

# WHY FAMILY PLANNING MATTERS

*Family planning helps individuals decide the number and spacing of their children. It includes a wide range of contraceptive methods and fertility treatments.*

**Family planning:**



**Upholds basic human rights**



**Saves lives and improves health**



**Reduces poverty**



**Empowers women**



**Promotes sustainable development**

**The global community has committed to eliminating women's unmet need for contraception and expanding voluntary access to effective modern contraceptive methods by 2030.**

# FIVE REASONS WHY FAMILY PLANNING SHOULD BECOME PART OF KAZAKHSTAN'S FAMILY POLICY

## 1 Improves maternal health and chance of infant survival

! *too early*  
● *too late*  
*too often*

Modern contraceptive methods help women avoid pregnancies that are too early, too late, or too often.

Using contraceptives reduces the number of pregnancies and births with a high risk of complications. These are the factors that contribute significantly to maternal and infant mortality.



When contraceptive needs are met, a woman can:

recover her health after childbirth;

have more time and energy for her family and children; and

have more time and energy for personal development.

Policies aimed at increasing the birth rate and protecting reproductive health, especially among young people, are interconnected processes and integral factors of Kazakhstan's socioeconomic development.

## 2 Furthers the country's socioeconomic development



*The experience of European countries proves that a higher rate of contraceptive use reduces the number of abortions and does not lower the birth rate.*

An example to the contrary is the rise in the number of abortions and significant decline in the birth rate in the former Soviet Union during the severe economic recession of the 1990s.

**A country's adolescent fertility rate is an indicator of its poverty level.** The lower the rate, the greater the chances for young people to get a good education and become competitive in the labor market. The interaction between a government and its people in family planning matters is in line with the humanistic values of family policy, and has a positive effect on the health and socioeconomic well-being of citizens, communities, and the nation.

# 3 Reduces abortions



In Kazakhstan, **every sixth** pregnancy ends in abortion<sup>1</sup>.



**Every fifth** woman of childbearing age has had at least one abortion during her lifetime.

<sup>1</sup> *Analysis of Abortions in the Republic of Kazakhstan*, a report by UNFPA.

# 71%

**71% of sexually active women aged 15–19 do not use any contraceptive methods<sup>2</sup>.** This impacts the high rate of unintended pregnancies and childbirths.

<sup>2</sup> *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) for Kazakhstan, 2015*. Ministry of National Economy of Kazakhstan Statistics Committee.



On average, about five out of 1,000 girls aged 15–18 have had an abortion, and the birth rate among adolescents is **six times higher** than in OECD countries<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> *Analysis of Abortions in the Republic of Kazakhstan*, a report by UNFPA.

**Affordable modern contraceptives reduce the total number of abortions, including unsafe abortions. Unsafe abortions increase mortality and contribute to adverse dynamics of reproductive loss.**

# x10

The cost of contraceptives is **ten times less** than the costs of an unintended pregnancy.

The free provision and subsidizing of oral contraceptives is proven to yield future economic benefits for the health care system. According to economic studies conducted in Kazakhstan<sup>4</sup>, the cost of contraceptives is ten times less than the cost of an unintended pregnancy, abortion, treatment for reproductive tract infections, infertility, and maternal mortality.

The cost of free contraceptives for 15–19-year-olds is projected to yield six-fold economic benefits by eliminating the expenses of unintended pregnancies, such as abortion, treatments for complicated pregnancy and childbirth, and welfare disbursements associated with the birth of a child<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> *Budget Impact of Free Contraceptives. Policy Brief for the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of Kazakhstan*, an economic study (budget impact analysis) by UNFPA, 2017, 2018.

**High domestic drug prices make modern contraceptives inaccessible to the majority of the population.**

The percentage of total household expenditures spent on modern contraceptives is a scientifically proven indicator of their availability. Ideally, they should comprise 1% of the total annual family income. In Kazakhstan, this number is 12%, which suggests that the majority of Kazakhstanis either use modern contraceptives occasionally or not at all, having little effect on reproductive health<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> *Report of Contraceptive Market Segmentation Research, Kazakhstan*, UNFPA, 2015.

# 44%

Over the past ten years, the percentage of women of reproductive age who are in official and unregistered marriages and **do not use contraceptives is 44%**<sup>2</sup>.

# 4 Prevents sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)

Barrier contraceptives prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. This helps to reduce the number of pelvic inflammatory diseases that lead to adverse reproductive consequences, including premature birth, miscarriage, stillbirth, and infertility.



The Kazakhstan Reproductive Medicine Association estimates that 17% of couples in the country are childless. Between 2010 and 2018, 5,770 in vitro fertilization (IVF) procedures were carried out in Kazakhstan, of which only 12% were arranged as part of guaranteed free medical care. IVFs place an economic burden both on the state budget and childless families.

# 62%

In Kazakhstan, 62% of HIV cases are sexually transmitted. This means that raising public awareness about how these infections are transmitted and how to protect against them should be a healthcare priority. As high-risk groups, adolescents and youths should be given special attention.

*The government provision of free contraceptives (condoms) will significantly change this situation, reduce the spread of sexually transmitted infections, and prevent unintended adolescent pregnancies.*

# 16,5

The median age of first sexual debut in Kazakhstan is 16.5<sup>6</sup>.



# 2/3

Two-thirds of young people aged 15–24 are unaware of HIV transmission methods<sup>7</sup>.

**Ensuring access to male and female condoms reduces the spread of STIs, including HIV.**

# 44%

**44% of sexually-active teenage boys have four or more sexual partners.** A significant percentage of adolescents are not concerned about having promiscuous sexual encounters and their associated risks<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>6,7,8</sup> Sociological Survey on the Status of Reproductive Health of Adolescents and Young People Aged 15–19, Their Sexual Behavior, and Access to Reproductive Health Services and Information. UNFPA, 2018; Sociological Survey to Diagnose the Level of Awareness of Contraceptive Methods and Family Planning among Adolescents and Youth, UNFPA, 2019.

# 5 Empowers women

***Women who can plan if and when to have children have better opportunities for good education and employment.***

This improves their socioeconomic prospects and the future of their families.



In European countries, bridging the gender gap in employment results in tangible economic benefits, including an estimated GDP growth **from 5% to more than 30%.**

