

Central Asia Education Platform NEWSLETTER

Newsletter #13 October 2018

A newsletter published by CAEP — a project funded by the European Union's Programme for Central Asia

Editorial

Dear colleagues,

In mid-October CAEP organised two events in Tashkent. The first one was a “hybrid” webinar on gender equality in education, with some 30 representatives attending in person - delegates from Ministries and HE and VET institutions as well as education and gender experts from the region and EU Member States - along with a number of other experts who participated online.

The second event was the Regional Seminar on “The role of education in supporting social inclusion and resilience against radicalisation in Central Asia and the EU”. For the first time, UNESCO, OSCE and UNICEF participated in a CAEP event, demonstrating the interest in and relevance of CAEP to policy dialogue on education in the region.

Both events highlighted that although progress has been made to better address the needs of both women and marginalised groups in education, work is still needed to strengthen the capacity of education systems to reach out to all learners. One example shown of how this can be achieved is through the use of local community initiatives such as the Mahalla Foundation in Uzbekistan.

We were pleased to hear both the Latvian and Polish ambassadors emphasize the importance of the outcomes achieved by CAEP so far, as well as their ongoing support for the implementation of project



activities. Both the platform and overall policy dialogue between the EU and Central Asia is greatly profiting from the readiness of these member states to share their good practice.

The CAEP Team would also like to express their thanks to the Ministry of Higher and Specialised Education Express (MSSHE) of the Republic of Uzbekistan for their support in implementing the webinar and seminar.

November will see a further example of cooperation between international organisations and donor-funded projects supporting reforms in Central Asia. The Education and Sports Conference in Ashgabat will host a variety of sessions looking at how cooperating with international organisations can assist the development of Turkmenistan's modernisation efforts, with the participation of a number of EU-Turkmenistan bilateral projects, the European Training Foundation and CAEP. Topics will

include linking employment policies with education strategies, developing qualification frameworks and education management.

CAEP is delighted to be able to contribute to policy dialogue through this event and further support education reform in Turkmenistan.

Christian Wagner
CAEP Team Leader

Also in this issue:

Report from the Regional Seminar on Social Inclusion



Report on the Webinar on Gender Equality



British Council report on Internationalisation of Kazakhstani Universities



This project is funded by the European Union

This project is implemented by a Consortium led by GOPA Consultants



Regional Seminar on Social Inclusion held in Tashkent



The latest CAEP Regional Seminar, on 'The role of education in supporting social inclusion and resilience against radicalisation among youth in Central Asia and the European Union' took place in Tashkent this month.

At the Second Meeting of Ministers for Education in Astana in June 2017, the role of education in preventing and countering violent extremism among young people was identified as a priority for EU cooperation in the field of education and training in Central Asia, in line with the global commitment to Sustainable Development Goals, in particular to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (SDG 4).

This seminar, which was organised in order to contribute to regional policy dialogue on the topic, was opened by the Deputy Minister for Higher and Specialised Secondary Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Mr. Uzokboy Begimqulov, the Delegation of the EU to Uzbekistan's Head of Cooperation, François Begeot, and Latvian and Polish Ambassadors, H.E. Mihails Popkovs and H.E. Piotr Iwaszkiewicz.

Delegates from Central Asian HE and VET institutions and community associations joined members of EU institutions and other relevant organisations, as well as a number of Uzbek media outlets.

During the morning sessions, representatives from the

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), UNESCO and the Mahalla Foundation in Uzbekistan shared their approaches to strengthening social inclusion, including Global Citizenship Education, the strengthening of transversal skills and specific teacher training (UNESCO), and the self-governing Mahalla Institution reaching out to families, religious groups and youth.



The afternoon saw parallel workshops tackle the role of non-formal and community approaches, as well as presentations of case studies from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and the EU member states of Poland, Latvia and Romania.

Participants came to the conclusion that a continuation of the discussion is highly recommendable, to ensure equitable access to quality education for all, in particular for those leaving school too early or for parts of the population living in more rural areas and thus not profiting from the same quality education offered in the larger city centres – a phenomenon to be observed both in the EU and in Central Asia.

CAEP Review Report on Social Inclusion

At the Regional Seminar in Tashkent, Mr. Jan Helbich, CAEP Education Expert, presented a summary of the findings of the CAEP review report on the role of education in supporting social inclusion and resilience against radicalisation among youth.

The report presents a background of existing policies and frameworks that promote social inclusion and looks at the role that international organisations, such as the UN, OSCE, the Council of Europe and the World Bank play. A total of 14 good practice examples of initiatives aimed at fostering social inclusion in and through education in both Central Asia and the EU are showcased.

The eight case studies from Europe include a German programme that teaches Syrian university scholarship holders about democratic societies and sustainable economic policy, and the Youth Counselling Against Radicalisation (YCARe) international project that assists youth counsellors to support vulnerable youth.

The six example initiatives from Central Asia include the Central Asia Institute (CAI) which promotes education, especially of girls, in the mountainous regions of Tajikistan, and a programme that provides vocational training opportunities to street children in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The report identifies two fundamental challenges in building young people's resilience against radicalisation: (i) risks are highly dependent on the country context and its vulnerability to violent extremism and a 'one size fits all' approach cannot be used; (ii) the amount of evidence available for country specific policy making is limited and political commitment is varied.

Nevertheless, there is a common understanding of the important role that education plays in addressing the drivers of violent extremism, and the report makes a number of recommendations on how to move forward, at policy, programme, government and institutional levels. The role of the private sector, the media, and community and leisure initiatives



are also highlighted. A full copy of the report will be available on the CAEP website shortly.

Webinar on Gender Equality in Education



Another priority area that was discussed at the Second Ministerial Meeting in June 2017 was the issue of gender equality; with all ministers welcoming the exchange on how education can contribute to addressing gender inequalities.

This web-based seminar on gender equality in HE and VET took place the day before the Regional Seminar in Tashkent and followed previous webinars organised by CAEP on Quality Assurance and Accreditation and National Qualifications Frameworks. It had the character of a “hybrid” webinar-seminar, with the physical attendance of representatives from Ministries of Education and Labour, HE and VET academic staff and education and gender experts from Central Asia and several EU Member States, along with the online participation of other experts from the Central Asia countries and ETF.

The webinar kicked off with an introduction to the preliminary findings of a recent CAEP report on gender equality in education (see next article) by education expert Ms. Dilbar Turakhanova. Examples of good practices and existing challenges from Latvia, Poland and Romania were then presented, with the opportunity for questions from participants. Ms. Zarina

Chikibayeva from the Bologna Centre in Kazakhstan outlined some of the tools being used to strengthen gender equality in the country, and the Chairman of the Women's Committee of the Khokimiyat of the Chilanzar District of Tashkent, Ms. Ganieva Galnora, put forward case studies from Uzbekistan.

The discussions showed that although much has been achieved in terms of gender equality, inequalities still exist. While women make up 75% of all academic staff in education, they are still largely under-represented in the top positions (rectors, school directors, leading roles in ministries) and a strong gender bias also exists with women choosing “female” professions in social areas and education, rather than in technical subjects. This gender segregation is highly visible in the labour markets, where a pay-gap can also be seen. Finally, the collection and processing of gender data in education has room for improvement. However, the discussions also showed that the attending representatives are aware of these challenges and welcome the steps currently being undertaken to contribute to more gender equality in education both in the EU and Central Asia.

CAEP Review Report on Gender Equality

In preparation for the webinar, CAEP experts carried out a review report on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) in Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Central Asia.

The objectives of the review were to study the current situation in the region, identify good practices for policies, methods and instruments supporting gender

equality in both Central Asia and the EU, and establish a common basis for knowledge and understanding of gender relevant issues in HE and VET. Findings have already been published on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, with Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to be added at a later date.

The following common challenges were identified in the three countries:

- A lack of effective system-wide approaches to gender mainstreaming in education and research;
- No provision for mandatory gender expertise in national legislation;
- Most good practices on GEWE in VET and HE, except for those identified in Kyrgyzstan, were developed externally, e.g. with use of donor resources;
- National capacities for gender equality in the Ministries and in VET and HE institutions require particular attention.

However, good practices were identified in all countries, with some examples being: the Injener Qyzdar (IQ) scholarships for women studying engineering and technical subjects at the Eurasian Technological University in Kazakhstan; The Center for Critical Gender Studies established by the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) in Kyrgyzstan; and the Gender Equity Model Programme (GEMP) to promote the enrolment of women and girls into VET in Tajikistan.

The report proposed the following recommendations:

- The introduction of a system-wide approach to gender mainstreaming in education and the adoption of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) for Ministries and VET and HE institutions;
- The introduction of gender experts in the development of education and training curricula, teaching and learning materials;



This project is funded by the European Union



This project is implemented by a Consortium led by GOPA Consultants

Central Asia Education Platform NEWSLETTER

A newsletter published by CAEP — a project funded by the European Union's Programme for Central Asia

- The implementation of various strategies to encourage women to select non-traditional occupations;
- More active engagement with civil society organisations and the private sector on GEWE in HE and VET.

The results of the gender review will be used to further discussion among policy makers, education practitioners and related stakeholders in the framework of CAEP. The full report will be available on the CAEP website shortly.

Report on Internationalisation at Kazakhstani Regional Universities



The British Council have published the findings of their 2017-2018 research into internationalisation at regional universities in Kazakhstan. This is part of their work to support the reforms to modernise and internationalise the country's HE system, and specifically looked at what has been achieved by the universities so far and the challenges still being faced, as well as identifying cases of best practice.

The main findings of the research were that:

- Universities are fully aware of the necessity and benefits of internationalisation and already have strategies in place;
- There are regional issues such as youth population emigration and funding availability;
- Russia, neighbouring and East European countries are the main collaborators;
- The major barriers for collaboration are cost and language;
- New, innovative approaches are needed.

As part of the research project a new Self-Assessment Tool on internationalisation was designed to be used by the six participating institutions. The aim of the tool was to provide a clear picture of a university's involvement in internationally related activities and three areas were covered: internationalisation; governance and quality assurance; and curriculum and student care. This tool is available to all as part of the report and can be a useful instrument for any Central Asian university to help identify strengths, barriers and opportunities in their existing internationalisation strategies and develop future university policy.

The full report can be found on the British Council website: www.britishcouncil.kz/programm/education/ihe

"Save the date": Next CAEP events

December 10 – 12, 2018

*5th Working Group meeting on Evidence Based Policy Making in VET and HE
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan*

December 13, 2018 (tbc)

Webinar on Innovative Teaching Methods

January 16, 2019 (tbc)

Webinar on Financing of Education Systems and Institutions

In the next CAEP Newsletter issue #14 (December 2018):

1. Review of CAEP series of Webinars
2. Report from Education & Sport Conference in Ashgabat
3. Outlook on CAEP closing Regional Conference and final steering committee meeting

Contact:

Christian Wagner
CAEP Team Leader
E-mail: christian.wagner@proqualityconsult.de

Dilyara Woodward
CAEP Communication Expert
E-mail: dilya_woodward@mail.ru

Nanna Pedley
CAEP Communication Expert
Email: nannapedley@gmail.com

Address:
GOPA Consultants
Hindenburgring 18
61348 Bad Homburg, Germany
Tel: +49 (0) 6172 9300

Website: www.caep-project.org



This project is funded by the European Union

This project is implemented by a Consortium led by GOPA Consultants

