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**Ministry of Education, Science and Youth Policy
of the Kyrgyz Republic**

**Education Development Strategy
of the Kyrgyz Republic
(2007-2010)**

Bishkek, 2006

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB – Asian Development Bank

EFA – Education for All

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HEI – Higher Educational Institution

KR – Kyrgyz Republic

MDG – Millennium Development Goals

MICS – Multi Indicator Cluster Survey

MOESYP – Ministry of Education, Science and Youth Policy

NAP – National Action Plan

NGO – Non-governmental organization

PE – Preschool education

PEO – Preschool education organization

SDG – Sustainable development goals

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF – United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UNO – United Nations Organizations

USAID – US Agency for International Development

VS – Vocational school

WB – World Bank

INTRODUCTION

This document has been developed in accordance with Country Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic 2006-2010 (Education section) and with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable Development goals, goals of Education for All and to implement reform of the educational system.

The dynamic nature of socio-economic development of the modern world requires continuous improvement of educational systems. Today even the most outstanding education cannot provide the required scope of knowledge within only 5 – 7 years. The world is changing fast and educational systems should monitor and as far as possible anticipate these changes.

This means that reforming education and bringing its educational system into line with the realities of the modern world are one of the most topical objectives for the Kyrgyz Republic. Consequently, this Education Development Strategy of the KR is based both on worldwide development goals and the economic and social priorities of the country's development. It includes the principles and regulations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on Children's Rights, Dakar framework activities on education for all, Lisbon Convention, Bologna Declaration for higher education and other initiatives. It determines the major directions of development for the educational system of the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2007 – 2010 by the main levels of education: preschool, primary, secondary, and higher professional education, and per se is the continuation and elaboration of the strategic documents adopted by the Kyrgyz Republic at the beginning of 2000 (Education Doctrine, 2000; Concept of the educational system development to 2010, 2002; National Action Plan on Education for All, 2002; Development strategy for higher professional education of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2003; etc.).

A distinctive feature of this Strategy is the change in priorities in the system of continuous education and a shift of emphasis on primary education, which lays solid foundations for lifelong learning.

This Strategy has the following objectives:

- Identify medium-term educational system development (2010);
- Identify problems and propose solutions and mechanisms for their implementation.

This strategy depends on the number of common strategy regulations:

- Involvement into the process for working out all active subjects of the education sector: permanent consultations and concordances took place and it allowed carrying out more exact selection of priorities and directions of activities;
- Accent on coordinated planning including systematic but not mobilized type of using resources;
- Orienting the strategy to solve real problems but not situational tasks ;
- Forming special scenarios of actions ;
- Taking into account the increase of resources besides distribution of available ones;
- Opened (public) character of the strategy;
- Involving stakeholders into the strategy realization processes;

- It contains methods for achieving a goal, criteria for evaluating specific actions and boundary conditions.

Following these regulations when working out and coordinating the strategy allows effectively building the organizational structure for realizing all planned actions. Such structure as well as the strategy itself contains several important principles:

- **Positioning:** this strategy is linked to goals for the Country Development Strategy and is its sectoral instrument for realization.
- **Succession : coordination with previous strategic documents;**
- **Validity :** relying upon investigation data and materials in the sector .
- **Complementary character:** the strategy takes into consideration resources and zones of activeness for all actors of the sector ;
- **Orientation on all groups of interests (stakeholders);**
- **Coordinating donor assistance when realizing;**
- **Management principle:** The Ministry of Education, Science and Youth Policy of KR is a leading agent on coordinating the interaction of all participants of the strategy realization process. The strategic approach allows linking non-uniformly directed goals, manifold resources in borders of the one flow of activities

PART I. Modern educational system

Section 1. State policy on education

In the transition period the Kyrgyz Republic has been set new political and economic goals, such as the democratic rearrangement of public relations and shift to a market economy. In this relation new priorities in state policy of education are becoming more pronounced. Transition to a market economy and development of an open society resulted in adjusting educational sector goals and set new requirements for acquiring knowledge and skills by producers of goods and services and required additional resources.

The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Law On education and a series of National educational programmes identified the main principles and objectives to be achieved in the area of education:

- Ensure equal access to education;
- Update the content of educational and learning technologies;
- Improve quality;
- Use resources more effectively and efficiently;
- Make management democratic.

The orientation of reforms was posed by the new Law On education adopted in 1992. This law envisaged changing to diversified educational programmes, seeking new learning forms and technologies, arranging multi-channel financing, involving various partners in providing educational services and developing non-governmental education.

The approval of the Bilim National Educational Programme in 1996 launched individually-oriented education. New curricula have been developed and mastered and new types of schools such as grammar schools, mathematics and science oriented schools, and schools with their own independent curriculum approved by the MOE, were set up. Many educational institutions became testing grounds for experiments. Higher education was actively shifting to university curricula and regionalizing university education. Extensive opportunities for international collaboration were created.

The Education Doctrine was adopted in May 2000. This Doctrine was an important step in strengthening the interaction between government and society on education issues and improving the understanding that state, public and economic reorganization is possible only with the support of education and science. Besides the priority long-term educational system development courses the Doctrine also focused on strengthening and developing a democratic form of education.

Democratization of education as the main principle of the new educational policy was extensively substantiated and elaborated in the Concept of educational system development in the KR until 2010 adopted in 2002. In the same year, the National EFA Action Plan was approved, which contained a comprehensive programme of activities to improve the quality of school education for all in the context of the six EFA goals defined in the Dakar Agreement of the World Forum on Education held in 2000.

Milestones in the educational policy of the independent Kyrgyz Republic were secured by the new Law On education adopted in 2003 and the new Constitution of the KR adopted in 2003.

Hence, in the transition period the Kyrgyz Republic adopted a series of policy documents, which formulate the medium- and long-term educational development goals.

Educational policy is based on the idea that education is a connecting link between all the elements in the process of development irrespective of whether or not it is related to poverty and suffering, gender equality or the dissemination of democratic principles.

Development of strategic educational development programmes ensured the formation of unified approaches to understanding the main trends of implementing educational policy, whilst at the same time, funding became the constraint on implementing state policy.

State budget expenditure on education (as % of GDP)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Educ ation	7.6	6.1	5.0	4.2	6.1	6.6	5.2	4.9	4.9	4.1	3.5	3.9	4.5	4.5	4.63	4.69

The majority of policy documents with an educational agenda did not receive financial support and thus remained unimplemented in many respects. This resulted in the need to develop a new medium-term Education Development Strategy consolidating the experience and achievements of previous years in choosing directions for development and assurance of financial support.

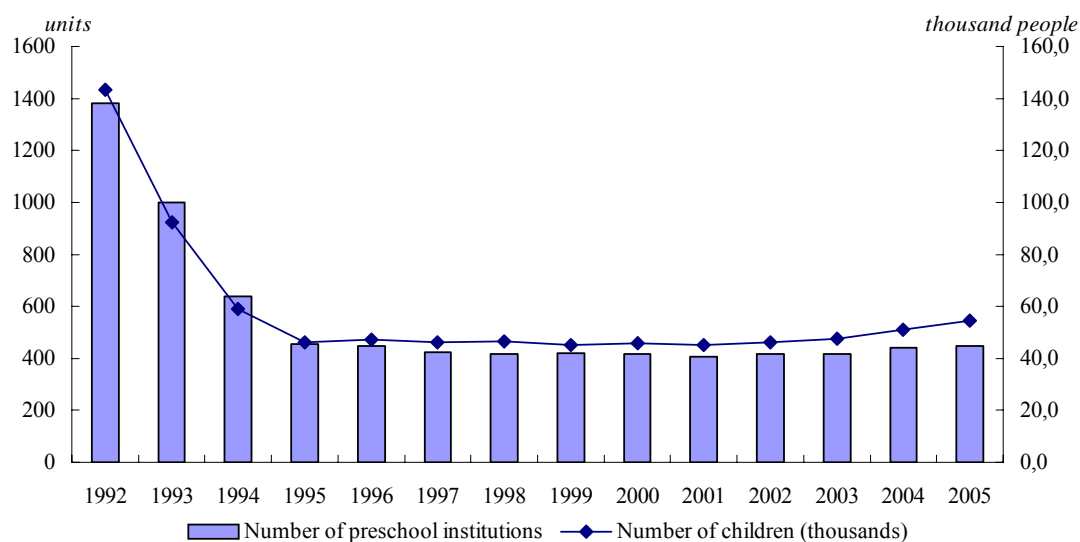
Section 2. Current situation and main strategies by type of education

2.1. Preschool Education and Early Childhood Development

Since the Kyrgyz Republic gained its independence, the preschool education system has shrunk drastically due to the universal closure of departmental kindergartens owned by enterprises and collective and state farms, which were unprofitable or bankrupt. The number of pre-school institutions declined due to the consequences of the general socio-economic crisis in the country, unemployment and increased internal labour migration and the majority of kindergarten buildings being sold off for private commercial use.

In 1995, a Decree of the President of the KR was published on Urgent Measures to Improve the Conditions for Further Use of Social Infrastructure Assets that prohibited the sale of buildings belonging to pre-school institutions or using them for improper purposes. Nevertheless, the number of preschool organizations fell from 1,604 in 1990 to 448 in 2005.

Table 1. Trend of changes in the number of preschool educational organizations (PEO)



Rural preschools experienced the most drastic reduction. Despite the large number of rural inhabitants only 27% of the total number of children in the country attending PEO are rural. At present, there are 188 rural kindergartens. In many respects, their activities depend on economic support from the local self-governance bodies in their area, the local community's social activeness and pre-school staff competence and enthusiasm.

Considering the crucial importance of this period in developing school skills and forming the ability to learn it can be said there is a serious difference in the opportunities for getting further qualitative education between urban and rural residents and between children who live in well-provided for and needy families.

Government financing in 2005 was 290.8 million soms (approximately US\$7.27 million), the majority of which went on salaries and food (part of the cost of food is covered by parents). The cost of maintaining buildings is borne by municipalities.

Table 2. History of government financing of preschool education

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Government spending on PEO	185.3	214.1	224.2	248.0	290.8
Including:					
Salary	64.9	75.3	90.7	107.3	129.6
Food	61.9	73.5	79.7	95.2	107.0

In addition to a quantitative decline in preschool programmes, the quality of preschool programmes also deteriorated. The existing 448 kindergartens currently employ 2,388 teachers, not all of whom have adequate professional training and opportunities improve their

professionalism. There are only two higher educational institutions (HEI) training specialists to work in PEO. State organizations only partially provide retraining and continuous education to kindergarten staff. Some assistance is rendered through projects of international organizations, in particular, the Soros-Kyrgyzstan Foundation has trained about 1,000 kindergarten workers under the Step by Step programme that has been running since 1995.

Although the Kyrgyz Republic had established preschool education system before independence, preschool programs needed to be updated to meet current international standards. Recognizing need for expanding and qualitatively upgrading preschool programs, the Ministry of Education adopted the preschool education concept in 2005, and submitted the new preschool standards in 2006 for the government’s approval. The concept and standards embrace alternative models of preschool, in addition the extant state kindergartens. It was obvious that the Government will not be able to establish and manage sufficient number of preschools to cover all preschool age children, and flexibility in preschool provisions is required.

In 2003 Asian Development Bank launched a project “the Community-Based Early Childhood Development Project (CBECDP)”. This project plans to cover over 20 000 preschoolers through creation of community-based kindergartens. Seventy community-based kindergartens have been established to date, and 300 in total are expected to be opened by the end of this project. The project also has trained 16,000 parents on child care and will training 15,000 more parents. (The Second CBECDP will start in 2008.)

Work is underway on developing various child education programmes enriched with national-cultural content and special educational programmes (health-improving, aesthetic, athletic-sports, etc.) that can teach parents how to prepare pre-school children who do not attend PEO (for example, the UNICEF supported Mother’s School).

Currently, a draft state standard of preschool education is being developed. Taking into consideration the fact that preschool education is not compulsory, this standard in a number of cases serves as recommendations. Development and approval of this standard will provide the baseline against which the system for assessing the efficiency of early development educational programmes will be judged.

According to the selective investigation results that was conducted in the number of regions in Kyrgyzstan in 2003, school reasons of children’s non-attendance of pre-school institutions were identified

Table 3: School reasons of children’s non-attendance of pre-school organizations (PEO)

Hard material situation	Lacking PEO in sites	Lacking places in PEO	PEO is located far away from home	No willingness to attend pre-school institution	Other reasons
38.2%	22.1%	26.5%	4.4%	4.0%	4.8%

Results of this survey as well as investigations conducted within the UNICEF limits show that over 68% of parents would like their children to attend pre-school organizations.

The current situation in the pre-school education sector and parents' inadequate contribution to teaching, developing and preparing children for school are the main reasons why the majority of children who start school are unprepared for the learning process and this is reflected in children's success at school and their motivation to receive and perception of education.

Thus, a number of problems prevent the existing pre-school education system from developing successfully. Only enough resources are provided to this level of education (infrastructure, finance, staff capacity) to maintain the status quo, making it necessary to seek different, less expensive but effective forms to develop children of primary school age.

Strategies to expand access to early child development programmes for the period until 2010

1. Maintain the existing PEO network

- Build the capacity of system specialists, professional development and retraining of teachers. The achievements of a series of programmes and projects (community-based kindergartens, Step by step, projects of UNICEF, ADB and others) can serve as significant resources for this.
- Strengthen the methodological, material, and technical base of PEO.
- Upgrade quality of pre-service training.

2. Expand alternative development programmes for children of primary school age

- Create alternative accessible forms and programmes to develop children of primary school age in schools, PEO and other organizations including NGOs; develop community kindergartens
- Promote establishment of community preschools and/ or preschools run by local authorities.
- Develop a private kindergarten system by creating favourable conditions for their functioning that can relieve the existing government institutions to a great extent
- Get NGOs to organize and carry out early childhood education projects and programmes

3. Optimize the management and financing system

- Diversify services provided to the population based on ability to pay.
- Decentralize the management system and increase the economic independence of educational institutions for the purpose of imparting flexibility in service delivery to the population and saving resources.

4. Train adults in skills on the care and development of younger children

- Provide information to the public, first of all to parents, on problems of early child development, through the mass media and other sources of information.
- Implement training programmes on caring for children and early childhood development.
- Include issues on early child development into HEI and school curricula

2.2. Primary, and secondary education

Ensuring accessibility to and improving the quality of primary and secondary education are the highest priority objectives for educational system development taking into account the constitutional guarantees of universal primary and secondary education, the needs of the country's economy for workers with adequate general education and the ability for further learning/retraining and the need to achieve the MDG and EFA.

Improving the quality of primary and secondary education

Second generation state standards for all subjects of the school curriculum were updated and developed in 2005 – 2006. These standards serve as the basis for developing training programmes with the emphasis on practical application of knowledge acquirement and skills.

However, this did not result in the expected optimization of school education content. What resulted was the fragmentation of the educational process due to the large number of subjects, each of which requires a subject-teacher and corresponding textbook and schools lack sufficient numbers of both teachers and textbooks. Small, unfinished schools without a sufficient workload for teachers of all subjects suffer the most.

Findings from studies of the achievements of pupils undertaken with financial support from UNESCO and UNICEF in 2001 and 2005 showed a general downward trend in the quality of primary school education in the Kyrgyz Republic from 2001 – 2005, shown by the test results in numeracy and literacy, which are school areas for the rest of education.

Table 4. Monitoring results of numeracy, literacy and life skills in 2001 and 2005

	Life skills		Literacy test		Numeracy test	
	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed
2001	75	25	59.1	40.9	81.4	18.6
2005	77.9	22.1	44.2	55.8	58.8	41.2

Lower achievements in mathematics and natural sciences were also discovered by the UNESCO supported Monitoring progress in education (8th grade) international research undertaken in 2002 – 2003 in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The research findings suggest that progress in education is falling faster in rural than urban schools. This conclusion is supported by data from MOESYP and the results of the General Republican Test for school leavers, which has been sat since 2003.

Table 5 Average values of test results by category of candidates

	2003	2004	2005

Total in the Republic	114.2	122.4	112.7
Bishkek school leavers	136.4	144.3	137
Oblast centre school leavers	120.1	127.1	118.5
Rural school leavers	108	114.9	103.6

The over-saturation of curricula and training programmes affect the quality of education and health of students. Findings of comparative international studies show that the Kyrgyz Republic is a country with a very high learning workload.

Table 6 Cumulative hours of school workload for 10 – 14 year old students per year

Country	10	11	12	13	14
Germany	774	862	874	915	918
Japan	761	761	875	875	875
Finland	684	713	713	855	855
Sweden	741	741	741	741	741
Spain	795	795	795	870	870
Czech Republic	738	803	828	886	886
Hungary	867	902	971	902	902
Russia	893	919	971	998	998
Kyrgyz Republic	1088	1156	1156	1122	1190

Changing to a 12-year education system is underway and the second ADB Education project is studying ways of doing this.

The school system in the Kyrgyz Republic is multilingual: 63.9% of students study Kyrgyz, 24.5% Russian, 13.5% Uzbek and 0.3% Tajik. Korean, Dungan, Hebrew, German, Turkish and other languages are also learned as native languages. Provision of textbooks to schools being taught in Kyrgyz is 85.5%, Russian – 88.9%, Uzbek – 77.2% and Tajik – 90%. Overall provision of textbooks in the country is 85.4% (in the 2005/2006 academic year the average provision of schools with textbooks was 77.4%).

However, textbook availability varies from region to region and there is no systematic approach to publishing them. The education authorities do not take into consideration the actual need for textbooks when preparing orders, do not track changes in the future numbers of pupils and as a result end up with surplus stocks of some textbooks (mathematics, Kyrgyz language) and shortages of others, such as world history and Russian literature. Before 2006 publication of textbooks should have been covered from revenue collected from renting out school library textbook stocks. No arts or methodology literature has been published in the last fifteen years due to lack of funds.

Currently, 74 thousand school teachers work in the educational system of the Kyrgyz Republic, of whom 68% have higher, 21% secondary professional and 10% incomplete higher education.

The average salary in the education sector was 1,621 soms (approximately USD 41) in 2005 or 62% of the average salary. The number of graduate teachers varies between 1900 – 2600 per year, but only half of these actually go to work in schools and there is a permanent shortage of between 3000 - 3600 teachers.

The World Bank grant of USD 15.0 million for the Rural Education Project planned for 2005 – 2009 is aimed at increasing the effectiveness of teaching in schools and creating a system of incentives and improving the quality of education.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Youth Policy initiated the Young teachers' deposit programme in 2004 with the aim of getting graduate teachers to teach in remote rural schools through opening deposit accounts in savings banks and entitling them to receive these accumulated savings after 3 years teaching in their remote schools.

Table 5. Young teacher recruitment under the Young Teachers' Deposit Scheme

Oblast		2004	2005	2006
1	Osh oblast	30	55	112
2	Jalalabat oblast	34	73	113
3	Batken oblast	35	66	86
4	Talas oblast	25	27	38
5	Naryn oblast	12	21	32
6	Chui oblast	28	22	172
7	Issyk-Kul oblast	35	36	55
	Total	200	300	600

The take up of the scheme remains low and in recent years the average age of teachers has soared, with 65.1% of the total number of teachers aged 45 plus and 11.2% over the retirement age of 60.

One of the components of the Rural Education project run by the MOESYP and supported by the World Bank (around US \$2.5m) aims to improve the teachers' incentive system.

The gap between the average level of salaries for workers in the education system and the subsistence consumption budget, has closed however, in 2005, the average salary in the education sector was 1,621 som (approximately US \$41) per month, 62% of the average national wage or 88% of the subsistence consumption budget

The analyzed period highlighted the deterioration of the learning environment: a shortage of schools resulting in increased numbers of schools working 2 – 3 shifts. In 2000, the number of schools working 2 and 3 shifts was 1,483 and 105 respectively and in 2005 these figures were 1,597 and 97 respectively. The number of students going to school on 2nd and 3rd shifts increased from 402,2 thousand in 2000 to 462,6 thousand in 2005. The sharpest increase in shifts was observed in Chui (60%), Talas (67%) and Naryn (69.7%) oblasts during the analyzed period.

Measures to maintain and renovate the learning environment have been undertaken. 316 schools and associated buildings that can accommodate 54.9 thousand pupils have been brought on stream. Construction of small schools for 120 – 240 pupils was mainly covered from local budget funds, by sponsors, communities and ashar (voluntary self-help).

During the same period 868 secondary education schools were renovated through the joint efforts of local communities, sponsors and international organizations such as Mercy Corps, UNDP, ARIS, ADB and USAID.

The Asian Development Bank has started to implement the Second Education project designed to support improvements to school infrastructure and education quality in rural schools. Under this project it is planned to renovate 90 schools from 2006 – 2010, 42 of which are in Jalalabat and Osh oblasts.

Extensive repairs are also required for schools in other oblasts (Batken – 46, Issyk-Kul – 17, Talas – 21, Naryn – 18 and Chui – 25).

Increasing the accessibility to primary and secondary education

At present, 1.106 million children are attending general educational institutions, a coverage of 89.9%, 90.5% of girls and 89.3% of boys.

Official data of the National Statistical Committee show that 2,512 school age pupils did not attend school in 2001, 1,344 in 2003 and 1,619 in 2005. Independent studies suggest that in fact many more children do not attend schools. An independent sampling survey of micro-sites in 5 schools in different regions of the country conducted in 2003 by the Public Opinion Study Centre, with financial support from UNICEF, revealed six times more children not attending schools than the official statistics reported. The findings of studies implemented by Save the Children (Great Britain), UNICEF and other organizations show that several thousand children are not attending school. About half of those not attending school are 12 – 15-year-old teenagers. Results of Multi Cluster Indicator Survey - MICS (UNICEF) show that school attendance decreases when children grow older and there are cases when children have not attended school for several years.

Of the total number of children not attending school, 69% are from rural areas. The main reason for not attending school is poverty, which forces teenagers to start work at a young age. Children in the Kyrgyz Republic are engaged in the similar jobs to the adult population, such as trade, different types of services, agriculture and work at home.

Table 8: Main types of jobs in which working children are involved (%)

Job	Sample site				Total percentage of working children involved in each type of job, countrywide
	Bishkek	Osh	Naryn	Kara-Suu	
Trade	23.8	48.1	49.0	26.0	32.4
Transportation, loading and unloading of goods	17.2	5.8	16.3	12.0	13.7

Collecting (aluminum, bottles)	8.1	8.3	2.0	18.0	8.5
Auxiliary workers	9.9	12.8	12.2	12.0	11.0
Panhandling	10.5	0.6	4.1	12.0	7.5
Footwear cleaning and repair	8.1	7.1	4.1		6.8
Car wash	8.7	3.2	2.0		6.0
Work in fields	3.2	6.4	4.1	10.0	4.7
Prostitution	3.2	1.3		4.0	2.5
Other	7.3	6.4	6.1	6.0	6.8

A series of studies indicate that children start working at a very young age, which naturally forces them to miss classes

Table 9 Child labour by age

Age	Percentage of working children
7-10	4.2
11-15	12.0
16-17	19.6

Significant numbers of working children work on fields/farms owned by their families, starting at the age of 7 – 9 (61.2%). Most working children aged 9 and above have already been working for more than two years. For example, 48.6% of working children aged 10 started work when they were 7-8 years old as did 38.4% of 11 year olds.

Child labour is widely used for growing agricultural crops, such as tobacco, rice and cotton. Data from the Central Committee of the Trade Union of Agricultural Sector Workers of the Kyrgyz Republic suggest that in Jalalabat oblast alone, an average of 125 thousand children are engaged in agricultural work every season.

In Osh and Kara-Suu the majority of working children are aged 9 – 13, mainly engaged in trade, transporting goods, collecting non-ferrous metal, working as servants and auxiliary workers in cafes and on construction sites

Unwillingness to study due to poor learning conditions and relations between teachers and peers in schools remain another major reason for not attending schools from year to year.

The trend to commercialize services in the area of school education intensify the problems of ensuring equal access to secondary education for the population of the country. General education schools actively offer commercial classes where tuition is paid for by the parents. The privileges for pupils in commercial classes (smaller class numbers, studying on the first shift. more qualified teaches) are frequently provided at the expense of infringing the rights of other students in a school and this leads to differentiating between students by financial wellbeing and social status.

There are 19 special schools for children with various special needs, of which fourteen are boarding-schools which provide training and education to over 3,000 mentally and/or physically handicapped children and teenagers (for comparison: in 1992 there were 29 special boarding-schools for children with special needs).

To increase accessibility to quality education for children with special needs, a number of programmes are being implemented involving large schools (for example, inclusive education programmes by the Save the Children Fund, Great Britain).

From 2000 to 2003 the number of children placed for training and education in institutions and boarding schools for orphans and institutionalized children grew but since 2003 numbers have at the 1997 level.

Analysis of children in institutional care shows that only 12% of them are biological orphans whereas 88% have one or both parents, which indicates that families are undergoing social and economic pressures and that current social services are inadequate to support families to look after their children

Optimizing financing and management

The main problems of financing education in the Kyrgyz Republic are related to drawing up budgets, cashflow and management at school level, the strict limitations on which have led to a deterioration in the quality and outcomes of the educational system.

Table 10 Appropriations for education in percentages of state budget expenditures in 2001 – 2005 (millions soms)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Gross domestic product (GDP)	73883,3	75366,7	83420,8	94078,4	100115,5
State budget expenditures of the Kyrgyz Republic	12257,0	15190,2	16895,9	18841,7	20143,7
Spending on education (including special means accounts)	2847,6	3350,4	3752,7	4357,4	4917,7
As a percentage of state budget expenditures	23,0	22,1	22,2	23,1	20,0
As a percentage of GDP	3.85	4.45	4.5	4.63	5.0

In the last five years spending on education has increased 1.7 times, but this is still inadequate and it is necessary to attract additional sources of funding.

Profit-making activities by schools, including providing paid educational services are becoming universal and the value of special means for republican educational institutions

increased from 400.0 million soms in 2001 to 750.0 million soms in 2005 (approximately US\$10 m to US\$ 18.75 m).

According to Government Decree №775 of the Kyrgyz Republic adopted on December 10th 2001, general education schools used parents' resources to support the material and technical base of schools up until January 1st 2006. Public funds to support and develop educational organizations developed universally along with the above-mentioned activities.

Spending on primary and secondary education accounts for about 65% of the total value of government expenditure on education, or approximately 2486.5 million soms per year, including special funds worth 131.2 million soms or 12% of total expenses (approximately US\$ 61.1 million and US\$ 3.28 million respectively).

Table 11: Total Education budget with breakdown

	Total, million soms	Breakdown			
		Budget, million soms	As % of the total	Special means, million soms	As % of the total
Primary and secondary education	2617,7	2486.5	64,2	131,2	12,0

The value of educational maintenance funds (repairs, other expenditures, transport, business trips) is reducing every year.

Practical lessons are not being implemented due to the lack of required training-laboratory equipment. The average budget spending per pupil (child in care) does not exceed 2229 soms and the budget allocates not more than 2000 soms (or 10 soms per day) for training needs and the salaries of teachers calculated per student without considering expenses for utilities.

Budgets of general education institutions are drawn up based on indicators showing class numbers, number of administrative-managerial and maintenance staff, expenditures to maintain buildings and other expenditures. The inflexibility of local budgets does not allow schools to decide for themselves how much to spend on maintenance or improving the quality of education.

Grammar schools and mathematics and science oriented schools have schoolprivileges and receive additional budget financing but schoolintensified learning of certain subjects in the form of additional paid services (APS) over and above the school curriculum is paid for by parents.

The traditional education financing system “supports the process rather than the output” of education and the financing of individual schools to a great extent reflects previously used categories and levels of expenditure but not rational choice based on economic analysis.

Currently, 95.3% of allocated funds are spent on staff and administration and only 4.7% on the educational process.

The approved budget for 2006 states that over 85% of the budget be spent on staff and administration whereas the educational process is virtually not supported by budget funds. For comparison: in 1995, 54% of budget funds were spent for this purpose.

A series of projects on piloting new financing mechanisms (an experiment on giving vouchers to teachers to use in the capacity building system for teachers, capitation-based financing of schools (PEAKS, USAID), textbook rental schemes and encouraging teachers (Rural Education Project, WB), etc. have been and still are being implemented. The results of these projects will be used to further improve the financing of education.

In this connection, it becomes important to scale-up pilot projects to spread the new methods of financing and management and encouraging teachers to other regions and national level, optimize expenditures through multi-channel financing of educational organizations, provide more managerial functions on administrative and financial issues to educational organizations and ensure transparency of financial resources of educational institutions.

Thus, as regards the school education sector a number of problems exist that need to be resolved:

1. Declining school education quality at all levels due to poor provision of schools, especially rural schools, with qualified staff, textbooks and school supplies; high level of learning workload on students and a fragmented curriculum aimed mainly at increasing knowledge; worsening educational environment and teachers' low motivation.
2. Increasing percentage of children who do not attend school, especially in middle and higher grades due to poverty and having to start work at a young age; high incidence of illness among school pupils, discontent with learning conditions and relations between students and teachers and pupils and their peers and irrelevance of the education to children's needs, including children with special needs.
3. Inefficient financing and management system for schools due to a lack of financial sustainability of schools and inadequate professionalism of senior management.

Strategies to expand access to and improve the quality of primary and secondary education

1. Increase the percentage coverage of children by educational programmes, including children with special needs by improving the learning environment and involving the community in solving school problems
 - Create a healthy environment for learning to reduce the incidence of catarrhal, infectious and eyesight diseases through improving lighting and water supply systems, sanitary-hygienic equipment.
 - Ensure regular provision of food to students, especially to needy students, in collaboration with local communities and create conditions for organizing food provision in schools (kitchen equipment).

- Renovate and update the infrastructure of educational institutions (construction, repairs, heating, water-sewerage systems, furniture) taking into account the requirements of all children, including children with special needs.
 - Supply schools where necessary with training-laboratory equipment, school furniture and computers based on the implemented monitoring of the infrastructure and material and technical base in the regions.
 - Supply general education schools with text books.
 - Involve the community in education problems by expanding tutorial councils and setting up education committees and other public management structures.
2. Improve education content and teaching technologies
- Develop a national curriculum with a view to optimizing the learning workload and bringing it into line with modern educational aims
 - Orient the curriculum on a competence-based approach and effectiveness of education.
 - Update teaching materials and textbooks using the principles of political culture, gender sensitivity and healthy life style including HIV/AIDS prevention.
 - Expand the use of innovative teaching methods.
3. Raise the status and professionalism of teachers and administrative staff by improving salaries, retraining and capacity building
- Bring the system of training and continuous education of teachers into line with the requirements of the new curriculum and a competence-based approach.
 - Diversify continuous education programmes.
 - Strengthen the management capacity of Directors and Deputy Directors of General Education schools (ie primary and secondary schools)
 - Raise teachers' salaries to the national average and change the teachers' incentive system
 - Introduce independent professional attestation of teachers based on competence-based criteria.
4. Change the system of assessing the progress of pupils
- Introduce a system for regularly evaluating and monitoring pupils' progress in literacy, numeracy and life skills based on agreed indicators (at 4th grade).
 - Improve the system of assessing the progress of students at school level (9th grade).
 - Improve the system of national testing
5. Optimize financing and management
- Change to new methods of financing general education schools based on minimum standards of financing.
 - Increase the financial autonomy of general education schools.
 - Strengthen managerial capacity at all levels of the educational system:
 - train managers of educational bodies and organizations in management and

- accounting;
- introduce the profession and training in HEI of education managers.
- Set up an information management system in the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth Policy and education administrative authorities.
- Expand the involvement of local communities in managing educational institutions.

2.3. Primary, secondary and higher professional education

There are 191 primary, secondary and professional educational institutions in the Kyrgyz Republic, including 113 vocational schools and 78 technical schools with more than 64 thousand students. The biggest problem facing primary and secondary professional education is its irrelevance to labour market requirements, neglect of the system by employers as potential investors and the low status and image of the system due to its isolation and lack of links to national and local development processes.

Despite considerable socio-economic changes in the the country, the list of professions in primary and secondary professional education has remained unchanged for 10 years. Since 2002, the numbers of suitably qualified teachers has fallen dramatically, and less than half of the teachers have higher education. Also, the system of vocational education has been detached from other levels of professional education for many years and students from vocational schools do not have the opportunity to improve their professional training.

The development of an unregulated market for educational services due to the ever-changing economic situation and lack of communication between employers and the system of primary and secondary professional education has resulted in distortions in the numbers of trained specialists by level of education and sectors of the economy. The number of artisans at 64 students per 10 thousand head of the population is significantly lower than in the area of higher education.

Development of higher professional education in the country is more dynamic. In 1991, the Kyrgyz SSR had 12 HEI with 58.8 thousand students whereas at present 54 HEI train degree holding specialists. These HEI include 31 public, 15 non-governmental and 8 branches of CIS HEI, consist of 55 structural training subdivisions including 34 institutes and 10 centres with legal entity status, 9 branches and 2 technical schools and provide higher education programmes to over 230 thousand students. The number of students per 10 thousand head of the population has increased. In 1995 this figure was 141 whereas today it is more than 460, which is the highest rate in the world.

The majority of students attend public HEI – over 212 thousand, which is 91.7% of the total number of students in the country. Over 204 thousand of them are paying for their tuition and only 12.1% receive state scholarships. Over 95.5 thousand students are paying for their education in HEI located in the capital city.

52.4% of students are full-time, 46% on correspondence courses, 0.4% attend evening classes and 1.2% are on distance learning.

Over 200 specialties are offered, but there are imbalances in favour of certain specialties. For example, in Bishkek the majority of students are studying economic specialties – 32,299

students (or 28.7% of the total number of students), 16,807 - technical specialties (14.9%), 15,885 – law (14.1%) and 15,709 -teacher training (14%).

Expenditures on higher education account for 0.88% of GDP. The current per capita budget allocation per year is 5000 soms, which does not cover the actual cost of training students and forces HEI to increase the numbers of paying students significantly (tuition fees average 15,000 soms per year). Currently, public HEI in the country are financed to cover the following line items: salaries, Social Fund contributions, utility costs (partially) and student scholarships.

For several years the Kyrgyz Republic has been making efforts to introduce the main principles of the Bologna agreement. HEI have introduced a multi-stage continuous system of education, a system of credit hours and student and faculty mobility. However, there are many problems with higher professional education.

The education process lacks a competence-based approach, which results in formalized training. State educational standards have been developed by Training-Methodological Associations (TMA) without involving professional groups that know the content of the profession and there is no external procedure for assessing the competence of graduating students.

Assessing the performance of HEI, licensing and attestation of educational institutions remain serious problems. Practice shows that in recent years no HEI has been refused a license and all have successfully passed attestation, but employers continually express discontent with the competence of graduates. There is no adequate system of guaranteeing higher education quality or its level when graduating and there are no independent accreditation agencies in the country.

The existing HEI management system has proved to be ineffective and the current system for choosing heads of HEI does not correspond to the interests of the HEI and self-governance bodies of higher educational institutions - Academic Councils, Boards of Trustees, disciplinary and financial committees - are ineffective.

There is no suitable system for training education managers no institutions offer Education Management programmes.

No serious work is being done to fight corruption in education. Student places, points and diplomas are bought and sold and there is no procedure in place for putting an “electronic signature” on higher educations and “file freezing” does not exist.

There are serious problems related to graduates finding jobs and the numbers of those who cannot get jobs in their specialty or find a job at all is growing from year to year. Graduates from HEIs with Bachelor’s degrees cannot find jobs in their specialties because many enterprises do not recognize their diplomas and request a specialty diploma.

Finally, although the higher education system operates on a fee paying basis it cannot provide the additional paid educational services demanded by the population.

Strategies

1. Restructure the system of primary and secondary professional education
 - Develop and launch pilot regional projects to set up sectoral institutions of primary and secondary professional education (by merging vocational and technical schools).
2. Improve State Educational Standards
 - Revise the list of training courses and specialties of higher professional education and the corresponding state educational standards with the aim of supporting priority specialties and courses to help the socio-economic development of the country;
 - Develop an Education Management specialty and enroll students on Masters' Programmes;
 - Develop new generation State Educational Standards based on competence;
 - Include, on a mandatory basis, representatives of employers' and professional associations in the groups of those developing educational standards;
 - Re-orient the state attestation of graduates to examine competence and introduce professional exams for specialties financed by the government;
 - Expand the application of the Bologna agreement principles in the educational process. Continue pilot projects on technical, agricultural, pedagogical and humanitarian courses. Set up a coordination bureau to implement the Bologna principles under the MOESYP and introduce the concept of coordinators in all HEI in the country;
 - Include Bachelor's degree status in the Labour Code of the Kyrgyz Republic as a specialist able to work in accordance with the obtained qualification.
3. Decentralize – de-monopolize the assessment of higher education
 - Revise the mechanisms, programmes and criteria for assessing the licensing and state attestation procedures;
 - Develop parameters to assess the quality of higher education, primarily, in the employability of graduates;
 - Approve a system of independent accreditation of higher educational institutions and curricula;
 - Introduce public systems of assessing HEI (e.g., ratings).
4. Optimize government financing of essential specialties
 - Extend and specialize HEI by directions of training;
 - Study the country's long-term needs for specialists;
 - Introduce a targeted system for training specialists;
 - Define HEI financed by the government;
 - Develop mechanisms to change to to capitation-based financing;
 - Develop mechanisms to turn HEI, except HEIs of state importance, into businesses.
5. Optimize the HEI management system
 - Change the system of appointing Rectors in HEI so that Rectors of HEI funded by the government are appointed by the state authorized body and rectors of private and commercial HEI are appointed by the Board of Trustees. Rectors should be given the functions of executive managers of HEI (determining the

HEI strategy, fund-raising activities, creating and improving the image of their HEI);

- Introduce the appropriate changes into the legislation;
- Develop a common information database on the management of HEI educational activity

6. Develop a system for verifying diplomas

- Develop a secure information database (a “file freezing” system) on students with a list of points for each semester and the serial number of each graduate's diploma.

7. Develop an additional education services system for adults in HEI of the Kyrgyz Republic

- Introduce paid educational services requested by the population into HEI based on the existing educational process;
- Change the correspondence courses for training specialists to reflect the introduction of modern technologies and teaching methods.

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