



UZBEKISTAN*

Introduction

The Republic of Uzbekistan is situated in Central Asia and has the largest population (about 25 million people) in the sub-region. About 60 percent of the population lives in rural areas. Young people under the age of 25 constitute almost 56 percent of Uzbekistan's total population. Almost 99 percent of the population is literate⁹. Although Uzbekistan has already achieved universal primary education, the goal stipulated in the Millennium Declaration, there is evidence that (as in other countries of the former Soviet Union) the access, content, processes, and organization of Uzbekistan's education system should be re-organized to better serve the needs of changing economic, social and political conditions. The potential erosion in human capital could undermine Uzbekistan's successful transition to a market economy, while emerging disparities in access to quality education will result in unequal opportunities to benefit from market reforms and exacerbate future income inequality within the country.

There are two ministries of education in Uzbekistan: the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education and the Ministry of Public Education. The Ministry of Public Education is responsible for pre-school, primary, secondary, special and out-of-school education. The Ministry of Higher Education and Secondary Specialized Education is responsible for professional and higher education. There are several higher education institutions within both ministries, where there are facilities for the retraining of specialists.

There are more than 10,000 general secondary schools, 63 higher education and 539 technical vocational institutions in the Republic of Uzbekistan. To finance educational reforms in the country, the Government of Uzbekistan has provided 40 percent of the national budget, or 7.8 percent of the GDP.¹⁰ The country's educational system specifies the content of education at each level and area. Programmes are divided into general educational and vocational curricula. General educational programmes encompass pre-school, primary general education, while vocational programmes include secondary special and vocational education; higher education includes undergraduate and graduate degrees, and post-graduate and doctorate education. Academic programmes may be offered in regular, evening, and correspondence programmes, as well as in the form of non-formal education, family education, self-education, and externship.

Uzbekistan is actively participating in different international programmes in the field of education, particularly within the Action Plan of the Dakar Forum on Education for All (EFA). An EFA national working and assessment group has been created at the Ministry of Public Education. Education reforms in Uzbekistan started in 1997 with the adoption of a new "Law on Education" and the National Programme for Personnel Training (NPPT). One of the most important innovations of the reforms is the introduction of continuous and lifelong education.

Continuing education is the main basic system in personnel training to meet the priorities of the social-economic development of the Republic of Uzbekistan. It includes the following types of education:

Continuing education satisfies the economic, social, scientific-technical and cultural requirements of personality, society and state. Continuing education creates the necessary conditions for a creative, socially active, spiritually rich personality. In Uzbekistan, it occurs through three types of educational delivery mechanisms: formal, non-formal and informal.

Formal education - provides general literacy up to 100 percent (reading, writing, calculating), and also enables learners to receive corresponding education and professional qualifications. Formal education is provided through pre-school and formal schooling up to the highest level, that is, from kindergartens, high schools, to professional colleges, institutes, academies, and universities.

* Written by Prof. Erkin Imamov, Physics Department, Tashkent State Pedagogical University

9 State Committee on Statistics of Uzbekistan, 2004

10 Ibid.

Table 19: Structure of the Continuing Education System

Types of education	VI. Out of school ¹⁰				IV. Higher education		V. Post Graduate	
	I. Pre-school education	II. General Education		III. Secondary special, professional education	Baccalaureate	Magistracy	Post graduate education	Post doctoral studies
		Primary	Secondary					
Initial age of education	4 years-old	6-7 years-old	10-11 years-old	15-16 years-old	18-19 years-old	22-23 years-old	24-25 years-old	27-28 years-old
Normative period of education	3-4 years	4 years	5 years	3 years	4 years	2 years	3 years	3 years
		4+5=9 years			4+2=6 years		3+3=6 years	
VII. Adult education (qualifications upgrading and retraining) ¹¹								

Non-formal education - provides opportunities for mastering professional skills, gives functionally guided training, and also offers additional vocational training. Non-formal education is realized through educational establishments of non-scholastic adult education and for retraining and upgrading professional skills. These organizations include CLCs.

There are many important aspects for the development of the whole society concerning non-formal education:

- 1) Political: preparedness for active participation, co-operation in decision-making, development of civil society, formation of loyalty and tolerance;
- 2) Social: supporting social coherence, creating equal possibilities to study, supporting social and cultural identity;
- 3) Economic: formation of preparedness for reasonable consumption, supporting small business enterprises, supporting economic subsistence, creating a saving lifestyle;
- 4) Cultural: preserving the national culture and learning traditions (indigenous knowledge), formation of values and norms, formation of a creative individual with cultural identity.

Therefore, the education policy of Uzbekistan in the field of non-formal education focuses on providing a favourable environment for linking literacy with life chances and life skills, creating a dynamic literate environment and networks, supporting diverse modalities of knowledge acquisition (context, languages), developing partnership links with potential stakeholders and mobilizing efforts for neglected areas.

Informal education - is indirect education pursued individually by means of independent knowledge acquisition of: published and other printed teaching materials; materials, programmes, or broadcasts prepared and distributed by the mass media; results of family education and self-training; and communication of other people, social groups, and ideologies.

In this epoch of globalization and the advanced information society, informal and non-formal forms of education are popular and are increasing rapidly. They are intended to satisfy the educational needs of different age groups and social status. Community learning centres (CLCs) can satisfy these kinds of needs.

Profile of the Research Study

Members of the research team consisted of experts from government organizations (Ministry of Public Education of Uzbekistan, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Uzbekistan, Ministry of Health Care of the Republic of Uzbekistan), NGOs and universities.¹³

¹¹ CLCs are functioning in the framework of this type of education for youth.

¹² CLCs are functioning in the framework of this type of education for all age categories.

¹³ See Uzbekistan CLC Research Report, Annex 2 (in attached CD) for a list of research team members.

Research activities consisted of the following:

- Field visits to all CLCs in Uzbekistan
- Meetings and conversations with representatives of the community, local authorities, heads of partner organizations, and heads of CLCs, facilitators, women, youth, and elderly members of CLCs
- Collection of quantitative data (total number of CLC members, total reading materials, hours of service, etc.) and qualitative data (content of training, contents of materials)
- Evaluation of learning and teaching materials (textbooks, manuals, videos, video CDs and cassette tapes, etc.)
- Examination of plans and implemented programmes, study of relevant documents
- Analysis of questionnaire results (the original questionnaire was developed and administered at all CLCs)
- Through analysis of data, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of CLCs and coming up with recommendations for their further improvement

The research group organized exit checks on the activities of ten CLCs in Uzbekistan located both in urban and rural areas:

Main CLC Activities

The main activities in the CLCs studied were the following:

1. Education and Training
 - Preparing children for elementary school
 - Courses of foreign languages
 - Functional literacy (transition process from Cyrillic alphabet to Latin alphabet)
2. ICT Programmes
 - Providing basic computer courses
 - Informational technology in the system of education
 - Internet and creation of Web page
3. Life Skills Programmes
4. Health Programmes
 - Reproductive health
 - HIV/AIDS prevention
 - Healthy lifestyle
 - Drug abuse
 - Sanitation and hygiene
5. Early Childhood Care and Education
6. Ecological Programmes
7. Vocational Training
8. Culture Programmes
 - Programme on cultural heritage
 - Discussions on religion
9. Gender Programmes
10. Community Resource Centres and Libraries
 - Information and library services
 - Advisory and counseling services
 - Distribution of educational materials
 - Information from videos and audios

11. Sports and Recreation
12. Co-ordination and Networking
13. Developing Local Language Teaching-Learning Materials

The activity of the CLC depends on the allocated financial resources in order to carry out sustainable work. Reflecting the current economic difficulties in Uzbekistan that are related to the transitional period, CLCs suffer from a shortage of resources. In order to raise funds for implementation of their programmes, CLCs strive to attract outside sponsors, i.e. governmental organizations, the private sector, and international agencies. Some of these efforts have proven successful. In one municipality, for example, local authorities renovated the communication infrastructure (roads, reliable telephone lines, regular electricity) around CLCs.

Self-generated funds are primarily obtained from the sale of products (computer software, business cards, etc.), cultural shows, and sale of services (tutoring) Gifts and donations are largely received from patronage and sponsorship, volunteerism, government subsidies (providing buildings), fund-raising campaigns, and NGO support. Operational resources may also be supported through partnerships with the local government; local educational department; pedagogical, cultural and health care institutions; universities; and vocational schools.

Analysis of CLC Experiences

In 1999, the concept of lifelong education was introduced in Uzbekistan. It started with a pilot project to establish and develop CLCs. The project was supported by UNESCO within the framework of the Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All. At present, there are ten CLCs and one CLC Resource Centre created under the initiative of the National Commission of Uzbekistan for UNESCO. Moreover, the UNESCO Tashkent office has initiated the creation of a number of training centres (listed in Annex 1 of the attached CD) to provide essential skills training and market economy approaches for setting up small business enterprises. They were also created to preserve an important part of the country's cultural heritage, which is now in danger of being lost.

Due to the fact that most of the population lives in a rural social environment with a strong sense of community, CLCs provide opportunities for individuals to acquire knowledge and skills through structured activities and non-formal learning. The CLC environment also encourages all age groups living together in one community to make and follow their own education plans and programmes.

During the last six years, the CLC programmes in Uzbekistan have been developing, and the CLC concept has changed accordingly to suit the needs of society, particularly giving emphasis to poverty reduction and preservation of cultural heritage.

Groups that are targeted for CLC training activities include schoolchildren, youth, women, men, unemployed, pensioners and people with disabilities. CLC objectives largely focus on providing a favourable environment for linking literacy with life opportunities and life skills, creating a dynamic literate environment and network, supporting diverse modalities of knowledge acquisition (context, languages), developing partnership links with potential stakeholders, and mobilizing efforts toward alleviating the poverty situation in neglected areas.

Main CLC Activities

1. Andijan Region, Izboskan district, Poytug Village, School № 12
2. Khorezm Region, Shovot district, Ataniyazov Farm, School № 39
3. Syrdarya Region, Mirzoabad district, Dekhqonobod Farm, School № 21
4. Bukhara City, Textile district, 7/3 Pablo Neruda Street, School № 8
5. Karakalpakstan, Nukus district, Village Akmangyt, School № 21
6. Namangan City, Regional Branch of Public Education
7. Samarkand City, Syob district, 73 Jomiy Street, School № 5
8. Tashkent Region, Chirchik Town, 1 Sadovaya Street, School № 12
9. Kashkadarya Region, Shakhriyabz district, Village Chavkan, School 32
10. Fergana Region, Margilan City, 2A Jomiy Street, School № 27

Table 20: Analysis of CLC Experiences

CLC	Internal partners	Educational establishments	International organizations	NGOs
Bukhara	Local education department under the MOE, Local government, Local department of labour and social protection	Bukhara State University, Information Centre under the State University, Bukhara State Medical Institute	UNESCO, UNICEF, USAID, IREX, Peace Corps	Centre "Orzu" (children with disabilities), Kamolot (Youth foundation), Mahalla (Community) Foundation, Soglom Avlod Uchun (For Healthy Generation) Foundation, Business Women Association of Uzbekistan (BWA)
Samarkand	Local education department under the MOE, Local government	Institute of Foreign Languages, Samarkand University (ICT project, capacity building for facilitators, creation of teaching/learning materials)	UNESCO, Peace Corps, Japan Embassy in Uzbekistan, CAFÉ (Central Asia Free Exchange, USA)	Kamolot (Youth foundation), Mahalla (Community) Foundation, Soglom Avlod Uchun (For Healthy Generation) Foundation
Namangan	Local education department under the MOE, Local government	Namangan State Institute of Foreign Languages (gives every year \$4,000 for English courses and 4 teachers for training)	UNESCO, IREX	Kamolot (Youth foundation), Mahalla (Community) Foundation, Business Women Association of Uzbekistan
Syrdarya	Local education department under the MOE, Local government	Agricultural college, vocational school	UNESCO, IREX	Kamolot (Youth foundation), Mahalla (Community) Foundation, Soglom Avlod Uchun (For Healthy Generation) Foundation
Margilan	Local education department under the MOE, Local government small enterprises "Margilan-non" and "Lazzat"	Pedagogical Institute, vocational school, medical college, Republican Education Centre	UNESCO	Kamolot (Youth foundation), Mahalla (Community) Foundation, Soglom Avlod Uchun (For Healthy Generation) Foundation
Shakh-risyabz	Local education department under the MOE, Local government	Pedagogical Institute, agriculture college, medical college	UNESCO, IREX	BWA, Kamolot (Youth foundation), Mahalla (Community) Foundation
Chirchik	Local education department under the MOE, Local government	Vocational school	UNESCO	Kamolot (Youth foundation), Mahalla (Community) Foundation
Khorezm	Local education department under the MOE, local government small enterprises "Mukkadas", tractor station, sanatorium	Pedagogical Institute	UNESCO	Kamolot (Youth foundation), Mahalla (Community) Foundation
Nukus	Local education department under the MOE, Local government		UNESCO, IREX	Kamolot (Youth foundation), Mahalla (Community) Foundation, Soglom Avlod Uchun (For Healthy Generation) Foundation
Andijan Region Izboskan	Local education department under the MOE, Local government	Pedagogical Institute, medical college	UNESCO, IREX	Kamolot (Youth foundation), Mahalla (Community) Foundation, Business Women Association of Uzbekistan

The questionnaire (Annex 3 in the attached CD) included the following sections:

1. Official information about the CLC (10 items)
2. Methodological problems (8 items)
3. Efficiency of CLC activities (24 items)
4. Partners and communications (9 items)
5. Resource maintenance (9 items)

The information gathered in the process of the study visits, the interviews, conversations, discussions and questionnaire analysis was used in the evaluation of CLC operations.

Structure of Management

The structure of personnel management of CLC centres in Uzbekistan is as follows:

1. Head of CLC
2. Educator-Instructor as a Deputy Director
3. Specialist of Computer System
4. Teachers
5. Volunteers from: enterprises, local communities (mahalla), youth committees, parents, private sectors, medical centres

Findings showed that the CLCs aimed to provide people with both formal and informal learning through organizing a variety of activities according to the needs and problems identified by community members, themselves, in the context of lifelong learning.

Major Findings

Economic reforms (in a condition of increased demand for education, in particular for professional education) have caused a growth in demand for operatively realized educational services of various kinds and for many different categories of people: youth and adults who are unemployed or temporarily unemployed, and those from marginal and other restrained (for different reasons) strata of society.

Educational services are directed toward the development of professional knowledge to master skills that will fulfill real production and methods of management, skills needed to find optimal solutions to concrete practical problems, and psychological and social-humanitarian skills for crisis management. In other words, training of people for active professional work under new conditions created as a result of information/communication development and the scientific, technical progress of society.

The most effective results from such innovational educational activity are brought about by, in the first place, the implementation of target educational programmes designed to develop concrete professional knowledge and skills, and secondly, programmes that have been provided by seed capital (or initial financial, material and technical support) from either state or non-state entities, public organizations and departments, or international organizations and funds.

Study results from the 10 CLCs in Uzbekistan show a variety of services:

1. Realization of qualitative programmes, which are innovative, diverse, accessible, and address required curriculums. There is freedom of a choice of trades, proceeding from development needs of the region, and from the desires and opportunities of trainees. There is also realization of alternative, innovational, accessible, educational programmes and a choice quality of initial vocational training (opportunity of attraction of the modern process equipment, freedom of choice of trades, proceeding from wide development needs of the region as well as desires and opportunities of trainees).
2. High methodical and didactic maintenance of training courses is possible only for those CLCs that have special arrangements with small and medium enterprises, which rely on an exchange of educational services and retraining courses for sponsorship. Such arrangements provide for high quality trainers (opportunity of attraction of the highly skilled pedagogical staff and experts) and availability of updated equipment.

3. Special preparation of trainers and constant improvement of their professional skills is necessary.
4. In order to correspond to required high professional standards, the educational programmes of all courses realized in the CLCs should be of a standard that will pass special certification and licensing in professional communities (for example, in specialized departments of high schools or their branches in educational establishments under the Centre of Secondary Specialized Education under the Ministry of High Education).
5. CLCs suffer from a critical lack of methodological literature and didactic materials intended both for trainees and trainers. In this connection it is necessary to support, under the aegis of UNESCO or within the framework of separate educational programmes, the development and distribution of relevant educational training material.
6. Uzbekistan is a country whose territory is almost completely covered with a network of radio-telecasting as well as a broad availability of modern information communication technologies. Nevertheless, there is a significant need for centres of welfare, scientific-educational dialogue, and professional study. CLCs execute this mission in close co-operation with *makhallyas* (community), the local social public administrative formations. Particularly in the countryside, in accordance with its considerably high information saturation and innovational activity, CLCs are the centres of culture, enlightenment and education, as well as the source of scientific and technical information for the population.
7. CLCs have served as places where people can satisfy their needs and try to solve the actual problems of the region through meetings, conversations, exhibitions, reviews, organization of “roundtables” and “brain storming.”
8. It is necessary to note the special positive role of CLCs in the rural regions, since more than 60 percent of the country’s population live in the countryside. CLCs, with their technical and intellectual resources, allow rural populations to achieve professional skills, gain more knowledge, and be better informed.
9. There are many positive factors that illustrate the successful functioning of CLCs in Uzbekistan. However, the study of only 10 CLCs does not give a proper basis for a serious conclusion about the efficiency of all CLCs in the country. From the results of the research, it is possible to say only that they are expedient and there is an urgent need for expansion of the CLC network throughout Uzbekistan. As there are only 10 CLCs in the republic, the opening of other CLCs or their branches in adjoining regions is an actual and necessary problem.
10. CLCs in Uzbekistan are open, basically, at secondary schools of general education which have rather limited (poor) legal opportunities and low public status. The results of the research study and almost six years’ experience in operating CLCs (particularly in rural regions) show that it is difficult for CLCs to broaden their delivery areas and target populations. It is, thus, expedient to open new CLCs at educational establishments of the Centre of Secondary Specialized Education under the Ministry of High Education (the academic lyceums and professional colleges) and in residential areas, departments of national education, and branches of non-governmental organizations. The educational establishments of the Centre of Secondary Specialized Education would offer, for example, a rich material base, uniform distribution over all the regions of the country (about 900 academic lyceums and professional colleges), information and communication resources, technological opportunities, and a highly skilled teaching staff.
11. CLCs can react effectively to the needs of individual regions and market conditions. The wide assortment of educational services rendered by CLCs can promote fast development of a region, opening of new manufactures and workplaces, and solutions to many social, ecological, gender and other problems.
12. It is obvious that within the framework of CLC curricula, it is much easier to realize and organize selective training of youth in order to develop their professional, social, cultural and personal skills. This is seen, in particular, with training to support national creativity, ethnic traditions, work skills, and information communication technologies.
13. Control and monitoring of CLC activity via the National Commission for UNESCO in Uzbekistan should continue to feature:

- Organization of regular trainings for CLC chiefs, their branches, tutors of training courses and teaching staff;
 - Organization of experience exchanges between adjoining CLCs and other educational establishments that carry out vocational training and lifelong learning activities;
 - Development, editing and distribution of the methodological teaching literature and didactic materials on the organization of training, curriculum enrichment that integrates new scientific achievements in this area;
 - Organization of seminars on discussion of realized and planned educational programmes and teaching materials;
 - Promotion of educational programme licensing by proper establishments;
 - Publicity campaigns on the concept of lifelong education; and
 - Activities to extend training to all members of the population.
14. The issue of organizing lifelong learning programmes through CLCs is an important consideration for Uzbekistan. The main financial source for establishing such CLC programmes should be the national education budget. However, for countries with transitional economies such as Uzbekistan, it is difficult to guarantee that adequate resources are available without the certain financial help and support of international organizations. In this connection, we consider it as an important noble step to continue and expand the efforts of UNESCO that are directed toward the prolongation of CLC programme activities for the following term. These actions of goodwill can strengthen considerably the authority of UNESCO and strengthen its influence in the modern world.
 15. There is an insufficient development of legislative support for non-formal education establishments (and CLCs), including equivalency of their certificates.
 16. The CLC monitoring group in the Republican Education Centre under the Ministry of Public Education has few opportunities to effectively co-ordinate educational, organizational and methodological activities at CLCs.
 17. There is insufficient public awareness of the opportunities offered through non-formal education and CLCs in Uzbekistan.
 18. Insufficient partnership.

Recommendations

1. It is crucial to develop strategies for policy and legislative support in order to institutionalize CLCs in Uzbekistan. For this purpose, it is necessary:
 - to include adult education centres by organizing lifelong training programmes;
 - that local governments should promulgate legal acts to support CLCs and their activities in the sphere of non-formal education;
 - for authorities to work to define the role and position of CLCs in the framework of existing continuing education in Uzbekistan.
2. Patronage and more effective (than now) attention from the state party and educational ministries is required in matters of educational programme certification, legalization of documents on education, material assistance to training courses, and moral-methodological support of CLCs.
3. It is necessary to create a guardianship council comprised of representatives from local communities, universities, colleges, schools, learning centres, international organizations, business ventures, funding agencies, etc. There should be a maintenance group of related branches for preparation, retraining, and improvement of professional skills for corresponding staff.

Professional guardian boards (or associations) can include representatives of large enterprises, corresponding manufacturing enterprises, public and international donor organizations, and educational establishments at all levels.

Education programmes at CLCs should be licensed by appropriate higher education establishments under the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, and should be appropriate, useful, comprehensive, and needs-oriented.

5. There is a need to train facilitators in the sphere of non-formal education and upgrade their qualifications regularly (through Republican 'Iste'dod' Foundation - foundation to enhance the professional skills of prospective young pedagogues and scientific personnel).
6. Training courses such as "Features of Informal Education," "Methodology of Informal Education" and "Androgogics" should be included at professional colleges as part of the bachelor's degree curriculum for engineering-pedagogical education programmes.
7. Organize high-quality training in CLCs by the way of:
 - licensing of educational programmes,
 - arrangement of regular methodical and information provision,
 - training and retraining of pedagogical personnel,
 - rendering sponsor's assistance in material and information support, and
 - expansion of professional contacts with special and/or vocational educational establishments in the region.
8. It is essential to expand the number of CLCs in Uzbekistan and their branches. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the material/technical and intellectual resources of both higher and professional education establishments that are already available.
9. Education activities at CLCs should be co-ordinated with the education policies of regional and local governmental bodies (*mahallas*). Special attention should be paid to co-operation with the organizations and ventures situated in the same territory where the CLCs are located.
10. Activities at CLCs should include education and training programmes related to national crafts, traditions and the historical heritage of Uzbekistan.
11. CLCs should regularly acquire information, teaching-learning materials, and scientific and cultural literature to turn themselves into popular places of enrichment, knowledge and skills acquisition for community members.
12. While monitoring activities at CLCs, special attention should be given to informational and methodological aspects, the elaboration of new learning materials, and the quality of education.
13. It is advisable to organize a CLC mobile training team in co-operation with the Ministry of Public Education, Ministry of Secondary Specialized Education and the Republican 'Iste'dod' Foundation, equipped with modern technologies, methodologies and teaching-learning materials.