



How NGOs React: Globalization and Education Reform in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Mongolia

By Iveta Silova, Gita Steiner-Khamsi



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- * Critical retrospective on the first decades of the transition from planned to free-market economy in Central Asia
- * Contributions from both Eastern and Western scholars
- * Includes both theoretical NGO research and practical examples taken from experience

During the important, early years of post-socialist transformation in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Mongolia, the Open Society Institute/Soros Foundation was arguably the largest and most influential network in the region. *How NGOs React* follows the Soros Foundation's educational reform programs there and raises larger questions about the role of NGOs in a centralist government, relationships NGOs have with international donors and development banks, and strategies NGOs use to interpret global reforms locally.

The authors, all former or current educational experts of the Soros Foundation, analyze “the post-socialist reform package” at the country-level, highlighting the common features such as decentralization, privatization, vouchers and liberalization of the textbook publishing market. They look at the global reforms and their variations as they were transferred to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan over the past decade. A unique combination of perspectives from Western as well as Eastern scholars based in the region makes this collection an essential retrospective on key processes involved in transforming educational systems since the collapse of the socialist bloc.

Contributors: Tatiana Abdushukurova, Erika Dailey, Valentin Deichman, Natsagdorj Enkhtuya, Alexandr Ivanov, Saule Kalikova, Elmina Kazimzade, Anna Matiashvili and Armenuhi Tadevosyan.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Gives a very real institutional face to processes of globalization and educational transfer across the region, while also highlighting the diverse paths that the nine countries have pursued since the late 1980s. This collection will be of great interest to scholars in education policy, political science, area studies, and critical approaches to globalization."

"Illuminates not only the contexts that have shaped the education reform initiatives and outcomes of Soros national foundations in the region, but, by extension, what conditions are likely to influence the success or failure of NGO activities in post-socialist as well as other societies."

"Offers rare insights into education and culture in countries that have been at the periphery of global scholarship. Its brave challenge to the post-colonial scholars, development experts, and local elites to take global justice seriously is inspiring. Soros Foundation Network has produced a fair-minded and far-reaching volume that is equally useful to those interested in NGOs, political science, and international, comparative, and development education. Other NGOs will, hopefully, follow the example of the OSI in enlightening us about post-Soviet education and social developments."

"Essential reading for any student who wishes to understand the reality and complexities of post-Soviet stability and development issues, not just limited to education reform"

About the Author

Iveta Silova is an Assistant Professor of Transcultural, Comparative, and International Education at the College of Education, Lehigh University. She is the author of *From Sites of Occupation to Symbols of Multiculturalism: Re-conceptualizing Minority Education in Post-Soviet Latvia* (2006) and coeditor (with Mark Bray and Virginija Budiene) of *Education in a Hidden Marketplace: Monitoring of Private Tutoring* (2006).

Gita Steiner-Khamsi is Professor of Comparative and International Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York. She has been a guest professor at Humboldt University, Berlin; Stanford University; O.I.S.E. at University of Toronto; University of London Institute of Education. She is 2009 President of the U.S. Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) and committee member of the World Congress of Comparative Education Societies. Her two most recent publications are *The Global Politics of Educational Borrowing and Lending* (2004) and *Educational Import: Local Encounter with Global Forces in Mongolia* (2006). She does analytical work and applied research in Mongolia, Central Asia, and Europe.

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