

Early Grade Teacher Co-Authors New Uzbek Language Arts Textbooks



Photo: T. Kurmakaeva, RTI International

Meet Feruza Ikramova, a primary teacher from School №33 in Tashkent Region. Mrs. Ikramova is proud to be one of the 10 curriculum writers who just completed the new Uzbek Language Arts student textbooks and teacher guides for grades 1 to 4.

Today is International Mother Language Day, and Mrs. Ikramova has a smile on her face because the new student textbooks will strengthen students' practical reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in Uzbek. The new teacher guides will help teachers enhance their teaching methods, including by emphasizing active, student-centered learning. The new teaching content and methods will improve learning in early grades, which will continue to benefit students throughout their education.

Improving the teaching and learning, including mother language subjects, is a priority of the Ministry of Public Education. The Ministry is working with the United States Agency for International Development's Uzbekistan Education for Excellence Program to realize their reform goals.

Mrs. Ikramova, the other writers, and the team of reviewers spent a year developing and piloting these materials with teachers. As a teacher, Feruza brought her classroom experience and understanding of the needs of mixed-ability students to the process.

When she started working on the student textbooks and teacher guides, Mrs. Ikramova could not imagine how challenging it would be to fully transform the language learning approach. Luckily, she had the tremendous support of the international and local experts, who helped the writers to ensure international best practices guided the content and teaching methods. Mrs. Ikramova met with experts every week over the year to improve and strengthen the books. As a result of their hard work, she and the rest of the team have created books that inspire children to learn and develop a love of the Uzbek language.

"The learning materials should not be boring but rather interesting and fun! The main task was to cause children to fall in love with their native language. How can this be done? We can motivate them to discuss, ask questions, use their creativity and express their thoughts using the language!" said Mrs. Ikramova.

During the first field test in September and October 2021, she observed dramatic changes: children were happy and eager during class, and their eyes sparkled with excitement.

Mrs. Ikramova intends to continue her teaching career and believes it is her life's mission. Her dream is to share the knowledge gained through working with the Uzbekistan Education for Excellence Program with other teachers so that the new approach will benefit all children in Uzbekistan. She believes that the Uzbek language is a source of pride and that reaching early grades children in their native language helps to preserve Uzbekistan's rich history and traditions.

Feruza Ikramova meets the Program team, February 2022



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