



Protecting children affected by migration in Southeast, South, and Central Asia
A project implemented by UNICEF and co-funded by the European Union and UNICEF

Child Rights Impact Assessment of COVID-19 on children affected by migration (CRIA)

UZBEKISTAN COUNTRY REPORT



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COI	Conflict of Interest
CRIA	Child Rights Impact Assessment
ENOC	European Network of Ombudspersons for Children
ERB	Ethical Review Board
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoU	Government of Uzbekistan
IC	Informed Consent
KII	Key Informant Interview
LBC	Left-Behind Children
LMIC	Low-income and middle-income countries
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

GLOSSARY

Khokimyat	Territorial public and administrative authority (Uzbek)
Mahalla	Local neighbourhood communities (Uzbek)
Primary Caregiver	Main person responsible for the care and upbringing of a child
Child Rights Impact Assessment	CRIA is a process, tool and report which supports a systematic assessment and communication of the impact of a proposal or measure on the rights, needs and interests of children and young people. CRIA focuses on how children's rights were or may be affected by the decisions and actions of governments, institutions and others in the areas of law, policy and practice. ¹

¹ Payne, L., Synthesis report. (2020). Child Rights Impact Assessment. ENOC.

I. BACKGROUND

Globally, around 3.3 per cent of the world's population are international migrants. The majority are labour migrants who originate from low-income and middle-income countries.² Labour migration has increased significantly in many parts of the world, causing changes in family structures, mostly because of existing stringent policies and financial constraints in destination countries which often force migrated parents to leave their children behind in their home country for lengthy periods of time.³

Migration in the Eurasian region is marked by economic and demographic push-pull factors related to the relative prosperity but low birth rates in Russia, and instability coupled with higher birth rates in Central Asian countries.⁴ Remittances from a migrant household member might allow the remaining family members to invest more in their children's education, but the absence of one or both parents might negatively affect child development due to a lack of parental supervision.⁵

International labour migration has become more popular in Uzbekistan over recent years.⁶ The main reasons for international migration from Uzbekistan include a shortage of jobs with decent salaries at home, inadequate earning to cover family expenses, desires to purchase a new car or apartment, pursuit of better living conditions, and debt repayment.⁷

According to the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in 2019 about 2.5 million citizens were in labour migration, of whom about 2 million were in the Russian Federation. According to statistics from the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, in the first half of 2019, 918,000 Uzbeks (4.75 per cent of the country's economically active population) had entered the country as labour migrants.⁸ As of 1 January 2021 the number of migrant workers from Uzbekistan had reached 1.678 million people. Most of these workers (1.193 million) have migrated to Russia.⁹

In 2019, UNICEF conducted a study on 'Effects of migration on children of Uzbekistan' as part of the EU-funded cross-regional project 'Protecting children affected by migration in Southeast, South and Central Asia'. The study examined the challenges that children left behind by migrated parents (left-behind children - LBC) have experienced while in the care of other adult relatives, when one or both parents migrate.

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, which has been declared a global public health emergency.¹⁰ Many governments worldwide have implemented stringent containment and closure policies to mitigate the pandemic, in order to limit the spread of the virus. These restrictive community measures that limit activities or access to resources, facilities or institutions have been often referred to as 'lockdown' measures. However, the impact of these measures on children's rights has been different from country to country.

The first case of coronavirus infection was detected in Uzbekistan on 15 March 2020, spurring the country's leadership to take immediate measures against the COVID-19 outbreak in order to curb its spread in the country.¹¹ In accordance with the Order of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 29 January 2020, No. P-5537, a Special Republican Commission for the Preparation of a Programme of Measures to Prevent the pervasion and spread of a new type of coronavirus in the Republic of Uzbekistan (Commission) under the leadership of the Prime Minister was established.

Since the detection of the first case of COVID-19 in Uzbekistan, the abovementioned Commission rapidly announced a strict lockdown regime on the whole territory of the country. Several measures have been implemented to ensure the population's social support, optimize budget expenditures, and support the most affected areas of the country.

² IOM. (2018). World migration report 2018. The UN Migration Agency. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

³ Zhao, C.; Wang, F.; Zhou, X.; Jiang, M.; Hesketh, T. Impact of parental migration on psychosocial well-being of children left behind: A qualitative study in rural China. *Int. J. Equity in Health*. 2018, 17:80. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

⁴ Laruelle, M.; Schenk, C. Eurasia on the move: Interdisciplinary approaches to a dynamic migration region. The George Washington University, Central Asia Program, 2018. www.centralasiaprogram.org

⁵ Khamrakhudhaev, N., Juraev, J. (2019). Social and Economic impacts of international labor migration in Uzbekistan. *Society and Administration*. Vol.3: Iss.4 Article 1. https://uzjournals.edu.uz/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=soc_adm

⁶ IOM. Countries: Uzbekistan. The UN Migration Agency. <https://www.iom.int/countries/uzbekistan>

⁷ As cited in study in line with Presidential Decree No. 5052 from 24 May 2017 on 'Action plan for development of government policy on employment and strengthening effectiveness of labor bodies' by the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations in Uzbekistan.

⁸ <https://fergana.agency/news/121002/>

⁹ EU-funded project Report (2019). 'Protecting children affected by migration in Southeast, South and Central Asia'. UNICEF [\[CrossRef\]](#)

¹⁰ Shangjun, L. et al. Analyzing the Effectiveness of COVID-19 Lockdown Policies Using the Time-Dependent Reproduction Number and the Repression Discontinuity Framework: Comparison between Countries. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

¹¹ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/uzbekistan-confirms-its-first-coronavirus-case/1766896>

Starting from 16 March 2020, the Commission adopted initial restrictive, preventive and anti-epidemiological measures to combat the spread of COVID-19¹²:

- The closure of air and road communications with all foreign countries;
- The enactment of extended holidays for preschool, secondary and higher educational institutions (public and private);
- Cancellation of all public events;
- Cessation of meetings in all government bodies and non-governmental organizations;
- Set up of a hotline on COVID-19 by the Ministry of Health;
- Increased production of masks;
- Implementation of large-scale sanitary and anti-epidemic measures.

Starting from 1 April 2020, a self-isolation regime was introduced in Tashkent, Nukus and regional centers, which became mandatory for all residents from 6 April 2020 the following.

- The following measures and temporary restrictions were imposed for the period of the self-isolation regime:
- Strict restrictions on leaving place of residence (citizens over 65 were forbidden to leave their place of residence);
- Maintaining a 2-meter social distance from others;
- Restriction of movement on motor vehicles and bicycles;
- Implementation of large-scale sanitary and anti-epidemic measures.

Violation of sanitary legislation or the rules for combating epidemics, as well as other lawful demands of the state sanitary inspection bodies, was punishable by a fine from 50 basic calculation units (11,930,500 Uzbek Soum or US\$1,249) to one hundred basic calculation units (23,861,000 Uzbek Soum or US\$2,497) or deprivation of a certain right for up to five years or correlational labour up to two years, or restriction of liberty from one to three years or imprisonment of up to five years.¹³

The pandemic and economic crisis have affected national healthcare systems, public sectors, business activity, consumption, international trade and investments both at an individual and economic level all over the world, including in Uzbekistan.¹⁴

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every aspect of children's lives worldwide. UNICEF and the Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights (Ombudsperson) initiated the study 'Child Rights Impact Assessment of COVID-19 on children affected by migration in Uzbekistan'. The current Child Rights Impact Assessment has been conducted under the leadership of the Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights (Ombudsperson) by engaging a national consultant to adapt a Common Framework of Reference and CRIA, developed by the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC), to conduct a desk-review of state-issued laws, policies, budget decisions, programmes and services related to COVID-19, which were developed in the early stages of the pandemic to protect life and health, and to examine their potential impacts on the rights of children left behind by migration (LBC).

¹² PwC. COVID-19 Uzbekistan Legal Handbook: Key considerations. (2020) [\[CrossRef\]](#)

¹³ PwC. COVID-19 Uzbekistan Legal Handbook: Key considerations. (2020) [\[CrossRef\]](#)

¹⁴ Tulyakov, E. The Foreign Policy Centre. (2020). COVID-19: Actions taken in Uzbekistan. <https://fpc.org.uk/covid-19-actions-taken-in-uzbekistan/>

II. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES



The Government of Uzbekistan (GoU) has taken steps to protect the health of its population and to prevent the further spread of the coronavirus. So far, no child rights impact assessment has been conducted to examine the potential impacts of laws, policies, budget decisions, programmes and services related to the COVID-19 pandemic on children's rights, including the rights of LBC, in Uzbekistan. The lack of such analysis and data is the main concern that impedes evidence-based policy planning. Consequently the Child Rights Impact Assessment is very important to critically review decisions made so far and to provide decision makers, parliamentarians, civil society and human rights defenders with recommendations for more evidence-based state policy development national programmes.

The regulations related to COVID-19 restrictions adopted by the GoU since March 2020 have been identified from the National Database of Legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, www.lex.uz, using the search words "coronavirus infection", "prevention", "measures", "children" and "labour migration". In general, more than 40 legislative documents issued from 15 March to 31 December 2020 were found in the database. Three legislative documents have been selected for assessment of COVID-19 restriction measures to determine their impact, negative, positive or neutral, on the rights of LBC:

1. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 19 March 2020, No. UP-5969 'On priority measures to mitigate the negative impact on the economy of the coronavirus pandemic and global crisis phenomena'. The purpose of the regulation is to ensure macroeconomic stability, ensure uninterrupted operation of industries and sectors of the economy, stimulate foreign economic activity, and provide effective social support for the population during the period of countering the spread of coronavirus infections. The next two measures have been assessed for the period of March-September 2020:

- Parents (or persons replacing them including guardians and caregivers) who have been quarantined due to confirmed or suspected coronavirus infection, as well as persons caring for their children under the age of 14, are paid temporary disability benefits to the amount of 100 per cent of the average monthly salary.
- Employers are prohibited to terminate employment contracts with employees with confirmed or suspected coronavirus infection, including those placed in quarantine, as well as parents of a child under the age of 14.

These measures have not been cancelled and are still valid. The GoU has helped parents (and persons replacing them including guardians and caregivers) who could not afford a standard of living that is good enough to meet children's physical and psychological needs by giving them a temporary payment when they were unable to work due to lockdown, and allowing parents (or persons replacing them including guardians and caregivers) to retain their jobs in the case of quarantine.

2. Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 23 March 2020, No. 176 'On additional measures against the spread of coronavirus infection'. The purpose of the regulation is to ensure the population's sanitary and epidemiological well-being and safety, to organize the coordinated activities of the state and economic authorities and organizations responsible for preventing the spread of coronavirus infection, and to protect the life and health of citizens. The next three measures have been assessed for the period of March-September 2020:

- Starting from 24 March 2020, in the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan citizens who did not meet payments for internet and telephone communication on time were not disconnected for two months. Through this measure, the government helped families who could not afford to pay for internet and telephone communications by giving a two months' moratorium and facilitated support to meet children's psychological needs, particularly in maintaining connection with their migrant parents. The measure related to the prohibition of disconnecting the internet in case of non-payment on time is not applied at present, since the period was specified as being for two months only.
- If there has been a person on a plane, intercity bus or train travelling in any direction between two locations, who was later diagnosed with a coronavirus infection, other people in the same compartment (train) are then considered as having been in close contact with a person with a coronavirus infection, and placed in a state hospital or state isolator for 14 days. Mobile phones, audio and video equipment, bank cards and other information items belonging to the quarantined persons were temporarily confiscated. This resulted in a two-week loss of communication between parents coming back from abroad, who were placed into the state quarantine isolator, and their children. If in the case of detection of coronavirus infection among quarantined persons of the same quarantine complex, the isolation continued for two more weeks, causing a loss of communication for one month. The measure related to placement in a state isolator is now not applied, due to the closure of state isolators.
- Citizens of Uzbekistan who entered the country in January-March 2020 from the countries considered 'Red' zones for coronavirus infection according to the Republican Specialized Commission (including Turkey, Russia, UAE, South Korea, China and Kazakhstan¹⁵) had to enter home quarantine under the control of National Guard personnel with limited access to outdoor activities. This measure is not applied at present.

Children should not be separated from their parents unless this is assessed to be in their best interest. If parents have been separated, children have the right to stay in contact with both parents.¹⁶ The government should help families meet children's psychological needs, particularly in connecting them with their migrant parents. Thus, this situation was later improved based on the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 254, stating that each room of the quarantine complex, where quarantined persons are placed, must be equipped with a continuous telephone for calling for medical care, contacting the administration of the quarantine complex, and for external communication.

3. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 3 April 2020, No. UP-5978 'On additional measures to support the population, sectors of the economy, and business entities during the coronavirus pandemic'. The next measure has been assessed for the period of March-September 2020:

- The payment of benefits to families with children under 2 years old and childcare allowances for families with children under 14, for whom the payment period would end in March- June 2020, continued for a period of 6 months without interruption and requesting submission of applications for the continuation of payment for an extended period. According to the legislation, temporary caregivers and guardians should annually submit an application for the continuation of receiving childcare allowance from the government. However, during the COVID-19 restriction measures, requests to receive continuing material assistance were not received. This measure has become invalid due to the end of quarantine restrictive measures in Uzbekistan.

¹⁵ <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2020/06/23/regular-flights/>

¹⁶ Convention on the Rights of the Child; Article 9 [CrossRef]

This report highlights the impact of COVID-19 regulations adopted by the GoU, at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, on the rights of LBC to the highest attainable standard of basic health and welfare (Articles 6, 18, 23, 24, 26, 27 and 33 of the UNCRC), and to grow up in a family environment and to be provided with alternative care if deprived of a family environment (Articles 5, 9, 10, 11, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 27 and 39 of the UNCRC) from the perspectives of children, parents/guardians, and service providers.

The reported findings of the study ‘Effects of migration on children of Uzbekistan’ show that in Uzbekistan, LBC may face developmental, psychosocial and emotional challenges, given that the absence of parents creates disruptions and displacement in caregiving arrangements. The study revealed that some LBC have faced problems in accessing medical care and health services in different parts of the country. As for the vaccination of children, around 14 per cent of one-year-old babies from migrant households were not vaccinated within the last 12 months. Survey data also revealed some negative effects on children’s psychological well-being, such as feelings of sadness and solitude. Around half of all children reported worsened mood immediately after their parent(s) migrated, and about 10 per cent reported experiencing physical punishment by caregivers.¹⁷

LBC were more at risk of being impacted by COVID-19 measures. The current CRIA focused on LBC living with relatives, not on those who live in residential care, due to limited resources and time available, and access restrictions to residential care facilities. The objectives of this child rights impact assessment are to assess the impact of COVID-19 pandemic-related measures as endorsed by the GoU at the beginning of the pandemic, on the rights of LBC and particularly on their right to the highest attainable standard of basic health and welfare, to grow up in a family environment, and to be provided with alternative care. According to the terms, the study objectives were divided into the following:

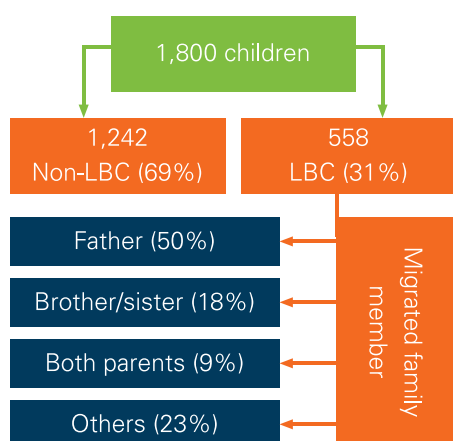
Short-term objectives:

- Review of the impact of adopted COVID-19 related measures on children’s rights to contribute to the identification of more appropriate measures or mitigating measures that give special attention to the rights of LBC.
- Adaptation of CRIA research tools to local conditions for further use by decision makers, parliamentarians, and civil society and human rights defenders.

Medium-term objectives:

- Make government, public bodies and institutions more accountable to children and young people, with special attention given to some of the most vulnerable children, including LBC.
- Close data gaps or improve cooperation between stakeholders and data sharing.

III. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH



The study was based on a mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative data collection. This approach included an online survey of 1,800 children aged 14-18 years old, a desk review including regulations related to COVID-19 restrictions issued by government officials in Uzbekistan from March to December 2020, focus group discussions (FGDs) held separately with boys and girls aged 15-17 years old affected by parental migration (i.e. left behind by one or both parents), an FGD with caregivers, and an FGD with service providers. The study included the conducting of in-depth interviews with 10 stakeholders, including three at a national level, four at a regional level, and three at district levels.

¹⁷ UNICEF, ‘Study report on effects of migration on children of Uzbekistan’, available: <https://www.unicef.org/uzbekistan/en/reports/study-report-effects-migration-children-uzbekistan>

An online survey using U-Report, a social messaging tool for data collection developed by UNICEF, was conducted between July and August 2021 to collect data related to violence against children and the mental health of children affected by parental labour migration. The target group of the online survey was children between 14 and 18 years old who live in Uzbekistan. A total of 1,800 children participated in the online survey, of which 31 per cent of respondents were LBC. Some 69 per cent of the respondents were non-LBC children, selected for the purpose of the comparison of findings. The questionnaire for the online survey was reviewed by U-Report's board members and then revised according to recommendations of the ethic's focal point for U-report, and ERB. The subsequent analysis compared the answers provided by LBC and other children participating in the survey.

Qualitative data collection was implemented by the UNICEF national consultant with support from the national office of the Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights (Ombudsperson). The Bukhara region was selected for qualitative data collection based on available data on external migration from the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of Uzbekistan, and as it is one of the four regions (Fergana, Bukhara, Surkhandarya and Khorezm) where data had been collected within the study on 'Effects of migration on children of Uzbekistan'. Social workers from the Bukhara region, who had participated in the study, contacted caregivers to get their and their children's consent to participate in FGDs. All FGDs have been conducted at local schools, whereas in-depth interviews with key informants took place at the premises of relevant local authorities.

Four FGDs with a total of 34 respondents took place between 5-9 July 2021, in two districts (Gijduvan and Olot) of the Bukhara region:

- FGD with 9 girls aged 15-17 years old
- FGD with 8 boys aged 15-17 years old
- FGD with 9 caregivers
- FGD with 8 service providers

Ten in-depth key informant interviews (KII) were conducted between 30 June 2021 and 7 August 2021, with representatives from local authorities at national (3), regional (4) and district (3) levels:

- KII: The Ministry of Health (national)
- KII: The Ministry of Internal Affairs (national)
- KII: The Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support (national)
- KII: The 'Intilish' Bukhara Regional Branch of the Republican information-educational centre (NGO regional)
- KII: The Bukhara Regional Health Office
- KII: The Bukhara Regional Department for Mahalla and Family Support
- KII: The Bukhara Regional Office for Internal Affairs
- KII: The Kogon District Department for Mahalla and Family Support
- KII: The Olot District Prosecutor
- KII: The Gijduvon District Health Unit

The UNICEF national consultant developed a draft inception report, including research methodology, a questionnaire for the online survey (Annex 3), guides for desk review (Annex 4), and sampling and data collection tools (Annexes 5-14), in close collaboration with the UNICEF Child Protection Specialist/Officer and an international consultant based in the ENOC for undertaking CRIA. The international consultant provided feedback for the draft inception report, which was addressed prior to submission for approval by UNICEF's Ethics Review Board. The CRIA inception report was approved by ERB (Annex 15).

DESK REVIEW

The desk review phase of the CRIA was conducted as the first stage of gathering evidence. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected from relevant authorities upon the official request of the Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights (Ombudsperson) (Official letter, Annex 2). This data collection was conducted by the UNICEF national consultant and researcher from the office of the Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights (Ombudsperson), with coordination by the UNICEF Child Protection Specialist/Officer.

METHODOLOGY LIMITATIONS



One major limitation of the study was the selection of one out of fourteen regions in Uzbekistan for qualitative data collection, due to time and logistics constraints, which may limit the study's external validity.

After consultation with the project partners and the government, a range of respondents, the sample size and the research scope were limited to one out of four regions included in the EU-funded 'Protecting children affected by migration' project mainly because of limited funding and timeframes, and restrictions related to the pandemic.

Another limitation is that the age groups of children in the FGD has been limited to 15-17 years. The major consideration for this selection is that children of this age range can better articulate their ideas and provide more meaningful responses to complex questions pertaining to the impact of pandemic-related mitigation measures on their rights, and the social consequences for them. This is also due to the cultural sensitivities that lead to children not being able to speak up about their experiences. Children aged 14-18 participated in the online survey (U-Report), while those aged 15-17 participated in FGDs. Caregivers were asked questions about their LBC aged 0-17 during their FGD.

Only LBC from rural regions were selected, and therefore the data could not be compared with LBC living in urban areas.

IV. ANALYSIS



In general, the assessment of the rights of LBC affected by the adoption of regulations to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the economic crisis on economic growth in Uzbekistan, assessed by this Child Rights Impact Assessment, was divided into two clusters¹⁸:

1. Rights to the highest attainable standard of basic health and welfare:

- Article 6 – Children have the right to life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.
- Article 18 – Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.
- Article 23 – Children who have a disability should receive special care and support so that they can live a full and independent life.
- Article 24 – Children have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment, so that they can stay healthy.
- Article 26 – The government should take all the necessary measures for the realisation of the child's right to benefit from social security, including social insurance.
- Article 27 – Children have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.
- Article 33 – The government should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs.

¹⁸ The Ministry of Social Development. New Zealand. (2018). Improving the well-being of children and young people in New Zealand: Guidance for carrying out a Child Impact Assessment. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

2. Rights to grow up in a family environment and to be provided with alternative care if deprived of a family environment:

- Article 5 – Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly.
- Article 9 – Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is in their best interests – for example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting their child. If parents have separated, children have the right to stay in contact with both parents.
- Article 10 – Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact or get back together as a family.
- Article 11 – Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.
- Article 18 – Both parents share the responsibility for bringing up their children and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.
- Article 19 – Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.
- Article 20 – If a child cannot be looked after by their own family, they must be looked after properly by people who respect their religion, culture and language.
- Article 21 – Children can be adopted by people in a country that is not their own, but this should only happen as a last resort.
- Article 25 – Governments should ensure that children who have been placed by the competent authorities for the purpose of care, protection or treatment of their physical or mental health, have treatment provided to them and all other circumstances relevant to their placement regularly reviewed.
- Article 27 – Children have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.
- Article 39 – Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.

RIGHT TO THE HIGHEST ATTAINABLE STANDARD OF BASIC HEALTH AND WELFARE

Along with other Central Asian countries, Uzbekistan has experienced a nation-wide interruption in service delivery. A state of emergency was declared on 16 March 2020, with COVID-19 related restriction measures, particularly stay-at-home measures, being quickly applied and extended until 15 June 2020. A second lockdown took place from 10 July to 15 August 2020, further affecting health service delivery. These measures had an impact on health service provision, including immunization services.¹⁹

After WHO declared the outbreak of a global pandemic on 11 March 2020, a national Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP) was developed for Uzbekistan, in collaboration with WHO and other partners, to provide guidance on managing the national response to COVID-19.²⁰

With the adoption of lockdown measures, the pandemic continued spreading slowly with a relatively low incidence rate. Additional funds were allocated to Uzbekistan's health sector, both from the government's state budget and from international financial institutions including ADB and AIIB, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Investment Bank, and others.²¹

Uzbekistan has designated 14 regional hospitals for infectious diseases and two hospitals at the republican (national) level, specifically the Scientific Research Institute of Virology and the Scientific Research Institute of Epidemiology, Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, as COVID-19 treatment centers for specifically providing intensive care to COVID-19 patients.²²

¹⁹ WHO (2020). COVID-19: National Strategic Preparedness & Response Plan for Health. 2020 report. Uzbekistan. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

²⁰ WHO (2020). COVID-19: National Strategic Preparedness & Response Plan for Health. 2020 report. Uzbekistan. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

²¹ ADB. 2020. [Covid-19 Emergency Response Project: Summary Assessment of Damage and needs](#)

²² ADB. 2020. [Covid-19 Emergency Response Project: Summary Assessment of Damage and needs](#)

In cities and regions such as Tashkent, Bukhara and Samarkand, some health service provision point operations were suspended. Some LBC participating in FGD pointed out that they did not become sick with coronavirus, but rather they noted that they often caught colds in 2020, which might have been light/asymptomatic courses of COVID-19, and therefore they did not visit medical facilities but were rather treated at home. LBC had no problems with visiting health facilities, but most of them received out-patient treatment at home.

In 2020, the coronavirus didn't occur among children, although it might have passed with slight or without symptoms... we didn't check them with a PCR test. (KII)

... parents usually bring their sick child to a medical facility very late, after medical check-up, and they refuse to get treatment, pointing to the absence of money... after three days, the child's condition worsens and again they visit the medical facility... in that case the child's right to treatment is violated... (FGD)

In terms of vaccine stocks, the major issue has been related to transportation, particularly caused by the delay of vaccine arrivals and the discontinuation of international flights. However, as of May 2020, Uzbekistan received vaccines. During the stay-at-home period, DTP1 and DTP3 vaccine implementation decreased, but as he measures were lifted in mid-summer, the administration of these vaccines started to increase.²³

According to statistical data of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the prevalence of most diseases among children (0-14 years old) and teenagers (15-17 years old) decreased in 2020 compared to 2019. In particular, there was a prevalence of certain infectious and parasitic diseases (respectively, 5.0 per cent and 20.0 per cent); diseases of the respiratory system (respectively, 11.3 per cent and 9.0 per cent); diseases of the digestive system (respectively, 19.0 per cent and 15.0 per cent); and mental, behavioural and neurodevelopmental disorders (respectively, 36.0 per cent and 64.0 per cent).

This downward trend in diseases commonly found among children might be related to the introduction of restrictions on movement and lesser detection, due to fewer visits to relevant medical facilities. However, this would require further study.

...on the contrary, the number of patients has decreased... 5-10 patients came (during stay-at-home measures). Most (patients) treated their illness in isolation at home. (KII)

It is interesting to observe that, based on official statistics, the prevalence of conditions aggravated by pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium among teenagers decreased sharply by 78 per cent from 2019 to 2020, which might be related both to restriction measures and the decreased cases of early marriage (aged 16-17), down 97 per cent from 2019 to 2020, with the establishment of the age of consent to marry for men and women as 18 years in the Family Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2020.²⁴

According to key informants at the regional level, the population's hygiene literacy, including that of children, has increased during the pandemic. It was stated that intestinal infections among children significantly decreased in 2020 compared to 2019, which might be considered a positive side-effect of pandemic-related restriction measures.

In the past, children used to swim in open water basins... they were not used to washing their hands with soap...

As far as mental health concerns, according to the results of the online survey, the five most frequent statements regarding children's mood over the past year included frequent mood swings (36 per cent), perfect and good mood (36 per cent), stable mood (14 per cent), and sadness (6 per cent).

Cultural beliefs and expectations about gender differences have been reflected in children's emotion expressions, in which girls may show cheeriness or sadness, whereas boys are expected to be strong and calm, and to show anger if necessary. These trends were reflected in the online survey, in which girls reported experiencing more frequent mood swings, sadness and irritation during the pandemic compared to boys (respectively, 49 per cent and 37 per cent). On the other hand, boys more often had a perfect, good and stable mood, compared to girls (respectively, 57 per cent and 43 per cent).

²³ WHO (2020). COVID-19: National Strategic Preparedness & Response Plan for Health. 2020 report. Uzbekistan. [CrossRef]

²⁴ Family Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (1998). <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=973>

In one case, as highlighted by a key informant at a district level, a 13-year-old girl reported feelings of loneliness during the pandemic. Her parents are divorced. Her mother left for Russia, and her father left her and her two brothers with an aunt, to stay with another family in Uzbekistan.

Before the pandemic she didn't want to see her father... it appeared during the pandemic... we brought different books so that she wouldn't get bored... we found her uncle, she hugs him and cries continuously... she still has such (loneliness) feelings...

LBC experienced more frequent mood swings than non-LBC (37 per cent vs 35 per cent). It is interesting to note that negative moods, such as sadness, irritation and bad moods experienced in combination, have been mostly observed among non-LBC compared to LBC (14 per cent vs 9 per cent). These results can be supported with information given by LBC in FGD, who have stated that they have heard of some cases of suicide among children living inside their neighbourhoods during the pandemic. This situation might be related to relatively high cases of prohibitions to go outside among children living with their families compared to LBC (U-report poll), and the presence of relatively high freedom in LBC (FGD with LBC), which requires conducting further studies.

Worldwide both governmental stay-at-home restriction measures and individuals' personal social distancing behaviour have been associated with symptoms of a range of mental health conditions. Such restriction measures have caused more symptoms of depression, generalized anxiety disorder, acute stress, and insomnia.²⁵ According to LBC in FGD, they felt lonelier during the pandemic. Shifting learning to an online mode has been pointed as one of the reasons for the sadness experienced by LBC.

It wasn't much noticeable when we went to school. We used to be busy with education. When we stayed at home, we were sad and cried a lot...

Boys in FGD mostly had their own mobile phones, while girls often used their caregiver's phone. In FGD, LBC flagged that they wanted to but could not talk to their friends or psychologists from school. They also communicated less with their migrated parents (once a week or once every other week). The absence of girls' own mobile phones, leading to reduced communication with peers and migrated parents, might explain why they experienced more mental health problems during the pandemic.

LBC used to share their feelings with their grandmothers, sisters or brothers, while some children do not share their feelings with anyone and just cry. Some LBC in FGD or in the online survey also reported that they could not invite their friends to their caregiver's house, and would like to have their own flat.

We could not tell our feelings to our grandfather, he is old...

We are embarrassed to call a friend (to the caregiver's home), as a guest or for having a birthday, it is uncomfortable for us...

In most cases I cry and feel better. I don't tell anyone...

LBC stated that they felt a relief from participating in an FGD, with a chance to share their feelings with the group and the UNICEF team.

...they (parents) are far from here, we can't tell everything to them. Only here with you we are talking and telling words from the heart, and we feel relieved.

At present a psychiatrist's position is available only in the central district's multidisciplinary policlinics. WHO has made a recommendation to the GoU for including a psychologist into the medical teams established at all family policlinics, based on the Decree of the President of Uzbekistan dated 12 November 2020, No. UP-6110 'On measures to implement principally new mechanisms in the activities of primary healthcare institutions and further improving the efficiency of reforms in the healthcare system'. However, these positions have not yet been established.

A key informant has stated that based on the Order of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 2 April 2021, No. PP-5050 'On additional organizational measures to further improve the activities of the internal affairs bodies in the field of ensuring public security and combating crime', 2,000 inspector-psychologists will be deployed at schools, namely 1,100 in 2021 and an additional 900 in 2022, who have been working at schools from September 2021, and visiting target households.

²⁵ Marroquin, B. et al. Mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic: Effects of stay-at-home policies, social distancing behaviour, and social resources. *Psychiatry Res.* 2020; 203:113419. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7439968/>

Through the pandemic there has been a 30 per cent overall reduction in the coverage of essential nutrition services, including school feeding, micronutrient supplementation, and nutrition promotion programmes in low- and middle-income countries.²⁶ Before the pandemic, half of respondents among girls in FGD stated that they used to go to school without having breakfast. Pandemic related measures differently influenced the nutrition of LBC. For example, boys in FGD indicated that they had more access to fruits and vegetables from their own plot of land. On the other hand, during the period of stay-at-home measures, some LBC indicated in FGDs that they had less access to food products, due to financial limitations and increased prices of some food products.

... during the pandemic we borrowed 6-8 million soum for products... now we still owe 2 million soums. My grandfather went out to the local authorities and reported that it was happening (experiencing difficulties), to help my grandchildren, but no one helped us...

Due to the spread of COVID-19, millions of children have faced school closures around the world as a means of preventing infection.²⁷ During similar crisis/situations a key informant from the health sector has recommended implementing provision of a one-time free meal per day for all children at schools to maintain children's physical development. According to service providers' statements at their FGD, such kind of measures have been implemented at secondary specialised education (colleges and lyceums) only for orphans who are under the care of the state based Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 21 November 2020, No. 739 'On measures for further strengthening of social protection of orphan children and children deprived of parental or other legal care'.

Most children in the U-Report poll assessed their present state of health as being good (38 per cent), excellent (32 per cent) and moderate (24 per cent). Only 6 per cent of respondents assessed their current health status as being bad or very bad. Boys mostly assessed their current health status as being excellent, while girls assessed it as being good and moderate. Bad and very bad health status assessment were given by more girls than boys.

Some data of meta-analysis, through global research, indicated that incidence of serious mental health status of LBC has been nearly 2.7 times higher than that of non-LBC.²⁸ This might explain why LBC have more frequently assessed their current physical health status as being bad or very bad, compared to non-LBC (9.1 per cent vs 5.3 per cent). The online survey showed insignificant difference in terms of health status assessment between LBC and non-LBC.

The GoU has conducted several health activities to keep children healthy, namely the distribution of free antihelminths to children aged 2-12 years in April 2020, through the patronage services of family polyclinics. However, in FGD caregivers pointed out that they did not receive such services. According to service providers attending the FGD, there is a practice in place when a child from a needy family requires surgery, the khokimyat (local authority) facilitates the identification of funds/sponsorship aid. Last year a girl whose parent is a labour migrant received through the khokimyat the assistance required to receive heart surgery in the capital.

Pandemic-related restriction measures have affected children's rights to access the highest attainable standards of basic health and welfare (Articles 6, 18, 23, 24, 26, 27 and 33 UNCRC) in two ways.

On the one hand, the measures have positively affected children's health status. During the pandemic, the sanitary and hygienic literacy of the population, including that of children, has increased. The prevalence of most diseases decreased among children and teenagers in 2020, compared to 2019.

On the other hand, lockdown measures might have negatively affected children's physical health, referring to an increased likelihood of hypodynamia and obesity. With stay-at-home measures, some LBC had less access to food products due to financial limitations which caused them to be more prone to illness. LBC participating in FGD reported that they often caught colds during the pandemic, and according to the U-Report poll, LBC more frequently assessed their current health status as being bad and very bad, compared to non-LBC. Girls generally had a worse health status than boys. The pandemic has affected children's mental health, with every second girl, both LBC and non-LBC, experiencing frequent mood swings, sadness and irritation. LBC experienced frequent mood swings relatively often and felt lonelier during the pandemic.

²⁶ UNICEF & WFP. 2021. [Nutrition crisis looms as more than 39 billion in-school meals missed since start of pandemic.](#)

²⁷ UNICEF & WFP. 2021. [Nutrition crisis looms as more than 39 billion in-school meals missed since start of pandemic.](#)

²⁸ Wu, W. et al. Meta-analysis of the mental health status of left-behind children in China. *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*. 2019, 55:3; 260-270. [CrossRef](#)

RIGHTS TO GROW UP IN A FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND TO BE PROVIDED WITH ALTERNATIVE CARE IF DEPRIVED OF A FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

Right to grow up in a family environment

Violence against children occurs in every country of the world, in a variety of forms and settings, and is often deeply rooted in cultural, economic and social practices. A large proportion of children in every society suffers significant violence within their homes.²⁹

Violence against women and children has been reported more in Uzbekistan over recent years. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan, in 2020 the country's internal affairs bodies issued 14,774 protection orders to ensure the safety of women and girls who have suffered from harassment and violence.³⁰

According to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 4 January 2020, No. 3 'On measures to improve the system of protection of women from harassment and abuse', there are four types of violence (sexual, physical, psychological and economic) about which a protection order can be issued to women and girls who have suffered harassment and violence, by a preventive (senior) inspector of the base point of internal affairs bodies for 30 days.³¹ It was pointed out in the FGD with service providers, that one protection order was granted to a girl due to psychological violence experienced during the pandemic. Based on legislation an accused person can be sentenced to 15 days in prison or pay a fine from 1 to 3 times the minimum wage (747,300 Uzbek Soum or US\$71; for the state of 01.02.2021). There is little mentioned in legislation about protection of boys who have suffered from violence.

Domestic violence is one of the most common forms of violence. According to an analysis of appeals received by the '1146' hotline of the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support, in the first quarter of 2020, 48 per cent of complaints related to violence against women committed by spouses.³²

COVID-19 related restriction measures have somehow influenced incidences of domestic violence among LBC, as mentioned in FGD. The CRIA found that in the first few months after implementing pandemic-related restriction measures, 3 out of 17 children at FGD had experienced violence, including one girl who had experienced physical violence, and two children (one boy and one girl) who have experienced psychological violence.

We have not received alimony for three months... we called (to the compulsory execution personnel), but executors didn't pick up the phone... my father works in the private sector and he gives alimony for one child to three children.

I was asleep when the tap water came, my uncle asked me to bring water, and he hit me on the head with an iron bucket. My grandmother saved me...

The online survey administered through U-Report revealed that 28.4 per cent of children (aged 14-18) have experienced violence at home. Most of this was psychological violence (27 per cent) expressed in the use of various disciplinary methods by parents/caregivers. The five most commonly-used methods to discipline children during lockdown included: 1) calm explanations; 2) prohibitions on going outside (due to lockdown restrictions); 3) rewards for good behaviour; 4) asking not to behave badly; and 5) taking away phones and shouting loudly. These accounted for 79 per cent of disciplinary methods.

More than half (55 per cent) of respondents stated that they have been treated like this since the start of the pandemic, without any significant difference between LBC and non-LBC, whereas one third of children stated that they have always been treated like this, with significant differences between LBC and non-LBC (40 per cent vs 29 per cent).

Analysis of disciplinary methods by gender have revealed that boys are more likely to be rewarded for good behaviour and asked not to behave badly than girls (respectively, 12 per cent vs 9 per cent; 9 per cent vs 8 per cent). Whereas, girls were more likely to receive calm explanations than boys (39 per cent vs 33 per cent). On the other hand, boys were more likely to be punished by having their phones taken away compared to girls (5 per cent vs 4 per cent). At the same time, girls more often than boys were shouted at loudly and deprived of privileges by their parents/caregivers (respectively, 4 per cent vs 3 per cent; 2 per cent vs 1 per cent).

²⁹ UN. 2006. [World Report on Violence Against Children](#)

³⁰ https://uza.uz/uz/posts/iiv-2020-yilda-tazyiq-va-zoravonlikka-uchragan-14-ming-774-xotin-qizga-himoya-orderi-berildi_236643

³¹ Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2019. [On Protection of Women from Harassment and Abuse](#)

³² <https://www.gazeta.uz/uz/2019/08/23/women-protection/>

The online survey determined that caregivers more often use positive methods to discipline LBC than non-LBC. Such methods include calm explanations and rewards for good behaviour (respectively, 45 per cent and 12 per cent). During the pandemic, LBC experienced less negative disciplinary methods than non-LBC, not being punished through prohibitions on going outside or by having their phones taken away. However, one out of five LBC reported experiencing negative disciplining methods, such as prohibitions on going outside, loud shouting, phones being taken away, insults/humiliation, or removal of privileges such as electronics, toys or others. Being left with an elderly caregiver by migrated parents was indicated during FGD as a reason why girls have more freedom.

According to service providers attending FGD, some LBC have experienced psychological violence from their migrated father because of the jealousy for his wife who stayed at home. One example that illustrates such an incident is provided below:

His father is abroad, there are quarrels over jealousy of his wife, calls his son telling him that he is not from him, asking him to leave the house, demanding to kill himself or kill his mother...

LBC described in FGD how they had mostly experienced violence from their grandfather, uncle, aunt and/or brother.

There was a time when my grandfather came drunk and hit me in the face, causing bleeding...

The results of the U-Report support those from the FGD, with significantly more LBC than non-LBC selecting brother/sister or uncle/aunt as a response to the question "Who most often punished children?"

All legislative measures of implementation should follow a procedure that ensures children's best interests are a primary consideration. The reasons for experiencing violence during the pandemic, as highlighted by children in FGD, were: 1) staying at home with all family members; 2) increased food product prices; 3) receiving less remittances from migrated parents and consequently having less financial resources; 4) increased alcohol consumption by caregivers; and 5) no home visits of families with LBC by guardianship and trusteeship bodies.

Due to increase of prices for food products, we experienced difficulties...

During the pandemic there was (in the place of migrated parent) no work either, the conditions remained more severe. Nobody cared about us.

No one went to work, i.e. had no money, and more problems appeared. It caused conflicts...

Two children at FGD indicated that during the pandemic they received less or no remittances from their migrated parents (US\$50 per month) due to the introduction of COVID-19 restrictive measures at the destination of their parent's work, and unemployment.

It is interesting to observe that children do not tell anybody about their experiences of violence, not even their migrated parent(s), just because they do not wish to bother them. During the pandemic, LBC interviewed in focus groups said they had spoken less with their migrated parents. This might be related to the fact that LBC didn't want to disturb their migrated parents with the problems they experience.

We can't say much to our parents because they are in Russia, abroad. If we say, they will worry. That's why we don't tell them about the problems here because we don't want them to worry...

During the pandemic, a girl told her migrated mother about her experience of physical violence. As her mother cried a lot when hearing this, the girl decided not to share such experiences anymore. This kind of situation was mentioned by a key informant from the regional level as well.

There were cases of violence... when it happened the first time they (children) told their migrated parents about it. However, when it happened the second time, they hid it.

Based on the results of the online survey, most children (aged 14-17) in difficult situations would like to get help from both their parents, and particularly from their mother (respectively, 48 per cent; 22 per cent), followed by their father (6 per cent), brother/sister (5 per cent), and grandfather/grandmother (4 per cent). LBC are less likely to seek help from classmates, doctors, neighbours and the police. Some children seek support from their teachers (3 per cent of LBC; 1 per cent of non-LBC).

In general, girls, both-LBC and non-LBC, more prefer to get help from their mother than boys (25.7 per cent vs 17 per cent). Meanwhile boys often prefer to ask their father and grandfather/grandmother to ask for more help, compared to girls (respectively, 8.3 per cent vs 4.2 per cent; 5 per cent vs 2.8 per cent).

Children shall have the right to protection and care, as is necessary for their well-being. They may express their views freely. Such views shall be taken into consideration on matters which concern them, in accordance with their age and maturity. For preventing violence among children during the pandemic, LBC suggested a few approaches at the FGD, including: 1) ensuring access to female psychologists at schools; 2) frequent visits by relevant state bodies to families with LBC, to conduct more interviews with psychologists at least once a week, and 3) providing material assistance, such as food products. Some children and caregivers in FGD requested that children's parents return home.

Return our parents here, provide them with a house and a job (employment)...

In the FGD with LBC, it was indicated by a girl that her caregiver's attitude towards her changed after her engagement, and despite her willingness to continue her education, she agreed to get married to avoid cases of violence from her caregivers.

In general, the COVID-19 related restriction measures, particularly stay-at-home measures, have influenced the occurrence of incidences of domestic violence among LBC (18 per cent of LBC in FGD), mostly in the form of physical and psychological violence. Qualitative and quantitative data showed that on average one in four children in the study have experienced domestic violence in their lifetime, and in more than half of the cases the domestic violence began after the pandemic's outbreak. Based on the results of the online survey, during the pandemic, every 5th child among LBC experienced violence through negative disciplinary methods used by their caregivers. Despite this, in 65 per cent of cases, caregivers tried to use positive methods to discipline LBC. In the long run, LBC experienced less negative disciplinary methods by their caregivers than non-LBC. Moreover, they had more freedom because they stayed with an elderly caregiver. During the lockdown, the cases of violence among LBC were less reported mostly because children tried to disturb their migrated parents less.

Based on qualitative data it can be concluded that receiving less remittances from migrated parents, caregivers losing their jobs, and difficulties faced in buying food products during the pandemic, may all possibly have led to excessive alcohol consumption among caregivers which subsequently caused incidences of domestic violence among LBC.

Rights to be provided with alternative care if deprived of a family environment.

According to a social survey, conducted by the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations in December 2019, 13.5 million people were employed in Uzbekistan's labour market, including 2.5 million labour migrants.³³ Since the start of the pandemic, over 63,000 citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan have returned to their homeland.³⁴

With the introduction of lockdown measures to counter the COVID-19 pandemic in Uzbekistan, the main focus was given to measures of providing social support to the population. First of all, Uzbekistan took action to prevent a decrease in the population's income, to sustain employment and prevent unemployment. The Anti-Crisis Fund was the first economy-wide step taken to mitigate the pandemic's negative impact on the country's economy. As of 17 June 2020, the Fund's income amounted to 7.44 trillion soum. Out of all the funds, 9 per cent went to engaging unemployed citizens in the social area for temporary work, social benefits, supporting women in low-income families, and developing personal subsistence plots for the unemployed, low-income families, and for workers of enterprises providing transport services.³⁵

Nevertheless the pandemic has resulted in widespread job losses. Around 475,000 or 85 per cent of small business have been temporarily closed.³⁶ On 1 May 2020, 1.5 million people were in need of social protection, and 341,300 people could not work due to the pandemic.³⁷ Household income, employment, and food security are all expected to decline further unless the pandemic is contained, and if the lockdown measures are further eased.³⁸

³³ The Ministry of employment and labor relations of Uzbekistan. 2019. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

³⁴ ADB. 2020. [Covid-19 Emergency Response Project: Summary Assessment of Damage and needs](#)

³⁵ Tulyakov, E. The Foreign Policy Centre. (2020). COVID-19: Actions taken in Uzbekistan. <https://fpc.org.uk/covid-19-actions-taken-in-uzbekistan/>

³⁶ ADB. 2020. [Covid-19 Emergency Response Project: Summary Assessment of Damage and needs](#)

³⁷ <https://uza.uz/uz/posts/yerdamga-mu-tozh-a-oli-atlamiga-davlat-byudzhetidani-be-araz-22-05-2020>

³⁸ ADB. 2020. [Covid-19 Emergency Response Project: Summary Assessment of Damage and needs](#)

By the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Sahovat and Kumak Foundation (Kindness and Support) was established in April 2020 to provide financial support to those in need during the lockdown period. These persons include temporarily-unemployed citizens who have lost their income, to supply them with everyday goods, medicines and other products. This foundation has been operating under the Mahalla Charitable Public Foundation of Uzbekistan and its territorial units.

When children were asked about social support provided during the pandemic, three children at the FGD stated that they had received material assistance from the mahalla in the form of food products. One child had received such assistance two times, while two children had received it one time. Two children being from what was considered a low-income family received 72,000 soums for the last six months.

The legislation regulating the order of attaining trusteeship and guardianship needs to be updated. According to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 26 May 2008, No. 110 'On the approval of the regulations on the procedures of submitting trusteeship and guardianship information about children without parental care', trusteeship and guardianship bodies can facilitate the receipt of sponsorship aids, specifically food products and household appliances, for families with children left without parental care. However, due to a lack of cooperation of mahalla offices and health facilities with trusteeship and guardianship bodies, most families were left without social assistance during the pandemic.

I (caregiver) visited the mahalla five times to get help, but they did not help at all... the chairman of the mahalla changed five times...

... the mahalla had to notify trusteeship and guardianship bodies, they have high staff turnover... we (trusteeship and guardianship bodies) should carry out informing sessions for them (mahalla personnel), but we do not have time...(KII)

According to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 3 April 2020, No. 5978 'On additional measures to support the population, sectors of the economy, and business entities during the coronavirus pandemic', the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support and its territorial subdivisions shall closely cooperate with citizens' self-government bodies to ensure the targeted assignment of social benefits and material assistance, as well as to take prompt measures to attract the necessary assistance to families in need of social support.

Moreover, Article 47/1 of the 'Code of administrative responsibility of the Republic of Uzbekistan' states that failure to report information on children deprived of parental care to the guardianship and trusteeship authority by the head of the institution (school) or the official of the citizens' self-governing body (chairperson of the mahalla), will result in a fine of three to seven times the basic amount.

Directors of schools are unaware about this, so they should be gathered, informed and warned about their responsibilities...

Trusteeship and guardianship is appointed according to the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 2 January 2014 No. ZRU-364 'About guardianship and trusteeship'. The key informant at the district level stated that in 90 per cent of cases, migrated parents left their children with their grandfathers and grandmothers. More than 32 documents are required to register trusteeship and guardianship, and thus the majority of elderly caregivers refuse to register accordingly.

Article No. 40 of the Law 'About guardianship and trusteeship' states that "...the expenses of the guardian or trustee for the maintenance of the person under his/her guardianship or trusteeship shall be reimbursed from the funds of the person under his/her guardianship, and if these funds are insufficient, the guardianship and trusteeship bodies shall apply to the relevant authorities in order to assign an allowance for his/her maintenance...." However, the guardianship and trusteeship authorities do not fulfil their functions.

...mother died, father did not pay alimony... grandfather and grandmother receive a 300,000 soum pension... they are sick and have communal payments. The law does not work regarding a child, and no bylaws are available...

According to the Order of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 8 August 2017, No. PP-3182 'On primary measures to ensure rapid socio-economic development of regions' the territory of Uzbekistan has been divided into sectors and respective state bodies, such as territorial units of the Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the State Tax Services. They have been assigned to solve various problems encountered by people. The provision of social support to families considered to be in poverty was realized based on information presented by mahallas, until the 15th of each month, to relative sectors.

During the pandemic, based on the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 28 April 2021, No. 250 'On additional measures for social support and financial assistance for families, women and youth in need', a new system was established which includes the 'Iron book'³⁹, 'Women's book'⁴⁰ and 'Youth's book'.⁴¹ Temporary regulations for the inclusion of these books have been developed, to mitigate the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on living standards, social protection and financial support for low-income families. Among caregivers who participated in FGD, two respondents had been included in the 'Iron book' and received regular, one-time financial aid payments from the 'Sakhovat va Kumak' foundation between the 5th and 27th of each month, along with social assistance from the authorities.

There is a Commission under the khokimyat (local authority), which consists of seven specialists from different state bodies who decide on the appointment of trusteeship and guardianship.

The commission under the Khokimyat consists of seven people... they must meet within seven days and make a decision on one guardianship case... it is difficult to gather seven heads of different organizations at the same time...

One service provider from the trusteeship and guardianship body replied to a citizens' request regarding their refusal to register trusteeship and guardianship, stating that "it is written that it is not obligatory." However, according to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 22 September 2014, No. 269 'On approval of normative legal documents on the implementation of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'About guardianship and trusteeship'', it is clearly stated that trusteeship or guardianship is appointed if deemed necessary for the benefit of the child. A guardian or trustee may be appointed after the guardianship and trusteeship authority has assessed the minor's legitimate interests, and determined whether there is a direct threat to their life and health.

...we explain that if there is a troubled family, if there is an illness or disability in the child, if there is a dangerous situation, the mahalla and school must register guardianship or trusteeship...

Some LBC in FGD, from a better-off family, could not submit documents to a college because of the absence of a trusteeship and guardianship document.

...I submitted my documents (to a college)... last year... it was a period of lockdown...when I went there, they asked for the trusteeship document... My mother could not send it from there (Russia)... deadline would pass before she sends (power of attorney)... I was so depressed... I went out crying because they refused to accept my documents...

A key informant proposed to stratify the appointment of guardianship and trusteeship, giving more attorney to guardianship and trusteeship bodies and decreasing bureaucracy. Guardianship and trusteeship personnel pointed out during the KII that they are overloaded with work, and could not manage their work tasks.

We need one personnel to promote trusteeship and guardianship... At present, the deputy director of the school is helping me...

There are families with good material conditions, they do not need the decision of the khokim (mayor) to go to school. A simple order of the guardianship and trusteeship body will be enough... if they need material assistance, then the (guardianship and trusteeship) should be appointed by the decision of the khokim (mayor)... If the guardianship and trusteeship bodies issue power of attorney, then it would be easier.

A child gets access to their rights once they are appointed a guardian or trustee, with a related document requested when a child attends kindergarten, school, college, educational club, sport competition, or another such facility or activity. This document is also helpful in obtaining material support from different sponsors.

For example, for girls there are several quotas... last year a girl was included into the 'Iron book'... she was also accepted this year into a state scholarship...

³⁹ 'Iron book' is a database on registration, identification, elimination and control of families with difficult social and living conditions which are under special control by the heads of sectors

⁴⁰ 'Women's book' is a database on identification, elimination and control of problems of unemployed women in need of and desiring social, economic, legal and psychological support, knowledge and vocational training

⁴¹ 'Youth's book' is a database on identification, elimination and control of problems of unemployed youth in need of and desiring social, economic, legal and psychological support, knowledge and vocational training

During the pandemic, guardianship and trusteeship bodies worked online, and had difficulties in registering such documents. Also, fewer applications had been submitted. According to a key informant, families with LBC experienced difficulties during the pandemic in registering such documents. Key informants proposed allocating special funding to guardianship and trusteeship bodies, to help families in need access basic food products in demanding situations. Despite this, according to a key informant at the district level, the amount of registered trusteeships in the district reached 91 in 2020, and an additional 18 cases were registered in 2021.

...during the pandemic, the submitted documents were stuck and delivered with delay...

According to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 5 March 2021, No. 122 'On measures to further improve the system of social protection and the widespread introduction of modern information and communication technologies in the industry', by 1 April 2021 the Ministry of Public Education should develop and implement a single database for children with a registered trusteeship and guardianship. This single database for trusteeship and guardianship should connect public education, mahalla, and guardianship and trusteeship bodies. However, not all relevant authorities are connected.

It has been simplified... the Ministry of Public Education is not connected to it...

During the pandemic the cases of children's institutionalization decreased in Bukhara, compared to previous years.

A girl's mother tried to come (from Russia)... the girl's relatives did not want to care for her... we could not place her in an orphanage... we talked to her mother about her children, and she said that the price for charter flights is expensive... she still could not come...

A regional key informant stated that children were less controlled by teachers during the pandemic due to schools shifting to online mode, which led to an increase of unsupervised activities among children.

The teachers left the children unsupervised... children had informed teachers that they are studying online, however they went to tutors, worked in car-wash places, etc...

Pandemic related restriction measures have affected children's rights to grow up in a family environment and to be provided with alternative care if deprived of a family environment (Articles 5, 9, 10, 11, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 27, and 39 of the UNCRC) in different ways.

The GoU has initiated different measures and adopted several regulations to support families in need of social support. The establishment of the 'Sahovat and Kumak' Foundation (Kindness and Support) has contributed to supporting low-income families, including those with LBC. However, due to a lack of cooperation by mahalla offices and health facilities with trusteeship and guardianship bodies, most families were left without social assistance during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, families with LBC experienced difficulties in registering guardianship and trusteeship documents in relevant state bodies, due to their online operation. As a result, such families experienced challenges in getting social support from the state, and difficulties in submitting trustees' documents to education institutions, while the reintegration of children left without care into families was suspended.

V. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Rights to the highest attainable standard of basic health and welfare



On a global level, both governmental stay-at-home restriction measures and individuals' personal social distancing behaviours have been linked to symptoms of a range of mental health conditions.⁴² According to the U-Report poll, during the pandemic every third child in Uzbekistan has experienced frequent mood swings. Gender differences in children's emotion expression can be considered to reflect Uzbekistan's cultural beliefs and expectations. This conclusion can be supported by findings of the U-Report poll in which girls indicated they had experienced mood swings, sadness and irritation more often compared to boys during the COVID-19 pandemic. LBC experienced relatively more frequent mood swings than non-LBC.

- Article 6 – Children have the right to life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

Negative: Lockdown measures have negatively affected the mental health and psychosocial well-being of LBC who have experienced loneliness and sadness. The limitation in communications with peers and migrated parents due to the absence of mobile phones among LBC girls, during the pandemic, might explain why they experienced mental health and psychosocial well-being problems.

- Article 24 – Children have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food, and to a clean environment in which they can stay healthy.

Positive: Pandemic-related restriction measures have led to an increase in the sanitary-hygienic literacy of most children, including LBC, causing a decrease in the prevalence of many diseases among children and teenagers, especially the prevalence of infectious and parasitic diseases.

⁴² Marroquin, B. et al. Mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic: Effects of stay-at-home policies, social distancing behaviour, and social resources. *Psychiatry Res.* 2020; 203:113419. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7439968/>

- Article 27 – Children have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.

Negative: Families with LBC could not get timely food assistance due to difficulties in registering corresponding documents during the pandemic.

The right to grow up in a family environment and be provided with alternative care if deprived of the environment.

A global increase in domestic violence and child abuse was noted during the pandemic. Increased stress levels among parents are often a major predictor of physical abuse and neglect of children. Resources that many at-risk parents rely on, such as extended family, childcare and schools, and community organizations, became no longer available. Children in turn experienced their own stress and uncertainty about the pandemic. Stressed parents were more likely to respond to their children's anxious behaviours or demands in aggressive or abusive ways.⁴³

In Uzbekistan, pandemic-related restriction measures, in particular lockdown measures, negatively affected children's right to grow up in a family environment and be provided with alternative care if deprived such an environment. According to the FGD with LBC and the U-Report poll, domestic violence and harsh discipline measures used by caregivers have particularly increased. No significant difference could be established in regards to the experiences of LBC and non-LBC.

The pandemic and economic crisis have affected national health care systems, public sectors, business activity, consumption, international trade and investments, both at an individual and economic level, all over the world and including in Uzbekistan.⁴⁴

The GoU has taken action to prevent a decrease in the population's income, sustain employment, and prevent unemployment. Nine per cent (0.66 trillion soums or US\$6.6 billion) of the Anti-Crisis Fund has gone to engaging unemployed citizens in the social area for temporary work, social benefits, to support women in low-income families, and to develop personal subsistence plots for the unemployed, low-income families, and workers of enterprises providing transport services.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the pandemic has resulted in widespread job losses. Around 475,000 or 85 per cent of small businesses have been temporarily closed.⁴⁶

- Article 19 – Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or by anyone else who looks after them.

Negative: According to qualitative and quantitative data, on average one fourth of children in the study have experienced domestic violence, with more than half indicating that the domestic violence had started after the pandemic's outbreak. Receiving less remittances from migrated parents, the loss of caregiver's jobs, and difficulties faced in buying food products during the pandemic, have all possibly led to excessive alcohol consumption among caregivers, and caused incidences of domestic violence among LBC during the pandemic.

- Article 39 – Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.

Negative: Most children, including LBC, did not have access to school psychologists during the pandemic due to extended holidays in preschool and secondary educational institutions, and the shift from face-to-face to online education.

- Article 18 – Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.

⁴³ Abramson, A. How COVID-19 may increase domestic violence and child abuse. APA. 2020. <https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/domestic-violence-child-abuse>

⁴⁴ Tulyakov, E. The Foreign Policy Centre. (2020). COVID-19: Actions taken in Uzbekistan. <https://fpc.org.uk/covid-19-actions-taken-in-uzbekistan/>

⁴⁵ Tulyakov, E. The Foreign Policy Centre. (2020). COVID-19: Actions taken in Uzbekistan. <https://fpc.org.uk/covid-19-actions-taken-in-uzbekistan/>

⁴⁶ ADB. 2020. [Covid-19 Emergency Response Project: Summary Assessment of Damage and needs](#)

Negative: LBC experienced difficulties during the pandemic in regards to the registration of guardianship and trusteeship documents at relevant state bodies, due to their online operation. As a result, families with LBC experienced challenges in obtaining social support from the state, and difficulties in submitting trustees' documents to education institutions, while the reintegration of children into their families was suspended.

Positive: Caregivers of LBC received regular social support from local authorities, through their inclusion in the 'Iron book'.

- Article 20 – If a child cannot be looked after by their own family, they must be looked after properly by people who respect their religion, culture and language.

Positive: During the pandemic, LBC in need of social support received social and financial aid from the relevant local authority's section.

The next suggestions could be determined from an analysis of key findings through the lens of the four principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which include: the best interests of the child; non-discrimination; child participation; and survival and development:

- The best interests of the child

The interests of children should be taken into account during the pandemic, in particular because of the online delivery of social services, and the suspension of document issuance.

- Non-discrimination

Social support should be provided to those families with LBC who are in need, regardless of their race, religion, abilities, citizenship, or other factors.

- Child participation

Children should participate in the making of decisions regarding the inclusion of needy families into the list of the 'Sahovat and Kumak' Foundation (Kindness and Support). The lack of cooperation of mahalla offices and health facilities with trusteeship and guardianship bodies have resulted in needy families not receiving social assistance during the pandemic.

- Survival and development

The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 3 April 2020, No. UP-5978 'On additional measures to support the population, sectors of the economy, and business entities during the coronavirus pandemic' supports this principle. However, COVID-19 related restriction measures, particularly, stay-at-home measures, have influenced the survival and development of children. They have caused incidences of domestic violence among LBC (18 per cent of LBC in FGD), mostly in the form of physical and psychological violence. On average one fourth of children in the study have experienced domestic violence, half of which began after the pandemic's outbreak. Every 5th child among LBC has experienced violence through negative disciplinary methods applied by their caregivers.

Stay-at-home measures have resulted in the decreased financial state of LBC families, creating less access to food products, and making children more prone to becoming ill.

VI. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

RIGHTS TO THE HIGHEST ATTAINABLE STANDARD OF BASIC HEALTH AND WELFARE



The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Health:

- Coordinate work between the established inspector-psychologists under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and family doctors, to realize joint activities in preventing psychosocial and mental problems among families with LBC. Inspector-psychologists should be provided with cell phones for making international calls to allow LBC to talk with their migrated parents, when needed.
- Revise measures so they focus on children. For example, point No. 19 of the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 23 March 2020, No. 176 'On additional measures against the spread of coronavirus infection' should be updated through the addition of "if a family member has a child under 18, they should be self-isolated at home."

The Ministry of Internal Affairs:

- Inspector-psychologists should be available during lockdown, and be equipped with information technologies to conduct online consultation for LBC families.
- Revise measures so they focus on children. For example, Point No. 24 of the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 23 March 2020, No. 176 'On additional measures against the spread of coronavirus infection' should be updated through adding "if a family member has a child under 18, they should have access to their mobile phones in order to communicate with their children."

The Ministry of Public Education:

- Provide opportunities for LBC's active leisure and recreation, especially during the implementation of self-isolation measures at home.

THE RIGHT TO GROW UP IN A FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND BE PROVIDED WITH ALTERNATIVE CARE IF DEPRIVED OF A FAMILY ENVIRONMENT:

In times of crisis, such as a pandemic, governments should prioritize maintaining or adapting critical prevention and response services to protect children from violence, including designating social service workers as being essential and ensuring they are protected, strengthening child helplines, and making positive parenting resources available.

Specific recommendations:

The Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support and the Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights (Ombudsperson):

- Establish a toll-free 24-hour ('1146' hotline) child helpline for reporting cases of violence against children, and for counselling children who have experienced violence or abuse, along with giving them referrals to relevant support services. Ensure the child helpline and its services are widely known through public promotion.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs:

- Adapt existing services. For instance, during times of school closures, school inspector-psychologists should be equipped with means to visit children identified as being at risk of violence/child victims of violence in their homes, including during lockdowns. Such means include Personal Protective Equipment and fuel/funds for transportation.
- Raise public awareness of the increased risk of domestic violence and child abuse, and how and where support can be sought.
- Develop and disseminate positive parenting resources that provide guidance on self-care and stress management, positive parenting, and other matters.
- Include into the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 4 January 2020, No. 03 'On measures to improve the system of protection of women and girls from harassment and abuse' the issuance of protection orders not only for women and girls, but also for boys.

The Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support:

- Include LBC families into population target groups, in case of pandemics, to facilitate the provision of social support from different state funds.
- Provide social support to those LBC families who are in need, regardless of their race, religion, abilities, citizenship, or other factors.

The Ministry of Public Education:

- Improve the process of issuing documents for the appointment of guardianship and trusteeship, reduce bureaucracy and optimize activities of guardianship and trusteeship authorities, and improve the effectiveness of interaction with relevant units of local authorities and the provision of assistance to families with LBC, via the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Ministry of Health.
- Organize training courses for personnel of the Ministry of Public Education institutions (schools) and the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support, on 'Trusteeship and Guardianship' regulations and orders.
- Revise the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 22 September 2014 No. 269 'On approval of normative legal documents on the implementation of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'About guardianship and trusteeship''. Documentation on getting trusteeship and guardianship should be optimized, namely through categorizing guardians and trustees based on their needs in different regards such as receiving documents for education, for receiving financial support, and others. Guardianship and trusteeship bodies should join a single database and decrease their bureaucracy, establishing horizontal integration of their functions with other relevant bodies.

- Clearly define the role of teachers, deputy directors and directors of schools, lyceums and colleges in the activities of trusteeship and guardianship bodies, and increase their awareness about personal responsibility in revealing and reporting information on children deprived of parental care to guardianship and trusteeship authorities.
- Trusteeship and guardianship bodies shall closely cooperate with citizens' self-government bodies, to ensure the targeted assignment of social benefits and material assistance, as well as to take prompt measures in attracting necessary assistance to families in need of social support, especially LBC families.
- By laws regarding the execution of Article No. 40 of the Law 'About guardianship and trusteeship' should be developed on the assignment of allowance for maintenance of persons under guardianship and trusteeship, when funds for the reimbursement of his or her expenses are not sufficient.
- Establish a special fund in guardianship and trusteeship bodies to provide assistance to needy families with LBC, including the provision of basic food products in difficult situations.
- Create a 'hotline' for children at the Republican Center for Psychological and Pedagogical Diagnostics and Vocational Guidance of Schoolchildren, as well as at the regional Centers for Social and Psychological Support of Children, to effectively rehabilitate children and provide psychological assistance to children who have experienced various types of violence and who find themselves in crisis situations (migration, repatriation, epidemics, natural and human disasters, and others), and to provide active assistance to their parents and relatives.

VII. LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE CRIA PROCESS

- Several sessions for personnel involved in CRIA should be organized, to better understand the main points in conducting assessment.
- Capacity building sessions on CRIA should be conducted for local authorities who are involved in CRIA. Additionally, regular meetings with the assignment of responsible personnel, and setting clear tasks with deadlines, would facilitate increasing the effectiveness of CRIA.
- CRIA includes the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, and requires the analysis of huge data, and as such it would be efficient if there will be more than two national consultants involved when CRIA is being conducted the first time. Sufficient budget and time should be allocated to conducting CRIA.
- CRIA has been easily adapted to local needs, but there is missing data which requires filling gaps. This correspondingly requires the implementation of new regulations in the collection of such data by local authorities, which requires the involvement of representatives of corresponding local authorities in carrying out CRIA.
- There should be enough time and financial resources for increasing the validity and significance of obtained data. Also, it would be useful to include case-studies of children who have experienced difficulties regarding the studied issues.
- Working groups from different authorities should be established, who could be involved in making improvements to the current situation / studied issue (for example, representatives of khokimyats, the Ministry of Public Education, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support, and NGOs) to jointly discuss studying the given issue through the provision of available data, and considering means of filling gaps where information is absent.

VIII. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. REFERENCES

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ANNEX 2. OFFICIAL LETTERS TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Letter to the next local authorities:

1. Prosecutor's General Office
2. State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics
3. Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan
4. Ministry of Public Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan
5. Ministry for support of Mahalla and Family
6. Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan
7. Ministry of employment and labour relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan
8. Department for the Protection of the Rights of Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan, carrying out temporary labour activities abroad and International Economic Cooperation

Dear NAME!

In accordance with the National Government Development Plans, sectoral priorities and the Joint Country Program of Cooperation between the Government and UNICEF for 2021-2025, as well as within the framework of a project funded by the European Union, the Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights (Ombudsperson), together with the United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF, is conducting an assessment to study the impact of Government imposed mitigation measures in response to COVID-19 on children affected by migration (left by one or both parents due to labour migration).

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of government measures on the rights, needs and interests of children left behind by migration. The data obtained will be used to develop recommendations to reduce possible risks and consequences for children and will be summarized in a synthesis report for 15 countries, as well as for the preparation of the Strategy for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other treaties on the rights of the child for 2021-2026.

In this regard, we ask you to assist in providing information in accordance with Appendix.

Sincerely,

The Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights (Ombudsman)

A.T.Yunusova

Please provide us with specialists from the Republican and regional (Bukhara) levels in order to invite them to take part in a study on assessment the existing barriers among children, whose parents are in labour migration, in obtaining legal and social assistance

№	Name	Place of work	Position	Contacts (tel.)
1		National level		
2		Regional level		

Please provide information on the issues below.

№	Requested information	Normative-legislative document	Answers	Notes
1	Information on crime, violations of COVID-19 measures committed by children (under 18), whose one or both parents are abroad due to labour migration or returned to their homeland in the last 3 months from the date of the crime in 2020			Requested from Prosecutor's General Office
2	Information on the contingent of children of labour migrants of the Republic of Uzbekistan			Requested from State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics
3	Information on the state of external labour migration, work carried out in the field of support and protection of the rights of children of labour migrants for 2019-2020 and for the 1st quarter of 2021			
4	Information on the children of labour migrants in Uzbekistan			
5	Information on international labour migrants from Uzbekistan, in the context of regions for 2020 and the 1st quarter of 2021			Requested from Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan
6	Information about crime among minors whose one or both parents are abroad due to labour migration or have returned to their homeland in the last 3 months from the date of the crime, for 202 years			
7	Information on the number of orphanages			Requested from Ministry of Public Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan
8	Data on the movement of children enrolled and expelled from orphanages in Uzbekistan for 2019-2020, by regions			
9	Information about families whose family members have left abroad for labour migration or returned from labour migration in the last 3 months, by regions of the republic			Requested from Ministry for support of Mahalla and Family
10	Measures taken during the pandemic to provide social support to children of labour migrants			

11	How many vaccinations were carried out according to the national calendar of Uzbekistan for 2020 and 2021 for children under 18 years old, in the context of regions (if any) and gender (if any) and age (if any)?			Requested from Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan
12	How many children's psychiatric dispensaries are there in Uzbekistan, in the context of regions, the number of guardians in each of them, the nature of the contingent, by sex, age. Trends in the movement of guardians for 2019-2020 and Q1 2021?			
13	Statistical data on the health of children under 18 years old, by region, for 2019-2020 and the 1st quarter of 2021.			
14	Information about the contingent of children, labor migrants in the Republic of Uzbekistan			Requested from Ministry of employment and labour relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan
15	What kind of measures aimed at social support of children of labour migrants implemented during the coronavirus pandemic in 2019-2020 and in the 1st quarter of 2021?			
16	Information on the state of external labour migration, work done in the field of support and protection of the rights of children of labour migrants in 2019-2020 and for the 1st quarter of 2021			
17	The number of all citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan who left for labour migration abroad, from them, the distribution by country and by gender, in the context of regions for 2019-2020 and as of the 1st quarter of 2021.			
18	Information on children of labour migrants in the Republic of Uzbekistan			Requested from Department for the Protection of the Rights of Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan, carrying out temporary labour activities abroad and International Economic Cooperation
19	What kind of measures aimed at social support of children of labour migrants implemented during the coronavirus pandemic in 2019-2020 and in the 1st quarter of 2021?			
20	Information on the state of external labour migration, work done in the field of support and protection of the rights of children of labour migrants in 2019-2020 and for the 1st quarter of 2021			

ANNEX 3. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE WITH CHILDREN (U-REPORT)

Impact of COVID-19 on the psychological and physical condition of children affected by migration

Partners: The Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights (OMBUDSMAN) and the United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF

Objective: To find out how COVID-19 affected children left-behind by migration (who were left by one or both parents due to work abroad).

The results of the survey will be used in the development of proposals to the government of Uzbekistan to reduce the possible risks and consequences of the COVID-19 related measures taken on children.

At the end of the questionnaire, you will learn interesting facts obtained from the UNICEF survey on labor migration.

If you would like to report any cases of mistreatment or to receive advice and assistance on the protection of children's rights, you can contact the OMBUDSMAN at 71 20010 96 or 1096

You can also ask for psychological help to the specialists of the Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children, at the following numbers +998-94-935-88-62 (Kamilov Farkhod Oblakulovich); +998-71-254-36-30 (Khusanova Dilnoza Gafurovna)

Select your gender: (Filter)

Female

Male

Write how old are you:

1. Do your family members (one or both parents), now or for the last 1.5 years, work abroad?

- A. Yes, works now
- B. Yes, they have worked in the last 1.5 years
- C. No
- D. Difficult to answer

2. Which family members work abroad?

- A. Father
- B. Mother
- C. Mother and Father
- D. Grandmother / grandfather
- E. Aunt / uncle
- F. Brother / sister
- G. Others (write)

3. Adults use various methods to discipline children. In your opinion, which of the following methods is OFTEN used during the pandemic (last 1.5 years) in relation to children? Please check all that apply:

- A. Calmly explained
- B. Asked not to do / not to behave badly
- C. Rewarded for good behavior
- D. Didn't talk for a long time
- E. Shouted loudly at him/her
- F. Shook / pulled by the ears
- G. Insulted / humiliated

- H. Forbade to go outside
- I. Punished by beating
- J. Took away privileges
- K. Took away the phone
- L. Other (please write) _____
- M. Difficult to answer
- N. Don't want to answer

If answers from D to L to the question #3 then go to questions #3.1 & 3.2.

3.1. Has s/he always been treated like this, or since coronavirus pandemic?

- A. Always
- B. Since pandemic
- C. Difficult to answer
- D. Don't want to answer

3.2. If it happened, who most often punished children?

- A. Father
- B. Mother
- C. Both (father and mother)
- D. Brother/Sister
- E. Grandfather/Grandmother
- F. Neighbor
- G. Teachers at school
- H. Classmate
- I. Other (write)
- J. Don't want to answer

4. Do you know who would s/he most like to get help from in difficult situations?

- A. Mother
- B. Father
- C. Both parents
- D. Brother/Sister
- E. Grandfather/Grandmother
- F. Neighbors
- G. Teachers
- H. Classmates
- I. Police
- J. Doctors
- K. Other (write)
- L. Difficult to answer

5. How do you assess your mood, in general, over the past year?

- A. Excellent
- B. Good
- C. Stable
- D. Bad
- E. Experienced tension/irritation

- F. Sad
- G. Difficult to answer
- H. Other (write)

6. How do you generally assess your state of health at the present?

- A. Very good
- B. Good
- C. Satisfactory
- D. Bad
- E. Very bad
- F. Difficult to answer

Thanks for answers! Your responses will be used to compare with similar responses received from children before the pandemic. We will take into account the answers when developing proposals for reducing the risks of COVID-19 related measures for children.

If you would like to report any cases of mistreatment or to receive advice and assistance on the protection of children's rights, you can contact the OMBUDSMAN at 71 20010 96 or 1096

You can also ask for psychological help to the specialists of the Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children, at the following numbers +998-94-935-88-62 (Kamilov Farkhod Oblakulovich); +998-71-254-36-30 (Khusanova Dilnoza Gafurovna)

Interesting facts!!!

According to a survey conducted by UNICEF in 2019, the main country for citizens of Uzbekistan to work abroad is Russia (87%), followed by South Korea, Turkey and Kazakhstan.

(<https://www.unicef.org/Uzbekistan/en/reports/study-report-effects-migration-children-uzbekistan>)

Among parents working abroad, 63 per cent are fathers, 10 per cent are mothers, and the remainder are both parents

(<https://www.unicef.org/Uzbekistan/en/reports/study-report-effects-migration-children-uzbekistan>).

The Republic of Uzbekistan ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on June 29, 1994

(https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4).

ANNEX 4. GUIDES FOR DESK REVIEW

1. Assessment of regulatory documents related COVID-19 prevention measures in the Republic of Uzbekistan (from March 2020 to January 2021)

No	Requested information	Source of information	Responsible partners for data collection (Ombudsman will request)	Deadlines
1	Information on labor migrants from Uzbekistan (official number of labor migration etc)	Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations	Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations	07.05.2021
2	Unemployment Statistics in Uzbekistan (for 19-20 years)		Online open data (State Committee on Statistics etc)	
3	Consent form of respondent (from previous projects, such as «Protecting children affected by migration in Southeast, South and Central Asia»)	UNICEF	UNICEF web page	01.05.2021
4	National vaccination calendar of Uzbekistan. Available vaccines in Uzbekistan	Ministry of Health Vaccination Centers	Local researcher (Sherzod)	26.05.2021
5	Number of regulatory documents related to preventive measures on spreading coronavirus infection in Uzbekistan issued during the period March 2020 to January 2021, from them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related to children; • Related to labor migration; • Related to health facilities; • Related to social support; • Related to violence 	Resolutions and Decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Ombudsman Ministry of Justice	30.04.2021
		Laws, draft law, resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Ministry of Justice	26.04.2021
		Ministry of Preschool Education, Ministry of Public Education and other departments	Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children	26.04.2021
		Orders and Resolutions of the Special Republican Commission on prevention measures of spreading a new type of coronavirus in the Uz	Ministry of Health Local researcher	26.04.2021
		Ministry of Health		26.04.2021

2. Brief assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 measures/regulatory documents on children's rights

	Title of the regulatory document (No., year of publication)	Which children were affected (most children or marginalized children)	What impact did the document have on children's rights (positive, neutral, negative)	The rights and articles of children affected in the document (iii: basic health and social services; vi: special protection measures)	How are they affected?	Provide citations from the document (text, link to page, etc.)
	Example	Marginalized children	Negative	i: civil law and freedom. iv: education, leisure and culture	Children with disabilities were not allowed to go to school even after schools reopened	"... children with disabilities, people with chronic diseases and the elderly are prohibited from going outside without special need," 15 p.

3. General overview on the assessment of complaints or appeals from children or their guardians / parent about their living conditions due to COVID-19 measures/regulatory documents (from March 2020 to January 2021)

	Organization where complaints / appeal were made	Date of complaint	Appealed person)	Aim/point of appeal	Reason for the complaint / appeal
	Example: Makhalla	21.04.2020	Guardians	Support with food product	Quarantine measures, movement restrictions, job loss

4. Assessment of violations of regulations realized by/against children during COVID-19 quarantine (from March 2020 to January 2021)

	Name of state body	Type of violations	Time and number of open / initiated cases	
			Date	Number
	Example: General Prosecutor's Office	Petty theft	May 2020	10
	Ministry of Internal Affairs			

ANNEX 5. INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN (FGD)

Introduction

Dear friend! You are invited to participate in the group discussion about “Child Rights Impact Assessment of COVID-19 on children affected by migration (CRIA).” We are doing a study about impact on children from families with adult members who left for their communities for earnings, of pandemic-related measures, i.e. laws, policies, programmes and services, accepted by the Uzbek government in the beginning of pandemic. We would greatly appreciate your participation in Focus Group Discussions, where you will join the discussion with other children of similar age to talk about measures adopted by state response to the pandemic and its possible impacts on children affected by parental migration. The discussion will be led by the presenter. An assistant will also be present in the room, to take notes and to help the presenter to guide the discussion.

We have asked your parent (caregiver) if it is OK to invite you for discussion and they have given their permission. Your participation is entirely voluntary, so you can choose not to participate in the discussion and can stop participation at any time. You can also refuse to answer any question if you do not want to answer.

Risks and Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you from participation; however, we appreciate your time and as an acknowledgement, we will give you some stationery, such as diary, pen and bag. Your opinion is important to help the government of Uzbekistan understand what problems children of migrants may have. As such, your opinion is very important as it will help the government to improve adopted legislations and services which impact on children affected by migration.

Confidentiality

Your name will not be mentioned in any report, so any information you provide will be confidential. However, there is a limit to confidentiality if there is an obvious risk of harm to you and others. We would like to audio-record the discussion in order not to miss any important information, ideas or suggestions expressed during the discussion. All the recorded materials will be used for the study purposes and will be deleted after the study is finalized. No recorded materials will be shared with other parties under any circumstances. Before you decide to participate, you may also choose a nick name or another name such as your favourite actor.

Contact information to request additional information and file a complaint

If you would like more information about the study, or want to file a complaint, or would like to report any cases of mistreatment or to receive advice and assistance on the protection of children’s rights please contact the following people:

Key researcher	Organization	Contacts
Aliya Yunusova, Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children’s Rights	Representative of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan for human rights	(+998-71) 200-10-96 or 1096
Kamilov Farkhod Oblakulovich, psychologist	Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children	(+998-94) 935-88-62
Khusanova Dilnoza Gafurovna, psychologist	Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children	(+998-71) 254-36-30

If you feel that you need help to discuss what support services you can get, you can contact the Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children’s Rights, or any other organizations in this leaflet. You will be provided with a copy of the document for your records.

Written assent of the Child

I have read this information (or had the information read to me). I understand that any identifying information in connection to this study will remain confidential and will be stored separately from the rest of research data. I have had my questions answered and I can ask questions later if I have them.

I agree to take part in the study_____

Signature of the respondent

Date

Would you like to share your story with public YES / NO

If YES, please provide your name and phone number/contact info.

If YES, do you agree to provide photos when sharing your story YES / NO

ANNEX 6. INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR CAREGIVERS (FGD)

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research project: “Child Rights Impact Assessment of COVID-19 on children affected by migration (CRIA)”. The study, conducted under the leadership of the Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children’s Rights (Ombudsman) with support from UNICEF, is funded by the European Union. The qualitative data will be collected by a UNICEF national consultant and an online survey using U-Report will collect data related to children’s violence and psychological health status during pandemic. The study objectives include assessing the potential impacts on children and young people, left behind by one or both parents due to labour migration, of pandemic-related measures, i.e. laws, policies, programmes and services, accepted by the Uzbek government in the beginning of pandemic and enhance child protection system in Uzbekistan. You are invited to participate in the focus group discussion because your household was proposed by a social worker. Your participation is voluntary, and you can choose not to participate without explaining any reasons. You can also refuse to answer any question if you do not want to answer. The discussion will last for about an hour and a half with 8–10 adult caregivers and includes questions related to impacts of COVID-19 related measures on children’s rights to get access to health facilities and social services.

Risks and Benefits

You will not receive any direct benefits for your participation; however, we appreciate your time and as an acknowledgement, we will give you basic food items, such as vegetable oil and flour. Your participation can help the government of Uzbekistan to understand the impacts of pandemic-related laws, policies, programmes and services, accepted by the Uzbek government in the beginning of pandemic, on the rights of children left-behind by one or both parents due to labour migration, and develop recommendations to avoid or mitigate any negative impacts in the future. The discussion will be led by a moderator and an assistant will be present in the room, to take notes and help the moderator to guide the discussion.

Confidentiality

Neither your name, nor the names of your household members, will be mentioned in any report concerning the study. However, there is a limit to confidentiality in an unlikely case when a child reveals information of some harm such as violence against children and/or neglect. The research team is trained react adequately in case support and protection are required. The discussion will be audio recorded so as not to miss any important information, ideas or suggestions expressed during the discussion. All the audio records will be identified by an anonymous digital code and will be deleted after the study is finalized. Only the analytical team will have access to the records and materials will not be shared with other parties under any circumstances.

Contact information to request additional information and file a complaint

If you would like more information about the study, or want to file a complaint, or would like to report any cases of mistreatment or to receive advice and assistance on the protection of children’s rights please contact the following people:

Key researcher	Organization	Contacts
Aliya Yunusova, Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children’s Rights	Representative of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan for human rights	(+998-71) 200-10-96 or 1096
Kamilov Farkhod Oblakulovich, psychologist	Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children	(+998-94) 935-88-62
Khusanova Dilnoza Gafurovna, psychologist	Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children	(+998-71) 254-36-30

If you agree to participate in the focus group, please sign this document. You will be provided with a copy of the document for your personal records. If you choose to receive legislative support, a program assistant from the Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights will contact you to discuss further. In this case only we may share your contact information. Otherwise, you do not have to provide your contact information.

Name _____ Phone number _____

Written Consent

I have read this information (or had the information read to me). I understand that any identifying information in connection to this study will remain confidential and will be stored separately from the rest of research data. If I choose to receive legislative support services through the Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights, only my contact information will be shared. I have had my questions answered and I can ask questions later if I have them. I understood the above and I agree to take part in the study.

Signature of the respondent

Date

Written Consent of the Caregiver for participation of child/children

Your child is also invited to participate in the FGD that covers the same topic. With your permission, we would like to invite your child to join the discussion with other children of similar age. This FGD is confidential and nothing will be shared with the third parties unless there is an apparent risk of harm to your child and other children.

I have read this information (or had the information read to me). I understand that any identifying information in connection to this study will remain confidential and will be stored separately from the rest of research data. I have had my questions answered and I can ask questions later if I have them.

Yes, I give permission for child/children under my care to participate in this FGD.

Child/Children _____

Caregivers' signature _____ Date _____

Would you like to share your story with public through media YES / NO. If YES, please provide your name and phone number/contact info.

If YES, do you agree to provide photos when sharing your story YES / NO

If YES, we will need to ask your child/children if they wish to share their story and sign a separate consent form.

ANNEX 7. INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS (FGD)

Introduction

You are invited to participate in focus group discussion for representatives of governmental organizations, such as healthcare providers, representatives from support of mahalla and family, social and legal protection of minors, and social workers. The research project, “Child Rights Impact Assessment of COVID-19 on children affected by migration (CRIA)”, is conducted under the leadership of the Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children’s Rights with technical support from UNICEF and is funded by the European Union. The objectives of the project include assessing the potential impacts on left-behind children (LBC), by one or both parents due to labour migration, of pandemic-related measures, i.e. laws, policies, programmes and services, accepted by the Uzbek government in the beginning of pandemic, and enhance child protection system in Uzbekistan.

The focus group will help the research team review the impact of issued COVID-19 related measures on children’s right to identify the necessary adaptation of these measures and adapt research tools to local conditions for further use by decision makers, parliamentarians, and civil society and human rights defenders to take into account the needs of children affected by migration when issuing such measures. Your participation is voluntary, so you can choose not to participate without explaining any reasons. You can also refuse to answer any question if you do not want to answer without any consequences. The discussion will last for about an hour and a half and during the discussion, you will be asked about your main roles in working with children affected by parental migration, how adopted COVID-19 related measures affected LBC and what can be done to enhance mechanisms for assessment of developing measures and getting feedback of vulnerable children to ensure compliance with children’s right.

Risks and benefits

There are no direct benefits to you from participation, however your opinion is important to help the government of Uzbekistan understand what impacts of pandemic-related laws, policies, programmes and services, accepted by the Uzbek government in the beginning of pandemic, on the rights of children left-behind by one or both parents due to labour migration, and how to address them. Your views about the current situation and what you see as the way forward in strengthening the child protection system are important in this study. The results of the study will be used in designing recommendations to reduce possible risks and consequences of adopted measures on children and to enhance child protection system in Uzbekistan.

Confidentiality

This study is anonymous, and neither your name, nor the name of participants from your territory, will be mentioned in any reports. However, there is a limit to confidentiality in an unlikely case when a child reveals information of some harm such as violence against children and/or neglect. The research team will react adequately and report such cases for support and protection. We have developed a series of structured questions which we will ask the group during the discussion. In addition, we may introduce some probing questions when something is not clear to us or to encourage you to reflect more deeply on the question we have asked. The discussion will be audio recorded and all audio records will be identified by an anonymous digital code and will be deleted after the study is finalized. Only the analytical team will have access to the records and materials will not be shared with other parties under any circumstances.

Contact information to request additional information and file a complaint

If you would like more information about the study, or want to file a complaint, or would like to report any cases of mistreatment or to receive advice and assistance on the protection of children’s rights please contact the following people:

Key researcher	Organization	Contacts
Aliya Yunusova, Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights	Representative of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan for human rights	(+998-71) 200-10-96 or 1096
Kamilov Farkhod Oblakulovich, psychologist	Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children	(+998-94) 935-88-62
Khusanova Dilnoza Gafurovna, psychologist	Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children	(+998-71) 254-36-30

FGD with representatives of service providers conducted by:

Inakov Sherzodbek (UNICEF local consultant)

Date:

Location:

Designation of the FGD participant:

Organization represented:

Written Consent

I have read this information (or had the information read to me). I understand that any identifying information and the recorded materials in connection to this study will remain confidential and will be stored separately.

I agree to take part in the FGD.

Signature of the respondent

Date

ANNEX 8. INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR EXPERT INTERVIEWS (KII)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this discussion as part of the research project “Child Rights Impact Assessment of COVID-19 on children affected by migration (CRIA)”. The interview will focus on your role in this organization (Guardianship and Trusteeship/Commission on Minors/other) to understand what your job is, what are the impact of COVID-19 related measures made towards children’s right to be protected from violence, to the highest attainable standard of health, and to benefit from social welfare. The study, conducted under the leadership of the Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children’s Rights with technical support from UNICEF, is funded by the European Union. The government of Uzbekistan is interested to take into account the rights, needs and interests of children and young people affected by parental migration while adopting laws, policies, programmes and services, so that they can better address vulnerabilities and the negative impacts of proposals and measures. The Interview may take about 1 to 1.5 hours.

The interview will include structured questions, including questions about COVID-19 related measures, available evidences to assess their impact on children’s rights, how these measures affected vulnerable children, particularly children left behind (LBC) by one or both parent due to labour migration, in terms of access to healthcare and social services, and what recommendations and tools can be used to enhance mechanisms for assessment of developing measures and getting feedback from LBC. In addition, we may introduce some probing questions when something is not clear to us or to encourage you to reflect more deeply on the question we have asked. We will take notes of your responses and we will explain what people think in a report, but we will not mention any names. Your participation is voluntary, so you can choose not to participate without explaining any reasons. You can also refuse to answer any question if you do not want to answer without any consequences.

Risks and benefits

You will not receive any direct benefits for your participation in the study. However, the results of the study will be used to develop recommendations and tools to enhance mechanisms for assessment of adopting measures and getting feedback from vulnerable children to ensure compliance with children’s right in Uzbekistan. The goal of the project is to prepare recommendations for the government based on research findings on avoiding or mitigating any negative impacts of adopting proposal or measure. We are also happy to hear your views about the current situation and what you see as the way forward in strengthening the system.

Confidentiality

All interviews are anonymous, and your name will not be mentioned in any report concerning the study. Your interview will be audio-recorded in order not to miss any important information, ideas or suggestions expressed during the discussion. All audio records will be identified by an anonymous digital code and will be deleted after the study is finalized. Only the analytical team will have access to the records and materials will not be shared with other parties under any circumstances.

Contact information to request additional information and file a complaint

If you would like more information about the study, or want to file a complaint, or would like to report any cases of mistreatment or to receive advice and assistance on the protection of children’s rights please contact the following people:

Key researcher	Organization	Contacts
Aliya Yunusova, Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children’s Rights	Representative of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan for human rights	(+998-71) 200-10-96 or 1096
Kamilov Farkhod Oblakulovich, psychologist	Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children	(+998-94) 935-88-62
Khusanova Dilnoza Gafurovna, psychologist	Republican Center for Social Adaptation of Children	(+998-71) 254-36-30

KII conducted by:

Inakov Sherzodbek (UNICEF local consultant)

Date:

Location:

Designation of Key Informant:

Organization represented:

Written Consent

I have read this information (or had the information read to me). I understand that any identifying information and the recorded materials in connection to this study will remain confidential and will be stored separately.

I agree to take part in the KII.

Signature of the respondent

Date

ANNEX 9. NON-COMMERCIAL RECEIPT FORM

By signing this receipt form, I hereby grant the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) the right to copy, display and distribute worldwide and permanently in any traditional or electronic media format my image as shown in the photographs, described below the photographs, and owned by UNICEF, including partnerships fundraising and other partnerships. I agree (agree) to the use of my photographs in UNICEF programming and advocacy materials and in the media.

I also agree that my photographs be used for illustrations and data (name, surname, age, place of work and residence) were given in these stories.

Photos with my image were taken on (date) _____ in (place with indicating city / country) _____

by the photographer (name of the photographer) _____

I confirm that these photos are indeed my image and the photos were taken with my knowledge and consent.

Name	Age (if over 18)	Date	Signature
------	------------------	------	-----------

Address and other contacts

If the person is a child under the age of 18:

I certify that I am the legal guardian of the above-named child and can guarantee permission for this non-profit receipt on behalf of the child:

Name of legal guardian	/ Relation to the child /	Date /	Guardian's signature
------------------------	---------------------------	--------	----------------------

Name of the witness	/ Organization /	Date /	Witness's signature
---------------------	------------------	--------	---------------------

ANNEX 10. INFORMED CONCENT FORM TO PUBLISH STORIES AND PHOTOS

By signing this consent form, I understand and agree to allow the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to publish stories and photographs of myself and / or my child.

The goal is to raise awareness and provide programmatic assistance and fundraising to children. These stories and photos are not used for commercial purposes.

By signing this informed consent form, I grant UNICEF the right to publish information / stories and photographs about myself and / or my child indefinitely in any country of the world, in any media **without disclosing our name or face**. At the same time, I allow stories to be published in order to promote other UNICEF's information and raise funds.

The stories were taken by the following person with my permission:

[name of the person:]

Date [day / month / year:]

Address [city / district / country:]

Adult person's name: _____

Adult person's signature: _____

Child's name / age: _____

Address, telephone / information for communication: _____

IF A PERSON IS A CHILD UNDER 18 YEARS OLD:

I certify that I am NOT a contract worker hired by UNICEF, that I am the legal guardian of the child named above, and that I am therefore entitled to issue this permit on his behalf:

Name of legal guardian	Relation to the child	Date / Guardian's signature
------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------------

Name of the witness	Organization	Date /Witness's signature
---------------------	--------------	---------------------------

ANNEX 11. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR CHILDREN

Participants: Children aged 15-17 years whose parent(s) has (have) migrated or currently is/are in labour migration

Hello. My name is _____ and I represent the UNICEF local consultant who is conducting the study for Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights with technical support from UNICEF, one of the biggest organizations for children in the world. My work is to ask questions and listen to people in order to help specialists and politicians better understand what is happening in the country, what people think and need. Based on our research recommendations to reduce possible risks and consequences of government measures for children will be developed. I would be grateful if you could spend about 1 hour answering my questions. This discussion is anonymous and your name will not be mentioned in any report document.

You do not have to answer any question if you do not want to, and you can stop at any moment.

We asked your caregiver if it was ok to speak with you.

I would like to introduce my assistant, _____, who will be present in the room and take notes during the discussion.

There are no right or wrong answers in this interview and you will not be judged on the basis of information you provide. We are here to listen to your story and opinion. Would you like to participate in the focus group?

Would you like to ask me anything before you decide to participate? **[Answer any questions they may have before beginning].**

Table 1

q1	Date	_____._____.201____
q2	Moderator	
q3	Note taker	
q4	Region and District	
q5	Number of participants	
q6	Type of the settlement (rural/urban)	
q7	Gender composition (male, female)	
q8	Duration	____:____-____:____

Moderator to introduce the purpose of the discussion. Start by asking participants to introduce themselves by choosing nickname if they want (Assistant: fill out Table 1). Advice to moderators: For time efficiency, can

- I have moderator and assistance ask participants information in above table before they are seated;
- II have moderator and assistant ask different participants at same time;
- III or print off copies of table and ask each participant to fill out with a pen with moderator guiding participants verbally.

Table 2

		A	B	C	D	E	F
q9	Pseudonym						
q10	Age						
q11		1. female 2. male	1. female 2. male	1. female 2. male	1. female 2. male	1. female 2. male	1. female 2. male
q12	Who migrated	1. father 2. mother 3. both	1. father 2. mother 3. both	1. father 2. mother 3. both	1. father 2. mother 3. both	1. father 2. mother 3. both	1. father 2. mother 3. both
q13	The primary caregiver						

14. Was your parent or both parents abroad working during COVID-19 pandemic?

15. Did they return or tried to return to home during pandemic? If they returned home, do they plan to go back there after pandemic or already went there for work?

16. Tell about your daily routine:

- a. What do you do in your free time? What your hobbies/ interests?
- b. Has your daily routine changed, since COVID-19 pandemic?

17. What do you want to be when you are older? Was this specialty the same choice you made before or has it changed after the pandemic?

a. Health & Nutrition

18. How often do you get sick? What about during pandemic? If often was sick, did you visit medical facility during pandemic?

19. Who takes care of you when you feel ill during the extended absence of your parent/parents?

20. Have you had COVID-19? If yes, where did you get treatment? Who took care of you?

21. How many times do you eat per day? What is your typical breakfast/lunch/dinner? Do you like the food you eat? Why if you do not?

22. Was your nutrition changed due to COVID-19 related quarantine?

23. How many fruits and vegetables did you eat during COVID-19 related quarantine? Was it different before the pandemic?

b. Socio and psychological effects

24. How do children feel when COVID-19 related measures were introduced? Were you able to talk with your parents, peers?

25. How did other people treat children during restriction measures, when everybody was staying at home?

26. What difficulties, if any, did children and adults face when COVID-19 related measures were introduced?

27. What was the challenging for children during pandemic and what opportunities were created due to pandemic?

28. What are the behavioral changes that children face when pandemic related restrictions were introduced?

30. Violence against children and Access to services and awareness about child rights

- a. What do you know about the rights of children?
- b. What do you think 'violence against children' is?
- c. Have you heard of any cases where bad things have happened to a child in your area during pandemic? If yes, have you heard if such cases are/were reported?
- d. Whom were they reported to? Did such action help?
- e. How would you report violence against children?
- f. If something bad happened to you, would you tell anyone? Why/not? To whom?
- g. What can be done to protect children in the area?
- h. What could be the biggest challenge when children try to tell someone about their problems?
- i. How are girls whose parents are labour migrants treated in your community? How about boys? What are the reasons children are placed to institutionalized places? What do you think about this?

c. Relationship and interaction with parent

31. Do children share their feelings more openly with parents? How about during COVID-19 related measures, was it possibility to share their feelings with parents? Why?

32. Do you communicate with your parent(s) using social media (Facebook, telegram, etc). What about communication during pandemic?

33. Who do children can share their feelings when both parents are away? (relatives, teachers, mentors, other)? How about during COVID-19 related measures, was it possibility to share their feelings with them?

34. What relationship do children have with caregiver parenting children during the COVID-19 pandemic? What about such relationship after the releasing the quarantine restrictions?

35. Do you think you have less control over your life when your father is away? What if you have both parents away?

36. What are the advantages for you when pandemic-related measures introduced? What about the disadvantages?

d. Wrap-up

38. Let's summarize our discussion.

- a. Could you name three top positive and negative effects on children by the COVID-19 related measures?
- b. Can you name 3 recommendations what kind of support should be provided to such families and children during pandemic?

ANNEX 12. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS

Participants: Primary caregivers of children whose parent(s) has (have) migrated or currently is/are in labour migration

Hello. My name is _____ and I represent the UNICEF local consultant who is conducting the study for Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights with technical support from UNICEF. The project is funded by the European Union in order to help the government develop policies and programs in the area of child protection. I would be grateful if you could spend about 1.5 hours discussing the suggested topics. This discussion is confidential, and your name will not be mentioned in any report or document. You are not obliged to answer any question, and you can stop at any moment. The purpose of this discussion is to understand how the pandemic-related measures impacts on children affected by parental migration.

If you agree to participate in the FGD, there will be 8–10 other participants taking part in the discussion. The discussion will be led by me. I would like to introduce my assistant, _____, who will be present in the room and take notes during the discussion.

We would like to audio-record the discussion. The discussion will be audio-recorded only if you have given your prior permission to do so; however, this is not a requirement for participation in the study. The audio recordings will be deleted after the study and will not be shared with third parties during the study.

There are no right or wrong answers in this interview, and you will not be judged based on information you provide. Would you like to participate in the focus group? Would you like to ask me anything about the interview before you decide to participate? **[Answer any questions they may have before beginning].**

q1	Date	_____._____.201____
q2	Moderator	
q3	Note taker	
q4	Region and District	
q5	Number of participants	
q6	Type of the settlement (rural/urban)	
q7	Gender composition (male, female, mixed)	
q8	Duration	____:____:____ - ____:____:____

Moderator to introduce the purpose of the discussion. Start by asking participants to introduce themselves by choosing a nickname if they want (Assistant: fill out Table 1).

Advice to moderators: For time efficiency, can:

- I have moderator and assistance ask participants information in above table before they are seated;
- II have moderator and assistant ask different participants at same time;
- III or print off copies of table and ask each participant to fill out with a pen with moderator guiding participants verbally

		A	B	C	D	E	F
q9	Pseudonym						
q10	Age						
q11	Gender	1. female 2. male	1. female 2. male	1. female 2. male	1. female 2. male	1. female 2. male	1. female 2. male
q12	What is the relations of migrant to the child	1. father 2. mother 3. both	1. father 2. mother 3. both	1. father 2. mother 3. both	1. father 2. mother 3. both	1. father 2. mother 3. both	1. father 2. mother 3. both
q13	Time migrant spent abroad/ as a migrant	_____ months	_____ months	_____ months	_____ months	_____ months	_____ months
q13 B	Is this the first migration or repeated one	1. first 2. repeated	1. first 2. repeated	1. first 2. repeated	1. first 2. repeated	1. first 2. repeated	1. first 2. repeated
q14	How are you related to the child						
q15	Number of household members						
q16	Number of children						
q17	Ages of children						
q18	Main sources of income in the Household (pension, remittances, social transfers)						

1. How did the pandemic affect the lives of household members?

- How did the COVID-19 related measures impact the life of a caregiver?
- How does it impact the lives of the migrant's child/children (Please discuss both positive and negative aspects)? How does the impact differ between households with children-living with parents and those who left by parents due to labour migration?
- What difficulties, if any, do such families faced during COVID-19 related restriction measures?
- Have you heard of any cases of children being abandoned by migrant parents during pandemic? What about the children of migrants in the household?
- Were there any difficulties or barriers that prevented boys and girls from receiving health services during the pandemic?

2. How does the pandemic affect the psychological state of children in households from the neighbourhood? Let's discuss possible positive and negative effects.

- How did it affect their psychological wellbeing?
- How they behave when it was prohibited to go outside?

3. How would you rate the access to healthcare of households with children in the area during pandemic?

- a. How would you rate the quality of local health care?
- b. Have children had COVID-19? If yes, where did they get treatment?
- c. What are challenges you and households with children face in accessing health care during the COVID-19 related restrictive measures?
- d. How did the pandemic-related restriction affect health status of children?
- e. How do you think the healthcare services can be improved?

4. How did the pandemic-related measures affect the healthcare of children? Let's discuss possible positive and negative effects.

- a. How did it affect hygiene?
- b. How did it affect the child's nutrition and diet? Did they have enough access to vegetables and fruits?
- c. How did it affect the vulnerability of the child to illness?
- d. How did it affect the child's access to healthcare/treatment?
- e. How did it affect the behavior of child/children?

5. Child protection and psychosocial wellbeing

- a. How COVID-19 affected children in your area?
- b. How it affected boys/girls?
- c. How do you understand the term "violence against children"?
- d. What do you think, did cases of violence against children changed during pandemic?
- e. What kind of violence against children did you witness or hear in your area during pandemic?
- f. What was your reaction? Was the case reported and, if yes, to whom? If no, why not?
- g. What is the best way of reporting such cases by your opinion?
- h. How can you prevent such cases of violence against children during pandemic? How can you protect a child from violence? Can you provide a recommendation on how to improve referral mechanisms?
- i. Who should children speak to when there is problem and their parents are away?
- j. Do children share their feelings with people other than their parents?
- k. Who do children share their feelings (parent, parents, other relatives, teachers, mentors, other)?
- o. Do children share their feelings with caregiver(s) parenting children during the pandemic-related restrictions?
- p. Can children be punished if they violence the COVID-19 related measures?
- q. Are there any acceptable forms of punishment for children if they disobey?

6. Access to services and awareness of the child rights.

- r. How familiar or otherwise are you with child rights? If familiar, can you name some?
- s. How familiar or otherwise are you with child protection services? Can you name any?
- t. What should be done to improve the knowledge of children on child rights and access to assistance services?

7. Child labour.

- u. What kind of work at home and outside was observed during COVID-19 pandemic in your area?
- v. Should children under 18 be allowed to work for income during and after pandemic?
- aa. How are children in households with absent parents involved in household activities during pandemic-related restriction measures were implemented?
- bb. Did you notice if more children worked during pandemic or not?

8. Institutionalization of children affected by migration.

- cc. What do you think, did cases of sending children to childcare institutions increased/decreased during pandemic?
- dd. Did you hear of such cases in your area?
- ee. What is your attitude towards placing children left behind to institutional care facilities during COVID-19 pandemic?
- ff. What should be done to prevent such cases?

9. Social assistance

Let's talk about the social assistance program for households with children.

- f. Do you have social services (such as health, education, social work) in your neighbourhood?
- g. How easy was it for people to access such services during the pandemic restrictive measures?
- h. What was the role of assistance for households during pandemic?
- f. Were households with migrants and children in need of financial support during COVID-19 restrictions? If YES, Please, explain Why?

10. Wrap-up

Let's summarize our discussion.

- j. Could you name three top positive and negative effects on children in households when pandemic-related measures implemented?
- k. Can you name 3 recommendations on the type of support that should be provided to such households and children during implementation of such measures?
- l. Who should be responsible to carry out these solutions?

ANNEX 13. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

Participants: Healthcare providers, representatives from support of mahalla and family, social and legal protection of minors, social workers, and local authorities (Khokimyat representatives and other state bodies).

Hello. My name is _____, and I am UNICEF local consultant from Tashkent. I am conducting the study for the Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights (Ombudsman) with the technical support from UNICEF. The project is funded by the European union and the results of the study will be used by Ombudsman to prepare recommendations for Oliy Majlis (Parliament) and to incorporate findings into Strategy for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other treaties on the rights of the child for 2021-2026. The results of the study will be used to draft recommendations to prevent negative impacts of pandemic-related measures on children and develop programs to enhance child protection system in Uzbekistan. I would be grateful if you could spend about 1 hour answering my questions. This discussion is anonymous, and your name will not be mentioned in any report document.

The participation in the study is voluntary. You are not obliged to answer any question, and you can stop at any moment. I would like to introduce my assistant, _____, who will be present in the room and take notes during the discussion.

With your permission, I would like to audio-record the FGD. The recorded materials will be used for the study purposes only and will be deleted after the study. Moreover, no identifying information will be revealed to third parties under any circumstances. This is not a requirement for participation in the study, and you may choose not to be audio recorded.

There are no right or wrong answers in this interview, and you will not be judged on the basis of information you provide. We are here to listen to your story and opinion. Would you like to participate in the focus group?

Would you like to ask me anything before you decide to participate? **[Answer any questions they may have before beginning].**

Table 1

q1	Date	_____._____.201____
q2	Moderator	
q3	Note taker	
q4	Region and District	
q5	Number of participants	
q6	Type of the settlement (rural/urban)	
q7	Gender composition (male, female, mixed)	
q8	Duration	____:____:____- ____:____:____

Moderator to introduce the purpose of the discussion. Start by asking participants to introduce themselves by choosing nickname if they want (Assistant: fill out Table 1). Advice to moderators: For time efficiency, can

- I have moderator and assistance ask participants information in above table before they are seated;
- II have moderator and assistant ask different participants at same time;
- III or print off copies of table and ask each participant to fill out with a pen with moderator guiding participants verbally.

Module 1. Participants introductions

We would like to talk about pandemic-related measures, i.e. laws, policies, programmes and services, accepted by the Uzbek government in the beginning of pandemic, on the rights of children affected by parental labor migration in your community and namely, children from families with one or both parents who left for earnings.

1. Please, describe what your organization/department does. What kind of work you do?
2. Does your organization/department play a role in child protection of families affected by labor migration? Please, describe your professional role and functions? (SOP) Were you involved in provision services/ social assistance to children of labor migrants during COVID-19 pandemic?
3. Do you work directly or indirectly with such families and children?
4. If you do not work directly with such families and children, what is your role in addressing services to them?

Module 2. COVID-19 related measures

We would like to know more about the pandemic-related measures and how they affected children left behind (LBC) by parental migration due to employment in abroad.

1. Could you tell us more about the LBC and their families you work with?
2. What was the most important social issues experienced by the labour migrants and their families during pandemic and how it was addressed by the organization/institution you work in?
3. What do you think, how pandemic-related restriction measures affected children left behind parental labour migration? What was the main problems this family faced during pandemic?
4. Which impact did you observe that COVID-19 measure had on LBC's well-being? How did you come about this conclusion? On which basis? Which evidence do you have to prove that impact?
5. What are the negative impacts of pandemic-related measures for LBC? If you identified a negative impact, what do you consider are the options to modify the measure or mitigate the impact on LBC's well-being and children rights? Which compensatory measures could be taken?
6. What are the positive impacts of pandemic-related measures for LBC? If you identified a positive impact, what are the possible options to maximise the impact of this measure on LBC's well-being and children rights?
7. Can we anticipate or predict the medium or long-term impact of the measure on children and children's rights?

Module 3. Awareness of child's rights, social protection for households and children of labor migrants.

1. How familiar or otherwise are you with child rights? If familiar, can you name some?
2. What should be done to improve the knowledge of service providers on child rights?
3. Can you tell us what you think child protection is? Why do children need to be protected and what do they need to be protected from?
4. Who is responsible for child protection services in your area?
5. Do you know any children who needed someone to intervene to protect them? Were children in migrant households more/less at risk during COVID-19 pandemic? Why?
6. What social/protection services are actually available for children of labor migrants and their families? What about during the COVID-19 restrictive measures, were these services available? How efficient were they? Please, provide examples.
7. Do you think the services of your organization/institution were available for everybody during COVID-19 pandemic? What were the obstacles? Please, provide examples.

8. What can be done to prevent institutionalization of children of labor migrants?
9. How many people, on average, applied to your organizations/institutions for assistance monthly/ annually during pandemic? How many people are served by your organization/institution monthly/ annually during pandemic?
10. Are there other professionals / social organizations/institutions working with the same families in your region? Who are those? What are their job titles/professions and the number?
11. Do you think your organization/institution has sufficient number of workers to address the needs of labor migrant families during COVID-19 pandemics? What limitations you experienced in provision your services to such families during implementation of pandemic-related restriction measures?

Module 4. Wrap-up

12. Let's summarize our results of our talk. Could you name top three positive and negative aspects of pandemic-related measures on the rights of the children left behind by parents due to labour migration?
13. In your view, how do the COVID-19 related policy and legislative measures impact LBC? What improvements could be made?
14. Please describe what is the most effective mechanism in place for child protection? What is the most important gap/barrier in child protection?
15. What would you recommend to the policy makers to do in the first place to reduce negative impacts of adopting legislative measures on children left behind by one or both parents due to labour migration?
16. Do you have any other proposals and recommendations on our discussion?

Thank you for participation in our study!

ANNEX 14. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Respondents: representatives of Ministry of Interior, General Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Health, Guardianship and Trusteeship/Commission on Minors, General Childcare institutions, hospitals, local NGO workers, and local authorities (representatives of Khokimyat, mahalla).

Hello. My name is () _____, and I am UNICEF local consultant from Tashkent. The UNICEF is conducting the study for the Commissioner of Uzbekistan for Children's Rights. The project is funded by the European union and the results of the study will be used to develop policies and programs. The results of the study will be used by Ombudsman to prepare recommendations for Oliy Majlis (Parliament) and to incorporate findings into Strategy for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other treaties on the rights of the child for 2021-2026. The results of the study will be used to draft recommendations to prevent negative impacts of pandemic-related measures on children and develop programs to enhance child protection system in Uzbekistan.

I would be grateful if you could spend about 1 hour answering my questions. This interview is anonymous, and your name will not be mentioned in any report concerning the study. The participation in the study is voluntary. You are not obliged to answer any question, and you can stop at any moment. The purpose of this interview is to assess the potential impacts on children left behind (LBC) by one or both parents due to labour migration, of pandemic-related measures, i.e. laws, policies, programmes and services, accepted by the Uzbek government in the beginning of pandemic, on the rights of LBC. We very much appreciate your participation in the study. With your permission, I would like to audio-record the interview. The recorded materials will be used for the study purposes only and will be deleted after the study. Moreover, no identifying information will be revealed to third parties under any circumstances. This is not a requirement for participation in the study, and you may choose not to be audio recorded.

There are no right or wrong answers in this interview, and you will not be judged on the basis of information you provide. As such, I am here to ask your expert opinion about the situation in the area(district/town/village). Are you willing to participate in the interview? Would you like to ask me any questions about the interview before you decide to participate? **[Answer any questions they may have before beginning].**

q1	Date	_____._____.201____
q2	Interviewer	
q3	Region and District	
q4	Type of the settlement (rural/urban)	
q5	Organization that the respondent represent	
q6	Type of the settlement (rural/urban)	
q7	Duration	
q8	Position	____:____:____-____:____:____

Module 1. Introduction

1. Can you tell me about your organization?

- How does the organization work with families with children of migrants?
- Could you describe your main functions/responsibilities in this position?
- How long have you been working in this organization?
- Over the 1.5 year, did you work with such families with children?
- What are the major social problems that children from such families faced during COVID-19 pandemic?
- Do you notice any changes in the way they behave due to pandemic?
- Could you tell us about the target population you work with?
- Are there are other professionals working with the same population in your organization? Who are those workers?

2. For households with children, what were the common challenges during COVID-19 pandemic?

- a. What about challenges for migrant households with children during COVID-19 pandemic?
- b. Have you worked with migrant families and children during pandemic? If yes, what kind of support did you provide? What were the outcomes?
- c. How do these challenges differ between households with children comparing to non-immigrant households?

3. How did COVID-19 pandemic measures affect the lives of children left behind (LBC)?

- a. Could you tell us more about the LBC and their families you work with?
- b. What was the most important social issues experienced by the labour migrants and their families during pandemic and how it was addressed by the organization/institution you work in?
- c. What do you think, how pandemic-related restriction measures affected children left behind parental labour migration? What was the main problems this family faced during pandemic?
- d. Which impact did you observe that COVID-19 measure had on LBC's well-being? How did you come about this conclusion? On which basis? Which evidence do you have to prove that impact?
- e. What are the negative impacts of pandemic-related measures for LBC? If you identified a negative impact, what do you consider are the options to modify the measure or mitigate the impact on LBC's well-being and children rights? Which compensatory measures could be taken?
- f. What are the positive impacts of pandemic-related measures for LBC? If you identified a positive impact, what are the possible options to maximise the impact of this measure on LBC's well-being and children rights?
- g. Have you heard of any cases when children were abandoned during the COVID-19 pandemic? What about children placed in institutional care facility? How important is it not to place the child in childcare institutions?
- h. Can we anticipate or predict the medium or long-term impact of the measure on children and children's rights?
- i. What do you think, has a broad range of relevant stakeholders (including children and young people) been consulted by the body who initiated the measure?

4. What does your organization do to address negative effects of pandemic-related measures on children, left-behind due to parental migration?

- a. What other organizations help children of migrant households in the area during pandemic? What challenges had children with immigrant parents compared to non-immigrant ones during COVID-19 pandemic?

Module 2. Health & Nutrition

5. How would you rate the access to healthcare in the area?

- a. Is there any impact of the COVID-19 restrictive measures on children's health? How you came to this conclusion? What evidences do you have?
- b. Did households with LBC have enough access to get food products? What were the impact of these measures to their access to food products?
- c. What do you think, how the COVID-19 related measures influenced the access to healthcare facilities for LBC? How you came to this conclusion? What evidences do you have?
- d. Do all children in your neighbourhood had access for vaccinations during pandemic?
- e. What services do you think should be added to improve healthcare for LBC during COVID-19 pandemic?

6. Let's discuss possible positive and negative effects of COVID-19 measures to LBC.

- f. How did pandemic-related measure affect the LBC's nutrition?
- g. How did pandemic-related measure affect LBC's daily routine?
- h. How did pandemic-related measure affect vulnerability of LBC to illness?
- i. How did pandemic-related measure affect LBC's access to treatment?

Module 3. Socio and psychological effects

7. Corporal Punishment.

- a. What should a parent/caregiver do when a child does not obey or behaves badly? What methods are considered good to raise a child?
- b. To ensure a child has good upbringing, should he/she be ever punished? How so? How can adults teach children how to behave without administering punishment?
- c. Can children be punished if they violence the COVID-19 related measures? Did you witness or hear any punishment of children for violence such measures?

8. Violence against children.

- a. How do you understand the term "violence against children" or neglect"?
- b. How changed situation with violence against children during the COVID-19 restrictive measures? What kind of violence against children did you witness or hear in your area during pandemic?
- c. How can we prevent violence against children in the community?
- d. What would be your reaction to such cases if you witness violence against children during pandemic?
- e. What authorities do you think violence against children should be reported to?
- f. Can you recommend how to improve referral mechanisms of violence against children?
- g. Do you think caregiver can punish children during the COVID-19 pandemic? How?

9. Identifying issues.

- a. Who should children speak to when they have a family problem such as personal conflicts, neglect, etc.?
- b. Do children in your area speak about their problems with caregivers or other relatives when parents are away? Have you heard of such cases?

10. Awareness about child rights.

- a. How familiar are you with child rights? If familiar, can you name some?
- b. Where have you heard about them?
- c. How familiar are people in your area with child rights? How it can be improved?
- d. How familiar are children in your area with child rights? What children are familiar with child rights (age, education level, children of migrant parent/parents, etc.)?
- e. How familiar are children in your area with child protection services?
- f. Can you name 3 recommendations on how to improve knowledge on child rights and social assistance services?

11. Child labour.

- a. What kind of physical work is acceptable for children?
- b. Do children under 18 perform any income-generating activities?
- c. What kind of income-generating activities children do they perform?
- d. How are children from migrant families involved in such activities?
- e. Did you noticed more children worked during pandemic or not?

12. Institutionalization of children.

- a. Have you heard of any children being institutionalized during COVID-19 pandemic? What is your attitude to that?
- b. Can you name any recommendations to prevent children from being institutionalized?

13. What is the role of your organization in addressing negative psychosocial effects of the COVID-19 restrictive measures on children of migrants?

- a. What can be done to address these issues and what is needed to improve the situation of left behind children?
- b. Who do children share their thoughts and concerns other than caregivers (other relatives, teachers, etc.)?
- c. What communication issues children may have with their caregivers during pandemic?
- d. Do you think children affected by migration had any interaction problems with their peers during COVID-19? Why?
- e. How would you characterize the relationship that takes place between children and their caregivers during COVID-19 pandemic?

14. Let's talk about the social assistance program for vulnerable households.

- a. Do you have any social service programs in your area?
- b. How easy is it to access social services for HH with children?
- c. What is the role of such assistance for families where parents left for employment?
- d. How effective was the social service provision for vulnerable families, including families with migrants during the COVID-19 restrictive measures? Why?
- e. What recommendations do you have to enhance social support services during the pandemic?
- f. What knowledge and skills in your opinion are needed to fulfil the functions in work with migrant households?
- g. What assistance programs should be developed and provided to families with children affected by migration during pandemic?

15. Let's summarize our results of our talk.

- a. Can you suggest recommendations on the type of support to such households during pandemic? Who should be responsible for implementing these solutions?
- b. What evidence should be available to assess impact of a proposal on children's right and how those children identified as being most affected by the proposal should be involved in its development?
- c. What recommendations and tools can be used to enhance mechanisms for assessment of developing pandemic-related measures, i.e. laws, policies, programmes and services, and getting feedback of vulnerable children to ensure compliance with children's rights?

ANNEX 15. UNICEF RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL



Research Ethics Approval

14 June 2021

Sherzodbek Inakov, MPH, PhD
UNICEF national consultant
16, Sharof Rashidov Street
Tashkent, 100029, Uzbekistan

RE: Ethics Review Board findings for: *Child Rights Impact Assessment of COVID-19 on children affected by migration (CRIA), Case of Uzbekistan* (HML IRB Review #396UZBE21)

Dear Dr. Inakov,

Protocols for the protection of human subjects in the above study were assessed through a research ethics review by HML Institutional Review Board (IRB) on 03 – 14 June 2021. This study's human subjects' protection protocols, as stated in the materials submitted, received **ethics review approval**.

You and your project staff remain responsible for ensuring compliance with HML IRB's determinations. Those responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- ensuring prompt reporting to HML IRB of proposed changes in this study's design, risks, consent, or other human protection protocols and providing copies of any revised materials;
- conducting the research activity in accordance with the terms of the IRB approval until any proposed changes have been reviewed and approved by the IRB, except when necessary to mitigate hazards to subjects;
- promptly reporting any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others in the course of this study;
- notifying HML IRB when your study is completed.

HML IRB is authorized by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Human Research Protections (IRB #1211, IORG #850, FWA #1102).

Sincerely,

D. Michael Anderson, Ph.D., MPH
Chair & Human Subjects Protections Director, HML IRB

cc: Zhanar Sagimbayeva, Antonia Luedeke, Zokir Nazarov, Shakhlo Ashrafkhanova, Шерзодбек Инаков, Penelope Lantz, JD

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ANNEX 16. INFORMATION ABOUT RESEARCH FIELD TEAM

Name of Staff & Firm associated with	Area of Expertise	Company	Designation for this Assignment	Number of years of relevant project experience
Sherzodbek INAKOV	Experience: Qualitative and quantitative research; Evidence Based Medicine; Data analysis & Statistics (SPSS, EpiInfo, STATA); Preparation of recommendations on improvement quality of medical care; Analysing socio-demographic changes in regions, data collection (ODK).	Tashkent Medical Academy	Local consultant	12 years
Sattor RAKHMATOV	Experience: Health care system of Uzbekistan Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan on ecology and environmental protection, labor and social relations, health care and ensuring the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of children, as well as activities on improvement of legislation in these areas.	Committee of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis on health protection of citizens	Coordinator of Ombudsperson for Children's Rights	25 years

The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, since the entry into force in 1958 of the Treaty of Rome which founded the European Economic Community, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

The European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) is a not-for-profit association of independent children's rights institutions (ICRIs). Its mandate is to facilitate the promotion and protection of the rights of children, as formulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. ENOC was established at a meeting in 1997 and by 2021 it had grown to include 43 institutions in 34 countries within the Council of Europe, 22 of which EU countries. Membership is limited to institutions in the 47 member states of the Council of Europe.

The function of protecting the rights of the child by the state is reflected in the activities of the Ombudsman for the Rights of the Child. Today, the Ombudsman for the Rights of the Child works in about eighty countries around the world to defend the rights and legitimate interests of children. Their main task is to implement the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to actively involve the entire society and the state in protecting the individual, honor, dignity, rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of the child.

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. UNICEF is committed to doing all it can to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in partnership with governments, civil society, business, academia and the United Nations family – and especially children and young people.

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