

Seminar 1 of the HSE Research and Training Group  
"Inclusive Society: a Comparative Analysis of the Structural Conditions  
and Opinions of Insiders in Russia and Neighboring Countries"  
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# **TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN CENTRAL ASIA**

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# Introduction

- Teachers are regarded as key drivers of the implementation of inclusive education as they are at the school and classrooms which are strategic delivery points.
- Central Asian countries have embarked on a process of implementing inclusive education in their respective education systems.

# Problematizing teacher attitudes towards inclusion

The **notion of teacher attitude** may be understood to mean the way the teacher may perceive and think which may lead to how he/she will act in relation to their teaching practices.

Teacher beliefs, conceptions and attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education can **either become a driver or a barrier of inclusion process.**

# Purpose of the study

- This study, therefore, analyzed the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education in central Asian countries. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
- these are four post-socialist countries of Central Asia where inclusive education is becoming a goal and a challenge for social policy.

# Research Question(s)

- *What are teacher attitudes towards inclusive education in four central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan?*
- *What are the key initiatives, barriers and drivers of inclusive education?*

# Literature Review: an international perspective

- Transition towards inclusive education often require a change of teaching and learning practices but most importantly the changing of teacher's beliefs, values, attitudes and knowledge about teaching and learning.
- Factors to influence the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education internationally:
  - Training of teachers (Agavelyan et al, 2020) and the establishment of professional learning communities (Makoelle, 2014)
  - Long professional experience (Unianu, 2012)
  - Classroom and special education teachers vs subject teachers (Saloviita, 2020)
  - Level of education, self-efficacy and gender (Bandyopadhyay & Dhara, 2021)

# Literature Review: Central Asian Perspective

- Starting from the 2010s, four countries of Central Asia began to develop and adopt legislative acts that create legal, infrastructural and organizational opportunities for the inclusive education
- Barriers of inclusive education:
  - Soviet legacy with prevailed medical model of disability,
  - Stigmatization and discrimination of children with disabilities (especially, girls from rural areas),
  - the lack of educational standards (Tajikistan),
  - medicalization of approaches to disability (Uzbekistan & Tajikistan),
  - the lack of competencies among teachers (Tajikistan),
  - poor school infrastructure (Kyrgyzstan),
  - poverty and insufficient financing of social policy programs (Kyrgyzstan & Tajikistan)
  - low level of professional competence of teachers (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan & Tajikistan)

# Research Approach & Design

**Research Approach:** quantitative survey questionnaire

**Data Collection:** 7 point Likert scale

**Data Analysis:** Descriptive Statistics & SPSS

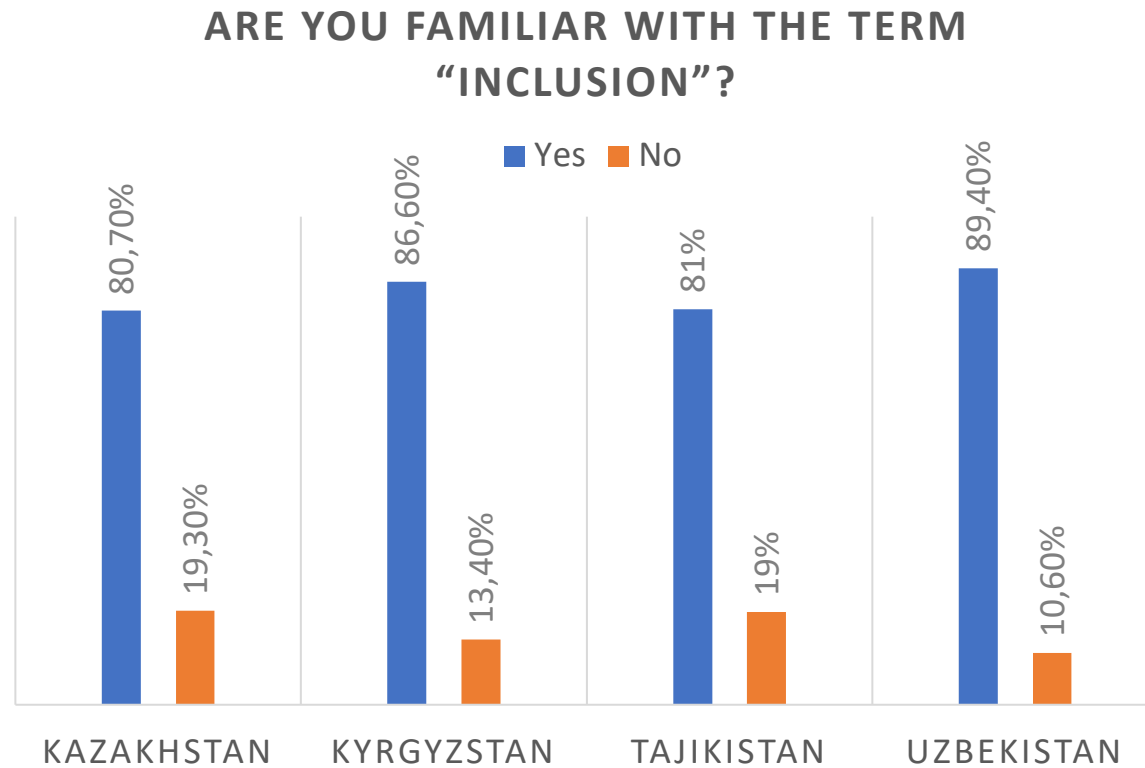
**Population & Sampling :** school teachers (N=869) from Central Asian countries i.e Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

Country	N, teachers
Kazakhstan	382
Kyrgyzstan	283
Tajikistan	81
Uzbekistan	123



# Findings: Role of inclusion, inclusive school and inclusive class (1)

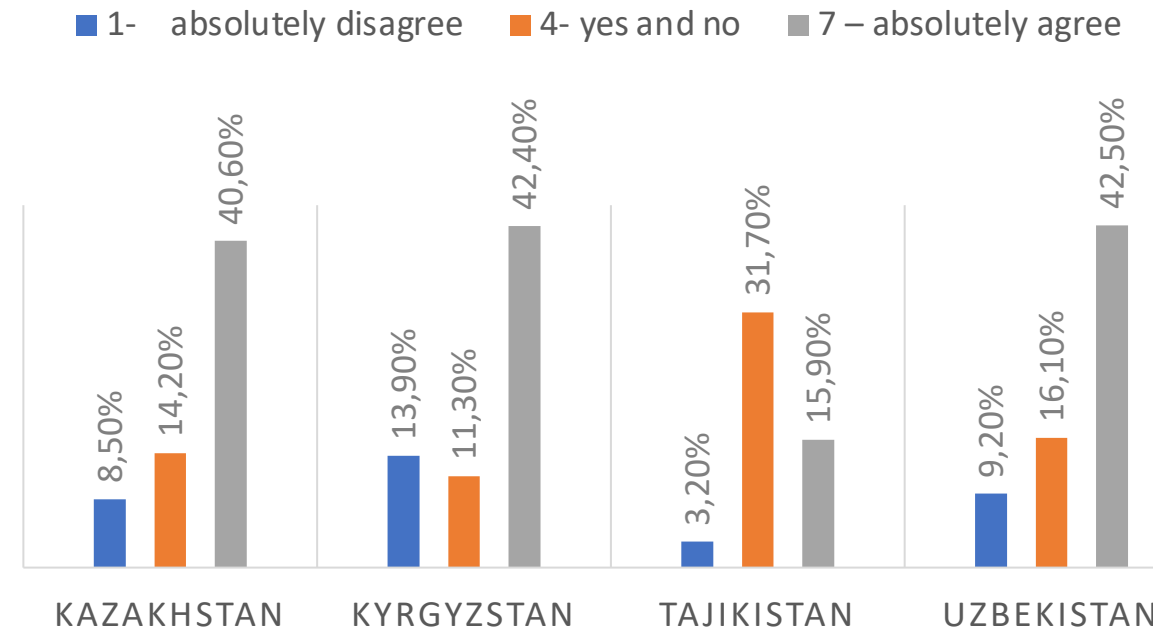
- The majority of respondents are familiar with the term “inclusion”,



# Findings: Role of inclusion, inclusive school and inclusive class (2)

- About 40% of teachers in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan seem to strongly agree that inclusive schools/classes are more likely to prepare SEND students for adulthood. However, this was not the case in Tajikistan,
  - inclusive employment as a special problem for Tajikistan, the poorest of the four Central Asian countries
- About 35% of teachers in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan think that all students, who study in the mainstream education class will receive equal attention. However, in Tajikistan only 18% of teachers strongly agreed to this aspect
  - serious imbalanced ratio of the teacher to students and the consolidation of classes and schools as well in Tajikistan

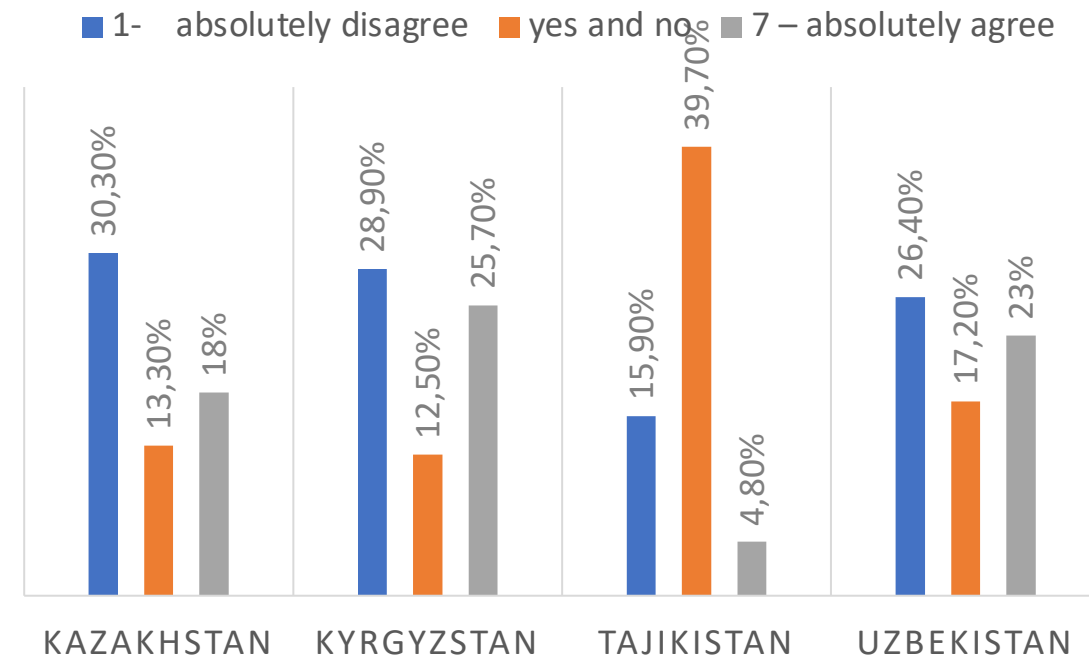
AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL/CLASS IS MOST LIKELY TO PREPARE CHILDREN WITH SEND FOR ADULTHOOD



# Findings: Curriculum, pedagogy and inclusion (1)

- Teachers in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan
- are more confident that inclusion requires additional competence and teacher training and
- are less confident that it is possible to teacher both SEND and Non-SEND students in the same class.

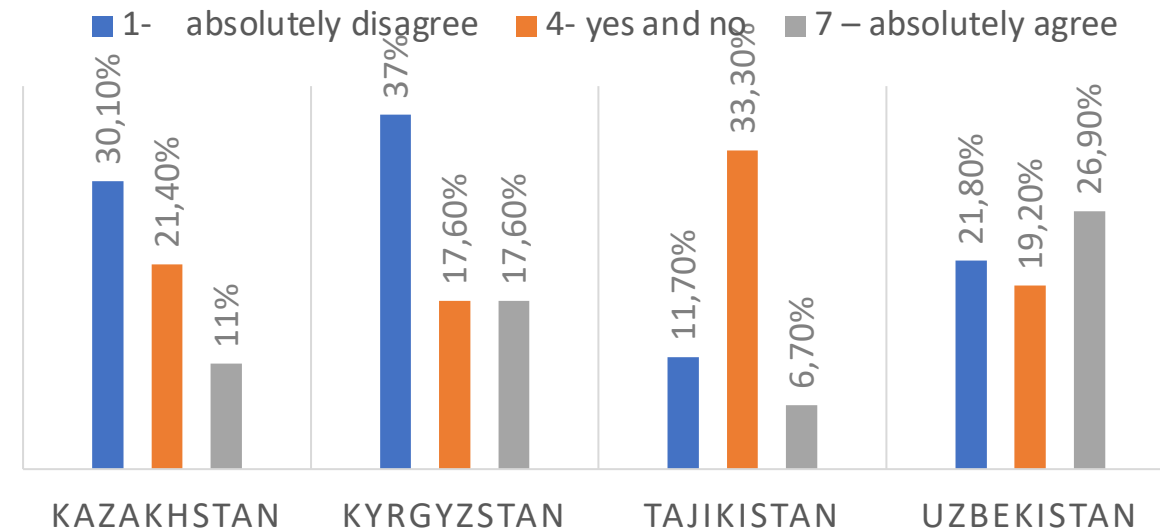
EDUCATION OF BOTH CHILDREN WITH AND WITHOUT SEND IN THE SAME CLASS IS POSSIBLE



# Findings: Curriculum, pedagogy and inclusion (2)

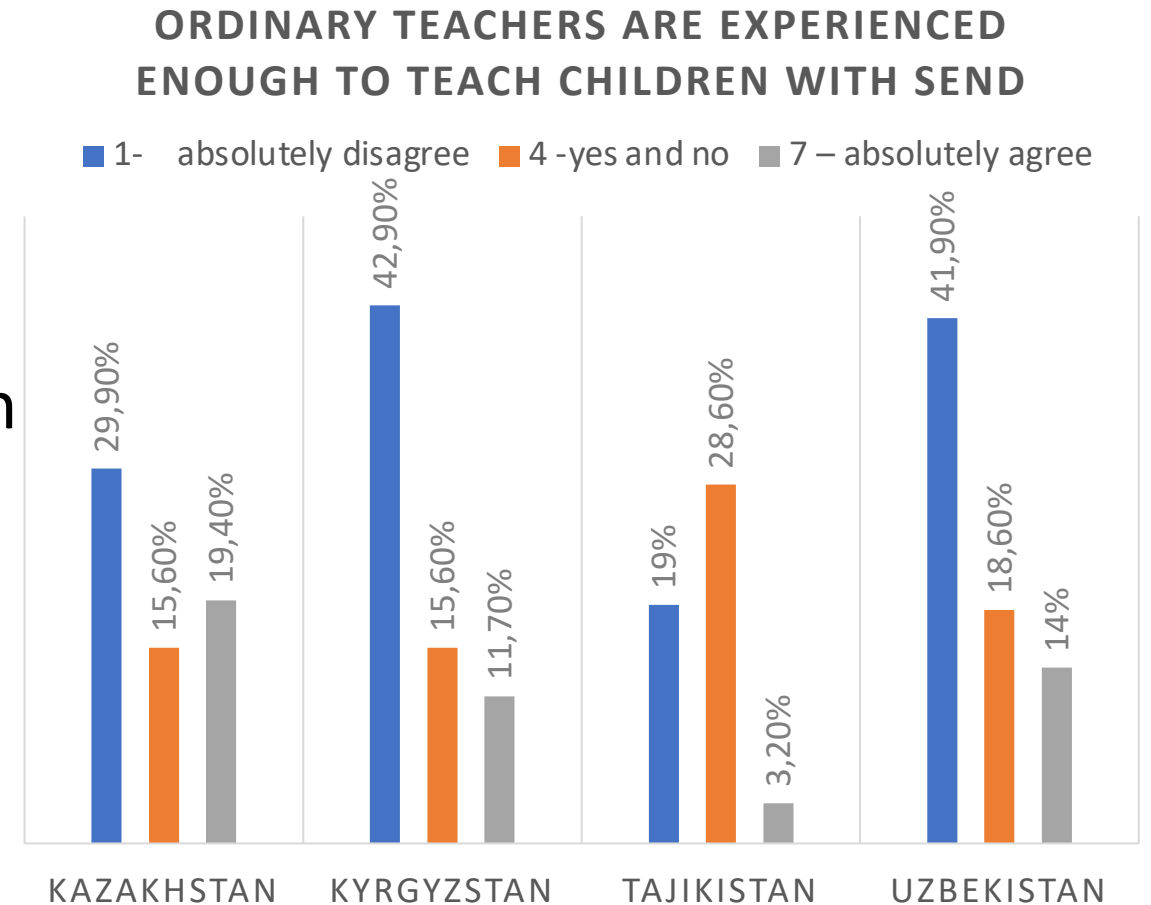
- Respondents from Kazakhstan & Kyrgyzstan more often indicate that they were not ready to adjust the curriculum to the individual needs of each student,
  - the development of inclusive education is totally underway in these two countries, so teachers more likely understand real challenges in teaching students in inclusive classes using inclusive educational program
- Teachers in Tajikistan are neutral towards this statements.

I AM READY TO ADJUST THE CURRICULUM TO THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF EACH STUDENT, REGARDLESS OF HIS OR HER ABILITIES.



# Findings: Teacher attributes, competencies, skills and knowledge (1)

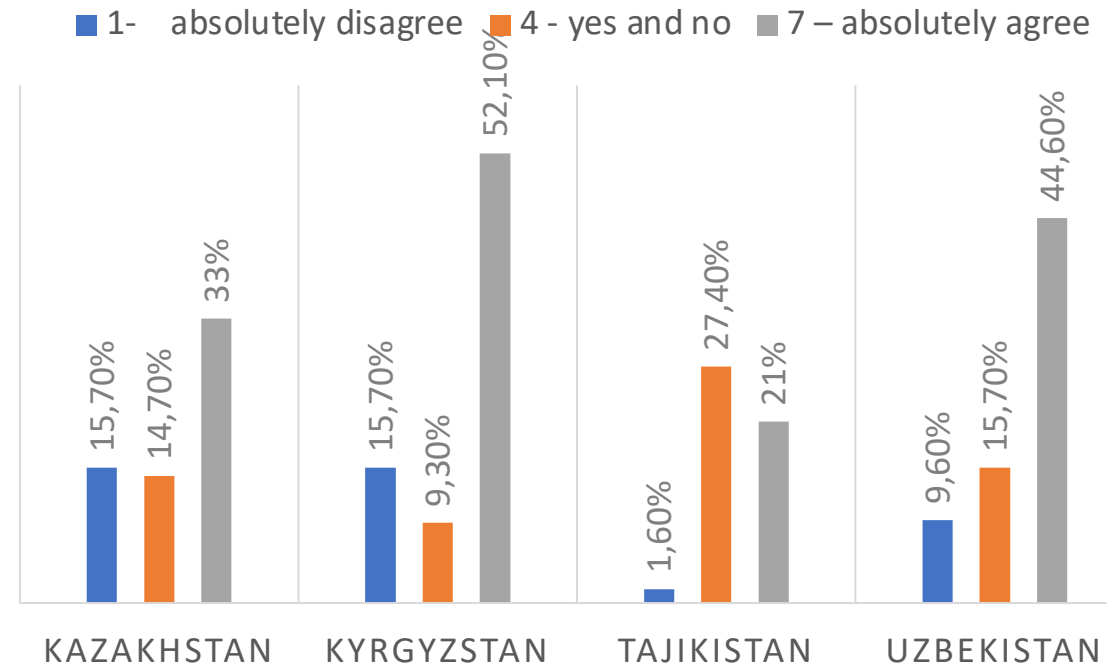
- Teachers in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan strongly believe that ordinary teachers are not experienced enough to teach children with SEND. In Tajikistan the attitude was mixed with teachers disagreeing.



# Findings: Teacher attributes, competencies, skills and knowledge (2)

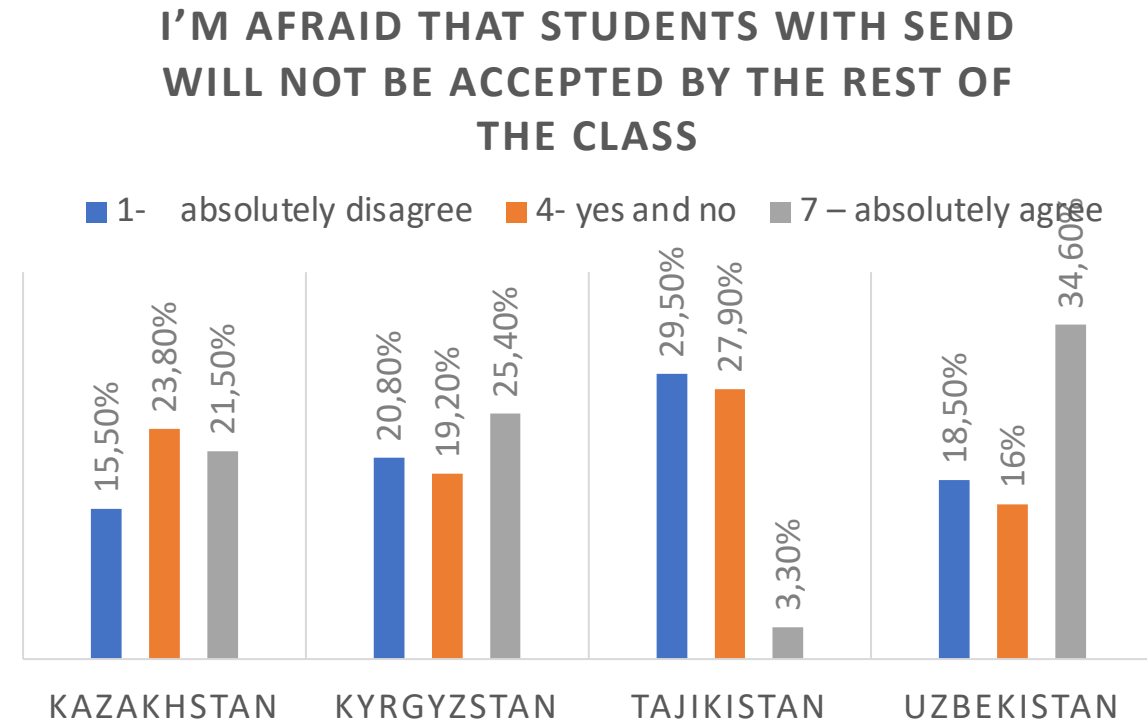
- Respondents from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have a strong idea that child with SEND could be at school together with children without SEND, if the school has teachers with competencies. This view seems not strongly supported by teachers in Tajikistan.
  - additional cultural and economic barriers for inclusion in Tajikistan
- The ability of teachers to deal with stress as a result of students with SEND in class was neither strongly agreed nor disagreed to
  - The level of teacher's stress in inclusive school is higher (Galaterou, 2017) vs lower (Weiss et al, 2019)

A CHILD WITH SEND COULD BE AT SCHOOL TOGETHER WITH CHILDREN WITHOUT SEND, IF THE SCHOOL HAS TEACHERS WITH COMPETENCIES



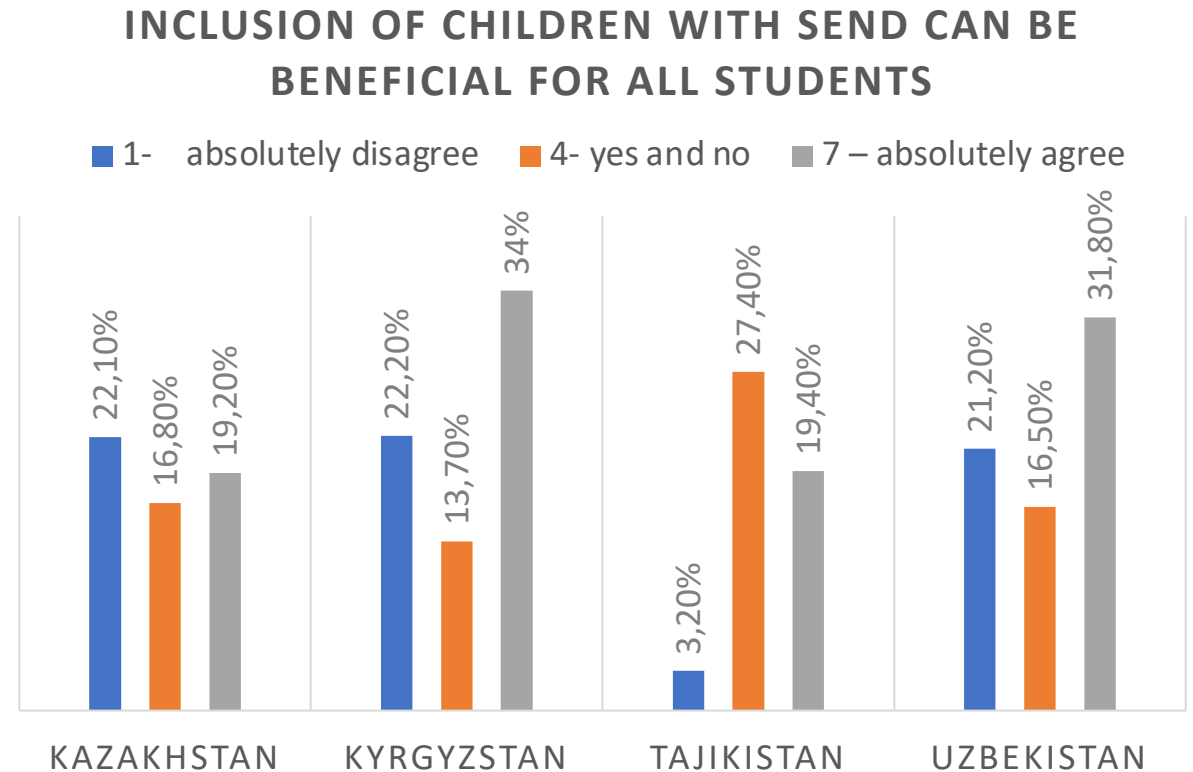
# Findings: Attitudes toward children with special educational needs and disability

- teachers in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have a strong attitudes that interaction between Non-SEND and SEND students may not reflect poorly on SEND students
- The statement that students with SEND will not be accepted by the rest of the class elicited mixed responses. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan the responses were balanced with those strongly agreeing and those strongly disagreeing. Teachers in Tajikistan are more positive and in Uzbekistan are more negative.



# Findings: Attitudes toward children with special educational needs and disability

- The inclusion of SEND students in the mainstream was thought to be beneficial to all students mostly in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.
- There seems to be doubt by teachers in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.

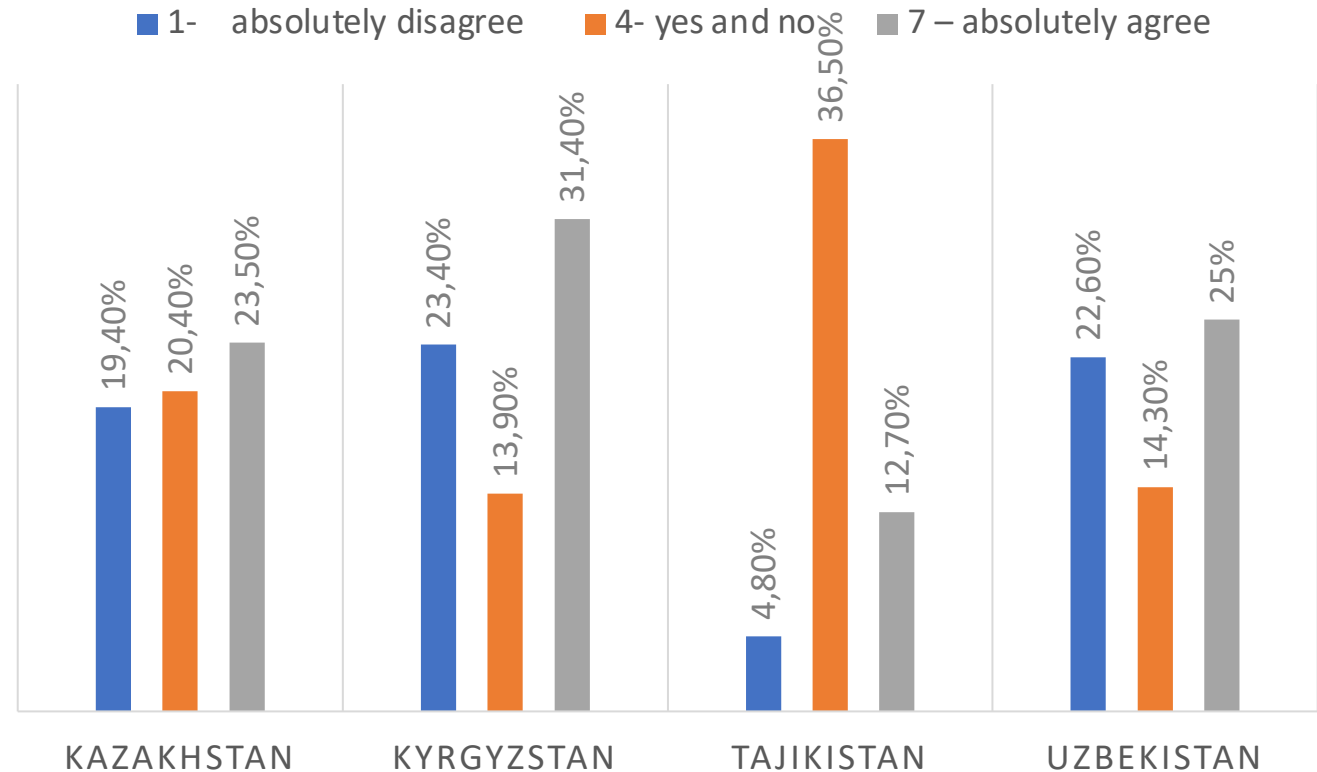




# Findings: Inclusion, assessment and academic performance

- Teachers in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are more confident that education in a mainstream class contributes to higher academic performance. Teacher in Tajikistan was not significantly agree or disagree,
  - limited personal experience of teachers, because inclusive education in Tajikistan is just beginning to institutionalize.

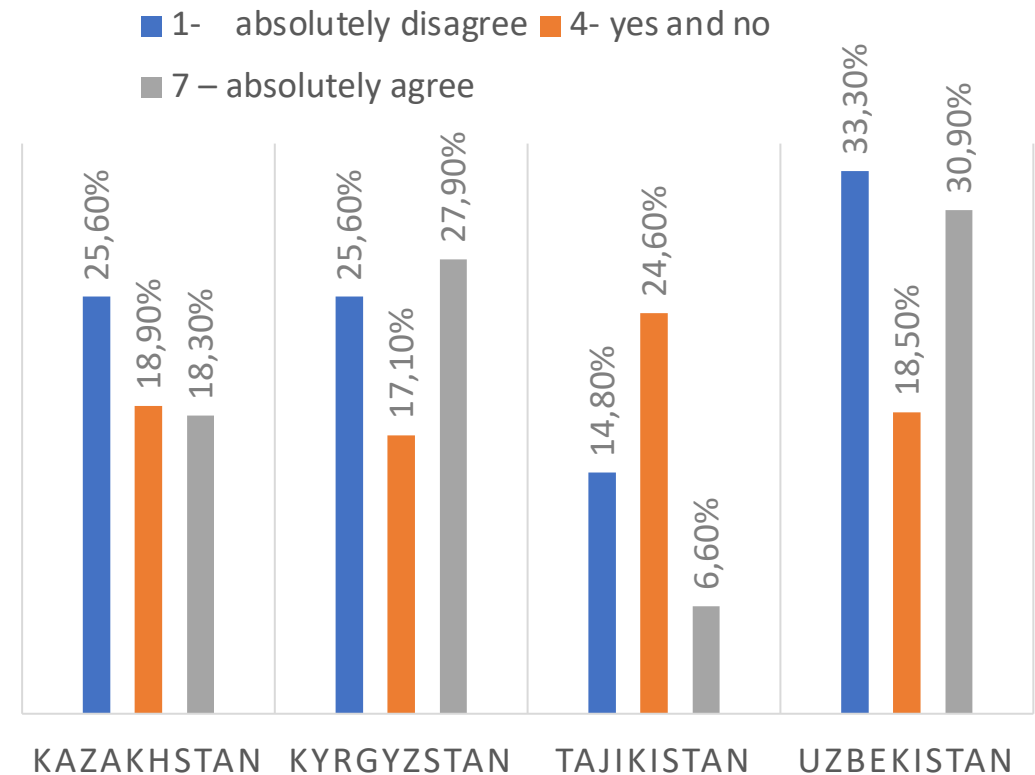
EDUCATION IN A MAINSTREAM CLASS CONTRIBUTES TO HIGHER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF CHILDREN WITH SEND



# Findings: Inclusion, assessment and academic performance

- In Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan there were a significant number of teachers who believe that that inclusion may affect the academic performance of students without disability. However, teachers in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan seems not to agree strongly with this view.
- Teachers in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are more ready to adjust the assessment of academic performance for individual students while in Tajikistan teacher neither thought they were ready nor not ready.
  - More developed inclusive training programs in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

## I AM WORRIED THAT INCLUSION MAY AFFECT THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS WITHOUT DISABILITY



# Conclusion

- A slow but steady shift from the segregation strategy to inclusion which embraces diversity, equality and equity for all students.
- Views of teachers about what constitutes an inclusive pedagogy are still varied,
- Some change in attitudes of teachers are visible in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan albeit in some cases negative attitudes towards inclusion still persist. More work seems to be needed in Tajikistan.