

## UNICEF EDUCATION

### Education Case Study

## UZBEKISTAN

### Curriculum reform to meet the individual needs of students

29 September 2021

In 2019, UNICEF intensified its technical assistance to the Government of Uzbekistan on curriculum reforms using a competency-based approach, working to combat low learning levels and the exclusion of children with disabilities, of whom only 40 *per cent* were in mainstream schools. Essential components of this reform were the proper use of assessment to track learning, the inclusion of all learners and instruction that is tailored to the needs of students at different levels. A new curriculum—with the inclusion of those with disabilities at its heart—was developed for Grades 1 and 2 that is flexible and focuses on learning. UNICEF helped shift the mindset in Uzbekistan from talking about what is taught to what is learned, breaking an engrained ‘one size fits all’ mentality, through advocacy and technical assistance.

When COVID-19 struck, about 6.2 million learners in Uzbekistan experienced education disruptions. Inconsistent access to and effectiveness of distance learning modalities across student groups resulted in substantial learning losses, exacerbating existing inequalities in learning opportunities and outcomes. When schools reopened in November and December 2020, UNICEF advocated for inclusivity. This complemented ongoing curriculum reform in the country and increased use of learning assessment, as well as teacher training on inclusive education and on tailored instruction in the classroom to students at different learning levels.

To assess and compensate for the learning losses, the Government, with UNICEF support, developed blended learning programmes as well as individualized learning remedial and catch-up programmes, which are currently being rolled out. These programmes aim to remedy lost learning and reorient instruction in the long-term, with a focus on grouping students according to their learning levels and teaching accordingly. UNICEF provided support to identify priority learning outcomes and success criteria, assess learning loss and knowledge gaps and design catch-up plans for students

lagging behind. The most experienced teachers led the individual or group catch up sessions. [Programme Guidelines](#), which included links to demo videos on using different online applications for teaching, learning and assessing, were disseminated across the country to teachers and principals.

## RESULTS

UNICEF Uzbekistan's commitment to inclusive education and providing tailored instruction to support student learning is reflected in the following key results:

- Since September 2020, the remedial education programmes have targeted 9,825 schools (98 *per cent* of schools in the country), expecting to benefit 4,437,262 students (2,189,273 are girls) in Grades 1 to 11.
- UNICEF supported the development and distribution of more than 30,000 information, education and communication materials related to remedial education. UNICEF also printed and distributed 10,000 guidelines for both teachers and parents to support blended learning.
- As schools prepared to reopen, UNICEF directly trained 500 teachers on how to implement blended learning and remedial education, including differential instruction in their classrooms. UNICEF also provided online and offline courses to teachers in all 9,986 schools across the country.
- For the new academic year in September 2021, to enable personalised and tailored instruction, UNICEF introduced a new competency-based curriculum and helped develop textbooks for

728,251 children newly enrolled in Grade 1 and 731,291 children in Grade 2. Complementary teaching and learning materials promote inclusion and uphold positive images of children with disabilities and ethnic minorities.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- **To minimise learning gaps among students, differentiation, ongoing assessment and use of data must be built into each class.** Teachers should develop lesson plans that include formative assessment as ongoing support for individual learners and differentiated activities. Better communication with and feedback from teachers helps students gain clarity on what they are expected to achieve and how that builds greater skills and knowledge.
- **Remediation is essential to mitigate long-term learning loss.** Continuing reorientation of instruction must also align with children's learning levels, which can be moving targets: teaching needs to remain flexible.

## NEXT STEPS

Next steps in the ongoing curriculum reform are developing a competency-based curriculum and teaching and learning materials for Grade 3, then incrementally for higher grades. UNICEF is working on developing guides for teachers as well as pre- and in-service training on differentiated instruction in the context of the new curriculum for primary school and inclusive education. The Government has already identified 42 schools for piloting, and a baseline assessment is underway.

**Cost effectiveness:** From 2020 to date, UNICEF invested US \$160,000 (US \$0.03 per child) in COVID-19 response, including remedial education and tailored instruction, benefitting 6 million students in Grades 1-11. In addition, UNICEF provided US \$150,000 (US \$0.10 per child) in curriculum reform, inclusive education and teacher training on differentiated instruction, benefitting 1.5 million children (50 *per cent* girls) in early grades.

For more information, please contact:

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