



unicef  | for every child

**Cover photograph:**

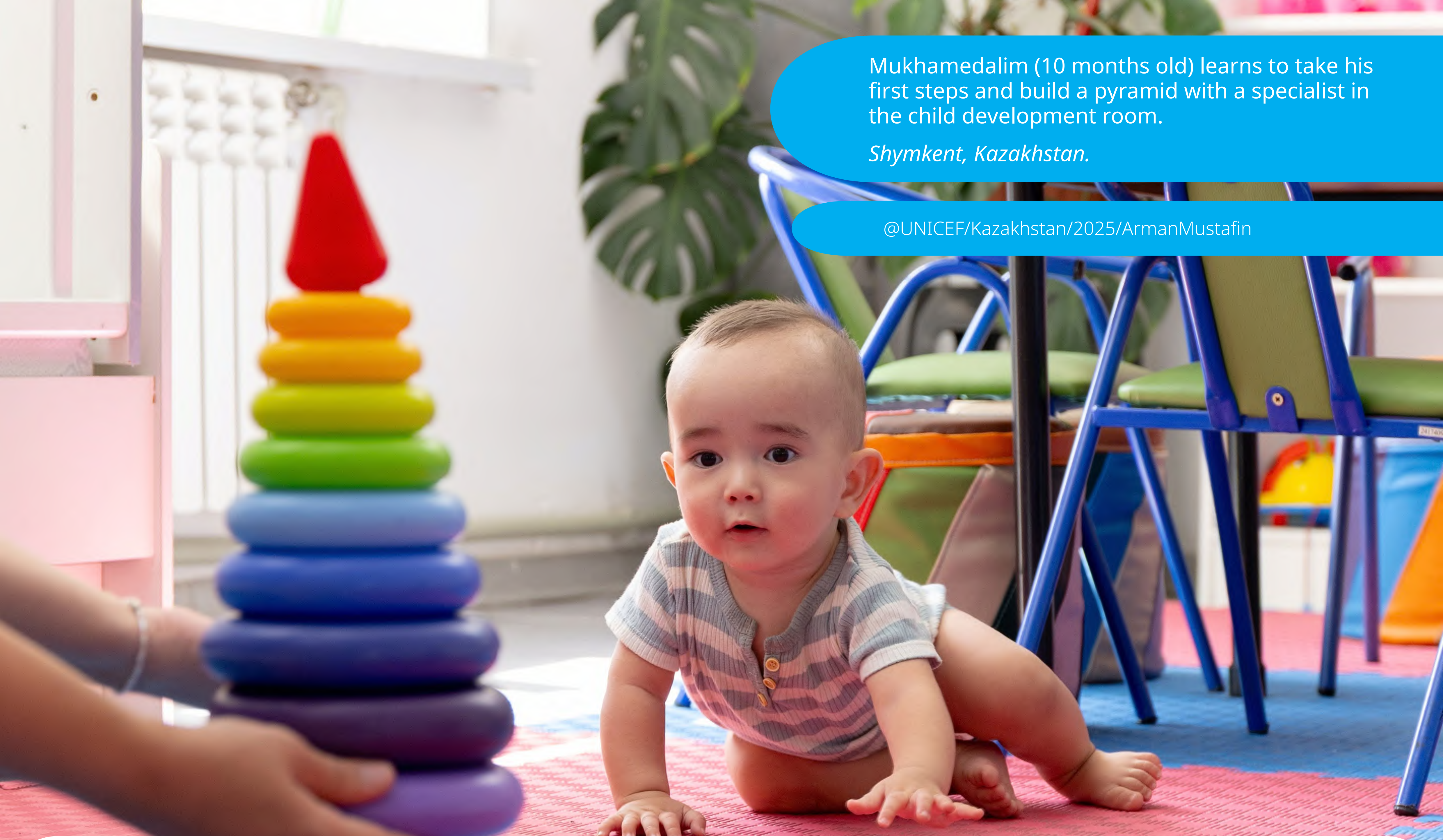
Daria (2 years old) develops fine motor skills with her mother. Early childhood development helps children better prepare for school. Shymkent, Kazakhstan.

@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/ArmanMustafin

Mukhamedalim (10 months old) learns to take his first steps and build a pyramid with a specialist in the child development room.

*Shymkent, Kazakhstan.*

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# АЯЛЫҚ СОТ



Spandiyar Arailym (15 years old, Almaty), winner of the national drawing contest "The Constitution through the eyes of children." Organized by the Constitutional Court, the Ministry of Education, and UNICEF to mark the 30th anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the contest promotes child participation and legal awareness.

*Astana, Kazakhstan.*

@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/SultanAnarbekov

# | Situation Overview

In 2025, Kazakhstan advanced an ambitious wave of legislative and regulatory reforms aimed at strengthening child well-being and accelerating the realization of children's rights. The measures covered healthcare, education, family policy, social protection, violence prevention, and digital safety, reflecting a shift from fragmented interventions toward an integrated, preventive, and rights-based system.

Kazakhstan also reaffirmed its commitment to the UN 2030 Agenda, moving from broad alignment to deeper integration of the SDGs into national planning. A major milestone was the presentation of the Third Voluntary National Review, based on MICS 2024 findings, at the UN High-Level Political Forum.

The opening of the UN Regional SDG Centre for Central Asia and Afghanistan in Almaty further positioned Kazakhstan as a regional hub for advancing sustainable development and strengthening cross-border cooperation.

Kazakhstan continues to make steady progress on gender equality, ranking 50th out of 172 countries in the Gender Inequality Index with a low inequality score of 0.182, reflecting strong outcomes in health, empowerment, and economic participation.

Government investments in human capital, coupled with structured institutional reforms, continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to enhancing accountability, improving service delivery, and advancing child-centred policies at both national and subnational levels.

In 2025, Kazakhstan advanced an ambitious wave of legislative and regulatory reforms aimed at strengthening child well-being and accelerating the realization of children's rights. The measures covered healthcare, education, family policy, social protection, violence prevention, and digital safety, reflecting a shift from fragmented interventions toward an integrated, preventive, and rights-based system.

A visitor at Comic Con Astana learns about children's rights through interactive games at the UNICEF pavilion.

*Astana, Kazakhstan.*

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Economic growth remained robust in 2025, driven by the oil sector and strong domestic demand. GDP expanded by approximately 6.3 percent in the first nine months of the year, outperforming international forecasts. Investment growth (16.1 percent) also supported the positive trajectory. However, inflation persisted as a major challenge, fluctuating between 10 and 13 percent according to IMF estimates. Expansionary fiscal policy -including substantial National Fund transfers and a non-oil fiscal deficit exceeding 8 percent of GDP - continued to exert upward pressure on prices. To strengthen fiscal sustainability, the Government adopted a new Budget Code and Tax Code in 2025, aiming to gradually reduce dependence on the National Fund and reinforce long-term discipline.



6.3%

GDP GROWTH

in the first nine months of the year

16.1%

INVESTMENT GROWTH

supporting positive trends



HOWEVER

BETWEEN 10 AND 13%

INFLATION RATE

persisted as a major challenge

Despite overall progress, regional disparities remain pronounced. Regions with the lowest per capita income also experience the most significant child deprivations, as confirmed by MICS 2024. Place of residence and income level are the strongest predictors of disadvantage. Children from the bottom 40 percent of the income distribution particularly those in rural areas, face persistent challenges in education, access to safe drinking water, and financial inclusion. Digital access has improved nationwide, and gaps have narrowed, but urban low-income families continue to lag in mobile phone and internet access. Moreover, urban poor children show higher rates of acute malnutrition (wasting) compared to other groups. Wasting (4.5%) and underweight (2.4%) are less prevalent nationally yet remain concentrated among boys and children from disadvantaged households, with rural residence.

A positive trend is the reduction of overweight prevalence (7.5%) among children under five, however boys from richer households are more at risk, highlighting the importance of addressing gender and socioeconomic patterns in early childhood nutrition.

Ulbolsyn (2 years old), together with her mother and a child development specialist, reads a book.

Shymkent, Kazakhstan.

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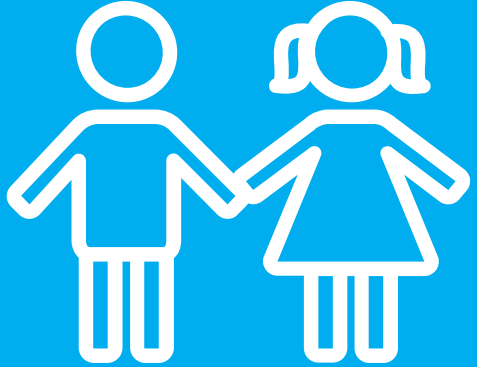


The largest inequality is observed in early childhood education and organized learning. Participation in early childhood education ranges from 55 % among children from poorer households with lowly educated mothers to 77 % among children from richer households with highly educated mothers. Similarly, participation in organized learning is lowest among children from poorer households and highest among girls from richer households with highly educated mothers, highlighting persistent socio-economic gradients early in life.

Poverty declined slightly in 2025, with 5.3 percent of the population living below the subsistence minimum, compared to 5.6 percent in 2024. Although the situation has improved, levels have not returned to 2022 figures. Children remain disproportionately affected: 7.2 percent lived below the poverty line in 2025, compared to 9.1 percent in 2022. Rural children are particularly vulnerable, with poverty rates at 10 percent, significantly higher than the 6.4 percent reported among urban children. In 2023, children accounted for 40 percent of the poor population, up from 27 percent in 2006.

Climate shocks further compound vulnerabilities, especially for rural and low-income families. While Kazakhstan faces climate risks to a lesser extent than its neighbors, its adaptive capacity remains limited, increasing exposure to shocks.

Kazakhstan continued consolidating its reputation as a regional digital leader in 2025. Major investments in digital transformation supported more accessible, transparent, and efficient social protection services. UNICEF assisted the Government - particularly the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection - in transitioning from a categorical to a needs-based social assistance model, enabled by the Digital Family Card information system and a new scoring-based eligibility approach. During the year, Kazakhstan also adopted Central Asia's first Law on Artificial Intelligence, launched a National AI Development Plan, and established a dedicated ministry for digital development and AI.

7.2% 

### Children living in poverty

Children remain disproportionately affected, despite a decline from 9.1% in 2022.

10% **RURAL CHILD POVERTY**

In rural areas, poverty reaches 10%, compared to 6.4% among urban children.



Yasmina (2 years old) studies pictures of animals. Reading together with parents builds the foundation for cognitive development.

*Shymkent, Kazakhstan.*

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Following recommendations from the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which emphasized Kazakhstan's continued reliance on a medical model of disability and gaps in anti-discrimination legislation, the Government adopted the Concept of Inclusive Policy for 2025–2030. UNICEF provided technical support in preparing a draft law to amend national legislation on disability rights, ensuring alignment with international standards and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

A particularly significant development in 2025 was the advancement of evidence-based social policy. The Bureau of National Statistics, with UNICEF's support, finalized a multidimensional poverty measurement methodology. It was endorsed in January 2026 and will enable more precise targeting of social programmes, address structural inequalities, and operationalize the principle of "leaving no one behind" across national policies.

The number of children in residential care increased from 11,281 in 2023 to 13,532 in 2024, largely due to improved data accuracy following revisions to the national database on children in alternative care. Legislative amendments introduced in 2025 strengthened safeguards for children without parental care by prioritizing family-based care, formalizing a professional mentoring system, and raising qualification and accountability standards for professionals working with vulnerable children. Measures to prevent violence, including bullying and abuse were reinforced through stronger legal responsibilities, enhanced oversight mechanisms, and coordinated prevention programmes.



13,532

CHILDREN IN  
RESIDENTIAL CARE

**The number increased from 11,281 in 2023**, driven by improved data accuracy.

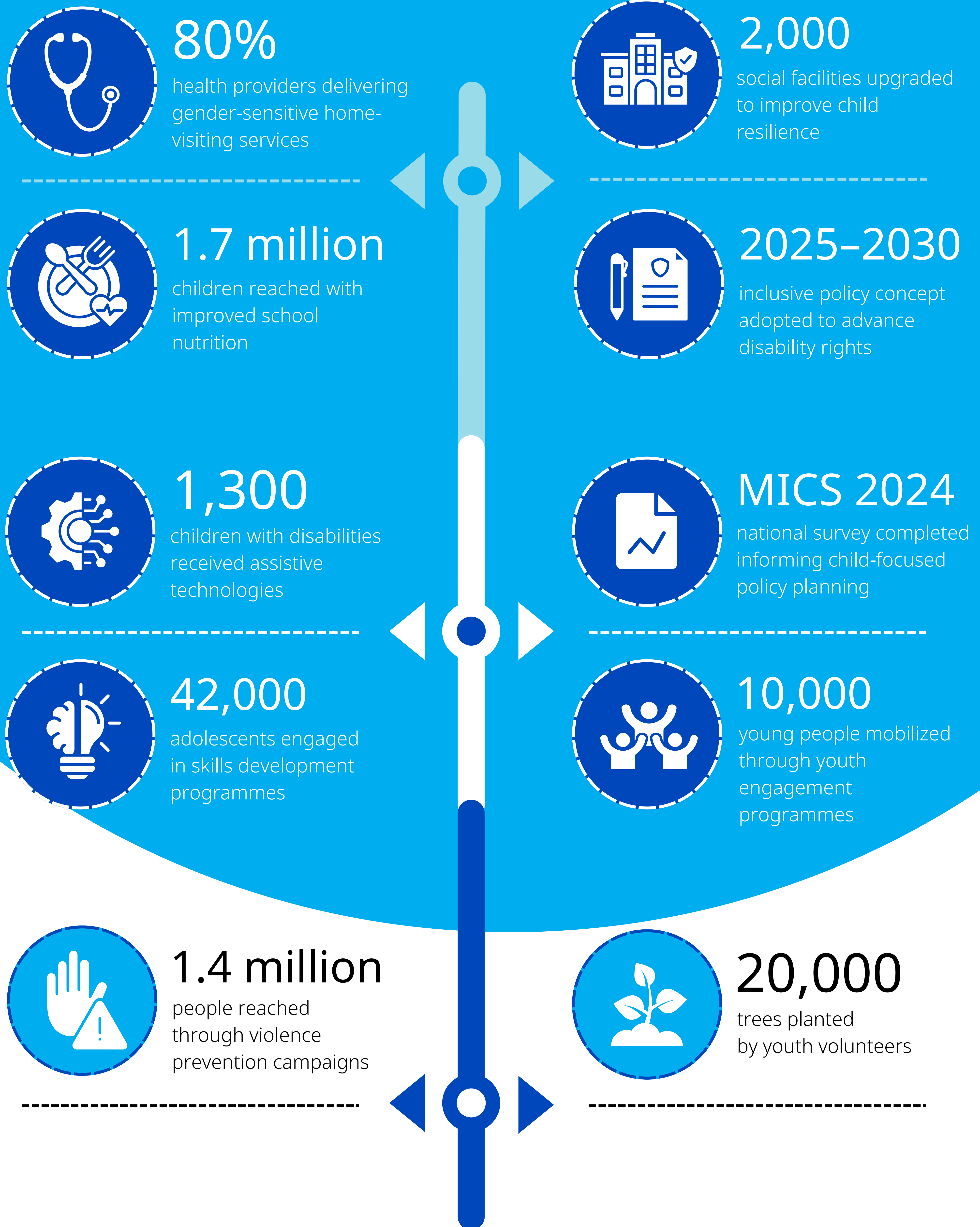


Mariam (2 years old) at a playground.  
*Shymkent, Kazakhstan.*

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## | Key Results

In 2025, UNICEF supported the Government of Kazakhstan in strengthening health, education, protection and social systems to improve outcomes for children nationwide.



# Every Child Thrives

## Major achievements



Infant mortality declined from 7.67 to 6.80, marking improved child survival



More than 2,000 specialists were trained on nutrition standards and tools



A national programme on child mental health was initiated to strengthen policy and services

## HEALTH

Infant mortality continued to decline from 7.67 in 2023 to 6.80 in 2024, marking a notable improvement in early childhood survival. In 2025, UNICEF provided extensive support to the Government of Kazakhstan to strengthen health services, particularly in early childhood development (ECD), patronage models, immunization, and adolescent mental health.

UNICEF supported the integration of early childhood development and early intervention services into the pediatric care standard at the primary health-care level, including the establishment and regulation of Development and Early Intervention Centers within polyclinics. The Guide for Monitoring Child Development (GMCD) was adapted to Kazakhstan's context, and 16 national master trainers were prepared to lead capacity-building efforts.

To further strengthen the Universal Progressive Model of Patronage (UPMP), UNICEF offered technical expertise to integrate gender responsive approaches into pediatric PHC standards, updated training modules, and conducted a national assessment of the model's goals, functions, outcomes, and resources. Training sessions were delivered for trainers and specialists to support nationwide scale-up. As the result, the proportion of health providers delivering home-visiting services with adequate skills in gender-sensitive caregiving, early stimulation and responsive parenting increased from 10% (2019) to 80% (2025).

A health worker teaches the mother of 14-day-old Aibibi proper breastfeeding techniques and newborn care.

*Regional Hospital, Shymkent.*

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A doctor examines 8-month-old Daryn.  
*Shymkent, Kazakhstan.*

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UNICEF also strengthened the national immunization system by adapting a training module on interpersonal communication for vaccination. A master-training programme helped equip more than 200 trainers with skills to work effectively with parents and support increased uptake of child immunization. UNICEF's partnership with the Government of Kazakhstan on procurement services remains a critical mechanism for ensuring timely and equitable access to safe, affordable, and quality-assured medicines and health supplies. In 2025, UNICEF supported the procurement of four types of vaccines, antiretroviral medicines (ARVs),

and OraQuick HIV self-tests, with a total value of USD 5.6 million, ensuring quality assurance, cost efficiency, and full transparency in line with international procurement standards.

Under the Global Health Security agenda, youth engagement expanded significantly with the establishment of six UNICEF Youth Community Hubs in Astana, Almaty, Shymkent, Aktau, Semey, and Kokshetau. Through the "Sau Bol" programme, more than 2,000 new volunteers were mobilized, and 4,476 completed online training to strengthen community-level preparedness for public health emergencies.

## NUTRITION

UNICEF continued supporting national efforts to address overweight, obesity, and micronutrient deficiencies among children, with a strong focus on improving the quality of school meals for 1.7 million primary school children. The Ministries of Health and Education officially adopted the national nutrition standard for educational institutions, developed with the Kazakh Academy of Nutrition and UNICEF.

The standard defines clear procedures for procurement, food preparation, community engagement, and nutrition education; establishes rules to limit sugar, salt, and saturated fats; and restricts the sale of unhealthy foods and beverages in schools. It also specifies required quantities and frequency of diverse food groups - meat, fish, dairy, fruits, vegetables, legumes, and grains to ensure adequate nutrition.

To ensure school menus meet national nutrient standards, UNICEF developed an online application that allows parents and schools to assess macro- and micronutrient composition of meals. With UNICEF support, the National Center for Public Health and the

UNICEF also supported the development of recommended menus for schools and kindergartens and the launch of a dedicated national website on school nutrition, serving as a comprehensive resource for families, educators, and food providers.

## MENTAL HEALTH

According to national data, 16.6% of adolescents show poor mental well-being or signs of possible depression. Nearly half do not seek MHPSS services due to parental consent requirements. Self-harm remains the leading cause of death among adolescents and youth (10–24), with suicide rates increasing sharply with age and higher incidence in rural areas.

Promoting the mental health and well-being of children, and reducing high suicide rates, remains a national priority.

Zere (9 months old) plays with her mother. Family support is key to a child's healthy emotional development.

*Shymkent, Kazakhstan.*

@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/ArmanMustafin



Akkerbez (2 years old) develops cognitive skills through play in the child development room.

*Shymkent, Kazakhstan.*

@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/ArmanMustafin



In April 2025, the Government initiated the development of the National Programme Children of Kazakhstan, and UNICEF provided technical recommendations to strengthen mental health policy, legislation, and intersectoral systems. Support focused on improving service accessibility, coverage, quality, and cross-sector collaboration.

In August 2025, the Orken Institute, with UNICEF support, began developing a national Comprehensive Plan for preventing bullying, suicide, and violence in secondary schools. Psychological support services were strengthened through a standardized trauma-informed training programme.

UNICEF trained 51 national trainers, at least one per region who subsequently trained 204 professionals, including school psychologists and parenting specialists.

UNICEF supported mainstreaming MHPSS across government systems by helping establish a unified psychological services system within the education sector. Standards and guidelines for MHPSS in youth health centres were piloted and scaled, and an accreditation system was introduced to ensure quality.

# Every Child Learns

## Major achievements



More than 4,600 frontline workers were trained to strengthen early childhood services



Over 166,700 parents received information on child development



Youth-led initiatives reached 60 schools engaging 25,682 students

In 2025, UNICEF's evidence-informed advocacy supported the Ministry of Education in reviewing early childhood education and care (ECEC) financing and the national assistive technologies ecosystem to improve access, equity, inclusion, and quality. The ECEC and education agenda was delivered with the high-level engagement from the government, especially Ministers of education, health and social protection but also with technical dialogue with the UNICEF regional advisors and specialists on ECD, ECI, Education, Disability and Digital Learning, Financing.

Despite high official enrolment figures, MICS 2024 shows only 68.7% of children aged 3–5 accessing preschool, revealing significant methodological discrepancies and highlighting the need for harmonised indicators aligned with international standards. Children in rural areas, low-income families, and children with disabilities remain the least likely to access quality, affordable preschool education. Only 1.4% of children with disabilities were enrolled in kindergartens in 2024, despite a 10% disability prevalence.

UNICEF recommended adopting an equity-sensitive per-capita funding formula, extending inclusion incentives to private kindergartens, and strengthening quality assurance mechanisms.

Talshyn (1 year old) masters new skills through play with her father. Fathers' active engagement in early childhood development stimulates cognitive abilities and strengthens emotional bonds.

[Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan.](#)

[@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/ArmanMustafin](#)



Aikorkem Orakbayeva, a 6th-grade student at IT School-Lyceum №80, uses digital technologies for learning.

*Shymkent, Kazakhstan.*

[@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/TimurYerketayev](#)

With UNICEF support, the Government developed the first ever joint Satty Bastau Comprehensive Plan on ECD and Early Intervention (2025–2027). This landmark plan represents the first coordinated action among the ministries of health, education, and social welfare to ensure the best start in life for every child. It establishes a unified framework to deliver high-quality early childhood development and early intervention services, especially for children with developmental needs and disabilities.

UNICEF also continued to technically support the Government service provision strengthening, more than 4,600 frontline workers and 1,000 parents accessed online training, and over 166,700 parents received information on developmental milestones through UNICEF's platforms. The national conference in October 2025 culminated in the Astana Call to Action on the Best Start for Every Child, reaffirming national commitments.

UNICEF strengthened inclusive education through evidence-based reforms on early identification, intervention, and equity-sensitive financing. Through the Assistive Technologies Ecosystem Assessment, UNICEF recommended standardized terminology, unified data systems, and stronger parental engagement. UNICEF equipped 1,300 children with disabilities with assistive technologies and reached over 16,000 indirectly. Two national online training courses and a handbook for 5,100 computer science teachers were integrated into the Orleu platform.

UNICEF also advanced innovation through Digital Public Goods and inclusive game design modules co-created with girls, now available on the Learning Passport platform.



## SKILLS

In 2025, UNICEF strengthened national education systems to support future-ready skills. Technical assistance helped integrate social-emotional learning modules (ages 10–13) and mental health awareness programmes (ages 14–17) into the draft National Comprehensive Plan. Overall in 2025, 42 000 adolescents participated in UNICEF supported skills initiatives, of whom 50.7% were girls enhancing their STEM,

civic engagement and employability skills.

Through Skills4Girls partnerships with KBTU, accessibility modules were added to the national game development course, enabling girls in STEM to co-create inclusive games that reflect diversity, ethics, and emerging global trends.



6th-grade students Aikorkem and Adilet study English using the innovative Akelius program in the school library.

Shymkent, Kazakhstan.

[@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/TimurYerketayev](#)

With UNICEF's support, Youth-led climate change education initiatives reached 60 schools, engaging 25,682 students, including 13,810 girls in research and project-based learning on climate mitigation and adaptation.

The UN Youth Advisory Council (50% female) continued shaping UN and Government policy dialogue. Council members participated in national youth events and initiated a U-Report survey to gather youth perspectives for future advocacy.

# Every Child is Protected from Violence and Exploitation

## Major achievements



Violent discipline declined to 38% in 2025, down from 52.7% in 2015



Over 20,000 families received social and psychological support services



31 regional focal points were trained to support child protection services



More than 15,400 families are under regular monitoring

In 2025, UNICEF supported Kazakhstan in advancing child protection system reforms and elevating high-level advocacy and policy dialogue on VAC, mental wellbeing and early childhood development, through policy development, institutional capacity strengthening, and enhanced service delivery. The State counsellor, Child Rights Commissioner and the Senate played an important role in advancing UNICEF's advocacy, strengthening national commitments to children's rights, and accelerating child-centred reforms, including through the development of the National Programme Children of Kazakhstan (2026–2030).

UNICEF contributed to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan on Protection of Children from Violence, Suicide Prevention, and Ensuring Children's Rights and Wellbeing (2023–2025) and to the development of the upcoming National Programme Children of Kazakhstan (2026–2030). UNICEF also supported the design of a national programme on suicide and violence prevention with strong emphasis on school-based interventions.


A national child protection system maturity assessment conducted with line ministries examined legislation, governance, service delivery, workforce capacity, coordination, child participation, and data systems.

A visitor at Comic Con Astana shows off a UNICEF bracelet received for participating in a digital safety challenge.

*Astana, Kazakhstan.*

@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/RomanKopanev





Members of Parliament, government officials, and international experts meet in Astana to discuss the results of the national program to protect children in the digital environment, supported by the Safe Online Global Fund. Strengthening child protection systems is a result of the shared commitment of all partners.

*Astana, Kazakhstan.*

[@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/ArmanMustafin](#)

Findings informed the development of the Minimum Package of Child Protection Services and supported the establishment of Child Rights Protection Departments under local Akimats.

UNICEF supported the development of standards regulating child-friendly support rooms for child victims of violence—ensuring coordinated, child-sensitive, multi-sectoral assistance “under one roof”.

Thirty-one regional focal points were trained and cascaded training to specialists from Family Support Centers and mobile teams. More than 1,500 professionals were trained nationally, and specialists provided social, psychological, and legal support to approximately 20,000 families, with 15,400 families under regular monitoring.

UNICEF strengthened psychological support through standardized trauma-informed training for 51 national trainers and 204 frontline professionals.

In online child sexual exploitation and abuse, UNICEF supported coordination with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and

contributed to competency assessments for cyber police units and police academies in 10 regions.

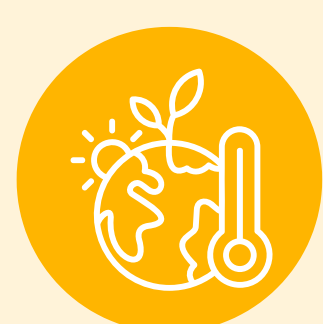
MICS 2024 shows violent discipline decreased from 52.7% in 2015 to 38% in 2025, a 28% reduction at national level. Though boys from poorer households and children of less-educated mothers consistently form the furthest-behind groups, particularly in urban areas. In contrast, girls from richer households living in urban areas are the least exposed to violent discipline. These patterns highlight the role of gender norms, household wealth, and parental education in shaping children’s exposure to violence.

UNICEF supported integrating a violence and bullying module into the National Education Database and piloted a monitoring framework for children returning from conflict zones.

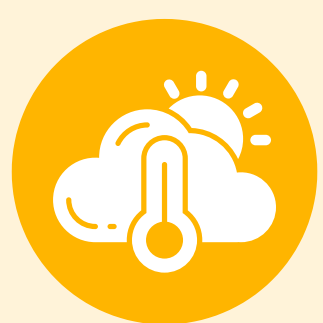
Overall, 2025 saw significant progress in child protection reforms, strengthened legislation, and deeper recognition of child protection as an integrated, multi-sectoral system, and reached 1.4 million people through campaigns on violence prevention, positive parenting, and online safety.

# Every Child Lives in a Safe and Clean Environment

## Major achievements



Kazakhstan joined 65 countries in global climate action initiatives



The first national Climate Risk Index for children was developed



Child rights were integrated into national climate policy (NDC 3.0)



Climate-resilient health systems were strengthened nationwide

In 2025, UNICEF accelerated child-sensitive climate action in Kazakhstan by positioning child rights and climate resilience at the centre of national climate policy and investment frameworks.

Through evidence-based advocacy, targeted technical assistance, and youth engagement UNICEF supported the transition from policy commitments to institutionalized, child-responsive climate governance. As a result, Kazakhstan adopted a USD 1.2 billion investment envelope to upgrade 2,000 social facilities for children reaching 1,500 million children. This includes \$239.1 million from the state budget and \$982.6 million from other investors, with strong focus on climate-resilient education, green skills, and youth-led climate action.

A key milestone was the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources' commitment to integrate child rights and child-specific vulnerabilities into Kazakhstan's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) marking a shift toward a child-sensitive NDC that recognizes children as both a high-risk group and agents of climate adaptation and mitigation. This was reinforced by endorsement of the Concept for Ecological Culture Development (2024–2029), embedding climate awareness, environmental stewardship, and intergenerational responsibility into public policy.

UNICEF volunteers cleaned the Caspian Sea coast during an environmental campaign. Climate change is a challenge for every child's future.

*Aktau, Kazakhstan.*

@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/



A volunteer at the UNICEF Youth Eco-community meetup held at Nazarbayev University. UNICEF supports youth initiatives aimed at solving environmental challenges and creating a sustainable future.

*Astana, Kazakhstan.*

@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/ArmanMustafin



At the global level, Kazakhstan joined 65 countries in signing the Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action, signaling alignment with international child-centred climate agenda and strengthening access to climate finance partnerships and inclusive governance platforms.

To operationalize these commitments, UNICEF, together with the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Regional Center on Emergencies and DRR, and the Bureau of National Statistics, developed Kazakhstan's first Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI) model using UNICEF's CCRI Disaster Risk Management methodology. Subnational data collection established a national baseline on children's exposure, vulnerability, and adaptive capacity, supporting risk-informed planning, intersectoral coordination, and digital integration.

Critically for sustainability, the Government agreed to institutionalize CCRI DRM within national statistical systems and local planning processes, enabling predictable financing, scalability, and long-term evidence-based decision-making. Capacity-building in GIS, climate risk analysis, and modelling strengthened national ownership.

Complementary interventions strengthened climate-resilient health systems, including regulatory reforms for air quality monitoring in schools and integration of environmental health into pediatric care, directly reducing climate-related health risks for children.

# Every Child Has an Equitable Chance in Life

## Major achievements



The Digital Family Card system enabled more targeted social support



An inclusive policy framework for 2025–2030 was adopted to advance disability rights



Social protection systems were strengthened to address child poverty and inequality

In 2025, UNICEF supported the Government of Kazakhstan in advancing inclusive, child-sensitive, and rights-based social protection reforms during a period of economic and institutional transition. Despite strong GDP growth driven by oil production and investment expansion, persistent inflation, fiscal vulnerabilities, and geopolitical risks continued to disproportionately affect low-income households and families with children, especially those with disabilities. UNICEF's support focused on strengthening effectiveness, equity, and child rights integration within social protection systems and services to address multidimensional child poverty.

A major milestone was the completion of an innovative multidimensional poverty measurement methodology by the Bureau of National Statistics in partnership with UNICEF. Moving beyond income measures, the new approach captures child deprivations across education, health, and living standards. The methodology has been formally adopted in early 2026. Once institutionalized, it will allow more precise identification of children and families in difficult life situations, including those experiencing overlapping vulnerabilities.

Akkerbez (2 years old) develops fine motor skills using kinetic sand, guided by a child development specialist and her mother. Such sessions are critical for cognitive development in early childhood.

*Regional Hospital, Shymkent, Kazakhstan, August 2025.*

@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/ArmanMustafin





A student at School-Gymnasium №4 in Kokshetau develops alternative communication skills using PECS cards. The equipment was provided through UNICEF's digital inclusion program, funded by proceeds from the UNICEF Gala Dinner in 2024. Kazakhstan.

@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/NurlanKhalamkhan

UNICEF also supported the Government's transition from a categorical to a needs-based social assistance model, led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. The reform is anchored in the Digital Family Card integrated information system and a new scoring-based eligibility methodology piloted in Shymkent and Karaganda. UNICEF provided technical assistance to assess the scoring logic, conduct simulation analysis using household survey data, benchmark international practices, and deliver recommendations to enhance equity, transparency, and inclusion before national scale-up.

Another significant achievement was the Government's adoption of the Concept of Inclusive Policy for 2025–2030, following the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Concept formally recognizes structural discrimination and introduces non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation as guiding principles.

It also commits Kazakhstan to transitioning from a medical to a social and human rights-based model of disability. UNICEF continues providing technical support to draft legislation amending national laws on disability rights, ensuring alignment with international standards and the UN CRPD.

To inform fiscal and policy dialogue during broader governance reforms, including the adoption of new Budget and Tax Codes, UNICEF launched a study on fossil fuel subsidies to identify opportunities for redirecting fiscal resources toward targeted, child-sensitive social protection. UNICEF advocated for shifting from broad, untargeted subsidies to compensatory mechanisms that protect vulnerable families while maintaining fiscal stability. Findings will be presented in early 2026.

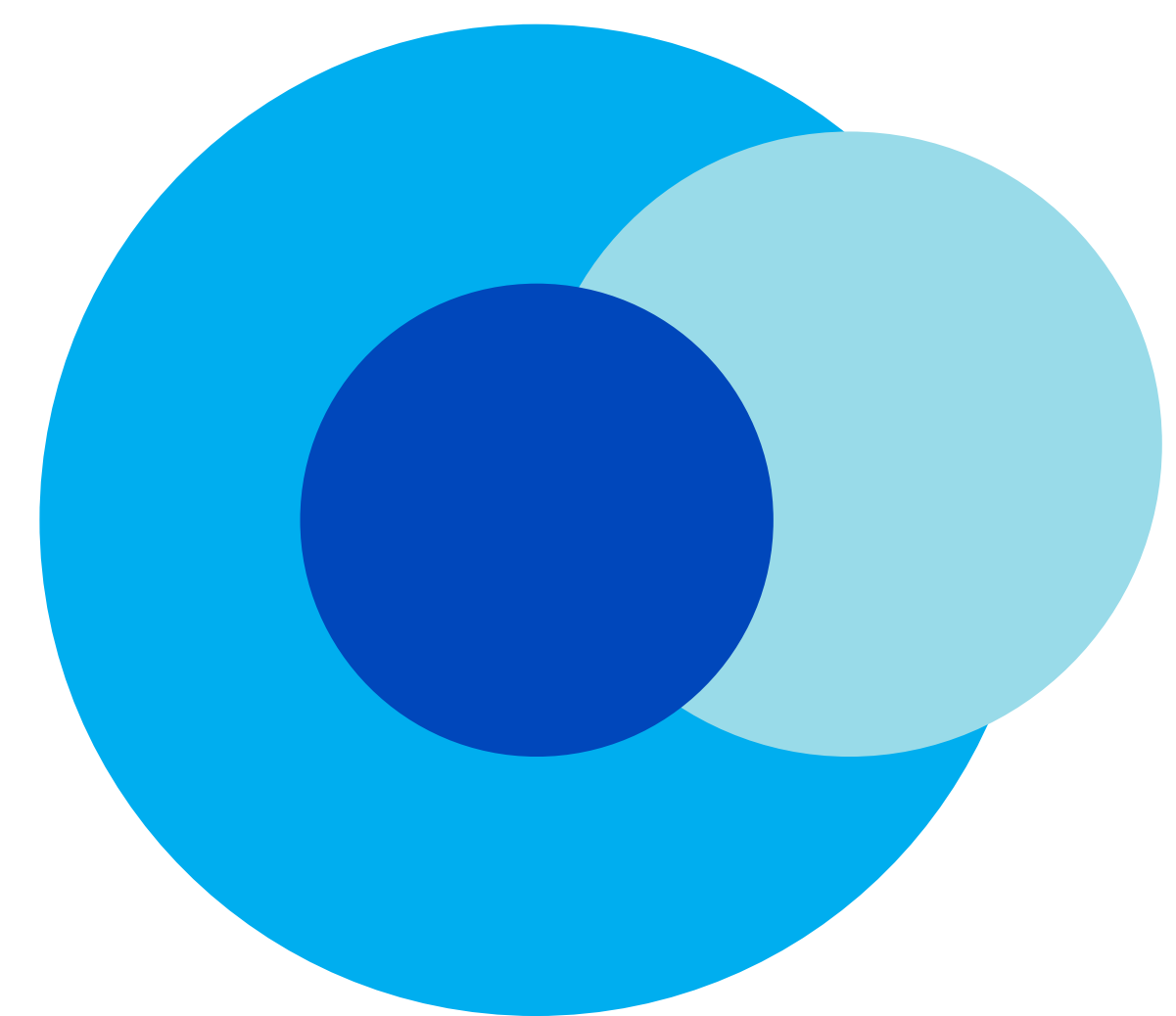
These results reflect strong national commitment to equity and inclusion, with UNICEF providing technical expertise to ensure children's rights remain central to social protection modernization.

# Cross-Cutting

## EVIDENCE GENERATION, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, AND EVALUATION


In 2025, Kazakhstan, with UNICEF’s technical support successfully completed and presented the results of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2024. Findings were shared with the Presidential Administration, Office of Prime-Minister, Parliament, and all 20 regional governments. Using MICS data and administrative sources, region-specific socio-economic profiles were developed to identify child rights deprivations and key achievements. Twenty regional consultations were jointly organized with the Bureau of National Statistics, strengthening evidence-based planning and local accountability. These results, together with the Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents, informed the draft flagship programme Children of Kazakhstan, marking a significant shift toward integrated, child-focused policy planning.

UNICEF supported the Government in shaping the landmark state programme “Children of Kazakhstan” through targeted technical assistance and policy advice, strengthening compliance with international standards and ensuring that children’s wellbeing as a core driver of inclusive and sustainable economic growth.



UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and other line ministries, facilitated national consultations to validate the Generation 2050 analytical report for Kazakhstan. The country co-hosted the regional launch of Generation 2050 – Central Asia at the SDG Hub, resulting in a joint commitment from Central Asian governments to develop a regional roadmap for investments in quality education, child protection systems, NEET reduction, and social protection transformation.

UNICEF supported youth consultations led by the Ministry of National Economy through U-Report during the preparation of Kazakhstan’s Third Voluntary National Review (VNR 2025).



Responses from young people across all 20 regions were integrated into a dedicated youth chapter of the VNR. UNICEF also collaborated with the Bureau of National Statistics to prepare and present the statistical annex, strengthening national SDG monitoring systems.

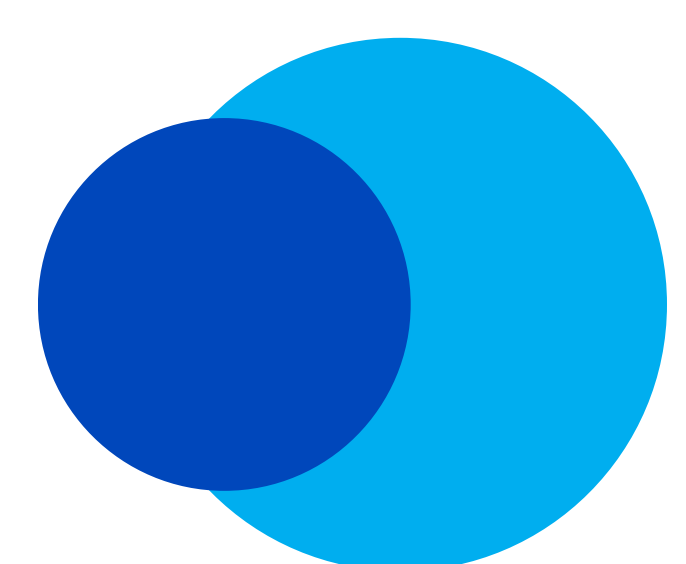
UNICEF contributed substantial inputs to the UPR, CEDAW, and CESCRC processes, with 20 percent of UPR concluding observations reflecting UNICEF's recommendations, accelerating progress on core child rights priorities. UNICEF also played an active role in developing the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2026–2030, contributing to the Common Country Assessment, UNSDCF evaluation, and multilateral consultations with Government and civil society.

The Bureau of National Statistics continued to lead the national working group on child data, with UNICEF support prioritizing the testing of a minimum set of indicators on violence against children, alternative care, and children with disabilities, aligning the Child Rights

Monitoring framework with national monitoring systems, preparing the annual Statistical Yearbook on Children and TransMonEE reporting.

Kazakhstan actively contributed to the Steering Group on Statistics on Children led by UNICEF and UNECE, reinforcing its commitment to advancing methodological standards and sharing best practices across the region.

UNICEF, together with the Ministry of Digital Development and AI and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, finalized a practical case study on the use of causal machine learning to evaluate and optimize social welfare policies. Using large-scale administrative and socio-economic data, the study estimated heterogeneous treatment effects of cash transfer programmes on household and child outcomes, including financial vulnerability, debt accumulation, and proxy indicators of social stability. Results revealed substantial variations in policy impacts across population groups, demonstrating that uniform programme design risks inefficient spending and missed opportunities for targeted support.




## COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

In 2025, UNICEF Kazakhstan significantly expanded youth engagement, communication, and public advocacy, positioning young people as active partners in advancing child rights and sustainable development. These efforts aligned with national political reforms that prioritize civic participation, digital governance, and inclusive policymaking.

UNICEF launched a nationwide Youth Engagement Programme, marking a major shift toward structured, large-scale youth volunteerism. By year-end, nearly 10,000 young people were mobilized, with 4,476 actively engaged across all regions. Six UNICEF Youth Hubs were established in Astana, Almaty, Shymkent, Aktau, Kokshetau, and Semey—each led by dedicated regional coordinators. The hubs serve as platforms for structured participation, peer learning, and community outreach, particularly on public health preparedness.

Across the hubs, 4,476 volunteers completed online training and contributed to community initiatives. Their efforts included planting 20,000 trees, collecting 500 tons of waste, and delivering awareness sessions on child rights and protection that reached one million people.

More than 75 youth engagement activities were delivered across environmental action, advocacy, training, and institutional dialogue, providing safe, interactive spaces for young people to build skills, engage communities, and discuss protective behaviours, and child rights. A national UNICEF Youth Forum in Almaty convened leading youth volunteers to showcase 13 competitively selected projects on environment, mental health and community safety, connect with government, business and civil society leaders, and strengthen youth leadership nationwide.



Volunteers share ideas on promoting children's rights during a UNICEF outreach event in Astana.

*Astana, Kazakhstan.*

@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/AdilAbltayev

Renowned TV presenter and UNICEF Friend Dinara Zhanykul at a press event ahead of the second Gala Dinner.

*Almaty, Kazakhstan.*

@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/MichaelSitnikov



A new pro-bono partnership has been established with Documentolog, leading Kazakh IT-company, for pro-bono development of UNICEF national volunteer digital platform.

Institutional partnerships were strengthened through formal cooperation with the largest regional universities and local Departments for Youth Policy, reflecting strong government support for youth empowerment under the updated State Youth Policy Concept. U-Report Kazakhstan expanded significantly, reaching 13,605 registered U-Reporters, a 155% increase from 2024 and establishing itself as a national tool for youth feedback in policymaking.

Influencer engagement remained an important component of UNICEF's outreach.

In 2025, 66 digital influencers supported UNICEF campaigns on online safety, positive parenting, early childhood development, ending violence against children, healthy behaviours, and mental health and wellbeing. UNICEF's digital platforms continued steady growth. In 2025, total UNICEF social media followers reached 133,509, reflecting a 15 percent increase compared to 2024.

Finally, UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, and the Constitutional Court co-organized a nationwide children's drawing contest to mark the 30th anniversary of the Constitution. The contest engaged 169 schoolchildren, and 30 winning artworks were published in a trilingual art book officially presented to the Presidential Administration, symbolizing Kazakhstan's continued commitment to meaningful child participation in civic life.



## ІС-ШАРА ҚОНАҚТАРЫ



Дарманов

Алматы әкімі



Доктор Рашед  
Мустафа Сарвар

ЮНИСЕФ-тің Қазақстандағы өкілі

UNICEF Representative to Kazakhstan  
Dr. Rashed Mustafa Sarwar welcomes  
volunteers.

*Almaty, Kazakhstan.*

@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/IvanPershin

| Partnership

In 2025, UNICEF Kazakhstan made significant progress in advancing the rights and well-being of children through strong partnerships across government, civil society, academia, and the private sector. UNICEF worked closely with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Health, Education, Labour and Social Protection, Information and Culture, AI and Digital Development, Ecology, Emergency Situations, as well as the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms (ASPIR), the Bureau of National Statistics (BNS), and the Child Rights Protection Committee (KOPD), reflecting UNICEF's role as a trusted partner across sectors.

The Child Rights Commissioner, the Constitutional Court, and the Senate played an important role in advancing UNICEF's advocacy, strengthening national commitments to children's rights, and accelerating child-centred reforms, including through the development of the National Programme Children of Kazakhstan (2026–2030).

With UNICEF's technical assistance, the Government signed the first inter-sectoral Comprehensive Plan on Early Childhood Development and Early Interventions "Satti Bastau" (2025–2027). This landmark plan represents the first coordinated action among the ministries of health, education, and social welfare to ensure the best start in life for every child. It establishes a unified framework to deliver high-quality early childhood development and early intervention services, especially for children with developmental needs and disabilities.

UNICEF and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs co-hosted the regional launch of the Generation 2050 – Central Asia report at the SDG Hub. The event resulted in a joint commitment by Central Asian leaders to develop a regional roadmap focused on quality education, strengthened child protection systems, reduced NEET rates, and transformative social protection.

UNICEF also partnered with the Ministry of National Economy to amplify youth voices in shaping Kazakhstan's sustainable development agenda.

Eldar, Mansur, and Amira (Petropavlovsk), winners of the social project exhibition at the UNICEF Youth Forum in Almaty. Their project, QazDysFont (a Kazakh font for children with dyslexia), took first place among 90 initiatives from across Kazakhstan, showcasing the power of youth-led innovation in creating an inclusive environment.

[Almaty, Kazakhstan.](#)

[@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/TatyanaDruzhinina](#)





UNICEF Representative to Kazakhstan Dr. Rashed Mustafa Sarwar and CEO of Documentolog Baizhan Kanafin sign a memorandum on digital partnership. The collaboration aims to develop innovative IT solutions to support the volunteer movement.

*Almaty, Kazakhstan.*

UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/TatyanaDruzhinina



2025

UNICEF STRENGTHENED COLLABORATION ACROSS SECTORS, advancing child rights through national and global partnerships



20 regions

THROUGH U-REPORT, YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ALL REGIONS informed the Voluntary National Review 2025

Through U-Report consultations, opinions from young people in all 20 regions informed the Third Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2025, contributing to a dedicated youth chapter. Together with the Bureau of National Statistics, UNICEF supported the development of the VNR's statistical annex, strengthening evidence-based SDG monitoring.

Throughout 2025, UNICEF engaged actively in UN collaborative mechanisms to operationalize the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

(UNSDCF) 2026–2030, in close consultation with government, civil society, and youth. UNICEF also continued collaboration with other UN agencies: with UNFPA on MICS implementation; with WHO on digital health system strengthening; and with UN Women on Family Support Center reforms and gender-based violence prevention. UNICEF co-organized joint UN events for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

In partnership with the Ministry of Education, the Department for Child Rights Protection, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Cyber Policy Department), UNICEF led a large-scale social media campaign to promote safe online behaviour and strengthen digital safety practices nationwide.

The Asian Development Bank partnered with UNICEF and the Bureau of National Statistics to support dissemination of MICS 2024 results. Findings were presented to the Presidential Administration, Parliament, and Akimats across all 20 regions. Region-specific socio-economic profiles, developed using MICS and administrative data, highlighted child rights deprivations and disparities. Twenty regional presentations were conducted jointly with BNS to inform evidence-based planning. In 2025, BNS and UNICEF also finalized the multidimensional poverty measurement methodology—a major step toward more precise identification of children and families facing multiple vulnerabilities.

UNICEF strengthened its corporate partnerships to promote children's rights

through strategic engagement with the private sector, high-net-worth individuals, and influential leaders. The newly operationalized Advisory Council provides strategic guidance, champions UNICEF's mission, and supports resource mobilization.

Four programme directions were identified to align Council efforts with national priorities and the 2026–2030 Country Programme. UNICEF signed a 2025–2026 Work Plan with the Ministry of Culture and Information to collaborate on youth participation, Family Support Centers, violence prevention, and national awareness campaigns.

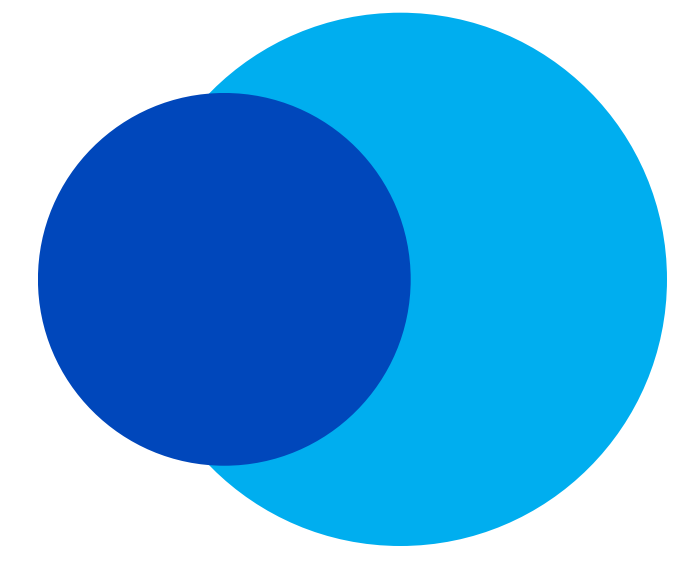
Private-sector engagement expanded through a partnership with CITIX, which delivered a nationwide campaign across 141 digital screens for World Children's Day. UNICEF also positioned children's rights within high-level business forums, including BeWoman and New Vision organised by YPO (Young President's Organisation), as a speaker and exhibitor.



Members of the UNICEF Advisory Council during their second strategic meeting in Almaty. The Council brings together private sector leaders and influential experts to provide strategic guidance and mobilize resources for the benefit of children in Kazakhstan.

*Kazakhstan, Almaty.*

UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/IvanPershin



Civil society organizations and academic institutions played a central role in accelerating progress for children across nutrition, immunization, school connectivity, learning recovery, girls' participation in STEAM, parenting, online safety, child protection, inclusive education, gender equality, youth skills, and volunteering. UNICEF provided technical expertise to integrate Digital Public Goods into university programmes and co-created additional training modules with girls to improve accessibility in game design. Structured tutorials on the Godot open-source engine, inclusive design, cultural sensitivity, ethics, and future trends were uploaded to the Learning Passport.

UNICEF's Akelius literacy programme was successfully handed over to the Orleu teacher training centre and the International IT University, benefiting more than 2,028 children in 18 disadvantaged schools, including 200 migrant children from China, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Coaching for 438 teachers strengthened digital instruction and lesson planning.

In partnership with the National Education Academy, UNICEF initiated a climate education curriculum review, identifying gaps in geography, natural sciences, and global competencies. Orleu also strengthened teacher capacity on online safety, training 250 teachers to support risk prevention and respond to school-based violence. UNICEF continued its collaboration with the Center on Emergencies and Disaster Risk Reduction to enhance child-focused and gender-responsive preparedness systems by supporting the development of the subnational Children's Climate Risks and Resilience Index.

Overall, 2025 marked a transformative year for partnerships. Through strategic collaboration, meaningful engagement, and compelling advocacy, UNICEF Kazakhstan strengthened the foundation for sustained, long-term impact for children.



World-renowned opera singer and UNICEF Friend Maria Mudryak performs at the UNICEF "Dreams Without Borders" Gala Dinner in support of children. *Almaty, Kazakhstan.*

@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/AibekMurati



# Lessons Learned and Innovations

A Salvador Dali woodcut at the UNICEF "Dreams Without Borders" Gala Dinner auction. The lot was provided by the Zhanykulov Foundation. All funds raised are dedicated to the program for strengthening adolescent mental health in Kazakhstan.

*Almaty, Kazakhstan.*

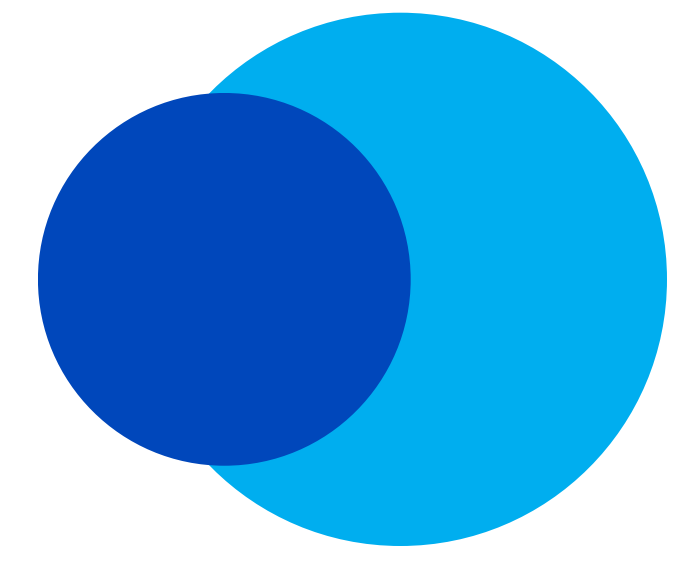
@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/AibekMurati

In 2025, UNICEF significantly strengthened its credibility and impact through strategic private-sector engagement, tripling resource mobilization for children's rights. Building on the success of Kazakhstan's first UNICEF Charity Gala, the second edition - Dreams Without Borders - demonstrated how sustained partnerships and innovative approaches dramatically amplify results. Through powerful storytelling, influencer engagement, and citywide branding, UNICEF not only raised USD 547,000 - three times the previous year's figure - but also elevated national awareness of adolescent mental well-being. The event showcased the strong commitment of Kazakhstan's business community to creating a better future for children.

The Gala highlighted the transformative power of cross-sector collaboration. Businesses, philanthropists, and artists contributed significant financial and in-kind support, including pro bono performances and media coverage valued at USD 379,000. Combining advocacy with cultural engagement, the event reached 11.3 million people, reinforcing the importance of visibility and credibility in driving social change. Resources mobilized will support capacity building for more than 50,000 frontline specialists and enhance mental health and well-being services for 140,000 adolescents nationwide - demonstrating that creative partnerships can deliver both awareness and tangible results.



The Gala strengthened UNICEF's tradition of partnership with Kazakhstan's private sector, grounded in the country's strong culture of philanthropy. UNICEF also deepened its engagement with high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs), applying a more targeted and personalized approach to cultivate long-term relationships. Through tailored outreach, curated events, and strengthened value propositions, UNICEF broadened its pipeline of major donors and increased interest among Kazakhstan's most influential philanthropists.



In 2024, after an eight-year break, Kazakhstan successfully completed the largest data collection operation in the Europe and Central Asia region - the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) - with strong support from UNICEF, UNFPA, and the Asian Development Bank. Covering 24,000 households with a 96.4% response rate, the survey generated high-quality data, including GPS-verified information, across five comprehensive questionnaires. The survey produced high-quality, nationally representative data on women, girls, adolescents, and households—providing a stronger baseline for analysing gender disparities in health, nutrition, education, protection, and adolescent well-being.

MICS 2024 was incorporated into the National Statistical Annual Plan and endorsed by child-related ministries, marking a milestone in evidence-based policy planning. Notably, the Government covered 50% of the survey costs demonstrating growing institutional ownership and commitment to strengthening gender-sensitive data systems. UNICEF mobilized internal and additional resources and in-kind contribution from the Bureau of National Statistics, ADB and UNFPA.

Implementation took place amid geopolitical and socio-economic challenges - including spillover effects from the war in Ukraine, sanctions on the Russian Federation, rising prices, and severe flooding across 10 regions in 2024. Through coordinated efforts, UNICEF and the Government ensured public trust, legitimacy, and visibility of the survey. Joint press briefings in Kazakh and Russian were conducted nationwide, supported by promotional videos, social media campaigns, and standardized call-center scripts. Police departments and local authorities validated the survey's legitimacy, while flexible scheduling and repeated household visits maximized coverage. The use of CAPI (tablet-based) data collection significantly reduced paper use, fuel consumption, and carbon emissions supporting Kazakhstan's green development agenda.

Kazakhstan's advanced digital infrastructure enabled efficient verification of vaccination records and supported an innovative mental health module for youth aged 15–24. With technical support from UNICEF HQ and the Ministry of Healthcare, the module was culturally adapted, piloted, and linked to a referral mechanism. A total of 147 enumerators received specialized training and worked with 40 psychologists across 20 regions. Due to the sensitive nature of mental health and prevailing stigma, participation was limited, affecting representativeness. Although results were not published, this pioneering effort marked an important step toward integrating psychosocial well-being into national surveys and highlighted the need for continued awareness and destigmatization.

In 2025, UNICEF collaborated closely with the Senate, Presidential Administration and the Bureau of National Statistics to present the final MICS report, setting the stage for evidence-based national policy dialogue.

With support from the Presidential Administration, UNICEF and BNS

developed and disseminated 20 detailed socio-economic portfolios to Akimats, equipping local governments with actionable insights for subnational planning and human capital development. Bilateral consultations were held across all 20 regions, reinforcing the role of data in shaping governance priorities and reducing regional disparities.

Critically, MICS results became a cornerstone for the design of the national programme Children of Kazakhstan 2026–2030 and influenced multiple sectoral strategies and policy documents at both national and regional levels. The survey has strengthened evidence-based decision-making and firmly embedded data-driven governance within Kazakhstan's long-term development agenda.

The findings of the Country Programme Evaluation (CPE), conducted across two programme cycles, significantly shaped the planning and design of the UNICEF Country Programme Document (CPD) for 2026–2030.



The Ministers of Education, Health, and Labour and Social Protection signed the "Satti Bastau" (The Best Start) Comprehensive Plan for Early Childhood Development and Early Intervention (2025–2027). This plan will be implemented with the support of UNICEF.

Astana, Kazakhstan.

@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/ArmanMustafin

Khadia (2 years old) and Mariam (2 years old) out for a walk with their mothers. UNICEF advocates for an inclusive and safe environment for every child.

*Shymkent, Kazakhstan.*

@UNICEF/Kazakhstan/2025/ArmanMustafin



Developed jointly with the Government of Kazakhstan, the CPD reflects lessons learned particularly on UNICEF's strong strategic positioning in the country. The CPE highlighted that UNICEF's sustained advocacy for children's rights and the systematic use of data-driven approaches enhanced its credibility and influence. It also underscored the critical importance of adapting strategies to local contexts and strengthening multisectoral partnerships, which were essential for achieving sustainable, measurable results for children. These insights directly informed the prioritization, strategic choices, and forward-looking orientation of the new CPD.

In parallel, innovative analytical work undertaken by the Ministry of Digital Development and AI and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection resulted in a pioneering case study on the application of causal machine learning to evaluate and optimize social welfare policies. By utilising large-scale administrative and socio-economic datasets, the study produced nuanced

estimates of heterogeneous treatment effects for key cash transfer programmes. This enabled an assessment of differentiated impacts on household and child well-being—including financial vulnerability, debt accumulation, and indicators of social stability, revealing substantial variations across population groups. The findings demonstrated that uniform programme design may lead to inefficient spending and missed opportunities to better support the most vulnerable families. Looking ahead, this work lays a robust foundation for institutionalizing data-driven policy design and expanding the use of AI-enabled tools within Kazakhstan's social protection system. The study clearly illustrates how causal machine learning can strengthen evidence-based policymaking by improving targeting accuracy, enhancing cost-effectiveness, and minimizing unintended adverse effects. The insights generated are already contributing to ongoing government reforms and align closely with the vision and strategic priorities of the CPD 2026–2030.

# Thank you

UNICEF expresses its deep appreciation to all its partners in Kazakhstan for their invaluable contributions to advancing the rights and well-being of children in 2025.

We sincerely thank the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, national institutions, United Nations agencies, international organizations, civil society partners, academic institutions, the private sector, the media, individual donors, and dedicated volunteers.

Your collective efforts and unwavering commitment are essential to building a better future for every child in Kazakhstan.

## For every child

Whoever she is.  
Wherever he lives.  
Every child deserves a childhood.  
A future.  
A fair chance.  
That's why UNICEF is there.  
For each and every child.  
Working day in and day out.  
In more than 190 countries and territories.  
Reaching the hardest to reach.  
The furthest from help.  
The most excluded.  
It's why we stay to the end.  
And never give up.



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