

KAZAKHSTAN ACTIONS AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN CHILDREN (KATCH)



PROJECT SUMMARY AND VISION

Kazakhstan Actions Against Trafficking in Children (KATCH) is a project [01 April 2023 - 30 September 2025] funded by the United States Department of State (USDOS), works to improve identification of child trafficking in persons (TIP) survivors and socially vulnerable migrant families, and support them with appropriate, comprehensive care in southern Kazakhstan. KATCH is the first-ever project

in Kazakhstan that focuses exclusively on the prevention of trafficking in children and the protection of child victims and children at risk. At the request of the donor, the project geographically covers only the south of Kazakhstan: Turkestan, Kyzylorda, Almaty, Zhambyl and Zhetysay regions and the cities of Almaty and Shymkent.

KATCH PROJECT GEOGRAPHICAL AREA



During the period of February 1 - 22, 2024, the KATCH Project Team organized consultative workshops with Akimats of southern regions of Kazakhstan to improve the effectiveness of child trafficking (TIP) support services. During this review, workshop participants identified gaps in policies and procedures that hinder rescue, reintegration and rehabilitation child victims of trafficking. KATCH leveraged various platforms, including those hosted by government agencies and international organizations, to present these findings and **advocate for stronger identification and protection measures.**

Because child TIP prevention and protection projects are most effective when informed and implemented by those who have survived it, KATCH established **a Survivors Advisory Group** and engaged adult survivors of child TIP to advise on decisions related to improved identification of victims, their referrals, assistance to them, and ensuring their rights.

During the period of October – November 2023, September – November 2024, KATCH has **trained 473 specialists in health, education, and social protection sectors, as well as NGOs** in five oblasts of southern Kazakhstan on identifying, referring, and providing child-sensitive, trauma-informed care to child TIP victims and socially vulnerable migrant families.

These NGO partners conducted awareness campaigns to educate at-risk populations about the dangers and indicators of trafficking, as well as the support services available in their communities. Some campaigns were organized jointly with the newly established inter-agency mobile groups to identify potential victims among vulnerable children.

Child trafficking remains an under-researched issue in Kazakhstan. There was only one national study commissioned by UNICEF and USAID in 2012 “Rapid Assessment of Children’s Vulnerabilities to Risky Behaviors, Sexual Exploitation, and Trafficking in Kazakhstan”. But since then a lot has changed. To bridge this gap, KATCH conducted **a Rapid Situational Assessment on the Child Trafficking Context and Response in Southern Kazakhstan** which enabled more effective targeting and planning for project interventions. This research investigated factors contributing to the vulnerability and resilience of children to child trafficking and identified major gaps in the identification and referral of TIP survivors to police and their access to special social services offered by the relevant state and NGOs.

