



ANTI CORRUPTION AGENCY
OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

YUKSALISH
NATIONWIDE MOVEMENT

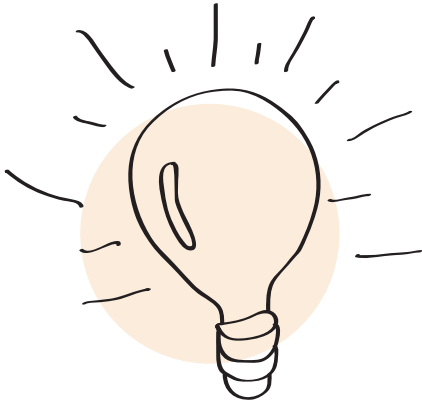


REGIONAL DIALOGUE
Branch Office in Uzbekistan



FINAL REPORT ON CORRUPTION RISK ASSESSMENT IN ADMISSION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tashkent – 2022



BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to assess corruption risks and their factors in the process of primary school enrollment using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. To obtain objective and all-inclusive data, surveys have been conducted in all regions of the republic among three respondent groups – those directly participating in the primary school enrollment process: parents of first graders, primary school teachers (questionnaire surveys) and school principals (individual interviews).

Results of the mixed research method demonstrated six major factors of corruption risks:

- 1 Admission to primary school
- 2 Lack of budget funding and its transparency
- 3 Lack of infrastructure, provision and logistics support of schools
- 4 Lack of qualified pedagogical staff
- 5 Low level of school employee salaries
- 6 Violation of integrity and ethics in public education

All factors are closely interdependent. Within the scope of assessment of each of them, the analysis of institutional and legal framework, respondents' perception of a problem, their experience, suggestions to make changes (improve) a situation has been conducted and expert findings from the viewpoint of corruption risks and recommendations on reducing influence of these risk factors on corruption

risks in the form of corruption and unethical behavior have been made.

This work included preparation of initial analysis of the selected matter using statistical data of the Ministry of Public Education, national and international reports and reviews on this matter, analysis of legal framework and publications in mass media and social networks, as well as information received following the meetings with general secondary education personnel and study of public opinions posted in social media.

Based on the initial analysis results, questionnaires have been compiled to conduct surveys and interviews. Thereafter respondents have been interviewed and the data obtained have been analyzed to present the survey findings in this document.

Survey findings have shown that the majority of corruption risk factors and the risks themselves are caused by non-transparent school enrollment system, non-transparent and inefficient school budget funding system, non-transparent and inefficient system of distribution and use of allocated resources, as well as by absence of a legally regulated capability of provision of financial aid to schools by parents in case of lack of budget funding. Lack of budget funding, in its turn, leads to the lack of necessary infrastructure for optimal activity of schools that is also one of the factors contributing to emergence of corruption risks. Unqualified and unethical behavior of the school enrolment process participants is also partially due to non-transparency of the process and distrust toward the public education system, lack of qualified human resources and low salaries of general education institution employees.

This document is intended for use by the Anti-Corruption Agency, Ministry of Public Education, leadership of the education system and other ministries and agencies, teachers, public figures, journalists,

international donors, as well as all others concerned with learning the causes and effects of corruption and dishonesty in the admission process to secondary schools of the Republic of Uzbekistan. This survey may serve as a good platform to work out recommendations for relevant entities and further implementation of effective measures to prevent corruption in the school education system.

The study based on opinions of respondents reflects the situation and problems in the process of enrolment of children to secondary schools, as well as in secondary education as a whole. This report contains findings of the research, which was conducted with the support of international experts in line with world standards of corruption risk assessment, as well as recommendations on reducing the influence of corruption risk factors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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GLOSSARY / LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

INGO – International Non-Governmental Organization

NWM – Nationwide Movement

MPE – Ministry of Public Education

DDPE – District department of public education

HEI – Higher education institution

PETS – Public expenditure tracking system

Corruption risk – possibility of corrupt behavior

Corruption risk factor – everything that leads to corrupt behavior

Discretion powers – collection of rights and obligations of a government agency or officials giving a government agency or an official the power to choose, at their own discretion, the type or content (fully or partially) of a managerial decision to be made

Micro-area – the area where a school related to the place of family registration is located.

1. INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE “ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIRST ANTI-CORRUPTION LABORATORIES IN UZBEKISTAN” PROJECT

Final report has been prepared as part of the “Establishment of the First Anti-Corruption Laboratories in Uzbekistan” Project initiated by the Nationwide Movement “Yuksalish” and being implemented jointly with the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan with financial and expert support of the US Department of State through INGO “Regional Dialogue” (Slovenia).

Advantage and current relevance of the “Establishment of the First Anti-Corruption Laboratories in Uzbekistan” Project is that no mechanism for corruption risks research and their management was in place in the country until present, a mechanism that is supposed to be the foundation for development of anti-corruption measures, policies and strategies. Anti-corruption laboratories represent an expert platform for identification, analysis, scientific and systematic assessment of corruption risks in various fields of social life on a republican scale in order to develop recommendations for reduction of these risks.

Main objectives of anti-corruption labs are creating the corruption risk assessment methodology, study of experience and public perception related to corruption and unethical behavior, development of theoretically and practically justified recommendations based on conducted

research for further implementation of measures for risk management and mitigation. Ultimate purpose of the research is to create the mechanism for corruption risks research in line with international standards.

It is expected that the corruption risk assessment mechanism developed will become the platform where anti-corruption recommendations in different fields will be worked out.

2. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Education embraces the most fundamental needs and involves the larger part of population. According to the Ministry of Public Education's data for 2021, we are talking about more than 10,000 schools across the country, 6 million pupils, more than 500,000 teachers and countless parents and families. Over the years of the country's independence, the education level of pupils and teachers dropped extremely low, and nowadays education is one of the areas requiring radical reforms. That is why assessment of corruption risks in admission to school has become the subject of the first anti-corruption laboratory.

In addition to corruption factors and risks, research findings point at deep structural problems, reasons for which rest with legislative and institutional foundations of the public education system. The most significant challenging factors are as follows:

1. Enrollment procedure to first grades of general education institutions is specified by the Administrative Regulations for provision of public services on enrollment of children to public general education institutions, approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No.469 dated June 7, 2019, through the online-queue platform qabul.maktab.uz.

There are two types of school enrollment quotas – main and additional. Main quota is intended for those living in the micro-area, which is attached to a certain school. Additional quota is generated from the

available capacities of an educational establishment to enroll pupils from other micro-areas. Absence of the unified information on admission, enrollment criteria for additional quota and inefficient information sharing about the enrollment process for all interested parties results in consistent corruption risk factor and unethical behavior.

2. In 2017, centralized financial and accounting services have been established in regional (city) departments of public education in order to raise transparency and strengthen public control of the budgeting process, reporting in educational entities and to increase responsibility and discipline. However, the mechanism of fund distribution among schools remains non-transparent, enhancing the distrust toward activities of MPE and schools.

3. Construction of new schools and infrastructure development, strengthening the material and technical facilities of general education institutions is carried out within the scope of annual centralized investment programs for three types of work (new construction, capital improvements and capital repairs). This program covers about 350-400 schools per year.

At the same time, scheduled maintenance of schools (maintenance of heating, roofing, cold water supply, sewerage system and fencing) is performed when necessary at the cost of local budgets. These works usually cover

around 10% of schools a year. In practice, established departments for coordination and monitoring of proper operation of public education entities do not entirely satisfy daily needs of general educational entities due to limited personnel and material resources and long distances between schools.

4. Numerous regulatory documents have been enacted over the recent years with regard to salary increases and material incentives for teachers and employees of general education schools specifying the size of increases and their payment terms. Every document sets out the number of hours in a teacher's full-time employment (hourly workload), yet the number of hours per full-time employment is changing frequently. All of the above leads to various interpretations and applications of rules and regulations, and non-transparency of the salary formation process worsens this process even more.

5. Due to low occupational prestige of a teacher, there is significant lack of personnel, in particular young education specialists. This problem also mirrors in insufficient qualification level of school teachers that hinders the successful execution of tasks set before the general secondary education system and contributes to the growth of inequality between schools.

Major staffing issue, which needs to be solved urgently, is prevalence of teachers with secondary specialized education in lower elementary school grades where primary skills and motivation for knowledge acquisition is usually formed. Oftentimes specialists with secondary specialized teacher education degrees are not capable to ensure a good quality level of education that is caused by limited number of hours

designated for pedagogics, psychology and subject teaching methodology in pedagogical colleges. Therefore, graduates of pedagogical colleges do not have necessary qualifications to evaluate the acquisition quality of taught material, its perception by pupils, as well as experience of establishing a psychological connection with kids. In highly-demanded/overfilled schools, which were included in the survey, teaching staff have higher pedagogical education, whereas specialists with secondary specialized education teach in lower elementary school grades in the majority of schools of the republic. This leads to inequality between schools, grades and, consequently, to unequal opportunities to get quality education. Inequality, in its turn, is a corruption risk factor in admission to primary school, as well as in the process of getting education.

Lack of teaching personnel in Russian-medium schools is a special matter. Majority of teachers working in Russian-medium classes, who teach exact and natural sciences, represent retired or soon-to-retire group of population, and often do not have skills of proficient use of up-to-date information technologies that became an important part of the education process nowadays. In addition, higher pedagogical education institutions produce insufficient number of school subject teaching graduates able to teach in Russian (there are no Russian-speaking graduates at all for some school subjects). Consequently, lessons in these classes are conducted by non-native speakers and it seriously affects the level of learning necessary school subjects by pupils.

6. Professional integrity of school employees and ethical behavior within the educational process are regulated by a Charter of a general educational

institution, where rules of conduct of school employees, parents and pupils are specified. Ethical code, rights and obligations of teachers and administrative personnel manifested in a school charter are not implemented in practice, because they are introduced without a fundamental analysis of existing ethical problems. Moreover, perception and behavioral experience of other parents and school employees influence the formation of ethics concept among parents.

All the above-mentioned factors are the causes of negative perception in the society undermining credibility to political, organizational and financial efforts of the government in this field and they are supported by the respondent answers. Every factor is discussed separately in Chapter 4.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research conducting mechanism includes the following 4 stages:

1. Developing the research methodology:

- ✓ defining the subject and research methods;
- ✓ identifying the target group;
- ✓ population sampling;
- ✓ determining the required number of experts and research participants for conducting surveys;
- ✓ setting deadlines.

2. Statistical and situational analysis, which includes:

- ✓ Description of legal and institutional framework in school enrollment to identify accepted, but not working practices, gaps and legislative clauses that represent corruption risk factors;

- ✓ Analysis of mass media, social media, scientific papers on the subject under review, detection of practical cases in the process of primary school enrollment.

3. Surveys of target groups by means of questionnaires and interviews are aimed to:

- ✓ reflect the practical experience of people who encountered cases of corrupt nature;
- ✓ learn the perception of corruption, experience, causes of professional dishonesty, violation of ethics and their consequences, opinions of relevant groups of population, as well as problems that different respondent groups are encountering;

4. Preparation of the final report with recommendations:

- ✓ assessment of corruption risk factors and comparison of all collected data, their summary in the final report, expert opinions and working out recommendations on what actions should be taken to minimize the effects of these factors on the process of admission of pupils to first grades of a primary school.

5. Public monitoring of implementation of recommendations:

- ✓ Engaging the general public to monitor the implementation of measures recommended in the final report.

Survey coverage: throughout the entire country, including regional centers, industrial cities, district centers, and larger rural settlements.

Survey target group: parents of first graders, elementary school teachers, school principals.

End beneficiaries: Ministry of Public Education, Anti-Corruption Agency, Nationwide Movement "Yuksalish", parents of pupils, school principals and teachers.

Data collection methods: The data was collected in two ways: questionnaire survey among teachers and parents, structured interviews with principals. Identity of every respondent remained fully anonymous while collecting data. Prior to the start of

the data collection process, interviewers and volunteers went through a specialized briefing on conducting questionnaire survey and interview with each group of respondents.

To conduct the questionnaire survey, 114 schools have been selected randomly. It is slightly more than 1% of total number of 10,002 public schools in all 14 regions of the Republic ¹, taking into account their territorial location and planned capacity. Out of those selected schools, 21 schools are located in regional centers, 31 – in regionally governed cities, 31 – in district centers, and another 31 – in large rural settlements.

Table of sampling for the questionnaire survey is presented in Attachment 1.

Schools that are in good demand among population, in particular, those with mixed language of instruction, have been selected for the survey. The number of pupils in these schools exceeds their capacity factor by 2-3.5 times and, therefore, represents a corruption risk factor enabling displays of corrupt and dishonest behavior related to violations of micro-area regulations and lack of infrastructure.

The purpose of schools coverage in large rural settlements was the study of actual public demand for good-quality education considering the growth or decline of social infrastructure locally regarding the school places and sufficient staffing level of teaching personnel in educational entities and the assessment associated with these problems of corruption risks.

¹ According to the data of the Ministry of Public Education for 2020.

The survey across all 14 regions of the republic included 114 directors, 1,740 teachers, 3,420 parents (5,274 people). In fact, 4,920 people or 93.3% of respondents participated in surveys and interviews.

Individual format of a questionnaire has been developed for each respondent group. Questionnaire for parents contained 62 questions, questionnaire for teachers – 55 questions. Interview with principals included 18 questions. Considering the sensitivity of the matter, every respondent group was investigated in the context of victimization resulting from corruption risks in the general secondary education system.

Questionnaires for teachers and parents contained three sections, consecutively

developing from simple questions to more “sensitive” questions. First section aimed to examine the overall awareness of respondents on the school enrollment system, their perception level of instances of corruption. Second section intended to learn the personal experience associated with existing problems and school enrollment practices. Third section aimed to determine the attitude of respondents toward off-budget payments, their causes, equivalents of informal payment, as well as to receive proposals to change the situation.

Graphically, the concept of questionnaires for surveys looks as follows:

ALLEGED FACTORS AND MOTIVES FOR CORRUPTION AND UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR FOR THREE GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

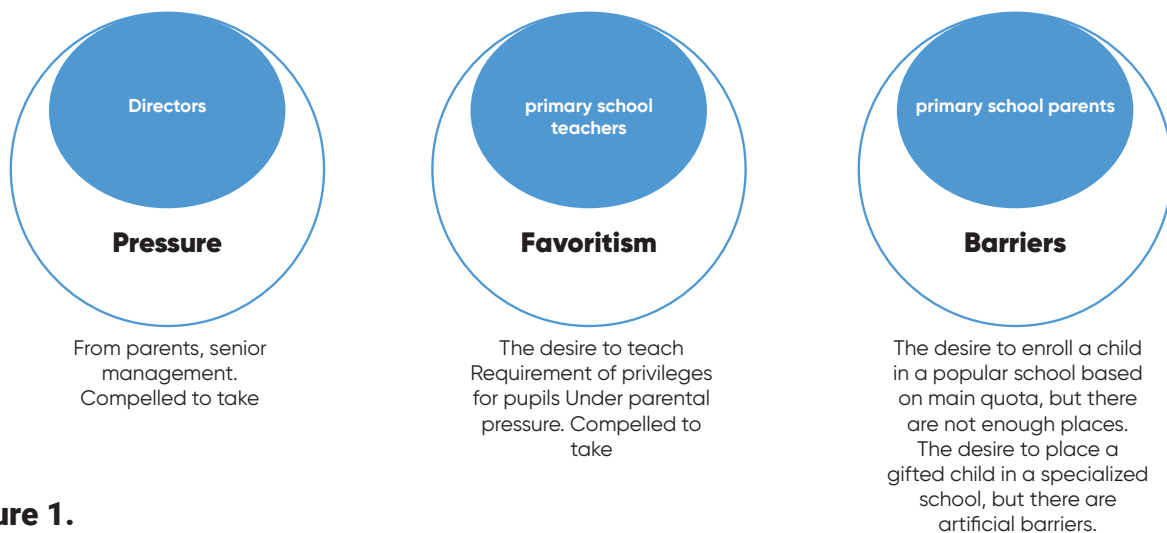


Figure 1.

Questions were composed on such a basis that different respondent groups, depending on the degree of applied/ experienced pressure, shortages in the system they face or guided by the experience of other process participants, are forced to violate the professional integrity and demonstrate dishonest behavior.

Questionnaires developed with the help of a psychologist and international experts help to present a viewpoint, understand the mood and tendencies in the society and highlight the problems that are not clear to government entities. The questionnaire design allows respondents to also write comments and suggestions on how

transparency and accountability can be ensured during school enrollment.

Pilot study in two Tashkent schools has been used to do the “calibration” of questions in surveys and for interviews. In order to conduct the study, Anti-Corruption Agency made an official letter to the Ministry of Public Education with the request to support conducting the research studies in schools.

Questionnaires have been adjusted to conduct surveys on a republican scale based on the pilot data analysis.

The survey has been conducted in every school by four employees: two employees were holding an interview with a school principal (one person is asking questions and having a conversation, second person is writing down the answers and own observations of reactions to questions), third employee was working in the lecture

hall with teachers and the fourth – with parents. Surveys were taking from 40 to 60 minutes in all three groups. The data collected have been entered into a special Excel template, where they were systematized for further analysis.

Data from each region was entered in a separate table. Therefore, total number of tables amounted to 14, in accordance with the number of regions of the Republic. Every table contains 12 worksheet tabs – 4 each for every of all three respondent groups – teachers, parents, principals: city, district, village, totals. To analyze the data across the country, a table was created to consolidate data of all regions and it contained 8 worksheet tabs: one each for every respondent group and tabs for open questions with comments, classifying the comments by the most popular subjects and problems.

4. CORRUPTION RISK ASSESSMENT RESULTS IN SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

4.1 ADMISSION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL

Enrollment procedure to first grades of general education institutions is governed by the Regulation on general secondary education approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 140 dated March 15, 2017 ², as well as by the Administrative

Regulations for provision of public services related to admission of children to public general education institutions approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 469 dated June 7, 2019. ³

Section 5 of the Regulation on general secondary education, approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 140 dated

³ <https://lex.uz/uz/docs/3137130>

⁴ <https://lex.uz/uz/docs/4367850>

March 15, 2017, specifies assigning of micro-areas, which have a certain number of households, to schools. So, every school is attached to a micro-area, which includes multi-family buildings and private residential houses, by the resolution of a district khokimiyat on an annual basis. According to Item 39 of the mentioned Regulation, teachers of a given school shall perform door-to-door canvassing to spot school-age children.

According to Item 41 of the Regulation, the school administration is accountable for timely provision of school education to school-age children.

Item 42 of the mentioned Regulation sets out that 6-7-year old children are enrolled to the first grade based on the medical examination report. Whereas, according to the Law "On education" ⁴ this age shall be 7 years of age, children who reached this age by December 31 of the current year can be enrolled this year.

Thus, we have a disagreement between the Regulation and the Law concerning the school age. Thereby, the Law is prevalent, and children shall be admitted to school from the age of 7 in practice.

In Item 44, it is determined that children are enrolled to the first grade of a general educational institution regardless of their level of preparedness. Nevertheless the school administration can take a decision on enrollment or refusal to enroll a child based on results of the interview with psychologist.

Coexistence of two legal and regulatory acts with regard to enrollment of children

to the first grade creates complications in implementation of these acts and, therefore, can be a factor and a cause of corrupt or dishonest behavior.

Demand for schools providing high level of education resulted in introduction of two kinds of enrollment quota for general educational institutions – main and additional.

These quotas are formalized in the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 173 "On improving the activities of public specialized general education establishments with in-depth study of certain subjects" ⁵ and applied both for general education schools and specialized schools.

Main quota is generated by district (city) khokimiyats from among school-age children living in the assigned micro-area.

Additional quota is generated from the existing capacities of an educational institution for children, who are not a part of the main quota, and intended for school-age children living within or outside the micro-area.

Admission of additional quota children to general education schools is carried out by principals of correspondent general education schools on the basis of general requirements set in line with the Regulation on general secondary education approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 140 dated March 15, 2017.

When analyzing above-mentioned legal acts, questions arose concerning the

⁴ <https://lex.uz/uz/docs/5013007>

⁵ <https://lex.uz/uz/docs/1382112>

formation and implementation of additional quota. So, it is unclear upon what criteria a principal considers candidates for additional quota? Where the list of enrolled first graders is published? Is the proper assessment of psychological suitability (according to the unified accepted standard) of a child to study in a school in place in the process of enrollment?

Furthermore, until August 31 of the current year, parents of 6.5-year old children willing to study in the first grade shall pass the consultation with teachers and psychologists of general education schools on the matter of a child's physical and psychological preparedness to school.

ONLINE-QUEUE SYSTEM QABUL. MAKTAB.UZ

"Administrative Regulations for provision of public services related to admission of children to state general education institutions" specify the procedure for enrollment of children to general education establishments through the online-queue system qabul.maktab.uz for submitting documents to public general education institutions that is integrated in the Single Portal of Interactive Government Services.

Queue reservation is provided for in the online-queue system both within the micro-area ⁶ of a school and outside the micro-area. However, the option to reserve a place in the queue to submit documents is available only for those children living within the micro-area and not available for those whose place of residence is registered outside the micro-area, restricting the option to choose the school. ⁷

It should be noted that with regard to generation of main quota, following issues are not regulated: Who will directly determine the number of quotas? Who will be accountable for validity of quota-related numbers? How the wishes of parents will be taken into consideration? How this process will be documented? What is the communication and information strategy for effective interaction with parents in all regions and micro-districts of the country regarding the process, procedure and regulation of enrollment?

Non-availability of detailed and unified information on admission and inefficient information sharing on the admission process for all concerned parties leads to a consistent factor of corruption risk and integrity that influences corrupt and unethical behavior of concerned parties who usually either govern themselves based on previous own experience or experience of others or based on perception of such experience.

PERCEPTION OF RESPONDENTS

Results of the questionnaire survey among school teachers have shown that 47% of respondents believe that the school enrollment system is working well, 25% think that the system has weaknesses, but works well in general. At the same time, 72.3% of participants responded that the main and additional quota system in the school enrollment process is effective, while 28% disagree with them. 52% of respondents think that the enrollment procedure is regulated efficiently enough at the legislative level. Thereby, 33% of

⁶ Micro-area of a certain school can be found on the platform <https://xt.uzedu.uz/Home/GPS/>

⁷ Remark by authors: The system was unavailable for children outside the micro-area at the moment of survey and became available from the beginning of 2021-2022 school year.

teachers responded that the procedure needs improvements with consideration of best international practices.

Analysis of parents' responses to the question "What system of document submission for school enrollment would you prefer?", 46.1% of respondents answered that online-system is preferable since it is convenient and saves time, and 15.3% responded that submission in person is preferable since they do not trust the electronic system or have limited access to Internet. Out of all interviewed parents, 55% of them are aware about two enrolment quotas, while 45% are not aware about this procedure. Only 17% of parents took advantage of the additional quota in 2020/2021 school year.

At the same time, concerning the question "What caused your child to be enrolled through the main quota?", 26% of parents responded that they put all efforts to enroll their child to a given school despite the fact that they are part of the school's micro-area. 38.3% of parents

have intentionally tried to enroll their child through the additional quota.

Concerning the online-queue system introduced in all regions since 2020/2021 school year, 45% of interviewed parents pointed at insufficient information awareness, 28% haven't even heard about this system. Due to this reason, 76% of parents did not use this system when enrolling their child to school. At the same time, 56% of parents find this method convenient.

The highest level of interest to the issue of enrollment and quotas was brought to light among principals of general education schools. Compared to other areas of research, nearly 15% of respondents expressed their opinion on this matter with suggestions to change this system. School principals in the Namangan region, for instance, spoke in favor of cancelling the additional quota for schools, which have a shortage of capacity to enroll pupils, i.e. it was offered to take quotas into account in accordance with capacities of schools.

WHAT METHODS WOULD PARENTS USE TO ENROLL THEIR CHILD IN SCHOOL? (%)

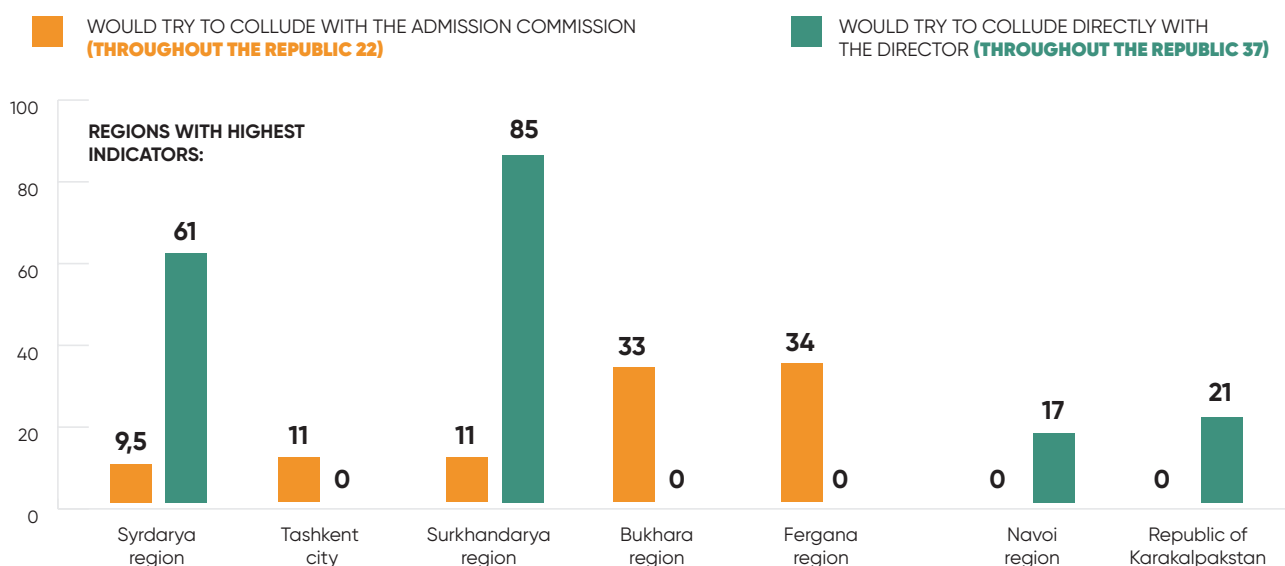


Diagram 1.

These results prove the above-mentioned problem of inefficient information exchange about legal norms and procedures, as well as wide discretionary powers of school principals that urge parents and school administration to circumvent regulatory obstacles and uncertainty by way of direct negotiations to solve arising issues. Thus, these factors lead to risks of corruption and dishonesty in the form of corrupt and unethical behavior of concerned parties.

EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS

Analysis of open questions among teachers generated a fair amount of proposals that the enrollment should be carried out only on the main quota basis. The highest percentage of respondents supporting this form of school enrollment showed the Syrdarya region (50%), Jizzakh (26%), Kashkadarya (18%), Samarkand and Navoi regions (11%). The following regions spoke in favor of the necessity of the main quota and enrollment of gifted children instead of the additional quota: Andijan region (24%), Fergana region (20%), Surkhandarya region (11%) and Bukhara region (8%).

Experience of parents was revealed in the question "What difficulties did you encounter during enrollment of your child to the first grade?". 22% of interviewed parents across the entire republic encountered the shortage of places. The problem is particularly acute in Navoi (41%) and Kashkadarya regions (28%). Shortage of places for pupils is less mentioned in Jizzakh (8.3%), Fergana (8%), Samarkand (9.7%), Khorezm (10.3%) and Syrdarya (11%) regions.

The problem with the choice of teaching language was mentioned by 18% of parents on average. This problem stands

out clearly in the Samarkand region (30%), in Andijan and Fergana regions – 26% each, in Tashkent region and the Republic of Karakalpakstan - 23% each. In other regions, parents raised this issue in 8-12% of comments.

19.3% of respondents across the republic were not able to enroll their children to the preferred class (or teacher). The highest numbers are registered in the Samarkand (33%), Khorezm (32.4%) and Syrdarya (30%) regions.

Interestingly that 59% of interviewed parents rejected the necessity to look for unofficial ways to enroll their child to school. However, attention should be turned to the fact that respondents in Surkhandarya (24.3%), Namangan (22%), Kashkadarya (21%) and Andijan (20%) regions mentioned that they always have to employ informal ways meaning that every 4-th or 5-th parent in the country has to resort to informal ways of school enrollment.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL PREPARATION OF CHILDREN DURING THE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

The issue of psychological maturity and insufficient socialization of children stands out clearly in the comments of teachers and principals. This problem found itself in third place by popularity of comments among teachers after such matters as salaries and overcrowding in classes. Need for interviews with a psychologist and a teacher was mentioned to various degrees by teachers in all regions. Majority of comments on this matter was received from teachers in the Bukhara (48.5%), Jizzakh (33%), Khorezm (28%) regions and the Republic of Karakalpakstan (26%).

Teachers report a clear psychological unpreparedness of some children to school and society, physical unpreparedness and absence of logical reasoning due to failure to ensure full coverage of pre-school education. It is confirmed by comments of the teachers who pointed at the need for pre-school education of children. Teachers from nine regions of the republic expressed themselves on this matter, whereby the highest numbers were recorded in the Fergana region – 38%, Andijan region – 37% and Khorezm region – 36%.

School principals have also talked in their interviews about the absence of shaping and development of skills and logical reasoning from an early age in families. The problem of weak connection between pre-school education and elementary school has been also raised. Principals also underlined parents' provision of health certificates issued to children by outpatient clinics, which do not always reflect their actual health condition.

Absence of reasonable and accessible pre-school education should also be considered as a factor of corruption risk and integrity in terms of the school enrollment process. Unschooling and unfit children neither physically nor mentally or educationally will be still enrolled to a school regardless of the need for medical examination that will lead to corrupt or unethical behavior of parents, teachers and school principals who will try to bypass the rules and regulations on mandatory medical examination. Moreover, disproportionate enrollment of these children and other children who also found a way around the rules either in terms of a micro-area or in terms of the age and who cannot be rejected in admission, because the right to school education is a fundamental constitutional right, creates

problems with overcrowded classes. Ultimately, classrooms and teachers face the problem of lack of technical and learning materials, teachers bear higher workload and all of that results in declining quality of education for pupils. This is just one of examples when even a minor discrepancy and possibility of discretion in one regulatory act may lead to corrupt and dishonest behavior and cause even more global implications for the quality of public education.

TRANSPARENT ENROLLMENT

In the course of conducting the surveys, it was discovered that parents, for example, would like to see how many free spots and classes are available in the school they have chosen. Teachers also think that a free access to such information is a natural right of parents. So, all three respondent groups spoke in favor of a transparent school enrollment. In particular, 26% of interviewed parents supported ensuring transparency and accessibility of enrollment data. At the same time, 11% of teachers in Samarkand region, 10% in Kashkadarya region and 8% in Bukhara region also deem it necessary to ensure transparency in the enrollment process.

Altogether, 3.7% of principals spoke in favor of the need to ensure transparent school enrollment, among other proposals. It is remarkable that the majority of proposals on this matter was received from the school principals in the Samarkand region (14%). Notable amount of comments on this issue came in from principals in Navoi, Fergana, Jizzakh, Tashkent regions and Tashkent city (6-8%).

LANGUAGE-RELATED ISSUE IN THE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Regarding the answers to the question “If your child had to pass a language exam as part of school enrollment, would you still try to enroll your child to the school of your choice?”, average numbers of responses to this question across the republic look as follows: 66% of parents said “Yes” and 34% said “No”. Thereby, more than 70% of respondents in Namangan and Fergana regions gave positive responses, while these numbers in the Navoi region and Tashkent city were 10% lower than across the republic in general.

Meanwhile, comments given by respondents show that the language-related issue is particularly acute in Tashkent. Most parents are willing to send their child to a Russian-medium school even if it will be hard for a child. For those parents it is important that their child knows at least two languages. In the regions, on the contrary, parents think that a child should have a good command of the language of instruction in order to receive good-quality education.

Consequences of meeting the requests of parents to assign their child to a Russian-speaking class at any cost affected the problem raised by teachers. To the question “List the most common problems with pupils”, 17.2% of teachers interviewed across the republic pointed at pupils’ poor command of the language of instruction. Thereby, this issue is mostly apparent in Tashkent city – 45%, Navoi region – 25%, Republic of Karakalpakstan – 23% and Namangan region – 20%. This is not considered to be a major issue in Surkhandarya – 3.3%, Andijan – 4.5% and Syrdarya – 6.5%.

Both teachers and principals complain about the lack of Russian language skills among pupils whose parents insist on education of children in Russian-medium classes. Under these circumstances, self-esteem of children is dropping due to lack of understanding of the study material and the inferiority complex is developing. As a result, educational retardation begins because parents are also not capable to help out with their homework. Rights of other children are violated because a teacher spends time allocated to the lesson to explain the study material in two languages and has to provide material, which is understandable for educationally retarded pupils, while more progressive pupils feel bored that is particularly relevant in classes with in-depth study of subjects.

All 10 interviewed school principals in Tashkent raised the language-related issue. For instance, school principals in Jizzakh region say that quotas are not sufficient for Russian-speaking classes. In rural Uzbek-medium schools, for example, there is demand for more hours of the Russian language. Principals in the Namangan region note the lack of Russian-speaking teachers in the elementary school and non-availability of such teachers in senior classes. Principals in Kashkadarya think that there is demand for Russian-medium classes in any area, however, resources are not provided for this purpose. Comments received from interviews with school principals in Tashkent suggest to legalize refusal to enroll children who do not know the language of instruction of a school.

These suggestions may serve as evidence that legal provisions can represent a significant factor of corruption and dishonesty risk that leads in future to corrupt and unethical behavior and, consequently, improvement of these

provisions and rectification of gaps in them can minimize corruption and dishonesty risks. However, in this case, it would be necessary to take into consideration other implications too, namely, if certain cases of refusal to enroll are legalized then how and to what schools will the “rejected” children be admitted?

SUGGESTIONS OF RESPONDENTS

In many answers to open questions, regional teachers suggest to replace the additional quota by enrollment of gifted children. These suggestions are most commonly given by teachers from the Fergana and Andijan regions (20%) and by nearly 10% of teachers from the Surkhandarya and Bukhara regions. Teachers insist to introduce psychological, pedagogical and maturity assessment of children’s preparedness to school in the enrollment process based on a relevant interview. Many teachers particularly emphasize the necessity of pre-school education of children in children’s pre-school establishments. In addition, many suggestions were presented on the matter of fundamental change of the school enrollment system based on international practices, including based on digital technologies, and ensuring transparency and public control.

In principle, parents support an online enrollment system yet they prefer to submit documents to schools in person. Principals, mainly, suggest to arrange enrollment of children by way of an interview with participation of parents that would ensure, above all, transparency and examination of a child’s preparedness to school in order to efficiently distribute pupils to classes considering physical and mental workload, as well as work experience and qualification of elementary school teachers.

It is remarkable that when providing suggestions to improve the school admission system, 73% of teachers from Karakalpakstan, 14% of teachers from Tashkent and 9% from Surkhandarya expressed their opinion on examination of linguistic preparedness. Teachers suggest to introduce mandatory and independent testing for children’s preparedness to school and for knowledge of Russian for Russian-medium schools and classes. “A child doesn’t have to learn the language, a child should be taught in this language” principle is suggested to eliminate the language barrier between a pupil and a teacher.

Regarding the medical examination, nearly one half of teachers and principals suggest to establish independent medical board during the school enrollment in order to ensure trustworthy examination of children’s health.

CONCLUSIONS:

Identified problems with insufficient awareness of parents about the enrollment procedure, existence of quotas, lack of transparency and absence of certain criteria for language-related selection to primary grades have been actively emphasized by all respondent groups, regardless of the location of an educational entity.

1. Despite the work carried out by public education entities on site, analysis of the survey results demonstrated a clear lack of awareness of parents about the school enrollment procedure, including the quota system (main and additional) and language-related selection criteria. Joint work between schools, pre-school educational establishments and mahalla citizens’ gatherings in this area is organized ineffectively and is usually of sporadic

nature. All of this contributes to emergence of unwanted practices (corrupt and unethical behavior).

2. In the process of enrollment to Russian-medium schools, there are no clear criteria for Russian-medium or mixed-medium school enrollment that is considered a corruption risk factor, because demand for such schools is high. On the other hand, the Ministry of Public Education aims toward satisfaction of population's needs to receive education on chosen language and, therefore, criteria for enrollment of children to Russian-speaking classes are not in place. So, school principals, using their discretionary powers and under the pressure of parents or superior authorities, open additional Russian-medium classes forcing parents to circumvent rules and negotiate with the school administration on possible unofficial ways of enrollment, whereas the school administration is prone to accept services, off-budget payments and other material aid in the overcrowded school without additional technical facilities and proper maintenance.

3. As a result, considerable number of parents, guided by the right to education, strives to assign their child to a class where education is conducted in the language non-native for the child. Therefore, they make teachers first to teach their children the language and then provide knowledge that very negatively affects the quality of education in primary grades and quite often gives rise to just criticism from teachers and parents whose children are fluent in the teaching language with regard to irrational use of allocated teaching hours.

4. Results of respondents' comments concerning the psychological and pedagogical immaturity of children in

school enrollment point at the necessity for compulsory organized pre-school training of children and base pedagogical training of parents themselves.

5. Absence of practical and prompt organization of targeted medical examination of children for provision of required health certificates to educational establishments gives rise to corruption risks when issuing health certificates. This results in incorrect diagnostics of anthropometric measurements of a child and, consequently, to incorrect distribution of physical and mental workload of children in the primary school.

6. Schools covered in the survey, as a rule, are in high demand among people thanks to presence of well-qualified teachers that is backed by responses and comments of parents. While school principals mention critical shortage of experienced qualified personnel, young specialists are not keen to work in schools. This fact represents one of the factors for corruption and dishonesty risk in school enrollment, because parents make the school administration to violate professional integrity and accept children on top of the additional quota oftentimes for the chance to get into the class with a certain teacher that may also lead to overcrowding of classes and schools on some occasions.

7. Thus, it was identified that at all stages of generating the main and additional quota, acceptance of documents and school enrollment of a child, as well as in the course of distribution of children by their linguistic choice, participation of parental community, representatives of mahalla gatherings, field specialists (psychologists, pediatricians, speech pathologists) can be observed quite poorly. It is the result of missing transparency

of the school enrollment process, which is also absent in planning and school construction processes. In its turn, this leads to serious underfinancing of schools, absence of basic technical and sanitary conditions, insufficient supply of books and study materials, overcrowded classrooms, work overloads of teachers and school administration resulting in worsening of education quality as a whole.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the analysis of answers from three respondent groups (teachers, parents of first graders and school principals), following recommendations have been developed by the anti-corruption lab experts to minimize corruption risk factors in the process of school enrollment:

1. To develop a unified open data platform that includes the number of open spots in the main and additional quota covering all public and pre-school education establishments with the option of online-enrollment to first grades with no need for parents to visit a school (equivalent to the Unified Information System for Education Management of Armenia, see Attachment 2). The platform would ensure corruption risk mitigation through provision of criteria and information about the school enrollment, availability of places, transfer, expulsion of pupils, registration of children in pre-school establishments, etc.

2. To study the link, quality and transfer between pre-school education establishments and primary schools.

3. To design and implement the package of measures on effective and accessible

awareness-raising of parental community about the procedure of online-enrollment of children to primary grades of general education schools.

4. To organize regular awareness-raising activities on the procedure of primary school enrollment of children with participation of general education school administration among parents of graduate groups of pre-school education entities.

5. To organize thematic meetings on the procedure of first grade enrollment of children at the place of residence of parents whose children are not included in pre-school education establishments.

6. To work out and organize Open Doors Day in every school for parents of future first graders to raise their awareness about the procedure, document acceptance deadlines and conducting interviews.

7. To take into account the capacity of an educational institution and availability of sufficiently qualified teachers when establishing the additional quota.

8. To develop comprehensive organizational measures to ensure transparent school enrollment of children, providing therein wide participation of parental community, representatives of local communities, subject-matter experts (psychologist, pediatrician, speech pathologist and pedagogue) for children and consultations for parents, preferably with accessible online-application and using the best world practices of enrollment.

9. To critically study the need for psychologists and other required subject-

matter experts and make psychology specialists available in all general education institutions.

10. To develop and approve clearly defined rules for enrollment of children to classes with the teaching language, which, along with justified criteria, is not the child's native language and he/she struggles to communicate in this language. Rules should include interviewing based on which an additional regular training supervised by a specialist should be provided. The aim is to exclude difficulties, especially with regard to child's acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary to study in primary grades, and for teachers – to implement set objectives on educational standards in full.

11. Considering the above-stated recommendations, to work out the issue of simplifying the school enrollment procedure ensuring the interests of parties and excluding risk factors of informal relations as specified in Recommendation 1 above.

12. To critically investigate the existing procedure for issuance of special health certificates (Form 086/U) and ensure authenticity of medical examination and reconciliation with reality. To review the capacity to arrange specialized medical examination on site in the enrollment process.

13. To study the chain, openness, transparency and sustainability of school funding and targeted use of funds. To develop more efficient funding structure of public education institutions and legally adjust voluntary financial aid from parents for school needs.

14. It is important to weaken the influence of corruption and dishonesty risk factors, which lead to corruption and

unethical behavior (financial support for school needs in exchange for enrollment of a child from another micro-area, use of falsified medical certificates to secure child's admission to school, etc.), such as:

- ✓ deficiencies, inconsistencies and powers in regulatory acts and documents related to enrollment process;
- ✓ serious underfinancing of schools due to various reasons (embezzlement, misuse and misappropriation of funds, etc.)
- ✓ inefficient information sharing with parents on enrollment in all regions of the country;
- ✓ inadequate assessment of school capacities, on which estimations of the main and additional quota is based (majority of teachers and school principals, as well as parents suggest the number of children in one class not to exceed 20-25);
- ✓ inefficient and vague chain of subordination between regional and local departments and schools of MPE given the high level of latitude and absence of transparency and reporting of MPE departments;
- ✓ lack of training and practice in the field of integrity within MPE and school personnel that is, in addition, not supported with reasonable transparency and reporting mechanisms.

4.2 LACK OF BUDGET FUNDING AND ITS TRANSPARENCY

Accounting departments of general education institutions were discontinued in 2017⁸. Pursuing the aim to increase transparency and enhance public control of the budgeting process, improve the budget funding mechanism, accounting and reporting in general education institutions, increase accountability in the context of enhancing budget discipline in subordinate entities in district (city) departments of public education, established centralized financial and accounting services did not explicitly lead to positive effects.

Tasks of centralized accounting services included centralized compilation and execution of cost estimates, payroll accounting and payment of salaries, purchase of goods, works and services, keeping records of budget and off-budget funds in subordinate entities, as well as monitoring of revenue flows from goods (works, services) depending on their primary activity.

However, nearly 10% of directors mentioned the problematic nature of this system, because they can more accurately estimate the needs of their schools and effectiveness of financial autonomy of their educational entity.

When interpreting the survey results, it should be noted that, at present, there is no legal and regulatory control of the matter of using off-budget school funds for performance of works and services

(extended daycare groups, additional classes, tutoring), as well as in relation to financial support being received from parents and sponsors.

Analyzing the perception and experience of parents, teachers and principals with regard to school funding, the issues of discrepancies between purchases of goods, works and services by centralized accounting units under MPE departments and school needs, whereas absence of open and transparent data on distribution and use of budget funds by MPE and centralized accounting units leads to underfunding of schools, have caused big concerns. In its turn, this makes school principals, parents and teachers to display unethical (sometimes corrupt) behavior in the form of an offer, provision and acceptance of off-budget payments aimed at satisfaction of financial and operational needs of a school.

At the same time, it should be noted that financial autonomy system of schools, which was in place from 2005 to 2017, allowed general education institutions to plan and exercise their financial powers based on school needs.

LACK OF TRANSPARENCY AND FUNDING

PERCEPTION OF RESPONDENTS

Issues related to financial activity of a school have been actively discussed by all respondent groups. Analysis of responses of the survey participants found its reflection in the following numbers. 71.5% of teachers in all regions of the

⁸ <https://lex.uz/uz/docs/3323262> Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated August 21, 2017, No. PP-3231

country mentioned that the information about financial activity of a school should be transparent and accessible for all interested parties. 45% of teachers are not content with transparency, completeness and accessibility of financial and budget information of DDPE and schools.

Teachers from Tashkent city, Fergana, Navoi, Jizzakh regions and the Republic of Karakalpakstan represented the highest values (from 52% to 65%) in terms of mentioning the insufficient funding in their school. Teachers ranging from 31% to 43% in Andijan, Syrdarya, Khorezm and Surkhandarya regions also pointed at insufficient funding.

Regarding the question on openness of financial activity of schools, opinions of parents have divided as follows: 45% of interviewed parents consider the information to be sufficiently open. Thereby, 26% of the survey participants do not know how and where such information can be received. 16% of respondents are not quite content with openness and accessibility of such information, while 13% are fully dissatisfied with it. 42% of parents think that schools lack public funding. 31% of parents are not aware of problems with funding.

11.3% of school principals expressed their opinions regarding the matter of insufficient transparency of financial reporting. Most often, principals from Fergana and Syrdarya regions (14% of responses) raised this issue as problematic. Respondents mentioned that, at present, financial documents related to the activity of schools are transparent roughly by 10%.

The issue of providing financial and material aid from parents has been actively discussed by all three respondent groups. Opinions and suggestions have been given on the necessity for legal regulation of this matter and transparency of the process.

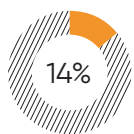
Lack of financial resources to accommodate the school needs often leads to the practice of informal payments for partial maintenance of a school activity. 47% of teachers think that financial support of a school on the part of parents is necessary, but it should be provided optionally. 26% welcome such support if transparency of registration of such support and expense reporting of received funds will be ensured. 19% of respondents explicitly support the necessity of financial aid from parents.

REASONS FOR EXTRA-BUDGET PAYMENTS IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

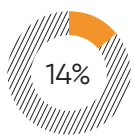
TEACHERS



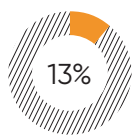
Low wages of education staff



Insufficient allocation of funds for school needs



Lack of an open financial reporting system in the Ministry of Public Education and its departments

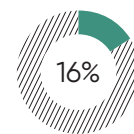


Due to certain actions of public education departments, the funds do not reach schools

PARENTS



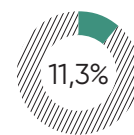
Low wages of education staff



Insufficient allocation of funds for school needs



Lack of an open financial reporting system in the Ministry of Public Education and its departments



Due to certain actions of public education departments, the funds do not reach schools

Diagram 2.

83.3% of principals welcome the financial support of schools from parents. Regarding the question “Can parents provide voluntary financial aid to the school if there is a lack of budget funds and it affects the efficiency of education in the school?”, almost a half of 114 interviewed school principals support provision of aid to schools from parents on a voluntary basis, explaining it by lack of budget financing. 33 principals also welcome the voluntary aid to school under the condition that aid provision and reporting system will be transparent and endorsed legally. 16 principals think that education should be fully free of charge and, consequently, spoke against the acceptance of aid from parents.

Separate responses speak for a complex state of affairs. Among them, for instance, following comments: “I did not get a single pen from the budget for 2 years. In despair, I seek help from parents”; “Due to lack of financial resources, schools have to seek aid from parents and sponsors”; “School budget must be prepared by the school itself”; “Rural schools are devoted less attention in terms of funding”.

EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS

12% of interviewed teachers confirmed that there is a practice of informal payments aimed at satisfaction of school needs. Most often, parental aid is directed to the education process needs (textbooks, school books and study materials) – 30%; school or classroom repair – 22%, extra classes in addition to the curriculum and electives – 17% and 22% for cultural and educational events (excursions, theater visits).

Teachers are compelled to seek aid from parents due to lack of budget funding. 19% of respondents confirmed this. The highest numbers of this answer option are given in Kashkadarya, Tashkent and Namangan regions – from 26% to 30%. At the same time, almost 11% of teachers on average spoke against this aid provision practice. Most of all, this practice is not supported in Samarkand, Jizzakh and Bukhara regions – from 14.5% to 28%.

SCHOOL NEEDS, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF TEACHERS AND PARENTS

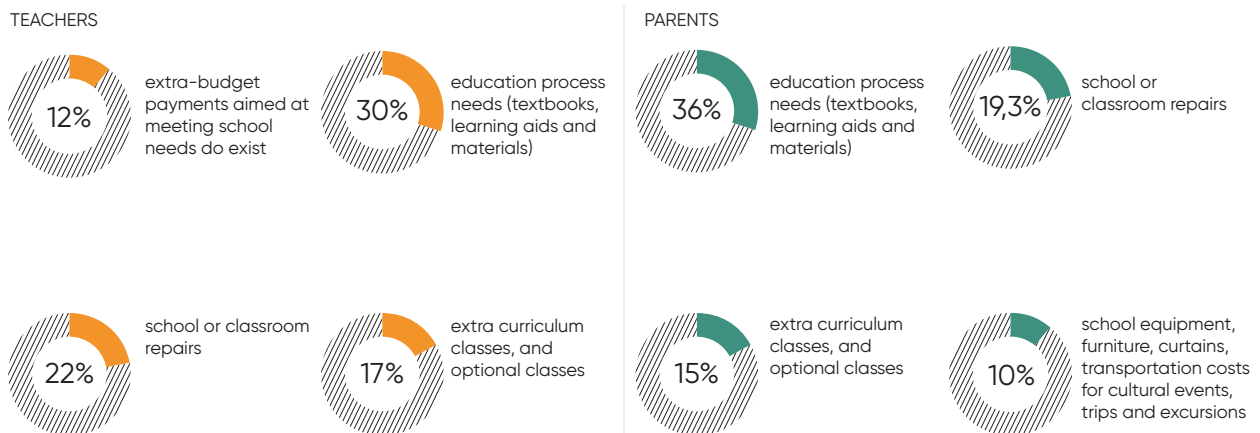


Diagram 3.

Regarding the matter of providing financial aid to the school during enrollment of a child to the first grade, based on personal experience, responses of parents divided into following directions: the answer option “In the form of rendering any service (personal participation in the school repair works)” was chosen by 35% of parents; 70% of parents noted that the school did not reach out for help and that’s why they did not provide any help. However, instances of participation in improvement works of the school area confirmed 28% of respondents. In their comments they emphasized that financial aid to a school from parents was taking place and should be provided upon their wish, depending on financial state of a family.

At the same time, there were also such comments as: “Endless needs of schools lead to money collection among parents”. For instance, 36% of interviewed parents across the republic pointed at the necessity of parental aid for the educational process needs (schoolbooks, study materials, etc.). 19.3% of parents mentioned the need for parental aid for school or classroom repair works. 15% of respondents tell that financial aid from parents is needed for extra classes and electives. Up to 10% of parents answered that help is needed for school equipment, furniture, curtains, transportation costs for cultural and educational events, trips and excursions.

Meanwhile, in response to the question “How did you find out that you have to provide aid or payment to the school?”, 40% of parents selected the option “I was told directly”. Thereby, the highest number of this option was selected by respondents in Surkhandarya (82%) and Syrdarya (50%) regions. The lowest number of responses was given in the Navoi region – 13% and Tashkent city – 15%. The option “No one

asked for help, I did that myself to facilitate/ speed up the enrollment procedure” was chosen by 27% of parents. The highest value was shown by Tashkent city – 50.5% and Jizzakh region – 46.5%. These numbers across Navoi, Surkhandarya and Namangan regions vary from 15% to 18%. At the same time, 23% of parents mentioned that they found out that it is a usual practice in a school from other parents/relatives/friends. Similar responses were received in the Navoi region from 70% of respondents and in the Republic of Karakalpakstan (45%). The same option was selected in Surkhandarya (3%), Bukhara (11%), Syrdarya (12%), Andijan (9%) and Jizzakh (9.5% of parents) regions.

SUGGESTIONS OF RESPONDENTS

In their interviews, 33% of principals welcome the financial aid from parents, but under the condition that the reporting and distribution system of these funds will be fully transparent by means of publishing of all financial information on the school’s website or in mass media. Thereby, accumulation of financial aid should be governed by regulatory legislation to the maximum. According to received suggestions, the raised funds should be controlled by parental stewardship board.

Necessity to ensure autonomy of schools in practical translation of allocated financial resources from the budget and other sources (parental and sponsor aid) was also pointed out. Thereby, some principals believe that, ideally, a school should be independent from parents. In addition, principals suggest to learn the problems and causes of ineffective funding of schools from the state budget. Suggestions reflecting day-to-day needs and welcoming voluntary aid have been presented: “If parents themselves want to help, let them

help. A school has many needs and the state does not cover them in full (chalk, brooms, seedlings, rugs, mops, buckets), these fixtures wear out and eventually break.”

In one of the comments of respondents from the Kashkadarya region, a school principal noted that their school has been awaiting its turn in the queue of the repair program since 2005. As a solution to the issue of insufficient school funding, parents suggest to increase teachers’ salaries (32%) and allocate sufficient funding for maintenance of schools (16.5%). Similar survey numbers among teachers look as follows: 51% and 12% respectively.

CONCLUSIONS:

Based on the analysis of responses of three respondent groups on the matters of transparency, lack of appropriated budget funds and practice of off-budget collections in activities of general education establishments, following conclusions can be made:

1. Since appropriated budget funds, as experience and researched perception shows, are insufficient for optimal operation of schools, this shortage is oftentimes compensated through use of off-budget funds provided by parents both voluntarily at their own initiative and at the request of other parents, teachers or school administration. Absence of regulatory acts governing off-budget payments from parents and other sponsors also contribute to such behavior. Thus, the process of using off-budget funds is a risk factor of dishonest behavior by participants of the school education system, because one of the outcomes of this process can be corruption and dishonesty risk in the form of rendering unethical “services” to parents

in return for provision of off-budget aid by them such as, for example, favoritism toward one certain pupil or unjustified high grade for particular work and/or quadmester.

2. Existing financial system in schools is not transparent enough. Role of school principals, teachers and tax payers in general is limited therein. Effective work on provision of information about financial activities of education institutions to process parties is not in place. To ensure transparency and efficiency of funding, it is necessary to design an electronic system of open data accessible to every interested citizen with introduction of PETS (public expenditure tracking system) mechanism and other modern-day digital solutions allowing to evaluate effectiveness of public funding and optimize various funding models.

3. There is a perception reflected significantly in responses of all three respondent groups that funds allocated from the budget do not reach schools due to actions of financial departments of the public education system and distribution of financial resources among educational entities based on actual needs is not objective and even.

4. Absence of transparent mechanism and open data on distribution of funds among schools leads to increased distrust in education system, activity of MPE and schools. Enhancement of such negative perception can also result in normalization of unethical and corrupt behavior on the part of parents and teachers and school principals who are compelled to pay and accept informal payments for school needs.

5. Absence of actual analysis of the state of material and technical infrastructure (maintenance, improvement work, additional equipment), lack of financial resources essential for regular operations leads to problems associated with supply of consumables (office supplies, office equipment), additional textbooks and schoolbooks and execution of set educational and pedagogic tasks (after-school clubs, electives, cultural and educational events) that make parents, teachers and principals to display unethical and unwanted behavior in the shape of off-budget payments and sometimes as exchange of personal services.

6. The above-mentioned deficiencies make the administration of educational entities to accept parental and sponsor aid since every principal strives to create decent conditions for education in their establishment and lack of effectively applied regulatory acts with regard to accumulation and use of off-budget funds, in its turn, can lead to instances of embezzlement and corruption.

7. When analyzing filled-in questionnaires and interviews, the expert group has come to conclusion that the practice of off-budget payments in schools is not a definitive corruption risk but rather an effect of insufficient budget funding of schools.

8. To mitigate specified risks, it is necessary to work out and introduce a system ensuring transparency and legally regulated voluntariness of off-budget payments, as well as accountability in the process of their implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To study the causes of inefficiency, review and develop the funding system ensuring its transparency, sufficiency of allocated resources and full-fledged involvement of school administration and parents in their planning and implementation.

2. To carry out planning and appropriation of financial resources based on the actual analysis of the state of material and technical infrastructure of educational entities considering the actual prices and expenses to carry out their activity.

3. To identify and critically analyze the causes of the need to collect and use off-budget funds. Based on the conducted analysis, to work out and introduce in practice necessary regulatory acts ensuring the rights and responsibilities of parties.

4. To organize training for school principals to raise knowledge and skills of using allocated budget funds, take measures to introduce the practice of regular provision of information to parental community about financial activities of a school.

5. To consider the possibility of creating a platform of open and transparent data on school budget formation and their use, both at the level of MPE and its departments and at the level of schools.

6. To develop the funding system ensuring its transparency, sufficiency of allocated resources, full-fledged

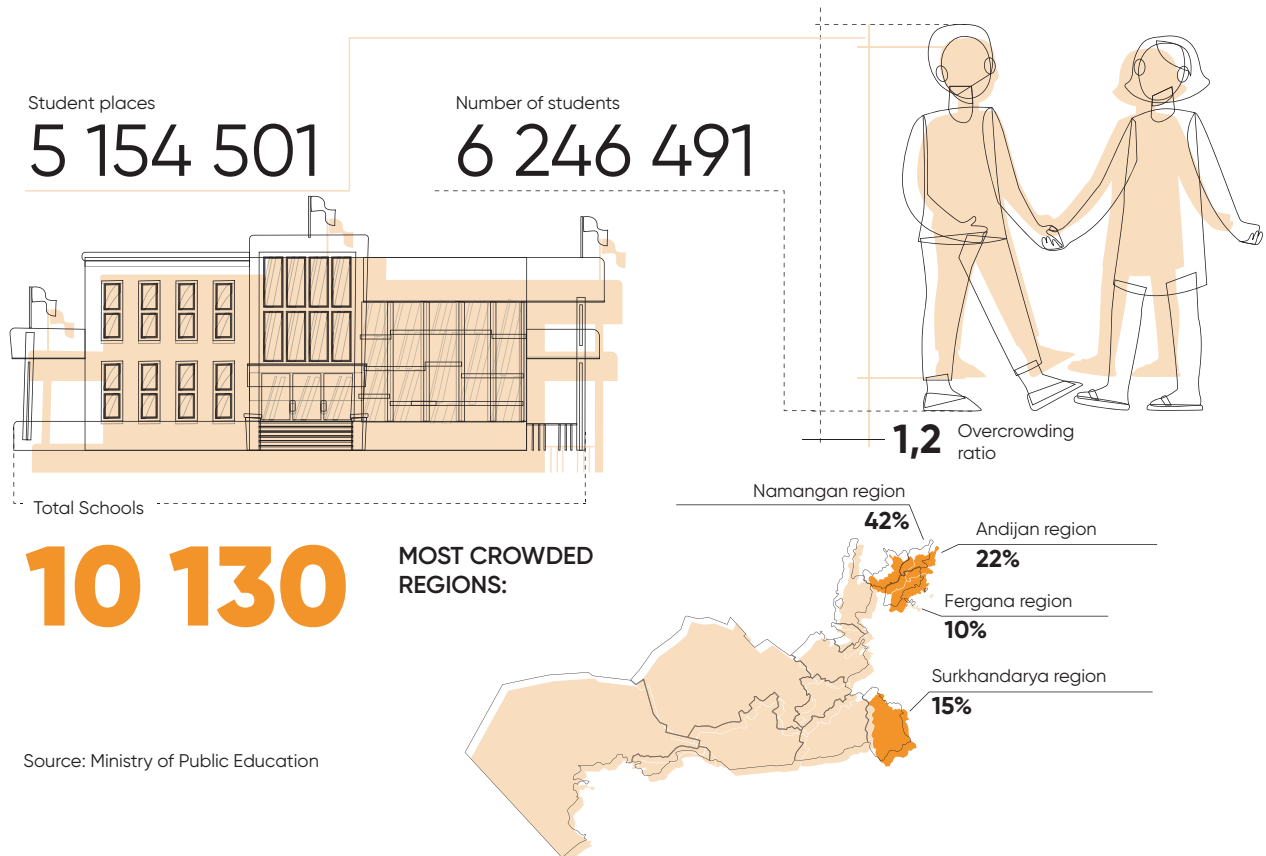
involvement of school administration and parents in their planning and implementation of funding. Jointly with the Ministry of Public Education, submit proposals to the Cabinet of Ministers on legalization of aid provision (material, financial and in the form of services) from parents and creating a transparent platform to receive, distribute and use financial resources at all levels and by all entities of the public education system.

4.3 LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE, PROVISION AND LOGISTICS SUPPORT OF SCHOOLS

Analysis of responses of three respondent groups (questionnaires and relevant comments) has shown a range of problems in the existing infrastructure of general education institutions, namely – lack of school places due to the fact that calculation of quotas and quota places does not account for occupancy rate and infrastructure of classrooms, schools and demographical aspect of the local area in general. Responses also pointed at lack of due level of heating supply in the autumn and winter seasons, and in some cases even lack of due sanitary conditions (drinking water supply, sufficient number of toilet facilities for children and teachers, etc.). Most of the schools do not have fast Internet connection.

RESULTS OF SURVEY: OVER A MILLION SCHOOLCHILDREN LACK SEATS

(2021-2022 ACADEMIC YEAR)



Source: Ministry of Public Education

Figure 2.

More than 50% of respondents mentioned the lack of school furniture corresponding to pupils of elementary, secondary and higher grades, lack of textbooks and visual materials, including guidelines for teachers, insufficient amount of consumable stationeries and office supplies, lack of technical infrastructure.

Construction of new schools and development of infrastructure, strengthening the material and technical infrastructure of general education institutions is carried out within the scope of annual centralized investment programs for three types of work (new construction, capital improvements and capital repairs). The number of schools included in this program amounts to 350-400 schools.

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Construction of new schools and development of infrastructure, strengthening the material and technical infrastructure of general education institutions is carried out within the scope of annual centralized investment programs for three types of work (new construction, capital improvements and capital repairs). The number of schools included in this program amounts to 350-400 schools.

At the same time, partial regular maintenance of schools (repair of heating supply system, roofing, cold water supply, sewerage system and fencing) is carried out at the cost of local budgets. These types of work usually cover only about 10% of schools due to limited capacities of local budgets. ⁹

Established departments for coordination and monitoring of due operation of buildings and facilities of entities under the Ministry of Public Education, in the Ministry of Public Education of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and in the chief directorate of public education in Tashkent have staff headcount of 2-4 employees and, despite the availability of mobile units, do not fully accommodate the daily demand of educational entities due to limited human and material resources and long distances between schools. ¹⁰

For maintenance of infrastructure, payment of utility bills (electricity, gas,

⁹ <https://lex.uz/uz/docs/4691320> Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated January 10, 2020, No. PP-4565. <https://lex.uz/uz/docs/5188515> Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated December 28, 2020, No. PP-4936.

water supply, Internet, telephone), purchase of equipment and technical supply of educational establishments, budget funds are appropriated according to the budget item 4 that, by virtue of its limitation, currently covers mainly utility expenses and, in rare cases, partial expenses for technical facilities.¹¹

The issue of infrastructure of educational establishment ranks second in terms of the number of received comments from teachers. Lack of resources, technical facilities and infrastructure was mentioned mostly by teachers in Fergana (55%), Jizzakh (38%), Surkhondaryo (11%) and Namangan (6.7%) regions. Shortage of resources often results in overcrowded classes that is also reflected in the comments of teachers from Namangan region – 42%, Andijan region – 22%, Fergana region – 10% and Surkhondaryo region – 15%.

Regarding the question “Why in some schools the number of pupils exceeds the specified standard number?”, 37% of interviewed teachers across the republic responded that it is due to shortage of schools. 22% of parents, i.e. every fifth parent, were not able to enroll their child according to the quota of the micro-area where they live, because there were no places left. The highest rates of this problem were recorded in Navoi region – 41% and Kashkadaryo region – 28%.

Nearly 90% of interviewed principals pointed at serious lagging of construction of new schools behind the population growth. This, in its turn, leads to critical shortage of school places and overcrowded

classes above the norm. All 114 schools included in surveys are working currently in two shifts.

Listing the existing deficiencies in schools, 23% of parents mentioned poor technical provision, shortage of furniture and equipment. The highest numbers have been shown by Kashkadaryo (44.5%), Tashkent (41%) and Bukhara (32%) regions.

17.4% of interviewed parents (roughly every fifth school of the country) across the republic pointed out poor heating or its absence. Highest rates of this problem were recorded in the following regions: Samarkand - 30%, Navoi – 28%, Bukhara – 25.5% and the Republic of Karakalpakstan – 23.2%. Absence of drinking water and sanitary conditions was mentioned by 9% of respondents on average that statistically means over 1,100 schools across the republic.

Almost every tenth school principal, who participated in the survey, pointed at problems associated with material resources of the school. Most often this problem was referred by principals in the Jizzakh region – in 15.5% of cases.

Teachers find the cause of off-budget collections in the public education system in the fact that funds do not reach schools by the fault of district or city centralized accounting units (27% in Karakalpakstan, 20% in Khorezm, 20% in Navoi and Tashkent regions, 18% in Andijan region, 16% in Jizzakh region, 14% in Kashkadaryo, 12% in Syrdaryo and Fergana regions). In addition, teachers mentioned the issue

¹⁰ <https://lex.uz/uz/docs/3323262> Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated August 21, 2017, No. PP-3231.

¹¹ Annual State Budget.

of absence of public and administrative control over the school budget (18% in Kashkadarya).

Parents told about similar problems with reference to the absence of administrative control over the school budget formation and execution (36% in Navoi and 17% in Karakalpakstan), that funds do not reach schools due to actions of public education accounting units (11.3% across the republic) or actually think that schools are not funded sufficiently (33% in Tashkent, 22% in Karakalpakstan, 21% in Tashkent, 17% in Fergana, 16% in Namangan and 15% in Surkhandarya regions).

Regarding the supply with textbooks, 13% of teachers across the republic pointed at the shortage of textbooks. The highest rates with respect to this matter were recorded in Jizzakh and Surkhandarya regions – 22% each, in the Republic of Karakalpakstan – 21% and in the Samarkand region – 20.5%. Statistics of the interviewed parents show similar rates: 12% of parents across the republic noted the shortage of textbooks (Navoi – 25%, Surkhandarya – 22%, Fergana and Khorezm regions – 18% each).

SUGGESTIONS OF RESPONDENTS

45% of interviewed teachers believe that during construction of new schools it is necessary to take into account construction capacities and demographic growth, as well as occupancy factor of school and availability of free seat capacity of schools. Teachers' comments indicate that infrastructural occupancy of schools is not taken into account when estimating quotas that leads to overcrowding of classes and accelerated depreciation of existing infrastructure. 63% of teachers in Kashkadarya, 51% in Khorezm, 44% in

Bukhara regions, 43% in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, 38% in Fergana, 34% in Navoi regions, 33% in Tashkent city, 32% in Andijan and Syrdarya regions, 26% in Namangan and 25% in Surkhandarya regions pointed out that overcrowding in classes makes it difficult for them to perform their work qualitatively.

22% of parents suggest to create sufficient number of school places at the place of residence and provide schools with experienced teachers.

77 comments from 114 principals pointed out the necessity of construction of additional buildings within the territory of their school to meet the people's demand and allocation of additional funds for reconstruction of existing buildings.

Eight principals have underlined that the school must be independent from parents. Following comments have been received: "When schools are short of government support, principals themselves have to look for funds required for repair, printers, technical maintenance and other day-to-day needs."; "This problem can be effectively solved also with the help of a stewardship board. If parents would see and manage the aid to school, everything will be transparent."; "In the past, khokimiyats were in charge of repair works, everything was taken into account."

CONCLUSIONS:

1. A serious problem of shortage of school places at the place of people's residence arises due to lack of accurate forecasts on population growth and forecasts of the speed and scope of construction of residential areas regarding the existing capacity and occupancy level

of schools to which one or another micro-area is attached.

2. At present, 70% of schools of the country work in two or more shifts that does not guarantee neither normal conditions to organize educational and pedagogical process nor good quality of public services provided to population ¹².

3. Population growth at the micro-area leads to opening of additional classrooms that do not have necessary furniture and technical facilities (school desks, chairs, wardrobes and bookshelves, whiteboards (incl. electronic), projectors and even chalk). Occasionally, different and insufficient level of material and technical infrastructure leads to unequal conditions in parallel classes, thereby also being a factor of unethical and corrupt behavior both from parents who try to put their child to the best possible class and from the school administration accepting the child in the best class by means of their discretionary powers. On a systemic level, infrastructural problems of lack of tap water, poor operation of the heating system, lack of sanitary conditions and no Internet connection are also worth mentioning.

4. Perception, measured through the survey, of parents, teachers and principals on the matter of material support of schools indicates that lack of school funding transparency and use of budget funds by MPE and its departments, as well as insufficiency of effective, based on needs, school funding is a reason for the declining quality of education due to material conditions of educational process that, on a systemic level, is a corruption and dishonesty risk factor provoking unethical (rarely corrupt) behavior and

undesirable practice of using off-budget financing (informal payments) by all three parties who are participants of this process (teachers, parents, principals).

5. If there are 1,100 schools in the Samarkand region, then the experience of 20.5% of teachers of this region related to shortage of textbooks is a corruption and dishonesty risk factor that leads to unethical and sometimes to corrupt behavior expressed in organization of off-budget financing to purchase necessary books (or their copies) using informal or legally unregulated payments from parents due to their non-availability in free sale that also on a systemic level reduces both the education quality (in the event of financially difficult state of a family) and the trust in public education system from parents and teachers.

6. Insufficient funding of school needs and non-transparency of this process gives rise to distrust in the school budget planning and execution system and negative perception of the school funding problem among teachers and parents as supported by the survey data on perception of respondents.

7. Judging by responses of principals, lack of funding relates not only to consumable materials but also to payment for services, in particular, labor expenses for repair works as an example. In such cases principals have to hire workers at their own expense or seek assistance from parents. Sometimes assisting parents ask for higher marks for their children that is another evidence how corrupt risk factor in the form of lack of funding can lead to corrupt risk in the form of dishonest behavior of parents and school employees.

¹² Statistical data of MPE for the 2020-2021 school year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the survey data and considering best practices of foreign countries, it is recommended to implement the following measures in order to fundamentally improve the infrastructure, both internal and external: sanitary and heating system, reliable access to fast Internet, due provision of necessary furniture, equipment, fixtures, textbooks, visual materials and guidelines, stationeries and office equipment (at least a printer, electronic whiteboard and projector).

1. Based on statistical data and information provided by mahallas, to estimate maximally accurate forecast of population growth by locations of general education schools to ensure necessary amount of school places in locations. In addition, optimal occupancy level of school classrooms and every classroom separately should be estimated due to forecasted population growth. Comments from parents and teachers point at the perception of optimal number of pupils in one classroom to be in the region of 20-25 children.

2. Considering the specifics of long-term population growth projections of every locality, to work out and implement multiple-option typical projects of general education schools taking into account the world experience, specifics of geographical location of general education institutions and residential areas being designed.

3. To carry out construction of schools based on accurate population growth forecasts, providing for use of mobile modular building units in the event of unexpected population growth in a given region as customary in the world practice.

4. To carry out inspection of heating and water supply system conditions of general education schools. Based on the inspection results, to develop and implement measures on stable supply of heating in the autumn-winter period and good-quality drinking water in schools.

5. To undertake specific measures on effective provision of high-speed broadband Internet in schools.

6. To carry out monitoring of actual expenditures and needs of general education schools in terms of availability and renewal of furniture, stationery and household supplies for day-to-day use, and take measures on actual financial provision of corresponding cost items in the budget of schools.

7. To ensure compulsory alignment with the general public and public control of the planning transparency and locating projects of future school buildings ensuring sufficient number of school places, territorial ease of access with consideration of population growth.

8. To perform efficiency evaluation of textbooks supply system of schools considering the best practices of foreign countries.

4.4 LACK OF QUALIFIED PEDAGOGICAL STAFF

Despite the fact that, according to the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, sufficient number of young pedagogical specialists are being trained, personnel availability of general education institutions, in practice, does not meet the pedagogical needs of schools due to low popularity of the teaching profession. Insufficient level of qualification and skills of school teachers stands in the way of successful execution of tasks set before the general secondary education system and contributes to inequality between schools.

Major staffing problem, solution of which requires urgent actions, is prevalence of teachers with secondary specialized education degree in primary schools where basic skills and motivation to gain knowledge are shaped. Out of 501,044 teachers working in the MPE system, 49,731 people (9.9%) have secondary specialized education degree. The share of teachers with secondary specialized degree amounts to 20% in Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya regions. In total, 17,489 teachers (3.5%) have senior category, 63,626 (12.7%) – first category, 137,917 (27.5%) – second category and 217,354 teachers (43.5%) have a “specialist” category.¹³

Quite often specialists with secondary specialized pedagogical education degree are not capable to provide good-quality level of education that is caused by limited numbers of hours allocated to pedagogics, psychology and subject teaching methodology in pedagogical

colleges. In this connection, graduates of pedagogical colleges do not have the necessary qualification to determine the quality of taught material acquisition and its perception by pupils, as well as the skills to establish a psychological connection with children. In high-demand/overcrowded schools, which were included in surveys, teaching personnel has higher pedagogical education, whereas specialists with secondary specialized education degree teach in elementary grades in the majority of schools of the republic. This leads to inequality between schools, classes and, consequently, to unequal access to good-quality education. Inequality, in its turn, is a corruption risk factor in primary school enrollment and in the process of getting education.

Shortage of personnel in Russian-medium schools is a specific matter.¹⁴ Majority of teachers working in Russian-speaking classes and teaching exact and natural sciences belong to the retired or pre-retirement group of population and often do not possess skills for using up-to-date information technologies that are crucially important for the present-day educational process. Therefore, lessons are given in these classes often by non-native speakers and it seriously affects the level of acquisition of necessary knowledge by pupils.

EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS

When choosing the school, parents usually pay attention to its reputation – it was confirmed by 13.4% of interviewed parents. Parents also mentioned the high quality of education in the selected school (39%) that is ensured with the help of qualified teachers. At the same

¹³ Collection of statistical data of MPE for the 2020-2021 school year

time, in their comments on the issue of professional dishonesty, parents have been often indicating poor motivation and lack of qualified professionals giving rise to inequality of conditions to gain knowledge. These surveys show that one half of interviewed parents, when choosing a school or class, are guided by the experience of teachers and results of their work that often leads to overcrowding of one classes and shortage of pupils in other classes. This fact represents a corruption risk factor since it is usually the cause, based on which parents can display corrupt and unethical behavior when enrolling their child to a school, inducing thereby school employees to allow such behavior and take part in this process that ultimately represents a materialized risk of corruption.

Among the benefits of their schools, teachers mentioned their good teaching staff in 37% of cases. Out of them, the highest figures were attained in Bukhara, Khorezm and Kashkadarya regions – 50-60%. About 25-26% of interviewed teachers in Tashkent city, Surkhandarya and Samarkand regions consider the teaching staff of their schools to be good.

Additional comments of interviewed teachers often indicated the issues of lack of qualified personnel and necessity to improve the personnel recruitment system. Most commonly these issues have been raised in the following regions: Jizzakh – 32%, Republic of Karakalpakstan – 29%, Surkhandarya – 28%, Samarkand – 17%, Andijan – 12%, Khorezm – 7%. Every tenth of interviewed teachers from schools in Tashkent also mentioned in comments the issue of poor command of Russian language by teachers of Russian-medium schools.

On average in 6% of cases, interviewed principals raised the matter of inefficient training of teaching professionals, lack of qualified staff, despite the fact that specific questions regarding these matters were missing in the interview questionnaires for school principals. Both school principals and parents emphasized insufficient popularity of the teaching profession as well as the importance of elevating the status and authority of a teacher. Respondents noted that young specialists are not prepared to practical work with children, lack adequate skills of teaching and interaction with children, as well as knowledge in the field of child psychology.

SUGGESTIONS OF RESPONDENTS

- ✓ Almost 38% of parents think that it is important to raise the occupational prestige of a teacher in the society.
- ✓ Half of all interviewed principals mentioned that pedagogical education in Uzbekistan is the least popular among HEI students and quality training should be ensured for teachers. To increase and standardize the quality of education across the country, it is necessary to put major emphasis on enhancing the teachers' potential and increasing their knowledge and skills.
- ✓ Data from interviews with school principals point at complaints received by principals from parents regarding the insufficient qualification of teachers. Moreover, teachers lack motivation for quality performance of work due to low salary and disproportionate workload that does

not allow teachers to have healthy balance between working and personal time. “Parents complain that schools hire teachers without experience. Young teachers-mothers under 40 care only about the family, have little interest in pupils, they have low financial motivation”, one of Tashkent school principals told us in an interview.

- ✓ Interviewed parents from Tashkent mentioned in their comments the necessity to increase the education level of teachers and ensure required number of teachers in schools. In addition, it was suggested to increase the number of practical classes of future parents.
- ✓ To solve the problem with shortage of teachers (mathematics and physics), one of Tashkent school principals suggested to select the most talented among their pupils who demonstrate capability to teach, sign a memorandum with them that they will get quotas for free education in a university under the condition that they will return to teach in the school they finished. However, a transparent selection to a pedagogical institute should be ensured for that.
- ✓ Appointment of school principals by local Councils of people’s deputies should be cancelled, and the appointment process itself must be transparent and carried out with participation of the general public.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Schools covered by the survey, as a rule, are in high demand among population due to availability of solid teachers that is

supported by responses and comments of parents. Principals point to serious lack of experienced qualified professionals and complain about lack of motivation among young specialists to work in a school. This fact is a corruption risk in school enrollment because parents make school administration to violate professional integrity and accept children beyond the additional quota, frequently attaching them to certain teacher, that is confirmed by facts of overcrowded classes and schools described in the previous section.

2. Some principals point out the challenging practice of appointment of principals by local government authorities, i.e. khokimiyats, which sometimes pursue their own interests and select for the position of principal not a career-pursuing specialist in the field of public education but former law enforcement officials that, in its turn, can point at dishonest behavior of local executive authorities in the form of nepotism/cronyism and protection/favoritism. Sometimes former law enforcement officials do not have required knowledge about the work specifics of general education institutions and in the field of pedagogics and child psychology.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. As a solution of the problem with lack of experienced qualified teaching professionals that adds to emergence of corruption risks in school enrollment due to inequality of schools and classes, it is recommended to review the construction of booking portfolio for teachers of general education institutions considering the population growth, languages of instruction and school subjects.

2. In order to raise motivation for teachers to work in their field and to reduce

risks of unprofessional behavior, it is recommended to increase salaries, improve working conditions for teachers, eliminate overcrowding in classes and ensure a competitive environment for competitive selection for a teacher position. Study of successful foreign models, approaches and modules for training of teachers could help to create favorable conditions for the work of teachers.

3. In order to raise motivation of young specialists to work in a school, it is recommended to practice targeted recruitment to pedagogical HEIs of students who did not get enough entrance points under the condition of further work in remote schools of the republic as a payback work, providing them government support in the form of grants and creating due conditions for living and working.

4. To ensure targeted admission of future potential specialists to pedagogical HEIs, it is recommended to refuse using the student selection system based on test examinations, developing and introducing the interview-based selection methodology to determine professional suitability of prospective students for the future occupation on the basis of pedagogical and psychological methods.

5. In order to increase the access to higher pedagogical education, it is necessary to establish a close connection between pedagogical HEIs and schools for early vocational guidance of pupils toward pedagogical occupation, creating joint pedagogical classes, and work out the scheme for their admission to pedagogical HEIs on a preferential basis under the

condition of future work in the delegated school.

6. Enhancing the role of territorial entities of the Ministry of Public Education in the formation of personnel reserve for a school principal position can help to prevent from nepotism/cronyism and protection/favoritism during selection of candidates for a school principal position, as well as in providing personnel with pedagogical education degree, work experience in educational entities and knowledge of the specifics of pedagogics and child psychology to schools.

4.5 SALARY OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

Over the past years, numerous documents have been enacted at different levels with regard to salary increase and material incentives for teachers and employees of general education schools with indication of growth amounts and their payment terms. Every document specifies the number of hours in a teacher's full-time rate (hourly workload) and they have been changing constantly.¹⁵

Frequent changes in the amount of salary and terms of its payment led to unclear understanding of salary sizes with regard to rates and qualification grades.

All of the above resulted in various interpretations and application of regulatory provisions and non-transparent process of salary formation has aggravated this process. All three respondent groups expressed their frustration concerning the salary of teachers.

¹⁵ <https://lex.uz/uz/docs/3323262> Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated August 21, 2017, No. PP-3231

The most common comments on deficiencies in the education system among interviewed teachers pointed

at the issue of low salary and financial encouragement, as well as the necessity to increase payment for full-time employment.

TEACHERS' VIEWS ON RAISING SALARY RATES AND IMPROVEMENT OF WORKING CONDITIONS

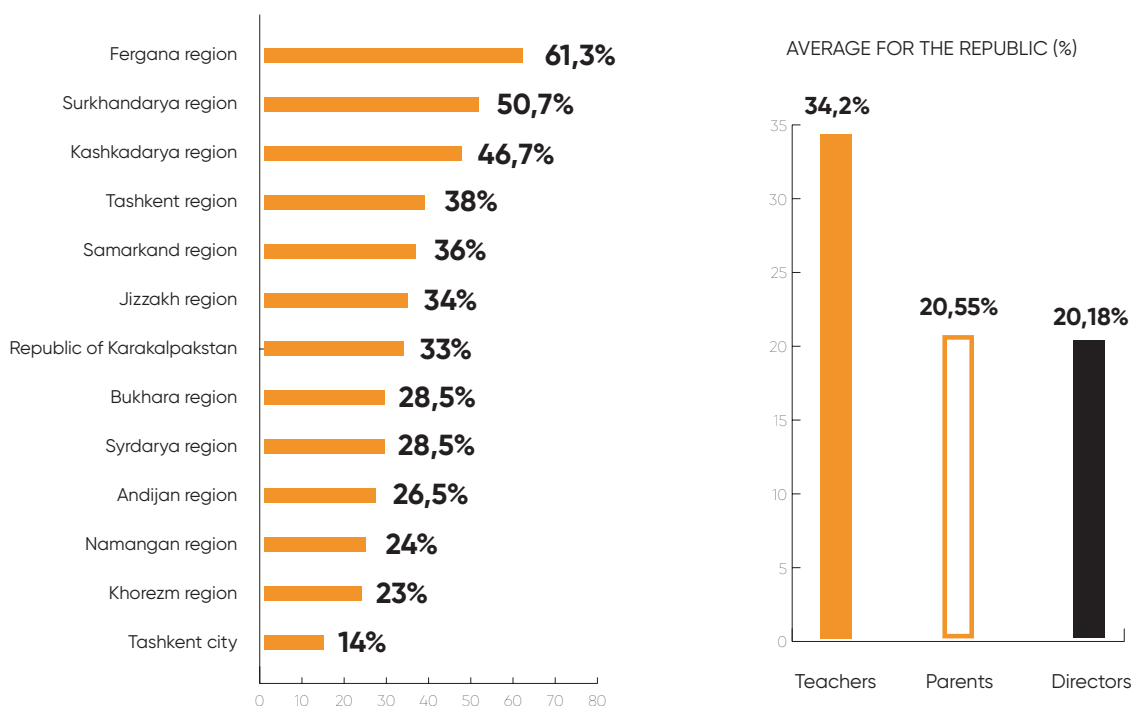


Diagram 4.

45.5% of teachers confirmed that they have to work an additional job due to low salary. 26.3% of teachers noted that they consent to the offer of parents to work with their children at extra charge. At the same time, 40% of teachers see the cause of informal collections in low salaries. In addition, about one third of parents think that low salary of school employees is the cause of off-budget payments in the school education system.

23% of principals think that salaries of both teachers and principals are low and, if teachers will get well-paid salaries then the education quality will increase. In one of the comments received from the

Bukhara region, a principal mentions that the salary in amount of 2.5 million soums covers only transportation costs. Several principals pointed at the need to increase the number of male teachers to enhance the disciplinary component of education.

SUGGESTIONS OF RESPONDENTS:

To improve the quality of education and raise its status, respondents (teachers) believe that, first of all, it is necessary to raise the salary, review the teacher's full-time rate, improve working conditions and reduce bureaucratic paperwork in the form of different reports and plans.

TEACHERS' PROPOSALS TO RAISE SALARIES, REVISE TEACHING RATES, AND IMPROVE WORKING CONDITIONS:

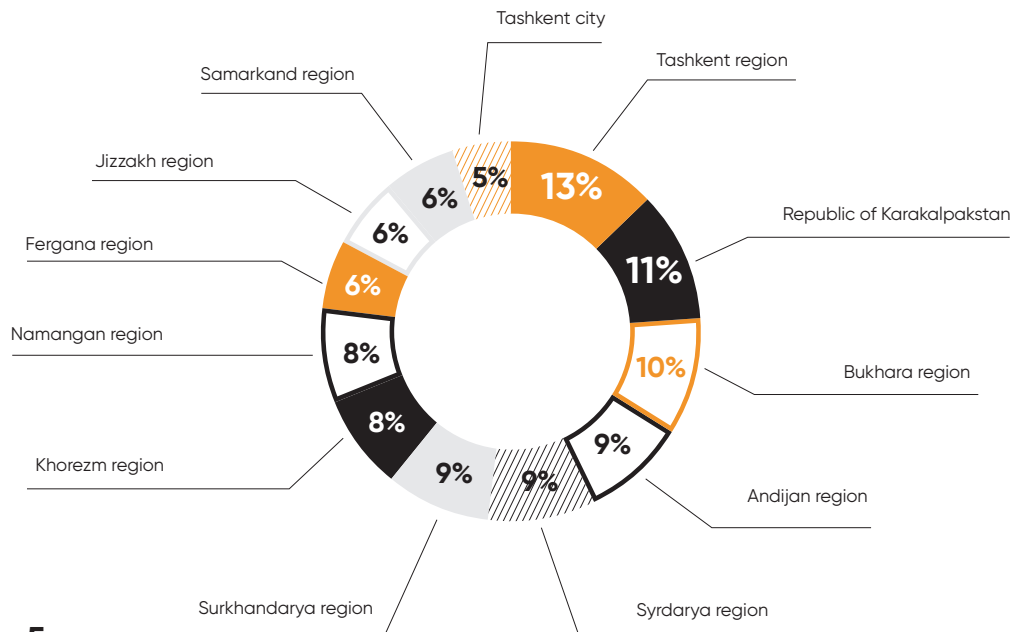


Diagram 5.

51.5% of teachers suggest to increase salaries to combat the issue of off-budget payment in the education system. There are also comments to increase the salary of cleaning ladies due to their hard work and to reduce off-budget payments from parents for cleaning.

According to 21% of interviewed parents across the republic, professional integrity in schools can be raised, among other things, by increasing financial support (salaries and allowances) for teachers and school administration personnel, including through provision of social security (social insurance, social benefits). The highest percentage of such comments was received from respondents in Navoi – 40.5%, Surkhandarya – 28% and Tashkent city – 27%.

One third of parents suggested to increase teacher's salary as a measure to prevent the practice of off-budget payments.

One fourth of principals also think that high teacher's salary can become an effective solution to reduce off-budget payments.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Half of the interviewed teachers have to have an additional job that seriously affects the quality of their main job. More than a quarter of teachers agree to informal financial incentives from parents due to low salary. This sets up a field for unethical behavior of teachers and parents being a risk factor of corruption and professional dishonesty.

2. Low salary does not ensure a decent social status of a teacher, does not correspond to his labor input and is not commensurate with actual market rates that leads to lack of motivation for the quality work and increased influence of this risk factor, which usually disposes school employees to receive off-budget and informal payments. It is also relevant

with regard to male teachers who are small in numbers in the school education due to low salary since the salary level of teachers does not allow to provide well for family.

3. This study has demonstrated different understanding of payroll calculation for full-time employment and number of hours among teachers. Constant changes, complex and non-transparent system for calculation of full-time rate amounts and different full-time payment terms lead to frustration, misunderstanding, differing interpretations of regulatory provisions, distrust in the system and low level of teacher's salaries in general. Therefore, teachers are compelled to look for additional income sources that increases the likelihood of corruption and dishonesty risks in the form of corrupt and unethical behavior.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To increase the quality of education and involvement of highly qualified and motivated personnel in schools, it is proposed to significantly increase the salary that can also attract male teachers and positively affect the diversity of pedagogical professionals.

2. To raise the social status of a school teacher, one of important components is the teacher's financial status. This fact necessitates revision of salary amounts for school teachers based on economic and social realities. In this connection, it is recommended to conduct an inclusive research study on formation of salary amounts and scopes of full-time employment considering the experience of foreign countries. Improved financial state of teachers can help to create motivation for work in the education system and ensure decent standards of living, because, according to comments, present-day

level of salaries makes teachers to look for alternative income sources leading to corruption and dishonesty risks.

3. To simplify and ensure stability and clarity of teacher's full-time rate calculations and transparency of the process of formation and calculation of monetary payments to school employees.

4.6 VIOLATION OF INTEGRITY AND ETHICS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

The analysis conducted on perception of professional integrity of school employees and ethical behavior of parents during school enrollment among three respondent groups has shown strong necessity to raise parents' awareness about the procedure for submission of documents to school and accountability of parents for academic performance in the study process.

Rules of professional conduct of teachers and school employees require certain ways of conduct also from parents that would not impose pressure on behavior of teachers making them either to display unprofessional behavior (especially under pressure) or to apply other means to regulate parental behavior. To do that, it is necessary to have mechanisms of communication and notification about ethical requirements and unethical behavior from both sides and effective application of these mechanisms is not in place at present.

Code of conduct, rights and duties of teachers and administration specified in the school's charter are not executed in practice as they are introduced without fundamental analysis of ethical problems,

necessary training and consultations on ethical dilemmas at work are not in place, there is no institutional leadership in the field of ethics and integrity (as exemplified by ethical conduct of superior authorities) as well mechanisms for monitoring, notification and sanctioning (including social) of unethical behavior. In addition, the concept of ethics is shaped among parents based on observations and experience of other parents' behavior.

At present, initiatives aimed at raising transparency of the enrollment to the first grade and allowing to enroll children to first grades without personal interaction of parents and schools are still too difficult and, therefore, considered to be inefficient and unpopular among users. For instance, survey results show that parents, who, due to various reasons, have to or want to use the additional quota, prefer to submit documents to school in person. Based on the survey findings, 22% of parents would attempt to make an agreement with the school admission committee and 37% would make an agreement with the school principal directly. Thus, absence of a transparent system of "contactless" enrollment is a risk factor, which stimulates nearly 59% of parents to display corrupt or dishonest behavior, response to which could be the similar behavior from school employees.

Moreover, there is no transparency in planning and formation of the number of school places and general education schools, their technical equipment provision, school funding (activities and salaries of teachers), off-budget payments, school enrollment of children, training of teachers and job appointment of school principals. At the same time, no systemic work on these issues is underway.

Problems listed above lead to negative perception of the school education system in the society undermining confidence also in political, organizational and financial efforts of the government in this area.

EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS

Comments of respondents still at the stage of surveying in schools have shown that low level of responsibility of parents in terms of education of their children, their influence on teachers and school administration and impunity is a problem contributing to unethical behavior along with low salary of teachers and lack of qualified personnel. Teachers from 12 regions of the republic, who took part in the survey, sharing their opinion on deficiencies in the public education system, mentioned the need to raise responsibility of parents for the study and behavior of their children, the low legal awareness of parents and weak communication between the school and parents. Relevant percentages across all regions are shown in the following diagram:

TEACHERS' VIEWS ON THE NEED TO INCREASE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS AND STRENGTHEN THEIR COOPERATION WITH THE SCHOOL

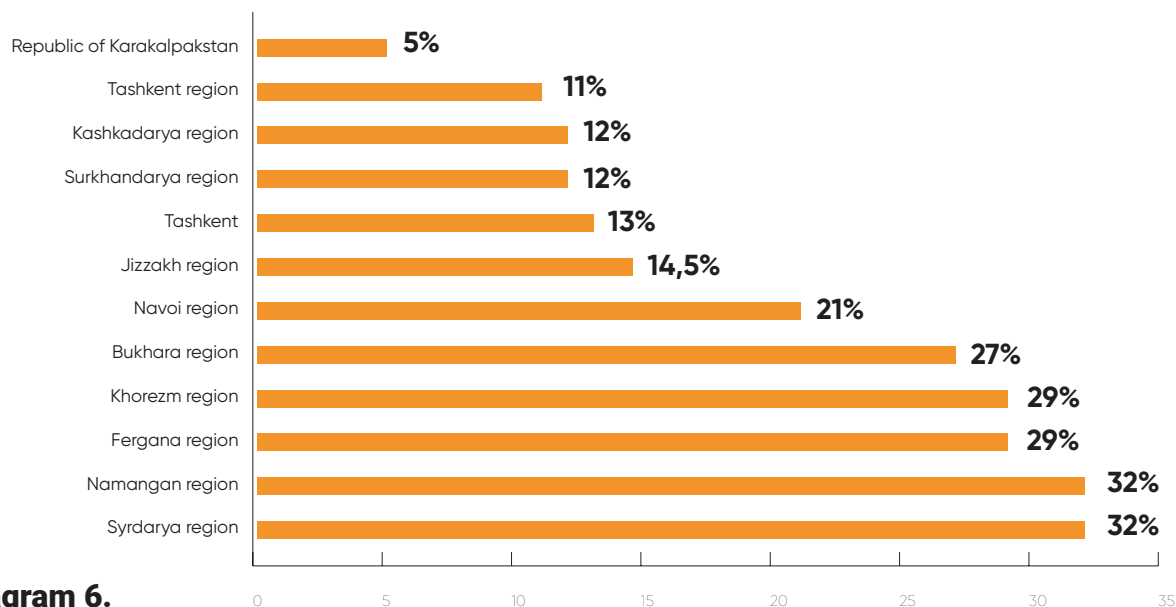


Diagram 6.

At the same time, teachers' responses pointed at the problem of influence and pressure from parents, administration or superior authorities: Andijan region - 20%, Namangan region - 13%, Tashkent city - 10%, Republic of Karakalpakstan – 1.6%.

23% of teachers in Surkhandarya, 12% - in Kashkadarya, 7% - in Tashkent city, 4% - in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and 1.2% in Andijan region supported the necessity to eliminate corruption.

PARENTS: WAYS TO INFLUENCE ON TEACHER'S POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CHILD

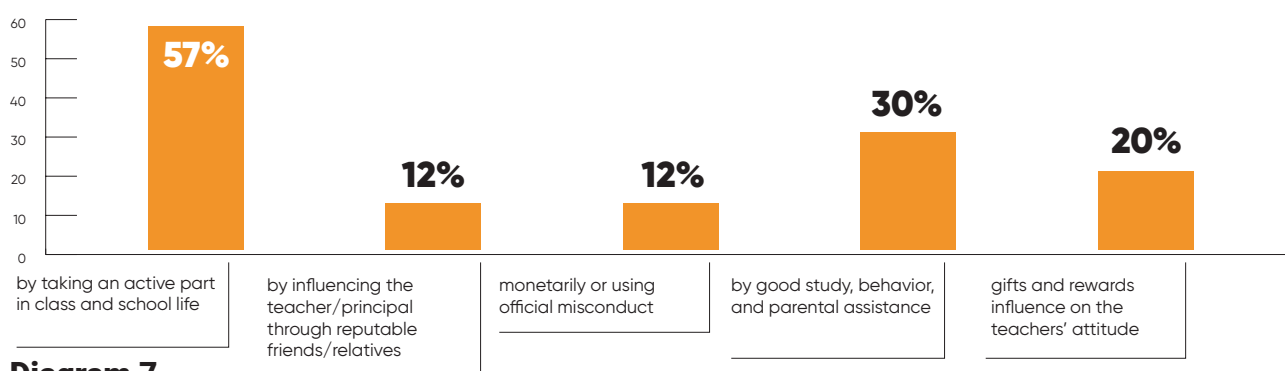


Diagram 7.

Comments of parents indicate that good study, behavior and provision of material and technical aid from parents can positively affect the good attitude of a teacher toward a pupil. 30% of parents think that teachers' attitude toward pupils must be equal regardless of circumstances.

About 20% of interviewed parents believe that gifts and rewards affect the attitude of teachers toward pupils.

In Tashkent, about 30% parents mentioned that problems in the study and behavior will not arise if a child will be

trained by parents and teachers hand in hand. Among comments there is also such comment as: "Preferential treatment of children is present: someone supports the school financially, someone studies well".

1.5% of parents think that unprofessional behavior should be eliminated in upper echelons of power and 2.6% spoke in favor of eliminating the possibility of informal pressure on teachers and school principals by departments of public education or higher rank officials (incl. using the effective investigation system on complaints about such pressure). Nearly 5% of parents advise to introduce the rules for ethical behavior

of teachers and school administration with guaranteed application of sanctions in case of violation of rules.

In the opinion of parents, they can influence most of all on the decision of school administration than any other management structures in the system of general secondary education. It is apparent from the analysis of the question "Rate on the scale from one to five the degree of influence of parents on the entities of general secondary education listed below", where 1 – very little influence, and 5 – strong influence:

PARENTAL INFLUENCE DEGREE ON ENTITIES OF GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

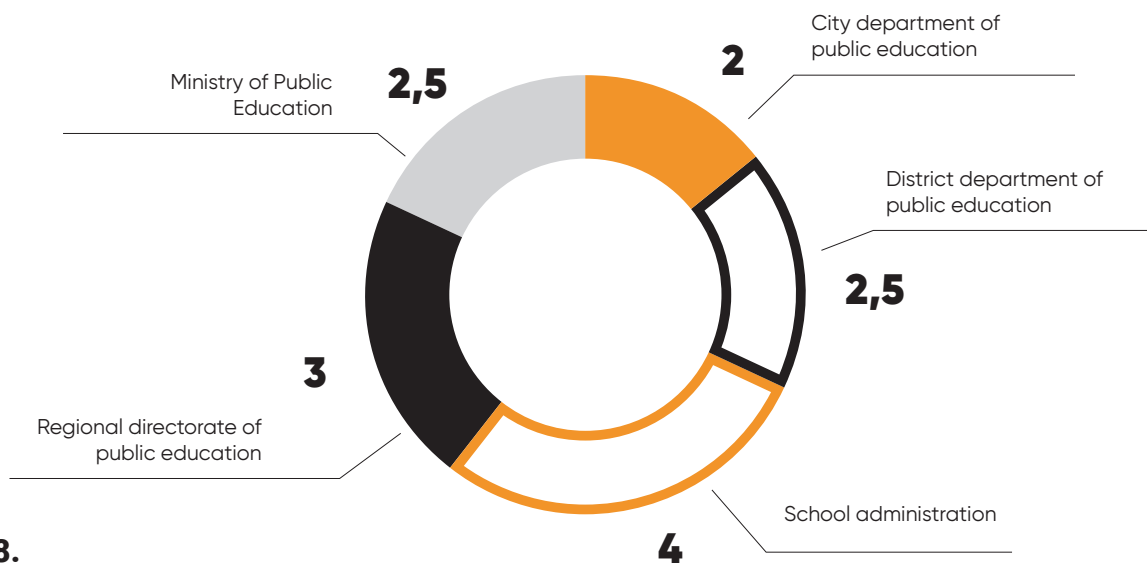


Diagram 8.

In their interviews, 9% of directors across the republic told about the pressure from parents (the highest figures are in Fergana (14%) and Andijan regions – 13%). 8% of directors spoke about the pressure from the superior authorities in the field of education and government agencies (the highest percentage is in Surkhandarya – 13.7%,

Navoi and Samarkand regions – 12% each). If we project this data to the total number of school principals in the country then nearly every 10-th principal faces the pressure from parents and every 10-th principal deals with the pressure from the superior authorities, officials and government entities.

APPROXIMATELY EVERY 10TH DIRECTOR IS UNDER PRESSURE OF PARENTS AND EVERY 10TH DIRECTOR IS UNDER PRESSURE OF HIGHER AUTHORITIES, INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, 9% OF DIRECTORS SAID THAT THEY WERE UNDER PRESSURE OF PARENTS, THE HIGHEST INDICATORS ARE IN:



8% SAID THAT THEY WERE UNDER PRESSURE OF HIGHER AUTHORITIES IN EDUCATION SECTOR, AND PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS, THE HIGHEST INDICATORS ARE IN:

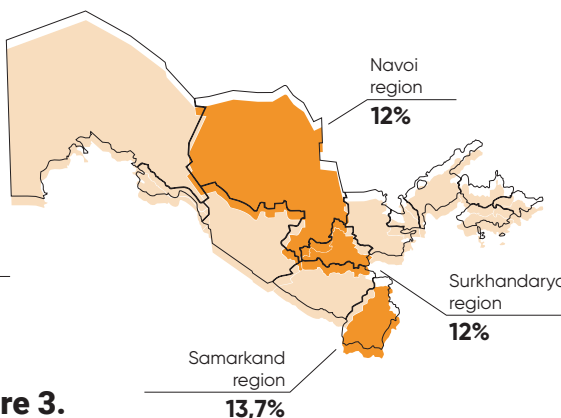


Figure 3.

Principals, in their interviews, unwillingly expressed their opinion on the matter of influence or pressure on their decisions. Some principals mentioned the assignments from higher authorities that are not within the competence of principals or not related to education at all. Teachers are reported to be engaged in cultural events of khokimiyats that goes beyond their direct pedagogical duties.

Following remarks can be found in the comments: “Higher authorities influence on personal decisions of principals”; “Supremacy of law does not exist practically”; “It is impossible to eradicate nepotism in Uzbekistan”; “If a school principal is honest, nothing can affect his firm decision”; “I was accepting children through the online system qabul.maktab, but there was still pressure in the selection process of the homeroom teacher”; “Parents remain absolutely unpunished for their actions”.

SUGGESTIONS OF RESPONDENTS

To raise the quality of education, on average, every fifth interviewed teacher

pointed at the need to strengthen cooperation in children education between parents and teachers.

Parents in Samarkand (10%) and Jizzakh regions (2.7%) support the need to raise responsibility of parents. To increase professional integrity, on average, 40% of parents think that professional status of a teacher must be elevated, whereas 20% think that professional integrity can be improved along with better financial support and social security provided to teachers and school administration personnel. Another 20% believe that improved infrastructure and provision of schools with equipment can add to higher integrity of school employees.

Some school principals from different regions suggested to establish a hotline for principals during enrollment where they can report about the pressure exerted. Separate comments of principals contain following suggestions:

- ✓ Number of organizations able to put pressure and affect the school should be reduced. Only those who exert

pressure on decisions of a principal or admission committee must be held accountable.

- ✓ It is impossible to eradicate this influence, but it can be diminished through wide awareness-raising work if laws will not be working in full effect.
- ✓ Number of competent teachers should be increased in schools to reduce the influence of not only officials but also parents.
- ✓ The practice of rotation of principals and their deputies every 3 years should be introduced.
- ✓ Superior authorities take advantage of their official position; they are also called “pozvonochniki” (backbones). To remove the influence by phone (“po zvonku”), independence of the education system should be ensured in practice.
- ✓ It is necessary to eradicate corruption. An employee committing corruptive actions will inevitably violate the internal environment of a school.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Analysis shows that about 40-50% of teachers understand the concept of “professional integrity” as equal and unbiased attitude toward all pupils, whereas another 20% think that professional integrity involves teaching to the best of teacher’s abilities despite the lack of necessary study materials (textbooks and/or equipment). Only in Surkhandarya region, 24% of teachers think that integrity also

involves professional responsibility and accountability for professional actions.

2. 30% of parents think that professional integrity is mirrored in a teacher’s ability to perform his professional duties in the best possible way without needed materials and teaching resources. Only 10-15% of parents believe that integrity is linked to professional responsibility and punishment for misconduct. It shows that proper conditions are not in place for teachers to comply with professional integrity, parents lack legal awareness and have little social responsibility for academic performance and appropriate behavior of their children and principals do not have clear legal mechanism to have an influence on teachers, pupils and parents to control unethical behavior.

3. Present-day social norms do not judge and openly challenge ordinary behavior associated with unethical behavior of any of three parties. Parents, teachers or principals do not oppose the established system and norms due to deeply-rooted practice that seems to be already normal/usual. Thus, all three groups reinforce the relative legitimacy of unethical behavior using the constant practice that is hard to overcome by means of a legal act or inclusion of requirement to have the Code of Conduct in a school’s charter.

4. Parents think that they have a high degree of influence on the school administration. In this connection, any innovations introduced in the system to maximally reduce instances of unethical behavior among parents should be worked out jointly with school administration, which most of all encounters risks of unprofessional behavior in response to unethical behavior of parents. Preventive

measures can be developed in collaboration with school administration employees who can point out the most common and serious types of unethical and corrupt behavior from parents in the school enrollment process. Going forward, tutorials and training courses on rules of ethics and professional integrity both for school employees and parents can be developed based on similar practical cases.

5. Unethical behavior of parents, be it in the form of observation from the sidelines or as active promotion by parents, can be stamped on the memory of children who, since their childhood, start to perceive unethical behavior (gifts to teachers in return for good grades, influence on teachers to get good/better grades, influence on principals to be transferred to another/better class, etc.) as normal practice that considerably complicates prevention of corruption and dishonesty risks both at present and in future. This is also one of the reasons that could lower the occupational prestige of teachers.

6. Financial dependence of schools from parental aid is becoming the reason for parental influence on decisions of teachers and school administration, and considered a factor of corrupt and unethical behavior of all parties.

7. Speaking about pressure and influence on decision-making on school enrollment, predominant majority of principals underlined that such influence is made in the form of a request that is hard to refuse. Many principals pointed out strong trust in absolute (with high degree of discretion) decision of the principal that compensates distrust in the education system and procedural rules regulating enrollment of children to first grade. Realizing their power and at the same time the social

responsibility, principals can rarely reject admission of a child to school. Standing in opposition to each other, lack of trust in education system and trust in powers and capacities of a principal in the process of first grade enrollment are significant factors encouraging unethical and corrupt behavior of parents and principals and, in some occasions, teachers-members of the admission committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To maximize transparency of the activity (enrollment, study organization process, performance assessment, reporting) of the Ministry of Public Education, its local structural units and every school for the general public using electronic open data system.
2. To review the capacity of applying measures to change social norms toward intolerance of all types of corrupt behavior from government authorities, both expected and "normal" practice.
3. To work out and introduce a comprehensive system of integrity including practical application of values and standards of professional integrity specified by relevant rules and procedures (Code of conduct, best practices of ethical employment, professional training courses on professional integrity and risk prevention, etc.)
4. To develop mechanisms for assessment, monitoring, reporting about instances of dishonest and unethical behavior for all participants of the process (within MPE, its departments and in schools), sanctioning and prevention from dishonesty risks that will be updated annually by Integrity Plan.

5. To ensure support and persistent practice of integrity by senior management in the shape of ethical leadership.

6. Based on best world practices, to ensure public expertise of construction and technical provision of general education schools engaging local communities, wider parental community and concerned ministries and agencies, because pressure from parents, influential people or government bodies on the matter of enrollment of children to first grade usually

leads to overcrowding of classes, especially in schools, which, according to parents, provide high quality of education.

7. To arrange the work with parents of pupils on a conceptually new platform using capabilities of new information technologies ensuring wide and active participation of parents in activities of all units of general secondary education for them to better understand their roles, rules of educational ethics, professional integrity of school employees and eliminate distrust of parents toward the system.

5. GENERALIZED CONCLUSIONS

Results of the study have shown insufficient awareness of parents about the school enrollment procedure, including the quota system, unclearness of enrollment criteria on additional quota and non-transparent processes of enrollment that were actively emphasized by all respondent groups regardless of geographical and administrative location of an educational entity.

Non-transparent process and unclear criteria for enrollment to first grade lead to overcrowding of some classes and schools. This is linked to the fact that parents want to send their child to the best teacher or popular school. It is much more difficult to control the number of pupils in such classes and schools when strict criteria for enrollment to first grade and enrollment process transparency are not in place.

In the enrollment process, school principals, using their discretionary powers and being under pressure from parents or higher authorities, open additional classes that do not have necessary equipment and

appropriate technical maintenance. As a result, under-enrollment can be observed in some schools or classes, whereas some classrooms are overcrowded and have insufficient room to comfortably accommodate all pupils. This is a corrupt risk factor in interactions between parents and principals since parents will try to assign or transfer their child to a class with more comfortable conditions or higher education quality using informal ways of influence on the school principal's decision to fulfill their request.

Principals cannot often refuse the request of insistent parents who either try to exert pressure on the principal or try to "support" their request through offering off-budget material aid to school, because principals, in their turn, are interested in creating best possible conditions for education of all pupils in the school in general, as well as for every separate pupil according to wishes of their parents, among other things.

Results of the respondent comments analysis with reference to psychological

and pedagogical immaturity of children during the school enrollment point at the need for compulsory organized pre-school training of children and basic pedagogical training of parents, as well as organization of interviews and tests for schools admitting children through additional quota. In addition, absence of targeted medical examination of children in educational establishments, when preparing paperwork for submission to school, contributes to corruption risks in the process of issuing health certificates. Certificates provided to schools do not reflect the real condition of mental health of children and their psychological preparedness to school.

Analysis of respondent answers with reference to transparency, lack of appropriated budget funds and practice of off-budget payments in the work of general education institutions allows us to make the following conclusions:

- ✓ Insufficient appropriation of funds required for normal operation of schools, collection and spending of off-budget funds are risk factors of their misuse and dishonest behavior of participants of the school education system.
- ✓ Currently existing financial system in schools is not transparent enough. Participation of principals, teachers and taxpayers is limited in this system in general.
- ✓ Lack of real analysis of financial and material resources for normal operation of schools during their planning and distribution at a higher level leads to problems related to material and financial support of schools and makes parents, teachers and principals to display unethical and

unwanted behavior with the purpose to meet the needs of schools and learning process.

- ✓ Financial dependence of schools from parental aid turns into the reason for influence of parents on decisions of teachers and school administration, and is a factor of corrupt and unethical behavior of all parties.
- ✓ Off-budget payments in a school are not explicit corrupt risks but rather an effect of insufficient budget funding of schools and absence of transparent platform for legally regulated financial aid from parents.

In its turn, lack of budget funding leads to the lack of infrastructure and technical support. Lack of exact forecast estimations of population growth and construction of new residential areas leads to acute problem of insufficient school places at the place of residence when attaching micro-areas to schools. Population growth at the micro-area results in opening of additional classrooms that do not have necessary furniture and technical provision, creates inequality in parallel classes and is a factor of unethical behavior both from school administration and parents.

70% of schools in the republic work in two or more shifts that does not guarantee optimal and rational conditions for organization of the teaching and educational process and quality of public services provided to population.

All three respondent groups expressed their displeasure toward teachers' salary. Half of interviewed teachers are compelled to have an additional job that is seriously affecting the quality of their primary job. More than a quarter of teachers agree to

informal financial incentives from parents due to low salary that creates room for unethical behavior of teachers and parents, usually disposing school employees to accept and take part in off-budget and informal payments. Research demonstrates that there is different understanding of full-time payroll calculations and number of hours among teachers. Constant changes, complicated and non-transparent system of full-time rates calculation, different terms of salary payment lead to frustration, misunderstanding, differing interpretations of regulatory provisions, distrust in the system and low level of teacher's salary in general.

Schools included in the study, as a rule, are in high demand among people due to presence of well-qualified teachers that is also supported by responses and comments of parents. At the same time, principals point out serious lack of experienced qualified personnel and complain about lack of motivation to work in a school among young specialists. This fact is a corruption risk in school

enrollment because parents make school administration to violate professional integrity and accept children beyond the additional quota, frequently attaching them to certain teacher, that is confirmed by facts of overcrowded classes and schools described previously.

Any display of unethical and corrupt behavior in the school enrollment process by any of party of the process (school administration, parents or teachers) is not judged and openly challenged by established social norms, because it is considered to be "normal" or ordinary. Thus, all three groups reinforce the relative legitimacy of such unethical and corrupt behavior that limits the possibility to prevent risks of corruption and dishonesty.


Unethical behavior of parents can be stamped on the memory of children who start to perceive unethical behavior as normal practice that considerably complicates prevention of corruption and dishonesty risks in future.

6. GENERALIZED RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has identified risk factors that cause violation of professional integrity rules and corrupt behavior of school employees and parents. However, these risk factors are not the effects or results or personal greed and they are not aimed at personal enrichment of teachers and principals. These risk factors rather point at deeper structural and systemic problems, which need to be addressed.

Best global practices show that use of modern-day digital technologies to increase transparency with the help of open data

systems allows to minimize significant amount of risk factors. Following key recommendations are aimed at such minimization:

-  To develop a unified open data platform that includes the number of open spots in the main and additional quota covering all public and pre-school education establishments with the option of online-enrollment to first grades with no need for parents to visit a school (equivalent to the Unified Information System for

Education Management of Armenia). The platform would ensure corruption risk mitigation through provision of criteria and information about the school enrollment, availability of places, transfer, expulsion of pupils, registration of children in pre-school establishments, etc.;

- ✓ To develop the funding system ensuring transparency, sufficiency of allocated resources, full-fledged involvement of school administration and parents in their planning and implementation of funding. Jointly with the Ministry of Public Education, submit proposals to the Cabinet of Ministers on legalization of aid provision (material, financial and in the form of services) from parents and creating a transparent platform to receive, distribute and use financial resources at all levels and by all entities of the public education system;
- ✓ To ensure compulsory alignment with the general public and public control of the planning transparency and locating projects of future school buildings ensuring sufficient number of school places, territorial ease of access with consideration of population growth;
- ✓ In order to raise motivation for teachers to work in their field and to reduce risks of unprofessional behavior, it is recommended to increase salaries, improve working conditions for teachers, eliminate overcrowding in classes and ensure a competitive environment for competitive selection for a teacher position. Study of successful foreign models, approaches and modules for training of teachers could help to create favorable conditions for the work of teachers.
- ✓ To conduct an inclusive research study on formation of salary amounts and scopes of full-time employment considering the experience of foreign countries to simplify and ensure stability and clarity of teacher's full-time rate calculations and transparency of the process of formation and calculation of monetary payments to school employees.
- ✓ To work out and introduce a comprehensive system of integrity including practical application of values and standards of professional integrity specified by relevant rules and procedures ensuring support and persistent practice of integrity by senior management in the shape of ethical leadership;
- ✓ To arrange the work with parents of pupils on a conceptually new platform based on analysis of popularity and access to modern-day communication platforms and social media that will ensure wide and active participation of parents in activities of all units of general secondary education for them to better understand their roles, rules of educational ethics, professional integrity of school employees and sanctioning system to correct, avoid and prevent unethical behavior and to eliminate distrust of all process participants toward the system (MPE, its departments, in schools and from parents).

The corruption risk assessment methodology will be submitted for consideration of the National Anti-Corruption Council and Ministry of Public Education. The mechanism of similar independent social studies will be helpful to investigate risks also in other fields to be used by senior officials making decisions at local level, as well as by international donor and research community.

7. AFTERWORD

The Anti-Corruption Laboratory has become a new trend for Uzbekistan in combating corruption. The value of the data obtained is that the anonymous surveys have documented the rumors and anecdotal evidence faced by participants in the admissions process. Among these are unequal opportunities for children subject to the main and additional admission quotas, the compulsion of school principals to resort to the help of parents due to a lack of budget funding, infrastructure and provision, pressure from parents and higher organizations in order to arrange a child in a good school, and other problems in the public education system.

In December 2021, the NWM 'Yuksalish' hosted a public discussion of the results of the surveys with the participation of core ministries and departments, specialists in the field of education and anti-corruption, and representatives of civil society institutions. Specifically, Deputy Minister of Public Education of Uzbekistan Rustam Karimjonov emphasized that the problems raised in the survey and the proposals and recommendations developed will be used in the development of the National Public Education Development Program for the next 5 years. The discussion, due to its relevance, had a response in the media - a total of 24 sources published news about the research in three languages - Uzbek, Russian, and English.

Based on the results of the public discussion, the developed recommendations, including both the introduction of amendments and additions to the legislation, and the improvement of practices and procedures, as well as the research methodology, were submitted for consideration to the Ministry of Public Education and the National Anti-Corruption Council of Uzbekistan, as well as to the Administration of the President.

On January 28, 2022, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev held a videoconference on the development of public education.

The head of state voiced a number of problems and relevant issues in the field, some of which were revealed in the course of surveys conducted by the Anti-Corruption Laboratory. They include as follows:

- ✓ construction of additional schools due to the construction of new housing areas, expansion of rural infrastructure and population growth;
- ✓ the need to revise existing educational standards and curricula;
- ✓ advanced training and retraining of teaching staff;
- ✓ the need to reduce excessive reporting and bureaucracy in schools.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev also identified key tasks for the comprehensive development of the public education sector, some of which are based on the recommendations developed by project experts:

- ✓ Establish councils for reformation of public education, which will work in line with the opinions of teachers, parents and specialists;
- ✓ Establish 1.2 million student places over the next five years through the construction of new schools and additional buildings in existing schools;
- ✓ Build and commission new schools under the supervision of social activists, parents and the public;
- ✓ Appoint school directors from among qualified managers;
- ✓ Establish a Minister of Public Education Fund to encourage teachers who apply advanced

pedagogical technologies, and whose students achieve high results;

- ✓ Fundamentally improve the teacher training system. Students of pedagogical universities, starting from the first course, will undergo practical training at schools.
- ✓ Revise the teaching load and update textbooks in line with best practices.

In addition, the Presidential Decree «On the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy 2022-2026» of January 28, 2022 determined the creation of 141,000 new student places, bringing their number to 6.4 million by the end of 2026. Within five years, 605 billion soums will be allocated from the State Budget for the implementation of a school textbook renovation program. It is also planned to introduce a fair and transparent system for assessing qualifications of teaching staff in schools, increasing their wages by a differentiated method.

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9. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1. Sampling of regions and number of respondents for questionnaire survey

№	Regions	Total number of schools	Number of schools, teachers and parents covered by the survey												
			Total	Regional center	Teachers	Parents	City	Teachers	Parents	District centers	Teachers	Parents	Villages	Teachers	Parents
1	Republic of Karakalpakstan	727	8	2	30	60	2	30	60	2	30	60	2	30	60
2	Andijan region	764	8	2	30	60	2	30	60	2	30	60	2	30	60
3	Bukhara region	536	6	1	15	30	1	15	30	2	30	60	2	30	60
4	Jizzakh region	550	6	1	15	30	1	15	30	2	30	60	2	30	60
5	Kashkadarya region	1157	10	2	30	60	2	30	60	3	45	90	3	45	90
6	Navoi region	365	6	1	15	30	1	15	30	2	30	60	2	30	60
7	Namangan region	711	8	2	30	60	2	30	60	2	30	60	2	30	60
8	Samarkand region	1255	10	2	30	60	2	30	60	3	45	90	3	45	90
9	Surkhandarya region	927	10	2	30	60	2	30	60	3	45	90	3	45	90
10	Syrdarya region	313	6	1	15	30	1	15	30	2	30	60	2	30	60
11	Tashkent region	891	10	2	30	60	2	30	60	3	45	90	3	45	90
12	Fergana region	948	10	2	30	60	2	30	60	3	45	90	3	45	90
13	Khorezm region	546	6	1	15	30	1	15	30	2	30	60	2	30	60
14	Tashkent city	312	10				10	150	300						
Total		10002	114	21	315	630	31	465	930	31	465	930	31	465	930

Attachment 2. Recommended case for creating a unified open data platform

Recommended case for creating a unified open data platform under the Ministry of Public Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan

UNIFIED INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION ¹⁶

Project start and end dates: November 2018 – August 2020

Lead implementing agency: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia

¹⁶ <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/armenia/commitments/AM0042/>

COMMITMENT

To exclude multiple concurrent record-registration of the same learner at various levels of education, to oversight over the process of transferring from one educational institution to the other (of various educational levels as well), to clarify the mechanisms for listing children, to admit and transfer them to educational institutions, to ensure transparency in education, resource-reduction of administration, optimization of information flows.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

Ensuring, through unified electronic governance, the completeness of information, increasing authenticity, public accountability, effectiveness of work, early detection of the risk of being dropped out from compulsory education and not being included in education and referral, creation of mechanisms for appeal for the main beneficiaries – parents, applying to relevant bodies in case of dereliction, omission or improper fulfillment of duties, commission of violations in any circle.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Development of a unified information system (which will provide information about the students record-registration, transferring from one educational institution to the other, listing and enrollment) for management of education by including all institutions of educational levels, including pre-school, regardless of the organizational form and subordination.

The system provides multilevel and comprehensive information on the

organization's activities, getting acquainted with the reports, being informed about the availability of places, attendance, transfer, withdrawal of students, registration of children in pre-school institutions and other issues, provides feedback for parents. There is a possibility to comment and complain, and be informed on the measures taken to solve the issues.

It also helps to regulate the process of identifying and including children left out of education.

The operation of the system ensures the realization of each child's educational right, regulates the registration process for schoolchildren, ensures that the responsibilities of the territorial administration and local self-governing bodies and all other responsible institutions and stakeholders are included in the process of involving children in education.

ADVANTAGES OF THE SYSTEM

- ✓ Reducing corruption risks by opening information on students attendance, availability of places, transfer, expulsion of students, registration of children in pre-school institutions and other issues
- ✓ Providing feedback and tracking possibility for parents' comments and complaints on educational issues
- ✓ Introduction of innovation
- ✓ Ensuring transparency, accountability, participation, technology and innovation

Attachment 3

Along with key corruption risk factors, the study has also identified other pressing issues, which were raised by respondents and received high percentage of comments.

Among them – pre-school education, higher education, requests of parents to improve the quality of education and all-round development of children.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Pre-school education is the main factor of child's successful performance in primary grades. It helps to quicken social adaptation of a child to collective work environment, facilitates to bring forward primary learning skills and enhances child's motivation. Comfortable climate is established from the start of study in primary classes.

Analysis of conducted research data has shown the current relevance of pre-school training and education for parents, teachers and principals.

Responding to open questions, teachers from Fergana (38%), Andijan (37%), Khorezm (36%), Jizzakh (24%), Kashkadarya (12%), Navoi (11%), Namangan (9.3%), Tashkent city (8%), Tashkent region (5%) and Republic of Karakalpakstan (5%) pointed at the necessity for full-fledged pre-school education and training.

9% of interviewed parents in the Fergana region pointed out the importance of pre-school education as the major factor of children's training for school.

Principals in the Samarkand region and Republic of Karakalpakstan think that the best thing would be if pre-school groups were to start at an early age, e.g. at the age of 5.

SELECTED COMMENTS:

Effective development of pre-school education establishments is required to ensure all-inclusive development of primary education,

Matters of interaction between general and pre-school education entities should be revisited.

Training programs in senior groups of pre-school education entities and primary grades of schools should be identified in order to exclude repetitions and ensure continuation.

AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS AND OFF-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Analysis of respondent questionnaires has shown the demand for developing and sports after-school clubs, linguistic and extracurricular activities by interests and subjects as a factor affecting enhancement of gained knowledge and as an additional source of theory and practice.

Comments of parents from Andijan (7.1%), Navoi (11%), Fergana (3%), Khorezm (7%), Namangan (2%) regions and the Republic of Karakalpakstan (7%) demonstrate the current relevance of this matter.

A school principal from the Jizzakh region points at the need to legalize additional classes in schools, a principal from the Syrdarya region suggests to provide additional classes in activity clubs in the 2-nd shift.

Comments of parents indicate the inadequacy of the work carried out by local

public education entities with regard to organization of after-school club activities. Cost estimate of a school provides for half-time, full-time and time-and-a-half rates for paid after-school club work, based on the number of pupils, that completely does not cover full-scale work in this area.

“Barkamol avlod” schools operating within the general education system do not provide all schools of the republic with after-school clubs, personnel and directions.

Non-availability of gyms in more than 1.5 thousand schools seriously affects the organization of sports and fitness activities with pupils. The course taken by the government toward development of mass sports requires establishment and increase in number of sports clubs and classes in educational establishments as the primary component.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Need for research in higher education, including accessibility to higher education institutions, relations between participants of the education process in higher education entities, has been mentioned by all respondent groups of this survey. Participants think that there is lack of transparency in the higher education system, especially in issues related to enrollment to HEI.

Almost 700 parents, 346 teachers and 20 school principals suggested to conduct a study of corruption risks in the higher education system.

Some parents in Tashkent city suggest to explore the reasons why graduates of pedagogical HEIs are not willing to work in the field of their profession and also consider necessary to increase the number of practical sessions of future teachers and raise the quality of education in HEIs.

School principals note that, due to incorrect planning, there is a shortage of qualified pedagogical personnel in Russian-medium and other medium schools, especially in remote areas of the republic, as well as low training level of graduates of pedagogical HEIs (6% of comments).

As a solution of the problem with lack of qualified pedagogical professionals and to raise the motivation to work in the field of profession, some principals suggest to establish subject-matter pedagogical classes jointly with higher education

institutions and provide quotas for free education in a HEI to learners delegated by schools as future teachers. Principals also suggest to ensure transparent enrollment to pedagogical institutes and fundamentally increase the level of teaching methodology in HEIs.

