



COUNTRY ANALYSIS 2005
TAJIKISTAN

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Summary

Tajikistan is a poor, basically rural and traditional country. There is high demographic pressure on the education system and the labour market and neither is able to handle the challenge. The country has seen rising unemployment and poverty, the emergence of an informal sector, and widespread internal and external migration including an exodus of non-Tajik craftsmen, industrial managers and academics. The country risks finding itself without a properly educated workforce at the level of skilled workers, middle management and technicians.

The education system is deteriorating. Vocational and technical education in particular has not been in a position to respond to the changing environment and continues to offer obsolete knowledge and skills. Nevertheless, vocational education and training has an important role to play in improving social cohesion and poverty reduction. There is an emerging understanding of, and political commitment to, the importance of a well-qualified workforce at the level of skilled workers and technicians as a means for fighting poverty and as a precondition for economic growth.

With the overall aim of poverty reduction, and recognising the importance of sustainable skills development to achieve that goal, the ETF suggests concentrating donor assistance in the area of education and training on the three levels of basic vocational education and training and technical and higher technical education.



1. Current situation and trends in human resources and labour market development in Tajikistan

Background

Tajikistan is a poor, rural country¹, with 73% of the population living in rural areas. The country became independent for the first time ever in 1991. Prior to independence it was totally integrated in – and dependent on – the Soviet Union. At this time, Tajikistan was already the poorest of the Soviet republics, with less than half of the average per capita income in Russia. It received considerable subventions from Moscow in exchange for cotton and aluminium. Independence had devastating effects on the socioeconomic situation, with a civil war causing widespread destruction, the loss of all subventions from Moscow and the subsequent need to cope with reconstruction, transition and building up a viable economy and nation.

Demographic trends²

The total population in Tajikistan continued increasing from 5.3 million in 1990 to 6.5 million in 2002. Although the population growth rate slowed down from 2.9% in 1985 and 2.3% in 1990 to 2.1% in 2002, it remains high. Population prognoses foresee a further increase to 7.5 million in 2009³. As a consequence of the high birth rate, the population pyramid remains flat, with 46.6% of the population under 15 years of age in 2002.

Labour force⁴

The total population of working age increased from 2.53 million in 1991 to 3.48 million in 2002. The formal labour market has not been able to absorb this increase. In fact, while the labour force did not increase formally⁵, and the rate of formal labour force participation went from 78% in 1991 to about 55% in 2002, the size of the economically non-active population above 15 years of age increased from 555,000 in 1991 to 1.57 million in 2002.

Employment and unemployment

The size of the employed population went from 1.97 million in 1991 via a low of 1.74 million in 1999 to 1.86 million in 2002. This corresponds to an employment rate of 78% in 1991 and 53% in 2002. Before independence, agriculture was virtually a monoculture based around the all-dominating farming of cotton. Industry was dominated by aluminium production, although other industries such as textiles, machine building and wood and pulp processing were also prevalent. The vocational education and training system ensured the manpower to meet the needs of this reality. Since independence, the composition of the economy has changed and so has employment. In 2003, about two-thirds of all employment derived from agriculture, which contributed 26% of GDP, while industry provided about 10% of employment and 22% of GDP. Services provided 23% of employment and 52% of GDP.

Although cotton remains by far the most important cash crop⁶, agriculture has begun diversifying towards other crops and animal husbandry. The education and training system is still heavily biased towards the old style of farming, however, with “tractor driver” being the most frequented vocational

¹ In 2003, gross national per capita income was US\$190 (Atlas method) and Tajikistan ranked 197th out of 208 countries and territories. World Development Indicators database, World Bank, July 2004.

² Data sources are Goscomstat and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, unless otherwise indicated.

³ “Major directions of Tajikistan's education medium-term reforms”, working paper, World Bank, 2004.

⁴ Data refer to table 1 in annex. Source: Department of Labour, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, 2004

⁵ The labour force went from 1.97 million in 1991 via a low of 1.79 million in 1999 to 1.90 million in 2002

⁶ 75% of farmlands and farming households and 30% of total export earnings

education programme. The current diversification of the economy, which has already resulted in changes in employment between sectors and in new types of knowledge, skills and attitudes being required, has not so far been supported by any related changes in the education and training system.

With the emergence of official recognition of unemployment, it has been possible to register as unemployed with the employment services. However, given that the level of service provided by the employment services is absolutely minimal, the incentive to register as unemployed has been, and remains, low. The lack of incentives includes low compensation levels, unattractiveness of the few vacancies offered through the employment services, the quasi-absence of guidance and counselling services, and limited training possibilities. In addition, the rules for being recognised as unemployed are restrictive. The number of registered unemployed since 1998 is around 50,000, and in 2003 the registered unemployment rate was as low as about 3%. Such figures are far from the reality. A first labour force survey was carried out in 2002 and it showed that there were over 200,000 unemployed people, equal to an unemployment rate of over 11%. According to different estimates, however, this rate may be an underestimate.

In any case, the emergence of an informal sector in Tajikistan makes formal employment a poor measure of productive activities in the economy. According to the Tajikistan Living Standards Survey 2003, adding informal income-generating or income-substituting activities to formal employment would imply that more than two-thirds of the population above 15 years of age actually work, compared to a formal employment rate of only 53% in 2002. If household work is included, then more than 80% could be considered as having been employed in 2003. Much employment in the informal sector is self-employment, but the education and training system does not do much to prepare people to create their own income-generating activity.

Poverty⁷

The quasi-collapse of the economy and its lack of capacity to absorb the influx of young people into the labour market every year has caused a widespread increase in poverty. Though the two poverty assessments carried out in 1999 and 2003 show a decrease from 81% to 64% of the population living under the poverty line at less than US\$ 2.15 per day at purchasing power parity, poverty incidence remains high. The regions of Gorno-Badakhshan and Khatlon have markedly higher poverty rates at 84% and 78% respectively. The regions under Republican jurisdiction and Dushanbe have the lowest rates at 45% and 49% respectively. Poverty rates were higher for rural areas at 65% compared to urban areas at 59%. The fall in poverty has been spurred by positive economic growth during the last five years, averaging 8% per year. However, three factors that have led economic growth to have a positive effect on the poor may turn out to be one-off effects. These factors are the end of the civil conflict, the initial impact of macroeconomic stability and the large increase in migration.

Migration⁸

Since independence, migration has been an important phenomenon in Tajikistan. Initially, in the period 1991–1995, the country suffered a 'brain drain' with the exodus of about 285,000 emigrants. These were typically managers, professionals and intellectuals of non-indigenous origin, and the country thus lost a critical mass of its intelligentsia and skilled workforce. Since then, poverty and the absence of work opportunities in Tajikistan have forced an increasing number of Tajiks to migrate abroad every year in search of paid work to sustain their families back home. About 18% of the adult population – equivalent to 632,000 people – left the country in search of work during the period 2000–2003, mostly for seasonal work.

About 84% of Tajik migrants work in Russia. The majority are unskilled or low-skilled workers in low-income jobs in construction, the oil and gas industries, motor vehicle and machinery manufacturing, the sale of fruits and vegetables, catering, agriculture, the shuttle trade, and small-scale trade and markets. About 85% of migrant workers are male. The majority, 57%, define themselves as not having a profession or skills. The absence of men at home leaves a large number of women filling the role of head of the family and in need of income-generating activities to feed their dependents. The response of

⁷ Data are taken from *Tajikistan poverty assessment update*, World Bank, 4 June 2004.

⁸ Data are taken from *Labour migration from Tajikistan*, International Organization for Migration, July 2003.

the education and training system to prepare young women for work has been very traditional, offering sewing courses as part of the retraining services of employment offices.

HRD trends

Enrolment rates in primary (grades 1–4) and basic education (grades 5–9) were practically 100% at the time of independence. According to the Tajikistan Poverty Assessment Update, these rates are declining and in 2003 were 98% in primary education and 94% in basic education. Non-enrolment was highest in urban areas at 6% for boys and 18% for girls in basic education. Attendance levels have declined even more and in 2003 were 88% for all compulsory education (grades 1–9) and even lower in Dushanbe at only 82%.

Total enrolment in compulsory education in 2003 was 1.49 million pupils. In upper secondary general education (grades 10–11) there were 134,000 pupils. About 50–55% continued from compulsory education to upper secondary education. In spite of the increase in the size of the young population, the number of students in vocational education institutions (PTUs) has declined from 42,000 in 1990–1991 to 25,000 in 2003. The same has happened in technical education (specialised secondary schools, former *teknikum* schools), where the decline was from 41,000 in 1992 to 25,000 in 2001. Conversely, the number of higher education students has increased from 69,000 in 2001 to 97,000 in 2003. However, distance education (especially correspondence courses) and part-time students account for approximately 40% of all students in higher education.

According to poverty assessments, the decrease in enrolment and attendance rates in primary and basic education is primarily due to poverty and the poor conditions of school facilities. The declining number of students in vocational and technical education can partly be explained by the fact that compulsory schooling was decreased from 11 to 9 years in 1996. This means that vocational education is not an option to complete compulsory schooling. At the same time, the relevance of both vocational and technical education to the labour market has decreased, and the image inherited from the past is negative.

An estimated 60,000–75,000 young people drop out of school prior to completing or at the end of compulsory education, while approximately 25,000–30,000 young people leave education after upper secondary education without any qualification or skills⁹. The provision of adult training is very limited, with approximately 5,000 unemployed per year receiving basic training and retraining through the employment services. There are in fact very few opportunities for people to return to a focused training system providing short-term training with an emphasis on employability.

Summary

Tajikistan became independent by chance. It underwent a civil war, lost its subventions from Moscow, and had to cope with the reconstruction of its infrastructure, transition to a market economy and building up a viable economy of its own without major natural resources to rely on. There is high demographic pressure on the education system and the labour market and neither are able to handle the challenge. The country has seen rising unemployment and poverty, the emergence of an informal sector, and widespread internal and external migration including the departure of non-Tajik craftsmen, industrial managers and academics. The monolithic nature of agriculture and industry further worsens the situation. The labour market in Tajikistan has been unable to absorb the ever-increasing number of people of working age, and social stability is primarily guaranteed through massive seasonal migration and related remittances. Finally, the educational trends among younger generations and the education and training system's apparent incapacity to address the new conditions do nothing to improve the situation, and the country risks remaining without a properly educated workforce at the levels of skilled workers, middle management and technicians.

⁹ The number of dropouts and the number of people leaving school without a qualification are rough calculations based on data provided by the Ministry of Education and World Bank. They are intended only to give an indication of the size of the problem.

2. Contribution of HRD to socioeconomic development

Mismatches between the labour market and the education and training system

The education and training system has not been able to adapt to the fundamental changes in the employment system since independence. This is critical in a situation where most of the former jobs provided by large state-owned industrial and agricultural enterprises for which vocational education and training still prepare trainees have all but disappeared. Emphasis remains on teaching students knowledge and skills for rather narrowly defined jobs. The system does not deliver the kind of knowledge, skills and competences that would enable students to find or create decent work by themselves. Without a well-educated and qualified labour force, covering in a balanced way the different qualification levels that the labour market needs, no country can secure prosperity and decent standards of living for its people. In Tajikistan, the availability of a stratum of mid-level qualifications for skilled workers, technicians and middle-level professionals is also key to economic and social development.

At present, in the absence of providing relevant skills for employment, basic – that is to say, lower secondary level vocational education and training has become an instrument of social protection for children of poor families. Its main attraction is that it provides shelter and meals for its students. However, it does not provide real opportunities for students to continue their studies at higher levels of the education system. That route is defined by general secondary education. Moreover, higher education has remained largely unreformed apart from the high degree of autonomy given to individual faculties at the start of independence. A large segment of higher education covers the education of teachers and healthcare staff.

Budgetary problems resulting from the loss of subsidies from Moscow and from damage as a result of the civil war have made it difficult so far to develop the reform of the education and training system seriously. The earlier dependence on Moscow, and the centralised nature of the vocational education and training system in particular, have also resulted in an absence of local policy making and implementation capacities, including capacities for the development of curricula and teaching materials. Recently, however, a number of promising initiatives have been taken.

Policies

A national “concept of education” was approved by the government in November 2000, and further work on refining the national concept continues under the lead of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry has put initial emphasis on addressing the problems in primary and basic education and to some extent on upper secondary general education.

A Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) was agreed in 2002. The PRSP addresses the importance of improving the education system, with an emphasis on general education. Training and retraining of workers are also mentioned. Vocational education is not mentioned in the present PRSP, but the intention is to include a focus on the contribution of vocational education and training for poverty reduction in the second generation of the PRSP currently under preparation.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection has developed a new concept for basic vocational education and training that was approved by the government in October 2004. This concept emphasises the role of basic vocational education and training as an integral part of the overall education and training system as well as a key tool to support poverty reduction.

The fact that vocational education and training is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the rest of the education system under the Ministry of Education has so far prevented the elaboration of a policy that encompasses all segments and levels of the education and training system. However, communication between the two ministries is improving.

Reform

Though the actual reform of education is in its early stages, some reform initiatives are under way. Efforts to improve general education in Tajikistan in the mid-1990s focused on re-establishing an acceptable infrastructure – ensuring heating, electricity, roofs, windows, and so on – and on expanding the capacity of the school system to encompass the ever-growing number of school-aged children. These basic challenges have not yet been fully met in all schools, however.

Subsequently, focus moved towards the content of general and teacher education¹⁰. Strategic reform directions currently concentrate on ensuring equal access in terms of learning conditions, acquiring quality knowledge, completion and non-discrimination based on parent income levels, providing sufficient incentives to retain and attract competent teachers, and adapting the education system to the needs of modern society and the labour market. The two key objectives for reform are to increase public spending on education from a low 2.8% of GDP in 2003 to 5% by 2009 (of which 4.3% goes to general education) and to improve the efficiency of the system, including financing, management, planning mechanisms, public spending, rationalisation of education institutions and the modernisation of curricula.

Higher education reform will focus on rationalising the university network, modernisation of curricula for teacher education, introduction of merit-based grants for students from vulnerable groups, and strengthening the autonomy of institutions. A major problem in higher education is widespread corruption at all levels; this presently makes the assessment system in higher education a formality only, whether for admission, passing individual exams or obtaining a diploma. There are therefore increasing concerns about the quality of higher education, and although larger numbers of young people now have access to higher education this may not necessarily improve their employment opportunities upon graduation.

Based on the new concept for vocational education and training, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection is presently developing a comprehensive implementation plan. Actual implementation of reform has not yet started, apart from a small number of pilot activities. Key aspects of the implementation plan for the reform of vocational education and training will address how best to ensure that vocational education and training can contribute to poverty reduction. Other priorities will be to ensure that vocational education is seen as a part of the overall education system with transfers to higher levels in the system, and to strengthen its contribution to the development of citizenship. It has been recognised that it will be fundamental to involve social partners and especially employers in the future development of vocational education.

Public contribution

There is now considerable recognition in the government of the need for reform of the different components of the education and training system and an increased appreciation of the potential contribution of vocational education and training to poverty reduction. There is also a willingness to increase public investment.

Major weaknesses relate to the ability of the public authorities in terms of institutional and financial capacity to develop, prioritise and implement relevant reform initiatives.

A major opportunity is presented by the economic growth that has occurred in recent years, which will allow increasing public expenditure on education in real terms.

A major threat is the lack of financial capacity to underpin reform efforts throughout the system and the lack of knowledge about, and experience with, modern education and training systems that still prevails in large parts of a system that has been isolated for so long.

¹⁰ Major drawbacks from Soviet times were: an overloaded timetable, a large number of different subjects, a strong emphasis on academic and rote learning, the absence of a national assessment system, a lack of performance indicators for the system, outdated teaching and learning methods and materials, a collapsed teacher retraining system, and finally a complete lack of incentives for good teachers to stay in the system.

Private contribution

Though some private schools have been established in general education, still less than 1% of the total student body in general education attend private schools. Under the given economic conditions in the country it is unlikely that private education will be able to play a role outside higher education.

Summary

The education system has not been able to maintain high enrolment rates and the overall education level of the population has decreased. Dropout rates throughout compulsory education are increasing and the number of students who leave education without relevant employable qualifications and skills is alarming. Vocational education in particular has not been in a position to respond to the changing environment and continues to provide programmes offering obsolete knowledge and skills to students. It has an important role for improving social cohesion by focusing on the poor, but it is not in a position to attract poor students, to function as a safety net against early dropout, or to provide students with the relevant occupational knowledge, skills and competences to enable them to find or create decent work.

There is political commitment to improving the education system underlined by increased public funding. Developments in vocational education and training also confirm an understanding of the importance of a well-qualified workforce as a means of fighting poverty and as a precondition for economic growth. The first steps have been taken with the development of a new concept for basic vocational education and training and the ongoing work on its implementation strategy. Nevertheless, considerable external funding is still needed to support system-wide and system-deep implementation of reform at all levels of education and training. Moreover, the institutional capacity to develop and implement reform also needs further strengthening.

3. Current EU interventions in education and training in Tajikistan

Vocational education

A two-year Tacis project started in September 2004 with the aim of developing a comprehensive vocational education and training reform strategy and implementation plan with emphasis on school-based basic vocational education. The project includes initial work on curriculum development and teacher and trainer training on a pilot basis and the preparation of a rationalisation plan for the school network.

The ETF provided support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in 2004 for the development of the new concept for vocational education and training. It is currently assisting the Ministry in coordinating donor support for Tajik reform priorities. In 2005, a three-year ETF regional project started on national qualification frameworks. The project aims to create basic policy awareness of approaches to national qualification frameworks. Finally, the ETF will carry out a study on the links between skills development and poverty reduction as input to the ongoing international debate on this topic.

Higher education

Though Tajikistan has been eligible within the Tempus programme for Joint European Projects since 2000, no project has started as yet. Tempus priorities include training and retraining of teachers from secondary general and vocational education.

Poverty reduction

Through Track III, the Tacis Programme supports the enhancement of living standards in the Tajik part of the Fergana Valley and in the Khatlon region. The project includes a component on HRD in which the vocational schools of the region will be involved.

Focus and gaps

EU support to the education and training system in Tajikistan has been limited. Essentially, the Tempus programme has not yet got off the ground. In vocational education and training, the complementary support from the ETF and the Tacis project has ensured that informed reform initiatives have started. Without support to implementation of reform, however, it will be difficult for the Tajik authorities to ensure system-wide and system-deep reform. The contribution of skills development to poverty reduction and the role therein of the vocational education and training system need to be further developed and exploited.

4. Significant investments by other donors in the field of HRD

General education

By far the most important part of support to the education and training sector in Tajikistan has been support to general education funded by the World Bank. This has first and foremost been for infrastructure improvements to make schools functional after the civil conflict, but lately also to support reform of the education system. The initiatives carried out support development of reform priorities in the medium and long term to ensure access and equality, efficiency of financing, management, planning, and assessment mechanisms, and quality of the content of education.

Vocational education and training

The first support to vocational training was provided via the UNDP with Japanese and Swedish funding. The project supported the establishment of a modular training centre in Dushanbe to target demobilised soldiers. This target group has now been enlarged to cover all disadvantaged groups that have left school, and a second training centre has been established in Gharm. The centres are considered resource centres for the vocational education and training system. However, with external funding drying up, there is a serious sustainability problem.

The IIZ/DVV and DED¹¹ from Germany started a two-year project in August 2004 to assist in building up curriculum development capacity in adult training within the Methodological Centre for Vocational Education and Training in the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

Poverty reduction

Vocational training has played an integral part in a large number of projects implemented by NGOs to support the enhancement of living standards (e.g. training farmers to manage new crops). However, the existing vocational education and training system has not been involved in these initiatives and the training actions have had no bearing on the capacity of the Tajik training system to deliver similar training on a sustainable basis.

¹¹ Internationales Institut für Zusammenarbeit des Deutschen Volkshochschulverbandes, and Deutsche Entwicklungsdienst.

Focus and gaps

International focus has understandably been on primary education to try to ensure that the negative tendency in enrolment and attendance can be turned around and to improve efficiency and quality. However, general education alone will not ensure that the country develops a well-educated and qualified labour force, covering the different qualification levels that the labour market needs in a balanced way. This means that it becomes essential to further underpin support to all levels of vocational education and training.

5. Main challenges for HRD and labour market-related reform and modernisation processes

The continuing development and improvement of general education grades 1–11 in terms of infrastructure, access and content is still of major importance for Tajikistan as it is the cornerstone of the entire education system. However, large-scale support for this is provided by the international financing institutions.

With the overall aim of poverty reduction and recognising the importance of sustainable skills development to achieve that goal, the ETF suggests that donor assistance should also be invested in the area of education and training on the three levels of basic vocational education and training and technical and higher technical education.

Ensuring an appropriate role for basic vocational, technical and higher technical education and training in the context of poverty reduction

A key issue in the Tajik education system is that basic vocational and technical education have not been able to provide students with employable qualifications, skills and competencies, or offer an attractive alternative that is less academic and more employment-oriented than mainstream general education. The implication of this is that the two subsystems have therefore not been able to function as an alternative choice of education for early school leavers and those who finish compulsory schooling without a qualification or desire to continue education. Nor have they been able to provide an alternative to the mainstream education system for able students who would prefer to obtain an employable qualification directly. This means that the Tajik economy lacks a well-qualified workforce at the middle technician and skilled workers levels that is a precursor to economic development and poverty reduction.

The challenge will be to transform the current social protection role of basic vocational and technical education into a real contribution to poverty alleviation by delivering education and qualifications either for which there is demand on the labour market or that enable people to create employment, and that will be sufficiently attractive to able students who are interested in acquiring professional qualifications. Vocational and technical education will only be able to do so if it manages to replace its negative social protection stigma with a positively recognised capacity to provide such relevant qualifications. At the same time, however, these systems will have to accept the fact that most students will come from poor families; this concerns vocational education in particular. The basic issue, though, is that vocational education cannot be seen as only catering to the poorest segments of society. It must provide basic levels of qualification with a value on the labour market and in the wider education system.

Training and upgrading of adults

The knowledge, skills and attitudes many adults possess are no longer relevant for the emerging labour market in Tajikistan. This implies partly that these people's productivity is low and partly that they are not able to find or create employment in the local labour market and must resort to working in the informal

sector or end up as un- or low-skilled migrants. The challenge for Tajikistan is to create a training system for adults that can ensure that they may acquire new knowledge, skills and attitudes, enhancing their chances to find decent work or create income-generating activities in Tajikistan and thus help local economic development. In addition, adult training can improve the qualification level of those who, in the years to come, will continue to go abroad to find employment. It will be crucial for Tajikistan to ensure that a sustainable delivery mechanism is developed for adult training and that it does not repeat the mistakes of a number of Central and Eastern European countries who in the initial phases of reform tried to set up a delivery network for adult training in parallel to the vocational school network at high cost.

Teacher and trainer training

Higher education in Tajikistan is strongly biased towards academic rather than applied knowledge. However, the academic knowledge is not always up to date. In addition, the retraining system for teachers and trainers has almost ceased functioning. This implies that teachers and trainers are not relevantly prepared to function within a reformed vocational and technical education system, which will make implementation of reform at school level virtually impossible. In all efforts towards modernising vocational and technical education it is therefore a key challenge to ensure that the higher education system is appropriately prepared to train teachers and trainers who can deliver modern vocational and technical education programmes. This is essential to support the development of applied higher education.

6. Levers in HRD and related labour market policies through which sustainable system reform can be triggered

Ensuring an appropriate role for technical and vocational education and training in the context of poverty reduction

Further policy advice and institutional capacity building are essential to assist the technical and vocational education and training systems in assuming appropriate roles in reducing poverty. They have a role in the development of a qualified labour force, presenting a real alternative to general education for early school leavers and attracting able students who wish to pursue a vocational or technical qualification but who are presently driven away by the bad image and low attractiveness of the systems.

Both the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Ministry of Education presently lack the institutional capacity to develop policies or plan and implement strategies to refocus the two separate components of the education system. They also lack the capacity to ensure the involvement of social partners at all levels of reform. Initial support through the ETF and the Tacis Programme is ongoing, and this should prepare Tajikistan to enter into the logic of the sector-wide approach in this area. Presently, support focuses on empowering Tajikistan to coordinate donors, prepare reform policy and implementation strategy, and related costing. Further support in the form of one or more projects could therefore be prepared within the framework of the sector-wide approach. The following areas of intervention are suggested to trigger sustainable system reform:

- A reorientation and revalidation of occupational qualifications in programmes of technical and vocational education and training to improve attractiveness.
- The development of a national qualification framework to bring coherence, transparency and consistency in the present multitude of unrelated qualifications.
- Continued improvement of content and curricula with an emphasis on creating a better balance and interrelationship between theoretical knowledge, practical skills and attitudes.

- Changes in approaches to technical and vocational education will entail different roles for teachers and trainers. This will have implications for the organisation and contents of pre-service training, in-service training and recruitment policies to attract and retain teachers and trainers.
- Introducing regional decentralisation and school autonomy. A proactive and innovative approach by vocational schools requires competences on the part of its managers, teachers and trainers that still need to be developed.
- Support for moving away from the current centralised and itemised funding system towards a per-capita funding system.

Training and upgrading of adults

Tajikistan could benefit from support to develop a sustainable and affordable training and retraining system for adults and young school dropouts. Initial support in curriculum development for adult training has started via IIZ/DVV and DED, and a specific approach to adult training via the ILO-developed modules of employable skills has been implemented on a pilot basis through the establishment of two new training centres. However, Tajikistan needs to decide for itself on a sustainable and affordable adult training system. This is another area where Tajikistan could benefit from support to develop its capacity to prepare policy and implementation strategies, and to manage implementation through targeted policy advice and capacity building. This could include an analysis of the potential role and feasibility of using the existing delivery network of technical and vocational schools to provide adult training. It would also be essential to provide support to create a model ready for large-scale implementation. This could include support to the development and implementation of new curricula, related trainer training and the provision of equipment for a number of pilot training centres within technical and vocational schools.

Another major area of intervention would be to carefully plan the involvement of the technical and vocational education and training system in projects addressing the enhancement of living standards and rural and local development. Typically such projects contain training components, but rarely are they designed in such a way that their future sustainability is ensured. By involving the technical and vocational education and training system in the planning, design and delivery of such training, the system would be strengthened and a better understanding within the system of the actual needs for training would be created.

Applied higher education

Teacher and trainer education, training and retraining provides an opportunity to underpin reform efforts in technical and vocational education and training and at the same time enhance modernisation towards applied higher education and continuing training at post-graduate level. This would include assistance in reviewing teacher and trainer education programmes and in-service training programmes through support to curriculum development. It would also include capacity building for setting up a sustainable system for teacher and trainer education and training. Finally, it provides a good opportunity to foster partnerships between institutions of higher education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Ministry of Education, the technical and vocational schools, and enterprises. In order to improve quality assurance and enhance the image of higher education, it will be important to build in measures to counteract the widespread corruption that exists in higher education.

Support could be delivered through capacity building measures to ensure a systemic impact and through people-to-people measures to ensure a much needed outlook on international approaches to higher education.

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