Fifth North and Central Asia Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

Session 4: SDG 4 Quality Education

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Education as a main driver of development, but also in achieving the other SDGs (UNESCO, 2015)
### North and Central Asia

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Source: SDG Gateway Asia Pacific
What Sub-Regional Development Trends Have Significant Implications for Education?

Trends in Demographics
More than 50% of population in Central Asia are young people
External and internal migration, economic disparities and a decrease in youth labour force participation all have an impact on Targets 4.3 and 4.4.

Trends in Social and Economic Development
National budgets allocated to social development have grown slightly with a more inter-sectoral collaboration and integrated approach.
Skills mismatch between education and the demands of the labour market
Significant structural transformation and industrial modernization for economic diversification, private sector development and job creation due to the transition to a market economy over the last decades

Trends in Climate Change and the Environment
Natural disasters and environmental degradation affect access to education in the subregion.

Trends in Technological Development
Connectivity and ICT infrastructure is developing, but doesn’t cover all
Technology in education has become critically important as support of classroom interaction. Distance and hybrid education models have expanded which impact the internet connectivity, online teaching and an increase in smartphone use.

COVID-19 impact
Pandemic disrupted implementation towards many of the SDGs and, in some cases, turned back years of progress
In Europe and Central Asia average student achievement will decline by up to 6%
Target 4.1: Primary and Secondary Education
Target 4.2: Early Childhood and Pre-primary Education

- Almost universal provision and access to primary and secondary education
- Completion rates are low in upper secondary education
- Gross enrolment ratio for pre-primary education over the past years remains very low in Central Asia, where only four out of 10 children are enrolled.
- Almost full portion of children and young people achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics in Armenia, while other countries in the area lack certain data.
- Pre-school education is neither free nor adequately available in the sub-region – characterized by low enrolment, uncertain quality, and unevenly distributed resources across regions.
- Gap in access to pre-school education between urban and rural areas despite the Private- Public Partnerships (PPPs).
- Low levels of enrolment in pre-school education may have the following negative implications
Youth participation in vocational education is most popular in Central Asia, where the proportion of 15–24-year-olds enrolled in vocational education stands at 16 percent as of 2019.

The most prominent drop between upper secondary education and tertiary education is seen in CA, where the GER for tertiary education is 27 per cent, compared to 93 per cent in upper secondary education in 2019.

Lack of flexible pathways between education levels, widening inequality, and shortage of affordable higher education offerings.

Specific trainings related to different sectors of the labour market have become more popular and in demand of professional development, upskilling, and retraining.

Graduate employment is recognized as a key indicator for the relevance of TVET with regard to the demands of the labour market in CA.

Difficulties in moving from the traditional method of measuring qualifications levels by the duration of study programmes, rather than on the learning outcomes achieved.

More than half of youth and adults in Azerbaijan are equipped with basic information and communications technology (ICT) skills.
In Central Asia, the literacy rate has been close to 100 per cent regardless of age in recent years with gender parity achieved.

Exclusion from education persists, particularly for children with disabilities and those of ethnic minorities.

The issue of gender inequality becomes visible at higher levels of education.

Strong gender bias in the choice of profession or specialization made by female are mostly the sectors with low salaries.

Lifelong learning systems should also be founded upon the concepts of global citizenship and sustainable development, as well as the four pillars of learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be (Delors et al., 1996).

Lack of flexible pathways between education levels, widening inequality, and shortage of affordable higher education offerings.

Lack of reliable data in countries like Armenia and Azerbaijan lead difficulties in evaluating these targets in the area.
Recent policy efforts by the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan have focused on establishing resource centres to enhance the capacity of the multi-graded schools and support alternative boarding facilities and transportation services for pupils.

Action needs to be taken to develop labour market information systems, skills forecast, analysis of skills gaps, and mismatch in CA countries.

More state grants is urged to enable youth to obtain jobs in various business sectors, in order to increase opportunities for youth, especially those from rural provinces.

Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships has been declining for Armenia and Gabon.

Shortage of quality teachers is still a key obstacle to quality education.
The achievement of the SDGs – including SDG 4 – requires that even more attention be paid to Equity and inclusion

- Build education systems that embrace relevance and flexibility, and have equity and learning at their core.
- Remove barriers that hinder equity, inclusion and quality in education.
- Ensure an adequate and equitable supply of motivated, supported, qualified, resources and empowered teachers.
- Increase and ensure the equitable supply of suitable infrastructure, physical and digital resources, from basic necessities to digital technologies.
- Strengthen monitoring and use of data on the levels of learning and conditions for learning.
- Increase investment in education and ensure efficient and equitable resource allocation, as well as accountability in expenditures, through a progressive universalism approach.
- Strengthen and broaden partnerships across all actors in education from parents and caregivers, to international organizations and the private sector.

Overview on Sub-regional Progress on SDG 4
Thank you

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