



In Uzbekistan pre-primary education is delivered to remote communities through school buses | Photo source Maximilian Simson on Unsplash

Innovation > Education > Schools on wheels for remote areas in Uzbekistan

SCHOOLS ON WHEELS FOR REMOTE AREAS IN UZBEKISTAN

 EDUCATION

The preschools are housed in brightly-painted buses that travel to remote villages, bringing early education to children who would otherwise have no access to it

Spotted: Over the past couple of decades, the number of preschools in Uzbekistan has decreased by almost 50 per cent, with only 818,000 out of 2,450,000 children having access to preschool education in 2018.

In response, the government of Uzbekistan rolled out an initiative to improve access to preschool education by providing mobile preschools in rural areas. The programme has been highly successful, with over 6,00 children now attending school on the buses and preschool enrollment jumping from 27 percent to 67 percent in just two years.

Each bus can host up to 16 children at a time, providing three hours of play-based learning. The fleet is made up of 65 buses which drive to remote areas where children otherwise couldn't access preschool easily. The buses then drive to another location the next day, alternating locations in the community.

The mobile preschools are staffed by trained teachers and provide a safe, nurturing environment for children to learn and grow. The programme has been particularly successful in rural areas, where access to preschool education was previously very limited.

“While the government gradually builds public preschools across the country, we have to think of those children who will not be able to have a proper kindergarten anytime soon in their area... Also, as of last year, buses were over 80% more economically efficient if compared to building a

conventional kindergarten,” Shaknoza Mirziyoeva, an adviser to the preschool education ministry in Uzbekistan [explained](#).

The buses also include solar panels and tiny bathrooms, allowing them to run off the grid. The solar panels also power an air-conditioning system and a microwave oven. This is highly relevant given that the majority of remote areas in Uzbekistan don't have the infrastructure to power electricity supplies or water for drinking and sewage.

Other innovations spotted by Springwise that bring services to remote regions include a [solar power system for off-grid communities](#), [muscle-powered emergency generators](#), and [free school classes on the street for India's disadvantaged children](#).

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Takeaway:

As of 2019, [Unicef reported](#) that over 175 million children—around 50 per cent of pre-primary-age children globally—were not enrolled in pre-primary education. However, this is only the mean. In low-income countries, [four out of five children](#) aren't enrolled in pre-primary education. Education can have a big impact on a child's future and these years of formation are critical. Excluding children from this opportunity can have a devastating effect on the rest of their lives. While initiatives such as Uzbekistan's school buses aren't able to address the extent of the issue, it is a great example of how innovation can be applied to effectively and economically invest in early childhood education.