

The Kyrgyz Republic

Selected Statistics and Indicators on Child Labor¹⁹¹⁹

Working children, 7-14 years (%), 2006:	4.5
Working boys, 7-14 years (%), 2006:	5.1
Working girls, 7-14 years (%), 2006:	3.9
Working children by sector, 5-14 years (%):	
- Agriculture	-
- Manufacturing	-
- Services	-
- Other	-
Minimum age for work:	16
Compulsory education age:	9 years or until age 14
Free public education:	Yes*
Gross primary enrollment rate (%), 2006:	97
Net primary enrollment rate (%), 2006:	86
School attendance, children 5-14 years (%), 2005:	84
Survival rate to grade 5 (%):	-
ILO-IPEC participating country:	Associated
* Must pay for miscellaneous school expenses	

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Children in the Kyrgyz Republic work selling goods, loading and unloading goods, collecting aluminum and bottles, begging, cleaning and repairing shoes, washing cars, and serving as porters. Some children also work in transportation and construction. Reports estimate that 7,000 children are working in Bishkek.¹⁹²⁰ Reports indicate that street and working children are frequently victims of police persecution and have been forced to give up their earnings in exchange for being released.¹⁹²¹ A 2003 UNICEF-supported survey of 207 street and working children in Bishkek found that up to 90 percent of those children did not attend school.¹⁹²² In southern rural areas, reports indicate that children work in coal mines and in brick making.¹⁹²³ There were also

reports of children mining near or in uranium and silicon waste dumps.¹⁹²⁴

Children are reportedly taken out of school to harvest cotton. Children also work on commercial tobacco farms.¹⁹²⁵ Some schools have reportedly required students to participate in the tobacco harvest in fields located on school grounds. Proceeds from the harvest are collected by the schools and do not go to the children.¹⁹²⁶ Children working in agriculture are often exposed to extreme heat and hazardous conditions.¹⁹²⁷ Children are also found working on family farms and in family enterprises such as selling products at roadside kiosks.¹⁹²⁸ Many children from the Kyrgyz Republic migrate to south Kazakhstan with their families during the harvest season to work in the cotton and tobacco fields.¹⁹²⁹ ILO reports indicate that children from rural areas are sent to urban areas to live with wealthier relatives and to work as domestic servants.¹⁹³⁰

Children engaged in prostitution in the Kyrgyz Republic are primarily girls aged between 11 and 16 years.¹⁹³¹ It has been reported that at least 20 percent of prostitutes in Bishkek are minors.¹⁹³² Trafficking of children for sexual exploitation and forced labor is a problem.¹⁹³³ The internal trafficking of children from rural areas to Bishkek and Osh for sexual exploitation and labor has been reported.¹⁹³⁴ An increase in the use of trafficked children to sell and distribute illegal drugs has also been reported.¹⁹³⁵

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The law establishes the minimum age for basic employment as 16 years, but limited light work is permitted at age 14. The maximum work hours for children 14 and 15 years is 5 hours per day; for children 16 and 17 years, it is 7 hours per day. The employment of persons under 18 years is banned in certain industries including oil and gas, mining and prospecting, food, entertainment, and machine building.¹⁹³⁶ Children studying in educational establishments are forbidden from participating in agricultural or other work not related to their schooling.¹⁹³⁷ The law penalizes parents who

restrict their children's access to schooling.¹⁹³⁸ The penalty for preventing a child from attending school ranges from a public reprimand to 1 year of forced labor.¹⁹³⁹ According to USDOS, this law is not strictly enforced, especially in rural areas.¹⁹⁴⁰

The law prohibits forced labor, except in the case of war, natural disaster, epidemic, imprisonment, or in extraordinary circumstances.¹⁹⁴¹ The minimum age for recruitment to active military service is 18 years; however, boys may volunteer for military schools at 17 years.¹⁹⁴² Prostitution is not illegal, but the operation of brothels, pimping, and recruiting persons into prostitution is punishable by up to 5 years in jail.¹⁹⁴³ USDOS reports that a lack of legal regulation and oversight makes prostitution an ongoing problem.¹⁹⁴⁴ The recruitment of persons for exploitation, including minors, is punishable by up to 8 years in jail.¹⁹⁴⁵ The illegal restriction of freedom, including underage children, is punishable by between 7 and 10 years in prison.¹⁹⁴⁶ The law prohibits forced labor and trafficking in persons and imposes punishments of up to 20 years imprisonment.¹⁹⁴⁷ The law grants immunity from prosecution to trafficking victims who cooperate with authorities.¹⁹⁴⁸

The General Procurator's Office and the State Labor Inspectorate are responsible for enforcing child labor laws. There are 62 labor inspectors in the Kyrgyz Republic.¹⁹⁴⁹ During the first 6 months of 2007, labor inspectors made 48 checks for compliance with child labor laws. The checks resulted in 14 recommendations, 11 instructions to eliminate the violations, 89 warnings of legal punishment, and two disciplinary punishments.¹⁹⁵⁰ The Federation of Trade Unions also has the right to carry out child labor inspections when it receives a complaint.¹⁹⁵¹ The Office of the Ombudsman has a special department dealing with the rights of minors. It has the authority to order other agencies to deliver information or conduct investigations.¹⁹⁵² USDOS reports that the labor inspectorate conducts spot checks for violations, but that those are infrequent and ineffective, due to lack of resources.¹⁹⁵³ Since many children work in the informal sector and small and medium-sized business that do not have employment contracts, it is difficult to determine the extent of child labor and employers' compliance with the law.¹⁹⁵⁴

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has a special anti-trafficking police unit.¹⁹⁵⁵ In 2006, the last date for which information is available, 39 trafficking investigations were conducted.¹⁹⁵⁶ According to USDOS, law enforcement is hampered by widespread corruption. Victims reported that local police, immigration officers, and airline security officers assisted trafficking operations.¹⁹⁵⁷

Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

On January 22, 2008, the Kyrgyz Government, via a Prime Ministerial Decree, approved the State Program of Action of the Social Partners for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Kyrgyz Republic. The program covers the years 2008 to 2011 and is aimed at improving legislation, making the labor inspectorate more efficient, withdrawing and preventing children from the worst forms of child labor, promoting youth employment, increasing awareness about the worst forms of child labor, and developing a child labor monitoring system.¹⁹⁵⁸

With assistance from the IOM, the Government now issues new forgery-resistant passports intended to reduce incidents of human trafficking in the Kyrgyz Republic.¹⁹⁵⁹ The Government supports a USAID-funded anti-trafficking project implemented by IOM that is intended to protect victims and assist prevention efforts.¹⁹⁶⁰ Office space and space for two NGO-run shelters is provided by the Government.¹⁹⁶¹ The Kyrgyz Government has distributed brochures and booklets in public places about the threat of trafficking. Government-run media outlets also broadcast programs about trafficking.¹⁹⁶² In April 2008, IOM and the Norwegian Government, with support from the local Osh Government, opened a shelter for child victims of trafficking and labor exploitation.¹⁹⁶³

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic participated in a USD 2.5 million USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC sub-regional project that enhanced the capacity of national institutions to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in the Kyrgyz Republic and share information and experiences across Central Asia.¹⁹⁶⁴ The Ministry of Education and the NGO "Every Child" jointly manage a project to assist children working in markets within Osh and

Karasu. They provide training to Government officials on children's rights and child labor laws.¹⁹⁶⁵

¹⁹¹⁹ For statistical data not cited here, see the Data Sources and Definitions section. For data on ratifications and ILO-IPEC membership, see the Executive Summary. For minimum age for admission to work, age to which education is compulsory, and free public education, see U.S. Department of State, "Kyrgyz Republic," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2007*, Washington, DC, March 11, 2008, sections 5, 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100616.htm>. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention*, CRC/C/104/Add.4, April 5 2004, para. 70. See also U.S. Embassy- Bishkek, *reporting*, December 21, 2007. See also ECPAT International CSEC Database, *Kyrgyz Republic*, accessed March 14, 2008; available from <http://www.ecpat.net>.

¹⁹²⁰ Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Kyrgyzstan: Child Labour Remains Rife", IRINnews.org, [online], June 26, 2006 [cited December 6, 2007]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=54174&SelectRegion=Asia&SelectCountry=KYRGYZSTAN>. See also Ramazon Dyryldaev and Severine Jacomy, *Rights of the Child in Kyrgyzstan*, Geneva, February 2004, 18; available from http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.37/Kyrgyzstan_OMCT_ngo_report.pdf. See also Tatiana Yarkova, Botoeva Gulzat, Madeleine Reeves, Kanybek Konokbaev, Natalia Yarkova, Rachel Marcus, and Elmire Satybaldieva, *Childhood Poverty in Kyrgyzstan*, Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Center, 2004, 33; available from <http://www.childhoodpoverty.org/index.php?action=documentfeed/doctype=pdf/id=62/>.

¹⁹²¹ ECPAT International CSEC Database, *Kyrgyz Republic*.

¹⁹²² UNICEF's Executive Board, *Draft Country Programme Document: Kyrgyzstan*, E/ICEF/2004/P/L.14, United National Economic and Social Council, April 1, 2004, 3.

¹⁹²³ ILO-IPEC and SIAR, *Child Labour in Kyrgyzstan: An initial study*, Summary Report, Bishkek, 2001, 14. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 6d. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *NGO Commentaries to the Initial Report of the Kyrgyz Republic on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, n.d., 26; available from <http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.24/kyrgyzstanNGOreport.doc>.

¹⁹²⁴ Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Kyrgyzstan: Child Labour Remains Rife". See also Ian Greenberg, "In a Kyrgyz dump, girls dig up silicon for China," *New York Times* (New York), September 5, 2006;

available from [hard copy on file].

¹⁹²⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 6d.

¹⁹²⁶ Ibid. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *NGO Commentaries*, 27.

¹⁹²⁷ Dyryldaev and Jacomy, *Rights of the Child in Kyrgyzstan*, 18.

¹⁹²⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 6d.

¹⁹²⁹ U.S. Embassy- Astana, *reporting*, December 3, 2007.

¹⁹³⁰ Youth Human Rights Group, *Alternative NGO Report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in Relation to the Examination of the Second Periodic Report by the Kyrgyz Republic on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, April 2004, 27; available from

http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.37/kyrgyzstan_ngo_report.pdf. See also ILO-IPEC and SIAR, *Child Labor in Kyrgyzstan*, 15-17. See also Yarkova, Gulzat, Reeves, Konokbaev, Yarkova, Marcus, and Satybaldieva, *Childhood Poverty in Kyrgyzstan*, 34.

¹⁹³¹ Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), *Lost Children of Central Asia*, [January 19, 2004]; available from [hard copy on file].

¹⁹³² UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *NGO Commentaries*, 27. See also ECPAT International CSEC Database, *Kyrgyz Republic*.

¹⁹³³ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 5. See also Youth Human Rights Group, *Alternative NGO Report*, 16.

¹⁹³⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Kyrgyz Republic," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2006*, Washington, DC, 2007, section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78821.htm>.

¹⁹³⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 6d.

¹⁹³⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Kyrgyz Republic," section 6d. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties: Kyrgyzstan*.

¹⁹³⁷ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties: Kyrgyzstan*, para. 340.

¹⁹³⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 5.

¹⁹³⁹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties: Kyrgyzstan*, para. 67.

¹⁹⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 5.

¹⁹⁴¹ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic*, (February 17, 1996), article 28;

available from [hard copy on file].

¹⁹⁴² Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Kyrgyzstan," in *Child Soldiers Global Report- 2004*; available from <http://www.child-soldiers.org/>. See also U.S. Embassy- Bishkek, *reporting, December 21, 2007*.

¹⁹⁴³ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 5. See also ECPAT International CSEC Database, *Kyrgyz Republic*.

¹⁹⁴⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 5.

¹⁹⁴⁵ U.S. Embassy- Bishkek, *reporting, December 21, 2007*.

¹⁹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 5. See also U.S. Department of State, "Kyrgyz Republic (Tier 2)," in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2007*, Washington, DC, June 12, 2007; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2007/>.

¹⁹⁴⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic."

¹⁹⁴⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 6d.

¹⁹⁵⁰ U.S. Embassy- Bishkek, *reporting, December 21, 2007*.

¹⁹⁵¹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 6d.

¹⁹⁵² UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Summary Record of the 987th Meeting: Kyrgyzstan*, September 29, 2004, para 38 and 47; available from <http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/Documentsfrset?OpenFrameSet>.

¹⁹⁵³ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 6d.

¹⁹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵⁵ Ibid., section 5.

¹⁹⁵⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic."

¹⁹⁵⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 5. See also U.S. Embassy- Bishkek, E-mail communication to USDOL official, July 24, 2007.

¹⁹⁵⁸ ILO-IPEC official, E-mail communication to USDOL official, February 8, 2008.

¹⁹⁵⁹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Kyrgyzstan: New Passport to Help Reduce Human Trafficking," August 4, 2004; available from http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=42509&SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=KYRGYZS_TAN.

¹⁹⁶⁰ USAID, *USAID Programs in Kyrgyzstan in 2007*, Washington, DC; available from <http://centralasia/usa.gov/page.php?page=article-89>.

¹⁹⁶¹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 5. See also U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic."

¹⁹⁶² U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic."

¹⁹⁶³ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Kyrgyz Republic," section 5.

¹⁹⁶⁴ ILO-IPEC, *CAR Capacity Building Project: Regional Program on the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, Project Document, RER/04/P54/USA, Geneva, September 2004.

¹⁹⁶⁵ U.S. Embassy- Bishkek, *reporting, December 21, 2007*.

Lebanon

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

According to a 2000 Government of Lebanon study supported by ILO-IPEC, there is a higher prevalence of working children in poor rural areas of the country.¹⁹⁶⁶ Children work under hazardous conditions in several sectors, including metal works, construction, automobile repair, equipment installation and maintenance, painting, street work, carpentry, construction, welding, and seasonal agriculture.¹⁹⁶⁷ The 2000 Government assessment estimated that of the 100,000 working children in Lebanon, 25,000 children were working in tobacco

cultivation; the majority of whom worked for family enterprises and were unpaid.¹⁹⁶⁸ Non-Lebanese children, particularly boys from Syria and Palestinian boys living in Lebanese refugee camps, constitute approximately 85 percent of children working on the street.¹⁹⁶⁹ The most common types of street work are selling goods, shoe polishing, and washing car windshields.¹⁹⁷⁰ Forty-seven percent of working street children who participated in a 2004 study conducted by the Ministry of Labor (MOL) were forced by adults to work long hours on the streets.¹⁹⁷¹