

DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR EDUCATION REFORMS IN KAZAKHSTAN FOR 2015-2020

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Introduction. This study presents a roadmap report of current developments in the academic system of Kazakhstan. The report puts forward comprehensive reforms for the way the Kazakhstan educational system is developed, organised and financed. It takes into account the goals of the State Programme of Education Development for 2011-2020 and a number of the key reform measures that were currently under implementation, such as the system rationalization and quality assurance initiatives [1]. The report draws on the experience and expertise of a broad range of stakeholders, who generously contributed their views through more than 50 meetings and consultations throughout the year. The key themes of the study include i) preschool education; ii) secondary education; iii) teacher education; iv) higher education and v) vocational education and training. The recommendations are driven by two realities. First, Kazakhstan is poised for long-term prosperity through the development of market economy and investment. At the same time, the nation is experiencing challenges across different sectors of knowledge-based economy. For instance, there is strong lack of additional skills that the economy demands. To ensure skilled workforce is well used, the state will require further investment in education.

Methods. The study is based on mixed research methodology. It draws on documentary and policy documents analysis, comparative analysis of best practices in management of the education sector; face-to-face interviews and focus-groups discussions.

Results and discussion. Since the study pursues complex goals of education reforms. The points of discussion are grouped according to the format in the Introduction above: (i) The research evidence has shown that there is a need to develop a network of model kindergartens that act as inspirations and training centres for more child-imitated practice around the country complementing the work of the Orleu. Discussion of this idea with various experts suggested that where this had been attempted previously centres have been identified through competition for a limited period of time rather than having a longer-term agreed function; ii) There is widespread recognition of the need to change especially the "high stakes" assessment represented by the UNT, but there is uncertainty as to what kind of change would be most beneficial and how much change can gain public acceptance; iii) There are serious issues about the *recruitment and selection* of high quality candidates for teaching in Kazakhstan. Motivation and commitment to teaching are key factors in preparing good teachers and at the moment there is no way of using these as selection criteria; iv) As a first step towards the goal of greater transparency, Kazakhstan needs comparable data collected from all higher education institutions in order to facilitate (1) government decisions about financing; (2) measurement of system level outputs and, eventually system outcomes at national level; and (3) other policy decisions. v) In Kazakhstan, there are already certain bodies which focus on quality of education and training. However they need to be refocused and perhaps restructured on the basis of the national concept of quality assurance in education which yet needs to be developed and agreed upon in close consultations with stakeholders. The need for setting up a National Qualifications Authority in Kazakhstan is of great importance because it should be made responsible for defining the learning outcomes.

Conclusions. The study recommends that Kazakhstan should develop the analytical capabilities, data collection and implementation capacity to manage the education reform at national, local and institutional levels and to improve coordination among different agencies working within different sub-sectors of education and between sectors.

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References.

1. Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. 2010. State Programme of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020. Astana: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan.