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"Akelius" and trilingualism: phase 2

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As part of the Akelius project, aimed at teaching foreign languages to children affected by migration and lagging behind in literacy, a webinar was held to exchange experiences of countries connected to this program.

On January 27, 2025, the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Methodological Center of the Astana Akimat held an international webinar to exchange experiences in the framework of promoting multilingualism and integration through education, as well as the initiative of the Akelius project to improve literacy skills of children affected by migration.

The speakers shared valuable experience and innovative approaches to language teaching in the digital age. The webinar was followed by an active discussion, during which participants were able to ask questions to experts and exchange ideas on the development of multilingual education in their countries.

The event brought together leading experts in linguistics, education and international cooperation from various countries, such as Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, and the UAE. The dialogue was attended by school teachers, college and university lecturers, language training centres, who have experience in teaching a foreign (non-native) language using blended learning technologies.

The project "Improving the language skills of children in Kazakhstan to improve academic performance" using the internationally recognized Akelius program is being implemented in Kazakhstan with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF in Kazakhstan.

The Akelius program is a language initiative that helps learn foreign languages. It is designed for children and adolescents affected by migration, as well as for children who are significantly behind in literacy.

Recent data on the adoption of language courses on the Akelius platform showed that digital content improves students' language skills: 8% and 9% improvement in listening and reading, and 25% and 34% improvement in speaking and writing.

Moreover, using digital language course in the classroom increases students' confidence, improves attendance and reduces the risk of children dropping out of school.

The Akelius project has been implemented in Astana since 2021.

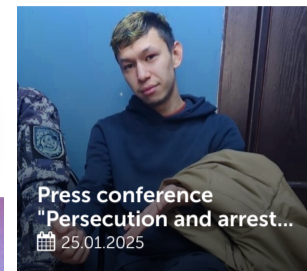
The implementation of the innovative language initiative "Akelius" helps teachers improve children's literacy through lessons using the application and tablets. Since its launch, the Akelius application has developed and tested the A0-B1 competency levels (the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages defines language knowledge and skills at six levels - A1 (elementary proficiency), A2, B1, B2, C1, C2 (proficiency). Based on the positive results of Phase 1 of the Akelius initiative and the opinion of teachers and specialists in Astana, it became possible to expand the program to more schools, as well as expand the program itself by including English in schools.

The second phase of the project is currently being implemented.

The components of Phase 2 of the Akelius initiative (October 2023 – May 2025) are presented as follows.

Based on the experience of implementing the initiative in 2021-2023, the

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teaching of Russian using the Akelius app was continued during the implementation of Phase 2. In Phase 2, an English language component was included in all 6 schools participating in the project and using the Akelius app for the Russian language. English is a compulsory subject in all schools in Kazakhstan (in accordance with the National Trilingual Policy). The project aims to help English teachers implement the Akelius app in their regular work after basic training. In addition to Kazakh or mixed schools, the English course using the Akelius app is also offered for use in language gymnasiums. The English course in the Akelius app is especially attractive to teachers due to the high interest of children and young people in information technology.

Currently, the Akelius program for studying Russian and English languages is used in 6 schools in Astana: School-Lyceum No. 60, School-Lyceum No. 62, School-Lyceum No. 53, School-Gymnasium No. 67, School-Gymnasium No. 51, School-Gymnasium No. 75.

Experts from the International University of Information Technology provide methodological support to schools in lesson planning, blended learning using various successful methods, including assessment.

The Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights helps identify and refer students in need of the program to teachers.

The Methodological Center of the Akimat of Astana supports the program in methodology, promotion of new approaches, exchange and dissemination of results, coordination with other schools in Astana and regions.

The value of the Akelius app is that it enables teachers to conduct lessons more effectively, because when there is such a tool, the teacher has the opportunity to work more individually with each child, even when there are students of different levels in the same class. We are spreading this approach to other schools in the city.

Awakening the desire to learn and self-learn in children is one of the main principles in our work. The Akelius project gives children a unique opportunity to study any language both with a teacher and individually, and teachers to acquire the skill of integrating traditional learning with an electronic-digital resource.

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