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**Abstract**

In Kyrgyzstan, the breakup of the USSR raised many issues related to equity and fairness in education, one of which is the distribution of public funds to support scholarship admissions to higher education institutions. After 1992, public institutions could begin to charge tuition fees, but as a legacy of the USSR, Kyrgyzstan continues providing "budget-funded places" (public scholarships) for higher education study. In recent years, the number of these scholarships has been shrinking, resulting in increased competition for budget-funded places, and unfortunately, their distribution has been unfair and discriminatory against students from remote regions and poorer families. To address these issues, the merit-based National Scholarship Test (NST) was introduced in 2002 to identify the most deserving youth, irrespective of where they live and their backgrounds. Moreover, as a crucial part of the test implementation, quota categories have been introduced to ensure the proportional representation of youth from various geographic backgrounds at institutions of higher education. In the years since its introduction the NST has achieved both successes and setbacks. Generally considered a huge step forward, the NST has been able to impact equity in education on a broad scale.

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However, challenges still remain. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)