



COUNTRY PROFILE

# Early Childhood Development and Education in Emergencies **TAJIKISTAN**

*Aigly Zafeirakou, USA*

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**Emergencies (definition):** Emergencies include situations such as natural disasters, violent conflicts, or complex crises that generate a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.

*Kindergarten No. 1, Dushanbe: emergency facilities*



## A. Country Context

**Tajikistan** is landlocked, and the poorest country among the Central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union. It has a population of 7.3 million, and a per capita GDP of US\$702 (2008). The country is rich in natural resources, most importantly water and hydroelectricity potential; it also some minerals (high-quality coal, gold, silver, precious stones and uranium). Only 10% of its territory is suitable for agriculture, and the remaining 90% is covered by mountains varying in height from several hundreds of meters to 6,000–7,000 meters above sea level. Tajikistan suffered a brutal civil war immediately after independence from 1992 to 1997, which inflicted widespread physical damage and heavy human losses of up to 50,000 lives. Peace and stability



were achieved 12 years ago in 1997, through a peace deal between the government and the United Tajik Opposition.<sup>1</sup>

The country experienced strong economic growth between 2000 and 2008, averaging about 8% per year. The economy depends heavily on exports of cotton and aluminium, and on remittances of migrants working in Russia; remittances were estimated at US\$2.3 billion (46% of GDP) in 2008.

Despite a decline in poverty between 2003 and 2007 (*Poverty Assessment Report 2009*) attributed to remittances and economic growth, Tajikistan faces difficult challenges arising from its geography and history, its institutional weaknesses, and the global economic crisis. In particular, the proportion of people living on less than US\$2.15 a day was 64% in 2003, but remained at a high of 41% in 2007. Almost 54% of the population was poor at the end of 2007, with more than 17% being extremely so. About 75% of poor, and 72% of extremely poor people live in rural areas. The high poverty rate of those living in rural areas makes them exceptionally susceptible to weather and price shocks. The worldwide food crisis led to a 25.9% inflation rate of food prices in 2007, which slowed to 12.9% in 2008 due to weak demand. The poor continue to be disadvantaged in terms of access to high-quality education services and health care. The global economic crisis has worsened the social situation in the country, threatening to undermine the achievements of the last several years. The crisis is likely to result in lower remittances, and a partial return of migrant workers to the country, putting additional pressure on public services and the labor market. In addition, for the last two years, Tajikistan's economic development has been complicated by deficiencies in macro-economic management, severe energy shortages in winter, and international food price rises.<sup>2</sup>

Poverty in Tajikistan may be on the rise again due to the reduction in remittances brought about by the global financial crisis, while the poverty and food security situation in the country requires continuous monitoring and potential policy interventions. Social indicators, although improving in the past few years, still remain at a low level, reflecting poor public service delivery, weak governance, persistent energy shortages and low per-capita incomes.

With 67.5% of its population under the age of 29, Tajikistan's youth will be a main force in determining the country's economic future and stability. Thus, Tajikistan remains the poorest and among the most fragile of the countries among the Commonwealth of Independent States,

1. State Committee of Statistics, 2009, *Tajikistan Poverty Assessment*; Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Tajikistan, 2005; [www.worldbank/countries/Tajikistan](http://www.worldbank/countries/Tajikistan)

2. *Ibid.*

and is the only country in the Europe and Central Asia region unlikely to achieve most of its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).<sup>3</sup>

## B. The Context: Characteristics of Young Children, Parents'/ Caregivers' Situations, and the Preschool System in Tajikistan

The most recent information on the general context, the characteristics of young children, and parents' situations in Tajikistan can be found in the *Tajikistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey* (2005); the recent UNICEF/Innocenti *Social Monitor* (2009); the *Child Poverty in Tajikistan* report (2007) and; the *Tajikistan Poverty Assessment* (2009).

Education, high fertility rates, and fewer working women are indicators of poverty in Tajikistan's families; these directly influence children's environment. Families with educated heads of the household are much less at risk of poverty. ***High fertility rates, and the low labor market participation of women are substantial barriers to poverty reduction.***<sup>4</sup>

***The number of deaths of children under five years old is nine per 1,000.*** The nutritional status of children in Tajikistan is a major cause for concern: around 10,000 children are stunted, emaciated or underweight. Levels of acute child malnutrition increased between 2003 and 2005. Children in rural areas and the poorest households are most likely to have had a low birth weight. Children aged 12–23 months are 70% more likely to be underweight than a child aged 6–11 months. This coincides with the period when foods other than breast milk are generally introduced into the diet.<sup>5</sup> Nearly 10% of children aged 5–14 years are involved in child labor: mainly unpaid or domestic work. As for child discipline, three in every four children in Tajikistan aged 2–14 years have been subject to at least one form of psychological or physical punishment from their mother or caregiver. Finally, 88% of children under 17 live with both parents.<sup>6</sup>

Progress in the education sector is identified, but ***Tajikistan still faces major challenges on improving educational outcomes.*** The quality of school facilities is often very bad, with huge inequalities across regions. The reported lack of qualified

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*





teachers points to institutional challenges. The use of tuition fees or hidden charges in general education represents a significant problem for poor households. Most schools are locally financed and are at the mercy of available funds and the decisions of local governments, which do not report back to the central government.<sup>7</sup>

***Early child development (ECD) access and enrolment are among the lowest in the region.*** Only 10% of children aged 36–59 months are currently attending some form of organized ECD program, generally in public kindergartens.<sup>8</sup> This varies significantly according to region, with young children in Dushanbe being considerably more likely to be enrolled than children elsewhere in the country. Children from the poorest families, and who may be thought to benefit most from ECD provision in terms of health and education, are most likely to be excluded from it. Just 1% of young children living in the poorest fifth of households (ranked by their ownership of assets), are enrolled in organized early childhood education (mostly public kindergartens) compared with 20% of those in the wealthiest fifth.

7. *Ibid.*

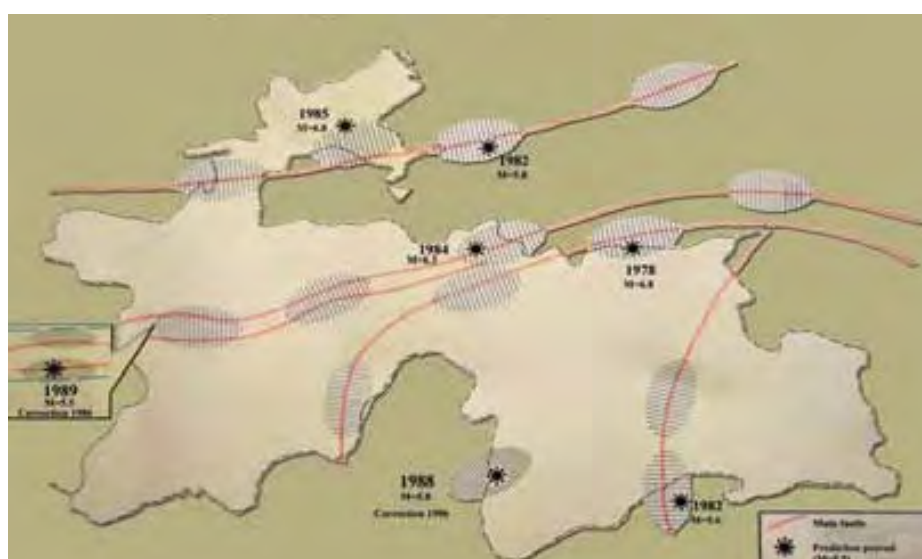
8. UNICEF, MICS, 2005.

The low level of enrolment in ECD means that *a high proportion of children (generally aged seven years old) enter the first grade of primary education unprepared for the school program*. Overall, only around 30% of first graders report having attended any form of early education. This varies from 76% in Dushanbe to just 9% in Khatlon; and from 11% of those from the poorest households to 59% of those living in the wealthiest households.<sup>9</sup>

## C. Disaster Risk Analysis

**Hazards/threats.** Tajikistan faces a wide variety of potential disasters, with some 1,470 areas characterized as catastrophic zones: these face year-round threats, including earthquakes, floods, mudflows, landslides, and avalanches, risks of epidemic, drought and windstorms. Earthquakes represent a threat in most parts of the country, specifically in urban areas, and can cause damage to infrastructure such as reservoir dams, communications, as well as to human lives. Floods and flash floods are also threats to the natural environment and to people. Severe cold and energy shortages tend to disrupt basic services, including hospitals and schools, which happened during the harsh winter of 2007–2008 when the rural population was affected by crop failure and losses of livestock. Areas of Tajikistan are also being mined. This, combined with natural disasters, further exacerbates the situation as regards emergencies. The flow of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) is another source of hazard for Tajikistan.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 1: Areas at risk of earthquakes in Tajikistan  
(Most probable places for earthquakes' occurrence with  $M > 5.5$ )



Source: Committee of Emergency Situations (COES).

9. Child Poverty in Tajikistan, 2007.

10. UNICEF, EU–Aid ECHO, 2008.



**Vulnerability.** The abovementioned hazards and threats have an impact on communities, schools, children and their families, especially in regards to access to basic services (health and education) for the most vulnerable (including rural isolated communities). For instance, in July 2006, a strong earthquake hit the district of Qumsangir in the south of the country. It destroyed nearly 2,600 houses and affected some 21,000 people. Also, during 2006–2007 around 284,000 persons were affected by disasters, with 222 fatalities. Crucial infrastructure was damaged: 54,000 houses; 118 schools; 26 medical facilities; 111 kilometers of power transmission lines; and 13,000 hectares of farmland.<sup>11</sup> During the winter of 2008–2009, an estimated 800,000 people required emergency food assistance in Tajikistan to cope with food and energy needs. Young children were among the most in need. In answer to this, UNICEF started to implement a US\$1.4 million program to address the impact of the poor food security situation on children.<sup>12</sup>

In April–May 2009, 26 people were killed and over 3,000 displaced by floods and mudflows in 25 districts in the country. Over 2,000 houses, hospitals, schools and other buildings were destroyed over a period of six weeks. The Tajik government and aid agencies delivered life-saving assistance in the aftermath of the crisis: tents, food, and access to safe water and emergency health care. However, the affected communities continue to struggle to rebuild their homes and livelihoods and to restore infrastructure. Hundreds of families had to live with relatives or in tents. Over 2,000 people needed access to proper housing during winter, when temperatures can fall to as low as  $-25^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Supplies of essential medicines and school materials needed to be replenished.

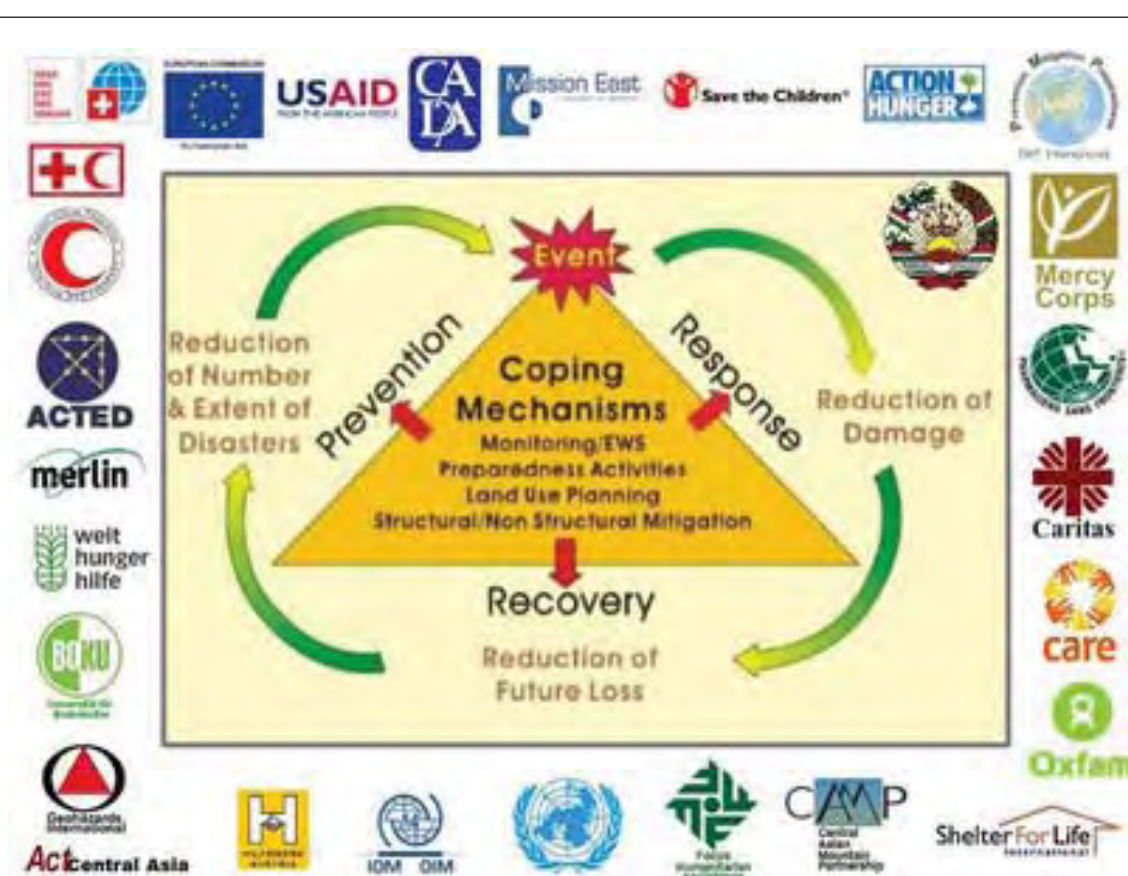
11. UNICEF proposal (2007) *Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction amongst vulnerable communities in Central Asia*.

12. [http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/reallives\\_10873.html](http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/reallives_10873.html)

## D. Government Institutions Responsible for Emergencies and Coordination Mechanisms

Tajikistan has been benefiting, especially since 2000, from quite a large amount of international technical assistance and intervention in terms of preparedness, relief and response to a variety of disasters. As a result, mechanisms for preparedness and response to emergencies are generally well established. However, this preparedness is limited to medium-scale disasters. The *Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team* (REACT) is the primary mechanism for dealing with emergency preparedness, and disaster management cooperation in the country (see Box 1).

Box 1: Disaster Management in Tajikistan



The Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team (REACT) was established in 2001 to promote the sharing of information, logistics and other resources between partners active in the disaster management sector, including the Committee of Emergency Situations and the Government of Tajikistan. The group involves over 50 state, local and international organizations and entities, and meets regularly to coordinate and share experiences on issues related to various areas of disaster management. These include preparedness, responsiveness, mitigation, and capacity-building activities with national bodies. During emergency situations, the partnership works together closely, coordinating response and assistance.

Source: UN Tajikistan Information Platform, <http://www.untj.org>

*While a legal framework is supposed to set the basis for guiding, protecting and monitoring activities before, during and after disasters (Law on Protection of Population and Territories; Law on Natural and Man-made Disasters; Law on Civil Defense; Law on Emergency Rescue Services and the Status of Disasters), there is no clarification on budget allocation.*

The government, through the **Committee of Emergency Situations** (COES), has the responsibility of implementing and monitoring programming in disasters in the areas of contingency planning, effective coordination systems, appropriate equipment, training, and public education and awareness programs. In the majority of disaster-prone areas, the **Community Disaster Response Teams** are established by the COES at the community level, in cooperation with national and international organizations. Each of the teams has an action plan to follow in case of emergencies. These teams comprise trained volunteers, and are generally equipped with basic disaster-response tools, warehouses with non-food items, a communications system and means of transport.

## E. National Policies, Strategies and Ongoing Programs for Emergencies

The government, through COES, and jointly with the UNDP Disaster Risk Management Program (UNDP/ DRMP), is preparing a *National Disaster Risk Management Strategy and a National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan to be completed by early 2010. The features of United Nations and other international assistance is twofold: (i) to provide necessary humanitarian aid directly to communities; (ii) to support the capacity building of the government, involving the Ministry of Education (MoE) in preparedness and disaster response.*

ECD and the vital needs of young children in emergency cases are not comprehensively reflected in the above strategy and plan. As will be presented in this report's recommendations section, now would be a good time to boost the ECD and child-needs agenda within the national Disaster Risk Strategy and Plan.

According to the ISDR Office in Tajikistan, a strategy for the emergency preparedness of all communities in Tajikistan should comprise *three phases*:<sup>13</sup>

- to create a culture of disaster preparedness among the population;
- to raise the population's awareness on emergency preparedness in order to better focus policy-makers on the issue;
- the government should train the school community – including kindergarten school directors – on what to have or do in emergency situations.

13. Interview with the ISDR Office in Tajikistan, November 2009.

An important ongoing emergency preparedness program in the country is the *Disaster Risk Management Program* ((DRMP), administrated by UNDP. The program aims to support government capacity on implementing policies, coordination mechanisms using information technology for assessment and monitoring, increasing public understanding of risks, and to reduce the impact of natural disasters on vulnerable communities.

## F. Education and Early Childhood Development in Emergencies

The Ministry of Education has a focal point for emergencies which works in close cooperation with key UN agencies active in emergencies, in order to receive support for school preparedness and emergency response. This cooperation has been very active in recent years. An impressive number of school materials, the result of various programs (including the REACT partnership), have been made available in the country<sup>14</sup> as part of a public-awareness effort. Under the *Children and Disasters* component *in particular, relevant information materials have been produced (see Annexes)*.



14. See Annex: List of Educational Materials on Emergencies in Tajikistan.

The European Union program DIPECHO is the most important donor to education within Tajikistan's emergency activities. Various recipients have received grants to implement activities in the area of emergency preparedness for the schooling community. Selected activities are presented here.

*Among the various programs that UNICEF implements to support disaster-preparedness and response, the DIPECHO project is one notable example.* The DIPECHO project, *Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction amongst Vulnerable Communities in Central Asia*, is a disaster preparedness program of the Directorate General for Humanitarian AID (ECHO) concerned with disaster-preparedness in Central Asian countries. The program has been active recently in Central Asia, including Tajikistan. UNICEF Tajikistan received funds from the DIPECHO project for the first time in 2007, to cover 20 disaster-prone districts in the country. UNICEF's objective was to provide equal assistance to children, focusing on school children from 20 districts, as well as government counterparts from educational and emergency bodies. The activity also aimed to build the capacities of the Ministry of Education and the Committee of Emergency Situations in Tajikistan in the field of disaster-risk reduction. The total numbers of beneficiaries covered by DIPECHO activity, implemented by UNICEF in Tajikistan, were as follows:



- total number of direct beneficiaries – 191,560;
- 80,000 people (from 16,000 families) in 20 selected districts;
- 80,000 school children – an average of 160 children each from 500 schools and special-care institutions (11–16 years old);
- 500 schools;
- 1,000 teachers (at least two from each school/institution);
- 30,000 parents of school children;
- 300 community leaders, elders and facilitators;
- 60 local disaster-management teams (three from each district);
- 200 officials from regional and local authorities (concerned with health, education, civil defense, etc.).<sup>15</sup>

15. UNICEF Regional Office, Tajikistan.



The *Fostering Disaster-Resilient Communities in Isolated Mountain Environments* project is being directed by FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance, an affiliate of the Aga Khan Development Network. The project's aim is emergency preparedness for schools and students. This is a fifth-cycle project of the Disaster Preparedness component of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office grant (DIPECHO). Completed in 2009, the project's objective was to enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate against, and respond to natural disasters. The project was implemented in 41 communities, in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) of Tajikistan, and in four bordering communities in the Badakhshan province of Afghanistan. These activities

included the implementation of 18 structural mitigation projects. For the increased awareness component, more than 5,000 children and educational staff in 23 local schools were targeted. Additional capacity-building activities focused on 120 government staff in particular, to better assess, monitor, and respond to disasters.<sup>16</sup>

According to the MoE Focal Point, a country-wide program supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation was implemented by FOCUS in 50 schools, out of the country's 3,800 schools (i.e. about 1.5% of schools). More information is needed to understand if this program was related to that run in the GBAO Oblast (see above). The FOCUS program provided training for teachers and supplied related materials, including various manuals for dealing with earthquakes, and a Tajik/Russian-language film on emergency preparedness. About 65% of the copies of the printed material was distributed among the participating schools. Although these materials were prepared for primary and secondary schools, selected parts could be used and further adapted for kindergartens and preschools.<sup>17</sup> The MoE has expressed interest<sup>18</sup> in becoming more active in the project's implementation, especially at the level of monitoring and evaluation.

***International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) Projects for School Communities.*** In cooperation with the MoE, ISDR has initiated and implemented the following activities related to schools in disaster preparedness and risk reduction in Tajikistan (with DIPECHO IV funding).

- The *School Resilience to Earthquakes Workshop* for school administrators. This focused on discussions with school directors and deputy directors about options on low-cost

16. [www.akdn.org/focus](http://www.akdn.org/focus)

17. Interview with MoE Focal Point.

18. Interview with MoE Focal Point.

or no-cost methods providing safety to teachers and students during earthquakes, and distributing materials developed by CARESI.

- Production, printing and distribution of *the booklet Earthquakes: how to protect yourself from disaster*. It is unclear if distribution was carried out systemically, or if all schools (and those people at the schools) effectively received this booklet.
- ISDR together with UNDP–DRMP is lobbying to introduce *Disaster Risk Reduction onto school curricula*.

**ECD in emergencies.** According to the Ministry of Education, public kindergartens are included in the emergency planning for all schools in the country. However, it has to be pointed out that less than 10% of children are enrolled in early education institutions, while almost 90% of children are not in early education institutions before grade 1. Infants and toddlers in families are generally not addressed by disaster-preparedness plans.

**Emergencies training for ECD service providers and volunteers.** In summer 2008, UNICEF conducted a one-month training session for ECD service providers and other volunteers in cooperation with the MoE. Fifty volunteers from eight districts trained for one month on Psychosocial support and



Early Stimulation for Young Children in Emergencies. Many of the volunteers were directors and teachers from public kindergartens. The training, provided in the summer of 2009, aimed to:

- (1) prepare a group of ECD preschool teachers, directors, mothers and interested adolescents to become volunteers for preparing and facilitating stimulation activities for 0–6 year-olds during and after an emergency;
- (2) guide ECD volunteers towards creating a safe environment for young children during emergencies.

This has been one of the few activities in the region to target kindergarten staff for emergency preparedness. More information is needed on the session's evaluation, follow-up and list of participants in order to build on its experience for future emergency-preparedness projects in Tajikistan, and other countries in the region. However, according to the recommendations of the UNICEF expert who designed and implemented training for ECD staff and stakeholders in Tajikistan (see below), **“the Ministry of Education has to be more proactive and must now make maximum use of all support towards developing emergency preparedness and response plans [EPRP] for schools and psychosocial support training for teachers.** Effective use of EPRPs in schools combined with disaster mitigation programs for and with children and their communities can make a positive change in coping mechanisms for children, as well as for the school system. It will certainly make education in emergencies more assessable for a greater number of children”.<sup>19</sup>

***Challenges on how to cover young children left out of ECD services (90% of 3–7 year-olds).*** Tajikistan had made progress in comparison to neighboring countries in terms of education material for emergencies, including emergency instruments in kindergartens (see attached photo in Annex) and some capacity building of human resources (training of kindergarten school directors and other ECD players). Nevertheless, the key issue on boosting ECD in its emergency preparedness and response agenda has to be on how to reach the vast majority of young children aged 3–7, 90% of whom are excluded from any kind of ECD.

***Options for reaching young children and their families, especially in rural areas in Tajikistan.*** Any ECD activity for emergency preparedness and its response should be twofold:

- (1) activities targeting the ECD community (educators and other staff, children) in all kindergartens in the country – this will cover around 10% of young children (aged 3–7);
- (2) activities targeting the 90% of young children excluded from any kind of ECD services.

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19. See Annex.

A combination of the below options may be considered.

### Option 1

Produce and broadcast TV programs (including cartoons) targeting young children. (Kyrgyzstan has a successful cartoon program used for emergency preparedness).

### Option 2

Use human resources at the community and intermediary levels (doctors, nurses and teachers) in providing information on preparedness for emergencies, targeting young children and their families. (This is a suggestion from the Health Emergency Direction, Ministry of Health).<sup>20</sup>

### Option 3

Train volunteer students and support them to reach communities and to bring information and materials to families in these communities, specifically targeting young children (aged 3–7). The activity should be supported by making use of already existing volunteer teams in the country (e.g. the Red Crescent, UN volunteers, etc.).



20. Interview with the Director of Emergencies, Ministry of Health.

## G. Recommendations

### ► Advocacy level

#### RECOMMENDATION 1

**Reinforce the role of the UNICEF country office as co-leader of the education cluster in emergencies (with Save the Children), and advocate for the inclusion of ECD in the country's emergency strategy and plan (to be completed by early 2010).** Because of the ongoing finalization of the National Disaster Risk Management Strategy for Tajikistan, there is a great opportunity to make sure that ECD and the age group of young children will be included in the strategy.

#### RECOMMENDATION 2

**Improve coordination among donors and line ministries to enable information-sharing on strategies, plans and activities for emergency preparedness with regards to young children.**

#### RECOMMENDATION 3

**A needs assessment of young children and their families, for emergency preparedness and its response, through a participatory process.** The MoE and CoES, with external expertise support, should perform a country-wide needs assessment of teachers, students, and parents in schools and kindergartens/community-based centers regarding preparedness and response to emergencies.

### ► Operational level, for both government and international organizations

#### RECOMMENDATION 4

**Assessment of human resources capacities, and available materials for ECD emergencies.** An assessment of existing ECD human resources capacities should be conducted, at the community, regional and national levels, thereby informing activities related to ECD in emergencies that target young children within their home and preschool environment. An additional activity could be to gather and assess all materials (visual aids, video and TV programs, texts) for children, teachers and families on the topic of emergency preparedness and response developed in recent years. The DRR materials should be adapted to the specific needs and rights of young children and care-givers.

**RECOMMENDATION 5**

Develop a strategy to reach children of preschool age (in or out of kindergartens) as well as infants and toddlers.

**RECOMMENDATION 6**

**Target and plan for the scaling up of ECD in emergency activities/projects, in order to cover the whole country.** Start with the most vulnerable and poorest communities, targeting young children. The MoE, together with CoES and UNICEF, will identify which disaster-prone districts are most vulnerable, with or without preschools. For this purpose, the DIPECHO project list may also be used.

**RECOMMENDATION 7**

**Build on existing human resources and materials for emergencies.** Reinforce capacity and coordination among the sectors' focal points (at central, intermediary, and local levels) under the direction of the CPES and the MoE, especially the health sector. Coordinate alongside the Ministry of Emergencies and MoE on selecting and adapting a training package on *information, training, and efficient modern materials for school directors of kindergartens, teachers, students, parents and local community emergency teams.*

## H. Reference List

### Resources

Baschieri Angela & Falkingham Jane, (2007) *Child Poverty in Tajikistan*, University of Southampton (report prepared for UNICEF Country Office)

Rodrigues, A. M., (May 2008) *The Process of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Emergencies Training*, report on deployment in Tajikistan, prepared for UNICEF Dushanbe, see Annex 3

State Committee of Statistics & ECA Human Development Sector of the World Bank, (2009) *Tajikistan Poverty Assessment*, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

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UNICEF Innocenti Research Center, (2009) "Child Well-being at a Crossroads: Evolving Challenges in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States", *Innocenti Social Monitor*, Florence, Italy: Innocenti Research Center

World Bank [www.worldbank/countries/Tajikistan](http://www.worldbank/countries/Tajikistan)

### Tools (see Annex)

### Emergency Contacts and Meetings

Malohat Ahoinbodova, Focus Humanitarian Assistance in Tajikistan: [malohat.shoinbodova@focushumanitarian.org](mailto:malohat.shoinbodova@focushumanitarian.org)

Akhroridin Bobiev, Emergency Focal Point, Ministry of Education

Jasmhed Kumolov, Head of Population, Protection and Prevention, Commission of Emergencies, Tajikistan: [jjk@list.ru](mailto:jjk@list.ru)

Abdurahim Muhidov, HFA Coordinator, UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Central Asia, ISDR, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Ibrahimov Nisimiddin, Head of the Direction for Emergencies, Ministry of Health: [nibrohimov@mail.ru](mailto:nibrohimov@mail.ru)

Tahmina Rajabova, Step by Step, Program Coordinator, Tajikistan

Khusrav Sharifov, Program Manager, UNDP

Anton Tsyganov, Emergency Assistant, UNICEF Tajikistan, Country Office

Rustam Ubaidulloev, UNICEF, Tajikistan Office

## Annex 1: Tajikistan – Country Profile

<b>Source:</b>	<i>The CIA World Factbook</i> <a href="https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ti.html">https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ti.html</a>
<b>Location:</b>	Central Asia, west of China
<b>Area:</b>	total: 143,100 sq km country comparison to the world: 95 land: 141,510 sq km water: 2,590 sq km
<b>Land boundaries:</b>	total: 3,651 km border countries: Afghanistan 1,206 km, China 414 km, Kyrgyzstan 870 km, Uzbekistan 1,161 km
<b>Coastline:</b>	(landlocked)
<b>Terrain:</b>	Pamir and Alay Mountains dominate landscape; western Fergana Valley in north, Kofarnihon and Vakhsh Valleys in southwest
<b>Population:</b>	7,349,145 (July 2009 est.)
<b>Ethnic groups:</b>	Tajik 79.9%, Uzbek 15.3%, Russian 1.1%, Kyrgyz 1.1%, other 2.6% (2000 census)
<b>Religions:</b>	Sunni Muslim 85%, Shia Muslim 5%, other 10% (2003 est.)
<b>Languages:</b>	Tajik (official), Russian widely used in government and business
<b>Government type:</b>	republic
<b>Capital's name:</b>	Dushanbe

### Economy – overview:

Tajikistan has one of the lowest per capita GDPs among the 15 former-Soviet republics. Because of a lack of employment opportunities in Tajikistan, nearly half of the labor force works abroad, primarily in Russia, supporting families in Tajikistan through remittances. The exact number of labor migrants is unknown, but estimated at around 1 million. Less than 7% of the land area is arable. Cotton is the most important crop, but this sector is burdened with debt and obsolete infrastructure. Mineral resources include silver, gold, uranium, and tungsten. Industry consists only of a large aluminum plant, hydropower facilities, and small obsolete factories mostly in light industry and food processing. The civil war (1992–1997) severely damaged the already weak economic infrastructure and caused a sharp decline in industrial and agricultural production. Tajikistan's economic situation remains fragile due to uneven implementation of structural reforms, corruption, weak governance, widespread unemployment, seasonal power shortages, and the external debt burden. A debt restructuring agreement was reached with Russia in December 2002, including a \$250 million write-off of Tajikistan's \$300 million debt. Completion of the Sangtuda I hydropower dam – built with Russian investment – and the Sangtuda II and Rogun dams will add substantially to electricity output. If finished according to Tajik plans, Rogun will be the world's tallest dam. Tajikistan has also received substantial infrastructure development loans from the Chinese government to improve roads and an electricity transmission network. To help increase north-south trade, the US funded a \$36 million bridge which opened in August 2007 and links Tajikistan and Afghanistan. While Tajikistan has experienced steady economic growth since 1997, nearly two-thirds of the population continue to live in poverty. Economic growth reached 10.6%

in 2004, but dropped below 8% in 2005–2008, as the effects of higher oil prices and then the international financial crisis began to register – mainly in the form of lower prices for key commodities and lower remittances from Tajiks working in Russia, due to the declining economic conditions in that country.

**GDP – real growth rate:** 7.9% (2008 est.)  
 Country comparison to the world: 23  
 7.8% (2007 est.)  
 7% (2006 est.)

**Population below poverty line:** 60% (2007 est.)



Source: CIA World Fact Book.

## Annex 2:

### List of Materials in Emergency Situations

	Name of book(let)	Brief summary	Pages	Published	Publisher	Donor(s)	Language
1	<i>Safe school in safe territory</i> (written by Gustavo Wilches-Chauks)	This booklet is published within the DIPECHO project and covers topic related to the safety of schools and territories	115	2009	Ministry of Education, Committee on Emergency Situations, CECC	UNICEF, ECHO	Tajik
2	<i>Manual on preparing the schools in emergency situations</i>	This booklet provides assistance to school staff in order to be prepared during emergency situations	76	2005	Focus, Geohazards International, Hayot, MOE, USAID, For the Earth, California Office of Emergency Services	USAID, SDC	Tajik
3	<i>Basics of Emergency Preparedness and Civil Defense</i>	Training manual for primary school teachers	60	2008	ISDR, Committee on Emergency Situations (CES), MOE	ECHO	Tajik
4	<i>Program “On teaching the Basics of Emergency Preparedness and Civil Defense to the grade 2 and 6 students of secondary schools of the Republic of Tajikistan</i>	This program is developed to teach “The Basics of Emergency Preparedness and Civil Defense” to the students of 2nd and 6th grade in secondary schools of the Republic of Tajikistan	26	2009	CES	UNDP, ISDR, SDC, Swiss Confederation	Tajik, Russian

	Name of book(let)	Brief summary	Pages	Published	Publisher	Donor(s)	Language
5	<i>Minimum education standards in emergency situations, in continuous crises situations and in the first stages of restoration activities</i>	This booklet is recommended for community members and teachers	92	2006	DIPECHO	UNICEF	Tajik
6	<i>Textbook on non-structural risk reduction</i>	The purpose of this booklet is to increase the understanding of risks related to non-structural objects, to show how to identify these risks, to motivate everyone in taking simple measures	36	2005	GeoHazard International, American Red Cross, AHEB, CAR-EST	USAID, SDC	Russian
7	<i>Earthquake: Five steps to risk reduction</i>	Colored pocket booklet with pictures about earthquakes and preparedness for earthquakes. Source of information "ABC-Basic concepts of emergencies"	32	2005	UNDP Kz, ISDR	UNDP Kz, UNISDR	Russian
8	<i>Earthquake: Five steps to risk reduction</i>	Colored pocket booklet with pictures about earthquakes and preparedness for earthquakes. Source of information "ABC-Basic concepts of emergencies"	32	2005	CES, ECHO, UNDP Kz	ISDR	Tajik
9	<i>What should we know about earthquakes? Pocket book about earthquakes for secondary school students</i>	This pocket booklet is designed for higher grade students of secondary schools in the Republic of Tajikistan			CES, ECHO, UNDP Kz, MOE	UNICEF, ECHO	Tajik

	Name of book(let)	Brief summary	Pages	Published	Publisher	Donor(s)	Language
10	<i>Manual for trainers</i>	This manual informs about natural risks and disasters. "ABC of natural risks" (mainly related to earthquakes)	94		MOE, GeoHazards International, Focus, Hayot, AHEB	USAID, SDC	Tajik
11	<i>Earthquakes: How to protect oneself from the elements</i>	This booklet is mainly designed for schoolchildren and is also useful for older children. The main topics of the booklet are earthquakes and their influence on people	80	2008		ECHO, UNESCO, ISDR	Russian
12	<i>Centers in Schools, When? How? Why?</i>	This booklet mainly covers the topics of disaster risk reduction and the safety of school buildings	54		ECHO, MOE, CES, UNICEF	UNICEF	Tajik

## Annex 3: Abridged Report on Deployment in Tajikistan

### *The Process of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Emergencies Training*

The concept of ECD in emergencies is new to the people of the Republic of Tajikistan. In normal situations, structured stimulation activities are almost non-existent for the 0–4 age group, and very few children are exposed to any school-readiness activities before the age of seven. It is against this background – and coming from a completely different culture – that it became necessary to plan strategically; to share ideas judiciously; to foster genuine participation; and to promote culturally appropriate methodologies and materials.

I embarked on the following plan.

#### A. Collecting data on ECD in the Republic of Tajikistan

1. **Review of documents on ECD in the Republic of Tajikistan:**
  - the *National Strategy for Education Development*;
  - the ECD work program and Annual Report of UNICEF, Dushanbe;
  - strategy papers on ECD policy and standards;
  - reports from consultants tasked with ECD investigation and planning.
2. **Field visits to ECD centers** (only possible in Dushanbe).
3. **Interviews with ECD practitioners**, including those responsible for health, child protection, and key organizations involved in ECD programming in Tajikistan: the Open Society Institute; Step by Step; Save the Children; and Operation Mercy.

Benefits included the following:

- an overview was presented of the status of ECD in Tajikistan;
- understanding was provided of the constraints faced by children, parents, communities, and the government of the Republic of Tajikistan;
- an overview was presented of the donors, the scope of work, and the capabilities of various institutions and organizations;
- the *modus operandi* of ECD schedules and programs were identified in the facilities available.

## B. Crafting a response to data findings

1. A concept note was developed for ECD in emergencies.
2. The concept note was shared with the Education Cluster Group for emergencies, namely: GTZ; Save the Children; the Open Society Institute; the Ministry of Education; and the Ministry of Health – Integrated Management of Early Childhood Illnesses (IMCI).

Benefits included the following:

- issues were clarified with organizations working in Tajikistan for many years;
- a vision was refined based on the experiences/perceptions of a diverse team of experts;
- a consensus was gained on proposals and strategies.

**C. Assessing the capacity** of local ECD practitioners and international NGOs working in ECD in Tajikistan for the next 3–5 years.

Benefits included the following:

- strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats were identified;
- an opportunity was provided to match the organizations' /ministries' skills and capacities to the task;
- a foundation was built for sustainability.

**D. Developing and reviewing a program** with the UNICEF ECD team and the Education Cluster Group.

Benefits included the following:

- good team work was fostered, and guidance given in what is culturally appropriate;
- the stage was set for ownership, as all presentations were done in Tajik and by Tajiks;
- terms of reference subtly ensured commitment, importance guidance and a clear scope of work;
- the technical resources available were maximized, and the greater effectiveness and efficiency, and the sustainability of the program were catered for.

**E. Preparing a Handbook for Facilitators and conducting training** in preparation for a larger target group of trainers; developing terms of reference for coordinators and facilitators, and reviewing the same with the group.

Benefits included the following:

- expectations, issues and methodologies were clarified;
- ambiguities were removed, and it was ensured that there was common understanding in the content and presentation of topics;
- ownership was provided for in the preparation and execution of the monitoring plan of the six-day training session, practical sessions in communities, as well as for the assessment tools for facilitators and trainees;
- genuine participation and a model for the conduct of subsequent sessions with larger groups were provided for;
- ministries and organizations were allowed to indicate their confidence, competence, and comfort levels in particular sessions, and to take responsibility for preparing and conducting the identified sessions in the general training;
- encouraging teamwork, as organizations co-facilitated sessions and made use of their own materials;
- giving leverage for inter-sectoral planning;
- highlighting the importance of an integrated approach to ECD.

## F. The training

It was important to set ground rules together, and to encourage each party to take responsibility for observing them. It was important to demonstrate democratic principles and to allow for full participation. Time-keeping was essential, not only to maintain the pace of the intensive program, but to show the importance of keeping schedules for children, especially in terms of adequate rest, play and meals, and **respect for time**. An evaluation concluded each day's proceedings: its contents, work ethics, and ideas for change. As many suggestions as were appropriate and realistic were implemented in subsequent sessions.

## G. De-briefing

A four-hour debriefing session was held at the end of the community practicum with coordinators and facilitators, primarily to review the process, and to show the way forward. Targets were identified with time-lines (see hand-out notes).

## Conclusion and Recommendations

UNICEF and the Education Cluster will continue to battle with the effects of natural disasters on the education system. The goal of the UNICEF-led Education Cluster must be to find ways of sustaining disaster preparedness and mitigation programming in schools and communities.

Securing funds for adequate responses to education in emergencies in Tajikistan will pose some challenges in an environment where opinions vary as to the concept of such responses being a developmental rather than a crisis issue. However, opportunities now exist for making greater impact, with combined efforts made possible through the **identification and implementation of zones of convergence within the Education Cluster**. The examples of insulating schools, window replacement, and disaster-mitigation programs for schools are noteworthy as these involve Save the Children, UNICEF, Little Earth, and UN/ISDR. The imperative is to utilize the current networks (in the Education Cluster; in schools and in the community) to sustain programming through building the capacity to manage activities in emergency preparedness and mitigation. A good example of this strategy is the ECD in emergencies training. **Consolidating the ECD in emergencies program** for replication later is a major recommendation. In this regard, the **Ministry of Health, through its Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) program, has the potential to take a leading role.**



With the compounded crises now facing Tajikistan, the challenge will be to help families keep children in school so as to ensure successful completion of their education. This is particularly worrying with the impending drought season, coupled with poor yields due to a harsh winter, a locust infestation, and rising food prices. These disasters, while seriously threatening the food security of the country, will take on a different dimension for parents and children when, after the long school summer holidays, the stark reality of the impact of rising prices and the provision of lunches and other requirements, are likely to become deterrents to children's access to and completion of their schooling. **One strategy would be to expand inter-agency initiatives into activities which need a more multi-faceted approach, such as the WFP's food for schools program.**

**The Ministry of Education** has to be more proactive, and **must now make maximum use of all support towards developing emergency preparedness and response plans (EPRP) for schools, and psychosocial support training for teachers.** Effective use of EPRPs in schools, combined with disaster-mitigation programs for and with children and their communities, can make a positive change in coping mechanisms for children, as well as for the school system. It will certainly make education in emergencies more accessible for a greater number of children.

## The Way Forward

**For ECD practitioners and interested partners, the following are recommended:**

- Consolidate the “ECD in Emergencies Training” initiative. More than 40 persons have received basic training, and that should be upgraded to include: alternative forms of discipline; working with children with disabilities; child-protection issues; and child rights, particularly in emergencies.
- Create ECD emergency kits for each district, which are to be stored and kept for distribution and use only during and immediately after emergencies.
- Make the IMCI program the repository for all ECD emergency kits, and take the lead in ECD regarding emergencies programming. The MoE should show greater commitment to the program.
- Utilize a core group of trainers to execute a cascading method so as to expand to other districts.



**Aigly Zafeirakou**, Ph.D., is a senior expert on education development strategies, specializing in early childhood education and issues of improving access, equity, and quality of compulsory education. She has consulted in over 20 developing countries for the World Bank and other multilateral organizations. Previously, she was a professor at Democritus University in Greece, as well as a Fulbright scholar.

### [www.issa.nl](http://www.issa.nl)

ISSA is a membership organization that connects professionals and organizations working in Early Childhood Development (ECD). Established in the Netherlands in 1999, ISSA's network today stretches across the globe. While ISSA offers general membership and information sharing to all interested individuals and organizations, ISSA's core members are non governmental organizations, located in 28 countries of Central, Eastern and Southeast Europe and Central Asia.

ISSA's overarching goal is to promote inclusive, quality care and education experiences that create the conditions for all children to become active members of democratic knowledge society. ISSA does this through: raising awareness of the importance of quality care and education; developing resources; disseminating information; advocating; strengthening alliances and building capacity to create conditions where all children thrive.

ISSA's mission is to support professional communities and develop a strong civil society that influences and assists decision makers to:


- provide high quality care and educational services for all children from birth through primary school (birth through 10 years old), with a focus on the poorest and most disadvantaged;
- ensure greater inclusion of family and community participation in children's development and learning; and
- ensure social inclusion and respect for diversity.



### [www.unicef.org/ceecis](http://www.unicef.org/ceecis)

UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children. UNICEF insists that the survival, protection, and development of children are universal development imperatives that are integral to human progress. UNICEF mobilizes political will and material resources to help countries, particularly developing countries, ensure a "first call for children" and to build their capacity to form appropriate policies and deliver services for children and their families. UNICEF is committed to ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged children – victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation, and those with disabilities.

UNICEF responds in emergencies to protect the rights of children. In coordination with United Nations partners and humanitarian agencies, UNICEF makes its unique facilities for rapid response available to its partners to relieve the suffering of children and those who provide their care. UNICEF is non-partisan and its cooperation is free of discrimination. In everything it does, the most disadvantaged children and the countries in greatest need have priority. UNICEF aims, through its country programs, to promote the equal rights of women and girls and to support their full participation in the political, social, and economic development of their communities. UNICEF works with all its partners towards the attainment of the sustainable human development goals adopted by the world community and the realization of the vision of peace and social progress enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.



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#### **INTERNATIONAL STEP BY STEP ASSOCIATION**

Nádor utca 23, IV/1  
H-1051 Budapest, Hungary

Phone: +36 1 354 3920

Fax: +36 1 354 3925

Email: [issa@issa.hu](mailto:issa@issa.hu)

**[www.issa.nl](http://www.issa.nl)**