



PRESS RELEASE

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The Microfinance Centre (MFC) is proud to announce the successful close of its Financial Education Program for Low-Income Households in Uzbekistan (Part II). The project was financed by the **European Union** under the auspices of its “Action Plan 2006” (agreed with the government of the Republic of Uzbekistan) and was implemented by the Microfinance Centre (Poland), in partnership with **National Association of Microfinance Institutions (Uzbekistan)**. The project ran from December 2011 - May 2014.

The goal of the Financial Education Program (FEP-2) was to improve the financial capability of low-income households in Uzbekistan, building on the results of institution building and infrastructure development at regional and national level we achieved in the previous EU-funded FEP project in Uzbekistan.

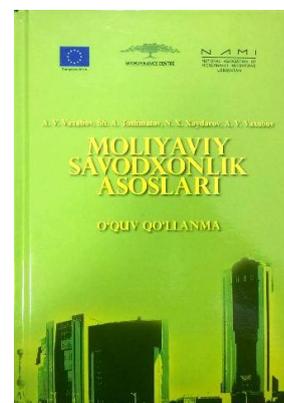
The project targeted young people, low-income households, microfinance institutions and retail banks from Tashkent, Andijan and Termez.

The Financial Education Project aimed to:

1. Raise awareness about financial education among stakeholders at the national, regional and local level and increase their involvement in financial education activities
2. Increase participation by low-income Uzbeks in the financial markets through increasing the quantity of financial counselling services provided by financial institutions
3. Improve the quality of counselling and financial literacy training services by developing new tools and strengthen the capacity of existing and new local consultants
4. Facilitate the inclusion of financial literacy themes into existing tertiary curricula and other educational programs for students.

Project activities included:

1. **Developing and integrating financial education materials into college curriculum:** MFC, in cooperation with NAMI, worked with the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education to develop a plan to increase financial education skills among Uzbek students. We established a working group consisting of the government representatives, academics and non-governmental organizations to introduce financial education into the formal curriculum. As a result, we produced a “Fundamentals of Financial Literacy” textbook, as well as a 36-hour financial education curriculum. When we piloted these among 2,000 students, we saw significant changes in knowledge, attitudes and financial behavior. More students started to save, mainly by reducing expenses. Students also



“Fundamentals of Financial Literacy” textbook

started spending more carefully to avoiding unnecessary spending. After the pilot, the Ministry took the leadership on further evaluation of the textbook and discussion on how to integrate it into the formal curriculum. Pilot test results and recommendations on integrating financial literacy in schools can be found [here](#).

2. **Integrating financial education into customer services for financial institutions that target vulnerable households:** We used our “Debt Management” financial education module, adapted to the Uzbek context, as the basis of a short training for management staff of financial institutions involved in the project. These institutions in turn reached out to 633 low-income people with debt management advice through individual or group consultations, which were conducted by local counsellors employed in microfinance institutions and retail banks. Through these consultations, low-income people learned how to borrow wisely, effectively manage their credit obligations, and prevent over-indebtedness. They also learned how to use financial services effectively, especially credit and loans, and how to apply wise money management practices. Analysis completed after these consultations demonstrated that low-income people had successfully changed their financial behaviour by planning their budgets, protecting their assets through increased regular savings, and wise borrowing.
3. **Strengthening the financial education capacity of local consultants:** The MFC conducted two five-day training of trainers workshops for branch staff of financial institutions, who in turn trained other departments and branches in their organizations. As the result, 32 local trainers were certified from 12 microfinance institutions. Additionally, MFC trained and certified 3 local senior financial education trainers.
4. **Raising awareness around financial education:** The MFC launched a social campaign to reach low-income and socially-vulnerable people through the media, as well as through financial and educational institutions. The MFC developed financial education leaflets and posters that were printed and distributed among the target group. Altogether, this campaign reached more than 10,000 vulnerable people.



Social Campaign Poster

The Microfinance Centre (MFC) is a grassroots network of over 100 members that play an active role in shaping the microfinance industry in the Europe and Central Asia region. Our headquarters are in Warsaw, Poland, and our members range from banks, non-governmental organizations, social and commercial investors, to development institutions and international PVOs. The MFC has implemented a number of financial education initiatives and programs in transition countries including Poland, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, Russia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. MFC is a leading partner in this project.

National Association of Microfinance Institutions of Uzbekistan (NAMI): is an organization whose mission is to consolidate the efforts of non-banking microfinance institutions to increase the quality and access of microfinance services by building the capacity of microfinance sector and creating enabling environment for its development. NAMI is a local partner in this project.

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