implementing nationwide external evaluation either do not exist, or the ones recently established (in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan) lack necessary technical and organizational knowledge and resources.

This system does not prepare children for an independent life. They are lost in real life... (parents from a village in Kyrgyzstan)

Currently, the entrance exams to secondary schools and university are seen primarily as a selection mechanism, not as an approach to monitoring school effectiveness, a tool for school improvement, or a means to measure learning outcomes against national standards. The only “external evaluations” of students' performance are centrally developed tests at the end of primary school (grades 8/9) and secondary school (grades 11/12), in essence a selection exam for varying types of upper secondary schooling.

There are also serious concerns about the selection process, as well as the prevalence of private (paid) after-school tutoring by teachers of their own pupils, which disadvantages poorer youngsters. As pointed out by the current Minister of Education and Culture of Kyrgyzstan, Ms. Camilla Sharshekeyeva, there have been serious allegations of corruption connected to the university entrance and school leaving examinations, and they have become a political issue.

5. Teachers and teacher training

All the privileges teachers had enjoyed such as stable jobs, ample professional development opportunities, and a respected social status, began to erode rapidly after the collapse of Soviet Union as values related to profit replaced the high value placed on education. This trend has severely affected teachers as a professional group, resulting in multiple financial, professional, and social losses. First, teacher salaries declined dramatically, and could no longer provide for an average sized family. Second, professional support and recognition of teachers decreased as the states failed to fulfill their legal obligation to provide regular in-service training. Third, the teaching profession lost its social respect as teachers began to be more concerned about personal survival than educating children.

*Today teaching is a miserable profession... Teachers think mostly about money problems and that's why they don't think about how to make their lessons better, they just don't have time to think about the children they teach....
Many teachers in our village do not live but survive and this obviously influences the quality of teaching (parents from a village in Kyrgyzstan)*

Consequently, the rapidly deteriorating status of the teaching profession has retarded education reform efforts as witnessed through increased teacher shortages, declining professional teachers' qualifications and limited professional development opportunities.

Increased shortages of qualified teachers.

There are shortages and imbalances in qualified teachers in all three countries – in some subjects over half the teachers are missing, while there is an oversupply of teachers in other subjects. For example, in Uzbekistan, general education schools are staffed with teachers at 93% of the required total, but schools in some regions are staffed with teachers only at 77% of the required total, and for some subjects only 50% of the teachers are available (ADB, 2002). In Tajikistan, it is estimated that 4000 qualified school personnel migrated to other countries during the civil conflict and many others have left their jobs in search of better-paid jobs elsewhere in the country. In Kyrgyzstan, official figures point to 2580 vacancies in schools, although the actual numbers are estimated as double that number (OSI, 2002). In all countries, there are severe shortages of qualified teachers of the official state language (Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek), as well as teachers in subjects which have acquired new commercial value, such as English, Computer Science and Economics.

Government efforts to expand the number of teachers in the education sector have been implemented at the expense of quality. Of the total number of teachers in Tajikistan, only 62% have completed a higher education degree (ADB, 2000, p. 60). As a response to this critical situation, the Ministry of Education authorized a new measure allowing the recruitment of teachers from a number of successful secondary school graduates. The situation is similar in Kyrgyzstan. Although the situation in Uzbekistan seems to be better (71.5% of teachers have a university degree), the real situation may actually be worse than presented in the "official" data. In the case of official state language schools, which face a severe shortage of official state language speaking teachers, principals increasingly hire teachers based on their language ability, instead of professional qualifications. Obviously, this leads to a decrease in the quality of education.

Relatively low pupil-teacher ratios and teacher workloads (Annex 1, Tables 29, 30 and 31) suggest structural inefficiencies, but governments are more interested in recruiting more teachers than in optimizing inefficient ratios and increasing the number of contact hours. The governments of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have made concerted efforts to recruit and retain teachers. These include: relieving teachers from paying utility bills in Uzbekistan, providing teachers with land plots in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and organizing a special teacher recruitment campaign in Kyrgyzstan to attract teachers to the most severely affected region of Batken. With teacher salaries so low and irregular, however, these governmental campaigns cannot realistically solve the problem.

Limited and antiquated in-service training.

While an increasing number of teachers without any professional qualifications are being hired, there are fewer opportunities for in-service professional development, which has been seriously cut back as a result of shrinking education budgets. Although commitments have been made for providing in-service teacher

education once every five years, governments cannot realistically implement them. First, the in-service teacher education system itself (central and regional training centers) is physically incapable of serving *all* teachers over the period of five years. In Uzbekistan, for example, the capacity of teacher training institutions allows enrolment of only 60-65% of teachers every five years. In Tajikistan the situation is much worse, as many regional in-service training centers have been closed over the last ten years. Second, the existing in-service training system is not always affordable to teachers, who now have to assume some costs associated with their professional development (e.g., travel & accommodation costs). As a result, teachers from poor, rural areas have much fewer chances for professional development than those from urban areas.

Above all, in-service training institutions have not changed much since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In many cases, they provide outdated training by focusing on "new" factual information, instead of preparing teachers for working in a "new" environment through introducing child-centered, interactive teaching/learning methods. Training opportunities in teaching critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, curriculum planning, and assessment of students are badly lacking.

Although the Ministers of Education in all countries have publicly indicated their willingness to mobilize local resources, these are mostly foreign investments (e.g., the Asian Development Bank, Soros Foundation, etc.) that address the alarming situation of in-service teacher training. One donor that has consistently addressed needs in this area has been the Soros Foundations. In Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan a comprehensive active teaching and learning program called Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking has been offered to a growing number of teachers. Local universities have also expressed interest in the program. A specialized Laboratory for Critical Thinking has been established at the American University of Kyrgyzstan, offering courses for teachers of Tajikistan. In Kyrgyzstan, the Step by Step program in early childhood education, sponsored by Soros Foundations, is well established. The program is under consideration in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Other donors have also sponsored courses for different subject teachers, especially in the areas of democracy, civics and economics.

Escalating dilemmas of pre-service teacher education.

The state of pre-service teacher education presents further dilemmas for improving the numbers and quality of teachers. First, pre-service teacher educational institutions (pedagogical colleges, institutes, and universities) are struggling to attract new students. Given low salaries, deteriorating working conditions, and decreasing professional prestige, far fewer students are willing to become teachers. Second, pre-service teacher education institutions have a problem retaining their graduates in the education sector, because most students are seeking higher paying jobs elsewhere (for example, secretaries, interpreters, etc.). In Kyrgyzstan, for example, the MOE estimations suggest that only about 30% of graduates with teacher qualifications actually enter the profession.

Uzbekistan's new national testing system allows higher education enrollment for students with the highest scores, which means leaving behind students from rural areas unable to compete with urban students. Students from urban areas, however, are rarely interested in assuming positions in rural areas, further compounding the problem of teacher shortages in the countryside. Finally, pre-service teacher education institutions may not seem particularly attractive to prospective students, because the format, methods, and to a certain extent, the content of teacher preparation have not substantially changed since the beginning of the 1990s. Pre-service teacher education institutions lack a child-centered orientation in methodological and academic training, as well as links to schools,

Some universities created new schemes for attracting students to the teaching profession. For example, In Uzbekistan, a three-way agreement on student placement is signed between the university, student, and school. In this case, the school provides some "benefits" to a student for several years (for example, no payment of rent, etc.). In Kyrgyzstan, students cannot actually receive their diplomas until they complete a two-year teaching service in schools.

6. Textbooks

Difficulties breaking away from old systems

Since the beginning of the 1990s, education reform has focused on revising textbooks published during the Soviet times – particularly textbooks containing outdated information. But the countries are having difficulty breaking away from the old system in which, typically, a pedagogical institute within the Ministry of Education wrote the textbooks, evaluated and approved them. Systems of open and fair competition with independent, objective evaluation encouraging good new authors to write new textbooks, have been difficult to introduce.

Poor quality of textbooks

Although the ideological stance has changed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the legacy of an ideology that stressed the existence of one truth prevails and most of educators are still searching for the definitive textbook that will replace the old one. There are very limited skills in developing good quality textbooks that would be more comprehensive, respecting age group requirements, less abstract and fact oriented, and encouraging critical thinking. Textbooks developed in past years are not linked to the new pedagogy and teacher training. In addition, the physical quality of the learning materials is low. Textbooks do not last long,, illustrations are often unclear and diagrams unreadable. Old textbooks are wearing out, and there are very limited resources for printing new ones.

Shortages in textbook provision

As a result, the shortage of textbooks and other learning materials ranges from significant to critical. In Tajikistan, WB estimates suggest that student/textbook ratios may be as high as 6 students/1 textbook in the primary grades and 10 students/1 textbook in rural areas (WB, 2000:2). In Kyrgyzstan, the MLA study (MLA, 2000) shows that schools were provided with 60% of the required math textbooks, 55% of Kyrgyz language textbooks, 46% of Russian language textbooks, and 30% of foreign language textbooks. The situation in Uzbekistan is particularly critical due to a shift from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet, which was introduced in 1996. Mostly affected are Uzbek students who started studying several years ago. Presently, they have only the essential textbooks in the Latin alphabet, while the remaining learning materials (references, manuals, etc.) are available in Cyrillic only.

Problems with textbook affordability

When textbooks are available, they are not necessarily always affordable. Whereas all textbooks were distributed free during the Soviet period, parents are now responsible for purchasing them. The problem is that most parents cannot afford to buy all the required textbooks for their children. As one of the parents in Uzbekistan explained, "the cost of all the textbooks is usually higher than both parents' salaries." To increase textbook affordability, funding agencies have been urging the adoption of rental schemes, which are more economical but require better-quality books. A textbook rental scheme has been successfully operating in Uzbekistan (with the support of ADB), and Kyrgyzstan, and one was recently launched in Tajikistan (with the support of WB and AKF). None of the countries can afford the provision of alternative textbooks, which could potentially improve textbook quality through providing parents, students and teachers with a choice. Because of the increase in textbook unit costs, for example, the Tajikistan government plans to publish supplementary teaching/learning materials rather than provide alternative textbooks for schools.

The textbook issues have been addressed by several international agencies working in the region, particularly ADB in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and WB, ADB, UNESCO/OPEC and OSI in Tajikistan, where the textbook shortages were most alarming. International organizations have supported the publishing of new textbooks; introduced international bidding procedures and encouraged an open market in textbook publishing. OSI has focused on building knowledge and skills in textbook development for local authors and publishers, teacher training in new teaching and learning methods, and more interactive use of textbooks.

7. Infrastructure

The deterioration and lack of infrastructure for basic education is a major concern in all three countries. Economic decline over the last decade has affected the government's investment budget for construction and capital repairs. Schools in Tajikistan have suffered additional damage and deterioration during periods of conflict. Problems are particularly severe in rural areas, where conditions were already worse than in urban areas. As with other areas of education, obtaining accurate data on requirements and priorities has been difficult. At this stage, there is no up-to-date approach to geographic information systems and school location planning in any of the countries. No data was available on the impact of these conditions on learning, though it is likely that a significant number of school days are missed or class hours lost, especially during cold weather.

According to an ADB study in Kyrgyzstan, from 1992-2000, 187 schools were constructed for 59,800 children, 92 schools were rehabilitated in the southern region, and another 187 extensions were made to existing schools to accommodate 25,700 children. Despite this investment, there remain schools in rural Kyrgyzstan that lack heat, running water, electricity and even windows. Local governments are responsible for school maintenance and repairs, though few of them have sufficient resources to undertake the work that is needed.

In Tajikistan, an estimated 20% of schools were destroyed and looted during the civil war (WB and IMF data). More than 130 school buildings require repair and re-equipping. Construction of classrooms and schools is needed to accommodate 20,000 pupils with adequate conditions for learning. Preliminary estimates put the total investment requirement at 66.3 million Somoni or US\$27.7 million equivalent (OSI, 2002). Shortage of funds for maintenance and the difficulty in obtaining building materials and classroom furniture locally, often hinders renovation and interferes with the proper functioning of schools and daycare centers. Many premises adapted for use as daycare centers lack central heating (26.3%), water supply (23.9%) and sewage systems (34.7%). Both the ADB and WB are providing some resources for school rehabilitation within their latest education loans, and the UNDP has also supported some projects in conflict-affected areas.

In Uzbekistan, facilities for basic education are badly deteriorating. Available investment for school construction has been concentrated on the construction of upper secondary schools (academic lyceums) with little attention to the other sectors of education. According to the MLA study (1999), two thirds of school directors in rural and urban areas responded that their schools were in need of capital repairs. The same study revealed that 83% of schools had no hand-copying machines and almost 60% no flushing toilets. School rehabilitation has been generously supported by various donors, including WB (Tajikistan), ADB (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan), UNDP (Tajikistan), and CARE International (Tajikistan). Next year, GTZ plans to engage in school rehabilitation in Tajikistan. However, much more assistance is necessary to ensure that children have adequate school facilities for quality learning.

IV. Donor Assistance

International donor funding and loan finance in the region increased steadily over the last decade – then jumped sharply after the attack on New York on September 11, 2001. Major international organizations – such as the Asian Development Bank, Agha Khan Foundation, UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank, and the Soros Foundations network – moved to support development, promote democracy and buttress stability in Central Asia. Ministries of education created special units responsible for keeping track of education activities supported and initiated by international organizations. However, even though national ministries have information on donor activities in each country, the information is not available to the public. In addition, there appears to be very little awareness among financial organizations about what is being funded by other organizations. Annex 3 provides a relatively up-to-date summary of donor activity in the three countries.

Co-ordinating international donors and financing

The increase in external donor and other financial assistance in Central Asia creates the need for better coordination of technical assistance and resources. The lack of co-ordination results in inefficient duplication of program activity and conflicting priorities. For example, several international organizations, including the World Bank, UNESCO, the OPEC Fund for International Development, Mercy Corps and the Soros Foundation, are involved in various textbook and curriculum developments in Tajikistan. There is no clarity on how these initiatives complement each other or if they are even coordinated at government level. There is clearly a need for better co-ordination and, at the very least, a cataloguing of the initiatives undertaken by various donors. Currently, relatively comprehensive databases of international investment in education are maintained by the ADB in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and by the OSI in Tajikistan³.

Creating partnerships

The Involvement of local partners is essential for effective program development and implementation. Usually, international organizations rely more on foreign than national input to identify funding priorities. This frequently leads to a misunderstanding of local and national needs and conditions. For example, a recent project in Tajikistan aimed to train an initial 20 teachers as trainers, who would in turn train a further 900 teachers, on site in their own schools. However, most of the newly-trained teacher trainers left teaching altogether to find other jobs as soon as they were trained, and the donor was forced to train an additional 80 teacher-trainers in order to complete the project. This could have been avoided if local expertise was consulted about the realities of the teaching profession in Tajikistan.

We are convinced that development partnerships should not involve local education professionals only. Institutional partnerships would need to be established with NGOs, local training institutions and with governments at all levels.

V. Priorities and Ways Forward

Effective education transformation in the region is not something international donors can accomplish through a quick intervention; there are no short cuts and perhaps no easy routes.

Two things seem to be fundamental:

- 1) nothing will be achieved without the support of national governments or without 'local' ownership of projects;**
- 2) everything will require adequate and carefully focused external funding.**

Similarly, national governments will not achieve education reform goals without the right kind of international assistance or without effectively mobilizing local resources and stakeholders.

Responding to immediate, shorter-term needs can make an essential contribution to longer-term education transformation goals. Such activities can build local networks and partnerships, and provide essential experience for international organizations. While such recommendations for more-immediate, specific project activities are made in the next section of this overview, this section introduces the broad components of the systemic, policy-level changes that will be needed in order to alter the course of education in Central Asia.

Five strategic priority areas appear to be important for the USAID/CAR intervention in the three countries:

1. Developing information systems and independent policy analysis;
2. Promoting quality in education;

³ OSI-Budapest initiates occasional meetings for exchanging information and coordinating activities among international donors. Such a meeting was held in Budapest in February 2002; it focused on donor activity in Tajikistan.

3. Building social coalitions and institutional partnerships around education goals;
4. Investing in physical and virtual infrastructure;
5. Establishing policies for equity and access.

Developing information systems and independent policy analysis

A lot of education information reportedly exists in these countries, much of it under lock and key. The task is not so much to identify and maintain huge amounts of information, as to identify what information is important and to devise efficient and reliable systems for data collection, presentation and analysis. Clear information is needed both for developing national education policy and for effective education management; the data and analysis that is required may be similar but will seldom be the same.

An effective management information system needs to rely on sound school evaluation and teacher assessment data. No assumptions can be made about how to successfully accomplish school development and evaluation or teacher support and assessment within these systems. Substantial work at a range of levels will be needed just to get these pre-requisites in place.

The establishment of independent institutions for data collection and analysis is critical from two points of view: firstly as a means for bolstering knowledge and resources in data systems and analysis; and secondly as a mechanism for ensuring the validity and veracity of data. At the same time, it is important to support independent policy analysis in order to monitor education reforms, collect and analyze data, offer policy options, publish system reviews and analytical papers, and act as independent advocacy bodies. The support of independent policy analysis centers (reform support units, think tanks, NGOs, public policy centers) can play a crucial role in democratizing the process of policy-making, and making it more transparent.

Promoting quality in education

The achievement of quality in education is only possible on the basis of well-developed curriculum standards linked with national exams. The approach to promoting quality in education will, of course, be specific to each country and will involve, variously, curriculum development, quality assurance assessment, school improvement, teacher education and support, and textbook development.

Curriculum: In the 21 century it is not enough for teachers to simply 'deliver the curriculum according to the timetable'. Basic skills, which need to be learned by all, are not reflected in curricula (teaching programs) – yet it is those skills that enable youngsters to progress in further schooling, find employment, or participate usefully in daily life. The emphasis needs to shift from teaching to learning, and teachers need to have a much better understanding of standards-based, formative assessment in their own classrooms. The work on major curricula reform started recently in Kyrgyzstan. It is important to support curriculum change that is based on a new coherent philosophy (e.g. curriculum framework, underlying principles and rationale). In all three countries, at least partial choice and freedom has been given to schools. In order to use this opportunity properly, school principals and teachers must receive substantial training and support in school-based curriculum and materials development.

Quality assurance assessment and evaluation of educational outcomes: Despite the rising interest in assessment (especially testing and examinations) in all three countries, the actual in-country capacity in this area is severely limited. Apart from *developing necessary skills*, the main strategic goal is to *establish a well-balanced system for quality monitoring and the evaluation of educational outcomes* that covers different types of evaluative activities: school (self) evaluation, supervisory services and external exams and surveys. Participation in international comparative studies would be also very helpful in benchmarking students' performance compared with other countries around the world. It will enable Ministry officials, teachers and parents to get better insight into the *real* levels of learning achieved in schools.

Teacher training and professional development of teachers: Initial teacher training should focus more on educational and pedagogical issues and less on content knowledge of the subject. The learning process of future teachers should include considerably more supervised practice in schools, which have sustainable

professional partnerships with universities and pedagogical colleges. The development of an effective network of school-university partnerships needs support.

With the increased presence of external donor assistance, and co-operating partners who have their own intentions and interests around the in-service training of teachers, it is important to coordinate activities. Any activities in the field of teacher training should be based on the demands and needs of strategic reform and the overall system.

School improvement approach: In countries that do not practice democracy, schools can become an essential vehicle for the next generation to learn democratic principles – not necessarily through the curriculum such, but by changing the atmosphere in the schools. It is therefore important to equip local government, school principals and teachers with new skills in school development planning, self-evaluation and school management. It is important to help them improve the culture of schools, decrease the drop-out rate, increase attendance rates and improve overall learning. Specific focus needs to be given to rural schools.

Building broad social coalitions and institutional partnerships around education goals

There is no automatic link between improving the quality of education and improving participation and democracy in education. Furthermore, it is very risky to move beyond purely professional issues in education to ascribe a role for civil participation in governance and decentralization, without being able to demonstrate at the same time, an improvement in learning outcomes. Such a result would discredit the professed benefits of democratizing education, and reinforce perceptions that education would have been better left to professionals.

Transition from the currently centralized systems to more flexible, democratic and participatory education governance is necessary if education is going to be responsive to social, cultural and market requirements. Importantly, it involves the need to define education quality from a perspective beyond the school fence and develop the accountability of all stakeholders for achieving and upholding quality in education. In the Central Asian context, it can be supported through:

- 1) dedicated knowledge and skills-building programs at national, regional, local and school levels;
 - 2) encouraging links between schools, local governments, parents and community; and
 - 3) ensuring that information flows upwards and downwards within the education system.
- There will have to be adequate support for these processes from education departments, training institutions and NGOs if this is to have any chance of success.

Investing in physical and virtual infrastructure

The obvious needs for construction and upgrading of school infrastructure are an important priority and opportunity for donors interested in assisting education in the three countries. Visible improvement at the classroom level is possible in a relatively short period – through construction, repairs, and basic equipment – and will almost certainly increase the “time on task” of learners and teachers, thus contributing to quality. Attention to facilities in parts of the country where there are too few classroom places for the surrounding population can help quickly to improve access.

School construction and repair can create heightened community readiness, incentives and hope for other changes in education. Donors should acknowledge this reality and look for ways to link assistance for facilities to other initiatives in school leadership and governance improvement, and teachers’ professional development. Too often in education development initiatives, the construction or “hardware” component is distant from the so-called “software” investments in overall reform, and in the human resources development of education. In many countries, school reconstruction and repair is relegated to the category of humanitarian assistance, especially in post-conflict situations like that in Tajikistan. Strategic opportunities for education and community development are neglected in favor of the need to demonstrate an urgent response. Of course, the integration of construction and other efforts should be undertaken in such a way as it does not limit opportunities for school-based innovation and teacher development only to schools which have been repaired or reconstructed.

Where basic facility requirements are met and conditions permit, interested donors could pilot innovations in “virtual infrastructure” related to education. New developments in interactive technologies, new learning materials, the vast amount of material available and the rapidly expanding work on education portals, mean that virtual infrastructure could be an important investment in education. Virtual infrastructure includes physical items to enable bandwidth and connectivity (via satellite or optical fiber), computers and hardware, and knowledge products associated with distance learning. However, like learning materials and unlike buildings, virtual infrastructure serves no purpose by simply being there. There is a premium on the development of human capital resources in this process and a concerted effort has to be made to ensure that ICT is used optimally – both to improve education quality and to serve information and management system needs.

Establishing policies for equity and access

Broader trends and data reveal that for women and minorities in all three Central Asian countries, access to education and equity in education is in a critical state. A whole generation of young people is less likely to receive the necessary early childhood education, to regularly attend education, or to finish education at all.

The reasons are complex, though data does reveal that one primary obstacle to access is directly related to a decline in expenditures in education, and to the overall encroaching poverty in the countries of Central Asia. Clearly, greater income disparities always accompany rapid economic decline. Moreover, successful economic reform, the opening up of markets, the diversification of economies and the growth of business will inevitably benefit an emerging elite. Quality will be available to those who can afford it. Nationalistic perspectives and preferential treatment may worsen inequity in education. Vulnerable groups include, children from rural areas and poor families, girls, national minorities, disabled children, homeless and orphaned children.

It is essential that issues of equity and access remain central strategic priorities, and become central to all policy considerations. Both decentralization and privatization are central goals in reform efforts led by major international funding organizations, and economic growth in these countries is surely to be hoped for. Yet these developments carry grave risks for equity and access. Moving toward decentralization will adversely affect poorer districts, and this will be compounded by even limited privatization.

The consequence of growing inequity in education is an enormous waste of human potential that will impact negatively on the whole of society. The loss of empowered citizens will eventually weaken economies and put strain on states, as the disenfranchised become helplessly dependent on social welfare or crime in order to survive.

VI. Recommendations

This section presents a wide range of recommendations and ideas for programs, rather than a coherent strategy. However, selection of some of these components combined with other ideas, could form the basis of a strategy for a regional initiative.

Developing information systems and independent policy analysis

- *Support the development of a “culture” of evidence-based policy decision-making.* Develop technical and organizational capacity in data systems and analysis; help governments to improve management and financing mechanisms; promote transparency and accountability of financial management.
- *Support the development of an effective information management system.* Freely available, reliable and valid statistical data, trends and analyses need to be used to underpin strategic planning. Support the development of a reliable system for collecting baseline information (EMIS), as a mechanism for ensuring the validity and veracity of data.

- *Provide training to specialists to develop indicators for benchmarking, quality assurance, monitoring and decision-making*, to develop data on school performance and teacher performance. This initiative needs to be linked with teacher support and school improvement.
- *Promote independent policy analysis* to monitor education reform, collect and analyze data, offer policy options, publish analytical papers and system reviews, and act as independent advocacy centers. Supporting these independent policy analysis centers (reform support units, think-tanks, NGOs, public policy centers) and developing their professional capacity can play a crucial role in democratizing the process of policy-making, and making it more transparent.
- *Promote the establishment of independent institutions for data collection and analysis*. Support the establishment, work and networking of independent policy analysis centers (reform support units, think-tanks, NGOs, public policy centers etc.). Build the infrastructure of the independent policy analysis centers (equip them with computers, internet access.)
- *Ensure information dissemination*

Developing quality in education

Curriculum: (in Kyrgyzstan)

- *Support curriculum reform efforts*, related to the approved concept of curriculum reform transition to 12-year schooling, and promote the introduction of new content areas, instructional strategies, and objectives for children at different development stages
- *Develop capacity in strategic and implementation planning, and provide training for specialists in curriculum development and content*.
- *Support an internal audit of the existing curriculum system and school offerings*.

Quality standards and assessment

- *Support the establishment of independent units/bodies to measure pupils' learning outcomes*, transforming the supervisory service for student evaluation.
- *Support participation in international comparative studies*, such as MLA and PISA, to help in benchmarking students' performance and compare results with other countries.

Teachers and teacher education:

- *Support improvement of the content quality of in-service teacher training*, and promote modern and innovative in-service teacher training programs to expose teachers to new teaching and learning methods. This will in turn enable teachers to develop their students' skills as needed in the work force of the future. Areas of importance are: democratic principles, problem solving, critical thinking, life-long learning, students' self-assessment, and curriculum planning (particularly in the social sciences and humanities).
- *Support in-service training programs for teachers* to develop the skills necessary to work with minorities and people with disabilities, accommodate individual needs of students, and work cooperatively with other teachers, parents, and members of the community.
- *Support the reform of teacher training and retraining systems*, including a new system of upgrading and qualifications. The whole in-service training of teachers needs to be reformed. The strategy for such

reform should set the framework for national teacher development, and set priority areas for training, especially in relation to curriculum or overall education reforms.

- *Improve the initial teacher training system.* More pedagogical modules are needed in university and college curricula. Modern ideas of teaching and learning should be incorporated in all training programs, and the duration of educational studies as part of teacher training programs should be increased.

School improvement

- *Develop capacity in school development, school self evaluation and school-based curriculum development.* Provide training in school improvement programs, including training for the decision-makers from the Ministry, regional authorities and school teams, including small grants to support school projects. This program should introduce new principles of school and classroom management, and school self-evaluation, and enhance headmasters' and teachers' skills in co-operation, project management, strategic planning, and priority-setting. It should support shared leadership within the school, and include training on the school-based curriculum.
- *Develop In-service training programs for educational personnel* including school principals and educational managers at local governments.
- *Promote professional and school networking and exchange of ideas and experiences.* Teachers and other interested people need some common forum to express their views, especially in times of reform.
- *Encourage diverse school-based initiatives.* Feedback on good practice should be provided for policy making areas (Mongolia could be looked at on school based reform, for example).
- *Support links between teacher education institutions and schools; teacher preparation and school improvement; and professional promotion and school improvement.*

Building social coalitions and institutional partnerships around education goals

- *Strengthen the role of civil society in education reform* by providing training and financial support. Although numbers of NGOs have been established in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and to a lesser extent in Uzbekistan, only a few of the local NGOs have sufficient expertise to become strong partners with the Ministry in reform planning. The network of OSI spin-offs, especially the Step-by-Step NGO, is a rare exception.
- *Promote consultative and negotiated processes.* This might involve developing stakeholder groups (including religious groups) and helping them to formulate their interests; collecting feedback from consultation processes; and ensuring accountability for policy decisions.
- *Develop the management and governance capacities of key players in the systems.* Training for local governments, school principals and teachers is needed in the areas of change management, education management, strategic planning, school financing, school management and school-based curriculum. School managers need training in consulting, negotiating and change management skills, and in communications techniques as well as training in their new roles.
- *Promote the development and active participation of parents, parents' organizations, and communities* in the education process at all levels. Encourage the establishment of Parent-Teacher Associations at the local level and later at national level, to become a partners and/or pressure groups for state policy makers in education. Support the establishment of on infrastructure of NGOs which could have real opportunity to influence the situation in the community.

- *Enhance co-operation between school and community, local and regional initiatives and national authorities* to motivate parents and community members to support the development of the school, and to promote the school as a resource for community development on the one hand, and the community as a potential learning environment on the other hand, that influences school life according to its needs.
- *Support the establishment of Community Schools and/or Community Centers to promote social inclusion* e.g. provide a second chance for dropouts, the unemployed etc. Community Schools should be located in existing schools where the conditions are suitable and where there is commitment for local support that would:
 - Provide reconciliation programs, legal services, drug and social counseling in the community through the Community Centers;
 - Develop programs for “drop-outs” by giving them an alternate education or an opportunity to return to “mainstream” school programs.

Investing in physical and virtual infrastructure

- *Assist the governments of the three countries and their interested donor partners in assessing needs, planning and prioritizing the upgrading of school facilities using up to date approaches in geographic information system planning;*
- *Share the information on priorities among potential donors and promote a coordinated approach to investment in school infrastructure;*
- *Sponsor technical cooperation and exchange among professionals in the three countries (school planners, architects and designers, procurement specialists, engineers, builders) with specialists from other countries experienced in large-scale upgrading of facilities (such as Albania, Kosova, Serbia, the OECD network of educational facility planners);*
- *Organize support for the upgrading of school facilities that is integral to initiatives in the other strategic areas (e.g. development of information systems, quality improvement in education, social coalitions and participatory governance for education change);*
- *Where conditions permit, provide and finance opportunities for pilots in the use of “virtual” infrastructure in education information systems, school networking, and classroom interaction;*
- *Ensure parental and community involvement. Link school reconstruction with community programs.*

Establishing policies for equity and access.

- *Support governments in developing new mainstream policies that are more sensitive to access issues.* Governments need to pay more attention to social measurement of the main reform processes in order to protect disadvantaged groups (especially students in rural areas, urban poor, girls) and increase the employability of the youth.
- *Increase access to education services for the poorest segments of society and marginalized groups* through the expansion of pre-school facilities and programs through: the use of lower-cost constructions and re-locatable buildings (which still meet safety standards); and the development of community ‘family playgroups’ in neighborhood or local community facilities (in co-operation with NGOs where appropriate).
- *Provide training programs for teachers, parents and community representatives to address the needs of girls.* Such programs should aim to familiarize parents with the benefits of education; prepare children

to attend school; and identify children's special needs. This will promote individualized education and establish informal contacts among parents, teachers, school administrators and community members.

- *Increase opportunities for (re-)training of adults.* There needs to be adequate training for unemployed youths with low-skills, or skills that become redundant through the economic restructuring process. At the same time, training courses need to be designed that ensure the development of adaptable working and life skills, including entrepreneurial skills and skills for setting up Small and Medium Enterprises.
- *Support greater enrollment of children from rural areas and girls in upper secondary schools* through school improvement and community based education programs.

COMPARATIVE DATA

I. POPULATION

Table 1. Total Population

	1990	1995	2000
Kyrgyzstan	4.3	4.6	4.9
Tajikistan	5.3	5.8	6.3
Uzbekistan	20.5	22.8	24.8

Source: UNICEF 2000

Table 2. Percent of Urban Population

	1990	2000
Kyrgyzstan	37.4	40.1
Tajikistan	31.7	32.9
Uzbekistan	40.1	42.4

Source: ADB

Table 3. Infant Mortality Rate
(per 1,000 live births)

	1980	1990	1995	1999
Kyrgyzstan	43.3	30.0	28.1	22.7
Tajikistan	58.1	40.7	30.9	19.4
Uzbekistan	47.0	34.3	25.8	20.3
Russia	22.0	17.4	17.6	16.9
Ukraine	16.6	12.8	14.4	12.8

Source: UNICEF 2000

Table 4. Life Expectancy (at birth)

	1990		1995	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Kyrgyzstan	72.6	64.2	70.4	61.4
Tajikistan	71.9	66.8	71.2	65.5
Uzbekistan	72.4	66.1	NA	NA
	1997			
	Female	Male		
Kyrgyzstan	71.4	62.6		
Tajikistan	71.3	65.6		
Uzbekistan	NA	NA		

Source: UNICEF 2000

Table 5. Adult Literacy Rate (% of population)

	1980		1990	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Kyrgyzstan	NA	NA	96	99
Tajikistan	92	97	97	99
Uzbekistan	67	83	77	90
	1999			
	Female	Male		
Kyrgyzstan	98	99		
Tajikistan	99	99		
Uzbekistan	99	99		

Source: ADB

Table 6. Ethnic composition

	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan
Dungan	1.1	NA	NA
German	2.4	NA	NA
Karakalpak	NA	NA	2.5
Kazakh	NA	NA	4
Kyrgyz	52.4	2.5	0.9
Russian	18	1.1	5.2
Tajik	NA	80	4.8
Tatar	0.9	NA	1.4
Uigur	1.0	NA	NA
Uzbek	13.9	15.3	80
Ukrainian	0.9	NA	0.5

Source: CIA, OSI

Table 7. Youth
(0-24, % of total population)

Kyrgyzstan	55.2
Tajikistan	61.3
Uzbekistan	58.6
The Baltics	33
Central Europe	35.1

Source: UNICEF MONEE

Table 8. Youth
(0-17, % of total population)*

	1990	1995	2000
Kyrgyzstan	43.5	42.1	41.6
Tajikistan	49.3	50.0	47.8
Uzbekistan	47.1	47.0	45.0
Russia	27.2	25.9	23.3
Ukraine	25.8	24.7	22.5

Source: *Calculated on the basis of the figures in UNICEF 2000

Table 9. Rate of Natural Population Increase
(birth rate minus death rate, per 1,000 population, excludes changes due to migration)

	1990	1995	1999
Kyrgyzstan	22.4	17.6	14.7
Tajikistan	32.7	22.8	16.3 (in 1998)
Uzbekistan	27.8	23.5	17.0
Russia	2.3	-5.7	-6.4
Ukraine	0.5	-5.8	-7.0

Source: UNICEF 2000

Table 10. Net External Migration
(immigrants minus emigrants, thousands)

	1989	1990	1991	1992
Kyrgyzstan	-16.0	-41.9	-33.8	-77.5
Tajikistan	-19.1	-59.0	-28.6	-93.4
Uzbekistan	-86.5	-120.6	-41.6	-88.7
	1993	1994	1995	1996
Kyrgyzstan	-120.6	-51.1	-18.9	-11.7
Tajikistan	-74.3	-48.5	-39.8	-30.4
Uzbekistan	-64.5	-141.2	-83.3	-42.7
	1997	1998	1999	
Kyrgyzstan	-6.7	-5.5	-9.9	
Tajikistan	-16.3	-15.8	-14.9	
Uzbekistan	-43.2	-57.1	-51.3	

Source: UNICEF 2000

II. ECONOMY

V- Table 11. GDP Growth

	1989	1995	1999
Kyrgyzstan	100	50.3	62.7
Tajikistan	100	41	43.5
Uzbekistan	100	83.4	94.3

Source: CIA

Table 12. Growth Rates of GDP

	1995	1996	1997
Kyrgyzstan	-5.2	6.9	9.9
Tajikistan	-12.5	-4.4	1.7
Uzbekistan	-0.9	1.7	5.2
	1998	1999	2000
Kyrgyzstan	2.0	3.8	5.2
Tajikistan	5.3	3.7	5.0
Uzbekistan	4.3	4.3	4.0

Source: ADB

Table 13. GNI/GDP in 2000 (US\$ mil)

	Total GNI (mil. of US\$)	PPP GDP (mil. international \$)	GNI per Capita – Atlas method (US\$)	PPP per Capita GNI (international \$)
Kyrgyzstan	1,304	13,324	270	2,545
Tajikistan	991	7,105	180	1,090
Uzbekistan	7,666	60,431	360	2,360

Source: WB

Table 14. Total and Per Capita GNP

	Total GNP (US\$ mil)		
	1997	1998	1999
Kyrgyzstan	2211	1771	1465
Tajikistan	2010	2256	1749
Uzbekistan	24236	22900	17613
	Per capita GNP (US\$)		
	1997	1998	1999
Kyrgyzstan	480	380	300
Tajikistan	330	370	280
Uzbekistan	1020	950	720

Source: ADB, Atlas method

VI- Table 15. Real Average Wage Growth

	1989	1995	1999
Kyrgyzstan	100	43.5	49.4
Tajikistan	100	24.3	17.2
Uzbekistan	100	9.2	20.8

Source: CIA

Table 16. Poverty and Economic Inequality

1999	Population in poverty			Income ratio*	Gini **
	Total	Urban	Rural		
Kyrgyzstan	55.3	42.4	60.0	6.8	0.37
Tajikistan	83	NA	NA	NA	NA
Uzbekistan (1996)	22.0	NA	NA	5.5 (1993)	0.33

Source: ADB, * highest 20% to lowest 20%, ** Inequality increases from 0 to 1

Table 17. Unemployment Rate

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Kyrgyzstan – official	2.9	4.3	3.0	3.1	2.9
Kyrgyzstan – estimate*	33.3	32.0	32.0	30.8	33.3
Tajikistan – official	2.0	2.6	2.8	3.2	3.0
Uzbekistan – official	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5

Source: UNICEF 2000, OSI

* estimate of real unemployment based on in-country sources

Table 18. Youth Unemployment

(% of the total number of officially registered unemployed) *

	1995	1999
Kyrgyzstan	20.3	19.8
Tajikistan	30.1	40.6
Uzbekistan	61.9	59

Source: UNICEF 2000

*Youth in the age of 15-24 in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, 16-29 in Kyrgyzstan.

III. EDUCATION

Table 19. Total Education Expenditure (as % of GDP)

	1990	1995	1997	2000
Kyrgyzstan	7.5	6.6	4.9	3.7
Tajikistan	8.9 (1991)	2.4 (2.2*)	2.5	2.07 (1999)
Uzbekistan	10.4	7.4	7.3	6.8 (11*)

Source: WB, *ADB

Table 20. State Education Expenditure
(as % of state expenditure)

	1995	1997	2000
Kyrgyzstan	23.1	22.6	20.3
Tajikistan	16.1	12.5	11.8
<i>Uzbekistan</i>	NA	NA	NA

Source: ADB

Table 21. Pre-Primary Enrolment
(net rates, percent of 3-6 population)

	1990	1995	1999
Kyrgyzstan	28.7	6.5	6.9
Tajikistan	15.2	6.9	5.5
Uzbekistan	37.1	24.5	16.2
Russia	72.6	62.8	63.1
Ukraine	63.2	51.4	45.3

Source: UNICEF 2000

Table 22. Basic Education Enrolment
(gross rates, percent of relevant population)

	1990	1995	1999
Kyrgyzstan	92.0	87.7	89.5
Tajikistan	94.9	85.0	84.3
Uzbekistan	91.5	88.0	88.9
Russia	90.0	88.4	88.8
Ukraine	92.3	90.8	89.9

Source: UNICEF 2000

Table 23. General Secondary Enrolment
(gross rates, % of 15-18 population)

	1990	1995	1999
Kyrgyzstan	36.6	25.2	37.5
Tajikistan	40.5	23.0	17.2
Uzbekistan	37.1	26.3	30.9
Russia	24.7	24.5	29.1
Ukraine	25.0	24.1	31.1

Source: UNICEF 2000

Table 24. Gross Secondary Education Enrolment Ratio

	1980		1990	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Kyrgyzstan	108	112	101	99
Tajikistan	100	100	102	102
Uzbekistan	94	117	95	104
	Latest year *			
	Female	Male		
Kyrgyzstan	62	79		
Tajikistan	74	83		
Uzbekistan	88	100		

Source: ADB, * Kyrgyzstan 1999; Tajikistan 1996; Uzbekistan 1994

Table 25. Vocational Secondary Education Enrolment

(gross rates, percent of 15-18 population)

	1990	1995	1999
Kyrgyzstan	26.1	14.7	11.6
Tajikistan	19.2	11.9	8.3
Uzbekistan	28.9	22.2	Na
Russia	24.7	24.5	29.1
Ukraine	25.0	24.1	31.1

Source: UNICEF 2000

Table 26. Higher Education Enrolment
(gross rates, % of age 19-24 population)

	1990	1995	1999
Kyrgyzstan	12.9	12.9	29.8
Tajikistan	11.9	11.8	11.5
Uzbekistan	15.2	7.6	6.2
Russia	24.6	22.4	31.4
Ukraine	21.7	20.8	29.7

Source: UNICEF 2000

Table 27. Number of Schools in 2001*

	Kinder-gartens	Primary (grades 1-4)	Basic (grades 1-9)	Secondary (grades 1-11)
Kyrgyzstan	420	140	188	1665
Uzbekistan		9,802		
Tajikistan	523	675	829	2035

Source: OSI, *Data for Tajikistan – 1999/2000

Table 28. Student Population in 2001 (1,000)*

	Kinder-gartens	Primary (grades 1-4)	Basic (grades 1-9)	Secondary (grades 1-11)
Kyrgyzstan	45	12.1	1103.6	
Tajikistan	51.1	1479.3		
Uzbekistan		2,593	3,013.6	436.3**

Source: OSI, *Data for Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan – 2001/2002; Tajikistan – 1999/2000

**365,000 in general upper secondary schools (grades 11-12); 71,300 in academic lyceums

Table 29. Pupil/Teacher Ratio

	Primary	Secondary
Kyrgyzstan (1995)	20	13
Tajikistan (1996)	24	6
Uzbekistan (1994)	21	10

Source: ADB

Table 30. Student/Teacher Ratios, Basic Education

	1990	1995	1997
Kyrgyzstan*	10.7	12.6	13.5
Russia	14.0	12.5	11.9
Lithuania	12.0	10.8	11.3
Croatia	18.6	17.4	16.5
Romania	16.7	14.8	14.8
Hungary	12.5	11.6	12.2
Poland	16.7	15.9	15.4

Source: WB 2000

*Data for Tajikistan and Uzbekistan not available

Table 31. Teachers' Workload
(contact hours – lessons – per week)

	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary
Kyrgyzstan	16	18	18
Tajikistan	16	14	14
Uzbekistan	16	18	18

Source: ADB, OSI (Uzbekistan)

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Working in the Education Sector Kyrgyzstan

Over the ten years of independence, more than two thousand NGOs were established in Kyrgyz Republic. Most of them are focused on issues of gender, human rights and ecology. There is also number of non-profit organizations under educational institutions. Most of these organizations target their activities on women, refugees, homeless and orphans. There exist a number of parents' foundations and associations. However, none of all these organizations work in the sphere of education policy.

NGO/Association	Type of Activities
Association "Education Institutes Union"	Conducts training and seminars on issues of new teaching methods
Center of educational initiatives "Step by Step"	Spin off organization of the Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan (SFK). The center works in the sphere of pre-school and elementary education. The center has a network of resources centers across the country. Presently, the center is working on a two-year project "Inclusive education" supported by EU-TACIS program (implemented in cooperation with Kazakhstan's "Step by Step Public Education Center."
Center for Democratic Education	Spin off organization of the Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan (SFK). The Center (http://debate.kyrgyznet.kg) works with higher school and university students teaching them basics of rhetoric and debate skills. They also have a network of debate clubs all over the country.
The Critical Thinking Laboratory	In October 1999, the Critical Thinking Laboratory (http://rwct.reading.org/countries/kyrgyzstan/index.html) was opened at the American University in Kyrgyzstan (AUK). The lab conducts critical thinking training programs and research, develops materials for seminars as well as coordinates all RWCT (Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking program) activity in Kyrgyzstan. In October 2000, the Critical Thinking Laboratory was opened on the Osh State University (OSU) campus. The lab promotes the development of the program in the southern parts of Kyrgyzstan. Periodically, the laboratories periodically conduct seminars in Bishkek for teachers from Tajikistan and prepare a group of Tajik trainers (university teachers) in Dushanbe.
Big Brothers/Big Sisters	Another SFK spill off organization that focuses on orphans of pre-school and preliminary school age providing them volunteer's support.
Association "Young lawyers of Kyrgyzstan"	Association of university students that work in the sphere of law and jurisprudence. They conduct training and seminars on law. (http://rus.gateway.kg/ngo_young)
Center for Adult Education	Supported by DANIDA, the Center (http://www.atc.kg) provides training and seminars for adult population on such subjects as democracy, economy.
Youth Human Rights Group	The Group (http://www.yhrg.elcat.kg) is a nonprofit non-governmental organization, which was established by Bishkek University students in November 1995. YHRG undertakes the following initiatives (1) education, (2) awareness raising, (3) monitoring of human rights, (4) legislation, (5) consultations and legal aid, (6) network of NGOs, (7) public actions, (8) publications and video films.
Center for Public Policy, Dungan Children's Center	The Center (http://cpp.freenet.kg) organizes seminars for teachers and principals of schools from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, introducing new forms of education and administration. Using its school as a base, it provides training to university students and graduates on issues of organization of thinking, research, and project and program development. This year CPP intends to work on issues of integration of Kyrgyzstan and other NIS countries into world educational sphere. The Center cooperates with some of the above-mentioned organizations and plans to conduct a number of activities in educational policy.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Working in the Education Sector Tajikistan

There is a total of 595 NGOs registered in Tajikistan. According to CANGO (2002), the largest number of NGOs work in the sphere of children/youth (16.3% or 97 of all NGOs) and education/science (14.6% or 87 of all NGOs). However, there are only a few organizations active in the field in education. Similar to Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, most of the NGOs are entirely dependent on international donor support.

NGO/Association	Type of Activities
CCCIED, Coordinating Children Center on Int'l Development	The Center has been involved in (1) civic and legal education, (2) peace education, (3) sustainable development of communities, and (4) Children's Rights protection.
<u>Association of University Women</u>	The Association focuses on gender issues in education (development of teaching materials & conducting trainings).
Association of Women in Science of Tajikistan	The Association addresses the following issues (1) gender in education (through developing teaching/learning materials and conducting trainings), (2) reproductive health, and (3) social support to vulnerable groups.
Manizha, <u>Center for Information and Education Initiatives</u>	The Center promotes the development of civil society by increasing education of citizens of Tajikistan in market economy, democracy, activities of the third sector, strengthening of cooperation between state, business and NGO sectors. Provides trainings on (1) participatory decision making in schools (PTAs, etc.), (2) interactive teaching/learning methodologies, etc.
<u>Children Foundation of Tajikistan</u>	The Foundation provides support and help for children, invalids, poor, and ill children (governmentally supported foundation).
ECO, Youth Ecological Center	The Center (www.tabiat.narod.ru) focuses on leadership training for students in schools and universities of Tajikistan. The Center support developing student council in schools, including developing students' skills in decision-making, teamwork, etc.
<u>Society & Child's Rights, NGO</u>	The NGO's initiatives focus on children's rights protection and distribution of UN Child's Rights Convention.
<u>Young Leaders Association of Tajikistan</u>	The Association provides leadership program trainings got youth in schools and universities (student councils, etc.).
Tajik Training	The Center offers a variety of training courses, including CRC training program for schools.
For Earth	The NGO conducts trainings for primary school students on readiness/preparedness for emergency situations (earthquakes, etc.)
Dilafrus	The NGO (teacher association) actively works in Khatlon area, conducting teacher training courses for teachers on interactive teaching/learning methodologies.

**Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Working in the Education Sector
Uzbekistan**

There are 586 registered NGOs in Uzbekistan. There is a very small amount of local NGO's operating in the field of education. Most of them do not or cannot make any significant impact onto the improvement of educational process because of lack of funds, lack of skills, insufficient experience in fundraising and NGO management. Main NGOs in the field of education are usually initiated by and operating under the government's or international organizations' support.

NGO/Association	Type of Activities
UMID	The Inter-regional Rehabilitation Center "Umid" (a shelter) was established in 1998 to render psychological, psychotherapeutic and medical aid for children and women suffered from various trauma.
USTOZ Foundation	Created in 1997, the Foundation supports capacity building for the faculty of educational institutions, acquainting them with new information and teaching methodologies.
Children's Fund	The Fund (1) supports orphans, children from poor families, young talents, (2) preparation for independent life, (3) provides rehabilitation services for disabled children. The Foundation has branches in Tashkent, Namangan, Fergana, and Karaalpakstan.
Tashkent Public Education Center (TPEC)	Operating under the support of OSIAF-Uzbekistan, the Center (1) works with teachers, runs seminars, and conducts trainings for teacher trainers; (2) produces publications which include textbooks, e.g. on constitutional and legal systems (a book for 10/11 th grade) and legal studies (1 st – 11 th grades); and (3) runs summer schools for school students, promoting self-government in schools.
Khorezm Center of Civic Education & "Progress" Center in Fergana	Operating under the support of OSIAF-Uzbekistan, Khorezm Center of Civic Education and "Progress" Center in Fergana promote civic and legal education.
Education Resource Centers	Supported by the OSIAF-Uzbekistan, a network of Resource Centers provides students and high school teachers with up-to-date computers, access to Internet, as well as library and resource materials for students. The Centers have been created in Nukus (Karakalpak State University), Samarkand (Samarkand State University), and Tashkent (Tashkent Financial Institute).
Regional Youth/Debate Centers	Created in 2001 with the support of the OSIAF-Uzbekistan, regional Youth/Debate Centers cover various kind of activities for youth, including debate, practical study of children and youth rights, development of leadership abilities, legal and economic education, etc. The Centers are located in Samarkand, Bukhara, Karakalpakstan, Namangan, and Andijan regions.
Center of a guard of the rights "Glance to us"	The Center renders assistance and support to "homeless children" and tutoring to various trades.

Institute "Women and Society"	Created in 1997, the Institute is involved in improving gender relations in Uzbekistan. In cooperation with UNICEF, the Institute conducted workshops on the prevention of drug addition and HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and teenagers. In cooperation with the Soros Foundation, the Institute conducted a program "Empowering Education" covering all levels of education.
Umir, Yorug'lik, Mehribonlik, Kridi	NGOs supporting special education activities in Uzbekistan
Teacher Associations	Several Teacher Associations are operating in Uzbekistan, such as Association of English Language Teachers; Association of Uzbek Language Teachers; language-oriented NGOs - Center of Uzbek Language; Chirchik Russian Culture Center, etc.

**International Organizations
Kyrgyzstan**

(Ongoing projects)

International Agency	Amount in USD	Programs/Activities
Asian Development Bank	19 000 000 (Program Loan)	<p>Education Sector Development Program (Ongoing) The program is aimed at supporting policy reforms in the education sector. The funds are used to cover the budget deficit and support the country's balance of payments. The Ministry of Finance is the executive agency of the program loan. The main activities include the rationalization of the school funding system; education planning and management; capacity building in educational institutions and education management bodies; income generating activities for educational institutions; supporting alternative providers of education; and creating social mechanisms to ensure education is accessible to children from disadvantaged families.</p>
	13 700 000 (Investment Loan)	<p>Education Sector Development Project (Ongoing) An investment loan is provided to support the reform of educational programs; the development of a new generation of textbooks and training materials; the creation of a national distance education network for teachers; the development and introduction of an integrated EMIS System covering all regional and rayon level education departments; and the reconstruction of school heating systems, supplies of science learning sets and educational furniture. Forty one pilot schools were established within the framework of the project.</p>
	930 000 (TA)	<p>Strengthening Education Sector Policy and Planning (Ongoing) Funds supported international consultants on education sector policy, planning, and management.</p>
	700 000 (TA)	<p>Early Childhood Development (approved in 2000) The project aims to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) define the requirements for capacity-building, personnel development training and data systems in support of ECD programs; 2) examine ways to strengthen the implementation and monitoring of child health programs, especially immunization and communicable disease control programs; 3) review pre-school programs for cost-effective intervention in promoting the psycho-social and cognitive development of children from 0-5, and recommend a program approach for the project; 4) examine the management structure of ECD programs and recommend ways to improve coordination and management efficiency; 5) recommend a package of nutrition interventions including nutrition IEC, community and school-level growth monitoring and food supplementation interventions to address micronutrient and protein/energy deficiencies; 6) analyze the cost-effectiveness of comprehensive ECD services and identify least-cost packages.

OPEC Fund for International Development	5 000 000 (Investment Loan)	Education Sector Development Project The Project is aimed at the development of the country's education sector. Project activities include the reconstruction of school heating systems, procurement of educational equipment and furniture, printing of textbooks, organizing of training programs and other education-related activities.
II- UNESCO	250 000 (budget for CARK)	I- Education Program (2002-2005) UNESCO implements several education programs, including: 1) advocating for achieving the goals of Education for All (EFA), including conducting the EFA forum, providing policy advice, etc., 2) supporting the Associated Schools network (trainings, projects, etc.), 3) assisting in developing and conducting monitoring of learning achievement (MLA) studies, 4) assisting with developing Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), 5) developing multi-media teaching/learning materials, promoting early childhood development through seminars for policy-makers, etc.
UNICEF	300 000 (RR) 500 000 (OR)	Early Childhood Growth and Development Program (2000-2004) The program provides support to the initiation of pilot projects in preschools and to the production of child development materials; builds the capacity of educators to deliver child-centered approaches for preschool education in rural communities and poor urban communities; and advocates for the recognition of non-traditional early childhood development approaches and for family-based alternatives to institutional care for children in institutions.
	1 280 000 (RR) 900 000 (OR)	Child-Enrichment Program (2000-2004) Designed for children 6-12 years of age, the program aims to maintain high enrolment rates and low drop-out rates, as well as to improve the quality of education through introducing interactive teaching/learning methods and promoting community involvement in education; teaching life skills in health and nutrition, hygiene, and CRC; and assisting in the establishment of EMIS. In cooperation with the MOE, UNICEF supports the text-book leasing system.
	600 000 (RR) 500 000 (OR)	Young People's Well-being Program (2000-2004) Focused on the youth between the ages of 13 and 18, the program aims at the promotion and development of adolescent health, youth development and life skills, in preparation for adulthood and responsible citizenship. The program focuses on the development of mechanisms for youths' participation in their own development, the dissemination of healthy lifestyle messages (HIV/AIDS, intravenous drug use), and on linking youth groups with professional caregivers, media, and NGOs.
Aga Khan Foundation	N/A	III- University of Central Asia AKF supports a branch of the University of Central Asia in Kyrgyzstan. The University is a private, autonomous, not-for-profit international institution of higher education, focusing on interdisciplinary teaching and research in development issues affecting mountain societies across Central Asia. It serves people in the mountainous parts of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Iran, and countries in South Asia.
British Council	N/A	<u>Regional Academic Partnership Program (REAP)</u> The British Council Information Point is administering REAP (Regional Academic Partnership programme). This is a Know How Fund program aiming to provide British technical assistance and expertise to support the transition to a pluralist democracy and a free market economy in the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EE/CA). REAP

		contributes to this aim, strengthening the capacity of higher education institutions (HEIs) in these countries to, over time, provide the human resources to support transition in key sectors. The British Council also plans to provide in-service training to foreign language teachers in Kyrgyzstan.
Germany	N/A	IV- German Language School Development The project supports four schools with German language instruction, including the provision of textbooks, teacher training, technical equipment, etc.
Mercy Charitable Christian Organization	N/A	Education Programs (On-going) Current projects include support to 5 Christian schools and 2 orphanages, including Tokmok School of Blessing , Kara-Balta Children's Home , Kemin School for the Disabled , Ivanovka School , and Karakol Orphanage . The total number of children covered by the project is currently 753.
The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)	N/A	Refugee education (2000) ADRA is joining forces with UNHCR, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), Mercy Corps International, the national Ministry of Education, and other organizations to fill in the gaps of the ailing education system. Together, the organizations will provide school supplies, teacher salaries, shoes, clothing and other items to 11 schools in refugee communities in Chui Oblast and in the capital Bishkek. ADRA Kyrgyzstan will handle the overall management of the school project, as well as the financial reporting. A large portion of ADRA's financial support in the program will be used to provide the participating school children with quality clothing. Initially, ADRA will also pay teacher salary supplements. All school supplies and furniture will be purchased or arranged for by ADRA in consultation with the UNHCR, UNICEF and other such organizations, and distributed to the schools by ADRA. Approximately 300 students will benefit directly from the program, with schools receiving supplies such as notebooks, pens and pencils, chalk, textbooks and furniture.
Soros Foundation (SFK)	N/A	Education Programs of Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan (2002) <i>The education programs of SFK include: the Higher Education Support Program; the English language program, Education Advising Centers/Scholarships; Educational Reform; and secondary education programs (Step by Step, Debate, Critical Thinking). Information on secondary education programs is provided in an overview of NGO activities. For the purposes of this review, only basic education programs will be reviewed: English Language Program The program is intended to continue the implementation of professional development projects for secondary school and university teachers, in order to ensure the teacher training process is sustainable. Teacher training will also be conducted in Issyk-Kul, Osh and Jalal-Abad oblasts by SPELT personnel and in Naryn and Talas oblasts in cooperation with Peace Corps volunteers. The Foundation supported the establishment of the English Language School, which registered as an NGO. The primary objective of the school is to provide multilevel courses in English. Education Advising Centers/Scholarship Program The program supported the establishment of a number of education resource centers across the country. The main goal of the centers is to ensure all citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic have equal access to information about programs administered by the Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan; to advise prospective independent applicants to western universities on how to start the application procedure; and to prepare applicants for standardized tests required by western higher education institutions. The Centers coordinate 13 scholarship and grant programs as well as run a database of scholarship opportunities offered by other international organizations, and maintain a reference library of educational institutions</i>

		<p>around the world for those who wish to apply to study abroad and seek financial aid independently.</p> <p>Education Policy Project The strategic goal of the program is to facilitate education reform. Since 2001 the efforts of the program are concentrated on promoting the development of constructive relations between all stakeholders in the educational process, in the process of forming education policy. It is planned that representatives from secondary schools, education system management, and the public will be involved in this process. The program will work towards the following objectives: improving the quality of policy documents with the help of outside experts and professionals; effectively increasing the number of developed documents through involvement of "consumers" of law in the legislation drafting process; ensuring "openness" through public discussion of the developed documents.</p> <p>II- <i>Early Childhood, Primary School and Secondary School Education Reform</i> The following projects are operating in the country: Step by Step (teacher training and systemic reform for ages 0-10), Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking (teacher training to develop analytical and critical thinking skills in primary and secondary grades), Street Law (Civics education for secondary schools), Debate (Debate clubs and activities for secondary school and university students).</p>
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**International Organizations
Tajikistan**

(Ongoing projects)

International Agency	Amount in USD	Programs/Activities
World Bank	5 000 000	<p>Learning Innovation Loan (1999-2002) The World Bank's Learning Innovation Loan (LIL) focused on supporting education reform in 20 pilot schools in Dushanbe (5 schools) and Lenin rayon (15 schools). Pilot schools were involved in the following education reform initiatives: (1) training teachers in interactive teaching/learning methods for 20 teacher-trainers (who then trained teachers in their own schools), (2) training of 20 school principals, 5 employees of rayon education departments, and 5 representatives of the MOE in education management, (3) establishing PTAs in each pilot school, and (4) carrying out pilot school rehabilitation. In addition, LIL included a large textbook component, involving development, publication, and distribution of 18 denominations of text-books for 1-11 grades of the republican schools. In addition, LIL's textbook component included support of a textbook rental scheme.</p>
OPEC Fund for International Development	2 000 000	<p>III- Textbook Production Project (On-going) OPEC supported a project with a total cost of 2 million US dollars for printing textbooks. Based on a competitive bidding, a group of seven people was selected to participate in the project.</p>
ADB	23 000 000	<p>Social Sector Development Project (1999-2003) In the education sphere, the project supported (1) rehabilitation of 200 schools in Soghd and Khatlon oblasts, including procurement of furniture and equipment (student desks, teacher desks, chairs, etc.), (2) publishing of 26 denomination of textbooks for 5-11 grades, (3) training of 43560 education staff from pilot oblasts. In each district, it is planned to open resource in-service education centers, (4) small grants for repair and rehabilitation of old furniture in schools.</p>
UNDP	N/A	<p>IV- School Rehabilitation in Post-Conflict Areas UNDP supported projects on school rehabilitation in post-conflict areas. In cooperation with other international agencies, UNDP implemented two projects on girls' education in high schools from the mountain districts of Tajikistan, as well as training and social rehabilitation of former fighters. Currently, UNDP does not deal with any projects directly addressing education reform issues except for school rehabilitation.</p>

UNESCO	250 000 (budget for CARK)	<p>V- Education Program (2002-2005)</p> <p>UNESCO implements several education programs, including (1) advocating for achieving the goals of Education for All (EFA), including conducting EFA forum, providing policy advice, etc., (2) supporting the Associated Schools network (trainings, projects, etc.), (3) assisting in developing and conducting monitoring of learning achievement (MLA) studies, (4) assisting with developing Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), (5) developing multi-media teaching/learning materials, (6) promoting early childhood development through seminars for policy-makers, etc.</p>
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UNICEF	285 000 (RR) 105 000 (OR)	<p>Early Childhood Growth and Development Program (2000-2004)</p> <p>The program (1) provides support to the initiation of pilot projects in preschools and to the production of child development materials, (2) builds capacity of educators to deliver child-centered approaches for preschool education in rural communities and poor urban communities, (3) advocates for the recognition of non-traditional early childhood development approaches and for family-based alternatives to institutional care for children in institutions.</p>
	2 484 000 (RR) 615 000 (OR)	<p>Child-Enrichment Program (2000-2004)</p> <p>Designed for children 6-12 years of age, the program aims to maintain high enrolment rates and low drop-out rates, as well as to improve the quality of education through (1) introducing interactive teaching/learning methods and promoting community involvement in education, (2) teaching of life skills in health and nutrition, hygiene, and CRC, (3) assisting in the establishment of EMIS. In cooperation with the MOE, UNICEF support the leasing system of text-books.</p>
	620 000 (RR) 225 000 (OR)	<p>Young People Well-Being Program (2000-2004)</p> <p>Aimed at the youth life cycle from 13 to 18 years, the program aims at the promotion and development of adolescent health, youth development, and life skills in preparation for adulthood and responsible citizenship. The program focuses on (1) the development of mechanisms for youth participation in their own development, (2) on dissemination of health lifestyle messages (HIV/AIDS, intravenous drug use) and linking young people's groups with professional caregivers, media, and NGOs.</p>
Aga Khan Foundation	N/A	<p>VI- Education Programs (On-going)</p> <p>AKF has been running a number of education programs, including (1) textbook rental scheme in Gorno Badakshan (GBO) wherein the rental money collected is kept in schools and used for school maintenance/repairs, as well as purchasing new textbooks, (2) implementing such projects as "Human Being Study," (3) retraining of teachers, (4) working with school communities. The Foundation works primarily in GBO, though it provides a some support to other regions of Tajikistan. In addition, the AKF has founded the University of Central Asia in Khorog City. The University is a private, autonomous, not-for-profit, international institution of higher education focusing on interdisciplinary teaching and research in development issues affecting mountain societies across Central Asia. It serves people in the mountainous parts of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Iran, and countries in South Asia.</p>

Save the Children Fund (UK)	N/A	<p>VII- Poverty Alleviation Pilot Project (1997-1999) SCF (UK) was implementing a part of the WB's Poverty Alleviation Pilot project in Vaksh Rayon for school improvement. Schools received around \$1000 to invest it in income generating activities (goat herds, grinding machines, etc.). With the income generated, the school bought textbooks, clothes and shoes for orphans, supplemented teacher salaries, and repaired buildings. The project involved 20 schools and 2100 families.</p>
Mercy Corps International		<p>Textbook development Projects (On-going) Mercy Corps International, funded by the US, gives grants for small projects in education, health, and civil society. It has supported publication of special textbooks for the primary school level, including 1000 copies of a grade four Yagnob language textbook for the community north of Dushanbe, a Pamir language book for Gorno Badakshan, a Tajik-English science dictionary, and Russian-English-Tajik-Persian dictionary.</p>

Soros Foundation	791 000	<p>Education Programs (2001-2002) Open Society Institute/Soros Foundation implements the following main educational programs: (1) pre-school education program "Step by Step" (just started), secondary education program (RWCT, etc.), (3) higher education program, (4) grant programs for the development of various areas of education, facilitating research, and scholarships. In addition, the Foundation support two national projects:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Education Reform Support Unit (ERSU)</i></p> <p>The project was initiated to promote <i>informed</i> democratic deliberation as part of the public policy process in Tajikistan. The ERSU team has been engaged in a series of technical, strategic, and communication tasks in support of sustainable education reform in Tajikistan. It is planned that the ERSU will (1) act as a systems and policy analytical unit, assessing the current state of affairs in education (with a particular bias toward education finance) and working out possible solutions for the direction of the education reform and ad-hoc interventions; (2) act as a strategic information clearinghouse of certain reform issues; (3) monitor and assess key aspects of education reform in the country; (3) begin to mobilize the education community for involvement in and understanding of education reform; and (4) build the capacity of others in the fields of social sector reform and applied educational finance and planning.</p> <p>Textbook Development Project The project aims to build the capacity in textbook development in Tajikistan through (1) supporting a democratic process of textbook publishing through open competition, democratic selection procedures and involvement of teachers into the development and testing of new textbooks, (2) building the capacity of textbook authors and publishers in developing and publishing textbooks, (3) promoting the team-based approach involving academicians, teachers and designers into the textbook development process, (4) supporting an open market in textbook publishing, (5) training the group of evaluators and key players from the MOE in the textbook provision sector, and (6) encouraging greater involvement of teachers in the process of textbook development.</p>
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International Red Cross	N/A	Education Program The IRC programs participated in developing, printing and disseminating education materials (textbooks, teacher manuals) for different school grades.
ORA International	46 350	Education Program (2000) ORA International was involved in the following initiatives (1) service delivery of most necessary items (clothing, school supplies, etc.), (2) vocational education in agricultural sector for 4000 children-orphans in 26 schools, (3) vocational education in food industry for 7 schools, (4) children's sponsoring program for 300 children (orphaned and disabled children).
CARE International	1 500 000	Education Program (2001-2004) In addition to other initiatives, CARE International developed a rural education project in Tajikistan. This three year project is supported by the US Department of Agriculture. The project covers three rural areas, including Yvan, Shakhrinav, and Gyssar regions (each region covers three secondary schools). The project includes the following activities: (1) repairs of school buildings, including installing heating systems for the winter season; (2) humanitarian assistance such as flour, meat, and salt for children and teachers; (3) organizing school meals; (4) teacher training (professional development); (5) textbook provision for all students; and (6) establishment of parent and student associations.

**International Organizations
Uzbekistan
(Ongoing projects)**

International Agency	Amount in USD	Programs/Activities
Asian Development Bank	37 500 000 (Investment Loan)	<p>Education sector development project (expected approval in 2002)</p> <p>The investment loan will support government efforts to improve the quality of basic education (with priority given to poor and remote rural areas) and to modernize sector management. It will comprise three main components with several sub-components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthening sector planning and management capacities in order to support participatory policy formulation processes and develop national capacities to manage education reforms. It will involve: (i) an organizational audit of the education administration with a training needs assessment of the administrative personnel, (ii) a nationwide school mapping exercise combined with a community survey, (iii) policy studies in the areas of staff development, NGO provision of education, and education finance, and (iv) training of school principals and district administrators. 2. Improving and extending teacher education through establishing the capacity for teacher training and retraining by distance education. Teacher education programs will be developed and delivered in the area of: (i) multi-grade instruction, (ii) primary school teaching, (iii) field-specific teaching methods, and (iv) select junior secondary school subjects. 3. Strengthening community involvement in schooling, and improving learning conditions. This will comprise: (i) the rehabilitation of the physical infrastructure and provision of equipment for the most resource-poor schools of the country, (ii) assistance to communities in establishing autonomous and effective school boards, and (iii) provision of grant funds accessible to schools on a competitive basis through a School Initiatives Fund (SIF). <p>The immediate beneficiaries of the investment project comprise: some 200,000 primary and lower secondary school teachers; staff of regional in-service teacher training institutes, and of institutes and faculties of pedagogy; approximately 10,000 school principals and district education administrators; staff and pupils of 500 poor schools (making up over 5 percent of the schools of the country); and staff and pupils of about 1,000 schools accessing SIF resources.</p>

70 000 000 (Policy & Project Loan)	Education Sector Development Program (expected approval in 2002) The ESDP will support the implementation of Uzbekistan's medium-term education and training development plan, commonly designated as the National Program for Personnel Training (NPPT), by addressing four major sector-wide challenges: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Modernizing the structure, contents and processes of education, including: (i) pursuing ongoing efforts to streamline and simplify the structure of education, (ii) developing modern curricula and educational quality monitoring mechanisms, and (iii) strengthening the teacher education system, in particular through the introduction of distance learning.2. Improving sector sustainability and efficiency, which will be enhanced by: (i) redeploying and retraining administrative staff in line with the decentralization process, (ii) reviewing the service conditions of education personnel, paying particular attention to those categories working in difficult conditions, (iii) and rationalizing the network of schools and institutions.3. Reforming the governance of education with a view to: (i) developing national capacities in the area of policy formulation, planning and financial management, (ii) encouraging community participation in school management, and (iii) supporting the emergence of an NGO education sector.4. Access of the poor to quality education will be protected by: (i) improved targeting of public resources towards deprived areas, and (ii) special assistance schemes for vulnerable population groups.
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	57 000 000 (Loan)	<p>Senior Secondary Education Project (2000-2004) The project supports the ongoing education reforms by assisting with the improvement of the compulsory senior secondary education system (grades 10 to 12). It supports the establishment of a broad-based senior secondary education which meets international standards, aimed at the development of a flexible workforce to support the country's economic transition. Immediate objectives of the project are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to support the implementation and refinement of the new SSE curriculum, 2. to develop effective management and teaching staff, 3. to develop domestic capacity for the production and acquisition of teaching materials and 4. to foster cost-effective planning, management and policy development for SSE. <p>The project consists of four components: (i) developing 45 model schools, (ii) developing school directors and teachers, (iii) developing instructional materials, and (iv) sub-sector planning, management, and policy development. (Piggy-backed to this loan is the Interim Review of Senior Secondary Education System technical assistance.)</p> <p>The immediate beneficiaries of the project will be approximately 55,000 students enrolled in the 45 beneficiary schools by the time of the project's completion. The beneficiaries also include 4,200 teachers who will receive the intensive in-service training, 45 school directors who will receive overseas and in-country management training and about 30 education planners, managers, and policy makers who will undergo various exposure programs in-country and overseas. Indirect beneficiaries will be the students who are enrolled in the model schools after the project's completion, as well as students and teachers at other SSE schools which benefit from the experience of the model schools.</p>
	40 000 000	<p>Basic Education Textbook Development Project (1998-2003) The project includes curriculum development, textbook development, fostering competitive textbook publishing, and developing and supporting a textbook rental scheme in Uzbekistan.</p>
	900 000	<p>Monitoring and Evaluation of Education Reform (1998-2000) The project provides assistance to the Social Complex of Cabinet of Ministers in monitoring the status of education reform implementation at all levels of the education system.</p>
	500 000	<p>Capacity Building in Education Finance (1999) The project provides assistance in identifying strategies for strengthening education financial management.</p>
	350 000	<p>Basic Education Staff Development / Teacher Education Reform (1999) The technical assistance (TA) was implemented in two phases over a period of six months. A sub-sector review was carried out during Phase 1, aiming at formulating an adequate policy framework for staff development. A detailed proposal for a Basic Education Staff Development Project was the major outcome of Phase 2. TA activities included: (i) advisory services by international and domestic consultants; (ii) participatory technical workshops to discuss, amend and validate TA activities; (iii) in-country visits and surveys aimed at consulting key stakeholders; and (iv) specialized technical reports prepared by international and domestic consultants.</p>

European Union	1 660 000	Restructuring of the Education System (1998-2000) Education planning, financing, and management systems. Coverage includes assistance to the Ministries of Higher Education and Public Education, inter-ministerial coordination, and policy/horizontal issues.
	950 000	Assistance for the Reform of Vocational Education (1999-2001) Curriculum development for vocational education programs; development and testing of teaching/learning materials; teacher training.
Germany	7 000 000	Support for the Development of Vocational Education and Training (1999-2001) Reforms in vocational education, curriculum development and implementation for (1) management, (2) tourism services, and (3) agriculture. In addition to this, the introduction of a dual training system.
	1 071 000	Assistance to Primary Professional Education (1997-1998) Advisory services in the development of professional education and training.
V- UNESCO	150 000	Education Program (2000-2001) UNESCO's education initiatives include six projects: 1) advocating for inclusive education (series of workshops for school administrators, teachers, university professors, etc.), 2) providing technical assistance for the EFA goals (round tables, conferences, etc.), 3) developing multi-media teaching/learning materials (civic education, environmental education, healthy lifestyles, etc.), 4) promoting basic education through skill development (community learning centers, etc.), 5) promoting literacy, non-formal education (Silk Road Radio), and 6) organizing youth camps to promote human rights and democracy. In addition, UNESCO (in cooperation with UNICEF) provides assistance to MPE in conducting Monitoring of Learning Achievement (MLA) studies and other research on youth problems.
UNICEF	296 000 (RR) 788 000 (OR)	Early Childhood Growth and Development Program (2000-2004) The program: provides support for the initiation of pilot projects in preschools, and for the production of child development materials; builds the capacity of educators to deliver child-centered approaches for preschool education in rural communities and poor urban communities; and advocates for the recognition of non-traditional early childhood development approaches and for family-based alternatives to care for children in institutions.
	2 626 000 (RR) 3 250 000 (OR)	Child-Enrichment Program (2000-2004) Designed for children 6-12 years of age, the program aims to maintain high enrolment rates and low drop-out rates, as well as to improve the quality of education through introducing interactive teaching/learning methods and promoting community involvement in education, the teaching of life skills in health and nutrition, hygiene and CRC, and assisting in the establishment of EMIS.

	1 600 000 (RR) 3 750 000 (OR)	<p>Young People’s Well-being Program (2000-2004) Targeted at the youth between 13 to 18 years old, the program aims at the promotion and development of adolescent health, youth development and life skills, in preparation for adulthood and responsible citizenship. The program focuses on the development of mechanisms for young people’s participation in their own development; the dissemination of healthy lifestyle messages (HIV/AIDS, intravenous drug use); and the linking of youth groups with professional caregivers, media, and NGOs.</p>
VI- Save the Children	1 000 000 (UK Pounds)	<p>Education Program for Excluded Children (2000-2002) The SC's (UK) education program focuses on improving access to education for children with special needs, and other excluded children. First, inclusive education is being introduced in 9 schools in the Fergana valley (teacher training, community involvement, PTAs). Secondly, support is provided to other excluded children (street children, working children, etc.), addressing such issues as poverty, gender and violence.</p>
British Council		<p>Basic Education and Textbook Development Project (2000-2002) Technical assistance provided to basic education, and a textbook development project within the ADB program loan. Technical assistance included assisting the MPE to refine the national curriculum, focusing on conformity with internationally adopted standards and student-centered approaches; supporting authors in writing textbooks and teacher guides, particularly through the provision of advice on international methods, styles, and standards; training teacher trainers in the theory and practice of student-centered methods of teaching/learning; and providing advice and training to relevant MPE staff in the supply, marketing and production of textbooks, with particular reference to budgeting and finance.</p>
Soros Foundation	1 090 000	<p><i>Education Programs of OSIAF-Uzbekistan (2002)</i> <i>Education programs of OSIAF include: an English language program, a secondary education program, a youth program, a scholarship program, and a higher education program. For the purposes of this review, only basic education programs will be examined:</i></p> <p>(1) English Language Program This program provides free access to information and increases the number of people speaking English. In addition, it supports other OSI programs designed to improve the level of English of those teaching in the areas of education, law, medicine and journalism. Working together with the Association of English Teachers and governmental agencies, the program works to improve the education methodology for the teaching of English in Uzbekistan. The following projects have been initiated or continued through this program: teacher training, English language for special purposes, effective management of English language schools, writing the “Fly High” textbook, and Language Resource Centers.</p> <p>(2) Secondary Education Program The main aim of this program is improving the education process and providing assistance in using interactive methods of teaching at secondary school level. The program includes the following initiatives: Civic Education, Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking, Street Law, School Improvement, and Economic Education.</p> <p>VII-</p> <p>(3) Youth Program</p>

		<p>This Program aims to develop young people’s critical thinking and involve them in social activity. The Program focuses on students aged 12-17, teachers and lecturers. The program includes such initiatives as: debates, parliamentary debates, youth centers, summer camps, etc.</p> <p>(4) Scholarship Program The Program supports students, scientists and specialists from Central and Eastern Europe, former USSR countries, Mongolia and Burma in participating in modern academic programs outside their countries. The objectives of the program are the following: to regenerate and reform the teaching of public and humanitarian sciences in institutions of Higher Education in the region; to guarantee professional training in disciplines absent or poorly delivered in educational institutions in their countries; to help bright students with different levels of academic education to continue their education in an alternative academic and cultural setting.</p>
<p>Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC)</p>	<p>60 000 000 (Soft Loan)</p>	<p>Vocational Education Development (announced in 2001 for 10 years) The project will finance the reform of 50 vocational colleges, including building new vocational colleges, the provision of new equipment, and teacher training (for example, it is planned that 50 lecturers and 50 college directors will go on a study tour to Japan).</p>

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE PROGRAM APPROACHES

A collation of documents is presented in this annex. They suggest possible program approaches that might be developed relatively quickly into donor-supported regional initiatives. These suggestions include children's program, school facilities upgrading, school improvement, community education and a regional education co-operation initiative. Each program concept draws on good practice that has been developed and refined in other post-communist countries that have faced issues similar issues to those found in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

OSI would be prepared, upon request, to provide additional suggestions for program approaches in other areas.

*The following section contain brief information on OSI's Children and Youth Programs: **Step by Step, Debate, Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking and Street Law**. These programs have the following features in common:*

- *promote democratic ideals in education, such as human rights, equal access, parent involvement, critical thinking skills*
- *are built to be sustainable, by engaging in systemic education reform, but emphasize grass-roots support and school/parent/community involvement*
- *create strong networks and professional contacts nationally, regionally and internationally*
- *build on already established local expertise to reach out to new countries and regions, thereby very cost-effective*

The programs work cooperatively with each other, for maximum impact. They also work cooperatively with other, non-OSI programs and projects in their countries. All programs continue to add new content, which is then distributed throughout their international network

I. THE STEP BY STEP PROGRAM – Early Childhood Development, Ages 0-10

The Step by Step Program was initiated in countries struggling to make the transition to democratic societies in a period marked by enthusiasm for educational reforms, which was tempered by harsh realities, including:

- sharp drops in economies of the region
- decreases in social services (early childhood programs included)
- reduction in teacher training services by the state
- professional isolation from Western pedagogic trends
- closing of preschool structures, due to lack of financing
- reduced funding to those preschools that survived,

Step by Step is an education reform program for children from birth through age ten. The methodology introduces child-centered teaching methods and supports community and parent involvement in pre- and primary schools. Step by Step aims to engender democratic ideas and principles within young children and their families. The program promotes the rights of all children to a quality education, and provides materials and training to insure equal access for children of minority families, children with disabilities, refugee children and children from families living in poverty.

The program provides an innovative and comprehensive approach to civil society development through reform of early childhood education systems at all levels by:

- training teachers and administrators
- training faculty at universities and pedagogical institutes
- cooperating with education and health ministries
- establishing national and international advocacy and support associations for parents, teachers,

In each country where the program is active, early childhood professionals adapt Step by Step materials to meet the cultural and national educational context of the country.

Now in its eighth year, Step by Step program is active in 27 countries in Central Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, Mongolia and Haiti, reaching over 1 million children and their families.

In Central Asia the program is currently active in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Mongolia.

The Step by Step Program in Kazakhstan is a regional leader for Central Asian extension of Step by Step to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, now under discussion with USAID.

II. DEBATE

OSI has been introducing debate into secondary schools and universities in Central Asia since 1994. More than just a verbal skill or performance, **debate is a powerful means of encouraging critical thinking, personal expression, and tolerance for the opinions of others.**

The Debate Program supports debates that are based on the debates in parliaments and other formats more suitable to large audiences. Debate clubs also participate in mock trials, model United Nations, model parliaments, conflict mitigation and other activities

One of the main tasks of the debate program has been to introduce debate and discussion into the educational curriculum as an alternative to the *ex cathedra* styles of instruction all too common in Central Asia. **Debate is a truly interactive teaching tool that stimulates individual study and research, emphasizes group work and cooperation, encourages students to form their own opinions, and enhances academic performance through friendly competition.**

Teachers trained in this program use debate to teach literature, history, social and natural sciences, and foreign languages. In addition to its value in specific subject areas, debate has proven a strong tool for teaching communication skills, career skills and native and foreign language skills.

Debates are held in virtually all the languages spoken in Central Asia: Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Russian, Turkish, Uzbek, Uigur, Russian and English.

In Central Asia, the Network Debate Program has established a regional center in Bishkek, Kryrgyzstan.

In **Kazakhstan**, the program is active in all sixteen oblasts and is a fixture on Kazakh television with its "City of the Future" program. The Kazakh Parliament sends proposed legislation to university debaters for their comment. To date, the parliament has accepted 54 of their amendments and recommendations.

In **Uzbekistan**, the program has established youth centers throughout the country that serve the whole community. The youth centers created by the debate program have become the focal point of after-school activity in their communities. Supplied with Internet access and small research libraries, students and teacher converge on the youth centers at all hours of the day. Each center offers a wide variety of OSI educational and vocational programs.

Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are working together to introduce debate into the troubled Fergana Valley region. In 2002, debates were held in English and Russian and the students chose to debate

whether “the State should negotiate with terrorists” and if “military actions should be used to fight against terrorism.” Kyrgyzstan also cooperates with a fledgling debate program in **Turkmanistan.**

In **Tajikistan**, where the program was first introduced two years ago, it has grown rapidly and is active throughout the country.

III. READING AND WRITING FOR CRITICAL THINKING (RWCT)

The Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking Project (RWCT) which started in nine countries in 1997 has now spread to 25 countries in the region. In Central Asia Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were first to join (1997), followed by Uzbekistan (1999) and Tajikistan (2000).

The project's fundamental premise is that democratic practices in education play an important role in the transition toward open societies, and that creating methodologies and curricula to encourage active learning is the best use of educational resources. RWCT's goal is to help teachers change classroom practices at all grade levels and in most school subjects in order to promote active inquiry, student-initiated learning, opinion formation, problem-solving, and cooperative learning.

Through a series of workshops for classroom teachers and teacher educators, the project introduces a core of instructional methods that promote critical independent thinking into primary and secondary school classrooms. A series of eight guidebooks was developed and over the years has been adapted locally to respond to each country program's individual needs. **A priority of the project has been to include teacher training institutes, education inspectorates, and pedagogical departments at universities from the beginning, with the goal of including these practices into the regular system of teacher education.**

In Kyrgyzstan. the program had affected fundamental change in teacher training practices and had gained support at the highest level of the national education system. The RWCT program in Kyrgyzstan is based at the Critical Thinking Lab at the American University in Kyrgyzstan (AUK). They have the local capacity to train across borders.

In Kazakhstan, the RWCT program is coordinated by the Center for Democratic Education. RWCT has been well received in Kazakhstan, and the project receives continued support from several funding sources: USAID, Shell and Chevron oil companies, and Soros Foundation-Kazakhstan

In Uzbekistan the program is still run by the Open Society Institute, but there are plans to create a separate NGO to deliver the program. Local RWCT trainers have started delivering workshops in 2000. Today, there are 24 local strands initiated by the first-generation trainers where about 400 new participants are being trained. Fifteen trainers have been certified to date. The RWCT program in Uzbekistan is in close collaboration with all the major pedagogical universities and teacher-training and retraining institutions throughout Uzbekistan.

Tajikistan is the newest addition to the list of countries where RWCT is active. The program is specific in that it was started with help from Kyrgyz RWCT

IV. STREET LAW PROGRAM

The Street Law Program supports civic and law-related education projects throughout Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia with the goal of enabling young people to contribute to civil society as well-educated, well-prepared citizens. The Program operates in secondary schools, youth centers, and local government agencies. It offers students practical, participatory education about law, democracy, and human rights. Activities include community-based projects; visits to local courthouses; mock trials, simulations, and mediations; and regular classroom visits by police officers, judges, lawyers, and other community resource people.

The utilization of law students is a key component to the success of the Street Law approach. Secondary school students and their teachers benefit from the law students' legal knowledge, while the law students themselves deepen their understanding of the law and develop their communication and advocacy skills.

Most Street Law teams are based in law schools or operate as non-profit organizations (NGOs). Almost all of the teams have cultivated strong relations with the Ministry of Education in their country, and some have been endorsed as the text for mandatory civic/legal education classes. **Several programs have expanded to include special courses for training police officers to assist the teachers, for social workers to teach in community settings, as well as for youth in detention settings.**

This note suggests a possible program approach to school facilities upgrading--repair, rehabilitation, and new construction--that draws upon successful experience in post-conflict countries of South East Europe, particularly in Albania.

SCHOOL MAPPING AND RECONSTRUCTION

The obvious needs for construction and upgrading of school infrastructure constitute an important priority and opportunity for donors interested in assisting education in the three countries. Visible improvement at the classroom level is possible in a relatively short period—through construction, repairs, and basic equipment—and will almost certainly increase the “time on task” of learners and teachers, thus contributing to quality. Attention to facilities in parts of the country where there are inadequate places in classrooms for the surrounding population can help quickly to improve access.

Any donor interested in major support to the school infrastructure area should, if possible, take a broad and strategic approach to its assistance. First, it will be important to ensure proper technical support for the identification of needs and priorities and for the “mapping” of activities according to demographics of the countries. It will not be sufficient just to engage school directors in documenting what are their needs and sending them to the central government for consultation with donors.

Second, it will be important to organize the support to school infrastructure as an integral part of other changes desired in education. This can be done in such a way as to encourage transparency, equity and equal opportunity (for example in the selection of schools to be assisted, in the rural and urban dispersion of construction sites, in tendering for construction companies and school

equipment providers); democratic process and community involvement (for example, in the planning and monitoring of construction); in community-initiated school improvement projects that are undertaken alongside the capital repairs construction, in identifying local solutions and commitments to maintenance.

Where there is vision about quality change, the educators working on reforms can be brought together with architects and builders to envision creatively what the school of the future can and should look like. Very often, innovations to the school exterior and classrooms that reflect a more child-centered approach to curriculum and learning are possible using the same level of resources as would be used to construct and repair a school in a “traditional” appearance.

School construction and repair can create a heightened readiness, incentive and hope at the community level for other change in education. Donors should acknowledge this reality and look for ways to intersect other assistance initiatives in school leadership and governance improvement and professional development of teachers with assistance for facilities. Too often, in education development initiatives, the construction or “hardware” component is distant from the so-called “software” investments in overall reform and in the human resources development of education. In many countries, school reconstruction and repair is relegated to the category of humanitarian assistance, especially in post-conflict situations like that in Tajikistan, and strategic opportunities for education and community development are neglected in favor of the need to demonstrate an urgent response. Of course, the integration of construction and other efforts should be undertaken in such a way as it does not limit opportunities for school-based innovation and teacher development only to repaired or reconstructed schools.

The proposed Education Sector Development Project of the government and ADB in Uzbekistan includes a promising systemic approach to school infrastructure issues and community involvement in the process. There are also two important precedents in other countries that might offer relevant experience for the Central Asian contexts. The first is in post-communist Albania, where the school facilities context in the early 1990s was not dissimilar to that of the three countries concerned in this study. More than a third of the school infrastructure had deteriorated from neglect or been destroyed or looted during Albania’s civil unrest, and there was virtually no culture of voluntary civic participation in schooling. In Albania, between 1994-2002, the OSI’s Albania Education Development Project (AEDP), working in partnership and co-funding with the Government of Albania has successfully completed reconstruction and repair of several hundred schools. The project placed a strong emphasis on development of a high standard of local construction, cost-wise use of resources and “corruption-proof” tendering procedures, involvement of local governments and the community from early stages of construction planning, and the integration of new approaches to education in the design of classrooms and schools. Over time, the AEDP’s approach to construction with community involvement has proven far more effective than the approaches used in large-scale school construction projects in Albania that were financed by the WB, EU and central government. In fact, numerous donors have elected to channel funds through the AEDP as a way to maximize the use of their resources. The OECD also made available to Albania access to its highly active network of public officials concerned with facilities upgrading in Europe, who assisted Albania in gaining access to modern practices and standards.

Another interesting initiative to note is the Schools for Democracy Program funded by the EU in Serbia, during the last years of the Milosevic regime. In this project, localities that were democratic and reform-minded received preferential support for capital repairs to schools. In the years following the fall of the regime, this initiative is being followed up more community-based initiatives at the school level and, in a forthcoming, WB project, by a school-based grants program.

Where basic facilities requirements are met and conditions permit, interested donors could pilot innovations in “virtual infrastructure” related to education. New developments in interactive technologies, new learning materials, the vast amount of material available and the rapidly expanding work on education portals, promise to ensure that virtual infrastructure could be an important investment in education. Virtual infrastructure includes physical items to enable bandwidth and connectivity (via satellite or optical fiber), computers and hardware, and knowledge products associated with distance learning. However, like learning materials and unlike buildings, virtual infrastructure serves no purpose by simply being there. There is a premium on the development of human capital resources in this process and a concerted effort has to be made to ensure that ICT is used optimally both to improve education quality and to serve information and management system needs.

This note suggests a possible program approach to community education, which draws upon successful experience with schools and communities in Hungary, Russia, the whole of South East Europe and elsewhere, where community education has been sponsored by the OSI and the Mott Foundation. Implementing such an approach in Central Asia would quickly help connect the three countries to a wider network of experience and expertise in community education.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Many schools in Central Asia don't use the potential they have to develop their own opportunities as well as the community ones. It happens due to different reasons, the main of which is that schools work as closed institutions, and the society is indifferent to the problems of education in general, and to school's needs in particular.

At the same time, the school, facing the lack of the government support, needs a much bigger public support to save itself as an educational institution. For school, the local parents' community is an accessible and presently the only resource for its further survival and development. However, the inertia of the parents majority and their consumers' attitude towards school as a producer of free educational services, impede the school to use this resource. To overcome this impediment, the school should start working with the parents' community in the direction of development of their needs and skills in social partnership, voluntarism, social activity and charity, social self-organization and civil initiatives. Thus, to survive and to meet the community needs, school must start building local civil society structures in the neighborhood.

At this point, on the local level, there appear two sides of mutual advantageous social partnership. It is vitally important for both of them to establish such non-commercial partnership. But both of them lack understanding the situation, lack activity and intention to change something for the best.

Main goal

The main aim of the Community Education program is to stimulate the school function as a social institution and initiate its partnership with the community to provide it with educational, cultural, social services through involvement all strata of the community population into these activities, irrespective of their age, sex, social status, nationality.

Objectives

To create and develop different models of community schools
To establish the movement of community schools
To establish and support an infrastructure of NGOs on the basis of community schools.

Program Description

The program should ideally combined three components:

Training Component

The aim is to develop school community movement in various regions through conducting a series of training seminars for school administrators and community representatives (local authorities, parents' community, etc.), involved into the project.

The training component develops in two directions:

Training of school personnel for working at schools

Training of trainers (teaching instructors for systematic work in the project)

Grant Component

Two stages:

To create a common information space for community schools (to provide them with computers, modems and Internet)

Grant support of the projects, which will pass the open competition.

Establishment of NGOs infrastructure on the basis of community schools

Nearly as a rule, school/Community projects initiate the process of the community intensification and stimulate school as a social institution, promote establishment of NGOs' infrastructure, having real opportunities to influence the situation in the community.

This note suggests expansion of a possible program approach to school improvement, which is already being piloted in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan by a UNICEF-supported initiative.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Centre for School Improvement (CSI) from Lithuania has extensive experiences with providing training service and consultancy on school improvement. The CSI is targeting school as an organisation. All the programs and services of the CSI aim to initiate change and development at the whole school level. Sponsored by UNICEF, the CSI has organised several training workshops in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Bellow is a summary of their observations and recommendations on possible programs in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, though similar program would be most likely needed also in Kyrgyzstan.

Uzbekistan

The system of education is highly centralised, a lot of power is concentrated at the regional level: local departments of education control schools quite strictly. However, schools have certain freedom in fundraising and choosing its' profile. Many things depend on the capacity of school principle. A number of schools have very strong leaders (in most cases – women), who are fighting for their school like lionesses. Those who are managing to overcome beaurocratic barriers can work really creatively.

E.g., schools are allowed to run a little “business”: to sell the products they are producing, and the range is from bread and vegetables up to intellectual products, such as seminars or materials for teachers', sharing schools' experience , etc.

Schools can participate in different projects, decide about their direction , etc.

There is a big difference among national (Uzbek) schools and Russian schools.

It is considered that Russian schools provide better quality, and local intelligentsia tend to let their children to Russian schools. In our experience, Russian schools are more ready for changes, their staff is more open-minded, but at the same time they have more opportunities for professional development and more access to information. There is a big need for professional support to Uzbek schools.

Generally, the hunger for new ideas in school development is tremendous.

The group of trainers, whom we trained, are now providing courses on school improvement at the national institute of in-service training. The interest is huge, there are so many participants, that they can hardly fit into the rooms.

When investing to the school-based projects, it is important to involving local authorities and the Ministry. Local authorities and the Ministry in this case is needed as school supporters, it would be too early to expect changes to happen at that level. The political structure of the country is authoritarian, the power is concentrated in the hands of the President, so the signs of democracy are very shadowy. Ministry staff members are changing very frequently, the level of their responsibility and competence is very unclear, the corruption is obvious, therefore their involvement is quite doubtful. On the other hand, as the economic and political situation in Uzbekistan is rather stable, that makes the development processes much easier.

Community development could be one of the areas to invest. Traditionally, community life is quite organised and it is based on “machala” – an informal self-governance of the community, which consists of the elderly members of the community (usually – men). Community education projects could be successful. It might solve a problem of girls' education. Religious and conservative parents do not want their daughters to receive education, because education is not valued getting married, even it is considered to be a weakness. This attitude can be influenced working with

communities, but one should consider very big differences in western and oriental mentalities.

Tajikistan

The situation is very similar to the one in Uzbekistan. It is also worth investing to the school-based projects because the level of corruption at government and municipality level is huge. Schools are ready for change, there is quite a big number of educators who are extremely enthusiastic and eager for the new ideas. Generally, there is quite a lot of optimism and hopes for the future and people are ready to create their new country. In Uzbekistan there is much less optimism and enthusiasm.

Tajikistan is experiencing dramatic decline of social sphere, including education, due to the civil war, social and political instability. Education needs huge political support, tremendous human and financial investments. At this point, the support of international organisations is extremely important.

Several points can be mentioned about the need for school improvement program:

- 1) The standards and delivery of education decreased in comparison with the Soviet era. But the need for the highly educated citizens in the developing country is huge. Soviet system ensured equal access and massive enrolment to education, but it was oriented towards academic excellence. Development of democratic society, market economy requires others skills, such as co-operation, critical thinking, problem solving, responsibility for one's own decisions, etc. The task for Tajikistan is, on the one hand, to raise the standards and enrolment level and ensure access to education, on the other hand – to change the content and the process of instruction meeting the demands of the changing society.
- 2) The possible program on school improvement could help educators of the country to get acquainted with the new strategies of instruction, new principles of school and classroom management, to support professional networks of educators and schools and initiatives of individual teachers.
- 3) The need for teachers' professional development is huge; one could feel teachers' hunger for the new information. The sources of information, possibilities for teachers' professional development are very limited, especially in rural areas.
- 4) In Tajikistan the spectrum of the topics could be enhanced: the educators need more knowledge in modern didactics, new theories in teaching, learning and student assessment, school management and leadership. More attention should be paid to the development of participants' skills in group and co-operative learning.
- 5) The school visits and communication with the educators proved that active schools and educators could achieve a lot even in unfavourable conditions. Having limited resources it is more worthwhile to involve schools and educators who are already active and motivated, which are ready to implemented new ideas to the school practice.
- 6) Participants at school improvement workshop sponsored by UNICEF in 2000 showed tiredness due to political and social instability, but nevertheless, they have a lot of hope and care about the future of Tajikistan; many educators are ready to take the responsibility for the future of their

country. Their achievements, enthusiasm and motivation are the guaranty for the continuity of the reform of education in Tajikistan.

This note summarizes main points for a possible program of regional education cooperation initiative that would build on existing achievements of the OSI, national NGOs and donors in Central Asia by building capacity and strengthening collaborative links among already existing individuals, groups, and/or education institutions in the region. It envisages the creation of a regional network of loosely affiliated, mutual supporting, mini centers that, in the first phase, will mainly be linked through an internet interface and, in the next phase, through collaborative projects.

CENTRAL ASIAN EDUCATION CO-OPERATION INITIATIVE

Main issues of education context in Central Asia:

- Political instability, deep socio-economic struggles, increased intolerance, survival of corrupt institutions, lack of information sharing mechanisms, highly centralized systems, and reinforced traditional strong hierarchical structures in family, community and society pose *major challenges for the education systems* in meeting the needs of modern societies.
- System reform is inconsistent and even haphazard from country to country. There are some *alarming trends with negative impact on education achievement, equity, and education opportunities*. Amongst the most worrying tendencies are rapidly increased drop-out rates, sharp declines in pre-school education provision and in schooling opportunities for children in rural areas, and a sharpening disparity in student attainment.
- More than in other post-communist states, there is a *severe lack of capacity to gather and analyze reliable information*, examine policy implications and develop policy options papers within Central Asian countries, and within the ranks of policy makers, decision makers, and educational researchers.

Opportunities:

- *Donor involvement has increased* since September 2001 and there is an opportunity to coordinate use of technical assistance and resources more effectively to capitalize on one others' strengths and fill in any 'gaps'.
- OSI programs, othe NGOs and donors projects' *achievements can be built upon to create capacity and strengthen collaborative links among already existing individuals, groups, and/or education institutions in the region* (NGOs, higher education establishments such as Central Asian Research Initiative and Central Asian Research Center, etc.).

- There are already *some good technical assistance relationships that have been established between individual countries and a group of consultants*. These professionals have been engaged with the OSI network and other international partners working in the CA region. They have a strong professional background, good knowledge of the country context and appropriate language skills (Russian and English).
- There are *experiences from the Russian Megaproject and the South East European network that can be drawn upon and linked with Central Asia*.
- OSI National Foundations are already highly-credible partners that on several individual occasions have assumed the role of local experts for other international donors: for example when conducting an education reform analysis survey for the Asian Development Bank.

Proposed initiative:

As a response to the issues and opportunities stated above, we are proposing the creation of a Central Asian Education Cooperation Initiative (CAECI) which will have three core parts:

- 1) *A regional network of national mini centers for education reform support*. – A regional network of loosely affiliated, mutual supporting, mini centers will be created. The exact location will be discussed with foundations, and selected based on the country context and agreed-on criteria (one important criteria, for example, will be that the partner ‘mini center’ proves that it is based within an existing structure that could assure its existence in the future).. The institutional structures and professional profile may differ from country to country. This network is conceived of as a sustainable solution to preserve the work started by foundations and support national education reform efforts. It is expected that this network will live far beyond the life of the national foundations in the region.
- 2) *A Coordinated flexible external technical assistance structure* will be provided through Country Lead Consultants (CLCs) and Professional Institutional Partners (PIPs) drawn heavily from specialists in Baltic countries and, as needed, from NGOs, training centers, academic institutions and professional organizations from Eastern and Western Europe. The CLCs and PIPs will provide both technical assistance as well as training to build the capacity of mini centers and skills such as data gathering techniques and data analysis, qualitative research methods, policy analysis, educational policy, financial and economic analysis, etc.). They will work closely with local partners in transferring their professional and academic skills in order to ensure that their responsibilities will be taken over by local professionals at a later stage of the initiative. Initially, the leadership and facilitation of this structure will be provided by the Education Support Program, though further decentralization of support may be possible over time.
- 3) *International advisory board* - Establishing such a board in early stage will bring necessary support and the guidance of international partners to the CAECI. Representatives from the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, and Agha Khan Foundation would be likely candidates for this group. Members will include representatives of national foundations, mini centers, OSI network programs, and ESP. In the initial stage the donors may need to play more active role and drive the process. At a later stage of the CAECI, the local leaders and/or mini centers assume greater responsibilities in the governance of the Initiative.

Proposed activities:

Programs designed to support policy capacity building.

Development of a regional Internet interface (including technical equipment, connectivity and web design).

Cross-country activities, meetings, joint seminars and study tours of identified national professionals.

Cooperation with international donors to support regional research projects (such as the comparative study on education reforms funded by the Asian Development Bank).

At the second stage, the grants for new joint projects proposals developed by the mini centers or lead educational professionals could be provided by international donors upon agreed criteria.

Potential benefits/impact:

- 1) Better informed and more open decision making in education systems in Central Asia;
- 2) Better use of information, technical assistance and resource of OSI and other international donors, that can lead to acceleration of capacity building;
- 3) Development of a regional network of well positioned mini centers of excellence that can last beyond the life of the National Foundations.

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