

Early Childhood Education and Care: A Focused Review of Preschool Education in Tajikistan

Final Report

June 25, 2019



This report presents the findings and recommendations of an Early Childhood Education and Care Analysis carried out in Tajikistan under the Advisory Services and Analytics P165024. This analytical work was financed by the World Bank with co-financing from the Education Sector Development Plan Grant of the Global Partnership for Education.

Disclaimer

This report is a product of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / the World Bank. The findings, interpretation, and conclusions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Executive Directors of the World Bank or the governments they represent. The World Bank Group does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this work. This report does not necessarily represent the position of the Government of Tajikistan

Rights and Permissions

The material in this work is subject to copyright. Because the World Bank encourages dissemination of its knowledge, this work may be reproduced, in whole or in part, for noncommercial purposes as long as full attribution to this work is given.

Attribution

Please cite the work as follows: "World Bank. 2019. Tajikistan Early Childhood Education and Care Sector Analysis: A Focused Review of Preschool Education in Tajikistan. © World Bank."

All queries on rights and licenses, including subsidiary rights, should be addressed to World Bank Publications, The World Bank Group, 1818 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20433, USA; fax: 202-522-2625; e-mail: pubrights@worldbank.org.

Contents

Acknowledgements	vi
Abbreviations	vii
Why this report?	9
Key findings and policy recommendations.....	11
Access and equity.....	12
Facilities and services quality	12
Financing.....	13
Regulation and governance.....	14
Policy recommendations	15
<i>General recommendations</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Increasing equitable access.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Enhancing quality.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Ensuring financing</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Improving regulation and governance.....</i>	<i>17</i>
Chapter 1. Early childhood education and care in Tajikistan today.....	19
Chapter 2. Access and equity.....	24
2.1. Low access	28
2.2. Inequitable access.....	29
Chapter 3. Quality of facilities and services	34
3.1. Preschool facilities quality	34
3.2. Quality of preschool services	40
3.3 Quality of human resources.....	42
Chapter 4. Financing	49
4.1. Public financing.....	49
4.2. Parent contributions.....	51
4.3 Per capita financing	52
4.4 Expenditures for meals in public preschools.....	54
Chapter 5. Regulation and governance.....	55
5.1 The regulatory regime: actors, standards, curriculum, programs.....	55
5.2 Ambiguous adherence to regulations	58
5.3 A lack of consistent monitoring	59
Chapter 6. Policy Recommendations	62
<i>General recommendations</i>	<i>62</i>
<i>Increasing equitable access.....</i>	<i>63</i>
<i>Enhancing quality.....</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Ensuring financing</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>Improving regulation and governance</i>	<i>66</i>

Annex 1. List of Regulatory Documents	70
Annex 2. ECEC Monitoring.....	72
Annex 3. Development Partners' Support to ECEC in Tajikistan	74
Annex 4. Maps.....	75
Annex 5. International examples of ECEC services provision	85
Chile Grows with You (Chile Crece Contigo) - Informative and Educational Materials for Children – “Discovering Together”	85
ECEC core curriculum of Finland, demonstrating a common approach in early care and early learning.....	86
Session services and Toy libraries to support general access	89
Family Creche service in France.....	89
Childminders policy in Ireland.....	90
Some other examples	90

Figures

Figure 1.1 Number of ECEC institutions by type of service and years, 2010–17	21
Figure 1.2 Private ECEC provision growth and planning	22
Figure 2.1 Net preschool enrollment ratio to per capita GDP, 2014	24
Figure 2.2 Dynamics of enrollment in preschool services, 2010–17	25
Figure 2.3 ECEC enrollment by region (nonresidential only)	26
Figure 2.4 Number of children in nonresidential ECEC institutions by type of services and year, 2010–17.....	26
Figure 2.5 Occupational rate in KGs by district, 2017	28
Figure 2.6 Distribution of KGs by district, with poverty rates by district.....	29
Figure 2.7 Number of children enrolled in KGs and ELCs per 1,000 poor people by districts on poverty map	30
Figure 2.8 Number of girls and boys in KGs.....	31
Figure 2.9 Enrollment of children with disabilities in ECEC in 2017.....	32
Figure 3.1 Room in a functioning KG (Rudaki, RRS)	36
Figure 3.2 Bedroom, KG (Tajikistan).....	38
Figure 3.3 Multifunctional room, KG (Sweden)	38
Figure 3.4 Flexible regime, KG (Sweden)	38
Figure 3.5 Multifunctional space, KG (Sweden)	38
Figure 3.6 Tetrapak KG (Modena)	39
Figure 3.7 Open KG (Šmartno)	39
Figure 3.8 Example of merging spaces	39
Figure 3.9 Example of multifunctional spaces	39
Figure 3.10 Quality of services at preschool institutions: urban and rural areas.....	40
Figure 3.11 Private ELC (Khorog, GBAO).....	42
Figure 3.12 Rural KG (Rudaki, RRS).....	42
Figure 3.13 Urban KG (Khujand, Sugd).....	42
Figure 3.14 Education profile of professional staff in state KGs	44
Figure 3.15a Education level of state KG professional staff, urban and rural, absolute figures ..	45

Figure 3.15b Education level of professional staff in state KGs, urban and rural, percent	45
Figure 4.1 Planned expenditures for food per child per day, in TJS, at state KGs in 2017.....	54
Figure 5.1 ECEC governance chart	56

Tables

Table 1.1 Profile of ECEC services in Tajikistan, 2017 ^a	19
Table 1.2 Most nonresidential ECEC institutions in 2017 were state owned.....	21
Table 1.3 Enrollment in ECEC services by age in 2017 (<i>excluding boarding institutions</i>)	22
Table 2.1 Tajikistan's population of children aged 0–7 years, by age and year, selected years from 1991 to 2016	25
Table 2.2a ECEC services ^a by region in 2016	27
Table 2.2b Comparison of ECEC services ^a distribution by region in 2017 vs 2016.....	27
Table 3.1 Basic utilities in urban and rural preschools (KGs and ELCs) in 2016.....	36
Table 3.2 Education profile of core staff in state KGs	43
Table 3.3 Staff schedule sample for KGs	47
Table 3.4 Norms for children per group by age group	48
Table 4.1 Total expenditures (in TJS millions) of the state budget for the education sector, 2010–18 (mainly current expenditures)	50
Table 4.2 Budget breakdown by key budget classification items.....	51
Table 4.3 Coefficients of the indicator for calculations of parent fees, by district (city or district)	51
Table 4.4 Summary of the main characteristics of the preschools' financing system before, during, and after the PCF pilot.....	53
Table 6.1 Estimated maintenance cost per child in KG and in ELC in 2017 (in TJS)	66

Boxes

Box W1 Tajikistan's fast-growing youth population: Key facts	9
Box W2 About the analysis in this report.....	9
Box K1 Early childhood education and care (ECEC) and "preschool" in Tajikistan	11
Box 1.1 The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study	23
Box 2.1 Targeted social assistance (TSA)	30
Box 3.1 Norms for infrastructure, hygiene, and daily routine in Tajikistan preschools.....	34
Box 3.2 Example of an attempt to comply with the sanitary norms. The autonomous sewerage system of B. Gafurov district, Sugd. Kindergarten No.18	35
Box 3.3. Preschool Facilities and Services Assessment Instrument.....	41
Box 3.4 Norms for group size and children–teacher ratios in other countries	48
Box 4.1 Tajikistan's pilot per capita funding (PCF) model for preschools	52
Box 5.1. Preschool Education Management Information System (EMIS).....	61

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by a team led by Saodat Bazarova and comprising Dessislava Kuznetsova and Sanobar Khojaeva. Shavkat Sohibov, Sobirjon Kurbanov, Elena Lenskaya and William Seitz provided technical inputs, Avralt-Od Purevjav prepared poverty maps. The team of exerts led by Elena Yudina and the Center for Sociological Research Zerkalo designed, conducted, and analyzed beneficiary survey. Shahlo Norova, Sijani Eli and Marta Helena Reis de Assis provided administrative support.

The team would like to thank Harry Anthony Patrinos and Jan-Peter Olters for their guidance and support. The team also thanks Ayesha Y. Vawda, Alexandria Valerio and Marina Ustinova for the draft report review and valuable comments. Special thanks are due to peer reviewers Tigran Shmis and Shawn Powers. Big thank you to Nick Moschovakis and Bruce Larson for intensive editing and Priya Susan Thomas and Shalmraj Ramraj for formatting support.

This analysis could not have been possible without the support of the Ministry of Education and Science, its Education Management Information unit that provided valuable data, and deputy ministers Fathiddin Usmonzoda and Latofat Naziri. The team also thanks representatives of Academy of Education, Institute for Education Development, Republican Institute for Inservice Teacher Training and Republican Training and Methodological Center, representatives from the regions, education sector workers and national experts who participated at the discussions of preliminary results of the analysis and provided valuable information and advice. The team would like to thank the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Health and Social Protection for provided data. The team is grateful to the parents of preschool age children, community representatives, preschool workers and district education departments that participated in the beneficiary survey.

The team would like to thank development partners that provided valuable information and contributed to the discussions of preliminary results of the analysis including UNICEF, Aga Khan Foundation, USAID, and Open Society Institute.

Abbreviations

AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
AoE	Academy of Education
CwD	Children with disabilities
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ECA	Europe and Central Asia (region)
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
ECHI	Early Human Capability Index
ELC	Early Learning Center
ELDS	Early learning and development standards
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESPDG	Education Sector Development Plan Grant
FG	Focus group
GBAO	Gorno-Badahshan Autonomous Oblast
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNI	Gross national income
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HCI	Human Capital index
HCP	Human Capital Project
HEP	Higher Education Project
IED	Institute for Education Development
INSET	Inservice Education and Training
KG	Kindergarten
LED	Local Education Department
LFD	Local Financial Department (LFDs).
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
NSED	National Strategy for Education Development
NDS	National Development Strategy
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OSI	Open Society Institute
PCF	Per capita financing
PHC	Primary health care
PRESET	Preservice Education and Training
QA	Quality assurance
RTMC	Republican Training and Methodological Center
RIITT	Republican Institute for Inservice Teacher Training
RRS	Rayons of Republican Subordinations
SABER	System Approach for Better Education Results

SASSE	State Agency for Supervision in the Sphere of Education
SEN	Children with special educational needs
SES	Sanitary Epidemiological Service
SSF	Social Security Fund
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
TA	Technical assistance
TF	Trust Fund
TLM	Teaching and learning material
TSA	Targeted social assistance
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAT	Value added tax
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

Why this report?

Tajikistan's human capital—eroded by the country's civil war (1992–97)—remains low today. According to analyses by the World Bank's Human Capital Project, a child born in Tajikistan today is expected to be 53 percent as productive as he or she could be with full health and complete education.¹ High rates of childhood stunting, low preschool coverage and low learning outcomes are the major reasons for underperformance. Accordingly, Tajikistan has made it a development priority to invest in high quality early childhood development (ECD) and early childhood education and care (ECEC).²

Given Tajikistan's overwhelmingly young population and high birth rates (box W1), the government is right to address its human capital shortcoming by investing in its youth. High quality ECD and ECEC investments are vital: they yield high economic and social returns by improving child health, education access and quality, and cognitive and psychosocial development.³

Box W1 Tajikistan's fast-growing youth population: Key facts

Tajikistan is a small landlocked country in Central Asia. It is a low-income country, with gross national income (GNI) per capita at \$990 in 2017.

In 2016, Tajikistan's population was 8.76 million, and this population was growing rapidly at 29 births per 1,000 people. That is the highest birth rate in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region, and it is among the 25 percent highest in the world. About one of every three people in Tajikistan is a child under 15 years of age—and about one of every six people (17 percent) is under 6 years of age.

Providing social services to this fast-growing youth population is a challenge, in part because of Tajikistan's topography. High mountain ranges occupy 93 percent of the nation's territory, making communication is difficult—especially in winter. This challenge is all the greater because more than three of every four poor people (76 percent) live in rural areas.

Recognizing the potential of ECEC investments, the 2030 National Development Strategy (NDS) of Tajikistan sets the ambitious goal of quadrupling preschool coverage for children aged 3–6: from below 12.4 percent in 2016, to 50 percent in 2030. The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) is in the early stages of preparing its 2030 National Strategy for Education Development (NSED 2030) and a State Program for Preschool Development for 2021–2025.

To guide these ambitious plans and the Government of Tajikistan's overall policies on ECEC, the World Bank financed an analysis, with results detailed in this report.⁴ The analysis focused on the preschool sector, access and service delivery challenges for children aged 1.5–6 years, and ways to meet these challenges (box W2).

Box W2 About the analysis in this report

The analysis detailed in this report used several sorts of data and research methods. It intensively used the results of a prior assessment of preschool facilities and services in Tajikistan, conducted under the Fourth Global Partnership for Education (GPE-4) project in 2016.⁵ The analysis also used:

- A desk review of ECEC policies and services.
- Education statistics from national and other sources.⁶

- Interviews with key stakeholders.
- A beneficiary survey, conducted within the scope of work for this analysis.

The beneficiary survey sought to identify, first, barriers to preschool education as perceived by key local stakeholders; second, families' expectations of ECEC services; and third, any potential demand for selected alternative preschool models. It included focus group (FG) discussions with the local stakeholders, as well as interviews with local education departments (LEDs) and with community leaders (heads of mahallas). The FGs—14 in all—included parents of children who did attend some type of ECEC program, parents of children who did not attend any type of ECEC program, and teachers and heads of state-owned and privately-owned KGs and early learning centers (ELCs). The survey was conducted in five locations (districts or cities): poor and nonpoor, central and peripheral, large and small, urban and rural.

Note: a. Data was obtained from the Education Management Information System (EMIS), national statistics, the kindergartens^a (KGs) per capita financing (PCF) monitoring reports of MoES, the World Bank, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (IUS), and other international data platforms.

Key findings and policy recommendations

Early childhood development (ECD)—including early childhood education and care (ECEC)—is a national priority for Tajikistan, in part because of demographic trends, in part because of today’s low ECEC coverage and quality. Tajikistan’s population is growing by 2.2 percent per year, putting it in the top quarter of the fastest growing populations globally. As a result, children aged 0–6 years make up 17 percent of the total population. Yet in 2016, Tajikistan’s preschool enrollment rate for children aged 3–6 years was 12.4 percent—the lowest for any country in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region.

By 2030, the government aims to attain 50 percent preschool enrollment for children aged 3–6, quadrupling the 2016 enrollment rate: an ambitious goal, especially with such a fast-growing population.⁶ Preschool education in Tajikistan (box K1) has not only to make up the loss of facilities during the civil war of the 1990s, but also to meet rapidly rising demand.

Box K1 Early childhood education and care (ECEC) and “preschool” in Tajikistan

In general, *early childhood education and care (ECEC)* is a part of early childhood development (ECD), focusing primarily on child developmental services provided through education and care arrangements for children from birth to compulsory schooling, regardless of setting, funding, opening hours, or program.

Preschool is defined differently in different countries. In Tajikistan, *preschool* stands for ECEC covering children from ages 1.5 years to 7 years (the first year of compulsory schooling). It is not compulsory. Although preschool is mostly provided by the state (92 percent)—with few facilities either private or enterprise-owned—it is also mainly fee based.

More than two-thirds (67 percent) of all ECEC enrollments are in full day kindergartens (KGs).^a Of the remaining one-third, most (32 percent of total enrollment) are in half day early learning centers (ELCs). A very small share (1 percent) are in residential institutions. Some services are specialized for children with special education needs (SEN).

Enrollment of children aged 3–6 years in ECEC institutions is low, at 12.4 percent in 2016. This low preschool enrollment rate mainly reflects three factors: low access (especially in rural areas), low average service quality, and the poverty level of households.⁷

Note: a. Kindergarten (KG) normally refers inclusively to various regular full day services—nursery, nursery/KG, KG, and KG/primary school—which differ only by the age groups served.

Despite progress and increasing ECEC investments in recent years, the government still is not on track to meet its target of 50 percent enrollment by 2030. Enrollments more than doubled from 2010 to 2015 and continued to rise through 2017. And from 2010 to 2017, recurrent public preschool education spending rose from 2.1 percent to 5.6 percent of all budget expenditures on education.⁸ The government has also made some efforts to stimulate private ECEC provision. But these efforts have not yet begun to close Tajikistan’s wide coverage gap.

Expanding today’s largely public ECEC system by building and maintaining new state-operated KGs is unlikely to be affordable for Tajikistan, according to local financial departments (LFDs). Building and equipping a standard KG for 150 places costs about \$800,000, while its average annual maintenance cost is about TJS 380,000.⁹ Food for children imposes additional costs—one that KGs today cannot sustain except by compromising on mandated food quality standards.

Key findings

How will Tajikistan meet its ECEC enrollment target for 2030? This report analyzes four dimensions of the problem—ECEC access and equity, facilities and services quality, financing, and regulation and governance—and recommends steps toward 50 percent enrollment.

Access and equity

While coverage for preschool-age children in Tajikistan has been growing, the 2016 enrollment rate of 12.4 percent reflects insufficient provision, especially in rural areas. It also reflects inequitable access, given Tajikistan's poverty rate, unsustainable parent fees, and the lack of relevant parent education. In addition, low enrollment partly reflects low service quality (discussed below).

Access to ECEC services is much lower in rural areas than in urban ones. Urban areas have more KGs—of the 615 in Tajikistan in 2017, Dushanbe alone (the capital) had 132 KGs—and also higher enrollment rates: compare 30 percent in Dushanbe with just over 2 percent in Rayons of Republican Subordination (RRS). Because KGs are concentrated near the more densely populated centers of districts, physical distance from preschool services is an access barrier for rural children. More generally, different districts have vastly different numbers of KGs. Even if Dushanbe is excluded as an outlier, the number per district ranges widely, from 1 to 45, with a statistical mean of 5.5. Some districts have just one KG for 10,000–12,000 children of preschool age (see chapter 2, figures 2.7 and 2.10, and annex 4 for maps showing access disparities).

The share of girls in the preschool population lags behind that of boys. Over 2010–17, girls consistently accounted for fewer than one-half of ECEC institution enrollments (about 45 percent).

Children with disabilities (CwD) are mainly accommodated in specialized schools rather than in mainstream education, and minority language speakers lack access to materials in their language. Inclusive approaches to meeting the needs of CwD are not yet widely practiced or understood outside Dushanbe. Languages of instruction—and especially of classroom materials—do not typically accommodate national minorities, yet this lack of minority language instruction does not create access barriers.

In sum: the main reason why preschool enrollment is lower in Tajikistan than in regional comparator countries is that access is low—and highly inequitable. There are not enough spaces, low income households often cannot afford preschool, and preschool facilities are often of low quality. In addressing these challenges to meet Tajikistan's goal for 2030, a top priority must be to remedy inequities in the geographic distribution of preschools and in the affordability of ECEC services across the income distribution. Other priorities are including CwD, promoting higher participation by girls in preschool, and providing teaching materials in minority languages (recommendations appear below).

Facilities and services quality

Despite stringent regulations, many ECEC facilities are well below minimum state quality standards for health and hygiene and for classroom lighting. Infrastructure is dilapidated, especially in rural areas. Two services in particular are among the most severely limited and unequally distributed of any in Tajikistan: access to improved drinking water, and access to sanitation connected to a functioning sewerage system.¹⁰

The quality of ECEC services is generally low, limited by funding and other constraints. This low service quality appears across critical child development domains, with significant disparities (see figure 3.9 in chapter 3).

Service quality is lowest in ELCs, in rural ECEC institutions, and in public ECEC institutions (the vast majority). In 2016, an assessment of preschool facilities and services found that they were of lower quality in ELCs than in KGs; of lower quality in rural than in urban preschools; and of lower quality in public than in private or enterprise-owned preschools.¹¹ Child-to-teacher ratios in state KGs are 20:1 on average,¹² which would be considered high for a provider of high quality ECEC services.

The qualifications of ECEC teachers do not meet state standards. In 2017, only about half of professional staff in state KGs had the degree in pedagogy (secondary or higher education) required by the state.¹³ And many teachers, especially in rural areas, lack general knowledge and understanding—let alone specific professional skills—limiting the quality of their work.¹⁴

Service quality is much lower at ELCs than at traditional KGs.¹⁵ Tajikistan's ELCs reflect the country's first efforts toward its strategic goal of investing in alternative preschool types. An ELC provides half day services at a location and a price that make it more accessible than a KG. Between 2012 and 2016, a notable rise in preschool enrollment rates for children aged 3–6 years (from 9 percent to more than 12 percent) resulted largely from massive ELC openings by local authorities, following government instructions to scale up ELCs. By 2017, ELCs accommodated almost one-third of children enrolled in preschool. Yet ELCs still lack secured public funding and a regulatory framework, limiting their quality and sustainability.

Learning outcomes are not systematically monitored in the ECEC system (discussed below). In particular, ELCs are burgeoning across the country without any regulatory regime, raising special concerns about their service quality.

Financing

Today's inadequate financing of preschool education—a legacy of collapse in the economy and public finance of Tajikistan during previous decades—will continue until the country adopts new financing approaches to meet its 50 percent enrollment goal for 2030. Tajikistan cannot afford to realize this ambitious goal through the construction of new state KGs alone. Financing is low, both from the public purse and from private investors. Facilitating nonpublic financing and provision will be a necessary part of ECEC services expansion. The increase in access, however, must also make equity a priority.

Preschool fees are unaffordable for many parents. Fees contribute about 34 percent of total KG budgets.¹⁶ In the beneficiary survey conducted for this report, respondents singled out the “very high fee” as a key reason for not enrolling children in KGs. In 2017, between one-quarter and one-third of the national population—29 percent—lived below the national poverty line of TJS 190 per month per person (adjusted for inflation). Even the lowest monthly KG fees—TJS 50—thus account for more than one-fourth of the poverty line, or more than 150 percent of the cash benefit provided to a low-income family (TJS 33 per month per household).¹⁷

Preschool food quality, though strictly regulated, is compromised by funding constraints. Budgeted funding for KGs lacks a secured allocation for food. As a result, KGs are spending only one-sixth to one-fourth of what they would need to spend on the minimum food basket under state standards.

Following the success of per capita financing (PCF) in general education, a PCF model for state KGs was piloted in 2016—but has not been adopted. The pilot has shown that PCF can make resource management more efficient at both the policy and the service provision levels. Further implementation of PCF is pending an analysis of its impact on interbudgetary relations.

Even as public financing falls short of enabling high quality ECEC service delivery, it also leaves schools with no autonomy. Schools in the ECEC system have no ability to invest on their own, either in quality or in equitable and diversified access.

Regulation and governance

National development strategies in Tajikistan emphasize holistic preschool education, and an intricate regulatory regime is in place for preschool education. Strengthening education and improving preschool participation and provision quality are key elements within the national development priorities. A set of regulatory documents defines key principles of ECEC in Tajikistan and standards for various aspects of ECEC services, including preschool infrastructure, daily routine, nutrition, human resources, and learning outcomes.

However, there are challenges in intersectoral and cross-sectoral coordination. The governance system lacks a strong institutional niche to coordinate three key ECD sectors: health, education and social protection. Some ECD regulatory documents are approved with only a single ministry's involvement, and there are discrepancies between data possessed by different ministries. Vertical coordination within the education sector is also scarce, in part because service provision is decentralized—local authorities finance and provide all local social services. Data are abundant, but monitoring (also locally implemented) remains weak.

The mandatory curriculum for full day preschools—Rangincamon¹⁸ (“Rainbow”), which targets children’s physical, emotional, social and personal development and aims to prepare them for comprehending knowledge—is in need of updating, while other optional programs have not attained wide use. Approved in 2012, Rangincamon now needs updating with new approaches according to national experts. Although other optional short-term preschool curricula and programs exist for children ages 5–7, those options are not widely used, and their effectiveness has not been assessed.

There is no document providing a clear job description and qualification requirements for preschool staff. The Regulation for Preschool Institutions (2015) describes the responsibilities of a preschool head only, while stipulating that preschool staff engaged in education activities should have professional pedagogical education (secondary or higher). In 2017 the MoES developed a new preschool staff schedule with responsibilities and qualification requirements—a good basis for staff optimization on KGs, but still pending approval.

Today’s multilayer monitoring system—both for regulatory compliance in ECEC processes, and for service provision and outcome quality (including direct observation of children)—is not standardized. No manuals exist to guide assessments. In 2016, MoES took a step forward by creating a standard instrument for internal and external monitoring of ECEC service provision, but the instrument has not yet been adopted or its procedures institutionalized.

Almost a decade after introducing the Early Child Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) in 2010, Tajikistan still is not monitoring adherence to them. The country is thus missing an opportunity to properly assess child outcomes and development.

Tajikistan does not systematically educate parents on the aspects of ECD most relevant to ECEC services. Across sectors, policy elements targeting parental support are present but fragmented: they are not organized to invest in parental skills and capacity through child-centered concepts, such as Nurturing Care. To be sure, standards are in place to stimulate parenting and knowledge transfer through maternity and childhood health consultations. But these standards are neglected in health provision because of low funding, a lack of professionals, and a lack of materials. In preschools, work with parents is limited to meetings and discussion of preschool issues—there is no policy for communicating information on priority topics, such as the psychological and physical development of children in different age groups, or how parents should play with children with special education needs.

In sum: an inclusive and multisectoral approach to ECD service provision—including preschool services—is a high priority given Tajikistan’s challenging ECD outcomes. The challenges range from high stunting rates among children under 5 years to low school readiness.

Policy recommendations

As the Government of Tajikistan embarks on much-needed ECEC policy reforms, the analysis in this report identifies some options as feasible, others less so. A proposed ECEC expansion strategy is presented here first, with related general recommendations. More specific recommendations follow under four heads: increasing equitable access, enhancing quality, ensuring financing, and improving regulation and governance.

General recommendations

The proposed ECEC expansion strategy is a coordinated, gradual introduction of a mixture of high quality services, giving priority to 6-year-olds, while sustaining and raising the current enrollment of other preschool age groups—and while intensifying the focus on ECD and ECEC advocacy and awareness raising and on parental education.

- *To develop a clear roadmap for covering gradually all 6-year-olds with one preschool year as a priority, while, at the same time, to the extent possible, sustaining and raising the current level of enrollment of all preschool age groups already covered.* That would also facilitate a move toward compulsory one-year preschool in the future, if such a decision is made.
- *To address supply limitations and meet varying demands, the preschool expansion should rely on a mixture of different preschool models.* To meet the needs of a fast-growing and diverse child population, the government should further develop alternative models and combine center-based services with family care, parenting support programs, and varied cost-efficient solutions targeted to children aged 0–6. Such a combined approach will be less costly than investing in public infrastructure alone—though it will also require strong collaboration and quality assurance mechanisms.
- *ECD and ECEC advocacy and awareness raising and parental education should receive greater emphasis.* Parental education is crucial, given the system’s low capacity to cover preschool children, on the one hand, and the lack of awareness about child development needs among parents and caregivers, on the other.
- *Plan expansion in the supply of ECEC services, using data to ensure equitable provision.* The expansion and combination of services and infrastructure development should be

informed by specific local demand for services (including demographic data), with two parallel strands of work to address rural and urban demands.

- *Encourage provision by the private sector and other nonstate actors.* Regulations should support alternative means of ECEC provision, especially through private finance.
- *Ensure that preschool expansion does not come at a cost in preschool quality, but instead accompanies improvements to facilities and services.* International experience shows that children who attend low quality preschools very often do not perform better than peers who attend no preschool at all: in some cases, the enrolled children even perform worse.
- *Develop a comprehensive regulatory framework.* In Tajikistan today, different types of ECEC services are being provided under different settings. Combined with an introduction of new modalities of the service provision that would require a comprehensive framework for enabling preschool service delivery by various providers (public, private, nonprofit), in diverse settings (full day, half day, half week, and so on), and in different venues (KGs, schools, public premises, community centers, homes, and so on)—all targeting a core set of child development outcomes. See the recommendations under “Improving regulation and governance,” below.

Increasing equitable access

- *Organize and develop the ECEC service network to better facilitate access and growth according to the needs of the population* (including by reducing physical distance from preschools). In addition to collecting and analyzing data on regional preschool needs and access, the government could initiate space planning for the expansion. Special attention is needed to poverty as an access barrier.
- *Expand coverage, not just through newly built public facilities but also in existing ones, by applying innovative designs that use space flexibly.* Such designs could combine adaptable layouts, storable or multipurpose furniture, and a flexible daily routine to accommodate higher numbers of students, while also encouraging more interaction among and with children and thus improving early learning experiences (see chapter 2).
- *Initiate national campaigns to promote understanding of CwD and raise awareness on the value of child-centered inclusive approaches, in education and in all ECD services.* The government should consider more focused planning and support for the inclusion of CwD, using knowledge and experience developed by international partners in Tajikistan.¹⁹
- *Encourage the opening of preschool groups with instruction in Russian, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen,*²⁰ subject to the availability of specialists. Such diversification would better meet the needs of national minorities at ECEC institutions.

Enhancing quality

- *Improve ECEC infrastructure to meet hygiene norms and other facility standards.* Public infrastructure requires upgrading, especially of water and sanitation facilities, and improvements to classroom lighting.
- *Improve quality of teaching.* A good preschool experience depends heavily on the skills of the school teacher. Efforts are needed to improve teacher preparation and training, not only before service, but during service.
- *Monitor learning, including child learning outcomes and classroom interactions.* Establish standards. Keep them clear and simple. Measure them regularly. Before settling on a type of assessment (direct assessment or survey, sample or population wide), the government

should first identify its purpose for ECECs: it is for process monitoring? Screening? Outcomes evaluation? What resources (human, financial, time) are required? What tradeoffs may be necessary and acceptable among purpose, instrument, and cost?

- *Coordinate all actors to improve ECEC service quality based on monitoring data, and invest in building their capacity.* Once an assessment is adopted and its results are available, the government has a central role in aligning all actors (parents, schools, community leaders, policymakers) to improve learning in response. Efforts must include both staff training and community outreach.
- *Make teaching and learning materials (TLM) adequately available.* Critical to cognitive stimulation and social development, these materials do not have to be expensive—they can be locally resourced. Brains are best stimulated by using a variety of resources. The preschool sector needs to encourage a more intensified use of TLM.
- *Improve preschool meals to meet state quality standards.* Such improvement could reduce the high stunting rate among children under age 5 in Tajikistan.

Ensuring financing

- *Increase preschool financing.* Increased public financing for ECEC will be important to attain the desired growth in preschool enrollment, as is envisaged in the national development agenda. Efforts will also be required to enhance private financing of preschool service provision.
- *Introduce more equitable funding modalities, with autonomy for preschools to distribute funds efficiently.* It is recommended that a decision on PCF implementation be made following the analysis of its impact on the interbudgetary relations—making KG budget allocations more transparent, and preserving KGs' gains from the preschool PCF pilot. If regulations are revised, alternative preschool models could be financed from the budgets of KGs or schools to which they are mapped, and preschool children could be included in the PCF formula for those institutions.
- *To make ELCs more sustainable and affordable for families and improve quality of ELCs services, include ELC teachers in the state budget payroll with a limited parent fee.*

Improving regulation and governance

- *Improve coordination among all parties involved in data collection and analysis, planning, policy development and quality monitoring—and intensify efforts to coordinate ECD policies within the education sector and among relevant sectors (education, health, and social protection).* Strengthening the capacity for data collection and analysis, both at the local and at the national level will also be important.
- *Review and update the regulatory framework in line with international good practices for child learning outcomes, child safety, teaching standards, physical infrastructure, inclusive education, and so on.* See recommendations under “Enhancing quality,” above.
- *Revise the regulatory framework to stimulate private ECEC services provision.* See recommendations under “Ensuring financing,” above.
- *Strengthen regulations for improved services quality at ELCs.* Regulations governing ELCs and similar services—and related financing modalities—need updating to ensure more sustained and high- ELCs have increased preschool coverage, they are generally of low quality provision. Although quality.²¹ Including ELC teachers on the state budget payroll (as recommended above) should raise the quality of ELCs.

- *Strengthen quality assurance in the preschool sector.* Elaborate the quality assurance structure and procedures, internal and external, with roles and responsibilities and qualification requirements for all ECEC stakeholders. Introduce quality assurance procedures at all levels, from central agencies down to preschools.

Chapter 1. Early childhood education and care in Tajikistan today

In Tajikistan, early childhood education and care (ECEC) includes a wide range of services for children from 2 months to 17 years in various settings—nurseries, kindergartens (KGs), early learning centers (ELCs), boarding schools, and specialized schools (table 1.1). Most of these institutions are regulated by the Ministry of Education and Science. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP) regulates centers for abandoned young children (under age 4) and for children with disabilities (ages 6–14).

Table 1.1 Profile of ECEC services in Tajikistan, 2017^a

#	Institution type	Target children	Number of preschool age children there	Number of Institutions	Services	Regulated by	Legal base
1	Nursery	All children aged 1.5 to 3 years	122	1	Care, feeding, early development	MoES	(1)
2	Kindergarten (KG)	All children aged 3 to 7 years	29,498	267	Care, feeding, early development, preschool education	MoES	(1)
3	Nursery-KG (without specialized institutions)	All children age 1.5 to 7 years	60,489	328	Care, feeding, early development, preschool education	MoES	(1)
4	KG-primary school	All children aged 3 to 10 years	1,648	13	Care, feeding, early development, preschool education, primary education	MoES	(1)
5	Early Learning Centers (ELCs)	All children aged 4 to 7 years	43,666	1,671	Preschool education	MoES	(1)
6	Specialized Preschool	Children aged 2–7 years requiring physical/mental treatment/development and rehabilitation	1,296	6	Care, feeding, medical treatment, early development, preschool education	MoES	(1)
7	Boarding school Residential	Orphans and children from poor and single parent families aged 6–17 years	6	13	Accommodation, care, feeding, early development, preschool education, medical care	MoES	(1)
8	Special Boarding school	Children who have committed	0	1	Accommodation, care, feeding, early	MoES	(1)

	Residential	crimes/or are troubled, aged 6 to 17 years			development; preschool education; medical service		
9	Orphanage Residential	Orphans, abandoned children from ages 2 months to 8 years	1,291	15	Accommodation, care, feeding, early development, preschool education, medical care	MoES MoHSP	(1)
10	Baby Home ^b Residential	Children with disabilities or those who have been abandoned, aged 0 to 4 years ^c	94	4	Accommodation, care, nutrition, early development; medical service	MoHSP	(1)
11	Facilities for children with disabilities (residential/ half day)	Children with disabilities aged 4 to 17 years	369	4	Rehabilitation (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, psychosocial care, education, employment), and other basic services	MoHSP	(2)
12	Daycare center for children with disabilities	Children with disabilities aged 6 to 14 years	n.a.	31	Care, rehabilitation, development abilities	MoHSP	(4)
13	Private centers for additional education	All children aged 3 to 7 years	n.a.	n.a.	Early development, development of children's abilities in the field of art	Ministry of Justice	(3)

Note: a. The laws envisage other preschool services that did not exist in 2017, such as family preschools. b. Data from the state institution, the Republican Center for Medical Statistics and Information of the MoHSP. c. MoHSP is working on raising the upper age limit to 6 years.

(1) Law of the Republic of Tajikistan ‘On Education,’ Provisions of preschool educational institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2015.

(2) The Law ‘On Social Service,’ 2008 and the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Protection of the Rights of the Child, 2015.

(3) Law of the Republic of Tajikistan ‘On licensing certain types of activities,’ 2004.

(4) Law of the Republic of Tajikistan ‘On the State Social Order,’ 2008

Preschool education—which covers children aged 1.5 to 7 years and is not compulsory—is provided almost exclusively by the government. Of the 2,286 institutions providing nonresidential preschool education and other ECEC services in 2017, 92 percent were public. In contrast, less than 4 percent were private—while a similarly small share consisted of enterprise-owned preschools, concentrated in the economic centers (table 1.2).

Table 1.2 Most nonresidential ECEC institutions in 2017 were state owned

ECEC institution type	Number of institutions (excludes residential)	Ownership		
		State	Private	Enterprise-owned
Nursery	1	1	0	0
Nursery-KGs (specialized included)	334	289	24	21
KGs	267	203	50	14
KGs-Primary school	13	6	6	1
ELCs	1,671	1,605	9	57 ^a
Total	2,286	2,104	89	93

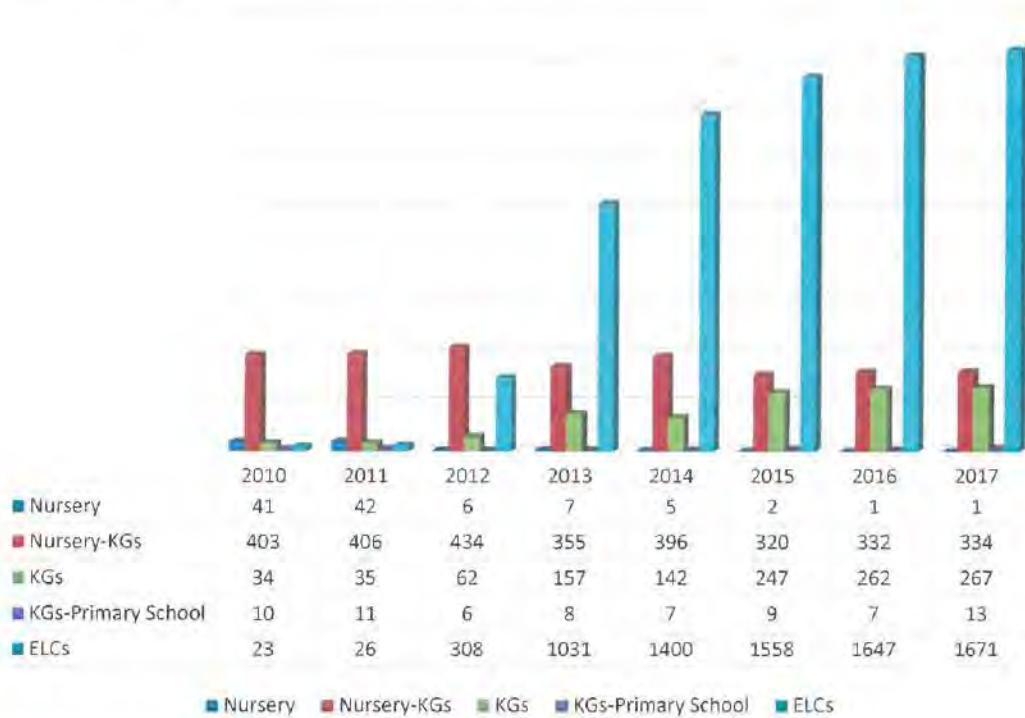
Source: Authors' analysis based on EMIS data.

Note: a. Data needs thorough checking—the number of enterprise-owned ELCs is questionable.

Nonresidential preschool education and services provision increased almost fivefold from 2010 to 2017 (figure 1.1)—an increase driven chiefly by ELCs. First established in 2010 with support from development partners,²² ELCs began opening in 2012, as local authorities followed the government's instructions for scaling up. As a result, the number of ECEC institutions increased from 511 in 2010 to 2,286 in 2017.

Figure 1.1 Number of ECEC institutions by type of service and years, 2010–17

(excluding boarding institutions)

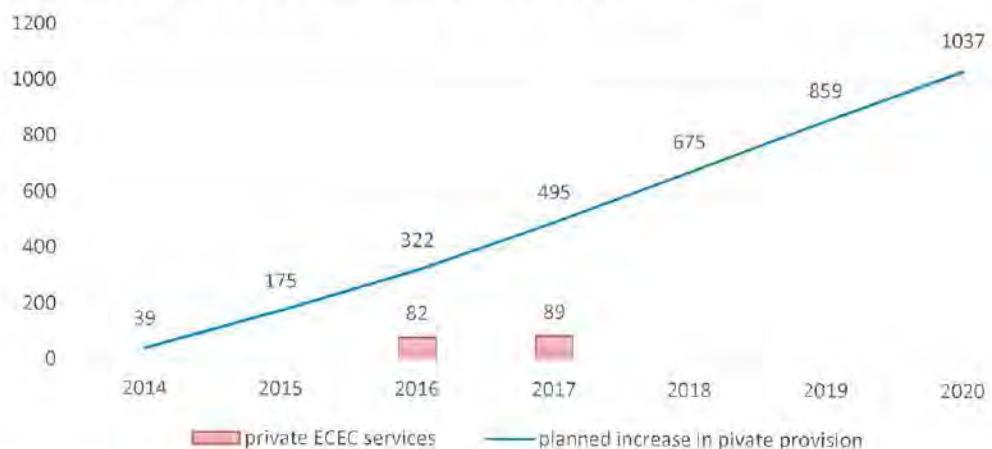


Source: Authors' analysis based on EMIS data.

Providing half day services for children aged 4–7 years,²³ ELCs depend wholly on parental fees for teacher salaries and for teaching and learning materials (TLMs), while they rely on local authorities for facilities. Local authorities guarantee physical space, maintenance, and utilities—usually in schools²⁴—through the budgets of the public services to which the ELCs are attached. The school (or the entity where the ELC is opened) and the parents negotiate the service fee, which is flexible to some extent based on family income.

Private ECEC provision is growing—but lags behind the government’s planned growth (figure 1.2). Whereas the government had planned for 495 ECEC institutions by 2017, only 80 private KGs and 9 private ELCs had opened by then. Of the 80 private KGs, 63 were in the capital city and the Sughd region. Tajikistan’s most populous region, Khatlon, had just 6 private KGs. And Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO)—the least populated region, with the highest poverty rate—had only 1.

Figure 1.2 Private ECEC provision growth and planning



Source: Authors’ analysis based on MOES.

Most children enrolled in preschools are attending kindergarten (table 1.3). Of the students enrolled in ECEC services in 2017, 67 percent were attending KGs and 32 percent ELCs.

Table 1.3 Enrollment in ECEC services by age in 2017 (excluding boarding institutions)

Title	Number of institutions	Number of children by age						
		Total	0–3	3	4	5	6	7
Nursery	1	122	122	—	—	—	—	—
Nursery-KGs	334	61,785	8,556	11,456	13,238	13,926	12,809	1,800
Kindergartens	267	29,498	2,944	5,694	6,645	7,031	6,264	920
KGs-primary school	13	1,648	98	354	354	482	322	38
ELCs	1,671	43,666	37	883	1,911	2,821	35,556	2,458

Source: EMIS.

Tajikistan’s main investments in parental knowledge, skills assistance, and empowerment have not been designed to raise awareness about the aspects of ECD most relevant to ECEC services. These investments are provided through health services with a traditionally limited

scope. They do not include providing parents or caregivers the tools and knowledge to stimulate children and nurture their cognitive and socioemotional development. Programs investing in interactions to support home learning experiences have worked very well in some of the most successful models of ECD and preschool provision, empowering families and providers through flexible and inclusive forms of provision and promoting nurturing parenting (box 1.1).

Box 1.1 The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study

The famous High/Scope Perry Preschool Study's results put the spotlight on ECEC internationally. The Perry Preschool Project, carried out from 1962 to 1967, provided high-quality preschool education to children from disadvantaged backgrounds aged 3 and 4. Each weekday morning, certified public school teachers with at least a bachelor's degree led 2.5-hour sessions. The average child-teacher ratio was 6:1. The curriculum emphasized active learning, in which the children engaged in activities that (i) involved decision making and problem solving, and (ii) were planned, carried out, and reviewed by the children themselves, with support from adults. The teachers also provided a weekly 1.5-hour home visit to each mother and child, designed to involve the mother in the educational process and help implement the curriculum at home.

In comparing success levels for two groups of poor children—those who received a high quality preschool education and those who did not—the study found that the program group significantly outperformed the nonprogram group on six dimensions:

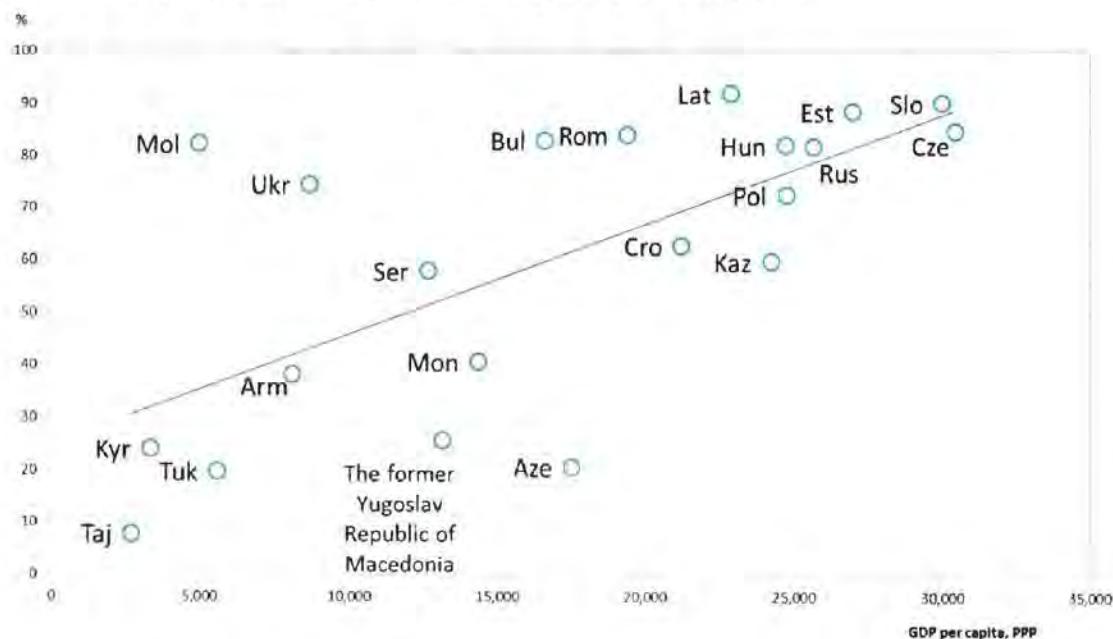
- Intellectual and language tests for preschool age.
- Highest level of schooling completed (77 percent vs. 60 percent high school graduates).
- Literacy tests at ages 19 and 27.
- Employment rate at ages 27 (69 percent vs. 56 percent) and 40 (76 percent vs. 62 percent)
- Median annual earnings at ages 27 and 40 (\$20,800 vs. \$15,300.)
- Reduced involvement in crime.

Source: L. J. Schweinhart et al., 2005. "The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40."

Chapter 2. Access and equity

Preschool enrollment is strikingly low in Tajikistan, lagging that of regional comparator countries. Tajikistan's national preschool enrollment rate for children aged 3–6 years was 12.4 percent in 2016,²⁵ 13.3 percent in 2017.²⁶ In 2014, other countries in the region with fairly comparable GDP—the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, and Moldova—had much higher enrollment rates (figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Net preschool enrollment ratio to per capita GDP, 2014



Source: TransMONEE 2016 Database, UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS.

Data refer to children 3–6 (or 3–5) years depending on age for entry into primary education. From denominator (for net rates) is extracted number of pre-school age children enrolled in primary education (for few countries data are not available).

The rapid growth of the preschool-age population puts additional pressure on the system's accommodation capacity. Over the 25 years from 1991 to 2016, the population of children aged 0–7 years grew by about 326,000 (23 percent), and that of children aged 3–6 years grew by about 185,000 (26 percent) (table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Tajikistan's population of children aged 0–7 years, by age and year, selected years from 1991 to 2016

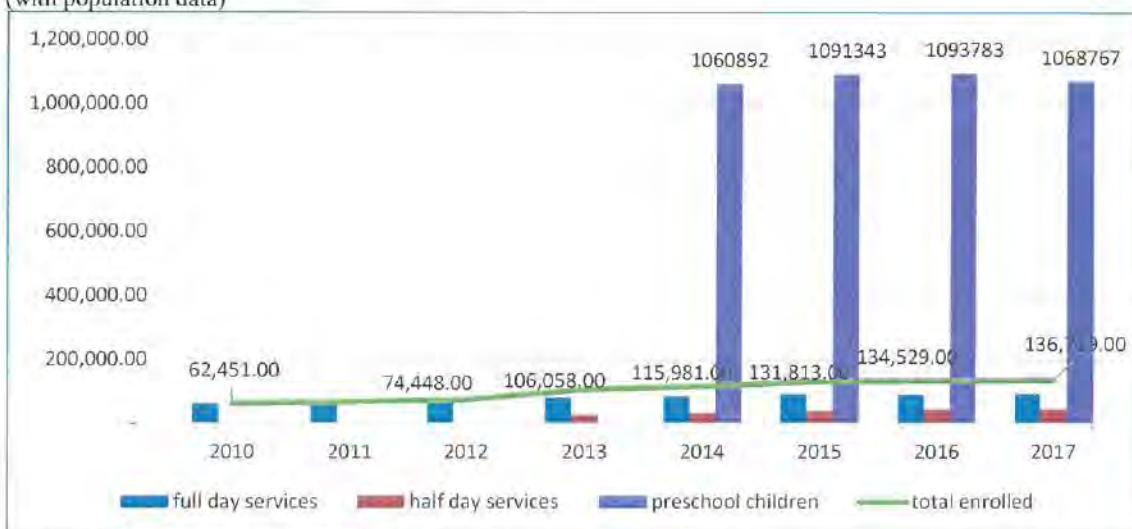
Age (years)	1991	2000	2005	2009	2014	2015	2016	Difference between 1991 and 2016
Under 1	202,838	179,808	171,938	205,074	206,187	226,692	235,056	32,218
1	190,456	180,675	162,817	185,133	214,930	205,415	225,873	35,417
2	183,198	172,188	167,615	173,166	219,872	214,714	205,142	21,944
3	185,854	165,101	156,295	172,031	237,778	219,724	214,586	28,732
4	183,247	185,562	187,079	170,505	215,016	237,680	219,633	36,386
5	172,742	182,118	177,751	162,114	203,747	214,953	237,585	64,843
6	159,922	165,325	175,996	167,076	184,479	203,703	214,872	54,950
7	151,753	176,365	171,382	185,871	172,742	184,430	203,621	51,868
0–7	1,430,010	1,407,142	1,370,873	1,420,970	1,654,751	1,707,311	1,756,368	326,358

Source: Demographic Annual Book of the Republic of Tajikistan. Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2016

Enrollments in preschool programs more than doubled from 2010 to 2015 and continued to rise through 2017. Tajikistan's highest preschool program coverage for 3–6-year-olds was in the late 1980s, at more than 50 percent. It then declined with the civil and economic instability that followed national independence. Since 2010, enrollment has risen steadily again (figures 2.2 and 2.3).

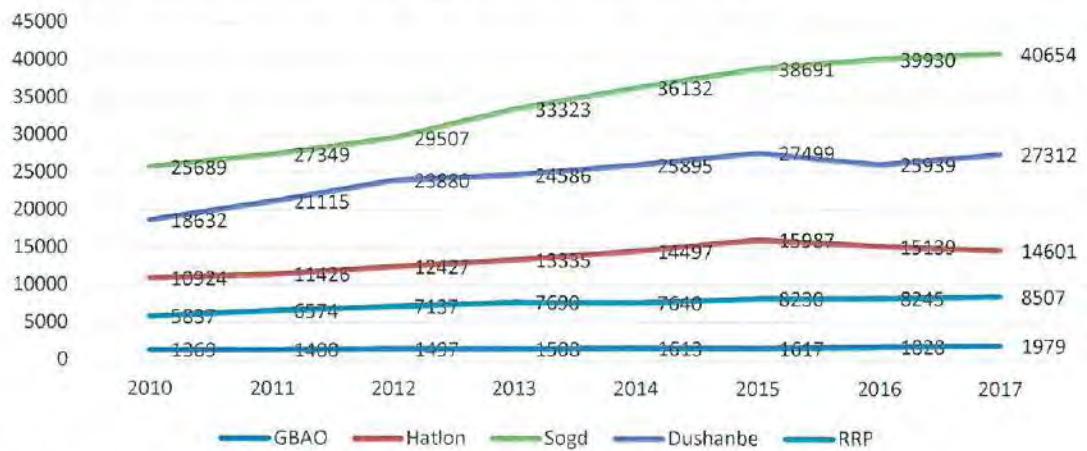
Figure 2.2 Dynamics of enrollment in preschool services, 2010–17

(with population data)



Source: Authors' analysis based on EMIS data.

Figure 2.3 ECEC enrollment by region (nonresidential only)



Source: EMIS. For 1.5–7-year-olds in all types by ownership and services excluding residential.

Tajikistan's rising preschool enrollment has two main drivers: the development of ELCs and the growth of preschool services for children aged 3–6 years (figure 2.4). The number of KGs has increased in the current decade, from 488 in 2010 to 615 in 2017 (see figure 1.1 in chapter 1).

Figure 2.4 Number of children in nonresidential ECEC institutions by type of services and year, 2010–17



Source: Authors' analysis based on EMIS data.

In its struggle to accommodate a fast-growing child population, Tajikistan has worked to restructure its ECEC network—leading to increases in some types of ECEC institution, but reductions in others. For example, the number of public nurseries declined nationally from 41 in 2010 to 1 in 2017. Some were converted to nursery-KGs to increase enrollment. Meanwhile, however, some nursery-KGs were converted to KGs (because not all preschools complied with state standards for nursery conditions).

Both the expansions and the reductions in different types of ECEC service have varied by region. Three of Tajikistan's five regions saw some types of ECEC institution decline from 2016 to 2017, even as other types rose—and the direction is not consistent across regions (tables 2.2a, 2.2b). Thus, there was an increase of private preschools in Sugd and RRS with no increase in Khatlon and even decrease in Dushanbe.

Table 2.2a ECEC services^a by region in 2016

Region	Number of preschool institutions												
	Private				Enterprise-owned				State				
	Nsr/ KGs	KGs	Sch/KG s	Tot al	Nsr/ KGs	KGs	Sch/ KGs	Tota l	Nsr/K Gs	KG s	Sch/ KGs	Tot al	Over all
GBAO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	18	23	23
Dushanbe	13	10	0	23	7	5	0	12	1	72	16	89	124
RRS	4	5	1	10	7	0	0	7	0	34	20	54	71
Sugd	9	27	0	36	8	7	0	15	0	127	68	195	246
Khatlon	1	5	0	6	0	3	0	3	0	45	78	123	132
Total	27	47	1	75	22	15	0	37	1	283	200	484	596

Table 2.2b Comparison of ECEC services^a distribution by region in 2017 vs 2016

Region	Number of preschool institutions												
	Private				Enterprise-owned				State				
	Nsr/ KG	KG	Sch/ KG	Tota l	Nsr/ KGs	KGs	Sch/ KGs	Tot al	Nsr/ KG	KG	Sch/ KG	Total	Over all
GBAO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	19↑	24↑	24↑
Dushanbe	11↓	9↓	2↓	22↓	7	4↓	1↑	12	1	74↓	16	91↑	125↑
RRS	3↓	4↓	4↑	11↑	7	0	0	7	0	35↑	21↑	56↑	74↑
Sugd	9	32↑	0	41↑	7↓	7	0	14↓	0	130↑	65↓	195	250↑
Khatlon	1	5	0	6	0	3	0	3	0	45	82↑	127↑	136↑
Total	24↓	50↑	6↑	80↑	21↓	14↓	1↑	36↓	1	289↑	203↑	493↑	609↑

↓ decrease since 2016; ↑ increase since 2016

Source: EMIS, 2018.

Note: a. Without ELCs and boarding schools.

Whereas a high share of children is enrolled for the full day in public ECEC institutions, the establishment of ELCs since 2012 has contributed to increasing half day enrollments (see figure 2.4). Also rising are enrollments in services that mostly target children aged 4–7 years—KGs, ELCs, and integrated KGs in schools. One reason is that these services require fewer resources than services for children aged 1.5–3 years. Other reasons are higher parental demand and the development of both full- and half day services for the 4–7 year age group. For all the same reasons, preschool services for children ages 3–6 constitute the most attractive market for private providers—though a few private providers do target younger children and their families.

Demand for ECEC services for children under age 3 is limited—likely because of generous provisions for paid and unpaid leave, combined with women's low employment (especially in rural areas). The law provides working mothers with maternity leave and guaranteed job re-

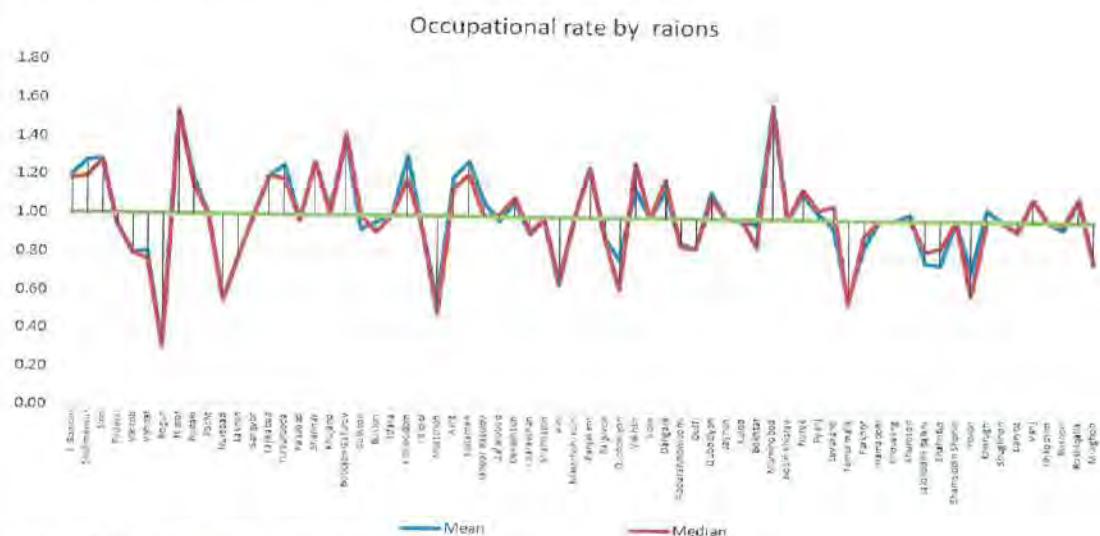
entry until their children reach age 3.²⁷ Maternity leave routinely lasts 140–180 days, covering the period of pregnancy, childbirth, and care. Working mothers also receive a one-time state social insurance benefit (whereas nonworking mothers receive no monetary benefit).²⁸ Mothers may then extend their leave until a child reaches the age of 18 months, meanwhile receiving a monthly benefit of TJS 50 (2017). And more unpaid leave is then available—to a working mother or any working person raising the child²⁹—until the child is age 3. Maternity leave for these three years is included in the overall employment period.

2.1. Low access

Despite a decade of expansion, preschool spaces are still in limited supply. Part of the challenge is that Tajikistan still has not recovered from its loss of preschool facilities during the 1990s. But beyond replacing what was lost, the ECEC system also has to accommodate a rapidly growing preschool-age population (see table 2.1) with limited resources. In the 2017 beneficiary survey, various stakeholders noted an absence of local preschool services, a severe lack of appropriate space in local KGs, or both.

Data on KG occupational rates³⁰ indicate high overcrowdedness in many KGs, even in rural areas (figure 2.5). In some of these areas the actual number of enrollments may be double or triple the planned capacity. However, the average national occupational rate is 1.1. Indeed, several KGs mainly in rural areas face under-enrollment. According to interviews with the heads of KGs and LEDs, the poor physical infrastructure of those KGs with some of the rooms in an unusable condition is a key reason (see figure 3.1 in chapter 3).

Figure 2.5 Occupational rate in KGs by district, 2017



Source: Authors' analysis based on PCF monitoring data.

Physical distance from preschool services is a significant barrier to access. In the focus group discussions, parents whose children attend preschools prioritized the need to organize transport to and from preschools for families in remote areas. This challenge appeared across regions and among families with different socioeconomic backgrounds.

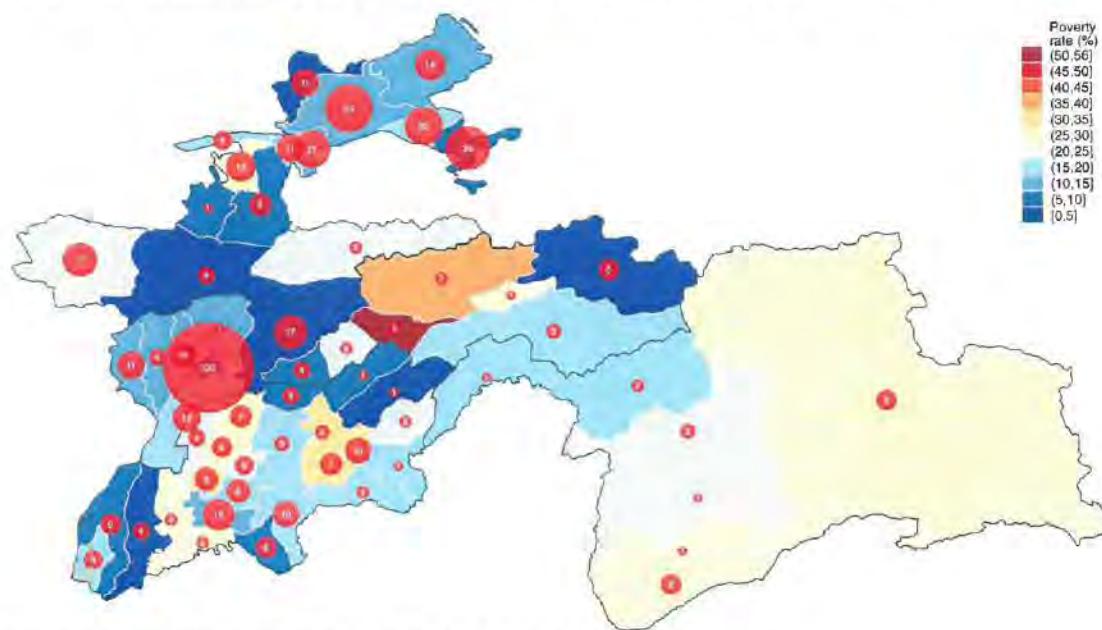
2.2. Inequitable access

Although coverage for preschool-age children in Tajikistan has been growing, it remains especially low in rural areas. Urban areas have notably higher coverage. For example, enrollment is 30 percent in Dushanbe, compared with 2.3 percent in Rayons of Republican Subordination (RRS).

The geographic distribution of preschools is inefficient, with coverage especially low in rural and poorer areas. Kindergartens are mainly located near the more densely populated centers of districts. A statistical mean of the number of KGs per district is 5.5, with a huge deviation from 1 to 45 (setting aside the outlier of Dushanbe, the capital, with 132 KGs). Some districts have just 1 KG for as many as 10,000 or even 12,000 preschool-age children (for example, Khamadoni, Jilikul, Kumsangir).³¹ Interestingly, Murgab district in GBAO, with a population density of less than 2.3 per km² (compare Tajikistan's average at 66 per km²), has the lowest average ratio of preschool-age children to KGs, at 374 (Murgab has about 2,250 preschool-age children and about 6 KGs). By contrast, Shahriston district (Sugd region), with a population density of 65 per km², has more than 7,000 preschool children per KG.³²

The geographic distribution of KGs by district appears in figure 2.6, along with each district's poverty rate. Poverty is defined as consumption of less than \$3.2 (PPP) per day.³³ Numbers of KGs are provided by MoES for 2019. (Annex 4 provides more poverty maps, including poor people's enrollment rates by district.).

Figure 2.6 Distribution of KGs by district, with poverty rates by district

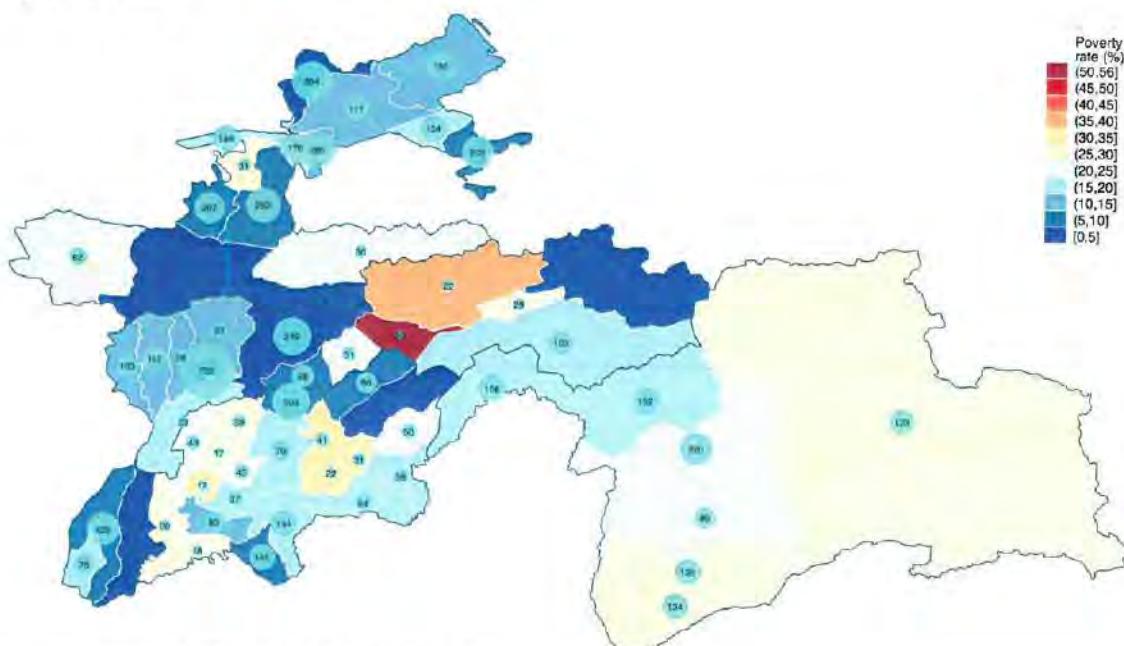


Note: Circle size proportional to number of KGs in the district.

There is an obvious correlation between preschool enrollment in an area and poverty there (figure 2.7). Thus, number of children enrolled in KGs and ELCs per 1,000 poor people in Nurobod and Rasht with the highest poverty rates (35–40 percent) is 10 and 22 accordingly vs 726 and 319 in Dushanbe and Vahdat accordingly where the poverty rates among the lowest.

Poverty is a key factor influencing access to ECEC services in Tajikistan—in part because it directly affects enrollment decisions. Kindergartens are not affordable for a large share of the population. Thus, in 2017, 29 percent of the population in Tajikistan lived below the national poverty line of TJS 190 per month per person, adjusted for inflation. In 2017–18, KG fees were TJS 50, 75, or 100 (\$5–11 equivalent)³⁴ per month per child, depending on the district. Thus, even the lowest KG fee—TJS 50—accounts for more than one-fourth of the poverty line, or more than 150 percent of the targeted social assistance (TSA) cash benefit provided to a low-income family (box 2.1).

Figure 2.7 Number of children enrolled in KGs and ELCs per 1,000 poor people by districts on poverty map



Note: [any note needed here to explain circle size?]

Box 2.1 Targeted social assistance (TSA)

Tajikistan is introducing a new TSA system to support the poor population. It provides each registered household with an unconditional cash benefit of TJS 400 per year. Eligibility criteria include—among others—the total number of family members, the numbers of disabled persons and of CwD, and the number of children under age 15.

The annual cash benefit of TJS 400 may seem small. For example, it covers just 67 percent of the lowest monthly KG fees over one year. But eligible households receive additional benefits: a TJS 1,000 burial allowance for a family member, a 50 percent fee discount on public health facility services apart from the Basic Benefit Package, and higher education tuition discounts. (Beyond the TSA, the state also provides a preschool fee exemption for orphans, semi-orphans, and children without parental care.)

Outside these benefits set centrally for the entire country, local authorities can add more benefits for registered TSA households, such as a public transport fee exemption. And until 2016, local authorities provided discounts on a preschool fee to low-income TSA families. But in that year—

when the government piloted per capita financing (PCF) in preschool, and the government adopted its resolution “On payments for maintenance of children in state preschool educational institutions”—the instructions that came with these important undertakings did not preserve the discounts.

Preschool access for the poor is thus constrained. Today the TSA is not an entry point promoting child development and learning through access to ECEC services. Nor is the TSA used, through special services, to provide parenting support—or to promote the ECD knowledge and parenting skills that support holistic child development.

Access is especially challenging for low-income families in districts with higher KG fees. In the focus group discussions with parents and professionals, all respondents from family focus groups—regardless of the family income or the center-periphery factor—jointly assigned a high value to preschool education with respect to its principal benefit and desirability for children. In the rare cases when respondents indicated that child education and care could be provided at home, further discussion revealed that the reason for this opinion was the “very high fee for a KG” or the “lack of physical access to a KG.”

Kindergarten enrollment has been consistently lower for girls than for boys, though not by much. The share of girls in total KG enrollment fluctuated around 45 percent from 2010 to 2017 (figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8 Number of girls and boys in KGs

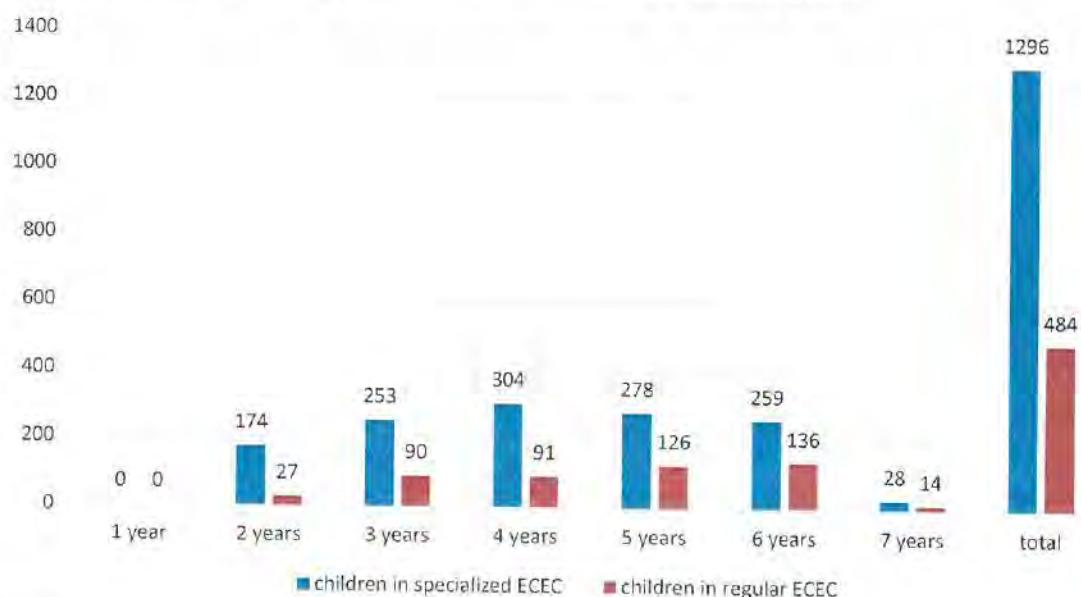


Source: EMIS.

Despite the government’s stated priorities to create suitable physical conditions for children with special education needs in mainstream preschools, inclusive education approaches are not well adapted at the service provision level, and the preschool system has not promoted

them effectively. Based on World Health Organization (WHO) estimates of the global prevalence of childhood disability, Tajikistan had about 150,000 children with disabilities (CwD)—nearly six times the 26,000 who were officially registered—in 2015.³⁵ In 2017, about 1,800 children in Tajikistan received services from institutions including baby homes for orphans and CwD ages 0–4 years old, residential and half day institutions for CwD, and specialized and regular KGs (figure 2.9).

Figure 2.9 Enrollment of children with disabilities in ECEC in 2017



Source: EMIS.

The adoption of the National Concept of Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities (2011–15 and 2016–20) promoted establishment of conditions for CwD in regular KGs and schools. In 2017, regular KGs enrolled 484 CwD, including 211 children with a mental disability, 155 weak-sighted children, 50 deaf or hearing-impaired children, 40 dumb children, and 28 children with spinal trauma.³⁶ The ELCs enrolled around 60 CwD. Still, capacity of regular preschools to accommodate CwD is low.

To meet the needs of CwD of preschool age, authorities ave opened specialized preschools providing health and education services covering around 1,300 children aged 2–8—but service provision at these preschools is not specialized in all respects [meaning OK?].³⁷ Some specialized preschools have 24-hour groups, and they can enroll children from surrounding districts. Four provide free services and care for children, and all expenditures are covered by state budgets (but parents who decide to enroll eligible children in a regular public KG, rather than a specialized one, receive no fee exemption). With regard to quality assurance, there is no assessment by health authorities of specialized preschool service provision—even though these institutions are for children with health issues and have a nurse for a limited medical service. Both regular and specialized preschools use the Rangincamon preschool program, which does not reflect the needs of CwD. There are no special guidelines for preschool professionals or illustrated materials for children.

Other barriers to including CwD in mainstream education arise from a lack of qualified professionals and low social awareness of benefits from inclusive education. Feedback from the focus group discussions with professionals and parents revealed ambivalence toward inclusive education. Professionals, while reporting positive inclusion experiences in their preschools and highlighting effective socialization for CwD in inclusive groups, also expressed concern about responsibility and referred to parents who did not welcome inclusion. The professionals felt that they needed help to include CwD and that such help is not provided to them. Parents from Dushanbe are more prepared for inclusion than parents elsewhere, seeing its benefits for children with specific health conditions and special development needs, and no risk of harm to their children.

Arrangements for the language of instruction could do more to accommodate national minorities—especially in teaching materials—though language is not among the chief barriers to access. Such linguistic challenges as were noted arise mainly from a lack of teaching staff speaking minority languages, and from a lack of teaching materials in Tajik and in minority languages. In 2017, the language of instruction for the vast majority of children enrolled in preschools was either Tajik (86.3 percent) or Russian (12.4 percent). In 2010, Tajikistan's three largest ethnic-linguistic minorities—Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Russian—accounted for 14 percent of its population. The law promotes education for such minority groups in their mother tongue. Parents, at their discretion, may enroll children in groups with any language of instruction available at preschools. But even in KGs that provide groups with instruction in Russian, preschool professionals use methodological literature in Russian from the 1980s. For other languages of instruction, curricula and methodological literature are the main challenges.

Chapter 3. Quality of facilities and services

When assessed by USAID in 2011, preschool outcomes in Tajikistan at the national level appeared to be low. The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) found that primary school children who had attended kindergartens did not have better reading skills than children who had not attended kindergartens.³⁸

3.1. Preschool facilities quality

The legacy of construction standards for preschools has a strong tradition guided by hygiene norms and care focused concepts for child development. Preschool construction is regulated by the preschool's design norms, developed in 1988,³⁹ and hygiene norms of 2014⁴⁰ (box 3.1). The regulatory documents define norms for facility design, basic utilities (sewerage, water, heating, and lighting), air quality, space per child, furniture, nutrition, daily routine, and so on. The value of adhering to basic hygiene norms is supported by recent studies closely linking learning achievements to air, lighting, and sound quality (Schneider 2002; Barrett et al. 2015).

Box 3.1 Norms for infrastructure, hygiene, and daily routine in Tajikistan preschools

(extract)

Green area shall be no less than 50 percent of territory.

One sports playground shall be organized on land plots of preschools with capacity up to 150 places.

Open baths to learn swimming shall be organized at preschools with capacity more than 250 places.

The building shall have sewerage, access to drinking water, hot and cold water, be equipped with central heating and ventilation; where there is no central heating, heaters fenced with metal and wooden grilles shall be used as heating devices; stove heating can be used in rural areas.

Rooms should have good ventilation.

The following rooms shall be provided at preschools: group classrooms, rooms for physical and musical classes, medical, service and amenity rooms, as well as a catering unit.

Catering unit shall include a kitchen with processing and washing units, a distribution unit, storage for dry products with a refrigerator, storage for vegetables.

Each age group of children shall be located in group unit facilities that include five rooms: change room, group classroom, bedroom, pantry, and toilet.

Facility	Area in sq.m per 1 place (for a preschool group)
Change room	0.72
Group classroom	2.0
Bedroom	2.0
Toilet	0.64
Total	5.36

Furniture and equipment (specification) shall comply with the State standards and hygienic and teaching norms.

Furniture in a bedroom: stationary beds (Sanitary Rules and Norms [SanPiN] 2014); folding and pull-out beds (Design norms, 1988)

Continuous wake time for 3–7-year-olds - no more than 5.5–6 hours.

Sleeping time for 1.5–4-year-olds - up to 3.5 hours; for 3–7-year-olds - up to 2 hours.

Age of children (years)	Number of children in a group		
	Regular type	Specialized	Short-term stay
1–3	12–22	15	10
4–7	25–30	15	15

Adherence to the hygiene norms, though successful in past decades, now appears difficult. Access to improved drinking water is one of the most severely limited and unequally distributed services in Tajikistan. Sanitation connected to a functioning sewerage system is another. Outside Dushanbe, the availability and quality of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services remain low. Much of the country's drinking water and sewerage infrastructure was built before the 1980s and has not been updated. Where existent, it is in poor condition, especially in rural areas and small towns. Education institutions rely on the same WASH facilities as households, so they face the same challenges: low access, availability, and quality.⁴¹ In addition, regulations lack clear guidance on designing sewerage or water supply systems for preschools located in the settlements without centralized WASH systems. As a result, both state and nonstate services do not fully meet requirements—and most if not all newly established services, including ELCs, make do with compromises.

To unlock new streams for service expansion by both public and private ECEC providers, the government should focus on overcoming infrastructure barriers. Some public facilities across Tajikistan have approached close adherence to hygiene norms: an example appears in box 3.2. These facilities could be used to model acceptable compromises. Other preschools are in dire condition (figure 3.1) and will need a package of a minimum level of immediate intervention to guarantee essential conditions are met and alternative provision package to secure the service delivery process.

Box 3.2 Example of an attempt to comply with the sanitary norms. The autonomous sewerage system of B. Gafurov district, Sugd. Kindergarten No.18

The institution's yard contains a stationary concrete dump well, located at a distance from the main building to discharge sewerage wastes. The well is tightly closed with a concrete slab. On being filled, the well is cleaned and disinfected by water and sanitation services. The institution's building is connected to water supply, and each group has toilet rooms with a WC pan, wash-stands, trays, and electric water heaters.



Photo credit: GPE-4 project.

Figure 3.1 Room in a functioning KG (Rudaki, RRS)



Photo credit: World Bank.

Gaps between rural and urban infrastructure needs should inform policy development—but planning will require stronger data collection on these gaps. The available information suggests significant disparities (table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Basic utilities in urban and rural preschools (KGs and ELCs) in 2016

Utilities	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
Preschools with centralized cold-water supply	48	17
Preschools with the centralized sewerage system	41	7
Preschools with district heating system	0	0
Preschools with electric heating system	53	21

Source: E. Yudina. 2016. "Preschools' facilities and services assessment." GPE-4 project.

Both rural and urban ECEC facilities—but especially rural ones—are often heated with temporary stoves that pollute the air. Such stoves are used even in electrically heated facilities during power outages, and many burn fuel that produces smoke and smuts (observed in 79 percent of rural facilities and 60 percent of urban facilities).⁴²

A lack of cold weather preparation in ECEC infrastructure may reduce attendance during winter. Winter can last up to five months in Tajikistan's mountainous areas. However, data on winter expenses and attendance levels are lacking.

Observations indicated that most preschools do not comply with norms for room lighting. Efforts to increase ECEC coverage should be matched with guarantees that providers will meet minimum public health standards. Lighting premises properly should not be difficult, as it does not consume as much energy as heating. The norms indicate that artificial light sources shall ensure sufficient and even lighting of all rooms. [meaning OK?] Although lighting quality is monitored by many state authorities—the firefighting service, education departments, and the Sanitary Epidemiological Service (SES)—it can be further improved. Visited preschools used energy-saving lamps with a low lighting percentage, which may lead to vision problems in children. To assess and improve the physical conditions of provision, MoES could explore options to introduce smart technologies that monitor classrooms remotely for temperature, lighting, noise, and humidity.

Food quality in preschools is also strictly regulated yet compromised by budget constraints. Requirements for preschool feeding—food product variety and quality, cooking process, raw products storage, and so on—are thoroughly described, and illustrated by a weekly menu sample, in a regulatory document adopted by the MoHSP.⁴³ This topic was important for focus group participants, who saw nutrition as an egalitarian function of preschools: children are expected to have equal access to the same variety and quality of food while in school. Based on 2017 prices, the sample menu approved by the MoHSP cost around TJS 18 per child per day.⁴⁴ In fact, though, the highest average regional allocation of funds for feeding in 2017, with parent contributions included, was TJS 4.7 per child per day.⁴⁵ The reason is that local fiscal constraints—and the lack of minimum financial guarantees for ECEC-related funds—require compromises on preschool food quality in order to provide the needed quantity per day per child.

Preschool financing analysis indicates large regional disparities in preschool food provision (see chapter 4). However, data are not available for a systematic assessment of ECEC nutrition policy outcomes. Preschool feeding can and should play a role in reducing high level of stunting among children under age 5.⁴⁶ Tajikistan is now finalizing a multisectoral national nutrition plan for 2018–22 under the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative. In the preschool sector, the draft plan includes revisions of the menu sample, with trainings on healthy feeding for preschool staff.

The space organization and daily routines in KGs follow strict standards which should be modernized to promote flexibility and a child-oriented approach. Box 3.1 provides some of the norms related to space and day organization in KGs which are described in detail in SanPiN. They envisage five separate rooms for a group of children, with up to 3.5 hours of sleep during a day for children aged 1.5–4 years, and 2 hours for children aged 5–7 years, in line with the WHO guidelines⁴⁷ on sleep for children under 5. For older children, modern international practice provides a more flexible and child-led sleeping regime that addresses age specifics and self-regulation skills development (compare figure 3.2 with figures 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5). In Finland, children 3–4 years old usually sleep in folding beds, which can be removed into the wall to make the room a playground. Children 5–6 years old are not expected to sleep during the day. A tired child can choose to sleep on mattresses scattered across the floor, but no one will force the child to sleep. Such an approach meets individual needs while making efficient use of multifunctional space: a possible solution for overpopulated KGs. Tajikistan's preschool design norms, dating to 1988, allow folding and rollout beds. The focus group discussions with preschool professionals

revealed a readiness for more flexible organization of daily routines and related child-oriented space arrangements. The main possible objection is the added load for preschool professionals, who have become used to relative freedom during children's sleeping time.

Figure 3.2 Bedroom, KG (Tajikistan)



Photo credit: GPE-4 Project.

Figure 3.3 Multifunctional room, KG (Sweden)



Photo credit: World Bank.

Figure 3.4 Flexible regime, KG (Sweden)



Photo credit: World Bank.

Figure 3.5 Multifunctional space, KG (Sweden)



Photo credit: World Bank.

Freeing space leads to a broader discussion about the design of KGs and innovative early learning environment design. The environment is seen as a third teacher, supporting parents and teachers as a spatial framework for education. Modern schools and preschools are designed for economic and energy efficiency, for openness and flexibility of educational spaces, and for freedom of movement within these spaces. A key new KG design element is common space (figures 3.6 and 3.7), which is multifunctional and meant for various group activities, from cultural to motoric (figures 3.8 and 3.9). New KG designs with common space—and no fixed bedrooms for older children—increase the space per child for activities, accommodate more children in one space, and enable more child-centered interactive learning. The spatial environment promotes diverse types of learning, with active to calm spaces and from dynamic group spaces to more individual ones (for example, resting and reading corners).⁴⁸ Merging playrooms, bedrooms, change rooms, and pantries makes the use of space more efficient and promotes modern learning.

Figure 3.6 Tetrapak KG (Modena)



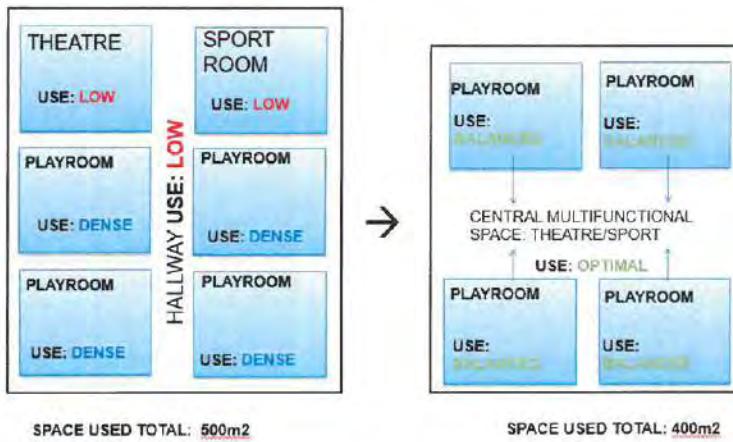
Photo credit: R. Hise

Figure 3.7 Open KG (Šmartno)



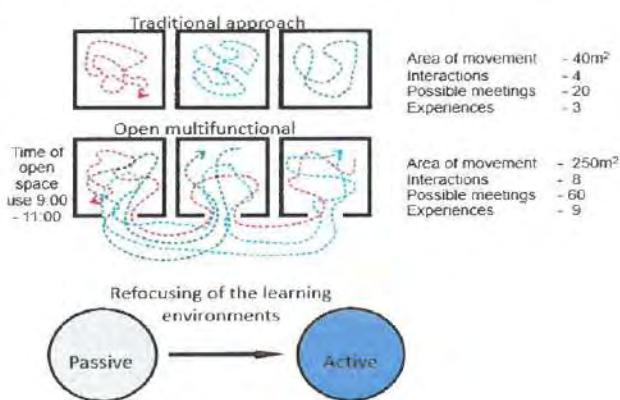
Photo credit: J. Marolt

Figure 3.8 Example of merging spaces



Source: World Bank. "Guidelines for new Yakutian KGs."

Figure 3.9 Example of multifunctional spaces

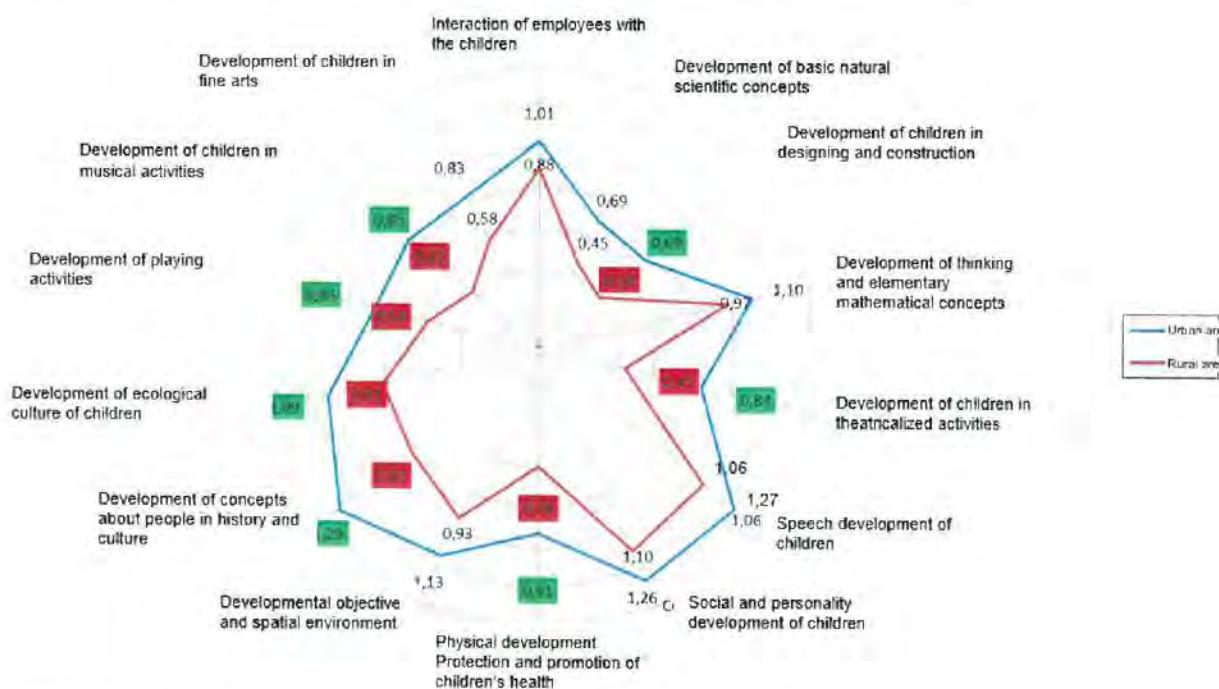


Source: Dr. J. Kortnik

3.2. Quality of preschool services

The 2016 assessment of preschool facilities and services indicated that service quality is low overall, with significant gaps between ELCs and KGs, between rural and urban preschools, and between public and private or enterprise-owned preschools.⁴⁹ Quality is significantly higher in urban areas than in rural areas (figure 3.10). Yet the general profile configuration is more or less similar for urban and rural preschools and ELCs, indicating that the problems in service provision are generally similar.

Figure 3.10 Quality of services at preschool institutions: urban and rural areas



Note: Red and green colors indicate the values which showed statistically significant differences (significance level = 0.05).

The main challenge to rural program implementation arises not from the spatial environment in facilities but from the low professional skills of teachers. Educational activities at rural preschools and ELCs are less frequent and of lower quality than at urban ECEC institutions. Beyond the fact that many teachers lack the required formal educational background (see section 3.3 below), many lack general knowledge and understanding—limiting the quality of their work.

Even in urban areas, however, program implementation quality is lacking. Rated on a 1–3 point scale, the highest scores were 1.29 for “Development of a notion of a human being in history and culture” and 1.26 for “Social development and the development of personality.” As expected, private and enterprise-owned preschools benefit from higher infrastructure and service quality than public preschools, thanks to an ability to attract more qualified staff and provide better TLM (figures 3.11, 3.12, and 3.13).

Box 3.3. Preschool Facilities and Services Assessment Instrument

In 2016, GPE-4 supported development and piloting of an instrument to assess preschool facilities and services which could be used for both self- and external assessment of a preschool.

The instrument assesses quality of services in kindergartens and ELCs in the following areas:

1. Staff interactions with children
2. Development of elementary science concepts
3. Child development in building with blocks and other materials
4. Development of thinking and of elementary math concepts
5. Child development in drama and theater activities
6. Language development
7. Social development and the development of personality
8. Physical development and health preservation
9. Learning environment
10. Development of elementary social science concepts
11. Development of ecological culture
12. Development of play
13. Child development in music activities
14. Child development in art activities

Figure 3.11 Private ELC (Khorog, GBAO)



Photo credit: IFC.

Figure 3.12 Rural KG (Rudaki, RRS)



Photo credit: World Bank.

Figure 3.13 Urban KG (Khujand, Sugd)



Photo credit: World Bank.

The quality of services is lower in ELCs than in traditional KGs on every indicator, and regardless of rural or urban location. On nine assessment areas ELCs' education quality is substantially lower than that of KGs. In other areas ELCs also lag, though by less. The part of child development and education that scores low in KGs is substantially worse in ELCs, and it does not foster child development. During analysis, gaps also appeared in ELCs in areas more traditionally associated with schooling, such as scientific conceptualizations and construction. Most ELCs aim at training children in reading, writing, and counting, rather than at ensuring preparedness for school enrollment—and even these reading, writing, and counting skills are better developed in KGs than in ELCs. An explanation is that most ELCs are located at schools, with classes run by school teachers who are not trained on the preschool curriculum, and who, in many cases, are not from primary classes.

Private and enterprise-owned preschools, as expected, demonstrate higher services quality than the public ones. The reason lies in the nonpublic preschools' ability to attract more highly qualified staff and to provide better TLM.

3.3 Quality of human resources

Overall, the qualifications of staff in preschools do not meet state standards. According to the regulations for ECEC institutions, all pedagogical staff in preschools should have secondary or higher professional pedagogical education with "knowledge in preschool psychology and basic

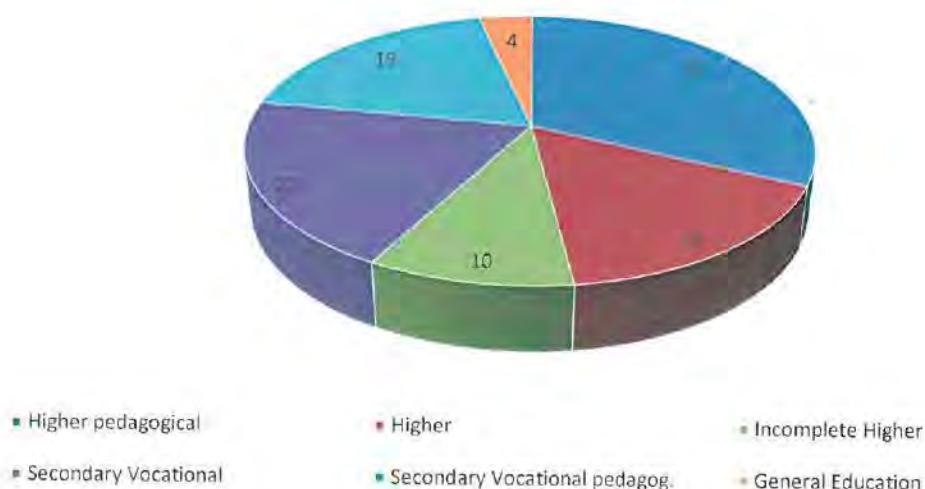
remedial pedagogy.¹⁵⁰ In 2017, 50 percent of professional staff in ECEC institutions had a degree in pedagogy (secondary or higher education; table 3.2, figure 3.14).

Table 3.2 Education profile of core staff in state KGs

Education level Position \	Number of staff	Higher pedagogy	Higher	Incomplete Higher	Secondary Vocational	Secondary Vocational pedagogy	General Education only
<i>Professional staff (administrative and pedagogical)</i>							
Head	591	345	164	31	21	27	3
%		58	28	5	4	5	1
Deputy Head	57	14	6	1	16	6	14
%		25	11	2	28	11	25
Sr. Teacher	275	132	64	25	21	32	1
%		48	23	9	8	12	0
Teacher	4,050	985	579	454	957	910	165
%		24	14	11	24	22	4
Subject-Teacher	531	267	82	28	83	57	14
%		50	15	5	16	11	3
<i>Junior service staff</i>							
Teacher's Assistant	2,773	62	9	46	305	60	2,291
%		2	0	2	11	2	83
Nurse	806	14	2	8	135	15	632
%		2	0	1	17	2	78
Total	9,083	1,819	906	593	1,538	1,107	3,120

Source: EMIS 2017.

Figure 3.14 Education profile of professional staff in state KGs



Source: EMIS 2017.

The three key pedagogical positions in KGs are senior teacher, teacher (preschool group teacher), and subject teacher. Senior teachers are expected to provide methodological support to teachers: 60 percent had pedagogical education in 2017. Among teachers of preschool groups, 46 percent had pedagogical education. Subject teachers are specialists in particular subjects—music, foreign language, speech therapy, and so on—and of these, 3 percent had only general education.

The position title “teacher’s assistant” does not correspond to performed functional duties. These assistants perform the work of junior service staff. Their positions differ from nanny positions in that assistants work with a higher-age group of children.

Staff in urban areas are better qualified than in rural areas. Share of professional staff with pedagogical education in urban areas comprises 53 percent vs 42 percent in rural areas; and with higher education—52 percent vs 36 percent (figures 3.15a and 3.15b). In rural preschools, it is significantly lower than in urban ones. The major challenge for preschool teachers is the lack of professional qualification. Teachers in rural areas lack general knowledge and understanding, apart from specific professional skills, which ultimately affects the quality of their work.⁵¹

Figure 3.15a Education level of state KG professional staff, urban and rural, absolute figures

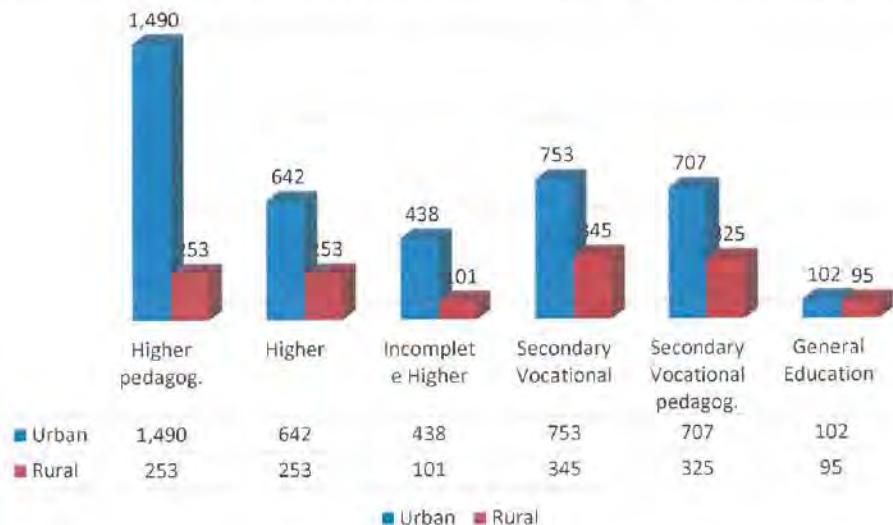
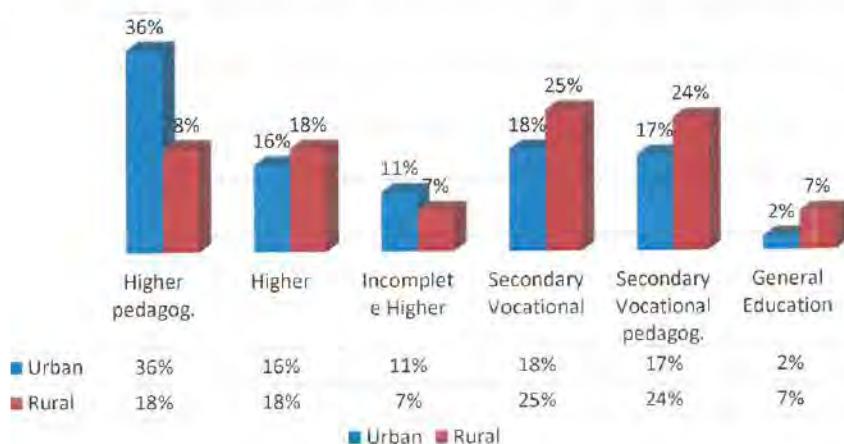


Figure 3.15b Education level of professional staff in state KGs, urban and rural, percent



Source: [provide]

A lack of data on staff shortages and staff experience affects the system's capacity to plan workforce training, both for the existing network and for its planned expansion. EMIS collects comprehensive data on preschool staff education levels—data that are used intensively in this report—but not on staff shortages. However, data showing 46 percent of professional staff with non-pedagogical education and 4 percent with general education suggest a shortage of qualified staff: one that is more prominent in rural areas. According to EMIS, 98 percent of preschool teachers are female. But there are no data on the average age of staff, or on their years of service in the preschool sector. These gaps constrain plans for workforce training and retraining (and limit the analysis in this report).

Access to pedagogical education may not be a constraint to quality of teaching. Currently, teaching staff for preschools are trained in several universities and pedagogical colleges located in different regions of the country including remote areas, providing different types of fee and non-fee-based training including correspondence courses and distance learning. Thus, access to pedagogical education should not be an issue. However, it could be an issue for teachers in the sector who already have one professional non-pedagogical training as obtaining a second profession is fee-based.

The quality of pedagogical education needs to be assessed. There is no a systematic approach in evaluating quality, relevance, and efficiency of the training. Lack of pedagogical competencies among certified teaching staff discussed earlier is an indication of inadequate quality of teacher training. In the absence of a National Qualification Framework (NQF), development of PRESET courses for preschool teachers is guided by state standards for preschool education, ELDS, and Rangincamom program. Currently, with support from the Higher Education Project (HEP),⁵² MoES is conducting an analysis of pedagogical training courses and has started tracking graduates of pedagogical specialties. These two studies along with the proposed upgrade of ELDS discussed earlier should guide further development of training courses for teachers, including preschool ones.

In-service training is a standardized activity, regulated by MoES and targeting professional staff in preschool services⁵³—but the qualification challenges and needs of preschool professionals require more flexible provision and training content development. According to the regulations, every school and preschool teacher should undergo centralized INSET courses every 5 years; INSET courses should be upgraded at least every 3 years. In principle, the system provides an opportunity to develop retraining courses of different complexity levels to meet the needs of teachers with different levels of competencies and teaching as per different programs (for example, program for ELCs). Various donor-supported projects provide such courses. However, this is not the case for regular INSET courses, which lack flexibility in both their design and delivery mechanism. The NSED 2020 envisages measures in that direction.

Private education providers are not included in the in-service training plans. Given the expectations for significant roles of private provision for the ECEC growth, some proactive steps might be considered. The development of common professional development programs for both public and private providers would also facilitate the exchange of information and practices between the providers and the professional network.

Professional development for ECEC is still conceptually separate from the development of overall ECD professional qualifications and knowledge—assets that would benefit ECD in all areas of public service provision. Qualification programs for different ECEC professionals are now created and delivered separately. Current plans to develop the ECEC qualification to incorporate contemporary ECEC and ECD concepts could be a starting point for content and knowledge development targeting the broader network of ECD professionals.

Although outdated, the existing service staff schedule provides some opportunity for flexibility, but it needs elaboration and optimization for greater efficiency and effectiveness. The Handbook for Education Sector Financing (1987) is the only document containing a staff schedule and remuneration examples (table 3.3). Given the large changes in preschool infrastructure and financing since 1987, the schedule is outdated, contains redundancies, and leads to inefficient resource use. The regulations provide some opportunities for flexibility in staffing based on actual needs, but only experienced and proactive preschool heads use them. The new

PCF mechanism, described in chapter 4, stimulates staff optimization. (Note that in addition to the staff positions on the schedule in table 3.3, specialized preschools also have positions for professionals in required areas—speech therapists so on.)

Table 3.3 Staff schedule sample for KGs

Number of groups Position	Full-Time Equivalent (stavka), depending on the number of groups											
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Principal	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Senior teacher					0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1
Principal assistant for housekeeping department												1
Housekeeping manager	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Head nurse	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Senior accountant							1	1	1	1	1	1
Accountant	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1						
Document controller												0.5
Chef-cook									1	1	1	
Cook	1.5	1.5	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	3
Assistant worker	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Current repair worker (for buildings, equipment, and so on)							0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Warehouseman									1	1	1	
Chatelaine		0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Laundry operator	0.75	1	1.25	1.25	1.75	1.75	2	2	2.5	2.5	3	
Facility janitor									1	1	1	
Total	5.25	6	8.25	8.25	9.75	11.25	12.5	13	16.5	16.5	19.5	

Source: "Handbook for Education Sector Financing" 1987.

There is no document providing a clear job description and qualification requirements for preschool staff. The Regulation for Preschool Institutions (2015) describes the responsibilities of a preschool head only, while stipulating that preschool staff engaged in education activities should have professional pedagogical education (secondary or higher). Again, the "teacher's assistant" position is an example of inefficient human resource use: the title assumes educational activities, but the assistants are doing essentially a nanny's job. In 2017 the MoES developed a new preschool staff schedule with responsibilities and qualification requirements—a good basis for staff optimization on KGs, but still pending approval.

The child-to-teacher ratio seems high for quality service provision. Norms are established for class sizes in Tajikistan (table 3.4). International norms of group sizes appear in box 3.3. In Tajikistan, every group should have one teacher and one nurse or assistant. Subject teachers (music, language) teach in groups for 4–7-year-olds (twice per a week). The ratio is lower for specialized groups. In 2017, the group size varied between 15 and 40 children per group; the average child-to-teacher ratio was 20:1.

Table 3.4 Norms for children per group by age group

Age of children (years)	Number of children/group
1.5–2	12
2–4	22
4–5	25
5–7	30

Source: Regulation for Preschool Institutions, 2015.

Box 3.4 Norms for group size and children–teacher ratios in other countries

In Russia, Belarus, and Moldova, the regulation limits group size as follows: not more than 15 children in the 2–3 year age group and not more than 20 children in the 4–7 year age group, with 1 teacher and 1 nurse or assistant per group.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, group size is limited to 20 for the 1.5–2 year age group and 30 for the 3–7 year age group, with 2 teachers and 1 assistant per group.

In Bulgaria, group size is limited to 18 for the 1.5–2 year age group and 22 for the 3–7 year age group, with 1 teacher and 1 assistant per group.

In Finland, the requirement is 2 teachers and 3 nurses for children in the 0–4 year age group (1 adult for 4 children) and 2 teachers and 1 assistant for children over 4 years old (1 adult for 7 children). All teachers should have a bachelor's or higher degree; assistants should have a secondary professional degree.

In Australia, for the 0–3 year age group, the requirement is usually 1 teacher for 4 children, with no less than 1 teacher with a university diploma for 12 children. For older age groups it is 1 teacher for 11 children, with no less than 1 teacher with a university diploma for 30 children. Thus, teachers with bachelor's degrees are supported by teachers with university degrees who cover 2–3 groups.

Tajikistan may consider using the Finnish and Australian approach of forming a team of professionals with different qualification levels, with a senior teacher covering more than one group of children. This approach can utilize human and financial resources more efficiently.

Private providers have more flexibility in staffing based on needs, allowing for efficiency in spending and organization. There are no regulations on staff schedule and child-teacher ratio for ELCs.

Historically, remuneration for preschool professionals has been low. In 2010 its levels were equalized with those for primary education professionals—a promising step to promote the profession, and one that could support policies to attract the best professionals to the ECEC path. In 2018, for one *stavka*⁵⁴ primary school and preschool, teachers were receiving approximately TJS 570–900 per month depending on their education level and qualification category. The nominal average monthly wage in the education sector in 2017 was TJS 893 (about \$95).

Chapter 4. Financing

Tajikistan cannot meet its ambitious preschool enrollment goal for 2030—which calls for increasing ECEC enrollment by 38 percentage points in 15 years—without increasing dramatically ECEC financing and solely by building new public KGs. With a fast-growing population and low human capital, Tajikistan is certainly right to make ECD a cornerstone of its development agenda. But public financing for preschool education is low. Accordingly, facilitating nonpublic financing and provision will be a necessary part of the planned ECEC services expansion. At the same time, the increase in access must address equity concerns as a priority.

The state budget remains the main source of funding for social spending in Tajikistan—yet parent fees make up more than one-third of state preschool funding. Like school educational institutions, preschools are under the jurisdiction of local authorities, and local budgets are their main funding source. Parent fees contribute about 34 percent of the total budget for state ECECs. External funding for the preschool sector comes from donor funded projects (see annex 4 for the areas of development partner support).

Budget planning for public entities in Tajikistan generally is based on an assessment of their historical expenses, with financing reforms ongoing in social sectors. During the past decade, new practices have been gradually introduced to improve budget planning. Here the key example is the national adoption of per capita financing (PCF) for general education budgeting since 2010. In 2016, a PCF model was also piloted in state KGs, though it was not expanded in 2017 as initially planned (see section 4.3 in this chapter). A targeted social assistance program was recently introduced for low-income households (see box 2.1 in chapter 2).

4.1. Public financing

Public financing for preschool education is low. Tajikistan's gradual economic improvement since the 2000s has enabled annual education funding increases in recent years: over 2010–17, as total state budget expenditures rose from 15.8 percent to 18 percent of GDP, total education spending rose from 4.4 percent to 6.1 percent of GDP. But these increases have not been equal across the education system. Instead, given budget constraints, the government made general education and higher education its priorities. And preschool education spending started from a low baseline: only 2.1 percent of the total education budget in 2010, it was still just 5.6 percent in 2017.

State budget expenditures in the education sector, including for preschool education over the years 2010–18, appear in table 4.1. Most of these expenditures comprise recurrent spending by state institutions, though a small share of state preschool spending (planned to be about 12 percent in 2018) consists of local authorities' capital expenditures on preschools. The data do not include major capital expenditures in the preschool sector, which are funded from the sector budget for "state governance." Also, the data do not include enterprise-owned preschools' maintenance expenditures.

Table 4.1 Total expenditures (in TJS millions) of the state budget for the education sector, 2010–18 (mainly current expenditures)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 planned
GDP in actual prices	24,705.0	30,071.1	36,163.1	42,158.0	48,500.0	52,821.0	54,471.1	58,909.7	66,866.7
Education sector expenditures	1,068.30	1,363.36	1,607.80	2,130.84	2,516.97	2,918.64	3,146.23	3,581.11	3,863.06
As % of GDP	4.4	4.5	4.5	5.1	5.2	5.5	5.5	6.1	5.8
In % of the state budget	15.8	15.9	15.5	17.3	17.8	18.8	16.9	18	18.1
Preschool education	21.95	23.98	29.18	42.54	66.74	125.93	129.71	201.82	241.23
As % of the education budget	2.1	1.8	1.8	2.0	2.7	4.3	4.1	5.6	6.2
In % of GDP	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.1	0.14	0.24	0.24	0.34	0.36
Secondary education	756.49	919.43	1,041.14	1,311.58	1,740.33	1,783.65	1,951.92	2,101.26	2,338.02
Primary vocational education	18.14	23.24	28.17	41.09	43.39	43.96	58.63	59.60	63.15
Secondary vocational education	26.03	32.52	35.34	55.49	73.39	83.05	100.16	140.21	146.81
Higher education	177.98	219.63	281.07	337.81	397.69	477.11	556.17	632.75	606.11
Other	67.71	144.57	192.91	342.34	195.43	404.94	349.64	445.47	467.75

Source: Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The recent increase in public ECEC expenditures aims to compensate for inflation while investing in a modest service expansion. The budget associates the recent increase with a rising number of preschools and with gradual salary raises for preschool staff. Most current nonwage expenditures in the sector are, at best, indexed to the level of projected inflation. The wage bill ceilings are fixed at the central level and protected.

Major education budget items for 2017 and 2018 appear in table 4.2. It is not possible to estimate and track expenses for other items of expenditures due to different approaches to their breakdown by budget classification in different years.

Table 4.2 Budget breakdown by key budget classification items

Expenditure	2017		2018	
	TJS, millions	%	TJS, millions	%
04 - Education	3,581.1		3,863.1	7.9 ^a
041 - Preschool education	201.8	5.6 ^b	241.2	6.2
2111 - Salary	98.5	48.8 ^c	111.3	46.1
2211 - Physical resources (including meal expenses)	53.7	26.6	55.0	22.8
2215 - Operating repairs	8.5	4.2	6.3	2.6

Source: Data from MOF of the RT.

Note: a. The increase in the education budget in 2018 from 2017. b. From the education budget. c. From the budget of preschool education.

4.2. Parent contributions

Parent contributions constitute a significant share of KG budgets. The share of parent fees in the total budget of KGs increased from 19 percent in 2015 to 34 percent in 2018. Until 2016 the fees were not nationally regulated, and they varied from TJS 25–60 per month (about \$2.65–\$6.35) at the discretion of each district—often reflecting local residents’ purchasing power. The contributions are, for the most part, used to provide preschool meals.

In 2016, a government resolution regulated parent fees through a system that combined an indicator for calculations with coefficients specific to the districts.⁵⁵ In 2016 this indicator was TJS 40 (about \$4.23), and in 2017 and 2018 it was TJS 50 (about \$5.29). Table 4.3 presents the coefficients used to define a parent fee’s value in different districts.

Table 4.3 Coefficients of the indicator for calculations of parent fees, by district (city or district)

Cities and districts of the country	The specificity of the city or district
Coefficient: 2.0 (Fee in 2017–18: TJS 100)	
Dushanbe (Somoni, Sino, Firdavsi, Shohimansur)	Mostly urban population, with a developed infrastructure and a high population density
Khatlon Region: Bokhtar (formerly Kurgantube)	
DRS: Tursunzade, Vahdat (with the exception of villages), Shahrinav	
Sugd Region: Khujand, Istaravshan, Kanibadam, Biston, Bobojon Gafurov, Jabbor Rasulov, Spitamen	
Coefficient: 1.5 (Fee in 2017–18: TJS 75)	
DRS: Ragun, Varzob, Rasht, Faizabad, Nurabad	Mostly urban population,
Sugd Region: Isfara, Guliston, Pyandjakent, Zafarabad, Devashtich	districts receiving subsidies from the state budget
Khatlon Region: Sarband, Kulob (except villages), Yavan	
GBAO: Khorog, Shugnan	
Coefficient: 1.0 (Fee in 2017–18: TJS 50)	
DRS: Rudaki, Gisar, Lahsh, Tajikabad, Sangvor	Predominantly rural,
Sugd Region: Aini, Kuhiston Mastchoh, Mastchoh, Shahriston, Asht	mountainous areas,
Khatlon Region: Baldzhuvan, Kushonen (formerly Bokhtar), Vakhsh, Vose, Dangara, A. Jami, Dusti, Kabadian, Jaihun, Muminabad, N. Khisrov, Pyanj, Temurmalik, Farhor, Hamadoni, Hovaling, Khuroson, D. Balkhi, Shahritus, Sh. Shokhin	districts receiving subsidies from the state budget

GBAO: Darvoz, Vanj, Ishkashim, Murghab, Roshtkala, Rushan

Source: Government Resolution "On payments for maintenance of children in state preschool educational institutions," 2016.

This regulation for parent contributions was a key step toward consolidating and settling private contributions to public preschools and increasing transparency—but challenges remain. Some KGs reported that after the introduction of the unified system, the number of children in the kindergartens declined because fees were not affordable for all families. Parents of children attending public preschools in Dushanbe, Khudzhand, Tursun-zade in 2017–18 paid TJS 100 per child per month (about \$10.59).

Preschools can generate additional resources. Regulations give public preschools the right to provide optional fee-based services beyond the preschool program—language, music, dancing, and arts classes, for example—led by invited subject teachers during regular hours. The KGs are required to ensure basic quality: a certified subject teacher, equipment, and so on. The fee for these additional services is to be coordinated with the regional division of the antimonopoly committee. Public preschools are required to use these fees in accordance with the instruction on nonbudgetary funds utilization adopted by MoF and MoES in 2017. Whereas parent fees go mostly toward food provision, the revenues from these additional services mainly cover teacher salaries.

4.3 Per capita financing

In 2015 Tajikistan introduced a per capita financing (PCF) pilot for preschools, inspired by the success of the PCF model in general education. The aims were to eliminate inequity in ECEC funding, make planning more transparent, and give preschools the autonomy that would enable them to use funds more efficiently. The government's 2015 resolution stipulated the development and piloting of a PCF model (box 4.1) to be introduced nationally from 2017.

Box 4.1 Tajikistan's pilot per capita funding (PCF) model for preschools

The formula defines a minimum amount of budget funds allocated to public preschools. It covers the recurrent costs of basic services to be provided by preschool education: wage bill, utilities, maintenance, TLMs, and so on. Funds for food are determined by each city/district. The financing norms of the formula are determined for every region. Because of the overall low coverage of preschool education and the higher level of differences in enrollment rates between the regions than the one between the districts within a region, the use of nationally set norms was considered inappropriate. In 2016, the model was piloted with the support of the GPE-4, in all regions of the country and Dushanbe city, covering 14 districts.

PCF formula, as designed with UNICEF support, for public preschools' budget calculation (excluding parental contributions):

$$B = ((N_p * Q) * C_s + N_i) + F,$$

(B - kindergarten's budget amount; N_p - norm per pupil (at the regional level); Q - number of children in the KG (on January 1 of each fiscal year); N_i - norm per institution (at the regional level); C_s - coefficient for specialized institutes (10 percent; determined at the national level), and F - funds for food (determined at local level))

Source: "On transition of state preschool educational institutions to per capita financing," Government Resolution, 2015

The preschool PCF pilot achieved positive results, showing that ECEC resources can be managed more efficiently. As part of the preparation for national PCF introduction from 2017, all public preschools were registered as legal entities, with their assets, accounting, and approved estimates of income and expenses (separate from a founder). Despite the expected challenges—misunderstanding of the PCF model, the lack of financial management skills among preschool heads, the lack of skilled accountants, and so on—the pilot was a success. First, it achieved transparent and standardized preschool budget planning. Second, it gave preschools autonomy in funds distribution, enabling them to use resources more efficiently to improve services. For example, KGs reduced water and electricity consumption after meters were installed. The KGs used the savings to buy teaching and learning materials, to buy heating fuel, to make minor repairs, to improve meals, and so on. (The PCF pilot allowed the basic data collection and analysis used in this report.)

Despite these achievements, the PCF pilot was not expanded as planned. The PCF was not scaled up nationally from 2017 as intended. The MOF would like to put off a decision about this step until it has simulated a PCF model with norms defined nationally—not by region, as in the pilot—and assessed the simulated model's impact on interbudgetary relations.

While the government did not adopt PCF in preschools nationally in 2017, it made an attempt to equalize public preschool budgets at the district level. The main characteristics of ECEC financing before, during, and after the PCF pilot appear in table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Summary of the main characteristics of the preschools' financing system before, during, and after the PCF pilot.

Specification	Before 2016	2016 in piloted districts	Since 2017 nationwide
Legal status of KGs	Not a separate legal entity	A legal entity with its assets, budget, and bank account	A legal entity with its assets, budget, and bank account
Flow of funds	From LFD to LED or jamoat. KG did not have money for disposal	From LFD directly to KG. KGs form their budgets and use the money themselves	From LFD directly to KG. KGs form their budgets and use the money themselves
Distribution of funds among KGs	Based on historically formed practice and at LED's discretion	According to PCF formula	Based on historically formed practice and at LED's discretion
Breakdown of KG budget by budget line items	By LFD for each KG	By KG	By KG
Procurement of goods for KG	By LED or jamoat	By KG	By KG

Maintaining the current budget planning system reinforces uneven and inequitable funds distribution, as budgets are allocated to preschools on a residual basis. At the district level, in the education sector, the general education budget is determined by the PCF formula first. What is left is then distributed to other areas including preschools, additional education, and so on. For preschools, expenses for so-called protected items (wage bill, utilities) are defined first, leaving

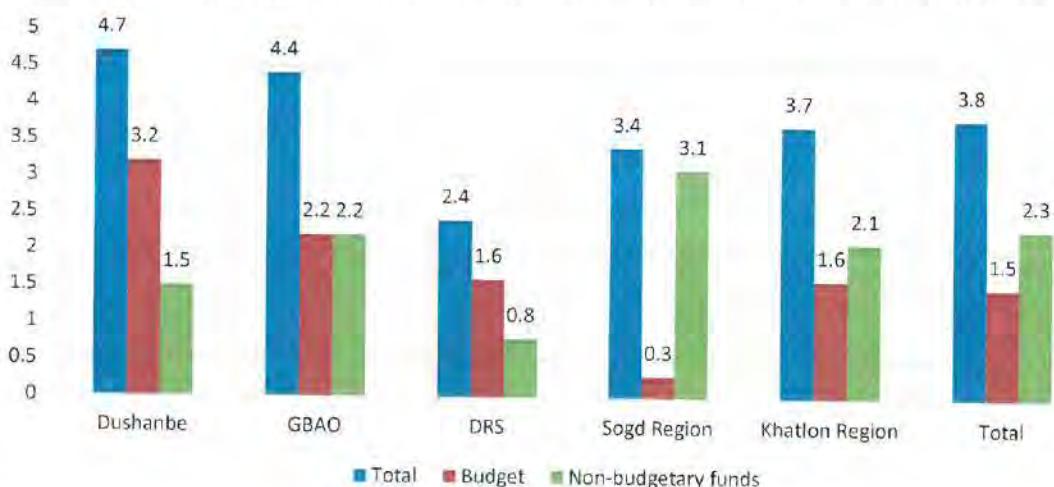
little for nonwage items. To make the distribution of budget funds more equitable and their use more efficient, PCF is the most promising approach.

4.4 Expenditures for meals in public preschools

The regulations define norms for preschool meals—but there are no legal requirements to abide by these norms. As noted in chapter 3, the meals component in the public preschools budget is not guaranteed. So as each district plans its preschool budget, it determines its own food component by looking at the district's projected revenue and at competing education needs. Meals are often financed mainly by parent fees.

The lack of a guaranteed minimum budget for preschool meals makes it challenging for preschool food current expenditures to adhere to the norms developed by the MoHSP.⁵⁶ To ensure the stated quantity of food per day, providers must compromise on quality. A calculation of the minimum expense for a child's meal per day—based on the approved nutritional standards and the sample menu—was conducted for this study. The results show that in 2017, TJS 18.8 per child per day was needed for meals (2017 prices). By contrast, in 2017, the largest budgeted amount for food—planned in Dushanbe city—was TJS 4.7 per child per day (figure 4.1). And the country average amounted to TJS 3.8, which is 4.9 times less than the required minimum.

Figure 4.1 Planned expenditures for food per child per day, in TJS, at state KGs in 2017



Source: Authors' analysis.

Approved preschool food budget expenditures in 2017 varied by region (see figure 4.1). They were lowest in Rayons of Republican Subordination (RRS), at TJS 2.4 per child per day. However, planned or approved expenditures often differ from actual expenses.

Chapter 5. Regulation and governance

National development strategies in Tajikistan strongly emphasize holistic ECD, especially for low income families, and increasing preschool enrollments while improving service quality is a prominent part of national development priorities.⁵⁷ A 2013 law “On education” determines the legal, organizational, and socioeconomic framework, along with key principles of government policy in education. Article 15 states that preschool education institutions:

- Support holistic child development.
- Help parents and caregivers provide child care and nurturing.
- Prepare children to enter primary school.

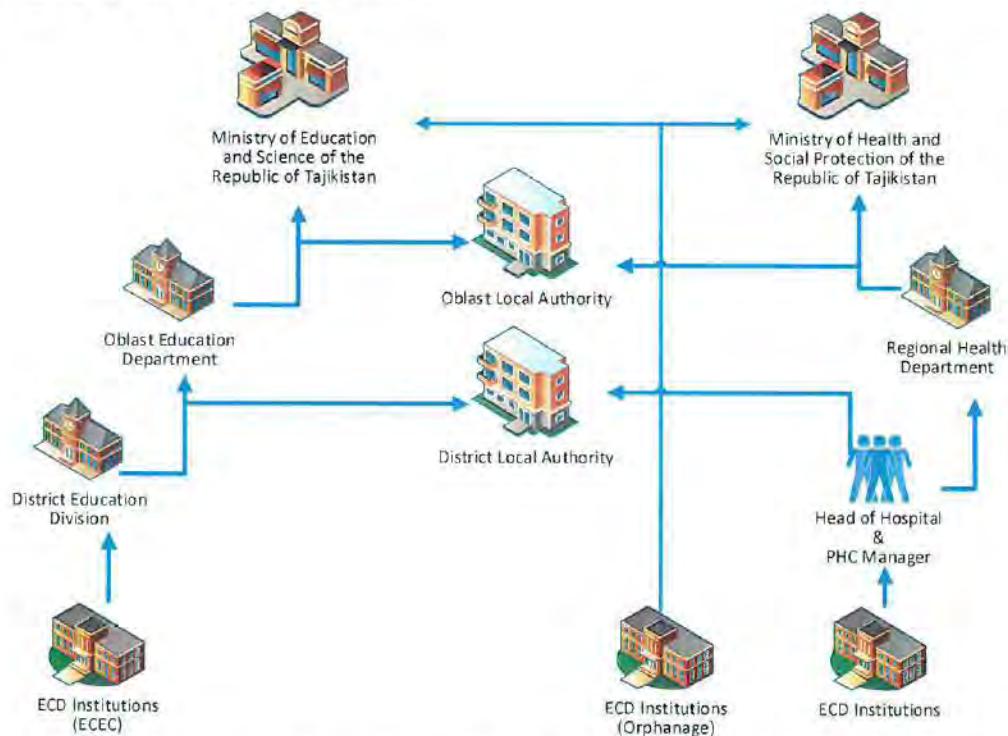
Without mandating preschool enrolment, the law states that preschool education is the first level of the national education system. Children can be enrolled as early as 1.5 years of age. The law also stipulates that the state must ensure preschool access for low-income families.

5.1 The regulatory regime: actors, standards, curriculum, programs

All levels of the education system of Tajikistan are highly regulated and governed by several actors (figure 5.1). At the central level, in the preschool sector, MoES (through its subordinates) develops and implements state policy and strategy, sets priorities for developing preschool education and care, and approves unified standards for education service provision. It also approves education standards, curricula for preschools, and training curricula for preschool professionals. Besides MoES, other entities have the following roles:

- The Republican Training and Methodological Center (RTMC) and the Academy of Education (AoE) have a mandate to develop methodological guides for preschool teachers.
- The State Agency for Supervision in the Sphere of Education (SASSE) conducts licensing, attestation, and accreditation for all preschool institutions.
- The MoHSP approves preschool norms related to feeding and sleeping arrangements in preschools, sanitary-hygiene requirements on preschool premises, and WASH facilities.
- The Agency on Construction and Architecture is responsible for establishing construction standards for social infrastructure, including preschools.
- Local authorities—district and city municipalities (Khukumats)—are responsible under the Law on Local Self-governance for implementing preschool policy and ensuring local preschool provision, following the centrally adopted state norms and regulations. Local authorities play a key role in decisions about the local network of preschool service provision, and they cover much of the cost of public ECEC services.

Figure 5.1 ECEC governance chart



The ECEC regulatory regime also comprises many actors. A list of key ECEC regulatory documents is given in Annex 1. The key elements of this regulatory system include:

- The State Standard for Preschool Education (2014).⁵⁸ This standard defines key principles of ECEC in Tajikistan, such as building educational activities based on the individual needs of each child. The State Standard sets the overall process requirements for preschool services, including single requirements for preschool education and care; the core component of preschool education and care; the maximum academic workload for students; requirements toward a graduate level of competence; the organization of the education process; and timelines for preschool learning and care. The State Standard is mandatory for all preschools, public and private, regardless of ownership.
- The Early Child Learning and Development Standards (ELDS; 2010). The ELDS aim to outline learning outcome standards for all children 0–7 years of age, balancing between the domains of child development⁵⁹ and focusing on competences. Being compulsory for all types of ECEC, they guide the system to focus on individual child development by introducing ECD key indicators to be filed for each child.
- The Law on the Responsibility of Parents for Child Education and Upbringing (2011). This law aims to enhance the responsibility of parents for child education and care in the spirit of humanism, patriotism, respect to national, universal human, and cultural values, as well as the protection of children's rights and interests. The law identifies tasks, rights, and obligations of parents for child education and care: creating conditions for health protection and for the physical, psychological, spiritual, ethical, and moral formation of children, as well as providing preschool education for children up to 6 years old. The law prescribes respecting the honor and dignity of children, preventing cruel treatment of children, and

preventing children's engagement in hazardous and hard labor that harms their health. However, this broad legislative framework is not supported by policy measures and actions to empower parental capacity and initiate transfers of information and knowledge to families to promote child development and early learning.

- The Design Norms (1988) and Hygienic Requirements for Preschool Institutions (SanPin; 2014). According to these regulatory documents, preschools must adhere to a list of standards that cover different aspects of design, construction, and hygiene: minimal space per child, lighting, daily routine, feeding norms, furniture, the roof, floor, structural soundness, windows, building materials, functional hygienic facilities, potable water, and electricity.
- The Provision of Preschool Educational Institutions (2015) and Hygienic Requirements of Preschool Institutions (SanPin; 2014). These standards establish responsibilities for preschools and requirements for preschools management, defining the preschools' education process and their daily routine. A daily regime is mandatory for all types of preschools.⁶⁰ For the full day, the maximum length of continuous wake time for children 3–7 years old shall be 5.5–6 hours.⁶¹ This is under stringent control by SES and superior authorities. The state service delivery is for a minimum of eight hours per day during weekdays with regular working hours from 7:30 AM till 5 PM. The regulations provide flexibility to full day ECEC institutions in setting their working hours within 8–10 hours per day in the institutions' charter. To accommodate working parents' work schedule, KGs arrange care services between 5 PM and 6 PM. A charter of a preschool educational institution also gives an opportunity to organize 24-hour groups, which is rarely observed in practice (for example, at specialized preschools).

A mandatory curriculum, Rangincamon⁶² (“Rainbow”), was approved in 2012 for all full-day preschools. Developed using the State Standard for Preschool Education of the Republic of Tajikistan (2014) and the ELDS for 0–7 years (2010), this curriculum reflects Tajikistan's piloting of the Step-by-Step⁶³ approach in the mid-2000s. Rancingamon targets the physical, emotional, social, and personal development of children aged 1.5–6 years, along with speech development and preparation for knowledge comprehension. National experts acknowledge that Rangincamon needs updating with newer, more advanced approaches to preschool education.

Optional, short term programs provide preschool services for children ages 5–7—but their implementation and promotion present challenges. The programs are based on Rangincamon and state standards and are adjusted to one month, three months, and nine months, creating an opportunity for preschools to provide varied services to previously uncovered beneficiaries and diverse, vulnerable groups. The short term programs could be delivered in preschools and general schools, but they remain limited in implementation because they are not mandatory. These programs are:

- The Program to Prepare Preschool-Age Children Ages 5–7 Years for School Enrollment—a one-month program to get acquainted with a school and school rules, approved by the MoES Collegiate body on 30.04.2015, No.11/31;
- The Short-Term Curriculum to Prepare Preschool-Age Children 5–7 (6) Years Old to School Enrollment, designed for 3 months (with 15 weekly hours) and approved by the MoES Collegiate body on 01.12.2009, No.18/20.
- Preschool Preparation of Children of 4–7 (6) years old,” a program for ELCs, designed for 9 months and approved by MoES Collegiate body on 13.05.2013. This program was

developed with support from AKF and UNICEF and officially adopted by MoES. It was introduced in ELCs supported by AKF and GPE-4 (around 800 ELCs in total). A modern program, it synthesizes best practices (Montessori, Step-by-Step, and so on) and adjusts them to Tajikistan's environment. The program targets 6-year-olds who do not attend full day KGs. It is counted at 15 hours a week (3 hours per day and 5 days per week). For comparison, Rangincamon is counted at 17 hours a week. The ELC program aims to promote child development and school readiness.

According to regulations, a preschool educational institution can provide extracurricular services—foreign language learning, choreography classes, rhythmic gymnastics classes, visual arts classes, and others—in accordance with state preschool education standards. Subject to request from parents, but usually paid separately, preschools can provide such classes during the regular preschool day. These classes exist at preschools with children of professional parents, who can afford the extra cost. Data on the scale at which these additional services are being provided is not collected or analyzed—but such data could help in identifying parents' priorities for preschool education, and in planning additional preschool education services.

5.2 Ambiguous adherence to regulations

As indicated in chapter 3, the implementation of standards is ambiguous. For example, many ECEC facilities do not comply with established infrastructure standards. According to the policies, facilities that fail to meet standards should be suspended or shut down. Nevertheless, according to MoES, some functioning preschool institutions have not been rehabilitated over the past 25–30 years. Private facilities must follow all the standards, but they often violate them to provide services. The result is that the standards undermine the policy priority of stimulating and supporting private ECEC provision. The national planning and monitoring of maintenance needs is often ad hoc. And local monitoring is inadequate, because of limited local budgets.

Preschool curriculum implementation falls short of what was intended and described in regulations. Although optional short-term preschool programs are intended for use in preschools and schools, preschools do not deliver them. The programs are not mandatory, preschools lack space for additional programs, and staff are not prepared to teach in these programs. Programs are promoted by MoES and implemented by local self-government authorities. These programs are provided in general schools which have space and teachers to deliver them. Although the programs are titled for children ages 4(5)–7, in fact, they are designed for children of age 6. The effectiveness of one-month and three-month programs was not evaluated. AKF evaluated an earlier version of the nine-month program for ELCs with positive results; the program was further elaborated and used in the AKF and GPE-4 supported ELCs. While the program for ELCs targets 6-year-olds, ELCs enroll children from ages 4 to 6 years. Thus, children aged 4–5 years who attended ELCs in a previous year will go through the same syllabus the following year. Both programs—for Rangincamon and for ELCs—aim to promote comprehensive child development: cognitive, physical, socio-emotional, ability to learn. But the intended curriculum is not fully and properly implemented in KGs and ELCs, mainly due to teachers' lack of skills.

Both KGs and ELCs are under pressure from parents who demand that preschools teach children at age 6 to read, write, and count—anticipating the first grade of primary school. Focus group participants reported that parents in turn are under pressure from some schools, which arrange a sort of school admission test, contrary to regulations.

At the service level, the overall management of state, enterprise-owned, and private institutions is conducted by the founders. LEDs, the founders of public preschool institutions located in their territory, are responsible for the provision of human and material resources for those public preschools.

5.3 A lack of consistent monitoring

While national agencies are responsible for overall policy monitoring, implementation monitoring is up to local authorities. LEDs thus supervise preschool institution performance—regardless of ownership—ensuring it is in line with state standards, regulations, and preschool programs. Other local agencies, including SES, inspect for adherence to nutrition and sanitary norms. Central institutions such as MoES and its subordinates (SASSE, AoE, RTMC, and so on) have their schedule of local service supervision.

In general, implementation monitoring is not of high quality. Implementation capacity is low, specialists are few, and concepts of how monitoring should support policy development are often obsolete (for example, by involving penalty measures).

Data gathering and analysis are inconsistent and often lacking. The CwD data available to the health, education, and social protection sectors—whether local or central—often contain discrepancies. Also, EMIS (the main source of quantitative data for this report) lacks population data for estimates of preschool enrollment and of potential preschool services demand.

Information on preschool admission waiting lists is not comprehensive and transparent, creating opportunities for corruption (according to focus group participants). Initial attempts to regulate access and prevent corrupt practices have been introduced in Dushanbe, Khujand, and Bohtar, reflecting long waiting lists and limited provision.

Overall, Tajikistan lacks intersectoral coordination in ECD. In 2013, such coordination was rated “latent” by the System Approach for Better Education Results (SABER)-ECD framework, meaning that Tajikistan had no explicit multisectoral strategy or institutional anchor for ECD, no coordination or integration of services for young children, and no coordination mechanisms for institutions involved in ECD.⁶⁴ Since 2013, no major upgrade has been undertaken. An example of the lack of coordination is that some regulatory ECD documents are approved by only a single ministry, without the others’ involvement. Specialized preschools under the MoES is a different example. There is no assessment of the specialized service provision from the health authorities. Even though, these institutions are for children with health issues and have a nurse for a limited medical service. There is no strong institutional niche to coordinate MoES and MoHSP (two key ministries in ECD).

Monitoring and assessment procedures and instruments are not standardized—even though a multilayer system exists. This existing system covers:

- Monitoring of ECEC processes’ compliance with various regulations.
- Assessment of service provision quality and outcomes.

Monitoring for various types of ECEC institutions is detailed in annex 2.

The head of each ECEC institution regularly oversees internal monitoring of teaching processes. Local and central education authorities (local and regional education departments, MoES, SASSE) conduct external monitoring for compliance with the state preschool program Rangincamon, for the implementation of state programs (such as Russian language study), for

orders issued by the government and MoES, for staffing issues, for readiness in advance of heating season, for nutrition, and more.

Monitoring student outcomes remains a challenge. The system is directed by ELDS (which is compulsory for all types of ECEC, as noted earlier) to focus on individual child development, with key indicators to be filed for each child. But these filings are not monitored. Tajikistan is thus missing a chance to monitor child outcomes and development effectively. Implementation is lacking—and the data gathered through this work is expected to be similarly lacking.

The ineffectiveness of ECEC outcome monitoring has many explanations. Reasons include the complexity of the ELDS document, the dearth of administrative capacity (national, local, and in-service provision), the lack of qualified staff, and—in general—low attention to the potential of standards for improving outcomes. Although an educational activity has been proposed for each indicator to help teachers achieve the outcomes formulated in the standards, the local expert community considers the ELDS complex and ambitious. No capacity building or standards popularization was initiated to support the standards' systematic introduction and use. As a result, specialists are lacking to monitor adherence to the standards—and some preschool institutions' managers and staff do not even know about the ELDS. Finally, MoHSP has not adopted the ELDS, and although MoES began work on ELDS revision (with UNICEF support), this work was not completed.

Education quality monitoring—including a review of the teaching plan, observation of teacher-children interactions, interviews with teachers, and direct observation of children—is based each time on a questionnaire prepared and approved by the monitoring body. After meeting to discuss the results, the monitoring body instructs parties to address any concerns. But monitoring instruments are not standardized, there is no manual for developing the questionnaire, and no training is prescribed for monitors—all especially critical problems for monitoring that includes direct observation of children. Monitoring also focuses on compliance with existing rules and standards, with no attempt to assess their quality and relevance. (As noted in chapter 3, other types of external monitoring are regularly conducted by non-educational bodies—epidemiological and sanitary services, state financial control, audit, and so on.)

In 2016 MoES took a step forward by creating a standard instrument for internal and external monitoring of ECEC service provision, but this instrument has not yet been adopted. Developed with support from the GPE-4 project, the instrument for preschool facility and services assessment⁶⁵ covers 14 key areas of preschool operations under Tajikistan's state standards. Examples of such areas include gaming activities, language development, the learning environment, staff interactions with children, physical development and health care, social development and the development of personality, and cognitive development and elementary natural science concepts. While not meant for the direct observation of children, the instrument could be used for both internal self-assessment and external services monitoring. Participating institutions, monitors, and MoES liked the instrument, in part because it is not too complicated. Still, MoES has not officially adopted the instrument as a standard monitoring tool.

MoES has a well-designed EMIS to collect and analyze basic information on preschools: infrastructure status, children and staff profiles, and the like. The EMIS data—which heavily inform this analysis—are collected by LEDs. But some data may be not reliable, especially for infrastructure. In addition, data are not collected on professional staff vacancies (unlike in general education). This gap impedes workforce planning.

Box 5.1. Preschool Education Management Information System (EMIS)

The MOES's EMIS for general education operates nationally since 2008. Preschool EMIS was developed and introduced nationally by the MOES with support from GPE-4 in 2016. It collects the following data at a preschool level:

1. General information about the preschool (type, ownership etc.)
2. Number of children by age and sex
3. Number of groups by children age and language of instruction
4. Orphan and disabled children, children from low income families
5. Children's diseases (flu, acute respiratory and virus infections, pneumonia, angina, hepatitis, parotitis, etc.)
6. Teaching staff (position, sex, education, experience, retraining courses taken, etc.)
7. Physical infrastructure
8. WASH system

Chapter 6. Policy Recommendations

As the Government of Tajikistan embarks on much-needed ECEC policy reforms, the analysis in this report identifies some options as feasible, others less so. A proposed ECEC expansion strategy is presented here first, with related general recommendations. More specific recommendations follow under four heads: increasing equitable access, enhancing quality, ensuring financing, and improving regulation and governance.

General recommendations

The proposed ECEC expansion strategy is a coordinated, gradual introduction of a mixture of high quality services, giving priority to 6-year-olds, while sustaining and raising the current enrollment of other preschool age groups—and while intensifying the focus on ECD and ECEC advocacy and awareness raising and on parental education.

- *To develop a clear roadmap for covering all 6-year-olds with one preschool year while, at the same time, sustaining and raising the current level of enrollment of all preschool age groups already covered.* Giving priority to the gradual coverage of 6-year-old children would address the government's urgent objective of increasing preschool enrollment and improving school readiness for preschoolers—and it would facilitate a move toward compulsory one-year preschool in the future, if such a decision is made. As the government plans to shift to a compulsory 12-year education system, making preschool compulsory at age 6 is one of the optimal options being considered. But it seems too early to institute such a plan immediately, given the system's capacity constraints and its substantial reliance on parent fees.
- *To address supply limitations and meet varying demands, the preschool expansion should rely on a mixture of different preschool models.* To meet the needs of a fast-growing and diverse child population, the government should further develop alternative models and combine center-based services with family care, parenting support programs, and varied cost-efficient solutions targeted to children aged 0–6. Alternative models include, for example, half day groups, half week groups, and weekend groups, which could also engage parents; the system could target skills development as well, through diverse extracurricular activities in preschools. The ECEC system could provide family-based care for small groups of children in private homes affiliated to a traditional KG that is responsible for hiring and supporting the home-based specialists and enrolling the children. Another option is to complement ECEC programs—regular or short-term—with a parenting component, promoting parent-child interactions that focus on skills stimulation and development (see, for example, box 2.2 in chapter 2). Such a combined approach will be less costly than investing in public infrastructure alone—though it will also require strong collaboration and quality assurance mechanisms.
- *ECD and ECEC advocacy and awareness raising and parental education should receive greater emphasis.* Parental education is crucial, given the system's low capacity to cover preschool children, on the one hand, and the lack of awareness about child development needs among parents and caregivers, on the other. Easy to access parenting programs should be provided to families at the local level—especially to parents with young children. These programs would be expected to meet children's developmental needs, to meet families' knowledge needs, and to be linked to existing health and social provision, creating positive conditions for improving human development outcomes and policy effectiveness

in all areas of child development. To promote ECEC and ensure continuity with the interventions in ECD, the parenting programs could be linked to local networks for preschool provision.

- *Plan expansion in the supply of ECEC services, using data to ensure equitable provision.* The expansion and combination of services and infrastructure development should be informed by specific local demand for services (including demographic data), with two parallel strands of work to address rural and urban demands. Preschools in rural areas should be expanded to overcome demand-side enrollment constraints, especially for the most vulnerable children. New national policy planning should ramp up the planning and coordinated delivery of ECD services, including preschools locally, to ensure efficient access and service delivery that meets the specific needs of the child population.
- *Encourage provision by the private sector and other nonstate actors.* Regulations should support alternative means of ECEC provision, especially through private finance. To effectively employ the private sector in provision, the government could take steps to support social entrepreneurship in ECEC. Regulations already create an entry point for private investment—yet these regulations would require further development to stimulate private provision that does not target only the wealthiest (perpetuating access barriers), but instead meets the needs of a broader public. One option, for example, is to use public funding as start-up stimulus. Another example is outcome-based impact bonds programs.
- *Ensure that preschool expansion does not come at a cost in preschool quality, but instead accompanies improvements to facilities and services.* International experience shows that children who attend low quality preschools very often do not perform better than peers who attend no preschool at all: in some cases, the enrolled children even perform worse. Improving facilities and service quality will require investment on many fronts. Both ECEC outcomes and children's school readiness will improve with a consistent effort to monitor learning and address its shortcomings. Given the low quality of existing ECEC facilities and especially preschools, investments will be required to meet standards for health and hygiene and child safety. The quality of teaching staff, school leadership, and district level staff who deliver services will also require investment.
- *Develop a comprehensive regulatory framework.* In Tajikistan today, different types of ECEC services are being provided under different settings. Combined with an introduction of new modalities of the service provision that would require a comprehensive framework for enabling preschool service delivery by various providers (public, private, nonprofit), in diverse settings (full day, half day, half week, and so on), and in different venues (KGs, schools, public premises, community centers, homes, and so on)—all targeting a core set of child development outcomes. See the recommendations under “Improving regulation and governance,” below.

Increasing equitable access

- *Organize and develop the ECEC service network to better facilitate access and growth according to the needs of the population* (including by reducing physical distance from preschools). In addition to collecting and analyzing data on regional preschool needs and access, the government could initiate space planning for the expansion. The data would support not just new services, but expansion through various ECEC service types that are flexible and respond to regional needs and population characteristics. Special attention is needed to poverty as an access barrier. The focus group discussions showed that parents

are ready to accept new forms of ECEC service allowing for lower monthly fees, alternative organization, and flexible payment models.

- *Expand coverage, not just through newly built public facilities but also in existing ones, by applying innovative designs that use space flexibly.* Such designs could combine adaptable layouts, storable or multipurpose furniture, and a flexible daily routine to accommodate higher numbers of students, while also encouraging more interaction among and with children and thus improving early learning experiences (see chapter 2). Tajikistan's existing design norms allow merging preschools with primary schools in remote areas and providing reduced day services in dwelling houses.
- *Initiate national campaigns to promote understanding of CwD and raise awareness on the value of child-centered inclusive approaches, in education and in all ECD services.* The government should consider more focused planning and support for the inclusion of CwD, using knowledge and experience developed by international partners in Tajikistan.⁶⁶ Strategic documents on inclusive education have already created space for such efforts. Campaign goals could include the formation of a positive mindset among users and professionals about inclusive approaches, based on experience and reliable information about CwD, causal explanations for behavioral differences, and the like.
- *Include ELC teachers in the state budget payroll* (as recommended below under financing). This step would increase access to ELCs for children from low-income families, as cost co-sharing from the state budget would reduce ELC fees.
- *Encourage the opening of preschool groups with instruction in Russian, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen,*⁶⁷ subject to the availability of specialists. Such diversification would better meet the needs of national minorities at ECEC institutions.

Enhancing quality

- *Improve ECEC infrastructure to meet hygiene norms and other facility standards.* Public infrastructure requires upgrading, especially of water and sanitation facilities, and improvements to classroom lighting.
- *Upgrade quality standards for ECEC programs and service provision.* The ELDS is an important tool, but it is not being used. A review, assessment, and update of the ELDS is urgently needed. Such an update should precede and set the terms for later support to the sector. Following the ELDS update, a review of preschool curricula will be required.
- *Strengthen the capacity of all personnel involved—now and in the future—in ECEC management.* Measures should build ECEC stakeholder capacity at all levels. Focus on local authorities, who will plan, implement, and monitor the expansion of high-quality services; and on current and future preschool leaders, who will lead schools and local communities in upgrading and complementing ECEC service quality.
- *Improve quality of teaching.* A good preschool experience depends heavily on the skills of the school teacher. Efforts are needed to improve teacher preparation and training, not only before service, but during service. Teachers also need school leaders' support to deliver high quality, child-centered services. Given the acute lack of certified teaching staff in Tajikistan, consider forming teams of professionals with different qualification levels, in which senior teachers cover more than one group of children. This approach can use human and financial resources more efficiently to raise the quality of ECEC services.
- *Monitor learning, including child learning outcomes and classroom interactions.* Establish standards. Keep them clear and simple. Measure them regularly. Before settling on a type

of assessment (direct assessment or survey, sample or population wide), the government should first identify its purpose for ECECs: it is for process monitoring? Screening? Outcomes evaluation? What resources (human, financial, time) are required? What tradeoffs may be necessary and acceptable among purpose, instrument, and cost? A variety of instruments are available for the government to consider, including the Early Human Capability Index (eHCI) and MODEL and MELE, or MELQO.⁶⁸ Developed by UNESCO, the Brookings Institution, UNICEF, and the World Bank, the MELQO modules focus on both child outcome measurement and classroom practice monitoring, which supports improved interaction.

- *Coordinate all actors to improve ECEC service quality based on monitoring data.* Once an assessment is adopted and its results are available, the government has a central role in aligning all actors (parents, schools, community leaders, policymakers) to improve learning in response. Efforts must include both staff training and community outreach. Monitoring cannot improve ECEC services unless it is used to support and guide policy decisions, curriculum implementation, and pedagogical practices.
- *Make teaching and learning materials (TLM) adequately available.* Critical to cognitive stimulation and social development, these materials do not have to be expensive—they can be locally resourced. Brains are best stimulated by using a variety of resources. The preschool sector needs to encourage a more intensified use of TLM.
- *Improve preschool meals to meet state quality standards.* Such improvement could reduce the high stunting rate among children under age 5 in Tajikistan. The government could adopt a single guaranteed norm for preschool food budgets, revise the menu sample to make it more nutritious, and train preschool staff and parents on healthy feeding.
- *Consider developing the role of assistants—currently titled “teacher’s assistants,” a misnomer and an example of inefficient resource use—through training.* Developing a trained assistant network could help the ECEC system expand provision while directing attention to the quality of interaction. The assistant position could be an alternative path to enter the ECEC profession, and it could be used to expand provision, with additional services and activities within the public system.
- *Assess the impact of cold weather on services and attendance, and, if appropriate, explore policies to address winter operation and the costs of preschool closures.* Depending on what better data may reveal about winter attendance and expenses, options to consider may include technical improvements for winter heating at preschools, with attention to autonomous boilers; installing solar panels (taking into account Tajikistan’s climate); and reorganizing service provision or even closing preschools during the winter in remote areas.

Ensuring financing

- *Increase preschool financing.* It is obvious that without an increased ECEC financing an increase in enrollment, especially such a dramatic one as planned by the Government, is not realistic.
- *Update regulations to encourage private financing.* See general recommendations, above.
- *Introduce more equitable funding modalities, with autonomy for preschools to distribute funds efficiently.* It is recommended that a decision on PCF implementation be made following the analysis of its impact on the interbudgetary relations—making KG budget allocations more transparent, and preserving KGs’ gains from the preschool PCF pilot. If

regulations are revised, alternative preschool models could be financed from the budgets of KGs or schools to which they are mapped, and preschool children could be included in the PCF formula for those institutions. A review of the recently launched targeted social assistance (TSA) system, and of current regulations on preschool fee exemptions and discounts, is recommended to encourage participation by the lowest income groups.

- *To make ELCs more sustainable and affordable for families, include ELC teachers in the state budget payroll with a limited parent fee.* Table K1 presents estimated average annual maintenance costs for a child in a KG (TJS 2,545) and in an ELC (TJS 590). If a parent fee of TJS 30 per month per child were established for ELCs, the budget would need to cover only TJS 320 per child annually—one-eighth the cost for a child in a KG.⁶⁹

Table 6.1 Estimated maintenance cost per child in KG and in ELC in 2017 (in TJS)

Cost per child	In KG	In ELC	In ELC with parent fee (TJS 30 per month per child)
Annual	2,545	590	320
Monthly	283	66	36

Source: PCF monitoring data and authors' calculation.

Improving regulation and governance

- *Give priority to a stable decision-making team of experts to guide the planning, management, and assessment of preschool and ECD policies at both the national and the local level.* Recently, MoES established a Preschool Education Department for setting policies and standards, ensuring service delivery and access, and monitoring quality.⁷⁰ Within MoES, this department is best positioned to tackle coordination issues.
- *Improve coordination among all parties involved in data collection and analysis, planning, policy development and quality monitoring*—and intensify efforts to coordinate ECD policies within the education sector and among relevant sectors (education, health, and social protection). National policy urgently requires coordination, horizontally across sectors and vertically within the education sector (as emphasized above in the general recommendations). Local planning and delivery of ECD services, including preschools, also needs to be better coordinated—for efficient access, and for service delivery that meets local children's specific needs.
- *Strengthen capacity for data collection and analysis, both at the local and at the national level.* Systematically monitoring the demand and supply balance, for example, is necessary for coordinated planning of service provision, network expansion, and the mix of services needed to facilitate rapid and inclusive high-quality coverage.
- *Adopt and apply systematic and comprehensive quality measurement tools that empower the system to develop based on data.* See recommendations under "Enhancing quality," above.
- *Review and update the regulatory framework in line with international good practices for child learning outcomes, child safety, teaching standards, physical infrastructure, inclusive education, and so on.* See recommendations under "Enhancing quality," above.
- *Revise the regulatory framework to stimulate private ECEC services provision.* See recommendations under "Ensuring financing," above.
- *Strengthen regulations for improved services quality at ELCs.* Regulations governing ELCs and similar services—and related financing modalities—need updating to ensure

more sustained and high-quality provision. Although ELCs have increased preschool coverage, they are generally of low quality.⁷¹ Including ELC teachers on the state budget payroll (as recommended above) should raise the quality of ELCs.

- *Strengthen quality assurance in the preschool sector.* Elaborate the quality assurance structure and procedures, internal and external, with roles and responsibilities and qualification requirements for all ECEC stakeholders. Introduce quality assurance procedures at all levels, from central agencies down to preschools.

¹ The World Bank Group launched the Human Capital Project (HCP) in 2018 to accelerate more and better investments in people for greater equity and economic growth. A human capital index (HCI) score is generated for each country, indicating the level of human capital opportunity. The HCI defines full health as no stunting and 100 percent adult survival, complete education as 14 years of high-quality school by age 18.

² ECD covers physical, cognitive, and socioemotional development of children from 0 (or conception) to 6 (8) years old. Thus, ECD services lay across health, nutrition, early learning, and social and child protection sectors. ECEC is a part of ECD focusing primarily on child developmental services provided through educational and caring arrangements for children from birth to compulsory schooling regardless of setting, funding, opening hours, or program content. Preschool in Tajikistan covers children of 1.5–7 years of age.

³ World Development Report 2019: The Changing Nature of Work. World Bank: Washington, D.C.

⁴ The analysis was conducted in parallel with an analysis of ECD policies and services funded by the Education Sector Development Plan Grant (ESPDG) of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Trust Fund (TF). The TF has also provided co-financing for this analysis.

⁵ E. Yudina. 2016. "Preschools' facilities and services assessment." GPE-4 project. Covered 75 KGs and ELCs in rural and urban areas, public, enterprise-owned, and private.

⁶ National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2015–2030 (NDS, 2030)

⁷ In 2015, monetary poverty in Tajikistan was at 31 percent of the population with 76 percent of the poor living in rural areas. Multidimensional poverty (which accounts for demographics, labor, education, and access to services) at 64 percent is much higher than monetary poverty.

⁸ Ministry of Finance (MOF) data. The data indicate that such recurrent ECEC expenditures made up 0.34 percent of GDP at the end of this period.

⁹ Authors' calculation based on the MoES's data. Unless stated otherwise, dollar amounts (\$) are US dollars throughout this report.

¹⁰ World Bank. 2017. "Poverty Diagnostic of Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Conditions in Tajikistan."

¹¹ E. Yudina. 2016. "Preschools' facilities and services assessment." GPE-4 project.

¹² Authors' calculation based on 2017 EMIS data.

¹³ EMIS.

¹⁴ E. Yudina. 2016. "Preschools' facilities and services assessment." GPE-4 project.

¹⁵ E. Yudina. 2016. "Preschools' facilities and services assessment." GPE-4 project.

¹⁶ MoES data.

¹⁷ In 2017–18, the parental fees were TJS 50, 75, and 100 per month per child, depending on the rayon.

¹⁸ Approved by MoES Collegiate body, No. 14/17 dated 28.09.2012.

¹⁹ UNICEF, Open Society Institute (OSI), GPE-4, and local and international NGOs jointly with MoES and MoHSP (early detection of disorders, early intervention, provision of qualitative services, including education services, for children with special needs and their families).

²⁰ Languages of main national minorities in the RT.

²¹ E. Yudina. 2016. "Preschools' facilities and services assessment." GPE-4 project.

²² UNICEF, AKF, GPE-4/World Bank.

²³ The service usually accommodates children between 5 and 6 years of age.

²⁴ But also, in other available and appropriate premises.

²⁵ MoES data.

²⁶ Authors' calculation based on EMIS and State Statistical Agency data.

-
- ²⁷ The Labor Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, July 23, 2016. Enforcement of the Labor code is mandatory for all types of institutions regardless of their form of ownership.
- ²⁸ The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan Resolution No. 313 dated 01.06.2007, "On approval of rules for calculation of average salary to pay for annual leaves, benefits at employment termination, benefits during temporary unemployment, and in other cases related to payment of average salary." In 2017, the benefit for a first child was TJS 150, for second-TJS 100, and for a third-TJS 50 (for first three children only).
- ²⁹ Specifically, unpaid maternity leave is provided to the following working persons upon their request: a mother or a father of a child; a single parent; a grandmother, grandfather, or any other legal representative raising an abandoned child; a person who adopts a child (children).
- ³⁰ Occupational rate is calculated as a number of enrolled children in a KG divided by a planned capacity of the KG. The latter data are from the PCF database.
- ³¹ Author's analysis based on the MOES data
- ³² Authors' calculation based on MoES data.
- ³³ 'Poverty Map of Tajikistan.' World Bank 2017.
- ³⁴ As per the average market USD/TJS exchange rate in 2017 at 8.49
- ³⁵ 'Evaluation of UNICEF Tajikistan's work in priority districts during the 2010–2015 Country Programme,' 2016.
- ³⁶ EMIS 2017.
- ³⁷ Among these specialized preschools were two for children with reduced vision and cross-eye, one for children with speech disorders, and three for children in contact with tuberculosis patients.
- ³⁸ USAID 2012. "Review of Early Grade Reading Teaching and Skills. The Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan"
- ³⁹ "Preschool institutions for children. Design norms," State Committee on Civil Construction and Architecture, USSR, 1988.
- ⁴⁰ "Hygienic requirements for children preschool institutions." SanPiN, MoHSP 2014.
- ⁴¹ World Bank. 2017. "Poverty Diagnostic of Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Conditions in Tajikistan."
- ⁴² E. Yudina. 2016. "Preschools' facilities and services assessment." GPE-4 project.
- ⁴³ "Hygienic requirements for children preschool institutions." SanPiN, MoHSP 2014.
- ⁴⁴ Authors' calculation.
- ⁴⁵ MoES data.
- ⁴⁶ 17 percent in 2017. Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2017.
- ⁴⁷ WHO 2019, "Guidelines on physical activity, sedentary behavior and sleep for children under 5 years of age."
- ⁴⁸ World Bank. "Guidelines for new Yakutian kindergartens."
- ⁴⁹ E. Yudina. 2016. "Preschools' facilities and services assessment." GPE-4 project.
- ⁵⁰ State Standard for Preschool Education 2014.
- ⁵¹ E. Yudina. 2016. "Preschools' facilities and services assessment." GPE-4 project.
- ⁵² HEP, World Bank funded.
- ⁵³ Heads, senior teachers, and teachers in kindergartens, and teachers in ELCs.
- ⁵⁴ Full-Time Equivalent, load. Stands for 20 hours of instructional time per week in primary grades and 40 hours in preschools.
- ⁵⁵ "On payments for maintenance of children in state preschool educational institutions." Government Resolution, 2016. The size of the indicator for the calculation of taxes, duties, other mandatory payments, penalties, social payments, as well as for the calculation of certain monetary marginal (lower or upper) values is determined annually in the Budget Law.
- ⁵⁶ "Hygienic requirements for children preschool institutions." SanPiN, MoHSP 2014.
- ⁵⁷ As laid out in the NDS of the Republic of Tajikistan till 2030; and built further under the National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan 2012–2020 (NSED 2020), and the The Program for development of private preschool and general secondary educational institutions" Approved by the RT Government Resolution No.295 dated May 03, 2014.
- ⁵⁸ The 'State Standard for Preschool Education of the Republic of Tajikistan.' Approved by the RT Government Resolution No. 785 dated December 30, 2014.
- ⁵⁹ Development of motor system, physical health, and condition; Development of cognitive activities and general knowledge; Emotional and social child development; Development of speech, communication, and preparation for reading and writing; Personal development and moral education of children.
- ⁶⁰ "Hygienic requirements for preschool institutions" (SanPiN, 2.4.1.009-13).
- ⁶¹ "Hygienic requirements for preschool institutions" (SanPiN, 2.4.1.009-13).
- ⁶² Approved by MoES Collegiate body, No. 14/17 dated 28.09.2012.
- ⁶³ Was implemented in 18 public KGs with support from ⁶⁸ OSI.

⁶⁴ SABER-ECD 2013.

⁶⁵ Covered 75 preschools (KGs and ELCs; rural and urban; public, enterprise-owned, and private).

⁶⁶ UNICEF, Open Society Institute (OSI), GPE-4, and local and international NGOs jointly with MoES and MoHSP (early detection of disorders, early intervention, provision of qualitative services, including education services, for children with special needs and their families).

⁶⁷ Languages of main national minorities in the RT.

⁶⁸ <http://ecdmeasure.org/melqo-portal/>; The initiative aims to promote feasible, accurate, and useful measurement of children's development and learning at the start of primary school, and of the quality of their pre-primary learning environments. Items are designed for children between the ages of 4 and 6 years.

⁶⁹ PCF monitoring data and authors' calculation.

⁷⁰ The department is supported in these tasks by the AoE's working group. Under the auspices of MoES, the working group comprises representatives from MoES, RIITT, Pedagogical University, and preschool educators. Experts In health, nutrition, and social and child protection can be invited to assist with ECD-related policy or programming.

⁷¹ More in Chapters 1.1 and 4.1.

Annex 1. List of Regulatory Documents

Regulatory documents related to preschool education		
No.	Document title	Document scope
1	Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2003	Establishes the right to receive preschool education within the framework of existing laws.
2	Law of the Republic of Tajikistan 'On Education,' 2013	Establishes general framework for structure, activities, and management of education system in RT, as well as specifies legal, institutional, socioeconomic framework and core principles of state policy in education sector.
3	Law of the Republic of Tajikistan 'On Preschool Education and Care,' 2013	Establishes legal, institutional, economic, and social framework for preschool education and care in the RT.
4	Law of the Republic of Tajikistan 'On Responsibility of Parents for Child Education and Upbringing,' 2011	Establishes responsibility of parents for child education and upbringing, protection of their rights and interests.
5	Law of the Republic of Tajikistan 'On licensing certain types of activities,' 2004	Establishes types of activities of educational institutions that require permit, as well as legal basis for issuing licenses for the right to perform certain types of activities.
6	'Provision of preschool educational institutions,' 2015	Establishes responsibilities, liabilities, and roles of preschool educational institutions; organization of educational process; requirements toward management of preschool educational institutions.
7	'Preschool institutions for children. Design norms,' 1988	Establishes norms for designing newly built and reconstructed preschool educational institutions for children.
8	'National Concept on Education,' 2006	Specifies tasks and objectives of national education on a new historical stage, determines their role and status in forming a fully rounded person.
9	'National Education Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan till 2020,' 2012.	Provides for structural changes in education system, as well as ensuring accessibility of qualitative education through modernizing education system.
10	'National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan till 2030,' 2016	Establishes development of preschool education that fosters ECD, development of alternative forms of preschool education (including non-public); creativity centers for children and youth, inclusive education system; development of targeted assistance system for low-income households.
11	'State Standard for Preschool Education of the Republic of Tajikistan,' 2014	Establishes single requirements with regard to preschool education and care; core component of preschool education and care; academic workload for students; requirements with regard to graduates' level of competence; organization of educational process; timelines for preschool learning and care.
12	'National Concept on Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011–2015,' 2011	Establishes equal rights for education and care for CwD at educational institutions of the RT.
13	Government Resolution 'On transition of public preschool educational institutions to normative (per capita) financing,' 2015	Stipulates transition of public preschool educational institutions to normative (per capita) financing.
14	Government Resolution 'On payments for maintenance of children in state preschool educational institutions,' 2016	Establishes unified norm for parental fees.
15	'Reference book for education financing,' 1987	Establishes a single requirement with regard to forming Full-Time Equivalents at preschools and their financing.

Regulatory documents related to preschool education		
No.	Document title	Document scope
16	'Program for development of private preschool and general secondary educational institutions,' 2014	Establishes measures to create favorable conditions for joint activities among public and private sectors.
17	'Early child learning and development standards (from birth to 7(6) years)', 2010	Establishes single requirements related to preschool education and care for children at the age from birth to 7(6), contents of teaching process, as well as provides for interrelation of sensitive development periods of children and their influence on education and care objectives.
18	'Hygienic requirements for children preschool institutions' (SanPiN [sanitary rules and norms] 2.4.1.009-13), 2014.	Specifies sanitary and hygienic norms for all types of preschool educational institutions.
19	State program 'Rangincamon' (Rainbow), 2012	Principal educational program for all types and forms of children full-day preschools (regardless of ownership type) that aims to develop abilities of children, care, education, and preparation for school.
20	'Short-term curriculum to prepare preschool-age children 5–7 (6) years old to school enrollment,' 2009	Provides for forming groups to prepare for school enrollment of children at secondary educational institutions, as well as preparation of children for school during 3 months.
21	'Preschool preparation of children of 5–7 (6) years old,' curriculum, 2010.	Specifies primary objectives of care, education, and development for children 5–7 (6) years old to prepare children for school enrollment during 1 year.
22	'Program to prepare preschool-age children of 5–7 (6) years old to school enrollment,' curriculum, 2015.	Specifies primary objectives of care, education for children and their preparation to school within short timeline (1 month).
23	'Educational and teaching program of Children development center,' 2013.	Provides for development of skills and competence of children, increasing preschool enrollment of children.
24	'Procedure for qualification upgrading and retraining of education sector professionals,' 2013.	Establishes the procedure for completion of courses for qualification upgrading and retraining of education sector professionals.
25	'Procedure for payment of salaries to education professionals,' 2017.	Establishes procedure for payment of salaries to education professionals.

Annex 2. ECEC Monitoring

No.	Monitoring/control type	Description	Frequency
<i>Internal control</i>			
1.	Preschool principal	Controls educational and teaching process, ensures fire safety of an institution, controls and provides for sanitary and hygienic norms, cooking process, as well as other norms to ensure children safety. Implements performance appraisal of employees	Daily
<i>External (inside the sector)</i>			
2.	LEDs (district)	All areas of preschool institutions' activities: educational and teaching process, compliance with standards and programs, implementation of directives from superior bodies, level of professional training of preschool professionals and teachers, staffing, comprehension of material by children, training for qualification upgrading, employment of young specialists, preparation for a heating season, as well as condition of infrastructure.	According to work plan
3.	Regional education departments		
4.	MoES		
5.	State Agency for Supervision in the Sphere of Education and Science	Issues licenses to grant a right for educational activities. Performs attestation of private institutions.	Once in 5 years
6.	Sector of State Agency for Supervision in the Sphere of Education and Science (district, city, regional)	Issues licenses to grant a right for educational activities. Performs attestation of public and enterprise-owned institutions.	Once in 5 years
<i>External (outside the sector)</i>			
7.	State Financial Control	Exercises control over financial and business activities of institutions.	Once in 2 years
8.	Chamber of Accounts	Exercises control over financial and business activities of institutions.	Once in 2 years
9.	Audit (district, city, regional)	Audit of financial and business activities on individual issues. In case of introducing changes in financial regulatory documents, they audit compliance of preschool institutions with new directives and prescriptions.	According to work plan of organization and on procurement of other organizations
10.	Prosecutor's office (district, city, regional)	Various inspections: compliance with regulatory documents, Government Resolutions, claims of parents and employees of an institution, preparation for a heating season, payment of salaries, and so on.	According to work plan
11.	Tax Committee	Tax payment inspection	Once a year
12.	Firefighting service	Inspects fire safety before the start of an academic year (September) and during heating season.	Twice a year. Also by order of management
13.	Sanitary Epidemiological Service (city, district)	Observance of sanitary and hygiene norms and food storage rules, cooking process, compliance with lighting norms, medical examination of institution's employees, health records of children, menu of an institution.	According to work plan

No.	Monitoring/control type	Description	Frequency
14.	Departments for social protection of population (district, city)	Payment of taxes, certificates of sickness	Once a year

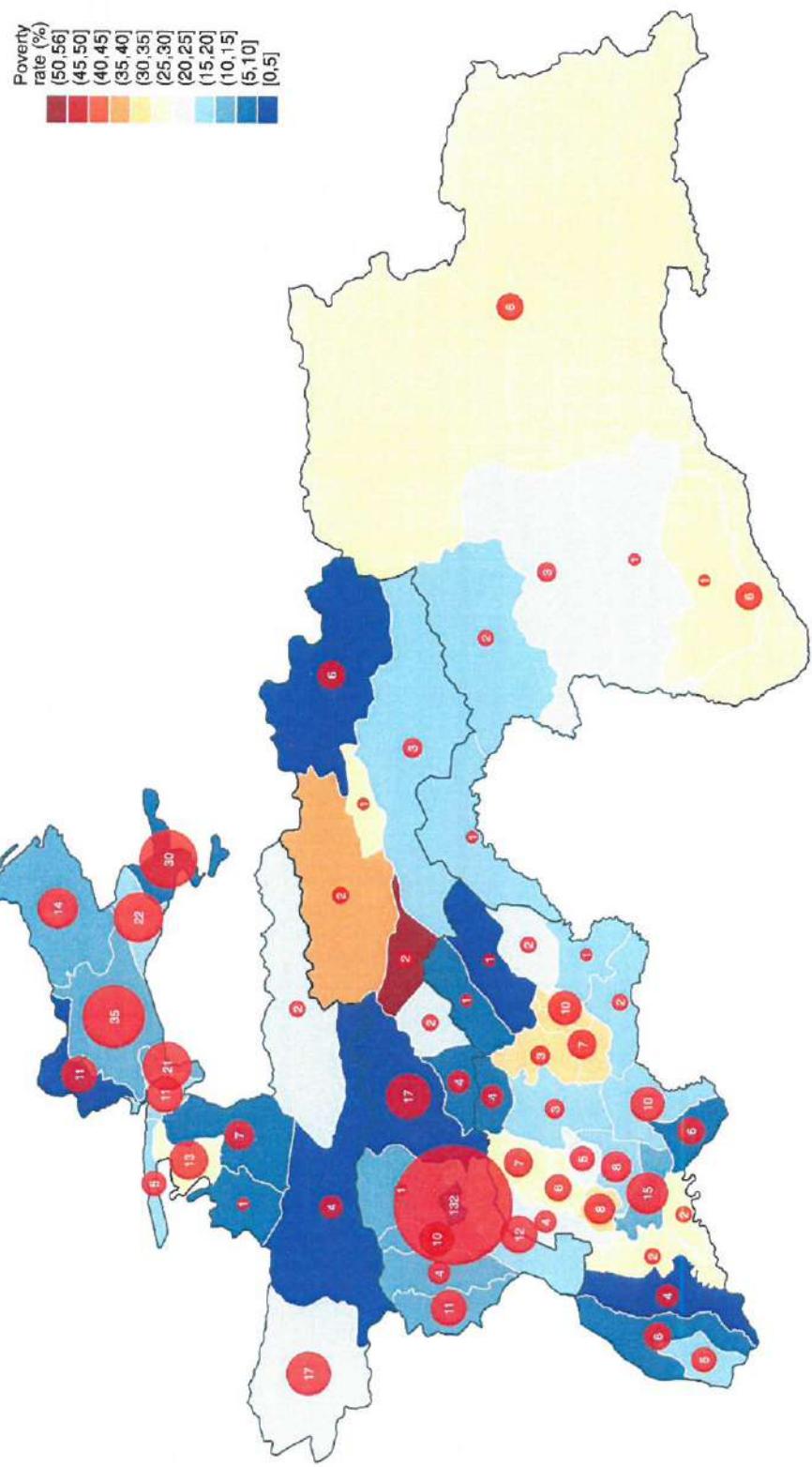
Annex 3. Development Partners' Support to ECEC in Tajikistan

Early Childhood Development in Tajikistan: Recent and Ongoing Support from Development Partners/Projects

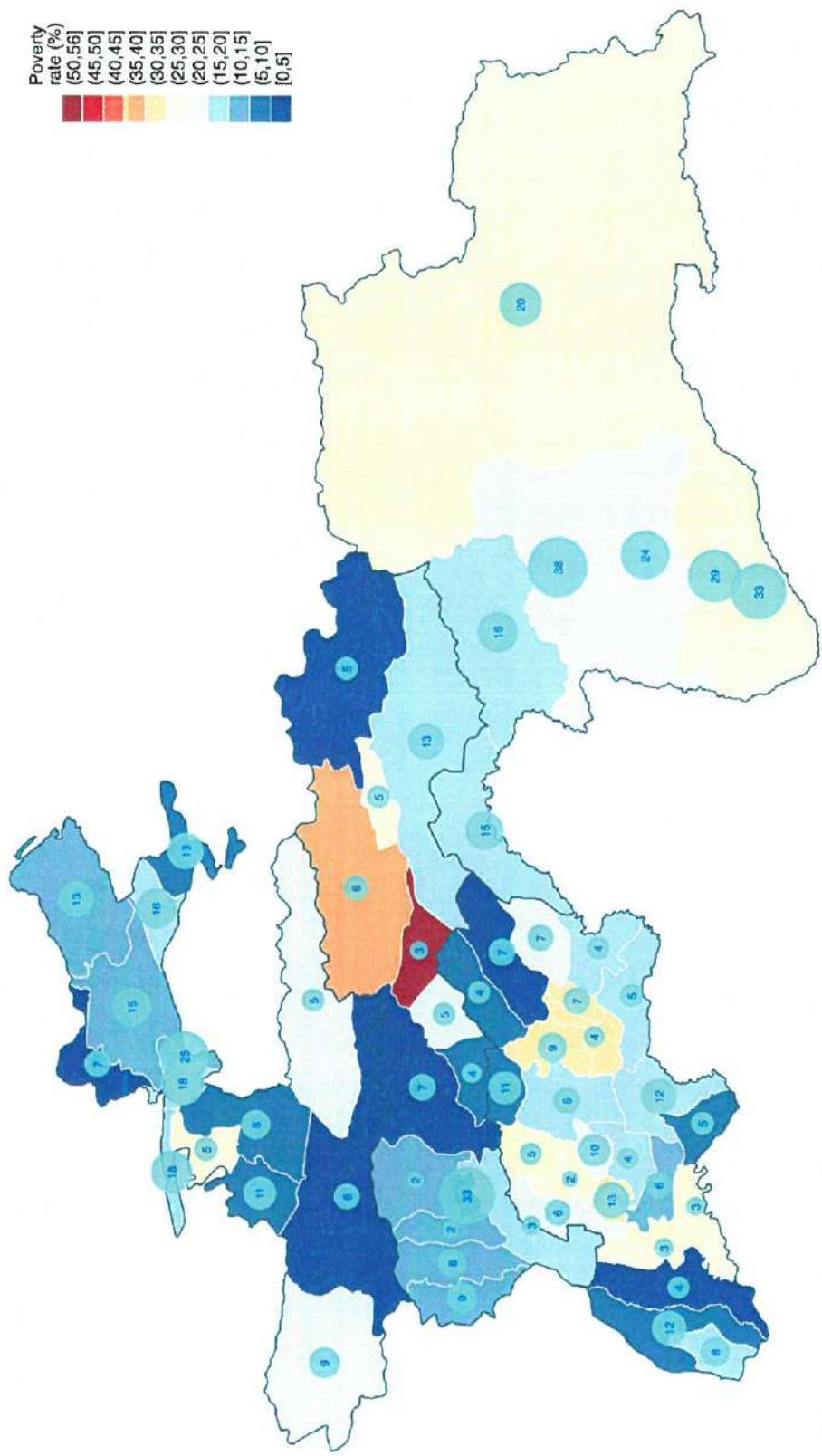
Area	Development Partners	Brief description
<i>Children 0–3 years old</i>		
CwD. Early identification	OSI	
Nutrition	WFP, UNICEF, GIZ, World Bank, USAID	Treatment of malnutrition for children, pregnant and lactating women, salt iodization, training
Upgrading physical infrastructure and WASH facilities	World Bank, ADB, JICA	Construction/rehabilitation of PHC and maternity wards premises
Deworming	WHO	Deworming of children and enforcing the guidelines
Rehabilitation	Caritas/EU	Community based rehabilitation (early detection and early screening)
Immunization	GAVI, UNICEF, UNDP, WHO	Immunization of children
<i>Children 0–6 years old</i>		
Child social protection	UNICEF	Promoting the new types of family care for children as alternative to residential childcare institutions
CwD. Social Inclusion	OSI, UNICEF	Awareness raising and advocacy among different groups of stakeholders
<i>Children 3–6 years old</i>		
ECEC analysis	World Bank, GPE-4, EU	Analysis of different aspects of ECEC sector
ECEC programs	OSI, AKF	TV developmental programs for children
Support to alternative preschool models (ELCs)	AKF, UNICEF, GPE-4	ELC model development and piloting, ELC program development (for ELCs and INSET), teacher training, provision of furniture and TLMs, monitoring and evaluation (M&E).
Parental education	AKF	Parental education
ECD awareness raising and advocacy	AKF, UNICEF, GPE-4	Awareness raising and advocacy of ECD importance among different groups of stakeholders
Assessment	UNICEF, GPE-4	Development and piloting of assessment tools for facilities and services and child development.
ECEC Financing	UNICEF, GPE-4	Development of PCF model for state KGs, its piloting and monitoring in 14 rayons in 2016, preparation for national scale up from 2017
Private services support	AKF	Support to private ELCs establishment
Upgrading preschools' physical infrastructure	n.a.	

Annex 4. Maps

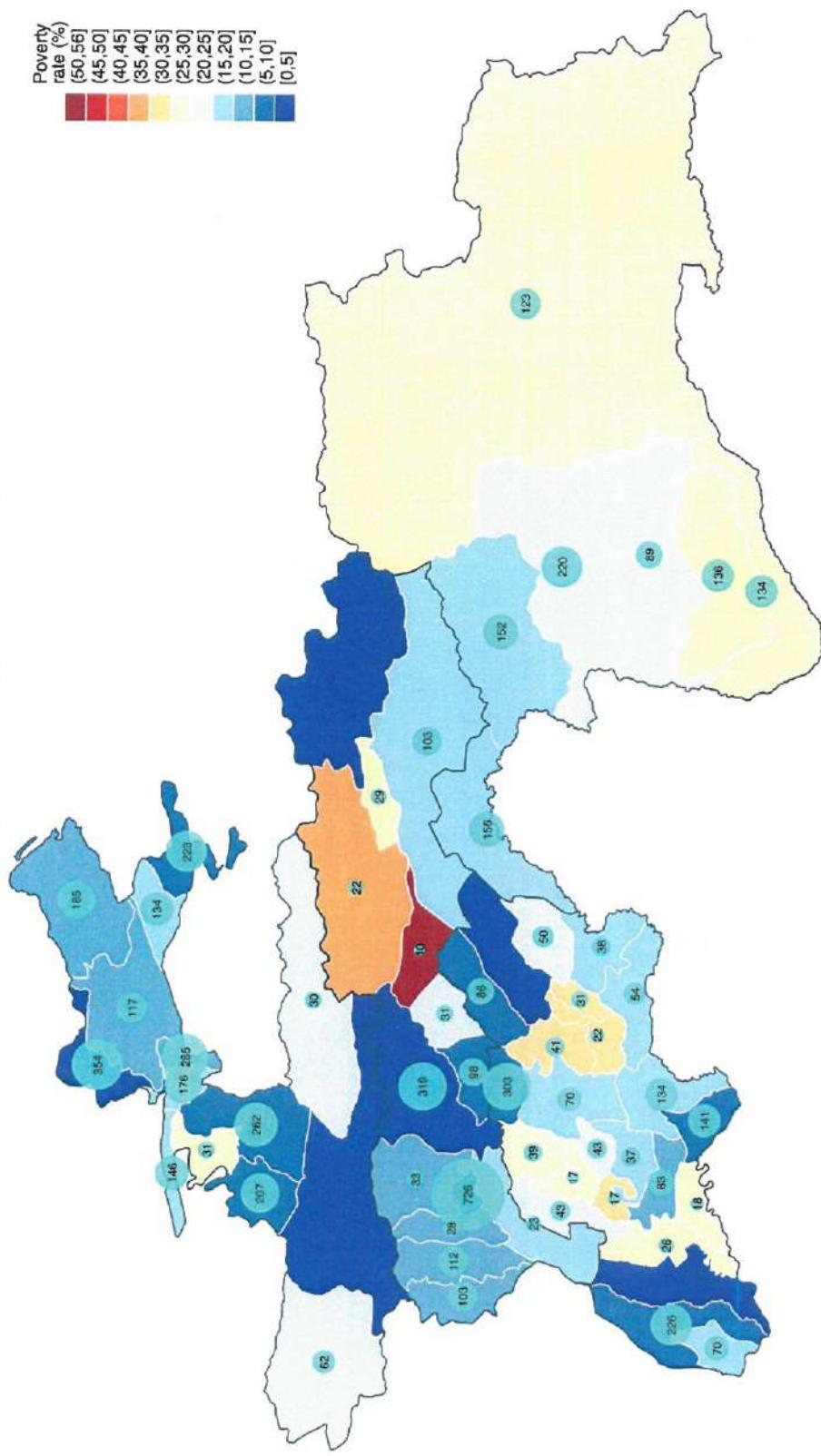
Map 1. Distribution of KGs on poverty map



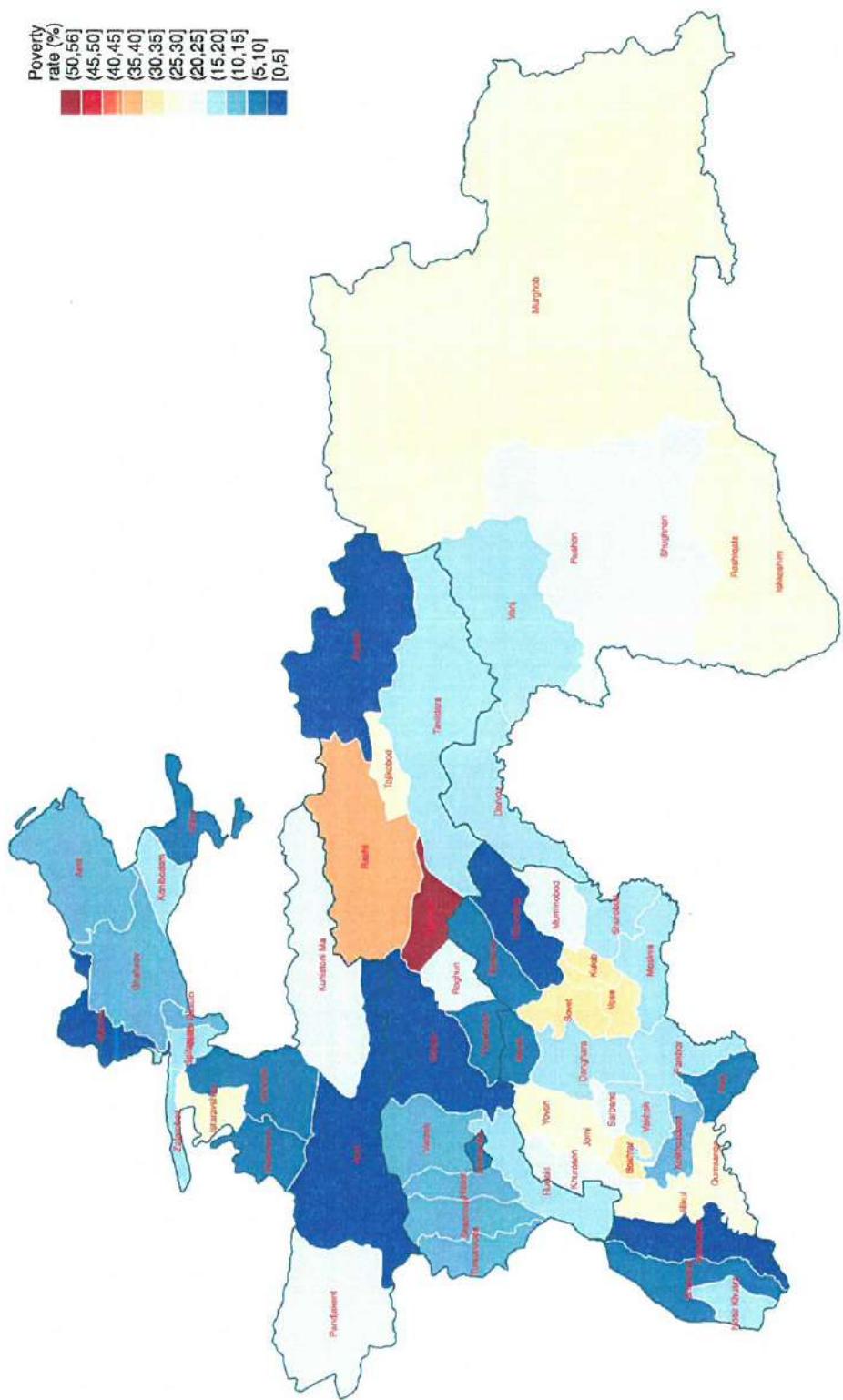
Map 2. Enrollment rate in KGs and ELCs by rayons on poverty map



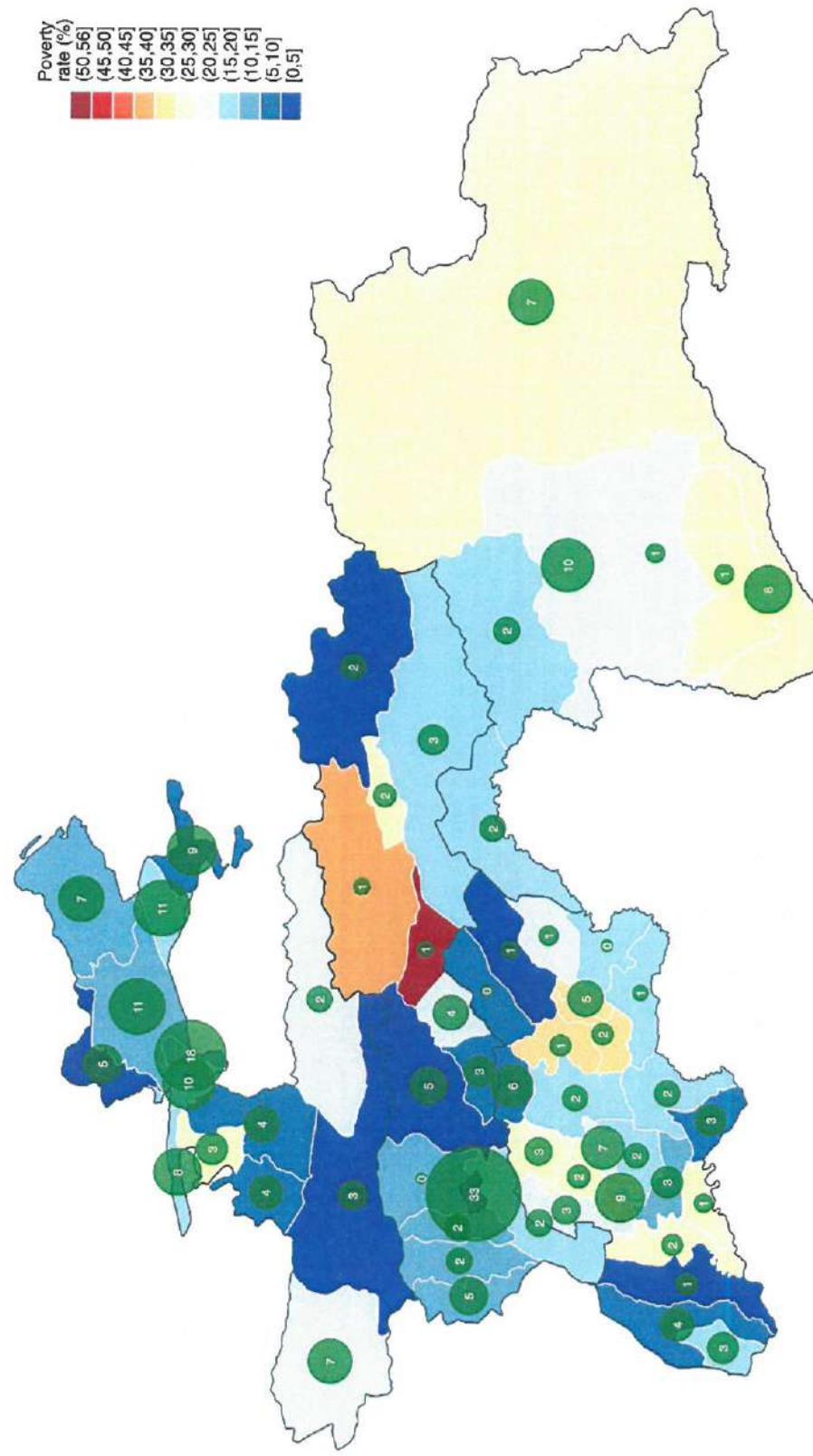
Map 3. Number of children enrolled in KGs and ELCs per 1,000 poor people by rayons on poverty map



Map 4. Poverty map of Tajikistan of 2017, at USD 3.2/PPP per day

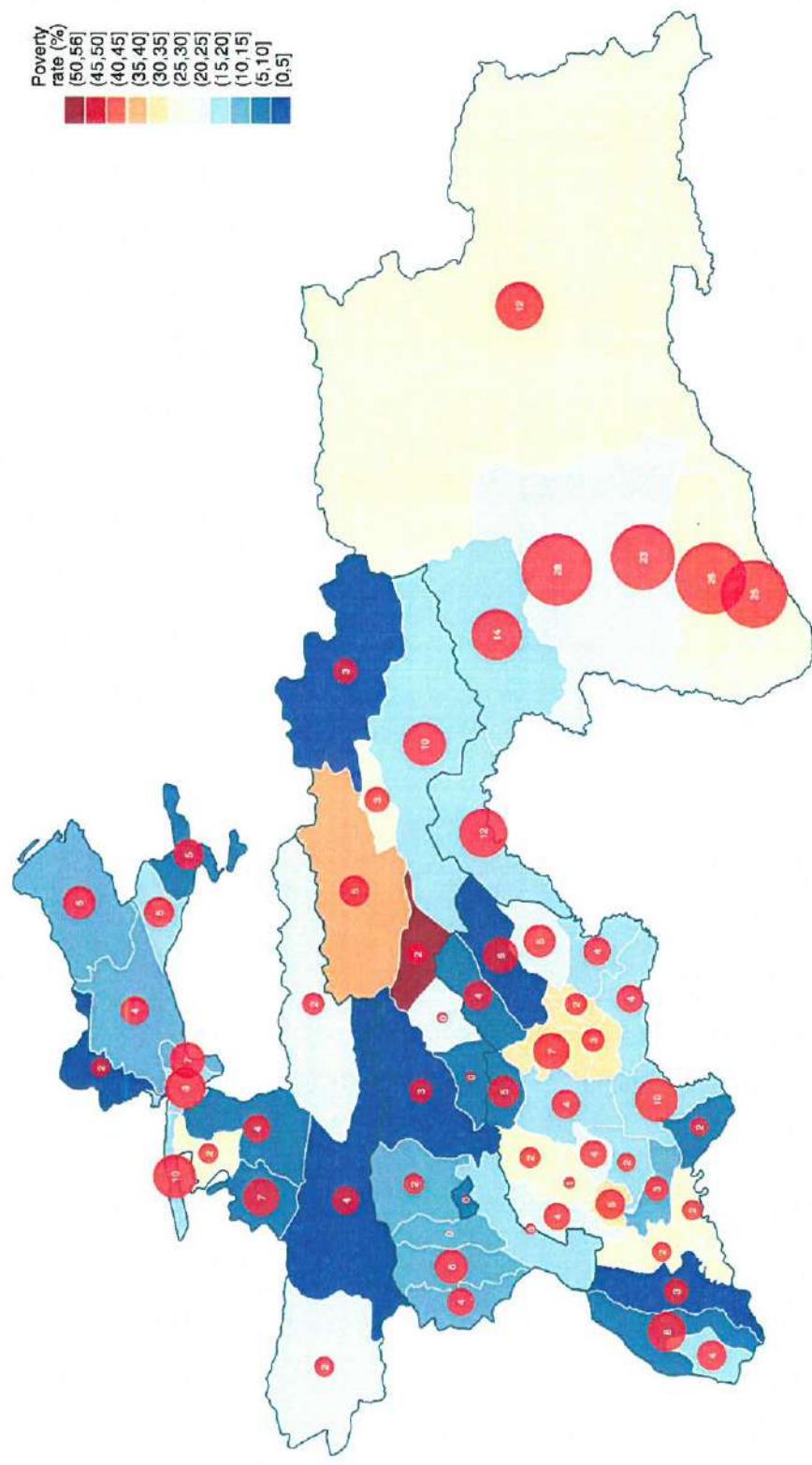


Map 5. Enrollment rate in KGs by rayons on poverty map



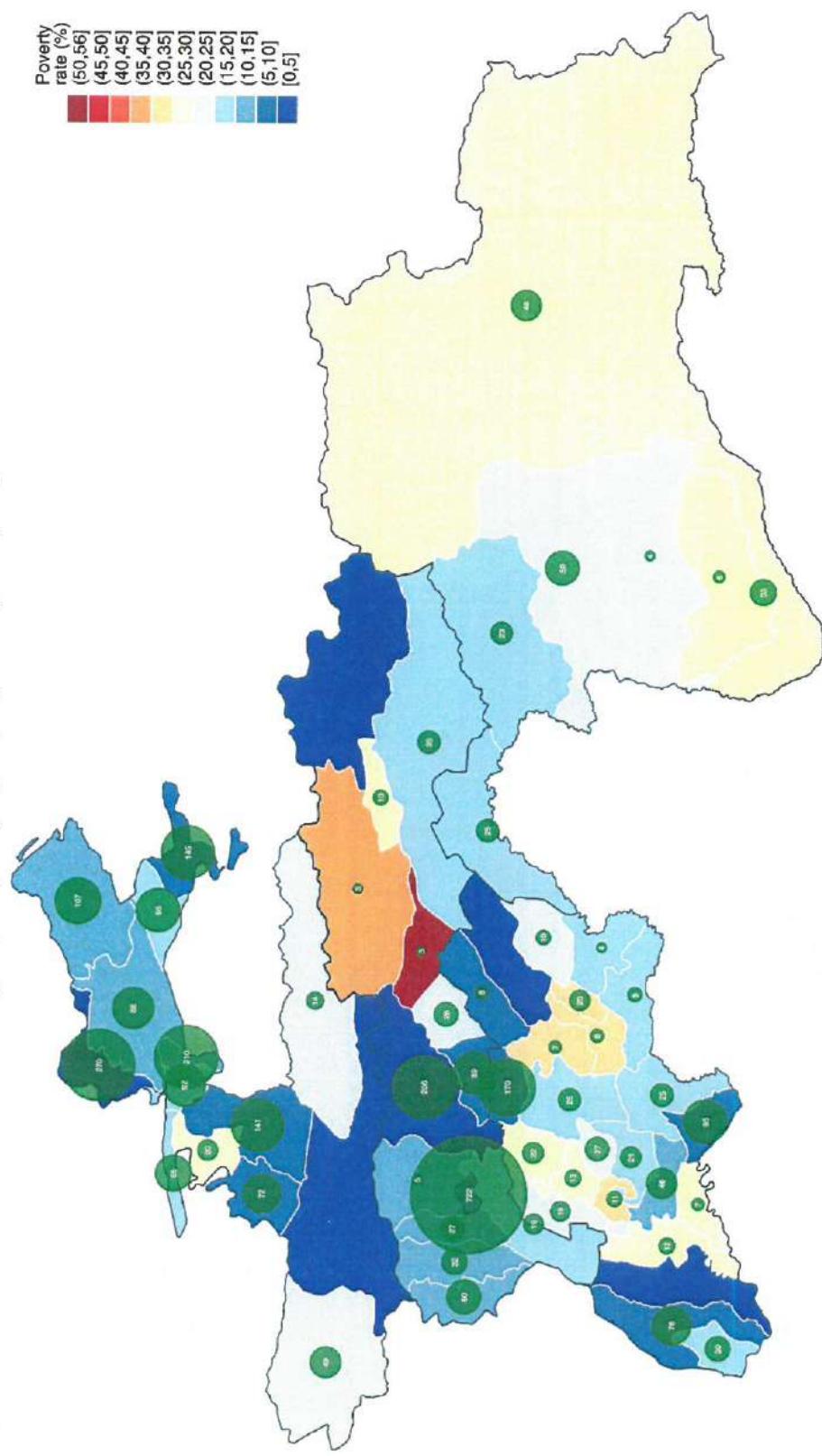
Note: Figures are rounded. For example, enrollment rate in Baljuvon is 0.4 percent (zero on the map).

Map 6. Enrollment rate in ELCs by rayons on poverty map

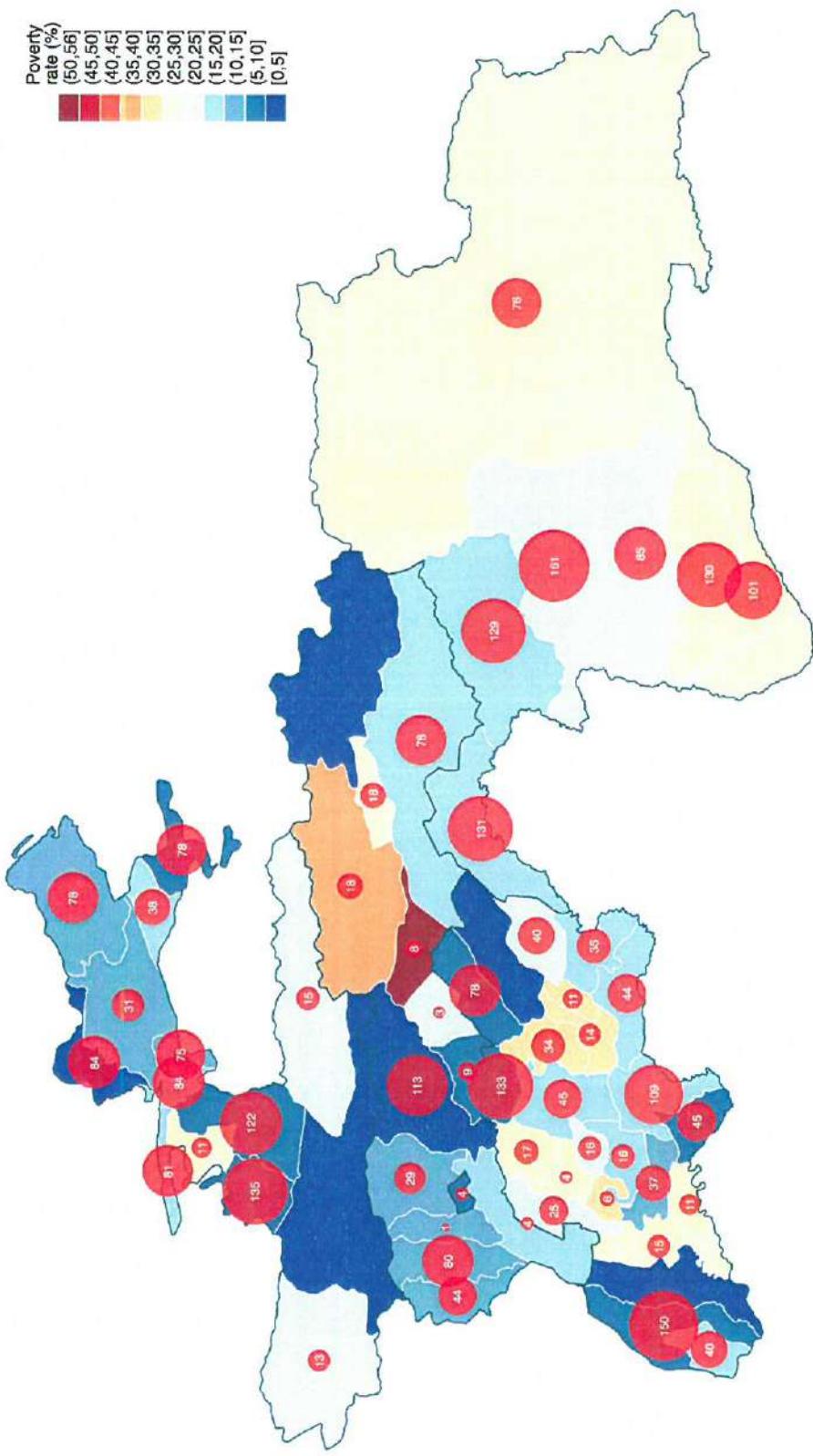


Note: Figures are rounded. For example, enrollment rates in Hissor, Dushanbe and Faizobod are 0.1 percent, 0.2 percent, and 0.3 percent, respectively (zeros on the map).

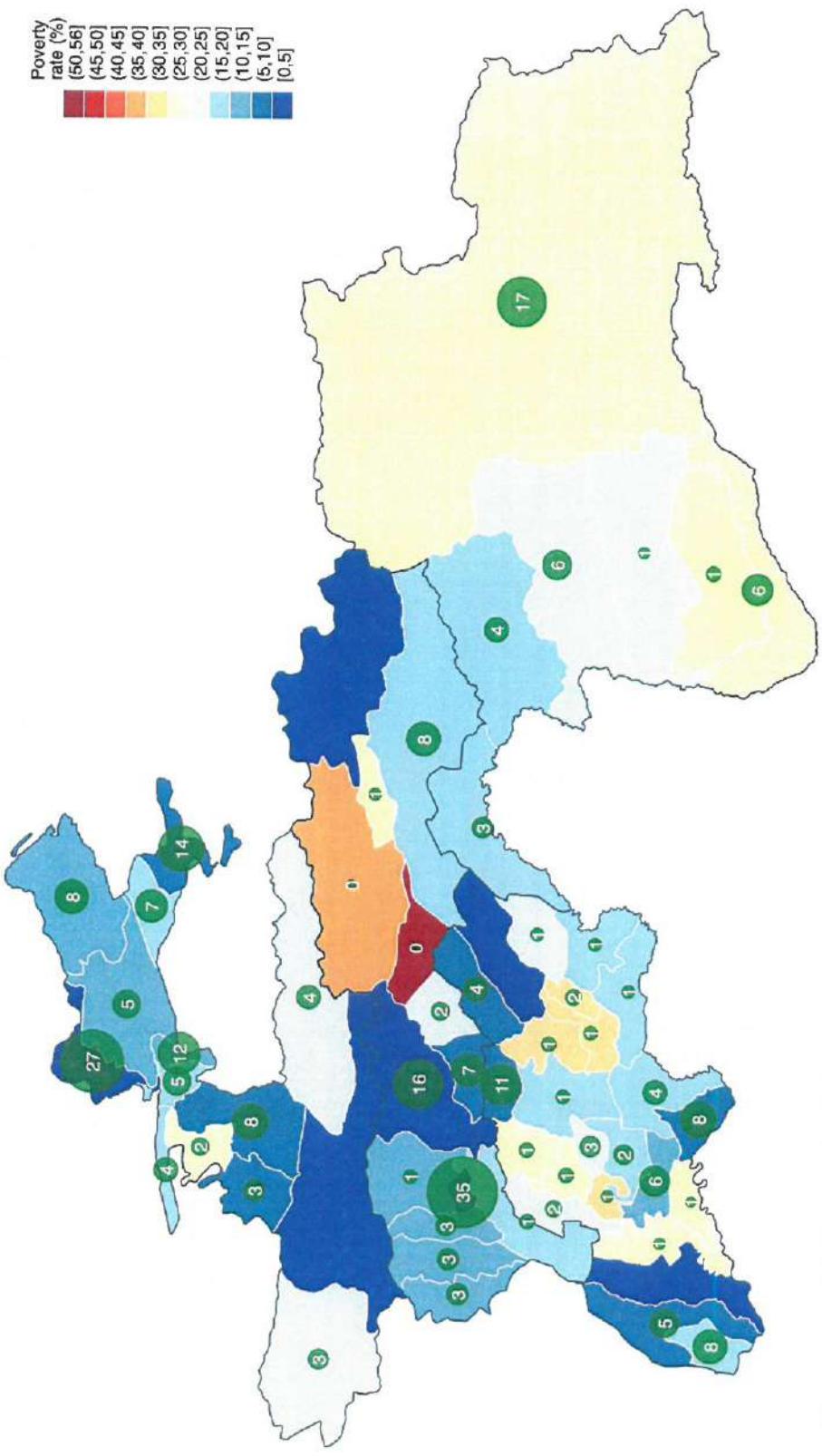
Map 7. Number of children enrolled in KGs per 1,000 poor people by rayons on poverty map



Map 8. Number of children enrolled in ELCs per 1,000 poor people by rayons on poverty map

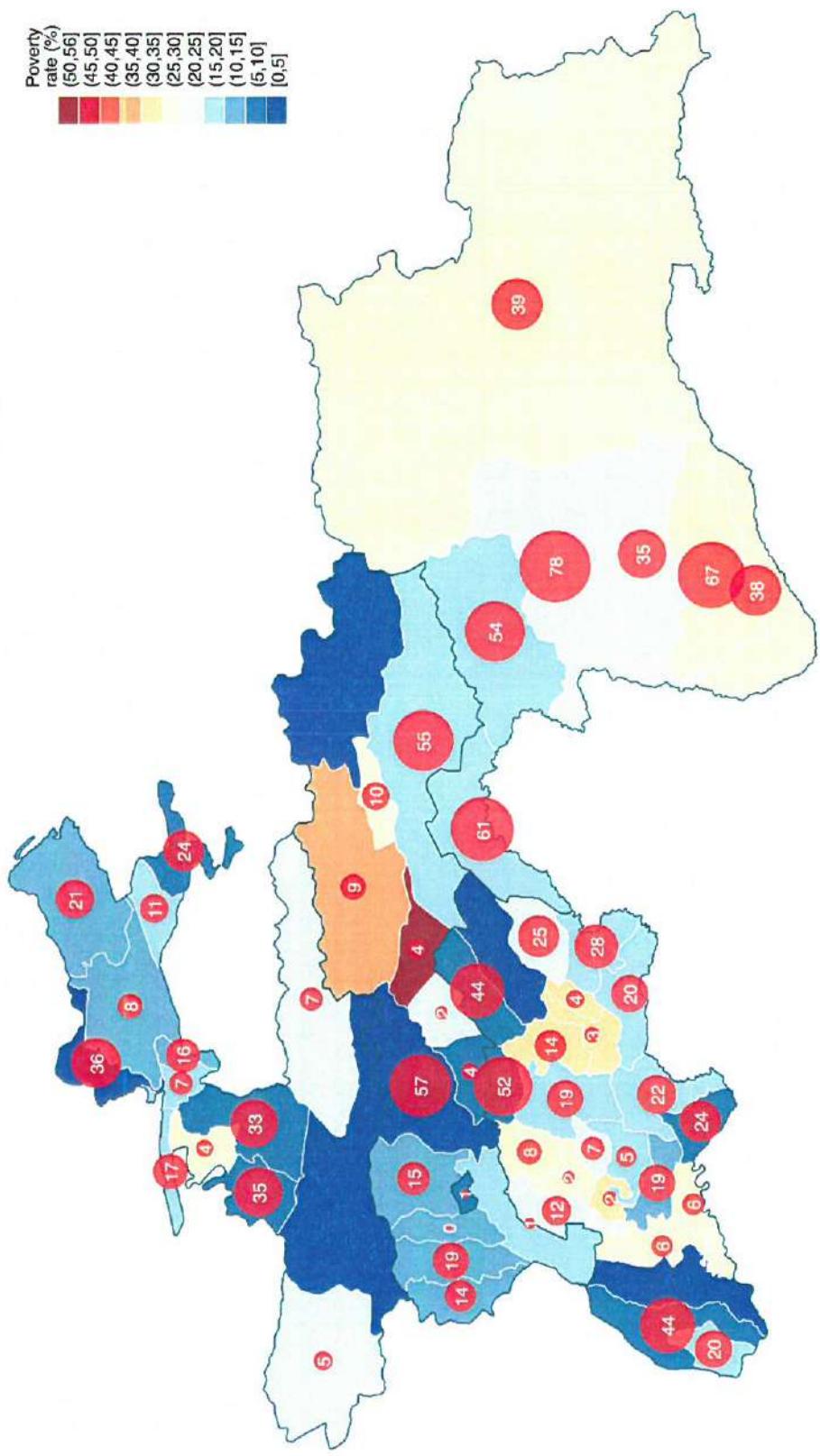


Map 9. Number of KGs per 10,000 poor people by rayons on poverty map



Note: Figures are rounded. For example, it is 0.5 KGs per 10,000 poor in Nurobod and Rasht (zeros on the map).

Map 10. Number of ELCs per 10,000 poor people by rayons on poverty map



Annex 5. International examples of ECEC services provision

Chile Grows with You (Chile Crece Contigo) - Informative and Educational Materials for Children – “Discovering Together”

Target population: Children aged under three served by the public health system.

Objective(s): To provide informative and educational material for the family with a view to promoting healthy child development, increasing the child's learning capacity, motivating the affective bond with surrounding persons, and providing concrete information about various aspects of child development.

Main features: Since the beginning of the Chile Grows with You (ChCC) initiative, the design and distribution of informative material to support families regarding child care and stimulation has been considered vital. The idea is to provide information, recommendations, and examples of activities conducive to healthy child development. The design of the educational material entitled “Discovering Together” was therefore organized around the different stages of development and aimed at all infants aged under 2 served by the public health system. This material has evolved over time to take into account various evaluation studies and the views of the technical teams and experts. In 2018, it comprises a series of informative and educational elements designed for children aged under 3.

Intervention strategy: This one-on-one intervention is designed to be part of child health monitoring activities. It takes place in primary health centers and is executed directly by a nurse, who distributes the kits (in keeping with the age of the child) in person, describes the material and its purpose and provide guidance on its use. For kit distribution, the health professionals and teams are guided by technical guidelines for this component, which describe the materials and their objectives and offer guidance on how to use them.⁷²

Materials and their distribution:

- Discovering Together I kit for children aged 4–12 months, comprising three finger puppets, a soft ball with sound, a set of stimulation cards, and a set of four colored cups. These toys are attractive and safe for babies to explore with their mouth, hands, and eyes. The puppets and animal cards also encourage a bonding game with the adult. Distribution takes place during the 4-month health check-up.
- Discovering Together II kit for infants aged 1–2 years, comprising a set of wooden blocks, a book with sounds, a set of stimulation cards, and an interactive picture book. Distribution takes place during the 12-month health check-up.
- Discovering Together III kit for children aged 2–3 years, comprising a coloring book, a CD of farm-themed music (*Juguemos en el Campo*), and a wooden jigsaw puzzle. Distribution takes place during the 24-month health check-up. All “Discovering Together” objects are certified as non-toxic.

Quality assurance mechanisms: The materials selected, and the distribution criteria were validated by a task force comprising experts from the Ministries of Health and Social Development. Non-toxic certification was listed as a prerequisite in the bidding documents for the materials. Methodological guidelines were also written for the teams responsible for distribution.

Implementing institution or direct service providers: Ministry of Health, through primary health centers.

Cost of the educational material and funding source: \$8.10 for the three kits. Funding provided by the education program budget.

Evaluation studies:

ICCOM. (2010). *Estudio de satisfacción usuaria del Sistema Chile Crece Contigo*. Available at: http://www.crececontigo.gob.cl/wpcontent/uploads/2015/11/Informe_Final_SeguimientoCasos-usuarias-CHCC_Corregido-Final.pdf

CADEM. (2015). *Servicio de análisis y usabilidad, pertinencia y satisfacción de los materiales entregados por el Subsistema de Protección Integral a la Infancia Chile Crece Contigo*.

Available at: http://www.crececontigo.gob.cl/wpcontent/uploads/2016/01/Informe_Finalmateriales.Pdf

Based on: 10 years of Chile Grows with You, 2018

ECEC core curriculum of Finland, demonstrating a common approach in early care and early learning

Finland: National, local, and individual levels of ECEC curriculum

ECEC - an entity of education, instruction, and care with a pedagogical emphasis to support the child's development path



"The national core curriculum for early childhood education and care is based on a conception of learning according to which children grow, develop and learn in interaction with other people and the immediate environment. The conception of learning is also based on a view of the child's active agency. Children are naturally curious and wish to learn new things and revise and repeat what they have learned. Learning is holistic and occurs everywhere. It combines knowledge, skills, actions, emotions, sensory perceptions, bodily experiences, and thinking. Among other things, learning occurs when children observe and examine their surroundings and as they imitate the actions of others. Children also learn by playing, moving, exploring, working on different assignments and expressing themselves as well as through activities based on arts."

ECEC is an essential service for children and their families in Finland and seen as part of the child's growth and development path. The understanding of the significance of childhood and awareness of children's growth, development, and learning lay a foundation for a pedagogical activity together with knowledge for each child, taking individual development into account. ECEC concept in Finland refers to a systematic and goal-oriented whole consisting of education, instruction, and care with particular emphasis on pedagogy.^a

The ECEC curriculum stimulates development-oriented learning environments (facilities, locations, communities, practices, and equipment which support children's growth, learning, and interaction) that promote learning and are healthy and safe. Learning environments shall be developed so that the objectives for ECEC are achieved and support the development of each child;

they are planned and constructed together with children. Children ideas are taken into account, and the outcomes of their efforts are visible in learning environments. The natural environment (yards, playgrounds, and other built environments) and public space (libraries, museums, guardian's workplaces, and others) also provide ECEC learning environments as well as information and communication technology.

ECEC lays the foundation for children's transversal competences—entity consisting of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and will and the ability to apply them. Five interconnected transversal competencies are described in the curriculum: thinking and learning; cultural competence, interaction, and self-expression; taking care of oneself and managing daily life; multiliteracy and competence in information and communication technology; and participation and involvement.

These concepts are translated into the National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care, which is legally binding for all ECEC providers—municipalities and their special authorities, or other public or private service providers. Pre-primary education is part of the ECEC and also is regulated by the Basic Education Act, which demonstrates the lifelong learning approach in ECEC and education.

The ECEC curriculum is an overall framework based on which the providers prepare local curricula for ECEC. The local curricula is an obligation that applies to all services provided by municipalities or private ECEC including private daycare supervised by municipalities. It may be developed to apply to all forms of ECEC services (center-based, family daycare, and others) or a separate curriculum may be prepared for each service. The local curriculum may be adopted as specific to the municipality, a unit, a group of ECEC services, or as a curriculum that partly applies to the municipality, unit, form, or service.

To promote and implement child-centered and goal-oriented education, instruction, and care^b for every child in an ECEC center or family-based center, an individual ECEC plan is prepared in collaboration with parents/guardians. The basis of the plan is the best interest and needs of the child. The plan is the responsibility of a qualified KG teacher, who is in charge of implementing and evaluating the outcomes. Where relevant, the plan includes information about any support in the development and learning needs of the child and its implementation.

National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care 2016

Lessons for Tajikistan: The favorable structure of ECEC services in Tajikistan targeting children from birth to preschool age needs to be further strengthened to promote holistic ECD and to support child-oriented care and learning. The application of existing curriculum and values for care and early learning could be developed to meet individual needs and stimulate child development. The capacity of the ECEC workforce could be supported through the ECEC development program and peer interaction.

Note: a. Act on Early Childhood Education and Care. b. Based on the legislation.

Example from Finland - the organization of flexible services through the network of public and non-public providers

Finland - ECEC supports children's development and learning

In Finland ECEC, pre-primary education and primary education form a continuum supporting a child's development and lifelong learning. All ECEC services target children under school age and are guided by the National Core Curriculum for ECEC. Families pay fees for ECEC services based on family income. Pre-primary education^a is compulsory (since 2015), free,^b and organized as half-day service for all 6-year-old children both in ECEC centers and schools.

Municipalities are responsible for organizing ECEC and preschool based on the local needs and may provide ECEC or purchase ECEC services from the public or private service provider. When purchased from other providers, the municipality must ascertain that services meet the standards required from municipal operations. The decision on provision is based on the requirement. The municipality coordinates the provision of preschool services and ECEC, based on parental demand and needs and the obligation to provide access to ECEC three months after the application of the family. This leads to efficient use of the ECEC services capacity. On the one hand, the majority of children in pre-primary education (scope of pre-primary education is approximately 4 hours a day) also require enrollment in ECEC because most parents work full time. Also, the municipality plans and meets the demand for ECEC that is traditionally provided according to the needs of working parents. In addition to daily services in ECEC, municipalities may provide a variety of services—during the evenings, at night, over weekends and for several hours (to cover shift work), or other non-typical forms of service. The municipality and the service provider coordinate all this.

Based on the legislation, ECEC is provided at ECEC centers, in family daycare, or as other forms of ECEC, such as club and play activities.^c ECEC organized in centers is the most common provision. Based on the legislation, at least one-third of the personnel responsible for providing care and educational tasks must be qualified as KG teachers, while the rest of the staff are required to fulfill qualification requirements. The KG teacher has the responsibility for planning and implementing activities with a goal-oriented approach, together with childcare and other personnel.

Family daycare is ECEC realized in a small group. It can be organized at the home of family childcare (or a child) or as group family daycare where attention is paid to forming appropriate groups of children. Family childcarers working in their homes are in charge of the activities of their groups. The management of family daycare supports goal-oriented planning and implementation of activities by family child care. Family childcarers working in family daycare are expected to have an appropriate education - qualification for Family Child Minders.

The other forms of ECEC depend on the decision made by the service provider - municipalities, local parishes, and NGOs for children and their families. Such services may be organized as playgrounds or group activities - outdoor activities, independent play, art or physical education, social interaction with other parents and children.

National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care 2016

Finnish education in a nutshell. Ministry of Education and Culture.
https://www.oph.fi/download/146428_Finnish_Education_in_a_Nutshell.pdf

Lessons for Tajikistan: Given the low enrollment in preschool and coverage of ECEC services, the provision for more flexible services through the existing network of services might be developed

as a good opportunity for covering more children in short-term services. This approach should be aligned with the local needs to allow local authorities to be flexible in the decision on the provision.

Note: a. Guided by the National Core Curriculum for Preprimary Education. b. In Finland, education is free at all levels from pre-primary to higher education. In pre-primary and basic education, the textbooks, daily meals, and transportation for students living further away from the school are free for the parents. c. Act on Early Childhood Education and Care.

Session services and Toy libraries to support general access

Session activities and ECD promotion through Toy Libraries

A toy library provides resources for play, trained staff, and dedicated space. Play, toys and games are at the center of activities. There are a number of ways in which toy libraries operate:

1. Play sessions—members come to play at the toy library premises. Facilitated sessions may be organized for specific beneficiary groups.
2. Loan services—toys are loaned to members from the toy library premises. They borrow them for an agreed upon time e.g. 2 weeks or a month. Some toy libraries offer both play sessions and loan services.
3. Mobile services—toys are taken to various destinations. Mobile toy libraries may offer either play sessions, borrowing of toys or both.

Toy libraries, as often as possible, serve as a community resource, offering information, guidance, and support to members in addition to making playthings available for play or loan. In some instances, the toy library may have been developed to serve a specific group e.g. children from 1-4 years, children in hospitals with serious illnesses, youth or adults with a disability, disadvantaged children etc.

A toy library can be operated by individuals, charitable organizations, local, regional, or national governments, or any other such agency or group, combined with other services. Members of toy libraries can be children, parents, grandparent, child-care providers, educators and/or school children, hospital staff and/or patients, adults, the elderly, community workers or anyone interested in toys, games, and play.

Source: <http://itla-toylibraries.org/home/join-us/> <https://etlgroup.wixsite.com/europeantoylibraries/> toy-library-definition

Family Creche service in France

The childminders are personnel of the preschool but provide the service in their private homes. They have access to programs that provide financial support to adjust the private home to the provision requirements.

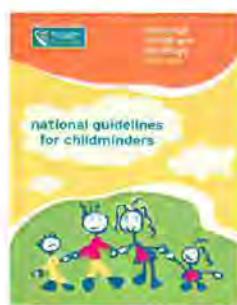
The services are provided in private homes by childminders who are appointed, managed, monitored, and supported by a center-based service – kindergarten, community center, association, enterprise, or another registered provider. Up to four children are enrolled in the private provision, usually under the age of four.

Group activities for children in the private space are organized in the center-based; the children are attending events and other key events in the center.

The families, depending of their income level, have access to different stimulus and subsidies to access the ECEC services.

Example for business plan on establishing private provision of ECEC services:
https://www.caf.fr/sites/default/files/caf/011/Pdf/2015/Partenaires/Petite%20enfance/Boite_outil.pdf

Childminders policy in Ireland



Based on: <https://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/>

As part of the National Childminding Initiative, childminding development grants and guidelines for childminders (pdf) are available to childminders. In addition, there is a childminder's tax relief for people who look after up to 3 children in their own home.

The Child and Family Agency is responsible for inspecting preschools, play groups, day nursery, crèches, day-care and similar services which cater for children aged 0-6 years.

Universal childcare subsidy is available to all children in registered childcare who are above the age of 6 months but below the age when they can start the free ECCE scheme. The subsidy is not means-tested. The subsidy is deducted from the overall bill the parent receives from their childcare service.

There is no charge to parents for the playschool or daycare hours provided under the ECCE scheme. The State capitation fee pays the playschool or daycare service to provide these ECCE hours.

Some other examples

Community-based ECD in Indonesia. A rapid expansion of services to rural, disadvantaged areas requires alternative models to traditional center-based preschool. Indonesia's model provides communities with (i) a block grant to be used toward a service delivery model of the community's choosing and (ii) access to a trained technical advisor to help guide the decision and implementation of the chosen model (options include playgroups, formal kindergartens, home visits, community centers with integrated services). The approach is flexible and also helps build local capacity.

Interactive radio instruction. This approach can help ensure basic quality of curriculum and instruction in remote and underserved contexts without formal ECD provision or well-trained practitioners. Interactive audio lessons are developed centrally, based on the curriculum, and delivered by radio or other technology (e.g. MP3 players). The government trains teachers and/or non-formal facilitators, local school management committees, and MOE officers to implement the

lessons with complementary materials. The model is relatively low-cost and scalable, and many countries have used it; Zanzibar was an early adopter and completed an impact evaluation.

ECD Standards in Jamaica. A common challenge in developing and enforcing standards is striking the right balance between aspiration and realism. Jamaica has developed a two-tiered approach of permitting - based on meeting minimum health and safety standards - and certification - based on a more comprehensive set of 12 standards which also relate to qualified instructors, school management, parent and community engagement, etc.

⁷² This methodological note is available at: <http://www.crececontigo.gob.cl/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/NMAcompanandote-a-descubrir.pdf>

