Regional Ministerial Conference

“Including All Children in Quality Learning – Closing Equity Gaps in Education”

Session 10.1: “Expanding Access to Early Learning Services”

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Istanbul, Turkey
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- **509 state-kindergartens** serve only **10%** preschool age children in urban areas;

- Access remains unaffordable, especially for **poor** and **vulnerable children**;

- Most children in Tajikistan enter school at age 7 without the skills they need to succeed;

- A school readiness assessment of in 2009 indicated poor reading, writing, and numerical skills amongst 6 year old children.
• Ministry of Education with support from UNICEF Tajikistan and Aga Khan Foundation developed, piloted, evaluated, costed and mainstreamed alternative school based early childhood education (ECE) models;

• A technical planning workshop organised by UNICEF in 2010 led to principal agreement amongst key actors on the parameters of the programme: curriculum hours, content, modality, staffing ratio, and others, including location.
• National Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) were developed and adopted and guides ECE curricula and programmes;

• ELDS based ECE curriculum, which promotes child-centred and inclusive approach, was developed and approved;

• Effective child-centred teacher training package, coupled with methodological guidance, was developed;

• Developmentally and culturally appropriate reading materials for preschool age children were developed.
## OVERVIEW OF ECE MODEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Framework questions</th>
<th>School based ECE group (Alternative model)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffing</td>
<td>Teacher/Student ratio</td>
<td>1:25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Yes, official Early Childhood Education Curriculum for children 4-7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Schedule</td>
<td>3 hours, 5 days per week Full calendar year</td>
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<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>Target group</td>
<td>4-6 year olds, predominantly 6 year olds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Capital cost</td>
<td>3,400 USD (for furniture, teaching and learning materials)</td>
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<td>Parental fees</td>
<td>Total 6 USD (on average / month) Of which 5 USD – recurring costs and 1 USD – bursaries for vulnerable children</td>
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• State Program on Developing Pre-school System 2006-2010 (Reg. #395) and 2012-2016 (Reg. #457);

• Regulation on Preschool Education Institutions (Resolution #443: 2007);

• State Standard on Preschool Education (# 388, 2009);

• National Early Learning and Development Standards (2010);

888 alternative ECE groups across Tajikistan serving about 18,000 children between the ages of 4-6 and the number of alternative models is growing steadily;

GPE-4 will also contribute to the expansion of access to preschool education by supporting 450 additional ECE groups from 2014.
CHALLENGES

- Existing normative and regulatory framework including bureaucratic taxation procedures hinder provision of low cost ECE services;
- Lack of qualified personnel responsible for service delivery; lack of a sufficient number of teaching and learning aids; weak material and technical base in some ECE institutions;
- Programme input and process standards are not yet agreed upon and M&E framework for alternative ECE services is not yet in place;
- No mechanisms and systems for measuring and assessing child development outcomes at the national level;
- Education Management Information System (EMIS) does not include preschool education module and do not collect information on ECE/ECD indicators.
1. Improvement of Policy Environment

- Build up a clear regulatory framework and improve programme standards (input and process)
- Develop comprehensive M&E framework and tools for monitoring and assessment of learning outcomes and holistic school readiness
- Strengthen an effective system of professional development for teachers, and a performance management and monitoring system that is welcomed and supported by the teaching cadre

2. Expansion of ECE services

- Expansion of ECE models on the principles of affordability and equal access
- Promote an inclusive environment to ensure all children, including the most marginalised and children with disabilities are afforded the opportunity to ECE
- Develop animated TV programme for preschool age children to increase coverage throughout the country of ECE concepts
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