

**ILO SUBREGIONAL OFFICE FOR EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA
BOOSTING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROJECT**

**REPORT
LOCAL SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS
IN KIZIL-KIA TOWN
OF BATKEN OBLAST OF KYRGYZSTAN
(QUALITY STUDY)**

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INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

Kizil-Kia town was identified by the ILO tripartite constituents and BYE project as a pilot site for project activities on promoting youth employment. The technical mission to Kizil-Kia stated a purpose of conducting initial fact-finding through Local Situational Analysis (Local SITAN) of youth employment in the pilot town. The assignment included collecting first-hand data through interviews with influencers and focus-groups with young people.

The objective of the Local SITAN was to make assessment of the current youth employment situation in the pilot town Kizil-Kia in the Southern region of Kyrgyzstan. This included review of the factors contributing to the existing unemployment rates of various youth groups, as well as analysis of characteristics of youth employment, self-employment and youth entrepreneurship in the pilot site.

Methodology

The study gathered information and qualitative data through interviews with the various groups of respondents:

- influencers (local policy makers, including tripartite partners, heads of community organizations, parents, teachers)
- young women and men aged 15-29 (young unemployed, youth in-school, young waged employees, young self-employed/entrepreneurs)

The groups of influencers were interviewed on the flexible open-discussion format. This allowed discussions with various groups of influencers that were not possible to categorise into some groups of respondents. The examples of questions asked are enclosed in the Annex 1.

Young people were approached via focus-group discussions with each of category of young women and men. Questionnaires for focus-groups are enclosed in the Annex 2.

Activities undertaken

The Local SITAN was conducted jointly by a team of experts consisting of ILO resource people and national experts who came from a research agency of Osh Oblast of Kyrgyzstan (Women's Business Centre of Osh Oblast).

The ILO resource people (national project coordinator and employment expert) conducted the following tasks:

1. Assessment of the socio-economic context and employment trends in the Kizil-Kia town
 - 1.1. Gather information and statistical data on the key economic and social indicators of the town, including poverty and unemployment rates, with a special focus on young groups of population (where possible).
 - 1.2. Gather information and data on governmental (both national and local level) policies and initiatives to promote youth employment
 - 1.3. Collect information on current national and local policies to promote entrepreneurship and whether there is an attention to developing youth entrepreneurship
2. Interviews with the Influencers on the youth employment situation:

- 2.1. Local government representatives (municipality), employers' and workers' organizations with aim to collect opinions on youth employment status, problems and perspectives. Based on the template open-ended questionnaire (provided in the Annex 1).
- 2.2. Teachers of the existing vocational schools and teachers of upper grades of secondary schools of Kizil-Kia town.
- 2.3. Heads of community organizations working on socio-economic issues of young people and with the youth organizations.
- 2.4. Parents of young people with aim to collect their opinions on youth employment situation in the Kizil-Kia town and discuss their relevant parental experiences.

Additional task was to participate at the moderation of many focus-groups with young people as it was possible within the timeframe of the mission (4 days).

National experts (2) were responsible for running focus-group discussions (facilitation) with young people aged 15-19, 20-24, and 25-29 as follows:

- Young women and men unemployed (3 focus groups for all 3 age categories)
- Young women and men waged employees (2 focus-groups for 20-24 and 25-29 year olds)
- Young women and men self-employed/entrepreneurs (3 focus groups for all 3 age categories)
- Young women and men in the education system (2 focus-groups of 15-19 and 20-24 year olds)

Totally, there were 10 focus group discussions conducted.

National experts collected records of all focus-group discussions (audio-files and paper-notes available).

Cross-checking: method

At the beginning of each focus-group discussion all participants were interrogated on their ages (age-check) and their occupation during the last week (check of their status). There were few cases when people were to be sent off to other more relevant focus-groups.

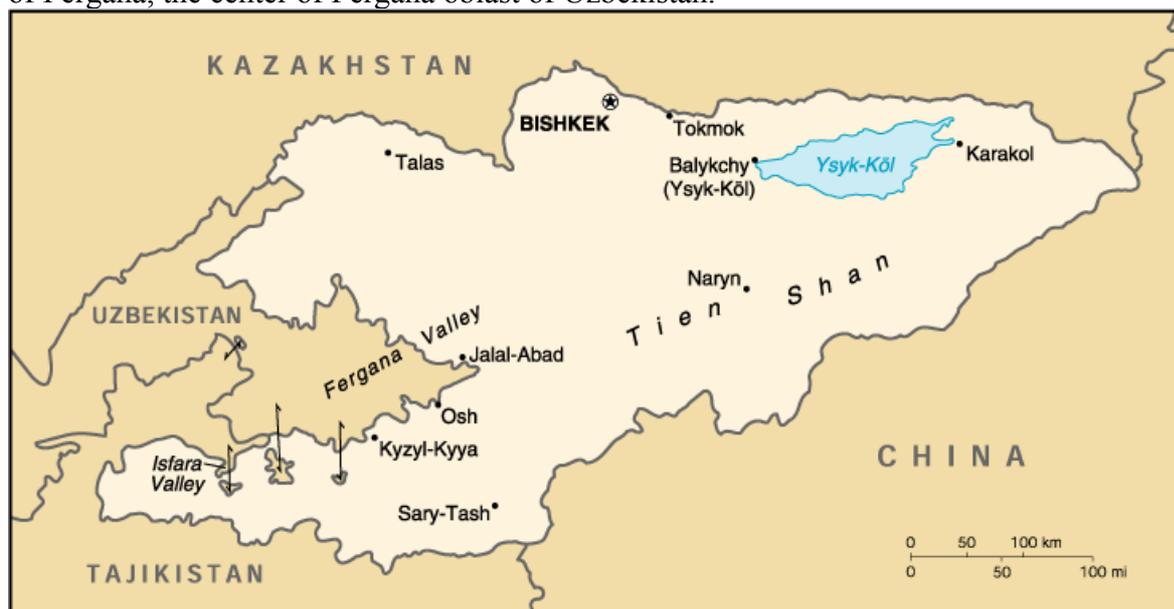
Identification and selection of participants of focus-groups

All young people were invited via local Territorial Self-governing Communities (TSCs) that represent major local community based organisations that cover all areas of Kizil-Kia and thus serve as major intermediary between municipality and population. Despite TSCs are informal in nature and not registered, the heads of TSCs are always invited to the meetings of the local municipality and thus they function as real territorial structures of the town. Involvement of TSCs into identification and selection of young people ensured geographical coverage of the whole Kizil-Kia town and proper classification of young respondents according to age and occupation groups. The status of many young people could only be identified by local community organisations who know their families and their occupations.

CHAPTER I KIZIL-KIA TOWN: SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE. YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT STATUS.

Kyzyl-Kia was founded in 1898, was granted the status of a city in 1938 and is now a city of oblast importance.

GEOGRAPHY. Kyzyl-Kia City is strategically located on the northeastern border of Batken Oblast at the crossing of the Osh-Sulukta and Osh-Fergana motor highways. It is 150 km. east of Batken City, the Batken oblast center; 86 km. southwest of Osh and 39 km. southeast of the City of Fergana, the center of Fergana oblast of Uzbekistan.



Kyzyl-Kiya City has a railway that connects it to the Republics of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Russia. The railway station is equipped with necessary loading and unloading mechanisms. There is an airport which, given overhaul of the take-off and landing strip, could service Kyzyl-Kiya/Bishkek and Kyzyl-Kiya/Cholpon-Ata/Almaty flights. Kyzyl-Kiya city is located at 1,058 meters above sea level. The winter period is not long and is comparatively warm. Spring and autumn during the last ten years were characterized by heavy rains. Summer is hot and dry.

- The area of the city is 5,300 ha. The territory of Ak-Bulak aiyl okmotu, which is located inside the city territory, occupies 2,188 hectares; including 1,737 hectares of irrigated and 451 hectares of dry-farming land and 490 hectares of personal plots of citizens, households. Agricultural land is suitable for growing grain cultures of all sorts, as well as vegetables, potatoes, fruits, melons, gourds and oil cultures.

POPULATION. According to the last national census in 2000, the population of the city, together with Ak-Bulak aiyl okmotu, amounts to 43.7 thousand people; 11.2% of the Batken Oblast population and 0.9% of the total population of the Republic. Urban population is equal to 31.8 thousand people and rural population is 11.9 thousand people. Over 17 thousand people are employed.

Representatives of more than 50 nationalities and ethnic groups live and work in the city including (thousand people) 24.8 Kyrgyz, 4.1 Russians, 7.4 Uzbek, 2.6 Tajic, 1.7 Tatars, 0.6 Turk, and 2.5 other nationalities.

Population	Thousand people
All population	43.7
Male	21.4
Female	22.3
Children under 16	17.4
Female from 16 to 55 years old	11.5
Male from 16 to 55 years old	10.4
Female older than 55	2.8
Male older than 60	1.6

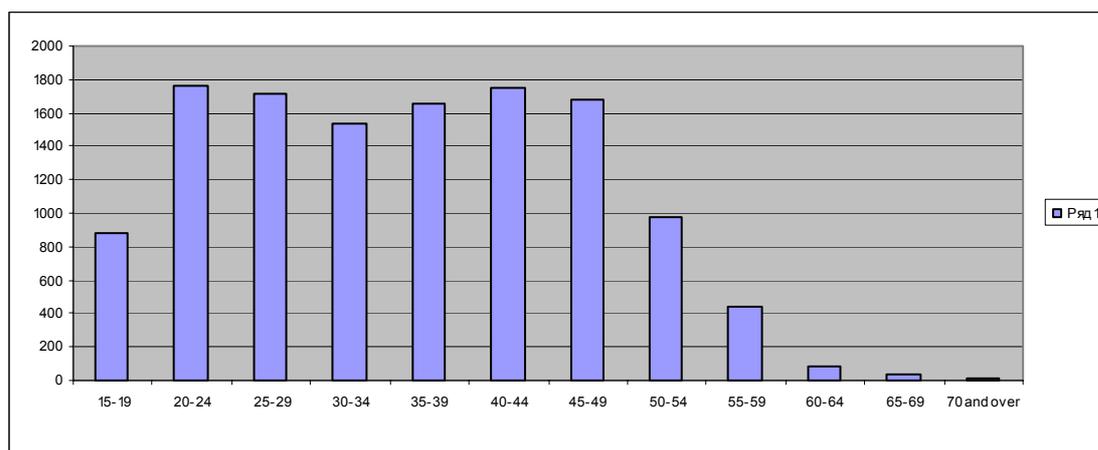
ECONOMY. Analysis of gross output for period of 2000 - 2006 are given in the table below (in mln. soms).

Indicators	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	% share of each sector in 2002 gross output
Gross output	699.3	530.7	530.3	524	473.1	452.6	513.1	
of which:								
- industry	429.3	281.2	292.5	283.3	184.1	188.6	229.8	56.0
- agriculture	200.0	165.0	149.0	134.5	131.2	127.5	121.9	28.5
- construction	15.6	23.1	22.4	25.5	57.7	31.1	17.1	4.3
- transport	0.76	0.81	0.82	0.84	0.82	0.33	0.36	0.5
- services	46.8	53.3	58.2	72.3	91.9	102.1	140.7	10.7

As at January 1, 2006 the following enterprises comprised economic infrastructure of the town

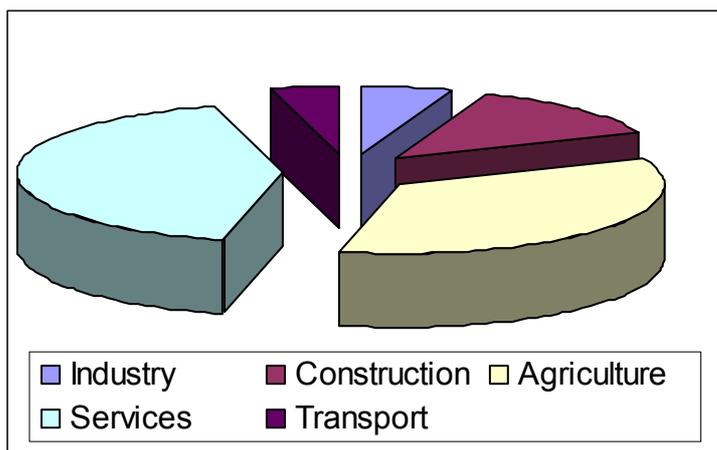
- ⇒ industrial enterprises - 13
- ⇒ construction organizations - 3
- ⇒ transport organizations - 3
- ⇒ small enterprises - 133
- ⇒ co-operatives - 3
- ⇒ communication and municipal services enterprises - 5
- ⇒ procurement and sale organizations - 1
- ⇒ farmer households - 641

EMPLOYMENT. The economically active population of working age of the city is equal to 20,218. At present 2,637 people are registered in the city employment center, of which 1,840 have a legal unemployed status. Formal unemployment is, therefore, equal to 9.1%. However according to survey conducted by State Committee on migration and employment the total number of unemployed in Kyzyl-Kiya town as at November 2006 was 4010 and unemployment rate totals to 24.2. The graph below shows employment rate in the town by ages.

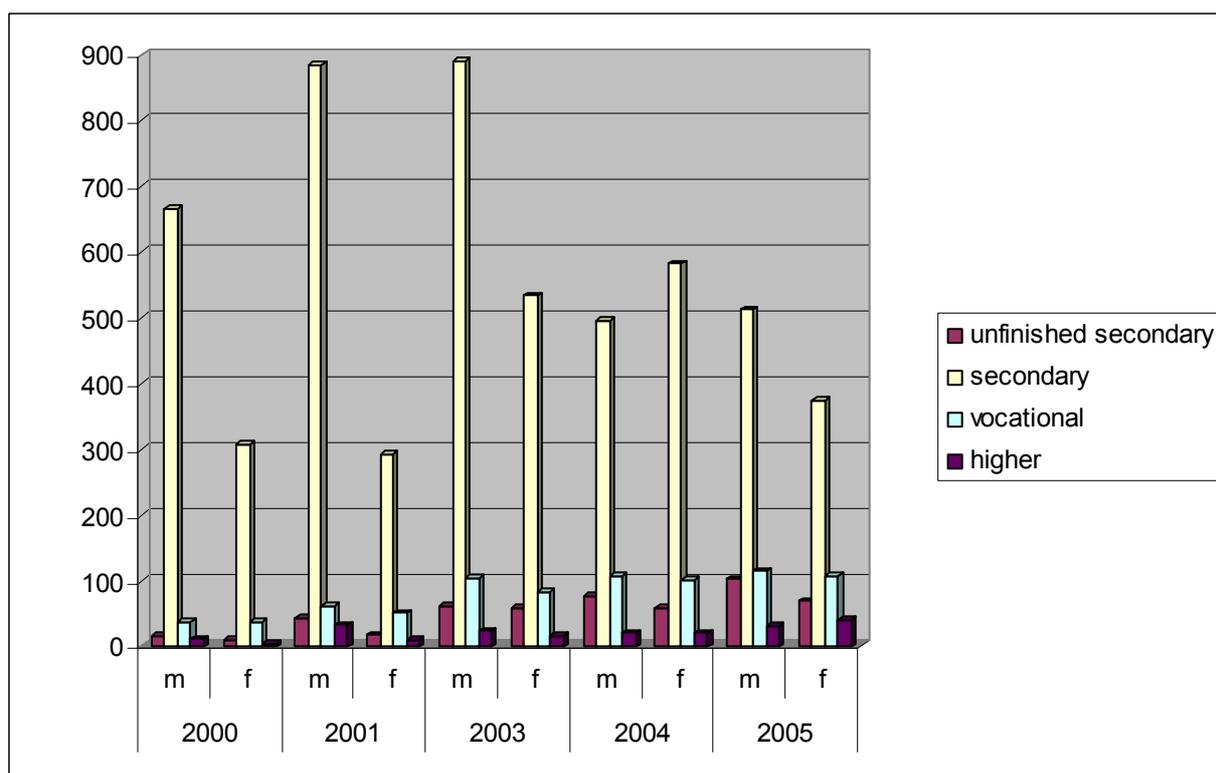


Basically, population in Kyzyl-Kiya town is employed in agriculture and services sectors as it is shown in the graph below.

With regards to youth employment we can say that the majority of young women and men is employed generally in services, transport and agricultural sectors relating to private business as according to focus-groups discussion it was mentioned that employment opportunities in public sector are very limited.



Also during the study it was found out that Kyzyl-Kiya town is considered to be youth town due to huge number of educational establishments in it. Therefore youth in town prefers to get higher and professional education rather than entering the labour market. As it is shown in the diagram below unemployed youth in the town has no education apart from full secondary education provided free by state.



Education. There are 15 secondary schools in place where youth of the town can get formal complete secondary education. 14 of them are public and free of charge.

Type	Sitting places	Number of pupils
Secondary Schools 14	7,857	10,913
Of which: Complete secondary 10	7,440	9,761
Non-complete secondary 4	407	1,052
Kyrgyz-Turk lyceum	550	188

Higher education institutions and number of students (Higher institutions, secondary professional training institutions, professional lyceums).

	Type	Number of students
1.	Kyzyl-Kiya Institute of Technology, Economics and Law of Batken State University (fields: economy, technology, technical disciplines, jurisprudence and pedagogy)	2,807
2.	Kyzyl-Kiya Humanitarian and Pedagogical Institute of Batken State University (specialties: Kyrgyz language and literature, Russian language and literature, Tadjik language and literature, Uzbek language and literature, history, jurisprudence, foreign languages, biology and chemistry, information systems in economy, mathematics, geography, pedagogy and international relations)	3,681
3.	Kyzyl-Kiya branch of Kyrgyz Mining and Metallurgical Institute (specialties: economy and management of mining works, environmental protection and rational usage of natural resources, metallurgy of non-ferrous metals, development of mineral resources, mining machinery and equipment, geology)	603
4.	Kyzyl-Kiya Branch of Kyrgyz-Uzbek University (faculties: economy, jurisprudence, accounting and others)	320
5.	Kyzyl-Kiya Mining College (specialties: technology of open-pit and underground development of coal deposits, exploitation and repair of electric and mechanical equipment and automatic facilities, accounting, economy, environmental protection)	415
6.	Kyzyl-Kiya Medical College (specialties: nursery, midwifery and medical attendance, dentist technician and pharmaceutical chemist)	1,042
7.	KNU Branch (specialties: jurisprudence, history, philology, and others)	400
8.	Professional Lyceum #7 (specialties: excavator operator, fitter and adjuster of control and measuring equipment, cook of express catering, seller of industrial goods, cutter)	408
9.	Professional Lyceum #8 (specialties: mechanic-technician, irrigation mechanic , farmer, accountant, auto crane operator)	400
10.	Professional Lyceum #70 (specialties: carpenter, joiner, cabinet-maker, mason, welder, fitter, concrete worker, rigger of steel and reinforced concrete structures, cookery specialist, seamstress (electric sewing machine operator) tailor, secretary-typist, PC operator)	267
	Total	10,343

NON-SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS:

Sport Club 27 groups with 392 people being educated

Educational Center Meerim 16 study groups with 300 people being educated

CHAPTER II

WHO ARE YOUNG PEOPLE IN KIZIL-KIA? Characteristics of young people in terms of occupations, living standards, and “state of minds”

Unemployed young people aged 15-19

The focus group consisted of 9 participants, out of them 7 young women and 2 men. 2 were married (a couple) and the rest - single. All young people (except for 1) graduated from secondary schools, and were now in between transition to either school or work. In reply to question if they were actively searching for job, there were 50% of assertive answers. Those who were not searching for job, explained that they were willing to go to study after the school but due to various circumstances (mostly lack of financial means) were not able to do so. It is interesting to note that these young people who could not study still would like to find employment as alternative occupation (even temporary) and as a source of income. In relation to the latter, young people display lack of interest in knowing the income of the household, rarely they could tell the exact figures and how they relate it to living standards of their families (parents, and siblings).

Those unemployed who did search for job during the last 4 weeks, either approached friends and relatives or directly visited potential employers.

The focus-group consisted of very young people who mostly were psychologically dependent on the opinions of parents. They did not seem to be enough independent in making decisions about their lives. In searching for jobs, their perception was that their parents “must help them to find jobs”. The only exception on this group was a married couple who was more active and mature, probably due to their responsibility for taking care of their family.

Unemployed young people aged 20-24

The focus group brought together 11 participants, out of them 8 young women and 3 men. 4 young people were married. All young people are currently searching for jobs. The interesting phenomenon was that all young people were coming from households where they had 2-4 members of the “youth age” (15-29 years old).

Similarly to the younger focus-group, the participants were not able to tell the exact figures of incomes of their households giving the numbers from 1500 soms/month to 15,000 soms/month.

Among 11 unemployed young people active actions towards job search were undertaken by 2 participants, who contacted friends for information. The rest of group was not active in job search due to various reasons (due to family circumstances, waiting for favourable situation, plan to go for studies, no suitable jobs).

When analyzing this inactivity in searching for jobs, it became clear that the majority of young people are still living with parents, and therefore, are still relying on parents for living. This is proved by their ignorance of incomes of their families, their inertness in undertaking stronger actions for finding employment. They don't feel responsibility for family incomes, and therefore are not pressured to find jobs. Part of problem is post-soviet mentality of upbringing children, when children were dependent on parents' support for long after their full age, and when the only responsibility of children was to study, and of parents – to support children as long as they find jobs and incomes (often several years after graduation from the university – this brings the average estimated age of 25-30 as age of independence).

Unemployed young people aged 25-29

There were 9 participants of the focus-group, 8 of them women and 1 man. 5 participants were married. Availability of siblings of the “youth age” was repeated in this focus-group as well, and all participants had 1-3 brothers/sisters of 15-29 years old.

This portrays the picture of typical household of Kizil-Kia having several children (usually 3-4) with little difference in the age that put them in the same age category. This displays existing substantial burden on parents in providing their children with education or job opportunities when they reach working age of 15. The issue of youth unemployment and poverty is therefore critical for well-being of the households in towns and rural areas of Kyrgyzstan.

And similarly to other focus-groups of unemployed youth, only 3 out of 8 participants did actively search for jobs by contacting friends, visiting enterprises (water-pumping factory, electrical station). The rest of participants did not undertake active measures due to having little kids, being busy by home shores, and because of low salaries.

In compare to other focus groups of young unemployed, this focus-group made an impression of being the most depressed. Young people were all coming from low-income families, and being at the ages of 25-29 and not having jobs, most of them never worked or did not gain enough working experience. They seemed to be dispirited and demotivated to continue searching for jobs. However, this category of “older unemployed” young people needs special attention as majority of them have children and need assistance with accessing kindergarten before being available to work.

Self-employed young people aged 15-19

There were 12 participants of the focus-group, 3 of them were women and 9 – men, all were single. The immediate observation of these young people (in compare to the previous group of unemployed young people of the same age) was that they indicated substantively higher figures of family incomes (starting from 6000 to 25,000 soms per month). Discussing later among the experts this fact, it was concluded that living in the same location and having much higher incomes means not simply higher living standards, but rather knowledge of real figures of earnings/consumption of households. For the family of 5-7 people it is impossible to live on (suggested by the unemployed youth focus-group) 2000-3000 soms/month (~\$65-80) income, there must be other means of cash or in-kind earnings. The conclusion was that self-employed young people are better aware of their household incomes.

Self-employed young people aged 20-24

The focus-group consisted of 12 participants, 4 of them were women and 8- men, 2 were married, and the rest – single. These young people made an impression of being aware of their household incomes by providing figures of 5000-9000 soms/month (that again confirmed the previous conclusion).

These young women and men are quite independent in their daily business operations, however, all of them started business thanks to support of either parents, relatives, or friends. None of them (including the other focus-groups of 15-19 and 25-29) received any support from institutions (governmental or other public/private SME support agencies).

Self-employed young people aged 25-29

The focus group gathered 7 young people: 6 women and 1 man, 4 of them were married. In order to check the previous conclusion about the knowledge of self-employed young people of the situation of their families, we looked carefully at the household incomes that they gave. It was

found that in this focus group the figures were in fact lower (1000-4000 soms monthly), but the obvious reason for this is that the majority are not married and most likely they provide information on their own young families' incomes (and not of their larger parental household as was the case for "younger" focus-groups).

Young waged workers aged 20-24

Out of 7 participants of the focus-group there were 4 women and 3 men, 6 were single and 1 – divorced. Young people were aware of the incomes of their households estimating it from 2000 to 12000 per month. 3 young women were working in secondary schools and university (teachers and a secretary), 2 – in commercial companies (1 in state company and 1 in private), 1 – in the non-governmental organization, and 1 was a dance instructor (but associated with the public institution). Thus, many (5) were having formally organized employment, by possessing a written working agreement (work-book in governmental organizations) with employer, and benefiting from paid annual and sick leaves, pension and social protection coverage. However, among them 2 (1 from NGO and 1 from private company) had only agreement (oral agreement in the case of private company) and no social benefits.

At the same time, the workload for all workers was the same – more than 41 hours during the reported week. The incomes were much diversified – those in the public sector gave figures of 1000-4000 soms monthly, and in the private and NGO organizations – either less than 1000 or more than 4000 soms/month.

Young waged workers aged 25-29

There were 9 participants in the focus-group, 5 of them were women and 4 – men. 5 participants were single and 4 – married. This group also displayed knowledge of incomes of their families by providing exact figures in between 2500 to 12000 soms per month. The easiness of answering to this question (in compare to other focus-groups of smaller aged young people in unemployed categories) was explained by the fact that many of the participants were themselves main breadwinners in their families and thus, were able to speak about living standards of their households.

The focus-group was much similar to the previous group of 20-24 years olds, by having 6 young workers from governmental institutions (schools and hospital). They also had formally organized employment with written working agreements (of unlimited duration) and all social benefits. The rest of participants were from private company (1 young man, duration – every 6 months) and from NGOs (2 young women for non-stated period). These 3 young people had agreements with the employer (1 –oral agreement with the church), and did not have any social benefits.

7 young people worked more than 41 hours during the last reported week, and the incomes were in the range of 1000-2000 soms/month. Among the 3 workers of private and NGO organizations, 2 reported wages of 1000-2000 soms per month and 1 – less than 1000 soms.

Youth in-school aged 15-19

13 young people came to this focus-group, 8 of them were women and 5 – men, all were single. All participants of the group were not aware of their household incomes. 9 people studied in the secondary schools, 3 – at the vocational schools, and 1 – at the higher school. The majority of young people (13) are supported by parents/families to cover their costs of living and studying. At the same time, 3 were working (with duration of 1-40 hours per week) at the trading kiosks, shops of parents and relatives.

Youth in-school aged 20-24

Among 14 young people in this focus-group there were 13 women and 1 man. The group therefore was not gender balanced, however, the focus-group was still conducted. All young women and man were single. Almost all participants came from families with many children, as they reported having 1-6 siblings of the youth age category 15-29. These young people displayed good knowledge of the incomes of their families (in compare to the similar young focus-group), by providing numbers between 5000 to 10,000 soms per month. The majority of young people (8) were studying at the higher institutions, and 6 were studying at the vocational schools. Similarly, the majority (8) were financially supported by parents/families in covering their costs of studies and living. 6 respondents were receiving stipends/subsidies. This must be true for 6 students of vocational schools as they normally receive stipend there, which is however of symbolic amount, not enough for any living costs.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS OF FOCUS-GROUPS

How young people search for job

The overwhelming conclusion of all focus-group discussions is that young people are passive and do not actively search for job. This is true for all groups of unemployed of 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, and for those in school of 20-24 years old when they normally graduate or close to graduation (last years of studies). When analyzing this phenomenon, and asking young people - “Why you don’t search for job?”, the majority were still willing to go for further studies. In turn, young people would like to continue studies because they don’t feel themselves ready for work (even those graduating from the universities and vocational schools) and they believe that higher education will increase their employment opportunities.

It is quite interesting to compare these answers with those to the question “What is a minimum level of education that is needed in order to find job?”. The unemployed young women and men that possess secondary school certificate tend to think that the vocational school training is needed, in turn those with some skills training certificates, believe that the university diploma is necessary. This displays their understanding that the main reason that they cannot find job is because of lack of education.

In fact, among all 29 unemployed respondents, all were having secondary school certificates, 11 people – vocational school certificates, 5 people – higher education diplomas. Thus, more than half of participants had training qualifications of various types.

In contrast to the answers of unemployed, those in the focus-groups of self-employed and entrepreneurs do not value formal education as being a pre-requisite for successful work. 80% of them responded that secondary school certificate was all that they needed in order to run their small businesses. This brings to the conclusion that young people who are working for themselves and running their own businesses, have no illusions about the necessity of education certificates. Their attitude towards education is rational and they did not feel that higher education (associated with higher costs) would bring any benefits to their businesses. In reply to our question on if they need any particular skills (driving for taxi-drivers, baking for bakers etc.) they responded positively but explained that they learned everything while already on job, but not due to formal training.

In comparison to answers of young unemployed highly valuing the education, young women and men already in-school were still not clear about their employment opportunities and whether they will be able to use their education for work. Moreover, they were not searching for job, and the main answer was that they did not know HOW to search for job.

In reply to a question on what kind of training they need in order to find employment, young unemployed people of 15-19 spoke about higher education in law, medicine, police academy, and half of them preferred sewing courses, cookery training. The focus-groups of 20-29 old named only vocational training courses of hairdresser, motor mechanic, computer courses, driving courses, electrician. Sewing training was the most popular subject of interest among young women that probably demonstrates development of this industry in Kizil-Kia (similar to the general trend in Kyrgyzstan).

In reply to question on the possible sources of employment information, the ranging was as follows:

The most frequent answer:	friends and acquaintances
Frequent answer:	television, radio, newspapers,
Frequent answer 2:	parents

None of young people in all focus-groups (among more than 120 people participated) named governmental or other public agencies as a source of job information. Equally, young persons were not aware (with the exception of 4 young people who worked in NGOs and universities) of state employment services or youth labour exchanges, and of any “governmental employment policies”. Equally none of young participants of focus-groups participated at any initiatives of town municipality, employment services or other youth organisations.

On private labour exchange in Kizil-kia

One of participants of unemployed focus-group informed on the existence of labour exchange in Kizil-Kia. It is located near the town market and is unregulated and unstructured place where people come to find hourly or daily non-qualified job. Potential employers (usually any people who need manual temporary workers) know this place and come to find workers (usually for digging, loading, other physical work in the households, and in businesses). Daily rate of payment is 50-100 soms and the usual duration is 1-2 days.

It is unclear if the mentioned labour exchange is actually owned by anyone, but all descriptions provide for its unregistered and informal nature.

More on education and employment relationship

The most educated focus-group participants were among waged workers of 20-29 where the majority were having a university diploma and where those without higher education (they all had vocational school certificates) were still planning to go for further studies. The reasoning behind was to increase their chances for better employment. At the same time, the current jobs that they have with their diplomas are in the stable, but low-paid jobs in schools, hospitals, and public organizations. They all admitted that these earnings are not enough for living and therefore many don't work on their trained professions but go for other opportunities (migrate abroad where they work on non-qualified jobs).

It is interesting that these young workers still do not relate their low earnings with the education and specialization that they studied at the universities. It is clear that their professions while being highly necessary for society, in fact were not marketable and did not provide for living. When being asked what is a minimum level of education that is necessary for finding a job, all of them indicated university diploma as a necessary level of training.

Other focus-groups of young people in-school aged 15-19 and 20-24 provided similar intentions of going for further education after completion of their current studies. They also informed of their desire to search for jobs simultaneously, but were clearly understanding of limited opportunities and therefore, further studies serve a type of occupation that would save them from being considered as truly unemployed. The overall impression was that young people in-school were not clear about their further employment perspectives. Some (students of foreign language departments) were hoping that some new companies would open in Kizil-Kia that would provide them chances to work on their specialization (interpreters). At the same time, there were not many possibilities for applying their current studies to the real labour market in the town. In this

connection, many were saying that young graduates will most likely not stay in Kizil-Kia, but migrate to Bishkek or other places (abroad). Among 27 students targeted, there was 1 from rural district of Batken Oblast, who informed that she has a prior agreement with potential employer (laboratory).

In reply to a question on what they think would be necessary for successfully finding a job, many gave answers “help of parents, money and networks”, that probably portrays the status of labour market in Kizil-Kia, but at the same time diminishes their current efforts of obtaining professions that they would normally offer on the labour market. Second popular response was “to study well”. This was unarguable statement, that however, made an impression of being idealistic, as obviously some more pro-active efforts are needed from the side of those in-school in order to increase chances for employment (ex. links with potential employers).

Economic sector and type of organization where young people would like to work.

Popularity of “having own business”

Unemployed young people would like to have a job in any sector, but in terms of type of organization 14 out of 29 (48%) interrogated (15-29years old) named having own business as the most attractive option. Less number (27%) preferred working in the governmental organisations and even less (17%) in private companies.

Popularity of having own business among unemployed young people (especially in the age category of 20-24) possibly can be explained by increased inclination towards entrepreneurship after few years after graduation from the secondary school, young people no longer plan to go for (further) education (3 out of 9 young people aged 15-19, only 1 out of in the category of 20-24, and none in the category 25-29), but at the same time in order to find qualified jobs they don't possess required certificates/diplomas or cannot find suitable job with the training that they already have. Therefore, the conclusion is that young people choose entrepreneurship not voluntarily and willingly as the best option in life, but rather due to pressure of circumstances and as a final survival strategy. This displays low entrepreneurial culture in general among young people, lack of understanding of what is entrepreneurship, and lack of pro-active behavior among young people.

The conclusion is enhanced by responses of young waged workers to the question on what do they think of entrepreneurship as main occupation for young people. Without exception all young people positively reacted towards starting business as attractive business idea, however differences in the various age groups were notable. In detail, workers of 20-25 years old were speaking about “huge responsibility associated with running a business”, and “need for having opportunities for business”. But workers of 25-29 years old were already having some small-scale businesses to complement their low formal salaries in the public sector, and despite were not considering it as a main occupation, they were positive in general about entrepreneurship as a way of becoming independent, self-reliant, and improve lives of themselves and their families. The reality proves however, that they still would prefer to keep their formal despite poorly paid jobs and business was a strategy to cover living costs (survival strategy).

Businesses of self-employed young people: current status and further perspectives

It is interesting to compare the above conclusions with the results of discussions with the focus-groups of self-employed young people of 15-19, 20-24, and 25-29 years old. Out of 31 young people totally interviewed, 12 (the highest number) were working in the processing (agro- and industrial services) sector, by doing business in sewing curtains, women's clothing, producing confectionary, meat products, bakery, auto motor repair services, computer services (copying,

photo-making). 8 people are working in trading sector, by selling fruits on the markets, re-selling CDs and DVDs, preparing and selling shashlyk, food and clothes on the central market. 4 young men were working as loaders on the markets, and 2 were taxi drivers.

All self-employed young people (or young entrepreneurs) were asked few questions on if they are happy with their business activities, if they consider it successful or unprofitable, on whether they would like to change it for another type of business or other type of work. The discussions brought quite intricate conclusions. The overwhelming majority of respondents were satisfied with their business activities by characterising it as “successful”. An obvious impression was that generally all young women and men selected the areas of activities to which they had prior personal inclinations (liked to work with equipment – CDs and computers, liked sewing, cooking, trading etc.). All faced various difficulties related to customs, tax control agencies, quality of goods, increasing prices for raw materials, competition, non-stable clientele, etc.)

Possible due to named difficulties, 12 young persons (40% of all targetted) wanted to change their occupation into work in the governmental sector, work on their trained specialization, go for studies, and do other types of work not connected to their current business activities. These 12 people were mostly loaders (young men), traders (young women) on the market, and student-entrepreneurs (who combined studies with doing business). For the loaders it is clear that they faced difficulties as their business activities were limited from the very beginning to a micro-scale non-regular earnings with little prospects for growth, and these young people would have to decide on changing their status. Those in the markets were reasoning bad conditions of work on the market especially for women, and they would like to undertake more productive activities.

The case of student-entrepreneurs and of those who consider going for further studies (higher education) as opportunity for growth is quite interesting. When searching for rationale for their decisions to rely on studies as engines of their personal and professional development, it became obvious that the formal education (3 were willing to go to College of Mines of Kizil-Kia when in fact no mines were functioning) cannot answer their aspirations. The student-entrepreneurs study on distance, and as they admit themselves, in the current conditions of higher education in Kyrgyzstan, it is a usual practice to pass exams by making informal payments to teachers. The formal education would not provide them with real skills and knowledge, and therefore the reliance on possession of formal university diploma as guarantee of stable work and income in future is much overrated. One of possible reasons is the general tendency in Kyrgyz post-soviet society to over-value the formal higher education, that was natural consequence of the system where remuneration was not based on actual skills that workers have had.

The main logical conclusion of discussions with the focus-groups of young people was that they need support in their business activities (including those who would like to leave business for other works/studies). All of them are running “survival businesses” when all their income goes for consumption and they have little means left for extending their businesses. They display lack of knowledge of business operations and procedures, business planning and accounting, they don't have any business strategies, are not aware of the current normative regulations for small business. At the same time, many of them are interested in expanding their businesses. The ILO instruments on entrepreneurial training would be keenly necessary for these young people, and would serve for developing their entrepreneurial activities, increasing their incomes, and promoting better living for their families.

What kind of jobs young people have at present?

Two focus-groups of waged young workers were interviewed. The conclusion is that formal employment with obligatory social benefits (annual leave, sick leave, pension and social

protection coverage) in Kizil-Kia exists mainly in the governmentally subsidized sectors (schools, universities, hospitals). These jobs are low-paid (around personal subsistence level, but not enough for the whole families) but offer a quite heavy workload (usually more than 41 hours per week). At the same time young people usually like their jobs for having opportunities for self-realisation (in working with children ex.) on the specializations that they were trained on at the higher schools. These young people were not going to change their jobs, but would definitely prefer to increase their earnings. Ad-hoc entrepreneurial activities were found by those in the category of 25-29 as one of possible additional sources of such earnings.

What kind of job young people would like to have?

The general discussions brought the idea of “good job” as being “well paid, stable, bringing benefits to the person and family, giving opportunities for learning, not physically difficult, not difficult in general”. The format of focus-groups did not allow for broader discussions of what is a ‘difficult job’ might be. However, the understanding of “good job’ is very close to the general ILO’s decent work definition that proves relevance of the ILO mandate to the minds of ordinary people. The discussions on general characteristics of “good job” prevailed in the focus-group of 15-19 years old, and on older groups young people already had concrete ideas on where exactly they would like to work. They named for example, opening a confectionery shop, working in hospital, school, opening private art school, beauty saloon, sewing workshop.

The wage size preferences were ranging from 1000 to 2000 soms (15-19 old) and 2000 to 5000 soms (20-29 old).

On the opinion of young women and men on what is necessary for finding a job

Young unemployed think that it is necessary to know people and have networks (acquaintances) in order to find job. Few of them mentioned that it is necessary to be active and communicative, tolerant and disciplined, to have necessary skills for job. Support from the government is necessary in order to find jobs.

Many mentioned that it is necessary to have money and starting capital, this is probably true for those who would like to start business. However, the format of focus-groups did not envisage wide discussions on the most valuable resources for starting business, as it was left unclear on if young people who would like to start business find lack of money to be the main reason or do they value it as 2nd or 3rd in place of priority resources. Additional study on entrepreneurial culture of young people might be interesting in order to look deeper into the issue.

Gender sensitivity

Respondents divided equally in discussing the question on if it is easier for women or men to find job. However, the given arguments displayed low gender awareness of young women and men. For example, the rationale of why it is easier for women to find employment was that “there are currently more jobs for women, like sewing, baby-sitting, cooking, etc.”. And why it was easier for men is because “men can easier migrate abroad for jobs and because they are physically stronger”. This gender disaggregation of occupations is perceived as being natural and is not being questioned by young people.

The other question on if young women need special attention and assistance in finding jobs, triggered similar responses. Half were not seeing any need in helping especially young women, and some were confirming that such kind of special attention would help them find jobs.

The interesting fact is that among the older age group of 25-29 old unemployed, participants were paying more attention to women's domestic responsibilities (especially having a small child) as being an obstacle for finding a job. They considered men having more freedom in terms of available time and locations of job places. This is a natural consequence that young women and men with family responsibilities (majority in the focus-group were married with children) understand the influence of domestic burden on job opportunities of women.

The latter conclusion was enhanced when responding to the question on existing obstacles for job search, many (women mostly) names family being against, having little kids, pregnancy, and local mentality as not being supportive of women's late return from work-place.

Focus-groups of self-employed young people were gender non-sensitive by refusing the special attention towards young women in promoting their businesses, and by suggesting rather to focus on men, since business is a challenging field and it is generally easier for men to work there. On the opinion of many of participants, "it is better for women to work in governmental or other public organizations that are more adequate to their abilities". The format of focus-groups did not allow for lengthy discussions of this issue, however, special gender awareness sessions would be highly necessary for these groups.

Focus-groups of waged workers unanimously concluded that the chances for employment of young women and men are different, but the advantage belongs to women as there are "more jobs for women in Kizil-Kia than for men". Therefore, "men are forced to migrate abroad to find suitable employment". These responses were challenging and the experts' group concluded that by "jobs for women" participants meant exactly low-paid jobs in the governmental organizations and enterprises that are indeed available in Kizil-Kia, but are not popular due to their poor wages for heavy workloads. The understanding of young people is that these jobs cannot be "for men" as men obviously cannot work for poor pay while it is alright for women to work on these jobs.

Migration for job

Interesting trend was displayed when discussing the interest to migrate for job purposes. In the age categories of 15-19 and 20-24 the majority of participants (more than half) were still interested to find employment in Kizil-Kia. In the focus-group of 25-29 old most of respondents planned to migrate to Russia (5 out of 9) and to Osh city (1 person).

In terms of destinations of migration, among 29 unemployed young people of 15-29 years old, 14 were willing to migrate that constitute almost half of all participants (48%). The most popular destinations is Russia (8 people), Bishkek (2), Turkey (2), Osh (1), Jalal-Abad (1).

Opinions of young people about Kizil-Kia town: development, current problems

The majority of participants of focus-groups consider that the situation in Kizil-Kia is worsening: factories are not functioning, bad conditions of roads, garbage is not collected in the town, lack of water and gas, no heating, prices are rising (especially for food) while salaries remain the same low, high unemployment, rising alcoholism even among young people and women. However, at the same time, some noted that new shops and cafes opened, the town market became central market place where more people are now working. When discussing the controversy of these two opinions, it became clear that all positive signs were brought thanks to incomes that were sent by migrants from abroad, a.i. external rather than internal factors.

Young people from self-employed category generally confirmed the difficult situation in Kizil-Kia town, but the number of those who find improvements were larger among these young women

men. New houses were built in Kizil-Kia and some people improved their living standards. However, again, it was confirmed that in most cases this was all possible thanks to remittances of those who work abroad.

The migration topic is highly critical for the inhabitants of the town, and some young respondents in the focus-groups highlighted a problem of families' break-up due to continued separation of husbands in migration and wives at homes.

Problems of young people in Kizil-Kia and possible solutions

On the opinion of unemployed young people, among the first problems, participants named lack of places for social activities and entertainment for young people. The youth does not know what to do in their leisure time. The other problems were lack of jobs, absence of income, high prices, mentality in terms of having no freedom to choose life partner, as young people are being married by parents. Social division between the rich and the poor was named among problems.

Self-employed young people prioritized unemployment as the most critical problem of the youth in Kizil-Kia. Among the other problems was high costs of education in the universities, poor quality of education, lack of kindergarten, places for entertainment of small children, poverty and lack of opportunities bring young people to criminality, alcoholism, and demotivation in pursuing substantial life goals.

Among possible solutions, young people suggested creation of jobs for the youth, providing training/vocational education, help young people to search for source of funds for their businesses and ideas. They inquired on the possibility of providing special discounts to young business start-ups. Another idea was establishment of a special financial agency that would lend support to young entrepreneurs.

Youth employment could be promoted via organization of job fairs, placements of job advertisement in newspapers and on TV, invitations of employers to meet with youth job seekers, career-guidance to young people in schools, strengthening quality of education, rehabilitation of the Kizil-Kia shoe factory, launching of long-awaited cement works factory, etc.

Is it difficult for young people to find jobs then to adults?

The answers divided equally: half were saying that it is easier for young people as they better know new technologies (computers), they are stronger and healthier. But the other half think that adults with experience, skills, have more networking connections and thus, have more chances to find jobs.

At the same time, everyone think that it is necessary to pay special attention to youth unemployment problem as young people need to be helped to find jobs. This would help solve the other social problems of criminality, alcoholism, drug abuse.

Attitude towards entrepreneurship

Almost all unemployed focus-group respondents confirmed that having own business would be an interesting life option. It provides for big opportunities, and having bigger responsibility for own lives, incomes, and living standards. At the same time, now all young people at the focus-groups were considering going for entrepreneurship as their personal choice. There were answers that some would prefer for government, and some would still would work for someone if it would allow to apply their skills.

Participants of focus-groups who were self-employed and thus, already in some type of entrepreneurial activity, admitted that going for entrepreneurship is not considered as the most preferred option for many of their peers. The opinions generally divided equally in terms of estimating if young people would choose entrepreneurship as main life occupation or not. Their opinions is naturally influenced by their subjective experiences in deciding if to start business, and in the majority of cases it was not voluntary but rather forced by circumstances decision. Therefore, these young entrepreneurs can be characterized as “ultimate entrepreneurs”, who had no choice but to do business in order to survive.

CHAPTER IV.

RECORDS OF DISCUSSIONS WITH INFLUENCERS

Influencer Group 1 – policy-makers and representatives of tripartite structures

Meeting with Mr. Abdurasul Omurbaeyev, Mayor of Kizil-Kia town

Mayor highlighted the following problems related to youth employment in Kizil-Kia:

- Lack of skills of young people, need for skills training;
- Working professions are not popular among young people, despite they are in demand on the labour market (so that workers from Uzbekistan take up such jobs);
- Motivation of young people to have employment: lack of interest among young people to learn and work.

Mr. Omurbaeyev informed on the acute demand for qualified workmen in many enterprises, it is estimated that around 1000 vacancies are currently available, mostly in construction and in the manufacturing. Unemployed young people cannot fill these vacancies due to lack of necessary skills. Training on priority skills would be highly demanding for youth groups, and employment service of Kizil-Kia has basis for organization of such training. The other alternative is to use the vocational schools of Kizil-Kia.

There is a problem of HIV/AIDS among young people in Kizil-Kia.

The main problem of the town is difficulties with access to a drinking water.

In terms of general socio-economic development of Kizil-Kia town, there some positive developments: the construction sector is growing, number of banks increased from 2 to the present 10 representations in the town, the population of the town is now receiving remittances of US\$1,5-2 mln¹ monthly from more than 3000 migrant workers (based on assessments of territorial self-governing communities – TSCs) of Kizil-Kia in Russia and Kazakhstan. Therefore, the perspectives of future development of Kizil-Kia are much promising.

Meeting with Ms. Florida Tzoy, Vice-mayor of Kizil-Kia town

Vice-mayor informed that despite difficult economic situation 13 enterprises were maintained and now operational. As a result of privatization process, 90% of them are not private. It is estimated that around 7 thousand people are occupied at state enterprises and the rest – in the private sector. The cement works factory is expected to be opened in near future. It would make contracts with the professional technical schools on job placement of graduates.

Ms. Tzoy expressed an opinion that those willing to work could easily find it. As an example, she mentioned that banks are now ready to give loans to all those wishing to start business. In total 90 mln soms were received by enterprises.

In reply to question on rates of economic growth of Kizil-Kia, Ms. Tzoy mentioned that according to National Statistics Committee the GDP in 2006 was 230 mln Soms (\$5,5 mln). It is 21% growth in relation to 2005, however, it is 50% of GDP of 2000. In 2004 Kizil-Kia had substantive decrease of GDP rates (-30%). However, Ms. Tzoy gives as a reason a change of counting methods, when for example raw tobacco is not counted and only value added in terms of tobacco

¹ The figures seems to be overestimated.

processing is calculated. Similar is for brick production factory, the cost of raw material is not counted, only processing costs are considered as real value-added of the factory.

The following international donors were working in the town: Asian Development Bank, Mercy Corps, **IRIS (World Bank project on water use)**.

In reply to question on any youth employment policy in Kizil-Kia, Ms. Tzoy informed that they did not receive any instructions about availability of such policy on national level. However, the current work on youth employment is not adequate, for example, no work with the professional vocational schools is done. Unemployed young people need attention. There are no workers of vocational specializations in the town.

Meeting with Mr. Nimatulla Saparmatov, Chair of the City Committee on Migration and Employment

The meeting was attended by Mr. Djanybek Gaparov, Specialist on Youth Labour Exchange of the Committee. Mr. Gaparov's post was funded out of public works funds and thus was not formally part of staff structure of the Committee. The Committee consists of 5 staff members + 5 workers funded by public works. 5 official staff members include Chair of the Committee, accountant, secretary, specialist on social benefits payments, specialist on migration.

Mr. Saparmatov briefed on employment situation in Kizil-Kia town in 2007: population of 43 thousand people, among them 25,242 are economically active, 20,280 of them are employed that bring 4,962 unemployed. The rate of unemployment is 7,7% (in 2006) that was commented by Mr. Saparmatov as not reflecting the real situation as the method of collecting data is not optimal. 2278 people emigrated from and 241 immigrated to Kizil-Kia town.

The biggest employers of the town are the following:

- Brickworks factory – 150-200 workers
- Tinned food factory – 50 workers
- Engineering plant – 100 workmen
- Masaliev named mine – 200-250 workmen

Many factories and mines are not functioning thus contributing to unemployment.

In terms of youth employment the City Committee arranges Job fairs on monthly basis, however, the difficulty is that employers are not enough interested to visit these events, as well as the young people themselves. The work on youth is only starting and there is no clear strategy and policy yet (Mr. Saparmatov means a special youth policy).

Findings of Round-table with tripartite constituents, policy-makers and other interested stakeholders on youth employment

14 participants were present at the round table representing the town municipality, committee on employment and migration, social protection department of municipality, statistics department of municipality, trade union of education sector workers (the only trade union represented in Kizil-Kia), state and private enterprises (as employers). The ILO mission shared immediate results of meeting with young people and influencers: big unemployment of young people, mismatch between skills and available jobs, low economic development, including SME development, lack of jobs of decent nature (only low-paid jobs available), young people tend to go to education due to unemployment situation, and they have no clear plans for job searching. Youth labour exchange is non-existent in Kizil-Kia, though there is a clear need for its activities.

Discussion during the round table evolved around possible reasons of the current difficult situation and possible solutions. Among them the following were suggested:

- to make agreement with Russian employers via the State Committee on Employment to regulate labour migration flow and make it easier for people to find employment in Russia;
- disseminate widely information about migration regulations in the town, in various organisations of Kizil-Kia;
- re-consider the need for presence of many higher education establishments in Kizil-Kia who do not work towards the local labour market and mainly operate as commercial entities by setting the goal of attracting students without taking into account real labour market demand
- find mechanism for Government to plan number of specialists needed in each of occupations and correspond student enrollment in universities with this plan
- take actions towards revival of the vocational education, and upgrading qualifications of teachers and practical training officers.

Influencer Group 2 - teachers

Meeting with Mr. Mamaturay Isakov, director of professional technical lyceum #70.

The lyceum has 2 categories of students:

After 9th grade of secondary school – student study in lyceum classes;

After 11th grade – ordinary classes of the vocational school.

In total, there are 420 students, out of them 210 were enrolled in 2007, out of them 40% are from Kizil-Kia and 60% are those arrived from rural areas and other locations. They are being taught by 8 teachers and 14 masters (training officers that instruct on practical skills for each subject). The capacity of the vocational lyceum is for 1400 students and it was enrolling this number during soviet times. When answering to the question on the reasons of such underfilling of the lyceum, Mr. Isakov reasoned that existence of 6 higher educational institutions in Kizil-Kia contribute to lack of applicants to vocational schools.

The vocation school is very old and was established back in 1923 – one of the oldest professional training establishments in Kyrgyzstan. The profile of the vocational lyceum is training on construction professions (carpenter, fitter, truck crane workers), as well as non-profile training (recently opened) for cooks and tailors. Tailor training is provided on commercial basis for tuition fee of 1,500 soms annually.

90% of graduates of the vocational lyceum migrated during recent years to Russia, and Mr. Isakov thinks that this trend will continue. He supposes that among 123 graduates who found employment in Kizil-Kia (out of total 184 graduated in 2007) in state enterprises, many will leave their jobs to low wages, and will migrate abroad.

In terms of general development of Kizil-Kia town, Mr. Isakov is inclined to believe that there some development ongoing and there are perspectives, but there are also many current problems of lack of housing, poor quality of roads, increasing prices for wheat.

Mr. Isakov has also pointed out on the problems of the vocational lyceum: poor material base, outdated equipment (the latest is dated 1982), lack of study equipment, lack of literature in Kyrgyz language on many professions. The interesting argument was given in relation to donor support – they prefer to provide help to rural vocational schools and Kizil-Kia being considered a town is often left outside of their outreach.

Meeting with teachers of the professional technical lyceum #70

Teachers (3) highlighted relatively high self-consciousness and commitment to finding job after graduation from the studies. However, they confirmed that expect that 70-80% of graduates will migrate abroad as there are no jobs in Kizil-Kia.

It is re-confirmed on the example of those who graduated in 2007 – almost all of them found jobs, so far 50% already left for Russia and this share will continue to increase.

Meeting with the Deputy Director and teachers of technical vocational lyceum #8

There are 560 students in the lyceum and they study on agricultural specializations of farmer, tractor operator, specialist in melioration, professions of welder, turner, tailor, accountant. There are 30 teachers in the lyceum and around 30 masters, along with the administration staff, this brings totally 100 staff of the lyceum.

The lyceum is quite old and in 2007 marked 50 anniversary (1957 – year of establishment).

In reply to question on the job placement of graduates, it was informed that most of students arrived from rural places where their families possess land plots, and usually after the graduation they are returning back to their lands². In general, 80% of graduates find employment as they bring back their job certificates (issued by the lyceum as a directive for employer and which is then exchanged for a diploma after being signed by the employer).

Interesting discussion was held in relation to the profession of an accountant. The duration of study at the vocational school #8 is 1 year, while at the universities (in Kizil-Kia and everywhere) it is 5 years. The similar situation is in relation to cost of studies – it is much more expensive in the higher schools. The conclusion is that it is obviously beneficial to study at the vocational level in order to become professional accountant, however, the paradox is that students still prefer to go to the universities. The rationale of their preference is that it is better for making career to have a university diploma (and that with the vocational school diploma one cannot become a chief accountant). The teachers of the lyceum agreed in general that life reality does not always support this rationale, however, students do not take into account real opportunities that vocational education could provide.

Meeting with the Deputy Director and teachers of the Mining and Technical College

There are 700 students and 67 teachers in the College. The college is very old and marked 75 anniversary in 2007. The following specializations are being delivered in the College: mining electromechanics, shotfirer, accountant, banking, taxation, industrial training, clothing manufacture technology, electrician training, industrial and civil engineering. The most popular specializations (those of economic subjects) were introduced 3 years ago due to demand on the labour market and are taught on commercial basis (4,500-4,900 soms per year). Similar is the situation with the clothing manufacture technology – it has huge potential for self-employment and is very popular among the college entrants. The technical specialization are awarded till 3 grade of qualification, and are being paid by budget, where student normally receive a stipend of 200 soms per month.

² Monitoring in relation to whether the rural graduates continue working on their lands is not done, therefore, it is difficult to confirm their 'rural status' after few years from graduation.

The majority of graduates (70%) find employment, but mostly in Russia. Similarly, good specialists tend to leave Kizil-Kia for better opportunities in Bishkek and abroad. The College has close link with potential employers for technical specializations graduates, ex. Haydarkan industrial complex³.

In terms of orientation on subsequent job placement, it was discussed that younger students do not think about their prospects for employment, but students of last years of studies do plan for job searching. It is important to note that in general choice of profession is being decided in 90% of cases by parents.

The teachers of the Mining and Technical College heard about the programme “Jany Muun” (New Generation), however were not aware of any further details.

One of the major problems for young people is lack of opportunities for spending their leisure time. It is mainly educational establishments who organize various meetings, debates, clubs for young people.

What is necessary for young people? Teachers think that there is little that the Government could do for young people. If the national economy would be functioning well, young people would find jobs themselves.

The issue of entrepreneurial training was discussed during the meeting. The “Economic Theory” course is taught at all specializations. An interest towards KAB was expressed.

Teachers of the College participate in career-guidance work: they visit secondary schools and meet with prospective enrollees.

Meeting with Mr. Yuriy Vasiliev, Director of secondary school #2 of Kizil-Kia town

Mr. Vasiliev started with information that 90% of graduates of his secondary school enter higher educational establishments mostly in Bishkek. This is a high achievement for the school as for comparison, other schools of Kizil-Kia have their pupils to leave the school after 9th grade, and much lower numbers of those graduates that continue their studies.

The secondary school #2 has liceum component in the curricula that provides for some flexibility in selecting subjects. There are 1430 pupils in the school, 54 teachers and among them only 2 are without professional education. 30% of 9th grade go into the vocational schools, and the majority of graduates of 11th grade go into the universities. The most popular specializations among them were medicine, law, finance and credit. Usually those who graduate from universities in Bishkek, don't return to Kizil-kia.

In terms of entrepreneurship – only a small percentage choose starting business⁴. There are related subjects for 5-8 grades – “Economics”, 9-11 grades – “Basics of market economy”.

³ Haydarkan industrial complex was a major producer of mercury and antimony in the Soviet Union (and was the 3rd biggest producer of mercury on the world market), however since independence had difficulties with finding markets as was fully export-oriented and establishing well functioning industrial process. The Kyrgyz Government was searching for investors. Currently the complex is operating on low scale.

⁴ This is clearly a subjective opinion of the director, and depends much on the level of monitoring of graduates by the school that might be not representative for those pupils who left school more then 5-7 years before (graduates of universities)

There are Junior Achievement pilot books available in the school library since 1999 on economics. However, it was not clear on whether these books are use by pupils within the mentioned subjects or are considered as “recommended reading” only.

There are pupils who work with parents in the mornings and study at school in the afternoons.

The school teachers would be interested in using the Know About Business course of ILO.

Interesting piece of information provided by Mr. Director was on career guidance by teachers to the pupils of final grades and they try to provide information on further opportunities by organizing visits to vocational and higher education establishments.

In reply to a question on youth policy in the town, Mr. Vasiliev informed that he there is no such policy, and the only activity directed towards youth are dancing rooms in the town. Young people in Kizil-Kia need culturally dedicated time-leisure, not only dancings. There are some sports groups in the town, but young prefer to stay in school as there are opportunities for special study and hobby activities.

The other interesting point made by Mr. Vasiliev was that other schools of Kizil-Kia are currently underused (due to various factors, including their low quality) while the school #2 is being overstretched to meet all applications for seats.

Influencer Group 3 – youth and community organisations

Meeting with representatives of youth organisations of Kizil-Kia

Heads and members of 2 youth student organisations were represented at the meeting – ‘Medextrim’ public organization of students of medical school, and ‘United KITEP’ that is a union of students of Kizil-Kia Economics and Law Institute (under the Batken State University). These organisations are established based on the universities and thus target mainly students of their respective educational establishments. The main activities are related to organization of various culture events for students, information sessions on major political events in the republic (for example, change of Constitution, organization of national referendum), sport activities for students.

The main problem of young people – absence of life of goals, no information on further job prospects.

In selecting professions, the majority of young people (60%) are being guided by parents, 30% - by friends and environment, and only 10% decide based on their own willingness.

What is necessary for youth employment? Firstly, available job places for young people. Young women and men need to be able to work, to possess necessary skills and knowledge. In terms of gender equality, the general opinion was that women and men have opportunities within their segregated occupations.

In relation to general situation of Kizil-Kia, it was discussed that there are many problems, but overall development is ongoing, but mainly thanks to external incomes from migrants.

In terms of entrepreneurship, young people are already doing various types of business on small scale. Students in KIMEP (Kizil-Kia Economics and Law Institute) have courses on business-

planning (18 hours), making grant applications (18 hours). In medical school the closest relevant subject is political science.

Influencer Group 4 - parents

Meeting with 2 parents: Mr. Azym Hasanbayev and Mr. Makataly Abdullayev

Mr. Hasanbayev has 3 children:

- Son 19 years old – student of Batken State University, road-transport department (road inspection)
- Daughter 16 years old – studies at 11th grade of secondary school
- Son 15 years old – studies at 10th grade of school

Mr. Abdullayev has 7 children aged 13-32 years old, among them 5 in the age category of 15-29. 2 of his children work in Bishkek, 2 in Kazakhstan, and the rest are in Kizil-Kia.

Both parents expressed big concern about job opportunities for young people in Kizil-Kia. Mr. Hasanbayev informed that his son would like to start working since the quality of education is low and he would not like to spend time at the university. Mr. Abdullayev declared that generally he is against young people migrating abroad for work. He supposes that many of them will never come back to Kizil-Kia and even to Kyrgyzstan.

What is necessary in order to promote youth employment in Kizil-Kia? The following possible solutions were suggested:

- restore manufacturing industry;
- launch real programme for young people (not only on paper);
- create job places;
- revive the 'state order' for professions

Interesting discussion was held around the subject of impact of education on further employment prospects of young people. Both parents tried to provide higher education to their children and intend to continue to do so for young children. In reply to our question on what professions they choose, it was found that Mr. Abdullayev sent his sons to study taxation, law, and daughter - foreign languages. Obviously, these professions have low potential for job placement in Kizil-Kia, and parents admitted this fact. However, they claimed that when selecting professions, children had to think about long-term future and career perspectives and that despite there is no job for lawyers, tax inspectors and interpreters in Kizil-Kia now, they might be needed in Bishkek in future. It is interesting to note that both sons (lawyer and taxation specialist) are now working in Bishkek trading on the market. Why parents did not try to guide them to opt for more marketable vocational skills? The answer was that it is not prestigious and 'not good for further career'. The conclusion was that both parents represent the society in Kizil-Kia that believes in higher education as being necessary for their children despite its low quality and low prospects for job placement.

Both parents stated that they never heard about any youth policy in Kizil-Kia.

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSION AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES: ACTION PLAN FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN KIZIL-KIA (DRAFT VERSION)

The complexity of problems related to youth unemployment in Kizil-Kia require concerted efforts of many related stakeholders: local municipality, local employment department, youth department, other local governmental bodies, employers, trade unions, directors and teachers of secondary, vocational and higher educational institutions, community and youth organisations, parents, and young people themselves. ILO contribution can be described as functioning as an ‘inspiring agent’ that helps and stimulates local actors to undertake concrete activities and builds their capacities where possible.

Thus, the action plan for youth employment is recommended to be formed in the form of **Local Integrated Youth Employment Strategy of Kizil-Kia town** that would be adopted by local municipality as a local youth employment policy document, and would be implemented by all mentioned parties. The table below is a first attempt to summarize problems and possible solutions.

Problem/Issue	Possible action	Responsible
Lack of information on available vacancies	Organize available vacancies roster (on regular basis) and publish in local newspapers and issue as periodic flyers Organisation of job fairs	City Committee on Employment and Migration. <i>ILO could help with issuance of first numbers of flyers and planning job fair.</i>
Skills mismatch	Based on the vacancies roster, monitor number of students being trained in each required profession – make recommendations depending on number of students trained in necessary qualification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - if too little - why? - If no training on required profession – what are reasons and is it possible to introduce it in one of vocational schools? Regular studies of local labour market.	Commission the study to one of the heads/teachers of the vocational schools. <i>ILO could help with training on how to do assessment of local labour market (if available tool exists)</i>
Low qualification of graduates of educational institutions	On-job training opportunities for graduates to provide practical experience – link employers and vocational schools (via City Committee on Employment) Introduction of Modular Skills Training programme into the curricula of vocational schools and enterprises Introduction of Know About Business (KAB) programme in secondary, vocational, and higher educational institutions	City Committee on Employment and Migration ILO will organize training on MST in cooperation with the local municipality and Employment Committee
Lack of skills of	MST programme – to launch via Employment	Committee on

unemployed young people	Committee for training of unemployed young people	Employment and Migration with support of ILO
Business problems of self-employed young people	Introduce SIYB programme: prepare local trainers and support local TOPEs/TOEs	TSCs (territorial self-governing communities) with support of ILO
Lack of or improper career-guidance in secondary schools (8 and 11 grades)	Training on Career guidance for directors and teachers of secondary schools, vocational institutions, heads and staff of TSCs, City committee on employment of Kizil-Kia	Local municipality, Committee on Employment and Migration, TSCs, with support of ILO (career guidance tool)
Potential forced labour/child labour problems at the informal Kizil-Kia labour exchange	Find solution for registration of the labour exchange as private employment service. Owners of the labour exchange should be known to the local population. Provide information on potential labour violations and how to avoid them.	Committee on Employment and Migration ILO IPEC materials and ILO trafficking project materials for dissemination at the informal labour exchange
Labour emigration from Kizil-Kia: lack of information for potential migrants	Re-produce brief booklet for migrants and disseminate among TSCs, local organisations. Organise training on migration for municipality, TSCs, directors and teachers of vocational and secondary schools.	Local municipality. ILO could support by providing booklets (from previous migration project). Link to IOM migration project for information materials. Training might be organised jointly by local municipality, local Eurasia project on migration and ILO migration project.
Low economic development, including SME development	Rapid Market Appraisal as one of assessment tools of local economic situation in relation to the SME development. Train local municipality, BDS institutions, vocational schools on RMA tool and promote its regular organization (bi-annually)	ILO organizes RMA training in cooperation with the local municipality
Lack of Gender awareness	To organize separate gender training or to plan for regular gender session within the organised trainings on MST, SIYB, KAB	Local municipality with support of ILO
Low entrepreneurial culture	Promote SIYB, KAB programmes. SME development need to be high on the agenda of the local municipality: check for available SME policies	ILO and stakeholders Local municipality.

Annex 1. Sample questions for influencers

Questionnaire

Target respondents: influencers

Method: open-ended interviews

Introduction

Introduce ourselves and provide objective of our meeting: collect information and opinions on the youth employment issue (if they find it important). Request permission to tape the interview. Request if they want the information to be kept anonymous. Agree on the duration of meeting – 1-1,5 hours.

1. What is your opinion of current development
2. t of Kizil-Kia town? Please identify the main problems that you face in your capacity of _____ (local policy maker, trade union rep, employer, head of community organization, parent, teacher)
3. What issues/problems of social and economic development you consider to be important for Kizil-Kia? Please share statistical data if available.
4. Do you consider the problem of youth employment to be topical for your town?
 - If negative answer – go to Question (a)
5. Please share your view on youth employment situation in Kizil-Kia town.
6. Is there any governmental policy (national or local) towards promoting youth employment in Kizil-Kia town?
 - If negative answer (not aware) – go to Question 8.
7. What was done within the governmental policies for youth employment?
8. What is your estimation of its effectiveness?
9. What do you think should be undertaken to promote youth employment on policy level and on the ground?

- (a) Why do you think the youth employment issue is not a problem?
- (b) What is your perception of chances of young people to find job after graduation from school, vocational education, higher education?
- (c) Give them current statistical data on employment of various age groups.

Annex 2. Questionnaire for focus-groups.

Please see the separate file: Questionnaire for focus groups.

Annex 3. Records of focus-group discussions (in Russian language)

Please see the separate file: Records of focus-groups