



PRIMARY SCHOOL AS A KEY INSTITUTION FOR THE FORMATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CULTURE AND ECONOMIC THINKING

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Abstract: *This article examines the role of primary school as a platform for introducing the concepts of the "green economy" in Uzbekistan. It highlights the importance of early environmental education in shaping a sustainable worldview among children. The article discusses the prospects for forming an environmentally conscious generation.*

Keywords: *green economy, primary school, environmental education, sustainable development, Uzbekistan, Strategy 2030, renewable energy, waste recycling, environmental responsibility, practical projects.*

НАЧАЛЬНАЯ ШКОЛА КАК КЛЮЧЕВОЙ ИНСТИТУТ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ ЭКОЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ И ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОГО МЫШЛЕНИЯ

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Аннотация: *в статье рассматривается роль начальной школы как платформы для внедрения идей «зелёной экономики» в Узбекистане, подчёркивается значимость раннего экологического образования в формировании устойчивого мировоззрения у детей. Обсуждаются перспективы формирования экологически осознанного поколения.*

Ключевые слова: *зелёная экономика, начальная школа, экологическое образование, устойчивое развитие, Узбекистан, Стратегия 2030,*



возобновляемая энергия, переработка отходов, экологическая ответственность, практические проекты.

In the modern world, issues of sustainable development and environmental responsibility are becoming increasingly relevant. Uzbekistan, as a country actively striving for modernization and integration into global processes, is making significant progress toward developing a “green economy”. In recent years, the nation has joined international initiatives such as the Paris Climate Agreement and has committed itself to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. One of the key tools for achieving this goal is education-particularly at the primary school level. It is during early childhood that the foundations of worldview, habits, and values are formed, which later determine a person’s behavior in society and their attitude toward the environment.

The concept of a “green economy” implies development in which economic growth is combined with minimal environmental impact, efficient use of resources, and social equity. For Uzbekistan, which faces challenges such as the reduction of water resources, land degradation, and the consequences of the Aral Sea catastrophe, the transition to a green economy is of strategic importance. According to the World Bank, about 40% of Uzbekistan’s land is affected by salinization, while water resources are decreasing due to climate change and inefficient management [1]. The *Strategy for the Development of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026* emphasizes the need to introduce environmentally oriented technologies and to increase the energy efficiency of the economy by 20% by 2026. Moreover, the country plans to raise the share of renewable energy sources in the total energy balance to 40% by 2030, which requires significant investment and human resource development-beginning within the education system [2].

This transformation calls not only for technological innovation but also for the cultivation of an environmentally conscious generation capable of sustaining and advancing these initiatives in the future.



Uzbekistan is actively cooperating with international organizations to implement “green” projects. For example, in 2023, with the support of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), a project was launched to construct solar power plants with a total capacity of 1 GW in the Navoi and Samarkand regions [3]. These steps demonstrate the country’s commitment to the principles of sustainable development. However, the success of such initiatives largely depends on the level of public awareness. According to a study by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), only 15% of schoolchildren in Uzbekistan have basic knowledge about climate change and ways to prevent it [4]. This underscores the need to strengthen environmental education, starting from primary school, where children can acquire the foundations of a sustainable lifestyle through accessible and practical teaching methods.

Primary school plays a key role in the educational system, as it is at this stage that basic knowledge and skills are formed. Introducing the concepts of a “green economy” at this level allows children to understand, from an early age, the importance of careful treatment of nature, rational use of resources, and the interconnection between humans and the environment. Learning through practical examples, such as waste sorting, plant cultivation, or participation in environmental projects, fosters environmental responsibility. For instance, studies show that children who engage in hands-on environmental activities are 30% more likely to demonstrate conscious environmental behavior in adulthood [1]. This highlights the importance of early involvement of schoolchildren in such initiatives.

Steps are already being taken in Uzbekistan to integrate environmental education into the school curriculum. For example, within the framework of the State Program for the Implementation of the *Uzbekistan-2030 Strategy*, approved by Presidential Decree No. UP-37 dated February 21, 2024, emphasis is placed on improving the environmental situation and implementing standards for the rational use of natural resources [2]. Specifically, the program includes greening of territories, enhancing energy efficiency, and developing environmental awareness among youth. Primary schools can serve as a platform for implementing such



initiatives through natural science lessons, extracurricular activities, and school projects aimed at environmental preservation.

In practice, pilot projects on environmental education are already being implemented in some schools in Uzbekistan. For example, since 2022, in the Tashkent region, with the support of the Ministry of Public Education and international partners such as UNICEF, lessons on the basics of waste recycling and energy conservation have been conducted for primary school students [3]. Pupils learn how to sort waste using color-coded containers and participate in tree planting on school grounds. Such activities not only introduce children to the principles of the “green economy” but also cultivate habits of environmentally responsible behavior. Furthermore, in 2024, the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection, and Climate Change of Uzbekistan announced the launch of the “Eco-Schools” program, which is expected to cover more than 500 primary schools across the country by 2026. This initiative includes master classes, competitions, and quizzes aimed at promoting sustainable development concepts among children.

The effectiveness of such approaches is supported by international experience. For example, in Japan, environmental education in primary schools includes mandatory lessons on waste management and energy conservation, which has led the country to achieve an 80% recycling rate. By adapting similar practices, Uzbekistan can lay the foundation for long-term changes in public consciousness and the economy.

President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasizes the importance of the environmental agenda for the country’s future. In his speech at the UN Climate Change Conference in Dubai on December 1, 2023, he stated: *"The transition to a 'green' economy and achieving carbon neutrality are priority strategic objectives for New Uzbekistan"*.

This statement reflects the state policy aimed at sustainable development and underscores the necessity of raising the younger generation with a sense of environmental responsibility, starting from primary school.



1. **Updating curricula:** Integrating topics related to climate change, renewable energy, and waste recycling into primary school subjects such as natural science and the surrounding world. For example, children are taught how solar panels convert sunlight into electricity using simple models or illustrations. Teachers can also use stories or fairy tales about animals affected by pollution to highlight the importance of a clean environment, making lessons engaging and understandable for young students.

2. **Organizing environmental clubs:** Establishing school clubs where children can participate in tree planting, cleaning school grounds, or exploring energy-saving technologies. For instance, in one club, students learn to make bird feeders from recycled materials such as plastic bottles and observe how their creations support local wildlife. In another case, students conduct experiments with light bulbs, comparing the energy consumption of conventional and LED bulbs, which clearly demonstrates the benefits of energy conservation.

3. **Practical projects:** Introducing small initiatives such as installing separate waste collection bins or creating school gardens, allowing children to apply the principles of the “green economy” in practice. For example, in one school, students collect paper and plastic in separate containers and then see how these materials are sent for recycling, understanding that their actions reduce waste. In another example, children grow vegetables on a small plot, watering them with collected rainwater, learning how to conserve resources while enjoying a productive harvest.

4. **Collaboration with local communities:** Involving parents and local organizations in environmental activities, which enhances the social significance of school projects. For example, parents help organize a community clean-up day, where children and adults work together to clean the school grounds and plant flowers while discussing how this improves air quality. In another case, local farmers conduct workshops for students, demonstrating how to compost organic waste and then use the resulting fertilizer for planting, illustrating the closed cycle of nature.



These examples show how theoretical knowledge can be combined with practical activities, making learning lively and motivating. Such initiatives help children not only understand the concepts of a “green economy” but also feel part of broader societal changes.

These measures not only introduce children to the basics of sustainable development but also foster an active civic mindset. Research indicates that early environmental education contributes to more responsible attitudes toward the environment in adulthood.

Despite the obvious advantages, the implementation of “green economy” ideas in Uzbekistan’s primary schools faces several challenges, including a shortage of qualified teachers capable of delivering environmental education and limited resources for practical projects. However, these challenges can be addressed through state support, international cooperation, and grants from organizations such as UNICEF or the EBRD, which are actively engaged in Uzbekistan.

The prospects, however, are very promising. Primary school, as a platform for introducing “green economy” concepts, can serve as a foundation for preparing a new generation of Uzbek citizens ready to face global environmental challenges. This is particularly important in the context of the country’s ambitious plans to increase the share of renewable energy to 25 gigawatts by 2030 and to produce “green” hydrogen.

Primary schools in Uzbekistan have enormous potential to promote the ideas of a “green economy”. Through educating children, it is possible to lay the foundations of sustainable development, which will contribute to economic growth and the preservation of nature for future generations.

Primary school thus becomes not just a place of learning but a platform for shaping an environmentally conscious society in New Uzbekistan.

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