

# **National Scholarship Testing in Kyrgyzstan**

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# Context

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- The collapse of the Soviet Union brought a lot of issues in the field of education.
- Over two decades later there are still many burning issues related to the principles of justice, equity and access in education.

# Distribution of budget places in Kyrgyzstan universities

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- Education in the times of the USSR was free.  
There was a small number of higher education institutions (10), and, therefore, a small percentage of school leavers (15%) were able to continue their education in universities / colleges.
- With the independence gained, the number of universities has increased from 10 to 50.
- Now there are more than 230 000 students (over 210 000 study in state universities and above 17 000 – in private universities)
- In 2000-2002, almost 70 % of school graduates were enrolled at higher educational institutions of the country.

# Contract and Budget Forms of Education

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- The Law On Education of the Kyrgyz Republic, 1992
  - Tuition fee is the so-called "contract" form of education (i.e. education for payment).
  - Now contract education makes a significant part of the revenues in the universities' budgets.
  - Even in state universities their budget consists of no more than 10-15 % of the state budget.
- There are 5000 budget places every year.

# Difficulties in Admission to Universities

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- In the USSR and during the first years of independence of Kyrgyzstan the entrance examinations were conducted by each university / college.
- The content of examination was based on the secondary school curriculum. The exams were held orally and in written.
- The problems of corruption and nepotism were noted during the exams.
- Applicants with connections or who were able to offer a bribe, were in a better position for being admitted to university or college.
- It was difficult for applicants from rural areas and of lower social status to be admitted on the budget places into universities / colleges.

# Reforms

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- In 2002 Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic started reforms in education.
  - Changing entrance examinations in 2002
  - National Scholarship Testing (NST)
- The aims of NST
  - Provide an equitable access to universities / colleges on the basis of the results of transparent, honest and independent testing.
  - Provide “access equality” to higher education and allow students from poor oblasts and regions have an opportunity to study on the budget basis.

# NST

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- **NST measures school graduates' ability to study at university.**
- **NST has replaced the previous entrance examination system.**
- **NST is a tool for the distribution of approximately 5000 budget places financed by the state.**

# **Independent Testing Centre**

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- Independent Testing Centre was also opened to conduct fair assessment.



# Additional Aims

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- Ministry of Education and Science expected NST to contribute to implementing the educational reforms in Kyrgyzstan.
  - In secondary schools of Kyrgyzstan teaching and learning was mainly focused on the mechanical memorization of facts.
- Todd Drummond and Alan de Young wrote (2004, p. 230):  
“Providing access to state educational scholarships to the applicants who have definite skills, she (the Minister) was aiming that the school teachers would improve their teaching methods so that their students could pass the test successfully.”

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- Parents want their children to gain quality education.
    - The Minister hoped: “If you want your children to be admitted to universities / colleges, teach them to think independently and critically and you should require your children be taught the same.”

(Todd Drummond & Alan DeYoung, 2004, p. 230)

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- NT would facilitate the reforms in:
    - setting the educational standards
    - developing new textbooks according to the new standards
    - effective teacher education
  - The reforms in education could be successful only in case they generally affected the entire system of education.

# Tests

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- The major test consists of five sections which measure:
  - the ability to think logically,
  - reading,
  - analogies,
  - filling the gaps in a sentence,
  - practical grammar.
- There are also tests in Chemistry, Biology and Foreign Languages (English or German).

3. Укажите правильный вариант ответа.

1) знакомо : неизвестно

А) в прошлом году : раньше

Б) выше : нижний

В) близко : далеко

Г) раньше : в этом году

2) вместе : порознь

А) вверх : вниз

Б) прохлада : тепло

В) скорость : медленно

Г) крепкий : хрупкий

3) освободить : привязать

А) плавать : окунаться

Б) собирать : раскидывать

В) радоваться : думать

Г) блекнуть : восхищаться

4) свободно : туго

А) много : лишний

Б) крошки : мелкий

В) светло : темно

Г) сильный : плакса

5) печаль : радостный

А) безбородость : бородатый

Б) равнодушие : приятный

В) мягкость : гибкий

Г) качество : грамотный

6) восхищаться : брезговать

А) валить : собирать

Б) радоваться : печалиться

В) зачеркнуть : стереть

Г) оборвать : завязать

ДОМАШНЕЕ ЗАДАНИЕ: \_\_\_\_\_

## УПРАЖНЕНИЯ

1. Определите связь между данными парами слов.

Красный: алый – синонимическая связь

- |                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| а) грубый: вежливый – _____  | б) год: месяц – _____     |
| в) котел: варить – _____     | г) козленок: коза – _____ |
| д) человек: ум – _____       | е) жарко: тепло – _____   |
| ж) поляна: луг – _____       | з) рыба: удочка – _____   |
| и) повар: кухня – _____      | к) врач: лечить – _____   |
| л) конфета: сладость – _____ | м) рука: палец – _____    |

2. Составьте примеры типов связи аналогий из схемы.

а) человек: человек

б) вещество: вещество

# Quotas

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- Provide “equal access” to higher education, different categories- “quotas” depending on the school location were introduced.
  1. schools in the city of Bishkek
  2. village schools
  3. schools in towns and oblast centres
  4. schools in the mountain areas.
- The quota system guarantees the proportional distribution of the scholarship winners from all the oblasts in the country.

# Progress

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- NST has been held for the last 15 years.
- On the whole, NST is the most successful attempt of reforming the educational system in Kyrgyzstan.
- By means of independent and fair testing NST successfully selects strong applicants.
- The quota system helps strong candidates to have an access to the budget places not depending on their place of living and social status.
- The problem of corruption has been significantly minimized in the process of the distribution of the budget scholarships.



# In 2009

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- 33.579 passed NST and 4.928 of them gained the scholarships.

	<b>Total number</b>	<b>Scholarships</b>
• villages	16,784 (50.4%)	2,573 (52.7%)
• mountain area	4,860 (14.9%)	922 (19.1%)
• oblast centres and towns	5,064 (15.5%)	689 (14.3%)
• Bishkek	6,526 (19.2%)	689 (13.9%)

## ***Mars Aliev (Manas KTU)***

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“...Free higher education became really possible for gifted knowledgeable school leavers. The system that worked in favor of the rich and high-ranking officials had become obsolete.

Now the task of the school is not only to give a certificate by any means, but also bring up such a schoolboy / -girl, who would demonstrate teachers' contribution to his / her education when applying to university, thus raising the prestige of a particular school.

Universities and colleges in their turn have had the students who successfully passed the National Scholarship Testing and will turn into perspective specialists, human resources and intellectual potentials in future. Our state can and should contribute to their education. At an international stage our Motherland has gained the status of the country which takes care of its future.”

[www.testing.kg](http://www.testing.kg)

# The gap in the Quality of Education

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- In 2007
  - The participants from the schools of Bishkek
    - 135.5 marks.
  - The school leavers from oblast centres and towns
    - 121.4 marks.
  - The school leavers from the rural districts
    - 107.0 marks.
  - The school leavers from the mountain area
    - 106.3.

## **The number of applicants who received more than 200 marks in 2009**

	200	210	220	230	240	245
Chui oblast	67	30	17	7	2	
Issyk-Kol obl.	41	23	9	6		
Osh oblast	33	9	1	2		
Talas oblast	22	1	2	1		
Jalal-Abad obl.	10	7	2			
Batken oblast	8	3	3			
Naryn oblast	7	2				

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- The representatives of the rural regions won the scholarships of “the lower quality”.
  - They are admitted to less prestigious universities / colleges, mainly, to the local higher education institutions.
  - It is necessary to take the most urgent measures to tackle the problem effectively.
  - Otherwise, the gap and the breakdown of the society will continue, and only a small number of students will receive a quality education in big cities.

# Language of Testing

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- The average mark on the language of testing in 2009

<b>Language</b>	<b>Average mark</b>
Russian	133.2
Kyrgyz	104.4
Uzbek	100.6
The average mark in the country	114.0

# Golden Certificate

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- 50 participants of NST, who have the highest marks, receive the Golden Certificate – i.e. they are given budget places at any university / college out of competition.
- The winners of the Golden Certificate are usually the graduates of private schools, elite gymnasiums and lyceums of Bishkek.
  - In 2009 the graduates from one and the same gymnasium won 18 Golden Certificates out of those 50.
- A new mechanism ought to be introduced to distribute the Golden Certificates strictly to the quotas.

# Preparing for NST (Tutoring)

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- Preparing students for TST
  - Some schools stop conducting classes for 11 Grade students according to the curriculum after the winter holidays, and instead they begin to prepare their students for NST.
  - Sometimes NST has a negative effect on the teaching and learning processes at schools.



## **Inequality in Preparing for NST**

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- Tutoring in the rural districts costs from 100 to 300 soms, in the cities they pay 1000 soms per an hour.
- Not all the parents can afford a great sum of money to pay for tutoring.

# Conclusions

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- A fairer approach is necessary for the scholarships distribution.
- An unfair difference still remains in assessing the quality education in various regions.
  - NST is not to blame for it. How can the situation be improved in other ways by using the NST results?
- Tutoring trespasses the principle of equal opportunities.
- Social scholarships are necessary to be introduced for the budget places in the universities / colleges in future.
  - These scholarships should cover not only tuition payment, but other expenses too including residence, textbooks purchasing, etc.







