Uzbekistan

Principles and general objectives of education

The main goal of the State educational policy is to educate a healthy generation, both physically and mentally. The new educational policy is determined by the following main principles and goals:

- achieving a humanistic and democratic character of education and training;
- priority to human values and to national and cultural traditions;
- separation of educational institutions from the influence of political parties and movements;
- scientific and secular character of the State education system;
- continuity of the education system;
- development of vocational and professional education in accordance with changing economic needs;
- provision of compulsory general (basic) education, technical and vocational secondary education;
- free choice of the type of specialized secondary education (academic lyceums and vocational colleges);
- universal provision of compulsory education within the framework of State educational standards;
- unity and differentiation of training programmes;
- free choice of educational programmes based on merit and ability, and incentives to intelligence and talent.

Current educational priorities and concerns

The Republic of Uzbekistan is located in the heart of Central Asia and 60% of its total area is comprised of arid steppe or desert. Its population of 23.4 million is the largest in Central Asia, with an average annual growth rate of 1.8% during the period 1990-96, compared with 2.3% per year during the 1980s. Literacy is practically universal both for men and women (99%). Three-fourths of the population are Uzbeks while the rest are Russians, Tajiks, Kazakhs, Tartars and other ethnic groups. The vast majority of the population are Muslims and speak the Uzbek language, the official language. The population is increasingly young (9.8 million under 16 in 1996 against 8.8 million...

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in 1990) and rural. The rural population, mostly Uzbeks, constitutes over 60% of the total population and is growing at a much higher rate compared to the urban population.

Uzbekistan is headed by a President who, through the Cabinet of Ministers (COM) chaired by him, wields executive authority. Although legislative authority is vested in the Parliament (Oliy Majlis), a very large proportion of rules and regulations are set by various ministries and departments. The Prime Minister, nominated by the President and appointed by the Oliy Majlis, is responsible for organizing COM’s activities.

The country is administratively divided into twelve provinces, the city of Tashkent and the Republic of Karakalpakstan. The provinces and the Republic of Karakalpakstan are subdivided into 163 districts and eighteen municipalities. Each province has a mayor (khokim) who is appointed by the President. Within the regions there are 1,421 rural areas constituting 12,391 settlements (kishlaks). The basic unit of local government is the neighborhood organization (makhalla) which is the state’s channel for targeting special assistance to low-income families. The Republic of Karakalpakstan has its own President and Parliament.

Agriculture is the largest economic sector both in terms of export earnings and as a source of employment. Uzbekistan is the world’s largest exporter of cotton. The country’s economic agenda places high priority on the decentralization and privatization of state enterprises, expansion of competition, and development of private entrepreneurial activity in all spheres of the economy. These economic reforms require appropriate and well-trained manpower.

The country is divided into six economic regions, each endowed with natural resources, capital stock, infrastructure and labour force, but with widely different levels of social, economic and human development. A priority of Uzbekistan’s economic policy is to ensure a more even development through programmes targeted to the rural areas. The Government has adopted a step-by-step approach towards a market economy and identified a strong social policy as the core of the national model of transition to a market economy. Attention is being given to the most vulnerable groups and to maintaining social cohesion in a multi-ethnic society. The human development-oriented strategy calls for the creation of an environment where every person of working age can reveal his/her capabilities and have decent living standards for him/herself and his/her family. The social sector, particularly the education system which is expected to play a crucial role in the development of the country, is being consequently reorganized and reformed.

Since independence (1991), the Government has adopted various measures to align the education system with the principles of a democratic society and a free market economy and to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of education. The National Programme for Personnel Training System, as the education reform is called, was endorsed by the Parliament in August 1997. The Government, through the Social Sector Department of the Cabinet of Ministers, monitors the reforms. The broad aim of the National Programme is to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the education system, in particular the training of specialists to make it more responsive to the socio-economic development needs of a market economy.

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The National Programme consists of three stages. The first stage (1997-2000) was assigned to the development of the necessary legal, normative, methodological, financial, material and management conditions for achieving the goals of the reform. These include: development of State educational standards and programmes at all levels and stages of education; definition of new types of educational structure and content; allocation and redistribution of resources in line with the restructured system; monitoring and forecasting of the market for graduates, particularly from vocational education; and implementation of measures and programmes for educational development.

Initiatives and programmes for educational development to be adopted during the first stage encompassed the following: (i) renovation of curricula, content and methods including the specification of knowledge and skills levels to be achieved by students, the progressive development of tools to assess students' learning abilities, interests and progress, and the ways to select and cater to the needs of gifted children; (ii) training of teachers and teacher trainers; (iii) provision and improvement of infrastructure, teaching aids (especially computers), and teaching staff for general and specialized secondary education and vocational training; (iv) creation of a competitive environment in the provision of educational services, and provision of greater autonomy for institutions to implement their own programmes within State standards, including the promotion of private education; (v) elaboration and implementation of a quality control system for educational establishments and their personnel (teachers, trainers, and managers); and (vi) intensified collaboration with the international community and mobilization of foreign investments for education.

Various other institution-building activities have been foreseen for the first stage of the reform implementation period. The most significant were: the creation and strengthening of the national capacity for the production of educational television programmes (1998) and films/film strips (1998-2005) for pupils, students, teachers and parents; the production of school furniture, equipment and teaching aids (1998-2005); the production and publication of a variety of instructional materials for all levels of education (1997-1998); the provision of state-of-the-art libraries and computer technology (1997-2005); the provision of distance education (1998); and the reorganization and democratization of the educational management system (1998). The full transition to a twelve-year compulsory education programme (providing three years of senior secondary education in either academic lyceums or technical and vocational schools) was initially planned for the second stage (2001-2005) of implementation, although it is now expected to be completed by 2010.

The organization and management of educational institutions and bodies has been revised following the National Programme. New establishments have been created and existing functions shifted for more efficient functioning. An Institute for the Development of Specialized Secondary and Higher Education and a Centre for Specialized Secondary Education have been established within the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education (MHE). A new unit for has been established within the MHE, while another has been organized at the Republic Testing Centre to assume the functions of accreditation and certification of educational institutions and staff previously assigned to the MHE. The MHE unit has the task of coordinating and monitoring the supply and demand for graduates in different specialties provided in

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all higher educational institutes, as an input to the setting of enrolment targets and quotas for governmental grants.

In 2004, the Government launched the National Programme for Basic Education 2004–2009, which aims to strengthen basic education to meet international standards and to remove disparities between rural and urban schools, thereby creating equal opportunities for all students. Under the programme, new schools are being constructed and existing schools are being rehabilitated and repaired. The investment costs of the programme, which are estimated at $1.2 billion, will be financed by a combination of 75% budget financing, 20% foreign investment financing, and 5% local donor contributions. Included in the major investments are significant salary increases for teachers and school principals, which should improve the reputation of the profession and entice qualified university graduates to become teachers. Only new schools will be fully equipped; other schools covered by the programme will receive only some new furniture, science equipment, teaching aids, and reading materials. (ADB, 2006).

**Laws and other basic regulations concerning education**

Immediately after independence, the Government passed the **Law on Education** in July 1992 to provide the legal basis for the sector and to set off the most urgent reforms needed to adapt the education system to the demands of a transition economy.

The 1992 Law laid down several principles such as: children’s right to education and protection; the right of workers to individual leave for training purposes; the financial autonomy of institutions including the possibility to conclude contracts with companies; and the right to establish private schools. In addition, this Law provided for the development of new curricula and textbooks, certification and accreditation of educational institutions as well as the establishment of specializations and types of educational institutions attuned to market needs. Greater emphasis was placed on the Uzbek language, history and literature as well as on foreign languages, business, economics and vocational-technical education. The duration of compulsory and free basic education was reduced from eleven to nine years due to financial constraints.

The impetus of the new **Education Law**, which was adopted by Parliament in 1997, can be seen in various measures. New kindergartens and educational institutions have been established and experimental programmes for teaching foreign languages, arts and computer science to young children have been started. A new curriculum has been introduced for general basic education schools and new textbooks have been developed. New types of educational institutions have been established based on market requirements, including business schools, banking colleges and academic lyceums. Extra-budgetary means of financing educational institutions have been devised. Specialized foundations have been established for talented students and high-level scientists to study in prestigious universities abroad (UMID Foundation, USTOZ or Teacher Foundation, KAMOLOT or Youth Foundation). A new testing system has been introduced at the national level as a means to monitor the quality of education. Several regional higher education institutions have been upgraded to university status. Special programmes have been developed for the rural areas.

International and scientific links are being expanded to support the modernization of education.

In August 1997, the Government adopted the National Programme for Personnel Training System (NP) which provides a coherent framework for the reform being undertaken, and further guides the educational development of the country well into the twenty-first century. Central to the NP is the development of a unified and continuous education and training system and the mandate for the State to provide twelve years of compulsory education according to a ‘4-5-3’ pattern. The last three years of education will be provided in two types of specialized secondary education institutions, namely academic lyceums for the top 10% of Grade IX graduates, and professional colleges for the rest. These new institutions will be organized within higher education establishments and managed by the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education. The selection of students will be based on competitive tests, individual attitudes, interests in the chosen specialties and the socio-economic characteristics of the regions where they reside.

As stipulated Article 41 of the Constitution (1992), everyone shall have the right to education and the State shall guarantee free secondary education.

**Administration and management of the education system**

The Social Sector Department of the Cabinet of Ministers (COM) is mainly responsible for setting education policies and quality standards.

The overall management of the education system is shared by the Ministry of Public Education (MPE) and the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education (MHE). Under the National Programme, the Ministry of Public Education is responsible for pre-school, general, special and out-of-school education, while the MHE administers specialized secondary and tertiary education, including vocational education and teacher training.

The two ministries have units for forecasting enrolment, teacher requirements and capital works, as well as specialist centres responsible for curriculum and textbook development.

Specialist training institutes run by other ministries (i.e. Agriculture, Communication, Railway, Tourism, Water Resources, etc.) are under the authority of both MPE and MHE.

The Republic Testing Centre, an autonomous agency, prepares and administers tests at the end of the general and specialized secondary education cycles to certify student qualifications for the higher levels of education. The day-to-day management of general education (primary and secondary) is the responsibility of the Province and District Education Boards.
Structure and organization of the education system

Currently, the formal education system follows a '4-5-2' pattern, that is four years of primary and five years of general education, which are compulsory, and two years of optional upper secondary education or vocational education. The eleven-year programme is expected to be fully replaced by a twelve-year compulsory education programme providing three years of senior secondary education in either academic lyceums or technical and vocational schools by 2010.

Uzbekistan: structure of the education system

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Pre-school education

Pre-school education is provided to children aged 3-6 years in kindergartens and family-based institutions. Pre-school education is not compulsory.

Primary education

General (basic) education is provided in several types of basic education schools: schools with only primary education (Grades I-IV); schools which offer partial (Grades I-IX) and complete (Grades I-XI) secondary education; adult education centres, and specialized schools and boarding schools for students with disabilities. General education is also available in new types of institutions (gymnasia and compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
lyceums), some of them attached to higher education institutions. General basic education (Grades I-IX) is compulsory and the admission age is 6-7.

Secondary education

General basic education is followed by two or three years of upper secondary education or vocational and technical (VTE) education. This is provided at two levels: the first level offers six months to three years of basic vocational training; the second level generally offers two years of training (postsecondary level) in over 300 specializations leading to the Diploma of Specialized Secondary Education.

Higher education is provided in universities and institutes. Access to the four-year bachelor’s degree programme is subject to State test-based selection. An additional two years are required for a master’s degree and another six years for a full doctoral degree.

The school year begins in September and ends at the end of May. It is divided into four terms separated by three periods of holidays: in autumn (eight days), winter (twelve days) and spring (ten days). The school year in Grade I consists of thirty-three six-day working weeks (198 working days); in Grades II-IX, the length of the school year is thirty-four six-day weeks (204 working days).

At the university level, the academic year begins in September and ends in June. It is divided into two semesters, each having a duration of seventeen weeks. Students have summer holidays, New Year holidays and national holidays. Examinations take place at the end of each semester. Courses are held from Monday to Saturday (included).

The financing of education

Generally speaking, education is financed from the central budget (through the MPE for general education and the MHE for specialized secondary and higher education), local budgets (for pre-school and general education), co-operatives and enterprises (for their own educational institutions), and parents who pay for school supplies and school meals. The share of capital expenditure on education in the local education budget has been minimal and was at its lowest level in 1994, with some signs of recovery in 1995.

To bridge the budget deficit, educational institutions across sub-sectors have been encouraged to engage in commercial ventures such as charging fees for academic and other extension activities. Higher education institutions are allowed to offer fee-paying places to students (payment-contract) equal to the number funded by governmental grants. This means a doubling of access to higher education. Other extra-budgetary means for raising revenues are to accept production contracts for educational furniture like desks and cabinets, and the lease of premises. Earnings from these sources in excess of expenditure can be used to increase staff salaries and for purchasing and maintenance of instructional resources.
Financing of education is mainly based on the State budget. Higher and specialized secondary education institutions are financed from the State budget, secondary schools and kindergartens are financed from municipal budgets. There is a system of financial support for all students at higher and secondary specialized institutes. About 70% of the financing for specialized secondary schools comes from local authorities, 20% from the Ministry of Higher Education, and the other 10% from contracts with industry, employment services, fee-paying courses and sale of products.

Financial constraints stemming from the transition period have had negative effects on the education sector, reducing funds for the repair and maintenance of buildings. New financial sources need to be found, and existing funds should be used more efficiently. The share of municipal funding in total state funding has been increasing. In addition, a number of measures have been introduced to shift part of educational financing away from the state budget to enterprises and students. Almost 20% of all students entering higher education institutions were required to pay tuition fees in 1995. These students do not pay a full tuition, but rather 20% of the total educational costs annually. At the same time, there are grants for students from low-income families and talented youth.

The unequal provision of specialists in specialized institutions of certain regions, combined with financial problems, has made it difficult for applicants to gain admittance in many central higher education institutions. One solution to this problem is the development of higher education establishments in regional centres outside of the major cities. The former regional branches of higher education establishments were reorganized into independent institutions to improve the quality of education and the effective use of intellectual potential.

According to the Asian Development Bank, Uzbekistan’s expenditure on education in real terms is one of the highest among transition countries, increasing every year since 2000, and reaching 8.8% of GDP in 2005. The amount spent on basic education is the highest among the education sub-sectors, at 50.3% of the total education expenditure, with senior secondary education at 31.6%, pre-school at 12.7%, and higher education at 5.4%. The responsibility of financing education has shifted from the central Government to the oblasts and raions. In 2005, 65% of the national education budget was financed by raions, 22% by oblasts, and 13% by the Ministry of Public Education. However, consultations at rural schools revealed that budget provisions are insufficient to cover all operation and maintenance expenditures; hence, schools rely on community support. Parents assist teachers with annual maintenance and minor repairs, and provide financial and in-kind support to schools. Companies, farmers, and community groups sponsor school operations and contribute building materials and funds to rehabilitate school facilities that are not covered by the budget. Other schools run small income-generating activities organized by teachers, students, and community members. The level of community participation and entrepreneurship depends largely on the commitment and motivation of school principals and teachers. (ADB, 2006).
The educational process

Pre-primary education

Pre-school centres have been mostly organized by State enterprises in the past, but with the privatization of sponsoring firms some of these centres have been closed, thus reducing the enrolment ratio from about 30% of the target group in 1992 to 16.1% in 1996. Nurseries and kindergartens are maintained by the Ministry of Public of Education, local municipalities and private companies. Nurseries cater to children aged 1-3, while kindergartens cater to children aged 4-6. Only 17% of rural children receive pre-school education compared to 40% in urban areas. Recently, new types of institutions have been introduced such as the home-based day-care centres and schools where kindergarten and primary classes are combined. Quality standards in these centres, however, are uneven. For instance, only 20% of all pre-school teachers have higher education.

Pre-school education aims at moulding a healthy and intelligent personality and preparing children for a systematic educational process. It is addressed to children under the age of 7 years in public and private institutions, and in families too. Makhalya (local communities), public and charity bodies actively participate in the delivering of pre-school services.

In kindergartens children learn some elementary notions of arithmetic and, since September 1995, a programme has started to teach reading and writing in all kindergartens. Due to the limited number of pre-schools, only 35% of children in Grade I of primary education have attended kindergartens (in urban and rural areas, 45% and 21%, respectively). There are two ways of dealing with this problem: the first would be to quickly generalize kindergartens for all 5-6-year-olds; the second solution is to develop community learning centres and home-based kindergartens.

Home kindergartens, as non-traditional educational establishments, have appeared in recent years. These establishments are basically located in rural areas. Currently, there are 1,965 home kindergartens with 15,616 children enrolled. Early childhood educational centres organized within the Pupils Centres (Youth Centre in School), local authority committees, schools and other public establishments represent a new form of work with pre-school children.

Pre-school establishments play an important role. Children in kindergartens receive medical services, preventive medical treatments, and three to five meals per day, depending on the time they pass in the establishment. One of the basic tasks of pre-school education is the introduction to the educational process and the balanced development of children. According to the educational programme for kindergartens, this process consists of: games; acquaintance with nature; moral education; physical training; arts and music; speech training; practical activities; elementary mathematics; and introduction to reading and writing. Children with mild handicaps receive special classes. Psycho-diagnosis, psycho-correction, speech, sight, hearing and motion corrections are provided in special education establishments in addition to the main educational programme. There are 15,801 children enrolled in 296 special education establishments.
There are different categories of pedagogical, medical and technical personnel working in early childhood establishments, such as the head of the establishment, methodologists (who provide methodological supervision on the activities of nursery school teachers concerning the implementation of the educational programme), nursery school teachers, psychologists, musicians, doctors, nurses, etc.

The full development of pre-school education requires the following: training of skilled teaching staff and tutors; implementation of an effective psychological-pedagogical methodology; elaboration and production of modern textbooks, manuals as well as other didactic aids; creation of appropriate conditions for the moral and spiritual upbringing of children on the basis of the rich cultural and historical heritage of the country and the universal values; implementation of a variety of programmes for different types of pre-school establishments and access to consulting services provided by qualified specialists; establishment of support mechanisms and network development of pre-school educational, health and recreational establishments.

According to estimates of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, in 2004 there were 615,333 children enrolled at the pre-primary level; in 2003, the number of teachers was 65,762.

**General basic education (primary and secondary education)**

General (basic) education is provided in over 9,000 institutions with an enrolment of about 5.2 million students. As mentioned, there are several types of basic education schools: schools with only primary education (Grades I-IV); schools which offer partial (Grades I-IX) and complete (Grades I-XI) secondary education; adult education centres; and specialized schools and boarding schools for students with disabilities. General (basic) education is also available in new types of institutions (gymnasia and lyceums), some of them attached to higher education institutions and considered to be of better quality.

The nine-year general (basic) education programme is compulsory. It includes primary education (Grades I-IV) and guarantees a systematic and basic knowledge of sciences. The programme develops basic learning, scientific, and cultural knowledge and spiritual/moral qualities on the ground of national and world spiritual values, labour skills and creative mentality.

Schools teaching in the Uzbek language predominate (over 80%) while the rest teach in Russian (10%), Kazakh, Tajik, Karakalpak, Turkmen and Kyrgyz (data refer to 1994). Facilities and equipment standards have been deteriorating in the basic education sub-sector due to budgetary constraints.

Since the 1996/97 academic year, in Grade I children start learning to read using the new *ABC book* (Latin script). For teaching the new orthography using the *ABC book*, necessary programmes, manuals and textbooks were created. The curriculum of compulsory education is shown in the table below:
Primary education is universal and the dropout rate is negligible. A limited incidence of dropouts exists after Grade IV. On successful completion of a general (basic) education, students receive the State certificate specifying the marks received in each discipline. Two or three additional years of study at the upper secondary level are necessary to receive the Certificate of Complete Secondary Education.

According to the Asian Development Bank, in 2005 there were 9,748 basic education schools in the country with 451,567 teachers. About 82% of the schools were in rural areas; 22% were in remote rural areas. Some 6.0 million students were enrolled in basic education: 2.3 million in Grades I–IV, 3.2 million in Grades V–IX, and 0.5 million in grades X–XI. The net enrolment rate in Grades I–IX was 98%, with no significant gender differentials. (ADB, 2006).

There are two levels of vocational and technical education (VTE) aiming at helping secondary education graduates to start their independent lives and at satisfying the needs of the labour market for workers and specialists. First-level VTE offers six months to three years of basic vocational training after Grade IX in about 260 professions at 442 institutions, including 209 vocational-technical schools, 180 vocational lyceums and fifty-three business schools. This level has a combined enrolment of 221,000 students and 20,000 teachers and engineer-trainers. About 70% of engineer-trainers, however, lack pedagogical training. There is a need for over 1,000 experienced foremen to give industrial training. About 56% of VTE institutions do not meet the typical requirements for facilities, especially industrial workshops. Second-level VTE offers over 300 specializations under thirty-three broad areas at 258 institutions, with a staff totalling about 16,000. Total enrolment amounts to

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197,000 students. Programmes are outdated and there is a short supply of instructional inputs. The number of specializations suggests an overly narrow training.

A network of specialized secondary vocational institutions was formed in 1997/98. It includes fifteen academic lyceums with about 1,800 students enrolled and twenty vocational colleges with an enrolment of about 3,900 students.

The results of the 1997 State tests, taken by Grade XI graduates competing for entry to higher education, offer an indication of the quality of secondary education. In general, the best performances in these tests were achieved by female students, fee-paying students, lyceum graduates and those coming from rural schools and correspondence departments of colleges. The number of young people who after the nine-year compulsory education neither proceed to further education nor find jobs has doubled (50,000 in 1994 and 100,000 in 1996). Lack of employable skills has been identified as the main reason. The potential threat posed by youth unemployment has prompted the Government to reassess its policies on compulsory education in general and vocational education in particular.

In order to define the new structure of general education it is necessary: to elaborate public educational standards, guaranteeing high-quality general education and taking into account the logical connection with the following educational programmes in academic and professional colleges; to train highly skilled teachers; to develop a network of educational establishments, taking into account geographic and demographic peculiarities at the local level, and the needs of individuals, the community and the State; to promote a different approach to education in compliance with the abilities and interests of students; to create advanced and integrated teaching strategies; to develop a network of centres for students professional orientation and psychological-pedagogical consultation.

**Assessing learning achievement nationwide**

No national programmes for assessing and monitoring pupils’ and students’ learning achievement nationwide are reported.

**Higher education**

The first higher education institute in Uzbekistan was created in 1920 (Tashkent State University). There were eight faculties: agriculture, medicine, technical, socio-economics, physics and mathematics, history and philology, industrial and military. The number of higher education institutes (HEI) grew from three in 1928 to 46 in 1990, reaching a total of 58 in 1996. The number of universities increased from three in 1990 to eighteen in 1998. Access to the four-year bachelor’s degree programme is subject to State test-based selection. An additional two years are required for a master’s degree and another six years for a full doctoral degree.

In 1997, there were fifty-eight State HEI (sixty in 1998) offering courses in over 270 specialties. Total enrolment amounted to about 315,800 students. There were about 20,000 teachers, including 1,116 professors and 6,990 Ph.D. scholars. In addition, there were 148 institutes for the retraining of faculty and nine higher military
educational institutes. According to official statistics, in 2005 there were 64 HEI in the country, including 24 universities and 40 institutes.

In 1997 enrolment in universities represented 69% of total enrolment. More than 50% of teachers in higher education institutions have postgraduate diplomas and doctoral degrees, but their distribution is biased against regional institutions where high qualified teaching personnel can be as low as 15-30%. The number of professors aged 40 and below is less than 1%, while the age of doctoral degree holders and candidate degree holders is, on the average, 50 years and 36 years, respectively. A system of retraining for raising the qualification of technical and managerial staff is being implemented in twenty-three institutes, sixteen faculties and four centres under the responsibility of twenty-two ministries and departments. There are more than 100 libraries and ninety scientific institutions within the higher education system.

The Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education is the apex coordinating agency for all the HEI, in particular the 33 institutes (15 universities and 18 institutes) directly under its responsibility in 2005. The remaining HEI are administered by various ministries (Public Education, Agriculture, Culture, Foreign Affairs, Health, Justice, etc.). According to official statistics, in 2004/05 a total of 270,000 students were enrolled in higher education (149,700 in 1996); the number of teaching staff was 22,228.

Higher education institutes recruit the most qualified teachers to improve the selection and testing system. Tests are carried out in various establishments and the results are sent to the National Centre of Testing, where they are processed. The State Admission Commission takes the final decision on the admission of students to all establishments in the country.

To improve the educational process, universities have introduced a modular principle based on continuous assessment of students’ performance. Previously, students were assessed only during the exam periods. Currently, students receive marks throughout the academic term. The sum of these marks determines the students’ ratings at the end of the term. Such a scheme constantly measures the level of knowledge attained, evaluates independent work, and adds two months to the study period, previously spent for preparing and taking exams.

New subjects related to the market economy are now being introduced into curricula. Computers are also being used extensively. In order to improve the teaching capacity of pedagogical institutes, it is necessary to provide students with an opportunity to obtain additional specialization in subjects such as economics and business, and to develop departments within universities for the retraining of teachers.

The Centre for Accreditation and Evaluation of Educational Institutes within the State Test Centre evaluates the performance of educational establishments.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
Special education

The Government considers education for students with special needs as an integral part of its social policy. The national programme adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan, “Rehabilitation of People with Special Needs within the Period of 1996-2000”, has an important mechanism to meet the educational needs of the disabled.

By the end of the 1990s, there are seventy-five special schools pertaining to eight different categories. About 17,000 children with different disabilities were educated in these schools, with a total of about 4,000 teachers and specialists. Innovations (inclusive education) and activities being implemented include: methodology of early diagnosis of children with special needs and definition of the curriculum; elaboration of State standards on special education; improvement of qualification and working methods of teachers dealing with children with special needs; and preparation of multi-variant programmes and textbooks.

Although the universal access to primary education has been achieved, it remains problematic for children with special needs. Many children with special needs do not attend schools. In order to make sure that they are not left out of the schooling system, a special program “Inclusive Education” was developed in 2001 under the Ministry of Public Education, supported by UNICEF and UNESCO. Commissions were set up to help identify whether a child is able to attend a regular school or needs to be redirected to special boarding schools or sanatoriums. Currently, there are 40,000 children with special needs who receive state-supported education. (Government of Uzbekistan, 2006).

Private education

According to the Laws on Education (1992 and 1997), the operation of a private educational establishment is permitted. Several private educational institutions are being established, and their curricula and level of teaching are under evaluation at the Department for Accreditation of Educational Institutes (State Test Centre).

Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure

At the end of 1997, the situation was as follows:

- 393 schools, six professional schools and five secondary special colleges were in need of repair;
- 3,697 schools, 158 professional schools and fifty-five special colleges were located in buildings that had to be adapted for educational purposes;
- 10% of schools were not supplied with gas;
- 47% of schools had no sports halls;
• 40% of schools were not connected to the telephone system.

Compared to 1996, the number of pupils studying in one-shift schools decreased from 74.4% to 72.6%, while about 1.5 million pupils studied in two or three shifts. Out of 9,627 secondary schools, only half were equipped with computers, and only 10% of them possessed modern equipment.

The Government is providing textbooks for all levels of education. A wide reform of the content of education has been undertaken, especially in subjects such as history, geography, Uzbek literature and economics. New textbooks based on Latin script have been introduced in primary schools since 1996, with Uzbek language as the medium of instruction. Currently, textbooks are under review and new subjects will be added to the curricula. New types of schools specializing in foreign languages, economic issues and ecological problems are being established.

About 300 new educational institutions were created in recent years, including business schools teaching new specialties, banking colleges, colleges for girls and lyceums. About 800 students were sent to study abroad, several regional institutions have been promoted to university status, and 200 foreign specialists had supported educational developments in the Republic. New methods of teaching are being developed in order to modify the education system in the direction of greater effectiveness. Work is under way to raise the educational standards of the country and to better integrate Uzbekistan into the international community.

According to the Asian Development Bank, the delivery of quality education in rural areas is constrained by the poor school facilities. Buildings and equipment have deteriorated in past decades because of inadequate maintenance and scarce resources for rehabilitation. The Soviet-era construction standards used to build many rural schools were inefficient in the use of materials and energy, and structural capacity. Roofs, flooring, insulation, heating, and sanitation systems are particularly poor. (ADB, 2006).

During 2003-2004, a study was conducted among several basic schools to assess the needs of school children and identify main factors that affect the decreasing quality of education. The study revealed the main causes to be: lack of textbooks; high cost of textbooks; poor school facilities; low teacher salaries; lack of qualified teachers; and financial shortage in households. (Government of Uzbekistan, 2006).

**Adult and non-formal education**

All citizens, regardless of their age, have the opportunity to be trained in a variety of educational establishments such as vocational, specialized secondary and high schools, universities, advanced training courses, houses of culture, etc. Literacy is practically universal for both men and women (99.3% in 2003). However, considering that the government is implementing a long-term programme of transition from Cyrillic to Latin script, in the short-term there could be some changes in the literacy rate.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
Adults can continue their education in different ways: full-time training, evening schools, training by correspondence, family and extensive education, etc. The right of adults to education is laid down in the legislation of the Republic. Evening secondary schools and centres for adult education created on this basis are the most important educational establishments for adults.

Evening secondary schools (Grades V-XII) have a long tradition in the country. During the last three decades, the number of people entering these schools increased. These are mainly people who could not continue their education in full-time secondary schools. This trend is being reinforced due to the change in the duration of compulsory education, as students prefer to work after completing Grade IX and they continue to study during their free time.

Adult education, particularly in the transition period, plays an important social role and provides possibilities to improve the potential of manpower.

A network of Centres of Adult Education (CAE), based on evening schools, is being established in order to meet existing needs. These Centres provide theoretical as well as practical knowledge. There are fifty-four CAEs offering three years of education (Grades X-XII) in several professions, including: accountant, master of electronic equipment, designer, restorer, cooker, clothing-industry worker, stenographer, etc. Besides evening schools, there are also full-time training courses, the training by correspondence for working youth and consultative training centres.

There is a special national policy concerning adult education. In accordance with the Law on Labour of the Republic of Uzbekistan: an employer (State enterprise) is obliged to provide the necessary conditions for the combination of work and training; employees attending training courses have the right to additional leave paid by their employers and shortened working weeks; employees attending training courses at secondary schools have the right to a shortened working week or to a reduction of working hours; for employees attending training courses in village secondary schools, the working week is shortened up to two working days.

During the academic year, employees attending secondary schools may be absent from their work up to thirty-six working days (when there are six working days in a week) or for the appropriate number of working hours. During this period, they are paid at least 50% of their average month wage, and this salary should not be less than the fixed minimum wage.

Only government structures offer adult education programmes. In accordance with the Education Law, the Ministry of Public Education regulates the development of the adult education network jointly with local authorities, defines and recommends curricula, programmes and textbooks, and is in charge of the preparation of teachers. Current adult education programmes in evening secondary schools are the same as in regular secondary schools, but they are shortened.

The Ministry of Public Education and other institutions concerned with evening schools and CAEs ensure a permanent monitoring and evaluation. Reports on the development and the quality of training are considered by the boards of directors of public educational institutions.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
## Statistics on evening secondary schools (1995/96)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of schools</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Number of CAE</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evening schools (total)</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>47,100</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>6,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with full-time direction</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>24,800</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>training by correspondence</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>training by correspondence and with full-time training</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>17,800</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of the total number of secondary schools (182), where there are courses for:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- deaf and hearing-impaired</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>161</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- blind and vision-impaired</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>257</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent evening schools for the deaf</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>635</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>187</td>
<td>47,735</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which located in villages</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>14,800</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In addition to evening schools, there are full-time training courses and courses by correspondence as shown in the table below:

### Full-time training courses and courses by correspondence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Number of groups</th>
<th>Number of students (correspondence and full-time training)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V-IX</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>16,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>958</td>
<td>16,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3,233</td>
<td>52,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Out of the total number of Grade X students (16,300), 11,000 completed general secondary education (Grade IX) in the previous academic year. Out of the total number of students, 21,600 (41%) are women. Education is provided in seven languages.*

**Teaching staff**

In 2005 there were about 451,000 teachers at the basic education level, of whom about two-third had higher education. The retraining of teachers is a priority need taking into account the fundamental changes in the philosophy, content and methods of education. The current in-service training programme for teachers in rural schools is considered to be (i) too inflexible to adjust to changing requirements of a modern education system; (ii) too centralized, making it difficult for teachers from remote schools to participate, particularly female teachers who have families to look after; and (iii) too infrequent to update the knowledge and teaching techniques of teachers. (ADB, 2006).

Teachers’ salaries are lower than the national average (60%). In particular, they are 41% lower than the average in the industry sector and 39% lower than the average in the construction sector.

In 1998, the USTOZ Foundation awarded about 200 teachers a special fellowship in order to study educational innovations abroad. After their return to Uzbekistan, they will integrate a Mobile Training Team in order to share their experience with other teachers in the country.

**Educational research and information**

Several institutions in Uzbekistan are working in the field of educational research. Within the MHE, there is an institute which is working on standards and classification of the educational process. The National Educational Centre (thirty scholars) is established under the MPE and is in charge of research on curricula and textbooks for general education.

The USTOZ Foundation (seven scholars) is working in the field of educational innovations and technology. The new approach implemented by the USTOZ Foundation consists in creating CD-ROM versions of educational packages for distance learning. The activities of USTOZ are supported by the private sector.

The State Test Centre (120 scholars) is providing results of statistical research on quality of education in secondary schools and on improving the management of education. The State Test Centre is a very important source of information for the MPE. In addition, the Centre is preparing various computer software packages for assessing the quality of education in each educational establishment. Both USTOZ and the State Test Centre have branches in each district of Uzbekistan. There are also research groups of educators at the Tashkent State Pedagogical University and the Bukhara State University.

Current issues of educational research in Uzbekistan include: reform of the structure of educational institutions; reform of the educational process and content; establishment of a quality monitoring system; introduction of new information technologies in education; democratization and humanization of education.
References


Web resources

Ministry of Education and Science: http://www.edu.uz/ [In Uzbek, Russian and English. Last checked: October 2007.]


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