



## Tajikistan Team

Case study in progress from the KIX-EAP learning cycle “Teacher Professional Development at Scale (TPD@Scale)” held in collaboration with the TPD@Scale Coalition for the Global South, through the Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development, Inc. (FIT-ED)

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## About case studies in progress

This case study in progress was drafted by a national team that participated in the KIX EAP Learning Cycle on Teacher Professional Development at Scale (TPD@Scale). Case studies in progress are ongoing and incomplete studies. As such, the KIX EAP Hub/ NORRAG does not guarantee the quality of the work nor the accuracy of the data.

The KIX EAP Learning Cycles are supported by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX), a joint endeavour with the International Development Research (IDRC), Canada. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in the Learning Cycle outputs do not necessarily reflect the views of the KIX EAP Hub, NORRAG, GPE, IDRC, its Board of Governors, or the governments they represent.

## About the KIX EAP Hub

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) is a joint endeavour with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to connect expertise, innovation, and knowledge to help GPE partner countries build stronger education systems and accelerate progress toward SDG 4. There are globally four KIX hubs or Regional Learning Partners, overseen by IDRC. The hub functions as a regional forum within KIX. NORRAG (Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education and Training) is the Regional Learning Partner for the KIX Europe Asia Pacific (EAP) hub.

The KIX EAP hub facilitates cross-country knowledge and innovation exchange and mobilisation, learning, synthesis, and collaboration among national education stakeholders in 21 GPE partner countries in the EAP region. The hub also offers opportunities for peer learning and exchange by means of professional development and inter-country visits.

## About the learning cycle on Teacher Professional Development at Scale (TPD@Scale)

This case study is a result of the KIX EAP Learning Cycle ‘Teacher Professional Development at Scale (TPD@Scale)’. Organised by NORRAG in collaboration with the TPD@Scale Coalition for the Global South, through the Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development, Inc. (FIT-ED), this professional development course ran from 23 September to 5 December 2022. Across 10 weeks, this Learning Cycle enabled national experts to examine how ICT-mediated TPD programmes can be scaled through adaptation/localisation to improve students’ learning outcomes. Thirteen national teams of educational sector experts from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Georgia, Kyrgyz Republic, Maldives, Moldova, Mongolia, Nepal, Sudan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and Yemen took part in this Learning Cycle.



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# Part 1. Policy Brief: Strengthening Teacher Professional Development at Scale

## Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the ensuing Civil War in Tajikistan impeded the nation's progress and generated multiple challenges. In the aftermath of the Civil War, the Tajik government made continuous efforts to improve the country's education policy. Today Tajikistan is in the process of development and ongoing transformation. In recent years, the government has advocated for the improvement of education quality, leading to the implementation of several reforms in the education sector over the past two decades. Despite these efforts, certain aspects, such as student-centered pedagogy, competency-based frameworks fostering critical thinking skills, and ICT integration to deliver quality education both for teachers and students remain underdeveloped due to limited internet coverage and insufficient teacher-training capacity within the country. To address these shortcomings, the professional standards for teachers need to specify the necessary competencies that teachers must have as well as qualities they should have for the effective implementation of new competence-based curricula and the realization of the new State Standards for Secondary Education (SSSE). An effective implementation plan, accompanied by a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism, is essential for achieving these goals. Moreover, it is crucial to revise the outdated educational beliefs and practices that persist, which rely on teacher-centered pedagogy and emphasize subject content transmission through lectures and rote memorization by students. A shift towards a more modern, learner-centered approach is necessary to facilitate the ongoing progress of Tajikistan's education system.

## Background


In Tajikistan, teacher professional development (TPD) systems and practices exist at various stages, including pre-service, induction, and in-service TPD. However, these systems lack appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, hindering the collection of data, analysis, and timely interventions to enhance TPD systems and practices. The current state of TPD systems and practices can be summarized as follows:

- Pre-service TPD: During their third and fourth years of study, pre-service teachers engage in a one-month practical experience at secondary schools, following the university curriculum. This limited exposure may not adequately prepare them for real-world teaching scenarios.
- Induction TPD: At this stage, school administrations assume responsibility for TPD practice by establishing mentor-mentee relationships between novice and experienced teachers. While helpful, this approach may not provide sufficient guidance and support for new educators.
- In-service TPD: Teachers are required to participate in upgrading courses every five years at the Institute of Professional Development in their region. However, the frequency and content of these courses may be insufficient, as they need to be updated to align with current educational contexts.

To address these shortcomings, it is crucial to implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for TPD systems and practices in Tajikistan. This will facilitate the identification of gaps and enable timely interventions, ultimately leading to a more effective and responsive TPD system that meets the needs of educators and supports the continuous improvement of the country's education system.

## Existing Issues and Challenges of TPD

In Tajikistan, the development of secondary school teachers' competencies in educational technology has become increasingly important, as many schools face challenges in acquiring ICT skills and effectively



incorporating technology into their teaching practices. This issue is amplified by other persistent challenges, such as teacher shortages in both rural and urban areas, inadequate infrastructure and facilities, and a decline in interest in the teaching profession due to low salaries. In response to these challenges, a long-term strategic goal has been set to enhance the quality of education in the country by 2030.

Teacher Professional Development (TPD) in Tajikistan faces several key challenges that must be addressed to achieve the long-term goal. These challenges include insufficient training cycles, a lack of qualified teacher-trainers and context-based content, which hinders the effectiveness of TPD. Furthermore, inadequate post-training follow-ups, the absence of incentives, and a lack of intrinsic motivation among teachers hinder progress in improving teaching practices. Moreover, the current educational environment does not effectively support student-centered pedagogy, ICT integration, and the development of creative thinking skills.


To address these challenges, a comprehensive approach to TPD is necessary, which includes improving training programs, fostering an environment conducive to student-centered pedagogy and ICT integration, and ensuring adequate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of TPD initiatives. By tackling these issues, Tajikistan can enhance the quality of education for its students, better preparing them for the demands of the 21st century and ultimately contributing to the nation's overall development and progress.

### **Future opportunities to scale TPD in Tajikistan**

ICT-mediated Teacher Professional Development (TPD) in Tajikistan holds significant potential for transforming the education landscape and improving the quality of teaching and learning in the country. The integration of technology into pedagogical practices can foster student-centered learning environments, promote critical thinking skills, and ultimately, better prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century. However, to realize these benefits, it is essential for stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), local and international organizations, and the broader education community, to collaborate in addressing the challenges faced by teachers in adopting and implementing ICT-mediated TPD initiatives.

In order to effectively expand professional development in Tajikistan, the following recommendations should be taken into account:

- Enhance training programs: Develop comprehensive, context-based training content and materials that focus on student-centered pedagogy, ICT integration, and creative thinking skills. Regularly update training programs to reflect the evolving needs of the education sector.
- Expand access to ICT resources: Increase investments in ICT infrastructure and resources, particularly in rural and underprivileged areas, to bridge the digital divide and provide teachers with the necessary tools to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices.
- Improve the quality of teacher-trainers: Train and recruit highly qualified teacher-trainers who are well-versed in modern teaching methodologies and best practices.
- Implement ongoing professional development: Encourage continuous learning among teachers by providing access to regular, high-quality professional development opportunities, such as workshops, seminars, and online courses.
- Strengthen post-training support: Establish robust follow-up mechanisms after TPD sessions to monitor teachers' progress and provide additional support as needed. This can include mentoring programs, peer-to-peer learning, and collaborative platforms for sharing best practices.
- Incentivize and motivate teachers: Introduce incentives, such as financial rewards, professional recognition, and career advancement opportunities, to motivate teachers to participate in professional development and continuously improve their teaching skills.

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- Establish partnerships with educational institutions and organizations: Collaborate with universities, research institutions, and international organizations to access expertise, resources, and funding for professional development initiatives.
  - Decentralize TPD initiatives: Encourage local and regional educational authorities to take ownership of TPD programs, adapting them to suit the unique needs and contexts of their communities.
  - Leverage technology for scaling TPD: Utilize online and blended learning platforms to deliver TPD programs to a broader audience, overcoming geographical and logistical barriers.
  - Enhance monitoring and evaluation: Implement robust M&E systems to assess the effectiveness of TPD initiatives and use the findings to make data-driven decisions for continuous improvement.

By implementing these suggestions and setting both strategic long-term and short-term goals, Tajikistan can effectively scale professional development initiatives, ultimately improving the quality of education for its students and contributing to the nation's long-term development goals. A phased approach to scaling, for example as a three-phase plan, can help achieve these goals while allowing for adjustments and improvements based on lessons learned in each phase. This will ensure that more teachers receive the necessary training and support to excel in their roles and positively impact their students' learning experiences.



## Part 2. Project Proposal: Scaling Teacher Professional Development in Tajikistan

### Scaling For Impact and Experience Sharing Model

#### *Project partners*

MoES, IPD, SPCE UCA, NGOs, development partners, SmartHub.

#### *Background and Rationale*

Tajikistan faces pressing challenges in improving secondary school teachers' competencies, particularly in educational technology, ICT skills, and overall teaching methodologies. To address these concerns and contribute to improved education quality, this project aims to create a comprehensive and sustainable TPD system, ultimately supporting the country's long-term development goals.

#### *Project Objectives*

The primary objectives of the project are to:

- Develop and implement comprehensive, context-based TPD training programs that cover student-centered pedagogy, ICT integration, and creative thinking skills.
- Increase access to ICT resources and infrastructure in schools across Tajikistan, particularly in rural and underprivileged areas.
- Improve the quality and expertise of teacher-trainers through specialized training and recruitment initiatives.
- Encourage continuous learning among teachers by providing regular, high-quality professional development opportunities.
- Establish robust post-training follow-up mechanisms to monitor teachers' progress and provide additional support as needed.
- Introduce incentives to motivate teachers to participate in professional development and continuously improve their teaching skills.
- Foster partnerships with local and international educational institutions, research organizations, and funding agencies to access expertise, resources, and support for TPD initiatives.
- Promote decentralization of TPD initiatives by encouraging local and regional educational authorities to adapt and implement programs tailored to the unique needs and contexts of their communities.
- Utilize technology to deliver TPD programs to a wider audience, leveraging online and blended learning platforms to overcome geographical and logistical barriers.
- Implement robust monitoring and evaluation systems to assess the effectiveness of TPD initiatives, using data-driven insights to continuously improve and refine the programs.



## ***Project procedure***

### Phase 1: Pilot Project

Training of 20 teachers (5 from 4 regions) to be trained through online learning, including student-centered pedagogy, and creative thinking skills consisting of 40 hours of training (20 hours of theory and 20 hours of practice including demo-teaching).

### Phase 2: Adapt and Decentralization

- Adapt and decentralize the course for regional implementation.

Training of 200 teachers in each of the four regions through online learning, including student-centered pedagogy, and creative thinking skills consisting of 40 hours of training (20 hours of theory and 20 hours of practice including demo-teaching).

### Phase 3: Scaling and Expansion

Training of up to 2,000 teachers through online learning consisting of 40 hours of training (20 hours of theory and 20 hours of practice including demo-teaching).

## ***Project Monitoring and Evaluation System***

A triangular method of data collection will be employed for the M&E system:

- Project implementers will observe, document, and analyze feedback from participants.
- Stakeholders, including teachers and school administrators, will be directly engaged in M&E, providing feedback throughout the project on content and adjustments to context.
- Indirect stakeholders, such as parents, students, and teacher-parent associations, will be involved in M&E through qualitative and quantitative data collection.
- The project will adhere to four guiding principles throughout the research process: Justification, Optimal Scale, Coordination, and Dynamic Evaluation.

## ***Future Development: Online Platform***

Following the first year of the project, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) and IPD may create an online platform to scale TPD initiatives in the country. The platform will feature approved and adapted courses tailored to the needs of teachers from various regions, with a focus on accessibility and internet connectivity.

The platform's first option will offer self-paced, relevant, and meaningful courses based on teachers' needs, student-centered pedagogy, ICT, and creative thinking skills. Regular post-course online surveys will help improve content and identify teachers' needs. Through this platform, teachers will enhance their professional development and ICT skills.

In the second option, the platform will facilitate collaborative training among teachers and experts. Teachers can upload lesson plans and videos, give feedback, share experiences, and receive advice from mentors and experts through online and offline interactions. Regular post-course online surveys will be conducted to improve content and identify teachers' needs.

The platform will provide technical support and video instructions for navigation, with the potential for developing a mobile application.





Course materials will be diverse and engaging, incorporating multimedia, interactive quizzes, self-assessment tools, reading materials, mini-projects, video forums, and case studies.

Course information will be updated regularly, and training can be conducted in various formats (online, remote, offline, or hybrid) and in the native language. Teachers will complete a 40-hour course, and all certificates will be issued in digital format, approved by MoES.

To ensure quality, assessment rubrics, tests, badges, and other verification tasks will be developed.

An "educational check" mechanism will be introduced, enabling teachers to select and access courses on the platform for free.