



# Access to Higher Education for Female and Male Students from the Mountainous Regions: Case Study of the Impact of the Kyrgyz National Scholarship Examination

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# Outline

- ◆ American Councils for International Education
- ◆ Case Study: Kyrgyz National Scholarship Examination



# American Councils

American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS is an international non-profit organization working to advance education, research, and mutual understanding across the United States, Canada and the nations of Southeastern Europe, Eurasia, and South Asia.

- ◆ Founded in 1974 as association for area and language professionals
- ◆ Staff of over 370 professionals
- ◆ Designs, implements and support innovative programs in education, professional development and scholarly research

# American Councils' Activities



- ◆ Primarily funded by US State Department and USAID
- ◆ High School Programs
  - Recruiting, selection and administration of over 15,000 high school students since inception
- ◆ US and Overseas Scholars
- ◆ Curriculum and Faculty Development
- ◆ “Bolashak” Presidential Program of Kazakhstan
  - Over 400 undergraduate, graduate and PhD students supported
- ◆ Flagship Language Programs (Persian, Arabic, Russian)

URBAN CENTERS					
City	Population	R1	R2	R3	% female (at round 2)
Dushanbe	600,000	605	306	97	45%
Khujand	150,000	476	201	66	49%
MOUNTAINOUS					
City	Population	R1	R2	R3	% female (at round 2)
Khorog	28,000	160	65	24	75%
Penjikent	33,000	102	13	7	50%
Murgab	4,000	47	3	0	65%



# The Kyrgyz National Testing Initiative: 2002-2006

*“These days it’s not enough to be an A student in order to get into university on a scholarship. In order to successfully study at university more is needed than simply knowledge received in school. The ability to think logically, analyze, make independent conclusions and the ability to find alternative approaches are needed. In this environment, I consider National Testing, which gives an independent and objective evaluation of test takers’ abilities, to be an huge achievement.”*  
*Written by F.Alimbaeva – test taker.*

# The Kyrgyz National Testing Initiative: 2002-2006

- ◆ Begun with backing of Minister of Education and President of Kyrgyzstan to provide children with a fair and transparent procedure to distribute 5,000 scholarships annually
- ◆ USAID funded anti-corruption initiative
- ◆ Promote new approaches to educational measurement and assessment by focusing on skills and analytical reasoning assessment (format similar to an SAT) in the classroom and at a system wide level.
- ◆ Aptitude testing does not assume common materials and curricula coverage that achievement tests do (a fair approach in conditions of great diversity in inputs and resources).
  - Measures critical thinking skills and ability to use information, not rote memorization





# Test Components

## ◆ Main Test

- 3 languages
- Math
- Analogies and sentence completion
- Reading comprehension
- Grammar

## ◆ Subject Tests

- English, German, Biology, Chemistry

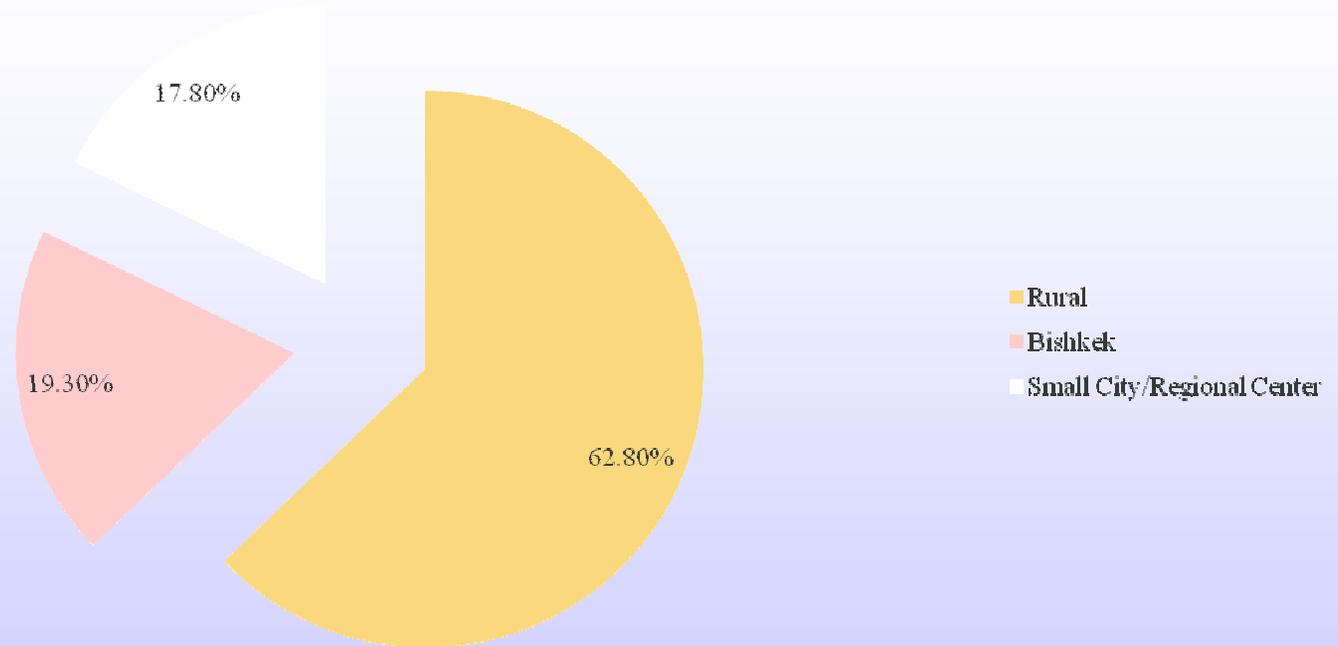
## ◆ Test Administration

- 90 test centers throughout country
- 30,000-40,000 test takers per year
- Secure test handling
- Secure and anonymous test scoring
- 33,400 tests administered in 2006

# Who took the test?



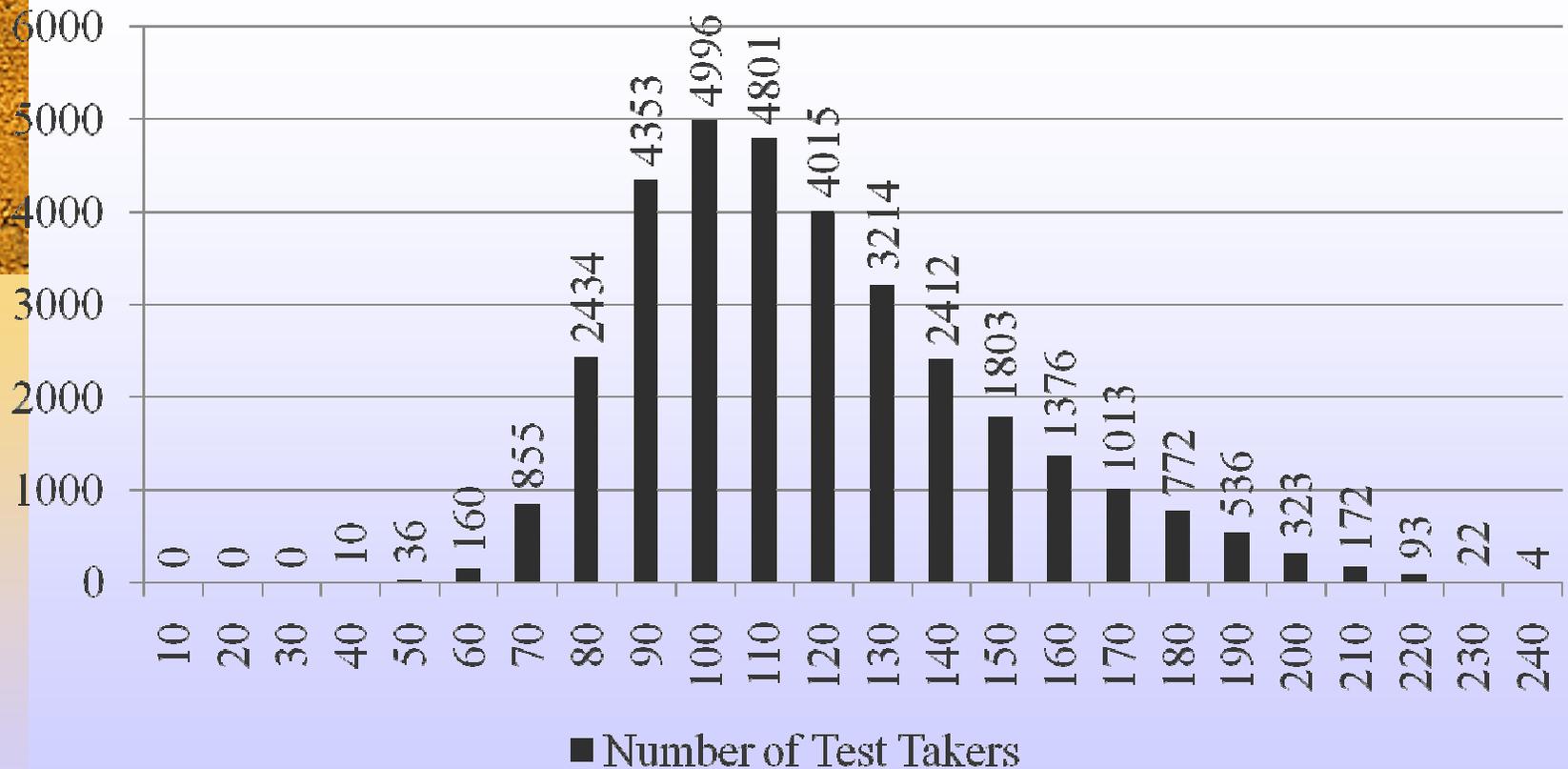
N=33,400





# 2006 Test Results

Score Distribution: 2006



# Bishkek and Rural Test Scores: 2003 & 2006



	2006	2003
Bishkek Avg Score	132.8	135.8
Issyk Kul	110.9	112.6
Naryn	106	109.3
Batken	106.8	108.6
Zhalalabad	108.6	111.2



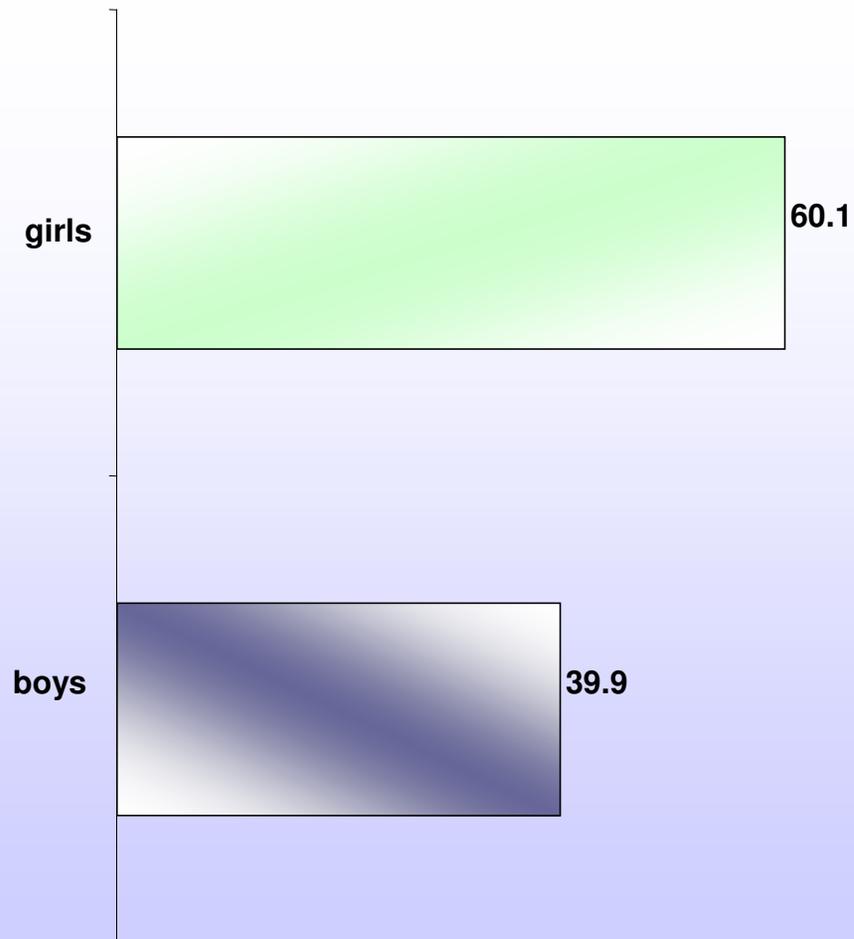
# Score Analysis: Gender



Gender Analysis	Girls	Boys
Primary Test	61%	39%
Biology	69.60%	30.40%
English	77.40%	22.60%
Awarded Grants	64.10%	35.90%
Avg Score	115.10	112.00
Scores of Grantees	143.00	143.80



# Scholarship Winners (by gender):2004



# Score Analysis: Language

- ◆ Test Administered in 3 languages
- ◆ Test language does *not* indicate ethnicity
  - Many ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks test in Russian

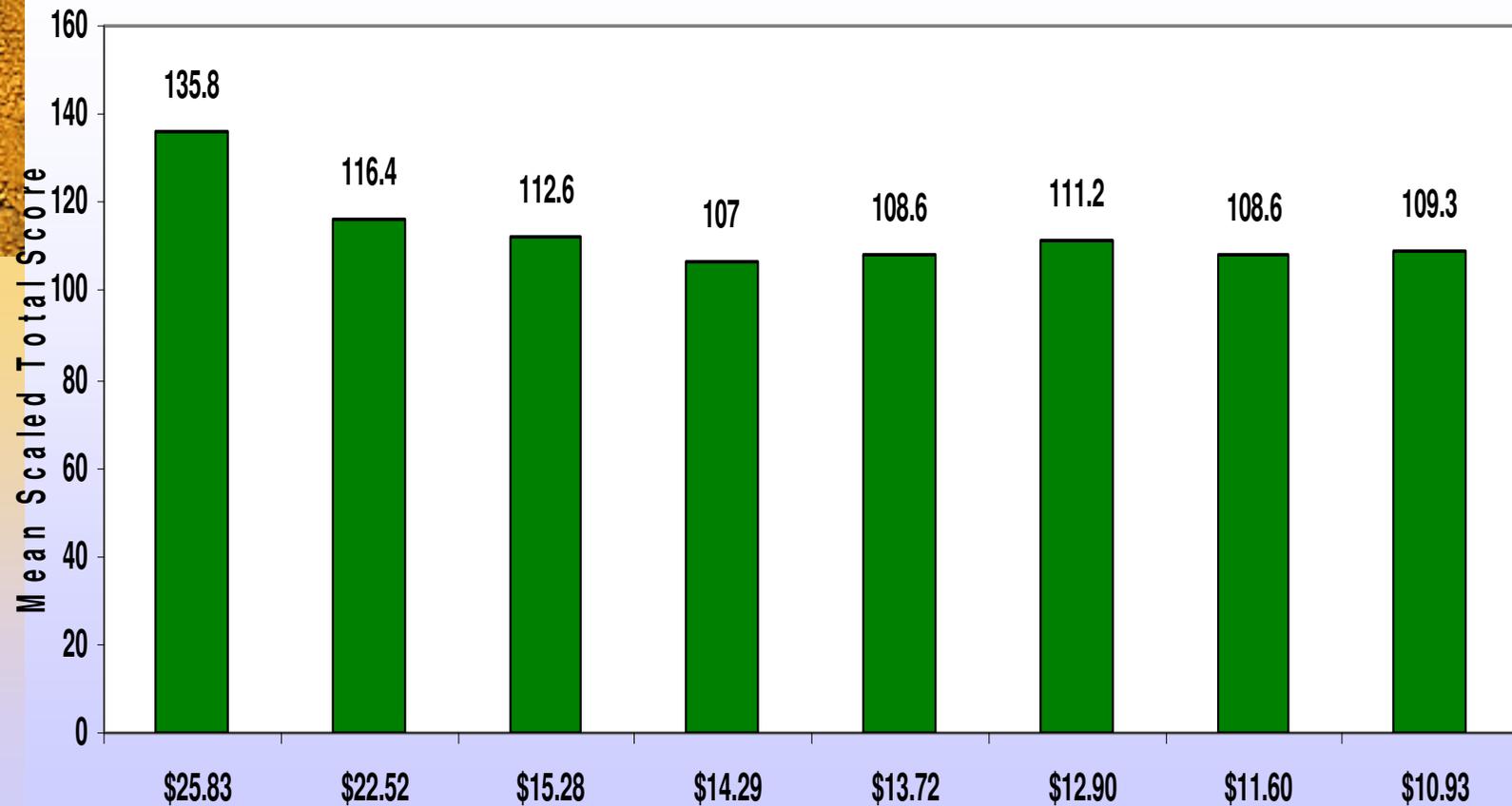
Language			Avg Score
Kyrgyz	22013	65.9%	107.2
Russian	10021	30.0%	130.1
Uzbek	1366	4.1%	102.4
National	33400		113.9



## Mean Scaled Total Score by Average Monthly 2002 Oblast Income (\$)

2003 Kyrgyz National Exam (N=35,246)

American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS





# Results

In 2006:

- ◆ 64.1% of grant winners were girls
- ◆ 65.6% of grant winners came from rural areas
- ◆ More choice of universities for talented young people
- ◆ Connection between aptitude and access to higher education



## Achievements:

1. Created a professional, independent and trusted testing organization
2. Encouraged students to strive for higher education regardless of income or connections
3. Kyrgyz Testing an example for other countries in FSU

*“Today, we can already already say that we were able to reach the main goals of testing, that is the provision of equal and fair access to higher education, to introduce entry examinations that are in reality objective and independent, and reduce the level of corruption encountered by students entering university”*. President K. Bakiev during a meeting with 53 of the grant winners.



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