DEMAND FOR EDUCATION INNOVATION
Adolescent and youth perspectives on education quality in the CEECIS Region
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Adolescent and youth perspectives on education quality in the CEECIS Region

Commissioned by the UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (UNICEF RO CEECIS) in partnership with UNICEF Kosovo, UNICEF Georgia and UNICEF Tajikistan
This study was researched by lead consultant Jane Lowicki-Zucca; supporting consultant Matthew Emry; lead local researcher Amir Haxhikadrija; local researchers Nino Partskhaladze and Jafar Usmanov; and the teams of youth researchers and research supervisors. Researchers and research supervisors in Kosovo1 include: Arsim Ajvazi, Lum Bicurri, Genc Bokshi, Armanda Dobroshi, Genta Gagica, Edis Galushi, Leotrim Germizaj, Majinda Hasan, Malbora Kajiku, Njomza Krasniqi, Veton Kurhasani, Arta Miftari, Arta Murati, Albcan Palushi, Dren Puka, Dušan Radaković, Vetiola Reçica, Ikram Rexhepi, Besnik Salihu, Kujtim Sermaxhaj, Blerta Sylhasi, Bardha Uka, Miloš Todorović, Bojana Vasić, Petar Vitosević, Aleksandar Velić and Ivana Zivić.


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Findings were analysed and the report was written principally by Jane Lowicki-Zucca, with writing contributions from Matthew Emry, Erin Tanner and Deborah Ackerman. Jamie Vinson researched and prepared portions of trend analysis data.

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About 12 million adolescents and youth remain without access to education in the CEECIS Region. Urgent attention is needed to improve equity and quality of education for adolescents and youth. In the CEECIS Region, enrolment rates drop significantly after primary school, especially among marginalised communities. All equity gaps in education in the region widen after primary school. Enrolment gaps between genders appear at the start of the lower secondary cycle; and enrolment gaps among minority ethnic groups, between urban and rural students, and between rich and poor increase after primary school. Thus, children who are marginalised in primary school become even more marginalised from the education system when they reach adolescence, largely because of the distinct challenges faced by adolescents.

The adolescents and youth who manage to stay in school encounter serious challenges related to the quality of education. Despite the efforts of many governments to improve quality, education systems remain unresponsive to the specific needs of young people. Learning outcomes are low according to international tests, which are often the only measure of achievement available. There is a lack of quality learning materials. National curricula are increasingly irrelevant to labour markets. Teaching quality is on the decline as teachers are often not respected, under qualified and under paid. There is a lack of opportunity for young people to engage in non-formal education and extracurricular activities, which make school more attractive. And, critically, young people’s voices are largely absent in discussions of how to reform education in the region.

Despite the serious challenges of equity and quality facing adolescents and youth in education in the region, little attention has been paid to post-primary education. This publication provides a foundation for future action to improve education for adolescents and youth. It also calls for more and better efforts to engage young people as partners, beneficiaries and leaders in education development initiatives.

Demand for Education Innovation: Adolescent and youth perspectives on education quality in the CEECIS Region is a unique research initiative that sought to better understand the challenges facing young people in education and to identify young people’s priorities for improving education quality. The research engaged young people from Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan at all stages of the research process - from its design to the dissemination of the findings. It calls on governments, international and national partners in education and youth organisations to:

1. Innovate teaching and learning processes to make them more attractive, more flexible, more relevant and more supportive of the distinct needs and priorities of young people
2. Reduce the number of early school leavers by giving special attention to preventing students from leaving school early and creating more second chance opportunities for young people that have left school
3. Promote the participation of young people and youth organizations in decision-making processes from the school to the state level.

We hope that this report will inspire initiatives to improve education quality, reignite discussion about post-primary education among the international community and act as a model for participatory action research.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACRONYMS</th>
<th>FULL FORM</th>
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<tr>
<td>CEECIS</td>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development (United Kingdom)</td>
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<td>EA</td>
<td>enumeration area</td>
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<td>ERC</td>
<td>Education Resource Centre</td>
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<td>FTI</td>
<td>Fast Track Initiative</td>
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<td>GBAO</td>
<td>Mountainous Autonomous Region of Badakhshan (Tajikistan)</td>
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<td>GEL</td>
<td>Georgian lari</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>gross domestic product</td>
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<td>GSE</td>
<td>general secondary education</td>
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<td>HEI</td>
<td>higher education institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>internally displaced person</td>
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<td>ISCED</td>
<td>International Standard Classification of Education</td>
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<td>KYC</td>
<td>Kosovar Youth Council</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<td>MEST</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Kosovo)</td>
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<td>MICS</td>
<td>multiple Indicator Cluster Survey</td>
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<td>MOES</td>
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<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<td>NEAC</td>
<td>National Education Accreditation Centre</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>NSED</td>
<td>National Strategy for Education Development (Tajikistan)</td>
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<td>NYSAP</td>
<td>National Youth Strategy and Action Plan</td>
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<td>ODA</td>
<td>Official Development Assistance</td>
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<td>PIRLS</td>
<td>Progress in International Reading Literacy Study</td>
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<td>PISA</td>
<td>Programme for International Student Assessment</td>
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<td>PSU</td>
<td>primary sampling unit</td>
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<td>RAE</td>
<td>Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian</td>
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<td>RO</td>
<td>Regional Office</td>
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<td>SAS</td>
<td>State Agency for Statistics (Tajikistan)</td>
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<td>State Department of Statistics of Georgia</td>
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<td>SPE</td>
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<td>SPUE</td>
<td>Strategic Plan for Pre-University Education</td>
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<td>SSE</td>
<td>specialized (technical) secondary education</td>
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<td>Tbilisi State University</td>
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<td>TVET</td>
<td>technical and vocational education and training</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>Unified National Examinations (Georgia)</td>
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<td>UNECE</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>UNMIK</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in Kosovo</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
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<td>VET</td>
<td>vocational education and training</td>
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Despite decades of political, economic and social instability and the devastation of armed conflicts that disrupted and at times destroyed formal education opportunities, adolescent and youth demand for high quality basic and post-primary education in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan is uniformly strong – 86 to 93 per cent of 13- to 24-year-olds surveyed in each country say they would like to achieve more education than they already have. Demand for education is high even among dropouts, 72 to 87 per cent of who also say they want more. At the same time, youth say they are facing a wide range of barriers to achieving their education goals, from high education costs to inadequate facilities to meet special learning needs, and many are unable to complete their education. While many recognize and appreciate efforts made to improve education quality and access, they call for stepped-up and innovative action to ensure all youth have opportunities to meet their learning potential. They show a sophisticated understanding of the value of education and the factors that affect its quality, including the importance of their own motivation and active involvement in education processes. Their awareness and ideas belie any concept of youth as nefarious, apathetic and disengaged in their personal and societal development. Instead they are actively working to push past barriers to post-primary education and describe their priorities and the support they need in doing so.

In 2010, UNICEF RO CEECIS and the UNICEF Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan Country Offices engaged 89 young people in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan as youth researchers to work with an international research team and national implementation partners to design, test and implement nationally representative studies of youth opinions of education quality in their respective countries. The study involved 2,444 youth respondents overall, including 1,963 randomly sampled and surveyed 13- to 24-year-olds (517 in Kosovo, 581 in Georgia and 865 in Tajikistan), and another 481 youth of the same age range engaged in 61 focus group discussions. Dozens more participated in four youth consultations, where youth developed survey topics and questions, and in events to develop youth advocacy statements. Key findings from this work are presented in this report, including the following highlights:

Youth in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan highly value formal education and want more of it. As noted above, high percentages of youth in all subgroups say they want to achieve more education than they already have. Strong demand for education among dropouts indicates that these youth are facing barriers to re-entering the formal education system.

Youth largely give passing grades to current education quality, but indicate significant room for improvement. Most youth in each case rate education quality as average or better: 30 to 47 per cent call it ‘average’, and another 30 to 47 per cent call it ‘good’, while just 10 to 16 per cent say it’s ‘very good’, and 8 to 13 per cent call it ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’. Given the difficulties facing education systems and learners in each setting, these ratings are impressive. Efforts to maintain and build back formal education systems are clearly meeting some success, while most youth also feel that further, and at times serious, improvements are needed.

Youth show a sophisticated understanding of the value of education and the possible consequences of poor quality education. The vast majority of youth in each case – 72 to 91 per cent – fully agree with the statements that education is important for the following reasons: “building my capacity in all aspects of life/learning is intrinsically good”; “preparing for a job or profession”; “ensuring a better status in society”; “good citizenship and helping me develop this country”; and “widen my perspectives, or learning about and understanding other people’s experiences.” At the same time, youth name several potential outcomes of poor quality education. Most often, they say that poor education quality is a risk factor for a weaker economy and poor development outcomes, poor health outcomes and the increased outmigration of youth, but their emphasis is somewhat different.

Youth do not consistently view poor quality education as a risk factor for renewed conflict or increased disappointment and youth grievances with government. For the vast majority of youth in Kosovo and Tajikistan, the roots of armed conflict lie distinctly outside the realm of education. Just 3 per cent of youth in Kosovo and 13 per cent in Tajikistan feel that failure to provide good quality education increases

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the likelihood of armed conflict. Findings in Kosovo and Tajikistan do not support a conclusion that education quality has no impact on the risk of armed conflict in general, but do send a message that most youth in these areas view the relationship as very indirect or non-existent in their contexts.

Personal motivation and interest are key to educational attainment in combination with other key factors, especially parental, spousal and teacher support and financial means. Keeping young people in school is especially linked with nurturing their motivation and ensuring family, teacher and financial support. Youth name a combination of factors that most influence or influenced their ability to achieve their desired level of education, and strikingly, they most often highlight their own personal responsibility. Youth most frequently cite their personal interest, motivation and attitude as a principal factor influencing their ability to reach their education goals, with 85 per cent of youth in Kosovo, 79 per cent in Georgia and 71 per cent in Tajikistan saying that this matters most. In second, third and fourth places, they also consistently name the level of parental and/or spousal support they receive, financial means and support from teachers as critical to educational attainment.

Despite strong youth demand for high quality education, youth reports of absenteeism are worryingly high, and dropouts are occurring. Young people’s motivation and ability to attend school regularly are under pressure. Self-reported absenteeism is high, and many youth report that they have not been able to complete their education. Thirty per cent of youth in Kosovo, 47 per cent in Tajikistan and 68 per cent in Georgia say they have skipped school without authorization in the previous 12 months, in many cases 10 or more times. Males are more likely to be absent without authorization than females in each case, particularly in Kosovo. Given the known links between serial absenteeism and dropping out in other settings, more research and action are needed to address these issues and the distinct circumstances facing subgroups of youth.

Between 5 and 7 per cent of youth sampled in each case say they have permanently dropped out of school before completing secondary education. The number of dropouts in each sample is too small to generalize findings on their opinions and experiences to the youth populations with confidence, but these groups nonetheless provide insights into who drops out and why in their settings. Their reasons are diverse, but dropouts most often say they left school mainly due to: lack of financial means/poverty and the need to work (Kosovo); early marriage and lack of financial means (Georgia); lack of parental and/or spousal support and lack of interest in school (Tajikistan). Notably, the Tajikistan females sampled are 13 times more likely than males in their country to say they left school due to lack of parental and/or spousal support for their education. Again, in the Kosovo and Georgia samples, females and males are equally likely to say they have dropped out of school and cite similar reasons.

Youth cite key barriers to getting an education, especially inadequate facilities for meeting special learning needs, the costs of private tutoring, and in Tajikistan, lack of parental support. About 48 to 60 per cent of youth surveyed overall (not just dropouts or absentee) report facing one or more particular difficulties getting an education. In each country, these youth most often say that facilities are inadequate for meeting their special needs, including youth with disabilities. Youth in Kosovo and Georgia next most often name an inability to pay for private classes or tutoring outside school as a key difficulty, while Tajikistan youth cite lack of parental support second most frequently. Rural, female, older and less educated youth are more affected by lack of parental support than their counterparts in Tajikistan, and as noted above, it is a main reason for youth dropouts there. Difficulties with school locations, extra costs, arbitrary fees and teacher mistreatment also stand out, followed by a wide range of other issues facing smaller numbers of youth. Notably, most youth in Kosovo and Georgia say they have the parental support they say they rely on to reach their education goals, while many in Tajikistan don’t – especially female youth. These and other barriers point to the need to further investigate and take action to address the sources and impacts of education exclusion, with a focus on societal views on disability; structural and cultural norms; gender divides; conservative religious practices; and the relationship between displacement and the location of education programmes.
Many youth feel that their own education quality has been negatively impacted by armed conflict, and even more feel that armed conflicts have negatively affected education quality in their country overall, while many others do not perceive any effects. When asked whether ‘war’ or ‘military conflict’ (meaning the conflicts of 1999 in Kosovo, 1991–1994 and 2008 in Georgia, and 1992–1997 in Tajikistan) has decreased their own education quality, youth responses are mixed. About 70 per cent of youth in Kosovo agree fully or somewhat that their own education quality was diminished by war, as do 30 per cent in Tajikistan and 20 per cent in Georgia. Youth in Georgia and Tajikistan were further asked if military conflict has negatively affected education quality in their country overall, with 58 per cent in Georgia and 68 per cent in Tajikistan agreeing to some degree – higher proportions than felt directly impacted themselves. At the same time, many youth disagree that war has had a negative impact on their own or the country’s education quality, or they are not sure.

Education content should be more relevant to job prospects for youth. Of the youth that report having a job, About 47 per cent in Kosovo, 55 per cent in Georgia and 24 per cent in Tajikistan say their education is not relevant to work (the remainder in each case say it’s relevant or ‘somewhat’ so). Youth opinions on education’s links with employment in Kosovo and Georgia are particularly influenced by high youth unemployment rates, including where youth cannot always find work in their chosen profession; mismatches between the skills learned in school and those required in the workforce; and nepotism and discrimination in the job market (including as felt by ethnic minority Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian youth in Kosovo). Many youth in all cases also express concern that limited job prospects and often low pay will not allow them to recoup expenses for rising education costs incurred in part in order to secure work later on. Interestingly, although female youth are more likely to be unemployed in each setting than male youth (data on female youth unemployment are unavailable for Tajikistan, but it is likely higher than male unemployment), females with jobs surveyed more often see the relevance of their education to their current work than their male counterparts. As outlined below, youth call for more practical learning opportunities, freedom to shape their course choices from expanded offerings, better access to technology in schools and libraries, language training and international study, in part to enhance their job prospects.

Youth emphasize that a high quality physical and social learning environment is important for sustaining their motivation for learning, ensuring success and equity in achievement and maintaining their health, safety and comfort so they can concentrate on learning. Basics matter. Many youth are satisfied with their learning environment in each setting, while many others report at times serious problems with school infrastructure, maintenance and services that impede their learning. Youth in all three cases want modern facilities that support safe, practical learning (especially in science) and the development of specialized skills to achieve higher education and professional goals. They too often lack and still desire functioning heating, electricity and water systems; furniture; well-equipped laboratories; computer and Internet technology; books; libraries; classroom space, including for extra-curricular activities; sports facilities and equipment; cafeterias; health spots; elevators, ramps and other facilities for students with disabilities; and more. Of these many gaps, youth emphasize the need for more, better quality, free and low-cost books in multiple languages; functioning computers and Internet service, with skilled teachers to instruct them on their use; and heat and electricity to power the technology they need and desire.

Urgent action is needed to prevent and stem violence in and around schools. Children and youth do not learn in environments where they do not feel safe, and fortunately, most youth report largely feeling safe in and around school. At the same time, many say that violence is occurring in or around school, especially between students, but also at times involving teachers. Youth call for more school psychologists and social workers to address violence and other social and emotional issues they are facing, especially in areas and among populations that were most directly affected by armed conflict.

Youth prioritize improvements in learning content that modernize education systems, rather than core subjects. Youth across the three countries call for surprisingly few changes to core subjects such as history, mathematics and literature and seem to accept these subjects as suitable. Instead, they prioritize...
subjects and learning content that modernize education systems to provide them with more chances to use computers and the Internet, learn foreign languages, engage in student exchange programmes and learn with engaging teaching methods and hands on applications. Despite advances in computerizing schools and classrooms, gaps in access to technology contribute to inequities in achievement. Students are also interested in more in- and out-of-school job training and internship opportunities to enhance practical learning and job prospects. Many would like more freedom to choose their courses from a wider selection of electives, allowing them to better shape their employment goals. Extra-curricular, after-school activities are also key for sustaining youth motivation to learn, as they cater to diverse interests in non-formal learning beyond the formal curriculum. Youth from both minority and majority ethnic communities call for more language learning opportunities that support cross-community interaction, reduce discrimination and/or expand job prospects.

High quality teaching is essential to equitable access to high quality education and educational attainment for youth. Lack of support from well-qualified teachers contributes to dropouts and undermines student motivation and their ability to learn. Youth in each country show a high level of respect for and gratitude toward their teachers. At the same time, many are frustrated with a lack of teachers and/or those with specialized skills (especially in Tajikistan); failure to fully implement education reforms, including more participatory and practical learning approaches with adequate materials and equipment; poor communication at times between teachers, parents and students; and ongoing corruption, including nepotism and bribery for grades and education opportunities. Many youth are further frustrated by mismatches between curricula and exam requirements, including where teachers lack specialized skills and are ill-prepared and equipped to implement new education requirements. All of these teaching challenges diminish education quality for youth, create barriers to education access and equity, demoralize students and create feelings of vulnerability and insecurity among them. Youth call for increased teacher salaries; regular and better training and professional development opportunities for teachers; smaller class sizes and one learning shift; strong parent-teacher-student consultation processes; better links between curricula and exams; stepped-up efforts to end corruption in the education system, reducing the need for private tutoring; and more financial support for youth and families who need it most.

Failure to fully and equitably implement education reforms fuels feelings of confusion and frustration and provides disincentives to youth to continue their education. Many youth praise and appreciate education reform achievements in their countries but also feel that much more needs to be done to ensure their implementation and success, especially in Kosovo. Youth in all three cases also recognize that successful education reforms cost money, and most youth in Georgia and Tajikistan think their governments should spend more on ensuring quality education (youth in Kosovo were not asked about public expenditure on education). Overall, youth suggest that reforms be progressive, tested, in keeping with international standards but based on and adapted to country needs and realities, well-funded and rolled out equitably and with oversight, including from youth. Students immediately affected by new exam requirements also require support urgently to succeed and avoid missing opportunities to progress and complete their education.

Youth show substantial confidence in their education authorities to deliver better education. At the same time, more youth express disappointment with education authorities than they do with education quality overall. Many youth also note ongoing politicization of education that impedes learning. Relatively few youth in Kosovo and Georgia say that they feel education authorities are ‘doing a great job’ providing good quality education at all levels to all students – just 10 per cent in Kosovo and 19 per cent in Georgia, compared with 37 per cent in Tajikistan. Youth in each case, however, indicate a substantial amount of trust that government can do a better job. At the same time, many youth say that education authorities are not prioritizing education, or that they are not representing their interests. In each case, this lack of trust in education authorities to deliver better services – felt by a fifth to a quarter of youth – outpaces the proportion of youth who rate the quality of education overall as ‘below average’. Such findings show that youth confidence in the willingness and/or ability of education authorities to provide better services can begin to flag even before youth perceive education quality overall as sub-par. Education authorities in each
case thus have an opportunity to work rapidly to improve education quality for youth while youth have a substantial amount of confidence in them to deliver better services.

The degrees to which youth are able to participate in the classroom, in extra-curricular activities and in education decision-making processes are key measures of education quality for many youth. There is wide room for expanding youth involvement in learning processes and education decision-making, and many youth are hungry for more opportunities. Less than a third of respondents in any of the countries feel that there are enough opportunities for youth involvement in education decision-making. They name a wide range of barriers to making their voices heard. Youth are at times frustrated with their own complacency, stemming in part from fear of reprisal, and at times with their efforts at participation being ignored and disrespected within education structures. Where student governments function, youth report that they are fairly effective, but they often do not take full advantage of their formal decision-making power and influence. Only about 7 per cent of youth in each country say they are involved in a group or organization, ranging from sports groups to student governments and non-governmental organizations. Many youth also call for more spaces and opportunities for extra-curricular activities in and out of schools, including at youth centres, for non-formal learning, recreation and socializing.

Gaps in education quality support inequities in education access and achievement for youth. Youth identify some efforts to address inequity as having positive effects. Nearly all of the issues youth describe pose challenges to equity of access and achievement in formal education that appear to affect many youth, and some more than others. A number of examples have been noted: inadequate facilities and societal views and norms on disability at times keep youth with disabilities from accessing formal education and attaining their education goals; overcrowded classrooms shrink the amount of time teachers can devote to students’ individual learning needs, decrease the teacher support that youth say is essential to their success, and fuel corruption and extra learning costs that the economically poorest of youth in particular cannot afford; lack of opportunities for multilingual education in school and for books in multiple languages create disadvantages for ethnic minority youth and for all youth aiming to participate fully in their society and the global economy; inadequate access to information on gender, health and other learning content disadvantage girls in Tajikistan; and more. While youth cite these and other inequities in education and their impacts, they also point to progress in addressing them, including successful, if not universally so, efforts to root out corruption in Georgia’s schools, and affirmative action to increasingly ensure tertiary education access for females in Tajikistan. Youth call for more efforts to identify and respond to inequities, including with financial support to the economically poorest youth and families; increased teacher salaries; improved monitoring and oversight of education systems and programmes; policies of inclusion for youth with disabilities; and sensitization programmes and other incentives to families to increase youth education enrolment and completion, especially of ethnic minority youth, including RAE youth in Kosovo, and of female youth in Tajikistan.

Youth priorities for improving education quality are diverse, but they most often prioritize issues relating to learning processes and systems and their physical and social learning environment as key areas for action. The wide range of priorities youth report reflects that youth have a rich range of ideas for change. Most issues centre on learning environment and learning processes and systems concerns, emphasizing the importance of these domains to young people’s learning experiences. Youth make clear, however, that all of the education quality domains they outline are intertwined and interact to produce the high quality education they desire. Some of the named priorities include: more classes with practical applications; improved teacher qualifications; reduced education costs; improved and modernized conditions of schools and universities (furniture, electricity, heating, water, libraries, sports facilities, laboratories, food and renovations).

Overall, young people are pushing for modern education systems that meet or exceed international standards, where all youth have access and the supports they need to form and reach their learning goals. Access to computers and the Internet and increases in teacher salaries are strong priorities, and in general, youth
want learning content and approaches that support stable, inclusive societies that are very much part of the wider global community. Youth also often movingly emphasize their own roles in making high quality education a reality in their setting. A key measure of youth satisfaction with education quality in these countries, and likely many others, is undoubtedly the extent to which they feel supported in taking individual initiative and responsibility for confronting obstacles to post-primary education and successfully completing their education goals. Support must in part help youth confront at times deep cultural and religious barriers to youth education, in addition to addressing the many other diverse, interacting issues youth describe, from education funding to teacher training. They call on governments at all levels; school, university and other education authorities; teachers; parents; international actors; their peers; and others to work together and deepen efforts to address the concerns they outline. Many of these are described in more detail in the following pages and in individual case reports, including a range of recommendations for action.

Youth call on governments at all levels; school, university and other education authorities; teachers; parents; international actors; their peers; and others to work together and deepen efforts to address the concerns they outline through a range of recommendations for action:

- **Improve the quality of teaching.** Raise teacher salaries. Enhance teacher qualifications. Promote support for teachers implementing new reforms. Support the use of interactive and engaging teaching methods to ensure that teaching supports practical learning.

- **Provide more practical and innovative learning opportunities.** Create opportunities for students to learn marketable skills, such as computer and technology skills, foreign languages and transferable job skills. Modernize learning opportunities to enhance students’ motivation to learn. Increase international student exchange opportunities at both the secondary and tertiary education levels.

- **Increase access to extra-curricular activities.** Add sports, culture and social programmes to schools. Use non-formal education to supplement academic courses with additional learning opportunities.

- **Enhance young people’s participation.** Increase opportunities for youth participation in education decision-making and implementation of education reforms. Empower youth to take action to improve education quality through student government and other forums. Expand opportunities for extra-curricular activities and non-formal learning. Work with youth to determine how youth subgroups prefer to receive information on the diverse subjects of health, HIV/AIDS and nutrition; gender and sexual relationships; and peace and tolerance.

- **Improve learning environments.** Improve the quality of school environments. Make school infrastructure more inclusive of students with special needs. Ensure that up-to-date, low cost and relevant textbooks are accessible for all students in relevant languages. Increase access to social support services and job counselling for students.

- **Reduce dropouts.** Provide in-school support for students at risk of dropping out. Make schools more flexible so that they are able to address the special needs of students and be inclusive. Create more opportunities for dropouts to return to school. Address barriers to school completion by reducing the cost of education and addressing gender divides.

- **Reduce the cost of education.** Decrease education costs, and expand financial support to students, with attention to the needs of the economically poorest students, female youth, youth with special needs and those in single-parent households.

- **Promote violence-free and inclusive schools.** Investigate violence in and around schools, including inter-ethnic and religious conflict, and enhance protective factors. Study and address the causes and effects of rising traditionalism and religious conservatism as barriers to youth getting an education. Expand learning opportunities for youth with disabilities and other special needs learners, as much as possible within conventional schools.
UNICEF’s Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (UNICEF RO CEECIS) embarked on an exciting and ambitious project to better understand and improve education quality for adolescents and youth in the CEECIS region. It aims to do so by:

- Increasing and improving knowledge about the relationship between youth, education quality, and the social, political and economic factors that have an impact on education quality;
- Informing and promoting further research and action to improve education quality for youth in the region; and
- Creating opportunities for youth contributions to education policy and programme decision-making.

In pursuit of these aims, UNICEF RO CEECIS worked with UNICEF Country Offices to mobilize an international research team, country-based youth research teams, a reference group of international experts, youth and other national non-governmental implementation partners, education and statistical authorities and others to investigate education quality for youth in the region, with a focus on three particular cases: Kosovo⁴, Georgia and Tajikistan.

Three nationally representative, participatory studies on youth perspectives of education quality have been at the heart of this work. Youth were asked to describe their understanding and experiences of education quality and what drives changes in it. Their inputs from the three cases were further compared with a focus on whether and how various forms of social, economic and political instability impact education quality for youth in similar and different ways. The findings of these participatory surveys with youth are presented here as a stand-alone report, highlighting youth voices in their own right. The youth survey findings provide valuable information about how youth aged 13 to 24 define, rate and prioritize improvements for education quality that are relevant for immediate follow-up by many actors.

This work has been a response to research conducted by the UNICEF RO CEECIS that revealed both troubling indicators of deteriorating education quality in the CEECIS region, with distinct effects on adolescents and youth, and limited opportunities for young people to contribute to decision-making on education reform and programming. UNICEF Country Offices have also called for more information and action on adolescent and youth education issues in their areas. Moreover, the project has attempted to support global Education for All efforts and to respond to a call for evidence supporting an emerging discourse on education and fragility that seeks to inform the delivery of quality education services in situations of social, political and economic instability. Findings related to questions on the impact of ‘fragility’ on education quality for youth will be provided separately, as the language of the fragility discourse proved unviable for the purposes of this research.

In addition to the youth survey findings, this report includes results of research also undertaken on trends in youth development and education indicators in the CEECIS region and in the cases considered, as well as recommendations for youth and education programming in the region. Youth advocacy statements developed by youth in each case site are also provided. Youth were involved in the project design and implementation and will actively promote its findings, contributing to the sustainability of outcomes. They were also principal respondents, who together with their peers and future generations of young people, stand to benefit from any improvements in education quality achieved. Detailed individual case reports are also available under separate covers for Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan.

⁴ UNSCR 1244.
INTRODUCTION

DEMAND FOR EDUCATION INNOVATION: ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION QUALITY IN THE CEECIS REGION
COMPOSITION OF THE CEECIS REGION

The Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEECIS) region is a UNICEF-defined geographic conglomeration divided into four subregions:

- The Caucasus – Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia
- Western CIS – Belarus, Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine
- Central and South-Eastern Europe – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo
- Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan
- Turkey is also included in the CEECIS region, but not within a designated subregion

Figure 1. Map of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States


5 UNSCR 1244.
RESEARCH AIMS, DESIGN AND METHODS
The findings on youth opinions of education quality in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan presented and discussed in this report have been derived as part of a UNICEF RO CEECIS research study aimed at exploring, in-depth, the factors affecting education quality for youth between the ages of 13 and 24 in the CEECIS region. This research has also aimed to identify ways to improve education quality for these youth. It has asked the central research questions:

- What are the key factors affecting education quality for youth in the CEECIS region?
- What steps should be taken to improve education quality for youth?
- What are the priorities of adolescents and youth for improving education quality?

The research study utilized three principal approaches:

- **A review of the literature on youth, education quality and the social, political and economic factors affecting education quality and youth;**
- **A trend analysis of select indicators of education quality and youth development in the CEECIS region and in three country cases** – Investigates some of the existing indicators, measures and data on youth and education to track changes over time.
- **A structured, focused comparison of three case studies of the relationship between education quality and youth in the CEECIS region** – Focuses on field research with youth undertaken in Kosovo (Central and South-Eastern Europe), Georgia (the Caucasus) and Tajikistan (Central Asia).

The same general research questions are asked of each case, including:

- How do youth view the quality of education they have received, or are receiving?
- What do youth think affects the quality of education in their setting at micro and macro levels?
- What do youth believe should be done to improve the quality of education in their setting at micro and macro levels, including their priorities for action?\(^6\)

The case study comparison utilizes several methods:

- **The participatory development and implementation of nationally representative structured surveys of youth opinions on education quality** – The surveys assess youth opinions about education quality based on their most recent experiences with formal education systems.
- **Focus groups with young people on education quality issues for youth** – The focus groups further assess youth opinions about education quality based principally on their most recent experiences with formal education systems, but also their experiences in the more distant past, including before, during and after armed conflict. Discussion centred on questions about the state of education quality, what factors affect it and priorities and suggestions for improving it.
- **Youth advocacy statements** – Smaller numbers of young people in each case site also took the opportunity to develop advocacy statements on education quality for youth in their area, providing further insights into youth views on education quality and ways to maintain or improve it. Details on the development and substance of youth advocacy statements are provided in the Appendices.

Case study implementation was also preceded and informed by the following initiatives, further detail on each of which is provided in Appendix 2:

- **Stakeholder analysis and implementation partners** – Work began in December 2009 with

\(^6\) As examples, at the micro level, some youth talked about poverty in the family or local conditions of violence affecting education quality, while at the macro level, some spoke about what drives or supports this poverty and violence and other systemic and structural factors affecting education service delivery.
stakeholder analyses that identified the wide range of actors who have an interest in, and/or could make contributions to the project and its outcomes in each youth study implementation site. Particular attention was paid to identifying and understanding the dynamics among youth and their networks and organizations. In light of this analysis, UNICEF worked to develop partnerships with individuals and organizations that were well placed and willing to support project implementation and outcomes across Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan beyond the short contracting period.

- **Youth consultations on education quality** – Youth consultations were held in each case site as first steps in developing the components of the structured survey questionnaire and questions for focus group discussion. Youth involved in the consultations, and later in testing and revising the questionnaire, did intensive work to define the facets of education quality from youth perspectives and prioritize questions for inclusion in the study. A summary of the education quality domains they developed is provided in Appendix 1. The consultations were also forums for engaging youth to participate in the youth research teams to implement the study and to generate interest among youth in the outcomes. Diverse participation was sought, including youth already involved, or interested in becoming active in addressing youth and education issues, supporting the sustainability of project outcomes. Youth were recruited in a variety of ways, such as through student councils, and youth, student and university networks, and through other NGOs.

- **National research team recruitment and training** – Three separate teams of youth researchers and supervisors were recruited to implement the study in each site through notices circulated through NGO, youth, school and university networks. Youth researchers between the ages of 18 and 24 were sought with strong, proven verbal and written communication and interpersonal skills and with a preference for research experience and prior involvement or interest in activism on youth and education issues. Researchers were needed with energy and a dynamic ability to track down and build a rapport with youth respondents and collect information quickly, yet accurately and ethically. Given the structured nature of the survey, however, they were not required to have extensive experience or training in qualitative methods.

An even mix of male and female researchers was also sought in order to ensure adequate coverage for same-sex interviewing. Researchers were further sought from a variety of geographic locations in each country to facilitate project implementation in randomly selected locations, ensure a variety of language skills and ease social interaction throughout the territories.

Youth researchers, research supervisors and implementation partner staff attended a five-day training in their respective areas on the study methodology. The teams debated, field-tested and revised the survey questionnaire. They then worked in two-person subgroups to implement the survey in specific geographic areas. See Appendix 3 for the final structured survey questionnaires and Appendix 4 for a sample training agenda.

**SAMPLE DESIGN**

The samples were designed respectively by the Statistical Office of Kosovo (SOK), the State Department of Statistics of Georgia (SDSG) and M-Vector in Tajikistan, in collaboration with the lead consultant, for the implementation of two-stage cluster surveys that would allow UNICEF to make inferences about youth aged 13 to 24 according to settlement type (urban/rural). In Kosovo, the sample was also designed to allow UNICEF to make inferences about youth aged 13 to 24 living in two geographic areas, one where the Kosovo

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7 Given resource and time constraints, many of the issues raised by youth were not addressed in the survey or focus group discussions. Those ultimately included should be understood as the mutually agreed-upon priorities for the purposes of this study by the parties involved and should not be considered the sum total of youth-defined youth education quality issues in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan.
education system serves the vast majority of learners in Kosovo, and the other where the Republic of Serbia education system serves the majority of Kosovo’s Serb population. A multistage method of sampling was used to design the samples.

Stratification was conducted first by region and then by settlement type (urban/rural). The sample sizes calculated (510 for Kosovo, 576 for Georgia, and 600 for Tajikistan) were distributed among those strata proportional to their population size in Georgia and Tajikistan, and in Kosovo, proportional to the distribution of households within randomly selected enumeration areas (EAs) (without replacement). Census EAs served as primary sampling units (PSUs) in Georgia, and State Agency for Statistics (SAS) urban and rural population aggregates served as PSUs in Tajikistan. The numbers of households, PSUs and/or interviews by strata for the Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan sample designs are shown respectively in Tables A1, A2, A3 and A4 presented in Appendix 2. The distributions of EAs for Kosovo and PSUs for Georgia and Tajikistan are further depicted in Figures A1, A2 and A3 in Appendix 2. As also shown in Appendix 2, final sample sizes drawn were 517 for Kosovo, 581 for Georgia and 865 for Tajikistan (1,963 total). After the structured survey was implemented, the samples were re-weighted based on actual response rates.

Selected characteristics of each sample are presented in Tables A5, A6 and A7 in Appendix 2. Distinctions within each of the samples that are important to interpreting the research findings are also described in Appendix 2.

**RESEARCH PROTOCOLS**

National sampling specialists provided the respective youth research teams with information on each of the EAs, PSUs, or ‘clusters’, where the team subgroups would be working. Researchers were trained to randomly select households within the clusters at the second stage of sampling using maps in Kosovo and addresses in Georgia and Tajikistan as starting points in urban areas and other starting points in villages. They were also trained to then determine whether or not one or more eligible youth resided within the household, and how to randomly select the respondent. If more than one eligible subject resided in a household, researchers used the protocol developed by the lead consultant and the SOK in Kosovo and the Kish Table in Georgia and Tajikistan to determine which individual should be selected for the interview.

Emphasis was placed on strict adherence to team protocols to ensure the validity and utility of research findings and the safety and well-being of research respondents and the research teams. Team members worked in two-person subgroups of the larger team to enhance security, oversight and teamwork. As much as possible, the subgroups were comprised of one male and one female in order to address any gender issues that might arise for both respondents and researchers. Although the contents of the survey were not considered to be particularly sensitive, randomly selected youth respondents were interviewed one-on-one and in confidence, as much as possible by a member of the same sex only. For additional information on research protocols and on the strengths and limitations of the approach, see Appendix 2.

**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

Based on youth consultation, suggestions and team discussion during the trainings, youth researchers organized focus group discussions and conducted them in subgroups of two. One researcher facilitated conversation while the other took detailed notes, and the two reported jointly. Sessions ran about an hour and a half to two hours each and involved no more than 12 participants in each.

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8 SOK estimates that approximately 60 per cent of the population lives in urban areas and 40 per cent in rural areas; the State Department of Statistics of Georgia (SDSG) estimates that half of the population lives in each type of settlement; and the Tajikistan’s State Agency for Statistics estimates that just under 30 per cent of the Tajikistan population lives in urban areas, and just over 70 per cent lives in rural areas.
Facilitators explored questions from the structured survey and consultations in deeper detail, in addition to questions germane to the experiences of the particular group such as youth who study in rural areas. Some focus groups were also dedicated to exploring a particular topic in detail, such as the quality of teaching or the connections between education quality and job market experiences. As shown in Tables A8, A9 and A10 presented in Appendix 2, 61 focus groups were held in total, involving 484 youth, including 230 females and 254 males.

**STRUCTURED SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES**

The youth involved in the pre-survey consultations processes in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan initially grouped the dozens of topics and questions they developed on education quality and youth into several domains, which as noted, are summarized in Appendix 2. These youth-generated dimensions of education quality at times overlapped with some of the key components of education quality identified in UNICEF’s Child Friendly School approach, including the following domains:

1. Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities.
2. Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive and provide adequate resources and facilities.
3. Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace.
4. Processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities.
5. Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.

To develop the respective structured survey questionnaires, youth-generated interests were further debated and reconciled with these UNICEF education quality criteria and with inputs from youth involved in the pilot tests, the reference group of experts and international research team. As much as possible, questions were worded similarly for each survey to increase the possibility of case comparability. Each questionnaire distinguishes the unique interests of the youth in each area, however, with differences in the wording of similar questions and with different questions posed altogether. The question domains ultimately agreed to by youth involved in the study design in each site are as follows, with additional detail provided within the survey findings below (see also Appendix 2):
Final structured survey question domains:

- **Demographics and family** – Key background information on respondents.
- **Education satisfaction and expectations** – Young people’s overall level of satisfaction with education quality; if and why youth value education; and factors that most affect educational attainment.
- **Learning environment** – Domain two above and issues raised by youth in Kosovo and Georgia under the same and other headers; and in Tajikistan under ‘Technical facilities in education institutions’, ranging from adequacy of facilities to school security.
- **Learning content** – Domain three above and issues raised by youth under the same and other headers in Kosovo; those raised by youth in Georgia under ‘Curriculum’; and those raised by youth in Tajikistan under ‘Education system’, ‘Technical facilities in education institutions’ and ‘In- and out-of-school student support’, such as the use of computer and Internet in classes, course selection and textbook quality.
- **Learning processes and systems** – Domain four above and issues raised by youth in Kosovo previously under a mix of other headers; those raised by youth in Georgia on ‘Quality of teaching and organizational culture’, and those raised by youth in Tajikistan on ‘Education system’, ‘Quality of pedagogical staff’, and ‘Material and non-material support for youth’, such as teacher qualifications, student financing and youth satisfaction with education reform progress.
- **Learning outcomes** – Domain five above and issues raised by youth in Kosovo and Georgia under similar and other headers; and those raised by Tajikistan youth under ‘Violations and implementation of youth rights and freedoms’, including the relevance of education to employment and absenteeism.
- **Youth participation** – Issues raised by youth in all sites with a focus on the prevalence of youth involvement in groups and organizations and in education decision-making, including under the same header in Kosovo, under ‘Organizational culture’ in Georgia, and in Tajikistan under the ‘Implementation of youth rights and freedoms’.
- **Politicization of education** – Issues raised by youth in Kosovo under ‘Politicization of education’; in Georgia, issues raised in the training and field testing on the impact of military conflict on education and political interference in education; and in Tajikistan, political issues raised by youth as distinct from other structural and systems issues.

Key findings on youth opinions of education quality follow, including structured survey responses and highlights of focus group discussions. Results are presented mostly according to the flow of the questionnaires in Appendix 3, with some re-ordering. Key findings are listed at the end of each group of questions. See individual country reports for additional detail.

**Important note**

See also Appendix 2 for important information on interpreting survey results, including an explanation of which young people’s opinions are represented by the findings of the nationally representative surveys. Note that survey findings provided within the report can only be generalized with a high level of confidence within each case site to the populations of 13- to 24-year-olds, those in urban and rural areas, and in Kosovo’s case, those living in either of the two school system areas.
REGIONAL AND CASE TRENDS IN EDUCATION QUALITY AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
To contextualize and inform the questions and issues considered by this study, background research was conducted on recent political, economic, social and demographic conditions and armed conflicts in the CEECIS region and in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan. A trend analysis of select indicators of education quality and youth development9 for the CEECIS region and the three cases was further undertaken to broadly compare changes in measures of education quality for youth against some indicators of instability and armed conflict affecting the cases considered.

As much as possible, indicators were tracked from the 1980s to the present in order to include data from before and after the formal collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, a marker of the beginning of the recent period of political, economic and social transition of the CEECIS region. This period would also include data from before, during and after wars in the former Yugoslavia, occurring between 1991 and 1999, particularly affecting Kosovo.

Identifying and generating relevant data to monitor, assess and compare progress in providing high quality education for youth in the CEECIS region over time are clearly key challenges. Even when data do exist, questions remain regarding what it reveals and what should be done as a result.

Summary findings are presented on the following topics for the Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan cases:

- Youth experiences of political instability and conflict (major political events; armed conflicts; humanitarian impacts of armed conflict)
- Economic instability (gross domestic product per capita; youth unemployment rate by all and sex; poverty/population percentages living in relative or absolute poverty)
- Demographics (population/total; total youth; and youth by sex)
- The evolving education situation (public expenditure on education/percentage of gross domestic product spent on education; education enrolment/net and/or gross primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment rates; education achievement/youth literacy rate, PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS; education policies and reform)

**YOUTH EXPERIENCES OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND CONFLICT**

Over the past two decades, youth in the CEECIS region have endured substantial political instability, and at times armed conflict, that have rocked their communities and families and shaped their education experiences. Today’s generation of 13- to 24-year-olds were not yet born or were very young when both Yugoslavia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) broke apart in the early 1990s, ushering in a period of dramatic change, unlike that of any other region in the world.

By 1992, 27 new nations were formed that faced the daunting challenge of reorganizing their societies. For many, this included abrupt moves away from USSR central planning to new market-based economies. While they were newly politically independent, many maintained economic, and in some cases, military relationships, including

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9 At its heart, analysing trends in aspects of education quality for youth involves confronting key challenges facing stakeholders at all levels, who want to know what the indicators and measures of youth well-being are or should be and to what extent they can be compared across societies. Efforts have been underway internationally and in many countries and localities to answer these questions, including as they relate to education for youth. This study focuses especially on select youth development indicators (YDIs) compiled with leadership from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Programme on Youth to track country achievements toward addressing the priority areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, which include education. These YDIs were identified by world experts, including youth, and focus on measurable indicators that can be used for cross-country comparison, emphasizing those for which data are available for many countries. Internationally comparable education achievement data are also analysed, including results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).
through participation in the CIS. While some political transitions occurred peacefully, a number of civil wars tore these new nations apart (Cold War Museum, undated). At least 340,000 people were killed, and a staggering 6.76 million people (estimated) were displaced over the course of the last 20 years. More than 827,000 children in the CEECIS are still classified as ‘populations of concern’ – i.e., refugees, asylum-seekers, returned refugees, IDPs, returned IDPs and stateless children. There are many more children and youth living in disputed territories and areas of unresolved conflicts (UNICEF CEECIS, 2011). These seismic political, economic and social shifts have had major impacts on young people’s lives and education, including in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan. The subsections below provide a brief background on political instability and conflict in Kosovo and Tajikistan.

KOSOVO

In the early 1990s, and as other regions of former Yugoslavia descended into war, ethnic Albanians in Kosovo (who were the majority of the province’s population of roughly 2 million) organized themselves to counter increasing repression from central Yugoslav authorities based in Belgrade. Non-violent protest and sporadic violence were met with extreme violence perpetrated against ethnic Albanian insurgents and civilians by Yugoslav forces as tensions boiled into full-blown war in 1999, also involving NATO forces. Thousands of civilians were killed, and about 800,000 ethnic Albanian youth and their families were expelled from Kosovo en masse. Another 500,000 ethnic Albanians, Serbs, Roma and others also became internally displaced. According to UNHCR, there were about 18,300 IDPs remaining in Kosovo by the end of 2010 (IDMC, 2011).

Kosovo’s armed conflict took a very personal and distinct toll on young people. Adolescents and youth were targeted with physical violence, including beatings, abduction, murder, sexual assault and gang rape. Many were arrested and detained, and their property and identity documents were destroyed. They lost and were separated from family and lacked food and health care, including reproductive health care for adolescent girls. Kosovo youth also struggled to get an education, as education services were disrupted and/or stopped, and schools and education infrastructure were destroyed (Lowicki and Pillsbury, 2001).

UN Security Council Resolution 1244 marked the war’s formal end in 1999 and designated Kosovo an internationally administered territory. The United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) carried out responsibilities for governance and development of provisional institutions for self-government, and NATO and Russian troops have acted as peacekeeping forces. Serb populations became newly displaced into enclaves and north and western Kosovo following the formal end of the conflict. What remained of Yugoslavia and had become Serbia and Montenegro, was further transformed with the formation of the separate independent republics of Serbia and Montenegro in 2006. In 2008, the Kosovo government, elected by Kosovo’s Albanian majority, also declared national independence, a status that has been formally recognized by many countries and disputed and unrecognized by many others, including Serbia. Although the Kosovo education system serves the vast majority of learners in Kosovo, the Republic of Serbia education system functions in Serb-majority areas of Kosovo, continuing an era of parallel education, but this time in reverse.

GEORGIA

Georgia declared independence from the USSR in 1991, having played important agricultural, energy, economic and geopolitical roles. It experienced a number of subsequent conflicts in the 1990s, including

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10 CIS members include many former Soviet Republics: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. With an administrative centre in Minsk, Belarus, the Commonwealth’s functions are to coordinate member policies regarding their economies, foreign relations, defence, immigration policies, environmental protection and law enforcement.

in its north-western region of Abkhazia and in Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia in north-central Georgia, where conflict flared again in 2008. As of 2010, an estimated 257,000 people remained internally displaced in Georgia as a result of the various conflicts (Georgian Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation, 2011), of whom 65,000 are under the age of 18.

TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan was among the last of the USSR’s constituents to declare its independence in 1991. It had been one of the economically poorest Soviet republics (UNTIP, 2010). It plunged into a brutal war that lasted from 1992 to 1997 that was fought against opposition groups, including a broad coalition striving to remake the republic into an Islamic nation (BBC, 2010; BBC, 2010a). Tajikistan’s young people were among the more than 100,000 people killed; youth were also among at least 600,000 people – then roughly a tenth of Tajikistan’s population – who became IDPs, and the 90,000 who became refugees (HRW, 1993; ICG, 2001).

The conflict also took a heavy toll on Tajikistan’s infrastructure, making daily life difficult for all and returns home very difficult for many refugees and IDPs, who had already lived in extreme conditions in exile. The Tajikistan population also became heavily armed, abetting further deadly violence. Psychological scars ran deep, and youth bore heavy personal and family responsibilities at an early age with limited support.

In 1993, the CIS authorized a peacekeeping force in Tajikistan to protect the CIS borders. Tajikistan approved a draft constitution in 1994, and has continued to work to improve security in the years since the war’s formal end in 1997. Sporadic violence continues in some areas.

ECONOMIC INSTABILITY

As children and youth throughout the CEECIS region experienced at times turbulent political transition, civil wars and displacement, they were simultaneously affected by often devastating economic change accompanying these events. Economic challenges varied, and for countries moving from the centrally planned economy of the USSR to market economies, transitions were particularly painful and not immediately successful. Some countries found paths to recovery more quickly than others. The global economic crisis beginning in 2008 has also struck the region hard, with varied impacts on individual countries.

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT

The magnitude and duration of the transitional recession that occurred throughout the region was comparable to, and in some cases even worse than that for developed countries during the Great Depression (World Bank, 2002). Some former Soviet nations saw their gross domestic product (GDP) fall by 40 per cent over the span of only five years between 1990 and 1995. The CIS overall witnessed an average of 6.5 years of continuously declining output. By 2000, the GDP for the CIS was just 63 per cent of its 1990 value (World Bank, 2002).

Whereas some countries continued to experience sharp declines, others met the economic reform challenges more easily and suffered much smaller and shorter recessions. Countries that make up what the World Bank refers to as the CSB (Central and South-Eastern Europe and the Baltics) bounced back more quickly from their transitional recession, recovering to their 1990 GDP levels by 1998 and exceeding that level by 6 per cent in 2000 (World Bank, 2002). Trends in real GDP growth by subregion are depicted in Figure 2.
Differences between countries may have resulted from smoother political transitions, the development of legal and regulatory institutions, reforms of communal public services, rapid movement of resources from the state to the private sector, more disciplined and transparent economic approaches or even cultural, geographical and educational advantages. Some nations benefitted greatly from larger economic inputs from western nations and companies (World Bank, 2002). ‘Less strategically important’ economies have not received as much of the badly needed foreign investments.

KOSOVO

Macroeconomic data are limited for Kosovo for the 1990s, but estimates point to the deterioration of all economic indicators during the decade. In the early 1990s, output dropped more than 50 per cent and another 20 per cent after the 1999 conflict (World Bank, 2005, 15). As shown in Figure 3, the early post-war period, however, brought economic expansion for Kosovo, which experienced double-digit GDP growth in 2000 and 2001 driven by donor-funded reconstruction and diaspora remittances. GDP per capita was US$1,088 in 2000, $1,364 in 2001 and reached $1,728 by 2009 (all at constant year 2000 dollars). Nonetheless, in 2006 and 2007, Kosovo had the lowest growth rate in South-Eastern Europe, and in 2009 and 2010, GDP growth was a moderate 4 per cent. Despite progress, given its population size Kosovo is still one of the economically poorest areas in Europe (World Bank, 2010, 1; and World Bank, 2011).

GEORGIA

One of the most valued USSR Republics before the USSR’s break-up, Georgia experienced one of the most severe economic contractions in the CEECIS region since its independence in 1991. As seen in Figure 3, Georgia’s per capita GDP was $1,249 in 1991, fell to $458 in 1994; and climbed to $1,199 by 2009 (at constant year 2000 dollars), which is still below the 1991 level (World Bank, 2011).
TAJIKISTAN

After independence, Tajikistan’s already very low GDP per capita of $387 in 1991 fell to $122 in 1996 and rose to just $249 by 2009 (at constant year 2000 dollars), still below the 1991 level, as seen in Figure 3 (World Bank, 2011). In 2007, Tajikistan had the lowest GDP per capita of the former Soviet republics (OECD, 2009).

Figure 3. GDP per capita for Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan, 1990–2009 (US dollars at constant year 2000 dollars)

\[\text{Source: World Bank, 2011. Data for Kosovo prior to 2000 are not available.}\]

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

The challenging economic environment fostered high unemployment levels within the entire CEECIS region, with marked subregional variation. Data that track changes in total and youth unemployment rates in the region and for Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan pre-1991 were not found in this investigation. More recent data show the CEECIS region youth unemployment rate as the third highest globally, after North Africa and the Middle East. Although overall CEECIS youth unemployment rates have fallen slightly since 1998, by 2009, they remained far higher than Western Europe or even sub-Saharan Africa, as seen in Figure 4 (ILO, 2010; UNICEF, 2011). Data from 2004 also show youth unemployment rates often greatly exceeding total unemployment rates in many countries in the CEECIS region, as depicted in Figure 5.
Figure 4. Global trends in youth unemployment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>1998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Africa</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and Caribbean</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>South-East Asia and Pacific</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central and South-Eastern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe (non EU) and CIS</td>
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<td>Developed economies and</td>
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<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>World</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Figure 5. Total and youth unemployment rates in some CEECIS countries, 2004


Youth unemployment rates in Kosovo and Georgia have fluctuated somewhat in recent years but remained consistently high, particularly in Kosovo, as shown in Figure 6. Youth unemployment was 73 per cent in 2008 in Kosovo, and 31.5 per cent in Georgia in 2007. Tajikistan’s youth have also faced high unemployment, although its 10 per cent youth unemployment rate in 2004 was substantially lower than the rates in Georgia and Kosovo. Youth unemployment figures for Tajikistan were not identified for multiple years.
Figure 6. Youth unemployment rates in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan, 1999–2008. Percentages (by all)


KOSOVO

Although youth unemployment data for Kosovo were not found pre-1991 and into the 1990s, the World Bank reports that less than half of Kosovo’s population was employed by the end of the 1990s (World Bank, 2005). Annual youth unemployment data for much of the past decade from the Statistical Office of Kosovo show a fairly steady, extremely high unemployment rate for youth, as seen in Figure 6. Youth unemployment was 77.7 per cent in 2002, dipped to 66.5 per cent in 2004 and was up to 73.0 per cent in 2008 and 2009 (SOK, 2009). These data do not, however, report youth unemployment in Serb-majority areas of Kosovo.

Over 80 per cent of Kosovo’s unemployment has been long-term, lasting one or more years, and has been similar to rates in Montenegro and in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The informal economy may contribute up to 35 per cent of Kosovo’s GDP, and there have been few structured links between vocational education and local economic environments. The inability of Kosovo’s economy to absorb thousands of new entrants into the labour market each year increases pressure on youth to migrate in search of work beyond Kosovo’s borders and provides fewer incentives to young people to complete higher education (Stubbs and Haxhikadrija, 2008, 4–5).

GEORGIA

Data on youth unemployment rates for Georgia were obtained for 1999 to 2007. They show fluctuations from 24.6 per cent total youth unemployment in 1999, to 20.1 per cent in 2001 and up to 31.5 per cent in 2007, as seen in Figure 6. Youth between 21 and 25 years old experience the highest rates of unemployment – 30.8 per

12 Data available for Yugoslavia and Serbia do not necessarily include and/or are not disaggregated for Kosovo.
cent – compared to the national rate of 12.4 per cent. Most recent unemployment in Georgia involves people entering the work force for the first time (30 per cent of total unemployment) and the long-term unemployed (27 per cent of total unemployed, who report unemployment of longer than three years) (World Bank, 2009, 7).

Unemployment is one of the greatest challenges young people face in Georgia, and youth who are more educated, female and/or are living in rural areas face the highest odds of being under- or unemployed. Completing secondary or even higher education does not substantially improve their job prospects, as unemployment rates tend to increase proportionally with one’s education level, creating a large educational attainment mismatch. Even the best and brightest students, who are increasingly and disproportionately female, find themselves unable to get entry-level positions or meaningful work-study or internship opportunities. Those living in economically depressed or highly rural subregions such as in the northern mountain regions of Georgia, have less access to labour markets (World Bank, 2009).

TAJIKISTAN

Annual figures marking changes in youth unemployment in Tajikistan from the same source over time were not found in this investigation. One source cites youth unemployment in 2007 as 33 per cent of total unemployment, which that year stood at an estimated 11.3 per cent, with spikes up to 33 per cent during periods of seasonal unemployment (Baskakova, 2007; UNICEF Tajikistan, 2010). This appears to be somewhat higher than the 2004 figure reported in Figure 5. At the same time, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) reports an overall unemployment rate of 2 per cent in 2004 and a youth unemployment rate of 10 per cent in the same year, depicted in Figure 6 (UNECE, 2010).

In the years following independence in Tajikistan, the number of people working in industry dropped by more than half, and employment in agriculture rose nearly 40 per cent. This brought agriculture’s total share of employment to approximately 67 per cent by 2002, up from 45 per cent in 1991. Rising industrial unemployment meant increased unemployment for workers with higher education, creating heavy outward migration of highly qualified labour. Many low-paid, unskilled and/or underemployed workers also sought opportunities abroad. By 2003, upwards of 1 million economic migrants from Tajikistan were sending remittances home (UNESCAP, 2003, 123). By 2007, almost half of Tajikistan’s GDP was earned by temporary migrants working abroad, with about 96 per cent of them employed in Russia. Tajikistan had the highest rate of outward migration for labour in the CIS, with a quarter of all families sending at least one member abroad to work – primarily males. Half of these migrants were youth aged 15 to 29 (Baskakova, 2007).

As described under ‘Learning outcomes’, youth say that heavy economic outmigration from Tajikistan provides a mix of costs and benefits. Heavy outmigration involves difficult family separations and hardships abroad, but it also generates remittances to meet education costs and likely provides a safety valve for many young people seeking work, particularly male youth. As seen in Figure 5, of many countries in the region for which unemployment data are available, Tajikistan registered relatively low total and youth unemployment rates in 2004.

Amid the grip of the global financial crisis beginning in 2008, Tajikistan’s GDP growth slowed, and remittances to the country have declined (World Bank, 2010a). Meanwhile, over half of the working population remaining in Tajikistan continues to work in agriculture (particularly cotton and cereals, fruits and vegetables) and one fifth in industry (such as aluminium and chemical heavy manufacturing and various light industries, such as food processing, fabric, carpets) (BBC, 2010; UNTIP, 2010; World Bank, 2009a).

Many improvements in the school-to-work transition are still to be made. Graduates continue to confront structural unemployment issues and mismatches between the skills they have obtained through formal education and labour market needs. Graduates are often not able to find employment in their preferred professions. Many are also forced to undertake additional training before beginning work because they
have not developed the necessary skills in school. Curricula remain outdated and unable to meet current international market demands or the career aspirations of many students, and employers are reluctant to invest resources in training new labour market entrants. As in other settings, graduates in Tajikistan are also often forced to find work through familial contacts, leading to jobs that are not in their desired profession and further devaluing the education they achieved (Baskakova, 2007; SSCT, 2009).

As described, many highly skilled young people who are unable to find suitable employment domestically are forced to migrate externally in search of work, stay home and be included among the unemployed or take lower skilled, lower paid jobs that do not fit their desired career path. School-to-work transition challenges are particularly pronounced for educated youth who live in rural or high mountainous areas where the vast majority of jobs are in agriculture or involve manual labour. About 23 per cent of youth graduates from university in 2008 remained unemployed by the end of the year (SSCT, 2009).

**Gender dimensions of youth unemployment**

In the CEECIS region overall, youth unemployment has also taken on important gender dimensions. Among the CIS countries, the unemployment rate for young women is higher than that of young men, which can be attributed to a wide range of potential drivers. The post-Soviet return to traditional gender roles, particularly in more rural, conservative and religious (Islamic) communities, has been one of the more significant influences. Girls have been marrying at younger ages or dropping out of school to take care of family obligations and thus have fewer marketable skills (UNICEF CPRP, 2011; Magno and Silova, 2008).

As shown in Figure 7, in Kosovo and Georgia, there have been changes in youth unemployment by sex. Data most recently available for 2007 and 2008 show that female youth are more often unemployed than male youth in both cases. In 2008, 81.8 per cent of female youth were unemployed compared with 68.6 per cent of male youth in Kosovo. While unemployment is high among both males and females in Kosovo, women from ethnic minority groups, apart from Serbs, face almost total unemployment (Villellas Arino and Redondo de la Morena, 2008, 20). In Georgia, despite generally positive school enrolment trends, females face strong difficulties entering the job market, together with rural youth in general. In 2008, 40.7 per cent of female youth were unemployed compared with 32.4 per cent of male youth (World Bank, 2011).
No sex-disaggregated data were obtained for youth unemployment for multiple years in Tajikistan. However, the number of women employed, including female youth, dropped 43 per cent between 1991 and 2002 (UNESCAP, 2003, 123). About 73 per cent of women’s labour is unpaid, and the gender wage gap is 50 per cent. Women with disabilities face strong discrimination in all economic sectors, especially those living in rural areas. Most women in rural areas of Tajikistan also lack personal identification papers, making it more difficult for them to pursue economic opportunities and secure social entitlements (UNIFEM, 2009). Meanwhile, males, including young males, are under increased pressure to provide for themselves and their families and to migrate in search of work.

**Figure 7.** Youth unemployment rates in Kosovo and Georgia. Percentages for multiple years (by sex)

![Graph showing youth unemployment rates in Kosovo and Georgia](image)

**Sources:** Kosovo: Statistical Office of Kosovo, 2008 (figures do not represent data from Serbian-majority areas of Kosovo). Georgia: United Nations Statistics Division, 2011; World Bank, 2011. Unemployed are those persons aged 15–24 who had no employment during the reference week, and had actively sought employment during the previous four weeks, and were available to start work within the next two weeks. Persons who already had found a job, which was to start later, are also classified as unemployed.

**POVERTY**

The financial contraction throughout the CEECIS region caused a sharp increase in extreme poverty between 1990 and 2000. There were differences by subregion, where countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus (CIS, Asia) more often experienced extreme poverty, as seen in Figure 8. By the end of the 1990s, almost 18 million children were living in poverty in the region (UNICEF CEECIS, 2011). In 1998, 1 out of every 20 people in the CEECIS economies had a per capita income below US$1.25 a day; a decade earlier, fewer than 1 in 60 lived in such poverty (World Bank, 2002). As shown in Figure 9, however, between 1990 and 1998, larger proportions of the populations of many other regions of the world experienced this absolute poverty. At the same time, Eastern Europe and Central Asia was the only region among these six to experience a rise in the average regional poverty rate during this period.13

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13 Note that there are many ways to measure poverty, including with a focus on its multidimensionality beyond income. The United Nations Human Poverty Index, for example, is a composite index measuring deprivations in several dimensions, including a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living, also capturing social exclusion. The relative and absolute poverty measures reported for this study focus on those for which the most data are available for each case over time.
Figure 8. Proportion of population living below $1 (PPP) per day. Percentages by subregion

![Bar chart showing proportions of the population living below $1 (PPP) per day by subregion from 1990 to 2005. The chart indicates a decrease in the percentage of the population living below the poverty line across different subregions.]


Figure 9. Average regional poverty rates (1990–1998), per cent

<table>
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<th>1998</th>
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<td>5.1</td>
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<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>15.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
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<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reprinted from World Bank, 2002.

KOSOVO

Although data were not found tracing changes in poverty pre-1991 into the 1990s for any of the cases, according to the World Bank, by the end of the 1990s, half of Kosovo’s population was living in poverty (World Bank, 2010). As shown in Figure 10, available data for more recent years show the percentage of people living at or below the poverty line in Kosovo ranging from 37.7 per cent in 2003, to 45 per cent in 2006. Other reports note that in 2007, about 45 per cent of the population continued to live below the poverty line and that 16 per cent lived in extreme poverty. The incidence of extreme poverty in Kosovo in 2007 was reportedly...
nearly twice the regional median of 9 per cent, and 17 per cent of children aged 6–15 were experiencing extreme poverty. Extreme poverty was also more prevalent among Kosovar Serb households than those of Kosovar Albanian and other ethnic groups in Kosovo (Stubbs and Haxhikadrija, 2008, 4–5; USAID, 2008; World Bank, 2007). Data on the percentage of Kosovo’s population living in absolute poverty on less than $1.25 per day (PPP) were not obtained.

Figure 10. Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan, 1996–2009. Percentage of the population

Source: World Bank, 2011; data not available for years not reported.

GEORGIA

Data on the percentage of Georgia’s population living at or below the national poverty line were found for just one year; in 2007, 23.6 per cent of Georgia’s population was poor, as shown in Figure 10. The World Bank also reports that about 9.3 per cent of the population was extremely poor in 2007. The incidence of poverty varied considerably across Georgia in 2007, with rural areas bearing the majority of the burden. For rural areas, 29.7 per cent of the population was poor, and 12.4 per cent extremely poor; by contrast, in urban areas, 18.3 per cent of the population was poor and 6.7 per cent were extremely poor. Overall, rural areas accounted for 59 per cent of total poor and 62 per cent of extreme poor. Poverty was also correlated with employment status, where the employed are less likely to experience poverty (World Bank, 2009, 4–5).

Data for multiple years on the percentage of Georgia’s population living in absolute poverty are relatively more available. As shown in Figure 11, about 4.5 per cent of people lived on less than $1.25 per day (PPP) in 1996. This rose to 17.3 per cent in 2003 and decreased to 14.7 per cent in 2008, still far above the 1996 level.
Data on the percentage of Tajikistan’s population living in poverty were found for four years between 1999 and 2009. As shown in Figure 10, in 1999, 92 per cent of the population lived in poverty; this dropped to 47 per cent in 2009, reportedly the highest overall poverty rate in the CIS and Europe in 2009. Poverty rates were higher for families with children than those without children, and families with seven or more members accounted for almost 60 per cent of the total population (World Bank, 2010a, 2011; UNTIP, 2010; Baskakova, 2007).

Data for multiple years on the percentage of Tajikistan’s population living in absolute poverty are also sparse. As shown in Figure 11, about 44.5 per cent of people lived on less than $1.25 per day (PPP) in 1999. This fell to 36.3 per cent in 2003, and was 21.5 per cent in 2004 (World Bank, 2011).

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

The CEECIS region’s overall population trend is interesting and dramatic compared to other regions of the world. CEECIS is the only region to have registered an overall population decline in the last decade – from 413 million in the mid-1990s to 404 million by 2009, a decrease of about a 2.2 per cent, with few a constituent country exceptions, including Tajikistan. The child population dropped from 122 million in 1990 to 96.7 million by 2009, about 21 per cent. The main drivers of these rapid and remarkable decreases have been a combination of overall declining birth rates, increases in adult mortality and high migration flows outside of the region (UNICEF CPRP, 2011; UNICEF, 2011). By 2005, the CEECIS region accounted for an estimated more than one third of global international migration. At first, migration reflected returns to ethnic homelands, and since the mid-1990s, it has been more economically driven (UNICEF IRC, 2009).
The countries with the largest child populations in the CEECIS region include the Russian Federation, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Romania and Tajikistan. Tajikistan had the highest population of children (0–17) as a percentage of total population – 44 per cent in 2008 – followed by Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan (all at 36 per cent), Turkey (32 per cent) and Albania, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan (each with about 30 per cent) (UNICEF, 2011). As of 2009, the adolescent population of 10- to 19-year-olds in CEECIS was 58 million, or 14 per cent of the total population. As illustrated in Figure 12, most of the world’s adolescents, however, live in East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia.

**Figure 12. Adolescent population (10-19 years) by region, 2009**

[Diagram showing distribution of adolescent population by region]


**KOSOVO**

As shown in Figure 13, Kosovo’s population shifted from 1.9 million in 1991, to 2.2 million in 1997 and 1.8 million in 2009, a decrease of 0.1 million people between 1991 and 2009, or about 5 per cent (World Bank, 2011). Data on the proportions of female and male youth within the total female and male populations were not available for Kosovo. About 50 per cent of Kosovo’s population was recently estimated to be under the age of 25, and 40 per cent was under 18. As such, it had the largest proportion of young people of any country in Europe (UNDP, 2006). About 60 per cent of Kosovo’s population lives in urban areas, and 40 per cent lives in rural areas. A historic population and household census undertaken by the SOK in 2011 now places Kosovo’s total population at 1,733,872, including 50.4 per cent males and 49.6 per cent females (SOK, 2011).

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16 Population estimates for Kosovo vary considerably given that, prior to 2011, the last reliable census data for Kosovo were collected in 1981. Kosovo population estimates included here were available for multiple years from the same source, for which figures over time were also available for Georgia and Tajikistan. The Statistical Office of Kosovo undertook a historic population and household census in 2011 (SOK, 2011).
GEORGIA

Georgia’s population shifted from 5.4 million in 1991 to 4.2 million in 2009, a decrease of 1.2 million people, or about 22 per cent. The proportions of youth among the female and male populations have increased a bit over the past two decades. Female youth aged 15–24 were 14 per cent of Georgia’s female population in 1991 and 16 per cent in 2009. Male youth aged 15–24 were 16 per cent of the male population and 18 per cent in 2009 (World Bank, 2011). Georgia’s population is not predominantly young, compared with Kosovo and Tajikistan. An estimated 32.8 per cent of Georgia’s population was under 25 in 2010, and 16.2 per cent were between the ages of 15 and 24 (United Nations, 2010). About half of Georgia’s population is estimated to live in urban areas and half in rural areas (State Department of Statistics of Georgia, 2010).

TAJIKISTAN

Unlike Kosovo and Georgia, which have experienced decreases in their overall populations in the past two decades, Tajikistan’s population shifted from 5.4 million in 1991 to 6.9 million in 2009, an increase of about 28 per cent. The proportion of youth among the female and male populations also increased somewhat in the same period. In 1991, female youth aged 15–24 were 19 per cent of the total Tajikistan female population, and in 2009, they were 23 per cent. Male youth were 19 per cent of the male population in 1991 and increased to 24 per cent in 2009 (World Bank, 2011). Like Kosovo, Tajikistan’s population is predominantly young, with an estimated 60.5 per cent under the age of 25 and 23.5 per cent between 15 and 24 in 2010 (United Nations, 2010).

Rural populations are growing at a much faster rate than urban ones, and about three quarters of Tajikistan’s population now lives in rural areas. The number of youth living in rural regions is increasing by 3.6 per cent per year, which may deepen corresponding regional, ethnic, religious and political divides (OECD, 2009; Baskakova, 2007; SSCT, 2009). Tajikistan’s fertility rate was the highest in the CIS recently, and a significant percentage of marriages are taking place among children (Baskakova, 2007; SSCT, 2009).

Figure 13. Trends in total population in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan, 1991 and 2009

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THE EVOLVING EDUCATION SITUATION

The CEECIS region was “long known for universal education with broad gender equality and relatively high learning achievements” (UNICEF, 2009a, 18). Political, economic, social and demographic turmoil impacted education systems across the region. Changes in public education spending, enrolment, achievement and policy are highlighted below, along with additional background notes on the education systems of each case.

As the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia broke apart, countries throughout the region were forced to redesign their education systems along with their public finance and management systems. States had previously provided free education at all levels in all geographic areas and covered many education costs. As public expenditure on education dropped and input costs increased, states have worked to redefine what education services they can and should provide, addressing efficiency and equity issues and responding to distinct country circumstances, from infrastructure needs to changing school-age populations. This process has at times been slow, lacked clarity, caused confusion, led to inequities and gave rise to informal payments for education (UNICEF IRC, 2009, 74).

Although some fared better than others, the transitions left many countries with weakened structures and low governing capacity. National, provincial and local ministers at times have had little formal training in public finance or management. Many countries have also not had reliable monitoring and evaluation mechanisms or a strong level of local community involvement in school management and planning. Budget structures have also often been unwieldy and open to corruption. Many education finance systems have been stressed by moves toward decentralization, threatening equity, where resources available to local authorities and their management skills and political agendas varied (UNICEF CEECIS, 2011).

KOSOVO

From 1945 to 1990, all Kosovo youth studied in the same Yugoslav education system. Throughout most of the 1990s, however, Serbian and Albanian students, and those closely identifying with them from other ethnic minority groups, studied in separate school systems when the Kosovar Albanian community formed a parallel government and school system. Kosovar Serb youth and others learning with them continued to use the old state-built school facilities, and the system received funding from Yugoslavia. Kosovar Albanian youth and those learning with them were schooled in alternative structures, including private homes, mosques and churches, and the system was funded by the Kosovar Albanian community and diaspora. The Kosovar Albanian system lacked resources and covered a limited number of subjects. Many learners were inadequately prepared for secondary school, higher education and the labour market (UNDP, 2006).

Kosovo’s schools were also targeted during the 1999 war; many were destroyed, shattering Kosovo’s education infrastructure. One UNICEF study conducted after the conflict found that “of Kosovo’s primary schools, 43 per cent of the 394 schools assessed (in 16 municipalities) were completely destroyed or severely damaged, 38 per cent were in need of new roofs, and 42 per cent were in need of landmine clearance or safety verification” (UNEP/UNCHS, 1999). Resources also became scarce during the conflict, many teachers fled the violence, and classes often became overcrowded and ineffective. The general dangers of living in a war zone also kept many youth from attending school on a regular basis, as did additional responsibilities for caring for themselves and others. Many refugee youth eventually gained access to education in exile, but primary education for primary-aged children was at first prioritized. Many youth missed classes and exams that would need to be made up during summer bridge courses or by restarting education later on.

Kosovo’s entire education system has had to be reformed and restarted since the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1244, which formally ended Kosovo’s 1999 conflict. Responsibility for education services has evolved from UNMIK to Kosovo’s Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), with many international actors involved in reconstruction, reform and capacity-building work. Among other issues, classroom space is still limited in the wake of wartime destruction of schools. To accommodate demand, most
schools are running on two shifts (splitting the school day between different groups of children), and about 10 per cent of schools need to operate three shifts per day (Stubbs and Haxhikadrija, 2008, 11, 14; Kita, 2008). As noted previously, although the Kosovo education system serves the vast majority of Kosovo’s learners, the Republic of Serbia education system functions in Serb-majority areas of Kosovo. Teachers and students in Serb-majority areas of Kosovo have at times received education resources from both the Kosovo and Republic of Serbia education systems since the war’s end. The systemic division presents particular challenges for them, however, as they are not availed of full Kosovo education system support and their education needs and rights are not necessarily prioritized within the Republic of Serbia education system.

GEORGIA

Georgia has a strong history of education. Georgia’s population was among the most highly educated in the USSR and continues to maintain almost universal primary enrolment rates across the country, as well as high secondary enrolment rates. The transition from socialism, the impacts of conflict and an ongoing economic crisis have stressed Georgia’s education system, however, including its funding and infrastructure. The transition of the 1990s left 70 per cent of urban schools and 84 per cent of rural schools in disrepair or in need of complete reconstruction (UNICEF Georgia, 2011b). Georgia has faced major challenges attempting to rationalize the former, top-heavy and resource-intensive system in post-Soviet times. Georgia’s school system is large, and its school-aged population has been shrinking. As described later, Georgia has undertaken extensive education reforms since 2003.

TAJIKISTAN

Prior to independence, Tajikistan’s education system was supported and modernized with inputs from the central government of the USSR. Education was widely available, and gender gaps were narrower. Although educational attainment remained below average compared with the other USSR republics, youth literacy was high (Curtis, 1996; UNESCO, 2010). These and other gains for young people and the society were rocked after independence and the outbreak of war.

Rapid deindustrialization of the economy displaced a large portion of the highly qualified workforce, and labour swelled into agriculture. The departure of specialists in education, science, medicine and culture from the country created a shortage of highly qualified personnel within the education system (MoE, 2005). The war further destroyed or damaged one fifth of the nation’s schools and disrupted education for thousands of children, youth and others who became IDPs and refugees or otherwise bore the direct effects of armed conflict (FTI, 2009; MoE, 2005; UNICEF Tajikistan, 2010). By 2005, school infrastructure, equipment and materials were in ‘appalling condition’. Education facilities were old-fashioned, and heating, electricity, water and sanitation services were dilapidated and often unusable in winter (World Bank, 2005a, 25).

The education process was further battered by a series of energy and food crises in the latter half of the 2000s. Much of the country is mountainous, and harsh winters with record-breaking temperatures below -25 degrees Celsius have created more hardships for young people and their families (OECD, 2009; CARE, 2008). Freezing weather slowed the production of hydroelectric power, Tajikistan’s major source of energy (UNICEF, 2008; CARE, 2008; Najibullah, 2008). The severe cold and the energy crisis increased food and fuel prices and decreased the power available to businesses, forcing many families to sell off livestock and household assets (CARE, 2008). Freezing temperatures and energy problems damaged water lines and rendered classrooms intolerably cold, making school attendance virtually impossible at times, especially in high mountain and rural areas. During the winter of 2008, an estimated 90 per cent of rural schools had no functional heating system as a result of the energy crisis or outdated equipment, and only 40–50 per cent of students would attempt to attend class. With classroom temperatures below negative 9 degrees Celsius, many schools were forced to reduce their operations to two to three hours per day, or to close altogether (UNICEF, 2008).
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION

Levels of public expenditure on education have fluctuated during the transition in CEECIS, mainly due to changes in country GDPS and the degree to which education has been prioritized within national public expenditures (UNICEF IRC, 2009, 72). Even if ministries of education were able to maintain their share of public expenditures, actual dollar amounts would have declined as regional GDPS dropped significantly on average throughout the mid-1990s. Public expenditures on education dropped very sharply in some CEECIS countries in the 1990s, including Georgia, as illustrated in Figure 14.

Figure 14. Index of real public expenditure on education in the CEECIS region

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From the late 1990s to 2006, most CEECIS countries increased resources allocated to education in absolute terms, and by 2009 recovered and even surpassed their pre-transition spending levels (UNICEF IRC, 2009, 73). Others have yet to fully recover, including Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Azerbaijan (UNICEF IRC, 2009, 73). In 2004, CEECIS countries spent on average 4.2 per cent of their GDP on education, below the average 5.6 per cent for North America and Western Europe, but above the average 2.8 per cent for South-East Asia and the Pacific. Figure 15 depicts public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP for CEECIS countries in 2006 (UNICEF IRC, 2009, 72-73). The State of the World’s Children 2011 further reports the percentage of central government expenditure allocated to education for the CEECIS region as 5 per cent, on par with the global average of 5 per cent (reflecting most recent data available for 1998–2008) (UNICEF, 2011, 115).
Changes in real public expenditure on education have had different impacts on countries, including depending on whether their school-age populations have declined or increased. Where real public expenditure has gone down, the impact is diluted if accompanied by a decrease in the school-age population. Where it has gone up, it is diluted by an increase in the school-age population. Where it has gone up and the school-age population has gone down, spending on each school-age person has increased (UNICEF IRC, 2009, 74).

As a result of migration and the overall downward trend in population growth rates, the average amount of spending per school-age person has increased significantly in most CEE countries, where the size of the school-age population has fallen and the real amount of public education spending has grown over time (UNICEF IRC, 2009). There has also been a general decrease among CEECIS countries in student/teacher ratios since 1990 (with the exception of Central Asian countries). Moreover, the total number of teachers has increased despite falling net enrolment rates in many countries (Buckland, 2003). Changing demographics, fluctuations in actual education spending and imbalanced student/teacher ratios have significant implications for how CEECIS governments need to adapt their education systems and policies to future needs and realities.

KOSOVO

Trend data for public expenditure on education in Kosovo were not identified, and would in any case be difficult to compare given the dramatic structural upheaval of recent decades. In 2003, however, education spending was budgeted at 6.1 per cent of GDP and as 15.6 per cent of total public spending overall, which compared favourably with neighbouring countries that spent less, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro (World Bank, 2005, 68). At the same time, overall public spending on education increased 77 per cent, from €57 million in 2000 to €105 million in 2004. However, this increase represented

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Note: For Croatia and Estonia, data refer to 2004; for Slovakia, Slovenia, Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan, data refer to 2005; for Uzbekistan, data refer to 2003. The high percentage in Uzbekistan also reflects large resource investments since the late 1990s in preparation for the introduction of 12-year compulsory education in the 2008–2009 school year.
a drop in the percentage of Kosovo’s total budget expenditures from 23.4 per cent in 2001 to 13.5 per cent in 2004 and 12 per cent in 2006. From 2003, when services were fully decentralized to municipalities, to 2006, the total municipal budget for preschool, primary and secondary education increased about 15 per cent. In 2005, just 5 per cent of own-source resources collected in 30 of Kosovo’s municipalities were spent on education (Stubbs and Haxhikadrija, 2008, 12).

GEORGIA

The decline in education funding for Georgia in the 1990s was severe, as seen in Figure 16. From spending 8 per cent of GDP on education in 1995, Georgia spent just about 3 per cent of its total GDP on education by the late 2000s, then the lowest expenditure rate in Europe and Central Asia, which averaged 4.4 per cent of GDP (UNICEF, 2009; World Bank, 2009, 11). Georgia’s total public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure decreased from 10 per cent in 1999 to 7 per cent in 2008 (UNESCO, 2011, 334). Despite a lower average level of spending on education, Georgia’s primary and secondary enrolment rates do not differ from others in the region. Georgia is also serving a declining school-age population, expected to contract 45 per cent between 2005 and 2050 (World Bank, 2009, 118). It nonetheless faces major challenges supporting a large number of teachers at the expense of capital investments (World Bank, 2009, 119). Full rehabilitation of Georgia’s schools would cost more than 10 times the annual state expenditure on education as a whole.

The government has allocated more financial resources to education, health and social protection, mainly at the cost of reduced defence expenditure. As a result, the share of social expenditure within overall public spending has increased, as has the share of social expenditure in relation to gross domestic product. However, Georgia is still one of the lowest social spenders in the CEECIS region. Consequently, major challenges remain (UNICEF Georgia, 2011). For example, five-year-old children in the poorest families are significantly less likely to attend preschool than their peers in the richest families (less than 50 per cent of poor children attend preschool). Equity of opportunity begins in early childhood, and the Government of Georgia has the responsibility to ensure that every Georgian child receives the essential building blocks to make a meaningful contribution to economic, social and political development (UNICEF Georgia, 2011b).

Figure 16. Public education expenditure in Georgia as a percentage of GDP, 1995–2009

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2010. Data are not available for the years 1996–98. Total public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP is defined as the current and capital expenditures on education by local, regional and national governments, including municipalities (household contributions are excluded), expressed as a percentage of the GDP.
TAJIKISTAN

Public expenditure on education also took a precipitous drop in Tajikistan from 8 per cent of GDP in 1993 to 2 per cent in 1995 and has begun to recover, as shown in Figure 17 (FTI, 2009; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2010). As Tajikistan has worked to improve tax revenues and decrease its deficit, it has also increased social expenditures (on education, health, social protection, housing and others), which rose from 6.4 per cent of GDP in 2000 to 7.1 per cent of GDP in 2002, with 90 per cent of total education spending focused on basic education in 2002 (World Bank, 2005a, 22, 25). A Millennium Development Goal (MDG) costing exercise put the cost of rehabilitating and operating Tajikistan’s education system from the 2000s to 2015 as upwards of $1.3 billion, costs that Tajikistan could not bear without additional support (World Bank, 2005a, 25). As noted, unlike most other countries in the region, Tajikistan is also challenged with funding education for a rising school-age population.

Figure 17. Public education expenditure in Tajikistan as a percentage of GDP, 1985–2008

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2010. Data are not available for years not included on the graph between 1985 – 2008. Total public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP is the current and capital expenditures on education by local, regional and national governments, including municipalities (household contributions are excluded), expressed as a percentage of the GDP.

EDUCATION ENROLMENT

Overall enrolment rates in basic education for the region have remained high throughout the transition period (with legal ages ranging from 6–7 to 14–16), as governments focused on guaranteeing compulsory education lasting 8–9 to 11–12 years. Most youth who complete primary education in the region also move on to lower secondary education (UNICEF IRC, 2009, 23–24, 26). Regional gross secondary school enrolment rates fluctuated dramatically from 1985 to 2007, however, marked by significant initial drops, followed by fairly steady rises. Figure 18 illustrates changes during this period for Europe and Central Asia and selected countries, including Georgia and Tajikistan.
Governments in the CEECIS region have become increasingly challenged to expand enrolment in non-compulsory education, including preschool and upper secondary education while improving equity and quality. Enrolment rates in upper secondary school have been most visibly affected by economic and social upheaval and vary by subregion. In Central Europe and the Baltic States, 15–18-year-olds are nearly fully enrolled, while gross secondary enrolment rates are on average lower for countries in Western CIS and South-Eastern Europe, at about 80 per cent in 2005, and 65–70 per cent for lower-income CIS countries (UNICEF IRC, 2009, 24, 26). Although gender parity in upper secondary enrolment has persisted in many countries, divides are occurring in a number of others, including in Kosovo and Tajikistan as described below. Ethnic, economic and other inequities are also occurring, including where enrolment decreases due to economic pressures on households (Central Asia) and increases due to lack of youth employment (Central Europe and the Baltic States) (UNICEF IRC, 2009, 24).

There are also significant subregional and country differences in enrolment in higher education in the CEECIS region. Following declines in the early transition period, Central Europe and the Baltic States more recently experienced high levels of tertiary enrolment, while other countries have not returned to or surpassed previous highs. At the same time, upper secondary and higher education are not guaranteeing jobs for graduates, including because of mismatches between curricula and labour market needs and high levels of long-term youth unemployment overall (UNICEF IRC, 2009, 24).
Women’s enrolment at the tertiary level in the CEECIS region also faltered in the early 1990s, but in most subregions began to recover, as shown in Figure 19. In Central Asian countries, where attitudes regarding women’s role in society grew more conservative during the transition period, the female share of enrolment in tertiary education dropped and stayed below 50 per cent during the 1990s. The education level of many women in Central Asia has been strongly influenced by their reproductive roles and re-emerging patriarchal values.

**Figure 19. Female share in tertiary education enrolment, 1989–99**

Data on enrolment trends in Kosovo for the past two decades are very limited. The SOK reported net primary enrolment (7–15-year-olds) at 95.4 per cent in 2003/2004, with a strong ethnic disparity (USAID, 2008,
Approximately 96.6 per cent of Kosovar Albanians and 95.2 per cent of Kosovar Serbs were enrolled in primary education in 2003/2004, compared with 86.6 per cent of other ethnic groups, including Roma, Askhalia and Egyptians (USAID, 2008, 35; UNDP, 2006). Net enrolment in secondary education in 2003 was 75.2 per cent, reportedly up from 59.5 per cent in 2001, and tertiary enrolment that year was just 16.2 per cent (USAID, 2008, 35–36).

A 2008 study from the European Training Foundation (ETF) shows little change in secondary enrolment since 2003 and marks gender and income disparities, citing an overall net enrolment rate for secondary education in Kosovo at 74 per cent overall, 81 per cent for males, 66 per cent for females, 81 per cent for the richest quintile, and 67 per cent for the poorest quintile. “With only one in two Kosovo Albanian girls continuing secondary education,” it says, “secondary school enrolment of girls is one of the lowest in Europe.” ETF also cites tertiary enrolment as increasing just 1 per cent in four years, with a persistent gap between rich and poor, where the economically poor are less likely to reach the tertiary level (Kita, 2008, 10).

As seen in Figure 20, available data on the number of students enrolled in upper secondary school in Kosovo show an increase of about 46 per cent between 2004/2005 and 2006/2007 in the Kosovo education system areas of Kosovo. However, the enrolment rate has likely remained static.

**Figure 20.** Number of students enrolled in upper secondary education in Kosovo, 2004/2005–2006/2007 (by total and sex)

Figures do not include data from Serbian-majority areas of Kosovo.

**GEORGIA**

Georgia’s net enrolment rates for basic education remained strong through the first decade of the transition, fluctuating between 95 and 97 per cent between 1996 and 2002, with some differences in perceptions of quality within different regions and ethnicities and between rural and urban areas (World Bank, 2009, 131–132). The 2005 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) found that primary school attendance was lower among children of Azeri ethnicity (87 per cent, against a national average of 95 per cent) (UNICEF Georgia,
2011b). At the same time, preschool attendance was just 43 percent on average in 2005 – a key factor in learning achievements in primary school and beyond (UNICEF Georgia, 2011b, 14).

Secondary school is a vital component of child development, spanning the period in which children transition to adolescence, towards adulthood and when they develop the skills that will determine the way in which they will participate in the labour market and contribute to democratic society (UNICEF Georgia, 2011b). Progression from primary to secondary education also remained strong and high and was 98 per cent in 1999 and 99 per cent in 2007, with slightly more females moving on to secondary, as seen in Figure 21. At the same time, some data show that dropouts from primary education have increased from 0.6 per cent in 1999 to 5 per cent in 2007, with males somewhat more affected than females (UNESCO, 2011, 310).

Overall gross enrolment in secondary education dropped significantly in the early 1990s, but rose from a low of 74 per cent in 1994 to 90 per cent in 2008, as shown in Figure 22. Some disparities in secondary completion are described later, including concerns over dropouts in rural areas (UNICEF Georgia, 2011b). Although the 2008 level was still beneath Georgia’s 95 per cent level in 1991, secondary education enrolment was on par with the CEECIS region and subregion (UNICEF, 2009). Georgia’s gross enrolment rate for tertiary education has fluctuated since the early 1990s, moving from 37 per cent in 1990, to 44 per cent in 1997 and 34 per cent in 2008, still beneath its pre-independence level, as further depicted in Figure 23. Georgia’s enrolment rate in higher education was the highest in the Caucasus (World Bank, 2009, 140, 148).

Figure 21. Progression to secondary education in Georgia, 1999–2007 (by total and sex)

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2010. Data, disaggregated by sex, are not available for 2006. Progression to secondary level (%) is the number of new entrants to the first grade of secondary education (general programmes only) in a given year, expressed as a percentage of the number of pupils enrolled in the final grade of primary education in the previous year.

Enrolment rates for the economically poor, ethnic minorities, youth in rural areas and young people with disabilities point to inequities in education access in Georgia at the preschool and tertiary levels. As reported in 2009, enrolment rates are the same for Georgia’s economically poor and non-poor populations for free
compulsory/basic education (the first nine years, when students are usually 7 to 15 years old). Fewer economically poor young people participate in preschool and tertiary education, however. Economically poor youth aged 15–17 (corresponding with upper secondary education) are more likely to drop out of school, and at 17 (presumably following upper secondary completion) enrolment drops off substantially for both poor and non-poor populations. Enrolment rates for 18-year-olds (corresponding with tertiary education) are 70 per cent for the richest quintile and 30 per cent for the poorest, although this difference decreases after age 20. Preschool and post-secondary school enrolment rates have been particularly low among Armenian and Azeri ethnic minority children in Georgia (World Bank, 2009, 124). Results of a 2010 Georgia Reproductive Health Survey largely confirm these differences between the poorest and wealthiest youth at the post-secondary level (UNICEF Georgia, 2011).

Figure 22. Total secondary gross enrolment rate in Georgia (by total and sex)

As also reported in 2009, there are differences in educational attainment between poor and non-poor and rural and urban populations. Secondary completion rates are 85 per cent for the richest quintile and 70 per cent for the poorest quintiles, and there is a similar difference between people in urban and rural areas, respectively. Again, far fewer among any socio-economic group moves on to tertiary education, and when they do, the poorest individuals in rural areas are least likely to: 30–40 per cent of the richest quintile have attained tertiary education versus 10–20 per cent of the poorest quintiles and in rural areas. Just 2 per cent of Azeri and 8 per cent of Armenians have attained some tertiary education, compared with 20–27 per cent of Georgians (World Bank, 2009, 124–125). As also reported in 2008, just 28 per cent of children registered with disabilities are enrolled in learning institutions, the majority of which are not mainstream schools (UNICEF, undated, 3).

In 2008, the Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child remained concerned about the general quality of education and the poor infrastructure of many schools, as well as the growing disparity in educational standards between rural and urban areas. The Committee was concerned about the hidden costs of education which may hinder access for children from low-income families, and that drop-out rates were progressively higher in later stages of schooling, particularly in rural areas (UNICEF Georgia, 2011b).
Figure 23. Gross enrolment rate for tertiary education in Georgia, 1980–2008 (by total and sex)

Data are not available for years not depicted between 1980 and 2008.
Gross enrolment rate, tertiary is the number of pupils (total, male, female) enrolled in tertiary, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population (total, male, female) of the five-year age group following on from the secondary school-leaving age.

Other critical challenges in secondary education in Georgia include the development of healthy lifestyles education, sports infrastructure and coaching. These have decreased dramatically since the end of the Soviet period, whilst new health and social risks, including violence in schools, have seen an increase, particularly during the transitional period (UNICEF Georgia, 2011b).

TAJIKISTAN

The gross enrolment ratio for primary education in Tajikistan remained high, moving from 98 per cent total enrolment in 1999 to 102 per cent in 2008, with near gender parity. The drop-out rate from primary education improved between 1999, when it was 3.3 per cent total (0.3 per cent for males and 6 per cent for females), and 2007, when it was 0.5 per cent total (sex disaggregated data not available) (UNESCO, 2011, 310). About 98 per cent of individuals transitioned from primary to secondary school in 2007 (UNESCO, 2011, 318).

Despite strong enrolment in basic education, data from 2003 show that enrolment was dropping particularly in urban and peri-urban areas of Dushanbe, Khatlon and the Regions of Republican Subordination. Non-enrolment rose to 6 per cent of boys and 18 per cent of girls above grade four in urban and peri-urban areas, compared with 4 and 7 per cent, respectively, in rural areas. Attendance was also a problem, particularly for girls in Dushanbe, while it was higher in GBAO and Sugd. Twice as many girls dropped out of school (mostly after grade four) than boys in rural areas and three times as many in urban areas.

18 Note that other sources refer to the Regions of Republican Subordination as the Districts of Republican Subordination.
High costs of education and the influence of traditional gender roles, where scarce household resources are concentrated on educating males, were contributing factors. Where school lunches and/or take-home rations were provided, girls were 66 per cent more likely to continue past grade four (World Bank, 2005a, 23).

The gross enrolment rate for secondary education in Tajikistan fell from over 100 per cent in 1991 to 82 per cent in 1993 and 74 per cent in 1999, and rose to 84 per cent in 2008, as shown in Figure 24. Female enrolment dipped more than male, losing 23 percentage points between 1992 and 2000 compared to 17 percentage points for males. Female secondary enrolment has also not rebounded as robustly, as also seen in Figure 24. In 1991, the gross enrolment rate for males in secondary education was 97 per cent, and in 2008, it was 90 per cent. The rate for females in 1991 was 91 per cent and returned to just 78 per cent in 2008.

Data available for 2008 show enrolment in lower secondary education as much higher than enrolment in upper secondary, with females more likely than males not to be enrolled in upper secondary education. Total gross enrolment in lower secondary was 95 per cent (99 per cent for males and 91 per cent for females), while for upper secondary it was 59 per cent (69 per cent for males and 48 per cent for females) (UNESCO, 2011, 319).

Enrolment in tertiary education also took a downturn post-independence, with particularly disastrous effects for females, as shown in Figure 25. In 1990, total gross tertiary enrolment was 23 per cent, dropped to 13 per cent in 2001 and rose to 20 per cent in 2008. For males in 1990, it was 28 per cent, dropped to 20 per cent in 2001 and rose to 29 per cent in 2008. For females, total gross tertiary enrolment was 17
per cent in 1990, dropped to 6 per cent in 2001 and was just 11 per cent in 2008 – less than half the total gross tertiary enrolment rate for males, who had surpassed their 1990 level. Gender disparity in education favouring males is the largest of all UNECE countries (UNECE, 2009 and 2009a).

The downward trend for female enrolment in tertiary education began to reverse following a presidential initiative in 2001 to attract more young women into higher education. The initiative allowed higher education institutions (HEIs) to introduce enrolment privileges for young women from rural areas whereby they could be admitted through formal interviews rather than being required to sit typical entrance exams (Baskakova, 2007). In 2004/2005, 551 females and 165 males entered university through the ‘presidential quota’ system (World Bank, 2005a, 24).

Data from 2003 show little difference between youth enrolment in different income quintiles in basic and secondary education. Differences by income increased significantly after secondary education, where the wealthiest quintile was most likely to be enrolled in tertiary education (World Bank, 2005a, 23–24). Although financial barriers were not the only issues affecting educational enrolment, they have been a strong factor for many young people, as they and their families bore increasing formal and informal education costs as public funding eroded (World Bank, 2005a, 24). Corruption in education has added untenable costs for many young people, when 30 somoni (about US$7) represents a week’s wages for the majority of families, and bribes for university admissions can cost US$4,000 (Briller, 2008; Ivanov, 2009, UNESCO, 2007). Public financing arrangements for schools also “rely significantly on the budgets of local authorities; introducing inequalities to the education services across regions,” where revenue levels vary (World Bank, 2009a).

**Figure 24.** Gross enrolment rate in total secondary in Tajikistan 1990–2008 (by total and sex)

Data are not available for years not included in the graph from 1990–2008. Figures disaggregated by sex are not available for 1990 and 1991.
Gross enrolment rate, secondary is the number of pupils (total, male, female) enrolled in secondary, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population (total, male, female) in the theoretical age group for secondary education.
School locations and young people’s involvement in agricultural activities also put pressure on educational enrolment and attendance in Tajikistan. Students in rural areas often lack transportation, especially in the high mountainous east. HEIs are concentrated in cities, placing rural youth at a distinct disadvantage in accessing urban-based universities and vocational schools. Rural schools are also typically overcrowded, forcing students to study in two or three shifts, adding further disincentives for rural youth to attend school (Agranovich, 2010; MoE, 2005).

Some young people left school during the transition period because of rapid deindustrialization. Given Tajikistan’s established production roles in the centrally-planned USSR economy before independence, students also knew what to expect from the labour market on graduation. In the sudden political and economic transition, all bets were off. As unemployment grew among technical specialists and those with higher education, the training of specialists and the number of students actually graduating from secondary professional training schools also fell by about 50 per cent in the decade after independence (UNESCAP, 2003, 123). Having moved away from the mandatory work assignments of the Soviet era, the system was unprepared to help young people redirect their studies and work options. Many left school without finishing, and hundreds of thousands migrated out of the country in search of work, particularly young males.

Access to education is also a problem for young people in communities where minority languages are spoken, due to a significant imbalance in the availability of teaching materials in languages other than Tajik or Russian. Children and youth with disabilities and other special needs are also largely left out of school, and instead stay home in high numbers, receiving no education at all. Public attitudes remain extremely negative towards young people with special needs, and discrimination frequently leads to social and economic exclusion both for the young person and her or his family. Lack of acceptance of these young people hampers efforts to ensure good quality learning opportunities that meet their special needs (OSF, 2009).
DEMAND FOR EDUCATION INNOVATION:
ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION QUALITY IN THE CEECIS REGION
EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

YOUTH LITERACY

Despite diminished funding and other shocks, CEECIS countries have maintained high youth literacy rates. From 1985 to 1994, the youth literacy rate for Central and Eastern Europe (15–24-year-olds) was 98 per cent total, 99 per cent for males and 98 per cent for females, and between 2005 and 2008, the respective figures were 99, 99 and 98 per cent. Central Asia boasted total, male and female youth literacy rates of 100 per cent for these periods (UNESCO, 2011, 281).

Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan have likewise maintained high levels of youth literacy. The youth literacy rate for Georgia was 100 per cent for males, females and the total youth population between 2005 and 2008, and for Tajikistan it was also 100 per cent for males, females and the total youth population between 1985 and 1994, and between 2005 and 2008 (UNESCO, 2011, 275). Kosovo’s youth literacy rate in 2003 was 98.6 per cent total, including 99.3 per cent of males and 97.9 per cent of females (USAID, 2008, 36).

ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

According to the 2009 UNICEF report, Learning achievement in the CEECIS region: A comparative analysis of the results from the 2006 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), education performance of 15-year-old students in many CEECIS countries scored on average significantly lower than their Western European peers in reading, mathematics and science (UNICEF, 2009a, 37–38, 43). PISA is a large-scale international assessment conducted by the OECD that provides an opportunity to analyse the quality and relevance of basic education. PISA has been conducted three times, in 2000, 2003 and 2006, and measures the core competencies of 15-year-old students in science, reading and mathematics. Seventeen countries in the CEECIS region participated in PISA in 2006, including seven for the first time, not including Kosovo, Georgia or Tajikistan (UNICEF, 2009a, 18). Figure 26 outlines mean performance in reading, mathematics and science literacy in 2006.

Among CEECIS countries participating in the 2006 PISA, girls have significantly higher average scores in reading than boys. This disparity is attributed to female students engaging more regularly in reading activities, and with a more diverse range of materials. Girls also tend to make more frequent use of school and community libraries than boys. This gender gap favouring girls in reading is even greater than for girls in OECD countries. In science, girls outperform boys in seven of the CEECIS countries, but differences are generally small. In OECD countries, boys tend to perform better in science than girls. Males in CEECIS meanwhile perform better on average than females in mathematics, but differences are marginal. On average overall, females in CEECIS tend to outperform boys in all three literacy domains relative to OECD countries (UNICEF, 2009a).

Students in Georgia have participated in two other internationally comparative education achievement studies, while Kosovo and Tajikistan have not, making it difficult to identify trends in learning outcomes across countries according to these measures. Scores for Georgia show much room for improvement.

Eighth graders in Georgia ranked lowest among the countries in the CEECIS region participating in the 2007 Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), which compares mathematics and science learning achievements for eighth graders internationally. For example, Georgia’s students scored 410 on the TIMSS,

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19 Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kyrgyz Republic, Montenegro, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Turkey. The Russian Federation and Croatia, however, individually performed above the CEECIS average, and Croatia performed similarly in reading and science to several countries recently acceded to the European Union.

20 These ‘EU8’ countries include: Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.
while students in the Russian Federation scored 512, and those in Serbia and Armenia scored 486 and 499, respectively (NCES, 2007). Of 48 participating countries, Georgia ranked 33rd in mathematics and 37th in science, with a slightly higher score for girls than boys (TIMSS and PIRLS, 2011).

In 2006, Georgia’s fourth graders on average scored 472 for the 2006 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), below the average PIRLS score of 500 and the Russian Federation’s score of 565 for that year (Stephens and Coleman, 2007). PIRLS is the U.S. source for internationally comparative information on the reading achievement of students in the fourth grade and on related contextual aspects such as reading curricula and classroom practices across countries. Georgia is scheduled to participate again in 2011 (NME and MHTR, 2008; Stephens and Coleman, 2007).

Figure 26. Mean performance in reading, mathematics and science literacy, PISA 2006

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<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyz Republic</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEE/CIS average</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD average</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEE/CIS – OECD</td>
<td>-52</td>
<td>-40</td>
<td>-39</td>
<td>-46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU8 – OECD</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF – OECD</td>
<td>-93</td>
<td>-80</td>
<td>-78</td>
<td>-85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reprinted from UNICEF, 2009a
Countries are ranked in order of average performance on the three literacy scales. Values in the last three rows refer to the difference between average scores of country groupings.

EDUCATION POLICIES AND REFORM

Amid these and other major challenges, many CEECIS nations are developing and implementing policies and strategies to improve educational quality for their minority and marginalized children and youth, in addition to the general populations. Policymakers are also increasingly recognizing the roles quality education can play
in addressing and preventing conflicts rooted in ethnic hatred and intolerance and in preventing devastation through trainings in emergency readiness. Education also remains a top priority for UNICEF offices throughout the CEECIS region, as they help governments develop better systems of governance and implementation.

**KOSOVO**

After the war, in a highly politicized environment and amid disputes over legal frameworks and structures of authority, UNMIK and Kosovo education professionals worked to get learners back in school. UNMIK also undertook a vigorous education reform process, which included plans to rebuild schools and reinvent and improve education quality at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels (Sommers and Buckland, 2004). In 2001, UNMIK initiated the development of the Kosovo Curriculum Framework with UNICEF support, laying out a plan for reforming Kosovo’s pre-primary, primary and secondary curriculum and improving the student assessment process. The Framework was a white paper for discussion that has not been fully put into practice due to a lack of mechanisms to ensure its implementation. Nevertheless, it became a driving force for changes to take place afterwards.

The Kosovo education system and the Republic of Serbia education system have similar visions for long-term education reform across Kosovo. They aim to provide and promote pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education for all youth; see Appendix 5 for more detail. They are also working to implement the 1999 Bologna Declaration for European space for higher education (Pupovci, 2002). The Bologna Declaration articulates a common goal of employability and citizen mobility for competitiveness in Europe, as well as common objectives to meet this goal, including through policy coordination.

MEST has taken many steps to modernize and improve Kosovo’s education system. In early 2005, MEST began developing a Strategic Plan for Pre-University Education (SPUE 2007–2017) that works to ensure Kosovo students "have the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes compatible and comparable to students in [developed EU] countries." The SPUE also aims to enhance the efficiency of school functioning; increase access for all groups in society; provide more adequate in-service and pre-service teacher training; create a healthier learning environment; provide school conditions that will ensure no more than two learning shifts at all schools; and link education to the general social and economic developments of Kosovo (MEST, 2007).

MEST has also developed a comprehensive sector plan as part of a Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011–2016 that prioritizes ‘inclusive education’ practices and principles. MEST aims to align itself with Education for All and the MDGs, striving to “provide equal access in quality education for all regardless of disabilities, ethnicity, age and economic status” (Enjte, 2010). Strategic objectives include: improved access; prevention of discrimination and segregation; improved cooperation between communities and increasing awareness of the needs of minority communities. The integration and inclusion of Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian learners are key foci (MEST, 2007a).

Among many other education reforms, MEST also developed a comprehensive list of school capital infrastructure improvements to be completed across Kosovo, including approximately 70 school construction projects (MEST, 2008).

Kosovo is also working to ensure its education system meets workforce challenges. Efforts to improve vocational education and training (VET) are part of the learning reforms for post-secondary school:

In line with the EU Charter for Small Enterprises, Kosovo will further develop Entrepreneurship Education and Training for pupils, students and adults in formal as well as non-formal settings and ensure that training institutions and business service providers make available skills and knowledge adapted to the needs of small enterprises (MEST, 2010).
With international support, Kosovo has embarked on a number of programmes to increase educational attainment and youth employability. For example, the European Union has provided €10 million for the development and implementation of a sector-wide approach to education focused on improving the management and quality of the general education system. The funds also aid youth employability with the development of a VET strategy, supporting the implementation of Kosovo’s Law on VET (2006). The VET law is focused on linking school-based education with in-company training and the development of a framework for vocational qualification (Kita, 2008, 21; Corbanese and Rosas, 2007, 51; MEST, 2010).

GEORGIA

Extensive education reforms have been implemented since the 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia, including increased expenditure on education, the removal of widespread corruption from the university entrance examination and funding process, decentralization and local management of both secondary and primary education. Laws on higher education and general education were passed in 2004 and 2005, respectively. In partnership with the World Bank and UNICEF, the Georgian Government completed a Consolidated Education Strategy and Action Plan for 2007 to 2011, “which includes preschool education and early childhood development, general education, vocational education, higher education, lifelong learning, non-formal education, inclusive education and children with special needs as national priorities” (UNICEF, undated, 1). The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) is working in cooperation with European partners on initiatives to enable Georgia to fully implement the 1999 Bologna Declaration and to prepare for integration in the European Higher Education Area (MoFA Georgia, 2010). See Appendix 5 for details on the structure of Georgia’s education system.

The MoES established the National Curriculum and Assessment Centre in 2006, which initiated “a new curriculum designed to encourage active learning rather than a mechanical transfer of knowledge” (UNICEF, undated). In 2011, a new curriculum and textbooks were introduced in all secondary school grades aimed at improving learning outcomes. Teaching skills and professional standards have also been comprehensively overhauled (UNICEF Georgia, 2011a).

A number of general schools have been rehabilitated, and new schools have been built through the National School Building programme, which has had a school rehabilitation budget of GEL 500 million ($329 million) for a period up to 2011. At the same time, in order to concentrate resources and adjust to declining student numbers in the next few decades, about 1,000 public general schools have been merged (UNDP Georgia, 2008, 42; World Bank, 2008, 15 and 20).

TAJIKISTAN

Since independence, Tajikistan has worked hard to develop legislative frameworks for education and improve service provision. Article 41 of Tajikistan’s constitution adopted in 1994 declares the right of every person to education, and basic education is obligatory and free. The government also guarantees, “free high school, trade, and in accordance with ability and on a competitive basis, specialized high school and university education” (Republic of Tajikistan, 1994). Tajikistan’s Law on Education was also adopted December 27, 1993, and was partially amended in 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997 and 2003. It is currently being revised again to reflect a shift to 12-year education described below. The law makes education a priority at all levels of state governance and regulates its structure and management. The Ministry of Education (MoE) sets, implements and monitors state policies and standards in education. See Appendix 5 for details on the structure of Tajikistan’s education system.

The MoE has explained that “the education sector has a very weak capacity in the sphere of management and planning at all levels.” In particular, it has highlighted the absence of a rational and streamlined decision making process; low policy development and system management capacity; and an inability to assess
learning results and the effectiveness of educational establishments (MoE, 2005). In addition to the areas of progress outlined above, however (including maintaining a high level of youth literacy and increasing secondary and tertiary enrolment rates), Tajikistan has taken steps to strategically address these and other education challenges.

As part of its efforts to meet MDG education targets by 2015, with support from an EU medium-term expenditure framework project and UNICEF, the MoE established a working group tasked with creating an education costing model to calculate what is needed to support education reform. The model shows that Tajikistan needs to increase spending on education to 6 per cent of its GDP by 2020. While Tajikistan’s education spending still falls short of meeting its goals, the government has demonstrated firm commitments to annually increase education spending (UNICEF Tajikistan, 2010; FTI, 2009).

Other steps have also been taken to improve funding. Using World Bank and Catalytic Funds, Tajikistan has introduced per capita education financing, which has helped improve sector management and implementation capacity, increase access to schools and reduce shortages in textbooks (World Bank, 2010a). Tajikistan was also endorsed as a Fast Track Initiative (FTI) recipient country in 2006, and as of 2010, had received three payments totalling in $31.9 million (MoE, 2009).

Tajikistan has also embarked on a comprehensive national education reform process, including the development of a National Strategy for Education Development 2020 (NSED). Education is a national priority for the Tajikistan Government, which aims to achieve “standards of access and quality in conformity with international norms...[and] universal access to quality education [for] all children and young people of the country” (MoE, 2005). Tajikistan has set five goals for education that are articulated in both its National Development Strategy and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper developed in 2004 and its NSED 2020 (FTI, 2009; MoE, 2005). They include to:

- Improve the management and performance of the education system;
- Improve system effectiveness through decentralization, community participation and building institutional and human capacities;
- Ensure the quality of education services;
- Ensure equitable access to basic education and merit-based access to other levels;
- Improve the physical infrastructure, and material and technical aspects of the education system.

To reach the NSED 2020 goals, Tajikistan’s parliament made significant changes to the Law on Education in April 2010 that, among other things, increase the total number of years for general education and lower the age of entrance into primary education. Starting in 2020, compulsory education will be extended by one more year to cover grades 1 to 10 (currently primary and basic school are years 1 to 9). Also beginning in 2020, children will begin grade one at age six instead of the current age of seven, and the system will be extended from 11 years of general education to 12.

To support these major shifts, the MoE is preparing a new teaching programme and revised curricula for grades 1–12 (primary, basic and secondary levels). It will also work to increase the number of schools and is currently seeking donor support for the civil works component of this strategy (Uldashev, 2010). The revised secondary level curriculum will aim to improve student preparation for both university and (VET). Emphasis will also be placed on linking education with local labour market needs and goals.

The Tajikistan Government has taken additional legislative measures to redefine state education policy, update the education system, ensure equal access to education, address gender issues in education, improve the quality of education and reduce poverty through increased literacy (MoE, 2005). Some of these legislative measures are listed at the end of Appendix 5.
Within higher education, the MoE recognizes a need to develop students’ capacity to think critically and creatively, particularly in relation to the labour market; heighten students’ sense of personal responsibility for educational excellence; encourage competition between higher learning institutions; and eliminate corruption and nepotism within the educational process. It also wishes to expand education services by including adult and distance learning (TDG, 2010).

The Tajikistan Government has further identified the importance of providing more support to the nation’s wide range of VET institutions. In 2002, Tajikistan’s Ministry of Labour and Social Protection organized a working committee to draft the law “On the initial vocational education.” Among other provisions, the law ensures the rights of citizens to obtain training, retraining and advanced training in primary VET institutions and guarantees the right to free VET in state institutions (TDG, 2010). The NSED 2020 further details VET reforms.

To reach its education goals, the Government has sought and gained economic assistance from a wide range of supporters, including the Islamic Development Bank, international humanitarian organizations, local business leaders, the Asian Development Bank and various governments. With their support, Tajikistan has completed or is beginning projects to reconstruct and rehabilitate over 130 educational institutions, including secondary schools; build and equip regional schools; purchase school equipment; and advance other aspects of its education sector development programme (TDG, 2010).

Education reforms have also depended on improving the capacity of the MoE to fulfil its mandate and manage education spending. To this end, the MoE has worked strategically to modernize and computerize its Education Management Information System. It is also working to make schools more autonomous, and education finance reforms have supported the introduction of per capita financing, where money is budgeted according to the number of students in a school system (FTI, 2009).

In order to help Tajikistan’s education pedagogy shift toward more interactive and inclusive teaching and learning methodologies, the MoE has tasked Tajikistan’s Academy of Education to develop new curricula and education standards.

The MoE recognizes, however that, “there is [still] a need to continue building its management capacities, particularly in the area of strategic planning, policy development and review, and monitoring and evaluation” and is working to determine how best to improve its structure and work processes (FTI, 2009).

The Government’s education reform work is also linked to other areas of youth development. The Tajikistan Government has said the main concerns facing youth today include: education, employment, protection of health and healthy lifestyles, housing for young urban families, distribution of land to rural young families and young people’s international participation (SSCT, 2009). The extent to which education reform efforts succeed in reflecting and responding to these and other youth concerns will undoubtedly be a test of its quality.
3

EDUCATION SATISFACTION AND EXPECTATIONS
Despite the many challenges facing education systems and youth learners in the past two decades, youth in all three cases consistently place a high value on formal education and overwhelmingly say they want to achieve more of it than they already have. They also largely rate its quality reasonably well but indicate clearly that there is substantial and at times serious room for improvement. Youth further outline strikingly similar key factors affecting their ability to attain their desired level of education in their diverse settings. A lack of these inputs might, among other things, be sources of increased dissatisfaction among youth. At the same time, youth most often say that the effort they themselves put into making the most of formal education opportunities is key in ensuring they reach their education goals. As outlined in other areas of this study, however, many youth also say and show – with at times high levels of absenteeism – that their motivation is strained by a wide range of pressures.

**HOW YOUTH RATE EDUCATION QUALITY**

Most youth in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan rate education quality in their country as about average or better, as shown in Figure 27. This consistent convergence of youth opinions mostly outside the range of ‘bad’ and ‘very bad’ is impressive, given the difficulties facing the education systems and learners in these areas. Each of the countries and their populations have clearly managed to maintain or build back formal education systems that meet a range of expectations, if by no means all or well enough.

Interestingly however, although Tajikistan is often assessed as bearing more social, political and economic instability than Kosovo and Georgia by the indices reviewed for UNICEF’s larger study on the impact of instability on education quality for youth, the largest proportion of Tajikistan’s youth call quality ‘good’, while the largest proportions of youth in Georgia and Kosovo feel it is just ‘average’. Responses to other topics surveyed describe more about why this might be, but clearly, bearing a higher or lower level of instability does not consistently correlate with better or worse youth perceptions of the state of education quality.

*Figure 27.* On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very bad, 2 is bad, 3 is average/not good or bad, 4 is good and 5 is very good, how would you rate the quality of the provision of education in Kosovo/Georgia/Tajikistan today?* Percentages of youth responses (by all)

*See Appendix 3 for the wording of this question for each case.*

More tepid enthusiasm in Georgia and Kosovo might reflect poorer quality education in these areas compared with Tajikistan; however, response patterns throughout the rest of the survey are not strongly suggestive
that this might be the case. Youth expectations of education might differ in each case; Tajikistan youth might expect less for some reason, and Georgia and Kosovo youth might have higher standards. Given the high level of desire for education expressed by all youth and the range of specific demands they articulate for improvement as described below, this also seems unlikely.

Youth perceptions of education might differ according to their sense of whether education quality is better or worse than at some point in the past. Each group of youth to some extent shares similar reference points for the evolution of education quality in their setting – often naming pre- and post-war, or pre- and post-independence differences – yet they might judge progress distinctly. The relative optimism expressed by Tajikistan youth might reflect a particularly strong understanding and tolerance of difficulties facing education authorities and appreciation for work done to improve quality over time.

A 19-year-old in the Rasht District, Tajikistan, says that education quality “is good, but not in every part of Tajikistan, especially in our area. It has been affected by declines in economic, social, moral and other types of growth in the country, low quality health services, a reduction in the number of specialists in the country, increased unemployment and a decreased sense of responsibility among many young people.” A 22-year-old male from the same district further says, “The education quality has been improving. I cannot say it is really good because we have not reached that level yet. However, it completely differs from the conflict times.” Similarly, an 18-year-old male in the Khovaling District says, “In comparison with the post-war period, the quality of education in Tajikistan has improved.” Although his views conflict with many of his peers, a 13-year-old male in the rural village of Vanj in GBAO, Tajikistan, says, “Our education is very poor in comparison to the education of our parents because now we have better opportunities and conditions than our parents had, but nobody is willing to study. Western TV and films and serials have been negatively impacting our youth.”

As previously described, Tajikistan has significantly raised the proportion of public spending on education. The pace of education reform in Tajikistan has also been less dramatic than in Georgia, where many youth say they were ill-prepared to cope with rapid reforms at critical junctures of their education. Youth in Georgia are also aware of an illustrious past where education quality was considered very high compared with that of other former Soviet republics, including Tajikistan. Although youth in Georgia might see progress since years of conflict, they might also feel that quality has not yet reached previous levels attained or that the value of new standards is unclear.

A 17-year-old boy in Tbilisi, Georgia, explains, “Although I’d call our current system average, we have many famous people, and this fact proves that we’ll never fall far behind.” Many others are more frustrated, however, with one saying, “No matter what kind of an education you receive in Georgia, it is still hard to apply it in real life.” One young person in Kutaisi concludes, “Education quality is significantly low compared to what young people expect and wish for. But then again, it is adequate considering the conditions that we have to live in. Our education matches our resources and abilities [right now].” For the largest proportion of youth in Georgia, again, this rates as just ‘average’.

For Kosovo, the end of armed conflict and the advent of new education reforms meant many immediate improvements for most youth who had been studying in a poorly resourced parallel education system. The overall Kosovo youth rating of education quality perhaps falls between those of the other two groups, although there appear to be more pockets of dissatisfaction in Kosovo than in Georgia and Tajikistan, as also seen in Figure 27 in the differences between the proportions of ‘bad’ and ‘very bad’ responses for each case. As described below, some youth who studied in the parallel education system before the war in 1999 have fond memories of that time despite the hardships they faced then, and often feel that teachers and learners today are lazy given their comparative advantages. Many young people in Kosovo are also frustrated by incomplete education reforms and high levels of unemployment.
The issue of how age contributes to youth education quality ratings overall is also an interesting one. In each country and as described elsewhere, younger youth often hold somewhat more optimistic views of education quality than older youth, who are often more critical. About 64 per cent of the sample of youth in Tajikistan is between 13 and 18, compared with 45 per cent in Georgia, which might explain the relative optimism in Tajikistan between these two cases. As depicted in Figure 28, younger youth in Tajikistan and Georgia are more enthusiastic about education quality, particularly so in Tajikistan. A higher level of optimism among younger youth is not always consistent, however. About 66 per cent of youth surveyed in Kosovo were also 13–18. Although younger youth sampled in Kosovo still rate education quality more favourably than older youth, the largest proportion of 13–18-year-olds still rates education quality as ‘average’, as also shown in Figure 28.

Figure 28. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very bad, 2 is bad, 3 is average/not good or bad, 4 is good and 5 is very good, how would you rate the quality of the provision of education in Kosovo/Georgia/Tajikistan today?* Percentages of youth responses (by age group)

Beyond possible explanations for the comparatively optimistic views on education quality in Tajikistan, it is also interesting to note that in Georgia and Tajikistan, there are more pockets of dissatisfaction among youth living in urban areas compared with their peers in rural areas, as shown in Figure 29. In much less geographically large and populous Kosovo, there is no corresponding statistically significant difference in how rural and urban youth rate education there. Interestingly, too, youth in the respective Kosovo and Republic...
of Serbia education systems share similar feelings about quality overall, despite youth in the Republic of Serbia system often expressing more pessimism about various areas of quality, as described below and in the Kosovo case report published under separate cover.

**Figure 29.** On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very bad, 2 is bad, 3 is average/not good or bad, 4 is good and 5 is very good, how would you rate the quality of the provision of education in Georgia/Tajikistan today?* Percentages of youth responses (by settlement type)

In addition to other interesting subgroup differences, youth with a history of absenteeism in both Georgia and Tajikistan more often call education quality ‘average’ or worse compared with their respective counterparts, as shown in Figure 30. Those who have not skipped school recently, on the other hand, are more likely to feel the quality is ‘very good’.

**Figure 30.** On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very bad, 2 is bad, 3 is average/not good or bad, 4 is good and 5 is very good, how would you rate the quality of the provision of education in Georgia/Tajikistan today?* Percentages of youth responses (by absenteeism)

In Georgia and Tajikistan, youth were also asked whether they feel their education quality is better, worse or about the same as their parents’ was. Youth views on the trend in education quality in these areas in recent
generations are mixed. Large proportions of youth in both Georgia and Tajikistan feel that the quality of their education is better than their parents’, as shown in Figure 31. At the same time, more than a quarter of youth in Georgia and a third in Tajikistan feel it is actually worse. These findings show that youth reference points for education quality today are varied; higher proportions of youth in Tajikistan and Georgia feel that education quality is worse in their own generation than rate it as ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’, as described earlier.

**Figure 31.** Do you think the quality of your education is better, worse or about the same as the quality of education your parents received? Percentages of youth responses in Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Georgia</th>
<th>Tajikistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worse</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Don't know</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are some interesting differences for subgroups of the samples drawn. About 40 per cent of youth in Georgia who have experienced displacement feel their education is worse than their parents’, compared with youth who have never been displaced, as shown in Table 1. Employed youth in Georgia, however, see more improvement in education quality over time compared with their unemployed peers, despite the difficult economic and employment situation and limited support for their school to work transition.

Many subgroups of youth in Tajikistan are also more likely than their counterparts to say that their education is worse than their parents’, including absentees, dropouts, female youth, older youth, secondary- and tertiary-educated youth and those who feel their education has been negatively affected by conflict, as outlined in Table 1. Youth with a primary or basic education and those without a history of absenteeism are the most optimistic, with about half of each of these groups saying that education is better today than it was for their parents. Reasons for these within-sample differences are unclear and are worthy of further research. Younger youth who are also more likely to have most recently experienced basic education, may have less information about education in the past, their education needs and expectations may be more easily met at their education level and/or they may have received stronger support. Interestingly, however, as described later under ‘Learning outcomes’, younger youth in Tajikistan are more likely to be absent from school without authorization than older youth.
Table 1. Do you think the quality of your education is better, worse or about the same as the quality of education your parents received? Percentages of youth responses in Georgia and Tajikistan (by youth subgroup)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Georgia Ever displaced</th>
<th>Georgia Never displaced</th>
<th>Georgia Job</th>
<th>Georgia No job</th>
<th>Tjk Younger 13–18</th>
<th>Tjk Older 19–24</th>
<th>Tjk Absent</th>
<th>Tjk Not absent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worse</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TJK Male</th>
<th>TJK Female</th>
<th>TJK Conflict-affected</th>
<th>TJK Not Conflict-affected</th>
<th>TJK Basic/primary</th>
<th>TJK Secondary/professional</th>
<th>TJK Tertiary</th>
<th>TJK dropout</th>
<th>TJK No dropout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worse</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**YOUTH HIGHLY VALUE AND STRONGLY WANT MORE EDUCATION**

Youth in each case study site highly value education for a variety of reasons. As shown in Figure 32, the vast majority of youth fully agree with the statements that education is important for: “building my capacity in all aspects of life/learning is intrinsically good”; “preparing for a job or profession,” “ensuring a better status in society”; “good citizenship and helping me develop this country”; and “widening my perspectives, or learning about and understanding other people’s experiences.” Very few youth fully agree with the notion that “education is not very important.” In Tajikistan, youth also strongly feel that education is important for “gaining new information and skills,” with 89 per cent fully agreeing.

Although most youth widely agree on all of these ideas, there are some differences on the level of enthusiasm they feel for the importance of formal education. In Kosovo, youth respondents in the areas where the Republic of Serbia education system is run are less emphatically convinced that education is important for all aspects of life, job preparation, achieving a better status in society and citizenship and development, compared with youth in the Kosovo education System. Youth with a history of absenteeism in Kosovo are also less convinced about the value of education in each of these ways apart from feeling similarly to other youth about education being important to all aspects of life. Youth with a history of displacement in Kosovo are also less sure that education is important for widening their perspectives.
Figure 32. Education is important for... Percentages of youth “full agreement” in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)
Female youth in Georgia are somewhat more enthusiastic than males about the value of education, while youth with a history of displacement are more pessimistic about education being useful for improving their status and for finding employment than youth with no displacement history. Subgroup differences in Tajikistan are more limited.

Over and over, across each of these countries, youth voice a strong understanding of how formal education can enhance their lives and the well-being of their societies. “It provides me with an opportunity to learn how to communicate with people, have sufficient life and respect in society,” says one 17-year-old boy in basic school in Khovaling District, Tajikistan. Working students in their teens and pre-teens in Khujand, Tajikistan, say, “We need highly qualified, educated specialists for the development of our country,” and “to meet international standards.” Some youth also feel that education will help young people avoid the need to migrate outside the country in search of work.

In Kosovo, female youth in rural areas also emphasize the importance of formal education to personal independence. One teen says, “We want to complete university. Without school and education, we cannot be independent.” Similarly in Georgia, older youth involved in a focus group in Shidan Kartli, in central Georgia, agree, “The more educated people a country has, the stronger it is. Educated people are independent and free.” Thousands of other youth like these young people have diverse education and life dreams that they continue to look to formal education to support.

Youth in each site also overwhelmingly say they want to achieve more education than they already have, as shown in Figure 33. This sentiment holds for nearly all youth in every subgroup analysed, including both males and females and youth in urban and rural areas, although younger youth, understandably, feel this desire particularly strongly, as they are mostly at an earlier stage in their formal education. It even holds true for youth who have dropped out of school, as shown in Figure 34.

**Figure 33.** Would you like to achieve more education than you already have? Percentages of youth answering “yes” in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)
Figure 34. Would you like to achieve more education than you already have? Percentages of youth answering “yes” in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by drop-out status*)

![Bar chart showing percentages of youth answering “yes” in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan by drop-out status.]

*Drop-out status includes youth who have permanently left formal education prior to secondary completion. For Tajikistan, this category also includes youth who have temporarily suspended their education.

**FACTORS MOST AFFECTING YOUTH REACHING THEIR EDUCATION GOALS**

Youth also describe a range of factors that most influence or influenced their ability to achieve their desired level of education. Out of more than a dozen possibilities in each country, youth consistently cite their ‘personal interest, motivation and attitude’ as a principal factor influencing their education prospects, with nearly three quarters or more youth choosing this response, as outlined in Table 2. The next largest proportions of youth overall then cite ‘parental and/or spousal support’, ‘financial means’ and ‘support from teachers’ as key. Youth in Georgia and Tajikistan further name ‘my personal academic achievement’ next most frequently, while youth in Kosovo highlight the ‘availability of programmes’ next.

Many other factors are also playing key roles in young people’s ability to realize their education goals, such as the quality of their secondary school, the accessibility of programmes and flexible course schedules. For many youth, a combination of individual, family, community, school, systemic and other factors influence their educational attainment. See Appendix 2 and individual case reports published under separate covers for more on the range of issues youth highlight.

Interestingly and as shown in Table 3, very few youth in any location say that politics is a main factor affecting their ability to achieve their education goals. This is particularly remarkable in Kosovo, given its history of politicized education, where not a single youth surveyed says that politics in Kosovo is what most influences their educational attainment. Similarly, few youth respectively say that ‘paralysed education reforms’ in Kosovo or the ‘effective implementation of education policies’ in Tajikistan mainly make the difference for them. Youth in Kosovo appear to believe that the parallel education systems are functioning

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21 Note that youth who had already completed their most desired level of education were asked to note what factors were most important in making that possible.
well enough such that politics and education reform policy are not what most affect young people’s ability to reach their education goals. Youth in Tajikistan might similarly feel that other factors matter more.

**Table 2.** Top five factors youth cite as most affecting their ability to achieve the level of education they wish for. Percentages of youth selecting the factor in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Frequency rank</th>
<th>Kosovo</th>
<th>Georgia</th>
<th>Tajikistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal interest, motivation and attitude</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>71.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of parental and/or spousal support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial means</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My personal academic achievements</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of programmes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Blank cells indicate that the factor was not the fifth most frequently cited for the corresponding case.

By contrast, while ‘politics in Georgia’ is not cited frequently, more than a quarter of youth in Georgia say that ‘the effective implementation of education reforms’ strongly affects their ability to reach their education goals. As discussed later, many youth, who are generally well informed, say they have struggled to keep pace with the rapid implementation of education reforms in Georgia.

These findings do not imply that youth do not feel that politics or education policy and reform processes are important influencing factors for education quality. As discussed below, youth express significant concerns over the failure to fully implement education reforms across each setting, and at times, over political disruptions of learning processes. They do show, however, that their relative importance to educational attainment varies.

**Table 3.** Youth views on whether politics and education policy and reform most affect their ability to achieve the level of education they wish for. Percentages of youth selecting the factor in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Frequency rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics in Kosovo</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>13/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralysed education policy reforms</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>12/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics in Georgia</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>13/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective implementation of education reforms</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>10/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics in Tajikistan</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>11/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective implementation of education policies</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>13/18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many subgroups of youth emphasize various factors differently. Notably, youth in the Republic of Serbia education system in Kosovo more frequently name ‘financial means’ as critical to their education achievement compared with youth in the Kosovo education system. Although youth in urban and rural areas feel largely the same about the many factors surveyed, youth in urban areas in Georgia and Tajikistan tend to emphasize the importance of a number of factors more than youth in rural areas. In all three cases, tertiary-educated youth also emphasize the importance of several factors more than less-educated young people. Absentees in Kosovo emphasize a range of issues more than non-absentees, while the opposite occurs in the Tajikistan sample, and there are no differences within this subgroup sampled for Georgia.

Perhaps most strikingly overall, however, youth most often feel that a factor that matters most is themselves – their level of motivation to do what it takes to achieve a high quality education given their circumstances. For anyone believing youth are apathetic or irresponsible, this high level of self-reflection points to a very different reality. Most youth are highly aware of a need to apply themselves to achieve the education they desire. As noted, however, they also strongly recognize that they cannot reach their goals alone.

Many youth are concerned that student motivation is waning under stress and amid change. “In my mind,” an 18-year old secondary school student in Kurgan-Tyube, Tajikistan, says, “Experiences of education depend on the personal will of schoolchildren. It is difficult to force someone to study, and we need to awaken youth interest in education [when it is waning].” In each country, many young people feel their interest in education is faltering amid competing responsibilities for work and in the face of a number of education quality challenges, many of which are outlined below.

Key findings: Education satisfaction and expectations

- Findings on youth satisfaction with and expectations of education are strikingly similar across the countries surveyed: young people highly value formal education and want more of it while they seek many improvements in its quality. This contradicts a common impression of young people as apathetic, nefarious and troublemaking and reveals them instead as eager stakeholders in their education and society, bearing important critiques and ideas for improving education quality.
- Most youth either feel that education quality is about average or somewhat better overall in their setting, indicating much room for improvement. The relatively small proportion of below-average, negative ratings shows that youth can maintain a positive outlook on education after and amid high levels of political, economic and social instability. Although many youth feel their education quality is worse than their parents’ was, relatively few rate quality as below average overall.
- Youth across the three societies have a sophisticated sense of the power and purposes of formal education in their lives. In each case, youth strongly agree that education is important for: all aspects of life (including capacity-building in Tajikistan); job preparation; achieving a better status in society; citizenship and development; and widening perspectives (namely learning about and understanding other people for Tajikistan youth).
- The vast majority of all youth surveyed say they desire more formal education than they have already achieved. This holds true for all subgroups of youth analysed, including those who have dropped out of school before completing secondary education. Many dropouts who want to return to school are thus facing barriers that prevent them from doing so. The level of ongoing interest also implies that the quality of education was not the principal factor for most in having dropped out.
- Youth in each country rely on similar things to reach their education goals and name the same four factors most frequently as especially affecting their ability to achieve their desired education level. In order, starting with the factor cited most often, they are: personal interest, motivation and attitude; level of parental and/or spousal support; financial means; and support from teachers. For many youth, however, a combination of diverse factors influences their ability to complete their desired level of education, ranging
from flexible course schedules, to the ability to pay for supplemental tutoring. The emphasis placed by youth on their own interest and motivation again points to their feelings of responsibility in achieving their education goals and the need for education policies and programmes that support their motivation and a positive attitude toward learning, while also ensuring a wide range of other supports.

- Findings also show that some subgroups of youth sampled are more enthusiastic about education quality than others, which might reflect inequities in education access and/or the wide variety of other issues youth outline as described in the pages below. These differences warrant further research and in some cases, challenge assumptions about inequity in education access. For example, although poverty is associated with less education access and is often concentrated in rural areas in the region, this study reveals that youth in urban areas in Georgia and Tajikistan are more often dissatisfied with education quality than youth in rural areas, and in Kosovo, there is no difference of opinion. In other examples, younger youth are more optimistic than older youth about education quality in Georgia and Tajikistan, which may mean that older youth have higher expectations, and/or that less progress has been made in meeting their distinct education quality challenges. Although youth with a history of absenteeism in Georgia and Tajikistan are more likely to rate education quality as just average or worse than non-absentees, more research is needed on whether various facets of education quality play a role in different levels of absenteeism. As outlined in Appendix 2 and in the section on ‘Learning outcomes’, among the youth sampled in each case, absenteeism is also correlated with being male.
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
Youth report that physical and social school environments are key to their learning and to quality education. Basics matter, not only to their safety and ability to carry out course work successfully, but for their motivation to learn – a factor they say is key to achieving their education goals. Many youth are very satisfied with their learning environment in each setting, while many others report problems with school infrastructure and maintenance that impede their learning. They highlight difficulties with malfunctioning or non-existent heating systems that at times pose health risks; dirty and broken toilets; lack of running water and electricity; and shabby facilities that fail to keep the weather out. Many say they cannot learn well when they are not comfortable. Youth also stress the need for equipment and laboratories that support hands-on learning (particularly in science), more space and materials for extra-curricular activities (especially sports) and functional computer and Internet access. These learning components are often undervalued in education reforms and international organization projects that see them as less academic than core subjects, while youth recognize them as essential to promoting learning and quality education.

Equity in education achievement is also hindered by book shortages, high book costs, frequent book changes and lack of books in minority and even majority languages. School and community libraries are not adequately contributing to education quality, as most have not been modernized since the break-up of the Soviet Union. Classroom overcrowding in many areas also hinders learning and prevents inclusive education by making it impossible for teachers to provide individual support to students, including those with special needs. Literature shows that children and youth do not learn in environments where they do not feel safe, and fortunately, most youth report largely feeling safe in and around school. At the same time, many say that violence is occurring in or around school, especially between students. Urgent action is needed to stem violence in these areas, and youth call for more school psychologists and social workers to address these and other social and emotional issues they are facing, especially in post-conflict areas.

**SCHOOL MAINTENANCE, FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

Youth are fairly satisfied with school cleanliness and maintenance, but call for many improvements, as shown in Figure 35. Similarly, youth call for improvements in the availability of school facilities and equipment, such as desks, chairs, laboratory, computer and sports equipment; books and other learning materials; heating and hygiene facilities. Where conditions are hazardous, urgent action is needed to ensure student and staff safety. Overall, attention to learning environment issues is critical to maintaining student interest in school and ensuring equity and inclusion.

Some high school graduates in Tbilisi, Georgia, say that school “infrastructure was poor. Nobody cared about it. There was no heat and often no light. It was freezing in the winter. The lavatories stank and were dirty. Accordingly, few of us had a desire to go to school or focus on studying.” Another young person argues that, “In the 21st century, when you watch the study conditions of foreign countries on television and see their education environment and compare it with the reality here, your desire disappears and encourages you to refuse to complete education.” Many youth are happy with recent improvements in Georgia, however, bolstering their motivation to study. “I am content not only with the building I study in, but also the studying environment, the programme and the professors,” one says.

Students in Kosovo most often refer to broken bathroom facilities. “The toilets are not cleaned and maintained,” says one teenage girl who lost her parents in the war. Youth in Kosovo explain that school bathrooms are under pressure and are overused in part because of a lack of spaces for youth to socialize and relax between and after classes. The need for more space for extra-curricular activities and socializing in and around school is thus having a direct impact on hygiene facility quality and maintenance. Lack of running water and sinks in some classrooms also further impedes practical learning, including for conducting science experiments.
Energy crises in Tajikistan have been a particular challenge, and youth there frequently cite lack of functioning electricity and heating systems at school that at times create health problems. Although they express substantial satisfaction with other facilities and equipment issues, more than a third of Tajikistan’s youth say that heating and electricity do not function consistently in their school, as seen in Figure 36. Lack of heat and electricity is a problem for youth in both rural and urban areas. Although youth in rural areas are less likely to fully agree that their school has regular heating and electricity, more than a quarter in both areas say they don’t have heat and electricity consistently. Youth with a history of displacement feel the strongest about this problem, with nearly half of them saying their school does not have consistent heat or electricity.

“Winter is difficult,” one teen in Tajikistan’s rural Zafarobod District describes. “The classrooms are so cold, we have to suspend school for a month, and as a result, many of us have to continue our schooling into June [to make up for the time lost].” Another explains, “Some of us collected money and purchased an electric heater for our classroom, but our teacher doesn’t use it so that it doesn’t get destroyed. Other classrooms have wood-based heaters, and we have no other choice but to bring wood from home. If we use them, however, the classrooms become dirty and smoky, and all of the teaching aids become black.” Despite such reports of dangerous, dirty smoke in classrooms, in general, very few youth in Tajikistan report the presence of hazardous materials at their school.

Students in Kutaisi, Georgia also say that schools relying on firewood bring a lot of dirt to classrooms and take too long to heat. “I saw a classroom in a countryside school,” one describes, “where the oven had no tubes, no locks and the smoke spread in the whole room, making it hard to see and breathe.” Another student states, “I went to Rukhi public school where roofs leaked and floors were damaged. One of my classmates broke her leg in school, and it took her a long time to cure.”

Despite some improvements, many youth still lack equipment and facilities that support practical learning. One student in Georgia’s Samegrelo region says, “My school has been sort of renovated, but only from the outside; it’s what they call a ‘cosmetic’ makeover. The façade is painted and looks pretty, but inside, nothing has changed. We don’t have a proper environment, without computers, Internet, enough equipment or labs.” Students in Kutaisi, Georgia, say, “There are practically no labs in Georgian schools. Without labs,
it is unimaginable to teach subjects like physics or chemistry. Consequently, students have a hard time understanding material and this leads to less interest in these subjects. Education reform has also subtracted hours from these subjects, which are now taught less.”

**Figure 36.** Heating and electricity function consistently. Percentages of youth agreement in Tajikistan (by all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Tajikistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>Fully Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>Fully Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>I Don’t Know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tajikistan respondents highlight similar issues. Students in Ayni District say they mostly do not have the necessary equipment for science classes, and what they do have “is outdated since it is inherited from the Soviet times. They are out of order, and there is no reason to use them.” One in Panj District also notes the need for “elevators in tall buildings,” particularly to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities.

Many young people in each country also call for sports facilities, which they indicate are an important piece of education quality. Kosovo youth are interested in sports opportunities, including playing fields and, in at least one case, a swimming pool. “In my opinion, a well-equipped gym for students to use is as necessary as the library. I’m discontent about this matter,” one young person says in Georgia. “Gyms would help us think more about having a healthy lifestyle,” another student adds. Where sports halls and gyms already exist, however some youth report that they “don’t have any of the necessary equipment.” Boys in Zafarobod District, Tajikistan, similarly say, “Sports facilities are in bad condition, and there is little sports equipment. Some schools don’t have a gymnasium, and in winter, we hold physical training in classrooms or do something else because we don’t have opportunities to do things outside.” Young males in rural Vanj District in Tajikistan’s GBAO region are pleased with some improvements that have been made to schools, but call for more rehabilitation of school sports facilities and grounds, noting that their sports facility has badly needed repair since the earthquake that took place in Tajikistan in January 2010.

Overall, youth in rural areas in Georgia and Tajikistan are a bit less enthusiastic about their satisfaction with facilities and equipment, but there are more pockets of full disagreement in urban areas. Several other groups in Tajikistan are similarly less enthusiastic and slightly more likely to disagree than their respective counterparts that facilities are adequate, including females, older youth, absentees and dropouts.

**BOOKS – QUALITY, ACCESS AND CONTENT**

Youth in each site repeatedly say they experience several similar problems with the books they need for their classes: there are too few of them; they cost too much; they are not available in the language they need; and they are often outdated, damaged and/or are changed too frequently. These problems with books present
obstacles to equity in educational achievement, exacerbate ethnic divisions, further frustrate student morale and fuel the need for costly tutoring and corruption in education.

One young person participating in a focus group with youth who study and work in areas served by the Kosovo education system says that "lack of literature is a problem. The majority of books are translated from foreign languages, are unclear and inapplicable for our education system." The translations are often difficult for students to understand, limiting learning possibilities, youth say.

A basic school student in Dushanbe City, Tajikistan, says, “There is a shortage of books, and even when we have them in school, they are in bad condition.” Many students are particularly peeved at being required to rent books that are in poor condition. Another basic school student in Dushanbe City says, “Children must pay for the torn books. There is a need to print new books since many books lack pages, and there are few in foreign languages.” Another student says, “We are forced to pay for torn books, and this year I bought 18 books for 32 somoni.” Access to books has improved for youth in some areas. A tertiary student in Soughd Province says, “We had difficulties with textbooks two years ago, and two or three students had to share one book, but now there are sufficient textbooks for everybody.”

Debate over books in Georgia is similar, with one 17-year-old girl in a Tbilisi, Georgia, public school saying that as a result of education reform, “school course books have been replaced with new ones, but low quality books have also been integrated.” Many also complain that there are not enough course books for everyone and that they are changed too frequently. These students also “protest the frequent changing of course books, especially science and math textbooks. We don’t understand how it is possible to change a math course book once a year while math theories themselves rarely change.”

Many students say they simply cannot afford to buy the textbooks they need to make up for the short supply in Georgia’s libraries. “The books of my profession are very expensive and not everybody is able to buy them, especially when only 10 per cent of the book may be needed,” says another university student. “That’s why I’m not content with the studying process as a whole.” Students also say that poor quality textbooks support poor quality teaching, as teachers have a harder time interesting students in the material. “Teachers aren’t accustomed to these textbook changes yet,” one 17-year-old secondary student says.

Students in Tajikistan also say they need more books in different languages – Tajik, Russian, Uzbek and Kyrgyz. Uzbek-speaking students in Zafarobod District say they want more books in Uzbek in order to “ensure students get an education” and understand material well, although they also stress the importance of knowing more than one language so they “will be able to travel to foreign countries without any assistance.” Kyrgyz-speaking students in Murghob, in the GBAO region, want more affordable books with up-to-date content. A 21-year-old tertiary-educated female says, “Teaching materials are not sufficient at schools. They are usually bought in Kyrgyzstan and are very expensive; they cost about 15–20 Tajik somoni each. Not every student can afford this and sometimes the content of those textbooks does not comply with curricula.” As also described below in the ‘Learning content’ section, Kyrgyz students would also like to have more teaching materials and learning opportunities using the Tajik language, supporting their inclusion in the Tajik-majority society.

More than a quarter of youth surveyed in Georgia say they do not have enough books in the language they find most useful. The need for books in a more appropriate language seems to be strongest in urban areas and among females and dropouts. Many especially call for books in Russian. Lack of high quality textbooks for all in appropriate languages amid Georgia’s education reform and new testing requirements also places pressure on students to hire private tutors, as described in ‘Learning processes and systems’.

Youth in all three cases further explain that libraries are failing to address the problems of lack of books and other resources for many students. They call for more and improved libraries to ensure access to needed course and other desired literature and to aid research, using modern technology and with support from well-trained librarians.
Youth in Kutaisi, Georgia, explain, “Libraries aren’t equipped with computers, and it seems like nobody cares about this issue. It is impossible to use many school libraries because there aren’t enough books, and there are no computers. Students without money for books must be able to use library books, but it’s impossible.” Another student in Georgia recommends, “Libraries must be more efficient and modernized. I wish my library had an electronic database to make the library work faster and more effectively.” One student notes, however, that “for small universities, these methods are a luxury. As such, we need effective librarians who are well-trained in bibliography, classification and arrangement of books in the library.”
Still others in Georgia emphasize the need to not only address the availability of textbooks, computers and Internet in the library but to ensure an updated literature section in each library as well, for use in courses and to read for pleasure. In Tajikistan, many young people also call for more access to different kinds of books through libraries. A 14-year-old male in the rural village of Sebiston says, “It is necessary to organize a library in the village in order to give young people an opportunity to read fiction and increase the level of their knowledge.”

LEARNING SPACE AND CLASS SIZE

Many youth surveyed in each country say that their classes are too large and/or that there are not enough schools, causing some schools to operate in more than one shift and making both teaching and learning more difficult. Feelings about this are particularly strong in Kosovo and Georgia, as shown in Figures 37 and 38. Although Tajikistan’s school-age population is rising, a comparatively smaller proportion of youth reports classroom overcrowding in their school or university, as also seen in Figure 37.

Feelings are strongest among students in the Kosovo education system, while youth in the Republic of Serbia education system in Kosovo also strongly agree. Some high school students in Kosovo explain that classroom overcrowding and double learning shifts affect their education quality because they make it impossible for teachers to pay sufficient attention to each student. They also place pressure on teachers to hold private classes for a fee to cover course material. As noted, hygiene facilities are also affected, as youth seek out spaces to socialize and relax and end up hanging out in the bathrooms.

Kosovo youth also link the lack of school space to a dearth of non-formal learning opportunities. They are interested in sports activities; new optional learning modules; communications and art classes; clubs and activities, including space for NGOs to support a range of non-formal learning efforts at school. Some high school students state that “non-formal education is important since it enables students to learn about various topics that are not part of the school curriculum.” Unemployed youth in North Mitrovica, a Serb-majority area in northern Kosovo, for example, say that their formal education does not train them to write curriculum vitae and motivation letters, which could be the focus of non-formal learning.

Figure 37. There are too many students/pupils in my classes. Percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)*

* ‘I don’t know’ response not applicable for Kosovo.
SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY COUNSELLORS, PSYCHOLOGISTS AND SOCIAL WORKERS

Majorities of youth in all three cases support the need for additional and/or improved student support services at schools and universities, as shown in Figures 39 and 40. This is especially important for young people with special needs. Respondents in Kosovo say that psychologists, social workers and career and guidance counsellors are especially needed to help young people deal with “teenage problems.” In Kosovo, some also suggest that psychologists should be dealing with aggressive and violent students, not teachers, who are at times left to cope with issues they are not well-trained to address. Still others state that many young people are still dealing with trauma associated with the war in Kosovo and its aftermath, and that school psychologists could play an important role in addressing these issues, too. An 18-year-old girl whose parents are deceased in Gjakova, an Albanian-majority area in western Kosovo, says, “I think schools should have psychologists, particularly in a post-conflict country where many young people need assistance.” School psychologists are also strongly linked to advancing inclusive education.

Youth in Gracanica, a Serb-majority area in eastern Kosovo, further explain that many young people experience abuse in families and at school, which is rarely admitted or spoken about. They feel that school counselling would help these young people deal with psychological and physical abuse. They also believe that bringing more counselling expertise into schools would help curb drop outs.

Few youth in Tajikistan say they have access to any kind of counselling services in school, although tertiary institutions appear to provide students with access to a well-qualified counsellor much more than lower-level Tajikistan schools, as nearly 40 per cent of tertiary-educated youth report their presence (about twice as much as their less-educated peers). Teenagers involved in a focus group in Tajikistan’s Asht District say that more school counsellors would help address problems with teenage suicide occurring in the district. They are concerned that young people have few support systems to deal with their problems and few activities to distract them from and take them beyond their troubles. They suggest that in- and out-of-school centres be established where young people can access counselling services. They also support a range of extra-curricular activities described below.
Demand for more social workers in schools and universities is also strong in Georgia, where 56 per cent of youth also call for better trained school psychologists. These calls come especially from urban, female, more highly educated youth. At the same time, work must also be done to change youth attitudes about turning to these professionals for support. One youth in Georgia says, “We used to have a counsellor at our school, but not anymore, as it isn’t necessary. Neither me, nor any of my friends ever went up to a counsellor and talked about our problems. I don’t think we ever would. I understand that they are very helpful, but in this kind of society, they aren’t needed.”

**Figure 39.** More guidance and career counsellors (Kosovo) and social workers (Georgia) are needed in schools. Percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo and Georgia (by all)

![Graph showing youth agreement in Kosovo and Georgia](image)

**Figure 40.** I have access to at least one well-qualified counsellor in my school/university. Percentages of youth agreement in Tajikistan (by all)

![Graph showing youth agreement in Tajikistan](image)

**SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND DRUGS IN SCHOOL**

Many youth raise concerns about smoking and alcohol use in school, saying that the practices are unhealthy, and when they occur among teachers, it is unprofessional, negatively affects their teaching and leads
students to lose respect for these teachers. Survey findings also point to possible differences in how anti-smoking and anti-drug education and publicity is targeting youth.

As shown in Figure 41, most youth in Kosovo and Georgia feel that too much smoking is taking place in school, which needs to be curbed. By contrast and very positively, the opposite is true in Tajikistan. This may indicate that anti-smoking rules are reasonably well enforced, that cigarette addiction has not taken hold of youth in Tajikistan to the extent that it has in other countries and/or that anti-smoking promotional work with youth and tobacco policies are effective. Older, male, tertiary-educated youth report smoking problems more often than their counterparts in Tajikistan.

**Figure 41.** There is too much smoking in my school/university. Percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)*

Calls to curb smoking in Kosovo come from younger, less-educated youth in urban areas in the Kosovo education system, although at least half of youth in the Republic of Serbia system also say it is a problem. In Georgia, calls to curb smoking most often come from secondary- and tertiary-educated youth. The 13–18-year-olds in Kosovo, for example, might be the recipients of more anti-smoking publicity and might not have started smoking yet, or the opposite could be true.

Some youth also express disappointment with smoking and alcohol use among teachers and school administrators in school. A 16-year-old student in Shurobi Village in Hisor District, Tajikistan, is frustrated when “teachers go out and smoke cigarettes behind the school.” Another 17-year-old in Shurobi says he and other “students lost respect for a teacher and the school principal” after they “drank vodka together” in the classroom instead of teaching their computer skills class. Similarly in Georgia, students at Telavi State University in Kakheti, in eastern Georgia, say that some students and professors attend class drunk and/or drink on campus. They call for “sanctions for alcohol use inside university and against students and professors who are under the influence of alcohol at the university.” In Tajikistan, although the vast majority of youth do not report a problem with beer bars being located too close to school, it is a problem for about 11 per cent of young people there, more often in urban areas and according to older, male, employed, tertiary-educated and conflict-affected youth.
Reports of significant drug use at school on the other hand are relatively low in all three cases, although reports from Kosovo are more frequent, as shown in Figure 42. Prevalence could also be higher, given stigmas attached to discussing drug use and the significant number of youth in Georgia and Tajikistan who answer “I don’t know.” Reports in Kosovo more often come from older, urban, employed and secondary- and tertiary-educated youth. In Georgia, younger, less educated, males, and especially absentees and dropouts, are more likely to report a lot of drug use in school. Only slightly more reports come from youth in urban areas and male youth in Tajikistan. The availability of drugs and/or enforcement of drug laws and education about drugs may vary for subgroups of youth.

These findings point to the need for more research on tobacco, alcohol and other drug use and to maintain or expand prevention and response efforts. Further investigation of the prevalence of beer bars near school also deserves further research and action in places where there are disruptions to learning and young people’s health and well-being. Many youth feel that new strategies are needed to curb smoking, drug and alcohol abuse among young people, from better enforcement to more creative information and prevention campaigns.

**Figure 42.** There is a lot of drug use in my school/university. Percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)*

*‘I don’t know’ response not applicable for Kosovo.

**VIOLENCE IN AND AROUND SCHOOL**

The majority of youth in all three cases say they feel safe in and around their school, although higher percentages of youth say that violence occurs in and around their school, as shown in Figures 43 and 44. The difference is comparatively small for Georgia, however. It is unclear why more youth report violence in schools than report feeling unsafe in school generally. It may be that the violence doesn’t directly involve or threaten them, or they may feel they have control over it. Almost all reports of violence in or around school in Kosovo come from Kosovo education system areas, while in Georgia, they are more often reported by younger youth with primary or basic education, and in Tajikistan, by youth in urban areas (41 per cent of urban respondents fully or somewhat agree, compared with 24 per cent of rural youth). In each case, it would be important to determine any patterns where respondents are saying they don’t feel safe and that violence occurs. Individual indicators of safety and security also deserve further research.
Despite the reports of violence occurring, few youth say they have experienced this violence personally, as shown in Figure 45, where less than 10 per cent of youth in any site say they have been victimized in or around school. (Kosovo youth were asked about bullying specifically, while youth in Georgia and Tajikistan were asked about being a victim of physical violence more generally). Georgia researchers also asked their peers about robbery, and findings of personal experiences of being robbed were similarly low, with about 3 per cent reporting having been robbed in or around school.
In what would seem like another contradiction to their widespread feelings of safety, youth in Kosovo and Georgia more often report that students have weapons at school than they report feeling unsafe in school, as depicted in Figure 46. Over one third of youth in Kosovo and a quarter of youth in Georgia say students carry weapons in their school. By contrast, about 4 per cent of youth in Tajikistan say this occurs. In Kosovo, the issue again affects youth mainly in the Kosovo education system, and secondary-educated youth more often report weapons in school (40 per cent of secondary-educated youth say this occurs). Reports come mainly from urban areas, males, dropouts and absentees in Georgia and from urban areas and conflict-affected youth in Tajikistan.

Figure 46. Some students carry weapons, knives or other dangerous tools in or around school/university. Percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)
Although this survey does not ask youth to gauge whether the prevalence of weapons in school increased following armed conflict, a previous study with youth in Kosovo indicates feelings among youth that this occurred (Lowicki and Pillsbury, 2001). An increased prevalence of weapons carried by students in school in the Kosovo education system areas of Kosovo may be another way in which armed conflict impacts the quality of education. Young people may feel the need to carry them for protection amid increased lawlessness, out of fear of further conflict, and/or amid a range of emerging social issues, including well into the post-war period.

As shown in Figure 47, more than three quarters of youth in Georgia and nearly half of youth in Tajikistan to some extent agree that students damage school facilities. Although youth in Kosovo were not surveyed specifically on this issue, their reports would likely have been similarly high given their testimony on the widespread destruction of bathroom facilities by students noted above. In Georgia, reports of student vandalism come more often from urban areas, absentees and youth without jobs, while in Tajikistan, more reports come from urban areas and among absentees. Overall, while seemingly a troubling problem in many institutions, student vandalism of school facilities is clearly not making most youth feel unsafe at school, as if it were, positive response levels on other security issues would be higher. It nonetheless contributes to education quality problems and dampens student morale, while also likely reflecting some of this morale.

Youth in focus group discussions describe a number of scenarios of violence occurring in or around school, if not the full spectrum. These include: fighting between students; fighting between students and other non-school youth; corporeal punishment by teachers against students; verbal abuse and threatening of students by teachers and vice versa; inter-ethnic and cross-national violence; bullying; sexual harassment; dog attacks and traffic hazards. As described above, in Georgia, this violence is taking place mainly among younger youth with primary education. In Kosovo, it’s happening mainly in Kosovo education system areas and in urban areas in Tajikistan.

Older youth in Gori, Shidan Kartli, Georgia, say that although they have never been a victim of violence and do not admit to having been violent towards others, they have heard of cases of verbal and physical harassment. One youth in Gori, however, states, “If a professor insults me, I’ll throw him out the window,” indicating that at times, instructors also likely feel threatened by students. In another instance in Gracanica, Kosovo, a student reports, “In my school, professors have not come to school at times because they were afraid of students.” At the same time, they also note that some students have dropped out of school due to problems with their teachers.

In all three cases, youth say that students fight between themselves, and as noted below, survey respondents most often name students as sources of violence in or around school. Fighting between students “happens and will always happen;” one teenager at a public secondary school in Tbilisi, Georgia says. “It always starts with something stupid and happens mostly with younger kids. Children develop their self-defensive instincts.”

Youth in all three cases also report that corporeal punishment is occurring in schools. Teenage girls in basic school in Dushanbe City (Sino), Tajikistan, describe episodes of this violence and other cruel and unusual punishment. “Teachers even use sticks and say humiliating words [to students],” one says. Another observes, “Schoolchildren are forced to sweep the stairs in school even when they are sick and not [otherwise] allowed to do so.” A 14-year-old female youth in Shurobi Village also reports that, at times, “Teachers beat students. They support and help students from wealthy families. As for the children from poor families, they do not care; they often punish them.” Others from Shurobi confirm reports of teacher preferences for wealthier students, and at times, students being instructed to conduct fieldwork and pick cotton if they have missed class or not performed well.
In Georgia, one 15-year-old male in middle school in the Samegrelo region says, “Once my teacher pulled my ear, and it was very painful.” Others say that teachers yell and at times threaten them. “My teacher has never used physical violence against us,” another teen in Samegrelo says. “But she has raised her voice many times. I’m not sure whether this was violence or not.” A 15-year-old girl in the same region says, “My teacher threatens us very often. She says, ‘I’ll throw you out if you don’t behave well, and I won’t give you the grade you want!’ and so on. She hasn’t done these things, however.”

In another scenario, youth in the Kyrgyz-majority area of Murghob, in the GBAO region of Tajikistan, say that violence occurs regularly between Kyrgyz and Tajiks. “We often have violence cases in schools,” says a 24-year-old male with tertiary education. “Some days we fight with Tajiks during almost every break, and these fights continue after classes, during concerts and in markets.”

“This is a very serious problem,” a 16-year-old male in Murghob continues. “Sometimes adults of different nationalities fight with each other. But despite all of this, we feel safe ourselves in our area.” A 20-year-old male tertiary student clarifies, however, saying, “We rarely witness violence cases at universities. But while we study at university, we cannot feel ourselves like at home. We feel uncomfortable sometimes.” These young people explain that the violence reflects tensions “between the representatives of different nationalities” and feelings of “inequality,” where minority Kyrgyz youth feel disadvantaged within the Tajik-majority country. In these cases, cross-national and inter-ethnic conflict is playing out within the formal education system.

Although youth do not describe specific situations, some also say that sexual harassment and bullying are occurring. In one focus group with youth in the Republic of Serbia education system area of North Mitrovica, Kosovo, youth further say, “Fighting rarely happens in schools. Instead, students usually fight during the night in cafes and clubs.” In some cases, youth also refer to the location of their school. A 19-year-old in Podujevë in north-eastern Kosovo says, “I don’t agree at all that schools and the areas around them are safe. Our school is located along the highways where all students are endangered by vehicles.” Ethnic minority youth in Prizren also raise the issue of street dogs along their routes to and from school as a “permanent threat to students.”
Survey respondents in all three areas were further asked to speculate beyond their own school experience about who or what causes violence in or around schools. Higher percentages of youth name sources of violence than say that violence is occurring in their school, indicating that some believe more violence occurs than they have witnessed themselves, as seen when comparing Figure 44 with Table 4.

When violence occurs, youth in each case say most often that it involves students. Next most often, youth in Kosovo blame inadequate policing, while youth in Georgia say it involves youth adopting an aggressive “street mentality,” and in Tajikistan, that it reflects poor communication skills among youth that make them more vulnerable to resorting to violence to resolve differences. Many youth in Kosovo and Georgia also name poor communication skills among youth as a contributing factor. Youth in Georgia and Tajikistan less often name inadequate policing as an issue, although some youth in Georgia report feeling “humiliated” by police checks at school.

Many youth in Kosovo further cite the “ongoing effects of war” as a contributing factor, as do smaller percentages of youth in Georgia and Tajikistan, who highlight the “ongoing effects of displacement.” These findings show that, for some youth, even a decade after war, its effects are ongoing and play out in social relationships in school. School and university staff are also implicated in some of the violence occurring in or around schools, although interestingly, less so than the “ongoing effects of war” in Kosovo. Gender inequality is a key factor in the eyes of some youth, particularly in Kosovo. In Tajikistan, youth also say that people and groups unconnected to the school are at times involved in school-centred violence.

Consistent with other violence-related responses, urban youth are more likely to report sources of violence occurring in or around schools in Georgia and Tajikistan, and most reports come from Kosovo education system areas in Kosovo. Youth reports of violence in and/or around school suggest a strong need for further research on the types of violence occurring and their dynamics, causes and effects. It would be important to consider the extent to which, and how, armed conflict has contributed to this violence, particularly where students are the principal protagonists and victims and where changes in the availability of weapons is a factor. It would also be very interesting to know what protective factors are at play in various settings and among different subgroups and/or what other security issues may be affecting these areas that were not revealed through this research.

**Key findings: Learning environment**

- Youth emphasize that a high quality physical and social learning environment is important for sustaining their motivation for learning, ensuring success and equity in achievement and maintaining their health, safety and comfort so that they can concentrate on applying themselves to learning. Youth are fairly satisfied with school cleanliness, maintenance, facilities and equipment overall, but cite many areas for improvement. Given the range of issues they name, their learning environment-related quality ratings show a high level of tolerance among youth and their strong dedication to working through difficulties to achieve their education goals. At the same time, poor learning environment issues are hampering the motivation of many learners and compromising their health.

- Young people across the cases stress the need for modern facilities that support practical learning and the development of specialized skills to achieve higher education and professional goals. They often need basics like desks, chairs, laboratories, books, hygiene facilities, heating and electricity. Many emphasize the need for better computer and Internet access at school and regular use of this equipment in their classes, with well-qualified instruction. For youth, these inputs are critical and central to their understanding of core academic subjects.
### Table 4. Who and what are causing violence occurring in and/or around schools/universities? Percentages of youth answering “yes” in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan and frequency rank (by all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violence Source</th>
<th>Kosovo All and Frequency Rank</th>
<th>Violent Source</th>
<th>Georgia All and Frequency Rank</th>
<th>Violent Source</th>
<th>Tajikistan All and Frequency Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>53.0 1</td>
<td>No violence occurs</td>
<td>78.9 1</td>
<td>No violence occurs</td>
<td>64.0 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No violence occurs</td>
<td>38.7 2</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>14.3 2</td>
<td>Students/pupils</td>
<td>27.8 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate policing</td>
<td>29.2 3</td>
<td>Some youth adopt an aggressive “street mentality”</td>
<td>12.7 3</td>
<td>Poor communication skills among youth</td>
<td>12.1 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor communication skills among youth</td>
<td>23.8 4</td>
<td>Poor communication skills among youth</td>
<td>7.9 4</td>
<td>People or groups other than students and staff</td>
<td>8.1 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing effects of war</td>
<td>17.2 5</td>
<td>School staff</td>
<td>6.0 5</td>
<td>School/university staff</td>
<td>6.8 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender inequality</td>
<td>10.4 6</td>
<td>Inadequate policing</td>
<td>5.3 6</td>
<td>Gender inequality</td>
<td>4.8 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School staff</td>
<td>10.1 7</td>
<td>Ongoing effects of war and displacement</td>
<td>3.4 7</td>
<td>Inadequate policing</td>
<td>3.3 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (low attention from school officials; personal problems; no protocols to follow at school; boys fight for no reason)</td>
<td>1.0 8</td>
<td>Gender inequality</td>
<td>3.0 8</td>
<td>Ongoing effects of war and displacement</td>
<td>1.6 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Youth in all three cases call for textbooks and course materials that are up-to-date, relevant to course content and exam and professional requirements; in good condition; low cost or free; and accessible to all. Many also require more textbooks in preferred languages to ensure their full inclusion in the learning process. They also want more, renovated and better-equipped libraries that are modernized with electronic holdings and staffed with well-trained librarians, as well as access to literature for reading enjoyment and knowledge-building beyond course requirements. Left unaddressed, literature and information gaps support inequity in achievement.

- Classroom overcrowding, particularly in Kosovo and Georgia, is impeding the learning process for many young people, as class time is compressed to accommodate multiple learning shifts, and teachers are not...
able to give enough attention to each student. This especially hinders inclusive learning for young people with special needs, who can’t get the teaching support they require. Young people ask for more schools and classrooms to reduce class size, accommodate one learning shift and provide more space for extra-curricular, non-formal learning, especially for sports activities. Many also say they need more and better dormitory facilities, cafeterias and health spots in school.

- Many youth report that too much smoking and alcohol use are occurring at school and that it negatively affects their health and the quality of teaching, undermining student respect for teachers. There are relatively few reports of significant drug use taking place in school, with a higher proportion occurring in Kosovo. Further research is needed on the substance, coverage and impacts of anti-smoking, drug and alcohol abuse campaigns to inform follow-up action. Successes should be documented and replicated to decrease smoking, drug and alcohol abuse among youth in and out of school. Some young people suggest that more innovative and creative prevention campaigns are needed.

- Most youth in all three cases say they need more and better trained guidance and career counsellors, school psychologists and/or social workers at school. They feel these professionals are needed to help young people deal with a range of social, emotional and violence issues they are facing, especially in post-conflict areas, and to support teachers, who are not equipped to handle these problems.

- Although most youth say they feel safe in and around school and few report having personally been victimized in these areas, they report that violence does at times occur, involving many scenarios: fighting between students; fighting between students and other non-school youth; corporeal punishment by teachers against students; verbal abuse and threatening of students by teachers and vice versa; inter-ethnic and cross-national violence; bullying; sexual harassment; dog attacks and traffic hazards. Youth reports of violence in and/or around school suggest a strong need for further research on the types of violence occurring and their dynamics, causes and effects. It would be important to consider the extent to which, and how, armed conflict has contributed to this violence, where youth are principal protagonists and victims many years after conflicts have formally ended, and where the level of youth access to weapons has changed.
Learnin
G content

Demand for education innovation:
Adolescent and youth perspectives on education quality in the CEECIS region
Survey questions about learning content focused on the changes youth would like to see made to their classes and how they prioritize these changes, as well as the extent to which youth receive information about health, gender and peace and tolerance issues in school compared with other sources. Youth across these countries are calling for modern education systems that provide them with more chances to select and learn a variety of subjects using up-to-date materials and equipment that are accessible to all – especially the regular use of computers and the Internet in their classes. They want more opportunities for international student exchanges, to learn other languages and be well-connected and engaged with the global community. Education content also supports inclusion for many young people within their own communities, including with language instruction that allows them to fully participate in their society. Youth would like to be more involved in a variety of extra-curricular activities and non-formal learning options, and many emphasize, again, the need for education to be practical and better linked to job markets.

YOUTH PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVING THEIR CLASSES AND LECTURES

Youth in all three cases outline a wide range of often similar learning content issues they feel need to be addressed in their setting, with varying degrees of emphasis. Youth in Georgia and Tajikistan most often prioritize the increased use of computers and Internet as a key change they want to see to their classes and lectures. Their focus group comments and survey response patterns on this issue point to possible differences in computer and Internet coverage and access within each case setting. They also reinforce the links between learning content issues and other domains of education quality, including learning environment and learning processes and systems.

Table 5. Top five youth priorities for making changes to their classes in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan. Percentages and frequency rank* (by all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Idea</th>
<th>Kosovo All and Frequency Rank</th>
<th>Change Idea</th>
<th>Georgia All and Frequency Rank</th>
<th>Change Idea</th>
<th>Tajikistan All and Frequency Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide more practical learning opportunities</td>
<td>31.9 1</td>
<td>Ensure more computer and Internet usage</td>
<td>22.4 1</td>
<td>Ensure more computer and Internet usage</td>
<td>18.6 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure direct links to the job market</td>
<td>21.1 2</td>
<td>Increase international student exchanges</td>
<td>19.4 2</td>
<td>Ensure more free centres for foreign language learning</td>
<td>14.8 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure more computer and Internet usage</td>
<td>15.5 3</td>
<td>Ensure direct links to the job market</td>
<td>16.8 3</td>
<td>Make needed literature available and accessible to all</td>
<td>13.9 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase international student exchanges</td>
<td>12.2 4</td>
<td>Supply better quality textbooks and change them less frequently</td>
<td>13.0 4</td>
<td>Increase international student exchanges</td>
<td>7.8 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand student choices of elective courses</td>
<td>6.0 5</td>
<td>Expand student choices of elective courses</td>
<td>6.1 5</td>
<td>Increase extra-curricular after-school activities</td>
<td>7.7 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages of survey respondents selecting one change to their classes as their first priority from lists of 8, 13 and 11 survey choices, respectively, in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan.
Young people’s keen interest in the use of computer and Internet in their courses and lectures indicates strong desires to engage with new technology and to meet modern, international education standards that emphasize international and communication technologies (ICT). They also reflect key areas of skills development many youth require for current and future employment. In Kosovo, young people view computer and Internet skills as integral to achieving their other priority changes to their classes – more practical learning opportunities and better links between education and the job market. Youth in all cases say they also use computers and the Internet to socialize, for fun and to learn about the rest of the world.

Case findings show that computer and Internet coverage and access in schools and universities might differ along age and gender lines. In Tajikistan, females more often call for increased computer and Internet usage in school than males. They are also much more likely than males to not have access to a computer at home. Rural youth in Tajikistan are also much less likely than urban youth to have access to a computer at home, but there is no corresponding difference in their call for more computers and Internet at school. These findings might point to even coverage in the provision of computers and Internet service in rural and urban areas but less access to them for females in school. Females might also simply be more interested in using them in school than males. These differences in coverage and access are worthy of further research.

As also reflected in their discussions of learning environment and processes and systems issues, youth in each case outline specific challenges they face in engaging with computers and Internet in school. One RAE youth in Prizren, Kosovo, explains that “in my high school, the computer lab has only two computers, which does not allow all students to spend enough time on them. On many occasions and particularly with information and technology modules, we are obliged to pay private courses (not organized by teachers) in order to improve our skills.” A girl whose parents are deceased in Gjakova explains that at her school, “There are enough computers but most of them don’t work and are not usable.”

Although the Georgian Government is already addressing the computerization of Georgia’s schools, progress is slow, and coverage is still limited. A university student in Tbilisi studying computer technology states, “Computers were bought for my university only one year ago, and our learning materials are really old. They give us no new learning materials, and if we request more, we are generally told, ‘If you are interested in anything, surf the Internet and find it.’” Another Tbilisi university student explains, “Many families are not in a good financial position and have no personal computers or Internet at home, so students are eager to spend the whole day studying at the library.”

In Tajikistan, a 19-year-old in Kurgan-Tyube says, “It is necessary to have new technology and qualified technicians, as if one doesn’t know computers and a foreign language, it will be hard for [one] to live.” Another teen in Zafarobod District says, “Computers should be used more in the learning process, including for drawing classes, as a way to help young people learn how to use them.” A 13-year-old in Sebiston village suggests, “Extra lessons should be conducted on computers” to make up for fact that “there are a total of two computers in our school, which are not connected with the Internet, and we are not allowed to work on computers.” Youth in Faizabad, Tajikistan, further say they have computers in school but limited electricity and no Internet access: “We would like to have the Internet in order to obtain more and new interesting information.” Youth who do have Internet access lament however that “it is too slow.” Students in Tajikistan also say they need more computer teachers and that some teachers also create additional barriers, including by imposing fees on school computer use.

Beyond these technology issues, many youth emphasize again that learning content must support practical learning and links to the job market. They want more interactive and interesting teaching methods, where teachers lecture less and engage students more in active discussion, group work and exchange of ideas and experience. They would also like more hands-on training opportunities to practice their skills in preparation for entry into the job market. Youth in Kosovo and Georgia name improving education links to the job market among their top five most frequently cited priority changes to their classes, as also outlined in Table 5. In
both cases, older youth understandably tend to emphasize this issue more than younger youth. By contrast, however, comparatively few youth overall in Tajikistan emphasize the need for better education and job market links (21 per cent of Tajikistan youth agree this change is needed, compared with 43 per cent in Kosovo and 64 per cent in Georgia).

The reasons for the lack of emphasis on job links in Tajikistan are unclear given high unemployment and youth outmigration, although the youth unemployment rate is likely still lower for youth in Tajikistan than for youth in Georgia and Kosovo. The issue is more important for urban respondents and those who have reached tertiary education in Tajikistan, who emphasize it twice as often as their rural and less educated counterparts. It might be that rural youth feel less of a critical need to confront the job market because they often engage themselves in family farm enterprises. School leavers in urban settings, where most universities are, might, on the other hand, expect to face stiffer competition for available job opportunities. Many youth in Tajikistan might also feel they can rely on the high level of outmigration possibilities for work if necessary.

Youth in Georgia and Kosovo also connect the issue of creating better education links to jobs with another of their top priorities – expanding student choices of elective courses. Youth in Georgia highlight frustrations with a new 12th year of education before the tertiary level, which many feel adds little value, with some calling it “totally unnecessary because we don’t get any new skills or knowledge.” They feel that students should be allowed more ‘freedom of choice’ in picking and designing their studies in the 11th and 12th grades to be more in line with a desired career path. One further asserts, “We should be taught only those subjects which we have to pass for college.” Others counter, saying, “We must have general knowledge about all subjects that we learn at school,” and “I think that all courses should be required and then you can choose which of the subjects you want to pass for the exams.”
Many students in Kosovo call for an all-out revision of the curriculum, including an expansion of student choices of elective courses. One young man who works and studies in Gilan in a Kosovo education system area says, “Our current education system emphasizes quantity over quality. The school curriculum is very broad and overloaded with too many classes and zero practical work. Students consider this very boring and exhausting. The curriculum should be simplified to provide quality information in accordance with the age of the students.” Many also want the total number of required courses decreased, particularly in the Republic of Serbia education system areas, and in some cases, an increase in the duration of each class beyond 40 minutes. Youth in Serb-majority Gracanica also suggest that more forms of alternative education are needed. They would like more training courses for specific jobs and night school opportunities for working students and those who are parents.

About a third of youth in Tajikistan say they want to be able to choose their courses and exams, especially urban youth, but they instead tend to prioritize a desire for extra-curricular activities more, as also seen in Table 5. Many youth in Kosovo and Georgia are also interested in more extra-curricular options, as well as non-formal learning opportunities, life skills development and youth-to-youth education. Their ideas are wide-ranging, and most want to supplement curricula and find ways to expand and deepen their skills. They also want more opportunities for youth to come together, socialize and actively explore common interests and concerns.

Female youth and non-absentees in Tajikistan particularly emphasize the call for extra-curricular activities and non-formal training. One 17-year-old female secondary student in Panji Bolo town suggests that summer camps should be organized for youth. A 17-year-old male in the village of Sebiston proposes, “Evening activities and clubs should be organized for young people.” Youth in the Asht District outline a range of potential extra-curricular activities, from creative courses offered during the daytime and evenings, parties and sports activities at school. They note that schools will often require rehabilitation in order to accommodate these activities but that they are much needed in their district, including to address problems with teen suicide. Youth in Somoniyon, Rudaki, who attend both Tajik and Russian schools, also support the establishment of evening schools, providing more flexibility for youth to attend classes and the provision of a wider variety of courses. They suggest the establishment of youth centres, where non-formal learning and socializing could take place. They further call for “more events for youth” at schools and universities.

Increased international student exchange opportunities are strong priorities for youth in all three cases, underscoring youth interests in being a part of and connecting with the international community. All subgroups of youth are interested in more international student exchanges, but in Georgia and Kosovo, they are particularly popular among older, tertiary-educated, urban-based youth, while in Tajikistan female youth emphasize their interest particularly strongly.

Youth at times say they want to study abroad to access academic and professional expertise they lack within their own education systems and to make job links. One 14-year-old girl in Samegrelo, Georgia describes her feelings on studying abroad, saying, “If I’ll be able to receive the same kind of education as my peers in Europe do, I won’t have to go abroad to study. This would be good for my own country’s future.” Many also simply want to connect with and learn about their peers and others around the world. A 16-year-old female in Panji Bolo town, Tajikistan, explains, “It would be good to have exchange visits with other schools so that we can learn from them and they can learn from us.”

Young people further highlight other learning content issues that can be particularly divisive in their societies. Youth in each case call for more foreign language learning opportunities, particularly in Tajikistan. Sometimes, young people want to learn languages to learn about the world, to be able to communicate freely and expand their employment options. Other times, and particularly for minority ethnic groups in each case, language barriers may abet or increase discrimination and experiences of exclusion, fuelling ethnic and national
tensions. Government policies on multilingual education and the steps they take to ensure all learners equal opportunities in school and after graduation are measures of their commitment to ensuring an inclusive, equitable society.

Half of all youth surveyed in Tajikistan want increased access to opportunities to learn foreign languages. Youth in urban settings feel especially strongly about this, perhaps where white-collar jobs may reward linguistic competence. All of the participants in a focus group discussion in Somoniyan, Rudaki, Tajikistan, say they want to learn foreign languages but that they “lack foreign language teachers in school and do not have access to foreign language centres or literature.” “Nobody cares about this issue,” one says. “Pupils can rarely find the necessary literature in libraries to learn a language independently. The MoE is not taking adequate action on this.” Tertiary students in Soughd Province also emphasize the importance of foreign language learning, with one saying, “There is a proverb that ‘one who knows languages, knows the world’. Everybody should try to learn foreign languages. Students have to learn Russian well since the majority of them go to Russia for earning.”

Youth interviewed in Kyrgyz-majority Murghob, in Tajikistan’s GBAO region, call for more opportunities to learn Tajik to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination in the majority-Tajik society. “Our district’s residents are Kyrgyz people,” a 16-year-old secondary-educated male explains. “We have 14 schools in total, out of which only one is a Tajik school.” “Some schools have two groups: Tajik and Kyrgyz,” a 17-year-old adds. The group says they do have Russian teachers of varied quality but that there are too few opportunities for Tajik language study and practice. “We are obliged to learn the Tajik language since we live in Tajikistan, and without it, we cannot find a job,” says a 20-year-old male. Another says, “There were even some cases when heads of organizations, who could not fill out documents in Tajik, were fined. There should not be behaviour like this.”

Uzbek students in Faizabad, Tajikistan, by contrast, say there are enough schools in their district, but they want more opportunities to study in Uzbek and Russian. A 13-year-old female says, “I would like to have more Russian forms [in school] or a Russian school.” And a 15-year-old female says, “I would like to study at an Uzbek school because I am Uzbek. We don’t have any Uzbek schools now, and there used to be Uzbek forms in school, but they were transferred into Tajik.”

In Georgia, a quarter to a third of youth (particularly urban, tertiary-educated) call for better and more non-Georgian language instruction. Serb youth in Gracanica and Mitrovica in Kosovo also say they are interested in more language courses. Unemployed youth in Serb-majority North Mitrovica in particular say that language teaching is focused mainly on Russian and that more professors of English are needed to meet modern education standards. No youth interviewed in Kosovo highlighted a desire to strengthen their Albanian or Serbian skills as a second language, although some noted that this would be useful for inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo.

Although the issue is not prioritized overall, many youth in the Kosovo education system areas of Kosovo would also like to see changes made in the way Kosovo history from 1990 to 2010 is taught in school. Forty per cent of these youth would like to see it taught in a way that represents and creates dialogue about different viewpoints. Youth with a history of displacement are particularly interested in this change. It is not clear what specific revisions they suggest, but overall, youth within the Kosovo education system, including many displaced youth, indicate a desire for increased openness and dialogue. In strong contrast, youth in the Republic of Serbia system areas express little interest in this change, with only 1 per cent saying they are for it. These findings are interesting given the high level of politicization of education in Kosovo since the early 1990s and efforts that have been made to revise the curriculum since the war in 1999. Although youth interviewed in Albanian- and Serb-majority areas of Kosovo voice interest in learning more about one another’s education experiences, Serb youth are clearly not interested in revising and revisiting recent Kosovo history in their classes at this stage.
INFORMATION SOURCES FOR YOUTH ON HEALTH, GENDER, SEX AND PEACE AND TOLERANCE

Youth rely on schools to varying degrees in the three cases to receive learning content on health, gender, sex/physical relationships and peace and tolerance issues. As shown in Tables 6 and 7, schools are very important sources of information to youth in Tajikistan and Kosovo, while relatively few youth in Georgia turn to them as main sources of information on these subjects. Youth in Georgia, by contrast, most often turn to television, radio and newspapers for this content.

At the same time, youth in Kosovo and Georgia are in general much more likely than youth in Tajikistan to receive information on these topics at all. Most youth in Kosovo and Georgia are finding some source of information – particularly schools; television, radio and newspapers; family and the Internet, although again, to varying degrees. Significant percentages of youth in Tajikistan, however, say they are not receiving any information on these topics at all, as also shown in Table 7. Youth in Tajikistan are also much less likely to turn to Internet sources than young people in the other two cases.

There are many differences among subgroups of youth on their sources of information, underscoring a need to better understand and address the different ways in which young people are targeted with and/or prefer to receive information. For example, as seen in Table 6, youth in Kosovo education system areas rely much more heavily on schools and television, radio and newspaper for information on these subjects than youth in the Republic of Serbia education system areas of Kosovo, who rely more on the Internet, family and NGOs.
In Georgia, as seen in Table 6, youth in rural areas rely even more heavily on TV, radio and newspapers and much less on the Internet than youth in urban areas do. Females in Tajikistan are less likely than males to get information on any of the topics, and when they do, they more often turn to different sources than males. In all three cases, younger youth aged 13–28 rely more heavily on schools for information than older youth, aged 19–24.

Responses in Tajikistan, where the survey questionnaire asked about each of these diverse topics separately, show that youth turn to different sources more or less for different types of information. Strikingly, nearly a third of youth in Tajikistan say they get no information on gender and physical relationships at all, while an equivalent proportion gets information from school.

Again, all of these distinctions point to a need for further research regarding the ways in which different groups of youth receive information on these topics and how they would prefer to receive the information. For example, do schools need to play a stronger role in delivering this content in Georgia, and why are so many youth in Tajikistan missing out altogether? Reviews of content and evaluation of its impact, including on youth behaviour, are also necessary. Some interviews with youth clearly indicate a strong need for awareness raising, with one youth in Faizabad, Tajikistan for example saying, “I don’t think we need such information [about HIV/AIDS], only those people who have an abnormal lifestyle need to know about it.” Colleagues promptly disagree, however, arguing, “I think this information is useful, as if we do not know the ways of HIV/AIDS and other disease transmission, we cannot protect ourselves and the number of infected people will increase.” They add, “Any information helps us.”

Table 6. Main information sources for youth on health, including HIV/AIDS; nutrition; gender issues; sex education; and peace and tolerance. Percentages of youth answering “yes” in Kosovo and Georgia (by all and system in Kosovo and by all and settlement type in Georgia)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kosovo Information Source</th>
<th>Kosovo All</th>
<th>Kosovo Education System</th>
<th>Republic of Serbia Education System</th>
<th>Georgia Information Source</th>
<th>Georgia All</th>
<th>Georgia Urban</th>
<th>Georgia Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>TV, radio and/ or newspaper</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV, radio and/ or newspaper</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Peers/friends</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers/friends</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>I do not receive this information</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not receive this information</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (pamphlets, elective health course)</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. Where do you get the majority of information about… Percentages of youth answering “yes” in Tajikistan (by all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Source</th>
<th>Health, HIV/AIDS and nutrition</th>
<th>Gender issues and physical relationships between people</th>
<th>Peace and tolerance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School/university</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers/friends</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television, radio and newspapers</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not receive information on these topics</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key findings: Learning content

- Youth across these countries call for surprisingly few changes to core subjects such as history, mathematics and literature and seem to accept these subjects as suitable. Instead, they prioritize subjects and learning content that modernize education systems to provide them with more chances to use computers and the Internet, learn foreign languages, engage in student exchange programmes and learn with engaging teaching methods and hands-on applications.

- Young people’s keen interest in using computers and the Internet more in their courses indicates strong desires to meet modern, international education standards that emphasize ICT and to develop skills required for current and future employment. There appear to be inequities in access to computers and Internet in schools, as younger youth in both Georgia and Kosovo, primary-educated youth in Kosovo, and females in Tajikistan emphasize this priority more than their counterparts. These differences again support inequity in achievement.

- In-school job training and external internship opportunities could facilitate young people’s transition from school to work. Youth in Kosovo and Georgia include ‘improving education links to the job market’ among their top five most frequently cited priority changes to their classes; older youth emphasize this most. Tajikistan youth do not prioritize this, where unemployment has been lower and many youth anticipate migrating in search of work.

- Offering students a wider selection of elective courses is important to education quality for youth. Respondents report that the emphasis on the quantity of subjects rather than their quality actually reduces instruction time and thus learning. More elective courses would also allow youth to better shape their employment goals.

- Extra-curricular, after-school activities are also important for sustaining youth motivation to learn, including by catering to a wide range of diverse interests in non-formal learning that go beyond formal curricula.

- Youth in all three cases strongly prioritize increased international student exchange opportunities, underscoring youth interests in being a part of and connecting with the international community, their need to access academic and professional expertise and desires to make job links.
• Learning content issues are highly political for many youth, who view them as a means of increasing or decreasing their access to education and full participation in society. Government policies on multilingual education and how history is taught are measures of a state’s commitment to ensuring an inclusive, equitable society. Youth in each case, particularly within minority ethnic communities, call for more language-learning opportunities that support cross-community interaction, reduce discrimination and expand job prospects.

• Research is needed on the ways in which different groups of youth receive information on the topics of health, nutrition, gender, sex/physical relationships and peace and tolerance, how they would prefer to receive the information and its impact. As appropriate, the roles of schools and universities in delivering this content should be strengthened. Younger youth aged 13–18 in each country tend to rely on schools more than older youth 19–24, and many youth, particularly females in Tajikistan, do not have access to any information on these topics at all.
LEARNING OUTCOMES
Survey findings confirm an association between absenteeism and dropping out among the youth sampled in Tajikistan and Georgia, but not in Kosovo. Gender plays varied roles in absenteeism. Males display a stronger propensity to be absent from school than females in all three countries (a fact that resonates with PISA results showing that males are increasingly lagging behind girls in performance). Despite lower rates of absenteeism (suggestive of a stronger attachment to education and its perceived utility), females are less likely to join the workforce, possibly flagging a sociocultural background that still challenges females’ access to labour opportunities. Females who are absent less than males sampled in Georgia, however, are still more likely than males to be tertiary-educated. Absenteeism is also associated with age, where younger youth are more likely to be absent than older youth in Kosovo and Georgia, while in Tajikistan, the opposite is true, pointing to different pressures on young people at different ages and in different contexts.

About 5 to 7 per cent of respondents have dropped out of school before completing secondary education, and the similarities and differences in their reasons for dropping out deserve further research and action. Lack of economic support, lack of parental support (especially for rural, female youth in Tajikistan and among RAE youth in Kosovo) and lack of interest are cited frequently among a wide range of reasons for drop outs in Kosovo and Tajikistan, while youth dropouts in Georgia most often highlight marriage. These findings also resonate with a range of barriers youth say they face in trying to get an education – from inadequate facilities to meet the needs of students with disabilities, to the inability to pay for costly tutoring and the location of schools. Many employed youth also do not feel that their education has adequately prepared them for work, underscoring their calls for more practical learning opportunities and education and job market links. Youth further name many potential consequences of failing to obtain a high quality education, most often a poorer economy and increased outmigration of youth. Youth in Kosovo and Tajikistan generally do not link poor education quality with the risk of renewed armed conflict, while half of youth in Georgia do.

**YOUTH ABSENTEEISM**

Despite the generally positive youth ratings of education quality described above, self-reported youth absenteeism from school is troublingly high in each case, but particularly so in Georgia and Tajikistan. As shown in Figure 48, nearly a third of youth in Kosovo, about half in Tajikistan and over two thirds in Georgia admit to having skipped school without authorization in the previous 12 months. Some of these youth say they have skipped school at least 10 times or more, including nearly a third of youth in Georgia.

In all cases, males are significantly more likely to skip school than females, although many females are also not showing up to school, as depicted in Figure 49. The gender divide is particularly large in Kosovo, while females in Georgia and Tajikistan are still very likely to skip school, albeit significantly less often than males. Males may be engaging in more risk-taking behaviour than females in general. They may also be skipping to attend to work or other responsibilities. Females may be less willing to admit to their absences, or their activities may be more closely monitored such that absenteeism is to varying degrees more difficult for some of them to undertake, particularly in Kosovo. At the same time, females may also be skipping to attend to other responsibilities or pressures.
In Georgia, where males are more frequently absent from school than females, females are more likely to continue on to tertiary education. In Tajikistan, however, while surveyed females are absent less often than males, they are still more likely to drop out of school or to temporarily suspend their education. Other sources further show that females are much less likely than males to attend university. In Kosovo, smaller numbers of females are enrolled in secondary education, and they are absent less. Other gender issues beyond absenteeism are clearly also at work in influencing the likelihood of males and females finishing secondary school and moving on to tertiary, some of which are discussed below.

In Kosovo and Georgia, older youth are absent more often than younger youth. This might be related to a higher level of freedom to make decisions by older youth, who may also be engaged in more diverse activities compared with younger youth. In Tajikistan, however, despite more optimistic views among younger youth on education quality in many respects, these same young people are somewhat more likely to skip school than older youth (an observation worthy of further research, and possibly linked to the need to participate in seasonal work more often than older youth). Given the known links between frequent absenteeism and dropping out, this phenomenon is particularly concerning given its prevalence among the younger youth sampled in Tajikistan.

In Tajikistan, youth who have dropped out of school or who had been forced to temporarily suspend their education are much more likely to be absent from school than youth who have not had these experiences (61 per cent of dropouts compared with 44 per cent of non-dropouts). The same holds true for youth sampled in Georgia, where dropouts are more likely to report absenteeism, although the prevalence is high among both groups (79 per cent of dropouts compared with 67 per cent of non-dropouts). This is in line with knowledge from other settings where serial absenteeism is linked with dropping out, particularly where special learning needs are not being met.

Youth in the Kosovo education system are far less likely to be absent from school without authorization than youth in the Republic of Serbia system, as depicted in Figure 50. This might reflect a higher level of frustration among youth in the Republic of Serbia system areas, stronger pulls from competing responsibilities and/or other reasons. The sample of dropouts is too small, however, to speculate further about the relationship in this setting.
Figure 49. In the last 12 months, did you stay away from school/university at least a whole day without an authorized excuse? Percentages of youth responses in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by sex)

Kosovo Male
- No: 56%
- Yes, 1-9 times: 36%
- Yes, 10 or more times: 8%

Kosovo Female
- No: 85%
- Yes, 1-9 times: 14%
- Yes, 10 or more times: 1%

Georgia Male
- No: 26%
- Yes, 1-9 times: 38%
- Yes, 10 or more times: 36%

Georgia Female
- No: 42%
- Yes, 1-9 times: 19%
- Yes, 10 or more times: 39%

Tajikistan Male
- No: 45%
- Yes, 1-9 times: 13%
- Yes, 10 or more times: 42%

Tajikistan Female
- No: 59%
- Yes, 1-9 times: 10%
- Yes, 10 or more times: 31%

Legend:
- Blue: No
- Red: Yes, 1-9 times
- Green: Yes, 10 or more times
Youth inputs from focus group discussions shed light on some of the reasons why young people are skipping school. In Tajikistan, youth say that, among other things, poor education quality, poor job prospects, family size, poverty, seasonal work and lack of parental support, are key factors driving youth absenteeism. Youth in Somoniyon, Rudaki, agree, “Young people are ready and want to get high quality education, but they are not provided with it. That is why young people do not try to attend lessons in the schools and study at universities. Those who want to work can’t find jobs.” A 16-year-old in the rural village of Sebiston explains that youth absenteeism reflects seasonal work demands, as people “mostly are busy with viticulture (growing grapes), which is the main source of income and involves both adults and schoolchildren. In March and April, people clean grapevines, and in August, September and October, they gather the harvest. This is driving the majority of schoolchildren to be out of school in our area.” Another 16-year-old adds, “All able-bodied members of our family, including me, work in the field during seasonal work periods. I get tired after the work, and I do not like to do my lessons. When I complain to my father, he gets angry with me.” Youth in the rural village of Shurobi in Hisor District, also say, “Youth miss their classes due to fieldwork and household chores. As a result, they do not understand some themes, and teachers do not understand this and scold them. Parents do not allow their children to attend school during the peak harvest or sowing season, and even if they are allowed to go to school, they are tired and unprepared.”

Youth in Kosovo and Georgia spoke less about the reasons behind absenteeism. Issues likely reflect the reasons provided for dropping out, which are described below. The reasons for absenteeism among all of the groups of youth cited are worthy of further investigation to determine whether in-school or systemic education quality issues are principal push factors, or if issues outside school matter more. The reasons youth give for dropping out of school shed more light on the pressures they face.

**DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL**

The drop-out rate is a key indicator of the success or failure of an education system to achieve its goals and objectives in any society. Depending on the reasons, dropping out might also be an indicator of young people’s disappointment with education quality. Between 5 and 7 per cent of youth surveyed in each case report...
having permanently dropped out of school before completing secondary education. In Tajikistan, when youth who claim to have temporarily suspended their education are included, the proportion reaches 17 per cent of the sample drawn. The sample of permanent dropouts is small, however, and is likely not representative of the opinions of all dropouts in any of the countries. They nonetheless provide interesting insight on reasons youth give for dropping out. The group that temporarily stopped their education in Tajikistan similarly provides indications of why these interruptions have occurred.

Dropouts include youth from all subgroups. In Kosovo, despite absenteeism more often occurring in Republic of Serbia system areas, most dropouts come from Kosovo education system areas. They are more often unemployed and occur equally among those with some primary or secondary education. There are no differences along rural/urban or sex lines in Kosovo. In Georgia, dropouts sampled are more often urban, older youth and are also a near-even mix of males and females. By contrast, in Tajikistan, they are more often rural, female and primary- or basic-educated youth, although they are also predominantly older. Youth with a history of displacement and absenteeism respectively are also more likely than their peers to have stopped their education permanently or temporarily in Tajikistan.

The main reasons presented for dropping out of school, as shown in Table 8, are diverse from country to country, and reflect issues and pressures at many levels, including family, societal (economic, religious, displacement) and from within school. For youth in Kosovo, lack of financial means/poverty and the need to work are cited most often, while in Georgia, early marriage and lack of financial means are mentioned most frequently. Tajikistan dropouts name lack of parental and/or spousal support and simply lack of interest in school most often.

Each of the reasons provided highlight country similarities and distinctions worthy of research and action. Poverty affects youth in each site, although the national and regional economic challenges of each vary. Parental and/or spousal support is reported to be the most important factor for youth dropping out in Tajikistan, while youth in Kosovo and Georgia appear to have the family support they say is vital to achieving their education goals, as outlined above.

Although marriage is listed as an issue by some in Tajikistan, it is not noted in Kosovo and is substantially affecting both males and females in Georgia, underscoring a need to address sex education and social mores surrounding physical relationships and their impact on youth education particularly in this case.

The issues cited might also be affecting subgroups of youth distinctly. For example, in Tajikistan, although a higher proportion of rural youth are affected (20 per cent versus 11 per cent of urban youth), there are few differences between urban and rural youth on the reasons they give for stopping school permanently or temporarily. Instead, some of the starkest differences that occur among subgroups of youth occur between males and females. The female youth sampled are much more likely to have left school overall (23 per cent of them versus 10 per cent of males), and are 13 times more likely to say it was because they lacked parental and/or spousal support for their education. These females were also twice as likely to be from rural areas. Moreover, female youth left school much more often because of marriage than males did.

Lack of parental and/or spousal support is also a bigger issue for displaced, absentee and conflict-affected youth in Tajikistan than their respective peers. Meanwhile, although youth with a history of displacement are more likely than the never displaced to have dropped out or stopped their education for a period of time, only 1 of these 14 young people says the interruption was caused mainly by displacement. Instead, they stress a lack of teachers and schools as key reasons for ending their education. Never-displaced youth, on the other hand, more frequently say they left because they had to work.

22 Note that unlike those reported in Table A7 in Appendix 2, figures here represent standardized re-weighted data relating to responses for question 25 in the Tajikistan structured survey questionnaire provided in Appendix 3, including both permanent dropouts and those who temporarily suspended their education.
Table 8. What were the *main* factors that contributed to your decision to drop out of school? Frequencies of youth answering “yes” in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kosovo*</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Georgia**</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Tajikistan***</th>
<th>Freq</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of financial means/poverty</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>I got married</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Lack of parental and/or spousal support</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had to work</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lack of financial means/poverty</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>School did not interest me</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School did not interest me</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Education was not relevant to my finding a job</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lack of financial means/poverty</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parental/spousal support</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>School did not interest me</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>I or a family member had a health problem</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmes were too far away</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lack of teachers support</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>I had to work</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School workload too heavy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I was going abroad</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I got married</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of the war</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Programmes were too far away</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Only nine classes were available in school/We want more</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education was not related to my finding a job</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>School workload was too heavy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Education facilities too far away/There were no schools</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Being forcefully displaced from my home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lack of support from teachers</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I faced strong discrimination in school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I couldn’t study, I was often absent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I faced strong discrimination in school</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was absent during the graduation exam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I had to work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Being forcefully displaced from my home</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was relocating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I was expecting a baby</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Education quality was poor</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support from teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I wasn’t willing to get a professional education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Learning environment was poor</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning environment was poor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lack of parental and/or spousal support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>School workload was too heavy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School was unsafe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Learning environment was poor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Because of a natural disaster</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To take care of my sister</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>School was unsafe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Because of the hijab</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education quality was poor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Because there were no teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I faced strong discrimination in school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Death of a family member</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>School was unsafe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education was not relevant to my finding a job</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I was expecting a baby</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Based on the responses of 29 youth respondents, or 5.6 per cent of the sample of 517, who were permitted to name up to three reasons for their having dropped out.
** Based on the responses of 38 youth respondents, or 6.6 per cent of the sample of 581, who were permitted to name up to three reasons for their having dropped out.
*** Based on the responses of 151 youth respondents, or 17.4 per cent of the sample of 865, who were permitted to name all that most apply as the main reasons for their having dropped out.
A 22-year-old male living and working in Kurgan-Tyube, Tajikistan, who finished nine years of school, says, “I left school to learn my profession. I was young and did not take it seriously, and I didn’t have anybody to support me. My father left for earnings, and I left together with my father, brothers and sisters. My mother worked in the market, baked bread at home and used to sell it. I helped my mother and got acquainted with a shoemaker, who suggested I become his pupil. I started to help him and finally left school to work more and make more money.”

Working youth also agree that youth leave school “to be independent” and “to have personal money.” One explains that studying and working is also very difficult to do at a young age. “It is good to work and make your own money,” this 15-year-old says, “but sometimes it’s hard because you have to find time for both education and the job. Sometimes I don’t have time to open a book and just fall asleep as soon as I come home.”

Other youth who did not drop out of primary, basic or secondary school explain that they weren’t able to move on to university as hoped. An 18-year-old female, who graduated from secondary school in Tajikistan, explains, “A negative impact of the quality of education is that I finished school last year, but I could not enter the university since the volume of work at my home is very high. It impacted me to miss an opportunity to enter university. Schoolchildren not only help their families to sell the products in the market, but they have much to do at home, and this decreases their education quality.”

A 17-year-old male, who completed secondary school in Sebiston village, says, “I graduated from the 11th year of secondary school this year and very much wanted to enter the Tajik Technology University in Dushanbe City, but the financial situation of our family is very bad. There are six children in our family besides me, and only my father is working. Because of lack of sufficient finances and accommodation, I cannot continue my education.”

Focus: Youth discuss youth marriage in Georgia

“Youth marriages happen frequently and have even become fashionable,” says one 16-year-old female student, who participated in a focus group on “youth marriages” in Georgia. “It’s becoming so frequent, it’s alarming,” says a fellow 17-year-old boy. Some feel that early marriage is occurring because youth are not interested in education, whereas others disagree, saying that it is a product of adolescence and cultural and social norms that require young people to be married in order to have sex. In either case, many feel that these youth do not fully understand the consequences of their choice to marry young and would like to advise their peers against it.

“Illiterates can never be successful,” one believes. Others say that the economic and financial pressures that come with marriage, children and family responsibilities make it impossible for many to continue and complete their education. “Almost no one continues studies after they get married,” a 14-year-old girl says. While not all youth believe that marriage and education are mutually exclusive, one teenage boy advises, “At this [young] age, doing both things together successfully is not possible.” An 18-year-old female concurs, saying, “They should analyse the step to marry better before taking it.”

A 20-year-old female who got married when she was 15 says now, “My decision to marry was premature, and I would advise all youth to finish their studies first if they want to be successful [in whatever path they choose]. I was very lucky, as my family supported me to finish my studies after I married, but not everyone is so lucky.

“As for why young people are getting married, in most cases, I don’t think it’s because parents are not supporting their education,” she continues. “Everyone decides for themselves to continue studies or stay at home with family. Probably young people are deciding themselves not to move forward with getting an education. But in most cases, they are taking a hasty step and are making a premature decision to marry and leave school.”

Further research is needed on early marriage in Georgia and the consequences for young people’s education and well-being.
BARRIERS TO GETTING AN EDUCATION

All youth surveyed, not only dropouts, were further asked about whether they face any particular difficulties in getting an education. As shown in Table 9, large proportions of youth in each case say that they do not face any particular difficulty getting an education, while many others do:

- Youth in all three cases most often cite the inadequacy of facilities to meet their special needs as a difficulty they face in getting an education.
- Kosovo and Georgia youth second most often name an inability to pay for private classes or tutoring outside school as a key difficulty.
- Tajikistan youth second most frequently say they lack parental support, contrasting youth responses in Kosovo and Georgia that reveal that they generally have the parental support they rely on.
- Difficulties with school locations, extra costs, arbitrary fees and teacher mistreatment also stand out for many young people in each area.
- A wide range of other issues present education barriers for smaller numbers of young people.

Each of these issues is worthy of further research to learn more about the ways in which subgroups of youth may feel excluded from formal education, the impacts of this exclusion and distinct approaches needed to increase inclusion. Notably, the interplay of gender divides, other cultural norms and conservative religious practices is creating barriers, especially for female youth in Tajikistan and youth in the RAE community in Kosovo. These and other findings point to the need to address and support the roles families play as influenced by the wider society in ensuring equitable access to education for all youth.

Table 9. Do you face difficulties getting an education for any of the following or other reasons? Percentages of youth answering “yes” in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Kosovo</th>
<th>Georgia</th>
<th>Tajikistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do not face difficulties for any of these reasons</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>51.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities inadequate for my special needs</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot afford private classes/tutoring</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot access easily due to location</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents do not or cannot support my education</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher mistreatment and punishment</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot afford or unwilling to pay arbitrary fees at school, including to teachers</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence in and around school</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other students unwelcoming</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am married and not permitted to attend school</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes/lectures not in mother tongue</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullied</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual harassment</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo: 22 reasons, ranging from “war” and “misunderstandings with peers” to “student has difficulty expressing himself”</td>
<td>4.8 (≤0.6 each)</td>
<td>0.5 (≤0.3 each)</td>
<td>6.4 (≤1.0 each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia: “disruptive classmates,” “unsuitable textbooks,” “literature in foreign languages”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan: “I wear a hijab,” “classes overcrowded,” “only nine grades are available,” “long distance from home,” “lack of books,” “no library,” “teacher shortage,” “age limitation,” “I don’t want to study,” “it is difficult without knowledge,” “I dislike my classmates,” “illness”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When youth refer to the inadequacy of facilities to meet their special needs, they at times refer to physical
disabilities, particular learning interests and professional goals they would like to pursue, and/or to problems
with materials and equipment. An 18-year-old female secondary student participating in a focus group
discussion with young people with disabilities in Panji Bolo town, Panj District, Tajikistan says, “I’m not
satisfied with conditions in my school since my health is poor, and it is hard for me to go upstairs. In addition,
even with excellent marks it is hard for me to enter university since my parents cannot afford my study.” See
also the box on ‘Youth reflections on inclusive education in Kaketi and Kutaisi, Georgia’.

Youth with disabilities in Panji Bolo town highlight the need for more financial support to individuals with
disabilities and to households with members with disabilities. They say it would be much easier for them to
attend school if “pensions are increased for youth with handicaps and for households with members who
are handicapped.” A 16-year-old female with disabilities says, “It would be good to have access to books
for free and to not be asked to pay for school renovations.” Youth with disabilities also say they require
learning facilities that are equipped to meet their needs, such as having entrance ramps and elevators. Youth
in this focus group agree, “All handicapped youth should be able to study in comprehensive schools
[and] colleges and universities should be established in the district so that we can study in our
district” and receive “free education.” They would like “more tours and summer camps organized for
handicapped youth.” They also want “more foreign language lessons” and the “establishment of enterprises
so that youth can leave for Russia.” They also say, “Schools must be beautiful as in other countries!”

Working youth in Tajikistan say that their motivation to prioritize education over work would increase with
stipends and in-kind assistance for themselves and their families, particularly the poorest families. They
also feel that the “organization of more extra-curricular activities” would draw them in, including “sports
competitions and creative events in the evenings.” They further suggest more “flexible course schedules”
and better teacher training, including through “practical professional learning experience abroad, to improve
their skills and knowledge, which they can then bring back to classrooms in Tajikistan.” Working youth
interviewed in Kurgan-Tyube, Tajikistan, also agree, “Stipends should be increased for schoolchildren,
especially those from poor families. This would motivate schoolchildren to education.” In addition,
they call for “benefits to children, the poor and ‘defective’ [those missing a parent] families.”

In addition to burdensome extra costs for classes and tutoring highlighted in Kosovo and Georgia, youth in
Tajikistan and Georgia further focus on requests for arbitrary fees at school. Youth who cannot afford to pay
for extra classes, tutoring and who are asked for unauthorized fees say they feel disadvantaged in their ability
to succeed in school.

Youth in all three cases state that parental and/or spousal support is a main factor allowing them to attain their
education goals. Survey results here show that youth in Kosovo and Georgia largely feel that they have this
support, while many more young people in Tajikistan say they don’t. Lack of parental support for education
is more prevalent in Tajikistan for rural, female, older and less educated youth. About 17 per cent of females
say that parents are unable or unwilling to support their education, compared with 6 per cent of males, and
17 per cent of older youth say it’s a problem, compared with 9 per cent of younger youth. Just 2 per cent
of tertiary-educated youth say lack of parental support is a particular barrier, compared with 12–14 per cent
of less educated youth. Most strikingly, however, nearly a third of dropouts cite lack of parental support as
an issue, against just 8 per cent of non-dropouts. As described above, lack of parental support is the reason
cited most often by young people for why they left school permanently or temporarily in Tajikistan. As also
described in the box on ‘Education barriers for female youth in Tajikistan’, the vast majority of these reports
come from female youth.
Youth reflections on inclusive education in Kaketi and Kutaisi, Georgia

Under Georgia’s new education reforms, youth who had been under state care in institutions, where they also attended classes, have in recent years begun to attend classes in local public schools. Youth in a high school in Telavi, Kaketi, participated in a focus group where this has occurred. The Georgian Government has also invested more in inclusive education in many schools in Georgia where teachers have been trained and physical infrastructure improved to work with children with disabilities in regular public schools, although specialized schools for children with special disabilities still exist. Youth involved in a focus group in Kutaisi (Georgia’s second largest city in the western region of Imereti), at Akaki Tsereteli State University also discussed the issue of integrating learners with disabilities into the regular school system. Youth reflections on both of these processes follow.

In Kaketi, students who were in institutions and those in the public school where they moved to say they are “quite content” about the change. “Although some students at first chose to leave the public school because of these kids, this view has changed,” one describes. One of the students receiving peers from the institution says, and others agree, “We’ve made great friends with the new kids. When we finally got to know them well, we realized there was nothing wrong with these children. Before now, we thought they were from a different world.” Those who were transferred from the institution say that the change is good for them in part because they are “not locked up in a building.” One says, “We have made a lot of friends and have become more daring and bold. We have been welcomed by a warm environment and amazingly attentive and loving people.”

In Kutaisi, youth call for major changes to make education and employment more inclusive of learners with physical and mental disabilities. They say, “Every single young person must be guaranteed a right to comprehensive, high quality education. The government and school staff must support a process of change, and society must be ready as well. Attitudes in society must change. More people should be interested in integrating these kids with the rest of the society, and compassion is needed. We should give these kids a chance to receive an education. People must be informed about the idea that handicapped kids will be active parts of the educational process. Young people should be able to make independent decisions and must know how to use their knowledge and apply it in real life. We need proper conditions in school for inclusive education, like appropriate books, other literature and equipment.”

One young person with disabilities asks for “more trainings, meetings and contests to be held at schools to get more people involved [with promoting inclusive education]. I want to be able to make decisions on my own and I want my school to teach me how to do it. I want my school to meet international standards. Equipment, renovation, teacher-student relationships, developing the right attitudes – all of these areas need to be addressed and more.”

In Kosovo, all of the reports of lack of parental support come from youth in the Republic of Serbia education system. Meanwhile, RAE youth in the Kosovo education system areas of Kosovo interviewed in focus groups say that parental support is still a big problem for many young people in their community. Combined with financial, structural and other barriers, RAE youth face particularly strong barriers to advancing through the education system and putting their education to use in the labour market, as described further in the box on ‘Barriers to education for RAE youth in Kosovo’. By contrast, in Georgia, very few youth cite parental support as a problem, but among the small group that does, youth with jobs emphasize it more. This may indicate that financial pressures influence parental support, however, like in Kosovo, survey findings likely miss key issues facing small but significant subgroups of youth.
As noted throughout this report, young people in Tajikistan face barriers to education as a result of gender norms in the society that often dictate education possibilities for both males and females amid competing pressures and opportunities. For female youth, this has amounted to a startling decline in the numbers reaching tertiary education and a range of other challenges attempting to complete basic and secondary education. Many of the female youth interviewed for this study, and males, too, describe some of the dynamics behind what is happening for these young women.

Needing but not having parental support for education is key for many young people in meeting their education goals and dreams in Tajikistan, and females lack this support more often than males. As outlined above, female youth are almost twice as likely as males (almost a fifth of females overall) to say their parents do not or cannot support their schooling. When the issue is financial, at times, resources are concentrated on supporting the education of males. Frequently, however, females are not expected or encouraged to continue their education.

Two teenaged young women in Somoniyon, Rudaki, say that their parents do not help them with their education. “There is gender inequality,” one teenage young woman says. “Fathers do not allow their daughters to be educated as their sons are. Many people know that each person has the right to be educated, but not many people can rise against close relatives who violate that right. Boys are exceeding because girls are rarely allowed to get such skills at home, and there is a lack of computers in school. Girls cannot work on them and sit and look at their classmates using them.”

Although many males are deprived of schooling because of their perceived role in providing for their families alongside or in the absence of parents, females are also affected as they are expected to take on a range of family responsibilities considered to be within their purview, which some parents consider to be more important than formal education.

A 16-year-old girl in the village of Sebiston, who has not been able to complete secondary education, says, “My father took my documents from the school because I was looking after my sick mother. As a result, for the time being, I do not have my nine-years certificate.” A 19-year-old female youth in Faizabad, meanwhile, can’t continue her education and has been prohibited from trying to earn money to do so. “I finished school last year,” she says, “but I could not enter university due to financial problems. This year I want to enter the university, but my father does not allow me to work and says there is no need for me to work. For the time being, I am at home.”

Female participants in a focus group in Panjakent Town assert, “In the majority of cases, girls are not allowed to continue their education, and they marry forcefully. As for educated girls, they are not allowed to work, and as their parents see such an outcome, do not support their daughters’ education.”

Some female youth also say that they are discouraged by a lack of fairness in the education system that doesn’t sufficiently support them in confronting the barriers they face. Young men and women working in Kurgan-Tyurbe say that girls need more opportunities to complete education, including higher education. They state, “More presidential quota places should be allocated for girls.” They also call for more support to households that are missing parents or where family members are sick, disabled or economically impoverished in order to ensure the family support for education that girls especially need. One 16-year-old female in Basic School also says, “There is no need to marry girls young. They also want to study, and it is important.” A 20-year-old female youth in Dushanbe City who completed just four years of schooling regrets her limited education. “It’s a pity that I did not study. It’s hard for me to find a job since I am uneducated.”
Many female youth are also facing problems because of conflict over the role of Islam within Tajikistan society. Muslim female students who wish to wear hijabs are not permitted to do so by law, creating a problem for many of them, who feel pressures at home and school to conform. Youth are split on whether the law should be changed.

In addition to the direct impact lack of education has on girls’ health and employment opportunities, many youth also say that educating girls and young women “is important for the education of future generations. They agree, “Education is necessary for women so they will also be able to keep their families in case their husband is absent.”

A tertiary-educated youth in Ghafurov District, Soughd Province, says, “In our society, the majority [of parents] pays attention to the education of boys because they think a girl is ‘somebody’s property’ and that there is no reason to educate girls. But girls will become mothers in the future, and they need to be educated first, because how can an uneducated mother educate her children? Girls should not count on husbands to provide them with everything. They should get education themselves.”

In addition to efforts to ensure female youth have full opportunities to complete their desired level of formal education, some youth also say that vocational education is particularly important for female youth who have dropped out of school. An 18-year-old female secondary school student in Panji Bolo town suggests, “Youth groups and training opportunities should be set up for girls who miss out on education due to early marriage. They need something to help them fill the gap with regard to education.”

Girls call for more programmes to promote girls education among parents and girls themselves.

The location of schools is also a problem for some youth in each case. It is a bigger problem for displaced youth in Georgia and for youth in Republic of Serbia education system areas and rural youth in Kosovo. More than a quarter of youth with a history of displacement in Georgia say that school location is a problem, compared with 11 per cent with no displacement history. About 14 per cent of Republic of Serbia system and 10 per cent of rural youth in Kosovo have this problem, compared with 5 per cent of Kosovo education system and 3 per cent of urban youth. Distance and lack of transportation are challenges.

Some young people in Kosovo say that without public transportation, it is impossible to travel easily to school whenever they need to. Youth in Gracanica, in the Republic of Serbia education system, say that transportation is a problem, particularly for young people trying to get back and forth from their homes to attend afternoon shift classes. In Severna Mitrovica, another Serb-majority area, students say that traveling on buses is unsafe because they are defective. Buses run irregularly and have problems with heating. Youth in Serb-majority areas of Kosovo also have limited higher education offerings in their area, and many must travel to other parts of Serbia for tertiary studies. Female youth who attend the Kosovo education system in rural areas interviewed in a focus group also call lack of regular public transportation between villages and towns a “major problem.”

Some youth in each site also indicate that they are targeted with teacher mistreatment and punishment in school that hinders their learning, examples of which are described above. Subgroups are affected differently in the different cases. In Kosovo, youth who report this difficulty are more often males, dropouts and absentees, and in Georgia, they are more often urban, younger, primary-educated and drop-out youth. Urban, absentee and employed youth complain of this most frequently in Tajikistan.

Smaller numbers of youth in each case also name a wide range of other barriers they face in getting an education, including violence in and around school; unwelcoming fellow students; bullying; not having classes in their native
Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian (RAE) and other youth involved in focus groups say that, although NGO interventions have improved awareness about the value of education and some change is occurring, many RAE young people are still not continuing their education past primary school. RAE youth face financial and family barriers in continuing on to higher education. They also complain that it is very difficult to apply the knowledge and skills they learn in school because of Kosovo’s high unemployment rate and because of prejudices that exist toward RAE communities.

“Many RAE young people have to work during school and right after completing primary or secondary school, and some never finish school at all,” one RAE youth participant describes. “Some parents are still not convinced of the value of education…. The priority for many of us is survival, our existence, regardless of the will of young people from this community to advance to higher levels of education.” A Kosovar Serb youth in North Mitrovica says, “Having a bad financial situation is an enormous problem for my Roma friends. Some go to school for a while and then leave so they can work on the street and beg for money, including so they can go back to school.”

Many RAE youth say they still need motivation, encouragement and financial support to achieve higher education in greater numbers. In addition to awareness raising, they cite economic development as important for supporting educational attainment overall. Despite the challenges they face, many are also optimistic that the future will bring a more advanced education system with more positive education outcomes. “With my education,” a 21-year-old RAE student learning in the Pristina-based system says, “I hope I will be able to get a job and support not only my family but the whole society and my country. Fortunately, the number of educated people in our community is growing, but I’d still like to go to the homes of families with illiterate children and explain to them the importance and value of education. Some organizations provide scholarships, but often, they do not cover all expenses. More full scholarships would also greatly improve the education situation in the RAE community.”

The 21-year-old RAE student also faced a language challenge in moving on to university in Kosovo. “For 13 years, I attended school in the Bosnian language. I managed to successfully adapt at university, which is in the Albanian language. I had the will and passion, and therefore managed to continue studies in the Law Faculty.”

Language challenges begin early for many youth from ethnic minority groups, however. Other RAE youth interviewed in Prizren, who take classes in Albanian instead of their mother tongue, say that teachers often do not show enough understanding when they make grammar and spelling mistakes. They feel that education reforms that support new approaches to teaching allowing for more in-class discussion would create more room for understanding and better learning.

Youth in other Kosovo communities also call for more financial support for education. “We have the largest number of young people of all the countries in the region, and many don’t have the financial means to continue education,” one young working student says. Youth suggest that the Kosovo government provide more stipends to encourage and support students, some based on merit and some on financial need. RAE youth also call for concrete and comprehensive work to improve living conditions in Kosovo that will enable more members of their ethnic community to appreciate and take advantage of education opportunities.
A number of youth in Georgia and Tajikistan, females and males, also say that being married is a significant barrier to getting their education. They explain that after marriage, they are no longer permitted to attend school. Marriage is the top reason for youth dropouts among the Georgia sample and is an important reason for many dropouts in the Tajikistan sample, too.

Less than 1 per cent of youth cite sexual harassment as a problem in any of the three cases, although youth may be very hesitant to raise the issue in the interview setting given cultural taboos surrounding youth involvement in sexual activity. Interestingly, similar numbers of both males and females surveyed cite experiences of sexual harassment in school in each case. Similarly, males and females equally report the small number of cases of being bullied in all three cases. Although language barriers also affect a relatively small group of youth respondents, they are significant potential sources of exclusion.

Youth call for a combination of actions to address this wide range of difficulties, from education promotion among parents, to financial support and incentives for youth with disabilities and those facing other special difficulties. Again, the particular circumstances of subgroups of youth who are being excluded from education require further research and targeted action. These case studies point to several avenues of inquiry, including the influence of cultural norms, gender divides and conservative religious practices on education quality for youth. Links between education barriers and Learning Outcomes, including absenteeism and dropping out, are also important areas for further study.

**RELEVANCE OF EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT**

About 22 per cent of youth sampled in Kosovo, 13 per cent in Georgia and 20 per cent in Tajikistan say that they have a job. Of these respondents, more than half in Tajikistan feel that the education they have received is relevant and useful to their work, while nearly half in Kosovo and more than half in Georgia say it is not relevant or useful, as seen in Figure 51. Employed females in Tajikistan and Georgia are more likely to say their education is relevant and useful to their work than employed males, and there is no difference between males and females in Kosovo (note also, that males and females are equally likely to say they are employed in each case).

**Figure 51. If you have a job, is the education you received relevant and useful to the work you are doing? Percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo/Georgia/Tajikistan (by all)**
Youth living in the Village of Rudakoul tell youth researchers they have rarely travelled the 40 kilometres to the centre of Kabadiyan District in Tajikistan's Khatlon Oblast. They have had few hopes of completing secondary school or to study a range of subjects they should like to learn about if given the chance. The following is a synthesis of the words and experiences of nine girls and boys between the ages of 13 and 18 whose parents are unemployed in Rudakoul village located in Kabadiyan District. Their descriptions of education quality in their town likely mirror those of many youth in rural areas, where agricultural life in Tajikistan shapes their days and opportunities.

“We'd like to gain a lot from education, but lessons here often don't meet basic requirements. There is one secondary school in our village, and up until 2000, it was located in a van. With international donor support, however, we now have a single-story building with five classrooms, one computer room, one teachers’ common room, two offices (one for the director and one a store room), two toilets and one library. The school is intended for 150 students, and 136 attend. But only offers classes one to nine. There are 12 to 16 pupils in each class, and six teachers in total. We know little about how the school is financed and administered or what powers the school and parents have, but education is free. The pupils receive textbooks, and so far, the school is still in good condition.

“Teachers earn 80 to 190 somonies per month (about $18–42 or €12–29). The teachers are not highly educated, and there aren’t enough of them. They teach such subjects as mathematics, algebra, geometry, Tajik language, literature, history, biology, geography, ecology and the basics of law. All classes are taught in Tajik. Other subjects such as chemistry, physics and foreign languages are ‘celestial’ for us; they are not taught. Even though we have a computer room, there are no computer classes, as we have no computer teacher.

“More than 70 per cent of school-leavers from this school do not complete secondary school and instead stay in the village and do field work. Girls in our village mostly complete nine classes, generally do not continue their education, and like others, start to work. In the past five years, however, about 20 per cent of parents have shown more interest in education for their boys. Boys whose families want them to get a complete secondary education go to the centre of the district. These parents are officially unemployed. These families have plots of land or rented lands where they are garnering profit from the land, livestock and labour migration. These parents and young people in particular want to gain Russian skills so that they can migrate for labour.

“Although we would like to get an education, and we like to go to school, conditions are insufficient. Our village is located far from the district centre, and we do not always see the gains, or sense in getting an education. Despite the good condition of the school, it is necessary to increase the potential of teachers. In particular, they need to know more about computers and the Internet. New methodologies should be introduced in the process of teaching, including with in-class use of, and training on computer technology and Internet. Teacher salaries should be increased, and education should be extended from 9 years to the full 11 years of education.”

Youth researchers conducting the focus group remark, “Participants were thoughtful but silent for more than seven minutes when we first asked them about their school environment and any problems they may be experiencing. It was as if no one had ever asked them any questions before, and they prefer to listen to adults and live based on their parents’ instructions. They were not used to expressing their personal, independent opinions, but slowly, they described their situation. Girls were particularly silent and very passive. Girls were hesitant to express their ideas because girls in their village almost do not speak with boys.”
In Kosovo and Georgia, many youth explain that their feelings about the relevance and utility of their formal education in their work specifically relates to strong concerns about high unemployment, irrelevance of acquired skills for work, and nepotism and discrimination in the job market. Some high school students interviewed in a focus group in Kosovo state that they believe that poor job opportunities may be affecting interest in education for some youth, who may be discouraged that their efforts will not lead to a livelihood or vocation. Some youth are also frustrated that they cannot receive education in a preferred profession, and if they do, that they cannot find a job in that field.

Other youth are further discouraged by what they experience as nepotism in the job market. A young man from the Kosovo RAE community says that “the competition in the labour market is getting stronger, and therefore, people need to have PhD in order to get a job in state institutions, unless they have family ties in the decision-making bodies.” Another university student says, “Nepotism is very much present in our institutions. I just hope that nepotism will end one day and true professionals will manage to get the jobs.” One youth interviewed in Gracanica says that “education is very important, but employment here is not based on competence. That is why nothing functions here.” Youth in North Mitrovica agree that connections matter. One says, “After students finish school, they realize that their education is not enough, that they must find some contact person or bribe someone to find a job.”

Still other youth express optimism about the future. For example, a 15-year-old female youth from the RAE community who is still in primary school says, “I haven’t yet decided how I want to continue in the future, but since things are getting better every day, I expect better opportunities.” Some also suggest that more internships should be made available so that youth can make connections and learn practical professional skills through direct experience.

Similarly in Georgia, whether or not formal education provides the necessary skills training for various professions and vocations, youth also report widespread nepotism in hiring practices. “Relationship-based decision-making is a problem in Georgia,” says one youth. “If you want to achieve a certain goal, you’re going to need influential contacts and sponsors.” One Telavi State University student says, “We fear we will not be able to use our formal education in Georgia because of the widespread ‘institution of plural acquaintances’ [nepotism]. As such, we are also planning to use our education for self-employment.”

Georgia youth also note that, while students are mainly choosing their professional path themselves, their choices are highly shaped by family and a range of other factors. “Family influence is big,” agree Telavi State University students. “Family members often require a young person to follow the profession they represent.” In addition to personal interests, youth also look at the status that a chosen career path will confer on them and are very much influenced by their social environment. Many also make decisions based on what they can afford. Regarding their choices for tertiary education, prestige and accessibility also matter. Overall, students ask that university and school administrations become more organized and actively interested in students’ destinies, including to guide and ensure their employment options.

Given high unemployment, decreased demand for skilled labour and family pressures in Tajikistan, it is unclear why youth are more positive about the links between formal education and jobs compared with Kosovo and Georgia. Youth in all of the sites highly value education for “all aspects of life” and for “job preparation.” The ability of high numbers of youth in Tajikistan to migrate in search of work might be part of the explanation. This safety valve might lessen the blow of unemployment prospects for many youth there. The issue is, however, worthy of further research.

CONSEQUENCES OF POOR QUALITY EDUCATION

Youth in each country consider eight possible negative consequences of education quality in common, and Tajikistan youth include two additional categories (how they feel valued in and by society, and youth
feelings of responsibility for the future of the country). As shown in Table 10, young people in all three sites focus most consistently on the risks to economic and other development and on the risk of increased youth outmigration, but differ on their emphasis of other potential dangers. For example, youth in Kosovo and Tajikistan show relatively little belief in the power of poor quality education to increase youth disappointment with government or the likelihood of a return to armed conflict, while youth in Georgia more often see these impacts as real possibilities.

Youth in Kosovo and Tajikistan name the same three possible negative consequences of poor education quality most frequently, but not in the same order. Youth in Tajikistan feel most strongly that poor education quality will lead to increased youth outmigration, while youth in Kosovo most frequently feel it will contribute to a weaker economy and poor development outcomes. Impacts on health are also among the most frequently cited in these two cases. Youth in Georgia, on the other hand, name weaker economic and development outcomes first, increased outmigration second, but feel third most strongly that poor quality education leads to decreased interest in secondary school.

Rural youth and males in Kosovo are more likely than urban youth and females, respectively, to say that poor quality education supports increased outmigration of youth, with more than 10 percentage points difference separating them in each case. Youth in the Republic of Serbia education system are also much more likely to say that outmigration is a risk of poor quality education compared with youth in the Kosovo education system, with 24 percentage points between them. It may be that rural youth, male youth and youth in the Republic of Serbia education system are thus more likely than other youth to seek to migrate outside of Kosovo in search of better education.

Table 10. What are the consequences of failing to provide good quality education to youth in Kosovo/Georgia/Tajikistan? Percentages of youth answering “yes” (by all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor quality education impact</th>
<th>Kosovo</th>
<th>Georgia</th>
<th>Tajikistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased outmigration of youth from Tajikistan</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaker economy and poor development outcomes</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor health outcomes</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor health practices and lower health service use</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased outmigration of youth</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor youth self-esteem</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth do not feel valued in society, and society does not value youth</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth feel less responsibility for the future of Tajikistan society</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased demand for secondary school</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased youth grievances and disappointment with government</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deeper problems for female, ethnic minority, disabled and other youth groups</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased likelihood of return to conflict</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rural youth in Tajikistan similarly show an acute awareness of the risk of increased outmigration resulting from poor quality education, surpassing their urban counterparts by more than 10 percentage points. On nearly all other issues, urban youth in Tajikistan indicate stronger concerns, especially regarding the negative impact of poor education quality on health outcomes, on youth demands for secondary school and on youth feelings of responsibility for the future of Tajikistan.

By contrast, urban youth in Georgia are more likely to say that increased outmigration is a risk of poor education quality, and there is no difference between males and females on the issue. Young people’s concern over decreased interest in secondary education in Georgia is interesting given the upward trend in secondary enrolment and the downward trend in tertiary enrolment in this case. “Slowly high schools will not be accessible for everybody,” a 23-year-old male in Tbilisi believes. “There was high demand on high schools, but now it has decreased, and I think this is undesirable.” This young person’s views might also be reflecting the high level of absenteeism among youth in Georgia, including at the secondary level, which does very much indicate dissatisfaction and a lack of interest despite the overall enrolment rate. Further research and data on secondary completion are needed.

Relatively few youth in Kosovo and Tajikistan say they feel that poor education quality contributes to increased youth grievances and disappointment with government or that it increases the likelihood of a return to armed conflict. About a fifth or less of youth in these countries say that poor education quality supports more disaffection with government compared with nearly half of youth surveyed in Georgia.

Youth in Kosovo and Tajikistan send strong messages that, in their view, a return to war does not hinge substantially or at all on the quality of education. In their minds, the causes and risks of conflict have very
different and/or much more complex origins than education quality. In Kosovo, youth in both Serb- and Albanian-majority areas and in the corresponding Kosovo and the Republic of Serbia education systems strongly agree on this despite a history of highly politicized education. All youth subgroups in Tajikistan also agree, although youth in urban areas and those with a history of displacement feel more strongly that poor education quality increases the likelihood of military conflict (20 per cent of urban youth compared with 10 per cent of rural youth and 27 per cent of ever displaced youth, compared with 11 per cent of never displaced).

These findings by no means support a conclusion that education quality has no impact on the risk of armed conflict in these or other countries. It does, however, show that the vast majority of Kosovo and Tajikistan youth are not focused on the ways in which poor education can directly or indirectly support armed conflict, and instead view the relationship as very indirect or non-existent in their contexts and are more concerned about, or aware of other potential consequences.

Again by contrast, about half of Georgia’s youth feel that poor education quality increases the risks of grievances and disappointment with government and of a return to conflict. They feel this almost as much as they feel that poor education quality leads to decreased interest in secondary school. Youth in urban areas, older, tertiary-educated and unemployed youth are most likely to cite the increased risk of conflict.

Furthermore, although youth concerns about how poor education quality impacts their feelings about government differ in the cases, youth distrust in government outpaces their feelings about how education quality rates overall. This indicates that sources of dissatisfaction and distrust of government often lie outside government performance on education service delivery, at least at the level of quality provided in these settings at the time of these surveys.

Key findings: Learning outcomes

- Although primary enrolment and increasing secondary and tertiary enrolment rates in each case reflect young people’s strong desire for formal education and their dedication to pushing past barriers to achieve their education goals, youth absenteeism and dropouts show that engagement in schooling is faltering for many youth, who say they continue to face many obstacles to achieving their education goals. Given the known links between serial absenteeism and dropping out in other settings, the reasons behind them require further research and action, including addressing differences in subgroup involvement.

- Self-reported absenteeism is troublingly high in each case, involving nearly a third of youth in Kosovo, half of youth in Tajikistan and over two thirds of youth in Georgia. In Georgia and Tajikistan, being absent is associated with dropping out among the samples drawn, but not in Kosovo. Gender and age play roles in absenteeism all cases. Males are more likely to be absent without authorization than females, particularly in Kosovo. Although PISA results in other countries show corresponding poorer performance among males, higher levels of absenteeism do not consistently correlate with education progression to tertiary education along gender lines in the three cases studied. Females are less likely to be absent in each case, but in Georgia, they are more likely to be enrolled in tertiary education, while in Tajikistan, females are less likely to be enrolled in tertiary. While absenteeism occurs more often among older youth in Kosovo and Georgia, younger youth are more often involved in Tajikistan, where youth responsibilities for seasonal agricultural work is a contributing factor.

- Between 5 and 7 per cent of youth surveyed in each case report having permanently dropped out of school before completing secondary education. In Tajikistan, when youth who claim to have temporarily suspended their education are included, the proportion reaches 17 per cent of the sample drawn. Their reasons are diverse, but dropouts most often say they left school mainly due to: lack of financial means/ poverty and the need to work (Kosovo); early marriage and lack of financial means (Georgia); lack of parental and/or spousal support and lack of interest in school (Tajikistan). Nearly all subgroups are equally
Youth say that widespread outmigration from Tajikistan is having a mixed impact on their education quality. Many youth agree, “Lack of employment and insufficient wages have driven parents and young people themselves to work abroad, particularly in Russia.” They also widely agree that “low teacher salaries have caused many highly qualified teachers to leave Tajikistan to work abroad,” mainly in Russia. Family separations have left many youth with less daily support, and these young people have had to take on new responsibilities at home to compensate for the absence of relatives, who have left to work for the family. Loss of teachers has also had a deleterious impact on the range of subjects offered in school and the overall quality of teaching, where young people say their schools often lack qualified specialists. At the same time, many of the young people actively use remittances from family members working abroad to continue and complete their education as best they can.

Although some youth say that economic difficulties are contributing to serial absenteeism and are causing many young people to cut their education short, most youth surveyed still strongly desire more education and cling to hopes of better economic and education opportunities. Many youth are optimistic that education quality, job prospects and salaries will improve in Tajikistan to an extent where outmigration will become less attractive and necessary. At the same time, others interviewed have their sights firmly set on finding work abroad with or without a high level of formal education.

A 19-year-old, out-of-school youth working in Kurgan-Tyube says that more government support to families would help curb the outmigration of youth in search of work in their area and elsewhere. “If somehow the government could support poor families, families without breadwinners and widows it would help prevent their sons from leaving the country to earn a living,” he says.

Youth living in Zoosun village in Ayni District, who have a parent or other relative working abroad, concur that, “Labour migration by teachers has been seriously affecting the education quality in our school since there are teachers among those labour migrants going to Russia.”

As for the effects of their parents’ migration to Russia on their education quality personally, youth in Zoosun village say there are pros and cons. “My father’s migration has affected my education,” says a 15-year-old male. “Since I am the eldest child in our family, I need to help my mother with field work and household chores, which affects my studies.” A 15-year-old female says, “Migration of my father has been positively impacting my education because we have better living conditions, and I have the opportunity to purchase the textbooks I need, which has been useful.” Contact with the migrant parent matters, according to a 14-year-old male who says, “My father calls us almost every day and asks how I am doing with my studies. When my father calls us every day, I feel that he is with me and educates me.” Lastly, a 16-year-old male adds, “Fathers’ migration has both positive and negative impacts. Its negative impact is that they can become ill, and its positive impact is that they bring more money [to the household].”

Above all, youth with migrant family members and many others call for increased teacher salaries and salaries in general in order to keep teaching talent in Tajikistan and in their schools and to keep families together. They also think that officials should prioritize ensuring electricity and heating in all schools and provide new textbooks to remote villages “so that students from these areas have the same opportunity to get education as students in other areas of the country.” Youth with migrant family members appreciate the opportunity to voice their opinions on education quality, to describe their “dreams and expectations” and say they hope their involvement will bring some result.
likely to report having dropped out in the Kosovo sample. In Georgia, dropouts are more often urban, older youth and are a mix of males and females (females in the Georgia sample overall are more educated than males, in line with the country trend). In Tajikistan, dropouts sampled are more often rural, female, older and basic-educated youth (while data from 2003/2004 point to females in urban and peri-urban areas as at particular risk of dropping out). Tajikistan females are 13 times more likely than males to say they left school due to lack of parental and/or spousal support for their education.

- Youth in all three cases face a range of barriers to getting an education, and these barriers promote their exclusion. They most often cite as a barrier the inadequacy of facilities to meet their special needs, including youth with disabilities. Youth in Kosovo and Georgia next most often name an inability to pay for private classes or tutoring outside school as a key difficulty, while Tajikistan youth again cite lack of parental support second most frequently. Rural, female, older and less educated youth are more affected by lack of parental support than their counterparts in Tajikistan, and as noted, it is also a main reason for youth dropouts there. Difficulties with school locations, extra costs, arbitrary fees and teacher mistreatment also stand out, followed by a wide range of other issues affecting smaller numbers of young people. Further research is needed on these and other barriers to formal education for youth, the impacts of exclusion and approaches to increasing inclusion, with a focus on views on disability; structural and cultural norms; gender divides; conservative religious practices; and displacement and the location of education programmes. Findings should inform follow-up action.

- The relevance of education to employment receives mixed ratings from youth, whose opinions are influenced by a number of factors. Nearly half of employed youth surveyed in Kosovo and more than half in Georgia say education is not relevant and useful to their work, citing high unemployment; mismatches between the skills they learn in school and those they need for work; and nepotism and discrimination in the job market as shaping their opinions. More than half of youth with jobs surveyed in Tajikistan, however, feel that the education they have received is relevant and useful to their work, perhaps because of a comparatively lower unemployment rate and the possibility of outmigration for work.

- Youth have a sophisticated sense of the consequences of poor quality education, in line with their reasons for valuing high quality education. Young people in all three sites feel particularly strongly that poor quality education has negative consequences on economic and other development outcomes and increases the risk of youth outmigration. Youth in Kosovo and Tajikistan are also especially concerned about its impacts on health, while Georgia youth highlight decreased youth interest in secondary school. Youth views on links between education quality and armed conflict are mixed. Youth in Georgia are more convinced that poor quality education supports youth grievances and disappointment with government and that it increases the risk of war. Few support these ideas in Kosovo and Tajikistan, sending strong messages that, in their view, the causes and risks of conflict have very different and/or much more complex origins than education quality.
LEARNING PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS
Youth convey strongly that learning processes and systems issues – including where “education quality [especially] depends on teachers” – are critical to ensuring high quality education. Youth place a premium on highly skilled teaching and dynamic classroom interaction with an emphasis on practical learning and fair assessment. They mostly feel very satisfied with the qualifications of their teachers, while also outlining a range of concerns, from a lack of teachers with specialized skills in Tajikistan, to the need to increase teacher salaries and training opportunities. While many recognize and appreciate advances made through education reform processes, they cite ongoing problems with corruption in education and a failure to fully implement reforms. Gaps in implementation fuel inequities in access and achievement, including where curricula do not meet exam requirements and teachers are not fully informed or prepared to meet new standards and practices. Those who can afford to often resort to costly extra-curricular tutoring and/or respond to teacher requests for informal payments in order to bridge the gaps. Many youth say they need more support to successfully adapt to rapidly implemented education reforms, particularly in Georgia. In the face of rising education costs, including for private education, youth in each country widely feel that their governments need to spend more on education. They highlight the need for more support and opportunities for economically impoverished youth, females, youth with disabilities and others facing difficult barriers to education. Overall, youth convey strong interest in education policy and programme issues, but there is much room for raising awareness among many left out of debates and decisions on education reform, particularly female youth in Tajikistan.

**YOUTH SATISFACTION WITH TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS**

Satisfaction with teachers’ skills is generally high among respondents in the three countries surveyed, without stark differences by location, sex or age group. As shown in Figure 52, youth in Tajikistan express particularly high levels of satisfaction with their teachers’ qualifications, which is somewhat surprising, given their repeated calls to prioritize the recruitment of more qualified teachers, especially specialists, and calls to root out teacher corruption described below. Even absentees show a very high level of appreciation in Tajikistan, although not as high as that reported by students who attend school regularly. This is not the case for Georgia or Kosovo, where absentees are generally cooler in their judgments. Youth in the Kosovo education system are more emphatic about their satisfaction with the qualifications of their teachers compared with those in the Republic of Serbia education system in Kosovo. In addition, Kosovo youth with a history of displacement mostly agree that teachers are at least to some extent well qualified, but they are much cooler in their endorsement, with a much higher percentage only somewhat agreeing compared with never-displaced youth.

Youth state that teachers need to be trained regularly to refresh their skills and improve the implementation of education reforms. “We follow the Bologna system of education in school,” one youth in North Mitrovica, Kosovo says, “but that doesn’t mean that professors have the knowledge to implement that system or that they follow its rules.” A 16-year-old public school student in the Imreti, Racha-Lechxumi Svaneti regions in Georgia states, “I think my teachers have enough qualifications to educate us well. However, teachers are confused about today’s reforms.” All of the students participating in a focus group in those regions in Georgia further agree that retraining and certification of teachers is necessary and useful. “The new education system is too hard, and if the teachers are not retrained they won’t be able to teach us properly,” one explains. Tajikistan youth also call for regular teacher training and professional development opportunities and strong monitoring by the MoE, as well as parent and student involvement.

Many students also strongly support salary increases for teachers as an incentive to perform to the highest standard. “Good, professional lecturers must be hired and paid well, as they currently don’t have salaries that compensate their work,” one 20-year-old university student in Tbilisi, Georgia, says (most teachers earn salaries beneath the poverty line in Georgia). Others in Georgia say, “How can we talk about teaching quality when lecturers are thinking about how to travel back and forth from university?... Their salaries must be
higher in order to motivate them to give you high quality knowledge.” Resoundingly and repeatedly, youth in Tajikistan say, “Schools lack teachers,” and, “It is necessary to raise teacher salaries to motivate them” and to provide an incentive to attract and retain high quality teaching. A 17-year-old secondary student in Ayni District says, “The miserable [teachers’] salary is not enough at all, and therefore [teachers] have additional jobs or get engaged in farming, field work or livestock breeding, or the majority of them go to Russia. If their salary is high enough to keep their families and children, they will not need to go to Russia and will teach with great interest. Classes would be conducted properly and education quality would improve.” A 16-year-old female who completed secondary school in Dushanbe City (Sino), Tajikistan, explains, “Due to the shortage, some teachers have to teach on several subjects.” A 13-year-old female working student in Khujand similarly says, “One teacher teaches several subjects that are not related to each other at all.”

Figure 52. My teachers/lecturers are well qualified to teach my courses. Percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)

Some youth in Tajikistan also believe that poor quality teaching contributes to poor student motivation. A 16-year-old girl in basic school in Dushanbe City says, “Schoolchildren do not want to study because some teachers do not give sound knowledge, explain their subjects badly and do not encourage children at all.” Another 14-year-old girl in basic school agrees, adding that this leads to “attitudes where schoolchildren treat their teachers with disrespect.” Some youth in Georgia feel similarly. Mutual understanding is essential,” one 18-year-old female in Tbilisi says. “When there is a good relationship between teachers and pupils, pupils get more interested in studying.” Other female youth in Tbilisi concur, saying, “I had an occasion when I did not like my teacher, and that’s why I still do not know that subject. If I do not have a good relationship with the teacher, I will not study the subject and will not even be present for their lessons.”

Some advocate for hiring younger teachers who, they argue, would be able to adapt to new education reforms more readily. “The reality is that low teacher quality is resulting because the generation of teachers is not changing,” asserts a 23-year-old male university student in Tbilisi, Georgia. A 21-year-old male in North Mitrovica, Kosovo, notes, “More younger teachers are needed to improve education quality with new ideas.” Not all agree, however, with one student in Georgia saying, “Younger teachers are not sufficiently trained and do not have the knowledge and experience of older teachers.”

Armed conflict, displacement and political divides have also affected teaching quality for many young people. One 15-year-old girl who was displaced from Abkhazia in Georgia’s Samegrelo region – she calls herself a
refugee and attends a school predominantly for learners who have been displaced – says that her teachers “participated in the war” and as a result have “social and morale problems, which get in the way of their developing better skills. On the other hand,” she says, “I’m quite lucky because refugee teachers can easily relate to my family’s problems.” One youth in the self-segregated Republic of Serbia education system in Kosovo in North Mitrovica also explains, “A lot of professors come to teach here from Belgrade, Niš and Novi Sad. Because they are working in those cities, they cannot come here regularly.” This creates learning problems, as “they are rarely coming,” another former student there describes. “Eight hours of lecturing once or twice a month only leads to a bad education.”

**MISMATCHES BETWEEN CURRICULA AND EXAM REQUIREMENTS**

Youth say that mismatches between curricula and exam requirements also at times undermine high quality teaching and equity in learning achievement. Less than half of youth report that they feel prepared to pass their exams, as shown in Table 11. A full quarter of youth in Georgia say that their classes and teachers do not prepare them adequately to pass exams.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kosovo</th>
<th>Georgia</th>
<th>Tajikistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A 20-year-old male in the predominantly Uzbek town of Faizabad, Tajikistan, says, “During the tests, [some teachers] give us questions that we cannot answer since we have never had lessons on them, and then we must also pay for tests.” Youth without specialist teachers also feel disadvantaged in related exams, particularly in the sciences and mathematics.

In Georgia and Kosovo, youth tend to express concerns about their ability to pass secondary leaving examinations, which affect their ability to move on to tertiary education. In Kosovo, there are strong feelings among many youth that the requirements of the graduation test exceed the knowledge and skills provided by the current school curriculum, and that teachers are ill-prepared and equipped to teach them what they need to know to succeed. They also say that this, in part, drives youth to need to pay for outside tutoring, as discussed below.

One secondary school student in Prizren, Kosovo, explains, “The graduation exam is not in line with the school curriculum, and that is why students have had bad results. Last year, only three students from our school managed to pass the test successfully.” Another young woman who works and studies says, “Learning outcomes are best measured by the graduation exam, which many students fail to pass, and their education ends right there.” Other young people say, “The high number of failures shows that there are deficiencies. Those who fail must look for other options, since further education is not possible”; and that, “when this happens, it makes you feel like 13 years of education were spent for nothing.”

Students in Kosovo also want to be and feel successful in their academic achievements in high school whether or not they choose to go on to the tertiary level. Youth suggest that the exam and/or the curriculum be revised by the Ministry of Education so that young people are taught and tested on the same things. These concerns are particularly strong for youth in the Kosovo education system, who are much more likely
to feel unprepared to pass exams than their counterparts in the Republic of Serbia education system. At the same time, youth in the Republic of Serbia education system are less likely to fully agree that their classes adequately prepare them for exams.

In Georgia, young people’s opinions on exam preparation focus on teacher qualifications in light of new exam requirements first instituted in 2004 and 2005, where students must pass Unified National Examinations (UNEs) in order to be accepted into a state-run higher education institution. The new exams are in part meant to root out widespread corruption, where students and their parents paid bribes in order to ensure success and an opportunity at tertiary education. Although many students feel that their teachers and classes prepare them adequately to pass these and other exams, many youth disagree, saying that it is now necessary to pay tutors to help them prepare and pass. Nearly three quarters of youth surveyed agree to some degree that tutoring is needed to pass exams, as shown in Figure 53. Rural respondents, males and younger youth especially feel that tutoring is important to pass exams. It appears to be particularly crucial to respondents who have attained a secondary school education (two thirds of them fully agree on the need for tutoring to pass exams).

Some students in Gori say, “School education is never enough to pass college exams. Private tutors are necessary for undergraduates even if they had great teachers at school. Most graduate students, however, do not see a need for private tutoring.” Students in Telavi, Kaketi, note, “The majority of us aren’t able to pass college exams using school education. In most cases, we turn to tutors.”

Figure 53. Accessing tutoring is necessary to pass exams. Percentages of youth agreement in Georgia (by all)

Georgia’s UNEs came very abruptly for many youth, who suddenly faced new, unfamiliar requirements with little time to fully prepare themselves. The exams are more difficult for many, no doubt, because the new system requires more students to study well to pass them (for more information on how youth are experiencing these exams, see box, ‘Youth opinions of the new Unified National Examinations’ in the Georgia case study). When Georgia youth feel well-prepared by their teachers, however, they report feeling very motivated to do well academically, not only for themselves but on behalf of their teachers. One 14-year-old public school student in the Imreti, Racha-Lechxumi, Svaneti region of Georgia says, “They really prepare us well [for exams], and we also try to make their wishes come true.”
INTERACTIVE AND ENGAGING TEACHING APPROACHES

In all three countries surveyed, the majority of respondents fully or somewhat agree that teaching methods are engaging and effective, but many feel there is much room for improvement, as seen in Figure 54. In Georgia, youth with a history of absenteeism are much more likely to disagree that teaching methods are engaging and effective, which might contribute to their decisions to skip school. Youth in Tajikistan are particularly satisfied with teaching methods, but a relatively large proportion of them also fully disagree that teachers regularly engage them in the classroom. Female youth, those with primary or basic education, dropouts and youth with a history of absenteeism are all less likely to say their teachers actively engage them in the classroom there. At the same time, in a separate question posed in the Tajikistan survey, more than half of youth fully agree that they are ready and willing to get involved in more interactive teaching approaches, as shown in Figure 55. Female youth especially agree.

Figure 54. Teaching methods are engaging and effective. Percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)

Youth researchers conducting focus groups in Tajikistan remark, “Some rural youth are particularly [unfamiliar with] interactive methods,” and are “very shy and at times afraid.” One says, “Village youth have good ideas but are unable to express their opinion.” They suggest that these and other youth would benefit from “training sessions on interactive methods of communication” that would boost youth activity in and out of school. Many youth also say that students in Tajikistan are losing interest in school because “classes are boring.” A 14-year-old male in Panji Bolo town says, “I think our lessons are not interesting. A teacher writes the lesson on the board, and we copy what she writes. A school has never taken us to a museum or to other districts.” A 17-year-old male agrees, saying, “A teacher needs to attract children [to learn].” Youth studying in village schools in Asht District also support youth-to-youth learning and say that teachers should “involve good pupils and high achievers to work with pupils who do not study well.”

Despite calls for more engaging and interactive lessons, more than half of respondents in each country say that their teachers show interest in their academic progress, as seen in Figure 56. Younger, primary- or basic-educated students in each case express this more often than their older, more educated counterparts. This might be explained by smaller class sizes and more personal relations between teachers and students at those levels compared with university lectures and their larger student/teacher ratios. This is also consistent

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23 For the Tajikistan survey, the statement was worded: “At least 50 per cent of your teachers engage students in debate and discussion; small group work; and/or individual work in front of the class (e.g., doing problems on the board); in each or every other class session.”
with the finding that tertiary students (in particular in the Kosovo survey) voice concerns about classroom overcrowding more so than students at other levels.

In Georgia and Tajikistan, students from rural areas report more often that their teachers show interest in their progress. It might be that in rural, less populated settings, students and their families develop closer relationships with teachers, who are not viewed solely as education service providers, but as community figures embedded in rural social networks. In Georgia and Kosovo, absentees express more often and strongly that their teachers/instructors are not interested in their progress, an issue worthy of further research to determine whether it has a role in student decisions to skip or drop out of school. As described above, some youth surveyed name “lack of teacher support” as a main reason for their having dropped out of school.

**Figure 55.** Youth are ready and willing to engage in more interactive teaching approaches. Percentages of youth agreement in Tajikistan (by all)

Although students in both the Kosovo and Republic of Serbia education systems agree that teachers show interest, students in the Republic of Serbia education system are less emphatic in their agreement. Similarly, absentee youth in Kosovo are far more likely to disagree and far less likely to fully agree on teacher interest in student progress.

Parent-student-teacher consultations are also generally reported to work somewhat well or better by at least three quarters of respondents in each country, although Georgia youth more often strongly disagree, as shown in Figure 57. Older, tertiary-educated youth are less likely to say parent-student-teacher consultations function well in Kosovo and Tajikistan. It might be that these older youth at the university level rely less on communication between their parents and teachers and/or that they are less satisfied with the interaction between students and instructors. Other subgroups of youth who are less likely to feel that these consultations function well include urban youth (nearly three times as many are dissatisfied compared with rural youth); youth with jobs and absentees in Tajikistan; absentees and dropouts in Georgia; and youth with a history of displacement and absentees in Kosovo.
Many youth in Kosovo emphasize that relationships and communication between parents, teachers and students should be improved. Some say simply that there is not enough communication, and others say that youth views are not taken sufficiently seriously when there are opportunities to express them. Secondary school students in focus group discussion in Tbilisi, Georgia, differ on how much interaction parents should have with teachers. One says, “Teachers pay less attention to children if they don’t have a close relationship with their parents.” Another feels, “Teachers and pupils should be able to arrange their relationship themselves.” Still others feel that teachers need to communicate with parents to engage them when students have particular needs, but that normally “constant contact” is not needed. They also feel that parents have a role to play in protecting their children from “oppression” at school. One 16-year-old basic school student in Dushanbe City, Tajikistan, also stresses that engaging parents is critical in improving education quality in the country. She says, “I think we need to conduct more parents’ meetings to discuss education quality, not only concentrate on collecting fees at school.”

**Figure 57.** Parent-student-teacher consultations are functioning well. Percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)
TEACHER CORRUPTION

Teacher corruption in the grading process does not seem to be endemic in Georgia and Tajikistan, where nearly three quarters of respondents in each case think that earning a good grade does not require giving money or other benefits to one’s teacher, as seen in Figure 58 (a separate question was asked of youth in Kosovo on payments for extra courses, as noted below). At the same time, many youth report that corruption in education persists despite promising education reform efforts to curb it, and requires ongoing or stepped up attention to eradicate it completely. Ending corruption in education is a key education quality issue for many youth.

**Figure 58.** To earn a good grade at my learning institution, pupils/students are obliged to give money or other benefits to teachers/lecturers. Percentages of youth agreement in Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)

![Graph showing percentages of youth agreement in Georgia and Tajikistan](image)

Many students in Georgia feel and appreciate that corruption has decreased with education reform, and most do not report it as an issue in their school. About a fifth of respondents surveyed, however, say that corruption in the form of needing to give money or other benefits to teachers/lecturers in order to earn a good grade is occurring to some degree. Findings are consistent through all main subgroups analysed, although absenteees report corruption much more frequently than non-absentees. Furthermore, and as noted previously, 8 per cent of survey respondents say that the inability or unwillingness to pay teachers extra for their classes was among the difficulties they faced in achieving their desired level of education.

One young person in Gori, Shidan Kartli, Georgia, says, “Corruption hasn’t just vanished. Just the type is different now. If in the past [they] took money unofficially, now they give you a receipt.” Students in Gori remember one of their professors asking students for “10 lari [GEL] per passed exam.” Another from Gori said he was asked by a professor to “bring an alcoholic beverage in order to get points.” Students at Telavi State University in Kakheti in eastern Georgia also report ongoing corruption that they feel helpless about. Many agree, “We are often victims of corruption by our professors.” A 21-year-old female in Tbilisi says, “Lecturers are still treating students very inadequately because the ‘institution of acquaintances’ is still functioning today.”

One student says he “tried to discuss the problem with the dean but the dean said he was powerless to do anything about it without evidence.” Students say they feel hopeless to change the situation, feeling that “even with evidence, it wouldn’t make a difference and would just cause us extra trouble. We just prefer to pay for our grades instead of fighting against this.” They feel that one of the causes is likely the low salary that professors earn, but they also believe that some professors simply “are old and are having a hard
time parting with old traditions of bribery.” The students say the situation makes them feel less secure and more vulnerable in general, as they fear reprisals should they speak out and are unsure their rights will be protected. Experiences do vary, however, as shown by the survey results and as described by a 24-year-old female in Tbilisi, Georgia, who says, “I don’t know how they are giving marks in other universities, but in mine, everything is happening really objectively. No ‘acquaintances’ is working; everything is very objective. Everything you write is saved, and everybody is motivated to study and do something. I am more or less satisfied. We are now paying money for studying [tuition fees], and you won’t be able to do anything with help from ‘acquaintances’. But it is still frustrating to pay more than 6,000 GEL, and we don’t get a good education in other ways.”

Similarly, about a fifth of respondents in Tajikistan report corruption occurring to some degree in the form of needing to give money or other benefits to teachers/lecturers in order to earn a good grade. Respondents from urban settings report the need to make payments or give other benefits to their instructors more than twice as often as youth in rural areas. This may be because of the concentration of HEIs in urban areas, as tertiary-educated youth also more often report the need to pay instructors in order to earn good grades. Females seem to be more aware of a climate of corruption than males, as are older respondents compared to younger ones.

In a focus group discussion involving youth who pay bribes in schools in Dushanbe City, Tajikistan, participants say, “Corruption, unfair and illegal practices very much exist” in their schools, taking many forms. One describes instances of “teachers selling the answers to questions” provided to exams. A 14-year-old female in the rural village of Shurobi, in Hisor District, Tajikistan, says, “If you get a bad mark, teachers ask you to give money, and then they correct the mark.” In order to gain access to a presidential quota position, a 20-year-old female in Dushanbe City says, “I passed all my exams, but I was still asked to pay, so I paid for the quota.” A 17-year-old basic school student in Dushanbe City adds, “Teachers require us to set the table during examinations and provide them with delicious food. If you do it, they promise good marks.” Corruption also extends to access to learning equipment. A 14-year-old male secondary school student in Panji Bolo town says, “We have books and computers, but a teacher of the computer lesson asks us to pay before using the computer.” In order to gain access to a presidential quota position, a 20-year-old female in Dushanbe City says, “I passed all my exams, but I was still asked to pay, so I paid for the quota.” A 17-year-old basic school student in Dushanbe City adds, “Teachers require us to set the table during examinations and provide them with delicious food. If you do it, they promise good marks.” Corruption also extends to access to learning equipment. A 14-year-old male secondary school student in Panji Bolo town says, “We have books and computers, but a teacher of the computer lesson asks us to pay before using the computer.” Youth in Panjakent Town also say, “There is no computer teacher at school. If any student pays 1 or 2 somoni, then they can use the computer. Otherwise, they are not allowed to use the school computers for learning.”

Other students in Dushanbe explain, “Corruption in the education sphere in Tajikistan is an integral part of our life, and the economic situation of our country plays an important role in this process. Despite all of the attempts of the government to eradicate corruption, it still exists and is prospering.” One young person involved in a focus group with tertiary-educated young people in Soughd Province says, “If corruption is eradicated completely, education quality would definitely improve because the majority of students take their examinations through bribes. When teachers do not get bribes and do not give students marks [based on bribes], students will have no other way [to pass] than by preparing for classes and examinations properly.” Another 24-year-old tertiary-educated male in Murghob, Tajikistan, feels teacher corruption creates a vicious cycle of weakened education quality, saying, “There are people who have a higher education diploma that in reality don’t deserve the diploma they have. They paid for their education and diploma at university. Teachers should possess good qualifications, but unfortunately, at present, we rarely meet highly qualified specialists. Paying for marks and diplomas should be stopped, and control over bribery at universities and other educational institutions should be strengthened [to ensure high quality education over time].” Another young person in Shurobi, in Hisor District, suggests, “If we had commissions from the MoE every month for inspections and to demand high quality, teachers would have a more serious attitude toward their job.”

Youth in Georgia and Tajikistan state that corruption is largely driven by low teacher salaries and other stresses on their education systems. They call for higher teacher salaries, better supervision and monitoring
by education authorities, safe channels for student reporting of corruption with follow-up, and student and parental refusal to participate in corrupt practices. Youth are also taking targeted action in some areas. A 16-year-old male in secondary school in Kyrgyz-majority Murghob, in GBAO, says, “The scoring system should be fair at the school. Some teachers pay attention to the social status and wealth of students and score them accordingly. Bribery should be stopped, and relatives should not interfere in this process. This year, we organized a campaign for fair scoring during examinations in our school, and some students received bad marks. Those students were not shifted to the next grade. Now students have a serious attitude towards examinations.” Most youth in Tajikistan also like the idea of setting up systems for anonymous reporting to register complaints and make suggestions to improve education quality, as seen in Figure 59. Urban youth particularly like this, as do older and tertiary-educated young people.

**Figure 59.** A system should be put in place for pupils/students to register complaints and make suggestions anonymously. Percentages of youth agreement in Tajikistan (by all and settlement type)

![Figure 59: Percentage of youth agreement in Tajikistan](image)

In Kosovo, where the survey question was different,24 nearly half of youth fully or somewhat agree that attendance in private courses offered by their teachers and lecturers is a precondition for receiving a good course grade in school, as seen in Figure 60. The problem appears to be bigger for youth in rural areas and youth in the Republic of Serbia education system, where young people more strongly agree that private courses are needed to succeed in school. Youth who have never been displaced, absentee youth and those with tertiary education also feel more strongly about this. As described above, about 20 per cent of respondents also flag the inability to pay for private courses offered by teachers as one of the barriers they face in trying to get an education in Kosovo. It may be that these young people have an especially difficult time affording the classes and/or particularly object to the practice in principle.

The findings for the Republic of Serbia education system youth are interesting alongside findings that these youth are also a bit less convinced that their teachers are well-qualified and show interest in their progress. It is less clear why a higher proportion of rural youth are feeling pressure to attend extra courses in order to get good grades despite similar feelings among rural and urban youth on most other education quality measures. Findings among absentees are consistent with their higher level of scepticism over education quality on many counts in Kosovo, but seem inconsistent for youth who are displaced, who on other measures have also

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24 The Kosovo survey question stated: “Attendance in private courses organized by school professors is a precondition for earning a good course grade at my school.”
registered more tempered enthusiasm. Findings at the different levels of education are also not consistent with stronger calls by youth at primary and secondary levels for more schools, one learning shift and more non-formal education at school, which might have placed even more pressure on teachers to hold additional classes outside school. It may be that secondary- and tertiary-level teachers may have more opportunities to compel youth to attend these courses, or that these youth feel the courses are more important to achieving good grades and passing key final exams.

Many Kosovo youth link the need for private course attendance to classroom overcrowding and the need for multiple learning shifts, where teachers are pressed to cover course material adequately during classroom time. However, some students also describe other forms of corruption. “Some university professors can be bribed in order to pass exams,” one focus group participant in the Kosovo education system explains. A Pristina University student states, “[Some] students manage to get high grades just because they have family relations with professors or senior officials. Other students learn a lot and prepare for exams but are not as privileged as students that have family ties.” Youth in the Republic of Serbia education system register similar concerns. A 23-year-old female in Gracanica who works and studies says, “Corruption is a big problem. Most of the professors are grading students based on their status and connections, not on their knowledge.” An unemployed youth in North Mitrovica says, “Professors treat rich students better than students in a bad financial situation, so they need to put in extra effort so their professors notice them.” Youth call for stronger steps to curb these and other forms of corruption in schools. In addition to smaller classes and one learning shift, one student asserts, “There should be regular oversight and monitoring of learning processes by the officials of the Ministry of Education.”

Figure 60. Attendance in private courses organized by school professors is a precondition for earning a good course grade at my school. Percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo (by all and system)

Roughly consistent with youth feelings about bribe-taking for grades and payments for extra courses to succeed in school or university, youth see grading as largely fair and transparent, but with much room for improvement, as depicted in Figure 61. Youth in Kosovo agree a bit less strongly about this, and there is a bit more disagreement among youth in Tajikistan. Subgroups of youth who disagree more often include urban youth, those with a history of displacement and those in the Republic of Serbia education system areas of Kosovo; absentee youth in Georgia (a proportion about twice as high as non-absentees, in line with their feelings on corruption); and older, conflict-affected and tertiary-educated youth in Tajikistan (particularly the tertiary-educated).
Partly as a result of the mismatches between curricula and exam requirements and the corruption issues described above, some youth feel assessment could and should be done in a substantively different way. Some youth in focus groups in Kosovo describe the evaluation system as “very rigid” and “not allowing for the proper evaluation of student skills and knowledge,” especially because they feel the contents of the high school graduation exam are not adequately covered in the curriculum. Concerns also stem from feelings that “students are not allowed to express their views and opinions with regard to the learning process,” as one working male youth puts it. Students in Zafarobod District, Tajikistan, say, “The scoring system is fair,” however, “some teachers are kind enough to support students with bad performance and give them satisfactory marks in order to pass to the next grade. But this is not good, as it leads other students to lose interest in learning.” Some Tajikistan youth also take issue with a new credit-based system of scoring that is being instituted in HEIs. One youth in Dushanbe feels, “Under this system, students who do not do anything can count on luck to choose answers randomly. I think that written and verbal examinations instead allow any person to improve their communication skills to successfully communicate with other people. Dishonest teachers also may have more opportunities to abuse this system.” In Georgia, among students who disagree with the idea that the assessment process is transparent and fair, some reiterate, “Teachers who are unskilled cannot prepare us for exams, especially not the UNEs, and without skills, they cannot appraise us justly.” Some students also simply feel confused by the academic evaluation system. Students in Gori say the system is “very ambiguous and confusing for both students and professors. This problem is more intense in public schools, where, for example, students have a hard time understanding whether 9.6 points means 9 or 10.”

All of the assessment issues that students named compromise equity in education access and achievement.

**Figure 61. The grading/assessment process is transparent and fair. Percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)**

![Bar chart showing percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo, Georgia, and Tajikistan](chart)

Some youth satisfaction with national education reform and spending

Large proportions of youth in each country feel that education reforms have to some extent been improving education quality, albeit with significantly less enthusiasm in Kosovo, as depicted in Figure 62. While many youth are aware of education reform issues in each case, survey results also strongly point to opportunities to inform and engage more young people in debate, discussion and action. Youth in Georgia display a high level of awareness of education reform efforts, with most providing an opinion, while there are much larger gaps in awareness in Kosovo and Tajikistan. Youth in Republic of Serbia education
areas of Kosovo appear to be particularly cut off from or disengaged with information about education reform, where 73 per cent of them say they don’t know anything about it, compared with just 13 per cent of youth in Kosovo education system areas. There are also interesting gender differences in the level of awareness of education reforms, where female youth in Georgia and Kosovo are more aware than their male peers, while the opposite is true in Tajikistan, as shown in Figure 63. Urban youth in Georgia and Tajikistan are also a bit more aware of education reforms than rural youth, while there is no difference by settlement type in Kosovo. Awareness also increases with level of education, as primary- or basic-educated youth surveyed in each country are less likely to know about education reform than their more educated peers. Meanwhile, tertiary-educated youth sampled in Kosovo and Tajikistan more often register dissatisfaction with the implementation or impact of education reform.

Also notably, youth with a history of displacement in Tajikistan have a particularly low opinion of education reforms, coupled with a low degree of awareness. Dropouts and youth who temporarily stopped their education in Tajikistan also have a lower opinion of reforms compared with their counterparts, and many are not very aware of reforms. Higher proportions of youth with a history of displacement and absenteeism in Kosovo are also dissatisfied with education reform, compared with their counterparts. Absentees in Kosovo are also much less aware of education reform efforts.
**Figure 62.** Do you think that national education reforms have improved the quality of education?®

Percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I Don’t Know Anything about Education Reform</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 63.** Do you think that national education reforms have improved the quality of education?

Percentages of youth responding “I don’t know anything/ enough about education reforms” in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by sex)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In focus groups in Kosovo, youth tend to flag a failure to properly and completely implement education reforms as a problem. In particular, they state that teachers and professors often don’t understand the reforms and are not changing their approaches to the learning process, instead continuing to predominantly lecture rather than employing more participatory and practical approaches. Some students say that the lack of

® For Figures 62 and 63, the actual questions in each country were: “Are you satisfied with the implementation of education reforms in Kosovo?” “Do you think the national education reforms have improved the quality of education in Georgia?” “Do you think the national education reforms have been improving the quality of education in Tajikistan?”
implementation of reforms in the classroom is causing confusion among students. Failure to match curricula with requirements for the high-school-leaving exam is also creating frustration among students, as are slow moves in many schools to improve infrastructure and facilities.

At the same time, many Kosovo youth acknowledge progress with appreciation in many areas. RAE youth, for example, are happy that the University of Prizren will be opened soon, and that some new schools are being built. In general, however, youth would like to see the pace of change and improvement quickened and applied across all areas of the education system in Kosovo. Focus group participants from a madrasa, a religious secondary school, say, “Reforms mainly remain on shelves and are not implemented in practice.” They suggest, “A comprehensive assessment of the education system should take place in order to implement reforms properly. Reforms should adapt to the environment and culture and cannot be copied and pasted from developed countries and directly applied here.”

Positive youth opinions about the impact of education reform on education quality in Tajikistan are in part shaped by improvements in equipment and infrastructure they have experienced. A 22-year-old working male living in Kurgan-Tyube who left school after nine years of study says, “When I studied in school it was a horror. All school desks and chairs were broken. We did not have conditions [for study]. Now it is better; schools have computers. Year after year, it became better.” Similarly, one youth in Panji Bolo Town in Panj District says, “I think that before, the quality of education was not good, but with the support of the Tajik president, the quality of education is being improved.” Youth in Panjakent Town, Tajikistan, feel, “The government has been providing great support to the education sector and school, including computers and Internet. In comparison with previous years, schools and the education sector have been improving, and school management has been gradually improving.”

Disagreement on the state of progress is common across the country, however, and some youth want the pace of picked up. A 17-year-old male with disabilities in Panji Bolo town says, “If the education sector and the president pay more attention to youth, young people will study better and be better qualified.” An 18-year-old female with disabilities from the same town agrees, saying, “I want the president, together with the MoE, to change the quality of education.”

Many of Georgia’s highly informed youth meanwhile express strong feelings that they have been the subjects of a very difficult education ‘experiment’, and provide many details about their experiences. Although most youth support the concept of reform, which “always brings something new,” there have been heavy disadvantages for many youth in the first years of implementation. “Overcoming this period turned out to be quite difficult for us because we had to be in an experimental condition; a great amount of changes had to be made, with a lot of reforms to go through,” says an 18-year-old male in public school in Tbilisi. Another explains, “Reforms are very good, but they have one big disadvantage – we weren’t ready. For example, we have to pass exams according to a book that we haven’t used yet. [We] think these reforms should have started with fifth graders and not with us right away.”

A 22-year-old female in Tbilisi adds, “Out of 10 points (where 10 is the highest/best), I give our education system a 7, because there was no base in schools when reforms were carried out. It was a shock for us. We were not ready, and many of us were unable to overcome them.” A 23-year-old Tbilisi male explains, “The education system is absolutely disorganized. My friend graduated university two years ago and is still waiting for the diploma. This problem of handing out diplomas is still unresolved.” Students in Telavi, Kaketi, Georgia, emphasize, “Most of us are displeased about having to pass 10 exams in 12th grade. We’re not sure we can do it, because we were used to the idea that we had to pass the so-called ‘national exams’ and have only been preparing the necessary subjects.” One young person concludes, “We are in a process of change, and we don’t see any progress yet. We hope future generations will.” Another teen in Telavi says, “Many students don’t like reforms, but they don’t have enough information about them either. I like the reforms, but I’m in a lower grade, and I have more time to prepare.”
Many youth also highlight the increased costs of education and high unemployment as debilitating aspects of education reform in Georgia. "The fact is, learning is becoming more and more expensive, and people cannot get education just because of an inability to pay," says a 20-year-old male in Tbilisi. "There are still too many kids left out of university because they can’t pay for their education; they can’t even pay the smallest share of the price," a young person in Kutaisi agrees. "To pay for education, you have to work. Without opportunities for work, those who took out loans are in a worse situation now," says another 23-year-old male in Tbilisi. He also explains, "Under the new credit system, if you fail any subject, you have to pass it again or change it with another course, but in any case pay an additional sum of money. For the term, it becomes a sufficiently big sum of money, and the financial aspect has a big influence upon education quality." Another youth in Kutaisi says, "We need an educational system that is focused on the market. We need professions that will actually feed us. I don’t want to do a job I like doing if it requires me to starve."

Many youth in Georgia also complain about paying a lot for education that is, in their opinion, not top quality. Youth in Gori say, “The government should decrease prices for students because quality isn’t correspondingly good compared to high prices.” A female youth in Kutaisi says, “If I pay money for something, it must be properly given to me and brought to me. It is unforgivable when universities make you pay money for their service while it is poor and insufficient.” Another young person in Kutaisi says, “These prices are appropriate for European economies, not Georgia’s.” Others reiterate, “High school students without enough money to pay for private tutors are not able to get proper scholarships for university.” They call for “opportunities to receive scholarships later on for doing well in college.” They further suggest a sliding scale for university tuition costs to address the lack of fairness they see in “economically poor but talented kids not being able to get into college.” Youth in Kutaisi also suggest that a system of “allowances” be instituted to inspire and reward high-achieving high school students.

Still other youth in Georgia have a problem with changes that have decreased the amount of attention paid to what might be called nationalism in the country’s curricula, and feel that it is “inappropriate to try and implant ‘Western principles’” in their country. Students in Kutaisi say, “After famous educational reform, hours have been subtracted from subjects with nationalistic spirit, like history. It is unimaginable how a period between 1918 and 1921 can possibly be taught in one hour. Consequently, we have a situation where kids don’t know where they come from and have no patriotic spirit whatsoever. It is necessary to start giving military classes in schools. It will bring a feeling of security and patriotism.” Another says, “We need to teach more subjects that ignite our patriotic spirit, or more and more destructive results will emerge as time passes. If smaller countries want to survive, they must be loved.” These young people blame globalization for disrupting Georgia’s national identity. “I like that motivation is rising,” another says, “but I am not satisfied by the reforms. School systems are not well organized; I think that traditions and values that were important in the past must have a place again. Without them, it’s a waste of time to talk about improving education quality.” Other youth flatly disagree, however, with one in Kutaisi stating, “It’s the other way around. Western education gives us the opportunity to fit into new environments better. As for losing patriotic spirit, it is an individualistic problem and has nothing to do with globalization.” Others suggest, “New methods should not be implanted without checking and testing them first. We shouldn’t copy from Western systems. We should try to adapt them to the Georgian reality.”

In general, youth in all three cases also recognize that successful education reforms cost money, and most youth in Georgia and Tajikistan also want their governments to spend more on education, as seen in Figure 64 (a similar question was not posed in Kosovo). Only about a quarter of youth in Georgia and 30 per cent in Tajikistan think the current spending level is sufficient (the percentages rise to just over half, respectively, when those who ‘somewhat agree’ that enough is being spent are included).

Youth in Georgia again show a very high level of awareness about this issue; less than one tenth of youth interviewed in Georgia admitted not knowing the issue well enough to express an opinion, compared with
more than one third of interviewees in Tajikistan. High awareness about both education spending and reforms shows a strong interest among youth in public decision-making and action on education issues in Georgia. Youth knowledge about education spending in Georgia increases with the age of the respondent and their level of education, while the level of youth satisfaction decreases along the same path. Older respondents and those who have attained tertiary education are the most likely to feel that spending is too low. Dropouts are also much less likely to agree that Georgia’s education spending is high enough.

Knowledge about government spending on education in Tajikistan is slightly higher among urban youth and much higher among the tertiary-educated. Both groups feel particularly strongly that the Tajikistan government does not spend enough on education. Females in Tajikistan show a significant lack of awareness about education spending (as they also do on education reforms). This may indicate that females are much more likely to be left out of discussions in families and society about public policy issues or to feel that they are within their purview. Youth respondents with a personal or family history of displacement are less approving of the government’s education spending level. Youth who dropped out also know less about education spending and approve less when they do.

**Figure 64.** Do you think the government spends enough money on ensuring quality education? Percentages of youth agreement in Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Georgia All</th>
<th>Tajikistan All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"I think that in order to receive a high quality education, state resources must be strengthened," says a 14-year-old, male middle school student in Samegrelo, Georgia, who attends school with both displaced and non-displaced youth. A fellow 15-year-old male student in the same school adds, “If the government takes more care of education, our country will gain more and more qualified people.” A 19-year-old male in Tbilisi says, “Nowadays, education received in schools and other educational institutes is devalued. I think more support is needed from government.” Students call for lowering the cost of higher education; making more scholarships available to students, including on a sliding scale; and expanding merit-based support to students after they have begun university.

In Tajikistan, some students say that the current level of spending requires more monitoring and evaluation. A 20-year-old secondary student in Dushanbe City (Sino) says, “The Hukumat allocates money, but no one knows how the money is spent.” At the same time, other youth feel the money is often clearly misspent...
and/or poorly monitored in their area. For example, some youth in Panjakent Town say, “Allocated funds do not fully reach schools. Not all of the computers allocated for school reach their destination. They bring four computers to school... in order to demonstrate that they equipped the school with computers..., but the rest will be used or sold by the head of the town. The Province Administration decides how to distribute them.” However, many youth have seen tangible improvements as evidence of education spending.

Tajikistan youth also debate the pros and cons of private education and increasing education costs. Some feel that if paying more brings better quality, it is a good thing. A 29-year-old male in Dushanbe with eight years of education says, “If the quality of education will increase along with its cost, I’m for it!” Other youth in Dushanbe say, “In private school, we pay for education and the quality is much better.” One young person in Dushanbe further argues, “It is necessary to increase tuition fees to the extent that schools can meet their financial needs themselves – to purchase inventory, teaching materials, computer and so on. Universities could also offer students who do well after they begin university free or reduced tuition as an incentive.” Still others fear that rising costs will make getting an education even harder for those who can least afford it. A 16-year-old female in Dushanbe City with nine years of education says, “Many poor youth already cannot get education, and they would face more difficulties paying for education if costs go up.”

Beyond questions about education reform and spending, the research teams in Kosovo and Tajikistan decided to include some learning processes and systems issues specific to the history and situation of their own country. In Tajikistan, youth researchers surveyed their peers about several specific changes that could be made to Tajikistan’s education system. Respondents issued strong calls to:

• Increase teacher salaries to motivate their interest in and responsibility for students (89 per cent full agreement);
• Increase student stipends, especially for low-income students (88 per cent full agreement);
• Provide free transportation to and from school (87 per cent full agreement);
• Improve regulations and oversight of the presidential quota system (79 per cent full agreement, with strong support from female youth; more than a fifth of youth overall do not give an opinion);
• Require uniforms be worn in school and university (76 per cent full agreement, with much less support among males and those who have been displaced).

Permitting students and pupils who choose to wear a hijab at school appears to be the most controversial topic among those investigated by the researchers in Tajikistan. It is fully opposed by almost half of the respondents, as depicted in Figure 65. Youth in rural areas and female youth are particularly less enthusiastic about the idea (with half of rural youth and 55 per cent of females fully disagreeing with the statement). Disagreement with this idea increases from primary- and basic-educated to secondary-educated youth, but tertiary achievers show a somewhat more conciliatory attitude. Youth who feel their education has been negatively affected by conflict are also somewhat more conciliatory, with less than half of them (44 per cent) fully disagreeing, compared with more than half of non-conflict-affected youth (53 per cent). Disputes over wearing the hijab in school reflect wider religious tensions within the society, including over the reach of conservative Islam. As noted above, some female youth who would choose to wear the hijab in school face problems with education access when they cannot.

The team of researchers in Kosovo investigated youth perspectives on National Youth Policy initiatives that support education for youth. After years in the making, in late 2009, a law on Youth Participation and Development was passed by the Kosovo parliament, formally adopting a National Youth Strategy and Action Plan (NYSAP). A NYSAP was also developed and formally adopted by the Republic of Serbia between 2007 and 2009. Both initiatives seek to improve the lives of youth through better cross-sectoral work to address youth issues, including formal and non-formal education. Survey results show, however, that most youth in Kosovo know little about Kosovo’s NYSAP or law or Serbia’s NYSAP (71 per cent in Kosovo education...
system areas and 79 per cent in Republic of Serbia education system areas – less than their awareness of education reforms). Fewer than a quarter of youth in Kosovo education system areas and just 10 per cent of youth in Republic of Serbia education system areas believe to some degree that a law or NYSAP will support improvements in government attention to youth issues, including education. Very small numbers, however, have no faith in these government initiatives to support change at all. Females and more educated youth are again more likely to know about these government initiatives.

**Figure 65.** Students who choose to should be permitted to wear a hijab to school/university. Percentages of youth agreement in Tajikistan (by all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>I Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan All</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key findings: Learning processes and systems**

- High quality teaching is essential to high quality education for youth. Youth name it as a key factor in their ability to reach their education goals successfully. Lack of adequate support from teachers contributes to dropouts and undermines student motivation and their ability to learn. As described later in this study, ensuring high quality teaching is also a top youth priority for action to improve education quality. Youth in all cases convey much satisfaction with the qualifications of their teachers, their use of engaging and interactive teaching methods, the level of interest they show in student progress and their communication with students and parents. Yet they name many pressing teaching challenges to be addressed, including: lack of teachers, including those with specialized skills; failure to fully implement education reforms, including for more participatory and practical learning approaches; at times poor communication between teachers, students and parents; ongoing corruption, including nepotism and bribery for grades and education opportunities; and the need to access costly outside tutoring in order to fill gaps in classroom teaching. All of these challenges diminish education quality, create barriers to education access and equity, demoralize students and at times create feelings of vulnerability and insecurity for them. To address them, youth suggest:
  - Increase teacher salaries; pay them well to reward and provide an incentive for good work.
  - Regularly train teachers, refresh their skills and provide them with opportunities for professional development.

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26 Youth in Kosovo education system areas were asked about the Kosovo parliament law, strategy and action plan, and youth in the Republic of Serbia education system areas were asked about the Republic of Serbia strategy and action plan.
development. In particular, ensure teachers are trained in education reforms so that they can implement them fully, including participatory learning. Address gaps in teacher training, in particular, among war-affected and displaced populations.

- Make classes interesting and valuable, supporting students’ motivation and ability to learn. Ensure all teachers utilize more interactive, participatory and interesting methods, moving away from rigid, lecture-style and memorization-based approaches.
- Give teachers the tools they need to ensure practical learning opportunities for students, from classroom space to equipment and training.
- Ensure all teachers regularly show interest in the progress of students to address individual learning needs and motivate students to learn more.
- Decrease class sizes and learning shifts where necessary, and ensure teacher-student ratios that allow teachers to cover course material within class time and address individual learning needs.
- Continue and/or increase support for parent-student-teacher consultations and open communication between students, teachers and parents during the learning process.
- Remain vigilant and/or step up efforts to curb and end teacher and other forms of corruption in the education system. Learning processes should be regularly monitored and evaluated by education ministry officials, who are further overseen by a system of government checks and balances and by the public, including parents and students. Students and parents should desist from participating in corruption, and youth should have opportunities to make anonymous reports that are followed up. Student councils, associations and governments should address the issue in debates and education policy work. Regulation and oversight of the presidential quota system in Tajikistan, in particular, should be improved.

- Assessment processes are at times contributing to poor quality education. Although most youth in each case feel to some degree that their teachers and courses adequately prepare them to pass in-class and final exams, many express concerns about mismatches between curricula and exam requirements and gaps in teacher training and equipment that hinder their ability to pass secondary-school-leaving, and other, exams. This inequity in achievement affects young people’s ability to move onto tertiary education. Exam and curricula misalignment and lack of teacher preparation to teach exam content, again, fuel costly private tutoring and corruption in education, which the economically poorest learners can ill afford. All of these factors can also decrease demand for education. Youth call for education reforms that avoid and correct these disconnects and ask for more support for students who must adapt to education reforms rapidly, to ensure equitable and successful exam preparation and progression. Progress made to ensure fair and transparent assessment processes should also be expanded. In addition to curricula and exam realignment and steps to root out corruption, youth ask for more diverse approaches to student assessment that rely less on rigid and often one-time examinations. Youth would like more opportunities to engage in shaping evaluation approaches. As noted above, more data are also needed to track and compare measures of educational achievement in each country.

- Although youth praise and appreciate education reform achievements, many feel much more needs to be done to ensure their implementation and success. Failure to implement education reforms fully and equitably fuels feelings of confusion and frustration and provides disincentives to youth to continue their education. While many youth in Kosovo and Tajikistan want to see the pace of reforms stepped up, many youth in Georgia caution that rapid implementation of reforms can lead to inequities. Youth suggest that education reforms be progressive, tested, based on and adapted to country needs and realities, well-funded and rolled out equitably and with oversight. Students completing secondary and tertiary education when reforms are enacted and implemented must have all of the supports they need immediately in order to meet new requirements successfully and have a fair chance to achieve their education goals.
Many youth feel that public expenditure on education remains too low, while education costs are rising and are often far too high for many learners to meet; this creates exclusion and inefficiencies in developing a diverse base of skills and interests among new generations of youth. As costs increase, student demand for high quality education also increases. Without adequate resources, education reforms cannot be implemented fully or equitably. Youth call for increased government spending on education and the efficient, equitable and transparent use of these funds. They would like to see decreases in education prices, and/or more improvements in education services and outcomes to ensure value for money. In addition to merit-based incentives, they want more financial aid made available at the secondary and tertiary levels, especially for the most economically impoverished youth, youth with disabilities, ethnic minority youth, females and others facing special difficulties getting an education. Many would also like free tutoring provided to students who require it and free transportation for students to and from school and university.

Youth show a high level of awareness of and interest in education reform and spending issues overall, particularly in Georgia, but many youth are uninformed and thus excluded from meaningful debate and action. Action is needed to increase awareness about education reform processes among all youth and to engage youth in discussion and action regarding their implementation. Gender and other differences in access to information should be addressed, including where males are less informed in Kosovo and Georgia and where females are particularly uninformed in Tajikistan.

Education policy at times excludes youth from education opportunities, such as some females in Tajikistan who do not attend school due to their inability to wear a hijab. Policies of exclusion must be reviewed, and targeted efforts made to ensure that all youth have access to high quality education.
YOUTH PARTICIPATION
The degrees to which youth are able to participate in the classroom, in extra-curricular activities and in education decision-making processes are key measures of education quality for many youth, who often feel very frustrated that their voices and ideas are not heard and heeded. Although youth are active in many of these ways, there is wide space for expanding their involvement. Few are involved in groups or organizations, and although many student governments are active in Kosovo and Georgia, they are not taking full advantage of their decision-making power and influence. Student governments appear to be functioning much less in Tajikistan. Youth in all three countries have mixed feelings on whether or not there are enough opportunities for youth involvement in decision-making but in all cases widely indicate that there is much room for improvement. They name a wide range of barriers to making their voices heard, which further hinder progress in addressing education inequities on many levels.

**YOUTH MEMBERSHIP IN GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

Participation of youth in groups and organizations is very limited, with less than 10 per cent of youth reporting that they are involved in one or more in each of the three countries, as seen in Table 12. In Georgia and Tajikistan, youth say that most of these organizations and groups are affiliated with schools, while far fewer are connected with schools in Kosovo, as also shown in Table 12. The types of groups are diverse, ranging from civic and political, to cultural, sports and leisure, as outlined in Table 13. In Kosovo, most are sports groups and NGOs, in Georgia they are mainly student governments and NGOs, and in Tajikistan, youth clubs and sports groups.

**Table 12. Youth involved in groups and organizations in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Per cent answering “yes”</th>
<th>% of groups or organizations affiliated with a school*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on responses of youth surveyed, who say they participate in one or more groups or organizations.

**Table 13. Five types of groups and organizations youth are most frequently involved in by case. Percentages*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kosovo</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Georgia</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Tajikistan</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>School self-government</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>Youth club</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>Sports group</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth (non-sports, civil society)</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>Pupil self-government</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>Debate club</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure (non-sports)</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Student self-government</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>School self-government</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Cross</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Sports group</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Student self-government</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on the responses of: 37 youth (7.2 per cent of the sample) involved in groups or organizations in Kosovo; 41 youth (7.0 per cent of the sample) involved in groups or organizations in Georgia; and 45 of the 65 youth involved in groups or organizations in Tajikistan (where 65 youth are 7.5 per cent of the sample).
Many participants in this study call for more extra-curricular opportunities, including youth group and club activities. It is important to recognize, however, that since most young people are not involved in groups and organizations, work to expand opportunities for youth participation in various aspects of life, including their education, must consider approaches that go beyond this model (Siurala, 2000). Many young people are unaffiliated and clearly very interested in more opportunities to use new technologies, including in school, and might be interested in engaging more with online social and advocacy networks. As also highlighted above, youth emphasize the need for more space and facilities at school for extra-curricular activities, and some would like to see the establishment of youth centres, including for non-formal education and social interaction.

**STUDENT GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY**

Student councils in Kosovo and Student Governments in Georgia are very active, with at least half of youth reporting that they are running in their school, as outlined in Figure 66. Student governments appear to be functioning less in Tajikistan, where just about a third of youth say they are active. Significant numbers of youth in Kosovo and Tajikistan also say that they do not know about them, while youth in Georgia are somewhat more aware overall.

**Figure 66.** Is there an active student council/student government body in your school/university? Percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)

In Georgia and Tajikistan, youth report that student governments are most active in urban areas and at the tertiary level. In Kosovo, there are no urban/rural or education-level differences, but student councils there are much more active within the Kosovo education system areas than in the Republic of Serbia education system areas (63 per cent of youth reporting them, compared with 22 per cent, respectively). Females in Georgia and Kosovo also show more awareness than males about student governments and councils, while in Tajikistan, there is no difference along sex lines.

Youth in Georgia and Tajikistan who say that student governments are active were also asked if they feel they are effective. As shown in Figure 67, where student governments are active, youth in Tajikistan feel they are very effective, and youth in Georgia feel somewhat less so.
Figure 67. If there is a student governing body active in your school, is it effective? Percentages of youth agreement in Georgia and Tajikistan (by all)

Georgia

- Yes: 41.3%
- Somewhat: 37.2%
- No: 21.8%

Tajikistan

- Yes: 63.8%
- Somewhat: 9%
- No: 23.1%
- I Don’t know: 4.1%
In all cases, there is clearly much room for increased student involvement in school governance work and for the evaluation of the impacts of this involvement. Youth in Kosovo explain that students could be taking better advantage of existing formal arrangements for student influence and control over education decision-making, where student councils participate in school councils that are the formal school authorities. More research is also needed to determine why youth in the Republic of Serbia education system in Kosovo are much less involved in and aware of student government opportunities. Youth participating in the consultation and focus groups in Georgia do not seem to be aware of new school and university management structures being implemented that include students and have significant power over many areas of decision-making. There may be similar opportunities in Tajikistan. Youth should consider how they can become involved in these and other processes in ways that are representative of the diverse needs and interests of all students.

**YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION DECISION-MAKING**

Youth opinions on whether they have enough opportunities to be involved in education-related decision-making are very mixed, but less than a third of youth in each case say “yes,” as shown in Figure 68. The largest proportion of “no” answers comes from youth in Kosovo, where about a third of youth also say, “I don’t know.” Georgia youth are most likely to give an opinion, and the highest proportion of respondents there (about a third) says there are just “somewhat” enough opportunities. Youth in Tajikistan are very much split on the subject. In all cases, youth widely indicate that there is much room for improvement. Action might require the creation of new opportunities for young people to be involved in education-related decision-making, improvement or promotion of existing opportunities and/or youth taking better advantage of those mechanisms that already exist.

**Figure 68.** Do youth have enough opportunities to contribute to education decision-making in school/university and in other policymaking forums? Percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo/Georgia/Tajikistan (by all)*

*The response “somewhat” was not included in the Kosovo survey questionnaire.*
As shown in Figure 69, far fewer youth in the Republic of Serbia education system in Kosovo give an opinion overall or say they have enough opportunities to participate in education decision-making compared with youth in the Kosovo education system. Tertiary-educated and older youth sampled in Georgia are much less likely to say they have enough opportunities to participate in education decision-making compared with less-educated, younger youth. The opposite is true in Tajikistan, where these opportunities appear to increase with education attained and with age. In rural areas of Tajikistan, where there are fewer higher education institutions, youth also more often say there are not enough opportunities compared with youth in urban areas. There are no differences by education level, age group or settlement type in Kosovo.

**Figure 69.** Do youth have enough opportunities to contribute to education decision-making in school or other policymaking forums? Percentages of youth agreement in Kosovo (by system)

Focus group participants in all cases provide many insights into the opportunities and frustrations young people experience in attempting to engage in efforts to improve education quality. They seek opportunities to participate more in class and in policy decision-making. Their frustrations range from youth complacency, at times fuelled by fear of reprisal, to indignation at their efforts being ignored and disrespected.

In Kosovo, a secondary school student explains, “Young people do not have the necessary space to be involved in decision-making processes. Some students raise their voice but are ignored by structures that manage the education system.” One 19-year-old female flagged particular frustration at students not being heard regarding the disconnect between the curriculum and the final secondary school exam discussed above. She says, “It is very bad that nobody asks us about the drafting of the graduation exam, which is why we have difficulties in the end. The decisions that relate to us are taken without us.” Several students also experience education in Kosovo as overly politicized, which further undermines the possibility for effective youth efforts to make change.

Many youth in both education system areas in Kosovo express their appreciation for the focus group discussions they participated in and call for more and regular discussions to take place. Youth in Gracanica reportedly gladly answered the questions of the youth researchers, with some saying, “Nobody has raised questions about education in Kosovo with us before,” and, “We have waited a long time to discuss these education problems and the problems in young people’s personal life connected with education.” Youth in
a madrasa in an Albanian-majority area also say, “We have never been visited or asked by anyone about the problems we face at school. We are grateful for this focus group.”

Youth in other focus groups expressed similar sentiments, and encouraged researchers to continue discussions in other forums and schools. Those involved in Severna Mitrovica also asked that a focus group be organized with Kosovar Albanians in order to share views on respective education systems.

Youth in North Mitrovica also ask that similar discussions take place in other municipalities of North Kosovo and in high schools, and that youth consultations be held regularly to assess education progress across Kosovo. They also suggest that a website be created where youth can easily access and understand information about the Ministry of Education and school activities, and ways that youth can play an active role in improving education quality.

In Georgia, some students say they often simply feel disrespected within the education system. One student at TSU states that, despite some instructors taking an interest in students, overall, “The university’s attitude towards us is negative. Our questions are followed by a rude answer, swearing or being totally ignored, which leaves us filled with indignation.” Students in Gori report some anonymous inquiries, and polls having been undertaken to obtain youth opinions, but say they are sceptical about what they called “ineffective formalities” that “do not lead to their opinions ever being taken into consideration.”

Youth in Georgia are passionate, highly opinionated and often contentious in their discussion of education quality. At the same time, they often cower in the face of authority, noting that they feel helpless, unsupported and unconvinced that their voices or other efforts will lead to improvements. Some express fear that speaking out will make their precarious situation worse, especially if confronting or revealing corrupt professors. On one exemplary circumstance, although youth researchers hotly debated education quality issues during the
In Tajikistan, some youth say they do not speak out and attempt to participate in education debates more because they fear reprisals from teachers, administrators and others in society. Many feel youth must be more active, however.

A 17-year-old secondary student in Tajikistan says, “Youth should learn how to express their opinions in appropriate ways.” A 16-year-old working secondary student further asserts, “Youth are ready and wish to improve education quality in Tajikistan, but their voice is not heard. Youth have many ideas and wishes, but they do not have opportunities to implement them in practice. We hope that everything will change in the near future.”

Youth also have many suggestions for changing this situation. A 17-year-old female secondary school student in Panji Bolo town in Tajikistan says, “NGOs and state structures working with youth must conduct seminars and meetings with youth [on education issues].” A 13-year-old male further suggests, “More focus groups like the ones conducted for this study should be organized so that each youth will be active and the quality of education will be better.”

An 18-year-old male in Rasht District says, “First of all, young people should have a will to seek solutions to education and other problems. Everything is possible if there is a will to solve problems.” Others agree, saying, “Youth should propose more plans and projects on education quality and should ask their school administration, education department and local authorities to create enabling conditions for education in schools.”

Youth in Faizabad suggest holding “public meetings of schoolchildren with school directors, university rectors and representatives of the MoE, where young people could express their opinion about the education system in Tajikistan and make recommendations for improvements.” They also endorse active student government structures, suggesting “a system, like one working in some schools in Dushanbe City, where schoolchildren elect a school president and ministers, giving them an opportunity to influence education through their representatives.” Youth in Panjakent Town also say, “It is necessary to establish relations between the school administration and parents’ committee and school units (student associations, women’s committees, girls’ council and so forth).”

Key findings: Youth participation

- Youth in all cases cite opportunities and barriers to increased and more effective youth involvement in the creation of high quality education, and offer a range of solutions for action. They are interested in more participation in class, extra-curricular activities and education policy and programme decision-making and believe their inputs are important to improving education quality and access for all.

- There is wide room for growth in youth participation in improving education quality. Few youth are involved in groups and organizations, most of which in Georgia and Tajikistan are affiliated with schools, unlike Kosovo, where less than a third are connected with schools. More research is needed on young people’s interest and involvement in a variety of forms of participation, from organizations and groups, to online networking and activism and creative endeavours involving unaffiliated youth.

- There is much room for increased student involvement in school governance work and for evaluation of the impacts of this involvement. In both Kosovo and Georgia and possibly in Tajikistan, youth could take stronger advantage of existing formal student authority over school decision-making.

- Youth need safe spaces for expression and action without fear of reprisal.
THE POLITICIZATION OF EDUCATION
Youth describe strong politicization of education, both past and present, that at times negatively affects education quality. Education is political, they say, and quality and access can be distorted and denied to youth as a result. Many youth say that the impacts of war continue to negatively affect their education quality, even years following the end of the conflict. Despite the political, economic and social turmoil their countries have endured, and the range of challenges that remain in ensuring equitable access to education of quality, youth voice a substantial amount of confidence in the ability and willingness of government authorities to do a better job.

In Kosovo, education politicization is most apparent with regard to the ongoing existence of education administration by Republic of Serbia authorities in Serb-majority areas of Kosovo, albeit serving a relatively small portion of Kosovo’s overall population, which is otherwise served by Kosovo education authorities. Youth researchers did not address this hot button issue that speaks to wider disputes over Kosovo’s political status, however, and instead focused on political party dynamics and related administrative arrangements, which about a quarter of youth feel at times impinge on learning processes across Kosovo. Researchers in Georgia found that about half of youth feel that politics at times impedes learning in Kosovo. More than half of youth in Tajikistan feel that military training should continue to be part of their curriculum, showing strong feelings that education has a very direct role to play in security and nation-building, and perhaps a positive view of the range of skills that military training offers youth.

**IMPACT OF CONFLICT ON EDUCATION QUALITY**

Youth in all cases were asked whether they think “war” or “military conflict” in their country (meaning the armed conflicts of: 1999 in Kosovo; 1991–1994 and 2008 in Georgia; and 1992–1997 in Tajikistan) decreased the quality of their education personally. Youth in Georgia and Tajikistan were also asked whether it negatively affected education quality in general. About two thirds of youth in Kosovo feel to some degree that their own education quality has been negatively affected by conflict. This is a much larger proportion of young people compared with just under a third of youth in Tajikistan and about a fifth in Georgia, who feel this way, as shown in Figure 70.

Figure 70. Has war/military conflict in Kosovo/Georgia/Tajikistan negatively affected the quality of your education? Percentages of youth responses (by all)
Higher levels of education correlate with stronger youth feelings on this issue in Kosovo and Tajikistan. Secondary- and tertiary-educated youth in Kosovo are more likely to say “yes” and/or “somewhat” compared with primary-educated respondents. Youth with tertiary education in Tajikistan are most likely to say they feel this negative impact personally, compared with youth with less education. These findings might stand to reason, since more secondary- and tertiary-educated young people would have been in school during the wars and experienced changes in the education system directly. Older youth aged 19–24 in Tajikistan also feel more strongly that their education quality has been negatively affected by military conflict, compared with 13–18-year-olds, while there is no corresponding difference by age group in Kosovo.

Notably in Tajikistan, youth with a history of displacement are particularly likely to say they feel that military conflict has negatively affected their own education quality. Smaller sex and settlement type differences occur, where males and youth in urban areas feel somewhat more negatively affected.

In Georgia and Tajikistan, where youth were also asked about the impact of military conflict on education quality in general, many more youth feel that military conflict has negatively affected education quality overall than feel negatively impacted personally, as seen when comparing Figures 70 and 71. More than half of youth in Georgia and about two thirds in Tajikistan feel that military conflict has been bad for the country’s education quality.

**Figure 71.** Has war/military conflict negatively affected the quality of education in Georgia/ Tajikistan? Percentages of youth responses (by all)

As for subgroup differences on this question, Georgia respondents who do not have a history of absenteeism are again more likely to agree that conflict has hurt education quality in Georgia in general. Urban youth are more convinced of this than rural youth in Tajikistan. Tertiary-educated young people in Tajikistan also feel especially strongly that Tajikistan’s education quality has been hurt by military conflict, with more than 90 per cent agreeing with this to some degree. Youth who feel their education quality has been directly negatively affected by conflict in Tajikistan also agree particularly strongly that military conflict has been bad for education for the country.

While many young people believe that war can and does diminish education quality for them individually, and their countries more generally, many others state that it doesn’t. This is also shown by the large proportions of youth that answer “somewhat.” The findings further point to a variety of influences on youth opinions about the impacts of armed conflict on education quality, such as:

- The nature of the conflict, including its location, duration and dynamics such as whether and how education systems have been targeted by fighting forces;
- Youth experiences during armed conflict, such as internal displacement or becoming a refugee;
• The availability, accessibility and quality of education services during the conflict;
• The political, economic, social and cultural circumstances of individuals, communities and their larger society before and after the conflict, including gender relations and religious practice;
• The state of the education system before the conflict and pre-existing youth expectations of education;
• Differential patterns of investment in the education system, including over time, following the conflict; for example, with more or less being invested at primary, secondary and tertiary levels in different locations and benefitting different groups;
• The development, implementation and progress of post-conflict education reforms that address youth learners;
• The time incurred between the conflict and when youth are asked their opinions about its impact.

Overall however, the findings show that war impacts on education can be very lasting for larger or smaller proportions of a country’s youth population even a decade post-conflict. Youth opinions on the influence of military conflict on education quality in general in Georgia and Tajikistan further show that youth consciousness of war impacts on education quality can be widespread and enduring, whether or not youth feel their education has been directly negatively affected.

Youth opinions on the impact of armed conflict on education quality are also very interesting when considered alongside their opinions on learning outcomes. Very few youth in Kosovo say that poor education quality is a risk factor for a return to conflict in Kosovo. Tajikistan youth appear to feel somewhat similarly, where many feel that war negatively impacted education quality overall, but few feel that poor quality education increases the likelihood of a return to conflict. By contrast, many youth in Georgia appear to affirm the reciprocal relationship, as more than half feel that war negatively influenced education quality overall, and nearly half feel that poor education quality increases the risk of conflict.

The differences between absentee and non-absentee youth are also interesting and point to areas for further research on the relationship between armed conflict and absenteeism over time. In Kosovo and Tajikistan, absentees are more likely than non-absentees to feel their education quality has to some degree been negatively affected by conflict, while in Georgia, the non-absentees are more likely to feel this way. The negative impacts of war might contribute to more cynicism and absenteeism among some youth and might push others to optimistically do their best to stay in school.

Focus group discussions provide further detail on youth experiences of the relationship between war and education quality. In Kosovo, the war ultimately improved the education quality for some youth. For Kosovar Albanians, the end of the war meant the end of schooling in private houses in the parallel education system. As described in the box on ‘Youth reflections on parallel schooling in Kosovo’, however, parallel schooling was unifying for many, who now feel that their younger peers take the advantages they have today for granted. Despite the relative pessimism youth who were displaced often express regarding education quality issues surveyed in this study, some also feel they learned new things during their displacement and action has been taken to improve the education system following the war.

At the same time, for many Kosovar Serbs, the end of the war meant new displacement and disrupted education. Youth in Gracanica explain, for example, that for a period of time, many had to go to school in houses instead of school buildings, and that many of their professors left to move abroad. Ongoing political division also means lack of connection to some benefits that might come from engaging in the Kosovo education system, while at times receiving limited attention from Republic of Serbia education system authorities.
Youth reflections on parallel schooling in Kosovo in the 1990s and the impact of war on education

A focus group with Kosovar Albanian youth who participated in the parallel education system during the 1990s and are all university students now provides additional insights into the politicization of education and the impact of war on education quality for youth in Kosovo. For some of the Kosovar Albanian youth involved in the pre-war parallel system, the education disruptions and deprivations they experienced were acts of courage and unity that they recall fondly and with pride.

A 20-year-old female in Fushë Kosovë says, Though it brings back sad memories, I still think about that time at school, maybe because to us, it was a special feeling to be together at school even though we faced major obstacles, not only in school but on the way there, too. Another young woman says, I know today students talk about having a clean and well-maintained school, but back then, we didn’t even consider that matter. It was important for us to have a facility where we could have classes, including improvised in houses, and we managed to keep them clean and to maintain them.

A young man explains, “At that time, we stood together unified more than ever, and the owner of the house that was transformed into a school was a hero in our eyes.” Another young man “completely agrees, because giving your house for education purposes was a patriotic act.” A 19-year-old woman says, “Being a good student and learning hard was considered a patriotic act at that time, knowing that the most important war, in our minds, was through education, not only the use of weapons.”

Despite the changes and conditions they faced in the parallel system, these young people feel that the war did not impact the quality of learning because they were working to learn the same things that students after the war also worked to learn, albeit with a feeling that grading is easier now. They do, however, remark on other key differences. “Teachers were much more motivated to work with students during the parallel system than they are now,” one young woman says. “Though they were not paid for months, the quality of teaching at that time was way better than now.” Another agrees, saying, “Before, teachers used to share with students much more than what was on the books, but these days, they complete the lecture and leave.”

“One young woman says, “Since we know how the situation was then and how it is now,” one young woman says, “we appreciate much more the education we got. These days, I think that teachers and students are very lazy.” Students in this focus group agree that they did of course miss out on basic resources that should have been at their disposal, but they judge education quality with an understanding of political dynamics, rather than simply condemning it as politicized in a solely negative sense. Today, they would especially like to see changes to the curriculum, again with a bent toward more practical learning, further facilities improvements, non-formal education and increased opportunities for internships and international student exchange.

In Georgia, the numeric gap between the youth who feel their own education has been negatively impacted and those who feel that war has negatively impacted education quality generally might represent differences in how young people conceptualize impacts. Tertiary students participating in a focus group in Gori, which was hit hard by military conflict in 2008, agree, “The August [2008] war had a very negative impact on those who lost their homes or underwent serious moral damage, but it didn’t really have an impact on the educational system in general.” From their perspective, the damage caused in their lives and town did not shake the system substantially overall, while most of their peers across the country feel that military conflict anywhere was to some degree bad for the country’s education system as a whole.
A 15-year-old student in the Samegrelo region of Georgia who was displaced from Abkhazia due to war says her teachers’ skills are not as strong as they could be because of their experiences with war and displacement. At the same time, she appreciates the ability of her teachers to relate to the problems of displaced learners. Another 16-year-old boy says, “My folks are refugees. Well, me too, but I can hardly remember anything. I don’t know what kind of an education I would have been able to receive there [Abkhazia], but I like it here at my school, and I am satisfied with this education. However, I believe there are better places.”

Youth in Dushanbe City, Tajikistan, say, “Yes, the civil war has certainly impacted the development of our country.” For some young people, it meant loss of education with lasting impacts despite the cessation of conflict. “My sister still suffers today from the consequences of the civil war, as she was forced to leave school,” a secondary school student in Dushanbe says. Meanwhile, a 13-year-old Uzbek youth in Faizabad says, “War certainly influenced those who were studying during the civil war, but it doesn’t influence education now.” Youth in Panjakent Town state, “Education quality depends very much on the political environment. Teachers were afraid to come out of their homes and to go to school during the period of instability. Classes were not conducted in time, but at present, we have stability, education quality has been improving, and Tajikistan has been developing. At the same time, youth in urban areas have more opportunities, and education quality remains lower in rural areas.”

**POLITICAL PARTY DISRUPTION OF LEARNING PROCESSES IN KOSOVO**

Relatively few youth surveyed in Kosovo say a definite yes to the question of whether political parties disrupt the learning process, but about a quarter say that sometimes they do. Most youth, however, say they don’t, as shown in Figure 72. Youth in rural areas, those in the Republic of Serbia education system areas and those with a history of absenteeism more often say that political parties are disruptive to learning, compared with their respective urban, Kosovo education system and non-absentee counterparts.

**Figure 72.** Do political parties at times disrupt the learning process in Kosovo? Percentages of youth agreement (by all)

More research is needed on the approximately one third of youth who report experiencing some form of political party interference with learning processes, including differences between rural and urban areas, between the two education systems and among absentee and non-absentee youth. Some of the youth involved in this study
who complain about disruptive political party involvement in education, however, highlight the misuse of power by majority parties in making appointments to education decision-making positions, and in some cases, the deliberate co-opting of education processes to further their party political agendas. Some high school students in the Kosovo education system state, “Managing structures are influenced by politics. To improve education, the influence of politics over municipal education directorates must be reduced.” Students in Gracanica, in a Republic of Serbia system area, assert, “Political parties have influence in schools. Directors and professors are employed based on their political party, not based on their knowledge... The practice of choosing school staff based on their political party affiliation must be ended.”

**IMPACT OF POLITICS ON LEARNING PROCESSES IN GEORGIA**

About half of Georgia youth surveyed believes that politics has to some extent impeded the education process, as shown in Figure 73. Youth with tertiary education particularly feel this, in line with the stronger opinions and criticisms they tend to express about other areas of education quality in Georgia. Youth in focus groups repeatedly describe politicization of education today as involving systemic instability brought on by strong central and, at times seemingly capricious, control of the education system. “Education suffers from an unstable system, where ministers are changed suddenly and reforms are pushed through rapidly,” says one participant in Tbilisi. “Education ministers can’t make any decisions without the president.” While this study was implemented, the education minister was suddenly sacked, and many other education professionals summarily lost their jobs, creating a sense of uncertainty regarding the progress and future of education reform and the degree to which dissent, debate and diversity of political affiliation are permissible.

Students at Telavi State University in Kakheti say, “Ministers should not be changed without reason, and one solid, reliable person is needed who is interested in the education system.” Many students at Telavi State University say they have “no trust whatsoever in the Ministry of Education and believe that decision-makers are unqualified. The influence of politics is most clearly seen in the behaviour of school principals and university deans. Whatever party comes to power, the principal becomes its follower, or is changed immediately.” Some students also experience nepotism, or the “institution of acquaintances,” as disruptive political involvement in education. One university student in Tbilisi explains that in order to get a job after university, not only do you need help from acquaintances, “You must also be a member of the National Movement,” the political party in control of the Georgian Government.

*Figure 73. Does politics impede the education process in Georgia? Percentages of youth agreement (by all)*
MILITARY TRAINING IN TAJIKISTAN SCHOOLS

The majority of Tajikistan respondents think that military training should not be dropped from the school curriculum, although a quarter think it should go, as shown in Figure 74. Interestingly, males are slightly more supportive of military training being dropped from the curriculum (more than a third, compared with a quarter of females, who are less likely to give an opinion overall). As young people’s education level increases, so does their reluctance to drop military training from the curriculum. Youth with primary or basic education are the least likely among their counterparts to have an opinion on this topic.

This relatively strong defence of military training remaining in the Tajikistan curriculum points to many youth feeling strongly that formal education should support nation-building and strengthen the security of the country. Further research on the debate over the role of military training within the formal education system would increase knowledge on whether and how military training in schools impacts the legitimacy of state authorities in the eyes of youth.

Figure 74. Should basic military trainings be dropped from the school curriculum in Tajikistan? Percentages of youth agreement (by all and sex)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tajikistan All</th>
<th>Tajikistan Male</th>
<th>Tajikistan Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

YOUTH CONFIDENCE IN EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

Although by some measures, Tajikistan continues to deal with more instability than Kosovo or Georgia, a higher proportion of youth in Tajikistan issue a vote of confidence in education authorities to deliver high quality education. Relatively few youth in Kosovo and Georgia say that they feel education authorities are “doing a great job” providing good quality education at all levels to all students compared with more than a third in Tajikistan, as shown in Figure 75. Nevertheless, youth in each case indicate a substantial amount of trust that government can do a better job.
Figure 75. Do you have confidence in/trust the education authority/education decision-makers/the Ministry of Education to provide good quality education at all levels and for all students in Kosovo/Georgia/Tajikistan? Percentages (by all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kosovo</th>
<th>Georgia</th>
<th>Tajikistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I think they are doing a great job</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>70.8%</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I believe they can but need to do a better job</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, they are not in practice prioritizing education</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, they do not represent my interests</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some subgroups of youth differ in their opinions in each case. In Kosovo, older youth are less confident in education authorities than younger youth and more often say the government is not prioritizing education. Similarly, more youth who have been displaced in Kosovo (and who are also on average older) say education authorities are not prioritizing education compared with youth never displaced. In Georgia, older, more educated and absentee youth are also less convinced than their counterparts that decision-makers are doing...
a great job. Meanwhile in Tajikistan, females are a bit less approving than males, and absentees and youth who feel their education has been negatively affected by conflict have much less trust in the willingness and ability of the MoE to provide good quality education for all students. Again, these differences warrant further research and indicate diverse needs and experiences within the various education systems.

**Key findings: The politicization of education**

- Many youth in all three cases state that education in their settings continues to be politicized in ways that impede the learning process and create inequities. Youth in Kosovo cite political party interference in education, and Georgia youth cite politics in general as creating disruptions, including through political manipulation of education administration and management. A quarter of youth in Tajikistan feel state military training should be dropped from the curriculum, but its inclusion is defended by more than half. More research is needed into these claims with appropriate follow up.

- Findings show that negative impacts of war on education quality can last for larger or smaller proportions of a country’s youth population even a decade after armed conflict. Findings also point to factors that may influence youth opinions on how war/military conflict impacts education quality in general and their own education quality over time, from the state of the education system before conflict, to the development, implementation and progress of youth-focused education reforms post-conflict. More research is needed on differences in youth opinions, including on how armed conflict influences absenteeism over time, where it might be a push factor to stay in or be absent from school.

- Youth in two cases, Kosovo and Tajikistan, do not perceive a reciprocal relationship between war and education quality, where war diminishes education quality and poor education quality increases the risk of renewed armed conflict. By contrast, many youth in Georgia do perceive this reciprocal relationship, and value high education quality as a means to prevent further conflict.

- Relatively few youth in Kosovo and Georgia say that they feel education authorities are “doing a great job” providing good quality education at all levels to all students, compared with more than a third in Tajikistan. Youth in each case, however, indicate a substantial amount of trust that government can do a better job. Findings show that youth confidence in the willingness and/or ability of government to provide better services can begin to flag even before youth perceive education quality overall as sub-par. In each case, lack of trust in education authorities to deliver better services outpaces the proportion of youth who rate the quality of education overall as below average. Education authorities in each case thus have an opportunity to work rapidly to improve education quality for youth, while youth have a substantial amount of confidence in them to deliver better services.
CONCLUSIONS AND YOUTH PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
In a final, open survey question, youth were asked to name and talk about their top priority for improving education quality in their area. Their ideas and priorities are diverse, signalling both that obstacles to accessing high quality education are at times very individual and that young people have a rich range of ideas for change. The top 10 most frequently cited priorities in each case outlined in Table 14 amount to between 47 and 64 per cent of the respective responses. Nevertheless, and as shown in Tables 15, 16 and 17, their priorities most often fall under the ‘learning processes and systems’ and ‘learning environment’ domains, emphasizing the importance youth place on their physical and social environment and on teaching and education systems to the quality of their learning experience. At the same time, many youth prioritize other domains, and youth make clear from other findings of the study (consultations, focus groups, survey topics) that all of the education quality domains are intertwined and interact to produce the quality education they desire.

The heavier emphasis on ‘learning processes and systems’ in Georgia reflects substantial difficulties youth face meeting education costs, and their frustration with the problems they have experienced with rapid and radical education reform. Youth in Georgia most frequently prioritize the need to reduce education costs and to improve their qualifications and ensure that the skills they learn help them achieve their employment and life goals, especially given the heavy financial investments many are making in order to complete their higher education. They also emphasize, much more than their peers in the other two countries, the need for further government action to improve education quality for all youth.

Kosovo youth most frequently call for more practical learning opportunities and ensuring high quality teaching. Youth in Tajikistan, in turn, are very concerned about their motivation to study, and most frequently prioritize the need for young people to apply themselves diligently to achieving high education goals, including completing secondary school. Like Kosovo youth, they also strongly call for improvements in teacher qualifications, including ensuring specialized skills.

Youth in both Kosovo and Tajikistan further highlight the need to raise teacher salaries as incentives for good work, retention and reductions in teacher corruption and extra fees for tutoring outside school. Many youth in all of the sites also emphasize, again, the need to modernize education facilities, especially with functional computers and Internet service and well-qualified computer instructors.

Although they don’t make their top 10 most frequently cited priorities for change, many youth in Tajikistan also highlight the need for improved access to education for girls. In some cases, they are calling on girls to take more interest in school and to complete their secondary education. In others, they suggest that girls’ education be achieved by avoiding early marriage. They especially call on parents not to force girls into marriage and to support their education, and call on girls to express their interests and to study hard.

Overall, young people are pushing for modern education systems that meet or exceed international standards. They also often emphasize their own roles in making high quality education a reality in their setting. In general, they want learning content and approaches that support stable, inclusive societies that are very much part of the wider global community. Very few call for increased religious education, and none ask for decreased opportunities to study a wide range of subjects, learn foreign languages or study abroad. Still, while none overtly suggest increased exclusion of any individuals or groups, their opinions at times reflect societal controversies and divisions. Youth in Tajikistan are split on the issue of whether female students should be permitted to wear hijabs in school, and few youth in Kosovo are prepared to talk about the integration of all youth, Serb and Albanian, into the Kosovo education system. Further research, with larger samples of subgroups of young people, would be useful to determine patterns in youth priorities and solutions for action, including with regard to how ethnic, religious, political, social and other conflict impacts education quality and the roles education systems play in abetting and/or mediating these tensions.
### Table 14. Ten most frequently cited youth priorities for improved education quality by case*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kosovo Change priority</th>
<th>Georgia Change priority</th>
<th>Tajikistan Change priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Provide more classes with practical applications</td>
<td>1. Reduce the cost of education</td>
<td>1. Youth must study, behave well and complete school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provide more laboratories for practical applications</td>
<td>2. Ensure youth are more qualified for their chosen vocation</td>
<td>2. Improve teacher qualifications and training (more specialists are needed, in particular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Improve teacher qualifications</td>
<td>3. Improve the conditions of schools and universities</td>
<td>3. Improve and modernize the conditions of schools and universities (furniture, electricity, heating, water, libraries, sports facilities, laboratories, food, renovations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Provide and use more computer equipment</td>
<td>4. Activate further the Ministry of Education, its Minister, and other arms of government to improve education quality for all youth**</td>
<td>4. Introduce new technology in school (computers, Internet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Improve school hygiene facilities</td>
<td>5. Ensure all schools and universities are computerized, with adequate computer equipment, Internet access and up-to-date curricula and course materials to support related learning</td>
<td>5. More, better quality, free and low-cost books should be provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Build more schools</td>
<td>6. Expand education exchange programmes</td>
<td>6. More courses should be offered (particularly technology, languages – domestic and foreign, culture and science)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Increase and improve sports facilities</td>
<td>7. Ensure that school and university learning environments are disciplined</td>
<td>7. Decrease education costs/Provide more financial support and incentives to learners and families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ensure security at school</td>
<td>8. Increase education standards</td>
<td>8. Increase teacher salaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Improve school infrastructure</td>
<td>10. Guarantee employment according to education achieved</td>
<td>10. Increase the number of teachers at schools and universities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on youth survey question 35 for Kosovo, question 36 for Georgia and question 39a for Tajikistan.
### Table 15. Kosovo youth priorities for education quality improvement by domain. Frequencies and percentages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education quality domain</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning environment</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning processes and systems</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning content</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth participation</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicization of education</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning outcomes</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimates are based on data for Kosovo youth survey question 35, where responses are recoded by domain, including some shared domains, for a total of 1,480 recoded responses, without re-weighting.

### Table 16. Georgia youth priorities for education quality improvement by domain. Frequencies and percentages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education quality domain</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning processes and systems</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning environment</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning content</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning outcomes</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth participation</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicization of education</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics and economics**</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimates are based on data for Georgia youth survey question 36, where responses are recoded by domain, including some shared domains, for a total of 1,491 recoded responses without re-weighting.

**The ‘politics and economics’ domain captures youth references to the need for economic development and political reform.

### Table 17. Tajikistan youth priorities for education quality improvement by domain. Frequencies and percentages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education quality domain</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning processes and systems</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning environment</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth participation</td>
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<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning content</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>8.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning outcomes</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t care</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are no problems</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimates are based on data for Tajikistan youth survey question 39a, where responses are recoded by domain, including some shared domains, for a total of 990 recoded responses, without re-weighting.
Youth suggestions for how their priorities should be met are included in the sections above and in the individual case reports published under separate covers. As for who should undertake the changes, young people cite a wide range of actors, and some emphasize that many parties need to be involved. They frequently note the need for government action at both local and central levels, as well as action by school and university administrators and teachers. They also call on parents to be highly engaged in their children’s learning and to interact regularly with teachers.

Some of the most inspiring aspects of the study results, however, are the hundreds of ideas youth respondents provide of a range of things youth can and should be doing to improve the many facets of education quality they prioritize. These ideas represent the voices and energy of thousands of individual youth, each with aspirations for learning and engaging fully in their communities and society. The vast majority constructively calls on their peers to take action. Many encourage their peers to improve themselves individually by studying, and others issue moving calls to help other youth in need, even by filling teaching gaps with skills and talents some youth already have.

Some youth say that, while they can give their opinions, at times they feel they have no power or that it is not their role to make some changes, which must be made by others, including government. Some also say that they don’t know what youth should do about their priority issue, or that they have nothing to say. There is much room for further engaging these and other young people about the roles they might play, building on the many ideas and high level of enthusiasm of their peers.

A key measure of youth satisfaction with education quality in these countries, and likely many others, is undoubtedly the extent to which they feel supported in taking individual initiative and responsibility for successfully completing their education goals. Support must in part help youth confront at times deep cultural and religious barriers to youth education, in addition to addressing the many other diverse, interacting issues that youth outline.

The following recommendations for improving education quality for youth in the CEECIS region reflect young people’s diverse and interconnected interests and priorities for action. They are not listed in priority order. They are directed to a number of parties, principally education authorities; educationalists; donors supporting education and youth, economic and social development; and individuals and local communities, including youth and parents. See also the individual case reports for Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan printed under separate covers and the youth advocacy statements below for more recommendations focused on each of the cases considered.

**GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Improve data collection and sharing on youth development and education quality.** Trends in youth development and education quality and the links between them must be fundamentally supported by better data collection and sharing on key indicators and measures over time. Deepen support for government and civil society capacity to collect, manage and share information on, as much as possible, internationally comparable indicators and measures of youth development and education quality, including UN-facilitated youth development indicators. Consider developing and pilot testing the utility of a youth development index to measure progress in young people’s well-being over time and to support research on the contributions of formal education to this well-being. Also consider ways in which current MICS and labour force surveys can increase data collection on youth development and education quality for youth. Ensure all countries in the CEECIS region participate in PIRLS, TIMSS or other internationally comparable measures of education achievement.

- **Undertake further action research to investigate:**
  - **Differences in youth experiences and opinions of education quality highlighted in this comparative study.** All of the recommendations drawn from this study should be considered.

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27 The recommendations here are derived from the survey and focus group results and at times overlap with – but do not directly incorporate the findings from – the youth advocacy statements.
through lenses of diverse youth experience, about which more information is required, in particular to address equity. Some specific suggestions are outlined among the youth education programming recommendations below. Attention should be paid especially to examining differences in the experiences of youth who are:
- in urban and rural areas;
- in different geographic regions;
- male and female;
- older and younger;
- primary-, secondary- and tertiary-educated;
- displaced, or with a history of displacement, and those not;
- most directly affected by armed conflict, and those not;
- dropouts (before secondary completion) and non-dropouts;
- frequently absent from school and those who attend regularly;
- employed and unemployed;
- ethnic minorities and majorities;
- disabled and not disabled.

- **The impact of formal education on youth development, including youth health and income.** Research the relationship between one or more facets of education quality and one or more indicators and measures of youth development.

- **The impact of changes in education quality on youth development.** Research the relationship between one or more measurable changes in education quality and measurable indicators of youth development.

- **Deepen education reform processes, and continue to increase public spending on education to address the range of education quality issues raised by youth.** Ensure supports are in place for youth learners to succeed at all stages of reform, including rapid implementation. Ensure education systems are staffed with qualified professionals, not solely political party appointees, who may know little about education. Support youth involvement in education decision-making and oversight, with the depth and breadth of their participation to be shaped by the specific tasks and objectives at hand. Utilize the findings of this study to determine the extent to which reform efforts are considering youth concerns, ideas and priorities.

- **Maximize synergies in the formation and implementation of education, youth and development policy, and study and apply lessons from successes and failures.** As much as possible, ensure education policy, national youth policy, national development plans and other areas of policy are mutually reinforcing and take advantage of potential areas of synergy and efficiency. Study and apply learning from successes and failures in decentralized development planning, including in the implementation of these policies in conflict and post-conflict settings and amid major political, economic and social transitions. Identify the limitations of government systems at all levels and support their strengthening, including with public involvement and oversight involving youth and parents.

- **Support and further study traditional and more progressive forms of youth participation and active citizenship.** Increase support both for youth involvement in groups and organizations and in other forms of expression, social interaction and activism, including through online forums and creative arts. Youth participation in efforts to improve education quality should be evaluated carefully, testing assumptions about its forms and impacts. International guidance on youth involvement in policy formation and implementation should be further revised based on evidence.
CONCLUSIONS AND YOUTH PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Improve the quality of teaching.** Ensure teachers are well paid, receive regular training and utilize interactive and engaging teaching methods that support practical learning for their students. Ensure students have access to well-trained specialists, including in computer science, sciences, mathematics and foreign languages. Teachers should be fully informed about, trained in and equipped and empowered to implement education reforms, including through regular opportunities for professional development. Education authorities should work together with youth and parents to regularly monitor and evaluate teaching quality and support improvements on an ongoing basis.

- **Modernize school and university learning environments.** Ensure youth have the opportunities they need to participate fully in a global society and to compete in a global marketplace. Expand computer and Internet access in all schools and universities and for all learners, ensuring sufficient electricity to power this technology and student access to well-trained computer science instructors. Refurbish and/or build schools and classrooms to meet demand, reduce class size where necessary, and provide more access to youth in remote areas. Ensure all learning facilities have consistent access to water, heat and electricity and are free of hazardous materials. Establish and/or continue to improve school libraries, sports and dining halls, laboratories, dormitories, health spots and materials and equipment for learners who have physical disabilities and other special needs. Increase student access to highly qualified, school-based counselling.
CONCLUSIONS AND YOUTH PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Provide more up-to-date, low-cost or free and relevant textbooks and other literature in necessary languages.** Ensure that course literature meets international achievement standards and course requirements and is accessible to all learners at the start of and throughout their courses. Expand the number of school, university and community libraries and their holdings, and modernize these facilities, including through computerization and free Internet access.

- **Research and develop youth-driven solutions to address smoking, drug and alcohol use among youth.** Determine and address gaps and differences in the geographic and demographic coverage of outreach efforts. Establish and/or fully enforce anti-smoking, drug and alcohol policies in schools and universities, ensuring that education personnel are not exempt. Build on successes.

- **Investigate violence in and around schools, including inter-ethnic and religious conflict, and enhance protective factors.** Work with youth, parents, school and university officials and government and law enforcement authorities to develop, implement and evaluate violence prevention and response policies and programmes.

- **Increase opportunities for youth participation in education decision-making and action to improve education quality through student governments and other forums.** Take advantage of widespread youth enthusiasm, ideas and willingness to shape education quality and improve their lives and the lives of others, from individual desires to study as much as possible to calls to work together with education authorities on ways forward. Step up awareness-raising efforts to inform all youth about education policy and programmes. Education authorities should make education policy and programme information easily accessible to youth, including through a dedicated website and via radio and print media. Education authorities and youth should work together to develop opportunities for youth involvement in decision-making and other activism, recalling youth suggestions provided in this study. Youth should take action and get involved with efforts to improve their education quality, taking advantage of structures that already stipulate student authority over education decision-making in some areas.

- **Decrease education costs, and expand financial support to students, with attention to the needs of the economically poorest students, female youth, youth with special needs and those in single-parent households.** Increase the number of scholarships, stipends and other financial resources and tools available to students and their families to ensure that young people do not fail to complete their desired level of education due to financial constraints. Make these resources available especially at the secondary and tertiary levels of education, and tie them to both academic achievement and potential.

- **End teacher and other forms of corruption in education systems.** Ensure students are not required to pay bribes or sustain other non-formal costs to instructors or education officials in order to get good grades and to access higher education institutions and other education services. Establish and/or enforce fair learning, assessment and promotion processes, where all students are treated equitably regardless of social status, political affiliation or family connection. Learning processes should be regularly monitored and evaluated by education authorities, with input and review by other areas of government and the public, including youth. Anonymous student complaints systems should be established in schools and universities to report corruption and other education quality issues with clear, accountable follow-up procedures. Youth should also desist from participating in corruption, including with peer-to-peer support.

- **Promote secondary school completion.** Promote the value of secondary education among parents, youth and government authorities, emphasizing the rights of both females and males to complete their education. Support calls for education completion with action to facilitate both access and success. Ensure equal opportunity within the education system, and endeavour to maintain or improve its quality on an ongoing basis. Ensure youth have safe and effective avenues to enforce their right to education when parents or others post barriers.
• **Study and address the causes and effects of youth absenteeism and dropping out of school.** Develop, finance and implement strategic plans to curb absenteeism and dropping out, with a focus on the distinct experiences of the most affected groups, including those of both males and females.

• **Study and address the causes and effects of rising traditionalism, increasingly conservative religious practices and other barriers to youth getting an education.** Education authorities should work with youth, parents, teachers and others to develop and implement strategic action plans to address the impacts of education barriers for youth, ranging from cultural traditionalism, religious conservatism and lack of parental support, to financial difficulties, displacement and early marriage especially affecting girls.

• **Expand tertiary education opportunities.** Ensure as many youth as possible who want to achieve higher education have the opportunity to do so, with equity for youth who are marginalized by economic, geographic, political or other circumstances. Secondary schools must prepare youth with the skills and level of achievement necessary to advance to higher education. Both public and private HEIs must be held to clearly established rules of accreditation. Where education reforms are implemented rapidly, ensure that students have the urgent support they need to meet new achievement and progression requirements successfully, especially at the secondary level, as they are seeking to qualify and pay for higher education.

• **Expand modernize technical and vocational education and training opportunities for youth.** Ensure TVET students have access to contemporary technologies and teaching methods and learn critical thinking and job-seeking skills. Investigate increased interest among female youth in TVET, particularly as an alternative, or in response to dropping out.

• **Explore and implement alternative education options for youth.** Expand and enhance formal and non-formal education offerings to meet youth demands for more diverse learning options, such as specialized tutoring, distance learning, flexible course schedules, supplemental courses, make-up courses (for example, to address learning disruptions during emergencies) and non-formal training. Ensure youth interested in a second chance to complete their formal education or an alternative have avenues and means to do so.

• **Revise curricula with an emphasis on increased use of technology, practical learning, job market links, life skills development and opportunities for domestic and foreign language learning.** Link curricula reform to strategic plans for meeting international achievement standards and improving employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled youth workers. Ensure textbooks and other learning materials are in line with new requirements and that teachers are well-trained and equipped to implement these reforms. Ensure youth have opportunities to develop critical thinking, negotiation, active listening and communication skills in all learning approaches.

• **Expand opportunities for extra-curricular activities and non-formal and informal learning.** Respond to youth interests in having more opportunities to learn about topics and have experiences and gain skills that are not offered in formal curricula, and for more opportunities for social interaction. Expand school-based extra-curricular activities such as sports training and competitions, creative arts, clubs and seminars, and initiate more ‘events for youth’, such as concerts or charity events involving activities that are not necessarily related to school. Also, support youth centres as key loci for extra-curricular learning and recreation.

• **Strengthen links between education and employment, ensuring smooth school-to-work transitions for all youth.** In addition to linking curricula with the market for skills and utilizing practical learning approaches in classrooms, expand opportunities for youth internships and training opportunities that support marketable skills development. Pursue policies and programmes that support job creation, enforce equal employment opportunities for young people and end corrupt and nepotistic hiring practices. Continue to diversify international support beyond the development of national volunteer service corps opportunities that serve relatively small numbers of young people.
• **Research and address gender gaps in youth education and employment.** Investigate differences between male and female youth in educational achievement, including where either females or males are outpacing their counterparts in the achievement of secondary and higher education, and the impacts of these differences on individuals, families and societies as a whole. Research and strategically address youth employment gaps, particularly affecting female youth.

• **Determine how youth subgroups prefer to receive information on the diverse subjects of health, HIV/AIDS and nutrition; gender and sexual relationships; and peace and tolerance.** Explore ways for schools to expand and evaluate the impacts of their role in providing this content to youth.

• **Expand learning opportunities for youth with disabilities and other special needs learners across the education system, as much as possible within conventional schools.** Increase opportunities for youth with special needs to learn within general education systems, providing facilities and equipment and developing and implementing appropriate learning approaches. Support ongoing sensitization among youth and their communities regarding the value and importance of inclusive education for all.

• **Increase international student exchange opportunities at both the secondary and tertiary education levels.** Provide more opportunities for youth to access education opportunities in other countries, supporting intercultural learning and specialized skills development.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1. YOUTH ADVOCACY STATEMENTS

UNICEF provided youth in Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan with opportunities to develop youth advocacy statements supporting the empowerment of youth in their respective areas to take action on education quality issues. The process of developing the youth statements and the statements themselves were designed to give young people positive experiences in collaborative advocacy and to enhance their skills developing advocacy messages. The statements express young people’s views on education quality and may be used locally, nationally and internationally by youth, UNICEF and other stakeholders to advocate for the improvement of education quality for adolescents and youth. Key audiences will include local and national youth organizations and networks; local, regional and national government; UNICEF, civil society and other stakeholders (Emry, 2010).

The youth advocacy statements summarize adolescent and youth perspectives on:

- Why improving education quality is important to young people;
- The current challenges education is facing (in their area) that have kept education from meeting the needs of some young people;
- How education quality can be improved; and
- How policymakers and educators can involve youth in the process of improving education.

Youth researchers and other youth involved with many public and private institutions and organizations across Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan developed the statements. UNICEF international research team members, UNICEF Country Office staff and other facilitators worked with youth participants at one-day events that took place some weeks following each of the five-day trainings, but before the completion of research implementation. The agendas included: welcome and introductions; a discussion of youth needs in education; explanation of what an advocacy statement is; and breakout groups to develop content.

In each case setting, participants worked in small groups to produce draft elements of their statement and then reported back to the entire group, which posed clarifying questions and selected the challenges identified, key recommendations and specific verbiage they would like to see included in a collective statement. The facilitators and volunteer youth participants consolidated all small group drafts into larger workshop drafts that were again commented on by the larger groups. An international research team member further edited the draft statements, and a subset of the youth participants with English skills provided final revisions in each case.

The final statements reflect participants’ personal experiences with education, the education challenges they see, their hopes for improved education quality and how these improvements would empower them and their society. They include the key steps they believe need to be taken to improve education quality in their setting and how UNICEF can promote the findings of their respective youth studies. The text of the final statements follow, providing powerful closing remarks.
APPENDIX 1. KOSOVO YOUTH ADVOCACY STATEMENT

February 21, 2010

**We, the Kosovo youth representatives** of non-governmental organizations, student councils and the diverse communities of Kosovo have gathered to call on our leaders to improve the quality of education. As researchers for and partners to UNICEF’s investigation of adolescent and youth perspectives on the impact of fragility on education quality in Kosovo, we offer our insights on the current state of education and our recommendations on what is needed to improve education quality throughout Kosovo.

We believe we are the present and the future of our country. We are the people who plan to stay, live and work in Kosovo. We are the ones who are working for the brighter future of Kosovo, regardless of our nationality or religious or political views.

Considering the large number of young people in Kosovo, the leaders of Kosovo have a responsibility to ensure the fulfilment of MDG Number Two, which aims for universal primary education and youth and adult literacy. Leaders of Kosovo should also ensure stronger and ongoing support for secondary and tertiary education, which would also contribute to the achievement of the remaining MDGs.

**EDUCATION QUALITY IN KOSOVO FACES MANY ONGOING CHALLENGES**

The economic status facing many young people during the transitional period of the last 10 years has directly affected the quality of education we can receive. Many young people find themselves forced to leave school in order to survive economically. This may particularly affect marginalized youth, such as those from the Roma and Egyptian and/or rural communities.

Our curriculum continues to be prepared by so-called experts without consulting students at all. Therefore teachers do not have the necessary guidance or awareness of student needs to prepare us to pass our national exams. Many teachers need additional training in their subject matter so that they can more adequately prepare us for our future careers. Furthermore, students do not receive adequate career counselling, or professional and practical learning opportunities at school. Class sizes are also too large – it is scandalous when a teacher has 45 students and only 40 minutes to give each of them the attention they deserve.

Corruption and nepotism also negatively affect our education and relationships with our educators. If a student has enough money, family or mutual relationships with university professors, or can express the same political view as their teacher, they are rewarded with higher marks, even if the student knows nothing about the course subject. This is a fact that must be changed!

Our school infrastructure is often poor and problematic. We often find schools without enough chairs and desks; where the school has not been properly cleaned or protected from materials dangerous to our health. There are communities where one can find two large modern schools in close proximity to one another, yet in other communities there is no school building at all, or it is old and decrepit.

Everyone has the right to learn in good conditions, where they also have enough space to be involved in sports and other activities that engage them positively outside of class. Currently, there are too few constructive extra-curricular activities in which students can become involved; this can contribute to students being drawn into unhealthy behaviours.

Students also have a right to access education free of discrimination, but there are many youth that continue to face inequity in the school system because of their background or opinions. This inequality at school must end!
And even though we are living in the 21st century, in Kosovo there are too many students who do not feel secure inside or near their school. Students continue to face physical and psychological abuse from other students and professors, too.

Our leaders have not demonstrated that they have developed a vision for the social advancement of Kosovo society and education’s role for achieving it.

Therefore, we call upon the Ministry of Education, our governmental leaders, school officials, donors, UNICEF and young people themselves to improve the quality of education in Kosovo for all.

**We, youth representatives and youth researchers recommend:**

**Improving our learning environment**

- Stronger enforcement of anti-smoking and anti-drug policies in school;
- Building more schools in communities where they are needed and ensuring they have adequate learning materials, modern facilities and equipment that are in proper working condition (such as adequate cabinet space, lab and sports facilities and equipment, Internet and working computers that all students can access);
- Class sizes be kept to manageable numbers (at most 25 students in one classroom);
- Improving policies that promote interactive learning, a positive teacher-student environment and improved communications;
- Stricter and more active enforcement to end physical and psychological abuse and violence by students, school staff or community members in and near schools;
- Offering counselling services for students facing emotional, psychological or other personal challenges that prevent them from effectively learning.

**Improve our learning processes and systems**

- Making sure that the national graduation test of achievement accurately reflects what is taught in the official school curriculum and vice versa;
- Stricter enforcement of teacher selection to ensure they are qualified to teach their subject;
- Promoting teachers’ ongoing education, training and professional development, with which they can continue to develop the skills and expertise needed to most effectively educate their students;
- Greater enforcement of faculty professionalism and adherence to school regulations, and an end to impunity for teachers who break rules;
- Ensuring that material resources necessary for quality education (such as books) are made truly affordable or are provided directly to students;
- Ensuring our universities adhere properly to the Bologna Process.

**Improve our learning content**

- Updating and modernizing the school curriculum to be responsive to student needs and current workplace expectations;
- Making the implementation of practical learning opportunities through class mandatory; helping students move beyond theory to its practical application;
- Better teacher evaluation that involves student input – some teachers need to be reminded to stick to the official curriculum, whereas others need more freedom to respond to the needs of students;
- Strengthening and expanding the number and type of vocational schools and ensuring they are adequately resourced and supported.
Ensuring positive learning outcomes

- Making certain that class and student evaluation processes are truly fair, transparent and free from corruptive practices;
- Offering more useful career guidance services for students at every school.

Increasing youth participation

- Greater youth participation in the design, decision-making and review of education systems, processes and curriculum.

Ending the politicization of education

- Revaluating the law that regulates school and student councils so that students have the necessary power to influence, change and enforce policies that improve the quality of education and learning environment in their individual schools;
- Stronger policing and punishment of politicization and nepotism by school officials and staff.

UNICEF and youth groups should actively promote the findings of this education study by:

- Meeting with donors to ensure they adequately support education initiatives and target the programmes youth identify as the most important to their education;
- Meeting with Kosovo’s national and local leaders in every municipality;
- Engaging student parliaments and partnering with youth organizations to lead school campaigns and to recruit additional students to help disseminate the findings;
- Inviting the media to be present at student-led events related to this study;
- Actively using school newspapers and newsletters;
- Bringing students together from the diverse regions and communities of Kosovo to work collectively in the study’s promotion;
- Bringing students from the four countries of this study together to work collectively at the global level.
APPENDIX 1B. GEORGIA YOUTH ADVOCACY STATEMENT

March 25, 2010

We are Georgian youth and young adult representatives of non-governmental organizations, student bodies and the diverse communities of a country facing an uncertain and unstable future. We want to receive a quality education so that we may have a brighter tomorrow. As researchers for UNICEF’s investigation of adolescent and youth perspectives on the impact of fragility on education quality in Georgia, we offer our insights on the current state of education and our recommendations on what is needed to improve education quality throughout Georgia. We as youth believe that if our leaders listen to us, we can improve our country’s situation.

We believe we are the present and the future of Georgia, and therefore WE ARE WHAT IS POSSIBLE. We would like to contribute our energies and creative ideas to help guide Georgia towards a brighter future that embraces our diverse ethnic, religious, cultural, political and ideological backgrounds and fundamental values.

Georgia’s students are concerned with many aspects of our education:

We believe that Georgia’s education system suffers from broad levels of inflexibility and disorganization. School and university administrators are failing to adequately manage resources and implement policies, reinforcing the barriers that prevent pupils and students from receiving a quality education. Additionally, the politicization of education by political parties further erodes our faith in Georgia’s educational system and its policymakers. The Ministry of Education and school directors do not currently have the autonomy needed to make decisions free from undue politically motivated influences from the president or the ruling party.

Schools and universities across Georgia are in desperate need of improved infrastructure, such as more adequate laboratories, libraries and school equipment. Schools and universities often do not have acceptable hygienic facilities or central heating, while many other school buildings are in need of a full physical rehabilitation. Students and pupils who study at the least funded universities and schools are particularly disadvantaged and have even less opportunities to gain a high quality education.

Schools lack quality textbooks. This is particularly true for non-Georgian speaking schools – for example, in some schools where pupils must wait as long as two months into their academic year to receive textbooks printed in Russian. In other cases, teachers often dislike the newer Georgian textbooks, and do not feel these books are adequately informative or insightful. Therefore, some teachers continue to use old Soviet-era textbooks, causing pupils to have to make photocopies of these older books at their own expense.

School and university administrators are not doing enough to stop crime, vandalism, drug and alcohol abuse or smoking by teachers/lecturers and pupils/students in the learning environment. Gender discrimination and violence also robs students, pupils and faculty of a safe learning atmosphere. Pupils/students with disabilities, or who represent ethnic, cultural, sexual preference or religious minorities, also face harsh prejudice and/or systemic inequities at school/university. Students also face discrimination from school staff, teachers or other students for expressing their political or societal views, or representing particular political or social groups.

Many teachers/lecturers are not adequately qualified for the classes they teach, and many others take no personal interest in the progress of their students/pupils and the learning process. This may stem in part from the low wages and inadequate support and training teachers/lecturers receive, diminishing their own personal and professional motivation. Many adolescents themselves are also indifferent to their education. Schools are completely absent of social workers, and school psychologists are often unqualified to help students. Schools/universities also lack meaningful organized sports events or extra-curricular activities, which would serve to build the pupil/student community, improve our motivation and minimize participation in unhealthy behaviour.
Schools/universities also lack or fail to enforce appropriate school discipline. Furthermore, our schools/universities need to enforce the existing, or build a more transparent, assessment system that eliminates nepotism and material encouragements.

It is essential that education policymakers establish a more direct connection between our curriculum and the current employment market and realities. Learning processes are often not related to the development of usable and marketable cognitive and practical skills. School and university managers make decisions unilaterally and do not effectively listen to students or consider their opinions, needs or problems. This is due to students not being given an opportunity to be involved in the inner workings of school decision-making processes.

In addition to the challenges within our educational systems, Georgia’s community is suffering from deep and prolonged economic difficulties that make it difficult or impossible for many students to afford books, fees, proper clothing and shoes or transportation to school. These additional hardships further reduce students’ ability to be fully involved in their education or gain from educational opportunities.

We believe that these problems in Georgian education need to be solved both at the macro and micro levels. Therefore, it is necessary to implement systematic changes throughout our education system and at individual schools/universities. We appreciate the recent efforts that have been made to reform the education system in Georgia. While some improvements are being made, more needs to be done. We propose our ideas and suggestions to the Government of Georgia and civil society as a whole for improving our education.

We, Georgian youth representatives and youth researchers, recommend:

**Improving our learning environment**

- Improving or rebuilding the physical infrastructure and conditions of schools and ensuring they have classrooms that can fit their students, have appropriate and well-equipped laboratories and sports facilities, and adequate Internet access;
- Improving access to education for students who lack financial security;
- Providing inexpensive university dormitories, making it easier for students coming from distant regions to access university-level education;
- Conducting research about the social attitudes towards disabled students and students from ethnic, religious or sexual minorities to develop strategies to address and end discrimination against them in schools and universities. Training faculty and students in diversity awareness and tolerance;
- Providing psychosocial and primary health services at school;
- Improving communication between teachers and students, and developing an environment conducive to their cooperation;
- Instituting, improving and enforcing safety, security and behavioural policies;
- Providing free or subsidized transportation between schools and student residence areas.

**Improve our learning processes and systems**

- Pushing government and other responsible institutions to be more active in improving and implementing educational systems and policies;
- Establishing a special government body that has more direct control over implementing educational reform, policies, administration, faculty management and monitoring, and teacher and student ethical codes of conduct. The special body should have representatives from school administration, teacher and student groups and answer directly to the Ministry of Education;
- Using a central website, or centrally located brochures and flyers at schools and universities to inform pupils/students about educational programmes and opportunities, including: specialty and exchange
programmes, career guidance and school-to-work opportunities in specific fields, information about job markets, information about trainings for youth and upcoming lectures. This information needs to be accessible to all students/pupils, particularly in villages and remote mountainous regions. They also need to be available in multiple languages;

- Separating school processes from party politics, empowering administrators to make necessary decisions that improve education quality at their school, free of influence from political party officials.
- Improving education spending oversight to reduce and eliminate fraud and mismanagement and increase financial transparency, fiscal responsibility and completion of priority reforms such as school reconstruction;
- Providing ongoing training for teachers, providing higher salaries to attract more qualified teachers, and implementing regular teacher certification and evaluation tests. Teachers should also be fully involved in developing trainings to ensure the skills they want and need are included.

**Improve our learning content**

- Re-evaluating and redesigning teaching instruments and curriculum to reflect the needs of students/pupils;
- Ensuring students have adequate access to up-to-date course and additional reading materials (in Georgia’s various widely-used languages), diverse and advanced learning materials, a wide range of primary and elective courses to meet the demands of student interests and needs;
- Establishing and implementing more innovative and engaging learning and teaching methods;
- Supporting and establishing more non-formal education and trainings from non-governmental organizations;
- Providing more sports and cultural events between schools/universities and pupils/students. These events should be self-governed by the students/pupils, but directly supported by the Ministries of Education, Culture, Monuments Protection, and Sport. These ministries should also take direct part in organizing these events and supporting the student/pupil bodies.

**Ensuring positive learning outcomes**

- Implementing programmes on tolerance and diversity to ensure youth understand and support a more just, united and democratic society. Representatives of diverse and minority groups (cultural, religious, social, class, gender, ethnic and sexual minorities) should be directly involved in designing and implementing these programmes;
- Increasing student/pupil access to exchange programmes that broaden Georgia’s worldview and experience/skills base;
- Linking curriculum directly to what is covered in university entrance exams, the needs of the labour market and employer demands, and establishing more institutions that support youth employment and skills training;
- Adding and strengthening school programmes that address social, behavioural and life skills development;
- Developing and improving technical, trade or craft skills programmes so that students have a broader range of skills;
- Developing systems and incentives that encourage teachers/lecturers to take a more direct interest in student/pupil progress and success;

**Increasing youth participation**

- Ensuring that youth have more opportunities to express their opinions directly and to influence or make decisions in educational institutions and systems;
• Reinforcing the use of student self-government institutions that allow students to identify and address student problems, disputes, issues and needs directly;

**UNICEF and youth groups should actively promote the findings of this education study by:**

• Using national radio and television to report on the study’s findings and inviting the media to be present at student-led events related to this study;
• Urging the government to support youth-led projects that specifically aim to address issues identified in this study;
• Meeting with important and relevant government ministries and departments to educate them on the study’s findings and propose ideas to address the concerns of youth;
• Working with legislators to promote laws that improve education based on the study’s findings;
• Developing UNICEF-initiated projects designed to address concerns from the study;
• Meeting with the headmasters and school officials to develop individual school strategies and inform administrators of the study’s findings;
• Developing a website for the study and its findings. Ensure that the website is in multiple languages.
APPENDIX 1C. TAJIKISTAN YOUTH ADVOCACY STATEMENT

July 7, 2010

We are youth and young adult representatives from the many communities of Tajikistan. We are researchers for UNICEF’s investigation of adolescent and youth perspectives on the quality of education in Tajikistan. We are members of many institutions and public organizations from across our country. We are university and secondary school students; we are also young teachers, and we have gathered here in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, to discuss the problems that exist within our education system. The challenges we as young people face are the problems that our nation must address if it and we are to be prosperous. For this reason we, as youth representatives, would like to express our individual and the general opinion youth hold concerning the quality of education in Tajikistan.

We present this statement with the hopes and aspirations that, together with our leaders, we will improve the quality of education, improve the welfare of adolescents and young people and build the prosperity of Tajikistan. Through this statement we offer some ideas for how the problems facing education quality in Tajikistan can be solved.

We would like you to consider the following core education quality issues:

Throughout Tajikistan we are faced with a shortage of well-equipped secondary schools. Existing classrooms are frequently overcrowded. The infrastructure of schools is often poor and problematic, and does not meet the needs of the physically disabled. In many regions of Tajikistan, schools are too far away for students to readily access them, and in some villages there are no secondary schools at all, and even other villages are without preschool facilities. Girls, the economically poor and the disabled have an equal right to a quality education, but institutional and societal barriers have prevented their equal access.

Our textbooks are woefully inadequate in both quality and quantity. Textbooks are not compliant with our curricular requirements, and are not regularly available in native or second languages. We lack enough schools where instruction is offered in second languages such as Russian or Uzbek. Conversely, we lack Tajik language teachers at Uzbek- and Kyrgyz-dominated schools (such as in the Asht, Oksinjot, Oshoba and Murghob districts). This has contributed to the deteriorating level of education quality in secondary and higher education institutions.

Many schools do not have proper libraries, and libraries that do exist, often lack proper publications and resources. Electronic libraries are even less likely to be available. Furthermore, schools do not offer language, computer, sewing, dancing or music courses. Sports facilities are also not usually available (such as in the Asht, Danghara Sebiston and Kulob districts). These services and facilities should not be viewed as luxuries; they are important components to developing well-rounded students. They are important for providing constructive extra-curricular activities that offer students positive alternatives to unhealthy behaviours.

Teachers are not encouraged and do not generally use interactive and engaging teaching methods. Many teachers lack the skills or knowledge base needed to teach the subjects for which they are responsible. Teachers who are specialized in one subject are expected to teach other courses for which they are not trained. Teachers are also not given proper incentives to do their job well. They are poorly paid and are not given the manuals and resources they need for their classes. Too many teachers also misappropriate school resources for their own private use. Youth and teachers do not respect the laws and policies put forth by the Ministry of Education, and there is a broad absence of mutual respect between students and teachers.

Corruption exists at a number of educational institutions. Student scoring is neither transparent nor fair. Some teachers expect payment for good scores. Students are forced to pay to use what are supposed to be free
and public educational resources and equipment, such as textbooks, computer labs, etc. These practices regularly discourage students from wanting to do well in school. This must change.

Persistent social and economic inequality throughout Tajikistan and the financial difficulties many families face make it very difficult for large numbers of students to afford education-related expenses. The tuition is too high at some educational institutions, and some schools impose their own arbitrary fees. The quota system for economically poor students from rural or remote regions is mismanaged and full of corruption, preventing deserving students from accessing higher education. The academic opportunities between rural and urban children are unequal and favour urban students from more politically influential regions of Tajikistan. Forcefully displaced youth who would like to continue their education often lack access to adequate educational institutions. Labour-based migration also poses unique and unaddressed problems for students and teachers: schoolteachers leave their jobs, contributing to the lack of teachers in migrant communities; and students who migrate for work often do not complete their studies.

Tajikistan’s youth and adolescents have a limited worldview, which is exacerbated by growing nationalism and individual regionalism among young people, and is urged by various political leaders. Students are further affected by either anti- or pro-religious agendas. Religion has negatively affected some students’ ability to receive a secular education in more religious regions of Tajikistan, and conversely religious intolerance has caused unimpeded public (and systemically supported) discrimination against students who openly practice their religion. Cultural, religious, systemic and institutionally based gender discrimination also perpetuates inequalities for girls wishing to continue their education, particularly for those at upper secondary and higher education levels. Students are also hindered by a lack of parental, family, spousal or teacher support. This is all compounded by the fact that young people are generally unaware of their legal rights and the government’s responsibilities for their education.

Student and staff violence are also prevalent problems within schools and universities. Furthermore, schools do not have adequate medical or counselling services to address the many social, economic and psychological stresses with which students are forced to cope.

Students lack the motivation to do more with the education they receive. Students are not compelled to compete, and do not have consistent or proper internship opportunities. Students are not given enough practical learning experiences in or outside of school. There are not enough cultural centres or international student exchange programmes. Students are not being adequately taught the foreign languages required to compete in a globalized economy. Young people themselves must also take more personal responsibility towards their education.

Young people strongly wish for and are ready to take part in the decision-making processes that determine the quality of their education at micro or macro levels, but they are not given the opportunity. Whereas some reforms and improvements have been made, they do not go far enough to address our many and legitimate concerns. For these reasons, we call upon the Ministry of Education, our governmental and community leaders, school officials, donors, UNICEF, parents and young people themselves to improve the quality of education in Tajikistan for all.

We propose and call on the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, Parliament, the various ministries, donors, community leaders, parents and young people themselves to take the following actions to improve education quality in Tajikistan:

**Improve our learning environment**

- The Ministries of Health and of Education need to ensure that all schools are equipped to meet the needs of disabled students. We cannot treat disabled youth as second-class citizens;
- The Ministries of Labour and Social Protection and of Education need to ensure that all schools are provided the necessary equipment for laboratory classes, sports activities and computer courses;
The Ministries of Health and of Education need to launch classes on tolerance and diversity in order to foster healthier attitudes towards people from different socio-economic, cultural, religious, ethnic and political backgrounds;

The Ministries of Health and of Education must offer proper, professionally qualified and confidential counselling services in all educational institutions;

Construct new and modern schools, using local labour forces, particularly young labourers;

Build enough schools and hire enough quality teachers to ensure that the maximum number of students per class is no more than 20 to 25;

Local government authorities and school administrators need to repair the existing inventories of school equipment, tools and resources;

The Government of Tajikistan needs to support local authorities to supply power generators and properly ventilated coal-based stoves to adequately heat schools in the winter;

The Ministry of Education needs to partner with local authorities and business leaders to establish more rural Internet cafés, sports and recreational centres and debate clubs for rural students;

Local authorities and business leaders need to encourage local entrepreneurs to assist in the purchase of school equipment, tools and resources. Business leaders need to understand that by providing this assistance, they are investing in the skills and capacities of Tajikistan’s long term professional and general labour pools;

The Ministry of Education, school administrators and local authorities should set up boxes through which students can drop anonymous complaints. Schools could also install surveillance cameras to safeguard against teachers who abuse students;

Government, political party and religious leaders must settle their disputes over the role and place of religion within education so that we can end discrimination and likewise minimize unfair influences on young people who simply wish to receive a quality public education. Civil dialogue between secular and religious leaders is needed to move local mentalities and traditions towards the valuing of quality public education for all young people.

**Improve our learning processes and systems**

**Education funds**

- The Ministries of Finance and of Education need to approach more donors to increase investments in Tajikistan’s education system (young people and teachers should be included in these meetings);
- The State Agency of State Financial Control and Fighting Corruption and the Ministry of Education need to set up a highly visible and well-monitored special department or agency, and a task force to seek out, prosecute and end corruption within the education system;
- The Ministries of Finance, of Economics and of Education need to work together to ensure the use of foreign aid and Government of Tajikistan budget allocations to education are more transparent, targeted and purposeful. This process needs to be made more public.

**Teacher support and qualifications**

- The Ministry of Education should hire teachers based on a competitive merit system in conjunction with applicants’ qualifications;
- The Ministry of Education and district governments need to pay salaries to rural teachers in a timelier manner (for example: Zafarobod). Rural teachers should also be paid higher salaries in order to attract more highly qualified teachers to less desirable posts. The Ministry of Education in general should increase teachers’ salaries and expand their package of benefits;
The Ministry of Education needs to provide teachers with adequate classroom tools and resources, and provide them access to additional training and programmes that build their teaching capacity;

The Academy of Sciences and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection with the Ministry of Education should develop more professional development courses for teachers to ensure teachers and professors are skilled in what is most relevant for modern society and needs.

**Access to education**

- Reduce tuition fees and education-related expenses to improve the likelihood that low-income families will be able to afford and attend school;
- Establish opportunities and special classes for individuals who would like to complete their education but were forced to drop out (due to early marriage, pregnancy, illness, economic status, etc.);
- The Ministry of Transport and Communications needs to partner with local authorities to provide free transportation for teachers and students living in remote areas, in order to improve attendance rates and minimize the financial hardship of rural communities;
- The Ministries of Education, Finance and of Foreign Affairs could improve student motivation by increasing student stipends, organizing international information exchanges and ensuring access to student exchange programmes;
- The Ministry of Education, anti-corruption authorities and the Youth Parliament need to strengthen the control of stipend distribution and the quota system; particularly in rural areas, and help to address problems associated with regionalism;
- The Ministry of Education should allow communities that wish to pay fees to subsidize the needs at poorly performing schools to do so, particularly in localities where the population has the financial capacity, but where the Ministry of Education is not providing adequate financial resources to certain schools;
- Encourage girls to complete secondary education before marriage. Educate families to understand the importance of girls’ education. Establish mechanisms that make it easier for girls who married young or are young mothers to continue their education without punishment or discrimination.

**Improve our learning content**

- Provide to schools where Uzbek and Kyrgyz is the language of instruction, more Tajik language teachers and courses;
- Organize additional Tajik language courses for students who do not speak Tajik but study in Tajik-speaking schools;
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should establish more foreign language centres and courses;
- The Ministries of Culture and of Education need to establish more modern libraries, including electronic libraries, as well as facilities where young people can engage in healthy extra-curricular activities;
- The Ministry of Education should utilize more sector specialists to help the education system modernize textbooks and make them more relevant to today’s academic and professional needs.
- The Ministries of Health and of Education need to work together to develop a more relevant and informative curriculum that promotes healthy lifestyle choices, and improves youth awareness of health issues, risks and preventive measures;
- Establish new and modern printing services that use the best of current technologies so that our textbooks are of higher physical quality and are printed in a more rapid and timely manner.
Ensure positive learning outcomes

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should expand international student exchange programmes and teacher training opportunities abroad. They should also invite highly qualified specialists from other countries to run professional development courses in Tajikistan;
- School administrators should partner with NGOs and the Ministry of Culture to develop more supplemental courses and international excursions that introduce students to broader world views;
- The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection needs to work directly with the Ministry of Education to develop more employment opportunities for students and university graduates;
- The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection needs to stop the outflow of highly qualified specialists by directly connecting them to well-paid positions within Tajikistan;
- The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection must prohibit the use of Government-mandated youth labour in both rural and urban areas (such as forcing students to clean public land or schools).

Increase youth participation

- The National Youth Committee and the National Youth Parliament should ensure that they have student representatives from each and every school;
- The Ministry of Education and partnering NGOs should conduct trainings and seminars to improve and expand youth awareness of their legal rights in regards to education;
- NGOs should conduct information campaigns and distribute booklets to improve parental, student and community awareness of gender issues, gender needs and gender rights in education;
- Youth committees and youth organizations should expand opportunities to young people to be involved in public and open debates about education.

UNICEF and youth groups should actively promote the findings of this education study by:

- Circulating the report’s findings specifically within each of the clusters in which the study was conducted. UNICEF and the MoE should hold meetings in each cluster to discuss the findings with the community. These meetings should be well advertised so that questionnaire respondents and focus group participants can attend anonymously;
- Distributing the final report among Tajikistan’s youth networks;
- The NGO community can promote the study’s results and use the relevant components in their own work;
- Youth researchers and UNICEF should hold press conferences and conduct a public awareness campaign through the media;
- Creating a website that explains the findings, outlines strategies, takes suggestions and promotes education quality;
- UNICEF and youth researchers should hold a meeting with the Ministry of Education to present the research results. UNICEF should also organize a follow-up meeting one year later to review any progress made;
- UNICEF should circulate the report and an executive summary to interested parties, after which UNICEF will organize meetings with representatives from the various departments and ministries to discuss next steps;
- UNICEF should organize meetings at the local level between the youth researchers and community business, religious, civic and other leaders to identify community members who have the capacity and are willing to support activities that can improve education quality and provide necessary equipment and resources at the local level.
APPENDIX 2. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON RESEARCH AIDS, DESIGN AND METHODS

- **Stakeholder analysis and implementation partners** – The youth organization the Kosovar Youth Council (Kosovo) and research and consulting agencies BCG Research (Georgia) and M-Vector Consulting Agency (Tajikistan) served as the principal implementing organizations in their respective sites. They worked in collaboration with a lead local researcher in Kosovo; local researchers in Georgia and Tajikistan; UNICEF Kosovo, Georgia and Tajikistan Country Offices; an international research team; and youth research teams. They carried out administrative, logistical, financial and data management responsibilities for project implementation. UNICEF Country Offices also assisted the international research team with administrative, logistical and technical support, including obtaining the necessary permissions to undertake the research. Many other groups and organizations assisted the implementing organizations and the youth research team in their work, such as Kosovo’s Centre for Civil Society Development and the NGO Communication for Social Development, as well as the youth NGO, Youth Group for the Protection of the Environment in Khujand, Tajikistan.

- **Youth consultations on education quality** – Four one-day consultation events involving 77 youth in all were co-organized by local researchers, principal implementing organizations, NGOs and/or UNICEF Country Offices. In Kosovo, two consultations were held involving 30 participants aged 14–28, one in the ethnic Albanian-majority capital city of Pristina and another in the Serbian-majority city of Mitrovica. Eighteen youth between 15 and 24 participated in a consultation in Georgia’s capital, Tbilisi, and another 29 youth between 15 and 28 participated in one in Tajikistan’s capital, Dushanbe. In all cases, participants included: males and females; adolescents and youth at schools and universities; those involved with youth NGOs; employed and unemployed youth; and as much as possible, youth from diverse geographic areas (urban, rural, regional) within each country.

- **Youth inputs** – Consultation participants were engaged in a series of brainstorming and synthesizing exercises that moved them from thinking and talking about youth and education quality issues in general, to developing specific questions about the topics they raised for use in the structured survey questionnaires and focus groups. The consultation reports and contributions from UNICEF RO CEECIS, the reference group of experts, UNICEF Country Offices and other methodological background sources, formed the basis of draft survey questionnaires that were debated, field tested and revised with youth during the research team’s training period. Where youth inputs were largely similar in each case, the questionnaires were structured and worded as similarly as possible for each case to enhance comparability. At the same time, each contains questions and wording that are specific to the circumstances and interests of the youth in these areas.

- **Youth-generated education quality domains** – Youth-generated dimensions of education quality at times overlapped with some of the key components of education quality identified in UNICEF’s Child Friendly School approach, including the following domains:

1. Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities.
2. Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive and provide adequate resources and facilities.
3. Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace.
4. Processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities.
5. Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.

**Kosovo:**

- **Learning environment** – Issues largely corresponding with UNICEF’s education quality criterion two outlined above, ranging from the need to: improve technology and practical learning facilities in schools, build more schools, provide more school counsellors and better hygiene facilities, and enforce anti-smoking rules.
- **Learning content** – Issues largely corresponding with UNICEF’s education quality criterion three outlined above, such as teacher qualifications; learning methods and teacher domination in class; overloaded curricula; lack of student exchange opportunities; inadequate reforms; limited course choices; and lack of literature/books.
- **Learning outcomes** – Issues largely corresponding with UNICEF’s education quality criterion five outlined above, such as professional competence; scholarships and other incentives; graduation exam as an obstacle; lack of university preparatory courses; lack of special schools for disabled students; lack of job counselling for students; education not connected with current job market; lack of practical work; high youth unemployment.
• **Social issues** – Discrimination along ethnic and geographic (urban/rural) lines; student drug use; gender inequality; high private university costs; unemployment; ongoing post-conflict violence; other security issues; student absenteeism, among others.

• **Youth participation** – Lack of respect for student councils as equal partners with teachers and parents; an overall absence of youth in decision-making; lack of student motivation; student absenteeism (cross-listed with social issues); poor relations between students and teachers.

• **Legal framework** – Structure and systems issues; gaps in learning due to the existence of parallel education systems in the 1990s; impact of war on the education system; ‘paralysed’ education reforms; decentralization; poor municipal cooperation on education; non-formal education funding; private university licensing; low teacher salaries; slow implementation of European education regulations; politicization of formal education.

**Georgia:**

• **Learning environment** – Issues largely corresponding with UNICEF’s criterion two outlined above, including poor school infrastructure; class size; infrastructure and facilities for children with disabilities; and safety at schools.

• **Quality of teaching** – Methods of teaching (memorization rather than teacher explanation and innovation); poor teacher qualifications; teacher-student interaction; low teacher training on rapidly changing textbooks; need for private tutors; high costs of books.

• **Content** – Issues largely corresponding with UNICEF’s criterion three outlined above, including curriculum (limited options); frequent textbook changes; inadequate content of textbooks and courses; limited elective courses; inadequate Georgian language teaching in non-Georgian schools.

• **Organizational culture** – Unsatisfactory education reforms; teacher age (too old); teacher corruption; high university costs; lack of non-formal, extra-curricular and peer-to-peer learning opportunities; school uniforms; school social workers and psychologists needed; limited exchange programmes; low effectiveness of student councils; low level of free expression.

**Tajikistan:**

• **Education system** – Issues ranging from regulation of the university quota system\(^2^8\) and the scarcity of HEIs in rural areas, to the irrelevance of military training in school and what some youth call an unstable, frequently changing education system.

• **Quality of pedagogical staff** – Teacher shortages, including in rural areas; low teacher and lecturer salaries; use of old teaching methods; under- or unqualified teachers.

• **Technical facilities in education institutions** – Poor equipment and facilities (no computers, heat, electricity, cafeterias, showers, health spots, or facilities for disabled students); poor student dormitories; scarcity of electronic libraries and databases.

• **In- and out-of-school student support** – Extreme scarcity or non-availability of counsellors; lack of literature; little financial support from parents; no employment-oriented crafts clubs.

• **Material and non-material support for youth** – Few student stipends, discounts, loans or free public transportation; limited job opportunities; no student-organized charity events or ‘big events’ for youth; few youth spaces in cities; no assistance for entering HEIs.

• **Violation of youth rights and freedoms** – Environmental issues on education grounds; arbitrary collection of funds from students; no rights to choose courses and teachers; insufficient information for youth; early marriages that cause school drop-outs; beer bars near schools; class cancellations.

• **Implementation of youth rights and freedoms** – Poor control over administration’s performance; no anonymous complaints system; no regulation of alcohol consumption; need for legislative amendments; poor attention to youth in rural areas.

• **National research team recruitment and training** – The three youth research teams were ultimately comprised of 93 young people in all (48 females and 45 males), including:
  - Kosovo – 10 females and 12 males aged 17 to 24.
  - Georgia – 17 females and 12 males aged 17 to 29 (average age 22);
  - Tajikistan – 21 females and 21 males.

\(^2^8\) The presidential quota system is a government decree on admitting students from remote rural areas into HEIs, with the aim of increasing opportunities for males and females in these areas to obtain higher education. The government has also issued quotas specifically supporting the admission of females into HEIs.
Some of the youth researchers had participated in the youth consultation prior to the team training, and many had not. They were recruited from geographic areas around each country to address logistical challenges and support the ease of interaction across ethnic, linguistic and other divides. The researchers self-identified in a range of ways, including as secondary and university students; members of majority and minority ethnic communities; as working and unemployed youth; youth from urban and rural areas; youth activists; NGO-affiliated; and more.

Twenty-two research supervisors in all (10 females and 12 males) were also employed to facilitate the work of the youth researchers, including:

- Kosovo – two females and four males
- Georgia – three females and two males
- Tajikistan – five females and six males

Like the youth researchers, the research supervisors also came from areas across each country to facilitate logistics and ease of social interaction. They included NGO staff members, a sociologist, an independent researcher, a university lecturer, schoolteachers, parents, a PhD student and a former youth activist.

Their respective five-day trainings on the study methodology took place: February 3–7, 2010 in Pristina, Kosovo; March 15–19, 2010 in Tbilisi, Georgia; and June 19–23, 2010 in Dushanbe City, Tajikistan. The international research team and the lead and other local researchers worked with the team to review and discuss the study goals and objectives and to learn and practice its methods.

At the end of the trainings, the youth research team and supervisors worked with the international research team, the local researcher and implementation partners to develop a detailed team implementation plan. In addition to implementing the survey, they also made commitments to organize and conduct focus groups with youth across their countries. As also noted above, youth involved in designing and implementing the study were invited to participate in a one-day event to develop a youth advocacy statement, results of which are available in Appendix 1.

- **Sample design:**

  **Sampling frames:** Data on the distribution of households in Kosovo compiled by the Statistics Office of Kosovo (SOK) in cooperation with the World Bank and DFID and updated in 2009 served as the sampling frame for the Kosovo survey (Statistical Office of Kosovo, 2009). Data from the 2002 census in Georgia served as the sampling frame for the Georgia survey, and population data for 2009 compiled by Tajikistan’s State Agency for Statistics (SAS) served as the sampling frame for the Tajikistan survey.

  **More on sampling:** For more details on the enumeration areas and primary sampling units (PSUs), see the individual case reports published under separate cover. Note that the number of households randomly selected at the second stage of sampling was increased in Kosovo to anticipate the estimated distribution of 13–24-year-olds among households and non-response, and to increase the amount of information collected overall, especially from Serbian-majority areas of Kosovo, where the Republic of Serbia education system operates. According to the integrated households survey of the SDSG, the target population for the study (13–24-year-olds) is in about 40 per cent of Georgia’s households. Assuming a 25 per cent non-response rate, 20 households per PSU were randomly selected to obtain six completed surveys each for Georgia. According to the SAS, the target population for the study is in about 35 per cent of Tajikistan’s households. Assuming a 15–20 per cent non-response rate, 20 households per PSU were randomly selected to obtain 10 completed surveys in each for Tajikistan.

**Table A1. Distribution of households in Kosovo education system areas by strata**

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### Table A2. Distribution of households in Republic of Serbia education system areas in Kosovo by strata

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### Table A3. Distribution of Georgia PSUs and interviews by strata

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<th>Interviews completed Rural</th>
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<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samtskhe-Javakheti</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjara</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guria</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samegrelo</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imereti, Racha-Lechxumi, Svaneti</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>102</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mtskheta-Mtianeti</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>576</td>
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</table>

### Table A4. Distribution of interviews in Tajikistan by strata

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Projected Urban</th>
<th>Projected Rural</th>
<th>Interviews Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dushanbe</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Districts of Republican Subordination</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sughd</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khatlon</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountainous Autonomous Region of Badakhshan (GBAO)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan TOTAL</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>865</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A5: Selected characteristics of the final Kosovo youth perspectives on education quality survey sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Kosovo All</th>
<th>Kosovo education system</th>
<th>Republic of Serbia education system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>% within Kosovo All</td>
<td>Frequency % within Kosovo system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>220</td>
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<td>Average age</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>17.4</td>
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<td>Age group</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13–18</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19–24</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Albanian</td>
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<td>78.7</td>
<td>407</td>
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<td>Serbian</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bosniak</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roma/Ashkalia/Egyptian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turk</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or more times and:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned home</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still displaced</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently resettled</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never displaced</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>238</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living situation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live with:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult family member</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>97.5</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult guardian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live independently</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic indicators</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have my own room</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have home computer</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have own cell phone</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family owns a car</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>301</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education attained**</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently enrolled</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not currently enrolled</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropouts</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data reported in this table have not been re-weighted. Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth of a per cent.
** ‘Education attained’ refers to the highest level of education attained by the respondents (see question 10 in the Kosovo structured survey in Appendix 3). Subcategories are grouped as follows, in Table A5: Primary for ‘all’ and both education systems includes: some primary and completed primary in the survey; secondary for ‘all’ includes: secondary for both the Kosovo and Republic of Serbia education systems in the survey; secondary Kosovo education system includes: some lower secondary, completed lower secondary, some gymnasium, completed gymnasium, some vocational, completed vocational for the Kosovo education system in the survey; secondary for Republic of Serbia education system includes: some secondary and completed secondary for the Republic of Serbia education system in the survey; tertiary all includes: tertiary for Kosovo and Republic of Serbia education system in the survey combined; tertiary Kosovo education system includes: some first stage, completed first stage, some masters, completed masters for the Kosovo education system in the survey; tertiary Republic of Serbia education system includes: some first stage and completed first stage for the Republic of Serbia education system in the survey. Note that just six respondents, or 1.3 per cent of the Kosovo education system sample, reported experience with vocational education at the secondary level. No respondents were in or had completed PhD programmes and none responded that they had never been enrolled at any education level at all.
Selected characteristics of the final samples:

Selected characteristics of the final samples drawn for each case are depicted in Tables A5, A6 and A7 and are further described here.29

Kosovo: Overall, and as seen in Table A5, 517 youth were surveyed in Kosovo, including 440 in areas where the Kosovo education system is running and 77 in areas where the Republic of Serbia education system is in place. The demographic breakdown falls along predicted lines for the sample as a whole, with roughly even numbers of male and female respondents participating and more youth in urban areas than those in rural areas. The average age of the respondents was 17, and about 66 per cent were between the ages of 13 and 18, while 34 per cent were 19 to 24. The majority were ethnic Albanians and many were ethnic Serbs who, as noted previously, were oversampled by approximately 75 per cent, to increase the amount of information from the Republic of Serbia education system areas. Less than 5 per cent were from other ethnic groups, reflecting recent demographic estimates. Over 40 per cent of respondents were displaced at some point in their lives. The vast majority of youth said they were currently living with an adult family member. Over three quarters were currently enrolled in school at the time of the survey. Approximately 61 per cent of youth reported secondary as the highest level of education they had attained. Another 27 per cent said primary, and 12 per cent said tertiary. Nearly 6 per cent permanently dropped out of school before completing primary or secondary education. Twenty-two per cent also said they currently had a job. Most youth have access to the four economic indicators surveyed, with those saying ‘yes’ ranging from 64 to 77 per cent.

The characteristics highlighted in Table A5 varied along several lines according to the system area. As expected, Albanians in the majority live where the Kosovo education system runs, and Serbs in the majority live where the Republic of Serbia education system runs. While the proportions of males and females responding to the survey in the Kosovo education system are less than a percentage point apart, they are about 9 percentage points apart for Republic of Serbia education system respondents, the larger proportion being males. About 43 per cent of the Kosovo education system respondents have been or are still displaced, compared with approximately 26 per cent of Republic of Serbia system respondents. Most youth with displacement experience, however, have since returned home or been permanently resettled. A larger proportion of the Republic of Serbia education system area youth, about 86 per cent, are currently enrolled in school, compared with about 77 per cent of youth in Kosovo education system areas. A higher proportion of youth in the Republic of Serbia education system area say their highest level of education attainment was primary and tertiary, compared with Kosovo education system area youth, who report a higher proportion at the secondary level. Urban youth and those with secondary or tertiary education are more likely than their counterparts to say they have most of the economic indicators.

Georgia: As seen in Table A6, 581 youth were surveyed in Georgia, of whom 296 are in urban areas, and 285 are in rural areas. The demographic breakdown falls along balanced lines for the sample as a whole, with roughly even numbers of male and female respondents participating, as well as urban and rural percentages. The average age of the respondents is between 18 and 19, with about 45 per cent of the sample between the ages of 13 and 18 and the remaining 55 per cent between 19 and 24. Nearly all of the respondents – over 90 per cent – are ethnic Georgians. Another 6 per cent are Azerbaijanis, and nine ethnic groups make up the remainder of the sample.

Less than 10 per cent of respondents claim that they or their parents have been displaced at some point in their lives. The vast majority of youth say they are currently living with an adult family member – more than 95 per cent of respondents. About two thirds say they are currently enrolled in school. Approximately 45 per cent of youth report secondary or professional as the highest level of education they have attained. Another 19 per cent report a primary or basic level of education, and 35 per cent tertiary. About 13 per cent say they have jobs, and between 6 and 7 per cent say they dropped out of primary or secondary school. Most youth say they have a bedroom and a cell phone of their own, while less than half have access to a home computer or have a family car.

The characteristics highlighted in Table A6 vary along several lines according to whether the environment of reference is urban or rural. Females are slightly more represented in urban areas, where they account for 53 per cent of respondents. A larger proportion of urban respondents, (about 65 per cent), are currently enrolled in school, compared with youth in rural areas (at 58 per cent). A higher proportion of urban respondents say their highest level of education attainment is tertiary – about 42 per cent – compared with rural youth – 28 per cent. Youth in urban areas are two times more likely than youth in rural areas to have access to a home computer and are also more likely to have a cell phone. Tertiary-educated youth are also more likely to have access to a bedroom of their own, a home computer and a cell phone than youth with less education.

As also noted in Tables A5, A6 and A7, all of the numbers reported in this section represent data that have not been re-weighted. All of the relationships reported, however, hold true when statistical tests are run using standardized, re-weighted data for Georgia and Tajikistan. However, more youth marriage appears to be taking place in rural areas than in urban areas in Tajikistan when analysed using standardized, re-weighted data (about 14 per cent of youth in rural areas, compared with 8 per cent of youth in urban areas, a statistically significant difference). Data reported in the ‘comparison of case studies’ section use standardized re-weighted data for Georgia and Tajikistan. All re-weighted figures were not obtained for Kosovo, and findings based on data that have not been re-weighted are presented throughout this report for Kosovo.
# Table A6: Selected characteristics of the final Georgia youth perspectives of education quality survey sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Georgia All</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondents</strong></td>
<td>581</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Age</strong></td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>18.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13–18</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19–24</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgian</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>90.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijani</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other**</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Displaced</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self and/or Parents, One or More Times and:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned home</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still Displaced</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently Resettled</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never Displaced</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>93.8</td>
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<td><strong>Living Situation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Live with: Adult Family Member</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Guardian</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live Independently</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Indicators</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have My Own Room</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>224</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have Home Computer</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have Own Cell Phone</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>245</td>
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<tr>
<td>My Family Owns a Car</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>117</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education Attained</strong>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrolment Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently Enrolled</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Currently Enrolled</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dropouts</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Status</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Employed</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data reported in this table have not been re-weighted. Frequencies and percentages will vary somewhat among the case findings, where standardized re-weighted data are presented. Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth of a per cent. 
**Youth of other ethnic groups sampled and their percentages of the sample include: Armenian (.1), Chechen (.2), Kist (.6), Kurd (.3), Ossetian (.3), Polish (.1), Russian (.2), Turkmen (.3) and Ukrainian (.3). 
***‘Education attained’ refers to the highest level of education attained by the respondents. See question 10, Georgia structured survey, Appendix 3. Subcategories are grouped as follows. Primary in Table A6 includes: some and completed primary (years 1–6) as primary is termed in the survey; and some and completed basic school (years 7–9). Secondary includes: some and completed secondary (years 10–12) as secondary is termed in the survey; and some and completed primary and/or secondary professional. Tertiary includes: some or completed university (BA, MA, PhD, years 13–20). No respondent claimed to have never been enrolled in formal education or to have only had some or completed pre-primary.
Tajikistan: As shown in Table A7, 865 youth were surveyed in Tajikistan, including 239 in urban areas and 626 in rural areas. Urban and rural percentages reflected the roughly 30/70 split anticipated by the sample design, and about a third more females were sampled than males. The average age of the respondents was between 17 and 18, with about 64 per cent of the sample between the ages of 13 and 18, and the remaining 36 per cent between 19 and 24. Most respondents (82 per cent) were ethnic Tajiks, and the remaining 18 per cent were mainly ethnic Uzbeks. About 11 per cent of the sample was married or divorced, and 7 per cent had children of their own. Nearly 20 per cent were also employed, and less than half of all youth sampled reported having any of the economic indicators surveyed (home computer use was particularly low, with just 19 per cent of youth with access).

Less than 10 per cent of respondents were displaced at some point in their lives. The vast majority of youth said they were currently living with an adult family member (more than 90 per cent). More than half (53 per cent) were enrolled in school or university at the time of the survey, and about 5 per cent said they had dropped out at the primary, basic or secondary level. Approximately 45.5 per cent of youth reported primary or basic (mainly basic, or middle school) as the highest level of education they had attained. Another 37.5 per cent reported a secondary or primary and secondary professional level of education (mainly secondary school), and 15.4 per cent tertiary. Most had attended or were attending public schools. About 5 per cent of respondents permanently dropped out of primary, basic or secondary school prior to completion. Nearly 20 per cent reported having resumed their education after a temporary disruption at some point in their lives, exceeding the number who reported some experience of displacement.

The characteristics highlighted in Table A7 varied along several lines according to whether the environment of reference is urban or rural. Tajiks are more highly represented in urban areas (where they account for 90.8 per cent of respondents) than in rural ones (78.6 per cent). Uzbeks are more highly represented in rural areas (where they are 17.3 per cent of respondents) than urban areas (7.5 per cent). Most of the small number of Kyrgyz youth sampled are in rural areas, as well. Youth in urban areas appear wealthier on average, as they are more likely than youth in rural areas to have their own room, have access to a home computer, have a cell phone and for their family to own a car. Urban youth are also more likely to be employed than youth in rural areas. Youth in urban areas are further more likely to have moved on to secondary and tertiary education than youth in rural areas, while youth in rural areas are more likely to have temporarily suspended their education. Youth in urban areas are also more likely to currently be enrolled at the tertiary level. Although both urban and rural youth predominantly attend or attended public school, more youth have experience with private education in urban areas.

Males are slightly more highly represented among Tajiks and females among Uzbeks. Family resources may also be more focused on males, higher proportions of who report having their own rooms, cell phones and access to a home computer than females. Female youth are more likely to be married (16.2 per cent of females compared with 3.8 per cent of males) and to have children than male youth (10.9 per cent of females and 2.2 per cent of males). A much higher proportion of males (about twice as many) have attained some degree of tertiary education compared with females. Males sampled are also slightly more likely to have jobs than the female youth sampled (22 per cent of males have jobs, compared with 17 per cent of females).

It is unclear why far more females than males (one third more, as noted above) were sampled. The random selection of youth within households should not have produced a bias toward female respondents, as subjects were chosen using the Kish Table from among all youth regularly residing in the household. Researchers were required to attempt to reach subjects three times before abandoning interviews and did not move to other subjects within the same household if the randomly selected individual could not be contacted. The approach also included all residences, so that youth living alone, male or female, would have had an equal probability of being sampled. The difference likely reflects a high level of outmigration from Tajikistan by young males described below, but additional research is needed to determine where many of Tajikistan’s young males are residing today.

30 In addition to the settlement type and sex differences reported in these paragraphs, when data are analysed for differences by region, youth in the Dushanbe region are consistently more likely to have more access to each of the economic indicators surveyed, with particularly high access to home computer and cell phone use, compared with their peers in other regions. See also the ‘Note on interpreting survey results’ at the end of this section.
## Table A7. Selected characteristics of the final Tajikistan youth perspectives of education quality survey sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Tajikistan All</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondents</strong></td>
<td>865</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average age</strong></td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13–18</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19–24</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tajik</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>82.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uzbek</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyz</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other**</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Displaced</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or more times and:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned home</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still displaced</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently resettled</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never displaced</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>93.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living situation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live with:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult family member</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>91.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult guardian</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live independently</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have my own room</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have home computer</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have own cell phone</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family owns a car</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>88.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Widowed/widower</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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<td><strong>Parental status</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Child or children of own</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No children of own</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>92.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>Missing</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education attained</strong>*</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Never enrolled</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Preschool</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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<td>Primary</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>44.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>34.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary or secondary</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>15.4</td>
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<td>Missing</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Frequency and percentage within each location (urban, rural) are shown.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Tajikistan All</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>% within</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current or most recent school type</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Enrolment status</td>
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<td>Currently enrolled</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not currently enrolled</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropped out from primary, basic, secondary or</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
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<td>No</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
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<td>Missing</td>
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<td>0.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary education disruption experienced****</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Employment status</td>
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<td>Employed</td>
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<td>18.9</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
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<td>79.7</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data reported in this table have not been re-weighted. Frequencies and percentages will vary somewhat in the ‘Comparison of case studies’ section, where standardized re-weighted data are presented. Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth of a per cent.
** Other ethnicity includes 13 Turkmen (1.5 per cent of the sample) and one unknown (0.1 per cent of the sample).
*** ‘Education attained’ refers to the highest level of education attained by the respondents. See question 12 in the Tajikistan structured survey, Appendix 3. Results categories are grouped together for preschool, primary, basic, secondary, primary and secondary professional and tertiary.
**** Represents answers to the question: “Have you ever been forced to temporarily suspend your education for a month or more and then later returned?”

- **Research protocols:** Researchers followed an informed consent procedure to ensure all youth respondents freely chose to participate with adequate information about the nature of the survey and the potential consequences of their participation in it. Printed participant information sheets on the uses and confidential nature of the study were provided to each respondent in multiple languages, according to their country setting. If respondents were under the age of 18, informed consent was obtained from both the youth and his or her parent or guardian.

As much as possible, interviews were conducted in private in a separate room or in a quiet corner of a room out of earshot, while the researcher not conducting the interview remained nearby at the scene until the work was completed. Younger researchers were also paired with older ones, enhancing mentorship and addressing any age discrimination issues that might have arisen, where respondents may have perceived younger researchers as bearing less authority. As possible, the groups were also assigned to work in survey areas that were nearest their residences to facilitate logistics. Researchers read survey questions aloud to respondents and marked responses on printed questionnaires; respondents were not required to read the questions or to write their answers.

Research supervisors accompanied team subgroups with younger youth researchers and circuit rode to other teams. As needed, research supervisors also doubled as researchers to conduct interviews. The supervisors helped the youth researchers manage their work and were present to enhance security and address any age discrimination issues the researchers might encounter. Supervisors also worked to ensure quality and reviewed completed questionnaires to be sure they were coded properly and assisted with their secure storage and transfer to the KYC, BCG Research or M-Vector.

No identifiers were used in written research materials; no names were taken, and numeric researcher and location codes were used. Data were kept secured at all times, including in locked filing cabinets in KYC, BCG Research and M-Vector offices.
Attempts to ensure quality were also made through regular contact with the research team by the international research team, the KYC, BCG Research or M-Vector and the local researcher, including some travel to implementation sites to accompany researchers on their rounds. The KYC, BCG Research and M-Vector also reviewed all completed surveys prior to entering information into the database. Where issues were spotted, researchers were contacted immediately to rapidly resolve them. Any errors found during a data cleaning process performed by the lead consultant were rectified. Random checks performed by the local researchers of 5 per cent of the survey data entered into the database revealed few or no errors.

**Strengths and limitations:** The scarcity of up-to-date population data presented the major constraint to obtaining accurate, nationally representative findings in each case. Despite this circumstance, the international research team and local researchers felt confident that the best available and accessible data were used for the sampling frames given time and other resource limitations.

Given resource constraints and the physical size of both Georgia and Tajikistan, travel by the international research team and implementing partners to support and monitor study implementation in sites around the country was limited. With minimal resources, youth researchers in Georgia had inadequate support and incentives to conduct focus groups in rural areas. Most researchers there also came from, and had connections in, urban areas. As a result, most focus group discussions in Georgia were conducted in urban areas, curtailing more detailed inputs from youth in rural areas.

Cultural, religious and language barriers posed distinct challenges in cluster areas in southern Georgia, particularly among Azeris, many of who refused to take the survey. The response rate among both female and male youth was low in these areas, requiring BCG, research team members and female translators to return to these clusters and engage families again to encourage youth participation, particularly among girls.

The relative inexperience of the youth researchers also presented a potential source of bias should they stray from the protocol designed to ensure the equal probability of being sampled or to read and explain each question fully. The five-day trainings stressed the importance of adhering to the protocols, and the various checks described above were employed to monitor compliance. Procedures were clarified as needed, and strategies were developed and implemented to address all methodological challenges encountered. Researchers also set their own schedules within the implementation timeframe, corresponding with times they could expect youth to be at home or otherwise accessible. Each survey took approximately 10–15 minutes to complete. In these ways, the impetus to stray from protocol and rush the work was further minimized.

Despite these processes, the goal of 100 per cent same-sex interviewing for the structured survey questionnaire was not reached in Georgia. In some cases, this was due to the imbalance of males and females on the Georgia research team, where females outnumbered males. In other instances, language barriers combined with limited budget for transportation led researchers to conduct cross-sex interviews. On other occasions, however, youth likely strayed from protocol for convenience purposes. Although the survey was not considered to be particularly sensitive, departure from same-sex interviewing may have influenced some responses where male and female participants felt more or less comfortable to answer questions fully or honestly in Georgia.

The research was made possible and was successful due to the dedication and strong collaboration of all of the partners involved, including UNICEF Kosovo, UNICEF Georgia and UNICEF Tajikistan; the youth researchers and supervisors; the lead local researcher and local researchers; the KYC, BCG Research and M-Vector; and international research team staff. Youth researchers provided the enthusiasm and energy needed to effectively identify and elicit information from their peers in diverse settings around each geographic case area. They were dedicated to the work and expressed a range of interests in it, from wanting to improve education quality for isolated rural youth, to wanting to insure inclusive education for all ethnic groups and to find ways for youth organizations to contribute to change.

The research team did not encounter any insurmountable difficulties in tracking down youth for interview despite the general mobility of youth. Youth were deemed eligible for interview if they had slept in the household at least four nights in the previous week. This eliminated the possibility of double counting should the same youth be randomly selected in another area, for instance, if he or she travelled back and forth from his or her home in another area during the week to attend university classes. Youth who had migrated out of each country were not eligible for the survey. Researchers faced challenges scheduling the interviews if the youth subject was not home at the time, but in most cases, these were resolved, and interview times were secured. Apart from constraints in the Azeri communities of Georgia noted above, in general, the refusal rates once a youth subject was contacted were very low, particularly in Tajikistan.

- **Focus group discussions:** Based on youth consultation suggestions and team discussion during the trainings, youth researchers organized focus group discussions and conducted them in subgroups of two. One researcher facilitated conversation while the other took detailed notes, and the two reported jointly. Sessions ran about an hour and a half to two hours each and involved no more than 12 participants in each.
Facilitators explored questions from the structured survey and consultations in deeper detail, in addition to questions germane to the experiences of the particular group, such as youth who study in rural areas. Some focus groups were also dedicated to exploring a particular topic in detail, such as the quality of teaching or the connections between education quality and job market experiences. As shown in Tables A8, A9 and A10, 61 focus groups were held in total, involving 484 youth, including 230 females and 254 males.

Table A8. Kosovo youth perspectives of education quality study focus group discussions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus group</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Males/females</th>
<th>Average age and range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rural female students</td>
<td>Gjakovë</td>
<td>1. 9 females</td>
<td>1. 17 (16–18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. High school students</td>
<td>Gjakovë</td>
<td>2. 5 males/3 females</td>
<td>2. 17 (16–18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students in religious schools</td>
<td>Prizren</td>
<td>3. 6 males</td>
<td>3. 18 (17–19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students from the RAE communities</td>
<td>Prizren</td>
<td>4. 4 males/2 females</td>
<td>4. 20 (15–23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Working students</td>
<td>Gjilan</td>
<td>5. 5 males/2 females</td>
<td>5. 21 (20–24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. University students</td>
<td>Pristina</td>
<td>6. 3 males/3 females</td>
<td>6. 21 (19–23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Students who participated in the parallel education system (and in-school now)</td>
<td>Fushë Kosovë</td>
<td>7. 3 males/3 females</td>
<td>7. 20 (19–22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Unemployed students</td>
<td>Podujevë</td>
<td>8. 3 males/5 females</td>
<td>8. 18 (17–19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Youth whose parents are deceased (5 in-school, 3 out-of-school)</td>
<td>Gjakovë</td>
<td>9. 4 males/4 females</td>
<td>9. 17 (13–20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Youth with disabilities/Special needs (in-school)</td>
<td>Pristina</td>
<td>10. 5 males/5 females</td>
<td>10. 15 (13–19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Youth from ethnic minority groups who do not study in their mother tongue (8 in-school, 2 out-of-school)</td>
<td>Prizren</td>
<td>11. 7 males/3 females</td>
<td>11. 18 (14–30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Youth activists attending school</td>
<td>Severna Mitrovica</td>
<td>12. 6 males/3 females</td>
<td>12. 20 (17–23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Teens/high school students</td>
<td>Gracanica</td>
<td>14. 3 males/4 females</td>
<td>14. 16 (14–18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Employed youth (5 in-school, 2 out-of-school)</td>
<td>Gracanica</td>
<td>15. 4 males/3 females</td>
<td>15. 22 (20–24)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A9. Georgia youth perspectives of education quality study focus group discussions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus group</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Males/females</th>
<th>Average age and range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Youth in the care of guardians (problems in getting education)</td>
<td>Tbilisi</td>
<td>1. 4 males/4 females</td>
<td>1. 17 (15–22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tbilisi State University students</td>
<td>Tbilisi</td>
<td>2. 4 males/4 females</td>
<td>2. 21 (19–22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. High school students (11th and 12th grades)</td>
<td>Tbilisi</td>
<td>3. 7 males/3 females</td>
<td>3. 17 (17–18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Youth opinions on employment problems in Georgia</td>
<td>Tbilisi</td>
<td>4. 3 males/4 females</td>
<td>4. 22 (19–24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Teacher-pupil relations</td>
<td>Tbilisi</td>
<td>5. 1 males/5 females</td>
<td>5. 18 (17–18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The influence of globalization on education/Adding more nationalistic subjects to public school curricula</td>
<td>Kutaisi, Imereti region</td>
<td>6. 4 males/3 females</td>
<td>6. 19 (16–22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Satisfaction with the education system, reforms, inclusive education, cognitive skills</td>
<td>Kutaisi, Imereti region</td>
<td>7. 4 males/4 females</td>
<td>7. 19 (18–22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Education quality in universities and colleges</td>
<td>Telavi, Kakheti region</td>
<td>8. 3 males/6 females</td>
<td>8. 19 (17–23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Quality of education in public schools</td>
<td>Telavi, Kakheti region</td>
<td>9. 3 males/5 females</td>
<td>9. 15 (13–16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. General review of the education system</td>
<td>Gori, Shida Kartli region</td>
<td>10. 3 males/3 females</td>
<td>10. 23 (19–24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Middle school students</td>
<td>Samegrelo region</td>
<td>11. 3 males/3 females</td>
<td>11. 15 (13–16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Focus Group Discussions

**Focus group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Males/females</th>
<th>Average age and range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Middle school students</td>
<td>12. Zugdidi, Samegrelo region</td>
<td>12. 3 males/3 females</td>
<td>12. 16 (14–17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Youth perceptions of early marriage (during school years)</td>
<td>15. Tbilisi</td>
<td>15. 5 males/4 females</td>
<td>15. 17 (14–22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Good environment, better education</td>
<td>17. Tbilisi</td>
<td>17. 3 males/4 females</td>
<td>17. 20 (18–23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Justifying the professional expectations of education</td>
<td>20. Tbilisi</td>
<td>20. 3 males/3 females</td>
<td>20. 20 (18–23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Youth</td>
<td>22. Tbilisi</td>
<td>22. 4 males/6 females</td>
<td>22. 18 (15–22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Youth</td>
<td>23. Shida Kartli region</td>
<td>23. 5 males/5 females</td>
<td>23. 15 (13–18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table A10. Tajikistan youth perspectives of education quality study focus group discussions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Rural/urban</th>
<th>Males/females</th>
<th>Average age and range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Youth going in for sports</td>
<td>1. Vanj District</td>
<td>1. Rural</td>
<td>1. 10 males/0 females</td>
<td>1. 18 (13–23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ethnic minority youth</td>
<td>2. Murghob</td>
<td>2. Rural</td>
<td>2. 5 males/5 females</td>
<td>2. 19 (16–24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Youth who do not agree with the current education system, indocile adolescents</td>
<td>5. Dushanbe</td>
<td>5. Urban</td>
<td>5. 5 males/3 females</td>
<td>5. 16 (15–16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Students from rural areas</td>
<td>7. Shurobi Village, Hisor District</td>
<td>7. Rural</td>
<td>7. 5 males/4 females</td>
<td>7. 15 (14–18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Students studying at schools that lack electricity, gas and visual aids</td>
<td>10. Zafarobod</td>
<td>10. Rural</td>
<td>10. 4 males/5 females</td>
<td>10. 15 (13–17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus Group | Location | Rural/urban | Males/females | Average age and range |
---|---|---|---|---|
17. Students in village schools | 17. Asht | 17. Rural | 17. 4 males/3 females | 17. 17 (14–21) |

**Notes on interpreting survey results:** Given the age range of the respondents, youth opinions about their experiences of education quality in each site span many years of the functioning of the education system. Unless otherwise noted, all respondents were asked to provide opinions about their current or most recent term in the formal school system in Kosovo, Georgia or Tajikistan. For example, youth currently in secondary school were asked to refer to their most recent term of enrolment. Those who had graduated, dropped out or suspended their education and were no longer enrolled in any education programme were asked to refer to their experience of the last term they were enrolled in the formal education system. Thus, the findings should be understood as representing the average of this range of experience. Note, however, as detailed in Tables A5, A6 and A7, most respondents surveyed state that they are currently enrolled in an education programme. Thus, in the majority, youth responses speak to their opinions of very recent experiences of education quality.

For all statistical analyses, T-tests or Chi-square tests for statistical significance were run, with findings reported for significance at a 95 per cent level of confidence and higher. As outlined above, the sample was designed to be able to make inferences from the sample to the population with regard to settlement type (urban/rural) in each case. Thus, any finding of statistical significance can be generalized to the population with a high level of confidence for 13–24-year-olds according to:

- Settlement type (urban/rural)
- Education system area (Kosovo education system/Republic of Serbia education system)

Although the sample design does not support inferences about other subcategories of youth sampled at population level with a high level of confidence, statistical analyses were also run according to a range of other youth subgroups, including:

- Sex (male/female);
- Age group (younger/13–18 and older/19–24);
- Education level attained (Kosovo: primary, secondary, tertiary; Georgia and Tajikistan: primary/basic, secondary/primary and secondary professional, tertiary);\(^{31}\)
- Drop-out history (drop out/no drop out before secondary completion; for Tajikistan, this category also includes youth who have temporarily suspended attendance in primary/basic or secondary/professional school);
- Employment (those with a job and those with no job);
- Displaced (those ever or never displaced);

\(^{31}\) For simplicity, the shorthand primary/secondary/tertiary is used to represent these subgroups for Georgia and Tajikistan. See respective questionnaires in Appendix 3 for more detail on education levels in each case.
• Absenteeism (those absent from school one or more times in the previous 12 months without an authorized excuse, and those not absent without an authorized excuse); and
• Conflict-affected (those who say they have felt direct negative effects of armed conflict on their education quality, and not conflict-affected – those do not feel their education has been directly affected by conflict).  

Findings of statistical significance for these subgroup comparisons are representative of the sample drawn only. They provide interesting information that may warrant further research. Highlights of the results of these analyses are presented below along with information obtained from the focus groups held. See case reports published under separate covers for more detailed information on subgroup differences.

32 Due to resources constraints, subgroup comparisons for conflict-affected were analysed for the Tajikistan case only.
APPENDIX 3: STRUCTURED SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

Structured Survey Questionnaire Kosovo
(Includes both Albanian- and Serbian-language versions of Questions 10 and 27)*

Informed Consent has been provided by:
1. ☐ Mother 2. ☐ Father
3. ☐ Male guardian 4. ☐ Female guardian
5. ☐ The respondent aged 18-24

Group 1: General Demographic and Family

1. Are you male or female?
   1. ☐ Male 2. ☐ Female

2. How old are you?
   1. ☐ 13 2. ☐ 14 3. ☐ 15 4. ☐ 16
   5. ☐ 17 6. ☐ 18 7. ☐ 19 8. ☐ 20
   9. ☐ 21 10. ☐ 22 11. ☐ 23 12. ☐ 24

3. What is your ethnicity? Check all that apply.
   1. ☐ Albanian 2. ☐ Serbian
   3. ☐ Roma/Ashkalia/Egyptian 4. ☐ Bosniak
   5. ☐ Gorani 6. ☐ Turk
   7. ☐ Other

4. Have you ever been forcefully internally displaced from your home?
   1. ☐ Yes, once but I have since returned home
   2. ☐ Yes, more than once but I have since returned home
   3. ☐ Yes, once, and I am still displaced from my home
   4. ☐ Yes, more than once, and I am still displaced from my home
   5. ☐ Yes, one or more times, and I am now settled permanently in a new home
   6. ☐ No, I have never been displaced from my home

5. What adults do you live with, if any? Please check one.
   1. ☐ I live with an adult family member
   2. ☐ I live with an adult guardian (not a family member)
   3. ☐ I live independently from my family or guardian alone or with others

6. Do you have a room of your own?
   1. ☐ Yes 2. ☐ No

7. Do you have a computer at home that you are allowed to use?
   1. ☐ Yes 2. ☐ No

8. Do you own a cell phone?
   1. ☐ Yes 2. ☐ No

9. Do you or does your family own a car?
   1. ☐ Yes 2. ☐ No

10. What is highest level of education you have completed?* Check one only.

   Kosovo Education System
   1. ☐ Never Enrolled
   2. ☐ Some Primary
   3. ☐ Completed Primary
   4. ☐ Some Lower Secondary
   5. ☐ Completed Lower Secondary

   Upper Secondary:
   6. ☐ Some Gymnasium
   7. ☐ Completed Gymnasium

   Post-secondary:
   10. ☐ Some First Stage
   11. ☐ Completed First Stage
   12. ☐ Some Masters
   13. ☐ Completed Masters
   14. ☐ Some PhD
   15. ☐ Completed PhD

   Republic of Serbia Education System
   16. ☐ Never Enrolled
   17. ☐ Some Primary
   18. ☐ Completed Primary
   19. ☐ Some Secondary
   20. ☐ Completed Secondary

   Post-secondary:
   21. ☐ Some First Stage
   22. ☐ Completed First Stage
   23. ☐ Some Masters
   24. ☐ Completed Masters
   25. ☐ Some PhD
   26. ☐ Completed PhD

11. Are you currently enrolled in school or another education programme?
   1. ☐ No, go to question 12 2. ☐ Yes

Group 2: Education Satisfaction and Expectations

12. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent, how would you rate the quality of education in Kosovo today?
   1. ☐ 1 Poor 2. ☐ 2 3. ☐ 3
   4. ☐ 4 5. ☐ 5 Excellent
13. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about what education is important for?
(This question focuses on formal education).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education is important for...</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.4 Good citizenship and helping me develop this country</td>
<td>1. O</td>
<td>2. O</td>
<td>3. O</td>
<td>4. O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.6 Education is not very important</td>
<td>1. O</td>
<td>2. O</td>
<td>3. O</td>
<td>4. O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. a. Would you like to achieve more education than you have already?
1. ☐ Yes  2. ☐ No

b. What factors most affect or affected your ability to achieve the level of education you wish for? Check all that apply. (If you have already completed your desired level of education, respond according to what factors were most important in achieving it).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ☐ My personal interest and motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ☐ My personal academic achievements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ☐ Level of parental and/or spousal support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ☐ Financial means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ☐ Availability of affordable child care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ☐ Competing responsibilities (work, family, other)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. ☐ Availability of programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. ☐ Accessibility of programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. ☐ Support from teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. ☐ Flexible course schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. ☐ The quality of my secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. ☐ Paralysed education policy reforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. ☐ Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group 3: Learning Environment

15. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the learning environment at your school? (The focus of this question is on formal education. Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Environment</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.1 My school is clean, well-maintained, pests are controlled and hazardous materials are removed</td>
<td>1. O</td>
<td>2. O</td>
<td>3. O</td>
<td>4. O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.2 The facilities in my school are adequate; there are enough desks, chairs, laboratory and sports equipment, books and other learning materials and hygiene facilities</td>
<td>1. O</td>
<td>2. O</td>
<td>3. O</td>
<td>4. O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.3 More schools should be built to accommodate one learning shift so that students can participate in more non-formal activities at school</td>
<td>1. O</td>
<td>2. O</td>
<td>3. O</td>
<td>4. O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.5 Stricter enforcement of rules against smoking is needed in school</td>
<td>1. O</td>
<td>2. O</td>
<td>3. O</td>
<td>4. O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.6 There is a lot of drug use in my school</td>
<td>1. O</td>
<td>2. O</td>
<td>3. O</td>
<td>4. O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.7 There are too many students in my classes</td>
<td>1. O</td>
<td>2. O</td>
<td>3. O</td>
<td>4. O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about safety and security in and around your school? (The focus of this question is on formal education. Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.3 I have personally been bullied at school (other students humiliated me, made fun of me, hit or kicked me, threatened me, or excluded me from their group)</td>
<td>1. O</td>
<td>2. O</td>
<td>3. O</td>
<td>4. O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. Who and what is causing violence occurring in and/or around schools? Check all that apply.
   1. ○ There is no violence occurring
   2. ○ Students are causing the violence
   3. ○ School staff are causing the violence
   4. ○ Policing in and around school is inadequate
   5. ○ Youth have poor communication skills
   6. ○ The effects of war are ongoing
   7. ○ There is gender inequality
   8. ○ Other, specify

18 Do you face difficulties getting an education for any of the following or other reasons? Check all that apply. (The focus of this question is on formal education. Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school).
   1. ○ Facilities are inadequate for my special needs
   2. ○ Teachers single me out for mistreatment and punishment
   3. ○ Other students make me feel unwelcome
   4. ○ I cannot access school easily because of its location
   5. ○ My parents do not support my attending school
   6. ○ I cannot afford extra private classes offered by teachers
   7. ○ I am sexually harassed in and/or around school
   8. ○ I am bullied by others
   9. ○ Classes are not taught or offered in my mother tongue
   10. ○ Other

19 Where do you get the majority of information about health, including HIV/AIDS; nutrition; gender issues; sex education and peace and tolerance building? Choose one response only.
   1. ○ School
   2. ○ Family
   3. ○ Peers/Friends
   4. ○ Television, Radio and/or Newspaper
   5. ○ Internet
   6. ○ Non-governmental organizations
   7. ○ Other, specify
   8. ○ I do not receive information on these topics

20. a. Would you like to have any of the following changes made to your classes? Check all that apply. (Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school).
   1. ○ Include more practical learning opportunities
   2. ○ Expand student choices of elective courses
   3. ○ Decrease the total number of required courses
   4. ○ Provide more non-formal training opportunities
   5. ○ Kosovo history between 1990–2010 is taught in a way that represents and creates dialogue about different viewpoints
   6. ○ Ensure more computer and Internet usage in school
   7. ○ Expand opportunities for international student exchange
   8. ○ Emphasize life skills development more (decision-making, negotiation, critical thinking and other skills)
   9. ○ Ensure direct linkages to the job market
   10. ○ Other

   b. Which of these would be your priority?
   1. ○ My priority is _____________. (Write the item number here from the list in 20a).

Group 5: Learning Outcomes

21. In the last 12 months, did you stay away from school at least a whole day without a legitimate excuse? (If you are no longer in school, please answer for the last 12-month period when you were in school).
   1. ○ No
   2. ○ Yes, 1 to 9 times
   3. ○ Yes, 10 or more times

22. If you dropped out of school before completing primary or secondary school, what were the main factors that contributed to your decision to drop out of school? Check three responses that best apply.
   1. ○ I did not drop out of school, go to question 23
   2. ○ School workload was too heavy
   3. ○ I got married
   4. ○ I was expecting a baby
   5. ○ School didn’t interest me
   6. ○ Programmes were too far away
   7. ○ School was unsafe
   8. ○ Education was not relevant to my finding a job
23. Have your classes and teachers adequately prepared you to pass exams?
1. Yes  2. Somewhat  3. No

24. If you have a job, is the education you have received relevant and useful to the work you are doing? Check one.
1. Yes  2. Somewhat  3. No  4. I don’t have a job

25. What are the consequences of failing to provide good quality education to youth in Kosovo? Check all that apply.
1. Poor health outcomes among individual youth and their families
2. Deeper problems for female youth, ethnic minorities, the disabled and other groups facing difficulties getting an education
3. Decreased demand for secondary school
4. Weaker economy and poor development outcomes
5. Poor self-esteem among youth
6. Increased outmigration of youth from Kosovo
7. Increased youth grievances and disappointment with government
8. Increased likelihood of a return to conflict in Kosovo
9. Other, specify
10. I don’t know

Group 6: Learning Processes and Systems

26. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the learning process in your school? (Note that the focus of this question is on formal education. Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26.1 My teachers are well qualified to teach my courses</td>
<td>1. Yes</td>
<td>2. Somewhat</td>
<td>3. No</td>
<td>4. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.2 My teachers show interest in my progress</td>
<td>1. Yes</td>
<td>2. Somewhat</td>
<td>3. No</td>
<td>4. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.3 Attendance in private courses organized by school professors is a precondition for earning a good course grade at my school</td>
<td>1. Yes</td>
<td>2. Somewhat</td>
<td>3. No</td>
<td>4. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.4 The grading/assessment process is transparent and fair</td>
<td>1. Yes</td>
<td>2. Somewhat</td>
<td>3. No</td>
<td>4. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.5 Parent-student-teacher consultations are functioning well</td>
<td>1. Yes</td>
<td>2. Somewhat</td>
<td>3. No</td>
<td>4. No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27. Albanian-language version: Do you think the National Youth Law and Youth Strategy and Action Plan will ensure better government representation of youth and action on youth issues, including both formal and non-formal education?*

Serbian-language version: Do you think a National Youth Policy and Action Plan would ensure better government representation of youth and action on youth issues, including both formal and non-formal education?*

1. Yes  2. Somewhat  3. No  4. I don’t know anything about National Youth Policy

28. Are you satisfied with the implementation of education reforms in Kosovo?
1. Yes  2. Somewhat  3. No  4. I don’t know anything about education reforms

Group 7: Youth Participation

29. a. Are you a member of a group or organization of any kind?
1. No, go to question 30  2. Yes

b. If yes, what kind/s of group/s or organization/s?
3. Specify what type:                        4. Specify what type:

30. Is there an active Student Council in your school? (If you are no longer in school, please answer for the last term you were in school).
1. Yes  2. No  3. I don’t know

31. Do youth have enough opportunities to contribute to education decision-making in school and in other policy-making forums?
1. Yes  2. No  3. I don’t know

Group 8: The Politicization of Education

32. Has the recent war in Kosovo decreased the quality of your education?
1. Yes  2. Somewhat  3. No

33. Do political parties at times disrupt the learning process? (If you are no longer in school, please answer for the last term you were in school).
1. Yes  2. Sometimes  3. No
34. Do you have confidence in the education authority that governs your school system to provide good quality education at all levels and for all students?
   1. ☐ Yes, I think it’s doing a great job
   2. ☐ Yes, I believe it can but needs to do a better job
   3. ☐ No, the government is not in practice prioritizing education
   4. ☐ No, the government does not represent my interests
   5. ☐ Other

Group 9: Youth Education Quality Priorities and Solutions

35. What are your top three priorities for improving education quality in Kosovo? (That is, what should be done about what specific issues, and who should do it?) This is an open question. Write answers briefly and clearly.

[Note on the Kosovo structured survey questionnaire: Youth researchers debated and ultimately agreed that the final revised and tested survey questionnaire was applicable to all areas of survey implementation except for two questions. Questions 10 and 27 are written differently for use in the Kosovo and Republic of Serbia education system areas. Question 10 asks about the highest level of education attained and is worded differently in the Serbian and Albanian language surveys, reflecting differences in progressions through the school systems administered by the different education authorities. In the survey used in the Kosovo education system areas, question 27 refers to youth opinions of efforts to achieve a National Youth Law and or Strategy and Action Plan in Kosovo, whereas the Republic of Serbia education system questionnaire speaks more generally to the potential of the National Youth Policy to address youth and education issues. Youth researchers working in areas covered by the Republic of Serbia education system stated that youth in those areas would not know anything about the Kosovo Youth Law, Strategy and Action Plan.]

Structured Survey Questionnaire Georgia

Informed Consent has been provided by:
   1. ☐ Mother
   2. ☐ Father
   3. ☐ Male guardian
   4. ☐ Female guardian
   5. ☐ The respondent aged 18-24

Group 1: General Demographic and Family

1. Are you male or female?
   1. ☐ Male
   2. ☐ Female

2. How old are you?
   1. ☐ 13
   2. ☐ 14
   3. ☐ 15
   4. ☐ 16
   5. ☐ 17
   6. ☐ 18
   7. ☐ 19
   8. ☐ 20
   9. ☐ 21
   10. ☐ 22
   11. ☐ 23
   12. ☐ 24

3. What is your ethnicity? Check all that apply.
   1. ☐ Georgian
   2. ☐ Russian
   3. ☐ Armenian
   4. ☐ Azerbaijani
   5. ☐ Other

4. Have you or any of your parents ever been forcefully internally displaced from your home? Please check one.
   1. ☐ Yes, once but I/they have since returned home
   2. ☐ Yes, more than once but I/they have since returned home
   3. ☐ Yes, once, and I/they am still displaced from home
   4. ☐ Yes, more than once, and I/they am still displaced from home
   5. ☐ Yes, one or more times, and I/they am/are now settled permanently in a new home
   6. ☐ No, I/they have never been displaced from home

5. What adults do you live with, if any? Please check one.
   1. ☐ I live with an adult family member/relative
   2. ☐ I live with an adult guardian (not a family member/relative)
   3. ☐ I live independently from my family, relatives or guardian alone or with others

6. Do you have a bedroom of your own?
   1. ☐ Yes
   2. ☐ No

7. Do you have a computer at home that you are allowed to use?
   1. ☐ Yes
   2. ☐ No

8. Do you own a cell phone?
   1. ☐ Yes
   2. ☐ No

9. Do you or does your family own a car?
   1. ☐ Yes
   2. ☐ No

10. What is the highest level of education you have completed? Check one only.
    1. ☐ Never Enrolled in Formal Education
    2. ☐ Some Preschool
    3. ☐ Completed Preschool
    4. ☐ Some Primary (Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)
    5. ☐ Completed Primary (Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)
    6. ☐ Some Basic School (Years 7, 8, 9)
    7. ☐ Completed Basic School (Years 7, 8, 9)
    8. ☐ Some Secondary School (Years 10, 11)
    9. ☐ Completed Secondary School (Years 10, 11)
    10. ☐ Some Primary and/or Secondary Professional
    11. ☐ Completed Primary and/or Secondary Professional
    12. ☐ Some University (Some of any of the following: BA, MA, PhD, Years 12–20)
    13. ☐ Completed University (Completed any of the following: BA, MA, PhD, Years 12–20)

11. a. Are you currently enrolled in school/university or another education programme?
    1. ☐ No, go to question 12
    2. ☐ Yes

b. If yes, is your school/university public or private?
   3. ☐ Public
   4. ☐ Private

c. If yes, are the majority of pupils internally displaced persons?
   5. ☐ No
   6. ☐ Yes

Group 2: Education Satisfaction and Expectations

12. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very bad and 5 is very good, how would you rate the quality of the provision of education in Georgia today? Check one only.
    1. ☐ very bad
    2. ☐ bad
    3. ☐ not good nor bad
    4. ☐ good
    5. ☐ very good

33 Note that according to 2010 information from the Georgia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘secondary’ should read ‘Years 10–12’ and ‘tertiary’ should read ‘Years 13–20’.
### 13. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about what education is important for? (This question focuses on formal education. Check one answer only for each sub-question).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education is important for...</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.1 All aspects of life</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2 Preparing for a job</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.3 Ensuring a better status in society</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.4 Good citizenship and helping me develop this country</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.5 Widening my perspectives</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.6 Education is not very important</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 14. a. Would you like to achieve more education than you have already?
1. Yes  
2. No

### 14. b. What factors most affect or affected your ability to achieve the level of education you wish for? Check all that apply. (If you have already completed your desired level of education, respond according to what factors were most important in achieving it).
3. My personal interest, motivation and attitude  
4. My personal academic achievements  
5. Level of parental and/or spousal support  
6. Financial means  
7. Availability of affordable child care for children I am responsible for  
8. Other responsibilities (work, family, other)  
9. Availability of programmes  
10. Accessibility of programmes  
11. Support from teachers  
12. Ability to pay for and access tutoring  
13. Flexible course schedule  
14. The quality of my secondary school  
15. The effective implementation of education reforms  
16. Politics in Georgia  
17. Other

### Group 3: Learning Environment

### 15. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the learning environment at your school/university? (The focus of this question is on formal education. Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school/university. Check one answer only for each sub-question).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15.1 My school/university is clean and well maintained</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.2 The facilities in my school/university are adequate; there are enough desks, chairs, laboratory and sports equipment, books and other learning materials, heating and hygiene facilities</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.3 There are enough books in the language I would prefer in my school/university</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.4 More classrooms should be built to accommodate one learning shift</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.5 Psychologists in education institutions should be better trained</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.6 Social workers are needed in my school</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.7 There is too much smoking in my school/university</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.8 There is a lot of drug use in my school/university</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.9 There are too many students/pupils in my classes</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.10 More dormitories are needed at my school/universities</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about safety and security in and around your school/universities? (The focus of this question is on formal education. Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school/university. Check one response only for each sub-question).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.1 I feel safe in and around my school/university</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.2 Violence occurs in my school/university</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.3 I have personally been a victim of physical violence in or around school/university</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.4 I have been robbed in or around school/university</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.5 Some students carry weapons in school/university</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.6 At times, students/pupils damage school/university facilities</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. Who and what are causing violence occurring in and/or around schools/universities? Check all that apply. (This question can be answered by any respondent whether or not they currently attend or have attended school/university).

1. □ There is no violence occurring; go to question 18
2. □ Students/pupils are causing the violence
3. □ School/university staff are causing the violence
4. □ Policing in and around school/university is inadequate
5. □ Youth have poor communication skills
6. □ Some youth adopt an aggressive “street mentality”
7. □ The effects of war and displacement are ongoing
8. □ There is gender inequality
9. □ Other, specify

18. Do you face difficulties getting an education for any of the following or other reasons? Check all that apply. (The focus of this question is on formal education. Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school/university).

1. □ Facilities are inadequate for my special needs
2. □ Teachers/lecturers single me out for mistreatment and punishment
3. □ Other students/pupils make me feel unwelcome
4. □ I cannot access school/university easily because of its location
5. □ My parents do not support my attending school/university
6. □ I cannot afford and/or find tutoring outside school/university
7. □ I cannot afford or am unwilling to pay teachers/lecturers extra for my classes
8. □ I am sexually harassed in and/or around school/university
9. □ I am bullied by others
10. □ Classes/lectures are not taught or offered in my mother tongue
11. □ Other
12. □ I do not face difficulties getting an education for any of these reasons

Group 4: Learning Content

19. Where do you get the majority of information about health, including HIV/AIDS; nutrition; gender issues; sex education and peace and tolerance building? Choose one response only.

1. □ School
2. □ Family
3. □ Peers/Friends
4. □ Television, Radio and/or Newspaper
5. □ Internet
6. □ Non-governmental organizations
7. □ Other, specify
8. □ I do not receive information on these topics

20. a. Would you like to have any of the following changes made to your classes/lectures? Check all that apply. (Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school/university).

1. □ Use better quality textbooks, and change them less often
2. □ Expand student/pupil choices of elective courses
3. □ Increase the availability of extra-curricular, after-school/university activities
4. □ Provide more non-formal training opportunities
5. □ Expand education activities provided to youth by youth
6. □ Ensure more computer and Internet usage in school/university
7. □ Expand opportunities for international student/pupil exchange
8. □ Emphasize life skills development more (decision-making, negotiation, critical thinking and other skills)
9. □ Ensure direct linkages to the job market
10. □ Provide more and better Georgian language instruction
11. □ Provide more and better non-Georgian language instruction
12. □ Require all pupils to wear school uniforms
13. □ Utilize more innovative and engaging teaching methods
14. □ Other
15. □ I am not interested in any of these changes being made; go to question 21
b. Which of these would be your priority?

16. ☐ My priority is ______________________ (Write the number of the respondent’s top priority chosen from choices 1-14 marked in 20a. If 15 was selected, do not mark an answer here).

Group 5: Learning Outcomes

21. In the last 12 months, did you stay away from school/university at least a whole day without a legitimate excuse? (If you are no longer in school, please answer for the last 12-month period when you were in school).
   1. ☐ No
   2. ☐ Yes, 1 to 9 times
   3. ☐ Yes, 10 or more times

22. If you dropped out of school before completing primary or secondary school, what were the main factors that contributed to your decision to drop out of school? Check up to three responses that best apply.
   1. ☐ I did not drop out of school, go to question 23
   2. ☐ School workload was too heavy
   3. ☐ I got married
   4. ☐ I was expecting a baby
   5. ☐ School didn’t interest me
   6. ☐ Programmes were too far away
   7. ☐ School was unsafe
   8. ☐ Education was not relevant to my finding a job
   9. ☐ Education quality was poor
   10. ☐ Lack of financial means/poverty
   11. ☐ I had to work
   12. ☐ Lack of parental and/or spousal support
   13. ☐ The learning environment was poor
   14. ☐ Lack of support from teachers

Group 6: Learning Processes and Systems

26. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the learning process in your school/university? (Note that the focus of this question is on formal education. Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school/university. Check one answer only for each sub-question).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26.1 My teachers/lecturers are well qualified to teach my courses</td>
<td>1. ☐</td>
<td>2. ☐</td>
<td>3. ☐</td>
<td>4. ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.2 My teachers/lecturers show interest in my progress</td>
<td>1. ☐</td>
<td>2. ☐</td>
<td>3. ☐</td>
<td>4. ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.3 To earn a good course grade at my learning institution, pupils/students are obliged to give money or other benefits to teachers/lecturers</td>
<td>1. ☐</td>
<td>2. ☐</td>
<td>3. ☐</td>
<td>4. ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.4 The grading/assessment process is transparent and fair</td>
<td>1. ☐</td>
<td>2. ☐</td>
<td>3. ☐</td>
<td>4. ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.5 Parent-student-teacher consultations are functioning well</td>
<td>1. ☐</td>
<td>2. ☐</td>
<td>3. ☐</td>
<td>4. ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.6 Accessing tutoring is necessary to pass exams</td>
<td>1. ☐</td>
<td>2. ☐</td>
<td>3. ☐</td>
<td>4. ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.7 Teaching methods are engaging and effective</td>
<td>1. ☐</td>
<td>2. ☐</td>
<td>3. ☐</td>
<td>4. ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. Have your classes/lectures and teachers/lecturers adequately prepared you to pass exams? (Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school/university).
   1. ☐ Yes
   2. ☐ Somewhat
   3. ☐ No

24. If you have a job, is the education you have received relevant and useful to the work you are doing? Check one.
   1. ☐ Yes
   2. ☐ Somewhat
   3. ☐ No

25. What are the consequences of failing to provide good quality education to youth in Georgia? Check all that apply.
   1. ☐ Poor health outcomes among individual youth and their families
   2. ☐ Deeper problems for female youth, ethnic minorities, the disabled, the displaced and other groups facing difficulties getting an education
   3. ☐ Decreased demand for secondary school
   4. ☐ Weaker economy and poor development outcomes
   5. ☐ Poor self-esteem among youth
   6. ☐ Increased outmigration of youth from Georgia
   7. ☐ Increased youth grievances and disappointment with government
   8. ☐ Increased likelihood of a return to conflict in Georgia
   9. ☐ Other, specify ____________________________
   10. ☐ I don’t know

...
27. Do you think the national education reforms have improved the quality of education in Georgia? Check one.
   1. ☐ Yes  2. ☐ Somewhat  3. ☐ No
   4. ☐ I don’t know anything/Enough about national education reforms

28. Do you think the government spends enough money on ensuring quality education? Check one.
   1. ☐ Yes  2. ☐ Somewhat  3. ☐ No
   4. ☐ I don’t know anything/Enough about education spending

Group 7: Youth Participation

29. a. Are you a member of a group or organization of any kind?
   1. ☐ No, go to question 30  2. ☐ Yes
   b. If yes, what kind/s of group/s or organization/s?
      3. ☐ Specify what type: ________________________________
      4. ☐ Specify what type: ________________________________
   c. Are any of these affiliated with a school/university? (The order of the answers for part c should correspond with 3 and 4 above)
      5. ☐ Yes  6. ☐ No
      7. ☐ Yes  8. ☐ No

30. a. Is there an active student government body in your school/university? (If you are no longer in school, please answer for the last term you were in school/university).
    1. ☐ Yes  2. ☐ No; go to question 31
    3. ☐ I don’t know; go to question 31
   b. If yes, is the student governing body effective?
      4. ☐ Yes  5. ☐ Somewhat
      6. ☐ No

31. Do youth have enough opportunities to contribute to education decision-making in school/university and in other policymaking forums?
    4. ☐ I don’t know

Group 8: The Politicization of Education

32. a. Do you agree that military conflict has negatively affected education quality in Georgia? (Check one answer only for each sub-question)
    1. ☐ Fully Agree  2. ☐ Somewhat Agree
    5. ☐ Not Sure
   b. Has military conflict in Georgia directly negatively affected the quality of your education? (Check one only).
      1. ☐ Yes  2. ☐ Somewhat  3. ☐ No

33. Does politics impede the education process? (If you are no longer in school/university, please answer for the last term you were in school).
    1. ☐ Yes  2. ☐ Sometimes  3. ☐ No
    4. ☐ Not sure

34. Do you trust education decision-makers to provide good quality education at all levels and for all students?
    1. ☐ Yes, I think they are doing a great job
    2. ☐ Yes, I believe they can but need to do a better job
    3. ☐ No, they are not in practice prioritizing education
    4. ☐ No, they do not represent my interests
    5. ☐ Other

35. Do you think the quality of your education is better, worse or about the same as the quality of education your parents received?
    1. ☐ Better  2. ☐ Worse  3. ☐ About the same
    4. ☐ I don’t know

Group 9: Youth Education Quality Priorities and Solutions

36. What are your top three priorities for improving education quality in Georgia? What should be done about them, and who should take action? This is an open question. Write answers briefly and clearly in full sentences.

Structured Survey Questionnaire Tajikistan

Informed Consent has been provided by (check one only):
   1. ☐ Mother  2. ☐ Father
   3. ☐ Male guardian  4. ☐ Female guardian
   5. ☐ The respondent aged 18-24

Group 1: General Demographic and Family

1. Are you male or female?
   1. ☐ Male  2. ☐ Female

2. How old are you?
   1. ☐ 13  2. ☐ 14  3. ☐ 15  4. ☐ 16
   5. ☐ 17  6. ☐ 18  7. ☐ 19  8. ☐ 20
   9. ☐ 21  10. ☐ 22  11. ☐ 23  12. ☐ 24

3. What is your ethnicity? Check all that apply.
   1. ☐ Tajik  2. ☐ Uzbek
   3. ☐ Russian  4. ☐ Kyrgyz
   5. ☐ Other

4. Have you or your family ever been forced to leave your home due to armed conflict, natural disaster or fear of persecution by the community or authorities? Please check one.
   1. ☐ Yes, one or more times, but I have since returned home
   2. ☐ Yes, one or more times, and I am still displaced from home
   3. ☐ Yes, one or more times, and I am now settled permanently in a new home
   4. ☐ No, I have never been displaced from home

5. What adults do you live with, if any? Please check one.
   1. ☐ I live with an adult family member/relative
   2. ☐ I live with an adult guardian (not a family member/relative)
   3. ☐ I live independently from my family, relatives or guardian alone or with others

6. Do you have a bedroom of your own?
   1. ☐ Yes  2. ☐ No
7. Do you have a computer at home?
   1. ○ Yes  2. ○ No

8. Do you own a cell phone?
   1. ○ Yes  2. ○ No

9. Do you or does your family own a car?
   1. ○ Yes  2. ○ No

10. What is your marital status? Please check one
    4. ○ Divorced  5. ○ Widowed/erad

11. Do you have a child or children of your own?
    1. ○ Yes  2. ○ No

12. a. Please indicate the highest level of education you have achieved? Check one only, according to the level of education:
    • at which you are currently enrolled in school;
    • at which you dropped out of school before completion; or
    • that you completed (and have not continued to
      another level)
    1. ○ Never Enrolled in Formal Education
    2. ○ Some Preschool (1 year or less)
    3. ○ Completed Preschool
    4. ○ Currently Enrolled in Primary School (Years 1–4)
    5. ○ Incomplete Primary School (dropped before completing Year 4)
    6. ○ Completed Primary School (Years 1–4)
    7. ○ Currently Enrolled in Basic School (Years 5–9)
    8. ○ Incomplete Basic School (dropped before completing Year 9)
    9. ○ Completed Basic School (Years 5–9)
    10. ○ Currently Enrolled in Secondary School (Years 10–11)
    11. ○ Incomplete Secondary School (dropped before completing Year 11)
    12. ○ Completed Secondary School (Years 10–11)
    13. ○ Currently Enrolled in Primary or Secondary Professional
    14. ○ Incomplete Primary and/or Secondary Professional (dropped before completion)

15. ○ Completed Primary and/or Secondary Professional

16. ○ Currently Enrolled in University (Diploma of Specialist, BA, MA)

17. ○ Incomplete University (dropped before completing Diploma of Specialist, BA, MA)

18. ○ Completed University (Diploma of Specialist, BA, MA)

19. ○ Currently Enrolled in Post-graduate (Aspirantura - equivalent to full-time PhD) or Soiskatel – equivalent to part-time PhD)

20. ○ Incomplete Post-graduate (dropped before completing Aspirantura or Soiskatel)

21. ○ Completed Post-graduate (Aspirantura or Soiskatel)

b. Have you ever been forced to temporarily suspend your education for a month or more and then later returned? (This question can apply to respondents currently enrolled or those who completed education to a particular level, but not to those who have dropped out but not returned, even if they intend or would like to).
   1. ○ Yes  2. ○ No

13. Is the education you are currently enrolled in, or were most recently enrolled in, public or private? Please check one
    1. ○ Public  2. ○ Private  3. ○ I don’t know

Group 2: Education Satisfaction and Expectations

14. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is poor, 2 is somewhat poor, 3 is average, 4 is good and 5 is very good, how would you rate the quality of the provision of education in Tajikistan today? Check one only.
    1. ○ 1 poor  2. ○ 2 somewhat poor
    3. ○ 3 average  4. ○ 4 good
    5. ○ 5 very good

15. Do you think the quality of your education is better, worse or about the same as the quality of education your parents received? Check one only.
    1. ○ Better  2. ○ About the same
    3. ○ Worse  4. ○ I don’t know

16. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about what education is important for? (This question focuses on formal education. Check one answer only for each sub-question).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education is important for...</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.1 Building my capacity in all aspects of life/ learning is intrinsically good</td>
<td>1. ○</td>
<td>2. ○</td>
<td>3. ○</td>
<td>4. ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.2 Gaining new information and skills</td>
<td>1. ○</td>
<td>2. ○</td>
<td>3. ○</td>
<td>4. ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.3 Preparing for a job or profession</td>
<td>1. ○</td>
<td>2. ○</td>
<td>3. ○</td>
<td>4. ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.4 Ensuring a better status in society</td>
<td>1. ○</td>
<td>2. ○</td>
<td>3. ○</td>
<td>4. ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.5 Good citizenship and helping me develop this country</td>
<td>1. ○</td>
<td>2. ○</td>
<td>3. ○</td>
<td>4. ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.6 Learning about and understanding other people’s experiences</td>
<td>1. ○</td>
<td>2. ○</td>
<td>3. ○</td>
<td>4. ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.7 Education is not very important</td>
<td>1. ○</td>
<td>2. ○</td>
<td>3. ○</td>
<td>4. ○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17. a. Would you like to attain additional education to what you have already completed?
   1.  ○ Yes  2.  ○ No

b. What factors most influence or influenced your ability to achieve the level of education you wish for? Check all that apply. (If you have already completed your desired level of education, respond according to what factors were most important in achieving it).
   1.  ○ My personal interest, motivation and attitude
   2.  ○ Level of parental support
   3.  ○ Financial means
   4.  ○ My personal academic achievements
   5.  ○ Level of spousal support
   6.  ○ Availability of affordable child care for children
   7.  ○ Acceptance of married students in school
   8.  ○ Level of spousal support
   9.  ○ Availability of programmes
   10. ○ Acceptance of married students in school
   11. ○ Other responsibilities (work, family, other)
   12. ○ Accessibility of programmes
   13. ○ Support from teachers
   14. ○ Ability to pay additional fees arbitrarily imposed in school
   15. ○ The quality of my secondary school
   16. ○ Other
   17. ○ The effective implementation of education policies
   18. ○ Other

Group 3: Learning Environment

15. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the learning environment at your school/university? (The focus of this question is on formal education. Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school/university. Check one answer only for each sub-question).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>N/A/Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.1 My school/university is clean and well-maintained</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
<td>5.  ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.2 The facilities are adequate; there are enough desks; chairs; laboratory, computer and sports equipment; books and other learning materials</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
<td>5.  ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.3 There is a functioning, clean cafeteria</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
<td>5.  ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.4 Heating and electricity function consistently</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
<td>5.  ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.5 There is a functioning health spot</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
<td>5.  ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.6 I have access to at least one well-qualified counsellor in my school/university</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
<td>5.  ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.7 There is too much smoking in my school/university</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
<td>5.  ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.8 There is a lot of drug use in my school/university</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
<td>5.  ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.9 There are too many students/pupils in my classes</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
<td>5.  ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.10 More and better-maintained dormitories are needed</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
<td>5.  ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.11 There are hazardous materials at my school</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
<td>5.  ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.12 Beer bars are too close to school</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
<td>5.  ○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about safety and security in and around your school/university? (The focus of this question is on formal education. Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school/university. Check one answer only for each sub-question).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19.1 I feel safe in and around my school/university</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.2 Violence occurs in or around my school/university</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.3 I have personally been a victim of physical violence in or around school/university</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.4 Some students carry weapons, knives or other dangerous tools in or around school/university</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.5 At times, students/pupils damage school/university facilities</td>
<td>1.  ○</td>
<td>2.  ○</td>
<td>3.  ○</td>
<td>4.  ○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. Who and what are causing violence occurring in and/or around schools/universities? Check all that apply. (This question can be answered by any respondent whether or not they currently attend or have attended school/university).
1. There is no violence occurring; go to question 21
2. Students/pupils are causing the violence
3. School/university staff are causing the violence
4. People or groups other than students and staff are causing the violence
5. Policing in and around school/university is inadequate
6. Youth have poor communication skills
7. The effects of war and displacement are ongoing
8. There is gender inequality
9. Other, specify

21. Do you face difficulties in getting an education for any of the following or other reasons? Check all that apply. (The focus of this question is on formal education. Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school/university).
1. Facilities are inadequate for my special needs
2. Teachers/lecturers target me for mistreatment and punishment
3. Other students/pupils make me feel unwelcome
4. I cannot access school/university easily because of its location
5. My parents do not or cannot support my attending school/university
6. I am married and am not permitted to complete my schooling
7. I cannot afford or am unwilling to pay fees arbitrarily requested at school
8. There is violence in and around school
9. I am sexually harassed in and/or around school/university
10. I am bullied by others
11. Classes/lectures are not taught or offered in my mother tongue
12. Other
13. I do not face difficulties getting an education for any reason

22. Where do you get the majority of information about:
   a. Health, including HIV/AIDS, and nutrition? Choose one response only.
   1. School/university
   2. Family
   3. Peers/Friends
   4. Television, Radio and/or Newspaper
   5. Internet
   6. Non-governmental organizations
   7. Other
   8. I do not receive information on these topics

23. a. Would you like to have any of the following changes made to your classes/lectures? Check all that apply. (Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school/university).
   1. Make necessary literature available and accessible to all, including electronically
   2. Expand the ability of students/pupils to choose courses and exams
   3. Increase the availability of extra-curricular, after-school and university activities
   4. Provide more non-formal training opportunities, including crafts clubs
   5. Expand education activities provided to youth by youth
   6. Ensure more computer and Internet usage in school/university
   7. Expand opportunities for international student/pupil exchange
   8. Emphasize life skills development more (decision-making, negotiation, critical thinking and other skills)
   9. Ensure direct linkages to the job market
   10. Provide access to more and free centres for foreign language learning
   11. Utilize more innovative and engaging teaching methods
   12. Other
   13. I am not interested in any of these changes being made; go to question 24

b. Which of these would be your priority?
14. My priority is

24. c. Peace and tolerance? Choose one response only.
   1. School/university
   2. Family
   3. Peers/Friends
   4. Television, Radio and/or Newspaper
   5. Internet
   6. Non-governmental organizations
   7. Other
   8. I do not receive information on these topics

Group 4: Learning Content

22. Where do you get the majority of information about:
   a. Health, including HIV/AIDS, and nutrition? Choose one response only.
   1. School/university
   2. Family
   3. Peers/Friends
   4. Television, Radio and/or Newspaper
   5. Internet
   6. Non-governmental organizations
   7. Other
   8. I do not receive information on these topics

b. Gender issues and physical relationships between people? Choose one response only.
   9. School/university
   10. Family
   11. Peers/Friends
   12. Television, Radio and/or Newspaper
   13. Internet
   14. Non-governmental organizations
   15. Other
   16. I do not receive information on these topics

23. a. Would you like to have any of the following changes made to your classes/lectures? Check all that apply. (Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school/university).
   1. Make necessary literature available and accessible to all, including electronically
   2. Expand the ability of students/pupils to choose courses and exams
   3. Increase the availability of extra-curricular, after-school and university activities
   4. Provide more non-formal training opportunities, including crafts clubs
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   8. Emphasize life skills development more (decision-making, negotiation, critical thinking and other skills)
   9. Ensure direct linkages to the job market
   10. Provide access to more and free centres for foreign language learning
   11. Utilize more innovative and engaging teaching methods
   12. Other
   13. I am not interested in any of these changes being made; go to question 24

b. Which of these would be your priority?
14. My priority is

24. c. Peace and tolerance? Choose one response only.
   1. School/university
   2. Family
   3. Peers/Friends
   4. Television, Radio and/or Newspaper
   5. Internet
   6. Non-governmental organizations
   7. Other
   8. I do not receive information on these topics

Group 4: Learning Content

22. Where do you get the majority of information about:
   a. Health, including HIV/AIDS, and nutrition? Choose one response only.
   1. School/university
   2. Family
   3. Peers/Friends
   4. Television, Radio and/or Newspaper
   5. Internet
   6. Non-governmental organizations
   7. Other
   8. I do not receive information on these topics

b. Gender issues and physical relationships between people? Choose one response only.
   9. School/university
   10. Family
   11. Peers/Friends
   12. Television, Radio and/or Newspaper
   13. Internet
   14. Non-governmental organizations
   15. Other
   16. I do not receive information on these topics

23. a. Would you like to have any of the following changes made to your classes/lectures? Check all that apply. (Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school/university).
   1. Make necessary literature available and accessible to all, including electronically
   2. Expand the ability of students/pupils to choose courses and exams
   3. Increase the availability of extra-curricular, after-school and university activities
   4. Provide more non-formal training opportunities, including crafts clubs
   5. Expand education activities provided to youth by youth
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   10. Provide access to more and free centres for foreign language learning
   11. Utilize more innovative and engaging teaching methods
   12. Other
   13. I am not interested in any of these changes being made; go to question 24

b. Which of these would be your priority?
14. My priority is

24. c. Peace and tolerance? Choose one response only.
   1. School/university
   2. Family
   3. Peers/Friends
   4. Television, Radio and/or Newspaper
   5. Internet
   6. Non-governmental organizations
   7. Other
   8. I do not receive information on these topics
Group 5: Learning Outcomes

24 In the last 12 months, did you stay away from school/university at least a whole day without an excuse that is normally accepted by your school/university? (If you are no longer in school, please answer for the last 12-month period when you were in school). Check one only.
1. ○ No
2. ○ Yes, 1 to 9 times
3. ○ Yes, 10 or more times

25 If you dropped out of school before completing primary or secondary school, or if you were forced to temporarily suspend your education, what were the main factors that contributed to your decision to drop out or stop school temporarily? Check all that most apply.
1. ○ I did not drop out of, or temporarily suspend my attendance in school, go to question 26
2. ○ School workload was too heavy
3. ○ I got married
4. ○ I was expecting a baby
5. ○ School didn’t interest me
6. ○ Education facilities were too far away
7. ○ School was unsafe
8. ○ Education was not relevant to my finding a job
9. ○ Education quality was poor
10. ○ Lack of financial means/poverty
11. ○ I had to work
12. ○ Lack of parental and/or spousal support
13. ○ The learning environment was poor
14. ○ Lack of support from teachers
15. ○ I faced strong discrimination in school
16. ○ Being forcefully displaced from my home

Group 6: Learning Processes and Systems

29 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the learning process in your school/university? (Note that the focus of this question is on formal education. Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school/university). Check one answer only for each sub-question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29.3 To earn a good course grade at my school/university, pupils/students must pay bribes to staff or administrators</td>
<td>1. ○ Fully Agree</td>
<td>2. ○ Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>3. ○ Somewhat Disagree</td>
<td>4. ○ Fully Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.6 System should be put in place for pupils/students to register complaints and make suggestions anonymously</td>
<td>1. ○ Fully Agree</td>
<td>2. ○ Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>3. ○ Somewhat Disagree</td>
<td>4. ○ Fully Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.7 At least 50 per cent of your teachers engage students in debate and discussion; small group work; and/or individual work in front of the class (e.g., solving problems on the board) in each or every other class session</td>
<td>1. ○ Fully Agree</td>
<td>2. ○ Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>3. ○ Somewhat Disagree</td>
<td>4. ○ Fully Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.8 Youth are ready and willing to engage in more interactive teaching approaches</td>
<td>1. ○ Fully Agree</td>
<td>2. ○ Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>3. ○ Somewhat Disagree</td>
<td>4. ○ Fully Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
30. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about changes that could be made to the Tajikistan education system? (Note that the focus of this question is on formal education. Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school/university. Check one answer only for each sub-question).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>N/A/ Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30.4 There should be special requirements to wear school/university uniform</td>
<td>1. O</td>
<td>2. O</td>
<td>3. O</td>
<td>4. O</td>
<td>5. O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.5 Students/pupils who choose to should be permitted to wear a hijab at school/university</td>
<td>1. O</td>
<td>2. O</td>
<td>3. O</td>
<td>4. O</td>
<td>5. O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.6 Increase teacher salaries to motivate their interest in and responsibility for students</td>
<td>1. O</td>
<td>2. O</td>
<td>3. O</td>
<td>4. O</td>
<td>5. O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group 8: The Politicization of Education

36. a. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement about the impact of civil war on the Tajikistan education system? (Note that the focus of this question is on formal education. Please answer in reference to your most recent term in school/university. Check one answer only for each sub-question).

Military conflict has negatively affected education quality in Tajikistan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>N/A/ Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

b. Has military conflict in Tajikistan directly negatively affected the quality of your education? (Check one only).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>N/A/ Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

37. Should basic military training be dropped from the school curriculum? Check one only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>N/A/ Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

38. Do you trust the Ministry of Education to provide good quality education at all levels and for all students/pupils? Check one only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>N/A/ Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Group 9: Youth Education Quality Priorities and Solutions

39. Each of the following are open questions. Write answers briefly and clearly in full sentences.

a. What is your top priority for improving education quality in Tajikistan?

b. What specifically should be done to address this priority?

c. Who should take action to address this priority?

d. What role/s should youth play, if any?
APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE TRAINING AGENDA

Investigation of youth perceptions of education quality in the region of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEECIS)

Training Agenda
DATES, 2010
PLACE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE, 2010</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:00</td>
<td>Arrivals and Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:45</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 – 11:30</td>
<td>Overview of the Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 – 11:45</td>
<td>Morning Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 – 12:00</td>
<td>Outlining Team Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 – 12:15</td>
<td>Review of the Five-day Agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30 – 14:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:30 – 16:00</td>
<td>Review and Revision of Structured Survey Questionnaire (RI-7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00 – 16:15</td>
<td>Afternoon Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:15 – 17:15</td>
<td>Review and Revision of Structured Survey Questionnaire (RI-7) Continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:15 – 17:30</td>
<td>Final Questions and Closing Comments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE, 2010</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:15</td>
<td>Welcome, Warm-up and Review of Participant Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 – 11:15</td>
<td>Review and Revision of Structured Survey Questionnaire (RI-7) Continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15 – 11:45</td>
<td>Morning Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 – 12:45</td>
<td>Review and Revision of Structured Survey Questionnaire (RI-7) Continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45 – 13:30</td>
<td>Ethical and Security Considerations (RI-14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30 – 14:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:30 – 15:30</td>
<td>Ethical and Security Considerations (RI-14) Continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:30 – 15:45</td>
<td>Afternoon Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:45 – 16:45</td>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:45 – 17:30</td>
<td>Obtaining Informed Consent and the Random Selection of Youth Survey Respondents (RI-6, RI-6.a and the Kish Table)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:30 – 17:35</td>
<td>Distribution of Team Gear and Final Questions and Closing Comments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE, 2010</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 - 10:15</td>
<td>Welcome, Warm-up and Review of Participant Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 – 11:15</td>
<td>Random Selection of Households (RI-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15 – 11:30</td>
<td>Morning Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 – 13:00</td>
<td>Random Selection of Households (RI-5) Continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00 – 13:45</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:45 – 15:00</td>
<td>Conducting Survey Interviews and Coding Survey Data – Guidance and Practice (Revised RI-7, RI-8, RI.13.b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00 – 15:30</td>
<td>Distribution of Research Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:30 – 20:00</td>
<td>Pilot Test of the Structured Survey Implementation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DATE, 2010
10:00 – 10:15 Welcome, Warm-up and Review of Participant Expectations
10:15 – 11:00 Feedback on The Pilot Test of The Structured Survey
11:15 – 11:45 Morning Break
11:45 – 12:45 Feedback on The Pilot Test of The Structured Survey Continued
12:45 – 13:30 Focus Group Discussions – Guidance and Practice (RI-9, RI-10, RI-11)
13:30 – 14:30 Lunch
14:30 – 16:00 Focus Group Discussions – Guidance and Practice (RI-9, RI-10, RI-11) Continued
16:00 – 16:15 Afternoon Break
16:15 – 17:15 Focus Group Discussions – Guidance and Practice (RI-9, RI-10, RI-11) Continued
17:15 – 17:30 Final Questions and Closing Comments

DATE, 2010
10:00 – 10:15 Welcome, Warm-up and Review of Participant Expectations
10:15 – 11:00 Feedback on Focus Group Practice
11:00 – 11:30 Focus Group Reporting (RI-12, RI-13.c, RI-13.d, RI-13.e, RI-13.f)
11:30 – 11:45 Morning Break
12:45 – 13:30 General Review and Introduction to Research Instrument Revisions
13:30 – 14:30 Lunch
14:30 – 16:00 Team Planning and Preparation
16:00 – 16:15 Afternoon Break
16:15 – 17:15 Team Planning and Preparation Continued
17:15 – 17:30 Final Questions and Closing Comments

Thank you all and good work!!
APPENDIX 5: KOSOVO, GEORGIA AND TAJIKISTAN EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Kosovo education system and Republic of Serbia education system in Kosovo

Unless otherwise cited, the following detail on the Kosovo education system is reprinted directly from UNDP’s 2008 report, Basic information survey for Kosovo: For the preparation of JICA’s future assistance, and the information on the Republic of Serbia education system from the European Education Directory 2006.

KOSEOVO EDUCATION SYSTEM

Primarily, the Law on Primary and Secondary Education and the Law on Higher Education govern the Kosovo education system. The Kosovo education system is divided into four levels in accordance with UNESCO’s International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED): Level 0 (pre-primary education); Level 1 (5 years of primary education); Level 2 (4 years of lower secondary education); and Level 3 (3–4 years of upper secondary education). Education is compulsory for all children between the ages of 6 and 15 (lasting 9 years), and parents who fail to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school may be fined. Table A11 outlines the organization of the Kosovo education system. In public education institutions, tuition is free for Levels 1, 2 and 3; learning texts are free for Levels 1 and 2; Level 3 students may be required to pay for their own textbooks, equipment, and a standard fee to sit examinations, but these fees may be waived in some circumstances.

Table A11. Organization of the Kosovo education system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of ISCED 97 categories</th>
<th>ISCED 97 Categories</th>
<th>Age groups/grade</th>
<th>Level of the education system of Kosovo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1-3 years of age</td>
<td>Preschool education from age 3 to 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3-5 years of age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5-6 years of age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Primary education, 5 years (age 6 to 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>Lower secondary education, 4 years (age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>12 to 15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>Upper secondary education, gymnasium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>and vocational schools 2 and 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>(age 15 to 19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Secondary education not</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>First stage</td>
<td>Post-secondary high level of professional education (age 19 to 24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tertiary</td>
<td></td>
<td>studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First stage of tertiary education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>MA studies</td>
<td>The ISCED 97 has been used to define this level (age 22 to 26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second stage of tertiary education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>PhD Studies</td>
<td>The ISCED 97 has been used to define this level (age 22 to 26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Admission to upper secondary school is voluntary and must be based on a fair selection system administered by the municipalities. It includes general secondary education, vocational training, secondary art schools and secondary schools for children with disabilities. Students who have completed their primary education can enrol in general secondary schools or as full- or part-time students in vocational secondary schools. Public vocational schools offer three- and four-year courses, as well as specialized courses. There are also two-year vocational courses allowing persons who have not completed their primary education to attend and complete their primary education at the same time. MEST has drafted a strategic plan on vocational training, which focuses on development and reform of the vocational schools, and is in the process of drafting a law on vocational training.
Post-secondary education is governed by the Law on Higher Education, which states that higher education shall be accessible to all persons in the territory of Kosovo, or by distance learning, without direct or indirect discrimination. In public higher education institutions, students are admitted on a competitive basis and on merit only, and a set number of publicly-funded places are available in all courses and programmes. Those not qualifying for a publicly-funded place may be admitted, on the basis of merit, as a fee-paying student. Tuition fees are regulated annually by MEST, and a student financial support scheme is available. Under the reformed system, secondary education includes general secondary education, which lasts four years and prepares students for university studies, and vocational secondary education, which lasts three or four years. The three-year system of vocational education is meant to prepare students to enter the labour market immediately upon completion, while the four-year system provides students with the opportunity to continue university studies. Post-secondary and continuing education and training provision are almost non-existent, partly as a result of a failure to promote adult learning. Formal provision is almost entirely lacking, and there has been a tendency for recent developments to focus almost entirely on university provision to the virtual exclusion of other types of education.

In general, Kosovo’s new education legislation meets or exceeds the standards of education. Significant progress has been made towards curriculum development, teacher training, school construction, and the drafting of some guidelines and subsidiary legislation necessary to implement the new laws.

It took immense investments by international donors, local institutions, and by the community to make it possible to restart education in relatively normal conditions of work in the 1999/2000 school year. International donors – led by UNICEF, the European Agency for Reconstruction (ECHO, the Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission, in the beginning) and by donors such as the Islamic Bank for Development and countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Japan and others – invested significant amounts in construction and repairs to create optimal physical conditions for the organization of the process of instruction after the destruction of the 1990s, and after the lack of any maintenance of schools by the state in the previous 20 years. These efforts, coupled with activities to equip schools with the needed equipment and technological appliances, together with promotion of programmes for a healthy school, had a positive impact in improving the environment for learning and teaching and, consequently, in creating the preconditions for higher quality instruction. Later, efforts doubled to improve the physical infrastructure for children with special needs in accordance with the philosophy of inclusive education. After the year 2002, there was a gradual shift of responsibility (to provide school infrastructure) from various international donors to local institutions and local budgets.

In the period from 2002 to 2005, the MEST financed renovation of 39 school buildings in the total amount of €1,793,001, and construction of 28 new school facilities in the amount of over €8 million. All these joint efforts significantly improved the physical conditions of instruction in the Kosovo education system. However, until 2002, all reconstruction efforts were carried out only based on requests from the community and on assessments done by various donor organizations. In 2006, the education sector received 6.85 per cent of the total ODA committed to Kosovo. Aid by subsectors (in commitments) was allocated as follows: higher education (51.64 per cent), vocational education (34.28 per cent), primary education (4.06 per cent), building, reconstruction and rehabilitation (4.03 per cent), secondary education (3.02 per cent), pre-primary education (1.11 per cent), planning, management and policymaking (0.98 per cent) and teacher training (0.89 per cent).

**REPUBLIC OF SERBIA EDUCATION SYSTEM IN KOSOVO**

Primary (compulsory) education lasts for eight years, starting at seven years old, and is divided into two cycles, each one lasting four years. Prior to these cycles, a preparatory educational period of one year is mandatory.

Secondary education is provided in high schools, where schooling lasts for four years, from the ages of 15 to 18. The curricula in Serbia and Montenegro are adopted by the ministers of education with the prior consent of the education councils of both republics. The certificate awarded at the end is the diploma o završenoj srednjoj školi. Secondary vocational schools offer both general and vocational (practical and theoretical) education for direct entry in the world of work and further education. The vocational qualification is acquired at the level of first form and second form, then third and fourth form and specialization after secondary education lasting for one year.

Higher education in Serbia includes university education (faculties and art academies) and non-university education (post-secondary schools), where courses last no less than two years and no more than three years. Universities in Serbia organize art and educational work, as well as other activities, in compliance with the law and its statutes. The faculty is an educational and art institution, which includes basic studies, specialized studies, magisterial studies and doctoral studies. The basic studies last between four and six academic years. Specialized studies last between one and two academic years and magisterial studies last for two academic years. Doctoral studies last for three years. Faculties carry out independently, or in cooperation with another organization, their basic, applied and development research in the function of educational activity development.

Post-secondary (non-university) higher schools (viša škole) in Serbia offer programmes in technical subjects, paramedical sciences and other vocations. They usually last from two to three academic years and lead to a diploma (diploma višeg obrazovanja), with a professional title (senior nurse, senior medical technician, economist, senior designer, transport engineer, senior physiotherapist, etc.).
Reforms of higher education began in 2001, supported by Tempus and UNESCO-CEPES (UNESCO-European Centre for Higher Education) programmes. The new Law on Higher Education, which was made in accordance with the objectives of the Bologna Declaration, was adopted on October 28, 2003, after signing the Bologna Declaration in Berlin on September 18, 2003. The Law on Higher Education was passed in 2005.

At the first stage of university study, universities and specialized institutes offer programmes that last between four and six years and lead to a diploma (diploma visokog obrazovanja). Students who are awarded this degree are also awarded a professional title in various scientific and artistic fields (e.g., mechanical engineer, economist, medical doctor). Candidates who have completed adequate four-year secondary education can enrol in the first year of studies. Tuition fees can either be paid from the budget, or the student pays for them. The selection of the candidates is based on two cumulative criteria: the results obtained in secondary school (school-leaving exam) and those obtained at the entrance exam (for faculties of arts).

The master’s degree programme lasts for at least two years. Upon successful completion of the course work and the defence of a thesis, candidates are awarded a magistar nauka. In Montenegro, specialist studies last for one academic year (two semesters) and post-graduate studies for two academic years (four semesters) after completion of adequate undergraduate studies. Students are allowed to take their master’s thesis after they have passed all the exams of the postgraduate curriculum. After defending their master’s thesis in public, students are conferred the academic title of master of science or master of arts in a particular field.

The doctorate of science, or doktor nauka, is the highest academic degree. It is obtained through independent research and does not require structured course work of any kind. Candidates are evaluated on the basis of published research papers and their ability to write and defend a doctoral dissertation. A person who has the academic title of master of science or master of arts can enrol in doctoral studies. The procedure for obtaining the topic for a doctoral dissertation and choosing a mentor and the committee for the assessment and defence of a doctoral dissertation implies a mandatory consent of the university senate. Students can take their doctoral thesis after they have passed all the exams in the curriculum of doctoral studies. After defending their doctoral thesis in public, students are conferred the academic title of PhD.

**GEORGIA EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Georgia’s academic year begins in September and ends in June. The two languages of instruction are Georgian and Russian (WHED, 2010). Students are graded using a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest). Table A12 provides a snapshot of the typical advancement through the education system from elementary through secondary school.

**Table A12. Georgia education system: Elementary to secondary school stages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>Typical age of entry and exit</th>
<th>Length of programme</th>
<th>Diploma awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary school</td>
<td>6 to 12 years of age</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>Arasruli sashuloba ganatlebis motsmoba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic school</td>
<td>13 to 15 years of age</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Sashualo ganatlebis atestasi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>16 to 18 years of age</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Sashualo profesiuli satsaveblisi diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special secondary</td>
<td>15 to 18 years of age</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Higher education includes non-university, post-secondary technical and vocational studies and university-level studies. Post-secondary two-year professional education is not considered higher education, but its completion enables students to access higher education. University-level studies include:

- First stage (usually four years)
- Second stage (two years)
- Third stage (three years, ending with the presentation and defence of a thesis that leads to a PhD) (WHED, 2010)

Figure A1 depicts Georgia’s higher education cycles and institutions (HEIs), including pathways for progressing through the school system and degrees potentially earned.

**Georgia education reforms**

Since 2003, the Georgian Government has passed a series of legislative initiatives and enacted a set of comprehensive education reforms, including:

- The Law on Higher Education (adopted in December 2004) and the Law on General Education (adopted in April 2005) form the legal basis for education reform;
The introduction of a nationwide per capita funding scheme for schools at the general secondary education level (2006) through which schools receive a direct transfer of funds from MoES based on the number of students enrolled for a given year. The funds cover current school expenditures, of which teacher salaries are the main component;

- An administrative school consolidation programme;
- Efforts to increase teacher salaries and improve the quality of postsecondary education;
- Efforts to improve the school learning environment by addressing deteriorating school infrastructure;
• An Early Childhood Development National Strategic Plan of Action (2007–2009), drafted and budgeted to support programming, communication and policy development, and approved by Georgia’s Parliament in July 2008;

All educational institutions were also established as public legal entities. Former education departments were replaced by a network of 72 education resource centres responsible for facilitating schools’ work through data collection, training, research and accounts monitoring. According to the Law on General Education (Article 37.1), each school is now governed by a board of trustees with financial management authority and made up of teachers, parents, local government representatives and a student from the students’ self-government body. The number of board members is specified by the school’s charter (UNICEF, undated).

Teacher training and certification and school accreditation

The MoES supports the ongoing professional development of certified teachers. At the beginning of each academic year, teachers are required to develop professional development plans and implement them to gain required credits. Teachers wishing to continue in their career must also renew their ‘right to teach’ before their certification has expired. This can be achieved by: passing certification examinations; passing an accredited professional development programme; creating an educational product; and/or participating in a school-based professional development programme (Kuparadze, 2010).

The MoES is also developing a three-part teacher training programme that aims to embrace and follow the structure of all competencies as established by recently developed teachers’ standards. A range of manuals, films and didactic materials complement the system and are distributed to schools and education resource centres. The MoES incorporated and referenced a range of nationally and internationally adopted/proven teaching and learning materials in the development of these programmes (Kuparadze, 2010).

An institutional accreditation process was carried out throughout 2005 and 2006. The licensing and accreditation department of the MoES and a specially established Accreditation Board at the MoES initially oversaw it. Later, the newly established National Education Accreditation Centre (NEAC) managed it. This two-year process resulted in the reduction of the number of higher-education institutions in Georgia from 237 to 43 (World Bank, 2009). University accreditation continues to be a volunteer process, managed by the NEAC. Accreditation is determined by a higher education institution’s ability to meet specific material and financial resource, educational human resource, and programme standards as outlined by the NEAC (MoFA Georgia, 2010).

Challenges for 2010–2011, Georgia Ministry of Education and Science

Increasing the importance of the high school diploma
1. Overcoming the minimum competency barrier in the national examination centres in order to receive a high school diploma (from 2010)
2. Providing students with intensive preparation courses in the 12th grade to overcome the minimum competency barrier (2010–2011)

Encouraging students to attend classes
1. Attendance as one of the main components of the student’s evaluation criteria
2. Improving and finalizing the national curriculum
3. Raising students’ motivation to study through interactive lessons
4. Encouraging more local and international Olympics and contests
5. Providing access for exchange programmes to students
6. Enlarging summer school programmes
7. Supporting high school honour graduate programme (medal programme)

Improving and finalizing the national curriculum
1. Improving and finalizing the national curriculum for all 12 grades
2. Leaving the new national curriculum unchanged for five subsequent years
3. Integrating new subjects into the national curriculum:
   - civil defence and safety
   - information technology
   - world culture
4. Replacing physical culture by sports classes

Improving the quality of textbooks
1. Bringing school textbooks in full compliance with the national curriculum
2. Ensuring transparency of the approval process of textbooks  
3. Making textbook approval rules stricter  
4. Adopting common technical standards for textbooks (size, weight, shape, division, font)  
5. Monitoring schools for using non-approved textbooks on a regular basis  

Introducing and developing the concept of safe schools  
1. Introducing the institution of the security guards in schools  
2. Dividing schools into three study levels  
3. Creating safe zones in schools via video cameras  
4. Establishing credit card paying system for students and connecting it with web portal  
5. Organizing meetings for students with representatives of police, prosecutor’s office and legal aid service in order to raise their awareness on human rights and other legal issues  

Increasing teachers’ proficiency level through certification  
1. Teachers’ voluntary certification from 2010  
2. Paying bonuses to certified teachers  
3. Providing permanent professional development training (teaching methods, professional skills, information technologies)  
4. Ensuring intensive professional development training for teachers of foreign languages  
5. Enhancing the institution of mentor-teachers  
6. Developing and adopting teachers ethics code  
7. Providing new additional professional textbooks for teachers  

Actively involving local self-governance bodies in the education process  
1. Allocating 20 million GEL to the self-governments for improving school infrastructure  
2. Raising interests of self-governments in organizing different activities in education system  
3. Supporting self-governments in encouraging teachers and students  

Improving infrastructure  
1. Optimizing school communal expenditures  
2. Improving logistical support of education resource centres  
3. Refurbishing school libraries  
4. Renovating school cafeterias  
5. Upgrading school laboratories  
6. Renewing sports equipment  

Enhancing communication between the Ministry, education resource centres (ERCS) and schools  
1. Holding regular meetings among teachers, ERCS and ministry representatives  
2. Developing a mechanism of passing down the new decisions in a timely and efficient manner throughout Georgia  
3. Designing an informative and user-friendly website of the Ministry  
4. Developing special web portals for various target groups  
5. Providing live consultations to any interested person via special electronic monitors  
6. Engaging teachers in decision making process by participating in special summits (to be organized in every two weeks in different regions of Georgia)  

Enhancing learning of the Georgian language for non-Georgian population  
1. Expanding the Georgian language learning programmes  
2. Encouraging multilingual learning  
3. Creating multilingual school books with 30 per cent Georgian texts in order to make Georgian learning process more engaging and easy for students  

Increasing access to education for children with special educational needs  
1. Creating an electronic database for voluntary registration of the children with special educational needs  
2. Improving the intergovernmental cooperation (Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, Civil Registry of Ministry of Justice)  
3. Raising public awareness on inclusive education  
4. Enhancing the effectiveness of multidisciplinary teams’ activities  

TAJIKISTAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

The education system of the Republic of Tajikistan is under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (state republican/central government management body). Line ministries and their agencies manage primary, secondary and higher professional (vocational) institutions. Local government bodies supervise secondary education institutions (MoE, 2009).

As shown in Table A13 below, Tajikistan’s current education system has two cycles: general and professional. The general education cycle comprises three levels: primary, basic (also called incomplete secondary) and secondary education. The professional education cycle includes tertiary education and comprises three elements: primary/initial/first, secondary and specialized/higher. These three elements of the professional include, but are not limited to, VET and higher professional education. Children currently begin formal education at the age of seven.

**Table A13. Structure of Tajikistan’s current education system**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of education</th>
<th>Duration of studies</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Educational institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool training and education</td>
<td>1–3, 3–6 years</td>
<td>1–6(7) years</td>
<td>Kindergarten/nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• primary</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>7–11 years</td>
<td>General education schools, gymnasiums, liceums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• general basic</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>11–16 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• general secondary</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>16–18 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional education:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• primary</td>
<td>1–4 years</td>
<td>From age 16</td>
<td>Vocational schools, centres, technical colleges, colleges, special secondary schools, universities, academies, institutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• secondary</td>
<td>2–4 years</td>
<td>From age 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• higher</td>
<td>4–6 years</td>
<td>From 17 (18)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-diploma education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Master courses, post-graduate courses, doctorate courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional (extra) education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Conducted on the basis of general secondary, primary and secondary professional education
** Conducted in regular schools of general and professional education, outside main educational curricula or in the establishments for additional education (small research academies, palaces, stations, clubs, centres, art and musical schools, etc.).


The secondary professional education cycle offers a range of possibilities, among them general secondary, vocational and technical education. Progression to tertiary education is possible only after completion of general secondary education (GSE) or specialized (technical) secondary education (SSE). A diploma of completed secondary professional education (SPE, in most cases vocational education) allows for further progression only if combined with a completed GSE curriculum.

Higher education is provided mainly by universities and institutes. At the first stage, students can graduate as junior specialist (two years), bakalavr (bachelor – four years), or depending on the subject and the institution of study, specialist (four to five years). The title of magistr (master) or kandidat nauk (candidate of sciences) is awarded after two, or three, years of study respectively, beyond the bachelor degree. Postgraduate studies (third stage) involve a three-year aspirantura beyond the second stage of studies and combines the writing of a dissertation, coursework and teaching, leading to the degree of doktor nauk (PhD) (OECD, 2009).

THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF EDUCATION IN TAJIKISTAN

The Majlisi Oli (Parliament) of the Republic of Tajikistan adopted the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan:

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