

THE PROJECT OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Enhancing Human Security
in the Former Nuclear
Test Site of Semipalatinsk





Akimat of Semey City



Kazakhstan



Project title:

Enhancing Human Security in the Former Nuclear Test Site of Semipalatinsk

Project duration:

2008-2010

Total project budget

\$ 1,978,698

Donor

the Government of Japan

Partners

UN agencies: UNDP, UNV, UNICEF, UNFPA, Akimat of Semey city and East-Kazakhstan Oblast Akimat

The project objective is to provide assistance to Kazakhstan in the development and implementation of specific programmes and projects rendering assistance to the population who have suffered negative impact from the nuclear testing activities in the region. The wider objective is to make efforts to secure economic growth and sustainable development, and to enhance human security in the former nuclear test site.

The project task – to contribute to solving the following serious problems in the region:

1. Health and social services: securing access to quality basic health services, focusing on vulnerable groups (women, children and young people) to decrease the high levels of infant, child, adolescent and maternal mortality rates.
2. Economic development: build capacities for entrepreneurship, improvement of business knowledge and management skills and to provide modalities for generating economic and employment opportunities through micro-credit and micro-leasing etc.
3. Social infrastructure: mobilising communities and supporting non-governmental organisations (NGOs)/ public associations (CBOs) in providing community services and in acting as agents of change within society.

Four UN agencies are participating in the project: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Volunteers (UNV), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

UNDP works on the economic component of the project. The agency's employees provide consultation services: constantly conduct various seminars and provide training for rural inhabitants, train them in writing a business plan, receiving micro-credit, starting their own business and beginning earning money. The aim of this activity is to build capacities for entrepreneurship and business skills for the local inhabitants and to provide access to funding through micro-credit and micro-leasing programmes. In 2009, 33 borrowers received micro-credits and were able to start their own business. By the end of 2010, 30% of rural businessmen will understand and use economic opportunities in a better way through access to financial markets, information and training.

UNDP/UNV pays great attention to the social component working with NGOs/CBOs. The aim of this activity is to enhance the level of social development in the region, to involve non-governmental organisations in the process of programme management, securing their effectiveness in respect of the population suffering the greatest negative impact of nuclear testing in the region. The Small Grants Programme helps to solve the most urgent problems of vulnerable population groups. In 2009, 13 grants totalling \$ 39, 000 were approved. The range of problems has been very broad – in some places they managed to restore water-supply, in another place a school greenhouse supplying schoolchildren with fresh vegetables, and which at the same time serves as a room for practical studies, was repaired. In 2010 the Small Grants Programme will be continued. It is planned to provide grants totalling \$ 91, 000, which means that many other urgent problems can be addressed.

Programmes of UNICEF and UNFPA in the Semipalatinsk region are aimed at ensuring qualitative basic medical and social services provided for children, youth and women.

Within the frames of the UN joint programme UNICEF aims to address the most critical periods of the child's life and prevent conditions that may affect the health and development of children, adolescents and young people of the region. The main goals of the component being implemented by UNICEF are improvement of the family-based and child-focused social policies at local level; development of minimum standards of social counseling and family support services (including services for children from families in difficult life situations); improvement of quality of medical and social services provided to children, mothers and young people in order to decrease infant, child and maternal mortality and improvement of health status of young people and HIV/AIDS prevention.

One of the results of UNICEF and UNFPA interventions by the end of 2010 is 50 percent of women of reproductive age and infants of the Semipalatinsk area will receive the qualitative perinatal care.

Efforts of UNFPA are aimed at ensuring reproductive rights and improvement of reproductive health services.

UNFPA is also dealing with training of health professionals, but in the field of family planning. The scale of the planned actions is impressive, and the results also should be significant - by the end of 2010, at least 5,000 families in Semipalatinsk region will have been provided with consultation services on family planning and support.

Semey City Administration is a strategic partner, as well as the administrations of towns and villages. The state officials participate in organisation of seminars, courses and training for local inhabitants directly. They are trained in methods of strengthening their relations with NGOs, enhancing transparency in realisation of the laws and resolutions in relation to civil society. All UN agencies have established close contacts with local akimats, which has led to efficient working and joint realisation of the defined tasks.



Kazakhstan

With help of this initiative, UNDP/UNV promotes positive changes in social lives of people and supports economic rehabilitation with a long term perspective, which suits with country’s priorities on a national and local level, as are identified in many strategic documents. UNDP/UNV closely cooperates with local government executives and representatives of civil society who have expressed their interest several times for this initiative, and who have supported it.

The short stories in this brochure are success stories of several people who benefited from UNDP/UNV programmes such as “micro-financing” and “small grants” programmes. These people wanted to change their lives for the better and have been able to do so with UN support.

The first three stories in this brochure are stories of a “small grants”, the first of which helped to equip the “touch room” for disabled children in Akku village, Pavlodar Oblast. In Kengerbai bi village, East Kazakhstan Oblast, the school’s greenhouse was repaired, and now provides vegetables for children the whole year round, whilst at the same time doubling as a biology classroom. In Shulbinsk, new medical equipment was bought so that local community representatives would not have to travel 60 kilometres out of the village in order to acquire the medical services.

The next three stories are stories about the “micro-financing” programme. All stories are real examples of great willingness and ambitions to make dreams come true; to earn money and do the job you like. The heroes of these stories will tell you about their successes themselves.



“Our Home is Shulbinsk” PA Project “Provision of Shulbinsk outpatient facility with the required medical equipment”

Republic of Kazakhstan, East-Kazakhstan Oblast, Semey City, Shulbinsk village

Grant amount 49,416 tenge

Contribution of the outpatient facility: 26,000 tenge

Beneficiaries: 200 people living in Shulbinsk village

Volunteers: 15 people

Project duration: 15 August -1 October 2009

Results: acquired electrocardiogram and physiotherapy devices and a glucometer

Shulbinsk village is located at 60 km from Semey City. There are about 200 sick people registered in a medical check-up list. In order to measure the level of sugar in the blood, we have to go to the city for help, spending time and money. Basically, this is a category of poor population groups of the village and pensioners.

Liliya Grebelnaya – akim of Shulbinsk village: The problem of poor services rendered to the population is very urgent in our village. The Shulbinsk medical room has only 43% of the necessary medical equipment. The equipment has become outdated. Acquisition of electrocardiogram and physiotherapy devices and a glucometer was vitally important for the population. That had allowed an improvement in the quality of health services and provided an opportunity to conduct diagnostics of diseases on the spot.

“Our Home is Shulbinsk” PA was organized in 1998. The main objective is the solution of problems on life-support of the village.

Alfiya Chuprinina - the chairman of “Our Home is Shulbinsk” PA:

For a period of 11 years we have solved 11 vitally important issues working jointly with local administrations and business-structures. For instance, beginning from 2004, 80 children from poor families have had hot lunch free of charge during their study. In 2004 we participated in the UNDP grants programme and won a grant in the amount of \$400 to buy music equipment for Shulbinsk House of Culture.

Electrocardiogram and physiotherapy devices and a glucometer are related to the list of basic medical equipment, which must be available for physicians to render urgent assistance to patients. After all not only the health of people depends on that, but also their confidence in social protection.

N. Matviec - a pensioner from Shulbinsk village: My wife suffers from diabetes, and I know how difficult and expensive it is to identify the level of sugar in the blood. I am sure that all people suffering from diabetes will be grateful for this acquisition. Many people need such devices, and now they don't need to go Semey City at a distance of 60 km.

There are many problems in the village still. However, it's nice that due to the UNDP/UNV Small Grants Programme one of the main problems has been solved - the people, who need assistance have been provided with necessary medical equipment.

Liliya Grebelnaya - akim of Shulbinsk village: There is much to do in our village still. There are many different problems, and we try to support any useful initiatives of people. It's pleasant, when people want to change the life and conditions in their village for the best. It's more pleasant, when such international organisations as UNDP/UNV help to realise the plans.





“Tuz Kala” PF Project

A “touch room” – psychological assistance for disabled children

UNDP/UNV grant amount:	450,000 tenge
Contribution of the correction cabinet:	55,000 tenge
Volunteers’ voluntary contribution:	80,000 tenge
Beneficiary:	the correction cabinet, 185 children of the rayon
Volunteers:	10 people – parents and employees of the correction cabinet
Project duration:	1 August - 1 October 2009
Results:	a touch room is organised, special toys are made and equipment and a backlight is provided.

“Tuzkala” Public Fund – the main type of activity - volunteers and social employees working on rendering assistance to vulnerable population groups, organisation of cultural-informational and scientific-educational activities and support of children’s and young people’s initiatives.

Ruslan Musin – the founder of “Tuzkala” PF: An initiative group consisting of a manager and four specialists of the cabinet has had the idea of organising a “touch room” for a long time. The idea is very useful - children need psychological help. And if it is realised in the form of a game, it is nice. They learn the material better and the efficiency is very high.

A smile of a child is the main thing for which parents live and work. However, there are people, for whom the joy of someone else's child is the main aim of their life. The manager of the cabinet of psychological correction for disabled children Shynar Baidauletova has been dreaming to create a "touch room" for children for five years. This is a specially equipped room, where children can mentally relax and under literate working of teachers they can dispose of complexes. She has been collecting all necessary materials and has consulted with specialists for a long time. And then she applied to the UN Development Programme, developed a project and got a grant on realisation of her dream. Now in Lebyazhinsk rayon of East-Kazakhstan Oblast there is an excellent basis in order for disabled children to become full-fledged people.

Shynar Baydauletova – the manager of the correction cabinet: the most important thing is to have a desire to help children, because children are the most defenceless beings in the world, and anyone may offend them. Our home is the cabinet, they come here – they say "home" – and this is the greatest award, when a child says so.

The children decorated the interior of the building by themselves. They drew pictures, and modelled amusing figures from plasticine. Such lessons promote rapid development of small children. In the near future we also plan to organise a class for dancing.

Shynar Baidauletova: At first it was very difficult to work. We were like blind kittens - constantly tried to do something and making experiments. We knew that we had to have success. In our rayon the suicide indicator is very great. Recently such cases have become more frequent among disabled teenagers. Children need psychological help. We tried to support them through the material and technical base. The volunteers, people, who helped to paint, to whitewash and to lay the floors, helped us to realise all our plans. Our parents tried to do their best. They knew that they tried to do that for their own children. The state bodies helped to install a fire alarm system. We express them enormous gratitude for that.

Sponsors also paid attention to the correction cabinet. The UNDP/UNV Small Grants Programme urged well-to-do people to take care of children. For instance, before opening the



“touch room”, a citizen of Semipalatinsk, Sergey Strukov, made a pleasant surprise for children - he equipped a room in a national style and presented them with toys, playing them is not only joyful but also useful.

Sergey Strukov: It was done in order for disabled children to be brought up not only playing with Chinese toys, which seem to be alike, and watching incomprehensible cartoons on TV, and becoming any persons having no ideas. I wanted to do so in order that they could develop learning about the traditions of the country, where they were born.

The cabinet of psychological correction in Lebyazhinsk rayon is developing. The teachers constantly teach children and continue learning new things. It's quite possible that soon it will be not a room already that is located in a private house, but it will be a high-rise centre, where any person concerned with this issue may apply for help. The main task of teachers and sponsors is to prove that there are no people with limited abilities, but there are people with limited desires in the world.

Shynar Baydauletova: We must take care of these children and bring them up as fully-fledged citizens of the country in order for them not to feel themselves strangers in their Native Land. The main thing is patience and a strong desire to create something good. Partners' support is very important – but for the assistance of the UNDP/ UNV programme, we would continue dreaming about such a room for a long time. And now, it is available and ready to be useful for our children.





“Kengerbay-bi” PF Project
“Securing vitamin nutrition for children from poor families
attending Kengerbay-bi village school”

Republic of Kazakhstan, East-Kazakhstan Oblast, Abay Rayon, Kengerbay-bi village

UNDP/UNV grant amount: 450,000 tenge

School’s contribution: 150,000 tenge

Population’s contribution: 62,000 tenge

Beneficiaries: 110 children from Kengerbay-bi school.

Volunteers: 15 people (8 parents, 7 school employees)

Project duration: 1 August - 1 October 2009

Results: a repaired school greenhouse, for vegetable growing in the winter-spring period, and for conducting Botany lessons

“Kengerbay-bi” Public Fund - the main activity - charity in the form of assistance to poor people, as well as conducting free of charge excursions in the areas, where Kazakh people’s great sons - Abay Kunanbayev and Kudaibergen Shakarim lived and created their works.

Askar Suleimenov: the leader of “Kengerbay-bi” PF: With the assistance of the UNDP/UNV Small Grants Programme we are implementing two projects: on restoration of the greenhouse and restoration of the plumbing in Kengerbay-bi village. We decided to deal with the greenhouse first.

How to provide our children with sound food? What is necessary to do for our children to grow strong and healthy? These questions were of concern for parents and the public of the village. This question has been discussed many times at meetings between the village inhabitants and leaders of the village, and the school. There is a greenhouse at the school, but it is not used and should be repaired.

Bakizat Iskakova - the director of Kengerbay-bi village school: On the territory of the school there is a greenhouse, which is not used and is in bad condition. The idea for its reconstruction was raised long ago. When we learnt about the UNDP/UNV Small Grants Programme, we had got an opportunity to realise our plans. The assistance of volunteers was very useful. So, Arhymatayev Bauyrzhan, the father of a schoolgirl of the 1st form Bakiyeva Alimira glassed the greenhouse, and Kutuhanuly Kairat, the father of Mirasa, a schoolboy of the 1st form conducted all work on the electric wiring. Sultanov Zhanarbek - a school employee made his input setting a stove for the greenhouse.

It is planned to use the restored greenhouse as a classroom, where every child will be able to watch how vegetables are growing. The school teachers will conduct practical Botany lessons there.

Bakizat Iskakova – the school director. It would be nice not only to grow fresh vegetables for children, but also to conduct Botany lessons bringing up the children loving the nature. It would be more pleasant for children to harvest the vegetables and then to eat them realising that these vegetables have been grown by they themselves.

1,200 people live in Kengerbay-bi village. Basically, these are the families not having constant earnings. Their children (110 people) cannot have sound nutrition.





Askar Suleimenov - the leader of “Kengerbay-bi” PF: to make a decision turned out to be the easiest thing. It was much more difficult do so that nobody was left out. And what is the usual situation? When an issue is being discussed, all people agree that the idea is good, and when a concrete thing has to be done, everybody remains aside. However, we have managed to unite the most steadfast and active people for the project’s realisation. Every day we watched how our greenhouse was changing for the best and imagined vegetables growing there for our children. On the 1st October 2009, the solemn opening of the greenhouse took place with participation of the administration of Abay rayon region and UNDP/UNV representatives. The volunteers were delivered the letters of gratitude.

Simultaneously, the second project on reconstruction of the water-supply system is being realised in the village. It is aimed at repairing five non-functioning pumps and connecting them to the central control point. The water supply is a great problem in the village. Not all inhabitants have access to drinking water. Some of them have to go to the other end of the village with flasks to take drinking water. Therefore two outdated water pumps have to be changed to provide a steady water supply. This is an example of the village inhabitants’ faith that, if united, they can change their life for the better and deliver this faith to their children.

Askar Suleimenov: the leader of “Kengerbay-bi” PF:

The most important thing is a strong desire of people to change their life and the life of their own children for the best and to work constantly on it. Many parents realise that their children and grandchildren will live in this village, and that means that at present they have to create the conditions for maximum comfort. Working on such a project, one should understand that this not the matter of earning money. This is something that is important for all inhabitants, and so, everyone should try to provide possible assistance.



An Example of Micro-credit “For Potatoes”

EKO, Beskaragay rayon, Beskaragay village.

Murat Omarov, date of birth - 01.01.1958, married,
has two grown-up children.

The credit amount 307,600 tenge.

**The date of credit repayment
according to the agreement terms** 25 August 2010

The following was acquired: potato seeds 1000 kg., fertilizers, lease of a tractor,
KRS (a cow with a calf) totalling 307,600 tenge.

How to make seven things from one thing? Magicians, and an inhabitant from Semenovka village of the East-Kazakhstan oblast, Murat Omarov, though he is not a magician, can answer this question. The answer is simple, he could manage to harvest eight sacks of potatoes from each one planted this year.

Murat: I had received micro-credit and decided to plant potatoes using that money. I learnt beforehand that the harvest that year would be very good. But nevertheless I didn't risk the whole sum of the micro-credit – I planted potatoes for 150,000 tenge.

The amount of Murat Omarov's microcredit is 307,600 tenge. A half of this he spent for husbandry, while the second half was used for cattle breeding - Murat bought a cow with a calf. There is much forage for live-stock in the village, the calf is growing quickly and the cow provides milk. So, Murat and his family decided to develop in two directions simultaneously - to have vegetables and milk and meat.



Murat: If I had known that the harvest would be good, I would have planted many more potatoes. The harvest of potatoes was good, the potatoes were big. It's a pity that I planted so little, though on the other hand, I didn't risk a large amount. I shouldn't complain. I am thankful for the harvest of potatoes. I went to the city to sell them and the profit was not bad. We always have potatoes and fresh milk on our table. The wife milks the cow, makes butter, airan (milk product) and pot cheese. We shall spend winter without problems. Potatoes are a very saleable product, everyone eats them and that's why it is profitable to grow them.

Next year Murat plans to plant more potatoes. Specialists forecast a good harvest in the following season as well, so one may plant more and expect to have a greater profit.

Murat: The forecasts for potatoes in the following year are very good. They say that the harvest of wheat will be small, and on the

contrary the harvest of potatoes will be rich. And I plan to plant more potatoes than this year.

Presently, when the harvest has been collected, Murat works at a school. He services the boiler house. In April the heating season will finish, and Murat will continue dealing with husbandry.

Murat: We have finished with the harvest of potatoes and now we may deal with other things. I work at school to have constant earnings in winter. I don't want to stay without anything to do.

Does the word "credit" scare you?

Murat: Why should I be afraid of that? Certainly, I have risks, but when someone has credit, he needs to have a very detailed plan of actions and future expenses. One should count each tenge.

What should one do to have success, particularly when one is dealing with husbandry?

One should buy only the most necessary things, and work very hard. If someone is dealing with husbandry, he should learn about the forecasts of specialists beforehand to foresee the harvest, and what he should plant this year. Even if a harvest is good, one should care about it in order for it not to be spoilt. And one more important thing is to choose the right time for selling to get the maximum profit. A person's success depends only upon himself. And when one knows that he must pay back the credit, on the contrary, it urges him to work more and to repay the credit quicker. One should mind that the credit was provided not for having a party or buying a new vehicle, but for business development. One should have a profit from each thousand tenge. So, one will be able to repay credit in time and to earn money for his family. The one who works should not be afraid of credit.



An Example of Micro-credit: “Stock-breeding Development”

EKO, Abai rayon, Sarzhal village.

Ybyray Serikbay

married, brings up five children.

Credit amount

400,000 tenge

The date of credit repayment

according to the agreement terms: 22 January 2011

Acquired items:

a pedigree mare for 350,000 tenge and hay and forage for 50,000 tenge

What should someone do, when he has five children and works trying to provide his own family with all necessary things and care about his children in order for them to be educated, but he can't manage to do it? The answer to this question Ybyray Serikbay did not get at once, but he got it in the end. He decided to use an opportunity of the joint UNDP programme and the Fund on Financial Support to Agriculture. He took part in training workshops two times, filled in an application, collected all necessary documents, and in a fortnight he received the desired micro-credit.

Ybyray Serikbay: You can't earn much money in a village. And we have to feed children, to dress them and to teach them. My wife and I consulted each other and decided to start our own business.

Endurance, quick motion and high production ability allow the horse to be a working animal for different things. When people are choosing a living labour force they prefer a horse. Knowing that, Ybyray Serikbay was confident in receiving micro-credit to buy a pedigree mare.

Ybyray Serikbay: A horse is an irreplaceable animal in the household. This is your main assistant in a village. My wife and I, having learnt about the UNDP micro-finance programme realised in partnership with the Fund on Financial Support to Agriculture, had immediately decided to apply for micro-credit and to buy a pedigree horse. We have

been living in the aul (village) since childhood, and the horse has been usual for us since childhood.

Ybyray together with his wife decided to concentrate their efforts on kumis, and this was not a surprise. Sarzhal kumis is known all over Kazakhstan. This type of business is the most wide-spread among the population and in great demand. Also in the village there is a shop for kumis bottling to sell in other regions and cities.

Ybyray Serikbay: Our friends and neighbours always buy kumis made by my wife. Our production is well organised. The most important thing for us is its quality. The people know about that and therefore buy our kumis with pleasure. The children drink it with pleasure. Kumis is a very wholesome drink.

Every day Ybyray's wife milks about 15 litres of milk. One may milk a mare from June to October. All this time the wife is dealing with the production of kumis. Ybyray goes in the city and sells the tasty drink in Semei, where he also has regular customers.

Ybyray Serikbay: Constant production is well organised. The price of kumis we sell is 200 tenge per litre. This is much less than the price of competitors. But we don't forget about the quality. Therefore the product is quickly bought up. Nobody has said that our kumis is bad. People praise it – we are pleased by that. We want to make it better in order to have more buyers.

If the number of buyers grows, Ybyray will plan to expand his business. First of all, he has to repay his present credit, and afterwards he may think about increasing of the live-stock and the profit.

Ybyray Serikbay: Gradually we save money to repay the credit. This is an obligatory condition in our family. We live according to our earnings in order for the situation to be easier for us. We are not going to waste money. We have to work, to earn money, to pay back the credit, and when we repay it, we should expand our business. At first we decided not to take any risks. We bought one horse and tried to start business. We organised it, and in future we shall be able to buy one more horse and to acquire more live-stock in order to have meat on the table all the time. In general, the main thing for people is to try to change their life for the best by themselves, to search for options, to compare, to make analysis of the things they learn. We are lucky that we learnt about the joint UNDP Programme and the Fund of Financial Support to Agriculture. Now, we have our own business to live on.





An Example of Micro-credit: “A Joiner’s Shop”.

EKO, Beskaragay rayon, Semenovka village.

Baygabyl Kasenov

date of birth - 28.05.1967, married, has four children.

The credit amount

400,000 tenge.

The date of credit repayment according to the agreement terms

25 February 2010

The following was acquired:

a wood-processing tool in the amount - 200,000 tenge, Lumber (boards, logs and etc.) was acquired using the remaining amount

Baygabyl began working for himself long ago. He had his own joiner’s shop, where he worked, fulfilling different orders for the inhabitants of his village. However, gradually he understood that in order to expand his variety of services, it would be necessary to acquire equipment.

Baygabyl: We were making calculations for a long time and learnt about the prices and technical characteristics of tools. Finally, we had found the one we needed.

At first Baygabyl tried to get credit from one of the Kazakhstani banks. He says that he had to go to many places and collect numerous references. But even that did not secure success.

Baygabyl: You will not believe it, but I was visiting different banks for a half a year trying to get credit. I was ready to take money and pay high interest to begin my own business and start working. But they required me to leave an enormous level of collateral. This turned out to be backbreaking for me, and I decided to refuse the “help”

of the bank. Then I learnt about the UNDP programme on micro-credit. I took part in the training seminar, with the assistance of the UNDP employees and the Fund on Financial Support to Agriculture I wrote an application, filled in the form, prepared a business plan, collected the documents, and very soon I got the long awaited money for acquisition of tools for a joiner's shop. And a quite different life began.

Several orders were accepted immediately. The first products and the first money appeared. The work became more interesting.

Baygabyl: Someone needed window blocks, someone decided to change the doors and someone needed simply to saw up firewood. I am ready to do everything. If I manage to do something, I can help, I shall always do that. But, however, I do not forget that I have to repay the credit. I have strict responsibility: and all the time I save some money for that. It's easier to repay in such a way.

In the near future Baygabyl plans to expand his production: he is going to construct a new building to work in winter as well. A little later, most likely, he will use the programme on micro-leasing.

Baygabyl: There is much work in winter as well. It's possible to fulfil various orders. So, I shall build a capital shop in order to deal with my favourite business all the year round.

Baygabyl does not feel sorry at all that he used micro-credit, though many people dissuaded him from such a risk. He says that but for it he would not have managed to start his business, which presently is his main job.

Baygabyl: Many people said that credit is a terrible word. But I don't think so. The interest is acceptable and the conditions are good. When getting credit, one should plan and calculate everything in detail. This is the main thing. Everyone should decide what he or she will deal with exactly. One should know all nuances of the future business. For that, it is extremely important to study the sales market of goods produced, at least at the level of his village. It is very simple to do that – to learn from the inhabitants of the village what they need and to produce the necessary product in real demand, to provide orders and profit in such a way, and through that to secure repayment of the credit in time. Advertising is also very important - one may take pictures of ready-made products, prepare booklets in order to show the goods afterwards. This is not expensive but effective. It's better to repay the credit in parts, rather than to hope that by the end of the period it will be possible to save money somehow. I have returned all the money already. The situation has become easier. One should spend each tenge carefully and think over everything before deciding to buy something. A clear plan, detailed calculation and responsible approach to an activity guarantee a successful business.





**Joint UNDP/UNICEF/UNFPA/UNV project
«Enhancing human security
in the former nuclear test site of
Semipalatinsk»
(2008-2010yy.)**



United Nations Fund of Population Activity (UNFPA)

«Improving services quality of reproductive health in accordance with international standards»

Reproductive health is one of means in achievement sustainable development, and also providing human rights. UNFPA provide usage of integral approach to the questions of protection reproductive health. Besides that, United Nations Fund of Population Activity on the different levels come out for realization mother's right on safe delivery. But, for safe delivery, need to provide: 1) qualified help at all deliveries; 2) timely obstetric help to all women, which have complications in delivery. And very important, that given services render in stationeries of different levels. Quality of obstetric-gynecological help, first of all, depends from the level of theoretical and practical training of medical specialists.

In frameworks of joint project at technical support of UNFPA in Semey (Semipalatinsk) region conducted trainings by implementation effective perinatal technologies with

participation of international and national consultants. Special attention spared to the trainings of specialists from district stationeries.

Borankul Ongarbaeva, obstetrician-gynecologist of Medical Union of Abay district:

«I'm working in Abay district of The East-Kazakhstan Region as obstetrician-gynecologist more than 10 years. Till 2008 year in our work we adhere to the principles of «classical obstetrics». With implementation of international standards of perinatal care, it was very difficult for us to understanding and accepting that technologies. All the more that some time I was in maternity leave, or for me was period of so called «informational hunger». Thanks for participation in training «Effective perinatal care», organized by United Nations Fund of Population Activity, became clear, that effective perinatal technologies are very simple, their inculcation improve quality of obstetric help, makes deliveries safe and, mainly, given technologies is not expensive in economic meaning absolutely. I would like to say, that on seminar I'm not only adopted theory, but also could see in practice (in time of duties with trainers), how to use new technologies. I understood, that from good work of specialists group «obstetrician-gynecologist-midwife-neonatologist-child nurse», depends, how will pass delivery and will be safe they are for mother and newborn. Abay district is located in 180 km from Semey city (former Semipalatinsk city), district has some problems with provision of modern methodical literature by our specialty. In time of training I have got methodical guidance by effective perinatal technologies (international guidance, book of M. Enkin «Guidance by effective help and baby birth»). Passing these trainings, my world outlook, as obstetrician-gynecologist, had some change. I think, that with coming back in my stationary, with agreement of leadership, first of all I will conduct classes for second doctor obstetrician-gynecologist and midwives. With joint efforts we will inculcate principles of safe maternity in our district. Undoubtedly, that implementation of international standards of effective perinatal technologies will provide safety of all deliveries».





«Implementation principles of Evidence Based Medicine in clinical practice»

The modern medical practice requires from each doctor, that diagnostics of diseases, prescription of effective treatment, minimizing unfavorable consequences of interventions and composition of individual prognostication for patient based only on the most reliable information. Medicine must be based on evidences. For inculcation principles of evident medicine in clinical, in particular, in obstetrical practice, with the technical support of United Nations Fund of Population Activity in 2008 year on the base of Semey State Medical University (partner of UNFPA in realization joint project) was established Resource centre of evidence based medicine. Was organized the computer class for 7 work places, with permanent connection to the Internet. Obstetrician-gynecologists of cities and districts, and also collaborators of Semey State Medical University have possibility to visit free Resource centre.

At the same time, with establishment of Resource centre, UNFPA organized conducting trainings by usage principles of evidence based medicine in clinical practice with participation of national and local consultants. In seminar participate teachers of Semey State Medical University, doctor's obstetrician-gynecologists of city and district medical hospitals.

Elena Matycina (vice-director of city clinical maternity hospital of Semey city) participated in one of such seminars: «I'm practicing obstetrician- gynecologist, and I always had difficulties in searching reliable information by any interesting, incomprehensible clinical cases from my practice. I could not always find answer for that or other interested me question. One case - to get answers on my questions from somebody, other case - to find reliable answer myself from primary sources. Thanks to participation in training «Inculcation in clinical practice principles of medicine, based on evidences», I have possibility to formulate free right clinical question and find exhaustive answer on it from reliable sources of literature».

Participants of trainings by evident medicine, getting theoretical knowledge, directions in searching tasks decisions, now will be able any time, visiting Resource centre by evidence based medicine, to find necessary for himself information.

«Equipment of maternity homes»

At frameworks of project with financial assistance of UNFPA, was purchased main absent goods for improving services quality in sphere of reproductive health. Were equipped maternity homes of Semipalatinsk city and maternity departments of district hospitals.

In village Beskaragay of the East-Kazakhstan Region in January of 2009 year was built new typical district hospital (by government order). Very important was to equip new individual maternity wards, to conduct deliveries in coordination with modern perinatal technologies.

At supporting of United Nations Fund of Population Activity was equipped maternity ward, purchased fitness-balls and Sweden wall (for making special exercises by pregnant women), armchair for delivery in «sitting» condition (according to principles of safe maternity practices «vertical» deliveries), heater (one of important effective perinatal technologies is supporting of heating regimen- heating chain), partogramm and neonatology stethoscope; for reception department was acquired couch. Not ignored and medical staffs. In doctor's room of obstetrician-gynecologist purchased informative stands with methodical appliance on effective perinatal technologies.



United Nations Fund of Population Activity (UNFPA) will continue to support national and local authorities, and also promote to:

- increase services quality in sphere of reproductive health with special attention to improve maternity health and practice of control for reproductive health;
- increase access to the services in sphere of family planning through the improvement skills of services suppliers and increase informing in family planning problems;
- inculcate principles of evidence based medicine in obstetrics practice.





Within the frames of the current joint programme in the Semipalatinsk region Semey city Akimat, UNICEF and Semey local partners (State Medical University of

Semey, State Medical College named after Duisenby Kalmatayev, Semey State Pedagogical Institute and others) cooperate in the following areas:

- Promotion of participation of the young people in the local decision-making processes in the best interest of the child and his family;
- Improvement of family support services (development of minimum standards for identification, prevention and addressing family dysfunction and for cross-sector collaboration in child inclusion);
- Development of the Road map for the improvement of child care system in the region;
- Improvement of quality of health and social services provided to children, mothers and youth in order to decrease infant mortality rate, under five mortality rate, maternal mortality rate, improve health of adolescents and young people and prevent HIV;
- Promotion of consuming of flour enriched with vitamins by women of reproductive age in order to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates by prevention of anaemia and inborn pathology among children.

Small Changes Making Big Differences at Kazakhstan Maternal Hospitals

By: Tatiana Hobbs

Kulyash has been a Soviet-trained neonatologist* for twenty years who, thanks to an innovative UNICEF programme, has made a huge impact on the way ill babies are cared for in maternity hospitals in remote regions of Kazakhstan.

After going through a special seminar last year, she began training her own students about special, easy-to-implement UNICEF neonatal practices at ten maternal hospitals in the Semey area.

The programme that benefits Kulyash and others is under the Mother and Child Health programme and has spread like wildfire to many parts of the country.

The cornerstones of the intervention are Safe Motherhood - a joint project of WHO (the World Health Organization), UNFPA (the United Nations Population Fund) and UNICEF - and Early Childhood Development (ECD), an exclusive UNICEF project.

Promoting Change That Makes Sense

The going isn't all easy. With strongly embedded cultural beliefs – such as separating babies from their mothers at childbirth - it's challenging to change practices that have been used for generations. But Kulyash believes that as soon as people – families and health workers included - see the huge difference small, inexpensive changes can make they will adopt the new practices espoused by UNICEF.



“It changed my life – I started teaching my students everything that I had learnt,” said Kulyash, referring to the UNICEF seminar and UNICEF initiated perinatal care assessment at East-Kazakhstani maternity wards.

“Everything that UNICEF recommends to decrease problems facing mother and child health is so easy and makes so much sense. We just need to change people’s thinking.”

In fact the changes are already easy to see in hospitals in certain regions. Observers are struck by how small simple steps can make a world of difference in the health of an infant, and the knock-on positive effect as they grow older. Ultimately, securing the health of a child in the earliest phase of life reduces the burden of health care costs down the road.

One voice in South of Kazakhstan

The improved practices have virtually transformed the way hospital wards are managed.

The director of a maternity hospital in Shymkent (Southern Kazakhstan) explains that when she first walked through the doors in 2003 the hospital was experiencing rampant infection and illness in newborns.

As a reflex staff – using a system of care from the old Soviet system - were sterilizing everything “like mad people” – including the bedding and clothing used for the newborns and their mothers. The newborns were immediately wrapped up like “little soldiers” and taken away from their mother - denied human contact and access to breast milk.

But the babies continued to get sick and there was no reduction in the level of illness.

Helping Mothers Feel Comfortable

The director said she then quietly started implementing a new, simple system that UNICEF is training all neonatologists and health workers in Southern and Eastern parts of Kazakhstan.

It was first met by some opposition from her colleagues. The programme includes: heaters and thermometers in maternity rooms; hats, socks, and gloves for newborns; encouraging mothers to breastfeed within 30 minutes of giving birth and mother and babies remaining together in the same room.

Nowadays, the newborns sleep in the same room with their mothers and they begin to breastfeed and have skin-to-skin contact within at most an hour of being born. These simple, very inexpensive changes immediately led to a sharp decline in sick newborns.

The programme goes even further, ensuring mothers are shown how to breastfeed, hold their baby, change diapers, bathing, and how to clean eyes and ears.

Larissa is a neonatologist at Maternity Hospital #1 in Semey city (the former city of Semipalatinsk, East Kazakhstan Region) and two years ago, introduced the same practices as

in Shymkent – including individual rooms for mothers and their babies – birthing and living all happening in one room.

One year ago, Maternity Hospital #1 opened an entire block with individual rooms for mothers and their babies. All rooms have windows that let in natural light and provide the babies with a source of natural vitamin D.

Larissa explains: “Ninety percent of mothers now have their own clothes brought in and also clothes for their babies.” The days of sterile hospital gowns are a thing of the past. Women are even permitted to bring in their own bedding and blankets so they feel like they are at home.



Coming Full Circle

Madina is young mother of two who lives in Semey. Her first child was born six years ago at Perinatal Centre #3 in the old-style method. “The first time was very hard, I was young, and I was scared. I gave birth in a birthing chair. The doctor was there, but also students were present and watching me.”

Madina says that the birth of her second child was much easier: “My doctor stood beside me and held my hand; I only listened to her voice. She kept telling me that I could do it, that everything would be ok - her voice was so sure and calming.” Larissa was the doctor present at the birth of Madina’s second child.

It demonstrates the UNICEF and UNFPA training coming full circle and positively impacting the lives of the future generations of Kazakhstan.

Madina was also provided a twenty-four hour number for help with any problems or any questions regarding her new baby’s health or general care. Madina says that she only spent two days at Centre #1 after the birth of her second child compared to two weeks after the birth of the first.

Still, there is a lot that is yet to be done to ensure the national implementation of Safe Motherhood policies. Although the government officially implemented the policies nationally at beginning of 2008 and maternal mortality rates (MMR) and infant mortality rates (IMR) are steadily decreasing the results are not equal throughout the country.

In addition, there are some government orders that remain intact from the Soviet era – such as prohibiting relatives to visit new mothers in the maternity wards.

UNICEF has pledged help to train more health care workers, which is needed to transform more hospitals and educate more mothers in Safe Motherhood practices. It’s all with a view towards securing a better future for the children of Kazakhstan.

**Neonatology is a subspecialty of pediatrics that consists of the medical care of newborn infants, especially the ill or premature newborn infant.*



Creating the Opportunity to Smile

By: Tatiana Hobbs

SEMEY CITY, Kazakhstan -- As the Kazakh national anthem plays over the stadium loudspeakers in this eastern regional centre, 16-year-old Olzhas claps his hand to his heart – recalling the endless hours of grueling training to reach this point as a competitor in the Special Olympics.

Carrying on day-to-day with disabilities is tough enough for any adolescent. But managing to do so in a former Soviet republic – where people with physical challenges are often marginalized - and reaching the top spot in a difficult sport is an amazing accomplishment by any measure.

But even for one fleeting moment, this is a time when the brash Olzhas – who suffers from an undiagnosed mental disability - feels completely on par with his peers. This joint Special Olympics Kazakhstan and UNICEF event provides teenagers with disabilities the opportunity to feel and act like regular children.

“Prior to a bowling trip to Almaty two-years ago Olzhas had no idea about sports,” said his mother. “From a young age he was withdrawn, and always on his own, it was difficult for him to interact with other kids.”

But the introduction of competitive sports into his life changed all that. Three months ago his bowling team won a bronze medal.

Olzhas now has a full social calendar with daily activities – practicing and competing with his track and field and bowling teams.

It is hard to imagine that a mere two years ago Olzhas didn't even know what sports were. The participation has earned Olzhas many friends and they hang out together before and after their races, just like normal teenage boys.

Olzhas, who now has a cell phone to help him keep in touch with friends and family, says: "My friends call me and I call them and we make plans."

Indicative of Olzhas' new-found confidence, his grandmother says, was his desire to get a passport following a bowling trip to Almaty. "He began to see new opportunities for himself – a real future."

Olzhas' participation in sport culminated with his involvement in the joint UNICEF and Special Olympics Kazakhstan Track and Field day in Semey City. Also in the stands are his proud parents, grandmother and his little sister to support him for the 200-meter sprint.

A total of 120 children with disabilities from Semey city and the surrounding area participated in the Special Olympics event. For many it was truly a special day where their efforts as athletes were recognized through an official opening ceremony, special jerseys and an awards ceremony. The joy on their faces was unmistakable.

UNICEF and Special Olympics Kazakhstan joined forces with a view towards giving children with disabilities a new start in life – and to develop new friendships, support systems and lead happier and healthier lives.

One Doctor Making a difference

For newly-minted sportsmen like Olzhas and other children with disabilities it also represents a chance to become integrated into Kazakhstan's medical system through a programme called Special Smiles. The majority of children with disabilities in Kazakhstan will never see a dental professional at any stage of their lives, but this programme raises awareness about children with disabilities and provides them with free dental examinations.

During the training session attended by Olzhas, Dr. Saurbek Ruzuddinov, head of prosthetic dentistry, doctor of medical science and a professor at the Kazakh National Medical University in Almaty travelled to Semey City to train local dental students as part of the Special Smiles initiative.

Dr. Ruzuddinov tells the dental students that everyone has the right to free help and that as a future dentist "you are responsible for all potential patients irrespective of their differences."



At the screening the dental students provide the Special Olympics athletes on-the-spot oral exams.

Olzhas is very apprehensive – at first refusing to open his mouth. Eventually he relaxes and the dental student begins the examination. Olzhas leaves with a smile on his face as each child is given a gift for being such a great sport.

In total, 550 children received recommendations on involvement in sports and 300 students were trained at joint UNICEF and Special Olympics events in Astana, Almaty, Semey and Ust-Kamenogorsk.

Donors include: GSM Kazakhstan/Kcell, Kazzinc, Procter & Gamble, and KAZROSGAS.

UNICEF plans to continue support to central and local authorities and the pre-and in-service training of dental students in order to ensure that Special Smiles is extended nationwide.

Said UNICEF Kazakhstan Representative Hanna Singer: “UNICEF believes that sports can be an effective tool to help achieve goals in health, education, gender equality, HIV/AIDS, child protection and child development. That is the concept of sport for development – that sports is not just an end in itself, but also an effective vehicle to help improve the lives of children, families and communities. “

Saving Youths: One Child at a Time

By: Tatiana Hobbs

When a personal crisis strikes teens or their families there are typically few nurturing places to turn to in this part of the world.

Now, thanks to UNICEF and its partners, two Youth Friendly Service (YFS) Centres have been established in Semey city (East Kazakhstan Region). They represent a comforting place where young people can seek psychological advice and support.

In addition, they offer seminars for young people on sex education and other social problems.

As part of the process, parents of these teenagers are engaged – representing a dynamic and multi-directional approach to helping its young clients.

The psychologists at the YFS Centres also try to attract adolescents from the orphanages in the city, in the hopes that they agree to work as volunteers. These centres even cater to children with disabilities.

Working With Families in Crisis

Nurgul - the distraught mother of a 15-year-old Zhanar, came to one of the YFS Centres in Semey city out of desperation – telling psychologists how her daughter had become increasingly aggressive at home. Zhanar was “losing her temper for no apparent reason and had started yelling at both myself and her little brother.”

Nurgul quotes her daughter as saying: “Why did you give birth to such an ugly baby”, referring to herself and “I want to kill myself.”

Nurgul also received word from school officials that her daughter was having problems with aggression at school, specifically with the other children in her class.

The two YFS Centres are the only places in the Semey city where free psychological counseling is offered.

Not only was Nurgul able to meet with professionals to discuss the problem with her daughter but she was reassured by the fact that it was all completely confidential.

Nurgul says: “The psychologist listened to me and gave me advice, for example to reinforce verbally to Zhanar how much I loved her and what a great person she is and to show genuine interest in her life. These small adjustments made all the difference.”

She was eventually able to convince her struggling daughter to visit the YFS Centre to receive counseling.

One of the Centre’s psychologists explains: “Zhanar was suffering from low self-esteem caused by the fact that she wears glasses, her clothes are different and she struggles a bit with her speech.” Zhanar was also found to have just suffered “the loss of her first love,” which can often be difficult for teenage girls.

The psychologist continues to work with Zhanar teaching her basic coping strategies, as well as showing her fashion pages where models are wearing glasses so that she realizes that that she is not an outsider, but that it’s normal to wear glasses in our society.

Nurgul says that she has noticed a huge improvement in her daughter’s behaviour even just after one session at the YFS: “She asks me if I need help around the house, she is no longer yelling, I am so happy that Zhanar has someone to speak to and that she is listening to the advice that she is being given.”

Saving institutionalized children

Aigul is 15 years old and has had a very difficult life, the majority of which she has spent living in an orphanage where she consistently told that she was stupid and slow,



Her only social interactions were with the children and the staff of the orphanage or at school where she experienced an “us versus them” mentality; meaning there is a clear separation between the children who have grown up in families and those who have grown up in orphanages.

Aigul explains that the YFS came to the orphanage looking for volunteers and that at first she was interested in going, but they continued coming and asking her and so eventually she said yes. She says that through the YFS Centre she was able to participate in trainings and outings, which helped her gain confidence as an individual. She says: “Even my teachers began to notice that I was more open and social with the other children.”

Aigul explains that the YFS has given her something to look forward to, outside of her regular routine of “orphanage, school back to orphanage.” The Centre has not only opened her social horizons, but also through the volunteer training she has received Aigul has learnt new skills related to helping other youth in need. “I have made friends and I trust the staff here and I feel comfortable.” The YFS Centre has given hope to Aigul. Not only has she benefited from the counseling services, but in a way the YFS has become a type of home where an orphan like Aigul is nurtured and where she herself is able to nurture others.

One of the major ways in which Aigul has been stimulated through the YFS Centre is that she has been able to participate in UNICEF and Special Olympics Kazakhstan joint events, as she does suffer from a mild mental disability. This has also really helped to boost Aigul’s self-confidence – she is very outgoing, her smile radiates and one can see that she is truly happy.

Andrey: Curiosity Got the Better of Him

Andrey, now 15, was abandoned by his mother when he was quite young – he barely remembers her. He was raised in an orphanage without any proper family support or encouragement.

Dr. Nikhambayeva, a psychologist at one of the Semey city YFS Centres, says that when they used to go to the orphanage looking for volunteers she would see Andrey sitting by himself, completely withdrawn from the other children and smoking.

Andrey said he had given up on life, but that “After a while curiosity got the better of me and I went to the YFS to check it out.”

Now things have turned around for the boy. “I help at the orphanage now, with the younger children and I have even run my own seminars at the YFS.”

Andrey, was even given the opportunity to participate in the YFS summer camp this year. “Before my heart was closed and because of the Centre my heart has been opened.”

Said UNICEF Kazakhstan Representative Hanaa Singer: “To us, this is the best validation of the positive impact that UNICEF – through the YFS Centres - is having upon the lives of youth in Semey city.”

*Some names were changed due to the ethical reasons.

For notes

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