

**ALL CHILDREN IN SCHOOL BY 2015
GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN**

KYRGYZSTAN COUNTRY STUDY



GLOBAL
PARTNERSHIP
for EDUCATION



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This report is prepared for the Kyrgyz Republic as part of the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI). UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) launched a Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children at the beginning of 2010 with a goal to introduce a more systematic approach to address the problem of out-of-school children and guide concrete education sector reforms in this regard. Kyrgyz Republic joined the initiative in 2011. The objective is to improve statistical information and analysis on OOSC and to scrutinize factors of exclusion from schooling and existing policies related to enhanced participation.

The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of the United Nations Children's Fund and the organization does not bear any responsibility.

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Contents

List of Figures.....	4
List of Tables.....	6
Acknowledgements.....	7
Preface.....	8
Acronyms.....	9
Introduction.....	10
Country context.....	10
Geography and climate.....	10
People and culture.....	10
Politics and International Relations.....	11
Economy.....	11
Education Sector.....	12
Main Players and Stakeholders.....	14
The Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children.....	14
Overview of the Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE)	15
Methodology.....	16
Chapter 1: Who are the excluded? Profiles of excluded children.....	18
Overview of data sources.....	18
General picture of out-of-school children in the country.....	18
Profiles of children in Dimension 1	19
Overview.....	19
Out of pre-primary children in low income families.....	21
Geographic profile of out of pre-primary children.....	22
Out of pre-primary children without one or both parents.....	23
Out of pre-primary children in new settlements.....	24
Analytical summary.....	25
Profiles of OOSC in Dimensions 2 and 3.....	26
Overview.....	26
Discrepancies in OOSC figures between different sources.....	28
Children of migrants.....	29
Children living with a disability.....	30
Children from non-Kyrgyz speaking families.....	30
Boys from low-income families.....	31
Child labourers.....	32
Street children.....	35
Children affected by ethnic conflicts.....	36
Children belonging to multiple OOSC risk groups.....	36
Analytical summary.....	36
Profiles of children at risk in Dimensions 4 and 5.....	37
Overview.....	37
Children entering school late and without pre-primary experience.....	38
Overage children.....	39
Absentee children.....	40
Children performing poorly in tests of learning achievement.....	42
Analytical Summary.....	44
Chapter 2. Barriers and bottlenecks.....	46
Overview.....	46

Barriers and bottlenecks by OOSC profiles.....	46
Pre-primary age children.....	46
Boys from low-income families.....	47
Children living with a disability.....	47
Children in new settlements.....	48
Street children.....	49
Child labourers.....	49
Barriers facing children belonging to multiple OOSC risk groups.....	51
Demand side economic barriers.....	52
Supply side barriers.....	53
Corruption.....	54
Lack of schools and facilities.....	54
Shortage of qualified teachers.....	56
Problems with textbooks and study materials.....	56
Political, governance, capacity and financing bottlenecks.....	58
Chapter 3. Policies and strategies.....	60
Overview.....	60
Demand side policies and strategies.....	60
Supply side policies and strategies.....	61
Vertical equity: compensation for socio-economic disadvantage.....	62
Management and governance related policies and strategies.....	64
Social protection systems at the interface of education and development.....	66
Conclusions and recommendations.....	71
Increase enrolment in high-quality pre-primary education.....	71
Targeted action for specific groups of out-of-school children.....	72
Reduce the shortage of qualified teachers.....	73
Implement measures to prevent school dropout.....	73
Review policies and programmes for children with disabilities.....	74
An improved monitoring and evaluation system.....	74
Concluding remarks.....	76
Appendix 1: Laws and regulations on education in the Kyrgyz Republic.....	77
Appendix 2: OOSC Tables.....	86
References.....	106

List of Figures

Figure 1. Map of the Kyrgyz Republic.....	10
Figure 2. Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE)	16
Figure 3. Number of out-of-school children by region and location (urban/rural), 2009.....	19
Figure 4. Pre-primary gross enrolment rate in the Kyrgyz Republic, 1986-2010.....	19
Figure 5. Map of pre-primary net enrolment rate in the CEECIS region, 2010.....	20
Figure 6. Total private enrolment in pre-primary education, 1999-2010.....	20
Figure 7. Map showing the percentage of 6-7 year old children enrolled in state pre-school institutions by region.....	23
Figure 8. Enrolments in pre-school institutions in 2003 and 2009 by oblast.....	23

Figure 9. Percentage of pre-primary age children not enrolled in pre-primary and from low income families in new settlements around Bishkek.....	24
Figure 10. Percentage of primary school age children out of school, 1996-2010.....	26
Figure 11. Percentage of lower-secondary school age children out of school, 2004-2010.....	26
Figure 12. 7 to 15 year olds out of school in rural areas (left) and urban areas (right) by sex, 2009.....	27
Figure 13. Percentage of primary-age out-of-school children – comparison of survey and administrative data.....	29
Figure 14. Responses of parents of children with disabilities to the question “is your child studying at school?”	30
Figure 15. Percentage of out-of-school children by linguistic groups, 2005.....	31
Figure 16. Percentage of out-of-school children by age level, sex and wealth quintile, 2005.....	32
Figure 17. Percentage of children ages 5 to 14 involved in child labour by area, household head education and household expenditure quintile, 2007.....	34
Figure 18. Map showing the percentage of child labourers ages 5 to 14 by oblast, 2007.....	34
Figure 19. Distribution of child labourers by economic sector (%)......	35
Figure 20. Categories of out-of-school children by school exposure.....	37
Figure 21. Categories of primary age out-of-school children by sex, 2005.....	38
Figure 22. Categories of primary age out-of-school children by location, 2005.....	38
Figure 23. Total number of repeaters in primary and secondary, all grades, 1995-2010.....	39
Figure 24. Percentage overage and underage students at primary and secondary education levels over time, 2004-2010.....	40
Figure 25. Percentage of absent students by language, area and sex, 2005.....	41
Figure 26. Number of absentees nationwide by language, area and sex, 2005.....	41
Figure 27. PISA Reading, Mathematics and Science scores, 2009.....	43
Figure 28. Mean PISA science scores by school location in UNICEF CEECIS programme countries, 2006.....	44
Figure 29. Reasons for non-attendance.....	46
Figure 30. Main reasons why children ran away from home (% responses).....	49
Figure 31. Family related reasons for non-attendance according to non-attending children and teachers (% of responses)	52
Figure 32. Supply-side (school related) causes of non-attendance according to non-attending children and teachers (% of responses)	53
Figure 33. Number of public pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools, 1990-2010.....	55
Figure 34. Number of private pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools, 1990-2010.....	55
Figure 35. Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, 1994-2009.....	58
Figure 36. Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure, 1998-2008.....	59

Figure 37. Composition of social public expenditure on health and education as percentage of GDP, 2000 to 2009.....	67
Figure 38. Coverage, as percentage of the total population, of key social protection programmes for selected years.....	70

List of Tables

Table 1. Education programmes in the Kyrgyz Republic by ISCED level.....	12
Table 2. Textbook provision for the beginning of the 2011/2012 academic year.....	57
Table 3. Usable textbooks in schools as percentage of need, 2006.....	57
Table 4. Comparison of school characteristics and school mean socio-economic background.....	63
Table 5. Key Programmes of the Social Protection System.....	68
Table 6. Financing and Coverage of the Key Programmes of the Social Protection System.....	70

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Preface

As the world is fast approaching the 2015 deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals the challenges that countries are facing in addressing disparities in education are becoming more disturbing. In 2010 UNICEF in collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) launched the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children to accelerate efforts towards achieving the aim of universal primary education by 2015.

It is my pleasure to present this report prepared for the Kyrgyz Republic as part of the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI). It comes at a time when the country is adopting a new comprehensive education development strategy for 2012-2020. The focus of the government for the upcoming years will be the creation of a quality and efficient education system as the main tool for promoting the social and political development of the country and for ensuring its competitiveness in regional and international processes. Without immediate attention to the disparities and inequities that exist in the education system Kyrgyz children will continue to have unequal access to education, and many will face problems with school attendance and completion. This will definitely affect the wellbeing of society and hinder the development of the country.

The report offers factual, concise descriptions of the situation of out-of-school children in the country, the progress the government of the Kyrgyz Republic has made in this area, and the huge challenges remaining. The data analysis reveals the undeniable fact that too many children in the country are being left behind, deprived of their right to education – simply because they were born in remote rural area, or have a disability, or live in a disadvantaged or poor family.

I believe the report will make a substantial contribution to developing a deeper understanding of the existing barriers and challenges in access to and completion of general education in Kyrgyz Republic. This report provides a sound methodology and a foundation of analysis that can guide policy makers in identifying smart, sustainable policies and practices for addressing the out-of-school children issue. The contributions to this study by multiple national experts, international consultants, UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, are an example of the effective partnerships to advance Education For All and Millennium Development Goals agenda. I would like to express my gratitude to the officials from the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Statistical Committee and the Ministry of Social Affairs for their commitment and support during the reports' development.

We hope that this report will stimulate further discussion, policy analysis and collaboration towards appropriate evidence-based measures to reduce disparities in education for the most marginalized children and ensure accessible, flexible and affordable educational services for every child in Kyrgyz Republic.

Jonathan Veitch

UNICEF Representative in the Kyrgyz Republic

Acronyms

5DE	Five Dimensions of Exclusion
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CbK	Community based Kindergarten
CEECIS	Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
CMF	OOSCI Conceptual and Methodological Framework
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
MFA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic
MoF	Ministry of Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic
MoH	Ministry of Health of the Kyrgyz Republic
NSC	National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OOSC	Out-of-School Children
OOSCI	Out-of-School Children Initiative
PAMC	Public Advisory and Monitoring Council
PISA	OECD Program for International Student Assessment
UCW	Understanding Children's Work
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Introduction

Country context

Geography and climate

The Kyrgyz Republic is a landlocked country in Central Asia, which is bordered by Kazakhstan to the north, China to the east, Uzbekistan to the west and Tajikistan to the south. It is located on the ancient Silk Route, which connects China, the Middle East and Europe. Several of the highest peaks in the world which are over 7000 meters are in the Kyrgyz Republic, and mountains cover almost 90 per cent of the territory. The Kyrgyz Republic's territory is about 200 000 square kilometres, which is almost the size of Great Britain.



Figure 1. Map of the Kyrgyz Republic

Source: CIA 2011

The climate in the Kyrgyz Republic ranges from subtropical in the South to continental in the North. In most regions the average temperature in winter ranges between -4°C and -14°C while in summer it is from $+20^{\circ}\text{C}$ up to $+27^{\circ}\text{C}$ in low mountainous areas. In most provinces all four seasons are present, though some extreme weather conditions occur in some remote regions. For example, winter in Chatkal valley in the North West of the country lasts almost six months, cold weather in Aksai valley in the North East reaches -50°C in winter and hot temperature in the South regions and Chui valley reaches $+44^{\circ}\text{C}$ in summer (Plant Genetic Resources in Central Asia and Caucasus 2003).

People and culture

The people of the Kyrgyz Republic are diverse in terms of their cultural and historical heritage. Today, according to the national census of 2009, the Kyrgyz Republic is home to 5 million 363 thousand people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Kyrgyz (71 per cent), Uzbek (14.3 per cent), Russian (12.5 per cent), Dungan (1.1 per cent), Uyghur (1.0 per cent), Tajik (0.9 per cent), Turk (0.7 per cent), Kazakh (0.9 per cent), Tatar (0.9 per cent), German (0.4 per cent), Ukrainian (0.4 per cent), Korean (0.4 per cent), and others. Almost two-thirds of the population (64 per cent) lives in rural areas. The major cities are Bishkek and Osh with 836 000 and 260 000 inhabitants respectively (NSC 2009). Annual growth rate is 0.8 per cent, life expectancy at birth 67 years, total fertility rate (births per woman) is 2.7, and 28 per cent of the population are between 0-14 years old.

The Kyrgyz are divided into southerners and northerners¹, who have slightly different dialects and customs, as well as social and economic development (Berdikeeva 2006)². The latter fact may have an impact on access to education, since the South is traditionally agricultural and poorer than the North. The South borders with Uzbekistan and has a significant population of Uzbek population, while the North remains more Europeanized.

Politics and International Relations

The Kyrgyz Republic's location between China, the Middle East and Europe along the old Silk Way makes it a strategic spot in international politics, though the country is landlocked and farther from an ocean than any other country on earth. At the same time, the Kyrgyz Republic's relationship with its immediate neighbour countries is mostly limited to socioeconomic activities, giving the major political arena to Russia and USA, which have their strategic military bases in the country. The socioeconomic activities of immediate neighbouring countries of the Kyrgyz Republic include the exchange of natural resources. For example, the Kyrgyz Republic has considerable water resources which Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan lack. At the same time, the Kyrgyz Republic imports gas and oil from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

In terms of internal politics, the Kyrgyz Republic has more liberal social policies than other Central Asian republics. It is also the first country with a parliamentary government in the post-Soviet zone. The election of President Roza Otunbayeva in 2010 is a highly visible gain for women as there are still few women in politics in the Kyrgyz Republic. However, there has been a substantial increase of the number of seats in the National Parliament held by women and currently women hold around one-quarter of seats. Other encouraging developments during the last decade are the construction of a good quality Bishkek-Osh highway, which connects the southern and northern parts of the country, significant reductions in child and maternal mortality rates, and the rapid increase in mobile telephone subscribers and internet users (United Nations Statistics Division 2010).

The Kyrgyz Republic has experienced two revolutions and several ethnic clashes during the last two decades. This caused massive displacement, migration, distrust among ethnic groups and barriers to schooling. Therefore, the condition of peace is fundamental to reducing the number of out-of-school children in the country, especially in the South. As UNICEF's Executive Director Mr. Anthony Lake points out, "[Peace] is found in the secure and healthy lives of girls and boys. If we improve their lives today, we help them inherit a better tomorrow" (UN News Centre 2010).

Economy

The Kyrgyz Republic is a mountainous country that makes it the major water and electricity provider of its neighbouring nations, compensating for the absence of oil and gas on its territory. The Kyrgyz Republic is home to *Inilchek*, which is one of the largest glaciers on earth. The largest walnut forests in the world and a wide variety of flora and fauna, as well as mineral resources, including gold, antimony, uranium and mercury are located in the country. Economic products in the Kyrgyz Republic is still mostly concentrated on primary agricultural goods such as cotton and tobacco ((UNDP in the Kyrgyz Republic 2011) Other important industries in the Kyrgyz republic are small machinery, food processing, cement, garment production and re-export of commodities from China and Middle East to Russia and Uzbekistan (Mogilevski and Atamanov 2009).

The country's economy after independence has been characterized by international loans, money transfers by labour migrants, shuttle trades and a liberal regime of currency exchange. The Kyrgyz Republic is amongst the poorest countries in the world with a GDP per capita (int. \$ based on PPP³) of 2,229, and is the second-poorest country in the CEECIS region following Tajikistan (World Bank 2012). In 2009 more than one-fifth of the population – 21.7 per cent – lived under less than 2 USD a day (World Bank 2012). The situation has improved significantly over the past decade, however, in particular since 2002 when around two-thirds of the population lived on less than 2 USD a day. General government gross debt is high, estimated by the IMF to be 51.2 per cent of GDP in 2012 (IMF 2012).

¹ The division into southerners and northerners is somewhat contradictory, since some parts of Jalalabad oblast, which is considered to be a southern province, are actually located in a more northerner geographic latitude than Naryn oblast, which is perceived as a northern province.

² http://www.aytmatov.org/metinler/national_identity_of_kyrgyzstan_-_the_case_of_clan_politics.pdf

³ Current international USD.

The 2011 UN Human Development Report ranks the Kyrgyz Republic 126th in the world with respect to its Human Development Index (HDI) (UNDP 2011). This is a composite index combining life expectancy, wealth in terms of GNI per capita (PPP\$), and mean of years of schooling for adults aged 25 years and expected years of schooling for children of school entering age. In comparison, Tajikistan is ranked 127th (the lowest in the CEECIS region) and Uzbekistan is ranked 115th (the third lowest in the region). Although the HDI ranking is low, it is higher than would be expected given the level of wealth in terms of GDP per capita. This is because the other two components of the index - life expectancy, and mean and expected years of schooling - are relatively high compared to other countries which are at a similar economic level.

Education Sector

The system of education in the Kyrgyz Republic consists of pre-school institutions, primary schools, secondary schools, vocational schools, specialized technical schools, and universities. While pre-school and upper secondary school are non-compulsory in the Kyrgyz Republic, primary and lower secondary education are compulsory and last nine years. In accordance with the Law on Education, compulsory education consists of general primary (*nachalnoe obshee*) for grades 1 to 4 and general lower secondary (*osnovnoe obshee*) for grades 5 to 9 (Chalkova and Usenova 2008, 38). The ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) levels and corresponding levels of education in the Kyrgyz Republic are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Education programmes in the Kyrgyz Republic by ISCED level⁴

National				ISCED			
Name of the education programme	Theoretical entrance age	Theoretical duration (in years)	Is the programme part of Compulsory Education?	ISCED97 level	Theoretical entrance age	Theoretical duration (in years)	
Pre-school education (Программа дошкольного образования)	3	3	N	Pre-primary education	0	3	4
Preparation school class (Подготовительный класс в школе)	6	1	N				
Primary general education (Начальное общее образование)	7	4 (grade 1 to 4)	Y	Primary education	1	7	4
Basic general education (Основное общее (1-й этап среднего образования))	11	5 (grade 5 to 9)	Y	Lower secondary education	2	11	5
Secondary general education (Среднее общее (2-й этап среднего образования))	16	2	N	Upper secondary education	3	16	2

⁴ These are the ISCED 1997 mappings, which have not yet been updated to the new ISCED 2011, which includes changes in the classification of early childhood and tertiary education and introduces educational attainment in the framework. The ISCED mappings were retrieved from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics website: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/ISCEDMappings/Pages/default.aspx>

Primary professional education (Программа начального профессионального образования на базе основного общего образования)	16	2	N				
Primary professional education (Программа начального профессионального образования на базе среднего общего образования)	18	≥1	N	Post-secondary non-tertiary education	4	18	1
Secondary professional education (Среднее профессиональное образование на базе основного общего образования)	16	4	N	Upper secondary education	3	16	2
				First stage of tertiary education	5	18	2
High professional education, Bachelor degree (Высшее профессиональное образование (ведущее к поступлению в программы продвинутых научных исследований))	18	4	N	First stage of tertiary education	5	18	4
High professional education (Высшее профессиональное образование (ведущее к поступлению в программы продвинутых научных исследований))	18	5	N				5

The levels of education are as follows:

- Pre-primary education is from 3 to 6 years old, and encompasses both pre-school and preparatory school class before primary education (this is further discussed below).
- Primary education in the Kyrgyz Republic is compulsory and is normally from 7 to 10 years old (covering grades 1 to 4).
- Lower secondary education in the Kyrgyz Republic is also compulsory and is normally from 11 to 15 years old (covering grades 5 to 9).
- Upper secondary school is non-compulsory and can be completed in general education schools, lyceums, vocational schools and specialized technical schools.
- Post-secondary school in the Kyrgyz Republic can be continued in vocational schools, specialized technical schools and universities.

Pre-school education in the Kyrgyz Republic includes nursery (*yasli*) and kindergarten (*sad*). While nursery may enrol children of 0.5-3 years old, kindergartens are for 3-7 years old children only. There are also community based kindergartens introduced in the country since 2004 by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and further developed by UNICEF, Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and other implementing partners. As in other countries, pre-primary education in the Kyrgyz Republic acts as a

bridge between home and a school-based atmosphere (OECD 2002). Pre-school age children may go to kindergarten until they reach age six and then can move into preparatory sections of kindergartens. Most children go to primary school when they reach the official primary school age. Except when referring to pre-school institutions and corresponding government statistics, the term pre-primary rather than pre-school is generally used throughout this report which refers to the Kyrgyz Republic ISCED defined age range of pre-primary, which is age 3 to 6. In addition, the term “dimension 1” is also used based on the Five Dimensions of Exclusion model adopted for this report, which is further discussed below. In this model, dimension 1 refers to children of pre-primary school age who are not in pre-primary or primary school aged one year before the official primary school, which is 6 years old (primary school starts at 7 years old).

When students graduate from lower secondary school they may choose to enter either vocational schools or specialized technical schools. If they choose to do so their first two or three years of vocational education are counted as upper secondary education, thus making them eligible for admission to university after completion of vocational or technical schools. Vocational and technical education usually lasts four years after lower secondary school or two years after upper secondary school. Since recent years, graduates of compulsory education may also go to lyceums, after which they may continue their study at the university as 3rd year undergraduate students.

In order to receive a state accredited school diploma, a Kyrgyz student must complete 11 years of schooling and pass 4 mandatory exams in writing, math, history and a foreign language. After completion of nine year compulsory education students have the choice to move on to upper secondary school or get a certificate of completion⁵.

Main Players and Stakeholders

The Kyrgyz Republic is heading toward the building of a parliamentary system in the country where not a single person or clan rules the nation, but the people through their representatives. People came to this decision following the collapse of the two previous governments headed by presidents. Therefore, the national parliament is emerging as the main player in the country. The parliament has the power to issue laws, approve an action and budget, block and initiate a decision, and elect the head of the state and the government. The other emerging power in the country is the public advisory councils, created to monitor activities of ministries and state agencies. They represent a variety of communities and intend to serve as independent observers and as a bridge between the people and the government. The media of the Kyrgyz Republic is a powerful player in forming public opinion and developing policies, and international broadcasting companies also have a considerable impact on society and the government.

Regarding the OOSC initiative for the Kyrgyz Republic, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Social Protection and the National Statistical Committee are the key national institutions, which will share the responsibility for the project and benefit from the results. A number of international organizations play important roles in coordinating and financing the project, and some existing projects and initiatives launched by these organizations are closely related to the issue of out-of-school children. For example, UNICEF has provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Social Protection within the framework of “Reforming Social Policy” project, which is aimed at improving issues in the areas of reporting and defining the needs of citizens for social protection (Ministry of Social Protection of the Kyrgyz Republic 2011).

The Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children

The Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children (OOSCI) launched by UNICEF and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) involves twenty-six countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE-CIS), Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, which represent the magnitude of the problem of out-of-school children. The initiative is aimed at accelerating efforts to achieve universal primary education by addressing the problem of out-of-school children. This requires a joint action towards improving the statistical information and analysis, developing profiles of out-of-school children, identifying barriers and bottlenecks which

⁵ The certificate of completion of nine year compulsory education does not give the right to university admission.

lead to exclusion and improving policies for reducing the number of excluded and marginalized children. This report is a country report for the Kyrgyz Republic, which contains the Profiles of Excluded Children, Barriers and Bottlenecks related to the exclusion, and Policies and Strategies to address the barriers.

Overview of the Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE)⁶

This report employs the Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE) model which was used by all twenty-six participating countries in the OOSC initiative (UNICEF and UIS 2011). It provides a broader, more complex and equity-oriented view of exclusion from education than is addressed by the Millennium Development Goals. The model of the 5DE presents 5 target groups of children for the data and policy analysis that span three levels of education: pre-primary, primary and lower secondary; and two different population groups: children who are out of school, and those who are in school but at risk of dropping out. Each group represents a distinct Dimension of Exclusion that requires specific statistical and policy analysis. The term “exclusion” has a broad meaning for the purpose of this study. Children who are out of school are excluded *from* education, while children who are at risk of dropping out may be excluded *within* education – because for example they face discriminatory practices or attitudes within the school.

The 5DE also seeks to systematically disaggregate statistics on out-of-school children according to characteristics such as wealth, disability, location, gender, race/ethnicity and age group. In addition, it looks at the interaction between these disparities which create complex and mutually reinforcing patterns of disadvantage and barriers to schooling.

In general, children of primary or lower secondary school age are considered as being in school if they participate in primary or secondary education (ISCED levels 1, 2 and 3). Children of primary or lower secondary age who do not participate in education programmes at ISCED levels 1, 2 and 3 are considered as being out of school, including those in pre-primary and non-formal education.

The Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE) are defined as follows:

Dimension 1: Children of pre-primary school age who are not in pre-primary or primary school. This is the largest group of excluded children in the Kyrgyz Republic.
Dimension 2: Children of primary school age who are not in primary or secondary school.
Dimension 3: Children of lower secondary school age who are not in primary or secondary school.
Dimension 4: Children who are in primary school but at risk of dropping out.
Dimension 5: Children who are in lower secondary school but at risk of dropping out.

Dimensions 4 and 5 focus on children who are in school but at risk of dropping out. Understanding more about these groups of children is key to preventing them from becoming the out-of-school children of tomorrow (Lewin 2007).

In summary, the 5DE, through both the *out-of-school* and *at-risk* Dimensions set out specific groups of children who are not participating in the intended level of education for the intended duration and at the intended age (due to overage and repetition). The Five Dimensions are displayed below.

⁶ See Appendix 2 for the flows between the Five Dimensions of Exclusion

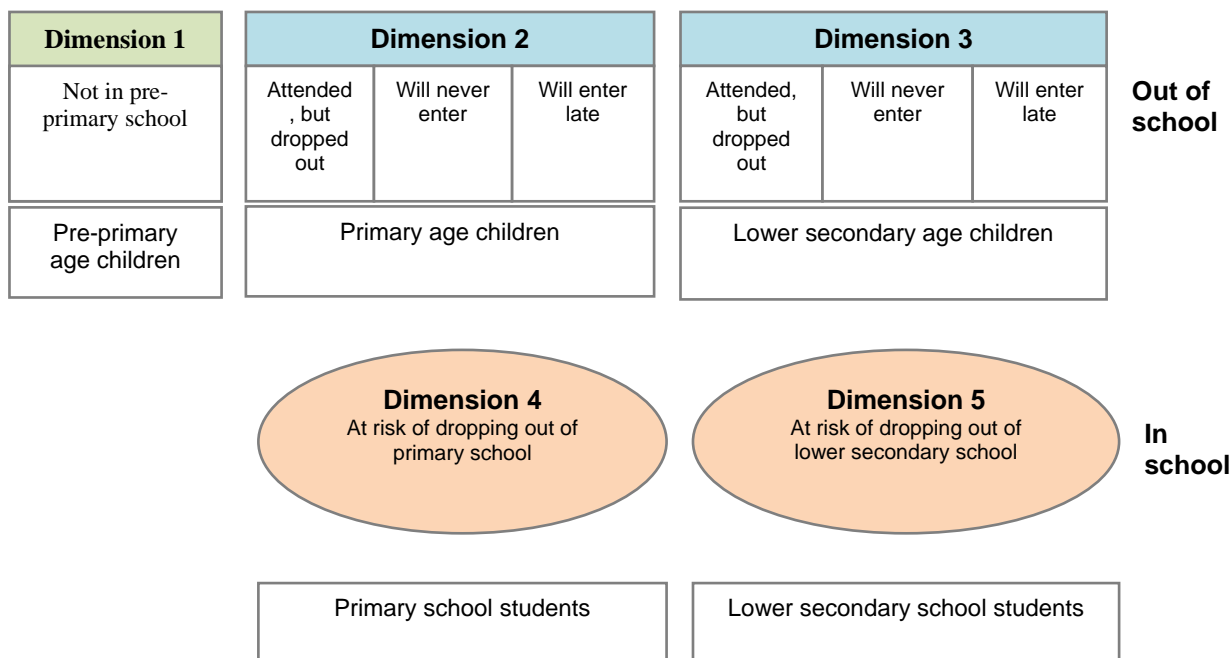


Figure 2. Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE)

There are several important aspects to note regarding the 5DE:

- **Dimension 1** represents a group of children who do not benefit from pre-primary education and who may therefore not be adequately prepared for primary education, placing them at risk of not entering into primary education or, if they do enter, at risk of dropping out. Although pre-primary education programmes may be longer than one year, the 5DE propose a standard approach for all countries by focusing on pre-primary participation of children in the year preceding the official entrance age into primary school. This is done in the interest of simplicity and to allow cross-national comparisons. In the Kyrgyz Republic, the official primary entrance age is 7 years old, so dimension 1 refers to children aged 6 years who are not in pre-primary or primary education.
- Second, each of the out-of-school **Dimensions 2 and 3** is divided into three mutually exclusive categories based on previous or future school exposure: children who attended in the past and dropped out, children who will never enter school, and children who will enter school in the future.
- Third, children in **Dimensions 4 and 5** – those in school but at risk of exclusion from education – are grouped by the level of education they attend, regardless of their age: primary (Dimension 4) or lower secondary (Dimension 5). This is different from Dimensions 2 and 3, which group out-of-school children by their age: primary age (Dimension 2) and lower secondary age (Dimension 3). The framework thus covers two different types of populations: the population of out-of-school children of school-going age, and the population of at-risk pupils of any age in primary or lower secondary school.

Methodology

The methodology of the study followed the Conceptual and Methodological Framework of the OOSC Global Initiative (UNICEF and UIS 2011). No new research was conducted with the exception of a number of interviews and focus group discussions to strengthen specific areas of the report. Therefore, the project relied mainly on existing studies and publications as well as information provided by regional consultants and national experts.

The study employed the most recent and representative administrative and household survey data. Information for earlier years is also referred to in the analysis of trends and developments, as well as to cover gaps where data for later years are not available.

The data sources used for this report include:

a) Three major sources of data:

- *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006, Kyrgyz Republic (MICS)*. MICS is a household survey which was carried out by international and national organizations in the Kyrgyz Republic during 2005-2006. In order to provide a representative estimate, the total sample volume of the survey covered 5,200 households or around 25,000 persons, among which 32.7 per cent were children under 15 years of age, 12 per cent were children of 0-4 ages and the ethnic composition of the sample consisted of 61.5 per cent Kyrgyz, 18.8 per cent Uzbek and 13.5 per cent Russian respondents.
- *National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (NSC)*. The NSC website provides administrative statistical data for different sectors, including the education, demographic and social protection system. Education data is collected from the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Health. The NSC website is <http://www.stat.kg>.
- The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Data Centre is an online repository for internationally comparable statistics on education, science and technology, culture, and communication. The system uses the data provided by national and international institutions and provides key indicators on all levels of the education system. The UIS website is <http://www.uis.unesco.org>.

b) Other resources include:

- *Out of School Children in the Kyrgyz Republic* (UNICEF and MoES 2008). This report uses both administrative and household survey data. It includes an analysis of MICS data as well as the findings of a study carried out by the El-Pikir Public Opinion Research Centre (NGO) with a special focus on street children.
- *Education and Science in the Kyrgyz Republic* (NSC and MoES 2008), which is a statistical bulletin published by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic. Although the most recent available data is generally for the 2006/2007 school year, it also includes data for 2007/2008 for the following categories: number of schools, distribution of students by sex, grade, age, language of instruction, type of area, educational level of teachers, number of graduates from general schools, number of boarding schools by regions and number of 7-17 year OOSC who never attended school. The bulletin also tabulates data on physical, material and technical resources of daytime general schools in 2007.
- The ILO and NSC National Child Labour Survey (SIMPOC) conducted in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2007 (ILO and NSC 2008a; ILO and NSC 2008b).
- The 2006 and 2009 OECD-PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) studies, which assess 15-year-olds' competencies in the key subjects reading, mathematics and science (OECD 2010; OECD 2011a; OECD 2011b; Schleicher 2012);
- *Review of Indicators of the "Education for All" Program in the Kyrgyz Republic* (NSC and MoES 2007), which covers data up to 2006/2007;
- *Kyrgyz Republic Demographic and Health Survey, 1997* (Research Institute of Obstetrics and Pediatrics [Kyrgyz Republic] and Macro International Inc. 1998);
- Chalkova, E, Usenova, V. Handbook of Social Workers on Child Labour [Справочник социального работника по вопросам детского труда], ILO 2008

Chapter 1: Who are the excluded? Profiles of excluded children

Overview of data sources

The data provided by UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the MICS Kyrgyz Republic survey and the website of the National Statistical Committee (NSC) serve as primary sources of information. The report also uses data directly provided by MoES and MSA as well as secondary resources as listed in the bibliography section. While the UIS data base⁷ is based on numbers provided by NSC, which in turn receives data from other national institutions, MICS represents an independent survey conducted in 2005.

It should be noted that estimates from household surveys tend to differ from administrative data for various reasons. Surveys usually measure school attendance, whereas administrative data records enrolment. Attendance rates are often lower than enrolment rates, as children may be enrolled but never attend school. Other differences arise because surveys are subject to sampling error, and both types of data may suffer from other reliability issues. Administrative data from NSC which covers all schools is more suitable for levels of disaggregation where sample sizes from household survey data may be too small. However, other sources of errors such as from data entry and inaccurate school reporting can reduce the reliability also of administrative data.

Large discrepancies were found in OOSC figures between different sources, some of which can be attributed to the differences in methodology as described above. However, some discrepancies are not as easily explained, and these require serious consideration. These discrepancies are further discussed in the section Profiles of OOSC in Dimensions 2 and 3.

General picture of out-of-school children in the country

According to the National Statistical Committee (NSC), around 29,000 school age children (7-15 years old) were out of school in 2009, which is about 3 per cent of the total population of the corresponding school age children (NSC 2011). However, estimates vary greatly between different sources, and according to UIS over 66,418 children were out of school in 2009 (UIS 2012). These differences are further discussed below in the section "Discrepancies in OOSC figures between different sources".

According to the latest UIS figure for 2010, 63,383 children are out of school, of which 18,490 of primary school age and 44,893 of lower secondary school age. In percentage terms, 4.7 per cent of primary age children and 8.2 per cent of lower secondary age children were out of school in 2010.

The chart below shows regional as well rural/urban differences in the number of out-of-school children (NSC 2011). From highest to lowest, the regions with the largest number of out-of-school children are: Osh, Jalal-Abad, Chui, Bishkek, Batken, Osh city, Naryn and Talas. Although Talas oblast has the smallest number of out-of-school children, as a percentage of the population it has the highest rate of out-of-school children (0.71 per cent). Bishkek has the lowest percentage of out-of-school children (0.43 per cent).

⁷ www.uis.unesco.org

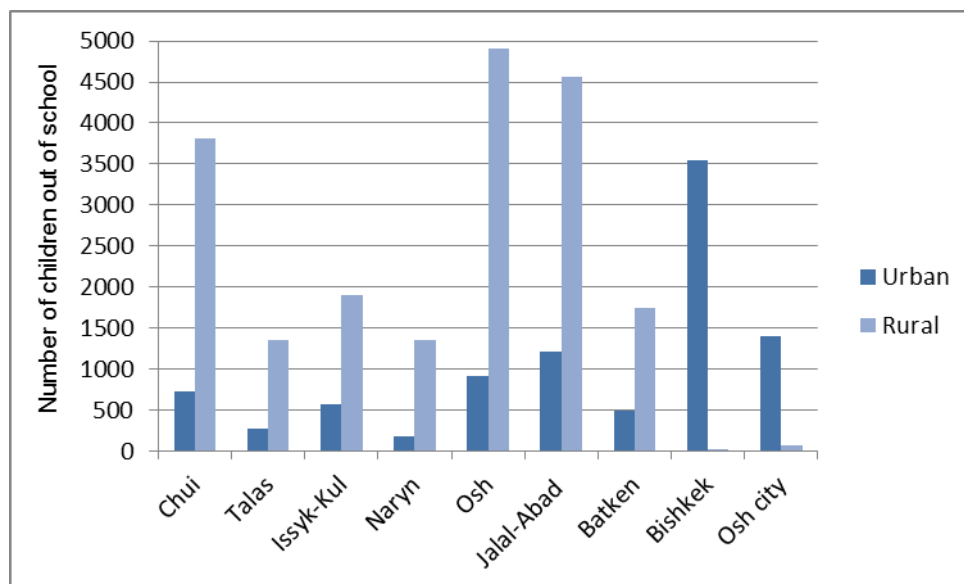


Figure 3. Number of out-of-school children by region and location (urban/rural), 2009

Source: NSC 2011

Profiles of children in Dimension 1

Overview

Historically, pre-primary enrolment has always been low in the Kyrgyz Republic compared to other countries in the CEECIS region, as well as compared to the rest of the world. The graph below shows the trend in gross enrolment rates in the Kyrgyz Republic since 1986. The gross enrolment rate plummeted during the transition period following the collapse of communism and is currently still far below the pre-transition level, though climbing steadily. However, even at its peak in 1990, the gross enrolment rate was only 33.9 per cent.

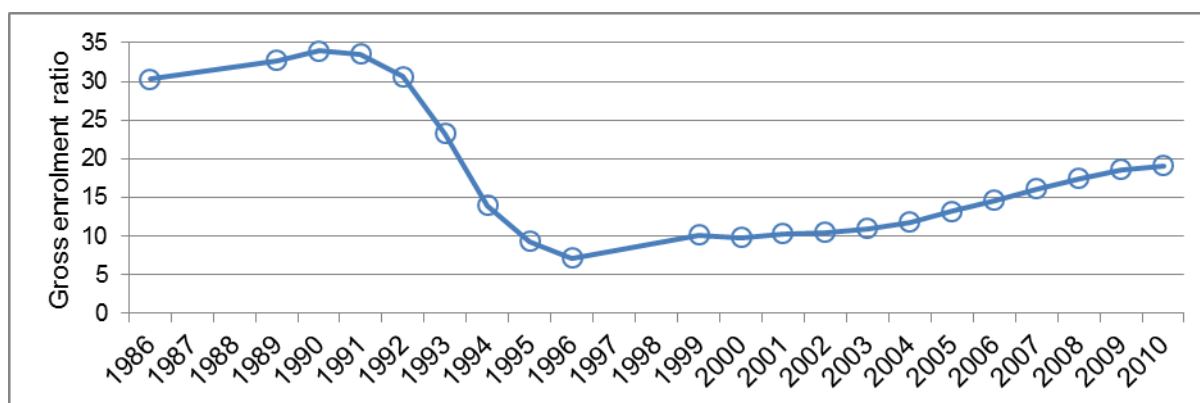


Figure 4. Pre-primary gross enrolment rate in the Kyrgyz Republic, 1986-2010⁸

Source: UIS 2012

Gross enrolment includes all age groups (not just pre-primary age children) and is therefore generally higher than the net enrolment rate. Historical data before 1999 is not available for net enrolment at pre-primary level, but it can be seen that from 1999 to 2010 net enrolment rates have been several percentage points lower than gross enrolment rates. In 2010, the latest year for which data is available, the gross enrolment rate was 19.1 per cent and the net enrolment was 15.7 per cent.

⁸ Data from 1987 to 1988 and from 1997 to 1998 is not available.

The gender parity index for the net enrolment rate at pre-primary is close to 1, indicating that there is gender parity at pre-primary level (UIS 2012). In 2010, slightly more girls than boys were enrolled in pre-primary (gender parity index 1.02) and the reverse was true for 2009 (gender parity index of 0.98).

The map below provides an overview of net enrolment rates in pre-primary in the CEECIS region for 2008. The Kyrgyz Republic has the lowest pre-primary net enrolment rate in the region after Tajikistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Figure 5. Map of pre-primary net enrolment rate in the CEECIS region, 2010⁹

Source: UIS 2012

The lack of pre-school institutions is a major reason for low enrolments. In recent years there has been a significant growth of private and community based pre-school institutions, as illustrated in the chart below, which help meet the demand (although from 2009 to 2010 there has been a slight decline) (UIS 2012). At the same time, the pre-primary school age population has decreased from 436 538 in 2003 to 403 874 in 2009. During this time the number of pupils in pre-school institutions has grown from 47 348 in 2003 to 72 424 in 2009.

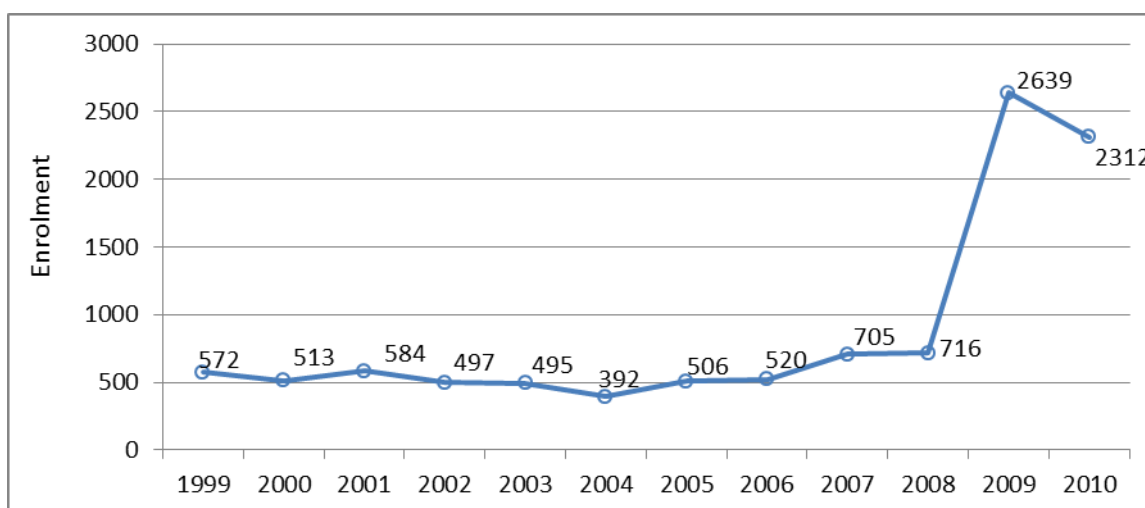


Figure 6. Total private enrolment in pre-primary education, 1999-2010

Source: UIS 2012

⁹ Data is from 2010 with the following exceptions: data for Georgia is from 2007; data for the Russian Federation and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is from 2009; and data for Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan is from 2011.

According to the Department of Pre-school, School and Extracurricular Education of the MoES there were 503 pre-school institutions in 2010, where 63 875 children were enrolled. In addition, 279 community based kindergartens (CbK) were set up with the support of the Asian Development Bank, UNICEF, and Aga-Khan Foundation.

To address the issue of school preparedness the government also launched free 240 hour and 100 hour programmes to prepare children for schooling. The 100-hour programme covered 40 000 children in 2006 and 70 436 children in 2010 – an annual increase of around 10 000 children. The 240-hour programme of mandatory prior-to-school preparation was implemented in March 2011. Thanks to these programmes enrolment in pre-school increased to 13.4 per cent in 2010 (up from 7 per cent in 2007) according to government statistics¹⁰. However, these are relatively short programmes – they are not equivalent to full-time enrolment in pre-primary in the year preceding primary school as defined in the OOSCI Conceptual and Methodological Framework (UNICEF and UIS 2011).

In the 5DE model which was discussed in the previous chapter, dimension 1 represents the percentage of children aged one year younger than the official primary age who are not in pre-primary or primary education. According to this definition, 45.4 per cent of children in this age range are not in pre-primary education in 2010. In other words, over half of children aged one year younger than the official primary age are enrolled in pre-primary education, which is significantly higher than the 15.7 per cent pre-primary net enrolment rate which covers the entire pre-primary age group. This indicates that many children enter school at around age 6, and very few between the age of 3 (the pre-primary starting age) and 5.

The following sections look at pre-primary age children with respect to poverty, location, family-related issues and migration.

Out of pre-primary children in low income families

Poverty affects children's physical health (e.g. low birth weight, stunting), cognitive ability, school enrolment and achievement (e.g. years of schooling, high school completion and test scores), and emotional and behavioural outcomes (Brooks-Gunn and Duncan 1997; Sridhar 2008). These effects have long term outcomes and influence not only school achievement but also success in life.

Poverty has a particularly big impact on pre-primary enrolment in the Kyrgyz Republic. Pre-school education was free during the Soviet period but financing was cut after independence. Schools have been forced to charge parents in order to be able to maintain their institutions. According to Damira Kudaibergenova, Director of the Department for pre-school, basic and extracurricular education of MoES, "the main reason of exclusion is poverty – many parents are unable to pay for their children's education" (personal communication, June 23, 2011). In the Kyrgyz Republic the overall level of poverty in the country has been increasing since 2005 (NSC 2011). Regional differences are significant, and this is further discussed below.

The following citation from an interview with a mother of three children illustrates the situation for poor families:

"My sister works in the sewing industry and her husband does occasional jobs, and is rarely at home. They have three children and they were able to send only the youngest to kindergarten. Their other two daughters always play in the yard of the living block, until she returns home lately at night. Most of our neighbours cannot give their children to kindergartens because they have to pay a minimum of 300 soms for soap and other detergents every three months, minimum 1200 soms monthly for food, minimum 1000 soms for stationary and office supplies every semester, minimum 500 soms annually for maintenance of buildings. In addition, there are other payments, such as charity budgets, which occur simultaneously during the year. This is a situation in a state sponsored kindergarten, where my children used to go. Private kindergartens charge much more." (Egemberdieva K., Bishkek, focus group discussion, June 25, 2011).

¹⁰ The UIS figure of net enrolment in pre-primary for 2010 is slightly higher – 15.7 per cent.

A conversation with a father of four in the Ak-Jar district of Bishkek (a sub-urban district) further highlights the problems faced by poor families:

"I come home once a week. My wife sells Chinese goods in Osh bazaar and returns home after 9.00 PM. Our children are usually busy with housekeeping or play nearby. They have never attended kindergarten, because we do not have official registration in Bishkek. Our earning is too small to pay endless "tips" which administrators charge for such people like us. My two other sisters who live in this village have 10 children and they have the same problems. Most of our neighbours cannot send their children to school either. Even many secondary school age children of our village do not attend school, because they have to take care for their youngest brothers and sisters" (Turgunbaev, M., Ak-Jar village, focus group discussion, June 25, 2011).

Because of poverty and the costs of pre-primary, many parents prefer to skip pre-primary and enrol their children in primary education once they are 6 years old to reduce family expenses, as primary education costs are less than pre-primary. Therefore, around 40 per cent of 6 year olds go directly to primary schools (UIS 2012; Van Ravens 2010). This is also encouraged by the government to reduce the cost of schooling. Although early enrolment into primary is not necessarily problematic, children skipping the preparatory phase for primary may find it difficult to adjust to the school environment and face a greater risk of dropping out.

Geographic profile of out of pre-primary children

Enrolment in pre-primary in 2009 was five times higher in urban areas (24.4 per cent) compared to rural areas (4.2 per cent) (UNICEF 2011a). Not all rural areas, however, have lower enrolment in pre-primary compared to urban areas. In fact some of the most remote and mountainous rayons have more children enrolled than some areas close to cities rayons. The Chatkal rayon, which is located in an isolated valley and at least 200 kilometres away from any town, is among the top 8 rayons with the highest level of pre-primary enrolment. At the same time, such towns and oblast centres as Balykchy town, Jalal-Abad town, Naryn town and Karakol town are amongst the areas with the lowest enrolment rates as shown in the map below.

The rayons with the highest rates of enrolment are in the north part of Jalal-Abad oblast (Ala-Buka, Chatkal¹¹ and Nookan), and in Chui oblast (Jayil, Kemin), including Bishkek City. The lowest enrolment rates are in Naryn, Batken, Osh and the southern part of Issyk-Kul oblast. It is interesting to note that the northern parts of Jalal-Abad and Issyk-Kul oblasts differ in the enrolment rates from their southern parts. Also, the enrolment rate in the most mountainous and remote rayons Chatkal and Alay is higher than in the rayons located closer to capital cities (Van Ravens 2010). This is the result of a project launched in 2004 under the Presidential Administration supported by ADB and later on expanded through AKF and UNICEF funded initiatives.

The map below shows that there are huge regional differences in state pre-primary enrolment, and hence an analysis by region or rayon would be essential to target specific areas for intervention in order to reduce the number of out-of-school children.

¹¹ Although Ala-Buka and Chatkal rayon is a part of Jalal-Abad oblast, it is located in the North-Western part of the country

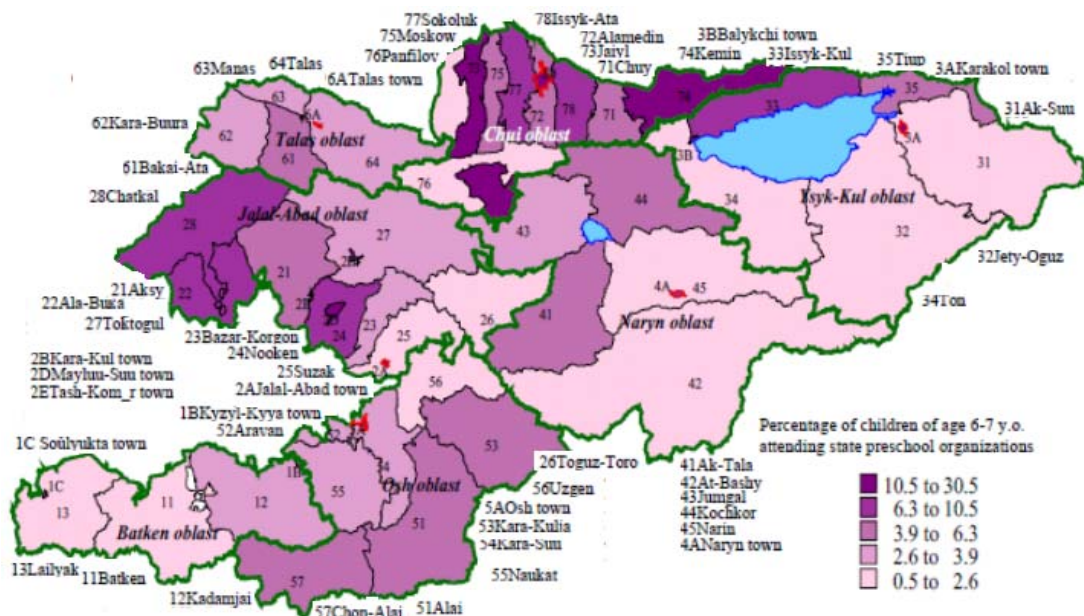


Figure 7. Map showing the percentage of 6-7 year old children enrolled in state pre-school institutions by region

Source: "The Best Future for Every Child," by Jan van Ravens, 2010, Report by World Bank and UNICEF, p. 20. Copyright 2010 by Jan van Ravens. Reprinted with permission.

Bishkek has the largest number of children enrolled in pre-school institutions and has also seen considerable growth, from 15,786 in 2003 to 23,456 in 2009. The Bishkek City Administration reported that only about 700 children were not enrolled in pre-primary in Bishkek as of August 2011 (Bengard 2011). Trends for other regions are shown in the graph below (NSC 2010). Pre-primary enrolments are growing fastest in Osh and Jalal-Abad oblasts and slowest in Talas oblast. The other regions, including Issyk-Kul, Naryn, Batken and Chui oblasts, show more moderate patterns of growth.

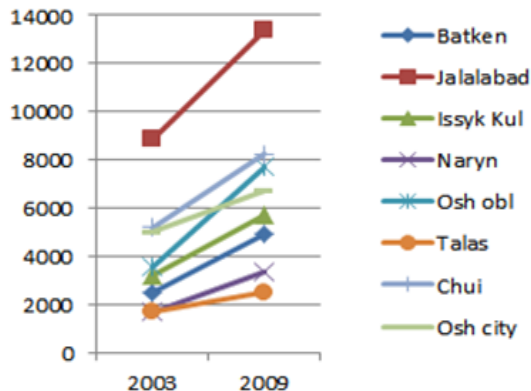


Figure 8. Enrolments in pre-school institutions in 2003 and 2009 by oblast

Source: NSC 2010

Out of pre-primary children without one or both parents

Besides socio-economic, geographic and cultural reasons of exclusion, there are also family related problems which lead to exclusion from pre-primary education. According to UNICEF estimates, around 140,000 children of 0-17 years in the Kyrgyz Republic live without one or both their parents (2011). Children in such families have a higher probability of being out of pre-primary than children living with both parents (MICS 2006).

Related to this issue is the maternal mortality rate¹², which is much higher in some parts of the country than in others. Osh City has a very high maternal mortality rate (168.4 per 100,000 live births), which is almost three times above the country average (63.5 per 100,000 live births) (NSC 2010). Naryn oblast (105 per 100,000 live births) and Osh oblast (93.2 per 100,000 live births) also have rates which are much higher than the country average. Children in certain areas of the country are therefore more likely to be raised without their natural mother, which can subsequently lead to exclusion from pre-primary and further education.

Out of pre-primary children in new settlements

The massive migration of poor families to major cities, in particular Bishkek and Osh, has created new strata in the Kyrgyz society – the suburban or new settlement inhabitants (called *novostroiki* - literally “areas containing new constructions”). There are around 50 new settlements around the capital with a combined population of around 125,000 and 200,000 – up to one-fifth of the total population of Bishkek (World Bank 2011). Osh has 8 settlements with a combined population possibly in excess of 50,000. These settlements are characterized by lack of basic infrastructure such as running water and electricity, significant hygiene issues, and lack of social and educational services such as schools and pre-schools. These settlements have a significant impact on social life and the political climate in the Kyrgyz White House.

Parents living in these settlements are generally unable to afford pre-primary, hence the government set up a free shortened pre-primary programme (a 240 hour and a 100 hour programme) to prepare children for schooling. However, according to a USAID survey of 2,746 children living in these settlements, only about one quarter of pre-primary age children (ages 6 to 7) were enrolled in a free state pre-primary programme due to lack of awareness of the programme or because the programme was full (USAID 2011). The USAID survey aimed to identify pre-primary age children who were not currently enrolled in pre-primary in order to involve them in the free 100 hour pre-school programme in collaboration with the MoES. Many residents were sceptical that a pre-school programme exists which does not charge for schooling, and were hesitant in providing contact details to interviewers.

The results of the survey in terms of the percentage of pre-primary age children not enrolled in pre-primary at the time of the survey, and the percentage of children from low-income families, are displayed in the figure below.

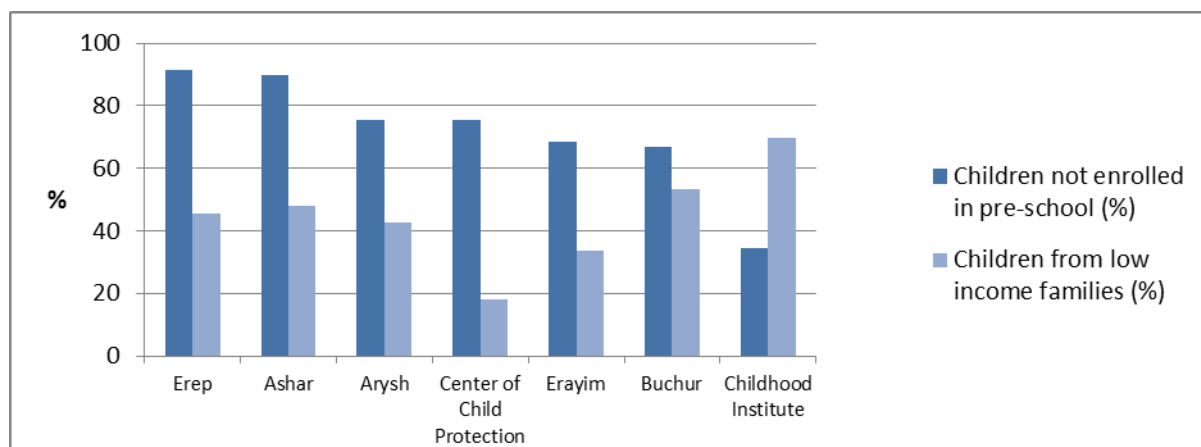


Figure 9. Percentage of pre-primary age children not enrolled in pre-primary and from low income families in new settlements around Bishkek

Source: USAID 2011

¹² Maternal death is the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes. (<http://www.who.int/healthinfo/statistics/indmaternalmortality/en/index.html>).

The settlements themselves vary widely in terms of the development of basic infrastructure and services as well as poverty levels. Therefore, outreach programs need to employ different approaches and priorities to each settlement where the situation of children is different.

Analytical summary

Net enrolment in pre-primary education has been growing steadily over the past decade, but is still lower than pre-transition levels and is the third lowest in the CEECIS region. Net enrolment in pre-primary was only 15.7 per cent in 2010. Moreover, this figure masks significant regional disparities, as pre-primary enrolment rates range from less than 2 per cent to over 30 per cent in different parts of the country.

Dimension 1 in the 5DE model represents only children aged one year younger than the official primary age. When using this definition over half of children age 6 are in pre-primary education. Clearly there is a big increase in enrolment as children turn 6 years old, and when considering the dimension 1 figure rather than net enrolment, the Kyrgyz Republic is around average in the CEECIS region. The newly introduced 100 and 240 hour pre-school programs will further increase enrolment for 6 year olds. It should be noted though that for the majority of countries in the world, the entrance age of primary is 6 years old or earlier. This means that even if enrolment of six year olds in the Kyrgyz Republic reaches 100 per cent, children will still start school relatively late as long as enrolment of 5 year olds remains very low – which is currently still the case. Investing in pre-primary for disadvantaged children, particularly very young children (prior to age 5) is crucial to reduce disparities between socio-economic groups. This is an important issue which is further discussed in the chapter on Policies and strategies.

Geographic location, poverty and living without one or both parents are significant risks associated with exclusion from pre-primary education, and often it is a combination of these factors. The growing phenomenon of children in new settlements with poor infrastructure is also a cause of concern which requires urgent attention.

Profiles of OOSC in Dimensions 2 and 3

Overview

This section analyzes the data on out-of-school children in dimensions 2 (children of primary school age who are not in school) and dimension 3 (children of lower secondary school age who are not in school). It focuses in particular on the profiles of the largest groups of out-of-school children and the key messages that can be drawn from the data.

While the percentage of out-of-school children of pre-primary age is decreasing (though still very high), the percentage of out-of-school children of primary school age has been increasing since 2004 (UIS 2012). It has more than doubled since 2004, when only 2.1 per cent of primary age children were out of school compared to 4.7 per cent in 2010. However, there has been a significant decline from 2009 to 2010, as in 2009 6.1 per cent of primary school age children were out of school.

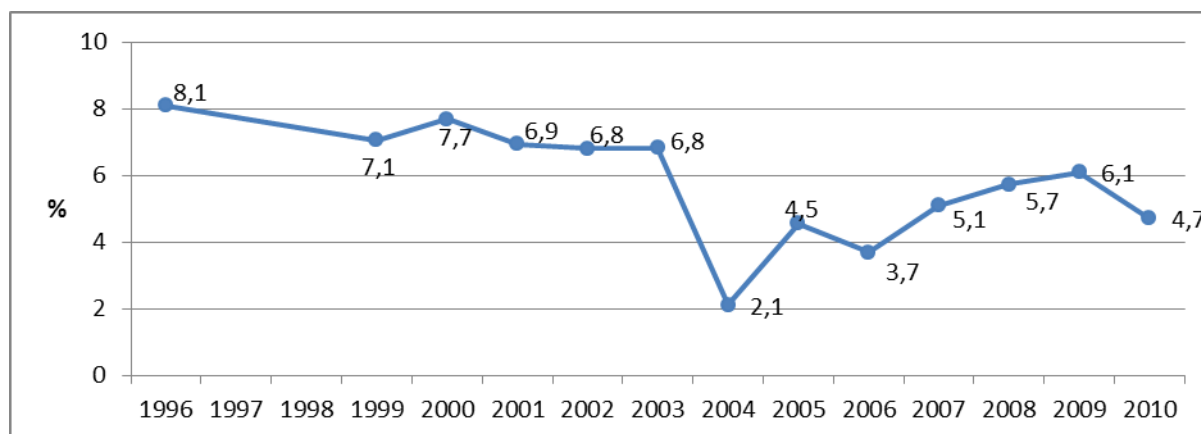


Figure 10. Percentage of primary school age children out of school, 1996-2010¹³

Source: UIS 2012

For children of lower-secondary school age, the trend from 2004 to 2010 shown in the figure below is the reverse of the trend for primary school age children shown in the figure above. The out-of-school rate has declined since 2004, but the last two years there has been a significant increase, from 6.8 per cent to 8.2 per cent.

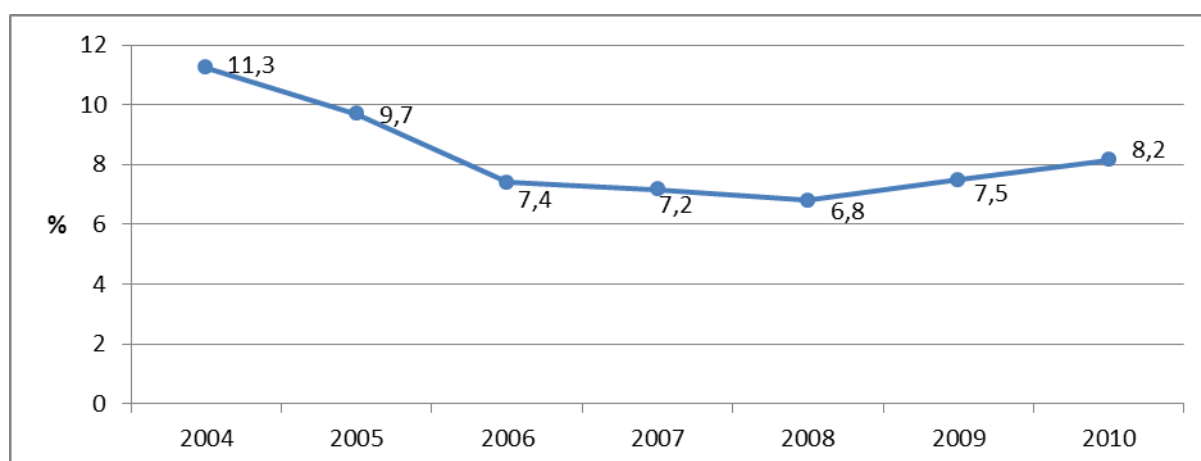


Figure 11. Percentage of lower-secondary school age children out of school, 2004-2010

Source: UIS 2012

¹³ Data from 1997 to 1998 is not available.

The rising rate of out-of-school children is a cause for concern. The figures above indicate that the out-of-school rate of primary school age children increased significantly since 2004, and for lower-secondary school age children has increased significantly since 2008. Although for primary age school children the out-of-school rate declined from 2009 to 2010, it remains to be seen whether this trend will continue.

The gender parity index for both primary and secondary net enrolment is 0.99, indicating that there are no significant differences between female and male enrolment rates.

The two charts below show the number of out-of-school children (measured as children who are not enrolled in school) in dimensions 2 and 3 in rural and urban areas according to NSC (2009) data. Out-of-school children in rural areas are shown in the chart on the left and in urban areas in the chart on the right. In both rural and urban areas the pattern of out-of-school children by age, from 7 to 15 years old, is similar. The largest group of out-of-school children by far is 7 year olds, which indicates late enrolment in primary school as at age 8 the number of out-of-school children is much reduced. From around age 11 the number of out-of-school children begins to increase, with a particularly steep increase for 15 year olds compared to 14 year olds. However, the number of out-of-school children is still much lower for 15 year olds than for 7 year olds.

Although this trend is the same in rural and urban areas, the number of out-of-school children at all age levels is much higher in rural areas. The number of out-of-school children in rural areas is on the rise (UNICEF 2010) and in 2009 the number of non-enrolled children in rural areas constituted around 68 per cent of all the non-enrolled (NSC 2011). Regionally, Batken, Jalal-Abad and Naryn oblasts have the largest numbers of out-of-school children (NSC 2011).

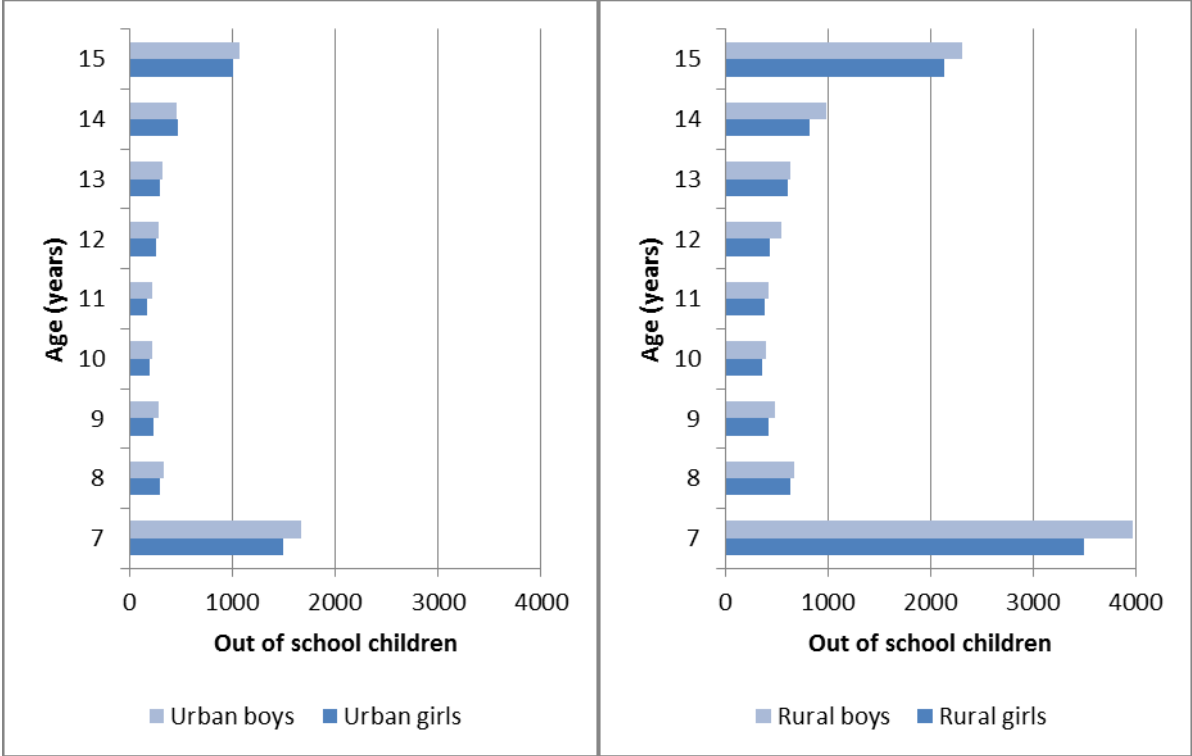


Figure 12. 7 to 15 year olds out of school in rural areas (left) and urban areas (right) by sex, 2009

Source: NSC 2011

The age pattern found in MICS (2006) household survey data from the 2005-2006 school year is consistent with the NSC data shown above, with the number of out-of-school children being highest at age 7 followed by age 15 (looking only at the age range of compulsory schooling). This confirms the general trend of late entry into primary school and a significant increase in dropout towards the end of lower secondary school¹⁴. This is an important observation for further research and action.

¹⁴ The NSC data may include 15 year olds who quit school after completing lower secondary. However, as upper secondary normally starts at age 16, the number of 15 year olds who complete lower secondary early and then quit is likely to be very small (if any).

Discrepancies in OOSC figures between different sources

The number of children in Dimensions 2 and 3 varies greatly between different sources. According to the National Statistical Committee the number of non-enrolled children for primary and lower secondary school age children in 2009 was 29 016 (NSC 2011). According to UIS data for the same year, 24,314 primary age children and 42,104 lower secondary age children were out of school, so a total of 66 418 out-of-school children for dimensions 2 and 3 combined (UIS 2012). Therefore, the UIS figure is more than double the NSC figure.

For comparison, MICS household data from 2005 gives figures of 35,861 primary age (8.3 per cent) and 19,777 lower secondary age (3.4 per cent) out-of-school children, so a total of 55,638 out-of-school children (5.5 per cent). This figure is in between the NSC and UIS figures, but it needs to be taken into account that this is from four years earlier. The UIS 2005 figure for primary age out-of-school children (19,991 children) is lower than MICS, but the figure for lower secondary age out-of-school children for the same year (57,481) is much higher. These large discrepancies in figures of out-of-school children warrant further examination to identify the sources of error and how these could be resolved, so that in the future more consistent and reliable figures can be provided. One of the reasons why the MICS figures are different is because it records attendance rather than enrolment, which could lead to higher figures because a child may be enrolled but not attending school. Data quality issues (errors made in data collection, recording and reporting) are also factors, and as MICS is a household survey one also needs to take into account sampling error¹⁵.

The large discrepancy between the UIS figure and the NSC figure can be explained by the calculation method used. The NSC figure is based on information reported by schools – children of compulsory school age who dropped out, or are in the civil registry but have never enrolled. Children who are out of school but not recorded as such by schools are excluded from this figure, and this can lead to a significantly lower out of school rate – due to the difficulty of identifying out-of-school children as well as inaccuracies in reporting. The UIS figure is based on population census data, but population data can also be unreliable (Carr-Hill 2012). Certain populations have often been excluded (such as mobile population and homeless populations). This has improved in more recent censuses, but children in particular still tend to be undercounted. Population census data tends to underestimate rather than overestimate the population, which would lead to underestimates of the rate of out-of-school children. However, there is another source of error which is that a census is normally only carried out every 10 years, and population estimates become less reliable the longer it is since the last census date. In the case of the Kyrgyz Republic, the projected population from the 1999 census turned out to be too high. When population figures were adjusted based on the 2009 census, the population figures were reduced, and as a result the UIS out-of-school children rates are now much lower than the previous estimates.

The chart below compares MICS survey, UIS administrative data based on the old population census data, and revised UIS administrative data based on the revised population census data, for the percentage of primary school age children who are out of school for 2005. It clearly illustrates that out of school rates can differ significantly for the reasons described above. For boys of primary school age, the MICS household survey figure of 9.5 per cent is more than double the revised UIS figure of 4.7 per cent. The differences between the old and revised UIS figure are also significant – a 2.9 per cent difference for boys¹⁶, and 2.7 per cent for girls¹⁷.

¹⁵ Sampling error is the amount of inaccuracy caused by using only a portion of a population i.e. a sample, in contrast to the whole population in the case of administrative data used by NSC and UIS.

¹⁶ For boys: out of school rate of 7.6 per cent compared to 4.7 per cent for the old and revised figures, respectively.

¹⁷ For girls: out of school rate of 7.1 per cent compared to 4.4 per cent for the old and revised figures, respectively)

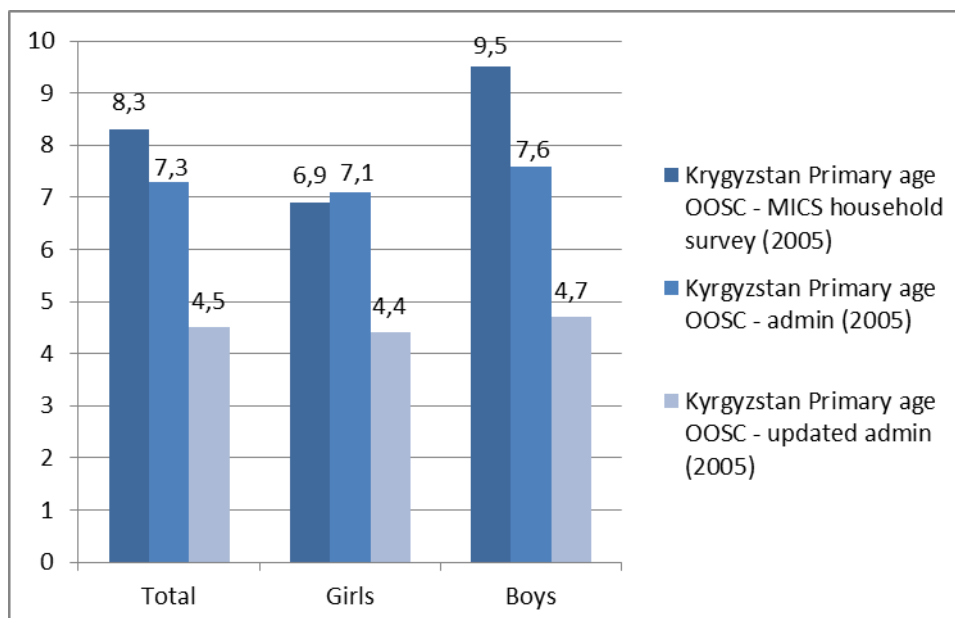


Figure 13. Percentage of primary-age out-of-school children – comparison of survey and administrative data

Source: UIS 2012; MICS 2006

Numbers in the different publications of NSC can also differ significantly. For example, the number of children in pre-school institutions for 2006 in the statistical bulletin published by National Statistical Committee in 2008 is 56 156 (NSC and MoES 2008), while the statistical bulletin published in 2007 gives a figure of 48 109 for the same year (NSC and MoES 2007).

A fourth figure for out-of-school children is provided by the ILO National Child Labour Survey (SIMPOC) conducted in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2007 (ILO and NSC 2008a). According to this survey, 12.9 per cent of children between ages 5 and 14 are out of school. This is much higher than any of the figures provided in other sources. The main cause of this inconsistency is likely to be the different age range used – as compulsory schooling in the Kyrgyz Republic starts at 7 years old rather than at 5 years old.

In summary, out of school rates can differ significantly – even by a factor of two or more – because of the calculation methods used as well as the reliability of the data used in the calculation. Inaccurate population projections, data quality issues, inaccurate reporting of out-of-school children and enrolment by schools, use of enrolment versus attendance, and the use of different age ranges for compulsory schooling are amongst the factors which can result in very different figures for out-of-school children. The issue of data inconsistencies between different sources is one of the major problems to be resolved and is further discussed in the concluding chapter of the report.

Children of migrants

Experts of the El-Pikir Research Group have identified children of migrant parents as one of the most vulnerable groups who are at a particularly high risk of exclusion from education:

“Even children who migrate with their parents are left without a choice of school, since they are forced to move from one apartment to another (a family can change addresses up to 6–8 times a year). The frequent lack of documents makes migrant children vulnerable in terms of access to education and medical services and this category of children is at greatest risk of being involved in illegal or hard labour, drug trafficking, begging and prostitution” (UNICEF and MoES 2008: 33).

Bishkek’s population has doubled since 1989 and is now at 1 million 300 thousand due to internal migration. Among them are 300 thousand with no registration documents, which is a cause of non-enrolment of children in the education system (Elkeeva 2011). Many schools are overcrowded because of migration and sometimes 15 desks are shared by up to 45 children (Alybaeva 2011).

During the last five years emigration from the Kyrgyz Republic was 9 times higher than immigration into the Kyrgyz Republic (33,380 and 3,829 correspondingly in 2009). Most emigration is to Russia and Kazakhstan, and the reverse is also true as most immigrants are from these two countries. The ethnic composition of emigrants is mainly Kyrgyz (14,552) and Russian (9,971) (NSC 2010).

According to Damira Kudaibergenova¹⁸, the head of the department for pre-primary, primary and conventional education in the MoES, many migrant workers take their children with them to Kazakhstan and Russia, where they work with their parents in plantations, kitchen, bazaars, and other locations. These children usually do not attend school, but are registered in Kyrgyz schools. There are also children who are not officially registered in Kyrgyz schools, nor are they enrolled in schools abroad. These children are unaccounted for.

Children living with a disability

The Kyrgyz Republic supports the principles of social inclusion and non-discrimination against children with disabilities, but the medical model of disability still prevails (UNICEF 2008). Children with disabilities and their families receive significant financial contributions from the state. However, they still suffer from segregation in specialized schools, living away from their families in institutions, and being excluded from many social activities.

According to a UNICEF (2008) survey of the situation of children with disabilities in the Kyrgyz Republic, a large percentage – 43.4 per cent – were not going to school at all, as shown in the chart below. Many children were not admitted to community schools because they are disabled. Moreover, in many cases children with disabilities attended schools only occasionally and may miss several months of school because they spend a lot of time in the hospital. Children with disabilities are also more likely to drop out earlier. This data suggests that children with disabilities are the most disadvantaged group in terms of their likelihood of being out of school.

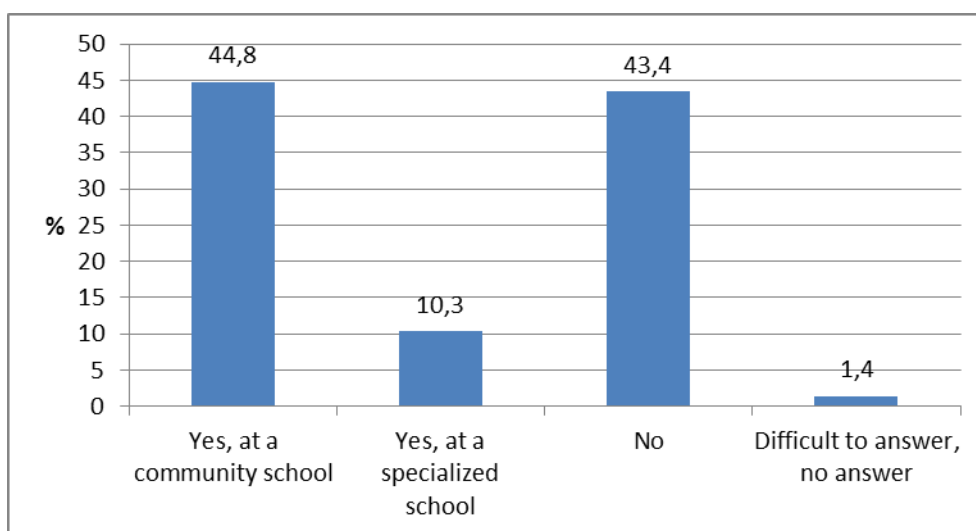


Figure 14. Responses of parents of children with disabilities to the question "is your child studying at school?"

Source: UNICEF 2008

On a positive note, in 2005 more than 150 people with disabilities since childhood qualified as young specialists with higher education diplomas from the Kyrgyz Medical Academy. Although much progress remains to be made, this signals a promising beginning to the provision of equal opportunities to people with disabilities.

Children from non-Kyrgyz speaking families

Data on out-of-school children by ethnic background is not available. However, the MICS (2006) household survey does provide data on out-of-school children by language spoken by the head of the household, specifically: Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek, or other languages. The chart below shows the percentage of out-of-school children by linguistic group for dimension 2 (children of primary age) and dimension 3 (children of lower secondary age).

¹⁸ personal conversation, June 23, 2011

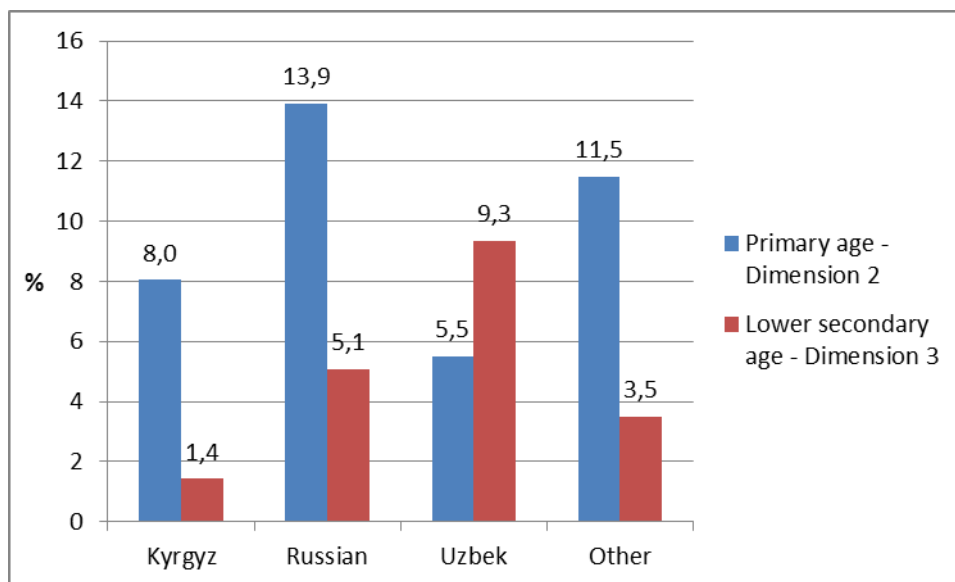


Figure 15. Percentage of out-of-school children by linguistic groups, 2005

Source: MICS 2006

At the primary level, children from Russian speaking households and households speaking ‘other’ languages are less likely to be in school, whereas children from Uzbek speaking households are most likely to be in school.

At the lower secondary level, children from families where the head of the household speaks a language other than Kyrgyz are much more likely to be out of school. The age when children tend to drop out from lower secondary school is quite different for each linguistic group. Children in Kyrgyz speaking households have relatively low dropout rates in lower secondary. Children from Russian-speaking households have unusually high dropout rates around the end of primary and beginning of lower secondary. Children from Uzbek-speaking households suddenly drop out in very large numbers around age 15. Similarly, but to a lesser extent, children from families speaking other languages are more likely to dropout from age 14.

The Uzbek population is concentrated around Osh and Jalal-Abad cities and they are historically involved in the commercial and service sectors. Many Uzbek children may therefore dropout before completing lower secondary to start work in these sectors, for example as entrepreneurs, bakers, sellers and shoe cleaners.

Boys from low-income families

MICS (2006) data shows that children from poor households are much more likely to be out of school compared to children from wealthier households. At lower secondary and upper secondary levels, poverty affects boys much more than girls, as shown in the chart below¹⁹. At lower secondary age level in the poorest households, 5.4 per cent of boys are out of school compared to just 2.1 per cent of girls. In the wealthiest quintile, hardly any girls or boys of lower secondary age are out of school.

¹⁹ Differences between girls and boys are not as large at primary school age level, so in this case sampling error makes such comparisons less reliable.

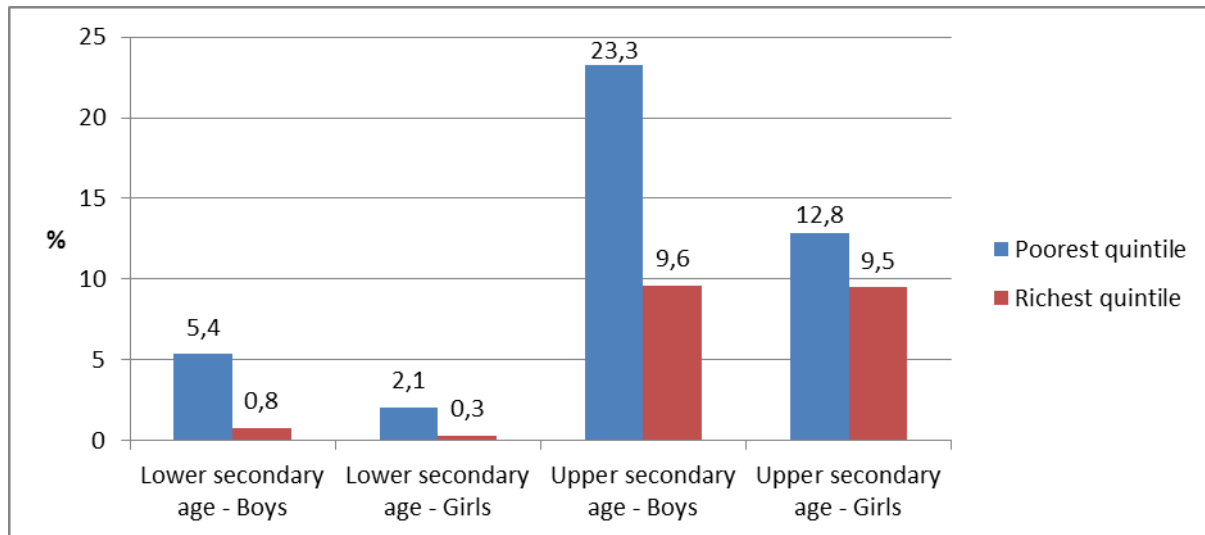


Figure 16. Percentage of out-of-school children by age level, sex and wealth quintile, 2005

Source: MICS 2006

In addition, the gap between rich and poor grows for boys as they get older. By the time boys reach upper secondary age, almost a quarter of the poorest quintile is out of school compared to less than 10 per cent of the wealthiest quintile. For girls, the gap between rich and poor is much smaller. This may be because adolescent boys from low income families face greater pressure to start earning an income. In the wealthiest quintile, upper secondary age out of school rates for girls and boys are around the same level.

The relatively high percentage of children out of school at primary age, regardless of sex or wealth quintile, is largely due to late enrolment in primary as discussed previously²⁰.

Child labourers

The Kyrgyz Republic has a high child labour rate, particularly among young children. According to the ILO-NSC National Child Labour Survey conducted in 2007, over a quarter of children ages 5 to 14 – around 26 per cent – are involved in child labour (ILO and NSC 2008a). For older children ages 12 to 14 the child labour is just slightly higher, 28.4 per cent compared to 25.2 per cent for younger children ages 5 to 11 per cent. In comparing the two it needs to be taken into account that the ILO definition of child labour is different for these two age groups. For children aged 5 to 11 years old, the ILO definition of child labour comprises any economic activity for at least one hour during the reference week²¹. For children aged 12 to 14 years old, the ILO definition of child labour comprises any non-light (or “regular”) economic activity for at least 14 hours during the reference week. In contrast, the national definition of child labour unconditionally prohibits children ages 5 to 13 from economic employment and also has much stricter working hour limits for children ages 14 to 17²² (ILO and NSC 2008b). Consequently, according to the national definition, the child labour

²⁰ Relatively small differences between girls and boys and different wealth quintiles may reflect sampling error rather than actual differences.

²¹ Economic activity covers children in all market production and in certain types of non-market production, including production of goods for own use. It includes forms of work in both the formal and informal sectors, as well as forms of work both inside and outside family settings). The resolution on child labour statistics adopted at the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 2008 provides a first-ever set of global standards for translating the international legal standards on child labour into statistical terms (see <http://www.ilo.org/ipsec/ChildlabourstatisticsSIMPOC/ICLSandchildlabour/lang--en/index.htm>). The ICLS resolution states that child labour may be measured in terms of the engagement of children in productive activities on the basis of the general production boundary. The general production boundary is a broad concept encompassing all activities whose performance can be delegated to another person with the same desired results. This includes unpaid household services (i.e., household chores) that are outside the more narrow System of National Accounts (SNA) production boundary.

²² The Kyrgyz Republic definition of child labourers includes the following:

i) Children working in unconditional worst forms of child labour;

rates are much higher: 32.7 per cent for children ages 5 to 11, 55 per cent for children ages 12 to 14, and 62.3 per cent for children ages 15 to 17.

The majority of children's work is unpaid family work conducted within their own household premises, and only a small percentage of older children work in the services and sales sector outside the home – such as in shops, restaurants and markets. Agricultural activity and the production of goods for home consumption account for most children's work.

According to the National Child Labour Survey, there was no significant difference in school attendance between child labourers and non-child-labourers ages 7 to 15. Differences in attendance rates only appeared from age 16 to 17 which suggests child labourers do not drop out until they finish compulsory education to learn a trade. However, working can still mean time away from school, and have a negative impact on children's school performance.

It is important to note that at least some of the statistics presented in this section are likely to be underestimates. For purposes of cross-national comparability, the statistics are based on the responses from parents, and the reference period is 'last week'. However, the National Child Labour Survey obtained information from both parents (or guardians) and children themselves, and also included a twelve month reference period. When a twelve month reference period is used, the child labour rate often increases because of fluctuations in agricultural activities throughout the year, from several percentage points to more than double (e.g. in the case of Talas oblast). When responses from children and parents are combined, child labour rates also increase because parents sometimes did not report on the employment of their children, but their children did declare themselves to be employed (in 6.1 per cent of cases the responses from parents and children did not match). It may be that parents were reluctant to report employment in particular of younger children.

As shown in the chart below, almost one third of children living in rural areas are involved in child labour which is around twice as high as children in urban areas. There are also significant differences in the percentage of child labourers according to household head education and household expenditure quintile. In families where the head of the household has not completed primary education (indicated as 'none') almost one third of children are out of school, compared to families where the head of the household has completed 'higher education', where only about 19 per cent of children are out of school. Similarly for households in the poorest two quintiles, around 26-30 per cent of children are working compared to around 18 per cent in the wealthiest quintile. This indicates that the issue of child labour is related to poverty, as discussed in the previous section, but that it is also surprisingly common for children from wealthier households to work.

-
- ii) Children in hazardous work;
 - iii) All working children aged 5-13;
 - iv) Working children aged 14-15 who attend school and work 12 or more hours per week;
 - v) Working children aged 14-15 who do not attend school but work 24 or more hours per week
 - vi) Working children aged 16-17 who attend school and work more than 18 hours per week; and
 - vii) Working children aged 16-17 who do not attend school but work more than 36 hours per week.

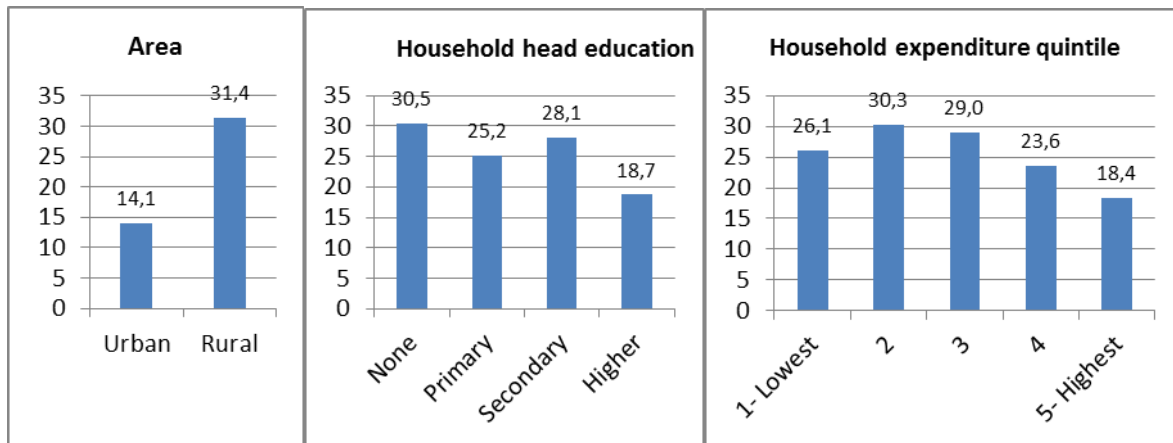


Figure 17. Percentage of children ages 5 to 14 involved in child labour by area, household head education and household expenditure quintile, 2007

Source: ILO and NSC 2008a

Regional differences in child labourers are even larger, ranging from a very low 0.5 per cent in Bishkek to a very high 62.5 per cent in Issyk-Kul as shown in the map below. One would expect heavily rural regions to have higher child labour rates given that children mainly work in the agricultural sector, but this is not always the case. However, this could have been influenced by the timing of the survey, as agricultural activities vary throughout the year. In Talas, for children ages 5 to 17, employment jumps from 19.5 per cent using a one week reference period to 52.6 per cent when using a twelve month reference period. It is also important to note that these are the results of a household survey, and hence potentially large numbers of street children involved in child labour were not included. Street children are discussed in detail in the next section.

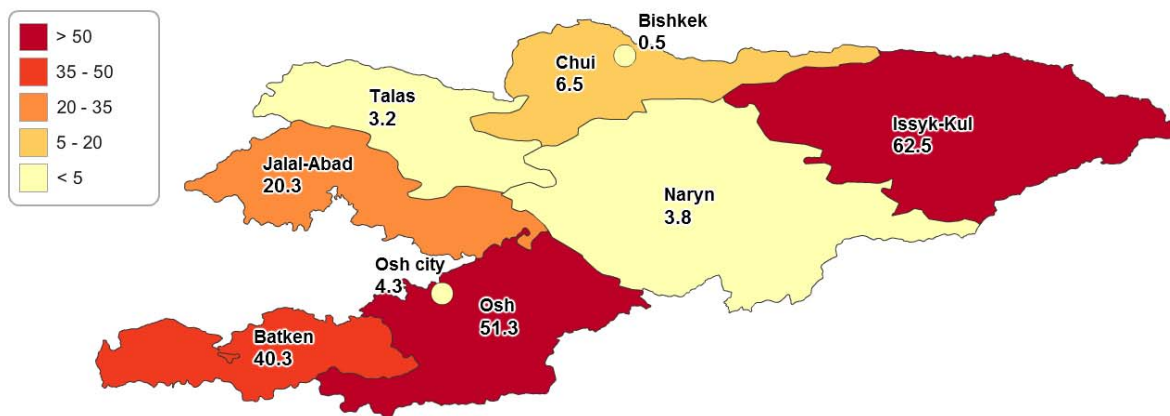


Figure 18. Map showing the percentage of child labourers ages 5 to 14 by oblast, 2007

Source: ILO and NSC 2008a

Agriculture is by far the biggest economic sector in the Kyrgyz Republic, with over half of the population engaged in either agriculture (including fishing, hunting and forestry), or in the production of goods and services for home consumption – which often involves agricultural work (ILO and NSC 2008b). In particular in rural areas children are employed almost exclusively in agricultural occupations. In urban areas, around 15 per cent of children are employed in non-agricultural jobs, mainly in sales (such as working in markets) and services (such as working in hotels or restaurants).

There are no major differences between girls and boys and children of different age groups – ages 5 to 11 and ages 12 to 14 – with regard to their likelihood to be involved in child labour (ILO and NSC 2008a). Boys are just slightly more likely than girls to be working and older children are slightly more likely to be working than younger children. However, the gap increases in rural areas where older boys in particular are more likely to be working than older girls. This may be partially explained by the role of animal husbandry which tends to be a male activity. In addition, there are also significant differences in the type of work done by girls and boys, as shown in the chart below.

Boys are more than twice as likely to be involved in agricultural work, and girls are much more likely to be involved in home production for household consumption – although as indicated above this also often involves agricultural work. Girls are also less likely to work in sales and other non-agricultural sectors. In addition, for school-going children in the age range of 7 to 17, almost all girls - 98 per cent - carry out unpaid household services, compared to 87 per cent of boys (ILO and NSC 2008b).

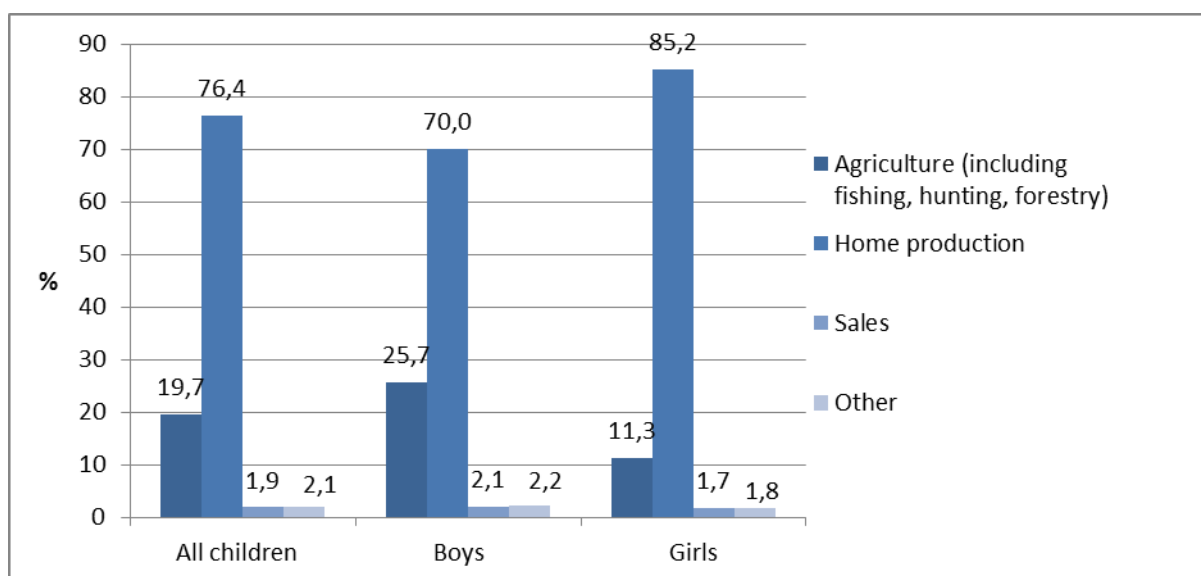


Figure 19. Distribution of child labourers by economic sector (%)

Source: ILO and NSC 2008a

Multivariate analysis of the National Child Labour Survey in 2007 indicated that household ownership of livestock and arable land significantly increased children's likelihood of being involved in child labour (ILO and NSC 2008b). A similar result was found based on analysis of the MICS household data (2006), looking at the relationship between land ownership and school attendance. It was found that children in households which own land tend to miss school days more frequently.

Street children

UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science published a report on out-of-school children in 2008 which includes the results of a study on street children conducted by the El-Pikir Public Opinion Research Centre (UNICEF and MoES 2008). Children ages 7 to 17 were interviewed who spend most of their time on the streets and are heavily influenced by street life. Since street children are concentrated mainly in urban areas, the study concentrated on cities and towns, specifically: Bishkek, Jalal-Abad, Osh, Batken, Karakol, Naryn, Kyzyl-Kiya (Osh province), Talas and Tokmak. A total of 873 interviews were conducted with children, and in addition local key informants such as heads of aiyl okmotu (local self-government bodies) were also interviewed. The interviewed children had been living on the streets on average for about 3 years. Around 28 per cent usually spent the night at home, while others slept in various locations including on the street (13.1 per cent), in abandoned barns (11.2 per cent), in attics (10 per cent), with acquaintances, relatives or friends (9.2 per cent), in rented apartments (5.6 per cent), and in various other places such as basements, under bridges and in pipes.

The study revealed that street children and child labourers are the most vulnerable to exclusion from school. Around two-thirds of street children were not attending school at the time of the survey. The figure is much higher for boys, of whom 69.1 per cent did not attend school compared to 44.1 per cent of girls. The majority of street children used to go to school in the past, however, and only 18 per cent had never attended any school. Over half of the children (58.8 per cent) reported that they missed classes during school days often or very often when they used to attend. On average the children had completed around five-and-half years of schooling, but over a quarter (28.4 per cent) had not completed primary education.

67.7 per cent of children were ethnic Kyrgyz, 15.9 per cent Uzbek, 8.8 per cent Russians and 2.4 per cent Tajik (with the remaining 5.2 per cent from various ethnic groups including Tatar, German and Dunghan). This corresponds quite closely to the general ethnic makeup of the Kyrgyz Republic, which indicates that children from all ethnic groups are equally vulnerable to ending up on the streets.

Children affected by ethnic conflicts

Although studies about the situation of children after the 2010 violence have not yet been completed, the conflict hit the whole region severely, leaving thousands of children with psychological trauma and economic hardship, since many families lost their homes. Many schools were destroyed, around 400,000 children were displaced (Solodunova 2011) and thousands of families have not yet fully recovered from trauma. Moreover, alcoholism and racketeering are on the rise in schools as Osh City administration informs (Kant 2011). Therefore, the main concern of both international and national organizations is currently directed toward returning some normalcy to the life of Osh and Jalal-Abad cities by rebuilding schools and houses. UNICEF has initiated a “Welcome to school” program which aims at providing more than 1000 schools in the south with study materials (Grebennikova 2011). 134 million USD in donations have been received following the June events (AKIPress 2011).

Children belonging to multiple OOSC risk groups

As discussed earlier in this chapter, children of migrants, children living with a disability, boys from low-income families, children from non-Kyrgyz speaking families, child labourers, street children and children affected by ethnic conflicts are more likely to be out of school. However, those children with more than one of these characteristics are even more likely to be out of school.

The Lyuli ethnic minority community near Osh city in the Kyrgyz Republic is an example of how belonging to multiple OOSC risk groups compounds the risk of exclusion from education (UNICEF 2011b)²³. The Lyuli community is very poor and from an early age children are involved in child labour to support their families. Only around 40 per cent of school age Lyuli children are enrolled in school. In addition, those children who do attend school often do so irregularly. Every day before school starts, teachers make a tour around the school to ‘collect’ children. Of those children that do enrol in 1st grade, only a fraction make it to 9th grade; in 2012 over three times as many children were enrolled in 1st grade compared to 9th grade.

The Lyuli community is highly marginalized and prejudice makes it difficult to find better work outside of their communities. In addition, the prospect of discrimination and bullying reduce the likelihood of Lyuli youth continuing education outside their community. The local school does not go beyond 9th grade. In a community of around 4000 people, only 80 people have completed 10th grade and only 2 have completed higher education.

Gender discrimination is reflected in the fact that more than twice as many boys are enrolled compared to girls (277 boys compared to just 120 girls). Early marriage is one of the reasons why girls are more likely to drop out.

For Lyuli children, it is a combination of OOSC risk factors - poverty, belonging to a marginalized ethnic group, child labour, and gender discrimination – which causes around 60 per cent of children to be out of school. The barriers to education corresponding to various OOSC risk groups are discussed in the next chapter, addressing the issue of why particular OOSC risk groups or combinations of OOSC risk factors lead to a greater likelihood of being out of school.

Analytical summary

Exact estimates of out-of-school children vary greatly in different sources, ranging from 29,016 according to NSC to 86,649 according to UIS for 2009, an issue which is further discussed in the concluding chapter. The different sources are quite consistent, however, with respect to the patterns of children out of school. The largest group of out-of-school children by far is 7 year olds, and at age 8 most children are enrolled in school. This indicates that there is a serious problem with

²³ Information on the Lyuli community is based on a UNICEF 2011 report as well as information (such as enrolment data) obtained during a May 2012 visit to the Lyuli community school.

late enrolment in primary school. From around age 11 the number of out-of-school children begins to increase, with a particularly steep increase for 15 year olds compared to 14 year olds.

Children living in rural areas and from poor and/or non-Kyrgyz speaking families are much more likely to be out of school. In addition, street children, children without registration documents, children living with a disability, children of migrants and children affected by ethnic conflicts are particularly vulnerable to exclusion. The percentage of out-of-school children is also much higher in some parts of the country than in others, and is particularly high in Batken, Naryn and Chui oblasts according to MICS household data from 2005-2006.

Poverty affects the out-of-school rates of boys more than girls at the secondary school level. At lower secondary level for the poorest quintile, boys are almost three times as likely to be out of school. At upper secondary level for the poorest quintile, more than a third of boys have left school compared to just 19.2 per cent of girls. In contrast, girls and boys in the wealthiest quintile are more or less equally likely to be out of school.

The percentage of child labourers in the Kyrgyz Republic is very high, with over a quarter of children ages 5 to 14 involved in child labour according to the ILO definition of child labour. According to the national definition the child labour rates are even higher, ranging from around one-third of children ages 5 to 11, to over half of children ages 12 to 14, and more than 60 per cent of children ages 15 to 17. This is a cause for concern. Even if it does not cause children to drop out of school, it can cause them to miss many days of school. This has long-term consequences on their learning achievement and their future job prospects. According to the ILO National Child Labour Survey conducted in 2007, the following groups of children are particularly likely to be involved in child labour: children living in certain oblasts – mainly Batken, Issyk-Kul, Jalal-Abad and Osh; children living in rural areas; and children from poor and less educated families.

The chance of being out of school is compounded for children belonging to multiple OOSC risk groups. The high rates of out of school children and low completion rates of schooling in the Lyuli community are testimony to this fact. In this community children face poverty, discrimination, a high prevalence of child labour, the practice of early marriage, and other risk factors – which when combined greatly increase the likelihood that they are out of school.

Profiles of children at risk in Dimensions 4 and 5

Overview

Dimensions 4 and 5 represent children who are at risk of dropping out at the primary and lower secondary levels correspondingly. Trends in dimensions 4 and 5 can be identified through an analysis of dropout rates, transition rates and types of out-of-school children as classified in the figure below (UNICEF and UIS 2011). Out-of-school children can be classified as dropouts, children who will never enter school, and children who have not yet entered formal education but will do so in the future - delayed by one or more years.

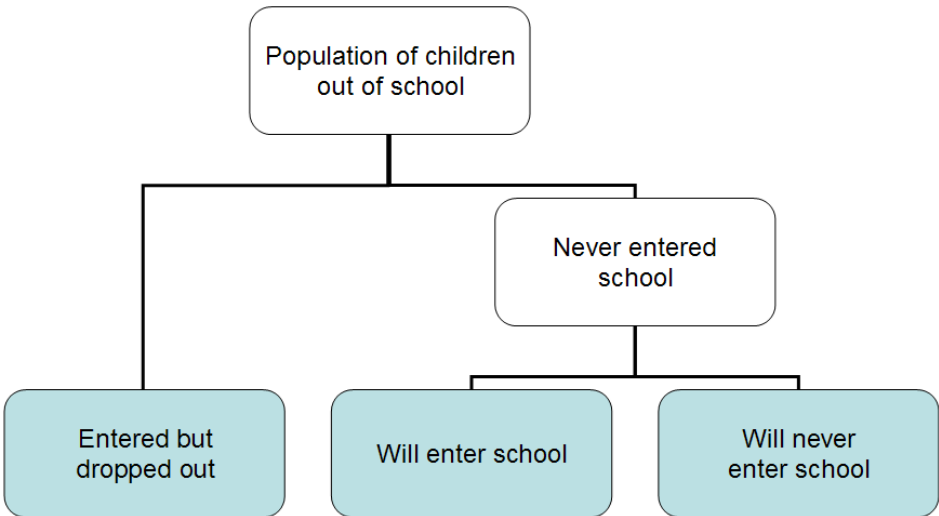


Figure 20. Categories of out-of-school children by school exposure

Delayed entry to schooling has been identified as a factor placing children at risk of dropping out and is also associated with lower academic achievement. Other factors placing children at risk of dropping out before completing compulsory education include being overage, being absent from school for long periods of time and entering primary school without having attended pre-primary school. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the Kyrgyz Republic faces significant issues with delayed entry to schooling, children dropping out towards the end of lower secondary, absenteeism due to child labour and the fact that the majority of children entering primary school lack pre-primary experience. These issues are discussed in the following sections.

It is interesting to note that transition rates from primary to lower secondary are very high in the Kyrgyz Republic – 99 per cent for girls and 100 per cent for boys in 2009 (UIS 2012), so almost all children who reach the end of primary school continue on to lower secondary school. The survival rate to the last grade of primary is also high – 97.6 per cent. However, national figures disguise potentially high regional and local inequalities. For example, as discussed above in the section on children belonging to multiple OOSC risk groups, the majority of children in the Lyuli community dropped out between grades 1 and 9, with a large percentage dropping out prior to completing primary education. Of course, high survival and transition rates at national level do not preclude such cases at the local level.

Children entering school late and without pre-primary experience

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the Kyrgyz Republic has one of the lowest pre-primary enrolment rates in the world. Only 18 per cent of children entering primary school have pre-primary experience. This problem is compounded by the fact that many children enter primary school late. The primary school starting age (7 years old) is later in the Kyrgyz Republic than in most other countries. If children start primary school a year late – which would be at age 8 – this could have far reaching, life-long consequences. MICS data shows that a very high proportion of around 30 percent of children start primary school late (MICS 2006). Children at age 7 without pre-primary experience may have already accumulated a significant learning gap compared to their peers who have attended one or more years of preschool, let alone children at age 8 with no pre-primary experience. Moreover, schools may never close this gap, and the gap can even widen through their years at school. Children who are behind at school are also at risk of dropping out early.

The charts below show the different categories of primary age out-of-school children based on MICS (2006) household survey data, according to sex and area.

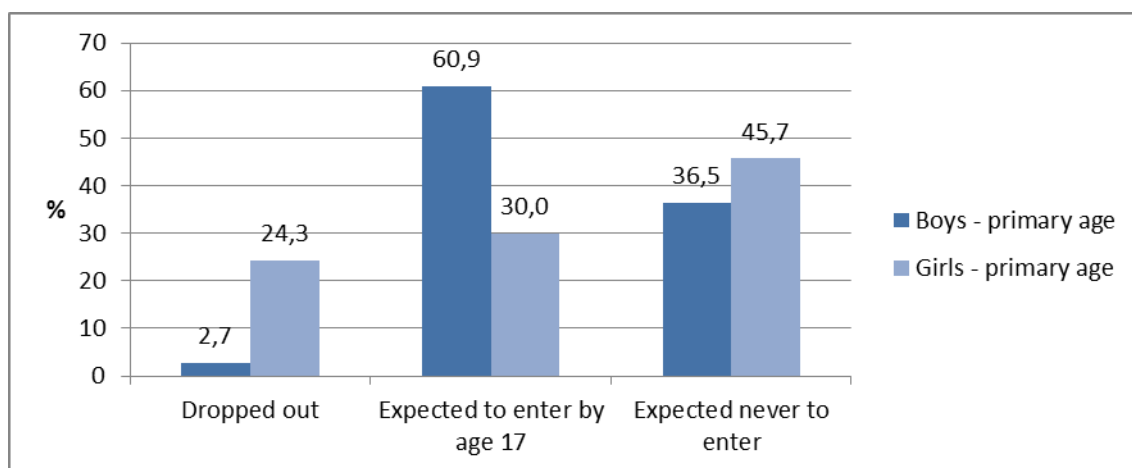


Figure 21. Categories of primary age out-of-school children by sex, 2005

Source: MICS 2006

Although there are no significant differences in out of school rates for girls and boys, a closer examination of the categories of out-of-school children shows that the situation is more complex. As shown in the chart above, primary school age boys in the Kyrgyz Republic are around twice as likely to enter school *late* compared to girls, are less likely than girls to *never* enter school, and are far less likely than girls to have *dropped out* from school. Out of school girls are nine times more likely than boys to have dropped out (24.3 per cent girls compared to just 2.7 per cent boys). In general out of school girls are most likely to *never* enter school, whereas out of school boys are most likely to enter school *late*.

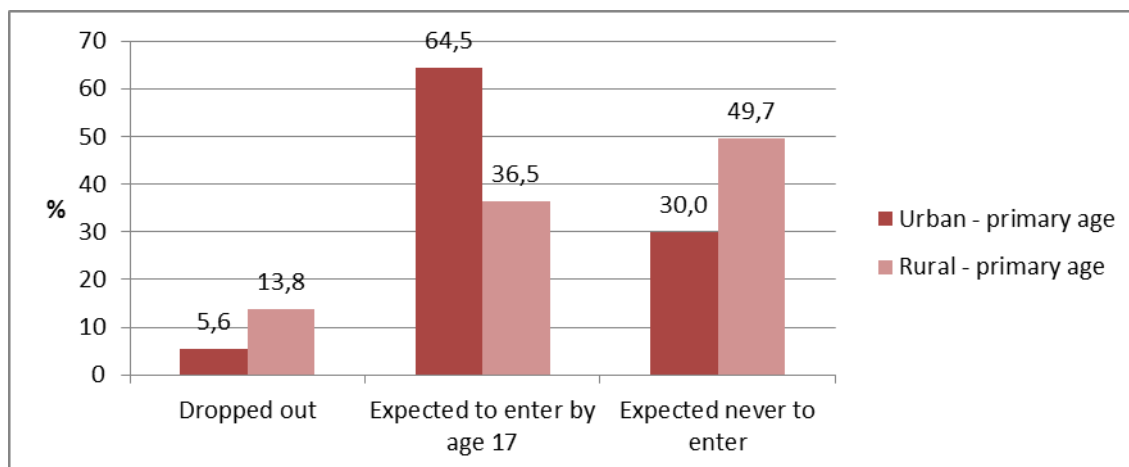


Figure 22. Categories of primary age out-of-school children by location, 2005

Source: MICS 2006

A very similar pattern can be found when comparing rural and urban areas. Out-of-school children in rural areas are more likely to have dropped out of school, and in urban areas they are more likely to enter school late. Rural out-of-school children are also much more likely than urban out-of-school children to never enter school at all.

Overage children

Being overage can be the result of grade repetition or of late entry into school. In the Kyrgyz Republic being overage is in most cases due to late entry into school, as discussed in the previous section. Repetition rates are generally very low and have been decreasing over the years. At primary education level there were only a total of 251 repeaters in 2010, a huge decline from 2349 in 1995. Similarly, at secondary education level there were only 560 repeaters in 2010, down from 3893 in 1995 (UIS 2012). The steep decline in the number of repeaters over time is shown in the figure below.

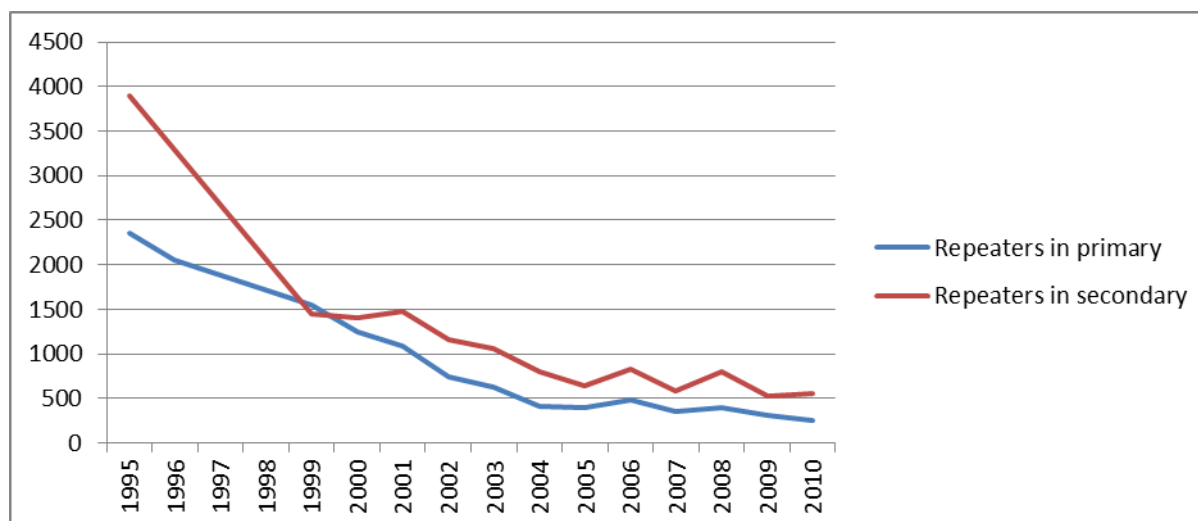


Figure 23. Total number of repeaters in primary and secondary, all grades, 1995-2010²⁴

Source: UIS 2012

The percentage of underage and overage children is around twice as high at the primary education level compared to the secondary education level, as shown in the figure below. It is calculated using the formula $(GER - NER) / GER$, where GER is the gross enrolment rate (which includes all students at a particular education level regardless of age) and NER is the net enrolment rate (which includes only children of the official age group).

²⁴ Data is not available for 1997 to 1998, and for repeaters in secondary is also not available for 1996.

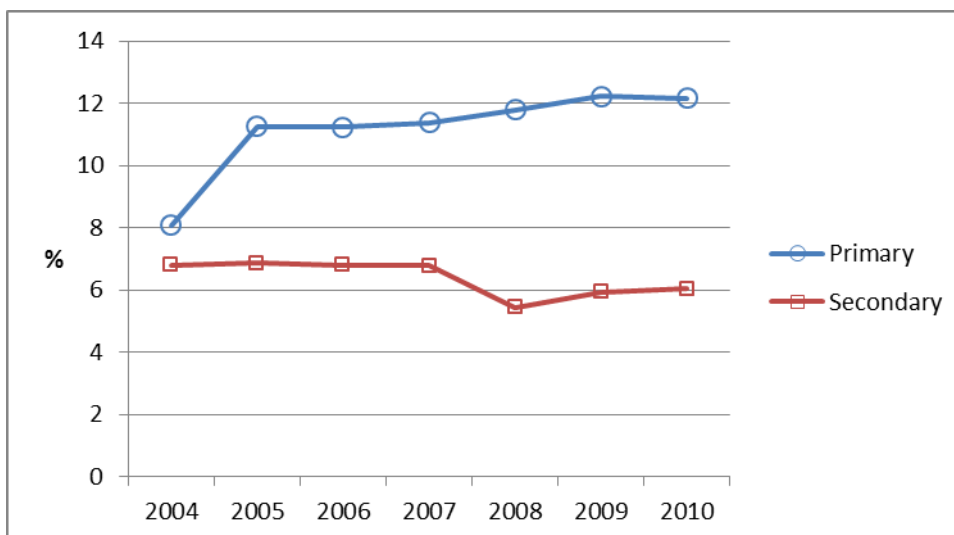


Figure 24. Percentage overage and underage students at primary and secondary education levels over time, 2004-2010

Source: UIS 2012

In 2004, the percentage of overage and underage students was at similar levels for primary and secondary education levels, but at primary level in a span of six years this percentage increased from 8.1 (2004) to 12.2 per cent (2010). At secondary level, it has remained fairly constant over time at around 6 to 7 per cent.

As discussed previously, late entry into primary school is very common. However, early enrolment into primary school is also prevalent. According to UIS data, 38.9 per cent of 6 year olds in the Kyrgyz Republic were enrolled in primary education in 2010 (UIS 2012). This trend is confirmed by MICS data which shows that around 30 per cent of children enroll in primary at age 6, around 30 percent enroll in primary at age 8, and only around 40 per cent enrolls at the official starting age of 7 (MICS 2006). Being both underage and overage can be problematic, and this is further discussed in the next chapter on barriers and bottlenecks.

What happens to the overage and underage pupils at primary level once they reach secondary level? The data appears to suggest that these categories of children (or at least the overage children) drop out in larger numbers at secondary level - hence the overall reduction in overage and underage students at secondary level²⁵.

Absentee children

Children who are frequently absent or absent for long periods of time are at risk of falling behind in school and dropping out. In addition, absenteeism is closely related to child labour and particularly agricultural work, which is further discussed below.

The MICS household survey identified the number of school age children who were absent one week prior to the survey (conducted during the winter of 2005-2006). It found that 5.4 per cent or 73 400 students (extrapolated to the national level) were absent (UNICEF and MoES 2008).

²⁵ Secondary education includes upper secondary, and since only lower secondary education is compulsory, those who leave school at upper secondary do not 'drop out' but rather 'withdraw' from school.

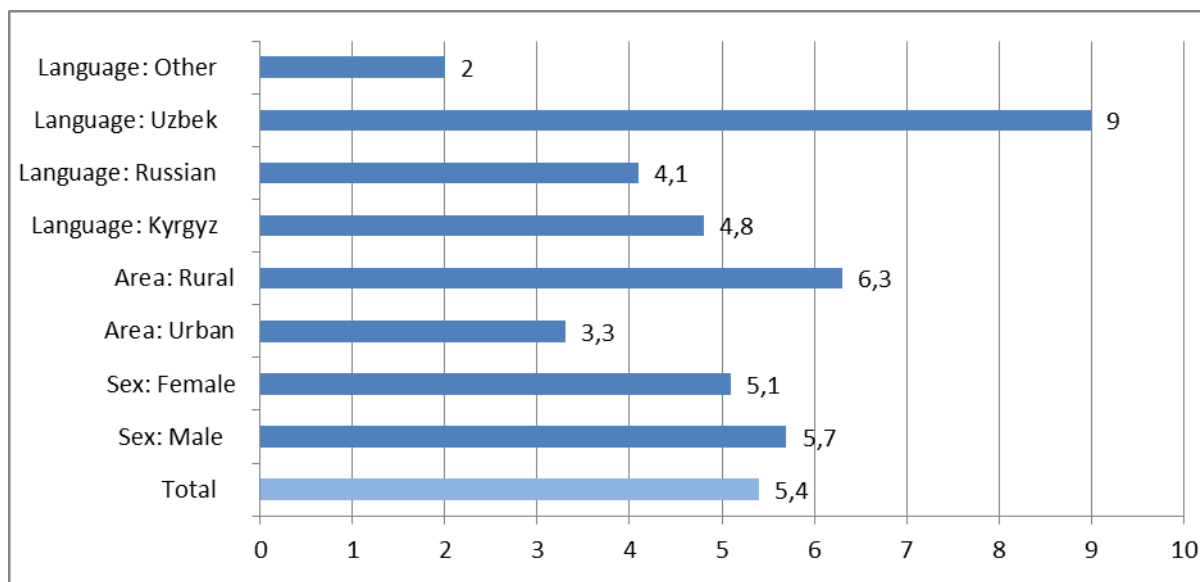


Figure 25. Percentage of absent students by language, area and sex, 2005

Source: MICS 2006 in UNICEF and MoES 2008

Absenteeism rates vary significantly across socio-demographic profiles. The chart above shows the percentage of absent students by language spoken by the head of the household, area (rural or urban) and sex. The chart below shows the total number of absentees nationwide according to the same socio-demographic profiles a week prior to the MICS survey.

Rural students are around twice as likely to be absent compared to urban students, which is likely due to agricultural work. Since much of the population lives in rural areas, in practice this means that there were over four times as many absentees in rural areas as shown in the chart below. Boys are somewhat more likely to be absent than girls. Interestingly, children from families where the head of the household speaks Uzbek were much more likely to be absent from school – around twice as likely as children from families where the head of the household speaks Kyrgyz or Russian.

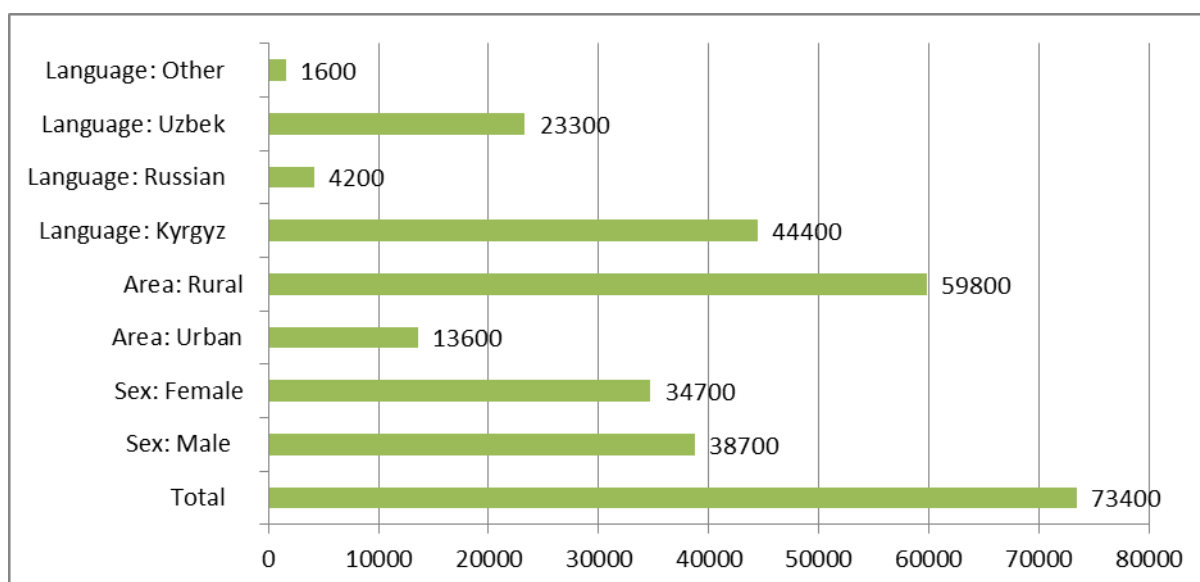


Figure 26. Number of absentees nationwide by language, area and sex, 2005

Source: MICS 2006 in UNICEF and MoES 2008

The El-Pikir survey which covered 100 schools for the 2006-7 school year can be used to construct a profile of absentee children from the perspective of schools rather than households (UNICEF and MoES 2008). In the 300 classes surveyed, it was found that on average 14.6 per cent of students were absent at any given time based on spot counts (comparing the class register against actual attendance). This rate is almost three times as high as the 5.4 per cent absenteeism rate from the MICS household survey (which is self-reported rather than based on actual counts, although other methodological differences such as the sample size can also account for some of the difference).

Absenteeism rates were found to increase significantly with age. At the primary level (grades 1 to 4), an average of 9.9 per cent of pupils were absent, increasing to 18 per cent in lower secondary (grades 5 to 9) and to 18.9 per cent in upper secondary (grades 10 to 11). The highest levels of absenteeism, however, were in the 8th and 9th grades at 23.5 per cent and 21.3 per cent correspondingly.

Absenteeism peaks during the autumn and spring farming seasons (September to November and April to May), with 83 per cent of all absences occurring during these periods. In some southern regions and Chui province, spring farm work starts in March rather than April and indeed this was reflected in the increased absenteeism during this month. Teachers confirmed the data that children are more frequently absent during the farming seasons when they help their families with agricultural work. Absentee children were more likely to be boys – 58 per cent boys compared to 42 per cent girls, which corresponds to the MICS household survey.

The main reasons for absenteeism according to principals and teachers are seasonal farm work, illness or other family-related reasons, and problems related to poverty, single-parent households and parental alcoholism.

Children performing poorly in tests of learning achievement

The quality of education is an important drop out risk factor. Moreover, being in school and out of school should not be construed as a simple dichotomy - those who have access to learning opportunities and those who do not - as some children who are in school have much greater opportunities for learning than others. In any analysis of exclusion from education, therefore, it is also important to analyze the differences in learning achievement of those who are in school.

The charts below show the results of the average achievement levels of 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science for those CEECIS countries which participated in the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which is coordinated by the OECD (though non-OECD countries can also participate).

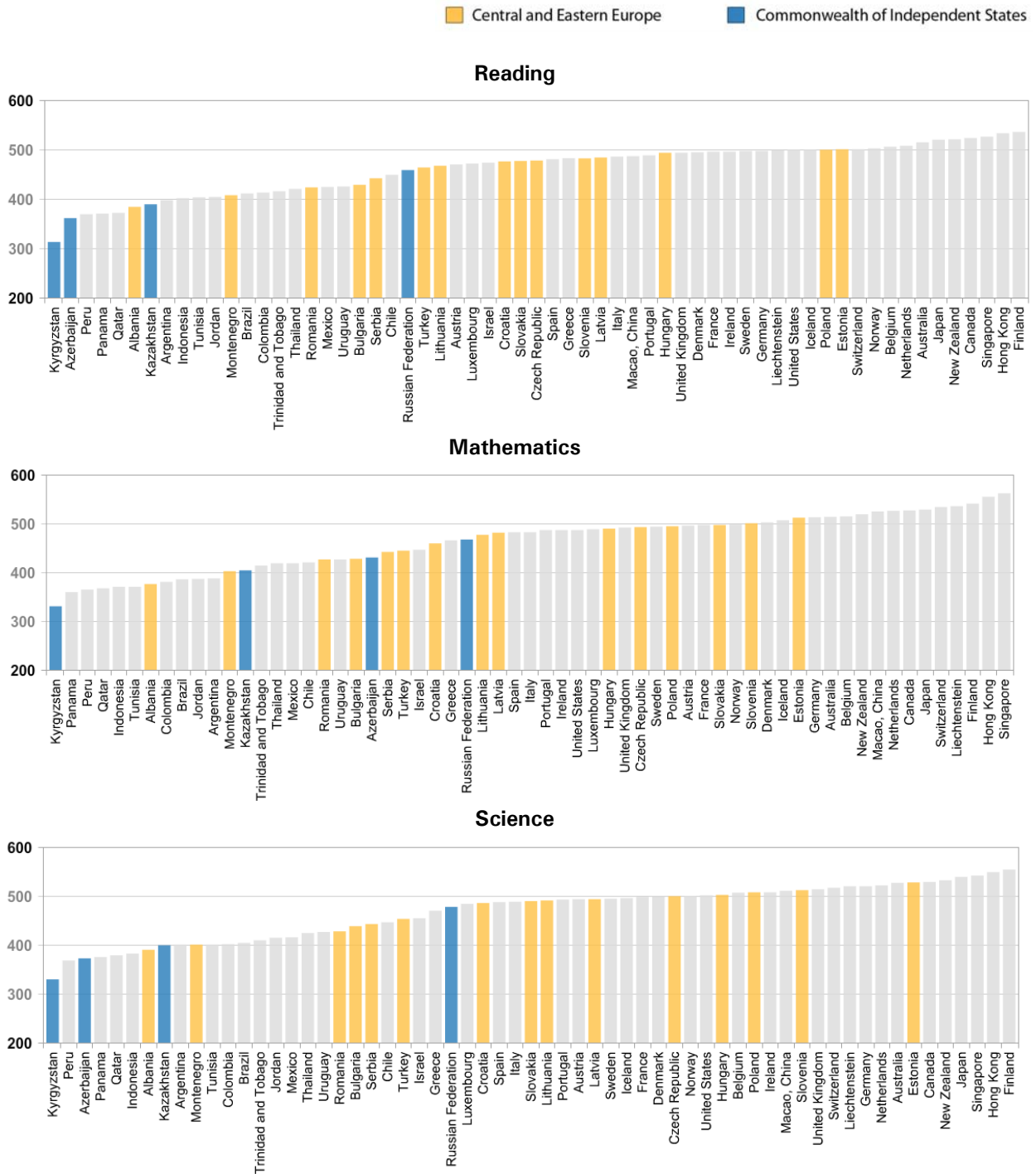


Figure 27. PISA Reading, Mathematics and Science scores, 2009

Source: OECD 2011a

The Kyrgyz Republic has the lowest reading, mathematics and science scores of the countries participating in PISA. It has a reading score of 314, compared to a mean of 500 and standard deviation of 100 for OECD countries. The implication of these scores can be better understood with reference to the seven levels of literacy. The following is a description of tasks at the lowest reading level 1b and second lowest reading level 1a (OECD 2010: 59):

At level 1a, tasks require the reader to locate one or more independent pieces of explicitly stated information; to recognize the main theme or author's purpose in a text about a familiar topic, or to make a simple connection between information in the text and common, everyday knowledge. Typically the required information in the text is prominent and there is little, if any, competing information. The reader is explicitly directed to consider relevant factors in the task and in the text.

At level 1b, tasks require the reader to locate a single piece of explicitly stated information in a prominent position in a short, syntactically simple text with a familiar context and text type, such as a narrative or a simple list. The text typically provides support to the reader, such as repetition of information, pictures or familiar symbols. There is minimal competing information. In tasks requiring interpretation the reader may need to make simple connections between adjacent pieces of information.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, close to 30 per cent of 15-year-old pupils are at the lowest level of literacy in the PISA scale, and almost 30 per cent of pupils fall below the lowest level of literacy. This means that more than half of pupils, almost 60 per cent, have not reached the second lowest literacy level and are unable to do tasks at level 1a (the second lowest reading level) described above.

Performance on PISA tests is generally much lower in rural areas than in urban areas, and gets progressively lower in ever smaller and more remote communities: large city, city, town, small town and village. This is shown in the figure below for UNICEF CEECIS programme countries. The Kyrgyz Republic has a particularly steep curve, indicating that there are very large differences in pupil achievement between rural and urban areas. The Kyrgyz Republic along with Bulgaria has the largest difference in rural-urban achievement amongst all UNICEF CEECIS programme countries participating in PISA.

The deteriorating quality of education since independence is a widely debated topic in both civil society and the government, with the various causes being attributed to the outdated curriculum, inadequate links between the job market and the education system, low teacher salaries, and high levels of plagiarism (Mambetaliev 2011).

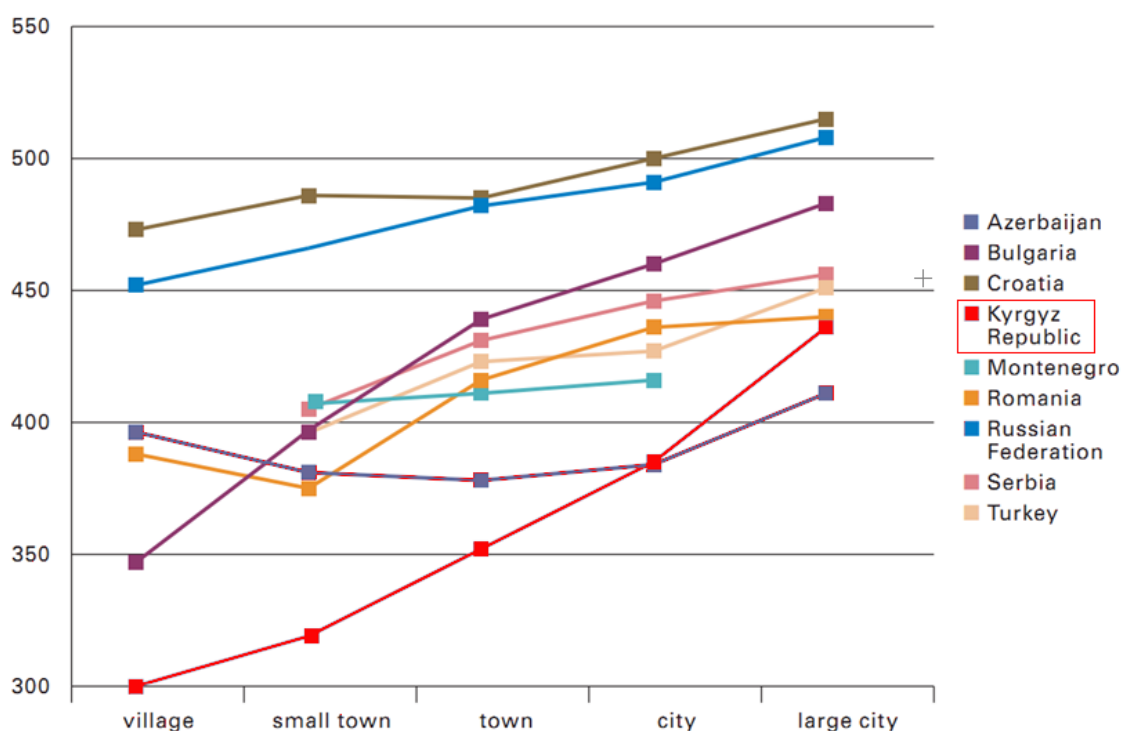


Figure 28. Mean PISA science scores by school location in UNICEF CEECIS programme countries, 2006

Source: Adapted from UNICEF 2009, based on PISA 2006 data

Analytical Summary

This section looked at a number of factors which can increase the risk of dropping out of school: entering school without pre-primary experience, entering school late and being over age, being absent frequently or for long periods of time, and performing poorly at school. These factors all interact with each other, and in many cases it may be a combination of factors which results in a child dropping out from school. For example, a child may enter school late and without pre-primary experience, struggle with school compared to his or her peers as a result, and may be absent from

school for long periods to help his family during the farming season – resulting in falling behind even further. These factors themselves may be a result of yet other underlying factors – poverty and living in a rural agricultural community. In this imaginary but realistic scenario, a combination of factors can be seen to drive the child to drop out from school. The Lyuli ethnic minority community discussed earlier in this chapter is an example of how multiple factors compound the dropout risk.

There are significant differences between girls and boys with regard to categories of out-of-school children, indicating the different risk factors for exclusion. Out of school primary age girls are nine times more likely to have dropped out compared to boys, whereas out of school boys are around twice as likely to enter school at a later date. Out of school primary age children in rural areas are more likely to have dropped out of school or to never enter school at all, compared to those in urban areas. For lower secondary age boys who are out of school, about one fifth has never been to school and is never expected to enter. The number is much smaller for girls (just 3 per cent).

Further research is required to identify the reasons why at primary age girls are much more likely to drop out than boys, and why boys are much more likely to enter primary school late.

The increasing percentage of underage and overage children at primary education level in recent years is a serious cause for concern. MICS data indicates that only around 40 per cent of children enrol in primary at the official starting age of 7 years old, with around 30 percent enrolling a year early and around 30 percent a year late. At secondary level the percentage of overage and underage children is much lower, which is also worrying. This could indicate that many of those who are overage (and possibly also those who are underage) in primary school dropout in secondary school.

Absenteeism is a significant problem particularly in rural areas. Rural children are around twice as likely to be absent compared to urban children, which is likely due to agricultural work. Since much of the population lives in rural areas, in practice this means that there were over four times as many absentees in rural areas. Absenteeism peaks during the autumn and spring farming seasons (September to November and April to May), with eighty three per cent of all absences occurring these periods. The fact that children are more frequently absent during these seasons was confirmed by teachers. The issue of child labour and absenteeism is therefore closely related, and child labour would need to be addressed in order to reduce the high levels of absenteeism particularly in rural schools.

Chapter 2. Barriers and bottlenecks

Overview

Barriers and bottlenecks in relation to the five dimensions of exclusion include many factors – poverty, stigmatization, discrimination, attitudes toward purposes and outcomes of education, quality of education and the social and political situation. These factors are intrinsically linked to the data on children out of school and children in school but at risk of exclusion.

This chapter discusses the different barriers to education in relation to the profiles of out-of-school children (dimensions 1 to 3), and children at risk of exclusion (dimensions 4 and 5). It looks at demand side barriers, supply side barriers, and political, governance, capacity, financing bottlenecks. The chapter begins, however, at the profiles of out-of-school children as discussed in the previous chapter. For these profiles of out-of-school children, a broad range of different kinds of barriers needs to be considered, including demand-side economic barriers such as the lack of shoes, school uniform, school supplies, general poverty, and children needing to work to support their families; socio-cultural barriers such as fear of bullying; and supply-side barriers – the lack of textbooks at school and distance to school.

The chart below provides an overview of the different kinds of barriers to schooling – family related, school related, and health related – from the perspective of teachers as well as children who were out of school for an extended period of time (UNICEF and MoES 2008, based on a survey conducted by the El-Pikir Public Opinion Research Centre). Family related barriers stand out, emphasizing the importance of demand side barriers to education. The specific barriers mentioned by children and teachers are further discussed below.

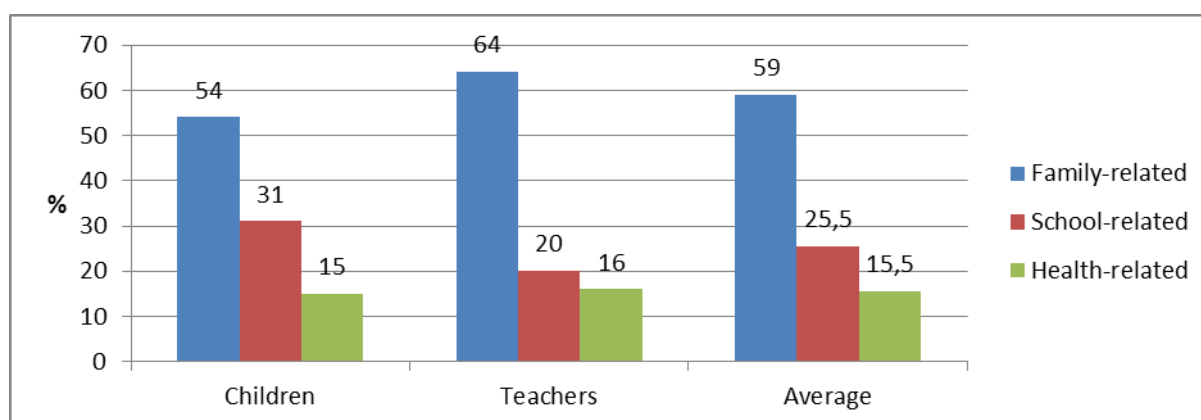


Figure 29. Reasons for non-attendance

UNICEF and MoES 2008

Barriers and bottlenecks by OOSC profiles

This section looks at different kinds of barriers and bottlenecks by profiles of out-of-school children. It focuses in particular on demand-side socio-cultural barriers and bottlenecks which include socio-cultural practices in the household and the community, violence in the home and at school and attitudes of parents and children toward education (UNICEF and UIS 2011). These kinds of barriers are often particular to the profiles of out-of-school children and hence are discussed here, while demand side economic barriers and supply side barriers are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Pre-primary age children

One of the reasons for the low enrolment in pre-primary education as discussed in the previous chapter is the change of attitudes towards pre-primary education following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The importance of pre-primary education has been neglected. As evidence of this,

many pre-school education buildings were sold (Children's Website Baldar 2011²⁶). In addition, the majority of the pre-primary age population in the country lives in rural areas, where sending children to organized pre-school educational institutions was uncommon even during Soviet times.

According to Kyrgyz culture, the role of care-takers of pre-primary age children traditionally belongs to grandparents, and they tend to assign the teaching role to older grandchildren at home. Unfortunately, even this type of educating children is not widespread anymore.

Many parents prefer to send their six year olds to primary schools rather than pre-school. This is motivated by two reasons – parents want their children to complete compulsory education earlier and the cost of primary education is lower than pre-school. At the same time, a large proportion of children also enrol in primary school late. This trend is confirmed by both household survey as well as administrative data as discussed in the previous chapter. The result is that a high proportion of primary school pupils is either underage or overage, which can cause various problems. Being overage is an important predictor of dropout. Underage children are not necessarily in a better position compared to overage children, as they may have difficulties keeping up with their older peers, in particular if they have no pre-primary experience.

At the same time demand for pre-school is increasing and there is currently a great shortage of pre-school institutions, which is further discussed below.

Boys from low-income families

Traditionally, the Kyrgyz put their ambitious expectations on their sons, not on their daughters, and focus mainly on their sons' education and careers. However, this attitude is changing and indeed as discussed in the previous chapter, boys are actually more likely to be out of school than girls. This could be related to the kinds of work, particularly agricultural work, which tend to be done by boys and may cause them to drop out early. For example, in particularly in rural areas older boys are more likely to be working than older girls which, as discussed in the previous chapter, could be partially attributed to the male activity of animal husbandry. School age boys are also much more likely to do agricultural work which is not for household consumption, and are also somewhat more likely to be involved in paid work. The reason for this may be attributed to cultural factors. Males in the Kyrgyz Republic are traditionally assigned the role of *kormilets*, which stands for feeders or providers of living necessities for households, while females are *hranitel'nitsy ochaga* or housekeepers. In poor households where there is economic pressure for children to start working at an early age, boys are particularly likely to start working at an early age and drop out of school. As illustrated in the previous chapter, MICS data shows that boys of lower secondary age in the poorest households are more than twice as likely to be out of school compared to girls.

Children living with a disability

Children with disabilities face many barriers in accessing basic services, including education, health and social protection. Almost all schools and universities in the Kyrgyz Republic have no specialized elevators, bathrooms for the disabled, pathways for wheelchair and other facilities.

Children with disability face numerous barriers to schooling:

- **Supply-side barriers:** School buildings or classrooms are often inaccessible to children with disabilities, and lack facilities for children with disabilities such as toilets with handrails. Transportation is also a barrier and the transportation needs of children with disabilities can be too costly for parents. Social protection for families of children with a disability is insufficient as only a very small monthly assistance is provided.
- **Social barriers:** The public perception of disability is a significant social barrier preventing children with disabilities from going to school. Children with disabilities often face teasing and bullying at school. Moreover, very few teachers have received training in inclusive

²⁶ www.baldar.kg

education. Parental attitudes towards disability and resistance to inclusive education can also be a significant barrier.

- **Rigid school programme and lack of teaching support:** The school programme and teaching materials need to take into account the needs of children with disability. For example, children who need to stay in a hospital for long periods of time require a more flexible programme to continue their school work. Teachers also need to be trained to be able to deal with the range of children with disabilities. There is also a shortage of specialists who are able to diagnose and provide care for children with disabilities (Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia 2010).

Many children with disabilities are not admitted to schools because of their disability. The UNICEF (2008) report *Assessment of the Situation of Children with Disabilities in Kyrgyzstan* revealed that on average 44.2 per cent of teachers surveyed responded that they are unable to integrate children with wheelchairs into their class. Moreover, more than one third of teachers responded that they would not be able to integrate children with hearing problems, children who have difficulty walking, children who have difficulty holding a pencil or pen, and children with medical needs that need to be attended to while at school. For children with visual impairments, who need assistance to move around, the figure was even higher – 63.5 per cent of teachers said it would not be possible to integrate them (and 82.7 per cent in cases where children are completely blind). Even when teachers said it would be possible, in most cases they said it could only be done with difficulty.

Another problem is that many children with a disability are not registered as having a disability, and hence do not receive any form of support. According to the study commissioned by the Dutch inter-church organization for development cooperation, “only 3 per cent of the population in the Kyrgyz Republic is registered as disabled, in contrast to the WHO’s estimate that 7 per cent to 10 per cent of people worldwide have a disability” (Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia 2010: 8). These figures are indicative of the percentage of children with disabilities who may not be registered.

Children in new settlements

As discussed in the previous chapter, new settlements which have emerged around the capital Bishkek often lack basic infrastructure such as electricity and running water, as well as schools and hospitals. Transportation to school is a significant barrier. In particular children in the largest villages such as Ak-Jar have problems with transportation to school, as shuttles usually do not stop and children often need to walk long distances to school (Pupilin 2008). Walking to school is often not safe for a number of reasons: children need to pass through crime-ridden areas, pass drunkards on the street, cross busy highways, and during winter journey through hazardous snowy roads (Khodykina 2011).

A particular characteristic of migrant communities that has an impact on their children’s involvement in education and economic activities is their regional origins. As discussed earlier, the regions of the Kyrgyz Republic differ not only in ethnic composition but also in culture and dialect, including attitudes toward education and child labour. Stigmatization and prejudice towards children from other regions who constitute minorities in school is common. Often children from rural areas, especially from poor families of southern origin, are subject to humiliation and mockery from classmates.

Internal migrants change their place of living from one rented apartment to another as they move in search of a better life. They often lack registration documents which makes the children of internal migrants vulnerable to exclusion from medical care and education. These children are at the greatest risk of being involved in prostitution, child labour and slavery (Chalkova and Usenova 2008, 42). Most migrants cannot obtain registration from the local authorities because they do not own their housing (International Crisis Group 2011). Schools are required to accept any children living in their districts, but many use the lack of registration documents as a pretext to deny admission to children of new migrants.

Street children

The previous chapter noted that street children are most likely to be out of school of all the identified profiles of children vulnerable to exclusion. The majority of street children (68 per cent) in fact expressed that they like attending school, with many indicating that they like studying and would like to get an education (UNICEF and MoES 2008). For most street children their living situation is not a matter of personal choice, but the result of circumstances they have no control over. Many children are unable to go back home because of family problems, because they need to work on the streets to earn an income, because they have no home to return to, and many other reasons. Most street children – around 78 per cent – did not like the situation they were in and would prefer not to be living in the street.

The following chart shows the main reasons why children ran away from home. It can be seen that problems in the family (such as being beaten, parents abusing alcohol and/or drugs) are the primary cause of children running away from home. Following family reasons, poverty stands out as the second-most important factor leading children to live in the streets. The majority of street children (70 per cent) came from poor or very poor families, where meat was a luxury and even basic food items such as bread and sugar were sometimes unaffordable. Around 45 per cent of families of street children could not afford schooling for their children.

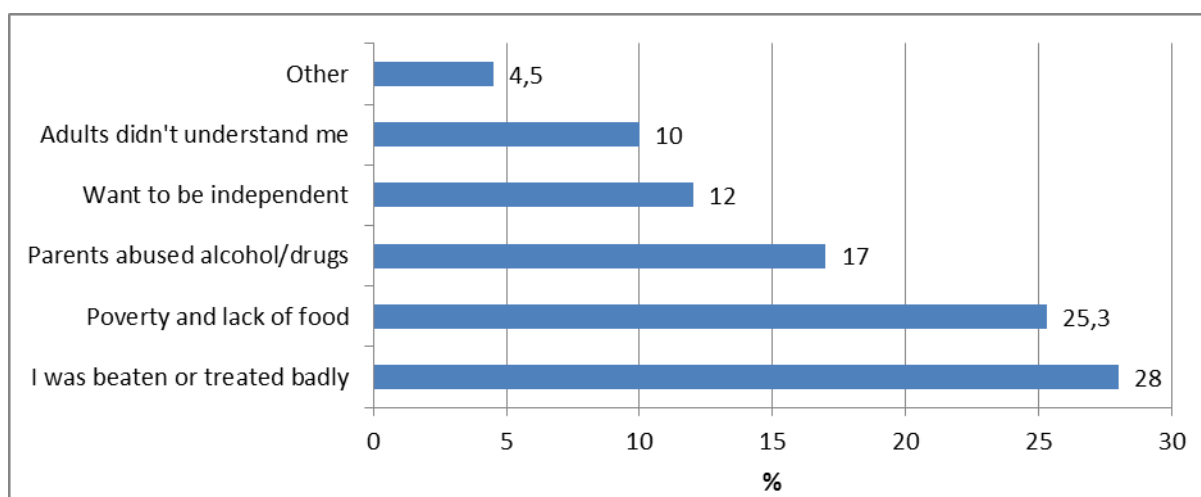


Figure 30. Main reasons why children ran away from home (% responses)

Source: UNICEF and MoES 2008

When street children were asked what could be done to improve their lives, their responses most commonly related to resolving problems in the family. This was followed by responses related to improving their financial situation and material well-being. Interestingly, ten percent of suggestions related to the need to study and get an education.

The responses generally reflect the chart above, as would be expected, as to improve their situation one would need to resolve the problems which caused them to be on the streets in the first place.

Child labourers

School age children work in many different kinds of sectors, and the dropout risks are different for each sector. As discussed earlier in this chapter, in rural areas older boys in particular are likely to be involved in agricultural work which can cause them to dropout before completing compulsory education. Children living in urban areas and near commercial centres are more likely to be employed in the service industries, the shuttle business, suppliers of goods to and from bazaars, luggage loaders, sellers, cleaners and collectors of used food containers (Chalkova and Usenova 2008: 9). Work in bazaars and other commercial spheres are different from agricultural work in that it is all year round work, while agricultural works are seasonal. Therefore, children working in this sector are permanently at risk from exclusion from education. The location of a bazaar in a town or city and its size are important explanatory variables, which have an impact on households and children's education.

In order to better understand the impact of trade centres on children's participation in school, one has to visit the grand bazaars of Central Asia, where many children are permanent dwellers from pre-historic Silk Road times. The Dordoi Bazar, for example, is one of the largest market places in Central Asia, which is located in Bishkek. It occupies about 1000 sq. meters and built up on more than 7000 large shipping containers. It is a city in the city, with 50 touristic firms, more than 50 cafes, 170 currency exchange shops and 7000 containers (Sydykov 2011). Thousands of Chinese, Turkish, Uzbek, Kazakh and Russian merchants re-export mostly Chinese goods to their countries. It also employs hundreds of children as baggage carriers, newspaper sellers, cleaners, food carriers and other workers. The second largest bazaar is the Kara-Suu Grand Market, located on the border of Uzbekistan, with 10 000 containers and more than 16 000 merchants. It serves to Fergana valley with 12 000 000 population. The next largest bazaar of the Kyrgyz Republic is the Osh Bazaar in Bishkek, which occupies 5.4 hectares and employs hundreds of children as the previous ones. There are also dozens of smaller bazaars throughout the country, where children are involved in different kinds of commercial and subservient economic activities. Many children work in these bazaars and do not attend school. Commonly children work in bazaars as *tachkists*²⁷ or tachka drivers:

"My name is Ruslan and I am 14 years old. I do not go to school, since I work as a tachkist in Osh Bazaar. I come here before 8.00 o'clock in the morning and leave home at 8.00 o'clock in the evening. I can take a day off during the week but Saturdays and Sundays are my busiest days which I cannot skip. These days I use my tachka to deliver goods from storage to selling tables. Sometimes, my tachka is overloaded and it's very difficult to pushing it through overcrowded market place. Some of my friends work with food sellers and their work is even much harder. However, I have no other options because my family has nobody else to feed us. I would like to attend school, but I don't want to study with children much younger than me." (Personal conversation, July 1, 2011).

Bazaars of course do not just employ children but also employ the parents of school-age children. Bazaar work is strenuous and requires one to leave home in the early morning and return in the late evening. Many children of bazaar workers who remain at home are left all day long without adequate care. The absence of parental controls also contributes to children learning bad habits and behaviour, making them an easy prey for crimes (Hashmi 2011). These and other factors put them at high risk of drop out from school.

Many children in both urban and rural areas are involved also in housekeeping services, such as cooking food, washing dishes, cleaning houses and caring after animals. These kinds of works are culturally considered insignificant though they take longer hours in everyday life. Often, children are not paid for such work and the real numbers of child labour are difficult to find out and may not be accurately reported in household surveys, since they serve to their parents or relatives.

Dealing with child labour requires a shift in attitudes, as many Kyrgyz adults, including those in government offices, do not have objections against many forms of child labour. It also requires a better understanding of what child labour entails, and at which point children's work can be defined as child labour. According to one government official, following a presentation on child labour, "we do not have to emphasize children's rights since it is based on western culture - we ourselves grew up doing household chores and dirty works" (focus group discussion in the MoES, June, 2011).

The conditions of work also affect children's success in school. For example the lack of a laundry machine, running water or cleaning supplies make household work more time consuming for children who do this kind of work. Even if work does not cause children to be absent from school, it takes time away in the evenings and weekends which could be used to study, and as a result child labourers can go to school unprepared and fall behind in their school work. This affects children's success in school and put them at the risk of dropping out.

Children enter the work force in order to help support themselves or their families and the difficult life circumstances which necessitate this should not be ignored. The following excerpt describes the situation in many families (UNICEF and MoES 2008: 33):

²⁷ Tachkist - wheelbarrow driver, similar to rickshaw but carries goods in marketplaces

“Everybody is nervous and irritable nowadays – some because of lack of work, others permanently lack money in the family, for some the breadwinner-wife is in Russia and the husband is a dependent that has to stay at home and look after children. I’m not even talking about families where parents abuse alcohol. All adults vent their aggression on each other and on innocent children”

Barriers facing children belonging to multiple OOSC risk groups

This section on barriers by profiles of out-of-school children concludes with a reflection of the barriers to education faced by children belonging to multiple OOSC risk groups. It is often a combination of factors which lead to children being out of school or at risk of dropping out. Poverty in particular is often linked with other profiles of OOSC discussed in this chapter, in particular child labour as discussed above. Whereas one factor may not lead to a child being excluded from school, when combined with one or two other factors the risk of exclusion can become much higher.

This section focuses on the Lyuli community, continuing the discussion from the previous chapter. The Lyuli community provides a vivid illustration of the impact of multiple barriers to education faced by children belonging to multiple OOSC risk groups. In fact, the Lyuli community faces almost every barrier to education discussed in this chapter. One has to admire the small percentage of children in the community that manage to transcend all these barriers and make it all the way through to the end of compulsory schooling.

One of the most significant barriers to education faced by the Lyuli community is poverty. The widespread poverty among Lyuli people can partially be attributed to the vicious circle of low education leading to poor job prospects, which in turn leads to continuing poverty and continued low education participation and completion. In order to scrape a living, Lyuli children and adults take strenuous low-paid jobs such as collecting scrap metal, cleaning plastic bottles and carrying cement. Many also resort to begging. Child labour is very common and is one of the most important causes of dropout, as from an early age many children start working in order to support their families. The inability of families to afford school supplies is another important factor causing children to not go to school.

Another cause of poverty is the discrimination the community faces from their non-Lyuli neighbours, which also prevents them from obtaining better paid, more respectable jobs. Discrimination also prevents youth from continuing past 9th grade, as the only school in the community only goes up to 9th grade and they face discrimination and bullying in schools outside of their community.

Socio-cultural attitudes towards education are also a barrier, in particular attitudes towards girls’ education. As discussed in the previous chapter girls are more than twice as likely to be out of school compared to boys. In addition, early marriage is common which leads some girls to drop out prior to completing compulsory education – although not many girls make it to the last grades of compulsory education.

There are also many children of migrant parents who have migrated to Russia or other areas. These children live in single parent households, stay with relatives or need to fend for themselves. The absence of parental involvement and supervision also places them at higher risk of being out of school.

More than half of the children in the community have no birth certificate, and parents’ lack of documents (such as a marriage certificate, ID card and registration documents) leads to vicious circle where obtaining one document is complicated by the lack of other documents. The lack of documents prevents access to government benefits and makes them vulnerable to harassment and corruption, factors which make it more difficult to escape the vicious cycle of poverty.

In addition to demand side socio-cultural and economic barriers, the community also faces significant supply side barriers. The school in the community is so small it only has a capacity for 120 children even though there are an estimated 1020 school age children in the community. The school currently runs in three shifts, but even then the school needs to be three times the size if it is to have sufficient capacity for all school age children. Because the majority of children drop out

before 9th grade, it is particularly at the lower grades where demand is starting to exceed capacity. The school is also almost devoid of facilities. The school lacks heating – which is crucial during winter time, and there is no running water. There is no library or computer lab and there are no sports facilities.

The children also face a language barrier, as they do not speak Kyrgyz but a language which resembles Tajik. The need to learn Kyrgyz at school while speaking a different language at home poses a significant challenge. Moreover, they have no books or other educational materials in their own language – neither at school nor at home.

When children face multiple barriers to schooling – which is often the case although very visibly illustrated in the case of the Lyuli community – a single or one dimensional approach is unlikely to have much impact. In such cases, a combination of strategies and policies are required to remove the different barriers to education, which are discussed in the next chapter.

Demand side economic barriers

This section focuses on demand side economic barriers to education, which include household poverty, school fees and other expenditures on education, exposure to child labour and the economic repercussions of, for example, natural disasters or migration (UNICEF and UIS 2011).

The following chart shows demand-side, family related causes of children's non-attendance, from the perspective of teachers as well as children based on El-Pikir survey data (UNICEF and MoES 2008). The El-Pikir study focused in particular on children who were out of school or systematically absent from school. The research sample included children and teachers from 100 schools (4.5 per cent of all schools in the country), selected through stratified random sampling to ensure that the sample was representative. Information on children who were not attending school was based on interviews with 873 street children and working children in 9 large cities and towns.

The results of the study indicate that many of the problems which cause non-attendance are related to poverty – such as the lack of school supplies and needing to help the family and earn money. Family problems such as parents abusing alcohol or drugs are also a major cause of non-attendance.

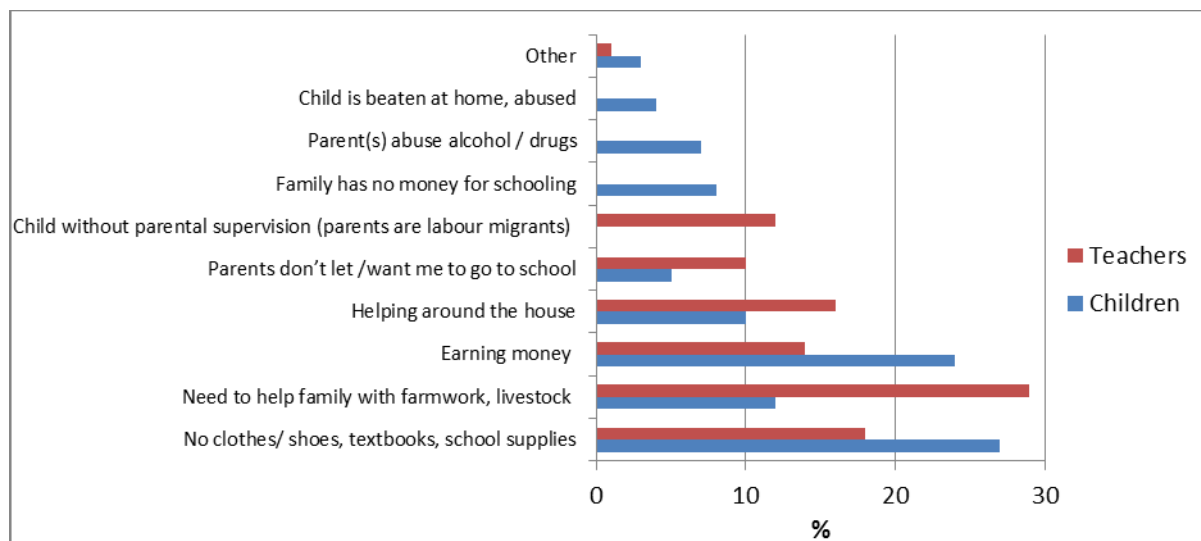


Figure 31. Family related reasons for non-attendance according to non-attending children²⁸ and teachers (% of responses)

Source: UNICEF and MoES 2008

Poverty levels are very high with over a third of the population - 35 per cent – living in poverty and 7 per cent living in extreme poverty in 2007 (OECD 2011b). According to NSC data the poverty level is almost twice as high in rural areas (37.1 per cent) as in urban areas (21.9 per cent) (NSC 2011). Almost three-quarters of the poor and extreme poor live in rural areas. Low wages – notably in the agriculture sector which employs much of the population, unemployment and under-

²⁸ Children who were not attending school or were systematically absent from school.

employment are important causes of poverty. According to estimates of NSC, 1 846 200 people lived below the poverty line in 2010.

As a result of these circumstances large numbers immigrate to other countries such as Russia, and many families are dependent on remittances from emigrants. Migration from rural to urban areas is also high. The economic situation leading to high levels of migration has a disruptive effect on the lives of children, who are displaced from one location to another or stay behind in the care of relatives.

The transition period following the collapse of communism saw a significant widening of inequality, as reflected by the Gini coefficient, which increased from 0.31 in 1987-1990 to 0.47 in 1996-1999 (Mertaug 2004). At the same time, unofficial payments for declared free and compulsory schooling have increased during this period. Many low income families cannot pay the requested amount (Chalkova and Usenova 2008, 42). Guljigit Sooronkulov, Deputy Minister of Education and Science, has stated that the MoES is unable to control unofficial payments (Bengard 2011).

The inability of parents to pay unofficial fees and issues with registration are amongst the biggest reasons for children not being enrolled in school (Kim 2010). As stated by Damira Kudaibergenova, the head of the Department for pre-school, basic and extracurricular education of the MoES,

“Parents are unable to pay for education of their children, since the types of payments have increased. The 100 million soms from the national budget is not sufficient to cover all the necessary expenses and schools charge parents additional fees. Also, attitudes of parents to education have changed and more and more parents think, ‘Why study when diplomas are sold’ ” (Personal conversation, June 23, 2011).

Supply side barriers

Supply side barriers to education include barriers related to the inadequacy of school infrastructure, transportation, teachers, textbooks, as well as school management and safety (UNICEF and UIS 2011).

The following chart shows school related causes of children’s non-attendance, from the perspective of teachers as well as children who were out of school for an extended period of time (UNICEF and MoES 2008, based on El-Pikir survey data).

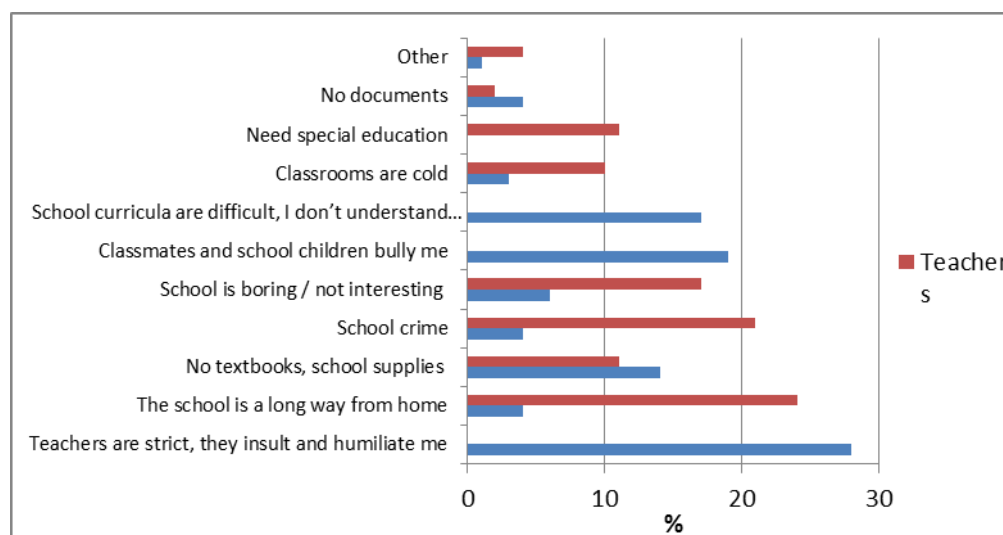


Figure 32. Supply-side (school related) causes of non-attendance according to non-attending children²⁹ and teachers (% of responses)

UNICEF and MoES 2008

The lack of textbooks and school supplies are often reported by both teachers and children, while teachers also frequently noted that cold classrooms, the distance to school from home and school crime are causes of non-attendance. The need for special education for children with special needs was also mentioned quite frequently by teachers. Children frequently pointed out problems with teachers and the school curriculum as causes of non-attendance, as well as being bullied by other

²⁹ Children who were not attending school or were systematically absent from school.

school children. With regards to teachers, many children pointed out that they are “strict” and “insult and humiliate me”, which is an even more common response than “classmates and school children bully me”. Bullying is a significant problem in Kyrgyz schools. However, according to this survey, teacher’s attitudes towards children are also a major problem which needs to be addressed.

Both teachers and children noted that one of the barriers to school attendance is the lack of documents, which is discussed below.

Corruption

Children of migrant families often do not have registration documents and use unofficial payments and connections in order to enrol their children. The continuing education of their children also depends on unofficial payments. If a child’s parent cannot pay the charges, the child may face pressure from the school administration (Open Kyrgyzstan 2011).

According to Nazgul Turdubekova from the League of Children’s Rights, “this hinders equal access to education, therefore we must create a special committee to control unofficial payments because some schools charge unbearable amounts of bribes and force children to buy school uniforms, which many parents cannot afford” (Bengard 2011). Unfortunately many parents are reluctant to speak about this problem, since reporting is culturally unacceptable (the soviet legacy).

Corruption can also lead to the deterioration of the quality of education when bribes are used to pass exams. In this regard, Almaz Tajybai, a member of the Monitoring Council of the MoES, states,

“In order to raise the quality of education in schools we need to reach out to society and advocate for the importance of education. More and more children are not motivated to study, but rather want to earn money or help their parents. Such children come to school with no educational goals and waste their time. When exams approach, with great pleasure and with the acceptance of teachers they bribe school administrators.” (Tajybai, A. Focus Group Discussion, June 27, 2011).

Lack of schools and facilities

There is both a lack of schools, particularly pre-primary schools, as well as a lack of facilities within schools. Poor WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) facilities are a major problem in many schools, particularly in rural areas, and could be an important cause of adolescent girls dropping out of school. A lack of facilities for children with a disability is also a serious concern, as discussed previously in this chapter.

The graphs below illustrate trends in the number of public and private schools since 1990. The number of public pre-primary schools declined steeply from 1990 to 1995, from almost 1700 schools to only 456 schools in just five years. The decline continued until 2002 when there were only around 400 schools left. Many pre-school buildings were sold during the privatization period, and in Bishkek kindergartens are so overcrowded that in many cases two children need to share one bed (A. Bengard 2011). Since 2002, the number of pre-primary institutions has been increasing again and by 2010 there were 653 pre-primary schools. There are also underground pre-schools, primary and extracurricular schools, which are not registered to avoid investigations and taxes (Damira Kudaibergenova, personal conversation, June 23, 2011).

Although less dramatic, there has also been an overall decline in the number of lower secondary schools - from 187 in 2010 compared to 234 in 1990 and 316 at its peak in 1995. The number of primary schools has been declining since 2005, although there are now slightly more primary schools compared to 1990.

The number of upper secondary schools in contrast has increased significantly, from just 1393 in 1990 to 1819 in 2010.

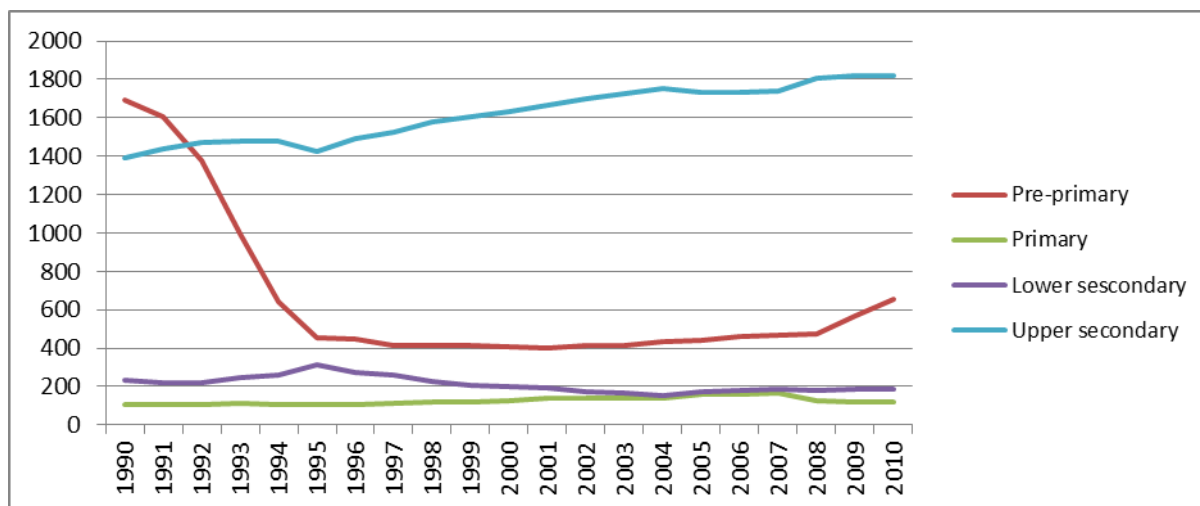


Figure 33. Number of public pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools, 1990-2010

Source: NSC 2011³⁰

The figure below shows the trend for private schools. Although there are currently not many private schools in the Kyrgyz Republic, the number is growing rapidly in particular for pre-primary schools, meeting the demand where there is a shortage of public pre-primary schools. The first private pre-primary school appeared in 1996. There was little growth however until 2008 when the number shot up to 28 from just 6 the previous year. In 2010 there were as many as 38 private pre-primary schools. This rapid increase may continue as people's attitudes towards the market economy are changing. Community based kindergartens are in increasing demand in rural areas (Nizovskaya 2010) and public expenditure is currently not sufficient to cover the demand. The private sector could help overcome the problem in the future, but currently the private sector is still quite small.

Private upper secondary schools have also grown in number, although it appears to have already reached a peak in 2007. Private primary and lower secondary schools are very few in number. As of 2010 there was only 1 private school for children with special needs, compared to 19 public schools.

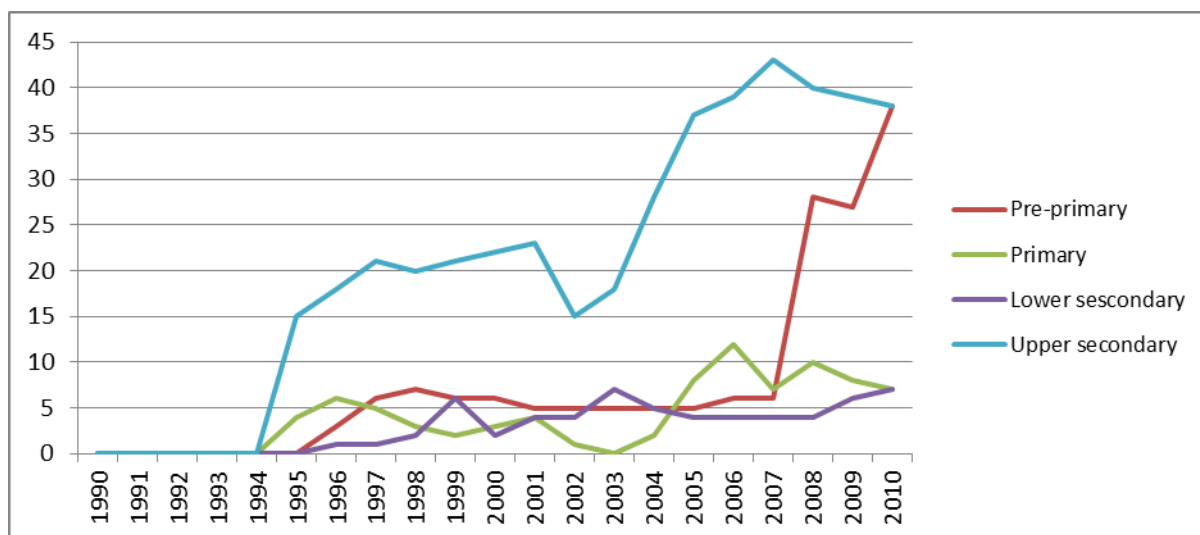


Figure 34. Number of private pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools, 1990-2010

Source: NSC 2011³¹

³⁰ <http://www.stat.kg/stat.files/din.files/education/5030102.pdf>

³¹ <http://www.stat.kg/stat.files/din.files/education/5030102.pdf>

Many schools have been affected by recent earthquakes, such as in Batken oblast and Kadamjay rayon. Some schools are destroyed and children are going to study in temporary camps or will be sent to other schools. Currently the MoES is working with local communities to provide adequate schooling in those regions (Alybaeva 2011).

In addition to 503 pre-school organizations (as estimated in 2010), which enrol about 64 000 children, there are also 133 non-formal schools functioning in the country covering more than 80 000 children (Children's Website Baldar 2010). These non-formal organizations offer diverse and innovative programs, including critical thinking, communication and creativity, which are not taught in the formal system. The Children's Media Center in Bishkek, for example, offers not only pre-school programs, but is also a home of creative projects run by graduates of the Center. However, these types of education centres lack state funding, which makes them rely on private sources. Ms. Borovikova Nadejda, Director of the Center, described the situation as follows,

"The problems of pre-school education are in the lack of specialists, textbooks, insufficient author programs, poor facilities and overcrowded classrooms. The education sector also needs to introduce fair hiring policies for administrative and teaching positions, organize in-service teacher training programs, allocate more money to equipment and textbooks, develop a list of pre-school centres and rating system and creation of motivating instruments for better teaching and learning through different competitions. Furthermore, the sector needs more research programs on pre-school education in collaboration with UNICEF and other international organizations. Unfortunately, most international organizations work through the Ministry of Education. It would be better if they worked directly with private organizations as well." (Borovikova, personal communication, 08.11.2011).

Shortage of qualified teachers

There is a serious shortage of qualified teachers in the Kyrgyz Republic, with many on the verge of retirement and few to replace them (International Crisis Group 2011). Only 14 per cent of graduates from specialized pedagogical universities end up teaching in schools, with the rest preferring to work in other sectors of economy. One of the main issues is the very low salaries of teachers, and in December 2010 teachers throughout the Kyrgyz Republic threatened a strike if their demands for a substantial pay increase were not met. Although the government is implementing a new system for salary calculation, it does not have the budget to fund a (significant) salary raise. The average monthly wage in the education sector declined between 1993 and 2005 to around 60 per cent of the national average wage (UNICEF 2007). Low teacher salaries and teacher morale are an issue in the whole Central Asia region, and it is common for teachers to take on additional jobs to survive. In addition, corruption in education has become widespread. In recent years, teacher salaries have increased, but are still perceived as being quite low (OECD 2011b).

Besides low salaries, factors leading to the shortage of teachers include meagre social security packages, poor conditions and the low prestige of the teaching profession (Open Kyrgyzstan 2010). The problem of finding certified teachers has worsened over the last five years and many schools have simply ceased teaching subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, music, English, Russian and Kyrgyz.

Although salaries are low, pupil teacher ratios in secondary schools are actually better in the Kyrgyz Republic compared to many wealthier countries (UIS 2012; OECD 2011b). However, this has done little to improve the quality of education.

Problems with textbooks and study materials

There are not enough books in schools, and those that are there, are often old, in poor repair, or no longer in line with the curriculum. The table below shows the distribution of schools by language and textbook availability for the 2011/2012 academic year (NSC 2011). About 13 per cent of Kyrgyz language schools and 32 per cent of Russian language schools are supplied with less than a half of the required textbooks. Overall, the provision of textbooks remains low.

Table 2. Textbook provision for the beginning of the 2011/2012 academic year

	Up to 50%		50-80%		More than 80%	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Kyrgyz	13.0	12.8	62.0	46.4	25.0	18.1
Russian	29.6	34.4	46.4	34.6	24.0	10.6
Uzbek	59.6	46.0	34.6	48.5	5.8	5.5
Tajik	-	71.4	100	28.6	-	-

Source: NSC 2011

There is no recent qualitative study available on textbook shortage in the country. The Ministry provides documented data on textbooks that have been *distributed* to schools; while the schools submit data on the books they actually *use* (ADB 2008). The issue of “usable” books was investigated by a Step-by-Step Foundation study covering all rayons and cities of the Kyrgyz Republic, and it revealed that the figures for textbook provision are much lower especially in Kyrgyz-medium classes and secondary school grades (5-9) (Sultanalieva 2006).

Table 3. Usable textbooks in schools as percentage of need, 2006

Grade	Percentage %			
	Kyrgyz	Russian	Uzbek*	Total
1	50	59	42	51
2	53	31	69	51
3	59	53	46	53
4	36	39	69	48
5	51	41	80	58
6	20	34	51	35
7	31	46	58	45
8	29	53	78	53
9	24	61	57	47
10	46	80	141*	89
11	37	80	124*	80

*Textbook supply in Uzbek language schools seems high because parents buy the textbooks themselves, especially in upper secondary grades 10-11.

Source: Sultanalieva 2006

In general the supply of textbooks is better in the capital Bishkek than in other regions. Textbooks also tend to be much cheaper in Bishkek. Many parents in Chui oblast purchase textbooks in Bishkek where they are two to three times cheaper compared to the cost in the provinces.

According to Damira Kudaibergenova, head of the Department of pre-school, basic and extracurricular education of the MoES, the World Bank is allocating 200 million soms for publishing textbooks (Alybaeva 2011). However, more resources are still needed to cover all schools and all children. According to Ms. Intisar Kalmatova, the principal of a school in Leilek rayon, “Children somehow learn until grade five, and then they have no more textbooks to use” (Berdishev 2011).

Language is also often an issue. For example, textbooks donated by Russia are in Russian and reflect the Russian context. The situation is similar in Uzbek language schools and many teachers use textbooks from Uzbekistan. Therefore, in some regions of the Kyrgyz Republic children name the President of Uzbekistan as president of the country.

The quality of textbooks is another problem and includes such issues as mismatch with the national curriculum, out-of-date content, academic language use which is difficult to understand, and the lack of alternative textbooks for children with special learning needs.

Political, governance, capacity and financing bottlenecks

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP declined significantly in the late 1990s but increased rapidly since 2000, as shown in graph below. Over the past decade there has been an impressive increase in budget allocated to education – with expenditure as a percentage of GDP increasing from 3.5 per cent in 2000 to 6.2 per cent in 2009, and is now at the same level as in 1995 (UIS 2012).

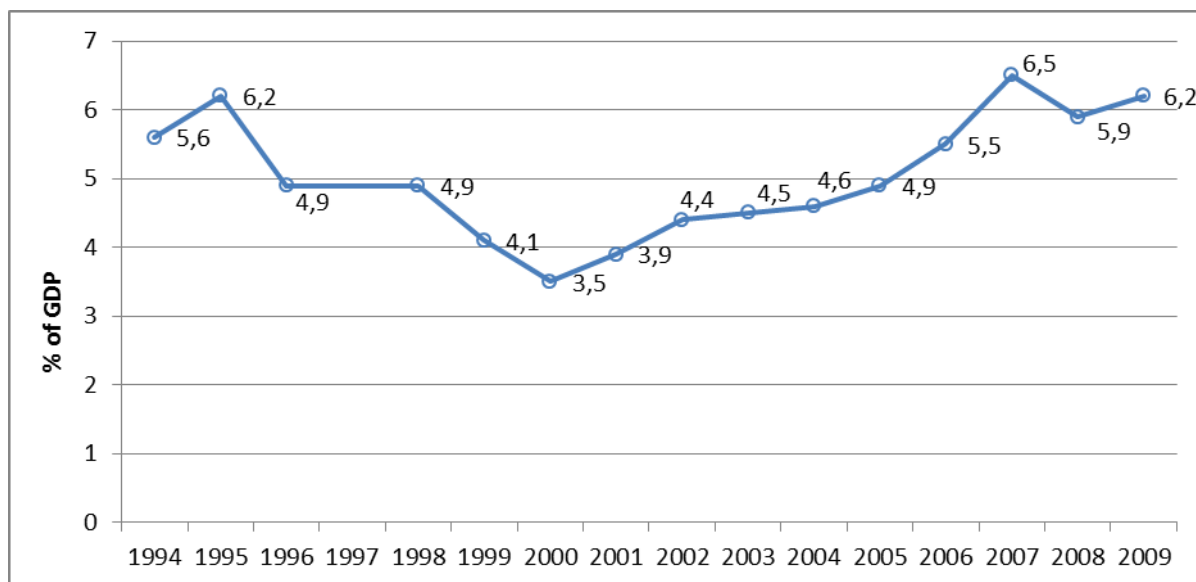


Figure 35. Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, 1994-2009

Source: UIS 2012

The Kyrgyz Republic is among the countries with the highest total expenditure in education in proportion to its GDP as well as the one of the countries with the highest fraction of total public expenditure allocated to education (OECD 2011b). The graph below shows that public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure increased from 20.3 per cent in 2000 to 24.7 per cent in 2008.

In spite of the significant budget allocated to education, expenditure per pupil is below average internationally. This is mainly because a relatively large proportion of the population is enrolled in the educational system. Over 31 per cent of the population is between 5 and 19 years old, compared to the OECD average of 20 per cent and 22 per cent in Russia. This places a heavy financial burden on the system.

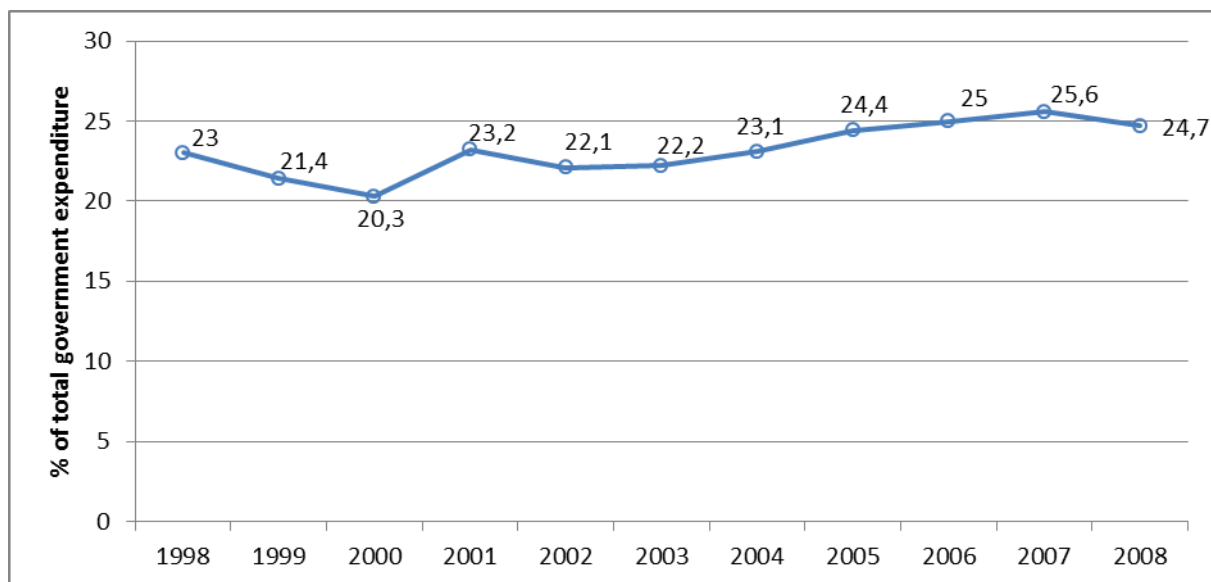


Figure 36. Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure, 1998-2008

Source: UIS 2012

As discussed in Chapter 1, enrolment in pre-primary education is very low and this is largely due to the lack of pre-primary infrastructure and the cost of pre-primary education. Even in the relatively prosperous Soviet period, the number of children attending pre-school institutions in the Kyrgyz Republic did not exceed one-third of the pre-school age population. In the current economic climate, it is a big challenge to restore the pre-school infrastructure to the state it was in during the Soviet period. Expanding it further to enable 100 per cent coverage is therefore a distant target.

To address the issue of poor school readiness the MoES introduced an intensive free 100 hour programme for pre-primary-age children. In 2011, through funding support from the Fast Track Initiative for EFA Catalytic funding, the MoES has also initiated an ambitious 240 hour pre-school program for children who were not able to attend kindergarten (Bengard 2011). However, these short-term programs can only be considered as temporary solutions to address the issue and cannot replace school preparedness programs as they are defined in the OOSCI Conceptual and Methodological Framework (UNICEF and UIS 2011).

At primary and secondary levels, unequal funding is a major concern. There are significant inequities between oblasts in terms of spending per student, which is related to their income generating capacity (OECD 2011b). Annual expenditure per student ranges from KGS 2893 per year in Jalal-Abad to KGS 4812 in Bishkek. Average teacher salaries also vary between oblasts, although not as widely as compared to student expenditure. Intergovernmental transfers aimed at reducing these inequities are currently insufficient. In addition, even if inputs were equal between oblasts, this would not guarantee equality of learning because learning outcomes are highly correlated to children's socioeconomic status. Poorer areas therefore require more funding than wealthier areas. This recognition has notably led to the adoption of formula funding in a number of countries.

There are also spending inefficiencies due to shortcomings in budgetary management and governance arrangements, According to the OECD, "there is considerable dependency on external expertise and funding, and a top-down policy approach without stakeholder involvement", and "the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) has neither insight in the overall spending for the sector, nor in the execution of parts of its own budget (donor spending for reforms), and its capacities to assess the needs of the system and to monitor reform implementation are limited" (OECD 2011b: 22).

Chapter 3. Policies and strategies

Overview

This chapter provides an analysis of ongoing policies and strategies pertaining to the problem of exclusion of children from and within school. These policies and strategies are shaped and refined by ongoing research, reports and legislations. Two types of policies and strategies are discussed in this chapter. The first relates to the education sector and includes demand side policies and strategies, supply side policies and strategies, and management and governance related policies and strategies. The second relates to the social protection system, and is concerned with key social protection programs relevant to the situation of out-of-school children and children at risk, their potential effects, as well as their financing.

Demand side policies and strategies

Demand side socio-cultural policies and strategies include community mobilization and strategies aimed at participation, awareness raising, addressing stigmatizing attitudes towards marginalized children, partnership with community and civil society organizations (UNICEF and UIS 2011). Demand side economic policies and strategies include initiatives such as free pre-primary education, reducing indirect costs such as uniforms and books, targeted interventions such as scholarships for girls, take home food rations and addressing opportunity costs especially for child labourers. These kinds of policies and strategies appear to have received relatively little attention so far in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The implementation of demand side socio-cultural policies and strategies requires a paradigm shift away from purely supply-side focused policies and strategies. It requires a better understanding of the demand-side barriers to schooling as discussed in the previous chapter, and what role the government can play in removing or reducing these barriers. Even if school fees are abolished, demand side factors can prevent children from going to school – for example indirect costs of schooling, children needing to support their families by working, and social barriers for children with disabilities. Here, too, the government can and should play a role in reducing these barriers to schooling. An example is the “Hey Girls Let’s Go to School” campaign launched in Turkey in 2003, which operates through a vast network of volunteers who raise awareness of the value of education and persuade families to enrol girls in school (UNICEF 2012). As a result of this campaign an estimated 350,000 children – many but not all of which girls - were enrolled in school.

A better understanding of factors which put children at risk of dropping out is also needed, with an early warning system to prevent dropout. It is more effective to target children at risk of dropping out than to get them back to school once they have already dropped out. A significant development in this respect is the introduction of social pedagogues in schools since 2010. The social pedagogue is responsible for working with children who stop attending school or are at risk of dropping out, and they can make a significant contribution to reducing dropout. The person also works with local self-governance bodies and other relevant services to identify the problems and develop an individual action plan for retention of the child or provision of needs based support to support the child.

The sensitive nature of the concept of children being excluded from education also needs to be addressed. The use of certain terms such as “exclusion” may be problematic. In focus group discussions with government officials this term was opposed because - it was argued - the education system does not “exclude” anyone. It is easy for misunderstandings to arise when addressing the complex, multi-dimensional issue of out-of-school children, and this may particularly be so for demand side socio-cultural factors. The problem of out-of-school children should not just be seen in terms of the failings of the education system, because it is not merely a supply side issue of providing schools, textbooks, teachers, and so on. It also about the positive ways in which the government can provide support to families who for various reasons decide not to send their children to school or take them out of school early. In this regard, community mobilization is essential in order to raise awareness amongst the population and civil society of the complex and multi-dimensional nature of exclusion.

Supply side policies and strategies

Supply side policies and strategies include the quality of schooling, multiple pathways to learning, improving school facilities, teacher and textbook supplies and nutrition programs (UNICEF and UIS 2011).

The quality of education is a growing concern of civil society since the 2006 and 2009 OECD-PISA studies, where Kyrgyz students performed worst amongst the participating countries. In 2011, the MoES updated the school curriculum for 1st grade primary school students. It is also supplying the 1st graders with 451 000 textbooks in the upcoming academic year. The new curriculum employs innovative teaching methods, and the Ministry is in the process of training 16 000 new teachers. In order to improve the quality of teaching, the MoES introduced a new teacher salary system in 2011 where working hours are limited to 36 hours per week (whereas previously there was no limit). The MoES is also considering re-introducing the practice of renting books, which was prohibited some time ago (Alybaeva 2011).

In terms of quality one area which needs to be addressed urgently is the significant difference in school quality between rural and urban areas. As discussed in Chapter 1, the quality of education is much lower in rural areas than in the cities according to PISA data, and this difference is much greater than in most other CEECIS countries which participated in PISA (UNICEF 2009, based on PISA 2006 data). PISA scores in large cities are not much lower than the OECD average of 500, but in villages are far below – 200 points – below the OECD average.

The MoES announced the new Strategy of Education Development for the next decade, which is going to be implemented in three consecutive phases of three years each. The strategy aims at improving the quality of educational services through effective use of internal and external resources. The main priority of the strategy is changing the system of financing and management in education, introduction of new criteria for accreditation of educational institutions and teachers, and the development of an optimal model of monitoring (MoES 2011). The strategy embraces short and long term programs for all levels of education.

The pre-school program sets forth the increase of alternative pre-school institutions and buildings for 3-5 year ages, introducing obligatory 240 hour school preparedness programs, launching awareness raising campaigns on the importance of pre-school education, equipping school with educational materials and developing human resources. It covers 40 000 children of pre-primary age, which is almost 40-45 per cent of the total number of children who do not currently attend pre-school institutions. The organizers announced that this initiative can eventually contribute to reaching 100 per cent of enrolment of children in pre-school education by 2020 (Bengard 2011). The 240 hour program requires attendance five days a week with three classes a day, encompassing about 16 hours a week. There is also a 100 hour program for those children who could not attend the 240 hour program. As of 2012 these programs are being introduced around the country. The Ministry is also planning to support the private sector and the construction of community based kindergartens during the next three years (MoES 2011). According to Damira Kudaibergenova, head of the Department of pre-school, basic and extracurricular education of MoES, “the private sector is choked by endless inspections, taxes, and so forth. Therefore, for the most part private education is underground”³².

The significant, positive role of high quality early childhood programmes in cognitive development is well established, but often insufficiently recognized by governments (e.g. Engle et al. 2007; Grantham-McGregor et al. 2007; Walker et al. 2007). Moreover, evidence shows that investing in pre-primary is the most cost-effective period in a child's life to invest in with respect to cognitive benefits and future economic returns. Early intervention can also reduce future disparities in achievement between pupils of different socio-economic groups. Therefore, investing in pre-primary education is of crucial importance in order to increase school performance later in life, particularly for children from poor households. Disadvantaged children benefit more from these programmes than advantaged children, and younger children (ages 2 to 3 years old) benefit more than older children (ages 5 to 6 years old) even after adjusting for the duration of the programmes (Engle et al. 2007).

³² Personal conversation, June 23, 2011.

The effects of pre-primary attendance continue throughout life. OECD-PISA data indicates that the score point differential associated with attending pre-primary school for more than one year is almost 50 points, *after* accounting for socio-economic background (OECD 2011c). To put this into perspective, the average reading score in the Kyrgyz Republic was 314, compared to a mean of 500 and standard deviation of 100 for OECD countries. This means that pre-primary positively impacts the education performance of 15 year olds as measured by the PISA tests, demonstrating that increasing pre-primary enrolment has a significant impact all through the education system.

Although the 100 hour and 240 hour school preparedness programs are welcome initiatives, they would need to be expanded to at least one year in order to have a bigger and longer-term impact. In addition, continued expansion of pre-school programs for younger children is needed, in particular for children from disadvantaged families. For pre-primary as with any level of education, the quality of education matters and there are many aspects to quality, including having sufficient play and learning materials, qualified and competent teachers, a high quality curriculum, and the ability to provide individual instruction. The ratio of pupils to teachers is particularly important at a young age when children need more intensive care and attention. The very high pre-primary pupil teacher ratio of 26 is therefore a serious cause for concern, which is almost twice the OECD average (which is 14) and the highest in the CEECIS region.

The MoES is introducing a new system of per capita financing, delegating the financing functions from national onto rayon level. According to Kanat Sadykov, the Minister of Education and Science, this system will help improve education financing (MoES 2011). There is also opposition against this scheme. Nevertheless, around one-third of all schools (717 in total) have already changed over to the per capita financing system (MoES 2012).

It is important to monitor whether funding from the MoES makes it down to the school level, which can be done through Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) (Poisson 2010). Such surveys enable one to calculate possible 'leakage' in the flow due to corruption. This leakage can vary based on the kind of school – for example in small schools it can increase because less qualified staff may not feel able to question the authorities about the funding they should receive. It can also vary according to funding modality, for example it may be significantly higher for discretionary funding given by local authorities to schools compared to rule-based funding. PETS are just one of several tools which can be used to identify corrupt practices within the education sector. Clearly transparency of education finance is required order to identify and prevent corruption at all levels, and this is an important consideration in the implementation of a per capita funding system.

There have been a number of recommendations from the international community regarding the effective use of financing for education and stimulating the enrolment of children. Considering the high returns of education for the nation, Van Ravens (2010), for example, recommends lowering the primary entry age to six and extend the enrolment in half-day programs to four and five year olds. This would, however, require 200 million soms of additional budget allocation per year. If parents could pay 50 soms per month, then it would reduce annual expenditure of the government by 100 million soms annually and that fee would be waived for the 18 per cent of families with low income (Van Ravens 2010).

The various initiatives looked at in this section are currently being discussed in the education sector. However, most of these suggestions are a spontaneous response to social or political demand and lack thoroughly developed programs. Although the country has three independent institutions for education - the MoES, the National Academy of Science and the Institute of Education – current policies and joint action plans often lack a solid basis in systematic analysis and research.

Vertical equity: compensation for socio-economic disadvantage

The per capita funding system which is currently being introduced is likely to have significant consequences for the distribution of resources. One of the main functions of any funding formula is to ensure fair and transparent distribution of resources, as well as provide additional funding to poor communities. This section identifies areas of inequality which need to be addressed with respect to funding for schools.

Two forms of equity can be distinguished (Ross and Levacic 1999: 29):

1. Horizontal equity: The like treatment of recipients whose needs are similar.
2. Vertical equity: The application of differential funding levels for recipients whose needs differ.

The OECD report “Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st Century” examined school characteristics and mean socio-economic background of schools across OECD member countries and partner countries participating in PISA (Schleicher 2012). The table below correlates the two, and by doing so sheds light on differences in vertical equity across the participating countries. Based on PISA data from 2009, it correlates various school characteristics with the mean school socio-economic background – i.e. the socio-economic background of the pupils in that school. Areas highlighted in green indicate that disadvantaged schools are more likely to have more or better resources. Areas highlighted in red indicate that advantaged schools are more likely to have more or better resources. The figures are in **bold** if the relationship is statistically different from the OECD average.

Table 4. Comparison of school characteristics and school mean socio-economic background, 2009

	Simple correlation between the school mean socio-economic background and:					
	Percentage of full-time teachers	Percentage of certified teachers among all full-time teachers	Percentage of teachers with university-level degree (ISCED 5A) among all full-time teachers	Index of quality of school's educational resources	Computer/student Ratio	Student/teacher ratio
OECD average	-0.07	0.04	0.15	0.13	-0.08	0.15
Kyrgyzstan	0.17	0.08	0.35	0.27	0.13	0.27
Germany	-0.15	-0.02	-0.02	0.06	-0.18	0.28
Albania	-0.25	0.00	0.38	0.44	0.24	0.15
Azerbaijan	0.05	-0.06	0.44	0.19	0.17	0.23
Bulgaria	-0.08	0.17	0.17	0.09	-0.17	0.21
Croatia	0.09	0.02	0.28	0.09	0.17	0.32
Kazakhstan	0.23	0.04	0.34	0.21	-0.12	0.44
Romania	0.05	0.10	0.11	0.20	-0.07	-0.02
Russian Federation	0.18	0.08	0.31	0.26	0.02	0.29
Serbia	0.10	0.06	0.06	-0.01	0.00	0.11
Turkey	0.12	-0.04	0.04	0.04	-0.06	-0.26

Disadvantaged schools are more likely to have more or better resources, in **bold** if relationship is statistically different from the OECD average

Advantaged schools are more likely to have more or better resources, in **bold** if relationship is statistically different from the OECD average

Within country correlation is not statistically significant

Source: Schleicher 2012

In most OECD and CEECIS countries, as well as in the Kyrgyz Republic, the student teacher ratio is better for socio-economically disadvantaged schools. This is a positive sign, but perhaps not surprising given that student teacher ratios tend to be lower in rural and remote areas – exactly those areas where schools are more likely to be socio-economically disadvantaged.

The Kyrgyz Republic fares poorly in providing for socio-economically disadvantaged schools when it comes to the percentage of full-time teachers, percentage of teachers with a university-level degree among full-time teachers, index of quality of the school's educational resources, and computer/student ratio. For all of these, there is an imbalance where socio-economically advantaged schools are better staffed and resourced. There is still a very long way to go before the Kyrgyz Republic reaches the level of vertical equity of OECD countries such as Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Germany, Poland and South Korea. In these countries, socio-economically disadvantaged schools have slightly better school resources to compensate for socio-economic disadvantage. As explained above, the very opposite is currently the case in the Kyrgyz Republic. Germany is included in the table above as a potential example of vertical equity (although it should be noted that these figures give only a rough indication of the compensation for socio-economic disadvantage and of course do not show the full picture).

Ideally, children from poor socio-economic backgrounds should be in schools with the same or better conditions than children from wealthy socio-economic backgrounds. The per capita funding formula would need to take this information into account in order to correct the current imbalance favoring socio-economically advantaged schools. In addition, as discussed previously in this chapter, there are significant geographical disparities as well which need further analysis and consideration.

Management and governance related policies and strategies

Management and governance policies and strategies include the development of effective regulations, building reliable data and monitoring mechanisms, improving accountability and transparency, increasing participation and support of local communities (UNICEF and UIS 2011). The management and governance of education in the Kyrgyz Republic is currently being reshaped as a number of important documents defining education policy are being developed:

1. The Concept of Education Development in Kyrgyz Republic until 2020
2. The Education Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012-2020
3. The Medium-term Program of Education Development in Kyrgyz Republic 2012-2014

These documents are developed by the MoES and are in the process of endorsement. The new Education Development Strategy developed by the MoES focuses on three main areas: financial reform, management reform and introduction of monitoring and evaluation. The financial reform introduces per capita financing for schools, which is discussed further below.

The following priority policy areas have been defined in the draft Education Development Strategy MoES (2012):

1. Maintenance of operational network in compliance with the standards;
2. Support the nutrition program in preschools and primary schools;
3. Modernization of educational content, taking into account the competency approach;
4. Promotion of individual approach in teaching;
5. Provision of inclusive education;
6. Providing schools with textbooks;
7. Diagnosis and monitoring of the educational process results;
8. Ensure the development of multicultural and multilingual education;
9. Create conditions for the development of ICT infrastructure in schools;
10. Motivation and encouragement of teachers and schools who/that systematically improve the achievements of students;
11. Develop and implement mechanisms for different social groups interested in improving educational organizations participation;
12. The reform of school financing;
13. Reform the further training system;
14. Reform the structure of teachers salaries.

Although the MoES controls a number of important spheres of education, it has no regulating power over a number of educational institutions. Many educational institutions and schools have their own Ministries and do not “obey” to the decrees and regulations of MoES. As Guljigit Sooronkulov, Deputy Minister of MoES, stated “the Ministry cannot fire anybody in schools, but can recommend the local self- governments to make an assessment on the activities of a principal”. Furthermore, the education system of the Kyrgyz Republic diffuses the responsibility for education into regional and local self-governments. In addition, MoES has to reconcile many aspects of budget with the Ministry of Finance, which in turn, is dependent on decisions of the Government and the Parliament. These and other problems of transition complicate the management and financing of education in the Kyrgyz Republic and new and alternative approaches are needed to improve the system that is currently in place.

One of the notions of the last decade to improve the system was decentralization. In principle, sharing responsibilities for education with parents and local governments makes education more responsive to local needs and encourages contributions from local communities. However, it also creates inequalities as richer communities are able to create elite schools, while poorer communities get further marginalized.

Schools do need more support from parents, however, without which many schools are unable to function. Therefore, there are Parents’ Associations in schools, which are independent bodies to control the contributions from parents. However, corruption and inequalities take place even within these associations (RFE/RL Kyrgyzstan 2011).

The Interim President Roza Otunbaeva introduced a new institution, the Public Advisory Council, in order to monitor the activities of the Ministries and Agencies, providing transparency in budget expenditure, develop recommendations for improving public service and serve as a bridge between people and the government³³. The Council for the Ministry of Education and Science has already had several meetings for school education, child labour and out-of-school children. As part of the background research for this report, several Public Advisory Council meetings were attended and focus group discussions were held with members. One of the policy proposals from the Council was as follows:

“The problem of unofficial payments for registering children in all levels of school education cannot be eliminated unless we introduce an institution of school supervisory committees, in order to control the school budget. We have had parental committees in schools, which has been ineffective so far. Therefore, the committee has to include members of civil society as well. Otherwise, some schools demand up to 25 000 soms (about 600\$) from parents in order to enrol children, which is a bribe” (Almaz Tajybai, focus group discussion, June 23, 2011).

The absence of effective monitoring and evaluation of schools for children with special needs is a pressing issue in the Kyrgyz Republic. As Jakubova Nurjamal, a member of the Council, states,

Schools for children with special needs have to be under control of Ministry of Social Protection not under the Ministry of Education, which is unable to provide proper conditions for schools for talented children. In Jalal-Abad, for example, one of such school has to be closed, because of poor hygienic conditions (Jakubova, focus group discussion, June 23, 2011).

The development of a reliable data and monitoring system is a key issue outlined in the draft Education Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic. This requires the harmonization of existing datasets managed by different entities. The document notes that there is currently no education management information system (EMIS) and as a result there is inadequate coordination, both horizontal and vertical, between the MoES, local governance bodies and educational organizations. This is considered to be a key problem for monitoring and evaluation. The aim is therefore to create a monitoring and evaluation system to be used as an information basis for management and forecasting, which is integrated in the decision-making process. As discussed in Chapter 1, there

³³ The website of the Public Advisory Council is www.ons.kg.

are currently significant differences in out-of-school children numbers according to different sources - the National Statistical Committee, UIS and the MICS household survey. This important issue is further discussed in the concluding chapter.

Another initiative of the government is a special fellowship grant program entitled *The Deposit for Young Teachers*, which is aimed at supplying remote schools with specialists who hold diplomas of public universities. As Minister Kanat Sadykov has stated, 307 teachers have received the grant since 2008 (Information Portal of Kyrgyzstan 2011). However, this is just a fraction of the number of teachers required – estimated at 3000 (AKIPress 2011). This program alone is not enough to satisfy the demand side needs. In addition, most of the recipients of the fellowship grant are ready to leave schools as soon as they find a better job. Therefore, the government needs to increase the amount of the grant or shorten the duration of the two year obligatory work in school for grant recipients (Open Kyrgyzstan 2010).

The country is experiencing a shortage of study materials and problems with quality of existing textbooks. In order to fill the gap, the government is planning to print 110 000 textbooks for first year students of primary schools. The textbooks will be available in four languages – Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek and Tajik. In addition to this, seven guidebooks on mathematics, the Kyrgyz Republic studies and basic literacy skills, are going to be published in Kyrgyz and Russian languages. The cost of these textbooks is shared with the Asian Development Bank, which provides 1 million 300 thousand dollars for 2011. Next year, ADB is also planning to allocate 1 million 200 thousand dollars to printing textbooks for primary school students in grades 2 to 5 (Bengard 2011).

Unfortunately, there is a growing concern by both government officials and civil society regarding the content and quality of textbooks. It is suggested that the Ministry and civil society are more actively involved in developing the content and ensuring the quality of textbooks (Kasmalieva 2011).

Social protection systems at the interface of education and development

Social insurance in the Kyrgyz Republic consists mainly of pensions for former employees or farmers (for old age and invalidity) and their dependents (survivorship). Other social insurance benefits are sickness or maternity benefits for contributors, and funeral benefits for pensioners. Social assistance includes targeted social assistance (UM and MSB), implemented after independence, and privileges and subsidies for certain categorically eligible groups, inherited from the Soviet period.

The chart below shows the composition of social public expenditure on health and education as a percentage of GDP, from 2000 to 2009 (TransMONEE database 2010). In 2009, government expenditure on health reached 4.4 per cent of GDP, up from 2.6 per cent in 2000, and covered 54 per cent of the total health care expenditure in the country. During the same time period, spending on education increased from 3.5 per cent to 4.2 per cent of GDP. Spending on social insurance comprises the biggest share in the government social spending. State expenditure on social assistance, on the other hand, is low and shrinking, annually spending only 1-1.5 per cent of GDP on social assistance benefits and services over the last decade. After 2005, spending on assistance was declining, in 2009 falling below 1 per cent of GDP (World Bank 2009).

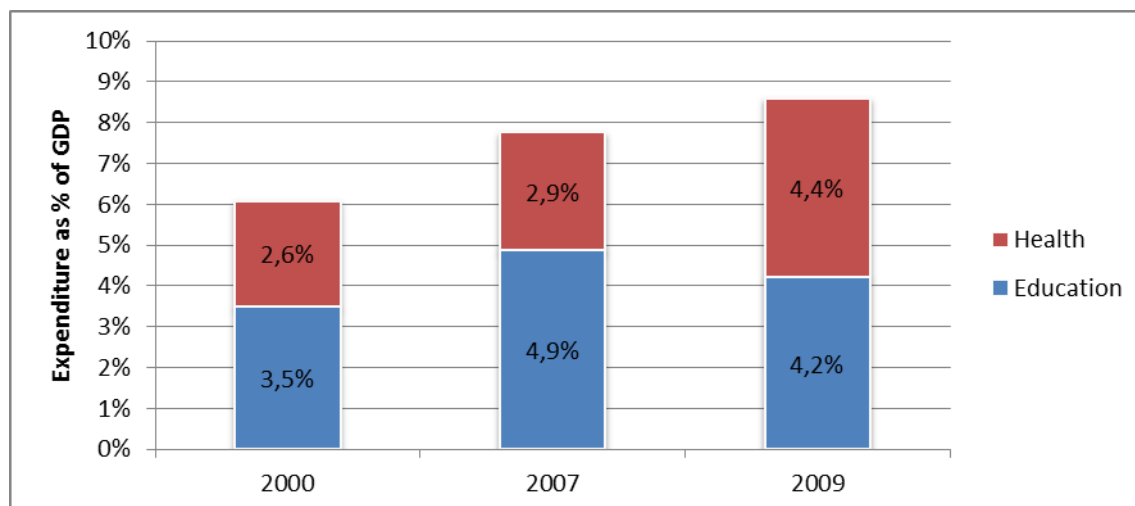


Figure 37. Composition of social public expenditure on health and education as percentage of GDP, 2000 to 2009

Source: TransMONEE database 2010

Pensions: The current pension insurance was launched in 1998, switching from a system of public pensions to the state social insurance, introducing the Notional Defined Contribution System, providing old-age pensions for those with at least 25 years (men) or 20 years (women) of covered insurance. Pensions have an earnings-related component, but all the insured are also entitled to a flat-rate basic pension set at 12 per cent of the average wage. Only about 33 per cent of the working age population is currently accruing any pension rights since only 0.8 million of the total labour force of 2.4 million are registered as contributors.

Social Pensions were introduced in 1998, under Monthly Social Benefits (MSB), paid to certain categories of the population irrespective of their income. The highest share of MSB beneficiaries are children with disabilities. The share of benefits in consumption, however, is low: in 2005 it was 7.6 per cent on average (World Bank 2009).

Labour market policies: Unemployment benefits are available for insured persons and are paid monthly for up to 6 calendar months. Active labour market policies are almost non-existent. The Micro Crediting Programme has been in place since 2000 as a means to reduce poverty and develop Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) (ADB 2008).

Family and Children: The Monthly Benefit for Low Income Families with Children (MB), financed by the government budget, provides family allowances and birth grants since 1998. It is a means-tested assistance programme targeted to children from low-income families. However, the Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) is very low: in 2001 it was equivalent to 1/3 of the extreme and 1/5 of the total poverty line (Tesliuc 2004), and in 2008, the average MB was US\$ 3.5, covering 3.6 of the Minimum Consumption Basket. The MB reduces the extreme poverty rate from 11.3 to 10.9 per cent (World Bank 2009). The system could be scaled up to include more families with children and higher amounts.

Nutrition: Several food programmes have been implemented very recently. In 2009, Vulnerable Group Feeding was introduced by the WFP to get food to the poorest villages in remote, isolated mountain plateaux. In 2010, WFP has also launched School Feeding Programme for children in primary schools (WFP 2010).

Categorical benefits: The country inherited from the Soviet period a safety net consisting of a large number of poorly targeted and costly benefits. Historically all the subsidies and benefits were granted in-kind, but starting from 2003, a gradual monetization has taken place. Since October 2010, monthly compensation is paid to 25 categories of beneficiaries while 13 categories of citizens were removed from the list of allowance beneficiaries. Housing Subsidies Programme has been introduced in 2000 as a targeted, means-tested social assistance to protect needy households from the rising prices of district heating, gas, hot water and electricity.

Children with disabilities: The government proposes to give children with a disability and their parents the opportunity to choose a school (The State Agency of Architecture and Construction of the Kyrgyz Republic 2011), and already provides a number of social services such as free public bus

transportation, free medical consultations, and discounts on such items as medicine and wheelchairs (Pupilin 2008). In addition, with the support of the Japanese government, 38 schools have been equipped with facilities for the disabled during the last 4 years (RFE/RL 2011). However, these are still relatively small steps towards meeting the significant barriers children with disabilities are currently facing.

As shown in the tables below, there are a considerable number of social insurance programmes and a few assistance programmes, mainly launched in 1997-2000. The impact of low income particularly affects children during the pre-school and primary school years, and eliminating deep and persistent poverty of children in their early years greatly impacts child outcomes (Brooks-Gunn and Duncan 1997, 9,14). The current non-contributory safety net contains one means-tested programme (UM) that is specifically designed to assist poor households with children in case of chronic and transient poverty, and a categorical programme (MSB) to assist certain categories of vulnerable groups. The expenditure on these, however, is very low and has decreased in the past few years to 0.49 per cent of GDP in 2009 (World Bank 2009).

The safety net also contains subsidies and benefits (privileges) for certain categories of citizens such as war veterans, rehabilitated people, mothers with many children, and military servicemen, although the expenditure and coverage of these allowances have been reduced. However, the safety net lacks certain elements to allow the supporting of households and individuals in smoothing consumption over lifetime and reducing poverty and providing a safety net of last resort for chronically or transitory poor households without children. Social assistance benefits are not adequately funded and provide for only marginal contribution to the income and consumption of the poor families with children. The Guaranteed Minimum Standard of Living according to which social assistance benefits are calculated is very low and thus allows for only a marginal reduction in poverty rates.

Moreover, in order to address out-of-school children, social protection needs to go beyond social insurance and assistance, and include policies and strategies specifically encouraging poor and disadvantaged families to send their children to school, for example (UNICEF and UIS 2011):

- Reducing of subsidizing indirect costs of schooling, including uniforms and books.
- Targeted interventions such as scholarships for girls and take home food rations.
- Addressing opportunity costs especially for child labourers.

Such initiatives cannot be enforced without building consensus for change through addressing social norms and knowledge, mobilizing civil society and generating political will, raising awareness and building knowledge (Rosati, et al. 2010: 80-118).

Table 5. Key Programmes of the Social Protection System

Title of the Program	Start date	Type	Targeting	Objectives	Existing Coverage
Old-age, survivors', disability pensions	1922 (system of public pensions); 1998 (state social insurance pension)	Social Insurance; Contributory; In cash; Notional defined contribution (NDC)	Old-age pensions: Men aged 60 + with 25 years of covered employment, women aged 55 + with 20 years of covered employment Survivors' pensions paid if the deceased had between 1-5 years of covered employment. Eligible survivors: the spouse; surviving children younger than age 16; nonworking dependents; parents of pensionable age or disabled. Disability pensions: the insured must have between 1-5 years of covered employment	Consumption smoothing; poverty alleviation	519,000 (2001). Old-age pensions: 352,200 (82% of the total population in pension age) (2007). Survivors pensions: 53,000 (2005). Disability pensions: 63,200 (2005)

Social Pensions/ Monthly Social Benefit	1998	Social assistance; categorical; no means-test	Certain categories of the population irrespective of their income: disadvantaged older persons, disabled persons having no right to pension, children with disabilities, mothers with many children having no right to pension, and survivors (orphans) not eligible for social insurance benefits. Children with HIV/AIDS	Poverty alleviation	62,200 households in 2009. (18,000 children with disabilities in 2005, 53,000 survivors in 2005)
Unemployment benefits	1921; 1998	Social insurance. Contributory. Cash benefits	Employed persons aged 16 to the pensionable age. Must be registered at an employment office and able and willing to work. Students.	Consumption smoothing	30,800 in 2006
Micro Crediting Programme	2000	Social assistance. Financial services.		Development of SMEs, contributing to the reduction of poverty level	166,021 in 2005 (722,000 if family members included)
Obligatory Medical Insurance	1997	Social Insurance. Contributory	All persons residing in the country	Health-care provision	4,190,900 in 2005 (82.3% of the population)
Sickness benefit, Maternity Benefit, Work Injury Benefits	1922 (social insurance); 2005	Social insurance. Contributory. Cash benefits.	Employed persons, students, members of cooperatives. Temporary disability benefits, Permanent disability benefits, and Survivors' benefits provided.	Consumption smoothing	
Monthly Benefit for Low Income Families with Children	1995, 1998 (state allowances) with 2001 and 2002 amendments	Social assistance; means-tested.	Family allowances: Low income families with children.	Poverty alleviation, intended to cover the income gap of the poorest families up to a minimal level of consumption.	387,000 in 2008 (7.3% of population). Since 2009 it is given to low income families with children only.
Food Programme to 1-4 class pupils		Social assistance. In-kind benefits	Primary school children, Grades 1 to 4.	Improving nutrition, increasing school attendance	348,200 beneficiaries in 2005
Full Provision of Textbooks		Social assistance. In-kind benefits	School children, grades 1 to 11	To support school children	1,122,000 beneficiaries in 2005
Vulnerable Group Feeding	2009	Social Assistance; Non-contributory; In-kind benefits	Poorest and most food-insecure families at the hardest times of the year (April/May, November/December). Local authorities draw up a preliminary list of the most vulnerable families, after which WFP and NGO partners verify the lists by visiting selected households to determine their economic status	To get food to the poorest villages in remote, isolated mountain plateaux	130,000 people in 2009 (3% of the total population)
Categorical allowances: privileges, subsidies, price discounts	1991	Social assistance. In-cash and in-kind. Categorical	38 different categories of beneficiaries: WWII veterans, Military servicemen; Survivors of Chernobyl catastrophe; Families living in upland areas; Low income pensioners, rehabilitated people, donors; Persons with disabilities; Mothers with many children; Current and retired military servicemen; Families who lost breadwinner	Mitigate negative impact of rising prices for medicine & tariffs for energy and transport. Compensation for certain categories of citizens.	282,500 (5.3% of population) (2009). The biggest group among the recipients is the families living in mountainous areas - 154,658 persons in 2008.

Sources: SSA 2008, World Bank 2009, TransMONEE database 2010, Asian Development Bank 2008

Table 6. Financing and Coverage of the Key Programmes of the Social Protection System

Sector	Title of the Program	Cost		Coverage		Financing
		early 2000s	late 2000s	early 2000s	late 2000s	
Pensions	Old-age, survivors, disability Pensions	3099 million Soms (2001)	4753 million Soms (2005)	519 000 (10.5% of population) (2001)	498 200 (9.7% of population) (2005)	Employers paying 19% and employees 8% of payroll.
	Social Pensions/ Monthly Social Benefit	115 million Soms (0.2% of GDP) (2001)	219 million Soms (0.2% of GDP) (2009)	35 000 households (2001)	62 200 households (2009)	Government budget: the Social Fund, Ministry of Social Development.
Labour Market Policies	Unemployment benefits	23 million Soms (2001)		60 000 (2001)	30 800 (2006)	Insured persons contributions
	Micro Crediting Programme	1240.6 million Som (2000)	2360.4 million Som (2005)	94 190 (2000)	166 021 (2005)	Enterprises' equity (16% of the total volume of micro credits) and debt capital (84%)
Health	Obligatory Medical Insurance			3 398 500 (69.5% of population) (2000)	4 190 900 (82.3% of population) (2005)	Mandatory Health Insurance Fund Employees: 2% of payroll. Self-employed: voluntary purchase of insurance. Private farmers: 6% from base part of land-tax. Government-provided insurance for: children under 16, disabled persons from childhood and social and state welfare recipients, pensioners and registered unemployed. Ministry of Health.

Source: SSA 2008, World Bank 2009, Central Statistical Office of Kyrgyz Republic 2010, TransMONEE database 2010, Asian Development Bank 2008

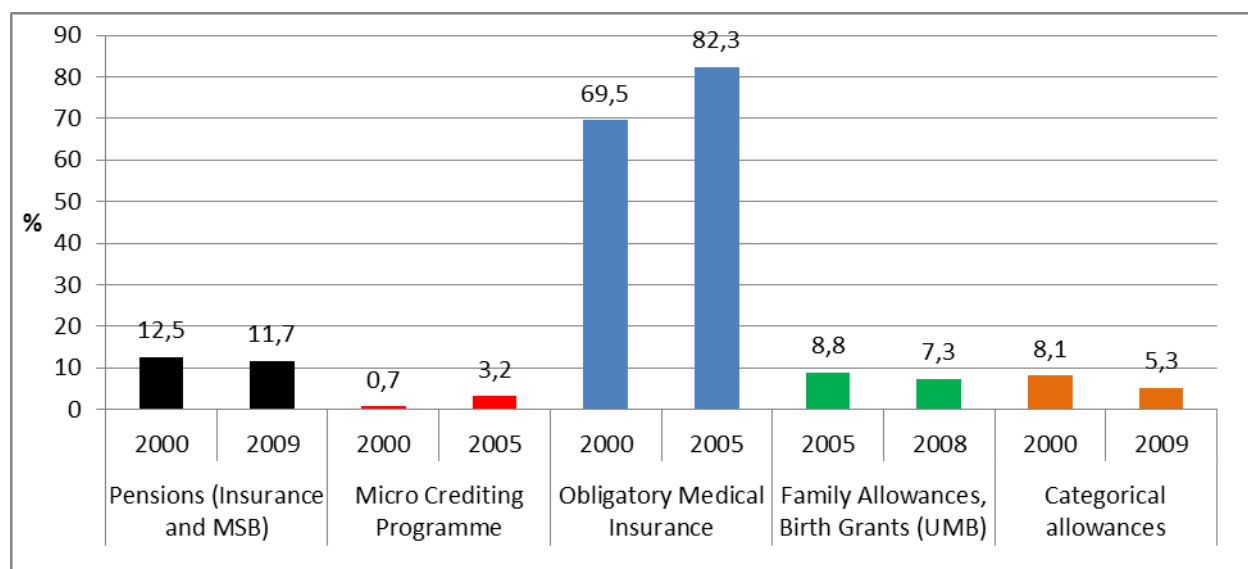


Figure 38. Coverage, as percentage of the total population, of key social protection programmes for selected years

Source: TransMONEE database 2010, Asian Development Bank 2008, World Bank 2009

Conclusions and recommendations

Much progress has been made around the world towards reaching the EFA 2015 goal of universal primary education, as well as reducing the number of out-of-school children of lower secondary age. Within this global context it is worrying that the Kyrgyz Republic is one of the few countries in the world where progress has reversed and the number of out-of-school children has increased over the last few years (UIS 2012). From 2009 to 2010, however, there was a slight drop in the percentage of out-of-school children of primary school age from 6.1 per cent to 4.7 percent. This is hopefully the beginning of a positive trend.

Beyond looking at out-of-school children, this report is also concerned with children who are currently in school but at risk of dropping out of school. Children who enter primary school without pre-primary experience are at a higher risk of dropout, so the fact that the Kyrgyz Republic has one of the lowest pre-primary enrolment rates in the world is of great concern. Low achievement is another risk factor for dropout, and PISA results indicate that learning outcomes in Kyrgyz schools are the lowest amongst all countries participating in PISA.

The report also carries positive messages. The percentage of out-of-school children in the Kyrgyz Republic, although increasing, is currently still low compared to other countries at similar levels of economic development. Pre-primary enrolment although very low has been steadily increasing, and private pre-school institutions and community based provisions have started to appear to meet the growing demand. While PISA results indicate that learning outcomes are low, participation in PISA is in itself an important step towards identifying shortcomings in the education system and implementing measures to improve education quality. Moreover, spending on education in the Kyrgyz Republic as a percentage of GDP has increased significantly over the past decade and is now higher than in most countries.

This concluding chapter discusses these and other key messages from the report, and provides recommendations for how barriers and bottlenecks to school attendance can be removed.

Increase enrolment in high-quality pre-primary education

Enrolment in pre-primary is still very low, but an important step has been made with the introduction of the 240-hour programme of prior-to-school preparation. Recognizing the importance of pre-primary, the MoES has made this programme mandatory for children who are not already enrolled in pre-primary. As discussed in Chapter 3, it is important to invest in children from a very young age, as the early years of a child's life are of crucial importance for future development. The significant, positive role of high quality early childhood programmes in cognitive development is well established and the impact has been found to be greater for younger children (ages 2 to 3 years old). For disadvantaged children, investing in quality pre-primary education is the most cost-effective period to invest in with respect to both cognitive and non-cognitive benefits (such as motivation and perseverance) and future economic returns, and becomes less cost-effective with increasing age (Heckman, 2006). Early intervention can reduce future disparities in achievement between pupils of different socio-economic groups. It is therefore particularly important to invest in pre-primary education for disadvantaged and marginalized children, and as early as possible.

The effects of pre-primary attendance continue throughout life. Those children without any pre-primary experience are at a higher risk of dropping out, and on average do not do as well at school. According to OECD-PISA data, the score point differential associated with attending pre-primary school for more than one year is almost 50 points, *after* accounting for socio-economic background. To put this into perspective, the average reading score in the Kyrgyz Republic was 314, compared to a mean of 500 and standard deviation of 100 for OECD countries. Pre-primary therefore has a lasting impact all through the education system. Although of course it is important not just that children attend pre-school, but also that the pre-school services are of high quality.

Besides the low rate of enrolment in pre-primary, another problem is late enrolment into primary. This is very common, and therefore many children start schooling at age 8 without any pre-primary experience. For these children, an important opportunity to invest early in their future has been lost. Early enrolment in primary school is also a problem, as primary schools are seen as a less costly

option to pre-primary. According to MICS data, only around 40 percent of children enrol in primary at age 7, with the remaining 60 percent enrolling either a year earlier or a year too late. The percentage of overage and underage children has also been increasing since 2004, so this is a serious cause for concern.

Net enrolment in pre-primary is 15.7 per cent, which is still much lower than the pre-transition level in 1990 and is the third lowest in the CEECIS region. There are significant regional disparities, as pre-primary enrolment rates range from less than 2 per cent to over 30 per cent in different parts of the country. The 100 hour and 240 hour pre-primary programmes are good initiatives towards scaling up access to pre-primary, in particular for poor children and children living in new settlements. When considering only children aged one year younger than the official primary age (dimension 1 in the 5DE model), over half of children age 6 are in pre-primary education. These short-term programmes will contribute to further increasing enrolment at age 6. However unless those programs are extended up to one year and universal provision is supported by state funding, they may be considered as temporary solutions which will not adequately prepare children for the transition into primary education. Universal one year school preparedness programs also need to reach those children living in parts of the country where there are currently no pre-primary facilities.

Targeted action for specific groups of out-of-school children

This report has shown that children who are excluded from education are more likely to live in rural areas and come from a poor and/or non-Kyrgyz speaking family. In addition, street children, children without registration documents, children living with a disability, children of migrants and children affected by ethnic conflicts are particularly vulnerable to exclusion.

The largest group of out-of-school children by far is 7 year olds, and at age 8 most children are enrolled in school. As discussed above, there is a serious problem with late enrolment in primary school which needs to be urgently addressed. In addition, large numbers of children drop out just prior to completing compulsory education.

Poverty affects boys more than girls, and at lower secondary and upper secondary education levels boys in the poorest quintile are much more likely to be out of school than girls. In contrast, no significant differences were found between girls' and boys' school attendance in the richest quintile.

There are unusually high regional differences in out-of-school children which warrant further investigation. The percentage of out-of-school children is much higher in certain oblasts such as Batken, Naryn and Chui according to MICS household survey data from 2005-2006. In fact, regional disparities among out-of-school children are higher than disparities in any of the other disaggregated groups of out-of-school children examined. The significant inequities between oblasts in terms of education spending could be a factor, and this is an important issue which needs to be addressed.

Related to regional disparities is the fact that socio-economically disadvantaged schools have a lower percentage of full-time teachers, a lower percentage of teachers with a university-level degree (among full-time teachers), a lower index of quality of the school's educational resources, and a lower computer/student ratio, according to OECD-PISA data. Schools where students are less well off and in greater need of support are actually understaffed and under-resourced in comparison to socio-economically advantaged schools.

The recent introduction of the per capita funding scheme has the potential to correct imbalances between schools and between regions, but only if the funding formula takes into account both horizontal and vertical equity (as discussed in Chapter 3). In addition, specifically targeted intervention may be required for parts of the country where there are large number of out-of-school children. It is recommended that further research is carried out to identify more specifically those areas of the country where many children are out of school, and which barriers and bottlenecks particular to those areas prevent children from going to school.

Reduce the shortage of qualified teachers

The Kyrgyz Republic has a much higher proportion of the population which is of school age compared to most other countries. The consequence of this is that even though overall spending on education is high in the Kyrgyz Republic relative to other countries – both in proportion to its GDP as well as in proportion to total public expenditure – expenditure per pupil is below average internationally. The large school age population places a heavy burden on the educational system. Because of the correspondingly large teaching workforce required to teach them and the greater number of school resources required. Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, pupil teacher ratios are actually relatively low, but this has done little to improve the quality of education. Research has shown that reducing class size is very costly but has little impact on quality (e.g. Hanushek 1998). If reducing class sizes comes at the cost of teacher quality, then it can even have a detrimental impact on learning outcomes.

In 2010 the pupil teacher ratio was 24 at primary level and 15 at secondary level. What is striking is the particularly low pupil teacher ratio at secondary level, which is actually better in the Kyrgyz Republic compared to many wealthier countries. At primary education level the pupil teacher ratio is around average, but fairly low in comparison to other countries with a similar level of economic development. However, in spite of the low pupil teacher ratio there is a significant shortage of teachers in specialized subjects.

At pre-primary level, the pupil teacher ratio was 26 in 2010, almost twice the OECD average (which is 14) (OECD 2011c). This is higher than the levels at primary and secondary levels, the highest in the CEECIS region and also very high in comparison to other countries around the world. This is problematic as a low pupil teacher ratio is particularly important at pre-primary level.

Given the low pupil teacher ratios in particular at secondary level, it is recommended that the overall teaching force is reduced, with emphasis given to increasing the number and proportion of better qualified, specialized teachers, which are very much needed. At pre-primary education level, however, the pupil teacher ratios are very high, and it is recommended that these are reduced in order to better provide the more intensive care and attention which young children need.

Implement measures to prevent school dropout

Children often drop out from school not because of a single factor, but a combination of inter-related factors – such as poverty, entering school late, lacking pre-primary experience, going to a school where the quality of education is low, and being absent from school and falling behind because of work.

School quality may be a particularly important risk factor for dropout in the Kyrgyz Republic, given the low overall performance in PISA as well as the high levels of inequality in terms of achievement. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 3, PISA data indicates that there is a big difference in education quality between rural areas and urban areas, and this difference is much greater than in most other CEECIS countries which participated in PISA. PISA scores in villages are 200 points below the OECD average of 500, whereas in large cities PISA scores are not much lower than the OECD average. The quality of education is therefore particularly low in certain parts of the country – the villages and small towns. Reducing inequalities in the quality of education between schools and between rural and urban areas more generally is therefore one of the key issues, both for improving the quality of education and for reducing dropout.

There are significant differences between girls and boys with regards to categories of out-of-school children based on school exposure, indicating the different risk factors for exclusion. Out of school primary age girls are nine times more likely to have dropped out compared to boys. Boys are much more likely to enter school at a later date. Out of school primary age children in rural areas are more likely to have dropped out of school or to never enter school at all, compared to those in urban areas. For lower secondary age boys who are out of school, about one fifth has never been to school and is never expected to enter. The number is much smaller for girls (just 3 per cent). Further research is required to identify the reasons why at primary school age girls are much more likely to drop out than boys, and why boys are more likely to enter primary school late.

Many children in primary school are overage, which is a risk factor for early dropout. Indeed, the percentage of overage children decreases considerably at secondary level suggesting that many overage children by this time have dropped out from school.

The percentage of child labourers in the Kyrgyz Republic is very high, with over a quarter of children ages 5 to 14 involved in child labour. Child labourers may miss many days of school and have less time for school work. This places them at risk of falling behind at school and dropping out early. Absenteeism is particularly common in rural schools and during the autumn and spring farming seasons, which clearly establishes the link between absenteeism and children's involvement in agricultural work. The issue of child labour therefore needs to be addressed in order to reduce the high levels of absenteeism.

Supply-side policies and strategies are insufficient to ensure that children from poor and vulnerable households go to school. In terms of social protection, benefits and concessions are required for the poorest families so that they can also meet indirect costs of schooling such as uniforms and books. School feeding programmes have been very successful around the world in increasing enrolment, reducing absenteeism and improving food security at the household level. Implementing such programmes on a large-scale in poor and food-insecure areas could be successful in reducing numbers of out-of-school children.

An especially challenging issue to resolve is the problem of violence, stigmatization and discrimination in schools. Preventing such unacceptable behaviour in schools requires targeted campaigning and awareness raising, as well as ensuring that the recognition and prevention of discrimination is a core component of teacher training. As discussed in Chapter 3, bullying is a very important factor preventing children from going to school. Moreover, it is not only children, but also teachers themselves who may create an unwelcoming environment for certain children. This issue is particularly relevant for children with disabilities. Strategies and policies are required which specifically address such demand-side socio-cultural barriers to education.

Review policies and programmes for children with disabilities

As recommended in an earlier UNICEF report (2008), moving from a medical model to a rights-based model of disability is crucial to improve the lives of children with disability. This would require the review of policies, procedures, programmes, service delivery, research and legislation to be more inclusive of children with disabilities, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was signed by President Roza Otunbayeva in 2011. The shift to a rights based approach would furthermore need to coincide with advocacy efforts to shift public perception of and attitudes towards disability. One important area to address is registration, as it is likely that a large percentage of children with disabilities are not registered as disabled, which may be explained by the cost of registration as well as the social stigma associated with disability. With regard to education, children with disabilities face many barriers in going to school due to physical barriers, social barriers and general segregation of children with disabilities into specialized schools which may not be available. A shockingly high percentage of children with disabilities in the UNICEF (2008) study were not going to school at all - 43.4 per cent – which indicates the scale of the problem. This therefore requires a coordinated effort to address the various barriers leading to the continuing exclusion of children with disabilities.

An improved monitoring and evaluation system

At various points in this report discrepancies between out-of-school children figures from different sources are pointed out, specifically figures from NSC, UIS and the MICS household survey. For example, the UIS figure for out-of-school children is more than twice as high as the NSC figure for 2009. It is important that the causes of these inconsistencies are identified and resolved, as these figures present a very different reality of the out-of-school children situation in the Kyrgyz Republic. Evidence-based policy and strategy recommendations require accurate and reliable figures, so this should be amongst the top priorities. The creation of a monitoring and evaluation system and the harmonization of data sources as discussed in Chapter 3 is an important step in this regard.

One of the causes of inconsistencies in out-of-school children figures from different sources is the different definitions and corresponding calculations adopted by different institutions. Out-of-school children can refer to children who are not enrolled, or to children who are not attending school but

may in fact be enrolled in school. It is recommended that 'attendance' is recorded in addition to enrolment, as a child may be enrolled – even for many years – without actually attending school (and hence in a dropout definition which considers only enrolment, she or he would never be considered a dropout). In this case a fixed period of non-valid absenteeism would be recorded as a dropout, which could be from 15 to 45 days, with valid reasons for absenteeism including temporary absence due to suspension, school-approved illness, or death (Lehr et al 2004; Stillwell, R., Sable, J., and Plotts 2011). Currently school principals do not have a common understanding of non-attendance (UNICEF and MoES, 2008). Using internationally agreed upon definitions and calculations for out-of-school children as proposed by the Global OOSCI Conceptual and Methodological Framework could lead to more accurate figures on out-of-school children and help ensure consistency between different sources.

It should be noted that an important source of inconsistencies is the different methodologies used by different sources, and indeed it is good to have more than one way of estimating numbers of out-of-school children as a means of verification - for example, based on population census data and school enrolment, based on household surveys, and based on out of school numbers reported by schools. In this regard some differences are to be expected. However, for the Kyrgyz Republic these figures are very different, which indicates that there are currently fundamental issues in accurately monitoring out-of-school children which need to be resolved.

To improve the current system for monitoring out-of-school children, steps which could be undertaken include:

- Updating or adding new indicators for monitoring out-of-school children according to the Global OOSCI Conceptual and Methodological Framework discussed in this report and international best practice;
- The establishment of clear indicators, definitions and guidelines for monitoring out-of-school children, used consistently across all relevant organizations, schools and levels of administration;
- Providing additional support as well as (financial) incentives to schools for accurately recording and reporting information on out-of-school children;
- Supporting social pedagogues in identifying and supporting children at risk through a systematic approach to classifying risk (for example, distinguishing between levels of risk, as well as kinds of risk – such as individual, family, school or environment related) with corresponding guidance;
- Ensuring that information on at risk children from social pedagogues is recorded, monitored and analyzed at local and national levels;
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities of organizations and persons, including schools and school staff;
- Facilitate the sharing and cross-checking of different sources of data which can be used to track out-of-school children, such as the aiyi okmotu population register, health centre records and records of families receiving social benefits;
- In the longer term, the establishment of a web-based School Information Management System which could enable more accurate and timely monitoring of out-of-school children, such as through automated error checking mechanisms and improved tracking of children who migrate and switch schools.

It is further recommended that as part of the development of a monitoring and evaluation system a data quality control system is put into place. The importance of data quality controls is often ignored, but this can lead to potentially large errors that can skew the analysis of data and resulting recommendations in one direction or another. Data quality controls and procedures need to start all way at the data collection level up until the point that data from different sources are merged into one database – and even beyond this stage, checking for data errors in the final data set prior to publication. It is of crucial importance that policy and decision making can be based on reliable evidence, and this can only be ensured through such procedures.

It is also recommended that disaggregated data is published or otherwise made available which would enable a more in-depth analysis of the data. Data would need to be disaggregated beyond

basic categories such as rural/urban and female/male, towards additional categories of disaggregation, such as rural female; urban female; rural female in Naryn oblast; rural female at different years of age; and so on. For household survey data, the sample sizes are too small to have reliable estimates at such levels of disaggregation. Therefore, administrative data is the only source of data which enables this kind of deeper analysis.

Concluding remarks

When the majority of children are in school, the last remaining children are the hardest to reach. That is not to say that this number is insignificant – indeed it is a very large number, more than 66 000 children according to the latest figure from UIS. These tend to be the poorest, most marginalized children in the country, who are often out of school due to a combination of factors. The Lyuli ethnic minority community discussed in this report provided a vivid illustration – where poverty, stigma and discrimination, marginalization, cultural attitudes towards education, lack of job opportunities other than low-skilled labour, and prevalent child labour were amongst the factors which caused children to be out of school.

The Conceptual and Methodological Framework of the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children used for this study emphasizes the complex and multidimensional barriers and bottlenecks that cause children to be out of school. It is clear that the issue of out-of-school children cannot be tackled in isolation, and a multi-sector approach is needed. Barriers to education need to be addressed in coordination with other sectors such as health and social protection. A broader approach is needed which recognizes that supply side barriers to education are only a small component of the overall problem. Demand side economic and socio-cultural barriers, as well as political, governance, capacity and financing bottlenecks, also need to be addressed.

We hope that this report will lead to a greater awareness of the challenges faced by out-of-school children in the Kyrgyz Republic and how these could be addressed. We hope that it can serve as a catalyst for improvement to help pave the way towards a more inclusive education system, where children can participate equally and meaningfully regardless of poverty, disability, sex, ethnicity and other characteristics. And we also hope that future research will build on the methodology used in this report to provide further, deeper insights into the profiles of out-of-school children and children at risk of exclusion in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Appendix 1: Laws and regulations on education in the Kyrgyz Republic

Education in the Kyrgyz Republic is regulated by the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Law on Education, the Code on Children and other standard legal documents which have entered into force according to the international treaties and agreements to which the Kyrgyz Republic is a signatory.

Education in the Kyrgyz Republic is based on the principles proclaimed by the international contracts and pacts, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Convention on the Rights of the Child. It adheres to the principles of national and international democracy and humanistic values (The Law on Education 2003).

During the past 20 years the basic legal documents developed and adopted in Kyrgyz Republic to secure the rights of children and adolescents on access to education are the following:

1. The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic (2010 edition)
2. The Law on Education (2007 edition)
3. State standards on Pre-school Education (2007),
4. The Law on Pre-school education (2009)
5. The Code of the Kyrgyz Republic on Children (2006)
6. Instructions on the registration of school age children and adolescents, approved by the Government of KR № 667 of November 14, 1997

In 2011 a number of documents that will define the education policy during the upcoming decade were developed by the MoES and are in the process of endorsement. Below is the list of those documents.

1. The Concept of Education Development in Kyrgyz Republic until 2020 (*Draft*)
2. The Education Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012-2020 (*Draft*)
3. The Medium-term Program of Education Development in Kyrgyz Republic 2012-2014 (*Draft*)

We will analyze the presented documents in relation to children's rights to education and will try to identify if and how these documents address the out-of-school children issue.

(1) In accordance with Article 45 of the Constitution: "Everyone has the right to Education which is obligatory and free. The State creates conditions for the education of each citizen starting from pre-school education institutions to general education with a state and official languages of instruction and a choice of a foreign language".

(2) The Law on Education stipulates further on the provision of educational services in Kyrgyz Republic.

According to the Article 3 of this law, "the citizens of Kyrgyz Republic have the right for education regardless of sex, ethnic, material and social status, political and religious views, place of residence and other circumstances.

The Law on Education determines a number of principles; according on one of them "the basic education should be accessible for every citizen and in line with the development feathers of the students" (Article 4).

About 90 nationalities are living in Kyrgyz Republic. In this regard one of the important factors of access to education is the instruction language. The Article 6 on "Language of instruction" requires:

- “The Language policy in the educational institutions is carried out according to the Constitution and legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic.
- The State creates the conditions for each citizen to develop knowledge of Kyrgyz language as state language, to study Russian language as official language, as well as study of one foreign language.
- Study can be conducted using any other language upon availability of relevant conditions”.

The next factor of access to education is the availability of the state guarantees on education. The Law on Education describes it in Article 7:

“The state in the name of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic provides the right of citizens to Education by:

- Creations of the education system corresponding to interests of the person, society and the state;
- Creations of necessary social and economic and legal conditions for access to the free of charge basic education. The education is realized through budgetary funding of the state educational organizations, payment by budgetary funds of purchase of educational services for the educational organizations or providing of the state educational grants”.

The law describes the types of general educational programs. These are programs of **the pre-school education, the primary education, the basic education and the secondary education**. Each citizen of the Kyrgyz Republic has the right to participate in these programs in the following forms: full-time, part-time (evening schooling), distance and correspondence education, and also home and individual education at pre-school, school and non-formal education levels. (Article 14)

This right allows also overcoming the problems with access to Education.

Education is mandatory at the primary and basic school levels for all citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the education in the state and municipal educational institutions is free of charge. As a rule, the **age of school entry is 6-7 years**, duration of training in each class - not less than one academic year.

According the presented articles the legislation provides all children with the opportunity to have an access to education. Parents (guardians) can define independently the school entry in accordance with the child school readiness.

The most important point for the implementation of the right to education is the social protection of students. The Article 30 states:

- The State creates conditions for education by provision of educational facilities, equipment, dormitories, grants, material aid, benefits for food, transportation and health services, textbooks.
- Education of children-orphans and children without parental care is carried out by the state until their maturity.

In addition the state guarantees “Health protection of children and youth”. The Educational organizations and local governments create the conditions guaranteeing protection and strengthening health of children and youth”. (Article 31)

For children with serious health problems, requiring long treatment, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and local governments create conditions for training in health facilities. The studies can be conducted also at home on an individual basis.

In Article 33 on “The social protection of students with special needs” the social protection procedures is described and is acknowledged that the state «is responsible for the care of children-

orphans, and also children suffering from severe illness or having gaps in physical or intellectual development.

- For children having gaps in physical or intellectual development, special groups, classes or the organizations are providing their treatment, education and training, social adaptation and integration into the society.
- For children in conflict with the law special boarding educational institutions are providing education, vocational training and medical and social rehabilitation.

(3) For the implementation of the state policy in the field of early childhood education and development the Law on Pre-school Education was developed and adopted in 2009.

In Article 1 of the law the pre-school age is defined as “the period of physical, mental and social development of the child from birth to 7 years”.

The law stipulates the principles of a state policy in the field of pre-school education and development:

- Availability and high quality of the pre-school education services for a sustainable development;
- Compulsory school preparedness program and linkages between the pre-school and primary education;
- Enhancing the role and responsibility of parents (legal representatives) of pre-school children

Nevertheless, the pre-school education is not mandatory and depends on parents' decision and possibility to cover the cost related with pre-school education. This resulted in limited access to pre-school education, especially for the children from vulnerable groups.

The following are the types of the pre-school institutions as described in the law:

- 1.Nursery for children aged 6 months to 7 years;
- 2.Kindergarten for children aged 3 to 7 years;
- 3.A specialized kindergarten for children with special needs
- 4.An orphanage - educational boarding institution for orphans and children without parents (from 3 till 18 years);
- 5.Child Development Centre;
- 6.Family type orphanage for children in age from 2 till 18 years;
- 7.Pro-gymnasium - a kind of the pre-school educational institution providing a comprehensive development of a child through innovative programs
- 8.Maternal school - pre-school provision with short-term and full day of stay for children who are not visiting kindergartens, including interactive training of children and adults;
- 9.Community kindergarten - the structural division of local governments intended for children at the age from 6 months till 7 years (full, incomplete day);
10. A kindergarten with short-term stay (3-5 hours per day). (Article 7)

The responsibility of the pre-school institutions is the provision of quality educational services in line with the State Standards for pre-school education (Article 8).

The key objectives of public administration system of pre-school education are:

- State policy implementation in the field of pre-school education;
- Monitoring of pre-school education performance and outcomes in accordance with the State standard for pre-school education;
- Record keeping of pre-school age children (Article 11)

(4) One more significant document regulating the childhood questions is the Code of the Kyrgyz Republic on CHILDREN.

The present Code establishes the basic guarantees of the rights, freedom and legitimate interests of children provided by the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, other acts of the Kyrgyz Republic and the international contracts which have entered in force. The Kyrgyz Republic recognizes the childhood as the important stage of human life and prioritizes the need for child development to their full potential through provision of education which is based on key social values, democracy and citizenship.

1. The purposes of the present Code are protection of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, legitimate interests and freedom of children.
2. The objectives of the present Code are regulation of the rights and interests of children, an establishment of principles and measures to protect children ensuring realization of their rights; the formation of frameworks securing the rights of the child; functioning of relevant child protection bodies and organizations; the definition of the competence of state and municipal bodies in the field of child protection and the procedures of their interaction.

The code is in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and identifies the child as “every human being below the age of eighteen”.

The present Code regulates the relations associated with the implementation of fundamental laws, rights and legitimate interests of the child in the Kyrgyz Republic, and extends on citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, foreign citizens and persons without citizenship, constantly or temporarily living on territory of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The present Code regulates also the performance of the state and municipal bodies, legal and the physical persons who are engaged in protection of the rights and interests of children on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic. (Article 5)

The Code on Children specifies the tasks of Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in implementation and protection of the child rights and best interests. Some of the tasks include:

- Tasks in the field of protection of the rights and interests of children of the authorized state body responsible for the work and social protection the population (Article 10).
- Tasks in the field of protection of the rights and interests of children of the authorized state body responsible for migration and employment (Article 11).
- Tasks and powers of the Ombudsman (Akykatchy) of the Kyrgyz Republic (Article 12).

The Article 13 describes the list of the significant bodies making system of child protection services on, their structure, legal status and responsibilities. According Articles 16 and 17:

“The official entities of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in the field of child protection are:
- The commission on children;
- Family and child support department”

(5) Instruction on the registration of school age children and adolescents, approved by Governmental decree of the Kyrgyz Republic, November, 14th 1997, № 667

The present instruction is designed in compliance with the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Education. According to this instruction the annual roster of compulsory education coverage is developed for all children and adolescents. This roster includes:

1. Children aged 6 to 16 years inclusive;
2. Children 5 years of age. (Section I, paragraph 1)

The document defines the structures which should be engaged in carrying out the registration of school age children. These are local state administrations, aiyl okmotu (rural councils) together with the education institution. The National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic prepares and conducts registration of children for compulsory education.

The document describes procedure of interaction between the school (Education department) and local state administration bodies «on non-attendance of school by children and on taking actions on returning them to school. Information on non-attendance of a child is sent to local administrative bodies not later than 5 days after missing of classes by a student” (Section I, para 7)

The instruction also specifies:

- The start date of annual census of children and teenagers - on August, 1st. (Section I, item 8);
- The date when school principals are required to provide list of students who do not attended school - on September, 5th (section I, item 16)
- The date when local state bodies provide the consolidated list of students who are out of school or do not attend school since the beginning of a school year to National Statistical Committee and MoES. (Section I, item 17)

The registration of children is conducted in rural and urban areas. It has two registration forms for children aged 5 to 16 years.

Despite all regulations and measures listed above, there are huge problems in organization of registration of children aged 5 to 16 years. As it is noted in the Concept of Education Development (CED) 2020; **the local self-governance bodies not always provides the trustworthy record of school age children registered in their territory. According to legislation it is necessary for local governments to take measures for ensuring access to compulsory education for all school age children, to keep and update records of children, with a special focus on children from vulnerable families, children with special needs, and also families where parents have left the country for work.**

In 2011 the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) of Kyrgyz Republic, Agency of Vocational Education at the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Migration (AVET) with the assistance of the international projects and independent experts develops a number of policy documents defining state priorities in education for 2012-2020.

(6) Concept of Education Development of the Kyrgyz Republic till 2020 (Draft)

The concept describes the role of education for the development of the Kyrgyz Republic, challenges of Kyrgyz education system in the XXI century, and the vision of education for Kyrgyz Republic by 2020. The concept defines the main directions of reform in education system:

- Development of pre-school education system for ensuring the equal opportunities of quality education for all children;
- improvement of the quality of basic education (in line with EFA and MDG) with a focus on development of competencies that will ensure that each graduate will be able to meet the personal, social and professional obligations;
- Expansion of vocational orientation and guidance for the students at upper levels of basic education with a focus on development of general professional competences; development of vocational education system;
- Modification of the education content and introduction of innovative teaching and learning technologies, including e-learning;
- Reformation in financing, management, personnel selection on all levels of the system.

The following measures should be taken in order to achieve 20 per cent coverage of 3-5 years old children by pre-school by 2020:

- 1) Maintenance of various types of pre-school organizations differing in proprietary forms and types, special attention to be paid to the establishment of alternative pre-school services. By 2020 at least 500 alternative pre-schools for 3-5 year old children should be established;
- 2) Regulatory and legal provision for alternative pre-school services;
- 3) Development and approval of standards of educational achievements for 3 -6 years old children;
- 4) Support of compulsory pre-school education for the 6-7 years old children who never attended pre-school;
- 5) Support in construction of buildings for pre-school organizations (including - the networks of schools released by optimization at transition to per capita financing);
- 6) Creations of the supportive learning environment provided with game materials, books and education materials for teachers/tutors.

In the field of school education:

The school education is based on the learner-centred approach and is aimed at the formation of a set of key specific competencies of each student. The basic education creates the foundation for primary or secondary vocational education, or for entering labour market. (Item 3.1.2 Concept)

Content of School Education

By end 2020 the school as the most mass level of education, should shift to results-oriented education which requires:

- 1) Adoption of a number of regulatory documents (National Curriculum Framework Standards, school curriculum, etc) as the basis of the new education in line with the social order of a society.
- 2) The restructuring of the basic curriculum which should provide an opportunity for establishment of a flexible, needs-based learning environment;
- 3) Change of the education content and introduction of innovative teaching technologies, including the use of e-learning, aimed at formation graduates competence at level of education, sufficient for performance of personal, social and professional obligations.
- 4) Transition at least 25 per cent of school secondary schools to upper secondary (high) schools by 2020 which will ensure proper professional orientation of students.
- 5) Establishment of textbook rental scheme for providing schools with new generation of educational and methodical materials.
- 6) Improvement of in service and pre-service teacher training system;
- 7) Introduction of new evaluation system of student achievements (summative, formative), allowing to estimate educational result not only as level of development of knowledge of this or that subject, but also individual for each student mastering level in key competency areas. (Item 3.1.1.1 Concept)

The main directions of the **Concept of Education Development** are elaborated further in the Education Development Strategy 2012-2020 and Medium Term Programs for Education Development 2012-2014 (the Concept. Section 5)

(7) Education Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic on 2012-2020 (Draft)

Education Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012-2020 years (hereinafter referred to the document as - EDS 2020) is based on the vision and goals of the country development and is part of the Country Development Strategy 2012-2020 (CDS 2020), and aims to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All objectives.

Realization EDS 2020 will be implemented in three stages: 2012-2014; 2015-2017, and the last on 2018-2020.

The vision of the EDS states “by 2020 significant improvement of the education and education provision quality will be achieved, in accordance with modern Kyrgyz Republic social, political and economic development, equal access to quality education.

Implementation of CPO in 2020 will provide an educational system which prepares citizens to:

- have strong communication skills;
- able to act independently, openly express their views; use creative and innovative approaches;
- respect cultural, ethnic and political diversity;
- handle general and specialized knowledge and skills that will allow them to be successful in life and labour market.

The educational system in 2020 will be the main tool for promoting the Kyrgyz Republic's social and political development and will ensure its competitiveness in regional and international processes.

The strategy highlights two main problems in the education system:

1. *Low coverage by pre-school education.* Currently, only 13,4% of the 3-6-year-olds in the country are covered by pre-school education.
2. Access to the qualitative basic education **for everyone**, irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, place of residence, intellectual and physical development, the social and economic status, etc.

Those problems are becoming even more complicated with continuous underfunding of education, teacher shortage, lack of textbooks and inadequate infrastructure.

The proposed initiatives to be reached by 2020 include:

- Introduction of school preparation program;
- Systematic integration of inclusive education at all education levels, while preserving the special schools for children with special needs;
- Specialized education for all 10 and 11 grade students;
- Systematic implementation of multi-level education programs.

Priority policy areas of EDS for pre-school education re the following:

1. Regulatory and legal provision of the operation of the network of pre-school educational organizations;
2. Equipment of the pre-school educational organizations;
3. Public awareness of importance of early childhood development and mandatory school preparation;
4. Maintenance of the existing network of state pre-school educational organizations
5. Increase of coverage by existing alternative models of pre-school educational institutions and programs for children of 3-5 years old
6. Introduction throughout the country of the school preparation programs for children of pre-school age (for children who have been not covered by pre-school education);
7. Training and retraining of personnel for implementation of programs of pre-school education
8. Analysis of rendering of services pre-school and school preparation education

Priority policy areas in the field of school education are specifies as the following:

1. Maintenance of operational network in compliance with the standards
2. Support school feeding program in pre-schools and primary schools
3. Modernization of educational content, taking into account the competency approach
4. Promotion child-centred teaching
5. Provision of inclusive education
6. Providing schools with textbooks
7. Results based monitoring and evaluation
8. Ensure the development of multicultural and multilingual education
9. Create conditions for the development of ICT infrastructure in schools
10. Motivation and encouragement of teachers and schools who/that systematically improve the achievements of students

11. Develop and implement mechanisms for different social groups interested in improving educational organizations participation
12. The reform of school financing
13. Reform the further training system
14. Reform the structure of teachers salaries

(8) 2012-2014 Medium-Term Educational Development Program on Implementation of EDS 2020

The 2012-2014 Medium-Term Educational Development Program (hereafter MTED 2012-2014) specifies the activities that are planned to be implemented in the upcoming three years as a first stage for reaching the goals set up in the strategy.

The main objectives for pre-school education are:

- Increased coverage of children of age 5-6 years (including children with special needs) by school preparation program through the existing network of general education institutions
- Maintaining the existing network of public pre-schools
- Expansion of alternative pre-school services like community based kindergartens.

The main objectives for basic education are:

- Maintenance of a network functioning in the general educational organizations according to standards
- Revision of the curriculum and application of a competency based approach in teaching and learning
- Ensure conditions of inclusive education for children with special needs on the basis of secondary and special schools
- Introduction of results based monitoring and evaluation as well as student assessment system
- Introduction of new funding schemes for basic and secondary education.

Below are the conclusions of presented policy document analysis

1. Pre-school education:

- a. Number of policy documents and regulations are developed and adopted in Kyrgyz Republic guaranteeing 6 - 7 years old children access to a pre-school education program.
- b. The state introduced school preparedness of pre-school age children who are not enrolled in pre-school institution through provision of
 - 100 hour program (since 2006 academic year),
 - 240 hour program since 2011
- c. The long-term development plans envisage increase in the number of pre-school institutions, provision of alternative pre-school education services.

Existing barriers in access to pre-school education for children age of 6-7 years include but are not limited to the following:

- Shortage of pre-school institutions
- Distance of pre-school institutions from a place of child residence (especially in rural areas)
- Pre-school facilities and programs are not adopted for provision of inclusive education services for children with special needs
- Poverty of a family
- Lack of knowledge on importance of pre-school education
- Inflexibility of system to provide various type of pre-school education services
- Shortage of teaching and learning materials
- Incompetency of local self-governance body for proper organization of the census of children, record keeping and ensuring access to school preparedness programs (resources for provision of targeted support to vulnerable families (children) to ensure their access 100 or 240 hour pre-school preparation),
- Absence of financial to pre-school services

2. Basic Education:

- a) The government developed and adopted policy documents ensuring compulsory education for children age of 6 to 16 years.
- b) There is a regulation for ensuring registration and monitoring of children who dropped from the school or are out of school
- c) A set of policy initiatives are in the process of piloting and expansion for improvement of compulsory education such as per capita funding, revision of the curriculum, etc

Even though education policy documents and the Code on Children of Kyrgyz Republic stated that “the protection of child rights and best interests of child is one of the main priorities” of the state and local self-governance bodies, however currently the state is not able to maintain 100 per cent coverage with compulsory education for all children. This is explained by the fact that the requirement of the Instruction on the Registration of Children is not being implemented appropriately at school, community, regional and national levels.

The barriers for access to basic education for children age of 6-16 years include:

- Absence of specific policies or actions plans for addressing the out-of-school children issue in the most recent strategic documents like Concept on Education Development 2020, Education Development Strategy 2012-2020. This is explained by the fact that official data on out-of-school children is very low thus the state does not consider it as an alarming issue. Weak system data collection on children who dropped out from school or are out of school.
- Poor responsibility of parents (guardians) or other relatives for ensuring the child participation in compulsory education. Amend the regulatory frameworks (for example, in case of leaving the parents to work outside the Republic there is a need to have regulations on transferring the guardianship of children to relatives/caregivers. Schools and the local self-governance bodies should be involved in the development of these regulations and share the responsibility with guardians on ensuring the rights of child to education).
- Absence of targeted support to children for school enrolment with a special focus on ensuring the enrolment of 6-7 year old children in primary education.
- Strengthen the school accountability on identification, referral and retention of out-of-school children. Provide schools with financial resources for the organization work with disadvantages children (For example, for purchase clothes, footwear, scientific materials, food).
- Lack of incentives for schools and low accountability of school staff to identify and involved children age of 6-16 years in compulsory basic education.
- Shortage of catch up and second chance programs for drop outs and out-of-school children for re-entering basic education.
- Shortage of schools, textbooks, qualified teachers.
- Distance of schools from places of their residence.
- Centralized special schools and few schools with inclusive education programs are not sufficient for ensuring basic education services for all children with special needs.

Additional information:

- Schools record students' attendance in class ledger books. The records are entered by teachers and provide daily information for each child.
- Since 2010 the position of a social pedagogue has been created in schools. The social pedagogue is responsible for working with children who stop attending school due to family or other reasons. The person also works with local self-governance bodies and other relevant services to identify the problems and develop an individual action plan for retention of the child or provision of needs based support to support the child.

Appendix 2: OOSC Tables

Table 1: Percentage of children of pre-primary age in pre-primary or primary education, by sex and other characteristics, 2005-6

	Not attending school	Attending pre-primary school	Attending primary school	Attending either pre-primary or primary
Male (%)				
Residence				
Urban	58.46	21.38	20.16	41.54
Rural	61.73	3.18	35.09	38.27
Wealth index quintiles				
Poorest	52.38	3.46	44.15	47.62
Second	73.79	0.23	25.98	26.21
Middle	56.17	0.78	43.05	43.83
Fourth	69.43	20.45	10.12	30.57
Richest	40.17	39.52	20.32	59.83
Total	60.73	8.74	30.52	39.27
Female (%)				
Residence				
Urban	48.18	20.83	30.99	51.82
Rural	58.89	4.71	36.40	41.11
Wealth index quintiles				
Poorest	70.12	6.08	23.80	29.88
Second	43.66	1.63	54.72	56.34
Middle	63.68	7.67	28.65	36.32
Fourth	58.79	12.98	28.24	41.21
Richest	42.99	31.88	25.13	57.01
Total	55.79	9.37	34.83	44.21

Source: MICS, 2006

Table 2: Percentage of children attending school, by age and level of education, 2005-6

Age (years)	Pre-Primary	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Post-Secondary	Total
	Male (%)					
6	8.8	30.6				39.3
7	12.4	68.6				81.0
8		98.6				98.6
9		97.7	2.3			100.0
10		74.5	22.0			96.4
11		16.7	82.4			99.1
12		3.4	93.6			96.9
13		0.6	93.1	0.4		94.1
14		0.1	93.1	3.1		96.2
15			69.6	21.2		90.8
16			9.6	76.6		86.2
17			2.2	66.1		68.4
Female (%)						
6	9.4	34.8				44.2
7	6.4	78.1				84.4
8		97.9				97.9
9		96.2	2.1			98.4
10		72.7	23.0			95.7
11		17.6	76.4			94.0
12		2.1	97.6			99.7
13			99.2	0.1		99.3
14			96.5	2.3		98.8
15			64.1	31.4		95.5
16			6.9	79.6		86.5
17			0.2	78.3	0.3	78.7
Total (%)						
6	9.1	32.7				41.7
7	9.7	72.5				82.3
8		98.1				98.1
9		96.9	2.2			99.1
10		73.6	22.5			96.1
11		17.1	79.6			96.8
12		2.7	95.6			98.3
13		0.3	96.1	0.3		96.6
14			95.0	2.7		97.7
15			66.9	26.4		93.3
16			8.2	78.2		86.4
17			1.1	72.5	0.1	73.8

Source: MICS, 2006

Table 3: Adjusted net enrolment rate (ANER), by sex and level of education, with GPI, 2010

	Adjusted net enrolment rate			
	Male	Female	Total	GPI
Level of education				
Primary	95.5	95.1	95.3	1.00
Lower Secondary	91.4	92.3	91.8	0.99

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database, May 2012 release

Table 4: Number of children out of school, by age group and sex, 2005-6

	Out-of-school children		
	Male	Female	Total
Dimension 2			
Primary school age	21368	14480	35861
Dimension 3			
Lower secondary school age	12658	7124	19777
Children not in school			
Upper secondary school age	25849	22096	47944
Total	34026	21604	55638

Source: MICS, 2006

Table 5: Percentage of out-of-school children by school exposure, by age group and sex, 2005-6

	Dimension 2			Dimension 3		
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	Primary age	secondary age	Lower
				Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
School exposure						
Dropped out	2,7	24,3	11,4	80,9	97,0	86,7
Expected to enter in future	60,9	30,0	46,7	0,0	0,0	0,0
Expected never to enter	36,5	45,7	41,9	19,1	3,0	13,3

Source: MICS, 2006

Table 6: Adjusted primary school net attendance rate (ANAR), by age, sex and other characteristics, 2005-6

	Male		Female		Total	
	Net attendance ratio	Number of children	Net attendance ratio	Number of children	Net attendance ratio	Number of children
Age (years)						
7	68.5	37807	77.9	33481	72.6	71288
8	98.5	50148	97.8	55588	98.1	105736
9	100.0	59154	98.3	51566	99.2	110721
10	96.5	56429	95.7	54533	96.1	110962
Residence						
Urban	93.0	67394	92.7	62924	92.9	130318
Rural	90.0	136141	93.5	132250	91.7	268391
Wealth index quintiles						
Poorest	92.6	46896	94.6	48732	93.6	95625
Second	88.6	42364	95.1	46975	91.9	89341
Middle	89.7	38245	92.6	31490	91.0	69742
Fourth	90.1	43110	90.1	38594	90.1	81705
Richest	94.5	33222	93.3	29074	93.9	62294
Region						
Batken	85.2	16700	94.2	16585	89.5	33295
Jalal-Abad	92.4	40276	91.1	42867	91.7	83142
Issyk-kul	95.1	16632	87.0	16689	90.8	33322
Naryn	83.4	11281	91.7	11364	87.4	22644
Osh	98.7	60710	97.6	48990	98.2	109702
Talas	90.5	6700	93.6	8090	92.2	14791
Chui	79.6	25524	93.2	24641	85.8	50177
Bishkek c.	90.0	25976	93.5	25651	91.7	51633
Total	91.0	203538	93.3	195168	92.1	398707

Source: MICS, 2006; UNPD Population database, 2008

Table 7: Adjusted lower secondary school net attendance rate (ANAR), by age, sex and other characteristics, 2005-6

	Male		Female		Total	
	Net attendance rate	Number of children	Net attendance rate	Number of children	Net attendance rate	Number of children
Age (years)						
11	82.6	44962	76.5	37976	79.6	82938
12	93.4	56238	97.8	58321	95.6	114559
13	93.7	61657	99.3	58924	96.3	120581
14	96.2	47288	98.8	55283	97.6	102571
15	90.9	59257	95.5	63782	93.2	123039
Residence						
Urban	93.2	83116	95.7	92322	94.3	175040
Rural	90.8	186696	93.4	181948	92.0	368644
Wealth index quintiles						
Poorest	90.4	62385	91.4	59662	90.9	122047
Second	92.4	58730	96.2	59851	94.3	118549
Middle	91.2	59355	92.6	50786	91.9	110141
Fourth	89.6	50717	93.0	55811	91.4	106527
Richest	94.1	37944	98.0	48452	96.3	86424
Region						
Batken	95.8	28249	95.4	21469	95.6	49718
Jalal-Abad	83.9	47661	86.6	48859	85.2	96509
Issyk-kul	94.7	22918	92.5	23117	93.6	46038
Naryn	91.3	14963	97.1	14055	94.0	29021
Osh	93.2	83864	92.8	62446	93.1	146311
Talas	91.2	9233	97.5	12338	94.7	21572
Chui	89.1	31814	98.5	53772	94.8	85598
Bishkek c.	95.6	30576	99.1	38321	97.5	68920
Total	91.4	269402	94.1	274286	92.7	543687

Source: MICS, 2006; UNPD Population database, 2008

Table 8: Percentage of lower secondary age attending primary school, by age, sex and other characteristics, 2005-6

	Male		Female		Total	
	Attendance rate	Number of children	Attendance rate	Number of children	Attendance rate	Number of children
Age (years)						
11	16.7	9104	17.6	8755	17.1	17859
12	3.4	2039	2.1	1243	2.7	3282
13	0.6	375	0.0	0	0.3	375
14	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
15	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Residence						
Urban	4.8	4314	2.5	2373	3.6	6687
Rural	3.5	7230	3.9	7696	3.7	14926
Wealth index quintiles						
Poorest	3.9	2668	6.5	4233	5.1	6899
Second	2.5	1596	1.1	689	1.8	2297
Middle	2.9	1860	5.4	2950	4.0	4809
Fourth	5.9	3367	2.3	1374	4.1	4742
Richest	5.1	2063	1.7	828	3.2	2867
Region						
Batken	3.3	969	4.2	947	3.7	1916
Jalal-Abad	4.2	2362	4.4	2504	4.4	4933
Issyk-kul	4.0	968	7.5	1869	5.8	2833
Naryn	7.6	1239	2.9	425	5.3	1628
Osh	2.1	1853	5.2	3520	3.4	5321
Talas	6.1	615	1.9	235	3.6	822
Chui	5.8	2072	0.4	204	2.5	2269
Bishkek c.	4.4	1422	0.9	342	2.5	1740
Total	3.9	11518	3.4	9999	3.7	21517

Source: MICS, 2006; UNPD Population database, 2008

Table 9: Adjusted upper secondary school net attendance rate (ANAR), by age, sex and other characteristics, 2005-6

	Male		Female		Total	
	Net attendance rate	Number of children	Net attendance rate	Number of children	Net attendance rate	Number of children
Age (years)						
16	86.2	49621	86.5	53358	86.4	102979
17	68.3	38877	78.7	51246	73.8	90124
Residence						
Urban	79.8	23425	83.7	40646	82.2	64071
Rural	76.4	65077	81.7	63955	79.0	129031
Wealth index quintiles						
Poorest	76.7	19767	87.0	21678	81.8	41448
Second	80.7	25296	80.5	27031	80.6	52327
Middle	66.8	19660	72.3	16679	69.2	36336
Fourth	82.0	14055	82.0	16640	82.0	30695
Richest	90.4	9750	90.5	22547	90.4	32297
Region						
Batken	88.8	11885	89.7	10282	89.3	22167
Jalal-Abad	79.8	19711	79.7	22484	79.8	42195
Issyk-kul	85.3	5458	96.7	11803	92.8	17262
Naryn	95.1	6118	99.5	7451	97.5	13569
Osh	64.3	23954	64.4	16779	64.4	40734
Talas	82.3	3086	92.3	5926	88.6	9011
Chui	77.1	11942	74.9	10769	76.0	22712
Bishkek c.	89.5	6359	92.7	19094	91.9	25453
Total	77.3	88498	82.5	104605	80.0	193103

Source: MICS, 2006; UNPD Population database, 2008

Table 10: Percentage of primary school age children out of school, by age, sex and other characteristics, 2005-6

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	Number of children	%	Number of children	%	Number of children
Age (years)						
7	31.5	18623	21.7	9999	27.3	28634
8	1.5	778	2.2	1218	1.9	1995
9	0.0	0	1.7	893	0.8	893
10	3.5	1967	4.3	2371	3.9	4338
Residence						
Urban	7.4	5374	7.7	5228	7.6	10601
Rural	10.6	15992	6.5	9246	8.6	25260
Wealth index quintiles						
Poorest	7.8	3940	5.3	2746	6.6	6699
Second	11.8	5624	5.3	2584	8.5	8208
Middle	11.0	4674	7.7	2611	9.5	7284
Fourth	10.5	5060	10.1	4361	10.3	9421
Richest	5.9	2067	7.0	2170	6.4	4238
Region						
Batken	15.7	3072	6.2	1096	11.2	4168
Jalal-Abad	8.1	3504	9.2	4289	8.6	7793
Issyk-kul	5.3	927	13.4	2564	9.5	3491
Naryn	17.6	2375	8.8	1091	13.4	3465
Osh	1.4	858	2.0	1022	1.7	1884
Talas	10.1	750	6.9	593	8.4	1344
Chui	21.2	6812	7.2	1897	14.8	8709
Bishkek c.	10.6	3069	6.9	1886	8.8	4955
Total	9.5	21368	6.9	14480	8.3	35861

Source: MICS, 2006; UNPD Population database, 2008

Table 11: Percentage of lower secondary school age children out of school, by age, sex and other characteristics, 2005-6

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	Number of children	%	Number of children	%	Number of children
Age (years)						
11	0.7	436	5.9	3219	3.2	3655
12	3.2	1870	0.2	91	1.7	1961
13	5.8	3569	0.7	396	3.4	3965
14	2.5	1391	1.2	737	1.8	2123
15	9.1	5391	4.4	2682	6.7	8073
Residence						
Urban	2.4	2137	1.8	1709	2.1	3846
Rural	5.1	10518	2.8	5415	4.0	15931
Wealth index quintiles						
Poorest	5.4	3686	2.1	1339	3.8	5025
Second	4.8	3057	2.8	1709	3.8	4765
Middle	5.7	3666	1.9	1052	4.0	4718
Fourth	3.5	1974	4.8	2869	4.1	4822
Richest	0.8	305	0.3	155	0.5	460
Region						
Batken	1.0	295	0.4	84	0.7	378
Jalal-Abad	10.3	5848	9.0	5041	9.6	10879
Issyk-kul	1.3	309	0.0	0	0.6	309
Naryn	1.2	187	0.0	0	0.6	187
Osh	4.5	4005	1.9	1250	3.4	5255
Talas	2.4	237	0.6	71	1.4	308
Chui	5.0	1789	1.2	678	2.7	2466
Bishkek c.	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Total	4.3	12658	2.4	7124	3.4	19777

Source: MICS, 2006; UNPD Population database, 2008

Table 12: Percentage of upper secondary school age children not attending school, by age, sex and other characteristics, 2005-6

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	Number of children	%	Number of children	%	Number of children
Age (years)						
16	13.8	8039	13.4	8373	13.6	16412
17	31.7	17810	21.3	13722	26.2	31532
Residence						
Urban	20.1	5906	16.2	7836	17.6	13743
Rural	23.4	19940	18.2	14261	20.9	34202
Wealth index quintiles						
Poorest	23.3	6011	12.8	3200	18.2	9211
Second	19.1	5988	19.4	6510	19.3	12499
Middle	33.1	9743	27.6	6352	30.7	16095
Fourth	17.9	3070	18.1	3672	18.0	6742
Richest	9.6	1034	9.5	2361	9.5	3395
Region						
Batken	11.1	1475	9.9	1132	10.5	2607
Jalal-Abad	20.0	4950	20.1	5676	20.1	10625
Issyk-kul	14.5	931	3.3	399	7.1	1330
Naryn	4.9	311	0.5	38	2.5	350
Osh	35.6	13244	35.7	9282	35.6	22526
Talas	17.5	658	7.5	485	11.2	1143
Chui	22.8	3530	25.0	3596	23.8	7126
Bishkek c.	10.6	749	7.2	1488	8.1	2236
Total	22.6	25849	17.4	22096	19.9	47944

Source: MICS, 2006; UNPD Population database, 2008

Table 13: Survival rate to the last grade of primary education, 2009

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	GPI
Survival rate to the last grade of primary education	98.0	97.3	97.6	0.99

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database, May 2012 release

Table 14: Percentage of new entrants to primary education with ECCE experience, 2010

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Total	18.0	18.1	18.0

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database, May 2012 release

Table 15: Transition rate from primary to secondary education, 2009

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	GPI
Transition rate to lower secondary education	99.8	98.8	99.3	0.99

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database, May 2012 release

Table 16: Child labour, 2007³⁴

Percentage of children by involvement in economic activity and household chores during the past week, according to age groups, and percentage of children age 5-14 involved in child labour														
	Percentage of children age 5-11 involved in				Sample size children age 5-11 in economic activity for at least one hour (n)	Percentage of children age 12-14 involved in				Sample size children age 12-14 in economic activity for 14 hours or more (n)	Percentage of children ages 5-14 involved in		Child labour	Sample size children aged 5-14 in child labour
	Economic activity					Economic activity for 14 hours or more					Economic activity for at least 1 hour	Household chores for 28 hrs or more		
	Paid work	Un paid work	Self - employment	Economic activity for at least one hour		Paid work	Un paid work	Self - employment	Economic activity for 14 hours or more					
Total	0.0	0.1	25.0	25.1	827	0.5	1.0	43.0	28.1	507	31.7	1.4	26.3	1 350
Sex														
Male	0.0	0.2	25.9	26.2	459	0.7	0.8	43.7	29.0	262	32.4	1.1	27.2	723
Female	0.0	0.0	23.8	23.9	368	0.2	1.3	42.2	27.3	245	31.0	1.7	25.4	627
Area														
Urban	0.1	0.2	12.3	12.5	161	0.6	1.1	24.5	16.4	106	17.4	0.9	14.1	277
Rural	0.0	0.1	30.2	30.3	666	0.4	1.0	51.1	33.3	401	37.7	1.6	31.4	1 073
School														

³⁴ The age range 5-14 is derived from international definitions of child labour and does not necessarily match the age range for compulsory education. In Kyrgyzstan the official entry age to primary school is age 7, and therefore the definition of “out of school” in the child labour tables does not match the definition used in the other out-of-school children tables. The numerator to estimate the percentage of children in child labour who are out of school in the following tables includes children aged 5-14 out of school who, during the week preceding the survey, were involved in child labour. The denominator is the total number of children in child labour.

The resolution on child labour statistics adopted at the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 2008 provides a first-ever set of global standards for translating the international legal standards on child labour into statistical terms (see <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/ChildlabourstatisticsSIMPOC/ICLSandchildlabour/lang--en/index.htm>). Based the measurement guidelines contained in the 18th ICLS resolution, and restricting the scope to children up to and including 14 years of age (the most common upper age limited for basic schooling), the child labour measure used in this study comprises three groups of children:

- (1) 5-11 year olds in economic activity (i.e., those engaged in any activity falling within the SNA production boundary for at least one hour during the reference week). Economic activity covers children in all market production and in certain types of non-market production, including production of goods for own use. It includes forms of work in both the formal and informal sectors, as well as forms of work both inside and outside family settings);
- (2) 12-14 year-olds in non-light (or “regular”) economic activity (i.e., those engaged in any activity falling within the SNA production boundary for at least 14 hours during the reference week); and
- (3) 5-14 year-olds in hazardous unpaid household services (i.e., those engaged in the production of domestic and personal services for consumption within their own household, commonly called “household chores”, for at least 28 hours during the reference week).

attendance														
No	0.0	0.0	7.8	7.8	47	18.3	3.2	31.6	53.1	9	8.9	0.9	9.4	58
Yes	0.0	0.2	29.0	29.2	780	0.3	1.0	43.1	27.9	498	35.1	1.5	28.8	1 292
Household head education														
None	0.0	0.0	25.4	25.4	18	4.5	0.0	55.6	38.9	12	35.6	3.5	30.5	31
Primary	0.0	0.0	24.7	24.7	67	0.0	0.0	39.0	25.3	47	30.0	1.9	25.2	119
Secondary	0.0	0.1	27.4	27.4	643	0.5	1.5	44.9	29.1	378	33.9	1.4	28.1	1030
Higher	0.1	0.5	15.0	15.6	99	0.2	0.0	36.2	24.4	69	22.8	1.1	18.7	169
Household expenditure quintile														
1- Lowest	0.0	0.2	24.8	25.0	224	0.0	0.3	49.1	28.4	113	32.5	0.9	26.1	337
2	0.0	0.0	29.5	29.5	173	0.4	0.8	46.4	30.5	107	35.6	1.9	30.3	283
3	0.1	0.1	26.6	26.8	242	1.2	1.3	46.9	33.0	168	34.7	1.5	29.0	414
4	0.0	0.0	22.5	22.5	95	0.1	2.0	35.9	24.8	57	28.1	2.2	23.6	157
5- Highest	0.0	0.1	17.7	17.9	93	0.2	1.0	29.0	18.8	62	22.4	0.7	18.4	159
Region														
Issyk-Kul	0.0	0.0	64.5	64.5	183	0.7	0.0	94.1	58.3	103	75.4	2.1	62.5	286
Jalal-Abad	0.1	0.0	20.8	20.9	198	0.2	1.1	42.4	18.7	100	28.3	0.4	20.3	302
Naryn	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4	1	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0	12	3.8	0.1	3.8	13
Batken	0.0	0.0	36.3	36.3	90	0.0	0.0	80.1	48.6	60	50.5	0.7	40.3	150
Osh	0.0	0.4	46.8	47.3	325	0.3	3.0	75.9	58.9	193	57.5	4.4	51.3	520
Talas	0.0	0.0	3.0	3.0	3	0.0	0.0	11.3	3.5	4	6.0	0.3	3.2	7
Chui	0.0	0.0	5.3	5.3	21	1.0	0.6	10.1	8.3	25	7.7	0.2	6.5	53
Bishkek	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2	1	1.0	0.7	0.0	1.3	3	0.7	0.0	0.5	4
Osh city	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.7	5	1.1	0.0	4.6	5.7	7	3.2	1.1	4.3	15

Source: ILO & NSC, 2008a

Table 17: Child Labour and out-of-school children, 2007³⁵

Percentage of children aged 5-14 years involved in child labour who are out of school				
	Child Labour		Child labourers who are out of school	
	Percentage	Sample size (n)	Percentage	Sample size (n)
Total	26.3	1 350	4.6	58
Sex				
Male	27.2	723	4.7	29
Female	25.4	627	4.6	29
Area				
Urban	14.1	277	2.4	8
Rural	31.4	1 073	5.0	50
Age (years)				
5-11	25.2	829	6.2	48
12-14	28.4	521	1.9	10
Household head education				
None	30.5	31	4.1	2
Primary	25.2	119	6.7	7
Secondary	28.1	1030	4.4	42
Higher	18.7	169	4.7	7
Household expenditure quintile				
1- Lowest	26.1	337	5.6	17
2	30.3	283	4.8	10
3	29.0	414	4.5	19
4	23.6	157	3.5	6
5- Highest	18.4	159	3.5	6
Region				
Issyk-Kul	62.5	286	6.0	16
Jalal-Abad	20.3	302	0.8	3
Naryn	3.8	13	0.0	--
Batken	40.3	150	4.9	10
Osh	51.3	520	4.9	22
Talas	3.2	7	0.0	--
Chui	6.5	53	11.3	5
Bishkek	0.5	4	0.0	--
Osh city	4.3	15	19.4	2

Source: ILO & NSC, 2008a

³⁵ The age range 5-14 is derived from international definitions of child labour and does not necessarily match the age range for compulsory education. In Kyrgyzstan the official entry age to primary school is age 7, and therefore the definition of "out of school" in the child labour tables does not match the definition used in the other out-of-school children tables. See also the footnote for Table 16 above.

Table 18: Out-of-school children and child labour, 2007³⁶

Percentage of out-of-school children aged 5-14 years involved in Child Labour				
	Out-of-school children		Children out of school, who are in child labour	
	Percentage	Sample size (n)	Percentage	Sample size (n)
Total	12.9	642	9.4	58
Sex				
Male	13.1	331	8.2	29
Female	12.7	311	58.3	29
Area				
Urban	9.8	172	3.5	8
Rural	14.2	470	11.2	50
Age (years)				
5-11	19.1	623	8.2	48
12-14	0.9	19	58.3	10
Household head education				
None	23.1	24	5.6	2
Primary	13.7	55	12.3	7
Secondary	13.5	480	9.2	42
Higher	8.5	82	10.3	7
Household expenditure quintile				
1- Lowest	15.3	185	9.5	17
2	14.3	120	10.2	10
3	12.3	180	10.6	19
4	11.2	81	7.2	6
5- Highest	9.3	76	6.9	6
Region				
Issyk-Kul	15.1	67	24.6	16
Jalal-Abad	11.6	137	1.4	3
Naryn	20.0	59	0.0	--
Batken	18.4	58	10.7	10
Osh	13.9	149	18.3	22
Talas	16.9	38	0.0	--
Chui	9.8	68	7.6	5
Bishkek	6.9	31	0.0	--
Osh city	10.3	35	8.2	2

Source: ILO & NSC, 2008a

³⁶ The age range 5-14 is derived from international definitions of child labour and does not necessarily match the age range for compulsory education. In Kyrgyzstan the official entry age to primary school is age 7, and therefore the definition of "out of school" in the child labour tables does not match the definition used in the other out-of-school children tables. See also the footnote for Table 16 above.

Table 19: Out-of-school children: involvement in economic activity and household chores, 2007³⁷

Percentage of out-of-school children aged 5-14 at work in economic activity and household chores by type of work and average hours											
	Economic Activity								Household chores		Sample size children aged 5-14 out of school
	Paid work		Unpaid work		Self employment		Economic Activity ³⁸				
	Percentage	Average hours	Percentage	Average hours	Percentage	Average hours	Percentage	Average hours	Percentage	Average Hours	
Total	5.1	41.7	94.0	9.4	0.9	44	8.9	11.3	16.3	9.1	56
Sex											
Male	8.9	41.7	91.1	10.7	0.0	--	9.4	13.5	16.1	9.4	28
Female	0	--	97.9	7.8	2.1	44.0	8.3	8.5	16.4	8.6	28
Area											
Urban	20.5	41.0	79.5	10.5	0.0	--	2.9	16.7	10.8	8.8	7
Rural	3.9	42.0	95.1	9.3	1.0	44.0	10.7	10.9	17.9	9.1	49
Age (years)											
5-11	0.0	--	100.0	7.4	0.0	--	7.8	7.4	15.2	7.8	47
12-14	34.5	41.7	59.6	28.4	6.0	44.0	53.1	33.9	59.4	21.6	9
Household head education											
None	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Primary	0.0	--	100.0	15.0	0.0	--	12.3	15.0	19.5	13.2	7
Secondary	6.9	41.7	91.9	8.8	1.2	44.0	8.7	11.5	15.4	9.0	41

³⁷ The age range 5-14 is derived from international definitions of child labour and does not necessarily match the age range for compulsory education. In Kyrgyzstan the official entry age to primary school is age 7, and therefore the definition of "out of school" in the child labour tables does not match the definition used in the other out-of-school children tables. See also the footnote for Table 16 above.

³⁸ The numerator to estimate the percentage and average hours of Economic Activity for out-of-school children age 5-14 includes: out-of-school children 5-14 who, during the week preceding the survey did at least one hour of economic activity in paid work, unpaid/family farm-business or self employment. Average hours refer to average weekly working hours.

Higher	0.0	--	100.0	7.2	0.00	--	10.3	7.20	17.6	5.6	7
Household expenditure quintile											
1- Lowest	0.0	--	100.0	8.3	0.0	--	9.5	8.3	16.4	7.8	17
2	7.1	41.0	88.7	13.9	4.2	44.0	8.4	17.1	17.0	12.1	9
3	11.7	42.0	88.3	6.7	0.0	--	10.6	10.8	14.6	7.3	19
4	0.0	--	100.0	10.0	0.0	--	6.1	10.0	16.1	9.5	5
5- Highest	0.0	--	100.0	12.0	0.0	--	6.9	12.0	18.8	9.1	6
Region											
Issyk-Kul	0.0	--	100.0	6.8	0.0	--	24.6	6.8	30.5	6.9	16
Jalal-Abad	0.0	--	100.0	8.2	0.0	--	1.4	8.2	5.8	6.1	3
Naryn	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.0	--	2.1	7.5	--
Batken	0.0	--	100.0	7.6	0.0		10.7	7.6	20.2	7.3	10
Osh	0.0	--	98.1	10.9	1.9	44.0	16.7	11.5	22.9	11.7	21
Talas	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.0	--	20.4	6.2	--
Chui	49.2	42.0	50.8	18.1	0.0		7.6	29.9	16.8	10.6	5
Bishkek	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.0	--	12.2	4.5	--
Osh city	100.0	41.0	0.00	--	0.0	--	4.1	41.0	14.6	18.1	1

Source: ILO & NSC, 2008a

Table 20: Out-of-school children in economic activity by sector of employment, 2007³⁹

Percentage of out-of-school children aged 5-14 in economic activity, by sector of employment				
	Sector of Employment			
	Agriculture	Service	Production for own consumption	Sample size out-of-school children involved in economic activity for at least 1 hour (n)
Total	4.5	6.0	89.5	56
Sex				
Male	7.9	8.9	83.2	28
Female	0.0	2.1	97.9	28
Area				
Urban	9.6	20.5	69.9	7
Rural	4.1	4.9	91.1	49
Age (years)				
5-11	5.3	0.0	94.7	47
12-14	0.0	40.4	59.6	9
Household head education				
None	100.0	0.0	0.0	1
Primary	0.0	0.0	100.0	7
Secondary	0.0	8.1	91.9	41
Higher	29.1	0.0	70.9	7
Household expenditure quintile				
1- Lowest	13.9	0.0	86.1	17
2	0.0	11.3	88.7	9
3	0.0	11.7	88.3	19
4	0.0	0.0	100.0	5
5- Highest	0.0	0.0	100.0	6
Region				
Issyk-Kul	2.6	0.0	97.4	16
Jalal-Abad	0.0	0.0	100.0	3
Naryn	--	--	--	--
Batken	0.0	0.0	100.0	10
Osh	8.2	1.9	89.9	21
Talas	--	--	--	--
Chui	0.00	49.2	50.8	5
Bishkek	--	--	--	--
Osh city	0.0	100.0	0.0	1

Source: ILO & NSC, 2008a

³⁹ The age range 5-14 is derived from international definitions of child labour and does not necessarily match the age range for compulsory education. In Kyrgyzstan the official entry age to primary school is age 7, and therefore the definition of "out of school" in the child labour tables does not match the definition used in the other out-of-school children tables. See also the footnote for Table 16 above.

Table 21: School attendance and child labour, 2007⁴⁰

	Children attending school (total)		Children in child labour who are attending school		Children not in child labour who are attending school	
	Percentage	Sample size (n)	Percentage	Sample size (n)	Percentage	Sample size (n)
Total	87.1	4579	95.4	1 292	84.1	3285
Sex						
Male	86.9	2406	95.3	694	83.8	1710
Female	87.3	2173	95.4	598	84.5	1575
Area						
Urban	90.2	1579	97.6	269	88.9	1310
Rural	85.8	3000	95	1 023	81.6	1975
Age (years)						
5-11	80.9	2769	93.8	781	76.6	1987
12-14	99.1	1810	98.1	511	99.4	1298
Household head education						
None	76.9	88	95.9	29	69.6	59
Primary	86.3	414	93.3	112	83.9	301
Secondary	86.5	3 231	95.6	988	82.9	2242
Higher	91.5	842	95.3	162	90.6	680
Household expenditure quintile						
1- Lowest	84.7	1 046	94.4	320	81.3	726
2	85.7	832	95.2	273	81.7	558
3	87.7	1 307	95.5	395	84.5	911
4	88.8	662	96.5	151	86.4	511
5- Highest	90.7	732	96.5	153	89.4	579
Region						
Issyk-Kul	84.9	373	94	270	69.5	102
Jalal-Abad	88.4	1 095	99.2	299	85.6	795
Naryn	80	257	100.0	13	79.2	244
Batken	81.6	292	95.1	140	72.5	152
Osh	86.1	977	95.1	498	76.8	479
Talas	83.1	199	100.0	7	82.5	192
Chui	90.2	598	88.7	48	90.3	550
Bishkek	93.1	416	100.0	4	93	412
Osh city	89.7	372	80.6	13	90.1	359

Source: ILO & NSC, 2008a

⁴⁰ The age range 5-14 is derived from international definitions of child labour and does not necessarily match the age range for compulsory education. In Kyrgyzstan the official entry age to primary school is age 7, and therefore the definition of "out of school" in the child labour tables does not match the definition used in the other out-of-school children tables. See also the footnote for Table 16 above.

Table 22: Key education expenditure indicators, 2006-9

	2009	2008	2007	2006
Education spending general				
Total public expenditure on education as a % of GDP	6.2	5.9	6.5	5.5
Total public expenditure on education as a % of total government expenditure	NA	24.7	25.6	25.0

Note: NA means not available

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database, May 2012 release

Table 23: Trained teachers, 2010

(%)	Pre-Primary	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Secondary
Total	42.7	68.4	NA	NA	84.6

Note: NA means not available

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database, May 2012 release

Table 24: Pupil-teacher ratio, 2010

(%)	Pre-Primary	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Secondary
Total	26.2	24.3	NA	NA	15.2

Note: NA means not available

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database, May 2012 release

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