



Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports Republic of Armenia

The Ministry in cooperation with the UN office in Armenia and within the framework of the Transforming Education Summit has conducted National Consultation and Youth discussions to support the process of defining the priorities and targets of the Educational reform in Armenia. These discussions engaged wide circles of stakeholders who touched upon various important issues: evaluated the influence of Covid-19 on the educational process, proposed transformative models and particular reform actions and addressed issues related to the content, the methodology and financing of the education.

The most fundamental process that is becoming the conceptual basis of the entire educational reform in Armenia is the transformation from the soviet-inherited, industrial era, mono-disciplinary educational approach, with a focus on memorization, to a modern, multi-disciplinary, project based education, emphasizing the development of critical thinking with a thoroughly thought out educational content and methods, proposing individual development paradigm to students and allowing to experience unique educational process helping to identify and effectively respond to the needs of a particular individual. It is well understood that this is a global challenge and thus needs to be addressed globally in partnership with all major international actors.

The influence of the Covid-19 on the system of education has been significant. It has revealed the existing gaps in education content and teaching methods, digital infrastructures and yet, it has undeniably boosted the incorporation of digital methods in education and has raised the level of digital literacy among both the student and the teaching staff. Although comparatively the quality of adaptation of the system of education in Armenia to the pandemic is above average, it should be noted that ineffectiveness of applied on-line teaching at primary school has further stimulated learning loss among students and particularly younger children, children with disabilities, children from disadvantaged groups and students from distant communities. Meanwhile, the aftermath of the pandemic has resulted in lay-offs among personnel, increase of red tape, emergence of psychological issues and cyber bullying. To mitigate the COVID-19 impact on student learning, the knowledge gap that has appeared during the pandemic shall be studied and addressed. Namely, the characteristics of the learning gap created as a result of Covid-19 shall be evaluated, the educational process will be strengthened and the missed educational content will be incorporated in the ongoing process. Learning poverty will be addressed via a combination of formal and non-formal educational methods, promotion of interdisciplinary education, application of project-based learning, exercising internal mobility and credit transferability and expansion of gender sensitive, needs based and inclusive pedagogical approaches. Retrospective analysis of the Covid-19 experiences will be undertaken, properly evaluating the effectiveness and applicability of various digital tools and mechanisms in education, which will foster systematizing of online and hybrid education in Armenia.

The process of development of digital content in Armenian will be strategized and followed by a large-scale state coordinated project which will unite HEIs, schools, CSOs, research institutions, private sector entities inside the country and in the Diaspora. Additionally, a separate digital platform for teachers proposing educational content, methodological materials and opportunities for exchange and networking will be developed. This will provide the teaching staff with an opportunity to diversify the educational content, apply best local and international practices and combine various approaches and methods. A special attention will be paid to the combination of various components of education, basic, professional and civic, with a special emphasis on the axiological aspect of knowledge application.

It is planned to undertake all necessary steps leading to the increased role of teachers and educational managers in the reform. Therefore three major interconnected sets of activities will be implemented: addressing the socio-economic needs of the teachers, large scale capacity building and promoting

engagement of the teaching staff in the process of formulating the targets of education and developing educational content and methodologies. Revision of teacher professional development schemes, including remuneration and educational management and leadership stipulated in the State Education development Programme until 2030 is marked to become a comprehensive program led by the government with active engagement of Armenian and international HEIs, civil society, private sector and international organizations.

Improvement of physical conditions for education is another important priority that is being fundamentally addressed by the government. This process starts from proper modeling aimed at understanding the needs of modern schools, from architecture and design to the necessary infrastructure development. The government is committed to create an attractive, safe and secure environment promoting learning, equipped with multi-functional physical and modern digital technologies, taking into account innovative and universal learning methodologies, criteria for safety and universal accessibility.

The issue of accessibility of education for the vulnerable groups is a priority for the country to be properly addressed. This is particularly important in regions and for the students from distant settlements that need proper infrastructure. Accessibility of the schools for the students with disabilities is another important priority that the government is already tailoring its policies to.

Developing new educational content is an important priority that is already being addressed via both adapting the content developed internationally and developing new educational content on the national level. Moreover, the government will make sure there is a wide variety of educational content which can be used by different conglomerates of schools allowing higher levels of education adaptation to the learning needs.

Ensuring proper functional disbursement between the high schools and the VET institutions, as well as VET institutions and HEIs, is another important priority to be addressed. In this regard proper formulation of the aims and the mission of each educational level shall be followed by development and adaptation of the methods and the content for each functional component respectively. Here the connection with the labor market, the perspective of economic development and employment opportunities, along with the foresight from the R&D, in the longer term shall rigorously inform education sector strengthening. The overall process of professional orientation of students shall be reviewed to become more practical and applicable. In this respect the institutionalization of internship mechanisms, connections between the private sector and the educational institutions shall be promoted.

There is a need for diversification of both sources and mechanisms of financing of education. Historically, the state is the key donor of the educational system, however, engagement of other actors and particularly private sector representatives becomes essential to ensure flow of additional resources to the system which, in its turn, shall formulate a new demand for educational products. The mechanisms of financing of schools shall be also reconsidered in light of the reforms agenda currently in the pipeline in Armenia. Namely, the decentralization reform that also impacts secondary education shall consider enclosing mechanisms of education financing on the community level, along with considerations around allocation of resources from the state to the community budgets. Funding schemes for various capacity building programs will be revised paying specific attention to aspects of ensuring competition between the service providers, connecting the capacity building process with career development and pathways, defining major areas of capacity building and training underlining the need for expanding the teacher population to professionals from different career paths. Ineffective funding of the education sector highlights the importance of new financing models aimed at sustainability and cost effectiveness mechanisms to be developed in parallel to education system reform.