**INFORMATION**

**regarding the study on the solutions to promote digital education**

**for young people and to ensure their protection from online threats**

**1. What are the main challenges that young people in your country face in accessing digital education? Please consider the specific situation of marginalized young people and those in vulnerable situations in your response.**

The indicators of the Information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure in the general education system in the country are as follows:

* The ratio of students to computers in general educational institutions across the country is 12:1;
* A total of 4.305 educational institutions across the country have been provided with access to the Azerbaijan Education Network and the Internet;
* In 2023, 43.350 pieces of computer equipment were distributed to educational institutions of the country.

Nevertheless, there are the following challenges in ensuring access to digital education:

* Internet access may be limited in some remote regions and areas;
* Deficiencies in technology infrastructure, including a lack of computers, tablets, or smartphones, can limit students' access to digital learning tools;
* Some teachers need training to effectively use digital tools and online platforms.

**2. What steps is the Government taking to ensure that digital education is accessible and promoted among young people? Please provide examples of specific laws and regulations, measures, policies, and programs directed at ensuring young people’s universal access to digital education.**

In accordance with "State Program for the implementation of the National Strategy for the development of the information society in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2016-2020", approved by the Order No. 2345 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated September 20, 2016, "Digital Skills" pilot project has been implemented since the academic year 2017/2018.

The project aims to equip students with comprehensive skills on ICT.

Implemented by the Ministry of Science and Education in collaboration with the international educational company "Algoritmika", the project focuses on enhancing the teaching of the "informatics" subject. It emphasizes the development of algorithmic thinking, logical reasoning, project-building skills, and the fundamentals of programming.

In 2023, the project reached more than 410.000 students in 532 schools across 53 regions.

In 28 general educational institutions (Baku, Sumgait, Mingachevir, Ganja), more than 950 students in X and XI classes were involved in digital skills training.

The "Code for Future" project is a collaborative initiative between Ministry of Science and Education and educational institutions and Information Technology (IT) training organizations.

The project aims to equip students with essential skills and knowledge in the rapidly evolving field of IT. It is designed to meet the demands of the current market economy and adapt to technological changes.

The project spans a four-month duration, offering intensive courses in various IT domains, including programming, network administration, IT specialist roles, system administration, web development, QA and etc.

Over the past three years, within the project more than 4.000 students has successfully graduated.

The STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) project was established in 2019 with the purpose of fostering critical and creative thinking, cooperation, and the improvement of 21st-century skills among students. The initiative aims to provide a holistic learning experience by integrating various subjects into a cohesive model, allowing students to tackle real-world problems through a creative process.

The teaching process within the project is implemented in secondary schools, encompassing modules such as "3D printing", "Microbit programming", "Electrical engineering", "Biotechnology", "Nanotechnology", "Robotics", "Genetic engineering", "CNC laser cutters", "Unmanned flight devices (educational drones)" and "Entrepreneurship".

In 2023, the STEAM project covered 400 secondary schools and 25 STEAM Centers. In total, 180.000 students were involved in STEAM education.

The application of electronic technologies has been expanded. In 2023, more than 19.500 video resources were posted on the video.edu.az portal, 61 textbooks and methodical materials are posted on the www.trims.edu.az. In total, 1.014 resources for general education institutions are available on the website. The interactive version of the textbooks is posted on the www.e-derslik.edu.az platform. Currently, 351 resources for the general education level are available on the portal.

**5. What steps is the Government taking to ensure that young people are protected from online threats? Please provide examples of specific laws and regulations, measures, policies, and programs.**

Since 2020, by using "Cisco Umbrella" technology the Ministry of Science and Education ensures safe access of students to online information of Azerbaijan Education Network, which connects all educational institutions across the country and limits the search for harmful information.

"Cybersecurity" project was launched by the Institute of Education with the support of Ministry of Science and Education on December 6, 2019.

The aim of the project was to teach the technological aspects of cyber security theoretically and practically to university students studying in related fields.

The following results were achieved within the project:

* Cybersecurity Laboratory comprising of 21 members (20 students and one trainer) was established;
* A total of 20 students from five higher education institutions actively participated in visual training sessions covering four distinct topics. These sessions involved practical tasks conducted in virtual laboratories, enhancing the students' understanding and application of cybersecurity concepts;
* Students engaged in research activities, focusing on four different cybersecurity topics;
* Online roundtables on various topics, such as "The extent of cyber security threats in the era of the Internet of Things" and "Digital identity - the key to data protection and security".
* Electronic Security Service under the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan held several awareness-raising events about online threats, in which nearly 700 young people, including students, participated, and conducted training sessions in these events on relevant topics such as "Cyber security rules", "Protection of personal information", "Rules for social network use" and etc.
* The Law "On protection of children from harmful information" of the Republic of Azerbaijan ensures that children receive information appropriate to their age and that they are protected from harmful content.