



PRESS RELEASE

USAID's Participation, Education, and Knowledge Strengthening Project Summarizes its work in Kyrgyzstan

BISHKEK - On October 22, 2007, the United States Agency for International Development- funded Participation, Education and Knowledge Strengthening project (PEAKS), held a conference to present its major achievements and policy recommendations in the areas of Teacher Training, School Management and Education Financing. The conference was attended by representatives of the Prime-Minister's office, Parliament, lead Ministries (Education and Finance), key donors in the education sector, and other project stakeholders such as school directors and teachers.

PEAKS is a regional project implemented in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan from 2003 through 2007. The project helped these countries in their efforts to provide a quality education for school students by improving teaching quality and distributing resource materials on improved pedagogy, involving parents and community in education decision making, strengthening education finance and management systems, and improving school infrastructure. In Kyrgyzstan, PEAKS built a platform for further education reform initiatives by developing a network of thirteen school-based teacher training centers which act as model sites and training centers for surrounding schools. These schools demonstrated modern teaching and management practices and school-community collaboration and work with 127 surrounding schools in both urban and rural areas. The result has been improved quality of education in project schools. This work included the training over 5,000 teachers and administrative staff, the provision of more than 40,000 resource materials for schools and training centers, and renovation of 27 schools.

PEAKS provided technical assistance and support to the Kyrgyz Academy of Education and Teacher Training Institutes to modernize in-service teacher training in the country through the development of training materials and the training of government staff. These inputs resulted in strengthening in-house capacity of 62 KAE/TTI staff in innovative teaching methods and incorporating these approaches into the State In-Service Teacher Education program. *"Teaching methods, introduced in PEAKS schools, certainly ensure improved quality of education since they promote development of personality. In turn, this leads to increased interest in education amongst learners and thus to the improved attendance,"* says Sabyr Iptarov, Director of Teacher Training Center, Kyrgyz Academy of Education.

PEAKS also played a key role in education finance reform through piloting new mechanisms such as per-capita in Tokmok and teacher training voucher scheme in Issyk-Kul Oblast that promote greater equity and efficiency in education spending. Both these pilots contributed to a government initiative to scale up these reforms further within Fast Track Initiative and Rural Education Project. *Japargul Sabyrova, Head of the Education Department, Ministry of Financ, says: "In per capita financing system, introduced by PEAKS, school director is not interested in increasing the number of classes, but instead he tries to save money including through rationalization of classes. Savings are used to provide financial incentives for teachers, to purchase equipment or textbooks and other learning needs. In the light of the current state budget deficit, this is a great reserve for both schools and the Ministry."*

PEAKS was implemented by a consortium partners, led by the Academy of Educational Development (AED). The consortium also included the Open Society Institute, Save the Children Alliance, and Abt Associates Inc. PEAKS is one of the many projects funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, on behalf of the American people. Since 1992, the American people through USAID have brought over \$1.5 billion to the five republics of Central Asia, in programs that assist education, healthcare, economic growth, and democratic institutions in these countries.

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