



SITUATION ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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This report is the product of a desk review of key reports, studies, surveys and evaluations produced in 2000-2010 in the area of child rights in Kyrgyzstan by UNICEF and development partners. It was carried out to inform the formulation of the Country Programme 2012-2016 of UNICEF and the Government by providing contextual background information, identifying priority issues affecting children and women of the country and suggesting possible strategic interventions for the Government and its development partners.

The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of the United Nations Children's Fund.

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Contents

Contents	3
List of Abbreviations	4
Foreword	5
Executive Summary	6
Background	9
Poverty	9
Food, energy and economic insecurity 2007-2009	10
Political crisis	11
Economic crisis	13
Vulnerabilities and inequities	14
Sectoral analysis	16
Maternal and child health	16
Nutrition	21
Food security	23
Early childhood development	23
Education	24
Child protection	29
Juvenile justice system	33
Water, sanitation and hygiene	35
Disaster risk reduction	37
Social protection	37
Budgeting issues	39
Peacebuilding needs among youth in the context of the June events	40
The framework for protecting children's rights	42
Rights in the family and the rights of women	43
Conclusion:	47
Recommendations	48

List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARIS	Agency for Development and Investment in Communities (Russian acronym)
C4D	Communication for Development
CBO(s)	Community Based Organisation(s)
CDC	(United States) Centers for Disease Control
CDS	Country Development Strategy
CEDAW	(UN) Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CEE/CIS	Central and Eastern Europe / Commonwealth of Independent States
CPD	Country Programme Document
DFID	(United Kingdom) Department for International Development
DHS	(Ministry of Health and USAID) Demographic and Health Survey
DRCU	Disaster Response Coordination Unit
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FAO	(United Nations) Food and Agricultural Organisation
FAPs	Rural Health Points (Russian acronym)
FCSDs	Family and Child Support Departments
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	The German Society for International Cooperation
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IG	Interim Government
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KFW	German Development Bank (German acronym)
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
MDG(s)	Millennium Development Goal(s)
MICS	(National Statistical Committee and UNICEF) Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NGO(s)	Non-Government Organisations
PCF	Per Capita Financing
PISA	(OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNOSAT	UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Operational Satellite Applications Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	(United Nations) World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

Foreword



There is nothing more important in our lives than our children. With the active participation of civil society, we have introduced new items in the Constitution to place children at the forefront of our priorities and to ensure that each child's fundamental rights are protected by law. We are working hard to reduce child mortality, to increase the number of pre-schools for young ones and provide alternative facilities for those in contact with the law. We must continue to do everything to support those who dedicate their lives to children.

*President of the Kyrgyz Republic
R. Otunbayeva*

Undoubtedly, we still have numerous problems. We must ensure peace so that every child can live without fear, threats or violence. We must support parents and other care givers so that all children, especially those with special needs may grow up in loving families instead of alone in institutions. We must take care of the education and the health services we provide to all our children so that they may develop their full potential and in turn drive our country to a better, more prosperous future.

This publication describes clearly the different challenges that face our young generation. It lays out some of the small but important steps we can take to ensure the realization of our children's rights.

Dear adults, let us not forget that we all came from this wonderful land of childhood. Our moral obligation is to allow our own children to go through this enchanting phase of life without the burden and intrusion of having to deal with adult issues. We must protect and help every child to reach their potential and realize their dreams. Folk wisdom claims that a "Child is insatiable for laughter". Let us allow our children to laugh wholeheartedly and spread this optimism and joy throughout the Kyrgyz Republic.

Executive Summary

This report is the product of a desk review of key reports, studies, surveys and evaluations produced in the last five years in the area of child rights in Kyrgyzstan by UNICEF and development partners. It was carried out to inform the formulation of the Country Programme 2012-2016 of UNICEF and the Government by providing contextual background information, identifying priority issues affecting children and women of the country and suggesting possible strategic interventions for the Government and its development partners. The report looks at the mechanisms in place or needed to address the issues, and focuses on the most vulnerable, with an equity focus and a gender lens.

Kyrgyzstan has had mixed results in its efforts to meet its commitments envisaged in the **Millennium Development Goals** and the Millennium Declaration. In 2009 it was reported that target benchmarks had already been reached for some indicators for the MDGs, including those for reducing extreme poverty, though a series of shocks in recent years threaten to reverse these achievements. However, the MDGs in the health sector appear much more challenging to meet, with indicators on maternal mortality in particular remaining unacceptably high. Meanwhile, progress towards achieving MDG 2 on access to education masks growing concerns about the quality of education available.

Several **shocks** have affected Kyrgyzstan in recent years. In the winter of 2008-2009, the effects of chronic underinvestment and a harsh winter led to the need for a humanitarian appeal to tackle emerging issues of food and energy insecurity. In 2009, the country was hit by the effects of the global financial crisis, with

sharp falls in remittances and exports, both crucial parts of the economy. April 2010 saw the overthrow of the country's President by protestors angry about their socioeconomic conditions and about perceived rampant corruption. Then in June 2010, more than 400 people died in several days of fighting between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in the south of the country. The country remains very fragile politically and economically.

In recent years significant **achievements** have been made with support from UNICEF and other development partners that are improving the lives of children. Government expenditure on key sectors including health, education and social protection has been increasing significantly since 2007. A Children's Code (2006) has been introduced, which sets out the rights of children and creates bodies for child protection at national and district level. Other laws have been passed to improve access to preschool education, redirect social benefits to the most vulnerable children (an additional 6000 are benefitting), promote breastfeeding, and make flour fortification mandatory. Meanwhile, a micronutrient programme for 6-24 month olds piloted by UNICEF and its development partners in Talas province is being rolled out nationwide after studies showed a substantial fall in anaemia among the target population. The Ministry of Health has been supported to develop the first ever prevention of mother to child transmission and paediatric AIDS programme.

However, at the same time, there are still enormous **challenges** in the systems to support children in rural parts of the country. The child protection system remains fragmented, and there is limited capacity at the district level to

fulfil requirements under legislation. Poverty, and the lack of available services, has led to a rise in the institutionalisation of children with living parents. Poverty, and the lack of opportunities, also contribute to high rates of gender-based violence, including bride abduction and early marriages. The healthcare and education systems remain severely constrained by antiquated infrastructure, and low pay and lack of incentives lead to a significant outflow of specialists, either to other professions, or abroad. While there are contrasting figures on access to clean water and sanitation, in many parts of the country it is clear that this infrastructure is also deteriorating. Meanwhile, there has been rising intolerance between ethnic and regional groups in the population that has seen its worst outpouring in the violence in June.

This report recommends areas in which further action should be taken by the Government with the support of its development partners to assist in achieving the broad spectrum of rights of children in Kyrgyzstan. Recommendations are presented by thematic area.

A key need is to develop the capacity of national and local authorities to develop, implement, monitor and amend **plans for children**, in order to translate national policies and laws into concrete outcomes for women and children. Innovative approaches and cost effective field interventions should be promoted and scaled up where necessary. Capacity development will enable district and local authorities, as well as ministries and government at national level, to design and implement a continuum of integrated social services for the most excluded children, adolescents and women and close existing gaps in access to and use of quality services.

Policy-oriented data collection and research needs to be improved. Assessments carried out in the wake of the June violence revealed many longstanding issues of concern in southern Kyrgyzstan, including shortages of alternatives to residential child care facilities; poor

education, child protection and social protection systems; and inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene. It is important that these issues do not slip from the attention of policy-makers. This should take the form of both regular monitoring reports to inform on-going advocacy and policy development, and continuing commissioning of research into the key issues. Topics revealed in this desk review that appear to merit further research include:

- The particular issues facing youth and children as victims, perpetrators and peace-builders by carrying out ongoing in-depth research and analysis of relationship of youth and children with conflict
- Inequity in access to justice for juveniles
- The reasons why the property rights of children in residential care are often violated
- Inequity in access to maternal and child healthcare and the reasons for late registration of pregnancy with healthcare professionals
- Issues of children working in hazardous conditions, including radioactive tailings and in mines, and what can be done to prevent this
- Inequity in access to social protection
- The scale of and factors behind bride abduction and marriage of under-18s
- The current and potential role of the mass media in Kyrgyzstan in advocating for the rights and needs of vulnerable children

Meanwhile, the Government should be supported to build its own capacity for **collecting and disseminating information**. Lack of such capacity hinders the Government from providing adequate services, particularly to the most vulnerable, even to the extent possible given still-limited budgetary means. In some cases, this is connected to poor communication and information sharing between national bodies, or between agencies at national and local levels.

Executive Summary

Over recent years, **remote and mountainous areas** have made slowest progress towards meeting targets for maternal and infant mortality, universal secondary education and poverty reduction. These areas suffer from a lack of economic opportunities, which leads to greater poverty. An additional problem is the high proportion of children living with elderly relatives, as their parents have often travelled to the cities or abroad to find employment. There are also strong disincentives for healthcare and educational workers to take up positions in these areas, as can be seen from the high levels of shortages in these key professions. Child protection, as well as health and education, is also hampered by the fact that professionals, as well as beneficiaries, have much further to travel to ensure that needs are met, often with less resources. These areas are also most susceptible to natural disasters.

There is also a need for a scaled-up international presence in **southern Kyrgyzstan** to continue after the humanitarian operations end. Peacebuilding efforts among youth and children in the south should take place both in the areas directly affected by the conflict, and in the other areas from which participants came. The south of the country is most susceptible to natural disasters. Surveys conducted with the support of UNICEF have shown that there are key issues in the fields of parental skills, lack of basic health awareness and child abuse which are particularly prominent in the south of the country and would benefit from community-based communications interventions. In addition, the Osh area has seen an outbreak of HIV among women and children, and programming should intensify to prevent further transmission and address the issues at community and healthcare level, such as lack of knowledge, stigma and discrimination, that make their lives even more difficult.

Background

Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous country located between China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in Central Asia. Formerly part of the Soviet Union, it became independent in 1991. The country has a population of just over five million, and is divided administratively into seven provinces and two cities. An informal geographical division also exists in the country between the north (Talas, Chuy, Issyk Kul and Naryn provinces and Bishkek city) and the south (Jalal-Abad, Osh and Batken provinces and Osh city). While both north and south are predominantly made up of sparsely populated mountain areas, the majority of the north's population lives in the densely-populated Chuy Valley, with most of the population in the south in Kyrgyzstan's portion of the Fergana Valley. Ethnic Kyrgyz make up the majority of the population (70.9 per cent); while Uzbeks (14.2 per cent, mainly concentrated in the south of the country) have replaced Russians (7.8 per cent, mainly in Bishkek and the Chuy Valley) as the second largest ethnic group in the country in the years since independence.¹

Kyrgyzstan is one of the poorest countries in the CEE/CIS region, with a Gross National Income of \$2291 per capita in 2008². It is among the "medium level" countries for human development, with an index of 0.598 (109 in the world)³.

The country has had mixed results in its efforts to meet its commitments envisaged in the Millennium Declaration⁴. In 2009 it was reported that target benchmarks had already been reached for some indicators for Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 1, 7 and 8.

The decade to 2010 saw significant progress in reducing poverty, and extreme poverty in particular. However, the MDGs in the health sector (MDG 4, MDG 5, MDG 6) appear much more challenging to meet, with indicators on maternal mortality in particular remaining unacceptably high. Meanwhile, progress towards achieving MDG 2 on access to education masks growing concerns about the quality of education in the country. For more on all of these MDGs, please see the relevant sections of the text below.

Poverty

Before the crises of 2010, the Kyrgyz Republic had achieved notable success in reducing poverty, particularly extreme poverty, and positive trends also included reductions in the depth and severity of poverty⁵. Overall poverty fell from 64 per cent to 31.7 per cent between 2003 and 2008, and extreme poverty from 28 per cent to 6.1 per cent, which betters the MDG target. The sharpest falls in extreme poverty were recorded in Osh (17.4 per cent in 2003 to 4.5 per cent in 2008) and Batken (14.3 to 3.9 per cent) provinces, while Issyk Kul province saw extreme poverty rise sharply in 2008 to 16.9 per cent, just below its 2003 figure of 18.7 per cent. Growth in remittances from labour migrants and pension increases played a significant role in poverty reduction⁶.

Nonetheless, poverty levels are still significant and raise major equity concerns, with children

¹ Figures taken from the 2009 Census;

² UNDP, Human Development Report 2010, 4 November 2010;

³ UNDP, Human Development Report 2010, 4 November 2010;

⁴ See Government of the Kyrgyz Republic / United Nations, Second Periodic Report on the Millennium Development Goals in the Kyrgyz Republic (MDGR), 16 March 2009;

⁵ It should be stressed that poverty lines used in Kyrgyzstan are very low: the general poverty line for 2008 was KGS 1526 (approximately \$42.30 per month at 2008 exchange rate), and the extreme poverty line KGS 975.7 (about \$27). [Government of the Kyrgyz Republic/United Nations, Second Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGR), 2010];

⁶ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic/United Nations, Second Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGR), 2010;

among the most vulnerable. Almost half the country's children (48.5 per cent) live in poverty, and one in eight children suffer from extreme poverty and deprivation. Children from poor households are less successful at school, and are more likely to have health problems and struggle to find meaningful employment in later life⁷.

Many of Kyrgyzstan's poor make their livings in the country's large informal sector, in which work is badly paid and irregular, and does not confer the labour rights and safety standards associated with formal employment⁸. Most of the estimated 670,000 working children in the country, work informally in the agricultural sector⁹.

Poverty is also geographically diverse – poverty rates based on consumption figures continue to be much higher in rural than in urban areas. As of the third quarter of 2009, 60 per cent of rural residents were poor (of whom 19 per cent were extremely poor), while the figures for urban areas were 32 and 7 per cent respectively¹⁰. A World Bank survey in 2005 gave estimates for poverty levels at district level – this highlighted the fact that poverty is much more prevalent in remote areas. Districts with more than 70 per cent estimated poverty levels included Toktogul and Aksy districts (Jalal-Abad Province); Aktalaa and At Bashy districts (Naryn Province); Uzgen, Alay and Chong Alay districts (Osh Province); and Bakayata district (Talas Province). With the exception of Uzgen district, all of these are primarily remote and mountainous districts.

⁷ Institute of Strategic Analysis and Evaluation Under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF, National Report of the Kyrgyz Republic: Global Study on Child Poverty and Disparities, 2009;

⁸ Asian Development Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Bank, with participation of the Eurasian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Commission, International Financial Corporation and the United Nations. Joint Economic Assessment: Reconciliation, Recovery and Reconstruction (JEA). 21 July 2010;

⁹ ILO and National Statistical Committee, Working Children in Kyrgyzstan: The Results of 2007 Child Labor Survey, September 2008;

¹⁰ Agnes Dhur, second update on the Food Security and Nutrition Situation in the Kyrgyz Republic. WFP, April 2010;

Because of a forecast fall of 3.5 per cent in GDP in 2010¹¹ it is likely that poverty rates will increase in 2011¹². However, current IMF projections are for a rise in GDP of 7.1 per cent in 2011¹³. The Country Development Strategy (CDS) 2009-2011 states that consistent GDP growth of 5.6 per cent per annum is crucial to prevent further deterioration of the country's infrastructure¹⁴ - this target seems impossible to meet within the time period.

Food, energy and economic insecurity 2007-2009

Kyrgyzstan has been hit by several major shocks in recent years. From 2007, the country experienced a convergence of food and energy insecurity that has had serious long-term effects on the livelihoods of vulnerable groups in the country. A harsh winter, followed by low precipitation during spring and summer of 2008, led to depletion of the country's hydroelectric reserves and compromised Kyrgyzstan's energy resilience. Electricity generation fell 21 per cent in 2008 and a further nine per cent in 2009¹⁵. While hydroelectric reserves have been much more secure in 2010, a deteriorating energy infrastructure means that energy security cannot be guaranteed.

Meanwhile soaring food¹⁶ and fuel prices, adverse weather conditions and declining remittances further limited the purchasing power of the most vulnerable and exacerbated what

¹¹ IMF, Regional Economic Outlook: Middle East and Central Asia, October 2010;

¹² Asian Development Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Bank, with participation of the Eurasian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Commission, International Financial Corporation and the United Nations. Joint Economic Assessment: Reconciliation, Recovery and Reconstruction (JEA). 21 July 2010;

¹³ IMF, Regional Economic Outlook: Middle East and Central Asia, October 2010;

¹⁴ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, Country Development Strategy 2009-2011;

¹⁵ National Statistical Committee figures;

¹⁶ In 2008, food prices in Kyrgyzstan rose by 33 per cent (National Statistical Committee figures);

had been a hidden precarious food security situation for many in the country. In response to these energy and food security concerns, a Flash Appeal was launched for Kyrgyzstan in November 2007.

On top of this, in 2009, the global recession led to sharp reductions in remittances¹⁷ and external trade for Kyrgyzstan. The country was able to maintain modest economic growth and increase social spending only thanks to large loans from the Russian Federation and the IMF.

At the height of the economic crisis, in January 2010, the Government attempted to end the chronic depreciation of the country's energy system by introducing massive price rises for electricity and heating¹⁸. However, little effort was made to tackle the governance issues that had also blighted the sector¹⁹. The effects of the extra burden on Kyrgyzstan's society, on top of the other shocks on Kyrgyzstan's society, and coupled with the perception of high levels of corruption and nepotism under the Bakiev Government, led to significant social discontent in early 2010, particularly in the north of the country.

Political crisis

April events

Following large demonstrations in Naryn and Talas, on 7-8 April violent protests erupted in Bishkek against the Government. These resulted in at least 84 deaths, hundreds of people injured, and extensive damage to state and private buildings. The President was forced to

¹⁷ 2009 saw a 15 per cent fall in remittances, following growth in 2008 of 65 per cent (National Statistical Committee figures);

¹⁸ On 1 January 2010, the cost of central heating rose by 500 per cent while the cost of electricity to household consumers rose by 100 per cent. Timur Toktonaliev, *Soaring Energy Costs Anger Kyrgyz*, IWPR, 25 February 2010, at <http://iwpr.net/report-news/soaring-energy-costs-anger-kyrgyz>;

¹⁹ Ben Slay, *Kyrgyzstan: From "Compound" to Socioeconomic Crisis*, UNDP, July 2010, at <http://europeandcis.undp.org/senioreconomist/show/DB1BDF26-F203-1EE9-B9D2AC9FE-C7A7FC1>;

flee the capital, and subsequently the country.

After this unrest, an Interim Government (IG) made up of opposition political and civic leaders took power. The IG was led by the parliamentary leader of the Social Democratic Party and former Foreign Minister Roza Otunbaeva. It resolved to break the tradition of centralised presidential control, and a new constitution was drafted enhancing the role of parliament, with plans for a quick transition via referendum and parliamentary elections to a parliamentary democracy.

However, the two months following the IG's formation were marked by local and national protests, roadblocks and violent clashes as various elements struggled for influence in the fragile political environment. Tensions grew between ethnic Kyrgyz communities in the south, who had tended to be more sympathetic to the Bakiev regime, and those in the north, who had been more supportive of his overthrow. Meanwhile, partially fuelled by the instability, interethnic tension grew in both the north (where six people died in April in clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and Turks in Maevka village) and in the south between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks. At the same time, the economic crisis intensified as neighbours Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were slow to reopen the international borders they closed after the April events; the agriculture, retail and manufacturing sectors were severely disrupted; some bank assets connected to the Bakiev regime were frozen by the IG; and confidence in the private sector weakened.

June events

In June 2010, persistent social tensions that had been on the rise in the south, where large ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities live side by side²⁰, climaxed in violent inter-ethnic

²⁰ Overall, ethnic Kyrgyz make up 68 percent of the population in the three southern oblasts (provinces) of Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken, while Uzbeks are the largest minority, at 26 percent;

clashes over several days. The violence began in Osh city and nearby areas on 10-11 June, spreading to neighbouring Jalal-Abad province some three days later. Many of the participants in the country were from remote and mountainous districts in Osh province which are almost exclusively Kyrgyz, and had been mobilised by local leaders in their thousands on rumours of atrocities being perpetrated by ethnic Uzbeks²¹. At least 415 people lost their lives in the violence (of whom 90 per cent were men), with more than 4600 injured, mostly by gun fire²². Large-scale targeted destruction of public and private property, especially housing, occurred²³. Of a total pre-violence population of 1.2 million in Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces, it is estimated that about 400,000 were directly affected by the violence, with 75,000 refugees fleeing to neighbouring Uzbekistan (of whom 96 per cent were women and children) and a further 300,000 people internally displaced by the violence²⁴. An estimated 400,000 children were directly or indirectly affected by the conflict²⁵. Although most of the refugees and internally displaced people were able to return to their homes within a month, underlying interethnic tensions remain.

The violence has led to a breakdown in trust between the ethnic communities, and lower confidence in the law enforcement authorities. A long process of reconciliation and peacebuilding will be needed to heal the wounds. People in the affected communities continue to experience fear, trauma, intimidation, and threats²⁶. Since June, Kyrgyzstan has seen huge rises in reported emigration, with more than 8000 people officially ending their

residence in the country in August alone. Osh city has been the most affected area, with 4463 residents (1.73 per cent) officially emigrating in the first nine months of 2010, compared to just 0.47 per cent in the previous year²⁷. Reports of human rights violations, including alleged arbitrary arrest and detention, largely perpetrated against ethnic Uzbeks, persisted long after June²⁸.

According to the Joint Economic Assessment carried out by several international organizations, the conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan was aggravated by several socioeconomic stresses. These included poor state accountability and service delivery; chronic poverty and widening socioeconomic disparities; competition over scarce resources such as agricultural land, irrigation water and pasture land; widespread unemployment and underemployment, particularly of youth and women; and a lack of civic participation in wider social, political and economic processes²⁹.

Political developments

Despite the violence earlier that month, a constitutional referendum was held and won by the Interim Government on 27 June. The new constitution strengthens the roles of parliament and Government at the expense of the President. Following the referendum Roza

21 Rights Watch, *Where is the Justice?* 16 August 2010, at <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/92408/section/6>;

22 UNOCHA, *Kyrgyzstan: Extended and Revised Flash Appeal – June 2010 to June 2011*;

23 Estimated at 2300 residential buildings, dozens of public buildings and more than 700 commercial establishments (UNOSAT satellite imagery, July 2010);

24 UNOCHA, *Kyrgyzstan Revised Flash Appeal*, July 2010;

25 UNICEF, *Humanitarian Action Update: Kyrgyzstan*, 3 November 2010;

26 UNOCHA, *Kyrgyzstan Revised Flash Appeal*, July 2010;

27 National Statistical Committee, *Socio-Economic Situation in the Kyrgyz Republic January – October 2010*, November 2010, at www.stat.kg/rus/common.files/obzor9k.pdf, pp54-56. Meanwhile emigration has doubled from Osh and Jalal-Abad Provinces, and continues to be high (0.8 – 1 per cent) from Chuy Province and Bishkek city – all the areas of the country with significant populations from minority ethnic groups. These figures do not take into account people who do not intend to return but have not stated this to the authorities;

28 Human Rights Watch, *Kyrgyzstan: Attacks During Trials Undermine Justice*, 13 October 2010, at <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/10/13/kyrgyzstan-attacks-during-trials-undermine-justice>;

29 Asian Development Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Bank, with participation of the Eurasian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Commission, International Financial Corporation and the United Nations. *Joint Economic Assessment: Reconciliation, Recovery and Reconstruction (JEA)*. 21 July 2010;

Otunbaeva, who had been acting President for nearly three months after the April events, was officially sworn in as President on 3 July. A new caretaker government was formed on 14 July. Parliamentary elections were also held on schedule on 10 October, and 5 parties won seats in the parliament. Election results highlighted the geographical divide in the country, with northern voters showing more support for the parties that formed the IG, while southern voters were more likely to back their opponents, some of whom had been closely linked to the Bakiev regime. On 15 December, a coalition agreement was reached between three parties with different regional power-bases.

Economic crisis

Kyrgyzstan's economy has been hit sharply by the fallout of the April and June violence. It is difficult to calculate the true economic impact of the 2010 events at the micro level. Many of those hardest hit by both trade restrictions and the effects of the conflict were working in semi-formal and informal jobs in small business, petty trade and farming. They will not appear in official statistics, and will not be eligible for unemployment benefits³⁰.

Problems have been compounded by a tightening of trade restrictions and border controls with major trading partners Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan. This has caused huge problems for the formal and informal trade in garments, fruit and vegetables³¹.

³⁰ Asian Development Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Bank, with participation of the Eurasian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Commission, International Financial Corporation and the United Nations. Joint Economic Assessment: Reconciliation, Recovery and Reconstruction (JEA). 21 July 2010;

³¹ Asian Development Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Bank, with participation of the Eurasian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Commission, International Financial Corporation and the United Nations. Joint Economic Assessment: Reconciliation, Recovery and Reconstruction (JEA). 21 July 2010;

Tax returns are forecast to be \$64 million less than planned in 2010, while national budget expenditure has increased by \$225 million (16 per cent) from the plan, mainly because of the April and June events. Extra budgetary funds have been allocated to social payments (including those for victims of the April events), public order, disaster response, restoration of administrative buildings and offices, the referendum and election, and reconstruction of Osh and Jalal-Abad. By mid-2010, the budget deficit was \$600 million, or 10.5 per cent of GDP³².

Meanwhile several major donor budget support programmes in Kyrgyzstan were suspended during 2010 because of the lack of a legitimate government counterpart. At a high-level donor conference on 27 July, \$1.1 billion of international grants and loans was pledged to Kyrgyzstan in response to the April and June events over a 30 month period³³. Fears have been expressed that the loans will increase the country's national debt, which some analysts suggest may reach 66 per cent of GDP in 2011³⁴. As of November, the World Bank reported that \$195 million had been committed by donors for 2010, of which \$103 million (from China, Turkey, the IMF, the World Bank and Russia) was in the form of budget support³⁵. Local media have reported that, as of 13 November, \$169 million of new donor funding was in the form of loans³⁶. The high budget deficit and

³² Daniyar Karimov, Дефицит республиканского бюджета в Кыргызстане в 2010 году составит 10,5 процента к ВВП [Republican budget deficit in Kyrgyzstan in 2010 is 10.5 per cent of GDP], 24.kg, 15 September 2010, at <http://www.24.kg/economics/82516-deficit-respublikanskogo-byudzheta-v-kyrgyzstane.html>;

³³ Information from Dinara Joldosheva, World Bank, at Donor Partnership Coordination Council Meeting, 27 November 2010;

³⁴ Anton Lyman, Kyrgyzstan will gain the right to adjudicate itself as bankrupt, Deutsche Welle, 19 October, at <http://eng.24.kg/business/2010/10/29/14545.html>;

³⁵ Information from Dinara Joldosheva, World Bank, at Donor Partnership Coordination Council Meeting, 27 November 2010;

³⁶ Julia Mazykina, Kyrgyzstan borrows \$169M from donors following June riots 24.kg, 13 November, at <http://eng.24.kg/business/2010/11/13/14828.html>;

growing national debt call into question the Government's capacity to implement its social programming in the future.

Vulnerabilities and inequities

There are several groups of children who are particularly vulnerable in Kyrgyzstan, and an equity approach is required to protect these children and fully realise their rights. Children left without parental care, child victims of abuse and violence, children in contact with the law, children living and working in the street, children with disabilities and children undertaking hazardous work (including children working in mines) are particularly at risk. As indicated in the section above, nearly half of children in Kyrgyzstan live in poverty. Ethnic Kyrgyz girls, particularly in rural areas, are susceptible to being abducted for marriage, while ethnic Uzbek girls also face a growing trend of early marriage, and are less likely to complete school than Uzbek boys (among ethnic Russians, this latter problem is reversed). In addition to these issues of poverty, ethnicity and gender, there are several geographical locations where children are more vulnerable.

The first of these groups are children and young people living in communities that have experienced or are at risk of conflict or disaster. This includes also young men and possibly boys from post-conflict areas in the south where Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities live close together or from mono-ethnic areas from where they travelled to participate in the fighting.

As a result of the conflict, 3433 children lost one parent, and three children lost both. Post-traumatic stress disorder has been identified by the Ministry of Health as a key health concern in southern Kyrgyzstan, and requires mental health and psychosocial support. In addition, access to professional healthcare providers remains problematic for some communities affected by the violence, especially for victims of gender-based violence, because

of fear and mistrust of health personnel. This has resulted in increased home deliveries and delays in seeking health care³⁷.

Meanwhile, children are also particularly vulnerable to natural disasters: most of the deaths in the 2008 Nura earthquake and 2009 Raykomol mudslide were children³⁸. Child survivors of natural disasters also require specialised social and psychological assistance. While the children most at risk of natural disasters live in remote rural areas, it is important to note that all of Kyrgyzstan, including all of its major cities, is susceptible to earthquakes. Meanwhile, Naryn, Jalal-Abad and Issyk-Kul provinces are at very high risk of heavy earthquake and mudslides.

A further group of vulnerable children are those from rural areas, who are more likely to be from poor families, have poorer access to social facilities including schools and healthcare facilities and poorer service provision. These problems are particularly acute in remote mountainous areas of the country³⁹. There are many reasons why development goals are more difficult to meet in these areas. In part this connected to a lack of economic opportunities, which leads to greater poverty. Access to programmes to improve qualifications is also more problematic, as these tend to take place in the cities. Shortages of healthcare and educational equipment are also more common. Child protection, as well as health and education, is also hampered by the fact that professionals, as well as beneficiaries, have much further to travel to ensure that needs are met, often with less resources. Many children from such areas have seen their

³⁷ UNOCHA, Kyrgyzstan: Extended and Revised Flash Appeal – June 2010 to June 2011;

³⁸ In the Nura earthquake (Alay district, Osh province), 43 of the 75 earthquake fatalities (57 per cent) were under 18. In the Raykomol mudslide, (Aksy district, Jalal-Abad province), 11 of 16 deaths (69 per cent) were of children;

³⁹ Institute of Strategic Analysis and Evaluation Under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic/United Nations Children's Fund, National Report of the Kyrgyz Republic: Global Study on Child Poverty and Disparities, 2009;

parents migrate to find work in Russia or Kazakhstan. There are no reliable figures for the number of migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan, though some estimates put the figure at about 500,000⁴⁰. Many children are left with relatives, often grandparents, who may find it difficult to meet the material and emotional needs of the growing children, many of whom are thus placed in residential institutions⁴¹. In some cases, children whose parents have migrated abroad can face problems in obtaining legal documentation, including internal passports and other identity documentation⁴².

In addition, most remote areas in Kyrgyzstan now have almost exclusively ethnic Kyrgyz populations, including Alay, Chong Alay and Karakulja districts in Osh province. The fact that many thousands of young people from these areas took part in the fighting in and around Osh city in June means that reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts should include these districts, rather than just areas where different communities live close together.

An equity approach also requires that attention be paid to children living in many of the several dozen spontaneous new-build settlements around Bishkek, where families live in unauthorised houses sometimes in hazardous areas, with poor, if any, access to energy, communications, healthcare and education provision. Because of lack of registration of families, many children in such areas lack birth documentation⁴³. USAID estimates that 37,000 of the more than 300,000 people living in the

new-build settlements do not have residence registration and are therefore ineligible for a wide range of social programming⁴⁴. Access to healthcare services is problematic without residence registration, and families are often forced to find distant schools with surplus spaces, if they wish their children to attend⁴⁵. Children without residence permits cannot transfer automatically to their new local schools, and they are further impeded by official banned tests that disqualify them from enrolment because their previous education has taken place in rural areas where standards are lower⁴⁶.

⁴⁰ Institute of Strategic Analysis and Evaluation Under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic/United Nations Children's Fund, National Report of the Kyrgyz Republic: Global Study on Child Poverty and Disparities, 2009;

⁴¹ Mehriqul Ablezova, Emil Nasritdinov and Ruslan Rahimov, The impact of migration on elderly people: grandparent-headed households in Kyrgyzstan, HelpAge International Central Asia and Social Research Center, American University of Central Asia, 2008;

⁴² UNHCR, A Place to Call Home: The Situation of Stateless Persons in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2009;

⁴³ David Trilling, Soviet-era Registration System fosters Discontent in Kyrgyzstan, Eurasianet, 11 May 2010, at <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/61035>;

⁴⁴ Irina Bayramukova, "Poyaz Shahida" dlya stolitsy [A "martyr's belt for the capital], Report.kg, 11 November 2010, at <http://www.report.kg/analitic/publicity/1704-pojas-shahidadljastolitsy.html>;

⁴⁵ Aizada Kutueva, Mira Itikeeva: V Kyrgyzstane vyrastaet vtoroe pokolenie ulichnykh detey [Mira Itikeeva: In Kyrgyzstan a second generation of street children is growing, 24.kg 28 October 2010, at <http://24kg.org/community/85822-mira-itikeeva-v-kyrgyzstane-vyrastaet-vtoroe.html>;

⁴⁶ Yevgenia Kim, Kyrgyzstan: High Cost of "Free" Education, IWPR, 14 April 2010, at <http://iwpr.net/report-news/kyrgyzstan-high-cost-%E2%80%9Cfree%E2%80%9D-education>;

Sectoral analysis

Maternal and child health

The healthcare system in the country is developed, with an infrastructure of facilities providing maternal and child health (MCH) care services, at national, regional, district and local level. The system includes maternity hospitals and departments, and a network of rural health points (known by their Russian acronym – FAPs).

However, the healthcare system is severely constrained by antiquated infrastructure and a lack of funds for development. A study carried out in 2009 revealed that two thirds of hospitals in the country were built more than 25 years ago. Most do not have central heating, running hot water and sewage systems. Cold water is available in half of district hospitals and maternity wards, and none are supplied with running hot water. Throughout the healthcare system, and particularly in rural and remote areas, there are shortages of drugs, medical equipment and skilled healthcare personnel, particularly in facilities providing services to women of reproductive age and children¹.

In addition to this, there is a significant staffing crisis in the healthcare system. Reasons include low pay² and a lack of incentives to work, particularly in rural areas. This leads to internal migration and a significant outflow of trained

health care specialists to Russia and Kazakhstan, where salaries are much higher. In 2008, the highest outflow was from Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces. There is a catastrophic shortfall of gynaecologists servicing villages (40 per cent of all gynaecologists and obstetricians are concentrated in Bishkek and Osh)³, and a lack of qualified practitioners to oversee pregnancies, particularly when complications arise⁴.

Maternal and infant mortality

It will be very difficult for Kyrgyzstan to meet its Millennium Development Goal for maternal mortality (MDG 5). In 2000, the maternal mortality rate was 62.9 per 100,000 live births, while by 2008 this had fallen to 55. The slow pace of reduction reflects a shift to using international standards on these indicators – surveys carried out using these international standards in 1997 (the Ministry of Health and USAID's Demographic and Health Survey) and 2006 (the National Statistical Committee and UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey – MICS) recorded a fall from 110 to 104 per 100,000 for maternal mortality. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that the MDG for maternal mortality⁵ would have been met even without the current difficulties.

The reasons for high levels of maternal mortality in Kyrgyzstan are varied. The most common proximate causes recorded are hypertensive disorders in pregnancy (40.0 per cent), obstet-

¹ UNOCHA, Kyrgyzstan: Extended and Revised Flash Appeal – June 2010 to June 2011, November 2010;

² In 2009, the average salary for healthcare workers was 63.4 per cent of the average wage in the economy. [Roman Mogilevskiy, Public Social Expenditures in Kyrgyzstan: Trends and Challenges, Presentation made at the Roundtable "Investing in Children – a Key to the Achievement of the Millennium Development, 20 November 2010]. A decision taken by the Prime Minister at the beginning of 2011 increased the salaries of healthcare professionals by 200 per cent as of May 2011 [RFE/RL, Kyrgyz PM: Teachers, Medical Personnel To Get Raises, 18 January 2011, at http://www.rferl.org/content/kyrgyzstan_pm_promises_teacher_raises/2281383.html];

³ GIZ, Review of the situation on mother and newborn health care in the Kyrgyz Republic for the period of 2008-2009, 2009;

⁴ Ivan Marchenko, Pokazatel' materinskoy smertnosti v Kyrgyzstane za 8 mesyatsev 2010 goda snizilsy na 20,8 protsenta [Maternal mortality in Kyrgyzstan has fallen by 20.8 per cent in the first 8 months of 2010], 29 September 2010, 24.kg, at <http://24kg.org/community/83468-pokazatel-materinskoj-smertnosti-v-kyrgyzstane-za.html>;

⁵ The MDG target for maternal mortality is 15.7 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2015;

ric bleeding (21.5 per cent) and septic complications. Many women of childbearing age suffer from anaemia and poor nutrition⁶. Osh province has particularly high rates of deliveries complicated by anaemia – 67.1 per cent in 2008 and 71.2 per cent in 2009⁷. Many mothers register their pregnancy late, while others reportedly have children against medical advice while suffering from tuberculosis⁸. The last 10 years have seen huge falls in the number of practising paediatricians (from 4.4 per 10,000 population in 1998 to 1.0 in 2008) and neonatologists (from 0.6 to 0.3) in the country.

Many internal migrants without residence registration are not registered with health-care professionals in their new home areas. One third of women who died in childbirth in 2009 had not received antenatal care from healthcare professionals. There are also key equity concerns in provision of healthcare for births – while 96.3 per cent of mothers in the richest quintile are supported by skilled healthcare workers in their deliveries, for the poorest quintile, only 60.1 per cent received skilled care⁹.

Other problems include a lack of criteria for the well-timed referral of patients to appropriate specialists and obstetric facilities, lack of monitoring of services provided, high turnover of staff and lack of incentives for good performance. Some primary health care facilities in remote areas have hospital beds designed for deliveries but often lack appropriate equipment and qualified personnel, making it impossible to ensure the safety of both wom-

en in childbirth and newborns¹⁰. Rural areas also suffer from shortages of ambulances and fuel¹¹. The particular problems of these remote areas are evident in maternal mortality figures – over 2005-2010, the highest rates are seen in the remote mountainous districts of Toguz Toro and Chatkal (Jalal-Abad province), Tong (Issyk Kul province), Manas (Talas province) and Naryn and Aktalaa (Naryn province). Meanwhile, districts and cities in the Chuy and Fergana Valleys consistently show much lower maternal mortality rates¹².

In this context, a rise in maternal mortality against the already high levels was widely reported in Kyrgyzstan's mass media in 2009¹³, though this may partly be a result of better reporting. However, reported maternal mortality fell by 20.8 per cent in the first eight months of 2010. Forty seven deaths were recorded per 100,000 births in the period, compared to 55 in the same period of 2009. Nevertheless, several public figures have indicated that the health targets among the Millennium Development Goals are very unlikely to be met¹⁴.

Mortality among under-fives is showing stronger downward trends. In its ongoing monitoring the Ministry of Health reported an annual seven per cent reduction to 28.9 per 1000 live births in 2009, and links this to the implementation of efficient perinatal services – rational delivery management, better promotion of and practice of breastfeeding, a better-functioning heating network, and timely neona-

⁶ Zulfiqar Bhutta, *Maternal And Newborn Health In Chui Province & Kyrgyzstan: Assessment And Implications For Interventions*, Ministry of Health and UNICEF, 2009;

⁷ GIZ, *Review of the situation on mother and newborn health care in the Kyrgyz Republic for the period of 2008-2009*, 2009;

⁸ Ivan Marchenko, *Pokazatel' materinskoy smertnosti v Kyrgyzstane za 8 mesyatsev 2010 goda snizilsy na 20,8 protsenta* [Maternal mortality in Kyrgyzstan has fallen by 20.8 per cent in the first 8 months of 2010], 29 September 2010, 24.kg, at <http://24kg.org/community/83468-pokazatel-materinskoj-smertnosti-v-kyrgyzstane-za.html>;

⁹ GIZ, *Review of the situation on mother and newborn health care in the Kyrgyz Republic for the period of 2008-2009*, 2009;

¹⁰ Zulfiqar Bhutta, *Maternal And Newborn Health In Chui Province & Kyrgyzstan: Assessment And Implications For Interventions*, Ministry of Health and UNICEF, 2009;

¹¹ GIZ, *Review of the situation on mother and newborn health care in the Kyrgyz Republic for the period of 2008-2009*, 2009;

¹² Mapping carried out by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan based on official statistics;

¹³ Ivan Marchenko, *Pokazatel' materinskoy smertnosti v Kyrgyzstane za 8 mesyatsev 2010 goda snizilsy na 20,8 protsenta* [Maternal mortality in Kyrgyzstan has fallen by 20.8 per cent in the first 8 months of 2010], 29 September 2010, 24.kg, at <http://24kg.org/community/83468-pokazatel-materinskoj-smertnosti-v-kyrgyzstane-za.html>;

¹⁴ Vice Prime Minister Utomkhan Abdullaeva gave this prognosis at a press conference on 27 September 2010 (<http://kg.akipress.org/news:268481>);

tal resuscitation¹⁵. The latest UNICEF figures, which are consistently higher than the Ministry's figures, report 38 deaths per 1000 live births in 2008, half of the number in 1990, but still off target for 25 deaths per 1000 live births in 2015¹⁶. Meanwhile, in the first seven months of 2010, 23.9 cases of infant mortality were reported by the Ministry of Health's Republican Health Information Centre per 100,000 births¹⁷, a slight reduction on the 25 recorded for the same period of 2009¹⁸.

The most common underlying causes of neonatal mortality are birth asphyxia, prematurity, congenital malformations and infections¹⁹. According to the 2006 MICS, low birth weight (under 2500 g) was particularly widespread in Naryn Province (10.3 per cent), and is more common for women in the richer quintiles. Meanwhile, the MICS study shows a wide ranging lack of knowledge of the danger signs of pneumonia – just 9.8 per cent of mothers / carers in Osh Province were able to give two danger signs, and low awareness was also especially found among the poorest two quintiles and within the ethnic Uzbek population.

Wild poliovirus

In 2010, a poliomyelitis outbreak was reported in Central Asia for the first time since the WHO Europe region was certified polio-free in 2002. As of 16 December, a total of 458 cases from Tajikistan were laboratory confirmed (of which 29 victims died from the disease); 3 cases have been confirmed in Turkmenistan and 1 in Ka-

zakhstan. A further 14 cases were confirmed in the Russian Federation, several of which affected migrants from Central Asia.

In response to the outbreak, a regional vaccination campaign has been carried out. Kyrgyzstan has undergone two rounds of polio vaccinations, in July and August. Reported coverage was 95 per cent in both campaigns. As of March 2011, no confirmed cases of poliomyelitis had been reported in Kyrgyzstan²⁰.

HIV and AIDS

While the absolute number of registered cases of HIV continues to be low, the number of newly registered cases has been increasing by an average of 25 per cent over the last 10 years, one of only seven countries in the world showing such large increases²¹. The biggest increase was recorded in 2009 (671 cases or 4.5 times more than in 2001). Most cases occur among 20-39 year olds (75 per cent) and males (73 per cent). However, the number of females registered with HIV has risen from 1 in 2001 to 176 in 2009. While the vast majority of males with HIV contracted the virus through intravenous drug-use, many women living with HIV contracted the virus through sexual contact. Many of these women are not members of high-risk groups and contracted the virus from drug-using husbands²².

There are concerns that HIV infections are growing particularly fast in southern Kyrgyzstan, partly as a result of poor hygiene in hospitals but also because of ignorance about how the virus is contracted²³. By April 2007, more

¹⁵ Ministry of Health, Manas Taalimi Indicators, 2009, The infant mortality MDG is 8.5 deaths per 1000 live births;

¹⁶ UNICEF, Progress for Children - Achieving the MDGs with Equity, Number 9, September 2010, p.56;

¹⁷ Kutueva, A., Anara Yeshkhojaeva: V Kyrgyzstane s kazhdym godom snyzhaetsya mladencheskaya smertnost [Anara Yeshkhojaeva: In Kyrgyzstan every year infant mortality falls], 24.kg, 21 September 2010, at <http://www.24kg.org/community/82942-anara-ezhxodzhaeva-v-kyrgyzstane-s-kazhdym-godom.html>;

¹⁸ Ministry of Health, Manas Taalimi Indicators, 2009;

¹⁹ Tamer Rabie, Kyrgyz Republic Results Based Financing: Paying for Performance to Improve Maternal and Child Health Outcomes, Powerpoint presentation, World Bank, 9 November 2010;

²⁰ WHO, Importation of Wild Poliovirus and Response Measures in the European Region, WHO Epidemiological Brief, 16 December 2010;

²¹ UNAIDS, Fact Sheet: Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 23 November 2010, at http://www.unaids.org/documents/20101123_FS_eeca_em_en.pdf. The other countries in the region with 25 per cent annual increases over the past 10 years include Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan;

²² UNICEF, Transmonee 2010 Country Analytical Report - Gender Issues in the Kyrgyz Republic 10 years after the "Women in Transition Report", 2010, p.13;

²³ Abdumun Mamaraimov, HIV Shadow Lengthens Over

than 100 young children had been infected with HIV in medical facilities in Osh province. It is not clear if the virus was primarily contracted from dirty needles or from mother to child²⁴. Since the outbreak, the province has the highest rates of women and children living with HIV in the country. Women and children diagnosed with HIV have suffered stigma and discrimination from healthcare workers, in their communities and from their families, while many of the victims have developed serious mistrust of doctors²⁵. The situation is aggravated by lack of information about HIV, fear-mongering in the media, and traditional beliefs which lead people to consider HIV infection as punishment for women's sins. Furthermore victims are not supported because women's and children's health are considered to be purely the business of mothers²⁶.

Healthcare financing

Healthcare in Kyrgyzstan has undergone two reform programmes in the period 1996-2010: the Manas National Healthcare Reform Programme (1996-2005) and the Manas Taalimi Healthcare Reform Programme (2006-2010). These Programmes were developed by government ministries and agencies, in close cooperation with independent specialists and donor organisations. Manas Taalimi builds on the previous programme and seeks to further strengthen and institutionalise its achievements and address shortcomings²⁷. Under Manas Taalimi, spending on healthcare as proportion of total public expenditure is intended to rise steadily to 13.6 per cent in 2011. This is intended to increase the predictability

of health financing, and decrease the financial burden on the population²⁸.

In 2006, public healthcare spending was transferred from provincial to national level, in an effort to straighten out inequity in health expenditure around the country. An exception is Bishkek, where local revenue still finances healthcare. Since 2008, coefficients have been included in the budget allocation process for the regions to take account of geographical and demographic conditions around the country. Progress was reportedly slow in equalising financial norms for hospitals, but ambulance services reportedly improved in Batken, Jalal-Abad and Naryn provinces²⁹.

Manas Taalimi is being implemented using a Sector-wide Approach (SWAp) mechanism that ensures programme integration and leverage funding in the health sector. The SWAp is led by the Ministry of Health and partner organisations, which provide support both through financing the SWAp budget and through parallel financing. DFID, KfW, SDC, SIDA, and the World Bank provide direct financing to the SWAp, while parallel financiers include the WHO, UNICEF (which coordinates the Maternal and Child Health component of the SWAp), UNAIDS, UNFPA, and USAID³⁰.

A mid-term review in 2008 revealed several achievements of Manas Taalimi, including a reduced financial burden on patients (down 27 per cent between 2004 and 2006 for the poorest half of the population); reduced informal payments (from 70 to 52 per cent for staff and 81 to 51 per cent for medicines in the period 2001-2006); more equity in regional

South Kyrgyzstan, IWPR, 13 March 2008, at <http://iwpr.net/report-news/hiv-shadow-lengthens-over-south-kyrgyzstan>,

²⁴ Olga Grebennikova, *New Ways to Resolve the Challenges of the 21st Century*, UNICEF, 19 September 2009;

²⁵ Galina Solodunova, *Partners in Kyrgyzstan Unite against HIV Stigma and Discrimination*, UNICEF, 29 October 2010;

²⁶ UNICEF, *A Mission to Help and Let Others lead a Full Life*, 2009;

²⁷ Donors.kg, *Kyrgyzstan's Manas Taalimi Mid-Term Review Reveals Effective Donor Collaboration, Program Integration and Significant Achievements in the Health Sector*, 4 July 2008, at <http://www.donors.kg/en/event/323/>;

²⁸ Institute of Strategic Analysis and Evaluation under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF, *Global Report on Child Poverty and Disparities: National Report Kyrgyzstan*, 2009;

²⁹ Institute of Strategic Analysis and Evaluation under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF, *Global Report on Child Poverty and Disparities: National Report Kyrgyzstan*, 2009;

³⁰ Donors.kg, *Kyrgyzstan's Manas Taalimi Mid-Term Review Reveals Effective Donor Collaboration, Program Integration and Significant Achievements in the Health Sector*, 4 July 2008, at <http://www.donors.kg/en/event/323/>;

Recommendations:

National level:

- Carry out policy level advocacy with government for focus on vulnerable and difficult to reach and to ensure that State Guarantees are met fully and equitably.
- Assess equity issues in access to healthcare, and ensure that no population groups (including minority ethnic groups, people living outside their place of registration and stateless persons) have difficulties accessing maternal and child healthcare.
- Continue work to integrate medical services for children and mothers with HIV and AIDS into general maternal and child health services.
- Build the capacity of the Ministry of Health to better manage maternal and child health (including support for monitoring and evaluation).
- Research the reasons for late registration of pregnancy with healthcare professionals.

Community level:

- Strengthen quality and administration of perinatal services, newborn screening programmes and prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV.
- Work at community level to address socioeconomic causes of maternal and infant mortality, e.g. by:
 - promoting early contact with healthcare professionals in pregnancy;
 - supporting community efforts to improve access to transportation to healthcare facilities;
 - working to ensure that no-one is excluded in target communities from maternal and child healthcare for reasons of inequity (such as ethnicity, or poverty);
 - education for reducing discrimination and stigma in the healthcare system on grounds including health status, ethnicity, place of origin, etc;
 - nutritional interventions to reduce anaemia and iodine deficiency (see section below)
 - communications activities for mothers and carers for early warning and prevention of dangerous medical conditions.
- Work to address stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS.
- Promote safe immunisation practices.
- Improve management capacity in healthcare system at local level (multiethnic management, non-discriminatory management).

distribution of expenditure; and increased use of primary health care services (up 36 per cent from 2004 to 2007, as funding for primary healthcare increased from 26.4 to 37.9 per cent of the health budget). However, improvements in actual health outcomes in the period were limited, suggesting a need for greater focus on disease prevention and quality of care. With this in mind, the SWAp mechanism has developed a three-year results-based financing project in which district hospitals and primary healthcare facilities will be paid based on performance in improving quality of maternal and child health services³¹.

There are still several concerns with healthcare financing. There are often delays in approving budgets for the Ministry of Health, which result in delays to the financing of programming. In addition, the State Guarantee Programme for certain essential services, particularly in maternal and child health, is not financed to a level where all these guaranteed services can in fact be provided. Finally, nearly half of total healthcare expenditure is still financed directly by service users, leading to inequality in access to and quality of services³².

Impact of violence

The June violence in southern Kyr-

³¹ Tamer Rabie, Kyrgyz Republic Results Based Financing. Paying for Performance to Improve Maternal and Child Health Outcomes, 2010;

³² Institute of Strategic Analysis and Evaluation under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF, Global Report on Child Poverty and Disparities: National Report Kyrgyzstan, 2009;

gyzstan has led to a high number of mental health problems, reported for both children and adults. Access to clinical treatment and psycho-social support continue to be required. There are expected to be increases in child and maternal morbidity and mortality in affected areas over the winter, and because of unhygienic conditions. On-going communal tensions and fear mean that the rate of home deliveries and late reporting of pregnancy and disease is likely to be higher than before the crises³³.

Nutrition

In Kyrgyzstan, under-nutrition is an important public health problem. Stunting, low birth weight, and vitamin and mineral deficiencies are major barriers to the country achieving its MDGs. In addition, under-nutrition costs the country \$32 million a year in lost productivity due to increased mortality and reduced cognitive and physical development³⁴.

Results of the 2006 MICS survey showed that the nutritional status of Kyrgyz children remains poor. In 1996, 14 per cent of children under 5 were stunted, compared to almost 25 per cent of children under 3 in 2006. Stunting remains a serious problem, particularly in the three provinces with stunting rates over 20 per cent: Batken, 22 per cent, Issyk Kul, 23 per cent, and Talas, 27 per cent. The prevalence of stunting was higher among children in rural areas (15.7 per cent) than in urban areas (10.8 per cent). Children of educated mothers and richer families were less likely to be stunted. The prevalence of wasting is only 4 per cent nationwide, but substantially higher in Jalal-Abad (9.2 per cent) and Issyk Kul (7.8 per cent) provinces. Meanwhile, in 2006 over 5.3 per cent of children born in the country were of

low birth weight – in Naryn province the figure was 10.3 per cent.

While there has been no systematic nationwide study of micronutrient deficiencies, a 2008 study in Talas Province found that 50.6 per cent of children under 5 and 25 per cent of mothers had anaemia. This continuing high prevalence of anaemia is a serious public health problem because it increases the risks of perinatal, maternal, and child mortality, and also impairs cognitive functioning in children³⁵. A nutrition assessment conducted in September 2010 indicates that anaemia had risen by 4.5 per cent among children under 5 years of age since June 2009 in areas affected by the June conflict. The deficiency is exacerbated by poor diet and poor appetite resulting from stress and fear among the children. As the first two years of life are the most critical for child growth and development, a diet low in micronutrients impacts the development of children's brains, lowers their immunity and puts them at high risk of infections and disease. Therefore, addressing infant and young child nutrition and especially micronutrient deficiencies is a pressing priority³⁶.

Malnutrition is an underlying cause of 22 per cent of deaths among children under five in Kyrgyzstan. In spite of on-going public health reforms, the country still does not have a comprehensive national strategy to reduce micronutrient deficiencies among women and children. Only 31.5 per cent of infants are exclusively breastfed and only 37.5 per cent of infants are adequately fed. Meanwhile, figures for vitamin A supplements taken by women in the first eight weeks after giving birth were particularly poor in Naryn Province (19.6 per cent) and among Uzbek families (36.3 per cent)³⁷.

Iodine deficiency, partly caused by the moun-

³³ UNOCHA, Kyrgyzstan Revised Flash Appeal June 2010-June 2011. November 2010;

³⁴ Agnes Dhur, Emergency Food Security Assessment in the Kyrgyz Republic, WFP August 2010, citing World Bank / UNICEF, Draft Situational Analysis: Improving Economic Outcomes by Expanding Nutritional Programming in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan;

³⁵ Ministry of Health, US Center for Disease Control and Protection, UNICEF, Assessment of the nutritional status of children 6–24 months of age and their mothers, rural Talas oblast, Kyrgyzstan, 2008;

³⁶ UNICEF, Humanitarian Action Update: Kyrgyzstan, 3 November 2010;

³⁷ Kyrgyzstan, Nutrition: the Issues, at <http://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/nutrition.html>;

Recommendations:

National level:

- Develop, implement and monitor National Strategy of Nutrition addressing micronutrient deficiencies among children under two, including:
 - continuing to tackle iodine deficiency disorder;
 - supporting enforcement of the law on universal flour fortification;
 - continuing promotion of breastfeeding.
- Broaden current nutrition interventions (Gulazyk (Sprinkles), fortified flour, iodised salt) across the country.

Community level:

- Carry out communication activities to improve nutritional practices and address micronutrient deficiencies for women and children
- Empower community members to increase demand for quality nutrition services for women and children

tainous terrain and distance from the sea, affects a significant proportion of the population, with dramatic consequences, including reduction of mental capacity and productivity. In pregnancy, it increases the risk of stillbirth, and can leave the babies that survive with permanent disabilities, including severe brain damage³⁸. The 2006 MICS survey recorded particularly poor iodine content in salt in Osh Province, where only 56.8 per cent of salt tested contained more than 15 parts per million of salt. There are also equity concerns, with only 68.5 per cent of salt consumed by the poorest quintile containing adequate iodine levels, compared with 89.9 per cent of that consumed by the richest quintile.

Kyrgyzstan is taking steps to address nutritional deficiencies. With UNICEF and other international partners, the Ministry of Health is tackling undernutrition and anaemia among children through introduction of micronutrient powder (Sprinkles) for children under two in Talas province. The strategy is based on providing sprinkles concurrently with promoting proper diets during pregnancy and exclusive breastfeeding; and integrating early childhood development communication messages, and strong involvement of communities and local authorities. It has led to remarkable results. A recently concluded CDC evaluation in Talas province indicates that 89 per cent of children in the target age group are using Sprinkles and that there has been more than 20 per cent decrease in the level of iron deficiency anaemia among children 6-24 months within one year. The success of the project has been widely recognised and has helped to secure funding to scale it up to the entire country.

Two Laws approved in 2009 – on Mandatory Fortification of Flour, and on Marketing Regulations for Substitutes to Breast Milk – will support the development of a national nutrition strategy for the improvement of the nutritional status of more than 500,000 children. Most

³⁸ UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, Nutrition: the Issues, at <http://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/nutrition.html>;

maternity hospitals in the country have been classified as baby-friendly because of their promotion of breast feeding.

Food security³⁹

Food insecurity in the Kyrgyz Republic is essentially chronic, with poverty as the root cause. Poverty is a contributing factor to food insecurity in several ways: it leads to large family size, lack of education, low access to land and irrigation, inability to procure the agricultural inputs needed to secure good harvests, limited numbers of productive animals, an absence of markets, and low-paid and irregular employment. These factors combine to limit access to self-produced and purchased food, resulting in diets lacking varied, nutritional food, and expensive foodstuffs such as animal products.

An estimated 14 per cent of households are severely food-insecure. This compares with 4 per cent severely food-insecure in August 2010, at the peak of the harvest season. Food-insecure households were more likely to include vulnerable members such as under-5 children, pregnant and lactating women, and chronically sick individuals, than food-secure.

Levels of food insecurity continued to be higher in rural than urban areas. The highest prevalence of food insecurity was in Jalal-Abad province (city and rural), Osh province rural and Batken province, followed by Talas and Issyk-Kul provinces. These findings reflect the long-lasting effects of the June 2010 events, particularly in Jalal-Abad where more than 10 per cent of households remained hosted with relatives.

The relatively low level of severe food insecurity in Bishkek city and Chuy Province (6 per cent) may be linked to the high proportion of migrants in these areas enabling access to food from own production in Chui and to in-

come-earning opportunities in Bishkek.

Food-insecure households are forced to apply diverse strategies and mechanisms to cope with food insecurity: switching to less expensive foods; cutting back on portions of food within meals or reducing the number of meals per day; purchasing some food on credit at a local shop; or increasing dependence on neighbours and friends.

The food security situation of residents in affected areas was also anticipated to deteriorate as access to jobs, fields and markets remained difficult.

Early childhood development

While good nutrition is essential for children's development, stimulation is equally important. In Kyrgyzstan studies have shown insufficient responsive interactions between under-five year olds and their carers. The 2006 MICS reported that in Jalal-Abad and Naryn provinces, 50.8 and 51.9 per cent respectively of under-fives were engaged in four or more activities to promote learning and school readiness by household members. By contrast, the figure was 86.4 per cent in Bishkek. Families in the highest quintile were 20 per cent more likely to answer this question positively than those in the lowest (83.6 to 64.0 per cent). Uzbek families had a particularly low score (53.6 per cent). Fathers were much less likely to engage in such activities in the south of the country – just 32.7 per cent had fathers who took part in one or more activity with them, compared to about 70 per cent in the north. Urban fathers were more engaged than rural fathers (65.8 per cent compared to 43.8 per cent), and fathers in the richest families were most involved (75.3 per cent), with the mid-quintile the least (34.9 per cent), followed by the second poorest and poorest. Uzbek fathers were the least engaged (31.5 per cent).

The 2006 MICS also showed that under-fives in Jalal-Abad province were least likely to have three or more children's books (58.3 per cent,

³⁹ Unless otherwise stated taken from Agnes Dhur, Follow-up emergency food security assessment in the Kyrgyz Republic, WFP, March 2011;

Recommendations:

National level:

- Promote improved parenting education, enhancing physical and cognitive development of young children.
- Continue working with media to develop positive, values-based programming for pre-school children and parents (including discipline and violence, conflict resolution, diversity, education, signs of illness and dangers, preparation for parenthood).

Community level

- Focus on communities shown to have poorest response interactions with under-fives.
- Integrate Early Childhood Development Communications into other interventions at community level.

compared to 85.9 per cent in Bishkek city). While 84.7 per cent of under-fives from the richest quintile had access to 3 or more books, only 68.2 per cent in the poorest quintile did. In Naryn, Jalal-Abad and Batken provinces, more than 10 per cent of respondents did not mention any objects that under-fives played with. Ethnic Uzbek children were least likely to have three or more children's books in the house (60.5 per cent), and most likely to not mention any objects that the under-fives played with (9.1 per cent).

Children in Batken, Issyk Kul and Naryn provinces were most likely to have been left with under-10 year old carers or alone in the previous week (20.5, 19.2 and 14.8 per cent respectively). This was most common among the poorest three quintiles, and least common among Russians (6.6 per cent).

In Kyrgyz culture, some babies are kept swaddled and isolated in a beshik, or traditional cradle for the first 40 days of their lives in order to prevent being crossed by the evil eye. Many parents, particularly fathers, spend very little time playing with and stimulating their children. There is also very little educational activity on parenting skills⁴⁰.

Education⁴¹

Kyrgyzstan has a strong educational history, with official figures showing 99.2 per cent literacy with no gender, regional or ethnic imbalance, and high coverage of primary and secondary education⁴². Statistics over the last six years show steady progress towards the second MDG⁴³. However, the figures mask se-

⁴⁰ Patrice Engle, Guidance for the Video Communications in Kyrgyzstan from research in Kyrgyzstan (unpublished), 18 September 2010;

⁴¹ Unless otherwise noted, the information in this section is taken from Farida Ryskulueva, Situation Analysis Review of Education Sector in Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF 2010;

⁴² Figures from 2009 Census;

⁴³ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic/United Nations, Second Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGR), 2010;

rious concerns in the country with falling educational standards and quality, as highlighted in PISA international testing which saw Kyrgyzstan come last out of 65 countries tested for both literacy and mathematics.

Pre-school

As of 2009, there were 567 state kindergartens, 27 private kindergartens and 351 community-based kindergartens registered in Kyrgyzstan. Enrolment was low in 2009, with 75,955 children (12 per cent of the age cohort) attending, of whom more than 14,000 attend community-based kindergartens. Urban coverage (24.4 per cent) is five times higher than in rural areas (4.2 per cent), and is generally better for richer families, and children in the north of the country. Figures for rural children attending kindergarten do not show clear trends, with the poorest attendance in parts of Batken and Issyk Kul provinces, in both of which more than half of the rural districts have less than 5 per cent attendance⁴⁴. State funding for pre-schooling increased by 290 per cent between 2005 and 2009, partly thanks to donor financing and advocacy.

A new Law On Pre-school Education was adopted with international support in 2009, which seeks to improve the status of kindergarten staff and provide for expansion of pre-school coverage, partially by promoting use of community-based kindergartens. Local authorities in remote and poor districts are being supported by the Asian Development Bank, the Aga Khan Foundation and UNICEF to establish community-based kindergartens, which practice a shift system, thereby expanding access by a factor of four. Development of secondary legislation to enforce the Law on Pre-school Education is on-going and will establish regulatory and funding mechanisms for alternative pre-school programmes and organisations. Meanwhile, compulsory school preparedness has been incorporated into the draft Education Development Strategy for 2011-2020.

⁴⁴ Mapping carried out by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan based on official statistics;

The full second tranche of Education for All – Fast Track Initiative funds for Kyrgyzstan (a total of \$6 million) will be made available for pre-school education. This is the result of a successful lobbying campaign by UNICEF and its partners in the pre-school sub-sector.

Primary and secondary schooling

Meanwhile, there are 2191 schools in Kyrgyzstan as of 2010, including 54 private schools. Most of these schools cover the full 11 years of primary and secondary education mandated by law, though there are also separate primary schools in some remote rural communities. There are 1,036,834 pupils in attendance with a pupil – teacher ratio of 14.6 to 1. More than 80 per cent of schools are located in rural areas.

The problem of non-enrolment and non-attendance of school is underreported in national statistics. A Ministry of Education and Science and UNICEF survey in 2007 found more than 40,000 children out of school⁴⁵, with some NGOs suggesting a real figure of 120,000 absent from education⁴⁶. According to official statistics there has been a steady rise in the percentage of children in basic education, and 98.3 per cent of children in the age cohort of the first nine years of school are studying. There are noticeable trends for children registered in remote rural areas to attend school in Bishkek, Osh city and Chuy province. There is generally a gender balance in school attendance, though disaggregated statistics show girls are more likely to attend school in the large cities, while boys are more likely to be in school in rural areas. While girls form a majority of 10-11 grade students (53.2 per cent), their proportion falls in 5-8 grade (49.2 per cent) and 1-4 grade (48.9 per cent), which may indicate a negative change in attitude to girls' education⁴⁷. Figures from the 2006 MICS

⁴⁵ Ministry of Education and Science and UNICEF, Out-of-School Children in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2008;

⁴⁶ Yevgenia Kim, Kyrgyzstan: High Cost of "Free" Education, IWPR, 14 April 2010, at <http://iwpr.net/report-news/kyrgyzstan-high-cost-%E2%80%9Cfree%E2%80%9D-education>;

⁴⁷ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic/United Nations, Second Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals

indicate that Russian girls are 20 per cent more likely to attend primary school than Russian boys, but five per cent more Uzbek boys than girls attend primary.

There is no single state agency responsible for dealing with non-attendance, with poor coordination on the issues between schools, local education departments and the police. Reportedly 38,200 children are not enrolled, while a further 23,500 have dropped out. Most of these children live in rural areas (72.9 and 74.1 per cent respectively)⁴⁸.

The MICS also indicated that, while there was little differentiation in primary education, 95.6 per cent of children from the richest quintile attended secondary school, compared to the 90.8 per cent average. Uzbek children were much less likely than average to attend secondary school (80.4 per cent).

On 23 September 2010 the Deputy Education Minister, stated that 2425 children with disabilities are currently studying in 15 boarding schools in Kyrgyzstan⁴⁹. A further 547 children with disabilities are studying in four general secondary schools, which he stated helps to integrate children with disabilities into society. In addition, 1256 disabled children attend 14 kindergartens. He said that there was a current vital need for books for blind children. These books are not published in the country, and so they have to be imported from abroad, particularly from Russia. Another problem is the lack of suitable environments for children in wheelchairs. Many schools built in Soviet times do not have wheelchair access. The Ministry is trying to build ramps, but these are not always effective because of the school design⁵⁰.

(MDGR), 2010;

⁴⁸ Farida Ryskulueva, Situation Analysis Review of Education Sector in Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF, 2010;

⁴⁹ This is despite ongoing efforts to end institutionalisation;

⁵⁰ Ryskulueva (supra) and Tolgonay Osmongazieva, Guljigit Sooronkulov: V Kyrgyzstane v 15 shkolakh-internatakh obuchayutsya 2 tysyachi 425 detey s ogranichennymi vozmozhnostnyami [Guljigit Sooronkulov: 2425 children with disabilities study in 15 boarding schools in Kyrgyzstan], 24.kg, 23 September 2009, at <http://www.24.kg/community/83074->

There are currently more than 7000 children with special needs attending school. Of these, more than 3500 attend ordinary schools, 2425 are enrolled in 15 specialised boarding schools, 482 study in specialized day schools and 1256 attend specialized kindergartens. There has been a trend over the last 20 years towards closure of residential schools and integration into comprehensive schools. However, there are several key problems facing children with special needs, particularly in poor families or remote areas. In general, and despite support from organizations such as Save the Children and the Asian Development Bank, there is little provision in the system for identification of special needs, teachers are not trained to work with children with disabilities, and the infrastructure is not adapted to their needs.

There is an acute shortage of active, qualified teachers in Kyrgyzstan. As of 1 September 2010, government statistics showed a shortfall of 3333 teachers, or 4.6 per cent of requirements. However, a Ministry of Education and Science and UNICEF survey in 2008 showed that there is a real shortage of 23 per cent qualified teachers in the country, and all schools are short of properly trained staff. Some subjects, such as sciences, are explicitly mentioned as suffering extreme understaffing, and specialists in other subjects are often brought in to fill vacancies.

The still low salaries⁵¹ and low status of teachers give little incentive for all but the most dedicated educators, to remain within the system. In particular, the starting salary for young teachers is far too small to attract university graduates with teaching specializations into the teaching profession. Only 15 per cent of people who graduate from teacher training courses go into teaching. In addition, young

[gulzhigit-sooronkulov-v-kyrgyzstane-v-15-shkolax.html](http://www.gulzhigit-sooronkulov-v-kyrgyzstane-v-15-shkolax.html);

⁵¹ In 2009, the average salary for education workers was 59 per cent of the average wage in the economy. [Roman Mogilevskiy, Public Social Expenditures in Kyrgyzstan: Trends and Challenges, Presentation made at the Roundtable "Investing in Children – a Key to the Achievement of the Millennium Development, 20 November 2010];

teachers rarely receive social benefits or allowances for which they are eligible (such as plots of land, flats or discounts on utility bills) because local governments do not have the resources to offer these benefits to new teachers. Teacher shortages are predicated on the opportunity cost of teaching rather than the urban or rural setting – if there are opportunities to make better money locally be it in agriculture or in services, qualified teachers are less likely to work in the profession⁵². Nevertheless, the Government has recognised the particular travel costs of teachers in remote areas, and in 2008 it proposed to introduce salary top-ups for teachers at schools most remote from district and provincial centres, as well as schools in towns with severe economic and demographic status⁵³.

As of May 2011, the salaries of education professionals were increased by 100-150 per cent. However, as of late January, it was still unclear where the funds for this would come from.

Textbook shortages are also a key problem. In 2009, the Ministry of Education and Science reported that only 62 per cent of necessary textbooks were provided, but survey results indicate the true figure could be even lower. The shortage of textbooks is linked to the lack of an efficient system in the Ministry to collect information on resource requirements, as well as poor capacity for in country printing and textbook development. According to the data, only 10 per cent of students in the country have full sets of textbooks. The content is also outdated and of poor quality because of a lack of capacity for textbook development.

The official data indicates that Kyrgyz language schools were the worst provided, with only 40 per cent textbook coverage; schools teaching mainly in Russian (53 per cent) and Uzbek (74

per cent) suffered less acute shortages⁵⁴. However, concerns have been raised that many Uzbek-language textbooks in Osh have been confiscated in October 2010 because they were printed in Uzbekistan. The Uzbek language textbooks are available in the city but funds are not available to print copies⁵⁵.

Education in Kyrgyzstan is also hindered by the lack of a system for information sharing, monitoring and evaluation. Statistics collected by the National Statistical Committee and the Ministry of Education differ from each other and are not used for planning and decision making. There is poor coordination between the Ministry, district education departments and schools for information sharing.

Bullying and school violence has been endemic in Kyrgyzstan for several years. There have been reports from various parts of the country of organised crime groups overseeing rackets within schools⁵⁶.

Education financing

Education financing is a priority issue in Kyrgyzstan. In 2009, Kyrgyzstan spent 6.9 per cent of its GDP on education, equating to about 21.4 per cent of its national budget. However, there are concerns that this money is not spent efficiently or equitably⁵⁷. The budgets of schools are calculated based on factors including class size, number of staff members and maintenance costs. The system does not

⁵² Ministry of Education and Science and UNICEF, *Survival Strategies of Schools in the Kyrgyz Republic: a school-level analysis of teacher shortages*, 2009;

⁵³ Institute of Strategic Analysis and Evaluation Under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF, *Global Report on Child Poverty and Disparities: National Report Kyrgyzstan*, 2009;

⁵⁴ Farida Ryskulueva, *Situation Analysis Review of Education Sector in Kyrgyzstan*, UNICEF, 2010;

⁵⁵ Education Cluster meeting 3 November 2010, Osh – minutes. Reportedly textbooks from Russia for Russian-medium schools have been much less controversial in recent years in Kyrgyzstan – see Kamil Satkanbaev, *Russian Schooling Still Prized in Kyrgyz South*, IWPR, 15 April 2007, at <http://iwpr.net/report-news/russian-schooling-still-prized-kyrgyz-south>;

⁵⁶ William O'Connor, *Kyrgyzstan: Gangs Govern Life in Many Kyrgyz Schools*, Eurasianet, 14 October 2009, at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav101509.shtml#>. Nazgul Osmonova, *Kyrgyz instability encourages teenage crime, gangs*, Central Asia Online, 3 June 2010, at http://centralasiaonline.com/cocoon/caii/xhtml/en_GB/features/caii/features/main/2010/06/03/feature-01;

⁵⁷ OECD and World Bank, *Kyrgyz Republic 2010: Lessons from Pisa*, November 2010;

allow for flexible and efficient resource utilisation and improvement in the quality of education. In 2006, 95.3 per cent of funds were allocated for staff and utility bills, and just 4.7 per cent to the education process itself⁵⁸. The system creates incentives at school level to minimise class size and maximise the number of teachers, and disincentives to investigate and address energy and water inefficiency⁵⁹.

Spending also disproportionately favours richer areas, with the highest spending (as of 2006) in Chuy province and Bishkek. Extra funding is also granted for intensive study at gymnasia and lyceums, which tend to have less access for vulnerable children⁶⁰. Meanwhile, education in southern Kyrgyzstan is chronically underfunded. In 2007, because of chronic underfunding of rural schools, education financing was separated into two programmes for urban and rural secondary education. In the 2007 budget, 70 per cent of financing was allocated to the Rural Secondary Education programme, as 71 per cent of schoolchildren go to rural schools. However, a deficit was still felt in terms of travel expenses to and from school, for example.

Since 2006⁶¹, all children in Kyrgyzstan are lent school books and provided snacks free of charge at elementary schools (food is provided at a cost of five som per child per day)⁶², but low income families, especially those with

many children, can find it difficult to provide children with school uniform and school supplies. Schools also charge additional fees, such as so called “voluntary contributions to the school fund”, school refurbishment costs and contribution to class funds⁶³.

The Ministry of Education and Science is rolling out per capita financing (PCF) for schools, after trials in Chuy province from 2008⁶⁴. The reforms are intended to increase efficiency of resource allocation and promote inclusion of children not attending school by providing funding to schools based on set average costs for service provision per child in attendance. PCF is designed to reduce inequity between schools⁶⁵.

Impact of Violence

The recent civil unrest has led to fear and anxiety amongst the affected population of southern Kyrgyzstan, to the extent that parents remain reluctant to send their children to school over concerns for their safety. This has led to a low enrolment rate in the most-affected areas, and particularly among the ethnic Uzbek population. UNICEF staff in Osh has also reported a shift among parents towards wanting to send their children to mono-ethnic schools, in order to avoid difficulties⁶⁶. By mid-October, it was reported that school attendance in Osh city had risen to 42,000, still some 2800 short of the pre-violence figure, and 5000 more than in early September⁶⁷. In addition, Education

58 Institute of Strategic Analysis and Evaluation Under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF, Global Report on Child Poverty and Disparities: National Report Kyrgyzstan, 2009;

59 OECD and World Bank, Kyrgyz Republic 2010: Lessons from Pisa, November 2010;

60 Institute of Strategic Analysis and Evaluation Under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF, Global Report on Child Poverty and Disparities: National Report Kyrgyzstan, 2009;

61 OECD and World Bank, Kyrgyz Republic 2010: Lessons from Pisa, November 2010;

62 Decree 372 of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic dated July 12, 2006 on Provision of Meals at General Education Schools of the Kyrgyz Republic, Decree #673 of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic dated September 18, 2006 on Provision of Meals to Children at State and Municipal General Education Schools of the Kyrgyz Republic;

63 Irina Malanchuk, Mapping of the Child Protection System in Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF, April 2009;

64 Institute of Strategic Analysis and Evaluation Under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF, Global Report on Child Poverty and Disparities: National Report Kyrgyzstan, 2009;

65 OECD and World Bank, Kyrgyz Republic 2010: Lessons from Pisa, November 2010;

66 UNICEF, Humanitarian Action Update: Kyrgyzstan, 3 November 2010, Child Protection sub-cluster;

67 24.kg, Abdivali Baltabaev: Poseshaemost shkol yuzhnoy stolitsy Kyrgyzstana zametno uvelichilos [Attendance at schools in the southern capital of Kyrgyzstan has noticeably increased], 14 October 2010, at <http://24kg.org/community/84889-abdivali-baltabaev-poseshaemost-shkol-yuzhnoj>; 24.kg, Abdivali Baltabaev: Poseshaemost v shkolakh yuzhnoy stolitsy Kyrgyzstana postepenno uvelichivaetsya

Minister Kanat Sadykov has acknowledged that existing teacher shortages in southern Kyrgyzstan have been exacerbated by significant numbers of teachers emigrating following the violence⁶⁸. There are also reports of lack of interaction between children from different ethnic groups and even between teachers⁶⁹.

Child protection

The child protection system

Kyrgyzstan has a fragmented child protection system, which includes several state structures at central and local levels responsible for child protection. It is characterized by an extreme shortage of financial and human resources⁷⁰. After the Children's Code came into force in 2006, two departments were set up to coordinate its implementation: a Child Protection Department within the State Agency for Physical Education, Sport, Youth Affairs and Child Protection and a Sector on Family and Children's Issues within the Presidential Administration. On government reorganisation in October 2009, these functions were both transferred to the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Migration, with a Child Protection Department retaining its policy implementation functions, while its policy-development functions were transferred to the Sector for Coordination of Youth Affairs, Child Pro-

[Attendance at schools in the southern capital of Kyrgyzstan is steadily increasing, 21 September 2010, at <http://24kg.org/community/82882-abdivali-baltabaev-poseshhaemost-v-shkolax.html>;

⁶⁸ Aizada Kutueva, Kanat Sadykov: Nekhvatka uchiteley na yuge Kyrgyzstane sostavlyayet bole 1.7 tysyachu che-lovek [The shortfall of teachers in southern Kyrgyzstan is more than 1700 people], 24.kg, 27 October 2010 at <http://24kg.org/community/85710-kanat-sadykov-nexvatka-uchitelej-na-yuge.html>;

⁶⁹ UNICEF, Humanitarian Action Update: Kyrgyzstan, 3 November 2010, Child Protection sub-cluster;

⁷⁰ Kyrgyzstan, Consolidated Third and Fourth Periodic Reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, July 2010;

Recommendations:

National level:

- Roll out Education SWAp - building a strategic partnership and leveraging resources for children to improve equity in access to quality learning environment.
- Provide policy advice and budget analysis based on cost-effective and evidence based interventions to promote real solutions to the issues of teacher shortages and salary scales in pre-school, primary and secondary education.
- Help design a per capita financing formula which will take into account the extra costs of schooling in remote areas which require smaller schools covering wider catchment areas.
- Focus on developing strategies to return children to school, including through support to proposed national Education Monitoring and Information System.
- Support Government to develop secondary legislation on pre-school education.
- Support Ministry of Education and Science to develop monitoring and evaluation system, including of textbook needs and gaps.
- Support policy research to discover why Russian boys and Uzbek girls are less likely to attend school, and what can be done to tackle this.

Community level:

- Continue and expand peace and tolerance education curricula initiated in the south after the June conflict to cover inclusiveness for all social groups facing stigma and other barriers to education.
- Support increased coverage of quality pre-schooling in target communities, including through Fast Track Initiative grants.
- Work in schools to tackle issues of bullying and violence.

tection and Gender Issues department of the same Ministry⁷¹. While this may have reduced a previous duplication of policy-making functions with the former Ministry of Labour and Social Development, there are still many concerns about the low capacity of the Department to influence other structures at national and sub-national level. In addition, within the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Migration, child protection remains separate from social services for children, with which activities should be closely coordinated. A Ministry of Social Protection was established in December 2010, and as of January 2011, discussions are underway to transfer the Child Protection Department to this Ministry.

Meanwhile, the Ministries of Social Protection, Health, Education and Internal Affairs continue to carry out child protection functions at both national and sub-national levels⁷². Other new structures have been established at district level, including Family and Child Support Departments (FCSDs) and Commissions for Children's Affairs. The FCSDs are departments within the district authorities and do not have independent decision-making powers. They also do not have reporting lines to the Child Protection Department, which has no implementing body at sub-national level. A lack of sub-district representation, limited staff and a lack of transportation means that the FCSDs find it difficult to implement their statutory duties, particularly with regard to vulnerable children in remote areas⁷³. Individual case management is often weak. The FCSDs work separately from the local government departments responsible for social protection, despite having a largely mutual target group. The response to the June events confirmed that referral mechanisms for child protection and gender-based violence are weak, with

poor linkages and cooperation between different partners⁷⁴.

Commissions on Children's Affairs at district level are composed of representatives of the judicial system; the prosecutor's office; the police; and education, health and social protection authorities. NGOs and other organisations can be seconded to the Commissions. Their main function is to oversee the work of the FCSDs⁷⁵.

At district level, funding for child protection services comes from two principal sources. In richer areas, such as the districts around Bishkek, the majority of funding for social services comes from local taxation. In poorer parts of the country, a much larger part of district spending comes from the state budget – requests are sent to the central department for coordinating local government, which has to decide how much to allocate to each district. Thus social services are generally stronger in richer areas of the country, where they tend to be less needed⁷⁶.

At sub-district (ayil okmotu) level, a single leading specialist on social protection is responsible for identification, assessment and provision of support to families and children in crisis. This official is usually supposed to work across several villages, and reports to the FCSDs and Social Protection Departments at district level.

Deinstitutionalisation

State and private residential institutions are still a widely-used form of support for neglected children, despite commitment by successive governments to the deinstitutionalization process. There is disagreement about how many such institutions there are in the country: the Ministry of Education and Science states there are 50, while the National Statistical Committee reports 82 and local NGO the

⁷¹ Kyrgyzstan, Consolidated Third and Fourth Periodic Reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, July 2010;

⁷² A diagram of the current child protection system can be found (in Russian) at www.baldar.kg;

⁷³ Irina Malanchuk, Mapping of the Child Protection System in Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF, April 2009;

⁷⁴ UNICEF, Humanitarian Action Update: Kyrgyzstan, 3 November 2010;

⁷⁵ Children's Code, Article 16;

⁷⁶ Matthew Naumann, Children of Imprisoned Mothers in the Kyrgyz Republic, (unpublished) 2008;

Youth Human Rights Group has counted 134. Of these, only four are family style homes. The institutions are supervised by several national government Ministries and Agencies, as well as local government in some cases⁷⁷. More than 88 per cent of children in such institutions are not orphans, and many have been institutionalized because of family poverty. Some local centres have been established to support children and families as part of a decentralized system for the protection of children and families⁷⁸.

The Government's report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, quoting from local NGOs, paints a gloomy picture of the residential institutions. The NGOs allege that resources intended for their feeding are either insufficient or incorrectly used. There is also an acute deficit of hygiene supplies, clothes and shoes. After leaving the institutions, some children are sent to professional lyceums, where they receive basic vocational education and live while they study. After graduation they no longer receive accommodation, and often are forced to live on the street, as state guarantees for accommodation are not met in practice, and often property that should have been theirs is misappropriated while they are in residential care⁷⁹. Other children become homeless after leaving the institutions. Meanwhile, many children living in residential institutions reportedly run away to live on the streets, because of the poor conditions in the institutions and a lack of consultation on their needs.

Work for reintegration of families and encouragement of foster families remains very limited, and the few alternative, family-type homes for children without parental care are mainly supported by the international community.

Adoption

⁷⁷ Kyrgyzstan, Consolidated Third and Fourth Periodic Reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, July 2010;

⁷⁸ United Nations, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Kyrgyzstan, 16 June 2010;

⁷⁹ Kyrgyzstan, Consolidated Third and Fourth Periodic Reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, July 2010;

In February 2009, the Government called a moratorium on all international adoptions, citing fraud and abuse of the system by orphanages and adoption agencies. The legislation on domestic and international adoption was brought into compliance with international standards and norms. The moratorium, therefore, was annulled in the beginning of 2011. The new legislation gives priority to domestic adoption, with international adoption to be considered a subsidiary solution. The subsidiary principle is one of the main principles of the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption.

Child abuse

A survey carried out by UNICEF in 2009 revealed widespread child abuse and neglect in Kyrgyzstan. Of 2,132 children surveyed, 72.7 per cent reported experiencing abuse and/or neglect in the family. More specifically, 51.0 per cent of children reported experiencing harsh verbal abuse by family members, 38.7 per cent experienced psychological abuse, 36.6 per cent experienced physical abuse, and 1.6 per cent experienced sexual abuse in the family. In addition, 64.4 per cent of children experienced some form of neglect. Groups of children that reported abuse and neglect most often included ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz, those from rural areas, and residents of the three southern provinces of Jalal-Abad, Osh and Batken⁸⁰.

Children with disabilities

Kyrgyzstan is still shaking off the legacy of the Soviet model of care of disabled children. The medical model of disability still prevails and influences those caring for disabled children including teachers, parents and medical personnel. Due to this understanding of disability, mechanisms that result in the segregation of disabled children are still in place. As noted in the education section above, disabled children are often segregated in specialized schools, living in institutions separate from their families, and excluded from many social

⁸⁰ Dr Robin N. Haar, Child Abuse and Neglect in Families in the Kyrgyz Republic, UNICEF, 2010;

activities⁸¹. Some of these children on graduation are transferred to residential institutions for disabled adults and the elderly, as there is nowhere else for them to go. Other children remain at home with their families and may receive no education at all⁸². There are concerns that the number of children with disabilities may be underreported, as registration with the authorities may require large transport costs and bribes – in many cases children are only diagnosed on arrival at school⁸³. There are very few rehabilitation centres available for children with disabilities in the country – just one in Bishkek and one in nearby Chuy province. Very little support is given to children with learning difficulties in the country, though seven day care centres for disabled children are currently functioning in different regions of the country.

Child labour

The only official statistics available for child labour in Kyrgyzstan indicate that 40 per cent of children in the country were working in 2007. An estimated 671,752 children between the ages of five and 17 are believed to be engaged in economic activity. This figure represents 45.8 per cent of all children in the age group and 21.9 per cent of all working individuals in Kyrgyzstan. The prevalence of economic work is higher among boys (49.6 per cent) than girls (41.5 per cent); however, a larger proportion of girls (78.1 per cent) than boys (59.6 per cent) perform unpaid household services ('household chores')⁸⁴.

Child labour is illegal under Kyrgyzstan's constitution, which gives 16 as the minimum age or 15 in exceptional circumstances. However, legislation does not provide a clear definition

of child labour, and so there is scope for misuse of the term in the country. Kyrgyzstan's ratification of the ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour commits the country to protecting children under 18 from hazardous work. However, children in the informal economy can be paid less than adults, and are less aware of their rights. Some children are involved in dangerous activities such as coal mining and scavenging scrap metal from disused uranium waste dumps, while others are employed as market porters, sweepers, vendors, or washing cars⁸⁵. Most children in rural areas do some work in agriculture⁸⁶, particularly in the autumn and spring, but it is often hard to determine if they are helping out their parents or forced to drop school and work long hours in difficult jobs.

Experts have noted a change in the nature of child labour as a result of endemic poverty. Whereas previously children were learning skills for adult life, they are now routinely subjected to unpaid labour. There is little political will in local and national government to put pressure on farms and businesses to tackle child labour despite the legislation in place⁸⁷.

Birth registration

Under Kyrgyzstan's legislation, births are registered at the place of birth or the place of residence registration of parents. If the parents or others registering the birth do not have the necessary documentation then registration can be made through the court system. Various laws have been passed in recent years to improve the registration system. Despite this, research has shown that children at risk, in-

81 Andrea Pupilin, *Assessment of the Situation of Children with Disabilities in Kyrgyzstan*, UNICEF, 2008;

82 Open Society Institute, *Children with Special Education Needs in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan*, 2009;

83 Andrea Pupilin, *Assessment of the Situation of Children with Disabilities in Kyrgyzstan*, UNICEF, 2008;

84 ILO and National Statistical Committee, *Working Children in Kyrgyzstan: The Results of 2007 Child Labor Survey*, September 2008);

85 Asyl Osmonaliev and Gulzat Abdurasulova, *Poverty Drives Child Labour in Kyrgyzstan*, IWPR, 5 November 2010, at <http://iwpr.net/report-news/poverty-drives-child-labour-kyrgyzstan>;

86 It is estimated that 95 per cent of working children work in agriculture: ILO and National Statistical Committee, *Working Children in Kyrgyzstan: The Results of 2007 Child Labor Survey*, September 2008;

87 Asyl Osmonaliev and Gulzat Abdurasulova, *Poverty Drives Child Labour in Kyrgyzstan*, IWPR, 5 November 2010, at <http://iwpr.net/report-news/poverty-drives-child-labour-kyrgyzstan>;

cluding those without parental care, children living in the street and children from poor and vulnerable groups, and children from homeless and stateless families in the population often do not have registration or identification documentation. Often children's rehabilitation centres need to deal with documentation issues as a priority when new children arrive. A significant obstacle to provision of identity documents is the requirement for propiska (registration) at the place of residence. Other causes of lack of birth registration include lack of awareness of legislation, bureaucratic complications, births outside of medical institutions, parents not having documents, and lack of access to legal support⁸⁸.

Juvenile justice system⁸⁹

Data from the Ministry of the Interior indicate that during 2008, 10,362 children were arrested⁹⁰. Of these, 1280 children were convicted and received conditional sentences. According to a study conducted by the NGO 'Young lawyers of Kyrgyzstan' 15,000 boys and girls in the Kyrgyz Republic are juveniles in conflict with the law. Successive governments have reduced the number of children in detention. In 2010, just 35 boys are in detention. There are only two girls currently imprisoned, in a separate block within the women's prison. Most of the boys and girls imprisoned have been convicted of serious crimes including murder, robbery and rape. By contrast, a total of 400 children were in detention in 2005.

The issue of children in conflict with the law has been a matter of concern for Kyrgyz policy makers and civil society in recent years. The

Children's Code adopted in 2006 provides for reform of the delivery of justice to children. Implementation of the provisions of the Children's Code requires new legislation to replace laws dating back to the Soviet period, a time when imprisonment was widely regarded as the only realistic response to child crime. The existing legal framework in Kyrgyzstan does not offer sustainable alternatives either at the phase of criminal investigation or when the child is convicted. Mediation, which was recently introduced in the criminal process, opens such a possibility. However, the current legal provisions and existing practice do not offer a full framework for using it (there are no procedures for referring cases for mediation and no mediators in place to offer services). No juvenile offenders receive adequate legal assistance despite constitutional guarantees. There is no separate juvenile court system in Kyrgyzstan.

Juvenile justice reform is hampered by the absence of a common database on children in conflict with the law. Other structural problems include poor coordination between government organisations and public bodies, limited human capacity and a shortfall in financial resources.

Such legislation has already been drafted, based on the concept of restorative justice and treats detention as the measure of last resort⁹¹. The proposed legislation envisages the introduction of specialized judges and social workers to work with children in conflict with the law. It also sets out a framework for the use of diversionary measures. Children's courts have not been established because of the expenses these would entail.

However, the reform process has been repeatedly delayed due to a lack of clear governmental and policy directives, absence of a single authority to oversee the multi-faceted nature of the reform, lack of technical expertise in this

⁸⁸ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, Consolidated Third and Fourth Periodic Reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, July 2010;

⁸⁹ Much of the information in this section was found in UNICEF, Reform of Kyrgyz Juvenile Justice, 2009;

⁹⁰ The age of criminal responsibility in Kyrgyzstan is 14. Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, 1 October 1997, Article 18). Boys of 11-14 can after committing certain crimes be placed in Special Schools;

⁹¹ UNICEF, Reform of Kyrgyz Juvenile Justice, 2009;

Recommendations:

National level:

- Support reform of legislation on child protection and mechanisms to improve coordination of activities and address needs of vulnerable and poor (including gatekeeping, children in conflict with the law, child abuse and adoption).
- Continue to promote deinstitutionalization and alternatives to institutionalization.
- Promote integration of child protection and social protection services.
- Support policies that guarantee children's rights to birth registration.
- Research legislation and practice regarding property rights of children without parental care, and advocate for full upholding of these rights.
- Research issues of child working in hazardous conditions, including radioactive tailings and in mines, and what can be done to prevent this.
- Support Government to pass new legislation on inter-country adoption in line with the Hague Convention and to implement it.
- Support Government to improve early identification and registration of and support to children with disabilities.

Community level:

- Improve decentralised services protecting children and women from violence and abuse through well-functioning referral and response mechanisms.
- Support efforts to help children remain with their families.
- Promote alternatives to institutionalisation.
- Support measures to improve birth registration and documentation in communities where these issues are particularly problematic.
- Improve access to child protection and social protection services in target communities.
- Carry out communications activities to improve understanding of child protection issues and services and problems of child abuse.
- Work with law enforcement agencies to build capacity for child protection and working with youth.

area⁹² and, recently, the change in government in April 2010. Negotiations with the Government on the draft legislation had to be restarted following the April 2010 change in government. However, specialists believe that adopting legislation is also hampered by the fact that significant procedural changes and institutional reform would need to be undertaken in the child protection system (including law enforcement agencies, and this would require significant financial resources. The lack of secondary legislation to define the structure, functions and standards for juvenile justice bodies also makes their creation more difficult⁹³.

A pilot project based on the new rules is already being implemented in Bishkek with UNICEF support. In two of the city's districts, children are provided with free legal and social support and separate facilities for investigation. Diversionary mechanisms and alternative sanctions are being tested, and an Open Centre for children in contact with the law has opened in the city. Seventeen children in contact with the law have been referred by courts for rehabilitation programmes in the Open Centre. Not one juvenile who has undertaken a rehabilitation programme has offended since March 2010.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

Diarrhoeal diseases are the leading killers of children in Kyrgyzstan, causing 35 deaths per 100,000 children under five. The 2006 MICS reported that only 20 per cent of children that had had diarrhoea in the previous two weeks had received any oral rehydration therapy, and that

⁹² UNICEF, Reform of Kyrgyz Juvenile Justice, 2009;

⁹³ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, Consolidated Third and Fourth Periodic Reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, July 2010;

three-quarters of that was home treatment. Furthermore, MICS reported that only 25 per cent of cases received any increase in volume of fluids, and 75 per cent received just adequate or lower volume of fluids. Children in rural areas reported 50 per cent more cases of diarrhoea than children in urban areas. It has been reported that following the June violence in southern Kyrgyzstan diarrhoea is on the rise in the area. The disease is complicated in the area by anaemia and dehydration⁹⁴, as well as by poor hygiene standards and facilities.

The burden of soil-transmitted helminth worm infections in Kyrgyzstan is extremely high. Epidemiological surveys conducted by UNICEF and local governments have consistently shown parasite burdens of 50 per cent or more among the general populations, with the proportion rising to 75 per cent among school-aged children⁹⁵. One of the leading causes of the problem in Kyrgyzstan is the lack of access to improved sources of drinking water and the lack of sanitary means of excreta disposal. According to the 2006 MICS, 11.8 per cent of population did not have any access to clean drinking water. The highest proportions of the population consuming surface water were reported in Batken (29 per cent) and Osh (14 per cent) provinces. In 2008, rates of more than 50 per cent of the rural population without access to piped water supplies were found in Toktogul, Chatkal and Aksy districts (Jalal-Abad Province); Chong Alay and Kara Suu districts (Osh Province); and Talas district (Talas Province)⁹⁶. With the exception of Kara Suu district, all these districts are primarily remote and mountainous.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union drinking water infrastructure in rural areas quickly

⁹⁴ Galina Solodunova, Kyrgyzstan's top doctors work around the clock in hospitals in the affected areas to save children from diarrhoea, UNICEF, 25 August 2010;

⁹⁵ Peter Steinmann, Epidemiological survey on human intestinal helminths - Results, implications and policy recommendations, UNICEF, April 2009;

⁹⁶ Mapping carried out by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan based on official statistics;

Recommendations:

National level:

- Continue advocating for new laws on juvenile justice that promotes diversion and alternative measures to placement in places of detention.
- Work with the Government to roll out and enforce a new juvenile justice system around the country.
- Support the Government to improve coordination on juvenile justice issues, including establishment of a common database on children in conflict with the law.
- Advocate for better governance and donor financing of the juvenile justice system.
- Research and identify any inequity in access to and provision of juvenile justice because of ethnicity, geographical location, gender, family income or other factors. Work with authorities to overcome any inequity if this is revealed.

Community level:

- Support local institutions to develop preventive and rehabilitation services for children in contact with the law.

deteriorated as the centralised government structures that had dealt with water supply issues were replaced by local government bodies that did not have the funds or capacity to address the issue. Since then, rural water supply reform led to the creation of rural public associations of drinking water users, which are now responsible for planning, financing and managing water supplies at the local level in rural areas. In 2002, two projects began the task of rehabilitating water supply systems, the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project, funded by the World Bank, and the Local Infrastructure Services Project funded by the Asian Development Bank. Together these are known as the 'Taza Suu' ('Clean Water') project. Five hundred and nine villages with a combined population of 1 million people now have access to safe water supplies; however, over 1000 villages (out of 1800) still do not have access to centralised water services⁹⁷.

A second round of drinking water supply projects to cover about 200 villages was begun by the World Bank and the ADB in 2009. Other agencies involved in supporting water and sanitation projects in rural and urban areas of Kyrgyzstan include the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Agency for Development and Investment in Communities (known by its Russian acronym ARIS).

Water and sanitation systems are not in place in some of the large spontaneous settlements around Bishkek⁹⁸. This has led to several demonstrations of residents in recent months, with local officials countering that sewage systems and other needed infrastructure cannot be built as the houses were constructed without official approval⁹⁹.

⁹⁷ Office of the Resident Coordinator, United Nations in Kyrgyzstan, Rapid Multi-Sector Needs Assessment, November 2009;

⁹⁸ Galina Solodunova, Hope on the Verge of Existence, UNICEF, February 2009. David Trilling, Soviet-era Registration System fosters Discontent in Kyrgyzstan, Eurasianet, 11 May 2010, at <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/61035>;

⁹⁹ RFE/RL, Villagers Near Bishkek Demonstrate, Demand Electricity, Clean Water, 8 June 2010 at http://www.rferl.org/content/Villagers_Near_Bishkek_Demonstrate_Demand_Elec

Water and sanitation experts carried out several assessments of areas in Osh and Jalal-Abad Provinces affected by the June 2010 conflict. The general conclusion was that water infrastructure was relatively undamaged from the conflict, compared with other infrastructure such as private houses. However, UNICEF and other water and sanitation partners have tested and found canal water to be heavily polluted. Many people and especially children very often resort to the use of canal water when the piped water supply is cut off. The consumption of this water has serious health consequences, especially among school children¹⁰⁰.

An assessment of water needs of Osh schools after the June events revealed that almost 86 per cent did not have sufficient access to water. Even though the schools assessed are connected to the city water supply grid, the delivery was intermittent with most of the schools accessing the water only three times a week. Furthermore, the schools also lacked water storage facilities for use during the days when there was no water supply. There is also a lack of proper sanitation facilities and hygiene practices in schools which can lead to an increase in diarrhoea and other sanitation related diseases¹⁰¹.

Disaster risk reduction

Due to its geographic location in a seismically active and mountainous region, Kyrgyzstan is highly susceptible and vulnerable to natural disasters. In addition to the conflict risks tragically highlighted in the June 2010 events, the Ministry of Emergencies lists 20 natural hazards and processes that pose risks to Kyrgyz society. These include avalanches, droughts, floods, glacial lake outburst floods, earth-

http://www.rferl.org/content/Clean_Water/2065685.html; RFE/RL, Kyrgyz Amenities Protest Ends, 2 November 2010 at http://www.rferl.org/content/Kyrgyz_Amenities_Protest_Ends/2208428.html ;

¹⁰⁰ UNICEF, Humanitarian Action Update: Kyrgyzstan, 3 November 2010;

¹⁰¹ UNICEF, Humanitarian Action Update: Kyrgyzstan, 3 November 2010;

quakes, landslides and mudslides, epidemics, pests, crop diseases and river erosion. Some of these hazards (including floods and landslides) are predominantly seasonal and occur on an annual basis, while other hazards (such as earthquakes) are rare events but potentially highly destructive.

Every year, Kyrgyzstan registers about \$35 million of damage from natural disasters. Limited state and local government resources available for disaster reduction and response, compounded with poverty and low coping capacity of the most vulnerable communities, exacerbate the population's high vulnerability. Furthermore, in recent decades, the entire region of Central Asia, including Kyrgyzstan, has experienced a steep increase in the incidence and severity of weather and water-related disasters. Due to prevailing climate change processes, this trend is likely to continue and possibly intensify in coming years and decades.

Children are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters: most of the deaths in the 2008 Nura earthquake¹⁰² and the 2009 Raykomol mudslides¹⁰³ were of children under 18 years of age. Child survivors require specialised social and psychological assistance¹⁰⁴. Disasters also disrupt access to and continuity of education. The Ministry of Education and Science is aware of the need for increased focus on disaster risk reduction in the education system, and intends to work with the Ministry of Emergency Situations and the donor community to achieve this.

Following the June crisis, humanitarian response to the conflict has been coordinated by a Humanitarian Country Team and nine of the global humanitarian Clusters. An analogous system has also been established in

recent years at the national level to improve preparedness and respond to small and medium-scale natural disasters. The Disaster Response Coordination Unit (DRCU) is comprised of representatives of the donor community, NGOs, the Red Crescent and UN organisations, and is mandated under national legislation to coordinate international disaster response as part of the Government's Inter-Agency Committee on Disaster Management. The DRCU coordinates seven sector groups based on the global cluster system, and two geographically-based rapid emergency and coordination teams.

Social protection

In 2008, 2.8 per cent of GDP was used for social protection measures including social insurance¹⁰⁵. Currently the social assistance system includes two cash benefits and category-based compensations. Successive governments, with international support, have been committed to improving social protection in Kyrgyzstan. The system was improved in 2009 with the introduction of a new Law on State Social Benefits, which aims to increase the coverage and size of the poverty-targeted benefit to children. There are currently two targeted cash benefit programmes: Monthly Benefits intended for the children of the poorest families and the Monthly Social Benefits, mainly for people with disabilities and elderly people ineligible for pensions. State benefits are too low to effectively improve living standards and insufficiently targeted to be sustainable. The head of the State Agency for Social Welfare has reportedly admitted that social support for children with disabilities is miserly¹⁰⁶.

The most effective social benefit, in fact, at reducing poverty among children is the

¹⁰² UNICEF, Children Bear the Brunt of Earthquake in Kyrgyzstan, 7 October 2008, at http://www.unicef.org/emerg/kyrgyzstan_45859.html;

¹⁰³ 24.kg, Most of landslide victims killed in Kyrgyz south are children, 16 April 2009, at <http://eng.24.kg/incidents/2009/04/16/7733.html>;

¹⁰⁴ UNISDR, In-depth Review of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2010;

¹⁰⁵ Kyrgyzstan, Combined Third and Fourth Periodic Reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, July 2010;

¹⁰⁶ Tolgonay Osmongazieva, Yekaterina Khoroshman: V Kyrgyzstane prozhivayut 148 tysyachi 800 chelovek s ogranichennymi vozmozhnostyami, iz nikh 22 tysyachi – deti [Yekaterina Khoroshman: 124,800 people with disabilities live in Kyrgyzstan, of whom 22,000 are children], 24.kg, 23 September 2010;

Recommendations:

National level:

- Support the Government to develop a water, sanitation and hygiene policy for emergency conditions.
- Research needs and means to improve access to water, sanitation and hygiene in education and healthcare facilities.

Community level:

- Improve water and sanitation in education and healthcare facilities (including water supply and latrines).
- Promote hygiene (in particular hand washing) as a key public health strategy.

pension. Thirty per cent of all children live in households with at least one pensioner. Analysis of 2007 data has shown that if pensions were not included in household income, extreme poverty would have risen from eight to 27 per cent and general poverty from 43 to 56 per cent. In contrast, without Monthly Benefits the rises would have been to just 13 and 46 per cent respectively¹⁰⁷.

Despite the programmes highlighted above, up to two-thirds of those living in extreme poverty are still excluded from social assistance. Targeting is complicated by the large number of households living below or near the poverty line, and by the high proportion of household income from informal earnings, which are difficult to verify. In addition, the propiska system, which restricts lawful residence to where one is registered, leads to the exclusion of the majority of internal migrants, including those in the newbuild settlements around Bishkek. Other groups often excluded include stateless persons and persons with disabilities¹⁰⁸.

Social assistance comes from both national and local budgets. Strengthening of the national budget has limited the local government role in combating poverty in recent years. Local government at sub-district level now is responsible for carrying out poverty mapping, identifying the social protection needs of the population, evaluating applications for social assistance, registering documents for state benefits and preparing lists of poor people in need of humanitarian assistance. In addition, local budgets pay the salaries of local authority social workers and certain targeted benefits for groups such as police, people who worked

¹⁰⁷ Institute of Strategic Analysis and Evaluation Under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF, Global Report on Child Poverty and Disparities: National Report Kyrgyzstan, 2009;

¹⁰⁸ Asian Development Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Bank, with participation of the Eurasian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Commission, International Financial Corporation and the United Nations. Joint Economic Assessment: Reconciliation, Recovery and Reconstruction (JEA). 21 July 2010;

in Chernobyl, women who have had many children and people with hearing and sight problems. Additional funding for vulnerable families is still provided in some cases, but this depends on resources available locally¹⁰⁹. As reported in the child protection section above, the staff member responsible usually covers several villages and is also responsible for child protection activities.

Budgeting issues

Kyrgyzstan's budgetary system is made up of the national budget and local budgets, which are incorporated into an overall budget for the country. The national budget is a centralised fund intended to finance state activities at both the national and local levels. Since 1998, the Ministry of Finance has begun preparing mid-term budget forecasts, and government Ministries and departments are actively involved in drawing up budget requests and making budget forecasts on a programmatic basis.

Local budgets are formed from local tax revenues and some funds allocated from the national budget. Certain items of budget spending are ring fenced in transfers to local government, including salaries, Social Fund contributions, social benefits, and medicines.

In order to achieve equity for children and meet the Millennium Development Goals, government action and budgetary decisions are needed across all areas of UNICEF's interest. Decentralisation, which leads to decisions being made by people who are more aware of the key issues, requires budgetary choices at the local level. Work is underway, particularly at the national level, to make disaggregated budget analysis of social sectors including health, education, social protection/welfare and water and sanitation, in order to identify efficiency gains and redistribute existing re-

¹⁰⁹ Institute of Strategic Analysis and Evaluation Under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF, Global Report on Child Poverty and Disparities: National Report Kyrgyzstan, 2009;

Recommendations:

National level:

- Work with national authorities to influence policy to promote and institutionalise the concept of disaster risk reduction (help establish a legal, information and coordination framework), with particular attention to needs of children.
- Build the capacity of Government and other partners to empower them to effectively promote and implement disaster risk reduction interventions.
- Advocate for incorporation of disaster risk reduction into formal and non-formal school curricula.
- Advocate for school and pre-school safety, preparedness and training with emphasis on seismic risk.
- Advocate for disaster risk reduction interventions to be child-focused.

Community level:

- Promote and demonstrate the concept of disaster risk reduction among the most vulnerable communities.
- Carry out disaster risk reduction education and awareness-raising for pre-school and school children, including for children outside the formal educational system, among vulnerable communities.
- Promote and ensure the structural and non-structural safety of schools and other key public social facilities under natural disaster conditions.

Recommendations:

National level:

- Support disaggregated data analysis — including on gender — to inform evidence-based policymaking and ensure that child poverty is being addressed.
- Support reform of cash transfer system to assist most vulnerable families and children and reduce exclusion errors.
- Improve access to social protection decision making process by all stakeholders, particularly the most disadvantaged groups.
- Social and economic policy analysis, focusing specifically on child poverty, analysis of disparities, including gender-based inequalities.

Community level:

- Facilitate demand creation for social protection.

sources within each sector to the basic and primary service components of each, such as public health centres, early childhood development and primary education as opposed to tertiary services. However there is a need for capacity building for budgetary decisions, particularly at the local level in vulnerable communities. In addition, in general there are currently few opportunities for vulnerable women and children to participate in and influence budgetary processes¹¹⁰. For more on financing in individual sectors, see the health, education, child protection and social protection sections above.

Peacebuilding needs among youth in the context of the June events

Even before the outbreak of the conflict in the south, youth were already in a vulnerable situation due to limited opportunities in employment, education, participation in political affairs and empowerment processes. A recent survey (2009) indicated falling levels of knowledge, information awareness, educational achievements and professional skills, as well as a general deterioration in health status and an increase in crime and law infringement among youth¹¹¹. UNDP's 2009/2010 National Human Development Report on Youth indicates that youth are experiencing exclusion in almost all areas, including education, employment, health care, family, and entrepreneurship. With inadequate educational training and poor economic prospects, many young people turn to crime and drugs¹¹². Lack of access to information and to channels where youth can voice their interest and concerns is

¹¹⁰ Galina Solodunova, Kyrgyzstan: the reality of child poverty, UNICEF, 2004;

¹¹¹ Institute of Strategic Analysis and Evaluation Under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF Global Study on Child Poverty and Disparities – Kyrgyzstan National Report;

¹¹² The last decade saw an almost six-fold increase in drug abuse, with the average age of drug users now been 14-15 years old and a resulting growth in HIV-infection. More than 60 percent of all registered crimes in 2008 were committed by young people;

also a rising problem¹¹³.

The continued lack of opportunities makes youth more vulnerable to being engaged in violent demonstrations, criminal activities and general civil unrest. This was evident in the April revolution, which saw high involvement of groups of young people who felt themselves disenfranchised despite efforts by the previous regime to bring youth into the political process (the 2007 parliamentary election had introduced a party list quota for youth).

During the June inter-ethnic conflict in the south most participants were young people aged between 20–25, with some video evidence showing involvement of children younger than 15. While groups of youths were seen as the perpetrators of the violence, they were also the main victims. There is currently an acute shortage of specialists to carry out psychological and rehabilitative work with either of these groups in the post-conflict context.

As noted in the background section above, there are other ethnic and regional tensions in the country besides the Kyrgyz / Uzbek divide. In recent years interethnic violence has flared up in villages in Chuy Province between Dungs and Kyrgyz (2006)¹¹⁴; Kyrgyz, Russians and Kurds (2009)¹¹⁵; and Kyrgyz and Turks (2010)¹¹⁶. Tension is also present in many areas on the borders with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, often connected to water and land issues¹¹⁷. Within the Kyrgyz community, the longstand-

ing political and cultural divide between the north and south sometimes also contributes to tension, and was partly responsible for the 2005 and 2010 overthrows of government¹¹⁸. Youth from communities around the country have the potential to be victims of, or used to perpetrate violence.

The Government is well aware of the importance of youth policy. Global practice has shown that young people, in addition to being victims and perpetrators, can engage to play a strong positive role in peacebuilding and achieving sustainable peace in conflict and post-conflict environments. Following the April events, the Department of Youth Affairs was upgraded into a Ministry of Youth to address the specific concerns of youth, engage young people in civic activism and promote a broader sense of social and moral responsibility. The Ministry currently works with a small budget, but may expand when government finances allow¹¹⁹.

The recent violence in the south led to a post-conflict situation characterized by high levels of distrust between communities and local authorities (not only between Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnic groups). In view of the rapidly growing dissatisfaction and disaffection of citizens (especially youth) with the current situation in the region, confidence between youth and government authorities, including law enforcements agencies, has to be rebuilt to promote peace and security.

¹¹³ UNDP Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyzstan: Successful youth and successful country, 2010;

¹¹⁴ Cholpon Orozobekova, Government Intervenes After Kyrgyz Village Violence, IWPR, 10 February 2006, at <http://iwpr.net/report-news/government-intervenes-after-kyrgyz-village-violence>;

¹¹⁵ RFE/RL, Kyrgyz Police Detain 80 After Interethnic Tensions, 26 April 2009, at http://www.rferl.org/content/Eighty_Detained_Following_Interethnic_Tensions_In_Kyrgyzstan/1616297.html;

¹¹⁶ Joldosh Osmonov, Maevka Unrest Threatens Interethnic Stability, Central Asia – Caucasus Institute Analyst, 28 April 2010, at <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5319>;

¹¹⁷ Negmatullo Mirsaidov and Maks Maksudov, Border disputes fuel Ferghana tensions, Central Asia Online, 20 September 2010, at http://centralasiaonline.com/cocoon/caii/xhtml/en_GB/features/caii/features/main/2010/09/20/feature-01;

The framework for protecting children's rights

¹¹⁸ Bruce Pannier, Future Kyrgyz Government Faces Traditional North-South Divide, RFE/RL, 26 April 2010, at http://www.rferl.org/content/Future_Kyrgyz_Government_Faces_Traditional_NorthSouth_Divide/2025131.html;

¹¹⁹ Julia Mazykina, Mirlan Zhukeshov: Kyrgyz Ministry of Youth Affairs is not a moulage and not a mirage, 24.kg, 5 November 2010, at <http://eng.24.kg/community/2010/11/05/14686.html>;

Recommendations:

National level:

- Carry out high-level social and economic policy analysis to ensure that budgeting at national level is responsive to children's needs.
- Engage in budget policy and processes (analysis, implementation, M&E, transparency).

Community level:

- Upgrade municipal-level capacity for local gender- and child-sensitive local planning and budgeting.
- Enhance local planning and monitoring to improve child rights governance at local level through support for development, fund allocation, implementation and monitoring of gender-sensitive local plans for children, and for reporting on status of both girls and boys every year.
- Develop capacity of community planning committees to bring together all stakeholders in communities over concrete needs.

The ultimate aim of all UNICEF-supported activities globally is the realisation of the rights of children and women, as laid down in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. While protection of children's rights is inherent in all aspects of the organisation's work, this section merely focuses on the institutional framework to monitor and protect them.

The protection of children's rights and interests is a priority for Kyrgyzstan. In 1994, the country ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child¹²⁰. The Children's Code, adopted in 2006, was the first attempt in Central Asia to put the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child coherently into national legislation in order to more adequately protect children's rights. After recommendations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Children's Code includes a provision for the country's Ombudsperson to protect the rights, freedom and legal interests of children including through the court system, and a Child Rights Department was established in the Ombudsman's Office in 2009. The Office has carried out several inspections and other monitoring since its founding but there are still concerns that it does not have the capacity to monitor the full range of children's rights around the country. There is no specific official institution for the protection of children's rights, or anybody who brings together different sectors to ensure that children's rights are respected widely. This gap was demonstrated during the response to the June crisis, in which no government body was systematically collecting information on children's rights issues. While there are civil society organisations involved in the monitoring of children's rights, these tend to be concentrated in Bishkek and, to a lesser extent, Osh.

Rights within the family and rights of

¹²⁰ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, Consolidated Third and Fourth Periodic Reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, July 2010;

women

The issue of domestic violence remains critical in Kyrgyzstan. According to a 2008 study, at least one in four women in the country had suffered violence at home¹²¹. A Law on Socio-Legal Protection from Domestic Violence was adopted in 2003, but implementation of its provisions has been lagging. In November 2008¹²², the UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) raised serious concerns about widespread domestic violence in Kyrgyzstan, and the ineffectiveness of the police response¹²³. After a November 2009 visit, the UN Special Rapporteur on Women concluded that legislation and formal commitments to protect women have largely not been translated into concrete actions and improvements for ordinary women, and that “women and girls’ vulnerability to violence, exploitation and destitution has increased¹²⁴.” On 18 January 2010, the Interior Minister reported to parliament that the police receive about 10,000 complaints about domestic violence every year, and that 97 per cent of plaintiffs are women. Legislative reform was introduced to coordinate government bodies working against domestic violence and to introduce community service orders for offenders¹²⁵.

¹²¹ Anara Moldosheva, Violence against Women in Kyrgyzstan: Baseline Assessment, UNFPA, 2008;

¹²² Human Rights Watch, Domestic Violence in Kyrgyzstan, 2008;

¹²³ CEDAW, Concluding Observations on Kyrgyzstan, CEDAW/C/KGZ/CO/3, 14 November 2008;

¹²⁴ Rashida Majoo, Report on Mission to Kyrgyzstan, A/HRC/14/22/Add.2, 28 May 2010;

¹²⁵ Aizada Kutueva. Kyrgyz law enforcement agencies get 10000 domestic violence claims annually, 24.kg. January 2010, at eng.24.kg/polic/2010/01/18/10133.html;

Recommendations:

National level:

- Improve understanding of the particular issues facing youth and children as victims, perpetrators and peacebuilders by carrying out in-depth research and analysis of the relationship of youth and children with conflict.
- Support development of Youth Policy, National Strategy and Action Plan for Youth (addressing also tolerance, peacebuilding and reconciliation).
- Explore possibilities for accreditation of non-formal education and certificate in youth work and leadership.
- Conflict resolution and peacebuilding training (including psycho-social) for teachers, administrators, student leaders, communities/parents.
- Support peace education programming, and peacebuilding in school curricula.
- Carry out policy advocacy for mixed and integrated schools.
- Work with national media to promote tolerance and peacebuilding.

Community level:

- Establish youth centres for constructive civic, peacebuilding, and volunteer leadership programmes and activities in conflict affected communities.
- Support training and informal education of youth in youth leadership, using methods such as volunteering to bring communities together.
- Facilitate the organisational development of key partner youth civil society organisations carrying out youth work.
- Support education and communication activities for peace and tolerance among youth and children from communities at risk of conflict (with other organisations).
- Support capacity development for local authorities to support voluntary youth work and youth centres.
- Work with local media to promote behavioural change and to encourage uptake of the services listed above.

Recommendations:

National level:

- Advocate for a child rights ombudsman, but in the meantime work to develop the capacity of the Ombudsman's office to monitor and promote children's rights.
- Research the current capacity of all institutions (including parliament, the Ombudsman's office, the General Prosecutor's office, the court system, local government, NGOs and CBOs to monitor and protect children's rights) and support capacity development where appropriate.
- Support disaggregated data analysis — including on gender — to inform evidence-based policymaking and child rights monitoring institutions.
- Develop the capacity of child rights monitoring institutions to provide and exchange information and produce accurate and timely reports on child rights.
- Promote strategic alliances for children's rights

Community level:

- Develop capacity of community-based organisations for implementation, monitoring and reporting on child rights issues.
- Forge links between local government and civil society to build capacity for implementation, monitoring and protection of children's rights.

The continuing high prevalence of bride abduction in Kyrgyzstan, despite its prohibition in law, remains a serious concern¹²⁶. Officially, just 27 cases of bride abduction were reported by the Prosecutor General's office in the period 2003-2008, but the Government acknowledges that the true figure is much higher¹²⁷. The practice is largely confined to the ethnic Kyrgyz community, many of whom perceive it as a national tradition. One study estimates that 30 per cent of all marriages in the country are the result of bride-kidnapping, while others have found that in certain areas, predominately at village level, the prevalence may be as high as 80 per cent. The Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women suggests that a range of economic, legal, social and cultural factors account for continuing perpetration of bride kidnapping¹²⁸. Many victims of bride abduction are reportedly under 18 years of age. The Government reports that UNDP and UNIFEM have been supporting state bodies and NGOs to carry out awareness raising work in schools and in society against the practice, and it has been discussed in Government and Parliament in 2009 and 2010. The Government hopes to address the issue in part by strengthening its ban on religious marriage which is not accompanied by state registration¹²⁹.

The minimum legal age for marriage in Kyrgyzstan is 18 years. However, MICS research indicates that approximately 12.2 per cent of women in Kyrgyzstan marry before this age. In rural areas, the study indicates a 14.2 per cent early marriage rate¹³⁰. According to a UNFPA report, early marriages are generally not legally registered. As a result, children born of these marriages either do not receive birth

¹²⁶ CEDAW, Concluding Observations on Kyrgyzstan, CEDAW/C/KGZ/CO/3, 14 November 2008;

¹²⁷ Kyrgyzstan, Consolidated Third and Fourth Periodic Reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, July 2010;

¹²⁸ Rashida Majoo, Report on Mission to Kyrgyzstan, A/HRC/14/22/Add.2, 28 May 2010;

¹²⁹ Kyrgyzstan, Consolidated Third and Fourth Periodic Reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, July 2010;

¹³⁰ National Statistical Committee and UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey. 2007, p. 68;

certificates or receive them late. Furthermore, women and girls coerced into early marriage often become the victims of forced domestic labour, are denied opportunities of education, and are rarely granted property rights. The CEDAW Alternative Report suggests that poverty and unemployment, patriarchal tradition, and religious conservatism are leading factors in the prevalence of early marriage¹³¹. After the June 2010 violence in southern Kyrgyzstan, the humanitarian Protection Cluster, activated in response to this year's crisis, has reported an apparent rise in early marriage of girls within the Uzbek community, reportedly because of the difficult economic and security situation.

Meanwhile, the birth rate among 15-17 year old girls was 4.7 per 1000 in 2008, a slight rise from 4.5 per 1000 in 2005. The highest rate (9.4 per 1000) was recorded in Chuy province. The Government's report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child states that this is because of massive internal migration to Chuy province by rural youth, the lack of adequate healthcare services for adolescents and youth, and the lack of a sex education policy¹³². Many of the internal migrants in Chuy province are living in newbuild settlements around Bishkek.

Women are generally underrepresented in senior government positions. An exception to this is President Roza Otunbaeva. After a parliament from 2005-7 with no female members, a quota system was introduced for political parties in the 2007 elections. The 2007-2010 parliament had 24 female members (32 per cent). During the 2007-2010 parliament, female deputies initiated 148 out of 554 bills brought to the floor, many on socio-economic issues ranging from promotion of breastfeeding to equal rights and opportunities for women and men¹³³. However, the new parliament sworn in on 10 November 2010 is less equal,

¹³¹ Council of NGOs, CEDAW Shadow Report, 2008. p. 97;

¹³² Kyrgyzstan, Consolidated Third and Fourth Periodic Reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, July 2010;

¹³³ Aidai Bedelbaeva and Jyldyz Kuvatova, Widening women's political representation in Kyrgyzstan, UNDP, 11 August 2010;

Recommendations:

National level:

- Support in-depth research on the scale of bride abduction and marriage among under-18s, and the factors behind it.
- Develop alliances to counter bride abduction, early marriage and gender-based violence.

Community level:

- Support education and communication activities on bride abduction, early marriage and gender-based violence in communities where these problems are widespread.

with just 28 of 120 deputies (23 per cent) being women, which falls under the requirement of MDG3, and the new Government sworn in on 27 January has no female members at all. Progress on other MDG3 targets for gender equality is mixed: there remains a majority of female university students (55.7 per cent against a target of 50 per cent), and a growth in the salary gap in favour of men (women received 63.9 per cent of men's salaries in 2009, as opposed to 67.6 per cent in 2000)¹³⁴.

¹³⁴ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic/United Nations, Second Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGR), 2010.;

Conclusion:

The UNICEF Country Programme Document for 2012-2016 has been developed in a very different context than previous editions. Security, socioeconomic and political events have significantly altered the environment for the realisation of children's rights. The consequences of these shocks are still unfolding and the context for activities in the next five years is unpredictable. Government budget falls short and the difficult international economic climate may force cutbacks in social spending and a rollback of services. The continuing economic difficulties of the population may fuel a return to political instability and insecurity.

Nevertheless, while planning for all eventualities, UNICEF should go forward on the assumption that the next five years will be more stable in Kyrgyzstan. The Government, as well as their development partners, know the importance of improving their activities to meet crucial needs of the population, including those in health, education and social protection. Achievements in children's rights, maternal and child health, nutrition, access to preschool education and targeting of social benefits need to be built upon and expanded.

This report has highlighted some of the ways in which UNICEF's work should adapt to the new context. UNICEF has recognised that national progress towards the Millennium Development Goals masks inequities in indicators between different income quintiles and geographical locations. There is a need to refocus efforts on the most vulnerable and marginalised children, including those living in remote districts and in areas affected by conflict. There should also be greater focus on the particular unmet needs of children in southern Kyrgyzstan, some of which may have contributed indirectly to the 2010 conflict. Communi-

ty-level programming in the most vulnerable communities is an important aspect of this.

UNICEF should continue to use its leverage within the donor community to ensure that funds are most effectively utilised in equity-based programming. The organisation's strength in communication for development and policy-oriented data collection and research should be creatively expanded into other thematic areas to bring about real change for the most marginalised children. And UNICEF also needs to support government bodies and civil society organisations to develop their internal capacity for planning, monitoring and data sharing that will enable all interventions to be ultimately sustainable.

Recommendations

Based upon the findings of this Situation Assessment, this section highlights some priority issues for action by the Government and its development partners to assist in achieving the broad spectrum of rights of children in Kyrgyzstan. This report does not specify what should be done to deal with these issues, as action is already being taken by specialists from the Government and its development partners. Recommendations are presented by thematic area.

In the area of **health**, efforts should be stepped up to meet the health-related MDGs on maternal and infant mortality in an equitable manner. More should focus on meeting the maternal and child healthcare needs of vulnerable and difficult to reach women and children, and groups at risk including women and children living outside their place of registration, stateless persons, and members of minority ethnic groups. Local healthcare institutions, authorities and communities in the most vulnerable areas of the country should receive additional support to improve local maternal and child health indicators. The approach should be broad based, addressing the social and economic reasons behind high maternal and infant mortality, as well as ensuring that there is human and technical capacity at local level for quality maternal and child healthcare.

In addition, efforts should be made to ensure that the State Guarantees for healthcare provision for the most vulnerable are met fully and equitably. The Ministry of Health should be supported to improve its capacity to manage maternal and child health, including support for monitoring and evaluation activities. Efforts should also be stepped up to end stigma and discrimination against women and children living with HIV and AIDS and to

prevent hospital-level, and mother-to-child transmission.

With regard to **nutrition**, efforts should continue to develop, implement and monitor the National Strategy of Nutrition addressing micronutrient deficiencies among children under two. Current nutrition interventions on micronutrients, fortified flour, iodised salt and breastfeeding should continue and be scaled up around the country, with a focus on the most vulnerable communities.

The linkage of nutritional with **early childhood development** programming has proved successful and should continue to be rolled out around the country. There should also be more focus on parenting skills in the media, and among communities in the south of Kyrgyzstan, where surveys have shown lower levels of parent-child interaction and higher levels of child abuse and neglect.

On **education**, there should be an emphasis on improving the learning outcome of children at all levels. More efforts should be made to expand pre-school educational opportunities, particularly in impoverished and remote communities. The Education SWAp should be rolled out, building a strategic partnership and leveraging resources for children to improve equity in access to quality learning environment. Real solutions need to be found to resolve the shortages and low motivation of teachers in pre-school, primary and secondary education. The Ministry of Education and Science's capacity to monitor the situation around the country, and analyse problems of school dropouts and human and material shortages should be developed through support to the proposed national Education Monitoring and Information System.

Development partners should also work closely with the Ministry to scale up peace and tolerance educational programmes around the country to include all social groups facing stigma and barriers to education. There is also a need for work to address the serious problems of bullying and violence in schools around the country.

In the field of **child protection**, development partners should support the Government to improve coordination of child protection activities across government structures in order to better address the needs of the vulnerable and the poor (including gatekeeping, children in conflict with the law, child abuse and adoption). In addition, the widespread institutionalisation of children and other child protection problems linked to economic concerns requires work to integrate child protection and social protection services, to ensure that, as much as possible, children can remain with their families. Support should be given to these services at national and community level to improve performance.

More needs to be done to ensure that all children and particularly children of labour migrants, those living in newbuild settlements, children of parents without marriage certificates and children of stateless persons receive birth certificates. Concerted efforts to end the worst forms of child labour, including work in mines and at radioactive tailings, should be undertaken. The Government should also be supported to improve early identification and registration of and support to children with disabilities.

The Government should introduce a new law on **juvenile justice** that promotes diversion and alternative measures to places of detention. Development partners should work with the Government to roll out and enforce the new juvenile justice system equitably around the country. The Government should be supported to improve coordination between national and local bodies on juvenile justice issues, partly by establishing a common data-

base on children in contact with the law.

Development partners should support the Government to introduce the position of **child rights** ombudsman, but in the meantime work to develop the capacity of the Ombudsman's office to monitor and promote children's rights. The Government should be supported to produce disaggregated data analysis — including on gender — to inform policymaking and child rights monitoring institutions. The capacity of child rights monitoring institutions at all levels to provide and exchange information and produce accurate and timely reports on child rights should be developed.

With regards to **gender**, development partners should support the Government to make more concerted efforts to address the widespread problems of bride abduction, early marriage and domestic violence, including child abuse. There should be a focus on education and community actions at community level to address the causes of these problems.

On the issue of **disaster risk reduction**, development partners should work with the Government to promote and institutionalise the concept of disaster risk reduction by establishing a legal, information and coordination framework, with particular attention to the needs of children. This should include developing capacity in state and local bodies to meet water, sanitation and hygiene needs in emergency conditions. The capacity of government and other national partners should be developed to effectively promote and implement disaster risk reduction interventions. More support should be given at local and national levels to ensure school and pre-school safety in disaster conditions, with an emphasis on seismic risk and, as much as possible, all disaster risk reduction interventions should be child focused.

In the area of **peacebuilding**, there is a deep need for improved understanding of the particular issues facing youth and children as victims, perpetrators and peacebuild-

Recommendations

ers. Development partners should support the Government to develop a youth policy, national strategy and action plan for youth, which should partly address tolerance, peacebuilding and reconciliation, and bring young people from different communities together in safe environments. Conflict resolution and peacebuilding training (with a psychosocial component) should be provided for teachers, administrators, youth leaders, communities and parents. Support should also be given to media organisations to promote intercommunal reconciliation.

With regard to **social protection**, support for systematic reform should continue and be extended to ensure that assistance benefits as many vulnerable families as possible. The Government should be supported to carry out disaggregated data analysis — including on gender — to inform policymaking and ensure that all aspects of child poverty is being addressed.

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For every child
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