1. Definitions and stipulated rights of children with disabilities in Tajikistan

a. Definition of disability as per the law of Tajikistan

The law on 'Social Protection of People with Disabilities' in Tajikistan defines disability as “the degree of limitation of life activities of a person due to impairment of health and reduction of functions of the body”; “disabled is a person with health deficiencies that reduce his/her bodily functioning due to sickness, injuries, physical or mental disabilities, which limit his/her daily activities and puts him/her in need of social protection; child with disabilities as a person with disabilities up to 18 years old.”

b. Changes in the legislative and policy framework stipulating the rights of children with disabilities in the Republic of Tajikistan:

The Constitution of Tajikistan recognizes the responsibility of government to ensure the protection of children with disabilities, as well as their upbringing and education, and guarantees social assistance for those with disability. Other legislation of Tajikistan stipulates the rights of children with disabilities and their families in a range of specific laws, including the Law on Social Protection of People with Disabilities, the Law on Pension Support, the Family Code, the Housing Code, and the Law on Health Care. In addition, a variety of Government decrees set out entitlements in more detail. The Law on Social Protection of People with Disabilities includes provisions on inclusive education for children with disabilities in general pre-school, basic and vocational education, where these establishments are appropriately equipped for this service. In addition, the law foresees home education for children with disabilities who do not have the opportunity to be educated in educational establishments, with the support of their parents or guardians. The law obliges the relevant educational establishments to support parents or guardians of children with disabilities in the education and upbringing of their children at home. For those children who stay in residential care institutions, the law stipulates that these institutions are responsible for the education and upbringing of the children under their responsibility. The law makes provisions regarding social

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1 All data in this country profile are, unless otherwise specified, provided by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan based on a country profile template in preparation for the 4th Child Protection Forum for Central Asia. Data from this submission come from TransMONEE, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan (2011, 2012). Based on this data, the analysis and conclusions were made by UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS.
assistance, providing for additional assistance to families with two or more children with disabilities and to single parents who care for disabled children. In addition to laws, specific decrees stipulate the entitlements of children with disabilities in more detail. One such decree is #368 from 2 October 1992 regarding the medical benefits for children with disabilities and their entitlement to transportation.

The most important legislative changes in the last five years in Tajikistan were amendments to the Labour Code in 2011. This change raised the age of capacity of children with disabilities from 16 to 18, consequently also extending the benefits for parents of children with disabilities; amendments to the Law on Insurance and State Pensions in 2012, raising the age of capacity of children with disabilities from 16 to 18 and consequently extending the eligibility to social pensions to age 18; enactment of the Law on Social Protection of People with Disabilities in 2010; amendments to the Law on Education in 2013, stipulating that all children with disabilities have a right to free education, offered through home-schooling.

c. Remaining challenges in the law

Regardless of the fact that important provisions and rights are stipulated for children with disabilities, the laws aimed at protecting children with disabilities still provide a basis for creating separate services for children with disabilities and do not systematically enforce social inclusion. Thus, the law promotes the establishment of special educational facilities for children who, because of their disabilities, cannot participate in general education facilities at pre-school, basic and vocational levels.

2. Assessment and identification of disability by different sectors

All pregnant women (at 18 weeks of pregnancy) are meant to undergo ultrasound screening and doppler screening in Tajikistan. After delivery, in accordance with the orders and guidelines of the Ministry of Health, the weight and height of all children less than 12 months need to be monitored on a monthly basis. From 12 months to five years growth monitoring should be done annually. Medical examination of children is foreseen in maternity houses, during the first three days after delivery. During home visits from the third day until one month of age the monitoring is continued through three visits of the physician and four visits of a home-visiting nurse. From 1 to 12 months of age the physician conducts examinations in the clinic on a monthly basis and the nurse practices home visits. From 1 to 3 years of age – the physician conducts examinations in the clinic on a quarterly basis and the nurse does home visits. From 3 to 7 years of age – an examination is conducted twice a year, and from 7 to 18 years of age children are examined twice a year. However, due to capacity constraints, this comprehensive monitoring, screening and assessment approach cannot always be applied fully, comprehensively and effectively in all parts of the country. It is important to highlight that one of the major innovations in recent years has been the establishment of Psychological, Medical, Pedagogical Consultation (PMPCs). With the financial support of the Open Society Institute in Tajikistan, a working group from the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection has developed age appropriate screening tools/assessment standards for PMPCs. The screening tools and standards are still under the consideration of the Ministry of Health for approval.

Considering the degree of disability and how this affects functioning in daily life, a disability category is assigned to persons who are recognized as disabled and the category of ‘disabled child’ is given to disabled persons of under 18 years of age. The Medical and Social Assessment is carried out by the responsible state authority – the Medical Labour Expert Commission for adults and the
Medical Consultation Boards for children. Methodological guidance on the Medical and Social Assessment of people with disabilities is provided by a scientific research establishment under the Government of Tajikistan. There is considerable variation in the identification and assessment of children with disabilities in different sectors and in different parts of the country. This is an area for further reform, as this variation of practices inevitably leads to inconsistencies, is difficult for parents of children with disabilities to comprehend, and may lead to inequities, resulting in children with disabilities missing out on timely services and benefits they could be entitled to.

In the education system a child who has difficulty following the education curriculum will be referred to a Medical, Pedagogical Commission (MPC) or to a Psychological, Medical, Pedagogical Consultation centre (PMPC), depending on which one exists in the district. The MPC/PMPC provides recommendations for the child's further study. PMPCs now exist in nine locations in the country, with four more planned for opening in the near future.

In social protection sector, children with disabilities are identified based on information from clinics (referrals), and door-to-door visits of social workers from Social Assistance at Home Units.

Number of registered children with disabilities below 18 years in the country

![Bar Chart]

According to the official data of Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the RT as of 2012, 26,345 children were registered to receive disability pensions (of the 171,447 persons with disability registered for this benefit). This is about 4,000 children less than the year before. The number decreased after a joint assessment conducted by MoH and MLSP to check each individual
case for their eligibility to receive the disability pension. In 2008, this number was 19,500 at the same time as the Ministry of Health was reporting 11,400 in their databases.

3. Services and supports to children with disabilities and their families in Tajikistan

a. Social welfare and support to families of children with disabilities

Rehabilitation Center in Chorbog, which is a residential care facility for children with disabilities, also offers 16 days residential rehabilitation courses to children with disabilities, while their care givers have access to a training programme on how to provide care and support for the child at home. In addition, an innovation center for social work has recently been established by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection located in the same district, which along with an education programme for paraprofessional social workers operates a day care center for children with any type of disability.

In addition to the above, children with disabilities and their care givers receive rehabilitation services and support through six day care centers located in six different regions of the country. Their services include social supervision, skills education, socio-psychological support, legal support, occupational therapy and various trainings for parents. The support center for Children with Disabilities in Kulob City provides psychological and legal support, social adaptation and social supervision services for children with disabilities and their care givers as well.

Since 2008, the Social Assistance at Home Units/Departments (SAHU), expanded its activities from working with the elderly to include working with most vulnerable families and children. The SAHU operates under the local authorities, with policy set by the Agency for Social Protection, Employment and Migration under the MLSP. From 2009 SAHU started to be involved in the provision of social assistance to the most vulnerable children. Currently, SAHUs are functioning in 38 out of the 68 districts of the country. Although the SAHU is involved in rendering social assistance to the most vulnerable children, they still need more training to acquire additional skills to fully respond to this responsibility. In November 2012, with support from the EU, the Practical Training Unit for Social Work and Innovations under the MLSP was set up to provide systematic training for SAHU staff with more focus on community-based rehabilitation.

Following the Polio Outbreak of 2010, UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Health and together with Operation Mercy and Handicap International initiated a Community Based Rehabilitation Project for those affected by the polio outbreak and other children with physical disabilities in the 24 most afflicted districts. The objective was to ensure that persons affected by polio paralysis get quality physical rehabilitation services to decrease the disabling outcome of the disease and are accepted into mainstream society and was used as an example for inclusive community-based development of services for persons with disabilities.

Presently, there are a few residential care institutions for children with disabilities in Tajikistan as well. The National Center for Rehabilitation of Children and Adolescents with mental disabilities in Chorbogh provides rehabilitation services for 200 children. This institution is specifically designed for children with severe disabilities. In addition, children with severe mental disabilities receive rehabilitation services at three residential centers (J. Rasulov, Panjikent and Yavan districts), which
also serve elderly people including those with disabilities. The MLSP also has a Boarding Lyceum where children with disabilities receive vocational classes. Children with disabilities from all over the country apply directly to this Lyceum and get admission based on the criteria that they have physical disabilities with supporting documents from the Medical Labour Expertise Commission (VTEK) of district level. Children are admitted to this Lyceum after their completion of the basic school, either from general schools or Boarding Schools. The study in this Lyceum takes two years and the programme includes secondary school and vocational studies. For admission to these centres, parents/care givers or boarding schools for children with mental disabilities can officially apply to the State Agency on Social Protection, Employment and Migration which then makes referrals to these places.

Proportion of children with disabilities below 18 years of all children below 18 years in residential care:

In 2011 there were 13,069 children with disabilities below 18 years placed in residential care in Tajikistan. Out of this, approx. 18% per cent were children with disabilities. There has been both an increase in the number of children below 18 years placed in residential care and the number of children with disabilities below 18 years in residential care in Tajikistan.

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2 This includes all types of care institutions and boarding schools for children with disabilities, including baby homes from TransMONEE. For children with disabilities, data on the number of children with disabilities in infant homes comes from Ministry of Health.
As per data of the Ministry of Health of Tajikistan (2012), there were 300 children below 3 years in institutional care in the country, out of which 7 per cent were children with disabilities.

b. Social assistance to children with disabilities

Disability allowances in Tajikistan are 104 TJS (approximately US$21.85). Also, according to the Labour Code the mother of a child with disabilities is entitled for 14 days of additional unpaid leave. Finally, based on the Decree of the Government of Tajikistan 2008, additional social assistance is being provided through transfer of compensation payments for the use of gas and electricity for families with two or more children with disabilities and for single parents with disabilities, caring for a child with disabilities. An important change has been introduced with a new Targeted Social Assistance scheme which was piloted in recent years in the country. According to this scheme, social benefits are being issued on the basis of a proxy means test with the number of children with disabilities in the household being a factor in the proxy means test. With the Decree # 661 from 2012, continuation of the pilot project is being ensured, which is expected to be scaled up nationally (currently it is being piloted in ten districts of the country).
c. Early childhood development and education for Children with Disabilities

In Tajikistan, children with disabilities are offered different types of educational programming dependent on the situation and their respective needs. The Law on Education, as revised in 2013, stipulates that all children with disabilities have a right to education. Special boarding schools are offered for children with disabilities by the Ministry of Education and home-schooling is supported by a teacher who provides classes by visiting child at his/her home. Moreover, children with disabilities can attend regular schools, though most of these schools lack full accessibility and are not equipped for inclusion in terms of teacher training, equipment, curriculum and learning materials.

The Ministry of Education of Tajikistan is making strides in promoting and training for inclusive education. There are plans as part of the revision of the in-service teacher training programme to offer a course on Inclusive Education and support the mainstreaming of children with disabilities in the General Secondary Education system. The Early Childhood Education curriculum, adopted by the Ministry of Education in 2013, promotes inclusive education and the accompanying teacher training package offers practical examples on how to implement inclusive education within the classroom setting. Moreover, the National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan (2006-2015), focuses on development of programmes of inclusive education and the
incorporation of the concept of inclusive education into the curricula of Pedagogical higher schools and colleges. In addition, in 2011 the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan adopted the “National Concept on Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011-2015”. The goal of the National Concept on Inclusive Education is to create a national model for inclusion of people with disabilities into the general educational process. The concept has focused intervention in three areas: Education, health care and social welfare.

Proportion of children with disabilities receiving education services through home-schooling, in boarding schools and in regular schools

According to the official data, there were 1,755 children with disabilities in special boarding schools and 999 children with disabilities receiving home-schooling in Tajikistan in 2011. While the data indicate that 5,029 children with disabilities were in regular schools, it is not known what are the types of disabilities these children have and if these children regularly attend schools.
While data suggest that there are children with disabilities in regular schools in Tajikistan, the graph above demonstrates an increase in the number of children with disabilities receiving education in special boarding schools since 2005.