

EMPLOYABLE SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUTHS MAY ENHANCE THE ENGAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC STRENGTH OF KYRGYZSTAN

Skills and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and social development of any country. They have become even more important given the increasing pace of globalization and technological changes provide both challenges that is taking place in the world. Countries with higher and better levels of skills adjust more effectively to the challenges and opportunities of globalization. In the 21st century as science progresses towards a better understanding of the miniscule, that is, genes, nano-particles, bits and bytes and neurons, knowledge domains and skill domains also multiply and become more and more complex. In an increasingly interconnected and globalizing world economy, newly created jobs require a higher degree of analytical and interpersonal skills. With a per capita GDP in 2012 of US\$1,155, the Kyrgyz Republic is a low-income country. However, it is experiencing a number of structural changes with the size of the industrial and service sectors—especially the latter—strongly on the rise. Detailed data analysis confirms that these sectoral shifts are changing the demand for skills in the Kyrgyz Republic toward “new economy skills.” More generally, the Kyrgyz aspiration to become a middle-income economy will require a labor force that has diverse high-quality skills.

Skill acquisition takes place through two basic structural streams—a small formal one and a large informal one. The formal structure includes: (i) higher technical education imparted through professional colleges, (ii) vocational education in schools at the post-secondary stage, (iii) technical training in specialized institutions, and (iv) apprenticeship training. The target group for this program is the Educated Youth/ school drop outs and women SHG members across all societies. Different fitting basic qualification required for different courses as specified in each module of the training. The trades for training will be based on the available resources and technology. The Skills may lead to better opportunity to engage and empower the youth for livelihood and sustainability.

Key word: *Skill development, training& employment and Sustainability.*

Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected and globalizing world economy, newly created jobs require a higher degree of analytical and interpersonal skills. With a per capita GDP in 2012 of US\$1,155, the Kyrgyz Republic is a low-income country. However, it is experiencing a number of structural changes with the size of the industrial and service sectors—especially the latter—strongly on the rise. Detailed data analysis confirms that these sectoral shifts are changing the demand for skills in the Kyrgyz Republic toward “new economy skills.” More generally, the Kyrgyz aspiration to become a middle-income economy will require a labor force that has diverse high-quality skills.

As discussed the skills in the Kyrgyzstan is a unique feature which defines workers' skills as cognitive, non-cognitive (social and behavioral), and technical skills. This study focuses on cognitive and non-cognitive skills. Cognitive skills capture the ability to use logical, intuitive, and critical thinking as well as skills such as problem solving, verbal ability, and numeracy. The cognitive skills measured in this report include memory, literacy, and numeracy skills. Non-cognitive skills represent personality traits and socio-emotional skills that are relevant in the labor market, including extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, agreeability, and emotional stability. This survey measures the following non-cognitive skills: openness/sociability, workplace attitude, decision making, achievement striving, and growth mindset.

There is considerable scope for public policy to address the observed skills gaps. Policies can target the future workforce, usually by focusing on families and communities and focusing on the formal education system, and/or target the current workforce, by focusing on adult training institutions and on-the-job training by firms. Taken together, the Kyrgyz findings and the Skills Toward Employment and Productivity (STEP) Framework point to three policy goals that can strengthen the quality, relevance, and use of skills over the life-cycle:

- To get children off to the right start: by continuing to emphasize public policies that seek faster universal access to early childhood development services, building on the nutrition and preschool strategies in the Kyrgyzstan. These efforts should be promoted as an integral part of a strategy to build strong skills for the future.
- Ensuring that all students learn and build job-relevant skills that employers demand: by building on public policies, such as the education development, alongside strong cognitive skills; promote non-cognitive skill building in schools; emphasize systematic measurement of skills alongside education and labor market outcomes; encourage more students to invest in technical/science training, both at the secondary and tertiary level.
- Encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation: by emphasizing public policies that encourage firms to enhance skills use and skills investments; support migrants to build more skills to increase their earning capacity and therefore their ability to support their families.

Fig 1.1: The division of skills at different stage of life cycle

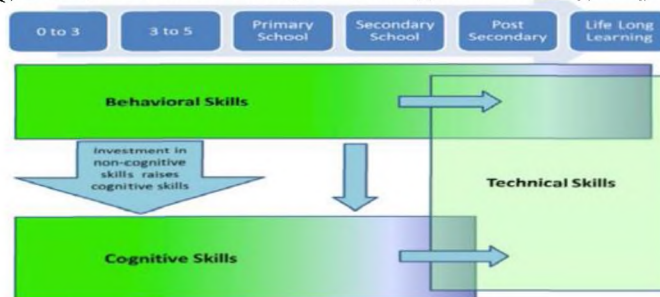


Skills are developed throughout all stages of life—from conception to preschool, primary, secondary, higher education, and on the job—and there are sensitive and critical development periods for each type of skill. Recent evidence suggests that the most sensitive and critical moments for skill building differ by skill type; these “malleable” periods are depicted in green in Figure 27. Cognitive and non-cognitive skills are largely formed earlier on in life, while technical skills are developed later. The early childhood period is critical in the development of cognitive skills. This stage marks the first step of skill-building, and it can be particularly critical in closing the gap between children from poorer and better-off households. In fact, there are strong indications that the most critical moment for cognitive skill-building is before a child turns 5. By ages 8 to 10, the foundation of an individual’s cognitive abilities is well set. Technical skills are developed later—they are continuously developed throughout adolescence and into adulthood.

Developing strong cognitive and non-cognitive skills early in the life cycle is imperative for building the skills needed for productive employment later in the life cycle. Strong cognitive and non-cognitive skills feed into the successful acquisition of technical skills, as solid cognitive and non-cognitive foundations will help workers to strengthen their technical skills throughout their working lives.¹⁹ These skills also shape the capacity and motivation to

absorb new knowledge, adapt, and solve new problems, thus affecting one's ability to learn across the life cycle. Such skills are crucial in a dynamic economy where specific skills can be rendered obsolete. This is not to say that generic skills, particularly non-cognitive skills, are an alternative to academic qualifications. Instead, careful attention to these skills is a powerful way to enhance educational attainment, life-long learning, and employability.

Fig 1.2 :Skills are developed throughout all stages of life.



Objective of Skill development programme

The broad objective is to train the youths and women members, educated as well as school drop outs, in local specific market oriented skills and entrepreneurship skills to facilitate better livelihood options through enhanced employability and self-employment opportunities. This will be documented in respect of the following parameters:

- To impart skill development/ up-gradation training programme in the areas of self enterprise development and market oriented job opportunities
- To facilitate the job placement of the trainees through Placement Linked Employability training in the concerned sector.
- To facilitate the development of enterprise skills through training, business plan development and linkages support for the trainees interested in self-enterprise.

Background

The Jobs, Skills, and Migration survey is one of three identical household surveys conducted in Central Asia in 2013 by the World Bank in collaboration with GIZ. The survey collected comprehensive information not typically captured by traditional household surveys. It includes two distinct instruments: a core questionnaire and a skills questionnaire. The sample size of the core questionnaire was 1,500 households with a total of 7,706 individuals. Given that one individual per household was randomly selected to partake in the skills questionnaire, this sample consists of 1,500 individuals. The survey was conducted from July to September, 2013.

*Core questionnaire**

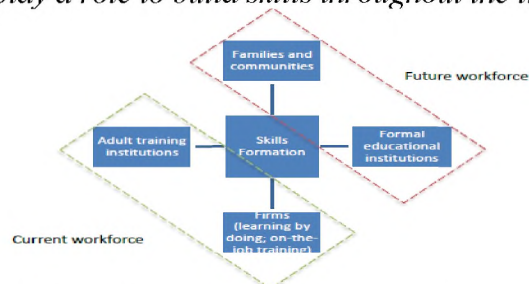
- The core questionnaire contains modules on education, employment, migration, health expenditure, remittances, government transfers, financial services, subjective poverty, and housing conditions, as well as a complete household expenditure module. The core questionnaire concludes with the random selection of a household member aged 15 to 64 to whom the skill questionnaire is administered. The random selection is based on a random number table (Kish grid).
- The skills questionnaire contains detailed modules on labor and work expectations, migration and preparation for migration, language skills, and technical skill training. A unique aspect of the survey are the cognitive and non-cognitive questions to test skills. The cognitive skills module is based on a recent instrument developed for a similar survey in Bulgaria. The non-cognitive test modules of the skills questionnaire are based on World Bank Skills Toward Employment and Productivity (STEP) surveys. The skills modules were developed with the support of a multi-disciplinary panel of experts in psychology, skills assessment, education, and labor markets.

The Skills Roadmap in the Kyrgyzstan

The Kyrgyz economy is changing and with it the demands for skills. The service sector has been growing fast and the industrial sector has also started to grow. These structural changes, as well as the Kyrgyz aspiration more broadly to become a middle income country,

require a different, more diverse skill set of the labor force, which includes non-cognitive skills alongside high quality cognitive and technical skills. Policies can target the future workforce, usually by focusing on families and communities and the formal education system, and/or the current workforce, by focusing on adult training institutions and on-the-job training by firms (Figure 37).

Figure 1.3: Actors that play a role to build skills throughout the life cycle of an individual



The development of skills policies will confirm Skills Toward Employment and Productivity which contains five steps to improve employability and productivity in a country: getting children off to the right start; ensuring that all students learn; building job-relevant skills that employers demand; encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation; and (5) matching the supply of skills with employer demand. These steps apply to all countries, with the degree of emphasis varying depending on the government’s strategic vision, which in turn is constrained by budget and capacity constraints.

The following is a summary of the STEP conceptual framework which brings together research-based evidence and practical experience from diverse areas

- Getting children off to the right start: by developing the technical, cognitive, and non-cognitive skills conducive to high productivity and flexibility in the work environment through early child education, with an emphasis on nutrition, stimulation, and basic cognitive skills. Research shows that handicaps developed early in life are difficult if not impossible to remedy later and that effective ECE programs can have a very high payoff.

- Ensuring that all students learn: by building stronger education systems with clear learning standards, good teachers, adequate resources, and a proper regulatory environment. Lessons from research and on-the-ground experience indicate that the key decisions about education systems are how much autonomy to allow and to whom, how much accountability to expect from whom and for what, and how to assess performance and results.

- Building job-relevant skills that employers demand: by developing the right incentive framework for both pre-employment and on-the-job training programs and institutions (including higher education). A growing body of experience is showing how public and private efforts can be combined to achieve more relevant and responsive training systems.

- Encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation: by creating an environment that encourages investments in knowledge and creativity. Emerging evidence shows this requires innovation-specific skills (which can be developed starting early in life) and investments to connect people with ideas (such as through collaborations between universities and private companies) as well as risk-management tools that facilitate innovation.

- Matching the supply of skills with employer demand: by moving toward more flexible, efficient, and secure labor markets. Avoiding rigid job protection regulations while strengthening income protection systems, complemented by efforts to provide information and intermediation services to workers and firms, make up the final complementary step that enables skills to be transformed into actual employment and productivity.

The skills that may leads to employability

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- Automobile / autocomponents
- Electronics hardware
- Textiles and garments
- Chemicals and pharmaceuticals
- Building and construction
- Food processing
- Handlooms and handicrafts
- IT or software
- ITES-BPO
- Tourism, hospitality and travel
- Transportation/ logistics/ warehousing and packaging
- Organized retail
- Real estate
- Media, entertainment, broadcasting, content creation, animation
- Healthcare
- Banking/ insurance and finance
- Education/ skill development
- Unorganized sector
- Management and Accounting

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Conclusion

The unprecedented opportunity for Skill Development arises from a unique 25-year window of opportunity, called Kyrgyzstan's demographic dividend. The Demographic dividend consists of three elements of demographic trends fortuitously coinciding at a time when the economy is growing at 9% plus: (i) a declining birth rate means fewer people will be joining the workforce in coming years, than in previous years, (ii) a very slow improvement in life-expectancy around 63/64 years of age means an ageing population surviving fewer years after superannuation than in other countries, (iii) the baby-boomers generation having now crossed the age of 20, the demographic bulge is occurring at the age bracket of 15–29. The Skills may lead to better opportunity to engage and empower the youth for livelihood and sustainability.

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