

School Education Quality Assessment Project

What is SEQAP?

School Education Quality Assessment Project (SEQAP) aims at helping developing countries that have insufficient capacity of experts to master use of the assessment technologies through development and adaptation of tools. The developed technology becomes country's own. It then can be used by state authorities and school administration for educational assessment in the situation where large-scale international comparative research is not conducted. The project also promotes tools for day-by-day school assessment by teachers. SEQAP covers targets 4.1 and 4C of the SGA 4th and targets 17.6 of the SDG 17th.

Coordination and implementation

The initiative is operated by the Center for International Cooperation in Education Development (CICED) and managed by agreements between CICED and organizations participating in the project from four countries: Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

CICED is affiliated with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russia Federation. Together with the World Bank CICED implements Russia Education Aid for Development (READ) Program. The SEQAP is a partnership that formed under the READ Program when CICED introduced promising tools for education quality assessment that could be adapted and used in a different cultural context and language. Central development of the Project is the Student Achievement Monitoring (SAM) that also includes a set of tools based on SAM's taxonomy.

CICED cooperates with the leading Russian experts who work on the design of the assessment methodologies and tools. CICED promotes the development of tools including organization of piloting, clinical approbations and research conducting. The important role in tools development is a regular international review and validity studies which confirm that the tools and methodologies are reliable and developed in accordance with international standards.

Through participation in first stage of the READ Program (2008-2012) countries had an opportunity to explore tool methodology and evaluate its' features for a use in particular educational context. Within the first READ Program and beyond (not all the countries were participating in the second stage of the READ Program) the cross-country partnership was formed in order to transfer the methodology to countries and to adapted it in different language while keeping it original quality.

Partnership is mutually beneficial. While focal point of the project is the CICED, countries work under the supervision of the tool developers. In response they provide information and enrich global knowledge on assessment and specific educational contexts through applying and improving technology of tools adaptation and development.

The reports on the project are available publicly. They serve as a source of information on modern technology and classroom assessment for school administration and teachers. National assessment centers distribute them in countries. In some cases National assessment centers organize seminars and other events to discuss the mid-term results of the project with involvement of wider audience that represents different stakeholders in the country including governmental officials.

Projects activities and approach

The project is carried out through annual meetings, training, scientific seminars and other joint educational events. Communication is organized through the online expert platform.

All assessment methodologies originally created in Russian language for the use in Russian educational environment. They underwent the international validity review. The main requirements for the transferring of the methodologies is translation and adaptation to other languages. Participating countries and Russia have a lot in common in approaches to education which is determined by the common historical past and close traditions. That's why the development of new tools in Russia always attract attention from the bordering post-soviet countries. The comparison of the monitoring results between country participating in the project is also common concern. To help developers of such cross-cultural studies, CICED in partnership with SEQAP countries created guidelines and recommendations "Localization and adaptation framework" and based on American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, National Council on Measurement in Education (AERA/APA/NCME) standards following which it is possible to achieve maximum equivalence in target populations. After application of this methodology of adaptation participating country receives a version of the test in another language, which is based on the same theoretical model as in the original version that takes into account cultural characteristics of the country of localization

Methodology of the work under this partnership including following steps:

1. Determination of target population and comparison analysis of the educational programs. This is done by the local specialists that receive training in these tasks.
2. Translation and adaptation of test items that are common for Russia and the country of adaptation. This part is done through "learning by doing" approach by local specialists, usually test developers who know 2 languages well enough and under supervision of the test developers.
3. Development of new test items. This part is done through "learning by doing" approach by local specialists, usually test developers who know 2 languages well enough and under supervision of the test developers
4. Expert review. It is done by the Russian experts.
5. Small pilot and clinical approbation of translated version. These researches are organized on the country of adaptation by the team of local specialists that underwent training.
6. Psychometric validity research of the results of clinical approbation is done together with country teams and Russian specialists.
7. Discussion of results, development of dissemination strategy and presenting to public.
8. Country ownership of the adapted technology.

Learning, training and technology ownership

During the project participating countries receive to own: (i) SAM test and methodology for assessment in different subjects and for different school levels; (ii) methodology for development of the survey for teachers, students and school administration; (iii) technology of the lesson with in-built diagnostics. These methodologies get adapted to the local language in close cooperation with country teams through the "learning by doing" approach. The methodology of adaptation was also developed specially for the needs of the project and introduced to country teams during seminars and workshops. Country teams offered some specific cultural context to the methodology of the adaptation and localization so it can be used for further assessment tools adaptation and localization beyond the project needs. All transferred methodologies and tools are used for everyday classroom assessment and for conducting of comparative research inside of countries and between the countries. During the adaptation of the methodologies and tools there are trainings, workshops and seminars organized in order to equip country teams with necessary knowledge and skills. The training is conducted not only by the Russian experts by also by country

specialists who already underwent this training. They present experience in case studies seminars and through publications of the articles at online communication platform.

Capacity building is one of the most important outcomes of the project. The increasing numbers of the specialists from the developing countries who underwent special training (through workshops, online distant learning, scientific seminars and so on) reflects the success of the project. Capacity building activities under the project include:

1. “Learning by doing” component. This component of the project offers specialists, including young ones without any real work experience, to participate in project and do some tasks under the supervision of the expert. The expert is in constant communication with the participants and provide clear instructions, supervision, support and assess results. The work tasks under this component include field work on data collection, different kinds of preparation activities, reports writing, working with online resources and others.
2. Training including distant learning. The distant learning is performed through the online platform that allows interactive communication, submitting homework, distribution of materials. Through the platform specialists in specific countries study the adapted methodologies of the assessment for further use in their work.
3. Seminars and workshops. During these events specialists exchange ideas, experience and so on. The workshops with participation of the leading international expert are often conducted.