



A. S. Hornby Educational Trust

REPORT ON HORNBY-FUNDED TEACHER ASSOCIATION PROJECT

Title: Strengthening the integration and network of ESP teachers in Uzbekistan

Country: Uzbekistan

Dates: September 2019–May 2021

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

UzTESPING began functioning in December 2018 and thanks to the Hornby Alumni Award 2018, UzTESPING was able to grow into a country-wide ESP teacher community with a steadily increasing membership. Nevertheless, there were still many teachers who hadn't heard about UzTESPING or taken part in its activities. Therefore, even though the objectives set for the Hornby Alumni Project 2018 were achieved, there was still a need for further support to widen the ESP teacher community and strengthen its sustainability.

It could also be observed that there was not enough integration among ESP teachers across the country. ESP teaching departments knew little about what was happening in other institutions' ESP programmes. Opportunities for sharing practices were few and a very common problem for teachers in HE institutions was obtaining permission to take part in professional development activities. When events were organised in the capital, Tashkent, a very limited number of teachers from the regions could attend them. The project took into account all these factors in its efforts to make UzTESPING accessible to all ESP teachers in all parts of Uzbekistan.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

A number of important objectives were set to be achieved:

- to expand the ESP teacher community by increasing the number of members;
- to develop the UzTESPING functioning board with the inclusion of representatives from across the country;
- to help ESP teachers to integrate into the IATEFL community and benefit from it;
- to explore various ESP contexts;
- to identify needs and challenges in ESP contexts across the country;
- to initiate discussions among ESP teachers on finding solutions to their challenges by learning from local and international practices;
- to create an online platform for experience and idea sharing;
- to sustain the reforms set by the British Council in Uzbekistan.

3. PROJECT MEMBERS AND THEIR ROLES

As UzTESPING team leader, I started out by inviting some experienced ELT professionals and Hornby alumni in Uzbekistan, but later I widened the team as I decided to empower



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enthusiastic ESP teachers by giving them the feeling of ownership of the community they belonged to. The members of the project were:

Team leader

Name: Komila Tangirova

Institution: National Research Centre for Development of Innovative Methods in Teaching Foreign Languages under the Uzbekistan State World Languages University (alternative name is Uzbekistan Scientific Pedagogical innovation Centre-UzSPIC), A PhD student at the University of Warwick, UK since October 2019

Responsibilities: The Chair/Chief coordinator of UzTESPING, teacher trainer, project manager

Team members

Name: Hilola Maksudova

Institution: Tashkent State Pharmaceutical Institute

Responsibilities: Deputy Chair of UzTESPING, teacher trainer, administrator, the organiser of events

Name: Svetlana Khan (Hornby Alumni)

Institution: (UzSPIC)

Responsibilities: teacher trainer

Name: Miravas Iriskulov

Institution: (UzSPIC)

Responsibilities: Leading Consultant

Name: Nargiza Tadjieva (Hornby Alumni)

Institution: Westminster International University in Tashkent

Responsibilities: teacher trainer

Name: Mukaddas Ogay

Institution: (UzSPIC)

Responsibilities: teacher trainer, UzTESPING board member, advisor

Name: Davron Abdullaev

Institution: Urgench State University

Responsibilities: media materials developer, Khorazm regional coordinator, event organiser

Name: Aybolgan Borasheva

Institution: Nukus State Pedagogical Institute

Responsibilities: Karakalpakstan regional coordinator, event organiser

Name: Albina Elmuratova

Institution: Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanisation Engineers

Responsibilities: Secretary

Name: Svetlana Kurbanova

Institution: The Academy of the General Prosecutors' Office of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Responsibilities: Conference co-organiser

Name: Nurjamol Normatova

Institution: Termez State University



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Responsibilities: Surkhandarya regional coordinator, event organiser

Name: Bunyod Kholiyorov

Institution: Karshi Engineering Economics Institute

Responsibilities: Kashkadarya regional coordinator, event organiser

Name: Nigora Shukurova

Institution: Bukhara State University

Responsibilities: Bukhara regional coordinator, event organiser

4. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

September–October 2019

The project began in September 2019 with the setting up of the UzTESPING board. Initially, I selected a deputy chair, Hilola Maksudova, who took on the responsibilities of daily work in the office. We created a logo, roll-ups, banners and special welcome pack products, such as notebooks and fliers with information about the networking group.



UzTESPING flyer

The increasing popularity of UzTESPING then inspired me to set up the Board. The first Board meeting took place on November 19, 2019 which gathered together the most active UzTESPING members. Being in UK at that time, I participated virtually. The deputy chair was responsible for organising all the UzTESPING events while overall coordination was my

responsibility. A number of project tasks were allocated during this meeting. Members shared their ideas and initiatives that could be useful for ESP teachers and the development of UzTESPING. We also discussed preparations for the planned events. At the end of the event, the board enjoyed a special UzTESPING cake!



Our first Board meeting



Our special UzTESPING cake!

November 2019 – Forum at Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanisation Engineers

One of the most important benefits of UzTESPING for teachers is bringing top specialists together to deliver sessions and talks. For this one, I invited specialists with expertise in using technology for ELT. The event was hosted by Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanisation Engineers on 20 November. Speakers included a representative from British Council in Uzbekistan and two specialists from the Westminster International University in Tashkent. The rest of the presenters were from a number of HEIs. This event was followed by a very positive resonance which further increased the reputation of UzTESPING in the country. Teachers from various HEIs started contacting us asking to join the organisation. Quite a few institutions have since then contacted us asking for support in organising their own events.





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December 2019 – Presentation and webinar at Tashkent State Dental Institute

A very productive meeting was held at Tashkent State Dental Institute which gathered ESP teachers from a number of HEIs. To increase teachers' interest in participating in webinars, UzTESPING invited teachers to take part in a webinar by Cambridge Assessment English. After the webinar, the participants had a follow-up discussion. Before the webinar started, I joined the event online to give a talk about UzTESPING and answer any questions.



December 2019 – Presentation and webinar at Tashkent Institute of Oriental Studies

At this event, the deputy chair gave a presentation about UzTESPING and answered questions before joining a webinar by Cambridge Assessment English. This was followed by a post-webinar discussion and the filling in of membership forms to join UzTESPING. The deputy chair, who organised the event, reported a genuine interest by the teachers who received leaflets and notebooks with the UzTESPING logo.



January 2020 – Bukhara Engineering Institute of High Technology

Empowering ESP teachers to organise their own professional development activities has been one of the main objectives of the projects. Only through active collaboration among UzTESPING members can it further develop into a strong and sustainable teacher community.



January 2020 – Presentation at Tashkent Automobile and Road Construction Institute

As I was in the UK, I joined all the events online. This way, I had a chance to interact with the new members of UzTESPING, answer their questions and discuss matters of importance to them. It was very encouraging that after joining UzTESPING, teachers were keen to suggest projects and ideas for professional development activities. Both ESP and content teachers participated in this meeting.

February 2020 – Seminar at Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanisation Engineers

The most rewarding outcome of my efforts in running UzTESPING is seeing teachers' great interest in professional development. One of the members of the UzTESPING board made a huge contribution by inviting a foreign guest to talk about professional development opportunities in the UK.



February 2020 – UzTESPING Presentations at UzSPIC

On 12 February, my deputy and I organised a presentation about UzTESPING for teachers undergoing in-service teacher training at UzSPIC.

Urgench State University

Regional representatives were encouraged and empowered to initiate their own professional development activities and meetings. Here is one of them, Davron Abdullaev (one of the



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board's most active members), giving a presentation about UzTESPING. At the end of all such presentations, those who are interested are invited to join our association.



February 2020 – Karakalpak State University named after Berdakh

This is one more institution where a very dedicated member of the UzTESPING team (later appointed Karakalpakistan regional coordinator) introduced the organisation and provided information about our activities. At the end of the event, the participants completed membership forms and joined the Telegram group (a social media platform for communication).



March 2020 – A seminar at Samarkand State Foreign Languages Institute

This presentation was made by our new member of the board in his home city Samarkand.





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Post-March 2020

Unfortunately, the arrival of the pandemic influenced our project plans, and as it was no longer possible to organise events with lots of participants from different parts of the country, all meetings and events were organised online.

However, later, in October 2020, I was able to resume visits to each HEI and give presentations about UzTESPING following Covid-related government regulations. My intention was to cover 85 HE institutions across the country. I managed to cover most of these but the ever-changing circumstances and quarantine announcements made it difficult to reach all 85 institutions face-to-face, so some presentations were made remotely via Zoom.

Uzbekistan has 12 regions and 1 autonomous republic – Karakalpakstan. Within the period of the project, I was able to organise webinars for institutions in nine of these regions and the autonomous republic of Karakalpakstan.

Regional coordinators

One of the important achievements for UzTESPING has been the appointment of regional coordinators. It was always clear to me that ESP teachers need their own branches of UzTESPING for the sustainability of the networking group as a whole and accessibility to professional development. Below is the list of regions and their regional coordinators:

Regions	HE Institutions with ESP teaching departments where UzTESPING presentations were planned	Regional Coordinator	UzTESPING introductory presentations face-to-face and online
Tashkent city and region	29	Khilola Maksudova	21 face-to-face visits 2 online presentations
Sirdarya region	1	Erkin Khamdamov	1 online presentation
Samarkand region	7	Kamila Makhkamova	1 face-to-face visit to one institution
Bukhara region	4	Nigora Shukurova	1 online presentation attended by teachers from all 4 institutions
Jizzakh region	2	Sherzod Jabborov	1 online presentation attended by teachers from 2 institutions
Khorazm region	3	Davron Abdullaev	1 online presentation attended by teachers from 3 institutions
Surkhandarya region	7	Nurjamol Normatova	2 online presentations attended by teachers from 7 institutions
Kashkadarya region	5	Bunyod Kholiyorov	1 online presentation attended by teachers from 1 institution
Navoi region	2	Zebiniso Shomurodova	to be organised
Andijan region	5	Nargizaoy	1 online presentation attended

		Mirzaeva	by teachers from 1 institution
Fergana region	7	to be appointed	to be organised
Namangan region	3	to be appointed	to be organised
Karakalpakstan autonomous republic	9	Aybolgan Borasheva	1 online presentation attended by teachers from 9 institutions

Visits to Higher Educational Institutions

My visits to various institutions to meet with ESP teachers and tell them about UzTESPING have been very productive. Teachers were enthusiastic to learn about UzTESPING and at the end of these meetings, I invited all the participants to join UzTESPING and asked for an institutional representative. This way, the UzTESPING board grew with one ESP representative per institution. I also observed the interest of heads of departments and institutional administrations as they too understood the importance of their teachers engaging in UzTESPING activities.

Engaging with ESP teaching colleagues during these visits, I was able to learn about different contexts and the day-to-day problems these teachers experience. I learnt that ESP teachers share quite a few common challenges and I realised that these can be addressed through cooperation. To initiate discussion on finding solutions to these challenges, we have been running ESP discussion meetings every two weeks, where we compare our practices, share opinions and debate over controversial statements. We also learn from international practices at events where international guests are invited to suggest ways to address issues raised during the discussions. This initiative has been well received by ESP teachers and the meetings have become popular with regular participants. UzTESPING has also organised three international conferences: 'Teaching during Pandemic', 'Practices of ESP materials development' and 'Challenges and prospects of Teaching ESP' – all of which addressed the ongoing needs and challenges that ESP teachers in Uzbekistan face.

Through the network that has been created this has now become possible; participants in ESP discussion meetings asked each other questions, made suggestions and even suggested working together on mutual challenges and interests. One of the most commonly mentioned problem is mixed-level groups. Having discovered this, UzTESPING is now planning to address this issue in future activities.



Tashkent State Institute of Architecture and Civil Engineering



International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan



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*Journalism and Mass Communications
University of Uzbekistan*



Tashkent State Pharmaceutical Institute



Tashkent Medical Academy



*Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural
Mechanisation Engineers*



Tashkent Institute of Textile and Light Industry



Tashkent State Agrarian University

5. EVALUATION

This project has made an immense impact on UzTESPING as an association and the ESP teacher community as a whole. All eight objectives have been achieved, and impact has been measured by the level of engagement from ESP teachers, UzTESPING members and various authorities. Within the process of setting up the networking group, and then further supporting its sustainable functioning, I was contacted by institutions, where the administration (rector, vice-rector) expressed their wish for regular engagement and collaboration. Attention from the Ministry of Higher Education has also largely boosted my confidence that UzTESPING is being recognised as an important association capable of making a positive impact on the professional development of ESP teachers in Uzbekistan. At events, participants also filled in feedback sheets where they were asked to express their opinions and make suggestions for improvement. A vast majority of respondents commented that UzTESPING is crucial in creating professional development opportunities for ESP teachers.

One of our objectives was to create an online platform for communication. The main platform has become Telegram and all UzTESPING members have joined. This platform serves well as a means of communication among members: sharing news and announcements as well as useful links for resources and professional development opportunities (webinars, courses, conferences, etc.).



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Finally, UzTESPING has also supported British Council with its country-wide project, EnSPIRe-U. Although the project officially ended in 2019, there was still a need for further work to help participating intuitions continue what they had started. We organised an online event dedicated to further action in supporting the reform started with EnSPRe-U, with the participation of the deputy director of British Council in Uzbekistan, representative from the Ministry of Higher Education and heads of department of over 80 HE institutions.

6. EXPENDITURE

Expenditure	Details	Amount spent	Comments
Designing and preparing UzTESPING media materials	logo, fliers, notebooks, a roll-up, banners, conference and other events posters, UzTESPING door sign, certificates	£312	Expenditure for designing event posters and certificates continued throughout the period of the project. Fliers, notebooks and banners were also sent to regional branches for their events.
Printing	fliers and notebooks	£155	Fliers and notebooks were distributed at UzTESPING events.
Stationery and office supplies	Pens for welcome packs, paper for printing, paper for certificates, refreshments, office supplies, electric kettle, cups	£226	
Subscription to <i>Active Learning and Teaching of Foreign Languages in Uzbekistan</i> journal	Annual subscription	£20	
Setting up of the UzTESPING board (November 2019)	UzTESPING cake, refreshments, lunch, decorations	£114	
ESP Forum (November 2019)	Coffee break, Lunch, refreshments	£130	
Seminars and presentations organised by UzTESPING in regions	Coffee breaks refreshments	£200	Events were organised by regional coordinators in the following regions: Samarkand, Khorazm, Bukhara and Karakalpakistan. £50 was allocated for each of the events and reports of expenditure were obtained.
Organising UzTESPING presentations for ESP teaching departments at	Commuting and travel related expenses	£292	



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different institutions (October 2020 and May 2021)			
Memory stick	To store UzTESPING related files and materials	£10	
Organising UzTESPING online conferences in cooperation with ESP teaching institutions	Conference related expenses (IT service, conference registration, certificate preparation, designing a poster, preparing a conference programme, posting certificates to conference presenters)	£100	
Zoom subscription	13 months subscription	£144	All online events were held via Zoom
Presents for outstanding UzTESPING board members	Conference participation fee paid for 10 UzTESPING board members (International conference organised by Westminster International University in Tashkent)	£74	I and the deputy coordinator of UzTESPING gave presentations about UzTESPING and our projects and activities at this conference
Institutional IATEFL memberships	Institutional IATEFL membership to IATEFL: £190 Institutional IATEFL membership to ESP SIG: £33	£223	
Total expenditure		£2000	

7. DISSEMINATION TO A WIDER AUDIENCE

Sharing information about UzTESPING has been constant and I was pleased to learn that other people were sharing what they know about UzTESPING and my activities. I would receive messages and telephone calls from various institutions and people interested in this project and expanding the ESP teacher community. I never missed a chance to give a short talk at conferences to tell the audience about UzTESPING and invite colleagues to join. I was particularly happy to see rectors, vice rectors and directors showing interest in UzTESPING as they saw its potential benefit for professional development of ESP teachers in their institutions. I certainly plan to spread the word about UzTESPING to wider communities too. For example, I have already got in touch with the British Council and ESP teacher community in Ukraine and joined their Facebook group.



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8. OVERALL REFLECTIONS

Such projects, apart from sufficient funding, require a committed team who share the enthusiasm of the team leader. I have observed how inspiring and impactful a teacher association can be.

As team leader, I have gained considerable experience during this period. Managing a country-wide networking group is not at all an easy task and it has required a lot of effort and time, but I believe a well-thought-out plan has been key to its success. It is also important to have sufficient background to reach the necessary institutions and contacts. Moreover, it is not a single-person task, but a collective contribution, which has been an absolute necessity with this project. Even though UzTESPING has gained wide recognition in the country, I would still say there is still a lot to do. The networking group needs continued funding to function, so I aim to apply for further grants to maintain the teacher community. Running UzTESPING so far has undoubtedly taught me lessons.

A further aim is to organise more practical sessions where participants take away something tangible, such as example activities, resources, etc. To date, UzTESPING has focused more on identifying challenges and comparing and contrasting practices, which has proved useful, but feedback also showed that teachers like taking something away that they can then bring into their classrooms. Another thing I would like to do is to empower regional representatives and other active members of UzTESPING to run sessions and organise activities; so far, I have been leading most of the activities myself. For anyone wanting to run a TA, I would advise building up a strong and dedicated team. This is essential for successful functioning. I would also recommend exploring the most urgent needs of teachers and focusing on them in planning activities. Learning from practices of other TAs is very useful too.

9. GOING FORWARD/LOOKING AHEAD

Now that the membership of UzTESPING has reached over 500 ESP teachers across the country, maintaining the progress of the networking is a priority. Appointed regional coordinators will play a key role in making it possible for the board to spread a fair focus across all institutions around the country. While it is critical that there is effective coordination of UzTESPING activities and projects, I strongly believe that for the teacher community to flourish, it is particularly important that there appear more and more enthusiastic leaders ready to inspire their colleagues to engage in professional development activities. Thanks to projects funded by the Hornby Trust, a number of ESP teachers have become well-known as stars of the ESP teacher community in Uzbekistan. These bright members of UzTESPING have contributed a lot to the development of the networking group. They have become role models for many novice teachers starting their careers. Therefore, I believe helping such knowledgeable and energetic members of UzTESPING to run activities for their colleagues in their regions and towns will greatly benefit and further strengthen UzTESPING and its impact on the professional development of ESP teachers across the country.

As with any long-term project, UzTESPING has a plan for the year taking into account the HE academic year – October to July. Currently, together with several regional representatives, I am working on establishing UzTESPING branches in Karakalpakstan, Khorazm, and Samarkand, which will make it possible for more local activity in these regions. As shown in the table above, there are a few regions that haven't been visited yet



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and don't have an appointed regional representative, so to achieve a fairly spread focus, we have planned visits to these regions this year. An ESP Forum will also be held in November 2021, where the UzTESPING team will run a number of workshops and presentations. Training events will also be run by trainers in Samarkand, Andijan, Fergana, Namangan, Urgench, Nukus, Karshi, Bukhara and Termez. Finally, we are also working on the creation of an UzTESPING website.