



PILOTING A NEW APPROACH:

Teaching and Learning Materials Reach Uzbekistan's Classrooms

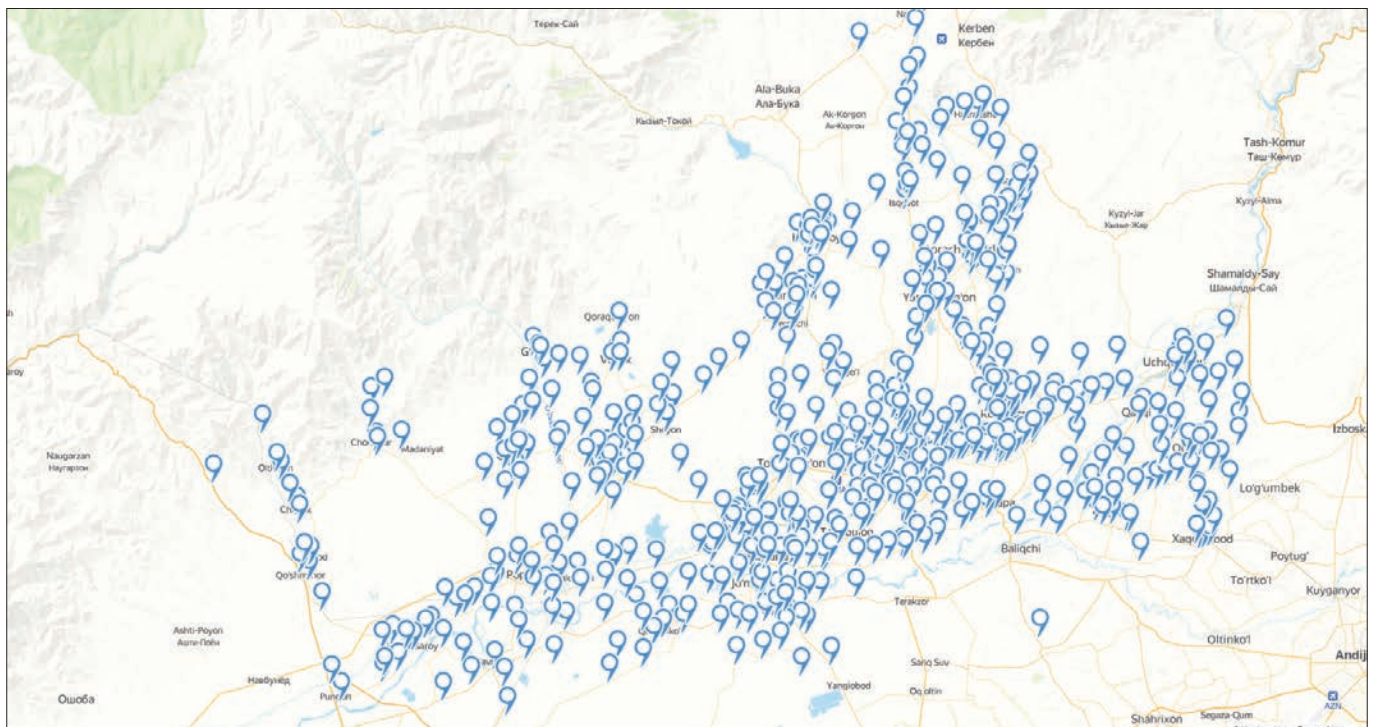
The Challenge

With a modern, robust new curriculum carefully prepared by local and international experts to meet the needs of Uzbekistan’s students, how would the Ministry of Preschool and School Education (MoPSE) ensure the effectiveness of textbooks and teacher guides in the classroom? The new teaching and learning materials (TLMs) created and customized by the USAID-funded Uzbekistan Education for Excellence Program in partnership with the MoPSE were developed through a multi-step, participatory process. Input from international experts and Uzbekistan primary teachers and academics grounded the modern methods and practices in the local context. To evaluate the use and value of these TLMs for students and educators, the Program led an extensive pilot initiative.

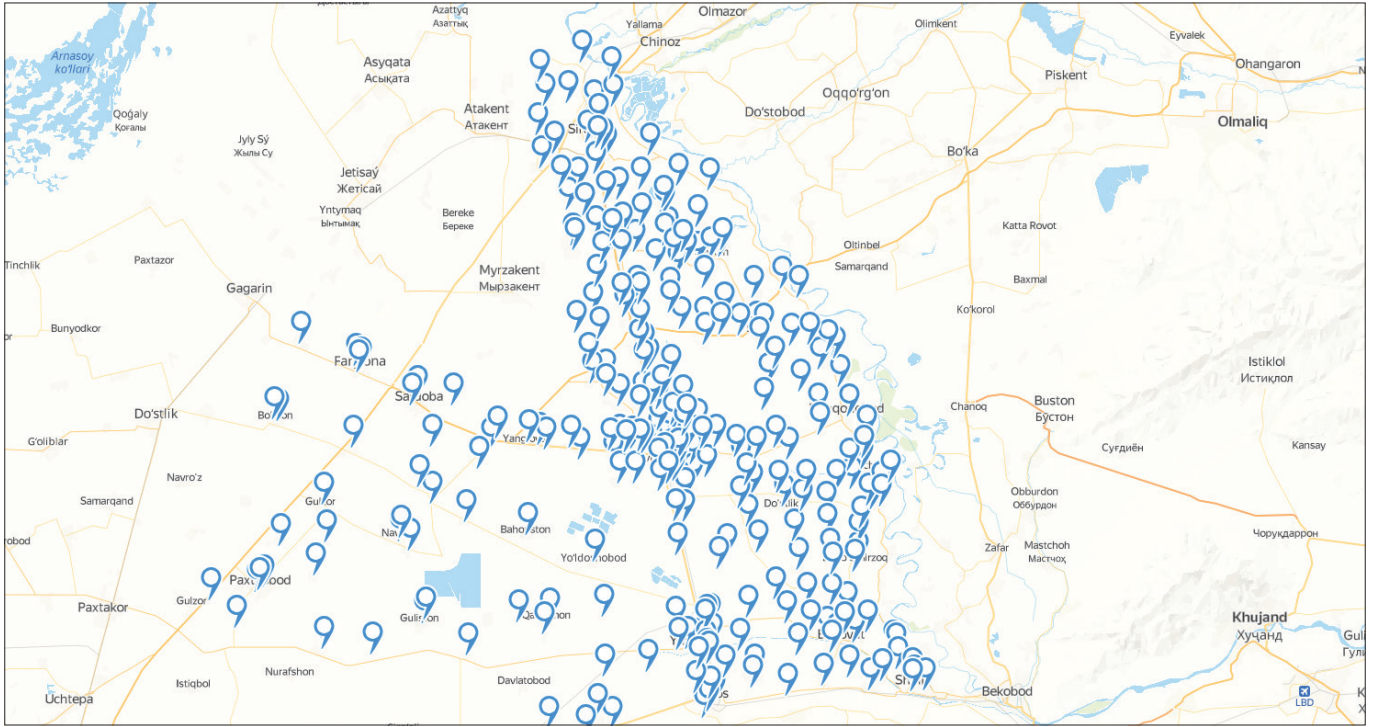
Pilot Process

A curriculum pilot of this scale, depth, and quality had never been attempted in Uzbekistan. Reaching more than 900 public schools, 8,000 teachers, and 225,000 primary students, the pilot set out to validate the Program’s research-based curriculum development approach. The curriculum pilot covered all public schools in the Namangan and Syrdaryo Regions of Uzbekistan, including some of the most vulnerable areas of the country with unsatisfactory educational outcomes for students. A pilot of English as a Foreign Language and Information and Communications Technology TLMs reached more than 89,000 secondary school students and preceded a separate pilot of Uzbekistan Language Arts and mathematics TLMs, which reached 225,000 primary school students.

Namangan region



Syrdaryo region

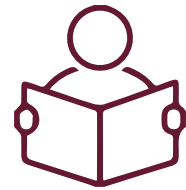


The pilot not only brought the new textbooks and teacher guides into classrooms, but also included continuous professional development to support teachers with the techniques and skills to bring the TLMs to life. In partnership with the Government of Uzbekistan's Avloni Institute and the Republican Education Center, the Program trained 14 ICT and 495 EFL trainers as well as, for ULA and mathematics, 80 master trainers, 800 regional teacher trainers, and more than 8,000 educators on effective use of the TLMs in their classrooms.

PILOT HIGHLIGHTS:



1-year pilot of 16 materials in
948 pilot schools



332,215
students benefited



829,300
student textbooks and
teacher guides distributed



8,000+
teachers and trainers
benefited

PILOT PREPARATION

A rigorous multi-step preparatory process preceded the pilot, and included review of the Program’s theory of change to ensure relevance, the identification of research questions to investigate the theory of change, and data collection planning and tool development. For this comprehensive pilot, the Program developed a range of data collection tools to ensure that TLMs were effective for educators and students through both subjective feedback and objective observation. The Program then trained 8 assessors and oriented pilot school administrators and district MoPSE officials to the pilot purpose and schedule. The Program field tested ULA and mathematics materials among 60 teachers over six weeks to ensure that the proposed design and sample lessons were fit for purpose. The result of the first phase was the integration of teacher feedback into TLM pilot production.

PILOT AND DATA COLLECTION

The one-year pilot in 948 schools included 16 materials and distribution of more than 829,300 student textbooks and teacher guides. Before the start of the school year, the Program trained both trainers and teachers on how to use the TLMs. Throughout the pilot period, the Program supported teachers with continuous teacher professional development. Data collection was multipronged and included a desk review, a TLM uptake study, a teacher professional development (TPD) study, and a learning outcome assessment. The Program trained data assessors who collected training and classroom observation information and provided structured feedback generated by **Tangerine Coach** throughout school year.



| PILOT PREPARATION | PILOT AND DATA COLLECTION |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of theory of change• Identification of research questions• Planning of data collection• Designed research protocols and tools• Develop assessor training guides and trained assessors• Administrator orientation - 199 school administrators and district MoPSE officials were oriented to the purpose, schedule, and requirements of the pilot• Pre-pilot testing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Printed and distributed TLM to pilot schools• Trained teachers on TLMs• Provided continuous teacher professional development• Trained data assessors• Desk review• TLM Uptake Study• TLM feedback groups |

A thorough TLM desk review revealed, for example, a lack of inclusive representation in ULA and math texts, especially in graphics and illustrations. The Program revised the texts to reflect a gender balance and include diverse characters, including children with disabilities. A mixed-methods TLM Uptake Study, including teacher surveys and classroom observations, investigated whether and how teachers and students used the new materials. The Program implemented 10 Teacher Feedback Groups per grade to collect and assess teacher impressions of TLMs in real time via Telegram, while REC and university specialists participated in a mid-school year review of teacher feedback. The TPD study involved classroom observation by 45 trained Field Assistants of more than 7,000 teachers and students, TPD attendance tracking (to compare with TLM data), training quality assurance observations, and three post-training surveys at different points during the school year. Finally, baseline and endline learning outcome assessments measured Grades 2 and 4 student progress after one year of TLM use. Ultimately, more than 227,700 students and more than 9,000 teachers and trainers benefitted from the pilot and its findings.

Data Collection Tools

- Desk review rubrics
- A pre-pilot field test tool
- Training quality assurance tool
- A post-training test and survey tool
- Classroom observation
- Teacher interview tools
- Learning outcome assessment
- Pilot school global positioning system (GPS) coordinates

TLM FINALIZATION

The Program delivered revised, fully customized print and digital TLMs, including ICT, EFL, ULA, and math materials, to the MoPSE along with facilitator’s training guide and e-learning modules. In addition, the Program developed workbooks for mathematics and supplementary-level readers for early grade students.

TLM FINALIZATION

- Delivery of final print and digital TLMs to the MoPSE



Lessons Learned

Through this comprehensive pilot, the Program produced learnings that can inform and improve future iterations:

THE PILOT OFFERED IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN CONTENT AND APPROACHES

Despite input from teachers, academics, and other experts into the TLM creation process, “road-testing” the materials was the best way to ensure viability and value in the classroom. Through the pilot process, the Program identified and corrected detailed translation inconsistencies, improved the timing of steps in lessons, and responded to teacher requests for more front matter, among other fine-tuning adjustments to meet the needs of educators and students. The pilot also included opportunities to build the capacities of textbook writers to recognize whether and how their designed materials are used as intended in the classroom.

DATA RELIABILITY BENEFITS FROM EXTENSIVE DATA ASSESSOR TRAININGS

Teacher observation in the classroom was an important aspect of the pilot initiative, but early observation data showed that data assessors perceived the same teacher behaviors differently, especially if those behaviors were complex, e.g., involving multiple steps. To improve the reliability of data, the Program strengthened the preparedness of data assessors by conducting multiple trainings which included classroom





This brief was made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the sole responsibility of RTI International and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

