

# Development and Current State of Inclusive Education Practices

**The cases of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Georgia**

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# Overview of the Report



- **Countries Analyzed:** Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Moldova
- **Main Focus:** Inclusive education for children with disabilities
- **Key themes and commonalities:**

**Historical Context:** The Soviet legacy and the medical model of disability

**Legal Development:** Alignment with international standards, particularly the UN CRPD

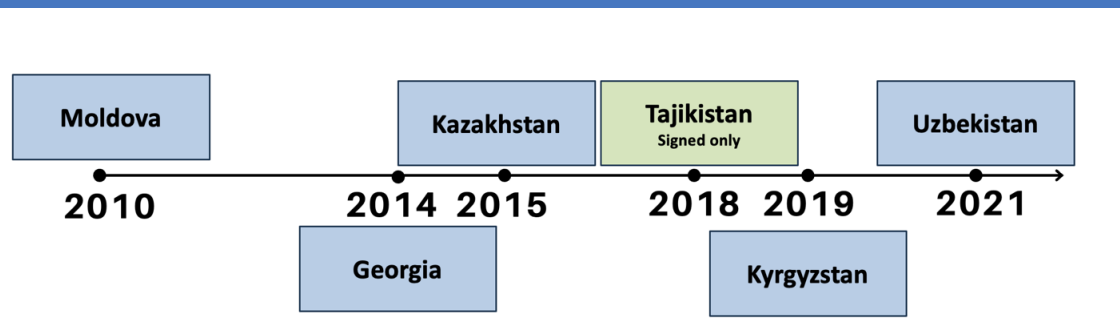
**Challenges:** Implementation gaps, resource constraints, and teacher preparedness

**Societal Attitudes:** Evolving perceptions of disability and inclusion

**Actors:** civil society, international organizations and NGOs, government (and governmental bodies)



# Historical and Legal Foundations of Inclusive Education



Ratification of CRDP by year, with Tajikistan having signed only but not ratified

- **Socialist legacies**
- **Legislation:** All five countries have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, except for Tajikistan, which has only signed but not ratified the convention.
- **Country highlights:**
  - Uzbekistan:** The Concept of Development of Inclusive Education 2020–2025 identifies objectives to improve the quality of educational services for children with SEN.
  - Moldova:** In 2020 the results of the Model of Inclusive Education for Children with Severe Disabilities and its extension to the national education system were approved.
  - Kyrgyzstan:** The 2023 Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Education” explicitly promotes inclusive education, defined as “ensuring equal access to education for all students, taking into account the diversity of educational needs and individual capabilities”.
  - Georgia:** The 2010 Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires the state to promote and protect human rights of persons with disabilities and ensure the protection of their dignity.
  - Tajikistan:** The 2010 National Strategy for the Development of Education until 2030 identified several priority reform measures in matters of inclusive education, such as construction and renovation of schools, ensuring the adequacy and quality of infrastructure, development of inclusive education programmes.

# Key challenges to implementation

- **Resource limitations:** Lack of sufficient funding to ensure the availability of specialized resources like adaptive learning materials, classrooms, and assistive technologies.
- **Teacher training:** Teachers often lack the skills required for managing inclusive classrooms effectively. The quality of training programs remains inconsistent across countries, with some countries like Georgia making more progress.
- **Access to learning materials:** There is a need for more personalized materials that cater to children with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities. Some countries still rely on outdated teaching methods and lack access to modern educational technology.
- **Overcrowded schools:** Many schools are still overcrowded, especially in rural areas, which hinders the integration of children with SEN effectively. Disparities are often significant between urban and rural areas in terms of access to inclusive education.
- **Scarce or partial implementation of legal changes,** especially in countries with democratic deficits.
- **Attitudes:** inclusive education remains a contentious topic.

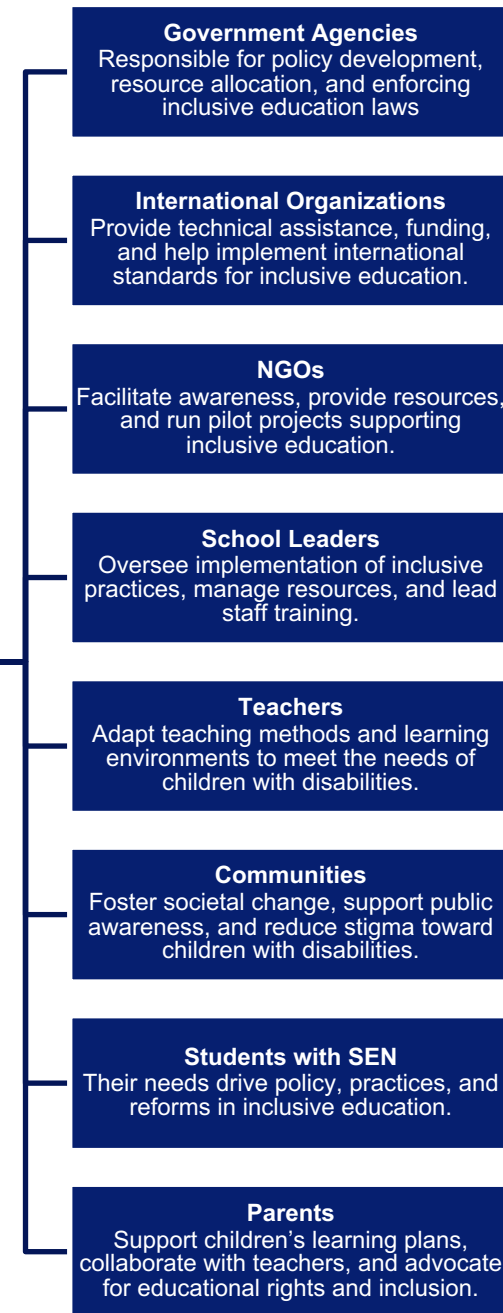


# Multi-actors cooperation

Even small-scale project can generate substantive changes



## Inclusive education



| <b>Country</b>                     | <b>Moldova</b>  | <b>Georgia</b>   | <b>Kyrgyzstan</b>  | <b>Tajikistan</b>   | <b>Uzbekistan</b>   |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| <b>Government Agencies</b>         | Ministry of Education, Culture, and Research  | Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia   | Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic   | Ministry of Education and Science of Republic of Tajikistan   | Ministry of preschool and school education of the Republic of Uzbekistan  |
| <b>International Organisations</b> | Lumos Foundation, Keystone, Hope, Partnership for Every Child, KulturKontakt, Charistas, CCF Moldova, Hilfswerk, The World  | UNICEF, Open Society Institute, UNDP, UK Aid   | Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan, USAID, UNICEF, Asian Development Bank                                   | UNICEF, Institute for Advanced Studies and Retraining of Personnel (Russia), Russian Educational and Methodological Center, UN Tajikistan   | Limited exposure  |
| <b>Parents</b>                     | collaboration on children’s individual educational plans, as well as on monitoring and evaluation   | partnership between parents and schools, identifying the needs of children   | active participation in the decision-making process, participation in monitoring and evaluation      | participation in public associations, cooperation with educational institutions   | participation in methodological support and in educational processes, cooperation with schools  |
| <b>Country-Specific Actors</b>     | Republican Center for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance (republican level)<br>Psychological and pedagogical assistance service (district level)<br>Multidisciplinary intraschool commission (monitoring and individual study plans) | Inclusive Education Multidisciplinary Team (monitoring since 2018)<br>Public Defender's Office of Georgia (monitoring 15 pilot public schools in 2019) | Embassy of Finland and Embassy of Switzerland (support and monitor projects for inclusive education) | Center for Comprehensive Support for Children and Parents (cooperation with public organisations and institutions in the field of inclusive education)<br>Regional Committees of Parents of Children with Disabilities (supports and implements projects introducing inclusive education) | Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children (methodological support to teachers of inclusive schools)<br>Center for Inclusive Education (assistance to parents and children with disabilities for inclusive education)<br>NGO Avlod Baraka (medical and social assistance to parents and children with autism spectrum disorders) |

# The Role of Civil Society and International Organizations



- International organizations:

UNICEF and UNESCO have played a critical role in supporting the development of inclusive education by funding projects, providing expert advice, and conducting awareness campaigns.

World Bank, USAID, and Save the Children have supported the reform of national education systems by providing both technical and financial assistance.

- NGOs:

Local NGOs have been instrumental in providing direct support to children with disabilities, helping to raise awareness, and conducting pilot projects for inclusive education.

- Both, IOs and NGOs

Greatly contributed to public awareness campaigns through various efforts to change societal attitudes toward children with disabilities, making inclusive education more acceptable in mainstream schools.

Encouraged community-driven initiatives, emphasizing the importance of acceptance and integration of children with disabilities.

Promoted dialogue on the importance of educational inclusion

# Improvements — selected examples



## Teacher training

In **Tajikistan**, teacher training has been relatively successful with universities like Tajik National University and Tajik State Pedagogical University incorporating inclusive education into their curricula.

In **Georgia**, the National Center for Teachers Professional Development and the establishment of special education teacher degree programs since 2013 have contributed to continuous professional development in inclusive education.

**Moldova** also stands out for adding a course on inclusive education to university teacher training in 2012 and offering continuous professional development through the Institute of Inclusive Education Sciences.

## Teaching resources

In **Kyrgyzstan**, alongside the use of Soviet-era textbooks, modern didactic materials and new technologies, such as smart boards, sound amplifiers, and video enlargers, have been introduced to enhance inclusive education.

In **Tajikistan**, equipping educational institutions with adaptive literature for students with various disabilities is a key aspect of inclusive education support.

In **Georgia**, the application of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) has helped modify the educational environment to meet the needs of all students.



# Country-level key findings



| Country    | Key findings  |
|------------|---|
| Moldova    | The country has implemented various models of inclusive education, such as full inclusion, partial inclusion and episodic inclusion, here depending on the needs of students with disabilities. These models assume various forms of support, such as assistance to teachers, as well as the establishment of resource centres and multidisciplinary intraschool panels.                                  |
| Kyrgyzstan | There are some improvements in teacher training, yet there is a need to improve educational and methodological support. The country uses Index for Inclusion to assess the organisation of an inclusive educational environment.  |
| Tajikistan | The legislative framework for inclusive education laid the foundation for the development of inclusive practices. Important enablers of inclusive education in Tajikistan are international organisations. Additional efforts are needed in the areas of financing, teacher training and creating an accessible environment.  |
| Uzbekistan | Uzbekistan has developed inclusive education laws and strategies but struggles with regional disparities, limited resources, and inadequate teacher support. A monitoring system is needed to assess the effectiveness of programs.   |
| Georgia    | There is a gradual removal of stigma and a more open approach to the inclusion of children with different needs in the educational process. The imperative role of the state is evident based on the establishment of a multidisciplinary inclusive education team within the Ministry of Education and Science that aims to develop inclusive education. Donor organizations are also important players. |

# Recommendations



## ***1. Establishing and Improving the Monitoring of Inclusive Education***

It is imperative to establish accurate ways of monitoring progress in inclusive education that are aligned with international standards and practices.

## ***2. Promotion and Scaling Up Cooperation with International Organisations and Local NGOS***

In the five countries, milestone achievements in inclusive education were made through collaborative projects that have set further changes in motion. Typically, foreign donors or international organisations have piloted projects or implemented change, which then was scaled up with the support of state institutions and contributed to legal changes. NGOs are imperative in collaborating with state bodies, universities and other institutions, providing expertise and resources to improve inclusive education standards.

## ***3. Support Awareness-Raising Campaigns and Dissemination of Information About Disability in General and the Value of Inclusive Education in Particular***

A growing body of literature showing that inclusive learning environments benefit all students, including students without special needs.

## ***4. Support The Revision and Restructuring of Teacher Training and Professional Development with a Focus on Inclusive Teaching***

Appropriate teaching skills and training opportunities have been recognised as key in all the cases. Along with teacher training, improved methodological support must be provided to educators to facilitate their work with SEN students. There is great potential in cross-national learning from best practices as well as in the evaluation of international practices for the purpose of adapting those to the local context.

## ***5. Strengthen the Involvement of Parents/Guardians of Children with Special Education Needs in their Education***

The involvement of parents and guardians in the development and evaluation of inclusive programmes suggests positive outcomes.



**Thank you for your attention**