

UZBEKISTAN

unicef 
NEWS

VOLUME NO. 1 APRIL-JULY 2011

FOREWORD



Welcome to UNICEF Uzbekistan. We are pleased to present our first newsletter which offers a glimpse into our partnerships with the government of Uzbekistan, non-governmental

organisations (NGOs) and other organisations and individuals dedicated to supporting the rights of children.

We hope this newsletter will become an effective channel of communication for sharing information, highlighting success stories and further promoting the work being done on behalf of Uzbekistan's children.

Inside you will find a variety of stories, including a look at UNICEF's Disaster Risk Reduction programme which provided timely and effective training for families living in Fergana region.

We've also highlighted the 2011 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) which is now in the data processing stage. To complete this study, UNICEF worked closely with government organisations to ensure accurate and equitable data collection. The information gathered will provide the material necessary for evidence-based decision making.

In the story about National Immunization Days against polio, you'll read how UNICEF worked with the local community to bring critical health messages to hard-to-reach groups. This programme illustrates our commitment to equity for all children within Uzbekistan regardless of their location and social status.

Other stories include a look at child-centred education, and two opportunities for Uzbekistan professionals to travel abroad to share their expertise and learn from others.

The launch of our first newsletter also matches the 20th anniversary of Uzbekistan's independence. We are honored to share in this historic event with our Uzbekistan colleagues and partners.

Uzbekistan has shown a strong commitment to defending and protecting the rights of children in its 20 years and it continues to take steps in this area. We wish Uzbekistan and its children a happy and healthy celebration and look forward to a constructive partnership.

Jean-Michel Delmotte
Representative



UNICEF Uzbekistan/2009/Pirozzi

Justice For Children: A Step Forward

Working Toward a System that Protects Child Witnesses, Children in Conflict with the Law and Children Who Need the Law's Protection

Children come into contact with the justice system in several ways. Some are accused of crimes; some are victims of neglect, abuse or abandonment. Regardless of their entry point, children who are pulled into this world deserve protection of their rights and child-focused advocacy.

The issue of justice for children was recently examined on a regional scale at the Child Protection Forum for Central Asia held in May 2011 in Turkmenistan and sponsored by UNICEF. Delegates from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan participated, along with experts from Russia, Turkey and Azerbaijan. In all, the forum included 80 participants, including five high-ranking officials from the government of Uzbekistan and representatives from UNICEF.

The goal of the forum was to support the on-going reform of justice for children in Central Asia by providing a platform for sharing experience and knowledge, bringing visibility to the issue of justice for children, leveraging support from partners working on broader child protection issues, and

encouraging commitments for reform from high-level representatives.

Response from the delegation has been positive and encouraging. Delegates agreed that the forum was both inspirational and informative. It also offered them a broader understanding of justice for children, they told UNICEF.

After the forum, the Uzbekistan delegates provided recommendations for future development of justice programmes for children. One recommendation was the development of professional social workers who can advocate for children who enter the system while also providing prevention and diversion support for at-risk groups. Currently the country does not have a network of social workers nor does it have separate family courts or a juvenile court system.

To this end, UNICEF is currently working with the ministries to help develop a broader understanding of child protection legislation as well as examples of good practices in inter-agency cooperation on child protection and justice for children.

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JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN

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Justice for children and protecting the rights of children who come in contact with the law is a priority issue for UNICEF Uzbekistan and an important initiative for UNICEF globally. Prompted by the Guidance Note of the Secretary General, 'UN Approach to Justice for Children' issued in 2008, UNICEF is a promoter and advocate of global justice for children initiatives.

The development of justice for children systems could lead to a significant impact for children who require support and protection within the legal system and mitigation of circumstances that could otherwise impair their chances of a happy and safe childhood.

For more information, please visit <http://www.unicef.org/protection/index.html>



UNICEF Uzbekistan/2011/Asahova

Creative Approaches to Immunization

Medical units went directly to families within the mobile population groups to ensure all children had equitable access to polio vaccines.

In 2010 Central Asia experienced its first importation of the wild polio virus since being declared polio free in 2002. The outbreak immediately put all children at risk, including those in Uzbekistan.

The Uzbekistan Ministry of Health answered this challenge by scheduling six rounds of National Immunization Days (NIDs) against polio, specifically targeting children under six years of age. The NIDs were conducted nationwide between May 2010 and May 2011 with accelerated social mobilization activities in four high-risk areas – Fergana, Tashkent, Samarkand and Surkhandarya.

However, the immediacy of the response presented yet another challenge – finding

effective and creative ways to communicate to all families within the country. Of specific concern were mobile people groups and those in hard-to-reach areas, particularly the nomadic Roma people who frequently move between regions in the country.

In response, UNICEF partnered with the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO) to create a comprehensive communication plan that included the use of street theatre to engage the community. Through these interactive performances, the message of immunization was brought down from the billboards and directly presented to those who needed to hear and remember it most.

Titled "Your Health is in Your Hands,"

the 15-minute play was staged by a local theatre group 30 times in each location during the immunization round conducted on May 23-28, 2011. The goal was to raise awareness about polio and all other routine vaccines, the importance of immunizations and the risks of not immunizing children, all in a culturally-appropriate way.

The fast-paced, high-energy performance presented the contrasting story of two neighboring families in a distant village who responded differently to the polio campaign call. The importance of timely immunization was driven home through community dialogues after the play.

"Street theatre breaks the formal barriers and approaches people directly in a variety of creative ways," said Dr. Dilorom Tursunova, manager of the Extended Programme for Immunization at the Ministry of Health. *"We will definitely build on this successful experience and will use street theatre techniques during the September 2011 NIDs against measles and rubella."*

Nigora, a mother of two young children in Samarkand, said *"This performance was a complete surprise for me in terms of the contents. Usually street theatre is only farcical, but this one gave people a lot of useful information on immunisations. I, personally, got answers to many questions."*

Through an equity-driven approach the NIDs used mobile health brigades to reach families like the Roma people who otherwise might not have had the opportunity to immunize their children.



Creative street theatre performances were used to share the importance of vaccinations.



Household Survey Nears Completion

Fourteen survey teams visited 20,400 households gathering information on the situation of women and children.

A wise man once shared this proverb - "If you don't know where you're going, you'll end up somewhere else."

UNICEF knows that forward thinking by observing our past and present is a better way to approach our future. It's a better way to get where we want to be instead of ending up "somewhere else."

MICS 2011 (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey), an ambitious household survey, is one way of accomplishing this. Results from MICS 2011 will give policy makers in Uzbekistan the tools and information needed to make evidence-based decisions into the future.

This year's survey looked closely at a variety of indicators impacting women and children. Fourteen survey teams consisting of seven professionals each spent three months visiting 20,400 households in all 12 regions of Uzbekistan plus Tashkent city and the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

The survey covered the areas of health, nutrition, education, child protection, water and sanitation, and others. Some concrete examples of information that MICS will help discover include the rate of breastfeeding,

consumption of iodized salt, availability of soap for hand washing in the households, the level of the father's support in child learning, the rate of marriages before 18 years of age, and other issues.

Survey teams began their data collection work in April and finished in July. Data is currently being processed. Preliminary results will be ready in the last quarter of 2011 and final reports are expected by the end of the year.

Once results of the survey are released, the information can be used to properly allocate funds, make decisions, and plan for the future regarding the health and welfare of women and children.

The field staff professionals, as well as the data entry and processing personnel came from the State Statistics Committee in collaboration with the Institute of Social Research under the Cabinet of Ministers.

MICS is a UNICEF tool used every four years in more than 50 countries around the world.

For more information, please visit <http://www.childinfo.org/> and http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/16789_17503.html

UNICEF expands partnership with Communities

UNICEF met with the Mahalla Charity Fund to explore innovative ways of involving mahallas or community councils in a sustained manner in the promotion and implementation of good child caring practices among families. The meeting also concluded that mahallas had a significant role in protecting the rights of the most vulnerable children.

In previous years UNICEF has supported a family education programme in five pilot regions, which was implemented by the Women's Committee through the mahallas. Over the last five years this initiative has reached and helped more than half a million families in Uzbekistan.

Within the current country programme, UNICEF is working in partnership with the Mahalla Fund, the Institute for Social Research and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to improve the capacity of mahalla committees in better distribution of social allowances to support the most vulnerable families and children.

The parties agreed to further expand all these initiatives and continue working on the ground to raise awareness regarding child rights and promote positive child rearing behaviours and better parenting skills at community and household levels through the well-entrenched mahalla network.



(far left) Heads of household were specifically interviewed.

(left) The survey looked at child growth and development.

Helping Children, Teachers Enjoy Experience of Active Learning

The Ministry of Public Education in Uzbekistan and UNICEF are charting a new course for educators and students by working together to create schools that are more child-centred in their delivery and philosophy.

Child-centred education is a global UNICEF concept that works at engaging both teachers and students in the full learning process. Through child-centred education, children are encouraged to be active participants in their education while teachers are trained to engage more personally with their students as they all work together to learn, discover and explore.

Child-centred education is a key element in improving the overall quality of education. Through the Child-Friendly Schools programme UNICEF has been working with the Government to also improve education in the areas of participation, gender equality, inclusiveness, health, safety and protection.

UNICEF and the Ministry of Public Education have incorporated the child-centred education model in 1,000 schools nationwide through ongoing teacher trainings. After five years of cooperation, the response has been positive. Teachers are finding new and exciting ways to interact with their students and children are enjoying the learning process.

In fact, in national tests, the best teachers and students are from the 1,000 schools where child-centred education has been the focus. A recent evaluation revealed that one quarter of the children in participating schools showed greater interests in their studies.

The new methodology has also filtered into other schools. Other teachers and educators around the country have started changing how they work with their children. Child-centred education principles have also been integrated into the curricula of all teacher training institutes in Uzbekistan.

For more information, please visit <http://www.unicef.org/cfs>



REDUCING RISKS FOR EVERY CHILD

Sohiba and her children were already in bed when just past midnight on July 20, 2011, their home in the Rishton district of Fergana began to shake. In an instant the family found itself near the epicenter of an earthquake.

Sohiba quickly began telling her family what to do, but four-year-old Shokirjon did not immediately listen to his mother. Instead, the young boy took charge, insisting that everyone find their pillow and cover themselves in a safe location, a technique called "Drop, Cover and Hold."

Shokirjon had recently learned this technique at School No. 6 in Rishton. During disaster risk reduction (DRR) trainings, which were part of a UNICEF-supported project, children were taught how to properly respond during an earthquake.

Sohiba's son wasn't the only one who learned from the DRR lessons. According to the director at School No. 6, several parents reported their children responded like Shokirjon, taking what they had learned at school and applying it in a real-life emergency.

The UNICEF DRR campaign in Rishton is part of a larger countrywide DRR training programme started in 2007 with support from the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department. In these efforts, UNICEF works closely with the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the

Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Public Education, and the Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan to help improve policy and build a culture of safety and prevention designed to reduce the impact of disasters on women and children.

Asim Rehman, a UNICEF DRR specialist for the CEE/CIS region,

recently visited a school in Namangan and noticed that teachers are also expanding the DRR techniques to fit their local situation.

"Our project is focused on natural hazards, but some schools also made risk assessments," Rehman noted. "For example, the school in Namangan identified road traffic as a risk because it is located on a big road. They made posters on road safety and taught children basic skills."

On a larger scale, the UNICEF DRR efforts closely match the recent comprehensive disaster preparedness programme adopted in 2011 by the Uzbekistan Cabinet of Ministers. The 15-point resolution includes several priority actions including a system to train school children and students in educational facilities.

For more information, please visit <http://www.unisdr.org/> or <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/>



Children protecting themselves during an earthquake simulation.



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HIV STUDY TOUR VISITS ROMANIA

Representatives from the Ministry of Health, the National AIDS Centre, UNICEF and other health-related agencies spent four days in Romania in June 2011, observing how that country has responded to HIV/AIDS among children.

The seven-person study group specifically looked at Romania's experience in providing pediatric AIDS care and the prevention of hospital infections and mother-to-child infection.

Romania was one of the first countries forced to deal with the emerging HIV/AIDS epidemic in the late 1980s. At the time, roughly 10,000 children were infected with

HIV in Romanian hospitals. Today, more than 7,000 of those children have reached adulthood.

In Uzbekistan, hospital transmission, or nosocomial infection, is the highest cause of HIV infection among children. In 2010, 24 percent of the 4,000 new HIV cases were among children, mostly through hospital infection.

Tour participants are now taking what they saw and learned in Romania and creating a working plan for Uzbekistan.

