

## Turkmenistan National Consultations Report

### 1 - TES NATIONAL CONSULTATION PROCESS

**Convenor’s Name:** Ms. Gurbangul Atayeva, Minister of Education of Turkmenistan

**Number of consultations** (*if more than one consultation takes place*): 6 (six)

**Basic information on all the consultation(s) convened:**

National Consultations were organized in the following forms:

- launching and concluding conferences with participation of all stakeholders;
- focus group discussions with in-person participation of representatives of stakeholders;
- collection of inputs from stakeholders.

Date(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. June 21, 2022</li> <li>2. June 22, 2022;</li> <li>3. June 24, 2022;</li> <li>4. July 7, 2022;</li> <li>5. July 13, 2022.</li> <li>6. August 8, 2022.</li> </ol>
Title(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. National Consultations Launch Conference</li> <li>2. A. Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption;</li> <li>3. B. Identifying the main strategic transformations and levers for reimagining education for the 21st century and accelerating progress towards shared education goals</li> <li>4. C. Ensuring strengthened and more sustainable public financing of education</li> <li>5. D. Raising the ambition of national education targets and benchmarks</li> </ol>

	6. National Consultations Concluding Conference
Types (e.g. National/Subnational)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 - National
Geographical Focus	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 - Countrywide
Number of Participants for each consultation	1. 15 (fifteen) 2. 8 (eight) 3. 14 (fourteen) 4. 16 (sixteen) 5. 11 (eleven) 6. 30 (thirty)
Language used	Turkmen and Russian

**Total number of participants:**

Age Range of Participants: (insert number)	
5	0 - 17
24	18 - 29
53	30 -59
12	60+

Gender Participants: (insert number)	
48	Male
46	Female
	Prefer not to say

Number of Participants from each Sector: (insert number)			
32	Education	3	Nutrition
10	Child Protection	3	Communication
5	Health	5	Information Technology
4	Labour	6	Social Protection
3	Environment	3	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
4	Finance	16 from other (please explain) 1. 4 (four) from the National Council of Turkmenistan (Turkmen: Milli Geňeş);	

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. 1 (one) from the State Committee of Turkmenistan on Statistics;</li> <li>3. 1 (one) from the Institute of State, Law and Democracy of Turkmenistan;</li> <li>4. 1 (one) from the Magtymguly Youth Organisation of Turkmenistan;</li> <li>5. 1 (one) from Women's Union of Turkmenistan;</li> <li>6. 1 (one) from Turkmenistan State Committee on Television, Radio and Cinematography;</li> <li>7. 1 (one) from the The National society of the Red Crescent of Turkmenistan;</li> <li>8. 5 (five) SDG ambassadors;</li> <li>9. 1 (one) from the “Bilim” Scientific and Methodological Magazine;</li> </ol>
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Number of participants from each Stakeholder Group: (insert number)	
25	- Teachers, educators, facilitators, and professors
10	- Youth and students (including children and adolescents)
	- School leaders (e.g., from UNESCO)
	- City and local government representatives
	- Parents and caregivers
2	- Small/medium enterprises/ <b>unions</b>
	- Large national businesses
4	- Members of Parliament
	- Multi-national corporations
	- Local authorities
41	- Government and national institutions
2	- Public Servants
	- Regional economic community
	- Local Non-Governmental Organizations

	- International and/or Regional financial institutions
	- International Non-Governmental Organizations
	- Indigenous people and community leaders
8	- Scientific community, academic, universities and research institutes
2	- Media
	- Other (Please explain) _____

## 2 – PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

How did you organize the consultation to ensure the following principles of national consultations?	
✓	- A whole-of-government approach
	- Inclusion and equality
	- Focusing on youth as ‘agents of change’

## 3 – CONSULTATIONS FOCUS AND OUTCOMES

**What was/were the main area(s) of focus of the national consultation(s), based on the TES five thematic action tracks and the issues outlined in the Discussion Papers and the Futures of Education Briefing Notes?**

**National consultation(s) focused on each of the five thematic actions.**

### **Action 1 - Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools**

- **Develop collaborative capacities among teachers, administrators, and staff:** Foster autonomy, and mutual assistance through collegial practices including coaching, mentoring, individual and group study, action research, and collaborations with other schools and higher education institutions.
- **Further develop technological capacity:** Enhance student creativity, communication, and competencies, create school capacity for digital and technological development, ensuring the existing systems of exclusion is kept at the lowest level possible.

### **Action 2 - Learning and life skills, work and sustainable development**

- **Promote competency-based education:** Design and develop competency-based educational programmes at all levels of education; continue the transition to constructive competency-based model of education from traditional reproductive method of teaching.

• **Put Students at the Center of Education Activity.** Transition from teacher-oriented education to learner-oriented education by keeping in mind the four features of that approach:

- giving students the ability to express themselves;
- spending extra time on students who need extra attention, while others are busy with tasks according to their abilities;
- promoting competency-based education;
- continuous monitoring of student needs.

### **Action 3 - Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession**

• **Make professional development responsive:**

- 1) organize professional development according to teachers' skills and interests in order to support students' learning;
- 2) professional development should focus on teachers' ability to cope with the ever-accelerating social and technological changes;
- 3) professional development should focus on learning dynamically from others in their field.

• **Further enhancing the autonomy of teachers in educational work:** Educational institutions should create conditions for improving the professional identity of teachers, facilitate continuous professional development, and implement management practices that allow teachers to effectively use their ideas and experiences in their work with students.

### **Action 4 - Digital learning and transformation**

• **Commit resources to closing divides in digital education:** Enable anytime, anywhere internet access and access to devices for students and teachers, in order to equalize digital educational opportunity.

• **Support learner wellbeing:** Accompany digital technology's use in education system with efforts to avoid and address their potential for isolation, which can result in increased loneliness and anxiety.

### **Action 5 - Financing of education**

• **Continue providing strong state financial support.** Continue and strengthen state financial support to education, including free universal education at state educational institutions.

• **Develop private education.** Spread the practice of privatization to all levels of the education system. Increase the share of the private sector in education.

## **What are the main outcomes regarding the four key components\* of the national consultation(s)?**

### **A. Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption**

#### **What has been the impact of the COVID-19 educational disruption on learning loss, student disengagement, dropout, and non-reenrolment?**

The timely preventive measures introduced by the Government of the country made it possible to prevent the occurrence and spread of the COVID-19 disease, as well as to keep the negative impact on the education system of Turkmenistan at an insignificant level. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Turkmenistan was able to ensure an uninterrupted face-to-face learning process without the need to use distance learning technologies.

Repetition and dropout rates stay relatively low in Turkmenistan.<sup>1</sup> The out-of-school rates in Turkmenistan remain low at all levels of education, at roughly 1 per cent in all three levels<sup>2</sup>: primary, lower secondary and upper secondary. Which means practically every child is enrolled at appropriate level of education.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been some adverse effects such as reduced motivation of students and teachers. Efforts were made to reduce the negative effects of these problems by regularly carrying out activities such as mental health and psychosocial support, regularly monitoring learners' wellbeing during class hours, and conducting personal conversations with learners if necessary. In addition, students were given additional individual assignments on topics of their interest to prevent students from losing interest in learning.

#### **What has been the impact of the COVID-19 educational disruption on nutrition and health, the protection of girls, and the well-being of both learners and teachers?**

Within the framework of preventive measure, subject to the observance of distance, cleanliness and personal hygiene in public places, including catering points, the work of canteens in educational institutions continued without interruption. As a result, all conditions were created for proper nutrition of students.

Thanks to mass vaccination of the country's citizens against the infection of COVID-19 and other infection prevention and control measures such as wearing masks, social distancing, regular disinfection of facilities the pandemic has not had any negative impact on the health of the citizens of Turkmenistan, including learners at all levels of education.

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<sup>1</sup> Turkmenistan - Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2019. June 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

All the achievements made in ensuring gender equality in Turkmenistan before the COVID-19 pandemic were continued during the pandemic, and no setbacks were allowed in this area.

**What steps have been taken to recover pandemic-related losses? What progress has been made to date?**

To ensure the continuity of the full-time learning process in all educational institutions of the country, in accordance with the conditions of study, one-shift training was transferred to two-shift, and some - to three-shift, if necessary. In educational institutions with a large number of students, the division of study groups (classes) into two groups was organized with the condition that the number of students (pupils) in each study group does not exceed 10-15 people. In general education institutions, the duration of lessons was reduced to 25 minutes from 35 minutes in grades 1, to 30 minutes from 45 minutes in grades 2-4, to 35 minutes from 45 minutes in grades 5-11. Short breaks after each session were increased from 5 to 10 minutes, long breaks between sessions were set at 20 minutes. Thus, all the materials provided for in the educational programs were mastered in full.

At present, although some restrictions are being reduced taking into account the normalization of the situation associated with coronavirus infection in the world, everyone, except for children of preschool age, are required to wear face masks in closed public buildings, including in educational institutions of all levels.

Thus, in the educational institutions of Turkmenistan, it is planned to continue the educational process continuously, using full-time in-person attendance form of education, as before.

**What additional measures are proposed to support further recovery in the short-term?**

It is proposed to maintain a small level of loss of education in Turkmenistan, continuing to strictly comply with the requirements of regulatory documents adopted by the national government and educational institutions in order to combat the spread of diseases, using in-person teaching method as before without using the distance learning technologies, and continuing classes without break. Digital education technologies should be used to enhance and support in-person teaching to improve learning outcomes.

**B. Identifying the main strategic transformations and levers for reimagining education for the 21st century and accelerating progress towards shared education goals**

## Was the country off-track with regard to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” before the pandemic?

Turkmenistan is improving its education policy and legislation with the goal of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The literacy rate of the country's population is 99.9%.<sup>3</sup> This shows that Turkmenistan achieves a universal literacy rate for youth aged 15 to 24.<sup>4</sup>

### Early childhood development

Government pays a special attention to the early childhood development. High rates of physical, social, emotional and cognitive development (95%)<sup>5</sup> of children were achieved through the state programmes implemented in the country. According to the 2019 Turkmenistan Multiple Indicator Cluster (MICS) Survey, Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI) is high: physical 99.6%, social and emotional 94.9%, cognitive 98.9%, and literacy and numeracy skills 20.2%. Each of these indicators represent an increase over the 2015-2016 Turkmenistan MICS Survey indicators. The area for improvement is the Literacy and numeracy skills for children between the ages of 3 and 4.

### Secondary education

Information on indicator 4.a.1						
Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Percentage of schools provided with:						
a) with electricity	100	100	100	100	100	100
b) with the Internet for educational purposes	18,7	21,7	23,2	28,2	31,1	31,1
c) with educational computers	99,2	99,1	99,3	99,2	99,3	99,4
d) with clean drinking water	100	100	100	100	100	100
e) with separate minimally equipped restrooms	100	100	100	100	100	100
f) with basic hand washing products	100	100	100	100	100	100

According to the data of the Statistical Collection of the Social and Economic Status of Turkmenistan for 2021 of the State Committee on Statistics of Turkmenistan, 66.7% of the total number of educational institutions are located in rural areas and 33.3% in urban areas. In the state social policy, great attention is paid to socio-economic adaptation of children with special needs. There are 17 institutions for children belonging to this group in the country (schools, boarding schools, educational complexes), where 4.5 thousand students study. In these schools, children are educated according to plans and programs that are slightly different from the curriculum of general education institutions. In them, education, training,

<sup>3</sup> Turkmenistan - Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2019. June 2020.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

and rehabilitation are carried out under the direct supervision of medical specialists, speech therapists and defectologists. Currently, 98.7% of educational institutions have classrooms equipped with interactive multimedia devices.

When looking at the attendance rates at secondary schools according to their age, most of the children are receiving education at a level appropriate for their age. For example, according to the MICS-2019 for 2021, the participation of students in secondary institutions is high. For example, the ratio of 6-9-year-old children attending relevant educational institutions was 99.3%, the ratio of 10-15-year-old children attending relevant educational institutions was 99%, and the ratio of 16-17-year-old children was equal to 98%.

The completion rate of general education programs is also high. That is, if 100% of students successfully complete primary education, this indicator is also high in the first and second stages of secondary education and is 99% and 97%, respectively.

Age-specific educational attainment rates show that almost all children are studying at age-appropriate levels of education.

### **Secondary vocational education**

At the beginning of the 2021/2022 academic year, the number of those who applied for admission to secondary vocational education schools was 15.8 thousand, of which 10.1 thousand were accepted. 5.6 thousand students (22% of total) from secondary vocational schools receive stipends. Most of the students studying at these schools are people aged 17-20 (50.3%), people aged 21-24 equalled 33.9%. In the same academic year, secondary vocational schools of the country were equipped with 2793 computers, all schools have access to the Internet.

### **Higher education**

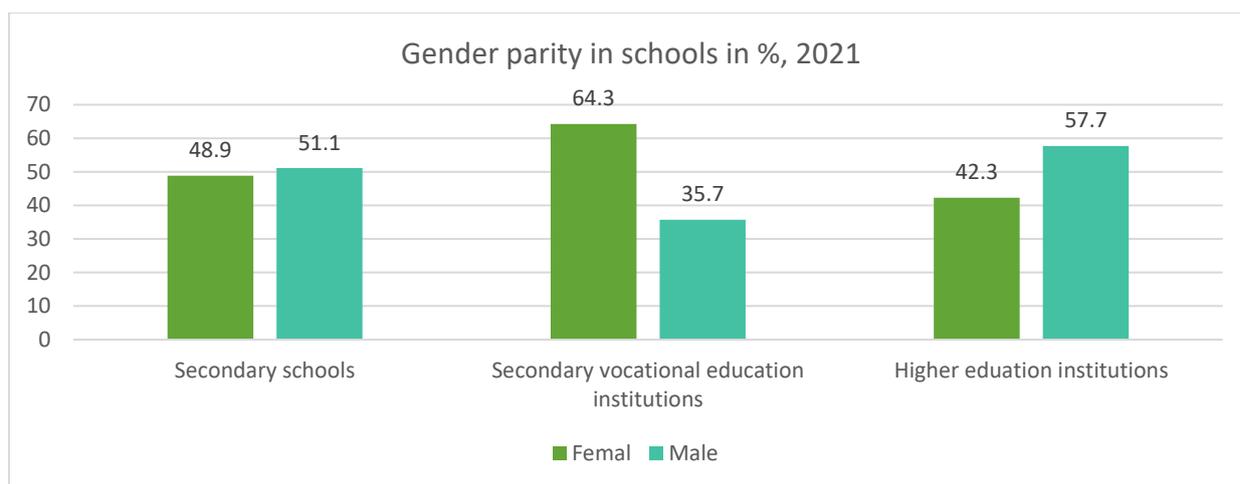
In the 2021/2022 academic year, 15.5 thousand people were accepted out of 41.0 thousand people who applied for higher vocational education.

25.7 thousand students from higher vocational schools receive scholarships.

The majority of students are 18-22 years old (76.4%), 23-24 years old are 12.2% and 25-29 years old are 8.2%.

In the academic year 2021/2022, the number of personal computers used in higher educational institutions of the country is equal to 8.7 thousand units, all of them have access to the Internet.

### **Gender equality in education**



The state's national education policy aims to ensure gender equality and create educational opportunities for women. In general, gender balance is ensured in the education system. At the same time, inequality in higher education persists. By the beginning of the 2021/2022 school year, the share of girls studying in general education institutions is 48.9%, the share of girls studying in secondary vocational schools is 64.3%, the share of girls studying in higher vocational schools was equal to 42.3%. In pre-school and general education institutions, this indicator remains at the highest level and gender equality is fully ensured. Compared to the indicators of 2015, it can be seen that these indicators have significantly improved in secondary and higher professional institutions. For example, in 2015, the share of girls studying in higher education institutions was equal to 35.5%. This represents an increase of 19.2%.

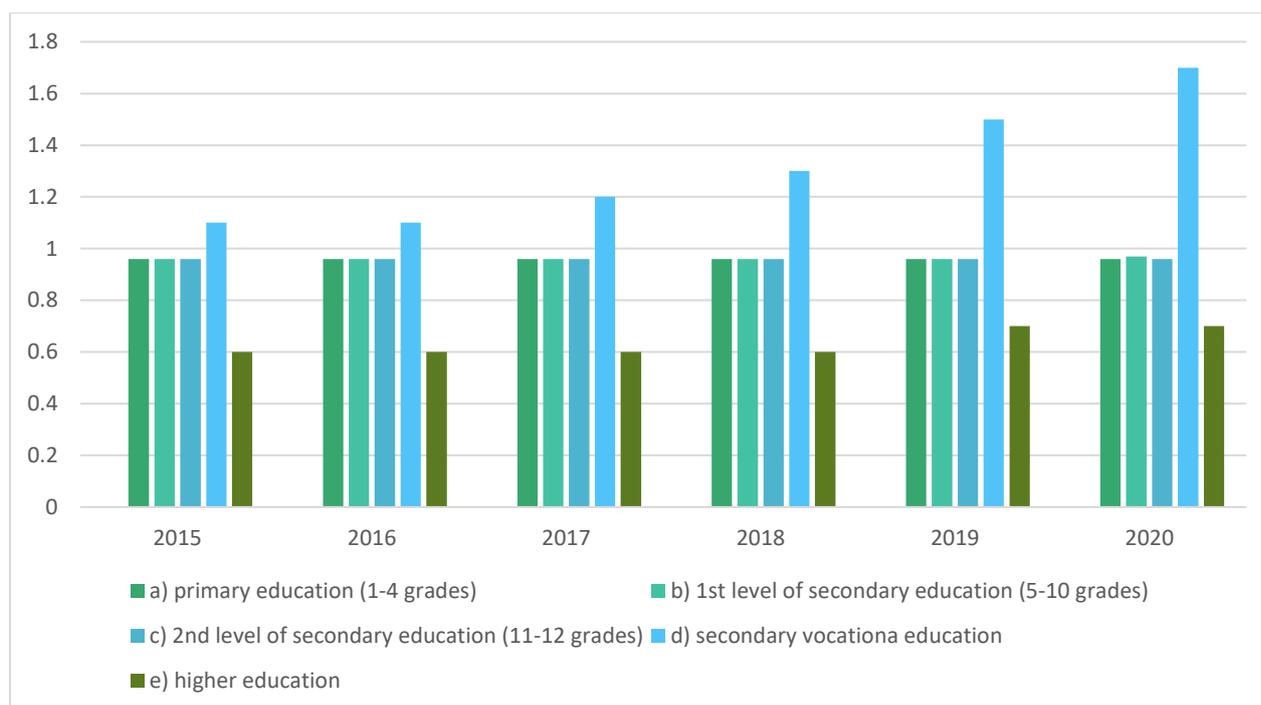
### **Inclusive education**

Currently, there are 24,656 children with disabilities under the age of 18 receiving state disability benefits.

There are 17 institutions for children belonging to this group in the country (schools, boarding schools, educational complexes), where 4.5 thousand students study. In these schools, children are educated according to plans and programs that are slightly different from the curriculum of general education institutions. In them, education, training and rehabilitation are carried out under the direct supervision of medical specialists, speech therapists and defectologists.<sup>6</sup>

### **Equality indicators (female and male, urban and rural, disabled) (Indicator 4.5.1)**

<sup>6</sup> Statistical collection of the social and economic situation of Turkmenistan for the year 2021 of the State Committee on Statistics of Turkmenistan. Page 112.



### What possibilities for system change are apparent now that were not before?

- The need to accelerate the implementation of distance learning technologies in education;
- The need to improve the capacity of the education system to deal with emergencies and disease outbreaks.

### What features of education are most important to continue, strengthen and/or safeguard?

- Continue and strengthen strong state financial support for education, including the provision of free universal secondary education in state educational institutions;
- Construction of modern educational facilities;
- Cooperation with international community to develop education system;
- Continue to implement 12-year education concept.

### What in current education policy and practice needs to be abandoned?

- **Transition to constructive competency-based model of learning** from traditional reproductive method of learning, that is, move away from way of learning based on passively receiving information to a way of learning that allows students to build their worldviews and acquire constructive skills based on their acquired knowledge.
- **Transition to student-oriented teaching from teacher-oriented teaching** considering four key features of this approach: voice - students' ability to express their opinions; choice - spending extra time on students who need extra attention, while others are engaged in tasks according to their abilities;

competency-based progression - promoting skills-based education; continuous monitoring of student needs.

### **What innovative transformations can be envisioned as desired features of education?**

- **Develop of digital education.** The desired innovative transformations in education are mainly related to the development of digital education. That is, the introduction of the use of new technologies of distance education, increasing the availability of electronic materials, Cloud Computing, Augmented reality (AR), Virtual reality (VR) and 3D printing technologies into the education system are all seen as the desired innovative transformations in education.
- **STEAM, foreign languages and partnerships.** Moreover, integrated and improved teaching of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) courses, improving the teaching of foreign languages and expanding cooperation/partnerships between industry and education will be implemented as innovative transformations.

### **What are the key levers of change within the national context?**

- Development of educational infrastructure in accordance with modern requirements;
- Leveraging the digital education technologies and national communications infrastructure to improve learning outcomes;
- Leveraging effective financing to bring in more and better resources to reach all learners in all regions of the country;
- Leveraging the capacities of the private sector to accelerate and improve digital learning;
- Attracting talented young people to the education system are all seen as the key levers for changes within the national context.

### **What coalitions and broad mobilizations can be activated?**

- Leverage existing networks, partnerships and global instruments and framework to mobilize additional resources and expertise;
- Support the design, implementation and evaluation of relevant programmes and policies;
- Facilitate communication among stakeholders from different sectors, such as between governments and the private sector and civil society, including young people;
- Promote collaboration between schools to share knowledge and experience in achieving SDG 4;
- Strengthen the role of parents in the educational process.

## **C. Raising the ambition of national education targets and benchmarks**

### **Has the national government set SDG 4 benchmarks to date, including for the seventh indicator on gender equity?**

During the nationalization of sustainable development goals, goals, tasks and indicators were defined that characterize the development of Turkmenistan at a higher level and indicate national priorities.

As of December 1, 2021, a nationalized list of 17 goals, 148 targets, and 187 indicators has been approved as a result of the nationalization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In Turkmenistan, 9 out of 10 global targets and 11 out of 12 global indicators were adopted for the SDG4. At the same time, national indicators in Turkmenistan were set at the highest level, taking into account the need to accelerate the achievement of the SDG4.

In order to practically coordinate measures and provide reporting on progress in the implementation of the SDGs, in November 2017, a Decree of the President of Turkmenistan was adopted to approve the institutional structure of the SDG monitoring system, on the basis of which a Working Group was created, which includes heads and representatives of more than 50 ministries and departments, khyakimliks of velayats and Ashgabat city, public organizations, research institutes and higher educational institutions.

### **Do national benchmark values reflect the maximum level of ambition possible, given the urgent need to accelerate progress towards SDG 4 commitments and the opportunities for progress that?**

In Turkmenistan, 9 out of 10 global targets and 11 out of 12 global indicators were adopted for the SDG 4. At the same time, national indicators in Turkmenistan were set at the highest level, taking into account the need to accelerate the achievement of the 4th Sustainable Development Goal.

### **Can global benchmarks for other SDG 4 targets (e.g., skills development, youth and adult literacy, higher education, enrollment, vocational and tertiary education) be elaborated further at the national level? If so, how?**

Competency-based education programs in education institutions continue to be developed and implemented in order to more clearly define other global indicators of Sustainable Development Goal 4 at the national level.

### **How can political accountability for achieving national SDG 4 benchmarks be strengthened?**

The Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan was designated as the responsible state body for the implementation of the SDG4. In order to ensure the availability and quality of information on the 4th SDG, the Ministry will create a centralized data collection and analysis system that includes each target and indicator, and organization of the preparation, dissemination and use of high-quality information through it is considered.

Opportunity to strengthen political accountability for the achievement of national indicators within the framework of the 4th Sustainable Development Goal by requiring the ministries and departments designated as responsible for the implementation of each target and indicator of SDG 4 to periodically (at least once a year) submit written reports to the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan is also being studied.

## **D. Ensuring strengthened and more sustainable public financing of education**

### **What is the current state of financing of education?**

#### **What is the share of national resource allocation for education per learner, in national income and in the national budget compared to other services?**

Turkmenistan pays special attention to the education system. This can be seen when we look at the expenditures of the State budget of Turkmenistan. That is, in 2021, the main part of the budget expenditures (73.82%) was directed to the goals of social welfare: and 39.0% of them was directed to financing education. This means that 28.83% of the expenditure part of the State budget of Turkmenistan is directed to the education system.

The share of education in GDP increased from 3.0% in 2016 to 3.8% in 2020.

#### **What is the proportion of public and private education?**

Currently, the main part of education in Turkmenistan is carried out by state educational institutions. In the future, the attention will be paid to the full implementation of private educational institutions and the spread of this practice to all levels of the education system.<sup>7</sup>

In accordance with the Resolution of the President of Turkmenistan signed on April 12, 2022, the Central Bank of Turkmenistan was instructed to lend funds to the joint-stock commercial bank "Rysgal", the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs in order to finance the construction of the higher education school of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs in Ashgabat. The higher education institution

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<sup>7</sup> The Program "Revival of new epoch of the powerful state: National Program of Turkmenistan's socioeconomic development in the period 2022-2052". Page 137.

funded by this Resolution is the first private institution of higher education planned to open in Turkmenistan.

### **What is the significance of external funding for education?**

Citizens studying in educational institutions of Turkmenistan and foreign countries in Turkmenistan are provided with state support through educational loans. Educational loans are targeted and provided by banks and other credit institutions of Turkmenistan to citizens enrolled in educational institutions, regardless of the type of ownership and type of education.<sup>8</sup>

External financing is given great importance in higher education institutions that provide education based on self-financing. For example, these institutions of higher education are authorized to use the following resources, among other financial resources:

- 1) income from acquiring, managing and selling shares, bonds and other securities in the national and international financial markets;
- 2) Voluntary donations and targeted contributions of legal and (or) natural persons of Turkmenistan and foreign countries;
- 3) voluntary contributions, including endowments;
- 4) grants, scholarships and other types of financial assistance provided by government agencies, public organizations, international organizations and funds.

### **How can public financing of education be strengthened?**

#### **What is the trajectory for education investment over the medium to long term?**

- **Construction of modern educational facilities.** According to the Program of socio-economic development of the country of the President of Turkmenistan for 2022-2028, the construction of new educational institutions is one of the main tasks and includes the construction of 40 preschool, 54 general education and 4 higher educational institutions.

#### **What measures are envisaged to ensure more efficiency in use?**

- **Strengthen monitoring on the ground and conduct special training for heads of educational institutions** in order to increase the efficiency of using existing capacities.

#### **How will greater equity in resource allocation be ensured?**

The following will be done as potential ways to ensure greater equity in resource allocation include:

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<sup>8</sup> Article 41 of the Law of Turkmenistan "On Education" (new version) (Data of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan, 2013, No. 2, Article 21; 2014, No. 4, Article 159; 2017, No. 1, Article 36; 2018, No. 2, Article 55; 2020, No. 3, Article 50)

- development of a system of control over the use of resources allocated to education in the regions;
- increasing the efficiency of using available resources;
- design and implementation of the evaluation system for teaching staff;
- creation and development of a skill-based salary system.

**What additional innovative and multi-sectoral mechanisms can ensure adequate and sustainable domestic financing of education?**

- Development of cooperation between government agencies and enterprises and educational institutions in financing the work of educational institutions;
- Establishing cooperation between educational institutions and private enterprises.