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UNESCO Almaty Cluster Office



**The Contents of Education
In Central Asia**



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- **The Contents of Education in Central Asia**
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QUOTE

Every child, youth and adult has the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term – an education that includes **learning to know, to do, to live together and to be**



UNESCO: The Contents of Education in Central Asia

Specific Aspects of the CA Education System

The CA countries inherited very strong educational traditions which now have to be evolved and modified within the context of need of the times.

The contents of education in CA have not met many expectations placed upon them by countries in transition – to promote change, to contribute within the regions for skill-based, high-technology economic growth and development.

- Facilities and books are often in short supply, teachers – undertrained and underpaid, curricula – outdated.
- Gender stereotyping needs to be addressed in education curricula.
- 20 million children in CA pitched into poverty
- Pre-school enrolment dropped to 15%,
- Upper secondary school enrolment fell to under 50% in Tajikistan, 65% in Kazakhstan, 75% in Kyrgyzstan%

(Source: EFA Global Monitoring report 2002)

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UNESCO: The Contents of Education in Central Asia Specific Aspects of the CA Education System

All the CA countries are now in **the process of reviewing and restructuring their systems and contents of education, facing major challenges:**

- quality of education, especially in rural areas;
- access to early childhood programmes;
- management of educational systems, monitoring of learning outcomes;
- production of textbooks with up-to-date contents;
- vocational education and life skills training for young people;
- qualified staff and training

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Specific Aspects of the CA Education System

The development of education systems and hence of human resources with economic capacity is crucial to the CA countries' sustainable development.

A transition from the “command and control” mentality to “a facilitate and service-oriented” approach is the key component to educational reform in CA.

There is clearly the need of **reforming in different areas of education:**

- decentralization, introduced in different areas of education;
- capacity building to improve skills in planning, contents, management, attitude change;
- improving of data collection and analysis for monitoring and evaluation, assessment of trends

The common challenge for all CA countries is **the need for political leadership to prioritize education and carry through whatever policy changes are appropriate to country' situation.**

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EFA National Action Plan and Millennium Development Education-related goals in CA

All CA countries have committed themselves to six objectives of EFA approved at Dakar Forum and to the Millennium Development Goals and responded to them according to their own situation in educational systems.

In each the CA country a commitment is made to:

- expansion of early childhood education;
- full access to general education with access on minorities, disadvantaged and vulnerable children;
- quality improvement measures including upgrading of facilities, provision of learning materials, teacher training and/or retraining, and development of assessment systems;
- gender balance in general education; reviewing national EFA plans from a gender perspective;
- providing more continuing education alternatives and expanding life skills training for youth and adults;
- improving education management and increasing financing for education

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EFA National Action Plan and Millennium Development Education-related goals in CA

At the same time all CA countries need technical assistance to move from **situation analysis of their educational systems and contents of education to actions of high priorities.**

It includes:

- highlighting major strategic directions;
- identifying specific targets and goals;
- possible models for further development of the educational systems to meet the priorities.

In all CA countries **the process of formulation and implementation of educational policies and the relative contents is hindered by:**

- budgetary constraints
- shortcoming in the area of effective legislation
- infrastructure
- equipment and supplies
- adequate human resources

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The Role of UNESCO in the CA countries

UNESCO mission :

- Promote education as fundamental right
- Improve the quality of education
- Stimulate experimentation, innovation and policy dialogue

UNESCO strategic objectives:

- coordination,
- strengthening partnerships,
- advocacy and communication,
- monitoring,
- capacity building

UNESCO works to:

- encourage the renewal of education systems and contents of education in the CA countries
- to make them more performing and inclusive
- to build up knowledge societies, grounded upon such values as equity, respect for cultural diversity and protection of common goods.

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The Role of UNESCO in the CA countries

UNESCO uses multisectoral and cross cutting educational approach and themes to impact poverty alleviation, sustainable development and promotion of universal values.

UNESCO sees poverty and education in CA as an interrelated process: regression in the education sector, especially basic education, is worsening the poverty situation, resulting in the rise of juvenile delinquency, unemployment, anti-social behaviour.

Setting targets:

- **Educational development**

Government initiatives towards improving their education systems in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan provide an entry point for UNESCO and respective donors to contribute to the process of development and reform in **the areas of short-term and long-term impacts.**

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UNESCO interventions

Long-term interventions:

- creating organizational, social, intellectual resources, incentives to influence educational policy and legislation (raising awareness, capacity building activities)
- providing assistance in strategic and innovative conceptions;
- creating an environment for acceptance of interventions by national educational authorities (social mobilization, advocacy , activities)
- broadening co-operation of NGOs, communities, civil society, government structures;
- creating policy dialogue.

Short-term interventions:

- promoting monitoring system for learning outcomes;
- improving learning-teaching environment;
- providing training for target groups;, updating knowledge and skills

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UNESCO Interventions

Implementation Steps

UNESCO's main form of intervention at the country level is **the provision of policy and strategic advice** to complement the efforts of other agencies to plan and fund specific programmes within EFA goals.

For the biennium 2002-2003 UNESCO strategy followed two main directions:

- **Basic education:** coordination of the follow-up the Dakar Framework of Action through dissemination of information, by helping member states to develop and implement National and Regional strategies, promote EFA partnerships, develop innovative methods of education and delivery systems.

- **Build Knowledge societies:** promotion of new approaches to quality of education as the education for a culture of peace, human rights, technical and vocational education; ICTs for education, sustainable development.

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UNESCO: The Contents of Education in CA Main Lines of Activities

Main Activities in 2002-2003:

- In 2003, the UNESCO Almaty Cluster Office initiated a project for “Technical Assistance to Countries Implementing EFA National Plans of Action”. The project was to provide the countries with advice and guidance in organizing EFA activities such as workshops, case studies and seminars in priority areas.

- During the 2nd Central Asian Education Forum, held in Bishkek on 5,6 June 2003, participants identified EFA thematic areas of priority for UNESCO assistance. These areas were **life skills and vocational education (Kazakhstan)**, **adult education (Kyrgyz Republic)**, and **girls education (Tajikistan)**.

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Main Lines of Activities

- Support was provided for the **Central Asian Education Forum thematic groups** to assist the three countries in understanding needs and defining actions in areas they identified as priorities.
- **Advocacy activities** included roundtables in rural areas of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan to promote EFA and the EFA action plans, production and distribution of advocacy materials (posters, calendars) publicizing EFA goals.
- **Capacity building of professionals**, teacher training workshops, case studies and seminars in priority areas contributed to raising awareness and provision of **policy dialogue with decision makers, establishment of monitoring mechanisms, development of educational programmes** for children, parents and teachers.
- Support has been provided to CLC centers **to set up a system of social partnerships providing access to life skills and livelihood education**

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Main Lines of Activities

- **The coordination and technical assistance** have been provided in the development of statistics, promotion of human rights, peace and democratic principles, identifying dissemination of best practices in EFA.
- **Promotion of democratic and human rights principles, fostering respect of universal values** and attitudes was ensured through training courses for youth mobile teams and youth leaders in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan.
- Conferences, research, mass media campaigns have been organized to **raise public awareness on the situation of neglected and street children** in the Kyrgyz republic to contribute to poverty eradication through social integration of the marginalized homeless young people.

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Main Lines of Activities

Partnerships:

- NGOs
- Communities and civil society
- International Donors' Group
- UN agencies
- National Commissions for UNESCO, UNSECO Chairs
- Government, educational authorities

The areas of collaboration with partners of the CA cluster countries in 2002-2003:

- Strengthening of inclusive approaches to education;
- Promotion of literacy and non-formal education
- Preventive education in response to HIV/AIDS pandemic;
- Information and communication technologies for education;
- Promotion of technical vocational education and training;
- Education for culture and peace, promotion of human rights.
- Collaboration with partners is aimed to build support for the EFA goals and draw upon the expertise of informed stakeholders and professionals.

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UNESCO: The Contents of Education in CA Future Actions and Support

UNESCO Future actions and support will be provided in the following areas:

- **monitoring and evaluation, policy dialogue and capacity building** to improve the education systems, contents and educational policies in the CA countries.
- **youth participation** will be ensured to build partnerships between young people and decision makers in the domains of secondary and higher education reforms, prevention of HIV/AIDS, science education, promotion of the culture of peace, human rights and social development.
- UNESCO will map in future years the extent to which the shift in policy and practice in support of EFA, MDGs is taking place in the CA countries, **analyzing the achievements and the progress of individual countries, educational policies and strategies** that are making a difference and investment in the sustainable development.

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UNESCO: The Contents of Education in CA Future Actions and Support

UNESCO believes in lifelong learning. It works at all levels of education to reach every age group, from early childhood to adulthood:

- Starting young
- Catering for children and youth
- Reaching the unreached
- Remembering the adults left behind
- Building bridges at the top – higher education

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Main Lines of Activities

- **Main Lines of Activities for 2004-2005:**
- Promotion of access to primary education for disadvantaged groups of children
- Promotion of the development of policies to improve access to ECCE in CA
- Advocacy for Girls' Education and Gender parity
- Support of Life-skills programmes for youth, especially in rural areas
- Promotion of Non-Formal Education
- Promotion of Education for Sustainable Development
- Promotion of improvement of secondary education, technical and vocational education and training
- Strengthening of national capacities to measure and monitor quality of education and learning achievements

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UNESCO: The Contents of Education in CA Main Lines of Activities

- Promotion of Preventive education
- Organizing Central Asian Education Forum
- Enhancing involvement of civil society and NGOs in National Plans implementation
- Strengthening of EFA communication, advocacy and information dissemination
- Promotion of human rights education, democratic and human rights principles.

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UNESCO: The Contents of Education in CA Conditions to Success

- Reform and restructure educational system and bring it in line with the developed countries to ensure horizontal and vertical movement of human resources both within CA and abroad
- Create content-subject areas to meet the challenges and demands of the new global economic systems that CA aspires to join
- Develop and improve the contents of education on the basis of rights-based democratic approach that integrates with sustainable development
- Create a skilled and professionally equipped educational work force that can meet the challenges of nationalism, regionalization and globalization

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UNESCO: The Contents of Education in CA Getting the Conditions Right

Education is a process with no quick fix solutions, with decisions which show the impact of number of years, efforts of partnerships.