

NEWSLETTER

for the Research Project

“Economic Transformation, Household Behaviour and Well-Being in Central Asia: The Case of Kyrgyzstan”

Issue #5
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Major news:

- Collection of the LIK survey: 2012 Wave 3 data collection is finished
- Discussion Paper summarizing household survey data in Central Asia is published
- Access information to the “Life in Kyrgyzstan” (LIK) Wave 1 & 2 Dataset

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1. About the Project

The project “Economic Transformation, Household Behaviour and Well-Being in Central Asia: The Case of Kyrgyzstan” funded by Volkswagen Foundation aims (1) to collect nationally representative panel survey data in Kyrgyzstan, (2) to investigate well-being and behaviour of individuals and households in this country, and (3) to improve research

capacity within the Central Asian region. The project runs from January 2010 through September 2013. The project is a collaborative endeavour of DIW Berlin, Humboldt University of Berlin, the Center for Social and Economic Research (CASE-Kyrgyzstan), and the American University of Central Asia (AUCA), the latter two being based in Bishkek.

2. Third Wave

Data collection for the third wave of the “Life in Kyrgyzstan” (LIK) panel survey was concluded in December 2012. The field survey had commenced in October and the majority of households was found and re-interviewed. The country-wide local elections that took place in November were considered to be relatively fair. There were no demonstrations afterwards. Hence, there was no serious impact of these elections on the data collection process. We have the impression that our enumerators have gained trust among the sampled households, which is likely to be due to the fact that they are visiting them the third year in a row. There are fewer refusals to participate and we also expect to see less non-response to sensitive questions. Next, the data cleaning process of the third wave will be on-going this upcoming spring.



Training for interviewers in Osh city, October 2012

3. Research Activities and Outcomes

3.1. Horizontal Inequality

In the light of the June 2010 violence between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Osh city, two of our research papers deal with horizontal inequality in Kyrgyzstan. Horizontal inequality is a concept that describes inequalities in economic, social or political dimensions or cultural status between culturally defined groups (so defined by Frances Stewart). Horizontal inequality is hypothesised to facilitate mobilisation for violent conflict.

In one paper, Damir Esenaliev and Susan Steiner investigate whether there is a welfare gap between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, as commonly perceived by the Kyrgyzstani population. Using household survey data, the authors find that Uzbeks are not better off, if welfare is measured in terms of

household expenditure. They are, however, clearly more prosperous in terms of the value and the size of their houses. Hence, it is most likely these more visible aspects of life that drive people's perceptions about other ethnic groups' standard of living.

In another paper, Tilman Brück, Antje Kroeger and Marc Vothknecht focus on the drivers of conflict-related displacement of ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in 2010. They examine the effects of horizontal and vertical inequality on displacement and analyze who had to leave their homes due to the riots. They find that social horizontal inequality between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, measured by differences in educational attainment, are among the main predictors of displacement.

3.2. Qualitative Research

Damir Esenaliev and Isabel Teichmann (doctoral students in the DIW Graduate Center) conducted a qualitative research study in October 2012 to complement their paper on welfare effects of smallholder market and export participation. Using a subsample of households from the LIK survey, they interviewed 17 households in Issyk-Kul, Osh and Talas oblasts as well as agricultural experts. This research was funded by the Foundation Fiat Panis.



After the interview with a household, Issyk-Kul oblast, October 2012

Such a supplement of quantitative research with qualitative work seems very fruitful. It allowed the researchers to understand better market and export participation of smallholders and clarify concepts and assumptions of the paper. Some interesting findings include the importance of initial conditions at the entry into the market system for the current household's welfare, or that land size matters for efficiency by allowing crop rotation.

3.3. Conferences / Workshops

During the second half of 2012, the project team again had the opportunity to attend several conferences and workshops and present their research work. Here are several of those venues:

Venues:

1. SIAG Brownbag Seminar, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany, Jul 2012
2. IZA/Higher School of Economics Workshop: Labor Market Adjustment in the Commonwealth of Independent States, Central Asia and China in the Wake of the Great Recession, Moscow, Russia, Oct 2012
3. SIPRI Research Seminar Series, Stockholm, Sweden, Nov 2012
4. DIW Development and Security Seminar Series, Berlin, Germany, various dates

3.4. Work in Progress (other than mentioned above)

1. Household Survey Data for Research on Well-Being and Behaviour in Central Asia (Tilman Brück, Damir Esenaliev, Antje Kroeger, Alma Kudebayeva, Bakhrom Mirkasimov, Susan Steiner) – Published as DIW Discussion Paper No. 1257, DIW Berlin and IZA Discussion Paper 7055, IZA, Bonn.

This paper summarizes the micro-level survey evidence from Central Asia generated and analyzed between 1991 and 2012. The authors also present the individual-level panel dataset “Life in Kyrgyzstan”.

2. Private Transfers in the Context of Migration: Evidence from Kyrgyzstan (Tanika Chakraborty, Bakhrom Mirkasimov, Susan Steiner) – Work in progress.

This paper focuses on the impact of migration on mutual help within social networks of households that are left behind. Preliminary results do not show a large difference in the helping behaviour of households with and without migrants. The only substantial difference is that households with migrants abroad provide more financial transfers to others.



LIK collects data on the education and health of children

3. Remittances and Children’s Capabilities: New Evidence from Kyrgyzstan, 2005-2008 (Antje Kroeger, Kathryn Anderson) – Published as DIW Discussion Paper No. 1170, DIW Berlin and IZA Discussion paper No. 6293, IZA, Bonn.

In this paper, we examine the role that remittances have played in the Kyrgyz Republic in promoting investments in children. Based on the capabilities approach to well-being initiated by Amartya Sen, we look at the impact of remittances and domestic transfer payments primarily from internal migration on children's education and health. Our outcomes include enrollment in school and preschool, expenditures, stunting and wasting of preschool children, and health habits of older children.

4. Labour Markets and the Financial Crisis: New Evidence from Tajikistan (Antje Kroeger, Kristina Meier) – Published as DIW Discussion Paper No.1174, DIW Berlin.

In this paper, we study the impact of the economic crisis on individual labour market outcomes in Tajikistan. This is the first study investigating the possible impact of the financial crisis in a transition country and uses a unique panel data set from Tajikistan.

5. The Toi Economy in Kyrgyzstan (Charles Becker, Tilman Brück, Bakhrom Mirkasimov) – Work in progress.

This paper empirically explores the costs of attending and hosting different life-cycle festivals to better understand such monetary investments in traditional customs and their impact on the welfare status of households. We also examine the determinants of “bride-kidnapped” women and compare their use of time and participation in the labor market to those women who reportedly married for love and those women with arranged marriages.

4. Access Information to the LIK Wave 1 & 2 Data

“The ‘Life in Kyrgyzstan’ panel survey data can be used for scientific purposes by interested researchers”

The “Life in Kyrgyzstan” (LIK) panel survey data can be used for scientific purposes by interested researchers. However, the data is not freely available on the web in accordance with data protection laws. Data access must comply with high security standards to maintain confidentiality and to protect personal privacy.

Interested researchers are invited to send an email to kyr@diw.de describing the project they wish to conduct using the LIK dataset. After conclusion of a data distribution

contract with DIW Berlin, contract holders receive the LIK dataset on DVD by insured mail. Students who wish to work with the data are very welcome to do so but they may not obtain the data themselves. Their supervisors (professors, lecturers, etc.) have to conclude the data distribution contract in this case.

The dataset is provided for a fee (€50 per wave), which covers the materials used to copy, document and deliver the data. Once the payment is received, the dataset on DVD will be mailed immediately.

5. Future of the Life in Kyrgyzstan Survey

The third wave of the LIK survey is the last wave that is collected – for the time being. The project team aims to secure funding for continuing data collection, as the benefits of a panel survey are typically reaped after more than three years. Together with the University of Central Asia (<http://www.ucentralasia.org/>), the team has started to look for funding sources.

If the fundraising is successful, it is planned that the responsibility for the survey implementation and management will be gradually moved to the University of Central Asia. This will be an important step in the University’s efforts to become a regional centre of excellence for research and evidence-based policy advice.

6. Funding of the Project

This project is funded by the Volkswagen Foundation which is a nonprofit foundation under private law. The grant is received within the funding initiative “Between Europe and the Orient - A Focus

on Research and Higher Education in/on Central Asia and the Caucasus”. For further information, see:

<http://www.volkswagenstiftung.de>



For More Information on the Project:

VISIT THE PROJECT WEBSITE AT

<http://www.diw.de/kyrgyzstan>

OR

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