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Uzbekistan

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Principles and general objectives of education

The main goal of the State educational policy is to educate a healthy generation, both physically and mentally. The new educational policy is determined by the following main principles and goals:

- achieving a humanistic and democratic character of education and training;
- priority to human values and to national and cultural traditions;
- separation of educational institutions from the influence of political parties and movements;
- scientific and secular character of the State education system;
- continuity of the education system;
- development of vocational and professional education in accordance with changing economic needs;
- provision of compulsory general (basic) education, technical and vocational secondary education;
- free choice of the type of specialized secondary education (academic lyceums and vocational colleges);
- universal provision of compulsory education within the framework of State educational standards;
- unity and differentiation of training programmes;
- free choice of educational programmes based on merit and ability, and incentives to intelligence and talent.

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

Immediately after independence, the Government passed the **Law on Education** in July 1992 to provide the legal basis for the sector and to set off the most urgent reforms needed to adapt the education system to the demands of a transition economy.

The 1992 Law laid down several principles such as: children's right to education and protection; the right of workers to individual leave for training purposes; the financial autonomy of institutions including the possibility to conclude contracts with companies; and the right to establish private schools. In addition, this Law provided for the development of new curricula and textbooks, certification and accreditation of educational institutions as well as the establishment of specializations and types of educational institutions attuned to market needs. Greater emphasis was placed on the Uzbek language, history and literature as well as on foreign languages, business, economics and vocational-technical education. The duration of compulsory and free basic education was reduced from eleven to nine years due to financial constraints.

The impetus of the new **Education Law**, which was adopted by Parliament in 1997, can be seen in various measures. New kindergartens and educational institutions



have been established and experimental programmes for teaching foreign languages, arts and computer science to young children have been started. A new curriculum has been introduced for general basic education schools and new textbooks have been developed. New types of educational institutions have been established based on market requirements, including business schools, banking colleges and academic lyceums. Extra-budgetary means of financing educational institutions have been devised. Specialized foundations have been established for talented students and high-level scientists to study in prestigious universities abroad (UMID Foundation, USTOZ or Teacher Foundation, KAMOLOT or Youth Foundation). A new testing system has been introduced at the national level as a means to monitor the quality of education. Several regional higher education institutions have been upgraded to university status. Special programmes have been developed for the rural areas. International and scientific links are being expanded to support the modernization of education.

In August 1997, the Government adopted the **National Programme for Personnel Training (NP)** which provides a coherent framework for the reform being undertaken, and further guides the educational development of the country well into the Twenty-first century. Central to the NP is the development of a unified and continuous education and training system and the mandate for the State to provide twelve years of compulsory education according to a '4+5+3' pattern. The last three years of education will be provided in two types of specialized secondary education institutions, namely academic lyceums for the top 10% of grade 9 graduates, and professional colleges for the rest. These new institutions will be organized within higher education establishments and managed by the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education. The selection of students will be based on competitive tests, individual attitudes, interests in the chosen specialties and the socio-economic characteristics of the regions where they reside.

As stipulated Article 41 of the **Constitution** (1992), everyone shall have the right to education and the State shall guarantee free secondary education. The Law on Education was revised in 2007, reaffirming the commitment to providing free compulsory education for all children. General basic education (primary and secondary, grades 1 to 9) is compulsory and provided free in public institutions.

Administration and management of the education system

The country is administratively divided into twelve provinces, the city of Tashkent and the Republic of Karakalpakstan. The provinces and the Republic of Karakalpakstan are subdivided into 163 districts and eighteen municipalities. Each province has a mayor (*khokim*) who is appointed by the President. Within the regions there are 1,421 rural areas constituting 12,391 settlements (*kishlaks*). The basic unit of local government is the neighborhood organization (*makhalla*) which is the state's channel for targeting special assistance to low-income families. The Republic of Karakalpakstan has its own President and Parliament. The **Social Sector Department of the Cabinet of Ministers** is mainly responsible for setting education policies and quality standards.

The overall management of the education system is shared by the **Ministry of Public Education (MPE)** and the **Ministry of Higher and Secondary Vocational**



Education (MHE). Under the National Programme, the Ministry of Public Education is responsible for preschool, general, special education, extra-curricular institutions, and teacher training, while the MHE administers specialized secondary and tertiary education, including vocational education.

Specialist training institutes run by other ministries (i.e. Agriculture, Communication, Railway, Tourism, Water Resources, etc.) are under the authority of both MPE and MHE. The **Ministry of Labour and Social Security** oversees some programmes aimed at professional training and raising the level of employees' professional skills.

The **Republic Testing Centre**, an autonomous agency, prepares and administers tests at the end of the general and specialized secondary education cycles to certify student qualifications for the higher levels of education. The day-to-day management of general education (primary and secondary) is the responsibility of the **Province and District Education Boards**.

Structure and organization of the education system

Currently, the formal education system follows a '4+5+2' pattern, that is four years of primary and five years of general education, which are compulsory, and two years of free upper secondary education or vocational education. The eleven-year programme is being replaced by a twelve-year compulsory education programme providing three years of senior secondary education in either academic lyceums or technical and vocational schools.

Uzbekistan: structure of the education system

30		24	L a b o u r M a r k e t
29	Doctoral Degree	23	
28		22	
27	Post-graduate studies (Doctoral Candidate)	21	
26		20	
25		19	
24	Higher Professional Education	18	
23	(Master's degree, Certified Specialist)	17	
22	Higher professional education	16	
21	(Bachelor's degree)	15	
20		14	
19		13	C o E m d p u c l a s t o i r o y n
18	Specialized secondary education (Certificate of Complete Secondary Education)	12	
17	Academic Lyceum/ Professional College	11	
16		10	
15		9	
14	Secondary education	8	
13		7	
12		6	
11	General secondary education	5	
10		4	
9	Primary education	3	
8		2	
7		1	
6			
5	Pre-school and upbringing		
4			
3			
	Age	Level of education	Grade

Pre-school education

Preschool education is for children aged 3-6/7 years and is provided in kindergartens and family-based institutions. Preschool education is not compulsory.

Primary education

General (basic) education is provided in several types of basic education schools: schools with only primary education (grades 1-4); schools which offer partial (grades 1-9) and complete (grades 1-11) secondary education; adult education centers, and specialized schools and boarding schools for students with disabilities. General



education is also available in new types of institutions (gymnasias and lyceums), some of them attached to higher education institutions. General basic education (grades 1 to 9) is compulsory and the admission age is 6/7.

Secondary education

General basic education is followed by two or three years of upper secondary education or vocational and technical (VTE) education. This is provided at two levels: the first level offers six months to three years of basic vocational training; the second level generally offers two years of training (post-secondary level) in over 300 specializations leading to the Diploma of Specialized Secondary Education.

Higher education

Higher education is provided in universities and higher education institutions. Access to the four-year bachelor's degree programme is subject to State test-based selection. An additional two years are required for a master's degree and another six years for a full doctoral degree.

The school year begins in September and ends at the end of May. It is divided into four terms separated by three periods of holidays: in autumn (eight days), winter (twelve days) and spring (ten days). The school year consists of 33 six-day working weeks (198 working days) in grade 1, and 34 six-day weeks (204 working days) in grades 2 to 11. At the university level, the academic year begins in September and ends in June. It is divided into two semesters, each comprising 17 weeks. Students have summer holidays, New Year holidays and national holidays. Examinations take place at the end of each semester. Courses are held from Monday to Saturday (included).

The educational process

Within the framework of the National Programme of School Education the relevant agencies elaborated new and improved national education standards (NES) and curricula. Since the 2004/05 academic year these new improved NES and modernized curricula have been piloted initially in 29 experimental centers. In addition, for all subjects, the authorities organized experimental classes in various regions. Well-known scientists and leading specialists in teaching methods, along with teachers specializing in innovative teaching methods, were attracted from different regions of the Republic to the work carried out at these centers. At the first stage of the NES and curricula testing 31 subjects were developed in the light of this experience and in the new instruction languages. The second stage of the experimental work aimed at improving the NES and curricula continued during the 2005/06 academic year with 81 subjects organized by subject and languages of instruction in 45 experimental classes. It should be noted that among the subjects tested were 26 subjects for schools with instruction in Russian and other minority languages.

The results of the experimental centers were approved by the board of the Ministry of Public Education and recommended for the general schools nationally. During the 2005/06 school year pilots of these new NES and curricula were launched



in an additional 50 subjects compared to the 2004/05 school year. During the 2006/07 academic year the third stage of this piloting was launched. In 2007/08, 53 subjects at 54 experimental centers were being tested out. The introduction of the national education standards into the educational process has produced positive results. (UNDP, 2008).

Pre-primary education

Pre-school centers have been mostly organized by State enterprises in the past, but with the privatization of sponsoring firms some of these centers have been closed, thus reducing the enrolment ratio from about 30% of the target group in 1992 to 16.1% in 1996. Nurseries and kindergartens are maintained by the Ministry of Education, local municipalities and private companies. Nurseries cater to children aged 1-3, while kindergartens cater to children aged 4-6/7. Recently, new types of institutions have been introduced such as the home-based daycare centers and schools where kindergarten and primary classes are combined. Quality standards in these centers, however, are uneven. For instance, only 20% of all preschool teachers have higher education.

Preschool education aims at moulding a healthy and intelligent personality and preparing children for a systematic educational process. It is addressed to children under the age of 7 years in public and private institutions, and in families too. *Makhalya* (local communities), public and charity bodies actively participate in the delivering of pre-school services.

In kindergartens children learn some elementary notions of arithmetic and, since September 1995, a programme has been introduced to teach reading and writing in all kindergartens. Home kindergartens, as non-traditional educational establishments, have appeared in recent years. These establishments are basically located in rural areas. Early childhood educational centers organized within the Pupils' Centers (Youth Centre in School), local authority committees, schools and other public establishments represent a new form of work with preschool children.

Preschool establishments play an important role. Children in kindergartens receive medical services, preventive medical treatments, as well as three to five meals per day, depending on the time they pass in the establishment. One of the basic tasks of preschool education is the introduction to the educational process and the balanced development of children. According to the educational programme for kindergartens, this process consists of: games; acquaintance with nature; moral education; physical training; arts and music; speech training; practical activities; elementary mathematics; and introduction to reading and writing. Children with mild handicaps receive special classes. Psycho-diagnosis, psycho-correction, speech, sight, hearing and motion corrections are provided in special education establishments in addition to the main educational programme.

There are different categories of pedagogical, medical and technical personnel working in early childhood establishments, such as the head of the establishment, methodologists (who provide methodological supervision on the activities of nursery school teachers concerning the implementation of the educational programme), nursery school teachers, psychologists, musicians, doctors, nurses, etc.



Preschool institutions have an option either to choose for their activity any curriculum from the set of curricula approved by the Ministry of Public Education (MPE), or to elaborate their own curricula based on the model one which should then be approved by the MPE. (UNDP, 2008).

According to national estimates, in 2005 there were 6,495 preschool institutions (of which about 3,800 in rural areas) with some 565,000 children enrolled. Preschool institutions included: 1,386 kindergartens, 4,893 day-care centers, 40 day nurseries, and 177 school-kindergartens (e.g. schools providing preschool and primary education). (MPE, 2008). UNDP reports that in 2006 the number of preschool institutions was 6,413 (including 12 private kindergartens) and the total enrolment was about 562,000 children, representing 18.8% of the children of the respective age. Non-traditional forms of preschool education are being developed, such as home-based and small kindergartens, various centers for the early development of children at pre-school age, and Sunday schools. The number of non-traditional preschools was 13,744 in 2006, with an enrolment of some 123,600 children. (UNDP, 2008).

On the basis of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2006, nearly 20% of children aged 36–59 months were attending preschool in 2006. Urban-rural and regional differentials are significant—the figure is as high as 35% in urban areas, compared to 14% in rural areas. Among children aged 36–59 months, attendance at preschool is more prevalent in Tashkent city (53%), and lowest in the Southern region (7%). No gender differential exists, but differentials by socioeconomic status are significant. Forty-six percent of children living in rich households attend pre-school, while the figure drops to 5% in poor households. Overall, 34% of children aged 6 and 26% of children aged 7 attending the first grade of primary school had been attending preschool the previous year. The proportion among boys was slightly higher (29%) than girls (24%), while almost one-third of children in urban areas (33%) had attended preschool the previous year compared to 24% among children living in rural areas. Regional differentials were also very significant; first graders in Tashkent city were four times more likely (66%) to have attended preschool than their counterparts in the Central-Eastern region (15%). (SSC, UNICEF & UNFPA, 2007).

General basic education (primary and secondary education)

As mentioned, there are several types of basic education schools: schools with only primary education (grades 1 to 4); schools which offer partial (grades 1 to 9) and complete (grades 1 to 11) secondary education; adult education centers; and specialized schools and boarding schools for students with disabilities. General (basic) education is also available in new types of institutions (gymnasia and lyceums), some of them attached to higher education institutions and considered to be of better quality. Academic lyceums and vocational colleges are centrally managed.

The nine-year general (basic) education programme is compulsory and free. The aim of general secondary education is as follows: formation of knowledge and skills in accordance with the national education standards; adaptation of children to society and development of independent thinking; formation of a harmoniously developed personality, citizen of his/her motherland; and instilling a feeling of devotion to the principles of independence and democracy. Upon completion of primary schooling (grades 1-4) children should have acquired reading, writing and



calculating skills. Pupils are introduced to theoretical thinking and the skills of self-control. They acquire knowledge in standards of speech, basics of personal hygiene, healthy life-style and behaviour in society. The quality and content of subjects at primary school are flexible in respect to different types of schools and learning conditions.

Primary and secondary education are closely interrelated in terms of both organization and content. Each general school provides teaching at both stages of the general secondary education. General secondary education is the logical continuation of primary education, though it has a different content and incorporates different methods of teaching. Secondary education ensures the formation of the students' personality, their preferences, interests and ability to make choices in society. Secondary school students have a systematic knowledge in the basics of the sciences. During their studies they become broad-minded and develop abilities in creative thinking. Through sharing knowledge on the spiritual and cultural heritage of the nation, teachers inculcate a responsible attitude towards the surrounding world. Secondary school provides students with more opportunities for independent study. The structure of secondary education content includes both compulsory and optional subjects. The compulsory component is determined by the national educational standards which sets the minimum requirement for each educational level. This is guaranteed by the general secondary educational establishments. This component is set taking into account the needs of society as well as the interests and needs of the individual. The optional component is determined on the basis of the student's needs and abilities, available facilities, staffing, and the requirements of social and economic development of the particular area where the school is located. The volume of this additional study load is determined by norms fixed by the Ministry of Public Education (MPE). Teaching is based on the Basic Study Plan and syllabuses of general secondary education approved by the MPE. The list of subjects, syllabuses, and length of time are determined by the national education standards of general secondary education as well as by the Basic Study Plan. General secondary education is provided on a full-time basis. At the end of the studies graduates receive State certificates and those who have the best results receive certificates with excellence. (UNDP, 2008).

Schools teaching in the Uzbek language predominate (over 8,800 schools in 2006/07). In 760 schools instruction is provided in Russian and other languages (Russian-Uzbek, Russian-Karakalpak, and others). Out of these, in 93 schools children are taught only in Russian. A total of 522 schools were teaching in Kazakh, 258 in Tajik, 383 in Karakalpak, 48 in Turkmen, and 61 in Kyrgyz. In the same year, over 27% of students studied in 2–3 shifts. (*Ibid.*).

The weekly lesson timetable for general basic education (2010) is shown in the table below:

Uzbekistan. General basic education (grades 1-4): weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade			
	1	2	3	4
Uzbek/Russian language	–	2	2	2
Uzbek language and literature	8	8	10	10
Mathematics	5	5	5	5
Nature and geography	1	1	1	1
Technical drawing and architecture	–	–	–	–
Art education	1	1	1	1
Music	1	1	1	1
Vocational education	1	1	1	1
Physical education	2	2	2	2
Introduction to ethics	1	1	1	1
School choice	2	2	2	2
Total weekly periods	22	24	26	26

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, *Study plan for general basic education schools 2010/2011*. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.

Uzbekistan. General basic education (grades 5-11): weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade						
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Uzbek/Russian language	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Uzbek language and literature	9	7	5	5	5	4	4
Foreign language	3	3	3	3	3	2	2
History	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
Civic education (State and law)	–	–	–	1	1	1	1
Man and society	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Introduction to economics	–	–	–	1	1	1	1
Mathematics	5	5	5	5	5	4	4
Computer studies	–	–	–	1	2	2	2
Physics and astronomy	–	2	2	2	2	4	4
Chemistry	–	–	2	2	2	2	2
Biology	1	2	2	2	2	1	2
Nature and geography	1	2	2	2	2	2	–
Technical drawing	–	–	–	1	1	–	–
Art education	1	1	1	–	–	–	–
Music	1	1	1	–	–	–	–
Vocational education	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Motherland and patriotism	1	1	–	–	–	–	–
National independence and values	–	–	1	1	1	–	–
Social service	–	–	–	–	–	2	2
School choice	2	2	2	2	2	6	6
Total weekly periods	32	34	35	36	37	39	39

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, *Study plan for general basic education schools 2010/2011*. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.



Primary education is universal and the dropout rate is negligible. A limited incidence of dropouts exists after grade 4. Upon successful completion of a general (basic) education, students receive the State certificate specifying the marks received in each discipline. Two or three additional years of study at the upper secondary level are necessary to receive the Certificate of Complete Secondary Education. A network of specialized secondary vocational institutions was formed in 1997/98. It included fifteen academic lyceums with about 1,800 students enrolled and twenty vocational colleges with an enrolment of about 3,900 students. The introduction of a compulsory 12-year education system offers to grade 9 graduates the possibility to choose between studying at academic lyceums or vocational colleges in accordance with their abilities. Since the general curricula of lyceums and colleges are equivalent, all graduates have the right to continue their education onto the next stage. (UNDP, 2008).

According to the Asian Development Bank, in 2005 there were 9,748 basic education schools in the country with 451,567 teachers. About 82% of the schools were in rural areas; 22% were in remote rural areas. Some 6.0 million students were enrolled in basic education: 2.3 million in grades 1-4, 3.2 million in grades 5-9, and 0.5 million in grades 10 and 11. The net enrolment rate in grades 1 to 9 was estimated at 98%, with no significant gender differentials. (ADB, 2006).

As of January 2007, there were 1,055 new secondary specialized vocational educational establishments, including 99 academic lyceums and 953 vocational colleges. Of these vocational colleges, 296 were housed in newly constructed buildings and 628 were housed in the buildings of former vocational schools having undergone major reconstruction including equipping them with modern teaching materials and laboratories. Secondary specialized vocational educational establishments enrolled 1,075,000 students, out of which 1,021,900 students (164,400 after the grade 11) enrolled in 953 vocational colleges and 53,100 students enrolled in 99 academic lyceums. The secondary specialized vocational education network covers 62.8% of the graduates of general schools. Study at these vocational colleges and academic lyceums is organized according to the Classifier of directions, specialties and professions of secondary specialized vocational education along with qualification requirements for junior specialists. The Classifier currently in force includes 348 specialties and 840 professions. Training is currently provided in 268 specialties which cover 712 professions. During the period 1998–2006, 277 branch educational standards and 3,503 curricula on general vocational and special subjects for vocational colleges, five branch standards, 11 study plans and 69 curricula for in-depth general preparation according to the specialties of academic lyceums were designed, piloted in experimental classes, discussed at seminars and conferences, approved and introduced. During the 2006/07 school year, 268 new typical study plans, characterized by mobility, flexibility and fast adaptation to the needs of labour market, were approved and introduced. Modernized study plans take into consideration all forms and types of studies, the organization of the independent work of students, as well as some hours allocated for educational establishments to make their own choices. (UNDP, 2008).

According to national data, in 2006/07 there were 9,733 schools in the country (of which 7,705 in rural areas), categorized as follows: 170 primary schools (grades 1 to 4); 3,817 schools offering grades 1 to 9; 5,700 schools offering grades 1 to 11; and



86 special education and boarding schools. The total enrolment was 5,687,858 students (of whom 48.8% were girls), according to the following breakdown: 2,167,158 pupils in grades 1-4 (of whom 49% were girls); 3,101,652 students in grades 5-9 (48.8% girls); and 419,048 students in grades 10 and 11. The total number of teachers was 450,327 (of whom 68.1% were female teachers), of whom: 308,560 teachers with higher education (or 68.5% of teachers); 20,847 with incomplete higher education; and 120,920 teachers with secondary education. The total enrolment in special education schools was 19,116 students. In 2005, the gross enrolment ratio was estimated at 97% for primary education (grades 1-4) and at 97.6% for grades 5-9; the net enrolment ratio was estimated at 95.8% and 96.8% respectively. The survival rate to grade 5 and the transition rate to secondary were almost universal. (MPE, 2008).

On the basis of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), overall 96% of children of primary school age were attending primary or secondary school in 2006. Only less than 4% of the children were not attending school. At the national level and according to background characteristics, there is very little difference between male and female primary school attendance as well as overall attendance. A low percentage of the children of secondary school age were not attending secondary school (7%). Of these only a small portion were attending primary school. There is no differentiation by sex; the net attendance ratio was 94% for boys and 92% for girls. Of all children starting grade 1, nearly all of them will eventually reach grade 5. Notice that this number includes children that repeat grades and that eventually move up to reach grade 5. There is very little or no variation according to the background characteristics in the full attendance of children during the first five grades of school regardless of their sex, region, residence, mother's education, or socioeconomic status. At the time of the survey (2006), 97% of the children of primary completion age (11 years) were attending the last grade of primary education. All of the children who successfully completed the last grade of primary school were found to be attending the first grade of secondary school at the time of the survey. Again there was also no significant variation by background variables. (SSC, UNICEF & UNFPA, 2007).

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

Information is not available.

Teaching staff

There is still a lack of teachers, especially in rural schools. At the beginning of the 2006/07 school year, schools lacked a total of 1,455 teachers of foreign languages and 551 teachers of mathematics. In 2007/08, about 141,900 teachers did not have a higher education degree (31.4%), including 15,800 teachers (3.5%) teaching one of the major subjects such as native language and literature, mathematics, physics, chemistry, history, fundamentals of the state and law, foreign languages, geography and biology. Rural schools are still the weak link in the educational process where teachers with a higher education degree make up only 66% of the total, while for cities this figure is 76%. It should be noted that primary school teachers are mainly trained at colleges rather than at higher education institutions. (UNDP, 2008).



Between 2005 and 2006 teachers' salaries have grown by a factor of almost 1.9. This created a more effective way of encouraging talented teachers—those who show devotion to their profession, initiative and high levels of professional skills. A system of training and upgrading qualifications has been established for teachers of all school subjects. It is provided at 22 higher education institutions of the country. Tashkent State Pedagogical University (named Nizamiy) is the coordinating agency engaged in developing the methodology for teachers' training. The university has created the conditions necessary for studying and then disseminating best practice as well as for applying the lessons learned. (*Ibid.*).

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Web resources

Ministry of Education and Science: <http://www.edu.uz/> [In Uzbek and Russian. Last checked: August 2011.]

For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>