



## LEARNING FOR UZBEKISTAN:

### A Student Curriculum for the Future



## Introduction

A national curriculum and its learning materials are the backbone of an education system. At their best, they reflect student needs, a country's aspirations for its youth, and a realistic path to gaining the knowledge that will bridge them. The Government of Uzbekistan Ministry of Preschool and School Education (MoPSE) is investing in a strong education system for the long-term success of students and the nation. Uzbekistan boasts an impressive adult literacy rate of over 99 percent and the country's support for education is evidenced in the policies and executive decrees of recent years. Yet, challenges persisted in the national curriculum and educational materials, which were not well integrated and did not consistently reflect current evidence on how children learn nor the unique context of Uzbek youth.

The USAID-funded Uzbekistan Education for Excellence Program supported the Government of Uzbekistan to realize its comprehensive goals and deliver innovative, competency-based teaching that supports students to achieve better learning outcomes. In partnership with the MoPSE, the Program developed and adapted new learning standards, subject scopes and sequences, and learning materials, integrating research-based innovations to boost student engagement and improve learning outcomes. Robust monitoring and research also informed programming. The Program aimed to achieve and sustain four overarching results:



Improved  
learning  
outcomes  
in Uzbek  
Language Arts



Enhanced  
information and  
communications  
technology  
(ICT) instruction

$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$

Improved  
learning  
outcomes in  
mathematics



Improved  
English as  
a Foreign  
Language  
(EFL)  
instruction



# Achievements

Implemented by a consortium of partners including RTI International as the lead organization with Florida State University and Mississippi State University, the Program brought together a diverse cohort of international and local experts—from academics to rural primary school teachers—to revitalize the Uzbekistan curriculum. The Program introduced new ideas and modern approaches while localizing educational processes and products which align with new learning standards. Scopes and sequences were used to develop textbooks that guide teachers to meet those standards, while new standards-based assessments measure progress. The Program integrated these elements to improve student engagement and learning outcomes through a well-researched and cohesive approach.



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“I enjoy watching my students complete the exercises from the textbook with interest and curiosity.”

**Shakhlo Abrorkhanova,  
EFL Teacher,  
Syrdaryo Region**

## STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS

The Program supported the MoPSE to use, for the first time, an evidence-based approach to develop a set of learning standards for the target subject areas. With review and contributions from a variety of stakeholders and experts, the learning standards are a rich set of guiding documents to which student textbooks and other learning materials directly align for a coherent approach from the ministry to the classroom. The standards now have a digital home, hosted by the MoPSE, for easy reference by teachers, administrators, and government officials.

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The [new] books are full of knowledge; we are ready to carry them.

**Grade 1 student**





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Every student is able to understand the content in the textbook, and not a single student is excluded.

I am happy to hear that other teachers have the same impressions.”

**Qoraboyeva Habibaxon,**  
English Teacher,  
Namangan Region

## SUBJECT SCOPES AND SEQUENCES

Quality teaching and learning materials help students to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical skills. Subject scopes and sequences are detailed road maps that lay out exactly what should be covered in each lesson in a student textbook and the corresponding teacher guide, aligned to student learning standards. Now for the first time in Uzbekistan, these detailed scope and sequence documents enable systematic development and revision of student textbooks and teacher guides.

## TEXTBOOKS AND LEARNING MATERIALS

Learning materials bring education to life; they are students' portal to new knowledge. The MoPSE's reform agenda aims to transform instructional practices by moving away from rote learning and toward practical application of skills and knowledge. USAID supported the MoPSE to develop and customize learning materials, such as textbooks and teacher's guides, based on international standards and best practices. Through extensive collaboration between local and international experts, the new materials — in tandem with teacher professional development — encourage students to be active and vocal in the classroom. They are also pedagogically and culturally customized to ensure that Uzbekistan's students see themselves reflected in the subject matter, boosting a sense of belonging, confidence, and engagement.



# Impact by the Numbers

The Program has enabled students to achieve their full potential by equipping them with a standards-based curriculum and modern educational materials.





# Sustainability

## COLLABORATION FOR LONG-TERM VALUE

Uzbekistan's curriculum and standards development process has long been centralized. To help ensure buy-in from across the education system, the Program engaged a wide range of stakeholders in curriculum writing and review. Indeed, this was the first time in Uzbekistan that primary school teachers were among the curriculum writers. This breadth of contributors took pride in the final products, bolstering commitment to their long-term use.

## CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

The Program introduced a standards-based approach to curriculum development in Uzbekistan. To equip contributors with the skills to replicate this approach in the future, the Program facilitated collaborative brainstorming workshops to agree on the best path toward curriculum development, and facilitated trainings on standards and curriculum development. Based on this participatory process, the Program provided the MoPSE and regional teacher groups with a clear standards-based system, detailed training facilitator manuals, and templates to enable curriculum development and updates going forward.



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The Program, being one of the biggest projects for the MOPSE, has played an influential role in the capacity building of textbook developers as well as bringing modern books [to Uzbekistan]. Teachers found EFL books very interesting and effective. The books have authentic content with various activities. Almost all teachers are satisfied with the books.

**Javlonbek Meliboyev, Head Specialist,  
Methodological Support and Textbooks Department, MoPSE**

# Reflections

In the course of introducing new-in-context approaches, the Program generated important learnings that can strengthen future educational reform efforts in Uzbekistan and beyond.

1

**Teacher participation in curriculum development helps ensure that learning materials are grounded in student needs and classroom practicalities.** The Program included primary teachers from varied school locations in inclusive scoping and sequencing exercises and in multiple rounds of learning materials development and review. As a result, teachers can be confident that the educational materials align with their priorities and needs.

2

**Customization of learning materials brings new knowledge “home.”** Mistakes are inherent to the process of learning, and fear of making them can be a barrier to active student participation. The learning materials developed by the Program featured characters, places, and cultural touchpoints that are familiar to Uzbekistan youth. By localizing textbooks and other materials, the Program helped ensure that students feel safe and acknowledged in the learning process, which builds their confidence on the journey of learning.



