

Inequality of Opportunity in Asia and the Pacific

KYRGYZSTAN



“Kyrgyzstan fully supports the adopted comprehensive international development agenda until 2030. We welcome the fact that the Sustainable Development Goals were developed taking into account the lessons learned from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals [...]. Among the Sustainable Development Goals for Kyrgyzstan, the top priorities are such areas as poverty reduction, food security, quality education and health care, economic growth, energy, and environmental protection.”

HE Mr. Erlan Abdyldaev
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan
UN General Assembly 2016

Country Background

6.1	million, total population	0.27	GINI coefficient (income inequality)
3,393	GDP per capita, 2011 PPP \$	0.12	D-index (inequality of opportunity)
32.1 %	people in poverty (below the national poverty line)	71	years of life expectancy at birth
2.5 %	people in extreme poverty (below \$1.90 a day)	12.3	expected years of schooling at birth

Source: ESCAP, World Bank Open Data, UNDP

Leaving no one behind by ensuring a level playing field

Inequality of opportunity refers to the unequal access to fundamental rights and services, required for individuals to sustain and improve their livelihoods.¹

In Kyrgyzstan, large gaps exist between the *best-off* and the *furthest behind* groups in access to different opportunities. Full-time employment and access to clean fuels are the most unequally distributed opportunities, with gaps of at least 40 percentage points between the *best-off* and the *furthest behind* groups. On average, less than 8 per cent of the population has access to bank accounts, with the *furthest behind* groups having no access.

Identifying the characteristics of the *best-off* and the *furthest behind* group in access to clean fuels reveals how almost all urban households have access. This blue box represents the *best-off* group. The green box shows the *furthest behind* group with the lowest access to clean fuels: households with secondary education in the bottom 40 living in rural areas, where 50 per cent have access.

Figure 1. How wide are the gaps in access to opportunities?

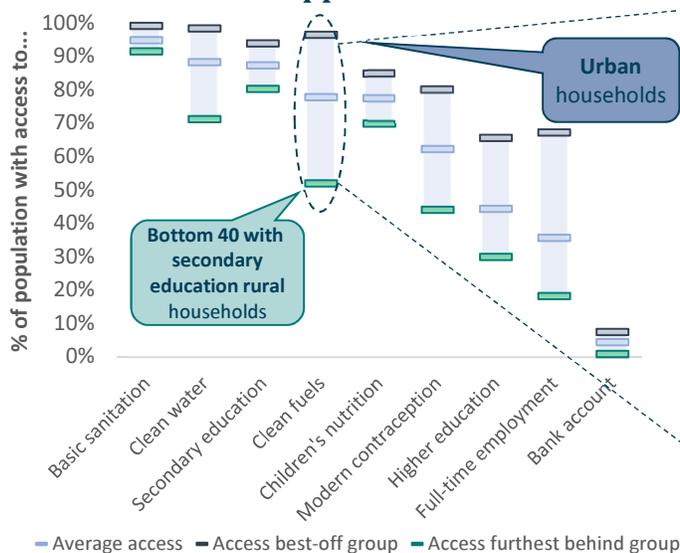
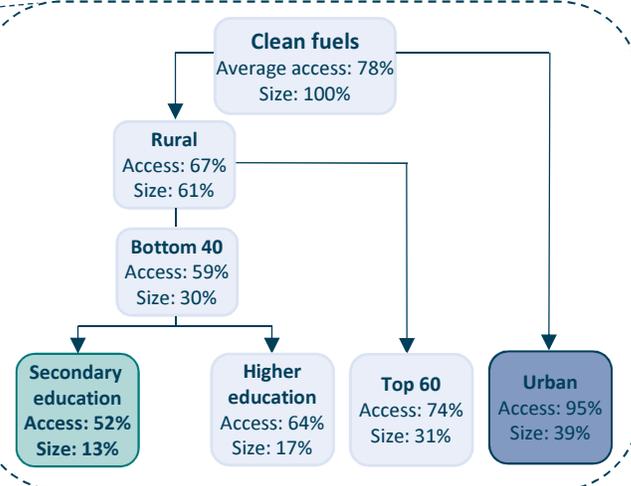
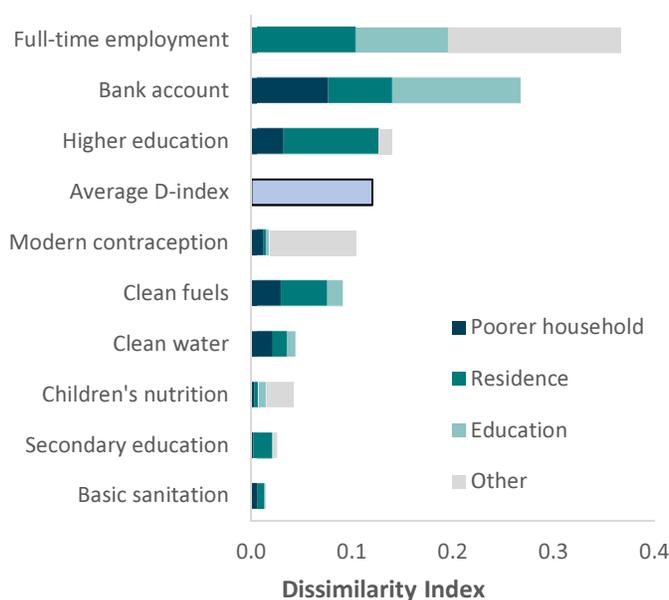


Figure 2. Who are the furthest behind?



Source: ESCAP calculations, using data from DHS 2012 and the Gallup World Poll

Figure 3: Drivers of inequality in access to different opportunities



Household wealth, the place of residence and educational level are behind most of the inequality in access to opportunities.

Other circumstances, however, also appear relevant in explaining unequal access to opportunities.

For example, women, single people, and those without children have limited access to full-time employment in Kyrgyzstan. Also, a woman's age and the number of children under the age of five in the household explains unequal access to modern contraception. The number of children in the household explains, together with mother's education, inequality in children's nutritional outcomes.

*Source: ESCAP calculations, using data from DHS 2012 and the Gallup World Poll
Note: A Dissimilarity index (D-Index) is used to examine which circumstance contributes most to overall inequality among different population groups.*

Key Takeaways

In Kyrgyzstan, the largest opportunity gaps between the *best-off* and the *furthest behind* groups are in full-time employment and in access to clean fuels respectively. While 95 per cent of households who live in urban areas have access to clean fuels, only 52 per cent among rural households with at most secondary education in the bottom 40 do. **Understanding households' circumstances in shaping energy consumption patterns is paramount in addressing clean fuels inequalities.**

Less than 8 per cent of the population have access to bank accounts, with the *furthest behind* group having no access. **Promoting financial literacy and developing national strategies for financial inclusion, with accompanying action plans and monitoring frameworks, should be prioritized.**

Among all groups, inequality of opportunity is explained by distinct circumstances. Living in rural areas appears as the most important circumstance shaping inequality in 3 out of 9 opportunities. **Since Kyrgyz living in rural areas face unequal access to basic services, investing in a more even socioeconomic development of the country, both in urban and rural areas, is a must for ensuring equal opportunities.**

¹ The opportunities considered in this country brief are education, women's health, children's nutrition, decent employment, basic water and sanitation, access to clean energy, and financial inclusion. In Kyrgyzstan, access to electricity and professional help during childbirth are universal. Therefore, these opportunities are not reported in the graphs.

Cover photo by Frans Hulet

For more information and thematic reports on these data and analysis, please visit: <https://www.unescap.org/our-work/social-development/poverty-and-inequality/resources>

Contact Info: escap-sdd@un.org