



Hospital Pedagogy and Inclusion in International Dialogue – Impressions from Uzbekistan.

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Uzbekistan is a country in Central Asia that is still comparatively little known within German society. An initial encounter with a delegation from Uzbekistan at the HOPE Congress in Dublin in May 2025 marked an important starting point and subsequently led to an invitation from the Ministry of Pre-School and School Education.

The visit to Uzbekistan vividly demonstrated how much the country has modernized in recent years. This development is not only characteristic of Uzbekistan but also of other Central Asian countries whose societal and educational dynamics are often underestimated.

At the same time, the journey can be seen as another step in the internationalization of the Chair of Education for Emotional and Behavioral Disorders and Autism as well as of the Faculty as a whole. For several years now, intensive cooperation has existed with partners in Tanzania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Guatemala, Bolivia, and Brazil. Building sustainable collaboration with Uzbekistan represents a valuable extension of this international network and opens up new opportunities in the areas of research, teaching, and student exchange.

The Uzbek educator Abdulla Avloniy expressed the importance of education in the societal context particularly strikingly:

"Tarbiya biz uchun — yo hayot, yo mamot. Yo najot — yo halokat masalasidir."

"Education is for us a question of life or death, of salvation or destruction."

This understanding of education as an existential foundation of human development proves to be highly relevant in today's context and provides guidance for international cooperation in the field of education.



Fig. 1: State Museum "In Memory of the Victims of Repression"

Visit to the Avloniy Institute

The first stop of the journey was the Avloniy National Institute of Pedagogical Competence. Avloniy is considered one of the central educational figures of the country. After a reception by the director, a tour of the library and the modern "hubs" for

teacher training followed. These include areas for robotics, flight simulation, and programming. The institute serves as a central institution for the continuing education of teachers from all over Uzbekistan.

During a meeting with colleagues, the program for the week was finalized. Already in the initial discussions it became clear that the Uzbek side was not only interested in theoretical content but especially in practice-oriented examples of inclusion. On this basis, an intensive and productive working program was developed.



Fig. 2: Exchange with Ph.D. students, psychologists, and teachers at the Avloniy Institute

In the afternoon, two lectures were presented to teachers and doctoral candidates, addressing the inclusion of children with chronic illnesses and exploring the challenges this entails. The discussions highlighted the high relevance of the topic in the Uzbek context. Students shared their own experiences and reflected together on how barriers to inclusion in schools and society could be overcome.

Mehrli Maktab, School

The following day included a visit to the Mehrli-Maktab, School. The name, marked by its **comma**, conveys the central idea that children spend only a limited time in this institution, while their

lives continue beyond its walls. The school presented itself as modern and well organized. After a reception by the principal, insight was provided into the pedagogical work with children and parents.



Fig. 3: Artwork by a patient – depiction of Munich and my hand during a stay in the hospital school

It is particularly noteworthy that there are ten such schools in Uzbekistan, which focus exclusively on supporting and promoting children with cancer. This specialization underscores the high educational and health policy relevance of the topic in the country.



Fig. 4: Lecture on the reintegration of children with cancer into school

In the afternoon, two presentations were given to a group of about 30 teachers; additional colleagues from hospital schools across the country

participated via Zoom. The focus was on the reintegration of children with cancer as well as the development and use of teaching materials that support school reintegration while also contributing to destigmatization and cancer prevention. The approaches presented were new to the participants and aroused great interest, leading to lively discussion. The books and materials made available were received with visible joy and gratitude.

Visit to the University of Pedagogy and Psychology

On the following day, a visit to the University of Pedagogy and Psychology in Tashkent took place. The reception by the head of the International Office as well as the dean of the faculty was very warm. The university is undergoing a continuous development process, and the country's education system as a whole has made considerable progress in recent years. While the current campus is already well maintained, a move to a new campus is planned for the coming year. Particularly noteworthy is the high proportion of women in pedagogy: about 99% of the students are female.

In discussions with colleagues, opportunities for future cooperation were explored. Agreements were made on the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding as well as the development of concrete steps such as study trips for Uzbek students and teachers to LMU.

Special attention was drawn to a room labeled **“German-Uzbek Faculty.”** Although it is currently little used, it

holds potential for new initiatives. With the support of the DAAD, the Goethe-Institut, and the German Embassy, it is planned to use this space more intensively for joint activities in the future.



Fig. 5: Room of the German-Uzbek Faculty – potential for future cooperation

In the afternoon, a lecture was given to a packed auditorium of more than 250 students, teachers, and professors. At first, the focus was on a discussion of the meaning of inclusion. It became clear that inclusion is not only about academic performance but also about acceptance, respect, and strengthening the self-confidence of children and young people.



Fig. 6: Educational lectures at the university – high attention and active participation of students and teachers

Subsequently, the topic **“Teaching materials on cancer for use in school settings – Promoting Awareness, Empathy, and Inclusion”** was presented. This complemented the previous content in an ideal way and highlighted the importance of inclusion and prevention in the school context. Participants left the event with numerous new impulses.

Further Impressions and Visits

On the next day, a visit to the State **“Museum In Memory of the Victims of Repression”** provided insights into the historical development of Uzbekistan, which has existed as an independent state since 1991. In the afternoon, a tour of the International Inclusive HUB took place, a state-of-the-art building that hosts projects in 3D modeling, photography, fashion design, and other creative fields. Notably, inclusive projects also have space here, underlining the innovative and future-oriented spirit of the country.

Another significant meeting took place with the directors of the Zamin Foundation, an organization active nationwide in the field of inclusion. Various approaches for future joint projects were developed in the discussions.

Visit to Samarkand

On Friday, a two-and-a-half-hour train ride led to Samarkand. The reception was organized by representatives of the region’s top education authority. The program featured visits to an inclusive school **staffed by two nurses**, a hospital school, and an inclusive

kindergarten.



Fig. 7: As usual, a very warm welcome in Samarkand

In addition to educational policy impressions, the program also included a visit to the famous Registan Square with the Sherdor, Tillakori, and Ulugbek madrasahs – a cultural highlight of the trip that impressively underlined the close connection between education, history, and culture in Uzbekistan.



Fig. 8: Registan Square – Samarkand

Department for Inclusive Education

On Saturday, a meeting was held with the head of the Department for Inclusive Education at the Ministry of Pre-School and School Education. Various topics were discussed, and initial approaches for further cooperation were developed, including in the field of **autism spectrum disorders**. The meeting also provided an opportunity to acknowledge the many valuable encounters of the past week and the great hospitality of the Uzbek partner institutions.

Conclusion and Perspective

The journey to Uzbekistan proved enriching and insightful in many respects. It highlighted the dynamic development of the country's education system as well as the great interest in international cooperation. In particular, the topics of hospital pedagogy and the reintegration of children with cancer received special attention and led to intensive discussions with colleagues.

It became clear that inclusion cannot be guaranteed solely by material resources or infrastructural modernization but depends largely on fundamental **attitudes, acceptance, respect**, and strengthening students' self-concept are central prerequisites for successful participation. In this regard, one can draw on Martin Buber's understanding of education, who emphasized: **"Man becomes I through You."** This dialogical principle makes clear that inclusion is not merely an organizational task but essentially rests on the quality of interpersonal relationships. It is precisely here that cooperation between Uzbekistan and LMU opens up significant potential for mutual learning and the joint development of innovative approaches.



Abb. 9: Decorative wall at the restaurant Besh Qozon in

Tashkent, adorned with typical Uzbek crafts (hand-painted ceramic plates, lagan).

It is also noteworthy that Uzbekistan is already more advanced in some areas than one might expect: every school employs at least one nurse who actively supports teachers and students – for example, when children with diabetes or epilepsy need special assistance in everyday school life. This close cooperation between educators and medical staff would also be a valuable enrichment for the German context.



Fig. 10: White-golden portal with Arabic calligraphy – Tashkent

Looking to the future, clear perspectives are emerging: the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, the implementation of joint research and teaching projects, and the establishment of exchange programs for students and teachers. Particularly the firmly established cooperation between educators and medical staff in

Uzbekistan serves as an example that could provide valuable impulses for Germany as well.

Moreover, it becomes clear that building academic bridges to those countries that have developed independently since the dissolution of the former USSR is of particular importance. These states are engaged in ongoing processes of transformation and democratization, which require continuous support in order to be sustainably consolidated. Science, in particular, can make a significant contribution here – through internationalization, cooperation, and the creation of reliable networks. By integrating regions that have so far received little attention into international academic exchange, opportunities arise for stability, social participation, and peace-promoting developments.

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