



COUNTRY FACTS AND FIGURES



Population:	6.672 million (National Statistical Committee of Kyrgyz Republic, 2021)
2021 Global Index Score:	74.00/100 (SDR 2021)
2021 Global Index Rank:	44/165 (SDR 2021)
SDG 4 Dashboard:	● SDG achieved (SDR 2021)
SDG 4 Trend:	↑ On track or maintaining SDG achievement (SDR 2021)
SDG 10 Dashboard:	↗ Moderately improving (SDR 2021)
2019 HDI Value/Rank:	0.697, 120 out of 189 (HDRO, 2020)
GNI per capita (PPP\$):	4,864 (HDRO, 2020)
Gini Index:	29.69 (Statista, 2020)
Income Group:	Lower-Middle Income Status (WB, 2020)
Education Expenditure:	5.73 % of the GDP, 22.2% of the total budget (National Statistical Committee, 2020)
Secondary Net Enrolment:	Total: 85.2% Female: 85% Male: 85.5% (UNESCO, 2019)
Literacy Rate (15 years & older):	Total: 99.6% Female: 99.5% Male: 99.7% (UNESCO, 2018)
Out of School:	2,574 children 11,164 adolescents- 6,536 Female; 4,628 Male (UNESCO, 2019)

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Meeting of representatives of non-governmental organisations, including AED, in Osh in support of inclusive education (March 2021)

Civil Society Spotlight Report on SDG 4 for HLPF 2021

I. COUNTRY CONTEXT

The Kyrgyz Republic is a small, landlocked country with relatively high levels of poverty and a lower-middle-income status that is dependent on remittances from labour migrants working in neighbouring countries.

The territory covers 199.9 thousand km². Almost 90 per cent of the territory is located 1500 m above sea level: 5.8 per cent - forests, 4.4 per cent - water, 53.3 per cent - agricultural land. Kyrgyzstan occupies a marginal position in Central Asia. The country's climate is sharply continental. All these conditions make farming risky.

The population is 6.672 million people¹, of which the urban population is over 2 million (34%), while over 4 million (66%) live in rural areas.

More than a third (35%) of the total population are children and adolescents, 57 per cent are people of working age.

The GDP per capita is USD 1,178 (World Bank, 2020). The poverty rate in 2020, calculated based on consumer spending, was 25.3 per cent across the country, which increased from the 2019 figure of 20 per cent.²

II. ACHIEVEMENTS IN IMPLEMENTING SDG 4 AND OVERCOMING THE IMPACT OF LOCKDOWNS

In 2020, Kyrgyzstan prepared its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) and reported on the implementation of the SDGs at the UN High-Level

¹ From the National Statistical Committee of Kyrgyz Republic, 2021

² From the National Statistical Committee of Kyrgyz Republic, 2020



Youth from rural areas support the One Billion Voices campaign for education (2021)

Political Forum (HLPF). The work done was highly appreciated due to the existing mechanism of interaction between civil society organisations and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Currently, due to the transformation of the governing bodies, the process of preparing the Roadmap for the implementation of the SDGs has been suspended.

The VNR³ noted that, despite a number of these challenges⁴, there have been positive shifts in almost all SDG 4 targets, and not only quantitative ones, including the increase in the number of students, but also infrastructural and institutional ones, such as the construction of kindergartens, schools, universities, Internet coverage of schools (99%), development of platforms for additional education of students, and digital enrolment in educational institutions.

The coverage of various levels of vocational education has increased. This is seen as a positive step because the students of these institutions more often remain in the labour market of the country. With regard to higher education, it should be noted that the number of universities increased to 73 by 2021 (62 in 2019).⁵

³ <https://www.gov.kg/files/news/froala/f3ddb48acf7a344ef780e4e875f9d9039f15533.pdf>

⁴ Relatively small coverage by preschool educational institutions, although a significantly increased percentage of attendance at preparatory school courses, weak link between vocational educational institutions and employers, lack of renovation in a large number of educational institutions, both schools and VET schools

⁵ <https://edu.gov.kg/>

The gender equality index at the primary school level is 1, at the basic school level - 1.01, at the high school level - 0.97. Gender disaggregation has also been introduced in the reporting of vocational education and training (VET).

III. COPING WITH THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION

The pandemic has exacerbated the plight of the poor. It is troubling to note that 52 per cent of all poor households in the country reported some or significant deterioration in their financial situation. The proportion of those affected was especially high among households with a female breadwinner (65%). The sudden shift to distance education required households to cover additional costs, such as paying for the Internet costs and buying computers and mobile phones.

Due to the introduction of a lockdown in the country, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) of the Kyrgyz Republic created the special Anti-Crisis Plan in March 2020. About 83 per cent of students are covered by distance learning using technical means (mobile phone and tablet (98.9%), TV (51.5%), computer and laptop (5.6%) and others (0.7)).

Taking into account the realities, the Ministry proposed and developed various formats of distance learning,

which continue to be improved and replenished. Due to the pandemic and the closure of preschool educational organisations, access to preschool education has dropped. There has been a decrease in pre-school education by 3.4 per cent, which was organised online for 107,000 children.

A number of studies have shown that the education system in the country is not ready for distance learning methods due to the following: adequate infrastructure is not in place, schools and students do not have an adequate number of gadgets for effective learning, and teachers do not have the capacity to carry out distance-learning methods.

All these factors have reduced the quality of education for the majority of students. Learners from low-income households or poor families are much less likely to access education. Available evidence suggests that at least 1 in 10 children⁶ most likely did not have access to distance learning. In almost every third household, parents or guardians of children are not satisfied⁷ with the online learning process for various reasons, including difficulties in understanding the material, lack of access to a stable Internet connection, and insufficient equipment).

IV. CHALLENGES FOR IMPLEMENTING SDG 4

Kyrgyzstan moved steadily towards the implementation of SDG 4 during the period of 2015-2019. State programmes corresponded with the achievement of the SDGs on various parameters up to 82 per cent.⁸

The main challenges for the implementation of SDG 4 are currently driven by two factors:

- A. The COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of the imposed lockdown in the country, which caused the closure of most educational institutions or a shift to other modes of learning. There was also a sharp decline in the country's economic situation, which made it challenging to provide sufficient additional funding for education.
- B. The protracted transformation of the political system, which began in October 2020 and has not yet been completed. As a result, legal rules have not been formed, and the administrative system (executive branch) does not have sufficient rules and grounds for effective functioning.

⁸ The Rapid Comprehensive Assessment (RAP) of 36 strategic documents showed that the compliance of the Sustainable Development Goals with the national strategic development planning in the Kyrgyz Republic is 82%.

⁶ COVID-19 Response and Early Recovery Plan, Report. <https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/Annual%20progress%20report-2.pdf>

⁷ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic "Survey on the impact of COVID-19 on the situation of children and women in Kyrgyzstan with financial and technical support from UNICEF. March 2021"



Training for civil society representatives on advocacy tools held in Osh city



Youth from rural areas support the One Billion Voices campaign for Education 2021

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The confluence of crises brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic curtailed progress on the SDGs and jeopardised the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Targeted actions are needed to rebuild and ensure better progress towards the full SDGs, including SDG 4, by 2030.

It is necessary to direct efforts in:

1. Including the provision of stable Internet access and necessary computers or gadgets for educational purposes to every household; increasing the number of qualified teachers with remote teaching skills as part of the national SDG indicators of SDG 4 in the country; support for the creation of a digital platform for teacher training.
2. Providing social and psychological support to students as they return to school, developing manuals for parents to assist students of different ages in the process of distance learning and on health protocols when they return to school, and training parents to assist in the distance learning and provide psychosocial support to learners.
3. Establishing a consultative mechanism for the state and other relevant stakeholders, including the local government, civil society organisations, youth groups, and other relevant stakeholders, to address issues of access to education for vulnerable groups and improve education policies that will ensure education delivery especially for the most marginalised groups amidst the pandemic and even beyond. •



Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) is a regional association of more than 200 organisations and individuals working towards promoting quality education for all and transformative and liberating, lifelong adult education and learning.

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The Association for the Development of Education (AED) in Kyrgyzstan is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation that unites legal entities and individuals on the basis of their common interests. The main goal of the organisation is to assist in providing affordable and quality education for all throughout life. To date, the coalition has 12 members from the NGO sector and six individual members from different regions of the country. AED Kyrgyzstan is a member organisation of the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE).