

unicef 

for every child

COUNTRY OFFICE

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

KAZAKHSTAN

DECEMBER 2022





Contents

Part 1: Update on the situation of children and the country context	5
Part 2: Major results	11
Every child thrives and survives.....	13
Every child learns.....	15
Every child is protected from violence and exploitation.....	17
Every child lives in a safe and clean environment.....	18
Every child has an equitable chance in life.....	19
Cross-cutting work.....	19
Part 3: Partnerships	23
Part 4: Innovations and lessons learned	25

Cover photograph: Nurlykyz Kenesbek, a UNICEF volunteer under the Generation Unlimited program. Astana, Kazakhstan.

@UNICEF Kazakhstan/2022/RuslanKarsamov



Saule Tokmanovna - methodologist of the kindergarten «Karlygash» works with children. Astana, Kazakhstan.

@UNICEF Kazakhstan/2022/RuslanKarsamov

PART 1 | Update on the situation of children
and the country context



Maxim (13) in his room.

“Ark” family house. Talgar, Kazakhstan.

@UNICEF Kazakhstan/2022/BauyrzhanSabitov

Part 1:

Update on the situation of children and the country context

The President of Kazakhstan declared 2022 ‘the Year of Children’. However, this declaration was quickly overshadowed by unprecedented civil unrest. In January 2022, a peaceful demonstration triggered by sharply rising liquefied gas prices spread to encompass widely-held grievances and major reform demands. Protests rapidly turned violent – likely from opportunistic political interference – resulting in looting and infrastructure destruction. The President ordered law enforcement agencies and called upon the Collective Security Treaty Organization’s armed forces to restore calm. Unfortunately, 238 persons died during the unrest with nearly ten thousand delivered to police stations and more than one thousand prosecuted, including children and youth.

In response to nationwide demands for political and socio-economic change, Kazakhstan initiated wide-ranging reforms, including adopting constitutional changes to the Office of the

Commissioner for Human Rights, establishing the Constitutional Court, and holding early presidential elections. Constitutional changes limited presidents to one 7-year term, and new policy measures enhanced political competition and strengthened the Parliament.

Kazakhstan initiated a socio-economic programme aiming to ensure an average annual growth rate of 4–5 per cent of real monetary income and create over two million new jobs by 2025. In December 2022, the Government also finalized a new Social Code for submission to the Parliament. This Code introduces measures improving family social protection, reorganizing social services, and strengthening social work functions. It also introduces a 'Digital Family Card' to proactively identify vulnerable families and provide social assistance. UNICEF and the wider United Nations advocated for strengthening the draft Code.

The Russian invasion into Ukraine indirectly impacted the Kazakh economy, especially for children and families. Accelerated inflation rates and increased household living costs¹ slowed post-COVID-19 recovery and reversed recent progress towards reducing unemployment, poverty and inequality. Increased labour and housing market pressures further impacted vulnerable households.

¹ Per the Bureau of National Statistics aggregate food price increased by 16 per cent, agricultural products by 19 per cent, and purchased resources (including fuel) by 24.8 per cent from July 2021 to July 2022.

In September 2022, Kazakhstan saw a significant influx of Russian migratory crossings, including children, following draft announcements.

Poverty increased slightly, with 5.3 per cent of the population living below the poverty line by late 2022. The population's real monetary income also decreased by 11.7 per cent.² Families with children remained disproportionately vulnerable to poverty and exclusion, with children over-represented among the poverty stricken.³ According to the 'Listening to Kazakhstan' surveys administered by the World Bank and UNICEF between December 2020 and August 2022, 19 per cent of adults and 22 per cent of children lived in self-classified 'poor' families, with multi-child families substantially more vulnerable to deprivation.

The number of children receiving targeted social assistance decreased by 19 per cent between 2020 and 2022. Social assistance programme revisions in 2020, inadequate levels of assistance, and more stringent eligibility criteria likely impacted the number of families seeking assistance.

Schools remained open and operational in 2022, with no COVID-related closures. Kazakhstan also extended the 2021/2022 school year by two weeks to help students recover from learning loss.

² Ibid.

³ In 2021, while children made up one third of the overall population, they represented 47.2 per cent of those in poverty.

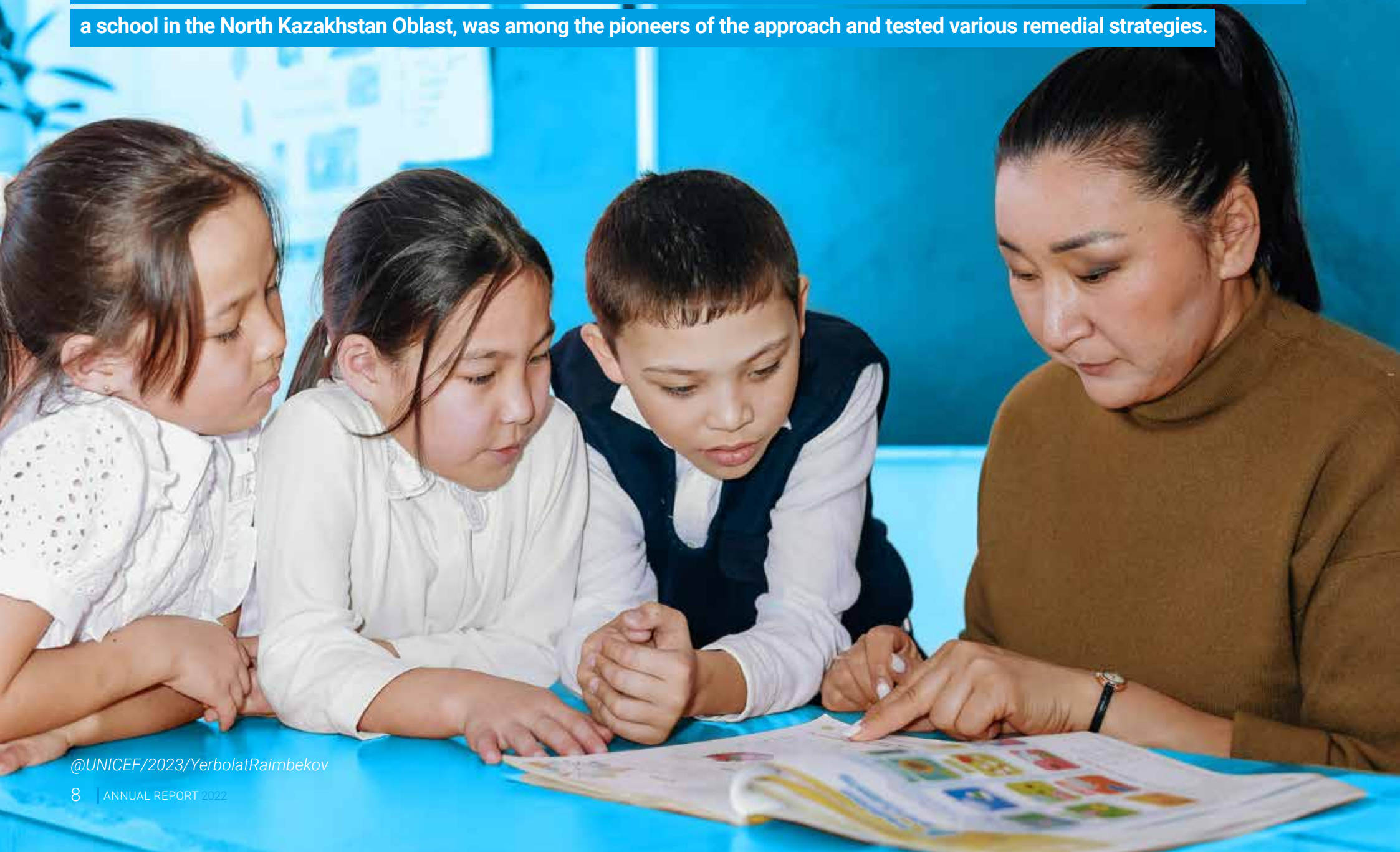


Poverty increased slightly,
WITH 5.3%
of the population living below
the poverty line by late 2022.



19% OF ADULTS
and
22% OF CHILDREN
lived in self-classified 'poor'
families, with multi-child
families substantially more
vulnerable to deprivation.

Since 2021, with support of UNICEF and Almaty Management University (AlmaU), school administrators and educators in Kazakhstan have been implementing various remedial programmes as part of the 'whole-school approach'. Dana Orumbaeva, the principal of a school in the North Kazakhstan Oblast, was among the pioneers of the approach and tested various remedial strategies.



However, children lost an estimated 12 weeks of learning due to the pandemic,⁴ necessitating stronger remedial programmes. An estimated 147,000 children were out of school in 2021.



Children lost an estimated 12 weeks of learning due to the pandemic, necessitating stronger remedial programmes. An estimated .

147,000

CHILDREN

were out of school in 2021.

Kazakhstan adopted the Concept of Education Development for 2022–2026, which focuses on preschool education. All 10,857 preschool organizations (covering almost 900,000 children) must now comply with international quality assurance standards. The Ministry of Education now permits preschools to develop free daily routines, which allows teachers to apply different educational methods. Overall resources for preschool education increased by 32 per cent in 2022. Additionally, the Government announced the construction of 401 new schools by 2025.

Gender equality in STEM remains a key challenge for Kazakhstan. Due to persisting gender stereotypes and social norms, girls represent only

33 per cent of ICT students. At the Transforming Education Summit (TES), the Government reiterated commitments to sustainably invest in education, increase GDP-based budget allocations, and test an educational voucher system. It also promised to improve education quality, address learning loss, reduce digital and educational disparities, and created the 'National Fund for Children' to fund education vouchers in 2024.



Due to persisting gender stereotypes and social norms,

GIRLS REPRESENT ONLY

33%

OF ICT STUDENTS.

In 2022, Kazakhstan updated the 2030 Family and Gender Concept with stronger commitments to pursue gender equality, prevent violence against children and women, and support family resilience and positive parenting. The country also adopted new laws to protect the rights of children and people with disabilities. Since 2020, every child born in a health facility can receive a birth certificate irrespective of the mother's legal status. This change helped 1,500 children obtain birth certificates and access services. However, children born to undocumented mothers outside of

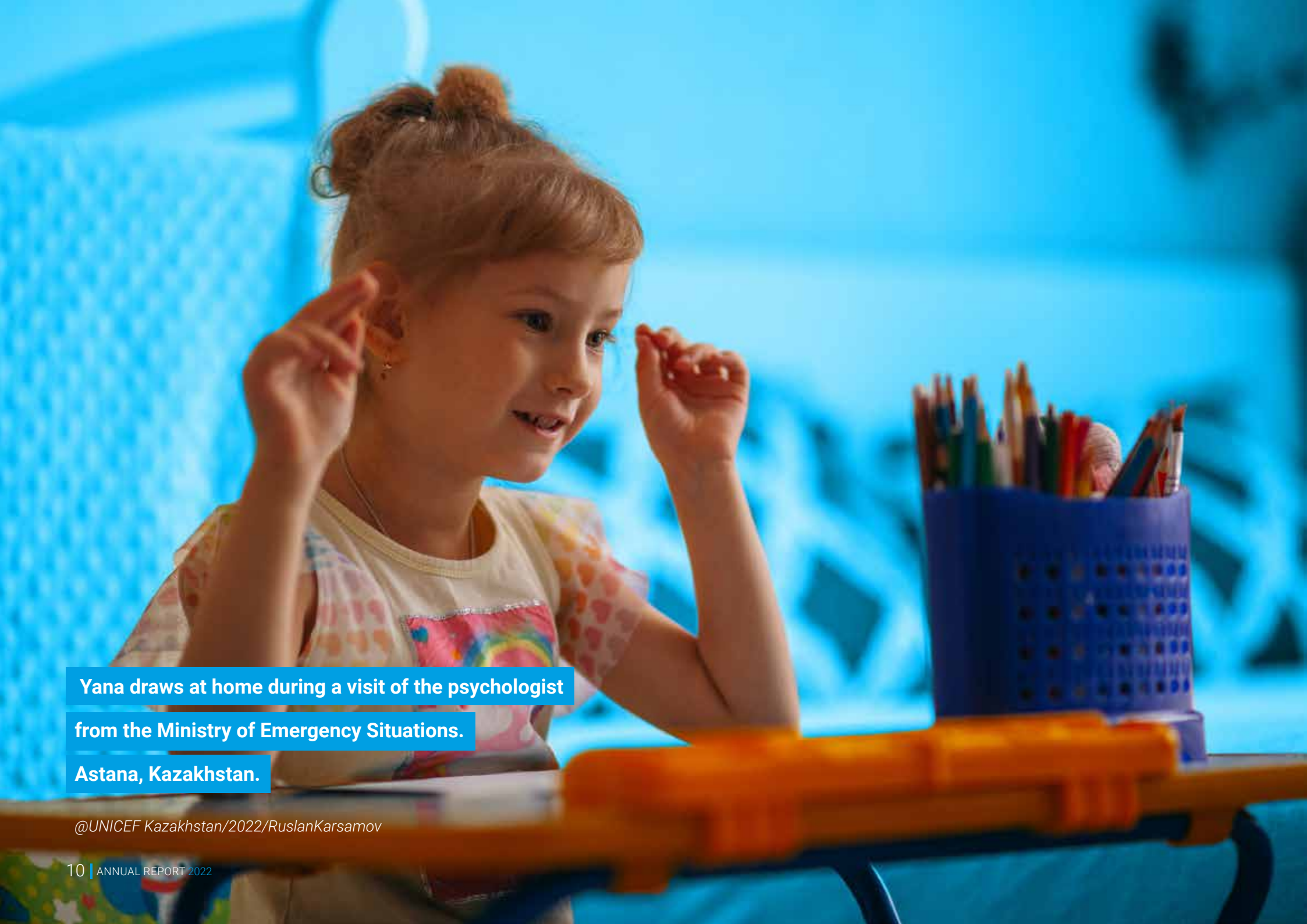
a medical facility continue to encounter challenges obtaining legal identity documents.

In 2022, 14,752 Kazakh children deprived of parental care lived in residential care facilities. The number of children in residential care is concerning, especially for children with disabilities. Despite progressing towards family-based alternative care solutions, Kazakhstan requires comprehensive childcare reform increasing preventive services for vulnerable families and better equipping social service workers.

Following a continuous and significant decrease between 2012 and 2021, the infant and child mortality rates increased again between 2020 and 2021 due to COVID–19, especially in urban areas. By the end of 2021, infant mortality rates increased slightly from 7.8 per 1,000 live births to 8.4, and child mortality rates went from 9.4 to 10. The double burden of malnutrition also remains an acute issue in Kazakhstan. Overweight and obesity rates among 8-year-old girls have remained at 18 per cent since 2015,⁵ but these rates increased among 8-year-old boys, going from 18.7 per cent in 2015 to 24.2 per cent in 2020. This increase calls for comprehensive child nutrition policies and enhanced local market regulations.

⁴ Preliminary findings, Learning Loss Study, UNICEF/University of Cambridge, 2022

⁵ COSI, 2020



Yana draws at home during a visit of the psychologist

from the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

Astana, Kazakhstan.

@UNICEF Kazakhstan/2022/RuslanKarsamov

PART 2 | Major results



**Mohammad (8), during the lesson of
the Akelius project.**

Shymkent, Kazakhstan.

@UNICEF Kazakhstan/2022/ArdakTorekhanova

Part 2:

Major results



Every child thrives and survives

Health

The National Roadmap for Immunization System Strengthening (2022–2025), developed with UNICEF support, is now available and pending official adoption. UNICEF-generated evidence on the national immunization system – including registration of medical contraindications and adverse events following immunization, cold chain, and social and behavioral drivers – identified key bottlenecks facilitating a more comprehensive approach.

In partnership with the National Center of Public Health and the Committee of Epidemiological Control, more than 2,000 health professionals, including school medical workers, enhanced their capacities on immunization, vaccine safety, and effective interpersonal communication skills, improving service quality and trust.

To tackle vaccine hesitancy and address misinformation, UNICEF helped the Ministry of

Health reinforce reliable information sources through an official website, egu.kz. More than 545,000 persons accessed educational information. Standard operating procedures were developed on health crisis communication which will support Government to communicate more systematically, credibly and transparently in times of crisis.

The National Center for Healthcare Development also drafted the National Concept for the Protection of Maternal and Child Health for 2023–2026. Key support from UNICEF ensured the Concept's alignment with international best practices and encouraged a more comprehensive approach to children's health, including mental health, protection against abuse and neglect.

Nutrition

UNICEF supported the development of a National Roadmap on Healthy Nutrition for 2022–2027 to address the double burden of malnutrition, namely, obesity and undernutrition. The National Center on Healthy Nutrition (NCHN) is finalizing national nutrition standards on micro and macronutrients for children.

Half of Kazakhstan's regions provide free school meals to children in grades 1–4, and the remaining regions pledged to join this initiative. UNICEF helped the NCHN and Ministries of Health and Education conduct a school meal assessment to inform action needed to ensure that school meals are diverse and nutritious. Simultaneously, 100 school medical workers were trained on healthy nutrition for children.

In collaboration with a major retail chain, UNICEF produced a nutritional booklet containing locally adapted nutritious recipes for children aged 6–10 years. Disseminating this booklet electronically and in retail outlets nationwide will help promote healthy family meals for children.

HIV

In 2022, the Ministry of Health with UNICEF and UNAIDS assessed the status of HIV/AIDS integration into primary healthcare. Assessment findings helped identify areas for improvement with the goal of achieving universal health coverage of HIV/AIDS services.



Nail (19) sets up his insulin pump.

Almaty, Kazakhstan.

@UNICEF Kazakhstan/2023/MaximBalakin

The 2021–2025 national ‘Healthy Nation’ project prioritized developing online health services in Kazakhstan. With UNICEF support, Youth Health Centres (YHC) in the Turkestan region piloted an online integrated services platform for adolescents. UNICEF partners also developed a handbook on integrated online medical and social services for adolescents to support this programme.

Mental health

To build youth resilience in these changing times, over 1,300 schools from seven regions engaged in the Helping Adolescents Thrive (HAT) initiative. This initiative, supported by UNICEF and WHO, promoted social and emotional learning activities benefiting 125,296 adolescents aged 10–14. HAT also equipped 1,540 school psychologists with dedicated tools and materials promoting adolescent mental health and well-being. The HAT initiative received strong positive feedback from participants.

To reduce gaps in adolescents’ access to mental health services, UNICEF began developing an on-demand online platform to connect young people with existing mental health support and referral services. UNICEF expects a 2023 launch after mobilizing a multidisciplinary team of national, regional and global experts and incorporating feedback from adolescents.



Every child learns

Early childhood education

With UNICEF support, the Ministry of Education strengthened its quality assurance system for preschool education organizations. Pre-schools may now access early childhood education score card instruments, education self-assessments, and monitoring tools. These tools help preschool staff make decisions in areas such as pedagogy, playtime, interactions with space and materials, interactions between children, and parental engagement. The Ministry of Education also enhanced its multidisciplinary approach aligned to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) to identifying children in need of services and early childhood interventions.

UNICEF finalized a survey targeting caregivers and professionals' Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices related to monitoring early childhood development, with results providing insight into family needs, parental knowledge, and upbringing. These results inform the development of the social behavioral change strategy on Early Childhood Development for Kazakhstan.

Primary and secondary education

With UNICEF and UNESCO support, Kazakhstan – following national consultations with participation of children – enhanced its educational commitments at the global Transforming Education Summit, prioritizing financial investments to reach OECD levels; strategies to overcome learning loss; gender-equity and inclusion; digital classroom transformations; quality assurance monitoring; child mental health, and life-skills education.

A national study of 6,200 schools conducted by the Information Analytical Center (IAC) and Cambridge University with UNICEF support, showed an accumulated 12 weeks of learning loss due to COVID-19. UNICEF-supported approaches to tackle learning loss, including providing teachers with remedial strategies and students with peer and volunteer support, benefiting an estimated 864 children (53 per cent girls) from 44 schools across six regions. UNICEF partners also piloted a literacy application (the Akelius App), which helped 250 children improve their reading and speaking skills. These initial results encouraged other schools to invest in education technology to support children with learning difficulties. To address school dropout, UNICEF and Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools digitized a case management guide for education staff to support at-risk children. This will enhance school psychologists' case management capacities.



UNICEF partners also piloted a literacy application (the Akelius App), which helped

250 CHILDREN

improve their reading and speaking skills.



Helping Adolescents Thrive (HAT) initiative, supported by UNICEF and WHO, promoted social and emotional learning activities benefiting

125,296

ADOLESCENTS AGED 10–14.



Amina (17), at a nanosatellite launch site during the UniSat programme. Almaty region, Kazakhstan.

@UNICEF Kazakhstan/2022/RuslanKostykin

The effectiveness of education technologies in classrooms depends on reliable internet. While Kazakhstan aims to provide all schools with an internet speed of 20 Mbps, the digital divide between urban and rural areas affects children's access to online learning and teachers' ability to use modern teaching technologies. Through the UNICEF/ITU Giga initiative, a pilot program monitored internet speeds in 38 schools around Kazakhstan. The Ministry of Education is expanding this program to over 7,000 schools. UNICEF partners provided the Government with detailed reports on school connectivity and conducted a feasibility study on technically and financially sustainable models for upgrading connectivity. Further, the Astana International Finance Centre (AIFC) joined UNICEF to identify sustainable solutions for redistributing internet connectivity from schools to local communities in remote locations.

Given children's ever-growing online presence, UNICEF launched a skills-building programme on child online safety and digital literacy to help teachers and caregivers enhance their digital intelligence and capacities to keep children safer online.



Through the UNICEF/ITU Giga initiative, a pilot program monitored internet speeds

IN 38 SCHOOLS

around Kazakhstan. The Ministry of Education is expanding this program to

OVER 7,000 SCHOOLS.

Skills

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Information and Social Development (MISD) in developing a national youth policy and reviewing the Youth Resource Centres (YRC) model to better fit youth needs. With UNICEF support, 15,142 children and adolescents strengthened their personal empowerment, active citizenship, and enhanced employability skills via online and offline platforms. As part of these initiatives, UNICEF's 'Samgau' programme, helps youth develop learning, employability, and quality work skills. Rolled out with the MISD and the MoE, the programme met with great success among youth, and in 2022, almost twice as many youth participated than in the previous year, ie. 9,560). One in four YRC hosts the programme. Simultaneously, 4,000 adolescents and youth accessed the programme through the Learning Passport online platform.



With UNICEF support,

15,142 CHILDREN

and adolescents strengthened their personal empowerment, active citizenship, and enhanced employability skills via online and offline platforms.

To promote gender equality, UNICEF continued providing girls with opportunities in STEM through the UniSat education programme. This programme helps girls build STEM competencies and acquire

soft skills using both online and in-person trainings and mentorship. In 2022, 846 girls and women participated in the online course. Further, a UniSat Learning Hub was officially opened in the Turkestan region to increase networking opportunities for girls in STEM.



Every child is protected from violence and exploitation

Violence prevention

UNICEF collaborated with line ministries, the Ombudspersons on Human Rights and Child Rights, civil society organizations, parliamentarians, and UN agencies to support legal reforms to detect, respond to, and prevent violence against children. A National Plan on Child Protection Against Violence, Suicide Prevention, Children's Rights and Well-Being for 2023–2025 was drafted and the family and gender concept revised to include stronger commitments to promote gender equality, prevent violence against children and women, increase family resilience and support services, and encourage positive parenting.

In 2022, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education's roll out of the 2021 Algorithm of Actions of Educators for the Prevention and Response to Violence Against Children. A pilot tool supporting digital case management in schools is being piloted. UNICEF

advocates for comprehensive childcare reform to prevent family separation and reduce residential care placements. UNICEF partners developed procedures and tools to create a professional foster care network and strengthen social services by improving case management. These targeted changes are designed to help children receive assistance adapted to their needs and desires.

To tackle social norms associated with violence against children, UNICEF supported a digital campaign that reached 2,180,622 people. As part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, 39 diplomatic missions and international organizations jointly called for the introduction of a statutory rape provision into the Criminal Code. This call was lechoed on social media and supported by UNICEF and its partners.



Every child lives in a safe and clean environment

UNICEF supported the Government in strengthening national capacities to create safer and cleaner environments for children. The country adopted a Roadmap for Injury Prevention (2022–2023), which includes specific child-safety provisions. With UNICEF contributions, the Ministry of Health also introduced a National Plan



UNICEF BeGreen volunteer Altynay Segizbay

at the recycling collection point.

Almaty, Kazakhstan.

@UNICEF Kazakhstan/2022/RuslanKarsamov

on Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Systems for 2022–2027. The National Center for Public Health Care developed training packages to build health workers' WASH and IPC capacities and train school personnel on WASH.

Thanks to the UNICEF-supported #BeSafe volunteering programme, which also supports girls' leadership, around 1.3 million persons accessed information on disaster risks reduction (DRR) and climate action. Additionally, nearly 4,000 school children and 1,500 teachers enhanced knowledge and capacities on DRR.



Every child has an equitable chance in life

UNICEF supported Kazakhstan in strengthening equitable access to social protection and quality support services for children and families, through improved child vulnerability monitoring and enhanced legal, policy and institutional frameworks.

The Bureau of National Statistics (BNS) finalized and introduced multidimensional child poverty measurements into official statistics. Now, the Government's 'Quality of the Population's Life' survey will monitor critical indicators of child deprivation to

support adequate appropriate policy changes and implementation strategies. Further, the Economic Research Institute (ERI) finalized a child budget methodology to track public expenditures for child rights achievements. This enabled introduction of a child budget indicator, monitoring government spending for children, into the Child Well-Being Index.

With UNICEF support, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection developed a new Social Code that includes major advances in social protection for vulnerable groups. During a national conference on social protections for families with children, 100 experts across public, private, and academic sectors shared lessons, discussed challenges, and proposed measures to strengthen legal social frameworks and the social protection system. UNICEF dialogued with parliamentarians, ombudspersons, and government officials to further enhance the coverage, adequacy, effectiveness, and overall accessibility of social assistance to children. The Government is considering transitioning to the median income model for determining the national poverty threshold. This would increase children's access to essential social assistance.

To further improve the quality of services for children with disabilities, UNICEF developed specific case management tools and training packages for social workers. These materials equipped 800

professionals and over 1,000 parents of children with disabilities benefited from enhanced support. This year, the Digital Public Goods Alliance (DPGA) also recognized the UNICEF-supported digital platform 'Accessible Kazakhstan,' which provides up-to-date information on public accessibility for adults and children with limited mobility, as the first Digital Public Good (DPG) in Central Asia.



Cross-cutting work

Emergency response to the January events

During January's tragic events, UNICEF provided swift support to families in Almaty by distributing essential supplies such as food and nutrition baskets, hygiene items, and education kits benefiting 660 children. Approximately 1,700 women and children also accessed protective services.

With the Human Rights Commissioner, UNICEF also trained 114 experts in closed-facility child rights monitoring and 20 justice professionals in protecting children's rights after contact with law enforcement during crisis.

Evidence generation, knowledge management and evaluation

In 2022, with UNICEF support, Kazakhstan enhanced its child rights monitoring commitments to support child-focused policy development and implementation strategies. Kazakhstan officially adopted the Child Well-Being Index, developed with UNICEF support. The Index consists of 56 indicators to monitor children's rights status, with initial findings presented in December 2022. Each region's status was documented and improvement areas identified.

To ensure child-rights policies are informed by the best evidence, UNICEF supported the BNS in leading the work of the technical group for the annual children's statistical book. With UNICEF support, the BNS consolidated child related statistics for the TransMonEE regional database which allows Kazakhstan to compare internationally.

UNICEF and the World Bank monitored family and child vulnerabilities through the 'Listening to Kazakhstan' survey initiative and presented officially the Survey findings, which indicate high demand for social protection, especially for multi-child families. Thanks to UNICEF advocacy and technical support, Kazakhstan officially committed to conduct MICS to assess its progress towards women and child rights' achievements since 2015, when the last MICS survey was conducted.

Communication and youth engagement

UNICEF's brand awareness and visibility significantly increased in 2022, with nearly 2 million website users, 84,497 social media followers, and a 26 per cent share of voice in traditional media.

These increases solidified UNICEF's position as the key player on child rights promotion in Kazakhstan.

UNICEF stands firmly behind its commitment that nothing for children should be developed without children. As such, UNICEF continued promoting youth engagement, including girls' empowerment and leadership, through online and offline platforms. These platforms allowed UNICEF to engage with youth on issues that matter to them and better echo their voices to support youth initiatives at both national and local levels.

To empower youth to share their experiences overcoming important modern problems, including gender stereotypes, UNICEF organized the first-ever 'UNICEF Talks' event. This programme enabled several youth, especially girls, to share their stories and promote children's rights initiatives in a TED-talk format.

UNICEF also established an account in TikTok in August 2022, creating another direct access channel for youth. A UNICEF-sponsored summer

camp programme helped 22 young boys and girls co-create TikTok content with UNICEF and improve their life skills. Dedicated TikTok campaigns for International Charity Day and World Mental Health Day reached 100,000 unique users and saw youth making their voices heard by addressing topics including online safety, mental health, stigma, and gender stereotypes.

UNICEF and the National Volunteer Network expanded volunteering initiatives in 2022. Nearly 4,000 new volunteers joined UNICEF to promote children's rights this year, marking 10,000 UNICEF volunteers since 2020. Through social media and community efforts, volunteers significantly contributed to social change for children. Among them, 734 volunteers (84 per cent girls) reached over 12,000 school children and teachers by promoting cyber safety, digital literacy, and emergency preparedness initiatives and helping children with their homework.



734 VOLUNTEERS
(84 per cent girls) reached

OVER **12,000** SCHOOL
children and teachers by promoting
cyber safety, digital literacy, and
emergency preparedness initiatives
and helping children with their
homework.



In November 2022 UNICEF organized the UNICEF Talks Youth Conference in a town hall format in Astana.

@UNICEF Kazakhstan/AzamatZhanturin

In August 2022, UNICEF launched a summer camp programme, where adolescents were studying and producing social media content to raise awareness on online safety and mental health among their peers. UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador in Kazakhstan Dinara Saduakasova supported the programme and participated in the content creating process together with the adolescents.

@UNICEF Kazakhstan/2022



PART 3 | Partnerships



A nanosatellite launch site during the UniSat programme.

Kazakhstan.

@UNICEF Kazakhstan/2022/MaratZhunisbekov

Part 3:

Partnerships

UNICEF Kazakhstan adopted a new partnerships and resource mobilization strategy for 2022–2025 aligned with existing country Programme and global UNICEF strategic plans. UNICEF worked closely with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Health, Education, Labor and Social Protection, Information and Social Development, Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace; the Bureau of National Statistics; the Child Rights Protection Committee; and the National Commission on Women and Family Demographic Affairs to advance the child rights agenda in the country.

The Human Rights Commissioner, Child Rights Commissioner, and the Parliament played an important role in UNICEF’s advocacy for child-specific reforms, including child well-being guarantees, social protection, violence protection and prevention, and childcare reform. UNICEF collaborations with the Human Rights Ombudsperson further addressed the rights of children after contact with law enforcement during crisis.

UNICEF engaged in United Nations collaborative mechanisms to operationalize the UNSDCF 2021–2025 through joint advocacy, technical coordination, and programming.: reintegrating returnees with UN Women; monitoring and accelerating SDGs with UNDP and ESCAP; supporting health policy development and mental health promotion with WHO; preparing for the Transforming Education Summit with UNESCO; promoting child online safety with ITU; engaging youth in the COP-27 Climate Change Conference with UNDP; addressing child migration with IOM and UNHCR; and promoting child justice and children’s rights with UNDP and OHCHR. UNICEF played a pivotal role in United Nations advocacy efforts for social protection legal reforms and youth policy development.

UNICEF strengthened its partnership with USAID and established a new collaboration with the CDC to strengthen the routine immunization system in Kazakhstan and tackle vaccine hesitancy and misinformation. UNICEF reinforced its joint social monitoring, poverty measurement, and

social protection initiatives with the World Bank. Working partnerships with the EU delegation continued promoting the rights of returnee and children affected by migration, and promoting youth engagement at the Central Asia Connecting Conference. UNICEF rallied diplomatic missions and international organizations to advocate for enhanced judicial protection for children against sexual violence.

UNICEF continued leveraging its strong corporate partnerships in Kazakhstan. Fourteen private companies joined the Business Advisory Council (BAC) to unlock private businesses’ potential to build a better society for children. BAC members discussed strengthening family-friendly business practices and co-developed nutrition and child online safety solutions with UNICEF. An innovative and promising partnership with TikTok to promote joint campaigns on shared values and agendas, including mental health and child online safety, opened doors to directly reach youth on issues that matter to them.

Partnerships with civil society organizations and academia contributed to expanded volunteering and youth skills programmes, increased capacity building, and furthered institutional and legal reform efforts. These partnerships accelerated progress on achieving results for children in the following areas: nutrition, immunization, school connectivity, learning loss, early and inclusive education, child online safety, child protection against violence, and gender equality. UNICEF also established a partnership with the Center on Emergencies and Disaster Risks Reduction to enhance national and local emergency preparedness systems using a child-focused approach.



UNICEF discussed progress made on promoting children’s safety online, healthy nutrition and family-friendly business practices on the second meeting of the Business Advisory Council.

@UNICEF Kazakhstan/2022/SalamatAyazbai

PART 4 | Innovations and lessons learned



Teacher Inna Zhilevskaya, a participant of the intensive online course on inclusive blended learning, is checking the work of her students.

Ridder, Kazakhstan.

@UNICEF Kazakhstan/2022/IrinaVolzhenina

Part 4:

Innovations and lessons learned

Promoting comprehensive and integrated health approaches

National authorities adapted healthcare systems to COVID-19 viral mutations to address intensified typical respiratory infections. A widespread vaccination program among adults and adolescents drove this change. The healthcare system is gradually returning from a survival-based approach to a thrive-based agenda. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of primary healthcare in ensuring quality healthcare provision to people in both non-emergencies and healthcare crises. The health sector cannot resolve public health issues alone, especially when it comes to children's health, where cross-sectoral collaboration among education, social protection, and other sectors is crucial.

Building on its emergency-response experience, including COVID-19 and during the tragic events in January, UNICEF is supporting evidence-based updates to the Universal Progressive Patronage

Model (UPMP). Introduced into Primary Health Care (PHC) organizations in 2019, but hindered by COVID-19 with subsequent pressure on Primary health Care. In 2022, UNICEF also successfully encouraged the Government to develop an integrated child healthcare vision. Overall, investment made on research - tackling both demand and supply sides for universal immunization, along with extensive local experts' mobilization, and consensus building dialogue with authorities, helped identifying gaps and developing a comprehensive Roadmap for immunization system strengthening.

Expanding youth's access to skills programmes

Blended learning (online/offline) formats were instrumental in expanding access to youth skills programmes in 2022. Youth Resource Centres and schools around Kazakhstan increasingly favored the Upshift/Samgau blended skills programme, which adolescents found more attractive because

it involves in-person interactions and mentoring. Anchoring the programme to the 'Learning Passport' digital platform was a cost-effective approach to engaging students from schools in rural areas. The number of Samgau digital platform users increased threefold in 2022, requiring programmers to develop a digital application for launch in early 2023.

Strengthening child rights monitoring

The Kazakhstan Country Office continued investing in meaningful research and evaluation efforts. Experience dictates that building evidence-based national commitments requires early-stage development of sound dissemination plans and targeted advocacy strategies for critical stakeholders. UNICEF successfully opened dialogues with national authorities about expanding the child rights monitoring framework, developed in the Region, to compare evidence-based statistics with national commitments, develop result-based policies, and inform future programmes.

The Prime Minister's office endorsed the Child Well-Being Index, developed with UNICEF support, in close cooperation with the Child Rights Protection Committee and the Institute of Economic Research. The Index represents a major national innovation, as it consists of 56 indicators used to monitor the status of children's rights in Kazakhstan. The process for developing the set of indicators and a calculation methodology is complex, as it must ensure not only comprehensive and accurate monitoring, but also efficiency and sustainability. As such, UNICEF partnered with the BNS to review data sources and collection methods and develop an online dashboard to monitor children's well-being regionally.

Promoting public financing for children

With UNICEF support, the Government successfully integrated child budget monitoring into the new Child Well-Being Index to track public spending for children. This work revealed significant gaps in child-specific public expenditure tracking methods. Incomplete child sensitiveness of the data generated by central and local authorities prevents a comprehensive analysis of public expenditures for children. Moving the child budget initiative forward requires significant investments to build internal systems to track child-focused public allocations and expenditures and strong national commitments on public spending for children.

UNICEF continues consulting with the Government to develop long-term plans for child-specific budgeting and spending.

Engaging through new digital platforms

Opening UNICEF's TikTok channel and establishing an innovative partnership with TikTok created a tremendous opportunity to directly access adolescents not otherwise reached through Instagram and Facebook. Organizing a summer camp with adolescents and youth to produce TikTok content for UNICEF's new channel further promoted youth engagement. Producing and maintaining dynamic, targeted, and high-quality content in accordance with TikTok trends necessitates additional investments.

UNICEF Kazakhstan activated its donation page to raise funds for the Ukraine appeal. Using global digital assets, the Country Office promoted the donation page through its social media platforms. As a result, the page received a high volume of traffic and positive public feedback. Individual givers highlighted the need to modify the donation page to reflect local practices for financial transactions, as Credit cards are not widely used in Kazakhstan and people instead almost universally use the Kaspi platform to make electronic payments. Successful digital fundraising relies on locally adapted platforms and strong brand communication strategies.

Building evidence and addressing gender-balanced parenting

While conducting a knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey on early childhood developmental monitoring, several target groups were a hard to reach, including parents expecting their first child, parents/caregivers of children with disabilities aged 0–7, and fathers. These difficulties likely resulted from cultural practices, such as the delicate and private nature of first-time pregnancies in Kazakhstan and the prevalence of traditional gender roles in childrearing. This bottleneck highlights the continued importance of UNICEF's work to promote gender-equal parenting and more in-depth qualitative analyses in this area.

Алихан Кошеубаев

UNICEF Talks

UNICEF Talks provides children and young people with an open platform to exercise their rights to freely speak out and express their views on any issues affecting their interests.



Astana, Kazakhstan.

@UNICEF Kazakhstan/AzamatZhanturin



UNICEF Kazakhstan

Address:

-  Block 1, 10 Beibitshilik Street
Astana, Z10K8H4
Kazakhstan
-  +7 (7172) 32-28-78

Follow us:

-  UNICEFKazakhstan
-  @unicefkaz
-  @unicefkazakhstan
-  @unicefkazakhstan
-  <https://www.unicef.org/kazakhstan/>