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**IMPACT** *Initiatives*

# **SOCIO-ECONOMIC MAPPING OF TENSIONS AND DISPUTES IN SOUTHERN KYRGYZSTAN**

RESEARCH REPORT  
SEPTEMBER 2011



**REACH**  
Informing  
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IMPACT Initiatives is a center for applied research and advocacy based in Geneva. In 2010 IMPACT launched REACH, a program that supports humanitarian and development planning through the provision of assessment, management information systems (MIS) and geographic information systems (GIS) mapping services.

## REACH in Kyrgyzstan

REACH was launched in Kyrgyzstan as parts of the humanitarian response that followed the June 2010 clashes. During the emergency phase of the crisis, REACH provided information gathering and management services for humanitarian actors. REACH promoted interagency coordination and planning through the provision of assessments and mapping services, in partnership with a number of aid actors, including UNOCHA, UNOSAT, UNHCR and a number of clusters. In the emergency phase, REACH received financial contributions from ECHO, OFDA and UNHCR.

Today, REACH continues its intervention in Kyrgyzstan through socio-economic assessments and mapping exercises in the regions in the South of the country. The goal of the exercises is to support recovery activities in Kyrgyzstan to ensure that they contribute to the stabilization and socio-economic development of the country. Ongoing action is supported by ADB, DIPECHO and USAID.



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## ACRONYMS

**AO:** Айыл Өкмөтү in Kyrgyz (name of sub-district administrative unit in the Kyrgyz Republic)

**GIS:** Geographic information systems

**MSC:** Most significant change theory

**NGO:** Non-governmental organization

**UNOSAT:** United Nation's Operational Satellite Applications Program

**USAID-OTI:** United States Agency for International Development's Office of Transition Initiatives

## GEOGRAPHIC CLASSIFICATIONS

| English Name<br>Used in Report | Official Russian<br>Name | Official Kyrgyz<br>Name |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Province                       | Область                  | Облусу                  |
| District                       | Район                    | Район                   |
| Sub-District                   | Аильный Округ            | Айыл Өкмөтү             |
| Municipality                   | Город                    | Шаар                    |
| Village                        | Село                     | Айыл                    |

## EXPLANATION OF TREND ANALYSIS TABLES

Throughout the report tables analyzing the trends in various socio-economic sectors summarize the response of focus groups using a set of standardized symbols and colors explained below:

| TREND ANALYSIS<br>LEGEND  |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
|  |   |   | Indicates a community where all focus group participants agreed <u>unanimously</u> that there was a <u>positive</u> trend in the relevant sector.                                      |
|  | Indicates a community where a <u>majority</u> of focus group participants agreed that there was a <u>positive</u> trend in the relevant sector. |  | Indicates a community where a majority of focus group participants felt there was <u>no significant change</u> in the sector or <u>no clear pattern</u> emerged from the focus groups. |
|  | Indicates a community where a <u>majority</u> of focus group participants agreed that there was a <u>negative</u> trend in the relevant sector. |  | Indicates a community where all focus group participants agreed <u>unanimously</u> that there was a <u>negative</u> trend in the relevant sector.                                      |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The study on ‘Socio-Economic Mapping of Tensions and Disputes in Southern Kyrgyzstan’ was designed to help determine the root causes of tension and disputes between communities in Osh, Jalalabad and Batken Provinces. The project used a dual approach of both macro and micro-level analyses to determine the causes of disputes or tensions, with each analysis looking at difference sources of information from different levels of society.

The macro approach worked with local government officials in all of the 26 districts and 241 sub districts of the targeted provinces to compile and analyze all of the governmental statistics relevant to tensions and disputes between communities. In total over one hundred different categories of data were collected and mapped in determining the large-scale socio-economic trends relating to disputes and tensions.

The micro approach relied on community-level focus groups to facilitate a discussion on the major socio-economic changes within target communities over the past ten years. These changes were then analyzed to determine how the community’s relationship to neighboring communities, authorities and other key stakeholders affected either positively or negatively these changes.

Based on more than four months of fieldwork, the Project has identified the following as the most important components of tension and disputes between communities in southern Kyrgyzstan:

- Pollution of drinking water sources by neighboring communities;
- Decline of the agricultural economy, which was linked to a restricted and frequently monopolized market for agricultural inputs, a lack of credit sources attuned to the agricultural calendar and a severe information asymmetry between farmer and supplier in the high-quality seeds market;
- Reduction of the supply of irrigation water due to both the collapse of key irrigation infrastructure and the weakness of the governance over the flow of that water;
- Lack of clarity over the rights to graze on lower altitude winter pastures;
- Increasing thefts of ruminants in cross-border communities;
- Lack of trust and understanding regarding grazing rights between communities in the valley that send their animals to summer pastures and the communities that host those pastures;
- Perceived growing bias on the distribution of stalls by the owners of bazaars; and
- Difficult in access to educational facilities in all languages.

Common to all of these problems are issues of governance from the national to local level. Often then these governance issues are played out between communities as disputes or tensions over resource allocations. It is important, however, for agencies working on peace building in the region to ensure that improving governance remain a primary concern of their programming.

### **Full Sets of Data and Maps from the Project**

All of the research’s raw data, including regional maps of government data related to conflict and tension, community level conflict analysis maps, focus group questionnaires and surveys can be accessed through the project’s web portal at: <http://www.reach-initiative.kg>.

## 1. CONTEXT OF TENSION AND DISPUTES IN SOUTHERN KYRGYZSTAN

The events that erupted in Osh and Jalalabat cities and surrounding areas in June of 2010 have marked the worst violence the country has experienced since its independence. The impact on the region has been significant, with loss of human life, displacement, destruction of livelihoods and property, thus exacerbating instability, and causing acute economic stress. While today the overt violence has dissipated, ongoing tensions create a very difficult situation for vulnerable families in these dispute-prone communities.

Following the 2010 violence, it is important that the aid community focuses beyond the urban centers directly affected by the June events, towards rural communities that have long been divided by micro-disputes and lacking in mutual confidence. Rural areas of southern Kyrgyzstan have a history of tension which results from a variety of root historical and social causes that can be traced back to the administration and fall of the Soviet Union, and have become defining features of the Kyrgyz Ferghana Valley. Drawn by Moscow between 1924 and 1936, the administrative boundaries between and within the Soviet republics of Central Asia did not follow pre-existing socio-economic or natural geographical lines. Upon independence, these demarcations took on a new significance, as previously united groups found themselves cut off from one another by international borders, or became minorities in the newly-formed nations.

At the turn of the 1990s, the unexpected independence of the Kyrgyz Republic, alongside subsequent economic collapse and a deterioration of social services intensified the struggle for scarce resources. These problems were compounded by the emergence of new cultural and social demarcations linked to recently- developed administrative boundaries. A series of micro disputes throughout the Kyrgyz Ferghana Valley revolved more specifically around the weak management of and lack of resources to rehabilitate shared infrastructure, and the mismatch between administrative and socio-economic boundaries. This decaying infrastructure and lack of joint management continue to threaten the stability of the region to this day.

It is within this context that that the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID-OTI) and IMPACT Initiatives (IMPACT) designed the present research project to both better understand the causes of conflict throughout the South of Kyrgyzstan and attempt to find ways that aid actors can contribute to reducing tensions and promoting stabilization and development in the region.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study on Socio Economic Mapping of Tensions and Disputes in Southern Kyrgyzstan was implemented between February and September of 2011 by a team of 18 local and international researchers who visited every single district, sub-district and municipality within the three provinces of Southern Kyrgyzstan (Batken, Jalalabad and Osh Provinces). Government data was collected, key informants were interviewed and focus groups were conducted in dispute-prone communities in order to produce the information and conclusions contained in this report. All of the research was conducted using REACH's approach of focusing on natural socio-economic clusters within the population targeted by the study. In other words, the communities analyzed in this report are sometimes classified as villages, cities or neighborhoods by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic<sup>1</sup>. In some cases the report looks at informal communities that represent a socio-economic community of interest in helping to understand the causes of tension and disputes in Southern Kyrgyzstan.

### 2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The main objective of the present research project is to develop an interactive, multi-layered map of the region combining of macro- and micro-level analyses of the history, as well as the potential sources and locations of disputes in the South of Kyrgyzstan. More specifically, the project used complementary methodologies to provide a comprehensive overview of disputes in the region:

- A macro approach clarified the implications of national and regional issues, and factors of instability for communities;
- A micro community level, approach helped understand the individual perspectives of dispute-prone populations, and assess local capacities and opportunities for peace-building initiatives.

### 2.2 RESEARCH STAGES

In implementing this research, the project team conducted four distinct but inter-connected activities:

**Preliminary desk research:** The project team reviewed the existing socio-economic and conflict-related literature on the post-Soviet Ferghana Valley to determine what lessons learned can be gained from twenty years of scholarly research and project implementation. In addition, a rapid key-stakeholder analysis was conducted in order to determine the information and tools needed by agencies involved in peace promotion in the region. The results of this desk review can be found in *Annex 1* attached to this research report.

**Macro-level data collection and statistical analysis:** The project team compiled at both the national and local levels all existing macro-level socio-economic data related to disputes or tensions in the South of Kyrgyzstan. The data was analyzed to produce maps that help identify particular areas of interest for programs related to reducing tensions and mediating disputes. The complete list of statistics collected during this research can be found in *Annex 3* attached to this report.

**Field level assessments:** With the help of the desk research, the project team identified a number of dispute-prone communities in which community-level assessments were conducted to determine that the potential for inter-communal disputes. These analyses were complemented by visual materials, including pictures of the key villages and infrastructure and maps explaining the relation of that source of tension to other key pieces of infrastructures or neighboring communities. Reports from each of the communities visited can be found in *Annex 6* attached to this report.

<sup>1</sup> Национальный Статистический Комитет Кыргызской Республики. Государственный Классификатор Система Обозначений Объектов Административно-Территориальных и Территориальных Единиц Кыргызской Республики. Издание Официальное ГК 002-2009. Бишкек 2009.

**Production of an interactive map:** In partnership with a team of technical experts from UNOSAT, the findings of these micro- and macro-level studies were compiled into an online interactive mapping product available to all stakeholders.

### 2.3 METHODOLOGY OF THE ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT DATA (MACRO-LEVEL SURVEY)

The research derived from the analysis of government data, hereby called the 'macro-level survey', used information that was collected by assessment teams from every district (considered 'Admin 2') and sub-district (considered 'Admin 3') in the three provinces of Southern Kyrgyzstan. Additionally assessment teams also collected information from cities, towns and other municipalities which were administratively classified as the same levels as the districts and sub-districts rural areas. The distribution of the 241 administrative divisions existing within the target areas of this research project are listed below:

| Province           | Number of Admin 2<br>Level Administration<br>Offices | Number of Admin 3<br>Level Administration<br>Offices |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Osh Province       | 8  | 102  |
| Jalalabad Province | 12   | 76   |
| Batken Province    | 6  | 37   |
| <b>TOTALS</b>      | <b>26</b>  | <b>215</b>   |

Table 1 - Administrative units existing in Southern Kyrgyzstan

Meetings were held with each head of the local administration to discuss the potential for inter-communal tension in his/her community and to compile relevant government statistics. While a full list of the statistics collected can be found in *Annex 3* of this report, here are the main categories of socio-economic data that were of interest to this research project:

- Territorial size & land use;
- Education & health care infrastructure and human resources;
- Agricultural land, agricultural production and registered livestock;
- Transportation & communication infrastructure;
- Social organizations (community based organizations, NGOs, etc.);
- Number of vulnerable individuals (pensioners, disabled, single parents, etc.);
- Registered professionals (construction, government workers, etc.);
- Electrification of houses and sources of household energy use;
- Sources of drinking water;
- Number and type of bazaars.

Often the data available at government offices was either outdated or incomplete. In those instances, the project team worked together with the local authorities responsible for the data to update and clean the information in order to ensure that it was all reflective of the situation on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011. The full analysis of the data collected can be found in Section 3 of this report.

## 2.4 METHODOLOGY OF THE COMMUNITY-LEVEL CONFLICT ANALYSIS (MICRO-LEVEL SURVEY)

In parallel to the macro-level survey, community-level research was conducted on the cause of tension and disputes in Southern Kyrgyzstan. The project team was able to visit 65 communities in three target provinces to conduct a 'micro-level survey'. The micro-level survey consisted of a series of focus groups with community members in which issues causing tensions and potential for disputes were discussed. Participatory mapping exercise where used during which participants in the focus group helped the project team localize and identify relevant infrastructure, neighboring communities, fields or other items of interest.

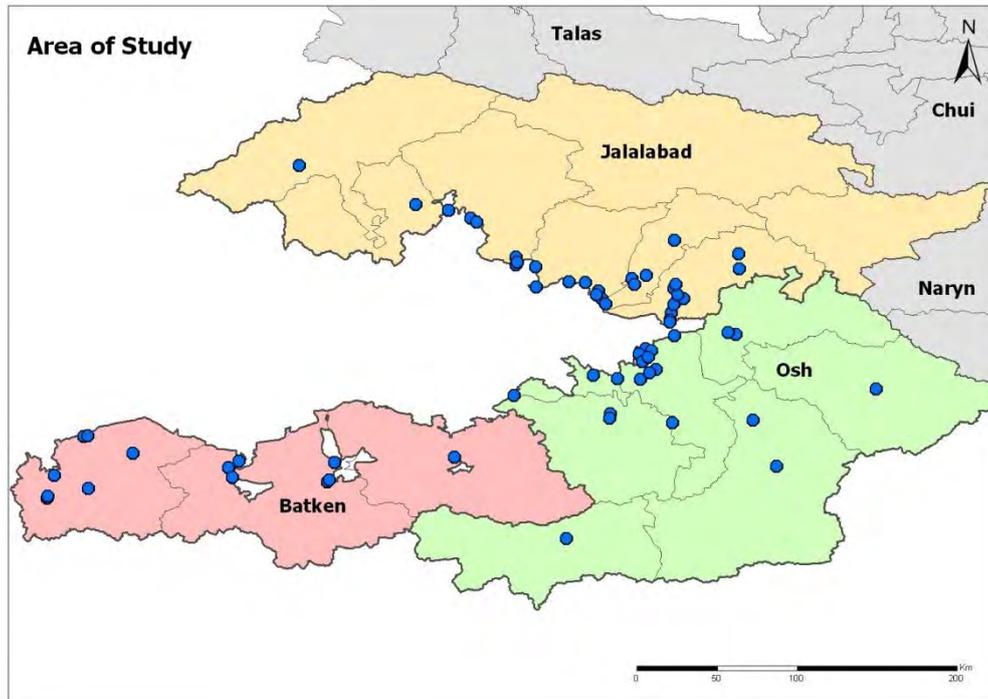


Figure 1 - Map of communities included in the micro-level survey

Communities were chosen based on the results of the desk research and the rapid stakeholder analysis conducted at the beginning of the project (see *Annex 1*). During the desk research, a list of communities to be targeted by the project team was compiled based on previous research on tensions in the region. Additionally, during the subsequent stakeholder analysis, we asked key agencies working in the peace building sector to share with us information on the histories of disputes and tensions in the region.

A minimum of three focus groups were conducted in each community: one for community leaders, one for women and one focused on the perspective of youths in the community. Where there were important ethnic or economic divides within the community, additional focus groups were organized to ensure that all of the stakeholders in that community were able to contribute to the conflict analysis.

Each focus group was designed to examine the main socio-economic changes that had occurred over the past ten years in that community and to trace back the causes of each socio-economic change. Discussions then followed as to how each change affected the quality of life within that community and what impact it had on their relations with other communities and local authorities. At the heart of the focus-group methodology was the Most-Significant Change (MSC) Theory of project evaluation, which relies on beneficiary storytelling to determine the impacts of aid interventions. In the context of this research project the MSC methodology was used to look for the most important social and economic changes in our target villages over the past ten years. The result is a picture of the socio-economic history of dispute-prone communities that highlights the relationships that either exacerbate or de-escalate these tensions. The MSC methodology also enabled to identify key pieces of infrastructure whose poor condition causes tensions either within or between communities by degrading their own socio-economic condition.

### Most Significant Change Theory

Most Significant Change Theory was developed by Rick Davies during his time with CARE in Bangladesh in 1994. It is an anthropological approach to looking at changes in communities that was designed to be able to evaluate the impact of projects that did not have any baseline data collected. In a guide to its use, Rick Davies described Most Significant Change Theory as:

*“a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation. It is participatory because many project stakeholders are involved both in deciding the sorts of change to be recorded and in analyzing the data... Essentially, the process involves the collection of significant change stories emanating from the field level, and the systematic selection of the most significant of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff.”<sup>2</sup>*

In looking at changes in communities, the research divided the history of each community into one section on demographic change and six chapters on its socio-economic landscape: drinking water, education, health care, crop agriculture, animal husbandry and tertiary economic activities. In each chapter, assessment officers conducting the focus groups in the communities asked two key questions:

- **Tendency:** What has been the overall trend in this community in this sector over the past ten years? Has it improved, worsened or stayed the same?
- **Crises:** Have there been any acute changes or crises in this sector in the past ten years that have significantly changed your community's quality of life?

For each tendency or crisis observed in the community, the root cause of the change is explored through an open discussion with many participants in the focus group able to give their opinion. Following each community-level survey, the results of all of the focus groups were compiled and dispute potentials were assigned per sector based on the following four categories:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>NO<br/>DISPUTE<br/>POTENTIAL<br/>IDENTIFIED</b> | None of the community's essential social services or key livelihood sources has been significantly affected or threatened in this sector.  |
| <b>LOW<br/>DISPUTE<br/>POTENTIAL</b>               | The community's essential social services or key livelihood sources have been affected or threatened, but there is no clear third party that the community can identify and blame for this situation.                                |
| <b>MEDIUM<br/>DISPUTE<br/>POTENTIAL</b>            | The community's essential social services or key livelihood sources have been affected or threatened, and there is a third party that the community identifies as being responsible for the situation.                               |
| <b>HIGH<br/>DISPUTE<br/>POTENTIAL</b>              | The community's essential social services or key livelihood sources have been affected, there is a third party that the community identifies as being responsible for the situation and there is a history of dispute on this issue. |

Table 2 - Explanation of the dispute potential classifications used throughout the research project

A full summary of the research conducted at the community level during this research project can be found in section 4 of this report.

<sup>2</sup> Davies, Rick & Dart, Jess. *The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique: A guide to its use*. CARE International. April 2005. pg 8.

### 3. MACRO-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT DATA

The research devoted to the analysis of government data, or macro-level survey, was conducted for all 241 level 2 and 3 administrative divisions in the three provinces that makeup Southern Kyrgyzstan (see Table 1). Firstly the assessment team worked closely with local government officials to ensure the quality and consistency of the data that was collected, and then regional trends in the data were analyzed using geographical information systems (GIS) software. The analysis and maps produced can be found online at <http://www.reach-initiative.kg/>

The full list of government statistics collected can be found in *Annex 3* of this report, but below is a table of analysis that the team has conducted at this stage of the project:

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#### Analysis of Government Data Available at the Sub-District Level

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##### **Bazaars**

# bazaars (including the # of bazaars dedicated to selling food products)

##### **Education**

Preschool ratio of students / preschool & students / teacher

Primary and secondary ratio of students / school & students / teacher

##### **Ethnicity (not displayed on online map)**

Ethnic distribution

Ethnic diversity

##### **Factories**

# factories (leather factories, grain mills, animal processing, drinking liquid processing, vegetable oil processing)

##### **Health Care**

Health care facilities ratio - # residents / health care facility (medical point, family doctor group or hospital)

Pharmacy ratio - # residents / pharmacy

##### **Population**

Total population

Male/female ratio

##### **Agricultural Production**

Total yearly production of many agricultural products (vegetables, sugar beets, grains, potatoes, cotton, tobacco, fruit, berries, meat, milk, eggs, wool, oil seed, rice and sweet corn).

##### **Electrification**

Location and name of all communities with more than 5% of homes non-electrified.

##### **Agricultural Land**

Hectares of irrigated land per capita

Agricultural land type ratio – hectares of irrigated land / hectares of non-irrigated land

##### **Animal Husbandry**

Total ownership of livestock (horses, large ruminants & small ruminants)

Livestock savings analysis – a composite picture of the value of livestock held per capita

Hectares of summer pastures per capita

##### **Drinking Water Source**

Percentage of the population relying on each source of drinking water (piped, surface, trucked or other)

##### **Energy Source**

Percentage of the population relying on each source of household energy (coal, natural gas, wood, animal waste or other)

---

Table 3 - Levels of analysis of government data available at REACH's online mapping platform for Kyrgyzstan

In addition to the above, the IMPACT team continues to develop further levels of data analysis. The updated levels of analysis will be available for all stakeholders to access on the online mapping platform. All of the analyses are projected on the sub district map produced by the project team for this project.

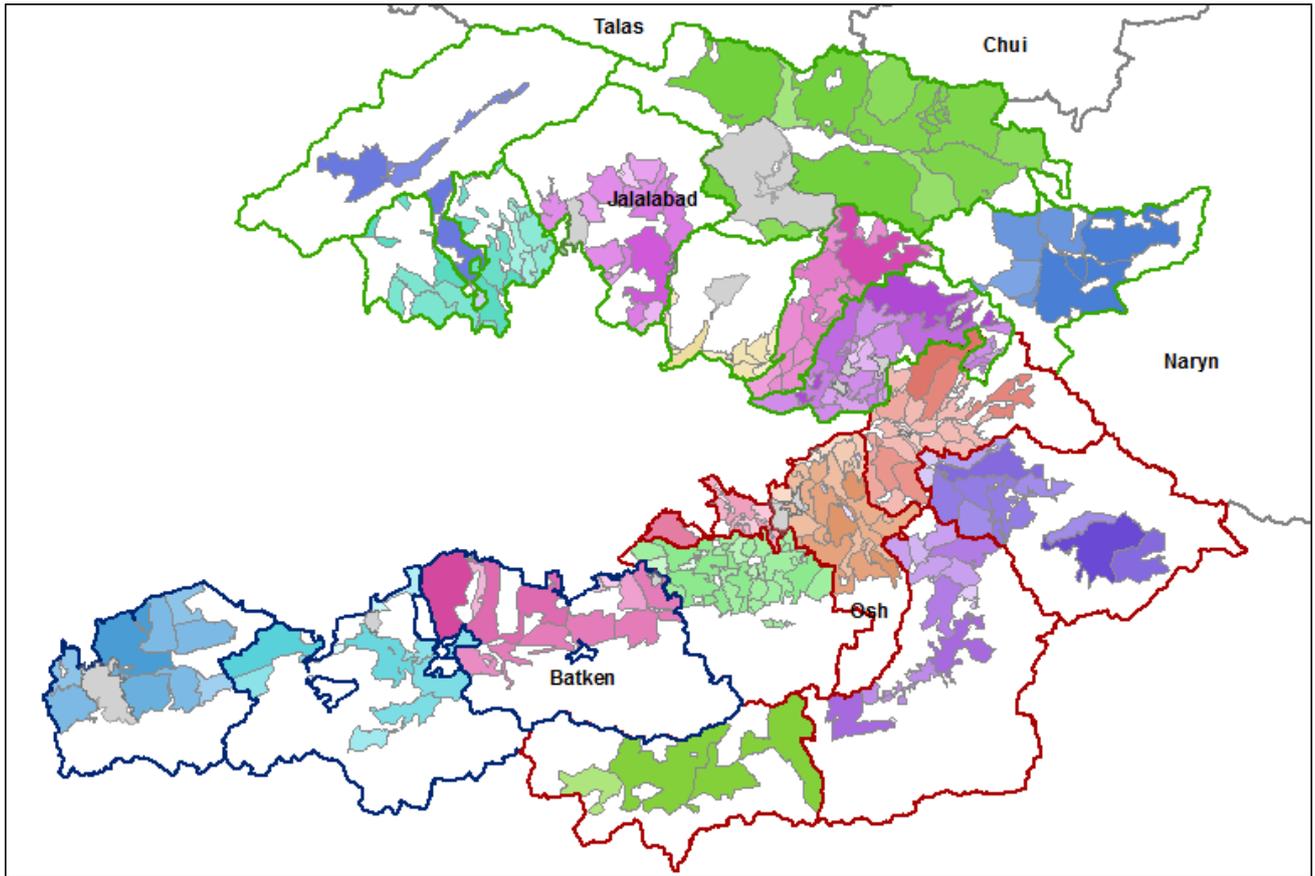


Figure 2 - Sub district level map used to analyze government data collected during the project

Through the online mapping portal created by the project team, all of the relevant aid stakeholders in Southern Kyrgyzstan will be able to visualize analysed data in sub district maps, such as in figure 2. Two further examples of such visualizations can be found below:

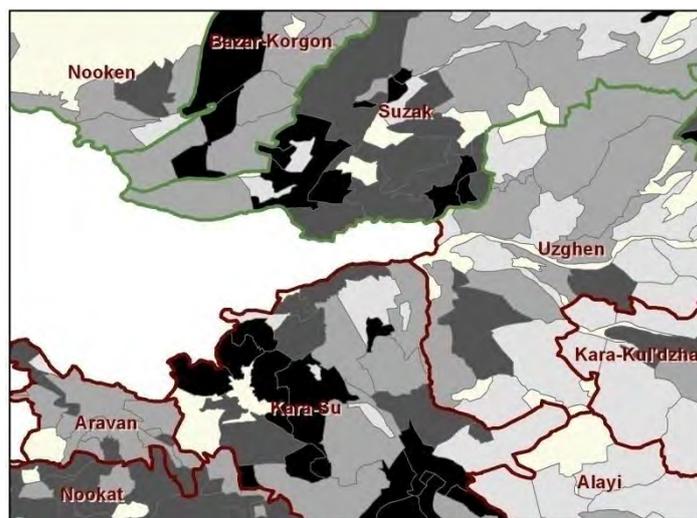


Figure 3 - Map of population per sub district

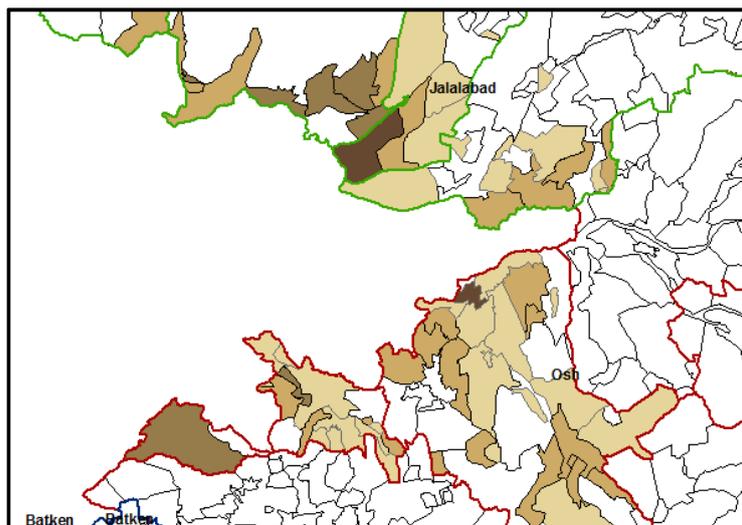


Figure 4 - Map of cotton production per sub district

Although the data was primarily designed to inform peace building programming in the region, it could also be used by a number of development and governance programs to better target their interventions in the region.

## 4. COMMUNITY LEVEL CONFLICT ANALYSIS

The community-level research, or micro-level survey, was conducted in 65 communities in Southern Kyrgyzstan known for their history of significant inter-communal disputes or tension (see *Annex 5* for a complete list of the communities surveyed). In this section the patterns and trends drawn from the analyses of the surveyed communities will be summarized by sector. For a look at the detailed analysis conducted for each community, a copy of all 65 community analyses (called 'Socio-Economic Passports') can be found in *Annex 6* of this report.

### 4.1 DEMOGRAPHY

The micro-surveys included a discussion of the demographic changes that had occurred in each community over the previous ten years. Demographic change varied widely between communities in peri-urban areas, which had experienced an average 68% growth, and the troubled cross-border communities, which had shrunk on average by 20%. The survey also captured a wide variety in the prevalence of labor migration, with reported levels of population migrating seasonally abroad to earn money ranging from 2% (women between 18-30 from the village of Chek, Seydikum AO in Jalalabad Province) to 90% (men between 18-30 from the village of Boston, Mombekov AO in Jalalabad Province). The figure below shows that men were found to be far more likely than women to migrate seasonally for labor.

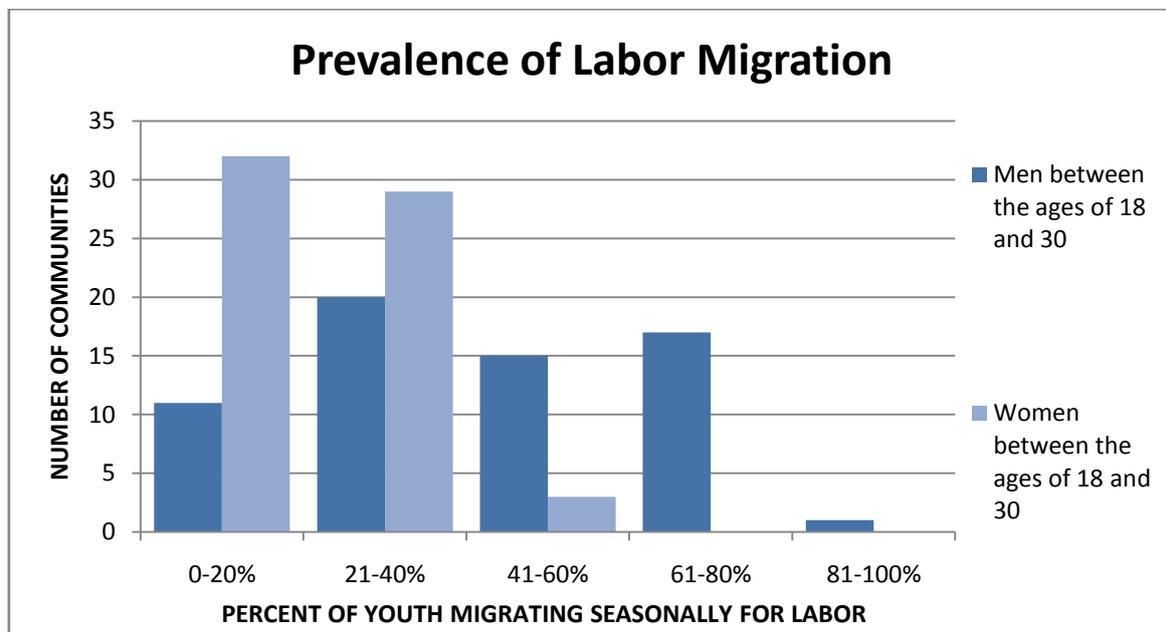


Figure 5 - Prevalence of reported labor migration in community-level focus groups

Additionally, the survey looked for evidence of entire families migrating from their communities. The migration of entire families was considered more relevant to this analysis than the migration of a member of a family, as indicative of a highly vulnerable situation - many families leaving their main pieces of property (rights to arable lands, houses and gardens) behind them when leaving their community. In total 1,285 families were recorded as having left their communities of origin through the survey due to the following reasons:

| Economic Reasons | Natural Disasters | Events of June 2010 | Other        |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| 882 families     | 130 families      | 63 families         | 210 families |

Table 4 - Numbers of entire families reported to have left their communities by focus groups

It is also important to note that many of the families recorded as leaving communities for economic reasons, mentioned economic reasons that are closely related to inter-communal conflicts:

- *Ak-Sai*<sup>3</sup> – 144 families left – reason given: the decrease in irrigated land and occasional lack of access to any drinking water due to disputes over the flow of water from the Tajikistan enclave of Vorukh located just upstream of the community;
- *Samarkandek*<sup>4</sup> – 30 families left – reason given: the pollution of their drinking water source by trash thrown from the Uzbekistan enclave of Shakhimardan and classes over pasture rights with communities across border;
- *Kyzyl-Tuu*<sup>5</sup> – 15 families left – reason given: the lack of irrigation water in their community due to the lack of maintenance on the canals in communities upstream;
- *Tashtak*<sup>6</sup> – 30 families left – reason given: the lack of irrigation water due to the diversion of the flow of water from upstream communities has devastated the agricultural economy.

While the demographic conditions vary widely between communities, the overall patterns of high labor migration among youths and migration from rural communities to urban and peri-urban areas match similar patterns visible across all of Kyrgyzstan.

#### 4.2 ACCESS TO CLEAN DRINKING WATER

The community-level analysis survey included a section discussing the community's access to drinking water. The community's main source of drinking water was identified (piped water system, protected spring water, surface water, etc.) as well as how that source of water had changed over the past ten years.

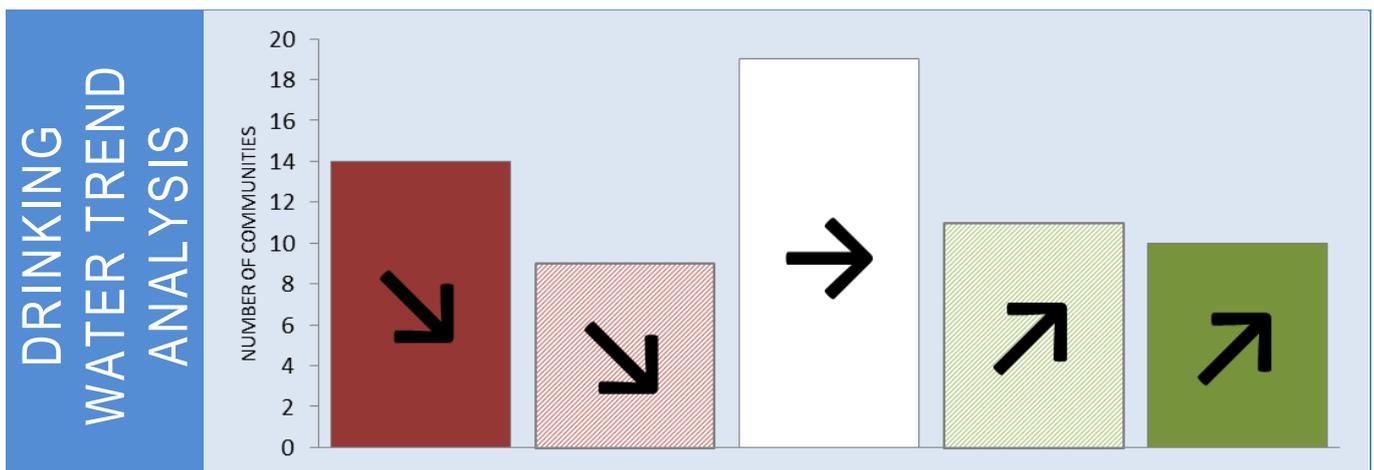


Figure 6 – Trend of access of drinking water by number of communities

The largest single number of communities noted 'no change' in their access to drinking water over the previous 10 years. Mostly these were communities that had always relied on surface water for drinking, without seeing an improvement in the drinking water infrastructure in the past ten years. Otherwise a similar number of communities noted positive (21 communities) and negative (23 communities) changes to their access to drinking water. Most of the positive changes were related to projects financed by aid interventions to provide access to protected sources of drinking water, while most of the negative changes related to burnt out water pumps or failing pipes on centralized water systems.

<sup>3</sup> The community of Aksai is located in the Sub-District of the same name, part of Batken District and Batken Province.

<sup>4</sup> The community of Samarkandek is located in the Sub-District of the same name, part of Batken District in Batken Province.

<sup>5</sup> The community of Kyzyl-Tuu is located in the Sub-District of Papan, part of Kara-Suu District in Osh Province.

<sup>6</sup> The community of Tashtak is located in the Sub-District of Kyzyl-Tuu, part of Suzak District in Jalalabad Province.

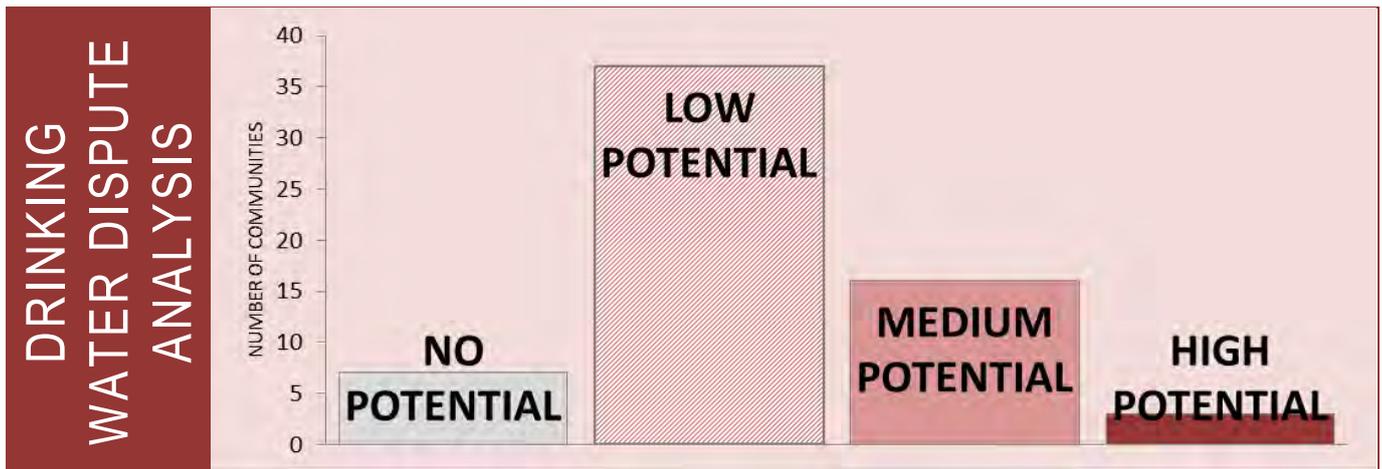


Figure 7 – Potential for dispute associated with access to drinking water

The analysis showed a large number of communities with low potentials for disputes in the drinking water sector. These mostly are composed of communities without access to an improved drinking water source that blame the government's lack of investment for their poor quality of life. As for the communities with medium or high potentials for disputes, the most common source of tension is pollution of surface water sources by neighboring communities (reported in 9 of 19 these communities), often those living across a border from each other. It was reported that the cross-border relationship prevents turning to local authorities to stem the pollution of drinking water. The second most common reported cause of tension is either the perceived discrimination or lack of influence of local authorities in helping to improve their drinking water situation. Examples of this frustration with governance in the drinking water sector include the inability of local authorities to collect any fees from users, which would allow the community to connect to a neighboring city's piped system (community of Uchar) or the perceived discrimination felt by the an ethnicity community which is a minority in its Sub-district.

So while the access to clean drinking water varied greatly across the many surveyed communities, it remained an important source of tension overall.

#### 4.3 ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

The second section of the community-level conflict analysis surveys focused on the community's access to health services such as medical points, hospitals, pharmacies and other important infrastructure such as private clinics. The first questions on access to health services catalogued what was available in the community both in terms of health care structures and trained medical personnel. Then the focus groups turned to the perception of the population on the tendency of the community's access to those services over the past ten years.

As can be seen in the trend analysis shown below, many more communities (36 in total) reported an improvement in their access to health services than reported a decline in that access (11 communities). The large amount of communities reporting improvements in their access to health services is a testament to the significant investment that both aid agencies and the Kyrgyz government in health care infrastructure over the past ten years.

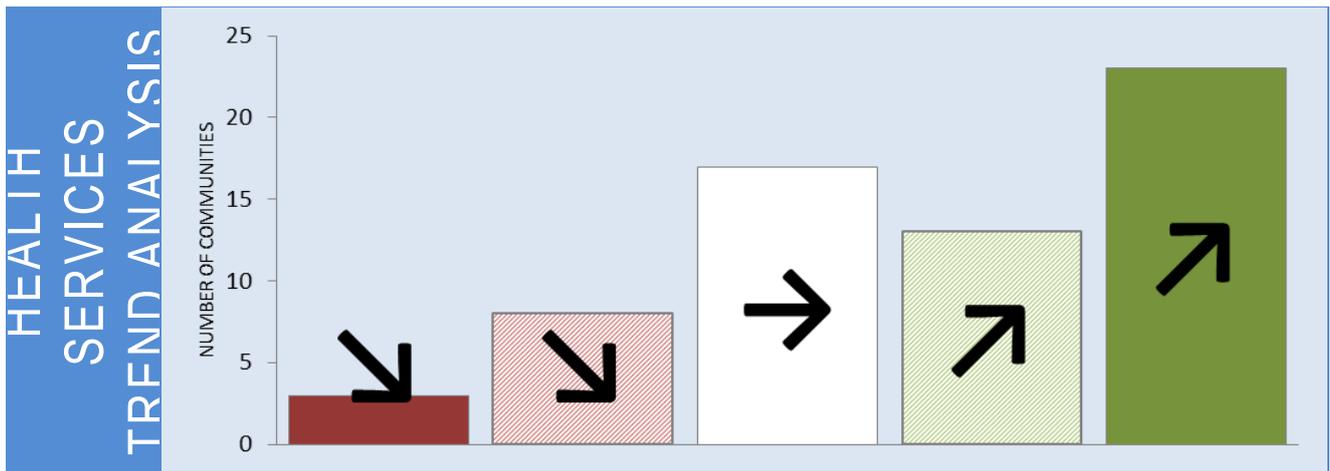


Figure 8 – Trend of access to health services by number of communities

Of all the sectors covered by the community-level conflict analyses, health care was the one considered to have the least conflict potential. As shown in the analysis below, only three communities were considered to have a medium dispute potential related to health services and none were considered to have a high potential. The lack of potential for disputes is largely due to the significant investments that these communities have seen in their health care infrastructure, as well as by the fact that health is less linked to community-specific concerns of residents (such as language, access to business, etc). The small number of identified medium potential for disputes was most often (2 of 3 communities) linked to the informal payments demanded by medical personnel for treatment of community residents.

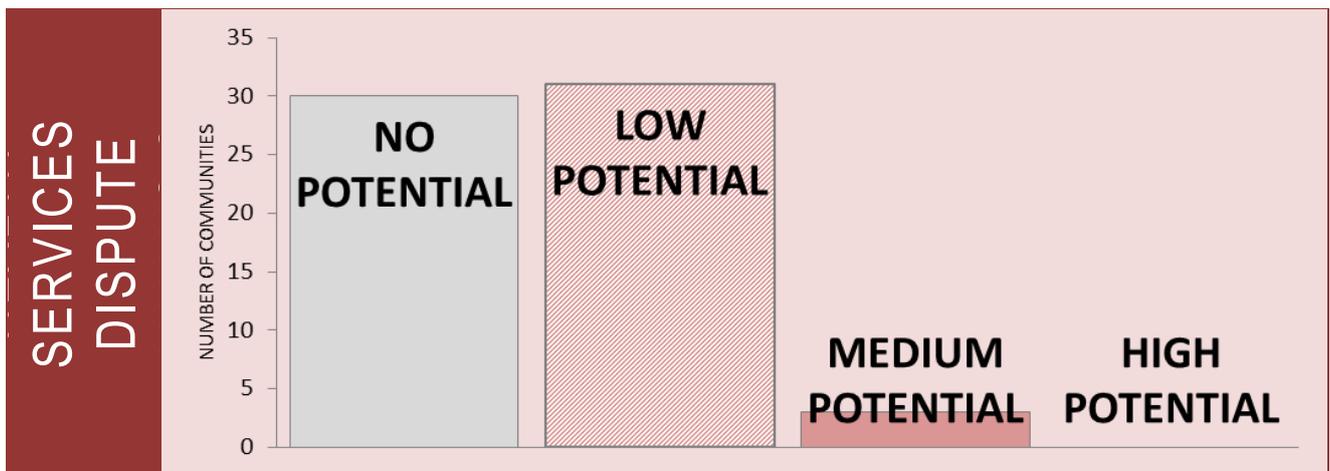


Figure 9 – Potential for dispute associated with access to health services

While health services were not identified as a major source of tension, they remain extremely important to how community residents in Southern Kyrgyzstan determine their quality of life on a day-to-day basis. Should the large levels of investment that have been flowing into the health care sector from both the Kyrgyz Government and international donors dry up over the next few years, it may reemerge as a potential source of disputes.

#### 4.4 CROP AGRICULTURE ECONOMY

In looking at economic sources of disputes and tension, the community-level conflict analysis survey first considered the crop agriculture economy, the traditional backbone of livelihoods in the lower elevation portions of Southern Kyrgyzstan. The first step was to look at the most popular crops cultivated in each surveyed community. Of the 65 communities surveyed the project team, the following crops were most commonly listed among the ‘three most important crops’ planted in their community: various animal feed crops (e.g. fodder crops such as wheat, barley and Lucerne; 77% of communities), wheat (46%), cotton (43%), potatoes (37%), other vegetables (23%), rice (17%), various fruits (14%) and

tobacco (9%). Secondly, the assessment team determined the main trends in ten year yield for each crop, looking at whether it was becoming more or less productive in the given community. The results of the focus group discussions on yield trends have been summarized in the figure below:

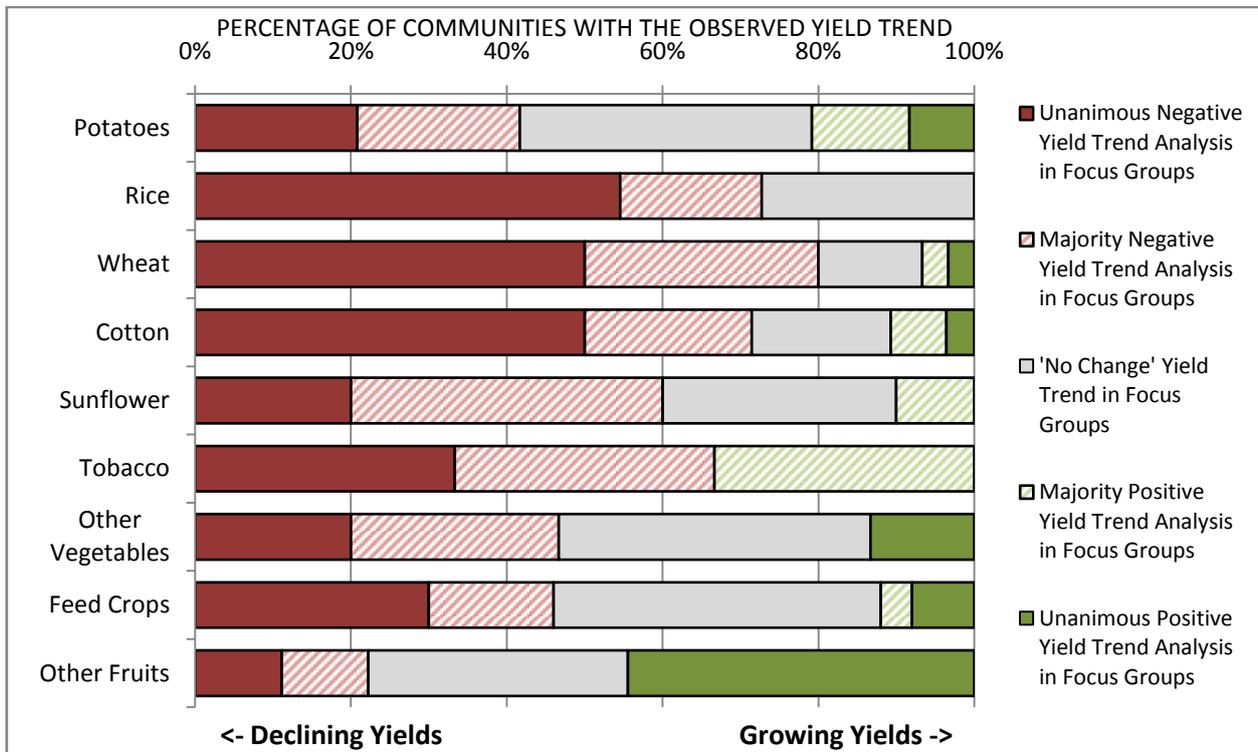


Figure 10 - Changes reported in crop yields over the past ten years by community-level focus groups

As shown in the figure above, most of the crops have experience declining yields over the past ten years, including key staple crops such as wheat and rice as well as cash crops such as cotton and tobacco. It should be noted that nearly every community that reported positive yield trends over the past ten years for potato cultivation were benefiting from an aid agency program to distribute high quality seeds.

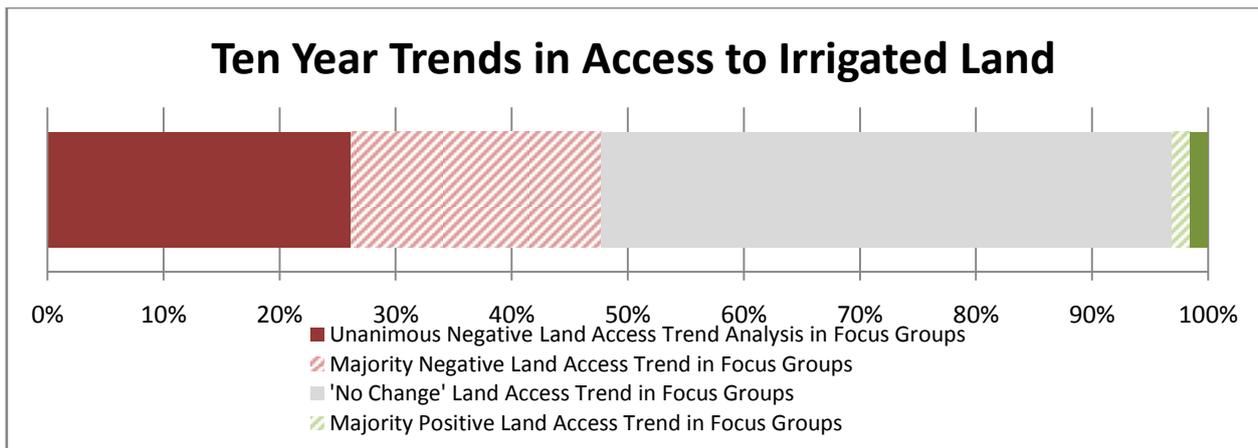


Figure 11 - Trends in access to irrigated land as reported by community-level focus groups

In addition to crop yields, the survey considered the access to irrigated land in the communities and how it had changed over the past ten years. As shown below, nearly half of communities reported experiencing reduced access to irrigated land. 11 communities identified decaying irrigation infrastructure as the primary cause of reduced access, while 17

communities blamed construction of new housing for it. The declining yields noted in figure 6 above are also closely linked to communities' declining of access to irrigation land, which was often noted as one of the main causes.

The analysis of non-irrigated land is different, with more communities noting little or no change in their access to this type of land (see figure 8 below). Those that noted a negative trend in access to non-irrigated land mostly described long distances between their communities and the land in question, and the increasing costs of transportation that rendered the cultivation of the land unprofitable.

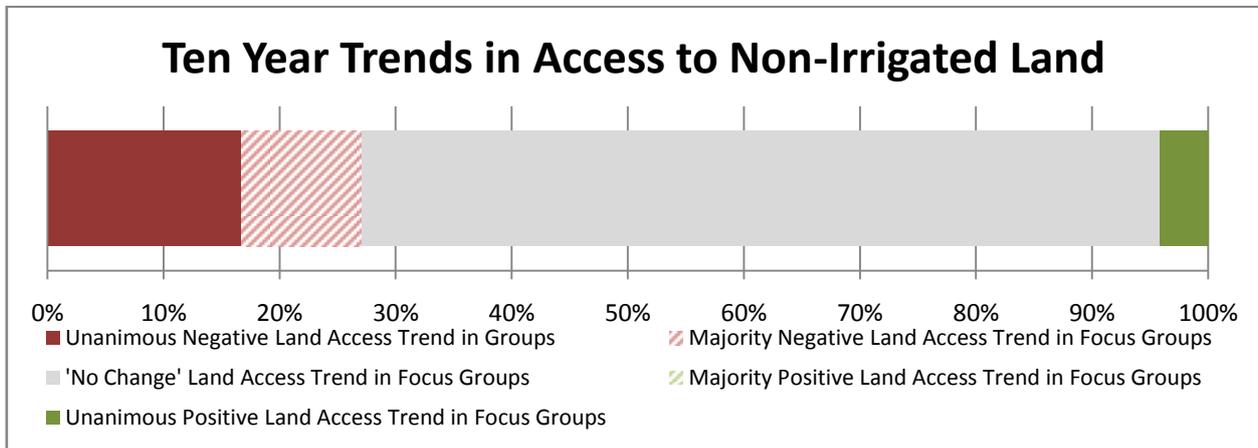


Figure 12 - Trends in access to non-irrigated land as reported by community-level focus groups

After discussing trends that their community had experienced both in agricultural yields and in access to land, the focus groups were asked to summarize the overall situation regarding the crop agriculture economy in their community. As can be seen in the trend analysis below, an overwhelming number of communities (45) considered the crop agriculture economy to be shrinking, while only a few communities (5) considered it to be increasing. The shrinking importance of the crop agriculture economy was the single most important socio-economic change noted during the analysis conducted by the project team.

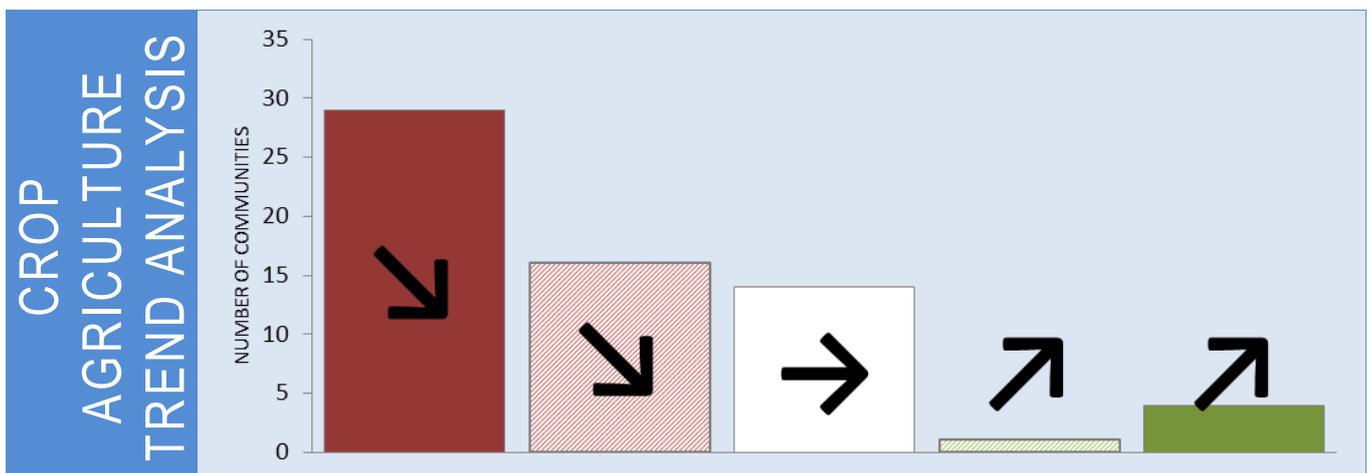


Figure 13 – Trend of access to crop agriculture opportunities by number of communities

While the combination of declining yields and access to land was the immediate cause behind the large economic shift in the crop agriculture sector, focus group participants pointed to several root causes to these twin problems. These included (in declining order of importance):

- **Lack of access to affordable sources of credit:** The rising costs of agricultural inputs, especially chemical fertilizers, have meant that less capitalized farmers must rely on sources of credit to be able to invest in

improving their agricultural yields. The lack of access to affordable sources of credit tailored to the needs of the agricultural calendar was a major reason why many families were unable to improve their yields through the purchase agricultural inputs.

- **Inefficient and unpredictable irrigation networks:** The lack of consistent supply of irrigation water was also noted as an important cause of the decline in the crop agriculture sector. Here the problems of decaying infrastructure and lack of efficient management of the water flows were both noted as problems.
- **Lack of access to reliable high-quality seeds:** The market for high-quality seeds suffers from a profound informational asymmetry in Southern Kyrgyzstan. Most of the seeds advertised as first-generation, elite or high-quality in bazaars across bazaars in Southern Kyrgyzstan are of dubious quality, making farmer reticent to pay any premium for higher-quality seeds.
- **Declining supply of agricultural machinery:** The rising cost of fuel has pushed the renting of agricultural machinery into the same sphere as chemical fertilizers as their rising costs has outstripped many farmers' ability to pay for them based on their existing levels of capital.
- **Lack of crop rotation:** The small shares of land assigned to each family, especially the shares of irrigated land, make them impractical or impossible to effectively rotate in and out of cultivation, as is suggested to retain soil fertility. As a result the soil in many communities has been progressively degraded over the past decade.

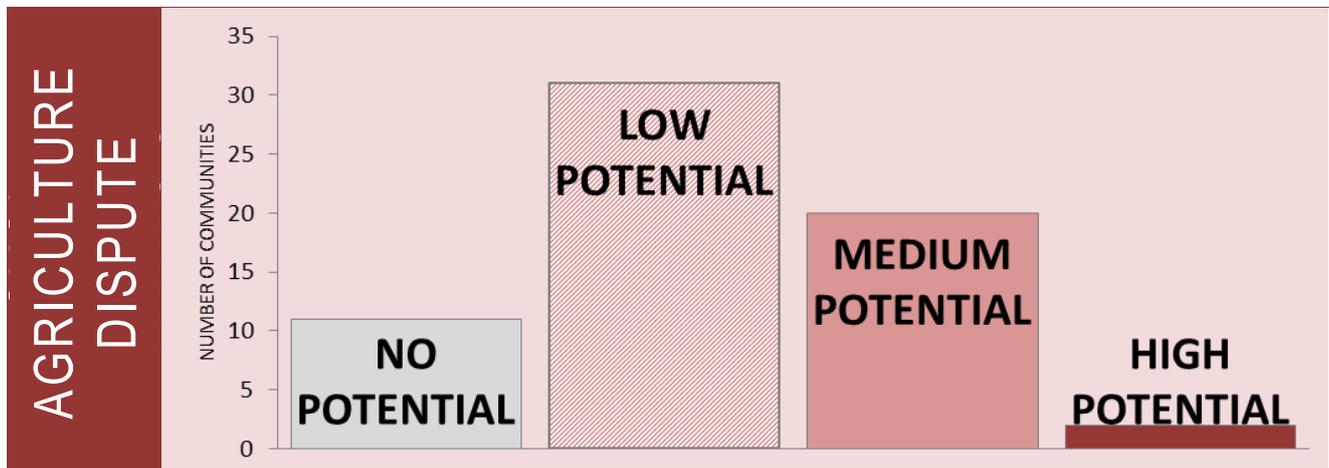


Figure 14 – Potential for dispute associated with opportunities for crop agriculture

The general decline in the crop agriculture sector has created significant tension and potential for disputes, with 54 of 65 communities reporting some level of potential for dispute. Most of the communities considered to have a low potential for dispute are suffering from simply the general degradation of the crop agriculture sector, generally due to factors beyond their control such as climatic change, rising agro-input prices and decaying irrigation infrastructure. As for the medium and high potentials for disputes, they were most commonly related to access to irrigation water (13 of 23 communities). Communities were more likely to attribute their lack of access to irrigation water to the mismanagement of the resource by a neighboring or 'up-stream' community than to the decaying state of the irrigation network. These problems with the distribution of irrigation water were more serious in cross-border areas where border guards and lack of access form another barrier to resolving disputes over the sharing of irrigation water. Other factors mentioned by communities with medium or high dispute potentials were mismanagement of agricultural resources or subsidies by local authorities, market manipulation in the agricultural inputs sector, pressure on access to land due to migration and problems with cross-border trade.

The research conducted by the project team demonstrates that the crop agriculture sector is one of the more important components of tension and dispute potential in Southern Kyrgyzstan. The largest number of such disputes, however, is related to issues of governance, especially in the management of the agricultural inputs market and the distribution of irrigation water.

#### 4.5 ANIMAL HUSBANDRY ECONOMY

The second major component of the economy of Southern Kyrgyzstan is the animal husbandry sector, generally considered as the primary livelihood source in more mountainous parts of the region. In examining the potential for disputes surrounding this sector of the economy, the ownership trends were considered for different types of livestock commonly kept in the region (horses, large & small ruminants and poultry). Access to both winter and summer pastures were then analyzed to determine trends related to communities' access to this valuable natural resource. The analysis was then used to determine the communities' dispute potential in this sector, which was determined differently for the winter months, when livestock is kept in or close to their community, and the summer months, when ruminants and horses are generally kept up in high altitude summer pastures.

The analysis of trends in animal ownership is shown in figure 9 (below).

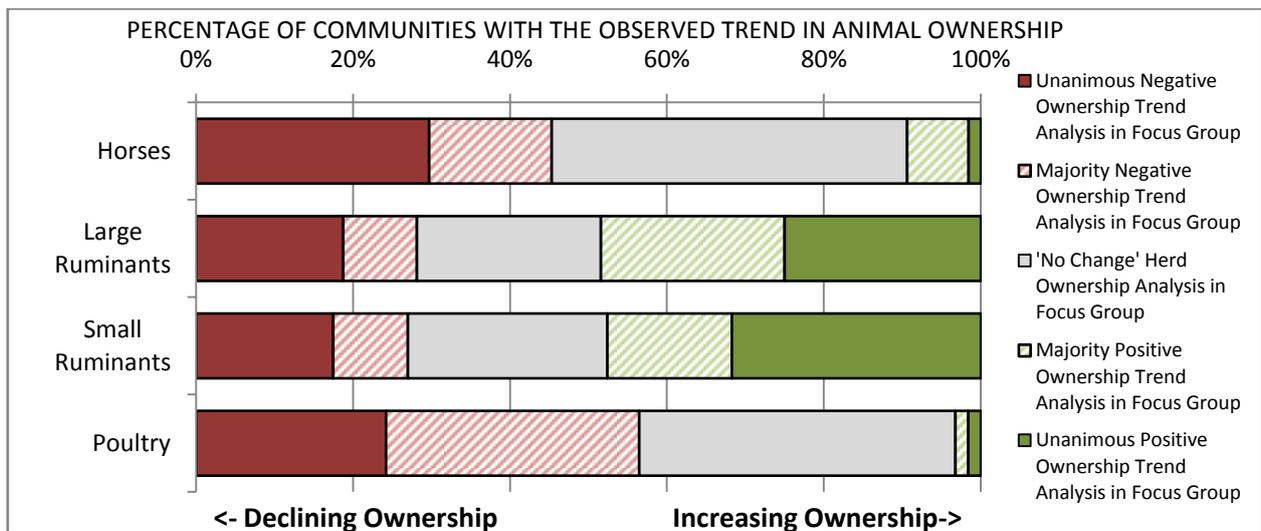


Figure 15 - Changes reported in livestock ownership over the past ten years by community-level focus groups

Three clear trends are remarkably consistent across the region:

a. Horse ownership has been in decline in an overwhelming majority of surveyed communities (most of the communities noting 'no change' in horse ownership never had any horses to begin with), which was attributed to the sharply rising cost of feed over the past ten years. As horses are the animal that consumes by far the most feed, they have been the most affected by these rising costs.

b. Ruminant ownership, on the other hand, has generally seen an increase over the past ten years in the surveyed communities. The increased levels of remittances from labor migrants were pointed as primarily responsible for this trend. Many rural households don't have sufficient trust in banks to leave deposits there, therefore preferring to instead invest remittances in ruminants. Ruminants can be easily sold at local livestock bazaars when money is needed, while in the meantime providing much needed nutrition to their family through milking. It should be noted that the investment of remittances in ruminants has resulted in their rapid price-inflation over the past ten years, which has in and of itself continued to increase people's confidence in investing their savings in ruminants.

c. Poultry ownership has experienced a significant decline in the past ten years. The lack of vaccination services or general veterinary knowledge has rendered poultry extremely vulnerable to diseases. As a result of such uncertainty, the commercial raising of poultry has significantly declined in favor of only raising a limited number of heads of poultry for domestic consumption.

After discussing trends in livestock ownership, focus groups were asked to discuss their access to winter pastures, essentially pasture land located near their community that can be accessed during the winter months. An overwhelming majority of communities (49 of 65) noted no change to their access to winter pastures, but a fair number noted that winter pastures were now causing tensions and disputes with neighboring communities. As the price of feed and the numbers of ruminants being held in communities has risen over the past ten years, access to winter pastures has become more valuable and subject to greater competition between communities. Also, a lack of a legal framework for right to access these communally-owned lands has added uncertainty, contribution to tension and emboldening shepherds to go further from their communities in search of grazing pastures.

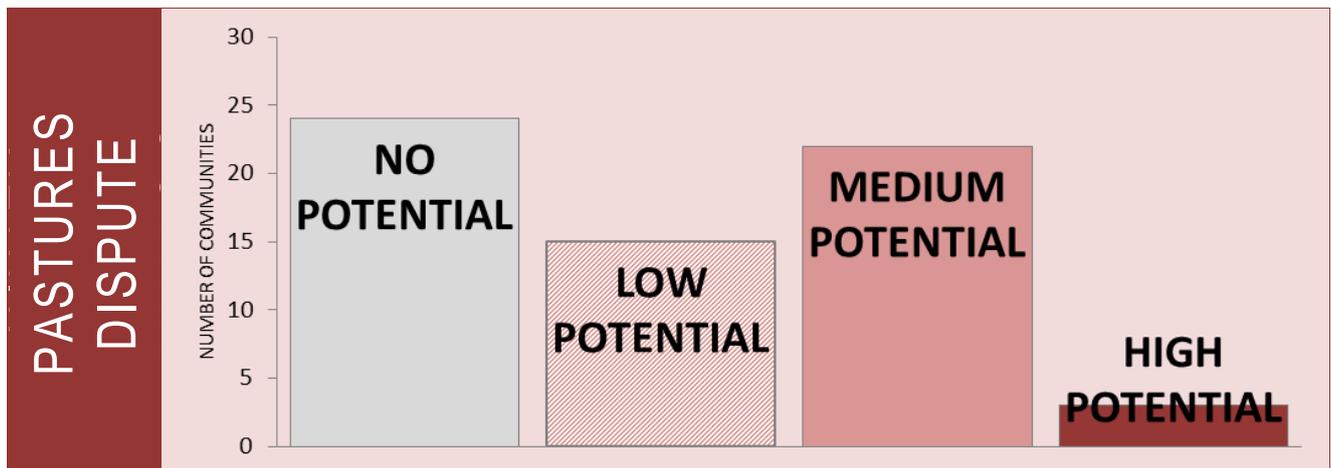


Figure 16 – Potential for dispute associated with access to winter pastures

As shown above, a large number of communities (26) were identified as having medium or high potential for conflict. The most common reason for potential disputes is the repeated cross-border theft of animals (in 11 communities), reported as conducted either by border guards or with their explicit consent. These cross-border communities reported losing between 3% and 20% of their ruminants each year to such thefts, with many communities pointing to an uptick in occurrences directly after the events of June 2010.

The second most common cause of tension and dispute potential is related to access to winter pasture and to competition between neighboring communities for access to these pastures (in 9 communities). Concerned communities felt that inter-communal tensions were rising when neighboring communities grazed their animals on land near their community which (by custom, if not by law) belonged to their community. These tensions were all the more likely in cross-border areas where issues of ethnicity also weighed on the relations between communities.

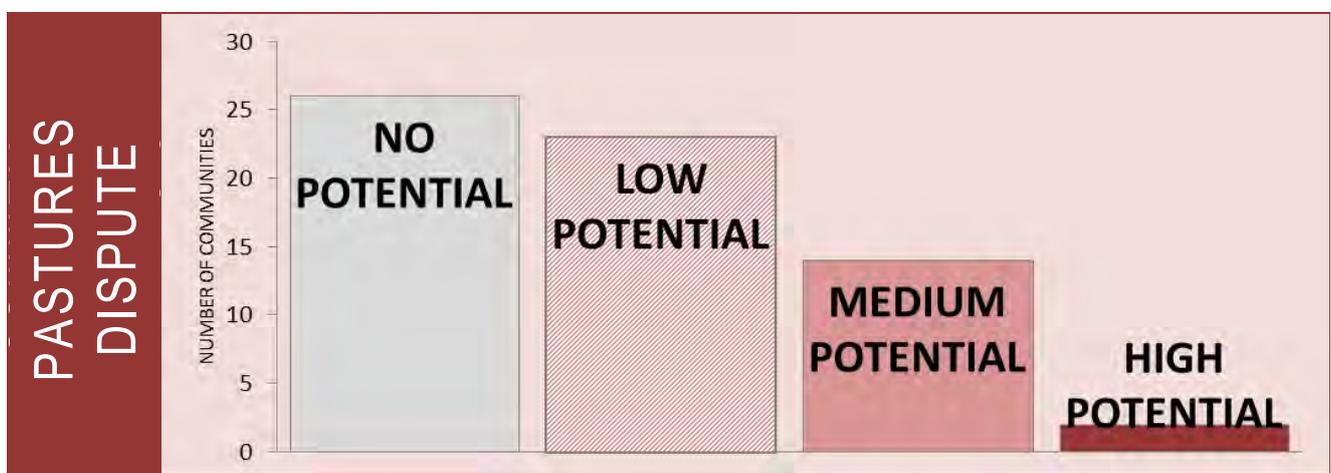


Figure 17 – Potential for dispute associated with access to summer pastures

The project team also looked at the role that access to summer pastures played in creating conflict potentials among communities in Southern Kyrgyzstan. There too, a significant amount of potential for disputes was identified, with 23 communities having low dispute potential, 14 as medium and two as high.

The majority of the low dispute potentials were related to the increased number of ruminants that competed over fodder located in the summer pastures; fodder which in some cases has declined in the past ten years as the climate in many regions of Southern Kyrgyzstan has become hotter and dryer.

The majority of the medium to high conflict potential communities fell into two categories. First, there were seven minority communities that reported significant amount of ruminants stolen by care-taking shepherds belonging to another ethnic group in the aftermath of the events of June 2010. The result was reported as both a near total loss of household savings in affected communities as well as a long-term loss of access to summer pastures since those communities no longer have confidence in entrusting their ruminants to shepherds for the summer, forcing them to rely on the lower quality fodder found at lower elevations.

A second common cause identified by communities as to tension involving summer pastures was towards the allocation of pasture rights by authorities. In some cases respondents questioned the fairness or transparency of the allocation of pasture rights by local authorities to a very limited number of shepherds. In other cases, the creation of cooperative forests (called 'leshoz') from land formerly belonging to a community as its summer pasture was singled out as creating seemingly arbitrary barriers to their use of pasture. Finally, the international treaty negotiated between the governments of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan over the use of pastures in Batken Province has proved extremely controversial in the province, as many communities reported that they were inadequately consulted during this process and did not have their concerns taken into consideration.

To summarize, access to winter and summer pasture land is one of the major causes of inter-communal disputes and tensions in Southern Kyrgyzstan. Sudden shifts in a community's relationships with its neighbors or with governmental officials can radically change their ability to access summer pastures and as a result the profitability of their animal husbandry activities.

#### **4.6 TERTIARY ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES**

Many communities in Southern Kyrgyzstan rely entirely on agricultural activities for their livelihoods, including the dispute-prone communities visited by the assessment team. Roughly half of the communities surveyed (32 of 65 communities) relied solely on agricultural-based livelihoods, with the rest gaining a small share of their livelihoods from other economic activities (described in this research report as 'tertiary'). As can be shown in figure 10 (below), these tertiary economic activities usually only provide livelihoods for a small subset of the overall community's population, whereas the agricultural activities provide a source of livelihood for the vast majority of community residents.

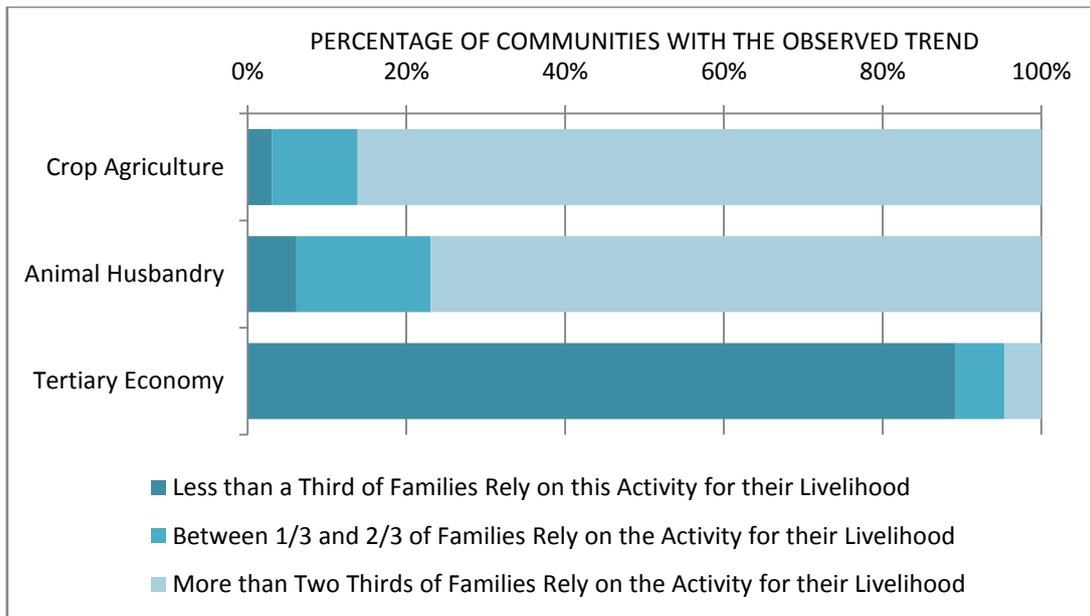


Figure 18 - Relative importance of economic activities to the overall economy as reported in community-level focus groups

Among the communities with a tertiary economy, the largest percentage (76%) were engaged in trade or commercial activities, with only construction (21%), walnut collection and processing (15%) and sewing (15%) having similarly important numbers of communities involved.

As for the trend analysis, none is presented in this report as it was very specific to each sector. Commercial and trade activities generally had positive trends, as the general increase in commerce in the region benefited communities located in areas where they could take advantage of that trend. Most of the other economic activities showed no significant change over the past ten years, with the processing of nuts depending greatly on climatic conditions season to season.

The analysis shown below identifies that among the 33 communities with tertiary economic activities, 13 are considered to have related medium or high dispute potentials and ten low dispute potentials. The communities with a low potential for disputes mainly reported difficulties in obtaining credit for commercial activities, as well as pressure of increasing populations on limited communal resources such as walnut forests and harvests. The medium potentials for disputes are the results of two main concerns: (a) seven communities reported difficulties in trading across the border and frustration with the informal payments required by many border guards for even legal border trade activities. (b) All three of the communities reporting high potentials for disputes faced tensions related to perceived biases against participation in bazaars. In some cases, the privatization of key bazaars was perceived as ethnically biased. In other cases, the privatization of bazaars was seen in negative terms as benefiting only a small portion of society and generally being against their own community's economic interests.

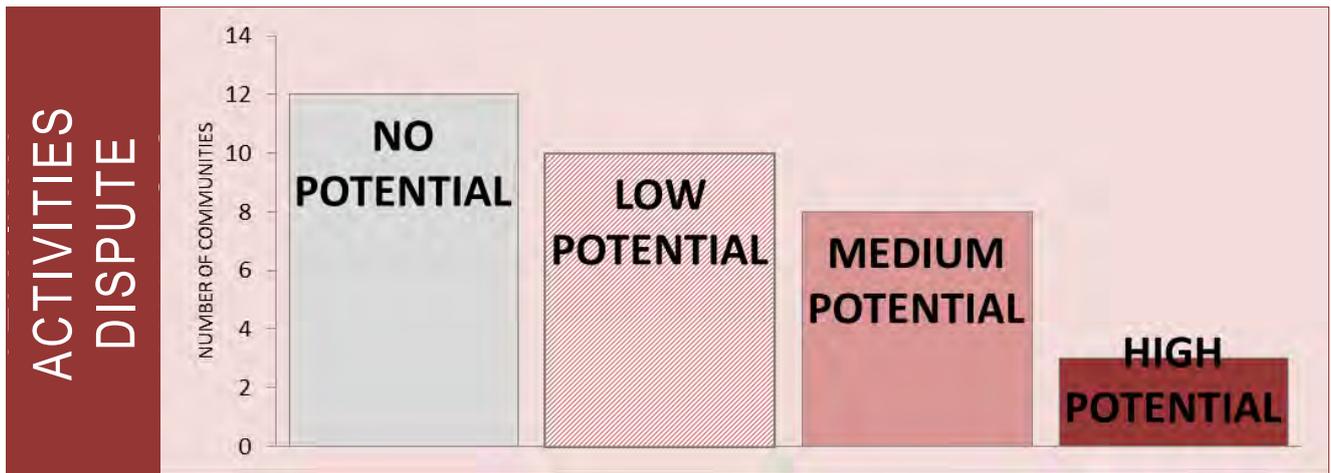


Figure 19 – Potential for dispute associated with opportunities for tertiary economic activities

While the tertiary economy is not as important as the agricultural economy in Southern Kyrgyzstan, it is in some ways an even bigger source of potential disputes. As the main intersections of trade and commerce attract powerful interests and manipulation, they become source of strong tensions between communities. The strained interaction with customs officials along the border only adds to this combustible mix, putting many of the community's principle economic interests in direct opposition to the state and its officials.

#### 4.7 ACCESS TO EDUCATION SERVICES

The final section of the community-level survey focused on community access to primary and secondary education. Firstly, the main educational infrastructure was catalogued and the amount of travel necessary to obtain primary and secondary education was outlined. Then the perceived change in the quality of education in the community was assessed by the focus groups:

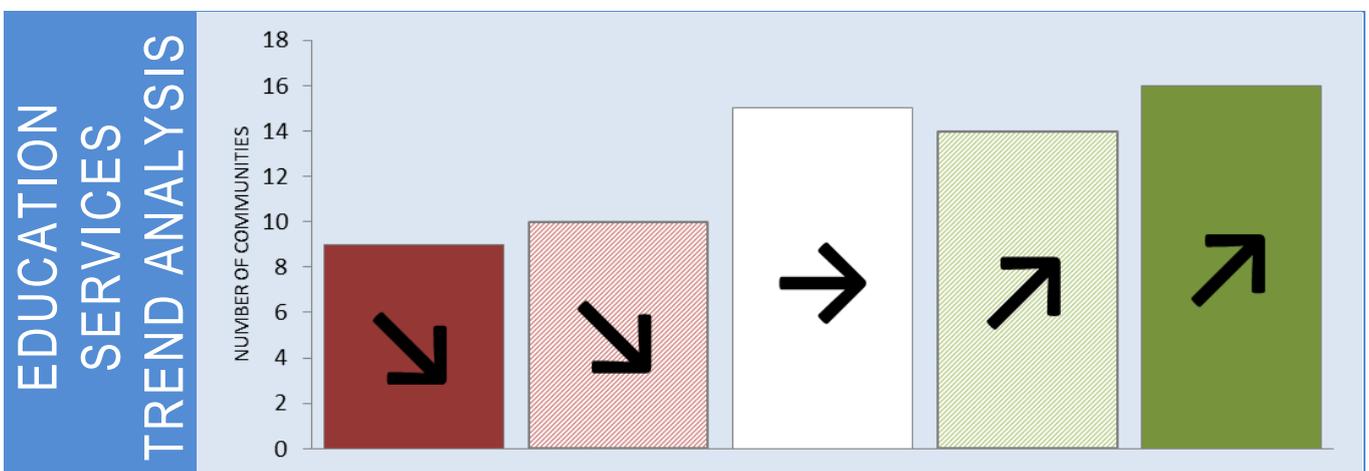


Figure 20 – Trend of access to education services by number of communities

The trend analysis shows more communities reporting improvements in their access to education services (30 communities) than reporting declines in their access to education services (19 communities). Many of those improvements were linked to renovations of schools conducted by aid agencies or local authorities, while the declines in access to education were most often linked to a decline in teacher quality following years of low wages and an inability to attract teachers with university education.

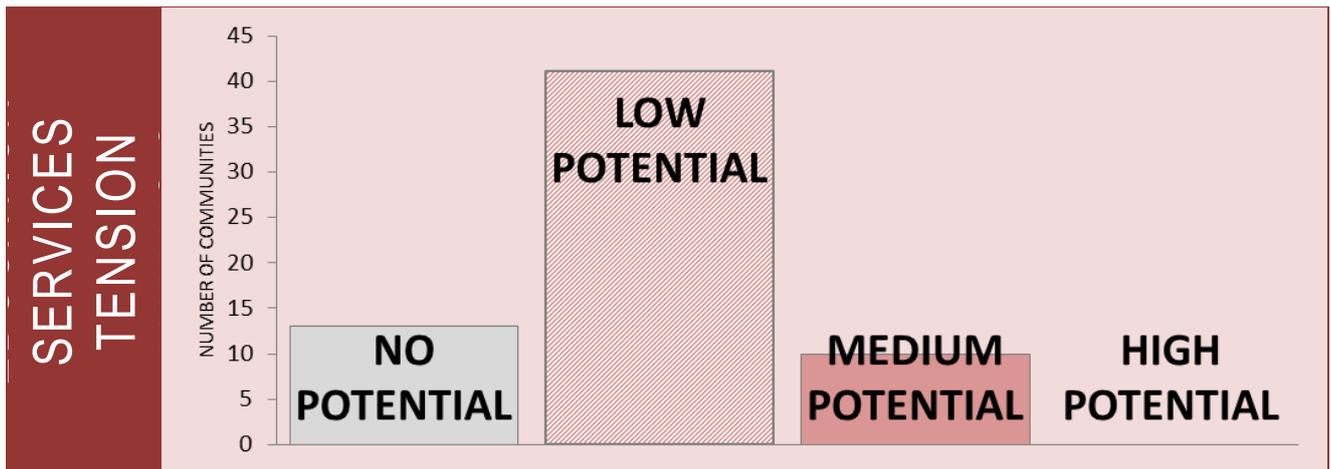


Figure 21 – Potential for dispute associated with access to education services

A majority of communities were identified as having a low potential for disputes, much of which was linked to frustration with the Ministry of Education for not being able to attract qualified teachers to their schools. The few medium potentials for dispute came from a variety of different threats to the communities' access to education services, including a lack availability of minority language material (2 of 11 communities) or difficulties for some students to cross an international border in order to obtain education in their native language (3 of 11 communities).

Access to education was only a significant source of conflict when it was related to minority access to adapted services. For majority communities it rarely represented more than a low potential for disputes since there was rarely an identifiable third party that could be blamed for the poor state of education services in their community.

## 5. MOST COMMON CAUSES OF TENSIONS AND DISPUTES IN SOUTHERN KYRGYZSTAN

Based on the results of both the community-level surveys and government data collected through the course of this research project, a number of clear trends emerged as to common causes of disputes and tension in Southern Kyrgyzstan. The trends are outlined below and categorized based on the socio-economic sector to which they are related. They have not been ranked or prioritized in any way. Only the most common and serious causes of tensions and disputes identified by the research have been listed here.

### 5.1 TENSIONS RELATED TO ACCESS TO CLEAN DRINKING WATER

Most of the tensions that the research discovered related to access to clean drinking water revolved around **the pollution of drinking water sources by neighboring communities**. The resulting higher rates of water-borne diseases and lower quality of life experience by affected community are blamed on their neighbors, often resulting in fairly localized disputes. Communities that live in cross-border areas are both more likely to experience these types of disputes and to have these disputes gain in importance, as they can't rely on governance mechanisms to apply pressure on neighboring communities to stop polluting the water source in question.

### 5.2 TENSIONS RELATED TO THE CROP AGRICULTURE ECONOMY

A recurring source of tension in the crop agriculture economy was the frustration among farmers as to their **restricted access to markets for agricultural inputs**. For most communities surveyed by the project team, they only had one supplier that they could contact for their purchases of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, seeds or other key agricultural inputs. Some of this had to do with the South of Kyrgyzstan's reliance on Uzbekistan as a source of fertilizers, but part of the problem often was perceived to be a lack of competition in the internal Kyrgyz market. A number of farmers reported being unable to purchase inputs from alternative suppliers due to the monopolization of the market by powerful traders. The perception that these markets are being controlled for the benefit of a select few is widespread in Southern Kyrgyzstan and an increasing source of tension between communities and government authorities.

The overall decline of the crop agriculture economy is a considerable source of tension in Southern Kyrgyzstan. As its importance in supplying livelihoods for families in the region decreases, pressure is placed on other sources of livelihood and resources in the community, causing disputes in bazaars, in summer pastures and elsewhere. One of the key causes of the decline in the crop agriculture economy is the **information asymmetry in the market for improved seeds**. While most farmers report being willing to pay for high-quality improved agricultural seeds, the lack of any certification or guarantee process means that few believe any of the claims made by seeds manufacturers. Too many sellers in the market of supposedly first generation elite seeds are in reality selling very average seeds, making farmers suspicious of claims as to the quality of seeds being marketed. As a result, few farmers invest in high-quality seeds of any kind and as a result yields and the wider agricultural economy have suffered.

The third cause of tension in the crop agriculture economy revolves around **the collapse of the irrigation systems** in many communities throughout the South of Kyrgyzstan. Much of the irrigation infrastructure has been degraded by years of deferred maintenance and many systems simply reaching the end of their useful lifespan. As the water in the system decreases due to cracks in pipes and aging canals, disputes begin between communities over the distribution of the now limited resource, usually pitting up-stream communities that have the first chance to take water from the canal against down-stream communities that must subsist with what is leftover in the canal. A second component of the same problem is a **lack of legitimate management system for the irrigation water** among newly independent and private farmers in the region. As state structures exert only limited control over the flow of irrigation water, it is up to community leaders and elders to negotiate the distribution of the water between communities.

### 5.3 TENSIONS RELATED TO THE ANIMAL HUSBANDRY ECONOMY

The raising of ruminants has become increasingly popular over the past decade in Southern Kyrgyzstan, as rising livestock prices has broadened their appeal beyond families that simply wanted them to collect wool or milk. The most significant cost related to raising ruminants is the purchase of feed during winter months. Families that have access to winter pastures can save large amounts of money on feed and, therefore, are able to raise ruminants much more profitably. As a result, winter pastures have become the source of significant inter-communal tension over the past years.

One of the ways in which that tension manifests itself is in **small disputes over winter pastures** located in the hills directly above neighboring communities. These lands are generally of marginal value and not legally assigned to any particular community. As a result, families tend to rush their animals to these pastures at the first sign of grazing opportunities, leading to over grazing and competition among communities for this limited resource.

Another significant source of inter-community tension involves the large levels of **thefts of ruminants along the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border**, specifically in Jalalabad Oblast. In some cases the ruminants simply wander across the border, after which border guards are reported as preventing their owners from crossing the border to reclaim their animals, sometimes at gunpoint. In other communities organized groups are reported as crossing the border illegally to directly steal ruminants with the complicity of the border guards. As these thefts can represent the loss of up to 20% of the communities' ruminants, they are responsible for considerably increasing tensions between cross-border communities and the border guards stationed in those areas.

Additionally, some disputes over access to summer pastures were reported as indirectly related to the events of June 2010. Care-takers from different ethnic groups were reported as not returning ruminants that they had been entrusted with by minority groups for the summer pasture. This was reported as contributing to a **lack of trust between minority communities and care-taking shepherds**, limiting access to summer pastures and an important source of livelihoods. As a result, many minority communities reported that in 2011 they did not at all take advantage of their summer pasture lands assigned to them. In another similar pattern of disputes over summer pastures, several of the communities from the District of Kara-Suu had difficulty in using the pastures assigned to their communities in the Alay Valley. During the past year **small disputes between shepherds from these communities and residents of the Alay Valley** have resulted in loss of livestock and reduced access to summer pastures. As a result, fewer families are sending their ruminants from these communities in Kara-Suu to the Alay Valley, resulting in a loss of an important natural resource to this community.

### 5.4 TENSIONS RELATED TO TERTIARY ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Besides the agricultural sources of livelihood available to communities in Southern Kyrgyzstan, commercial and other forms of livelihood do exist and are also an important source of disputes and tension in the region. The single biggest source of tension in this sector of the economy is **access to points of sale in the main bazaars of the region**. Many communities that live near the bazaars in district centers feel that they are being progressively excluded from spaces in the bazaars, at the expense of new commercial interests from other groups. The process of privatization of the bazaars that has been ongoing over the past decade in Kyrgyzstan is seen as a driving force in this process and is often itself a large source of tension.

### 5.5 TENSIONS RELATED TO ACCESS TO EDUCATION SERVICES

While the community-level surveys noted a large amount of discontent at the decline in the quality of education, it did not note this as a likely source of tensions. The fact that this decline is experienced across all communities in the region and that its cause, mainly low teachers' salaries, is beyond the control of community leaders or local governmental authorities, are both reasons to not consider it a likely source of disputes. On the other hand, findings do indicate issues related to accessibility to minority language education, which is more likely to be a source of dispute.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this assessment primarily point to access to resources and governance issues as the root causes of most inter-communal disputes in Southern Kyrgyzstan. These manifest themselves in a number of important areas of community life, such as use of natural resources (notably land), accessibility to commercial assets, agricultural assets and fair arbitration of markets, accessibility to drinking water and education facilities. While ethnic belonging can be an issue in a number of disputes it is far from being the defining aspect of tensions in the region. Many mono-ethnic areas experience tensions and disputes between communities, especially as access to social services and the agricultural economy continue their steady declines of the past twenty years.

The research findings strongly back the need for peace building programs in Southern Kyrgyzstan. It is recommended that these are centered on the improvement of accessibility to key resources and to related governance issues; factors that are essential for tackling the root causes of tensions in the region. Infrastructure, mediation and other peace building approaches can address the results of poor governance, helping to calm flare-ups in violence and temporarily address issues of access to natural resources, but they cannot in the end address the roots causes of tension and disputes in the region.

It is hoped that the tools and resources created by the project will continue to be of help to agencies working on peace building and development in the region for years to come. All of the data collected during the course of the project and all of the maps produced at both the local and regional level will remain available to all actors in the region through the dedicated website: <http://www.reach-initiative.kg>.

## LIST OF ANNEXES TO THIS REPORT

- Annex 1: Desk Review of Research on Disputes and Tension in the Post-Soviet Ferghana Valley**
- Annex 2: Macro-Level Survey Terms of Reference**
- Annex 3: Macro-Level Survey Data Collection Definitions and Methodology**
- Annex 4: Micro-Level Survey Terms of Reference**
- Annex 5: List of Communities Assessed by the Micro-Level Survey**
- Annex 6: Socio-Economic Passports for all 65 Analyzed Communities**
- Annex 7: Matrix of the Identified Conflict Potentials of all 65 Analyzed Communities**

**REACH - SOCIO-ECONOMIC MAPPING OF TENSIONS AND DISPUTES IN SOUTHERN KYRGYZSTAN**

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