

Children in School but Out of Schooling: Kazakhstan case

By

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Introduction

Society and Education

It is a generally known fact that there is a strong connection between the level of education of an individual and his standard of living. The lower the level of education, the less is the opportunity for an individual to get a job, engage in a career, and achieve a certain status in the society --- and, therefore, less opportunity for further development.

Existing statistics in Kazakhstan¹ on labor and employment show that people with low level of education dominate the unemployment structure. Almost half of the unemployed are people with only an average and even lower level of education, while more than one third completed only primary and secondary vocational training². The most vulnerable and noncompetitive category of population in the labor market is the youth: more than half of all the unemployed in Kazakhstan are young people between 15 and 24.³

Official data also suggest a direct correlation of the well-being of the family and the level of education of the parents: 94% of parents whose income is below the living wage do not have higher education. This implies that those with proper education and qualifications have a better chance to land more or less high paying jobs. This is evidenced by the fact that in Kazakhstan, there is a very high rate of gross enrollment in higher education since higher education works like a passport to secure a good-paying job, and consequently to have a higher social status. Clearly then, education makes a big difference on the opportunity of people, especially the youth, to succeed in life. Cognizant of this, the government of Kazakhstan mandates compulsory general secondary education. The laws and regulations pertinent to compulsory education in Kazakhstan are discussed below.

Legislation, regulations on the compulsory education requirement

Basic Provisions of the System of Compulsory Education in the Republic of Kazakhstan

The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK) (Item 1, Article 30) and The Law of the RK on Education, 1999 (Item 1, Article 24) guarantees the citizens of the country a free

¹ Kazakhstan is located on the border of two continents, Europe and Asia. It has a total area of 2,724,900 square kilometers, which stretches from the Caspian Sea and Volga plains in the west to the mountainous Altai in the east, and from the foothills of Tien Shan in the south and south-east to the West-Siberian lowland in the north. Kazakhstan gained independence on December 16, 1991, now celebrated as Independence day. Astana became the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan on December 10, 1997. Source: Source: http://www.undp.kz/script_site1.html?id=185

² Statistical Kazakhstan year-book. Almaty, 2004. p. 52

³ Labor and employment of population in Kazakhstan. Statistical Manual. Almaty , 2003. p.42

secondary education. In accordance with The Law of the RK on Education, 1999 the following levels of education are established:

- Pre-school education
- Secondary education
- Higher education
- Postgraduate education

Secondary education, in contrast to other levels of continuous education is compulsory, and comprises general secondary, primary vocational and secondary vocational types of training. General secondary education includes three levels of education: primary level (grades 1-4), basic level (grades 5-9) and senior level (grades 10-11/12). In accordance with the Law of the RK on Education, 1999, children are enrolled at the age of six or seven. All levels of general secondary education can function together or independently.

Acquisition of basic general education is mandatory until a child reaches 18. Mastering of the programs of basic general and secondary (complete) general education is concluded with final attestation of the graduates. Those who succeed in the final attestation are granted a state certification certifying that the holder has completed the respective level of education. School directors and local school administration authorities are responsible in enforcing the right of citizens to secondary general education.

The rights of Kazakhstan's children to education and guarantees to free secondary education at school are also secured by The Law on Child Rights in RK, 2002 (Item 1, Art. 15). This Law also provides for the allocation of additional funds from the state budget to ensure that children with special needs who need special pedagogical approach would be guaranteed education at the level of specified standards.

Basic Provisions of Legislation of RK in Relation to Covering Children with Education, Non-Attendance and Dropping out

School enrollment

The following terms are used to explain the issues of registration and non-attending students from the education system of the school age children:

- Non-enrolled school age children
- Children not attending school over 10 days a month
- Children not attending school due to certain reasons

To ensure the full attendance to general educational schools, children and teenagers are registered within the boundaries of villages, towns or other administrative districts where they reside. In towns and villages with several schools, the territory of the town is divided, for convenience, into several districts (micro-districts). For record-keeping purposes, authorized

officials conduct house-to-house survey using the people registry. These registries include children from the age of 5 to 17 who live on a particular territory of the micro-district.

Children and teenagers with physical and mental deficiency are put on a special list used to enroll such children to special schools. The local executive bodies are responsible for generating, maintaining and updating the lists of children and teenagers. The local executive bodies review and systematize the lists of children and teenagers and classify them according to school micro-districts, and submit the copies of the lists to the school's director not later than the 15th of August of each year. The director is responsible for keeping copies of the lists of children living in the micro-district. During the academic year, the director provides information to the rayon (district) educational department about children who stopped attending school. This information is the basis for taking appropriate measures for their return to school. The director is required to furnish such information within five days after the student stopped attending school, except in case when a pupil does not attend school temporarily due to illness or for other valid reasons, such as:

- If, according to the determination of a psychological, medical and pedagogical consultation (PMPC), the child is deemed not legally responsible to attend schooling;
- If a medical certificate confirming the disease of the child is available;
- If the student participated in certain events (sport competition, contest, subject olympiad etc.) on the basis of the director's order; and
- Other reasons where appropriate permission is granted

It should be noted that the Law of the RK on Education, 1999 does not contain a stipulation on dropout student or non-attending student in the international context of school-age children who ought to be in school but are not. In Kazakhstan, the concept of dropout students is understood in terms of non-attending students, which are described as those who were enrolled to the educational system, but who have not accomplished a given level of training due to the failure to master knowledge based on given standards of education; or, those who missed lessons at school for more than 10 days without any valid reason.

Expulsion

Although the Law of the RK on Education, 1999 does not contain stipulation on dropout students, it has provisions that specify the conditions of excluding children under 16 years old from the schools. Expulsion is upon the decision of education authorities and is resorted to only in extraordinary cases stipulated by the law as follows:

- committing of unlawful act; and
- rude and repeated violation of the Charter of Educational Organization

In case of expulsion from the general education school, a student is given a certificate as a person who has not accomplished education. Item 2 of Article 15 of Law of RK “On the Rights of Child in RK” provides that the expulsion of a child from the state educational establishment before receiving a free general secondary education may be accomplished only by notification of the guardianship bodies, in addition to strict adherence to the procedures of expulsion. When a student is excluded from school, s/he is assigned to a different school or to an evening school to continue his/her education and complete general secondary education. Expulsion from school is considered as an extreme measure.

Repetition

If a student of the general educational school does not fulfill the requirements of acquiring knowledge and practical skills within the scope of the state general obligatory standards of education, s/he is retained for the second year to repeat the course. The following options are provided to repeat the course: transfer to a corresponding or equivalent training upon agreement with parents; and, continue education in the form of home education.

Primary school students, who fail in 1-2 subjects based on the performance results in a given school year, are promoted to the next grade after having fulfilled the summer tasks and passing the exams. If the student is permanently behind in mastering the general school program, the school administration has the right to transfer the student to schools for children with special needs or deviant behavior. The school administration also reserves the same right in case of repeated violation by the student of the school’s code of discipline, the school charter and repeated commission of unlawful acts. In this case, the student can also be transferred to the special school where he has to continue education. Children and teenagers are assigned to the special schools through the Commission for Protection of Juvenile’s Rights in Akimats (executive authorities) on the basis of the court’s decision.

The legislative acts of RK in the field of education envisage, along with other rights, the right of the student after the 9th grade (basic level) to:

- continue education in the primary or secondary vocational school;
- enter / transfer to the institution of the general secondary education (at one’s discretion);
- restore the returning student in his/her educational institution

Organization of Activities for Compliance with the Requirements of Compulsory Education

National Level Institution

The Law of RK on Education 1999 provides that the implementation of the state policy on education shall be the responsibility of the following bodies:

- Government of RK;
- Central Executive Authority of RK in the field of education (Ministry of Education and Science RK);
- Local representative and executive authorities (Maslikhat and Akimat);
- Local education management authorities (national authorities in the capital and cities of national level), regional and district departments of education.

The Government of RK develops and implements the state educational policy. MES RK, being the central executive authority, provides the branch coordination in education. It also develops and approves normative legal acts regulating the activity of educational establishments including the issues on ensuring the right of the citizens to general secondary education as specified by Constitution of RK. All matters pertaining to general secondary education are coordinated by the Department on Education of MES RK.

Twice a year each in August and January, MES RK conducts a monthly check on general compulsory education, called “Vseobuch” (Universal Schooling – requirement of full enrollment of the school age children i.e., general compulsory education). All households in the micro-district or region are surveyed whether there are school age children who do not attend school in the place of residence. The Department of the Secondary General Education of MES RK provides a monthly report and an analysis of the accumulated data throughout the country on children of school age with education. It also monitors students’ attendance. The data provided by MES RK is compared with the data of Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) RK. MES RK submits a quarterly report on Vseobuch to the Administration of the President of RK and Government of RK. The Vseobuch is under the administration of the RK President.

Local Management Authorities: Akimat, Oblast Education Department, Municipal and District Education Administration.

Local executive authorities must ensure the rights of citizens to the general secondary education. They keep records of the school age children and ensure they attend school and receive a general secondary education. In the oblast (provincial) departments, municipal and rayon (district) educational departments Vseobuch is supervised by an expert. Oblast

education departments, together with the departments of MIA, monitor and submit annual reports according to form No1, "Data on the number of children aged 6 to 17", and a monthly report according to the form No 2, "Data on the status of coverage of school age children with education". On the basis of orders of MES RK on the monthly monitoring of general education, the heads of the oblast and city educational departments in the cities of Astana and Almaty organize a joint activity involving teachers, parents' community and the law-enforcement authorities. They conduct spot-check to detect children and teenagers who are not enrolled, daily analyzes school attendance reports and visit each household in the school micro-district. The results of the monthly monitoring on Vseobuch are submitted for consideration to the board of the oblast and municipal educational departments and eventually reported to the central MES office. The results obtained by MES are then compared with the data collected by MIA.

Alternative Educational Pathways

In compliance with Law of RK On Education 1999, educational programs implemented in RK are divided into general educational (basic and additional) and vocational (basic and additional) programs. The Law also envisages the offering of educational programs implemented by out-of-school organizations. The out-of-school organizations include palaces for children, houses, centers, complexes, studios for children's and teenagers' creative work, art schools, sport camps, health centers and other facilities.

Article 14 of the Law of RK on Education, 1999, states that training may be implemented in the alternative forms, such as distance training and external studies. Distance education is one of the forms of training people who are far away from schools and is implemented through electronic and tele-communicative means. Though there are state guarantees, the problem of equal access to quality education for everyone has become real in the recent decade due to such factors as:

- Economic: poverty, unemployment;
- Social: broken families; children of single or unwed parents, at-risk children; social orphans;
- Demographic: migration, new groups of population such as oralmans⁴ and refugees;
- Psychological and pedagogical: inflexible curriculum that does not address individual needs of a student; unfriendly school environment;
- Psycho-social, behavioral and physical: children with deviant behavior and special needs

⁴ Kazakh repatriates from China, Mongolia, Iran, Uzbekistan etc.

Information Base

Statistical data on the issues of enrollment, drop out and attendance of school-age children are collected by various organizations at different levels: MES, MIA and the Statistical Agency and others are involved in this process. Reports are then prepared according to the agreed form. The form provides for the following criteria of registration of the school age children:

- The school age children who are not enrolled: sick children not legally responsible to have education; children not on the list in any educational establishments;
- Children not attending school over 10 days a month;
- Children not attending school due to migration, are under investigation, or those who lack interest to study, or suffer from illness --- these, upon proper determination, are construed as not legally responsible to attend school.

In accordance with the Dakar Framework on Education for All (EFA) of which Kazakhstan is a signatory, Kazakhstan developed an integrated National Plan of Actions on EFA to 2015. One of the priority tasks of the plan is to ensure the full enrollment of school age children in general secondary compulsory education. This requires the collection of a large amount of information at preschool and primary levels of education on such data on enrollment, survival rate by grades, gender aspect and age categories.

Based on the results of our study, however, data on attendance provided by MIA and MES were frequently irreconcilable. In general, figures by MIA were several times higher than that of MES. This was due to the different methods used by MIA and MES in calculating the number of children not attending school. As well, the primary source of statistics at MES is the school Director who, one may surmise, as we did, would not report actual figures say, for example on non-attendance. Arguably, poor attendance is tantamount to poor or even non-performance of his/her responsibilities towards compulsory education, making him/her subject to administrative punishment and/or dismissal.

In the process of this research, it also became evident that although data on non-attendance is regularly collected, usually the information is not published in the official statistics and is restricted and not accessible to wide users. Thus, we characterized the current statistics related to the issue of non-attendance as follows:

- ambiguity of definitions between "dropped out "," not attending student" and "non-enrolled";
- inefficient interdepartmental coordination;
- unreliable data;
- inaccessible data;
- not comparable with international standards

Design of the Study

Purposes of the study:

- Identify the reason of non-attendance and dropping out of the school age children from the general secondary schools of RK;
- Identify the degree of impact of different factors on this issue

Tools of research:

- Quantitative method: survey questionnaire of students, their parents and teachers;
- Qualitative: individual in-depth interview;
- Analysis of legislation of RK on the full coverage of the school age students; non-attendance and dropping out of students of general secondary schools;
- Analysis of available statistics.

The survey included 200 students of general secondary schools, 54 parents of the students, and 53 teachers. The results of this study are based mainly on interview of non-attending students. As well, 42 individual interviews were held including:

- Representative of the department of General Secondary Education of MES (expert interview) -1; representatives of city (district) departments of education – 4;
- Managers of school on educational work – 15; students who changed school due to the reason not related to the change of place of residence – 10; regular students – 12

The target groups included:

- The dropout students – students who completely quit the school due to the reason not related to the move or exercising the right of free choice of school
- Non-attending students – students who are on the list in the given school, not attending classes from 40 days and more during the academic year not for the reason of being ill.

As previously noted, the concept of dropout student in the Kazakhstan context differs from the international definition. By law, there are actually no dropout children because of the declared State program on full enrollment (Vseobuch); they however, de facto, exist: some are officially recognized, while others are officially enrolled in schools, but do not attend regularly. The study was conducted in the cities of Almaty, Aktau and Pavlodar as well as in the neighboring villages: Raimbek and Zhetygen (Almaty oblast); Kzyl-Orda and Mangyshlak station (WKO); Moildy, Kemzhekol and Leninsky (Pavlodar oblast).

Findings and Analysis

On collecting data on drop outs and non-attendance

As already noted, twice a year, spot checks are conducted one each in August and January, to collect data concerning children's (6-17 yrs) enrollment, those who quit and who are not

attending as provided for by the RK MES rules 3.09.2001 N 701-2/645. The Rayon Department of Education (RDE) is tasked to organize and control this process. However, we found out from the RDE representatives, that the monthly spot checks were actually conducted three times a year: in September, January and March, and not two times contrary to such provisions.

The functions of the RDE and schools include the identification of the place where the children who quit school continue their training and whose documents are supposedly kept by the new school. The RDE, who is on top of this operation, cooperates with the regional police departments on migration, which keep records of the people coming and leaving the country. However, in our study we found a lot of cases when such identification could not be accomplished and the children were not simply found in their new schools or registered places of residence. This was attributed to the upsurge in migration, which left the schools confronted with the enormous challenges of registering children, particularly from migrant families. The upsurge in migration was in turn attributed to the effects of “perestroika” and the consequent relaxation on registration and passport policies.

As a result, it almost became impossible to track people migrating within the country, or a particular region or city. The only way possible to locate the children of migrant families was through the registration coupons from school. However, when, for whatever reason, parents do not register their children, it takes the educational body months and, sometimes years, to identify the new school and residence of their former students. The consequences are such that a lot of time and money is spent on tracking such children and the limited resources of the government, which could have been spent, say for example on salaries, is spread even thinner on. Worse was when schools are held responsible for the “unaccounted” or “missing” children even if there is no evidence that in fact they are from said school. The severity of the system of collecting data and tracking of school-age children in Kazakhstan is best manifested by this response:

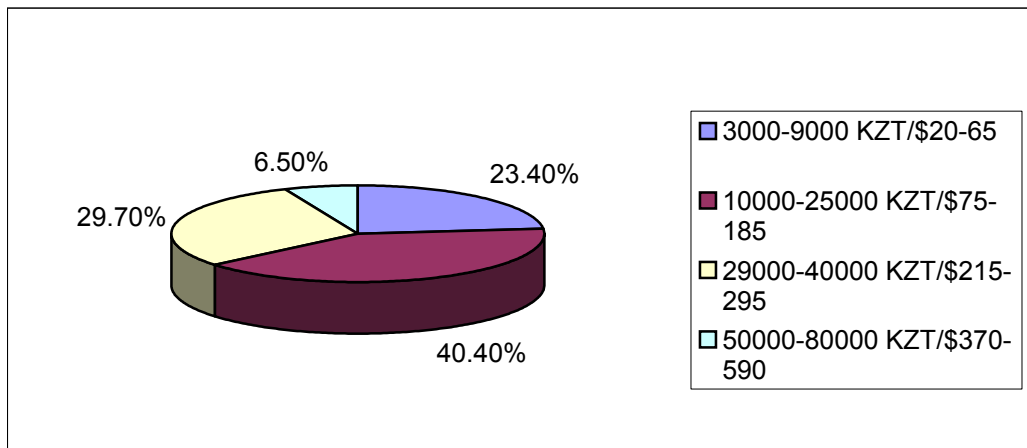
”By the end of 2003-2004 academic years (sic) we detected 50 students not attending school. Now 6 of them change (sic) their place of residence, 2 are in search by police (sic). 40 students out of 50 returned to school and now continue their training. Every year we accumulate a great number of documents during the monthly spot checks as if (sic) a student moved with his family to another city and didn’t take off the register (sic), we learn from the neighbors what city they have moved to and send inquiries there and wait for a reply. We can search for our students during months and years until we find him.”

Social Status

Most of the children not attending school were members of big families: half of the families had three and more children. Every sixth family had more than four children. The most

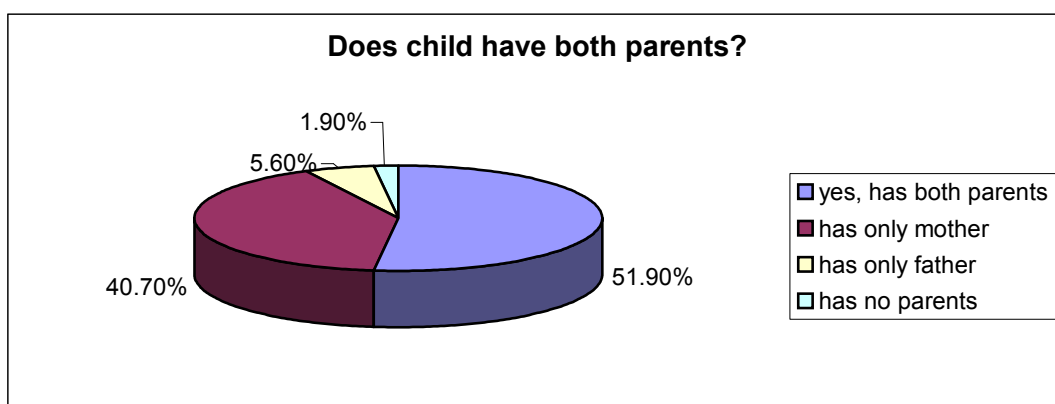
typical was the family with two or three children. According to the results of the survey, most of the families were categorized as low income family: the total income of more than 60% of the families was below 200 US dollars. Considering that 87% of the surveyed families had two or more children, it was safe to assume that more than half of the surveyed families lived below the poverty line⁵. Only 6.5% of the families had standards of living, which may be considered as average (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. **Total Income of Family**



Based on the responses from the questionnaires, 51.9% of students lived with both parents; others lived in broken families or with single/unwed parents. One child did not have parents; 40.7% children were brought up by their mothers only, and 5.6%, by the fathers; 59.1% of the surveyed mothers did not work. In 46.4% of the families, both mother and father worked (see Figure 2). The most common occupations among the parents were: for father - driver, metalworker, and plumber; for mother – saleswoman, house painter, street cleaner.

Figure 2. **Presence of Parents**



⁵ In 2004, the standard living wage in Kazakhstan was estimated in the amount of about 40 US dollars

Attitude to education and relations within the family

Most of the parents (79.6 %) did not want their child to drop out the school; some were indifferent, while the others agreed with their children dropping out or missing school. In 18.6% of the cases, the parents once dropped out of the school or did not attend the classes; 63% of the parents agreed with the statement that the school guarantees good future; 35.2% were not sure.

Based on the parents' responses, 24.1% regularly took strong drink, while 11.1% sometimes did. The results reinforced the teachers' view that children from these families do not receive support from parents on their studies and that there are problems in the family (77.4%). Most of the parents (54.5%) met with their children's teachers at school meetings or the meetings organized on the initiative of the teachers and the school administration; 15% of the students were reported not to have received any help from the parents in doing their homework.

Based on the results, it could be surmised that the families of children not attending the school may be characterized as: with low financial and social status; with problems related to the up-bringing and the children, including the lack of attention given to the children.

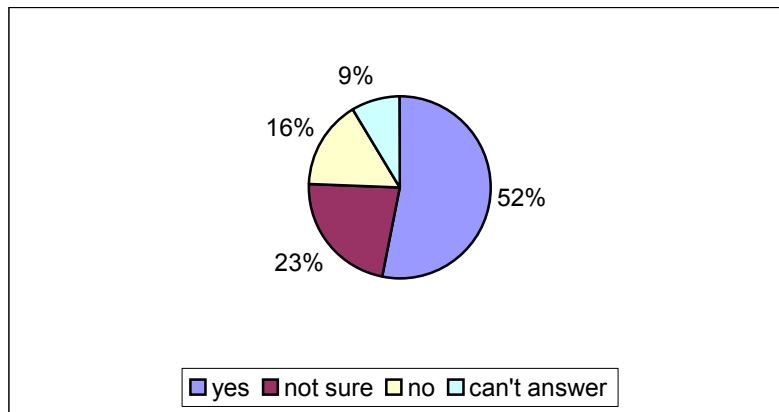
Non-attendance from teachers' point of view

The teachers observed that non-attendance or missing out on lessons were caused by the following factors: parental neglect (12); problems in the family, including parents' drinking, and conditions at home not conducive to study (10); children's lack of interest to study(9); preoccupation with computer games (6); and peer influence (5). The duties of a class teacher in Kazakhstan include talking to parents of student who do not attend school. This is done through individual consultation with the parents; calling the parents to the council on prevention of violation of law; and going through juvenile inspection with the student. However, 81.1% of the surveyed teachers noted that such measures were only effective at certain times.

Students' Response

Former classmates of the drop out students cited the following reasons behind the students dropping out: lack of interest to study (54); family reasons (26); poor progress at school (22); illness (19); negative impact of friends (16); need to work (15); financial problems (11); conflicts with teachers (9); and tardiness (9). In response to the question to dropout students on whether they would always like to attend school, 52% said they did, 16% reported otherwise, while the rest 31% were not sure (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Responses to the question “Would you always like to attend school ?”



It is interesting to note that those who did not attend school due to lack of interest to study, poor progress, and tardiness were also those who did not want to attend school in the future. In their responses to the question “What needs to be changed at school so that you could come back to school?” the children suggested that certain aspects related to their stay at school should be improved, in particular: reduce students’ training load; conditions of life at school need to be improved; repair the school and solve heating problems. The students also indicated that the duration of interval and the requirement to wear a school uniform influence their desire to attend the school again.

As to school transfer, 7 out of 10 who transferred changed schools 2-3 times. Another two transferred due to conflicts with the administration, and as a result of the decision of the school council, were later on expelled. One student transferred school because of conflict with classmates. Other reasons for change of school were due to the relocation of the family, desire of the student to live with relatives or special requirements such as need for language training.

Profile of Non-Attending Student

The survey also attempted to determine whether a student’s perception of himself/herself in the society, in the school, and his/her individual perception of himself/herself influence his/her non-attendance at school. The results showed that most of the students (60.5%) were pleased with themselves and believed they had good character traits (51.5%). They noted having such traits as kindness, willingness to help, sense of responsibility, diligence, cheerful nature and humor.

As to whether they were satisfied with their progress in school, 36.5% indicated they were partly satisfied, while 20% were not. The rest indicated they intend to pay more attention to their studies or to take additional studies to improve the situation. One third of the students who were not satisfied with their marks responded that they would not take any measures to improve their progress at school; 42.6% reported being uncomfortable in school; 45% were not sure, while 24% indicated that they did not have any good qualities.

As to communication with parents, the results showed that 32.5% of the children never talked with their parents about their problems. One could surmise, as we did, that this was an area where there was lack of appreciation and understanding by the parents of the student's plight in school. The logical inference was this is a pre-cursor to a child dropping out. This was supported by another finding from the students' survey where more students (36.5%) than parents (14.8%) indicated that parents did not really mind their children missing classes. However, most parents (79.6%) reported that they did not want their children to drop while 5.6% said they really did not care.

In so far as belief on the benefits of education is concerned, 42.5% of children doubted or did not believe that school training will guarantee them better future while more parents believed so. Half of the students (56.5%) further said they knew what they want to become in the future and what profession they would engage in. Among the most popular professions preferred were: doctor, driver, lawyer, and cook. Some wanted to be soldiers, cosmonauts etc.

Teachers, on the other hand, noted that the surveyed groups of students usually were not interested either in the process of studying or training: only 11.3% of the children were interested to acquire new knowledge and do their home assignment; 45.3% were only sometimes interested in the studies. According to the form-masters, only 1.9% showed high results in the studies. Although 66% of the students were reported not to have high results in their progress, 62.1% did not care about their results. As to extracurricular activities, 48% of the students from the surveyed groups never participated in extracurricular activity.

Description of Children by Teachers

The teachers indicated that 44% of the dropout children sometimes or usually showed aggression, while 66% had quite a temper. Half of the students were sometimes or always displeased with the teacher and were impolite to them. The teachers indicated that the most typical manifestations of aggression were rude attitude to teachers and classmates and provocation to fighting.

Peer influence

In terms of social association, the survey revealed that all the students who participated in the study had friends: 75% had friends who were of the same age as the students, while 25% had friends who were older. The association with older friends, especially by those who dropped out was also observed by teachers. This was true as well with the association with friends who were also drop outs (2.5%) and friends who worked (4.6%). Based on these results, the inference was made that peer influence had an influence on the dropping out of students.

Students' health and habits

The responses on the general health conditions of the students varied: 23% of the parents said their children were weak while 72.2% thought their children were healthy. Those who believed that their children were weak cited cold and headaches as the most frequent reasons. The teachers, on the other hand, indicated that smoking and drug use were the reasons why children appeared weak or ill, and believed these were the same reasons why the students do not pay attention in class or appear to be slow learners.

The overall reaction of the teachers about the drop out situation is best captured with these collective responses:

“Often it is enough to find an individual approach to the pupil”

“No, we don't have a right to exclude a child from school. We are obliged to fulfill the provision about the general compulsory education. An exception is if the parents are not able to feed their child, and he must work, say, if his mother is an invalid or she is alone, we may transfer a pupil to the evening form of training. Moreover, this question may be settled only by CJR⁶.”

“We had a case when the class curator took the pupil to school by his hand. Early in the morning he would come (sic), wake him up and bring him to school and at every lesson check his presence”(sic).

“Duties of schools and teachers should be specified, and also obligations of the parents and local executive bodies, especially in the Law of RK “On Education”. At present teachers are forced to make household rounds. This is illegal. Teachers have no authorities to do this. They are not paid for this kind of work. Many children are not registered in the place of residence. Who must control this? Who is responsible for this?”

From teacher-respondents

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Legislation and laws

- The analysis on legislation and laws pertaining to the drop out issue showed that there is a problem of definition of and distinction between “dropout student”, “non-

⁶ CJR - Commission on Juvenile Rights

attending student” and ”non-enrolled”. In the Kazakhstan context, “dropout students” are those children who quit school because of family relocation, illness, or death of the child. “Non-attending” is a student who misses school for more than 10 days in a month without a valid reason. The Head Master must provide information about children who do not attend school within five days after the fact of non-attendance.

- The problem of dropping out is riddled with dubious, if hidden, inconsistencies: official data on dropout do not reflect the actual situation. One of the reasons is that despite the close attention of the state authorities on the Vseobusch program, the implementing and monitoring measures of the program are purely administrative and reporting in nature, rather than preventive or enforcing. As a result, the school administration ends up not providing reliable information to escape administrative punishment.

Socio-economic status of families

- Non-attending children mostly come from the families with many children and live below the poverty line: 40.7% of the children are brought up only by mothers; 59.1% of all mothers from the surveyed families don't work; parents mostly engage in unskilled occupation; 35% of parents are not sure that school guarantees the better future for their children; one third of children never discuss their problems with their parents.

Drop out reasons

- The survey showed that the main reason of non-attendance is lack of interest to study. Other reasons are: poor performance in school; poverty, migration; conflicts with teachers and classmates; unfavorable school environment; financial and health problems. However, it should be noted that these reasons most frequently serve as the root cause on why students lack interest to study

Main recommendations

- Legislate in clear terms what a “dropout student”, “non-attending student” and ”non-enrolled” is vis-à-vis the international context of drop out;
- Legally define and delineate the responsibilities of all entities involved in the process of ensuring general secondary education for school-age children: parents, teachers, representatives of school administration, local authorities and education management authorities;

- Improve the efficiency of the state program on Vseobuch through the: (a) creation and review of funding mechanism to prevent regional disproportion (b) greater transparency and reporting to the society the program outputs;
- Strengthen departmental coordination involved in this process: MES RK, MIA RK, Health Ministry of RK, Migration Committee, Statistical Agency of RK and others;
- Create and maintain a database on non-attendance and dropping out;
- Develop indicators to monitor the situation and introduce into practice a periodic monitoring inspection;
- Institutionalize the use of indicators in school assessments in particular those that relate to the improvement of the school environment; and
- Include educational programs and methods of student-centered learning in teachers' training and professional development programs.

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