



New Student Books Inspire Former English Language Teacher Lola to Go Back Into Teaching Again



Photo: Tamila Kurnakova

Lola Petrosova attending one of the teacher training programs organized by USAID's Uzbekistan Education for Excellence Program July 2022

"When I saw the new printed books, I wanted to go back to school for teaching again!"

*Lola Petrosova
Former EFL Teacher*

Lola Petrosova is a former English language teacher, with 21 years of experience, working at local school #10. She remembers the challenges she herself and fellow colleagues have faced using outdated teaching materials in the past. Most teachers did not have access to audio materials to develop the listening skills of their students and there were not enough practice activities for revision, nor supporting resources to use during the lessons. Teachers also had to design and implement their own tests for formative and summative purposes, which took lots of time and were not always accurate in checking the students' knowledge. Although the teachers put their best effort into teaching English to young girls and boys of Uzbekistan, the outcomes in student learning were not as expected, mostly due to the old and boring teaching materials used in the classrooms.

In 2019 U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), together with the Ministry of Public Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, launched the Uzbekistan Education for Excellence Program. One of the objectives of the Program was to create student textbooks, workbooks, and teacher guides on teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) to be used as the main teaching material in local schools of Uzbekistan.

The Program involved international experts in the process of creating the books to ensure Uzbek boys and girls have access to the best learning and teaching materials, which will lead to stronger student performance and the long-term success of the Uzbek children. Cambridge University Press laid the foundation for the development of the books, Florida State University experts supported the creation of the student standards, and the local Product Review Group of seven experts from Uzbekistan helped with the cultural customization of these teaching and learning materials to make them appropriate for Uzbek society. Ms. Petrosova was among these seven experts.

In the 2021–2022 academic year the Program piloted the new books in two regions of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Local teachers were provided with professional development trainings from foreign and local trainers on how to effectively use these teaching materials, and over 600,000 school students have already enjoyed learning from the new textbooks. Starting in the 2022–2023 academic year, the Ministry of Public Education printed and distributed books for the whole Republic of Uzbekistan. This means now over 6 million Uzbek school students have access to the modern learning materials to study English as a foreign language. It also means that thousands of educators like Ms. Petrosova are using modern teaching materials and methodologies to engage their students and achieve the academic results they always admired. Now, as the national rollout happens, Ms. Petrosova is very excited. As would be any professional who loves her job, she is eager to see how teachers and children are working with the new teaching and learning materials. During her interview, Ms. Petrosova said that she would like to attend the classes and see how teachers are using the newly developed textbooks in their work.

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