

## Turkmenistan

### Update on the context and situation of children

In March 2022 a new President was elected in Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedow, who succeeded his father and former President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow. The change of President brought no shifts in the foundational principles of Turkmenistan's foreign policy of neutrality and constructive international cooperation, and in the macro socio-economic objectives of pursuing progress and high standards of living for the people. This vision has been reinforced in the new medium and long-term plans of the country launched in 2022, the Program of the President of Turkmenistan on socio-economic development of the country for 2022-2028 and the National Program of Turkmenistan's socio-economic development for 2022-2052.

The war in Ukraine and refugee crises in the European region, as well as continuing volatile situation in the neighboring Afghanistan, brought a level of uncertainty in Turkmenistan, while the actual and visible impacts are estimated to have been minimal and indirect so far. Turkmenistan is among the least affected countries in Central Asia region, according to EBRD estimations. This premise is based on increased energy prices which benefited Turkmenistan, the country being a major energy exporter. The downside risk is related to the volatility of the global gas prices, which saw a sharp reduction in the last quarter since its peak in August 2022. According to official statistics, GDP of Turkmenistan grew by 6.2% in 2022, similar to its growth in 2021.

Overall limited data makes it difficult to assess the actual impact of the multiple global and regional crises on the country, especially on the most vulnerable population. The logistics and transportation challenges due to the war in Ukraine and related sanctions, and due to COVID-19 pandemic which continued in-part through 2022, affected the supply routes from Europe to Turkmenistan. Russia is a significant trading partner representing 21% of Turkmenistan's total imports. A collateral impact may occur as a result of Russia's restricted access to parts and technologies from Europe and other regions, which can affect the availability of oil and gas equipment, engineering products, transport vehicles, chemicals and pharmaceuticals – products which Turkmenistan imports from Russia.

The effect will largely depend on the situation in Russia and Ukraine, and ability of Turkmenistan to adapt and identify alternative markets and suppliers. Prices on essential food items have been observed to increase in Turkmenistan during the year, while the challenging security context and uncertainty caused by the war in Ukraine, unstable energy and food supply markets, routes and prices, and the lingering pandemic problem, will continue to exacerbate vulnerabilities especially for population groups experiencing pre-existing conditions, such as people in rural areas, those seeking employment or underemployed, households with multiple children, people with disabilities.

With the stabilization of the epidemiological situation in the world, the face masks regime was abolished in Turkmenistan in August 2022. Internal movement restrictions between the regions of the country were removed enabling the local population to undertake internal travels. The domestic flights between the country regions resumed from May 2022 and some regular international flights from September. These positive developments revived the cross-border movement of people and goods.

Following the gradual ease of pandemic restrictions, from mid-2022 UNICEF Turkmenistan had the opportunity to undertake a number of field monitoring visits in the velayats (regions). These visits enabled UNICEF to interact with local stakeholders and to observe and understand the local realities and post-pandemic situation. During these field trips it was identified that disability and gender norms are among the most prominent obstacles for realization of child rights.

Turkmenistan developed a new National Action Plan (NAP) on Child Rights for 2023-2028 following country-wide consultations in 2022. The new Plan will ensure continuity of efforts on children undertaken in the framework of previous NAP and will expand the work on emerging priorities such as climate change and child participation. The normative framework for the protection of children in contact with the law was enhanced in 2022 with the amendment of Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code. The amendments include child-sensitive procedures in dealing with children in contact with the law and diversion for young offenders. The new Criminal Code, inclusive of UNICEF recommendations, was adopted by Mejlis in April 2022, and the Criminal Procedure Code is expected to be approved in 2023.

In 2022 Turkmenistan took proactive steps in strengthening the availability of statistics needed for monitoring the progress on child rights and SDGs, and to improve the overall statistical capacity of the country. The results of the first survey on the Health and Status of a Woman in the Family (also known as survey on Violence Against Women) and of the survey on Children and Adults with Disabilities were concluded and communicated by the State Statistics Committee. The survey results indicated that 12% of women aged 18-69 experienced physical and/or sexual abuse from a husband or partner at least once in their lives, and among women who experienced such abuse 34% resorted to abortion, 26% had a miscarriage, and 6% gave birth to a stillborn child. The 2022-2023 Population and Housing Census is ongoing and will provide a new population count and characteristics hereby updating the current demographic figures which date back to 1995 census.

Being categorized as an upper middle-income country, with a specific context, Turkmenistan continues to be a donor disadvantaged country. Although there have been developments in the donor landscape in recent years, with EU establishing a delegation in Ashgabat since 2019, World Bank and Islamic Development Bank signing loan agreements with the Government, these have either been limited in size or focused on topics not directly related to child rights. UNICEF itself is among the top 10 donors of gross ODA to Turkmenistan according to OECD-DAC. Having one of the largest natural gas reserves in the world, hydrocarbons make up over 50% of Turkmenistan's GDP. An important milestone in 2022 was the development of a draft Contribution Agreement with potential for the Government to become a donor to UNICEF in 2023.

## Major contributions and drivers of results

### **Every child and adolescent have access to inclusive social protection**

In 2022, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) demonstrated continued leadership in acceleration of the introduction of inclusive quality community-based social and child protection services within the SDG-funded Joint Programme (JP) on Improving the Social Protection System in Turkmenistan. The adopted Law on Social Services enabled social sector ministries to have a transformational impact on the lives of vulnerable and excluded people and introduced forty-five social worker posts into the state budget of the MLSP for 2022 and 2023 along with their deployment in the community-based services. UNICEF-supported specialized social services established by MLSP have directly impacted 341 vulnerable families with children addressing complex social, psychological and economic issues including disability, child protection and gender-based violence.

The JP on Community Social Services concluded in 2022 with the conduct of the final evaluation, which together with the evidence from the recent social workers' assessments for community-based services and economic analysis have informed government planning for social services development. This plan includes funding a national roll-out of the community based social worker service (that was piloted by the JP), and the implementation of the 2021 Law on Social Services. MLSP with UNICEF expertise has introduced goals and targets on social services development in the National Program of Turkmenistan's socio-economic development for 2022-2052 and supported the development of the new National Program on Social Services for the scale-up of the new specialized services nation-wide

by 2030. The JP integrated gender aspects in draft normative documents, trained social workers on gender aspects and its relationship with other vulnerabilities such as disability, poverty and violence.

Turkmenistan made progress in 2022 on strengthening the enabling environment for children with the development of a new National Action Plan on Child Rights for 2023-2028, which UNICEF facilitated with consultative processes and stakeholders' involvement. A Concept Note on a dedicated child rights function and potential re-organization of the Office of Ombudsperson was developed learning from examples in the region (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Moldova, and Georgia). Using different opportunities such as the meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Commission on Human Rights, the meeting between the UNCT and Turkmenistan Ambassadors to the UN and a dedicated meeting with the speaker of the Mejlis, UNICEF actively advocated for adoption of the third Optional Protocol to the CRC on a Communications Procedure. This continuous advocacy was conducted in close coordination with ECA Regional Office.

The strong partnership with the Mejlis (National Parliament) continued in 2022 and expanded the coverage of children familiar with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. More than 270 children from all over Turkmenistan have advanced knowledge on their rights following the CRC interactive awareness raising sessions facilitated by the Mejlis, Ministry of Education and UNICEF. To improve access to child-related legislation and normative frameworks in the country, the Institute of State Law and Democracy with UNICEF assistance published all Turkmenistan laws about children in one book titled "Legal Protection of Children in Turkmenistan".

The first of its kind survey on Children and Adults with Disabilities in 2022 contributed to the State Party periodic report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to a better understanding by policy makers of the situation of children and adults with disabilities in Turkmenistan, while the preparations continued in 2022 for the implementation of MICS in 2023.

### **Every child and adolescent survive and thrive**

Following two years of COVID-19 slowdown, the efforts in Health, Nutrition and Early Development significantly scaled up in 2022 towards 2025 CPD planned result of equitable access to quality health, nutrition and ECD services, while efforts continued supporting COVID-19 pandemic response including RCCE and procurement support to the Government. Quality of essentials services and bringing back to speed the affected health programme was the focus.

Major progress was made in optimization of the home visiting system and introduction of IMCI approach in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry (MoHMI). A Five-year Road Map on IMCI scale-up has been introduced and Home Visiting resulted in development of new standards of provision of health services at home for mothers and young children.

Infant Young Child Feeding (IYCF) initiative and Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) expended in 2022. Three rural district hospitals reconfirmed their baby-friendly status, and five House of Health (PHC) clinics and one district hospital were included in the BFHI programme. Over 700 health professionals and 48 women community leaders were trained in IYCF and nutrition counselling, while field data collection for the National Micronutrient Survey was launched on 16 December 2022.

Significant progress was also achieved in scaling up Early Childhood Development (ECD) services, with developmental monitoring provided by ECD demonstration facilities in all regions of the country and over 1,400 health professionals were trained in ECD and early identification of developmental delays. More than 8,000 children were included in developmental monitoring programme of whom 887 were identified with developmental delays and started receiving early intervention support. The highlight of the medical education system in 2022 was the launch of the first ECD course for postgraduate students. With thanks to the methodological support of Ankara University in partnership with MoHMI and UNICEF, the first 14 medical doctors completed this course.

MoHMI efforts, with UNICEF support, ensured that immunization programme is continuously sustained during the year, and delivery of all vaccines and vaccine related supplies is uninterrupted and timely, despite the global logistical challenges caused by the war in Ukraine and related sanctions. In 2022 alone, as part of a long-term MOU with the Government, UNICEF procurement services support to the Government – which fully finances the costs for routine immunization, amounted to procurements worth 15 million US\$ which includes vaccines for regular immunization (OPV, IPV, DTP, Td, DT, Penta, MMR, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis A, Rota, PCV, HPV, BCG), syringes, needles, safety boxes, and Tuberculin. Over the last decade, including during the global COVID-19 pandemic, Turkmenistan maintained a high routine vaccination coverage above 95%.

As part of UNICEF Turkmenistan support to infection prevention and control, an additional nearly 2 million US\$ has been mobilized in 2022 through UNICEF Supply Division for procurement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), Rapid COVID-19 Diagnostic tests, Dexamethasone medicines, and 3 containerized Oxygen Plants (Plant in a Box). These supplies complemented by capacity building on “Infection control in health facilities” conducted by MoHMI with the support of UNICEF for deputy chief doctors of all hospitals and epidemiologists, strengthened the infection prevention and control system in Turkmenistan.

UNICEF support to premix procurement in 2022, continued to ensure that all mills in the 5 velayats (regions) of Turkmenistan and in Ashgabat city fortify the flour that is produced and distributed throughout the country.

Development of early intervention services for young children with disabilities and their families was strengthened with a training package on preparation of trans-disciplinary specialists delivered for 150 childcare practitioners from health, pre-school education and social protection sectors. This in-service training programme designed and facilitated by the St. Petersburg Early Interventions Institute, includes additional modules on mental health for children and communication, and supports development of competencies required for provision of early interventions through trans-disciplinary team modality. This training programme served as a catalyst for promoting a normative framework to support cross-sectoral quality and continuity of the early intervention services. As a result of substantive consultations led by the Working Group on ECD with technical expertise from UNICEF partner, a joint inter-ministerial provision on early interventions was developed for further finalization and adoption.

### **Every child and adolescent are protected from violence and exploitation**

In 2022, UNICEF promoted the application of an integrated approach to delivering social and child protection services to vulnerable families and children. This led to the alignment of the Government’s approach to child protection with UNICEF’s Strategic Plan to fulfil the rights of the most vulnerable families and children.

While UNICEF continued advocacy for legislative reforms and enhancing the child protection system, the speech of the Chairperson of the Halk Maslahaty of Milli Gengesh (Upper Chamber of the Parliament) to the members of the Mejlis and Government in March 2022 highlighted the highest level of state commitment to ensure that the protection system for children in need of special protection measures would be strengthened in the coming years. This laid the ground for initiating a series of UNICEF supported high-level round tables and meetings with ministries and the Parliament. As a result, by the end of 2022, the Ministry of Justice, in consultation with the social and justice sector ministries and UNICEF, prepared a package of legal documents including the draft Regulations of the Commissions on Child Protection and Family Support at all levels, which provides opportunities to reform the child-care system of the country. Under these regulations, ministries and agencies, as well as child protection bodies should ensure that every child is protected against violence and has a safe and nourishing family environment with consideration of gender differences. This is in line with the

UN Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children, shifting the approach away from placing children in large institutions to family-type care, and to prevent unnecessary separation of children from their families.

Supported by UNICEF advocacy efforts, the Government increased its efforts on justice for children in 2022, specifically on addressing the issues of investigation procedure with the involvement of children in contact with the law. Based on findings of the 2021 Review and Analysis of Legislative and Normative Frameworks of Turkmenistan concerning Children in Contact with the Law, the Criminal Procedure Code was amended in compliance with international standards. UNICEF supported the Government in drafting amendments concerning child victims and witnesses of crime and children in conflict with the law. Along with these legislative reforms, UNICEF introduced the justice sector partners to best practices on diversionary measures and supported the Prosecutor General's Office to draft the Concept of Diversion with a Restorative Justice approach to be finalized and launched in 2023. The new concept aims to replace formal judicial proceedings and use the deprivation of liberty of a child as a measure of last resort.

UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Interior to design and equip the first child-friendly interview room and trained 26 police and prosecution investigators in forensic interviewing of children, particularly those who were victims or witnesses of crime.

This work strengthens the Government capacity to address social and child protection issues and is aligned with UNSDCF Outcome 1 and 4 and SDGs 5 and 16.

### **Every child and adolescent learn**

Ministry of Education and UNICEF worked closely towards introducing inclusive education, improve systems of information management, and strengthen preparedness to emergencies and climate-change adaptation in education.

Quality and inclusive learning at pre-school, primary and secondary school levels was strengthened in 2022 by introducing competency-based, gender-responsive and learner-centred pedagogies at pilot scale and by increasing national capacity to monitor and manage education sector in Turkmenistan.

In the framework of the national early childhood development agenda, support to MoE and social sector partners focused on promoting cross-sectoral quality and inclusive early learning and support services, particularly for the most vulnerable children and their families, in line with Turkmenistan commitments for SDG 4.2. The capacity and normative framework of the pre-school education sector for implementing a half-day pre-primary curriculum was strengthened with development of the MoE methodological instructions and general provision on organization of pre-primary preparation in schools. Development of the joint inter-ministerial provision on early intervention services contributed to establishment of a normative framework for ensuring quality and continuing cross-sectoral early intervention and multi-disciplinary support services in Turkmenistan.

The Ministry of Education continued to raise the quality of education at the primary and secondary levels, based on curriculum upgrade and the introduction of interactive pedagogies and child-centred classroom practices that support the development of both functional and transferable life skills and competencies. In the framework of implementing the competency-based education roadmap adopted in 2021, education specialists of the National Institute of Education and teachers at pilot schools have initiated integration of competency-based approach in three selected curricula (Mathematics, Turkmen language, and English) and developed competency-based teaching materials. This exemplified a beginning of a transition towards competency-based curriculum development and teaching practices. The newly developed competency-based teaching materials were tested in three pilot schools where positive feedback was received from both teachers and school children.

The availability of interactive learning materials at schools increased as a result of UNICEF technical assistance to the Ministry of Education in translation of 100 open-source accessible interactive simulations for teaching STEM subjects at primary and secondary education levels. Moreover, the Ministry of Education began in 2022 to mainstream gender equality in the national education system with UNICEF support. Foundational capacity-building in gender-responsive curriculum development, teaching practices, and school management was provided in alignment with educational priorities of the 2021-2025 National Action Plan on Gender Equality.

In line with the national priorities of developing qualified workforce for supporting young children and their families, particularly the most vulnerable, new disciplines required for comprehensive support for children with disabilities were introduced in 2022 with UNICEF technical support. With expertise from St. Petersburg Early Intervention Institute and Cercy Lisboa, the pre-service training course on social inclusion for persons with disabilities as part of the 5 years undergraduate medical-social work curriculum at the State Medical University was developed. The training course, which is already in use, is providing the graduates with the new knowledge and competencies necessary for planning and leading the work on policy reform for mainstreaming disability inclusion. The course includes new modules on psychosocial support for young children and their families, early childhood intervention, communication, physical and occupational therapy, assistive technologies (AT) and products (AP). The first batch of students will graduate in June 2023, and by this means, introduce the relevant professional disciplines and services.

The Ministry of Education is considering strengthening the national education management information system (EMIS) that will enable to collect, store, manage quality and timely disability-inclusive data for results-based management in education sector. Policy dialogue on transition from paper-based, low-reliability, narrow-scope information system to a digital, technically, and methodologically robust, comprehensive information system led to joint assessment of the existing EMIS, planning EMIS development with consideration of international best-practices, pilot software application development, and foundational capacity-building for national specialists conducted in 2022 with UNICEF technical support.

During 2022, UNICEF strengthened the resilience and adaptation of schoolchildren to socioeconomic and climate-change risks. The Ministry of Education integrated the Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction curriculum (that was developed with UNICEF support) into the national education system of the country through official endorsement and introduction of Methodological Manuals covering 5 environment related subjects (Ecology, Nature Study, Geography, Basic Life Skills and Agriculture). Schoolchildren in all regions of the country benefitted from the improved teaching of the climate change topics as a result of the integration of the methodological manuals and capacity building of 600 schoolteachers and education specialists in the framework of the implementation of the Programme Document with the National Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan.

## UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

### **Collaboration and leadership role within the UNCT**

UNICEF expanded collaboration with other UN entities in Turkmenistan in 2022 by supporting multiple Human Rights and treaty reports, sharing logistical and training resources and complementing each other's procurement services.

UNICEF assumed a leading role in multiple Working Groups under the UNCT including Chairing the UN Communication Working Group and the UN Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Working Group, co-chairing the UN Operations Management Team and leading the UN Joint Programme on Social Services.

### **Advocacy Partnership with the Young SDG Ambassadors**

During this year UNICEF worked with the Young SDG Ambassadors, a group initiated by the UN RC and Government of Turkmenistan, to promote SDGs and raise awareness on diverse topics related to child wellbeing, from healthy lifestyle and education to climate change and gender equality. This partnership was expanded to include promotion of one Global Goal among their peers.

UNICEF and the Young SDG Ambassadors partnered for advocacy using an information campaign on the International Women's Day highlighting the achievements of girls in various spheres and their role in pandemic prevention in Turkmenistan, where female SDG Ambassadors showcased their success stories. On Earth Day, UNICEF supported an online interactive learning session among schoolchildren facilitated by SDG Ambassadors promoting environment protection, waste separation and climate change prevention.

UNICEF fostered active participation of Young SDG Ambassadors in the process of developing the new National Action Plan on Child Rights (2023-2028). They made valuable contributions to identify the key focus areas and priorities for children and adolescents. In November 2022, four young SDG Ambassadors participated and amplified the voices of young people from Turkmenistan in the youth dialogue of Central Asia on the sidelines of the EU-Central Asia Connectivity Conference in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. They used this opportunity to share suggestions to advance opportunities in the spheres of digitalization, climate change, and gender participation. UNICEF will continue to leverage this UN initiative and will scale up its work with Young SDG Ambassadors in 2023, to empower them and create opportunities to contribute to the life of children and youth in the country.

### **Expanded partnership with NRCS for Emergency Preparedness and Response**

In 2022, UNICEF and the National Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan (NRCS) expanded their partnership by signing a Memorandum of Understanding and a Contingency Programme Document to strengthen the emergency preparedness and response cooperation in Turkmenistan. The Memorandum of Understanding provides the shared space for warehousing and management of contingency stocks of core supplies to be used by UNICEF and NRCS in humanitarian situations. The Contingency Programme Document is a standby humanitarian programme to respond to crisis situations. It can be activated within 24 hours from the onset of an emergency and consists of joint humanitarian assistance activities for the affected population. These preparedness actions are particularly timely in a context of increased global and regional risks such as continuing war in Ukraine and related food, fuel, and financial crises, the volatile situation in neighbouring Afghanistan, and other potential disasters exacerbated by worsening climate change.

## Lessons Learned and Innovations

### **Multi-dimensional approach to Climate Change Education**

Turkmenistan ranks 1st among 172 countries in the global ranking of energy intensity, with significant

potential for energy savings from implementation of energy efficiency measures in consumption, including in the residential and services sectors, which account around 42% of the total energy use in Turkmenistan. Education and awareness raising is therefore key for achieving efficient energy use and living in harmony with the environment.

Given its mandate and strong partnership with Ministry of Education and other partners, UNICEF adopted a comprehensive multi-dimensional approach to integration of climate change and environmental education in the national education system combining interventions at multiple levels (policies, institutions, communities, individuals) of socio-ecological model of climate change adaptation convening stakeholders from multiple sectors.

At the policy level, using the system strengthening approach, the National Child-centered Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy was finalized in 2022 with support of the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population, Ministry of Justice, Mejlis (National Parliament), National Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan and other key national partners and was submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers for endorsement. The Strategy enhances the national policy framework of Turkmenistan aiming at reducing vulnerability and strengthening resilience of children and adolescents to climate change impacts and natural hazards.

At the institutional level, UNICEF supported capacity-building of the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education to integrate CCA/DRR topics in the curricula and deliver learning through interactive child-centered pedagogies. 5 Methodological Manuals for teachers in Turkmen and Russian languages supporting the teachers in application of the interactive teaching and learning methodology and covering 5 environment-related subjects were developed and officially endorsed as a result of a series of consultations with the national partners, in particular Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education of Turkmenistan, ensuring their ownership and full engagement “Green School” programme was developed in 2022 for introduction in 2023 as a framework of criteria and guidance for schools to mainstream CCA topics in practice by developing ‘greening plans’ and implementing relevant activities to achieve green status at school level.

In addition to integration of topics in the school curriculum, UNICEF worked on integrating CCA topics in pre-schools, focusing on the climate-change-aware socialization of children from an early age and using interactive play-based teaching methods. While work continues to finalize the in-service climate change training course for schoolteachers and pre-service training course for higher education institutions (preparing future teachers), UNICEF and the Ministry of Education also developed a short training course on CCA/DRR for the Summer Recreation Centers for children. The course was developed as a digital product and shared with all recreation centers across the country. The training package includes didactical electronic games, quizzes and interactive contests using the best practices of teaching and learning.

At the community level, the capacities of children, teachers, women and local administrations in the selected regions were enhanced on CCA/DRR topics which strengthened their resilience and ensured community engagement for the management of risks and promotion of sustainable development. Partnership with the NRCST allowed evidence generation on school resilience in regions which are vulnerable to hazards of the Aral Sea problem.

Using a comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach to Climate Change education, ensures the sustainability of Climate Change teaching-learning process in Turkmenistan through the education system, which prepares a knowledgeable and skilled generation of children and young people, with energy- and environment-responsible behaviours. Going forward, UNICEF is exploring partnerships for integration of renewable energy sources in the school facilities, learning from Health Facility Solar Electrification (HFSE) initiative which Turkmenistan will implement in 2023 with UNICEF support.



## **Development of a cross-sectoral approach to ECD in Turkmenistan**

Cross-sectoral integration of early childhood development (ECD) services with focus on the most vulnerable young children and their families is the major priority under the national ECD Strategy for 2020-2025 with inter-ministerial Working Group leading the process.

Ensuring trans- and multi-disciplinary modality for early intervention provision requires competencies of pediatrician, psychologist, speech therapist, pedagogue, social worker, provided by health, education, and social protection sectors. UNICEF and inter-Ministerial Working Group on ECD promoted a cross-sectoral approach to capacity development for provision of early intervention services for young children with disabilities and their families, by designing a 6-module training for trans-disciplinary specialists provided to childcare professionals from health, pre-school education and social protection sectors.

As a result, selected sectoral professionals at the local levels initiated a team approach in delivering early intervention programmes for young children with disabilities and their families, with more comprehensive and individualized support to these families. This approach informed and facilitated cross-sectoral cooperation for continuity and enhanced quality of service provision across the sectors and child's life cycle.

A valuable lesson learned in 2022 is that having a functional inter-ministerial Working Group on ECD in Turkmenistan facilitated the design of a cross-sectoral capacity development programme, in line with the needs and recommended best practice on ECD, while the training programme reinforced the provisions of cross-sectoral ECD services in practice. This regular multi-stakeholder collaboration process on ECD, coordinated by the lead sectoral Ministries (MoHMI, MoE, MoLSP), facilitated a shared vision and commitment to develop a normative framework which resulted in drafting a joint inter-ministerial provision on early intervention services.