



# **The institutional context of the transition from education to work in Tajikistan**

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**TEW-CCA Working Paper No. 2.4**

Version 1.0

**DISCLAIMER:**

The authors gratefully acknowledge funding for the project “Opportunities and Barriers at the Transition from Education to Work-A Comparative Youth Study in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Tajikistan” (TEW-CCA) from the VolkswagenStiftung for the period 2015–2019; funding initiative “Between Europe and Orient”, call “Institutional change and social practice. Research on the political system, the economy and society in Central Asia and the Caucasus”.

TEW-CCA Working Papers are outputs from the TEW-CCA project aiming at the dissemination of research results of the TEW-CCA project. The series is edited by the project coordinator Prof. Michael Gebel from the University of Bamberg, Chair of Methods of Empirical Social Research.

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**SUGGESTED CITATION:**

**Ashurov, Subhon (2019). The institutional context of the transition from education to work in Tajikistan. TEW-CCA Working Paper No. 2.4. Bamberg: TEW-CCA Project, University of Bamberg.**

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## List of abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BA	Bachelor
CCA	Caucasus and Central Asia
EPL	employment protection legislation
ETF	European Training Foundation
GBE	General Basic Education
GIZ	German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation
GSE	General Secondary Education
ILO	International Labor Office
IMF	International Monetary Found
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
MA	Master
MES	Ministry of Education and Sciences
MLME	Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of population
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PhD	Doctoral degree
PTU	professional-technical schools
SPTU	secondary technical-trade schools
SSUZ	secondary specialized secondary schools
SVET	Secondary Vocational Education and Training
TEW-CCA	Research project “Opportunities and Barriers at the Transition from Education to Work-A Comparative Youth Study in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Tajikistan“ (funded by VolkswagenStiftung)
TJS	Tajik Somoni (national currency)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Childrens' Emergency Fund
VET	Vocational Education and Training

## 1. Introduction

This working paper introduces the institutional context in Tajikistan. It is part of a series of working papers describing the institutional context of countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia. It is based on research conducted in the project “Opportunities and Barriers at the Transition from Education to Work-A Comparative Youth Study in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Tajikistan” (TEW-CCA) that was financed by the VolkswagenStiftung in the period 2015–2019; funding initiative “Between Europe and Orient”, call “Institutional change and social practice. Research on the political system, the economy and society in Central Asia and the Caucasus”. The focus is on institutional conditions that are seen as relevant for youth transition from education to work and related youth transitions such as family formation (marriage and childbirth).

Chapter 2 of this report provides an overview of the education system in Tajikistan. After giving a general overview on the structure of the education system (Section 2.1) conditions of preschool education are explained (Section 2.2). These institutional conditions are of great relevance for young parents as they define the opportunities of institutionalized care for young children. Section 2.3 discusses main characteristics of general education, which is composed of primary education, basic secondary education and general secondary education. Section 2.4 provides an overview on the system of vocational education in Tajikistan. Section 2.5 highlights the higher education system of Tajikistan.

Chapter 3 of this report offers basic information on the labor market such as figures on labor force participation and unemployment (Section 3.1) and employment (Section 3.2). Section 3.3 discusses the issue of labor migration, which is of high relevance for the society of Tajikistan. Section 3.4 provides an overview on employment protection legislation in Tajikistan.

Chapter 4 of this report is devoted to the broad field of the welfare regime. Basic characteristics of labor market policies (Section 4.1), unemployment insurance (Section 4.2), social protection that exists next to unemployment insurance (Section 4.3) and minimum wages (Section 4.4) are introduced. Section 4.5 is considering the family and gender regimes in Tajikistan.

## 2. The Education System

The educational system in Tajikistan emerged from Soviet rule and at the end of the twentieth century. With the collapse of the USSR, independent Tajikistan inherited the Soviet education system. Whereas the Soviet education system was characterized by strong education-occupation linkages, strong vocational orientation and exclusive tertiary education, education-occupation linkages got lost, vocational education came under pressure and vigorous tertiary education expansion and differentiation took place in post-Soviet countries (Gerber 2003; Kogan et al. 2011). Still, nowadays, the education system structure in the Tajikistan is essentially similar to the structure of education systems in most of the countries of the former Soviet Union. In the following subsection an overview of the current structure of the education system of Tajikistan is given and the basic components are described.

### 2.1. The Structure of Education System

Figure 1 provides an overview on the education system of Tajikistan. It shows the basic structure of pre-primary, primary, secondary and post-secondary vocational and tertiary education in Tajikistan. Moreover, the typical pathways are highlighted via arrows.

In Tajikistan, there is a preschool education system that starts with nurseries for the first three years and it is followed by kindergarten that host children of age three to six. There are also nursery-kindergarten as a combined type covering the complete pre-primary education period as well as combinations of kindergarten and general primary education, although the latter have a very low incidence. The pre-primary education in Tajikistan is described in detail in Chapter 2.2.

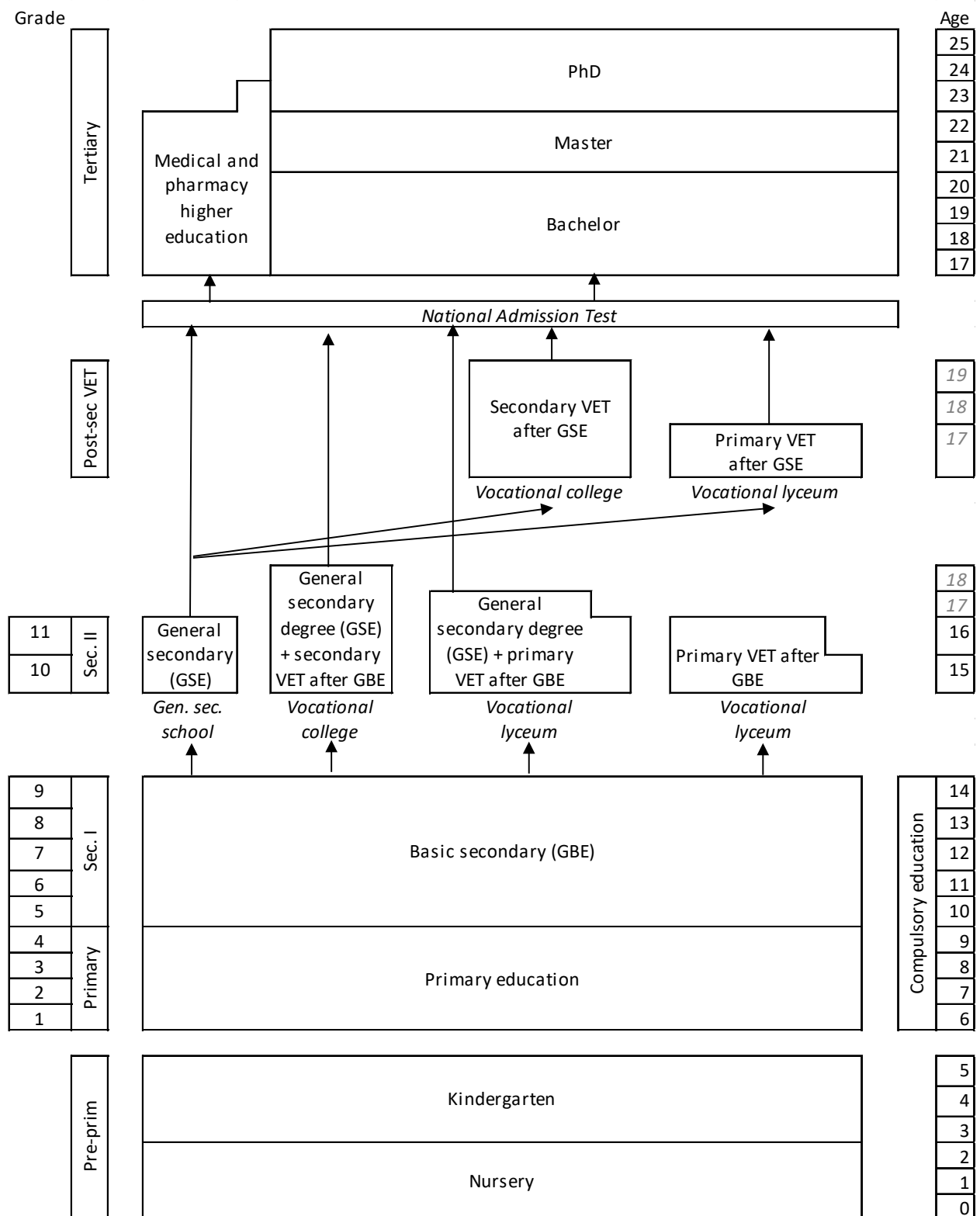
Education is mandatory for the Grades 1 to 9. The school system is divided into primary education (four years; ages 6–10), basic education (“lower secondary”) ending with General Basic Education (GBE – 9th Grade) (5 years; ages 10–15) and secondary general education (“upper secondary”) ending with General Secondary Education (GSE –11th Grade) (two to four years; ages 15–16/18). A detailed description of the general secondary in Tajikistan is provided in Chapter 2.3.

Alternatively, there exists a vocational education and training (VET) system. Primary VET, operated at professional-technical (vocational) lyceums, is either offered as a one-year program after the GSE (giving access to tertiary education because the students already have a GSE certificate) or as one-year to two-year program after GBE (without giving access to tertiary education because no GSE certificate is acquired in addition). Students at professional-technical (vocational) lyceums can also follow a program that combines primary VET and general secondary education for a duration of two to three years. As these students acquire a GSE in addition, they can proceed to higher education. Secondary VET, operated at vocational colleges, is either offered as a four program that offers in parallel the GSE (giving access to tertiary education) or as one-year to three-year programs after GSE (giving access to tertiary education because the students already have a GSE certificate). Chapter 2.4 offers more information on the VET system in Tajikistan.

Since 2014, passing the National Admission Test is one of the conditions to have access to tertiary education next to holding a GSE in Tajikistan. University education in Tajikistan is organized in a three-cycle degree system with Bachelor (BA), Master (MA) and Doctoral (PhD) degrees. The only exception is medical higher education that is offered in a six-year one-cycle study program. Chapter 2.5 provides more in-depth information on the university education system of Tajikistan.

In the following, we will overview the system of education by taking a deeper look at each level of education and its change from the period of transition from socialism up to currently.

**Figure 1: The education system in Tajikistan**



Source: Own illustration.

## 2.2. Preschool Education

The preschool subsystem in Tajikistan functions on the base of the “Law on Pre-school Training and Education”, which was adopted in 2013. This subsystem covers children aged one to six years. The

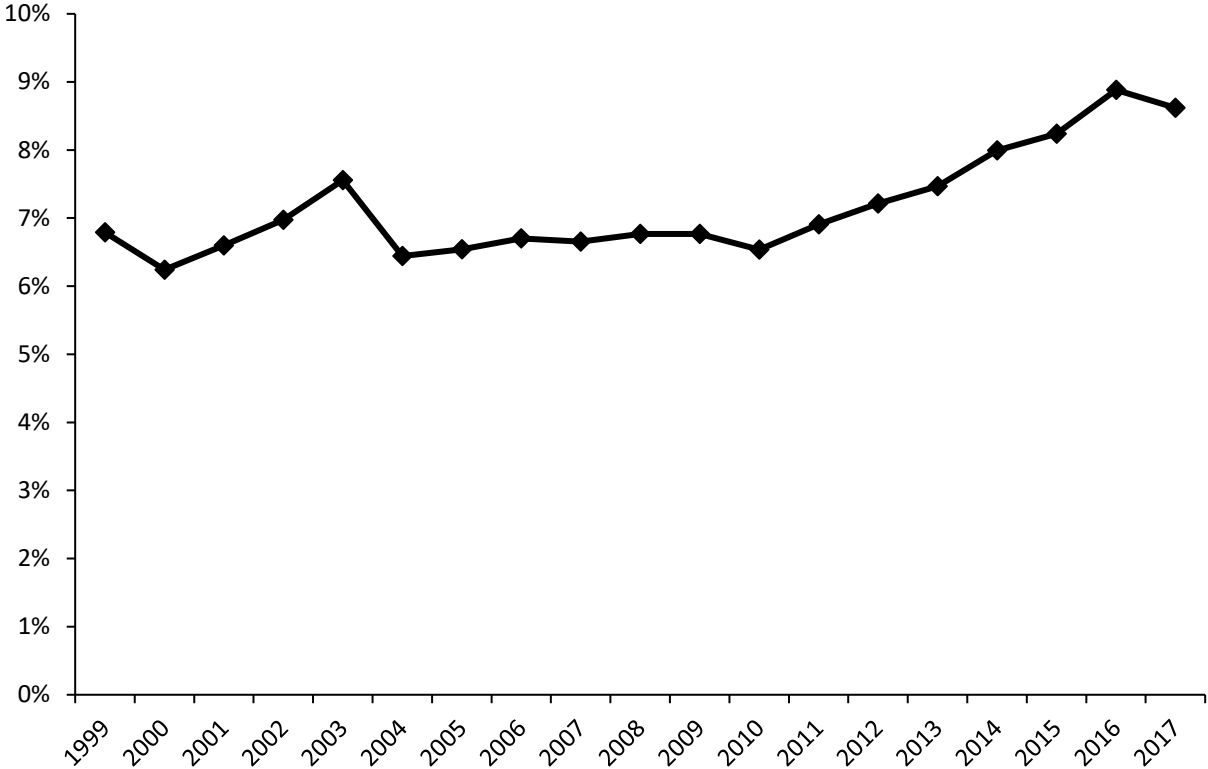
state executive governing body for the preschool system in Tajikistan is the Ministry of Education and Sciences (MES). There are both public and private preschool education institutions. The public preschools are financed by local governmental executive bodies, whereas private pre-schools are funded by private founders. The state standard of pre-school education is approved by the government and is controlled by the State Service of Supervision in Education of the MES.

The number of preschool education institutions halved from 944 to 494 during the first decade after state independence of Tajikistan from the Soviet Union in 1991 (State Statistical Agency 2017). In the years afterwards, there was a slight increase in the number of preschool education institution reaching a number of 550 institutions in 2014 (State Statistical Agency 2017).

Four different types of preschool education institutions can be distinguished in Tajikistan. There are (1) nurseries for children up to three years, (2) kindergarten for children of age three to six, (3) nursery–kindergarten that combine the structure of nurseries and kindergarten and (4) kindergarten–schools that offer both education in kindergarten and general primary education. In 2014, there were 396 nursery-kindergarten and 142 kindergarten in Tajikistan (State Statistical Agency 2017). There were just five pure nurseries and seven institutions combining kindergarten and school, which is a very low incidence. Thus, the combination of nurseries with kindergarten is clearly dominant. Short available trend data for the period 2010 to 2014 from the State Statistical Agency (2017) show that this dominance increased over time as the number of pure nurseries declined. Interestingly, within the short observation period from 2010 to 2014 the number of kindergarten very strongly increased from 24 in 2010 to 142 in 2014 (State Statistical Agency 2017).

Figure 2 provides basic trends in the net enrolment rate in preschool education in Tajikistan. In general, the enrolment rate in preschool education is rather low reaching just around 9% in 2017. In the period from 1999 to 2016 we can observe a trend of slight increase of the involvement of children in preschool education starting from 7% in 1999.

**Figure 2. Net enrolment rate in preschool education, 1999–2017**



Source: UNESCO (2019).



### 2.3. General Education

Primary, basic and secondary general education function on the base of the “Law on Education” adopted in 2013 in its new edition. Primary education includes Grades 1 to 4, basic education consists of the Grades 5 to 9 and secondary education covers the Grades 10 to 11. The state executive governing body for the general education system in Tajikistan is the Ministry of Education and Sciences and its local bodies. There are both public and private preschool education institutions. The public preschools are financed by local governmental executive bodies, whereas private pre-schools are funded by private founders. The state standard of general (primary, basic and secondary) education is approved by the government and controlled by the State Service of Supervision in Education of the MES. Curriculums of education programs are approved by the MES and controlled by the State Service of Supervision in Education of MES and its local bodies.

According to data from the State Statistical Agency (2017) general education in Tajikistan was organized by 3,838 schools in 2014. The number of students in secondary schools was 1,742,800, among which 47.7% were girls.

General education is offered by

- primary education schools, in which the four-year program of primary education is implemented;
- basic education schools in which the four-year program of primary education and the five-year program of basic education are implemented; and
- secondary education schools, in which the four-year program primary education, the five-year program of general education and the two-year program of secondary education is offered.

In addition, there are specialized schools of general education in the form of gymnasiums and lyceums. Gymnasiums implement primary general, basic general and secondary general education programs at a high level in all subjects and offer in-depth studies in humanities in addition. Lyceums cover basic and secondary education offering a specialization in technical or natural science. They can also offer primary general education programs. There are also special schools for children with special social needs such as schools for orphans or schools for mentally disabled children but also schools for highly talented pupils.

Table 1 shows the number of school types offering general education in the school year 2014/15. There were 456 primary education and 577 basic education schools. The great majority were secondary education schools, which reached a number of 2,602 in 2014/15. Specialized schools play only a minor role. The most important one among them are the gymnasiums followed by lyceums.

**Table 1. Number of schools and pupils in general education in the school year 2014/15**

	Number of schools	Number of pupils
Primary education schools	456	19,193
Basic education schools	577	95,447
Secondary education schools	2,602	1,534,290
Gymnasiums	85	50,497
Lyceums	65	28,971
Boarding schools for talented children	5	2,885
Boarding schools for orphans	22	6,120
Auxiliary boarding schools (mentally disabled)	12	2,046
Other boarding schools	7	1,792
School - kindergartens	7	1,597
TOTAL	3,838	1,742,838

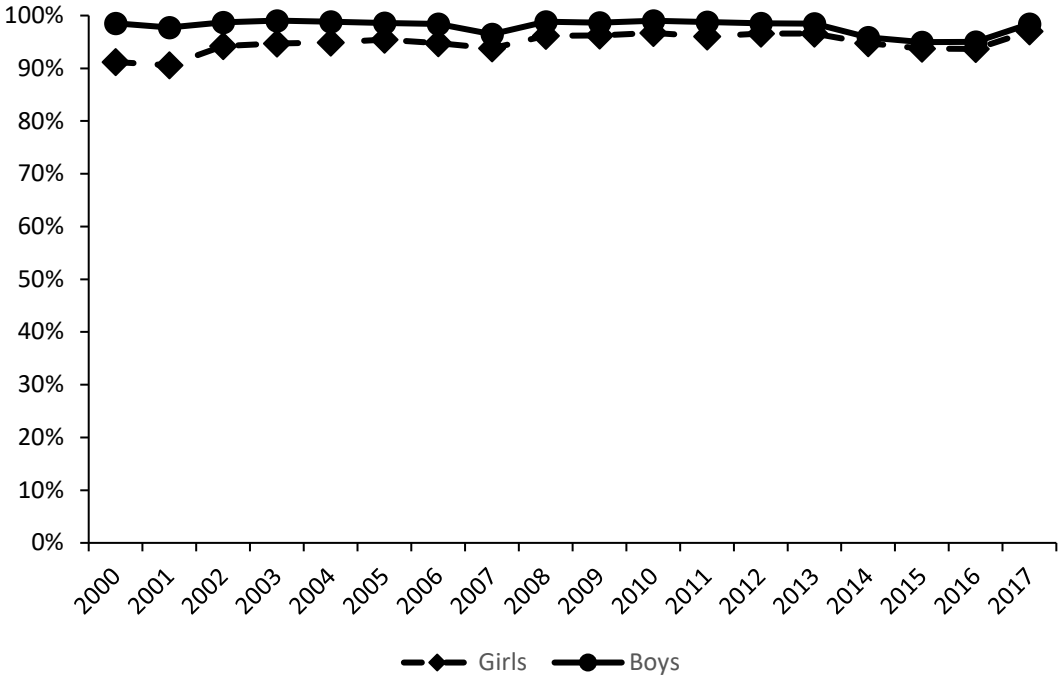
Source: State Statistical Agency (2017.)

According to data from the State Statistical Agency (2017), private schools only play a minor role in the general education systems of Tajikistan. In 2014, there were 54 private schools, which make up just 1.4% of all schools that offer general education in Tajikistan. The number of 21,379 pupils in private general secondary education schools in Tajikistan is in relative terms (1.2%) even slightly lower. During the short observation period 2010-2014 offered by the State Statistical Agency (2017), there was a small increase in the number of private schools and pupils in private schools.

According to the World Bank and German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ) “Jobs, Skills, and Migration Survey 2013” each household spends for education services of all levels an average 590 \$US per annum (World Bank and GIZ 2013). Different studies show that education quality in private schools is much higher than in the public schools. This mainly is a result of the relatively high wages of teachers, which gives opportunity to attract qualified teachers and to implement the modern methods of teaching and organization of education. The payment in these schools - minimum 1,000.00\$ per pupil (that more than 10 times in the public schools).

Figure 3 presents time series data on the net enrolment rate in primary education for boys and girls in Tajikistan. The enrolment rate for boys reached already 99% in 2000, whereas girls lacked slightly behind with 91%. In the new millennium, the gender gap in enrolment rates in primary education slowly declined and almost disappeared nowadays. In 2017, boys are just one percentage point ahead (98%) compared to girls (97%). According to a UNICEF-supported survey, about 25% of girls in Tajikistan cannot complete primary education due to poverty and gender bias, although literacy is generally high in Tajikistan (UNICEF 2005).

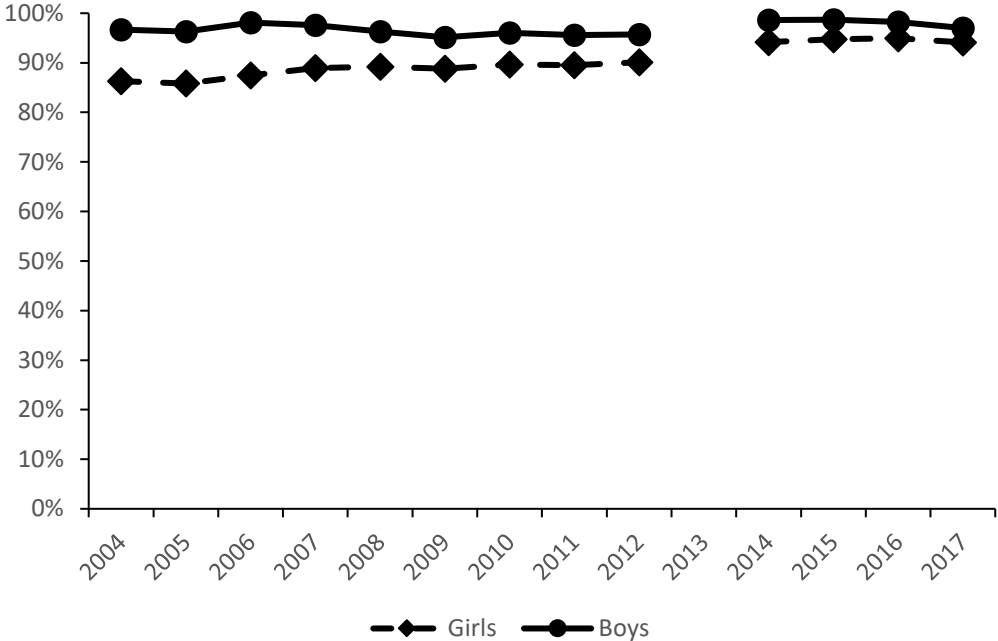
**Figure 3. Net enrolment rate in primary education, 2000–2017, by sex**



Source: UNESCO (2019).

Figure 4 presents time series data on the net enrolment rate in lower secondary education for boys and girls in Tajikistan. The enrolment rate for boys reached already 97% in 2004, whereas girls lacked slightly behind with 86%. As in the case of enrollment in primary education, the gender gap in enrolment rates in lower secondary education slowly declined. In 2017, boys are just three percentage point ahead (97%) compared to girls (94%).

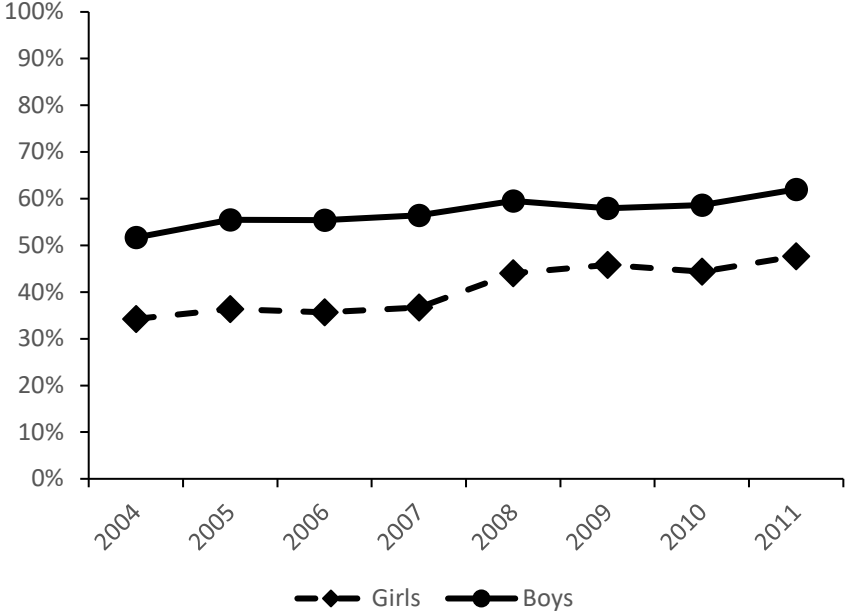
**Figure 4. Net enrolment rate in lower secondary education, 2004–2017, by sex**



Source: UNESCO (2019).

For upper secondary education, time series data on net enrolment rates that are provided by UNESCO (2019) are limited in the period covered (see Figure 5). According to the oldest available data from 2004, the net enrolment rate in upper secondary education was much higher for boys (52%) as compared to girls (34%). This gender gap just slowly decreased to 14 percentage points in 2011, which is the latest year with available data. From this trend, it is also visible that the enrollment rates in upper secondary education strongly increased in the short observation period from 2004 to 2011 from 52% to 62% for boys and from 34% to 48% for girls.

**Figure 5. Net enrolment rate in upper secondary education, 2004–2011, by sex**



Source: UNESCO (2019).

## 2.4. Vocational Education

During the Socialist era two types of VET schools operated (Gerber 2003):

- 1) professional-technical schools (PTU), where students attended short-term courses that qualify for manual jobs and secondary technical-trade schools (SPTU) that provided in addition a general secondary leaving certificate and,
- 2) secondary specialized secondary schools (SSUZ), where students were trained as technicians and middle grade staff of various kinds.

Both types were operated as dual-system vocational education. The VET students gained theoretical knowledge in professional centers and practical skills in enterprises. Usually VET graduates were able to continue their work in the enterprise after graduation. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the existing VET system came under pressure as state enterprises were closed or could not continue providing the practical training for the VET students.

### 2.4.1. Initial VET

Initial VET (IVET) functions on the base of the “Law on Initial Professional Education” adopted in 2003. The state executive governing body for the initial VET system in Tajikistan is the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment (MLME). The state standard of initial VET is approved by the government and controlled by the State Service of Supervision in Education of the MES and MLME.

Tajikistan’s initial VET system currently includes 63 public professional-technical (vocational) lyceums and 28 public Adult Training Centers located throughout the country, two continuing vocational education schools affiliated with the University of Central Asia and more than 250 private centers of professional and additional education (Ashurov 2016).

In professional-technical (vocational) lyceums the three following types of training programs are implemented:

- One-year program of initial VET after the General Secondary Education (GSE – 11<sup>th</sup> Grade);
- Two-year program of initial VET after the General Basic Education (GBE – 9<sup>th</sup> Grade) without getting the level of GSE and, thus, does not grant access to tertiary education;
- Two-year or three-year integrated program of VET and General Secondary Education after the General Basic Education (GBE – 9<sup>th</sup> Grade), which also grants the GSE certificate.<sup>1</sup>

Besides, PTL and ATC implement short-term (up to one year) VET programs after Grade 9 and Grade 11, which grants a certificate of professional qualification.

IVET aims at providing the first level of professional education to graduates of the general basic and secondary education system (ETF 2014). Hence, the initial VET system is characterized by two entry points: students either enter after Grade 9 or Grade 11 (ETF 2017a). Initial VET diplomas are issued after the successful completion of the program. As explained above, initial VET can also provide general secondary education to graduates of the general basic education system and issue them with the relevant GSE (Grade 11) certificate (ETF 2014). Detailed analyses of the curricular contents of initial VET programs of different duration in 2013 show that the professional education blocks covers between 58% and 73% (next to general secondary education block and auxiliary education block) and that within this professional block the practical training share varies between 62% and 82% (ETF 2014).

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<sup>1</sup> Until 2015, the Law on Initial Professional Education established a three-year term for such programs, but in 2015 changes were made in the Law, allowing to implement such a program in two years (Ashurov 2016).

Due to the lack of ties to enterprises, the majority of student’s practical work training takes part in training workshops in the VET institution itself (ETF 2014).

Continuing vocational education schools of the University of Central Asia organized by the Aga Khan Foundation provide tuition-based paid professional training services through the implementation of short-term and long-term VET courses.

While general secondary education is free of charge as it is state-funded, this does not fully extend to the VET system. Only for some students, stated-budgeted VET study places are provided, while a sizeable proportion has to pay study fees (ETF 2017a).

Table 2 presents time series data on the public initial VET system in Tajikistan. In 2014, there were 62 professional-technical (vocational) lyceums that provide initial VET. These institutions were attended by 21,700 students, who were primarily male. These educational institutions were transformed into vocational lyceum in 2012 (ETF 2014). Compared to 1991, the number of professional-technical (vocational) lyceums slightly decreased from 71 to 62 and the number of students fell by around 3,300. Thus, since the country declared its independence, the number of professional-technical (vocational) lyceums and students decreased, indicating a reduction in the system's potential to provide training to young people (ETF 2014). General education graduates from vocational lyceums currently account for just 5% of the total number of graduates (Government of the Republic of Tajikistan 2012). Compared to other Central Asian countries the proportion of students enrolled in VET programs during upper secondary education is lowest in Tajikistan (ETF 2017a).

Table 2 also offers numbers on adult education centers. Their number surged from four in 2008 to 28 in 2014. Similarly, there was an explosion in the number of graduates from 700 in 2008 to 32,300 in 2014.

**Table 2. Characteristics of the public IVET system in Tajikistan, 1991–2014, selected years**

	1991	2006	2010	2014
Number of vocational lyceums	71	70	66	62
Number of students	25,000	23,500	22,600	21,700
The share of girls in the total number of students	32.5%	27.1%	18.0%	22.5%
Number of adult training centers	n.a.	n.a.	8	28
Number of graduates	n.a.	n.a.	2,200	32,300

Source: State Statistical Agency (2017).

Remarks: Rounded numbers for number of students and number of graduates.

As previously mentioned, after gaining independence from the Soviet Union, fundamental changes took place in the economic and social sphere in Tajikistan. However, the VET system was not flexible enough to adapt to emerging labor market needs. The system’s focus was on self-preservation during the 1990s. In the new millennium, several actions to reform and improve the VET system took place. For example, in 2006, the National Action Plan for IVET Reform in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period 2006-2015 was adopted (Government decision no. 387 of 3 June 2006). Prior to this, several actions recognizing the social and economic importance of VET were adopted such as the State Educational Standard for VET (order no. 419 - 4 November 2002); the Law on Initial Vocational Education (order no. 21 - 22 April 2003) and the state concept for reforming the Tajik VET system (order no. 387 - 1 October 2004).

Despite the progress achieved over the last 10 years, the current training environment is characterized by materials that are often damaged, technologically outdated, not adapted to the requirements of the labor market and the current theoretical content of education, weak human resources, weak organization of the educational processes and inefficient management (ETF 2014, Government of the Republic of Tajikistan 2012a, 2012b). The links of the VET system to the business sector are seen as

rather weak (ETF 2017b). Thus, the functioning and development of the IVET system in Tajikistan faces serious problems due to both external and internal factors. Nevertheless, according to ETF (2017b), the VET system is gradually becoming more attractive to young people.

#### 2.4.2. Secondary VET

The secondary VET (SVET) subsystem is governed by the basic Law on Education and the Law "On the secondary professional education", adopted in 2015 (the new edition). The state executive governing body for the secondary VET system in Tajikistan is the MES. The state standard of SVET is approved by the Government and controlled by the State Service of Supervision in Education of the MES.

The secondary VET subsystem currently consists of 59 of professional colleges. In professional colleges, the following two types of training programs are implemented:

- Two-year to three-year program of secondary VET after the general secondary education (GSE – 11<sup>th</sup> Grade) that are completed with a diploma of secondary professional education;
- Four-year integrated program of secondary VET and general secondary education (GSE) after the general basic education (GBE – 9<sup>th</sup> Grade) that are completed with a diploma of secondary VET as well as a certificate on general secondary education (GSE -11<sup>th</sup> Grade);

On average, about 83% of students have a general secondary education, i.e., are studying on the second educational program.

According to data from the State Statistical Agency (2017), there was a small increase in the number of public secondary VET institutions from 51 in 2010 to 59 in 2014. At the same time, the number of students in secondary VET institutions substantially increased by 50% from 37,900 in 2010 to 57,700 in 2014. Thus, in 2014, there were three times more students in secondary VET compared to initial VET. Interestingly, the share of girls among all secondary VET students ranges between 55 and 64% in the period 2010–2014. Thus, secondary VET programs are more popular among female students in Tajikistan than among male students. This is different from primary VET programs that are dominated by male students.

The share of students in the secondary VET subsystem by industry groups is shown in Table 3. From this structure it follows that the secondary VET subsystem is mainly focused on the humanitarian fields and other, traditionally for Tajikistan, "female" occupations such as school teachers, middle level medical workers, culture and art workers, etc. This explains the relatively high proportion of women in the general number of students in the secondary VET subsystem in Tajikistan.

**Table 3. The share of students by field of study in SVET subsystem**

Field of study	%
Medicine and sport	54
Education (Teachers)	22
Industry and construction	14
Economics and Law	4
Culture and arts	4
Agriculture	2

Source: State Statistical Agency (2017).

In a detailed analysis on quality assurance in professional education, it is shown that the adopted laws and regulations in the field of vocational education do not contain a clear definition of the quality concepts and quality assurance, or potential quality assurance systems and tools to improve the quality

of education (Ashurov 2016). Instead, quality assurance of VET mainly takes place via the establishment of the state educational standards and enforcement of those standards by licensing, certification and state accreditation of educational institutions. These qualification standards are developed separately in each subsystems of IVET and SVET, so there is no strict relationship between the qualification standards at various levels of vocational education (Ashurov 2016).

## 2.5. Tertiary Education

During Socialist time Tajikistan followed the centralized Soviet system where studies and degrees were organized in the following way. The Specialist was the most common academic qualification under the Soviet higher education system. It required four to six years of study depending on the field of study. The Kandidat Nauk conducted at research institutes under the Academy of Science and the Doktor Nauk were the highest academic degrees in the Soviet system taking a study duration of five to 15 years. The higher education system was focused on fulfilling the needs of the planned socialist economy and, thus, educated mainly students in technical fields, engineering, medical and education science (DeYoung et al. 2018). After a partial decline in higher education in the early transformation period and the years of the civil war the Tajik higher education system underwent a long reform process (DeYoung et al. 2018).

Nowadays, the tertiary educational subsystem of Tajikistan is governed by the Law on Education and the Law on Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education, which was adopted in 2009 (EACEA 2017). The state executive governing body for the tertiary education system of Tajikistan is the MES. The state standard of tertiary education is approved by the government and controlled by the State Service of Supervision in Education of the MES.

Higher educational institutions currently consist of 37 universities, its regional branches as well as professional institutes. Since 1990, the number of higher education institutions quadrupled (DeYoung et al. 2018). Although Tajikistan has not yet joined the Bologna Process the three-cycle BA-MA-PhD has already been established in the higher education system. In tertiary education, institutions the following three types of training programs are implemented (EACEA 2017):

- Four-year Bachelor (BA) program after the GSE (11 grade);
- Two-year Master (MA) program after the BA;
- Three-year PhD program after the MA.

In addition, there are one-cycle degree studies in medicine lasting six years and in pharmacy lasting five years (EACEA 2017).

One can distinguish universities, academies and institutes as higher education institutions. While universities and academies offer the full three-cycle program, institutes only offer BA and MA degrees. Whereas universities offer a wide range of study subjects, academies and institutes have a narrow specialized study program in offer (EACEA 2017).

According to data from the State Statistical Agency (2017), there were 37 higher education institutions in 2014, at which 165,200 students were enrolled. The share of women among students slightly increased from 28.9% in 2010 to 31.6% in 2014. Additional data show that around three quarter of the students were enrolled in full-time programs, whereas one quarter of students attended part-time correspondence programs in 2014 (EACEA 2017).

Students either have to pay tuitions on contract base or they obtain state-budgeted grants to cover the tuition fees (EACEA 2017). There is special support in terms of special scholarships for students from poor families and mountainous regions as well as disabled students and orphans (EACEA 2017). The majority of students has to pay for their tuition fees themselves. In 2014, this applied to 58.9% of all students in higher education institutions (see Table 2.6). Tuition fees at public higher education

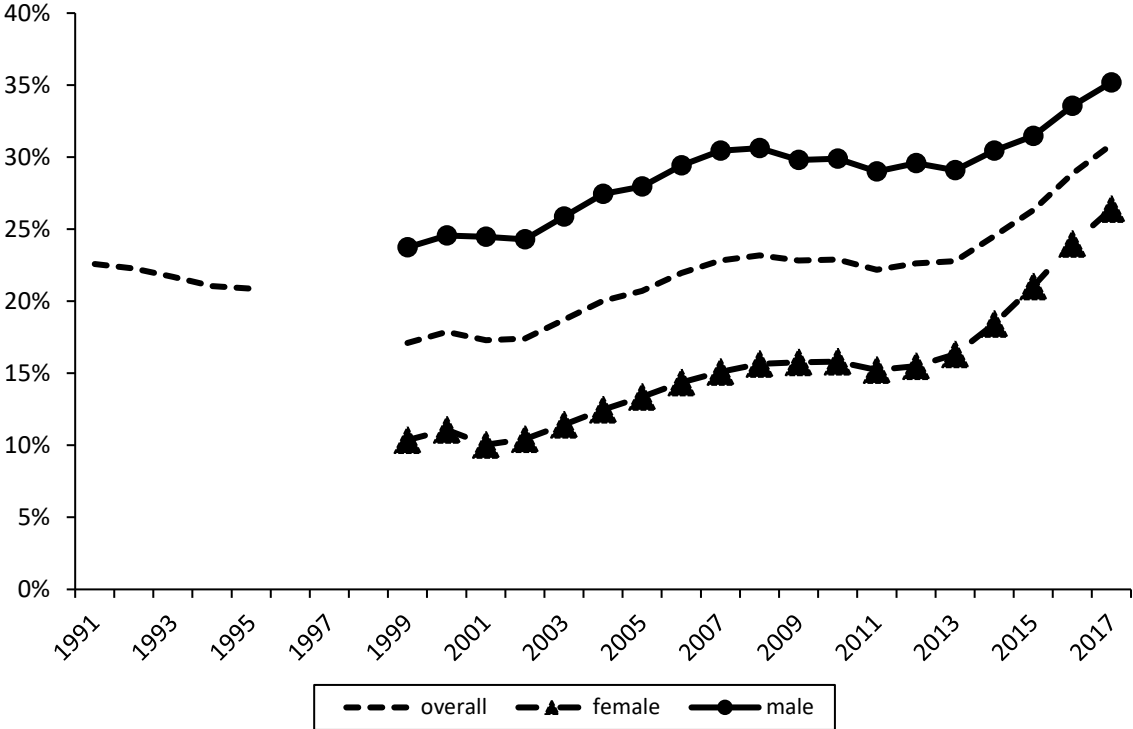
institutions range from 7,000 to 19,000 TJS per academic year (EACEA 2017). If fee-paying students perform very well during the first four semesters they are eligible to be transferred to the group of state-budgeted students (EACEA 2017).

While the marketization of higher education, in terms of tuition-paying study arrangements, is quite common, private higher education does not play a big role in Tajikistan. According to EACEA (2017) there is only one private higher education institution, reaching a share of students in private higher education of less than 1%.

According to data from the State Statistical Agency (2017), in 2014, the number of student of higher educational establishments (about 165,300) is about three times higher than in SVET (about 57,700) and eight times higher in IVET schools (about 21,700). This can be related to the relatively high level of prestige of higher education.

In order to enter tertiary education students need a GSE certificate. Beginning in 2014, a new mechanism for the admission of students in higher education through the National Testing Center under the President of the Republic was established. Students need to pass the Unified University Entrance Examinations at the National Testing Center in order to be admitted to tertiary education (EACEA 2017). In order to enroll into a MA program, students need to successfully complete a BA program. Similarly, holding a MA degree is a prerequisite for being admitted to a PhD program.

**Figure 6. Gross enrolment rate at tertiary education, 1991–2017, by sex**



Source: UNICEF (2019).

Figure 6 displays time trends in gross enrolment ratios in tertiary education in Tajikistan in the period 1991 to 2017. The gross enrolment ratio is defined as the percentage of the population in the 5-year age group starting from the official secondary school graduation age (UNICEF 2019). In the year of gaining independence, in 1991, the gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education reached 23% on average. After a decline in the gross enrollment ratio in the 1990s the gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education continuously increased in the new millennium from 18% in 2000 to 31% in 2017. The surge



in gross enrolment ratio is particularly pronounced among young women (from 11% in 2000 to 27% in 2017). Thus, over time the gender gap in tertiary education gross enrolment ratios declined from 14 percentage points in 2000 to 8% in 2017, i.e. it almost halved in this period. One technical reason for the lower enrolment rate of women in tertiary education is that women are less likely to graduate from secondary education (Turakhanova 2019).

Table 4 shows the percentage of graduates from tertiary education by type of program in 2017. The most popular fields are health and welfare (21.6%), followed by education (18.9%) as well as social sciences, journalism and information (15.9%). More detailed analyses of gender-specific choices of fields of study reveal that women select traditional “female” occupations such as education, culture and arts (Turakhanova 2019).

**Table 4. Percentage of graduates from tertiary education by type of program in 2017 (%)**

Field of study	%
Education	18.9
Arts and Humanities	10.8
Social Sciences, Journalism and Information	15.9
Business, Administration and Law	5.4
Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics	5.8
Information and Communication Technologies	3.9
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	12.4
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary	2.1
Health and Welfare	21.6
Services	3.3

Source: UNICEF (2019).

In view of the important role of labor migration (see Section 3.3) and in the context of globalization of the labor market, a need for internationalization of qualifications is evident in the case of Tajikistan (Ashurov 2016). International qualifications ease the mobility of the labor force in the international space of the labor market. In this regard, the National Education Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2020 outlined that the country’s higher education system is clearly aimed at integration at international level and thus supportive to develop NQF based on international standards. Similarly, the intention of Tajikistan to gradually enter the space of the Bologna Process aims at bringing the country higher education system in line with international standards and norms.

In this context, it should be also be noted that the agreement on mutual recognition and equivalence of documents on education, scientific degrees and titles were signed between the governments of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan in 2001. Tajikistan also joined the Tempus program in 2004 as an effort to implement measures for the rapprochement of the qualifications of Tajikistan to similar systems in the Central Asian region and the European Union.

### 3. Labor Market System

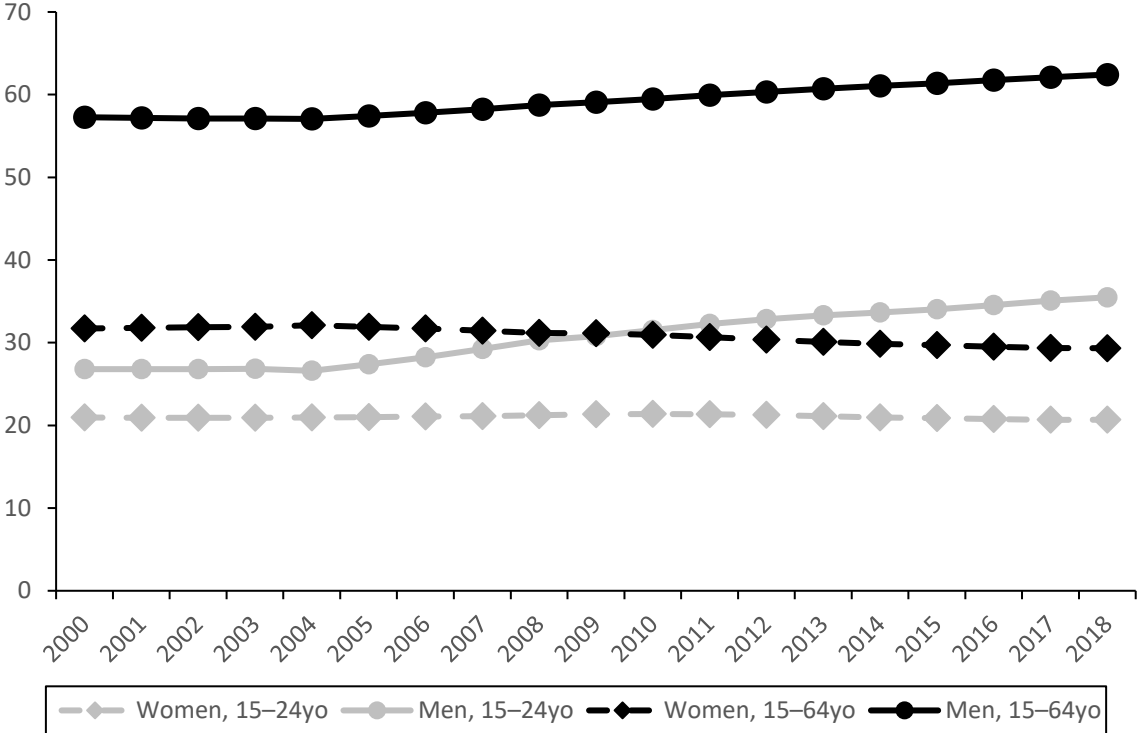
A key characteristic of the Tajikistan labor market— together with the transformation of social structures and the consequences of the global financial and economic crisis —is its labor surplus. Labor redundancy affects the process of establishing labor market regulation in the context of market management and control. Conditions in transition and post-crisis economies become even worse. In particular, the quality of the labor force declines and unemployment rates rise.

In this regard, it is necessary to take into account the features of labor market formation and regulation in an environment of labor redundancy and market globalization. This requires the design and implementation of appropriate approaches to assess the present state of market development in terms of its internal and external components.

#### 3.1. Labor Force Participation and Unemployment

The labor market of Tajikistan has undergone major changes during the last three decades of economic changes and reorganization, registering both periods of growth and severe declines. Figure 7 shows trends in labor force participation rates in Tajikistan in the new millennium for different age and gender groups. For both age groups (15–24yo and 15–64yo) female’s labor force participation rate was far below male’s labor force participation rate over the period from 2000 to 2018. Hence, women participate much less in the labor market than men in Tajikistan and this gender gap is even increasing over time. The gender gap in labor force participation increased from 6 percentage points in 2000 to 15 percentage points in 2018 among the population of men and women aged 15 to 24 and from 26 percentage points in 2000 to 33 percentage points in 2018 among the population of men and women aged 15 to 64.

Figure 7. Labor force participation rate, by gender and age group, in %



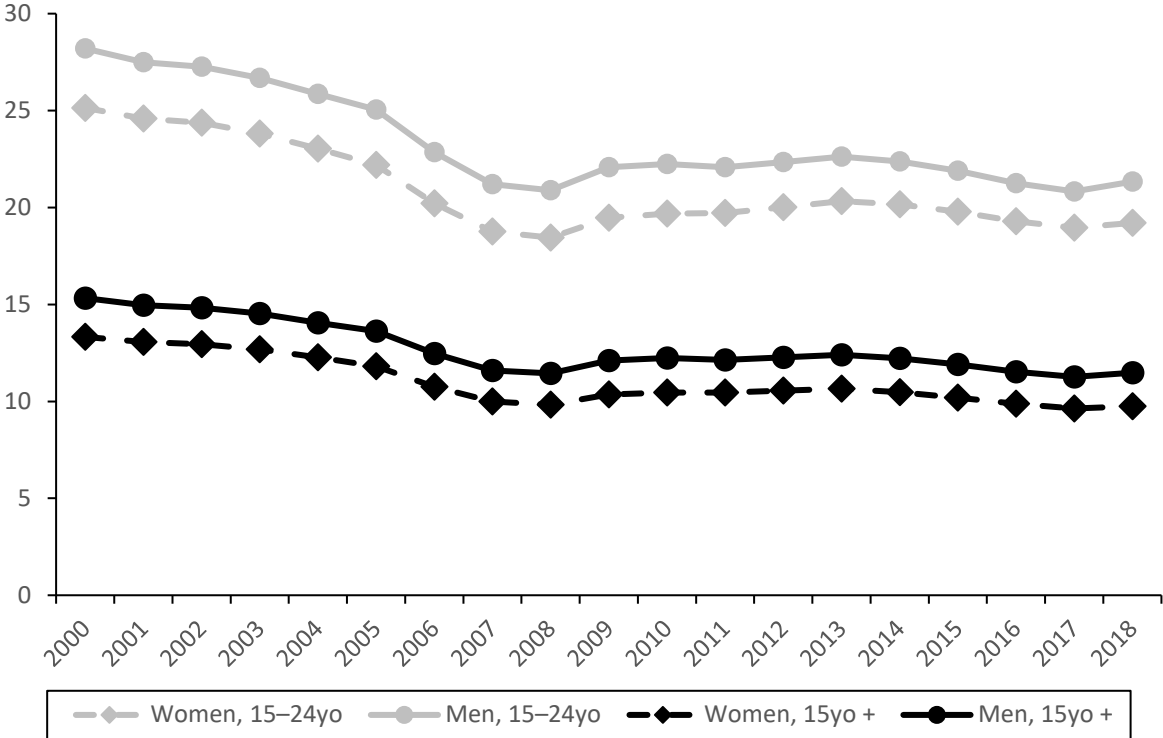
Source: Data from World Bank (2019). Own illustration.

As we can see from the picture above, labor force participation rates are lower among youths aged 15 to 24 compare to rates of the overall population aged 15 to 64. In 2018, the labor force participation rate of young men just reached 35% and just 21% among young women. The lower youth labor force participation rate is due to youth labor market problems but also due to prolonged enrolment of youths in education. While female youth labor force participation remained rather stable over time, there was an increase of the male youth labor force participation.

When considering the youth labor market in Tajikistan, one has to bear in mind the profound demographic developments taking place. From 2004 to 2014 the number of young people aged 15–24 in Tajikistan increased from 1.481 Mio to 1.721 Mio (State Statistical Agency 2019). However, there are declining dynamics in youth population growth rates that dropped from 3.1% in the period 2005–2007 to 0.2% in the period 2012–2014 (State Statistical Agency 2017). As a result of these demographic phenomena proportion of youth in the total population after 2007 has a tendency to decrease. Nevertheless, the average value of this parameter in the period 2004–2014 was 22.1% (State Statistical Agency 2017).

The lack of motivation to participate in the labor market in terms of a discouragement effect is an important factor behind the low youth labor force participation rates in Tajikistan, pushing them into the category of "inactive". According to World Bank (2014) the share of discouraged workers, measured as workers who are available for work but gave up job search because they think they cannot find a job, reached 17.2% among men and 11.9% among women aged 20-24 years in 2013. This is much higher than in OECD countries, where, on average, just 0.5% of youth aged 15 to 24 were discouraged. Thus, Tajikistan's labor market is not able to integrate youth into the labor force very well and, hence, it cannot use the large share of youth as a "demographic dividend". The World Bank (2014) report attributes this phenomenon to a lack of adequate professional skills and work experience among youths, which makes them not attractive to employers. This reduces the chances in the job search process such that youth become discouraged, giving up job search.

**Figure 8. Unemployment rate, modeled ILO estimates, by gender and age group, in %**



Source: Data from World Bank (2019). Own illustration.

Figure 8 shows general trends in unemployment rates in the period 2000 to 2018 based on modeled ILO estimates. In general it can be seen that in all years the youth unemployment rates surpasses the unemployment rate of the general population. The youth unemployment rate is almost twice higher than in the total population. In each age group unemployment rates for men are higher than unemployment rates for women. In terms of time trends there was a decline in unemployment rates at the beginning of the millennium, which less pronounced among youth. Starting in 2008 a small increase happened again during the worldwide financial crisis, whereas in the years afterwards unemployment rates were rather stable.

Thus, in general, the labor market does not give youth sufficient opportunities to find a significant work. According to Kuddusov (2014) in 2013, 74% of youth respondents found the paid work for the first time after completing their education. Of these, only 31% managed to find "significant work". Almost one in four young people (26%) could not find paid work for five and a half years after graduation.

Only a small proportion of unemployed officially register in public employment offices. According to a survey of the State Statistic Agency only about 10.5% of the unemployed are turning to employment offices to register their unemployed status in 2009. Among the registered unemployed the share of youth substantially increased from 46.2% in 2004 to 61.6% in 2013 (State Statistic Agency 2017).

### 3.2. Employment

The employment structure of Tajikistan has been fundamentally changed by the economic transformation. Tajikistan gained independence in September 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union and began its transition from socialist economics to a more liberal, market economy. Initially, efforts to effectively liberalize education to reflect the new economic order were hampered by the civil war that raged between 1992 and 1997, and the resulting economic collapse. The core of these reforms was the privatization of state property. Due to the beginning of the civil war in Tajikistan in 1992, the privatization process was going slowly. In the years afterwards the privatization continued.

**Table 5: Distribution of working population in state and non-state sector, by property type, 2000, 2010 and 2017**

	2000	2010	2017
Government <sup>1)</sup>	32.0	19.4	19.5
Public sector	23.8	16.6	13.2
Private sector	43.1	63.0	66.2
Clergy and other religious activity	0.0	0.3	0.3
Unallocated	1.1	1.0	1.0

Source: State Statistic Agency (2019).

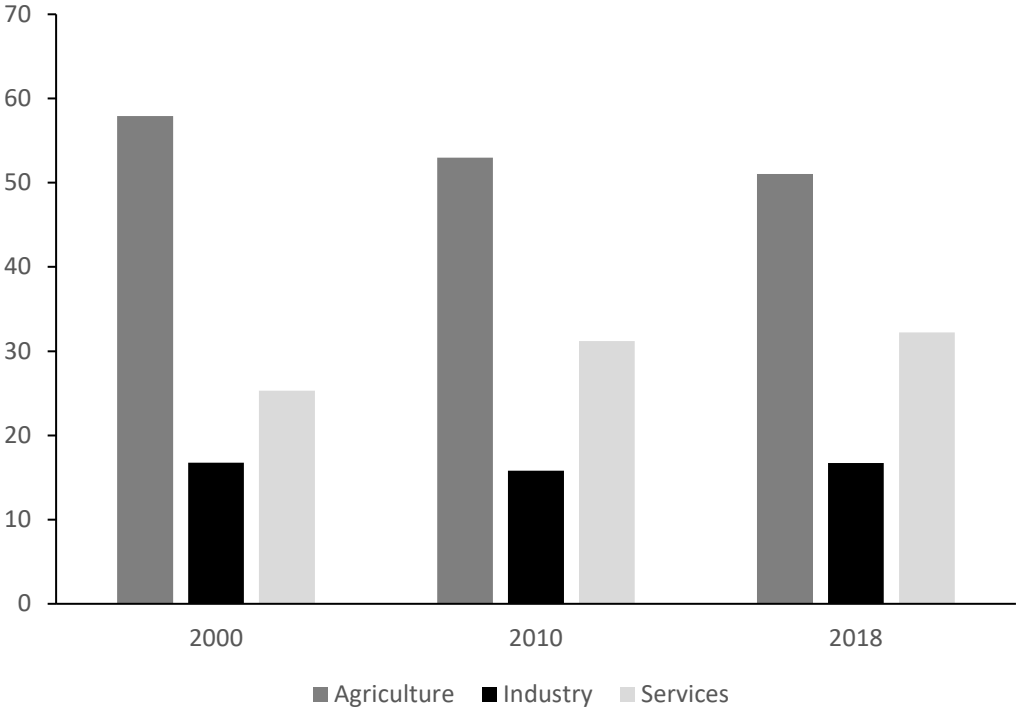
Remarks: <sup>1)</sup> Includes central and local governments, state enterprises and state farms.

Table 5 reports the distribution of working population in state and non-state sector by property type for the years 2000, 2010 and 2017. The employment share in government, which includes central and local governments, state enterprises and state farms, declined from 32% in 2000 to 19.5% in 2017. Similarly, there is a continuous decline in employment in the public sector (excluding government) from 23.8 in 2000 to 13.2% in 2017. Correspondingly, there was a strong increase in employment in the private sector from 43.1% in 2000 to 66.2% in 2017.

If the self-employed are included into the comparison they make up the largest type of employment. According to World Bank (2014), overall 41% were self-employed in Tajikistan in 2013. 28% work in government or state-owned enterprises, whereas only 17% work in the private sector as employees. The great majority of workers in the private sector do seasonal jobs in agriculture. The study conducted by the World Bank (2014) showed that self-employment in Tajikistan is dominated the micro enterprises in the services sector. More than half of all self-employed people (i.e. private and / or individual entrepreneurs) do not hire additional workers (56%) and 30% hire less than five additional employees (World Bank 2014). It should be noted that in Tajikistan, the majority of citizens employed in agriculture are unpaid employees from number of family members (53%) (World Bank 2014).

According to ETF (2017b) informal employment dominates in agriculture, industry and services and public and private enterprises and the self-employed are all affected. According to World Bank (2014) about 60% of all hired workers in Tajikistan are employed in the informal sector with the highest share of informal work being reached in the agricultural sector (83%), followed by the service sector (52%) and the industrial sector (48%). It is known that informal employment involves lower pay and less favorable conditions in comparison with workplaces in the formal sector (World Bank 2014).

**Figure 9. Distribution of employment by economic sector, 2001, 2008 and 2015 (% of total employment)**



Source: Data from World Bank (2019). Own illustration.

Figure 9 shows the distribution of employment by economic sector in Tajikistan. The employment structure in Tajikistan is dominated by agriculture. The employment share in agriculture just slightly decreased from 57% in 2000 to 51% in 2018. Thus, nowadays, still more than half of employed people work in agriculture. Following the assessment of the ETF (2017a) a great part of agricultural activity in Tajikistan is only to support a subsistence level of farming. Employment in agriculture is often informal in its nature (ETF 2017a). From 2000 to 2018 the employment share in services increased from 25% to 32%. In contrast, the employment share in industry remained at a rather low level of 16 to 17%.

Table 6 presents data on employment shares by economic sector in a more disaggregated form for 2017. The data of the State Statistical Agency deviate from World Bank data because of different definitions and samples. In 2017 the clearly dominant sector is agriculture, forestry and fishing with 60.9%. This is followed in clear distance by education (9.6%), and wholesale and retail trade, repair (7.1%).

**Table 6. Share of employees by economic activities in 2017**

<b>Economic sector</b>	<b>%</b>
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	60.9
	0.0
Fish breeding	
Extraction industry and quarrying	0.5
Manufacturing industry	3.6
Electric power, gas and water supply	0.7
Construction	4.2
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and household goods	7.1
Hotels and restaurants	0.6
Transport, storage and communication	1.8
Financial mediation	0.9
Operation of real estate, rent and commercial activity	1.3
Extraterritorial organization and organs	1.9
Education	9.6
Science and scientific services	4.7
Other public, social and personal services	2.0
Public administration and defense, compulsory social insurance	0.0

*Source: State Statistical Agency (2019).*

### **3.3. Labor Migration**

Tajikistan currently retains its labor redundancy, expressed in the inability of the economy to provide employment of the available labor force. In fact, the labor market in Tajikistan is a two-component, consisting of the domestic labor market and foreign labor markets that attract migrant workers from Tajikistan (Ashurov 2016). According to some estimates the capacity of the external component of the Tajikistan labor market is almost one third of the capacity of two-component labor market (Ashurov 2012). Strokova and Ajwad (2017) estimates that more than one million working age adults work abroad. Labor migrants are predominately men (ILO 2009). The World Bank characterizes “the typical migrant worker (as) a relatively young married man who has secondary education and lives in rural Tajikistan” (World Bank 2017: 32). Labor migrants are mainly low-skilled and/or were unemployed prior to migration (Strokova and Ajwad 2017).

Following World Bank (2014) more than 90% of labor migrants work in the Russian Federation, mainly in the construction sector, in trade, housing and cleaning services, agriculture and maintenance. Because of mass labor migration remittances make up a great part of the GDP and, thus, play an important role for Tajikistan (World Bank 2014). According to Strokova and Ajwad (2017), remittances account for about 40% of the GDP of Tajikistan such that Tajikistan is seen as the most remittance-dependent country worldwide. In contrast, regional labor migration within Tajikistan is very low (World Bank 2014).

A significant proportion of management and social responsibility lies on the migrant networks, which provide part of the social services in Tajikistan. For example, they play a crucial role in the first employment of young people in foreign labor markets. According to ILO (2009), which asked Tajik men working abroad about the types of assistance they received, 76.4% of male labor migrants from Tajikistan that participated in the survey reported that informal migrant networks assisted them in finding employment. More than half of them (57.4%) also report having received help in the initial period of arranging housing and administrative registration. About every third respondent got financial aid (34.9%) or advice/tips (30.8%) via informal migration networks.

### **3.4. Employment Protection Legislation**

Muravyev (2014) collected data on employment protection legislation (EPL) and calculated the strictness of EPL for the CIS and Baltic states, including Tajikistan following the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Version II methodology. Based on an extensive material of national and international legal sources the EPL regulations were quantified. The higher the value of the EPL index, ranging from 0 to 6, the stricter is the employment protection legislation.

In general, Muravyev (2014) finds the pattern of a gradual liberalization of permanent work contracts, while there is a growing regulation of temporary work contracts and collective dismissals. He also shows that the law enforcement is weaker in CIS countries (such as Tajikistan) compared to most OECD countries. In the specific case of Tajikistan the EPL sub-index on permanent employment increased from 3.39 in 1990 to 4.39 in the mid-90s and declined at the beginning of the millennium to 3.14, which persisted until 2010, which marks the end of the time series. The EPL sub-index for permanent employment measures the procedural difficulties (e.g., length of notification period) and direct costs (e.g., severance payments) involved in dismissing workers. The EPL sub-index for temporary contracts increased from 0.38 in 1990 to 1.88 in 1997 and remained on this relatively low level until 2010. The EPL indicator for temporary employment measures restrictions on the use, maximum duration and maximum number of consecutive temporary contracts, as well as restrictions with respect to temporary work agencies. Thus, having the pattern of high protection of permanent contracts and low regulation of temporary contracts resembles the typical pattern of dual segmented labor markets along the line of permanent and temporary employment. The EPL sub-index on collective dismissals increased from 0.00 in 1990 to 1.50 in 2003 and remained at this rather low level until 2010.

In general, the maximum probationary (trial) period is three months according to Art. 28 of the Labor Code (ILO 2017). There are specific regulations on temporary contracts. For example, Art. 25 of the Labor Code (ILO 2017) regulates that, with the exception of replacement and seasonal work the fixed-term contract has to be longer than one year. Various objective and material reasons for the use of fixed-term contracts are specified (ILO 2019). Moreover, Art. 25 of the Labor Code (ILO 2017) declares that is “prohibited to sign a fixed-term contract with a view to avoiding providing guarantees and compensations foreseen for employees with indefinite term contract.” Furthermore, it states that on the expiry of the fixed-term contract the fixed-term contract will be considered as being signed for an indefinite period unless one of the parties requires terminating it at the last working day.

## **4. Welfare Regime**

### **4.1. Active Labor Market Policies**

The labor market in Tajikistan is mainly governed by the Labour Code (1997) and the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On employment promotion" (2003). Currently, the state policy in this area is reflected in the State Labour Market Development Strategy until 2020, adopted by the Government in 2011.

Moreover, the insufficient development of the labor market information systems impedes the process of selection of the work in view of qualifications. Difficulties in obtaining the information about vacancies, or a demonstration of workers' skills complicate the process of finding suitable jobs. Information gaps and problems with the transmission of signals on the required skills constitute an obstacle to the efficient and equitable distribution of jobs in the labor market.

This situation on the labor market of Tajikistan obviously has a negative impact on the employment of young people of the country and therefore urgently requires the development of appropriate measures to improve the situation regarding the employment of the young generation of the country.

The State Agencies for Employment of Population implements several active labor market programs (Shodmonbekova 2012). For example, the "Skills Training Program for the Unemployed" has been running since 1991 targeting at unemployed person. It offers short-term (three to six months) professional vocational training in training centers and participants receive a monthly allowance. These training centers also offer certification of labor skills for returning labor migrants (Shodmonbekova 2012).

Another example are public work programs that target at unemployed persons since 2011. It offers public work based on a temporary contract, particularly in the construction sector, agriculture and cleaning and maintenance of streets (Shodmonbekova 2012). A minimum pay must be provided by the employer (Shodmonbekova 2012).

### **4.2. Unemployment Insurance**

Social protection of the unemployed is regulated by the Law "On the promotion of employment of the population" and is carried out in the framework of the state program to promote employment, which is adopted by the government every two years. As part of this program, the following measures are carried:

- appointment and granting of unemployment benefits;
- organization of professional training courses and retraining;
- organization of temporary employment (public works);
- granting of loans for self-employment.

Unemployment benefits are received by individuals who have more than 18 months of work experience during the last three years and who have paid the employee-contribution to social security tax of their salary (Shodmonbekova 2012). It is determined as half of the average wage of the last six months and it is paid for six months (Shodmonbekova 2012). In order to be eligible for unemployment benefits persons need to register at a public employment office and they must be able and willing to work and they are not allowed to receive any income from employment (ADB 2016).

However, only a part of unemployed persons officially register in public employment offices (ETF 2017a) and is, thus eligible for unemployment benefits. The reasons are seen in the low unemployment benefits, the low support by public employment services and the fact that persons engaged in subsistence farming are not eligible for unemployment benefits (ETF 2017a).



### 4.3. Social Protection

In accordance with Article 1 of the Constitution, "The Republic of Tajikistan is a democratic, legal, secular and social state." Moreover, Article 35 of the Constitution guarantees to every citizen the right to work and social protection.

In the initial stage following state independence, Tajikistan inherited an extensive social protection system that included a range of cash and noncash benefits. While the economy is well into its transition from a centrally planned to a market-oriented economy, its social welfare policies still adhere to the methods and approaches of the Soviet period.

At present in the Republic of Tajikistan formed sufficiently developed legislation and established government institutions to ensure social well-being of its citizens. State social policy is governed by the basic laws "On social protection of the population" (1993), "On Pensions" (1993), "On State Social Insurance" (1997), "On the promotion of employment of the population" (2003), "On social services "(2008)," On Living Wage "(2009) and other sectoral laws.

The State executive management body in the field of social policy is the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. Along with this Ministry in the social protection's issues are directly involved Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment, Pension Fund of the Government, the Committee and the Youth Committee for Women and Family of the Republic Government.

The social protection system is focused on social insurance in terms of providing old-age pension, disability pensions and survivor's pension, whereas there is only limited social assistance (ADB 2016). The priorities of social policy are poverty reduction, social protection of the poor and the disabled, education, labor market regulation and employment. The reduction of poverty from 81% in 1999 to 38.3% in 2015 highlights the achievements on the economic front.

At the same time, the system of social protection is weak, is paternalistic, largely depends on the local control systems and informal institutions. The share of public spending on social security and social protection in 2014 amounted to 21.6% of the total public expenditure, which equals about 5.3% of GDP.

Thus, Tajikistan inherited extensive and generous systems of social welfare that rapidly became unsustainable in the economically and socially trying period following independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991. Transition in the 1990s led to contraction in economic output and soaring inflation, contributing to a protracted civil war during 1992–1997. Despite achieving peace and rapid economic growth in the 2000s, real economic output is barely higher than its levels during independence, and per capita social spending is just half of what it was in 1992. On top of all this, poverty remains a severe problem, with more than 38 of the population living in poverty as of 2015.

### 4.4. Minimum Wage

Table 7 shows the evolution of the monthly minimum wage in Tajikistan for the period 2009 to 2017. There was a steady increase in the monthly minimum wage from 60 TJS in 2009 to 400 TJS in 2017.

**Table 7: Minimum wages (in TJS) in Tajikistan, 2009–2014**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Minimum average monthly wage	60	80	80	200	250	250	250	400	400

Source: State Statistic Agency [2019]

#### 4.5. Family and Gender Regimes

The family is the main institution of Tajik society. The age of marriage is set at eighteen years. Overall, there is a very high level of marriage in Tajikistan. Early marriages are common, especially in rural areas. There are also cases of illegal polygamies.

Young people often live together with their parents or parents-in-law (Olimov and Sohibov 2017). It is also common that multigenerational households exist with three generations living in one house. According to a survey on young people in 2015, 78.3% of respondents live with close family members such as parents and siblings. 19.5% live with their spouse/wife (Olimov and Sohibov 2017). In terms of decision making young people report that their parents make decisions on important issues that are relevant in their life. 54.5% report joint decision making of themselves and their parents. Just 12.6% reports that they are free to make their own decisions (Olimov and Sohibov 2017).

Kinship plays an extremely important role in the life of society in Tajikistan. Kinship based on blood-related community, which is often called the clan ("Avlod" or "Gavm"), i.e. a group of families related to each other by being descendants from a common ancestor.

The importance of (family) networks in Tajikistan is also visible in terms of the importance of networks in the job search. According to a survey of young people in Tajikistan in 2015, just 38% consider their level of education as most important and 31% said that family ties and friends are the most important factor in the job search process (Olimov and Sohibov 2017).

In Tajikistan, there is gender equality, which has increased markedly in the years of independence. Despite nearly seventy years of Soviet rule, some patriarchal traditions survived in Tajikistan, and many have since regained public approval. Women's freedom to make choices depends on the gender division of labor, property relations, and the seniority system, specifically, whether there exists a patriarchal system of control. According to a survey of young people in Tajikistan in 2015, 44.7% of respondents say that the man performs the functions of the head of family, and a woman obeys its decisions, whereas 42.6% say that man and woman divide the sphere of influence in the family and have equal rights (Olimov and Sohibov 2017).

In Tajikistan the government is taking measures to improve the status of women. The Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On state guarantees of equal rights for women and men and equal opportunities for their implementation" was adopted by the country Parliament in 2004. Then, the Decree of the President of Tajikistan "On measures to enhance the role of women in society", the decision of the Government of Tajikistan "On the National Action Plan of the Republic of Tajikistan for enhancing the status and role of women", on the National Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan "Family planning and law", "On the National program "Guidelines for a state policy to ensure equal rights and opportunities of women and men in the Republic of Tajikistan", "On the national strategy for strengthening the role of women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011-2020" and other decisions and orders were adopted, the purpose of which is to ensure that maternal and child health, improving the status of women.

According to Art. 215 of the Labor Code (ILO 2017) the "termination of labor contract by the initiative of the employer with a pregnant woman, women and other individuals with family commitments caring after children under the age of three and/or children with disabilities (is not) allowed". Guarantees for employment of pregnant women and women with children are specified in Art. 225. Accordingly, "it is prohibited not to employ women or reduce their salary due to pregnancy or because they have children. In case the employer does not employ pregnant women, women and other individuals with family commitments, who have children under the age of three years old or children with disabilities, the employer is obliged to inform the applicant about the reasons for rejection to employment in writing. These individuals can apply to court on the employer's rejection to employment."

According to Art. 217 of the Labor Code (ILO 2017) "employer(s) (do) not have the right to engage pregnant women in night work, work on weekends and non-business holidays, overtime work, send to

business trip and also recall them from annual paid leave.” This obligation is extended to a woman, who has children under the age of 14, or, who care for ill family members or children with disabilities, and exceptions need the woman’s consent.

According to Art. 219 of the Labor Code (ILO 2017) the “employer is obliged to appoint reduced working day or week for the pregnant women and other individuals with family commitments caring after a child under the age of 14 or child with disabilities (...).” Following Art. 221 of the Labor Code (ILO 2017) “the employer is obliged to transfer pregnant women to another job by holding their average salary based on the doctor’s medial opinion and excludes the impact of hazardous and harmful industrial factors”.

The Labor Code of Tajikistan also specifies right on maternity and child care leave. Following Art. 223 of the Labor Code (ILO 2017) “pregnant women are granted 70 calendar days of pre-delivery leave and also 70 calendar days (88 days in case of difficult delivery and 110 days for delivery of twins or more children) of post-delivery leave and are paid allowance from the public social insurance fund (...). This is granted regardless of women’s actual job type and employment duration prior to delivery in the firm. Maternity benefits are equivalent to 100% of the average worker’s wage for the whole period of maternity leave (ILO 2009).

In addition Art. 224 of the Labor Code (ILO 2017) grants women “child care leave at their request after the end of their pre-and post-delivery leave until their children reach 18 months and are paid allowance from the public social insurance fund in this period.” Moreover, “unpaid child care leave is granted at the request of the following employees until the child reaches three years old” under specific conditions that are regulated in Art. 224 of the Labor Code (ILO 2017).

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