



Strategic Research Center
Under the President of the
Republic of Tajikistan

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CHILDREN'S VOICES

A Qualitative Study of
Poverty in Tajikistan





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Children's Voices: A Qualitative Study of Poverty in Tajikistan

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GLOSSARY

- Region** Administrative division in Tajikistan; there are three regions in the country: Sogd Region in the north, Khatlon Region in the south, and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (Oblast) in the east. Region Chairmen are appointed by President.
- District** Administrative division consisting of jamoats and headed by Chairman (Rais) who is appointed by President. There are 58 districts in Tajikistan.
- Khukumat** Regional and district government authorities
- Rais** Head of administrative or social division
- Jamoat** Administrative-territorial division on a district level. There are 403 jamoats in Tajikistan. Jamoat chairman is appointed by the district chairman.
- Mahalla** Community – social division comprising streets (guzars) and headed by chairman (Rais) who is elected by people. Mahalla (community) existed in Tajikistan, especially in its northern areas, back in the Soviet period. After the country gained independence, this institute of local governance expanded to practically all areas of the republic.
- Kishlak** Rural village, often part of a jamoat
- Guzar-street** Independent division under the mahalla chairman. Chairman (Rais) of a guzar is elected by guzar residents.
- Bibikhalifa** (Babiotun) Religious tutor educating girls in the elements of religion in Islam; performs religious ceremonies among women
- Khashar** Traditional free community work
- Idi Kurbon** Muslim Day of Sacrifice
- Idi Ramazan** A Muslim holiday devoted to the end of the sacred month of Ramazan (a fasting period for Muslim population)
- Khudoi** A charitable event associated with free distribution of hot meals to the people
- Guzapaya** Cotton stems
- Mardikor** A hired worker for odd jobs
- Mullo** (Domullo) Religious leader
- Koree** Religious leader citing Koran suras
- Tapak (Sargin)** Animal manure used as fuel for cooking and heating (dung)
- Kurpacha** National mattress filled in with cotton
- Gahvora** A cradle made of wood used as a baby-bed. It is practical and convenient, especially in rural areas.
- Liang game** Lianga is a small piece of sheep skin and lead. It is tossed by one's leg and the winner is the one who never drops it.
- Buchulbozi** Bone-game; uses small animal bones (sheep and goats)
- Tandyr** National stove for making traditional bread. The stove is made of clay and straw.
- Fitri Ruza** A type of a one-time per capita tax payable at the end of Ramazan. It should be given to the poor, low-income, disabled and lonely people. It equals 1.22 kg of grain and can be given in cash.
- Andova** A kind of plaster made of clay and straw. Usually, it is used for covering roof, walls and cowsheds.
- Shirchoi** Breakfast made of milk, tea and butter (or animal fat)
- Khalvo** A type of sweets made of fried flour, sugar and oil or animal fat
- Atola** National dish cooked for breakfast. It is made of fried flour, oil and milk.
- Damlama** A steam dish of vegetables and meat (better-mutton)
- Mantu** National dish made of steamed flour, meat and onions
- Chillakbozi** A game of "gorodki" played with wooden sticks
- Skull-cup** A national cap worn by men and women
- Dastarkhan** A national table-cloth
- Tabib** A national healer
- Khishti hom** Clay bricks
- Somoni** National currency of Tajikistan (\$1=3.22 Somoni)
- Dirham** National currency of Tajikistan of small denomination (100 dirhams-1 Somoni)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

According to the second Tajikistan Living Standard Survey (TLSS, 2003) 1, the poverty level of the population decreased from 81% of the population in 1999 to 64% in 2003. However, the present surveys that show a general trend of household poverty reduction define the poverty level on the basis of adult interviews. Children's viewpoint on poverty was perceived only as part of the general picture of people's poverty and thus the current surveys do not provide a full picture of the changes in children's situation in the past years. Therefore, there is a real need for further in-depth studies of children's perception of poverty in Tajikistan using both quantitative and qualitative methodology.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Overall goal:

The overall goal of the present survey is to supplement the efforts of quantitative surveys of poverty in Tajikistan. A qualitative survey with the participation of children will make it possible to understand more deeply the causes of child poverty and identify a strategy aimed at its reduction.

Specific objectives of the present quality survey include:

- investigate children's understanding and perception of poverty;
- understand children's opinion on how to overcome poverty;
- understand the impact of poverty on children's education, health and nutrition;
- understanding how children cope with poverty problems.

Methodology

The research team conducted focus group interviews in 18 communities. Selection of focus-group participants was done through communities with the involvement of teachers and other local leaders. Focus groups were organized with the consideration of child age and consisted of the following focus-groups:

1. Children aged 6 to 11
2. Children aged 12 to 16

The groups were mixed in terms of sex, including both boys and girls. A total of 36 meetings were conducted in 18 communities spread between nine districts and cities of the country. Four meetings were held in each of the nine districts and cities; one with each age group in a district center and one with each age group in a rural area. In the case where the area selected was a city, two different neighborhoods in

each city were selected and an interview with each age group was conducted in both neighborhoods.

Site selection

Nine cities and districts were selected for the qualitative survey of child poverty in Tajikistan. The selected sites included three large cities (Dushanbe, Khodjent and Kurgan-Tube), four cotton-growing districts (Khamadoni, Kolkhozabad, Shahrinav and Kanibadam) and 2 mountainous districts (Ragun and Shahristan). They were selected based on the following criteria:

- Geographical location (city, village, cotton-growing and mountainous districts);
- Level of socio-economic development;
- Ethnic and language diversity;
- Level of religious affiliation of the population;
- Population density;
- Development level of the education and health care systems;
- Impacts of the civil war;
- Level of external and internal labor migration.

MAIN OUTCOMES

Children's understanding and perception of poverty. Most children have a similar understanding of poverty. In their opinion, poverty is a lack or absence of basic living conditions. Practically all focus-groups defined poverty as a lack or absence of money in the family, poor nutrition, absence of warm clothes, footwear and school supplies; a lack of heating fuel, a lack of jobs for adult population. Both elder and young children marked that poverty can also be visible from the way the house looks. The house of a poor person is usually not renovated, does not have windows and heating system.

There is a slight difference in definitions of poverty between rural and urban areas. In rural areas, the key poverty criteria included the absence of live-stock, food stuff – mostly grain, and a lack of land. In those districts where the level of labor migration is rather high, children think that poverty is when their parents leave for Russia to earn money yet cannot find jobs; some parents forget all about them and do not send money back home. Children residing in areas that suffered from the civil war believe that poverty is when women lose their husbands and children – their fathers. In urban areas, children mentioned kids begging in the streets and homeless children spending nights in basements or in the open.

Children responded that poverty is evident by the way a person looks, his/her manners and the appearance of people's houses. Children think that poverty is visible from the way a person looks and the way he/she behaves. Poor persons are usually very shy and he/she always keeps his/her head down. Poor people do not go out very often as they feel embarrassed of their old clothes and shoes. They feel miserable.

Children's opinion of the causes of poverty. According to the focus groups, children believe that the main causes of poverty are as follows:

- One of the main causes of poverty is the civil war. Children pointed out that many people died during the war, many houses were burnt and destroyed, families lost their bread-winners and some of the people turned into refugees. In children's opinion, factories and plants also stopped working because of the civil war and that caused their parents unemployment.
- Lack of steady jobs and low salaries for adults is also mentioned by children. It is also the absence of jobs that accounts for a high level of labor migration. Children noted that their fathers and elder brothers borrow money to cover their trip to Russia; however it is not always the case that they find jobs and send money back home.
- Practically all children mentioned the low level of education of both adults and children as a cause for poverty. Children believe that educated people are in better positions to find jobs. This is also the case for migrant workers. Children state that, first and foremost, a lack of knowledge of the Russian language, as well as a lack of awareness of their rights is a cause that many labor migrants cannot find jobs, are sent back home, are intimidated and/ or abused.
- Children also marked that families with many children, especially in rural areas, often suffer from poverty. Lack of resources does not allow all members of the family to have equal access to education, health and good nutrition. It happens very often that several families have to live in one house as they do not have resources to buy or build a new house.
- In rural areas, children note the unequal distribution of agricultural lands as one of the causes of poverty.
- Younger children pointed out that one of the reasons for poverty is a parents' drinking and/ or gambling.
- Some children also mentioned that poverty is caused by various irrational expenditures such as spending remittances on various events (weddings, funeral, etc.)

Effects of poverty on the family: Over 75% of interviewed children said that poverty mostly hits adults, especially parents. When asked who suffers most – mothers or fathers, children's opinions were divided as basically the same for both. Fathers suffer physically and psychologically. However their morale sufferings are much stronger. They keep thinking of how to provide for the family and blame themselves in their family poverty. To provide food for their families, fathers turn to hard physical work and often get sick. In some children's opinion, those fathers who work outside the country suffer most.

Children who said that poverty hits mothers most, mentioned that it concerns women whose husbands left for Russia and seldom send money home. Yet it is most hard for those women whose husbands took new families in Russia and stopped sending remittances. Children noted that these mothers suffer most – they have to carry all the burden of their children's upbringing.

When comparing younger members or poor families, children responded that elder children suffer both psychologically and materially. They have to do all the housework, earn money outside the house and provide for their families. They mostly suffer because they have no education opportunities and chances to get a good job in the future.

Some members of focus-groups pointed out that they also suffer from poverty. Younger children, in their opinion, suffer from the lack of funds: they are always hungry and cold because they have no warm clothes and shoes in winter time. They also suffer because they have no toys to play.

Over 80% of children in focus-groups said that girls in poor families suffer more from poverty than boys, especially elder girls. They cannot afford fashionable clothes and therefore are ashamed to leave the house and visit public places. The absence of adequate clothes and shoes stops elder girls from attending school. They spend their days at home and perceive poverty as much as their mothers thinking of how to feed the family and what to cook for dinner and supper. Elder girls have practically no spare time to meet their peers.

Children's opinion on poverty trends in the society. Practically all children – both young and old – pointed out that the living standard has improved in the past 5 years for the following reasons:

- First of all, they see improvement in the education system. Children said that before there were not enough school teachers in many subjects. Today, many teachers returned to schools because their salaries had been raised. Children also mentioned new textbooks and repaired schools. However, the most important thing is that almost all children attend school today.
- The improved living standard in the former combat areas is accounted for by the stabilization of the political situation.
- Most children, especially in the areas with the high level of labor migration, said that their lives improved thanks to remittances.
- Most of elder children in rural areas explain the improved living standard by land allocation to poor families following the Decree of President.
- Small children see the improved living standard in beautiful two-storied houses built by the rich, in their foreign-made cars and nice clothes as well as by plenty of goods in the stores and markets.
- Elder children from urban areas witness people getting involved in private business, establishment of new enterprises and creation of new jobs.

Children's perspectives on survival strategies. As we learned from focus-group meetings, many rural and urban families in poverty rely on remittances of labor migrants working in the territory of Russian Federation as a way to better their lives. However, several rural children pointed out that besides labor migration, a main source of family's income comes from the fruits of household garden plots and leased lands.

Children that live in big cities and district centers pointed out that the men in poor families that have no opportunity to leave the country in search of jobs work as mardikors (hired labor) constructing rich people's houses, pulling carts in the markets, buying

and selling agricultural products or working as loaders. Children from Khodjent said that today some men and even children are involved in a new business: they move old foreign vehicles brought in by railway from the Baltic States. They buy these vehicles at the railway station, bring them home, wash them and then resell at a higher price.

Most women in urban areas work in the markets selling greens, vegetables and dairy products. Some women work for the rich as servants. In Dushanbe, Khodjent and Kurgan-Tube women bake bread and pies, make various national sweets and sell them in the market. Besides, women are engaged in home labor: make home crafts, sew national women's dresses, men's robes and skull-cups for sale.

Child opinion on ways to overcome poverty. According to most children, the main way to overcome poverty is creation of permanent jobs for adults.

In addition, practically all children in the study mentioned that a main way to overcome poverty is fighting the population's illiteracy: people need to study well and get trained in new occupations. Children believe that it is illiteracy that is the main cause of poverty in the society because illiterate people do not know their rights and cannot protect themselves.

Children believe that rich people should help poor. They should lend them money, so that poor people could go to Russia for jobs. Rich people should not spend their money on building two-storied houses, and rather construct new factories and create new jobs for poor people. Rich people should help orphans, and give money and food to orphanages.

There are some recommendations that children addressed to the Government of Tajikistan. Children believe that officials should get their positions not for money, but for their professionalism and knowledge. The president of the country should have regular discussions with poor people, listen to their problems and give instructions to the government to resolve these problems. The state should provide compensations to the poorest families. Poor families should be provided with shelter by the Government. The Government should watch the prices in the markets and shops

Elder and younger children have different opinions on labor migration as one of the ways to overcome poverty although they all understand that, at present, their parents' remittances are a main source of income. Thus, many elder boys think that the main way to reduce poverty is to create conditions for free and safe migration for adults to Russia. However, younger boys and girls and many elder girls do not want their parents and elder brothers to leave for Russia.

Children from rural areas see a fair distribution of land between the rich and the poor as one of the ways to overcome poverty. They also pointed out that it is necessary to create more independent dekhkan farms in the country and that the government should provide loans in the form of seeds, equipment and fuel& lubricants.

POVERTY IMPACT ON THE LEVEL OF CHILD EDUCATION, HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Education: Practically all children in focus-groups pointed out that poverty makes a great impact on education. Children from poor families have to miss classes due to the lack of warm clothes and footwear, school supplies and textbooks. Girls miss school more often because they are ashamed of their clothes and shoes before their peers. Too much housework and additional work outside the house is yet another reason behind the poor performance of children from low-income families. Lack of good conditions (heating and electricity) in poor families' houses does not provide proper environment for good education of children.

Health: Children in the research sites say that poverty makes a negative impact on human, especially child, health. In their opinion, it is poor children who are most vulnerable to various diseases. They get sick more often than children from rich families. They are poorly nourished and dressed; they reside in houses with no heating and carry out hard physical works. All this definitely tells on their health status. Children noted that due to the lack of money, poor families usually treat patients by traditional means (medical herbs) or turn to traditional healers (tabibs) and mullas which in most cases make a negative impact on their health. Respondents pointed out that most often children suffer from goiter, typhoid, bronchitis, malaria, kidney failure, TB, rheumatism, and dysentery, Acute Respiratory diseases and anemia are caused by poor nutrition. Children believe that lack of fortified food and inappropriate treatment lead to chronic forms of disease.

Nutrition: Focus-group members pointed out that poverty makes its first impact on human nutrition. It is the quality of food that defines the living standard of the population today. Practically all children said that nutrition of a poor family differs from that one in a rich family. Children gave examples of how meals of poor families differ from rich families in (1) caloric values and (2) in the number of daily meals. Poor families try to have 2-3 meals a day and the rich have 4-5 meals a day depending on their desire. Breakfast in a poor family includes only sweet tea and bread. Rich families consume more meat than poor families. Poor families cook meat 4-5 times a month or when they receive guests and on holidays. Very often poor families that have cows or poultry do not eat dairy products and eggs. Mothers have to sell milk and eggs in the market, and buy soap or various food commodities.

THE USE OF CHILD LABOR

The place of child labor in a household: Focus-group meetings showed that much housework is carried out by children. This is especially true of families where fathers are away from home earning money, of single-parent families or families with one disabled parent. Children gave examples of how child labor within the household is

subdivided into boys' and girls' duties and how housework is divided between younger and elder kids.

Girls clean the house and courtyard, wash clothes and dishes, and help their mothers cook meals. If mothers work outside the house, girls cook meals and look after the younger children. In rural areas, girls milk cows, bake bread in tandyr, make fuel of animal manure to be later used for cooking and heating. It is worth noting that in southern areas of country drinking water is brought by girls and in northern areas – by boys. In urban areas, beside the housework, girls help their mother sew national women's dresses and men's gowns. All these products are later sold at the market.

In rural areas, boys mostly collect fire-wood, make hay, tend to live-stock and does most of the gardening.

Children from apartment buildings said that they have less work to do at home than children in rural areas. Girls usually clean the apartment, wash dishes, laundry and cook food. Boys usually take away garbage from their apartments.

At the harvest time, all children regardless of their age and sex gather wheat, vegetables and fruit at their household plots. In cotton-growing areas of the country, after the cotton-picking campaign is over, almost all children are involved in collecting cotton stems used for house heating and cooking.

The use of child labor in cotton-growing. Historically, the main labor force in cotton-breeding areas of the country have been women, school and university students. The situation changed in 2004 when the President prohibited the use of student labor during the academic year.

Meetings with children in cotton-breeding areas showed that high-school students are mostly engaged in cotton picking after classes and during week-ends. The survey proved that children seldom get paid for their work. Thus, of the four cotton-breeding districts, in two of them, children said that they are not paid for picking cotton. Besides, in the course of a year, elder girls and their mothers are engaged in weeding and engraving.

Children as family bread-winners. Meetings with focus-groups showed that in the majority of low-income families children have become the only bread-winners.

In big cities and district centers, children mostly work in the markets. Elder boys are engaged in pulling carts, unloading trucks with agricultural products, or reselling fruit and vegetables. In such big cities as Dushanbe and Khodjent, children work as conductors in the public transport. Elder boys also work as hired labor at construction sites, gather sand in plain floods and sell it to whoever needs it, or collect and sell glass-containers or non-ferrous metals. Younger boys wash cars or sell items such as cigarettes, plastic bags or chewing-gum.

Elder girls sell pies, bread, herbs and fruit in the markets. Girls from the rural suburbs collect milk from their neighboring households and sell it to city residents – people call them "milkmaids". Many girls work as nurses and servants at rich people's houses,

or work as waitresses, dish-washers in cafeterias and bars. The majority of girls from Khojent, Kanibadam and the mahalla "Urgut" of Kurgan-Tyube are involved in sewing and selling of national dresses, hats and other items.

Rural child labor differs from that in the cities. Rural children have fewer opportunities to earn money for their families due to the absence of markets and a lack of demand. Elder boys in rural areas mainly work as mardikors (hired labor) in house construction, make hay, gather crops, tend the live-stock, and clean cowsheds of well-to-do people. At present, most rural children earn money making clay bricks, gathering sand and river stones in flood plains for house construction.

Girls are hired by the rich to look after their children, sweep the yard, and wash dishes and clothes and clean windows. Very often rural children are paid with food stuff – mostly wheat.

Children in Shahristan district in Sogd – where a majority of Uzbeks live – marked that they do not earn money for their families outside their houses. There is no market in the town for children to work. Children are mainly working at rented farms or gardens. They say that they do not have time to work somewhere else, as they have enough work at their own farms.

Spare time. The interviews showed that child spare time very much depends on the family's economic condition, place of residence (city or village), the child's age and sex. Children told us that spare time is a privilege of younger children who are not physically developed and therefore cannot carry out much housework. Elder children from poor families – both boys and girls - said that they have very little spare time for games and communication with their peers. They are overloaded with the housework that leaves them too little spare time. Children pointed out that as they become older they have less spare time.

High-school girls said that due to a lot of housework they practically have no spare time at all compared to their boy-peers. Younger girls usually play with dolls and skipping ropes. Girls from poor families in rural areas said that they prepare dolls themselves from twigs and national clothes.

Boys said that they have time to play football, volleyball, and other games. Cards and backgammon become very popular among children in the recent years.

Children in Dushanbe, Khodjent and Kurgan-Tube who live in apartment buildings said that they have more free time compared to children in rural areas, since they do not work at the farms and have less work to do at home. Many children in big towns play computer games in Internet cafes.

Children's opinion of violence. Focus-group meetings showed that not all children understand the concept of violence, including the concept of violence against children. Having received some explanation, they said that they indeed witness some forms of violence. It is most obvious when we talk of orphans or children from low-income families who earn their living. Children confirmed that one of the forms of violence in child perception is the use of child labor and cheating children in the market. Children noted

that violence in the market often comes from law-enforcement officers. Pretending to bring order, they confiscate money and goods from the kids and throw them out from the market.

Children in Dushanbe, Kurgan-Tube and Khojent believe that violence is when parents send their children to earn money or get them to do too many household chores, thus, children do not attend school.

Children also confirmed that a form of violence is when rich children laugh at poor children, insult them or even beat them.

It should be noted that children rarely talked about violence at home or in schools. Many of them said that that this type of violence is rare in rural areas.

Looking forward. Discussions revealed that despite the poverty, children dream about a good future. They want to get specializations that will allow them and their children to live a better life than what they and their parents have currently.

Children usually chose those professions that are considered as profitable. Their choice also depends on their place of residence, and the level of economic development in that area. In many cases their choice also depended from the example of other people and their living conditions.

Majority of boys in Khojent and Kanibadam remarked that they want to become importers of foreign cars, butchers, drivers, mechanics, businessmen or singers. Most girls mentioned that they want to become dressmakers, others - doctors, and a few - teachers. Children believe that there is no need to get higher education, and it is necessary to choose professions that are required in the market.

A majority of boys from focus groups in the Shahrستان district (main production - potato growing and livestock) want to become agronomists and veterinarians, while girls want to become doctors, teachers and dressmakers.

Many of the boy and girls that we interviewed in Ragun and in rural areas of Kolkhozabad – where the population is more religious - want to become religious figures: boys – *mullo, domullo* or *kori*, and girls – *bibikhalifa*.

Children interviewed in the Khamadoni district usually chose professions of tax and custom officers, policemen, military workers or drivers. It should be noted that many children were surprised to hear this questions. They said that it was the first time that they have been asked what they would want to become in future.



BACKGROUND

During the Soviet era and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Tajikistan was one of the poorest countries in the Central Asian region. The civil war and a sharp economic decline following independence drastically reduced the population's socio-economic status, especially children. Many children became orphans and lost access to basic material goods. The low level of funding in the social sector and the high level of unemployment does not allow for the provision of high-caloric food and access to high-quality education and health care for children. Many children from low-income families and orphans must give up their childhood and earn money to support their families. According to the census of 2000, children under 15 constitute 43% of the total country population. Their present living standards will determine their future.

Quantitative surveys show positive trends, but do not consider the situation of children. According to the second Tajikistan Living Standard Survey (TLSS, 2003)¹, the poverty level decreased from 81% in 1999 to 64% in 2003. The poverty assessment, which was based on the opinions of the adult population, showed a general trend of household poverty reduction. However, the quantitative surveys regarded children's views as part of the general picture and do not provide sufficient information on the changes of child status during the recent years. According to the analysis of the second TLSS, children find themselves in the most unfavorable position as the level of child poverty is 14% higher than that of adults.²

Therefore, there is a real need to conduct further in-depth studies of poverty from the perspective of children in Tajikistan with the use of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

1 The first TLSS was held in 1999 on the basis of 2,000 households. The second TLSS was held in 2003 and involved 4,156 households.

2 *Gender and Poverty Assessment in Tajikistan* by Jane Falkingham

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

OVERALL GOAL:

The overall goal of the present survey is to contribute to the efforts of the quantitative surveys of poverty in Tajikistan. A qualitative survey of children will make it possible to understand some of the causes of child poverty and identify possible strategies aimed at its reduction.

Specific objectives of the present quality survey include:

- investigate children's understanding and perception of poverty;
- understand children's opinion on how to overcome poverty;
- understand the impact of poverty on children's education, health and nutrition;
- understanding how children cope with poverty problems.



METHODOLOGY

JUSTIFICATION

Many large-scale quantitative and qualitative poverty assessment surveys have been conducted in Tajikistan. However, most of the surveys were not related and did not provide a full picture of poverty in the republic.

The greatest advantage of a quantitative survey is its efficiency in studying large samples of respondents. However, quantitative studies focus on general problems and the problems of children are not always connected with the general problems of poverty as a whole. Thus, a more complete understanding of poverty requires approaches with active, joint participation of children themselves.

This study uses qualitative methods in order to investigate children's perception of poverty, its causes, their opinions on the ways to overcome poverty and how children are currently coping with poverty. The experience of previous surveys proves that children are more open speaking of their problems and are more sensitive to the challenges of their everyday life than adults.³

A qualitative survey is an important part of the foundation of an in-depth and comprehensive study of child poverty in Tajikistan, investigate the reasons of existing levels of poverty and the elaboration of poverty reduction cycles, and also the survival strategy used by families in fighting poverty as well as its impact on children and their ways to overcome it.

Respondents:

Sampling took place on two levels. First, 18 communities in 9 different districts and cities in Tajikistan were chosen. Second, respondents were chosen in each of the 18 communities. The resulting sample was 398 children.

Site selection

Many areas of Tajikistan are characterized by a similar socio-economic situation and geographical position. Therefore, selecting twin-districts, it is possible to assess poverty of several similar districts.

Following are the criteria used for the site selection:

- Geographical location (city, village, cotton-growing and mountainous districts);
- Level of socio-economic development;
- Ethnic and language diversity;

³ H. de Soto, P. Gordon, and F. Saidov: "2001: Voices of the Poor in Tajikistan. Qualitative poverty assessment for the development of poverty reduction strategy (PRS)"

- Level of religious affiliation of the population;
- Population density;
- Development level of the education and health care systems;
- Impacts of the civil war;
- Level of external and internal labor migration.

With regard to its natural and geographic location, Tajikistan can be sub-divided into eight socio-economic zones:

1. Kuliab and Kurgan-Tube zones in Khatlon Region;
2. Northern and Zeravshan zones of Sogd Region;
3. Regions of Republican Subordination – Gissar and Rasht groups of districts;
4. Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast/Region (GBAO);
5. The city of Dushanbe as the capital city of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Site selection was carried out with the consideration of all socio-economic zones.

Based on the above criteria and survey objectives, the team selected 3 big cities, 4 cotton-breeding and 2 mountainous districts.

- In Kuliab zone, the team selected Mir Said Alii Khamadoni cotton-breeding district located at the state border;
- In Kurgan-Tube zone, these were the city of Kurgan-Tube and the cotton-breeding Kolkhozabad district;
- In RRS – Shahrinav cotton-breeding district and the mountainous area of Ragon;
- In Sogd Region, the team selected the city of Khodjent (a regional center) and Kanibadam – a cotton-breeding area;
- In Zeravshan zone of Sogd Region, the team initially planned to work in Aini mountainous district; however, due to the severe weather conditions (the survey took place in January) and the closure of the Shahrستان pass, it was decided to choose Shahrستان district located close to Aini and characterized by similar natural and economic conditions.
- The city of Dushanbe was included as a separate site representing the country capital city. The survey focused its efforts in the districts Sino and Shohmansur.

To get more comprehensive information on the problems of child poverty, the team selected two communities in each of the sites (in the district center and in rural areas). Rural communities had been selected with regard to their geographical location, their distance from district centers, types of agricultural activity and other criteria.

Brief socio-economic characteristics of selected sites (cities and districts):

- **Dushanbe:** Since 1924 – the capital city of the Republic of Tajikistan. According to official data, by January 1, 2003, the city population constitutes 619,400 people (according to unofficial data – over 1 million). There are four districts in the city. Population density per 1 sq. km is 6 thousand people. The share of the city economic output in 2003 was 4% to the total national volume. Capital

investments in the development of the city economy in 2003 constituted 22% of the total volume. There are 117 permanent pre-school education facilities hosting 19.5 thousand children; 116 general secondary schools (143,800 students and 5,800 teachers), 12 secondary vocational schools (6,900 students) and 20 higher educational institutions (69,600 students). According to the 2000 census, of the total city population, 83.4% are Tajiks, 9.1% - Uzbeks, 5.1% - Russians, and 2.4% - others.

- **Khodjent:** is the center of Sogd Region and the second big and culturally developed city in the republic. According to official data, by January 1, 2003, the city population consisted of 150,500 people. Population density per sq. km is 7 thousand people. The share of the city economic output in 2003 was 5.2% and that of the Region – 25.7% to the total national volume. Capital investments in the economic development of Khodjent in 2001 constituted 12.7% of the total national volume, and in 2002 – 2.7%. There are 32 permanent pre-school education facilities hosting 6.5 thousand children; 44 general secondary schools (over 33,500 students and 2,600 teachers); 3 secondary vocational schools (2,000 students) and 13 higher educational institutions (22,800 students). According to the 2000 census, of the total city population, 90% are Tajiks, 5% - Uzbeks, 3% - Russians, and 2% - others.
- **Kurgan-Tube:** is the center of Chilton Region located in the south of the country. According to official data, by January 1, 2003, the city population consisted of 65,500 people. The share of the city economic output in 2003 was 0.8% and that of the Region – 3.4% to the total national volume. Capital investments in the city economic development of in 2002 constituted 1.2% of the total national volume. There are 14 permanent pre-school education facilities for 2,382 children; 14 secondary schools; of them, 8 general secondary schools, 2 gymnasiums, 1 technical lyceum, 1 city lyceum, 1 joint Tajik-Turkish lyceum and an orphanage. The total number of students in the city is 18,100; of them girls constitute 42% (the total number of teachers – 776). Besides, there are 3 vocational schools (3,500 students) and one higher educational institution (4,500 students). According to the 2000 census, of the total city population, 75% are Tails, 15% - Uzbeks, 3% - Russians, and 7% - others.
- **Shahrinav:** By January 1, 2003, the district population consisted of 85.2 thousand people; of them 93.7% residing in rural areas. There are 6 jamoats (local governance) and one town. According to the 2000 census, of the total city population, 65% are Tajiks, 30% - Uzbeks, and 5% - others. Population density per sq. km is 85.2 people. The share of the economic output is 0.2% to the total national volume. Capital investments in the economic development constitute 0.17% of the total national volume. During the Soviet times, there were three big enterprises in the district: a brick factory, a canning plant, and the biggest poultry-farm in the republic. At present, these enterprises use only 5-10% of their capacity. Most of the rural population is engaged in cotton-breeding and the production of grains, vegetables and livestock product. There are two permanent pre-school facilities for 230 children, 53 general secondary schools for 22,000 students (with 1,400 teachers). There are five health care facilities (a district hospital, a polyclinic, and three rural out-patient clinics). These give jobs to 125 physicians and 350 nurses.

- **Ragun:** The city of Ragun was established in 1976 with the beginning of the construction of the biggest hydropower plant in Central Asia. Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the population of Ragun consisted of 15,000 people; of them 90% were Russian-speakers. At present, there are only 130 Russian families (720 people). Taking into account the population of the nearby villages, the present population of Ragun is 11,000 people. The total district population is 31 000. There is one city, one town and one rural jamoat in the district. 86% of the district budget is formed by the allocations of the state budget. There is one kindergarten and 51 schools; of them, 32 secondary and 19 primary schools with 361 teachers. The total number of students is 7,200. Over 2,000 people have left the district as labor migrants.
- **Kolkhozabad:** By January 1, 2003, the district population consisted of 136,000 people; of them, 13.2% live in urban and 86/8% in rural areas. There are two towns and 6 jamoats in the district. Population density per sq. km is 150 people. The share of the economic output is 1.2% to the total national volume. Capital investments in the economic development constitute 0.25% of the total national volume. There is the biggest in Central Asia milling plant; however, today it uses only 10% of its capacity. Rural population is mostly engaged in cotton-breeding. There are 4 permanent pre-school education facilities for 450 children; 70 secondary schools for 35,000 student and 2,000 teachers. There are 10 health care facilities (a district hospital, a polyclinic and 8 rural out-patient clinics). These provide jobs for 150 physicians and 330 nurses. According to the 2000 census, of the total city population, 60% are Tajiks, 35% - Uzbeks, and 5% - others.
- **Mir Said Alii Khamadoni:** By January 1, 2003, the district population consisted of 112,400 people; of them, 83.9% live in rural areas. There 6 jamoats and 1 town in the district. Population density per sq. km is 52 people. The share of the economic output is 0.5% to the total national volume. Capital investments in the economic development constitute 0.6% of the total national volume. In rural areas, the population is mostly engaged in cotton-breeding, grains and live-stock products. There are practically no industrial enterprises in the district. There are two permanent pre-school education facilities for 500 children; 44 secondary schools for over 32,000 student and 1,700 teachers. There are 7 health care facilities (a district hospital, a polyclinic and 5 rural out-patient clinics). These provide jobs for 126 physicians and around 400 nurses. According to the 2000 census, of the total city population, 65% are Tajiks, 30% - Uzbeks, and 5% - others.
- **Kanibadam:** By January 1, 2003, the district population consisted of 214,000 people; of them, 79% live in rural and 21% in urban areas. There are 6 jamoats and the city of Kanibadam in the district. Of the total population, 70% are Tajiks, 25% - Uzbeks, and 5% of others. Population density per sq. km is 150 people. The share of the economic output is 2.6 % to the total national volume. Capital investments in the economic development constitute 4.5% of the total national volume. Before the 90-s, the city of Kanibadam was one of the most industrially developed cities of the republic. There were over 10 big industrial enterprises in the city. There was a join Tajik-Russian venture producing

light vehicles. There were also several light and food industry enterprises. At present, many of these are out of operation or work at 10-15% of their former capacity. Rural population is mostly engaged in cotton-breeding, production of dried fruit and live-stock product. There are 55 secondary schools for over 43,000 students and 3,000 teachers. There are also 10 health care facilities (a district hospital, a polyclinic, a delivery hospital, and 6 rural out-patient clinics). These provide jobs for 320 physicians and around 1,225 nurses.

- **Shahristan:** The district of Shahristan was formed in 1993. By January 1, 2003, the district population consisted of 30,000 people; of them 100% live in rural areas. There are only 2 jamoats in the district. Of the total population, 75% are Uzbeks and 25% - Tajiks. Population density per sq. km is 102 people. The share of the economic output is 0.08 % to the total national volume. Capital investments in the economic development constitute 0.06% of the total national volume. There are practically no food industry enterprises in the district. There are 20 secondary schools for 8,000 students in the district and 800 teachers. There are also 2 health care facilities (a hospital and a rural out-patient clinic). These provide jobs for 46 physicians and around 197 nurses.

Participant Selection

Second, selection of participants of focus groups was conducted with the help of community leaders such as chairmen of *mahalla* committees and school teachers. The community leaders were presented with a list of children meeting certain characteristics and the leaders suggested which children to be interviewed. The goal was to have some children from each of the following categories participate in the focus groups:

- children from large families
- children from one-parent families
- children of labor migrants
- children from poor families
- children from middle-income families
- children from wealthy families.

The children were then divided into groups by age categories for the focus group meetings. Children aged 6-11 were in one group and children aged 12-16 were in another.

On the whole, 36 focus-group meetings comprising 398 children with a male to female ratio of approximately 52:48 were conducted. The focus groups took place in 9 different regions, two in a district center and two in rural areas, for a total of 18 sites. In each site a group of younger children and a group of older children were interviewed. Experience shows that an optimal size of a focus-group is between 7 and 12 members. These focus groups averaged 11 children in each group with a range from 7-14 members.

Methods

This study utilized focus-groups comprised of "homogenous groups" of participants broken down by age categories (younger and elder children). Homogeneity of participants allowed for the formation of groups with common problems and pro-

moted an atmosphere of trust. This was done with regard to national and traditional forms of social behavior of Tajik people that is inherited by children from adults. This includes situations when small children cannot openly talk of their problems in front of older kids. As had been proved by previous surveys, homogeneity of group participants helped achieve a free information exchange and get to a serious discussion of problems of poverty from children's perspective.

Technique and study's tools

Based on the goals and objectives of the survey, a preliminary questionnaire was developed for qualitative assessment of child poverty. This questionnaire was developed with the participation of researchers. The questionnaire as it was used is provided in the Annex 1.

As the survey was conducted in winter time, heated premises were used for interview as much as it was possible. In order to create an open and trustful environment, it was decided to provide tea for each group.

In order to ensure reliability of survey results, it was decided to use PRA methods to explain various terms for children (Vena graph, movement cards). Sometimes tape recorders were used with the permission of participants.

Ethical considerations

Local authorities, the population and even children actively participated and supported researchers in conducting study and were well familiar with humanitarian activity of UNICEF. As the basic topics of study concerned children's poverty, local authorities and communities were interested in carrying out of the study.

Before participation of children for interview, according to selection criteria above, researchers talked with children individually, asking for their agreement to participate in a focus-group discussion. Interviewers explained to children the subjects of the forthcoming discussion about child poverty.

Children respond to questions actively, with pleasure and researchers felt, that the question does not touch interests of children and is not painful for them. During discussions in focus groups, researchers observed that a child may not wish to respond based on a facial expression showing confusion, or by the lack of eye contact with respondents.

In case when a question was painful for a child, researchers tried to formulate the question differently, or generalized it, or through examples explained it to children. The most important goal was not to focus on the problems of this child. Researchers did not meet participants-children of focus groups after completion of the study.

Before conducting the focus group discussions, the questionnaire was pre-tested and finalized with comments and suggestions and therefore during study problem with questionnaires did not arise. Only issue was that study was carried out in winter period, we had problems with a choice of a heated premise for focus-group discussions.

Data Analysis

Summaries of the focus group interviews were written by team members and given to the team leaders (36 summaries). From the written summaries the team leader prepared consolidated reports disaggregated by districts and cities (9 reports), and presented them to UNICEF. Then a final report based on these various reports was created and given to UNICEF.

Moreover at the end of the final report an appendix (3) is attached, where examples of common statements are organized according to the UN Convention on Child's Rights. In the beginning interviewers from each focus group discussion reports selected most common statements and grouped them. During four days together with international consultant Angela Bascereilli and a local UNICEF consultant we discussed all statements, prepared chapters according to the UN Convention and subtitled by most commonly mentioned topics. Children's statements selected according to the followed Articles of UN Convention on Child Rights:

- Physiological effect of poverty
- Right to personal development/education/labor
- Child labor – environment
- Right to shelter
- Sanitation
- Nutrition
- Right to good health
- Material poverty
- Abuse
- Regional difference



1. UNDERSTANDING, PERCEPTION, AND CAUSES OF POVERTY FROM A CHILD POINT OF VIEW

1.1 CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION AND UNDERSTANDING OF POVERTY.

Interviewing children showed that their perception of poverty differs very little in the various districts and cities of the republic that we sampled. Children said that the word "poverty" has become widespread among the population; people talk of poverty at school, at home, in the market, on TV and radio. In children's opinion, poverty is, first of all, the lack of basic living conditions. Children from Dushanbe even decoded this word as "kam bizoat" – "kam" – little and "bizoat" – property; that is, "poverty" means a lack of property.

Practically all focus-groups understood poverty as the lack or absence of money, adequate food, warm clothes, footwear and school supplies. Poverty is also the lack of heating fuel at home. In the rural areas of Khamadoni, Ragun, Shahristan, and Kolkhozabad, children associate poverty with the lack of live-stock, food stuff and land. In Khamadoni children stated that the main poverty indicators include the lack of flour and wheat which implies that the level of poverty in this district is much higher than in others.

Most children associate poverty with the lack of permanent jobs for their parents. Elder children especially associate it with the lack of permanent jobs and money – when people keep borrowing from others. In Shahristan, Ragun, Kolkhozabad, Kurgan-Tube where the level of labor migration is rather high, children associate poverty with the situation when their parents leave for Russia to earn money and cannot find jobs; some parents even forget all about their children and do not send money home.

Poverty is when there is no wheat at home, when there is little food, when Mom and Dad have no jobs, when there are no utensils, good clothes, and sometimes – when there is no home. And even if there is, it has dirty walls, no carpets and blankets. Poverty is when a person is often hungry.
– Shahnoza, 10, Shahristan.

It is worth noting that young children mostly associate poverty with the lack of good food, warm clothes and shoes, school supplies and heating. Young children also pointed out that poverty manifests itself in appearance. A poor person always wears old clothes and shoes and in winter time a poor person has no warm clothes and footwear. Children from poor families go to school in old and shabby clothes, they have no boots, and they carry their textbooks in a plastic bag instead of a school-bag.

Even in public places they judge people by clothes. These people are often dressed off season; they wear cheap clothes or the same clothes they had back in the Soviet days. They seldom have pilav, eat meat on holidays only

– not like the rich who have it every day. They hardly ever have tasty food. They can only dream of good food. – Focus-groups, Kurgan-Tube, 6-11.

Poor people are different from the rich. They buy cheap food and goods. Children from poor families wear slippers or galoshes. They carry textbooks and notebooks in plastic bags because they have no school bags. They go to school in the same clothes they wear at home. Their parents cannot afford school uniforms. – Radjabali, 12, Khamadoni.

It is easy to define a poor person by the way he looks because a poor person cannot afford good clothes. Poor people are more often sick than the rich. They cannot afford energy food. For them to buy meat is a real event. They learn of tasty food only through advertising. Rich people's children go to prestigious schools while poor people cannot afford good education for their kids. Rich people have money and can send their children to study abroad. A rich person rests in sanatoriums, has dinner in restaurants, and a poor person cannot even see the doctor. – Moruhsor, 15.

Poverty is obvious in clothes, footwear and the general appearance. Boys from poor families usually have long hair; they wear dirty clothes because their family cannot afford soap or washing powder. Compared to the rich, poor children even speak differently. Their speech is usually low, uncertain, and they look around surprisingly. Poor families have no computers, TV-sets, tape-recorders or satellite dishes. Rich people enjoy their time, have rest; some even rest abroad. A poor person is deprived of all this. Very often there are several families living together in a single household. At the same time, a rich person has a two-storied house; each of his children has a room of his own; they have a nice clean yard; they hire baby-sitters and even gardeners. – Focus-group, Dushanbe, Children of 12-16.

In Dushanbe, Kurgan-Tube and Khodjent, children associate poverty with children begging in the streets and homeless children sleeping in basements and in the open.

Both small and elder children said that poverty is obvious by the look of the people's house. Usually, a poor man's house is not repaired, walls need plaster and paint, windows lack glass and are covered with plastic, and the house is cold.

A poor person has no doors and windows at home; they have plastic instead of glass in the windows; their rooms need plaster and paint. Children from poor families are not properly dressed – they have no warm clothes and shoes. – Shahnoza, 8, Khamadoni.

In former combat areas of the civil war, children believe that poverty is when women are left without husbands and children without their fathers.

Children also agreed that poverty manifests itself in people's behavior. As a rule, a poor person is shy and detached, and keeps his head low. Children pointed out that poor people usually are unaware of their rights and any official can intimidate them. The poor are ashamed to be seen in public because they do not want to be seen in their shabby clothes and therefore feel humble.

A poor person keeps his head low, he is always thinking of where and how

to earn his living; he is ashamed of his clothes and he does not say much. At the sight is a rich person, a poor person also wants to be rich. – Saida, 15, 9th grade, Khodjent.

The poor see rich people and are jealous. They want their children to be raised in good conditions and comfort. They are always upset and miserable thinking about it. Some poor families are ashamed to pay visits because they have no new clothes and money to buy presents. – Mavzuna, 10, Khodjent.

1.2 CHILDREN'S VIEWS ABOUT CAUSES OF POVERTY

Interviews showed that most of the children, particularly elder children, consider the civil war as the main cause of poverty in society. Thus, older children from Shahrinav, Kolkhozobad districts and the cities of Ragun and Kurgan-Tube indicated that although they were very young at that time, they could feel all the horrors of war. Some of the children said that they did not see the civil war themselves, but their parents often tell them about it. Even younger children that were not yet born at the time of the civil war, heard about the horrors of the war from their fathers and elder brothers. For example, children from the cities of Dushanbe, Ragun, Kurgan-Tube and from Kolkhozabad district were saying that during the civil war, a lot of houses were looted and burnt down, families lost their breadwinners, and people had to become refugees. Children from Kolkhozabad district indicated that upon returning from forced emigration their parents had to build their houses anew and set up their household facilities from scratch. Children from the town of Ragun pointed out that it was because of the civil war that construction of Ragun Hydro Power Plant stopped, effectively leaving all the male population of the town jobless.

Children from the mahalla Karateginskaya of the City of Dushanbe indicated that hostilities had been going on in their area between the government troops and remnants of armed gangs headed by the field commander nicknamed "Rahmon Hitler" up until the end of 1999.

Even children from areas where there had been no hostilities consider the civil war to be the main cause of poverty. Thus older children from Hamadoni district of Kulab zone, Kanibadam and Shahristan districts of Sogd region specifically attribute poverty to the effects of the civil war. The children indicated that as a result of the civil war a lot of refugees from southern parts of the country had turned up in their districts. According to the children's views, it was because of the civil war that a lot of factories and plants stopped working and their parents became unemployed.

My elder brother was killed during the war and my father avenged his death. He was put into prison for that for five years. Having served his time in prison he left for Russia. I have not seen him for seven years now. Zamira, 13 years old, Chiptura village, Shahrinav.

We returned from Afghanistan where we had stayed as refugees for many

years just to find out that we no longer had a house to live in. We still have to live with our grandmother in a big family. Some of our classmates still do not have a house of their own and have to live in a school or a kindergarten. Farruh, Kolkhozabad, 12 years old

Kurgan-Tube was in the hotbed of war. In those years we were way too small but we heard a lot about it from our parents. Factories and plants are no longer working after that war and a lot of people are now unemployed. It is possible to find a job today, but wages are miserable. Well paid jobs have all been taken by the rich. A lot of people had become refugees. Upon their return they no longer had homes of their own. Many years have passed since then, but a lot of people still do not have a roof of their own over their heads. Focus group, Kurgan-Tube city, 6-11 years old.

The reason why poverty has become prevalent is that our area was the hotbed of the civil war. In the civil war, a lot of women lost their husbands who were either killed or went missing. Some women have to sell their children for USD 100 to be able to feed their families. Mohkalon, 10th grade, 16 years old, Kurgan-Tube

At the time when we were still in our cradles (when we were little), the civil war was raging forcing a lot of people to become refugees. The war was mostly raging in Dushanbe but it affected us as well. Factories and plants stopped working. People became unemployed and the poor appeared. Farangis, 10 years old, Kanibadam.

Practically in every district children referred to fact that their parents do not have permanent jobs as one of the reasons of poverty. In their opinion, it was the lack of job opportunities that caused a high level of labor migration. The children noted that their fathers and elder brothers borrow money to travel to Russia but cannot always find jobs there. They do not send money to their families. Some parents have not contacted their families for years. Whereas some fathers even started new families abroad.

Poverty is caused by the fact that we have few workplaces where one can earn good money. A lot of people leave for Russia to look for jobs and stay there for good. They do not take care of their children back at home and do not send them money. Dilfuza, 4th grade, 11 years old, Sabo village, Shahrinav

Some people leave for Russia and do not send money back home to their families. Meanwhile wives cannot properly support her children since they have no education, qualifications, etc; Zarif, 3rd grade, 11 years old, Sabo village, Shahrinav

Our parents used to work at a textile factory and we lived in the boarding house of that factory. It has been several years now that my parents no longer work at that factory. Because of this the factory officials have tried several times to evict us from the boarding house. As a result my mother has had several heart attacks. There are many children from our school living in that boarding house and they face the same problem. Rajabmoh, Kurgan-Tube, 7 years old.

In Hamadoni district of the Khatlon region and in Kanibadam district of the Sogd region

older children living in rural areas attributed poverty to unfair distribution of agricultural lands. Children from Hamadoni district indicated that at the time of distribution most of fertile land was given to former farm managers and to their relatives. The poor were left without land and have to work for those people for scanty wages. Children from Kanibadam district pointed out that people work for most of the year cultivating cotton and then harvesting it, and in the end of the year all they get is cotton stems and a small amount of money for picking cotton.

Younger children living in district centers of Kolkhozabad district (Khatlon region), Shahrستان district (Sogd region), cities of Kurgan-Tube and Khodjent indicated that in their view one of the causes of poverty was that a lot of parents abuse alcoholic beverages and gamble. Thus, Russian speaking children from Khodjent said that they know a lot of kids whose parents, as a result of constant abuse of alcoholic beverages, have sold all their property, some of them even their flats, and their children now have to sleep in basements and beg alms.

It happens that men often drink alcoholic beverages and sell stuff from their home. As a result the family becomes poor. Manizha, 3rd grade, 9 years old, Kolkhozabad

I heard that men play cards and billiards setting their houses and property on stake. The people become poor because they lose all their property in such games. Nilufar, 4th grade, 11 years, Kolkhozabad

If the father suffers from alcohol addiction he no longer thinks about welfare of his family, he does not try to find a job to support his family. On the contrary, given the opportunity, he would sell something from his house to get liquor. Mahina, 10 years old, Shahrستان.

Maybe the family became poor also because the father sold the flat and spent all the money drinking. And the family had nowhere to go. Or maybe they were evicted from their house because they could not pay real estate tax and other charges. Yura, 10 years, Khodjent.

Practically all children in the surveyed districts and cities attributed poverty to low educational achievement of both adults and children. Children believe that people with an education can find work for themselves if they want to. The children pointed out that since a lot of men do not have proper education and qualifications and do not know the Russian language, when they go to Russia they cannot find jobs, they become objects of humiliation and insults, and some of them are expelled back to their home country.

Among the reasons contributing to poverty that children also mentioned is that there are many women without husbands since the latter were either killed in the civil war or went to Russia and do not support their families. Since most women, particularly in rural areas, have no education, it is very difficult for them to find a good job. Children, particularly girls, indicated that one of the reasons for poverty was that families have many children.

If there is no father in a family this family is considered to be poor since it has no one to work and support children. If there is no father and the mother is uneducated this can also be a reason for poverty because it is difficult for a woman to find a job and earn daily bread for her children. Muhridin,

3rd grade, 10 years old, Sabo village, Shahrinav

I know of one woman who decided to sell her two children because she was unable to support them. Her husband had gone to Russia to look for a job but would not send any of his earnings. She could not get a job herself since she had no education. All these difficulties forced her to make such a decision. Abduholik, 4th grade, 10 years old, Dushanbe.

Some children also think that one of the causes of poverty is irrational use of resources such as remittances on different events (weddings, funerals and etc.).

I know the case when a man came from Russia and spent his money on different family events within a year. He had to leave for Russia again to earn money to repair his house. Focus Group in Dushanbe.

1.3 POVERTY'S EFFECTS ON THE FAMILY

The qualitative survey showed that children's opinion as to who suffers the most from poverty in poor families somewhat differs from the results of quantitative surveys. In practically all interviews, children pointed out that adults were suffering most from poverty. This does not mean that children suffer less from poverty. In fact they suffer much more and should be referred to a high risk group. One can feel in the children's observations their understanding and compassion for adults, particularly for their parents. Our calculations show that approximately 75% of the interviewed children hold to this opinion.

Adults suffer more because they do not have money to provide their children with textbooks, schoolbags, notebooks, clothing and footwear. They have to sell something from their house to buy food, clothes, etc. Sunatullo, 11 years old, Ragun.

Adults suffer from poverty most of all because they have to think how to support the family and bring up their children. A lot of people have to borrow money, sell their property for their children to be able to go to school and grow up healthy. Shahnoza, 8 years old, Hamadoni

We also suffer from poverty but in comparison with our parents we suffer less. Our parents often think how to feed us, get us some footwear. They are nervous all the time, become ill, their blood pressure goes up. They are worried all the time, sometimes they have psychotic breakdowns. Focus group, 12-16 years old, Shahrinav.

Children's replies to the question "Between mothers and fathers who suffers more from poverty?" were divided approximately 50/50.

Uzbek speaking children from Shahrinav district, a village in Shahrstan district and boys from the cities of Kurgan-Tube, Kanibadam, Ragun and Dushanbe who participated in interviews believe that it is fathers that suffer the most from poverty. The

children pointed out that at present their fathers are the main bread-winners in their families. In their opinion the fathers suffer both physically and psychologically. But the morale suffering prevails. In children's opinion, fathers constantly think how to feed their family, and blame themselves for poverty of their family. To support their family they undertake hard physical work and often become ill. They go to Russia to earn money and become the objects of humiliation and insults there.

Our fathers suffer the most because they have to bear the main burden of life. They consider their primary duty as men to feed their families. A man's role, particularly in rural areas, is the foremost. In cities both the wife and the husband are considered to be breadwinners, whereas in rural areas it is the man's role only. Children also suffer from poverty but the fact is that in rural areas almost all children wear similar clothes, which is not the case in cities. People do not follow fashion trends in rural areas. Children in cities are more fastidious. We are not particularly shy about what we wear. Focus group, Shahrستان, 6-11 years.

My father went to Russia to earn money. While he was working there he was sending money to our family and relatives, i.e. he was our sole breadwinner. But as a result of hard working conditions and very cold climate he fell ill. He could not afford to get treatment there. He was ill for a long time and then died there. Now we have no one to feed our family. Parvina, 3rd grade, 10 years.

Our fathers work in Russia under very difficult conditions. They agree to that since they need to feed their families and it is hard to find work in our own country. However they are often deceived and do not get paid for the work done. They often become ill and since they cannot afford treatment a lot of people die there or become disabled. Some people borrow money to buy a ticket, but when they are deceived they cannot repay the debt and come back home. Creditors demanding repayment beat them up and force them to work for free. They are sometimes beaten to death. Shamsiddin, 4th grade, 10 years.

Some children from Ragun district, most children in Hamadoni district, children from a village in Kolkhozobad district, and girls from the cities of Kurgan-Tube, Dushanbe, Kanibadam and most children from Khodjent and Shahrستان district center believe that it is their mothers that suffer most from poverty. Especially those mothers whose husbands have gone to Russia to work but cannot always find jobs and send money to their families. But the worst suffering befall those women whose husbands married again in Russia and do not support their families. Children indicated that such mothers were mostly affected by psychological sufferings: in this case they have to bear on their frail shoulders the entire burden of upbringing the children. Children also noted that it is most difficult for those mothers whose husbands were killed in the civil war, which makes them the sole breadwinners in their families.

My father has been working in Russia for two years now. He has a kidney disease and cannot send money to our family. My mother suffers a lot. She often has to borrow sugar, tea and, vegetable oil in the store. If she has to borrow more often she sends us to the store. She says she is embarrassed.

Saadat, 7 years old, Ragun.

I believe that it is harder for women. They have to raise their children, perform household chores, and have to earn money working for rich people, selling potatoes, carrots and flat bread in the market. Men go to Russia and a lot of them forget about their families. Women have no option - since they have to put their children on their legs. Suratmo, 15 years old, Hamadoni

Some women in despair of their situation commit crimes - become prostitutes, deal in drugs and end up in prison. As a result, their children suffer even more, start begging for alms, sleep in the markets under the counters or in tandyr (ovens for baking flat bread) to protect themselves from cold. Rustam, 10th grade, 16 years old. Kurgan-Tube

Girls were saying that poverty made life particularly hard for women, i.e. their mothers.

When fathers go away it is not yet certain that they will be able to find jobs. If the husband does not send money to the family it is the mother who has to think how she can provide everything necessary for her children. Just to feed their children mothers try to get jobs as cleaners, housekeepers, and children start working in the market selling plastic bags, drawing hand-carts, working as shoe polishers and loaders. Focus group, 6-12 year old children. Dushanbe

Participants of focus group meetings indicated that children in poor families suffer badly from poverty. In their view, young children in poor families suffer materially: they constantly feel hunger; freeze in wintertime because they do not have warm clothes and footwear. And most of all they suffer because they do not have toys to play with. Psychological sufferings of young children are less compared to those of elder ones since they do not yet understand the notion of poverty and think less about it.

According to respondents, older children from poor families suffer from poverty both materially and psychologically. Older children have to do all the household chores, and earn money on the side to support the family. They mostly suffer from the fact that they do not have opportunities to study properly and learn a good profession in future. They keep thinking about their future and do not see any good prospects there. Children in that age start having new needs: they want to dress and eat as well as their other peers, but cannot afford it because of their poverty.

A large number of children that took part in focus groups meetings pointed out that girls, particularly older girls suffer from poverty more than boys. This happens because they cannot dress according to the season and therefore are ashamed of going in the street and showing up in public places. It is due to the lack of proper clothes and footwear that most of senior grade school girls do not attend classes at school. They stay at home day after day and can feel poverty at its worst thinking together with their mothers of how to feed their family, what to cook for lunch or dinner. Older girls have practically no spare time to associate with their peers. High level of labor migration among adult population, a lot of housework and the need to take care of their younger brothers and sisters make the older girls drop out of school.

Children pointed out that there are older boys in poor families who also suffer from poverty because of having to do heavy physical work. But in comparison with girls, the situa-

tion is easier for them because they are not as busy and can associate with their peers.

Children suffer most from poverty because they want to wear clothes and shoes as well as those of children from well-to-do families. Parents of such children cannot pay for school; buy all the supplies necessary for their children to study. Chasurbek, 10 years old, Sabo village, Shahrinav.

Boys can go in the street and find some occupation or work for themselves. It is harder for girls. They stay at home since their parents will not let them go anywhere. Very often girls are ashamed of their old clothes and shoes and do not go out. It is very important for a girl how she and her clothes look. Nigina, 11 years old, Chiptura village, Shahrinav.

I think that in comparison to boy's girls suffer more from poverty. Boys can walk around in T-shirts, sporting trousers and barefoot. But I am a girl and must wear much better clothes. I know girls who come out of their houses very seldom because they are ashamed of their clothes. Mohpari, 12 years old, Ragun.

Children also suffer from the poverty of their family. For example, they freeze in winter because they do not have warm clothes and footwear. Children ask their parents to buy them the same kind of footwear and clothes that they see the rich wearing. They dream of having all the necessary school supplies, and this affects them morally. Abdurahmon, 3rd grade, 9 years old, Hamadoni.

When I was in primary school I did not think of what kind of clothes I was wearing. Whatever my parents gave to me I would wear to school. Now I am ashamed of my clothes. There are children from well-to-do families in our class and we compare all the time what kind of clothes they wear to school and what clothes we have to wear. Ozoda, Kolkhozabad, 14 years old.

Recently our supervising teacher was distributing a newspaper to all of us but I did not have the money to pay for it. Every time when they asked me whether I have brought the money for the newspaper I felt ashamed. Although there are many other girls like me in our class. Therefore I think that girls suffer morally more than boys. Parvina, Kurgan-Tube, 11 years old

Children from poor families do not see proper childhood. Recollections of miserable childhood stay in their hearts for ever. They do not even take part in school events because to be able to participate in them one needs to put in some money. Moral and physical sufferings also affect the adults - their fathers and mothers. The only difference is that our fathers disguise their distress, keep it inside. Focus group, Kanibadam, Gunbazi, 12-16 years old.

2. CHILDREN'S VIEWS ABOUT POVERTY TRENDS AND WAYS TO OVERCOME POVERTY IN SOCIETY

1.1 CHILDREN'S VIEWS ABOUT POVERTY TRENDS IN SOCIETY

Practically all children interviewed pointed out that the standard of living had improved over the last few years. Improvements of the living standards the children see primarily in access to the education system. The children pointed out that in the past schools were running short of teachers in many subjects. Now a lot of teachers have returned to school because their salaries were increased. The children indicated that they are now receiving new textbooks; schools are being rehabilitated through financial assistance of international organizations and parents. Rural children said that cast-iron stoves were installed in their classrooms that provide heating. Children from the cities of Dushanbe, Khodjent and Kurgan-Tube pointed out that computer classrooms were set up in their schools. But the most significant improvement in their opinion is that almost all children are now attending schools. Girls from rural schools indicated that whereas in the past most girls did not continue their education in high school, today most of them do study. Young children see the main improvement of the education system in the fact that in the past most of them did not have schoolbags, whereas now practically all schoolchildren have schoolbags.

Children from Shahrinav and Kolkhozabad districts and the city of Kurgan-Tube talked about the stabilization of the political situation as a trend of living standards improvement. Children from Kurgan-Tube indicated that five years ago it was dangerous to go out after 5 pm - one could easily get robbed or killed. At present people can freely walk in the city until late in the evening. Children from Shahrinav district see improvement of the political situation in the fact that in the past all weddings in their village were celebrated only until 2 pm; whereas now they continue far into the night.

Practically all children noted that improvement of their life over the last few years mainly occurred due to money remittances from labor migrants. The children pointed out that in recent years a lot of men started to go to Russia to work. Using their earnings they rehabilitated their houses and bought clothes, footwear, school supplies, and cars. Nutritional status of children also improved. The children indicated that if their parents and elder brothers had not gone to Russia to work, their living standards would have been much worse even in comparison with the civil war period.

When their fathers come back home with their earnings they first of all buy asbestos slates for roofing, glass for windows, and plank the ceiling, i.e. rectify the existing drawbacks in their house. They also buy clothes for their children. At that time the entire family eats well. Dilfuza, 10 years old, 4th grade. Shahrinav.

Children living in rural areas in Hamadoni, Kolkhozabad and Shahristan districts attribute living standards improvement to the fact that according to a Presidential Decree a lot of poor families were allocated land. They started to grow wheat and other agricultural produce for their own consumption. The children indicated that in the past their families were using offal's rather than flour whereas now they consume good quality flour.

Younger children see improvement of living standards in the fact that rich people started to build beautiful two-storey houses, buy foreign made cars, dress smartly, a lot of goods have appeared in the markets and in stores. Children think that if a person has money he can buy any kind of goods in the market.

Older children from the cities of Dushanbe, Khodjent and Kurgan-Tube and other districts pointed out that they see improvement in the fact that people started to carry on private business, private enterprises have been established providing new job opportunities, people now own more livestock.

Despite all these positive changes the children noted that in recent years there was a significant rise in prices, primarily for food stuffs.

Food prices grew considerably over the last few years. Consequently, life has become harder. In the past there were not enough teachers and textbooks. We almost do not have such problems any more although it is very difficult for poor families to buy textbooks. Bahodur, Kolkhozabad, 16 years old.

2.2 SURVIVAL STRATEGY THROUGH CHILDREN'S EYES

Focus group discussions showed that children understand quite well not only survival strategy of their own families but that of their community as well. This could be because many of them are directly involved in supplementing their family's household incomes.

The interviews showed that the main income source for majority of families both in rural and in urban areas are remittances from labor migrants working mainly in the Russian Federation. According to the children, the majority of labor migrants come from Southern areas of the country. In the city of Khodjent the level of labor migration is somewhat lower in comparison with other districts and cities of the republic but in the recent years there has been a trend for its increase here as well. This being the case, the trend applies both to male and female populations. According to children from Hamadoni district of Khatlon region, the male population goes to work not only to Russia but also to major cities of the republic, mainly to Dushanbe. Children from an Uzbek village in Shahristan district indicated that the level of labor migration in their village was significantly lower than in the district centre populated predominantly by Tajiks. Based on the children's answers we can determine to which cities and areas of Russia the flow of migration goes. Thus, children from Southern parts of the country pointed out that their parents and relatives mostly go to work to the European portion of Russia (Moscow, Samara, St. Petersburg). Whereas children from Sogd region indicated that their parents mainly work in the Northern regions of Russia.

The children said that most people who intend to go to Russia have to borrow money to cover their travel expenses. The children also noted that not all men can find jobs easily in Russia. Some of them spend months looking for a job. In times like this their families experience very hard times.

We have 23 students in our class. Of that number 15 students have their parents working in Russia. Unfortunately not all of them can send enough money to their families. My mother often has to borrow sugar, oil, and soap from a private store. Once we receive money remittances from our father the better half of the money goes to the store to repay our debts. Besides my elder brothers study in Dushanbe, so the life is hard for our family. Parviz, 14 years old, Sabo village, Shahrinav.

As a rule, fathers borrow money and go to Russia. So families receiving money from one of the parents or relatives working abroad somehow survive. My father used to work in a canning factory. He is now working in Russia. But to survive my mother has to work because the money we receive from our father is not sufficient. Firuz, 9 years old, Chiptura, Shahrinav.

Men work in Russia. If our parents had not been working in Russia there would have been more children in the street begging for alms. Women work in the market on equal terms with men. Men also work as mardikors. There are some women who earn by prostitution. Of course there are few of them but unfortunately they exist. They are doing this also because of poverty. Focus group, Kurgan-Tube city, 6-11 years old

My father went to the city of Tula, but he sends us money seldom. My mother tries to spin out whatever money we receive; she buys wholesale flat bread and apples with it and then resells them. We live by our mother's earnings. Sheroz, 9 years old, Khodjent.

Children from rural areas indicated that aside from labor migrant's remittances the main source of income for a majority of the population is their subsidiary plots and rented land. We should note here that children in rural areas are very knowledgeable about agricultural production. Children from such districts as Hamadoni, Kolkhozabad, Shahrinav, Ragun and Kanibadam indicated that people mainly use their subsidiary plots to produce wheat and a small amount of fruits and vegetables. More than 80% of the output is consumed by the family itself and only a small portion of it is sold in the market. In rural areas of Shahrستان district, population mainly grows potatoes (on 70% of the total agricultural lands), wheat and engages in animal breeding. It should be noted that for Uzbeks that we interviewed land constitutes the main source of income. Labor migration among them is much lower than among Tajiks.

In cotton growing areas women mostly work in the cotton fields cultivating and harvesting cotton in order to provide income. Generally women are paid for picking raw-cotton; they do not get any wages for other types of work that they are doing throughout the year.

Children from cities and district centers pointed out that men who cannot go abroad to work usually work as mardikors (hired workers) building rich people's houses, draw handcarts in the markets, speculate with agricultural produce, work as loaders. Chil-

dren from the city of Khodjent pointed out that a new type of business has recently emerged for a certain part of male population and even for children - they drive second-hand foreign made cars from the railway station where they arrive from the Baltic States to the market. They buy those cars at the railway station, drive them home, clean them up and then sell them at a better price.

Most women in cities sell herbs, vegetables, and dairy produce in the market. Some women work as house servants in rich people's houses. The children said that since majority of their fathers are working in Russia, children and their mothers have to do all the household chores and work on subsidiary plots.

In the cities of Dushanbe, Kurgan-Tube and Khodjent women bake flat bread, buns and various traditional sweets and sell them in the market. Women also engage in traditional handicraft, sew traditional dresses for women, gowns for men and traditional hats (tyubiteikas) to sell them.

2.3 CHILDREN'S IDEAS ABOUT WAYS TO OVERCOME POVERTY

According to practically all children in the surveyed districts, the way to overcome poverty is to create permanent jobs for adults. Children from Shahrinav, Kolkhozabad, Kanibadam districts and the cities of Dushanbe, Kurgan-Tube and Khodjent believe that to do that first of all the factories and plants that used to work in the past need to be rehabilitated. Children from the town of Ragun set their hopes of overcoming poverty on the continuation of Ragun Hydro Power Plant construction.

Views of children from younger and older groups about labor migration as one of the ways to overcome poverty differ; despite the fact that all of them understand that money remittances from their parents constitute their main sources of income at present. Most older boys believe that the main way to reduce poverty at present is to establish proper conditions to enable their parents and elder brothers to go to work to Russia freely and without risk to their lives. Children believe that to achieve this the government should take all the necessary steps and enter into negotiations with the government of Russia. They think that there is no other way to overcome poverty in the country (including the area where they live) at present.

Younger boys and girls and most older girls stated that they do not want their fathers and elder brothers to go to Russia to work. The children pointed out that their fathers and elder brothers, upon coming back from Russia, as well as while still in Russia, very often fall ill. They are humiliated there and some of them even die. They believe it would be better to create job opportunities for them inside Tajikistan to make sure that they are always with their families.

We are sorry for our parents. They work under harsh conditions in Russia. They are not respected in Russia, and sometimes they are even insulted. A lot of them come home ill and become disabled for the rest of their lives. (Focus group, Kurgan-Tube, girls 12-16 years old).

My uncle was working in Russia for many years to support his family. A teacher's salary was not enough for him to support his family. He had to go to work to Russia. Last year he had a kidney surgery. He can no longer perform physical work. Besides he still has not repaid the debt that he incurred for the operation. On the other hand, in our fathers' absence, which can last a long time, children, particularly boys are left without proper oversight. Hayot, Shahrinav, 16 years old.

The most important thing is to have regular job. We want our President to create new jobs for our fathers and brothers. So that they can all come back from Russia. Burhon, 10 years old, Chiptura village, Shahrinav.

When factories, plants and farms start working again our fathers and brothers will come home. They will work here and live with their families. And their children will be able to study. Gulrakat, 12 years old, Ragun.

We want all industrial enterprises that used to work in the past to resume their operation so that our parents can work their. We would like them to work here in this country and not somewhere in a foreign state. Life is too short and we have to be separated from our parents. We often miss them. Shahodat, Kanibadam, Gunbazi, 16 years old.

Children from rural areas in Hamadoni, Kolkhozabad districts of Khatlon region and Shahrستان and Kanibadam districts of Sogd region see fair distribution of land between the rich and the poor as one of the ways to overcome poverty. The children pointed out that it is necessary to establish more independent dehqan farms and the government should lend to them seeds, machinery, fuel and lubricants.

It is the view of almost all children that the most important way to overcome poverty is to improve the low level of education of the people; and to do that it will be necessary to study hard and to learn new professions. Children believe that the poor literacy level is the main cause of poverty in society because illiterate people do not know their own rights and cannot protect themselves. Even in relation to migrants, they think that to be able to work in Russia one needs to be literate, know the Russian language and command several specialties. Children believe that a well-educated person can always find a job.

The schoolchildren said "We need to study hard at school and then continue our education in universities. If a person is ignorant he cannot work outside the country. For example, those who work in Russia and do not know the Russian language are facing a lot of difficulties. They can be easily deceived and cannot protect their own rights. Very soon construction of our Ragun HPP will be resumed and people from our country will be working here. Focus group, 6-11 years old, Ragun.

If a person does not want to be poor he needs to study. He needs to have good knowledge of English and Russian and be computer literate. Only then, even if he goes to Russia to work he won't let anyone deceive him and make him work for free under harsh conditions. Abduholik, 4th grade, 10 years old. Dushanbe

Children from Shahrinav and Kolkhozabad districts think that at present it is very difficult for parents alone to support their families without extra help. Therefore children, particularly older children must also earn money for the family. Children think that to be able to earn money one should not be embarrassed to do any work: clean rich people's houses, work for them as mardikors (hired workers), work as seller in a market, draw handcarts, till the land.

Children from the cities of Kurgan-Tube and Khodjent made an interesting point. According to them, rich people should be helping the poor, lend money to them so that they can go to Russia to work, and instead of building two-storey houses invest their money in construction of new enterprises, create new jobs for poor people. Rich people should be helping orphans, provide money and food to boarding schools and orphanages.

The children addressed some of their requests to the government of the republic. According to them, measures need to be taken to ensure that officials are appointed based on the merit of their professionalism and skills and not for money. The President of the country should regularly communicate with poor people, identify their problems and instruct the government to rectify them. The government should provide allowances to the poorest families. International organizations should distribute humanitarian aid to the poorest groups of population. It is essential that the government provides housing to the poor people, and closely monitors market and shop prices.

Rich people should help the poor, offer them jobs at their enterprises or in their households. For example, my friend's father is working as a deputy director of Eshata bank. He makes good money, often goes on business trips, and can afford to help several families. But he makes sure that he provides jobs only to his own relatives. Madina, 15 years old, 9th grade. Khodjent.

3. POVERTY IMPACT ON THE LEVEL OF EDUCATION, HEALTH AND NUTRITION OF CHILDREN

3.1 POVERTY AND EDUCATION

In focus group meetings, practically all children pointed out that poverty significantly affects children's education. Children from poor families very often skip classes because they do not have warm clothes, footwear, school supplies and textbooks. Girls skip classes at school more often because they are ashamed that their classmates will see their old clothes and shoes. Excessive burden of household chores and work outside the household is also a reason for poor performance of children from poor families at school. Children pointed out that most orphan children have to drop out of school because they are overloaded with work in the market or in other places.

My brother is 16 years old. Upon completion of the 9th grade he dropped out of school because our mother needed help to support the family. He washes cars at the main highway. He gets 1-3 somonis for one car. Mahmud, 11 years old, Chiptura village, Shahrinav.

Last year I did not have half of the required textbooks; I had to borrow them from my friend living nearby. I had to finish my homework as fast as possible and give the textbooks back to the owner although I wanted to study the subjects deeper. There are some students in our class whose parents cannot even buy notebooks for them. Not all of the schoolchildren have even the basic drawing-books and color pencils. Most of schoolchildren in primary school draw in their notebooks with pens. Our parents consider such classes as graphic arts, labor nurturing and singing to be of secondary importance. Mizhgona, 14 years old, Shahrinav.

Many of us do not have textbooks; some of my classmate cannot even afford to buy a regular notebook. Children from poor families are working after classes to support their family. During classes, while sitting behind their desks they keep thinking how to earn something to feed their families. After the classes they usually run home, leave their textbooks and notebooks there, change and go out again. They return home tired at night and go to sleep straight away. They almost never do their homework. Focus group, 6-11 years old, Ragun

Mostly it is children from poor families that skip classes at school. Their families cannot afford to buy textbooks for the children; they do not have schoolbags and have to carry their notebooks, pens, etc in plastic bags. It is so cold in classrooms that you cannot hold a pen in your hand. Focus group, Kurgan-Tube city, 6-11 years old

Indeed, poverty has an adverse effect on the level of knowledge. Our parents are desperately trying to make both ends meet; they cannot buy us everything we need for school. Textbooks are expensive. It is because of life conditions that a lot of children do not go to school or skip classes too often. They wash cars; draw handcarts help their families in whatever way they can. Daler, 14 years old, Gunbazi, Kanibadam.

I do not go to school now because my parents cannot afford to buy notebooks, textbooks and other school supplies for me. I had to drop out of school and help my mother to earn money. Ours is a family of 7: 3 adults and 4 children. But my mother is the only one in the family who has a job. I try and help her but the money we earn is not enough to buy everything we need. Nadya, 15 years, does not go to school, Khodjent.

Respondents pointed out that educational level of children from rich families differs from that of children from poor families. Children from rich families have every opportunity to receive a good education since they go to private high schools, and never face problems poor children face such as lack of clothes, footwear or school supplies. Lack of normal conditions at home (lighting and heating) is also one of the reasons for poor performance of children at school. Participants of focus group meetings were saying that most children from poor families do not feel certain that if they do well at school they will be admitted to institutions of higher education. To be admitted to an institution of higher education one needs a lot of money rather than knowledge. And money is something that children from poor families do not have. This uncertainty is one of the reasons why a lot of children skip classes at school, work outside their households, and girls do not go to high school.

At the same time there is the perception among children that their classmates from rich families do not always make good progress at school and in most cases receive their certificates of education not based on standards of knowledge but for money. Children from rich families are confident that no matter how they perform at school they will be admitted to institutions of higher education in the country. They do not have the problems that the poor face. Hired people do household chores for them, their parents hire tutors for them and the children do not have to think where to get money.

Children from rich families can afford to go to prestigious gymnasiums, lyceums, for example to the Turkish Lyceum. This is why the level of their knowledge is much higher than that of children from poor families. Today, if you have money you can get all sorts of things. Even a diploma of higher education. Gulmurod, 16 years old, Kurgan-Tube

The father of my brother's classmate was a UN employee (Kurgan-Tube is meant). His son did not attend classes at school. But he was giving money to the class supervisor so that he did not get into trouble for skipping school. Classmates often enquired the class supervisor about him but she would only reply that he was either taken ill or begged off. By the end of the school year he was issued a certificate with good grades in it and he went about bragging about it in front of his classmates. And it was not all for nothing, for he was later admitted to a university in Dushanbe. Although my brother's knowledge was better than this guy's, he received a certificate of education with worse grades and he did not even apply to any university. He is now getting ready to go to Russia. Safar, 9th grade, 16 years old, K-T.

Children from rich families go to prestigious schools; they have all the necessary school supplies and good clothes. Their parents hire tutors for them in different subjects. At home, they have all the necessary conditions (lighting, heating, good food) to prepare for their lessons. Some of them have servants in their houses. Consequently, the quality of education of children from rich families is better. Besides, a child from a poor family does not have textbooks, notebooks and a schoolbag. He often suffers from hunger and, in wintertime, from cold for lack of warm clothes. His parents cannot always pay for school. There are frequent electricity outages in the area where he lives. All these drawbacks hamper the quality of his education. As a result children start to work themselves to get everything they need for school. And gradually they drop out of school for good. Daler, 9th grade, 16 years old. Khodjent.

3.2 POVERTY AND HEALTH

Practically all children in the surveyed districts indicated that poverty has an adverse effect on people's health and primarily on children's health. According to them, it is poor children who are the most vulnerable today to various diseases. They become ill more often than children from rich families. Their food and clothes are of poor quality, they live in houses with no heating, do hard physical work. All this has an adverse effect on their health. The children pointed out that due to lack of money ill people in poor families are usually treated with folk remedies (medical herbs, traditional healers (tabibs) and mullahs are asked to treat them), which in many cases has an adverse effect on their health. Parents turn to doctors only in emergencies whenever a disease takes a severe form or becomes chronic. The children pointed out that their parents often have to borrow money from relatives or rich people to buy medicines; and then they spend the entire year working to repay the debt. Sometimes poor people sell their only cow to buy medicines, thus depriving themselves of their last source of income. Respondents indicated that children from rich families become ill less frequently because they have normal living conditions, their food and clothes are of good quality and they live in warm houses. If a child from a rich family is taken ill he is sure to get expensive medicines and be treated by experienced doctors, since rich people can afford it.

Indeed, poverty has an adverse effect on any person's health. Its effect is particularly strong on children's health. Children from poor families are taken ill more frequently than children from well-to-do families. The primary reason for it is that they eat unvaried and low-calorie food, live in bad conditions and wear clothes of poor quality. They are frequently taken ill with such diseases as abdominal typhoid, angor, arthritis, anemia, etc. Focus group, 6-11 years old, Ragun

To be able to get professional help and treat their child in an in-patient facility a poor family has to sell their property or livestock because otherwise the child will not be admitted into the hospital. Abdurahmon, 3rd grade, 9 years old, Hamadoni.

Certainly children from poor families are taken ill more frequently and it takes them longer to recover. This is related to their nutrition and lack of proper clothes and footwear in the family. Besides, a poor family tries to save money on food to be able to buy something else. Parviz, 4th grade, 10 years old, Hamadoni.

My parents say that an empty sack won't stand. A fetus while still in its mother's womb feels hunger. Pregnant women need to eat well to give birth to healthy children. Unfortunately a lot of women cannot afford to eat well. A poor family cannot give its child everything he needs therefore children from poor families are often taken ill. Their organism lacks vitamins. Very often they are taken sick with such diseases as gastric ulcer, abdominal typhoid, TB, anemia. Since they do not have money they do not go to doctors, endure their illness on their feet, and as a result the illness assumes a chronic form. Barno, Kolkhozobod, 16 years old.

Since the population mostly uses water of poor quality a lot of people get goiter. Besides, the method of processing and drying apricots involves use of hydrogen sulfide which causes skin diseases and deterioration of vision. Focus group, Kanibadam, Gunbazi, 12-16 year old children

Respondents indicated that children most of all get such diseases as: goiter, abdominal typhoid, bronchitis, malaria, kidney diseases, TB, rheumatism, dysentery and Acute Respiratory infections, and anemia. Children from Kanibadam district pointed out that lack of good quality water is the reason why practically all children suffer from kidney diseases. In Shahrستان and Hamadoni districts children said that they are most frequently taken ill with brucellosis because they graze cattle all the time and clean up cowsteads. Girls indicated that they constantly get pains in the small of the back because they have to fetch water all the time. Rural children said that they get rheumatism most frequently because they have to wear rubber galoshes summer and winter alike. Respondents indicated that practically all children from poor families have anemia largely due to consumption of low-calorie food.

3.3 NUTRITION AND POVERTY

Participants of the focus group meetings indicated that poverty does affect people's nutrition. It is the quality of nutrition that currently determines living standards of the population. Practically all children pointed out that food in a poor family differs significantly from that in rich families. We noted that in all the surveyed districts food in all poor families is very similar. There are sometimes differences in the name of the dish. According to children food in a poor family primarily differs from that in a well-to-do family by its caloric value and frequency of meals. In poor families people have 2-3 meals a day depending on their resources. In rich families people take 4-5 meals a day depending on their desire.

Children indicated that breakfast in a poor family mainly consists of tea with sugar and flat bread. Sometimes they cook atolla with water instead of milk. Children from rich families have scrambled eggs, milk, butter and sausages for breakfast. They are also given rice milk cereal with butter.

Participants pointed out that in poor families children often have for breakfast leftovers from the previous day's supper. Such families eat meat very seldom - 4-5 times a month or whenever guests come to their house or on holidays. Children said that in poor families they most of all use produce from their own subsidiary plots (pumpkins, cabbage, potatoes, beans). According to children rich people practically never eat food without meat; they never eat leftovers from the previous day and give them to pets.

According to children, poor people mostly eat meat whenever there is a wedding, hudoee (religious offering), or a Muslim holiday (Idi Kurbon, Ramazon). Six- Eleven year old respondents from Ragun, Shahrinav and Kanibadam indicated that up until 2005 they were given hot meals at school. International organizations were mainly providing food to schools. This food was used to cook hot meals such as soups, patty-cakes, and flat bread for children. To diversify the meals a lot of schools introduced additional payments for parents to buy vegetables, potatoes, rice and other food stuffs. The children said that these programs are over now. It was only in Hamadoni and Shahrstan districts that children of 1-4 grades indicated that they were still getting meals at school.

Most children said that the characteristic feature of rich families as distinct from poor ones is that they always have food in store. A poor family often needs to borrow food either from well-to-do neighbors or from a shop. Often families that have a cow and chicken do not eat dairy products and eggs. Mothers sell milk and eggs in the market and buy soap or other food with the money.

Once a week we buy just one kilogram of meat. There are seven people in our family. Mother gives each member of the family one small piece of meat. She says that if she does not stretch out the meat we will eat up everything at a time and will have to do without meat for the rest of the week. Poor families often cook soup with vegetables only. Most families cook hot meal twice a day. On Fridays orphans get free hot meals at the school canteen. Yagona, 10 year old, Ragun

We sell milk and eggs and buy flour, rice and macaroni. We have a lot of chicken at home but we take all the eggs to the market. With that money Mother buys food and soap. Kholmurod, 12 years old, Hamadoni.

In our family we usually have flat bread with sweet tea for breakfast. But there are some families living nearby that have not had sugar for months. They sometimes drink milk, but more often than not they have to sell milk to buy other food. Nigora, Kolkhozabad, 12 years old.

A girl from our class suffers from anemia. She fainted several times during classes because of that illness. She often complains of dizziness and general weakness. Her illness was caused by consumption of low-calorie food. Dishes with high caloric value are those containing meat, eggs, butter. Focus group, Kolkhozabad, 11-16 years old

Practically all children, both boys and girls, when asked to describe what high-calorie food is replied that it is dishes with sufficient content of meat. According to them such traditional dishes as pilaf, mantu, fried meat, fried meat with potatoes; scrambled eggs have high caloric value.



4. USE OF CHILD LABOR

4.1 CHILD LABOR IN HOUSEHOLD

Interviews held in focus groups showed that most household chores in poor families are performed by children. Children are particularly burdened with housework in families where fathers have gone to work to Russia, in families with no parents or families where one of the parents is disabled. Children agreed that housework is divided along gender and age divisions. House chores of children living in private houses, multistory houses, villages and in cities also vary.

The survey showed that rural children's housework differs slightly in different regions of the republic that we surveyed. Village boys mainly collect wood, cut the hay, tend for livestock (mucking out, feeding, and grazing). Boys in rural areas work on their subsidiary plots. Since most parents from poor families go to work to Russia or other cities, all the work to be done on subsidiary plots is handed over to children. Young boys also do some housework. They mostly graze livestock, as far as possible store up fodder for animals, collect wood.

Girls are mostly engaged in cleaning the house and the yard, washing dishes, laundering, and helping their mothers in cooking. In families where mothers work outside the household, girls cook everything and take care of younger children. Some girls, particularly in Southern districts, milk cows, bake flat bread in tandyr, prepare fuel from animal dung to be later used for cooking and heating (colloquial name for such fuel is tappak). We should note that in Southern areas of the country drinking water is usually fetched by girls, whereas in the Northern areas this work is performed by boys. The housework of girls differs depending on their age as younger girls mainly sweep the yard and wash dishes.

In harvesting season all children irrespective of their age and sex harvest wheat, vegetables and fruits on their subsidiary plots. In cotton growing areas of the republic once the picking of raw-cotton is finished practically all children are engaged in collecting cotton stems (guzapaya) to be later used for cooking and heating. At the time of this survey, all children we interviewed from cotton growing areas reported doing this type of work. In Kanibadam district of Sogd region children reported that practically all family members are engaged in production of dry fruits. Once apricots are harvested family members start to process them. Apricot stones are cracked and the kernels are taken out. Production of dry fruits is the main source of income for most families. It is very labor-intensive and keeps both adults and children busy.

In the cities of Khodjent and Kurgan-Tube girls, aside from their primary housework, also help their mothers to sew traditional dresses for women, gowns for men and tyubiteikas. The finished clothes are then sold in the city markets. Also in the city of Khodjent children help their parents in making traditional sweets.

Children living in apartment buildings indicated that they had less housework than children living in rural areas. For the most part, girls are mainly engaged in cleaning the

flat, washing dishes, laundering and cooking and boys are charged with putting out the garbage. Since at present drinking water in multistory houses is usually pumped only as high as the second floor, most children we interviewed have to bring water from a water tap in the yard.

Practically all children interviewed noted that the work of children from rich families differs from that of children from poor families. Rich people's children almost never do any hard physical work. They have mardikors (hired workers) or servants to do it for them.

4.2 CHILD LABOR IN COTTON INDUSTRY

Historically, the main cotton-pickers in the cotton growing areas of the country were women, schoolchildren and students. However, even the transition to a market economy did not change the situation. In the 1990s, from September until the end of November schoolchildren from the 5th grade and older and university students were mobilized for picking cotton; only children in grade 1-4 stayed in schools for classes. To ensure that high school students could cover the entire curriculum they had to study during spring and summer holidays. Schoolchildren and university students received scanty wages for their work. It was not even sufficient to cover the cost of their food during the harvesting season. The situation somewhat changed in mid-2004 when the president of the republic made a television address and forbade the use of schoolchildren and students for picking cotton during study time. Despite this, Children hire according to the order of local authorities, through secondary schools.

Interviews conducted with children from cotton growing districts of Shahrinav, Kolkhozobad, Hamadoni and Kanibadam showed that currently children from senior grades are mostly mobilized to pick cotton after classes. Sometimes they also have to do it on Saturdays and Sundays. Children indicated that when they pick cotton they are given practically no food and they have to bring it on their own from home.

Children from Shahrinav and Kolkhozabad districts said that they received 10-15 dirams per kilogram of picked cotton. Besides the wages earned picking cotton, another reason of interest for gathering cotton by children from poor families is that at the end of harvest period family gets stalks of cotton and these stalks are used as fuel. For this reason, parents from poor families allow to collect to the children cotton, even for free-of-charge. For example, children from Hamadoni district indicated that they are not always paid for cotton picked by them. Children reported that farmers say that the children's families are given the right to collect cotton stems in lieu of their wages. In Kanibadam district we were told that children's wages for picking of cotton are given to their school to procure school supplies and renovate the building.

Besides picking cotton, throughout the year mostly older girls are engaged in weeding and removing the top foliage in cotton together with their mothers. Children from rich families do not collect cotton because their parents are authorities of the district.

Children are paid 10 dirams per kilogram of cotton, but their total earnings do not even cover the costs of clothes and shoes that they wear out

in the process of harvesting. The money is not always paid accurately and in a timely manner. One should point out that girls are better at picking cotton than boys. Children from rich families are not mobilized for picking cotton. Sometimes dehqan farms cook lunches for us but they are unsavory to an extent that makes them impossible to eat. For example, last year they gave us stale pilaf. The next day all the schoolchildren were taken ill. This is one of the reasons that we try to bring flat bread and vegetables of our own. During cotton-picking season we often suffer from catarrhal diseases such as flue, angor, coughing. Housework does not affect our studies but work in the field has a negative impact on our progress at school. Teachers tell us that we fall behind on our curricular. Focus group, Kolkhozabad, 11-16 years old

4.3 CHILDREN AS FAMILY BREAD WINNERS

Interviews conducted in focus groups showed that for some poor families' children have become the only bread-winners. This mainly refers to families headed by women, families where parents, usually fathers, have gone to work to Russia but do not help their families, where parents are disabled, families with many children, and dysfunctional families where parents are addicted to drugs or alcohol. The children noted that there are a lot of families like this at present. The survey showed that the nature of child labor largely depends on the environment where the children live: in rural area or in a city. For example, in major cities and in district centers children mostly work in the markets whereas in rural areas they work on agricultural land. Child labor outside household also varies depending on age and sex of the children.

In major cities of the country such as Dushanbe, Khodjent, Kurgan-Tube and in major district centers with large markets, children mostly work in the markets. Older boys mainly draw handcarts, unload trucks, and speculate in vegetables and fruits. Younger children wash cars, sell cigarettes, plastic bags and chewing gum. In Dushanbe, Khodjent and Kurgan-Tube children earn money working as conductors in private minibuses. In the cities of Dushanbe and Khodjent children also earn money by changing large denominations to smaller ones for minibus drivers. In Khodjent some older boys have started to work driving foreign made cars from the railway station where they arrive from the Baltic States to the market. Boys in cities also work as mardikors (hired workers) in construction of houses, collect sand in river flood plains and sell it to whoever may need it, collect empty bottles and take them to glass reception points. Some children collect and sell non-ferrous metals.

In cities, older girls mainly sell patty-cakes, flat bread, herbs and fruits in the markets. Girls from city suburbs buy milk from their neighbors at a low price and then sell it at a higher price to the city residents. They are colloquially known as "dairy girls". Most girls hire out as nannies and servants in rich people's houses, work as waitresses and dishwashers in bars and canteens. A lot of girls from the cities of Khodjent, Kanibadam and "Urgut" mahalla of Kurgan-Tube reportedly are engaged in sewing traditional

dresses for women, gowns for men, traditional hats and other types of national needlework and sell their products in the city markets.

It should be noted that work of rural children somewhat differs from that of urban children. Rural children have fewer possibilities to earn money for their families because of a lack of markets and people willing to make use of their work.

In rural areas, older boys mainly work as mardikors (hired workers) constructing houses, cut hay, harvest wheat, graze livestock, muck out cowsteads belonging to more wealthy people. Many rural children also earn money making sun-dried bricks, collecting sand and stones in river flood plains for construction of houses.

Girls hire out to wealthy people to look after their children, sweep their yard, wash dishes, do the laundry and clean windows in rich people's houses. Uzbek girls from Shahrinav district indicated that rich farmers hire them to eradicate weeds on plots of agricultural land. In rural areas, in most cases children get food, mainly wheat, by way of remuneration for their work.

In Shahristan district of Sogd region, mainly populated by Uzbeks, children pointed out that they did not earn money for their families outside their households. There is no market in the district for children to work there and so they mostly work on their rented or subsidiary land plots. According to the children, they do not have any spare time to work on the side because there is more than enough work in their own households. The children said that if they work in their own household they can do their family more good than when they work somewhere else. Only in the district center mainly populated by Tajiks several children mentioned that some of their classmates work in the markets of Istravshan city.

In such major cities as Dushanbe, Kurgan-Tube and Khodjent respondents mentioned that some children beg for alms in the markets and in public places. Mostly these are children from dysfunctional families, from families where parents have abandoned their children, families with parents who were put in prison, families headed by women or where the parents are invalids.

I recently came across my former classmate in a market of Istravshan district. He was drawing a handcart and wearing an old jacket. I felt sorry for him. I pretended that I did not see him and watched him for a long time from aside. It became obvious at first glance that he had matured considerably. He looked worried and exhausted. I wanted so much to help him. Back at school he had been very bright and well-thought of by the teachers. Umed, 16 years old, Khodjent city, Sogd region.

There are many children from poor families in our school. The market is located close to the school. Many schoolchildren go to school in the morning and afterwards go to work at the market. Some of them often have to drop out of school because it is hard to study and work at the same time. They come home completely exhausted and drop asleep as soon as they have had their supper. It is a shame that they do not see and feel their childhood, adolescence and youth. Having no family of their own they consider themselves family men. Some children drop out of school because of low living standards. To go to school one must have proper clothes, shoes,

school supplies and must be able to provide something for school needs. Rahima, 13 years old, Dushanbe

Boys of our age draw carts in the markets, sell plastic bags, and work for rich people. In their houses they muck out cowsteds, harvest fruits, cut the hay, harvest wheat and wash cars in parking lots. Girls also work for rich people as servants after classes. Their work includes sweeping the yard, doing the laundry and taking care of babies and small children. Girls receive scanty remuneration for their work. Sometimes they get flat bread and flour for their work. Poor people like this kind of work also because they have their lunches and suppers in their employee's house. Focus group, Kolkhozabad, 11-16 years old.

There are also some poor children who indulge in petty thefts. They steal chicken and eggs. Their parents are well aware of this but choose to disregard the matter, do not berate them for it and do not try to stop them. Some boys work as loaders and also steal minor items such as chocolates or something else. Farruh, Kolkhozabad, 12 years old

4.4 SPARE TIME

The survey showed that availability of spare time for games and entertainment largely depends on living standards in the family, age, sex and place of residence of children (village or city). Older children, both boys and girls, from poor families indicated that they have too little time to spare for games and association with their peers. Significant burden of housework and work outside the household does not allow for much spare time. Children pointed out that the older they grow the less spare time they have. High school girls indicated that they have practically no spare time compared to boys because they have a lot of housework to do. It transpired from the interviews that younger children have more spare time because they are not yet strong enough to do housework. However, there are cases when younger children are engaged in housework and do not have spare time.

When we were grazing cows we got carried away by the game of lyanga. One of the cows strayed away from the herd and fell into a drainage canal. We could not save the cow. After that incident my father punished me by giving me a severe beating. Therefore we try not to play any games lest they should cause some damage. We have no time for games. Chabor, 3rd grade, 9 years old, Hamadoni.

We play rarely. There is no time for that. When you come home from school you need to finish your housework. And in cotton-picking season we stay in the field until late at night. But every boy likes to play. Rajabali, 12 years old, Kolkhozabad

Children from the cities of Dushanbe, Khodjent and Kurgan-Tube who live in apartment buildings said that they have more spare time than children from rural areas since they

do not have subsidiary plots and, consequently, there is less housework.

Boys pointed out that when they have spare time they most often play football, volleyball, bat, lyanga, or bujulbozi. Respondents noted that in recent years such games as cards and backgammon became prevalent among children. If in the past only boys played the traditional game of lyanga, today girls also play this game. In cities many children spend their spare time in internet cafes playing computer games.

Girls of junior ages mostly play with dolls, or jump ropes. They also play hopscotch and barley-brick. Girls from poor families living in rural areas said that in most cases they make their dolls themselves of twigs wrapping them up in traditional national fabrics. Most children from poor families indicated that their parents buy toys for them rarely because of financial problems. According to respondents when children do not have toys this one of poverty indicators.

5. CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF CHILD ABUSE

Interviews conducted in focus groups showed that not all the children fully understand the notion "abuse", among other things, even when it refers to them. When the notion was explained to them they indicated that some types of child abuse do exist. Children agreed that one form of abuse is practiced with regard to orphans and children from poor families that earn money for their families. They gave additional examples of how children are deceived in the markets. Adults make use of their labor and then do not pay the agreed amount. For example, children draw handcarts; unload goods from trucks, but owners of the goods having promised a certain amount actually pay much less. Children working as fare collectors in minibuses also suffer from abuse - minibus owners do not pay them remuneration previously agreed upon.

Children pointed out that they often become the object of abuse on the part of law enforcement officers in the markets. Under the pretext of putting things right in the market the officers take away money and goods from children and drive them away from the market. They also mentioned that any person can hurt orphans in the street or in the market and no one will intercede for them.

Last week I saw a teenager. He was detained by a policeman who was trying to take him to militia station. He was begging the militiaman to set him free. He was shouting: "Take the two somonis that I earned but let me go. I have to work and feed my younger brothers and sisters". Umeda, city of Kurgan-Tube.

Children from poor families often find themselves in situations when they are deceived because everybody knows that no one will protect this child. Navruz, 13 years old, 6th grade, Kolkhozabad.

They also referred to the kind of abuse when children from rich families tease, insult and sometimes beat up children from poor families.

We have children from well-to-do families in our school. During breaks they would give money to children from poor families telling them to fetch patty-cakes from the canteen. If they refuse they are beaten up or insulted with bad words. Many children wash cars but very often they do not get paid for their work. Boys working as loaders often develop a hernia. Far-ruh, Kolkhozabad, 12 years old

Children from rural areas of Hamadoni, Shahrinav and Kolkhozabad districts pointed out that some forms of abuse are practiced in dehqan farms. Children are paid much less than adults for the same scope of work. Children from an Uzbek speaking village in Shahrستان district indicated that they have never experience any abuse. Children from the cities of Dushanbe, Kurgan-Tube and Khodjent consider it to be abuse when

parents make their children earn money for the family, overload them with housework so much that they cannot go to school.

I know a boy who is forced to graze sheep even in cold weather. His father drives the sheep out in the morning and the boy cannot come back home until the evening. Besides, this boy does not have warm clothes. Sharifbek, 3rd grade, 9 years old, Dushanbe

In the above case of Sharifbek telling of a child forced to graze sheep, it is necessary to note, that in rural, presence of livestock in a household is one of the main sources of survival. For this reason, children, discussing such an example, force by the father have counted it as a normal phenomenon.

It should be noted that children seldom mentioned abuse against them at home or at school. Many of them said that this type of abuse happens rarely particularly in rural areas. Children spoke very little on questions on violence at home, because many confused each other, and also, it was visible, that children have not gotten used to speaking on this topic.

6. OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

The interviews showed that despite their poverty, many children dream about a better future. They want to become professions that would allow their children to live much better as distinct from their parents.

The interviews showed that children usually pick professions that under the current conditions are considered to be the most remunerative. Choice of professions by children largely depends on where they live and on the level of economic development in that area. In most cases professions were chosen based on other people's examples and their living standards.

For example, most boys from the cities of Khodjent and Kanibadam indicated that they would like to become ferry drivers of foreign made cars, butchers, drivers, car mechanics, television servicemen, businessmen, singers. One younger boy even mentioned that he would like to become a bee-keeper. More than half of girls indicated that they would like to be dressmakers, many others - doctors and a few said that they want to be teachers. According to children that we interviewed, it is not necessary today to receive a higher education, but one needs to choose professions that are in the highest demand in the market.

In Shahrستان district, where most people grow potatoes and raise livestock, most boys would like to become agronomists and livestock experts whereas girls would like to become doctors, teachers and dressmakers.

In the town of Ragon and in rural areas of Kolkhozobad district, where the population is more religious, many boys and girls would like to become religious figures: boys want to become mullahs, domullahs and qoris; girls would like to be bibihalifas (female religious figures). Another group of boys, mostly of senior ages, would like to become law enforcement officers and drivers whereas some girls want to be dressmakers and teachers.

I would like to become a domulloh-qori - first of all because having studied Qoran my whole life I will go to paradise and secondly because this way I can earn good money and support my family Saidahrar, 11 years old, Kolkhozabad

In Hamadoni district professions most popular with boys are: officers of taxation and customs authorities, policemen (most of all traffic policeman), servicemen and drivers. Some younger children indicated that they would like to become chairpersons of dehkans farms. One boy from the younger group even said that he would like to become the President of the Republic. In reply to the question of why they chose all those professions the children said that at present people with such professions earn good money and prosper. A lot of girls pointed out that they would like to become dressmakers in the future. Often girls, mostly older girls, indicated that they did not want to continue their education in the future. We should note here that many children were surprised that we asked them that question. They said that it was the first time somebody asked them who they would like to become in the future.

I would like to become the President because the president has everything and his children want for nothing. In the future, my family will also want for nothing. I will be helping my mahalla, create new jobs to make sure that there are no unemployed people and they do not have to face poverty. Parviz, 2nd grade, 8 years old, Hamadoni

7. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the discussions in the focus-groups, children made the following suggestions and recommendations that they believe could reduce poverty. Suggestions and recommendations of the report include several of these suggestions from the children.

- Request international organizations to continue school feeding programmes in order to improve school attendance;
- It is necessary to take urgent measures to prevent malnutrition among children with the involvement of local and international donors;
- Organize mobile entrance examination committees that will help talented children from poor families to enter higher education institutions;
- Provide books, school materials, clothes and shoes to children from poor families with the support from local and international donors;
- Abolish involvement of schoolchildren in cotton picking campaign during schooling period;
- Ensure regular electricity supply for schools;
- Conduct workshops and trainings on child rights with the involvement of international organizations, NGOs, schools and mahalla committees;
- Work with children to raise awareness on violence, as children are not aware of various forms of violence;
- Create specialized centers for children for them to be able to gain various professional skills;
- Ensure strict control over child labour in accordance with the convention ILO 138 (minimal age);
- Local authorities and communities should ensure strict control over the children in the groups of risk and organize public funds with the involvement of local and international donors;
- Involve local and international donors to increase the size of allowances for children in poor families;
- In order to ensure equal access to health services, it is necessary to regulate informal payments and exempt poor families from payments. Ensure close collaboration with local schools;
- Local health authorities with the support from international organizations should provide medicines to treat: anemia, acute respiratory diseases, goiter and diarrhea.
- The researchers suggested, at the end of study, it is desirable to organize seminars, round tables on results of study with researchers, representatives of communities, with children and interested persons.

ANNEX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR QUALITATIVE SURVEY OF CHILD POVERTY IN TAJIKISTAN

1. How do you understand the word “poverty”?
2. In your opinion, how is poverty manifested (characteristic features)? What is the difference between a poor and a rich family? How does poverty affect the poor? (in a moral or material way)?
3. In your view, who suffers more from poverty morally and materially and why (children including boys and girls, men, women)?
4. What do you think is causing prevalence of poverty in our society? And specifically in your area?
5. In your opinion, how do poor families cope with their difficulties at the moment?
6. How in your opinion the level of poverty changed in the recent years in the country including your mahalla: did it go down, stay at the same level or increase?
7. What do you think needs to be done at present in the republic, including in your area, to bring down the level of poverty?
8. How do you think poverty affects the quality of education? Is there a difference between knowledge of children from rich and from poor families? If there is a difference, what do you think is the reason for it?
9. In your opinion how does poverty affect health? Including health of children? Who fall ill more frequently: children from well-to-do families or children from poor families? What are the most common diseases afflicting children from poor families?
10. Is there a difference in nutrition of children from poor families and children from well-to-do families? What do you usually eat? How many meals a day do you have? Do they feed you at school (for children from 6 to 11 years of age)? In your opinion, what is high-caloric food?
11. What types of work do you do at home and outside (physical labor)? Do you receive money for the work that you do outside your household (picking cotton, harvesting fruits, vegetables, etc.).
 - In general what types of work do girls usually do and types of work do boys engage in? Is there a difference between the work of children from rich families and that of children from poor families?
 - Does the work that you do affect your studies at school?
 - What do you do in your spare time? What games do you play? What toys do you have at home?
12. Do children from poor families work to support their families? What types of work

do they usually do? What types of work are done by girls and by boys?

13. In your opinion, do children come across any kind of child abuse today? (for example, at school, at home, in the street, in the market). Who, do you think, become the object of child abuse most of all - girls or boys (the poor, orphans).

14. What would you like to become in the future and what do you intend to do to raise living standards of your family?

CHILD POVERTY – APPENDIX 3

1. PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECT OF POVERTY

Subgroup of population who suffer most:

I think that little children suffer more. They want to have nice toys, but their parents have no money for this. They are too small to control their feelings and desires. It is no possible to live without money. Money is everything. Abdurasul, 12 yrs Kugan-Tube.

I think that orphans suffer the most from poverty. Everybody can abuse or insult them, and nobody will defend them. Hochamgol, 13 Ragun

Our neighbour lives together with her grandfather and grandmother. Her parents died and three children orphaned. The older daughter, who is 15, sells bread at the market and feeds her two brothers, grandmother and grandfather. I think, a poor family is a family without parents. Zamila, 11 village Chiptura, Shakhrinav.

If there is no father in the family this family is considered to be poor since it has no one to work and support children. If there is no father and the mother is uneducated this can also be a reason for poverty because it is difficult for women to find a job and earn daily bread for her children. Muhridin, 3 grade, 10 years old, Sabo Village, Shahrinav.

Children aware of parents suffering

Adults suffer most because they have no money to provide their children with textbooks, school bags, notebooks, clothes and shoes. They have to sell something from home to buy food, clothes' Sunatullo, grade 4, 11. Khamadoni

My father has been working in Russia for two years now. He has a kidney disease and cannot send money to our family. My mother suffer a lot. She often has to borrow sugar, tea and vegetable oil in the store. If she has to borrow more often she sends us to the store. She says she is embarrassed. Saudat, 7 years, Ragun

It is adults who suffer most because they think of how to feed and educate their kids. Many have to borrow money and sell their property so that their children go to school and grow healthy. Shahnoza, grade 2, 8

Children think that poor people are ashamed of themselves

Some are begging. We all know about them and they are ashamed of their situation. Therefore, they go to the city or other villages. Farzona, 14 Khamadoni

I recently came across my former classmate in a market of Istravshan district. He was drawing a hardcart and wearing an old jacket. I felt sorry for him. I pretended that I did not see him and watched him for a long time from aside. It became obvious at first glance that he had matured considerably. He looked worried and exhausted. I wanted so much to help him. Back at school he had been very bright and well-thought of by teachers. Umed 16 Khodjent city

Children think that migration has an effect on poverty/morally

We would like that all the industrial plants, which functioned in the past, should operate in full capacity, and we would like our parent work at those plants; we would like them to work here, in our district, not somewhere in the foreign country. The life is short, and we had live apart from our parents we miss them very often. Shuhrat, Kanibadam, Gunbazi 16.

Children think that poor people suffer

Many children from poor families see how rich children are dressed and suffer because of it; they also want to be dressed like that. Sometimes children suffer so much they get sick of it. Dilbar, grade 9. 16

Children perceived the economic situation unstable, uncertain

There are not very many industrial enterprises in Shahrستان. That is why the life of people is very difficult. Many people have to live their homes to go outside to find job and earn money. Local food production has greatly dropped. Food products are imported now. Their price is very high because it transportation is very expensive. Very few people can afford buying imported food at such price. Umed, 9 16 years Shahrستان.

Food prices grew considerably over the last few years. Consequently, life has become harder. In the past there were not enough teachers and textbooks. We almost do not have such problems any more although it is very difficult for poor families to buy textbooks. Bahodur, Kolkhozobad, 16 years old.

Children think that poor people do not opportunities/feel of corruption.

Sometimes the knowledge of pupils from the poor families is even better than the knowledge of children from the rich families. But poor people cannot be sure that their child would be taken to the university, because they have no more to buy for the university quota which might be free but in fact it is sold to the rich people for the bribe. Thus the children from rich families became university students while the children from the poor families have no chance to get to university Mavchuda, 8 grade, 15 Shahrستان

Children from poor families have to grow up faster

Children from families where one or both parents are missing, have to make their living themselves. Very often small children became breadwinners for big families. Makhina, 16 Ragun.

Very often me and my dad load stones in the car for construction. We are paid 25-30 somoni for that. I hammer up boxes getting 6-8 somoni. Abuali, 9 years old, Village Chiptura, Shakhrinav.

2 RIGHT TO PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT/ EDUCATION/ LABOUR

Children think that children from poor families miss education to work

There are many children from poor families in our school. The market is located close to the school. Many schoolchildren go to school in the morning and afterwards go to work at the market. Some of them often have to drop out of school because it is hard to study and work at the same time. They come home completely exhausted and drop asleep as soon as they have had their supper. It is ashamed that they do not see and feel their childhood, adolescent, youth. Having no family of their own they consider themselves family men. Some children drop out of school because of low living standards. To go to school one must have proper clothes, shoes, school supplies and must be able to provide something for school needs Rahima, 13, Dushanbe.

When child suffers from hunger, when he has nothing to put on he loses interest to study. He constantly thinks about possibilities to earn something, to find some food and clothes. Subkhon, 4 grade, 10 years.

Children miss out education because lack of school material

Mostly it is children from poor families that skip classes. Their families cannot afford to buy textbooks for their children; they do not have schoolbags and have to carry their notebooks, pens, ect... in plastic bags. It is so cold in classrooms that you cannot hold a pen in your hand. Focus Group, 6-11 years old Kurgan-Tube.

Children do not have the required school material

Last year I did not have half of the required textbooks: I had to borrow them from my friend living nearby. I had to finish my homework as fast as possible and give the textbook back to the owner although I wanted to study the subject deeper. There are some students in our class whose parents cannot even buy notebooks for them. Not all of the schoolchildren have even the basic drawing-books and colour pencils. Most of schoolchildren in primary school have even their notebooks with pens. Our parents consider such

classes as graphic arts, labour nurturing and singing to be a secondary importance. Mizhgona, 14 years old, Shahrinav.

Children think that poor children need to help parent economically

My brother is 16 years old. Upon completion of the 9th grade he dropped out of school because our mother needed help to support the family. He washed cars at the main highways. He gets 1-3 somonis for one car. Mahmud, 11 years old. Chiptura village, Shahrinav.

School drop out

I do not go to school now because my parents cannot afford to buy notebooks, textbooks and other school supplies for me. I had to drop out of school and help my mother to earn money. Ours is a family of 7, 3 adults and 4 children. But my mother is the only one in the family who has a job. I try and help her but the money we earn is not enough to buy everything we need. Nadya, 15, does not go to school, Kodjent.

Heating in school is not adequate

My joint aches. It is cold in classes in winter. Most of the time in winter I stay home. Doud, 11 years old, Ragun.

Combining work and school has repercussion on learning

Many of us do not have textbooks; some of my classmates cannot even afford to buy a regular notebook. Children from poor families are working after classes to support their family. During classes, while sitting behind their desks they keep thinking how to earn something to feed their families. After the classes they usually run home, leave their textbooks and notebooks there, change and go out again. They return home tired at night and go to sleep straight away. They almost never do their homework. Focus group, 6-11 years old, Ragun

Education corruption

Children from rich families can afford to go to prestigious gymnasiums, lyceums, for example to the Turkish Lyceum. This is why the level of their knowledge is much higher than that of children from poor families. Today, if you have money you can get all sorts of things. Even a diploma of higher education' Gulmurod, 16 years old, Kurgan-Tube.

Children from rich families often rely on their parents' money and do not study properly because they know that money can always help them.' Jumaboy, grade 12, Dushanbe.

Children think that rich children have opportunity to get better quality of education.

Children from rich families go to prestigious schools; they have all necessary school supplies and good clothes. Their parents hire tutors for them in different subjects. At home, they have all the necessary conditions (lighting, heating, good food) to prepare for their lessons. Some of them have servants in their houses. Consequently, the quality of education of children from rich families is better. Besides, a child from a poor family does not have textbooks, notebooks and schoolbags. He often suffers from hunger and in, wintertime, from cold lack of warm clothes. His parents cannot always pay for school. There are frequent electricity outages in the area where he lives. All these drawbacks hamper the quality of his education. As a result children start to work themselves to get everything they need for school. And gradually they drop out of school for good. Daler, 9th grade, 16 years old. Khodjent.

If we do not study, we may be cheated and not given what we earned. To avoid it, we need to go to university and gain knowledge, become good specialists and get well-paid jobs. However, we are rural boys; we have no opportunity to study in university since we cannot afford it. Djamshed, grade 5, 11 years.

Even if you are wise as Solomon, you cannot continue studying if you have no money. Ismatullo, grade 7, 13 years old, Dushanbe.

Children think higher education is necessary to overcome poverty

To reduce poverty in the country, it is necessary to study and get a specialty. Poor families understand the need for education, therefore they borrow money and send their children to schools. Behrooz, grade 7, 13 years old.

Children think that higher education is good so they better prepared when they go to Russia

For a person not to become poor she should study. This person should know English and Russian and have computer skills. Then, even if he goes to Russia to earn money, he will not be cheated and made to work without pay under hard conditions. Abduholik, grade 4 10, Dushanbe.

Children do not feel they get the support from the parent to have higher education

Parents from poor families without the university degree try to convince their children that the university education does not bring anything good. It is better for them to graze the cattle. They say that it is only waste of time and money to study at the university. They do not understand that if the child gets proper education he would bring a lot of use to the family and the other relatives. He will avoid poverty. Raihona 9 16 yrs Shahrstan.

Many of our parents have higher. Now, all young people go to Russia for earnings. When are they going to study? They won't be future without real professional and specialists. Rasoul, 15 Ragun

Children do not belief in higher education but prefer skilled training.

My parents have higher education, but their monthly salaries do not last even a week. Should they have higher salaries, we will live much better. Ramazon, 10 village Chiptura, Shakhrinav.

CHILD LABOUR- ENVIRONMENT

Cotton- working condition

It is difficult to pick up cotton. Hands are cold and get rough. In the morning it is very cold even if the person is warmly dressed. Shahlo, 10 Kolhozabad.

Long hours

We seldom play there is not enough time. Once we get back home from school and do all housework there is not time left. In cotton season we pick cotton till late at night. However every boys like to play. Radjabali, 12 Khamadoni.

Gender work

Girls gather cotton only in the field and for their work they receive money. Boys do the heavy work as they are healthy and they are more exposed to the fraud and violence. Zarin, grade 4, 11, Kolkozabad.

The homesteads where there are no boys, the girls have to do the boys' job: in summer they cut hey, in autumn they pick up fruits and potato, collect wood, in winter they make the hey food for the cattle, clean the cow shed, in spring they dig the land. The girls from the poor families have very bad school results. Hasan, grade 16 years old, Shahrstan.

Gender-cotton

In general cotton is pick up by girls. Boys more often are involved in collecting wood, looking after cattle. Oisha, 9 years, Kolkozabad.

Picking up cotton associated with being poor

We do not pick up cotton because we are rich. Abubakr, 6 Kolhozabad.

Long working hour- all work

I work so hard during the day that coming back home I am so ceased that I cannot do my homework- sleep hangs on my eyelids. Jumamakhmad, 13, Ragun.

All work – family support

Two years ago I was not so good in counting money and could not cope with collecting money in minibuses-taxies, so sometimes I came home with empty pockets. Last summer I worked with my uncle collecting money in his bus and every day I brought some money home. My mother saved up the money and bought school uniform and shoes for me and my brothers. This was a good support for the family. Umarboy, Khodjent, 10.

Little children also suffer. They study at school and work to earn money to help the parents. They work for rich people, cut wood, graze their cattle, nurse their babies. My father works in Russia but he does not remit money. My brother is in the 4 grade. He works at the market, bringing home oil, soap, sugar. Farzona, 8 years old, Kolhozabad.

In poor families and in the families with small income all members of the family children and grown ups participate in the work around the house. In rich families they employ poor people as servants to do all kinds of work. Yusuf, 15 years old, Kurgan-Tube

Work- violence/abuse

Boys are more exposed to the fraud on the part of clients because just they do the difficult work on markets, roads, in the house of rich people. Example, most of all loaders and those who wash machines, sell food products, fruits and vegetables become victims of violence. Akram, 5 grade, Kurgan-Tube.

All summer I was selling ice cream but I wasn't paid, he said I'll pay you when you do extra job in my house, it was 6 o'clock, and I didn't go. I was afraid. Faranghis, 8 grade, 14 years Shakhrinav.

Children –breadwinner

Besides that, children of our age work as conductors in minibuses. My classmate works as a conductor; he hasn't showed up at school since September. His parents even do not ask him to go to school since he is the main breadwinner in his family, and he brings 5 somoni every day. His sister, who should study in the 11 grade at school, sells home-made patties at the market. Parviz, Shakhrinav.

Last week I saw a teenager. He was detained by a militiaman who was trying to take him to militia station. He was begging the militiaman to set him free. He was shouting: "take the two somoni that I earned but let me go. I have to work and feed my younger brothers and sisters" Umeda, city of Kurgan-Tube

Children are cheated in the payment for their work

Another boy for his work as the cashier in the en-route taxi instead of the promised 9 somoni was only paid 3 somoni' Garibsho, grade 4, 11 years old, Kolkozabad.

Children believe that working in land is was to escape poverty

We all can work on land from childhood. If we had land, I believe no one would have suffered from poverty. Mehr, 14 Khamadoni.

It is nice that we have land plots. Although they are not big, they feed us, we eat what we plant and grow. We live only by means of our land. Some members of our families sell agricultural products at the market, which bring us some income; they also sell livestock and diary products. Many of our fathers work in Russia. Parviz, Shkhrinav, 14 years old

Children are forced to work by parents

I know a boy who has to tend sheep even in cold weather. His father takes them all out in the morning and this boy cannot return home before the evening. Besides, he has no warm clothes.' Sharifbek, grade 3, 9 years old, Dushanbe.

I know a boy whose mother compelled him to work at the market. He helps to carry bags and sells plastic bags.' Orif, 10 years old, Village Chiptura, Shakhrinav.

Children from poor families feel that cannot rely on their parents for support

Children from rich families rely on their parents and therefore do not think of working, Umarali, 9 grade , Dushanbe.

RIGHT TO SHELTER

Children think that poverty is having no shelter/bad shelter

A poor person has no doors and window in his house; his window is covered with plastic; rooms need plaster and paint. Children from poor families are not adequately dressed and need warm clothes and shoes. Shahnoza, grade 2, 8 years old, Khamadoni.

Poverty is when there is no wheat in the house, there is little food, then parents do not work anywhere, there are no plates and dishes, no good clothing, sometimes there is no house. Even when there is house, its walls are dirty and there are no carpets and mattress. Shakhnoza, 10 years old, 4 grade. Shakhriston

The walls of a poor man' house are plastered, but not bleached, whereas rich people have huge nicely looking houses with white walls. Orif, 1 grade student, village Sabo, Shkhrinav.

Children live in temporary accommodation

Our family lives in the school building. There were four families in our household. It was too tight and we have no other land plot, therefore father had to move away. There is no money to buy a house. Gulrakat, 14 Khamadoni.

Some children have temporary accommodation as results of civil war

Our family returned from Afghanistan where we were refugees during many years. We have no house of our own. We live with the grand mother who has a big family. Other refugees live in the school buildings or kinder gardens. Faruh, 12 years old , Kolkozobod.

Some children do not have shelter due to parents drinking habits

There are many other reasons, for example if the father sold an apartment and drank all the money. So his family has nothing to go. Or some people were kicked out of their apartment, as they could not pay for it and for other things. Yura, 10 years, Khodjent.

Children think that money earn through labour migration are as a priority used for repairing housing

After earning money, when the fathers come home, they first buy titles for the roofs, glass for window, repair the ceiling, i.e. they repair house. Also they buy clothing for the kids. In such time the family eats well. Dulfouza, 19 years old. Shakhriston

Some children do not have shelter as a result of factory close done or change of system (privatization)

Our family worked at the textile factory in the past. We lived well in the family hostel in the factory. Several years ago my parents lost their job. That is why our family lost the right to live in the hostel. Every time when they want us to move out, my mother has a heart attach. Many people face the same problem. We study at the same school with their children. I know about it. Radjababmoh, 7 years old, Kurghan-Tube.

Poor Electricity connect associated with being poor

In the soviet days, electricity was free and now people pay a lot of money for it. Farrukh, grade 3, 10 years old, Khamadoni

In winter we heat only one room. Wealthy people have steady heating in

their houses. Ramazon, 10 years old, village Chaptura, Shakhrinav.

I know kids who sleep in ovens to get warm a little. Usually these kids do not have father or a mother. They live in the street begging or stealing. Kamariddin, grade 2, 9 Dushanbe.

In the past we had no money to pay for electricity. It was often cut off. Now mother pays and we have electricity. Gulandom, 9 years old, Kolkozabad.

Electricity – quality of education

Often we don't have electricity at home. All this impacts quality of their education. As a result children start work in order to earn money for school supplies, and step by step they drop schools forever. Daler, grade 9, 16 Khodjent.

SANITATION

Children associate poverty to poor sanitation

When you can meet a person who is dressed in dirty worn out clothes in the street and has worn footwear, these are signs of poverty. A poor man cannot even buy a soap to wash his/her clothes. Rustam, 8 years, Kanibadam.

Poor sanitation associated with health

Since poor people use basically water of bad quality, most of them suffer from thyroid gland' FG, Kanibadam 12-16.

Children from the poor families eat dirty fruits, dig in the garbage, and seldom wash themselves. They have no normal conditions for life. They catch typhoid, hepatitis measles, ditherier. Medina, 13 years old, Kurgan-Tube

If the poor families have the cow it does not mean that they drink milk. They sell the milk to buy sugar or soap. Shoira, 8 grade, 15 years old, Shahrstan.

NUTRITION

Food is rationed in poor families

There are families where they eat only two times a day. In these families the bread is divided into accounted out slices to each member of the family his norm. Parents tell their children not to eat too much. Manhsharif, grade 8 , 13 years Kurgan-Tube.

Poor nutrition effect on health

Regrettably, poor women cannot eat well. That is why children from poor family get sick very often. They lack of vitamins. They have ulcer in the stomach, typhoid, TBC, malaria. They do not go to the doctors. Thus the illness became chronic. Barno, 16 Kolhozobod.

Shomia from our class suffer from anaemia. Once she fainted at school. She has giddiness and low blood pressure. Nourishing food include meat and eggs. FG, Kolkozabad, 11-16 years old.

Of course, children from poor families get sick more often because it is related to their nutrition and the availability of clothes and footwear. Besides, a poor family tries to save on food to buy something else. Parviz, grade 4, 10.

Poor nutrition- no meat

In lower-income families soup is usually cooked without meat; it is made of pumpkins and turnips. Khursanoi. 1 grade, 7 years old, Village Sabo, Shakhrinav

We cook meat only on holidays or when we have guests. That is why we are happy when there holidays and guests are coming. Safarhon, 7 years old, Kurgan Tube.

Diet is not varied

Poverty is when there is only bread and tea at home. Mahmadsaid, 6 Dushanbe.

Poor nutrition and development

'Of course, if the child does not have decent food he cannot properly think; he does not have a school bag, textbooks, and notebooks; he might skip classes. Moukhriddin, 3 grade, 10, Village sabo, Shakhrinav.

RIGHT TO GOOD HEALTH

Poverty- health

Poverty affects human health. Especially it affects children's health. Children from lower-income families get ill more frequently than those wealthy families. The reason for that, in the first turn, is that they eat unvaried food; they live in bad conditions; they are badly dressed. They frequently suffer from such ailments as typhoid, angina, diseases of joints, anaemia, ect... . FG, age 6-11, Ragun.

Medical treatment expensive

I have been sick with typhoid for the last three years. The doctor said that I need further medical treatment. But medicines are expensive. Ramazon, 10, Chipture, Shakhrinav.

I have a damage of a membrane in my right ear; it is aching all the time. That is a complication from flu. When I was ill my family did not have money for proper treatment. Abuali, 9 years old, village Chiptura, Shakhrinav.

A seven- year old boy of our neighbour was ill. His parents were on earning in Russia. Parents left the children with the grandmother. The child had stones in his kidneys. The grandmother could not find money and he died. Gulmira, 9 grade, 15 years old, Kanibadam.

Poor family opt for traditional treatment for healing because it cheaper

When a child from a poor family is ill his mother tries to heal him with empirical remedies since the family does not have money for treatment. In case of illness, children from wealthy families are immediately brought to qualified doctors; sometimes they carry them to Dushanbe, and then follow all recommendations of doctors. Dilovar, 9 years old, Ragun.

Poorly dressed – health

Children frequently fall ill because are not quite warmly dressed, their footwear is ragged and rubber. They cannot buy expensive footwear and often fall ill with flu. Mavluda, grade 3 , 9 years old. Kolkozabad.

A child from poor family falls ill very often because he goes out into the street without a hat. He gets colds and has head ache (pneumonia). If the family has no money to buy medicine they used to sell something from their home. Ibodad, grade 8, 14 Khodjent.

Children from lower-income families come to school in thin clothes and torn shoes, which is the reason for their illness and non-attendance of classes. Zarif, 3 grade, 11 years old, Shakhrinav.

Family to get medical treatment need to sell assets

To be able to get professional help and treat their children in in-patient facilities a poor family has to sell their property or livestock because otherwise the child will not be admitted into the hospital. Abdurahmon, 3 grade, 9 years old, Hamadoni.

Health affect by hard labour

There are many young people here who left for Russia to earn money and came back completely sick. They have problems with kidneys, stomach, legs and ones. All this was caused by hard labour and poor nutrition. Sharofat 15, Khamadoni.

Lack of resources cause chronic disease

Once the cold weather comes the children of our class immediately catch cold or flu. They cough all the winter. Since they do not have medicines the illness last all the winter. Mohpari, 12 years old. Ragun.

MATERIAL POVERTY

Money

During breaks at school children from poor families do not go to the canteen since they have no money. Farida, 7 years old, Ragun.

There is a family in our village in which the father can earn only bread that is why they do not buy medical drugs to treat the elder child. He is staying sick for a long time at home lying on the floor because they have no carpet or mat. The roof is covered with mud and hey. Madina, 15 years old, 8 grade, Kolkozabad.

I'd like to have additional English classes too, but our family is not able to pay for these classes, that are why my mother used to say that I should do my best and than I will not need private and additional classes. If we get additional money we will eat more.' Nargiz, 11 years old Khodjent.

Lack of school supplies

There are children in our form that have not had schools bags since the 1st grade. They come to school with plastic bags. Some of them are not ashamed of this, other hesitate and hide their bags under the clothes. Nasiba, Khodjent, 11 years old.

Poor people differ from rich. Poor people buy cheap goods and food. Children from poor families wear slippers or galoshes. They carry their textbooks and notebooks in plastic bag because they have no school bags. They go to school in the same clothes they wear at home. Their parents cannot afford school uniform. Radjabali, grade 6, 12 years old, Khamadoni

Since my parents did not have possibilities to pay for school articles I did not attend school for two years. Azizjohn, 6 grade, 14 years old, Shakhrinav.

Sometimes, in order to do homework, children from poor families had to borrow textbooks from their classmates. Of course the classmate can lend the book once in a while, but it cannot last all the time. Being ashamed of such a situation children quit attending school. Jamshed, 7 grade, 12 years old, Shakhrinav.

Lack of proper footwear and clothes

A poor person can be recognized in the first turn by his clothes and shoes; usually, poor people are thin and small. Lower-income families deny themselves very necessary; they cannot afford good food and good clothes; they do not change their dress until it is completely worn out.’ Yagona, 10 grade, 10 years old, Ragun.

Children are those who suffer the most from poverty, because they want to have as good clothes as those of children from wealthy families. Some children do not attend school since they do not have textbooks, clothes and shoes. Parents of such children cannot pay for their study; they cannot buy everything needed for school. Jasourbek, 3 grade, 10 years old, Shakhrinav.

Lack of land

Our life is getting harder, before we lived in a village and we have land where we planted many products and father salary we spend for other stuff. Now we live in city and the father salary is little more than he had before but it is not enough for our family. Now we became poor. Farruch, 12 years old, Kurgan-Tube

Household amenities

Poor children study at the ordinary school. Rich people try to bring their children to schools and colleges, hire teachers for extra studies. Their houses are high. They have satellite TV and others technical facilities. The poor man does not have a TV set at all. Two years ago our family went to watch TV at the kneeboards. After our father brought money from Russia we bought the TV of our own but it is not very good’. Mirzo, Kolhozobod, 13 years old.

I think that little children suffer more. They want to have nice toys, but their parents have no money for this. They are too small to control their feelings and desires. It is not possible to live without money. Money is everything. Abdurasul, 12 years old, Kurgan-Tube.

Lack of food

Poverty is when there is no wheat in the house, there is very little food, then parents do not work anywhere, there are no plates and dishes, no good clothing, sometimes there is no house. Even when there is a house, its walls are dirty and there are no carpets and mattresses. Poverty is when a person is often hungry. Shakhnoza 10 years old 4 grade. Shakhriston.

We receive humanitarian aid, wheat flour, oil, peas, and beans. This helps us a lot. Ismat, 13 Khamadoni.

Lack time for games

When we tended cows, we got too involved in the game and did not notice that one of the cows fell in a drainage channel. We could not save it and could not even slaughter it therefore its meat was not good for consumption. Father punished me severely and beat me. Therefore we try not to play to avoid losses. We have no time for games. Djabbor, grade 3rd 9 years old, Khamadoni.

ABUSE

Peers

I would like to tell the story of one family heard from my parents. 10 years ago the mother died of hard illness leaving six children with the father. The elder was 12-13 years old. As it is usual in the villages the relatives recommended the man to get married because it is difficult to look after children along. The family was poor. The salary of the father was not enough. The step mother told the father to send the children to work: "Let them work and help the family. They are big enough". The father agreed and sent the elder son to work. The boy stop going to the 8 form at school and later on left for Russia. However, he did not find job because he did not know Russian and he was departed back. He became a constructive worker. But he lost his health and got tuberculoses. He has no money for treatment. Everybody says that he will die soon. That is why children he lost their parents become poor because nobody cares about them. Umed 14 years old 7 grade, Kolhozabad.

Rich

There are rich children in our school. During the break they send poor children to buy food for them. If the poor children refuse they beat them or insult. Many children wash the cars but they are not paid by the owners. The boys who carry heavy loads suffer from hernia. Faruh, Kolhozobod, 12 years old.

Orphans subject of abuse

I think that orphans suffer the most from poverty. Everybody can abuse or chide them, and nobody will defend them. Hochamgoul, 13 years old.

By employer

The whole group of elder schoolchildren was brought to Russia to the city of Volgograd to work in the agricultural sector and pick up water melons. They worked hard but as a result no money has been paid to them yet. Umed 9 grade 16 years old, Shahrstan.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Family land as safety net

My father was selling tomatoes. He saved money, bought a calf, tended it, then sold and got a lot of money. Today we again have calves at home. We live thanks to this money. Radjabali, grade 4, 10 Khamadoni.

My father drives cars to different places, and thus we survive. Life in the city is difficult. We have to buy everything here, even herbs. From time to time our relatives who live in the village help us sending some food in the season of harvest. It is difficult to have cattle in the city. There is no land for cattle and it is expensive to buy forage. Burkhon, Khodjent, 8 years old.

Our life became heavy. We lived in the village and grew a lot of vegetables and fruits, while the father had job. Now we live in the city. Father earns little money. We became poor. Faruh, 12 years, Kurgan-Tube.

Free time

Some children after coming from school throw their bags and run to a computer-bar. Mothers do not object them. Some parents even give their children money for teachers for getting a good mark. Shuhrat, 3rd, 9 years old, Kurgan-Tube.

We seldom play, there is not enough time. Once we get back home from school and do all housework there is not time left. In cotton season we pick cotton till late at night. However every boy likes to play. Radjabali, 12 Khamadoni.

Clothes

Our fathers suffer most of all, as they main burden is on their shoulders. As men, they think it is their main duty to feed family. The role of man in the family is dominating in the village. In the towns both men and women are breadwinners, but in the village only men. Children also suffer from poverty, but the fact is that in the village almost all children are dressed in the same way, but in towns it is not the case. Children are not concerned to look fashionable in the village. In town the children are pickier. We are not ashamed of our clothes. FG, Shahrستان, 6-11 years old.

A poor person is ashamed to leave the house because of his shabby clothes, there are people who laugh at his poverty and neglect him for that. Poor people sit in the street begging. Children from poor families cannot and do not want to go to school because they are ashamed of their torn clothes. Their parents do not visit parents' meeting because they cannot pay.

Differences in the type of job

There are many children from poor families in our school. The market is located close to the school. Many schoolchildren go to school in the morning

and afterwards go to work at the market. Some of them often have to drop out of school because it is hard to study and work at the same time. They come home completely exhausted and drop asleep as soon as they have had their supper. It is a shame that they do not see and feel their childhood, adolescence and youth. Having no family of their own they consider themselves family men. Some children drop out of school because of low living standards. To go to school one must have proper clothes, shoes, school supplies and must be able to provide something for school needs. Rahima, 13 years old, Dushanbe.

