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# Joint Sector Review

## Education Sector Synthesis Report

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# 1. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
CBE	Competency Based Education
CPD	Continuous Professional Development of Teachers
CPS	Country Partnership Strategy
CwD	Children with Disabilities
DPs	Development Partners
DPGS	Department of Pre-School and General Secondary Education
EA	Environmental Assessment
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECDC	Early Childhood Development Centre
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ELC	Early Learning Centre
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EU	European Union
GBAO	Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPE-4	The Fourth Global Partnership for Education Grant to Tajikistan
IED	Institute of Education Development
INSET	In-Service Training
JCPS	Joint Country Partnership Strategy
KG	Kindergarten
LEDG	Local Education Donor Group
LEG	Local Education Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOES	Ministry of Education and Science
MTAP	Mid Term Action Plan (of NSED)
MTR	Mid Term Review
NSED	National Strategy for Education Development
NDS	National development Strategy
PBM	Planning Budgeting and Monitoring
PCF	Per Capita Financing
PDO	Project Development Objective
PFM	Public Financial Management
PFMRSP	Public Financial Management Support Programme
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategies
QESP 1	Quality Education Sector Project, Lot 1
RED	Rayon Education Department
RIITT	Republican Institute for In-Service Teacher Training

RWM	Read With Me
SBE	Skill Based Education
SKG	State Kindergarten
TA	Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WB	World Bank

## 2. INTRODUCTION

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### 2.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Quality Education Support Programme 1 is grateful to all those who contributed to this Joint Sector Review 2019. Recognizing that staff in many government departments and international organizations work a busy schedule, we appreciate their time and inputs on issues and challenges in the education sector.

The mission would not have been possible without the continuous support of Usmonzoda Fakhridin, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan and Abdurahmon Gulov, Head of the Information Management Department of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, who provided access to EMIS Database.

The author of the report is grateful to the interviewed participants, in particular those from the educational institutions and regions selected for this study, for their flexibility, as well as to the NGOs representatives who shared their honest views during the process of collecting information for the JSR.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this report is correct and represents a joint perspective from almost 8 years of activities to meet the goals of the National Education Development Plan 2012 – 2020. Any factual errors that may appear are unintended and are the responsibility of the author.

Our sincere appreciation goes to counterparts in the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) and members of Working Groups who reviewed progress in the implementation of the Medium-Term Action Plan 2018 - 2020. Their inputs formed the basis of this synthesis report.

As part of this Joint Sector Review the 2017 (JSR) with its update of 2019 is attached as Annex 1, with relevant EMIS data update. This comprehensive data analysis was done by Mr. Shuhrat Mirzoev, and the author of this report would like to thank him for this deep analysis. The valuable inputs and statistical data were provided by Mr. Abdurahmon Gulov, Head of the EMIS unit in the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan. The author of this JSR 2019 would like to thank for this support. The Ministry of Finance and Agency for Statistics under the President have also extended support by granting access to official government statistics used in the report.

The Quality Education Support Programme 1 would like to thank UNICEF for the cooperation regarding the development of this JSR.

Thanks for the time and assistance provided by all international development partners, including the Delegation of the European Union (EU), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank, Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and Asian Development Bank (ADB)

#### The review

In 2012, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) of Tajikistan adopted a National Strategy for Education Development until 2020 (NSED 2012-2020), which aimed to create conditions to ensure functional and effective provision of educational services and access to appropriate quality education for everyone”.

The NSED focuses on increasing pre-primary coverage, modernization of general education, and increasing coverage of vocational education. It was developed through a two-year process of planning utilizing a working group model. The Ministry of Education (MoES) appointed a working group consisting of university professors and educational specialists in the areas of concern for the NSED. Several sub-working groups were formed based on expertise in specific areas of emphasis in the NSED (pre-primary, general education, vocational education). The sub-working groups combined representatives from the MoES, development partners, and representatives from the centralized working group.

The Development Partners shared their opinion that the commitment of Ministry of Education in the process of this comprehensive sector policy development in close communications with the Partners, was a very positive step. The Development Partners acknowledged the importance of policy based support for education reform.

The NSED was seen as an important step forward for the MoES by taken the leadership role in developing the plan. The planning process was open and included input from ministry officials, local and international educational specialists, and development partners.

The NSED is implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan and regional educational institutions with financial and technical support from the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and a number of donor organizations (World Bank, UNICEF, USAID, GIZ, EC, WFP, etc.), which also provide support to the implementation, monitoring and an assessment of its individual sections. Therefore, when preparing the annual review, the Joint Sector Review, all reports on the implementation of all educational institutions and the donor community on monitoring and evaluating of the activities and activities implemented, are used. The monitoring and evaluation process covers all activities and procedures for implementing the NSED and medium-term programs for its implementation.

An analytical review on the implementation of the NSED till 2020, with an assessment of the results achieved within its implementation, as well as proposals for further improvement of the education system, is prepared and submitted annually for consideration to leadership and board of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan. After its approval by the board – it is submitted to the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.

This Joint Sector Review will describe to what extent all stakeholders in the process contributed to strengthen the process of improving education in Tajikistan. The review will focus on achieved results, at all levels and describe positive achievements according to the national key indicators that can be used in future development plans.

The “National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2020” (NSED) is the second comprehensive strategic framework and plan for the education sector. The development of the document was initiated by the Ministry of Education in 2010 in order to update the goals previously outlined in the “National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan 2006-2015” (NSED 2006). The NSED builds upon the accomplishments of the previous strategy which were achieved through cooperation with multiple development partners. A significant development for the current NSED is approval of the plan, and the 3 year Mid-term Action Plans, by the government of Tajikistan. The previous NSED 2006 was accepted only at the ministry level which restricted its ability to be fully implemented.

Three Mid-term Action Plans (2012-2014, 2015 – 2017 and 2018-2020) were developed along with the NSED for submission to the parliament for approval. The NSED did not contain any specific financial plans, instead opting to create multiple short-term budgets. The Mid-term Action Plans have been the guiding documents for the implementation for the NSED.

The development of the Mid-term Action Plans have been a sign of increased ministry capacity as they have had the leading role in developing and costing the plan. The process of developing the Mid-term Action Plans has significantly strengthen the capacity of the Ministry to handle such processes.

The Joint Sector Review intends to play a pivotal and strategic role within national education system. The review process has been seen and prepared to be participative and inclusive and intended to be a tool for a review of results, progress and performance of the implementation of the National Education Strategy 2012 – 2020 and its supporting Action Plans.

The Joint Sector Review presents the results of an assessment ordered by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan to assess the achieved goals of the National Education Development Plan.

This report is composed of two parts: The Joint Sector Review (Part I) and The Update of the JSR from 2017 containing all relevant data based on the EMIS (Annex 1).



## 2.2 EDUCATION SECTOR REVIEW QUESTIONS

In the Annex 1<sup>1</sup> to this the Sector Review is included detailed EMIS data at program/activity level covered by domestic and external funding and cover the entire review period at the national budget level, as well as allocations/expenditure against projections at national and decentralized levels.

**The Joint Sector Review is developed based on working groups and non-key expert missions answering progress under the following headings:**

### **Relevance:**

- To what extent are the implementation of an activities in the MTEAP 2018 - 2020 justified in relation to needs?
- Are the activities in compliance with the objectives of the National Education Strategy and Action Plan 2020 and other strategic documents?
- What are the main benefits of the activity for the development of the Tajik society?

### **Coherence:**

- To what extent are the activities in the National Education Strategy and Action Plan 2020 logical and interlinked?

### **Effectiveness:**

- What is the status of the activities' implementation, what activities have been started and how is going the activities' implementation?

### **What are the preliminary results achieved?**

- Are there some problems in the activities' implementation and what has to be done to overcome the difficulties and potential bottlenecks?
- Have the interventions and instruments used produced the expected effects?

### **Efficiency:**

- Are the set up activities' management and monitoring systems efficient?

### **Impact:**

- Are the expected or unexpected effects satisfactory from the point of view of direct or indirect beneficiaries?
- Conclusions and Recommendations for the National Education Strategy 2020 – 2030
- The conclusions and recommendations form the core of the report. The conclusions and recommendations will be useful to the decision makers and give guidance for the development of the next National Education Strategy

This Joint Sector Review is based on an assessment of the implementation of the three MTAPs 2017-2020 supporting reaching the goals of the NSED. The outcome and most of the formulations will mainly be based on three contributions to the final report.

1. A thorough analysis of the reported achievements from Regions and municipalities, based on the sixth month's reporting to the Ministry

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<sup>1</sup> Update of JSR 2017 with data based of EMIS data.

A Senior Non-Key Expert was hired by the Quality Education Support Programme 1, to organise and coordinate the activities of the Local Education Group (LEG) and the contribution of the LEG towards the National Strategy for Education Development. The task of the SNKE was to coordinate the operations of the LEG, and its local committees. Feedback from local stakeholders will be related to the targets and aspirations contained within the NSED.

2. Reports from 5 working groups established by the Ministry of Education to do an overall evaluation of the outcome of the implementation.

To support this five senior non-key experts provided input for the drafting of the JSR of the Education Sector of Tajikistan 2019

Each of the SNKE prepared a report based on the analysis of the progress of the implemented activities in the assigned area (Pre-primary Education; General Secondary Education; Technical and Vocational Education; Higher Education; Governance) and the preliminary achieved results of funded activities and to assess if the activities are going to realize their indicators/targets.

The information received has contributed to providing answers to the question whether the initial objectives will be or are likely to be achieved and what has to be undertaken in order for the objectives to be achieved.

3. Analysis of Development Partners annual reports on progress from implementing different agreed activities and their contribution to the NSED 2012 – 2018

## 3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### 3.1 ASPECTS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The National Strategy of the Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan till 2020 was approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan on June 30, 2012. In compliance with the existing official procedures, this strategy after approval was sent to the relevant ministries and departments, regional, city and district executive authorities for implementation.

The National Development Strategy 2030 (NDS-2030) presents its commitment to create a sustainable, prosperous, internationally connected, united and just society by 2030. NDS-2030 also shows its full commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs). The key targets include: reducing poverty rates by 50 % and eliminating extreme poverty; significantly increasing spending on social welfare of the population; bringing the share of the middle class up to 50 % of the population; and achieving transformational growth which enables a shift from dependency on agriculture towards greater complexity and diversification of the economy. The education sector is considered as the driving force for bringing about these changes.

Based on the NSED implementation plan till 2020 and its medium-term plans for 2012-2014, 2015-2017 and 2018-2020 the regional, city and district government bodies have developed regional implementation plans to fulfil the strategy based on local conditions and traditions.

In developing their own programs of socio-economic development of the region, the local authorities are guided by Article 9 of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan “On State Forecasts, Concepts, Strategies and Programs of Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Tajikistan” No. 53 of December 8, 2003”.

The program of socio-economic development of regions is being developed for the medium term on the basis of strategic and program documents of the Republic of Tajikistan, which forecasts of the socio-economic development of the region, including the NSED till 2020.

The program of the socio-economic development of the region necessarily takes into account the strategic goals of the country's development, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and ensures their implementation, taking into account the characteristic features of each region.

- Mandatory development of a regional development program as a regional strategic planning mechanism;
- Full and comprehensive support of the regional development program, covering all programs and activities financed from the state budget, funds from donor organizations, public organizations, domestic and foreign investors;
- Mandatory participation of civil society in the design and implementation of programs;
- Implementation of mandatory monitoring and evaluation.

A regional development program is the major tool for developing local budget and preparation of proposals for financing individual areas of local development from the republican budget. The procedure for coordinating issues of financing individual areas of local development from the state budget is determined by the legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The regional development program is developed by the local executive body of state power and approved by the decision of the local representative body of state authorities.

Annex 2 shows the structure of cooperation in the development and implementation of the NSED till 2020 at the regional level.

The development process in the education sector has been ongoing and progressing on the basis of the three MTAPs up till the time for this review in the form of an increased trend in enrolment, in absolute terms, and a narrowing gender gap for all levels. After a succession of economic shocks, Tajikistan's growth prospects are favourable and financing is on the rise. In the context of high demographic pressure, the government has mobilized important public resources to adequately address the growing demand for education.



The Quality Education Support Project provides trainings and support to the assessment process.

The analytical review of the positive changes in the education system adopted by NSED 2020 reflects the national key indicators of what has happened in Tajikistan since the NSED was adopted. Based on EMIS and data available in annex 1 to this JSR some key and interesting outcomes can be described as follows:

- In total 33,245<sup>2</sup> primary school teachers completed INSET for teachers and methodologists (Competence Based Learning).

- In the pre-school education system, a significant improvement in the enrolment of children has taken place, especially when it comes to pre-school preparation reflecting the change in three levels education (kindergartens, Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDCs), and the monthly program for preparing children for school), which allowed for full coverage of pre-school children.
- In the secondary school education system improvement of the quality of education has moved forward in the form of: a) standards of grades 1–4 have been revised and updated taking into account the competency-based approach and healthy lifestyles; b) in the 2015-16 school year, piloting has passed approbation of the development of competency-based approach in 2 subjects in grades 5-6, i) with the support of donors, in particular the project “Support for quality education” of the European Union, in 2017, work has begun on introducing the competence approach in Grades 5-11. On September 1, 2016, by order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, all primary classes of the country began to work on the basis of new standards; e) for more than 3,800 general education educational institutions, new educational and methodological complexes were replicated and distributed, e) in 2016 the following achievements have been obtained.
- Regarding infrastructure improvements have also taken place; Improvement in organizing hot meals for primary school children; involvement of children with disabilities in the educational process; change of indicators of quality and effectiveness of training; reduction in the number graduates of grade 9 who dropped out of the educational process; Training and professional development of education managers and others.

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<sup>2</sup> GPE-4 Final Report, Table # 18. Participation of partners in finalizing the package of standards of primary school.

All activities and events carried out as part of donor cooperation at the subcomponent level were covered by M&E process. Basically, it is monitoring and evaluation of the correct implementation of the component mechanism, development of certain necessary documents (development of TOR, mechanisms of implementation, instruments, presentations, etc.), preparation of reports, plans, database, ensuring calculation and preparation of all indicators according to the results matrix monitoring.

The process of implementing all planned activities was covered by M&E system from the side of responsible on component and Department of Pre-School and General Secondary Education (DPGS). IED AOE according to the contract, provides information on the progress of finalizing DPGS standards and programs.

In the TVET sector there have been some specific improvements over the years. The curriculum has been updated in cooperation with donor community. The sector are making gains in women enrolled in TVET programs. There is still a need for further development as the sub-sector may need more absorption capacity to re-train the migrant workers who return to Tajikistan after the economic slowdown in Russia.

In higher education, there are increasing enrolments of women but completion rates remain relatively low, hitting girls and women in rural areas the hardest. While overall trends of women's enrolment in educational institutions appear to be improving, there are still practical barriers to their attendance and completion of education, which may be in part explained by perceived irrelevance of education in finding employment.

### 3.2 COMPETENCIES BASED LEARNING IN A BROADER CONTEXT

Good progress in the field of improving teaching methodologies has been achieved. Regional representatives has expressed an understanding that moving towards a competencies based learning environment is a long term process and will have to be implemented based on local conditions and understanding. The Regions and city school administrations face often same challenges like in many other countries going through the same process.

But the process is moving positively forward towards a renewed education system, formed in accordance with modern world trends. There is a high level of focus on a knowledge-based outcome of the teaching and learning process but the focus is now on a competent approach that should provide students with the possibility of mastering key competencies and social skills according to the intention in the NSED.



#### **The introduction of the competence based approach in training in primary and secondary educational institutions.**

Introduction of CBE in grades 5 to 11

The MoES sees training as an effective form of content reform implementation. The Ministry has requested to introduce competence-based methodology in teacher professional development. In cooperation the QESP 1 project the following In-service programs have been developed and implemented:

- 1) Realization of Competence Approach in Teaching Natural Science and Information Technology,
- 2) Formative Assessment Tools for the Development of Key Competences of Students in Teaching Languages, and

3) Application of the Competency-Based Approach in Teaching for the Teachers of Social Sciences and Humanities Subjects.

These programs encourage teachers to understand the new approach, the necessity for new culture of learning and assessment, and cross-curricular links development in school in general, before teachers are trained and deepened in the new content and teaching methodology of a particular subject.

To promote the Competence Based Education (CBE), trainings on CBE methodology has been introduced also for the direct stakeholders: RITTI and Educational and Methodological Center specialists.

The Training Programme for pedagogical staff of the higher education institutions (HEI) on implementing the Competence approach and Mentoring in PRESET and INSET is planned to be implemented starting in March 2020 in 2parts for 3+3 training days with practical individual tasks during the training interval.

In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, together with development partners, began working on the development of draft standards, programs, a package of CBE materials and their piloting in the Tajik language and mathematics for grades 5-11.

Ongoing the WB/READ-2 and the USAID funded "Read with Me" project continue to work on assessment in primary grades based on competency based education (CBE) including Student Assessment SABER (Systems Approach for Better Education Results). The EU-funded Quality Education Support Project (QESP) is supporting curriculum activities for selected subjects in Grades 5-11. The QESP project also supports work started in the FTI/GPE series on further elaboration of Per Capita Financing (PCF) and EMIS. The Islamic Development Bank initiated development of CBE curriculum materials for selected subject in high school (Grades 10-11). UNICEF with GPE financing is preparing analytical work on the move to 12 years of education. Finally, the World Bank with its own and GPE financing is carrying out analytical work on ECE and ECD, with the possibility of eventual project funding in this area.

In order to ensure the quality of developing educational materials, international consultants were hired. This provided technical assistance to local working groups for the revision and updating of the package of educational materials.

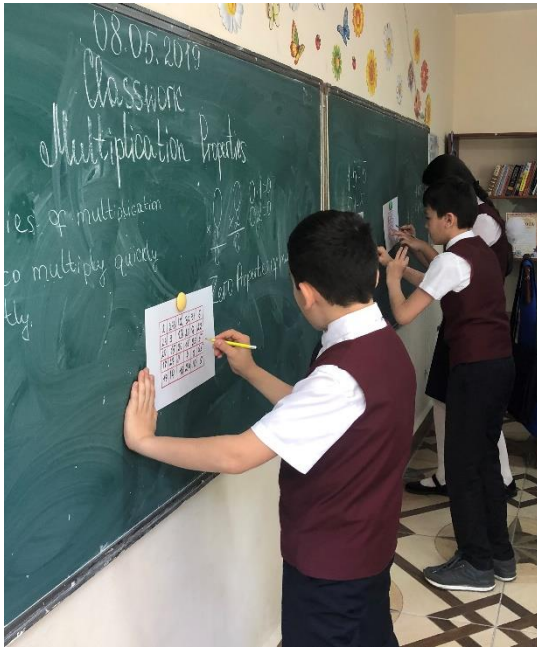
As a result of the work, standards and guidelines for teachers were revised and a pilot version of these materials were prepared. For effective piloting of the revised package materials, a piloting mechanism was developed, tools for gathering information on the piloting course and a database was created.

24 educational institutions were chosen for piloting. In total, 48 classes participated in the pilot (24 from among 5 graders and 24 from among 6 graders) with the participation of 72 teachers (38 in Tajik and 34 in mathematics). The piloting process was carried out in the 2016-2017 school year.

The teachers of the pilot classes received training in two stages. The first stage of training was held at the end of August 2016, where teachers mastered the basic concepts of the competency-based approach, familiarized themselves with the content of the set of standards. The second stage of the materials was prepared on the basis of the difficulties of the teachers while working on the new standards.

The piloting process was accompanied by regular visits of a support group in order to provide methodological assistance, monitoring and collecting data on the progress of the pilot. The data collected at the time of the pilot was entered into the database, and all the data was initially processed and analysed in order to make a change in the standard package. Following the results, an analytical report was made on the pilot.





After piloting and analysing the initial results, the Curricula package for grades 5-6 was refined and updated. Modified materials for grades 5-6 and a package of materials for CBEs were approved by the Scientific Council of RIPD and the Collegium of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan. The Curriculum for 2 subjects (grades 5-11), Teachers' Guide for grades 5-11, and Supplements to textbooks were developed.

157 employees from RITT and its branches were trained. According to the program and training modules (48 hours), the Republican Institute for In-Service Teacher Training (RIITT) organized a Skill Based Education (SBE) of teachers of the Tajik language and mathematics. In general, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, at the expense of the state budget, the CBE conducted for 27,500 teachers of the Tajik language and mathematics.

Under the MTA 2017 – 2020 the process of supporting the development of understanding the competence based education philosophy and methodology the MOES together with the donor community has intensified its effort to support educational institutions and teachers. This has been highly appreciated at the regional and local school level, and teachers have acknowledge their support to the process.

Reports from training explain the teacher's opinion. The training is recognized as very important and the trainings and relevant materials supports the implementation of competency based education. Teachers asked as well to put in place awareness raising activities better. As well they suggested in first instance to involve district education staff in implementation of competency-based approach.

The conclusion done after the training was that the process is running well. In general teachers in all regions embraced the training with deep gratitude. Through discussions and conferences with teachers it appeared that they have high sense of responsibility and are quite encouraged to discuss and further develop competence-based approach. They cannot wait when we provide them with additional information and are very enthusiastic about the activities. When asked, about barriers existing on the way of implementing competency-based approach in Tajikistan, teachers told it helps if higher institutions shall assume responsibility in this and teachers shall be provided with necessary materials and new information.

### 3.3 STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES<sup>3</sup>

Improving quality of education services is a long-term process and should build on good tools for measurement of learning outcomes. Such tools need to reflect Tajik traditions and culture and include accountability and supervision through local control, more intensive and targeted training of school personnel and continuous in-service teacher training, and availability of quality learning materials at all levels.

The development and institutionalization of new competency-based curricula, stimulating attendance and improving learning outcomes remain firmly in the MoES' plans. Moreover, cross-cutting challenges in terms of

<sup>3 3</sup> Based on: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis, UNICEF 2019, WB GPE-4 Reporting and Early Grade Reading Assessment Baseline 2018 Results USAID Read with Me Project in Tajikistan where details can be obtained.

mainstreaming children with disabilities into formal education, offering education in preferred languages of ethnic minorities, and optimizing funding structures will also need to be addressed.

#### Development of the National Learning Assessment concept

The use of large-scale, system-level assessment is important for a country to know how well students and schools are performing. System level assessment data provides policy makers with relevant information on overall performance levels, changes in those levels, and related or contributing factors.

The education system in Tajikistan, as well as society in general, can benefit from the establishment of a comprehensive standardized system of assessment at national level. The key function of the national Learning Assessment concept would be to provide timely and relevant information on the quality of the educational processes and outcomes and expects deliver a number of advantages for a range of stakeholders. A discussion paper setting out the proposals for the NLAS has been produced and is under consideration in the MoES.

The QESP 1 is guiding and supporting the MoES in the definition and development of a policy framework for learning assessment leading to the actual implementation of the first national assessment in general education in Tajikistan. The MoES is supported to define the ‘substance’ of the process, i.e. what is to be tested, how and when, ideally through a working group or task force. The policy framework will also provide clear roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders at all levels involved.

As part of the priorities in the NSED Tajikistan took part in the USAID “Read with Me Project in Tajikistan is a five-year early grade reading project that seeks to improve reading outcomes for students in grades 1 through 4 in targeted educational institutions across Tajikistan.

A 2012 and 2018 Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) led by USAID revealed low reading fluency among students from Grades 2 through 4. The tests were administrated in Tajik and Russian, depending on the language of instruction used in the respective sample educational institutions. The data had disaggregation by gender and the five geographic regions, plus Dushanbe.

In 2012, mean reading fluency scores only barely met the national standard for each grade and did not meet the international benchmark score used, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS). In 2018, the mean score for the Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) subtask for Grade 2 students in Tajik language educational institutions did meet the national standard but not the international. Similarly for Grade 4, the mean score for the ORF in Tajik language educational institutions was lower than the established benchmark. In Grade 2 20% of students achieved or exceeded the standard.

Students achieving the comprehension standard in Tajik language educational institutions (four questions correct out of five) were 14.9% and 22.5% for Grade 2 and 4 respectively.

For Russian language, the results were similar for Grade 2 with 32.7% students achieved or exceeded the standard. For Grade 4, the results increased compared to Tajik language. Students achieving the comprehension standard in Russian language educational institutions (four questions correct out of five) were 11.9% and 41.6 % for Grade 2 and 4 respectively.

By the end of 2017 it was concluded that the following results was achieved with support of a US\$16.2 million grant from the Global Partnership for Education:

<https://www.globalpartnership.org/multimedia/video/tajikistan-changing-way-children-learn>

- 5,400 primary teachers have been trained;
- 2 million new learning materials have been distributed to grades 1-4;
- 160,000 primary students are using the new curriculum.



By 2020, all grades and educational institutions in Tajikistan aim to complete the transition from knowledge-based to competency-based education.

At the beginning of the implementation of the NSED there were no measures or assessments of quality of education or children’s learning outcomes in place. The NSED and the mid-term action plan provided goals to establish assessment systems (with funding accounted for) that would provide information on learning outcomes and quality of education. Therefore, the National Testing Centre was established on the basis of a decree by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan to ensure transparent and fair evaluation of knowledge of prospective students, equal rights for entering the educational institutions of higher professional education of the Republic of Tajikistan. The National Testing Centre had to take measures towards bringing laws and regulations of education sphere to conformity with the centralized admission examination system of educational institutions of higher professional education of the Republic of Tajikistan.

### 3.4 GENERAL PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE ONGOING REFORMS.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan and its structural subdivisions, organized and ongoing work to increase the awareness of civil society and the population of the country about the ongoing reforms in the education system. For example, during the introduction of a competence-based approach to training for grades 1-4, covering the processes of the reforms from 2014 to 2017, more than 30 articles were published in the professional media “(weekly journal “Omuzgor”), and television and radio broadcasts related to the introduction of new approach.



Regarding awareness-raising activities of education system employees, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan and its structural subdivisions constantly hold seminars, discussions and round tables, where international and local consultants, experienced specialists of AE, IED, RIPD and other organizations take

part as Heads of working groups.

The issues of introducing a competence-based approach to education in grades 1–4 are included in Regional Development Plans and, based on these Plans, the results are discussed at Councils and boards of education. Decisions are made on teachers CBEs, the provision of educational institutions with teaching materials and textbooks.

### 3.5 CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

There has been a positive and impressive development when it comes to gender issues. Gender equity is less affected in early grades, but enrolment and attendance gap tends to widen in higher grades beyond primary education. The Gender Parity Index<sup>4</sup> (GPI), which measures equal access to each level of education between girls and boys, has marginally improved between 2017 and 2018. Fewer number of girls dropped out from upper secondary, and primary in 2018 in comparison with 2017.

According to the Global Gender Gap Report from the World Bank 2018 the main developments in the education sector has been an increasing trend in enrolment and a narrowing gender gap for all levels.

<sup>4</sup> EMIS, Joint Sector Review – 2017 (and its update 2019) TABLE 7: SELECT INDICATORS IN STATE PRE-SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS IN TAJIKISTAN, 2010-2017.

## 4. PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

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### 4.1 ASSESSMENT OF THE PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Pre-school education is the first level of continuous education, which creates a developing environment for the comprehensive formation of children's personality, taking into consideration age and individual peculiarities.

The process of ensuring children's right for pre-school education and training has improved during the reporting period and the early childhood education has been highlighted as an area with good progress. The network of pre-school institutions, preschool classes at educational institutions of general education have improved and developed both in form of the number of institutions or groups and in the form of quality. Also when it comes to the effort for better quality for orphans and children left without parental guardianship the situation has improved. At the level of content of the pre-school educational program for kindergartens as run through the internal channel includes morals education, religion, discipline, language ability, thinking exercises, creativity, social skills, feelings and emotions, manual skills and physical fitness and health.

According to article 7 of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Preschool Education and Training", adopted in 2013, various types of preschool institutions can be created in the Republic of Tajikistan:



- nursery - for children under 3 years old;
  - nursery - kindergarten - for children from 1 year and 6 months to 7 years;
  - kindergarten - for children from 3 to 7 years old;
  - kindergarten - primary school - for children from 3 to 10 years old;
  - orphanage - for children from 2 months to 7 years;
  - boarding school (pre-school group) - for children 1 to 7 years;
  - special school - a boarding school (preschool group) - for children from 6 to 7 years old;
  - educational institution with groups (classes) of preschool education - for children 5-7 years old;
  - child development center - for children from 4 to 7 years old;
  - family kindergarten - for children under 7 years old;
  - kindergarten of the rehabilitation type;
  - preschool educational institution for children from 2 to 8 years old who need physical treatment or mental development, and rehabilitation;
  - orphanage of boarding type;
  - preschool educational institution, which provides maintenance, education, training and social assistance to orphans and children left without the care of parents of preschool and school age, at the expense of the state;
  - orphanage for children - orphans and children left without parental care; and
- preschool educational institution of the healthcare system for the medical and social protection of children - orphans and children left without parental care, children with congenital physical and mental

disabilities, abandoned children, as well as children, parents (or persons replacing them) who for temporary reasons are temporarily cannot engage in their education or are deprived of parental rights.

The MTEAP 2017 – 2020 has a divided definition of pre-school education. In some context a specific part of pre-school is defined as one year before official school start. It states that the level of participation in organized types of education is one year before reaching the official age for starting school (children aged 6 years) by 2020 should be 50%. This process is developing very fast and there is a good opportunity that this target will be reached. From a preschool level this process is highly valued, as it gives children a much better start in grade 1.

The MoES has entered into cooperation with the Donors in the GPE-4 programme further to develop its efforts in the sector. Assessment<sup>5</sup> carried out as a result of its successful implementation shows good results of the implementation.

Given that the Early Learning Centers massively established by local authorities without donor support lacked essential inputs like qualified teachers in ECE and basic Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs), the decision was that the GPE-4 should not focus on establishing new ELCs but reinforce the existing ones.

Using results from the census, the MOES could identify more than 450 eligible communities where the ELCs had been already established, and to finalize a list of 900 selected project beneficiaries (450 existing ELCs and 450 SKGs) in 32 rayons in three provinces of the country.<sup>6</sup>

Social mobilization and awareness raising on the ECE importance was implemented by an NGO hired by the MOES which also monitored operation and utilization of goods provided to the beneficiary ELCs. Goods included furniture, basic equipment and toys and TLMs for ELCs and SKGs. The RIITT, AKF and UNICEF jointly prepared the new ECE training package on the ECE for the ELCs. After its approval by the MOES, the GPE-4 financing trained and provided mentoring support to 456 SKG teachers and 726 teachers of ELCs on the new program.

Often it has been a struggle to establish these centers, and the process has demanded both creativity and good cooperation at the regional level, using existing facilities to meet the overall goals from the NSED. Especially in remote and small villages the process has been difficult, and preschool very often there has been established as part of the local school.

### **Early Learning Centre (ELC)<sup>7</sup>**

When the Global Partnership for Education (GPE-4) was prepared in 2013, the net enrolment rate in pre-school education (ages 3-6) was 8.9 percent. This was due to limited space in the pre-educational institutions and high opportunity cost for poor households.

In 2009, UNICEF and Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) had introduced a new model of half-day community supported Early Learning Centers (ELCs) to increase coverage of Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs. This model was well received both at regional and national level and therefore this model was used by local

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<sup>5</sup> Implementation completion and results report on a grant in the amount of us\$16.2 million to the republic of Tajikistan for the global partnership for education GPE-4 ( p131441 ) march 19, 2018

<sup>6</sup> 6 GBAO was not included in the list of beneficiary provinces due to intensive support to ELCs from AKF there.

<sup>7</sup> Implementation completion and results report on a grant in the amount of us\$16.2 million to the republic of Tajikistan for the global partnership for education GPE-4 ( p131441 ) march 19, 2018

authorities to start the establishment of Early Learning Centres on their own without donor support. This process have been the success for good development.

The correlation between population growth and pre-school enrolment has become stronger in both urban and rural areas. The annex 1<sup>8</sup> to this report shows that more specifically, 79.5 percent of the variation in pre-school enrolment in rural areas is explained by natural population growth.

The Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Pre-School Education" is guiding the development and the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) was enacted fully aligned with it. The Ministry of Education and Science guides all pre-school curricula for kindergartens ECE centers. These ECE centers are supported by partner organizations and district/rayon education departments.



The state pre-educational institutions covered more number of children, signifying facility improvements and, possibly, greater trust in the pre-school system. For instance, the number of children per ECE center increased significantly up till the time for this sector review. Similarly, the number of children per state kindergarten has increased.

In the Medium-term Action Plan on Education, the NSED until 2020, within the framework of ensuring the availability of quality education a) enrolment in pre-school education; b) the introduction of various forms of preschool education; c) the improvement of pre-school preparation of children are the priority directions of the policy of the Government of the country.

The NSED formulates the overall development goals to be expansion of the coverage of preschool age children by education programs by means of enhancement of network of state institutions and development of network of non-state institutions, creating of low cost types of preschool education, such as short-term stay groups, child development centres. The mechanisms of leveling of access to education resources of early age children will be developed and implemented.

According to this goal the indicators of the MTAP, the coverage of pre-school education for children ages 1-6 years old was expected by 20%, by 2019 and for 3-6 year old 30% in 2020.

According to the data<sup>9</sup> from the EMIS for 2018, the coverage of children in preschool institutions and Early Childhood Development Centers at the age of 1-6 years was 11.7% and 16.5% for 3-6 years, Immediately, it seems to be at the lower end when it comes to a successful implementation, but it has to be noticed that data is a little lacking behind the time of the reporting and therefore the good progress from previous years, is still expected to continue.

It should also be noted that in the republic have been created a large number of private centers of children development of preschool age. If we take into account the indicators of trained children in this sector, then the above figure will be significantly higher. Unfortunately, statistics on these types of institutions are not kept.

In proportion, with an annual increase in the number of children of preschool age (natural population growth), the number of preschool institutions and Early Childhood Development Centers are also increasing at the same time, but the percentage of enrolment in preschool education has not yet reached the targets. However there is

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<sup>8</sup> EMIS Updated JSR – 2017 (dated 2019).

<sup>9</sup> Joint Sector Review – 2017 (and its update 2019) Number of children and the percentage of children enrolled in preschool education (3-6 years old, including children at ECDCs)

still time left up till the end of the implementation period of the NSDE, and the process against reaching the targets will improve.



In order to ensure an increase in the coverage of pre-school education, a positive trend of growth in the number of pre-school institutions is observed not only in the capital and cities of the country, but also in rural areas. This is owing to the construction of new preschool institutions, and creation of the ECDCs. For example, in 2012, 508 state pre-school institutions functioned throughout the country, and in 2018 their number reached 636. For the period from 2012 to 2018 the percentage of growth in the number of state pre-school institutions in the country was 25.2% in total. There are still issues to be solved to make things optimal for the regional development.

#### 4.1.1 REGIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS.

Input from Regional aspects based on reporting from Facilitators of working groups for NSED 2020 - 2030.

In Tajikistan, preschool education covers children aged 1.5 to 7 years. The total number of preschool institutions of all types and all forms of ownership in 2019 amounted to 2,333, of which 153 are private. Preschool education is provided by the state (more than 93 percent), with a small number of institutions, both private and departmental, that are also mainly paid. Moreover, the coverage of children in cities is several times higher than in rural areas. Private preschool education services are growing, but lagging behind government-planned growth.

The statistical average number of kindergartens for each district is 5.5 and varies widely from 1 to 45 (excluding the capital, Dushanbe, which has 132 kindergartens). In some areas, there is only 1 kindergarten per 10,000 or even 12,000 preschool children.<sup>10</sup>

Child development centers are one of the alternative low-cost forms of preschool education. Most of the preschool programs are 1,697 child development centers (72.7% of the total), which were first established in 2010 with the support of development partners. As a result, the number of the child development centers (CDC) institutions increased from 338 in 2011 to 1,697 in 2018.

It should be noted that this form of training has become widespread in rural areas, out of 1,697 of the CDCs 1490 are located in rural areas. This is explained by the fact that not everywhere in the countryside there is a full-time preschool and payment is not available for all parents.

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<sup>10</sup> World Bank. 2019. Analysis of the early education and childcare sector in Tajikistan: Target review of preschool education in Tajikistan. © World Bank.



**Table 2.** The number of child development centers and the number of pupils in them.

Name	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of child development centers	1,400	1,558	1,647	1,671	1,697
Number of children	31,312	39,789	43,448	43,666	46,360



The above data show that while the number of children enrolled in preschool programs in the CDCs increased by 12,136 between 2014 and 2016, the number of children enrolled in the CDCs increased by 2,912 from 2016 to 2018. The reasons for the low increase in children can be: lack of existing capacities in secondary educational institutions, staff turnover (the issue of social protection of the teachers of the CDCs is not resolved), inadequate conditions, and lack of material and technical base.

The Government of the RT adopted resolution No. 783, dated January 1, 2015, “On the enrollment of children of 7 years of age in secondary educational institutions in the month of August”, and the MES RT developed a program to prepare children of 6-7 years of age for school. In August 2018, 219,530 children were enrolled in the program.

Considering the fact that a month of preschool training is not enough to give a relatively good preparation, it would be possible to increase the number of hours of the program to two months. The conditions of secondary educational institutions allow this step to be taken.

The distance to the preschool institutions is a significant limitation of their availability. They are mainly located near the more densely populated centers of districts.

Thus, the following factors can be distinguished, because of which the coverage of children with preschool programs leaves much to be desired:

- Lack of services (places) in nearby preschool institutions.
- Low purchasing power of the population (poverty level).
  - There were cases of outflow of children from preschool institutions after fixing the amount of payment in them. Kindergartens are inaccessible to a large part of the population. Thus, in 2017, 29% of the population lived below the national poverty line at 190 TJS per month per person. In 2018-2019, the fee for state preschool institutions was 55-110 TJS/month per child. Thus, even the lowest fee of 55 TJS was more than a quarter of the national poverty line or more than 150% of the cash benefit from the Social benefit (33 TJS/month/family).<sup>11</sup>
- Poor quality of services.

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<sup>11</sup> World Bank. 2019. Analysis of the early education and childcare sector in Tajikistan: Target review of preschool education in Tajikistan. © World Bank.

## 4.2 PROGRESS AGAINST MTAP 2017 – 2020

The coverage of children in 3-6 age group by all state pre-educational institutions (including CDCs) has expanded to 15.6 percent in 2017 from 16.5 percent in 2018 (Figure #5) but is still relative low and is a real impediment to children's academic performance in later years. The NSED 2012-2020 and the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Pre-School Education" emphasize the importance of pre-school education. Building on this government priority, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) is working closely with international development partners to improve curricula and teacher training facilities, while also taking effort to improve the quality of education and increase coverage beyond the 1990s level of around 16 percent of eligible students.

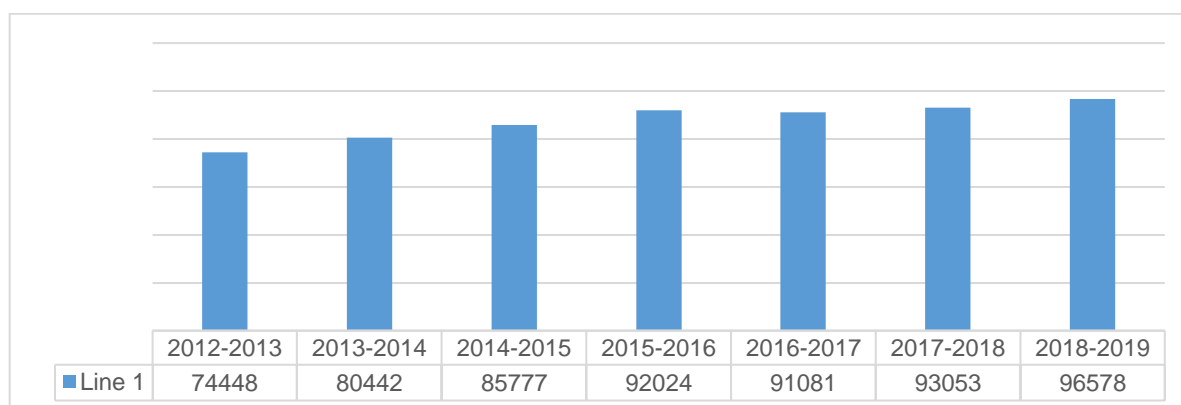
In 2018, the coverage of preschool children aged 3 to 6 years increased to 16.5% (from 15.2% in 2016 and 10.7% in 2011), but still remains the lowest in the region. The total coverage of children aged 1 to 6 years leaves much to be desired.

By 2018, the coverage of children in this age category was 11.7%. The low level of coverage of preschool education is mainly determined by three factors: low level of access (especially in rural areas), average low quality of services and poverty level of the population.

The total number of preschool institutions increased from 602 in 2016 to 636 in 2018, a total of 34 preschool institutions for full-time children.<sup>12</sup>

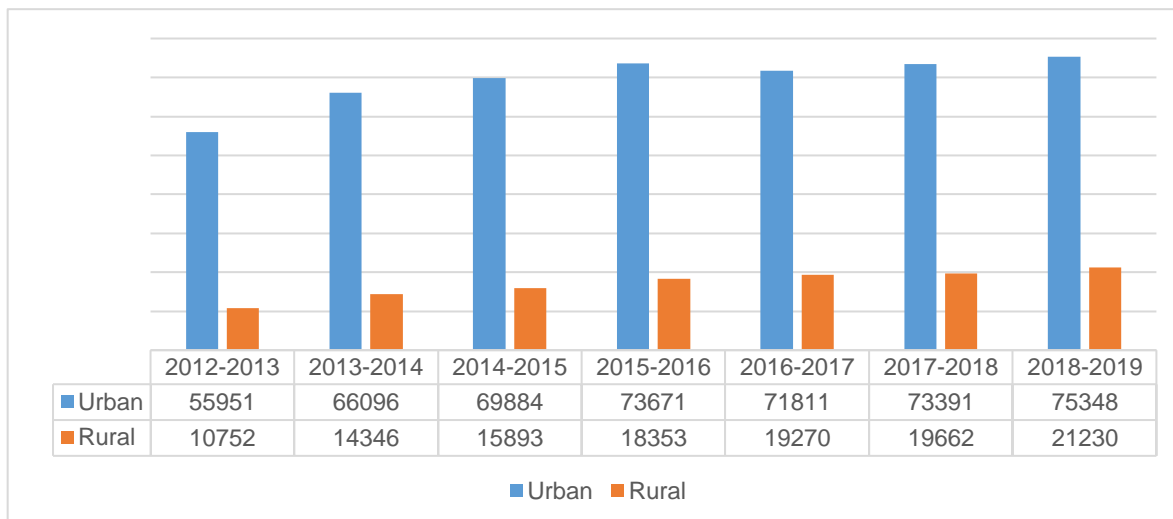
Accordingly, in the above institutions, the coverage of children increased by 22,130 people in 2018 compared to 2012 and by 5,497 people compared to 2016.

**Chart 1.** Total coverage of children in preschool institutions of a full day of stay (total)



<sup>12</sup> Annex 1 Joint Sector Review – 2017 (and its update 2019) Table # 7: Source: EMIS, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan; author's calculations

**Chart 2.** Number of children in preschool institutions of full day of stay (urban/rural).



Source: Statistical collection of education in the Republic of Tajikistan - 2019.<sup>13</sup>

The NSDE’s target of improving the learning conditions in pre-school education is a key issue. This was successfully achieved<sup>14</sup> as the number of children enrolled in the pre-school institutions with improved learning conditions increased. Learning conditions included the prepared education program, standards and content, and teaching- learning materials and teaching practices, and /or physical environment.



As of September 2017, 18,000<sup>15</sup> children were enrolled in pre-school institutions with improved learning conditions. All beneficiary pre-school institutions are equipped with essential Teaching Learning Materials. 1,182 pre-school teachers (vs. 900 planned) and 24 trainers have successfully completed an in-service course on the new ECE program, and the program is available in the beneficiary institutions.

Due to lack of kindergartens in remote areas and limited space in the existing ones, the Early Learning Centers which have been established by local authorities with community support are predominantly located in general educational institutions.

All ELCs in the country are fully dependent on the parents’ contribution and help in type of (equipment and other provisions). Thus, ELCs are vulnerable in terms of financing and legal norms. As a result: (a) staff does not benefit from pensions and other forms of social insurance; and (b) expansion of the ELCs is limited to only those communities that can afford the fees. Due to lack of social insurance, staff rotation in ELCs is often relatively high and that led to increased resources spent on teacher training in order to meet the objectives related

<sup>13</sup> In comparison, three more state pre-school facilities were constructed and opened between 2016 and 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Implementation completion and results report on a grant in the amount of us \$16.2 million to the Republic of Tajikistan for the global partnership for education GPE-4 p131441 March 19, 2018

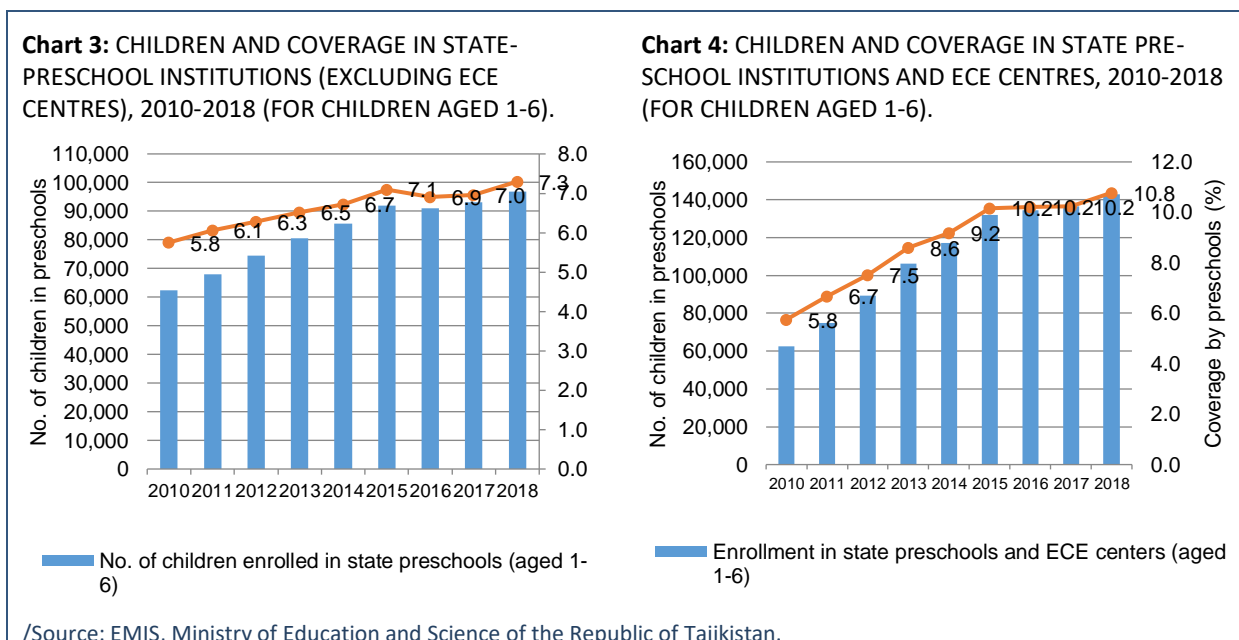
<sup>15</sup> Implementation completion and results report on a grant in the amount of us \$16.2 million to the Republic of Tajikistan for the global partnership for education GPE-4 p131441 March 19, 2018



to the component. By completion, essential TLMs, furniture and toys had been delivered to 11,250<sup>16</sup> children in 450 SKGs and 12,360 children in 450 ELCs (23,610 in total).

Out of all enrolled children, approximately 68 percent attend publicly funded state kindergartens and private kindergartens, which are full-day models, with high overhead costs. The remaining 31.9 percent of children are enrolled in ECE centers, which offer education services, usually on a half-day basis. ECEs are located predominantly in rural areas and have been supported by development partners (e.g., UNICEF, Aga Khan Foundation, and the Open Society Institute), local governments, and communities; and tend to rely on parental fees to cover<sup>17</sup> the salary of the teacher working in the center. The premises are provided by educational institutions and they also pay utility bills, labor of a technical worker and partially office supplies from their budget. That is a good example of the development of public and private partnerships.

Behind the positive development of the expansion to 16.5 percent coverage in 2018 is the building of 21 new state pre-school institutions opened between 2017 and 2018, most of them kindergartens and nursery-schools. This supported the increase in coverage during this period and partly attributed to the rollout of ECE centers. The number of ECE centers<sup>18</sup> increased from 1,671 to 1,697, covering 46,360 children in the 2018-2019 academic year. Furthermore, the government has reportedly created 3,395 new seats in state kindergartens between 2017 and 2018, whereas enrolment rose by 3,525 children.



EMIS data shows that the composition of children enrolled in state pre-educational institutions by gender fluctuated on yearly basis but did not change much since 2016 - 45 percent girls and 55 percent boys were enrolled in state kindergartens in the 2018-2019 academic year. Urban-rural outlook looks broadly similar, although access to pre-school education remains extremely limited in rural areas.

16 Implementation completion and results report on a grant in the amount of \$16.2 million to the Republic of Tajikistan for the global partnership for education GPE-4 p131441 March 19, 2018.

17 ECE centres operate on the basis of 25:2 child-teacher ratio.

18 TABLE 7: SELECT INDICATORS IN STATE PRE-SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS IN TAJIKISTAN, 2010-2017.

Table 3: INDICATORS IN NON-STATE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) CENTRES, 2011-2017.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Children in early child education (ECE) centers	6,955	14,796	25,616	31,312	39,789	43,448	43,666	46,360
<i>of which:</i> GBAO	...	1,183	1,895	3,554	3,978	3,678	4,806	5,936
<i>of which:</i> Soghd oblast	...	5,771	8,317	11,250	12,200	14,905	15,695	15,875
<i>of which:</i> Khatlon oblast	...	6,634	9,988	11,671	16,083	16,560	16,413	17,881
<i>of which:</i> Dushanbe	...	0	80	0	0	0	138	142
<i>of which:</i> RRS	...	1,208	5,336	4,837	7,528	8,305	6,614	6,526
Number of early child education centers	338	711	1,031	1,400	1,558	1,647	1,671	1,697
Coverage in pre-educational institutions								
<i>of which:</i> state kindergartens (aged 3-6)	9.7	10.2	10.4	10.2	10.5	10.3	10.6	11.2
<i>of which:</i> state and ECE centers; (aged 3-6)	10.7	12.2	13.7	13.9	15.0	15.2	15.6	16.5

/Source: EMIS, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan; author's calculations.

The model of ECE centers is aimed not only at expanding the coverage of children with preschool education, but also at tackling the issue of access and quality in pre-school education targeting marginalized children (children with disability, poor, ethnic minorities, refugees, etc.) and children from remote rural regions with the lowest access to early learning opportunities. The cost-effectiveness of ECE centres is explained by the fact that they are annexed to educational institutions and provide low-cost curricular materials; and mobilize parents to ensure continuous education of children at home.

### Equality in the preschool sector



In preschool institutions of all types, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Turkmens, Kyrgyzs, Kazakhs, Russians, Tatars and other nationalities are enrolled in education. Tajiks make up more than 85.9% (82,934 people, including 37,292 girls), Uzbeks comprise 13.2% (12,711, of them 5,666 girls), the remaining nationalities make up about 1% (933 people, of which 359 are girls).

Measures to ensure the use of different languages of instruction would contribute to the teaching of national minorities, especially in terms of teaching materials, although language is not one of the main barriers to access.

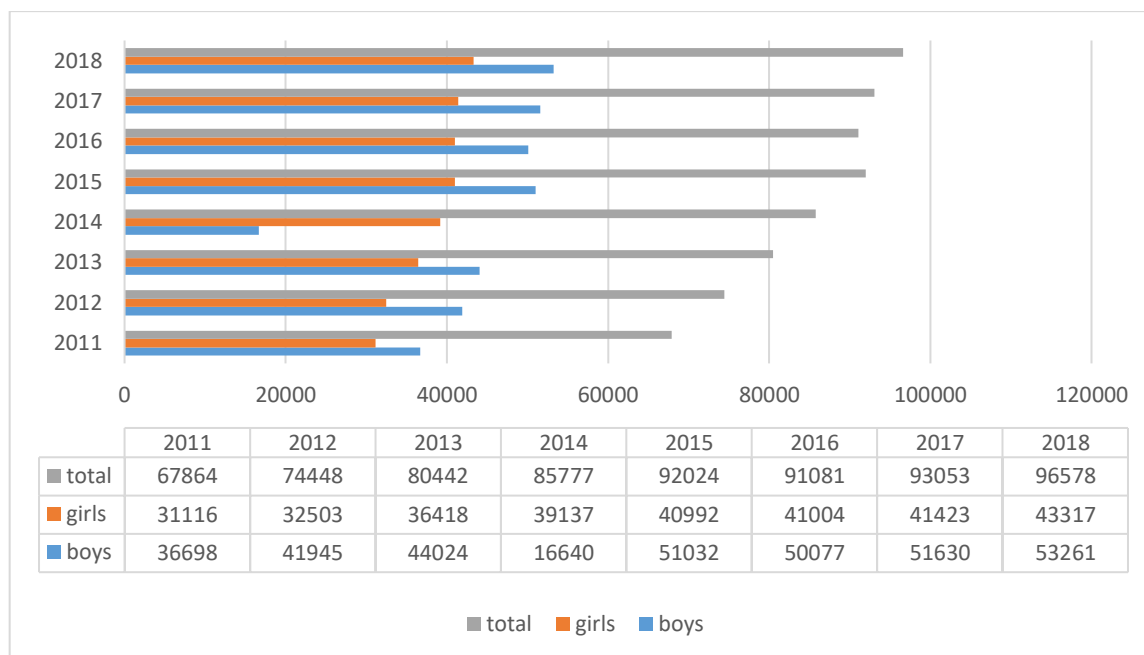
Such language problems, as was noted, arise mainly due to the lack of teaching staff speaking minority languages, as well as due to the lack of teaching materials in Tajik and in the languages of national minorities.

According to the legislation, the education of such minority groups is carried out in their native language. Parents, at their discretion, can enroll children in groups with any language of instruction available in pre-educational institutions. But even in kindergartens, where groups study in Russian, preschool specialists use methodological literature in the Russian language of the 1980s. For other languages of instruction, training programs and methodological literature are the main problems.

According to the national legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan, parents can choose a preschool institution according to the age of their child and his/her language of instruction. That is, there is no access to preschool education related to ethnicity in the country.

### Gender at preschool level of education

The number of girls studying in preschool educational institutions is consistently less than the number of boys, but not by much. The proportion of girls in total kindergarten enrolment in 2012-2018 ranged from 43.7% to 45% (Chart 5).



/Source: EMIS, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan

### Access for children with disabilities to preschool education

Despite the stated priorities for creating suitable physical conditions for children with special educational needs in ordinary preschool institutions, inclusive education approaches are not very well adapted at the level of service delivery, and the preschool education system does not ensure their effective promotion. The adoption of the National Concept of Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities (2011–2015 and 2016–2020) contributed to the creation of conditions for children with disabilities in regular kindergartens and educational institutions.<sup>19</sup>

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates of child disability in the world, the number of children with disabilities in the Republic of Tajikistan amounted to 150,000, which is almost six times more than the officially registered number of 26,000 in 2015.<sup>20</sup> Adoption of the National Concept of Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities (for 2011-2015 and for 2016-2020) contributed to the creation of conditions for children with disabilities in regular kindergartens and educational institutions. However, the capacity of general preschool institutions to provide services to children with disabilities is relatively low.

The unprepared infrastructure of preschool institutions reduces the attendance of children. For example, access to drinking water is one of the most limited and unevenly distributed services in the Republic of Tajikistan, as the country's drinking water and sewage infrastructure was built in the 1980s and has not been practically updated since then.

<sup>19</sup> World Bank. 2019. Analysis of the early education and childcare sector in Tajikistan: Target review of preschool education in Tajikistan. © World Bank.

<sup>20</sup> The World Bank (2019). "Analysis of the early education and childcare sector in Tajikistan: Target review of preschool education in Tajikistan".

In 2018, state preschool institutions covered 568 children with disabilities, including 221 girls, 313 children with intellectual disabilities, 152 visually impaired children, 50 children with hearing difficulties and deaf children, 39 dumb and 14 children with spinal injuries.<sup>21</sup> There are no special instructions for ECE specialists and illustrated materials for children. It should be noted that there are no specialists for working with such children in preschool institutions. This is an obstacle to the inclusion of children with disabilities in the educational process. Low social awareness of the benefits of inclusive education is also a barrier to the coverage of this category of children in preschool education.

The next big obstacle to the provision of quality preschool educational services is the qualification and education of preschool workers.

### Personnel for preschool education

The total number and quality of teaching staff is an important factor in the development of preschool education and is closely related to the development of the child. In 2018, there were 9,445 teachers in state preschool institutions (see Table 4). In accordance with the normative documents of preschool educational institutions, all pedagogical workers in preschool institutions must have secondary or higher professional pedagogical education with "knowledge of preschool psychology and basic correctional pedagogy". In 2018, out of all teachers in state preschool institutions, 44.3% of them had a degree in pedagogy (secondary or higher education).

Table 4: Education level of employees of state preschool institutions in 2018.<sup>22</sup>

Job title	Total	Level of education of teachers of state ECE institutions						
		Higher pedagogic	Higher	Incomplete higher	Secondary vocational	Secondary vocational pedagogic	General secondary	Basic
Head	610	331	189	31	25	31	3	0
Deputy Head	80	20	9	3	20	6	22	0
Senior educator	295	135	81	22	28	29	0	0
Teacher	544	247	109	31	59	86	12	0
Caregiver	4,189	1,066	646	491	841	1,007	138	0
Assistant caregiver	2,844	57	4	35	263	79	2,399	7
Nanny	883	19	2	13	98	29	719	3
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>9,445</b>	<b>1,875</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>1,334</b>	<b>1,267</b>	<b>3,293</b>	<b>10</b>

Source: EMIS, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2020 sets the priority for the reform of the education and science systems, which will be aimed at ensuring equality and access to education; quality improvement at all levels of education; and the financial sustainability and effectiveness of the education sector. Today, access to pedagogical education is not an obstacle to the quality of education. Teacher training is

<sup>21</sup> Statistical collection of education in the Republic of Tajikistan - 2018-2019.

<sup>22</sup> EMIS, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2019.

conducted at several universities and colleges located in different regions of the country, including remote districts. Thus, access to pedagogical education is not a problem.

In 2018, 331 out of 610 heads of preschool institutions had higher pedagogical education. In addition, the total number of caregivers increased in the period 2015-2018 by 11.9%, but there are significant differences by region. The level of education of preschool workers in urban areas is higher than in rural areas: with higher pedagogical education 33% against 24%, with incomplete higher education 33% against 5.4%, with secondary vocational education 25% against 35.2%, and with secondary education 35% in both in urban and rural areas.

Based on the activities of preschool institutions, it should also be noted that three key positions are key in the process of education and upbringing of children: (i) senior caregiver assisting caregivers; (ii) subject teacher; and (iii) caregiver. EMIS data for 2018 indicate that, on average, 51% of employees in all three categories had pedagogical education, including: senior caregiver - 55.6%, teacher - 61.2% and caregiver - 49.5%. However, the position of assistant caregiver remains unclear. It does not correspond to functional duties. This category of employees is paid as junior service personnel and performs the duties of a cleaner, and according to the stated position must engage in pedagogical activities. In addition, there is no document containing clear official duties and qualification requirements for staff of preschool institutions.

In recent years, in higher education institutions (universities) of the country, the number of specialists in speech therapy, surdopedagogy necessary for preschool institutions has increased. The capacity building of pedagogical workers of preschool institutions can occur through retraining of personnel who have worked in preschool institutions for at least 5 years, in the Republican In-Service Teacher Training Institute (RITTI) and its branches. In addition, in preschool institutions, recruitment should take place in accordance with regulatory documents. Ultimately, "a teacher working with preschool children must have knowledge of preschool psychology, pedagogy and the basics of correctional pedagogy."<sup>23</sup> However, the big problem today is the training of specialists for working with children with disabilities.

#### **4.3 ELABORATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Planning a new long-term strategy, a regulatory framework should be further developed to regulate the activities of alternative forms of preschool educational institutions. The process of changes is ongoing and good progress and also changes have been made to the existing regulatory framework to regulate the activities of all forms of preschool educational institutions. Financing and legal mechanisms for all forms of pre-school education should be improved and mechanism for public and private partnerships further developed.

**Access and Equity** – Still there is a priority to increase the coverage of children aged 3 through 6 with pre-school education services, particularly in rural areas, from marginal groups.

**Infrastructure** – Continue to focus on an appropriate infrastructure, availability of drinking water and other related practical problems to ensure proper access to pre-school educational services for all children.

**Quality of Services** – To continue to qualify personnel to work in pre-school.

#### **Recommendations for improvement of quality**

There is still no comprehensive assessment system for the quality of services provided by preschool institutions.

It remains problematic to assess the quality of the services provided in preschool institutions. So far, no studies have been conducted at the national level in this direction. In 2016, in the framework of the GPE-4 Project, a study was conducted to evaluate the quality of services among 73 kindergartens and ELCs. The analysis involved factors related to the type of preschool organization (kindergarten or ELC), location in urban or rural

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23 Закон Республики Таджикистан «О дошкольном обучении и воспитании», 2013 г.

area, as well as to sources of financing (state or local; international donors; as well as private or departmental investments). An assessment of preschool institutions and services for 2016 showed that the quality of services is generally low, with a significant gap between ELCs and kindergartens, between rural and urban kindergartens, as well as between public and private kindergartens.

The quality of food in preschool institutions is also strictly regulated, but there are compromises due to lack of financial resources. Based on the prices of 2017, the model menu approved by the MLME RT is estimated at 18 TJS per child per day. However, the actual distribution of funds for food in preschool institutions, on average in the region in 2017 and taking into account parental contributions, amounted to 4.7 TJS per child per day. It is necessary to approve a fixed amount for the nutrition of children in preschool institutions.

Based on the foregoing, it must be said that it is possible to achieve the goals for enrollment of children in preschool education through the gradual introduction of a range of quality services, giving priority to 6 year olds, without reducing the existing coverage for other age groups. The priority of 6 years will solve the government's tasks urgently to increase the coverage of preschool education and increase the level of readiness of preschool children to study at school.

It is necessary to develop a roadmap for the coverage of 6 year olds with one-year preschool education.

More intensive work in the direction of combining different models and forms of preschool education (work on alternative, low-cost models of preschool education) will yield results.

Special attention should be paid to awareness-raising on early childhood development, early education and parent education. Parent education is crucial given the low potential of the system to cover preschool children, on the one hand, and insufficient awareness of the developmental needs of the child among parents and guardians, on the other.

Encouragement by the state (changes in tax legislation, equalization of prices of the private sector for utilities with state institutions) and provision of services by the private sector and other non-state actors will increase the coverage of children.

The transition to compulsory one-year pre-school education in the future, if such a decision is made, will also solve the issue of coverage of children with pre-school education.

The expansion of services should not be at the expense of the deterioration of the quality of education in preschool institutions.

International experience shows that preschool educational services can be of different forms and time of stay. Child development centers are an example of this. Such centers can be organized not only in educational institutions and kindergartens, but also in any empty premises. For this purpose it is necessary to think over and develop the mechanism of their financing.

The next type can be Play groups organized on the basis of playgrounds, educational institutions, preschool institutions and other premises. Education of children through play, and parents - through joint communication with children. This type of training can be carried out two or three times a week.

It is also possible to combine different types of education on the basis of existing preschool institutions: half-day classes during the weekend, efficient use of space (transformer beds, allowed by the Sanitary and Epidemiological Agency) will help free up space for greater coverage of children with preschool education.

Family gardens are legally permitted. And this is another issue that needs to be resolved. This can be done by linking alternative models to traditional ones. That is, it is necessary to introduce educators in the staff list of preschool institutions.

## **General comments**

There is no flexibility in the programs of professional development courses both in terms of development and in terms of the mechanism for the provision of educational services. It should be noted that despite this, instructional documents and the mechanism for taking courses are mandatory for all types of preschool institutions, however, professional employees of private preschool educational institutions do not actively attend professional development courses.

The development of common refresher programs for public and private institutions will also facilitate the exchange of information and practice between them and the professional network. Refresher courses are held for three categories of ECE employees: heads, methodists of ECE, caregivers. Since 2013, refresher courses for employees of the Child Development Centers have been held. The course program was supplemented and amended in 2017 and approved by the decision of the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan dated October 10, 2017, No. 16/41. In the framework of GPE-4, refresher courses for employees of 420 preschool institutions and 450 child development centers were held.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan needs to develop alternative programs for refresher courses, taking into account the experience and potential of the participants. And it is also necessary to conduct training for RITTI specialists to work on the programs being developed in the future for alternative preschool institutions on the use of modern teaching technologies.

The Handbook on education funding (1987) is the only document containing staffing and examples of remuneration. Given the significant changes in the infrastructure and financing of preschool institutions over the past 32 years, the schedule is outdated, contains excess jobs and leads to inefficient use of resources. Legal acts provide some opportunities for flexible staffing depending on real needs, but they are used only by experienced and proactive leaders of preschool institutions.



## 5. GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

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### 5.1 ASSESSMENT OF THE PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Almost all key indicators in general secondary education were improved in the reporting period. In the academic year 2018-2019, there were 3,869<sup>24</sup> state educational institutions, of which 3,670 (or 94.9%) are educational institutions, and the remaining 5.1% are lyceums, gymnasiums and boarding educational institutions for children with special needs. Only 61 of these educational institutions are funded from private sources (i.e. 1.6% of the total number of institutions). In 2015-2018, 14 new educational institutions were opened and 6,303 new classes were created. This allowed educational institutions (both public and private) to enrol 189,213 more students and increase the enrolment rate of children by 10.4% in the reporting period. The gender parity index (GPI) has also improved for students of all grades. In 2018, GPI comprised 0.940 in grades 1-4, compared to 0.936 in grades 5-9 and 0.870 in grades 10-11.

General statistics for teachers have also been improved. The growth rate of the number of teachers during 2017-2018 was more modest than the growth in the number of students and, on average, amounted to 1.2% in GBAO and 2.7% in Sogd region. In addition, for the first time since 2003, the total number of students in GBAO has increased compared to the previous year (37,752<sup>25</sup> students as of the 2018-2019 school year). The average ratio of students and teachers in grades 1-11 changed from 16.2 in 2015 to 16 in 2018, and in primary grades it increased from 22.2 in 2015 to 23.3 in 2018. In addition, the average number of students per one class (in grades 1-4) increased from 21.6 to 23 in the period 2015-2018.

Improving school infrastructure has improved access to education. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan built 151 new school buildings during the 2018-2019 school year, with the help of which 36,600 new student places were created. Of the total number of new places, 44.7% were co-financed by representatives of the private sector, and 4.5% - by residents of local communities. In addition, in the period 2015-2018 the number of school buildings in need of urgent repairs (i.e. dilapidated buildings) decreased by almost 50%, and the number of educational institutions in need of major repairs fell from 1,746 in 2015 to 945 in 2018. In 2018, about 66% of educational institutions claimed that their water supply needs were fully satisfied (compared with 45.4% in 2015), which indicates a significant improvement in access to education in the Republic of Tajikistan.



In line with this the reporting period has shown good progress at all levels in General Secondary Education. By the September 2016 all the general secondary school in the country were supplied with consolidated and approved curriculum

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<sup>24</sup> Source: EMIS, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan

<sup>25</sup> Source: EMIS, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan



materials<sup>26</sup>. The technical assistance was supplied by the developing partners.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan was able to organize the process of developing the materials of the teaching materials package taking into account all aspects of the reform of educational content: promotion of the inclusive education, reflecting gender balance, reflecting life skills, basics of a healthy lifestyle, basics of safe living, project work, reading with understanding, etc.

There were 3,869 general secondary educational institutions catering to the needs of 1,966,924 students in the 2018-2019 academic year. About 79.3 percent of these institutions offer students to complete the full cycle of general secondary education (grades 1-11), while 8.6 percent of educational institutions offer education only in primary grades (i.e. grades 1-4). Progress has been made to increase access and enrolment rates in primary and basic education. For instance, no new educational institutions opened and yet 63,655 more children enrolled during 2016-2017.

The general secondary education system is also beset with quality issues, although the MoES has taken critical steps towards competency-based education model, as well as significant improvement of learning materials and overall school infrastructure. This led to higher average class size and classrooms-to-school ratio.<sup>27</sup>

There will be a need for improving quality of the teaching and learning process, particularly because it is difficult to attract, train and retain qualified and adequately motivated teaching personnel. In the meantime, curriculum framework and subject standards are being developed by the MoES in order to provide students with core competencies, which include analytical thinking as one skill (but there are also other skills which are required, such as problem solving, collaboration, communication and others). Furthermore, monthly pay increases and introduction of per-capita financing brought greater equity and efficiency in the use of public funds. While there is still plenty of room for improvement, the MTAP 2015-2017 provided much needed impetus to advance reforms in general secondary education.

In cooperation with the European Union, Quality Education Support Project 1 and 2 the MOE has got support to an increase in the quality of education provision through improved teaching, learning assessment and education system management, budgeting and evaluation. The overarching objective of the EU support in the education sector is ongoing to contribute to the development of a modern education system, able to prepare informed, qualified and ready for the "world of work" citizens.

Therefore specific objectives were developed for to support efficient and effective education service delivery at basic secondary and initial TVET levels in order to improve their learning outcomes. The overall goals of the provided support in the QESP Programme.

- Support the development of a modern, viable and competence based teachers' CPD system better responding to teachers' and school managers' needs and built on successful national and regional experiences is developed and piloted for secondary school teachers in selected regions.
- Support the development of a National Learning Assessment System properly developed and implemented, in line with agreed quality standards and targeting selected educational stages.
- Strengthened the planning, budgeting and monitoring (PBM) process that results in a more equitable and efficient distribution of resources and is informed by improved monitoring of NSED implementation.
- Support a strengthened reform process of the curriculum through increased coherence and coordination and technical support in selected subjects in secondary grades.
- Shortterm achievements and successes of innovative practices of the project assessed and a framework

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26 GPE-4 Final Report, Table # 18. Participation of partners in finalizing the package of standards of primary school.

27 Annex 1 Joint Sector Review – 2017 (and its update 2019) Table 11 Classrooms, class size and other indicators in general secondary education, 2010-17

to evaluate and monitor the long term impact of EU integrated support in the sector (and progress in general in the areas of learning in Tajikistan) established through education research initiatives.

- Crosscutting activities that serve to underpin achievements in the other results areas.

Inequalities in the education sector are being addressed within each project component, by ensuring benefits target the more vulnerable groups (adolescent girls and children with disabilities mainly) and areas. In particular, promoting greater equity has been a priority issue in the proposed support for improved planning, budgeting and monitoring.

The National Testing Centre is a partner in the QESP and the project team is supporting the NTC with the development of processes and procedures and also with capacity building. The first training/workshop for the NTC and their experts was carried out in June 2019 and guided staff through the process of developing items for Mathematics and Tajik language. The workshop provided an overview of taxonomic levels and supported NTC staff in preparing items based on the competences that are to be assessed. A full set of material for training on different aspects of Classroom Based Assessment was also developed.

## 5.2 Teacher Training:

The National Strategy of Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2020 put a high priority into the process of teacher training in all sectors. All development projects have been requested to highlight this issue in all ongoing activities. In the QESP 1 and 2 there, the focus was on a modern, viable and competence-based teachers' CPD system, better responding to teachers' needs and built on successful national and regional experiences is developed and piloted for secondary school teachers in selected regions.

### Teacher professional development

Developing a modern Teachers' CPD system is a strategic landmark priority, recognized by the NSED and all other policy documents. Over the course of implementation periods the QESP 1 has developed a series of documents: Teacher's CPD mid-term strategy and action plan for its implementation, Teachers' Competencies Framework, Teacher educators' competencies concept, Training Programme Development Manual to serve as a basis for providing direct assistance to course developers in Tajikistan to develop training programmes that are fitting the requirements of the new competence-oriented approach to education and pedagogical staff retraining needs.

The TCF is a powerful instrument for regulating the teaching profession – once developed and agreed upon it can influence and have a direct impact on Initial teacher education, induction and professional development of teachers as well as indirectly on licensing, inspection, teacher selection and assessment, role of school management and staff involved in teacher education and training. Moreover, the TCF will provide the backbone for system integrity and good governance in the area of teacher policy and school policy, by ensuring the introduction of measurable standards of high-quality performance.

### Introduction of CBE in grades 5 to 11

The MoES sees the training on CBE as an effective form of content reform implementation. The Ministry is introducing competence-based methodology in teacher professional development. The QESP 1 has greatly contributed to this process. Referring to the ministry's requirement, the following In-service programs have been developed and implemented:

- Realization of Competence Approach in Teaching Natural Science and Information Technology;
- Formative Assessment Tools for the Development of Key Competences of Students in Teaching Languages; and
- Application of the Competency-Based Approach in Teaching for the Teachers of Social Sciences and Humanities Subjects.

These programs encourage teachers to understand the new approach, the necessity for new culture of learning and assessment, and cross-curricular links development in school in general, before teachers are trained and deepened in the new content and teaching methodology of a particular subject.

Taking into account the number of teachers in the country and the opportunities to reach all of them, so far a cascading approach have been applied. The programme was prepared with master trainers (14) who directly taught it to local trainers (150), who have subsequently been provided with a trainer guide and training materials, and they should have taught (multiplicate) this training content in sites (around 30 000 for every group).

#### Development of training modules

Through successful cooperation with the QESP the MOE has defined interdisciplinary key topics for INSET programmes for all target groups of secondary grade teachers and designing five new INSET programmes for key topics to be embedded in the RIITT and its branches offer.

Given the move to a diversified CPD system, the project is developing modules that will be combined in different programs to meet the needs of teachers/

#### Promotion of CBE

According to the NSED 2012 – 2020 Competence Based Education is a core issue for the development process in Tajikistan. The EU Action Document for the Quality Education Support Programme I and its related projects, has been introduced to all stakeholders to support the issue: RITTI and Educational and Methodological Center specialists.

The Training Programme for pedagogical staff of the higher education institutions (HEI) on implementing the Competence approach and Mentoring in PRESET and INSET is planned to be implemented starting in March 2020 in 2parts for 3+3 training days with practical individual tasks during the training interval.

#### Support to development of CBE curricula

A Curriculum Framework was written with the aim of familiarising textbook authors and the wider public about the philosophy and practice of the new competence-based curriculum. Two versions were produced, a detailed version for the use of authors and a summary version for the use of all educational professional. 4000 copies of the summary version were printed and distributed to all General Secondary schools. A one-day workshop for educational professionals was held based on the summary version of the Curriculum Framework in 68 Districts and Cities in 7 Regions for a total of 560 participants.

A workshop was conducted to enhance the skills in writing Curricula and Teachers' Guides of 54 authors of Physics, Chemistry, Biology, ICT and Geography Grades 5 to 11 curricula.

#### Support to the development of Curricula and Teachers' Guides based on CBE

New competence-based Curricula and Teachers' Guides were developed for Physics, Chemistry, Biology, ICT and Geography Grades 5 to 11. In total 28 new Curricula and 28 Teachers' Guides were developed and in use by teachers by September 2019.

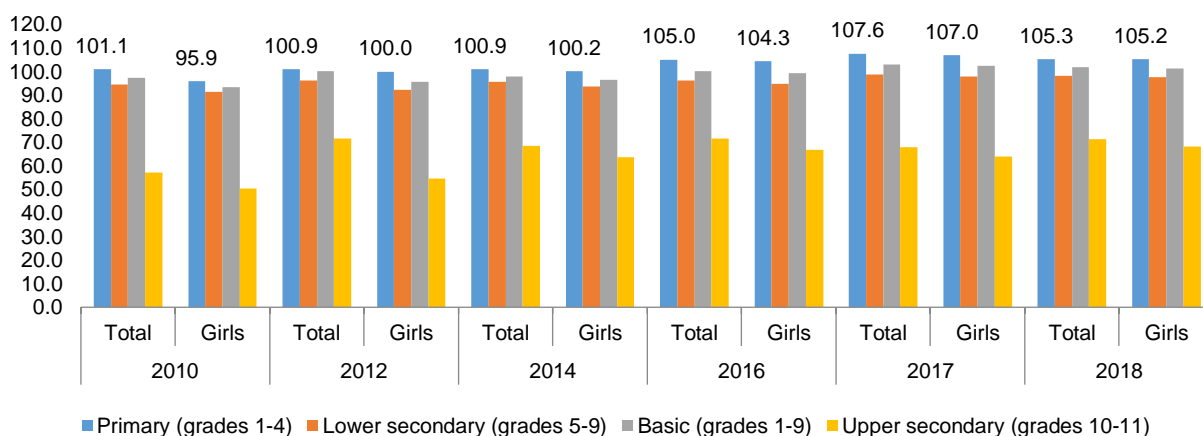
#### Additional support to curriculum development

Two consultancies were completed to improve the textbook production and procurement system in terms of exploring the role of a new objective, systematic and transparent system of evaluating educational manuscripts (for Teachers' Guides, Curricula, Textbooks etc) submitted to MOES for publication.

#### **Gender equity**

Different reports supports that gender equity is less affected in early grades but enrolment and attendance gap tends to widen in higher grades beyond primary education. The Gender Parity Index (GPI),<sup>28</sup> which measures equal access to each level of education between girls and boys, has marginally improved between 2017 (0.922)<sup>29</sup> and 2018 (0.929). Fewer number of girls dropped out from upper secondary (grades 10-11) and primary (grades 1-4) in 2016 in comparison with 2017. The gap in gender disparity continues to be large when a student moves on to study in higher grades in general secondary education. In 2018, 48.5 percent girls enrolled in primary grades, 48.3 percent in lower secondary grades and 46.5 percent in upper secondary grades.

**FIGURE 17: NET ENROLLMENT RATES (NER)<sup>30</sup> BY LEVELS OF GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION, 2010-2018.**



/Source: EMIS, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan; author's calculations.

Attendance is periodically lower in rural areas where propensity to work during harvesting season is high – especially in the rural areas. The NSED and the National Development Strategy (NDS) emphasize poor attendance rates in higher grades as a major concern in general secondary education. Although statistical evidence is lacking, observations indicate that girls are more likely to drop out or more likely to shirk from regular attendance in educational institutions in favour of attending to family matters (e.g., care for children), subsistence farming (e.g., harvesting and livestock breeding) and other economic activity (e.g., paid work,

28 The Global Gender Gap Report 2018 (WB)

29 Annex 1 Joint Sector Review – 2017 (and its update 2019) Source Table 10: select indicators in general secondary education, 2010-2017. Ministry of Education and Science / Author's own calculations (daytime general educational institutions only; without ECE Centers).

<sup>30</sup> Although the NER cannot exceed 100 percent, values up to 108.8 have been obtained in calculations of age-specific enrolment ratio (ASER) - which shows the participation in education of the population of each particular age, regardless of the level of education - reflecting inconsistencies in the enrolment and/or gross population data. GER, however, can exceed 100 percent due to the inclusion of over-aged and under-aged students (e.g., students aged 6 and 18, as well as students in grade 0) because of early or late entrants, and grade repetition.

domestic work, etc.).

The transition rate from basic to secondary education (from grade 4 to grade 5) for male and female students is steadily increasing. In 2018, the transition rate<sup>31</sup> for boys was 80.4 and for girls 77.1, which compares to 80.0



and 76.0 respectively back in 2016. Higher transition rates normally indicate greater access to education, or higher level of transition from basic education (grades 1-9) to upper secondary education (grades 10-11). These figures suggest that more students successfully transitioned from basic education and continued their studies in 10th and 11th grades during 2016-2018, hence completing the full cycle of general secondary education. The conundrum for policy makers is that while the gender gap has narrowed, transition rates from 9th to 10th grade remained low (equaling 78.8 in 2018-

2019 academic year).<sup>32</sup>

However, regional differences are a concern. The highest transition rate in the 2018-2019 academic year was recorded among girls in GBAO (94.7) and the lowest among girls in RRS (58.2). This difference is too significant to be attributed to demography or other external factors. One has to look further and assess the quality of educational facilities, availability of qualified teaching personnel and average student performance, including social norms to better understand the underlying reasons explaining these transition rate differences (especially vis-a-vis GPI improvements over the same reporting period).

### **Enrolment<sup>33</sup>**

The population of Tajikistan in the age group 7-17 years old is increasing and reached 2,023,600 in 2018. Based on this information, 97.2 percent of the population in the same age group were enrolled in state general secondary educational institutions in 2018. This is an improvement from 96.9 percent in the previous year.

However, regional variations make the difference again. To date, GBAO is the only sub-national region where absolute enrolment rate in general secondary education has been steadily declining for 12 consecutive years, except in the past two years when enrolment rose from 37,151 students in 2017 to 37,752 students in 2018.

EMIS reports show that there are in fact more students enrolling in the first grade of primary but enrolment rates (among boys and girls alike) start falling significantly beyond primary grades. This abnormality could be partly explained by: (i) high rates of migration from GBAO to other regions within the country; (ii) prevalence of poverty and inability of households to pay for education of their children in higher grades; (iii) remoteness of educational facilities and distance to school; and (iv) poor infrastructure (e.g., heating and electricity shortages).

The analysis revealed that a 1.6 percent increase in student enrolment in GBAO in 2017-2018 was complemented by a 1.2 percent increase in the number of teachers in GBAO during the same period, suggesting a minor change in efficiency - namely, a decrease in average student-teacher ratio from 6.6 in 2017 to 6.7 in 2018). This is a result of educational institutions not being able to make decisions about staffing as population numbers change.

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<sup>31</sup> Annex 1 Joint Sector Review – 2017 (and its update 2019) (see Figure 18).

<sup>32</sup> GPI rates improved from 0.915 to 0.922 during 2016-2017 but Transition Rate (TR) from basic to secondary has improved from 78.1 in 2016 to 79.3 in 2017 and remains relatively low (with the exception of GBAO).

<sup>33</sup> Student enrolment by shifts and type of general secondary institutions, 2010-2017.

There are 110 educational institutions offering three-shift education for 105,086<sup>34</sup> students. The majority of enrolled students in state general secondary institutions study in two shifts (morning and afternoon). The number of students studying two and three shifts has marginally increased but one-shift enrolment has in fact declined between 2017 and 2018, suggesting lower demand.

### Attendance and dropouts

The attendance rates in educational institutions are reflective of enrolment, where the enrolment rate is high in primary it falls as students move to higher grades. The reasons are several such as labour migration, where school attendance is sensitive to income and in particular remittances.

This reinforces the common view that poverty and financial vulnerability are regarded as the determinants of attendance in general secondary education. Children also report missing school largely because of illness, paid labour, and household work. In particular, school-aged girls in rural areas are least likely to further their education beyond basic education in comparison with other population groups in Tajikistan.

It is interesting that availability of educational institutions or insufficient number of seats is rarely stated as the reason for missing school regardless of gender, geography or income level. To that end, high dropout rates are a derivative of social obligations in a traditionalist society, which often require children to work or marry early to the detriment of schooling.

### 5.3 REGIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS.

#### Input from regional aspects based on reporting from Facilitators of working groups for NSED 2020 - 2030.



The MoES efforts to strengthen and improve the learning conditions in general secondary education has exceeded the expectations as by completion 52 percent (not less than 50 percent was targeted) of the trained and certified teachers follow the revised education program and apply improved teaching-learning practices in Mother-tongue Language and Mathematics.

The GPE-4 contributed to the implementation of the MOES' long-term plan to move from a knowledge-based to a competency-based curriculum in general education through curriculum modernization for core primary grades, and in Tajik Language and Math for secondary grades (5-11). USAID supported work on primary grades reading, while UNICEF supported integration of Life Skills into the new curriculum. Other development partners have supported management and teacher training programmes.

The upgrading of Secondary Education Curriculum and Pedagogy supported introduction of the revised primary curriculum in Tajik Language and Math through the following: a - new competency-based curriculum package (including standards, programs, teacher's guide and INSET models) was developed, piloted and finalized, and, based on that, a package for some other subjects (e.g. Nature, foreign languages) was also prepared; b - training and mentoring was provided to 5,395 primary teachers; and c - a package of essential Teaching Learning Materials, supplementing materials for textbooks, new standards and teacher's guides were delivered to all educational institutions in the country. In addition, 130 trainers (majority of them are the regular RIITT staff) were trained and 187 methodologists and university and college teachers.

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<sup>34</sup> Annex 1 Joint Sector Review – 2017 (and its update 2019) Table 12: student enrolment by shifts and type of general secondary institutions, 2010-2017.



Education in the Republic of Tajikistan is considered as one of the main priorities of state policy and is aimed at the formation of a free, creative, intellectually and physically developed personality. The government of the Republic of Tajikistan adheres to the principles of observance of international standards in the field of human rights, as evidenced by Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan. In particular, it states that "Everyone shall have the right to education. The basic general education shall be compulsory. The state shall guarantee the free of charge general basic compulsory education in the state educational establishments. Everyone shall get free of charge general vocational, primary specialized, vocational specialized and higher specialized education in the state educational establishments, within the framework determined by law. According to the Constitution, basic education is compulsory and free. Since general education plays an important role in the further development of the child, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan has taken a number of practical measures to protect the constitutional rights of citizens to education.

Articles 16 and 22 of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Education", regarding Inclusive education, indicate the need to provide separate curricula and educational materials for children with special needs in relevant educational institutions. And although the development of an inclusive approach to education is one of the main priorities of the state's educational policy, which ensures the realization of the right of citizens to receive quality education and social integration and it is an important factor in the sustainable development of society, inclusive education is not considered broadly taking into account all children, including migrants, stateless children, street children, Gypsy and Afghan children, etc., but only children with disabilities. And this requires further work.

It should be noted that during 2017-2019, a number of laws and regulations were adopted, aimed primarily at updating the education system and regulating the activities of general education institutions, which would improve the quality of education. These are:

- The Law of the RT "On targeted social assistance" - 2017;
- State program of introduction of information and communication technologies in educational institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2018-2022;
- The state program for providing general educational institutions of the country with subject classrooms and equipped educational laboratories for 2018-2020;
- State program of introduction of ICT in educational institutions of the RT for 2018-2022;
- The state program on fostering patriotism and strengthening of national mentality of youth of the RT for 2018-2022;
- State program for improving teaching and learning of Russian and English languages up to 2020;
- Standard regulations on state institutions of boarding school type in the Republic of Tajikistan;
- Curriculum of general education institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2018-2019 and subsequent years;
- Instruction on certification of students in general education institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan.



All this indicates that the significant progress has been made in the Republic of Tajikistan in the field of educational development in recent years. Within the framework of the state programs implemented in all regions of the country, the educational infrastructure has been significantly updated. State programs have been adopted in secondary education, institutions have been provided with up-to-date information and scientific-methodological material, textbooks have been improved, both with the Tajik language of instruction, and for educational institutions of national minorities, and remote rural

educational institutions (including small ones) have been provided with teaching staff.

In the 2018-2019 academic year, there were 3,869 general education institutions, of which 100 percent were daytime institutions. EMIS data are mainly available about these full-time educational institutions, 70.7% of which are located in rural areas, with more than 1.96 million students enrolled. About 79.3% of these institutions provide students with a full cycle of general secondary education (grades 1-11), while 8.6% of educational institutions offer education only in primary grades (1-4). There has been progress in expanding access to primary and basic education in the Republic of Tajikistan.

Children in the Republic of Tajikistan begin to study from the 1st grade in general education institutions at the age of 7 years (until December 31, full 7 years). Compulsory education lasts nine years and consists of three levels: primary education (grades 1-4), incomplete secondary education (grades 5-9) and full secondary education (grades 10-11).

7 (6)-10 years old	Grades 1-4	Primary education – 1st stage of general secondary education (compulsory)		
11-15 years old	Grades 5-9	Basic education – 2nd stage of general secondary education (compulsory)		
16-17 (16) years old	Grades 10-11	General secondary education (3rd stage, optional)	Primary professional education	Secondary professional education

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, the completion of grades 10-11 in general education institutions is not compulsory.

After receiving compulsory education students can go in one of two directions of further education:

- Obtaining a certificate at the end of grade 11 of general secondary education;
- Obtaining vocational education;
- Attending various courses.

Broad measures aimed at material and technical support have been implemented. To this end, in 2017-2018 a number of educational institutions were built in various cities and districts, capital renovation and restoration works were successfully carried out in existing educational facilities. But statistics have shown that this is not enough. In 2018-2019 the vast majority of students attended two-shift educational institutions (88.8%); only 5.9% attended single-shift educational institutions, and the remaining 5.3% attended three-shift educational institutions. However, rapid population growth leads to two-shift, and in some places three-shift classes in educational institutions. For example, according to the UN Population Division, the population of Tajikistan will increase by about 81.4% by 2050 and will equal approximately 16.2 million. This also leads to increased occupancy in classes, which makes it impossible to divide subgroups into individual subjects (Russian, foreign languages, etc.).

According to the reports of the education departments, in the 2018-2019 academic year 229,452 students (110,967 girls) were admitted to the country's 1st grades.

It should be noted that from year to year the interest of parents in teaching children increases, and their children (especially girls) continue their education and their career growth is observed.

In the 2018-2019 academic year, 160,369 students (76,915 girls) graduated from grade 9, and a total of 122,369 graduates (76.3%) were enrolled in grade 10. Enrollment of 9th grade students in 10th grade decreased by 1.8% during the 2018-2019 academic year, compared to the previous year, especially for girls.

In order to ensure access to quality education and improve the quality of education, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan approved the State Program dated November 29, 2017 No. 544 for providing educational and scientific institutions of the country with technical classrooms, equipping educational laboratories for 2018-2020 and a program to strengthen the material and technical base of educational institutions.



Unfortunately, the requirements of this program were met only in Dushanbe and some cities and districts of Sogd region.

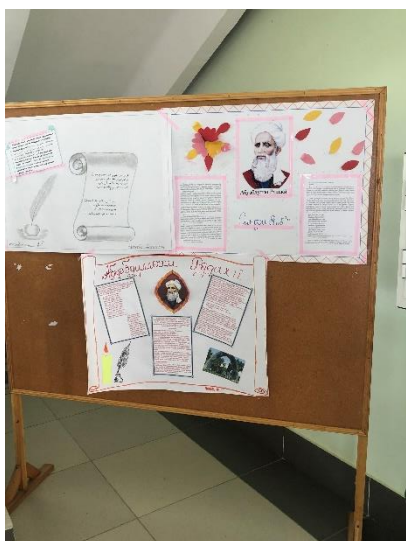
According to the plan of the State program of introduction of information and communication technologies in general education institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2018-2022, general education institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan (dated September 29, 2017, No. 443) need to purchase 52,017 computers within 5 years. The computer procurement plan for 2019 was 10,387 units, and in the first 9 months of 2019 3,378 units were purchased, representing 32.5%. Currently, 66,780 computers are used in educational institutions in cities and districts of the country.

According to the requirements of the State Program for the development of preschool and general secondary education for 2014-2020 (dated May 03, 2014, No. 295) within 5 years of its implementation (2014-2018 and 9 months of 2019) it was planned to create 331 private educational institutions. Unfortunately, it should be noted that today there are only 14 private educational institutions in the country (5 in Dushanbe, 1 in Khatlon, 1 in Sughd regions and 1 in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region), which makes up only 2% of the program.

In Dushanbe, the implementation of the Program is provided by 35.7%, in Sughd region by 8.3%, in Khatlon region by 1% and cities and districts of republican subordination by 1%.

Ensuring early development, physical and mental preparation of children for systematic cognitive activity based on the development and implementation of new generation programs and monitoring learning outcomes.

A significant step in changing the content of education was the modernization of the content of general education on the basis of the transition from a knowledge-based to a competency-based model of education.



This task is successfully performed. The transition is an integral part of the overall education content reforms. To implement the competence-based approach, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan has developed, tested and compiled a package of materials that includes standards for all subjects of primary education, textbooks for students in basic subjects of primary education and manuals for teachers. The transition to a new concept of the curriculum requires changes in other areas of the educational process, such as the system of formative assessment, the system of grading scales and the summative assessment of training. General academic and subject competencies are now recognized as learning outcomes.

For many years, the approach that reflects the practice of traditional school, where scientific knowledge was taken as the basis for the content of education, dominated the domestic pedagogical theory and practice.

The knowledge approach becomes narrow due to a significant increase in information, while it becomes more and more problematic to highlight the material to be studied, not to mention the possibility and motivation of students to master it. It is also necessary to take into account the fact that a feature of the knowledge model of education is its reproductive orientation (the transfer of “ready” knowledge from teacher to student).

One of the reasons for today's education reform in the country was the change of views on the goals, objectives and results of education. It has become important for us that educational institutions prepare specialists not only who know, but also know how to put their knowledge into practice. This is the essence of the competency-based approach.

School teachers realized that the main difference between a competency-based approach and a knowledge-based approach is its focus on students reflectively assessing their capabilities and impossibilities, and understanding

the boundaries of their competence. In the competency-based approach, the main value is not mastering the amount of knowledge that would allow them to define their goals, make decisions and act in typical and non-standard situations. The main idea of this approach is that the result of education is not individual knowledge, skills, but the person's ability and willingness to work effectively and productively in various situations.

In this regard, within the framework of the competence approach, the dominant idea is not just about "building up the volume" of knowledge, but about the acquisition of diverse experience. Despite the fact that the emphasis is still on memorizing the facts, but, at the same time, and on instilling skills of self-learning and self-solving problems, both independently and in a team.

It is gratifying to note that in all curricula introduced over the past 3 years, emphasis is placed on students, key competencies, the need to reflect new knowledge in the educational process with existing knowledge, with various subjects and further life situations.

Changes in the assessment system are a reflection of educational reform. A national system for assessing the quality of education has been created, which includes elements of an independent external assessment (licensing, certification, accreditation, rating, single national examination (SNE), interim state monitoring (ISM), comprehensive testing of applicants and others).

It was important to solve the problem of forming a worldview based on modern scientific ideas, principles of democracy and civil society.

In this regard, curricula and textbooks began to focus on the development of world perception and worldview of children. The formation of the worldview is determined primarily by the content of academic disciplines in educational institutions. Academic disciplines, giving students a range of knowledge, form a worldview based on the principles of democracy and civil society.

The issue of the formation of the entrepreneurial spirit, which proceeds from the National Education Development Strategy up to 2020, has not been ignored.

To perform this task, the discipline "Introduction to Economics" was introduced into the curricula of educational institutions in grades 10-11, which is aimed at forming an entrepreneurial spirit among young people.

Another, no less important task set in the Strategy up to 2020 is the development of healthy lifestyle skills. In order to implement this task, the Minister of education and science of the Republic of Tajikistan introduced mandatory educational hours on healthy lifestyle in grades 3-4 of educational institutions. Programs have been developed, a training manual has been published, approved by the board of the Ministry of Education and Science. Despite the fact that, within the framework of water sector issues, the indicators of access to drinking water and sanitation in educational institutions have improved, however, these issues have not been fully resolved and require the closest attention.

Along with the above, there is a need to take new steps to ensure that the education system of the Republic of Tajikistan meets the challenges of human capital development, bringing quality indicators of general education in line with international standards.

The question of improving the system for identifying, accounting, and social support for gifted and talented youth remains open. To eliminate this gap in order to identify and support talented youth, on the basis of the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated June 3, 2014 No. 353 was created Republican Talent Identification and Development Center, which implements the state program "About State Talent Identification and Development Program for 2015-2020." The program is aimed at identifying talents, developing talented, inventive youth, and is also designed to oversee the work of talent development centers in regions, cities and districts. The centers contribute to the identification of talented students and prepare them for republican and international competitions.

The created centers in cities and regions are equipped with computer rooms, educational and research laboratories.

The feasibility of organizing Center is undeniable. As evidenced by the following facts. If in 2011 the number of participants was 96 students, then in 2016 this number reached 133. Only during the first 9 months of 2019, students took part in 25 international Olympiads in Kazakhstan, Belarus, Thailand, Russia, Malaysia, Romania, Italy, India, Latvia, USA, Israel, Hungary, England, Uzbekistan, France, South Africa, Azerbaijan, etc.

It is impossible to ignore the centers of additional education in the Republic of Tajikistan, which are implemented in order to meet the needs of students. Educational institutions of additional education include:

- centers of creativity of children and adolescents;
- small academies of sciences;
- stations, clubs for children and adolescents;
- craft, art and music schools, as well as schools of painting;
- home, creative studios for children and adolescents, sports and tourist camps;
- children and youth sports schools, special children and youth schools, as well as children's sports grounds;
- physical education clubs and sports clubs at the place of residence;
- health facilities, schools of higher sportsmanship and centers of Olympic training;
- special primary art educational institutions.

The problem of children not enrolled in education and the process of dropping out students who have not included in the education system and do not attend school (stateless children, Afghans, Gypsies, etc.) are to be solved. To solve this problem was established working group by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan with purpose of creating intensive learning curriculum. This program was submitted for approval to the Ministry of Education and Science. Unfortunately, for various reasons, it has not been approved.

Attention should be paid to the issue of gender equality. There is a dropout of girls at the end of compulsory basic education. Among the reasons for dropping out of girls are early marriages and the need to help mothers at home and take care of younger family members. In rural areas, another reason for dropping out of girls along with the reasons already listed is also the problem of the distance between the house and the secondary school. There is no state-funded program of children's transportation to educational institutions by specialized buses. The distance from the school to the house in the mountainous area exceeds more than 3 km (small educational institutions).

Despite the fact that the issues of free hot meals for primary school children are solved, most of them do not have a dining room and a canteen, there are no gyms. Annually funds are allocated for catering for primary school students of the republic, which, of course, has a positive effect on increasing the school enrollment of children from low-income families. However, it should be noted that not enough attention is paid to the problems of equipping dining rooms with furniture and kitchen equipment (refrigerator, dishes, etc.).

Women remain vulnerable due to low levels of education, limited access to economic resources, misunderstandings of traditional family life and gender stereotypes: a girl must be trained for housekeeping and raising children. There is a need to develop a system of intersectoral coordination and cooperation at the national and local levels for the successful implementation of national programs to promote gender equality.

One of the problems is the equipment of offices. There is no data on equipping classrooms for teaching physics, chemistry, biology, languages (language laboratories).

The negative factors of secondary education are the outdated methodology and principles of selection of the

content of education. Information overload leads to a decrease in the motivation for learning and a deterioration in the health of students. Training is focused on obtaining formal results, not on personal development.

It is very important to determine the role of the teacher, which should consist of supporting the formation of the student as an individual, independently managing his/her educational activities, who will also cope with changes in the environment and take responsibility for his/her own development.

Despite the fact that a competency-based approach is being introduced in educational institutions, not all teachers understand the essence of this approach. And even teachers who took advanced training courses are not competent in this matter. Although there is no other way, because this transition is an integral part of the overall reforms of the content of education. To implement the competence-based approach, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan has developed, tested and compiled a package of materials that includes standards for all subjects of primary education, textbooks for students in basic subjects of primary education and manuals for teachers. The transition to a new concept of the curriculum requires changes in other areas of the educational process, such as the system of formative assessment, the system of grading scales and the summative assessment of training.

General academic and subject competencies are now recognized as learning outcomes.

For many years, the approach that reflects the practice of traditional school, where scientific knowledge was taken as the basis for the content of education, dominated the domestic pedagogical theory and practice.

Changing views on the goals, objectives and outcomes of education has become one of the reasons for today's modernization of education. A reflection of the socio-economic need of the state in training specialists not only who know, but also know how to apply their knowledge in practice, is the competency-based approach.

The transition from subject knowledge, abilities and skills as the main goal of training to the formation of general educational competencies of students entailed changes in the assessment system. With this model of education, the traditional "marking" system of assessment has a number of disadvantages:

- The generally accepted "marking" system performs the function of external monitoring of student success by the teacher and school;
- It does not provide a full opportunity for the student to develop independence in assessment;
- It makes it difficult to individualize learning. It is difficult for a teacher to fix and positively evaluate the real achievements of each specific child in comparison with the previous result of his/her education;
- It is uninformative. Due to its formality and secrecy of the criteria, the mark does not allow to determine the real level of knowledge; the most important thing is that it is impossible to determine the vector of further efforts, that is, what exactly needs to be improved, what to work on and to what extent;
- Often has a "traumatic" character. The "marking" system, completely concentrated in the teacher's hands, often turns out to be an instrument of manipulation and psychological pressure, which is directed, on the one hand, to the child, and, on the other hand, to the parents. Teacher feedback to students often serves social and managerial purposes rather than helping students improve learning outcomes;
- Among teachers, it is common practice to assess the volume and form of work performed, rather than the quality of the student's achievements;
- The emphasis is on comparing students with each other, which reduces the activity and motivation of underperforming students and does not allow full development of successful students.

It is gratifying to note the fact that teachers and the directors of the educational institutions began to play a major role in the implementation planned changes.

In society, the familiar image of a teacher and director of an educational institution should change. But wages are still low, and therefore, in most cases, teachers are overloaded, have a teaching load of 1.5 rates, and

sometimes 2 rates, which, of course, can affect the quality of training. Conversations with teachers led to the conclusion that the directors of educational institutions do not motivate teachers, so it is difficult for them to apply an individual approach to each student, as well as provide classroom guidance and work with parents and the public.

The use of information and communication technologies in education has expanded, the infrastructure of education as a whole is changing. At the same time, verification indicates that modern technologies in the educational process are applied on a limited scale, and in some cases the created systems are used little.

One of the tasks of the NSED up to 2020 was to support children with disabilities and integrate them into regular educational institutions. It should be noted that intensive work has been carried out over the past 3 years. A working group has been established at the Ministry of Education and Science, which is responsible for developing an action plan for the implementation of the Concept of inclusive education for 2020.

The further introduction of an inclusive approach is due to the need to improve the work in the field of education for people with special needs in psychophysical development, to expand the right to choose the forms of education, to create conditions that ensure equality of education for all categories of students, and to create tolerance in the education system and in society as a whole. Based on the medical and pedagogical commission, individual children with disabilities are integrated into educational institutions.

In 2018, in 52 specialized educational institutions for children with disabilities across Tajikistan, the majority of students with disabilities have a positive attitude towards education. Their classmates also expressed their willingness to support their peers with disabilities. 90% of teachers argued that every child with disabilities has the right to study in secondary educational institutions, and only 13% claimed that children with disabilities should attend special educational institutions.

In 2018-2019, 7,278 children with disabilities, of whom 2,957 girls, were educated in special classes (Source: EMIS MoES RT).

The study and implementation of advanced pedagogical experience in this direction is continuing, as evidenced by the international conferences “Inclusive Education: Problems, Searching for Solutions.”

The Department of Inclusive Education has opened at the State Pedagogical University, and the Resource Center is also successfully operating.

It is also planned to create a unified information system of education management and organization of conditions for education in the NSED up to 2020. In particular, it is planned to organize distance learning for students from hard-to-reach and remote areas. It is thought that this will be done at a later date.

It is also planned to organize non-formal education for young people who have not received the initial skills of reading, counting and writing accelerated learning. It should be noted that an accelerated learning program was developed, which was sent for consideration to the Ministry of Education and Science, but was never approved.

Work in educational institutions of national minorities living in Tajikistan should be strengthened. The lack of highly qualified personnel, educational and methodological material also affects the quality of education. School graduates have difficulty enrolling in higher education institutions (universities), as at the National Testing Center (NTC) under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan tests are provided only in the state and Russian languages. In school libraries, there is a lack of additional resources for reading in the state language and languages of national minorities, which also affects the ability of graduates to continue further education. It follows from the above that there is a lot of work to be done to ensure access to education, which is difficult due to insufficient growth in the number of educational institutions, poor quality of school infrastructure in the regions and relatively low qualifications of teachers, as well as insufficient access to improved sanitation and water supply in rural educational institutions and many others.

## 5.4 QUALITY OF EDUCATION - ASSESSMENT

The EU's Technical Assistance is supporting the organizational, institutional and human capacity development of the in-service training providers and their growth into resource centers that become the "spine" of a sustainable CPD system for the IVET professionals in Tajikistan. The assistance is provided in two dimensions building a "soft capacity" of the in-service training providers in a sense of their methodological and teaching capability to deliver quality professional development services. In addition, the Technical Assistance is providing support to the introduction of Quality Assurance systems for the selected training providers.

The draft national student assessment strategy being developed by QESP emphasising the important role classroom based assessment should play in assessment in Tajikistan. This approach to assessment goes beyond a focus on how students reproduce knowledge and apply basic skills and gives attention to the measuring of complex competencies. The broader approach to assessment involves the inclusion of assessments such as oral presentations, collaborative tasks, problem-solving assignments and portfolios. The main feature of this type of assessment is that they assess both knowledge and skills by asking students to perform a task rather than simply providing a correct answer to a test question. The extent of the capacity building required in relation to professional development for broadening the approach to assessment is recognised.

In line with the strategy and intensions for improving the progress of strengthening the assessment process the focus is in the classroom context, students need to be clear about what they are aiming to learn and what criteria is being used to assess their performance. In sharing the learning intentions and success criteria with students, teachers can involve them as active participants in the assessment process. This type of involvement will help students to develop their capabilities to reflect on their own learning and help them to become self-directed learners. Research has also shown that providing greater student ownership and involvement in the learning process is fundamental to improved learning outcomes. Substantial research evidence provided by Hattie (2009 and 2012) shows that one of the most effective ways of closing the achievement gap is to teach all students how to self-assess and provide them with plenty of feedback during the process.

The second dimension of QESP project support affects the "hard capacity" of the In-service training providers in a sense of their physical, material and technical capability to assure modern learning environment that follows the latest technological trends in selected professional fields. In this regards, the support is assisting realization of Supply Contract for EU funded delivery of modern teaching equipment that meets the requirements for effective teaching and learning process in specific VET fields and employment of modern industrial technologies in practical training.

The project is supporting the Government to fulfil its responsibility to create an appropriate environment for partnerships with the real economy sector by formulating terms that enable the stakeholders to actively involve and take responsibility in the IVET strategic development and improvement. Particular attention is given to building of sustainable mechanisms for partnership with businesses associations and private sector employers.

The QESP 1 is supporting the development of a National Learning Assessment System and providing guidance for implemented, in line with agreed quality standards and targeting selected educational stages, by the National Testing Centre. The QESP 1 is guiding and supporting the MoES in the definition and development of a policy framework for learning assessment leading to the actual implementation of the first national assessment in general education in Tajikistan. The MoES is supported to define the 'substance' of the process, i.e. what is to be tested, how and when, ideally through a working group or task force. The policy framework will also provide clear roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders at all levels involved.

The WB/READ-2 and the USAID funded "Read with Me" (RWM) projects is working on assessment in primary grades based on CBE including Student Assessment SABER (WB/READ2). This project has shown good progress in early grades. An assessment done in 2018 has given good support to the future planning and efforts

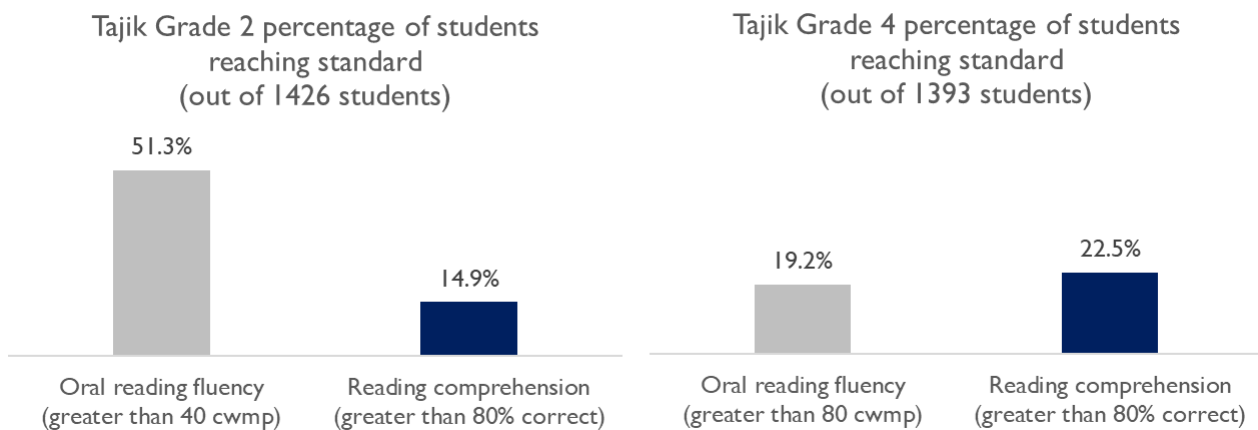
of having a new strategy prepared for 2020-2030.

The baseline assessment<sup>35</sup> was carried out with data collected electronically on tablets from 287 educational institutions (217 Tajik language and 70 Russian language educational institutions) and assessed students from Grade 2 and 4.

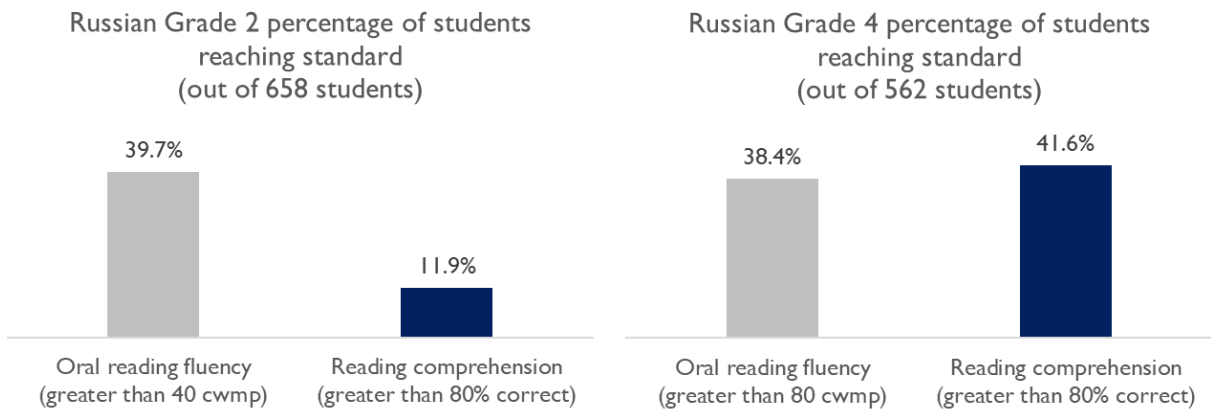
The baseline data collection identifies reading performance before direct implementation of the Read with Me project in the sampled educational institutions. The results are representative on a national basis, with disaggregation by language of instruction, region, location (urban/rural) and gender.

The main findings in this assessment are:

### Percentage of Students Reaching Reading Proficiency Standards by Grade in 2018, Russian



### Percentage of Students Reaching Reading Proficiency Standards by Grade in 2018, Russian



**“Grade 2, Russian, percentage of students who have reached standard (out of 658 students)**

**The report gives recommendations for further activities to support the positive development.**

<sup>35</sup> Early Grade Reading Assessment Baseline 2018 Results USAID Read with Me Project in Tajikistan (extract of the report)



Targeted reading interventions are needed to help improve reading comprehension for students across both languages and grades.

- RWM's intervention is focusing on developing teachers' understanding of how to build student's reading comprehension skills.
- RWM's training and mentoring content include strategies that focus on: vocabulary, comprehension, and overall exposure to a variety of types of narratives.

Basic skills are still weak for some students. Teachers should identify these students and reinforce basic skills that these students may not have learned proficiently earlier in their schooling.

### **Teacher training and local focus**

Teacher training should be mindful of the difference in reading outcomes between boys and girls and provide strategies to narrow this gap. RWM training includes classroom management strategies to ensure all students participate actively in lessons.

Provide extra support to teachers and educational institutions in rural areas especially in the DRS, Khatlon-Bokhtar, Khatlon-Kulob, and Sogd. RWM is considering how to target rural educational institutions in lower performing regions through mentoring and strengthening out of school and family reading activities.

Educational institutions should do more to foster a culture of reading among students and do everything possible to ensure that books are available for students to practice reading at home. This baseline data demonstrated that having books at home improved oral reading fluency rates by six words per minute in Tajik, Grade 2 and by twelve words per minute in Tajik, Grade 4. Educational institutions should:

- Provide opportunities for students to bring books home
- Promote opportunities for students to read outside of school

### **The National Testing Centre**

As an initiative to strengthen the quality of education as intended in the NSED the President of the Republic of Tajikistan in 2014 issued a decree to establish a National Testing Centre<sup>36</sup> to ensure a transparent and fair evaluation of knowledge of prospective students, equal rights for entering the educational institutions of higher professional education of the Republic of Tajikistan and to conduct researches and evaluation of knowledge level of prospective students from educational institutions of primary, general basic and general secondary education by means of testing.

The core objectives of the Centre were defined to organize and carry out of centralized admission examination to enter educational institutions of higher professional education and allocation of enrolees into educational institutions of higher professional education in reliance on exam results; The National Testing Centre also had the responsibility of monitoring and quality assessment of education and involvement in international programs oriented to evaluation of students' knowledge.

### **National education quality assessment systems as a context for the development of teachers' assessment competency in Tajikistan.**

The national education quality assessment system in the Republic of Tajikistan consists of the followings: The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, the State Supervision Service in the Sphere of Education, the National Testing Center under the President of Tajikistan, the Academy of Education of Tajikistan. There are control and supervisory government bodies dealing with the issues of certification,

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<sup>36</sup> DECREE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN On establishment of the National Testing Center under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan

accreditation and control over the implementation of national legislation in the field of education in the country. This contributes to the spread of international quality standards of pedagogical measurements, the formation of a culture of monitoring studies, affects the formation of teachers' assessment competence.

It is planned to develop and implement regular refresher courses for personnel involved in the organization and conduct of assessment procedures in the Republic of Tajikistan. The development of tools and procedures for national monitoring studies was carried out within the framework of the World Bank projects with the involvement of foreign organizations. In the country, final and entrance exams are not combined. – International organizations and individual experts are involved in training specialists of the national education quality assessment system.

According to analysts, there are not enough personnel in this area in the country, which naturally affects the conduct of appropriate training of teachers in the field of assessment activities.

The forms of examinations used are quite diverse: essay, dictation, examinations, tests and oral examinations on tickets, and examinations are supervised by specialists from educational authorities. The development of examination materials is within the competence of the Republican Educational and Methodical Center of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan.

In the country, a centralized entrance exam was held for the first time only in 2014 thanks to participation in the Russia Education Aid for Development (READ) project.

The most important strategic task of formation of systems of an assessment of quality of education in Tajikistan is the formation of personnel potential at several levels:

- Qualified experts in the field of pedagogical measurements (development of tests, mathematical processing of test results, implementation of evaluation programs, etc.);
- Teachers who have the technology of formative assessment for teaching, capable of ensuring the formation of assessment independence of students.

Therefore, it is necessary to ensure mass training of teachers for the development of a new approach to assessment, the development of its assessment competence. This, in turn, requires the development of appropriate training programs, their methodological support, including the use of electronic and distance learning.

Self-diagnoses plays an important role in the development of assessment competence, since an analysis of teachers' difficulties indicates a poor knowledge of the analysis and assessment of the quality of the results, including the results of their own professional activities.

Until now, teachers are strongly focused on the use of traditional forms of assessing the results of educational activities of students. In addition, a significant drawback of the traditional control and assessment activities of teachers is that the results are poorly used to improve the educational process.

It is necessary to actualize the most important function of the teacher's pedagogical activity, that is, the use of monitoring and evaluation of educational achievements for the analysis, interpretation and subsequent adjustment of the educational process, thereby strengthening the formative capabilities of the assessment activity.

In this regard, it is necessary to plan the development of a training program for teachers and “develop the teacher's assessment competence”, which would take into account the variety of professional tasks within which assessment competencies would be demanded: educational activities carried out by the teacher, methodological work, expert and managerial activities. A mandatory requirement for the organization of the development of the program should be the participation of the teacher himself in the choice of forms, criteria and directions of

assessment and self-esteem.

Assessment in the framework of the program should primarily be aimed at increasing the level of assessment competence of the teacher by identifying and eliminating problems associated with direct assessment activities in the framework of professional duties.

## **5.5 ELABORATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The positive reported development in the Tajik educational institutions should still be strengthened and shall focus on provision of additional reading qualifications in the state language at all levels. The Curriculum Framework must reflect key competencies expected for the Tajik education system. There is a need to strengthen the assessment system both at grade level and after completion of primary and secondary education. A standardized national assessment of learning outcomes and minimal participation in international assessments of learning outcomes is a priority.

Training materials: There is still a need to develop new quality teaching resources and alternative textbooks and teaching equipment in school laboratories. The positive development with inclusive education and teaching of students with disabilities has to be continued.

## 6. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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### 6.1 ASSESSMENT OF THE PLANNED ACTIVITIES

The education system has a major challenge to ensure an adequate supply of trained workers to meet the requirements of both overseas and domestic labour markets. This responsibility falls on the country's education and training system, more specifically the TVET system, which over the last decade has faced many challenges to meet expectations.



The TVET system faces major constraints including the need for a revision of curriculum and learning materials, obsolete and inadequate equipment base, dilapidated school buildings and unmaintained and damaged dormitories, low paid teachers and masters advanced in years with little staff development and succession planning, little or no linkages with industries, absence of modern approaches to school management, weak coordination between various agencies, and continuing underinvestment in TVET in general.

While a large number of graduates are finishing vocational education each year, the concern in the sector is that there is a need to have a higher focus on modern skills and qualifications relevant to the labour market demands. In the Global Competitiveness Report,<sup>37</sup> there is a focus on "inadequately educated workforce" raising the issue that this is among the most problematic factors in doing business, reducing Tajikistan's competitiveness and acting as binding constraints to economic growth.

Tajikistan's network of TVET providers comprises mainly public institutions including: (i) 72 secondary vocational education educational institutions (technical colleges) under the Ministry of Education (MOE);<sup>38</sup> and (ii) 61 primary vocational education educational institutions (lyceums) and 25 adult learning centers with branches in the districts under the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment (MoLME). The Adult Training Center of Tajikistan<sup>39</sup> (ATCT) in Dushanbe serves as the model and as a central resource center. In addition, the State Service for Education Supervision provides on-demand licenses for newly proposed specialties, as well as indication of the maximum number of students to be trained.

Since 2014 vocational education educational institutions or so called Professional Technical Lyceums (PTL) were transferred from Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Labour (Decision of the Government of Tajikistan, № 146, March 03, 2014).

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<sup>37</sup> The Global Competitiveness Report 2018.

<sup>38</sup> Since 2014 vocational education educational institutions or so called Professional Technical Lyceums (PTL) were transferred from Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Labour (Decision of the Government of Tajikistan, № 146, March 03, 2014).

<sup>39</sup> The Adult Training Center of Tajikistan (ATCT) was founded in 2008 under the Agency of Social Protection, Employment of Population, MLME (Decree of Government of the Republic of Tajikistan № 115, March 5, 2008).

In the reporting period, enrolment in primary TVET decreased from 24,176 students in 2017 to 23,385 students in 2018. Share of women decreased from 23.2% to 22.7%.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, enrolment in secondary TVET during the same period increased by 6.4% from 80,432 students in 2017 to 85,579 students in 2018. The share of women increased in the period from 61.8% in 2017 to 63.6% in 2018. But this cannot hide the fact that enrolment in TVET has been historically low. Generally, primary vocational education has the lowest coverage of secondary school graduates than other levels of professional education in the country. This is partly explained by: (i) limited absorptive capacity of the TVET system because of chronic underfunding and obsolete infrastructure and (ii) minimal role played by TVET in responding to growing market demand.



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In 2018, about 54% of the total enrolment was in “health, physical education, and sport”, followed by pedagogy. Enrolment in “industry and construction” decreased from 14.3% in 2017 to 13.4% in 2018. (EMIS, 2019).

According to Annex 1 (2017 update),<sup>41</sup> the TVET system faces major constraints including outdated curriculum and learning materials, dilapidated school buildings and, low paid teachers were amongst the few issues challenges to the TVET system. Though a large number of graduates are produced each year, they lack modern skills and qualifications relevant to the labour market demands.

From available data it appears that the number of teaching personnel increased both in primary and secondary vocational education and training, between 2017 and 2018.<sup>42</sup> However, for secondary vocational education and training, EMIS statistics do not provide any information on teachers’ qualifications, length of experience, and educational attainment. Teacher remuneration for TVET is generally not market-competitive.

As a partner the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan has established cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) on a wide range of issues, including: strengthening capacities of tripartite constituents to address priority labour issues, reform wage systems and wage policies through social dialogue; elimination of the worst forms of child labour; formalization of informal economy.

Since 2007, the ILO’s projects and activities in Tajikistan have been conducted within the framework of the Decent Work Country Programmes. In June 2015, the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Union of Employers, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions and the ILO signed a Decent Work Country Programme for 2015-2017. The Programme was based on the national priorities of the Republic of Tajikistan in the field of labour market, employment and social protection and aimed at the sustainable socio-economic development of the country, through regulation of labour relations in line with international labour standards, stimulation of productive employment, insurance of social protection of population and strengthening social dialogue.

<sup>40</sup> Table 17: annex 1 indicators in primary vocational education, 2010-2017.

<sup>41</sup> Annex 1 Table # ???

<sup>42</sup> Annex 1 TABLE 19: TEACHERS IN PRIMARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, 2010-2017.

The QESP 2 financed by the European Union, “Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of Population in the area of in-service teacher training for the initial TVET system” is provided to the beneficiary Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of population (MoLME). The project started on the 1st February 2017 and will last until 31 July 2020 with overall duration of 42 months. The project is implemented for a direct Beneficiary - the IVET Department at MoLME in close cooperation with the VET department at MoES. The project is realizing in close cooperation with other on-going donors’ activities in VET sector in Tajikistan.

A key project intervention is the support to institutionalization of the system developments in light of the recent changes in the Regulatory Framework of initial TVET. The project has to bring a new perspective to the current VET governance mechanisms by embedding the organizational changes into the Regulatory Framework for IVET.

The agreed Action Plan for the optimization of the IVET/VET legal base is implementing in close collaboration with experts and representatives of the Tajik official authorities empowered for adoption of the new regulations in the field of education. For this purpose, a Specialized Working Group on the regulatory framework in IVET and AE was established for justification the developed and proposed statutory instruments amending the existing framework on IVET and AE. Its scope of work is determined to discuss and validate through a consultation process, and prepare the final proposals for changes and amendments to the IVET RF. Analysis and optimization of the IVET Regulatory Framework is implementing as a transversal activity, which will affect all project components.

Continuous professional development of teachers is highly relevant both, for improving educational performance and effectiveness and for enhancing teachers’ commitment, identity and job satisfaction. A Teacher Competence Framework (TCF) is developing by the project upon comprehensive review of initial VET In-service teacher and management training (INSET TT) as a focal point for design and implementation of CPD system for the IVET professionals.

Competent performance of IVET professionals is necessary if the IVET schools in Tajikistan want to create a high-quality learning environment for their students that will equip them with knowledge, skills and attitudes to cope with the changing world and new demands of the labor market. The TCF is intended to support the government and respective institutions in dealing with the challenge of preparing IVET teachers, masters and IVET managers in a changing world so that they can in turn equip the next generation of young people with the skills and ability to continue learning throughout their working lives. The TCF draws from research- based international sources while also taking into consideration the needs of the Tajik IVET professionals and the current functioning of the IVET providers. It is grounded in the educational culture of Tajikistan, and based on the philosophy of teaching, shared by a representative sample of IVET professionals from across Tajikistan, namely, that the purpose of teaching is to facilitate students’ inquiry- based learning, and that students are capable of and should be allowed to solve problems by themselves. This philosophy calls for a transformation of schools into places where all learners are valued and nurtured, and where learning is activity-based and student centered. As such, it is aligned with the current international pedagogical trends that emphasize learner understanding over traditional memorization, and the necessity for schools to provide a support to their students’ development of important skills such as problem-solving, understanding how things are connected, critical thinking, and learner autonomy.

The EU’s Technical Assistance is supporting the organizational, institutional and human capacity development of these in-service training providers and their growth into resource centers that become the “spine” of a sustainable CPD system for the IVET professionals in Tajikistan. The assistance is provided in two dimensions building a “soft capacity” of the in-service training providers in a sense of their methodological and teaching capability to deliver quality professional development services. In addition, the Technical Assistance is providing support to the introduction of Quality Assurance systems for the selected training providers. The

second dimension of project support will affect the “hard capacity” of the In-service training providers in a sense of their physical, material and technical capability to assure modern learning environment that follows the latest technological trends in selected professional fields. In this regards, project is assisting realization of Supply Contract for EU funded delivery of modern teaching equipment that meets the requirements for effective teaching and learning process in specific VET fields and employment of modern industrial technologies in practical training.

The project is supporting the Government to fulfil its responsibility to create an appropriate environment for partnerships with the real economy sector by formulating terms that enable the stakeholders to actively involve and take responsibility in the IVET strategic development and improvement. Particular attention is given to building of sustainable mechanisms for partnership with businesses associations and private sector employers.

### 6.1.1 REGIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS.

#### Input from Regional aspects based on reporting from Facilitators of working groups for NSED 2020 - 2030.

##### 1. Are the activities carried out in line with the education sector in Tajikistan?

- To what extent do the activities carried out in the MTAP 2017 - 2020 meet the requirements?
- Are the activities in line with the objectives set out in the National Strategy of Education Development and Action Plan 2012-2020 and other relevant strategic documents? What contribution do events make to the development of the Tajik community?



The National Strategy of Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan up to 2020 is aimed at updating the education system so that it can fully fulfill the mission of a key resource for the welfare of society and citizens, as well as effectively respond to the challenges of the economy of a developing country and the processes of globalization. The main objective of the National strategy is to create conditions for ensuring effective and efficient provision of educational services and access to appropriate quality education for all.<sup>43</sup>

In connection with this goal, within the framework of the priorities identified by the National strategy, including i) modernization of the content of education; ii) structural changes in the education system; iii) ensuring the availability of quality education, in 2018 focused work was continued to achieve the objectives of primary and secondary vocational education for 2012-2020 through the implementation of the following measures (Table 1):

**Table 1: Planned measures and status of their implementation.**

Planned measures	Execution status by year				Responsible bodies
	2017 (base)	2018 (fact)	2019 (expected result)	2020 (plan)	
Goal 1. Ensuring the quality of vocational education so that graduates of lyceums and colleges are in demand in the labor market and the prestige of the PVE and SVE professions is increased					
<i>PR 1.1. The content of PVE and SVE is aligned with the needs of the labour market</i>					

<sup>43</sup> NSED up to 2020, p. 1



Analysis of the existing State classifier of professions taking into account the current state of the external and internal labor market and taking into account the needs of the sectors of the economy and prospects for economic development of the Republic of Tajikistan for PVE	None	None	Analytical report is prepared <sup>44</sup>		MLME RT/European Union Project/
Develop and approve competency standards, curricula and teaching materials for primary vocational education	None	None	Competence standards for 17 professions has been developed <sup>45</sup>		MES RT/ Asian Development Bank Project "Strengthening vocational education and training»
Develop and pilot a mechanism for continuous interaction between employers and the PVE system	None	None	Seminars and trainings with participation of employers are organized Industry advisory committees have been established in 21 lyceums. They are equipped with modern equipment	The mechanism will be approved and piloted	MLME RT/European Union Project
Develop and approve professional standards of SVE taking into account introduction of credit system of education	82	86	112	156	MES RT
<i>PR 1.2: The personnel potential of PVE and SVE educational institutions has been strengthened</i>					
Develop and implement programs of continuous professional development for engineering and technical personnel (ETP)	Situational analysis and needs assessment of teachers	An analytical report has been prepared and approved. Teacher Competencies Frameworks for 18 pilot professions has been developed	The competence matrix is developed. Syllabuses have been prepared for 90 programs to improve the skills of teachers. Of the 90 syllabuses, 30 will be piloted in 8 established resource centers for training teachers on	Piloting programs, by cascade method. Trainers are trained abroad, then trainings will be organized for ETP on the basis of resource centers	MLME RT/European Union Project

<sup>44</sup> The main conclusion of the analytical report is to revise the existing and develop a single classifier of professions, specialties or to prepare a coherent, orderly table of existing classifiers taking into account the International classification of education, which will allow organizing mobility and understanding of qualifications at the international level

<sup>45</sup> Competence standards are developed for IVE, but

			the basis of existing lyceums (1 in Konibodom, in Khujand, Dahana village (Kulob), 3 in Dushanbe, in Levakand and in Vahdat) <sup>46</sup>		
Prepare and retrain engineering and technical personnel of PVE and SVE system	Situational analysis of training needs	Concept paper for the preparation of ETP	Methodological support was created and the process of piloting training began	Large scale training of ETP 1670	MLME RT/European Union Project
Train and retrain management personnel of the PVE system	Situational analysis of training needs	Concept paper for the preparation of ETP	Methodological support was created and the process of piloting training began	130 managers (Director, Deputy Director, methodologist, Resource center and Training center of MLME RT) Additional training of Directors of 8 Resource centers in Belarus. The performance indicators of the PVE system have been developed and approved by MLME RT	MLME RT/European Union Project
Develop and implement a personnel management system for PVE based on the results.	The regulatory framework has been studied	A concept paper has been prepared	Tools for personnel evaluation based on results are being developed	Piloting mechanism of personnel evaluation system will be used as a personnel management tool	MLME RT/European Union Project
Organize training seminars for senior management of SVE on credit training system.	None	Three seminars were held with the involvement of experts from	One seminars was held with the involvement of experts from	2 seminars will be organized	MES RT

<sup>46</sup> Reports of the European Union Project "Technical assistance to MOLME RT in the field of teacher development in primary vocational education and training", www.qesp.tj

		universities of the country	universities of the country		
Retrain production workers of new methodology of training	None	None	A labor market study was conducted to identify employers' expectations from graduates and to determine the teacher profile from their point of view. An analytical report has been prepared on building the employer's potential for their direct participation in the educational process of PVE institutions.	Training the employer, increasing his expertise potential for participating in the development of the NQF, the content of educational programs, etc. developing competencies of graduates, etc.	
<i>PR 1.3: A normative and methodological basis for assessing the quality of primary vocational education has been developed</i>					
Situational analysis in the context of the current legal framework		A new Law on primary vocational education has been developed and proposed for approval	A national qualification framework for primary vocational education and training has been developed.  A competency standard for 17 PVE professions has been developed.  Methodology of training on the basis of competences has been developed		MLME RT/European Union Project/ADB
Develop the Concept of independent assessment of the quality of vocational education	None	None	None		MLME RT/ADB Project
Develop modern tools for assessing the quality of PVE, with the inclusion of an indicator on the employment of graduates	None	None	None		MLME RT/ADB Project
Pilot and implement internal quality management system (QMS) and computer program of quality management system	None	None	A guide has been developed for the implementation of an internal quality management system,	Pilot in 8 resource centers of continuous professional development and	MLME RT/European Union Project

			which is based on ISO 9000, ISO 1724 and European practice.	then in all lyceums. Training managers and holding a national conference	
Goal 2: By 2020, increase the equality of access to primary and secondary vocational and additional education for adults, including for vulnerable groups					
<i>PR 2.1 Gender balance of PVE and SVE is improved</i>					
Analysis of the needs of girls and women in a particular profession	None	None	None		MES RT
Develop and implement gender-oriented educational programs of PVE so that they are attractive to girls and women.	None	A model gender-oriented educational program has been developed.	557 women were trained under the model program in 9 specialties. Currently, 407 women have been enrolled in training, and applications have been received from 171 women who wish to continue their education.		MLME RT/ADB Project
Improve living conditions in dormitories for girls		Renovations are underway in 12 lyceums, including dormitories	Renovations in progress		MES RT/European Union Project
<i>PR 2.2. Conditions have been created to expand the admission of persons with special educational needs</i>					
Opening of new specialties (primary school teacher and ICT) for PWD in the Technical and Pedagogical College of Rudaki district and in the Republican art College named after Buydokov			12 girls were admitted in SVE and 80 in PVE		MES RT
Develop and implement inclusive programs taking into account the CBE		Inclusive programs have been developed taking into account the CBE			ADB
<i>PR 2.3. Access to additional education, including for PWD is improved</i>					
Create a resource and practical center for social work and rehabilitation			1 national and 4 regional centers have been established		ADB
Situational analysis to study the needs of young people with disabilities (PWD) in Dushanbe, Panjakent and Rasht. Development of a pocket guide for PWD on their rights to work		A situation analysis was conducted and an inclusive program was developed			ADB

Train on short-term trainings of persons from category of vulnerable groups of the population (PWD, people kept in correctional facilities).		The program is developed			
<i>PR 2.4. The infrastructure of vocational education in rural areas has been improved</i>					
Create training and production workshops for teaching various professions on the basis of correctional institutions in Norak and Yovon	No information				
Create resource centers (RCs) and industry advisory committees (IACs) and teacher retraining centers at PVE		4 resource centers on the basis of PVE educational institutions and adult education in the TAEC			MLME RT/European Union Projects/ADB
Improve the material and technical base of PVE and SVE educational institutions, taking into account the needs of PWD		12 lyceums are covered by renovation works			MLME RT/ADB
<i>PR 2.5. The prestige and attractiveness of PVE and SVE professions has been increased</i>					
Carry out annual information and explanatory work among graduates of educational institutions		A video has been prepared.	Broadcast of the video on television.	Preparation of videos on pilot professions	MLME RT/ADB/European UNION
Carry out information and explanatory work for parents of graduates		Preparation of booklets and their distribution during advertising works	Preparation of booklets and their distribution during advertising works		MLME RT/ADB
Organize regular meetings of PVE and SVE students with employers	No information				MLME RT/ADB



The planned measures being implemented by the MES RT, MLME RT together with development partners (European Union, ADB) within the framework of the MTAP 2020 are aimed, first of all, at improving the quality of primary and secondary vocational education by improving professional and educational programs that form the competences of graduates that contribute to their further employment in the internal and external labor market; advanced training of teachers and technical training staff who are able to use ICT in the educational process, training students to work with modern equipment;

creation of a system of continuous professional development of engineering and technical personnel (ETP); improving the material and technical base, including infrastructure, creating equal opportunities for people with disabilities; increasing the prestige of working professions and mid-level professionals among young people, including girls.

In addition, the development of social partnership can be coincide with one of the important planned measures, with the development of a mechanism of interaction between employers and educational institutions of primary and secondary vocational education on an ongoing basis, which will allow to form a high-quality contingent of students, improve the educational process, increase space for practical training and internships and increase the level of employment of graduates.

Thus, the measures being implemented are aimed at strengthening the potential of primary and secondary vocational education, which should provide affordable and mass vocational education aimed at training competent workers and middle-level specialists for the country's economy.

**Consistency:**

- To what extent are the activities specified in the NSED and the Action Plan up to 2020 logical and interrelated?

An analysis of the comparison of the planned measures within the framework of the NSED 2020 and the MTAP 2020 showed that they are generally agreed, logical and aimed at achieving the main goal of the NSED 2020. Of the 22 planned measures in the National strategy, 4 measures were partially not reflected in the MTAP 2020 (Table 2).

Table 2. Activities of the NSED 2020, which are not reflected in the MTAP 2020.

No.	Planned activities of the NSED 2020	Results
1	Analysis of the possibility of introducing distance learning programs of PVE and SVE	Although there is no analysis about the possibility of introducing distance learning programs for PVE and SVE, in the STR system the Pedagogical College named after H. Makhsumova and TSPU named after S. Ayni are at the stage of transition of all specialties to distance learning and are currently piloting distance learning in 8 specialties
2	Development of a national action plan for vocational education of people with special needs.	The national plan is not included in the MTAP-2020, however, other measures were planned to cover the PWD with the VET and SVE system
3	Creation of an interdepartmental expert group to develop a concept and create a structure for the development of professional standards for various sectors of the economy.	The activity is not included and not completed.
4	Formation of principles, techniques for the development of professional standards in the sectors of the economy of the Republic of Tajikistan.	The activity is not included and not completed.

In addition, there is, in part, a mismatch of some tasks, activities and expected results in the NSED 2020. For example, the expected result - "An external assessment system for educational results - certification of professional qualifications has been introduced" - is included in the NSED 2020, but no measures are planned to achieve this goal. But this measure is included in the MTAP-2020. Also, in order to achieve the fourth

expected result - "A state order for training personnel has been introduced as a way of state regulation of the market and labor" no activities are planned in the NSED 2020 and the MTAP 2020.

In addition, the analysis of the National Education Development Strategy up to 2020 allows us to highlight a number of gaps:

- due attention has not been paid to the development of the National qualification framework as a framework for the harmonization of professional and educational standards;
- due attention has not been paid to the harmonization of classifiers of PVE and SVE professions with the international standard classification of education;
- measures to create appropriate tools for assessing the effectiveness and quality of education are not reflected;
- creation of the structure responsible for diagnostics of efficiency of interaction of the educational market and the labor market, creation of information system of research of the labor market were not duly understood.

**Effectiveness:**

- At what stage is the implementation of activities, what activities have been initiated and at what stage is their implementation?
- What preliminary results have been achieved?
- Are there any obstacles or potential barriers to implementation of activities and what needs to be done to address them?
- Have the measures and instruments taken achieved the expected effect?

The implementation of the planned measures within the framework of the MTAP 2017-2020 were aimed at achieving the following expected results of the National Education Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan up to 2020:

1. *An effective network of training of workers and middle managers has been formed in accordance with the forecast of the needs of the internal and external labor market and the educational needs of the population*

In order to improve the status of PVE and SVE educational institutions, new types of educational institutions have been formed in the country: technical and vocational educational institutions were transformed into vocational lyceums, and technical educational institutions and colleges into colleges, whose activities are regulated by the Model Regulations and the State Standard.<sup>47</sup>

According to the EMIS under the Ministry of education and science of the Republic of Tajikistan, in the 2018-2019 academic year, there were 61 PVE educational institutions, in which 23,385 students studied and 2,508 teachers and masters of industrial training worked. There were 85,579 students in the 72 operating SVE educational institutions (56 public and 16 private colleges), while the educational process in the SVE institutions was provided by 5,775 teachers.

In the 2018-2019 academic year, out of 61 functioning PVE educational institutions, 22 and 17 operated in Sughd and Khatlon regions, covering 32% and 26% of students respectively. 26.5% of students were in 11 educational institutions located in Dushanbe. The remaining 15.6% are distributed between one educational

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<sup>47</sup> Model Regulations of the primary vocational education institution of the Republic of Tajikistan dated May 28, 2009, No. 300; State standard of IVE dated August 2, 2010, No. 388; Model Regulations of the SVE institution



institution in GBAO, and 10 in RRS. On average, there are 383 students per PVE educational institution with a small difference in the regional context.

72 educational institutions of the SVE<sup>48</sup> system are located in the country as follows: 1 educational institution operates in GBAO, 21 in Khatlon region, 21 in Sughd region, 13 in Dushanbe and 16 in RRS. On average, there are 1,189 students per SVE educational institution in the country, with the exception of GBAO, where there was 1 college with 302 students.

In order to increase access to educational services, 6 vocational technical lyceums have been transformed into colleges, as well as 2 public and 16 private colleges have received a license to conduct educational activities. Starting in 2016, those who wish to enroll in the SVE institutions and become mid-level specialists must successfully pass entrance exams at the National Testing Center under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

### ***2. New educational standards based on professional standards and competence-based approach were developed and introduced***

In 2016, the State standard of secondary vocational education and the State classifier of areas and specialties of secondary vocational education in the Republic of Tajikistan were approved.<sup>49</sup> In addition, 112 items of state educational standards of secondary vocational education based on the competency-based approach were approved by the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan in the field of pedagogy, engineering, energy, economics and technology.

### ***3. Modular and integrated multilevel educational programs, including adult education, have been introduced***

Within the framework of the GIZ project, seminars and trainings on the development of modules on management and entrepreneurship for heads of PVE and employees of MLME RT and MES RT were held. Due to the workload of the PVE and SVE curricula, the inclusion of these academic disciplines has been suspended until the revision of existing curricula.

Joint Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Minister of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan “On the opening of short-term courses and the coverage of labor migrants by vocational training based on PVE” dated July 25, 2012 No. 221. The Rules for admission of students to short-term courses for employment training in the Republic of Tajikistan were approved (Decision of the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan dated August 29, 2012, No. 13/6).

### ***4. A state order for training personnel has been introduced as a way of state regulation of the labor market***

There are no planned activities in the NSED 2020 and MTAP 2020. In the 2018-2019 academic year, 84% of students in the PVE system studied in budget groups, while in the SVE system this indicator is slightly more than two times less and amounted to only 35.6%.

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<sup>48</sup> This number of SVE educational institutions was received from the MoES.

<sup>49</sup> Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated October 1, 2016, No. 418.

**5. *A system of external evaluation of educational results - certification of professional qualifications has been introduced***

The NSED 2020 and the MTAP - 2020 do not include measures for the system of external evaluation of the learning outcomes of PVE and SVE educational institutions.

**6. *There is a National Advisory Council for the development of vocational education***

The Coordinating Council for Vocational Education in the Republic of Tajikistan has been established.<sup>50</sup> According to the approved Regulation<sup>51</sup>, the Coordinating Council for Vocational Education in the Republic of Tajikistan is an advisory body providing coordination and support for the development of the vocational education system, its orientation to the needs of the labor market, as well as effective interaction of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan with ministries, departments, local executive authorities, employers and public organizations for the implementation of state policy in the field of vocational education, and operates under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.

**7. *A network of multi-profile and multi-level educational institutions and training centers has been formed, providing mass career acquisition, profession change and professional development within one profession, including short-term courses***

Currently, there is an active improvement of the network of vocational education institutions, where the creation of multi-level educational institutions is very significant. Thus, on the basis of Article 18 of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan “On Education”, primary vocational education (IVE) departments have been created on the basis of **11** secondary vocational educational institutions that provide training in **16** specialties. In addition, **9** colleges, as structural units of higher educational institutions (universities), are training mid-level specialists.

The scale of training, retraining and professional development of the adult population is increasing every year. In the Republic of Tajikistan, there are **25** adult education centers with branches and representative offices in the districts under the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan. The adult education centres provide short-term training courses for individuals of working age, with approximately 50,000 participants enrolled each year.

Since 2016, in the Republic of Tajikistan there are 4 professional training centers with modern material and technical base, training in 15 working professions (in Norak at the Tajik State Pedagogical University named after S. Ayni, in Muminabad district at the Kulob State University named after A. Rudaki, in Khuroson district at the Bokhtar State University named after N.Khusrav and in Rasht district at the Tajik Pedagogical Institute).<sup>52</sup>

8 resource centers equipped with modern equipment have been established on the basis of vocational lyceums (two in Sughd region, two in Khatlon region, 3 in Dushanbe, and 1 in Vahdat city).<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated October 14, 2014, No. 640.

<sup>51</sup> Regulation on the Coordinating Council for Vocational Education in the Republic of Tajikistan dated October 14, 2014 No. 640.

<sup>52</sup> Training centers of vocational education were established on the basis of the Order of the Minister of education and science of the Republic of Tajikistan dated February 3, 2016 No. 43 for the purpose of training citizens and returned labor migrants.

<sup>53</sup> Reports of the European Union Project "Technical assistance to MOLME RT in the field of teacher development in primary vocational education and training", [www.qesp.tj](http://www.qesp.tj).

A national resource center and 4 regional resource centers (in Shahrinav district, Bokhtar, Kulob and Khujand cities) have been established.<sup>54</sup>

#### ***8. Various forms of social partnership are used to ensure the participation of the real sector of the economy in training***

A labor market study was conducted to identify employers' expectations from graduates of PVE educational institutions and to determine the teacher profile from their point of view. An analytical report and recommendations has been prepared on building the employer's potential for their direct participation in the educational process of PVE institutions.

Together with employers (187 employers took part), ministries and departments functional maps for 17 professions have been prepared. 425 specialists from 85 operating enterprises conducted an examination of functional cards in 17 professions.

130 seminars, trainings and round tables were held jointly with employers, in which 4 290 people took part, of which 1,501 people were women.<sup>55</sup>

#### ***9. IC technologies are actively used in the educational process and management***

According to the EMIS MES RT data for 2018-2019 academic year, there were 3,398 computers in the PVE system and 4,260 in the SVE system, of which 1,318 and 2,496 in computer classes, respectively. On average, there were 14 and 3 computers per 100 students in PVE and SVE institutions, which is an insufficient indicator in the context of the computerization of the educational process and its modernization.

A structure and tool for creating a database for managing the pilot system of CPD has been developed. The database will accumulate statistics of pilot results in such a way as to provide opportunities for analysis and gradual updating and building up of the system information. In accordance with the planned goals in the pilot training methodology in the centers-providers of continuous professional development (CPD) services, training will be held as follows:

- About 45% of the target group of students will complete about 18% of the new content of the CPD in terms of subject-oriented programs,
- About 43% of the target group of students will complete about 20% of the new content of the CPD within the framework of general, related and industry-specific VET programs, as well as
- About 8.5% of the target managers will complete about 50% of the new content of the CPD for the managerial staff of the TVET<sup>56</sup>.

#### ***10. Achieving a reduction in poverty, illiteracy and unemployment among the population***

In order to increase access to educational services, 6 vocational technical lyceums have been transformed into colleges, as well as 2 public and 16 private colleges have received a license to conduct educational activities. Starting in 2016, those who wish to enroll in the SVE institutions and become mid-level specialists must successfully pass entrance exams at the National Testing Center under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

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<sup>54</sup> Report of ADB Project "Strengthening technical and vocational education and training".

<sup>55</sup> Report of ADB Project "Strengthening technical and vocational education and training".

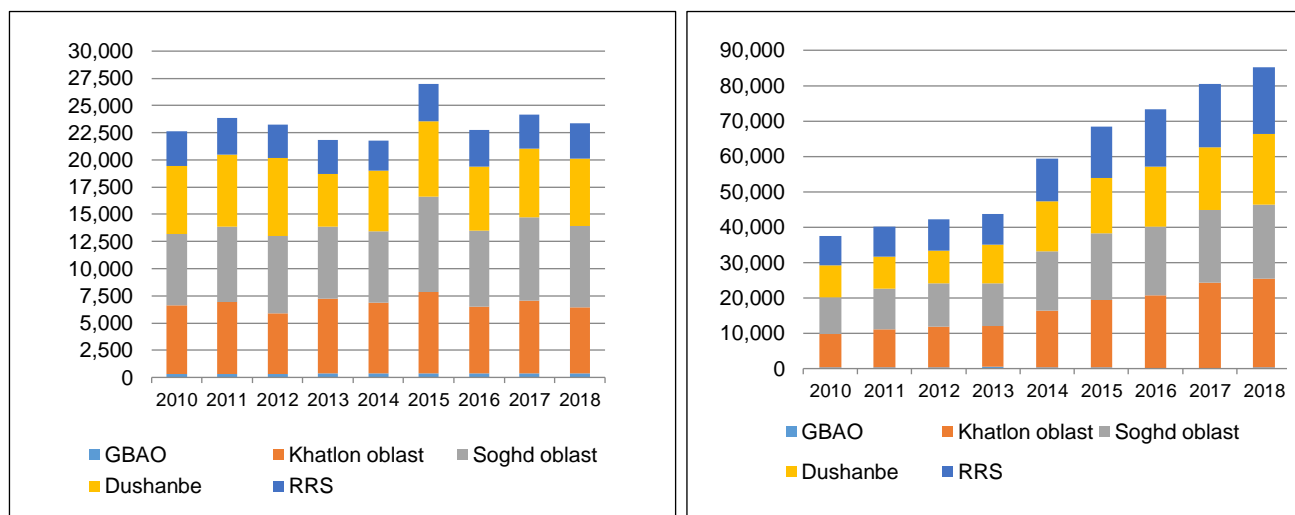
<sup>56</sup> Results of the Project "Technical assistance to the Ministry of Labour Migration and Employment in the field of training teachers of primary vocational education and training" from February 2017 to March 2019, p. 12

In the 2018-2019 academic year, the enrollment plan for SVE was 29,182. In fact, 26,764 students were enrolled, which is 2,418 less than the planned figure, or admission was only 91.7%. According to the statistics of the National Testing Center under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan “On the choice of groups of specialties by applicants in the process of registration for centralized entrance exams”, it turns out that applicants based on 11th grade prefer the following groups of specialties: “Medicine, Biology and Sports”, “Social Studies and Law”, “Philology, Pedagogy and Culture”. Applicants of SVE institutions who have completed 9 grades of general secondary education, prefer the discipline "Medicine, Biology and Sports", and the indicators of the actual number of applicants applying for these groups of specialties almost double the plan.

The growth trend in the number of students in the PVE system with insignificant fluctuation, and the clear trend for their growth in SVE show the importance of this education, as they ensure socialization and employment of young people in the labor market at an earlier age, especially for young people from incomplete, socially vulnerable or dysfunctional families when an additional source of income is required.

Distribution of the PVE and SVE educational institutions by regions of the country in 2017/2018 academic year and the number of students for 2013/14-2017/18 academic years (Figures 1, 2).

Figure 1. The number of PVE and SVE educational institutions Figure 2 The number of students in PVE and SVE educational institutions, 2010-2018.



In 2018, coverage of students in the vocational education system by PVE and SVE educational institutions was 7.4% and 27.1%, respectively.

Initial and secondary vocational education is more affordable for applicants. Tuition fees in the IVE and SVE institutions are many times less than in universities, for example, the cost of training in various specialties ranges from 400 to 3500 TJS. The only exception is training in medical and technical specialties in private colleges, where the cost of training ranges from 5,000 to 11,000 TJS<sup>57</sup>. This is due, first of all, to the growing demand of young people, especially girls, for a medical profession, since the opportunity to find a job in the labor market in this profession is higher compared to other specialties.

### 11. Significant expansion of the list of modern professions in vocational institutions of the country.

<sup>57</sup> National Testing Center under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, [www.ntc.tj](http://www.ntc.tj).

In recent decades, the system of primary and secondary vocational education has undergone significant changes in specialization. Currently, institutions of primary vocational education train workers and specialists in 14 areas (economy, engineering and technology, transport, electronic equipment, energy, chemical, light and mining industries, architecture and construction, agriculture, metallurgy, telecommunications, tourism and hospitality, consumer services and catering) and 96 specialties. At the level of secondary vocational education, specialists are trained in 7 areas (economy, technology, pedagogy, medicine, agriculture, culture and sports) and 166 specialties.

**Efficiency:**

- Analysis of the effectiveness of the activities carried out with the indication of special restrictions that affected it (efficiency);
- At what stage is the implementation of activities and how soon will the objectives of the activities be achieved (will the activities lead to the expected results), is the established system of management of activities effective?

The analysis carried out within the framework of the effectiveness of the measures taken indicates that the measures planned in the framework of the NSED-2020 and the MTAP-2020 are implemented in a timely manner to achieve the goals (see Table 1).

The effectiveness of the results of implemented activities can be assessed by quantitative and qualitative indicators. By quantitative indicators, it can be stated that the planned activities for the construction and renovation of PVE and SVE institutions, acquisition of equipment, conducting seminars and trainings, development of conceptual documents, enrollment of young people, including girls and PWDs, are carried out in a timely manner, in accordance with established requirements.

The difficulty faced by the European Union Project “Technical assistance to the MLME RT in the field of advanced training of teachers of the system of primary vocational education and training” in obtaining equipment was related to the problem of paying customs duties. Although, technical assistance, in particular equipment and other materials, according to the adopted legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan should not be taxed. As a result, when the first batch of equipment arrived in the country, taxes were paid, which affected the reduction in the amount of equipment that was to be purchased and equipped in the workshops of lyceums within the framework of the project. Only after a long clarification of the rules for the supply of equipment to the country as part of technical assistance, the next batch of equipment in the framework of the project arrived without paying taxes.

In addition, the NSED 2020 prescribes tasks (which were not reflected in the activities and expected results) on attracting an employer as part of a public-private partnership, attracting production facilities and capacities of the employer for joint practical and educational activities, and it is proposed to develop a mechanism for state support of the employer: "It is planned to develop and introduce the systems of government support of production organizations, which provide quality services of continued vocational education or provide production facilities, equipment and personnel for organization of vocational education."<sup>58</sup>

However, the employer does not cooperate with the PVE and SVE educational institutions only because they are not sure of the preferential mechanism prescribed by the government. The problem is that if everything is

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<sup>58</sup> NSED 2020, pp. 23-24.

clearly spelled out at the legislative level, then at a practical level, the employer (business) is faced with bureaucracy, that is, with those additional instructions that prove that the preferential mechanism for the employer in the field of educational activity is spelled out superficially and not clearly.

To assess quality indicators based on the results of the planned activities of the MTAP-2020, in our view, it is possible to use the indicators of employment of graduates of PVE and SVE educational institutions in external and internal labour market by specialty; the advanced training of teachers and ETP, their ability to work in new learning conditions, use modern equipment equipped in workshops, and their ability to form competencies among graduates. Currently, there is no mechanism for tracking the employment of graduates of PVE and SVE educational institutions, at all levels, which makes it difficult to obtain this information.

In addition, it should be noted that in the regulatory legal documentation of the Republic of Tajikistan, indicators for assessing the quality of professional education are not developed, which also complicates the process of effective assessment.

#### **Sustainability and impact:**

- Are the expected or unexpected effects satisfactory from the point of view of direct or indirect beneficiaries?

An increase in the number of PVE and SVE educational institutions, which allows increasing the coverage of young people, including girls, with educational programs for training workers and mid-level specialists; improving the infrastructure to cover PWDs; equipping the PVE educational institutions with the latest equipment; developing the capacity of teachers and ETP, that are aimed at improving the quality of education and the quality of competent graduates can be classified as sustainable measures. In addition, the recommendations developed to improve the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On primary vocational education" were reflected in the developed Code of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Education". The developed national qualifications framework for primary vocational education can serve as the basis for the development of the National Qualifications Framework for vocational education. Also, the created methodological base will be used in the educational process of PVE and SVE institutions.

However, it should be noted that a number of strategic developments in the framework of international projects do not find further implementation (approval) and remain at the level of future consideration, since the decision is made at the level of the MES RT or the MLME RT.

#### **6. Conclusions and recommendations for the National Education Strategy for 2020 - 2030**

- Conclusions and recommendations form the basis of the report. Conclusions and recommendations will be useful for decision makers and will serve as a guide for developing the next National Education Strategy.

During the period of implementation of the NSED 2020, the legislative, institutional and conceptual framework for reforming the system of primary and secondary vocational education has been created in the RT. In addition, close cooperation with development partners (European Union, Asian Development Bank) also brings positive results.

However despite the results achieved in the framework of the NSED 2020 there are still problems which are reflected in the following Table 3.

Table 3: Difficulties and challenges in the PVE and SVE system.


Strategic area	Difficulties and challenges
Access and participation	Non-compliance of educational institutions infrastructure with the requirements of international standards
	Lack of qualified teaching staff, production training masters and support staff with knowledge and skills for training people with disabilities
	Insufficient training material to train people with disabilities
	Imperfect legal framework to facilitate the employment of people with disabilities
	Specialties of the PVE system do not motivate girls to pursue primary vocational education
	Language of instruction in PVE and SVE only in the state language
	Less than 40% of students in the SVE institutions are trained on a budget basis
	Educational programs of the PVE system are not attractive to girls
Quality and relevance	Lack of independent assessment of the quality of education in the PVE and SVE system
	The lack of a mechanism of personnel selection on a competitive basis
	The classifier of professions and specialties does not meet the requirements of a rapidly developing economy, in particular for developing digital economy in the country
	Lack of a system of continuous professional development and professional development of ETP
	The lack of framework conditions necessary for the full harmonization of educational and professional standards, the education market and the labor market in the field of primary and secondary vocational education.
	Lack of a methodology for the development of the content of qualifications / VET programs in accordance with the requirements and expectations of the labor market - the relevance of training results to relevant competencies in the labor market
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inconsistency of the material and technical base of educational institutions for the preparation of highly qualified mid-level specialists</li> <li>- Outdated MTB, which does not correspond to the technological production processes of the industry;</li> <li>- Lack of funding for MTB modernization;</li> <li>- Lack of incentives and concessions for businesses to engage in the modernization of MTB of VET;</li> <li>- Legislative acts provide incentives for employers actively involved in the development of VET, but these measures are not applied in practice</li> </ul>
	Shortage of highly qualified teachers and masters of industrial training
	Lack of a strategy to attract and develop VET personnel; lack of incentives/rewards and motivation for career development in VET system
	Poorly developed social partnership (employers and trade unions) at the national, regional and sectoral levels for the development of VET;



	Weak or completely absent potential of social partners for dialogue in the VET sector to formulate policies and measures to attract employers in VET and to improve the quality and trust in VET
	Lack of drastic measures to increase the prestige of working professions, attractiveness and advertising of VET professions
Cost and financing	Insufficiency of financial resources affects the state of MTB, the level of salaries of teachers and engineers, and renovation work.
	Lack of motivational mechanism for attracting the private sector to participate in the development of the VET system at different levels
	Lack of financial resources does not allow establishing international cooperation, organizing advanced training of teachers and ETP abroad, and organizing practical training for students on the basis of foreign enterprises and organizations.
	The practice of training mid-level specialists and workers with the financial support of enterprises and the further employment of graduates has been ruined
	Significant differentiation of the cost of training in the same specialty is observed.

In view of the above, the following key priorities (broken down by key outcomes) for primary and secondary vocational education should be included in the NSED 2030.

*Ensuring equal access and participation in education*

1.	<p><b>Construction of new and reconstruction of existing PVE and SVE educational institutions.</b></p> <p>New educational institutions with modern infrastructure have been built, taking into account the increased coverage of graduates with primary and secondary vocational education, especially rural youth and people with disabilities. Existing educational institutions have been reconstructed. The infrastructure and training conditions for people with disabilities have been created. Educational institutions of vocational educational institutions and secondary vocational educational institutions are equipped with modern equipment. A preferential mechanism for the supply of equipment to educational institutions has been created. A search and conclusion of contracts with software companies for the educational process in the PVE and SVE institutions was carried out.</p>
2.	<p><b>Improving the prestige of working professions and specialties of secondary vocational education</b></p>  <p>Career-oriented campaigns aimed at informing graduates of educational institutions about popular professions and educational institutions have been strengthened to help them choose their professional path and plan their own career. Young people are acquainted with the history of World Skills, an idea of the world championship in professional excellence according to the WorldSkills standards is formed, interest in working professions is aroused, students have developed creative and cognitive abilities, and needs for the development of professional excellence. Engineering and technical professions that are attractive to girls have been introduced into the educational process of PVE and SVE; the importance of computer technology and engineering professions has been promoted, not only among girls, but also among their parents.</p>

*Improving the quality and relevance of education*

1.	Development of a system mechanism for tracking the employment of graduates, including PWDs in domestic and foreign labor market using a computer program.
	There is a mechanism in the structural subdivision of PVE and SVE engaged in the collection and analysis of information on employment of graduates (timely monitoring and evaluation, preparation of analytical information on employment of graduates and their publication on the website page). There is also a mechanism in the structural subdivision of the MES RT and the MLME RT for collecting information on the employment of graduates from PVE and SVE educational institutions and their publication in statistical materials and on the website of the MES RT and the MLME RT.
2.	Updating educational programs that form the general and professional competencies of graduates that meet the requirements of the external and internal labor market.
	The educational programs of PVE and SVE with the involvement of employers were updated: a comparative analysis was carried out with WorldSkills international standards, the structure and contents of the educational program were developed, matrix of competencies was developed, procedures for evaluating learning outcomes were developed, etc.
3.	Implementation of a sustainable system of continuous professional development (CPD).
	Trainings and seminars for engineering and technical personnel (ETP) and teachers were organized with the aim of teaching new teaching methods that form the competencies of graduates. Development of training programs and methodological support of CPD. New teaching methods have been introduced in PVE and SVE educational institutions, focused on the formation of competencies of graduates. Certification of engineering and technical personnel and teachers of PVE and SVE. Implementation of CPD management information system .
4.	Development, approval and implementation of the National Qualification Framework.
	The decision was made at the level of political will. A working group of representatives of the MES RT, MLME RT and other interested parties was established. The NQF is developed and approved.
5.	Development of a new mechanism to promote employment of graduates, including PWDs.
	Contracts were concluded with labor market entities (the private sector), agreed events were organized (job fairs, internships and further employment, career counseling, etc.) with labor market entities. Regulatory documents have been improved to facilitate the employment of graduates of the PVE and SVE institutions, including PWDs. A state program for providing employment to graduates of the PVE and SVE institutions, including PWDs, was developed and approved.
6.	Development and implementation of a single policy in the field of ensuring the quality of education.
	A working group has been created consisting of experts from the MES RT, MLME RT, the State Education Supervision Service under the MES RT and other interested parties to prepare guidelines for educational institutions of PVE and SVE on calculating uniform quantitative and qualitative indicators of the quality of education that are consistent with international practices, in particular European.
7.	Modernization of professional and educational standards based on international standards and practices. Implementation of practice-oriented programs (dual training).
	A working group has been created to improve professional and educational standards (educational programs) based on international practices, in particular European. A unified classifier of VET specialties and professions has been developed based on international practice, taking into account the list of professions and specialties for VET. Innovative tools and methods has been developed and implemented for assessing learning outcomes of students.
8.	Preparation and passage of independent program accreditation.
	An agreement has been concluded with an independent international accreditation agency. Seminars and trainings were organized for employees of PVE and SVE in preparation for independent programmatic and / or institutional international accreditation. Self-assessment reports were prepared. Certification of educational programs by an independent international accreditation agency.
9.	Reform of PVE, elimination of duplication in the content of educational programs of PVE with program blocks of general education institutions with the transition to 12-year education. Achieving higher skill levels that meet the requirements of the labor market.
	Educational programs of PVE were revised and updated taking into account the transition of general education institutions to 12-year education.

1.	Development of programs to attract additional resources. The PVE and SVE institutions have developed programs to: raise funds from labor market entities for the purchase of computer equipment, equipment for training workshops and laboratories; involve employers in the learning process; provide students with internships; improve the skills of teachers and masters of industrial training directly in the workplace.
2.	Creation of a motivational mechanism of cooperation with the subjects of the labor market to attract additional resources. Agreements on mutually beneficial cooperation of PVE and SVE institutions with the subjects of the labor market were signed.
3.	Training of specialists from among employees of educational institutions of PVE and SVE on the development of investment projects and attracting investments. Seminars and trainings were organized, with the participation of representatives of universities, international experts on project development to attract funds from international programs, other donors (labor market entities).
4.	Updating the state funding mechanism for the PVE and SVE system. A new mechanism of state financing of educational institutions of PVE and SVE has been introduced, taking into account the differentiated approach by professions.
5.	Ensuring the need for a sufficient number of engineering and technical personnel (ETP) and teachers of PVE and SVE, taking into account the increase in the coverage of graduates of secondary educational institutions by 30%. A motivational mechanism has been developed to attract highly qualified ETP and teachers to the PVE and SVE system.

## **6.2 ELABORATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the longer perspective it will be good to have a national qualifications framework (NQF). This is a difficult process that needs to be implemented in parallel with ongoing progress in the TVET Sector.

Prepare a process of getting the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) to meet the requirements of the International Labour Organization (ILO) classification structure for organizing information on labour and jobs. It is part of the international family of economic and social classifications of the United Nations.

There is a need for updating and staffing TVET educational institutions, and improve educational programs in order to form the general and professional competencies of graduates.

Improving the infrastructure for access for people with disabilities. Further training of the trainers who are doing the training of persons with disabilities.

## 7. HIGHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

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### 7.1 ASSESSMENT OF THE PLANNED ACTIVITIES

The Government of Tajikistan's vision for the country's higher education is to modernize the existing contents towards more professionally-oriented skills to better meet labour market demand as a tool for human capital formation, contributing to economic growth and poverty reduction. In line with the general educational approach priorities in Higher Education also aim to reform educational standards based on competency-based approach, with active participation of employers, to enable the modernization of the curriculum through modernization. The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) is committed to facilitating this process and, in parallel, to increase access to and improve the quality of learning materials.

In addition to the Bologna Process, Tajikistan aims to join the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) to identify synergies among higher educational institutions in Europe and to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent systems. The MoES has already started taking important steps to join the EHEA, with establishment of a credible quality assurance system and adoption of the national qualifications framework on its plans in the coming years. The government's effort is also focused on reforming the entire higher education system - e.g., governance, financing mechanisms, quality assurance, teaching, enrolment rates, learning, infrastructure and student assessment.

In the 2018-2019<sup>59</sup> academic year, there were 40 higher educational institutions in Tajikistan, including 17 universities and 14 institutions. The enrolment in higher educational institutions has gone up by 7.7% during 2017-2018,<sup>60</sup> including a 9% increase in female enrolment. This is an encouraging trend, particularly because women are commonly admitted to be severely disadvantaged and are more likely to be unemployed or poor.

The gender gap in higher professional education in Tajikistan is closing but remains significant, not least due to a number of gender-segregated fields of study (e.g., geology, ICT and construction) where female participation rates have been historically low. Few females enter scientific or technical faculties in universities and institutes.

The positive increase in gender balance has happened over the last years where female's enrolment in higher educational institutions increased in the period when the implementation of the NSED has taken place. The more educated Tajik citizens are, the more likely they are to find a job in the formal sector, earn higher incomes with better job security and various social protection benefits. In the perspective of the NSED and its targets, the gender gap in higher professional education in Tajikistan is observably closing but there is a need to continue the progress. Unfortunately only few females enter scientific or technical faculties in universities and institutes.

Based on data collected by EMIS that performance has improved in the reporting period. The MoES is credited with the 2010 rollout of credit-based system in all higher educational institutions and the establishment of a National Testing Centre (NTC) in accordance with the Presidential Decree issued on February 25, 2014. These developments have not deterred enrolment as feared, particularly from applicants in rural areas. However, university entrance examinations remain a good proxy of the quality of general secondary education and overall student performance.

The analysis of the sector shows that the regional composition of student enrolment in Tajikistan merits discussion. There is only one higher educational institution in RRS and only **2.2 percent** of all students are

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<sup>59</sup> ANNEXT 1 - TABLE 41 and 42 - SELECT INDICATORS IN HIGHER PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTIONS, 2010-2016.

<sup>60</sup> Source: EMIS, as reported by irzoev, S. 2017. Republic of Tajikistan Education Joint Sector Review 2017 Update. Dushanbe.

enrolled in GBAO (compared to 2.4 percent in the previous year), which undermines equitable access to higher professional education. Despite existing quotas and a number of merit-based academic scholarships for regional applicants, constraints are high because rural families require significant amounts of financial resources to cover education costs (e.g., travel to and accommodation in urban centres, and other living expenses for the duration of study).

Despite relatively low enrolment of Tajik nationals in comparison with other countries in the CIS, there are also foreign students in higher educational institutions in Tajikistan. More specifically, there were 3,815 foreign students (1.8 percent of total enrolment) studying in higher professional education in Tajikistan during 2018-2019 academic year. Many of these foreign students originate from Turkmenistan, India, Afghanistan and the Kyrgyz Republic. In turn, students from Tajikistan's universities and institutes are studying in more than 20 countries, including the Russian Federation, People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan, and others. In annex 1 a breakdown can be found in the chapter for Higher Education.

## **7.2 PROGRESS AGAINST MTAP 2018 - 2020**

In higher professional education the following programs will be implemented:

- Baccalaureate
- Magistracy
- Postgraduate studies, (Including PhD degree)
- Doctoral studies
- Additional (to higher) education.

It will be necessary to optimize the network of universities, their consolidation, by expanding the trajectory of training graduates, creating powerful research bases, small enterprises and business incubators.

It is necessary to develop university structures as educational, scientific and production centers, to shift the emphasis of university activities to participation in regional and republican development, preparation and support of development programs, consulting, scientific and engineering developments. Universities are the most significant intellectual resource for the development of territories, the use of this resource allows us to expand the scope of the university and to strengthen the link between curricula and practice.

It is supposed to continue work on the organization of *University Centers*, combining universities, colleges, lyceums, gymnasiums and educational institutions according to the territorial (sectoral) principle.

The most effective is the joint activity of units of the Academy of Sciences and higher education. For such an organization, joint research and development programs, inclusion of undergraduate and postgraduate students in the development teams, and the transfer of results to university study cycles will be offered.

Reformed in this way, the education system of the Republic of Tajikistan will be able to provide adult education throughout life.

### **A brief overview of the current State of the higher professional education sector of the Republic of Tajikistan since 2012**

By the time the country gained independence in 1991, there were 13 higher education institutions (HEIs) in the country, in which 69,300 students were officially registered and 5,400 teachers worked. In the 2018-2019 academic year, there were 40 higher education institutions in the RT, including 17 universities, 14 institutes,

one conservatory, 4 higher institutions of law enforcement agencies, as well as 4 branches, in which 206,327 students and 9,061 staff teachers were officially registered.

Academic years	Number of institutions	Number of students	Of them girls	
			people	%
<b>In the Republic of Tajikistan</b>				
2011-2012	35	151,207	43,118	28,5
2012-2013	36	151,003	42,015	27,8
2013-2014	38	157,791	42,925	27,2
2014-2015	38	167,660	53,217	31,7
2015-2016	38	178,109	58,881	33,1
2016-2017	39	189,711	65,501	34,5
2017-2018	39	191,550	67,780	35,4
<b>2018-2019</b>	40	<b>206,327</b>	<b>73,906</b>	<b>35,8</b>

Of the 206,327 students, 69.9% were registered in full-time programs and 30.1% - in distance learning programs. However, the proportion of women studying at universities remains at an inadequate level (35.8%).

The analysis shows that, despite the positive trends in the number of students entering higher education institutions, the share of graduates of secondary educational institutions and the system of primary and secondary vocational education entering universities is significantly behind the indicators set by the program. In 2018, this indicator amounted to 34.4%, which is 3.1 percentage points higher compared to the previous year. But, the same indicator, compared with the indicator established by the program, is lower by 5.6 percentage points. The reason for this is the continuing disparity in access to quality educational services for various reasons, i.e. according to the place of residence (city/village) and the economic situation of the family. The number of university students (including women) in 2018-2019 academic year was 232 people per 10 thousand people, which is 30 people more compared to 2011, and 8 people less than the planned indicator for the same year. In relation to this indicator, in terms of female students, in 2018 compared to 2011, an increase of 26.2 people (84.5-58.3) was observed, but there is a lag behind the established indicator by 5.5 people. Among girls, access to higher education is much less than among boys. The Global Gender Gap Report indicates that the gender gap between those enrolled in higher education institutions is narrowing, but remains significant.

In order to ensure the rights of women, a number of laws and Government decisions have been adopted in the last three years, in particular, the State Programme for the Education, Selection and Placement of Gifted Women and Girls in Leadership Positions in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2017–2022, the Action Plan of the National strategy for enhancing the role of women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2015-2020. The implementation of the National strategy for enhancing the role of women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011-2020 continued. Thanks to the measures taken by the Government of the country, the gender gap at various levels of education has been reduced.

According to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, in 2018-2019 academic year, only 7,175 people (3.5% of the total number of students) were enrolled in the country's universities according to Presidential quotas, including: 3,423 girls and 3752 boys. An important role in expanding girls' access to higher education was played by the implemented recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on increasing the age of marriage from 17 to 18 years. Unfortunately, at the end of compulsory basic education, there is a high drop-out rate for girls.<sup>1</sup> Other reasons for dropping girls out are early marriages, the need to help mothers with housework, and caring for younger family members.

One of the important indicators characterizing the potential of human capital is the net enrollment ratio (NER) of higher education. Estimates show that the net enrollment ratio of higher education in Tajikistan in 2018-2019 academic year was 16.7%, which is lower in comparison with the higher education system in Europe.

Analysis of the distribution of students by region shows that 58.2% of the total number of students are in Dushanbe, 20.1% are studying in universities of Sughd region, 17.9% - Khatlon region, 2.2% in GBAO and 1.6% in the district of republican subordination.

Against the background of changes in quantitative parameters, the structure of the number of students in the profile of the received specialties also changes. Among the country's universities, 12 are training for education, 11 for industry, construction, transport and communications, 3 for medicine, 1 for agriculture, 17 for economics and law and for other industries. Structural changes in the training are caused by the increased need for specialists in connection with the reform of secondary general and secondary specialized, vocational education, structural reforms in agriculture, the expansion of the service sector and the demand for new specialties in other areas.

Negative trends include a decrease in the share of specialists for public education. For the period under review, this indicator decreased by 3.9 percentage points. Positive trends include a slight increase in the number of students studying in industrial specialties. A decrease in the number of specialists for public education that is not balanced with the demographic situation in the country in the future may lead to insufficient and lack of teaching staff in the education system of the Republic of Tajikistan as a whole, and this trend does not meet the requirements of SDG 4. One of the problems of the higher education system in the Republic of Tajikistan is tough government quotas for certain specialties, including paid-contracted training. At the same time, the issue of accessibility to education is seriously complicated by the underdevelopment of external studies and distance learning, as well as the lack of a non-governmental, alternative sector of educational services.

Thus, to fulfill priority 3 “Improving access to quality higher education in the Republic of Tajikistan” of the National Strategy of Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan till 2020, among the planned tasks were:

1. Introduction of admission to institutions of higher professional education based on the results of National testing.  
Since 2014, admission to the universities of the Republic of Tajikistan has been carried out through the NTC under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Transparency and objectivity of admission to universities of the country has been achieved.
2. Creation of the Republican system of information and educational resources at all levels of education.  
Development of distance learning system.

### **Regarding the development of information resources of the RT**

In the Republic of Tajikistan, the necessary measures are being taken to develop the information sphere and to form an information society.

In the Republic of Tajikistan scientific information resources are presented in the form of databases and materials on paper and in electronic form:



1. The database "Science of Tajikistan in numbers" contains information on digital data of the material and technical base of scientific organizations, scientific personnel, the number of publications, the number of scientific developments;
2. The database "Scientific personnel of the Republic of Tajikistan" contains information about the personal data of scientists, place of work, research activities, the availability of patents for inventions;
3. The database "Scientific organizations of the Republic of Tajikistan" contains information on scientific research organizations, type of ownership, characteristics of scientific activities, work performed, human resources, sources of financing for scientific organizations, results of scientific and technical activities, branches of organizations;
4. The database "Results of scientific and technical activities" contains information on ongoing and completed research and development, their results, as well as information about the implementing organizations of these works;
5. The database "Deposited scientific works" contains information about articles, monographs, completed scientific works and their results, as well as information about the implementing organizations of these works;
6. The database "State register of R&D" contains information about organizations-performers of R&d, information about the goals, expected results, as well as data on the category of performers;
7. The database "Candidate and doctoral dissertations" contains complete information about the defended dissertations of scientists of the country, information about the authors, the content of dissertations and the full text of dissertations.

#### **STR Management publications:**

1. Scientific and technical potential of the Republic of Tajikistan (analytical collection, printed publication);
2. Catalogue of information resources of the Republic of Tajikistan (printed publication);
3. Catalogue of intellectual products of the Republic of Tajikistan (printed publication);
4. Catalogue of achievements of agricultural sciences of Tajikistan (printed publication);
5. Catalogue of achievements of medical sciences of Tajikistan (printed publication);
6. Information sheets on advanced scientific and industrial experience (printed publication);
7. Electronic abstract publication of completed research;
8. Electronic abstract collection "Deposited manuscripts of scientific works";
9. Electronic abstract collection "RSTA";
10. Electronic abstract collection "Candidate and doctoral dissertations of the Republic of Tajikistan";
11. Electronic magazine "Patent Bulletin".

A new program (database) has been developed in the educational system for higher education institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan on statistical reporting of all academic achievements of students, through which all data flow to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan. This system works on-line and should be mobile for all kinds of changes taking place in the movement of students, etc.

Work in this area needs to be continued, as the Republican system of information and educational resources is being modernized.

Programs and curricula for distance education are being developed in educational institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan, but their active implementation requires the introduction of the Internet for the regions, the establishment of preferential tariffs, etc.

#### **Professional development of the teaching staff of universities in the use of ICT technologies.**

In this regard, in the universities of the RT, the teaching staff annually undergoes continuing education in the field of ICT on a schedule. Such a refresher course is planned for the entire teaching staff, especially young teachers and interns. With the introduction of new technologies and digitalization in the field of education, it is necessary to improve this course.

In this strategy, it was planned to *Create a publicly accessible Republican electronic library*, followed by providing access to Central Asian and European electronic libraries. In this direction, the work has not been fully implemented, since a single republican system has not been created. Each university is developing a system of electronic libraries with an annual replenishment of the resource fund, but there is no single system for all universities.

***Analysis of the state of the educational and laboratory facilities of universities and the development of a long-term plan for their equipment.***

In this direction, each university has a database of a network of scientific and educational laboratories. The strategic plans for the development of universities in the section on improving the material and technical base reflect the development and improvement of laboratory facilities at the expense of grants and university funds.

MES RT developed a long-term plan for equipping laboratories.

**3. To expand the practice of establishing branches of training centers in district centers, taking into account the needs of the region's economy and attracting the rural population, including women and girls to vocational education.**

The development of a program to expand the network of affiliates of training centers in district centers has not been approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan. It is necessary to develop mechanisms for the establishment of branches and their financing.

The regulatory framework for the evaluation of educational results obtained by the external has not been developed.

**Universities of the Republic of Tajikistan at their level develop and implement the practice of creating electronic educational resources (contents) (LMS)/.** There is no full coverage of such a system in the universities of the RT. This system should be mobile, constantly updated with the necessary teaching materials, work online, which requires additional funding and Internet access for each university employee and each student. This work will have to be continued and mechanisms for its implementation will be developed.

**On Modernization of the content of education (Priority 2)**

Since the 1990s, reforms have been ongoing in the system of higher professional education aimed at bringing higher education institutions to the requirements of international educational standards and practices. The entry of the RT into a single world educational space requires improving the quality of education for the recognition and competitiveness of state-standard documents in the global labor market.

In this regard, at the legislative level, the following documents were adopted and approved: Law of the Republic of Tajikistan “On Education”, “State Educational Standard of Higher Professional Education”, approved by Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated February 25, 2017 No. 94; Law of the Republic of Tajikistan “On Science and State Scientific and Technical Policy” dated July 21, 2010 No. 629; “The procedure for the distribution and employment of young professionals”, approved by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated May 27, 2017; “Regulation on the Ministry of Education and

Science of the Republic of Tajikistan”, approved by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated March 3, 2014, No. 145; “Standard Regulation on the Educational Institution of Higher Professional Education of the Republic of Tajikistan”, approved by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated July 2, 2015, No. 428; “On approval of the Regulation on the procedure for filling the positions of teaching staff in higher educational institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan”, approved by the decision of the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan dated November 25, 2011 No. 21/21; “Regulation on correspondence education in higher educational institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan”, approved by the decision of the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan dated November 25, 2011 No. 21/21; May 29, 2017 No. 7/35; “Regulation on the features of licensing of certain types of activities (in the new version)”, approved by Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated April 03, 2007, No. 172; “On the Experimental Implementation of the Education Quality Management Program in Universities of the Republic of Tajikistan”, Order of the Minister of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan dated June 29, 2017 No. 8/3; “Regulation on the remuneration of employees of secondary and higher vocational education institutions”, Order of the Minister of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan dated January 01, 2019; “Regulation on the credit system of education in higher education institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan”, approved by the decision of the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan dated December 30, 2016 No. 19/24; "Provision on the pedagogical practice of students of higher education institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan", approved by the decision of the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan dated January 28, 2017 No. 1/16; "Regulation on the expulsion, restoration and transfer of students of higher professional educational institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan", approved by the decision of the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan dated July 15, 2016, No. 212; "The state program for training personnel with higher professional education for 2016-2020", approved by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated March 31, 2016, No. 144 and others.

Training of specialists with higher education is carried out according to the bachelor's, specialty, master's and doctoral programs in accordance with educational standards and curricula <sup>1,2</sup>The list of specialties is presented in the State classifier of specialties, approved by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan in 2007.

Currently, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan is working on introducing amendments and additions to the State Classifier in order to open up new specialties that are in demand in the labor market.

In the previous strategy, it was planned to ***Ensure a complete transition to a modular-credit technology for the organization of the educational process*** (teacher training, conducting seminars, development of guidelines), but at present, the transition to a modular organization of the educational process in the universities of the RT has not been implemented.

It should be noted that in all universities of the RT by 2017-2018, in accordance with the requirements of the State Educational Standards of Higher Professional Education, approved by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (2017), taking into account the credit system of education, new State educational standards were developed and approved in all specialties. Characteristics of university graduates are revised, competences are defined. In the new state educational standards in the specialties, the final learning outcomes are not defined, i.e. the competency-based approach to learning has not been taken into account.

The developed curricula do not fully reflect the requirements of the labor market, as the opinions of employers on the content of educational programs are not sufficiently taken into account.

The development of a new State classifier of specialties has not been carried out (the last statement of the State classifier was in 2007).

In terms of *Improving the practice-oriented higher education and its relationship with national and local labor markets, turning universities into an effective factor in the development of territories*, it should be noted that the legal framework for organizing student practices is assigned to universities by concluding agreements with enterprises and organizations with the right to provide educational student activities or accredited line ministries.

The planned *development of criteria and indicators of participation of universities in regional development* has not been carried out.

*Training of teaching staff through master's degree, target postgraduate, PhD and system of further training* is carried out by universities independently according to the License of MES RT in specialties. It is necessary to develop a system of further training for teaching staff in the acquired specialty, especially for persons with academic degrees and categories.

### **Structural changes in the education system**

Up to date, technology parks have been created in 12 higher educational institutions of the country and their branches, 8 of which function as legal entities in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan “About Technology Park”. These are technology parks of the Tajik Agrarian University named after Shirinsho Shokhtemur, Tajik National University and Tajik Polytechnical University named after academician Osimi, Tajik State University of Law, Business and Politics, Tajik State Institute of Languages named after Sotim Ulugzoda and Tajik Mining and Metallurgical Institute. Technological parks of the Institute of Entrepreneurship and Service, Institute of Economics and Trade, Tajik State University of Trade, Tajik Technological University and Tajik State Pedagogical University named after Sadridin Aini are not currently legal entities.

In general, unfortunately, creation and operation of these parks do not fully comply with the requirements established by the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on “Technology Park”, as well as the requirements of science and production.

In accordance with article 38 of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on education, educational institutions, including higher education institutions, are engaged with preparation, selection and placement of specialists, scientific, financial and economic activities within the limits established by the legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan are independent.

In a frame of this law, educational institutions can implement active teaching methods in the educational process.

At the same time, Article 5 of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan “On Higher Professional Education and Postgraduate Education” provides autonomy of higher education and postgraduate education. It provides selection and placement of personnel, educational, scientific, financial, economic and other activities, the charter of which is determined by the legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Higher educational institutions can use modern technologies to implement educational programs, partially or fully, in accordance with the procedures established by the Republican State Administration of Education.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan has done some work to meet the needs of the labor market and socio-economic development of the regions of republic, as well as to increase efficiency of specialist preparation.

In particular, Technological University of Tajikistan for 2015-2016 academic year will focus on seven new specialties: natural fibers, knitting technologies, textile design, sewing technologies, aerospace design, professional education, human style and environment. The technologies of vocational education (light industry), textile and light industry were introduced.

Currently, the university trains specialists in more than 11 specialties for the country's light industry.

The plan to design and introduce an optimal network of vocational education institutions in accordance with the territorial distribution of production, labor and economic development prospects is not fully implemented. During the planned period of time, the Danghara State Institute and the Khatlon State Medical University were established in Khatlon region.

The expansion of the autonomy of universities in the organization of the educational process in accordance with the needs of the labor market is not fully taking into account the fact that universities of the Republic of Tajikistan cannot independently determine their main educational program (EP) and choose disciplines. Universities operate within the strict framework of curricula approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan. 1st and 2nd blocks of disciplines of curricula are the State component of disciplines approved by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. Within the framework of 3rd and 4th blocks of disciplines, universities have their own autonomy.

It should be noted that universities have their own autonomy in the choice of the content of educational programs, the sequence of study of disciplines, the choice of topics for scientific research, technology and teaching methods.

### **Human resources management**

The work on *Strengthening the personnel potential of the apparatus of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan* continues. It can be carried out on an ongoing basis in connection with the requirements of the time and ongoing reforms in the field of education in the world.

The functional responsibilities of the MES RT units were reviewed and approved at the level of the Board of the MoES.

Work on the revision of staffing is still ongoing. It should be transferred to the task of the new National Strategy of Education Development until 2030, taking into account the restructuring of the Ministry of Education and Science of the RT, the creation of new departments and branches responsible for reforming the education system in the new economic conditions and expanding the network of educational institutions.

The work on the Development of information infrastructure of education management, connection of education management bodies and universities to the Internet has been completed. All universities of the Republic of Tajikistan have access to the Internet, and the ongoing establishment of the educational process on-line for the training of highly qualified specialists continues.

The planned work on the *Development and implementation of continuing education programs for employees of educational authorities at all levels to prepare them for new tasks* has not been completed. We believe that in the new National Strategy of Education Development, Centers or Higher Educational institutions of Education Management should be created to train personnel in the field of Education Sector Management, who own and master the quality management system, personnel management, according to ISO 9001, etc.

The work on the *Revision of the standards of teacher education in accordance with new priorities and*

**technologies of general education began in 2018.** Currently, within the framework of the World Bank Project, a revision of the State educational standards in the specialties (pedagogy) has been carried out. Recommendations are given on the development of Standards within the framework of a competency-based approach and the final learning outcomes. All disciplines of the Curriculum should be integrated into modules according to the logic and principles of the Bologna process. In this regard, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan is actively working to create a model of new State educational standards in accordance with international standards. A large working group of experts on the revision of state educational standard is working in this direction under the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan.

At the legislative level, by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated March 31, 2016, No. 144, the State Program for Training Personnel with Higher Professional Education for 2016-2020 was approved, which reflects the issues of retraining pedagogical personnel taking into account preparations for the transition to a new general education system. But, the ***Development and implementation of training programs for professional managers in the field of education*** have not been implemented.

### **Education quality management**

In this direction, to improve the Education Quality Management of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, the program “On the experimental implementation of the Education Quality Management Program in the universities of the Republic of Tajikistan” was approved (Order of the Minister of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan dated June 29, 2017 No. 8/3).

***A national system for assessing and managing the quality of education at all levels*** has not been developed and should remain a task in the new National Strategy.

**The National Center for Educational Quality Assessment** has not been established.

An independent graduate examination system has not been developed. From the experience of other countries, it can be said that final exams are conducted under the supervision of independent experts recruited from the Independent Examination Center. This Center conducts selection of questions for exams, conducting new technologies for accepting final exams and evaluating exam results.

***The creation of a regulatory framework for the introduction of quality management systems in educational institutions - ISO 9000*** has not been implemented. At present, there are no QMS departments in the universities of the Republic of Tajikistan (with the exception of the State Educational Institution “TSMU named after Abuali ibni Sino”).

Thus, higher education in Tajikistan is undergoing constant reform, however, reforms are being hampered by the depletion of human resources and the instability of relations between labor market participants. The observed changes in universities are most often a reaction to demographic, migration and socio-economic factors. Nevertheless, there are a number of achievements that will determine the further development of the system - from the introduction of State educational standards to the transfer of key activities to a project basis. Despite a number of long-standing problems, the RT higher education system remains a competitor in the international educational services market. Currently, a mechanism is being formed for building and developing professional trajectories of youth, including tools for adapting to the labor market.

The government has identified the clear goal of the future higher education system as a tool for the formation of human capital, which will contribute to economic growth in a rapidly changing world. The *National Strategy of Education Development until 2020* sets the task to improve and modernize the existing subject matter of higher education with a focus on the development of professional skills in order to better meet the demands of

the labor market and develop the potential of Tajikistan. In order to develop the higher education system and ensure its integration into the European Higher Education Area, the Government is currently actively engaged in the issue of joining the Bologna Declaration. Moreover, the Government began to implement some of the important reforms, such as the introduction of a three-tier education system and the implementation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTAS) in 2007. However, more important reforms, such as the establishment of a reliable quality assurance system and a national qualification system, have yet to be developed, approved and implemented. Thus, the main work related to the revision of the higher education system, especially with regard to management in the higher education system, quality assurance, teaching, training and assessment of students' knowledge, must be done urgently.

### **7.3 ELABORATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS;**

Preparing for the new strategy a long term goal would be to strengthen the process already undergoing to provide equal access to quality higher education to receive knowledge and competencies. This will lead to gross higher-education coverage ratio, broken down by gender identity.

It will lead to an improved quality of higher education, with the commitment of graduates to labour market demands, to increased level of access and participation of girls in higher education, Improved preparedness of higher education institutions to enrolment and education of PWDs (infrastructure, faculty – higher-education teaching staff) and Improved access to on-line education through the development of this field and increased access to Internet.

Teacher qualifications have marginally changed in the reporting period. In particular, 45.8 percent of all staff teachers had a Candidate of Sciences degree in 2017, compared to 49.7 percent in 2016. Relatively high age of teachers in higher professional education and moderately improving teacher qualifications suggests that on-the-job training and teacher exchange programmes to develop their skills and capacities will be important in the context of the need for younger, qualified specialists. Having said that, the gap in teacher qualifications is expected to narrow in the coming years.

In order to facilitate the narrowing of the gap in teacher qualifications, teacher salaries need to be revised in order to attract the younger generation. The existing teacher salary scales favor senior faculty members with high academic qualifications, while younger teachers with no qualifications receive monthly salary which is close to the size of stipend payments of high-performing students. This will make the profession more appealing to the younger generation and will enable higher educational institutions to attract young faculty, particularly in rural and densely populated areas.

#### **Improvement opportunities:**

1. Define the main concepts of the Bologna process (BP) in the legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan.
2. Legislatively consolidate the National Qualifications Framework, which would comply with the European Qualifications Framework with a description of knowledge, skills and abilities at each level of training.
3. Apply BP logic in building Standards, programs, syllabuses (modules, ESTS, learning outcomes).
4. Introduce a single Diploma Supplement.
5. Consolidate the Central position of the student in education in legislation and practice.
6. Initiate decentralization (in the transition period – partial decentralization) of the educational system.
7. Develop curricula and programs with stakeholders (employers, students, etc.).
8. Regularly update training plans according to the requirements of the labour market.
9. Develop institutional missions of universities.



10. Realign standards and curricula around learning outcomes in line with the European Qualifications Framework and Dublin descriptors.
11. Introduce the concepts of modules in the educational process (at the legislative level) - interdisciplinary (restructure standards and curricula taking into account modularization).
12. Develop clear student assessment criteria based on learning outcomes and competencies for each level of learning.
13. Adopt ESTS evaluation scale.

**Recommendations at the State level:**

1. Revise the legal framework governing the field of education and include definitions of concepts such as module, competence, competence descriptors, diploma supplement, etc.
2. Develop guidelines for universities on the process of developing curricula and they should be based on the principles of modularity.
3. Develop a National qualification system in accordance with the Bologna standards and taking into account the needs of the labour market and the proposals of stakeholders.
4. A single application to the diploma should be developed and implemented by all universities.

The key priorities for the development of the higher education sector, which will be included in the National Strategy of Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2030, should be:

1. Expansion of access to higher education, especially for women, as well as the development of inclusive education in universities of the RT.
2. Quality of education (Amendments and additions to the legislative framework of the Republic of Tajikistan in the field of education within the framework of the logic of the Bologna process, development and approval of new criteria and quality indicators that meet the requirements of European quality standards).
3. Actualization of academic mobility of university students in the country (within the network form of educational programs).
4. Organization of a network form of implementing educational programs on an intra-republican scale, when partners of universities in the country are not universities in other countries, but universities from different regions of the country.
5. Creation of a National Qualifications Framework and the definition of learning outcomes at each level in accordance with the Dublin descriptors; Maintaining unified Diploma Supplements and ESTS grading scales, Bringing State Educational Standards in the field of specialties in accordance with international standards and curricula on the principles of modularity: advanced training of teaching staff, revision of teaching materials, training of teachers trained in the use of new educational technologies, development of distance education and ICT, the introduction of innovative educational technologies, international cooperation and academic exchange, improving the material and technical base of educational institutions, etc.).
6. Reforming the system of management and financing of HE.

# 8. SECTOR EXPENDITURES/FINANCIAL TRENDS

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## 8.1 MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION SYSTEM & FINANCIAL MODELS

The education sector is one of the largest recipients of state budget funds. In 2018, total public expenditure on education amounted to 3,702.6 million TJS. More than 75% of the total education budget is decentralized, i.e. educational institutions receive funding from local authorities. In 2018, the education budget was 5.4% of GDP and 15.3% of the state budget.

The Comprehensive reporting in the Joint Sector Review 2017 and its update 2019 states that expenditures on education steadily increased since 2010, reaching 5.4 percent of GDP in 2018. The International Budget Partnership's Open Budget Index (OBI) and the World Bank's Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessment provide a fairly good account of Tajikistan's progress in reforming its public finance management system. The development is broadly in line with the size of the education sector in other countries with similar per-capita income, demography and CPIA scores.<sup>61</sup> Yet revenue shortfalls in recent years and rising debt service costs continue to limit fiscal space. The surest way to increase overall spend in the education sector is to improve the macroeconomic situation and fully implement structural reforms, e.g. in the area of public finance management.

Since the adoption of the PFM Reform Strategy 2009-2018, the government has made the following progress: (i) treasury single account (TSA) has expanded and now covers both republican and local budgets; (ii) new Financial Management Information System (FMIS) is being rolled out to all budget organizations, including districts and oblasts; (iii) a unified chart of accounts has been introduced; (iv) new Treasury Law has been adopted; and (v) public sector accounting standards based on accrual IPSAS62 for financial reporting were implemented.

Besides, basic PFM systems such as cash management and commitment control are being adopted to improve planning and execution of public resources, e.g. in education. In other words, basic bookkeeping and accounting is now sound across all the spending units in the education sector. Spend is much easier to trace and prospective extension of the SGB.Net database to the MoES will allow for greater monitoring of spend. This effectively enables the MoF to better exercise control of the use of public resources in education.

The Joint Sector Review 2017 and its update 2019 (Shuhrat Mizoev) contains a comprehensive analysis of the progress done on management of financial issues in the education sector (Public Finance Management in Education, chapter 3 page 24).

In short, the following list of the key reform for the sector since 1997.

- 1997 - Formation of Treasury; closure of accounts of budget organizations
- 2000 - Adoption of the first treasury information system (IS)
- 2001 - Transition from Soviet-style classifications to internationally accepted standard

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<sup>61</sup> Annex 1 Joint Sector Review – 2017 (and its update 2019) TABLE 11: Public expenditure and financial accountability assessment scores, 2007-2017.

<sup>62</sup> Tajikistan has already developed and approved 10 International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) such as cash flow statement, accounting policies, effects of changes in foreign exchange rates, borrowing costs, disclosure, consolidation, etc.

- 2003 - Introduction of medium-term planning in the budget process
- 2004 - Adoption of the first information system to adequately plan the state budget
- 2005 - Introduction of new budgetary classification in line with GFS 1986
- 2006 - Integration of existing information systems with relevant MIS in the NBT
- 2009 - The first PFM Strategy 2009-2018; improvement of budget planning and execution
- 2010 - Programme budgetary classification and source of funding; upgrade of existing IS on planning and execution of the state budget; automation of processes (local units)
- 2011 - Programme budgetary classifications in local governments; automation of wage bill and approval of the first Accounting Strategy 2011-2018
- 2012 - Single Treasury Account (STA); new budgetary classification and financial reporting in line with GFS 2011; restructuring of the treasury and introduction of new functions; setting up Tajikistan's Financial Management Information System; accounting reform
- 2014 - Introduction of the first set of IPSAS standards
- 2015 - Modern IT infrastructure to support the MoF; TFMIS for the republican budget
- 2016 - TFMIS for local budgets; roll out of external audit reform and civil service reform
- Implementation of the Medium-Term Public Expenditure Program (MTEF) and its piloting into the education system.

### 8.1.1 PER CAPITA FUNDING (RATIOS)



Per capita funding provides educational institutions with more autonomy and incentives to effectively manage financial resources, but the growth and mechanism for calculating per capita ratios require improvement. Funds are transferred to the treasury accounts for the needs of educational institutions in the form of a one-time payment, which can be distributed between wages, utilities, maintenance, office supplies, and other current expenses. Consequently, per capita financing means that educational institutions have autonomy both in the distribution of items of expenditure (in addition to the wage fund) and in spending within the limits calculated on the basis of the per capita funding formula. In addition, the formula provides educational institutions with means that are proportional to the actual number of students.

Per capita ratios are growing, but their annual growth rate does not correlate with inflation or budget figures. Standards per student and per school increased by 35.9% in nominal terms in the period 2015-2019. The nominal growth of per capita ratios in recent years has not been uniform: growth was 17% in 2016, 4% in 2017, 2% in 2018 and 13% in 2019. Indexation on the level of inflation is not carried out and growth is linked to remuneration for workers in the field of education is variable. The actual difference between nominal and real (i.e. adjusted for inflation) per capita ratios for the period 2015-2019. is 11.5%. In addition, the coefficients for lyceums and gymnasiums can be revised (or eliminated), because the differences between them and educational institutions are insignificant. This will mean a more optimal distribution of financial resources within the framework of per capita ratios.

However, in practice, the budgets of current expenses of educational institutions are insufficient to meet the financial needs of educational institutions. According to the calculations, educational institutions spend 54.7% of their total annual costs on the wage bill. In the Khatlon region, where there were 1,338 public educational institutions in the 2018-2019 academic year, an average of 90.5% of their total recurrent budget was allocated to the wage fund. This meant that each public school in Khatlon region had at its disposal, on average, less than 50,000 TJS throughout the year for expenses not related to wages, such as maintenance, utilities (except for the purchase of coal, which is purchased centrally by each district), the purchase of goods, etc. This amount is, on average, only 4.091 TJS per month per school to cover all current expenses not related to wages. In the Sughd region, for example, recurrent monthly expenses that are not related to salaries are, on average, 1,893 TJS per school.

### 8.1.2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF PARENTS

Parent contributions make up a significant proportion of funding in preschool institutions. These contributions are formally fixed in the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan “On payments for maintenance of children in state preschool educational institutions” (dated March 31, 2016, No. 150). In particular, in 2018, parental contributions amounted to 41.1 million TJS, i.e. 18.2% of the total budget of state preschool institutions. Since there were 96,578 children under the age of 7 in preschool institutions in the 2018-2019 academic year, parental contributions per child averaged 425.6 TJS per year (or 35.5 TJS per month).

Parents' contributions to general secondary education are regulated, but their accounting is not centralized. The regulation of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan “On paid services of general education institutions and methods for assessing the cost of paid services in general educational institutions” was approved in August 2005 (but almost never updated) and defines the services for extracurricular education, development and physical education that can be offered by general educational institutions on a paid basis. Each school coordinates the cost of the paid services with the Antimonopoly Service of the Republic of Tajikistan, the proceeds of which are reflected in the treasury accounts of educational institutions (as "special funds"). In practice, however, at least 20% of special funds are never registered. The cost of paid additional services is determined on an individual basis between parents and teachers (for example, contributions for renovation and maintenance of classes or school holidays are coordinated by parent-teachers associations, PTAs) and sometimes accounting is carried out by the parents or teachers themselves, and not by the accountants of educational institutions.

## 8.2 PROGRESS AGAINST MTAP 2018 – 2020

### **Input from Regional aspects based on reporting from Facilitators of working groups for NSED 2020 - 2030.**

**Goal:** To analyze the process of reforming the system of financing and management of education in accordance with the National Strategy of Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan up to 2020

The following expected results were laid in terms of financing and management as part of the implementation of the National Strategy of Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan -2020:

#### 8.2.1 MANAGEMENT IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

- A regulatory and methodological framework and infrastructure of the national system for assessing the quality of education have been created;
- A national system of assessment of the level of achievement of the declared state standard of educational results at all levels of education has been introduced;
- A management model has been implemented, which provides for the reduction of intermediate levels of management in the field;
- In the field of vocational education, a transition has been made from the management of institutions to the management of programs, the quality management of training specialists in ISO 9000, or other quality assessment and management systems, has been introduced;
- Licensing standards and accreditation provisions have been revised in accordance with the new tasks set for the education system;
- An information management base has been created based on monitoring the status, analysis and forecast of the development of education;
- Staff, functional activities of regional, district and city departments and education departments were reviewed;
- A system of indicators characterizing the resources and the efficiency of their use, the effectiveness of the functioning of the system and the compliance of these results with an external request was developed;

- Retraining of managers at all levels of the educational system in educational management programs is carried out;
- Marketing approach in management of educational institutions is implemented.

## 8.2.2 FINANCING EDUCATION SYSTEM

- Network models based on the joint use of resources by several educational institutions of different levels have been introduced;
- Conditions have been created for the development of competition of educational institutions of different forms of ownership for obtaining both budgetary and extra-budgetary funds;
- Per capita financing will become the main mechanism for the distribution of budget funds allocated to the education system, and is carried out without a breakdown of funds by budget classification items (“one line”);
- Effective use of financial resources and human resources based on competitive assignment of the state orders for training, scientific research, development of projects and programs for the development of economic sectors, enterprises and settlements in educational institutions of all forms of ownership, as well as their equal access to participation in the implementation of state orders;
- The tax burden has been reduced both for educational institutions of various organizational and legal forms, as well as for enterprises and individuals interacting with educational institutions, especially in terms of providing them with medical, consulting, methodological services and equipment;
- Assistance to non-governmental institutions in the provision of premises in various forms (including in the form of long-term leases), the formation of a system of tax benefits;
- Regulatory instruments on multichannel financing have been developed and implemented that facilitate the access of educational institutions to extra-budgetary financial resources and stimulate enterprises and organizations to provide assistance to the education system, including in material form;
- Incentives to enhance the participation of individuals and legal entities in financing institutions at all levels of education are provided at the legislative base level;
- Private sector participation at all levels of education has been enhanced.

## 8.3 PROGRESS AND RESULTS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NSED (MTAP 2017-2020)

The National Strategy of Education Development (NSED) for the period 2012-2020 assumed the creation of a financing system focused on ensuring equal access to educational services in pre-school, general secondary education and the effectiveness of financial relations at other levels of education, as well as a modernized result-oriented management system.

**Table 1.**

No.	Priority	Execution Status	
<b>1. Financing the education system</b>			<b>2.</b>
1.1	Funding according to the standard per pupil	The mechanism of financing according to the standard per pupil was introduced in accordance with the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan No. 621 "On the transition of state preschool educational institutions to normative (per capita) financing"	
1.2	Regulatory instruments on multi-channel financing will be	The Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Education" (article 52) permits	

	developed and implemented, facilitating access of educational institutions to extra-budgetary funds and stimulating enterprises and organizations of various forms of ownership to assist the education system, including in non-monetary form.	multi-channel financing of educational institutions. However, to launch such a mechanism and to facilitate the access of educational institutions to extra-budgetary funds, no special regulations have been developed.	
1.3	In order to improve the efficiency of the state budget, the main planning document organizing the work of educational institutions will be the state order for training. Work will continue on the methodological support of the procedure for the formation and distribution of the state order.	The State Program for the Training of Personnel with Higher Education for 2016-2020 was adopted (Approved by Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan of March 31, 2016, No. 144). However, the procedures for the formation and distribution of the state order have not been developed.	
1.4	Stimulation of enterprises of all forms of ownership, providing assistance to educational institutions, including in non-monetary form.	During the construction of educational institutions, enterprises of all forms of ownership and private entrepreneurs are exempted from the preparation of design and permits. The above documents will be prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as local authorities. This leads to a reduction in the costs of enterprises and private entrepreneurs, which provide assistance to educational institutions, including in non-monetary form.	
1.5	Stimulating the private sector to participate in the development of education at all levels;	According to the Tax Code (Articles 169 and 192), all representatives of the private sector who participate in the development of state educational institutions, that is, in the construction of new buildings, structures, equipment of educational institutions, in the purchase of goods and services, as well as in the provision of humanitarian assistance to educational institutions, are exempted from value added tax (VAT).	
1.6	Requirements for investment projects regarding training	Work continues	
1.7	It is necessary to develop and introduce a system of financial	Work continues	

	relations, providing for the level of funding of universities, depending on the degree of their effectiveness.		
1.7.1	Standards will be developed for financing the development of vocational education programs at all levels, groups of specialties and professions	Work continues	
1.7.2	It seems appropriate in higher professional education to abandon the system of providing state scholarships, replacing them with educational loans.	Not implemented.	
1.7.3	It is supposed to introduce partial compensation of the cost of studying by the student for the programs of higher professional education.	Not implemented.	
2	<b>Management of the education system</b>		
	The basis of the modernized management system will be a focus on results		
2.1	The quality management of training specialists at the level of educational institutions has been introduced, based on the principles of organization of ISO 9000 or other quality assessment and management systems	Not implemented.	
2.2	A regulatory and methodological base and infrastructure of the national system for assessing the quality of education based on existing structures have been created	Completed	
2.3	Improving the National Education Quality Management System	Work continues	
2.4	In order to strengthen the marketing approach in the management of educational institutions, it is necessary to increase the effectiveness of	Work continues. In August 2019, the Department for Tracking the Activities of Graduates of Secondary and Higher Professional Education Institutions was created at the State	



	existing ones and provide for the creation (in case of absence) of marketing services both in the structure of educational institutions at various levels and in republican, regional, city and district education management bodies.	Agency on Supervision in the Sphere of Education. At all higher education institutions there are structures that deal with marketing.	
2.5	Creation of the management information base built on the basis of monitoring the current state, analysis and forecast of the development of education.	An education management information system was created under the Ministry of Education and Science. However, it does not allow to forecast the indicators of the development of the education system.	
2.6	To maintain the compliance of educational programs with the demands of the labor market it is planned to introduce an independent professional certification	Work continues	

#### **8.4 RELEVANCE AND CONTINUITY OF INTERVENTIONS (INCLUDING EQUITY, EFFECTIVENESS AND TRAINING)**

The expected results, which were outlined in the National Strategy of Education Development until 2020, were a continuation of the initiated socio-economic reforms in the Republic of Tajikistan. The improvement of the financing system and management of the education system is closely related to the reform of the financial sector and the management of public institutions. One of such important reforms is the reform of state budgeting, which began in 2009 and was aimed at improving the budget process, ensuring its transparency, development of a three-year state budget and the efficient use of budget funds based on special sectoral programs. In accordance with the Public Finance Management Strategy for 2009-2018 (Approved by presidential decree No. 639 of 20 March 2009), the Medium-Term State Expenditure Program (MTSEP) was introduced. Budgeting the education system based on the principles of the MTSEP has made it possible to ensure the stability of the budget and the coverage of all the main components of public finance. Industry spending ceilings have been set. The Ministry of Education and Science presents budgets in which the costs of all programs will be calculated based on the expected results and priority areas. Educational institutions received autonomy in the allocation of funds according to budget items. The Ministry of Education and Science has organized an internal audit, which provides recommendations on improving the budget management processes of educational institutions.

The Ministry of Finance has launched the Financial Management Information System (FMIS), which covers the functions of the treasury execution of the state budget throughout the education system, including control over obligations. It is planned to organize a process of exchange and provision of data with the Ministry of Education and Science for the management of payroll processes and revenue management of educational institutions.

Over the past ten years at the initiative of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan wages of employees of the education system have been constantly increasing: in 2009 – 15%, 2010 -15%, 2011 – 30%, 2012 – from 30 to 60%, 2013 - from 20 to 30%, 2014 – 15%, 2015 – 20%, 2017 – 10%, and in 2017 - 15%.

The number of investment projects is constantly increasing. Since 2000, 14 investment projects worth 159.7 million US dollars have been implemented in the education system, of which 90.6 million dollars are grants, 58.1 million dollars are loans and the remaining 11 million dollars are contributions from the Government of



the Republic of Tajikistan. Various international financial institutions invest in the education system of the Republic of Tajikistan and this leads to a strengthening of the role and share of extra-budgetary funds. In recent years the government has attracted the financial resources of the following international financial institutions for the development of the education system: World Bank - \$34.3 million; Catholic Fund - \$31.9 million, Asian Development Bank - \$21.5 million, Saudi Development Fund - \$15 million, German Development Bank - \$21.45 million, International Development Fund (OPEC) - \$2.15 million, European Development Bank - \$22.65 million.

One of the essential reforms of the financing system of the Republic of Tajikistan is the transition of general education and preschool institutions to per capita (normative) financing. The transition to a normative system of financing was aimed at increasing the efficiency of the use of budget funds, stimulating competition between educational institutions to improve the quality of education, ensuring control over the expenditure of funds by self-government bodies and parents; optimization of the network of educational institutions; and creation of prerequisites for cost savings and their targeted redistribution.

According to the Decree of the Government of RT dated November 02, 2015 No. 621 "On the transition state preschool educational institutions to normative (per capita) financing" the transition of preschool institutions to per-capita (normative) funding was approved. The pilot showed that, on the basis of the introduction of per capita financing, it is possible to eliminate inequalities in the financing of preschool education institutions, expand the autonomy of preschool institutions and ensure the efficient use of public funds. According to the above decree, from 2017 all state preschool educational institutions should have switched to per capita financing. However, the process stopped due to the fact that the minimum funding standards for preschool educational institutions were not approved at the national level.

In 2016, for the first time in the history of the educational system of the Republic of Tajikistan, parents' fees for maintenance of children in state educational institutions were regulated at the national level (Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan March 31, 2016 No. 150 "On payments for maintenance of children in state preschool educational institutions"). This made it possible to improve food expenses, as well as increase the share of extra-budgetary resources in the preschool education system from 19% in 2015 to 34% in 2018.

From 2004 to 2011, according to Decrees of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated November 20, 2006 No. 502 "On the transfer of certain educational institutions to new forms of management and financing", Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated June 30, 2007 No. 350 "On the stages of the transfer of educational institutions to new forms of management and financing", Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated October 1, 2007 No. 505 "On approval of the rules of normative (per capita) financing of educational institutions"), all educational institutions, regardless of their type and the number of enrolled students in them, gradually moved to a new form of financing, i.e. funding for one (per) student. The transition to per capita financing of educational institutions has radically changed the management system at the macro level and at the institutional level. At the macro level, the role of local government bodies and local education authorities in managing financial resources has changed, and at the institutional level, the role of heads of educational institutions and local self-government has changed.

The standards of per capita financing (the standard per student and the standard for the type of educational institutions) are established by the Government, and they apply equally to all general educational institutions of the country and all students, regardless of physical condition and social origin. As the economy develops, the Government increases the size of these standards every year. If the standard per student on average in 2008 was 193.67 TJS, then in 2019 it rose to 1,182.67 TJS, i.e. 610.07% more. The standard for one general educational institution in 2019 increased by 590% (compared to 2008). In general, from 2008 to 2019, per capita funding standards for general education institutions increased by 6.1 times and this led to an increase in the budget of general education institutions and expanded their economic opportunities.

## 8.5 EFFICIENCY.

Financing of the education system of the Republic of Tajikistan is carried out from different sources: the state budget (budgets of all levels), grants, state loans and extra budgetary resources. Extra budgetary resources include funds from families, donor organizations, business structures, and earned funds of educational institutions.

**Table 2.**

**Funding by level of education in %**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018/2012 in %
4.1. Pre-school education	5.2%	6.5%	5.6%	5.9%	6.1%	6.1%	6.6%	334,6%
4.2. Secondary education	75.8%	76.3%	73.5%	70.1%	70.7%	71.1%	72.2%	91,4%
4.3. Tertiary and professional (vocational) education	13.6%	12.3%	13.6%	15.9%	15.6%	15.4%	13.0%	88,9%
4.4. Education not separable by levels	0.8%	0.7%	3.4%	4.2%	3.8%	4.1%	4.5%	182,6%
4.5. Other activity in the area of education	4.6%	4.2%	3.9%	3.8%	3.9%	3.3%	3.6%	91,5%

Table 1 shows that in 2018 6.6% of funding is allocated for pre-school education, 72.2% for general secondary education, 1.6% for primary vocational education, 4% for secondary vocational education, 7.4% for higher vocational education and 8.1% for other activity in education. From 2012 to 2018, there has been a marked increase in funding for pre-school education (from 5.2% to 6.1% or 334.6%) and secondary vocational education (from 2.2% to 4% or 182.6%). The share of funding for general secondary, primary and higher vocational education is decreasing. This trend does not correspond to the growth in the number of pupils and students and is associated with an increase in the cost of education in pre-school and higher professional institutions.

**Table 3. Funding per pupil and student (in TJS)**

Level of education	Average per person (in TJS)							
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018/2012 in %
Preschool education	463	675	834	1,468	1,410	2,170	2,592	559,8%
General secondary education	611	765	1,014	1,023	1,094	1,102	1,226	200,7%
Primary vocational education	1,174	1,786	1,972	2,022	2,174	2,483	2,612	222,5%
Secondary vocational education	883	1,321	1,668	1,399	1,466	1,753	1,825	206,7%
Higher vocational education	1,861	2,237	2,517	2,846	3,123	3,296	3,164	170,0%

The constant increase in funding for the education system has led to an increase in costs per person (pupil, student). The costs per person are higher in the system of higher professional education (3,164 TJS in 2018),

primary vocational education (2,612 TJS in 2018) and pre-school education (2,592 TJS in 2018). The lowest expense per person is in the system of general secondary education (1,226 TJS in 2018) and secondary vocational education (1,825 TJS in 2018).

In general, the presence of high costs in the field of vocational and preschool education in relation to secondary education, which accounts for a greater number of students, as well as high per capita costs in the areas of preschool and higher vocational education, requires additional analysis in order to identify the effectiveness of cost planning and methods of financing the education system.

Despite the constant increase in funding for the education system, there is a constant lack of financial resources, which is associated with demographic growth and a constant increase in the need for funds. In 2020, education sector spending is budgeted at 5 billion TJS. The planned reform - the transition to a 12-year compulsory general education will require (according to experts) from 77.8 million TJS to 1.66 billion TJS depending on the preferred scenario. Costs will further rise sharply over the next 6 years of gradual transition. This indicates that the Republic of Tajikistan currently needs more diversification of funding sources and the creation of effective mechanisms for spending public funds.

The following financing mechanisms operate in the education system: estimated (costly) and normative-per capita. Estimated (costly) financing is mainly used to finance vocational education and special educational institutions that have not switched to normative per capita financing. In general, estimated financing limits the financial autonomy of educational institutions and the efficient use of public financial resources. This method of financing is also opaque and inefficient in terms of the distribution of financial resources and the possibility of saving money in the context of a lack of resources.

Normative per capita financing was piloted in several districts of the country, and then after successful piloting it was introduced in all general education institutions (in 2011) and in all state preschool institutions (in 2017). It allows educational institutions to independently allocate and use their financial resources, as well as receive state funding taking into account the number of students (pupils).

The reform of the education financing system is ongoing and it is necessary to take into account the existence of several obstacles that reduce the effectiveness of the new mechanisms of financing the education system. First of all, strict regulation of the use of state and extra-budgetary funds within the framework of the treasury policy, complicated mechanisms for formalizing extra-budgetary funds, and the absence of by-laws regulating the formation, distribution and use of non-state resources reduce the effectiveness of financing state educational institutions.

The distribution of budgetary funds by budget classification items and compliance with the principle of their intended use (as understood by financial authorities) does not allow maneuvering resources depending on specific conditions and for solving specific problems. The ability to maneuver resources is limited, associated with the need for strict adherence to established budgetary procedures.

The tightening of control over the spending of extra-budgetary funds is increasingly turning into the need to justify to the financial authorities each expenditure of these funds, which nullifies the legally established autonomy and independence of educational institutions.

The absence of a consolidated financial management information system for the education sector does not allow the Ministry of Education and Science to generalize the results of financing educational institutions, as well as to disseminate information on budget execution of the education system. Due to the lack of an education finance information system, the Ministry of Education and Science will not be able to monitor and evaluate funding for priority areas and strategic plans.

The weak mechanism of planning and forecasting of the education system, based on actual results, also does not allow to finance strategic priorities at the proper level. The mechanism of planning and forecasting is poorly connected with the processes of monitoring and evaluation of strategic plans and government programs.

The directive forms of management of the education system and educational institutions, as well as the weak mechanism of public administration has led to the weakening of the management of educational institutions. In monitoring, supervision and control, the functions of different management structures are duplicated.

The main problem of the education management system of the Republic of Tajikistan remains the lack of responsibility for the final results of state educational institutions. The low qualification of a significant part of the management potential does not allow for the development of the education system on the basis of the introduction of innovative approaches and technologization of management decisions. The management system of educational institutions and the educational system as a whole is poorly technologized and electronic education and the achievement of digital technology are being introduced very slowly into the education system.

The existing information system of education management does not allow to carry out the current monitoring of the state of the education system and to predict the key indicators of the development of the education sector. Also, the education management information system does not allow tracking the budget execution of the education system and analyzing the financing of educational institutions.

At the moment, the education management system of the Republic of Tajikistan is characterized by low participation of citizens, employers and public associations in the management of educational institutions and the quality control of education. There are no rules and mechanisms of independent forms of assessment of the quality of education. The incompleteness and inconsistency of the regulatory framework regarding the formation of extra-budgetary resources, the state-public administration of educational institutions and the transparency of financial spending remain.

## 8.6 RESULTS

The implementation of the National Strategy of Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan till 2020 has not led to the solution of all existing problems in the education system. The presence of contradictions in the laws governing the financing of educational institutions and the absence of by-laws, poor technology and digitalization of the education management system, a tough financial policy regarding the formation, distribution and use of extra budgetary resources, the absence of an EMIS for finance, directive forms of management of the education system and educational institutions, as well as weak mechanism of public administration led to the fact that the financing and management system has become a deterrent to the development of the education system.

**Table 4. Problems (restrictions) of the system of financing and management of education**

No.	Problems	Reasons	Solutions
<b>Financing the education system</b>			
1	The procedure for budget financing is characterized by the presence of contradictions with the current legislation on education, as well as internal contradictions, shortcomings and ambiguities, exacerbated by the practice of its application. This reduces the efficiency of the use of budget	The presence of contradictions in the laws regulating the financing of educational institutions and the absence of by-laws.	Analysis of regulatory acts regulating the financing of the education system. Development of new by-laws (regulations, standards, etc.) regarding extra-budgetary resources, pricing of educational services, mechanism for the efficient use of public funds.

	funds, leads to significant transaction costs.		
2	The distribution of budgetary funds by budget classification items and compliance with the principle of their intended use (as understood by financial authorities) does not allow maneuvering resources depending on specific conditions and for solving specific problems. The ability to maneuver resources is limited, associated with the need for strict adherence to established budgetary procedures.	Rigid financial policy regarding the education system.	Development of new legislation on maneuvering resources and compliance with established budgetary procedures
3	The tightening of control over the spending of extra-budgetary funds is increasingly turning into the need to justify to the financial authorities each expenditure of these funds, which nullifies the legally established autonomy and independence of educational institutions.	Tough financial policy regarding the formation, distribution and use of extra-budgetary resources	Development and adoption of the "Regulation on the formation, distribution and use of extra-budgetary funds of educational institutions." Reduction of the tax rate relative to extra-budgetary funds of educational institutions. Development of a new mechanism to improve the efficiency of saved public funds in educational institutions.
4	Lack of consolidated financial information system in education	Absence of EMIS on finance and the policy of monitoring the financing of educational institutions.	The formation of an EMIS for finance in the MES
5	Weak mechanism for planning and forecasting the education system based on actual results	Weak human resources able to plan and predict the budget based on the result	Training of specialists of MES, subordinate structures, district (city) departments (management) of education and educational institutions in the planning and forecasting of the education system.
<b>Management of the education system</b>			
1	Weakening the management system of educational institutions	Directive forms of management of the education system and educational institutions, a weak	Development of new legal acts concerning state and public administration of educational institutions

		mechanism of public administration	
2	Old mechanisms and ways of interaction of state bodies and educational institutions	Low technologization of management of educational systems and institutions (low level of electronic governance in the education system)	Formation of "electronic government" in the education system
3	Duplication of functions in monitoring, supervision and control	The old management model based on the presence of many intermediate management links with duplicating functions.	Analysis of functional responsibilities of management bodies and sub-organizations of the Ministry of Education and Science
4	Lack of a system of monitoring and forecasting of the education system	Weak management information base, which does not allow monitoring the status and forecast of educational development.	Strengthening the EMIS system

It is necessary to continue the practice of introducing per capita financing of state educational institutions. This mechanism will become the main model for the formation, distribution and use of public funds allocated to educational institutions. This will increase the sustainability and efficiency of state funding of educational institutions.

In order to facilitate the access of educational institutions to extra-budgetary funds, it is necessary to introduce a system of multi-channel financing, which will ensure the financial stability of educational institutions. It is necessary to develop new rules for the diversification of sources of financing from extra-budgetary sources, allowing the attraction of additional resources for the development of educational institutions. On the basis of improvement of legal acts it is necessary to form a simple system of formation, distribution and use of extra-budgetary funds, which is based on the principles of financial autonomy of educational institutions.

It is also necessary to develop new forms of partnership between the public and private sectors in the field of education, which will attract the missing funds to eliminate the shortage of resources and modernize the material and technical base of educational institutions. This will allow the creation or reconstruction of real estate, the ownership of which belongs to the state. In turn, the state will provide the private sector partner with the opportunity to use public property for educational activities.

In the coming years, it is necessary to create a system of annual reporting on budget performance of all state educational institutions. This will improve financial management and attract extra-budgetary funds. The Ministry of Education and Science will be able to control and supervise the distribution and use of funds. Transparency of education funding will be ensured through the formation of an information system for

managing education funding and the introduction of mechanisms and forms of public reporting on the work of educational institutions.

Taking into account the importance of pre-school education, it is necessary to introduce alternative and low-cost forms of pre-school education aimed at expanding the access of all segments of the population to pre-school educational services. New forms of financing of alternative forms of preschool education should be introduced. To this end, new regulatory and legal documents will be developed that will allow the introduction of co-financing of alternative forms of preschool education and facilitate the processes of formation, distribution and use of extra-budgetary funds.

In order to ensure the financial sustainability of educational institutions, all state pre-school educational institutions are financed on the basis of "per capita financing". To do this, the regulatory framework is being improved and new criteria are being developed to determine the standard per capita of a student, taking into account inflation growth. The system of targeted social assistance is being strengthened, and mechanisms are being developed to encourage the participation of lower-income groups, including exemption from payment for preschool education.

In the secondary education system, it is necessary to continue the practice of improving the normative per capita financing. Special measures should be taken to reduce the tax burden for non-state educational institutions and extra-budgetary funds of state educational services.

In the vocational education system, it is necessary to introduce a model of normative-per capita financing. It is also necessary to develop and implement regulations on multichannel financing that facilitate the access of educational institutions to extra-budgetary financial resources.

Taking into account world experience, it is necessary to study the possibilities of introducing new fiscal mechanisms to stimulate investment in the education system by 2030, such as the introduction of educational savings and loans, the formation of private funds, tax incentives, a targeted social assistance system, the introduction of educational vouchers, the introduction of new forms of remuneration and etc.

## **8.7 ELABORATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

A further developed management information base, allowing monitoring the status and forecast of educational development. Therefore planning based on results is intended, using evidence (including data from EMIS), However the EMIS does not contain data collected by other agencies and ministries related to education and does not have a mechanism for the reverse transfer of data to educational institutions and districts. The use of planning should be reflected in the planning and decision making process at the regional and local levels. There is a wish further to develop the EMIS to contain also qualitative data better to be a tool for planning.

# **9. CROSS CUTTING ISSUES**

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## **9.1 GENDER ISSUES**

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, as a guarantor, signed agreements and developed various projects, which are being implemented through the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan. From 2000 to 2010 the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan implemented a number of investment projects in the sphere of education, which were aimed at renewal of the education system, achieving equal access to education, solving

gender problems, improving the quality of education and elimination of poverty by increasing the education level of the population.

Involvement of girls in education is of special attention to the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, all international programs and initiatives. Equality of access to education both for boys and girls was stressed as one of priority Millennium Development Goals: “Eliminate gender inequality by 2005 in primary and secondary education and no later than by 2015 – at all levels of education.”

#### Focus areas in the NSED:

- raising the gender parity Index based on graduation ration on all education levels;
- creating motivation and conditions to continue education for girls after they receive compulsory education;
- provision of one-time hot meals for students of primary classes (preferably 6-year olds, girls, children-orphan and children from low-income families) and children with special needs;
- increase access of girls and women to vocational education.

A national gender policy was passed in 2010, the National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan, which lists concrete actions to improve women’s participation in education, the labour market, entrepreneurship, and in politics, albeit without identifying responsible agencies, timeframes with milestones, funding sources, and monitoring plans. Tajikistan ranked 102nd out of 142 countries in the World Economic Forum’s 2014 Global Gender Gap Index.

#### According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2018 (WB)<sup>63</sup>

In 2017, the main developments in the education sector has been an increasing trend in enrolment and a narrowing gender gap for all levels. After a succession of economic shocks, Tajikistan's growth prospects are favourable and financing is on the rise. In the context of high demographic pressure, the government has mobilized important public resources to address the growing demand for education. However, the allocation and use of public resources is still not optimal and requires additional efforts.

#### INDICATORS IN STATE PRE-SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS<sup>64</sup> IN TAJIKISTAN, 2010-2017<sup>65</sup>.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Gender Parity Index, all state preschool educational institutions (excluding CDCs)	0.788	0.849	0.775	0.827	0.839	0.803	0.819	0.802	0.813
<i>of which:</i> in urban areas	0.799	0.838	0.771	0.836	0.837	0.809	0.822	0.808	0.823
<i>of which:</i> in rural areas	0.728	0.911	0.798	0.787	0.848	0.780	0.806	0.781	0.780
Gender Parity Index (GPI), all state educational institutions	0.883	0.890	0.891	0.907	0.911	0.912	0.915	0.922	0.929
<i>of which:</i> in primary (1-4)	0.924	0.930	0.930	0.936	0.935	0.933	0.934	0.935	0.940
<i>of which:</i> in lower secondary (5-9)	0.895	0.897	0.903	0.908	0.914	0.919	0.922	0.931	0.936

<sup>63</sup> The Global Gender Gap Report 2018 (WB)

<sup>64</sup> Excluding Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres.

<sup>65</sup> /Source: EMIS, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan; author's calculations



<i>of which: in upper secondary (10-11)</i>	0.718	0.758	0.743	0.818	0.839	0.833	0.837	0.850	<b>0.870</b>
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Although enrolment rates have been historically high in primary grades, there is evidence of dropouts and greater gender imbalances which result in lower attendance and higher dropout rates of girls. The general secondary education system is also beset with quality issues, although the MoES has taken critical steps towards competency-based education model, as well as significant improvement of learning materials and overall school infrastructure. This led to higher average class size and classrooms-to-school ratio.

Gender equity is less affected in early grades but enrolment and attendance gap tends to widen in higher grades beyond primary education. In general gender parity has marginally improved between 2016 and 2017. Fewer number of girls dropped out from upper secondary (grades 10-11) and primary (grades 1-4) in 2016 in comparison with 2017.

The gender gap in higher professional education in Tajikistan is closing but remains significant, not least due to a number of gender-segregated fields of study (e.g., geology, ICT and construction) where female participation rates have been historically low. Few females enter scientific or technical faculties in universities and institutes.

## 9.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan (NDS) until 2030 recognizes that limited social inclusion of children with disabilities is among the key problems affecting social inequities in Tajikistan. The main law governing persons with disabilities, Law #4-21 on Social Protection of Disabled Persons, approved in December 2010, provides definitions of terms (including disability) and describes entitlements for, and rights of persons with disabilities, as well as identifies the relevant government institutions responsible for social protection, health, rehabilitation, education, and employment. This law lays the foundation for the compliance with the CPRPD. The Tajikistan Constitution (1994, amended in 2003) also protects the rights of persons with disabilities, where their rights to social services and equality with other citizens is recognized.

The Tajik legislation provides for additional specific rights for persons with disabilities and their families in a range of other laws, the Law on Pensions (1993, 2012), the Family Code (1998, 2008), the Housing Code (1997), and the Law on Health Care (1997, 2013) and the Law on Education. A number of Government decrees set out the exact entitlements in more detail.

Furthermore, the Government of Tajikistan has established a Coordination Council on social protection for people with disabilities since 2011. For this council to be effective, it requires a strategy and a clear action plan with clear definition of roles and responsibilities of sectors. The fragmentation of existing services and mechanisms constitute a major barrier to people with disabilities enjoying their full rights to services.

Although, the Law on Education guarantees access of children with disabilities to study in mainstream educational institutions, it still allows for their placement in special educational institutions when mainstream educational institutions are not an option. By recognizing the need to increase attendance and participation rates in all levels of education as well as the need to improve Legal, Policy and Institutional Frameworks, the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan (NDS) until 2030 recognizes that limited social inclusion of children with disabilities is among the key problems affecting social inequities in Tajikistan. The main law governing persons with disabilities, Law #4-21 on Social Protection of Disabled Persons, approved in December 2010, provides definitions of terms (including disability) and describes entitlements for, and rights of persons with disabilities, as well as identifies the relevant government institutions responsible for social protection, health, rehabilitation, education, and employment. 7 This law lays the foundation for the compliance with the CPRPD. The Tajikistan Constitution (1994, amended in 2003) also protects the rights of persons with disabilities, where their rights to social services and equality with other citizens is recognized.

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To ensure that inclusiveness was well balanced in the overall educational development programme the MoES included a sub-component in GPE-4 to promote Inclusive Education. The main goal was to work against the NSDE target 2020 ensuring access to quality education for all children. Children with disabilities have been noted to be one of the most marginalised groups of children who are both out of school and at risk to dropping out of school. A UNICEF conducted study on out of school children in 2012 noted that children with disabilities are the most marginalised in terms of access to quality education. And, an OECD study (2009) noted that approximately 80% of children with disabilities receive no formal education.

The GPE-4 component supported adjustment of the school buildings to the needs of children with physical disabilities. In this regard, educational institutions were upgraded with pathways, accessible latrines, and ramps to ensure that all children got access to quality education.

The promotion of inclusive education in the developed “Training Material Packages<sup>66</sup>”, in particular, in the Teachers’ Guide reflects some aspects of working with students with special needs. Also, during the preparation of materials for students, this aspect was reflected in some supplements to the textbook and updated textbooks.

Also, the idea of gender balance is incorporated as a guiding thread within learning materials for students. For example, gender selection and alienation from gender stereotypes were taken into account for the selection of texts, topics of lessons, exercises, and drawings. The manual for teachers gives clear instructions for maintaining gender balance during classes that is, giving equal opportunities to boys and girls in the process of learning new knowledge and skills. During the selection of themes for textbook applications and updated textbooks, psycho-emotional development of both sexes was taken into account.

Considering the age of primary school students during the development of teaching materials and additional educational materials, the main topics related to healthy lifestyles (mainly hygiene and physical education), safe life and life skills were also taken into account and reflected in the teaching package.

A report commissioned by UNICEF<sup>67</sup> in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan to assess Sub-component 2.3 of the fourth Global Partnership for Education Fund Grant (GPE-4) presents the results of the assessment, and focuses on the state of affair promoting inclusive education

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<sup>66</sup> USAID “Read with Me” project

<sup>67</sup> Assessment of the results of sub-component 2.3 of the fourth global partnership GPE-4 for education fund grant: promoting inclusive education final report Final Report

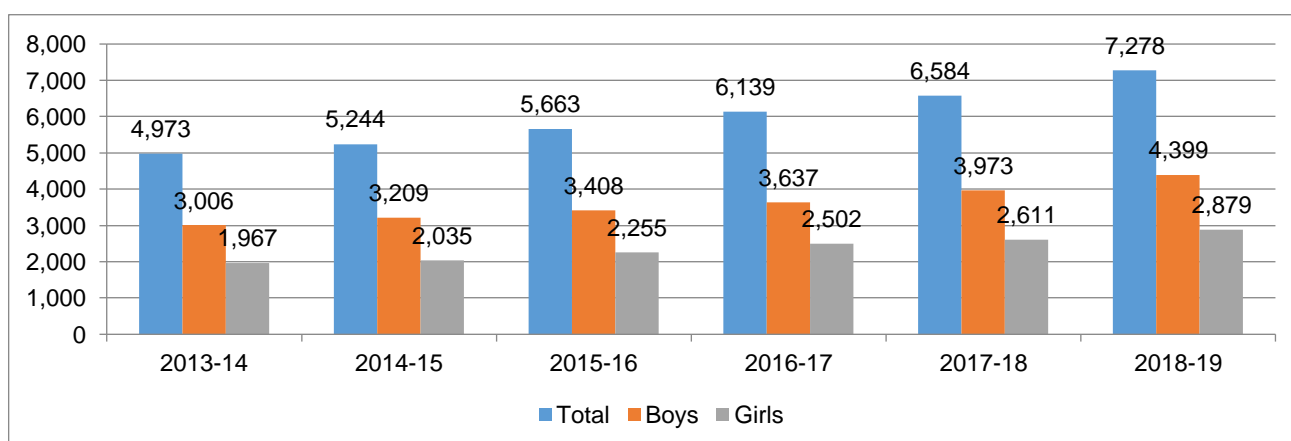
through improving infrastructure (in 20 selected educational institutions) and providing teaching and learning materials (in 49 selected educational institutions).

The analysis of data disaggregated by gender and type of disability collected in sample educational institutions also demonstrates positive trends in enrolment of children with various disabilities, including intellectual and sensory (visual and hearing) impairments at mainstream educational institutions. For instance, in rehabilitated educational institutions, 16 per cent of the children had physical disabilities, 12 per cent had intellectual disabilities and over 11 per cent had visual impairment, while in TLM educational institutions 35 per cent of the children had intellectual.

Despite faced obvious problems during the implementation of different initiatives, the analysis of quantitative data<sup>68</sup> from both sources implies that the number of children with disabilities in mainstream educational institutions is steadily increasing, and the interventions undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Science within the Sub- component were timely and reflect the urgent need to create appropriate conditions in regular educational institutions for children with disabilities to receive quality education.

The analysis of data disaggregated by gender and type of disability collected in sample educational institutions also demonstrates positive trends in enrolment of children with various disabilities, including intellectual and sensory (visual and hearing) impairments at mainstream educational institutions. For instance, in rehabilitated educational institutions, 16 percent of the children had physical disabilities, 12 percent had intellectual disabilities and over 11 percent had visual impairment, while in TLM educational institutions 35 percent of the children had intellectual disabilities.

Total number of children with disabilities in mainstream educational institutions in Tajikistan, by gender.



<sup>68</sup> Assessment of the results of sub-component 2.3 of the fourth global partnership GPE-4 for education fund grant: promoting inclusive education final report

# 10. DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

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## 10.1 GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION PARTNERS – GPE-4

The fourth Global Partnership for Education (GPE-4) Grant (USD 16.2 million, 3 years, implemented by the WB) builds on achievements of the previous FTI grants. This continues some of the activities and supports new areas like Early Childhood Education and Inclusive Education and complements work started with other DPs such as UNICEF, AKF, USAID and OSI. The activities related to primary level teacher training and system strengthening – focusing on planning functions within MoES – are both areas that complement the Project.

Twelve donors has signed a Joint Country Partnership Strategy (JCPS) with the aim of enhancing aid efficiency and effectiveness. A coordinating mechanism, i.e. the Donor Coordination Council (DCC), has been established on behalf of involved donors. The DCC interacts with the State Committee on Investments and State Property Management (SCISPM) on behalf of the Government and the national ministries, agencies and institutions. The DCC holds one meeting every month. A sub-group for the Education Sector has been established called the Local Education Donor Group (LEDG).

The JCPS partners' assistance, based on the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS-3), has focused on three broad areas:

- Support for broad-based economic growth – by increasing productivity in agriculture, realising export potential in energy, improving connectivity in transport, and strengthening other physical infrastructure required to enable growth;
- Support for human development – by enhancing education and health and by addressing vulnerability through improved social protection; and
- Support for good governance – by reforming public administration (including the civil service and wages) and public financial management, promoting private and financial sector development, and strengthening the rule of law.

The JCPS is the agreed approach for donor support to Tajikistan. The JCPS' three main objectives are:

1. to affirm partners' common commitment to support Tajikistan's development goals – as described in its NDS and related Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS);
2. to outline a shared strategic vision and operational framework for more effective coordination and management of JCPS partners' resource flows – including measures to improve their predictability, reduce transaction costs, promote programmatic approaches, encourage an agreed division of labour, and strengthen mutual accountability; and
3. to define the measures needed to achieve the agreed development outcomes, including the benchmarks by which shared principles of aid effectiveness will be monitored.

The strong partnership between the Tajik Government and the Development Partners implementing together the GPE 4 (2013-2017) has brought the good progress forward in the education system. The development objective of the Fourth Global Partnership for Education Fund Grant Project for Tajikistan was to contribute to

improving the learning conditions in preschool and general education. The project comprised of four components. The first component supported the process of increasing access to quality early childhood education (ECE) programs. The second component, upgrading general education content objective was to focus the general secondary education program on competencies and broaden the teaching-learning process to encompass active learning and formative assessment techniques. It consisted of following sub-components: (i) upgrading primary education content and practices; and (ii) upgrading secondary education content. The third component, improving learning environments objective was to increase access to improved learning environments in general secondary education. It consists of following sub-components: (i) civil works; and (ii) furniture. The fourth component, strengthening system capacity objective was to strengthen the capacities at the central and local levels to manage the education system. It consisted of following sub-components: (i) management capacity strengthening; (ii) directors training; (iii) per capita financing; (iv) education management information system; and (v) project management.

The Development Partners (DPs) active in the education sector include the Aga Khan Foundation, the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, GPE, UNICEF, USAID, and the World Bank, Open Society Institute.

As a contribution and support to the education sector the first engagement of the European Union through bilateral cooperation was the Public Financial Management Support Programme for Tajikistan", PFMRSPP, EUR 8 million that provided possibilities for synergies and complementarities. MOES was one of the three first line ministries to embark on the MTEF (Mid-Term Expenditure Framework) reform.

The conceived model for budgeted planning at school and local government levels, consisting of a 1 years plan combined with a 5 years perspective plan is in line with the MTEF planning cycle, thus the support programme has been working closely with the PFMRSPP to strengthen the participation of local education offices (Rayon and Oblast) and schools in the process.

The EU Education Action Plan 2015-2017's overall objectives were agreed to contribute to the development of a fully inclusive education system adapted to the requirements of the Tajik economy's transition towards a market economy and future Human Capital requirements. Two projects have supported the Ministry of Education in its effort to implement the National Education Development Strategy and to improve learning outcomes at general secondary and initial TVET level through more efficient and effective delivery of education and training provision.

The proposed project was designed with the aim of addressing selected national priorities from the National Strategy for Education Development (NSED) of the Republic of Tajikistan till 2020 and the Education Action Plan 2015-2017 (draft). The 2014-2020 MIP for Tajikistan provisioned an envelope of EUR 75 million for education, making the EU the major education donor in the country. It was the first time that the EU supported the education sector through its bilateral funds.

The current standalone project (EUR 15 million) was seen as the first phase of EU support over the 2014-2020 period, to be followed by two further projects of EUR 35 million (in 2017) and EUR 25 million (in 2020). The objective, should context allow, is to implement the follow up projects through a significant share of sector budget support. During the JSR reporting period the EU, through Erasmus Mundus and Tempus programmes (now combined under Erasmus+), over the years have supported Higher Education institutions in areas related to teacher training at pre-service level and has contributed to good outcomes and achievements of these initiatives. On a regional level the EU funded Central Asia Education Platform (CAEP) supported policy dialogue in CA partner countries around several themes functional to the forthcoming programme (e.g. teachers CPD and quality assurance systems for TVET) and will be kept in high consideration to provide coherence and consistency with the EU action in Central Asia in the field of Education.

This initial period is therefore considered to build a platform of partnership, dialogue and understanding in the sector in preparation for a scaling up of the implementation of the policy reform supported through the two subsequent phases.

Several other opportunities for collaborations has been opened by the focus of the European Training Foundation (ETF) on INSET in the TVET system in Tajikistan and in the Region. The ETF has promoted regional dialogue on development and strengthening of the professional development initiatives for teachers and trainers.

The "Development of Pre-Service Teacher Pedagogical Approaches for Quality Education" Project (2 years duration from 2014), which was funded and implemented by UNICEF, targets pre-service teachers enrolled at the Tajik Pedagogical University to promote quality education at the basic education level through methodological, didactic, and technical support of the teaching process.

The ADB has supported with a USD 20 million programme in Initial TVET with the main aim of supporting the GoT in developing a more effective, efficient, quality assured, and flexible Initial TVET System focusing on selected priority occupations and targeting 21 lyceums over the country.

GIZ has over the years implemented several projects with a focus on the TVET sector. The 3rd phase of the "Support to Sector Reform Process of the VET System in Tajikistan" project (EUR 3.2 million, started in 2014). The programme, building on the two previous phases, has worked on three major areas: Policy and System advice (through the creation of an inter-ministerial advisory board for TVET – CTVET), Capacity building for school management, and Capacity building for teachers and instructors in selected VET centres.

During the first 2 phases of the project "Support to Sector Reform Process of the VET System in Tajikistan" GIZ succeeded in setting up a system of "centres of competence" focussing on 7 Lyceums and 8 Adult Training Centres. The approach is reported to be successful in improving the quality of the training provided within the centres. The centres of competence have struggled to fulfil these responsibilities and have been unable to transfer their improved knowledge and competencies, particularly in the professional development of the teaching workforce in the neighbouring centres.

The FTI-3 project (WB implemented, USD 13.5 million), concluded in 2013, registered positive results through improved mentoring approaches and strengthened skills of quality control on teaching from school directors. Several issues were reported concerning the capacity and interests of RIITT and Rayon Education Departments (REDs), particularly in identifying and selecting the participants.

In relation to the quality of teaching, AKF have implemented in a variety of schools innovative in service teacher training modules applying the principle of "relevance pedagogy" and introducing school based "communities of practice". AKF results could be used and adapted taking into account the challenges of secondary education. An assessment system for monitoring improvements of students' learning outcomes is also used by the AKF project. This experience should also be taken into account.

The USAID funded Quality Reading Project (QRP) is supporting the government's effort to improve reading skills in primary education by working on competency based reading instruction (for Russian and Tajik) in grades 1-4. As part of its activities USAID intends to conduct regular assessment of its reading interventions and student learning outcomes over a four-year period. Collaboration in the area of reading assessment with the NTC is envisaged. QRP provides some good lessons, in particular regarding the development of active teaching and learning methods, training of trainers and materials that were developed.

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The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) has been active in Tajikistan since 1992.

AKF programmes have included:

- promoting new teaching/learning approaches
- enhancing management and planning skills of mid- and senior-level education administrators
- building capacity in development of curriculum and teaching resources

# 11. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

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## 11.1 LESSONS LEARNED

Based upon the NSED implementation plan until 2020 and its medium-term plans for 2012-2014, 2015-2017 and 2018-2020 the regional, city and district government bodies have developed regional implementation plans to fulfil the strategy based on local conditions and traditions.

Based on the commitments and progress made since 2012, the Medium-Term Education Action Plan (MTEAP) 2018-2020 was developed covering final stage of the National Strategy on Education Development (NSED) 2020. Building on the achievements of the previous stages, the document is designed to guide the implementation of the NSED in achieving the set objectives. The MTEAP 2018-2020 focuses on 2 cross-cutting priorities of the education sector, namely: (1) ensuring access to education for all categories of the population and age; and (2) improving the quality of education for all learners at all levels of education.

The program of socio-economic development of regions is being developed for the medium term on the basis of strategic and program documents of the Republic of Tajikistan, which forecasts of the socio-economic development of the region, including the NSED till 2020.

The program of the socio-economic development of the regions takes into account the strategic goals of the country's development, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and ensures their implementation, taking into account the characteristic features of each region.

- Mandatory development of a regional development program as a regional strategic planning mechanism;
- Full and comprehensive support of the regional development program, covering all programs and activities financed from the state budget, funds from donor organizations, public organizations, domestic and foreign investors;
- Mandatory participation of civil society in the design and implementation of programs;
- Implementation of mandatory monitoring and evaluation.

The Joint Sector Review describes the archived results during the period of implementation the NSED and describes the means to success including experiences from the regional development plans and programmes. Based on these experiences and the research leading to the Joint Sector Review it is suggested to develop a replication mechanism to use Tajik methodologies to implement the achieved results and further create new local based methodologies.



The Development Partners have supported the successful implementation of the NSED and this JSR is highlighting three main areas where successful implementation have taken place.

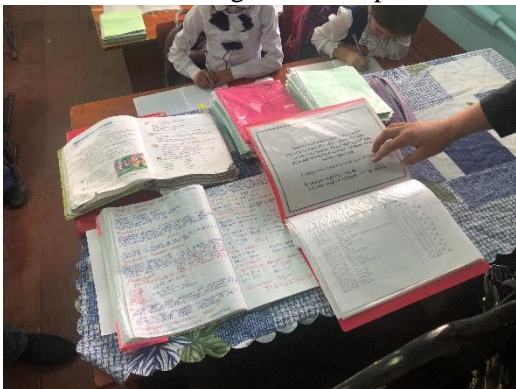
1. The successful implementation of the NSED’s main goals for the pre-school sector.



The successful development when it comes to start the implementation of a competency based learning.



2. The process of changing from a knowledge-based to a competency-based curriculum in general education including the development of new textbooks and teaching materials.



The three achievements are part a of a long term process in the Tajik education system, and the process of preparing a new National Education Strategy 2020 – 2030 will further support this development.

## 12. THE BEST PRACTICE

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At the regional level there are achievements which have changed both the methodological approach to teaching and learning, and successfully supported the local development and discussions with parents and among professionals.

An example from Istravshan, a district of Sogd.



The building of the Education Department was renovated and well-maintained thanks to good support from GPE-4 project. The process and focus on the management of a school administration process has made the foundation for progress in this district when it comes the pre-school institutions, and Child Development Centres, where the region really made very good progress, especially when it comes to Learning Centres that prepare children for the education system.

As a result of the investment of donor support in Istravshan, the district of Sogd. the secondary school No. 18 the staff of the school sees improving of the quality of education, taking into account the competency-based approach, about new standards, in-service training course for teachers, about new textbooks, as well as about normative per capita financing and about teachers' salaries.

An excellent and impromptu attendance of classes in primary grades, which give a good impression of the result of the priorities and investments of the Ministry of Education and Science.

New educational institutions are being built and renovated to promote new methodologies and to support gifted children. Such educational institutions are designed to support children with special gifts and are good support to a regions development. This process is ongoing country wide and can be a good asset to establish a process of using a “Best Practice” approach to strengthen local capacity further to improve achieved results from invested resources.

The local anchorage of the implementation of the NSED was highlighted by O. Karimzoda - head of ED of Sogd in a speech on 29 September 2019 at a workshop with members of local Education Group, heads of Education Departments, school directors and teachers, administrators and specialists of preschool institutions. Mr Karimzoda noted about the achievements in implementation of NSED until 2020 in Sogd, and about how it improved the capacity at the level of cities and regions of the region and the participation of local education groups in them. The NSED had positive effect on the quality of education, taking into account the characteristic features of each region. Positive changes in the region during the implementation of NSED occurred at all levels

of education, percentage of enrolment in preschool education increased, qualitative changes occurred in general in enrolment of girls in rural areas with different courses for obtaining of specialty and their employment.

There is a noticeable increase in enrolment of girls from regional educational institutions in universities and colleges, as well as in non-vocational educational institutions and vocational educational institutions. Mr Karimzoda also mentioned the importance of the donor organization's importance for providing comprehensive assistance in raising the qualifications of teachers for introducing of competency approach in teaching, capacity building of specialists and educational leaders of the region, etc.

### **Best Practice**

A "Best Practice" approach is a way to support relevant stakeholders at national, regional and rayon level in identifying and replicating 'best practices' at primary and preschool level.

The terminology "best practices" is recommended to cover the following topics: Implementing competence based learning, improving students learning outcomes, learning material and related delivery methods and improving early childhood education.

This approach will enhance the capacities of the local authorities at national, regional and rayon level for the replication and up-scaling of best practices in the sector.

### **Expected results of such approach are as follows:**

- An exhaustive survey on best practices in the preschool and primary and secondary education sector to identify good results from educational institutions.
- The survey on best practices in the preschool, primary and secondary education sector to be assessed, presented, nationally shared and discussed among stakeholders and a catalogue will be edited.
- A process will be established to implement training and related capacity building for the replication and up-scaling of best practices.
- Capacities of the stakeholders (at national, regional and aimag levels) for the replication and up-scaling of best practices are enhanced.
- A well-coordinated and embedded practice among various stakeholders in the education sector, to further finance and implement the replicability and upscaling of the best practices.

## **12.1 RECOMMENDATIONS ALSO TO BE CONSIDERED**

The reporting period gave different inputs for recommendations from high level representatives of the Ministry of Education Latofat. In a workshop held in Khujand on 26 September 2019 Mrs Naziri, Deputy Minister of MoES in her speech noted the priority areas of education system, constant paternal support provided by our Dear President and the Government of the Republic to the education system.

She gratefully noted about assistance provided by the educational development partners in Tajikistan. Especially she noted about the Project "Quality Education Support Program" conducted by the European Union since 2017 on introduction of competency-based approach in grades 5-11 of the Republic of Tajikistan.

In her speech, she made a special emphasis on the improvement of the infrastructure of preschool institutions, Early Learning Centers and in the process of expanding and covering of children with preschool learning. She noted about organization of hot meals for primary school children, the enrollment of children with disabilities in educational process, the system of assessing the quality of education, in-service training courses for teachers and school directors. She noted about the successful achievements in implementation of NSED in 2020 and about the priority areas of NSED 2021-2030.