

PROVIDING CHILDREN WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTINUE EDUCATION AT SCHOOL AFTER A LONG PERIOD OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

(Situational Analysis)



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This publication contains analysis of the situation with children that are enabled to go back to school after dropping out of school for a long time. This problem is viewed in social-economic, educational and legal settings thus enabling comprehensive approach to solution thereof. The situation analysis can be used for planning subsequent actions to ensure integrity and sustainability of the Education For All program in accordance with the policy of the Ministry of Education.

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1. Summary

The goal of this study is to identify barriers to obtaining quality secondary education by children who have been left out of the educational process for objective and subjective reasons and to identify what needs to be done to provide these children with a second chance to obtain secondary education at school.

The target group of the study is children who have been absent from school for a long period due to various circumstances: children were not enrolled in school on time; children who have missed schooling for more than a year; children who did not complete their studies at school and did not receive secondary education.

Children's personalities are influenced by their families, schools and communities, the three socio-educational elements, which create the conditions for a child's development and socialisation. The relevant legislative-legal basis provides the mechanism by which these elements harmonically and rationally affect children. On this basis, the obstacles to obtaining secondary education by the young generation of Kyrgyz will be considered from the socio-economic, educational and legislative-legal perspectives. In the socio-economic context, barriers to obtaining secondary education are formed by children's interactions within the family, which to a large degree depend on the socio-economic situation in the country in general, and peculiarities of interactions between families and the community. The educational context makes it possible to identify contradictions in interactions between children and schools, which present obstacles to children returning to school after a long period of absence and finally, analysis of the legislative-legal context makes it possible to explain barriers arising from the legal point of view. It will be kept in mind that the contexts' boundaries are blurred as the problems children face are often interconnected and interdependent.

It should be noted that the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic is the foundation for developing mechanisms for implementing the commitments assumed by the country and reflected in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Children's Code. Currently, the regulations covering full implementation of these commitments are being drawn up.

The problem of accessibility of education in Kyrgyzstan became one of the most acute problems of social development in the 1990s, particularly from 1993 to 1996. By 1997, the mass non-attendance of children at school ceased and from 1997 to 2001, the official numbers of children not attending schools decreased from 8,588 to 3,000¹ and adolescents of school age, however, according to unofficial data, the number of children not attending school is 10 times more than the official statistics.

The difficult economic situation in the country and lack of legislative-legal mechanisms means that the problem regarding children receiving secondary education is continuing, which causes children to drop out of school.

The presence of many problems in the socio-economic sector has led to the situation when many parents do not see the need for their children to get an education and so, the motivation of children to study and the responsibility of parents for their children's education has been decreasing. Inadequate participation of parents in their children's educational activities and education taking second place to dealing with family problems (taking care of younger children, elderly relatives) are serious barriers faced by children returning to school after a long absence.

Meanwhile, analysis of the educational context shows that even if a child and his/her family decide to resume interrupted schooling, schools are unprepared to meet the child's needs and create friendly conditions for studying. For working with such children, it is necessary to develop special

¹ Data taken from the National Education for All Action Plan

educational programmes, teaching aids and special training for teachers. Thus, teachers could help a child fill gaps in his/her knowledge and skills in the accelerated learning class (catch up class) and then join the regular class corresponding to the child's age and level of his/her preparedness, which is currently not happening. Besides, most schools are not prepared to provide materials and facilities to create a child friendly environment that encourages children to study. The environment, directly or indirectly, has a negative impact on the organization of the educational process and accordingly on its results. Eventually it can lead to the situation where a child drops out and completely loses any links with his/her school and the desire to resume studying.

Analysis of the regulatory-legal educational basis of the Kyrgyz Republic from the perspective of conditions conducive to children returning to school after a long period of absence makes it possible to state the following:

1. The legislative-legal acts do not stipulate specific measures concerning children returning to school and creating conditions for children who return to school after a long absence and experience difficulties with studying, to adapt.
2. The following issues have not been regulated: the list of documents for enrolling children in schools, problems with documents (for instance, the loss of a birth certificate, lack of residence registration, etc.)
3. The following issues have not been regulated: issues related to age barriers encountered by children who have missed school for a long time and creating conditions for their successful adaptation at school.
4. There is no system to provide expertise and review regulatory legal documents, which are being adopted, from the perspective of observing the best interests of children.
5. The Law on Education contains general regulations in the area of basic secondary education, but makes no provision for regulating access to education for children from socially vulnerable families.

To make the legislation more effective, it is necessary to introduce general amendments to the Law on Education in the section on ensuring access to education for children at risk. It is also necessary to adopt the Regulation on providing access to education for children at risk with detailed regulations and effective mechanisms that ensure access to education after a long absence. This can be solved by adopting a separate law on secondary education similar to the adopted Law on Higher Education.

Analysis of the funding of the educational system shows that the existing financial mechanism is not an efficient management tool, as it lacks levers that permit increasing the interest of schools in working with children who have long gaps in schooling and schools do not have funds to motivate teachers to work with such children. It is necessary to reallocate state budget funds within the educational system for the benefit of general education organizations and with the purpose of expanding the coverage of children from socially vulnerable families. It is possible to increase accessibility to education quickly by making it possible to motivate teachers and heads of schools in working with children from vulnerable segments of the population. In future, it is necessary to introduce standard (per capita) funding, which will make it possible to address many problems in the educational system, including the problem of accessibility to education for children who dropped out of school.

2. Introduction

The goal of this study is to identify existing obstacles to obtaining quality education by children who fall out of the educational process for objective and subjective reasons and identify what needs to be done to provide them with a second chance to get secondary education at school.

The tasks of this study are as follows:

- Preliminary assessment of government projects and practices aimed at providing universal access to compulsory school/basic education and getting children back to school, developing inclusive education, meeting the needs of specialists who work with truant children who have substantial gaps in their knowledge and developing programmes and manuals for specialists who work with such children.
- To analyse the existing legislation with regard to its compliance with the principles stipulated in the international conventions in the area of education, which have been ratified by the Kyrgyz Republic.
- To analyse the existing legislation with regard to ensuring access to school education for children from target groups and identifying existing gaps.
- Cost analysis (identifying potential sources of funding) of providing children with opportunities to continue education in general secondary and evening schools. This work should be implemented jointly with corresponding representatives of the Government (including the Ministry of Finance, etc.); its goal should be to determine the minimum guaranteed level of services and calculate the cost of them.
- To assess the existing practice of involving communities in addressing the problem of access to education for children who have substantial gaps in their knowledge and identifying obstacles in this field.
- To develop a programme document/implementation strategy with an action plan and list of recommendations for teachers, social workers and communities with regard to preparing schools to provide children with opportunities to continue education after a long period of absence from school. This document will serve as the manual for policy makers, school administrations, social workers, and members of the community so that they could make consistent, effective efforts to return children with long breaks in studying back to school.
- The document will become the basis for planning follow-up actions to ensure the holistic nature and sustainability of the programme in accordance with the policy of the Ministry of Education and with the aim of reaching EFA goals ('Education for All').

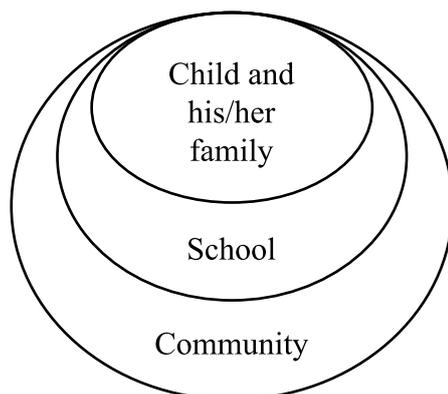
The target group of this study is children who have long breaks in schooling for objective and subjective reasons:

- Children were not enrolled at school in time;
- Children dropped out of school for more than a year;
- Children did not complete secondary school.

Primarily, this category includes *street children, working children, children at risk, and children with special needs*.

A child's personality is formed and his/her socialization is influenced by the family, school and community. These are the three ingredients of the socio-educational mix, which creates the conditions for children's development. The mechanism for the harmonic and rational impact of these three elements on a child is the relevant legislative-legal basis. On this basis, the obstacles to children obtaining secondary education should be considered under these three contexts: socio-economic, educational and legislative- legal.

The object for considering obstacles in the socio-economic context will be peculiarities of the interactions of children within families, which to a large degree depend on the socio-economic situation in the country in general and peculiarities of interactions between families and communities. The educational context makes it possible to identify contradictions in the interactions of children and schools, which cause obstacles to children returning to school after long absences and finally, analysis of the legislative-legal context gives an opportunity to explain emerging obstacles from the perspective of the legislation. It should be borne in mind that all the contexts and problems are interconnected and interdependent. Diagrammatically the approach to the analysis can be presented in the following way:



The set goals determined the structure of the study and its methods:

- analysis of reports on similar studies;
- analysis of state programmes in the area of education and reports on their implementation;
- analysis of laws and regulatory-legal documents that ensure mechanisms for implementing adopted decisions;
- in-depth interviews with experts.

3. Accessibility of education: legislative-legal and socio-economic contexts

3.1. Legislative-legal basis as a foundation and guarantee of accessibility to quality education

According to the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, every citizen of the country has the right to education. According to Article #32 of the Children's Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, every child has the right to obtain free school education in state general education organizations.

According to the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, the state must ensure all children have access to professional, specialized secondary and higher education based on each person's abilities (p.3 art.#32).

The Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "About Education" dated 30th April 2003 acknowledges the constitutional right of children to education regardless of their social and property status, nationality, religion, political and religious beliefs, place of residence and other circumstances, guarantees free basic secondary and professional education and free education at higher institutions – on a competitive basis.

Thus, the Kyrgyz Republic guarantees access to obtaining free basic education to every citizen, so accordingly children from the target group have this right as well. Hence, if children drop out of the educational process due to objective circumstances, the state, represented by its organs, is obliged to facilitate their return to school and create conditions for obtaining basic school or primary professional education.

In 1994, the Kyrgyz Republic ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (further referred to as the Convention) and thus assumed the obligation to introduce its regulations in the national legislation and to guarantee the rights stipulated in the Convention both **economically and socially**. In compliance with the obligations assumed, the Kyrgyz Republic, as a state-participant of the Convention, acknowledges children's right to education. To ensure that citizens exercise this right based on equal opportunities, the state is obliged to:

- a) introduce free and compulsory primary education;
- b) encourage the development of different classes of secondary education both general and professional, ensure its accessibility for all children and undertake necessary measures, such as introducing free education and providing financial aid, if needed. Also, in accordance with Article #28 (section *e*) of the Convention, the Kyrgyz Republic assumed the obligation to undertake measures aimed at promoting regular attendance at schools by pupils and reducing the number of pupils dropping out of school. In recent times the Kyrgyz Republic has presented several state reports about the execution of the undertaken obligations however none of them pointed out specific measures taken to promote regular school attendance and decrease the number of pupils missing classes at school. This problem is not fully covered in the presented reports. So far, Kyrgyzstan has not executed the obligations assumed under the Convention in full and the absence of national documents in this area contradicts the adopted international obligations.

It should be noted that the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic is the foundation for developing mechanisms for implementing obligations undertaken by the country and reflected in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Children's Code. Currently, regulations facilitating the full implementation of these obligations are being developed.

3.2. Socio-economic situation in the country and level of accessibility to quality education

One of the factors significantly influencing the coverage of children with secondary education is **poverty**.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Kyrgyz Republic has experienced severe economic and social problems. It has been more than 15 years since Kyrgyzstan gained independence and only in recent years has the percentage of the population living in poverty fallen, from 50% in 2003 to 47% in 2005, $\frac{3}{4}$ of whom live in rural areas (table #1). The poorest people are the inhabitants of Batken province (60%), followed by Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces (56%). The best situation is in Chui province and Bishkek. Despite positive trends, the number of people living below the official poverty line remains high. It should be noted that the majority of the population suffers from poverty in the transitional period caused by economic destabilization. This form of poverty is temporary, since people experiencing difficulties have the skills and knowledge needed to overcome poverty once the current economic situation in the country has improved. The fall in the number of poor people is an indication that this is already taking place.

Table 1. Correlation between average per capita income and minimum consumer budget per capita in 2005

Regions	Average per capita income, som/month	Minimum consumer budget per capita, som/month	In % of minimum consumer budget
Total in the republic	955.9	1836.6	52.0
Batken province	733	1339.7	54.7
Jalal-Abad province	705.1	1634.3	43.1
Issyk-Kul province	1047.2	1658	63.2
Naryn province	771.8	1443.3	53.5
Osh province	902.5	1561.2	57.8
Talas province	763.7	1437.9	53.1
Chui province	1121.8	1614	69.5
Bishkek	1368.6	2017.8	67.8

Source: KOP/HCCB/ЦРТ. Statistical indicators of the development of the Kyrgyz Republic and its regions - Bishkek 2005 and 2007

Another form of poverty is caused by structural adjustments in the economy (the demand for some professions is falling or has even ceased, while the demand for other professions, including those that did not exist before are emerging). Part of the population suffers from structural poverty² and people cannot adjust to new economic conditions for various reasons including living in areas with high levels of unemployment, lack of necessary knowledge and skills, problems with health, etc. and they could become the permanent poor, unaffected by the economic development of the republic. Children, whose parents are experiencing structural catch ups underachieve or do not study at all. Thus, the level of poverty is an indirect indicator of the implementation of the principle of access to education.

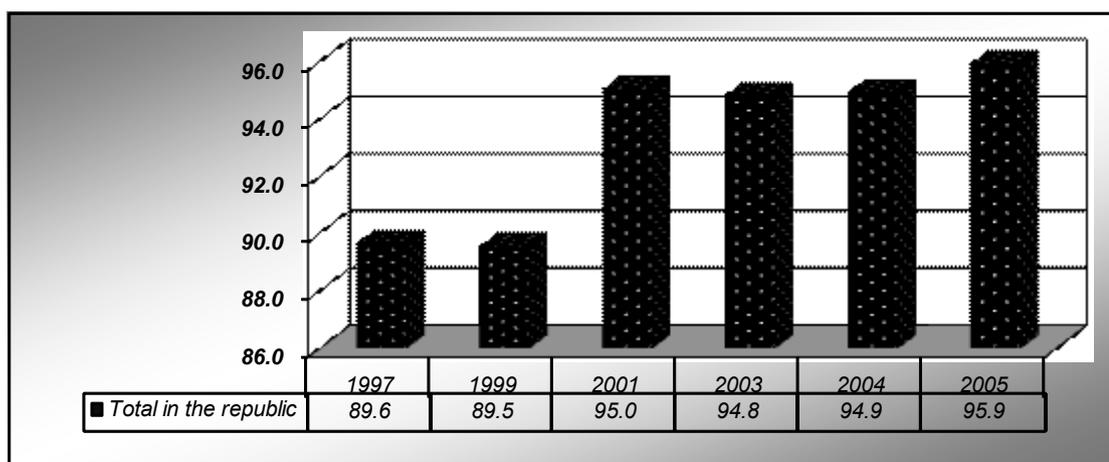
The second factor influencing access to education is **unemployment**. Unemployed parents cannot afford clothing and footwear for their children for a new academic year or buy school supplies and provide balanced nutrition.

Families living in rural areas suffer the most from unemployment and therefore have no, or very low incomes.

In about 30% of families, adults have permanent jobs² and the rest are engaged on their own subsistence farms or temporary seasonal work. If you consider that out of 1317.2 thousand families in Kyrgyzstan, 906.1 thousand have children younger than 17, including 42.7%, or 387 thousand families having three and more children³, it is clear that about 700 thousand children live in families whose income level does not exceed the poverty line. In 2005, this threshold (poverty line) was 9,605 soms a year per capita. In this connection, it should be taken into account that more than 45 thousand children live in one-parent families.

Diagram 1 shows that the number of children not covered by basic (classes 1-9) education fell from 10.4% (100% – 89.6%) in 1997 to 4.0% in 2006 (100% – 96 %).

Diagram 1. Coverage of children with incomplete secondary education (by percentage of the size of the corresponding age group)



Source: KOP/HCCB/ЦРТ. Statistical indicators of development of the Kyrgyz Republic and its regions - Bishkek 2005 and 2007.

It can be calculated that the number of children not covered by nine-year school education is approximately 37.5 thousand³ ($938.1 \text{ thousand people} \cdot 4.0\% / 100 = 37.5 \text{ thousand people}$)[□]. This is a very high number considering that the number of school age children, who should study at basic school, was 988.6 thousand in 2006 or 19.5% of the total population ($(988.6 \text{ thousand} : 5065.8 \text{ thousand population}) \cdot 100 = 19.5\%$).

In the past five years, there has been an overall fall of 8.7 thousand in the average number of pupils studying in daytime general education schools in the Kyrgyz Republic. This trend, along with a falling birth rate, is caused by both external and internal migration (see details in Attachment 1).

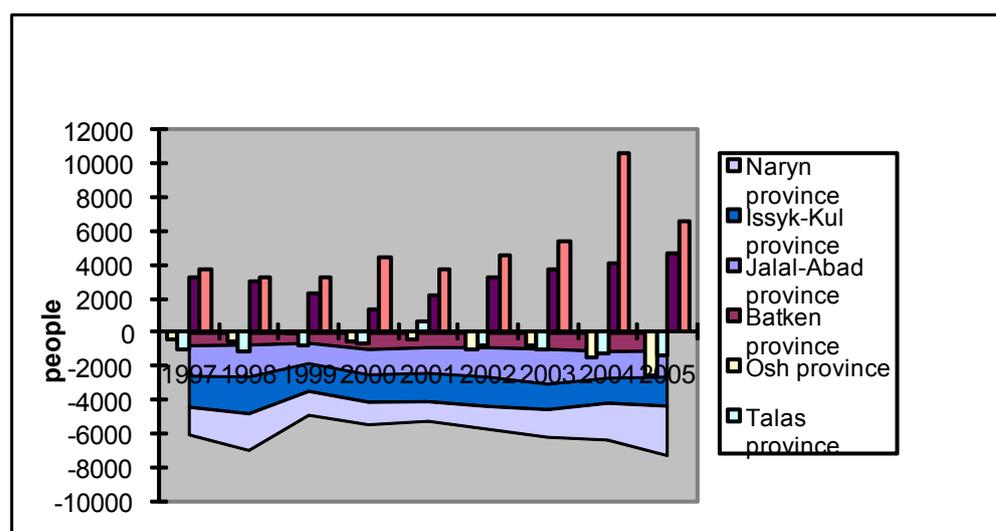
Since 1997, along with the extensive emigration, **internal migration of the population** has been on the rise as well. This has a serious impact on the coverage of children with school education: children often fall out of the educational process due to their parents moving frequently.

Most internal migration is to Bishkek and Chui Province while the other regions are experiencing reductions their populations (diagram 2).

2 The main reason for emerging structural poverty is unemployment caused by alterations in the structure of the country's economy, i.e. related to emerging new economic sectors, changes in production technologies and demands that lead to the need to introduce and adopt new professions and master special skills, knowledge and skills

3 Generation in danger?! Child Poverty in Kyrgyzstan – Bishkek: Applied Research Centre CNIP – Report #15, table 3.

Diagram 2 Internal migration of the population in the KR by region from 1997 to 2005



Source: Demographic Annual - Bishkek 2007

Due to internal migration, the population of Naryn province has fallen by 16 thousand people or 6.5% over the past 10 years, whereas the population of Chui province has increased by almost 28 thousand people or 3.7%. Large-scale migration has also been observed in Jalal-Abad and Issyk-Kul provinces – on average 1.5 thousand people per year. In Talas, Osh, and Batken provinces, annual migration is slightly more than 1 thousand people.

In the past 10 years, 45.5 thousand people or more than 4.5 thousand people per year have migrated to Bishkek, whose population has grown by 5.5% during this period (table 2).

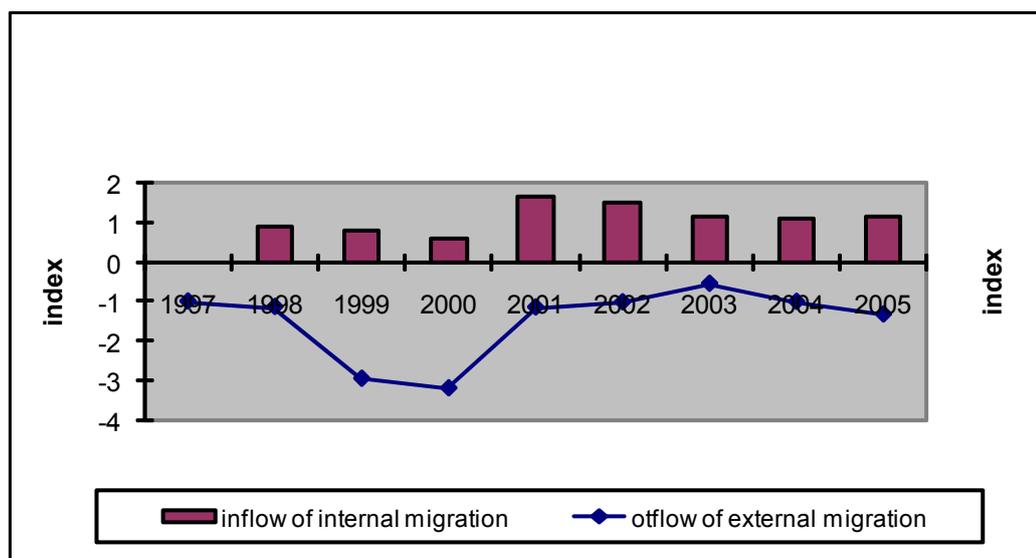
Table 2 Average annual outflow (–) or inflow (+) of school age children as a result of internal migration

Regions	Internal migration			
	Average annual population, thousand people	Average annual outflow (–) or inflow (+)	Coefficient, C	Average annual outflow or inflow of children, people
Osh province	1015.2	–0.975	–0.026	–25
Chui province	753.6	3.6	0.129	464
Naryn province	263	–1.9	–0.195	–371
Issyk-Kul province	425.8	–1.6	–0.101	–162
Talas province	210.6	–1	–0.128	–128
Batken province	406.5	–0.92	–0.061	–56
Jalal-Abad province	934.1	–1.7	–0.049	–84
Bishkek	805.8	6.1	0.204	1247
Osh	251.3	–0.5	–0.054	–27

Internal and external migration has a serious impact on the number of children studying in schools. For example, in the schools of Naryn province, out of 6,661 first formers who went to school in 2002/2003, only 6,062 pupils – or 599 fewer were still at school in 2006/2007.

In Chui province, due to external migration (– 69.152 people) and internal migration (+ 27.829), the population fell by 41.3 thousand people (diagram 3).

Diagram 3 Inflow and outflow of the population in Chui province due to the internal and external migration from 1997 to 2005



Families living in rural areas with high unemployment rates are more exposed to internal migration. These are the so-called ‘families with economic problems’⁴. Most socially disadvantaged segments of the population including children move to Chui province and Bishkek.

The problem is that head counts of school age children, who permanently reside in school catchment areas are conducted in May i.e. at the end of the academic year. Most schools are not interested in registering children who have dropped out or never attended school. However, in this case, they should report children who do not attend classes to higher authorities and attempt to get them back to school⁵.

Thus the problem of access to education was and remains one of the most acute problems of social development in the Kyrgyz Republic. The complicated economic situation in the country and lack of legislative-legal mechanisms ensuring access to secondary education mean that the problem of children dropping out of school continues.

Let us consider in more detail what obstacles children encounter in their efforts to continue education after a long period of absence from school in terms of interaction with parents, schools and communities.

4 ‘Families with economic problems’ – people leaving their places of residence for economic reasons: low standard of living, lack of job opportunities, extreme poverty.

5 Order #619/4 of the Ministry of Education of the KR dated 14.09.2005

4. Obstacles to returning to school after a long period of absence from school

4.1. Socio-economic context

4.1.1. Child and family

As noted above, obstacles to children to returning school can be caused by the social and financial situation of families and the nature of relationships that develop between children and their parents.

In this study, the family is seen as “A social system that is a social institution and a small social group. As a social institution, the family has a whole range of social norms, sanctions and behaviour models governing relationships between spouses, parents, children and other relatives. Social functions of the family reflect the nature of the social needs of family members. Throughout time the most important family functions have been giving birth to and raising children, however, the significance of other functions has been constantly changing”⁶.

The following factors can be used to analyse obstacles to children returning to school after a long absence in the family context:

- the extent of the impact of the family’s financial well-being on the possibility of obtaining education;
- the extent of **parents’ interest in their children getting an education**;
- the extent of parents’ responsibility for their children getting an education.

There are three types of families and each one can affect their children’s access to education: problem-free family⁷, conditionally problem-free family⁸ and problem family (asocial)⁹.

Let us consider each of these family types regarding how they affect their children’s opportunities of getting a second chance at an education. .

As studies have shown, parents even in *relatively problem-free families* often do not pay enough attention to monitoring and controlling school attendance and the learning achievements of their children.

Parents who pay little attention to their child might not suspect that he/she is not going to school. Often parents do not react to warning signs, even if these signs are quite noticeable (“burying one’s head in the sand”). Many parents having to deal with more than just their families’ problems feel much more comfortable living in “selective ignorance” and limiting their control over their child by the standard request to “show me your school report”.

According to the data of the study on problems of urban street youths in Kyrgyzstan conducted by the Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting, one of the main conditions influencing children’s school attendance is control by their parents or caregivers¹⁰. Survey participants were asked to answer the question about their parents or caregivers’ reactions to adolescents missing classes at school.

6 Concise dictionary on sociology/Edited by Gvishiani D.M., Lopin N.I. – Moscow, 1998. – p. 301.

7 *Problem-free family* – a family that has housing regardless of the form of property (owned housing or rented), is complete (has both parents – father and mother) and the parents have work regardless of the stability of earnings (seasonal fluctuations).

8 *Conditionally problem-free family* – a family that has some social problems related to housing, legality of work and earnings and the family’s composition. These are families of forced and work migrants, one-parent families (one parent takes care of the children) and substitute families (parenting functions are carried out not by the biological parents but, for example, grandparents, uncles, distant or close relatives, guardians, foster parents).

9 *Problem family (asocial)* – a family that has substantial social problems and needs help. These are families with parents who are alcoholics or drug addicts who do not have permanent jobs and housing problems.

10 Ilibezova E., Ilibezova L., Chekurov A., Musakojajeva G., Toktosunov R. Problems of Urban Street Youths in Kyrgyzstan. – Bishkek: El-Pikir Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting, 2003 – p. 42

Table 3 Opinions of survey participants about the reaction of parents or caregivers to adolescents missing classes at school

Reactions of parents/caregivers	% of respondents,
Would not say anything	69
Would talk to the child	7
Would punish/physically beat the child	8
Would not find out about it	15
Would go to the school	1
Total	100

The majority of children (69%) believe that their parents/caregivers will not react to them missing classes and 15% believe their parents will never find out about it. Thus, 84% of street children think their parents or caregivers do not care if their children go to school, so they in turn develop a reluctance to go to school. This was confirmed by monitoring study achievements in 2005. The report on the results of this monitoring shows that teachers believe the indifference of their parents (76.1%)¹¹ has a significant negative impact on pupils' performance.

The above-mentioned figures confirm the theories of causal attribution¹²: it is more convenient for parents not to react to problems their children experience in studying and, ultimately, shift their responsibility onto someone else, for example, the school, the state, community, etc.

Taking care of younger siblings while parents are at work might be another significant reason for school non-attendance by children. In Kyrgyzstan, as in other Central Asian countries, large families are considered a form of wealth and enduring value. According to the most recent statistics, the average Kyrgyz family consists of 8-10 members of who 2-3 are adults and the rest are children. The age difference between children is usually 2-3 years on average.

Large families are more common in rural areas and have a high risk of living below the poverty line as the only thing preventing this is parents working long hours at different jobs. This leads to the existing practice of older children raising younger children. Besides, succession and this system of older children taking care of their younger siblings are quite normal and to some extent traditional for Kyrgyz families meaning that older children often have to take care of their younger siblings at the expense of their education.

Children in such families often miss classes for long periods, are late for classes and lag behind in their learning achievements. **This situation can cause a child to drop out of school and not complete his/her education.**

We had a case when a mother strongly forbade her daughter from going to school after she had completed the 7th Form. The girl had to baby-sit her younger sibling at home. The mother worked in the bazaar and the daughter stayed home with the baby. After the 7th Form, she did not come back to school. We tried for two years to get her back and then she moved to Tokmok. We don't know what happened to her after that. (A.S. Samakova, Director of Chkalov Secondary School, Naryn)

¹¹ Monitoring Achievements in Studying: Republican Study on the Quality of Education in Primary Schools – Bishkek: El-Pikir Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting 2005. – p. 67.

¹² Theories of causal attribution (Weiner B., Frieze I., Kukla A., Ageev B.S., Ross L., Nisbett R.K., Munduzbaev) explore how a normal person explains the behaviour patterns of people, links between behaviour and results and correlations between situational and personality variables. According to this theory, people tend to attribute the causes of events in life to either internal characteristics (abilities, motivation, personal inclinations) or external forces (life circumstances, peculiarity of the situation).

Another similar reason for non-attendance or potential risk of dropping out of school is taking care of elderly relatives who have health problems. The typical Kyrgyz family is often an extended three-generation family,¹³ which includes elderly, sick people.

Sometimes a problem-free family can suffer due to a lack of money, so cannot provide the necessary learning supplies, stationery and clothing for children. As a rule, in this case parents might suggest that their children temporarily skip school until the family's situation has improved (for example, "Stay home until we have bought you some warm clothes and shoes"). However, this temporary situation can often become permanent state and get more complicated with accumulated gaps in studying due to not attending school. E. Eversmann, emphasizing the negative role of poverty, stresses that many children feel ashamed to go to school because they are poorly dressed and cannot afford to pay for school textbooks and repairs¹⁴.

Overall, even in a relatively problem-free family, parents often do not pay enough attention to the fact that their children do not go to school, which decreases their motivation to get an education.

All parents are different. There are parents who understand and there are parents who are not keen on teaching their children... they do not understand that their children need to study. They can yell at their children for appearances' sake, while we are there. Therefore, we have to work with parents themselves. At times parents are quite friendly during the first meeting, but are quite the opposite on the second visit: "Why have you come? My child does not want to study, and it's none of your business if he/she goes to school or not". Sometimes, we find ourselves in a practically no-hope situation.

(K. Ryspekov, Acting Head of Department of Education, Naryn)

Thus, the low level of parents' participation in their children's learning process and the shift in relegating education to second place after resolving family problems (taking care of younger children and elderly relatives) are the obstacles faced by children upon returning to school after a long absence. When religious and other beliefs of the family do not match the values nurtured at school, it can become a particular obstacle for children from problem-free families. Parents can promote other values and educate their children in other places than general secondary schools.

Conditionally problem-free families typically have no confidence in the future, especially migrants (internal migration from rural to urban areas), who do not have a permanent residence and have to rent their housing.

This situation does not allow parents to envision how long they will be able to rent housing in a certain area, so soon they will have to look for another place to live and, accordingly, for a new school for their children. This leads to parents sending their children to live with their more prosperous relatives. However, in this case, parents lose control of their children's behaviour. They are not always well informed about their achievements in studying and often cannot respond quickly enough to school requests or their children's anxieties, which sometimes indicate that children have been losing contact with their school or that their behaviour requires immediate correction by their parents.

Children sense their parents' indifference to their schooling and therefore stop valuing education themselves.

Some measures undertaken by families (UNFPA, 2001) to avoid or alleviate the impact of poverty have a negative effect on their children's education. Internal migration from rural to urban areas is

¹³ Extended family – a married couple with children who live with either the husband or wife's relatives

¹⁴ Eversmann E. School Attendance in the Kyrgyz Republic Report for UNICEF Bishkek UNICEF – Bishkek 1999

becoming more important. For example, since 1990, 16% of internal migrants have been people younger than 18, therefore there is a risk that older children of migrants would rather work than go to school¹⁵.

For families of migrants, who do not have stable earnings and permanent housing, boarding schools could become the obvious solution that would help children obtain secondary education. A while ago such boarding schools operated to support children, whose parents had special working conditions due to their professions (for example, shepherds). However, despite the increasing number of general education organizations in general, boarding schools, in which children could both live and study, have been restructured into standard general education schools. As a result, children in migrant families often face difficulties in registering at school and thus follow a typical but forced solution – not to go to school.

Mass internal migration leads to many more unsettled children who are difficult to keep track of as they don't register their change of residence. We accept children without registration then they stop going to school. It turns out that they and their parents have moved. It is impossible to trace them, since such families do not even register with the ayil okmotu. They come, work for a season, make some money and move on
(Z.A.Pak, Deputy Head of Alamedin Rayon Department of Education)

The lack of permanent housing due to families migrating causes difficulties in registering children at school and it must be assumed that children will also experience difficulties in trying to adapt to a new group of children.

Child labour Children from conditionally problem free families are often pressured by their parent to **start working**.

Most parents understand that their children have to study and that hard, physical and that the effect of routine labour (the specific nature of child labour) on immature children's bodies leads to serious consequences, such as becoming chronically ill and having poor prospects in an adulthood. Nevertheless, parents use their children to help them in their work or find them separate work to earn more money to help the family out.

Thus, the study into the scale of child labour in Kyrgyzstan conducted in 2001-2002 with the support of MOT/ИПЕК and the International Confederation of Independent Trade Unions showed that practically all parents want their children to go to school, but, at the same time, they admit that they do not let their children go to school for economic reasons. Most children do not attend school due to financial problems or their family's circumstances. According to the statistics, in Kyrgyzstan, despite the significant coverage of children with school education (97%), the number of school age children who do not go school for various reasons has not fallen.

Table 4. Reasons for school non-attendance according to data of the NSC of the KR

	2000/ 2001	2001/ 2002	2002/ 2003	2003/ 2004	2004/ 2005
Total number of children who do not go to school¹⁶	3516	2512	1717	1344	2559
Including non-attendance for the following reasons:					
Financial problems	201	820	677	350	721
Family circumstances	49	331	239	222	657

¹⁵ Economic Problems of the State Regulation of Internal Migration of the Population UNFPA – Bishkek 2001 – p.17

¹⁶ According to expert, the real number of children not attending school is considerably higher than shown in the official statistics – more than 28 thousand children

Reluctance of parents	1477	294	169	152	217
Unwillingness to study	43	337	250	242	336
Problem family	25	269	152	211	209
Working	28	305	144	53	156
Do not speak the language of teaching (refugees)	7	58	13	10	5
Other reasons	1686	98	73	104	258

According to the data of the “Children who do not go to school in Kyrgyzstan” survey conducted by the El-Pikir Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting in 2007, in 27 schools studied, 14.6% of pupils were absent throughout the academic year. The data presented by school directors indicates that the highest non-attendance rate (83% of all cases) falls in the agricultural season – September-November and April-May.

Along with the traditional causes of child labour, new socio-psychological causes have been appearing that induce and encourage children to work – **the perception of work as a necessary phase in their lives and often as a lifestyle in general.** Working becomes the main priority for such children. Thus, in the conducted survey, 43.5% of working children indicated that they would continue working even if their parents give them money. Furthermore, the early experience of making money by pupils (working children) speeds up their social maturation and awareness of their own value, and accordingly, leads to shifting priorities towards working and helping themselves and their families now, rather than in the vague future. The illusion of “wasting time” at school is also supported by family members and relatives of working children. Their anxiety for his/her future related to not attending school is replaced¹⁷ (a psychological protection mechanism) by pride in their child/ren, who earn/s money at such an early age. At the subconscious level, it inspires confidence: “If my child can make earnings today, he/she will surely be able to do it in the future”. Getting working children back to school is a temporary priority, as the experience of making money leads to the belief that he/she is simply wasting time at school: “Instead of being here and listening to the structure of the internal organs of the earthworm, I could be earning so much money, etc¹⁸”. According to E. Eversmann who conducted studies in Kyrgyzstan in 1999¹⁹, working is the best indicator of school non-attendance. As an example, he describes the situation in Naryn province, where school attendance is higher on average than in other regions of the republic. He believes that thanks to the short agricultural work season and lack of other types of work, children are able to go to school regularly (see Attachment 2 for more details about child labour).

Most working children are adolescents, the age when children are more receptive to the influence of outside factors, which increase the risk of dropping out of school.

Children work because of the breakdown of the educational system and process, which is currently taking place in Kyrgyzstan due to the lack of a clear cause-and-effect relation between “education today – prosperity in the future”. The experience of successful migrants making their livelihood abroad proves and strengthens the belief that education is not necessary in order to have a good and comfortable life. **Parents’ attitudes to the need for education, adopted by their children show that motivation to get education is decreasing, which in turn decreases the responsibility of parents for their children’s education and also shows the shift in priorities towards working.**

17 Replacement – one of the mechanisms of psychological protection (suggested and explained by S.Freud) and the most universal method of getting rid of internal conflict by actively displacing unacceptable motives or unpleasant information from one’s consciousness

18 “Leg in the doorway” Syndrome (Myers D.) – successful experience will stimulate the repetition of this experience

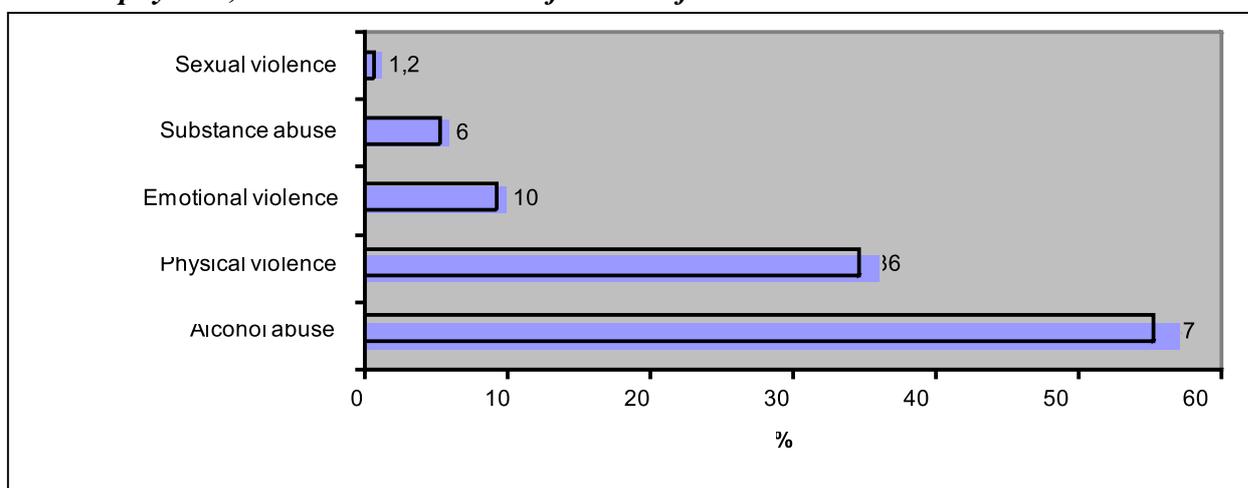
19 E. Eversmann School Attendance in the Kyrgyz Republic/ Report for UNICEF Bishkek/UNICEF – Bishkek 1999

A child raised in a *problem family* constantly witnesses his/her parents' poor behaviour and therefore assumes this behaviour is quite acceptable and worth replicating, since a child copies what happens in his/her immediate environment (family).

A child raised in such a family can become a victim of domestic, physical, sexual, financial and/or other type of violence, which might make it very difficult or impossible for him/her to get an education.

More than half (57%) of the children interviewed in the course of the study on problems of urban street youths in Kyrgyzstan, indicated that there had been problems with excessive alcohol consumption in their families. More than a third of street children (36%) talked about incidents of physical violence (abuse) in their families and 10% mentioned emotional violence. Substance abuse (6%) and sexual violence in families (1%) were less common. Obviously, the last two indicators do not reflect the situation accurately, since the interviewed children were very unwilling to respond to these questions²⁰.

Diagram 4. Problems related to alcohol and substance abuse and emotional, physical, and sexual violence in families of street children



Thus, children from problem families are more commonly engaged in various activities not related to education. Sometimes they resort to begging, pick pocketing and other criminal and quasi-criminal activities.

Overall, analysis of the peculiarities of interactions between a child and his/her parents in the family context shows that the social and financial situation of the family has a direct impact on the child's motivation to getting an education. The situation is aggravated by the decreasing responsibility of parents for their children's education and the devaluation of education in general.

4.1.2. Children and the Community

A community is defined as a group of adults and children, representatives of organizations, institutions and other economic-administrative entities located in the same area as a school.

Other organizations, which in one form or another interact with children and their families or work with minors:

CAM (КДН) – Commission on Affairs of Minors;

IAM (ИДН) – Inspectorate on Affairs of Minors;

FCSD (ОПСД) – Family and Child Support Department

²⁰ Ilibezova E., Ilibezova L., Chekirov A., Musakojaeva G., Toktosunov R. Problems of Urban Street Youths in Kyrgyzstan. – Bishkek: El-Pikir Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting, 2003 – p. 19

LSGB (OMCY) – Local self-government body, in our case - akimiats and ayil okmotus;
 CEC (ДЮЦ) – Children’s Educational Centre;
 NGO (НПО) – non-governmental organizations;
 RSPD (РУСЗ) – Rayon Social Protection Department

It is obvious that those specialists who have relevant skills and competences have to track school non-attendance by children and interact with them, their environment and children’s organizations. Workers of the above-mentioned organizations have to be involved in this work that is aimed at resolving individual problems related to school non-attendance by children but not the whole set of problems and their work is uncoordinated.

Issues related to social protection are addressed at three levels: Social Protection Management Department under the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic, at the institutional level – specialized centres, such as residential homes for the elderly and disabled, psychiatric hospitals, orphanages or rehabilitation and adaptation centres, etc and at the level of ayil okmotu and other self-governance bodies.

There is no doubt that first a child who dropped out of school has to be under the authority of the structures representing local self-government bodies, since it is they who can help a child return to school. Thus, there is one specialist in every Rayon Social Protection Department and a social worker in every ayil okmotu (the official title is “leading social protection specialist of an ayil okmotu”).

Job responsibilities of social workers include the following:

- analysis and assessment of the welfare of the general population;
- issuing social passports and social protection of the population based on them;
- paying certain types of allowances/benefits, such as single monthly allowance, monthly social allowance, ritual benefits on time;
- registering citizens entitled to benefits and issuing entitlement IDs and certificates confirming the right to benefits;
- collecting and analysing information about the number of people entitled to benefits in various categories;
- organizing work on providing services to **lonely, infirm elderly citizens** who need help with household chores (deliveries of food, household goods, hot lunches, and humanitarian aid to their homes, making utility payments, house cleaning, etc);
- dealing with and advising people and writing/receiving letters on issues related to awarding state benefits and allowances and providing targeted social aid.

In addition, in the standard official instructions to local self-government bodies, ayil okmotus and villages of the KR set out in Regulation #91 of the Government of the KR dated 23rd February 2004, the following functions of social workers are stipulated:

- identifying socially problematic and morally unstable families and children from this risk group;
- organizing family support programmes.

This study of the work experience of leading social protection specialists in ayil okmotus allows several conclusions to be drawn:

- the scope of work on social protection assigned to one specialist who serves a population of several thousand people is too great and it is physically impossible to handle so much work;

- there is a lack of coordination of the actions of different organizations involved in solving problems related to returning children to school, which makes the work of local social protection bodies less effective;
- job descriptions are rather vague and unspecific and they are not based on the Regulation about Social Workers. The function of helping children and families obtain education is not included in the job responsibilities of social workers.

So it is rational to raise the question of the need to introduce the position of staff educational social worker in general education schools to work closely with those children who no longer have any links with their schools or are in the risk group, their families and those around them and government and non-government entities. Currently, is done by class teachers who also have to do their jobs, including teaching their own subjects and organizing educational work at school. There was a positive experience of introducing the position of staff social worker in the general education school in Alamedin rayon of Chui province. In some general education schools, the position of school psychologist has been introduced as well. It is often necessary to involve a psychologist to solve problems related to returning children to school, however, only schools in Bishkek have this position. Schools in the other regions of the country do not have this position due to lack of funds. In addition, it is necessary to introduce a position of coordinator on working with children and families under the FCSD who will coordinate the activities of all structures involved in the issues related to school non-attendance by children.

It was necessary to make an effort to get children back to school. Thus, an idea emerged to introduce a position of educational social worker in the staff of each school of our rayon, whose job responsibilities include working with children from socially vulnerable segments of the population. It has led to better links between the ayil omotu, local self-government bodies, schools and the Education Department. The number of children not attending school has fallen in our rayon. The social worker has more time for working with children and parents and undertaking joint efforts with the head of the curriculum department at school

(Z.A. Pak, Deputy Head of Alamedin Rayon Department of Education)

The major obstacle hindering a child's motivation to continue an interrupted education is the lack of public censure of community members towards cases of school non-attendance. Public opinion is no longer a powerful influence on undesirable behaviour by community members. Most of the population firmly believes that a family's problems should concern no one but the family itself. "If my child does not go school, it is a matter of my responsibility as a parent", - many adults in Kyrgyzstan believe.

Besides, 'the adult community'²¹ can directly or indirectly pose the risk of out-of-school activities prevailing over the educational process. According to the concept of L.I. Antsyferova, there are certain patterns in the development process, one of which is defined as 'regress-progress', when progress in one direction means simultaneous regression in another direction.

The other danger posed by the adult community is when initially harmless interests/hobbies grow into dependency. Thus, there is an obvious problem of the growing number of children with computer dependency. It should be noted that according to the available research gaming and Internet clubs are not currently regulated by the respective authorities or state regulations. There are no special organizations engaged in identifying the impact of games played in such clubs on

²¹ *Community of adults* - representatives of organizations, institutions, and other economic-administrative entities located in a common area along with a school. An "adult community" might also include adults who in one way or another contribute to and are involved in the process of the socialization and development of children. For example, sports trainers and instructors, instructors in hobby clubs, coordinators and organizers of children's groups, Internet-clubs, teachers of music and other establishments providing additional education services, librarians of libraries attended by children living in other area-administrative units, etc.

the psychological state of children. There are no restrictions on the time children can spend in these places and as a result, instead of going to school, children sit in front of computers for hours (sometimes they just watch other people play), play various games, including violent ones, visit porn sites, etc. There have been cases when children have started stealing in order to pay for the games. All this leads to the psychological dysfunction of children, contributes to the growth of violence among children and teenagers and corrupts the system of values of young people²².

Children's communities also play a significant role in the formation and socialization of children. At certain times, children's communities can become a referent group²³ for children, i.e. community, whose norms and rules are paramount for its members, compliance with which is the main condition for the 'normal' life of a child, particularly a teenager. Children's communities have specific function (a community operates while there is a goal for its joint activities), spontaneity of education and as a rule, it has a certain hierarchy and its own stratified system²⁴. It may include children living in the neighborhood, regular informal children's formations, teenagers' "hangouts" based on the principle of common out-of-school interests, etc.

Children's communities play a quite significant role as an obstacle to children getting an education, as they are a serious alternative to classmates and sometimes to a family. Usually children's communities make up or rather compensate for those functions, which neither schools nor families (burdened by addictions) can deal with. For example, children's communities can successfully carry out the therapeutic function of the family when it comes to sharing difficulties and problems a child may experience, understanding his/her complexity, approving and praising, kindness and care. As a rule, children who are not controlled by their parents (neglected children) become active members of informal children's formations, which can grow into groups of homeless children supporting themselves as a team on a collective basis. They might also become engaged in socially dangerous activities (theft, robbery, racketeering, violence and inflicting serious physical injuries on members of other informal children's groups).

As an example of solving an identified problem, we can refer to the experiences of other countries. In particular, many British schools have a Connection system aimed at teenagers from 13 to 19 years old. Social workers representing this system employed by schools work individually with each teenager identifying his/her problems and possible ways of solving them. The main goal of this project is to keep a child in the system of education by offering him/her confidential help, protection from peers and sometimes from parents. Very often, social workers have to interact with children's families and accompany children to different centres, constantly maintaining connections. Connection social workers find out about children's problems from children or teachers and advise children and if necessary, their parents and then refer them to relevant centres, where their problems are addressed. Reports on actions taken are submitted to the official centre. In addition, British schools have Attendance Coordinators, who focus on returning children skipping classes back to school. There can be different reasons for school non-attendance: a child is scared, nervous, does not feel comfortable (because of the situation in the family or relationships with peers). The coordinator works with such children at his/her office, giving them assignments although there is no individual form of education as such. When a child does not want to study and go to school at all, the coordinator can go with the child and explain things to his/her parents (by the way, a social worker can visit a family accompanied by a policeman who is always on duty at school). If nothing helps, a school non-attendance case is submitted to court, so the parents can be fined or punished by doing community service (though it happens very rarely).

22 Monitoring Achievements in Studying: Republican Study on the Quality of Education in Primary Schools – Bishkek: El-Pikir Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting 2005 – p. 65

23 The term 'referent group' introduced by Mustafa Sherif, a social psychologist, means the real or conventional commonality that serves as a model for a person and an orientation on norms, opinions, values and assessments in his/her behaviour and self-assessment.

24 Frolov S.S., Nature of Social Groups/Sociology. – M,1998. – p.209

Analysis of obstacles to getting a second chance to continue and complete an education in terms of the socio-economic context shows that the value of education for the majority of the population has fallen due to the low standard of living (poverty) and migration. The shift in priorities to ‘earning money’ has led to:

- **less motivation for children, parents and the community on the whole to get an education;**
- **less responsibility for parents to get their children educated;**
- **lack of effective assistance from social workers in getting children back to school;**

To overcome the existing obstacles, it is necessary:

- **to develop integrated activities aimed at providing targeted support to children from poor families and accordingly changing the system for tracking school attendance by children (see report “Children who do not go school in Kyrgyzstan”);**
- **to strengthen and develop collaboration between schools and the community with the aim of changing the attitudes of parents and the community in general about children getting an education (taking into account the work experience of SOG) and introduce the position of social work teacher;**
- **to help set up the DSCF as a structure that has the capacity to improve the social protection of families and make parents more responsible for their children getting an education.**

4.2. Educational context

School is the primary educational institution that allows pupils to acquire basic knowledge and skills, shapes and socializes their personality and facilitates its harmonic development.

Getting children back into the educational process after they have had long breaks in schooling entails solving issues related to the organisation and content of education and creating a comfortable and friendly communication environment by both teachers and children. Based on the above-mentioned, the following assessment parameters of the capacity of the educational system to give children a second chance to get a secondary education can be singled out, which will enable existing obstacles to be identified:

- preparedness of schools to accept children who have been absent from school for long periods and the possibilities for organizing the educational process to meet children’s needs.
- preparedness of schools to provide educational services based on the needs of children who have had long breaks from studying;
- content of education and professional preparedness of teachers to work with children who return to school after a long period of absence from school;
- willingness of children and teachers to create a favourable communication environment for children who return to school after a long absence.

4.2.1. Preparedness of educational institutions to accept children with long breaks in studying, and possibilities for organizing their education

Despite schools being the only educational institutions offering free compulsory education, schools themselves can become obstacles impeding the access to education for children.

General education organizations in the Kyrgyz Republic can be split into several groups:

1. Schools that have the status of gymnasia/lyceums or have certain specializations
2. Boarding schools, orphanages
3. Schools for mentally and physically challenged children
4. Evening schools

The main educational institutions that can offer learning opportunities for children from the target group of this study are evening schools, daytime general education schools, boarding schools and schools with the status of gymnasia/lyceums or with certain specializations. This study will not focus on educational establishments that target mentally and physically challenged children, since specific activities are required for them.

Let us consider every group of general education establishments from the perspective of their accessibility for children from the target category.

Evening schools. Model Regulations on evening schools²⁵ (based on a shift system) dictate that citizens of any age (working and non-working) can get basic general and secondary (complete) general education and this type of school offers general education programmes of basic and secondary general education that take into account the peculiarities of organising education and a professional programme of primary education.

Evening (shift) general education organizations run two types of curricula - II stage – basic general education; III stage – secondary (complete) general education.

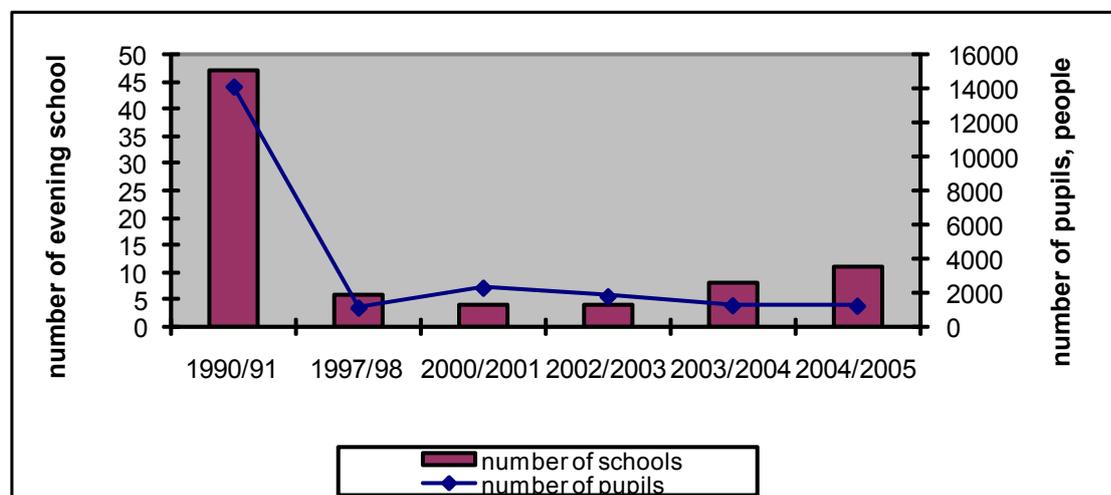
If there are pupils with a lower general education level, primary general education can be organized in these institutions. The content of general education is determined by the educational programmes and curricula that take into account pupils' age, their life and work experience, interests and plans to get further professional education, based on the state educational standards.

General education programmes are offered in the form of full-time and distance learning, as well as studying for an external degree, or a combination of ways of getting an education.

The regulation mentioned above also determines that non-budget funds are to be used as the main source for financing evening (shift) schools. The variety of educational programmes and ways of getting an education makes evening schools the best option for children with long breaks in schooling, since classes are formed based on their educational level and teaching methods are selected aimed at a particular group of children. Furthermore, in such schools children feel more comfortable among their peers, as they are usually in an equal social position.

However, the state has ceased financing evening (shift) schools, which has led to a sharp fall in their quantity (see diagram 5).

Diagram 5. Number of evening (shift) schools and number of pupils from 1990 to 2008



²⁵ Order #376.1 of the MoES dated 24.10.1997

As shown in the diagram, since 1997, the introduction of students or their parents having to pay for education in evening (shift) schools has led to a fall in the number of evening schools, with only four schools functioning²⁶ in 2002 compared to 47 with 14.7 thousand students in 1990. The closing of evening schools is mainly due to the inability of parents to pay for education because in this period family incomes fell and the cost of education rose, which mainly affected children from poor families. From 2005 to 2008, the number of evening schools marginally increased.

With the aim of increasing access to education for children from poor families, full-time and distance learning classes have been opened under daytime general education schools and today, approximately 12 thousand students study in those in Chui province. The average fee for education is about 3.0 thousand soms per year.

There are evening (shift) schools in only three regions of the republic (see table 5).

Table 5. Number of evening (shift) schools and number of students in the 2005/2006 academic year

	Total	including		
		Bishkek	Osh	Jalal-Abad province
<i>Number of evening general education schools, total</i>	15	4	10	1
<i>Number of students, total</i>	3352	1834	1239	259
<i>including girls:</i>	1208	597	1252	131

Source: *Education and Science: Statistical Handbook – Bishkek 2006*

There is one evening school operating in Jalal-Abad province, eight – in Osh, and three – in Bishkek. It is important to note that the mayor's office in Bishkek has allocated about 1.3 million soms per year for evening schools. On average, the cost per evening school student is 2,104 soms per year²⁷ for the Bishkek mayor's office including the cost of salaries of school workers that accounts for 69.9% of the total cost.

Thus, it can be said that making evening schools fee-paying (except for Bishkek) made them practically inaccessible for children with long breaks in schooling.

Orphanages. Support is given to the educational needs of children from the risk group and children with developmental problems in orphanages and boarding schools for orphans and children left without parental care. At present, there are 10 orphanages and 15 boarding schools for children with mental and physical impairments functioning in the country.

Orphanages are state educational institutions housing, raising and educating child orphans and children left without parental care aged from 3 to 17²⁸. The Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic and state management of education bodies in the regions and Bishkek refer child orphans and children left without parental care to state orphanages based on decisions of state administrations and local government bodies in the children's place of residence.

The number of orphanages has almost doubled from 5 in 2002 to 9 in 2008, housing 799 children, three in Issyk-Kul province and two in Bishkek, reflecting the increasing numbers of child orphans and children left without parental care.

26 Education and Science in the Kyrgyz Republic – Bishkek 2008

27 The annual budget of evening schools in Bishkek is 1268.7 thousand soms divided by the number of evening school pupils (603).

28 Regulation #168/1 on orphanages adopted by Order of the MoES dated 3.04.1998,.

Table 6. Dynamics of the number of orphanages in Kyrgyzstan

	1998	2002	2008
Total in the republic	6	5	9- 10 surely???
Jalal-Abad province	1	1	1
Issyk-Kul province	1	1	4
Osh province	1		
Chui province	2	2	2
Batken province	1	1	1
Bishkek			2

Source: *Education and Science: Statistical Handbook –Bishkek 2003,2006, 2008*

Orphanages, which are run under the aegis of the MoES of the KR, are government-funded but there are also orphanages, which are funded from local budget funds (Rakhat Maili-Suu orphanage, Chui boarding school for child orphans). The state allocates an average of 14.3 thousand soms per year to cover the living and educational expenses per orphan. In the 2006 financial year, 23.1 million soms were allocated for the maintenance of orphanages including 8.8 million soms from local budgets.

Since such institutions (orphanages) were designed to meet the needs of a certain category of children, they only partially solve the problem of returning children to school.

Boarding schools. Currently there are 2.183 general education organizations, including 70 boarding schools with 20.6 thousand pupils²⁹ (335 children per organization on average). In the past 10 years from 1997 to 2007, the number of boarding schools increased from 28 to 70, and the number of students doubled, which shows the demand for such general education organizations. Initially boarding schools in the republic educated children, whose parents worked in special conditions (for example, families of shepherds) or children from poor families and were entirely subsidized by the state. During weekends and vacations, children could visit their families. Now boarding schools have been transformed into ordinary general education schools and only a few pupils live in boarding schools, while the majority of them do not stay overnight. Besides, some boarding schools have become lyceums (for example, Makarenko lyceum-boarding school in Kara-Balta) and are no longer accessible for children from vulnerable segments of the population.

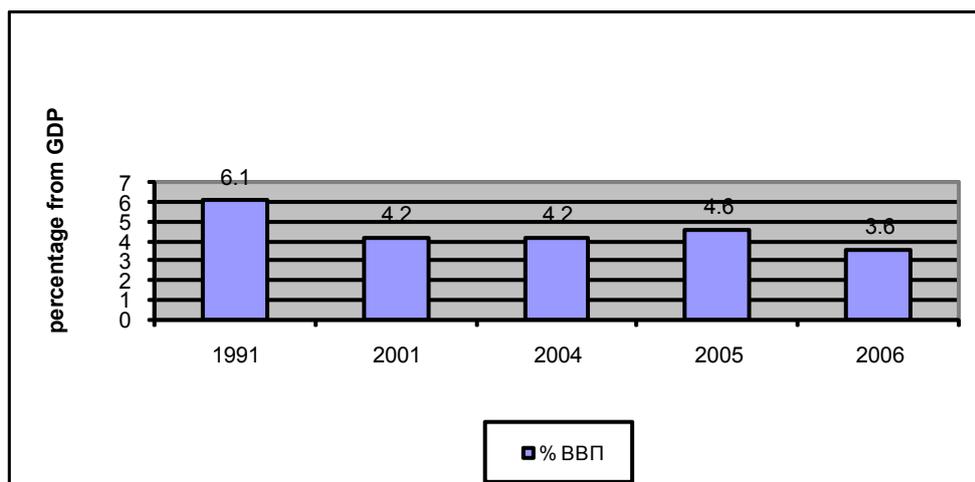
General education schools. In accordance with the Regulation on general education institutions³⁰, the founder establishes certain procedures for admitting children residing in the relevant area to a general education institution for primary general and basic general education. Heads of general education organizations have the right to refuse to accept children from vulnerable segments of the population on the grounds of their being no available places in the institution.

The regulation also determines that general education institutions can provide social aid to children from large and problem families and child orphans. Meanwhile, government-funded the Foundation for General Compulsory Education has been abolished. By using funds allocated by the Foundation, schools could buy school supplies, clothing, and footwear for pupils from vulnerable families so that now underfunded schools cannot now help poor families.

This situation arose because state budget and off-budget funds, funds of founders, parents, sponsors, etc. are used to finance general education institutions and in the past 15 years, state expenditure on the education sector by percentage of GDP has almost halved, which has had a negative impact on the budgets of educational organizations.

²⁹ Education and Science in the Kyrgyz Republic – Bishkek 2008

³⁰ Approved by Order #376/1 of the MoH dated 24.10.1997

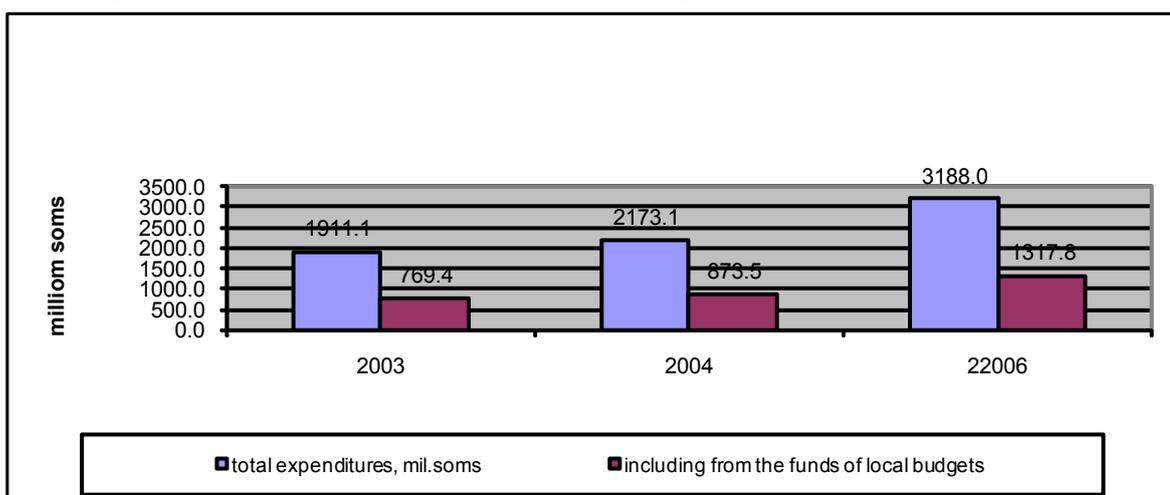
Diagram 6. State expenditure on the education sector in % of GDP

Source: Main socio-economic indicators of the KR 2005, 2007

At the same time, in three years, nominal state expenditure on the Secondary Education Programme has increased by 1.5 times – from 2173.1 million soms in the 2004 financial year to 3188.0 million soms in 2006.

The budget of the Education sector is formed from two sources: local budget funds and republican budget funds. The Law “About the financial-economic base of local self-government bodies” stipulates that expenditure on maintaining municipally-owned educational organizations, should be covered by local budget funds (diagram 7), while expenditures on teachers’ wages and Social Fund deductions should be covered by republican budget funds.

The Central Poverty Alleviation Foundation provides additional funding for the sector. In 2006, 100 million soms were allocated by this Foundation to provide textbooks and 135 million soms for routine maintenance of school buildings. In 2007, funds for providing textbooks and routine maintenance of school buildings were included in the main budget of the sector.

Diagram 7. Financing of general education organizations 2003–2006

Source: Reports on budget implementation for 2003, 2005 and 2006

The percentage of local budget funds in relation to overall expenditure by general education organizations averaged 41.3% in the 2006 financial year. These funds covered expenses on utilities, children’s meals, provision of equipment etc.

More than 70% of budget funds were spent on staff salaries and Social Fund deductions, 11.5% - on utilities and an average of 18.0% of budget funds was spent on other expenditure items (food, purchase of equipment, travel allowances, routine maintenance and capital repairs of buildings, etc). Therefore, there are funds available in schools.

If for example, in Osh province 11.5% and in Issyk-Kul province about 16% of pupils in general education organizations are orphans, children from one-parent and poor families³¹, it is obvious that schools cannot help children in need due to lack of funds and assistance from the government in the form of allocated funds to help children from poor families.

The republic has experience in engaging communities to provide financial aid to children in order to give them an opportunity to resume schooling after breaks related to the difficult financial situation of their families. This is, for example, what has happened to rural education groups (REG) in Naryn province and schools implementing the idea of social partnership. However, involving communities in solving this problem has been done only at local level so far.

In accordance with a Regulation of the Government of the KR, pupils in classes 1-4 are provided with free hot meals. Approximately 380 million soms³² are allocated annually for these purposes. This initiative partially compensates parents' expenditure on children's education, which was more than 600 soms³³ on average in 2005. Providing free meals is a very expensive initiative, therefore this help should become more targeted and aimed at reaching children who are most in need. According to the statistics³⁴, an average 20–25% of pupils in general education schools are children from poor families, a national total of approximately 280 thousand. The 380 million soms allotted annually for free meals for pupils in classes 1-4 are sufficient to provide free meals for all children in classes 1-11 who come from poor families.

On the other hand, the existing system of forming the budget for general education organizations is built in such a way, that schools bear no financial responsibility for having pupils drop out of school during the academic year nor do they have any incentives to organise individual programmes for children who have substantial gaps in studying. Annually about 7 thousand children drop out of school without a valid reason³⁵ however this does not affect the funding level of general education organizations, since school budgets are based on the number of classes, not the number of pupils at school. Therefore, schools are interested in opening as many classes as possible with low numbers of pupils in order to receive additional staff and teaching hours.

General education organizations that have the status of gymnasias or lyceums

124.4 thousand pupils or 11.1% of the total number of pupils study at 176 gymnasias and lyceums in the Kyrgyz Republic, enrollment in which is on a competitive basis and the duration of study in gymnasias is 7 years and in lyceums – 4 years.

Gymnasias are funded from budget allocations and own funds formed from various sources (provision of paid services, voluntary contributions from sponsors, public contributions, etc). Gymnasias also get a 15% premium (markup), while lyceums get a 20% premium for teachers' wages and financial incentives and payments on agreements (contracts).

In addition, each class receives from the state budget 1 teacher's salary for organizing interest sections, clubs, studios, unions and up to 2 teachers' salaries for individual and series of lectures and courses agreed with the highest category specialists.

31 Dynamics of Education Development in Osh and Issyk-Kul provinces 2006

32 National Report of the Kyrgyz Republic on a Mid-term Assessment of Achievements of EFA Goals

33 It included contributions of parents to pay for security guards, cleaners, class 'needs', etc.

34 Reports of area education management bodies

35 Social Trends of the Kyrgyz Republic – Bishkek 2007

Gymnasia and lyceums offer general education schooling and in-depth theoretical and practical study of subjects according to the type of institution. For example, lyceums can specialise in humanitarian, technical, natural science/mathematical, ecological, artistic/literary, aesthetic subjects, sport etc.

As a rule, most children studying in gymnasia and lyceums are children from wealthy families, whose parents can afford to pay for additional educational services. The state covers additional expenditure on maintaining special status schools, taking the place of parents who can afford to contribute to the schools. There are no official statistics on the number of children from socially vulnerable segments of the population, who study at special status schools. Most probably, this is an exception to the rule. Furthermore, according to the statistics, children from vulnerable families 'leave' school earlier.

In accordance with a Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic³⁶, general education institutions can run accelerated learning (catch up) classes, but within the budget funds allocated for school needs. These classes should be set up taking into consideration parents' and pupils' interests and by agreement with the respective educational body, however, the regulations on teaching children in catch up classes and the teaching hour schedule, norms on the number of children in such classes have been developed and approved and no provisions have been made for additional salaries for teachers who will be teaching accelerated learning classes.

The lack of the necessary normative basis is the major factor impeding the opening of accelerated learning (catch up) classes.

It should be noted that children are not always prepared to study in the way offered by schools. In this case, schools aggravate the obstacles encountered by children due to peculiarities of their psychological and physiological conditions. Unfortunately, from this perspective, schools are not always child-friendly.

Another factor complicating the process of obtaining a second chance to continue an education is that in Kyrgyzstan school is **seen as an institution that is in theory free, but costly in reality**. Today, schools burden parents with exorbitant 'voluntary,' but at the same time, enforced contributions, for example, 'initial contribution on entering first grade', 'fee for undergoing testing', 'contribution to the school fund', 'contribution to the class fund', 'payment for cleaning services', 'additional payment to a teacher', 'additional payment for extracurricular activities', etc. Thus, according to the data provided by school directors, parents' contributions cover 39% of the provision of textbooks³⁷. According to the study conducted by the CHIP (Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre), "reducing the state budget on education and shifting the obligation for funding education from the central level to the provinces has led to the situation when schools actively force parents to make various contributions and collect funds for renovations and providing textbooks". This situation is more inherent in urban schools, which have a quite rich and rapidly expanding range of various funds and contributions. Obviously, these financial contributions on their own cannot play a key role in influencing parents' decision to take a child out of school because they cannot pay additional and sometimes unauthorized fees. Nevertheless, as the study conducted in the Kelechek migrant settlement has shown, out of 31 interviewed children, only nine go to school. Other children cannot afford to pay for education (about 300-600 soms per year), textbooks and transportation³⁸. Although, unofficial expenses related to studying at school might not be very

36 Decree #24 of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 20.01.2006 "About Urgent Measures to Improve the Situation of Children in the Kyrgyz Republic".

37 Monitoring Achievements in Studying: Republican Study on the Quality of Education in Primary Schools – Bishkek, El-Pikir: Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting 2005 – p. 66

38 Report on results of the "Study of the Population in Kelechek Migrant Area" Project – Bishkek, SotsEconik Centre for Social and Economic Studies 2005 – p.30

high, many families cannot afford to pay them anyway³⁹. This factor might have a strong impact on the dropout rate, if there are also other concomitant complications with the access to education.

Thus, returning children to school after a long absence is closely linked to overcoming a number of obstacles related to limited opportunities for choosing an educational institution that can provide educational services in a form convenient for children on the one hand and the existing practices of accepting children in different educational institutions and organizing the educational process on the other hand:

- Schools are not interested in accepting children who have gaps in studying (funding is based on the number of classes, but not the number of pupils studying at school);
- Schools do not have the resources (financial, normative/legal) to open accelerated learning classes for children with long breaks in schooling;
- Schools do not get additional budget funds to provide financial aid and free meals to children from socially vulnerable families;
- Schools do not have sufficient budget funds to motivate teachers to work with such children (there is no provision made for bonuses).

4.2.2. Content of education and professional preparedness of teachers for working with children who return to school after a long period of absence from school

On returning to school after long absences children have to be re-assimilated into the educational process. However, this raises a number of obstacles - the gap in basic knowledge between children and their peers, psychological trauma related to studying in a class (age difference, as classmates are usually younger than children who have returned to school after a long absence) and differences in life experiences.

Kemel Boibosunov dropped out of school after completing the 2nd form. According to his age, he should be in the 7th Form and he just wanted to study with his peers. He was offered the 6th Form on the first shift and the 2nd grade on the second shift. He went to school for 2 months and then dropped out again, although everybody treated him well. He just could not catch up with his peers in his studies.

(From the REG study, Akjar village, Naryn province)

According to the study “Children who do not go to school in Kyrgyzstan” conducted by the El-Pikir Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting in 2007, a number of obstacles encountered by children while studying at school are linked to the teaching programme and teaching methodologies:

- School programme is complicated and the child does not understand anything
- School programme is boring and not interesting
- Special education is needed

As was discovered in the course of the above-mentioned study, the problem of getting a quality education in parents’ opinions is also linked to the lack of preschool classes and preschool education courses and heavy workloads on children at school.

These factors are further aggravated if a child did not enter school at the proper time or has a long gap in studying.

Like any other activity, schooling will be successful if it is based on the child’s internal motivation to studying. The lack of such motivation is caused by the discrepancy between existing educational standards, school teaching methodologies and current demands.

³⁹ Child Poverty in the Kyrgyz Republic Report CHIP (1) - Bishkek, 2004 – p.35

The main document that guides teachers in organizing the educational process is the “State Standards of Subject Education in Schools of the Kyrgyz Republic”⁴⁰. An indicator of the professional preparedness of teachers to ensure access to education for children who have breaks in studying is the ability of teachers to take into account children’s individual peculiarities. They must also manage the process of self-learning and self-assessment and adapt the programme material determined by the state standards to the level of children’s knowledge and skills while ensuring it is properly learnt more quickly than normal.

As the main document defining the content of education for different subjects, the State Standard also stipulates the main principles that serve as the basis for the educational process and requirements for professional qualifications but it should be noted that only some subject standards contain guidelines that encourage teachers to take an individual approach to each child. Thus, the standard on mathematics for primary school indicates that “the result of studying is determined not so much by a textbook as by a teacher”, his/her teaching position, teaching methodologies, professionalism, atmosphere created in a class and relations between a teacher and his/her pupils. The main requirement is to create conducive conditions for joint creative work between teachers and pupils. Of course, this guideline sounds rather generalized. However, it could become the foundation for creating appropriate conditions and providing opportunities for children with long breaks in studying to get an education. The secondary school standards contain a special section – ‘Conditions necessary for organizing and implementing the educational process’. However, this section pays more attention to formal indicators of the teacher’s professionalism, such as record of service and professional education than to teaching (see, for example, the ‘Information technology’ Standard p. 105). Besides, this section is not present in all standards. Some standards contain a different section – ‘Concept of teaching the subject’. Thus, for example, it was emphasized in the ‘Concept of teaching mathematics’ that “Effectiveness of teaching mathematics depends on the choice of methodologies and approaches, type of organization and means of education, age features of pupils, their level of preparation in mathematics and their general knowledge and skills. Depending on these factors, a teacher should apply a balanced combination of traditional and innovative educational methodologies...” (see standards on mathematics, p.108). However, these guidelines exist in only some standards and these standards do not provide clear guidelines for teachers regarding the individual oriented teaching approach, characteristics of this approach are not specified and guidelines on the psychological/educational organization of this process are not given.

The situation is aggravated by large classes and a lack of modern assisting teaching aids. If there are more than 25 pupils in the class and a teacher can use only a blackboard and a chalk to explain the material, he/she cannot take into consideration all the requests and individual needs of each child even with the best will in the world. According to the Monitoring of Achievements in Studying Survey conducted by the El-Pikir Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting in 2005, teachers in primary schools are not adequately equipped with methodological manuals and their arsenal of methods of teaching, control and assessment is limited. There is evidence of only an insignificant change in quality in using teaching aids. By 2005, the main teaching aids in schools were still chalk, blackboard and tables hand-made by teachers⁴¹.

Table 7. Use of teaching aids in current practice, %

TEACHING aids	OFTEN	FROM TIME TO TIME	SOMETIMES	NEVER
Blackboard	95.5	11		

40 State Standards of Subject Education in Schools of the Kyrgyz Republic – Bishkek KAE Publishing Centre 2006

41 Monitoring of Achievements in Studying: Republican Study on the Quality of Education in Primary Schools – Bishkek: El-Pikir Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting 2005 – p. 49

Posters/tables	59.1	31.8	4.5	
Models	20.5	40.0	17.0	5.7
Audiotapes	2.3	15.9	22.7	27.3
Videotapes	1.1	8.0	15.9	42.0
Conducting lessons in a park, museum, in the open air	2.3	33.0	42.0	8.0
Educational radio programmes	2.3	5.7	21.6	36.4
Educational TV programmes	3.4	6.8	13.6	42.0
Computers	6.8	-	6.8	54.5
Projectors	3.4	6.8	6.8	45.5
Musical instruments	9.1	23.9	21.6	20.5

With such poor provision of teachers and classes with additional resources, it is impossible to expect high pupil achievements in studying and it is especially difficult to work with children who have substantial gaps in their knowledge.

Professional upgrading courses do not make provision for training teachers in working with children who have a long period of absence from school. There are no corresponding elements in training programmes for trainee teachers in higher education institutions.

Teachers find it hard to work with children who have breaks in schooling: they need to stimulate children's interest in education and acquire skills that will allow them to achieve the same results but in a shorter time than with other pupils who go to school regularly. **These factors indicate that special educational programmes, teaching aids, and special training for teachers are required in order to work effectively with such children. Thus, teachers should be able to help children fill in gaps in their knowledge in classes of accelerated learning (catch up) classes, in a regular class corresponding to the child's age and the level of his/her preparedness and nurture the internal motivation to study.**

4.2.3. Readiness of children and teachers to create a favourable environment for learning

Conflicts between a child and teachers or classmates can become a major reason for children dropping out of school early.

Often children are intolerant of their less successful classmates and those lagging behind in their studies. These attitudes towards classmates are formed in primary school (1-4 classes) influenced by the first teacher who often becomes a decisive authority and total expert for young schoolchildren. If a primary school teacher encourages competitiveness in pupils, emphasizes the success of some children and condemns the lack of success of others, then there will be a clear division of children in this class based on the principle of "We" and "They – Others". During adolescence, the tendency to separate into groups of children increases due to the prevalence of the maximalism of teenagers who do not tolerate "shades of gray" in relationships, only black and white. Leadership among teenagers is usually established based on the criteria of a certain social position (informal leadership, physical strength, connections with authoritative senior pupils, presence of certain material values) but not on the criteria of achievements in studies. Nevertheless, in both cases, an intolerant attitude and verbal aggression towards some groups of pupils in the class can be tough and systematic. As a rule, conflicts between pupils based on social and self-identity are long lasting and can be accompanied by especially cruel relations and treatment of each other.

In my opinion, if a child did not go to school for longer than one term, it would be very hard and even practically impossible to catch up. I cannot talk about more prolonged school non-attendance by a child, for example, 6 months and more because I know of no precedents for their successful return to schooling not because he/she will lag behind in studying but that the class most likely will not accept them. Of course, senior classes are probably more tolerant, but the same cannot be said about junior pupils or teenagers in classes 7-8. Children can mock a poorly performing classmate all the time, make fun of and shame him/her. It is always hard to join such a class.

(K. Ryspekov, acting head of department of education in Naryn)

According to the data of the Study of Problems of Urban Street Youths in Kyrgyzstan conducted by the El-Pikir Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting, one of the main internal reasons for school non-attendance were conflicts with classmates (38% of the total number) and teachers (11% of interviewed children)⁴².

Table 8. Opinions of survey participants regarding reasons for school non-attendance

Reasons for school non-attendance	Number of respondents, %
Teachers are strict/they insult, humiliate me	11
School programme is difficult, I don't understand anything	5
School programme is boring	3
Classmates, children at school mock me	38
Extortion of money, bullying by classmates	2
It is cold at school	2
School is a long away from home	3
Dangerous road	2
Other	1
Total	100

As is evident from the table above, the most common reason for school non-attendance is conflicts between children.

Health, physical and psychological state

Starting from early childhood, children experience extensive psychological, physiological, and moral preparation for studying at school. The transition of children from preschool to school drastically changes the social orientation of children and classes their main activity – playing – as a cognitive skill. The important age characteristic associated with starting school is the attitude towards reality, and loss of spontaneity (Vygotskyi L.S.). In this connection, children can become a source of obstacles to accessibility of education: health and physical condition, work and psychological unreadiness for schooling.

At school, children can experience a number of health problems related to somatic, cognitive, and psychological reasons and become physically ill (migraine, headaches, stomachaches, drowsiness, etc), which can be a child's bodily reaction to a negative impact of the external environment. This

⁴² Ilibezova E., Ilibezova L., Chekirov A., Musakojueva G., Toktosunov R. Problems of Urban Street Youth in Kyrgyzstan. – Bishkek: El-Pikir Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting 2003 – p. 40

negative impact might be formed from such elements as learning conditions not meeting sanitary/hygienic norms; inadequate material/technical equipment and low standard of living of pupils.

According to school curricula physical education of children is given only two academic hours per week, whereas children spend an average of at least 36 academic hours per week at school. Pupils are overloaded with subjects that require constant concentration and attention, a high level of intellectual processes switching from one subject to another and few lessons aimed at the physical development of children. All these factors lead to sudden fatigue, and subsequently, a high level of illness.

Moreover, a child might not feel well because of poor nutrition during the day. For the past two years, there has been a practice of providing primary school children with “the president’s bun” (for example, a cup of tea and a bun) that costs 6 soms. Older children do not enjoy this luxury. Based on the data of the monitoring of achievements in education for 2005, every 20th child goes to school without having breakfast and does not have supper either, and every fifth child (19.8%) does not eat during the day⁴³. This situation can be aggravated by a lack of play and sports grounds in many schools (more than 44%), a lack of access to clean drinking water (36% of schools do not have a water supply system), bad ventilation and poor lighting. Therefore, children become the indirect cause of obstacles, which largely depend on social factors and the state of schools.

Another reason for school non-attendance is psychological discomfort. A child can experience discomfort caused by the perception of oneself as being worse than other children, because he/she cannot master something and does not have the skills required for a pupil of his/her age. Such discomfort is aggravated by the attitudes of classmates, who emphasize their superiority and segregate a poorly performing pupil from the group. The natural reaction of the child to such a situation is either to express aggression verbally or non-verbally (fighting, being rude, proving with fists that he/she is equal to others) or avoids the source of psychological discomfort by dropping out of school once again.

Studying conditions and physical environment that are bad for children’s health

Presenters of the World Bank report highlighted the remoteness of an educational institution from a child’s home as an obstacle encountered by many children when resuming schooling. “It is normal in rural areas for children to have to walk for an hour or more to get to school”. This problem significantly worsens in severe winters, which are typical for mountain regions of Kyrgyzstan. A schoolteacher from Achy says: “In the school I work in, the situation is getting worse and worse... Children come to school from several small villages 5-6 kilometres away, so they spend from half an hour to almost 2 hours on the road. In winter, in freezing cold weather, many children have to stay at home for weeks (and sometimes for months). They simply do not have winter clothing and footwear”⁴⁴. According to the data provided by the El-Pikir Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting on the monitoring of achievements in education, 15.9% of children spend from 35 to 60 min. getting to school⁴⁵. This situation forces some children to drop out of school or, at least, to attend irregularly.

In the same World Bank report another reason for school non-attendance that falls under the criteria ‘environment’ is indicated. It is lack of heating in schools in winter. Classrooms in schools located in the poorest villages often do not have functioning heaters or schools do not have coal and for most of the year school premises remain too cold to provide proper conditions for effective teaching and studying. This problem is most acute in those schools,

43 Monitoring of Achievements in Education: Republican Study on the Quality of Education in Primary Schools – Bishkek: El-Pikir Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting 2005 – p. 67

44 Kyrgyz Republic. Enhancing Pro-poor Growth: World Bank Report #24638-KG 30th September 2003 – p. 116

45 Monitoring of Achievements in Education: Republican Study on the Quality of Education in Primary Schools – Bishkek: El-Pikir Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting 2005. – p. 56

which are located in high mountain regions with poorer inhabitants and more severe climatic conditions⁴⁶.

Besides, school premises are often not safe and healthy for pupils and the majority of schools were built more than half a century ago. In the course of the monitoring conducted by the El-Pikir Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting in 2005, 88 schools were examined, 7 of which were located in remote areas, 19 were urban and 62 were rural schools. These schools were built in different years: 15.7% of schools were built in the period from 1921 to 1942; 20.4% were built in the period from 1954 to 1969 and 23.9% – from 1970 to 1990. Significantly fewer schools (15.9%) were built from 1991 to 2005⁴⁷. School premises are rather dilapidated and require extensive repairs, new communications facilities, roof repairs and rewiring and new sewerage and heating systems.

Furthermore, there is a shortage of basic school supplies in schools: school desks and chairs for pupils, class blackboards and desks and chairs for teachers.

Table 9. Shortage of furniture in primary school classes (%)

type of furniture	condition IN 2001	condition IN 2005
Desks for teachers	-	6.8
Chairs for teachers	1.3	5.7
Chairs for pupils	8.0	13.6
School desks for pupils	7.3	10.2
Class cabinets	4.7	21.6
Blackboards	2	5.7

Source: Data of the *Monitoring of Achievements in Education, 2005*

Many schools, especially urban, have a shortage of classrooms; therefore, children often study in three shifts. The number of toilets in many schools is insufficient and they are not cleaned regularly. Not a single school is fully equipped.

In Kyrgyzstan, more than 10% of schools operate on three shifts and about 82% on two⁴⁸. Many schools are overcrowded and classes have 40-42 pupils instead of the standard 25.

All the above-mentioned factors can have a direct or indirect negative impact on the educational process and accordingly on its results and ultimately lead to the situation when children drop out, lose links with school completely, or lose their desire to resume studying.

4.3. Legislative-legal context

The mechanisms for enforcing the constitutional right of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic to get a school education are stipulated in the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “About Education”, the Standard Regulation “About Educational Institutions” adopted by Order of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of the KR dated 24th October 1997, the Instruction “About Registration Procedures for School Age Children and Teenagers” adopted by Decree of the Government of the KR dated 14th November 1997 and other regulatory legal acts. School education provides children with opportunities to obtain the relevant knowledge and practical skills necessary for them to actively participate in society and serves as the basis for mastering a profession and qualifications (see Attachment 3 for more detailed information on the levels of education and principles of capacity building).

46 Kyrgyz Republic. Kyrgyz Republic. Enhancing Pro-poor Growth: World Bank Report #24638-KG, 30th September 2003 – p. 119

47 Monitoring of Achievements in Education: Republican Study on the Quality of Education in Primary Schools – Bishkek: El-Pikir Centre for Studying Public Opinion and Forecasting 2005 – p. 55

48 See above. – p.56

4.3.1. Admission to a general education school

General education schools accept children aged 6-7 to study in the 1st Form. The duration of studying in each form is not less than one academic year.

Regardless of the form, in order to be accepted at school, parents or caregivers must submit the following documents:

- 1) personal profile of a pupil;
- 2) medical forms # 26, 63;
- 3) copy of a child's birth certificate;
- 4) photograph (for a pupil's personal profile);
- 5) reference from a child's place of residence;
- 6) application from parents to enrol a child in school (based on the sample).

The list of documents for school enrolment is the same for all schools however the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic does not have a single normative/legal document stating what documents are required. Problems can arise with a reference from a child's place of residence as a result of the migration currently taking place in the Kyrgyz Republic (see section 1). A child can move from one place to another with his/her parents and not have a legal address and registration. Under such circumstances, the chances of being admitted to school decrease. A child can actually reside somewhere but might not be legally registered at this address. This situation not only impedes the admission of children to school but also prevents identifying children who miss school in order to provide them with an opportunity to get an education in a general education institution located in the area where they actually reside.

Currently schools in the Kyrgyz Republic are obliged to admit all children for schooling from the assigned residential area. If a child is not registered at least a certificate confirming that this child indeed lives in the supervised area is required from the relevant head of the block. However, unregistered children enrolled in school cannot take textbooks home or can take them only by leaving a deposit – a parent's passport, because families of such children without registrations can often and unexpectedly move from one place to another and it makes it difficult for schools to control the return of teaching materials. Children of immigrants are the main ones who face such obstacles.

Thus, lack of the list of documents for admission to school stipulated by the legislation creates inconvenience and contradictions in practice and makes it possible for authorities to misuse their powers. It is necessary to create an accurate list of documents for school admission. Perhaps, the appropriateness of the requirements for some documents should be revised and accordingly the list of documents needed for admission to school should be developed for every category of children.

The procedure for enrolling children in general education state and municipal institutions is defined by the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "About Education", the Standard Regulation "About Educational Institutions" adopted by the Order of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture of the KR dated 24th October 1997, the Instruction "About Registration Procedures of Children and Teenagers of School Age" adopted by the Decree of the Government of KR dated 14th November 1997 and regulations of general education institutions that should not contradict the legislation of the KR and should be registered at the Ministry of Justice.

All pupils who have completed primary school are accepted for studying on the programmes of general basic education. State secondary schools accept all those who have completed basic school on a free-of-charge basis.

Selective school admission is only allowed for schools with in-depth learning of separate subjects, senior grades in lyceums, gymnasia and other new types of educational institutions (p.43 of the Standard Regulation). The founder (state run public authorities, local self-government bodies) lays down the admission procedure to primary basic general and basic general education institutions, which is applicable to all eligible individuals, who reside in the respective area and have the right to get a general education. Children who do not reside in this area can be denied admission to the institution only on the grounds of insufficient spaces (p. 43 of the Standard Regulation). Since neither the Law “About Education” nor the Standard Regulation make any provision for the admission of children to primary (state) school based on selective admission and they are not allowed on the basis of the principles of obligation, free education and accessibility of basic education.

However, in reality, it often happens that children have to go through a selection process in order to be admitted to a school although it actually contradicts the existing legislation. The analysis of articles of the Standard Regulation about general education institutions confirms the illegality of conducting selective admission. However, neither this nor the possible liability of school officials for organizing such selective admission is mentioned in the Regulation or the Law “About Education”. In fact, schools often conduct selective admission of children when forming their first classes. In many central schools in Bishkek, selective admission is the result of overcrowding. Schools accept children not only from their respective areas but also from other districts; therefore, selective admission enables them to eliminate unregistered children and select better-prepared children.

The number of classes in a general education institution depends on the number of applications from parents and limits imposed by sanitary norms and maximum class numbers (p. 26 of the Standard Regulation). The legal maximum class sizes for general education schools is defined by the document “Methodology for defining minimum standards for budget financing of general education institutions in the Kyrgyz Republic” approved by the Decree of the Government of the KR dated 30th June 2005 as:

- for urban general education institutions – **30 children**
- for rural general education institutions – **25 children**

In accordance with Decree # 404 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 30th September 1995 “About the approval of standard staff numbers of education institutions in the Kyrgyz Republic”, the maximum numbers in classes of general education daytime schools taking into consideration education levels, are:

- **in classes 1–9 – up to 30 children**
- **in classes 10–11 – up to 25 children**

However, many schools exceed these numbers and class sizes can reach 40–45 children and this has a negative effect on the effectiveness of teaching, as schools lack the resources for such numbers of pupils and the level of control over school attendance decreases and some pupils can be missed by teachers. Subsequently, the regular absence of children from classes provides grounds for their expulsion from school, therefore exceeding permitted class numbers contributes to the increasing number of children dropping out of school.

Another big problem leading to dropping out of school is the numerous contributions required – either a one-off when the child is enrolled in the school or daily contributions in the course of studying.

The Regulation about parents’ contributions to general education, preschool and out-of-school institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic (approved by Order #5/1 of the Ministry of Education and

Culture of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 10th January 2002) does not prohibit parents' contributions. However, they should be voluntary with the purpose of improving the material/technical and teaching resources of the educational institution. According to the Regulation, parents' contributions should not be collected from disabled children receiving benefits as individuals with childhood disabilities; child orphans and children living in orphanages and foster families. Benefits (at the rate of 50%) are paid to large families with 5 and more children (under 16) and one-parent families with 1 and more children (under 18) receiving a single monthly allowance. The same benefits are received by parents (legal guardians) of pupils (foster children), who have certificates proving their right to allowances laid down by the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Since education in state and municipal institutions is free of charge, general education institutions do not have the right to demand fees for education. However, at present, schools still collect various contributions from pupils intended for class or school needs in general. Furthermore, contributions in educational system organizations are often collected without issuing receipts, which violates the rules of cash transactions. Since class teachers collect contributions this does not give parents any control over where the funds are spent. In some general education institutions, there have been cases of collecting contributions from migrant children based because they did not reside in the school's catchment area. These violations are caused by the lack of corresponding regulatory-legal acts. However, it should be taken into account that lacking insufficient funding from the state then schools are forced to collect these contributions in order to improve their resources.

It follows from the above-mentioned that a child might drop out of the educational process at enrolment level due to various circumstances: there are no documents, a child's family cannot afford to make 'voluntary' contributions and there are no places available at school.

4.3.2. Registration procedures for school age children

In accordance with the Instruction About Registration Procedures for Children and Adolescents of School Age approved by Decree #667 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 14th November 1997 (further referred to as the Instruction) **with the purpose of ensuring all children and adolescents get a compulsory education, they are registered on registration lists.** These lists include children from **6 to 16** inclusively and in order to plan the numbers of future pupils to be enrolled in the 1st form in a new academic year, lists of 5-year old children are also compiled annually.

School age children are registered by local state administrations and ayil okmotu in collaboration with educational agencies and institutions (p.2 of the Instruction).

In cities, towns, and urban settlements, oversight of the validity of records on children and adolescents aged 5 to 16 included in house registers (and making necessary amendments if needed in the records until August 1st (p. 13 of the Instruction)) is needed following instructions provided by local state administrations, housing management bodies, residential area committees, superintendents of departmental houses and dormitories and police agencies.

Based on the revised lists of housing management bodies and house registers, housing management bodies, superintendents of departmental houses and dormitories, Chairs of Residential Area Committees **compile lists of children aged 6 and 7** and lists of non-studying children of other ages and submit them to local state administrations by no later than August 10th (p. 14 of the Instruction).

In urban areas, lists of housing management bodies and house registers serve as the source for compiling such lists (p.3 of the Instruction).

City (district) state administrations check and systemize lists of children who will be 6 (7) by the 1st of September and separate lists of non-studying children of other ages. In cooperation with departments of education, these children are assigned to general education institutions. By no later than August 15th **lists of children subject to compulsory education in corresponding schools** are submitted to school directors. Main lists of children are held by local state administrations (p.15 of the Instruction).

Directors of general education schools oversee the presence of children and adolescents at schools, identify reasons for their absence and submit lists of children missing school showing the reasons why, to local state administrations by no later than September 5th. Directors must also report those children who attended school but were not on the list submitted by local state administrations. Children's attendance is monitored by verifying the lists obtained from local state administrations and schools' lists of pupils who studied during the last academic year (p.16 of the Instruction).

Local state administrations compile a consolidated report about the number of all 6 (7)-year-old children as at September 1st and children and adolescents aged 6 (7) to 16 who did not come to school at the beginning of the academic year (form РИК N 77) based on the lists of pupils aged 6 (7) who should study at school in the current and ensuing academic years and also based on the information obtained from schools about children and adolescents who did not show up for school. This consolidated report is submitted to the city (district) statistics committee by no later than September 15th (p. 17 of the Instruction).

During the academic year, housing management bodies, superintendents of departmental houses and dormitories, and residential area committees are obliged to report information about all school age children who have just moved into the catchment area to local state administrations. In turn, local state administrations have to report to corresponding departments of education and schools, so that schools can take measures to get these children into the educational process. Local state administrations send reports to schools no later than five days after a child or adolescent has arrived in the catchment area (p. 18 of the Instruction).

In practice, not all schools register children properly and children without a registered residence are not listed and are often denied enrollment. Compulsory August and January registrations are conducted solely by teachers. Representatives of area local self-governance bodies are not involved in organizing or implementing registrations. This process is not under the control of district departments of education. The registration of school age children is often conducted nominally, for appearances' sake: responsible officials tend to show better results and even do not record children without a residence registration. For example, in one of the districts of Bishkek called "Rabochiy Gorodok", the school age children have not been registered at all for the past 1.5 years.

Enrollment in school refused

In accordance with the Standard Regulation about general education institutions approved by the Ministry of Education in 1997, school enrollment can only be refused only on the grounds of lack of places at school, i.e. if classes are completely full. Any other reasons are not valid. In reality, a child might not get into a school because of a lack of required documents, although this is not grounds for refusal stipulated in the legislation. Another reason for rejection is that a child did not pass competitive selection. Exceptions are made only for children residing in the catchment who are provisionally accepted. However, there are no grounds for this in the Law "About Education", since competitive selection can only be conducted in schools with in-depth studies of separate subjects and senior classes of lyceums, gymnasias and other new types of educational institutions.

Thus, there is only nominal registration of school age children and schools are not interested in accepting children who have gaps in studying, as this only leads to problems in reporting, not to mention the need to do labour-intensive work with these children.

4.3.3. Main programme documents of the Kyrgyz Republic in the area of education

In the Kyrgyz Republic, the problem of ensuring quality education and access to education is one of the main priorities and since the republic gained independence, several programmes in the area of education have been adopted.

1. Bilim National Educational Programme (approved by Decree of the President of the KR dated 20th September 1996). This programme provides for benefits for children from poor families, children with disabilities, children who have impaired development, children from problem families and child orphans.

2. Concept for the Development of Education, Science, and Culture in the Kyrgyz Republic (approved by the Decree #487 of the Government of the KR dated 23rd July 1998).

3. Access to Education (Jetkinchek) Programme (approved by Decree #41 of the President of the KR dated 11th February 1999). This programme aims to provide assistance to educational reforms and ensuring access to education and organizing targeted support to protect the right of children to education.

4. State Doctrine of Education in the Kyrgyz Republic (approved by Decree of the President of the KR dated 27th August 2000, further referred to as the Doctrine). The doctrine is based on the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic that guarantees citizens of the country the right to get an education. The state guarantees access to professional secondary special and higher education for all in accordance with their abilities. The doctrine defines the strategy for developing education in the Kyrgyz Republic until 2025 and is the basis for developing programme documents in this area and calls for ensuring Kyrgyz citizens have access to free primary, general secondary and primary professional education.

5. New Generation State Programme on Implementing the Rights of Children in Kyrgyzstan until 2010 (approved by Decree #431 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 14th August 2001). At present, this programme is the main state document and in accordance with the articles of this document, steps are being taken towards realising the rights of children in Kyrgyzstan.

The programme acts on the premise that the basis for state policy in terms of realising children's rights is ensuring the survival, growth and development of children without violating any of their rights. At the same time, the institutional foundation has to take into account the needs of children from both socially problem-free families and children from various 'risk groups'. In the latter case, special attention should be paid to taking preventive and educational measures aimed at children, parents, or caregivers.

The action plan for children from risk groups under this programme includes the following:

- Ensuring opportunities for leisure activities for children by providing additional paid for by Councils of Trustees and school public funds.
- Monitoring accessibility and quality of school education to ensure 100% school attendance by children.
- Introducing a mechanism for providing homeless children with rehabilitation services, access to medical treatment and education and helping them be reunited with their families.
- Registering existing types of jobs and categories of working minors in order to set up an integrated database.

Since the adoption of this programme, several reports about how it is being managed have been presented (for example, see Attachment 4 - data from the report on the implementation of the New Generation State Programme in the Lenin rayon of Bishkek for 2004-2005). The data submitted by officials on the results of the New Generation Programme show the ineffectiveness of measures undertaken to ensure quality education for children who miss school for a long time. This happens despite the fact that this programme clearly stipulates the steps needed to be undertaken to resolve problems of children from socially vulnerable segments of the population and children 'at risk'. At the same time, it is necessary to make amendments in the mechanisms for implementing this programme and improve control by specialized bodies protecting children's rights.

6. National Action Plan on Education for All (approved by Decree #504 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 30th July 2002). One of the goals stipulated in the National Plan is expanding and improving the general upbringing and education of children at an early age, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged children and ensuring that all children, particularly girls, children in difficult situations and children from minority groups, have access to free and compulsory quality primary education by 2015.

Meanwhile, it should be taken into account that adopted state programmes are only guidelines for the state action plan: they support a number of short-term or long-term measures undertaken in some of the areas in practice but do not impose obligations under law.

The main regulations of the reviewed programmes ensure the right to get a free basic education and the right to access other levels of education but only the regulations of the New Generation and Jetkinchek programmes touch on problems related to the coverage of children with school education that consider objective conditions. The reasons for school non-attendance by children vary and so, approaches to ensuring school education for such children should be more specific and differentiated and include an indication of timeframes and persons responsible for implementation, mechanisms and funding sources. Neither of the existing state programmes clearly stipulates that.

Matrices of planned actions, in accordance with regulations of the programmes, are stipulated only in the New Generation State Programme and the National Action Plan on Education for All. However, even the existing matrices of planned actions do not contain actual assignments of tasks for specific agencies and in some cases several state agencies were shown as executors. Furthermore, funding sources were not specified, estimated costs of schools and individuals who will be engaged in resolving various issues were not indicated and expenditure on conducting relevant activities were not calculated.

Overall, the existing programmes are having a positive influence on the Kyrgyz Republic. However, since their adoption, the specific steps towards realising the goals declared in these programmes have not yet been implemented, due to the absence of clear mechanisms for implementing programme regulations (in the form of government decrees, regulations, or amendments to the Law "About Education") and the lack of an effective funding mechanism by the government.

A serious drawback is that adopted regulatory-legal acts do not stipulate specific approaches to solving various problems, so for example, in the Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic "About Protecting and Supporting Children" dated 30 August 2007, the problems related to ensuring the rights of children and actions needed to be undertaken in this area are listed, but there is no indication of whom these actions address and who will be responsible for their implementation. In accordance with this decree, activities to protect and support children should be funded by functional bodies by procuring the required funds, although it is not indicated who exactly

represents these functional bodies. This example shows that adopted regulatory-legal acts do not have supporting elements that reduce the effectiveness of these documents. The ineffectiveness of measures adopted at the legislative level is caused by inadequate funding and allocation of funds from the state budget to implement these measures. Thus, there are practically no funds allotted to implement measures on working with neglected children or helping families overcome crises, no state support to children who leave state institutions or no adequate funding of foster families.

4.3.4. Responsible bodies and persons

In accordance with Decree #657 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 14.11.1997, the responsibility for registering school age children lies with local self-government bodies. However, as has already been mentioned in previous sections, teachers bear the main responsibility for ensuring children get an education.

In August 2006, the Children's Code was adopted in the Kyrgyz Republic. It was, undoubtedly, an important step towards meeting the obligations assumed by the Kyrgyz Republic under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In accordance with the Code, provision was made for the introduction of a new system of specialized bodies to protect the rights and legal interests of children. These bodies include:

- a specially designated body to protection the rights and interests of children under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- a department to support families and children;
- a committee on children's affairs.

Representatives of all the aforementioned bodies have the right of free access to organizations working in the area of protecting the rights and interests of children with the purpose of overseeing their activities and their compliance in observing the rights, freedoms, and legal interests of children (art. 13 of the Children's Code).

The specially designated body under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in the area of protecting the rights and interests of children is the **Department for Protecting the rights of Children under the State Agency for Physical Culture and Sport, Youth Affairs and the Protection of children under the Government of the KR** (further referred to as the Department). To ensure the implementation of state policy in the area of child protection, the Department is to implement the following (within the bounds of its competence):

- coordinate the development and implementation of national and state target programmes in the area of child protection;
- in collaboration with interested government authorities, public associations and organizations, develop and introduce a system of measures aimed at ensuring the protection of the rights and legal interests of children and measures related to raising children, preventing child neglect, juvenile delinquency, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS;
- to generalize practices of applying the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic and analyse the implementation of state policy in the area of child protection;
- to create and ensure the functioning of the database on children left without parental care.

The role of the newly created agency is significant, since as a specialized body, it can identify problems and resolve them more effectively than any other entity. The Department is currently being set up. For the time being, the Department does not have the capacity to implement the imposed functions in full, since an integrated informational database has not been established yet, relevant training of the staff has not been conducted and suitable regulatory legal acts have not been developed.

Family and Child Support Departments (further referred to as FCSD) are created in each district to provide assistance in such areas as:

- prevention of and preventive measures on child delinquency;
- identifying children left without parental care and neglected children whose parents fail to provide proper care and upbringing;
- investigating and assessing the situation of children in crisis situations;
- controlling and monitoring conditions for maintaining, raising and educating children residing in educational institutions, medical institutions, institutions for the social protection of the population and other state-funded similar establishments;
- reviewing applications of children and officials, organizations and citizens regarding violations of the rights and legal interests of children. Initially in the republic, several FCSD were created as pilot projects and now FCSD are being established countrywide in accordance with the Children's Code. The work of FCSDs will lead to better coordination in tracking problems with children and preventing children from dropping out of school.

Committees on Affairs of Minors (further referred to as the CAM) function based on the Regulation About Committees on Affairs of Underage Children (approved by Decree #646 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 3rd November 2000). The main tasks of these committees are:

- organizing work on prevention the neglect of children, juvenile delinquency, referrals of children and adolescents and protecting their rights;
- coordinating efforts of government authorities and District (city) CAM in collaboration with education, social protection, health and internal affairs bodies and the wide participation of the public in identifying and registering children and adolescents without parents, minors with parents or caregivers, who fail to provide proper conditions for raising children, adolescents who have dropped out of school and are not working, adolescents abusing alcohol and drugs and other minors in need of state and public support. In addition, these organizations undertake measures on referring and assigning children to relevant service providers. For instance, transferring minors who did not complete secondary general education school to school with evening or distance classes of education can only be permitted if endorsed by CAM. Once a minor has been transferred to a school with an evening or distance form of education, district (or city) CAM takes measures to get him/her a job.

In accordance with the Children's Code, **Committees on Children's Affairs** will be created (further referred to as CCA) under the following entities:

- district administrations – in corresponding districts;
- executive-administrative bodies of local self-government bodies (mayors' offices, town councils) – in corresponding cities (towns) that are not divided into districts;
- executive-administrative bodies of local self-government bodies (mayors' offices) – in corresponding cities (towns) that are divided into districts.

CCAs will not be permanent working agencies and will function periodically and comprise 1 representative each from internal affairs, education, health, labour and social protection, district administration or executive-administrative bodies of local self-government, and 4 representatives of civil society.

The tasks of the CCAs are:

- approving FCSD decisions concerning a child's future (staying with his/her birth family, being placed with a foster family or in an open or closed institution);
- endorsing FCSD decisions regarding the choice of an adoptive or foster family;
- controlling FCSD activities;
- helping remove a child who has wrongly been placed in an open or closed institution;

- reviewing applications and complaints against and actions of FCSD workers and the quality of services provided for children or violations of children's rights.

The Regulation about CCAs was endorsed by Resolution #285 of the Government of the KR dated 10th June 2008, which will enable CCAs to function properly. Some functions of CAMs were given to FCSDs, while some functions will be implemented by CCAs.

Gaps in the legislation and the restructuring of executive bodies significantly complicate both the admission process to school and returning children to school after a long absence. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt a single legislative document, which will identify groups of children having trouble getting an education. The document should also stipulate approaches to be applied to each group; they, of course, would differ both in terms of admission to school and resuming education after gaps in schooling. Furthermore, this document should impose responsibility on persons (officials) for impeding the education of children or not undertaking relevant measures, although they have an obligation to do so. In accordance with the Children's Code, implementation and control of the execution of the Regulations of this regulatory-legal act should be imposed on the specialized bodies for protecting children's rights within the bounds of their competencies.

Responsible people The system of education is administered by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament) of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, central and regional bodies for the state administration of education of the Kyrgyz Republic and local self-government bodies. The structure of the state administration of the system of education has been developed and approved by the Kyrgyz Government within the range of authorities imposed by the Law. Texts of regulations, rules of internal procedures, as well as lists of authorized government institutions, local self-government bodies and contact information of relevant officials controlling the work of these organizations should be publicly displayed in educational organizations in places accessible to children and parents (or caregivers).

Parents are the main people responsible for educating their children.

Parents (legal guardians) are obliged:

- to create favourable conditions for their children to live and study in, which ensure their children's health, development of their spiritual and physical capacities and form their morals in the family;
- to enroll their children in educational organizations and ensure that they obtain basic general education;
- to cooperate with educational establishments.

Parents can be fined in the event of non-compliance with this regulation under Article 65 of the Code on Administrative Liability. Failure to fulfill the obligations of parents to educate their children can be shown by their neglecting to register their children at school, concealing the fact of having school age children from district state administrations and other factors resulting in children dropping out of school because of their parents' actions.

The Children's Code and the Law "About Education" also stress parents' obligation to raise and educate their children and mention fines for failure to carry out these obligations.

However, in recent years, parents have largely neglected their responsibilities and children from social problem groups studied in this research say they have dropped out of school because of their parents' fault. The number of parents with alcohol and substance abuse problems is increasing and subsequently, their children are more exposed to neglect. In rural areas, early marriages are common and young parents cannot provide the best conditions in which their children can develop properly and give them a quality education because of their age. There have been cases when parents have

deliberately not allowed their children to study at school and forced them to earn money and obstructed actions by teachers and officials to send them back to school. As mentioned earlier, the Administrative Code of the Kyrgyz Republic contains provisions for penalizing parents if they fail to meet their obligations on raising and educating minors. In the neighbouring republics, there are other measures of liability. For example, in Tajikistan, parents have been fined because they forbade their daughter from going to school. The Temurmalik District Court found Khikmatullo Kurbanov and Rakhima Ismatova guilty under Article 164 of the Criminal Code of the Republic that provides for fines for preventing children getting basic compulsory 9-year education. They forbade their daughter Nasiba from going to school after the 6th form and justified their decision by their need to take care of their sick grandfather. The court fined them 5,800 USD, which is about one thousand minimum wages. However, taking into account the distressed financial situation of the family, this was replaced with compulsory labour.

Practice has shown that such measures help reduce the number of children whose parents prevent them from getting an education. Such radical measures should not become a panacea, however and procedures for getting parents to meet their obligations should be revised and more strictly controlled.

Analysis of the regulatory-legislative basis of the Kyrgyz Republic in the area of education from the perspective of making it possible for children to return to school after a long absence shows that:

- Special measures related to returning children to school after a long absence and ensuring suitable conditions for overcoming difficulties that might be experienced by children in adapting to school are not stipulated in the regulatory-legislative acts on education.
- The list of documents needed for the admission of children to school and problems with the documents (for example, loss of a birth certificate, no residency registration, etc) are not regulated.
- Issues related to age barriers encountered by children who have gaps in schooling and ensuring conditions for their successful adaptation at school are not regulated.
- There is no system of expertise in overseeing the interests of children in the process of adopting regulatory legal documents. (Sufficient regulatory legal documents have been adopted in the area of education however, their regulations duplicate and sometimes contradict one other and these documents mainly declare general principles. This situation requires a more in-depth analysis and amendments to a number of regulatory legal acts).
- There is no regulation of activities of internet clubs, which have a negative impact on school attendance by children, their cognitive interests and mental state. It is necessary to regulate this issue by either limiting the age and duration of stay of pupils in these clubs or making computer clubs' owners liable for letting children attend these places (perhaps not only administratively).
- The basic Law "About Education" contains general regulations in the area of basic secondary education. However, it makes no provision for mechanisms of ensuring access to education for children from socially problematic families. To make the whole system more effective, it is necessary to amend the Law "About Education" regarding ensuring accessibility of education for children from 'risk groups'. In addition, it is necessary to adopt a Regulation about ensuring accessibility of education for children from 'risk groups' that would include an effective mechanism ensuring access to education after a long period of absence from school. This task could also be resolved by adopting a separate law on secondary education similar to the adopted Law on Higher Education.

5. Funding of the educational process

The existing funding system of general education organizations does not use budget funds effectively and also limits the flexibility of management at local level, as the system is based on funding expenditures. Schools have no incentives to manage the funds economically, since all funds saved by the end of the year are transferred to the state budget. In fact, all schools are more interested in overstating their expenditures (opening classes with low numbers of pupils, overstating costs on heating and electricity, planning additional expenditures, etc). Heads of general education organizations are forced to set up activities under the stipulated rules. With a mechanism of funding that does not allow financial independence, money is not a management element, as it should be.

It is becoming evident that reforms to the system of education should start with the revision of funding, which will ensure reorganization of the system at other levels.

School funding: the traditional model. Although in the past few years, the funding system of general education institutions has gone through certain changes, overall it has preserved the fundamental characteristics of the pre-reform model, where the main source of funding was the state budget. Allocations from the state budget for maintaining general education organizations are made based on estimates, which are the main planning document establishing the scope, purpose and quarterly distribution of funds allotted from the budget for maintaining general education organizations. Not only are expenditures calculated based on the estimate, but funds are allocated from the budget in the range of approved allocations in the estimate, i.e. heads of educational institutions are provided with very rigid estimates formed from expenditure items, which they are obliged to follow.

Teaching staff salaries In the education system of Kyrgyzstan, the tariff model of salaries for teachers is used that involves the element approach in appraising their work. On the one hand, standard hours (for example, 18 hours per week for teachers of senior grades and 16 hours for teachers of primary grades), numbers (for example, the monthly wage of the school director is set depending on the number of pupils) and services are set and on the other hand, the aggregate of payments (tariff rates, salaries, additional payments, bonuses, etc) is also taken into account. With tariff payments, teachers are paid separately for fulfilling or exceeding the norm and for working conditions and qualifications. Teachers' monthly salaries depend on their education, teaching experience and category. The rates for a teacher's education are divided into four groups: for those with higher education, for those with incomplete higher education, for those with secondary special education and for those with secondary education.

The other indicator of qualifications of educational workers is the teaching record of service. Based on this criterion, teachers are divided into groups: those with no record of service, with 1 year of service, 2 years of service, etc.

Thus, teachers' salaries consist of the main (tariff) and additional (incentive) parts. The level of the organization of work at schools has a decisive influence on the ratio of constituent parts. Where work is poorly organised, in order to get the necessary output from workers, more incentive systems are introduced or bigger bonuses are given. In the system of education of the Kyrgyz Republic, the following types of incentive payments are used – additional payments and bonuses (premiums), which in turn are divided into three groups:

- 1) Incentive payments. The most significant additional payments are paid for: holding more than one specialization (position), doing more than one job – managing the educational office, class management (class teacher), library work (in the absence of a librarian at school), computer maintenance, marking pupils' notebooks, qualifications (for the title of

‘Honoured’, ‘People’s’, methodologist), long-service bonus/benefit, extracurricular sports activities, teaching the Kyrgyz language – working in classes with non-Kyrgyz language of education, working as young specialists with less than 3 years service, etc.

- 2) Additional payments related to the specific character of the job done. These are payments for working in high-altitude and remote areas of the country, working in rural areas, working with children with physically and intellectually impaired children, etc. For example, a bonus (premium) worth 10 to 25% of the monthly wage rate is paid to teaching staff working in boarding schools, special boarding schools and orphanages.
- 3) Additional payments for working conditions: these payments are made to laboratory assistants and junior service staff for working with harmful substances and computers, security guards working night shifts, etc.

The tariff model of salaries used in the education system has its drawbacks and advantages. On the one hand, it rewards level of education, teaching record, and category and this sets a certain guaranteed wage rate for teachers, which depends on the economic situation in the country. On the other hand, teachers’ salaries are not related to their or their general education institution’s work.

Thus, it can be stated that the current legislation makes no provision for additional payments and bonuses (premiums) for school directors and schoolteachers for working with children who require an individual approach to education.

Motivation It is necessary to note that teachers’ support is quite a strong incentive that can make pupils eager to acquire knowledge. However, state general education organizations do not encourage this motivation by financially stimulating their workers for working with ‘difficult’ children since they do not have funds for this purpose (i.e. the state does not allocate funds for such an incentive).

The current legislation makes no provision for bonuses to encourage teaching staff of general education organizations.

Introducing a market mechanism. The situation could be changed radically with the introduction of another way of funding each pupil. The budget funds ‘follow’ each pupil. He/she is the bearer of these funds and a general education organization receives them only when a pupil enrolls. Under these circumstances, organizations would start fighting for every pupil by offering attractive conditions and programmes and competing in the educational services market. This form of funding would not only make it possible to cut the number of children dropping out of school, but also support good quality educational services.

The search for new methods of school funding, which would stimulate not only targeted and efficient use of funds, but also the achievement of most qualitative indicators in education, is one of the specific traits of developing educational systems in a modern society. In recent years the method of school funding based on a formula⁴⁹ is attracting more and more attention. In many countries of the world, financial resources are provided to schools based on calculations for one pupil (per capita financing). As a rule, the main elements of the financing formula are the variables by means of which the funds are calculated: basic education of pupils with ‘normal needs’; expenditure on in-depth studying of subjects; expenditure to cover needs related to the school’s location and additional educational needs of children from socially vulnerable segments of the population.

In Chui province, two pilot projects are currently being implemented: in Issyk-Ata district – the World Bank pilot project under the ‘Rural Education’ project on introducing schools to per capita

⁴⁹ Funding formulae were first developed at the end of the 1960s in the US, Great Britain and Australia and were initially used for programmes that target special categories of schools and pupils, for example, schools for economically disadvantaged segments of the population. Now, this method is used in all schools of many countries for a more fair distribution of financial resources

financing based on minimum standards; and in Tokmok – the USAID pilot project under the PEAKS project on introducing schools to normative (per capita) financing on the basis of the capacity of local budgets. The results of the implementation of these pilot projects and lessons learned will be presented to the Ministry of Education and Science of the KR so that it can decide to scale up the new funding model at republican level in order to address the lack of feasible legal and financial tools to influence negligent parents and their children and the lack of real financial incentives for teachers.

The government and society frequently raise the problem of increasing accessibility and quality of education, but, at the same time, they show no willingness to pay for a high level of accessibility to and high quality of education. It is hard to resolve this problem if state funds are limited. Additional expenditures on the maintenance of special status schools (gymnasias and lyceums) are covered by the state budget funds however these expenditures could be covered by the parents of pupils studying at these schools, who can presumably afford them. At the same time, the state imposed resolving the problems related to children from poor families on schools. Specifically, according to the Regulation on General Education Organizations, schools should provide financial assistance to children from poor families from their own financial resources. The school General Compulsory Education Fund has been abolished and now the state budget does not allocate targeted funds for assisting children from poor families (for purchasing school supplies, footwear and clothing).

In 2006, a Decree⁵⁰ of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic set out the minimum standards for the budget financing of general education organizations based on per capita funding. However, during the process of developing these standards, one of their elements was not considered – additional educational needs of pupils from socially vulnerable segments of the population.

Thus, it is necessary to redistribute the state budget funds within the educational sector in favor of general education organizations to ensure the coverage of children from socially vulnerable segments of the population. It is possible to increase the access to education quickly by creating conditions for motivating teachers and school directors to work with children from vulnerable segments of the population. In the long-term, it seems to be rational to introduce normative (per capita) funding, which would help resolve many problems of the educational system, including the problem of accessibility of education for children from poor families and neglected children.

⁵⁰ Decree #694 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 27.09.2006

6. Cost analysis of children's education in various types of educational organizations

As indicated above, the number of children missing school is around 40 thousand. In 2006, the average number of pupils in a class was 24. If 40 thousand children not getting an education returned to school, the average number of pupils in a class would reach 24.8 but the funding level general education organizations would remain the same if those children were to study in normal classes. However children who dropped out of school or who never went to school require special conditions (studying in small groups based on individual programmes, motivated teaching staff for working with these children). Accordingly, this would require additional funding for general education organizations.

Due to the lack of the necessary normative base (regulations on catch up classes, approved educational plans and programmes, regulations on additional payments, etc), for developing estimates regarding necessary additional funding for educating children who return to school after a long absence, the following conditions are necessary:

- 1) The maximum academic load per pupil – 12 hours a week
- 2) The number of children per group - 8–10 children
- 3) The salaries of teachers working in catch up classes: teaching load – 16 hours per week and an additional payment of 25% of a normal salary related to the specific nature of the work

Under these conditions, the coefficient of increasing expenditure on wages is: $K = 1.406^{51}$.

The calculations do not include expenses on the development and publication of suitable textbooks and teaching aids, purchase of learning equipment and school furniture or fixed costs, the level of which does not depend on the number of pupils (costs of heating, communications, travel allowances, vehicle maintenance, etc). It is assumed that education will be provided in general education organizations in the evenings and at weekends.

Meanwhile, an estimate will be made of the minimum state investment in the re-formed General Compulsory Education Fund of general education schools (see page 52 below) that will be used to provide assistance to children from poor families (purchase of school supplies, footwear, clothing, provision of meals).

The first step in determining the scale of additional funding could be a cost analysis of children's education in different types of general education organizations, as there are substantial differences in the level and breakdown of expenditures for various types of schools. Unfortunately, data on the funding of gymnasia or lyceums is not highlighted separately in reports of financial bodies, but are included in the overall funding total (table 10).

⁵¹ The overall coefficient (index) of increasing expenditures is calculated based on the formula: $K = (18/16) * 1.25 = 1.406$, where: 18 hours – is the norm for the weekly teaching workload; 16 hours – the suggested norm for the weekly teaching workload; 1.25 – 25 % additional payment to the teacher's wage rate for working in correction (catch up) classes

Table 10. Breakdown of state budget expenditure per type of general education organization for the 2006 financial year (million soms)

Region	Including							
	Primary schools		Basic schools		Secondary schools		Boarding schools ⁵²	
	Total, expenditure	Including wages and Social Fund deductions %	Total, expenditure	Including wages and Social Fund deductions, %	Total, expenditure	Including wages and Social Fund deductions, %	Total, expenditure	Including wages and Social Fund deductions, %
Osh province	13.2	79.5	47.8	77.4	547.7	78.3	24.5	50.2
Talas province	0.6	91.7	4.4	79.5	137.2	73.9	11.6	61.2
Batken province	9.5	64.2	4.6	71.7	247.5	79.0	5.2	67.3
Chui province	2.1	90.5	8.9	77.5	480.5	62.1	19.4	34.5
Issyk-Kul province	0.7	85.7	4.2	81.0	277.5	67.8	7.1	46.5
Naryn province	0.9	77.8	0.5	80.0	242.7	81.3	5.0	70.0
Jalal-Abad province	8.5	65.9	24.9	78.7	525.1	77.8	21.2	54.2
Osh			0.9	77.8	122.4	63.9	3.1	48.4
Bishkek			5.2	76.9	361.1	56.2	12.4	36.3
Grand Total	35.5	73.1	101.4	77.7	2941.7	71.4	109.5	49.2

Source: Budget implementation for the 2006 financial year

On average in the country, unit weighting of expenditure on teaching staff wages and Social Fund deductions varies from 77.7% in basic schools to 49.2% in boarding schools, due to the fact that there is practically no funding for other items. For example, insignificant funds were allocated for equipment (3.5 thousand soms), nutrition (19.1 thousand soms), utilities (30.0 thousand soms), other expenditure (15.0 thousand soms) and capital repairs (3.8 thousand soms)⁵³ for primary schools in Talas province in 2006. A similar situation exists in secondary schools: in those regions, where the share of expenditure on wages of teaching staff and deductions to the Social Fund exceeds 80% of budget funds, financing of other items is either non-existent or virtually no funds are allocated (table 11).

Table 11. Breakdown of state budget expenditure on general education organizations for the 2006 financial year (million soms)

Region/province	Total, expenditure	Including					
		Wages and Social Fund deductions		Utilities		Other expenditure items	
		million soms	%	million soms	%	million soms	%
Osh	633.2	488.8	77.2	50.3	7.9	94.1	14.9
Talas	153.7	112.5	73.2	21.2	13.8	20.0	13.0
Batken	266.8	208.5	78.1	17.5	6.6	40.8	15.3

⁵² Excluding boarding schools, which are financed from the republican budget

⁵³ Budget implementation for Talas province for 2006 Central Treasury of the MFKR

Chui	510.9	314.0	61.5	89.8	17.6	107.1	21.0
Issyk-Kul	289.6	195.5	67.5	52.6	18.2	41.5	14.3
Naryn	249.1	201.9	81.1	16.5	6.6	30.7	12.3
Jalal-Abad	596.0	445.0	74.7	47.8	8.0	103.2	17.3
Osh	126.4	80.4	63.6	22.9	18.1	23.1	18.3
Bishkek	378.0	211.5	56.0	50.9	13.5	115.6	30.6
Grand Total	3203.7	2258.1	70.5	369.5	11.5	576.1	18.0

Source: Budget implementation for 2006 reports

An important qualitative indicator of the work of schools is the indicator reflecting expenditure per pupil, as this is a monetary indicator of all school expenditure on education.

The level of expenditure per pupil is affected by the level of funding of general education organizations - i.e. the level of financial resources determined by the budget (republican and local budgets) and the average numbers in classes and the existing system of additional payments and bonuses. In Bishkek, the expenditure indicator was affected by the capacity of local budgets to invest additional funds in the educational system, in Naryn province – by the low average numbers in classes and the existing system of additional payments (for high altitude, record of service, living in a rural area).

Table 12. Average number in classes in the 2005-2006 academic year (people)

Region	Average annual number of pupils, total, thousand pupils	Average annual number of classes	Average numbers of pupils in classes	% of average republican indicator
Osh province	245.5	10018	24.5	102.1
Talas province	50.0	2330	21.5	89.4
Batken province	99.9	4387	22.8	94.9
Chui province	144.9	6477	22.4	93.2
Issyk-Kul province	95.6	4071	23.5	97.9
Naryn province	64.7	2745	23.6	98.2
Jalal-Abad province	230.0	9750	23.6	98.3
Osh	55.2	1904	29.0	120.8
Bishkek	101.4	3635	27.9	116.3
Grand Total	1087.2	45317	24.0	100.0

Source: Reports OSH-1

As previously mentioned, children from vulnerable segments of the population have opportunities to obtain basic general education in one of three types of schools: daytime general education, evening⁵⁴ and ordinary boarding schools. For a comparative analysis, the data on daytime⁵⁵, boarding and evening schools⁵⁶ are tabulated in the cross-tabulation table (table 13).

54 At evening schools in Bishkek only, as in other regions the cost of studying at evening schools is not free of charge

55 Data on secondary, basic and primary state schools

56 Data only on evening schools subsidized by the government in Bishkek

Table 13. Cross-tabulation table of average costs of studying per pupil for 2006 by type of school and region⁵⁷

Indicators	Average in the KR ⁵⁷	For general education organizations				
		Boarding schools		Evening schools	Daytime schools	
		total	Including wages and Social Fund deductions		total	Including wages and Social Fund deductions
Kyrgyz Republic						
– total expenditure, mil. soms	3203.7	105.3	53.8	1.4	2958.1	2222.0
– average annual number of pupils, thousand pupils	1087.2	16.2	16.2	0.6	1070.4	1070.4
– av. cost per pupil, soms	2947	6512	3321	2306	2764	2076
Batken province						
– total expenditure, mil. soms	266.8	5.0	3.5		258.4	203.6
– average annual number of pupils, thousand pupils	99.9	1.4	1.4		98.5	98.5
– av. cost per pupil, soms	2671	3534	2522		2623	2067
Jalal-Abad province						
– total expenditure, mil. soms	596.0	20.4	11.5		542.2	446.1
– average annual number of pupils, thousand pupils	230.0	3.4	3.4		226.6	226.6
– av. Cost per pupil, soms	2591	6068	3384		2393	1969
Issyk-Kul province						
– total expenditure, mil. soms	289.6	7.0	3.3		277.7	191.6
– average annual number of pupils, thousand pupils	95.6	0.6	0.6		95.0	95.0
– av. cost per pupil, soms	30.9	12662	5446		29.3	2017
Naryn province						
– total expenditure, mil. soms	249.1	5.0	3.5		241.6	198.7
– average annual number of pupils, thousand pupils	64.7	2.0	2.0		62.7	62.7
– av. Cost per pupil, soms	3850	2497	1735		3853	3169
Osh province						
– total expenditure, mil. soms	633.2	23.3	12.3		600.6	478.9
– average annual number of pupils, thousand pupils	245.5	1.9	1.9		243.6	243.6
– av. cost per pupil, soms	257	12622	6477		2465	1966
Talas province						
– total expenditure, mil. soms	153.7	10.5	7.1		139.7	105.9
– average annual number of pupils, thousand pupils	50.0	1.2	1.2		48.8	48.8
– av. Cost per pupil, soms	3074	8545	5936		2862	2170
Chui province						
– total expenditure, mil. soms	510.9	18.8	6.6		469.0	309.1
– average annual number of pupils, thousand pupils	144.9	1.6	1.6		143.3	143.3
– av. Cost per pupil, soms	3526	11868	4142		3273	2157
Bishkek						

⁵⁷ Average level of expenditure per pupil in state schools

– total expenditure, mil. soms	378.0	12.3	4.5	1.4	310.4	208.1
– average annual number of pupils, thousand pupils	101.4	2.7	2.7	0.6	98.1	98.1
– av. Cost per pupil, soms	3728	4536	1654	2306	3164	2121
Osh						
– total expenditure, mil. soms	126.4	3.0	1.5		118.6	79.3
– average annual number of pupils, thousand pupils	55.2	1.5	1.5		53.7	53.7
– av. cost per pupil, soms	2290	2075	1000		2209	1476

As shown in the table, the average cost of studying per pupil in the republic is 2.947 soms per year, including wages and deductions to the Social Fund – 2,076 soms or 70.4% of the total value of school funding.

By region cost per pupil varied from 2,290 soms in Osh to 3,850 in Naryn province, i.e. a difference of 1.681. In Naryn province, the cost of studying per pupil exceeds the average republican indicator by 30.7%, with Bishkek second at 3,728 soms, exceeding the average annual level by 26.5%. The lowest cost is in Osh – 2,290 soms annually per pupil.

Cost per pupil also differs by type of general education organization. Thus, in 2006, in boarding schools, the average cost per pupil was 6,512 soms including costs for wages of 3,321 soms. Compared to daytime schools, the cost per pupil studying in evening schools are twice as high, including the cost of wages at 1.6 times higher.

Educating one pupil at evening school costs the Bishkek budget 2,306 soms, whereas in Osh province it will cost parents 3,000 soms.

The additional funding for state budget organizations that is required to allow children from vulnerable segments of the population to study at school after a long period of absence from school will depend on several factors (apart from those conditions, which were mentioned at the beginning of this section):

- 1) Number of children not covered with education (as per regions);
- 2) Share (percentage) of children needing education in accelerated learning (catch up) classes;
- 3) Type of general education organization where the accelerated learning classes will be run (daytime, boarding or evening schools)

The average estimated norms for budget funding (based on 2006 prices) per child studying in catch up classes are given in table 14⁵⁸.

Table 14. Estimated norms of budget financing for the education of one pupil in the catch up class

Indicators	For general education organizations					
	Boarding schools		Evening schools		Daytime schools	
	Total	Including wages and deductions to SF	Total	Including wages and deductions to SF	Total	Including wages and deductions to SF
Kyrgyz Republic						

58 Conditions for children studying in catch up classes: numbers – groups of 8-10, additional payment for teachers – 25% of the wage rate, weekly norm of teachers' workload – 16 hours. The general index of increasing the cost per pupil at the expense of decreasing the class numbers, changes in teachers' salaries equals: $K_y = 1.406 * 2.4 = 3.374$ The general index of decreasing the cost at the expense of decreasing the teaching load per pupil to 12 hours per week equals: $K_c = 12 \text{ hours} / 23.9 \text{ hours} = 0.502$ (23.9 – actual established average teaching load per pupil per week). Then the aggregated index of increasing the cost per pupil will equal $3.374 * 0.502 = 1.687$
Wages and Deductions to the SF costs were calculated based on the formula: $K * \text{actual Wages and Deductions to the SF of 2006} * 1.687$. Other fixed costs – at the level of 2006

– average cost per pupil, soms	7272	5603	3585	2987	4202	3502
Batken province						
– average cost per pupil, soms	5420	4255			4115	3487
Jalal-Abad province						
– average cost per pupil, soms	7367	5709			3920	3322
Issyk-Kul province						
– average cost per pupil, soms	10501	9188			4151	3403
Naryn province						
– average cost per pupil, soms	3606	2927			6148	5346
Osh province						
– average cost per pupil, soms	12545	10928			4046	3317
Talas province						
– average cost per pupil, soms	11317	10015			4466	3661
Chui province						
– average cost per pupil, soms	9300	6988			4549	3639
Bishkek			3585	2987		
– average cost per pupil, soms	4407	2791			4330	3578
Osh						
– average cost per pupil, soms	2400	1687			2108	1687

Thus, the estimated average cost of educating one child in a catch up class in a daytime school will equal 4,200 soms per year, in a boarding school – 7,200 and in an evening school – 3, 600 soms per year.

General Compulsory Education Fund

To support children from vulnerable segments of the population, it is necessary to restore the General Compulsory Education Fund (GCEF) using state budget and donor funds. It is very important that the republican budget becomes the main source for setting up this fund and its value will not depend on local budgets, otherwise, this will put children from vulnerable segments of the population from different regions on unequal footings for receiving assistance but the GCEF can get funds from the local budget, if available.

Using funds allocated by the GCEF, schools will be able to purchase school supplies, clothing and footwear for children from vulnerable segments of the population and also provide free lunches, etc.

There are different ways of forming the General Compulsory Education Fund using state budget funds:

- a) as a percentage deduction from school budgets, for example, 1-3% of the total budget of general education schools;
- b) as a fixed sum per pupil per year, for example 100 soms per pupil per year;
- c) as a fixed sum per pupil from socially vulnerable segments of the population, for example, 300 soms per year.

On average throughout the republic, 10% of pupils in general education organizations, or 130 thousand children, are child orphans, half-orphans, and children from poor families⁵⁹ so in order to set up the General Compulsory Education Fund, it is necessary to allocate approximately 40-50 million soms from the state budget funds annually.

⁵⁹ Dynamics of Education Development in the Regions

7. Conclusions and recommendations

Analysis of various material and data related to education made it possible to identify a number of obstacles encountered by children who return to school after a long absence. These obstacles arise due to socio-economic, legislative/legal and personal factors determined by interactions between children and their families, children and schools and children and society.

1. The first group of obstacles – family related obstacles caused by the financial and social situation of a family and values on which family relationships are based. This group includes:

- Lack of participation in a child's life, showing no interest in a child's achievements (problems) related to schooling by parents: a child, who is deprived of his/her parents' attention and interest in his/her achievements, loses the motivation to study;
- Difficulties adjusting to new classmates and teachers due to frequent changes in place of residence caused by the family's migration;
- Early experience of earning money, rapid social maturation of the child, considers helping his/her parents and family as the main priority, which is caused by the devaluation of education and the shift of priorities towards working;
- Children from problem families have been involved in various types of activities not related to the educational process since early childhood.

The attitude towards education as a life value is formed in the family and if priorities shift and education becomes less important in the family, the child's motivation to get an education and the educational process itself dramatically decreases.

To overcome this group of obstacles, the following should be implemented:

- Conduct purposeful explanatory work with parents (this should be carried out by representatives of structures dealing with social problems and school representatives);
- Amend the regulatory legal base, which would increase the liability of parents for their child's upbringing and getting secondary education.

2. The obstacles encountered by children in the family are aggravated by the indifference of society:

- Society does not condemn families for their children not attending school and shows no interest in children's problems;
- Local self-government bodies and other relevant structures fail to provide adequate assistance due to the low professional level of their employees, who are expected to help children return to school and their lack of motivation for this work and their excessive functional responsibilities;
- There is a lack of coordination in the work of structures engaged in the protection of children's rights and the close collaboration of these structures with schools and families.

The involvement of communities in resolving the problem of returning children to school and removing a number of obstacles that have a social context is linked to developing cooperation between schools and social services. To achieve that, government assistance is necessary to fully establish the system of structures and services that will be engaged in protecting children's rights and advocating for their implementation. The following in particular should be implemented:

- introduce the position of coordinator working with children and families under the FCSD;
- develop regulations on social workers;
- introduce the position of a social teacher at school;
- undertake measures aimed at increasing the level of professional preparedness of specialists in the social field (organising training and publishing information).

To resolve the problem of returning children to school, it is important to remove obstacles children encounter when they decide to resume education. Despite the presence of various classes of education and types of educational institutions, which can create conducive conditions for studying after a long period of absence from school, children face the following:

- the school education system is not capable of meeting the needs of these children: (a) education in evening schools is offered on a paid basis; (b) after obtaining special status and shifting to teaching “visiting’ children, boarding schools have lost their *raison d’etre* – offering education to children from poor families fully paid for by the state; (c) general education organizations lack funding to open accelerated learning (catch up) classes from their available budgets. Moreover, no regulatory documents necessary for establishing such classes (regulations on accelerated learning, catch up classes, hours-schedule, etc) have been developed, there are no educational programmes or educational/methodological aids for working with children, who have long breaks in schooling and teachers are not adequately professionally prepared. Schools do not have social teachers and psychologists. In the Regulation on gymnasia and lyceums, there are no stipulations about working with children from socially vulnerable families. Orphanages accept child orphans and one-parent semi-orphans only;
- Schools are not interested in registering and keeping children, who have breaks in schooling, due to specific aspects of funding;
- Schools do not have the resources to motivate teachers to work with children who have breaks in schooling;
- Schools are not able to provide material assistance to children in need from their internal funds and do not involve communities in addressing this problem;
- Children are not always friendly to their classmates who return to school after long absences, which often cause returning children to develop complexes.

In terms of the specific educational obstacles facing children, it would be rational to undertake the following actions:

- Develop regulatory acts that make it possible to establish accelerated learning (catch up) classes in general education schools;
- Develop programmes for accelerated learning (catch up) classes;
- Conduct training seminars for teachers as part of professional upgrading courses aimed at preparing teachers to work in accelerated learning classes and creating a child-friendly environment in schools.
- Develop recommendations to introduce amendments to the content of teacher training programmes in higher education institutions on how to work with children, who have long breaks in schooling.
- Help schools establish and expand social partnerships with social protection bodies and organizations involved in protecting children’s rights.
- Develop mechanisms for introducing per capita funding that would motivate teachers to work with children, who need help in overcoming gaps in studying and increase the interest of schools in tracking children missing classes and their involvement in the educational process.

Improving the legislation should ensure the successful implementation of the proposed solutions, such as:

- It is necessary to stipulate mechanisms of access to education for children, who have breaks in studying due to various reasons, in the Law of KR ‘About Education’.
- Develop regulations regulating issues concerning children’s admission to schools considering their age and their level of preparedness for studying.

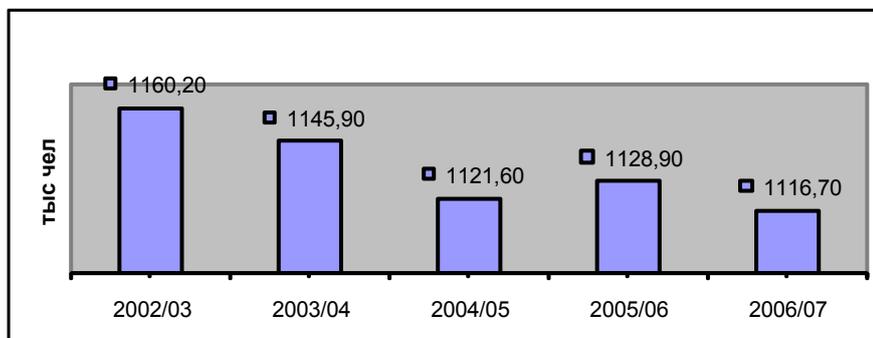
- Develop regulatory documents that will make it possible to designate specific functional bodies that will assume liability for the implementation of undertaken measures.
- Develop regulatory-legal acts giving expert assessments of government decisions, which are being adopted regarding working with this targeted group of children.
- Pass legislation regulating computer clubs and other entertainment venues.

8. Attachments

ATTACHMENT 1

Apart from the increasing number of children missing school, two factors have a substantial impact on changes in the total number of pupils: falling birth rates and external migration.

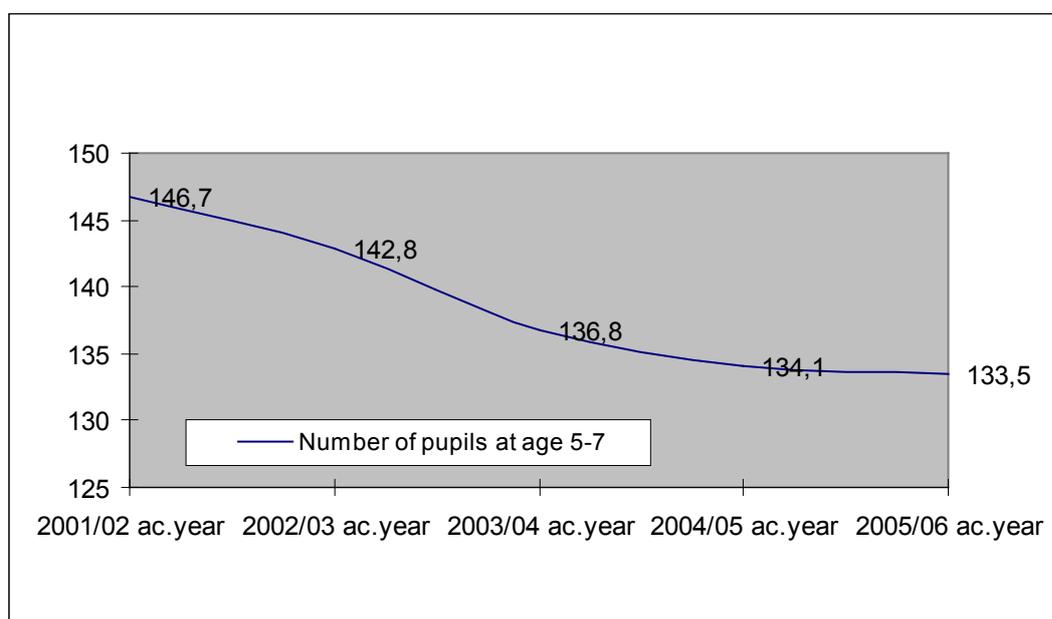
Diagram 1. Number of pupils at the beginning of the academic year



Source: *Statistical Handbooks of the MoES of the KR*

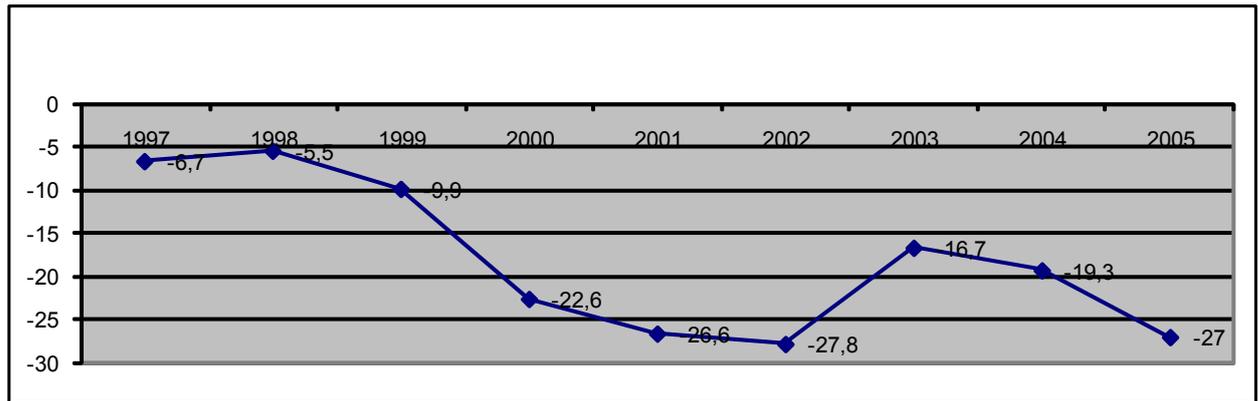
From 2001 to 2006, there has been a sharp fall in children aged 5-7 of 13,200 due to the falling birth rate.

Diagram 2. Number of children aged 5-7 from 2001 to 2006



Source: *Education and Science. Statistical Handbook – Bishkek 2006*

The external migration has a significant impact on changes in the total quantity of the republic's population and accordingly on changes in the quantity of school age children. Since 1990s, the migration process had been intense, then it was somewhat stabilized in the period from 2003 to 2004, but since 2005, the migration outflow of the population of the country has increased again (diagram 3).

Diagram 3. Emigration of the population of the KR from 1997 to 2005

Source: Demographic Yearbook – Bishkek 2001, 2006, 2007

The extent of emigration varies and is expressed as the number of emigrants per 1,000 people of the permanent population.

In five years from 2001 to 2005, 21.5 thousand people migrated to the republic and 138.9 thousand people emigrated, a net outflow of 117.4 thousand people. The highest incidence of emigration is in Chui province (see table 1). In just the past three years, the emigration coefficient has increased by 33.6% to 13.2 in 2005. It means that approximately 14 people per 1000 in Chui province leave the country annually. Bishkek comes second with approximately 9 per people out of 1,000 moving abroad annually. The lowest coefficient is in Naryn province: 1 person per 1,000 compared with the average republican indicator of approximately 6 people per 1,000.

Considering that the share of children aged 5-18 (1345.2 thousand) in the total permanent population of Kyrgyzstan is 26.5%, it could be stated that in the past five years, the number of school age children has fallen by 31.0 thousand ($117.0 \cdot 0.265 = 31.0$ thousand) due to emigration.

Table 1. Intensity of emigration from 2003 to 2005

	Region	Average annual population, thousand people	2003		2004		2005	
			Migration outflow, people	Coefficient of the intensity of emigration, %	Emigration, people	Coefficient of the intensity of emigration, %	Emigration, people	Coefficient of the intensity of emigration, %
1	Osh province	1015.2	1185	1.17	839	0.83	1803	1.78
2	Chui province	753.6	7463	9.90	7519	9.98	9975	13.23
3	Naryn province	263.0	39	0.15	71	0.27	181	0.68
4	Issyk-Kul province	425.8	941	2.20	1082	2.54	1475	3.46
5	Talas province	210.6	778	3.69	909	4.32	900	4.27
6	Batken province	406.5	383	0.94	571	1.41	1335	3.28
7	Jalal-Abad province	934.1	1142	1.22	1647	1.76	2480	2.65
8	Bishkek	805.8	4795	5.95	5617	6.97	7157	8.88
9	Osh	251.3	-		1068	4.25	1674	6.66
	Nationally	5065.8	16700	3.30	19300	3.81	27000	5.33

Source: Demographic Yearbook – Bishkek 2006

ATTACHMENT 2

The situational analysis of child labour in the Kyrgyz Republic based on studies conducted in 2001-2002 with the support of MOT/ИПЕК and the International Confederation of Independent Trade Unions has shown that Kyrgyz children primarily work in the main work areas of the adult population – trade, service provision, agriculture and domestic work.

Table 2. Main types of work, in which children are engaged (%)

Types of work	Sample point				Total % of children engaged in each type of work nationally
	Bishkek	Osh	Naryn	Kara-Suu	
Trade	23.8	48.1	49.0	26.0	32.4
Transportation, unloading and loading of merchandise	17.2	5.8	16.3	12.0	13.7
Collecting items (aluminum, bottles)	8.1	8.3	2.0	18.0	8.5
Auxiliary works	9.9	12.8	12.2	12.0	11.0
Begging	10.5	0.6	4.1	12.0	7.5
Shoe cleaning and repair	8.1	7.1	4.1		6.8
Car washing	8.7	3.2	2.0		6.0
Working 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

Most child labour is used in agriculture – growing and harvesting tobacco, rice, and cotton. According to the data of the Trade Union Central Committee of Agricultural Workers of the Kyrgyz Republic, an average of 125 thousand children are engaged in agricultural work annually in Jalal-Abad province alone.

The majority of working children in Osh and Kara-Suu are adolescents aged 9-13 mainly involved in trade, transportation of goods, collecting nonferrous metal, working as servants, auxiliary workers in cafes and construction sites⁶⁰. At this age, they are most exposed to the influence of external factors, which increases the risk of dropping out of the educational process.

ATTACHMENT 3

The system of educational programmes in the Kyrgyz Republic is established in the following way (article 11 of the Law “About Education”):

General education programme	Professional programme
Preschool education (6 months – 7 years old)	Primary professional education
Primary general education (Classes 1–4)	Secondary professional education
Basic general education (Classes 5–9)	3. Higher professional education
Secondary general education (Classes 10–11)	4. Graduate (послевузовское) professional education
Additional education	5. Additional professional education

The most important principles of the educational organization are:

- Systematic approach and continuity of the educational process;

⁶⁰ Data taken from the official website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the KR www.mlsp.kg

- Accessibility of secondary education, correspondence of the educational system with levels and peculiarities of pupils' development and preparation (article 4 of the Law "About Education").

The main normative legal document of school education that is mandatory for all types and kinds of general education organizations regardless of the form of property and departmental subordination is the State Educational Standard of School Education of the Kyrgyz Republic (approved by Decree #554 of the Government dated 23rd July 2004).

The State Standard establishes the:

- structure of school education;
- structure of the state educational standards on subjects (further – standard on subjects);
- content of the main general education programmes;
- basic school curriculum;
- scope of pupils' course load;
- conditions for implementing the state educational standards;
- documents on education based on the state standard;
- procedure for implementing state control of the observation of the state educational standards;
- responsibility of education management bodies and general education organizations, local state administrations, and local self-government bodies for implementing the state educational standards.

School education is implemented based on a three-level continuous system.

- First level – primary general education. Normative period of education – 4 years (classes 1-4)
- Second level – basic general education. Normative period of education – 5 years (classes 5-9)
- Third level – secondary general education. Normative period of education – 2 years (classes 10-11)

Education in primary general and basic general schools is compulsory for all citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic and is free in state and municipal educational institutions. The State guarantees the right of citizens to get free general secondary education at the level corresponding to the requirements of the state educational standards.

ATTACHMENT 4

There are 47 educational institutions⁶¹ in the Lenin district of Bishkek:

- 23 general education schools;
- 1 primary school (#84);
- 1 secondary school (#22);
- 1 evening school (IIPM #10);
- 3 out-of-school institutions (SYT – Station of Young Technicians, CAC – Children's Art Centre, ORSSCA – Olympic Reserve Sports School for Children/Adolescents);
- 18 preschool institutions (17 – functioning, preschool institution #26 is currently being renovated)

4 schools with the special status included in the number of general education schools:

- Educational complex #9;
- Lyceum #13;
- Gymnasium #68;

⁶¹ Information of the mayor office of Bishkek city on the issues related to the prevention of homelessness, delinquency, and crime among minors, as well as the realization of the State Programme "New Generation": data for 2004-2005.

- Lyceum #74.

On 05.09.2004, 31,345 pupils were present at schools in the district – in 989 budget classes and 85 classes offering paid services (1,611 pupils). On 01.02.2005, 30,102 pupils were studying at schools in the district. Children and school age adolescents are registered 3 times a year (August, January and May) at all schools in the district. According to the registration data for August 2003, there were 20,420 children living in the Lenin district, 39 of whom were not going to school. According to the registration data for August 2004, there were only 19,203 children living in the Lenin district, of whom 6 children from 5 families were not going to school. Based on the data of the district's January 2005 registration, there were 19,423 school age children living in the Lenin district of who only 12,062 were studying at schools in this district. 11 children who had dropped out of schools were identified (1 child from school #9; 1 child from school #25; 2 children from school #31; 3 children from school #47; 1 child from school #58; 1 child from school #80; 2 children from school #82). The results of the January registration were discussed at the meeting of directors of general education schools in the Education Centre.

Plans to prevent the expulsion of school age children and plans on specific actions concerning truant children have been developed in each school. 33 children returned to school in the period from September 1st 2003 (39 children were not going to school) to September 1st 2004 (6 children were not going to school). According to the May registration, 14 children and adolescents dropped out of school; 7 children returned to school or received assistance in getting a job.

Preventive measures among minors are being conducted in every general education institution: this issue is discussed at staff and parents' meetings and after school ('class hour') meetings for pupils. Schools develop work plans to prevent delinquency, joint plans with ИДН, and plans on working with 'difficult' pupils. There are special registration cards, which track discussions held with these children. The "Teenager", "Basement", "Bazaar", and "Network Games" inspections are conducted according to a specific plan. In total, 25 inspections were conducted; 75 families of children from the 'risk groups' from 26 district schools were visited.

In order to prevent delinquency and homelessness among minors the Lenin Education Centre works with the "Generation" Support Centre, Children's Protection Centre and other NGOs and during the reporting period, the "Generation" Support Centre conducted a series of measures to prevent delinquency among pupils of the secondary schools #77 and 42.

The programme of preventive measures includes:

- Individual work with children and adolescents
- Consultations with psychologists
- Organizing alternative leisure activities
- Working with Arts Centres and other organizations
- Protecting the rights and interests of children

In the above-mentioned schools, this programme covered 37 pupils registered in ИДН and internal school registers. Correctional lessons under the "Strengthening the Potential of Adolescents" Programme were conducted for these pupils – in total 6 sessions. Each session included 2-4 lessons on the following problems:

- Diagnosing a pupil's personality
- Consequences of negative behaviour
- Self-knowledge
- Confident behaviour
- Decision making
- Norms and laws of the Kyrgyz Republic relating to minors

List of regulatory-legal acts and state programmes used

1. Constitution of the KR
2. Administrative Code of the KR
3. Law # 92 “About Education” dated 30th April 2003,
4. Law # 9 About the Status of Teachers dated 14th January 2001,
5. Law #129 of the Kyrgyz Republic “About Primary Professional Education” dated 26th November 1999,
6. Children’s Code
7. DP# 102 on the Review of the Bilim National Educational Programme dated 20th March 1996,
8. DP #41 on the Main focus areas of the Access to Education (Jetkinchek) Programme dated 11th February 1999,
9. DP #431 on the New Generation State Programme on the Implementation of Children’s rights in Kyrgyzstan until 2010 dated 14th August 2001,
10. State Standards on Subject Education in Schools of the Kyrgyz Republic Bishkek: KAE Publishing Centre 2006
11. DP #259 on the Concept of Education Development in the Kyrgyz Republic until 2010 dated 29th April 2002,
12. DP #504 on the National Action Plan on Education for All dated 30th July 2002,
13. DP #173 on the Kyrgyzstan Jashtary National Programme for 2006–2008 dated 14th April 2006
14. DP #173 on the Concept of the Development of State Youth Policy in the Kyrgyz Republic until 2010 dated 14th April 2006,
15. DP #244 on the State Doctrine of Education in the Kyrgyz Republic dated 27th August 2000
16. Instruction “About Procedures for Registering School Age Children and Adolescents”
17. “Ayil Mectebi” (“Rural School”) Integrated Programme dated 20th August 2003, #534
18. Methodology for defining minimum standards for budget funding of general education institutions in the Kyrgyz Republic
19. Decree , #478 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic “About the Formation of the Committee on the Affairs of Minors” dated 8th July 1994
20. Regulations on Committees on the Affairs of Minors
21. Regulations about obtaining school education in the form of external degrees in general education organizations of the Kyrgyz Republic
22. Regulations on evening (shift) general education institutions
23. Regulations on the participation of parents in providing support to the material-technical and educational resources of general education, preschool and out-of-school institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic
24. Decree #404 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 30th September 1995 About the Approval of the Model Staffing level of Education Institutions in the Kyrgyz Republic
25. Decree of the Mayor’s Office of Bishkek “About the Organization of Transportation of Schoolchildren in Bishkek”
26. Decree #554 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic “About the Adoption of the State Educational Standard of School Education in the Kyrgyz Republic” dated 23rd July 2004,
27. Order #114/1 of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture of the Kyrgyz Republic “About Illegal Collections of Cash Means in Educational Institutions” dated 13th March 2001,
28. Standard Regulation “About General Education Institutions”

29. Decree DP #390 of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic “About Protection and Support of Children” dated 30th August 2007

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