

Open Educational Practices in Kyrgyzstan: Connecting Partners and Programs

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Abstract

Independent, democratic, and post Soviet, Kyrgyzstan or the Central Asian Kyrgyz Republic, is in the midst of multiple changes that involve its cultural identity, economic incentive structure, government, and laws, all of which have an impact on the country's educational systems and educational practices. In addition to national and local initiatives, multiple international entities, including other countries, multinational corporations, private individuals, and international non-governmental agencies are and have been involved in initiatives involving education in Kyrgyzstan since its independence in 1991 at the dissolution of the Soviet Union. These initiatives are meant to address disruption in the funding of school, libraries, educator professional development, and educational infrastructure as well as the ageing and replacement of Soviet-era curriculum materials.

This paper describes multiple, simultaneous policy, outreach, and research initiatives around open education which were held at, conducted by, and participated in in Kyrgyzstan by Faculty and Library Staff at the American University of Central Asia. The paper will review recent changes in Kyrgyz Copyright law (authored in part by an AUCA law faculty member) including official recognition of Creative Commons licenses, affirmation of the Marrakesh Treaty and library roles in administering activities affiliated with the Treaty. The paper will review government, foreign government, and non-government initiatives around open education in Kyrgyzstan, and those of University networks within Kyrgyzstan. Attention will be given to the goals and methods of capacity-building consultations conducted as part of the U.S. Fulbright Specialist program at American University of Central Asia (AUCA), and an administrator/faculty/library initiated open education pilot program undertaken at AUCA. Finally, the paper will end with results from two surveys: results of student, faculty, and administrator open education pilot perception survey (December 2017), and results of a survey of 100+ faculty and librarians working in Kyrgyz institutions of higher education (October-November 2017).

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