

Learning Environment as a Third Teacher

Educational Seminar: Almaty, 10-11 March

Live notes/Live blogging

Guidance: This is a collaborative space for live notes during the course of group discussions. Don't write down everything: Just include key messages, key challenges and/or key questions that emerge out of each discussion. Nothing needs to be perfect! Please write your notes in English and limit what you write to no more (!) than ten sentences.

First Group Discussion: Thursday morning (10:30-11:10)

Guiding questions:

- What examples do you find most interesting or relevant to your current situation?
- What are some key related challenges for you to implement these in your countries?
- What is possible in the short term (what can you do now) and in the long term?
- What related questions do you have?

Group	Live notes
ONE Armenia, Georgia (+KZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The delegations found most interesting the idea of open space for organization of learning environment, where teachers and students are located in one space without teacher in traditional leading position with ample opportunities to learn in teams, network closely and collaborate, it well responds the shift from teaching into learning• key challenges are existing rigid and often very old construction standards not really aligned to the new concepts of learning environment, vast infrastructure needs overall, sometimes even lack of basic infrastructure and lack of technology, basic labs in our countries, which makes government to prioritize basic rehabilitation and technology investments;• in the short and medium term, existing space of the existing classrooms and schools can be reorganized with the help of furniture coupled with teacher development and support to be able to use new methods and approaches for promoting effective learning• In the long term, given the inheritance of soviet architecture in both countries, preference was made to building new schools and gradually replacing existing infrastructure based on more innovative and conducive to learning standards• Examples and research from countries already implementing innovative learning environments, best practices of adapting existing infrastructure; how age groups differences are best accommodated within this new approach;
TWO Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan (+KZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The examples of architecture school designs are very interesting and relevant; however, several barriers prevent from introducing them. First, instructivism remain the main approach in school learning. Secondly, many issues concerning school environment are being regulated by current rigid standards and norms (fire protection regulations and sanitary norms).• What can be done in the short-term: start the dialogue between all stakeholders to change the learning approach from instructivism to

	<p>constructivism. To develop and adopt more flexible norms and regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can be done in the long-term: decentralize decision making and regulation in education (administration, governance).
<p>THREE Belarus, Moldova (+KZ)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completely open learning environments are not always immediately relevant in post-Soviet systems; very new concept • Need to plan ahead, pilot this approach first to see if it works • New learning methods being relevant to teaching average and lagging students is interesting, need new methods of addressing needs of non-elite students • Lack of resources may impede ability to “experiment” with new learning environment approaches • In the short term, can address small-scale changes (partial rehabilitation of schools), not large-scale reconstruction or construction of new facilities • Found Julia’s remark interesting regarding extra attention being paid to ECD and primary school for overall child development • What share of all schools in western education systems (e.g., Denmark) have these “new” open learning environments? • How does the alternative learning environment influence student learning (empirical findings)? • Is it possible to transition to new-style learning environments with a legacy of existing legacy of Soviet-style infrastructure (within existing resource envelope)?
<p>FOUR Kazakhstan, Russia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gabysheva, Yakutia - how to connect regulatory norms with pedagogical concepts and new designs in different countries? how to create new learning environments, if we still work in traditional classrooms? • Kazakhstan - We need to pilot new practices in selected schools to test it? Construction/fire protection norms do not allow to implement new design approaches. • Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia - Can learning environment influence on children and teachers? It’s easy to change teachers practices, but it’s more difficult to change regulatory norms • National Academy of Education - learning environments should change gradually, step by step • Nazarbaev school - best practice example - open access public library in the school, where pupils are responsible for their self-learning - these little initiatives can lead to big changes in learning environment design • Kazakhstan - the learning environment should be not only safe, but also friendly environment. The teacher carries an important role of innovator in changing learning environment: change of teaching/learning practices leads to the change of learning environment design • Possible short-term actions - training for teachers, creating inter-governmental council including experts from education sector, construction, fire protection, health to facilitate intergovernmental cooperation on learning environment development • Long-term - aligning national regulatory norms in order to facilitate learning environment design development and implementation
<p>FIVE Romania, Serbia (+KZ)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider who is the driver of change (and who/what is the ‘obstacle’). Role of the educator vs. role of the architect. • Also consider role of the principle. Agent of change? • Need to divide responsibilities (vs. ‘old networks’)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalize consultations (incl. with children and parents) and collaboration • Need to support good practice examples (teachers developing innovative learning environments) • Issue lack of continuity of 'inspiration and initiative' from ECD/ECEC and primary to lower and upper secondary (and higher ed.). Instead of lower levels inspiring upper levels we push academic standards and unification down to lower levels. Connection to teacher training pedagogists vs. (academic standard-driven) subject specialists • Link to discussion on inclusive education needed
SIX Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan (+KZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interesting approach but there should be space for traditional teaching especially for math, physics and chemistry • it would be nice to get drawings /layout of the schools which were presented • proposed approach - does it work for high school? • question on student/teacher ratio needs further discussion. What should be maximum size for effective teaching? what is a financing mechanism? • Financing would be a challenge in our countries and teacher training too. • In short term it is needed and possible: awareness raising, advocacy, pilot projects for different levels of education • how would such approach fit asian traditions in children grow up? • difference in the school location? urban vs. rural?

Second Group Discussion: Thursday afternoon (12:00-12:40)

Guiding questions:

- What current policies related to school infrastructure support / do not support the implementation of 'clever classrooms' in your country?
- What specific types of research or pilot activities might help you explore some of the aspects of how school infrastructure can support improved learning outcomes?
- What have you heard that is most relevant to your current country context?
- What related questions do you have?

Group	Live notes
ONE Armenia, Georgia (+KZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school construction including interior design is still regulated by rigid standards; only few teachers are able to create effective learning environment within their classrooms; • evidence based research from set of countries illustrating gains in student academic achievement from innovative infrastructure investments • most of the proposed measures can be relevant to our countries given that needs of children are similar across the countries, however, more cohesive policy environment will be needed to support the change in tandem with strong teacher professional development
TWO Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan (+KZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Governments support renovation of school interiors. However, construction and interior design of schools is regulated by old rigid norms and standards. • Areas of interest: research of factors that impact school achievement the most; lessons learnt (mistakes) in modernizing school environment from European countries.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Azerbaijan air pollution in cities is crucial for student learning. There is a need to move from provision in schools (air, water, etc.) based on norms to demand driven (conducted via surveys).
THREE Belarus, Moldova (+KZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most interesting: schools and teachers themselves decide many aspects of their own learning environment, not centrally set standards In “our” countries, teachers fear and comply with state standards, rather than are considered professionals who can make their own decisions Most relevant: light, air, temperature highly influence student learning
FOUR Kazakhstan, Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kazakhstan - optimised regulatory norms do not support diverse learning environments change the norms to give an opportunity to conduct teaching/learning activities not only in traditional classrooms, but also in other school spaces connecting with city infrastructure - increase efficiency of built environment research on learning environments needed in order to support creation of new environments, evidence-based design to support political, regulatory changes standard models do not apply to country contexts, standard models should be applied to the regional level and be developed on regional levels based on climate, cultural and other requirements research how lighting in the building impacts the learning outcomes the most interesting part of the presentation - how physical aspects affect learning performance
FIVE Romania, Serbia (+KZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedagogical initiatives - physical environment - ‘verification’ of physical standards not aligned National policies vs. municipal regulations, budgets and implementation Need to collect data on physical environment and conduct further research Over-regulation endangers local culture and individualized school environment/school autonomy Possibility to further investigate needs and viewpoints of different groups of children (e.g. children with special needs) Table would like to know more on impact of size of the school on three dimensions
SIX Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan (+KZ)	Policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> construction standards related to hygiene (light, ventilation, space per student, insulation, building materials). no flexibility in a classroom design in the state schools Research: cost analysis of new schools vs “old” schools Relevance : different teaching techniques

Third Group Discussion: Thursday afternoon (15:30-16:00)

Guiding questions:

- What current policies and regulations would support or challenge your ability to implement some of the good practices and emerging approaches identified by the OECD?

- To what extent is it possible to change existing policies and regulations, or introduce new ones, in order to implement these practices and approaches to school infrastructure?
- What related questions do you have?

Group	Live notes
ONE Armenia, Georgia (+KZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date, the comprehensive reform of regulations related to education infrastructure has not taken place & still complex bureaucracy involving multiple agencies function; To implement these good practices, close and effective collaboration is needed from multiple state agencies and involving different professionals: teachers, architects, policy makers from different ministries (education, urban development, health, economy) need to work together under one principle and objective of prioritizing school infrastructure for learning and developing a new, comprehensive and workable regulations and consolidated framework • Evidence based and innovative experiences that generate adequate knowledge on what works best and potential learning gains can help to push this topic up on the government's policy agenda; • Request from the delegation to get more hands on materials and guidelines for different actors from pilot experiences supported by the Bank/OECD
TWO Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan (+KZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to give more freedom to private sector in the area of kindergarten construction and ECD provision. • Policy makers in education sphere are ready to start introducing modern environments in educational institutions. However, teachers and school administrative staff should be provided training on flexible environment (furniture) usage. • Azerbaijan: There is no quality assurance in the area of school building construction. Thus, discussions of existing policies and regulations should be accompanied by introduction of quality assurance mechanisms. The MoES is not ready to discuss such changes.
THREE Belarus, Moldova (+KZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •
FOUR Kazakhstan, Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kazakhstan - competitive advantage - reform on Eurocodes is in progress - perhaps an opportunity to introduce modern design approach in construction sector • Dialog about learning, responsive design and norms is needed on governmental level, where decisions are taken • New needs of the children (e.g. according to recent studies, the attention span of modern children is much shorter than 10 years before) require new approaches to teaching and learning, teacher needs more freedom and flexibility for professional activities • We need to go away from standard building models and give more freedom and attention to regional needs in each country (e.g. in the south of Kazakhstan number of pupils in the class is higher, than in the north due to the population structure, different climate conditions - thus new design to inform regional differences is needed instead of standard model buildings replicated across the country)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's important to involve governmental bodies responsible for finance policy (ministry of finance, ministry of economic development) in the dialog about new learning environments and to explain advantages of cost optimization achieved by new design • It's important to calculate return on investments in education facilities/education projects - more thoughtful approach to public finance
FIVE Romania, Serbia (+KZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in bylaws requires changes in main legal documents; Open dialog and discussion is needed in order to tackle this challenge; • Mix responsibility of different Ministries to implement such policies; • Change behaviors, attitudes through cultural organization; • Transparency in financing since different institutions are allocating funds for education and there is lack of coordination and dialog among these institutions; • Need to address lack of dialogue between experts and authorities.
SIX Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan (+KZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1a. Policy decision on equality and access to learning environment: Are we creating schools for smart children and "less smart" children? Should not the educational starting point be the same for each child? • 1b. Regulations: local and regional context should be considered such as climate and geographic location (both design and construction) • 1c. Coordination with other agencies such as Goststroy, Fire Safety agency, Ministry of Health and others • 1d. Challenges will vary for each level of education (e.g. pre-school, schools, higher education institutions) and different types of schools • The changes are doable but depend on the decision if the country would like to make the changes, financial opportunities for the country and creativity

Fourth Group Discussion: Friday afternoon (13:00-13:50)

Each group will be assigned one general scenario, related to one of the following topics: education; safety; or construction.

For this topic, please discuss a potential related future activity or project that you may wish to consider related to the issues discussed during this seminar. Take notes using the template below. Each group will have five minutes to present this potential future activity to the plenary (note: we will use the onscreen stopwatch to keep everyone to five minutes!).

Scenario A: Safety

21 students were killed in a school fire, and so issues of physical safety are of an especially high priority right now. Your unit has been assigned to help improve safety and security of students in schools.

Scenario B: Construction

Your country needs to build 35 new high schools and 65 new primary schools. Your unit will be responsible for new construction guidelines.

Scenario C: Learning

Your president is disappointed with recent results in PISA. Your unit will make recommendations on improvements to the learning environment to improve learning outcomes.

Group	Live notes
ONE Armenia, Georgia	Development objective: to reach higher quality of education and better results in PISA

<p>FOUR Kazakhstan, Russia</p> <p>SCENARIO C Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Short term actions: 4 hours short-term period (till next PISA):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to conduct analysis of national PISA data to identify issues in education system (why we • provision of adequate resources and conditions to facilitate learning process (equipment, learning environment of school, learning materials) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Medium term actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to identify weak schools in the country and to develop individual development plan for each school • to create an inter-ministerial council to coordinate actions in making changes to learning environment • To provide change to the professional trainings of teachers • To provide changes to educational plans with the focus on practical activities • To develop high access to Internet • Modernisation of physical infrastructure and equipment <p>Potential indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018 - 5 points in PISA • 2024 - 10 points in PISA <p>What support might be expected from the World Bank/OECD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance on above-mentioned actions •
<p>TWO Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan</p> <p>SIX Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan</p> <p>SCENARIO A Safety</p>	<p>Development objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring safety in schools <p>Short term actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing causes of fire • Stock-taking (check-up) of existing schools, developing school fire safety system • Review of existing international fire safety regulations, development (adaptation) and introduction of new fire safety regulations. • Analysis of risks and ways of their mitigation <p>Medium term actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • <p>Potential indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Days without accidents in schools • <p>What support might be expected from the World Bank/OECD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of support in reviewing existing fire safety regulations in developed countries •

<p>FIVE Romania, Serbia</p> <p>THREE Belarus, Moldova</p> <p>SCENARIO B Construction</p>	<p>Development objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The objective is to develop new construction standards that serve the needs of the modern education system conducive to a quality learning environment <p>Short term actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out public consultations with all relevant stakeholders (parents, teachers, children) • Form an intergovernmental working group with representatives of different agencies to develop the new standards <p>Medium term actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop projects meeting the standards • <p>Potential indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • <p>What support might be expected from the World Bank/OECD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
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