

SUMMARY OF MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS
UNICEF – Kyrgyzstan Activities on Education and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
Supported by the Government of the Russian Federation

**This summary is being released as part of the 2012 Humanitarian Action for Children which reports on funds used in 2011 and outlines further support needed in 2012. Following an event in Geneva, UNICEF will also launch this global publication in Ankara on Thursday 2 February.*

A total of US\$1,000,000 was provided by the Russian Federation in 2010 to support UNICEF Country Office's response to the June 2010 events. The funds by the Government of the Russian Federation were provided under the 2010 Flash Appeal for Kyrgyzstan, and allocated to Education and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene sectors. The activities under the two projects mainly focused on minimising the impact of the emergency on education and improving water supply, sanitation and hygiene in schools and health facilities.

ISSUES IN EDUCATION AND RESPONSE

According to the rapid assessment conducted by the education cluster, the ethnic strife in Osh and Jalal-Abad in June 2010 has directly affected the education of 83,000 students and the working conditions of 5,000 teachers in 490 schools in these provinces. The emergency created enormous uncertainty and fear for safety of children in schools. A survey conducted in 2010 by Save the Children revealed that nearly 60 per cent of parents were reluctant to send their children to school as they were afraid that children would be attacked. According to the education authorities in Osh province the attendance was 70 per cent on the first day of school and overall enrolment fell by 12 per cent.

The enrolment was also affected by displacement of population as a result of the conflict. Children who were displaced to areas where schools could not provide education in their language encountered severe social and academic challenges. This fact caused increased school dropouts, particularly among adolescents and at-risk children. Also, families preferred sending their children to schools located closer to their homes, whenever possible in the same neighbourhood. This has resulted in further increase of "homogeneously Kyrgyz or Uzbek schools."

In response to the emergency situation UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and Science to develop the "Welcome to School" Initiative with the goal of minimizing the impact of the emergency on education, and to ensure that all children have safe access to preschool and basic education. The "Welcome to School" Initiative was an important element in restoring stability to the south and improving public confidence in the government.

In the framework of the "Welcome to School" Initiative, UNICEF supported school community-led peace building activities in all 585 schools of Osh province through distribution of small grants. The small grants we provided to school based on their action plans to mitigate the negative consequences of the conflict on children and to establish responsive learning environment. Over 240,000 school-aged children and more than 12,000 parents and local community representatives benefited from activities that included sport, art, photo-exhibitions, concerts and plays, friendship festivals, extra-curriculum classes, round-tables, debates and joint community-school social projects on improvement of the school gardens.

UNICEF also procured furniture for 15 pre-school child-friendly spaces, which were established in school buildings in order to address the psychosocial and developmental needs of children aged 3 to 6. To address a lack of textbooks in Kyrgyz and Uzbek language in schools, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and Science to print school textbooks both in Kyrgyz and Uzbek languages for selected secondary schools of Batken, Jalal-Abad and Osh provinces.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and Science and Ministry of Emergency Situations to organize emergency preparedness training based on Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergency

Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies. The training targeted the representatives of the local administrations, emergency departments and education authorities and meant to build their capacity in developing education emergency preparedness, response and recovery plans. Overall, 174 key focal points of civil protection were trained and 58 district emergency preparedness plans revised to sharpen the focus on protection of pre-school and school-aged children and educational institutions.

In order to improve the Education Development Strategy 2012-2020 and its implementation Action Plan for 2012-2014, UNICEF supported focus group discussions in the provinces during which useful feedback and comments from public education consumers and local district education stakeholders was received and included into the strategy. It was approved by the Government at the end of 2011.

The Russian Federation funds were also used to transport 640 students of former Tolstoy secondary school to and from a neighbouring Uzbek school (Sharipova) during the winter period. Fifty pre-school children of the Tolstoy pre-school child friendly space were also provided transportation so they could continue their education without interruption during the winter period.

ISSUES IN WATER - SANITATION AND RESPONSE

The water and sanitation emergency activities had an overall objective to reduce the risk of outbreaks of water and vector-borne diseases with intensive interventions to ensure water quality, improve environmental sanitation facilities and hygiene promotion in school and pre-school facilities and health clinics.

A post-emergency assessment in schools in Jalal-Abad and Osh undertaken by one of the UNICEF's partners in water and sanitation revealed considerable scope for improvement of sanitation in schools. For example, the assessment found out that in one school of 1,030 students there was only 10-hole pit latrine for girls, boys and teachers. The ratio of a toilet to students was approximately 1:100 whereas the national minimum standard is 1:50. The school latrines were observed to be dirty, smelly and a potential source of disease. There were no hand-washing facilities attached to the latrines in any of the assessed schools. A survey conducted in 36 schools in the south revealed that 97 per cent of school latrines were built in 1970s and 1980s and in the 3 per cent of the surveyed schools toilets never existed. The same survey indicated that 65 per cent of the 36 school toilets are not accessible to children with disabilities. Almost 99 per cent of surveyed latrines had no walls for individual use of children, affecting the dignity of female school children who had no privacy in latrines.

In response, UNICEF has supported the construction of new ventilation improved school latrines and hand-washing facilities in 14 schools in Osh province and rehabilitated sanitation infrastructure in eight health facilities of Batken and Osh provinces. In Aravan district on the border with Uzbekistan UNICEF's support resulted in the rehabilitation of 16 schools and two kindergarten latrines.

UNICEF supported training for 2,200 children in Osh and Jalalabad, for 350 school administrators, local governments in Jalal-Abad to improve hygiene and sanitation in schools. Hygiene promotion education was also given to children at peace-building summer camps for conflict-affected and vulnerable children of Osh city. Also, hygiene awareness training was supported by UNICEF in the nine child-friendly spaces in Osh and Jalalabad provinces. UNICEF's support was provided to strengthen government capacity to identify and address problems of parasitic infections among children. Jalal-Abad showed the highest rates of parasitic infections as reported by the Department of Sanitary Epidemiological Surveillance under the Ministry of Health.

As a part of the long-term strategy on WASH, UNICEF assisted the health authorities in Jalal-Abad to conduct a baseline survey to identify the prevalence of parasitic diseases among school children. Over 2,250 school children from 30 schools were laboratory tested during the study. The study report is expected in the end of 2011 and its findings will help to formulate strategy and identify further measures to reduce worm infections among children. In the same token, UNICEF supported the training of fifty laboratory specialists in Jalal-Abad to use new methodology and equipment as well as enhance the knowledge of the SES specialists to work with schools on hygiene education.