



# IDENTIFICATION AND MONITORING OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN AND DROPPING-OUT OF STUDENTS



# **IDENTIFICATION AND MONITORING OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN AND DROPPING-OUT OF STUDENTS**

## **KAZAKHSTAN**

The report has been prepared by UNICEF consultant Mrs. Laetitia Antonowicz  
l.antonowicz@hotmail.com

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the UNICEF Office in Kazakhstan. Persons and objects in photographs used in this publication have no relation to the content of the report.

The designations employed in this publication and the presentation of the materials do not imply on the part of UNICEF the expression of any opinion whatsoever concerning the legal status of children in Kazakhstan or of any country or territory, or of its authorities, or the delimitation of its boundaries.

This publication is not for sale. Any information from this publication may be freely reproduced, but proper acknowledgement of the source must be provided.

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the Republic of Kazakhstan

10 A Beibitshilik St.

010000, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan

Tel: +7 (7172) 32 17 97, 32 29 69, 32 28 78

Fax: +7 (7172) 32 18 03

[www.unicef.kz](http://www.unicef.kz)

[www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

# CONTENTS



<i>List of acronyms and abbreviations</i>	6
---	---

<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 Out-of-school children	8
1.2 The Out-of-School Children Initiative	8
1.3 About this report	9



<b>2 Out-of-school children and students who drop-out: terminology and conceptual frameworks</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1 Definition of terms	11
2.2 Non-enrolment and drop-out risk factors	12
2.3 Non-enrolment and drop-out risk points	15



<b>3 Out-of-school children in Kazakhstan: a brief overview</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 Legal framework for children's right to education	18
3.2 Data on out-of-school children and students who drop-out	19



<b>4 Identifying and monitoring out-of-school children and students who drop-out in Kazakhstan: a rapid assessment</b>	<b>34</b>
4.1 Identification and monitoring processes	35
4.2 Existing system and practices	36



<b>5</b>	<b>Statistical reporting on out-of-school children and students who drop-out</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Examples of international practice for monitoring out-of-school children and conducting intervention</b>	<b>44</b>
6.1	Involving and supporting parents	46
6.2	School based early warning systems	49
6.3	Drop-out prevention and response teams	50
6.4	Cross-sector collaboration and sharing of information records	50
6.5	Supporting students	52
6.6	Attendance policies and absenteeism	55
6.7	Education for migrant and refugee children	56
<b>7</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>58</b>
7.1	Summary of recommendations	61
7.2	General recommendations	61
7.3	Recommendations for strengthening the existing monitoring system for out-of-school children	65
7.4	Recommendations for strengthening data collection and reporting on OOSC	67
	<b>Annex</b>	<b>68</b>
	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>70</b>

## TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1	MICS pre-school education data (2006 and 2010-11)	19
Table 2	MICS primary and secondary education data (2006 and 2010-11)	21
Table 3	Minors not attending school without a valid reason for more than 10 days (2010, 2011 and 2012)	22
Table 4	Typology of risk factors for children missing education	24
Table 5	Regional disparities for children missing education for more than 10 days (2011 and 2012)	29
Table 6	Profile of children not in school for more than 10 days without a valid reason at the end of the academic school year (2010-11)	68
Table 7	Profile of children not in school for more than 10 days without a valid reason at the end of the academic school year (2011-12)	69

## TABLE OF CHARTS

Chart 1	Enrolment rate of children aged 1 to 6 years in pre-school education (% of total number of children of appropriate age)	20
Chart 2	Ratio of enrolment in primary, basic secondary and secondary education (% of population aged 7-17 years)	21
Chart 3	Primary and secondary school-aged children registered as having missed education for more than 10 days without a valid reason (2011 and 2012)	27
Chart 4	Profile of children who failed to return to school at the end of the school year (2011 and 2012)	28

## TABLE OF FIGURES


Figure 1	Non-enrolment and drop-out factors	12
Figure 2	Non-enrolment and drop-out risk points across a child's school career	15
Figure 3	Identification and monitoring system for OOSC	35
Figure 4	A framework for the enrolment, retention, completion and graduation of all children	60

## TABLE OF BOXES

Box 1	Absenteeism in Kazakh schools	23
Box 2	Children at risk of not being enrolled or not attending school in Almaty	28
Box 3	Enrolling in school: a hurdle for internal migrants	31
Box 4	Violence and discrimination towards vulnerable children	32
Box 5	Centres for the Adaptation of Minors	40

# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAM	Centre for Adaptation of Minors
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPC	Child Rights Protection Committee
CWD	Children with Disabilities
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESL	Early School Leaving
EU	European Union
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IE	Inclusive Education
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OOSC	Out-of-School Children
PMPC	Psychological, Medical and Pedagogical Commission
RK	Republic of Kazakhstan
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
VET	Vocational Education and Training



1

# Introduction

## 1.1. OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

Although the number of children out-of-school has reduced over the past decade, UNESCO estimates that 56 million children of primary school age will still be out-of-school in 2015 (UNESCO 2010). Even more children of lower secondary school age are likely to be out-of-school.

In the European Union (EU), more than six million young people leave education and training with, at best, lower secondary level qualifications; the Early School Leaving rate was 14.4% in 2011.

The Education for All Global Monitoring Report of 2012 reports that 317,000 children of primary school age and 315,000 adolescents of compulsory school age are out of school in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Central Asia has the highest proportion of primary age out-of-school children who are expected to never enter school (51%) after Sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF 2012, forthcoming). These children are the hardest to reach; holistic cross-sector policy responses are necessary to tackle the multi-dimensional aspects of their exclusion from education.

In the Central and Eastern European and CIS region (CEECIS), children and adolescents are kept out-of-school for a range of complex and overlapping forms of exclusion, disparities and inequalities. These are often captured in common expressions such as “poverty”, “lack of motivation” and “socially vulnerable”. Adequate tools and methodologies are often lacking, making it difficult to identify young people out-of-school, to assess the reasons for their exclusion and to inform policy and planning. In countries with high enrolment rates, the policy focus is on quality and learning outcomes rather than on barriers to schooling for the most disadvantaged groups (UNICEF, 2011).

To achieve universal basic education, children need equitable access to quality education. This must include children from marginalised ethnic minorities and migrant communities, children with disabilities and special educational needs, working children and all boys and girls regardless of their age and socio-economic or socio-cultural background.

Equity requires “securing all children’s rights to education, and their rights within and through education to realise their potential and aspirations. It also requires implementing and institutionalising arrangements that help ensure all children can achieve these aims.”<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2. THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN INITIATIVE

UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) launched a Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children in 2010. This aims to improve statistical information and analysis regarding out-of-school children (OOSC) and to scrutinise factors of exclusion from schooling, alongside existing policies relating to enhanced participation. Twenty-five countries have taken part, with

regional and national studies currently being finalised.

UNICEF’s Regional Office for CEE-CIS launched the Regional Out-of-School Children and Adolescents Initiative (ROOSCAI) in 2011 as a follow-up of the Global Initiative. The Regional Initiative aims to strengthen on-going efforts to reduce the number of out-of-school children

<sup>1</sup> UNGEI-FTI Secretariat (2010) Equity and Inclusion in Education: A guide to supporting the education sector plan for preparation, revision and appraisal. THIS TITLE IS THE OFFICIAL TITLE OF THE PUBLICATION AND SHOULD NOT BE CHANGED.

and early school leavers in the region, as well as supporting and monitoring innovative national projects to share best practice and facilitate exchange of knowledge between countries.

Under the Global Initiative for Out-of-School Children, minors are categorised in various ways:

- Pre-primary age children who are not in pre-primary or primary school
- Children who will never enter (primary or lower secondary) school
- Children who will enter primary or lower secondary late
- Primary and lower secondary children who have dropped out
- Children currently enrolled in primary or lower secondary but who are at risk of dropping out

## 1.3. ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is the first step of UNICEF's involvement in the issue of out-of-school children in Kazakhstan. It is based on a rapid desk review and a seven-day fact finding mission from the UNICEF Regional Initiative Consultant, where key stakeholders from State, Oblast and civil society institutions met in Almaty, Astana and Eastern Kazakhstan. It includes feedback from multi-sector central and oblast institutional stakeholders and non-governmental organisations, whose members gathered during a validation workshop held in Astana on 28th November 2012.

This report attempts to explore issues pertaining to children who are missing education in Kazakhstan and to make recommendations to inform policy development and to strengthen the current identification and monitoring system for out-of-school children and students who drop-out. The report does not investigate in detail the issue of school absenteeism. The scope of the document is as follows:

- Section 2 explains terminology pertaining to out-of-school children and presents conceptual frameworks to frame the issue of children missing education
- Section 3 provides a brief overview of out-of-school children in Kazakhstan
- Section 4 presents a rapid assessment of the current system of identification and monitoring of out-of-school children and students who drop-out in Kazakhstan
- Section 5 briefly touches upon issues of statistical reporting on out-of-school children and students who drop-out in Kazakhstan
- Section 6 introduces examples of international good practice around out-of-school children: monitoring and interventions to prevent children from missing education and responses to dropping-out
- Section 7 provides recommendations on how to reduce the number of children missing education in Kazakhstan, by strengthening the identification and monitoring system for OOSC and improving statistical reporting on these children

# 2

Out-of-school children  
and students who drop-out:

*terminology and  
conceptual frameworks*



## 2.1. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Understanding of the terms “school”, “in” and “out” of school and “dropping out” varies from country to country and between various bodies.

**School refers** to any state-licensed educational institution, whether public or private. It includes boarding schools and special institutions for children with special needs where education programmes can be matched to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) levels of education.

**Children out-of-school** describes those who are not enrolled and are not attending school, and those who are enrolled but are not attending school. This distinction is often difficult to capture in statistics, when the number of out-of-school children is drawn from population data minus the number of children not enrolled in school; this calculation method does not reflect the situation of enrolled children who do not attend school.

**Dropping-out covers** children who are enrolled but not attending or who have left education before the end of a given cycle, such as compulsory education. For

UNESCO, school dropping-out means leaving school education without having completed a started cycle or programme (e.g. primary education or lower secondary education). UNESCO also calculates the school drop-out rate by grade, which indicates the proportion of children enrolled in Grade X who do not attend Grade X+1 (minus repeaters).

Many countries have included in their definition of dropping-out those with a certain number of days of non-attendance, usually between 15 and 30 days of unexcused absences (those with no valid reason). This better captures the number of children who are missing education, even if they are still on the school roll.

**Early school leaving** is a term particularly used in the EU. It describes young people between 18 and 24 who have only completed lower secondary education (or less) and who are not engaged in further education or training.

**Children at risk of dropping-out** refers to those with individual, family or school situations which may contribute to the likelihood of the children dropping-out of education.

## 2.2 NON-ENROLMENT AND DROP-OUT RISK FACTORS

Several typologies capture the factors affecting non-enrolment and dropping-out. For the purpose of this report, we have adapted a model developed by Lyche for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Lyche, 2010) which identifies individual and social factors, school factors and systemic factors at macro level.

Figure 1. Non-enrolment and drop-out factors			
Individual/ Social factors	Background	Individual	Sex
			Age
			Health
			Ethnicity & language
			Location
			Past experiences
		Family	Structure
			Practices
			Demographics
			Resources
			Mobility
	Behaviours	Engagement	Academic
			Social
		Deviancy	
Educational experience and performance			
School factors	Structure and resources		
Systemic factors at macro level			
Source: Adapted from Lyche (2010)			

Literature agrees that dropping-out from school is usually a process rather than a decision following a single (or exceptional) event. Based on the above framework, the list below identifies children and associated risk factors, drawing from several sources, including from Chávez Chávez et al. (1991). Systemic factors are also outlined.

## INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children with a disability and those with special educational needs</li> <li>• Overage children</li> <li>• Children with low self-confidence</li> <li>• Teenage boys</li> <li>• Pregnant teenage girls and teenage mothers</li> <li>• Children with no documents (ID cards, birth certificates, resident permits, etc)</li> <li>• Working children</li> <li>• Children with other vulnerability factors - such as those with a background in public care, married or teenage-parent students</li> <li>• Children who have regularly changed their place of residence or school</li> <li>• Children who live far from school and for whom no transport is provided</li> </ul>
EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children who are absent frequently and/or for long periods of time</li> <li>• Children who have been expelled from school</li> <li>• Children with poor academic performance records</li> <li>• Children who do not participate in extra-curricular activities or in school life</li> <li>• Children with poor school behaviour</li> <li>• Children who have repeated a year twice or more</li> <li>• Children with no pre-primary education</li> <li>• Children who have not mastered the language of instruction</li> <li>• Children who are bullied at school</li> </ul>
FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children from poor, low socio-economic status households</li> <li>• Children of ethnic minorities, including Roma children</li> <li>• Children of migrants</li> <li>• Children with a large number of siblings</li> <li>• Children with one or more siblings who have dropped-out</li> <li>• Children who are orphans or from single parent households (or with one parent often absent)</li> <li>• Children from socially vulnerable families or with conflicts in the family, including those from dysfunctional families<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Children from families where education is not valued.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Defined as families with conflict, misbehaviour, potential child neglect or abuse, or addictions – particularly substance abuse.

## SCHOOL FACTORS

Among the school level factors (“push factors”) that may affect the non-enrolment or dropping-out process and students’ final decision to leave school, we find:

- Schools with high drop-out rates
- Schools with high intake of pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds when these are not well supported
- Schools with weak or inadequate academic discipline and attendance rules and policies (including lack of support for students falling behind)
- Schools not offering classes in the children’s first languages or supporting learning in the language of instruction
- Schools with weak pastoral care and support for students
- Schools with a poor climate
- Schools with a high incidence of violence or bullying
- Schools with a low level of student participation in school life or school governance
- Schools with weak parental participation and weak relationships between the home, the community and the school
- Schools not promoting their school identity or sense of belonging.

Not all children presenting one or more of the characteristics above will necessarily miss out on education while children outside these categories may miss school.

## SYSTEMIC FACTORS AT MACRO LEVEL

National level factors include:

- Legislation and enforcement of legislation, and the degree to which it is aligned with international human rights instruments
- Social values around gender equality, social inclusion and non-discrimination
- Social inclusion and non-discriminatory political agenda
- Education policies, strategies and funding which focus on equality of access
- Degree of education quality
- Degree of respect for human rights and diversity and non-discrimination in and through education
- Relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of cross-sector co-ordination and support mechanisms for children at risk of not enrolling in or dropping-out from education.

<sup>3</sup> Pastoral care refers to school support for the personal and social wellbeing of students - covering health and social issues as well as behaviour management and emotional support.

<sup>4</sup> School climate refers to the quality and character of school life: norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, organisational practices and the physical environment of the school (adapted from the National School Climate Centre. <http://www.schoolclimate.org/>)

## 2.3. NON-ENROLMENT AND DROP-OUT RISK POINTS

In addition to the risk factors described in the previous section, there are several particular risk points which can affect non-enrolment or drop-out. Identifying these risk points and assessing prevention and response mechanisms is critical to the identification and monitoring system for out-of-school children.

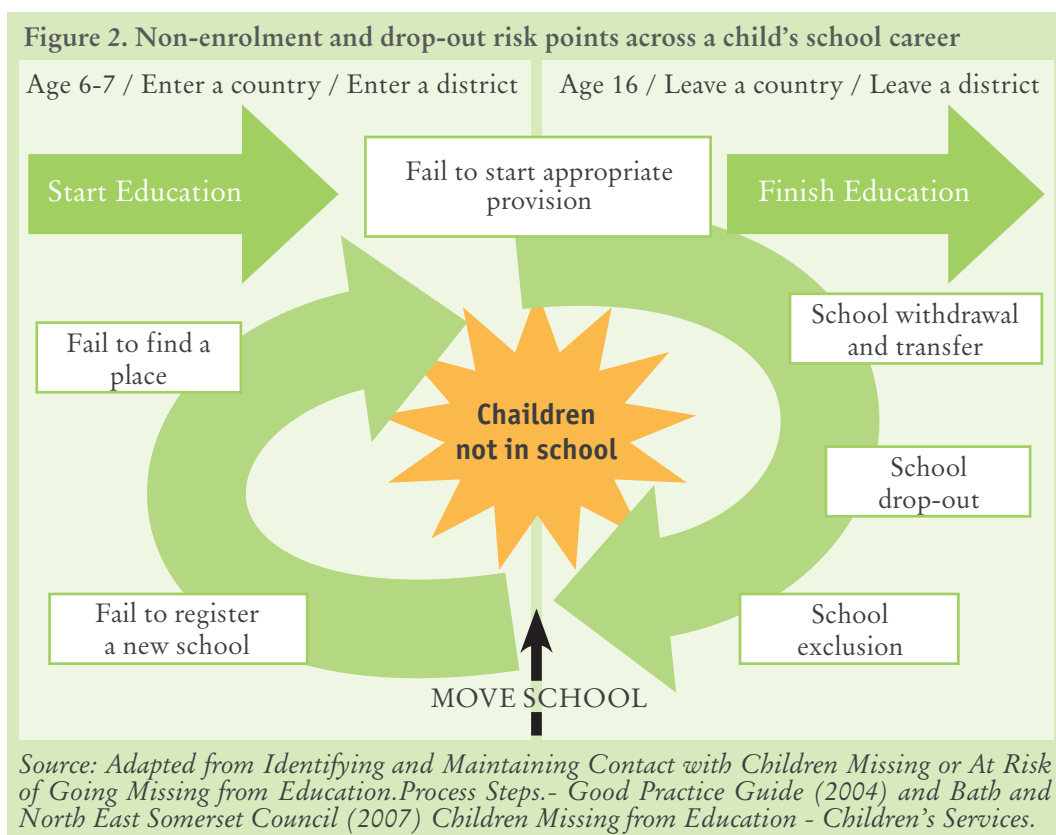
The diagram below captures, throughout the school career of a child, the various points when s/he is at-risk of not entering or not remaining in education.

The risk points are:

- Failing to start appropriate provision (at the appropriate age, when entering a country or when moving to another district)
- School withdrawal (parental withdrawal of a child from a given school, or children withdrawing of their “own will”)
- School official/unofficial exclusion

Once a child is out of the system, there are two additional risk points:

- Failing to register at a new school (after withdrawal, transfer or exclusion)
- Inability to find a new school place



# 3

## Out-of-school children in Kazakhstan:

*a brief overview*



Data shows that almost every child enrolls in school or in a special educational institution in Kazakhstan. There is, however, a small number of children who do not have access to education, and a number who do not attend class regularly.

After a brief overview of the legislative framework for children's right to education in Kazakhstan, this section presents available educational data relating to out-of-school children. It then maps the groups of children who are most at-risk of missing education and explores the barriers they encounter to access or remain in education.

## 3.1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Children's right to education is enshrined in a number of instruments signed, ratified or enacted by the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan has signed most of the international rights conventions relating directly or indirectly to children's right to education. However, while the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) have been ratified, Kazakhstan is yet to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and is not a party of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990) or the Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960).

The right of all children with Kazakh citizenship to access education is enshrined in the Constitution and in the Law of Education. Other national rights instruments reassert the right to education, for instance the 2002 Law on Social, Medical and Educational Support for Children with Disabilities, the 2002 Law on the Rights of the Child and the Standards on Special Social Services in Education (2009).

The right to education for permanent and temporary non-citizens and stateless children is guaranteed by Decree No. 468 of 28th September 2010. While this Decree used to explicitly exclude seasonal and border workers from education, a recent amendment has removed this exclusion

(No. 398, 28/08/2012). However, Decree No. 468 also specifies that permanent and temporary non-citizens and stateless children can only be enrolled in school if their parents submit some kind of documentation - such as registration of residence, refugee or migration cards or stateless person certificates.

The Republic of Kazakhstan has a strong regulatory framework with regard to school enrolment and transfer, including:

- Registration of children and adolescents of 6-17 years of age and movement of students in secondary schools in Kazakhstan (1997)<sup>5</sup>
- Government Decision of 28.08.1998, № 812 on "Measures to Further Reform the System of Secondary Education in the Republic of Kazakhstan"
- Decree of the MoES of Kazakhstan of 29.08/03.09.2001 N° 701-2/645 on "Approval of Departmental Reporting Forms for Registration of School Age Children Not Covered by Education" (with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan)

Educational reform in Kazakhstan is currently guided by the State Programme of Educational Development for 2011–2020. The Programme's objectives include improving the financing system for equal access provision, equal access and inclusive education, improved educational resources and technologies and full pre-school educational coverage.

<sup>5</sup> "On the Registration of Children and Teenagers Aged 6-17 Years and Movement (starting and leaving) Between Secondary Schools of the Republic of Kazakhstan".

## 3.2. DATA ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN AND STUDENTS WHO DROP-OUT

There is little data on out-of-school children and children who drop-out in Kazakhstan.

Data presented in this section comes from two main sources: Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS 2006 and 2010-2011) and official education statistics.

### 3.2.1. EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

According to MICS data (Table 1), the pre-school attendance rate was 37% in 2011. Other data sources from the Ministry of Education (Chart 1) reveal that the net enrolment rate of children aged 1-6 years in pre-school education reached 41.6% in 2010<sup>6</sup>. Data discrepancy between the MICS and the Ministry can be explained by the different age range captured by indicators. While the MICS counts children between 36-59 months (i.e. 3-5 years old), the Ministry includes children aged 6 in its calculation.

The Ministry of Education also provides information on the net enrolment rate for those aged 5 and 6 years in compulsory pre-school, which reached 89% in 2010. The MICS uses a different indicator: school readiness, which captures the number of children in grade 1 of primary school who

have received some kind of pre-school provision the previous year. This increased drastically from 39.5% to 81.6% between 2006 and 2011.

*Based on available data, we can conclude that between 11% and 18.4% of children aged 5 and 6 years are out-of-school. Pre-school age children make up the majority of out-of-school children in Kazakhstan.*

Chart 1 demonstrates inequalities in terms of access to pre-school education between cities and rural areas. This is also a critical finding of the MICS. Although the gap is slowly closing between rural and urban areas in terms of access, the MICS of 2010-2011 shows that only 78% of children in Grade 1 had attended pre-school the previous year in rural areas, compared to 85.6% of children in urban areas.

There was also a slight gender difference - to the disadvantage of boys: 80.4% of male and 82.7% of female children had attended pre-school the year before entering primary. There was a more significant differential between rich and poor households, with 86.5-91.6 % of Grade 1 children from wealthier households attending pre-school the previous year, compared to 71.1-78.8% from the poorest households.

Table 1. MICS pre-school education data (2006 and 2010-11)

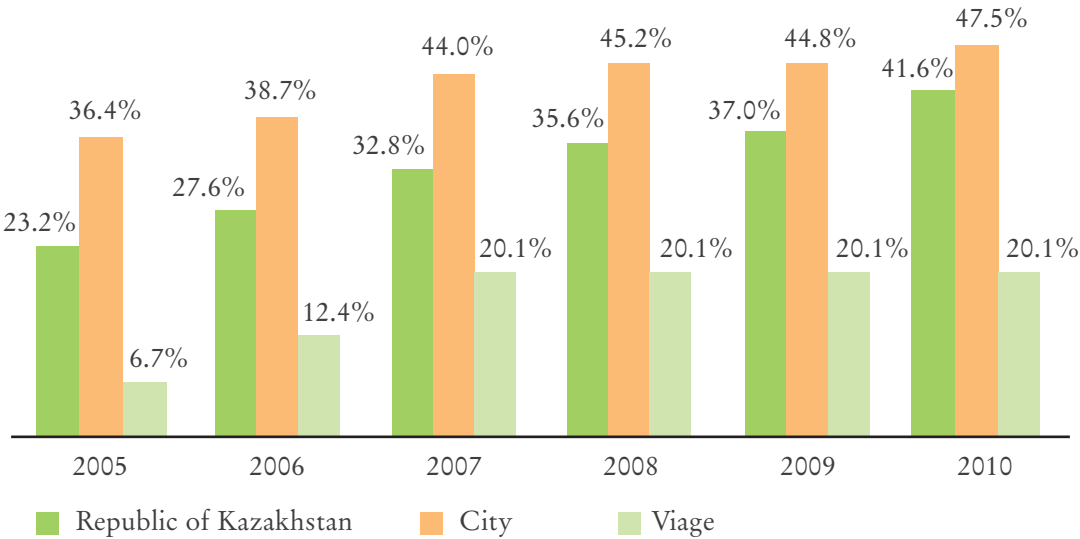
Indicators	2006	2010-2011
Pre-school attendance (2006) <sup>7</sup>	16.0%	37.0%
Attendance in early childhood education (2010-11)		
School readiness <sup>8</sup>	39.5%	81.6%

<sup>6</sup> National Centre for Education Quality Assessment (2011). National Report on the Status and Development of Education.

<sup>7</sup> Number of children aged 36-59 months who attend some form of early childhood education programme.

<sup>8</sup> Number of children in first grade who attended some form of pre-school the previous year.

Chart 1. Enrolment rate of children aged 1-6 years in pre-school education and training (% of total number of children of appropriate age)



Source: Data of the Agency of Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, from National Centre for Education Quality Assessment (2011) - National Report on the Status and Development of Education.

### 3.2.2. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

According to the MICS, the Net Intake Rate at primary school level was 93.8% in 2010-11 (children aged 7 in Kazakhstan entering the first grade of primary), indicating that a small percentage of children enter school at a later age (some are enrolled in Grade 2 at the age of 7 if they have entered primary school aged 6). Regional variations were significant. The Net Attendance Rate was 99.3% in 2010-11; 0.7% of children surveyed were not attending primary school at the time of the survey. While some were probably attending pre-school, the majority of the 0.7% were missing education altogether and the remainder were probably not receiving an education appropriate to their age and developmental stage.

MICS data for secondary education (Table 2) shows that the Net Attendance Rate was 96.1% in 2010-11. MICS data does not provide disaggregation between lower and upper

secondary education attendance but reveals that the transition rate from primary to secondary education was 100% in 2010-11.

Chart 2 presents data from the Ministry of Education. Data on primary and secondary education varies slightly between the MICS and the Ministry of Education, as the latter reports 100% of net enrolment in primary, 100% in basic secondary education and 99.9% in upper-secondary education in 2010. This data discrepancy can be partially explained by the fact that MICS indicators focus on attendance (children currently going to school) rather than enrolment (children on a school roll). Data from the Ministry captures enrolment, which is likely to be higher than attendance, since children can be on the school roll but not attend.

Another set of data, from UNESCO-UIS, gives slightly different figures. According to the 2012 Education For All Global Monitoring Report, the Net Enrolment Rate for primary in 2010 was 88%, with 4000 children (33% girls) estimated to be

**Table 2. MICS primary and secondary education data (2006 and 2010-11)**

Indicators	2006	2010-2011
Net Intake Rate in primary education	92.9%	93.8%
Net Primary School Attendance Rate (2006)	98.0%	99.3%
Primary School Net Attendance Ratio (adjusted) (2010-11)		
Net Secondary School Attendance Rate (2006)	95.3% <sup>9</sup>	96.1%
Secondary School Net Attendance Ratio (adjusted) (2010-11)		
Children reaching grade five (2006)	99.7%	100.0%
Children reaching last grade of primary (2010-11)		
Transition rate to secondary school	99.7%	100.0%

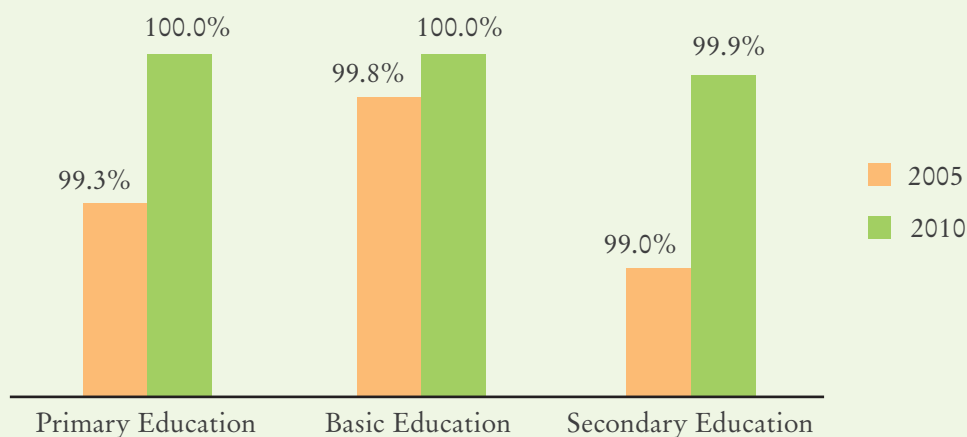
out-of-school. The same report reveals a drop-out rate of 2% in primary education, and a transition rate for the year ending 2009 of 100%. The Gross Enrolment Rate for secondary education was 100%, with 100 youngsters estimated to be out-of-school.

*Data points to the fact that a small number of children are missing primary education*

*(0.7% according to MICS data) and a slightly larger number at secondary level (maximum 3.9% according to MICS data).*

Ministry data indicates that where children drop-out from school, they are likely to do so in the transition from Grade 9 to Grade 10 (from lower to upper-secondary) - as confirmed by education officials and practitioners.

**Chart 2. Ratio of enrolment in primary, basic secondary and secondary education (% of population aged 7-17 years)**



Source: Agency of Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, from the National Centre for Education Quality Assessment (2011) - National Report on the Status and Development of Education.

<sup>9</sup> "1.6 percent of secondary school age children are attending primary school when they should be attending secondary school. The remaining 3.1 percent are not attending school at all." (MICS 2006)

### 3.2.3. DATA ON CHILDREN NOT ENROLLED OR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL

Very little data is available on out-of-school children in Kazakhstan, either from governmental or non-governmental sources.

#### CHILDREN NOT RECEIVING EDUCATION DUE TO HEALTH ISSUES

The database of children missing education, held jointly by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Child Rights Protection arm of the Ministry of Education, gathers information on children who miss education for more than 10 days without a valid reason. More information on this database is provided in section 4.2.2.

Table 3 below summarises the data for the last two school years, ending 2011 and 2012.

The number of children missing education for more than 10 days without a valid reason has fallen over the past five years. In 2008-2009, it was reported that 3,512 students were missing school, of which 347 did not return by the end of the academic year.<sup>10</sup> Data from 2011 and 2012 confirms a steady fall.

Data from this database is not fully accurate, as schools do not always alert the Oblast authorities each time a child is missing for

more than 10 days. School directors can be reluctant to openly reveal attendance “problems” in their school, particularly when enrolment and school funding are linked. Interviews with police child liaison officers and education officials and practitioners reveal that schools tend to prefer to resolve problems internally before referring the case to the authorities. This means that the overall number of children missing school for more than 10 days is likely to be higher than the figures in Table 3.

The definition of “returned to school” is also ambiguous, since many cases see children sent far from home to institutions for children with deviant behaviours, rather than returning to their previous school. Although they receive education at such institutions, their personal and school environments change drastically, potentially leading to further problems.

NGOs also provide information on school attendance, based on research studies conducted on small samples of respondents in selected oblasts. The NGO Report to the UN Human Rights Committee on the Implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by the Republic of Kazakhstan quotes results from an NGO survey on working and street children. These show that most children working on the streets progressively drop-out from school -either temporarily or permanently.

Table 3. Minors not attending school without a valid reason for more than 10 days (2010, 2011 and 2012)		
	15 May 2011	15 May 2012
Declared minors not attending school for more than 10 days without a valid reason since the beginning of the school year	1756	894
Of which: those who returned to school at some point during the school year	1542	706
Of which: those still absent from school in the last reporting month	214	188
Source: Child Rights Protection Committee		

<sup>10</sup> Government of Kazakhstan and UN Country Team (2010). Millennium Development Goals In Kazakhstan.

## CHILDREN NOT RECEIVING EDUCATION DUE TO HEALTH ISSUES

Children with disabilities are assessed by the Psychological, Medical and Pedagogical Commission (PMPC), which provides a certificate specifying whether the child can participate in education and, if so, the level of education s/he should receive. In 2010-2011 there were 5,649 children who were not attending school due to health issues - including severe or multiple disabilities. In 2011-2012, the figure was 5,230 (of which 3,159 were from rural areas), accounting for 0.2% of the total student population.<sup>11</sup>

## INVISIBLE CHILDREN

All the data presented in the previous sections refers to children registered in Kazakhstan and who are mostly on the school roll. It does not account for children who live in Kazakhstan on a permanent or temporary basis and who are not officially registered. These children are likely to never enter school, or to enter school late.

These children are invisible from official statistics and reports, due to challenges in estimating or assessing their number accurately. The Commission on Human Rights

under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2012) alludes to the infringement of children's rights to education when their parents are not documented, based on UNHCR sources. The NGO Report to the UN Human Rights Committee on the Implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by the Republic of Kazakhstan also flags problems encountered by refugee children, whose lack of legal documentation prevents them from attending public schools. Based on monitoring activities in the cities of Almaty, Taraz and Karaganda, the report mentions that several hundred children were refused education, mostly due to schools expelling or not admitting children whose parents were irregular migrants or whose parents did not have local registration and working permits.

## 3.2.4. CHILDREN AT RISK OF MISSING EDUCATION

### RISK FACTORS

Typology of risk factors for children missing education in Kazakhstan can be outlined from the following sources: the database on children missing education for more

### BOX 1.

#### ABSENTEEISM IN KAZAKH SCHOOLS

School absenteeism is a strong predictor of disengagement from education and dropping-out. A forthcoming UNICEF study on suicide among teenagers in Kazakhstan (UNICEF, forthcoming) has found that, of 2922 students interviewed, 16% admitted having missed five or more days of school intentionally over the past school year (2012-23). Of these, 22.5% felt that school was often or very often not relevant to them. Of all those interviewed, 7% stated that school was often or very often irrelevant and, of these, 47.5% admitted having missed five or more school days over the past year. Clearly, youngsters' perceptions of school relevance are a strong contributing factor to absenteeism. When students do not feel supported by their teachers or adult school staff, they are also very likely to miss school intentionally. Of the 10.5% who revealed that they often or very often felt unsupported by their teachers, 35.5% claimed to have missed five or more days of school intentionally over the past academic year.

<sup>11</sup> Data from the Committee on Child Rights Protection. Astana, 2012.

Table 4. Typology of risk factors for children missing education

Individual/ Social factors	Background	Individual	Sex	Girls who marry early or fall pregnant, as well as runaway boys and boys with behaviour issues
			Age	Drop-out teenagers and non-enrolled (pre) primary children
			Health	Children with disabilities, children with chronic illnesses and children with HIV
			Past experiences	Abused, neglected and trafficked children, those bullied at school or in conflict with the law, and working children
			Ethnicity & language	Children from Roma, Lyuli and other minority communities, and those who do not master the language of instruction
			Location	Children from rural and remote areas
		Family	Structure	Orphan children and those from single-parent families
			Practices	Children without or with limited parental care and those from dysfunctional families
			Demographics	No information available
			Resources	Children from low-income families
			Mobility	Internal migrants and foreign migrants, particularly irregular migrants and seasonal migrants, as well as refugees and Oralmans [ethnic Kazakhs who have returned since independence in 1991]
School factors	Behaviours	Engagement	Academic	“Lack of interest” in school education and irregular attendance
			Social	Isolated children and those who withdraw from social interaction
		Deviancy	Children with behaviour problems, including runaways and those affected by addictions - such as substance abuse	
	Educational performance		Low achievers and children who have changed school often	
	School practices		Enrolment or discipline procedures, stigmatisation and discrimination, and low inclusion practices: for such groups as CWDs and underachievers	
	Structure and resources		Lack of transport, qualified staff or materials	

than 10 days without a valid reason; a recent report on Access to Quality Education for Children from Vulnerable Groups (IC Sange, 2011); the NGO Alternative Report to the Fourth Periodic Report to the CRC Committee; and meetings with selected respondents.

It is important to recognise that risk factors are often interlinked and overlapping. For instance, sex, age, ethnicity and family practices all contribute to placing some teenage girls at risk of not completing compulsory education – particularly those from very traditional Muslim Turkish families, who are married at 14 (Collective, 2012). Sex, age, location, family resources and mobility, as well as educational performance, can contribute to the exclusion of low performing

teenage boys from large, very poor families of internal migrants, who must work to support themselves and their relatives.

Some children might be enrolled but be frequently absent or absent during specific periods of the year, such as the harvest season. Although the report does not investigate in detail the issue of absenteeism, it recognises that irregular attendance is potentially a contributing factor to the drop-out process and a risk factor to children's performance and engagement.

## DATA

There is little quantitative data available with which to assess the number of children at-risk of being out of school and, particularly, no sex or age disaggregated data.

<b>Migrant children</b>	Internal, seasonal and irregular migrant children make up a large number of those at risk of exclusion from education. Kazakhstan hosts seasonal workers from neighbouring countries but also from travellers' communities, such as Roma and Lyuli. These groups enter from countries in the region or even from Eastern Europe. No accurate data is available on these groups, particularly when they hold passports for which no visas are required to enter Kazakhstan.  However, some oblasts count migrant children when they encounter them. In the city of Almaty, for instance, 13 migrant children were not in school at the end of the 2011-12 academic year. <sup>12</sup>
<b>Working children</b>	The Commission on Human Rights under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2011) reported 553 cases of child labour among minors in 2010-11 (911 in 2009-10). In 2011-12, the number fell to 170 <sup>13</sup> . Working children are at risk of not enrolling in school or of dropping-out if they are seasonal migrants. Oblasts keep track of working children. In Almaty, 18 were identified in August 2012.
<b>Children with disabilities</b>	In January 2011, there were 147,679 children with developmental disabilities - out of 4,940,494 children under 18 living in Kazakhstan (2.98%). <sup>14</sup> The Fourth Periodic Report to the CRC Committee (RK, 2012) showed that 3.4% of children had disabilities and that, of these, 85% were receiving education (RK, 2012). It is unclear from the report whether the 15% not receiving education comprise only compulsory school-age children or also younger children.

<sup>12</sup> Personal communication. August, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Child Rights Protection Committee. Indicators in the Child Protection Sphere in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2011.

<sup>14</sup> The Commission on Human Rights under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2011).

<b>Children living in dysfunctional families</b>	In January 2011, there were 17,481 children living in dysfunctional families - of 4,940,494 in total (0.35%). <sup>15</sup>
<b>Children without parental care</b>	In January 2011, there were 38,386 parentless children or children without parental care - of 4,940,494 in total (0.77%). <sup>16</sup>
<b>Children with “deviant” behaviour<sup>17</sup></b>	In January 2011, there were 13,766 children with “deviant” behaviour - of 4,940,494 in total (0.27%). <sup>18</sup>

The 2011 World Disability Report establishes an international disability benchmark of 5.1% for children between 0 and 14. The Kazakh rate of 2.98-3.4% for children up to 18 suggests that the disabilities of many children remain unregistered and that they may not be receiving adequate educational provision in response to their specific needs, particularly if enrolled in mainstream schools lacking trained staff. Alternatively, some parents may feel reluctant to declare the disability of their children, keeping them at home to avoid future institutionalisation.

The discrepancy between urban and rural areas is likely to stem from children in rural areas being more likely to miss school to attend to chores or help with harvesting. The 2012 NGO Alternative Report to the CRC Committee emphasises that children working in cotton fields from August to November are missing school, as their average working day is 8-9 hours (Collective 2012).

## PROFILE OF CHILDREN WHO MISSED EDUCATION FOR AT LEAST 10 DAYS WITHOUT A VALID REASON

The MIA and CRPC database provides a rough profile of children yet to be enrolled in school at the time of reporting. Useful information includes the oblast and urban/rural areas, and whether children are living in low-income or dysfunctional families. It is unclear how children are classified if they live in a low-income family which is also dysfunctional. Furthermore, the criteria used to define a dysfunctional family are unclear and may not be consistently applied countrywide. The definition of children who “do not want to study” and of “migration” is also unclear, since migration criteria do not distinguish internal from external migration. Data is not disaggregated by sex.

Chart 3 presents the number of children reported on the database as missing education for more than 10 days in 2011 and 2012. Data reveals a slight decrease in number over the past two years and shows that children missing education come mostly from urban areas.

Chart 3. Primary and secondary school-aged children registered as having missed education for more than 10 days without a valid reason (2011 and 2012)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> This is the official terminology in Kazakhstan, although we prefer to use the term “children with behaviour problems or behaviour issues”.

<sup>18</sup> The Commission on Human Rights under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2011).

**Chart 3. Primary and secondary school-aged children registered as having missed education for more than 10 days without a valid reason (2011 and 2012)**

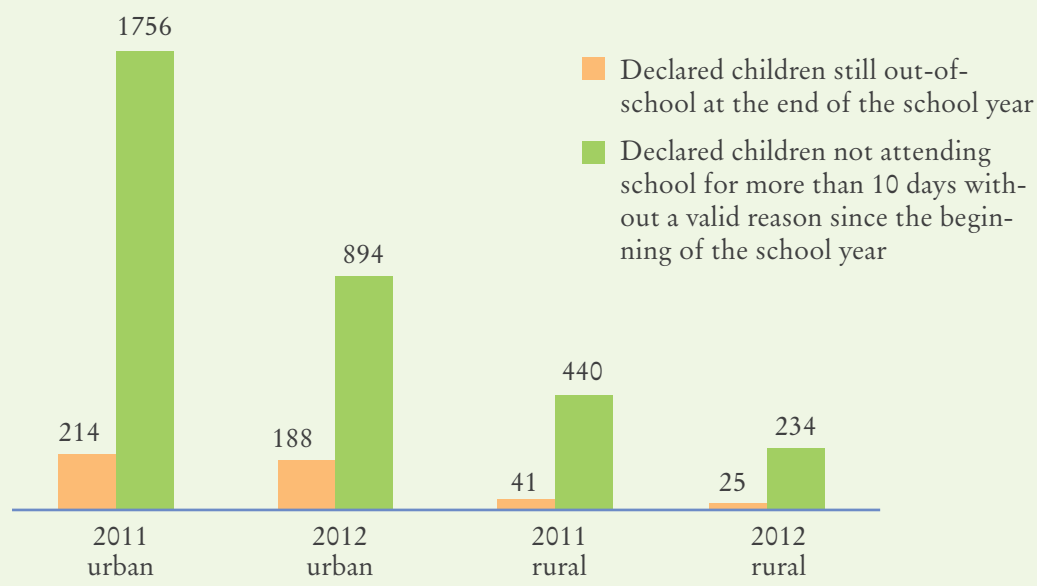


Chart 4 below presents the profile of children who, at the end of the academic year, were still not enrolled in education. The oblast database contains more information on children, particularly their year of birth, grades they have been enrolled in and the action taken to resolve their case. This information is not available aggregated at national level.

**Chart 4. Profile of children who failed to return to school at the end of the school year (2011 and 2012)**

At the end of the 2010-11 academic year, 214 children who had missed education for at least 10 days without a valid reason had not yet returned. Of these, 214 children (9%) were living in a low-income family and 74% in a dysfunctional family. By the end of the 2011-12 academic year, 188 children were still not attending school, of which 22% were living in a low-income family and 57% in a dysfunctional family. In short, the

majority of children who were still not in school at the end of the past two academic years were living in dysfunctional families. A more specific description of the exact characteristics of dysfunctional families would provide greater information on the real reasons behind the non-attendance of children.

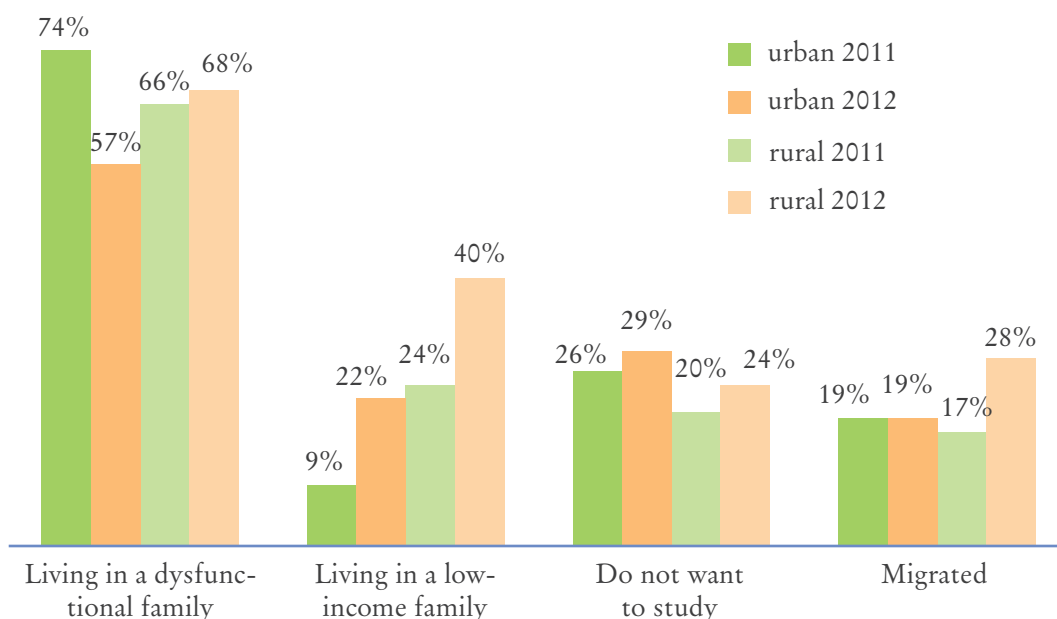
Another profiling element for these children is their willingness to study and their migration status. Of the 214 and 188 children not returned to school at the end of the last two academic years, respectively, 26% and 29% “did not want to study”<sup>19</sup> while 19% had migrated.

Table 5 below presents regional disparities and trends.

The oblasts with the highest number of declared minors not attending school for more than 10 days without a valid reason are East Kazakhstan (798 children in 2011),

<sup>19</sup> This turn of phrase masks the complex reasons behind children’s decisions not to attend school.

**Chart 4. Profile of children who failed to return to school at the end of the school year (2011 and 2012)**



Karaganda (232 children in 2011 and 194 in 2012) and North Kazakhstan (99 children in 2011 and 100 in 2012).

It is also interesting to note that, in 2011, it was in South Kazakhstan that the highest proportion of children failed to return to school (56%) followed by Almaty,

Astana, West Kazakhstan and Almaty Province. In 2012, Almaty Province had the highest percentage (57%) followed by South Kazakhstan (41%), West Kazakhstan (45%), Aktobe (33%) and Astana (30%).

Detailed tables on regional differences are presented in Annex 1.

## BOX 2

### CHILDREN AT RISK OF NOT BEING ENROLLED OR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL IN ALMATY

- Children from single-parent families where the parent is addicted to drugs or alcohol, regardless of the family's social status or income
- Children without parents, orphans and street children
- Children unsupervised by their parents due to lack of time
- Children from low-income families
- Children from dysfunctional families, particularly those who lack parenting skills and fail to provide an appropriate environment for bringing up children
  - Children with behavioural problems
  - Children from migrant families without documents

*Source: Almaty Education Department*

**Table 5. Regional disparities for children missing education for more than 10 days, 2011 and 2012**

	Total number of children on the database in 2010-11	Total number of children on the database in 2011-12	Number of children still out-of-school at the end of the school year, 2010-11	Number of children still out-of-school at the end of the school year, 2011-12
Akmola	94	64	13	14
Aktobe	39	15	12	5
Almaty Province	80	23	20	13
Atyrau	14	1	3	1
East Kazakhstan	798	150	15	13
Jambyl	66	50	11	17
West Kazakhstan	41	41	11	17
Karaganda	232	194	18	22
Kyzylorda	52	51	8	2
Kostanay	28	23	4	0
Mangystau	34	4	6	4
Pavlodar	24	20	2	3
North Kazakhstan	99	100	23	18
South Kazakhstan	90	92	50	43
Astana city	33	33	9	10
Almaty city	32	33	9	6

Education and Child Rights Protection District Officers in each oblast also identified specific profiles of children out-of-school or dropping-out in their area. In Astana, for instance, teenage boys were identified as an at-risk group for running away from home and school, particularly following conflicts with parents or friends. This category spans social classes; more information on profiling in Almaty is provided in Box 1 below.

Literature and data are scarce on profiles of children missing education and it is likely that risk factors are very different for different groups of children in rural and urban areas and in various oblasts.

### 3.2.5. BARRIERS TO ACCESSING AND REMAINING IN EDUCATION

The UN Special Rapporteur on Education has outlined four categories of barriers preventing children from accessing or remaining in schools:

- Economic obstacles
- Language and cultural obstacles
- Physical obstacles
- Administrative obstacles

To these, we can add social obstacles, which belong more to the family environment than to the action of institutional duty bearers. Factors affecting the quality of education must also be considered.

**Economic obstacles** particularly affect low-income families. Although education is supposed to be free, hidden costs may apply. There is anecdotal evidence that illegal fees are collected in schools by headteachers and teachers, for additional activities, events or school budget support. Textbooks, school supplies and winter clothes and shoes may be a great financial burden for the poorest families. NGOs also identify malnutrition as an important barrier to education (Collective, 2012). Hungry children and children whose diet is insufficiently nutritious are also more likely not to participate or to perform to their full potential in school, due to lack of concentration. Education related costs are a major barrier for refugee and returnee children.

*“My child does not want to go to school. At school, teachers and students are prejudiced against my child. We are poor, he does not have good clothes, and we cannot give money to the class.”*<sup>20</sup>

**Language and cultural obstacles** exist for children where the language of instruction is not their native language or where their first language is not taught at school as a second language. Not all schools provide Russian or Kazakh additional language classes, especially where there are only a few children affected. Schools where teaching is available in minority languages often lack sufficient numbers of textbooks (IC Sange, 2011). The language barrier is one of the reasons for a high level of absenteeism among migrant and refugee children - according to the IC Sange report.

**Physical obstacles** affect mostly children with disabilities, since they cannot easily access classrooms and other school facilities. Another critical issue is transportation, particularly in rural areas where some villages lack schools and school transport fails to be organised - for able-bodied students and those with disabilities. The IC

Sange study (2011) identifies school transport as a significant barrier for children, particularly in the winter, when fewer passing cars or buses can be stopped for a lift into school or back home.

**Administrative obstacles** affect internal and external migrants, as well as refugees. School enrolment procedures require that families provide proof of address (such as a private housing certificate) and, often, a registration certificate. The administrative hurdles which must be jumped to obtain these documents can be Kafkaesque for families lacking permanent addresses or who are living in accommodation not officially recognised.

Although the Road to School campaign provides families with support in obtaining documentation, anecdotal evidence shows that parents may be passed from one service to another for weeks, if not months, before managing to obtain their documents. Embarking on such procedures can be intimidating for vulnerable families, who do not feel confident engaging with administrative personnel and who may face challenges in understanding how the system works. Corruption is also reported, including by private companies offering to undertake the required administrative steps to accelerate the process. Corrupt practices in the school enrolment are also mentioned.

The 2010-11 MICS results show that 0.3% of children under the age of 5 lack birth certificates, which are key in obtaining further administrative documents for children at the time of compulsory education enrolment. NGOs also report the challenges faced by some families in gaining birth certificates for their children, which can impede their access to education at a later stage (Collective, 2012).

Arbitrary administrative decisions may be taken by school directors. An NGO report from 2006 (Collective, 2006) identifies that school directors' decisions not to enrol children from

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in IC Sange (2011).

**BOX 3**  
**ENROLLING IN SCHOOL: A HURDLE FOR  
INTERNAL MIGRANTS**

Tatiana is a lone parent looking after her two children; her husband left the household several years ago. Tatiana is educated but is struggling to find a job, having been caring for her two children until they reached school age. Tatiana moved in spring 2012 from Oblast X to Oblast Y, where she has some relatives. She has built a house, which is almost complete, but has not yet been registered by the authorities. In August 2012, her eldest daughter reached the official age for primary school. Tatiana has tried to enrol her but has failed several times due to her lack of “propiska” – the housing registration document. Aware of the Road to School Campaign, Tatiana contacted the Child Rights Protection Committee to gain support in processing her documents but was sent home and the Campaign has not visited her household. Tatiana has had no choice but to transfer parental responsibility for her daughter to a family member by power of attorney, placing her daughter with them. Aware of the situation, a nearby school has agreed to enrol the girl upon receipt of financial compensation.

vulnerable families - despite their location in the catchment area – are unjustifiable. Other NGOs report similar stories.

### **SOCIAL OBSTACLES**

Social obstacles to accessing and remaining in education fall under two main categories:

- Obstacles within the family
- Obstacles in school and wider society

Obstacles relating to the family cover a range of parental attitudes and practices and parent-child relationships. Children living in dysfunctional households often face the addictions of their parents, particularly to alcohol, or their untreated mental illnesses. Domestic violence against spouses, partners or children can result, with parents lacking the ability, capacity or willingness to care for and raise their children.

The IC-Sange study shows how some children are forced to take on parenting roles: running the household or caring for younger siblings, cooking, cleaning and undertaking other chores. This has direct consequences for their schooling: tardiness, absenteeism, under performance due to

stress, and lack of concentration from lack of sleep, as well as insufficient time, space or opportunity to study at home.

The Almaty Education Department also emphasises that parents may fail to appropriately stimulate their children, which affects their cognitive development. Meanwhile, other children endure excessive pressure and unrealistic demands from parents, which affects their attendance and performance. Other children skip school to attract attention from parents who fail to set aside time for their offspring, perhaps due to feeling overloaded by work.

Social factors are mostly at play outside the family sphere. In the IC Sange study (2011), teachers identify that those in their own profession can be negative, lacking understanding and readiness for inclusion. Teachers may have poor relationships with parents, use excessive discipline or be biased against certain students, particularly those from vulnerable groups. Vulnerable children echo these findings, with many believing that teachers do not value or recognise their opinion. This reveals that prejudice and negative attitudes towards certain groups

remain a major obstacle to universal inclusion, being contributing factors in students disengaging and dropping-out. Children also carry some of these negative views, particularly towards children with disabilities, migrant children and children from disadvantaged families. (IC Sange, 2011)

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION FACTORS

Children's experience of school and learning influences the regularity of their attendance and their overall performance in education.

Violence in school and in residential institutions may contribute towards students disengaging and dropping-out. A recent study conducted by UNICEF reveals the prevalence of violence in residential institutions for children (UNICEF, 2011).

A report on violence in schools (Haar, 2013) by UNICEF/Commissioner for Human Rights in the Republic of Kazakhstan shows that violence and discrimination against children prevails from school staff; 23.9% of children reported teachers having used violence and/or having discriminated against them in the past year. Psychological violence and discrimination are particularly reported, with 12% of surveyed children admitting that school staff had called them names or made hurtful comments. Meanwhile, 8.9% reported staff ridiculing, humiliating or embarrassing them in front of classmates. Some children reported discrimination from teachers on the basis of their disability (2.4%), clothes (1.9%) or gender (1.8%, because they were girls).

The survey also revealed information on school expulsions and transfers for student perpetrators of violence. Although very few schools reported a correlation between violence in school and dropping-out (only 3 out of 40), school violence affects regular attendance; 15.8% of children reported missing school "sometimes" because they felt unsafe in school or on the way to school. Additionally, 2.4% of children reported missing school "often" because they felt unsafe. The study also revealed that students who had witnessed violence, were victims of violence or perpetrators of violence were more likely to miss school compared to children who were not witnesses, victims or perpetrators.

The Alternative NGO report to the CRC Committee refers to the case of a Grade 1 student who was beaten by his teacher, which led to the child refusing to go to school for at least a week. The extent to which school-based violence impacts on absenteeism is yet to be explored in depth.

The IC Sange study also confirms that many vulnerable children do not feel safe at school. 2009 PISA results show the underperformance of Kazakhstan schools in comparison to those in other countries. Ranking at the bottom, Kazakhstan scores 390, 388 and 401 respectively in reading, mathematics and sciences, below the OECD average of 493 for reading, 496 for mathematics and 501 for sciences. This points to weaknesses in the quality of learning and teaching, which may be contributing to high absenteeism and dropping-out.

#### BOX 4

#### VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS VULNERABLE CHILDREN

A third of socially vulnerable children surveyed (n=571) do not feel safe in the school environment. This proportion rises to almost half for children with disabilities (44%), children with behaviour problems (44%) and children from dysfunctional families (41%).

18% of surveyed children admitted having no desire to have contact with children with disabilities and 29% shun children from disadvantaged families.

*Source: IC Sange (2011)*



The quality of education, respect for children throughout their schooling and inclusive education are pre-requisites for children feeling accepted and appropriately supported. They are also critical factors in reducing absenteeism and dropping-out, and in ensuring that no children are excluded from mainstream education as a result of physical, cognitive, behavioural or other characteristics, such as lack of parental care.

### 3.2.6. CHILDREN IN SPECIAL OR RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THOSE EDUCATED AT HOME

Thousands of children in Kazakhstan receive education in residential institutions or at home. Technically, these children are not “out-of-school”, but they are certainly deprived of their right to grow and develop in their homes and communities, or to properly develop cognitive and social skills based on exposure to real life situations and interaction with peers. This is a critical area for investigation under the framework of the Regional Initiative for Out-of-School Children and Adolescents, needing further research.

#### CHILDREN EDUCATED AT HOME

In 2011, there were 7,882 children being educated at home. This comprised 9% of the total number of school age students with disabilities. In fact, 61% of these children were from rural areas, pointing to transport, and other, limitations affecting enrolment in mainstream schooling. No recent study on the quality of home schooling exists.

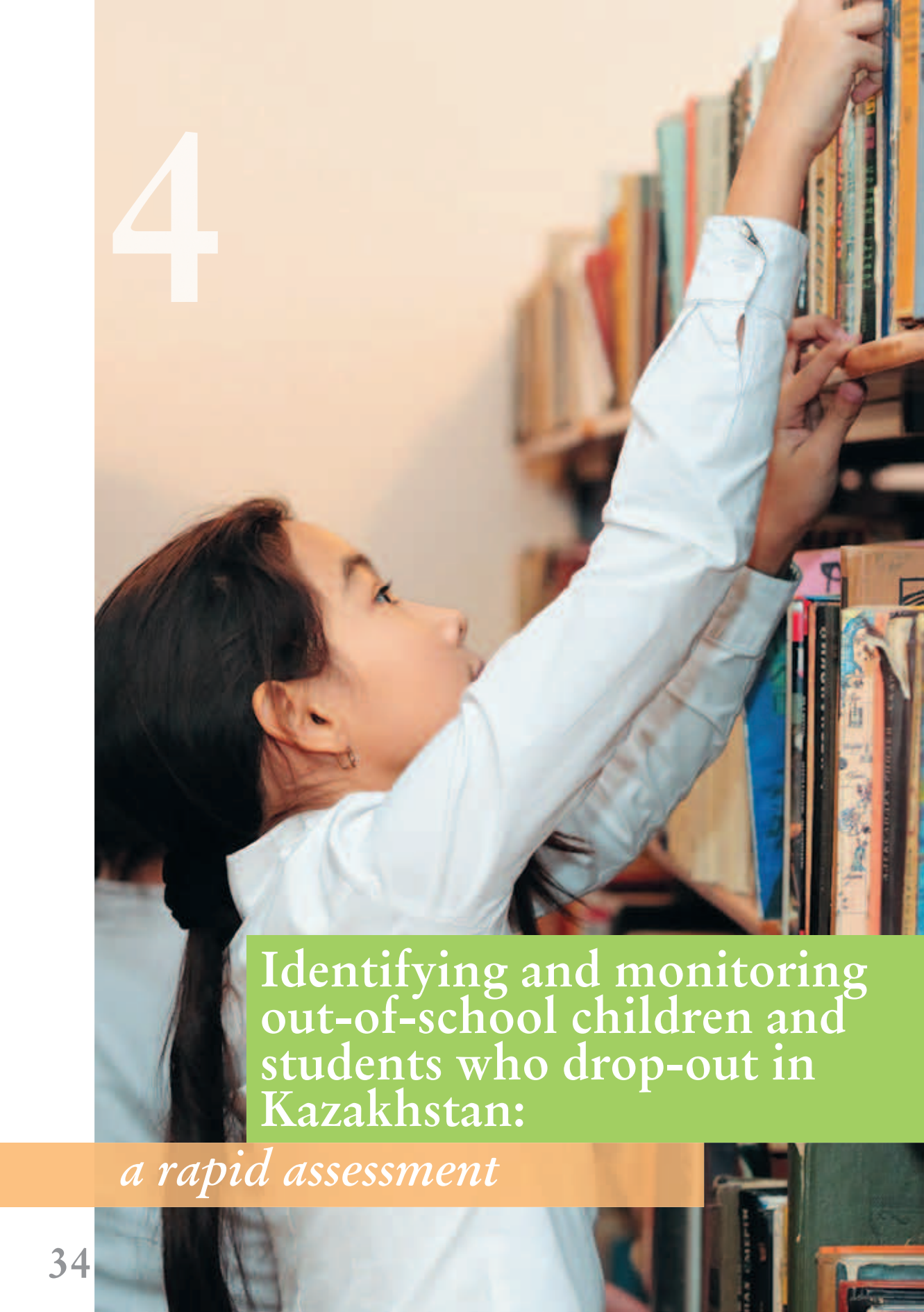
#### CHILDREN IN SPECIAL INSTITUTIONS

Kazakhstan has one of the highest proportions of children institutionalised in the CEE-CIS region, since institutional care is viewed as a reasonable response when facing challenging situations or those of family crisis. (UNICEF, 2011)

There are three main categories of children in institutions: children with disabilities; children without parents or social orphans (i.e. children whose parents have been deprived of their parental rights or children with one or two parents unable to care for them for a variety of reasons); and children with behaviour problems (including children in conflict with the law).

There are currently more than 200 institutions caring for children. In 2011, a total of 34,500 school-age children with disabilities were catered for in special schools and care institutions. (MoES, 2011)

# 4

A young girl with dark hair in a white school uniform is reaching up to a high shelf in a library, surrounded by books. The background is a warm, slightly blurred library setting.

Identifying and monitoring  
out-of-school children and  
students who drop-out in  
Kazakhstan:

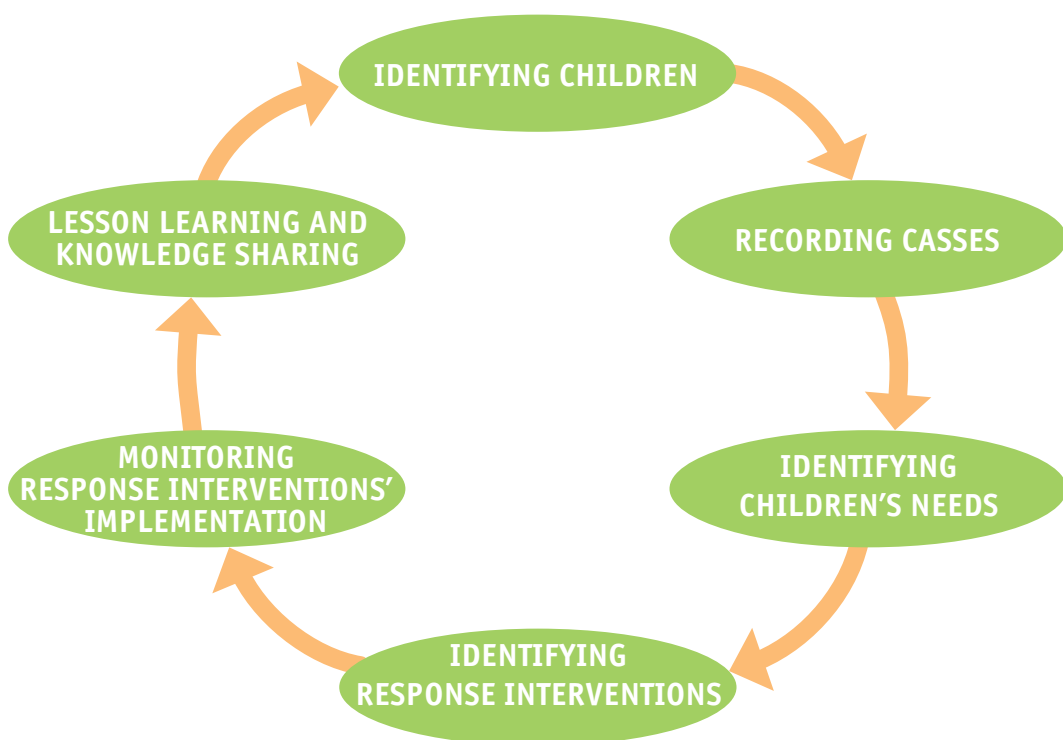
*a rapid assessment*



## 4.1. IDENTIFICATION AND MONITORING PROCESSES

To analyse the identification and monitoring system of OOSC and students who drop-out, the following framework has been used:

Figure 3. Identification and monitoring system for OOSC



## 4.2. EXISTING SYSTEM AND PRACTICES

### 4.2.1. IDENTIFICATION OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

The identification of children out-of-school is currently conducted through several parallel and complementary activities.

#### CENSUS OF CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS' CATCHMENT AREAS

Every school conducts a census of children in their catchment area two or three times annually.<sup>21</sup> Schools divide their catchment area into sectors and teachers visit every address in the sector for which they are responsible, collecting and verifying information on all children from birth to 18. Information collected includes name, date of birth, sex, ethnicity, language of instruction, mother's name, mother's profession and mother's phone number, father's name, father's profession and father's phone number, school attended by the child and, sometimes, his/her engagement in extra-curricular activities. A comment section enables teachers to record additional information, such as disabilities or impairments.

Based on thorough analysis of census data, discrepancies between two rounds of data collection automatically result in an investigation. If a child is found of whom there is no record, the school will attempt to verify the child's last known school. For children who are resident in the catchment area yet are not attending school, follow up work is conducted. The census also identifies children new to the area and which school they are attending.

#### RAIDS AND TRUANCY SWEEPS

Multi-sector task teams, comprising representatives from education, the Child Rights Protection Committee and the police,

conduct raids and sweeps in locations where children may be at risk of labour exploitation - particularly bazaars, train and bus stations and entertainment cafes. Working children's schooling status is checked and runaways are sometimes located. About 15,000 raids are conducted every year nationally.

#### ROAD TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

The Road to School Campaign, organised every August for the past five years, mobilises multi-sector teams to ensure that children are enrolled in school before the start of the academic year. Identification activities include home visits, particularly for vulnerable families.

A main drawback of the campaign has been that children from families of seasonal and irregular migrants have not previously been systematically identified. With the recent legislation change, such children should be identified next August. The Road to School Campaign is a preventive mechanism, rather than recording children's cases or following-up on the attendance of identified children during the school year.

#### HOTLINE

Hotlines for children and members of the public are in place in all oblasts. It is reported that some children missing education have been identified through this avenue.

#### SCHOOL NOTIFICATION

Schools notify their local Education and Child Rights Protection Department of children who have dropped-out of school following an unjustified absence of 10 days or more. Referrals can also be made separately to the police by schools or parents.

<sup>21</sup> The declared periodicity of the exercise varies, depending on respondents.

## NGO NOTIFICATION

NGOs working with children and vulnerable families may also refer cases of out-of-school children to the Oblast Minors' Commission. There are good examples across the country, particularly through the Road to School Campaign, of state-NGO collaboration in terms of identification and referral of children not going to school.

## SCHOOL IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN AT-RISK OF DROPPING-OUT

Schools often have responsible officers or teams to oversee social issues. School psychologists establish lists of vulnerable students and those from low-income families and schools must allocate 3% of their budget for student support (to pay for such items as school supplies, textbooks, clothes and summer camps). This could help prevent dropping-out or absenteeism for material reasons.

## COMMENTS

As described above, there are a number of procedures and systems in place to identify children who are not in school, which confirm Kazakhstan's commitment to education for all children. However, a few holes remain in the net regarding children's school attendance.

Although the census seemed well organised in the visited schools, some weaknesses were identified:

- Census information does not seem to be used by local administrations and there is no evidence of systematic cross-checking of children's census lists with local registration lists, including health lists.
- The census only covers children who live in registered accommodation, including hostels. Street children and seasonal migrant children are not accounted for.

- It is unclear how the census captures information on children living in travellers' settlements (including Roma) and whether data on these groups is accurate.

Multi-sector teams' raids and sweeps may ignore children of Roma and Lyuli origin, particularly when these children have parents who have entered the country legally, as informally reported by some respondents.

A weak point regarding referral to the Minors' Commission is that schools may delay their notification, trying to solve absenteeism internally first - as consistently reported by police officers in visited oblasts.

It is unclear whether drop-out risks are assessed at school level based on a sensitive combination of vulnerability and personal factors. In addition, there does not seem to be a clear mechanism in place to enable community workers - such as sports coaches and youth centre staff - to liaise; this would help flag-up potential cases of dropping-out or children failing to be enrolled. It is also unclear as to what extent schools analyse attendance data and the causes of absences, and how strategies are devised to address these issues.

Lastly, there does not seem to be any system in place to identify children at-risk of not enrolling or dropping-out throughout the school year, as per Figure 2. There is a lack of targeted information about the education enrolment process, parental responsibilities and family support when a family enters the country or moves from one oblast to another or has a child reaching pre-school or primary school compulsory age.

Tracking systems for children transiting from Grade 9 to higher grades also seem weak, with no responsible officers to follow-up individual cases when there is a high risk of dropping-out due to transfer between institutions. Similarly, it is unclear whether responsible officers are nominated to follow-up on exceptional cases of children expelled below the age of 16 or before completion of Grade 12, regardless of their age.



There is no system of cross-checking information on school attendance where families receive child benefits. Similarly, although health services keep records on children, these do not capture education information, which would enable them to identify children not going to school. Health and education lists are also not cross-checked at local or oblast level.

#### 4.2.2. RECORDING CASES

Since 2010, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has held a database of vulnerable children (Unified Registration of Minors in a Difficult Situation), including abused or trafficked children, child victims of violence, working children, children in conflict with the law and runaway children. These records aim, among other priorities, to provide targeted support intervention for these children. Included are records of children missing education for more than 10 days without a valid reason, providing the country's most comprehensive database of children missing education.

The database is kept up-to-date at oblast level on a monthly basis, when the Education and Child Rights Protection Department and the Internal Affairs Department reconcile their own records before jointly transmitting them to central level. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is in charge of maintaining the database at national level.

Children's records include: name, date of birth, name of the school and grade, address and telephone number, family social status (here are recorded orphans, children from dysfunctional families and children from low-income families), dates of missing education, reasons for missing school (i.e. missing, no desire to study, migration or under criminal investigation) and measures taken.

#### COMMENTS

There is no official record of non-enrolled children, including those identified through the Road to School Campaign. The number of out-of-school children enrolled in school every year is therefore unknown, as are their profiles and barriers to education. There are also no records of seasonal or irregular migrant children who may come across social or police services.

The database omits such information as gender and the total number of days of school missed before resolution of the case. Also lacking are clear criteria for deciding family status (“low-income family” or “dysfunctional family”) and there is no clear guidance on how to record when both are relevant. In addition, categories of reasons for missing school need to be more specific: “migration” does not specify whether internally or abroad; and “no desire to study” is a symptom rather than a cause, failing to address any explanation.

A rapid assessment of the database of one oblast, as of 15th May 2012, also reveals inconsistencies in recording. A child who had disappeared with his family was labelled “no desire to study”, as was another who, upon return from a residential institution for children with deviant behaviour, ran away again from home and school.

A more sensitive and precise description of each situation would enable practitioners to better identify a child’s needs and a suitable response. Additional and more consistent information would also support the development of more appropriate prevention measures.

### 4.2.3. IDENTIFYING CHILDREN’S NEEDS

#### SCHOOLS

School psychologists work with vulnerable children, using tests, interviews and discussion to discover children’s needs. The easiest needs to identify relate to financial and material conditions: often quoted as the main barriers for vulnerable children. Needs requiring psychological support may also be identified at school level for children displaying several dimensions of vulnerabilities. Language and learning support needs should be easily identified by teachers and the pedagogical team but the extent to

which this is achieved remains unclear; several schools seem to lack a system of identifying and supporting slower learners.

#### COMMISSION FOR MINORS AND INTER-SECTOR TEAMS

Through the Road to School Campaign, children’s needs are assessed and are often found to fall under the following categories: (i) financial, (ii) material, (iii) transport, or (iv) administrative. Needs assessment is conducted jointly after discussion with the child and his/her family.

Needs assessment for children missing education and those on the database of the MoES and MIA also covers financial and material issues. There is only anecdotal evidence of psychologists speaking with children and their families to try to better understand the situation and identify the root causes of problems.

#### COMMENTS

No clear procedure of assessing the needs of children missing education is apparent. Most stakeholders refer to discussions with families and children but the protocol for conducting these meetings appears to be lacking, as does documentation. The database of children missing education does not include a needs assessment column, to ensure children’s needs are appropriately articulated. There is anecdotal evidence from NGOs that insufficient time and resources are allocated to this critical stage of the process; this can result in superficial analyses, overlooking the real reasons behind a child’s behaviour. Another issue raised is lack of staff expertise in engaging with dysfunctional or vulnerable families. An incomplete assessment can lead to inappropriate or insufficient measures. Lastly, it is unclear how NGOs and social services centres can contribute to the identification of children’s needs.

## 4.2.4. IDENTIFYING RESPONSE INTERVENTIONS

### AT OBLAST LEVEL:

Common responses to the needs of out-of-school children include:

- Financial support through social benefits, scholarships, material support (school supplies, clothes, etc), food support (free meals), transport support and registration/documentation support, particularly through the Road to School Campaign;
- Placement in a Centre for Adaptation of Minors (CAMs) before re-integration with the family, or placement in a home or a residential correctional/special school;
- Placement in a correctional school, usually from 3-12 months. One oblast's database for children missing education detailed that, in May 2012, four cases (out of ten) were solved by sending children to an institution for children with deviant behaviour;
- Deprivation of parental rights in cases of neglect or abuse;
- Placement in evening classes. From 2010-2011, about 21,500 children were studying via evening classes (MoES, 2011);

- Collaboration with embassies in cases of external migration, working children or children without parental care; and
- Requests for guardianships where children are parentless.

There are examples of good practice in some oblasts. In Almaty, for instance, some preventive work has been conducted through social youth networks, including online. In East Kazakhstan, NGOs are facilitating life skills education classes in a residential institution for children with behaviour issues, helping build self esteem and strengthening communication and conflict resolution skills.

NGOs are also providing activities for children at risk: psychological support, creative and sports classes and family activities. The breadth of activities depends on the number and capacity of NGOs in a given area.

### SCHOOL LEVEL

Schools are able to contribute to financial and material issues students may face. Some students may also benefit from the support of a psychologist or from inclusion in extra-curricular activities. Schools may help families and support services liaise.

#### BOX 5.

#### CENTRES FOR THE ADAPTATION OF MINORS

Centres for the Adaptation of Minors (CAM) are oblast residential centres for neglected, abused and runaway children aged 3-18 years. Children referred by the police, social services or NGOs may stay for a few days or up to three months. CAMs undertake health checks and provide counselling and other psychological services, while children attend classes on the premises. CAMs work with families to prepare re-integration and liaise with residential institutions for children who have been abused or do not receive adequate parental care.

CAMs have become a critical mechanism in the first response to neglected children and young people with behaviour issues.

## COMMENTS

The panel of response interventions provided to children missing education appears limited. While the response to financial and material issues has been increasingly appropriate over the past five years, via the Road to School Campaign, other types of response mostly focus on withdrawing children from their family and community environments. Many school truant children are sent to residential schools. Although they will receive education in these establishments, they may face challenges in terms of integration, being taken away from their traditional support mechanisms. Challenges may also occur for such children on returning to their family and school. These solutions do not address the reasons why children missed school in the first place. Lastly, there is no clear strategy for solving administrative hurdles, particularly for internal migrants, seasonal migrants and refugees.

Schools lack a holistic response towards children missing education and those who attend irregularly, failing to address under performance and learning support. In an environment promoting individual excellence and performance, students who struggle in class may be forgotten. There is little evidence of extensive learning support mechanisms being in place in schools or communities, including language support. Schools also have limited strategies by which to include children with special needs or to (re-) integrate children after a stay in a residential institution.

There is little evidence of referral of children's cases to NGOs, which could possibly adopt a more child/youth-centred approach in the resolution of cases.

## 4.2.5. MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESPONSE INTERVENTIONS

Monitoring mechanisms appear weak, particularly regarding the review of response interventions and their impact on children. Certainly, it is unclear how children returning from correctional schools are supported, including whether they are monitored, and by whom.

## 4.2.6. LESSON LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Although a system is in place to collect data on children, there is little evidence of a systematic approach to analysis or interpretation, to better inform policy development and practice. No in-depth analysis of the database is available at oblast or national level and there is no indication as to whether boys or girls are more susceptible to missing school, their age, grade or the most common response interventions taken.

There is also no formal mechanism at oblast level to document best practice or learn what works best in various situations.

If fewer children were institutionalised, remaining enrolled in mainstream schools, incidences of irregular attendance or dropping-out might rise, due to inadequate provision and inappropriate and insufficient support. Accordingly, it is critical to learn lessons and to improve the system, to enable more children to enjoy mainstream education long-term.

# 5



Statistical reporting  
on out-of-school children

*and students who drop-out*

Vulnerable children rarely appear in educational statistical reports in Kazakhstan. Although the number of children with disabilities and those from dysfunctional and low-income families are recorded, there is no quantitative and analytical information on children who are missing or at-risk of missing education.

#### Information is lacking on:

- Out-of-school children (number and profile)
- Children dropping-out from school (number and profile)
- Invisible children - particularly migrant children (internal, external and seasonal), refugee children, working children and trafficked children
- Attendance/absenteeism rates, with relevant disaggregation
- Disaggregation of selected education indicators - such as the Net Intake Rate in Primary, Adjusted Net Attendance Rate in Primary, Adjusted Net Attendance Rate in Secondary, Transition to Grade 10, Graduation Rate for Grade 9 and the Graduation Rate for the Last Grade of Upper Secondary, per:
  - Sex
  - Oblasts and rural/urban areas
  - Children with disabilities
  - Ethnicity (also used as a proxy for linguistic issues)
  - Vulnerable children (low-income families, dysfunctional families, migrants and refugees)

Information is limited regarding children with disabilities:

- There is limited information on home-schooled children, such as the type of education they receive, through what channel, their grade, their type of disabilities, and their performance in education (e.g. transition and graduation)
- There is limited information on students in special schools and residential care institutions, particularly sex-disaggregated data, age-disaggregated data, grade-disaggregated data and information on their performance in education (e.g. transition and graduation)

Lastly, information is also limited on those attending residential schools for children with deviant behaviours:

- Sex, age and grade disaggregated data for children in correctional schools
- Reasons for institutionalisation
- Length of stay of children in institutions
- Education indicators for these children (completion, transition, graduation and performance)

This is partially explained by the fact that several Ministries are in charge of special and residential institutions and that several Departments or Agencies within the Ministry of Education (such as the Committee on Child Rights Protection and the National Centre for Education Statistics and Assessment) do not always have knowledge sharing mechanisms in place to make use of different sets of data in education reports.

Since October 2012, the Ministry of Education has embarked on a review of education indicators and calculation methods with support from UNESCO, to ensure compliance with international standards.

# 6



Examples of international  
practice for monitoring  
out-of-school children

*and conducting intervention*



The purpose of this section is not to provide an in-depth literary review of international best practice around monitoring and interventions for out-of-school children; rather, we aim to highlight practice relevant to the Kazakh context. This could feed into discussion by policy makers and practitioners, shaping future programmes for out-of-school children and those who drop-out.

## 6.1. INVOLVING AND SUPPORTING PARENTS

### PARENT EDUCATION

Many projects across the world use pre-school and kindergartens as an avenue for instilling parenting skills and for strengthening the parent-child bond, including the father-child bond.

#### PARENT EDUCATION IN PRE-SCHOOLS (PEPS), SINGAPORE

*Objective: To empower parents with effective parenting skills to nurture their children, and to promote better parent-child understanding and relationships.*

Here are some of the best practices and tips contributed by schools:

1. Extend PEPS programmes to workplaces located near PEPS schools.
2. Organise lunchtime parenting talks for working parents if PEPS schools are located near workplaces.
3. Disseminate information on PEPS programmes to parents:
  - during schools' Pre-Orientation Sessions or Open House Days
  - including the PEPS programme schedule into an information pack given to all parents
  - including updates on upcoming PEPS programmes into communication books to parents
  - providing parents with information on special events
  - providing family life education resource materials on PEPS programmes at the Parent Resource Centre
4. Ways of increasing participation:
  - sending weekend activities for parents and children, to increase family togetherness through home projects
  - sending feedback forms to allow parents to make suggestions, to help shape new programmes or activities
  - inviting parents to be parent volunteers, sharing parenting tips with other parents, based on their experience and knowledge skills
  - inviting parents to take part in PEPS programmes
5. Set up a Parent Support Group in PEPS schools, to discuss ways of sharing parenting skills and experience, helping parents become better parents.
6. Encourage more fathers to become involved in their child's growing years, through focused programmes; these could include an exclusive breakfast session, where teachers can share ideas on how dads can engage with their children at home.

*Source: Adapted from <http://app1.mcys.gov.sg/Policies/StrongandStableFamilies/NurturingProtectingtheYoung/ParentEducationinPreSchools.aspx>*

<sup>22</sup> DfES (2004) Engaging Fathers: Involving Parents, Raising Achievement.

## ENGAGING FATHERS

Evidence is growing of the positive involvement of fathers in their children's learning. The positive impact of fathers' involvement (in addition to that of the mother, not instead of) includes "better school attendance and behaviour, less criminality, better school results, better mental health and higher quality of later relationships".<sup>22</sup>

### CRITERIA FOR ENGAGING FATHERS SUCCESSFULLY

- Find out from fathers what sort of programme could interest them; don't make assumptions
- Be creative about recruiting fathers in interventions and meetings: appeal to their children to recruit them
- Make the school a welcoming place for them – it is often seen as a "women's space"
- Start with one-off events and develop activities which are dynamic with not too much discussion
- Develop a programme specifically for fathers; fewer fathers tend to attend events for "parents"
- Engage with individual fathers on specific child learning and behaviour
- Organise dads' breakfasts or dads' activities after work
- Make use of fathers' skills in school and in class
- Use fathers in a mentoring capacity
- Persevere for several years; change does not happen overnight
- Show them that their involvement will make a big difference in their children's learning and attitude, even at a much later stage
- Engage fathers who are not living with their children by contacting them regularly and updating them on the progress of their children; do not contact them only for bad news

*Source: Adapted from DfES (2004) Engaging Fathers: Involving Parents, Raising Achievement.*

## ENGAGING WITH VULNERABLE AND "CHALLENGING" PARENTS

The term "vulnerable parents" is here used to refer to parents in very difficult circumstances, including those with addictions to alcohol or drugs and those from dysfunctional families.

Vulnerable parents may often feel that they are blamed and criticised for the behaviour or bad performance of their children when addressed by school representatives. They often feel helpless and do not know, considering their circumstances, how to address the issue. They may also feel that school meetings are repetitive, which justifies their non-attendance, or they may feel embarrassed by meeting the parents of their child's friends. Conversely, some parents may demonstrate aggressive behaviour or anger when talking to school staff.

### CRITERIA FOR ENGAGING WITH VULNERABLE AND "CHALLENGING" PARENTS

- Be consistent, ensuring that the same member of staff meets the family each time (either nominate a staff member or comply with request)
- Be persistent, accepting that change won't happen overnight and that building a relationship may take years
- Provide timely support, working with social services to provide information or support to parents

- Be honest, open and respectful
- Be culturally sensitive
- Don't be patronising, judgemental or threatening
- Present issues and problems sensitively and in a way parents will understand • Always end meetings on a positive note and thank parents for their availability
- Maintain contact regularly and do not only contact parents when things go wrong
- Establish a culture of shared decision-making
- Engage CSOs and NGO centres, as they will bring different approaches, based on wide-ranging experience.

## COUNTRY EXAMPLES

### THE UK

Examples of practice to ease the relationship with parents include:

- Providing them with the phone number of a member of staff (of their choice if they wish)
- Starting phone conversations or meetings with calming messages
- Contacting parents when things are going well, so that communication with the school is not only associated with negative behaviour from their children
- Setting-up parent support groups for those with difficult or disengaged students

*Source: Ofsted (2008)*

### HISPANIC DROPOUT PROJECT, USA

The project documented different ways of involving Hispanic families in the life of the school. While parents tended not to attend scheduled parent-teacher meetings, they were more likely to come for informal dinners or picnics or to visit a dedicated parents' room within the school.

*Source: Lockwood, A. T. (2000) and Kerka (2006)*

### COFFEE MORNINGS, UK

Many schools in the UK organise coffee mornings for parents, carers and grandparents of children. These can be casual sessions, to talk generally, or sessions to consult parents on specific topics.

### HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNITY LIAISON, IRELAND

Overcoming parents' negative perceptions or experience of education and schools can be challenging. In Ireland, schools have used a long-term approach to build trust between the home and the institution, providing parents' rooms, inviting parents to take an active role in the classroom (such as reading activities or supporting their own child with special needs) and providing adult classes.

*Source: European Commission (2010)*

## 6.2. SCHOOL BASED EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

In the USA, Early Warning Systems have been developed in schools with a high-level of dropping-out.

Early warning systems present similar characteristics:

- Identification by the school of indicators for at-risk students
- Monitoring of these indicators
- Person or team responsible for giving the alert
- Implementation of early intervention
- Referrals where appropriate
- Monitoring of intervention
- Evaluation of results

In Miami Dade County (Cicilia, no date), schools have used five broad indicators/attributes to identify children at risk of dropping-out:

- Academic: such as course failure
- Attendance: three or more unexcused absences per quarter, or truancy

- Behaviour: suspension or Office Discipline Referrals
- Parental involvement: participation in school activities, voluntary participation and parental accountability
- Student engagement: mentoring and participation in extra-curricular activities

School monitoring sheets and staff records are kept for each at-risk student, including the following information:

- Baseline data for each of the five indicators/attributes
- A student goal for each attribute
- Strategies to achieve each of these goals
- Activities linked to each goal
- Named persons responsible for monitoring these activities
- Timeline for implementing these activities
- Status of these activities
- Results of these activities
- Specific interventions tailored for each child at risk of dropping-out



## 6.3. DROP-OUT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TEAMS

Drop-out prevention and response teams exist in various guises across the world - at school level or district level, or both - although membership and remit vary.

### THE NETHERLANDS

Most secondary schools (including VET schools) in the Netherlands have advisory teams to monitor children at risk of dropping-out. These can contact external stakeholders as soon as needed (such as Youth Services, Police, Social Services or Psychologists). They also provide mentoring at children's request.

### ALBANIA

Teachers identify cases of potential dropping-out, while school psychologists are responsible for creating and up-dating records for children who have dropped-out or show irregular attendance, developing an action plan tailored to each child. Multi-disciplinary teams monitor cases and implement action plans. Family visits are conducted by the school psychologist and by regional inspectors, with unresolved

cases referred to other agencies (such as the Labour Inspectorate, Police or Ministry).

### THE UK

In England and Wales, each county has a Children Missing Education Team and a dedicated Children Missing Education Officer. The latter co-ordinates all information on children known to be missing school for a long period and on those deemed at-risk of not receiving education (by the public or national or local agencies).

These teams contribute to:

- Identifying children missing education
- Tracking children's movement within and across regions
- Auditing school registers and attendance registers
- Developing sound school de-registration protocols
- Tracking and monitoring school transfer within public and private institutions and across local authorities
- Looking for school placements and alternative education provision

## 6.4. CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION AND SHARING OF INFORMATION RECORDS

### EXAMPLE: NATIONAL LOST PUPILS' DATABASE IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Children whose whereabouts cannot be traced are placed on a National Lost Pupils' Database, a sub-section of the School-to-School online system, which aims to better track school transfers.

Whenever a child from the Lost Pupils' Database is identified, the local authority shares this information with the last locality in which the child was recorded.

Each county maintains a database of children out-of-school, reviewed monthly by a

cross-sector panel, which is also in charge of finding alternative education placements for these children.

### BEST PRACTICE

In Sheffield, health, social services and education agencies/professionals access children's information data from a centralised system. Any practitioner checking a child's details will be notified automatically if the child does not appear on a school roll and are asked if they wish to make an online referral to the Children Missing Education Officer. Discussion may also take place with other



agencies, such as the homeless section, domestic violence forums and NGOs.

*Source: Identifying Children Missing Education - Good Practice (2004).*

### EXAMPLE: LINKING DATABASES IN LITHUANIA

“In Lithuania, a national information system is in development: the National Information System on Children’s Absenteeism and Pupils’ Truancy. This will integrate several databases (including the national register of residents and national register of pupils) while linking them to other information systems and databases. Tailored information on Early School Leaving (ESL) and pupils at risk of this can be extracted. The system will include student monitoring, tracking and early warning functionalities.”<sup>23</sup>

### EDUCATION AND HEALTH COLLABORATION IN THE UK

In the UK, all practitioners and agencies working with children and their families must systematically record data on children, including their name, age, address, name of the child’s primary carer, name of the child’s doctor and the name of the school in which the child is enrolled. Record triangulation

enables the identification of children not enrolled in school.

A recent survey from Ofsted (England and Wales Inspectorate) in 15 counties demonstrated positive results from involving the health services in finding and referring children not enrolled in school (Ofsted, 2010). This finding supports the critical importance of close collaboration between education and health services, and of a mechanism enabling health services to refer knowledge of out-of-school children to education services.

### BEST PRACTICE OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN HEALTH AND EDUCATION SERVICES

In one English county, a simple but effective system of exchanging information has been established. A public health nurse, responsible for vulnerable children and families, “agreed with the local hospital’s accident and emergency department that, each time a family attended, the nurses would ask the name of the child’s school. If none was given or they were unconvinced by the answer, a standard form was submitted to the public health nurse, who followed up.” (Ofsted, 2010)

<sup>23</sup> GHK Consulting Ltd (2011) Reducing Early School Leaving in the EU. A Study. Directorate General for Internal Policies - Policy Department B: structural and cohesion policies. Education and Culture.

## 6.5 SUPPORTING STUDENTS

### STRENGTHENING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND OTHER ADULTS

Across various texts, this is emphasised as a corner stone of preventing dropping-out and of encouraging school re-entry. Approaches vary, depending on context, school culture and the relations which exist between adults and young people. However, all such texts promote a culture of respect within school and between individuals. The school organisational structure shapes the way in which adults and students interact. Experience shows that drop-out prevention strategies are more successful where they respect the individuality of each student and offer opportunities for supportive and caring adult-student relationships. (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2009)

#### CRITICAL FACTORS:

- Respect and understanding of students' individuality, backgrounds and needs
- Safe and neutral environments, where students can freely express themselves
- Serious consideration given to students' views, concerns and problems
- Open communication between students and adults
- Constant link between adults and students and constant support on emotional and academic matters
- Regular feedback between adults and students
- Opportunities for teachers/staff and students to participate in activities together
- Expansion of network of adults available to students beyond teaching staff (such as support staff and specialised staff)
- Promotion of team work across the school, ensuring teachers and non-teaching staff meet regularly to talk about students' specific needs
- Clear communication of school expectations (academic and behavioural) and of school caring practices

*Source: Adapted from Hamre & Pianta, ND*



## MENTORING

Mentors are commonly defined as trusted counsellors. Depending on settings and resources, mentors are drawn from school staff, young people themselves, or other members of the community. Anecdotal evidence suggests that mentors external to the school are greatly appreciated by students at risk of dropping-out or disengagement and by students re-entering education institutions.

### INSERTION SUPPORT GROUPS, FRANCE

**Target group:** Students at risk of dropping-out and students re-entering education

**Mentors:** School staff (not necessarily teachers), community members and youth workers

Insertion Support Groups (GAIN) have been introduced in selected secondary schools and vocational schools in Paris suburbs. GAINs work with students disengaged from education and at risk of dropping-out. They also work with students re-entering education after long periods of absence and with students who have lacked regular attendance. GAINs are initiated internally by schools but external persons can contribute: mentors or social/youth workers, engaging children in extra-curricular activities.

Some GAINs have developed partnerships with community organisations, such as Insertion Centres. Young people have the opportunity to participate in activities to which they are not usually exposed - such as working with animals or gardens, creative workshops (theatre, creative writing and arts) or ICT lessons.

Community youth workers involved with GAINs are regularly invited to meetings, to provide feedback on how well young people are doing in extra-curricular activities.

Mentors can be teachers (but not the class teacher of the child with whom they are partnered), other school staff (librarians, nurses, career advisors or school assistants) or external persons - such as sports club managers, community workers or business men/women.

Mentors undertake the following:

- Meeting with the student to assess their situation and explain why GAIN assistance is offered, as well as confirming the voluntary participation of the student in the programme and explaining the objectives and modalities of the programme;
- Establishing dialogue to understand the reasons behind absenteeism, poor performance and behavioural issues, reassessing and re-validating these reasons over time;
- Jointly developing an action plan engaging the responsibility of the student and of the mentor (roles and commitments from both parties), monitoring the plan, assessing progress and making changes as appropriate; and
- Helping the student in identifying support and opportunities - such as catch-up classes, homework groups, work placement, extra-curricular activities, or being referred to health and social services or collective therapy groups and support groups.

The mentor is reminded not to put pressure on the student, allowing time for them to express themselves. Mentors should be accessible and available for meetings, respecting their engagement with the student. Teacher-mentors must not adopt an authoritarian attitude and should use appropriate, non-threatening vocabulary, which may differ from that traditionally used in schools.

*Source : Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale (2012)*

## TUTORING THROUGH HOMEWORK CLUBS

Tutoring, particularly through homework clubs, is a common intervention in deprived areas or areas with a high proportion of migrants. Tutors can be either paid or voluntary, with recruitment conducted through schemes, partnerships with universities or word of mouth. When tutors are volunteers, it is important that their role is discussed, well outlined and supported by organisations. Volunteers' commitment is critical in ensuring continuity and consistency.

### KOSOVO, BALKAN SUNFLOWERS

In Kosovo, Roma NGOs are working closely with schools to support homework clubs. Balkan Sunflowers is one such, working in selected municipalities, through learning centres, to provide support to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children, young people and women. The main child-focused activities include a pre-school centre, school preparedness, language classes and homework clubs. These provide a positive environment in which children can study, run by volunteers who establish peer-to-peer mechanisms by which children help one another. Tutors are mostly secondary school students and young people, receiving a payment of 35 Euros a month, as well as schoolbooks, training and support in helping younger children in their learning. They work 2-3 hours per day, supervised by full-time staff and more experienced facilitators. Balkan Sunflowers reports that tutor involvement in homework clubs is helping children to stay in school and complete their studies, and significantly contributes to self-confidence, as well as communication and social skills.

*Source: Balkan Sunflowers, 2010.*

### BELGIUM

In the French-speaking community, a tutoring programme has been set-up whereby university students tutor small groups of children (3 to 8 in number) from deprived areas or whose schools have a large proportion of pupils from disadvantaged homes. They give academic support and teach learning skills, as well as developing projects to complement the activities of their particular community organisation. Children have been found to gain greater confidence in their ability to learn, improved French language skills and tend to then hand in homework with greater regularity.

*Source: Lepage & Romainville (2009)*

## AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

In 2009, Romania's Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports provided funding and support to enable schools to extend after-school classes, allowing students to stay at school for leisure, sports and other supervised activities, including learning. This gave students up to eight hours in school in total. Partnerships with parents associations and other NGOs and civil society organisations were encouraged and the programme provided specialised activities tailored to children with learning disabilities and to gifted children.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Government of Romania (2009) Education and Research for a Knowledge Society; and Government of Romania (2012) Government Programme, Education Chapter. [http://www.gov.ro/chapter-5-education\\_\\_l2a1057.html](http://www.gov.ro/chapter-5-education__l2a1057.html)

## LEARNING-SUPPORT IN TRANSITION AND EXAM YEARS

It is not uncommon for students to drop-out between education cycles (e.g. either in the last year of lower secondary or in the first year of upper secondary) and in exam classes (e.g. last year of upper secondary). To curb this trend, schools and governments have set up various learning support mechanisms: subject specific small group tutorials, exam revision clubs, extra classes, and one-to-one sessions. The idea has been to give students extra help (and confidence) to help them stay in school over critical education stages.

### CRITICAL FACTORS

- **Learning to learn.** To gain higher grades, students need to be able to work independently. This can be achieved by learning how to organise learning and workload and by instilling a classroom culture whereby students are responsible for their learning;
- **Familiarisation with the next cycle.** Parents, as well as students, can be

anxious or have misconceptions with regard to higher cycles of education. To overcome this, schools have organised meetings for parents and children, alongside visits to upper secondary and vocational schools. Other initiatives include welcoming those from higher grades as speakers (a mix of former and non-former students) and setting up a shadow system, whereby a younger student shadows an older student for a day. School websites can also play a role in disseminating information, including on social, physical and cultural activities organised by the school and on support systems for new students;

- **School collaboration.** Close collaboration between primary and lower secondary and lower and upper secondary schools to prevent students' disengagement at transition (Ofsted, 2008); and
- **Continuity in mentorship.** It is important for mentors to accompany students throughout their promotion process to another school, across key transition stages. (Ofsted, 2008)

## 6.6 ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND ABSENTEEISM

In Hertfordshire, England, a Children Out-of-School Survey is conducted for those missing 50% or more over the survey period (this includes children absent for legitimate reasons, such as illness). Based on the results, local authorities and schools work together to develop strategies to reduce absenteeism. They also identify students in need of additional learning and other types of support.

### GOOD PRACTICE AROUND ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND DEALING WITH ABSENTEEISM:

- Clear communication with parents and students regarding the attendance

policy. Schools might communicate information in several languages and both in writing and in meetings, to maximise coverage. Communication of the policy is particularly important when children enter a new school or cycle (Year 1 of primary school and the first year of lower secondary and upper secondary school);

- Clear definition of excused and unexcused absences. Where the school has responsibility for assessing the validity of an excuse, it is important that flexibility be built in, to reflect each student's specific home situation (such as caring for sick relatives);

- Consistent implementation of the attendance policy and of sanctions;
- Communicating with students and families, to understand the problem and convey the value of attendance;
- Tackling the underlying causes of absenteeism rather than the symptom (absenteeism) – such as providing free school meals to prevent afternoon tardiness, free transport (or review of bus routes and schedules) or early/late school opening (to enable working parents to bring/collect children);
- Ensuring that sanctions do not deprive children of instruction time (do not prevent children from attending class for being late);
- Working with the whole community on school attendance, particularly with shops and cafes frequented by students skipping classes. In the UK, this is supplemented by awareness-raising on the importance of attendance, reminders on regulations regarding the selling of alcohol and tobacco to minors, hotline numbers for businesses to use to alert schools of truant children and collaborative work to avoid tardiness in school; and
- A system to track absenteeism and truancy.

## 6.7. EDUCATION FOR MIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN

### 6.7.1. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS

In Switzerland, additional financial resources and support are given to schools where more than 40% of children have a migrant background. In the UK, the British Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant is allocated to schools - according to the rate of under-performance by ethnic minority groups and the number of students learning English as a second language.

### 6.7.2. EMPHASIS ON PRE-SCHOOL

Early childhood education and pre-school education are critical in improving migrant children's language skills and future education performance. A UNICEF study (UNICEF, 2008, quoted in Schapiro, 2009) shows that, in Germany, migrant children's attendance of pre-school narrows *“the gap between them and native children in terms German language skills and improves their*



*educational record, putting them on a par with children from low-income German families. The level of immigrant children's German proficiency is likely to be less where the proportion of children of the same ethnic group is high in their pre-school."* (Schapiro, 2009)

### 6.7.3. LANGUAGE LEARNING SUPPORT

#### SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

In areas prone to high levels of immigration, schools may welcome children from many different nationalities, whose mother tongue differs from the language of instruction. Second language course schemes vary and may be conducted inside or outside school hours. Children may be taken out from specific subjects (usually mother tongue/literature classes) to take their second language course. To be effective, such lessons should be taught by trained teachers, using relevant learning and teaching materials and making appropriate connections with mainstream class teaching. It is also critical that teachers from all subjects are engaged in the language learning process for children and that language teaching is not the sole responsibility of the second language teacher.

**Norway:** Basic Norwegian Language for Minorities. In 2007, the government introduced this new curriculum, for newly arrived immigrant students: a transitional, level-based, age-independent curriculum plan for students from ISCED 1 through ISCED 3. It aims to provide systematic level-based teaching in L2, so that such students can be integrated into ordinary classes as soon as possible, enjoying a smooth transition to mainstream classes. (OECD, 2010)

### MOTHER TONGUE SUPPORT

In Austria, the Backpack Parents Project gives parents materials to teach their children in their mother tongue. In the UK, mother tongue classes are organised in schools after class or on Saturday morning. Learning in school rather than in a community centre valorises the child's mother tongue.

### 6.7.4. PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT AND AWARENESS RAISING

#### CREATING A CULTURE OF SCHOOLING AT HOME

In Finland, the Creating a Culture of Schooling at Home project aims to organise thematic discussion groups for parents with an immigration background. School staff and/or NGO staff run sessions which focus on home-school communication and information sharing, on school and educational matters. Additionally, advice is given on child development, language acquisition and homework support. Discussions are run in Finnish and in parents' mother tongues.

#### INFORMATION DVDS

In Austria and Ireland, information DVDs are distributed (in various languages) to migrant parents, to inform them about the education system: what and how children will be learning. (OECD, 2010)

#### PLATFORMS FOR MIGRANT PARENTS

In the Netherlands, the government initially funded its Platform for Ethnic Minority Parents and Education, to allow migrant parents to attend sessions on the education system and the importance of parental support. Funding also paid for sessions for teachers, helping them better understand the cultural and social cultural contexts of migrant children. (OECD, 2010).

7

## Recommendations



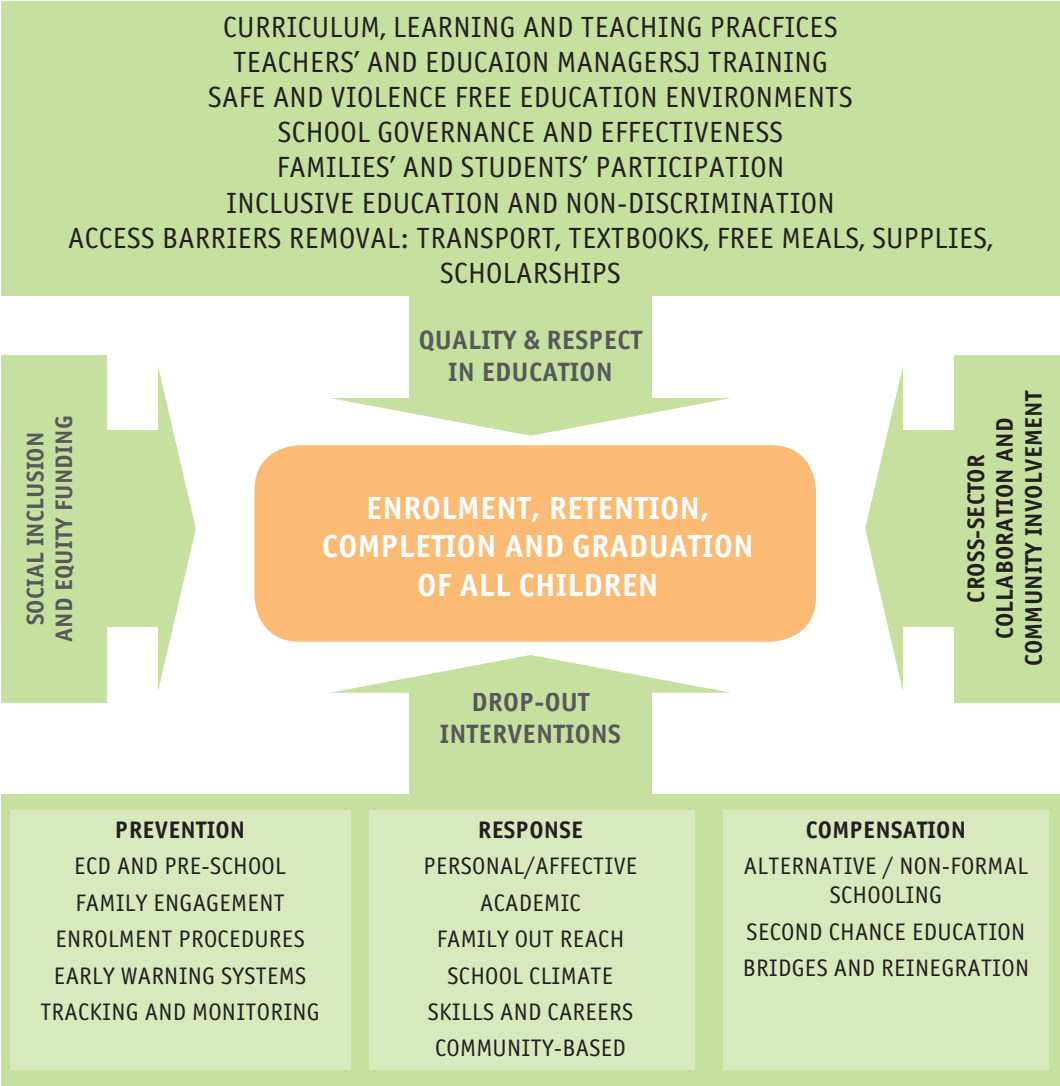
Kazakhstan has been pro-active in ensuring that all children of compulsory school age attend school. Despite significant efforts in recent years, including widening access to early childhood education, extending compulsory education to Grade 12 and stipulating that all permanent and temporary migrants and stateless children are eligible to education while living in Kazakhstan, a small number of children are not enrolled in school, particularly pre-school education and upper-secondary. A number of children attend irregularly and drop-out through the school year, being absent for more than 10 days without a valid reason or being frequently absent, including during the harvest season. Lastly, thousands of children are educated at home or in residential institutions, usually far from home, because they have disabilities, special learning needs or behaviour problems. These children are not included in mainstream schools, where they could enjoy greater academic and social stimulation and be better prepared for adult life in their communities.

All children have the right to education, regardless of their background or personal circumstances. In order that all children can learn, education systems must be inclusive and of good quality. Only then will all children be enrolled, remaining in local schools throughout their schooling and performing to the best of their abilities. Several dimensions come into play when framing education systems most likely to deliver good quality education to all children, as synthesised in Figure 6 below:

- (i) Quality education factors
- (ii) Children missing education/drop-out interventions
- (iii) State social inclusion agenda
- (iv) Cross-sector collaboration and community involvement

Keeping this framework in mind, and based on the preliminary findings of this report, the following recommendations are made to the Government of Kazakhstan and stakeholders across sectors to support their on-going efforts for the schooling of all children.

Figure 4. A framework for the enrolment, retention, completion and graduation of all children



Source: Antonowicz, L. (2012) *Drop-Out Prevention and Response: Good International Practices. A Literary Review for UNICEF Moldova and UNICEF CEE-CIS Regional Office. Regional Initiative on Out-of-School Children and Adolescents.*

## 7.1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

<b>RECOMMENDATION 1:</b>	Increase early childhood education and pre-school coverage
<b>RECOMMENDATION 2:</b>	Create an inclusive education system
<b>RECOMMENDATION 3:</b>	Remove remaining barriers to access
<b>RECOMMENDATION 4:</b>	Provide education to internal, seasonal and undocumented migrant children
<b>RECOMMENDATION 5:</b>	Improve the quality of education
<b>RECOMMENDATION 6:</b>	Prevent institutionalisation of children missing education
<b>RECOMMENDATION 7:</b>	Support schools in developing prevention and early response interventions
<b>RECOMMENDATION 8:</b>	Devise a holistic action protocol for monitoring out-of-school children
<b>RECOMMENDATION 9:</b>	Increase community and NGO involvement
<b>RECOMMENDATION 10:</b>	Conduct census of invisible children
<b>RECOMMENDATION 11:</b>	Use the new EMIS system to track children's movement and identify children at risk of dropping-out
<b>RECOMMENDATION 12:</b>	Broaden the scope of prevention and response interventions
<b>RECOMMENDATION 13:</b>	Closely monitor children's cases
<b>RECOMMENDATION 14:</b>	Document best practice and share lessons
<b>RECOMMENDATION 15:</b>	Systematic reporting on children missing or at-risk of missing education
<b>RECOMMENDATION 16:</b>	Measure new indicators
<b>RECOMMENDATION 17:</b>	Improve reporting on children receiving education in special institutions and on children with disabilities

## 7.2. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

### RECOMMENDATION 1: INCREASE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND PRE-SCHOOL COVERAGE

The Government of Kazakhstan is committed to the expansion of pre-school and it is recommended that on-going efforts are sustained, to ensure that all children receive at least one year of pre-school education, particularly in rural and remote areas. It is also recommended that pre-school education expansion programmes are combined with parenting education and community

services, in order to support vulnerable families. Activities focusing on parenting skills, fathers' involvement, language learning support, information dissemination about primary school enrolment and information dissemination about available local social support services are particularly encouraged.

### RECOMMENDATION 2: CREATE AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Despite national level commitment to inclusion in education, the overall approach remains traditional, with extensive provision of

special education for children with disabilities, children without parents and children with behaviour issues. Recently updated legislation on seasonal migrant children's right to education has a number of implications with regard to the provision of education for these children. It is recommended that:

- Amendment No. 398 is widely disseminated to oblasts and school authorities;
- Legislation is enforced by a series of concrete measures to identify seasonal migrant children and to cover their specific education needs in terms of access and learning outcomes. Oblasts with a high proportion of migrant population should discuss and strategise how to include seasonal migrant non-citizen children in the education system;
- Review and revision of methods of identifying children with severe disabilities and children previously considered as “uneducable” continue, alongside review and revision of teaching methods, to ensure that all children receive education meeting their needs, abilities and best interests;
- Strategies are developed to accelerate the inclusion of children in mainstream education and to ensure that their specific needs are addressed, both in school and through community day care services;
- The deinstitutionalisation of children with disabilities and children with behaviour issues is accelerated and their inclusion in mainstream schools supported by sound plans and integration activities;
- Awareness raising activities are organised nationally and locally with parents, children, teachers and other practitioners, aiming to overcome the discrimination, stigma and bullying experienced by children with disabilities, those from vulnerable or very poor families, migrants and refugees, and children with behaviour issues;
- Clear sanctions are adopted against schools refusing to enrol children from

vulnerable and migrant families within their catchment area;

- Schools provide Russian or Kazakh second language classes for students who cannot be educated in their mother tongue;
- Teachers, school psychologists and school directors are trained in inclusive education and school practices that are respectful of differences and supportive of all children; and
- Good teaching practice and learning materials for special schools are shared with regular school teachers.

### RECOMMENDATION 3: REMOVE REMAINING BARRIERS TO ACCESS

NGOs continue to report that children do not enrol or do not attend school due to financial, transport, administrative and selection barriers. It is therefore recommended that:

- School practice is closely monitored with regard to fees for school enrolment, maintenance or other activities;
- Support continues for low-income families at the beginning of the school year, such as giving free school supplies and materials, including in VET upper-secondary institutions for low-income families;
- Efforts to provide students with free school transport continue, ensuring that bus timetables are flexible, to prevent children waiting on-site unsupervised for long periods;
- Administrative barriers to children's enrolment are removed - such as registration certificates and proof of residence, particularly for migrant children;
- Sanctions are made against schools which, despite the removal of Year 1 entrance tests, maintain this practice with the aim of enrolling the most able pupils; and
- The Road to School Campaign is extended, to bring all children into school, ensuring that they complete their education successfully.

## RECOMMENDATION 4: PROVIDE EDUCATION TO INTERNAL, SEASONAL AND UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANT CHILDREN

Seasonal and undocumented migrant children are traditionally excluded from education in Kazakhstan. Internal migrants may also face administrative hurdles to enrolling in school when moving across oblasts. To ensure that seasonal migrant children enjoy their right to education, including Roma and Lyuli and undocumented migrant children, it is recommended that:

- Administrative barriers are removed and children may be enrolled in school without registration certificates or proof of address. The latter is particularly important, so that this information is not used as entrapment for undocumented families;
- MIA and the MoES work jointly to ensure that children's rights to education and parents' legal status issues are kept separate;
- Clear regulations are developed and followed in order that undocumented children can be included in school;
- The MoES works jointly with the Ministry of Labour in implementing the Employment Programme to 2020, to better predict population movements and strengthen measures to support internal migration, helping schools with enrolment and transfers;
- Research studies are conducted to estimate the number of children from seasonal migrant families, their educational needs, the barriers they may face to access and succeed in education and the best way to facilitate their schooling;
- Schools are made aware of their obligation to enrol seasonal migrant children, even for a few months, and to develop mechanisms to include and support them in their learning, nurturing partnerships with schools from the children's countries of origin and offering language learning support;
- Schools are adequately supported by financial, administrative and other means to include these children;
- Early childhood education programmes are flexible and community-run, to maximise children's school preparedness and language learning;
- Mediators from children's communities are identified, to mediate school-family relationships and build understanding on both sides regarding cultural expectations and practices;
- Partnerships are developed at national level with Ministries of Education from children's countries of origin, to reinforce collaboration and harmonise practices; and
- A portfolio system is developed in relevant languages to enable teachers to record key curriculum areas studied by seasonal migrant children and their progress in key competences, sharing this information with schools of origin or schools in the next country to which children are headed.

## RECOMMENDATION 5: IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Figure 6 above shows that students' retention and performance in school relies on the quality of the education they receive. Emphasis should be placed particularly on the following:

- Creation of a school culture of learning support, through flexible curriculum implementation, differentiated pedagogy, individualised approaches and tailored learning support activities - including for students with special educational needs;
- Greater focus on learning outcomes, in terms of teaching and learning practices and assessment;
- Violence prevention and response, in and around schools, particularly for vulnerable children;

- Inclusion of flexible life skills education programmes in schools, particularly to support students with low self-esteem and students with behavioural issues;
- Increased parental and youth participation, with focus on vulnerable families, based on best international practice;
- Training of teaching and management staff in child and adolescent development, inclusive education, drop-out prevention and engagement with dysfunctional families and those in difficult situations; and
- Ensure children with disabilities are provided with all necessary learning materials and aids necessary for them to learn and develop.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6: PREVENT INSTITUTIONALISATION OF CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION**

The institutionalisation of children is not in their best interest. It is recommended that Commissions for Minors and multi-sector teams consider a range of alternatives, to give children missing education and other children at-risk of being institutionalised a chance to grow-up and develop in their community:

- Create school-based and community-based mentoring schemes with older children, youth activists, sports coaches or adults as part of a school integration or re-integration plan;
- Use contracts between schools, parents and young people, detailing learning, attendance, behaviour and participation objectives, as well as support mechanisms, to enable children and families to meet these objectives;
- Involve youth organisations, CSOs and NGOs in providing small-group and individualised support to children at risk of missing education and children re-integrating in school;
- Develop integrated community-based specialised social services; and
- Introduce a case management approach, whereby one responsible officer is in charge of co-ordinating interventions from all relevant sectors.

### **RECOMMENDATION 7: SUPPORT SCHOOLS IN DEVELOPING PREVENTION AND EARLY RESPONSE INTERVENTIONS**

Schools must be supported in order to become more inclusive, while catering for children's various needs. It is recommended that Education and Child Protection Departments build schools' capacities and financially support schools, in order to develop drop-out prevention and early response interventions:

- Support schools in identifying and implementing appropriate absenteeism and drop-out prevention strategies;
- In rural areas, support schools and local authorities in raising parental awareness on the importance of sending children to school every day, including during the harvest season;
- Support schools in developing creative strategies and partnerships to include and to establish constructive relationships with vulnerable parents and dysfunctional families;
- Support schools developing sustainable partnerships with social services, NGOs and civil society organisations, to enable a greater number of people to be involved in social and psychological support for children and to diversify approaches and practices;
- Support schools and community organisations in developing programmes targeting teenage boys; and
- Consider additional financial and human resources support for schools with high absenteeism, low performance, discipline issues or a high proportion of children at-risk of dropping-out.

## 7.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING THE EXISTING MONITORING SYSTEM FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

### RECOMMENDATION 8: DEVISE A HOLISTIC ACTION PROTOCOL FOR MONITORING OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

The identification of children is the strongest aspect of the existing system of monitoring out-of-school children, particularly those in the process of dropping-out. To strengthen the overall monitoring system, it is recommended that an action protocol is devised for monitoring out-of-school children, and shared with national, oblast and school level stakeholders, from all relevant sectors. This protocol should:

- Include the identification of children not enrolled in school, those dropping-out from school and those missing education for more than 10 days without a valid reason;
- Cover all children, including internal and external seasonal migrant children and travellers;
- Cover pre-school to upper secondary education;
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of each person involved, at different levels, including the role of NGOs and health and social services in identifying and referring children not in school or at-risk of not being in school;
- Ensure cross-checking of education and health lists to identify OOSC and include a mechanism by which doctors and hospital staff check the educational status of all children dealt with, making referrals where they feel answers provided by parents or children are unsatisfactory;
- Provide clear guidance on how to assess the needs of children and their families;
- Ensure that records include information on the sex of the child and on needs assessment, better capturing the reasons why children drop-out from school;
- Provide clear guidance on how to fill in reporting forms, to ensure consistency across oblasts;
- Outline monitoring mechanisms, to ensure that children returning to school or sent to correctional schools continue to be followed; and
- Strengthen the tracking of children moving across oblasts, to ensure internal migrants do not miss education due to administrative issues.

### RECOMMENDATION 9: INCREASE COMMUNITY AND NGO INVOLVEMENT

It is critical that NGOs, particularly those working with vulnerable families, migrant families and children with disabilities, help in the identification and monitoring process. NGOs can help establish lists of children not enrolled in school from the most vulnerable communities, while providing support to families and young people not enrolled or in the process of dropping-out. NGO services should be integrated into response interventions available for out-of-school children.

### RECOMMENDATION 10: CONDUCT CENSUS OF INVISIBLE CHILDREN

As the current child census conducted by schools does not cover invisible children – such as seasonal worker children, traveller children, street children and working children – it is recommended that a census of these children is conducted through collaborative work between state agencies and

NGOs. Areas to focus upon include mines, plantations and other places where seasonal migrant are likely to work, as well as traveler settlements. Results can be used to inform education provision and delivery for these children.

### **RECOMMENDATION 11: USE THE NEW EMIS SYSTEM TO TRACK CHILDREN'S MOVEMENT AND IDENTIFY CHILDREN AT RISK OF DROPPING-OUT**

The new Education Management Information System (EMIS) is to be finalised by 2015, providing a unique opportunity to improve the existing system. The EMIS will give each child a unique education ID number, which should considerably ease the tracking of children from one location to another, particularly across oblasts and education levels. It should also be able to flag children of compulsory school-age who were previously enrolled in school but have disappeared. Where the reason for non-schooling is unsatisfactory (such as external migration), a manual investigation can follow.

Because the system will include all relevant data on the school history of a child, such as absenteeism, individual information and performance, it will be possible to identify children at risk of dropping-out by combining several risk factors. This information could be generated at oblast level to identify schools with the most at-risk children and to devise supportive prevention interventions. Early warning systems could also be developed at school level, based on the school-MIS version of the EMIS system, guiding targeted interventions for specific groups of children.

Electronic systems are only tools. Human input and analysis are necessary to make the system flexible, taking into consideration all situations. Safeguards against misuse of information and confidentiality issues are also to be seriously considered.

### **RECOMMENDATION 12: BROADEN THE SCOPE OF PREVENTION AND RESPONSE INTERVENTIONS**

Those involved at local level should be aware of the range of potential prevention and response interventions, for application at school and community level, to prevent children from being sent to correctional schools where other responses better address their needs.

### **RECOMMENDATION 13: CLOSELY MONITOR CHILDREN'S CASES**

It is recommended that a responsible officer (psychologist or social worker) from the multi-sector team is nominated as case manager for each child. The officer should be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the chosen interventions, and for reviewing and revising as necessary. The officer should also monitor the re-integration of the child into their family and into school, including upon the return of the child after placement in a correctional school.

### **RECOMMENDATION 14: DOCUMENT BEST PRACTICE AND SHARE LESSONS**

It is recommended that each oblast documents its approaches, identifying challenges and best practice, learning from experience, to inform future practice and to help train staff. Information can then be shared nationally, with other oblasts.

In addition, it is recommended that available data on children not enrolled in school, from the Road to School Campaign, be combined with that from the database on children missing education, for in-depth analysis and interpretation. The results can inform national level policy for prevention and response interventions. Such thorough analysis could begin with the school years ending 2010, 2011 and 2012.

## 7.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING ON OOSC

### RECOMMENDATION 15: SYSTEMATIC REPORTING ON CHILDREN MISSING OR AT-RISK OF MISSING EDUCATION

The Yearly National Education Report should systematically present and analyse data on:

- Number and profile of children not enrolled in school from pre-school to upper secondary
- Absenteeism rates per level of education, including disaggregation by sex and child profile
- Number of children missing education for more than 10 days per oblast without a valid reason and their profile, and the re-entry rate in regular schools and in special or correctional institutions

Based on the new EMIS system, additional indicators could be presented and analysed, such as:

- Number of children at-risk of dropping-out due to a combination of the following characteristics:
  - Low-income families
  - Dysfunctional families
  - Distance to school
  - Change of school more than twice
  - Past experience of institutionalisation

### RECOMMENDATION 16: MEASURE NEW INDICATORS

The Government of Kazakhstan should systematically measure the following UNESCO indicators in relation to out-of-school children and those who drop-out:

- Net Intake Rate, in first grade primary school
- Primary Adjusted Net Attendance Ratio
- Secondary Adjusted Attendance Ratio
- Age Specific Enrolment Ratio
- Repetition rate, by grade
- Out-of-school children

- Drop-out rate by grade
- Percentage of new entrants to primary education who have attended pre-primary education

The Early School Leaving Indicator, i.e. the proportion of young-people aged 18 to 24 with, at best, lower secondary completion and not further engaged in training or education should also be included in Labour Surveys.

Lastly, when measuring pre-primary education provision, the Government may want to consider calculating the proportion of children aged between 4 years and the age for compulsory primary education who are participating in early childhood education. This would enable comparison with EU countries, for which the benchmark is 95%.

### RECOMMENDATION 17: IMPROVE REPORTING ON CHILDREN RECEIVING EDUCATION IN SPECIAL INSTITUTIONS AND ON CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Reporting on children receiving education in special institutions should be more detailed, to include:

- Systematic sex-disaggregation of the number of children enrolled in special and correctional institutions
- Performance and graduation rates, sex-disaggregated, for those enrolled in special or residential institutions for children with deviant behaviour
- Performance and graduation rates for children with disabilities
- Average and median length of the institutionalisation of children
- Yearly proportion of children with disabilities (from special schools and from home education programmes) who integrate into mainstream education
- Proportion (disaggregated by sex and location) of children with disabilities receiving home education

# ANNEX 1: TABLES ON CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION FOR MORE THAN 10 DAYS

**TABLE 6. PROFILE OF CHILDREN NOT IN SCHOOL FOR MORE THAN 10 DAYS WITHOUT A VALID REASON AT THE END OF THE ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR 2010-11**

Oblasts	Declared minors since the beginning of the school year	Declared minors still out-of-school at the end of the school year	Of which living in a low-income family		Of which living in a dysfunctional family		Of which have no desire to study		Of which migrated	
Akmola	94	13	0	0%	6	46%	6	46%	3	23%
Of which rural	55	5	0	0%	3	60%	2	40%	1	20%
Aktobe	39	12	2	17%	8	67%	3	25%	4	33%
Of which rural	17	4	2	50%	2	50%	2	50%	1	25%
Almaty Province	80	20	7	35%	6	30%	3	15%	6	30%
Of which rural	37	11	6	55%	4	36%	2	18%	3	27%
Atyrau	14	3	0	0%	3	100%	1	33%	0	0%
Of which rural	0	0	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%
East Kazakhstan	798	15	0	0%	15	100%	3	20%	2	13%
Of which rural	181	6	0	0%	6	100%	0	0%	2	33%
Jambyl	66	11	0	0%	11	100%	1	9%	0	0%
Of which rural	17	2	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%
West Kazakhstan	41	11	0	0%	6	55%	9	82%	1	9%
Of which rural	7	1	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Karaganda	232	18	0	0%	18	100%	0	0%	5	28%
Of which rural	69	2	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Kyzylorda	52	8	4	50%	3	38%	5	63%	0	0%
Of which rural	16	2	1	50%	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%
Kostanay	28	4	0	0%	4	100%	2	50%	1	25%
Of which rural	14	1	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Mangystau	34	6	1	17%	1	17%	3	50%	0	0%
Of which rural	7	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Pavlodar	24	2	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%
Of which rural	7	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
North Kazakhstan	99	23	2	9%	21	91%	13	57%	10	43%
Of which rural	4	3	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	0	0%
South Kazakhstan	90	50	0	0%	49	98%	5	10%	4	8%
Of which rural	9	4	0	0%	3	75%	1	25%	0	0%
Astana city	33	9	3	33%	3	33%	2	22%	3	33%
Almaty city	32	9	1	11%	3	33%	0	0%	2	22%
Total	1756	214	20	9%	158	74%	56	26%	41	19%
Of which rural	440	41	10	24%	27	66%	8	20%	7	17%

**TABLE 7. PROFILE OF CHILDREN NOT IN SCHOOL FOR MORE THAN 10 DAYS WITHOUT A VALID REASON AT THE END OF THE ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR 2011-12**

Oblasts	Declared minors since the beginning of the school year	Declared minors still out-of-school at the end of the school year	Of which living in a low-income family		Of which living in a dysfunctional family		Of which have no desire to study		Of which migrated	
Akmola	64	14	2	14%	6	43%	1	7%	4	29%
Of which rural	37	4	2	50%	0	0%	1	25%	1	25%
Aktobe	15	5	2	40%	3	60%	3	60%	1	20%
Of which rural	6	1	1	100%	1	100%	1	100%	0	0%
Almaty Province	23	13	5	38%	6	46%	2	15%	4	31%
Of which rural	12	6	5	83%	4	67%	0	0%	2	33%
Atyrau	1	1	0	0%	1	100%	1	100%	0	0%
Of which rural	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
East Kazakhstan	150	13	1	8%	12	92%	8	62%	1	8%
Of which rural	26	3	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	1	33%
Jambyl	50	17	4	24%	13	76%	6	35%	4	24%
Of which rural	20	5	1	20%	4	80%	1	20%	2	40%
West Kazakhstan	41	17	1	6%	7	41%	12	71%	2	12%
Of which rural	8	1	0	0%	1	100%	1	100%	0	0%
Karaganda	194	22	11	50%	4	18%	0	0%	2	9%
Of which rural	48	1	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Kyzylorda	51	2	0	0%	2	100%	2	100%	0	0%
Of which rural	20	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Kostanay	23	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Of which rural	13	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Mangystau	4	4	0	0%	0	0%	2	50%	2	50%
Of which rural	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Pavlodar	20	3	0	0%	3	100%	0	0%	2	67%
Of which rural	3	2	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	1	50%
North Kazakhstan	100	18	10	56%	11	61%	11	61%	0	0%
Of which rural	28	1	0	0%	1	100%	1	100%	0	0%
South Kazakhstan	92	43	4	9%	39	91%	5	12%	7	16%
Of which rural	13	1	0	0%	1	100%	1	100%	0	0%
Astana city	33	10	0	0%	0	0%	1	10%	3	30%
Almaty city	33	6	1	17%	1	17%	0	0%	3	50%
Total	894	188	41	22%	108	57%	54	29%	35	19%
Of which rural	234	25	10	40%	17	68%	6	24%	7	28%

Source: Child Rights Protection Committee, Ministry of Education

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Annie E. Casey Foundation (2009). The KIDS COUNT Indicator Brief.

Antonowicz, L. (2012). Drop-Out Prevention and Response: Good International Practice. A Literary Review for UNICEF Moldova and UNICEF CEE-CIS Regional Office. Regional Initiative on Out-of-School Children and Adolescents.

Bath and North East Somerset Council (2007). Children Missing from Education. Children's Services.

Chávez Chávez, R., Belkin L. D., Hornback J.G., Adams K. (1991). Dropping-Out of School: Issues Affecting Culturally, Ethnically And Linguistically Distinct Student Groups. Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students. Volume 8 (Winter, 1991). Boise State University, Boise, ID 83725.

Cicilia, B. (?) Miami Dade County Public Schools, District Support Staff In Action!

Collective (2006). Alternative Report by Non-Governmental Organisations with Comments on the Second and Third Reports of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as Recommendations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. (Almaty, 2006).

Collective (2011). NGO Report to the UN Human Rights Committee on the Implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by the Republic of Kazakhstan, submitted to the 102nd Session of the Human Rights Committee, 11-29th July, Geneva. Almaty, (June 2011).

Collective (2012). Alternative Report by Non-Governmental Organisations with Comments on the Fourth Periodic Report of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as Recommendations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. (Almaty, 2012).

Committee on the Rights of the Child (2007). Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Kazakhstan, 19th June 2007. 45th session: Consideration of Reports Submitted by State Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention.

DfES (2004). Engaging Fathers: Involving Parents, Raising Achievement.

European Commission (2010). Commission Staff Working Paper Reducing Early School Leaving. Accompanying document to the Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Policies to Reduce Early School Leaving.

GHK Consulting ltd (2011). Reducing Early School Leaving in the EU. Study. Directorate General for Internal Policies. Policy Department B: structural and cohesion policies. Education and Culture.

Government of Kazakhstan and UN Country Team (2010). Millennium Development Goals In Kazakhstan.

Haarr, R.N. (2013). An Assessment of Violence Against Children in Schools in Kazakhstan. UNICEF - Commissioner for Human Rights in the Republic of Kazakhstan: Astana, Kazakhstan.

Hamre, B. K., Pianta, R. C. ( ?) Student-Teacher Relationships. University of Virginia. <http://www.pearweb.org/conferences/sixth/pdfs/NAS-CBIII-05-1001-005-hamre%20&%20Pianta%20proof.pdf>

Human Rights Commission under the President of Kazakhstan (2011). Report on the Human Rights Situation in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2010. Edited by Tastemir Abishev and Saginbek Tursunov. (Astana, 2011).

Human Rights Council (2012). Report by the Special Rapporteur on Rights to Education, Kishore Singh. Mission to Kazakhstan.

IC Sange (2011). Access to Quality Education for Children from Vulnerable Groups: situational analysis. (Astana, 2011).

Identifying and Maintaining Contact with Children Missing or At Risk of Going Missing from Education Process. Good Practice Guide (2004). United Kingdom.

Kerka, S. (2006). What Works: Evidence-based strategies for youth practitioners. Drop-out Prevention. Learning Work Connection. Ohio State University.

Lockwood, Anne Turnbaugh (2000). Transforming Education for Hispanic Youth: Recommendations for Teachers and Program Staff. Issue Brief No. 3. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, Center for the Study of Language & Education. <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/issuebriefs/ib3.pdf>

Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan (2011). Education Highlights. Department of Pre-school and Secondary Education (Astana 2011).

National Centre for Education Quality Assessment (2011). National Report on the Status and Development of Education.

Nusche, D. (2009). What Works in Migrant Education? A Review of Evidence and Policy Options. OECD Education Working Papers. No. 22. OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/227131784531>

OECD (2010). Closing the Gap for Immigrant Students - Policy Tools. <http://www.oecd.org/edu/educationeconomyandsociety/closingthegapforimmigrantstudents-policytools.htm>

Ofsted (2008). Good Practice in Re-engaging Disaffected and Reluctant Students in Secondary Schools 2008. Reference No: 070255. Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.

Ofsted (2010). Children Missing from Education. Action to Prevent Children from Missing Education or Becoming 'Lost in the System'.

Republic of Kazakhstan (2012). Fourth Periodic Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Schapiro, K. A. (2009). Migration and Educational Outcomes of Children. UNDP. Human Development Research Paper2009/57.

The Commission on Human Rights under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2012). Special report "On the Situation Concerning the Rights of Oralman, Stateless Persons and Refugees in the Republic of Kazakhstan". Under the general editorship of Kuanysh Sultanov and Tastemir Abishev. (Astana, 2012).

UNESCO (2010). Education For All Global Monitoring Report: Reaching the Marginalised. (Paris, 2010).

UNESCO (2012). Education For All Global Monitoring Report. Youth and Skills: Putting Education to Work. (Paris, 2012).

UNICEF - Commissioner for Human Rights in the Republic of Kazakhstan (2011). Violence Against Children in State-Run Residential Institutions In Kazakhstan: An Assessment. (May 2011).

UNICEF (2011). Concept Note: Regional Out-of-School Children and Adolescents Initiative. UNICEF CEECIS. (Geneva).

UNICEF (2012) A Rapid Assessment of Children's Vulnerabilities to Risky Behaviours, Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in Kazakhstan.

UNICEF (2013, forthcoming) Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children: Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Regional Report 2012. (Geneva).

UNICEF (forthcoming) Suicide Among Teenagers in Kazakhstan.



