

## 'Alliance of CSOs in Tajikistan for Education' formed in Central Asia!

27 August – 1 September 2017, Dushanbe, Tajikistan



**A workshop was held in Tajikistan brainstorm on the initiation of a coalition. Sessions included concept setting, prioritising national-level education issues, and developing plans of action.**

ASPBAE's Helen Dabu and Susmita Choudhury visited Tajikistan to facilitate the formation of an education coalition with a core group of civil society representatives that have formed an "Initiative Group". Six organisations are part of the group – Vocational Education Training (VET), ASTI, Microinvest, AEAT, Ishtirok, and the Association of Parents with Disabled Children.

A 2-day coalition strengthening workshop was held followed by bilateral meetings with group member organisations. The workshop, organised for civil society members of the education alliance in Tajikistan, was held from 27-28 August 2017 in Dushanbe. The main objective of the workshop was to lend clarity to the concept of an "Initiative Group" in the formation of a coalition. The sessions included concept setting, prioritising national-level education issues, and developing plans of action.

A lively discussion was held on the notion of a coalition, on education policy advocacy, and on the importance of working in partnership in advancing policy issues. Helen Dabu facilitated a session explaining the process of setting a vision for a coalition, building an advocacy strategy, and planning coalition activities.

Participants identified priority education issues in the country. The four main areas identified were - access and inclusion in education, quality education, education budget, and governance and management. It was agreed that the group would address the issues based on the principles of the Right to Education and link them with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4 – the education goal).

Group members agreed to name the coalition *Alliance of CSOs in Tajikistan for Education*. They also drafted the goals of the alliance and identified the following four policy targets -

1. Promote the Right to Education in the country and advocate for the implementation of SDG4.
2. Push for civil society engagement to increase the education budget and ensure its proper implementation.
3. Advocate to improve the quality of education in Tajikistan.
4. Strengthen the Alliance as an institution for education advocacy.

With support from Helen Dabu and Susmita Choudhury, participants categorized advocacy strategies to address policy targets.

At the end of the workshop, a detailed plan of action till 2018 was developed. It was also agreed that the group would conduct a strategic planning workshop in 2017 to develop the vision and mission of the Alliance.

The workshop was followed by meetings with individual alliance members to further set the tone for the future of the Alliance, discuss the political context in the country, and determine commitment of members.



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The ASPBAE team visited two organisations - Vocational Education Training (VET) and Ishtirok. They also met representatives of Microinvest and ASTI from Khujand province to discuss Alliance activities and strategies to strengthen its presence at the national level.

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