2003- 2013 EDUCATION LEGACY IN TURKMENISTAN

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

OUR REACH

2,100 individuals from higher education institutions were trained on information communications technologies (ICT).

9,000 faculty members and future teachers were provided access to the Internet and to ICT resources for research purposes.

91 trainings engaged **3,203** participants on Active Learning Methodologies for teachers, trainers, and Ministry of Education staff in Lebap, Ashgabat, Turkmenbashi and Mary.

1,410 primary and secondary teachers and **172** school administrators from **249** schools in all regions of the country received training in integrated learning methods.

OUR PROGRAM

USAID's work has been crucial to helping Turkmenistan adapt its education system and incorporate research findings about how students learn best. For 10 years, USAID's education programs in Turkmenistan have focused on teacher training and community involvement in education. USAID promotes effective, accountable and sustainable education systems that utilize modern methodologies and emphasize critical thinking.

USAID has greatly increased the capacity of Turkmenistan's teachers to deliver interactive lessons and has trained school administrators to strengthen school management. To improve the effectiveness of parent-teacher committees, USAID programs taught teachers how to conduct more effective meetings and mentored parents in the preparation of their toddlers for school. USAID also introduced new and innovative teaching and assessment methods in schools; tens of thousands of teachers across the country are now applying these new skills in their classes.

Most recently, USAID supported the government's drive to use information and communication technologies in higher education institutions to promote student learning and professional development. By focusing on staff and teacher trainers, USAID and the Government of Turkmenistan ensured that a generation of new teachers will be better prepared and will make a more meaningful contribution to the teaching profession. USAID computer literacy courses allow teachers to work more efficiently on lesson planning, and the integration of technology into the classroom makes learning more exciting for students and teachers alike. Today, distance learning courses developed by USAID in Turkmen are available for free online through the Academy of Sciences.

TURKMENISTAN EDUCATION OVERVIEW

Around the world, people are embracing technology as a tool for improved teaching and learning, and Turkmenistan is no exception to this trend. However, the United Nations estimates that less than 10 percent of the total Turkmen population has Internet or a computer available at home. With the introduction of the government's e-Governance strategy in 2010, government record-keeping, public sector work environments, and health care systems are quickly moving to digital and computer platforms. As a result, a continuing education certification in computer literacy or in specific professional software is often now necessary to maintain or obtain a position or promotion in the public sector.

To prepare its students to be tech savvy, global citizens, Turkmenistan's first graders now receive netbooks when they enter the school system. The Ministry of Education is providing curriculum to ensure that information and communication technologies are integrated into daily planning and teaching. Thanks to President Berdymukhammedov's leadership, almost 90 percent of higher education institutions are equipped with interactive whiteboards, which allows faculty to bring a multimedia experience into their classrooms – modeling new ways of student-focused teaching to generations of future teachers. Secondary schools are closely following suit.

Turkmenistan also pays attention to global education standards and is taking steps to align its higher education system with the Bologna standards, so that the education of Turkmen students is recognized worldwide. But post-secondary education is only currently available locally to about 10 percent of the population, which encourages many students to seek study abroad. After several years of deliberation, in March 2013, Turkmenistan announced that it had adopted a 12-year school system – becoming the first country in Central Asia to embrace this international norm.

USAID is at the forefront of helping Turkmenistan's education institutions and educators use modern practices and cutting-edge technology to ensure that fewer students are left behind. Together, the governments of the U.S. and Turkmenistan have provided faculty, administrators, and generations of teachers and learners the ability to gain a 21st century skill set.

LOCAL PARTNERS   USAID's cooperation with Turkmenistan's National Academy of Sciences is founded on developing sustainable partnerships with and strengthening the in-house capacity of several local organizations, consistent with USAID Forward objectives. The following organizations reflect these partnerships.

HEMAYAT

Hemayat is a local organization teaching computer literacy, accounting and management. It is a leading provider of computer training to government agencies, embassies and international organizations located in Turkmenistan. Hemayat provides subsidized and free trainings to youth and disadvantaged groups as well using 13 staff across all five provinces. Hemayat is led by a former official from the Cabinet of Ministers and is licensed by the Ministry of Education to provide and certify training.

BILGIRDJE

Based in the Lebap region, Bilgirdje started working with USAID in 2003 through the PEAKS project. Bilgirdje teaches secondary-school teachers critical thinking and interactive teaching methods that are now standard features of the education system across pockets of Turkmenistan. Thirty-six staff provide trainings throughout the region. Areas of activity include computer literacy, pre-school education, active teaching methodologies, short training courses in English and Russian languages, and several management topics.

BUSINESS SCHOOL OF UIET

The Business School of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan (UIET) is run as a for-profit wing of a governmental organization. Private businesses are required to join UIET, but it does not provide training directly to government agencies or ministries. UIET has multiple classrooms in Ashgabat and a full training center in Dashoguz and Mary. UIET recently opened a new training center in Turkmenabad and is planning to open a center in Balkanabad as well.

USAID PROJECT OVERVIEW

PEAKS The Participation, Education and Knowledge Strengthening (PEAKS) project was USAID's first education program in Turkmenistan. From 2003 – 2007, it reached local educators with interactive teaching courses that enhance students' participation in learning. PEAKS introduced an approach to teaching that emphasizes active learning, problem-solving, and teachers as facilitators. Working directly in schools and at the community level, enthusiastic and energetic local trainers mentored teachers to better implement these new forms of behavior in the classroom. Teachers also learned to increase parents' awareness and involvement in their children's learning and worked with parents of pre-school age children to better prepare them for entry into formal schooling.

PICTT The Promotion of Information and Communication Technology in Turkmenistan (PICTT) project operated from 2009-2013 to build the capacity of faculty in higher education institutions to incorporate information and communication technologies in the teaching and learning process. USAID helped establish two technical support computer labs at the Academy of Sciences. These labs provided individualized training as well as group courses on topics ranging from using Moviemaker and PowerPoint in the lesson planning process to the application of Courselab with interactive whiteboards. Graduate students gained valuable training in research methods.

Through this project, USAID worked as a close partner to the Academy of Sciences, which is responsible for leading Turkmenistan's country-wide transition to e-Governance, to help Turkmenistan enter the third internet decade at full sprint.

QLP The Quality Learning Project (QLP) from 2007-2012 built on PEAKS' initial foray into reform of the Turkmen education system. QLP focused its effort on improving the quality of in-service teacher training programs. QLP actively engaged teachers, administrators and staff from in-service training institutions and bolstered their application and institutionalization of student-centered methodologies. Through this project, USAID delivered a series of 91 trainings in Lebap, Ashgabat, Turkmenbashi and Mary provinces, equipping more than 3,200 participants with new interactive teaching skills.

"We're not dependent on USAID to keep improving education in Turkmenistan. We're grateful for the ideas and skills and will continue on our own"
– Hemayat Project Director

"The creation of digital materials and web-content in Turkmen language is an absolute must of the modern information age. USAID does a great job providing us with all the necessary resources to develop our own products. Without comprehensive technical support and continuous encouragement of staff, I would hardly be able to get through all the nuts and bolts linked to publishing e-lessons and websites."
- Graduate student from the National Institute of Culture

LEGACY OF OUR WORK

USAID built the organizational capacity, training expertise, and subject knowledge of locally licensed providers of educational services who will to continue to deliver fee-for-service trainings in response to the needs of the Ministry of Education.

A series of courses are now available in Turkmen and Russian to improve the application and integration of technology in the teaching process, including courses on computer and internet basics, interactive multimedia boards, Photoshop, CourseLab, Microsoft Office products, Windows 7, and Moviemaker.

Information communication technology is now being promoted as a driver for organizational change and learning through the use of intranet, virtual e-chemistry labs, and interactive multi-media whiteboards.

Distance learning courses in Turkmen - a first and major feat - are available for free online through the Academy of Sciences.

2003 — USAID begins Turkmenistan education programs

Parents and teachers learn new ways to engage in children's learning

2007

2009 — ICT and whiteboards are introduced in higher education

USAID partners with in-service teacher training institutes

2011 — Turkmenistan integrates E-Governance into the public sector

Turkmenistan begins giving netbooks to all first year students

USAID develops free online education modules in Turkmen

2013 — Turkmenistan moves to 12 year schooling

Last year of USAID education activities in Turkmenistan

Interactive methods are standard in Turkmen schools

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