# Kyrgyz Republic

The Kyrgyz Republic will undertake its 1st Voluntary National Review in July 2020. With a focus this year on development accelerators and transformative action, it is a key moment to consider activities and tools which can unlock progress, for all, across the board.

Access to information – understood as the physical possibility and right for all to seek and find information, and the skills to use it – can make just such a contribution. This access can help at all levels. It supports individuals to take better decisions about how to farm, where to look for work or how to look after their own and their families' health. It gives governments the possibility to define better policies. It allows researchers to understand the world around us, establish new insights and innovate. Libraries are a key part of the infrastructure for ensuring that this is the case.

But where does the Kyrgyz Republic stand today as concerns its libraries and access to information? This data sheet provides background based on data from the Development and Access to Information report produced by IFLA in partnership with the Technology and Social Change Group at the University of Washington, as well as IFLA's own Library Map of the World.

## KEY CONCLUSIONS

- *The Kyrgyz Republic has a strong network of public libraries, with good levels of staffing to support users, and use by the population. This offers a valuable platform for action to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals. At the academic level, a strong library consortium exists, facilitating access to resources for users across the country.*
- *Across the pillars of the Development and Access to Information framework, the main challenge for the Kyrgyz Republic appears to be to boost connectivity, and so fulfil the potential created by good scores on skills and freedom of discussion. Care will need to be taken to give support to women, and those facing poverty or unemployment.*

## LIBRARIES IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

According to the IFLA Library Map of the World, the Kyrgyz Republic has 1065 public libraries, alongside its one national library. This represents 16.7 libraries per 100 000 people (compared to a regional average for Eastern Europe and Central Asia of 20.5, but a global average of 6.9.

There are 2145 full time equivalent library staff, representing 34 per 100 000 people, lower than the average for the region (52.2), but again higher than the global figure of 11.6. It is worth noting that the figures for the Kyrgyz Republic are higher than those for Western and Central Europe also. In general, more public libraries and library workers tend to correlate with positive phenomena such as equality, skills, literacy and social capital formation.

Almost a quarter of Kyrgyz citizens are registered library users, and the average citizen visits a public library 1.3 times a year.

As for academic libraries, no data is available in the Library Map of the World, but library organisations such as Electronic Information for Libraries are active there, working with a consortium of 162 libraries in order to promote access to physical and electronic resources.

## DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

The Development and Access to Information report draws on a range of indicators highlighting where countries stand on four key pillars of access to information: connectivity, equality, skills and rights. For meaningful access to information to be a reality for all, performance needs to be strong across all of these categories.

The Kyrgyz Republic has a mixed performance across the four pillars of the development and access to information framework. On all aspects of **connectivity**, the Kyrgyz Republic scores significantly below the averages both for the world and the Caucasus and Central Asia Region as a whole, with around 35% of the population online at all, and only 20% with internet or computer access at home. 3G mobile coverage is also relatively low at 60% of the population.
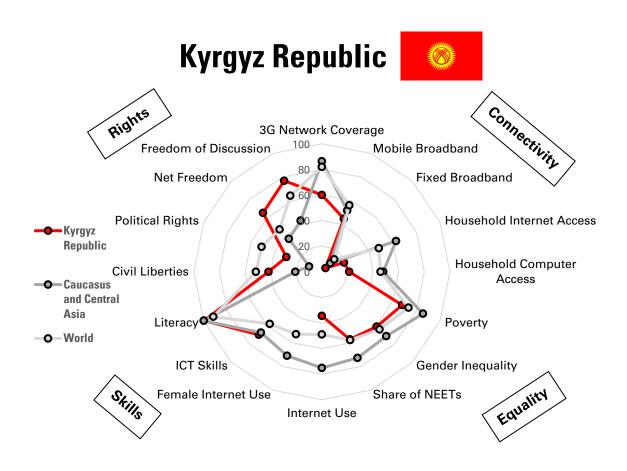
The picture is, however, marginally better on **equality**, where the Republic is around the global average as concerns its poverty rate, gender equality and the share of young adults not in employment, education or training. Nonetheless, figures remain below those for the Caucasus and Central Asia region, implying that plenty more can be done to give more people access to opportunity.

**Skills** represents a bright spot, with a high literacy rate and a score on the skills pillar of the ICT Development Index above both the regional and global averages, suggesting that once online, Kyrgyz citizens do have the competences to use

information. On **rights**, the picture is more varied, with relatively good scores on freedom of discussion and net freedom alongside considerably fewer political rights and civil liberties than the global average. Nonetheless, in these, the Kyrgyz Republic outscores other countries in the region.

Overall, this suggests that the Kyrgyz Republic may need to focus primarily on giving more people the opportunity to get online, both through affordable home access and making best use of libraries as centres where people can access the internet, regardless of their income.

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*How to read the graph: this graph displays a range of indicators used within the DA2I framework, adjusted to fit on a scale of 0-100, where 100 is the most positive outcome in terms of access to information.*

## TABLE OF DATA

See below for explanations. * = or latest available year. Regional averages are based on available data.

| PILLAR | INDICATOR | KYRGYZ REPUBLIC | Year | CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA | Year | WORLD | Year |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CONNECTIVITY | 3G Network Coverage | 60.00% | 2016 | 86.34% | 2016 | 81.92% | 2016 |
| | Mobile Broadband (Subscriptions per 100 People) | 44.86 | 2016 | 51.72 | 2016 | 56.22 | 2016 |
| | Fixed Broadband (Subscriptions per 100 People) | 4.04 | 2016 | 9.39 | 2016 | 13.71 | 2016 |
| | Household Internet Access | 18.76% | 2016 | 62.73% | 2016 | 48.16% | 2016 |
| | Household Computer Access | 21.40% | 2016 | 47.95% | 2016 | 45.88% | 2016 |
| EQUALITY | Poverty (Share of pop'n below national poverty line) | 32.10% | 2014 | 14.43% | 2015* | 26.69% | 2015* |
| | Gender Inequality (0 = More equal, 1 = Less equal) | 0.39 | 2015 | 0.29 | 2015 | 0.36* | 2015* |
| | Share of NEETs | 21.42% | 2015 | 13.58% | 2015* | 21.12% | 2015* |
| | Internet Use | 34.50% | 2016 | 75.11% | 2016* | 49% | 2016* |
| | Female Internet Use | | | 71.00% | 2016* | 52.79% | 2016* |
| SKILLS | ICT Skills | 6.96 | 2017 | 6.73 | 2017 | 5.76 | 2017 |
| | Literacy | 99.75% | 2015 | 99.91% | 2015 | 91.75 | 2015 |
| RIGHTS | Civil Liberties (0 = least free, 60 = most free) | 25.00 | 2018 | 12.40 | 2018 | 30.9 | 2018 |
| | Political Rights (0 = least free, 40 = most free) | 12.00 | 2018 | 4.30 | 2018 | 20.37 | 2018 |
| | Net Freedom (0 = most free, 100 = least free) | 35.00 | 2016 | 63.60 | 2016 | 53.29 | 2016 |
| | Freedom of Discussion | 0.77 | 2016 | 0.43 | 2016 | 0.64 | 2016 |

**EXPLANATION OF INDICATORS**

**3G Network Coverage**: this provides a measure of whether one part of the basic infrastructure for connectivity exists, although in itself is not enough to guarantee access (users need a device and a relevant subscription to be able to get online). Source: ITU

**Mobile Broadband (Mobile Broadband Subscriptions per 100 people)**: this provides an idea of how many people can use mobile internet, opening up many – if not all – of the possibilities that internet access brings. One person may have more than one subscription. Source: ITU

**Fixed Broadband (Fixed Broadband Subscriptions per 100 people)**: this provides an idea of how widespread home or business internet access is. Fixed access is often associated with the possibility to connect computers to make more advanced uses of the internet. Source: ITU

**Household Internet Access (Share of Households with Internet Access)**: access to the internet at home allows for access to information at any time without having to go outside, but may be controlled by some members of the family. Source: ITU

**Household Computer Access (Share of Households with a Computer)**: this focuses on access to computers. This is crucial for people to be able to carry out more advanced activities on the internet that might be impossible on a phone, such as writing resumes or analysing data. Source: ITU

**Poverty**: this indicator measures the number of people living below the national poverty line, which varies from country to country. It is a measure of economic inequality in a country. The indicator is inversed in the chart (i.e. the share of people not under the poverty line). Source: World Bank

**Gender Inequality**: this is calculated using the Gender Inequality Index. This index uses a basket of indicators in different areas of social development including: reproductive health, proportion of women in parliament, relative shares of men and women with at least some secondary education, and labour market participation in order to provide a broad idea of the extent of gender inequality in a country. The indicator runs from 0 (most equal) to 1 (least equal) and is inversed and adapted in the chart above. Source: UNDP

**Share of NEETS (People aged 15-24 Not in Education, Employment or Training)**: this measures the share of young people cut off from education or the job market. Being 'NEET' can bring long-term scarring effects, and so reducing numbers is a key priority. The indicator is inversed and adapted in the chart (i.e. the share of young people who are not NEET). Source: ILO.

**Internet Use (Share of People Using the Internet)**: looking beyond household access data (which will be affected by the structure of households in general), this gives a figure for the number of people using the internet. Source: ITU

**Female Internet Use**: this measure, in conjunction with the share of the overall population using the internet, allows us to understand to what extent there is a gender digital divide. Source: ITU

**ICT Skills**: there are relatively few global metrics of ICT skills, with those that exist only focusing on certain regions. The Skills Sub-Index of the ICT Development Index created by the ITU aims to work in this direction using levels of secondary and tertiary education enrolment, plus mean years of schooling, as proxies. Source: ITU

**Literacy**: this measures literacy among 15-24 year olds – i.e. people who have finished formal education. While there are online resources available for people with low literacy, being able to read, type, and understand information remains a fundamental skill. Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

**Civil Liberties**: this provides an indication of the degree to which citizens of a country enjoy fundamental civic rights, including freedom of expression and association, as well as the strength of the rule of law, based on expert judgements. Scores run from 0 (least free) to 60 (most free) and have been adapted to fit the graphic above. Source: Freedom House.

**Political Rights**: this provides a measure of the rights people have to participate in the political process, including fair and free elections, political pluralism, and the functioning of government in general. Scores run from 0 (least free) to 40 (most free) and have been adapted to fit the graphic above. Source: Freedom House.

**Net Freedom**: this metric assesses the level of restrictions on rights online by both public and private actors. It draws on assessments of obstacles to access (legal, economic and practical), limits on content, and violations of rights. Scores run from 100 (least free) to 0 (most free) and so are inverted in the graphic above. Source: Freedom House.

**Freedom of Discussion**: this indicator looks at whether people are able to hold private discussions without fear of repercussions either from the authorities or society in general due to cultural restrictions or norms. Scores run from 0 (least free) to 1 (most free), and so are adapted to fit int the graphic above. Source: V-Dem dataset codebook.