



VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEW

Inclusive Almaty



Almaty 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Significance of the Voluntary Local Review

According to the United Nations (UN), in 2007 the world became predominantly urbanised for the first time: more than 50% of the population lived in cities, and by 2025 this share had already reached approximately 58% (over 4.8 billion people). The annual rate of global urbanisation in 2020–2025 is about 1.7%, and by 2050, according to UN estimates, about 68% of the world’s population will live in cities. These figures reflect not just statistics, but a powerful social trend: cities are becoming the main centres of life, economy and innovation.

Almaty, like other megacities around the world, is facing the consequences of rapid urbanisation — sharp population growth, infrastructure overload and increased social pressure. As of 1 May 2025, Almaty has a population of over 2.31 million, with a positive net migration of over 11,800 people in January–April 2025 alone.

In the context of these global challeng-

es, which affect social and economic stability, sustainable development and inclusion, the city of Almaty plays a key role in implementing strategies aimed at improving the quality of life of the population in the Central Asian region.

In this context, Kazakhstan’s first Voluntary Local Review (VLR) was developed in 2023. The purpose of this document was to reflect the existing institutional framework that underpins the city’s transition to sustainable development, marked by the development of the Almaty City Development Programme until 2025 and medium-term prospects until 2030 (the Development Programme). The document provided examples of flagship urban projects, short-term target indicators, and showcased Almaty’s infrastructure and digital capacities for building a sustainable city.

The second VLR focused on the theme of inclusion. Its main objective is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the current state of the city’s socio-economic development, demonstrate achievements, and describe promising areas for further progress. In preparing the review, special attention was given to engaging all stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society and academia. This approach ensures a more objective and transparent assessment of the effectiveness of programmes and initiatives.

The significance of the second VLR for the city of Almaty lies in the fact that the document will make it possible to assess the extent to which urban policies and programmes comply with the principles of inclusiveness, sustainable development and social justice. This is particularly impor-

tant in the context of promoting access to education, health and social services, improving urban infrastructure and supporting vulnerable groups of the population. The VLR is not only a tool but also an important strategic planning mechanism that helps Almaty move towards an inclusive and sustainable future. Thanks to a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation, the city is able to respond effectively to emerging challenges, adjust strategies and improve the effectiveness of its initiatives in line with the needs of its residents.



Brief Overview of the First VLR

The Almaty City Development Programme until 2025 and Medium-Term Prospects until 2030 has become a key strategic document marking the transition from traditional urban planning to a sustainable and inclusive model. It was developed in a spirit of open dialogue, with the participation of over 130 experts and engaged citizens, who submitted more than 1,280 comments and suggestions. Approved in autumn 2022, the programme laid the foundation for a new philosophy of urban development, prioritising residents' well-being, environmental sustainability, equal access to opportunities and the involvement of all segments of the population in the development of the city.

The development programme is conceptually aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), integrating them into the priority areas of urban policy. This applies to areas such as sustainable transport, affordable housing, inclusive education, healthcare, the green economy, digitalization, security and reducing inequality. Thus, the Development Programme has become not only an instrument of local development, but also a logical basis for the preparation of the first VLR presented on the UN platform.

The first VLR was a continuation of the ideas and approaches laid down in the Development Programme and also became an important step towards integrating the principles of sustainable development into urban planning. The document was developed with the aim of demonstrating to the international community the city's commitment to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and assuming an active position on the global stage, including by advocating for the establishment of a UN Regional Hub for the SDGs in Almaty.

ALMATY BECAME THE FIRST CITY IN CENTRAL ASIA TO PLACE ITS VLR ON THE UN PLATFORM

The review covered the institutional, regulatory and programmatic environment, highlighted the participation of key stakeholders, including civil society, and set the stage for digital monitoring of progress. Almaty became the first city in Central Asia to publish its Voluntary Local Review (VLR) on the UN platform, signaling open dialogue, attracting sustainable investment, and implementing advanced solutions.

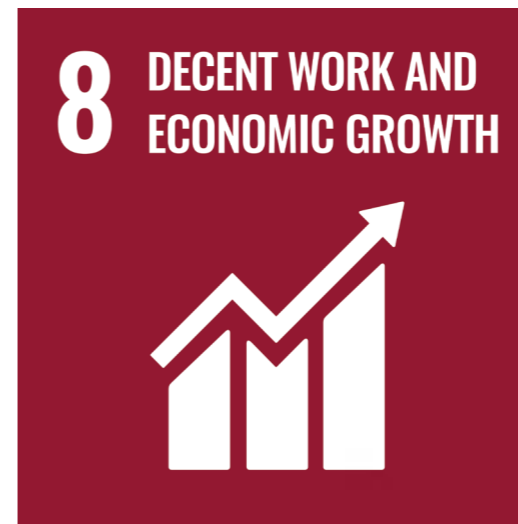


The first Voluntary Local Review (VLR) highlighted the city's key projects related to specific SDGs, with the following results to date:



SDG 11. Sustainable cities and communities

- The Master Plan for the Transport Infrastructure of Almaty City until 2030 has been approved;
- Detailed planning projects for five polycentres have been approved;
- The Almaty Design Code has been approved;
- Almaty City Building Regulations have been approved;
- Almaty City Planning Regulations have been approved.



SDG 8. Decent work and economic growth

- A 3 600 m² creative hub with 14 residents has been commissioned at 44 Markov Street.



SDG 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

- A robotics training laboratory has been launched at the Kazakh-British Technical University;
- Satbayev University's Electronic Circuit Board Production Laboratory has been launched;
- A memorandum has been signed with TUS Holding (China), and plans are underway to establish a business incubator at Al-Farabi Hub (Al-Farabi Kazakh National University).

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



SDG 4. Quality education

- 13 schools with 23,100 places have been built under the Comfortable School programme;
- The “Almaty School Model” concept for the development of the city’s education system has been developed;
- A plan for the concept “Year of Working Professions” was developed as part of the “Concept for the Development of the Almaty City Education System.”

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



SDG 3. Good health and well-being

- A unified standard for primary health care (PHC) organizations in Almaty has been developed;
- The concept for the development of digital medicine has been approved;
- Two PHC centres and one polyclinic were opened;
- A new building for the Children’s Emergency Medical Care Centre was opened.

Based on the above, it is worth noting the dynamic development of these areas and the improvement in infrastructure quality, as reflected in specific projects aimed at creating comfortable and inclusive living conditions for the citizens of Almaty.

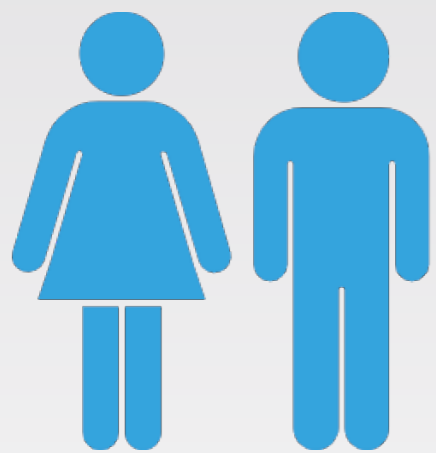


CITY CONTEXT AND CHARACTERISTICS

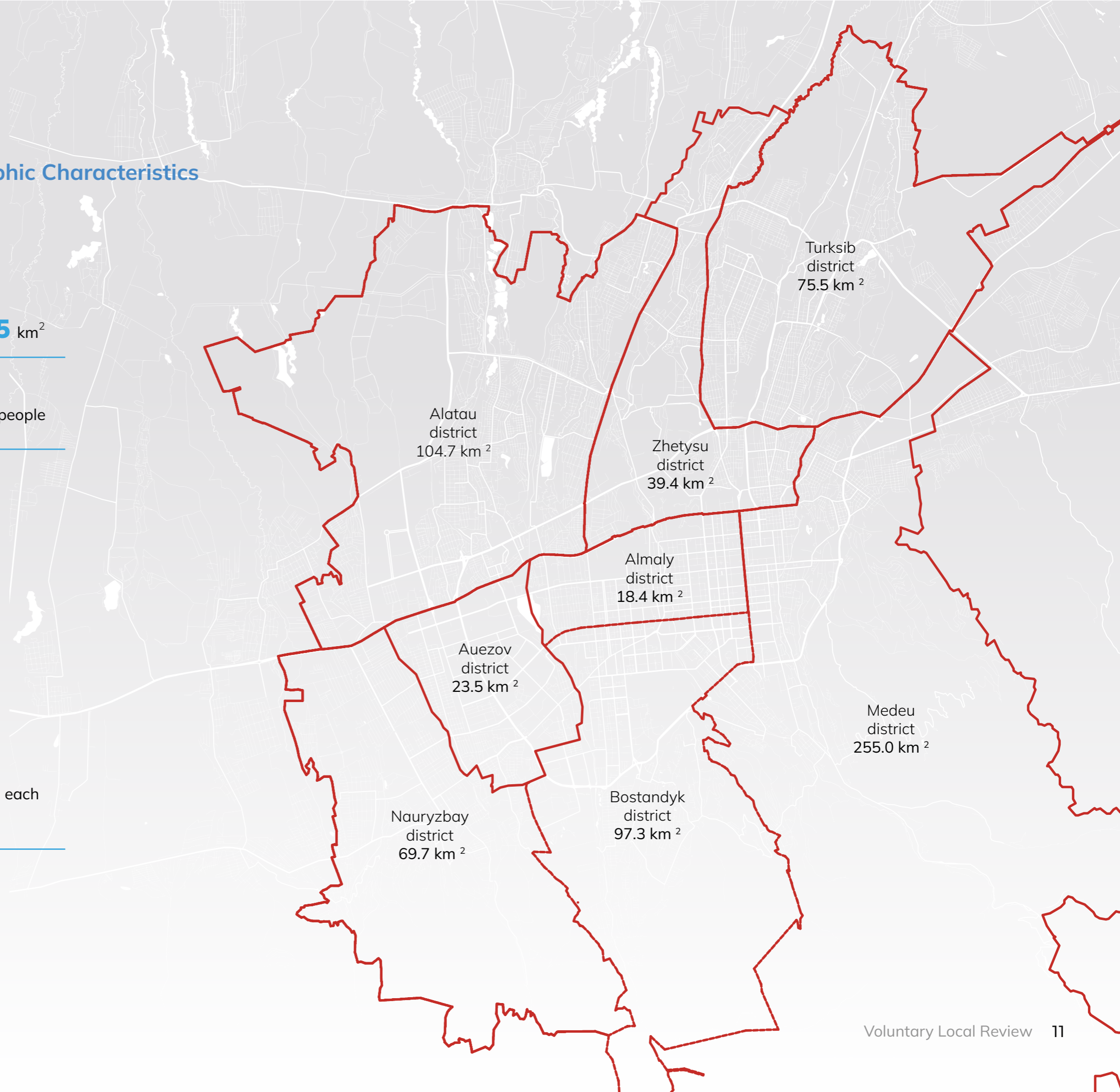
Key Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of Almaty

Area **683.5** km²

Population **2,292,100** people



The city is divided into eight administrative districts, each operating autonomously



2024

Key socio-economic indicators

Population	2,292,100 people
Life expectancy at birth	78.78 years
Estimated average nominal cash income per capita	344,454 tenge
Percentage of the population with incomes below the subsistence minimum	4.5 %
Labour force	1,135,100 people
Employed population	1,083,000 people
Unemployment rate	4.6 %
Proportion of NEET youth* (ages 15–34)	6.4 %
Youth unemployment rate (ages 15–34)	4.4 %
Average monthly nominal wage	490,963 tenge 1,045.8 US dollars
Minimum wage	85,000 tenge
Gross regional product	31,294.4 billion tenge
GRP per capita**	13.845 million tenge
Industrial production volume	2,153.4 billion tenge
Volume of construction work	735.2 billion tenge
Residential buildings commissioned	2,556,000 m ² of total area

* NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) - young people who do not study, work or receive vocational training

** GRP - gross regional product

Retail turnover	7,803.6 billion tenge
Investments in fixed assets	2,069,933 million tenge
Number of active small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)	367,784 units
Number of people employed in SMEs	1,013,702 persons
SME output	26,562.4 million tenge
Housing stock	57.5 million m ²
Housing provision per capital	30.4 m ²
Domestic R&D expenditure***	94,580.1 million tenge
Number of organizations (enterprises) engaged in R&D	142 units
Number of tourists	2,340,413 people
Number of foreign tourists	686,355 people
Number of higher education institutions	37 units
Number of students in higher education institutions	201,988 people
Number of registered persons with disabilities	59,899 people
Number of registered children under 18 with disabilities	9,912 people
Number of pension recipients	253,078 people
Average monthly pension	102,958 tenge

*** R&D - research and development

Source: <https://stat.gov.kz/en/>

National and Regional Policies Aimed at Promoting Inclusion

An inclusive urban environment in Almaty is being developed in accordance with the national strategy and other regulatory acts, as well as regional regulatory documents, with the aim of creating equal opportunities for all categories of citizens.



Strategic documents at the national level:

The Concept of Inclusive Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2025–2030 reflects the vision, defines the basic principles, goals and objectives of state policy, and provides for the implementation of the international norms of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2015. The concept aims to improve the socio-economic situation of the population, including persons with disabilities, and to create

conditions for their full social, economic and political participation in society. The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Concept of Inclusive Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2025-2030 provides for 52 projects in 13 different areas.

Source: <https://adilet.zan.kz/kaz/docs/P2400001143>

The National Plan for Ensuring the Rights and Improving the Quality of Life of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2025 is aimed at implementing international standards, taking into account global trends in the development of social protection systems for persons with disabilities. The National Plan includes 95 projects in 10 areas: prevention and early detection of disability; access to education; improving the effectiveness of social rehabilitation and habilitation; modernization of the social services system; improvement of standards

for special social services and tariff setting; status of social workers; development of cultural and sporting events for persons with disabilities; barrier-free environment; economic independence and quality employment; modernization of public awareness.

Source: <https://adilet.zan.kz/kaz/docs/P1900000326>

The Concept of Family and Gender Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030 is an integral part of Kazakhstan's social policy and represents a system of principles, assessments and measures of organizational, economic, legal, scientific, informational and personnel support aimed at improving conditions and quality of life for families. The objectives of state family policy are to support, strengthen and protect families, create the necessary conditions conducive

to the physical, intellectual, spiritual and moral development of families and their members, and protect motherhood, fatherhood and childhood.

Source: <https://adilet.zan.kz/kaz/docs/U1600000384>

Regional policy:

Almaty City Development Program until 2025 and medium-term prospects until 2030 is an integral part of the social policy of the city of Almaty and includes seven main areas of development, including the goal of "Social Sustainability and Stability", which covers education, culture, youth, physical culture and sports, as well as the creation of an inclusive urban environment.

Source: https://almatydc.kz/uploads/reports/38/file_kk/almaty-alasyny-2025-zhyl-a-dey-ng-damytu-ba-darlamasy.pdf

The concept of “Inclusive Almaty until 2030” was developed by the office of the akim’s (city governor’s) advisor on inclusion, with the assistance of local executive bodies. It is currently under review and approval by the city administration. After that, the document will be approved by the city council. The concept includes 88 projects in 15 different areas.



ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

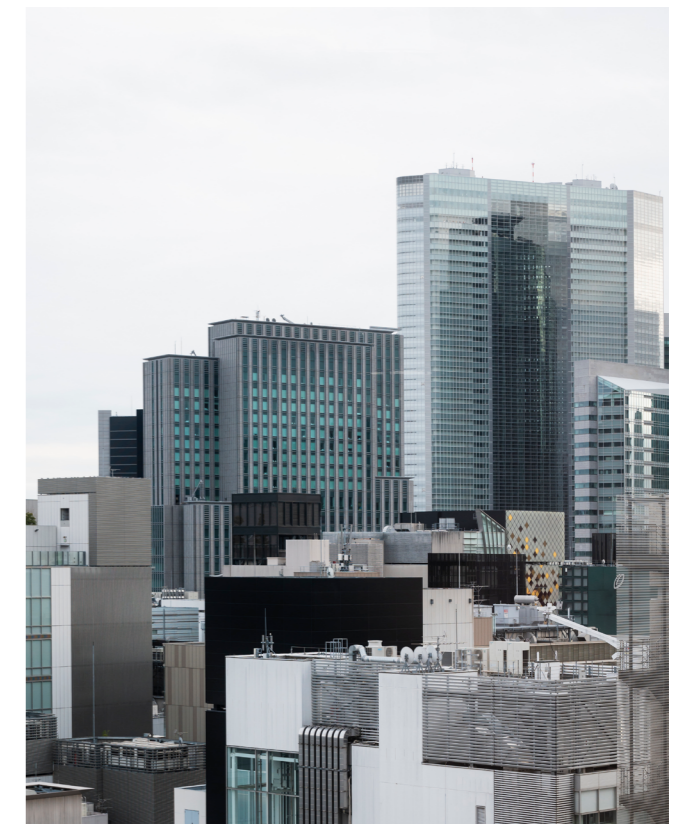


SDG 11

Sustainable Cities and Communities.
Accessibility of Infrastructure and Urban Services, Including for Persons with Disabilities

Almaty is Kazakhstan’s largest metropolis with a population of over two million. The city is a leader in the country in terms of economic and social development, as well as the implementation of innovative solutions in the field of sustainable and inclusive urban development. In recent years, Almaty has demonstrated a clear political will and commitment to creating a comfortable, safe and accessible urban environment for all categories of citizens, including persons with disabilities, older citizens, parents with children, and other low-mobility and vulnerable groups.

The physical and informational accessibility of the urban environment, transport, services, and technologies is a basic prerequisite for the independence of people, including those with special needs, and their full participation in public life. The current state of the inclusive urban environment in Almaty is directly related to the accessibility of urban infrastructure. Accessibility is a parameter of the quality of urban facilities and services for all citizens.



Source: <https://adilet.zan.kz/kaz/docs/P2400001143>

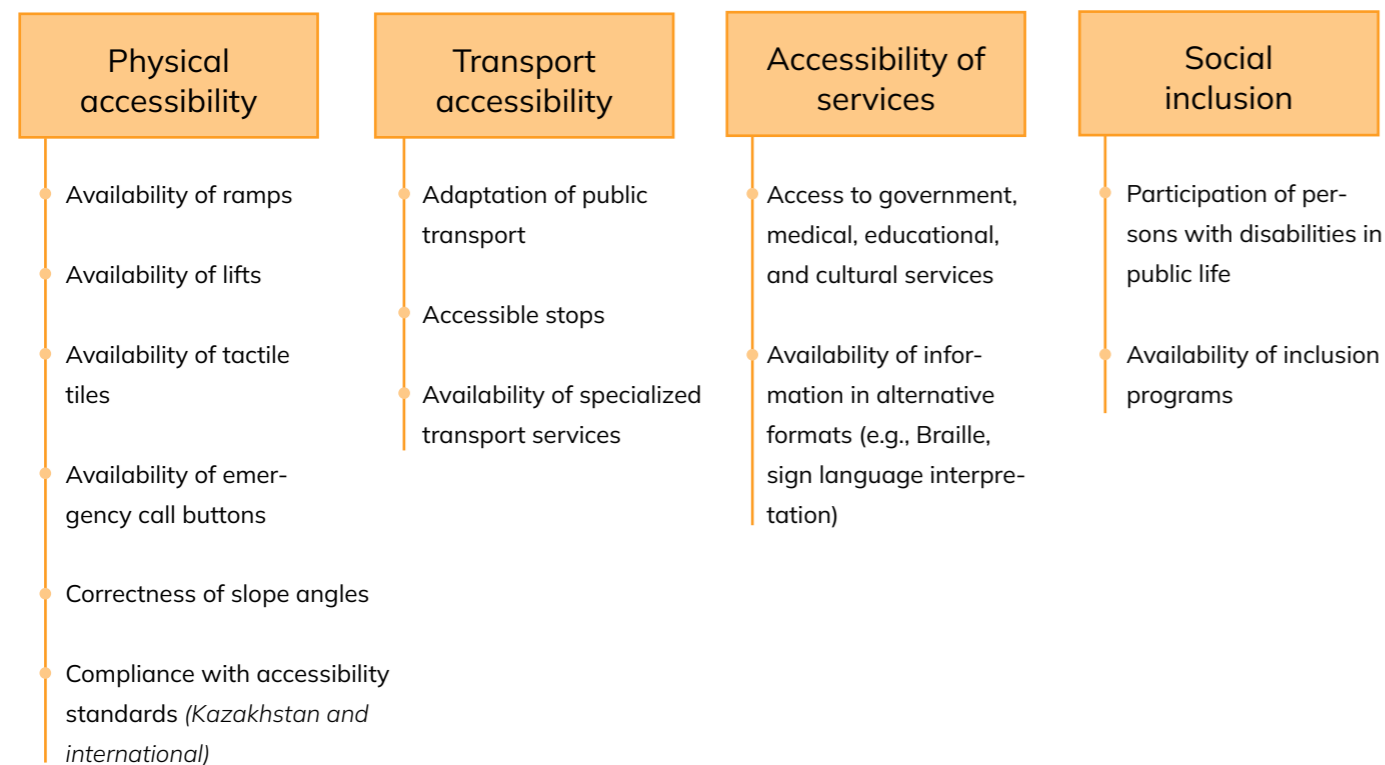
Urban services are provided by city authorities or private organizations under the control of the city to ensure a comfortable life for city residents. They include administrative, utility, transport, social services, and security.

Different sources cover different numbers of urban service providers in their analyses.

An analysis conducted by the information portal “Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities” in 2024 covered 10,122 social and transport infrastruc-

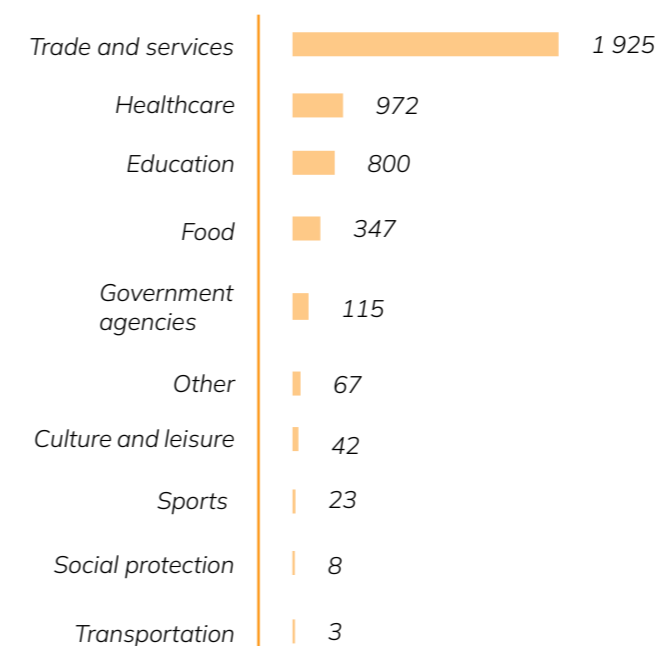
ture facilities in Almaty. As a result, data on 4,814 facilities accessible to persons with disabilities was presented.

With regard to the accessibility of urban services, the following parameters will be assessed:



One of the key tools for analysis and planning in this area is the virtual map project “Accessible Kazakhstan”. As part of monitoring in Almaty, 24,365 urban infrastructure facilities were surveyed, including government agencies, healthcare, cultural, leisure, educational, commercial and service facilities, catering, transport, sports, religious, financial institutions and residential facilities. As of now, only 148 facilities are considered fully accessible to wheelchair users, 7,118 are partially accessible (requiring assistance from others), and 17,099 are inaccessible.

Share of facilities by accessibility for persons with disabilities



Source: <https://inva.kz/2025/11/03/bole-4-3-tys-obektov-adaptirovano-dlya-lic-s-invalidnostju-v-almaty/>

Despite this, Almaty is taking active steps to improve the situation. All of the city’s strategic documents, including the Almaty City Development Programme until 2025 and the medium-term prospects until 2030, are based on the principles of universal design, reasonable accommodation and priority ad-

aptation of social infrastructure. Work has begun to improve the accessibility of health-care, education, public services and transport facilities. Representatives of vulnerable groups are involved in the design process for new facilities to ensure a systematic approach. In particular, the Urban Planning Council includes experts on inclusion and representatives of the disabled community.

At the same time, the city is working on digital solutions. The Almaty City Situation Centre collects data from all municipal structures and displays the level of accessibility of the city’s infrastructure in real time. According to the latest data, 15,608 facilities are covered, of which 83% are recognised as partially accessible. This provides a unique opportunity to make quick decisions, prioritise investments and track progress.

The Situation Centre is an integrated information and analytical platform designed to support management decision-making based on comprehensive analysis of city data. The platform serves as a tool for in-depth analysis of the city’s socio-economic processes, providing management bodies with enhanced capabilities for monitoring, forecasting and making informed decisions.

One of the modules of the Situation Centre is the “Digital Inclusion Service”, developed to support systematic assessment and reporting on the accessibility of city for all categories of residents. The main goal is to enable the city to monitor and enforce accessibility standards while informing citizens about the status of inclusiveness of public spaces and facilities.

The system includes a mobile administrative panel for city operators, where they can enter inspection data and adaptation results. In addition, it features a publicly accessible interactive map that displays the accessibility status of city facilities for people with hearing impairments, visual impairments, limited mobility, and musculoskeletal disorders.

The map clearly displays the level of compliance and allows residents to make informed choices about which areas are accessible to them, taking into account their needs. In addition, the system includes analytical tools that assess accessibility by area, taking into account the age groups of residents, geographical distribution, and types of facilities.

It is worth noting that in 2025, the Digital Inclusion Service won the SDG City Awards, organised by CityNet, the largest association of cities committed to sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region, in the category of 'Inclusive Leadership in SDGs'.

There have also been positive changes in the city's transport system. Since 2021, 212 trolleybuses and 1,150 low-floor buses equipped with ramps, call buttons and seats for passengers with reduced mobility have been purchased and put into op-

eration. The new rolling stock has also made it possible to organise 30 new suburban routes and provide better transport links for residents of more than 20 settlements. Today, passenger traffic has already reached 1.8 million people per day.

In addition, tactile indicators and voice signals have been installed at 120 intersections throughout the city. Tactile navigation has been introduced in the metro, and a number of routes offer an expanded set of inclusive features.



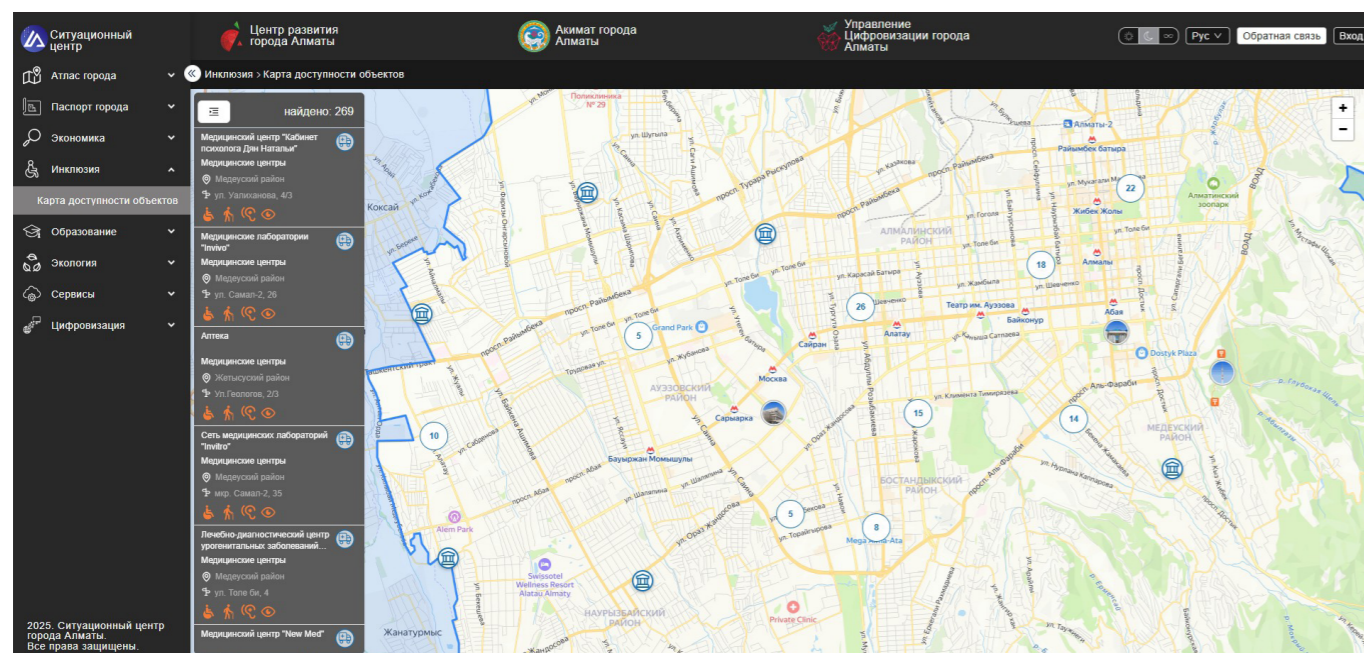
There are plans to extend the existing metro line westwards and to develop new lines to the east and north.

Serious efforts are also being made to expand the transport network. There are plans to extend the existing metro line westwards and to develop new lines to the east and north, connecting key points in the city — Almaty International Airport and Almaty-1 railway station. At the same time, LRT coverage areas are being developed to connect the west and east of the city, thereby ensuring inclusive mobility for even more city residents.

Almaty is also strengthening institutional mechanisms for implementing the inclusive agenda: monitoring of compliance with accessibility standards at the design stage is being stepped up, training programmes for staff are being implemented, and quality assessment systems

are being introduced. At the same time, the city recognises the need to move from a formal approach to a truly inclusive one, involving people with disabilities themselves in design, auditing and decision-making.

Thus, despite the existing challenges, Almaty is demonstrating steady progress in building an inclusive city. Ongoing reforms in infrastructure, transport, digitalisation and citizen participation give hope that the level of accessibility in the urban environment will increase significantly in the coming years. In this process, it is important to maintain cross-sectoral partnerships between the state, business, Non-governmental organizations (NGO) and city residents — only through joint efforts can true inclusion be achieved.



Inclusion/Accessibility map. Situation centre

Indicator:

Name	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of facilities covered by certification for compliance with modern accessibility requirements for persons with special needs, units.	260	260	260	7,500	15,000

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



SDG 4

Quality Education. Inclusion in Education

Inclusive education is a key area of educational policy aimed at ensuring equal conditions for all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual or social characteristics. Kazakhstan is developing inclusion in accordance with international standards and national laws, including the Constitution, the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Education”, the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On the Rights of the Child”, as well as strategic concepts for 2023–2030.

A significant step was the signing of Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 56-VII of 26 June 2021 “On Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Inclusive Education”, which establishes guarantees for the creation of special conditions for children with special educational needs (SEN) so that every child with SEN can attend a regular school near their home and undergo the process of socialisation on an equal footing with their peers. The document regulates the assessment of needs, support, adaptation of programmes and the responsibility of managers for creating an inclusive environment. The positions of teaching assistants and per capita funding have been introduced, and the activities of the Psychological, Medical and Pedagogical Commission (PMPC) have been reoriented from a

medical to a socio-pedagogical approach.

The category of children with SEN includes those who face difficulties in the emotional, social and cognitive spheres, including children with disabilities, migrants, refugees from socially vulnerable groups. Almaty, as the largest educational centre, is actively developing an inclusive system across all levels of education.



Pre-school education

Almaty is actively developing inclusive preschool education in line with the Concept of Inclusive Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2025–2030, according to which 20% of preschool organizations are required to provide education for children with SEN by 2025.

Percentage of organizations providing conditions for the education of children with SEN



Currently, 2,076 children with disabilities are being educated in the city’s preschool institutions, 187 of whom have registered disabilities.

A safe and comfortable educational environment is ensured through individual programmes, adapted teaching methods and training for specialists. Already, 880 teachers have completed advanced training courses in inclusive education. The preschool education system employs 187 speech therapists, 55 de-

fectologists, 9 teaching assistants, 6 deaf educators, and 4 typhlopedagogues.

In addition, there are 13 specialized state institutions for children with SEN, including specialized kindergartens for hearing, vision, speech and mental disabilities.

Almaty is demonstrating steady progress in inclusive education at the preschool level, above the national average, indicating that the city’s strategy for creating an inclusive urban environment is on the right track.



Indicator:

Name	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Percentage of preschool institutions that have created conditions for the education and training of children with SEN, %	83.1	82.5	46.6	83.5	87.0

Secondary education

Inclusive education in Almaty at the secondary level is implemented in several forms: teaching in mainstream classrooms, support from specialists, and distance/home learning. In 2025, inclusive education covered 2,750 students in 212 schools in the city. Since 2016, the number of schools that have created conditions for teaching children with SEN has been steadily growing: from 183 schools in the 2020–2021 academic year to 212 in the 2024–2025 academic year.

63 special (remedial) classes for 510 children with developmental delays have been opened in 14 schools, and in 2025, 4 schools opened “Life Skills Classes” for children with mental disorders, where 22 students are enrolled. 196 schools have inclusive classrooms with the necessary resources for individual and group lessons. Since 2024, there have been 8 Inclusive Academy competence centres and

8 base schools providing methodological support to teachers. At the same time, there are seven special boarding schools where 2,747 children with hearing, vision, speech, musculoskeletal and intellectual impairments are educated. These schools are provided with specialized equipment and materials.

Psychological and pedagogical support is provided by 1,105 specialists: 295 psychologists, 165 speech therapists, 146 special educators and 499 teaching assistants. However, there is still a shortage of qualified personnel, especially given the growing number of children with SEN. Two resource centres have been established: the City Inclusive Resource Centre (CIRC) and a centre based at School No. 10. Their key activities are providing counselling to parents on psychological and pedagogical correction and rehabilitation of children, as well as training teachers who work with children with special needs.



In order to solve the problem of a shortage of school places in Almaty, a project to build new schools is being actively implemented as part of the national project “Keleshek mekteptieri” (formerly “Comfortable School”).

As part of the national project “Keleshek mekteptieri”, 21 new schools with 34,800 student places are planned to be built in Almaty. One of these schools was opened on September 1, 2024.

On September 1, 2025, 7 schools with 12,000 places were opened. Another 5 schools with 10,500 places have been completed and began teaching in the second quarter of the current academic year.

In addition, there are plans to purchase eight schools with 11,700 places from private investors through a buyout mechanism.

In addition, to support the accessibility

and safety of school education, the Almaty City Administration has initiated the School Bus project. Its goal is to organise transportation for students from home to school and back, especially in areas with insufficient school infrastructure. In 2023–2024, 200 school buses were purchased, including 150 small-capacity (20 seats) and 50 larger-capacity (36 seats) buses. Today, 58 schools in the city have been identified, covering 12,201 students, with transportation provided by 200 school buses (1,033 trips per day). This initiative has significantly improved educational opportunities for children living in remote neighborhoods. The plan is to cover 100% of schoolchildren who have difficulty getting to school by 2030.



Indicator:

Name	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Percentage of schools that have created conditions for inclusive education, %	87.4	92.3	94.3	96.7	98.1

Supplementary education

Supplementary education in Almaty provides children with SEN with opportunities for development in creative, cultural and leisure activities. In 2025, as part of the state education order placed with 76 private organizations, 1,210 children with SEN participate in clubs and sections across seven areas: scientific and technical (180 children), artistic and aesthetic (280), social and pedagogical (250), humanities (250), and natural sciences and mathematics (250). The total funding amounted to 923 million tenge.

There is also a branch of Schoolchildren’s House No. 7, which runs clubs for children with special needs. The programmes include adaptive physical education, speech development, life skills, choreography, theatre, and swimming. Currently, 120 children aged 5 to 13 are covered.

Secondary specialized education

An inclusive educational environment in technical and vocational post-secondary education institutions plays an important role in ensuring equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their health status and difficulties caused by behavioural, social, economic, cultural, and linguistic factors.

In the 2024–2025 academic year, 381 students are studying at 12 colleges in the professions of seamstress, hairdresser, florist, carpenter, shoemaker, and massage therapist.

Higher education

Inclusion in higher education institutions in Almaty is still in its infancy. Some universities have policies on inclusive education and are adapting their programmes and infrastructure. Examples include AlmaU, Satbayev University, Abai KazNPU and Al-Farabi KazNU. Support services are being created (for example, at Turan University), but they are not available at all universities. The problems are limited resources, a shortage of qualified teachers and the lack of uniform standards. To promote inclusion, investment, staff training and the replication of successful practices are needed.

Almaty has made significant progress in developing inclusive education at all levels. However, systemic problems — staff shortages, insufficient resources and infrastructure constraints — require comprehensive solutions to create a sustainable and accessible educational environment for all.

In this context, universities are actively implementing measures to create the most comfortable learning conditions for all students, in particular measures such

as distance learning, the creation of electronic libraries and databases for remote access, the development of individual study programmes, the adaptation of existing infrastructure to provide universal access to all educational buildings, and the improvement of the qualifications of teachers working with people with SEN.

Indicator:

Name	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Percentage of Technical and Vocational Post-Secondary Education (TIPO) organizations that provide equal conditions and barrier-free access for students with SEN, %	68.2	47.8	47.8	43.8	39.6



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



According to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the right to work on an equal basis with others is an inalienable right of persons with disabilities, and the states that have ratified the Convention are obliged to ensure and implement this right.

In accordance with the Social Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, state policy in the field of employment of persons with disabilities is implemented by local executive bodies. Currently, **two employment mechanisms** are in place:

1. Establishment of job quotas

In accordance with the "Rules for Job Quotas for Persons with Disabilities," a quota of 2 to 4 per cent of the total number of jobs at an enterprise is established. Employers must provide jobs for persons with disabilities within six months of its introduction.

2. Creation of special jobs for persons with disabilities

Under this mechanism, employers are reimbursed for the costs of equipping workplaces for persons with disabilities.

In addition, the wages of persons with disabilities employed in spe-

SDG 8

Decent Work and Economic Growth.

Access to Employment and Economic Opportunities

cially equipped workplaces are subsidised by the state for three years:

- in the first year, 70% of the salary is subsidised by the state and 30% by the employer;
- in the second year, 65% is subsidised by the state and 35% by the employer;
- in the third year, 60% is subsidised by the state and 40% by the employer.

In addition, as part of the **Bastau Business*** project, persons with disabilities have the opportunity to receive training in the basics of entrepreneurship and obtain a grant to develop their own business.

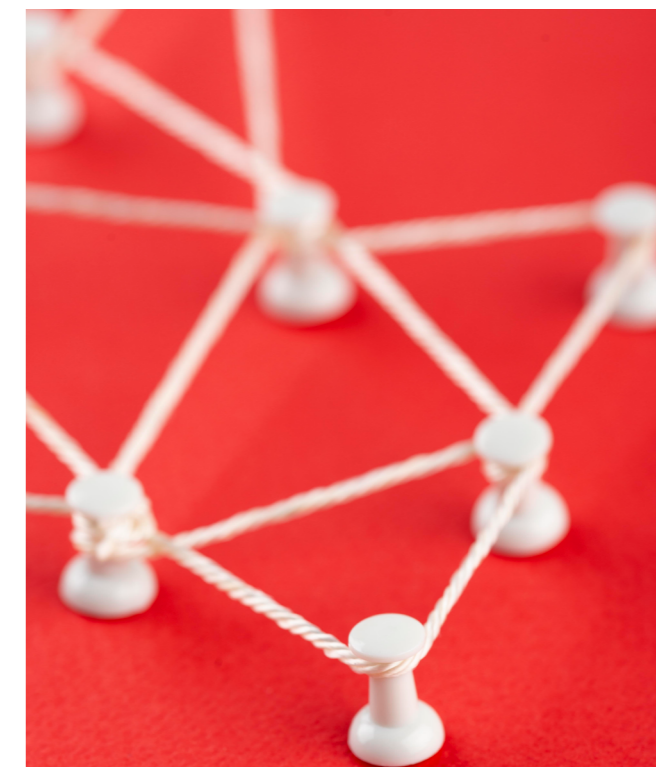
**This initiative is implemented through the electronic labour exchange portal: <https://business.enbek.kz/kk/bastau-business>.*

Since 2020, the city has had a centre for the employment of persons with disabilities called **TenQogam**. The centre provides information on state assistance and social support measures for persons with disabilities, as well as training aimed at developing the knowledge and skills necessary for successful job search and employment. The Independent Living School project helps persons with disabilities overcome internal barriers, learn independence skills and demonstrate their abilities in creative formats. The programme offers classes on career guidance, finding a suitable job, writing a CV, preparing for job interviews and workplace socialisation skills.

Significant attention is paid to employment. Of the 29,500 employable persons with disabilities in Almaty, 9,500 are already employed. In 2024, 1 731 people found permanent jobs, and another 990 were covered by employment assistance measures. From 2025, the **Jobcoach** project will be implemented, providing individual support at all stages of employment, from job search to workplace adaptation. The programme plans to employ 300 people in 2025, 400 in 2026 and 500 in 2027.



9,500 out of **29,500** are employed



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



The city is home to more than 58,000 persons with disabilities, including nearly 10,000 children. To ensure their rights, equal participation and social integration, Almaty has developed a comprehensive system of state support covering social assistance, employment, education, mobility and cultural integration.

The inclusive agenda is coordinated by the Council for the Development of an Inclusive Environment under the city mayor's office, whose meetings are chaired by the akim. Inclusion coordinators have been appointed at the level of all districts and departments of the city, which allows for the prompt resolution of emerging issues. The role of the mayor's freelance advisor on inclusion has also been strengthened, underscoring Almaty's political commitment to the principles of equality.

As part of the Almaty Development Programme until 2025 and the Concept of "Inclusive Almaty until 2030", measures are being implemented to adapt the urban environment. By 2025, 55,000 infrastructure facilities are planned to be registered, with at least 75% of them being adapted. A mobile digital platform is used for monitoring, allowing the process to be tracked in real time.

SDG 3

Good Health and Well-being. Social Support and Access to Medical and Social Services



Since 2024, the Social Integration Centre has been operating, where participants undergo psychological and social rehabilitation through art therapy, theatre, dance, music and media. These initiatives contribute to the development of potential, professional orientation and the formation of new career paths.

There is also a unique Wheelchair Repair Centre, which helped more than 2,000 people in 2024 alone. This is the first project of its kind in Almaty and the Almaty region, free of charge and in high demand among the population.

In total, social projects cover more than 7,000 city residents. The diversity of initiatives and the high level of involvement of local authorities indicate that state support for people with special needs in Almaty is sustainable and developing. These measures form the basis for building a city that leaves no one behind.

In addition, the creation of an effective system of social protection measures for persons with disabilities is also one of the priorities of the state's social policy. Social protection for persons with disabilities and measures for their rehabilitation are implemented within the framework of the Social Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Standards for the Provision of Special Social Services in the Field of Social Protection of the Population.

Disability benefits

Social assistance for persons with disabilities includes payments in the form of state benefits and compensation provided for by the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

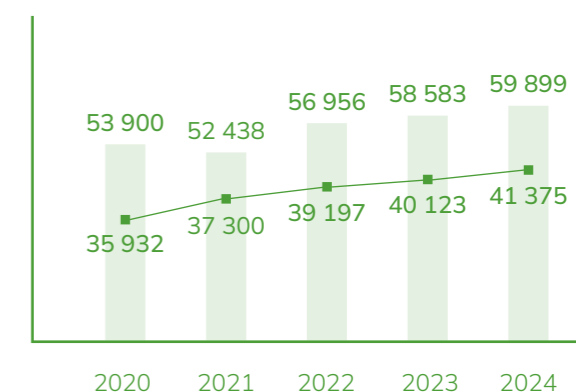
All persons with disabilities are entitled to a state social disability allowance, and, upon reaching retirement age, to a pension. The amount of the disability allowance depends on the disabili-

ty group and is indexed annually based on changes in the subsistence minimum. At the same time, the amount of the benefit/pension received is set at no less than the subsistence minimum. The subsistence minimum for 2025 is set at 46,228 tenge.

For example, children with disabilities under the age of seven are entitled to a benefit equal to 1.61 times the subsistence minimum, while children with disabilities between the ages of seven and eighteen in the first group are entitled to 2.20 times the subsistence minimum. In addition, one of the parents or guardians who provides direct care for a person with special needs is also granted a benefit equal to 1.61 times the subsistence minimum.

Over the past five years, Almaty has seen an increase in the number of recipients of state social benefits for disability, which generally corresponds to the trend of growth in the number of persons with disabilities.

Number of recipients of state social disability allowance (persons)



Also, persons with special needs are entitled to targeted social assistance (TSA), which is one of the key instruments of Kazakhstan's social policy aimed at supporting vulnerable groups of the population. It is provided to citizens and certain categories of persons (including stateless persons, refugees and kandas) whose average per capita income is below the poverty line, set at 70% of the subsistence minimum. The

subsistence minimum is calculated quarterly by the National Statistics Bureau for each region. TSA is divided into two types: unconditional and conditional assistance. Unconditional assistance is paid monthly to persons who are unable to participate in employment programmes – single elderly people, persons with disabilities of groups I–II, citizens with serious illnesses, as well as families where the only able-bodied member is caring for a child under three years of age, persons with disabilities or the elderly who need constant care. Conditional assistance is provided to low-income able-bodied persons and families on condition that they participate in employment promotion measures – employment, training, starting their own business. The TSA also provides for an additional payment for each child aged 1 to 6 inclusive – 5,898 tenge per month for 2025 (1.5 monthly estimated figure). This system allows for targeted support to those most in need, while stimulating labour activity and social adaptation among the working-age population. Entitlement to the benefit does not depend on the recipient’s length of service or current employment status.

Source: <https://www.gov.kz/situations/11/56?lang=en>,
<https://www.gov.kz/situations/11/intro?lang=en>

Benefits and additional support measures

The state provides persons with disabilities and their families with a comprehensive package of social benefits aimed at improving their quality of life and level of social protection. The support system includes tax preferences and preferential access to transport infrastructure.

Key social support measures:

- Provision of sanatorium and resort treatment free of charge;
- Access to state-owned rental housing for persons with disabilities in groups 1 and 2. Living quarters are provided for a period of five

- years with the possibility of extension;
- Tax preferences: according to the Tax Code, persons with disabilities and their legal representatives are entitled to a tax deduction of 882 MCI per annum;
- Provision of technical rehabilitation equipment;
- Discounts on railway tickets: 50% of the ticket price on socially significant routes and up to 70% of the price on commercial routes;
- Specialized housing programmes;
- Exemption from state fees when applying to courts, performing any notarial acts, obtaining duplicate birth certificates, registering intellectual property documents, and obtaining passports, identity cards and registration number plates for vehicles;
- Exemption from compulsory social health insurance contributions regardless of the validity period of the disability certificate and disability group;
- Discounted or free travel on public transport for persons with disabilities in groups 1 and 2 and children with disabilities under the age of 18.



Access to medical services, habilitation and rehabilitation

Persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with other citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan, are included in the Mandatory Social Health Insurance (MSHI) system, but on a preferential basis – contributions for them are paid by the state. This provides free outpatient and inpatient treatment, full medication as prescribed by doctors, as well as free medical rehabilitation. Children with disabilities, as a privileged category, receive the full range of medical services free of charge.

According to the Social Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, medical habilitation is the process of medical rehabilitation aimed at acquiring or compensating for undeveloped functions and skills of children with disabilities and integrating them into society, while medical rehabilitation is a complex of medical services aimed at preserving, partially or completely restoring impaired and/or lost bodily functions.

There are over 100 rehabilitation facilities of various profiles operating in Almaty, which provide services within the framework of the MSHI. One of the largest such institutions is the Rehabilitation Centre “ARDI” public association (Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities), which provides rehabilitation for children diagnosed with cerebral palsy and musculoskeletal disorders.

In addition, the city has state medical and social institutions such as the Balbulak Children’s Rehabilitation Centre and the State Institution “Alatau” Social Services Centre, providing rehabilitation services for adults.

Particular attention is paid to providing technical rehabilitation equipment. Persons with disabilities of groups 1, 2, and 3, as well as children with disabilities, are provided free of charge with everything they need – prosthetic and orthopaedic devices, wheelchairs and other mobility aids, ty-

phlo- and deaf-technical devices, hearing aids, and sanitary and hygiene products.

In 2024, the city provided wheelchairs to **169** people, hearing aids to **421** people, typhlo aids to **623** people, prosthetics and orthotics to **799** people, and hygiene products to **3,437** people. Sanatorium and resort treatment services were provided to **688** people at a cost of **345** million tenge, sign language services to **671** people at a cost of **121.3** million tenge, and personal assistants to **3,178** people at a cost of **1,090.1** million tenge.

Special social services

In accordance with Article 132 of the Social Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, special social services are divided into guaranteed special social services and paid special social services.

The guaranteed scope of special social services is a single list of special social services provided at the expense of budgetary funds.

The list of guaranteed special social services includes:

1. Social and domestic services,
2. Social and medical services,
3. Social and psychological services,
4. Social and educational services,
5. Social and labour services,
6. Social and cultural,
7. Socio-economic,
8. Social and legal services.

Special social services in inpatient settings are provided in medical and social institutions to persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, the elderly, and persons in vulnerable situations.



Indicator:

Name	2021	2022	2023
State social expenditure for low-income groups (TSA, housing assistance), thousand tenge	2,278,142	2,471,102	2,257,037



Gender equality in Almaty's city administration has long moved beyond being a mere priority, as it has successfully become part of everyday reality. In this regard, the Almaty City Administration can boast of having created equal conditions for career growth, training, professional development and other opportunities to unlock potential and maximize their contribution to society.

Thus, according to indicator 5.5.1 of SDG 5, as of 2023:

The share of seats held by women in local government is 43%, which confirms the high qualifications of women and demonstrates the city's commitment to gender equality policies. Reflecting the ongoing progress in ensuring women's rights and free choice, it is worth noting the trends over the past few years:

In 2021 and 2022, the above-mentioned indicator showed that 46% of women held seats in local government.

In addition, the Almaty Council of Business Women operates on the basis of the "Atameken" National Chamber of Entrepreneurs, whose tasks are:

- stimulating the economic activity of women entrepreneurs;

SDG 5

Gender Equality

- developing entrepreneurship among women and increasing their competitiveness in the labour market;
- raising the status of "business-minded, socially active women";
- creating new jobs for women, including self-employment;
- achieving gender equality in the business environment.

Source: <https://atameken.kz/kk/pages/655-sovet>

Gender equality is a key element of sustainable and inclusive urban development. More than 1 million women live in Almaty, and ensuring their equal rights in education, employment, political participation, and access to protection from violence directly affects social justice and the sustainability of the urban environment. Surveys conducted by Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (with approximately 200 respondents) and Turan University (with over 1,000 respondents) provide a realistic picture of the perceptions, experiences, and barriers faced by women and girls in Almaty.



1 million women

The study was conducted in relation to the following SDG:



Gender discrimination and perception of the legal field

55% of respondents believe that Kazakhstan has laws protecting women from discrimination. However, 28.5% are unaware of such laws, and 12% are convinced that they do not exist.

At the same time, only 44% believe that the laws ensure equality in public and political life, and 31.5% believe that equality exists only partially. 44.8% believe that the law obliges employers to pay equal wages for equal work regardless of gender, and 50.3% say that men and women have equal rights to paid maternity leave and leave for childcare and guardianship.

More than a third (26.8%) are unaware of the existence of quotas for women in parliament, and 76.5% of respondents are convinced that the legislation

needs to be significantly strengthened.

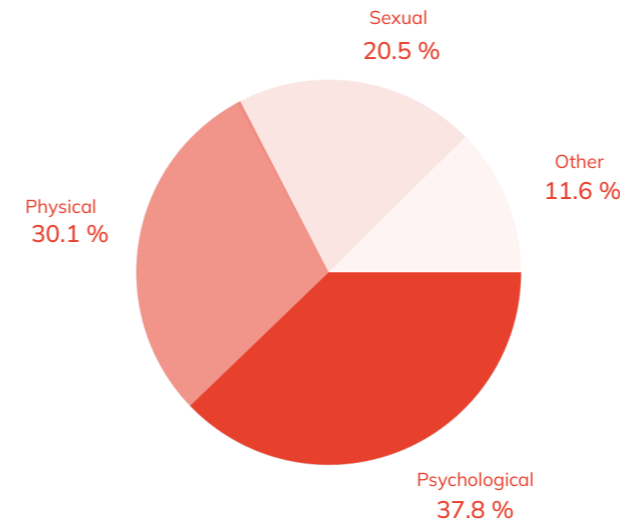
In addition, respondents' opinions were split: some believe that it is easier for men to advance in their careers, while others are convinced that they do not see any obstacles of this kind.

Physical and psychological violence

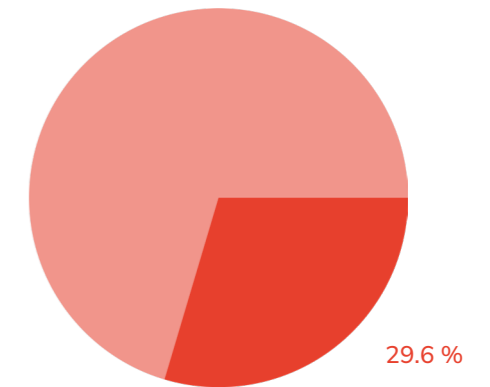
70% of women reported experiencing violence, including psychological (37.8%), physical (30.1%) and sexual (20.5%), which most often occurred within the family (40.6%) and at work (18.7%). Of these, only 21.3% filed complaints, and only 7.1% received a response.

Meanwhile, 29.6% of women are unaware of support services for victims of violence, indicating limited access to information and services. Respondents are also concerned about the impunity of illegal actions.

Types of experienced violence



Percentage of women unaware of support services for violence

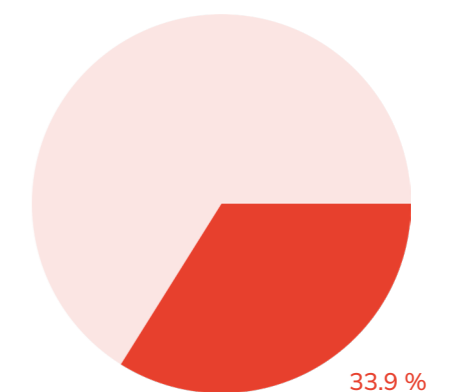


Women's health and vulnerability. Anaemia among women of reproductive age

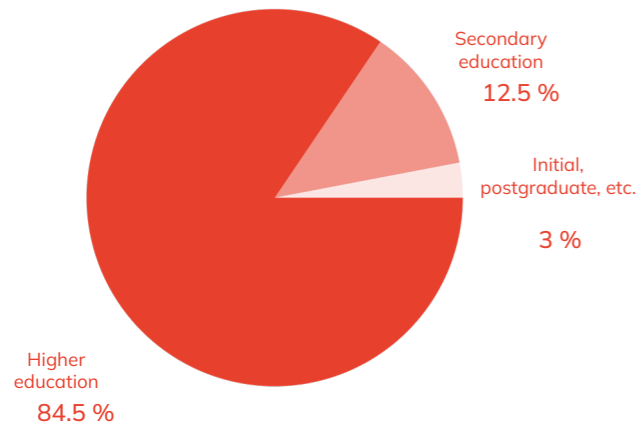
The survey showed that 33.9% of respondents were diagnosed with anaemia or iron deficiency. More than half experience chronic fatigue or weakness.

A study assessing service accessibility and digital inequality showed that 84.5% of women have higher education, but 42% are unemployed. In addition, respondents noted that there are certain barriers to the development of information and communication technology (ICT) skills, such as lack of time (59%) and lack of courses (23.5%).

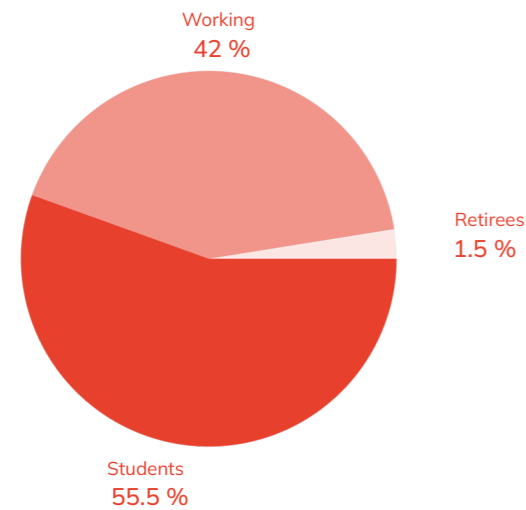
Percentage of respondents diagnosed with anemia and iron deficiency



Level of education among women



Current employment among women



ures was also identified. Most respondents are in favour of increased patrolling and the installation of cameras, indicating high public demand for reforms in urban safety.

In addition, most respondents (64%) consider Kazakhstan’s migration policy insufficiently effective and in need of reform. The main problems cited are bureaucracy, weak state support, and insufficient social adaptation of migrants. Although almost half recognise the economic contribution of migrants, a significant proportion still face difficulties in finding employment and obtaining documents. More than half of respondents consider the work of state bodies inadequate, and migrants’ awareness of their rights remains low. The overwhelming majority support updating the legislation.



The survey showed that most residents of Almaty are concerned about the **level of safety in the city**: 60% consider it insufficient, with the main threats being high crime rates, poor lighting and a lack of police patrols. Courtyards, parks and transport stops are considered the most dangerous. Many avoid the streets after dark and do not trust the effectiveness of the police — only 13% reported a positive outcome after contacting them. Low awareness of safety meas-

In addition, most respondents (64%) consider Kazakhstan’s migration policy insufficiently effective and in need of reform. The main problems cited are bureaucracy, weak state support, and insufficient social adaptation of migrants. Although almost half recognise the economic contribution of migrants, a significant proportion still face difficulties in finding employment and obtaining documents.

More than half of respondents consider the work of state bodies inadequate, and migrants’ awareness of their rights remains low. The overwhelming majority support updating the legislation.

Indicator:

Name	2021	2022	2023	2024
Percentage of women in management positions, %	40.9	40.8	42.7	41.1



SDG 16

Peace, Justice and Effective Institutions.

Open Dialogue Between Residents and the State, and Involvement of Citizens in Decision-Making Processes

The dialogue established between the city administration and the citizens of Almaty deserves special mention. There are several local-level tools aimed at obtaining feedback from the population, such as:

- meetings between the akim of Almaty and the population;
- the akimat's public reception office – "Open Almaty";
- the "People's Participation Budget";
- public services for the population.

1. Quarterly meetings between the

akim of Almaty and the population of each of the city's eight districts. This approach has allowed citizens to express their views on various issues, submit proposals to the administration and point out problem areas in the infrastructure of certain parts of the city. In 2024, the akim of Almaty held 21 meetings with the population. This communication tool increased residents' trust in the city administration and allowed them to directly contribute to resolving problematic issues in the city.



2. **Open Almaty.** Public reception office of the Almaty mayor's office. A special platform created by the mayor's office, whose tasks are:

- Creating a barrier-free environment, ensuring the accountability of state bodies to the population, and solving the everyday problems of city residents;
- Constantly analysing feedback, improving its quality, and implementing proactive responses.

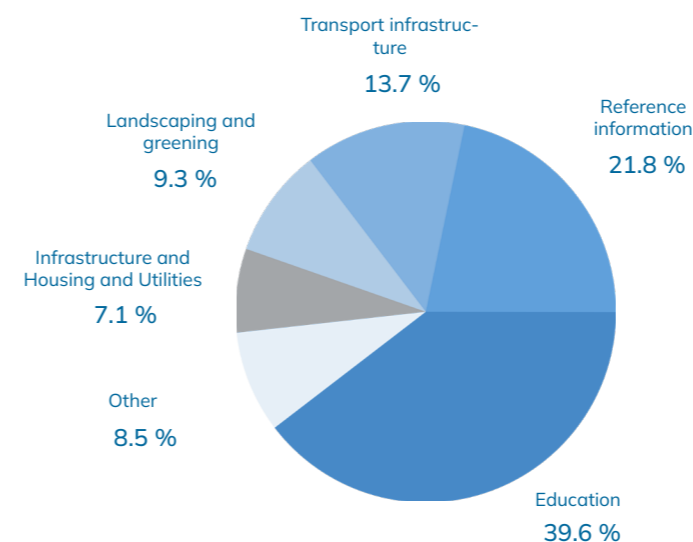
According to data from the Open Almaty public reception office, 246,205 requests were processed in 2024. The most popular categories of requests cover the following areas:

- Education – 39.6%;
- Reference information – 21.8%;
- Transport infrastructure – 13.7%;
- Improvements and greening – 9.3%;
- Infrastructure and housing and utilities services – 7.1%.

The tool also helped to directly address the city's problems and became a platform where every citizen can receive social counselling services.



Popular categories of citizen appeals (2024)



3. The aim of the **Public Participation Budget (PPB)** initiative is to develop and improve areas of Almaty based on citizens' initiatives and proposals. This initiative has made it possible to tackle several tasks at once:

- **Resident participation in decision-making.** Residents propose their ideas for improvement, develop them into projects and vote for the most pressing ones.
- **Increased civic engagement.** The project encourages residents to actively participate in city life and form their own opinions on its development.
- **Effective use of budget funds.** The PPB allows resources to be directed to projects that best meet the needs of residents.

Between 2022 and 2024, city residents submitted 13,715 applications, resulting in the implementation of 938 projects.

In the first five months of 2025, 6,118 applications were submitted, with 281 projects scheduled for implementation.

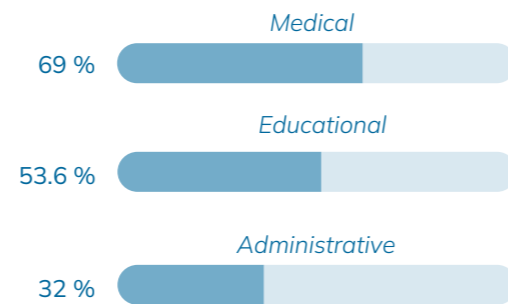
4. Another key tool in building open and trusting dialogue is the provision of high-quality **public services** to the population so that every citizen can access them without hindrance, which in turn increases citizens' trust in public authorities.

According to the results of a **survey** conducted by **doctoral students of the Economics and Management educational programmes at Turan University**, where more than 1,000 citizens aged 15 to 55 and older, of both genders, with different social statuses, as well as those with secondary and higher education, were surveyed, the following results were obtained:

Over the past 12 months, city residents have mostly used public services related to

medical services (69%), educational services (53.6%) and administrative services (32%).

Types of services popular among residents



62.3% of respondents are sufficiently satisfied with the medical services they have received. In particular, 55.4% of respondents gave a positive assessment of the accessibility of medical services (number of medical institutions, waiting times, and other factors).

At the same time, the preferences of the residents of the metropolis are divided: some turn to state institutions, while others are more inclined towards private organizations.

Recipients of educational services are also, in most cases, satisfied with their use (65.3%) and with the services received (59.4%). In their opinion, the location and accessibility of state schools in Almaty is quite satisfactory.

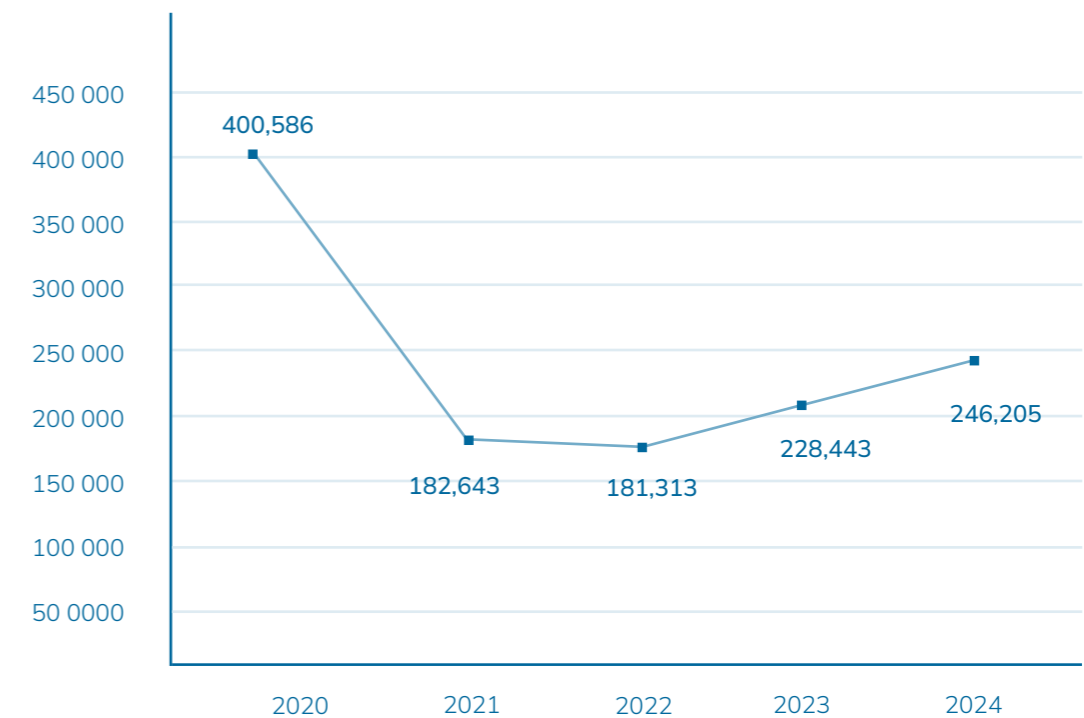
At the same time, most respondents say that in practice, the quality of the educational services they use is average.

In addition, 61.7% of respondents noted that administrative services are quite accessible to the population. However, not all citizens find obtaining administrative services to be a fairly simple and understandable process, with the majority rating their quality as average. Over-

all, 42% of respondents are satisfied with the speed of obtaining public services, but believe that their rights and interests have not been fully taken into account.



Number of inquiries to Open Almaty



Indicator:

Name	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of inquiries to the Open Almaty* public reception office, thousand	400,586	182,643	181,313	228,443	246,205

*This indicator reflects the involvement of city residents in decision-making processes.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



To monitor progress, the Almaty Development Centre (ADC) established a database of SDG indicators relevant to Almaty, significantly improving understanding of the city's current situation and enabling the tracking of dynamics of individual SDG targets.

The SDG indicator database is a key tool for monitoring and evaluating progress towards sustainable development at the global, national and local levels. In Almaty, where the implementation of sustainability and inclusion principles is becoming a top priority, the creation of such a database allows for systematic tracking of progress on each of the 17 goals, identifying problem areas and directing resources where they are most needed. Thanks to reliable and regularly updated data, authorities, non-governmental organizations, businesses and the scientific community are able to make informed decisions, develop effective programmes and monitor the results of their activities.

The database plays an important role in ensuring transparency and accountability. Making this information publicly available strengthens trust among the population and international partners, al-

SDG 17

Partnerships for Sustainable Development. Monitoring of SDG Indicators

lows for comparative analysis between countries and regions, identifies best practices and facilitates the exchange of experience. It also serves as a valuable resource for research and innovation: evidence-based analytics stimulate the development of new approaches and technologies aimed at achieving the SDGs. In addition, the availability of reliable data contributes to more accurate calculations of financial needs and attracts investment from donors and the private sector.

The pilot version of the database covers 15 goals relevant to Almaty, directly affecting residents' well-being. Some of the indicators are only available at the national level, but work is ongoing to adapt this data to the urban context. In some cases, indicators unavailable for Almaty are calculated using UN methodology, drawing on administrative and open data sources, including materials from the situation centre and data from the National Statistics Bureau of the Republic of Kazakhstan, while maintaining the original structure of the indicators. This ensures the consistency and comparability of the information.

The database is structured according to goals and objectives: each goal contains

a set of specific objectives, each of which, in turn, is represented by an indicator. Visually, the platform is designed as a clickable map with 17 squares, symbolising each goal, arranged in numerical order and stylised as silhouettes of mountains — the symbol of Almaty. The design is complemented by images of city landmarks. The interface is available in Kazakh and Russian, and work is underway on an English version. Clicking on each goal leads to detailed information on the tasks and relevant data.

The SDG database for the city of Almaty is hosted on the situation centre's digital platform and is updated on a regular basis. It not only allows for tracking current dynamics, but also serves as a tool for strategic planning, shaping urban policies and drawing international attention to Almaty's efforts in the field of sustainable development. Thus, the database is becoming an integral part of city management, strengthening stakeholder engagement, fostering international cooperation and strengthening the city's position as a progressive, people-oriented and sustainable metropolis.

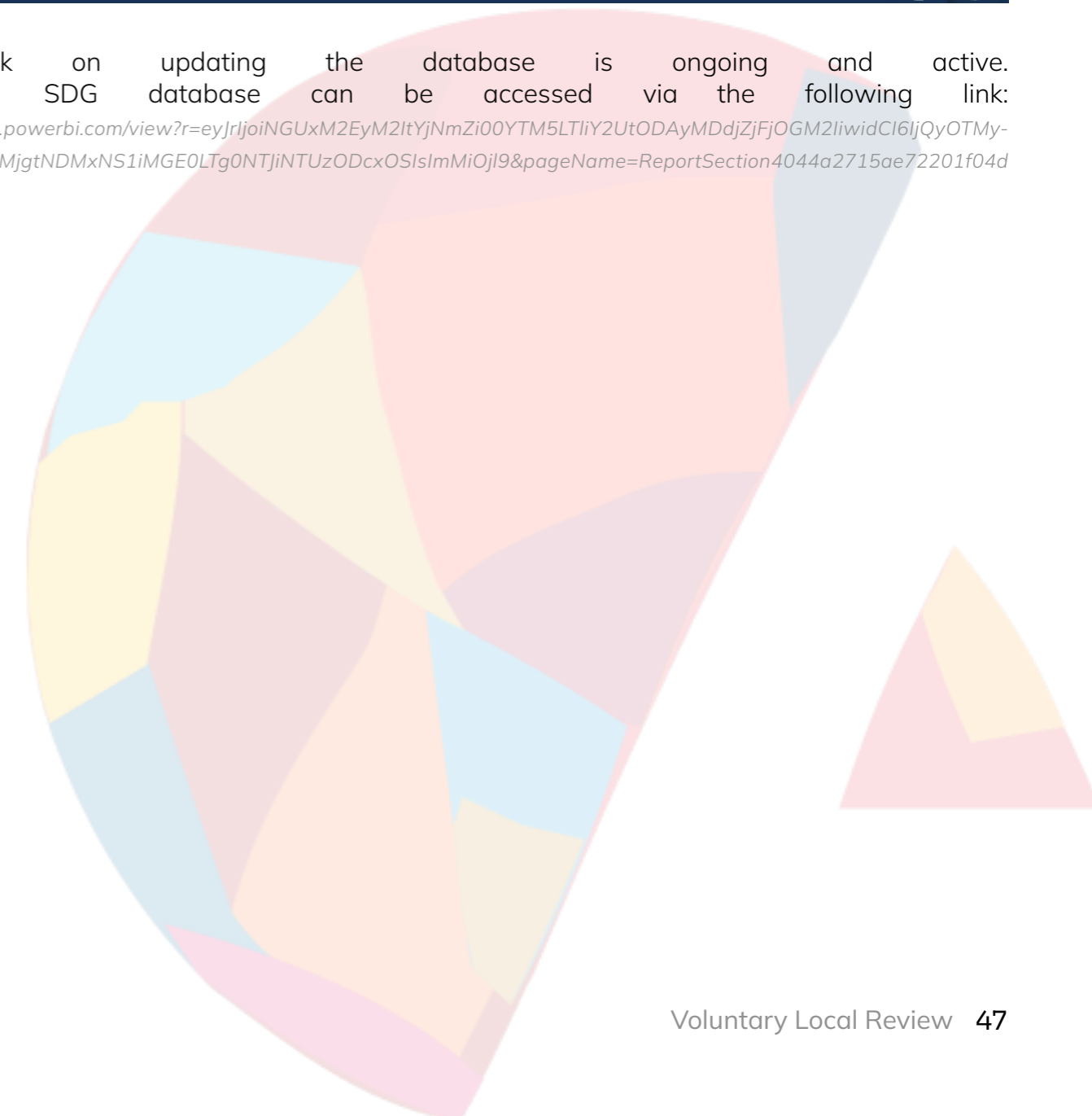




Furthermore, clicking on a task opens a page displaying graphs, the underlying data, a description of the calculation methodology, and an option to switch between subtasks (indicators).



Work on updating the database is ongoing and active. The SDG database can be accessed via the following link:
<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrjoiNGUxM2EyM2ItYjNmZi00YTU5LTUyU2U0ODAyMDdjZjFjOGM2liwidCI6IjQyOTMy-NzAwLTYzMjgtNDMxNS1iMGE0LTg0NTJiNTUzODcxOSIsImMiOiJ9&pageName=ReportSection4044a2715ae72201f04d>



SOCIAL INITIATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTAL, PRIVATE AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTORS

As part of efforts to implement the concept of a city for people, a number of social initiatives have been implemented in Almaty to support the most vulnerable groups of citizens. The social projects have been positively evaluated by service recipients and have made a significant contribution to ensuring the sustainable development of inclusion in the city.

Inclusive café "Kunde"



Since September 2024, the first social café "Kunde" has been operating in Almaty, aimed at providing jobs for people with special needs and supporting the sustainable development of social entrepreneurship. The first pilot project of the inclusive café "Kunde" was launched eight years ago in Astana and was successful, which led to the idea of opening branches in Almaty. In September 2024, the café's founders announced a crowdfunding campaign* to open a physical café in Almaty and raised 7,273,521 tenge, attracting 1,393 investors, to whom updates were sent about the progress of construction and further activities of the café. Together with the Insight inclusive school, in October 2024, six baristas with special needs were hired to work at Kunde, who were trained by ProBarista and completed an internship at Serikov Coffee Club. The coffee shop's partners are the Centre for Inclusive Programmes and Vanilla Coffee, and the premises are provided by the regional chamber of commerce Atameken. Every year, Kunde produces a Social Impact Report in

three languages, which describes the results achieved and analyses their impact.



Photo source: <https://digitalbusiness.kz/2025-04-03/za2dnya-sobrali-7mln-tenge-na-kraudfandinge-kak-razvivaetsya-sotsialnoe-kafe-kunde-gde-rabotayut-kazahstansi-smentalnimi-osobennostyami/>

In the future, there are plans to create a franchise of inclusive coffee shops in every region of Kazakhstan to give persons with disabilities the opportunity to start their own businesses and develop social entrepreneurship.

This initiative includes the promotion of SDG 4. Quality education; SDG 8. Decent work and economic growth; SDG 10. Reduced inequalities; SDG 17. Partnerships for sustainable development.

Source: <https://start-time.kz/project/details/2626/description>

"Aleumet" social services portal



A social services portal and mobile app for people with special needs, enabling them to order necessary goods and services. The portal is administered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and supported by the JSC Human Resources Development Centre. Services include the provision of special social services, technical rehabilitation equipment, sanatorium and resort treatment, sign language interpreter services and personal assistants, and a marketplace for inclusive goods. Among the effects of the portal are the consideration of individual needs, equal access to the market for rehabilitation equipment and services, enhanced monitoring of service quality, a wide selection of goods, the elimination of corruption risks, direct contact between buyers and suppliers, and improved service quality. The introduction of the portal improves the quality of the technical rehabilitation equipment provided, reduces waiting times, and increases the accuracy of delivery. The platform is also adapted for use by visually impaired people. This initiative includes the promotion of SDG 3. Good health and well-being, SDG 9.

Industry, innovation and infrastructure, SDG 10. Reduced inequalities, SDG 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions; SDG 17. Partnerships for sustainable development.



Source: <https://aleumet.egov.kz/>

Annual inclusive festival "Zhuldyzay"



A social festival that has been held since 2005, which is an original project of the “Zhuldyzay” Foundation and is funded by charitable donations from the BI Group holding company. In 2019, the festival went inter-national, with talented children from Georgia, Belarus, Turkey, Russia and France submitting applications. The aim of the festival is to reveal the creative abilities of children with special educational needs and to promote the formation of an inclusive environment in Kazakhstani society.

The project contributes to the promotion of SDG 4. Quality education; SDG 10. Reduced inequalities; SDG 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions.



Source: https://fest.juldizai.kz/?page_id=2622

Specialized vehicle "Invataksi"



Invataksi is a transport service for people with special physical needs, designed to provide social services for the transportation of persons with disabilities. The vehicle is equipped with a special hydraulic or retractable (folding) device for boarding and alighting, and wheelchair restraints. The service is provided not only to persons with disabilities, but also to people with mobility difficulties, as well as those who are entitled to an individual assistant and/or wheelchair. According to the list of facilities and locations*, Invataksi provides transportation to educational institutions, workplaces, local government bodies, social infrastructure facilities, medical institutions, airports, railway stations, and other social facilities. The following or-

ganizations provide the Invataksi service: Inclusion.KZ, Social Project Organization Group, Public Organization of Persons with Disabilities “Densauyk Zor Baylyk”, and the “Invataksi” Central Dispatch Office.

At the beginning of 2024, the fleet was increased to 100 vehicles, and by the middle of the year to 145. In addition, as part of a pilot project involving the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, an aggregator based on “Yandex Taxi” was introduced, which made it possible to expand coverage to 2,000 people.

The project contributes to the promotion of SDG 3. Good health and well-being; SDG 10. Reduced inequalities; SDG 11. Sustainable cities and communities.



145
vehicles
(in mid-2024)

For more information on how to order a taxi and what documents are required, please visit: <https://open-almaty.kz/kz/mirlik-zagdajlar/t-rgyndaryna/2023-07-10-07-55-00/2023-07-10-07-56-48/invataksi-b-l-lyzmetti-kim-zh-ne-ashan-pajdalana-alady>

List of facilities and locations: <https://adilet.zan.kz/kaz/docs/V1300008950>
Source: <https://open-almaty.kz/kz/mirlik-zagdajlar/t-rgyndaryna/2023-07-10-07-55-00/2023-07-10-07-56-48/invataksi-b-l-lyzmetti-kim-zh-ne-ashan-pajdalana-alady>

Public Association “Society of Persons with Disabilities “Jean Demieu”



The organization was initiated and founded by 10 people with musculoskeletal disorders in 2016. Currently, the organization provides advice and informational support on social and legal issues for persons with disabilities. The organization strives to create conditions for their integration into society and involve them in active participation in social and political life by providing information services. “Accessible Kazakhstan” is one of the organization’s projects aimed at implementing equal access to facilities and services for persons with disabilities and citizens with limited mobility. The accessibility of social infrastructure facilities was monitored with the participation of persons with disabilities and NGOs. The organization is committed to protect-

ing and ensuring the rights of persons with special needs to freedom of movement and equal access to facilities and services.

The association contributes to the promotion of SDG 10. Reduced inequalities; SDG 11. Sustainable cities and communities; SDG 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions.

Source: <https://qazvolunteer.kz/en/organizations/2566>

Public Association “Kazakh Society of the Blind”



Established to protect the rights and interests, provide social support, rehabilitation and integration of persons with visual impairments of groups I and II. The objectives of the Kazakh Society of the Blind include meeting the social, cultural and educational needs of persons with special needs, protecting their rights, and assisting in the implementation of state programmes for rehabilitation and integration. The organization’s activities are based on the principles of voluntariness, collegiality and the election of governing bodies.

motion of SDG 4. Quality education; SDG 8. Decent work and economic growth; SDG 10. Reduced inequalities; SDG 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions.

Source: <https://lookos.kz/en/>

The association contributes to the pro-

“Ten Qogam” Social Support Centre for Persons with Disabilities



There are seven branches operating in the city, five of which were opened in early 2023 in the Bostandyk, Zhetysu, Auezov, Medeu, and Alatau districts. The organization provides comprehensive services to persons with disabilities with the aim of providing psychological and legal support, assisting in employment and capacity building in the areas of job search, employment, and job retention, and teaching persons with disabilities life and social skills for effective integration into society. People with limited mobility in Almaty can also sign up for training or qualification courses, as well as study languages. To date, more than 3,600 citizens have already received services. The project is being implemented by the public association Inclusion.kz, with the support of the Almaty City Employ-

ment and Social Programmes Department.

The project contributes to the promotion of SDG 1. No poverty; SDG 4. Quality education; SDG 8. Decent work and economic growth; SDG 10. Reduced inequalities.

Full list of services provided: <https://academy.kz/en/news/nashi-novosti/item/5670-otkrytie-tsentra-sotsialnoj-podderzhki-lits-s-invalidnostyu-ten-qogam-v-alatauskom-rajone>

Source: <https://civilcenteralmaty.kz/ru/article/714>





An initiative aimed at highlighting the social activities of Almaly AMC, a leading holding company that brings together enterprises and organizations in the service, manufacturing, pharmaceutical and social project sectors. The company defines its social mission as making a tangible contribution to the development of Kazakhstan through the expertise of its specialists and companies.

Since its inception:

- **247** students have received grant support to study at the world's best universities;
- **27** educational and cultural institutions have been renovated: schools, boarding schools, theatres and libraries;
- **36** cultural figures in Kazakhstan have been supported in implementing key creative initiatives;
- **153** pieces of modern medical equipment have been installed in medical facilities, including ventilators during the pandemic;
- **24** Kazakh athletes received support, including Olympic medallists;
- **7** charitable foundations re-

ceived support to develop their activities.

This initiative includes promoting SDG 3. Good health and well-being, SDG 4. Quality education, SDG 10. Reduced inequalities, SDG 11. Sustainable cities and communities, SDG 17. Partnerships for sustainable development.

Source: <https://almaly.kz/en/>



The first unique club in the Republic of Kazakhstan for children (aged 3 to 15), adolescents and young people (over 16) with disabilities. Winner of national awards in Kazakhstan. This exceptional space was created to support, educate, socially adapt, develop and unlock the potential of those who need special attention. It provides assistance to children and teenagers with developmental disabilities: cerebral palsy, musculoskeletal disorders, speech and intellectual development disorders. Technical equipment includes a sensory relaxation room, a ball pool, and the latest exercise machines and equipment. Meirim has a Montessori room, a 3D projection room, a kitchen for teaching life skills, and an inclusive playground. The centre hosts sporting events such as the Meirim Golden Cup, a national boccia festival, and a

sports festival attended by unique athletes from different regions of Kazakhstan.

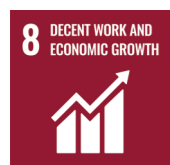
This initiative includes the promotion of SDG 3. Good health and well-being, SDG 4. Quality education, SDG 10. Reduced inequalities, SDG 11. Sustainable cities and communities.

Source: <https://rcmeirim.kz/#rec500393650>



Photo source: <https://rcmeirim.kz/#rec500393650>

Public Internet Radio "Community Radio Sector X"



The Community Radio Sector X project is the first inclusive internet radio station in Kazakhstan, created and run by persons with disabilities. The initiative was launched in 2018 with the support of the First President's Fund and is implemented by the Reliance Public Fund. Over the six years of its operation, the radio station has become a platform for inclusive employment and the development of digital skills. Fifty-two jobs have been created, more than 60% of which are occupied by persons with disabilities, while maintaining gender balance. Twenty media producers have been trained in 14 regions of the country and are successfully pursuing careers in the media and civil sector. More than 25 graduates launch their own IT and media start-ups every year, including on a freelance basis, thereby forming a new inclusive labour market in the digital and creative economy.

receive mentoring support and enter the labour market as self-employed or entrepreneurs. Over the years, the total number of students has exceeded 1.5 million. The radio station produces eight regular programmes, including "Nothing About Us Without Us", "Dauy"s and "Vector Children", strengthening inclusive media discourse and amplifying the voices of communities with special needs.

This project contributes to SDG 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth.

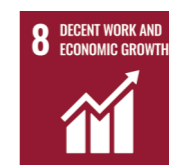


1.5 million listeners



The project contributes to the implementation of SDG 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth by promoting productive employment for persons with disabilities (8.5), reducing the number of unemployed young people (8.6), developing creative industries (8.9) and combating discrimination in employment. Since 2020, the radio station has been running an inclusive media school, Community Media Hub, which trains SMM managers, copywriters, video makers, radio presenters, and other specialists. Graduates

The Republican Public Association "National Alliance of Professional Social Workers"



Association was established in April 2019 with the aim of shaping professional social work in Kazakhstan, consolidating industry specialists, and developing social work education and practice. The association includes experts with relevant education and specialists working in the fields of social protection, health care, education, NGOs and other social institutions.

From 2021 to 2023, the Alliance implemented the project "Consolidation of Community-Based Rehabilitation Structures in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan" with financial support from BMZ (Germany) through Caritas Tajikistan. The project aims to develop a community-based rehabilitation (CBR) model

and professionalise social work training. The main beneficiaries are adults and children with disabilities, their families, social services, educational institutions and local authorities. The project's contribution covers the following SDGs: poverty eradication, health and well-being, quality education, decent work, reduction of inequality, climate resilience and partnership.



Key achievements of the project:

- Improved qualifications of social workers for working with vulnerable groups at the community level;

- Self-help groups have been established for parents of children with disabilities, utilising community resources and bibliotherapy practices.

- Promotion of integration and inclusion, development of local resources and supportive communities;

- Professional courses have been developed for personal assistants:
 - support for people with mobility impairments:

<https://skills.enbek.kz/en/course-catalog/course/587>

- accompanying blind persons:

<https://skills.enbek.kz/en/course-catalog/course/585>

- Courses have been developed for social workers, which are used in the certification system:
 - “Fundamentals of Social Work”:

<https://skills.enbek.kz/en/course-catalog/course/931>

- “Introduction to Social Work”:

<https://skills.enbek.kz/en/course-catalog/course/934>

- Supported the development of the professional standard “Social Work and Other Professions in the Social Sphere” in conjunction with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

<https://adilet.zan.kz/kaz/docs/G24G0000125>

- An information week on “Social Rehabilitation” was held for social workers and persons with disabilities. The materials are available on the YouTube channel “Social Work in the Republic of Kazakhstan: Realities and Prospects” (@Socialwork_Qazaqstan):

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLptn-32557wB8S2es7mhVyhSsUV3BPf0wC>

- A pilot project in the Pavlodar region to train social workers in institutions serving people with psychoneurological characteristics and mobility impairments, with the introduction of an approach based on the International Classification of Functioning.

Additional information about the Alliance’s activities can be found on social and traditional media:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1PjCA8fvFf/>

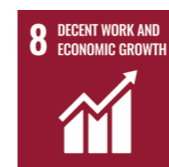
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1FqVZjQu27/>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/16YYYQ1mxs/>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1P5wsuLsvm/>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/18vWfGfL88/>

Centre for Public Monitoring of SDG Implementation in Almaty



In July 2024, the Almaty branch of the Civil Alliance (Almaty Azamattyq Alliance) launched the initiative “Centre for Public Monitoring of SDG Implementation in Almaty” with the aim of creating a unified digital database of sustainable development projects in the city and transforming it into an open BI platform. By November 2024, the first consolidated analysis of the contribution of Almaty NGOs to the achievement of the SDGs had been compiled. The project is being implemented in partnership with Almaty City Development Centre JSC (ADC) and the media platforms Ranking.kz and Finprom.kz, which ensures wide dissemination of the results.

A unified “showcase” for the civil sector has been created, consolidating scattered reports and forming three interactive panels: by number of NGOs, by state social order in terms of SDGs, and by the Almaty City De-

velopment Program until 2025 and Medium-Term Prospects until 2030. The platform allows authorities to see which SDG tasks are already covered by NGOs and to identify areas requiring budgetary intervention, thereby promoting evidence-based budgeting. The system reduces competition between NGOs and encourages the creation of partnerships, as organizations gain access to information about “free” tasks and can form consortia. The Centre has established an algorithm for annual database updates, which ensures its institutional sustainability.

The initiative directly contributes to the achievement of SDGs 11, 16 and 17, including tasks related to open urbanisation, the creation of accountable and inclusive institutions, expanding access to information and supporting cross-sectoral partnerships. In particular, it contributes to the achievement of targets 16.6, 16.7, 16.10, 17.17 and 17.18.

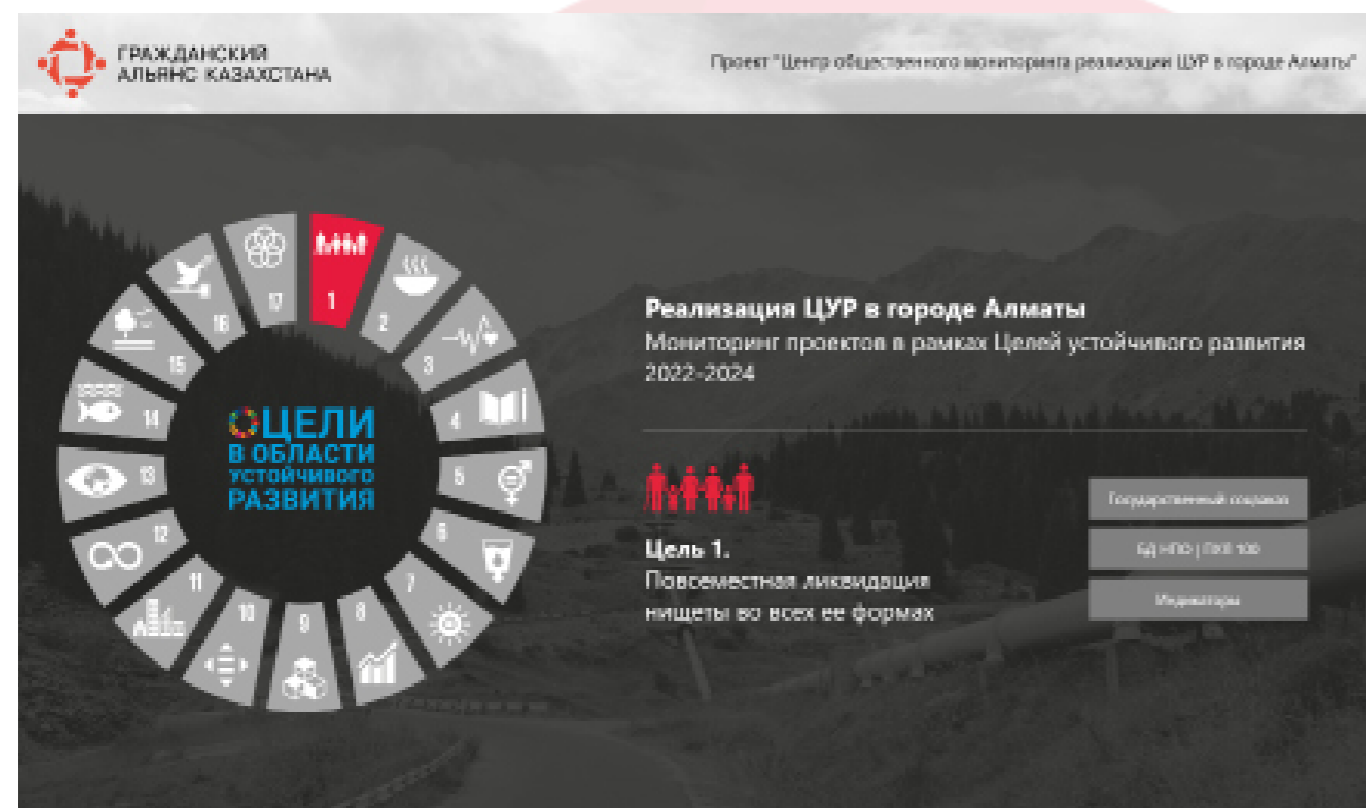


Photo source: <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/almaty-uor/press/news/details/515447>

At present, a detailed monitoring plan (questionnaire, survey, analytics, round table) has been approved, and the development of a methodological framework, including an NGO self-assessment questionnaire on compliance with SDG targets, has been completed. A list of active NGOs in Almaty has been compiled, and an electronic survey covering at least 100 organizations has been prepared. The platform update policy provides for regular updates of all dashboards at least once a quarter.

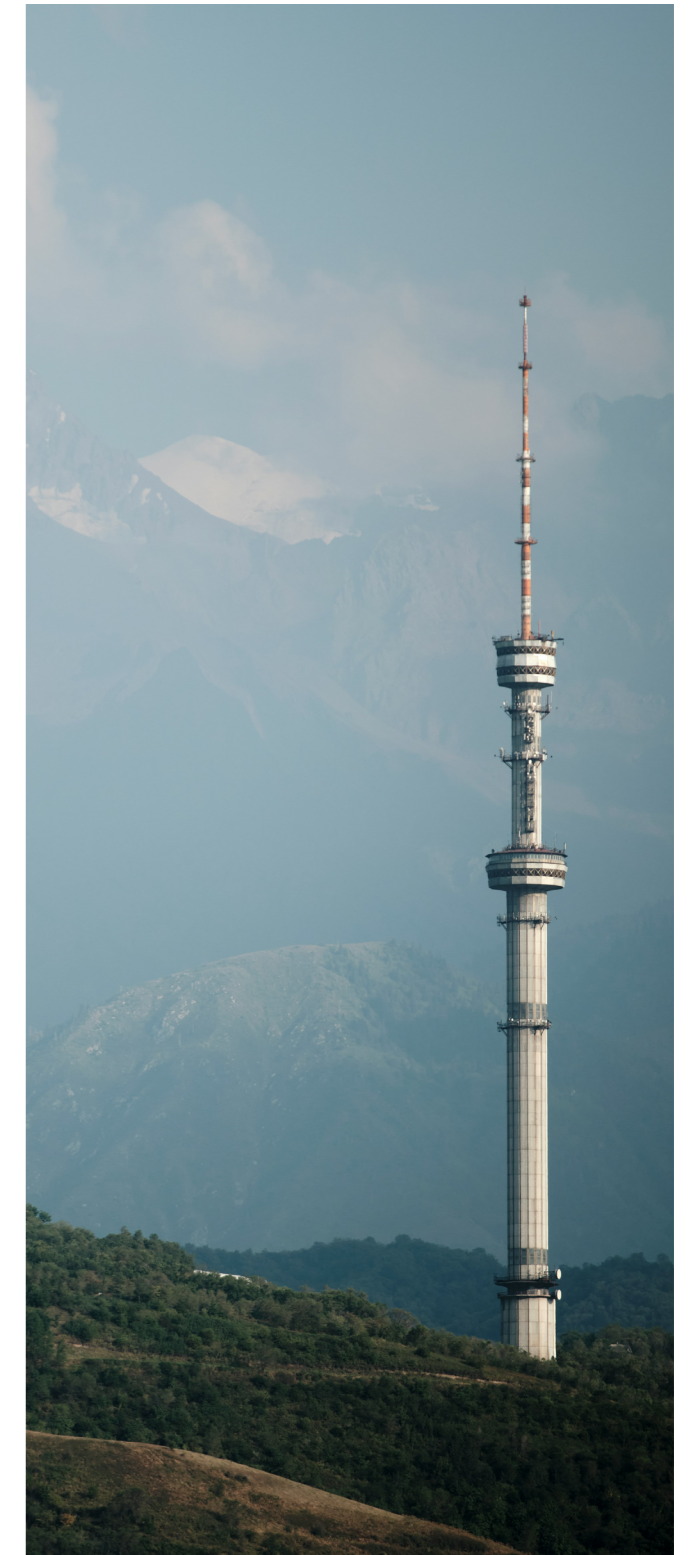
The project demonstrates how digitalization and data consolidation enhance transparency, accountability and civil society engagement in the implementation of sustainable development at the city level.

Links to dashboards: <https://ranking.kz/dashboards>



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ALMATY

Almaty is Kazakhstan's largest metropolis and an important socio-economic centre that is actively moving towards sustainable and equitable development. The city has significant potential to achieve the SDGs, including the creation of an inclusive urban environment where every resident feels involved and valued. Almaty is already demonstrating positive changes and accumulated experience on this path, but there are still issues that require special attention. Some systemic barriers still hinder the full participation of certain categories of citizens, especially people with special needs, in the social, economic and cultural life of the city. Overcoming these challenges opens up opportunities for Almaty to become an example of a modern inclusive city, where the principles of equality, accessibility and sustainability are implemented in everyday practice.



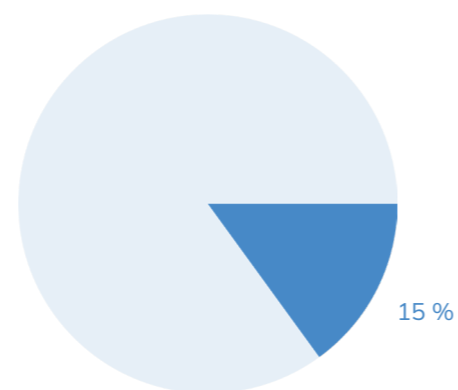
Persons with reduced mobility in Almaty continue to face physical barriers related to limited access to urban infrastructure. The streets still have unadapted pedestrian areas, no ramps or lifts, and navigation is not equipped with tactile elements. Even when ramps are available, standards are often violated – slopes remain steep, structures lead to dead ends or are not located at the main entrances. Inspections carried out by supervisory bodies are often formal in nature, without taking into account the opinions of persons with disabilities. There is no systematic control over compliance with inclusivity standards at the design, construction and commissioning stages. Social isolation and discrimination remain major problems. Persons with disabilities face difficulties in finding employment, accessing education and achieving full social integration.

Women with disabilities are in an even more vulnerable position: according to the “Centre for Women’s Initiatives” Public Fund, their earnings are 20-30% lower than those

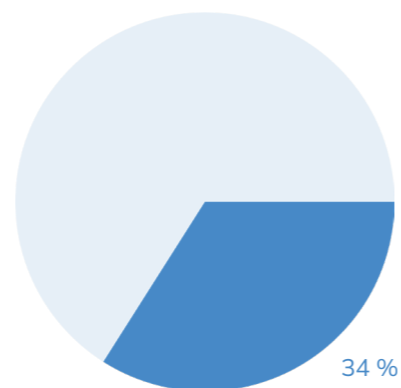


with similar disabilities. According to information from the non-governmental organization “Shyrak”, only 15% of women with disabilities are officially employed, while among men this figure reaches 34%. Migrants from rural areas with disabilities are particularly vulnerable, facing triple discrimination based on their place of residence, lack of permanent registration and health status.

Percentage of women with disabilities in formal employment



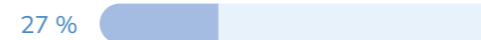
Percentage of men with disabilities in formal employment



Economic instability accompanies most persons with disabilities. According to data from the Statistics Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023, the employment rate for such citizens in Almaty is only 27%. The reasons lie in limited access to quality and adapted education, a lack of inclusive jobs, and poorly developed vocational rehabilitation and employment programmes.

Digital inequality also exacerbates barriers: government services are often inaccessible to users with special needs.

Employment rate of people with disabilities (2023)



According to a study by the Social Change Corps, only 18% of government web resources meet international digital accessibility standards (WCAG 2.1). In addition to infrastructure and technological problems, there is also an institutional problem. Insufficient coordination between departments, the lack of separate and detailed data, and the low level of participation of citizens with disabilities themselves in the process of developing urban solutions reduce the effectiveness of management policy.



Alongside these challenges, opportunities are emerging in Almaty to build an inclusive and equitable city. The political will expressed in the Almaty City Development Program until 2025 and Medium-Term Prospects until 2030, the Master Plan and the concept of “Inclusive Almaty until 2030” creates a solid regulatory framework for

the development and implementation of comprehensive solutions in the interests of all population groups. The active development of civil society plays an important role – there are many NGOs and volunteer associations in the city working to protect the rights and support vulnerable groups. The development of digitalization and smart city technologies opens up new horizons for engagement and transparency. An example of this is the work of the Centre for Public Monitoring of SDG Implementation, which develops digital dashboards and analytical tools to assess the contribution of various organizations. This helps to avoid duplication of efforts and strengthens coordination between participants (<https://ranking.kz/dashboards>). The involvement of international expertise, including through Almaty’s participation in UNECE, UN-Habitat and other platforms, contributes to the integration of best practices and institutional capacity building.



In addition, urban identity is strengthened, based on the principles of accessibility, diversity and respect for every resident, regardless of physical condition, social status or cultural background. Thus, inclusive urban development is seen as an integral part of a sustainable and equitable future for Almaty. This requires a targeted transformation of infrastructure, digital solutions, employment programmes and, most importantly, the participation of citizens with special needs in the decision-making process. Only the joint efforts of the state,

business, the civil sector and international partners will make Almaty a city for all.



FUTURE STEPS

Institutional Measures

The concept of “Inclusive Almaty until 2030” was developed in response to the need for a systematic and strategic approach to creating a fair and accessible city for all categories of the population, including persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility. It was developed on the basis of the international obligations of the Republic of Kazakhstan, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as internal strategic documents — the Almaty City Development Programme until 2025 and Medium-Term Prospects until 2030 and the republican Concept of Inclusive Policy until 2030. The Concept reflects the desire of the city of Almaty to move from fragmented solutions to a comprehensive

policy aimed at removing physical, informational, digital, social, economic and institutional barriers that prevent the full participation of all residents in the life of the city.



Photo source: <https://www.zakan.kz/obshestvo/6445739-kontsepsiya-programmy-inklyuzivnyy-almaty-obsudili-v-akimate-goroda.html>

The main idea of the Concept is to ensure equal access to education, healthcare, employment, culture, sports, transport, housing and other areas of urban life for all residents, regardless of their physical abilities, age, health or social status. The Concept aims to create a sustainable, universally designed urban environment in which the principles of accessibility and non-discrimination are integrated at all levels of management and design. It was developed based on an analysis of international experience and best practices (including the Berlin model), as well as with the broad participation of experts with disabilities and civil society. The concept serves as a basis for interdepartmental coordination, setting priorities for inclusion policy, and forming a unified roadmap for action for the period 2025–2030. Its implementation aims to strengthen human capital, reduce inequality, increase social sustainability, and integrate all residents into the economic and social development of the city of Almaty.

The Action Plan for the implementation of the Concept «Inclusive Almaty until 2030» includes **88 projects covering 15 different areas of life for the citizens of Almaty:**

- 1. Awareness raising and information – **6** projects;
- 2. Education – **12** projects;
- 3. Healthcare – **7** projects;
- 4. Employment – **4** projects;
- 5. Political participation – **7** projects;
- 6. Digital inclusion – **5** projects;
- 7. Youth – **5** projects;
- 8. Culture – **3** projects;
- 9. Sport – **5** projects;

- 10. Tourism – **7** projects;
- 11. Mobility – **6** projects;
- 12. Public facilities and spaces – **8** projects;
- 13. Housing – **4** projects;
- 14. Safety – **6** projects;
- 15. Rehabilitation and habilitation – **3** projects.

Enhancing Coordination Across Government Levels and Sectors

In order to ensure equal access to urban infrastructure and effective interaction between various structures (public, private and non-governmental) in Almaty on issues related to the development of a universally accessible environment, an Inclusion Group has been established.

Key areas of activity include:

- Analysis and proposals for the modernisation of regulatory documents;
- Advising departments and subordinate organizations;
- Conducting workshops and training employees;
- Developing accessibility standards and criteria;
- Involvement of persons with disabilities in the decision-making process;
- Support for the implementation of projects and activities with consideration for inclusion in all areas;
- International cooperation, representing the city of Almaty in the field of inclusion at the national and international levels.

Since its creation (over the last 18 months), the Office has been actively working and has already achieved a number of noteworthy results:

- **145** architectural projects with accessibility recommendations;
- **269** roadmap projects analyzed, of which **137** have been marked with two stars for compliance with inclusion;
- More than **50** technical specifications (TS), templates and regulations on accessibility standards;
- Draft concept and action plan

for “Inclusive Almaty until 2030” (15 areas, 85 measures) developed;

- Analysis and proposals for the modernisation of regulatory documents;
- Consulting for departments and subordinate organizations;
- Conducting workshops and training employees;
- Development of accessibility standards and criteria;
- Involvement of persons with disabilities (PWD) in the decision-making process;
- Support for the implementation of projects and activities with consideration for inclusion in all areas;
- International cooperation, representing the city of Almaty in the field of inclusion at the national and international levels.

Thus, the Almaty Inclusion Group plays a key coordinating role in the implementation of the city's inclusive development policy. It acts as a link between various departments, district akimats, subordinate organizations, the expert community and representatives of persons with disabilities, ensuring coordination of actions and monitoring the implementation of the measures of the Concept "Inclusive Almaty until 2030". The Inclusion Group is responsible for methodological support, monitoring the implementation of the action plan, and promoting the principles of universal design and inclusion at all levels of decision-making. The group will continue to ensure the institutional sustainability of the inclusive agenda, develop common standards and approaches, organize training events, and promote the involvement of civil society and feedback from target groups, ensuring comprehensive coverage of existing tasks.



Strengthening the Participation of Stakeholders: Civil Society, Academia and the Business Community

The Smart Sustainable Development Platform is a public forum for finding points of interaction, identifying issues facing urban communities, and developing dialogue and partnerships between government agencies, business, academia, civil society, and other stakeholders. The aim of the initiative is to jointly develop innovative solutions for the sustainable development of the city. The mechanism for implementing the Platform is as follows: the city development institute JSC "Almaty City Development Centre" identifies the problem, analyses its relevance and the current situation in this area, determines the circle of stakeholders, including responsible authorized persons, as well as the beneficiaries of the solution to the problem. Next, all stakeholders are invited to

the ADC for a discussion, where obstacles to solving certain tasks are identified and joint solutions to the problem are developed.



Since the launch of the initiative, meetings have been held with representatives of civil society, academia and business on the topics of “Food Sharing”, “Commercialisation of Science” and “Accessibility of Residential Buildings”. For example, following the discussion of the latter topic, an international competition among students, “Design review 2024,” was held in the fourth quarter of 2024.



The competition was organized in response to requests from residents of two neighbourhoods in the city, as there are difficulties in accessing buildings for people with special needs.

Students were presented with a unique opportunity to create an inclusive environment in Soviet-era and post-Soviet buildings, which lack lifts to the upper floors, posing difficulties for many residents, including people with special needs. The aim of the competition is to renovate such buildings to improve the quality of life and create a more comfortable and modern urban space

that takes into account the needs of all residents, including people with limited mobility.

From 7 to 15 November, specialists from the Almatygenplan Research Institute and Kazakh Leading Academy of Architecture and Civil Engineering (KazGASA) University, as well as invited experts in the field of architecture, held master classes on research methods and spatial analysis (participants studied methods of researching urban space and identifying problems, which allowed them to develop accurate and effective design solutions); design solution development (developing participants' skills in creating design projects and testing them in real conditions); architectural presentation methods (participants learned how to create presentations of their projects, including storytelling methods and creative presentation of the concept to the client).

Participants' competition entries were submitted by 28 November. Mandatory requirements included justification and analysis of the selected object, the availability of a spatial planning solution, drawings and visualisations, and other supporting materials.



From the start of the competition, 65 teams were registered, and 16 teams consisting of 49 students from local and foreign universities reached the final.

On 29–30 November 2024, the final entries were presented to the jury members.

Based on the presentations, the jury selected three winners.

The competition was an important step in implementing the principles of sustainable development and inclusiveness, providing participants with the opportunity to contribute to the transformation of the urban environment of Almaty. As a result, all works were sent to the Almatygenplan Research Institute for further use in its work.

Thus, the Platform has already proven itself to be an effective tool for decision-making and the comprehensive development of urban, sustainable solutions. Based on the experience gained, the city will expand the scope of issues considered and the range of stakeholders involved, which will help to increase the effectiveness of the decisions taken. There are plans to increase the Platform's potential and generate more useful and practical solutions for the city.

At the same time, it is worth noting that the development of the second Voluntary Local Review for the city of Almaty was the result of a broad partnership between representatives of civil society, the academic community, government agencies and development institutions. This format of interaction made it possible to reflect the multifaceted picture of the urban agenda, provide up-to-date data and strengthen the implementation of the principle of “no one left behind”.



Civil society actively participated in both the analytical part and the monitoring of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Almaty Civil Alliance initiated the creation of the SDG Public Monitoring Centre, which used a database

of **787** NGOs with details on their activities and dynamics over **3** years. Almaty is the leader in terms of the number of active

NGOs in the country: of the **18,204** organizations operating in **2023**,

5,017 are located in the city (**28%**)

<https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mam/press/news/details/659408?lang=kk>.

The participation of NGOs is strengthened through the implementation of the Concept for the Development of Civil Society and mechanisms

including public monitoring and the preparation of regional reports.

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The academic community, represented by Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (KazNU) and Turan University, made a significant contribution to the preparation of the VLR. In particular, universities conducted sociological surveys of the population, the results of which are reflected in separate sections of this review.

In addition, it is worth noting the efforts of universities to create and promote the principles of inclusion. For example, Al-Farabi KazNU has an Inclusive Environment Centre and implements educational programmes on inclusion, including bachelor's and master's degree courses and infrastructure solutions for students with SEN. In the 2024–2025 academic years, 90 students with special educational needs studied at the university. The university participates in international forums (SDG Summit), submits projects to Erasmus+, and implements initiatives to adapt content for visually impaired students. <https://farabi.university/news/85442>.

Turan University integrates SDGs into its development strategy, participates in city life, and provides public access to its campus.

<https://turan.edu.kz/en/on-the-implementation-of-the-sustainable-development-goals/>.

Special attention is paid to inclusive education: adapted educational pathways, an electronic library, discounts for persons with disabilities, volunteer assistance, and accessible infrastructure:

<https://turan.edu.kz/en/ob-universitete/inklyuzivnoe-obrazovanie/>.

To improve accessibility, the uni-



versity has introduced free buses for students and teachers <https://turan.edu.kz/en/news/50012/bus-schedule-of-turan/>

It is also worth mentioning one of the key links in the mechanism for building an inclusive urban environment, ensuring the coordination of efforts within the framework of urban inclusion programmes – the Advisor to the Akim of Almaty on Inclusion, who ensures the institutional sustainability of decisions.

Thus, the second VLR was the result of cross-sectoral cooperation, reflecting the real involvement of all stakeholders in building a fair, inclusive and sustainable city of Almaty.



CONCLUSION

Key Findings

The preparation of the second Voluntary Local Review on inclusive development allowed Almaty to comprehensively assess the current state of the urban environment, the level of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the dynamics of promoting the principles of inclusion in urban policy. Based on a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data, expert interviews, analysis of the regulatory framework and stakeholder participation, a number of key conclusions can be drawn.

1

First, a sustainable political and institutional basis for the development of an inclusive approach has been established in Almaty. The adoption of strategic documents such as the Concept of “Inclusive Almaty until 2030”, the City Development Programme and national policies on the rights of persons with disabilities and social inclusion demonstrate political will and a focus on international standards. The creation of the office of the mayor’s advisor on inclusion and the launch of coordination mechanisms between departments are steps towards the sustainable integration of the inclusive agenda into city management.



2

Secondly, the city has made progress in a number of key areas: the development of accessible infrastructure, inclusive education, digital transformation and social support. The participation of civil society and universities in promoting the SDGs is expanding, and analytical and expert capacity is growing. The development of public monitoring platforms, the involvement of non-governmental organizations in the implementation of social programmes and the emergence of pilot solutions for inclusion confirm the city’s readiness for

innovation and multi-level interaction.

However, alongside the achievements, certain challenges remain. These include insufficient accessibility of the urban environment for citizens with limited mobility, digital and social inequality, a shortage of qualified personnel in the field of inclusive education and social work, and limited coverage of vulnerable groups by current programmes. The fragmented and uneven implementation of inclusive solutions across different districts of the city, as well as the lack of systematic cross-sectoral coordination, reduce the effectiveness of efforts. There is a lack of reliable and disaggregated data, which makes it difficult to monitor progress and make evidence-based management decisions.

In this regard, the key priority for the coming years is to develop mechanisms for interdepartmental and intersectoral cooperation, ensure sustainable funding for inclusion programmes, institutionalise monitoring, and involve vulnerable groups in planning and evaluation processes. It is necessary to strengthen efforts to foster an inclusive culture among professionals, businesses and society as a whole, as well as to ensure that successful pilot initiatives are replicated at the systemic level.

Thus, the second Voluntary Local Review confirmed that Almaty is moving in the right direction, but in order to achieve sustainable and comprehensive results, it is necessary to deepen the systemic approach, expand partnerships and integrate the principles of inclusiveness into all aspects of urban development. It is important that the future of Almaty is built on the basis of equal opportunities, social justice and the active participation of every resident.



A Society Where No One Is Left Behind

Inclusiveness is not only a goal but also a process that requires the combined efforts of the entire urban community. The second Voluntary Local Review provided an opportunity to conduct an in-depth analysis of the current situation and outline key priorities on the path to creating a fair, accessible and sustainable Almaty. However, achieving these goals is impossible without the involvement of all stakeholders: from local and national authorities to citizens, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, businesses and international partners.

We live in a city where every second resident is a young person, a student, a parent, an employee or an entrepreneur. Each of us is an active participant in city life. Inclusiveness starts with simple things: a ramp at a shop, accessible information on a website, respect for others on public transport, support for people with special needs in the workplace. It is these everyday actions that shape the atmosphere of a city where “no one is left behind”.

Government and administration play a crucial role in setting the pace and direction, but they cannot change urban reality on their own. We call on government agencies to continue institutionalising inclusive approaches, sustainable programme funding, open data, and transparent processes. Civil society must continue to be not only a watchdog but also a full partner in the implementation of urban solutions. Businesses, especially small and medium-sized ones, are encouraged to actively engage in social responsibility, universal design, and job creation for all. Academic and educational institutions are encouraged to foster inclusive values in the new generation and to research and implement innovative practices.



We express our gratitude to our international partners for their support and invite them to continue participating in the implementation of pilot projects, the exchange of experience and the provision of resources. Almaty is ready to be part of the global movement of inclusive and sustainable cities, to adopt best practices and share its own.

The call for joint action is an invitation to every resident and organization to become a co-author of Almaty’s inclusive future. This is not only a political or managerial task, it is an ethical choice and a civic responsibility. The time has come to move from words to action — to build a space where every person feels accepted, meaningful and needed. The city of Almaty is open to dialogue, partnership and joint efforts. Together, we can make inclusion the norm rather than the exception, a way of life rather than a project.



APPENDICES

List of Participants

1. Almaty City Development Centre JSC

Chairman of the Board	Berdenov Ruslan
Deputy Chairman of the Board	Zheksenbay Aidos
Director of the Analytical Center	Abilakhanov Abzal
General Manager	Alimov Berik
General Manager	Mukhametzhanova Indira
General Manager	Beissenbayeva Kalamkas
Manager	Onalbayeva Adina

2. Department of Economics and Finance of Almaty City

3. Department of Employment and Social Programs of Almaty City

4. Department of Education of Almaty City

5. Almaty Civil Alliance

Chairperson of Almaty Civil Alliance	Kairzhan Abdykhalykov
Sustainable Development Expert	Sergey Tsoy
Sustainable Development Analyst and Expert	Pavel Grudnitsky
Big Data Management Expert	Timur Shigabutdinov
Design Expert	Svetlana Grudnitskaya

6. Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

7. Turan University

8. UNECE

9. Advisor to the Akim on Inclusion Omarova Kassiyet

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