



A Generation at Risk?

Childhood poverty in Kyrgyzstan

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Preface

This paper is one of a series of working papers, reports and policy briefings on different aspects of childhood poverty published by the Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre (CHIP). CHIP is a collaborative research and policy initiative involving academic institutions and Save the Children in China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and the UK. It aims to:

- Deepen understanding of the main causes of childhood poverty and poverty cycles, and increase knowledge of effective strategies to tackle it in different contexts;
- Inform effective policy to end childhood poverty, ensuring that research findings are widely communicated to policy-makers, practitioners and advocates;
- Raise the profile of childhood poverty issues and increase the urgency of tackling them through anti-poverty policy and action;
- Work globally to tackle chronic and childhood poverty in developing and transition countries.

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For further information and to download all our publications, visit www.childhoodpoverty.org.

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The views in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of CHIP, CPRC, DFID or Save the Children.

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Glossary

Aryk:	small streams or irrigation channels
Aiyl bashchy:	the head of village authority
Aiyl kenesh:	local council
Aiyl okmotu:	village authority
Aksakals:	elders
Baraks:	poor conditioned houses with several rooms
Beishik toi:	celebration of the 40th day after the birth of the baby
Dordoi:	the biggest market in the suburbs of Bishkek
Dungans:	Muslim Chinese
Kalym:	brideprice
Kolkhoz:	collective farm
Komok:	a corner shop
Kopeika (pl. kopeiki):	1/100 of the rouble, national currency during the Soviet times
Manty:	steamed dumplings
Marshrutka:	privately owned public transportation (mini-buses)
Moldo:	mullah, Islamic teacher
Novostroika (pl. novostroiki):	recently constructed suburb mostly inhabited by migrants
Oblast:	province
Pelmeni:	boiled dumplings
Pirozhki:	fried pies
Prikhvatizatsia:	unjust privatisation, 'robbing'
Rayon:	district
Samsi:	baked pies
Sep:	dowry
Sotka (pl. sotki):	1/100 of hectare
Sovkhoz:	state farm
Spravka (pl. spravki):	official document certifying something
Toshok:	traditional blankets made for covering floor
Tushoo kesuu:	celebration of the first steps of the baby, which symbolises that a baby will have a future without problems
Zaochnyi:	distance learning

Acronyms

ADB:	Asian Development Bank
WB:	World Bank
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
USAID:	US Agency for International Development

At the time of writing, one US dollar was equivalent to 42 Kyrgyz soms

Executive Summary

I. Incomes, assets and livelihoods

Fifty-five percent of children in Kyrgyzstan are living in poverty in rural and urban areas (Yarkova *et al*, 2004). Childhood poverty is inseparable from the poverty of families and communities. Our findings, which are consistent with the findings of other research (eg World Bank, 2003), suggest that the most important factors underlying childhood poverty in Kyrgyzstan are:

- living in a single-parent household
- being a member of a young nuclear family where the parents are younger than 30 years of age.

In addition, our research indicates that a greater proportion of children in urban than rural areas are living in income-asset poverty. This reflects the methods used to calculate socio-economic status. Since children in rural areas face other forms of deprivation (eg lack of access to safe water) more severely than urban children, it is important that the different dimensions of rural and urban childhood poverty are understood and addressed. Throughout this report we indicate how different aspects of childhood poverty differ between rural and urban areas.

In rural areas, access to land is a critical cause of poverty for young families with children born after 1 January 1996, who did not receive land shares. Although such families should be eligible for land through the Land Redistribution Fund, many local authorities rent this land out to those who can afford to pay the highest rents, meaning that poor families are denied access.

The situation of young families is compounded by traditional inheritance rights. Because of the shortage of land in most southern villages, when sons marry their land share remains with their parents, and is ultimately inherited by the youngest son who lives with his parents. Older sons are often unable to obtain an additional share for their new families. Daughters similarly do not inherit land, and if they get divorced, may have difficulties in obtaining land to support their families.

Poor people's livelihoods are further compromised by difficulties in obtaining access to machinery and irrigation which have often been controlled by better-off people since privatisation. The poorer people are, the more likely they are to have difficulties in obtaining fertilisers, irrigating their land, getting seeds on time, or paying others to plough the land, and thus producing at levels that would enable them to escape from poverty.

Access to land could be enhanced by enforcing requirements on local authorities to provide land shares to young families, and ensuring that a certain proportion of Land Redistribution Fund land is rented out to poorer families. More effective microcredit programmes (see below) would also help address problems of access to inputs.

2. Microcredit programmes

Although microcredit programmes are considered to be one of the main measures to deal with poverty in the National Poverty Reduction Strategy, our results suggest that better-off people are much more likely than poor people to participate in such programmes. A number of measures could help to address this:

- Lengthening loan terms and grace periods to enable investments in farming and livestock where profits are only reaped after six months to one year.
- Reducing the documentation requirements for taking microcredit, and eliminating corruption in this process.
- Reducing interest rates. Poor people in this study feel that interest rates of 2-3 per cent are manageable. This may require cross-subsidisation from programmes where clients pay commercial rates. The reduced costs would also help prevent exclusion of poor people from group-based lending programmes because they would be less likely to default.

3. Children's work

In this study, we found significant numbers of children working. About 11 percent of children from 7 to 17 years old work in full-time, part-time and seasonal jobs. Overall, rural children are more likely to work than urban children as agricultural livelihoods create particular demands for children's work. However, where there are urban work opportunities, such as in a bazaar, we also found substantial child labour. Children from better-off rural families with land or livestock are more likely to work for their own families than children of poorer families; children from poorer families are much more likely to work for others.

Many children miss school to work or they do not attend school at all. Their working conditions pose hazards to their health - many children work long days in all weather, doing physically hard work. They are also sometimes abused or cheated by their employers and/or other adults. Although many of the working children we interviewed for this study had no choice but to work – their families needed money for food – their hazardous working conditions and the fact that so many miss out on education means that they may be trapped in poverty as adults.

This situation could be addressed through targeted cash transfers which substitute for children's income, as well as through longer-term efforts to improve rural livelihoods and create employment opportunities for adults.

4. Education

According to our survey, school enrolment is high. Almost every 7-17 year old is currently enrolled at school. However, many children attend school irregularly. About one-third of children in this study continue their education after secondary school. Only 10 per cent of school graduates attend the nearest higher education institution and the rest undertake the generally lower quality distance learning programmes. Only 9 per cent of children in our study attend kindergartens, reflecting the lack of availability of preschools in most communities and the high costs for poor families.

Non-attendance of school is clearly mainly money-related. The main reasons for not attending school are: lack clothes or shoes, inability to buy textbooks or pay fees, and the need to work. Throughout the year, about 14 per cent of children miss school in order to work, although in rural areas at peak agricultural times, usually spring and autumn, teachers estimate that around 70 per cent of children miss school. Poorer children are also substantially more likely than better-off children to miss school due to illness (21 per cent compared to 11 per cent overall), as poor families find the costs of winter heating and medicines difficult to afford.

Another important cause of non-attendance at school is the poor state of repair of many schools. Most community schools that we visited need serious restoration of walls, roofs, windows, etc., and the heating systems in most schools were not functioning properly.

The question of quality of education is an important concern for better-off families in particular. Since there is a lack of professional teachers in key school subjects and salaries are low, teachers teach courses for which they are not qualified in order to earn more. In addition, teachers also skip classes to earn additional income. The lack of additional learning materials (such as school libraries) further contributes to poor quality education. The high costs and poor quality of education lead some parents in rural areas in particular, to feel that the costs outweigh the benefits.

Ways of addressing the financial barriers to education include:

- increasing the value of social benefits to families with school-age children, or providing cash support to poor families where children attend school for a specified period of time.
- increasing school budgets for textbooks would enable children who cannot afford to purchase or rent essential books to attend.

5. Health

The main child health problems which we encountered in this study were clearly poverty-related. The most common problems were: colds and flu due to difficulties in affording winter heating; and water-borne diseases due to poor water quality, particularly in rural areas, where about 30 per cent of respondents use water from unprotected sources, a figure that increases in summer. This is compounded by poor nutrition and limited consumption of meat, dairy products, fruit, vegetables and iodised salt in poor households.

Many respondents in this study consider it a luxury to use health services, largely because of their high costs. Almost half of respondents complained that doctors do not treat patients properly until the patients pay them, while almost 20 per cent found medicines too expensive. Ten per cent of respondents had started visiting a traditional healer, rather than making use of the public health system, in order to reduce costs. Perceived incompetence of doctors and lack of equipment in the facility were other important reasons for dissatisfaction with services, and contributing to self-medication or the consultation of traditional healers.

Overall, awareness about the entitlements provided by the Mandatory Health Insurance (MHI) programme is low, and most families are not accessing free treatment for children or discounts for adults. Migrants face additional problems in accessing their entitlements since they generally cannot afford to register in their new location in order to access services under the MHI programme. As a result, most migrants only seek medical care in absolute emergencies.

Problems related to accessing health services could be addressed by:

- media and other public information campaigns to raise awareness of Mandatory Health Insurance and its provisions;
- continued action to stamp out unofficial payments for health services, including raising health workers' salaries;
- reducing the requirements for documentation to access Mandatory Health Insurance and the costs of registration for internal migrants.

6. Social networks and cultural practices

Social networks are of vital importance – it was clear from our interviews that better-off families had strong ties and support among relatives. However, social networks can also place heavy burdens on families – close relatives are expected to contribute financially to celebrations such as funerals, weddings, ceremonies after babies' births, etc. Some respondents said that they had to contribute to such celebrations up to six times a year and were thus not able to improve their lives.

In some places in Kyrgyzstan, *moldos* (mullahs) or *aksakaly* (elders) have tried to discourage people from spending large amounts of money on these feasts and to only invite a few close relatives. However, such initiatives have not been successful in our research communities. Addressing this issue may require:

- legislation to limit spending;
- national public awareness campaigns.

7. The risk of intergenerational poverty cycles

In this study, we found relatively few ‘success stories’ of young people who had managed to escape poverty. Instead, there seems to be a high probability that many children and young people will grow up to be poor adults, and potentially pass that poverty on to their children. The following categories of families may be particularly at risk of intergenerational poverty cycles:

- Families with few or no assets (eg land in rural areas, access to credit): these are often young families;
- Families who live in areas with limited economic opportunities and who are unable to migrate;
- Families without a breadwinner or where the breadwinner is a drain on resources (for example if he or she is an alcoholic);
- Families where the household head has had limited education;
- Large families with small children who are too young to help out;
- Families who lack support from relatives;
- Families who depend on state support.

The following groups of children are also at particular risk of intergenerational poverty cycles:

- children who work to the detriment of their education or health;
- children who miss out on education due to poverty or discrimination;
- young women and girls whose education is curtailed due to early marriage or bride-kidnapping.

I. Introduction

This report presents the findings of a two-year study which investigated the nature and causes of childhood poverty in Kyrgyzstan and how it varies geographically across the country. It also examines the extent of intergenerational poverty transmission, and whether chronic poverty is developing in Kyrgyzstan. A third focus of the study is the impact of local, state and donor responses in addressing this poverty. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following key questions:

- How does poverty affect children and young people in Kyrgyzstan and how do they experience poverty?
- What are the key reasons for so many children living in poverty?
- How do key livelihood or coping strategies affect child wellbeing? What are the immediate and possible long-term effects?
- How do childhood poverty and children's future life chances vary between mainly agricultural and mainly pastoral areas, between isolated industrial/former industrial towns and urban areas, between isolated and less isolated areas, and between mountainous and low-lying areas?
- What evidence is there that intergenerational poverty cycles are occurring or developing? Which groups are vulnerable to falling into intergenerational poverty cycles?
- How far are existing social and economic policies causing/ helping to tackle childhood poverty?

CHIP uses the term *childhood poverty* as distinct from *child poverty* to emphasise poverty during a specific period of the life cycle, rather than to suggest that the poverty of children is a specific form of poverty. CHIP argues that the poverty of children is inseparable from adult poverty, and the poverty of families and communities. The reason for focusing on childhood is that poverty in childhood can have long-term effects – short periods of poverty in childhood can affect a person's future life as well as future generations (CHIP, 2003). This research focuses on poverty experienced in childhood where children are deprived of access to basic needs and/or opportunities for their development. This deprivation may be the result of a variety of economic, geographical, transitional, socio-cultural and structural factors, and is centrally linked to the distribution of resources and opportunities both nationally and internationally, and within households and communities (Yarkova et al, 2004).¹

This research involved a literature review and primary research. The primary research made use of both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. The goals of the quantitative survey

¹ The initial literature review for the study is available in English and Russian at the Save the Children, UK office in Kyrgyzstan and Applied Research Centre at American University – Central Asia and can be downloaded from www.childhoodpoverty.org.

were to establish a statistically valid picture of the extent and dimensions of childhood poverty in Kyrgyzstan and to explore the evidence of the development of intergenerational poverty cycles. The qualitative research explored the reasons for poverty and the development of poverty cycles, as well as the strategies that people have used to try to escape poverty, the various coping and investment strategies that families in different circumstances employ and the implications for children and young people, and their experiences of poverty.

Stratified and clustered sampling methods were used in the quantitative research. In total, 1096 household in 22 communities were surveyed with about 50 households in each site. The survey was conducted in both urban and rural areas. Urban areas included areas mainly inhabited by migrants, long-term residential areas and small industrial towns, which had suffered major declines since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Rural communities were stratified by location (south and north), main type of economic activity (pastoral, agricultural and mixed), landscape (low-lying and mountainous) and proximity from urban centres. Using data provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, within these strata, the communities with the highest proportion of people receiving monthly state social assistance were chosen. This was to ensure that the study was predominantly carried out in poor areas. Within these areas, households with children under 21 years were selected using systematic route random sampling methods. Interviews were conducted with adults (both women and men) in the selected households. The questionnaire was pre-tested in a rural area of Chui oblast and in the capital, Bishkek. Interviews were conducted with key informants in all 22 locations in order to understand better the social and economic context of each of the research communities.

Out of 22 communities in the survey, five were selected for in-depth qualitative research. Three of them were in the south and two in the north; two were urban and three rural. These were Gulbar (village in Osh oblast), Sogment (village in Batken oblast), Kokyangak (small mining town in Djalal-abad oblast), Iskra (village in Chui oblast) and Kelechek (suburb of Bishkek, populated mostly by migrants from other parts of Kyrgyzstan). These communities were visited in summer 2003 and two of them, Gulbar and Kelechek, were revisited in winter 2003/4, to compare livelihood strategies and experiences in summer and winter. The qualitative research involved wealth ranking with community informants, semi-structured interviews with local authority representatives, teachers, doctors, parents and children, focus group discussions with children and participant observation.

2. Incomes, assets, livelihood strategies and their implications for childhood poverty

Fifty five percent of children in Kyrgyzstan are living in poverty in rural and urban areas (Yarkova et al, 2004). Childhood poverty is inseparable from the poverty of families and communities. Our findings, which are consistent with the findings of other research (eg World Bank, 2003), suggest that the most important factors underlying childhood poverty and wellbeing in Kyrgyzstan are:

- living in a single-parent household;
- being a member of a young nuclear family where the parents are younger than 30 years of age.

In addition, our research indicates that a greater proportion of children in urban than rural areas are living in income-asset poverty. This reflects the methods used to calculate socio-economic status. Since children in rural areas face other forms of deprivation (e.g lack of access to safe water) more severely than urban children, it is important that the different dimensions of rural and urban childhood poverty are understood and addressed. Throughout this report we indicate how different aspects of childhood poverty differ between rural and urban areas.

In this study we have used a combination of reported income and assets to assess socio-economic status.² As Table 1 shows, households in rural areas are more likely to be in a higher wealth group than households in urban areas. Although people in urban areas earn more than people in rural areas (see Table 2), they do not own assets that people in rural areas do, such as land and livestock which can be additional sources of income. While the average rural person in our sample is materially better off than the average urban person, this index does not take into account other aspects of quality of life, such as access to services which tend to be worse in rural areas.

Table 1 Influences on socio-economic status

STRATA	Socio-economic group			
	Group 1 (poorest)	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4 (best off)
<i>Location (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>				
Rural	21.4	22.7	26.5	29.3
Urban	34.6	30.8	21.7	12.9
<i>Households (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>				
Two-parent	23.8	24.0	26.1	26.2
Single	35.1	32.4	18.0	14.4
<i>Parents' age (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>				
Not young	23.7	25.5	25.2	25.7
Young	41.7	16.7	26.4	15.3

² Relative socio-economic status was determined by adding up the money equivalents of the assets owned by a household and annual income earned by all members of a household. This numerical data was categorised based on quartiles. The wellbeing variable ranges from 1 to 4 where 1 means lowest and 4 means highest wellbeing status. See Appendix 1 for further details.

As expected, two-parent households are in a better material position than single-parent households. The lack of data on single male- vs female-headed households prevents us from estimating which are correlated with higher poverty levels, although our qualitative data suggest that, in general, single female-headed households tend to face more difficult situations.³ This is also linked to the fact that many women are housewives, often because they lost their jobs after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the associated closure of many sources of employment, such as factories and collective farms. Furthermore, many current job opportunities are in physically demanding manual work, for which women are generally not hired. These jobs also pay better than lighter work..

The number of children in a household is also significantly associated with socio-economic status. As Table 1 shows, there is a negative linear relationship between these two variables. In other words, the higher the number of children in household, the lower the socio-economic status of the household. This can be explained by the fact that expenditures in large families are greater, preventing them from saving and accumulating more assets. In addition, young families (nuclear families with parents under the age of 30) in both rural and urban areas tend to have lower socio-economic status than other households because they have accumulated a smaller number of assets, have smaller inheritance⁴ and smaller allocations of land compared with more established families.

2.1 Incomes

As observed above and illustrated in Table 2, mean incomes are higher in urban areas, although so are expenses.

Table 2 Mean income per household (in soms)

	Mean monthly income	Mean monthly income per capita
Rural	789	131
Urban	1275	255
Total	919	153

T-test for equality of means is significant at 0.01 level - in other words, the differences between these results are statistically significant.

As shown in Figure 1, the distribution of monthly income is negatively skewed, ie many more people earn low incomes than high incomes. More than 40 per cent of respondents reported that they earn less than 100 soms a month per capita.

3 However, some single female-headed households actually experienced an improvement in living standards when their drug- or alcohol-addicted male partners either left them or died.

4 Usually the oldest children live separately from their parents, because in Kyrgyz culture the youngest son lives with his parents and, therefore, gets the largest inheritance. Most often, older children are expected to earn money to buy their own houses for themselves.

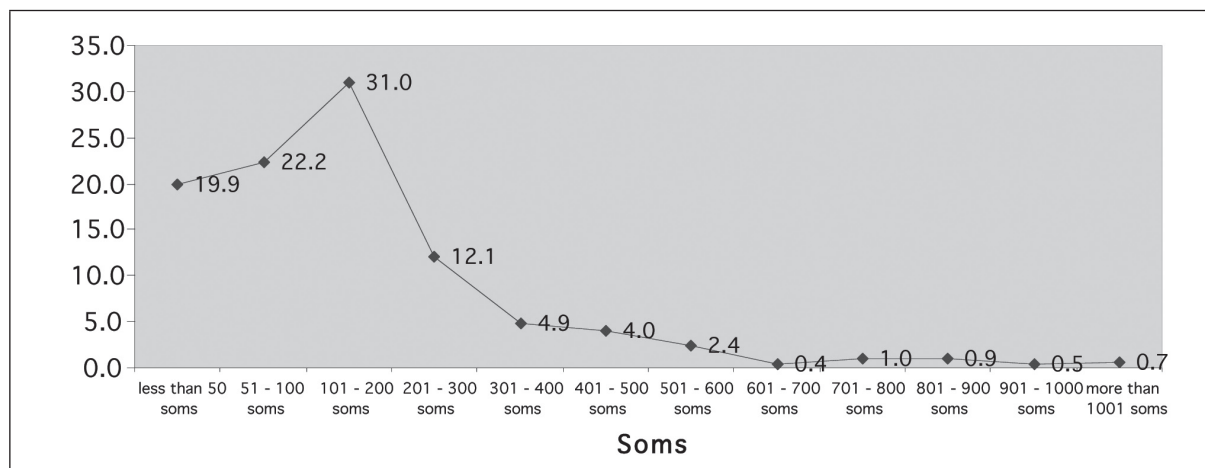
Figure 1 Monthly income per capita in soms

Table 3 shows the main income sources of participants in this study. The majority of respondents indicated pensions, stipends⁵, and benefits as the main income sources in their households. About 56 per cent of respondents consider shuttle trading to be their main source of income.⁶ About 52 per cent consume farm products and about 48 per cent of respondents sell the farm products that they produce. Only 29 per cent of respondents mentioned salaries as an important income source; however, a relatively high proportion of respondents (22 per cent) indicated that it is their most important income source.

Table 3 Main sources of income and livelihood (percentages)

	Source of income	The most important (rank 1) sources	Among 3 most important sources (ranks 1-3)
Pension / Stipend / Allowances	55.8	26.6	53.0
Selling / Reselling goods	55.7	18.1	45.7
Consumption of farm products	51.8	14.1	49.1
Salary from formal employment	28.9	22.1	28.0
Temporary wages	17.4	7.2	15.7
Remittance	7.1	0.8	5.3
Assistance from relatives	6.8	0.5	5.4

Table 4 illustrates the difference in income sources among different geographic and socio-economic strata. People in rural areas depend more on pensions, stipends and benefits (especially benefits for low-income families), temporary wages and consumption of farm

5 Some state universities in Kyrgyzstan pay stipends to students who perform well in their studies. The size of stipends varies from 140 to 200 soms.

6 People travel to Bishkek, Osh and other oblast centres to buy food products and other goods in order to resell them in their home communities.

products. For people in urban areas, salaries are the most important source of income; they also receive more financial assistance from their relatives than their rural counterparts.

Table 4 Income sources by location and socio-economic group (percentages)

Available Sources	Total	Location		Socio-economic group			
		Rural	Urban	1	2	3	4
Pension / Stipend / Allowances	55.8	64.8**	31.6**	52.8	53.0	62.6	58.8
Selling / Reselling goods	55.7	65.7**	28.6**	46.8	42.9	63.0	70.0
Consumption of farm products	51.8	69.2**	5.1**	30.0**	46.6**	62.2**	67.8**
Salary	28.9	20.4**	51.9**	18.7**	37.2**	30.7**	31.8**
Temporary wages	13.0	10.6**	19.2**	15.7	13.5	12.2	10.9
Remittance	7.1	5.1**	12.5**	8.2	9.0	6.3	5.2
Assistance of relatives	6.8	5.4**	10.8**	8.6	7.5	4.4	6.4
Providing services to others, eg repairs, transport, herding others' animals, etc	4.4	4.4	4.4	3.7*	1.5*	4.4*	7.1*
<i>Social benefits as a percentage of those who receive state assistance</i>							
Benefits for low-income families	55.9	60.0**	33.0**	67.4**	58.9**	56.2**	42.7**
Benefits for disabled people	8.2	7.5	11.7	7.1	8.5	10.1	7.0
Allowance for unemployment	1.1	0.6**	4.3**	2.8	0.7	1.2	

* Pearson chi-square is significant at 0.05 level; ** Pearson chi-square is significant at 0.01 level. In other words, where figures are starred, differences between rural and urban areas or between socio-economic groups are statistically significant.

There are differences throughout the socio-economic strata. Among richer respondents (groups 3 and 4), trading, salaries and consuming their own farm products are the main sources of income. Our qualitative research indicates that trading is one of the most profitable activities, but requires initial assets. Most of the people who started trading in the 1990s either owned cars or had initial capital to start a business. They tend to sell a small range of commodities, mostly essential goods. As the quote below indicates, those who are well-off are involved in trading and also own land, while poor people work for others.

A well-off person doesn't work, he hires poor people who don't have money to work on the fields, and sells the harvest. He uses the money that he got from selling the harvest to trade in other goods. **Girls, 14-17 years old, Sogment village**

However, trading is important even among poor people (practised by 47 per cent of the poorest respondents).

Benefits and pensions

Over 67 per cent of poor people report benefits for low-income families as their main source of income, while just over 40 per cent of people in the highest income group report benefits as a major source of income. This might be explained by the fact that the research was undertaken in poor communities and also because differences between different socio-economic groups are relatively limited, particularly in rural areas where most people work on the land. Our qualitative research also revealed some cases of people who were either poor or were at risk of falling into poverty but received no state support.

The importance of benefits to poor people is notable, although eligibility for benefits has been substantially restricted during reforms of the social security system. For example, while single mothers were formerly eligible for state assistance, eligibility now depends on their level of poverty. Furthermore, formal rules about eligibility can prevent poor people from accessing state support. Some respondents felt that officials were indifferent to the situation of poor people. (See Box 1 below).

When we go to apply for social benefits, officials don't want to talk to us, or look at us. In the past, the treatment of poor people was good, they had heard our problems and then helped us.

Iskra

Box 1: Case study: single mother denied benefits

Tolgonay is a mother of two boys, and lives in a village in southern Kyrgyzstan. She was married twice unofficially⁷ after being kidnapped and her children were born out of official wedlock. Now she lives with her mother. She should get social benefits (Unified Monthly Benefit) from the state since both her children are under-18, but she does not receive anything.

The family tried to get social benefits for Tolgonay's two children, but because she does not have any documents registering an official marriage and divorce, she cannot apply for social benefits. She was told to try and get alimony from her former husbands instead. The social protection officer explained to the family that Tolgonay had to submit a document from a judge showing that she is divorced in order to get social benefits. To get this document, she would have to find her former husbands. She cannot do this because her first husband is living in Uzbekistan and she does not know where her second husband is. Also, getting a document authorised by a judge is difficult for Tolgonay's family because they cannot afford it; so they decided not to get any documents.

My grandchildren don't get social benefit. To get it we need to run about it, and spend a lot of money. I don't have money, what can I give? Probably only dung. We are struggling. That's why we decided not to get it [the documents]. The officials told us to get alimony instead of social benefit, but if parents [the father] don't come to us, how can we get them?

Tolgonay's mother, Gulbar

The family was also told that another way to get social benefits without any official documents is to give a bribe, which they also cannot do. Therefore, they are not receiving social benefits for the two boys although they family is eligible because they live below the poverty line. Moreover, Tolgonay's mother cannot claim social benefit on behalf of the boys because they live with their mother.

Other respondents told us that even when they started to receive monthly cash social benefits this year, they were two to five months late. Respondents from two southern villages mentioned that benefits are still given in-kind. For example, instead of receiving 140 soms, the local social

⁷ An unofficial marriage is one which is not registered and thus not recognised by state officials. If a marriage is not registered, after divorce people have problems with inheritance issues and eligibility for social assistance.

protection centre in Gulbar village gave old newspapers⁸ in lieu of 40-50 soms this winter, regardless of recipients' wishes. In Sogment village in 2004, people received social benefits in oil and flour. People also complained that the calculations were made at very unfavourable rates ie higher than the market prices. This suggests that further efforts are needed to ensure payments are made in cash and on time, and also to ensure that those eligible for benefits do actually receive them.

2.2 Key assets

2.2.1 Access to land and agricultural assets

One of the most significant transition reforms in Kyrgyzstan, a mostly agricultural country, has been the distribution of land and other assets, such as livestock, tractors and machines to people who lived and worked on collective and state farms (*kolkhozy and sovhozy*) during the Soviet era (Giovarelli et al 2000). Our research shows that land reforms and privatisation have affected the livelihoods of different groups of people and their children in different ways.

Because of greater population density in the south of the country, the average arable land share per capita was only 0.19 hectares compared to 0.53 hectares in the north. Generally, the average land share for each collective or state farm was calculated by dividing 75 percent of the total arable land by the number of people eligible for land shares. By law, 75 per cent of all arable land was distributed among people who were born before 1 January 1996, and the remaining 25 per cent was reserved in the Land Redistribution Fund. The actual land distribution varied between 0.75 and 1.5 hectares per capita in the northern provinces and between 0.1 and 0.3 hectares per capita in the more populous southern provinces (*ibid*). Even within a region, there were differences in the quantity of land distributed to people. This reflects the original land area of the state and the privatised collective farms – people who worked on larger farms received larger shares. For example, in Sogment village people received shares in four different places, two *sotki* of arable land in their village, and another three *sotki* seven, 17, and 60 km away from the village. By comparison, the neighboring village distributed about 50 *sotki* to each member of the household. Thus, substantial inequalities between villages emerged during the privatisation process; where people received less land or only distant land, they faced many more difficulties than people in other villages who received more land closer to their village.

In addition, each region and local government developed different criteria for distributing land. In some places, land was distributed based on the number of household members; in others, every household received the same amount of share land (regardless of how many members they had); in some places, people who were not farmers at the time of land distribution received smaller land shares. As Table 5 shows, the strategy of providing the same amount of land to every household may have negatively affected families with many children.

⁸ In other words, they were sold newspapers without their consent, instead of receiving the benefits they were due. This is one way to sell government newspapers. The respondents who told us about this were very angry that they received newspapers instead of money, and particularly angry that these were old and out-of-date newspapers.

Table 5 Size of farmland by type of family

	Mean size of farm land (in hectares)
<i>Parents' age</i>	
Not young	2.38
Young	0.65
<i>Number of children</i>	
0 children	3.85
1 child	2.93
2 children	2.77
3 children	2.18
4 children	1.98
More than 5	1.77
<i>Total</i>	2.27

Another crucial factor which negatively affected some people during privatisation was corruption. In two villages in the southern region, people told us that the privatisation process was not implemented equally for everybody in the village. People in positions of power, or those who could pay a bribe to the officials who registered the land and representatives of *aiyl okmotu*, got more land or better quality land (by registering irrigated land as non-irrigated, for example), or land closer to the village. All of this meant that poorer people often started out with smaller and poorer quality assets and were subsequently less able to escape from poverty.

While local differences in distribution criteria and corruption played were critical in generating inequality and poverty during the privatisation process, another group with limited access to land has emerged in the last few years. As Table 5 shows, young families with children born after 1 January 1996 face particular problems. In principle, this land should be given to children who were born after that date. However, in practice, we found that this was not the case. Instead of distributing it among this generation, local governments usually rent out Land Redistribution Fund land. Many people in our research were not aware that they had the right to request land from the Land Redistribution Fund. Furthermore, in Sogment village the local *Aiyl Kenesh* created a local law that this land could not be redistributed, because there was too little to go round. As a result, young families had to make ends meet from the father's land share alone,

which in turn depends on what families provide their sons on marriage. However, the availability of land to young families does vary from village to village – in Gulbar, for example, families who ask for a land share to build a house will receive three *sotki*, whereas in Sogment village young families receive no land.

The situation of young families is further compounded by traditional inheritance rights, an issue which we believe should be addressed as soon as possible. According to Kyrgyz tradition, the last son in a family will inherit the house, most of the household assets and land because he and his family live with his parents. Because of the shortage of land in most southern villages, parents hold onto the land which they received for the whole family, which they bequeath to the youngest son. In some cases, an older son may live with his parents instead of the youngest son, depending on their specific situations. When other sons marry, they usually set up new households, and receive some assets and other assistance from their parents, depending on the situation of the family. When daughters get married, they are usually given a dowry but this does not include their land share. This has happened even where women marry within the same village. Thus, the combination of inheritance traditions and new assets are disadvantaging young families, except those of the youngest sons. Young families are thus more likely to remain poor than older families who managed to acquire land during privatisation.

Land scarcity does not only affect young families, but poor families more generally. Respondents in one of the southern villages mentioned the following obstacles to getting sufficient land to rent. First, land from the Land Redistribution Fund is rented out on a competitive basis and therefore goes to the person who can pay the highest price. Most poor people cannot compete in rental auctions, whereas well-off people from the village or beyond can; they then pay local people low wages to work on the land.

Although *aiyl okmotu* officials said that in Gulbar village 20 per cent of land from the Land Redistribution Fund was given to poor people for free, poor people themselves said that this was only 2-3 *sotki* per family and that this was insufficient. The *aiyl okmotu* sees renting out Land Redistribution Fund land as the only way that they can meet the expenses they face, including their contributions to local school and healthcare budgets. As a consequence, it is difficult for poor families to improve their living conditions through farming.

In rural areas, access to important agricultural assets is also a concern. In two of our southern research communities, people talked about unfair distribution of agricultural assets such as irrigation, cultivation, harvesting machinery or transport. Again, as with privatisation of land, people with money or with good positions in, or contacts with, the local administration were able to acquire these assets. According to our respondents, these people officially paid little money for the land, but another part as a bribe. Those who were able to acquire such machinery have generally been able to improve their situation, while those who have not had access to these assets have become poorer.⁹ For example, people who have no access to transport have

to sell their crops to middle-men who then sell them onto wholesalers who sell onto bazaar sellers; those who have transport can sell directly at bazaars and earn two to three times as much. However, as Table 3 in Appendix II shows, very few people own cars and other vehicles.

Accessing agricultural inputs is also a key concern. The poorer people are, the more likely they are to have problems with fertilisers, irrigating the land, getting seeds on time, or paying people to plough the land. Springtime, the season when agricultural inputs are most needed, coincides with one of the most difficult times as far as access to food is concerned – winter stocks are used up and new crops have not yet been planted. Many of the poorest people have no assets, such as livestock, which they can sell to raise cash. As a result, people are forced to make hard choices: between using seeds (eg seed potatoes) to feed their children today and being able to cultivate their land in order to provide food for their children in the future. Some of the ways in which people cope with these situations are discussed in more detail in section 2.3 below.

2.2.2 Privatisation and assets in urban areas

Parallel to land reforms, the privatisation of the industrial sphere also took place. Workers in urban areas (and in village factories) got shares in the factories, plants and other enterprises in which they worked. However, most of these were closed down very soon after privatisation, leading to a rapid rise in unemployment. Even where enterprises have remained open, poor people have often sold their shares for cash or when they migrated. Similarly, where urban workers received shares in blocks of flats, they have often sold these assets when they migrated or to raise cash. Urban workers did not receive land shares, making it difficult to survive when employment opportunities disappeared. Much productive infrastructure has now been sold off, or demolished and sold as building materials, which will make reconstruction much more difficult in the future.

2.3 Main livelihood and coping strategies

As Table 6 shows, people have developed a number of livelihood strategies to cope with poverty. The most common strategies used by people in this study are: reducing food consumption or the variety of food items consumed (over half of respondents); selling rather than consuming farm products (a quarter of respondents); reducing heating in winter (over half of respondents); cutting trees for fuel (almost forty per cent of respondents); selling key assets (a third of respondents) and migration for work (a fifth of respondents). Each of these main strategies and their impacts are discussed in more detail below.

9 Of course, different people have different perspectives on privatisation processes. Those who acquired assets argue, for example, that no one else wanted these assets or that they were in poor condition.

Table 6 Livelihood strategies

Strategy	Percentage of respondents who have used this strategy
Reduced the amount of food eaten	51.4
Reduced heating of home in winter	51.2
Going and cutting down wood for cooking and heating	38.1
Sold animals, seeds or tools needed to pay for key expenses	32.2
Tried to sell more farm products	24.4
Left the area to look for work	18.5
Sold other household items eg carpet, TV	11.4
Started visiting traditional healer	10.9
Sent a child to stay with relatives/friends for along period	9.7
Gathered coal for cooking and heating	8.0

2.3.1 Reduction in food consumption

Over half the respondents (51 per cent) in this study reduced the amount of food they consumed. As Table 1 in Appendix II shows, this is a particularly important survival strategy for the majority of people (over 60 per cent) in urban regions, since they purchase food products. Although in rural areas, this is also an important strategy (mentioned by 49 per cent of respondents), people can, at least, cultivate most of the food they need or sell their harvest to buy essential goods.

It is not surprising that poor families, compared to other social cohorts, have reduced the amount of food consumed, although 44 per cent of the richest group also stated that they have reduced food consumption. Moreover, the quality of the food consumed is declining. Poor people's main food consists of bread and potatoes; they cannot afford rice, which is popular in the South, and rarely eat meat (see section 3.3). The situation is particularly difficult for poor people from isolated villages because the prices of food products are higher than in villages close to *oblast* and *rayon* centres.

Related to reduced food consumption is an increase in the sale of farm products which would previously have been consumed. Almost a quarter of respondents sell farm products rather than consume them. Some – principally better-off families – have attempted to increase production in order to sell more farm products. Because of the problems of access to agricultural inputs discussed above, this is not an option for poorer families who produce for their own needs and sell any available surplus. In the southern research communities, the need to do so has been exacerbated by the collapse of former markets for cotton and tobacco after processing factories

shut. As a result, people have had to change patterns of cultivation in order to grow wheat, corn and potatoes for consumption and sale of surpluses, a process which many found difficult at first.

Both a reduction in food consumption and the shift towards selling as much as possible may have contributed to increases in diseases such as anaemia, goitre and tuberculosis among children, as well as to noticeable differences in stature and development between children from poor families and their peers from well-off families.

2.3.2 Reducing heating

Another common strategy is to cut down on winter heating. The vast majority of respondents, including better-off respondents, heat only one or two rooms in winter (see section 3.2). As well as reducing the number of rooms heated, people also try to cut down on the quantity of wood they use to heat their houses. In winter, food is usually cooked on a hand-made stove (which also heats the room) as this is cheaper than an electric cooker. As one respondent said:

In the past, electricity bills were about 2 kopeiki, and now they are up to 900 soms. We are in debt for electricity. In order to save some money, we cook on the hand-made oven in the backyard.

Many of the hand-made ovens in the south are made of metal and do not retain heat after the fire has died down. Furthermore, most of the houses we visited were built with no foundations and had floors which were made of clay. All of these factors result in poor families' homes being cold in winter. Cold houses plus the use of wood fuels contribute to high numbers of children getting colds, flu and respiratory diseases in winter, which are rarely treated (see section 3.2). This in turn contributes to reduced school attendance among poor children in particular (see section 3.1).

2.3.3 Selling assets

About a third of respondents indicated that they have sold animals, seeds or tools in order to pay for key expenses such as traditional celebrations, funerals and sending a child to school. However, this was largely a strategy of better-off people who had such assets. The sale of these assets clearly contributes to poverty in the longer-term. In addition, about 11 per cent of respondents had sold key household items, such as TV sets and carpets. This was particularly common among poorer respondents and in urban areas, where people did not have livestock or agricultural assets.

2.3.4 Use of traditional healers rather than public medical facilities

Due to direct and indirect payments¹⁰ for medical facilities, traditional healers have become more popular than in the past (10 per cent of respondents mentioned visiting a traditional healer). Thus, most households do not seek treatment from public health facilities when a child

¹⁰ Indirect payment means bribing the doctor.

has a headache, nausea, high temperature or is injured while working in the fields, mines or bazaars. Instead, they tend to delay treatment for such diseases and rely on traditional curing methods. This not only reflects cost concerns, but also lack of knowledge about the symptoms, preventative measures and consequences of illnesses, and concerns about the quality of treatment (see section 3.2).

2.3.5 Migration

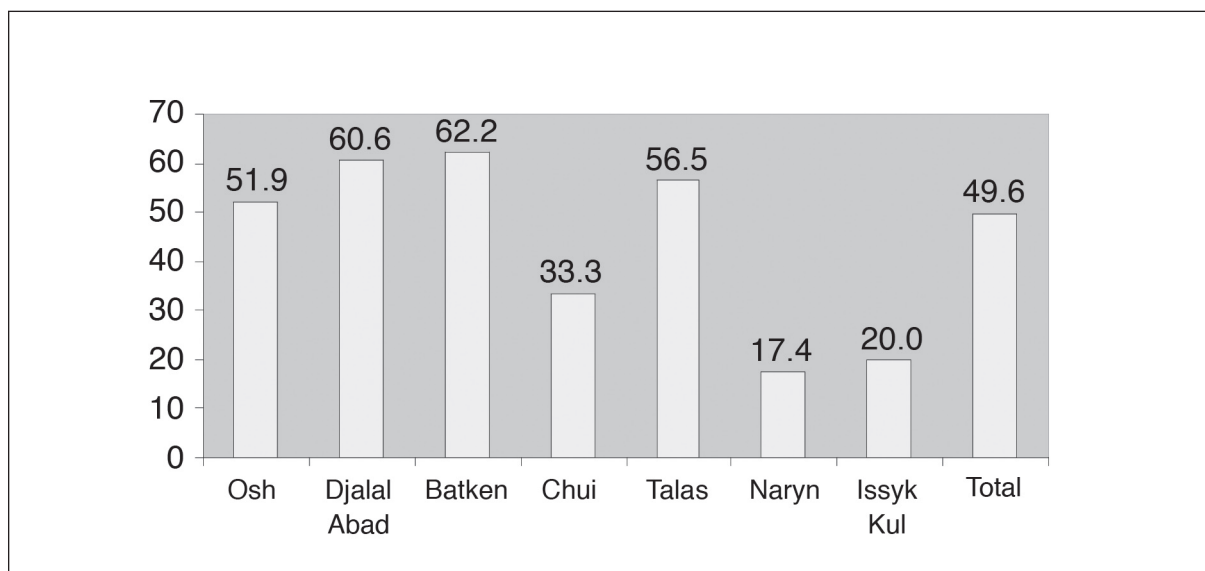
Migrating for work is another important survival strategy. Fifteen per cent of respondents indicated that they are expecting the return of migrant family members who live elsewhere. The main drivers of migration are the collapse of employment opportunities in towns such as Kokyangak, and the shortage of arable land for cultivation, particularly in villages in the south. It is therefore not surprising that seeking work is the most common reason for migration (by almost 50 per cent of those who reported having migrated – see Table 7). This is more common in the south than in the north (58 per cent and 34 per cent respectively). The other reason for migration is to study. This is more common in the north of the country than in the south (42 per cent versus 29 per cent).

Table 7 Reasons for migrating (Percentage of the total number of family members who were reported as being away from the household)

	To study	To work	To visit relatives/ friends	To serve in the army
South	29.0	58.1	5.2	5.8
North	42.2	33.7	6.0	7.2
Total	33.6	49.6	5.5	6.3

Figure 2 illustrates that people in Batken, Djalal-Abad, Talas and Osh are most likely to leave home to seek work. People in Batken and in Djalal-Abad mostly move to Bishkek and Russia, from Talas, they tend to go to their oblast centre, Talas, or to Russia and Bishkek, while people from Osh oblast mostly go to the cities of Osh and to Bishkek. Fifty per cent of people from Issyk-Kul moved to Karakol, and the other 50 percent to other places.¹¹

¹¹ The fact that there is no one who migrated to Bishkek might be explained by the fact that we conducted our survey in locations close to Karakol.

Figure 2 Percentage of people who have migrated to look for work*Table 8 Places people went to seek work, (percentage of the total number of respondents reported as having migrated for work in the last 12 months)*

Destination	Bishkek	Russia	Osh	Talas	Djalal-Abad	Balykchy	Karakol	Kazakhstan	Leilek	Other
Origin										
Osh	25.9	14.8	59.3							
Djalal-Abad	35.0	47.5			7.5			2.5		7.5
Batken	52.2	43.5							4.3	
Chui	33.3	33.3				22.2				11.1
Talas	38.5	23.1		30.8						7.7
Naryn	50.0									50.0
Issyk-Kul							50.0			50.0
Total	36.4	33.1	13.6	3.4	2.5	1.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	6.8

That the percentage of people who migrated to Kazakhstan is very low may reflect the fact that we asked about people who had moved within the last 12 months. However, according to the Kyrgyz Migration Service Department an estimated half a million Kyrgyzstani citizens are living and working abroad, some 300,000 in Russia, and between 30,000 and 120,000 in Kazakhstan.¹² In both countries, they provide cheap labour – in Russia, to the construction

12 'KYRGYZSTAN: Half a million labour migrants abroad', <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp>, accessed on 17.08.04

sector and they also trade, and in Kazakhstan, they work on farms. Recent efforts to control migrant labour are likely to have a severe impact on poverty and livelihoods in Kyrgyzstan.

The main implications for children relate to the impact of migration on livelihoods, children's access to services, and on family relationships. However, from this study we do not have precise data on migration patterns – who migrates first, or whether they take their family with them. In most situations, adults first move alone, and then try to reunite their family. The migration process is much harder for families with small children, and migrants usually leave them with relatives in villages, at least initially. Where only the man migrates and stays away for a long time, this has sometimes resulted in family break-up. If both parents decide to leave, a close relative such as a grandparent, aunt or uncle, takes care of the children. Another important survival strategy (practised by around 10 per cent of respondents in our survey) is to send children to stay with other relatives.

Impact of migration on livelihoods

Although internal migrants principally move because of economic problems, their situations often do not improve greatly in Osh or Bishkek where the majority of migrants tend to work in the bazaars. Working conditions and earnings depend on the type of job. Lacking financial capital, many migrants get involved in trading which has limited returns. The average earnings of migrants involved in trading is 1000 to 2000 soms a month, while the government's minimum consumption basket (and thus poverty line) is 637 soms per capita per month,¹³ amounting to 2548 per month for a family of four.

The main expenses which migrants have are food and rent, and only then can they consider other expenses. Because they live in rented accommodation, it is difficult for migrants to grow fruit and vegetables or keep livestock, and thus reduce their expenses. Therefore, migrants spend most of their earnings on food, mainly eating rice and macaroni. Rent is the next key expense. Many families who obtained land in the *novostroiki* (new suburbs of Bishkek and Osh, which are mostly home to migrants) in the early 1990s and built houses, rent out rooms in their homes or in *baraks* (a house with several rooms built in their backyard with outside toilets and no washing facilities). Such rooms are rented out at 500 soms per room, and 800 soms for two rooms. Four to five migrants – either a family, relatives or friends – occupy a room together in order to save money. These overcrowded conditions may contribute to the spread of disease, while the poor conditions of *baraks* such as clay floors, may also affect the health of people living in them.

Migration may mean that children take on greater workloads, both when they migrate or when they are left behind in rural areas. When they migrate, the additional work opportunities mean that children often work long hours, often instead of attending school. When they are left behind, they may have to take on adult roles in housework and agriculture.

13 2002 data, <http://stat-gvc.bishkek.su/>, accessed on 17.08.04

Impact on access to services

Many respondents found children's education and health services unaffordable, even though they would like to access these services. The fact that most migrants are not registered in the novostroika but in their place of origin, means they are unable to make use of their entitlements to healthcare. (See section 3.2).

Children's education in urban schools, especially in Bishkek city, is much more expensive than in rural areas, and migrant parents find it hard to pay tuition fees. Urban schools have extra-curricular activities and sport classes which all cost money. Moreover, the gap between poor and well-off children is great, which discourages children from poor families from attending school. Poor children compare themselves with other who have good clothes or who bring more money in order to buy food at school. The fact that migrants move house very often also negatively affects children's education because they cannot attend one particular school. Where children have come to urban areas from villages, the low standard of education in villages can make it hard for them to learn in urban schools, particularly if tuition is in a different language:

*Many such kids [migrant children] cannot even speak Russian, and cannot write in either Kyrgyz or Russian. Thus they feel humiliated. **Teacher in school 33, Bishkek city.***

Impact on family relationships

A specific problem in migrant areas is that parents are often too busy with their work to pay much attention to, and care for, their children.

*They go to work early in the morning and come back home late in the evening. The children stay alone all day long. **Teacher in school 33, Bishkek city.***

This lack of attention and care can also negatively influence children's nutrition and health.

*Now almost every child does not have adequate nutrition. Parents work all day long and try to make money. They do not have time to cook at home. Well off kids bring money to the school and buy 10-15 pirozhki, that is their food for the whole day. Those who don't have money can't eat at school. Therefore both well off and poor children's diets are not good. **Teacher in school 33, Bishkek city.***

Community informants also mentioned that without adult supervision and because many children are not attending school, they just stay at home and watch TV, or get involved in anti-social activities. In the opinion of our informants, this leads children to engage in crime.

They go to discotheques, but the worst thing is Counter Strike computer game. Our children go there and play computer games, when there is no money, they steal money, home utilities,

valuable things from their own parents. They sell all this stuff and play games again. It's kind of a new addiction for kids. The most interesting thing is that the youngest kids play most, those from 1,2,3,5-7 grades. We do have specialized classes, where they can do their extra-curricular activities free of charge, but no one comes. **Teacher in school 33, Bishkek city.**

2.3.6 Other livelihood and coping strategies

Our qualitative research revealed other important coping strategies such as leasing out land and debt. Some poor people 'sell' (lease) their land for a year to well-off people who are in a position to cultivate additional land. In Gulbar village, for example, there were examples of people who actually sold their land (ie renounced all ownership rights in exchange for money), but they had left the village and people did not know what had happened to them. Increasingly, however, migration within Kyrgyzstan or abroad, is one of the few options available to these families. Others continue to cultivate their own land, but can only use inputs when they are able to obtain some money – this may mean that they miss peak planting or growing seasons. Also, if their crop ripens late, they may get lower prices when they come to sell it.

In the spring we barely make ends meet. For instance right now we have two sacks of flour left. We buy food with the money which my brothers and I earn. My brothers worked and earned money for the fertilisers by working on three hectares of land belonging to other people last year. And after that we could start cultivating our own land. **Tolgonay, Gulbar village.**

Relatively few poor people get into debt because their social networks are usually with other poor people, and they have difficulty finding people to help them. It is mainly close relatives and friends on whom people can rely these days. However, they can only expect limited help, mostly in the form of food and second-hand clothes. Where poor people do get into debt, they may cut down on food or send their children to work, thus keeping them from attending school.

For most villagers, particularly in the south, support from relatives working in Bishkek and Russia is critical. Although people can survive by working in the fields, they cannot improve their wellbeing through such activities. Most of the people we interviewed talked of the need to create jobs and regarded this as crucial to improving their lives.

2.4 Children's Work

A consequence of strained livelihoods is the growing involvement of children in paid or unpaid work. About 11 per cent of children from 7 to 17 years old work in full-time, part-time and seasonal jobs (see Table 9). Approximately 4 per cent of children aged seven to ten years, 12 per cent of those aged 11-15 years and 20 per cent of 16-17 year olds work.

Table 9 Children's involvement in work by age

Education	Age	Percent of Children Employed
Primary school	7-10	4.2
Non-finished secondary school	11-15	12.0
Secondary school	16-17	19.6
Total		10.8

The older a child, the more likely s/he is to work (*see Table 10*), since older children are physically capable of more work and are able to earn more. Rural children are more likely to work than urban children because agricultural livelihoods create particular demands for children's work. Nonetheless, the work opportunities in migrant areas such as Kelechek, and parents' desire to maximise the family's earnings, also encourage urban migrant children to work. Notably, children from better-off families are more likely to work than children from poorer families. This reflects the greater asset base of better-off families and thus the wider range of activities for which children's labour is needed. The majority of better-off families prefer their own children to perform domestic jobs rather than hire someone else to do this. Observations during our qualitative research revealed that children in better-off families mainly work in their family fields or take care of their household's livestock. Children from poorer households tend to do paid work for others.

My son started working in the fields when he was 13. Dungan hired him. Dungan children start working in the fields when they are six. Ok for a six year old child to do housework: take care of livestock, to clean the house. My youngest son (who is 9 years old) helps me in the Kiosk.
Taalai, a 50-year old parent in Iskra

Table 10 Influences on 6 – 17 year olds' work activities

STRATA	Employed either in full time, part time or seasonal jobs	
	Yes	No
<i>Age(Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>		
6 years old	100.0	
7 years old	97.6	2.4
8 years old	98.0	2.0
9 years old	96.0	4.0
10 years old	92.3	7.7
11 years old	89.7	10.3
12 years old	89.6	10.4
13 years old	88.1	11.9
14 years old	85.0	15.0
15 years old	87.8	12.2
16 years old	79.3	20.7
<i>Gender(Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>		
Boys	87.7	12.3
Girls	92.5	7.5
<i>Socio-economic group (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>		
Group 1 (poorest)	94.2	5.8
Group 2	93.9	6.1
Group 3	86.8	13.2
Group 4 (best off)	84.4	15.6
<i>Location (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>		
Rural	87.3	12.7
Urban	97.9	2.1
<i>Number of children (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>		
0 children	96.6	3.4
1 child	89.6	10.4
2 children	88.3	11.7
3 children	86.9	13.1
4 children	93.3	6.7
More than 5	94.1	5.9
<i>Parents' age (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>		
Not young	89.3	10.7
Young	100.0	
<i>Total</i>	90.0	10.0

2.4.1 Kinds of work undertaken by children

Usually, both rural and urban children start working at about the age of six by doing easy jobs: they take care of livestock or the kitchen garden, gather berries and nuts in the forest and perform different types of housework (cleaning, cooking, washing dishes, fetching water). By the age of eleven, children are able to undertake harder jobs such as working in the fields (for their own family or for others), looking after other people's livestock, mining coal, collecting plastic bottles and glasses at the bazaar for resale, and portering goods at the bazaar. An important area of work for rural children is the collection in the forests of household firewood. Many households, especially in the south, plant trees near aryks or on their lands. However, people use these trees mostly for sale or for construction work, few use them for heating.

My son started working in the fields when he was 13. Dungans¹⁴ hired him. Dungan children start working in the fields when they are six. It is OK for a six year old child to do housework: take care of livestock, to clean the house. My youngest son [who is 9 years old] helps me in the kiosk. Taalai, a 50-year old parent in Iskra.

Although the majority of work, including farmwork, berry and nut gathering, collecting bottles and plastic cups in bazaars, is performed by both boys and girls, there are some gender differences in children's work. Boys are usually involved in heavier physical labour than girls, such as taking care of livestock, coal mining, loading and unloading of cargo, and construction work. Girls are mainly involved in sewing, cleaning and childcare. These girls are mainly sent to live with better-off relatives and are employed as servants, as in the case of Zarina in Box 2.

The working schedule slightly varies from one area to another and from one type of work to another. However, it is clear that many rural children work from sunrise to sunset.

[I start work} at seven in the morning. I get up at six in the morning and work until five.

Nurlan, a 16 year old boy in Gulbar

Some children earn money. They are working from morning till evening. .. They work all day long: from 7am till 7pm. Elena, a parent in Iskra

Such intense work schedule does not allow children to rest and play with their peers. Summer used to be traditionally a season for rest and travel in Kyrgyzstan. However, the majority of people cannot afford to rest. Children now use the summer to earn additional money.

They [children] do not rest neither in camps nor at home: they work in their kitchen gardens and in fields. They do not have a happy childhood and work all summer long. Maria, a medical worker in Tomon-Suu

For many parents, having to send children to work is an unfortunate necessity, and the only way to make ends meet:

If both my sons leave to study then who will plough and water the land? I can't do this on my own. Mother, Sogment.

2.4.2 Children's working conditions

Children's working conditions are often poor. First of all, most children are working outside. Secondly, the work they perform is hard physically, even for adults. Thirdly, working children are sometimes abused or cheated by their employers and/or other adults.

*I wish they did not work for 30 soms all day long under the sun, rain ... They have to rest now, but they work instead to earn money for school. **Farid, a parent in Iskra***

*I work during the summer too. I help to weed the onion fields. We get hired to work on other people's land. They pay us about 20 soms per day. I spent this money on buying clothes for myself. I bought jeans, sweater and shirts. I was supposed to get paid 400 soms, but the boss gave me only 150 soms, promising to pay the rest of money later. The man did not pay my brother either. **Amir, a 12 year old boy in Gulbar***

*One day I collected about 50-60 plastic glasses and one man knocked them from my hands and crashed all of them. I cried then he told me: "instead of crying go to school and study" ... we said "we are not doing this for pleasure". **Elmira, a 14 year old girl in Kelecheck***

*He [her son] does not [usually] miss school but sometimes when I am sick he does, he has to earn some money for our daily food. How much depends, sometimes 20 or 50 or 5 soms, sometimes nothing, he pays all the money he has earned to the police. Policemen threaten them and they give all their money they have. **Ainura, a 40 years old parent in Kelecheck***

Payments also vary from region to region. Children in cities generally receive higher wages than in rural areas, similarly children in the South are paid slightly less than in the North.

*I help to weed the land, when there are onions cultivated on the field. ...we get hired to work on somebody's land. [They pay] about 20 soms per day. **Temir, a 12 year old boy in Gulbar***

*Children do not come to school in spring. They work for the Dungans in the onion fields for 50 soms a day. **Maria, a teacher in Tomon-Suu***

*I earn 50 soms and sometimes up to 100 soms per day when I work with a wheelbarrow [as a porter in Osh]. I give the money to my mother. She, pays back our debt and, buys oil and bread. **Nurlan, a 16 year old boy in Gulbar***

*I collect plastic glasses. My earnings differs all the time. Sometimes I get more, sometimes less. My highest earning is about 80 soms a day. **Beishegul, a 15 year old girl in Kelecheck***

*When I do not go to school I work in the bazaar. I sell samsi.¹⁵ At most I can earn 40 som a day but usually I earn 10-15 som a day. **Elmira, a 14 year old girl in Kelecheck***

14 Dungans are Muslim Hui people in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, in Gansu, Qinghai and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region in China, and also in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

Box 2 Case Study - Zarina: migrant child worker dreams of becoming a teacher

13-year-old Zarina was in the 7th grade when her parents decided it would be best for her to leave school and migrate to live with better-off relatives. In January 2004, she moved to a suburb of Bishkek where she lives with her uncle's family. While her uncle and aunt work in a nearby market, Zarina looks after their 8-month old baby. Zarina's own family lives in a very remote area, in southern Kyrgyzstan. She has two brothers and a sister. Her father is unemployed and her mother works in a village school as a cleaner. Her older brother is in the 10th grade and her younger brother also goes to school. Zarina's sister, however, has not yet reached school age.

Zarina's uncle and his family live in a new suburb where there are about 750 households, with the majority of these households renting out small rooms. There is no school for the children in this suburb; instead, the local authorities have arranged a shuttle bus to take children to schools in Bishkek city.¹⁶

Zarina says: "I would rather go to school and stay with my parents instead of looking after a baby – it is so hard because he cries a lot; now he is crawling and these things bother me. I have a few friends here, but do not have any time to play with them or to read books. I like to study and I did well at school, I used to get good marks. I used to take care of my younger siblings, helping them to do their homework. And I helped around the house by feeding animals and doing other household chores". Some of Zarina's friends in this suburb do attend schools in Bishkek and Zarina would like to do the same, but is unable to: "I have to look after the baby. That's why I can't go to school!"

Describing her life with her uncle's family, Zarina says: "My uncle rents two little rooms of about 12 metres square and pays 800 soms a month. I get up early in the morning and as soon as my uncle and aunt leave for the market, I start looking after the baby. I spend a lot of time outdoors with him and I get tired because I carry him around all day long. I usually wash the baby's clothes, but sometimes my aunt does this. In the afternoon I cook dinner for all of us. Most of the time, I cook fried potatoes. I eat three times a day. I have tea and bread for breakfast and for lunch. My uncle does not pay me for looking after his son, but he did buy me winter clothes".

Zarina, her uncle, aunt and the baby all live in just one room in the house – they all sleep, cook, eat, and watch television in this room. Zarina and the baby spend much of their time in the living room. The other room is used only for storage. The house has a very low ceiling and a mud floor, which the family covers with cardboard. In the living room, they have layered a thin carpet and *toshoks* (blankets made for covering the floor) over the cardboard. The family only lights a fire at home when it is very cold outside; usually they rely on the heat from their electric oven to warm up the living room. Both rooms are damp due to the lack of heating in the house. These poor living conditions are not good for the family's health, and the baby often catches cold. The toilet is out in the yard, which is very dirty. Zarina says that her uncle and aunt sometimes get into debt because they cannot pay the rent. Zarina's uncle's family is one of several families of internal migrants who live in this part of the suburb – the vast majority of these families came here in search of a better life for their children.

Talking about her own family in southern Kyrgyzstan, Zarina says: "I come from a poor family, so it was hard for my parents to have four children living with them and to buy us all clothes and the other things that we needed for school. It is tough in our village now – many households live in poverty. My older brother underwent a surgery not long ago and I had 'flu. I went to the doctor because I had earache. You

15 Baked meat pies.

16 This school bus takes them directly to schools in Bishkek. It runs three times a day and children have to pay 1 Som one way. This is five times cheaper than a private mini bus and three times cheaper than public transport.

have to have enough money to buy appropriate medicines, but in most cases when somebody is sick in my family, we stay at home and do not visit the doctors.¹⁷ I wish to earn a lot of money and the first thing I would do is to give all that money to my parents. Not long ago they sent a letter to us. They would like to come here – either my mother or my father. They asked my uncle to find a job for them.

“I do hope that in September I will go home. I will go back to the 7th grade, but feel a little bit ashamed of it and sad because I will be one grade behind my peers. I don’t know what my teachers and peers will think about me then. Sometimes I raise this issue here with my uncle and keep telling him that I have to go home and continue my education. I know that if you do not graduate from school it might affect your future life. I have to finish high school, then I would like to continue studying at the teaching college. I would like to be a history teacher in the future. This is because I like history at school and I like my history teacher. I hope my parents will be able to pay for my education”.

Zarina strongly believes that she’ll go back to school. However, most children who drop out of school seldom return. One reason is that they are simply too ashamed of being behind their peers. Another major reason is that they are the breadwinners in their families.

Zarina’s parents could not afford to send all three of their school-age children to school. They also feel that the school curriculum has become worse and that teachers do not care much about children’s achievements. All these factors motivated Zarina’s parents to move their daughter to the capital city where her mother’s younger brother lives and has a baby that needs looking after. Zarina’s story reflects the kind of survival strategy adopted by many poor families in rural Kyrgyzstan where children are sent away to better-off relatives to become domestic servants or babysitters like Zarina.

17 As a child under 16, Zarina is entitled to free medicine and medical treatment under the Mandatory Health Insurance programme. However, because she is an unregistered internal migrant, she cannot access this free service.

2.4.3 Implications for children's health and access to schooling.

Working long hours, and doing physically demanding work can have immediate and long-term consequences for children's health. Similarly, working children are at higher risk of accidents than children who do not work. This is particularly the case in very hazardous work such as coal mining, but can also occur in other forms of work. Thus, during our qualitative research in Kokyangak, we found out that two children died in the mines because of landslides. In the same community, a boy got injured because he fell during the construction work.

The implications for children's education are discussed in section 3.1 below. In brief, though many children principally work during school holidays, work is an important reason why children miss school, particularly at peak agricultural times. Thus work is likely to affect their long-term prospects of getting out of poverty.

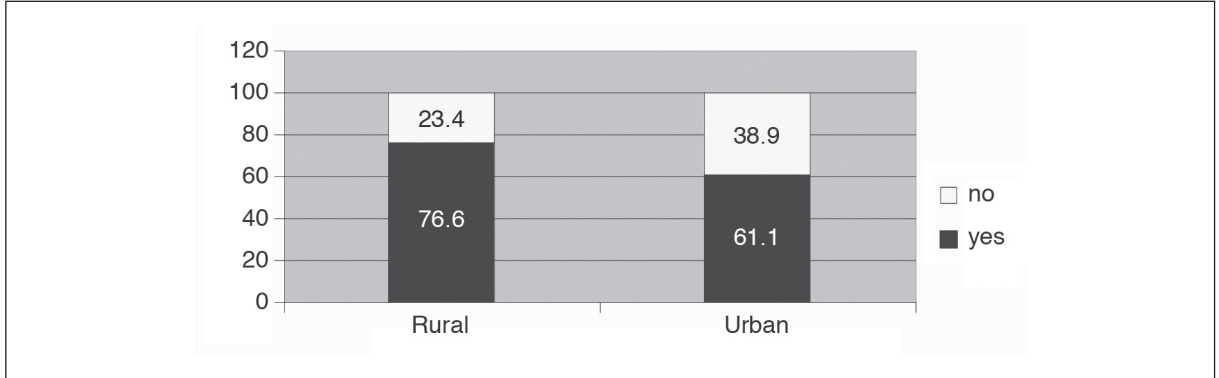
A new child labour policy was adopted in May 25, 2004. Among other regulations, this policy identifies the types of work (very broadly) in which the employment of children under 18 is prohibited (those that can damage children's health and mental well-being) and makes a medical review a mandatory requirement for hiring children. However, it is unlikely that many of these regulations will be enforced, particularly since children's work takes place predominantly in the small-scale informal sector.

2.5 Microcredit programmes

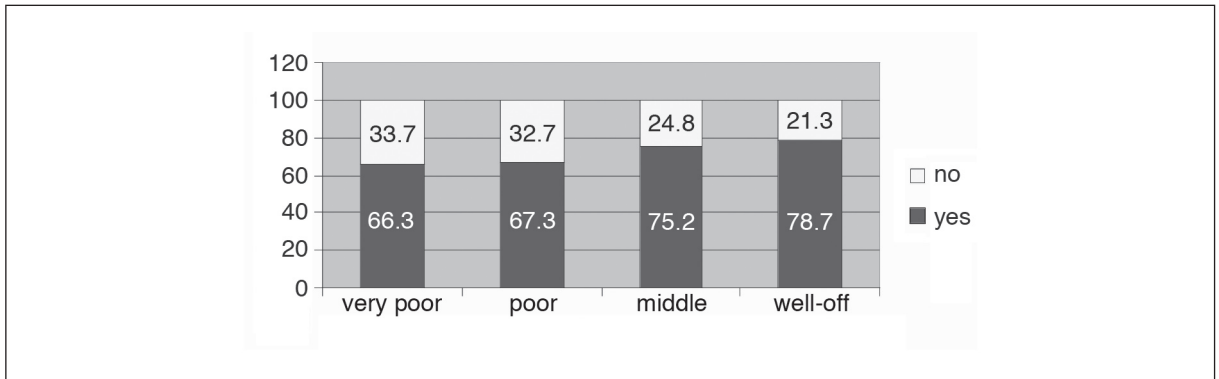
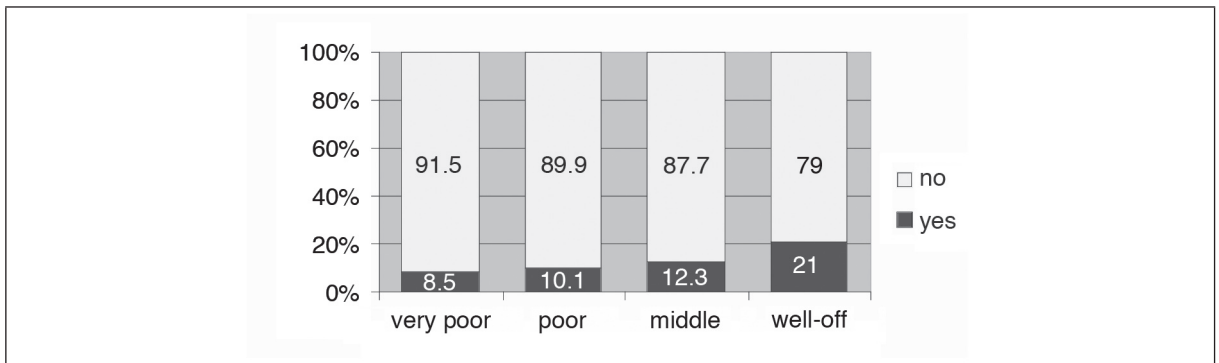
Microcredit programmes are considered to be one of the main measures to deal with poverty in Kyrgyzstan's National Poverty Reduction Strategy. International organisations as WB, ADB, UNDP and USAID are among the main international donors providing funds for microcredit programmes, which were introduced in the second part of the 1990s. Some programmes specifically target poor people, while others emphasise business development and therefore target entrepreneurs. The effectiveness of microcredit programmes in reducing poverty has not been comprehensively assessed in Kyrgyzstan (Alymkulova, 2003).

Given the strong emphasis on microcredit as a poverty reduction tool, we examined the perspectives of different groups of people of such programmes and their participation in them.

As figure 3 below shows, people in rural areas were more aware of microcredit programmes than those in urban areas. This may reflect the rural development emphasis of many microfinance institutions.

Figure 3 Awareness of microcredit programmes by location

However, as figures 4 and 5 show, better-off people are more aware of microcredit programmes and more likely to participate in them than their poor counterparts. Although levels of awareness are quite high (ranging from 66 per cent among very poor people to 78 per cent among better-off people), the numbers who have actually participated in such programmes are much lower. Only about 9 per cent of poor people have participated in microcredit programmes, compared to 21 per cent of better-off people.

Figure 4 Awareness of microcredit programmes by socio-economic status*Figure 5 Participation in microcredit programmes by socio-economic status*

About half of the respondents who took microcredit said that they were satisfied with the impacts. There was a small difference between rural and urban areas (51 per cent in rural areas and 52 per cent in urban areas). Substantially more respondents in rural areas (17 per cent) were unable to repay loans and became bankrupt after taking microcredit compared to urban respondents (4 per cent).

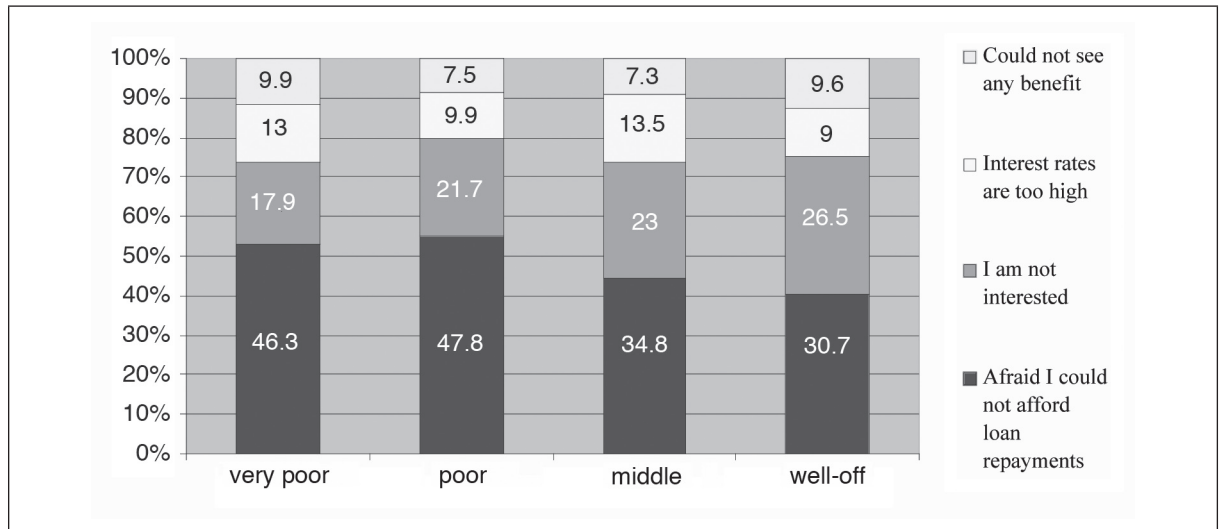
Most respondents in our qualitative interviews mentioned that most microcredit programmes demand regular payments every week or month. However, making such frequent repayments is only possible for people involved in trading, particularly those trading in cities or villages close to cities. It is much harder, for example, for traders in isolated and mountainous villages to make regular repayments. Respondents in such villages said that they would be interested in getting microcredit to cultivate land or raise livestock. However, this is not currently possible: because they have to wait until after the harvest or after their livestock have produced young, they cannot make monthly repayments. Even for people in cities, making such frequent repayments is difficult. The people we interviewed in this study said that they would be interested in getting microcredit if it was to be repaid after one year in cities and villages near to cities, and after two to three years in isolated and mountainous villages.

Around 7 per cent of respondents from villages were not satisfied with the results of taking microcredit because they had to pay for documents showing their ownership of their house as collateral in order to get credit. This is costly both in terms of time and money, particularly for villagers living far from *oblast* and *rayon* centres, such as Sogment, which is two hours away from Batken city. They also have to pay for the documents. People understand that they have to provide documents before getting microcredit, but they found it difficult to collect all of them.¹⁸ As a consequence, people try to find an easier way to get microcredit – in this case, through bribing people to supply documents. As one respondent in Sogment village told us, somebody might pay 5 000 to 10 000 soms from a microcredit loan of 50 000 soms for help with documents, but will to repay for the whole loan. Thus, people suggested simplifying the procedure for getting microcredit.

Our quantitative research revealed several other reasons for low participation of people in microcredit programmes: people are afraid that they will not be able to afford loan repayments; they are not interested in microcredit; they feel that interest rates are too high; or they see no benefit in taking microcredit.¹⁹

18 People in most villages do not have official documents at home, and it is costly to obtain them.

19 For more detail, see Table 5, Appendix II.

Figure 6 Reasons for non-participation in microcredit programmes by socio-economic status

As figure 6 shows, the importance of these reasons differs by socio-economic group. Poorer people are more likely to be afraid that they will not afford loan repayments. (About 46 per cent of poor versus to 31 per cent of the well-off group). For instance, many respondents told us about cases where some families from their villages took microcredit and could not pay it back. As a result, they had to sell their houses or all their possessions and move to other places, such as Bishkek or Russia. Some heads of households even left their families without any support. This is one of the reasons why people are afraid to take a loan which is secured with physical collateral. These bankruptcies in the early stages of implementation of microcredit programmes happened because some people receiving microcredit used funds for consumption,²⁰ combined with little knowledge about how to run an effective enterprise.

The second main reason for not participation in microcredit programs is that people are not interested. Overall, better-off people are less interested in getting microcredit. Even though this group of people participate more in such programs, the who are interested in doing so is still low. One explanation may be that compared to other groups, they possess more assets and have less need of microcredit. They also have better social networks than poor people, and are more able to rely on close relatives or friends if they need help. Even so, 31 per cent of the well-off group are afraid that they could not afford loan repayments.

The poorer people are, the more likely it is that interest rates will be too high for them. As some of them told us, there are microcredit programmes with interest rates as high as 30 to 36 per cent per year. As noted earlier, people who live in villages far away from urban centres use microcredit to grow crops and raise livestock, which are not as profitable as trading. Most of them felt that microcredit programmes should consider the realities of people's economic situations and make interest rates lower, for example, two to three per cent per year.

20 For example, one respondent told us that he had spent his loan on his son's wedding.

The microcredit programmes designed as group-lending schemes should, in theory, be more accessible to poor people because they do not require physical collateral. Group-lending based on 'social collateral' is the most common approach and requires that, if one member defaults, other group members should repay on their behalf (Alymkulova, 2003). However, the results of our research show that group-lending schemes also tend to exclude poor people. As a respondent in a southern village, who had participated several times in a group-lending microcredit programme told us, they do not include people who they think might fail to repay, ie poor people.

Conclusions

This section has reviewed the incomes, assets of people and livelihood strategies which they employ.

Over 40 per cent of respondents reported that they earn less than 100 soms a month per capita. The mean monthly income per capita in rural areas is 131 soms, and in urban areas is 255 soms, both of which are under the poverty line. The most important sources of income are state benefits such as pensions, stipend, and allowances, trading and getting of salaries from formal employment. However, pensions, benefits and salaries are usually paid three to four months late, and in some places even where it is stated that benefits are paid in cash, they are in fact still paid in kind.

Different groups of people are at risk of falling into chronic poverty. Single-parent headed families, families with large number of children, and young families in rural areas who lack access to land are particularly at risk, since their asset bases are so limited. In order to cope, people use a range of survival strategies, some of which may also lead to chronic poverty. For example, reduction of eaten food and heating of home in winter for example negatively affect of health of adults and children with both short and long-term consequences. About 20 per cent of have people migrated in search of a better life. However, many face difficulties in finding a well-paid job, accessing medical services and educating children in the cities to which they migrate.

Involving children in work is another important coping strategy. In general, children start work around age six doing easy jobs (cleaning, cooking, washing dishes, bringing water etc.) and as they get older start to take on harder jobs, such as working in the fields, looking after other people's livestock, mining coal, collecting plastic bottles and glasses at the bazaar for resale, and portering goods at the bazaar. Children's working conditions are often poor. First of all, most children are working outside. Secondly, the work they perform is hard physically, even for adults. Thirdly, working children are sometimes abused or cheated by their employers and/or other adults. Often this work conflicts with their education, or harms their health and thus can lead to their being trapped in poverty in the future.

Microcredit programmes are considered to be one of the main measures to deal with poverty through the National Poverty Reduction Strategy in Kyrgyzstan. However, our results suggest that better-off people are much more likely than poor people to participate. First of all people find it hard to get microcredit with physical collateral, because they have no mortgageable assets or they are not worth enough. Secondly, poor people are excluded from group collateral because people in the group are afraid of including poor people fearing that they will be unable to repay. Finally, most poor people find microcredit interest rates too high and repayment periods too short. As a result, microcredit is not making the contribution that it could to tackling poverty and preventing chronic poverty developing.

3. Human development

3.1 Education

3.1.1 School enrolment

According to our survey, as table 11 shows school enrolment is high. Almost every 7-17 year old is currently enrolled at school. However, this statistic can be misleading, since as we discuss in section 3.1.2 below, many children attend school irregularly. Furthermore, there are cases when many students only attend school 'on paper' by getting false *spravki*²¹ to avoid school attendance monitoring carried out by school teachers. The salary of school teachers depends on the proportion of enrolled school-aged children in the areas attached to the school. The higher the proportion of children enrolled the higher the salary, the exact amount of which is determined by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, if children do not want to attend school, some teachers ask them to bring falsified documents from other schools that certify students' attendance in that school.

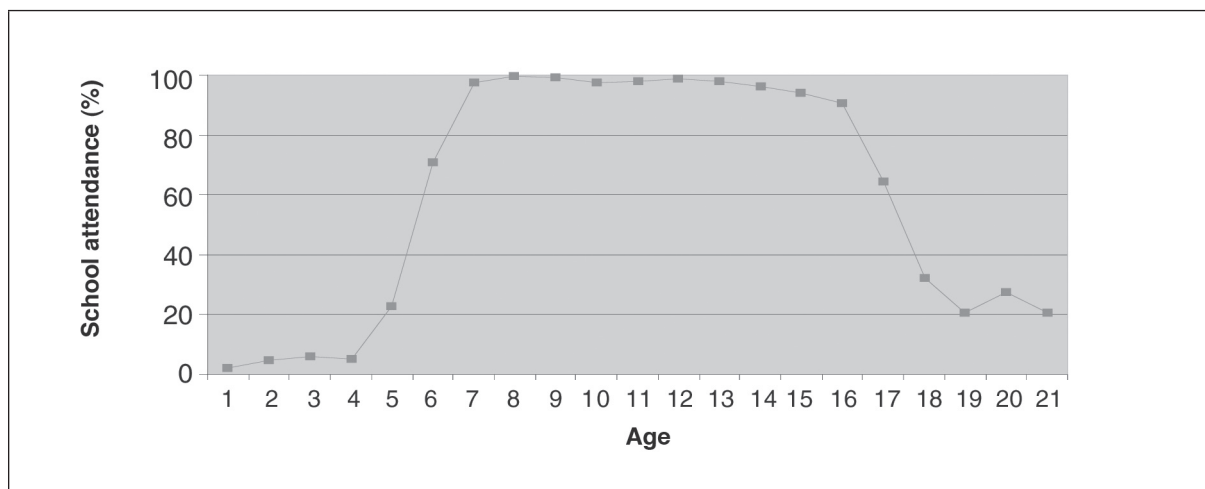
The preschool and specialised secondary and university enrolment in our research areas are lower than national figures because our research targeted the poorest communities in Kyrgyzstan. The majority of communities do not have preschool facilities and this leads to low preschool enrollment. As for vocational schooling and higher education, again, the vast majority of communities do not have vocational schools, and few people can afford to send their children to study elsewhere and pay for accommodation and tuition.

However, secondary school enrolment is higher than national figures. This difference may be explained by the fact that our data are based on the responses of parents, and some might answer in a way which makes them look good. Similarly, during our qualitative research almost all parents talked about the benefits of education. However, during our conversations with children we found out that some parents actually regard education very differently.

Table 11 School enrolment by age

Age:	School enrolment (%)	
	Yes	No
Preschool (2-6 years old)	8.8	91.2
Primary (7-10 years old)	91.8	8.2
Non-finished secondary (11-15 years old)	97.6	2.4
Secondary (16-17 years old)	92.3	7.7
Vocational school or University (18-22 years old)	33.8	66.2
Total	65.3	34.7

²¹ *Spravki* are documents which show that children are enrolled at a certain school.

Figure 7 School enrolment by age

About one-third of children in this study continue their education after secondary school. However, many students apply to *zaochnyi* or distance learning education programmes, where they do not attend classes and take exams once a year. Based on information provided by school children during focus group discussions, only about 10 per cent of school graduates attend the nearest higher education institution. Some students mentioned that students sometimes bribe teachers to get passing grades.

Only 9 per cent of children in our study attend kindergartens. Such a low percentage reflects the fact that the vast majority of kindergartens were closed after the collapse of the Soviet Union since they were attached to enterprises which closed, and local authorities could not afford to maintain them. Children in urban areas are more likely to attend kindergartens than in rural areas (see Table 12), reflecting the fact that relatively more urban kindergartens stayed open. Moreover, there are higher levels of income in urban areas, a greater belief in the benefits to children of attending kindergarten and a greater need to have somewhere safe for young children while parents are at work.

The functioning of kindergartens depends greatly on the efficiency of local authorities. For instance, in Kokyangak there are four functioning kindergartens with 50 per cent discounts for poor families. Thus, a poor family has to pay 35 – 50 soms per month per child. Moreover, children can attend kindergartens for free during the summer. These discounts are financed from the local authority's budget. This is a rare example, and such arrangements are more common in urban than in rural areas. The lack of kindergartens particularly affects single-parent households which are twice as likely as two-parent households to use kindergartens (see Table 12), reflecting mothers' needs for children to be in a safe place while they are at work.

Table 12 Significant influences on school enrolment (percentages)

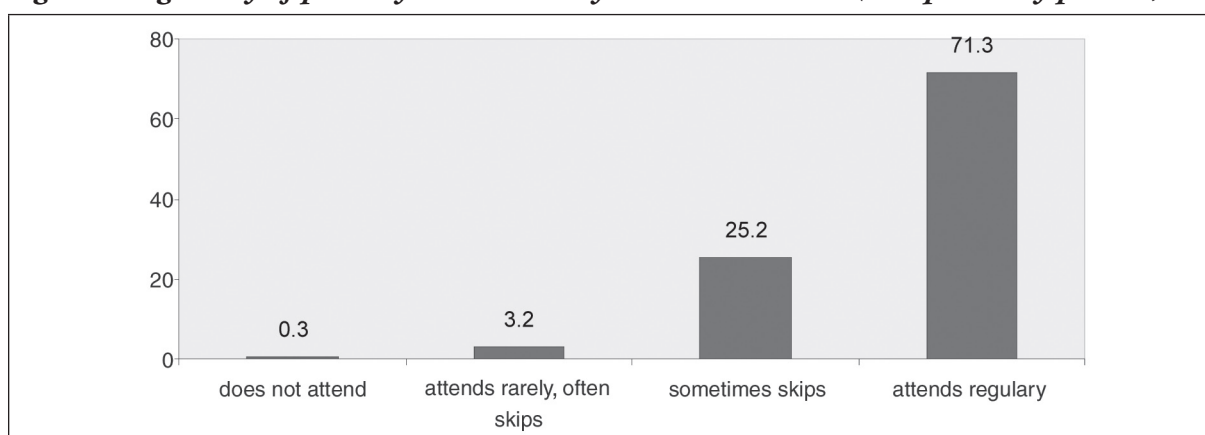
STRATA	Place of study				
	Preschool	Primary school	Non-finished secondary school	Secondary school	Technical school or university
Location					
Rural	6.6*	90.6	97.5	90.8*	32.6
Urban	15.8*	95.1	98.1	97.6*	37.6
Household types (in cities)					
Two-parent households	7.9*	91.2	97.6	91.8	33.9
Single-parent households	15.9*	97.3	98.0	97.4	32.2
Sex					
Boys	6.4*	92.0	96.7*	96.7	33.3
Girls	11.3*	91.6	98.6*	98.6	34.2

*Chi-square test is significant at 0.05 level

Differences between wealth groups, length of time residing in a city and age of parents were not significant.

3.1.2 Regularity of attendance

Although there are high levels of school enrolment, there is a serious problem of irregular attendance. As can be seen in Figure 8, more than a quarter of parents reported that their children miss classes. However, as parents noted the regularity of their children's school attendance, this might reflect the fact children skip classes without parents' knowledge.

Figure 8 Regularity of primary and secondary school attendance (as reported by parents)

It might be expected that irregular attendance of school is strongly associated with poverty and disadvantage. However, our analysis suggests it is the more advantaged children who are more likely to attend school irregularly (see Table 13). Also, children with young parents attend school

more regularly than children with older parents, despite the fact that younger families are overall worse off materially. Young parents therefore seem to be more concerned about their children's education than older parents. Children from two-parent households were reported to attend school less regularly than children from single-parent households, which is rather surprising as these households are more vulnerable to poverty, and their children might have been expected to skip school.

Table 13 Regularity of primary and secondary school attendance

STRATA	School attendance			
	Attends regularly	Sometimes skips	Attends rarely, often skips	Does not attend
<i>Location (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>				
Rural	65.3	30.8	3.6	0.4
Urban	88.3	9.6	2.2	
<i>Households (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>				
Two-parent	70.2	26.3	3.1	0.3
Single	80.8	15.3	3.9	
<i>Parents' age (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>				
Not young	69.8	26.7	3.2	0.3
Young	91.8	4.5	3.7	
<i>Socio-economic group (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>				
Group 1 (poorest)	65.3	28.2	6.1	0.5
Group 2	78.2	17.9	3.8	0.2
Group 3	72.7	25.9	1.4	
Group 4 (best off)	66.2	31.3	2.0	0.4
<i>Gender (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>				
Boys	68.1	28.2	3.3	0.4
Girls	74.9	21.9	3.1	0.1
<i>Schools (Chi square test is significant at 0.05 level)</i>				
Primary school (7-10)	75.6	22.5	2.0	
Non-finished secondary school (11-15)	70.6	25.2	3.9	0.3
Secondary school (16-17)	65.8	30.1	3.5	0.6

Children from the highest socio-economic group are less likely to attend school regularly than children from lower well-being groups in both rural and urban areas. Better-off families, particularly in rural areas, are likely to have more extensive land and livestock, and children are therefore more likely to skip school to work on family enterprises. Poorer children hire out their labour to others, and so are likely to skip school to work at peak agricultural times. Children in urban areas attend school less frequently than children in rural areas because of greater urban

work opportunities, which also pay better than opportunities in rural areas, and/ or higher living and schooling expenses in urban areas.

Children in primary school attend school more regularly than children in the last years of secondary school. This can be attributed to the fact that children of 16-17 years of age are considered able to perform different kinds of work, have greater job opportunities and therefore can earn more than younger children. Our qualitative research suggests that dropping out of school or missing school for work is particularly evident in households with many children. In these cases, the future of older children is often sacrificed for the future of their younger siblings.

Despite the popular belief that girls' school attendance is declining, particularly in the south of the country, our study found that girls attend school more regularly than boys in both the north and south. This may reflect girls' more limited employment opportunities and greater motivation to attend school. For example, as children said during focus group discussions in Gulbar, boys prefer to spend their time playing billiards and cards. In Iskra, many children and some teachers reported that some boys leave their homes in the morning but instead of attending classes they play football in school yards.

3.1.3 Major reasons for irregular school attendance

Figure 9 Reasons for irregular attendance at primary and secondary school (percentage of responses)

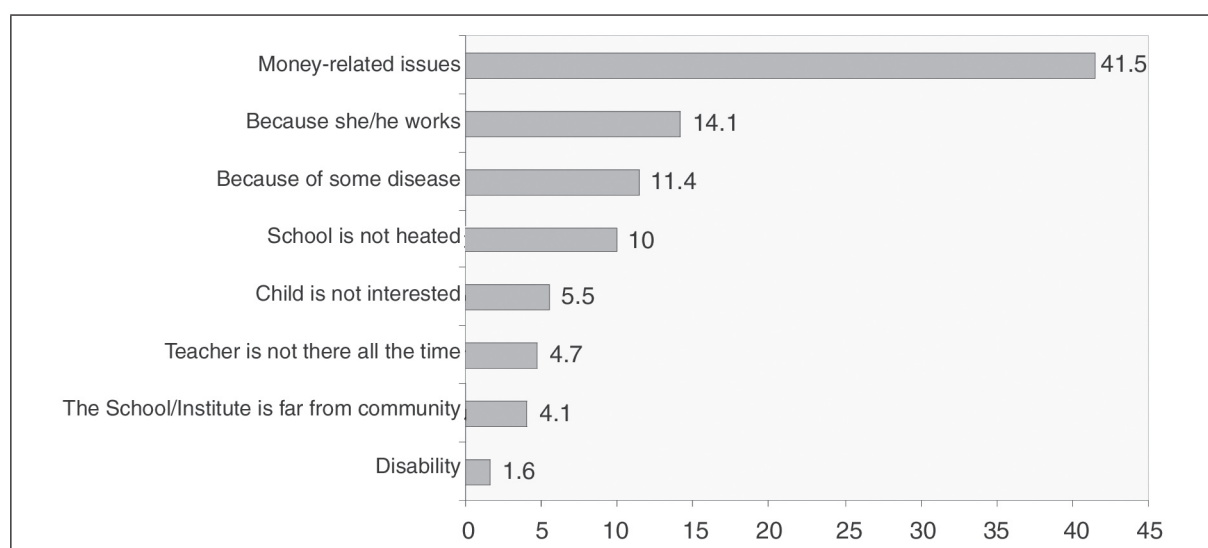


Table 14 shows how the importance of different reasons non-attendance varies with poverty and socio-economic status. These variations are discussed in the sections below.

Table 14 Reasons for skipping primary and secondary school classes by socio-economic group (percentages)

Reasons	Socio-economic group			
	1	2	3	4
Money-related issues	27.2	58.0	51.1	33.7
Because s/he works	14.4	9.2	8.4	21.2
Because of some disease	20.8	10.1	12.2	5.4
School is not heated	8.8	9.2	6.1	14.1
Child is not interested	5.6	2.5	6.9	6.5
Teacher is not there all the time		2.5	4.6	9.2
The School /Institute is far from community	12.8	3.4	2.3	0
Disability	4.8	0.8	1.5	0

(Chi-squared test is significant at 0.01 level for all reasons)

1) Financial reasons

School non-attendance is clearly money-related. However, as was mentioned above, it is children from the higher wealth groups who are more likely to skip school. This apparent contradiction may reflect the fact that the differences between the wealth groups are not very great, and even better-off families may find it hard to afford all school expenses. In addition, some parents regard school expenses as unaffordable because they do not see the benefits of education, and thus prioritise other expenses such as food, heating, or investment in property or livestock.

Lack of clothes or shoes, and inability to buy textbooks or pay fees were cited as important reasons for not attending school by more than forty per cent of respondents (see figure 9).

a) Adequate clothing

Of all financial reasons for school non-attendance, lack of clothes seems to be the most important. In many large households with school-aged children, we observed that some children attend classes irregularly and some of them even drop out of school due to the shortage of clothes. There was a case in one of the communities where, although children were provided with free textbooks (another common reason for missing school examined further below) by a special school committee fund (the structure and functions of such committees are explained

further below), they skipped classes because they did not have anything to wear. Since winter clothes are the most expensive, this problem becomes particularly acute during the winter.

*I don't have all the clothes I need. My mother cannot afford all these things. We have one pair of winter shoes for both of us, for mommy and me. I wear sports shoes in winter.*²² **Burulai, 14-year old girl in Kelechek.**

The reason why they quit their school is because they don't have clothes and shoes. They wear rubber shoes. My son's feet are red when he takes off his shoes. **Asankul, a parent in Gulbar.**

The quality of clothes can also prevent children from going to classes. A number of teachers, parents and children themselves mentioned that one of the reasons for irregular attendance might be that children are ashamed of the clothes they have. In addition, many children complained about teachers' biases on the basis of how well a child is dressed.

The reason they dropped out of school was that their peers made fun of their poor clothes. I decided to go to my brother and asked him to borrow me money, then I thought about how I would pay back that debt ... and could not see how to do it. Then it ended up with my daughters dropping out of school. **Gulnara, a 45-year old parent in Kelechek.**

The relationship with teachers depends on how you are dressed and whether you have money or not. If you are dressed nicely they treat you well. **Elmira, a 14-year old girl in Kelechek.**

Respondents indicated several ways in which they solved these problems. These included borrowing money from relatives to buy clothes to send children to school. Alternatively, parents accept clothes donated by people in the community or children work to earn money to buy clothes.

I could not manage to save any asset, not even a carpet. We haven't bought clothes for 2-3 years. We wear whatever is donated by relatives. **Mariya, a 38-year old parent in Gulbar.**

Everything that we earn we spend on food. I take clothes to smaller kids from Lena [a school teacher]. Vera Petrovna – a teacher – gives us clothes too. What can I do? I am not ashamed of this. Otherwise my daughter would have nothing to put on to go to 6th grade. **Sihuar, a 46-year old parent in Iskra.**

I used to skip some classes when I had some work to do in the field or when I had no clothes and shoes to wear ..., I gave money to my mother and she bought me some... A lot of my classmates also don't attend school, about five or six. They are working now, they earn money for their clothes themselves. **Nurlan, a 16-year old boy in Gulbar.**

²² Sports shoes are cheaper and much thinner than ordinary winter shoes.

b) Distance from school

About four per cent of respondents mentioned that children do not go to school because it is far from home; but this figure rises to 12 per cent in the poorest wealth group. This problem is especially serious in migrant areas since there is usually no school in the area and children have to attend city schools (Dubrowskaya, 2003).²³ This can have serious consequences for children. Thus, in Kelechek a migrant area in the suburbs of Bishkek, respondents mentioned transport costs as an important factor leading children to miss school. Since this is a relatively new district, the nearest schools are around 30 minutes drive from that area. Generally, children under seven have a right to use public transportation as well as *marshrutki*²⁴ for free. School-aged children have discounts on public transportation: they pay one som if they have a document certifying their school enrolment. However, these discounts are not applicable in *marshrutki*. Since there is a shortage of public buses and trolleybuses serving *novostroiki*, children who are older than 7 years old have to use private *marshrutki* and pay the full fee, five som per ride.

The reason we skip classes is that sometimes we do not have money to pay for the transport to get to school. Orozgul, 14 year old girl in Kelechek.

c) Costs of school fees and rent of textbooks

Another money-related reason for school non-attendance is an inability to afford school fees, ie tuition fees and contributions for school repairs, or to buy or rent textbooks.

We pay 100 som for education at school and 15 som for each book. It was not difficult earlier, but now when we had our second son it became harder. Anara, a 40 year old parent in Iskra.

I haven't got books. I need to pay for school repair works, which is 40 som. But I haven't paid yet. Half of the class paid. Amir, 12 years old boy in Gulbar.

Tables 6 and 7 in Appendix II show that there is some relationship between poverty levels and the affordability of school expenses. Unsurprisingly, richer people are less likely to experience difficulties in paying for school expenses, while it is harder for single-parent households and households with many children to meet these expenses. Young parent households, however, were more able to afford school expenses than more established families. There may be a number of explanations for this – for example, young families are generally smaller, are less likely to have other major expenses (eg contributions to weddings, funerals), or are generally more committed to education. Respondents in urban areas were more likely to find secondary school expenses difficult to afford (see table 7 in Appendix II). This may reflect the higher fees in urban schools. Many schools in urban areas have monthly tuition payments; renovation fees are also higher in

²³ Some working children in the *novostroiki* attend the 'school for working youth' with education four days a week. This is a government initiative where working children usually study two to three hours and three to four subjects a day.

²⁴ *Marshrutki* (private mini-buses), are the major form of public transportation in Bishkek and other major cities in Kyrgyzstan. Anyone who has a mini-bus and a license from the government can be involved in this business. The transportation fee in *marshrutki* is 5 som per person and in state-owned buses and trolley buses it is 3 som.

urban areas (160 – 250 soms) than in rural areas (110 -150 soms), and parents in urban areas have to buy more fashionable and expensive clothes for their children than in rural areas.

In most communities in our study, only a small number of children have most of the textbooks they need. Parents have to provide children with a minimum of five textbooks per year, where the cheapest textbook costs 50 soms, or textbooks can be rented at 10-15 soms per year. Affording textbooks is especially difficult for families with many children, and as a result, most families buy only two or three textbook per child per year. From our qualitative research, we have observed that poor families tend to buy fewer books for their small children and more books for those close to graduating from secondary school. Parents think that older children need more books in order to finish their studies successfully, but do not think it is necessary to provide all required books for younger children. Another issue is that children in poor families tend to rent old books which might be outdated. As a mother in one southern village informed us, since she cannot afford new books, she buys books that were published in the Soviet times.

Since these problems with textbooks, school tuition fees, and contributions to school repairs are common throughout the country, state special committees have been organised at local level for the purpose of supporting children from families with more than five children, orphans and children from single-parent families. Poor children are not eligible for such help if they are not from such families. These committees involve representatives of the local administration, teachers and parents. The functions of these committees are to decide who should get how much assistance. In one of our research communities in Talas, a number of students received shoes from a fundraising campaign conducted among community members and those who were born in this community and now live elsewhere.

Overall, some parents perceive the costs of education to outweigh the benefits, particularly since opportunities for paid employment are limited. As one poor interviewee put it:

The payment for one student equals ten people's living expenses. Instead [of paying for education], it's better to spend money on daily expenditures (tirikchilik kylaly). **Ulan, a 45-year old parent in Sogment.**

d) Work

About 14 per cent of children in our study skip classes (either seldom or often) because they work (see figure 9). It is worth noting, however, that the rate of skipping classes is considerably higher at peak agricultural times, usually spring and autumn, when teachers say that in rural communities, around 70 per cent of children miss school. At these periods, children miss about a month of school. In urban areas, there are no peak work seasons, and children are involved in work all year round. Even where most children miss school for work, follow-up classes are not conducted and students are responsible for catching up independently. Generally, this contributes to their learning less than their full-time peers. In addition, some teachers in rural areas also leave

their work to earn additional income from agricultural activities. This is not the case in urban schools where there are no seasonal peaks.

Putting food on the table is more important than me going to school. Nurlan, a 13-year old boy in Gulbar

If a child does not eat enough or does not consume the right products and does not consume enough vitamins, s/he cannot think about his/her studies; all s/he thinks about is food. A child becomes sleepy and stops being alert. We see that our children are pale and sleepy. Do they think about textbook chapters? Of, course not – they want to eat. When spring comes, parents rent land for cultivation. Children, then, do not go to school, and work to earn money for food. So, that is the situation with working children – they work very hard. Maria, a teacher in Tomon-Suu.

They gather almonds, pistachios. Pistachios are very expensive – 150 soms. ... We do not have enough pupils during these periods. We go to their homes and do not find them. We cannot stop them. About 50, 60, 70 percent are absent... Even teachers leave when everything ripens. Zarina, a 49-year old parent in Kokyangak.

Teachers are doing whatever they want. To tell the truth they did not teach us well, they were busy with their own business but may be now things will get back to normal - I do not know. Anagul, a 13 year old girl in Kelechek.

As well as paid work, some children also miss school to care for other children. In particular, older children take care of younger siblings while their parents are away. Sometimes parents bring teenage relatives (mostly to urban areas from rural) to take care of their children and do the housework.

I do not go to school, I would be in the 6th grade now but due to family circumstances I had to come to Bishkek. I came here to look after a baby. I stopped going to school about two months ago. Zinagul, a 13-year old girl in Kelechek.

2) Non-financial reasons

a) Illness

In our study, 11 per cent of respondents gave illness as a reason for children missing school. However, this figure rises to 21 per cent among the poorest income group, as shown in Table 13. Missing school due to illness is particularly common among the poorest families in winter because they find it difficult to afford to heat their homes and the costs of medicine if they fall ill.

I used to have headaches and skip classes because of that. Aijamal, a 11- year old girl in Gulbar.

b) Poor school conditions

Another important cause of non-attendance at school is the poor state of repair of many schools. Most community schools that we visited need serious renovations of walls, roofs and windows, and in almost no schools were the heating systems functioning properly. According to National Statistics Committee data, about 97 per cent of schools have undertaken some renovations; however, only 8 per cent could afford thorough school repairs. (National Statistics Committee, 2003). In addition, according to official data, nearly 15 per cent of schools in Kyrgyzstan need to repair their heating system; the proportion of such schools is higher in urban areas (about 42 per cent) than in rural areas (11 per cent). (National Statistics Committee, 2003). The temperature in winter inside such schools does not differ much from the outside temperature. In Sogment, for example, teachers indicated that the classroom temperature could be as low as -3°C , and in Kokyangak, classroom temperatures often fall to $+3^{\circ}\text{C}$. Many children get sick and miss school because of such low temperatures.

Teachers in Gulbar mentioned that they have collected money from children to buy electric heaters to heat their school rooms. However, they can use heaters very seldom since the community owes substantial amount of money for electricity, so, the electricity is not available from early spring till late autumn. During this time period, the school children are released earlier so that they can do their homework till it is dark. The electricity is provided in October from 6 pm till morning and sometimes in winter it is available all the day. Teachers can only heat their school rooms on these days. The school that majority of children in Kelechek attend is not heated at all and no repairs are done because the state of the school is perceived to be too bad to be worth it. As table 13 shows, low temperatures were of greatest concern to children from better-off families.

c) Quality of education

The quality of education is an important concern for better-off families in particular. For example, one better-off respondent said that he wanted to provide a good education for his children, but because he feels that this is impossible in the Batken oblast, he would like to send his son to study outside the oblast to get a better quality education. This is not only a concern for better-off people – however, poor people are more likely to decide that education is too costly given that the quality is low and future employment opportunities are limited, and thus they send their children to work instead.

Concerns raised by parents included the fact that teachers are under-qualified. In Batken, for example, one respondent told us that there are many teachers who have only completed secondary school and who study at universities on a distance learning basis. Furthermore, since

there is a lack of professional teachers in key school subjects and salaries are low, teachers take on courses in which they are not qualified in order to earn more. For example, in one of the research communities, a physical education instructor teaches mathematics with no training except that he studied it in school.

As observed above, teachers also skip classes to earn some additional income. This is a particular problem in rural areas during peak agricultural times. The average teachers' salary is 360 – 450 soms, with school directors earning up to 1000 soms per month. During our qualitative research, some school teachers admitted that it is more profitable to work in their fields than to teach at school. Moreover, there are delays of up to three to four months in the payment of salaries. In addition, some teachers reported that they are sometimes ashamed to go to school because of their poor clothing. Teachers in cities are more vulnerable since they do not usually have additional sources of income. Thus, according to official data, the proportion of schools experiencing a shortage of teachers is higher in urban areas (59 per cent) than in rural areas (46 per cent). (National Statistics Committee, 2003). Overall, about 48 per cent of schools need professional teachers in different subjects across the country. To earn additional income, the vast majority of teachers conduct additional classes for students.²⁵ The cost of such classes varies from 10 – 30 soms per class. Teachers are then expected by parents to give higher grades to students attending these classes. Thus poorer students may appear to be doing less well at school since they cannot afford these additional payments - which can affect their chances of future study.

Finally, very often schools have poor library resources that have deteriorated since the Soviet era. Some schools have even closed their libraries. As a result, children's access to additional sources of reading material (beyond textbooks) is limited. There is also a shortage or absence of teaching methodology materials for teachers. According to official data, the teaching methodology materials have not been renewed for 10 years in about 49 per cent of schools across the country (National Statistics Committee, 2003).

The low quality of education impacts on children's and parents' perceptions of the value of education, and is another factor behind school drop-outs. For example, an 11-year old girl who took part in our research in Kelechek said that her parents believe that such low quality education will not lead to a better life. They feel that under these circumstances, it is not important to get an education because she could find a job without it.

Conclusions

This section has reviewed the effect of poverty on children's education. Although there are high levels of school enrolment, there are also high levels of non-attendance. Our analysis suggests that it is the more advantaged children who are more likely to attend school irregularly. Children whose parents are young attend school more regularly than children with older parents; children

²⁵ This practice also exists in rural areas. However, since not many people in villages can afford such classes, it is much more common in urban areas.

from two-parent households were reported to attend school less regularly than children from single-parent households and children from the highest wealth group were less likely to attend school regularly than children from lower wealth groups in both rural and urban areas. Further research is needed to explain the reasons for such relationships. No evidence was found of a significant gender bias in enrolment or attendance.

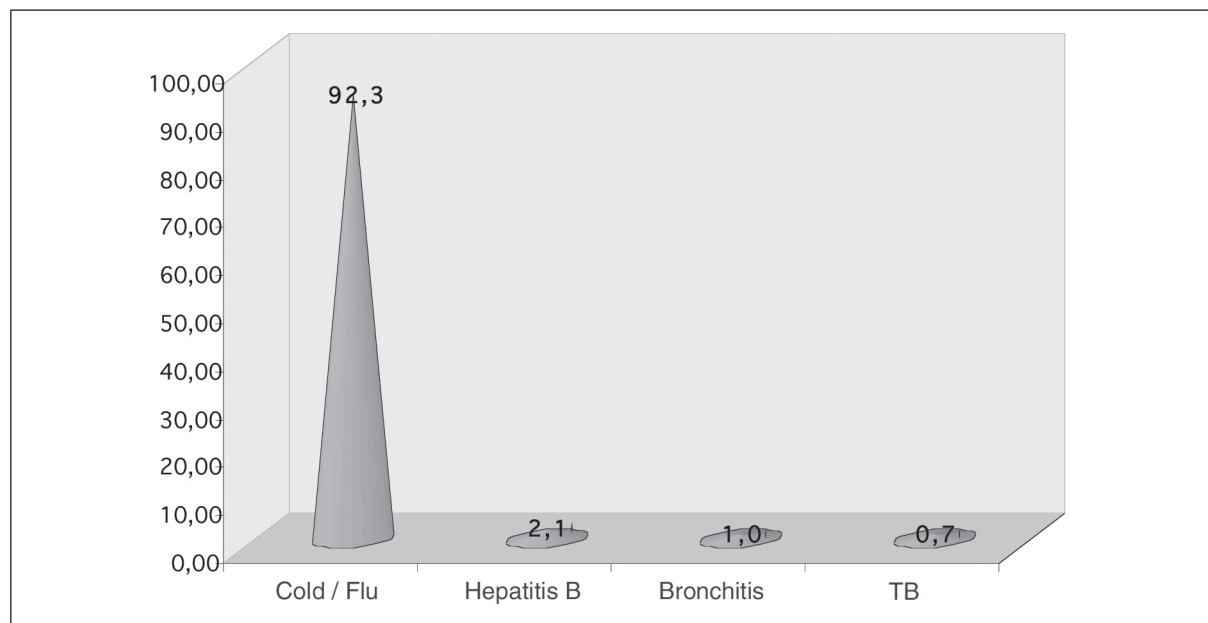
The reasons for irregular attendance vary, but many are clearly poverty-related: ie inadequate clothing, inability to afford school costs, and illnesses (a particularly important reason in the poorest group). Work is also an important reason. Teacher absenteeism, poor school conditions and the quality of education are also concerns.

All these factors mean that there is a substantial risk of many of these children being trapped in poverty in the future. According to the findings of World Bank research, having a university education is one of the most significant factors against poverty in Kyrgyzstan (World Bank, 2003).

The ways that some of these concerns can be addressed will be discussed in Section 6.

3.2 Health

Figure 10 Common children's diseases



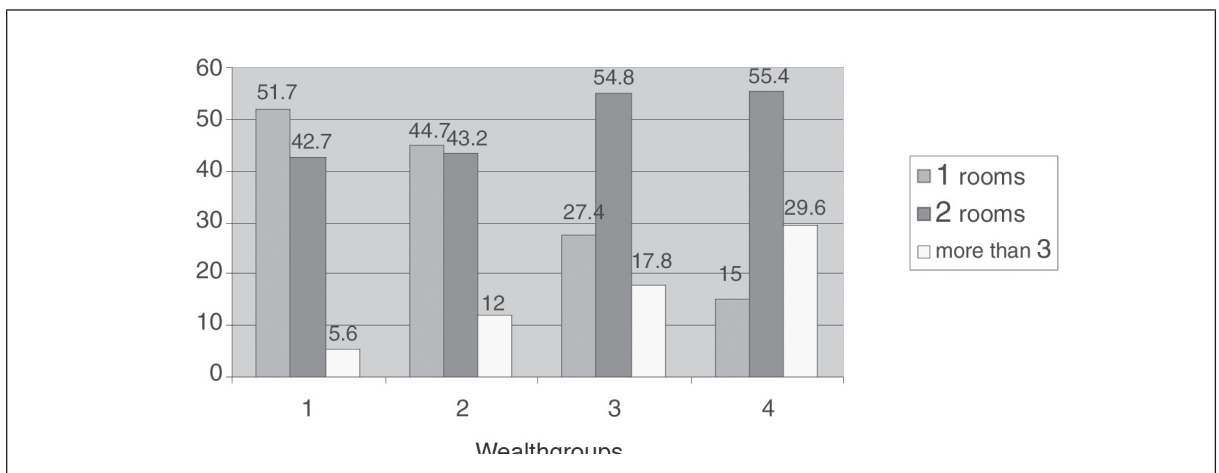
As Figure 10 shows, colds and flu are the most commonly reported diseases among the children in this study.

3.2.1 Main factors affecting children's health

a) Heating

Lack of heating during winter at both home and school contributes to the increase of catarrhal infections among children. As Figure 11 shows, regardless of the number of rooms in a house, the majority of respondents heat no more than two rooms and poorer people are likely to heat only one room and to use heating for shorter time periods than those who are better-off. As a result, almost every child has a cold in winter.

Figure 11 Number of rooms heated



Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level

b) Access to water

Access to clean water is another critical health-related issue in the research communities. Table 15 shows that piped water in the home is the most common source of water. It should however be noted that in the majority of communities, the pipes have not been replaced for a long time. Thus, the quality of piped water is questionable.

Table 15 Water supply (percentage of total number of respondents)

Source of water	Percentage
Piped water	26.6
Canal, river, pond	19.7
Central water supply system	18.3
Draw well	16.6
Spring water	10.5
Brought water ²⁶	8.0

²⁶ In some communities, water is transported from other areas in big container trucks or cars and then distributed to residents.

About 30 per cent of respondents use water from canals, rivers, ponds, and springs, sources that are not protected and which can easily be accessed by animals. They are therefore not reliably clean and safe. Table 16 indicates that people in rural areas are more likely to use water from unprotected sources: there is also a strong relationship between low socio-economic groups and unprotected water sources. Thus, poor families in rural areas are most likely to use water from unsafe sources, and are most vulnerable to associated water-borne diseases.

Table 16 Main influences on using water from unprotected sources

STRATA	Use water from canals, rivers, or ponds	
	No	Yes
<i>Socio-economic group (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>		
Group 1 (poorest)	76.8	23.2
Group 2	85.3	14.7
Group 3	74.8	25.2
Group 4 (best off)	82.8	17.2
<i>Location (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>		
Rural	73.1	26.9
Urban	99.7	0.3
<i>Total</i>	80.3	19.7

The extent of water access problems is very obvious during the summer when the proportion of people depending on unsafe source of water increases drastically. Many people use water from their *aryks* (small streams or irrigation channels) to cook and drink, although such water is not even suitable for washing clothes. The *aryks* run openly throughout the communities, and people and animals all have access to this water, which is brown and often contains refuse. As a result, there have been various disease epidemics in most of the research communities. According to information provided by the Sanitary and Epidemic Station in Kokyangak, there were 37 cases of hepatitis in 2002. In addition, a medical worker in Gulbar informed us that 207 children (out of approximately 3,500 children in Gulbar) got typhoid in the same year.

c) Health-seeking behaviour

Many respondents consider using health services to be a luxury. This confirms other research in Kyrgyzstan which has shown that about one-sixth of people have avoided using health services and nearly a quarter have not bought prescribed medicines because of costs (DFID, 2001). People generally try to treat themselves. For example, if children have flu, families try to treat it by using traditional methods, such as drinking hot milk with butter, tea with raspberry or honey, and herbs. Many children go back to school or work without fully recovering, potentially

damaging their immune system and increasing their risk of developing a chronic disease or exposure to other short-term illnesses. In addition, such children can expose other children to this disease.

When somebody is ill in the household, they become a burden to all family members. All illness, but particularly that of breadwinners, can push people into great difficulty. People who are slightly well-off may actually fall into poverty as a result. Firstly, they lose a breadwinner and secondly, the costs of medical treatment and medicines are so high that they have to sell livestock or other important assets.

*When my children get sick usually we get help from relatives. Last time my sister-in-law bought medicines for 75 soms when they got sick. My youngest daughter had some problems with her hand, but we couldn't afford to cure it. We had to pay for other things and for food but we were not able to put aside money for her. **Gulnara, a 45-year old parent in Kelechek.***

*A horse kicked him. He had six operations and doctors took out his large intestine. When he got sick we sold all of our livestock, our cow and bull. He only finished the eighth grade. **Nurlan, a 16-year old boy in Gulbar (talking about his 21-year old brother).***

During our qualitative fieldwork, a number of poor respondents were chronically sick or disabled. Their families are very dependent on close relatives. For example, one of our respondents in Kokyangak, Nurlan, had a stomach ulcer. He underwent surgery twice in 1997 and 2002. Since he was unable to provide for his three children, he had to return to his parents' house and is supported by his father's salary. Since all the work that is available in Kokyangak is very physically demanding, every time he takes a job he spends several days in bed afterwards. He cannot afford medical treatment and is not aware of the Mandatory Health Insurance Fund. In another case, a mother of four children in Kokyangak depends financially on her children. The mother became disabled two years ago and cannot walk. Her three sons are currently working and the girl stays at home to look after her mother.

Officially, all disabled people are entitled to monthly social assistance. However, there are a number of obstacles to getting this assistance. For example, according to Kyrgyz legislation in order to qualify for assistance, a person should go to the *rayon* center (often not only once) and gather a *medical and social expert committee* to certify the disability. During our qualitative research, people in Gulbar complained about this procedure since it is very time-consuming.

The importance of costs in the non-use of health services is borne out in Table 17 which examines reasons for dissatisfaction with health services. Almost half the respondents complained that doctors do not treat patients properly until the patients pay them,²⁷ while nearly 20 per cent found medicines too expensive. Perceived incompetence of doctors and lack of equipment in the facility were other important reasons for dissatisfaction, and contribute to self-medication

²⁷ The payment can be official or unofficial. Unofficial payments are a sort of *appreciation* of the patient for the medical service, the size of which depends on the patient's financial situation. This *appreciation* has become a widespread phenomenon throughout the country due to low salaries of medical workers.

or consulting traditional healers. As shown in Table 6 (livelihood strategies), 10 per cent of respondents had visited a traditional healer instead of making use of the public health system in order to reduce costs.

Table 17 Reasons for being dissatisfied with medical facilities (percentage of total number of respondents who replied that they are not satisfied with the treatment)

Reasons for dissatisfaction:	Percentage
Doctors treat you if you have money	48.0
The medicine is too expensive	18.6
The doctors are unprofessional	11.8
There are no equipment in the facility	10.8
The facilities are too far from home	8.8
The facility is not functioning	2.0

Awareness about entitlements under the Mandatory Health Insurance (MHI) system is quite low. The majority of families in this study are not aware of their entitlements; as a result, they are not accessing free treatment for their children. None of the respondents interviewed in Sogment was aware their entitlements. In addition to a lack of knowledge, there are also administrative obstacles. For example, according to information provided by medical officers in Gulbar, about 70 per cent of the village population is not covered by MHI. They have sent all required documents to the *rayon* MHI fund administration. The *rayon* MHI fund representatives informed them that all the documents are now in Bishkek, where all people who are entitled to MHI, are registered. However, this has not yet resulted in insurance coverage for the village population. In addition, medical workers in most communities complained about the limited list of medicines covered by MHI and a shortage of even listed medicines.

Migrants face additional problems in accessing their entitlements. Free medical services (for children) and Mandatory Health Insurance discounts (for adults) are only available to people who are officially registered in their new location. This means that the majority of migrants have to pay for all medical services. As a result, most migrants only seek medical care in absolute emergencies (Dubrowskaya, 2003).

3.3 Diet and Nutrition

Usually, respondents eat three times a day: bread and tea in the morning, a hot meal for lunch, and bread and tea in the evening. In summer, they include vegetables and fruit in their diet. Meat is consumed very rarely. Some traditional dishes that should include meat are prepared without it. For example, *manty* (steamed dumplings) and *pelmeni* (boiled dumplings) are usually

cooked with potatoes, while soups are also generally made without meat. Some poor respondents said that the only times they have meat are when someone invites them to a party or when they invite guests to their home.

We have difficulties with food during winter time. Because everything is expensive and there are no vegetables and fruits. There are a lot of them in summer; we eat a lot in summer time.

Ikbal, a 16 year old girl in Kelechek.

*We eat three times a day, and a hot meal once a day. We mostly cook dishes with noodles. We do not eat meat at all, sometimes when there are guests coming home I need to slaughter one of my hens, then I cook something with chicken and feed both guests and children. Otherwise, we do not eat meat. Pumpkins, carrots, potatoes and onions are used for manty. **Mariya, a 38 year old parent in Gulbar.***

*We don't eat meat and don't have sugar. We have little bit of potatoes and carrot which we add to the soup. **Asankul, a girl in Gulbar.***

*Parents cannot afford buying vegetables and dairy products. Everybody wants to eat, but there is no money for food. Fruits and vegetables are too expensive. **Gulnara, a girl in Kelechek.***

The higher the material status of a household, the more often a household can afford hot meals and meat (tables 18 and 19). People in rural areas have meat more frequently than in urban areas (table 19) since they occasionally slaughter their own livestock, while people in urban areas have to buy meat at higher prices than in villages. Families with many children consume meat less often.

Table 18 Influences on consumption of hot meals

STRATA	Hot meals consumption				
	One time a day	Two times a day	Three times a day	Four time a day	More than four times a day
<i>Socio-economic group (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>					
Group 1 (poorest)	72.3	13.5	12.7	1.1	0.4
Group 2	62.8	23.7	10.2	2.3	0.4
Group 3	52.6	21.5	21.9	3.7	0.4
Group 4 (best off)	46.1	21.0	18.7	13.1	1.1
<i>Location (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>					
Rural	61.6	13.0	18.1	6.4	0.6
Urban	49.2	38.4	11.1	1.0	0.3
<i>Areas in the cities (Chi square test is significant at 0.05 level)</i>					
Long term living	48.0	35.9	15.2	1.0	
Migrant	51.5	43.4	3.0	1.0	1.0
Total	58.2	19.9	16.2	4.9	0.5

Table 19 Influences on consumption of meat

STRATA	Meat consumption					
	Every day	Every two days	Once a week	Two times a month	Once a month	Rarer than once a month
<i>Socio-economic group (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>						
Group 1 (poorest)	6.9	11.6	21.0	14.6	26.6	19.3
Group 2	11.6	14.7	31.1	19.1	16.7	6.8
Group 3	13.8	17.7	29.6	17.3	15.4	6.2
Group 4 (best off)	24.2	25.8	31.5	9.2	6.2	3.1
<i>Location (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>						
Rural	10.6	16.3	28.7	17.7	18.4	8.3
Urban	26.3	21.1	28.1	7.0	8.1	9.3
<i>Areas in the cities (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>						
Long term living	29.3	19.0	23.6	6.3	8.0	13.8
Migrant	20.8	25.0	36.5	8.3	8.3	1.0
<i>Number of children (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>						
0 children	21.4	42.9	14.3			21.4
1 child	23.4	20.9	22.2	10.8	15.2	7.6
2 children	19.4	21.6	29.5	12.7	10.1	6.7
3 children	14.0	15.6	29.6	16.0	17.6	7.2
4 children	8.4	13.9	29.7	17.8	20.8	9.4
More than 5	5.2	11.9	32.1	19.4	17.9	13.4
<i>Total</i>	14.7	17.5	28.6	14.9	15.7	8.6

A number of households sell their dairy products to generate an income instead of consuming them. This is more common in communities that are located near urban centres where there is always a demand for dairy products. For example, in Gulbar, a village near the city of Osh, many households sell their dairy products, thus their children do not have a major source of protein.

*About 50 per cent of the population has a cow; however, they do not even drink the milk and cream. They sell everything. The car comes here and they sell everything. Many people just have tea and bread on their tables. **A medical worker in Tomon-Suu.***

*People who understood the meaning of reforms do not expect that either the government or the local authority can improve their wellbeing. They try to do this themselves... They sell milk. My neighbor sells 10 litres everyday at 7 soms per litre. So they have 70 soms a day as a profit. This is not a bad profit. Many people sell milk here. **Local authority representative in Ak-Sui.***

Such a monotonous diet, lacking in protein, iodine and vitamins, and often not containing enough calories, has contributed to the increase of anaemia and goitre. Across the country as a whole, the average protein consumption of very poor households was 38 per cent lower than the country average in 2002, while the nutritional intake of non-poor adolescents was nearly 57 per cent higher than that of very poor adolescents (UNFPA, 2002: 58). In our study, doctors in all communities said that there was a high incidence of nutrition-related diseases. For example, in Gulbar, the medical workers indicated that up to 70-80 per cent of pregnant women have moderate or severe anaemia. In addition, in Kokyangak, the doctor said that the vast majority of the city's population have goitre. Ironically, although the city is famous for its nut woods, including chestnuts (which contain iodine), people cannot afford to eat these nuts and gather them instead for sale. With non-iodised salt costing 3 soms and iodised salt 22 soms per pack, it is not surprising that most poorer people buy non-iodised salt. Indeed, in Kyrgyzstan as a whole, 52 per cent of northern adolescents and 87 per cent of southern adolescents have symptoms of iodine deficiency, and only 17-20 per cent of the population consumes iodised salt (GoKR, 2002: 66).

Before all food products were cheaper and the physical development of children was good enough and now it is not. Now there are many children ill with anaemia and iodine and calcium deficiencies. This leads to underweight and low height among children. Mental development decreases too. A medical worker in Kokyangak.

Conclusions

This section examined the factors negatively affecting children's health. These factors include inadequate heating, using unsafe water, the high cost of medicine and medical treatment, and poor knowledge of MHI entitlements and malnutrition. Malnutrition is one of the major factors that can contribute to intergenerational poverty cycles and is discussed in more detail in section 5.

As a results of malnutrition, diseases such as anaemia and goitre are the main concerns of medical workers in most of the research communities. One way of preventing such diseases is iodised salt subsidies, ie providing free iron tablets to people particularly at risk, as well as measures to increase food and water security.

4. Social networks, cultural practices and childhood poverty

It's impossible to survive on one's own. Nurlan, a 65-year old Sogment resident.

4.1 Role of social networks

In a country where governmental support has been substantially reduced, social networks are of vital importance. During interviews, it was clear that families who had a better life had strong ties and support among relatives.

People can expect different levels of social support from different social contacts: there are close family and relatives, friends and nextdoor neighbors, and people from the same village. The level of support is generally greatest from close family and relatives. Usually close relatives help to plough the land, build houses, lend money, and help each other out with weddings and funerals by sharing the expenses. Relatives can also help out with child-rearing by taking in one or two children from the households of other relatives who are in need, thus covering living expenses. This circle of relatives helps people survive in a context of limited income. However, this system demands a great deal of loyalty. When someone needs help, all members of that circle or network are expected to contribute. The outer social groups like neighbors and community members are a source of help with communal work, which includes common community problems such road repairs when it is washed out, building a local mosque or a water pipeline. Most respondents noted that certain friends can usually lend money or help to find work. People also make use of friendship networks when they migrate, either going with a group of friends to Russia, Kazakhstan or other parts of the country, or joining other friends who had gone earlier.

As Table 20 shows, respondents mostly get assistance from their parents, close relatives, friends and shops/kiosks, and particularly from relatives and neighbours. Shops and kiosks are important sources for borrowing money or buying goods on credit. Relatives and neighbours are the main sources of help for young families (see Tables 8 and 9, Appendix II). Young families are likely to receive money as a gift, help with harvesting and valuable items for the household from these sources; relatives also lend them money.

Better-off people are most likely to get money as a gift, help with harvesting and valuable items from their relatives. They do not usually get help from their friends. However, village authority representatives and kiosks/shops are more likely to lend them money (Tables 10 and 11, Appendix II).

Single-parents households tend to have weaker social connections with their relatives than two-parent families. They are also less likely to borrow money and get help with harvesting from relatives. The main reason for this is that single-parent households face additional difficulties in maintaining social ties in the face of higher levels of poverty. Poorer children are similarly less able to socialise with their peers.

Table 20 Main sources and types of aid received by households (percentages)

	Borrowed money	Money as a gift	Help in harvesting	Valuable item for the household	Food Products
Parents	6.6	16.4	13	13.9	14.8
Close relatives	11.5	16.1	17	12.6	14.2
Relatives	6.7	6.6	10.7	6.8	6.8
Neighbours	6.6	3.3	7	4.3	6.2
Friends who are not your neighbours	5.3	2.7	6.2	3.9	2.4
Village authority	4.8	1.0	0.5	0.9	0.4
Kiosk	16.6	0.1	0.1	-	3.6

4.2 Social obligations

In addition to being a potential source of help in difficult times, social networks can also place heavy burdens on families. Thus, cultural traditions may be one of the reasons why poor people cannot improve their lifestyles. According to cultural norms, there are some occasions when people should celebrate in a gathering of relatives and friends. Kyrgyz people usually celebrate the 40th day after the birth of the baby (*beishik toi*), the first steps of the baby (*tushoo kesuu* - the act which symbolises that baby will have a future without problems), weddings (which include a variety of ceremonies and require that the bride's family provide a dowry (*sep*) and the groom's family provide brideprice (*kalym*)), funerals and other occasions. Some people in our study became bankrupt after such celebrations. Thus, in one family, when the male head of the household died, his widow had to slaughter a cow for the funeral since she was pressurised by relatives to do so. The cow was the only livestock that they possessed and the only source of income for the family. Since the family then became indebted, they had to sell their house after the funeral and buy a cheaper place to live.

*My husband died in 1999 from tuberculosis. My children were young, the oldest daughter was married and the oldest son had just come back from the army. We did not have money. In order to bury him with dignity and not to disgrace ourselves, we had to slaughter the only cow we had. You know well. We Kyrgyz people have to slaughter some livestock. It was hard when my husband was ill; it became much harder when he died. **Jazgul, a 47-year old widow in Kokyangak.***

As most of the people in any village are from one tribe, they consider other members of the village to be their relatives, and are obliged to invite many people to such celebrations. Close relatives are expected to contribute financially to these celebrations. As most interviewees told us, such celebrations make their life unstable or impossible to improve. If they did not have to provide assistance so often (at least five or six times a year) to relatives for such occasions, they would live much better. They cannot refuse to participate in these celebrations because they are afraid to lose both social contacts and their status among relatives and friends. Indeed, they will give the only money or assets they have so that they do not lose these contacts.

*There are a lot of expenditures on different celebrations. For example, once a woman died in our village. Her children borrowed a cow and slaughtered it. However, they could not pay back this cow. So, they had to work for the owners of this cow for a whole summer without any payment. They did all kinds of jobs for them: on the fields and at home. Another example: Ulukbek's daughter got married. Apparently, he was ashamed to meet his son-in-law's parents without anything. So, he decided to borrow a mare, and then he suffered a lot but could not pay back the debt. He paid back with his harvest, he gave all his harvest. **A local authority representative in Talas oblast.***

Recognising the strain that these celebrations and obligations cause, people in Sogment and Gulbar have tried to solve this problem. In both villages, special committees have been established by village residents with representatives of the local authority, NGOs, *moldos* (mullahs) and *aksakals* (elders), which are responsible for monitoring the decision taken in villages meetings to limit expenditure on feasts. This initiative has failed in both villages. Despite the problems associated with making large expenditures on celebrations, the majority of people did not want appear as if they could not afford them.

*Everybody is concerned with not being worse than others. People are competing with each other. **Elena, a parent in Iskra.***

*It is much more difficult when somebody dies because, in most cases, the death is unexpected, one cannot prepare for it. .. If a family does not have anything, aksakals gather together and suggest that they borrow money that they have to return after the funerals... People are sure that the moldo does not try to limit funeral spending at all. Instead, he is interested in there being more such celebrations because he earns money from them. For example, they are paid 350 soms and provided with clothes. In addition, many aksakals consider such celebration as an opportunity to have good food. **NGO activist in Sogment.***

In some cases, *moldos* and *aksakals* even advised people to borrow money for the feasts. This may reflect the fact that they benefit from them. Often *moldos* are given a gift (usually a shirt) and are paid for reading the Koran. In addition, these celebrations may be one of the few occasions when *moldos* and *aksakals* can have a good meal. For poor people such celebrations are also the only chance to eat meat and have a good meal. However, our qualitative research revealed that poor people are not necessarily invited on equal terms. Instead, they may be invited to do the 'dirty work' such as slaughtering an animal or laying a fire, and may be treated differently to others at the celebration.

Conclusions

This section has examined how social networks, which are a potential source of help in difficult times, can also place heavy burdens on families. Although traditional celebrations and occasions have become unaffordable for the majority of the population, there is a strong societal pressure to maintain these traditions. In some places in Kyrgyzstan, *moldos* or *aksakals* have tried to discourage people from spending large amounts on these feasts or to just to invite a few close relatives. However, such initiatives have not succeeded in the two communities in which we discussed these questions. Some respondents suggested that this problem should be dealt with at the national level through laws and regulations or public campaigns throughout the country to encourage people to spend less on these celebrations.

5. Risk of intergenerational poverty cycles forming

This section examines the risk that intergenerational poverty cycles, where poverty is passed from parents to children, are developing in Kyrgyzstan today. In doing so, it also analyses the possibility that some groups of people are being trapped in chronic poverty from which it is difficult to escape. The section starts by examining parents' aspirations for their children, and children's aspirations for the future, and then summarises the analysis from other parts of this report of which families and children are most at risk of being trapped in poverty cycles.

5.1 Parents' aspirations for poor children

Research in other parts of the world, particularly the USA and Western Europe, suggests that parents' and children's attitudes and aspirations are important influences on their prospects of escaping from poverty (Harper et al, 2003). In this section we explore how far parents' and children's aspirations may be affecting their future prospects.

Despite high levels of poverty, many parents have high aspirations for their children, and hope that they will be able to escape poverty, even if they have not been able to themselves. Table 21 shows that one-third of respondents want their children to finish secondary school and more than a quarter want their children to go to university. It is also worth noting that about 15 per cent of respondents do not have any plans for their children.

The higher respondents' material status, the higher the proportion of those who want their children to continue their education after the 9th grade. People of lower status are more uncertain about the future of their children. About a quarter of people from the lowest socio-economic group do not have any clear hopes or expectations about what their children would do in the future. Almost all poor respondents expressed uncertainty about the future. For example:

It is difficult to talk about it now. The uncertainty in life. They can study further if we have money. **Dmitryi, a parent in Iskra**

I do not know now, everything should be paid for. I would like them to study at the university, but we have no money ... I do not know what will happen tomorrow. **Parhat, a parent in Iskra**

People in urban areas are less confident about their children's futures than people in rural areas, and long-term urban residents substantially less so than migrants. This may reflect the fact that many of the long-term urban residents in this study were living in post-industrial towns and cities, where opportunities have collapsed, while migrants have moved to try to improve their

situation. Young parents are less sure about their plans for their children than older parents. At the same time, reflecting their general commitment to education, more than one-third of such parents want their children to apply to university.

Table 21 Parents' plans for their children after the 9th grade

STRATA	Plans						
	Continue other 2 grades of secondary school	Go to vocational / technical school	Finish 2 other grades and apply to the University	Get married	Work	What s/he wants	Don't know
<i>Socio-economic group (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>							
1 (poorest)	27.0	6.4	21.7	2.6	9.0	8.2	25.1
2	31.2	5.3	25.6	3.8	7.9	12.8	13.5
3	32.2	5.9	28.1	7.0	4.4	13.7	8.5
4 (best-off)	31.8	5.6	28.1	7.1	3.4	11.2	12.7
<i>Location (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>							
Rural	31.7	5.8	22.5	6.6	5.8	13.9	13.8
Urban	26.3	5.4	36.4	1.0	7.1	5.7	18.2
<i>Cities (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>							
Migrant	32.3	1.0	42.4		9.1	11.1	4.0
Long term residential areas	23.2	7.6	33.3	1.5	6.1	3.0	25.3
<i>Households (Chi square test is significant at 0.05 level)</i>							
Two parent households	31.7	5.8	22.5	6.6	5.8	13.9	13.8
Single parent households	26.3	5.4	36.4	1.0	7.1	5.7	18.2
<i>Parents (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>							
Not young families	31.2	5.9	25.6	4.9	6.2	12.1	14.2
Young families	16.4	2.7	35.6	8.2	5.5	5.5	26.0
<i>Total</i>	30.2	5.7	26.3	5.1	6.1	11.7	15.0

Tables 22 and 23 show the plans that parents have for boys and for girls. In general, there is not much difference in their aspirations. The most common plans for both boys and girls were

that they should get higher education. For girls the other common expectations were that they would get married or become a doctor. For boys, other than higher education, the most common responses were that they would work on the family's land (particularly among higher socio-economic groups). About 18 per cent of respondents did not have any specific plans for their daughters, while one-fifth of respondents did not have any particular plans for their sons and would let them decide themselves.

Table 22 Parents' plans for girls' futures by socio-economic group

	Total	Socio-economic group			
		1	2	3	4
Will get higher education	26.2	21.3	26.7	28.9	27.7
Do not know, time will tell	18.1	18.4	19.9	16.7	17.6
Will get married	17.6	20.6	13.9	20.0	15.7
Will be a doctor	10.7	8.6	13.5	10.7	10.1
Will be teacher	8.2	7.5	6.8	9.3	9.4
Will work	5.7	4.9	3.0	8.1	6.7
We can not afford to educate her further	3.2	6.0*	3.8*	2.2*	0.7*
N (total number of respondents)	1070	267	266	270	267

*Chi-square test is significant at 0.05 level

Table 23 Parents' plans for boys' futures by socio-economic group

	Total	Socio-economic group			
		1	2	3	4
Will get higher education	24.8	22.8	24.4	24.4	27.3
It's up to him	21.5	21.3	21.8	20.4	22.5
Will help on the land	14.5	12.4*	10.5*	16.3*	18.7*
Will work in the legal system	6.4	4.5	5.6	9.6	6.0
Will have a good job	5.0	4.5	5.3	5.2	4.9
Will get married	5.0	4.1	4.1	5.2	6.7
Will take care of us	4.7	5.2*	1.9*	7.0*	4.5*
There are no boys in the household	4.6	5.6	3.8	4.8	4.1
We can not afford to educate him further	2.9	5.6*	4.1*	1.9*	-
Will be a teacher	2.1	1.5	1.9	3.7	1.5
No future	1.2	3.0*	1.1*		0.7*
N (total number of respondents)	1070	267	266	270	267

*Chi-square test is significant at 0.05 level

5.2 Aspirations of poor children

We explored children's aspirations for the future by asking them to write down three wishes for the future, and exploring what they would do with 10,000 soms. Almost all children, whether better- or worse-off want to study further and acquire professional qualifications. Many hope to acquire material wealth, and aspire to what they perceive as aspects of rich people's lives, in particular owning: cars, big multistorey houses, and technology such as audio-video equipment and computers.

It is apparent that many children are very well aware of their poverty and are burdened by it. For example, a 12 year old boy wrote:

When I graduate from high school I want to get higher education so that I can feed my parents and (my future) sons; I don't want them to work hard as I do now and I don't want them to suffer the way I do. Sanjar, 12 year old boy in Kokyangak

If they were given 10 000 soms, many children would buy basic necessities that are lacking in their lives and list these in detail. 14 year old Shuhrat's list is very typical of poor children:

I would buy 50 bags of flour, 10 bags of carrots, 50 bags of rice; I would buy my mum a jacket, t-shirts for my brothers; I would try to repay our debts. Shuhrat, a 14 year old boy in Kokyangak

Apart from buying daily necessities, many children also suggested ways of improving their families' situation. Many children from rural areas mentioned that they would buy livestock and try to breed them and enlarge their flocks. Several urban children said that they would buy a car to earn money by taxi-driving, buy an apartment and rent it out or open a small *komok* (shop).

There were differences in girls' and boys' aspirations. Most girls hope to live in urban areas and to marry a rich person - this is one of their possible routes out of poverty. However, most girls aspired to the generally poorly paid professions of teaching, medicine and journalism. Almost no boys mentioned marriage or family as part of their aspirations, and they aspired to work associated with possibilities of money making, such as: attorney (*prokuror*), deputy (*deputat*) and business/ entrepreneurship.

In the South, we noted strong religious sentiments and aspirations among poor boys. These boys usually do not mention the needs of their families but the needs of mosques when they are asked how they would use 10,000 soms. Many wrote that they would donate the entire amount to mosques, others that they would buy 2,000 copies of the Koran, or buy carpets for prayer. One wrote:

I wish the whole world would be Muslim, I wish to make a pilgrimage to Mecca, I wish to learn the entire Koran by heart, I wish to participate in Muslim holy war. **Aibek, a 16 year old boy in Kokyangak**

This blend of poverty and Islam is worthy of attention, since most members of the Islamic Military Movement and Hizb-ut-Tahrir²⁸ are poor youth.

Conclusions

There are not enormous differences between better-off and poorer children's aspirations. Children from both social groups wish to continue their education and acquire certain qualifications. The only difference that is sensible is the scale of items they hope for. Children from poor families tend to hope for basic things like food and clothing whereas richer children hope for more expensive goods, and larger quantities of them. For example, better-off boys hope for fashionable expensive cars, mobile phones and large sums of US dollars. Growing up in poverty therefore seems to have little effect on children's aspirations, and is probably a less important factor than others, such as access to assets and education, in the development of intergenerational poverty cycles.

5.3 Who is at risk of intergenerational poverty cycles?

We have discussed in some detail in the previous sections how children are affected by poverty in Kyrgyzstan today and the factors which increase families' risk of poverty. This section summarises these findings and discusses the risks that:

- a) certain families are becoming chronically poor - trapped in poverty and unable to escape
- b) intergenerational poverty cycles are developing, whereby poor children are likely to grow up to become poor adults.

a) Risk of chronic poverty

Hulme and Shepherd (2003) cited in Yarkova et al (2004:7) suggest that 'people who stay poor for a long period of time (about 5 years) have a high probability of remaining poor for the rest of their lives'. Poor health and nutrition, limited education, a lack of productive assets such as land, limited economic opportunities and certain cultural or social factors (such as obligations to spend money on feasts) can all increase the risk of being trapped in poverty and unable to escape. Our evidence suggests that there are certain groups who are vulnerable to becoming chronically (long-term) poor. Their children may well be unable to escape poverty either and may be trapped in an intergenerational poverty cycle.

²⁸ Hizb ut-Tahrir-is a radical Islamist political organization that operates in 40 countries around the world. Its proclaimed goal is the overthrow of existing political regimes and their replacement with a Caliphate (Khilafah in Arabic), a theocratic state based on the Shari'a (religious Islamic law). The model for Hizb is the 'righteous' Caliphate, a militaristic Islamic state that existed in the 7th and 8th centuries under Mohammad and his first four successors, known as the 'righteous Caliphs' (Cohen, 2004).

The following groups of families may be particularly at risk of chronic poverty:

- *Families without a breadwinner or where the 'breadwinner' is a drain on resources* (for example if he or she is an alcoholic) An estimated 73 percent of such families live in poverty.²⁹
- *Large families, with small children who are too young to help out.* Large families are defined as having over five children in rural areas and over three in urban areas. 92 per cent of families with eight to nine children live in poverty.³⁰
- *Families with few or no assets.* In rural areas, this means limited or low quality land, and/ or livestock. Young families with children born after 1 January 1996, who are unable to access land shares from the Land Redistribution Fund are at particular risk. So are the families of men whose parents have retained all the family's land share (typically elder sons since younger sons generally stay with their parents and inherent their assets), and of divorced women who may be left without any productive assets on divorce. Both urban and rural families who are unable to obtain credit at affordable interest rates are also unlikely to be able to invest in production or profitable enterprises, and thus may be trapped in subsistence livelihoods.
- *Families that lack support from relatives,* and are forced to survive on their own. Given low levels of state assistance, and difficulties obtaining it in some cases, support from relatives can be crucial. However, in most cases relatives have their own families to feed and they simply can not afford to support several families at the same time.
- *Families where parents do not value education, often due to their own poor level of education.* Or where they cannot access education - as, for example, in the case of migrants living in areas without schools who cannot afford the transportation costs of sending children to school. World Bank (2003) research suggests that households where the head has only primary or secondary education are most at risk of chronic poverty.
- *Families who are unable to migrate for work and are trapped in places with very few economic opportunities* (such as isolated villages or post-industrial towns and cities), or who cannot find adequately paid work when they migrate. World Bank (2003) research on chronic poverty, which suggests the population of Naryn (a province with very limited economic opportunities) is 3.5 times more likely than average to be chronically poor, reinforces this finding.
- *Families who depend on state support,* often for a combination of the above reasons, and in particular, the lack of a breadwinner. Low levels of social assistance and pensions mean that they can only use such support for subsistence, and are unlikely to be able to use it to help escape from poverty.

29 <http://eng.gateway.kg/cgi-bin/page.pl?id=298&print4=1>. Last accessed on 17.08.2004.

30 <http://eng.gateway.kg/cgi-bin/page.pl?id=298&print4=1>. Last accessed on 17.08.2004.

b) Risk of intergenerational poverty cycles

Children from the kinds of family situations outlined above are particularly at risk of growing up poor and passing that poverty on to their children. However, not all children are affected in the same way by poverty. The following groups of children may be at particular risk of intergenerational poverty cycles:

Children involved in demanding work from an early age

As discussed in section 2.4, around 11 per cent of children in this study were found to be working full or part time. Though relatively few seven year olds work, by the time children are 11-15, 12 per cent work, as do 20 per cent of 16-17 year olds. Moreover, many of these children are involved in physically demanding work, such as agricultural labour or portering, or dangerous work, such as mining. They often work very long days, both in agricultural work, and when working in bazaars. These working conditions may well be harmful to their health and development and could increase their risk of health problems in later life. Furthermore, many working children are missing out on education, either completely, or are regularly missing school to work, because of the immediate necessity of putting food on the table.

Children who miss out on education

World Bank research suggests that higher education is one of the most protective factors against poverty in Kyrgyzstan today, even if it no longer guarantees employment as in Soviet times. It is therefore concerning that only one third of young people in this study are enrolled in any higher education; in that they are often undertaking distance learning which provides a very poor quality education, this is all the more concerning. Although enrolment rates at secondary school are high (over 90 per cent), as discussed in section 3.2, this conceals high levels of irregular attendance. In addition to work, lack of adequate clothing, an inability to afford schooling costs (eg textbooks or contributions to repair funds) and illness, particularly due to lack of winter heating, are important factors which limit poor children's educational opportunities. Furthermore, the poor salaries paid to teachers and a shortage of qualified teachers in certain subjects mean that the quality of education children receive may not be equipping them with useful skills and qualifications for the future.

Girls and young women

Although our quantitative data show similar school enrolment rates for girls and boys, and our qualitative data suggest that girls may attend school more regularly than boys, in the country as a whole, there is growing concern about early marriage and school drop out among girls. This has been exacerbated by the increase in bride kidnapping in recent years.³¹ In some areas, this is also intensified by a tendency to undervalue girls' education compared to that of boys, and to encourage girls to stay home and look after the house rather than incurring costs at

³¹ Bride-kidnapping is the practice of kidnapping (ie abducting) a woman for marriage - this may be with the woman's consent or against her will. Kleinbach et al (2004) estimate that both rates of kidnapping and rates of kidnapping without the woman's consent have increased over the last 40 to 50 years. In this village study, 85 per cent of married women had been kidnapped, and 75 per cent of married 16-25 year old woman had been kidnapped, and 75 per cent of married 16-25 year old women had been kidnapped without their consent.

school. Where this is occurring, girls may be vulnerable to future poverty. Furthermore, Kyrgyz inheritances traditions mean that women do not inherit land or other valuable assets from their parents as it is expected that they will be supported by their husbands. Being less educated and assetless, girls are fully dependent on their husbands. During our interviews we observed that many women tend to tolerate abusive husbands and do not seek divorce. In case of divorce, many female household heads are denied access to their portions of land.

Conclusions

In this section we have examined risks of certain families to become chronically poor and the possibility of some poor children to be trapped in intergenerational poverty cycles.

The following groups of families may be particularly at risk of intergenerational poverty cycles:

- Families with few or no assets - land in rural areas, or access to credit - these are often young families
- Families who live in areas with limited economic opportunities and are unable to migrate.
- Families without a breadwinner or where the 'breadwinner' is a drain on resources (for example if he or she is an alcoholic)
- Families where the household head has had limited education
- Large families with small children who are too young to help out.
- Families who lack support from relatives
- Families who depend on state support

The following groups of children are also at particular risk of intergenerational poverty cycles:

- children who work to the detriment of their education or health
- other children who miss out on education, due to poverty or discrimination
- young women and girls whose education is curtailed due to early marriage or bride-kidnapping.

If a range of urgent and practical measures are not taken to tackle childhood poverty, it will be hard to prevent further development of intergenerational poverty cycles. The next section examines some possible measures to stop these poverty cycles forming.

6. Recommendations for Policy and Practice

This section draws on recommendations for tackling childhood poverty made by people – including poor people, government and NGO representatives – who took part in the research in both rural and urban areas. In the context of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Government of Kyrgyzstan, NGOs and others are well-placed to undertake a range of practical measures to tackle poverty among children and prevent the further development of intergenerational poverty cycles.

1. Livelihoods and access to assets

Improve young families' access to productive assets by:

- Enabling young families with children born after 1 January 1996 to claim land shares from the Land Redistribution Fund. It might be gained through legislation.
- Making rents of land available for poor from the Land Redistribution Fund - ie ensuring that this land is not reserved for those who can pay high rents.
- Providing seeds and fertilizers to people who need them in springtime.

Enhance employment by:

- Creating conditions for developing small enterprises in villages and towns to ensure that young families are employed. This could be done through providing training to people on how to organize businesses, and supporting them in taking microcredit. It will also require co-ordinated investment in disadvantaged regions to stimulate employment.

2. Microcredit programmes

Microcredit programmes have the potential to help people escape from poverty, but a number of modifications are needed so that poor people can benefit more:

- *Increase overall awareness of microcredit programs*, their potential and their terms and conditions. We found that many people had misconceptions about microcredit programmes and how they operate.
- *Increase loan periods* - for example one year in cities (for trading) and two to three years in villages where people are involved in farming and raising livestock.

- ***Schedule repayment periods to take account the kinds of activities being financed*** - for example a minimum of a six months' grace period is needed for livestock breeding.
- ***Provide small microcredits for farmers during spring time*** – because poor farmers mostly feel shortage of money in spring time and as result don't have seeds it would be good if there will be some specialized small microcredits for farmers.
- ***Lower interest rates.*** Many poor people find interest rates of 30 per cent prohibitively high. Poor people suggested rates of two to three per cent would enable them to start using microcredit. This may mean some cross-subsidies between credit aimed at entrepreneurs and credit for the poorest people.
- ***Eradicate corruption within microfinance institutions.*** Several respondents reported that they have to bribe an officer in order to get microcredit without some documents.
- ***Reduce the documentation needed to take microcredit*** - this should also help reduce corruption
- ***Provide credits without physical collateral for young families*** who do not have their own houses. The research results showed us that they also are likely to be excluded from group collateral because people in the group are afraid of including poor people.
- ***Microfinance institutions should wider their geographical scope*** and in particular, provide services in villages distant from district centres.

3. Social protection

Social benefits and pensions could provide more effective protection against poverty by:

- ***Making payments in cash and on time.*** Although efforts are being made to increase benefits and pensions and to make payments on time, our research shows that there are still significant problems. Addressing this will require improvements to financial flows from the national budget to local budgets. It will also involve firm action to tackle corruption in the distribution of benefits.
- ***Ensuring that those eligible for benefits actually receive them.*** Ways to achieve this include: simplifying the documentation required to apply for benefits, ensuring that people are aware of their entitlements (see below) and eliminating corruption in the approval of benefits.

4. Access to Information

It was clear from our research that many people were unaware of their entitlements to social benefits and the provisions of Mandatory Health Insurance, and of development programmes

taking place in their area from which they could benefit. The following measures would help address this problem:

- ***Mobile information centres*** providing information on these and other issues.
- ***Providing more information on these issues via the media***, particularly local radio stations.

5. Education

- ***Addressing financial constraints to education.*** Since family financial constraints lead to both irregular school attendance and children obtaining a poor quality education through lack of textbooks and other supplies, the following measures could help address this situation:

- ***Increased social benefits or targeted cash transfers to families with school-age children.*** Either the amount of social benefits paid to poor families with school-aged children could be increased, or additional payments could be made if children attend school for a specified percentage of time (eg a minimum of 85 per cent attendance). This has been tried successfully in Brazil, Mexico and other Latin American countries, where rates of school enrolment have significantly increased and the extent of child labour has declined among poor families following the introduction of cash transfers (Barrientos and DeJong, 2004). The size of such grants must be large enough to cover the costs of winter clothes, and/ or to offset the money that children would have earned otherwise.

- ***Provision of a budget to all schools to purchase and provide up-to-date textbooks for all children.*** This would eliminate the problem of families not being able to afford to buy or rent textbooks and children using out of date materials.

- ***Support to poor children's higher education.*** The vast majority of children in rural areas, especially, cannot afford to study at national (ie non-local) universities and institutes. One possibility might be to establish a fund to support children from poor families pursuing their higher education away from home.

- ***Improving the quality of education***

Supported by the Asian Development Bank, work is already under way to improve the quality of education, through investments in textbook and curriculum reform, teacher retraining and investment in school infrastructure. The USAID-funded Participation, Education and Knowledge Strengthening project also aims to improve teacher training and school curriculum and to promote greater community involvement in school management, contribute to education policy, and improve school infrastructure. Neither of these projects covers the whole country.

National-level programmes to ensure that improvements in education quality are made throughout the country are vital. This should include assessment of improvements in the quality of education - schools which have made substantial improvements could be provided with financial and material incentives or public recognition.

6. Health

Poor health is a major cause of children missing school and of family economic difficulties. The following measures were identified in our discussions as possible ways to address key health problems:

- ***Enhancing administrative efficiency of the health system.*** This is very important for people living far from urban centres, who currently have to travel to their nearest urban centres to apply for MHI and have to wait a long time for the documents certifying their eligibility. These transport costs also impose a significant burden on poor rural families.
- ***Increase awareness of people about Mandatory Health Insurance entitlements through the media and distribution of information booklets.*** This is particularly important for children as most respondents in this study were unaware that children under 16 are eligible for free treatment.
- ***Universal MHI coverage.*** The most common reason for dissatisfaction with health services was related to people only being treated properly if they have money. Many respondents complained about unofficial payments. Expanding MHI coverage to the whole population would help address these problems.
- ***Improve the knowledge of the population about major diseases,*** in particular - symptoms, preventative measures, treatment, consequences of delays in treatment, and the dangers of home treatment or treatment by traditional healers. This can be done by local NGOs and medical workers. In addition, since there are some common problems throughout the country (anemia, goitre, TB and other disease) there should be a government information campaign aimed at increasing public knowledge of these diseases and ways of tackling them.
- ***Tackling micro-nutritional problems:***
 - Subsidise iodised salt* to combat goitre since the price difference between non-iodised and iodised salt is significant (iodised salt costs 6-7 times non-iodised salt).

Provide free iron tablets to pregnant women and young people to combat anaemia.

Although UNICEF and ADB support is helping address these issues, so far the whole country is not covered, and severe nutritional problems continue. Wider nutritional problems, such as adequate access to calories, protein and vitamins should be addressed primarily through measures to improve livelihoods.

- ***Enhance water quality and availability.*** There are major World Bank-, DFID- and ADB-supported programmes to improve the quality of water in the country. These partially take a community-based approach, whereby community organisations are required to present proposals for water supply improvements. Two main recommendations have emerged:

- *Greater support to community organisations to develop such proposals* is needed.
- *Mechanisms must be put in place to ensure that poor families are not excluded* from benefiting, for example if they cannot afford to pay charges. Systems whereby the poorest families are exempt from charges could be developed at community level.

7. Cultural traditions

Legal documents on limitation of expenditures of celebrations should be adopted at the national level and monitored by local authorities and/or local activists.

A series of awareness and social mobilization campaigns should be conducted at the country scale that would encourage people to spend less on traditional celebrations. This might help reduce the demands on poor people to contribute their last money or assets to such celebrations.

8. Migrants and their access to services

There should be a specialized comprehensive programme targeted at problems that migrant families face. The problems that need immediate attention from government and non-governmental organizations are awareness about the human rights and social entitlements, access to school and health facilities, access to clear water, and (in certain novostroiki), measures to combat air pollution. Expansion of programmes aiming to enhance employment would also play an important role in tackling childhood poverty among internal migrants.

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Appendix I Calculation of socio-economic groups

Socio-economic status was determined by summing up the money equivalents of the assets owned by a household and annual income earned by all members of a household. The summation of money equivalents of all the assets owned by a household then was categorized based on quartile groups.

The following assets were taken into consideration for calculation:

Assets, owned by the household or planned to be purchased	Money equivalents, per item	
	in soms	In USD
A house, owned by the household	40 000	952
Dacha	8 000 per hectare and multiplied by 1.5 if the land is irrigated	190
Farm land	8 000 per hectare and multiplied by 1.5 if the land is irrigated	190
Annual income	Average income of the household multiplied by 12 months	
Car	40 000	952
Other motorised vehicle – truck, etc.	40 000	952
VCR	800	19
Tape recorder	2 000	48
Color TV	8 000	190
Black and white TV	2 500	60
Fridge	10 000	238
Telephone	600	14
Laundry washer	800	19
Cow	15 000	357
Horse	20 000	476
Sheep	2 500	60
Chicken	80	2

The following are the ranges of the sum of assets:

Groups	Ranges in soms	Ranges in USD
Wealth group #1 (the lowest quartile)	3 600 – 58 800	86 – 1 400
Wealth group #2 (the second quartile)	58 900 – 84 800	1 402 – 2 019
Wealth group #3 (the third quartile)	85 000 – 125 420	2 023 – 2 986
Wealth group #4 (the highest quartile)	125 700 – 882 100	2 993 – 21 002

Appendix II Additional Tables

Table 1 Livelihood strategies by location and socio-economic group (percentage)

	Location		Cities		Socio-economic group			
	Rural	Urban	Migrant	Long term residents	1	2	3	4
Sold animals, seeds or tools needed to pay for key expenses	38.9**	14.1**	13.1	14.6	20.6**	27.4**	35.2**	45.7**
Sold other household items e.g. carpet, TV etc.	7.1**	22.9**	21.2	23.7	17.2**	14.3**	10.4**	4.5**
Cut down on food	47.9**	60.6**	51.5*	65.2*	54.7*	55.6*	52.2*	43.8*
Tried to sell more farm products	30.4**	8.1**	10.1	7.1	21.0	26.7	23.7	26.2
Cut down the amount home heated in winter	49.9	54.5	45.5*	59.1*	50.6	54.1	53.3	47.2
Sent a child to stay with relatives/friends for a long period	7.4**	15.8**	32.3**	7.6**	11.2	11.7	10.0	5.6
Cut down wood for cooking and heating	42.4**	26.6**	18.2*	30.8*	43.8*	39.5*	39.6*	30.7*
Gathered coal for cooking and heating	3.4**	20.5**	2.0**	29.8**	15.4**	9.0*	4.1*	3.7*

* Pearson chi-square is significant at 0.05 level; ** Pearson chi-square is significant at 0.01 level

Table 2 Livelihood strategies by household characteristics (percentage)

	Households		Number of children				
	Two parents households	Single parent households	1	2	3	4	More than 5
Left the area to look for work	19.3	12.0	26.5*	15.9*	20.6*	16.0*	13.0*
Sold animals, seeds or tools needed to pay for key expenses	33.4*	22.2*	29.8	28.5	34.5	38.8	26.8
Cut down on food	51.2	53.0	49.7	51.6	55.4	49.3	47.8
Tried to sell more farm products	25.5**	14.5**	24.3**	17.7**	29.6**	28.8**	22.5**

* Pearson chi-square is significant at 0.05 level; ** Pearson chi-square is significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 Car ownership by household characteristics (percentage)

	No	Yes
<i>Households</i>		
Two-parent	86.3	13.7
Single	92.0	8.0
<i>Parents' age</i>		
Not young	86.6	13.4
Young	90.2	9.8
<i>Number of children</i>		
0 children	100.0	
1 child	86.7	13.3
2 children	85.1	14.9
3 children	84.7	15.3
4 children	88.1	11.9
More than 5	90.9	9.1
<i>Total</i>	86.9	13.1

Table 4 Other vehicle ownership by household characteristics (percentage)

	No	Yes
<i>Households</i>		
Two-parent	93.6	6.4
Single	97.3	2.7
<i>Parents' age</i>		
Not young	94.1	5.9
Young	92.2	7.8
<i>Number of children</i>		
0 children	100	
1 child	89.5	10.5
2 children	95.0	5.0
3 children	92.8	7.2
4 children	94.3	5.7
More than 5	97.5	2.5
<i>Total</i>	94.0	6.0

Table 5 Views on microcredit by location and socio-economic group (percentage)

	Location		Wellbeing			
	Rural	Urban	1	2	3	4
<i>Awareness of micro-credit programme:</i>						
Yes	76.6	61.1	66.3	67.3	75.2	78.7
No	23.4	38.9	33.7	32.7	24.8	21.3
<i>Participation in the programme (as percentage of those aware of microcredit programmes):</i>						
Yes	14.1	10.8	8.5	10.1	12.3	21.0
No	85.9	89.2	91.5	89.9	87.7	79.0
<i>Results of participation:</i>						
The results were good	50.6	52.2	26.7	61.1	64.0	47.7
Nothing good, we have lost out	17.3	4.3	26.7		8.0	20.5
We had to pay for documents	7.4		20.0		4.0	4.5
<i>Reason for non-participation:</i>						
Afraid I could not afford loan repayments	42.0	33.9	46.3	47.8	34.8	30.7
I am not interested	19.5	31.2	17.9	21.7	23.0	26.5
Interest rates are too high	12.2	9.0	13.0	9.9	13.5	9.0
Could not see any benefit	9.1	6.3	9.9	7.5	7.3	9.6
None in this area	2.4	5.3	3.7	0.6	5.1	3.6
It is forbidden by Islam to pay interest	0.6	6.3	1.9	1.2	1.7	4.2
I do not have anything to provide as a mortgage	2.4	1.6	2.5	1.2	2.2	2.4
No information	2.6	0.5	1.2	1.2	2.2	3.0
Because of the payments for preparing the documents	2.2		1.2	1.9	2.2	1.2

Table 6 Perceptions of the affordability of school expenses - influence of various factors

Bivariate Correlation (Pearson's r)							
	School expenses affordability	Socio-economic group	Urban	Migrant	Number of children	Single parent household	Young families
School expenses affordability		0.32**	-0.05	-0.07	-0.20**	-0.09**	0.17**
Socio-economic group	0.32**		-0.20**	0.05	-0.04	-0.12**	-0.08**
Urban	-0.05	-0.20**			-0.22**	0.07**	0.02
Migrant	-0.07	0.05			0.05	-0.10	0.05
Number of children	-0.20**	-0.04	-0.22**	0.05		-0.16**	-0.15**
Single parent household	-0.09**	-0.12**	0.07*	-0.10	-0.16**		-0.09**
Young families	0.17**	-0.08**	0.02	0.05	-0.15**	-0.09**	

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

Table 7 Influences on perceptions of affordability of secondary school expenses

Bivariate Correlation (Pearson's r)	
	Secondary school affordability
Well-being status	0.12**
Urban	-0.13**
Migrant	0.05
Number of children	0.03
Single parent household	-0.02
Young families	-0.02

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

Table 8 Influences on receiving help from relatives

STRATA	Borrowed money	Money as a gift	Help in harvesting	Gift of valuable items	Borrowed products
<i>Socio-economic group</i>					
Group 1 (poorest)	16.5	18.0*	19.5*	12.7*	22.1
Group 2	18.8	26.7*	20.3*	20.3*	26.3
Group 3	20.4	26.7*	20.7*	24.1*	23.3
Group 4 (best off)	20.6	29.6*	28.8*	24.7*	22.1
<i>Households</i>					
Two-parent	19.8*	25.8	23.4*	21.1	23.5
Single	8.5*	23.1	13.7*	14.5	24.8
<i>Parents' age</i>					
Not young	18.3	23.9*	21.3*	19.0*	22.5*
Young	23.3	49.3*	37.0*	41.1*	39.7*
<i>Total</i>	18.6	25.5	22.4	20.4	23.6

* Pearson Chi-Square test is significant at 0.05 level

Table 9 Influences on receiving help from neighbours

STRATA	Borrowed money	Money as a gift	Help in harvesting	Gift of valuable items	Borrowed products
<i>Socio-economic group(Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>					
Group 1 (poorest)	5.2	1.9	4.1	1.9	3.4*
Group 2	9.0	2.6	8.6	4.1	10.2*
Group 3	7.8	4.1	5.9	5.2	6.7*
Group 4 (best off)	4.5	4.1	9.0	5.6	4.1*
<i>Households (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>					
Two-parent	6.8	3.4	7.6*	4.5	6.2
Single	4.3	2.6	2.6*	2.6	6.0
<i>Parents' age (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>					
Not young	6.6	3.0	6.5*	3.8*	6.4
Young	5.5	6.8	15.1*	11.0*	4.1
<i>Total</i>	6.6	3.3	7.0	4.3	6.2

* Pearson Chi-Square test is significant at 0.05 level

Table 10 Influences on help from friends

STRATA	Borrowed money	Money as a gift	Help in harvesting	Gift of valuable items	Borrowed products
<i>Socio-economic group(Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>					
Group 1 (poorest)	5.2	0.7	4.5	0.7*	0.7
Group 2	6.4	3.8	9.4	4.9*	3.8
Group 3	3.7	2.2	5.6	4.4*	2.6
Group 4 (best off)	6.4	4.1	5.6	5.6*	2.2
<i>Households (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>					
Two-parent	5.8*	2.9	6.6	4.4*	2.3
Single	0.9*	1.7	2.6	0.0*	2.6
<i>Parents' age (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>					
Not young	5.2	2.2*	6.0	3.4*	2.2
Young	6.8	9.6*	9.6	11.0*	4.1
<i>Total</i>	5.3	2.7	6.2	3.9*	2.4

* Pearson Chi-Square test is significant at 0.05 level

Table 11 Influences on borrowing money from village authorities

STRATA	Borrowed money
<i>Socio-economic group(Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>	
Group 1 (poorest)	9.7*
Group 2	4.9*
Group 3	3.0*
Group 4 (best off)	1.5*
<i>Households (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>	
Two-parent	5.0
Single	3.4
<i>Parents' age (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>	
Not young	5.2*
Young	0.0*
<i>Total</i>	<i>4.8</i>

* Pearson Chi-Square test is significant at 0.05 level

Table 12 Influences on borrowing money from kiosks

STRATA	Borrowed money
<i>Socio-economic group(Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>	
Group 1 (poorest)	19.1*
Group 2	17.3*
Group 3	19.6*
Group 4 (best off)	11.6*
<i>Households (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>	
Two-parent	17.1
Single	12.8
<i>Parents' age (Chi square test is significant at 0.01 level)</i>	
Not young	16.7
Young	15.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>16.6</i>

* Pearson Chi-Square test is significant at 0.05 level

Appendix III Questionnaire

Applied Research Center of AUCA
Project «Childhood poverty in Kyrgyzstan»,
March, 2003

Questionnaire id _____

Interviewer's name _____

Hello my name is _____. I represent research group of AUCA, which conducts research on childhood poverty in Kyrgyzstan. We would like to talk with you about your living conditions and problems you face. We are responsible for security and confidentiality of information.

Your answers and opinions are very important for us, therefore we ask you to answer honestly. There are no wrong answers. We are interested in your personal opinion on your problems.

INT.: Please fill out this page

S1. The community name INT.: Write down the name of community	
S2. Panoh	
1. Osh	6. Lailyak
2. Kyzyl-Kia	7. Batken
3. Kara-Kuldja	8. Kok- Djangak
4. Chong-Alai	9. Toktogul
5. Aravan	10. Suzak
11. Bazar-Korgon	16. Bishkek
12. Talas	17. Chui-Tokmok
13. Bakai-Ata	18. Moskva
14. Djungal	19. Jaiyl
15. Kochkor	20. Tup
S3. Oblast	S4. Type of activity / Type of the city
1. Osh	1. Agricultural
2. Djalal Abad	2. Herding
3. Batken	3. Migrant
4. Chui	4. Long-term residential
Location	
S5.	S6.
1. Mountainous	1. Isolated
2. Low lying	2. Non-isolated
S7. Do you have children under 21?	S8. Language of interview
1. Yes (<i>continue</i>)	1. Kyrgyz
2. No (<i>discontinue</i>)	2. Russian
	3. Uzbek
S9. Address	

Day	Month
Time when interview is started	Time when interview is finished

Household roster

I would like to talk about your household. Tell your name and names of all people who are living in your household, whether or not they are family members. If you have children, who are married and do not live with you, do not include in the list. Please indicate all members of your family (apart from those who have formed their own households) even those who do not live in the household at the moment but you expect to return. *INT.: write down the names of all people who are living in house, even if she or he is not a member of the family. Ask questions about each member of the household. (Children in the household may work as well as adults)*

Q1. What are the names of all the members of the household? <i>INT: Write respondent first</i>	Q2. How old are you (is he/she)?	Q3. Sex 1. Male 2. Female	Q4. What is your (his/her) degree of education? 1. Preschool 2. Primary 3. Non-Finished Secondary 4. Secondary 5. Technical 6. Non-Finished Higher 7. Higher 8. PhD	Q5. How are you (is s/he) related to the head of the household? 1. Head of household 2. Wife/husband 3. Daughter/son 4. Son in law/daughter in law 5. Father/Mother 6. Mother in law/father in law 7. Brother/sister 8. Grand son/grand daughter 9. Grand father/grand mother 10. Servant/nurse 11. Temporarily living with us 12. Children of relative/friends 13. Other	Q6. What is your (his/her) nationality? 1. Kyrgyz 2. Russian 3. Uzbek 4. Ukrainian 5. Tatar 6. Dungan 7. Uyghur 8. German 9. Other
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					
13.					

In total how many people live in the household?

Q7. Number of adults	Q9. Total number of people living in the household
Q8. Number of children under 18	

INT.: Q 10 – Children might work as well as adults

	INT.: Write names of all the members of the household	Q10. Please tell me do you (does he/she) work: 1. Full time (cont.) 2. Part time(cont.) 3. On temporary / seasonal jobs (cont.) 4. Do not work (go to Q12)	Q11. What kind of work do you (does s/he) do? 1. Manager 2. Employee/ specialist 3. Worker 4. Businessman/ entrepreneur 5. Farmer 6. Housewife 7. Pensioner 8. Herding 9. Selling/ reselling 10. Other (specify)	Q12. Are you (Is s/he) currently studying? 1. Yes (cont.) 2. No (INT.: if 3-17 years old go to Q16; otherwise go to Q17)
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				

Q13. Where do you (does s/he) study?	Q14. What grade/year is he/she in?	Q15. Does s/he attend school/Institute:	Q16. Why does s/he skip?
1. Preschool 2. Primary school 3. Secondary school 4. Gymnasium 5. Boarding school 6. Technical school 7. School of working youth 8. Institute/University		1. Regularly (<i>does not skip</i>) (<i>go to Q17</i>) 2. Regularly but sometimes skips (<i>cont.</i>) 3. Rarely, often skips (<i>cont.</i>) 4. Does not attend (<i>cont.</i>)	1. Child is not interested 2. Lack of clothes/ shoes 3. School is not heated 4. Teacher is not there all the time 5. Can't afford textbook rent/ school repair contributions 6. Can't pay fees 7. Because s/he works 8. The School/Institute is far from community 9. Other (<i>specify</i>)
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			

Childcare

Q17. Who looks after children who are younger than 6 years old when parents are out?

0. No children under 6 (<i>go to Q19</i>) 1. Grandparents 2. Older children (<i>above 12</i>)	3. Older children (<i>under 12</i>) 4. Sister/sister in law 5. Other relatives	6. Neighbors / friends 7. Nurse 8. Other (<i>specify</i>)
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Q18. For how long do parents leave their children?		
1. For an hour	4. For a day	
2. For 2-3 hours	5. For several days	
3. For 5-6 hours	6. For several weeks	
Migration		
Q19. Does any member of your household, whom you expect to return, live in another place?		1. Yes (cont.) 2. No (go to Q27)

	Q20. What is the name of the member of the household who is living in another place?	Q21. How is s/he related to the household's head?	Q22. What city/village does s/he live in?
1.		1. Head of household	
2.		2. Wife/husband	
3.		3. Daughter/son	
4.		4. Son in law/daughter in law	
5.		5. Father/Mother	
6.		6. Mother in law/father in law	
7.		7. Brother/sister	
8.		8. Grand son/grand daughter	
9.		9. Grand father/grand mother	
10.		10. Other relatives	

	Q23. When did s/he leave the household? <i>INT.: Specify a month and a year</i>		Q24. Why did s/he leave the household? 1. To study 2. To work 3. To visit relatives/friends 4. To serve in the army 5. Other (<i>specify</i>)	Q25. When is s/he expected to be back? <i>INT.: Specify a month and a year.</i> 99. Do not know		Q26. Does s/he send money back to the household? 1. Yes 2. No
	23.1	23.2		25.1	25.2	
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						

Intergenerational mobility	
Q27. What is the occupation of household's head's mother? (or was last occupation before retirement)	
1. Manager	5. Kolhoznik/ sovhoznik
2. Employee / specialist	6. Farmer/ herder
3. Worker	7. Selling/ reselling
4. Businessman/ entrepreneur	8. Party cadre
	9. Housewife
	10. Other (specify)

Q28. What is the occupation of household's head's father? (or was last occupation before retirement).	
1. Manager 2. Employee / specialist 3. Worker 4. Businessman/ entrepreneur	5. Kolhoznik/ sovhoznik 6. Farmer / herding 7. Selling/ reselling 8. Party cadre 9. Househusband 10. Other (specify)
Living conditions – Now I would like to ask you about your house and environment.	
Q29. Is the accommodation where you live in:	
1. Owned by your family 2. Rented	3. Provided by state 4. Provided for free by relatives/friends 5. Other (specify)
Q30. How many rooms do you have in your house/apartment? INT: Don't include the kitchen, bathroom and balcony	
Q31. What is the heating system of your house? INT.: More than one response possible	
1. Central heating 2. Gas heating 3. Electric heating	4. Stove heating using only wood/or dung 5. Stove heating using coal and wood 6. Heater 7. Other (specify)
Q32. How many rooms do you heat in winter?	
Q33. How warm are the rooms you heat?	
1. Very warm 2. Warm	3. Cool 4. Cold 5. Do not know
Q34. What is the main source of water in your house? INT.: Only one response possible	
1. Central water supply system 2. Own water supply system 3. Draw well	4. Spring 5. Canal, river, pond 6. Rainwater 7. Brought water 8. Other (specify)
Q35. How far source of water is located from your house?	
1. Near the house (less than 50 meters) 2. Not far from the house (from 50 – 200 meters)	3. Far from the house (from 200 to 500 meters) 4. Very far from the house (more than 500 meters) 5. Don't know

Q36. Is water supply different in summer and winter?		
1. Yes (cont.)	2. No (go to Q37)	
Q37. In what way?		
Q38. Where do members of your family wash? INT.: More than one response possible		
1. Bathroom with shower	3. Private banya/sauna	5. In the river/ waterfalls
2. In the house (using heated water and a basin)	4. Public banya/sauna	6. Other
Q39. What is the type of toilet in your house?		
1. Toilet inside of house not shared with other households	5. Does not have toilet	
2. Toilet inside of house shared with other households	6. Other (Specify)	
3. Toilet outside of house not shared with other households		
4. Toilet outside of house shared with other households		
Q40. What is the main source of light in your house?		
1. Electricity	4. Light with batteries	6. Other (specify)
2. Kerosene, oil or gas lamps	5. Handmade candles	
3. Candle		
Q41. Which fuels do you mostly use for cooking during wintertime? INT.: Only one response possible		
1. Gas (central system)	4. Coal	7. Other
2. Gas (container)	5. Wood	
3. Electricity	6. Dung	
Q42. Which fuels do you mostly use for cooking during summertime? INT.: Only one response possible		
1. Gas (central system)	4. Coal	7. Other
2. Gas (container)	5. Wood	
3. Electricity	6. Dung	
Material well-being		
Q43. Does your household have land you rent or own?		
1. Yes (cont.)	2. No (go to Q49)	

Q44. What type of land?	Q45. What is the size of the land? <i>INT.: in hectares</i>	Q46. What is the form of ownership? 1. Life ownership with the right to inherit 2. Temporary ownership 3. Rent 4. It is used without any permission	Q47. What for do you mainly use the land?	Q48. Is the land irrigated? 1. Yes 2. No
a) Plot of land attached to a house				
b) Dacha				
c) Farm land				
d) Other				

Q49. Does your household have livestock?	
1. Yes (cont.)	2. No (go to Q53)

Q50. What animals do you have?	Q51. How many do you have?		Q52. What for do you mainly use?				
	1. Sale of meat	2. Sale of animal products	3. Food products for household's consumption	4. Riding	5. Other (specify)		
1. Cow							
2. Horse							
3. Sheep							
4. Chicken							
5. Others (specify)							
6.							
7.							

	Q53. Do you have following items in your household?		Q54. Are you planning to purchase these items within 3 months?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Car				
2. Other motorized vehicle - truck etc.				
3. VCR				
4. Tape recorder				
5. Color TV				
6. Black and white TV				
7. Fridge				
8. Telephone				
9. Laundry washer				
10. Refuse to answer				

INT: Show the table with the kinds of sources of income for QQ 55-56.

	Q55. Please indicate what kinds of sources of income do you have in the household?	Q56. What are your household's 3 main sources of income? Please rank them from 1-3, where the 1 is the most important source.
1	Salary	
2	Temporary wages	
3	Selling / Reselling goods	
4	Pension / Stipend/ Allowances	
5	Sale or consumption of farm products	
6	Sale of other home produced products (e.g. Handicraft, furniture, etc)	

7	Sale of non-farm products (coal, wood, berries etc.)		
8	Renting out a room		
9	Assistance of relatives		
10	Providing services to others e.g. repairs, transport, herding others' animals etc.		
11	Remittance		
12	Other (specify) _____		

Q57. INT: ask only those who indicated allowance in Q55. What kinds of social benefits does you or any member of your household receive?

1. Allowance for unemployment	
2. Benefits for disabled people	
3. Benefits for low-income families	
4. Other (Please specify)	

Q58. How would you estimate level of well being of your household of the present times, 5 years ago, 10 and 15 years ago according to the following statements? Please, choose the statement that describes your well-being most accurately.

a. At present	b. 5 years ago	c. 10 years ago	d. 15 years ago
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Interviewer: show the list with statements. Fill in the blanks with statement's number for each period.

1. We can afford everything we need	
2. We can afford almost everything we need	
3. We can afford only clothes, food, and medicines, but can not afford other things	
4. We can afford food, but have difficulties in affording clothes and medicine and other things	
5. We cannot afford enough food	
6. Refuse to answer	

Q59. Did the well being of your household stayed the same, or become worse or better than 15 years ago?

1. Worse (continue)	2. Better (go to Q62)	3. The same (go to Q64)	4. Don't know (go to Q65)
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Q60. What are the main reasons for your household to become poorer?

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Q61. How did this decline affect your children? What else? Anything else? <i>INT.: Get as more responses as possible</i>

INT.: go to Q65.

Q62. If you think your material status improved during the last 15 years what makes you think so?

Q63. In what way did this improvement affect your children? What else? Anything else? <i>INT.: Get as more responses as possible</i>

INT.: go to Q65

Q64. If you feel that your material well being has stayed the same, what are the main reasons for this?

Income	Livelihood strategies	
Q65. What is your average income of your household (including pension, allowance, temporary wages, stipend, income from sales, rent, etc) per month? 1. Less than 300 soms 2. From 300 to 500 soms 3. From 501 to 700 soms 4. From 701 to 900 soms 5. From 900 to 1100 soms 6. From 1001 to 1300 soms 7. From 1301 to 1500 soms 8. From 1501 to 2000 soms 9. From 2001 to 2500 soms 10. From 2501 to 4000 soms 11. More than 4000 soms 12. Don't know / Refuse to answer	Q66. In the last 12 months, have you or your family members: 1. Left the area to look for work 2. Sold animals, seeds or tools you needed to pay for key expenses 3. Sold other household items e.g. carpet, TV etc. 4. Cut down the amount you eat 5. Tries to sell more farm products 6. Cut down the amount you heat your home in winter 7. Started visiting traditional healer 8. Sent a child to stay with relatives/friends for along period 9. Cut down wood for cooking and heating 10. Extract coal by yourselves for cooking and heating	
	Yes	No

INT.: Show the table with the list of the question's categories.

	Q67. Have you received aid for last 12 months from following sources? This can be social as well as material aid. 1. Yes 2. No	Q68. Have you borrowed money from the following sources? 1. Yes (cont) 2. No (go to Q70)	Q69. How much?	Q70. Have you received money as a gift from the following sources? 1. Yes 2. No
1. Parents				
2. Close relatives				
3. Relatives				
4. Neighbors				
5. Friends who are not your neighbors				
6. Village authorities				
7. Colleagues				
8. Deputies, chosen in your election district				

	Q67. Have you received aid for last 12 months from following sources? This can be social as well as material aid. 1. Yes 2. No	Q68. Have you borrowed money from the following sources? 1. Yes (cont) 2. No (go to Q70)	Q69. How much?	Q70. Have you received money as a gift from the following sources? 1. Yes 2. No
9. NGOs				
10. Political parties				
11. Chernaya kassa				
12. Religious organizations				
13. Teachers				
14. Nurses				
15. Social workers				
16. Banks				
17. Shops / kiosks				
18. Other (specify)				
19.				

	Q71. Have they helped you in collecting harvest, etc? 1. Yes 2. No	Q72. Have they helped in building/ repairing house? 1. Yes 2. No	Q73. Have they taken care after children? 1. Yes 2. No	Q74. Have you got valuable items for the household from them? 1. Yes 2. No
1. Parents				
2. Close relatives				
3. Relatives				
4. Neighbors				

	Q71. Have they helped you in collecting harvest, etc? 1. Yes 2. No	Q72. Have they helped in building/ repairing house? 1. Yes 2. No	Q73. Have they taken care after children? 1. Yes 2. No	Q74. Have you got valuable items for the household from them? 1. Yes 2. No
5. Friends who are not your neighbors				
6. Village authorities				
7. Colleagues				
8. Deputies, chosen in your election district				
9. NGOs				
10. Political parties				
11. Chernaya kassa				
12. Religious organizations				
13. Teachers				
14. Nurses				
15. Social workers				
16. Banks				
17. Shops / kiosks				
18. Other (specify)				
19.				

	Q75. Have you borrowed products or received products as a gift? 1. Yes 2. No	Q76. Have you received useful information? 1. Yes 2. No	Q77. Have you got emotional support? 1. Yes 2. No
1. Parents			

	Q75. Have you borrowed products or received products as a gift? 1. Yes 2. No	Q76. Have you received useful information? 1. Yes 2. No	Q77. Have you got emotional support? 1. Yes 2. No
2. Close relatives			
3. Relatives			
4. Neighbors			
5. Friends who are not your neighbors			
6. Village authorities			
7. Colleagues			
8. Deputies, chosen in your election district			
9. NGOs			
10. Political parties			
11. Chernaya kassa			
12. Religious organizations			
13. Teachers			
14. Nurses			
15. Social workers			
16. Banks			
17. Shops / kiosks			
18. Other (specify)			
19.			
Policy monitoring			
Micro-credit block			
Q78. Have you ever heard about micro-credit program?			2. No (go to the Q81)
			1. Yes (cont.)

Q79. Have you ever participated in micro-credit program?		
1. Yes (cont., skip Q 80)	2. No (go to the Q80)	3. Do not know (go to the Q80)
Q80. What were the results?		
Q81. Why did not you participate in the program?		
1. Could not see any benefit	4. It is forbidden by Islam to pay interest	7. Other:
2. Afraid I could not afford loan repayments	5. Interest rates are too high	
3. None in this area	6. I am not interested	
Health Care block		
Q82. Did anyone in your family got sick in the last 6 months?		
1. Yes (cont.)		2. No (go to Q88)
Q83. Who got sick?	Q84. What was s/he sick with?	Q85. Where did s/he get treatment?
	1. Cold / flu 2. TB 3. Hepatitis B 4. Malaria 5. Other (specify)	1. Self-treatment 2. Traditional healer 3. Polyclinics 4. Hospital 5. Family doctors group 6. Pharmacist 7. Other (specify)
	Q86. For how long has s/he been sick?	Q87. How much did it cost?
	INT: Record the answer in days	INT.: Recode the answer in soms
		Q88. How did your household meet the expense?
		1. It was a real burden for the family 2. It was not very easy 3. Easily
Q89. INT.: Please write some details or comments made by respondent to Q88		



Q90. How often do your children get sick?				
1. Often (continue)	2. Sometimes (continue)	3. Seldom (continue)	4. Never (go to Q92)	

Q91. What are they usually sick with? INT.: More than one response possible				
1. Cold / flu	2. TB	3. Hepatitis B	4. Malaria	
5. Other (specify)				

Q92. How far away is the nearest clinic or health facility?				
1. Near the house	2. Not far from the house	3. Far from the house	4. Don't know	

Q93. Are you satisfied with the treatment in these facilities?				
1. Very satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Not satisfied	4. Not satisfied at all	5. Do not know

Q94. Why?				

Q95. Has a Family Doctor's Group been introduced in this area?				
1. Yes (cont.)	2. No (go to Q98)	3. Don't know (go to Q98)		

Q96. Has this change affected your use of health services?				
1. Yes (cont.)	2. No (go to Q95)	3. Don't know (go to Q98)		

Q97. In what way?				

Q98. On average, how many meals do you eat per day?				
1. One time a day	2. Two times a day	3. Three times a day	4. Four times a day	5. More than four times a day

Q99. How often do you eat meat?						
1. Every day	2. Every two days	3. Once a week	4. Two times a month	5. Once a month	6. Rarer than once a month	
7. Other (specify)						
Educational block						
Q100. Do you have to pay for the following education expenses?						
Type of expense						Amount per a year
1. School fee						
2. Rent of textbooks						
3. Contribution to repair fund						
4. Other						
Q101. How did your household meet the expense?						
1. It is a real burden for the family		2. It was not very easy		3. Easily		4. Don't know
Q102. INT.: Please write some details or comments made by respondent to Q101						
Q103. What do you see your children doing after the finish 9-class secondary school?						
1. Continue other 2 classes of secondary school		4. Getting married		7. Don't know		
2. Going to vocational/technical school		5. Working		6. What he/she wants		
3. Finishing 2 other classes of secondary school and going to University		6. What he/she wants				
Q104. Are you satisfied with your child's education?						
1. Very satisfied		2. Satisfied		3. Not satisfied		
Q105. Why?						
Q106. How do you imagine the future of your children? What will they become? INT.: Specify whether there is a difference between girls and boys						
a). For girls						
b). For boys						

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