



CAMBRIDGE

# Creating educational publishing organisation

Nazarbayev Intellectual  
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Between 2013 and 2018, Cambridge took a central role in an ambitious education reform project for the NIS in Kazakhstan. Cambridge provided expertise in the development of textbooks for internal Kazakh primary, secondary and languages markets (both for private sale and state adoption), and created an entirely new, nationally capable educational publishing organisation from scratch.



**TRANSFORMING  
SOCIETIES THROUGH  
EDUCATION**

# The challenge

In 2013, Cambridge received a request from the newly formed Educational Resources Centre (ERC), effectively a nascent publishing wing of NIS, to help NIS build its own professional publishing wing in a matter of years, largely by training personnel who were inexperienced in publishing but who nevertheless had to produce textbooks of a quality that satisfied state adoption standards.

This was a ground-breaking effort to give Kazakhstan a new generation of modern textbooks, effectively the first since the country became independent of the Soviet Union.

The initial request was to provide assistance to train selected personnel to become authors and editors for the new Primary Education Textbooks (PET) programme, Grades 1–5. Each subject within each grade consisted of three components: Learner Book (LB), Learner Workbook (LWB) and Teacher's Handbook (THB).

As delivery commenced, it quickly became apparent that ERC required far more assistance than originally envisaged, if it were to meet the acutely demanding publishing schedules and the high expectations for the quality of the final publications. By 2014, for example, the workshop programme had grown substantially and the editorial training had evolved to become an entirely separate component. Other areas of capacity-building support also emerged.

The proven value of Cambridge's contribution to the PET project led to Cambridge supporting ERC's launch of the Languages Textbook Programme (LTP) in 2014 and Secondary Educational Textbooks (SET) in 2016.

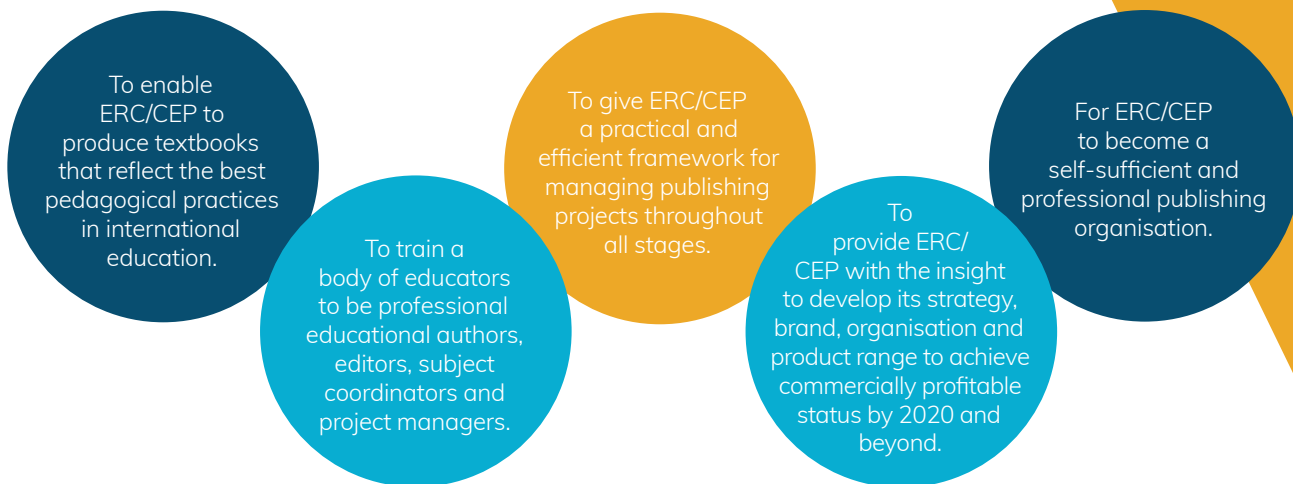
The Cambridge commitment to NIS became at the time the largest education reform project in the our history. Gradually, however, the knowledge provided by Cambridge was cascaded effectively through a growing body of in-house Centre of Educational Programmes (CEP) staff, meaning that by 2017, CEP was largely able to take over its own training requirements and publishing management.

In 2017–18, therefore, the Cambridge support switched to a more limited but critical series of workshops focused on organisational management and how CEP can shift from being a centrally funded organisation to a commercially funded organisation in the foreseeable future.

# Our approach

This project was capacity building in its fullest sense, conducted within an extremely demanding publishing environment.

## Overall objectives informing the CUP training and support



## Training and support provided by Cambridge



The workshop programme for ERC/CEP was particularly intensive between 2013 and 2017. The programme included training workshops for: authors, editorial work, as well as design and illustration.

## Key personnel trained by CUP/NIS 2013–17:



With many staff having little or no publishing experience, it was essential that Cambridge build up an in-house publishing reference library for the NIS staff.



Recognising that stakeholder acceptance was critical to the future of the textbook programmes, Cambridge created two important and related research documents to provide CEP with all the required theoretical support to defend their publications, and to demonstrate their value:

- Research Guide for Textbook Development
- Textbook Research Implementation Framework

# The results

The education reform project conducted between Cambridge and NIS was an exercise of huge scale and ambition. Cambridge consultancy and training helped produce the authors, editors, designers, illustrators and proofreaders central to the textbook production process, and over time, it also helped NIS develop the strategic and organisational framework for both government and commercial capabilities.

The proof of the efficacy of this process is that today the CEP within NIS is a thriving and professional educational publishing organisation. With more than 100 trained in-house staff, it has authored, edited, designed, illustrated, printed and published hundreds of publications for the state and private sector over the last five years. The intensity and challenges of the project have established it as one of the most formative models for education reform work in the history of Cambridge.

In this objective, it can be said emphatically that both Cambridge and ERC/CEP have been successful. Since 2013, the Cambridge and NIS collaboration has resulted in the production of literally hundreds of textbook components.

As a testimony to the level of productivity achieved by CEP, in 2016–17 alone, CEP produced the following textbook resources:

**Grade 2 (State Standard):** 16 textbooks for 11 subjects (88 items)

**Grade 3 (State Standard):** 18 textbooks for 12 subjects (96 items)

**Grade 5 (State Standard):** 16 textbooks for 11 subjects (43 items)

**Grade 7 (State Standard):** 28 textbooks for 17 subjects (60 items)

**Grade 7 (NIS Program):** 23 textbooks for 9 subjects (52 items)

**Grade 8 (NIS Program):** 12 textbooks for 8 subjects (24 items)

This hints at the formidable potential of NIS in the future as a leading educational publisher in Central Asia.

“After just five years of support, and from almost zero knowledge about publishing, NIS now has a professional educational publishing organisation, an achievement that has taken many other organisations decades to achieve. The people of ERC/CEP made our job easier by their intelligence, enormous capacity for hard work, diligence, flexibility and good humour ... Today CEP is a model for what a collaborative approach to education reform can achieve.”

**Chris McNab**  
Editorial  
Project  
Manager

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