

# Strengthening the backbone of health care

TAJIKISTAN

### EPW core priorities and flagships

Moving towards universal health coverage

### WHO collaboration

Health research and data provision  
National health review

A strategic distribution of doctors, nurses and clinical specialists is essential to ensure all citizens have access to quality health care. In Tajikistan, a major shortage of health workers, particularly in rural and remote areas, has created substantial disparities in access. The capital has five times more doctors per 10 000 people than some rural regions. Low salaries further exacerbate staffing challenges outside urban centres.

Tajikistan’s Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population approached the Regional Office and Country Office to conduct a health labour market analysis to identify key areas for investment. The results led the Ministry to establish a working group of technical experts, medical university representatives, financial experts and other stakeholders to find solutions. In April 2023 the Regional Office facilitated a high-level policy dialogue with government and international partners, guiding discussions on closing workforce gaps based on the analysis.

### The impact

The collaboration led to crucial updates to Tajikistan’s national health strategy to 2030. The Regional Office also contributed to a roadmap with key reforms, including aligning nursing education with international standards, improving recruitment and working conditions, ensuring ongoing professional development, offering incentives to retain health workers in rural areas, and allocating additional places in medical universities for applicants from regions with a shortage of doctors.

### Lessons learned

- The involvement of multiple ministries and international partners in the policy dialogue built consensus around key issues.
- Strategies including financial and non-financial incentives and enhanced educational development opportunities help to retain health workers.
- Data form the foundation on which progressive changes to health care can be made.

### Donors and partners

Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population; university medical departments; EU



European Region



Nurses studying in Rudaki District, Tajikistan.  
© WHO

“Health workers are the pillars of our health systems, but they need support and investment to care for their patients and their well-being.”

**Professor Salomudin Yusufi**, Department Head at the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population, Tajikistan

### What’s next?

Tajikistan will focus on increasing and retaining health workers outside of urban centres. Future activities will also include revising medical education curricula to better align with health system needs, improving information systems for human resources for health, and developing incentives to attract professionals in underserved regions.

TAJIKISTAN