# DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION:

## Bringing New Resources to Educators and Students

# Introduction

Uzbekistan is on an upward trajectory of digital transformation. Its Digital Uzbekistan 2030 Strategy includes ambitious policy goals to modernize and increase the competitiveness of a range of sectors, from telecommunications to healthcare and public services. For example, in the education sector, Uzbekistan has already achieved 100% coverage of high-speed Internet connections in preschool institutions and facilitated trainings for tens of thousands of students in technology-oriented skills.

The USAID-funded Uzbekistan Education for Excellence Program supported the Government of Uzbekistan to accelerate digital transformation in education. In partnership with Florida State University (FSU) and the Ministry of Preschool and School Education (MoPSE) Republican Education Center (REC), RTI led two initiatives to support students and teachers with access to essential and supplementary resources.

# A New Curriculum Goes Digital

A primary goal of the Program was to help the MoPSE transition to standards-based instruction. The Program collaborated with FSU and the REC to create a central digital platform that hones, centralizes, and complements existing, disconnected platforms and aligns them with the new national standards. The new platform includes student standards for all subjects, including the four target subjects Uzbek Language Arts (ULA), mathematics, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and information communications technology (ICT). Three essential features ensure that educators can track broader curriculum and assessment objectives while improving classroom practice:

**Standards repository** – where educators can find weekly subject lessons and track students' progress against expectations over the year.



**Materials repository** – where educators can access and download detailed teaching and learning materials for each daily lesson, including audio files for EFL classes and Excel spreadsheets for ICT classes, and view the corresponding standards.

**Supplementary links** to established REC resources.

Uzbekistan's educators follow national lesson plans; from urban centers to rural schoolhouses, student lessons are synchronized by grade level. The new digital platform will serve as a "one-stop shop" for educators, perhaps their first stop on busy mornings to find the lesson for the day, the national standards that it supports, and a full package of teaching and learning materials. Consolidating resources in one place saves time and simplifies lesson preparations among teachers. It also makes lessons more responsive to national standards and supports the unification of the education system around those standards, one teacher at a time.

**EMBRACING CHANGE:** The central platform was built as a starting point for a system that will continue to grow. As the MoPSE updates and improves its curriculum on a regular basis, trained staff from the REC will maintain the latest versions of standards and materials on the platform for access by educators.

**GLIMPSING THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION:** Traditional textbooks have limitations in the digital age. There is no way to embed an audio file or link additional resources to the printed pages of a bound book. By contrast, digital curricula are easily updated, corrected, and supplemented with new materials that are immediately accessible via the Internet. By embracing a well-organized, centralized digital platform, the MoPSE is on a path toward flexible, creative, dynamic education for current and future generations.

**SYSTEM CAPACITY STRENGTHENING:** FSU experts led trainings of REC subject area methodologists responsible for content management and technical staff responsible for system administration. The MoPSE has full ownership of the website — both the program and the source code behind it — and capability to adjust it to the needs of their educators independent of ongoing support from projects or third parties.

# Bloom e-Library

Uzbekistan boasts a robust literary history, but few written works are geared toward child learning and development. To make a range of high-impact stories available to children, the Program leveraged the SIL International Bloom digital library. The Program engaged MoPSE representatives and international experts to establish selection criteria for library books. Together with MoPSE experts comprising the Product Review Group, the Program then selected and translated 135 books of varied genres featuring diverse main characters and gender inclusive narrative scenarios relevant to Uzbek children. A key feature of the Bloom Uzbek e-library books is the integration of social and emotional learning (SEL), which align with the types of life skills promoted by the MoPSE. Critical to child development, SEL supports students to build social and self-awareness and positive decision-making skills.
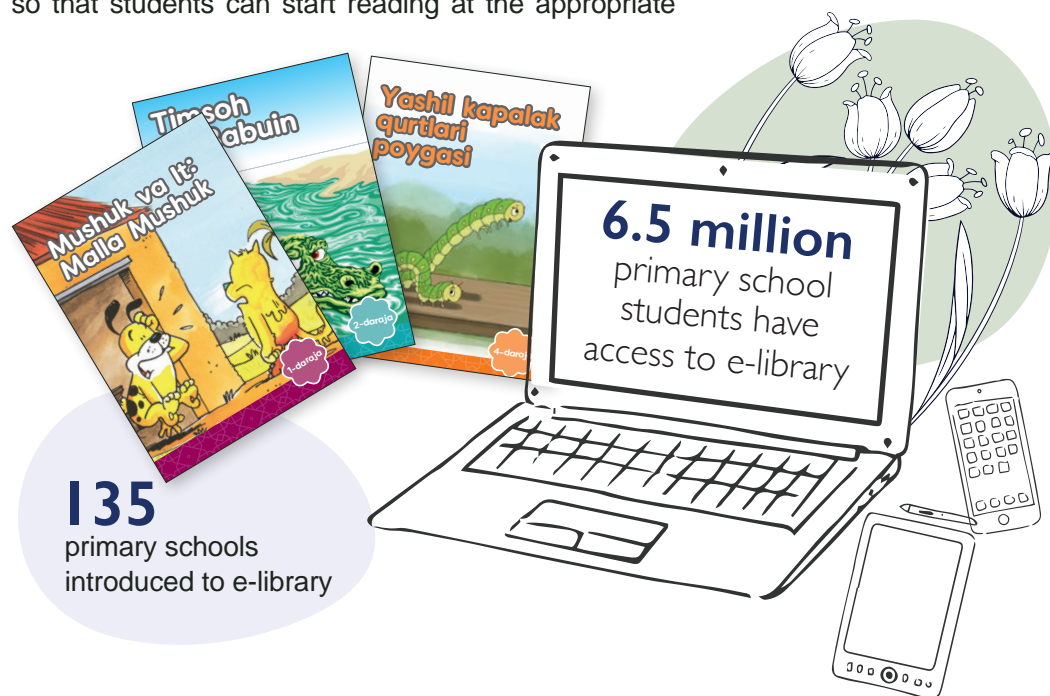
The Uzbek "shelf" of this digital library was curated for use as supplementary reading in primary schools. The books are organized by reading level instead of grade, so that students can start reading at the appropriate level and progress at their own pace. According to Dilfuza Karimova, Bloom e-Library Lead, "[The Bloom e-library] develops students' love for reading. [Then] they will become fluent readers and learn what types and genres they love." This repository of new books will also be open access for use by children, caregivers, and educators and downloadable to computers, tablets, and mobile phones for ease of use. The Program also developed a Teacher and Parent Guide to foster the love of reading at home.

As an open-access platform, the Bloom e-Library will have impact far beyond the classroom among both children and caregivers. A handover to the MoPSE will enable local leadership to update and promote the library nationwide.

Scan the QR code for more on the SIL International Bloom digital library.

Let's grow a library
Bloom.

**135**
primary schools
introduced to e-library

**6.5 million**
primary school students have access to e-library

**5,000**
subject teaching and learning materials uploaded to the new digital platform

**10,000+**
primary schools introduced to e-library

# Sustainability

The REC has uploaded all curriculum materials to the digital platform and, with support from the Program, has the capacity to ensure that materials are continuously updated and users of the system are supported to access the materials. The MoPSE also has the capacity to continue adding books to the Bloom e-library in the additional languages utilized in Uzbekistan's schools, increasing access to reading materials for early readers. The MoPSE has undertaken robust social marketing efforts to ensure that teachers and parents are aware of these resources that support their children's learning journeys.

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In the future, I want this digital platform to be a central platform for teachers to share methodological experience. It will play a big role in improving the standards for education policymakers and adapting them to the pace of economic and social development of the country.

**Shukhrat Sattorov, Director, REC**