

**Youth, Livelihoods
and Peace Promotion:
A Knowledge, Attitudes
and Practice study
among Youth aged 15-28
in Osh and Jalal-Abad
provinces,
Kyrgyzstan 2011**



The Ministry of Youth Affairs
in the Kyrgyz Republic



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Youth, Livelihoods and Peace Promotion: A Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice study among Youth aged 15 -28 in Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces, Kyrgyzstan 2011

This publication is a product of a 'Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice' study among youth aged 15-28 in Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces in the Kyrgyz Republic, carried out by the initiative and support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Ministry of Youth Affairs in the Kyrgyz Republic in April to May 2011.

The study was conducted to assess the opinions, attitudes, level of awareness, and concerns of youth in Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces and provide recommendations for future interventions.

The research was implemented by INTERMEDIA Research Institute in collaboration with the Social Research Centre at the American University of Central Asia.

The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of the United Nations Children's Fund and the organisation does not bear any responsibility for its content.

Young people in the age range 15-28 begin and complete a transition to adulthood. At age 15, most young people are studying full-time in general school. Most finish school but do not continue to college, getting married instead, with most young women marrying between the ages of 20 and 23, while most men are married by age 25. Many young people continue to live with their parents after marriage, which seems to reflect thin rental and mortgage markets, which makes it difficult for young people to acquire places to live on their own. Birthrates are high, and by age 28 the average young woman has two children or more. Over 90 percent of men are employed by ages 27-28. Fewer women, never much above one-third, work, and their employment rates fall in their late 20s.

The economy in the target region is partly a subsistence economy. Most of the population is rural, and owns land and livestock, providing for some of their own needs as well as selling to the market. Apart from that, most of the labor force operates in an informal sector where instead of permanent jobs, individuals work on short-term contracts, or do seasonal work, or are self-employed. Some of the skills that are most often used on the job are skills that are also useful at home, e.g., driving, sewing. Yet many young people aspire to the more skilled and specialized jobs that define a modern economy. Many are exposed to computers at school, and most have been touched by the mobile phone revolution, calling and texting friends regularly, and some of young people's career plans reflect an attempt to adapt to economic modernization. But youth have little confidence in their ability to acquire the capital, credentials, and connections needed to succeed in the careers they want, and feel they need help. Corruption also seems to impede entry to many professions.

Emigration apart, society in southern Kyrgyzstan is quite immobile, with very few mov-

ing house, and this seems to contribute to, and to reflect, a structure of social networks based on strong ties. Particularly noteworthy is that most young people say they would turn to relatives for advice and assistance in starting careers, even though few want to have the same jobs their parents did. Young people appear to lack the far-reaching networks of weak ties that, in the West, are the most effective in finding jobs. Such networks would also be useful in tying the two major ethnic communities together and helping them to see eye to eye. The segregation of Kyrgyz and Uzbek social networks may help to explain the large deviations in public opinion between these two groups, with Uzbeks being highly mistrustful and alienated from the system.

The June 2010 ethnic violence only affected a small minority of youth directly, as do continuing violent occurrences, though distressingly frequent. But it seems to have affected attitudes profoundly and probably explains the intense dissatisfaction with which the Uzbek community regards the state of affairs in Kyrgyzstan and their far lower levels of trust in all kinds of institutions, especially those associated with the government of Kyrgyzstan. Such mistrust will make it challenging to attract Uzbek participants to youth centers.

A survey of 1,500 interviews was commissioned by UNICEF in order to assess the opinions, views and concerns of youth in Osh and Jalal-Abad and with the aim to determine the needs of the youth and the right approaches to meet their needs. UNICEF was tasked to take the lead on the study, but UNHCR and UNDP were also stakeholders.

The survey was designed in the spring of 2011, and interviews were conducted between April 16 and May 3, while the rest of the field work, data entry, and data cleaning continued until mid-May. The target sample consisted of young people between the ages of 15 and 28 who live in the Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces. Field work was carried out by the Social Research Center at the American University of Central Asia. The sample was stratified by type of community (urban vs. rural), sex, and ethnic groups (Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Russian, Other).

The questionnaire contained 12 sections:

- First, an introductory section ascertained basic information about sex, age, ethnicity, marital status, and children of respondents.
- Second, a section on households inquired how many people live in each respondent's household, the age, employment status, and profession of household members, income and financial situation, land and livestock, homeownership, and mobility.
- Third, a section on skills and education, with questions about particular skills and how they were acquired.
- Fourth, a section on the current employment and career plans of respondents.
- Fifth, a section on young people's pastimes and habits, including the forms of entertainment they enjoy, the places they like to go, and religion.
- Sixth, a section on friends and social networks.
- Seventh, a section on travel and plans for emigration.
- Eighth, a section on news and opinion, including satisfaction with the economy, security, and the leadership of the country, and trust in institutions.
- Ninth, a section on mobile phones and how respondents use them.
- Tenth, a section on violence and crime.
- Eleventh, a section on inter-ethnic attitudes.
- Twelfth, a section on likely participation in a Youth Center.

In addition, interviewers were asked to record information about the location, including urban/rural/mountainous location, population and accessibility.

Two supervisors were recruited to supervise data collection phase in two provinces. One supervised the fieldwork in Osh province and Osh city and the other one - in Jalal-Abad province. All interviewers had previous experience in conducting face-to-face standardized interviews. Out of 36 interviewers, 29 are females and 7 are males. More than a half of interviewers, 23, are Kyrgyz, 8 are Uzbek, and 5 identified themselves with other ethnic groups. Most interviewers were fluent in both the Uzbek and Kyrgyz languages.

Two training sessions were conducted, one in Osh and one in Jalal-Abad. In each training session, supervisors explained the project goals and objectives and how the data would be used, and interviewers were briefed about the general guidelines and procedures for face-to-face interviewing. Then supervisors introduced the questionnaire and examined it question by question, discussed sample procedures, and conducted two demonstration interviews. After

the demonstration interviews, mock interviews were carried out with guests invited by the interviewers.

The total number of 15-28 year olds in the target areas, according to national census data, is 707,690. The most populated areas are Osh and Jalal-Abad cities. About ¾ of young people live in rural areas. In general, number of males and females in those areas is equal. About 69 per cent of target population is Kyrgyz; Uzbeks comprise 27 per cent of population and about 4 per cent are of some other ethnicity.

The sample was divided into five strata: urban households in Osh province (but not Osh city), rural households in Osh province, urban households in Jalal-Abad province (including Jalal-Abad city), rural households in Jalal-Abad province, and households in Osh city itself (a separate jurisdiction from Osh province). The allocation of targeted households between rural, urban (other than Osh city) and Osh city were made in proportion of population and on the basis of Census numbers.

Villages in rural areas and territorial public councils in Osh city were used as primary sampling units (PSUs). The number of interviews in each PSU was 10. Thus, the number of PSUs in each stratum of sample population was determined by dividing the total number of interviews to be conducted in the stratum by 10. Since PSUs have different population sizes, the probability proportionate to population size (PPPS) method was used. Within PSUs, households were chosen by a random method, as were respondents within each household. The survey enjoyed a high response rate of 94.7 per cent, although this was lower in Osh city.

The major demographic characteristics of respondents are very close to population parameters, so no weights were assigned in the data analysis. A more detailed account of the field work, as well as the quality control, data entry, and data cleaning processes, is available in the Technical Report prepared by AUCA's Social Research Center. Several problems were encountered during the field work:

- In Osh city there were problems with sampling young Uzbek males. Due to

recent events and the fact that young males are the frequent target of abuse by police officers in the city, most of Uzbek young males in Osh city have either migrated to other countries or moved to more safe areas in oblast.

- In Suzak district of Jalal-Abad oblast, the deputy chief of the district administration had concerns about the survey and demanded more information about the project. The major area of concern was the division of the sample by ethnic groups. He thought that it is dangerous to ask people about their ethnic identity and the ethnicity of their neighbors. Interviewers and oblast supervisor explained that it is done just to make sure that the sample is representative and that we are not going to share the database with anyone.
- In Kurama village of Jalal-Abad oblast, the female young interviewer was not allowed to conduct interviews in the village by local authority administration. After negotiation with the representative of the local authority administration, another more experienced male interviewer has visited the village. However, as soon as he arrived, he was beaten up by local young males. After this accident, the supervisor contacted the local authority leader again and during the conversation the village leader has promised to guarantee the security of the interviews. The interviews in this village were finally conducted by a middle-aged experienced female interviewer who was accompanied by a police officer from Osh city.
- Because of some safety concerns in Massy village of Jalal-Abad province, the interviewer there was also accompanied by police officers from Osh city.

The sample is self-weighted, as the tables below illustrate:

Table 1. Population vs sample data by oblast

Province	Sample data		Population data	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Osh city	187	12.47	88254	12.47
Osh province	682	45.47	321754	45.47
Jalal-Abad province	631	42.07	297682	42.06
Total	1500	100.0	707692	100.0

SOURCE: National Statistic Committee Census data, 2009

Table 10. Population vs sample data by type of residency

Type of settlement	Sample data		Population data	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Urban	378	25.20	178587	25.24
Rural	1122	74.80	529103	74.76
Total	1500	100	707692	100.0

SOURCE: National Statistic Committee Census data, 2009

Table 11. Population vs sample data by sex

Sex	Sample data		Population data	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Male	737	49.13	356288	50.35
Female	763	50.87	351402	49.65
Total	1500	100	707692	100

SOURCE: National Statistic Committee Census data, 2009

Table 12. Population vs sample data by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Sample data		Population data	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Kyrgyz	1034	68.93	530704	69.25
Uzbek	425	28.33	208505	27.21
Other	41	2.70	27111	3.54
Total	1500	100	766320	100

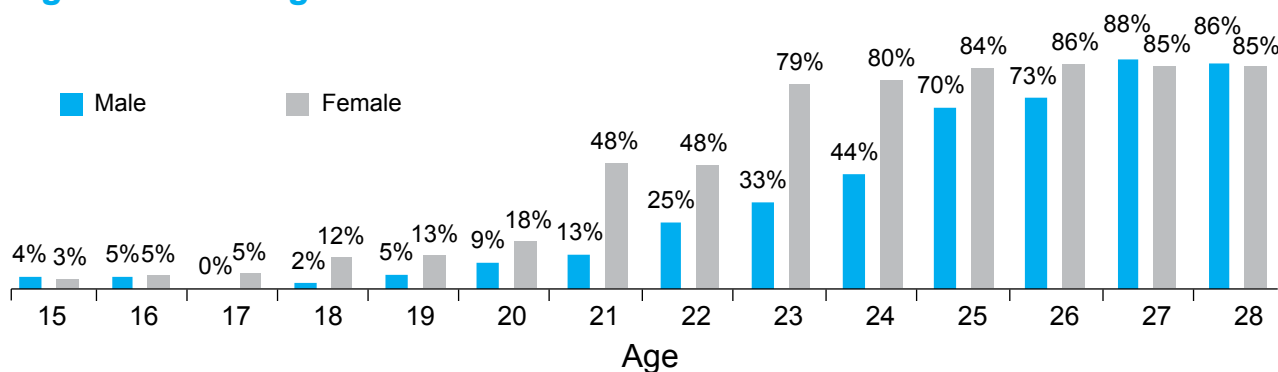
SOURCE: National Statistic Committee Census data, 2009

I. THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

For youth anywhere, the ages between 15-28 are a time of transition to adulthood. Young people are finishing, or dropping out of, school, and making decisions about whether to pursue higher education, or not. Many of them, especially young men but also many young women, are entering the labor force, or trying to. They are marrying and, if they can afford it, starting new households, and having kids, especially young women.

Figure 1¹ shows one aspect of the transition to adulthood as most youth in the target region experience it: marriage. Marriage rates for young women rise very sharply between 20, when only 18 percent of young women are married, and 23, when 79 percent of young women are. Men's typical ages at marriage are a little bit older, but most men are married by age 25.

Figure 1: Marriage



Base: n=77 males age 15, n=71 females age 15, n=86 males age 16, n=84 females age 16, n=70 males age 17, n=78 females age 17, n=59 males age 18, n=59 females age 18, n=62 males age 19, n=56 females age 19, n=53 males age 20, n=50 females age 20, n=39 males age 21, n=46 females age 21, n=40 males age 22, n=42 females age 22, n=49 males age 23, n=35 females age 23, n=41 males age 24, n=57 females age 24, n=46 males age 25, n=57 females age 25, n=37 males age 26, n=42 females age 26, n=41 males age 27, n=54 females age 27, n=37 males age 28, n=47 females age 28.

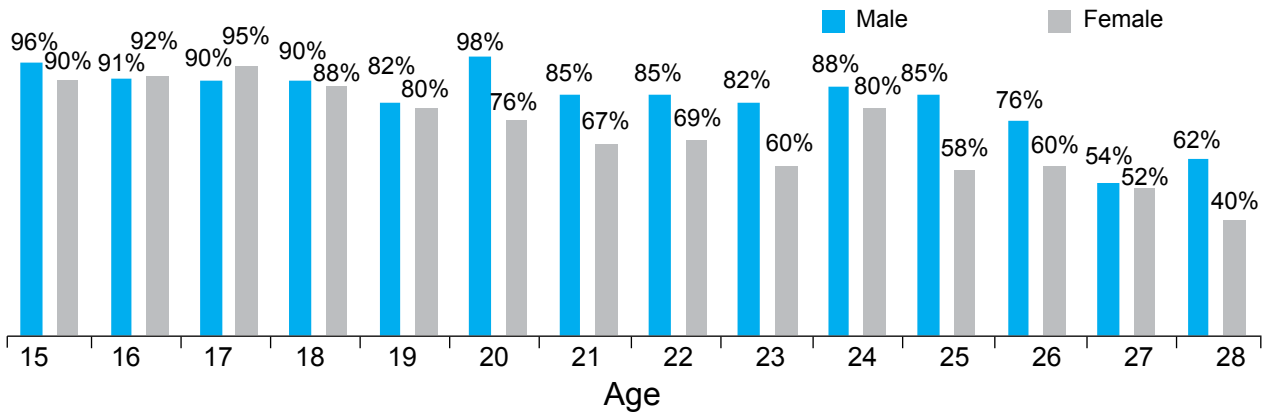
Figure 2 shows how some young people make the transition from living with their parents to setting up households of their own. But many of them do not. At ages under about 18, almost all young people live with their parents. (Exceptions might include orphans or students who live with relatives in order to study in a town.) By about age 19 or 20, some young people begin to move out of their parents' homes, and at this point a difference between young men and young women appears, with men more likely than women to live with their

parents. This reflects two factors: (a) women marry younger than men, and (b) when women marry, they tend to join the households of their husbands. Even by age 28, however, many young people are still living at home.

Figure 3 shows another transition: to parenthood. The youngest parent found by the survey was 15, but that seems to be an exceptional case, for the next youngest parents were nineteen, and only after age 20 did significant family sizes appear. At a given age, women

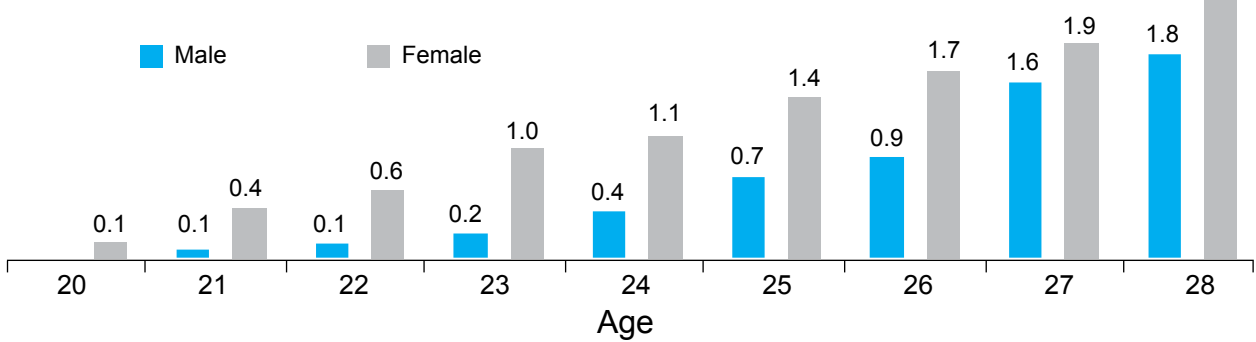
¹ Bases for Figures 1 through 5 are: n=77 males age 15, n=71 females age 15, n=86 males age 16, n=84 females age 16, n=70 males age 17, n=78 females age 17, n=59 males age 18, n=59 females age 18, n=62 males age 19, n=56 females age 19, n=53 males age 20, n=50 females age 20, n=39 males age 21, n=46 females age 21, n=40 males age 22, n=42 females age 22, n=49 males age 23, n=35 females age 23, n=41 males age 24, n=57 females age 24, n=46 males age 25, n=57 females age 25, n=37 males age 26, n=42 females age 26, n=41 males age 27, n=54 females age 27, n=37 males age 28, n=47 females age 28.

Figure 2: Young People Living with At Least One Parent



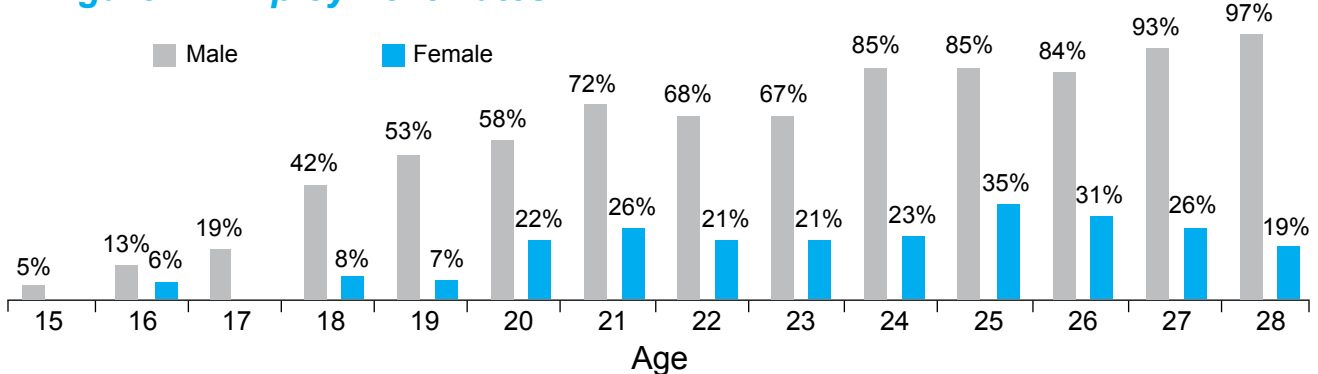
Base: n=77 males age 15, n=71 females age 15, n=86 males age 16, n=84 females age 16, n=70 males age 17, n=78 females age 17, n=59 males age 18, n=59 females age 18, n=62 males age 19, n=56 females age 19, n=53 males age 20, n=50 females age 20, n=39 males age 21, n=46 females age 21, n=40 males age 22, n=42 females age 22, n=49 males age 23, n=35 females age 23, n=41 males age 24, n=57 females age 24, n=46 males age 25, n=57 females age 25, n=37 males age 26, n=42 females age 26, n=41 males age 27, n=54 females age 27, n=37 males age 28, n=47 females age 28.

Figure 3: Average Number of Children



Base: n=77 males age 15, n=71 females age 15, n=86 males age 16, n=84 females age 16, n=70 males age 17, n=78 females age 17, n=59 males age 18, n=59 females age 18, n=62 males age 19, n=56 females age 19, n=53 males age 20, n=50 females age 20, n=39 males age 21, n=46 females age 21, n=40 males age 22, n=42 females age 22, n=49 males age 23, n=35 females age 23, n=41 males age 24, n=57 females age 24, n=46 males age 25, n=57 females age 25, n=37 males age 26, n=42 females age 26, n=41 males age 27, n=54 females age 27, n=37 males age 28, n=47 females age 28.

Figure 4: Employment Rates



Base: n=77 males age 15, n=71 females age 15, n=86 males age 16, n=84 females age 16, n=70 males age 17, n=78 females age 17, n=59 males age 18, n=59 females age 18, n=62 males age 19, n=56 females age 19, n=53 males age 20, n=50 females age 20, n=39 males age 21, n=46 females age 21, n=40 males age 22, n=42 females age 22, n=49 males age 23, n=35 females age 23, n=41 males age 24, n=57 females age 24, n=46 males age 25, n=57 females age 25, n=37 males age 26, n=42 females age 26, n=41 males age 27, n=54 females age 27, n=37 males age 28, n=47 females age 28.

have more children than men, since they are usually younger than their husbands. By age 28, a typical woman has two children or more.

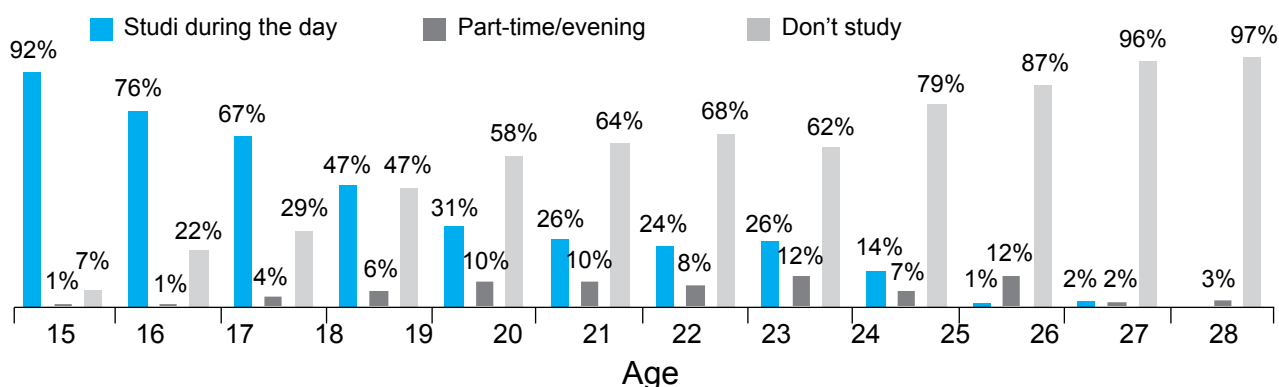
Figure 4 shows employment rates by age. Employment is defined broadly, to include not only permanent jobs but temporary and seasonal work, self-employment and individual labor activities, private enterprise, and agricultural labor. Young men overwhelmingly participate in the labor force from their mid-20s on, and by age 28 almost all of them have employment of some kind, though often only irregular work in the informal sector. Women’s labor force participation is much lower, and only one-quarter to one-third of young women in their 20s, or less, have employment of any kind. As women move into their late 20s, marriage and childrearing steadily crowd out employment.

Figure 5 shows the transition of young people out of education. Some young people have already stopped studying by age 15, but most continue studying until 17 and finish general education. Among youth over 18, almost 85 percent say that they finished secondary school. Between the ages of 19 and 22, about

one-quarter attend a higher educational institution. In 80 percent of cases this is a university, while the most of the rest are in “colleges” or lyceums and professional lyceums. About one in ten study during the day, and half of these are working at the same time, while others are unemployed, housewives, or simply non-working students. Those who study part-time take longer to finish, and many are still studying until age 24. By age 25, almost all young people have transitioned out of education into work and/or marriage. Rates of educational participation are similar for men and women at all ages.

Activities aimed at youth should be conscious of these transitions to adulthood and help young people to enter successfully into the labor force and/or marriage and family. Also, it must be remembered that the age range 15-28 covers different phases of life, and young people will have different interests as they turn from secondary school students into university students and then enter the labor force, or become housewives.

Figure 5: Rates of Participation in Education



Base: n=148 respondents age 15; n=170 respondents age 16; n=148 respondents age 17; n=118 respondents age 18; n=118 respondents age 19; n=103 respondents age 20; n=85 respondents age 21; n=82 respondents age 22; n=91 respondents age 23; n=76 respondents age 24; n=103 respondents age 25; n=79 respondents age 26; n=95 respondents age 27; n=84 respondents age 28

II. HOUSEHOLD SITUATION AND THE ECONOMY

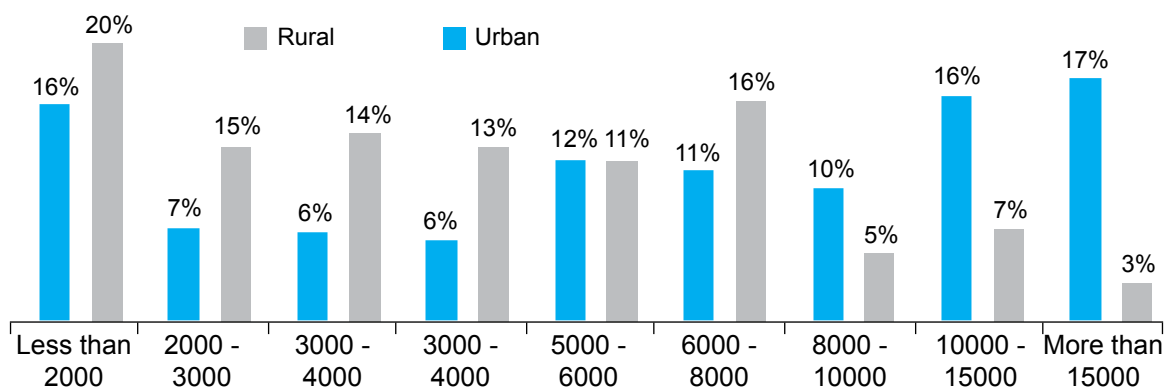
In the Osh and Jalal-Abad regions, a subsistence economy and a market economy exist side by side. The population is predominantly (75 percent) rural, and most families have their own land and livestock, including those who also have other professions, such as teachers or taxi drivers. Also, almost all households own their own homes. Households are therefore not completely reliant on money wages and markets to provide for their needs. When they do engage in market labor, it is usually on an informal basis, and the skills most often used are extensions of household management. Thus, in addition to those who make their livings simply as agricultural workers, many work as drivers, seamstresses, or in construction, renova-

tion and repair of buildings—all skills that can be learned at home and are useful in a household.

URBAN HOUSEHOLDS ARE BETTER OFF THAN RURAL HOUSEHOLDS

Respondents were asked to state their households' monthly income in Kyrgyzsom per month (US\$1 ≈ 45.1 Kyrgyz som)². They were also asked to characterize their household's financial situation with one of five descriptions, from “we don't have enough even for food” to “we can buy anything we want.” These two questions provide general indicators of households' economic well-being.

Figure 6: Distribution of Urban and Rural Households by Income



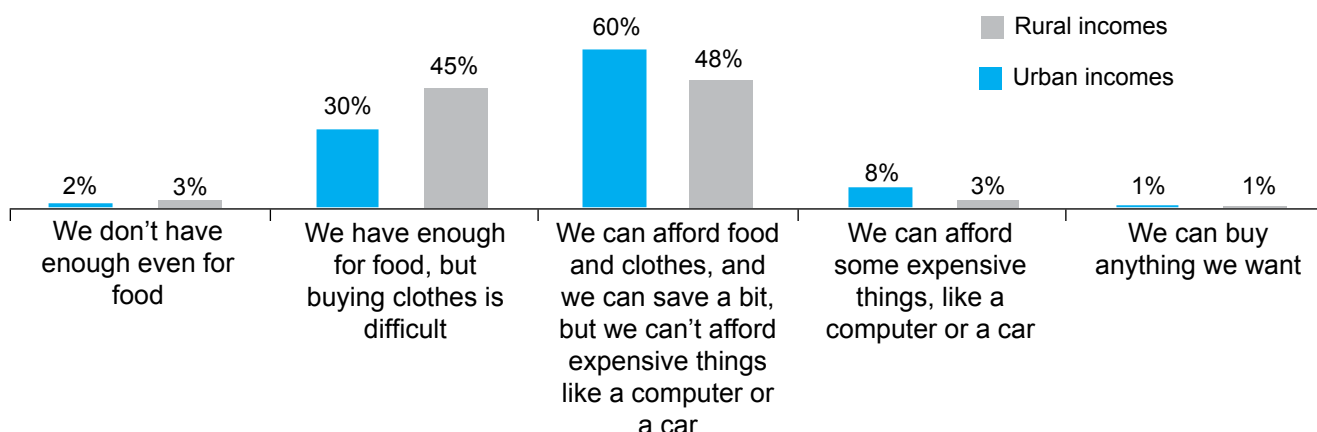
Base: n=378 urban respondents; n=1,122 rural respondents

Figure 6 shows the distribution of monthly incomes among urban and rural households. Incomes are higher in urban areas, where about one-third of households makes 10,000 som (\$221) per month or more, compared to only one in ten households in rural areas. There seems to be slightly more income inequality in cities. Incomes do not come solely from labor. The average monthly income in which at least one member is employed is 6,936 som (\$154) per month, compared to 4,800 som (\$106) per month for households in which no members are employed.

Figure 7 shows the five characterizations of household economic situation that were suggested to respondents and which ones they picked. The vast majority of households said either that “we have enough for food, but buying clothes is difficult,” or “we can afford food and clothes and can save a bit, but we can't afford expensive things like a computer or a car.” Very few households in either urban or rural are actually short of food. In urban areas, 8 percent said they could afford expensive things. Again, urban households appear to be better off, with only 30 percent of them saying that “buying clothes” is difficult, while 60 per-

² See <http://www.xe.com/?c=KGS&r=5>. Exchange rate reported as of July 17, 2011.

Figure 7: Urban and Rural Households' Financial Situations



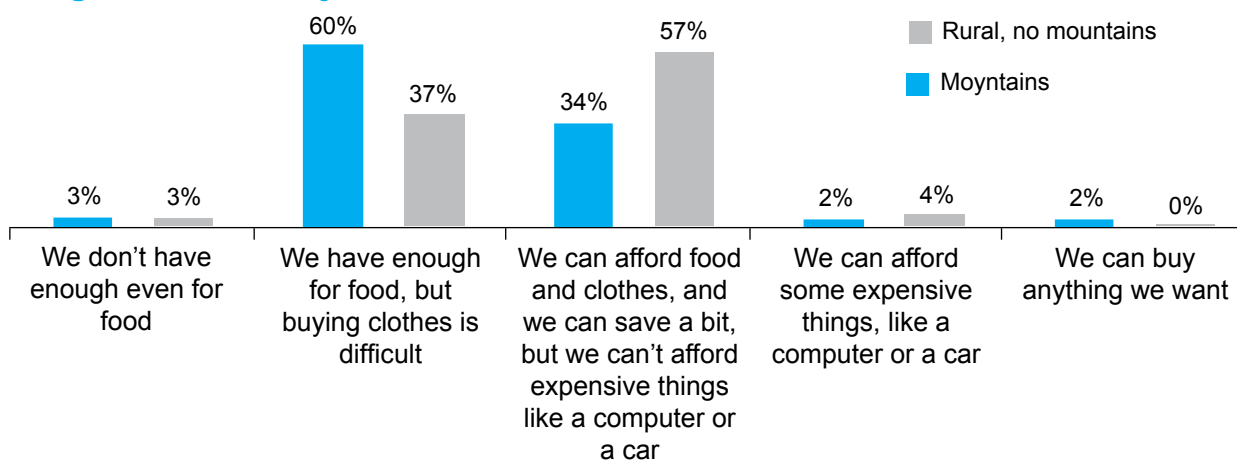
Base: n=378 urban respondents; n=1,122 rural respondents

cent place themselves in the higher category for financial situation.

Both measures of income confirm the conclusion that urban areas are better off than rural areas, and in general the two measures are correlated, though imperfectly. In particular, survey data do not suggest that higher incomes are needed in cities to offset higher costs of living and achieve the same living standard. Households that make 3,000 som (\$66) per month or less tend to say that “buying clothes is difficult,” while those who make 5,000 som (\$111) per month or more say they can afford food and clothes but not expensive things. However, a few households seem to live well with low monthly incomes, perhaps thanks to independent means.

Another important pattern that clearly emerges from the data is that mountainous areas³ look poorer than non-mountainous areas when asked to describe their economic situation. In mountainous areas, 60 percent say that “buying clothes is difficult,” compared to 37 percent in rural non-mountainous areas. However, households in mountainous areas do not have lower incomes than households in non-mountainous rural areas: mountainous households have a mean income of 5,380 som per month, compared to 5,267 som per month in non-mountainous rural areas. Rather, the special hardships of life in mountainous regions (colder weather, more difficult transport) make the people there effectively poorer, despite statistically comparable incomes.

Figure 8: Poverty and Mountains



Base: n=481 mountainous, 716 rural non-mountainous

³ Throughout the analysis, when analyzing mountainous areas separately, we will group the 75 “urban” households in mountainous areas with the rural mountainous areas. The reason for this is that they comprise too small a base to justify extensive subgroup analysis.

Oddly, Kyrgyz have slightly higher average incomes, at 6,312 som (\$140) per month, than Uzbeks, with 6,200 som (\$137) per month, yet whereas 80 percent of Uzbeks say they can afford food and clothes, only 47 percent of Kyrgyz do, while over half say that buying clothes is difficult. This is mostly because more Kyrgyz live in mountainous areas (43 percent, compared to 7 percent of Uzbeks), and fewer live in cities (21 percent, compare to 34 percent of Uzbeks). Urban Kyrgyz have higher incomes than urban Uzbeks.

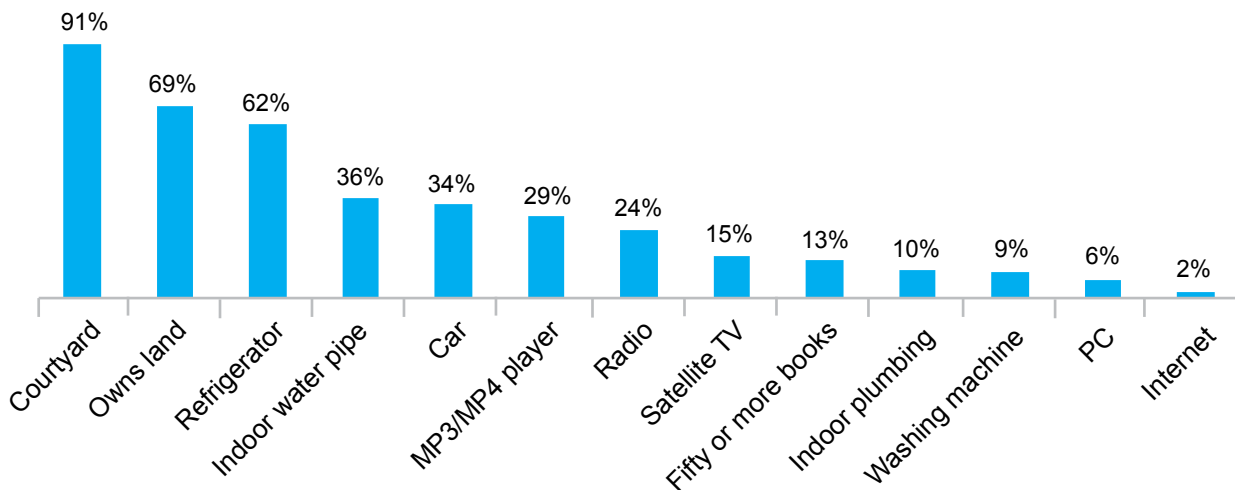
AFFLUENT HOUSEHOLDS HAVE MORE REFRIGERATORS AND CARS, BUT FEW HAVE COMPUTERS AND INTERNET

The survey collected information about certain categories of items that households may have, as a way of shedding light on their economic situation. One reason to collect this information was to serve as a check the accu-

racy of the general economic well-being measures, which would be suspect if households that were poor as measures by the income and economic situation questions had many amenities. While some assets, such as indoor plumbing and satellite TV, contribute mainly to a household's own quality of life, others, like cars, might improve young people's access to jobs. To a lesser extent this may apply to computers and internet as well.

Figure 9 shows that most households have a courtyard or some sort of land for recreation. Fewer, but still a large majority, own their own land, including (in almost all cases) arable land. Other InterMedia research has shown that almost all households have a TV, and 15 percent also have satellite TV. More households (29 percent) have an MP3 or MP4 player than a radio (24 percent). Most (62 percent) have refrigerators, but indoor plumbing is rare. Very few have PCs (6 percent) or internet access (2 percent).

Figure 9: Does your household have each of the following?

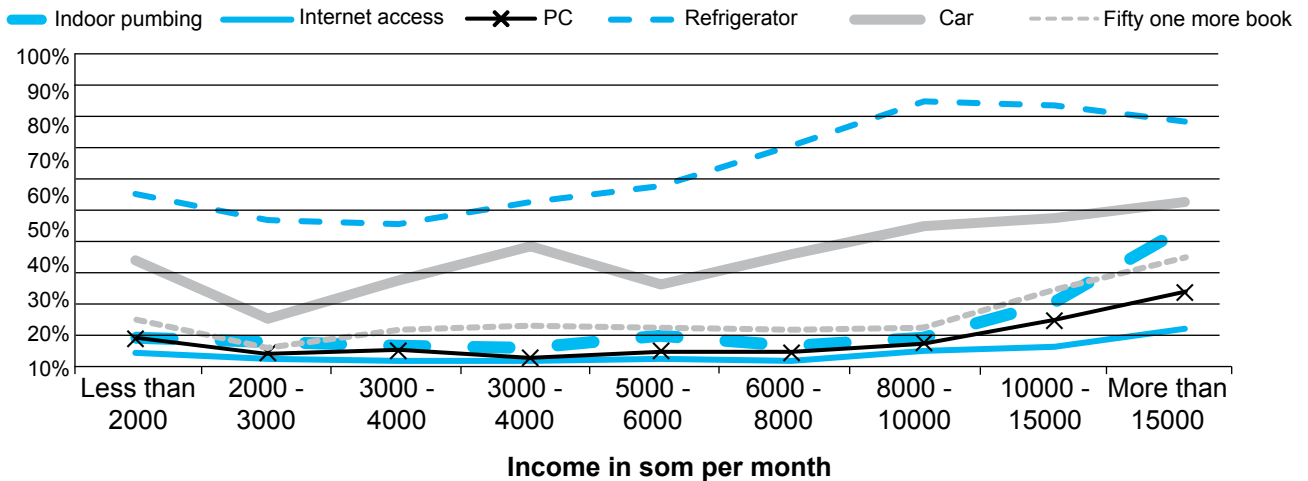


Base: n=1,499 respondents (one refusal)

With the exception of a courtyard and land, the ownership of all goods rises with income, as shown in Figure 10. Only about half of households with incomes under 4,000 som (\$89) per month have refrigerators, and very few have indoor plumbing, washing machines, or books. More affluent households have more of everything, and PCs, internet connections, books, and satellite TV are especially concen-

trated among households with 10,000 som (\$221) per month. Interestingly, the most affluent households are less likely to own land or to have a courtyard or plot of land for recreational use. However, they may feel that they have little need for this, as most of them live in urban areas and have access to a lot of public space. In the case of cars, causation probably runs in both directions. Households with more

Figure 10: Household Goods and Income



Base: n=283 respondents whose households get less than 2000 som per month in income; n=165 with 2,000 to 3,000 som/month; n=176 with 3,000 to 4,000 som/month; n=163 with 4,000 to 5,000 som/month; n=173 with 5,000 to 6,000 som/month; n=218 with 6,000 to 8,000 som/month; n=91 with 8,000 to 10,000 som/month; n=135 with 10,000 to 15,000 som/month; n=96 with more than 15,000 som/month

income are better able to afford cars, but cars are also used directly to earn money-driver and taxi driver are among the most common professions-and to commute to work or to carry goods to market.

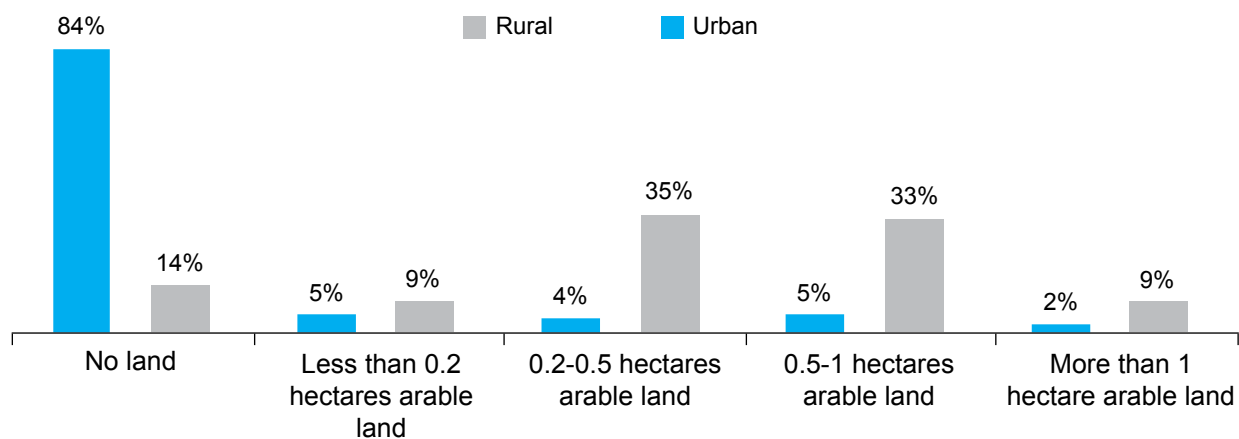
MOST OF THE POPULATION, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS, HAS LAND AND LIVESTOCK

The economy of southern Kyrgyzstan is still to a large extent a subsistence economy, in which people rely on land and livestock

to make a living. As Figure 11 shows, most households in rural areas have between 0.2 and 1 hectares of arable land. Since the absolute minimum necessary to support a human being has been estimated at 0.07 hectares⁴, it appears that many or most households have enough for bare subsistence, and some have enough to produce a surplus. Of course, much depends on land quality, household size, and other factors.

Households with more land are not necessarily more affluent. In fact, they tend to have slightly lower incomes. However, when urban

Figure 11: Landholdings of Households



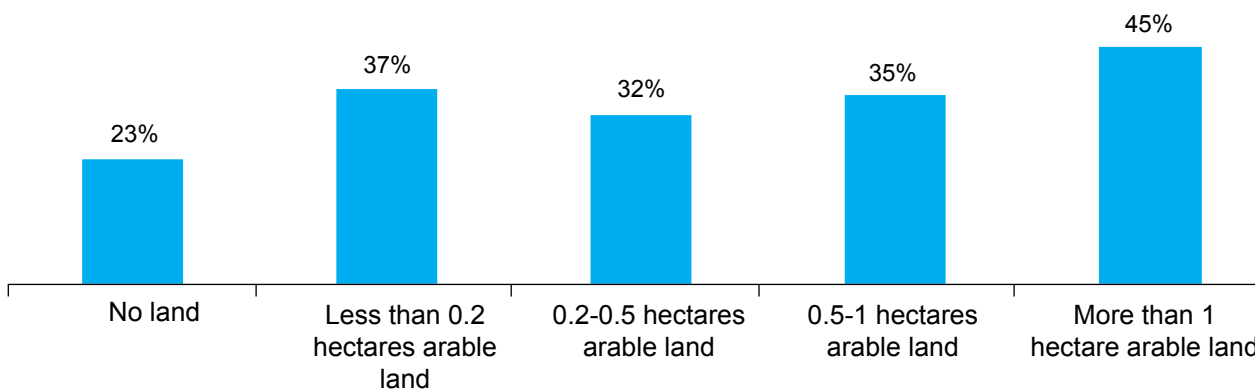
Base: n=378 urban respondents, n=1,122 rural respondents

⁴ http://tinyfarmwiki.com/index.php?title=How_much_land_to_feed_one_person%3F

vs. rural and mountainous vs. non-mountainous location are controlled for, self-reported economic situation does show a slightly positive correlation with landowning. Also, car ownership is clearly associated with landownership, as shown in Figure 12. This is not only an indicator of wealth but also of remoteness.

Thus, that a larger share of households in mountainous areas have cars (37 percent) than in non-mountainous rural areas (32 percent), even though their money incomes are no higher, seems to reflect the remoteness of these communities.

Figure 12: Car ownership by landholding



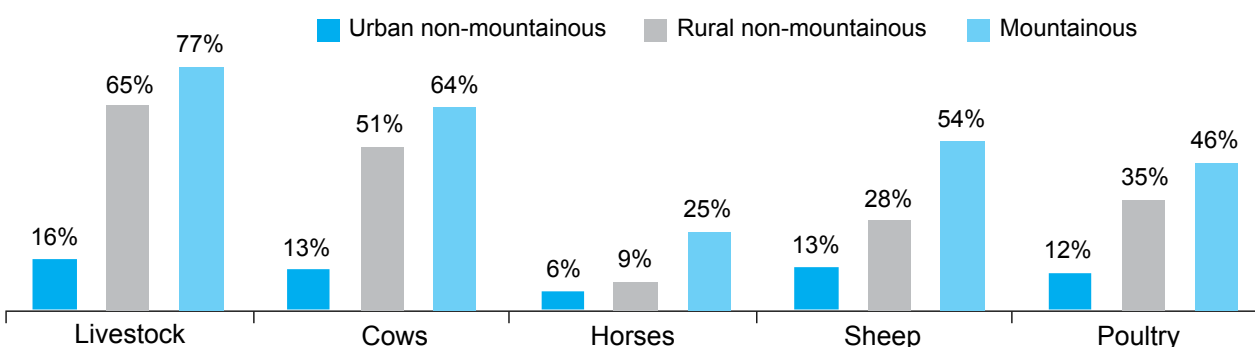
Base: n=542 respondents whose households have no land; n=88 whose households have less than 0.2 hectares of arable land; n=476 with 0.2 to 0.5 hectares; n=337 with 0.5 to 1 hectare; n=57 with 1 hectare or more

In addition to arable land, most rural families also own livestock, as shown in Figure 13. Livestock is especially common in mountainous areas, where livelihoods are more dependent on herding relative to agriculture than in flat country. But most households in rural non-mountainous areas also keep livestock, as does a minority even of urban households. Controlling for urban/rural and mountainous/non-mountainous location, households that keep horses, cows, and sheep in particular report (significantly) better economic well-being, but not (significantly) higher money incomes. These livestock raise households' well-being through providing transportation (horses), milk

(cows), and meat (sheep). While they must in some cases help households to earn money incomes as well, these gains seem to be offset by the labor that is used in keeping them and is not available for other market work. Animal husbandry is practiced not only by agricultural workers, but by taxi drivers, builders, teachers, and others.

Land and livestock seem to be major reasons why self-reported economic situation does not perfectly correspond with income. Households with a fair amount of land and livestock may have adequate living standards with low money incomes.

Figure 13: Does your family have...?



Base: n=303 respondents in urban non-mountainous locations, n=716 respondents in rural non-mountainous areas, n=481 respondents in mountainous areas

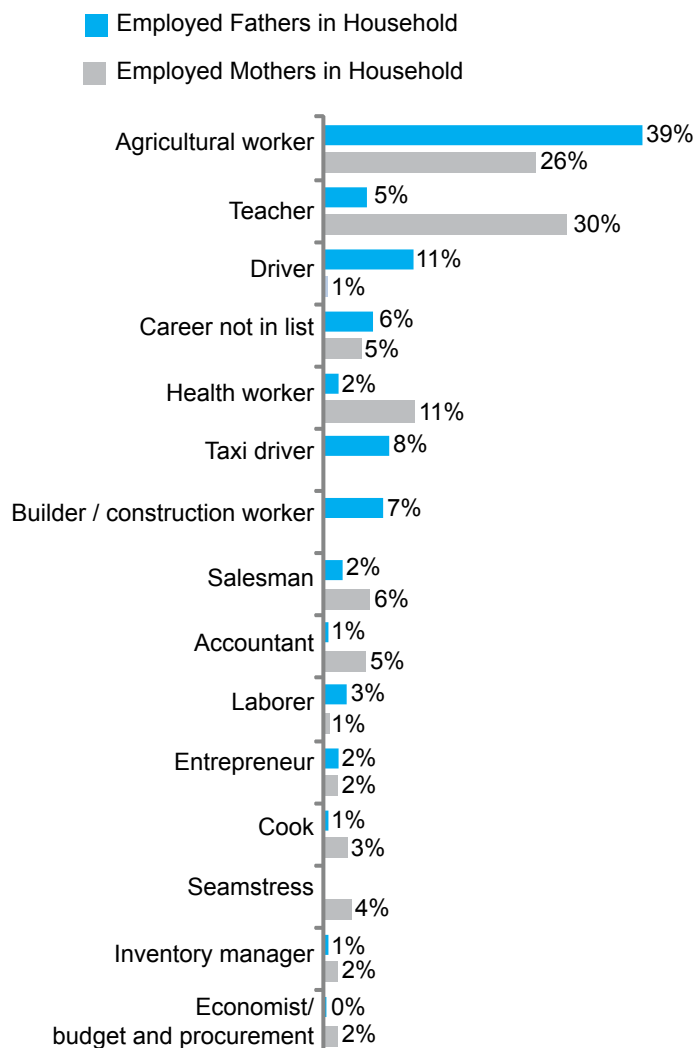
FEW PARENTS HAVE PROFESSIONAL JOBS EXCEPT AS TEACHERS, MANY ARE AGRICULTURAL WORKERS OR DRIVERS

Most young people live with one or both of their parents, and the survey inquired about the employment status and jobs of all household members. The analysis focuses on parents since they provide the largest share of comparable data.

Figure 14 shows that the most common jobs for employed fathers of respondents are agricultural worker, driver or taxi driver, and builder/construction worker, while employed mothers of respondents also do agricultural work, but otherwise are likely to be teachers or health professionals. Much of the market employment of respondents' parents depends mainly on basic skills that are also used at home, rather than on specialized skills, and it is concentrated in the informal sector.

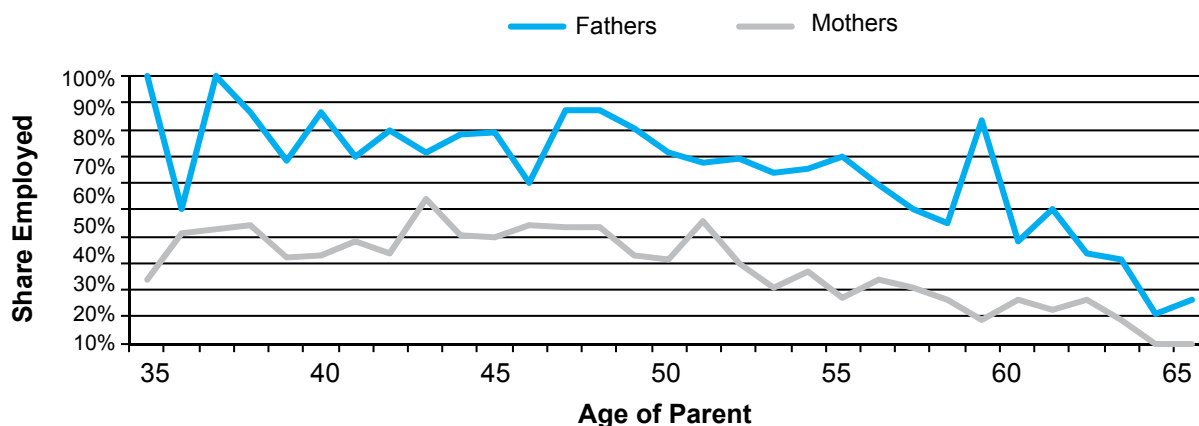
Since more than half (60 percent) of young people say that the first person they would turn to for advice on career and getting work is a family member, parents' jobs must be an important influence on the information young people have about the labor market. Nonetheless, it is quite rare for a young person to want to do the same thing for a living that his or her parents did. For many professions, none of the children of people in the profession wanted to pursue the same job, e.g., salesman, cashier, taxi driver, and security guard⁵. For most other professions, the

Figure 14: Parents' Jobs



Base: n=960 fathers, n=1161 mothers of respondents

Figure 15: Employment of Parents



Base: n=960 fathers of all ages; n=1,161 mothers of all ages

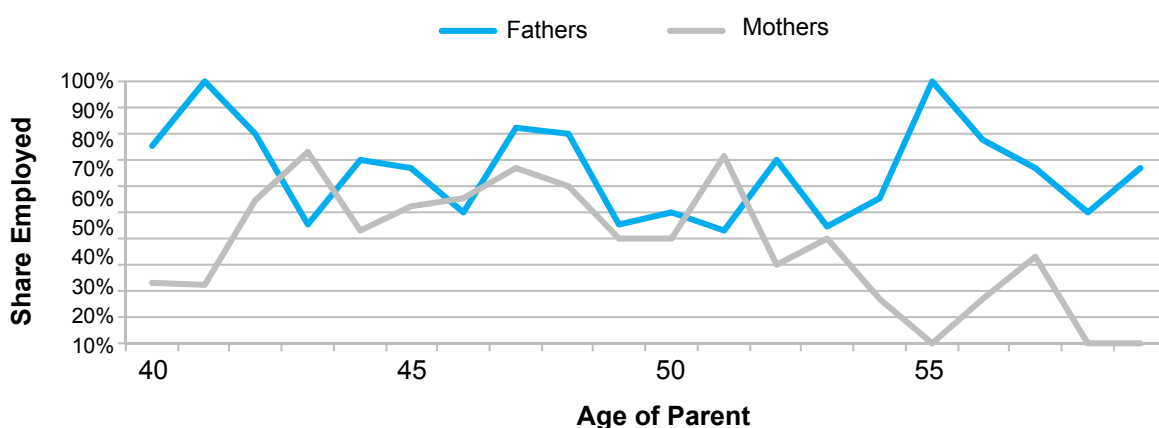
⁵ There were n=37 salesman, n=9 cashiers, n=51 taxi drivers, and n=7 security guards among respondents' parents.

share of children wishing to follow their parents' example was less than 10 percent. Only for a few professions, such as lawyer, manager, electrician, and health worker is there a large fraction of young people who want to pursue the same profession their parents did.

Figure 15 shows the employment rates among the parents of young people. They start at about 80 percent for fathers and 40 percent for mothers, begin falling early, after age 50. Mothers are much less likely to work than fathers, but about only 80 percent even of fathers in their 40s are employed, and less than half after age 60.

Figure 16 shows employment patterns of parents in urban areas, which are notably different from those in rural areas. The employment rate of the mothers of urban young people in their 40s and early 50s, averaging about 50 percent, is only slightly lower than that of urban fathers, which hovers around 60 percent. But employment rates for fathers are much lower than in rural areas, and as we have seen, many of those who are employed have informal work as drivers or taxi drivers, or in building and handyman work. In short, jobs seem to be scarce. In rural areas, most men have the option of working on their own land, so employment rates are higher.

Figure 16: Employment of Parents, Urban



Base: n=198 urban fathers; n=265 urban mothers

Since both monthly income and self-reported economic situation are higher on average in urban than in rural areas, these low urban employment rates may seem surprising. Even among the 36 percent of urban households that have no employed member, 55 percent say they “can afford food and clothes and can save a bit,” compared to only 50 percent of rural households that do have an employed member. It is not clear what other sources of income urban households have, but the higher perceived well-being probably reflects in part the many amenities, such as better roads and more developed public space and some public services, that are available in cities for free.

WIDESPREAD HOMEOWNERSHIP, RIGID REAL ESTATE MARKETS IMPEDE MOBILITY

Homeownership rates are very high in southern Kyrgyzstan. 91 percent of respon-

dents say they live in houses, while 9 percent say they live in apartments. Of those who live in houses, 97 percent own them. Apartment dwellers are much less likely to be homeowners: only 53 percent of them own their own homes. Homeownership relieves households of an important expense, namely rent, but it also seems to be indicative of the absence of a rental market, which if it existed could be helpful to young people who might otherwise want to move to where jobs are. Homeownership rates are much lower, 58 percent, in the households where urban young people who have moved out from their families live.

A related fact is that there is very little mobility. 71 percent of young people say they have lived in the same dwelling for their entire lives, and most of the rest left their families to study or start families of their own. Only 5 percent say that their entire families moved during

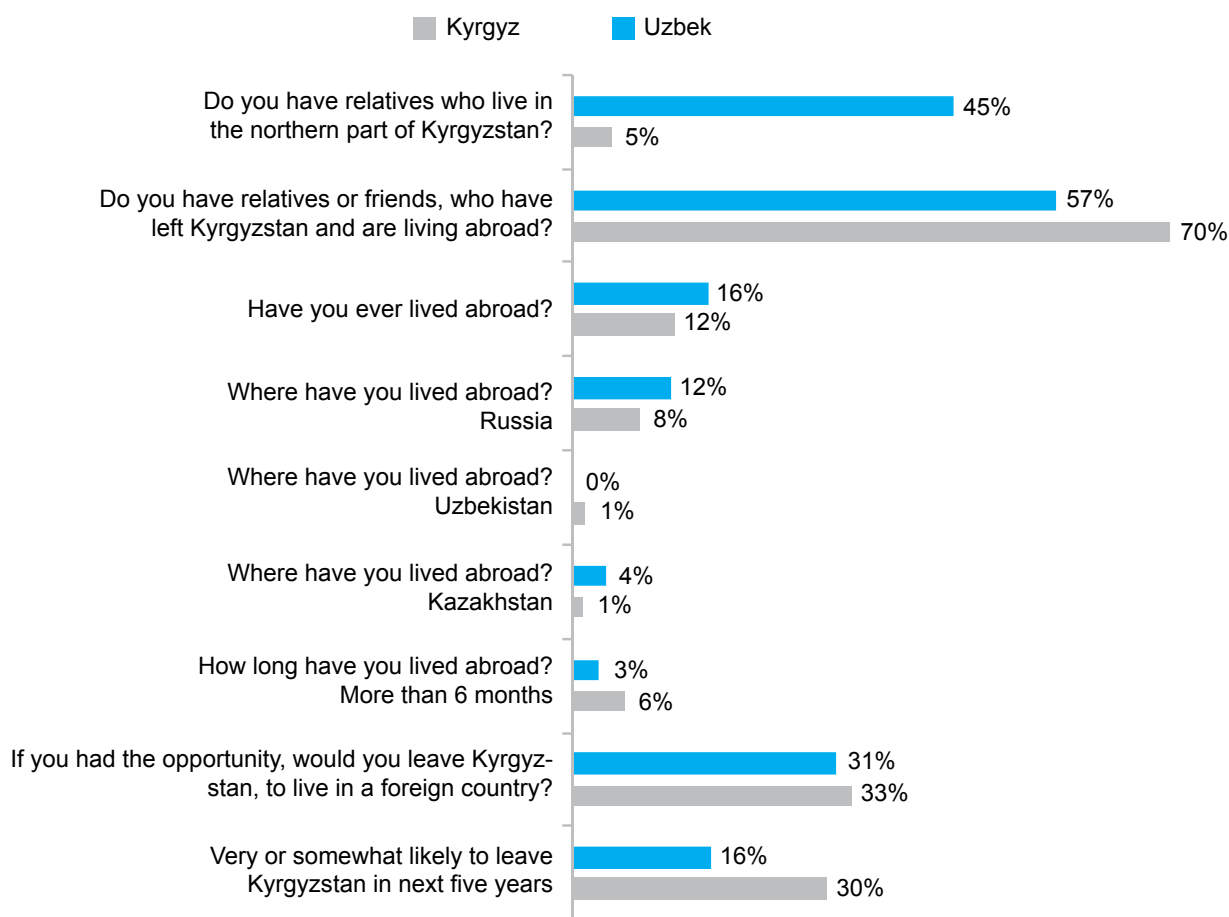
their lifetimes, most of them within the same town or city.

This evidence of low mobility might seem to be at odds with evidence of substantial emigration. About one-third of both Kyrgyz (31 percent) and Uzbeks (33 percent) say they would leave Kyrgyzstan if they had the chance. About one in six Kyrgyz (16 percent) and almost one in three Uzbeks (30 percent) say they are “very” or “somewhat” likely to leave Kyrgyzstan in the next five years. And most young people, Kyrgyz (57 percent) and especially Uzbek (70 percent), already have relatives who are living abroad. Just over one in ten have lived abroad

themselves. Aspiring emigrants mostly want to go to Russia (68 percent), Europe (8 percent), the USA (7 percent), and Kazakhstan (6 percent). Even among Uzbeks, only 8 percent want to go to Uzbekistan.

Of course, these findings are not really inconsistent, since the survey could not interview emigrants. Rather, they suggest that many young people feel it is not worth migrating inside Kyrgyzstan. If they are to leave their immediate communities, they might as well go to Russia. Underdeveloped rental markets may be one of the factors that make internal migration unappealing.

Figure 17: Travel and Migration



Base: n=1034 Kyrgyz respondents, n=425 Uzbek respondents

There are clear patterns in who wants to emigrate. Those with better Russian skills are more likely to want to emigrate. Men are more likely to want to emigrate than women. Urban respondents are more likely to want to emigrate than rural respondents. There is no clear relationship between age, marriage, or children

and desire to emigrate. Perhaps surprisingly, the affluent are more likely to wish to emigrate than the poor.

Young people with career plans think that most of these plans (76 percent) could succeed without their needing to move to another city. Even of young people living in rural areas

who want to be lawyers or programmers, most say they “could succeed here” in those lines of work. The flip side of these response patterns is that young people seem reluctant to consider careers that they expect would require them to move to another city.

MOST POOR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE RURAL KYRGYZ

If we define as “poor” those young people:

- for whose households “buying clothes is difficult” or who “don’t have enough even for food,” and
- whose monthly incomes are less than 6,000 som per month⁶, and
- who do not have cars, and
- who are not studying in university,

we will find that 83 percent of poor young people are Kyrgyz, 87 percent are rural, 44 percent live in mountainous regions, only 10 percent speak Russian fluently, 74 percent own land and 67 percent own livestock. These figures may serve as a corrective to the impression one might derive from media reports and conversations in the capital that the most vulnerable population are urban Uzbeks. Urban Uzbeks are especially vulnerable physically to ethnic violence, but many rural Kyrgyz young people are economically vulnerable. The subsistence economy gives households some insulation from the instability of market employment, but exposes them to other kinds of risks, such as crop failures.

The economy in Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces is closely tied to the land. Homeownership rates are very high and landholding is widespread, so that most families have a place to live and some opportunity for subsistence agriculture to supplement low incomes. But formal jobs are scarce. Even prime-age males have trouble finding employment in urban areas, and in rural areas falls off early as parents enter late middle age. Some young people show no signs of dissatisfaction with a rural lifestyle of subsistence farming and herd-

ing, combined with sporadic market employment. But many have career aspirations that, if achieved, would push them into more specialized, market-oriented work. The fact that, despite high unemployment, urban areas are better-off than rural areas, suggest that young people are justified in wanting to escape the rural subsistence economy.

⁶ In this case the use of both measures is mainly a control for response idiosyncracies.

III. EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Are young people acquiring marketable skills? The survey investigated this question in two ways. First, respondents were asked what skills they had learned in school that might be useful on the job. Second, respondents were asked what, in their opinion, were their two most marketable skills, then asked a series of follow-up questions about each one. The results suggest that young people are most often able to use home-related skills on the job, but that few use computers or other professional skills.

Vocational training programs should take into account that most jobs seem to be in agriculture or erratic work in the urban informal sector. If young people are to be taught skills, it should be ascertained first of all whether there is sufficient demand for those skills.

MANY MORE PLAN TO FINISH HIGHER EDUCATION THAN ACTUALLY DO SO

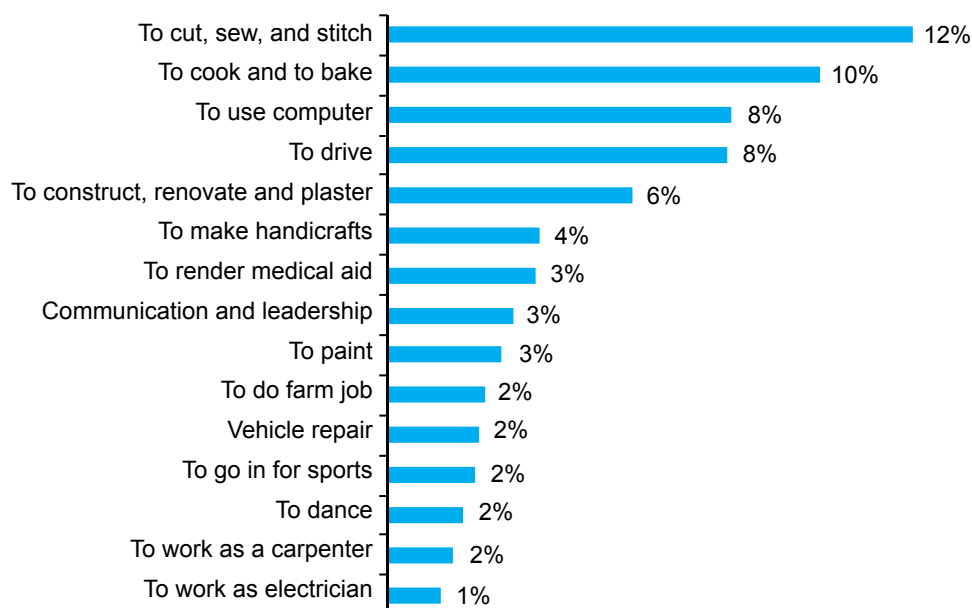
Most young people over 18 (85 percent) have completed general secondary school. By age 25, 20 percent have completed higher education, while another 11 percent have some

higher education or post-secondary vocational training.

Among young people age 25 and above, about 10 percent have not completed higher education but say they still plan to. However, hardly any respondents over 25 were still studying, so unless people are leaving the region to study and so were not captured by the sample, these hopes are probably not realistic. Among respondents between the ages of 15 and 18, 45 to 50 percent plan to complete higher education. Possibly education rates will rise over time so that more of these ambitions can be fulfilled. Still, it seems likely that about half of the young people aspiring to a university education will not succeed in getting one.

Higher education appears to be the most effective gateway to formal sector employment. Of those who have completed higher education, 47 percent have permanent long-term jobs, compared to less than 20 percent of non-students with lesser educational attainments. No doubt this helps to explain strong demand for higher education.

Figure 18: Skills Young People Learned in General School



Base: n=1,500

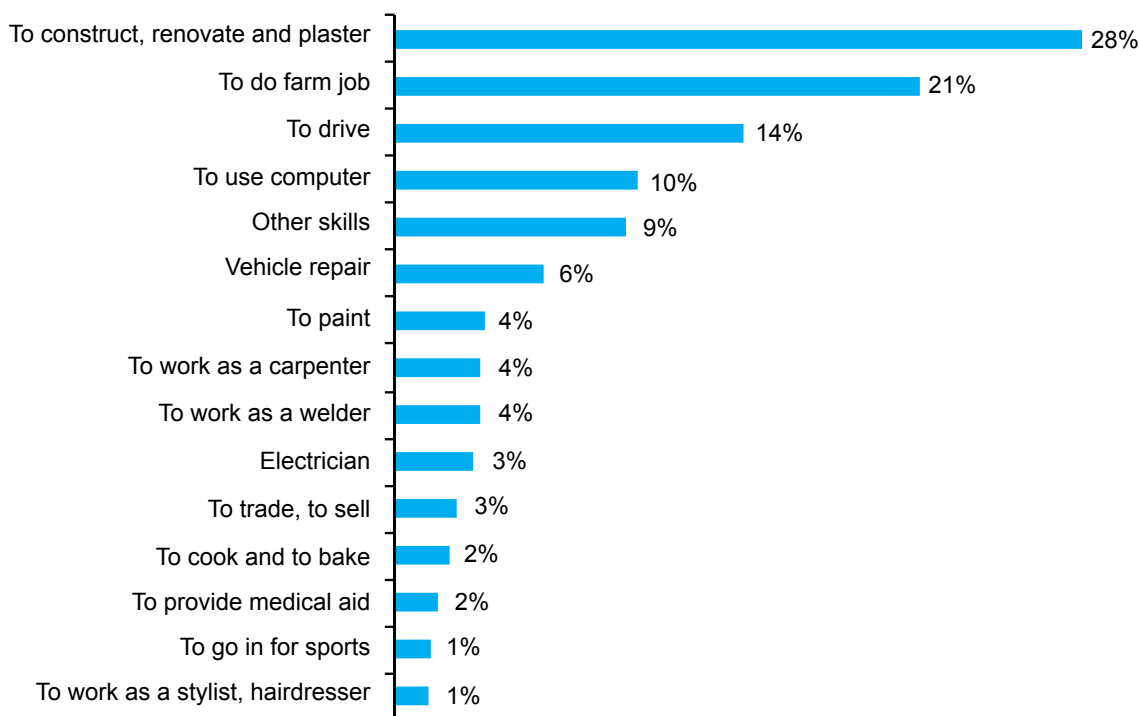
Most young people (59 percent of those 25 and over) only finish general secondary school. What marketable skills do they learn there? Just under half (49 percent) feel they have acquired any marketable skills. Among those who feel they have, the top skills mentioned are shown in Figure 17. Some of them—sewing, cooking, driving, handicrafts—are the type of skills that can be learned and practiced at home.

Respondents with higher education are more likely (89 percent) to feel that they have learned things in school that would be useful in a job. They are less likely to mention skills that could be learned at home, and more likely to mention teaching (18 percent), using computers (15 percent), medical aid (7 percent), communication and leadership (6 percent), accounting (3 percent), jurisprudence (3 percent) and other skills (14 percent).

THE MOST COMMON MARKETABLE SKILLS ARE HOME SKILLS LIKE SEWING, CONSTRUCTION, COOKING, FARM WORK, AND DRIVING

Figure 19 shows the answers given by men, in response to a question about the top two skills they had that could be useful in a job. Figure 20 shows the answers given by women. The first thing to note is that men’s and women’s answers are almost completely different. For men, the most marketable skills include construction and repair of buildings; farm work; driving; vehicle repair; and carpenter, welder, and electrician skills. For women, sewing, cooking, and handicrafts are the top skills, and the top fifteen also include music, teaching, foreign languages, and accounting. The only marketable skill that is highly ranked by both men and women is using a computer, which 9-10 percent of both sexes list as one of their top marketable skills.

Figure 19: Marketable Skills, Men

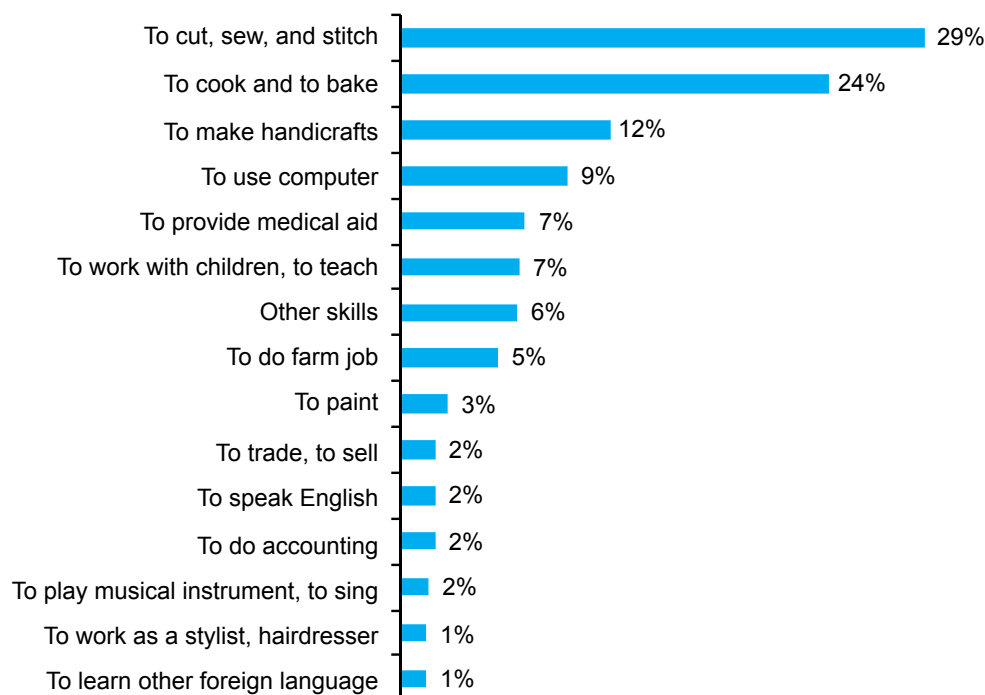


Base: n=737 male respondents

A pattern may be noted here. The chief (perceived) marketable skills of both men and women are the sort of skills that are useful both in the market and simply for running a household. Thus, driving is useful for running

errands for a household, and many men also make their living by it. Farm work can be done on a family’s own land, and a man may use his construction and repair skills to repair his own home. Similarly, sewing, cooking, and cleaning

Figure 20: Marketable Skills, Women



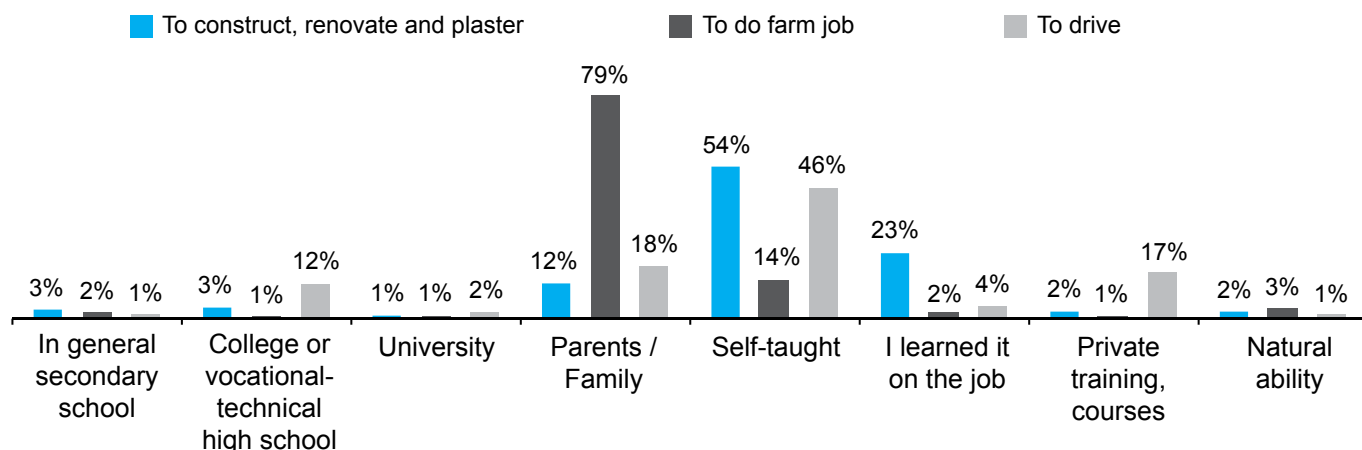
Base: n=763 female respondents

are all useful skills for a homemaker to have. Young people invest in skills they can use at home, and which happen to have some market applications. This is consistent with what was observed earlier, the coexistence of market and subsistence economies side by side.

Figures 21 and 22 show how young men and women learned the top three most marketable skills. Young men in particular seem to have learned them hardly at all in general secondary school. A few were introduced to construction, renovation, and plastering in general

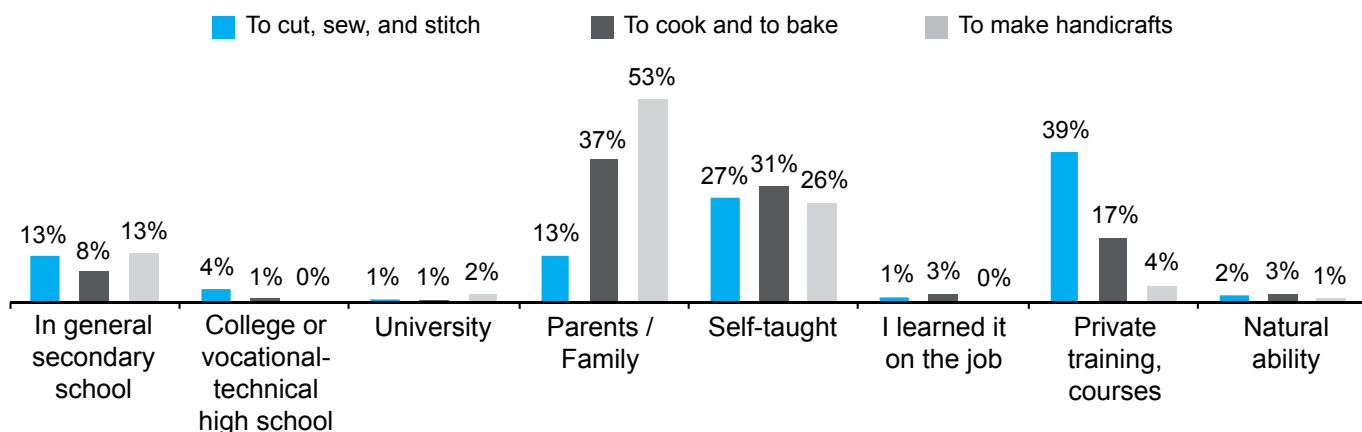
school, but most say they are self-taught or learned it from parents and family or on the job. Farm work is overwhelmingly passed down from parents to sons, and driving is most self-taught or learned from family, though about 30 percent learned it in vocational school or private courses. Some young women, but only a small minority, say they learned how to sew, cook, or make handicrafts in school, though private sewing courses seem to be important. Similar patterns hold for many other skills.

Figure 21: Where Useful Skills Are Learned, Men



Base: n=211 respondents who listed “construction, renovation, and plastering” as a useful skill; n=199 respondents who listed “farm work” as a useful skill; n=109 respondents who listed “driving” as a useful skill

Figure 22: Where Useful Skills Are Learned, Women



Base: n=224 respondents who list “to cut, sew, and stitch” as a useful skill; n=199 who list “to cook, to bake” as a useful skill; n=92 who list “to make handicrafts” as a useful skill

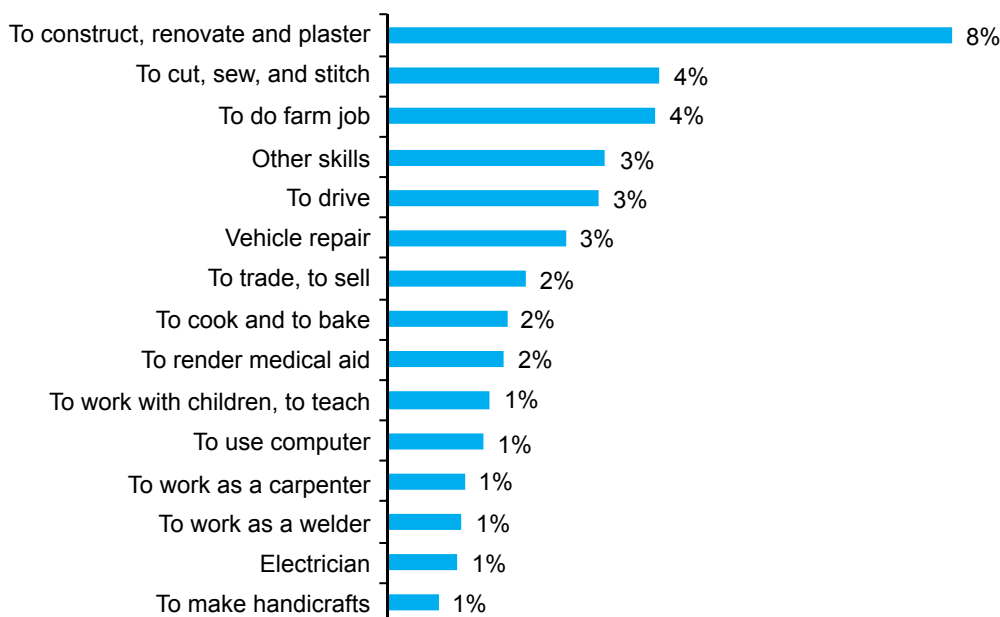
YOUNG PEOPLE GENERALLY HAVE REALISTIC IDEAS ABOUT WHAT SKILLS ARE MARKETABLE, BUT OVERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF COMPUTER SKILLS

The most important job skill that young people acquire in school, in their own estimation, is using computers. Of those who report having this skill, 41 percent say they learned it in general secondary school. Computers are widespread in educational institutions: 69 percent of respondents who are studying say there are computers in the places where they study. By contrast, we have already seen that only 6 percent of households have PCs. For

many people, schools offer the only chance they have to use computers. But computer skills do not seem to be as useful on the job as young people suppose, at least not yet.

Figure 23 shows that young people’s perceptions about which skills they are most likely to be paid to do are, for the most part fairly accurate. Over 8 percent of respondents have been paid to do construction, renovation, or plastering. About 4 percent have been paid to be farm laborers or seamstresses, and about 3 percent to work as drivers. Most of those who say they are able to repair vehicles have done it for pay. The same is true of trading and selling.

Figure 23: Skills Young People Have Been Paid For



Base: n=1,500

By contrast, only one-sixth of those who list “to use a computer” as one of their marketable skills have ever done this for pay. Apparently, many young people are aware that computer use will turn out to be a marketable skill, maybe based on knowledge of worldwide trends as much as local ones, even though they have never had the opportunity to do it for pay themselves. In view of not only the spread, but the falling cost, of computers and internet access, this is surely a realistic expectation. So far, however, little of the economic modernization which young people are anticipating seems to have arrived.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MARKET SPECIALIZATION ARE STILL LIMITED, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS

Comparing urban and rural areas, more young people in rural areas feel they have no marketable skills (16 percent) than in urban areas (8 percent). Young people in urban areas are much more likely to have computer skills (20 percent) than those in rural areas (6 percent), while those in rural areas, not surprisingly, are much more likely to cite agricultural skills (17 percent) than those in urban areas (2

percent). It should be borne in mind that since young people had to volunteer the information and only listed the top two, some young people in rural areas may have agricultural skills but did not list them because they only expect to use them on their own family’s land and not for pay in the market. Far more urban (10 percent) than rural (3 percent) young people reported having medical skills, as well as trading skills (6 percent urban, 1 percent rural). Handicrafts skills are more often cited in rural (7 percent) than in urban (4 percent) areas.

The survey data suggest that specifically market-oriented skills are comparatively rare among young people in the Osh and Jalal-Abad regions. Most often, young people have handyman and homemaker skills which they picked up on their own or from their families, and which can sometimes be used to earn money. In developed economies with a sophisticated division of labor, the skills people use on the job generally have nothing to do with skills that are useful around the house. Young people in the Osh and Jalal-Abad regions appear to have little opportunity to develop the kinds of specialized skills which would help them to flourish as the economy modernizes.

IV. LIVELIHOODS: CAREER PLANS AND EMPLOYMENT

In order to shed light on career plans, respondents were asked: “What professions have you seriously considered?” The word “seriously” was meant to evoke responses about realistic plans, as opposed to mere daydreams. Response patterns seem to comply with this intention. For example, young people do not seem to have been implausibly ambitious about what they hoped to earn. The median earnings that young people expect to make if they succeed in their chosen careers are 10,000 som (\$221) per month. Such wages would put them near the top of the income distribution but is by no means wildly ambitious. (Expected wages varied by the profession aspired to, with most who plan to be lawyers expecting to earn more than this, most who plan to be seamstresses less.)

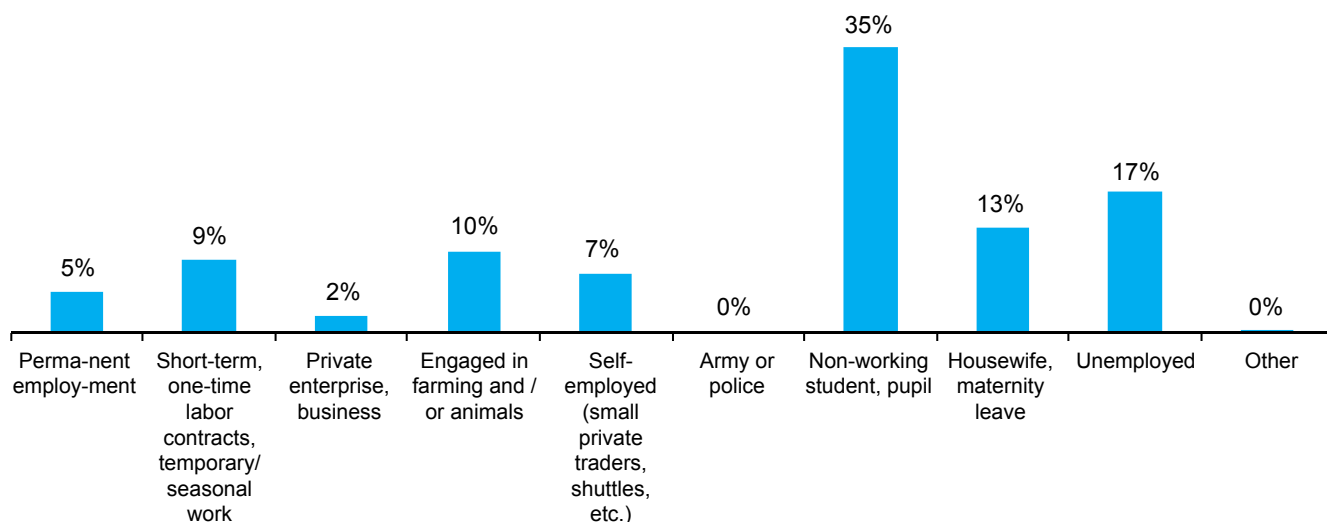
Nonetheless, young people feel very ill-prepared to achieve their goals. Most of them think they would need help to get the equip-

ment, capital, and connections needed to start work in the professions they want.

MOST MEN ARE EMPLOYED INFORMALLY BY THEIR LATE TWENTIES, MOST WOMEN DO NOT WORK

Figure 4 showed employment rates for young people, with employment being defined broadly to include both permanent long-term jobs and various kinds of informal work. Figure 24 shows employment status in more detail, albeit without breakdowns by age and gender. About one-third of respondents are students, and another 13 percent are housewives or on maternity leave. Only 5 percent have permanent, long-term jobs. Such jobs might be roughly identified as the “formal sector.” Four other employment categories—short-term contract work, private enterprise, farming and animals, and self-employed individual labor activi-

Figure 24: Employment Status, All Respondents



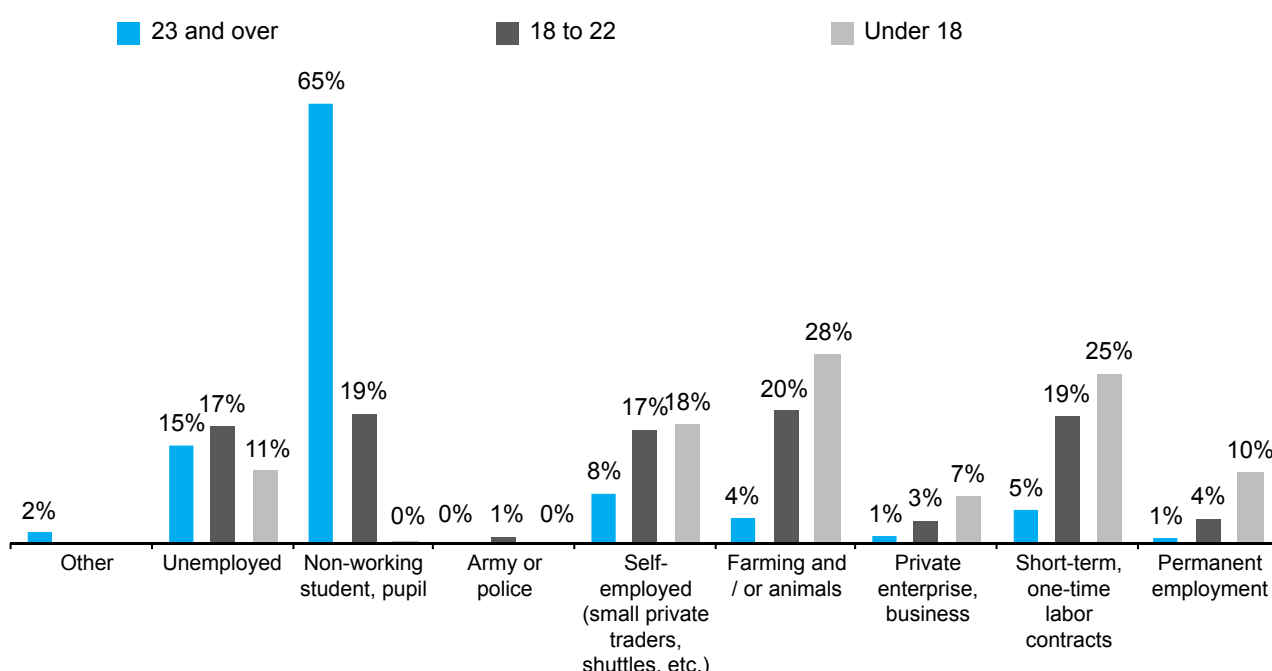
Base: n=1,500. Detail: n=76 respondents who are employed (contract) on a permanent, long-term basis (except for maternity leave or leave for child care); n=136 respondents who work periodically on short-term, one-time labor contracts, work temporarily, or do seasonal work; n=31 respondents who are engaged in private enterprise, business; n=151 respondents who are engaged in farming and/or animals; n=109 respondents who are self-employed on individual labor activities (small private traders in the city, “shuttles” and so on); n=3 respondents who are conscripts in the army or rank and file in the police; n=529 respondents who are non-working students, pupils; n=197 respondents who are housewives, on maternity leave; n=261 respondents who are unemployed; n=7 respondents of other employment status

ties—can in the Kyrgyzstani context be roughly characterized as “informal sector.” Clearly, a lot more young people are working in the informal than in the formal sector. Unemployment rates are high (17 percent) among youth in general, though unemployment seems to fall among young men age 27-28.

Figures 25 and 26 show patterns of male employment, broken down by age category and by urban/rural location. Figure 25 confirms that most men are employed (at least in erratic informal sector work) by their mid-20s, shows a sharp fall in unemployment as men get older, and confirms that most male employment is in the informal sector. Also, self-employment

seems to rise earlier than other kinds of employment. Some young men may be transitioning out of it into formal sector employment or short term contracts. Figure 26 shows the sharp differences between urban and rural employment patterns. Not surprisingly, farming and work with animals comprises a far larger share of employment in the countryside, but temporary and seasonal work is also somewhat more common there. By contrast, self-employment on individual labor activities comprises the largest share of urban employment, with 35 percent of young men trying to earn a living this way.

Figure 25: Employment Status, Men



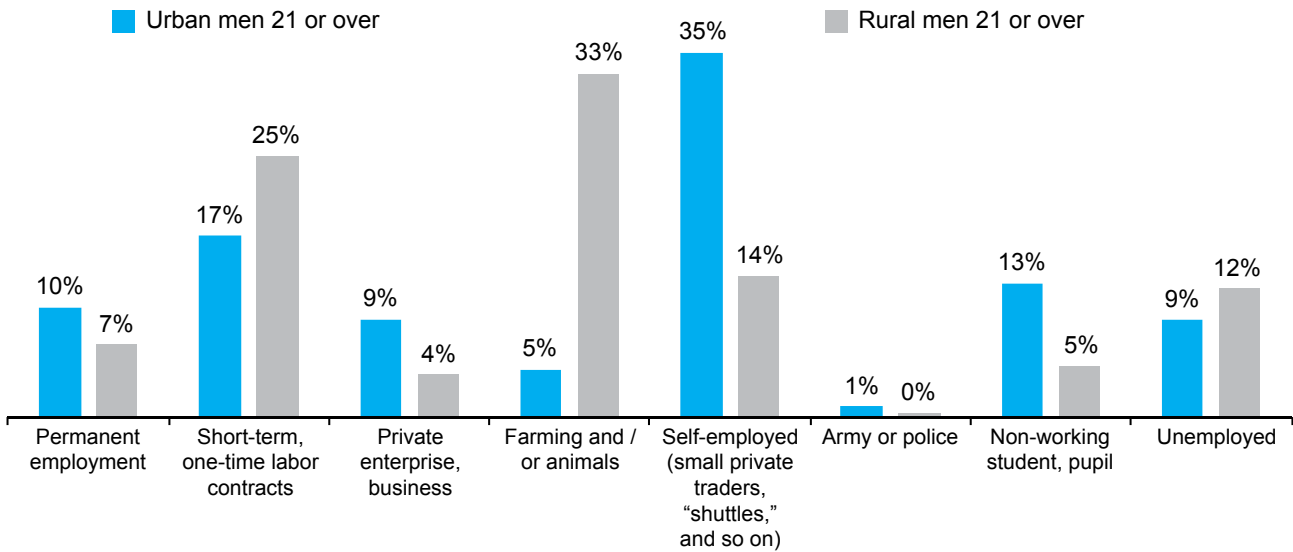
Base: n=737 male respondents

Figure 23, above, sheds some light on the skills that people are using on the job: construction, farming, and driving are the most common for young men, while the largest share of young women have worked as seamstresses. Unfortunately, the question design to find out what professions young people are engaged in—we asked them first about career plans, and then which of them they were already pursuing—turned out to lose some information, since some young people did not volunteer any career plans, and others did not mention their current jobs in the list of career plans. 45 percent of respondents were able to name at least

one profession that they had seriously considered. 14 percent were able to name two. Only for these respondents did we get specific information about what kind of employment they are currently engaged in. Figure 27 shows some careers that young people in the survey sample are currently pursuing.

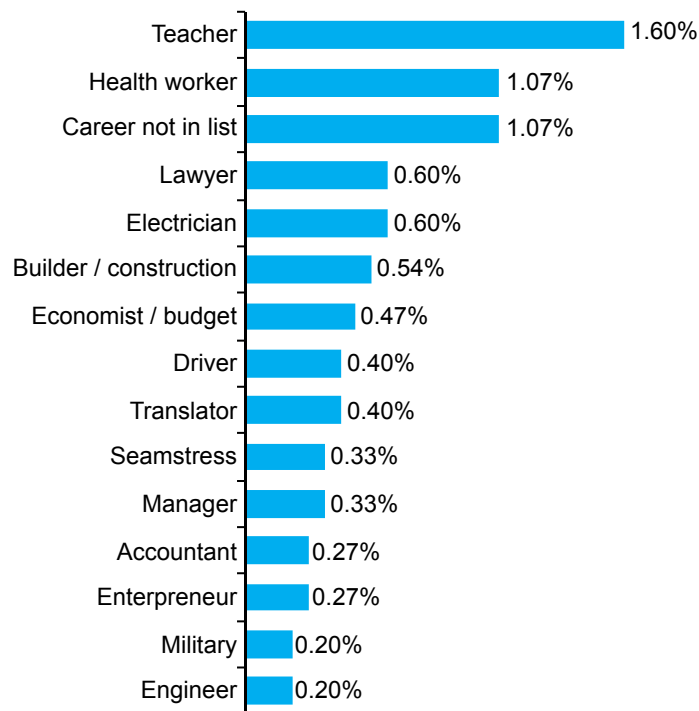
In short, the data show a pattern in which subsistence agriculture prevails in rural areas and precarious underemployment in urban areas. Young men manage to earn something with odd jobs and scrambling self-employment, but have trouble finding formal work, while most women drop out of the labor force.

Figure 26: Employment Status, Men 21 or Over



Base: n=86 rural men 21 or over, n=244 urban men 21 or over

Figure 27: Careers young people are pursuing



Base: n=1,500

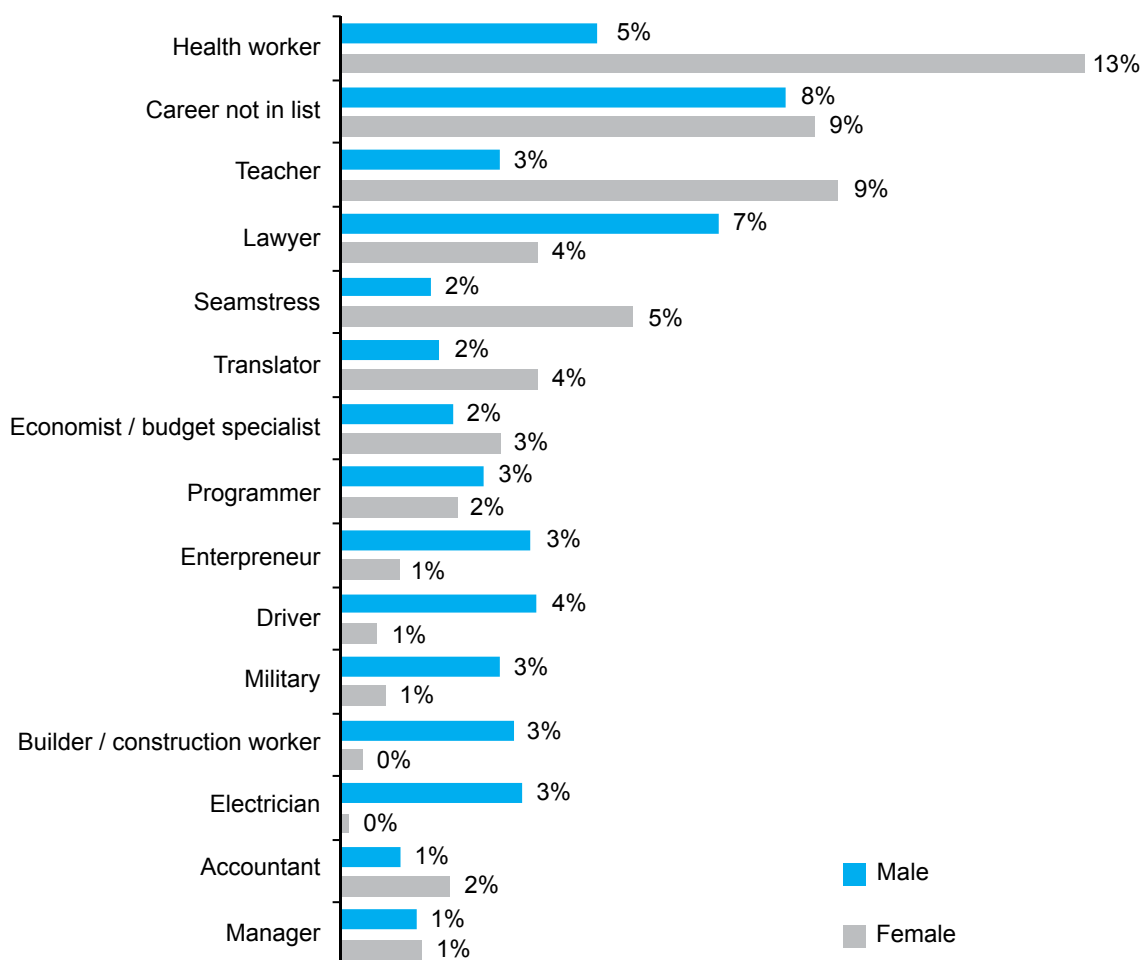
A SIZEABLE MINORITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE ASPIRE TO PROFESSIONAL JOBS

Figure 28 shows the frequency with which different professions are mentioned by those young men and young women who have career plans. Young women’s career plans are less diverse than young men’s, with a large share planning on the mainly feminine profes-

sions of health worker (e.g., nurse), teacher, and seamstress. Some comments may be made about a few of the careers most commonly aspired to.

- Health worker. 5 percent of young men’s career aspirations and 13 percent of young women’s are in the field of medicine—so medicine is a predominantly female career

Figure 28: Professional aspirations, by sex



Base: n=737 male respondents, n=763 female respondents

aspiration. Health worker is one of the top professions, especially for women, in the region, so these aspirations are not unrealistic.

- **Teacher.** Teacher is one of the most common formal sector jobs in southern Kyrgyzstan, practiced 30 percent of employed mothers of respondents and 5 percent of employed fathers, so the number of aspiring teachers is not great disproportionate to the demand for them. Teachers' wages are low, and are often supplemented with other income, but their steady money wages are a useful supplement to agricultural incomes, with their inherent seasonal variation and risk. Most aspirants to the teaching profession are female.

- **Lawyer.** Hardly any of the parents of respondents practice law, yet 7 percent of young men's career plans, and 4 percent of young women's, are aimed at this career. Many of these hopes must be disappointed, and in fact

aspirants to this career are disproportionately youthful, half of them 18 or under, and 80 percent are ethnic Kyrgyz. They are not disproportionately urban or affluent, but 73 percent speak at least some Russian.

- **Translator.** As with lawyers, putative supply far exceeds demand for translators. Among parents of respondents, there is only one professional translator. However, it may be reasonable for young people to set a goal of becoming a translator, because the acquisition of strong foreign language abilities might pay off in many other lines of work. Also, (a) translators may be more likely to leave the region, and (b) young people may plausibly anticipate that globalization will increase demand for translators in the future.

- **Seamstress.** About 4 percent of the employed mothers of respondents are seamstresses, compared to 5 percent of young

women’s career plans that are oriented towards this career. Aspirants to this profession are disproportionately (83 percent) rural.

- “Economist.” The word “economist” in former Soviet countries has a different meaning than in the West; it involves responsibility for managing the budgets and resources of organizations, rather than with analyzing macroeconomic data, or theorizing and teaching. Aspirants to this practical-minded career seem somewhat to outnumber available positions.

- Programmer. As with translator, aspirations to the career of programmer far outnumber the one person among respondents’ parents who has this career. Yet the field is almost certain to grow in the future, and many of the skills acquired by a programmer may cross-apply to other jobs. Only 11 percent of aspiring programmers have computers at home, and only 3 percent have internet access, so the extent that these plans are realistic they must depend on young people having access to the internet elsewhere, e.g., school.

It is noteworthy that very few young people aspire to careers as agricultural workers or taxi

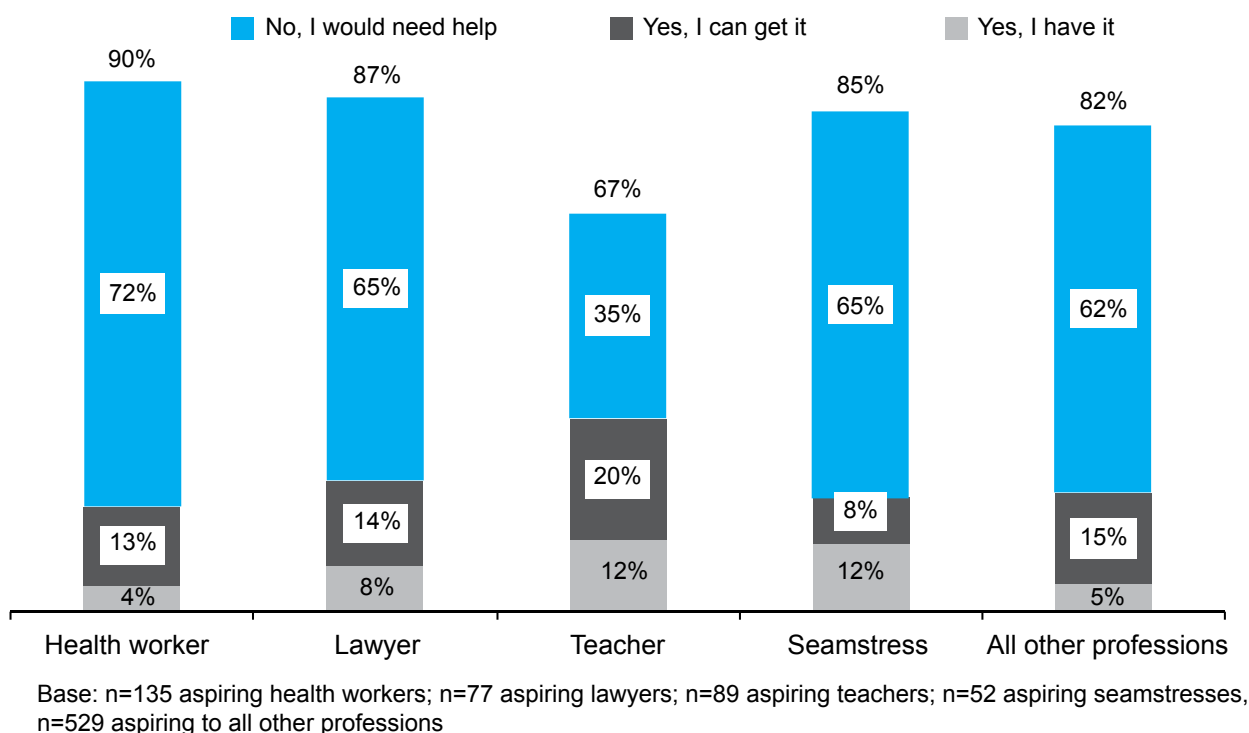
drivers, even though these are among the most common professions among their parents. Even if driver and taxi driver are combined, the number of aspirants to the job is far less than the number of people who are employed in this job⁷. Salesman is another common job to which no one seems to aspire.

A couple of tentative generalizations about gender and career may be worth hazarding. In general, young women seem to be more focused on a few jobs, such as health worker, teacher and seamstress, and may be more realistic and practical-minded in their plans. Young men give more diverse answers, and may be slightly more willing to enter “tournament” careers like lawyer and entrepreneur, where most entrants are likely to fail but a few will achieve high earnings.

MOST ARE NOT SURE HOW TO GET STARTED PURSUING PROFESSIONAL GOALS

The strongest finding in the data is that young people feel ill-prepared and helpless in pursuing their career plans. They feel that

Figure 29: Does this career require special capital or equipment? If so, do you have it? Can you get it?



⁷ The lists of careers used throughout are derived from Kyrgyzstan’s government statistical agency. “Careers not in list” include designer, singer, diplomat, banker, and sportsman.

capital, credentials, and/or connections are needed to enter the professions they are interested in. In most cases, they feel they do not have them, and more often than not, they feel they do not know how to get them either, but that they would need help.

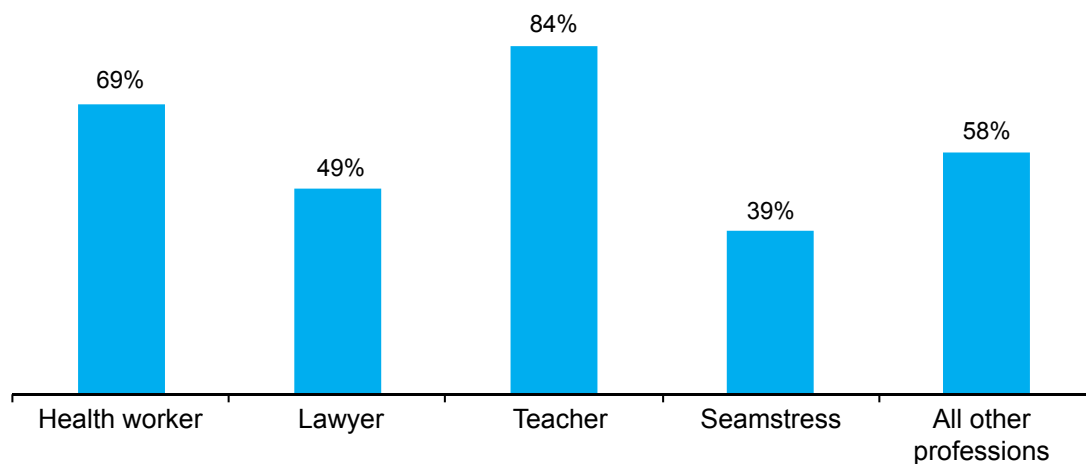
Figure 29 shows young people’s answers to questions about whether their career plans would require any special equipment or capital, and if so, whether they have it, can get it, or would need help. Response patterns are shown separately for four careers, health worker, teacher, lawyer, and seamstress—these are the careers most often aspired to—and all other professions are lumped together.

Some professions clearly require special capital or equipment. A taxi driver needs a vehicle. A shepherd needs a flock. Others—teacher, lawyer, etc.—would seem to require

human capital only. What is surprising is that response patterns show that even for those professions, most young people think special equipment is capital is needed (though fewer of them think capital is needed to become a teacher than for other professions). What kind of capital do young people think is needed to start a career as a teacher or lawyer?

Answers like these occurred during the field testing phase. The survey design team suspected that respondents were referring, not to capital or equipment per se, but to the money needed to pay bribes in order to get licenses or jobs. The phrase “not including unofficial payments” was therefore added to the question about capital and equipment, in an attempt to exclude responses thus motivated, and a separate question about bribes was asked, the results of which are shown in Figure 30.

Figure 30: Would you need to pay a bribe to get a start in this profession?



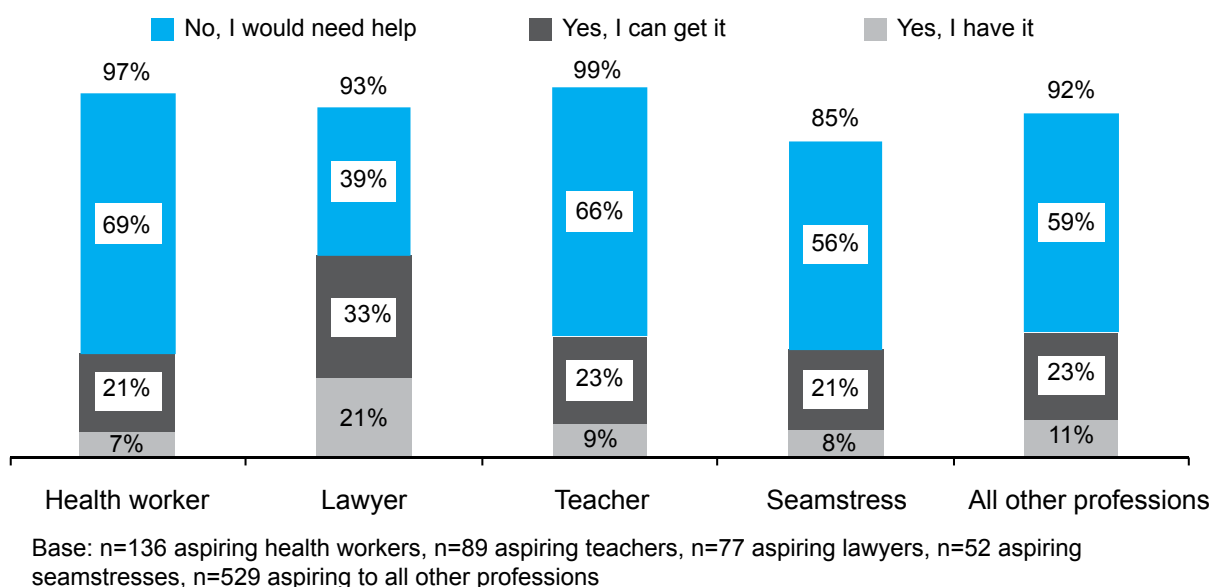
Base: n=131 aspiring health workers, n=83 aspiring teachers, n=67 aspiring lawyers, n=51 aspiring seamstresses, n=483 aspiring to all other professions

If survey respondents’ perceptions are correct, corruption is a barrier to entry into many professions. For every profession that was mentioned five times or more by respondents, someone, and usually a majority of respondents, thought that entry into that profession would involve paying bribes. Service professions that involve direct interactions with customers—seamstress, as shown in Figure 29, as well as driver, cook, barber, plumber, salesman—seem to be the least prone to corruption. Most prone to corruption are those that deal with the affairs of large organizations and especially government: manager, accountant,

entrepreneur, economist / budget specialist, lawyer, and so on (but not teacher).

As Figure 31 shows, young people think that almost all the careers they plan to pursue require special training, education, or credentials, and in most cases they do not think they have it, nor are they in a position to get it. Not only do aspiring lawyers and doctors think that law school and medical school are out of reach, as shown in the chart, but most seamstresses, drivers, cooks, soldiers, and construction workers feel that they lack the necessary training, education, or credentials to work in their chosen field, and think they need help to get it.

Figure 31: Does this career require special training, education, or credentials? If so, do you have it? Can you get it?



The same series of questions was asked about connections, i.e., whether they are needed, whether respondents need them, have them, or can get them. For all careers mentioned by five or more respondents, a majority of the interested respondents said they thought special connections are needed to start work in the profession. Also in all cases, fewer than half of those aspiring to the profession said they had or could get the connections they needed.

The fact that most young people feel so ill-prepared and helpless to make a start in pursuing their career plans may explain why more than half of young people do not bother to report any career plans at all. Yet, as we have seen, most young men do manage to find work by their late 20s, albeit rather erratic work in the informal sector. Still, survey evidence suggests that there is a large unmet demand for career contacts and assistance.

Development aid and civil society could help by providing young people with training in job-related skills, information about possible careers, and especially, as the next section will emphasize, by helping them to make contacts. This would involve attracting the participation not of youth only but of skilled professionals and entrepreneurs, who could assess young people, provide them with advice, and ultimately connect them with jobs. Vocational

training programs should also look into ways to help young people get a start on their preferred careers, where these are realistic.

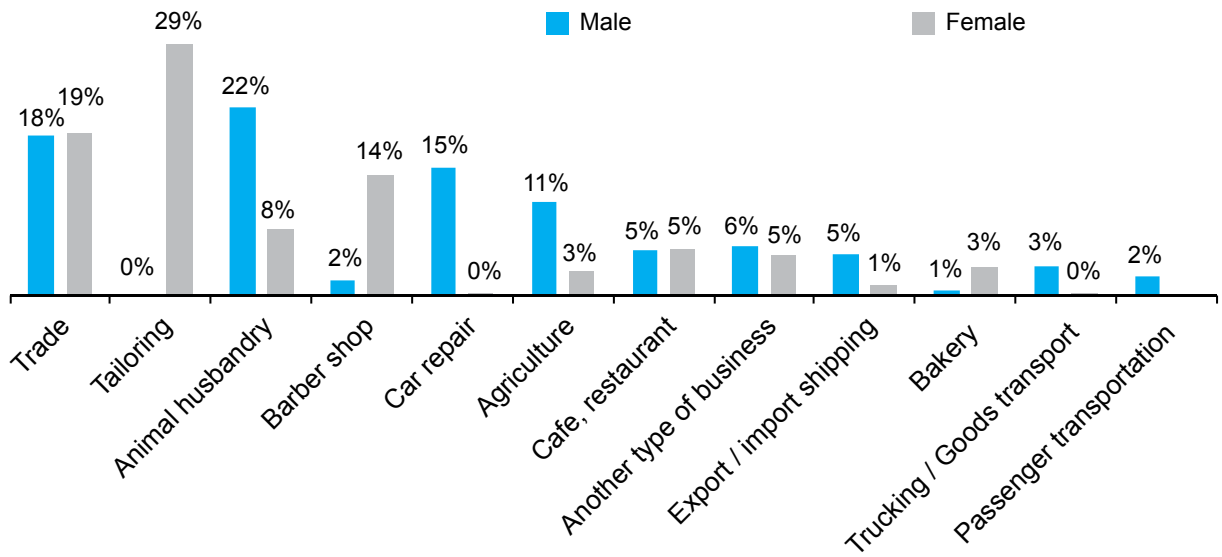
MOST YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE IDEAS OF WHAT TO DO WITH SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS

UNDP is providing business training and small grants. To shed light on the effects that this program might have, young people were asked what they would do with a small business grant if it were available. A few (11 percent) said “I would not invest it in anything,” but most did offer ideas of what they would do with the money. These are shown in Figure 32.

Among women, the most common proposal was to open a tailoring business. This is consistent with the common practice of women working as seamstresses. Many young women also proposed opening a barber shop. Young men were more likely to plan to open a business in agriculture, animal husbandry or car repair. Trading (probably meaning in the bazaar) was a common proposal for both genders.

The reconstruction of the cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad after the June 2010 events might be one opportunity to hire young people and help them acquire some career experience.

Figure 31: Does this career require special training, education, or credentials? If so, do you have it? Can you get it?



Base: n=737 male respondents, n=763 female respondents

Sociological research has shown that social networks are probably the single most important way that people find jobs. Especially important are “weak ties,” the people one only knows slightly, but who give one access to a very large network of possible job contacts. Activities at youth centers are placed where such social ties can form.

They are important to peace because it is to be hoped that youth centers will foster social ties across ethnic lines, exposing young people to alternative perspectives and moderating their biases in favor of their own group. Currently, almost all young people say they would turn to family or friends for moral advice, and almost all their friends are of the same ethnicity as themselves. This ensures that Kyrgyz will hear Kyrgyz points of view, and Uzbeks will hear Uzbek points of view, and a gulf between the attitudes of the two ethnicities is likely to persist. It is important for development agencies and civil society to seek to break up this pattern.

Research about networks is difficult, and research about weak ties, which are of particular importance for finding jobs, is especially difficult. Weak ties are, almost by definition, not the first ones that people will recall in response to a typical survey question. In order to evoke the kind of responses we were looking for, we first asked respondents about their closest friends—strong ties—then we asked (third) about a role model, a person the respondent regards as an example worthy of emulation, and (fourth) a person they would turn to for advice about career or help in a job search. Ideally, the last two questions would evoke weak ties that young people recognized as professionally useful.

THE STRENGTH OF WEAK TIES

Sociologist Mark Granovetter⁸ famously argued that finding jobs depend on weak ties,

a finding confirmed by later research. The reason for this is rather subtle.

Strong ties—one’s family and close friends, people one spends a good deal of time with and knows well—are more likely to exert effort to help a person find a job. But they are necessarily few in number, so that they provide access only to a small network. One’s weak ties—acquaintances, people whom one knows but sees rarely and may hardly remember until an occasion to do so arises—are less likely to exert effort on one’s behalf, but provide access to a much larger network, and therefore to a far larger array of employment opportunities.

It turns out that the structural advantage of weak ties is much more important than the effort advantage of strong ties. The key is to have access to a large network, where one is likely to find a match for one’s availability and skills. As we have seen, few young people in southern Kyrgyzstan seem to want to pursue the same professions as their parents. This makes it especially likely that they will need access to a larger network if they want to pursue their goals.

MOST FRIENDS ARE FROM SCHOOL, TALK ABOUT PERSONAL LIFE, GOSSIP, AND ENTERTAINMENT

85 percent of respondents named at least one friend, 47 percent named two. Most of the friends mentioned were of the same gender and about the same age as the respondents. 71 percent were known from school, 14 percent were neighbors, and others were relatives. Not surprisingly, as people get older, the share of friends whom people know from school declines, but even in people’s mid-to-late 20s about half of the friends named are from school. As young people get older, they tend to see their friends less often. 96 percent of 15-year-olds see their friends every day,

⁸ <http://171.67.216.14/dept/soc/people/mgranovetter/documents/granstrengthweakties.pdf>

compared with 36 percent of 28-year-olds, though 76 percent still see their friends at least once a week.

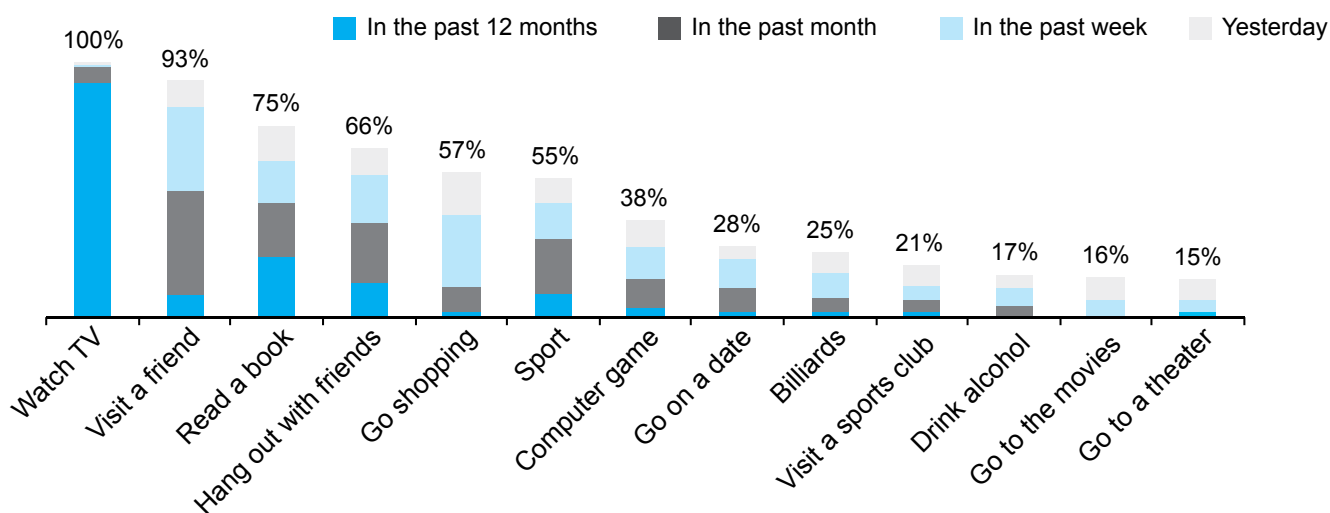
The most common topics of conversation among friends are related to where friends know each other from. School friends are most likely to talk about personal life (19 percent), gossip (17 percent) pastimes and entertainment (17 percent), and—but this is mostly while they are still in school—studies and intellectual topics (26 percent). People are more likely to discuss career, work and business with friends that they know from work, but these comprise only 3 percent of the friends that respondents named. Friendships like these may sometimes

help young people find work, especially in unskilled informal-sector jobs as seamstresses, drivers, etc.

YOUNG PEOPLE OFTEN VISIT OR HANG OUT WITH FRIENDS

Figure 32 shows survey response patterns to a series of questions about how frequently young people engage in various entertainments and pastimes. Since some of these—billiards, dating, sports, visiting or hanging out with friends—are necessarily social, the answers shed some light on how social networks hold together. Thus, about half of youth visit a friend (at home) every week, while some 37 percent hang out with friends (in public).

Figure 33: Entertainment and Pastimes



Base: n=1,500

Also, by showing what kinds of things young people do, Figure 33 sheds light on the sort of activities youth centers might organize, if they want to attract young people for purposes of entertainment, as opposed to being more narrowly focused on professional networking (livelihoods). Yet no simple conclusions can be drawn. High rates of participation in sports may be interpreted as (a) evidence that young people like sports, and so would be attracted to youth centers that could offer venues for this activity, or (b) evidence that young people already have plenty of opportunities to play sports, and so do not need the youth centers to provide venues. Conversely, low rates of

movie watching (1 percent weekly) might show (a) that youth have little opportunity to watch movies and would welcome a venue that offered them, or (b) that youth are not interested in movies. To find out what activities may require direct engagement and local adaptation.

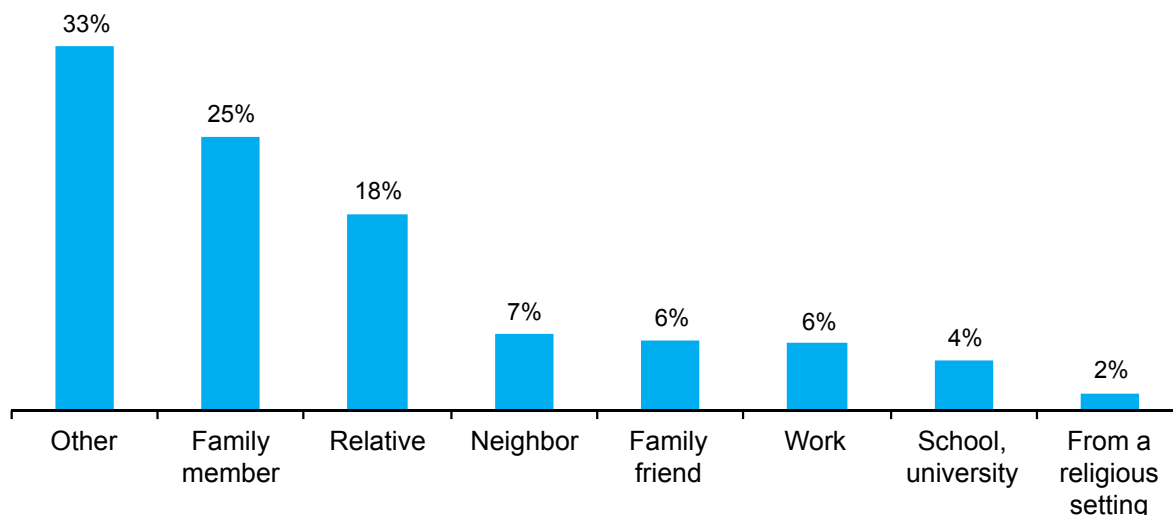
ONLY ONE THIRD OF YOUTH CAN NAME ROLE MODELS

Asked to name a role model from their circle of acquaintances, only one-quarter of respondents were able to do so. This is related to the finding mentioned above, that few young people want to do what their parents did for a

living. Among those who did name a role model, Figure 34 shows that one-third of respondents cite the “other” category when asked how they know their role model. These are the most promising responses. These young people have met someone outside their immediate

and extended families, and their family’s circle of friends and neighbors, and identified them as good examples to emulate. But such respondents comprise only about one-twelfth of the sample.

Figure 33: Entertainment and Pastimes



Base: n=382 respondents who named role models

More than half of young people cite as a role model a family member, relative, family friend, or neighbor, suggesting that they are drawing from a smaller set of “strong ties” in order to form their plans for the future. Figure 35 is further evidence that young people are drawing on their strong ties for examples to emulate, since most of them see their role models at least once a week.

Figure 36 shows the qualities that young people admire their role models for. Most important is “intelligent, educated,” (10 percent of men, 14 percent of women) followed by “honest, responsible,” (11 percent of both genders), and women also highly value people who are “kind” and who are “happy, enjoy life, [and are] friendly.” What cannot be known from the survey data, however, is whether these are the traits young people actually value the most, or whether this simply reflects availability (that is, some young people might admire “energetic, resourceful, enterprising” people if they knew them, but they only know “kind” people).

MOST WOULD TURN TO FAMILY FOR CAREER ADVICE

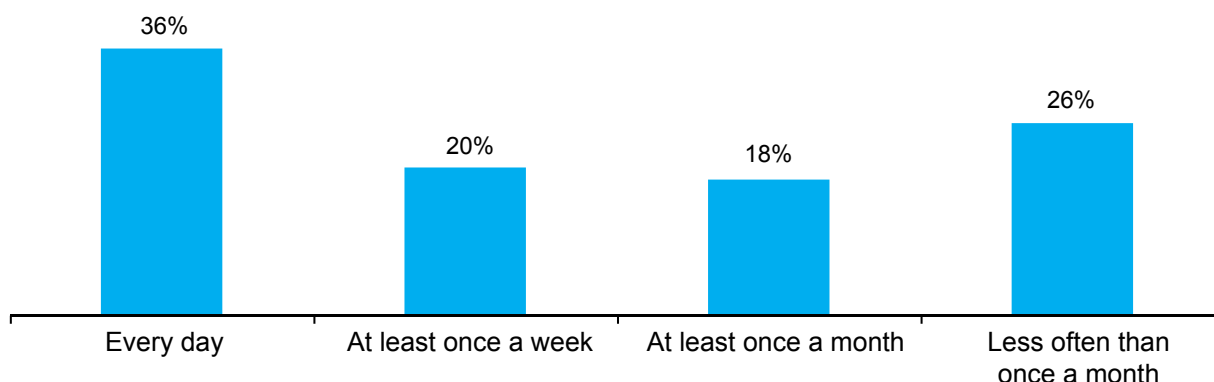
As with role models, relatively few young people (14 percent) feel they have someone to turn to for advice about careers or help in looking for a job. Of those, most (63 percent) say that they see this person every day. This person is usually an immediate family member, and almost always someone drawn from a network of strong family and personal ties, as shown in Figure 37.

No doubt family members and close relatives have the best of intentions, but considering that employment rates in cities are low and most of what employment does exist is informal, while agricultural labor is prevalent in rural areas, the professional value of family members’ advice and assistance is questionable.

RELIGION IS NOT AN IMPORTANT SETTING FOR THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL TIES

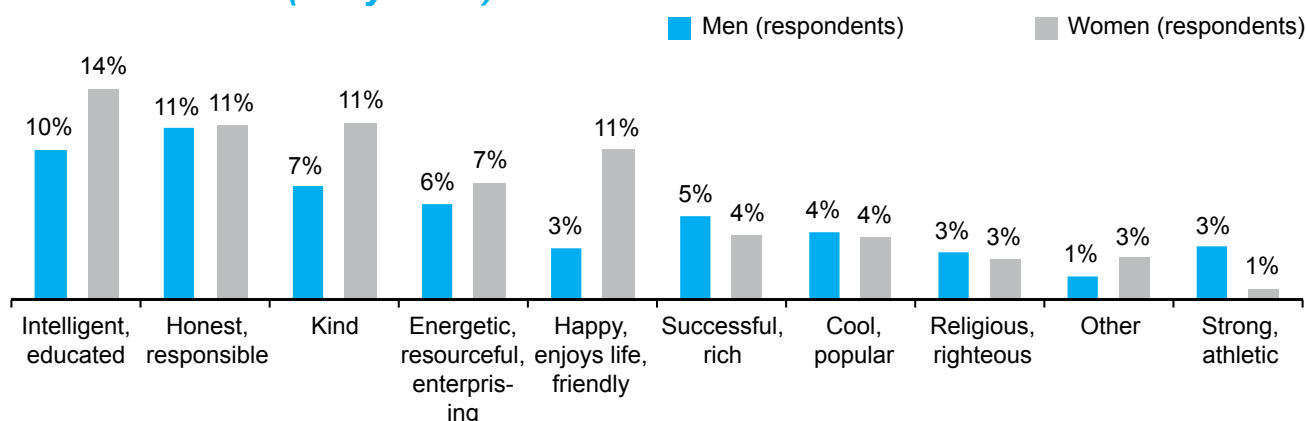
The low importance of religious settings as places where young people make friends and

Figure 35: Role models, how often do you see this person?



Base: n=367 respondents who named a role model

Figure 36: Why (for what qualities) do you consider this person a role model? (They are...)

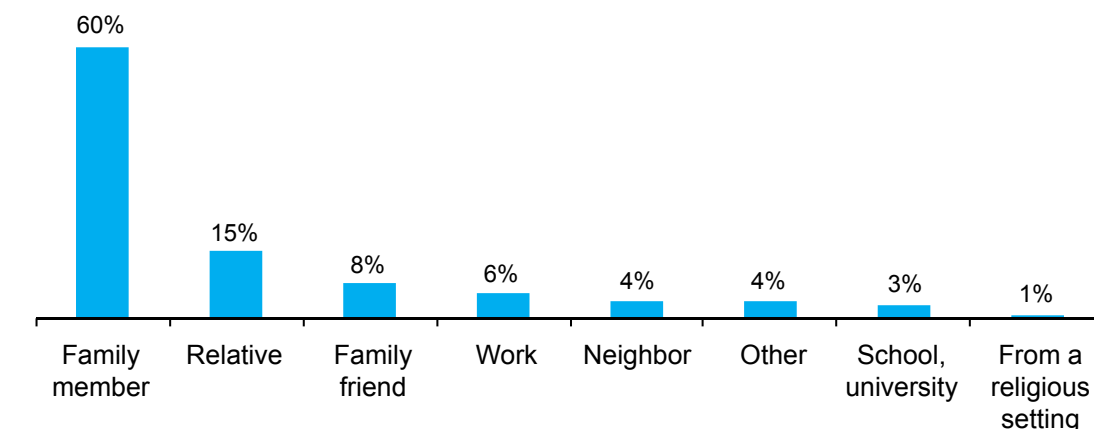


Base: n=160 male respondents, n=199 female respondents

get to know role models or career advisors is striking. It is not the custom in Central Asia for women to attend services at the mosques, but half (50 percent) of young men do attend these services. Over one-fifth of young women (21 percent) and somewhat fewer young men (14 percent) say they pray daily, and 88 percent of respondents say that religion is very or somewhat important to their lives. But hardly any of people’s social ties appear to be formed in religious settings. Figure 36 shows, also, that only 3 percent of young men and women cite “religious, righteous” as one of the top three qualities they admire in a role model. 2 percent are currently studying in a madrassah, and 4 percent have ever studied in a madrassah.

The tentative conclusion here is that young people seem to have limited access to the extensive networks of weak ties that could be most useful to them for professional development, and that might also cross ethnic lines and knit people together irrespective of ethnicity. Bearing in mind the caveats about the difficulty of researching the structure of social networks, the finding nonetheless suggests an important role that youth centers might play, namely, to provide a setting in which more diversified networks can form among young people, and between young people and others in the community who might be deliberately drawn into the activities of the centers for young people’s benefit.

Figure 37: Career advice, where do you know this person from?



Base: n=213 respondents

MOBILE PHONES ARE WIDESPREAD, AND ARE USED FREQUENTLY TO TALK TO FRIENDS

Sixty-four percent of young people have personal mobile phones. There has been a steep rise in mobile phone penetration in recent years, which to judge from the experience elsewhere in the former Soviet Union is likely to continue. Far more young people have cell phones than have home access to PCs and the internet.

Mobile phones are very important to social networks. Seventy-eight percent of young people say that they received a call from a friend yesterday, 95 percent did in the past week. SMS is used almost as frequently: 69 percent say they sent or received an SMS yesterday, 93 percent weekly. The fact that these “yesterday” percentages are higher than the “every day” percentages reported when we asked how often young people see their friends suggests that the frequency of mobile phone conversations is as high as that of face-to-face meetings, if not more so.

Kyrgyz are more likely to have mobile phones (68 percent) than Uzbeks (54 percent). Cell phone ownership rises with age, from 41 percent at age 15 to 71 percent by age 21, after which no clear trend persists. Young men are more likely (68 percent) than young women (60 percent) to have personal mobile phones, and mobile phones are a bit more common in urban areas (70 percent). Mobile phone penetration is strongly correlated with a household’s self-reported economic situation. Among those who

say “we can buy anything we want,” 93 percent have personal mobile phones, whereas only 43 percent of those who “don’t have enough even for food” report having a mobile phone—still a strikingly high number, suggesting that some families are even willing to tolerate some hunger rather than go without cell phones. For young people 19 and under, most phones are bought by parents. After age 22, most cell phones are bought by young people themselves, or (for married women) by their husbands.

Almost all young mobile phone owners, 94 percent, use a mobile phone to call a friend on a weekly basis, and 93 percent send or receive SMS on a weekly basis. Only 16 percent used a mobile phone to make a call for work. Mobile phones are also used to listen to the radio (24 percent of mobile phone owners weekly) and to access the internet (19 percent of mobile phone owners weekly). Weekly users of internet by mobile phone comprise 12 percent of the young population, and far outnumber the 2 percent of households that have home access to the internet.

To sum up, young people in Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces tend to be embedded in tight-knit social networks. These tight-knit social networks probably serve as an effective social safety net, but are much less useful for finding jobs. Most young people do not see role models in their community, and would rely on their family members for career advice even though many do not aspire to the same jobs their parents hold. Youth centers should seek to help young people broaden their social networks.

A small minority of respondents said that they or their families suffered directly in the events of June 2010. Such respondents comprised 2.2 percent of the ethnic Kyrgyz in the sample, and 5.4 percent of the ethnic Uzbeks, confirming the general opinion that Uzbeks suffered the most. Less than 1 percent of each ethnic group suffered from family members killed or being made refugees. However, 1.6 percent that someone they knew was beaten up or wounded, 3.5 percent of Uzbek respondents said their house was damaged, and 1.9 percent said their businesses had been damaged. But the events probably explain the state of profound alienation and mistrust among the Uzbek community.

Although most young people have not personally experienced any violence (or at least did not recall it), 3 percent said they had, over 1 percent within the month prior to the survey. The recency of these experiences suggest that more young people have probably experienced violence and did not recall it. Violence usually occurred on the street where respondents live, or else in the bazaar, more rarely in school or in the homes of family and relatives. The causes of violence are notably different between the ethnicities. Among Kyrgyz, the most common causes of violence are money and personal insults. Uzbeks, by contrast, experienced violence almost exclusively because of ethnic tensions.

Because the survey was conducted only after the violence, it provides no evidence about whether these tensions are primarily a legacy of the violence, or whether they represent longstanding attitudes. Yet it is clear that the Uzbek community feels wronged and vulnerable, and with good reason. The government's failure to bring to justice the perpetrators of the violence on the Kyrgyz side must contribute to Uzbeks' mistrust of the police and of all public institutions. Some good may be done by trying build social networks that cross ethnic lines; currently, most young people are exposed mainly

to the opinions of their own communities. But to the extent that Uzbek mistrust of the police, courts, and government reflects a real refusal of the government to provide protection and justice to the Uzbek community, it may be difficult for youth centers' activities to remedy this.

UZBEKS ARE ALIENATED AND MISTRUSTFUL

Quite different climates of public opinion that prevail among Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, as shown in Figure 38. Uzbeks show far lower levels of trust than Kyrgyz in Kyrgyz and foreign media, as well as in rumors; in religious institutions; and in the government and various government agencies, especially the police and the courts. The only exception to the pattern is local NGOs, which Uzbeks trust only slightly less than Kyrgyz, and international NGOs, which Uzbeks trust more than Kyrgyz.

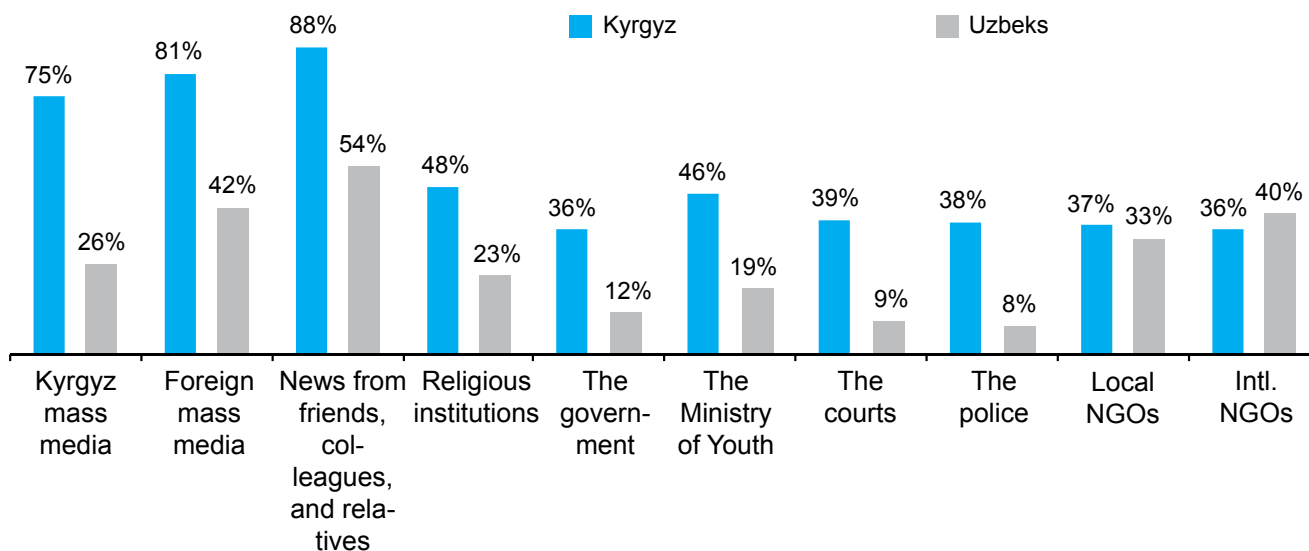
Kyrgyz are more trusting than Uzbeks of particular types of people, too. 41 percent of ethnic Kyrgyz say that leaders of political parties can "completely" or "usually" be trusted, compared with 32 percent of Uzbeks. 51 percent of ethnic Kyrgyz say that local businessmen can be trusted, compared with 29 percent of Uzbeks. 63 percent of ethnic Kyrgyz (young people) say that "young people of your age" can be trusted, compared with 48 percent of Uzbeks.

Not surprisingly, both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks are more trusting of their own ethnic group. 33 percent of ethnic Kyrgyz think ethnic Kyrgyz are "completely" trustworthy, 31 percent that they can "usually" be trusted. Uzbeks also regard one another as trustworthy: 72 percent say other ethnic Uzbeks can completely or usually be trusted. Ethnic Kyrgyz are particularly mistrustful of other ethnic groups: only 19 percent think that ethnic Uzbeks can be "completely" or "usually" trusted, and 34 percent completely or usually trust Russians. More ethnic Uzbeks

(34 percent) consider ethnic Kyrgyz trustworthy than vice versa, and ethnic Uzbeks trust ethnic Russians even more than each other: 25 percent trust them completely, 73 percent at least usually.

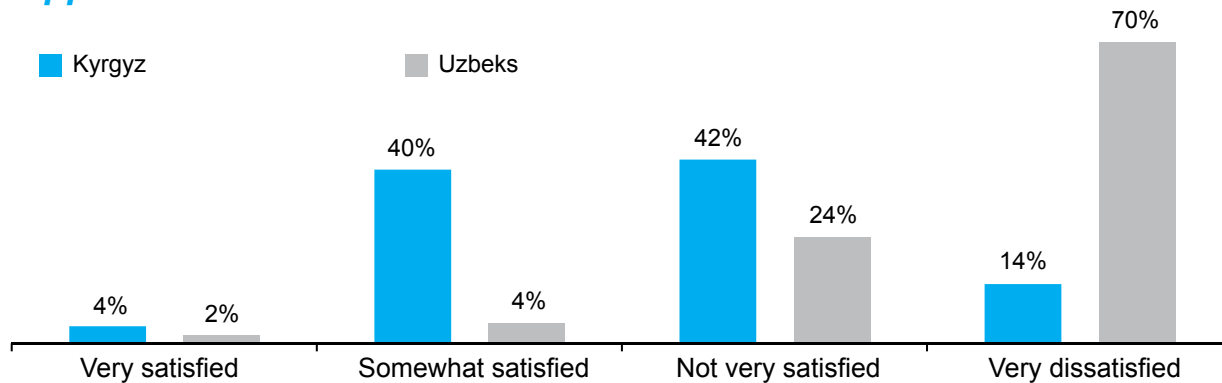
Uzbeks are far less satisfied with the situation in Kyrgyzstan in all respects. In particular, they are less satisfied with the economic opportunities (Figure 39), current leadership (Figure 40), and security (Figure 41) in Kyrgyzstan.

Figure 38: Trust



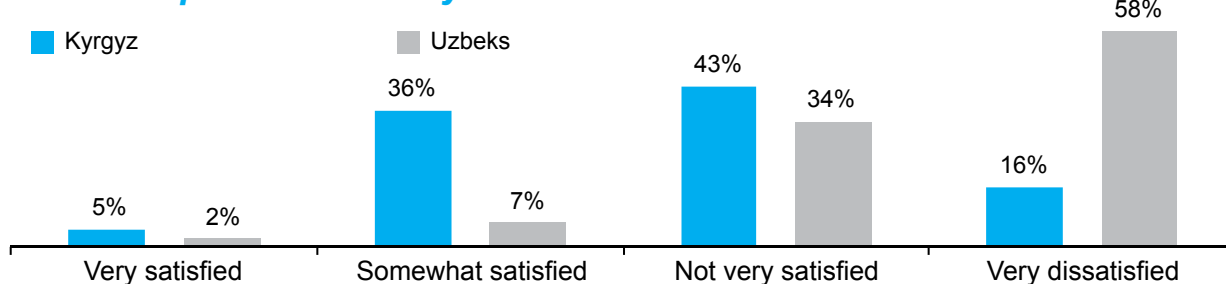
Base: n=1,034 Kyrgyz respondents, n=425 Uzbek respondents

Figure 39: In Kyrgyzstan, how satisfied are you with economic opportunities?



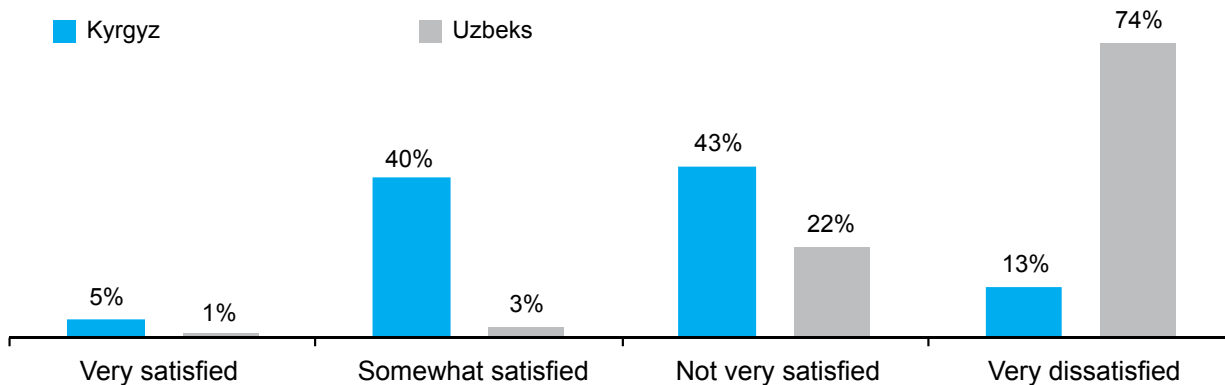
Base: n=1,034 Kyrgyz respondents, n=425 Uzbek respondents

Figure 40: In Kyrgyzstan, how satisfied are you with the current leadership of the country?



Base: n=1,034 Kyrgyz respondents, n=425 Uzbek respondents

Figure 41: In Kyrgyzstan, how satisfied are you with security?



Base: n=1,034 Kyrgyz respondents, n=425 Uzbek respondents

In response to all these questions, the “very dissatisfied” comprise a large majority of Uzbek young people. The intensity of this dissatisfaction reflects a deep breakdown of trust that will be difficult to overcome, especially if measures are not taken effectually to provide security to the Uzbek community.

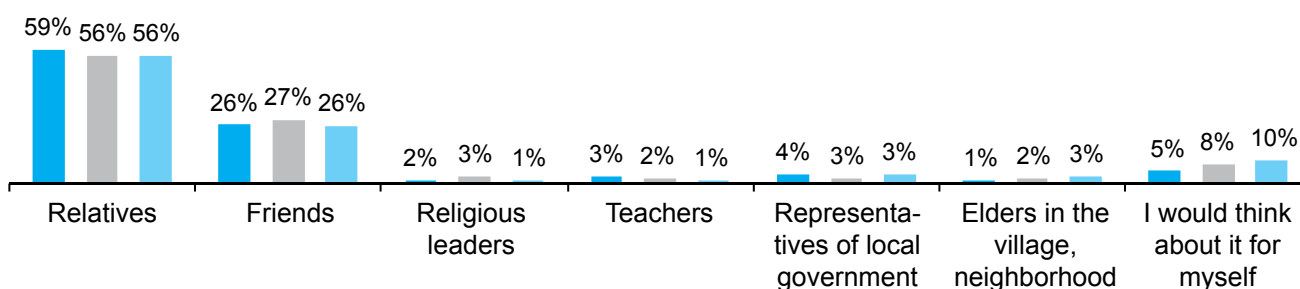
VALUES AND INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

Social networks are important to careers and getting jobs, but they are also important because they shape people’s values. The survey asked respondents whom they would turn to “for advice on moral questions.” The results are shown in Figure 42, and are not too surprising: most (57 percent) would turn to rela-

tives (including immediately family members) for moral advice, and most of the rest (26 percent) would turn to friends.

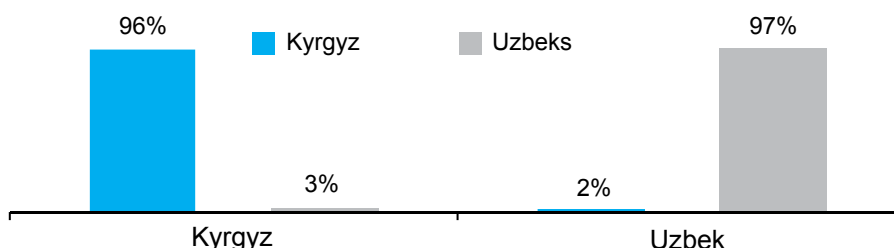
Worryingly, as Figure 43 shows, almost all young people’s (top two) friends are of the same ethnicity as themselves, this means that most people get moral advice only or mainly from members of their own ethnic group. Combining these two findings, most young people get moral advice mainly from members of their own ethnic community. On questions related to the ethnic violence, such moral influences almost certainly reinforce ethnic biases and prejudices.

Figure 42: Who would you turn to for moral advice?



Base: n=684 respondents ages 15-19, 357 respondents ages 20-23, 431 respondents ages 24-28 who named a source of moral advice

Figure 43: Ethnicity of Friends



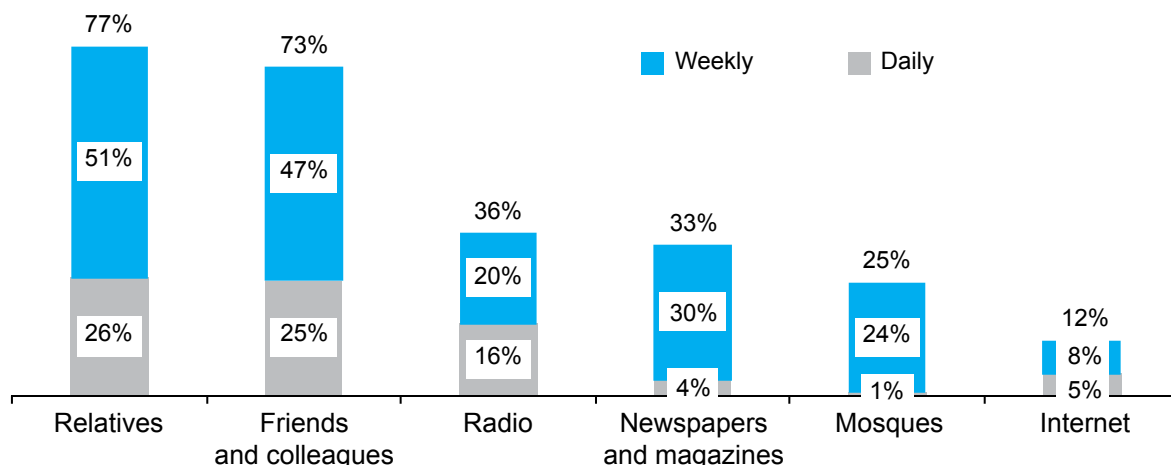
Base: n=1,034 Kyrgyz respondents, n=425 Uzbek respondents

The media can be another influence on public opinion, less insular in its reach than are social networks. Might the media serve to counter-act the biases people hear from their friends and relatives? Probably not very effectively, for two reasons. First, as Figure 44 shows that other than TV (which other InterMedia research has shown is watched every day

by most Kyrgyz and Uzbeks), relatives, friends and colleagues are the most important sources of news, far more so than radio, newspapers, or the internet. This finding underlines the importance of social networks in shaping public opinion.

The other problem, mentioned above, is that most Uzbeks do not trust the mass media.

Figure 44: News Platforms



Base: 1,500

KYRGYZ AND UZBEK ARE PARTLY MUTUALLY INTELLIGIBLE, RUSSIAN ALSO SERVES AS A BRIDGE

The Kyrgyz and Uzbek languages are mutually intelligible to some extent. Only 1 percent of young people say they cannot understand Kyrgyz at all, and only 4 percent that they cannot understand Uzbek at all. On the other hand, few non-ethnic Kyrgyz say they are fluent in Uzbek and vice versa. 17 percent of young people say they speak Russian fluently, compared to 13 percent who do not understand it. Russian may in some cases serve as a vehicular language for communication between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz. There are a lot more Uzbeks (24 percent) than Kyrgyz (8 percent) who do not understand Russian. Language, then, is not too formidable a barrier to communication in most cases, but it is certainly a reminder of the ethnic difference.

A DECLINE IN INTER-ETHNIC CONTACTS

97 percent of Kyrgyz live in neighborhoods where the predominant ethnicity is Kyrgyz. Few

Uzbeks (2.6 percent) live in predominantly Kyrgyz neighborhoods, but some (15 percent) say they live in ethnically mixed neighborhoods.

There seems to be less inter-ethnic interaction now (or at the time of the survey) than two years ago. One-third (33 percent) of Kyrgyz respondents say that they interacted with ethnic Uzbeks on a daily basis two years ago. Slightly fewer, 28 percent, say that they do so now. Interaction with ethnic Russians has fallen too, from 18 percent two years ago to 13 percent now.

For ethnic Uzbeks, the drop in contacts with Kyrgyz is a bit larger: 53 percent interact with Kyrgyz on a daily basis, down from 72 percent two years ago. They also interact with fewer Russians, and with fewer citizens of foreign countries.

Kyrgyz respondents were asked some questions designed to explore their attitude towards northerners, i.e., people from northern Kyrgyzstan. About three-quarters would be comfortable working in the same organization as a northerner, or having a northerner marry

a male or female relative. More (81 percent) would be comfortable living in a building or a street with a Northerner.

Attitudes of Kyrgyz towards ethnic Uzbeks are more negative than towards (Kyrgyz) from northern Kyrgyzstan⁹. A majority (59 percent) would be comfortable living in a building or street with an ethnic Uzbek, and a slight majority (52 percent) would be comfortable working in the same organization. But few (26 percent) would be comfortable seeing a female relative marry an ethnic Uzbek or (24 percent) seeing an ethnic Uzbek woman marry their male relative.

Uzbeks appear to be more tolerant of inter-ethnic ties than Kyrgyz. 69 percent of them say that they would be comfortable living in a street or building with a Kyrgyz, 74 percent that they would be comfortable working in the same organization, 46 percent that they would be comfortable seeing a female relative marry a Kyrgyz, and 45 percent that they would be comfortable seeing a female relative marry a Kyrgyz.

⁹The Kyrgyz ethnicity of “northerners” was not explicitly stated in the question but can be assumed, since the northern part of the country is dominated by ethnic Kyrgyz and has very few Uzbeks in particular.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are plans by development agencies and civil society to create new youth centers as places for young people to meet, to get to know one another, to have a good time, and to form friendships, in hopes of broadening their horizons, expanding the circle of their acquaintances, bringing them into contact with advice and opportunities, and helping them to form life plans and to achieve them.

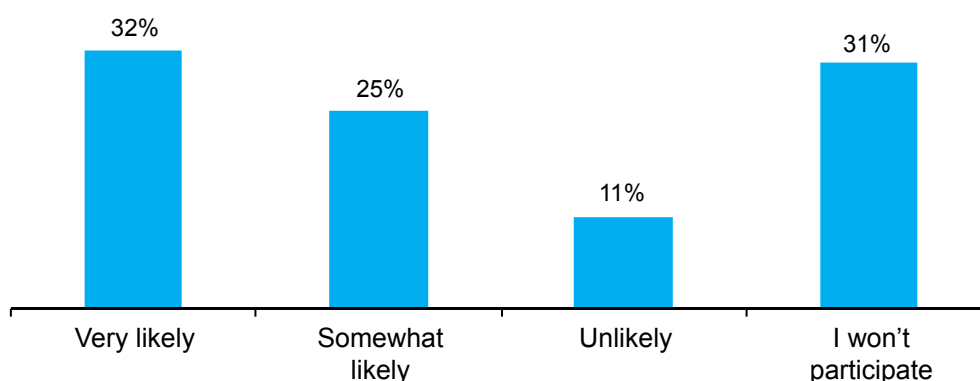
Young people seem to have fairly realistic ideas about which of the skills they have are currently in demand, in an economy characterized by agricultural subsistence or precarious urban underemployment, in which formal employment is scarce, and relatively few have opportunities to use more than basic household skills in transient jobs. But many of them also have career aspirations which point to more specialized professional roles in a modernizing economy. Although many of these aspirations are likely to prove unrealistic, they point to a picture of the future economy of southern Kyrgyzstan which is both desirable and likely. Some young people will need to be instrumental in bringing this about, if the change is to take place. Others need to adapt to prosper in a changing environment.

Success will depend on participation, which depends first of all on young people (a)

having the time to attend, and (b) being able to travel to the youth centers. Asked how much free time they have, the median respondent said about 19 hours per week, nearly the same for men and women. Mean free time declines slightly with age, from 21 hours at age 15 to around 17 to 18 hours in the late 20s. Uzbeks have slightly more (average) free time (21 hours) than Kyrgyz (19 hours). Single respondents have a bit more free time (20 hours) than married respondents. Those with permanent jobs have less free time (average 16 hours). Most youth have the time to attend events or activities at a youth center, if they desire to do so and have transportation.

How far would young people be able to travel to participate in youth center activities? The median respondent who had some interest in participating said he would be willing to travel up to 40 km to participate. Such a trip would be an unusually long journey for young people to make, for the places young people visit most often are located a median distance of 3 km from the household where the young person lives. Young people habitually walk distances of 1-3 km, but most rely on public transport to go further than that, so if it is not possible for most youth to live near a youth center, it will be necessary to think about the issue of transportation.

Figure 45: How likely are you to participate in activities organized by a youth center?

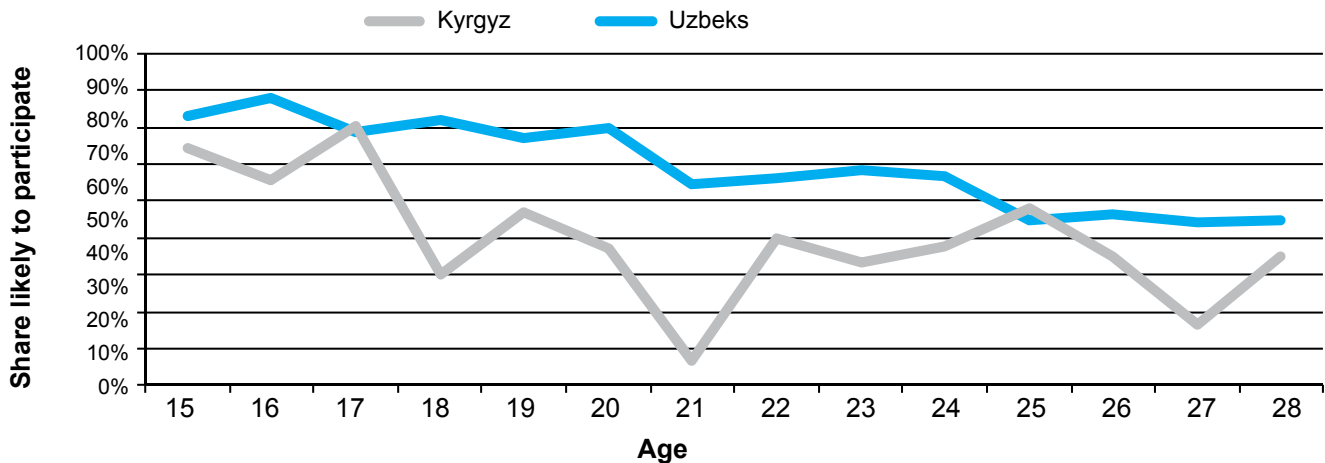


Base: n=1,482 respondents

To gauge likely participation at a youth center, respondents were given the following introduction; “UNICEF is planning to open youth centers in Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces. The goal of the centers is promotion of peace and helping young people in the search for work

and starting careers. Also the centers will help to provide secure places for pastimes and social interaction of youth.” They were then asked if how likely they were to participate. The answers are shown in Figure 45. Likely participation rates are similar for men and women.

Figure 46: Very or somewhat likely to participate, by ethnicity and age



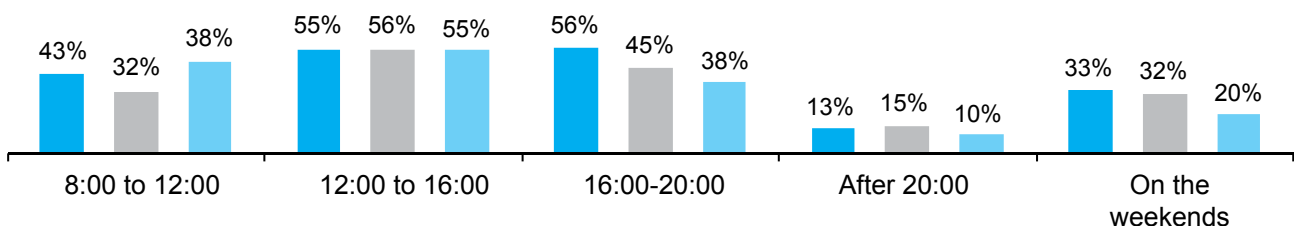
Base: Kyrgyz. n=97 age 15, n=113 age 16, n=105 age 17, n=75 age 18, n=85 age 19, n=63 age 20, n=68 age 21, n=57 age 22, n=60 age 23, n=51 age 24, n=76 age 25, n=56 age 26, n=70 age 27, n=58 age 28. Uzbek. n=48 age 15, n=54 age 16, n=37 age 17, n=40 age 18, n=32 a ge 19, n=35 age 20, n=15 age 21, n=20 age 22, n=30 age 23, n=24 age 24, n=23 age 25, n=20 age 26, n =24 age 27, n=23 age 28

Levels of interest fell with age, and were notably lower among Uzbeks than among Kyrgyz, as shown in Figure 46. Uzbek likely participation rates start lower and then decline faster, so that at age 18 and above, less than half of Uzbeks say they would be willing to participate. For both ethnicities, likely participation rates decline steadily as young people move into their mid and late 20s. Urban young people express more interest in participating than rural young people. Most young people who would like to participate wish to do so during the day, including the morning and afternoon

and extending into the early evening, as shown in Figure 47. Few would find it convenient to participate during the later part of the evening, but some could come on weekends.

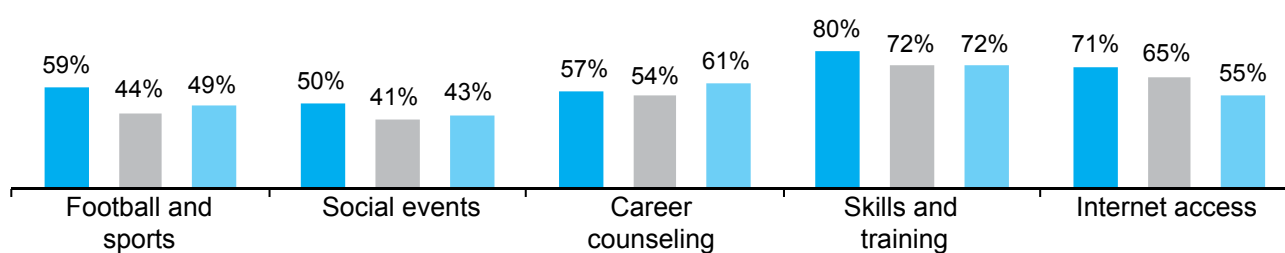
Finally, Figure 48 shows what types of activities young people would like to see take place at a youth center. The most popular type of activity is related to job search: 52 percent of interested young people would welcome events and activities devoted to acquisition of new skills and training. But the other four types of activities suggested are also of interest to sizeable minorities.

Figure 47: Most convenient times of day



Base: n=543 respondents ages 15-19, 234 respondents ages 20-23, 246 respondents ages 24-28 who said they would be likely to participate

Figure 48: Preferred activities



Base: n=543 respondents ages 15-19, 234 respondents ages 20-23, 246 respondents ages 24-28 who would likely participate

There is substantial demand, then, for participation in the youth centers' activities, if the word gets out. One effective way to reach young people would be through TV advertisements, since most young people watch TV every day. Of course, TV advertising time is likely to be hard to get, expensive, and scarce. Far fewer young people listen to radio, about 36 percent weekly, but that would still be sufficient to spread the word. About a third of young people also read newspapers and magazines on a weekly basis, so some young people could be reached that way.

But the most effective way to spread the word is probably via mobile phones. Since almost two-thirds of young people have mobile phones, they can be an effective way not only to let young people know of the existence of youth centers, but, even more, to spread the word about particular events and activities at youth centers. Mobile phone communications can enable youth centers to spread the word about activities widely and quickly; in this respect, no other information channel comes close. This will largely depend, however, either on young people spreading word about events to their friends, or providing their phone numbers to youth centers so that they can be contacted directly. Such communications could become an irritant if used too frequently, and fee structures for texting should be investigated so as to avoid imposing a cost on young people. Mobile phones can also be useful for coordinating transportation.

Once adequate rates of awareness and participation are established, youth centers will need to consistently provide activities and

events that are of interest to young people. Some of these may consist merely of entertainment, such as sports and social events. Yet these may be useful to young people if they provide a context for forming friendships which lead to discussions of life plans and exchanges of advice and information about opportunities. If internet access is provided, this will be a persistent attraction and may give young people exposure to regional and global opportunities, but it may get in the way of building networks among young people, and may also lead to mere diversion or even internet addiction.

Career counseling and training are the activities that young people desire most, but these activities should be carefully chosen. To some extent, young people have accurate ideas about what skills are useful in the economy of southern Kyrgyzstan now. However, what is now demanded is generally basic skills that are also used at home. It may be of limited use to offer this kind of training in youth centers, if young people have adequate opportunities to get it at home (though some of their answers suggest that many do not). Offering training in skills that the economy of the future will demand would be more valuable, but there is a risk of getting ahead of the economy, and training young people to do things that no one in southern Kyrgyzstan today would pay them to do. Such skills might atrophy, or might simply fuel emigration. Youth centers should let young people have a say in what they want to learn, but UNICEF should also execute its own judgment, based on consultations with employers and monitoring of the local economy, about what is worth teaching.

If participation in the youth centers turns out to be solely Kyrgyz, or if individual youth centers are used by a single ethnicity, part of their purpose will be defeated. There is a danger of low participation among the Uzbeks, who say they would be less likely to participate and who mistrust institutions of all kinds. Advertising should be targeted, and possibly transportation provided, so as to encourage Uzbek participation especially, and thereby to achieve ethnic balance.

If all these strategies are pursued, youth centers, and other activities aimed at youth in the south, may help to defuse ethnic tensions and promote the happiness of youth, successful transitions to adulthood and employment, and economic development generally, in the Osh and Jalal-Abad regions of Kyrgyzstan.

Youth centers can serve as a place for young people to meet one another. This may be their most important function. Social networks are very important to both parts of the youth centers' mission, to livelihoods and to peace. The youth center project may play an especially valuable role by building networks, helping young people to meet a larger array of others, in the context of suitable activities. Most youth say that they would "likely" participate in activities in youth centers, and they were often willing to travel quite far in order to do it. They are most interested in activities that can build skills useful on the job, but they are also interested in sports and socializing. Youth centers can make a difference for the better if they provide an alternative venue for youth to try to develop career skills for an economy destined to modernize.

For every child
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