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ORGANISING THE ACTIVITIES OF "KELAJAK" CENTRES IN THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM: THE CASE OF TASHKENT CITY AND TASHKENT REGION

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Abstract. *This article analyses the organisational and pedagogical foundations of the "Kelajak" (Future) centres established in Uzbekistan as part of the reform of the out-of-school education system, drawing on Tashkent City and Tashkent Region as case studies. A model of the governance structure and activity areas of the "Kelajak" centre system is proposed, the regional factors shaping the centres' performance in urban and regional settings are examined comparatively, and recommendations for reducing regional disparities are put forward.*

Keywords: *out-of-school education, "Kelajak" centre, extracurricular club, school counsellor, supplementary education, digital portfolio, regional disparity.*

Introduction. Organising students' leisure time meaningfully and identifying and nurturing their interests and talents at an early stage have become priorities of national education policy. The Law "On Education" defines out-of-school education as an integral component of the continuous education system, whose purpose is to meet children's and adolescents' needs for learning, creativity and sport [2]. Presidential Resolution No. PQ-277 of 8 September 2025 marked a new stage in the development of this system: "Kelajak" centres were established at the national, regional and district levels on the basis of the former "Barkamol Avlod" children's schools, the "Yoshlik" Physical Culture and Sports Society, the Pupils' and Youth Centre and the Children's Organisation of Uzbekistan [1].

A key feature of the reform is that the "Kelajak" centres, operating in close cooperation with schools, involve students in clubs in seven areas: engineering,

science, culture, arts, reading, sports and ecology. In addition, the position of "school counsellor" has been introduced in every general secondary school, and students' achievements in clubs, sports, volunteering and academic olympiads are to be compiled in a digital portfolio and reflected in their electronic school-leaving certificate [1; 3]. The regulatory framework governing the centres was approved by a Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of 10 December 2025 [3].

The effectiveness of the new system, however, depends directly on the socio-economic, demographic and infrastructural characteristics of each region. Tashkent City and Tashkent Region provide a particularly suitable basis for comparison: each has more than half a million school students [10; 11], yet the former is a high-density metropolis, while the latter is a heterogeneous territory comprising industrial towns, peri-urban settlements and rural foothill areas. A comparative examination of the "Kelajak" centres in these two settings, together with the identification of ways to reduce regional disparities, is therefore a pressing research task.

Literature review. The theoretical foundations of out-of-school education were developed within the concept of non-formal education. P.Coombs and M.Ahmed [4] define non-formal education as organised educational activity carried out outside the formal school system, with explicit learning objectives and oriented towards the needs of particular groups. In Russian pedagogy, the theory of supplementary education was elaborated by E.B.Evladova and colleagues [5], who interpret it as an educational space grounded in the child's free choice and personal interests and conducive to self-determination. L.N.Builova and N.V.Klenova [6] substantiated forms of integrating supplementary education with general schooling and mechanisms for its management.

International empirical research has examined extensively the role of organised clubs and extracurricular activities in child development. J.Mahoney, R.Larson and J.Eccles [7] treat organised activities as developmental contexts and show that their structure, adult guidance and regularity are the principal factors behind positive

outcomes. In a meta-analysis of after-school programmes, J.Durlak, R.Weissberg and M.Pachan [8] found that only programmes that are sequenced, active, focused and explicit have a significant effect on students' personal and social skills. U.Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory [9], in turn, requires child development to be viewed through the lens of interrelated environments such as the family, the school and the neighbourhood; this perspective provides a theoretical basis for designing cooperation between "Kelajak" centres, schools, families and mahallas (local communities).

Based on the reviewed literature, the following core functions of the out-of-school education system can be distinguished:

identifying students' interests and abilities and developing them individually (diagnostic and developmental function);

early orientation of students towards engineering, science and vocational pathways (career guidance function);

reducing the risk of problem behaviour through meaningful use of leisure time (preventive and character-building function);

uniting the efforts of the family, the school and the mahalla into a single educational space (integrative function).

Methodology. The study employed a systems approach, content analysis of legal and regulatory documents, examination of official statistical data and comparative analysis. On the basis of Resolution PQ-277, the related departmental documents and official information, a model of the governance structure and activity areas of the "Kelajak" centre system was developed (Figure 1).

According to the model, the Republican "Kelajak" Centre coordinates the work of the regional centres through methodological guidance, key performance indicators (KPIs) and a digital platform. Regional and district centres bring clubs closer to students through a network of school-based clubs, while the school counsellor

identifies each student's interests and abilities and directs them to an appropriate area. Students' achievements are compiled in a digital portfolio, and the family and the mahalla youth leader act as a supportive external environment for this process (in Figure 1, solid lines denote management links and dashed lines denote supporting links).

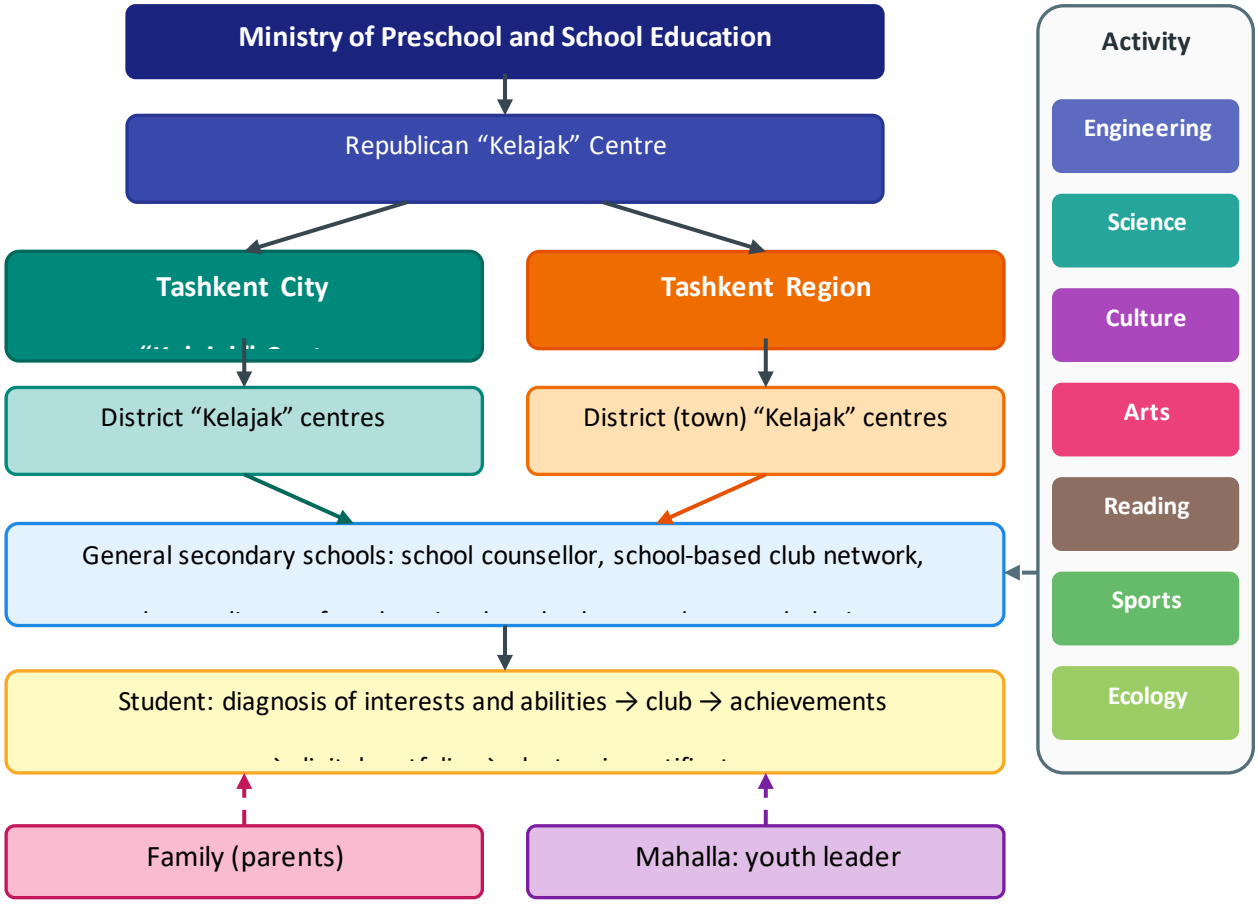


Figure 1. Structure and activity areas of the "Kelajak" centre system: the case of Tashkent City and Tashkent Region

The comparison between Tashkent City and Tashkent Region was based on factors such as territorial structure, the distribution of the population and students, educational infrastructure and the location of out-of-school education facilities. The analysis covered five aspects of the centres' activity: enrolment of students in clubs, diversity of activity areas, accessibility of clubs, conditions for maintaining digital

portfolios, and staffing.

Results and discussion. The results of the comparative analysis of regional factors are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

Regional factors affecting the activity of "Kelajak" centres in Tashkent City and Tashkent Region

Aspect	Tashkent City	Tashkent Region	Priority task
Territorial structure	High-density metropolis	Industrial towns, peri-urban settlements and rural foothill areas	Choosing organisational forms suited to the territory
Accessibility of clubs	Convenient transport, short distances	Long distances from remote mahallas	School-based club networks
Material and technical base	Ample facilities for engineering, IT and science	Mainly suited to sports and arts	Mobile laboratories, online sessions
Staffing	Many qualified specialists	Shortage of specialists in narrow fields	Professional development, methodological partnerships
Digital portfolio	Well-developed internet infrastructure	Uneven connection quality	Digital competence of counsellors

The analysis shows that in Tashkent City the density of out-of-school infrastructure and the convenience of transport create favourable conditions for enrolling students widely in "Kelajak" centre clubs. In Tashkent Region, by contrast, the main challenge is accessibility: in foothill and rural districts the centre building is located far from many mahallas, so school-based clubs remain the main opportunity for students. Consequently, the role of the school counsellor is considerably greater in

the regional setting than in the city.

Regional differences are also evident in the range of activity areas: in the city, the material and technical base and specialist staff for engineering, robotics, programming and science clubs are more widely available, whereas in the region sports, arts and culture prevail. This is explained by the shortage of equipment and qualified club leaders required for engineering-oriented activities in the region. The effectiveness of digital portfolio maintenance, meanwhile, depends on counsellors' digital competence and the quality of schools' internet connectivity.

At the same time, regional disparities cannot be eliminated merely by increasing the number of clubs. As Durlak and colleagues [8] emphasise, the structured, purposeful and regular organisation of clubs matters more than their number. Accordingly, significant results can also be achieved in the region by improving the quality of existing clubs and strengthening cooperation between schools, families and mahallas.

Conclusions and recommendations. The "Kelajak" centres make it possible to transform out-of-school education into a single system closely linked to schools, families and mahallas; however, their effectiveness varies depending on regional conditions. In Tashkent City the main task is to make good use of existing opportunities and ensure balance across activity areas, whereas in Tashkent Region expanding territorial access to clubs is the priority. The following measures are therefore recommended: supporting school-based clubs in remote districts of the region, particularly in engineering and science, through mobile laboratories and online sessions; establishing twinning-based methodological partnerships between Tashkent City centres and regional centres; organising professional development courses for school counsellors on diagnosing students' interests and maintaining digital portfolios; and, when evaluating the centres' performance, taking into account accessibility and diversity of activity areas alongside enrolment indicators.

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