

Hornby Educational Trust

Activating Teacher Communities in Regional Areas through Wider Engagement and Expertise Sharing

Uzbekistan

2022-2023 Alumni Project Report

Komila Tangirova



Hornby Alumni Projects

Project Overview

Title	Activating teacher communities in regional areas through wider engagement and expertise sharing
Country	Uzbekistan
Dates of project	2022-2023

1. Background and rationale

What are the main issues in your English teaching and learning context? How did these issues influence your choice of project? Were there also other important contextual factors to consider?

There are more than 80 HEIs around Uzbekistan (12 regions and the capital Tashkent city) offering ESP courses to students majoring at various disciplines. While engaging with ESP teachers at some of these higher educational institutions (HEI), I have learnt that many of them share very similar challenges. For example, one of the frequently mentioned one is having to work with mixed-level groups, with students ranging from elementary to advanced level in the same class. In addressing this and many other day-to-day challenges, teachers may seek for various trainings and professional development activities, but these are not always accessible evenly across Uzbekistan with more opportunities available in the capital city- Tashkent.

A possible solution to making these opportunities available in all parts of the country is supporting local teacher communities by encouraging teachers in regions to engage with like-minded colleagues in professional development activities and in collaborative learning organised in their own regions. For this to happen, however, it is important to collaborate with a dedicated and experienced practitioners or teacher trainers who are eager to develop professionally themselves and share their knowledge with others.

For this proposed project, I therefore will collaborate with twelve active members of the ESP teacher networking group – UzTESPING, which I initiated in 2018 (funded by Hornby Trust) and have been running so far. With the support of educational authorities (including Agency for Promoting Foreign Language Learning, which is the main authority focusing on teaching and learning foreign languages around Uzbekistan and The Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education), UzTESPING has managed to organise many events and connect ESP practitioners and researchers across Uzbekistan. Nevertheless, it has not yet been possible to

develop active engagement of ESP teacher communities in all regions equally and I believe there are two main factors that can help this to be achieved. These are getting local teachers voices heard and acted on as well as supporting regional coordinators of UzTESPING in organising PD activities locally. By sharing my own experience and expertise with twelve colleagues who volunteered to become regional coordinators, I aim to help them address local needs in their regions.

Being in the UK, I have so far successfully coordinated and accomplished two projects remotely. I therefore have a full confidence of my relevant capacity and experience to run the proposed project. In my role of a chief coordinator of UzTESPING, I have been engaging with numerous colleagues in regional areas eager to activate their local teaching community and engage with colleagues from other parts of Uzbekistan. I therefore aim to rely on these colleagues and available support from the educational authorities to develop a bank of PD support to create sustainable opportunities ESP teachers in regional areas to engage and learn through these activities.

2. Project objectives

The focus of the proposed project is exploring professional development (PD) needs of ESP teachers to draw attention of educational authorities to the current needs of ESP teachers at higher educational institutions (HEI) across Uzbekistan and to create sustainable and informed professional development opportunities through both in-place and online activities facilitated by twelve regional coordinators of UzTESPING (Uzbekistan Teachers of ESP Integrated Networking Group) in each of the twelve regions of Uzbekistan.

By the end of the project, the followings are expected to be accomplished:

- To prepare a survey instrument for exploring teacher needs for PD and guide twelve regional coordinators in running the survey among ESP teachers in all twelve regions of Uzbekistan
- To guide twelve regional coordinators in preparing a workshop on “Dealing with mixed-level groups in teaching ESP” which they will run in each of their visits to regional HEI for running a survey (It is expected that this initial workshop will motivate teachers to share other needs they have to receive a similar support on their topics)
- To share the findings of the survey with the relevant education authority (LPA) to cooperate and receive support in organising relevant PD activities
- To support regional coordinators’ participation in the 4th international Conference Education and Linguistics in Tashkent (capital city) where they will have a chance to share their survey findings with each other and other colleagues
- To develop a bank of PD support together with twelve regional coordinators of UzTESPING and invited ELP specialists in the relevant areas based on the survey results and support twelve regional coordinators in organising nationwide PD activities

Evaluation

1. Project objectives

To what extent do you feel your objectives were met? If they were not met, or only partially met, can you explain why?

The objectives set for this project were partly met due to circumstances beyond my control. Below, I will detail how and to what extent each of the objectives was met:

- **To prepare a survey instrument for exploring teacher needs for PD and guide twelve regional coordinators in running the survey among ESP teachers in all twelve regions of Uzbekistan**

The survey to explore PD needs of ESP teachers across the country was developed and run successfully. Regional coordinators and active members of the ESP community helped me in administering the survey among ESP teachers around the country. The survey generated very useful findings that informed the focus of PD activities for ESP teachers as part of this project. The results showed that the following topics were of the highest interest to 334 (the total number of survey respondents) teachers in 13 regions of Uzbekistan (note that the respondents could choose as many options as apply to them. For example, 203 respondents out of 334 think that Choosing/adapting/developing ESP teaching materials is an important topic to be covered in teacher training for them, the number in each case below represents the number of respondents in relation to the total number of the survey respondents:

Choosing/adapting/developing ESP teaching materials - 203

Working with multilevel ESP student groups - 183

Working with authentic materials - 167

Designing ESP course syllabuses - 142

Assessing ESP learners - 136

ESP student motivation - 125

Conducting needs analysis - 85

Corpus linguistics in ESP - 69

To guide twelve regional coordinators in preparing a workshop on “Dealing with mixed-level groups in teaching ESP” which they will run in each of their visits to regional HEI for running a survey (It is expected that this initial workshop will motivate teachers to share other needs they have to receive a similar support on their topics).

The core team in this project consisted of myself, and two regional coordinators. Aybolgan Borasheva (regional coordinator of Karakalpakstan) and Davron Abdullaev (regional coordinator of Khorazm) took a leading role in engaging and helping me to run the project. The two coordinators guided the invited trainers/presenters for each webinar we ran. Initially, when

planning the project, my intention was to organise workshop on “Dealing with mixed groups in teaching ESP” in each region. However, the original plan had to be modified, as we decided to run webinars instead of face-to-face events to be able to accommodate larger and more varied groups for each of the events. Thus, “Dealing with mixed groups in teaching ESP” became one the topics we covered in a series of webinars.



(These are the photos of UzTESPING introductory events run in the past at the two regions (Khorezm and Karakalpakstan. Following those introductory events both regional coordinators attached the wall signs with the logo of UzTESPING at their departments. The institutions are Urgench State University and Nukus State Pedagogical Institute)

- **To share the findings of the survey with the relevant education authority (LPA) to cooperate and receive support in organising relevant PD activities**

At the time when we completing the survey, the Agency for Promoting Language Learning (LPA) that I had planned to get support from in organising UzTESPING events was suddenly closed according to the Government decision.

Following a very successful completion of the country-wide survey on professional development needs of ESP teachers around the country, the team was ready to start organising events in each region locally with the expected support of the relevant local authorities. However, since

LPA (The Agency for Promoting Foreign Languages Learning) was closed according to the Government decision and restructured into smaller regional teams in each region of the country, we realised there was not time for us to re-establish communication with each of them. The closure of the Agency impacted on the ability of the projects team to organise in-place events. Establishing connection with newly structured local authorities in each region would have required a lot of time, which would have delayed the delivery of each planned event. For this reason, we (I together with regional coordinators) made the decision to run all the PD events in an online format.

Samarkand was the only region where we could establish a good relationship with the department of the local authority that worked on organising professional development activities of English teachers. Using the opportunity, we participated in the conference organised by the Samarkand State University, where one of the members of our team -Aybolgan Borasheva presented on the findings of our survey and discussed the topics of particular interest to teachers in the audience.

- **To support regional coordinators' participation in the 4th international Conference on Education and Linguistics in Tashkent (capital city) where they will have a chance to share their survey findings with each other and other colleagues**

The findings of the survey were presented at the 4th International Conference on Education and Linguistics in Tashkent. The event was hybrid for UzTESPING, which allowed UzTESPING members in other parts of the country to join it too.



The presenter (one of the regional coordinators -Aybolgan Borasheva) who was taking part in the conference in person (alongside other regional coordinators) facilitated the discussion on the shared insights in place. I joined the event online. This small gathering of ESP practitioners as a part of the conference “gave a good feeling of belonging to the UzTESPING community”, according to the participants of this forum. Following the provided insights, the participants shared their ideas related to the PD support of ESP teachers. For example,

- Create opportunities for ESP teachers across the country to network for resource and practice exchange
- Annual training for ESP teachers



The survey findings were also presented at another two conferences: a similar meeting at a conference in Samarkand with the same agenda, which it also led to a fruitful discussion among the participants and a conference in Khiva where Aybolgan Borasheva shared the survey findings, which led the relevant discussion too.



Thus, the findings of the survey were shared in three events in three parts of the country with communities of ESP teachers. The purpose of this sharing was to engage ESP teachers in

discussion of what PD support they need the most and how the findings of the survey resonate with what teachers' own experience.

- **To develop a bank of PD support together with twelve regional coordinators of UzTESPING and invited ELP specialists in the relevant areas based on the survey results and support twelve regional coordinators in organising nationwide PD activities.**

Following discussions on how to best address the needs of ESP teachers based on the survey results, each regional coordinator chose the topic that they would like to run a webinar on. Unfortunately, not all the regional coordinators volunteered to organise a webinar, so we were not able to engage with some regional communities more than some other. Nevertheless, there was good participation from 8 out of 13 regions, which we still found to be a successful outcome. Our experience also gave us an understanding of the specific characteristics of regional ESP teaching communities and their level of interest in and knowledge about UzTESPING activities.

Announcements of the webinars and follow-up discussions, sharing of materials took place in the Telegram UzTESPING group with almost 500 members in it. We also made relevant posts on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/UzTESPING>) Each webinar was recorded (with the permission of presenters and participants which was obtained at the start of webinars), the recording and the presentation slides are available for UzTESPING members as a resource. Summaries of these seven webinars are on our website (<https://uztesping.uz/workshops-and-seminars-2/>).

Webinar on Conducting Needs Analysis

DEAR ESP TEACHERS

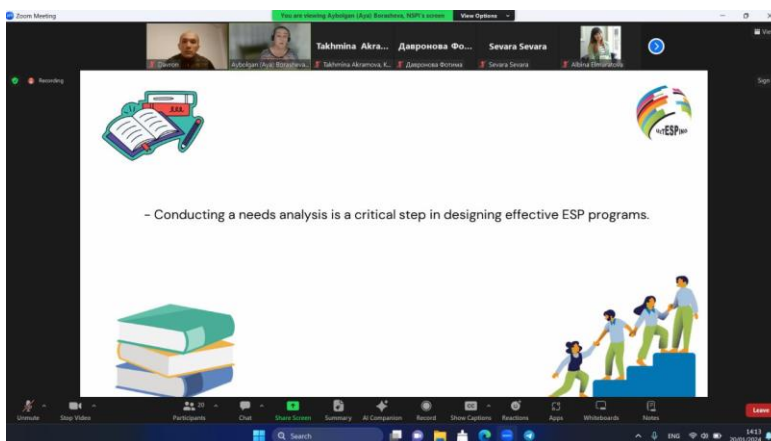
YOU ARE WELCOME TO JOIN A WEBINAR

TOPIC: CONDUCTING NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

SPEAKER: AYBOLGAN BORASHEVA
UZTESPING COORDINATOR
RESEARCHER

DATE: JANUARY 20TH
TIME: 19:00

The poster features a yellow background with a central illustration of a person sitting at a desk with a computer monitor. Above the person are three thought bubbles containing icons for a group of people, a gear, and a pie chart. The UzTESPING logo is in the top right corner.



Webinar on Motivating ESP learners

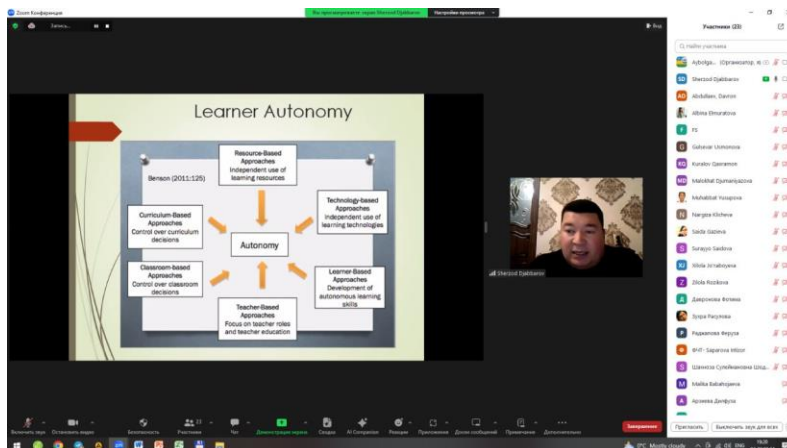
WEBINAR
 TOPIC: ESP student motivation

SPEAKER DR. SHERZOD DJABBAROV
 HEAD OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE METHODOLOGY DEPARTMENT
 ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
 DJIZAK STATE UNIVERSITY

SATURDAY
 3 FEBRUARY 2024

TIME
 19:00





Learner Autonomy

Benson (2011:125)

Resource-Based Approaches
Independent use of learning resources

Technology-based Approaches
Independent use of learning technologies

Learner Based Approaches
Development of autonomous learning skills

Teacher-Based Approaches
Focus on teacher roles and teacher education

Curriculum-Based Approaches
Control over curriculum decisions

Classroom-Based Approaches
Control over classroom decisions


Autonomy

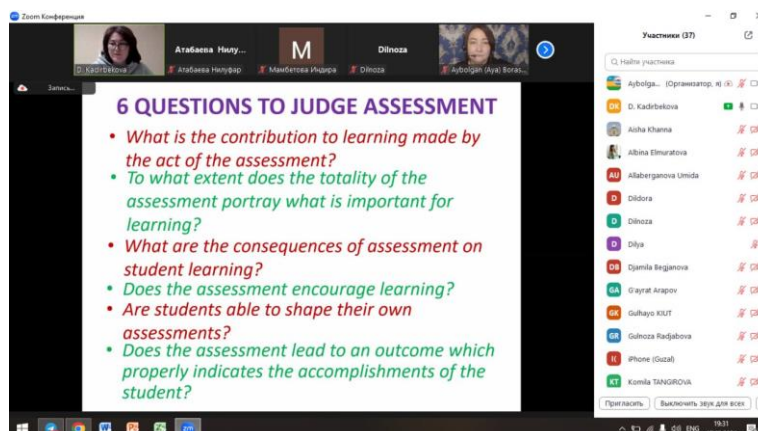
Webinar on Asssing ESP learners

WEBINAR
 Topic: Assessing ESP learners

SPEAKER: DURDONA KADIRBEKOVA
 PHD, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
 THE BRANCH OF RSU OF OIL AND GAS
 NAMED AFTER I.M.GUBKIN

DATE: 17 FEBRUARY 2024
TIME: 19:00





6 QUESTIONS TO JUDGE ASSESSMENT

- *What is the contribution to learning made by the act of the assessment?*
- *To what extent does the totality of the assessment portray what is important for learning?*
- *What are the consequences of assessment on student learning?*
- *Does the assessment encourage learning?*
- *Are students able to shape their own assessments?*
- *Does the assessment lead to an outcome which properly indicates the accomplishments of the student?*

Webinar on Corpus Linguistics and ESP

WEBINAR

Topic: Corpus linguistics and ESP

DATE: FEBRUARY 24TH
TIME: 19:00

SPEAKER: AYBOLGAN BORASHEVA
UZTESPING COORDINATOR
RESEARCHER

Webinar on Working with Multilevel ESP Student Groups

DEAR ESP TEACHERS

JOIN US ON SATURDAY 27TH
TIME: 19:00

TOPIC: WORKING WITH MULTILEVEL ESP
STUDENT GROUPS

SPEAKER: DAVRON ABDULLAEV
PHD RESEARCHER
UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Webinar on Working with Authentic Materials

WEBINAR
TOPIC: WORKING WITH AUTHENTIC MATERIAL

DATE: MARCH 2ND
TIME: 19:00

SPEAKER: DAVRON ABDULLAEV
 PHD RESEARCHER
 UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Authentic teaching in ESP

Industry-Specific Communication Skills: Example: In a hospitality management English class, students might practice writing formal emails for hotel reservations, participating in simulated customer service scenarios, or engaging in effective communication during hotel staff meetings.

Case Studies and Real-Life Scenarios: Example: In a legal English class, students could analyze and discuss real legal cases, draft legal documents, or engage in mock trials to apply their language skills in a legal context.

Guest Speakers and Site Visits: Example: Bringing in a guest speaker from the marketing industry to discuss current trends, or organizing a site visit to a marketing agency, provides students with real-world exposure to industry practices and language.

Role-Playing: In an English class for sales professionals, students might engage in role-playing exercises where they simulate sales presentations, negotiations, or customer interactions to practice language skills in a business context.

Webinar on Choosing/Adapting/ Developing ESP Teaching Materials

WEBINAR
Topic:
Choosing/Adapting/Developing ESP materials

SPEAKER: NARGIZA KADIROVA
 PHD, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
 NRU TIAMI

DATE: MARCH 30TH
TIME: 20:00

6. Grammar Exercises with IT Context

7. Authentic Speaking Activities

2. Project impact

What was the impact of your project on:

- a) you
- b) your Association(s) / Institution(s)?
- c) the people involved in your project?

d) the wider community?

What evidence do you have to demonstrate this?

For me, the project allowed obtaining useful insights about the ESP community in Uzbekistan. The survey results did not only inform the way the objectives of the project needed to be addressed but also helped to identify further goals and areas of interest to continue supporting ESP teacher community (Uzbekistan) in Uzbekistan. The project also gave me a chance to move my coordination skills of the ESP community in Uzbekistan to the next level, where I was no longer engaging in all the steps myself but learning to share responsibilities and ownership with my colleagues. This made a great impact on my own understanding how a community of practice can develop and function.

For UzTESPING community, this project gave an opportunity to engage in discussion on the topics of common interest among many ESP teachers. Each webinar consisted not only of an input provided by the presenter, but it also led to an active and engaging follow-up discussion with valuable comments and questions from the participants. Both of the leading regional coordinators who helped me to run the project and the presenters at each webinar seemed to find this experience valuable too, as they not only presented on the topic of a high interest to them but also engaged with the audience in furthering their understanding what the relevant day-to-day experiences of teachers are. I also felt the regional coordinators were able to gain skills of developing and running a survey, presenting their findings, cooperating with each other, planning, and running webinars.

We also engaged with the wider community both locally and internationally. Knowledge we gained from the results obtained through the survey allowed us to raise topics of discussion at three conferences in Uzbekistan. I together with two regional coordinators who supported me in running the project gave a talk sharing insights from this project at IATEFL ESP SIG pre-conference event in April 2024 on the topic “Exploring and Responding to Professional Development Needs of ESP Teachers in Uzbekistan” (one of them took part in person and the other participated online).



3. Sharing with a wider audience

Who did you share information about the project with? Why, when, and how did you do this?

What reactions did you get?

Do you have any further plans for sharing more widely?

The findings from the survey run for this project were shared to the wider community at three conferences in three regions (Tashkent, Samarkand, Nukus -more details are provided in the Section 1). The presentations were given by the regional coordinator - Aybolgan Borasheva.

We also wanted to share what we learnt and did in this project with colleagues in the international ESP community. We, therefore, decided to apply for the IATEFL ESP SIG pre-conference event since the topic of the event was “ESP around the World”. I and two regional coordinators gave a presentation at this even together. We were pleased to see interest from the audience, and we received very good feedback (more details and photos are above).

Finally, we plan to write an article to share the insights of this project, we are currently considering journals that might be suitable for this.

4. Overall reflections

As a result of planning, implementing, and disseminating the project, what did you learn about:

- a) organising / managing a project?
- b) the strengths / weaknesses and future needs of your TA(s) /Institution(s) and / or working context?

Would you do anything differently next time?

Would you like to suggest anything to other alumni planning to undertake a similar project?

Based on my experience during this project, I once again realised the importance of being ready to make quick changes in response to changes. I would argue that some modification to the objectives should not be seen as an issue as long as the main aim of the project can still be achieved, which is what happened in my case.

What I would have done differently is focusing on cooperating with individual institutions rather than local authorities since this approach has always been successful in my own experience in the past. I did not have enough time to start communication with individual institutions, however, had I set this as an approach from the start, I would have been able to run in-person events and cover larger audience of teachers in each region. I therefore, would have advised other alumni to try to seek support from individual institutions whenever it is impossible to gain the support from central authority like Ministry of Education, for example.

5. Next steps

How do you plan to continue and / or build on what has been achieved through this project?
Why? How might you begin?

Even though this project had a timeline, and the objectives were set to be accomplished during the given period, for me and for other participants of the project this period has been just the start and we aim to continue initiating PD activities based on the database and experience we were able to gain. We are going to have another round of webinar series in the coming academic year too. The following are planned following what has been achieved so far:

- run another series of PD activities in cooperation with individual institutions in different regions
- publish an article about the project based on the survey results and the outcome of the activities
- run online forum on the eight topics identified in the survey to give an opportunity for ESP teachers to exchange the experience and discuss areas of mutual interest

The three objectives above are seen as a meaningful and useful continuation of the webinar series where moderators shared insights from the relevant literature and their own perspective. While each webinar presentation was followed by discussion of attendees, our observation and participant feedback showed that more opportunities for discussion and experience exchange are required.

Permissions

This report is primarily for the Hornby Trustees and British Council internal review and records. However, we do want to promote your hard work and would like to share what you have done with other Hornby awardees and publicly via the Internet.

- Can you please tick here if you give your permission to share your report?
- Please tick here if you would like your project to be considered for presentation at the 2025 IATEFL conference (the Hornby Trust will select from reports submitted and will support one team member from each of these projects to attend the conference).

Please indicate who would give the presentation if selected:

Komila Tangirova (Name of presenter)

Name

Komila

Date

08.09.2024

Appendices

Appendix 1: Expenditure

Were there any **significant differences** from your planned budget? By significant we mean you spent far more than planned, or you were given a donation from a partner that was not expected, for example.

Note any costs below that exceeded the original budget by £200 (below this amount does not need including). Please also tell us what caused these changes in the *Reflection* section below the two tables.

a. local funding

Description	Breakdown	Total cost	Final cost
Employers of twelve regional coordinators	required cost will be reimbursed against receipts	required cost will be reimbursed against receipts	No contribution was made
Visited institutions in regions	N/A	N/A	Venue for UzTESPING activities
LPA	N/A	N/A	N/A
Westminster University in Tashkent	N/A	N/A	Venue for the team meeting, Conference fee waivers
Totals:		Free	

b. Hornby funding

Description	Breakdown	Total cost	Final cost
Zoom subscription 12 months	£12.50 a monthly subscription	£150	£150
Stationery for trainings and survey	12 packs of paper -£60	£150	

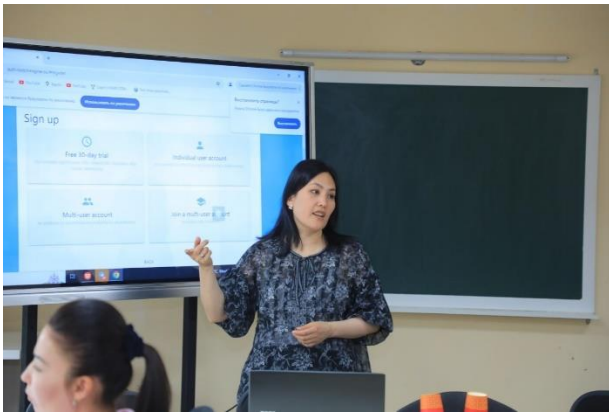
	Printing costs -£ 50 Folders - £15 Other stationery - £25		
Travel and maintenance costs for regional coordinators when visiting institutions in their regions	Estimated cost per person - £20	£240	£240
Regional coordinators' stay in Tashkent for the Forum and get-together	Estimated cost per person - £30	£360	£360
Regional coordinators' stay in Tashkent for meeting with me in August	Estimated cost per person - £30	£360	
Resources for developing training materials and organising professional development activities in regions	Estimated cost per person - £20	£240	£240
Totals:			

Reflections:

Please share your thoughts here:

The budget allocation had to be changed a result of changes to several elements of the project. As explained above since the activities moved from in-person to online format. I had to redirect funds to other areas where this was necessary to make sure I still reach the overall aim of providing PD support to ESP teachers based on the survey results. I reallocated the budget to the creation of the online media materials for promoting the webinars, extending the period of Zoom subscription, creating content for the UzTESPING website and the maintenance of the website, covering the cost of presenting the results of the project at IATEFL ESP SIG pre-conference event together with me for two regional coordinators.

The obtained stationery was used only partly during the period of the project, and the rest was saved for later UzTESPING activities. One of such occasions has been my recent visit to Uzbekistan (August 2024) where I gave a three-day training to teachers from four HEIs in Jizzakh region:



Following the changes that impacted the project, the budget allocation was transformed as follows, which allowed me to accomplish the aim of the project:

Description	Breakdown	Total cost	Final cost
Zoom subscription 24 months	£12.50 a monthly subscription	£300	£300
Stationery for trainings and survey	12 packs of paper -£ 60 Printing costs -£ 50 Folders - £15 Other stationery - £25	£150	£150
Creation of media for promoting UzTESPING series of webinars, maintenance of UzTESPING website and content creation	Media - £ 90 Website maintenance and content creation - £ 100	£240	£240

	Otter.ai subscription to create content by transcribing webinar recordings - £ 50		
Regional coordinators' travel and stay costs in Tashkent for the Forum and get-together	Estimated cost per person - £30	£210	£210
Expenses for two regional coordinators for participating and presenting a IATEFL ESP SIG pre-conference event together with me	Estimated cost per person - £30	£360	£360
Resources for developing training materials and organising professional development activities in regions	Estimated cost per person - £20	£240	£240
Totals:			

Appendix 2: Planned activity

Review your planned activity below and then reflect on any changes that were needed and explain why these were necessary.

Dates	Description	Duration
February, 2023	I will work with 12 regional coordinators to plan all the activities and create training materials. I will provide online trainer training to them once a week and we will agree on tasks to be accomplished in between training sessions. We will develop training materials for the session “Dealing with mixed-level groups in teaching ESP” At the same time, we will together work with LPA on the ministry letter required for holding all the planned events. Once the letter is issued and sent across institutions, regional coordinators will be able to start their visits. LPA team in each region will support regional coordinators in organising the visits to HEIs.	1 month
March-April, 2023	Regional coordinators will visit all HEIs in their region, deliver training on “Dealing with mixed-level groups in teaching ESP” and conduct a short survey to learn about their usual challenges in teaching and needs regarding professional development. Regional Coordinators will prepare a summary of finding to report to LPA and share the insights with their colleagues.	2 months

<p>May 5-7, 2023</p>	<p>Regional Coordinators will attend an international conference at Westminster International University in Tashkent on 5-6th May (this is intended for the regional coordinators to engage with local and international colleagues, meet all other regional coordinators in person and present their findings to each other to develop an action plan. Following the two-day conference, the regional coordinators will visit LPA team to submit their reports and discuss their action plan on professional development activities they would like to organise in their region.</p>	
<p>May - June</p>	<p>Each of the regional coordinators will plan and then conduct a local in-place or online professional development activity (e.g., workshop, webinar, etc.).</p>	
<p>August</p>	<p>I will travel to Uzbekistan to meet with regional coordinators and LPA team. UzTESPING is planned to be registered as a teacher association with 12 regional branches led by the regional coordinators who will participate in this project.</p>	
<p>September – January</p>	<p>As a team we will prepare a series of professional development activities in response to the results of the survey. We will choose the most common challenges across the country so that regional coordinators could collaborate in creating mutual training/workshop/webinar materials. The type of activity will be decided based on the availability of trainers and resources. Whenever possible we will involve other colleagues ready to share their expertise on the topics that will be chosen.</p>	<p>September – January</p>

Reflections:

Please share your thoughts here:

Even though changes need to be made to the planned activities, the overall aim was still achieved. Activities planned for February, March-April, and August had to be modified. However, the modifications did not impact on the progress of the project negatively, on the contrary they allowed me and the regional coordinators to gain new skills and learn to be flexible and responsive to the situations we found ourselves in while working together.