

Towards an Inclusive Future: Public Administration, Legal Reforms and Education in Kazakhstan

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Abstract

This study explores how Kazakhstan's legal and administrative systems shape the implementation of inclusive education. Inclusive education seeks to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, receive high-quality learning opportunities on the basis of equity and human rights. Using a mixed-methods design, the research combined quantitative data on school accessibility and disability inclusion with qualitative analysis of national and international legislative frameworks. Interviews with education experts further illuminated local implementation challenges and systemic barriers. The findings reveal significant gaps between policy development and practice. While Kazakhstan has endorsed international agreements promoting inclusivity, progress is hindered by centralized governance, limited funding, and persistent cultural stigma, particularly in rural areas. A comparative review of Finland, Germany, and Russia highlights the benefits of decentralization, community involvement, and strong teacher preparation. The study concludes that achieving genuine inclusivity will require clearer and more inclusive legal language, greater local autonomy in education, enhanced teacher training for diverse learners, and the removal of financial and cultural obstacles. These reforms are essential to secure equal rights and fair treatment for all students.

Keywords: inclusive education, public administration, legal reforms, policy implementation, decentralization, teacher training.

Introduction

Inclusive education is an approach that provides equal access to quality education for all learners, regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other disabilities. It includes children with special educational needs. Inclusive education is important because it promotes social justice and equity and helps children to develop as whole individuals (UNESCO, n.d.; UNICEF Kazakhstan, 2023). Furthermore, inclusive education not only helps children with special needs to become part of society but also helps their peers to internalize the values of acceptance, understanding, and respect for diversity. It is one of the most important ways of creating an inclusive society in which everyone can participate equally in the social, economic, cultural, and other aspects of life.

The history of inclusive education in Kazakhstan is relatively recent. Before the attainment of independence in 1991, the education system in the country was characterized by a greater degree of tradition, with children with special needs being educated in separate institutions alongside their peers. This approach to education has been identified as a contributing factor to the social

segregation of children with disabilities (Sage Open, 2020). Since 2000, Kazakhstan has made significant changes to its education system and started following the ideas of inclusive education. The adoption of the Law on Education in 2007 marked a pivotal moment in this development. This law established the right of children with special education needs to attend mainstream schools (Eurasian Research Institute, n.d.). In 2011, Kazakhstan ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This also helped to strengthen the idea of inclusive education (UNESCO, n.d.). This study investigates how legal reforms influence inclusive education and public administration in Kazakhstan, focusing on the relationship between legislation, its practical application, and the resulting effects on the development of inclusive education. It reviews existing laws and bylaws regulating inclusive education, assessing both their positive and negative aspects, and examines the administrative challenges that shape policy outcomes. In particular, the research models how public administration affects the adoption of inclusive education and identifies critical obstacles such as financial constraints, a shortage of qualified personnel, and inconsistent infrastructure. By analysing these issues, the study seeks to generate evidence-based recommendations for improving education policy and strengthening the effectiveness of inclusive practices across the country. The findings have important implications for the advancement of inclusive education in Kazakhstan. They expose gaps in legislation and implementation that hinder progress, offer practical suggestions for government agencies to enhance policy design, and support the creation of a more equitable education system. Ultimately, the research aims to contribute to a policy environment that ensures learning opportunities for every child, regardless of individual characteristics, and promotes a genuinely inclusive future.

Current Trends and Challenges

Inclusive education in Kazakhstan is changing, yet implementation faces ongoing difficulties. One important change is that more children with disabilities are able to go to school. Some schools in major cities like Astana, Almaty, and Shymkent are now including children with disabilities. These children go to the same schools as other children. To achieve this, teacher training programs are being conducted to ensure that teachers are well-equipped to handle students with special needs. Universities and teacher training colleges are now offering courses on inclusive education. For instance, psychology students at SDU University work with children with special needs as part of their practical training. Moreover, the university is already preparing students for this type of society, and positive changes are beginning to be seen within the academic community. Efforts are also being made to ensure that there are policies in place to support inclusive education through the creation of new laws and regulations (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Technological innovations are also playing a role, as schools are using online platforms and applications to enhance learning for children with disabilities (UNICEF, 2023). But inclusive education still has problems. One of the problems is that some schools do not have suitable buildings and elements, including ramps and elevators, for students with disabilities. This is especially true in rural areas, where there are no buildings at all (Suleimenova et al., 2023).

In Kazakhstan, the landscape is changing to be more inclusive, but there are still problems. The government and community partners in the country and around the world need to work together to solve these problems. When we include children with special needs in our schools, it makes society better for everyone.

According to Dr. Kamila Rollan, a PhD and alumna of the University of Cambridge:

“Only a small percentage of school-aged children with disabilities in Kazakhstan get a quality, inclusive education in a mainstream school. Most learners with disabilities and special needs are educated at home on a long-term basis, isolated from their peers, or attend special schools, which are often located far from their families and communities.

Home-schooling implies regular visits from teachers to deliver instruction at home, but, in reality, teachers visit only a few times a week or a month. And studying in special schools or special classrooms in mainstream schools provides little chance for socializing with peers or gaining competitive skills and knowledge to succeed in adult life.

One percent of individuals with disabilities in Kazakhstan make it to university; the remaining 99% can hope for some technical-vocational training at most, but a more common scenario involves them staying at home, uneducated, after completing basic secondary education. Lastly, institutionalization remains high, and children with disabilities living in psychiatric-neurological institutions receive very little or no education at all.” (Rollan, 2019, paras. 4-6)

In addition, she reflects on the situation during the COVID-19 pandemic: “What COVID-19 shows is that it is a very lonely place to be when you cannot go out to see your friends in a bar, have a walk in the park with a date, or meet colleagues at the office for a cup of morning coffee. But we know once the lockdown is over, we will get back to normal. But how would you feel if you could never do those things, just because going outside is a major challenge?

You may be wishing the quarantine was over so that you could drop your kids off at the nursery or school and have some time for yourself or your work. But for some, going to school is not an option at all. These difficult times should make us more aware of the daily struggles of people with disabilities living in segregated societies and prove, once again, that inclusion is one of the most important movements of this century — and everyone’s responsibility.” (Rollan, 2019, paras. 9-10)

Dr. Rollan's discourse elucidates a series of issues of paramount importance, which have frequently been disregarded. The present author concurs with her perspective that the prevailing system in Kazakhstan leaves a considerable number of children with disabilities without equitable opportunities for education, personal development, and social integration. Her observations highlight the harsh reality that, for the majority of these children, the path to university or meaningful employment is all but impossible, not because of a lack of ability, but because of systemic barriers.

Her comparison with the lockdown measures imposed in response to the pandemic of COVID-19 pandemic is especially powerful. It helps people without disabilities to understand the emotional and social isolation that individuals with disabilities face daily, not temporarily, but constantly. This should be a wake-up call for all of us. Inclusive education is not just a policy goal; it is a fundamental human right and a shared responsibility.

Legal changes are crucial for making education a reality by establishing the legal structure to ensure fair opportunities for all students alike. When there are no guidelines and ways to put them into action in place, inclusive education might just be words on paper rather than a reality. Legal reforms are important for eradicating bias, promoting access to education for children with needs, and asserting their right to go to school. They also establish benchmarks for excellence that every educational institution must achieve (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

Public administration has a role in putting policies into practice and ensuring their success. In this context, education requires the state to allocate resources for infrastructure improvement, staff training, and acquiring equipment. Additionally, oversight and evaluation are crucial for monitoring the enforcement of laws and gauging the impact of programs. Collaboration plays a part too, with

bodies such as ministries, local authorities, schools, and NGOs working together to ensure smooth coordination. Effective leadership is crucial for the implementation of meaningful reforms in public administration and driving educational changes to ensure policies are executed efficiently (Eurasian Research Institute, 2020). Over the past two decades, Kazakhstan has introduced several significant reforms that have transformed the educational landscape, particularly with regard to inclusive education. For example, the Education Act of 2007 granted children with special educational needs and disabilities the right to attend mainstream schools. In 2011, the country reaffirmed its commitment to inclusive practices by ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations Development Program, 2023). Further progress was made through the State Program for the Development of Education and Science (2016–2019), which aimed to improve the quality of education and establish resource centers to support inclusion (Human Rights Watch, 2019). In 2020, the introduction of the new Code on the Health of the People and the Healthcare System emphasized additional support for children with disabilities (Eurasian Research Institute, 2020). While these reforms represent important initial steps, the development of a robust legal and institutional framework is essential to fully realize inclusive education in Kazakhstan.

Theoretical foundations of inclusive education

The fundamental principles of inclusive education define its overarching purpose and objectives. These principles encompass the concepts of equality, which ensures that all learners are granted equal opportunities irrespective of their physical, intellectual, or social status; accessibility, which guarantees that learning environments, materials, and technologies are suitable for all individuals; and special education, which acknowledges the necessity for tailored approaches and instructional methods for students with specific educational requirements.

Several important theories serve as the foundation for inclusive education and influence how the problem is approached. According to the first theory, known as the social model of disability, disability is a societal issue rather than a medical one. It claims that social barriers that keep disabled persons from engaging in society are the cause of disability. To guarantee complete participation, this inclusive education framework works to eliminate these obstacles. However, the medical model views disability as a medical condition, which results in the separation of special needs children. According to the human rights viewpoint on disability, everyone has the right to inclusive education. It says that everyone should have access to education and that the state should ensure that this right is practiced. To successfully implement inclusive education in different nations, it is critical to comprehend these theories (Human Rights Watch, 2019). A key player in the creation and execution of educational policy is the general public. It establishes priorities, distributes funds, and upholds the law. Public administration should create plans for ensuring educational fairness in the context of inclusive education. They are responsible for providing funding for infrastructure, equipment, and teacher training initiatives, monitoring how the rules are being applied, and evaluating how well educational initiatives are working (Eurasian Research Institute, 2020).

In Kazakhstan, the responsibility for the majority of education-related decisions lies with the Ministry of Education and Science, which includes policy development, implementation, and oversight. Nevertheless, in recent years, a series of reforms have granted greater flexibility, empowering regional departments and schools to make context-specific decisions. This decentralization is intended to adapt educational strategies to local needs while still aligning with national priorities. Despite these efforts, maintaining consistency across regions remains

challenging (UNESCO, 2022). Centralized management provides the benefit of uniform standards and consistent policy enforcement across all regions. This approach is designed to ensure that all students receive a consistent and high-quality education. However, it is often criticized for its lack of flexibility and inability to address the specific needs of local communities.

Conversely, decentralized management facilitates the tailoring of educational programs to local contexts, enhancing their relevance and responsiveness. However, this model has the potential to result in uneven development and disparities between different regions. For inclusive education to succeed, both approaches should be combined to balance consistency and adaptability (UNESCO, 2022; Eurasian Research Institute, 2020).

Comparative Analysis: Inclusive Education Systems in Other Countries Around the World

Finland: A successful model of inclusion

Finland is regarded as a global leader in the implementation of inclusive education. The system is guided by principles such as "one student, one plan," which ensures personalised learning approaches. It is vital to emphasize that comprehensive teacher preparation and a minimal number of specialized schools are key features. The implementation of these policies is instrumental in facilitating the integration of all learners into mainstream classrooms. The Finnish experience demonstrates that inclusive education is achievable with robust government support and highly qualified educators (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2018).

Germany: Dual education system

Germany has a dual system where children with special needs can attend regular schools or resource centers. Nevertheless, the country has recently taken measures to incorporate inclusive education to diminish segregation and provide equity to all students (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022).

Russia: The post-Soviet model of education

Russia and Kazakhstan both have a system of special schools for children with disabilities that was created during the Soviet period. In recent years, Russia has likewise tried to include children with disabilities in regular schools, but it faces the same challenges of not having enough money and people thinking badly about inclusion. Looking at these countries can teach us the best ways to include children with disabilities in regular schools (UNICEF, 2020).

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is recognized as the first global document to recognize education as a universal right. As stated in Article 26, the right to education is guaranteed to all individuals, and this right should be implemented without financial restriction, at least at the elementary level of education. This established the foundations for contemporary education policies on a global scale. Its influence can be observed in subsequent agreements that focused on inclusive and equitable access (United Nations, 1948).

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities clearly states that people with disabilities have the right to education without discrimination and on the same terms as everyone else. It says that countries that have signed it must make sure that all children can get an education that includes everyone. This includes getting rid of physical and mental barriers, and providing the

support needed within normal schools (United Nations, 2006).

This convention says that people with disabilities have the right to education. This means that countries that have signed it must remove barriers to education and allow people with disabilities to attend school (United Nations, 2006). The Education 2030 Agenda is a plan created by UNESCO that aims to provide quality education to everyone. It also talks about how important it is to support children in need, especially those with disabilities, and how we need to focus on making things fairer for everyone (UNESCO, 2015). These global treaties set obligations for countries like Kazakhstan.

Constitution of Kazakhstan: The provisions of constitutional rights in connection with education.

The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan is the primary document that protects civil rights, including the right to education. Article 30 of the Constitution guarantees the right of every citizen to compulsory primary education in public schools for free. Furthermore, the Constitution provides for equality before the law and prohibits discrimination based on disability (Republic of Kazakhstan, 1995). These rights are important for developing inclusive education, which means education for all children, no matter what their disability. Although the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan does not explicitly refer to inclusive education, this omission may be viewed as a missed opportunity to articulate the state's commitment to educational equity. Nevertheless, the Constitution prohibits all forms of discrimination and places strong emphasis on the protection of human rights. In fact, Article 1 legitimizes the principle of inclusivity by proclaiming Kazakhstan as a democratic state, which implies equality of opportunity and the protection of individual freedoms. From this perspective, inclusive education can be interpreted as an extension of the democratization of knowledge and as a practical expression of the constitutional values of non-discrimination and human dignity (Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan 1995). The Constitution of Kazakhstan emphasizes equality and prohibits discrimination. Article 14 states that all persons in the Republic of Kazakhstan are equal before the law and court and forbids discrimination on grounds such as origin, social status, property, gender, religion, ethnicity or any other circumstances (Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan 1995). This broad guarantee underpins inclusive policies by ensuring that children with disabilities or other special needs are entitled to equal treatment in education

Revisions and deficiencies in the protection of people with disabilities

On the one hand, the Constitution of Kazakhstan is rather liberal, and on the other hand, several shortcomings hinder the implementation of inclusive education. For instance, the Constitution does not provide for concrete ways of making education accessible to children with disabilities. This makes many schools inaccessible to such children because of missing facilities such as ramps, elevators, and sign language interpreters for specialized classes (UNICEF, 2020).

The Law "On Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Kazakhstan," adopted in 2005, delineates the fundamental principles for ensuring the rights of individuals with disabilities in various aspects of life, including education. The report emphasizes the importance of making educational institutions physically and academically accessible, supporting vocational training and employment opportunities, and promoting inclusive practices in classrooms. However, the implementation of these measures is hindered by several factors, including insufficient resources, limited teacher preparation, and the absence of dedicated funding provisions (Human Rights Watch,

2019; Eurasian Research Institute, 2020). To address these implementation gaps, further legal changes are required to clearly define the state's obligations regarding inclusive education, and to create the necessary conditions for its realization (Eurasian Research Institute, 2020). Therefore, although the law establishes a foundation for inclusive education, fully executing it necessitates further dedication and resources.

The Code has undergone revisions over time, with the recent update in 2020 focusing specifically on enhancing assistance for children with disabilities; nevertheless, there are concerns raised by various professionals indicating that these modifications are mostly symbolic and may not always be accompanied by adequate financial resources (Aubakirova, 2016).

Kazakhstan's government has officially accepted agreements concerning inclusive education, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2011) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015). These agreements require the nation to guarantee that every individual has opportunities to access education (United Nations, 2006; United Nations Development Program, 2023).

Despite being approved and agreed upon in theory in terms of accessibility, for children with disabilities in schools still present challenges in real-world application. Not every teacher is eager to support these students, which highlights a disconnect between theoretical policies and actual practices (UNICEF, 2020).

Recently, in Kazakhstan, various initiatives have been implemented to promote education. One such program is the "Accessible school" which offers support for educating children with disabilities. (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023).

Financial obstacles, along with challenges in infrastructure and cultural differences, pose barriers. These efforts various obstacles such as insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure, and societal stereotypes. For instance, several parents and educators continue to hold the notion that students with disabilities ought to receive education in institutions (Eurasian Research Institute, 2020).

Methodology

In this research, we used a mixed-method approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative research methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of inclusive education in Kazakhstan and how it is connected to legal and administrative reforms. The design of the study enables a balanced investigation of both theoretical-political frameworks and real-world practices.

The qualitative component of the study involves a comprehensive analysis of national legislation, state programs and international treaties that have influenced Kazakhstan's inclusive education policies. Key documents reviewed for the purpose of this study include the Education Act (2007), the Law on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities (2005), and the Code on the Health of the People and Healthcare System (2020). The analysis also encompasses Kazakhstan's ratification of international agreements, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006), which outlines the country's obligations to ensure inclusive, non-discriminatory education. In addition to the analysis of documents, the study incorporates insights from secondary expert commentary, particularly the published interview with Dr. Kamilla Rollan, who is a leading specialist in inclusive education and who was featured on the University of Cambridge platform (Rollan, 2019). Her reflections provide critical insights into systemic gaps and practical challenges in the implementation of inclusive education across Kazakhstan.

The quantitative component looks at how well inclusive education is going using statistical data. This includes the number of schools with inclusive programs and the number of children with disabilities enrolled in mainstream schools. These metrics help us understand how national policies are reflected in practical, accessible educational opportunities.

A review of foundational legal documents was conducted, with particular reference to the Education Act, the Public Health Code and the Law on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities. In addition, an analysis was made of Kazakhstan's commitments under the UN CRPD and Education 2030 Agenda (Republic of Kazakhstan, 2005; 2007; United Nations, 2006; UNESCO, 2015).

An examination of inclusive education practices in selected schools in Nur-Sultan and Almaty is warranted, with particular reference to those schools that have implemented individualized educational plans (IEPs) and integrated support centers.

The utilization of extant expert interviews and commentaries, with particular reference to Dr. Kamilla Rollan's observations, is employed in order to furnish a practitioner's perspective on the gaps and challenges inherent to inclusive education in Kazakhstan (Rollan, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2019). This methodological framework allows to understand the issue from different angles. It combines what the law says, statistics, and expert opinions to create a well-informed understanding of how inclusive education is going in Kazakhstan.

Legal frameworks of Kazakhstan

The fairness and equality in the education system of Kazakhstan rely on laws and regulations that encourage tolerance and inclusivity in every educational establishment for all students regardless of their physical or mental conditions. This section introduces Kazakhstan's legal frameworks that promote inclusivity among schools and universities, workplaces, and daily life. Although each policy and law focus on different aspects of inclusivity, they form the foundation of a country with a fair and accessible education and a non-discriminating society.

The foundational law of the country, the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan guarantees a right to education to its every citizen. It requires the government body to provide free secondary education in state educational establishments to everyone (Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 1995). This alone shows education as an integral part of the country's development, and that every human being should have a chance to succeed regardless of their physical or mental capabilities. However, some critics claim that the Constitution's broad wording lacks the explicitness needed to address the daily problems that disabled individuals face, which results in different interpretations at the local level (Tulegenova, 2019). In reality, the execution of the constitutional rights mentioned above relies heavily on additional laws and the administrative processes that implement them. And the laws that are focused on clarifying and strengthening the protections for disabled people have not fully closed the existing legal gaps. So, irregularity in executing policies is common, especially in rural and unpopulated areas, or underserved regions where governmental resources and staff are limited (Baizhumanova, 2020).

In 2005, the Law on Social Protection of Disabled Persons was introduced. It was created to help ensure disabled citizens' rights in education. This law requires schools to have accessible buildings, so students who have impairments in mobility can move around easily and safely. Schools must also provide suitable learning materials so disabled students can fully participate in class alongside their classmates (the Law on Social Protection of Disabled Persons of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2005). Even with the law raising awareness and establishing clear responsibilities, its impact is often limited by practical execution challenges. Many schools in less developed areas face

staff shortages and other resource deficits, that result in different degrees of compliance to the standards. And even if some schools have become the role model of inclusivity, others continue to struggle with fulfilling the requirements of the law (Sultanova & Abilova, 2021).

By defining clear rules for developing a curriculum with inclusion in mind, specifically producing individualized educational plans for disabled students and requiring teachers to undergo specific training in adaptive teaching methods, the law designed a fair structure that makes it easier to adopt additional inclusive educational practices. While it solves many problems on paper, issues like unequal distribution of resources and lack of governmental monitoring and support prevent it from being executed as planned. And that shows the difference between the requirements and actual practice of the law (Osborne, 2019).

International agreements shape Kazakhstan's educational policies through specific regulations. The implementation of United Nations instruments such as the CRPD (2006) and CRC (1989) has formed the basis of domestic policy in the country. These international instruments establish education equality and non-discrimination standards to which local education laws must be measured. The treaties have created a positive impact on national policy reform to match global standards yet many gaps exist between written policies and actual implementation on the ground (United Nations, 2006; United Nations, 1989).

The adoption of international standards through practical policy implementation has produced updated regulations and new implementation measures. The implementation process faces ongoing challenges despite the strong legal language. The effective realization of these standards is blocked by limited funding and bureaucratic delays as well as significant regional differences. The laws in Kazakhstan demonstrate a robust commitment to inclusive education but practical implementation needs adjustments that match specific local conditions (Baizhumanova, 2020).

The government has taken specific targeted initiatives to modernize and enhance the education system despite facing these challenges. The State Program for Education Development implements student disability inclusion through mainstream classroom integration. The program establishes resource centers together with teacher training programs and school facility upgrades to achieve accessibility standards (Republic of Kazakhstan, 2015). Multiple barriers continue to hinder progress toward achieving inclusive education despite recent advancement initiatives. The limited financial support hinders schools from implementing new technologies and performing necessary infrastructure upgrades. Rural regions demonstrate extreme differences between national education policies and actual implementation results. The combination of deep-rooted cultural ideas and bureaucratic challenges makes it difficult to execute these programs (Tulegenova, 2019).

The educational system of Kazakhstan rests on a solid constitutional foundation for inclusion yet struggles to convert legal rights into everyday educational practice. The Constitution together with the Law on Social Protection of Disabled Persons and the Education Code demonstrate Kazakhstan's commitment to delivering accessible and fair education. The substantial difference between official policies and actual implementation stands as a major impediment. To achieve full implementation of legal rights three essential obstacles, need to be resolved: inconsistent enforcement, limited resources, and regional disparities. Strained educational resources and international support must continue through specific government programs to guarantee every Kazakh student with any disability access to high-quality inclusive learning opportunities (Ainscow, 2020; Osborne, 2019).

Discussion

The development of inclusive education policies in Kazakhstan is closely related to the public administration and legal systems of the country. At the forefront of this process, the Ministry of Education and Science serves as the main force that shapes policies to improve the quality and inclusivity of the education system. The State Program for Education Development (2020–2025) includes measures to incorporate students with disabilities by requiring the setting up of support centers and the development of individualized education plans (IEPs) (Republic of Kazakhstan, 2015). There is, however, an emerging issue that the national frameworks which are developed to guarantee consistency in language and purpose may not be able to capture local specifics, and therefore may not be able to address local needs adequately, which may result in delays and large variations in implementation across different regions (Agranovich, 2018; Miles & Singal, 2010).

In Kazakhstan, policies on inclusive education are mainly developed at the national level. This method helps to ensure that the legal language is uniform throughout the country. The Constitution of Kazakhstan, which enshrines the right to education for all citizens, serves as the basis for all other legislation that has been enacted since (Republic of Kazakhstan, 1995). Expanding on this, legal instrument such as the Law on Social Protection of Disabled Persons (2005) and demand that schools should have measures that guarantee that every child with a disability gets quality education. Nevertheless, the development of these policies does not always permit the necessary adjustments in light of local socio-economic or cultural contexts. Decision-making is still centralized and the top-down approach which guarantees policy wording coherence often leads to insufficient localization (Tulegenova, 2019). Such a one-size-fits-all model can cause delays and variations in the implementation of the national mandates as local education authorities try to map the national mandates to local availability of resources and particular community needs (Sultanova & Abilova, 2021).

A further complicating factor within Kazakhstan's public sector management system is the challenge of effectively operationalizing policy texts in detail. Since policies are made mainly from the top, the specific implementation procedures and resource management plans are often made without sufficient participation from local stakeholders. As a result, while the legal frameworks are well articulated at the national level, their implementation at the grassroots is often hampered by bureaucratic inefficiencies and communication gaps between different government departments (Altrichter & Heinrich, 2007). The fragmentation of responsibilities leads to the situation where there are both overlapping responsibilities and unclear lines of accountability which hampers the efficient flow of resources to schools, particularly in rural and underserved areas (Osborne, 2019).

Kazakhstan is facing a lot of challenges when it comes to putting in place policies and legal frameworks for inclusive education. The main problem is in the process of training and developing teachers. We can't have inclusive education without teachers who are trained to teach in general ways, but also know how to help students who need extra attention. In Kazakhstan, many teachers are not trained in adaptive teaching methods or how to correctly implement IEPs (Itkonen, 2009; Sultanova & Abilova, 2021). The quality of education varies greatly from one part of the country to another. Urban schools have successfully put inclusive education programs in place and made them better. But rural schools still use traditional teaching methods and don't have many resources for inclusive education (Sultanova & Abilova, 2021).

Additionally, financial constraints still pose a significant challenge. Although the national legislation provides for the inclusive education, the issue of the distribution of resources is quite critical. In urban areas, there is more money and better facilities, and therefore, schools are in a

better position to put into practice the policies provided by the Ministry of Education and Science. However, in rural areas, the limited financial resources and lack of modern facilities are some of the barriers that prevent the achievement of inclusive strategies (Agranovich, 2018; Baizhumanova, 2020). This financial inequality produces a heterogeneous educational system where the concept of inclusive education is fully implemented in the well-off regions only, while the poor regions are left behind (UNESCO, 2020). Another problem is related to the bureaucratic organization of the public sector. The policymaking process in Kazakhstan is highly centralized and has many levels of bureaucracy and procedures that are often duplicated. Attempts to define accountability and clear lines of responsibility have been made, but the coordination between national, regional and local bodies is not adequate (Altrichter & Heinrich, 2007). This lack of coordination results in delays in the implementation of policies and the slow response to the issues at the local level. Inefficient communication channels lead to the policy objectives not being met and this is worsened by the lack of supervision and the inconsistent measures that are employed (Osborne, 2019; Miles & Singal, 2010).

Moreover, social perceptions and cultural barriers are some of the barriers that hinder the realization of the implementation of inclusive education policies. In many parts of Kazakhstan, cultural practices and social stigma towards disability are still prevalent, which makes it difficult to have inclusive practices (UNICEF, 2019; Shalkhanova & Khamzina, 2020). These cultural beliefs not only deter parents from registering their children in regular schools but also perpetuate the discrimination of people with disabilities. Such deeply rooted social norms can only be altered through long term and consistent efforts such as public education and awareness campaigns (Miles & Singal, 2010). In countries like Finland and Germany, well-articulated strategies to foster diversity and inclusion have led to positive shifts in the public perception and acceptance of inclusive education (Savolainen, 2018; Wocken, 2019). For Kazakhstan, the solution to these socio-cultural problems is as important as the solution to administrative issues.

The international agreements such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006) has impacted on the Kazakhstani legislation through the provision of reference standards for local policies. Although Kazakhstan signed the CRPD in 2015, the effective implementation of the standards set by the Convention is limited by procedural barriers and weak enforcement (Human Rights Watch, 2019). While the international legal instruments offer a clear framework for the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, the challenge lies in translating these broad principles into practice at the local level (United Nations, 2006; United Nations, 1989; Stubbs, 2008). The comparison with Finland's administrative and legal systems where local actors are capable of meeting international standards highlights the necessity for Kazakhstan to strengthen its internal mechanisms and harmonize them with international norms.

Analyzing the models of Finland, Germany, and Russia reveals multiple valuable lessons, which are especially significant for Kazakhstan. Through decentralization, Finland demonstrates that local authorities gain flexibility to adjust national policies according to specific community requirements (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). With this method, each school can be more creative in teaching because the policies are designed to make the system fit with every classroom and not the other way around. Germany's multi-level governance system perfectly balances the national government's policies with local regional changes to adapt to the state. The German system divides power between the national government and *Länder* roles so that inclusive education becomes effective and sustainable by permitting regional adjustments while keeping the integrity of the original legal framework (Wocken, 2019; Powell & Solga, 2011). Russia has a different perspective from Finland and Germany. The Russian governance system is centralized, which means that a few

people in the government control it (Tulegenova, 2019; Slee, 2011). This can make it hard to manage resources and coordinate different groups well. This shows that without improving the governance structure and distributing decision-making power to lower-level governments, the legal reforms will fail to create change. The Russian case supports the idea that having too much centralization, which hinders local innovation, will lead to unproductive policy results.

An analysis of international systems shows that Kazakhstan's educational framework needs to be changed in several important areas. In Kazakhstan, the government controls education at the national level (OECD, 2020). This means that local authorities can't always make changes to these policies quickly. This can make it hard to make sure that all students have the same opportunities to learn. Kazakhstan needs to look at how its national standards match up with how well it can adapt to local needs. The country should have a decentralized educational structure (UNESCO, 2021). This would give local agencies the ability to make decisions about legal adaptations that suit their community conditions. The suggested change would improve local accountability and innovation, as well as make policy execution faster.

Lack of teacher training combined with lack of supporting materials is a massive problem in inclusive education. Even though schools in Kazakhstan are required to create individualized education plans and make the environment in which students learn accessible, that solely depends on how ready the teachers of each school are (Sultanova & Abilova, 2021). To give students with disabilities a complete learning experience, teachers must be prepared to adapt their teaching methods and be inclusive. However, many programs don't provide teachers with this training, which leads to inconsistent standards in different schools (UNICEF, 2019).

Not having enough funding mainly affects rural and poor areas. Kazakhstan has policies that support inclusive education, but money is distributed unevenly (Baizhumanova, 2020). This means that some schools have modern facilities and trained staff, while others have insufficient funding. Different regions have different abilities to achieve the goal of providing education to all. This difference is caused by unequal funding, which leads to unequal educational outcomes (Human Rights Watch, 2019). To make sure all students can benefit from inclusive education policies, we need to increase funding and improve how we distribute resources.

Problems with how the education system is run, like poor coordination and inefficiencies in how it is managed, prevent it from operating efficiently (Osborne, 2019). The current centralized administrative structure has complicated procedures and many bureaucratic steps, as well as unclear communication paths between national and local bodies (Shalkhanova & Khamzina, 2020). This combination makes it take much longer to put policies into action and makes it harder to get the resources and support systems needed. Making improvements to the administrative process and creating clear accountability systems will help resolve these problems and result in the classroom-based implementation of legal frameworks.

The success of inclusive education also depends on social and cultural factors. Many parts of Kazakhstan still have strong prejudices against people with disabilities (UNICEF, 2019; Shalkhanova & Khamzina, 2020). These prejudices make it hard for students with special needs to be accepted and integrated into regular schools. These societal attitudes discourage the participation of students with disabilities and at the same time sustain a cycle of exclusion and underachievement (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Through education reforms and public awareness campaigns, Finland and Germany have made a concerted effort to change the way people think about disability (OECD, 2020; Savolainen, 2018). In order to foster a culture of inclusivity, Kazakhstan will need to implement similar initiatives that will educate the public, challenge stereotypes and promote acceptance of diversity as a strength.

The current legal reforms in Kazakhstan offer a great chance to address most of the challenges identified. The Law on Education (2007) and all its amendments to date have provided for an inclusive education system since every child has the right to education regardless of his/her abilities (Republic of Kazakhstan, 2007). These legal instruments are not only intended to ensure the rights of students with disabilities but also to ensure that local legislation conforms with international instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006). However, the wide and at times unclear definitions of these laws create different interpretations and applications of the laws at the local level (Sultanova & Abilova, 2021). This problem is further worsened by the bureaucratic barriers that stand in the way of implementing these legal mandates. Inclusive schools in cities such as Nur Sultan and Almaty are successful. However, this has not been the case in other areas of the country. This shows that we need better laws to ensure inclusion and stronger ways to hold schools accountable for their actions.

Therefore, we should look at the laws about inclusive education in Kazakhstan and compare them to the laws in Finland, Germany, and Russia. The legal system of Finland is based on decentralization, which means that the government has given the power to the local authorities to come up with their own strategies for inclusive education (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Savolainen, 2018). This is supported by laws that require teachers to keep learning and allocate resources for that purpose. This, in turn, leads to the implementation of these policies at the local level. Germany's legal system uses a two-part approach of national guidelines and regional management. This creates a balanced system of inclusive education that is both general and specific (Wocken, 2019). However, the legal framework in Russia is quite detailed but for the reason that it is a centralized system, bureaucratic and lack of implementation remain the major challenges (Tulegenova, 2019; Slee, 2011).

Based on the comparative analysis, there is a strong reason for Kazakhstan to amend the existing legal framework that is already in place to ensure that it is easier to enforce. These reforms should include defining terms that are vague in the current legal instruments, defining the benchmarks for implementation and putting in place a system of checking and assessment to guarantee that all educational institutions meet the set standards. Furthermore, legislative measures should be supported by procedural changes that can help to improve the efficiency of the education management systems and enhance the cooperation among the different actors in the education sector.

Recommendations for future policy and legal reform in Kazakhstan should emphasize governance decentralization. Thus, giving more decision making power to the regional and local level, Kazakhstan can ensure that educational policies are relevant to the particular context of each community. This would not only help to reduce regional inequalities but also promote a culture of innovation, accountability and responsibility (OECD, 2020). Also, having feedback mechanisms built into the governance structure where by educators, administrators, parents and students can provide feedback on the effectiveness of inclusive practices on a regular basis would provide valuable information that could be used to improve legal and administrative frameworks (Wocken, 2019).

Another area of reform that needs to be invested in is the professional development of teachers and administrators. When the focus is on training teachers in the principles and practices of inclusive education, the laws that require inclusion will be followed better (Shalkhanova & Khamzina, 2020). Because of that, this aspect should be a key part of the legal framework instead of being treated as an extra. With that, international collaborations are an important tool in preparing Kazakhstani teachers for international standards (Sultanova & Abilova, 2021).

Financial inequalities could be considered a root problem that needs to be solved first. The problem of implementing policies lies in the inaccurate distribution of resources, which slows down the progress of inclusivity development, especially in rural areas, where this goal seems out of reach. The balanced funding approach that considers both geographic and social context would allow underfunded schools to receive support that includes modern technology and special staff who would assist in bridging the gap between the development of rural and urban areas (UNICEF, 2019).

The success of inclusive education policies depends heavily on fighting social and cultural barriers. A thought-out plan that includes educational institutions and public services is needed to change people's views on disability. Raising awareness by integrating insightful themes into school curricula to teach diversity and inclusion values will be a strong start to prospering into a society that encourages equality, fairness, and inclusivity (Human Rights Watch, 2019; Slee, 2011).

International standards from treaties, including the CRPD (United Nations, 2006), show how Kazakhstan can improve its laws. However, the complications of following the procedure during the practical implementation of the international standards have hindered Kazakhstan's public administration (Tulegenova, 2019). For this reason, local practices should be improved by studying and learning about the successes and failures of other countries and adapting best practices to the nation's culture. This would help strengthen the legal language and accountability in law.

Conclusion

Kazakhstan displays a problematic situation where the legal frameworks are well-intended. Still, the realistic implementation of those policies lacks in many aspects within the inclusive education and public administration that governs it. Kazakhstan's public administration system functions through a centralized structure that prevents effective adaptation of policies for local levels, even though it promotes laws protecting education rights for all. The State Program for Education Development (2020-2025) is a good example of the nation's dedication to non-discriminatory, inclusive education by requiring support centers and individualized educational plans for children. However, these efforts come up against several challenges, such as a lack of proper teacher training, government plan inefficiencies, and persistent social and cultural prejudices.

A comparative analysis of Finland, Germany, and Russia's approaches to inclusive education revealed that the essential elements of implementing policies effectively are decentralization, adaptability of government, and strong accountability of society as a whole. Finland's strategy serves as a role model for Kazakhstan because it presents an opportunity for local communities to make decisions and develop the field of education. Similarly, Germany shows the proper use of coordination between national and regional standards by merging them into one balanced system. In contrast, Russia's governance system demonstrated the negative effects of too much centralization, thus serving as a warning about the consequences of inflexible systems.

To achieve true equality in education and build an unbiased, unprejudiced society, Kazakhstan must work hard to change its legal framework so that it supports inclusive education and serves as a valuable tool for it. Such changes should include clarifying confusions and legal gaps in current laws and following the examples of developed countries by implementing decentralization in decision-making systems. Teacher training programs and resource distribution should be closely monitored to eliminate the differences between policy and implementation in reality.

This research explores the relationship between inclusive education and public administration in Kazakhstan to show that proper laws and necessary changes to how government is run are vital

components of building inclusivity in educational institutions and society. In the future, Kazakhstan will develop a fair, inclusive education system that improves society's accountability and decentralizes governance, as shown by its current dedication to this goal. Overall, Kazakhstan's experience illustrates the complex interplay between constitutional rights, national legislation, policy programs and governance structures in shaping inclusive education. Continued efforts to decentralize decision making, invest in teacher training, foster community involvement and provide clear legal guidelines are necessary to make that inclusive education becomes a lived reality for all children in Kazakhstan.

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Инклюзивті болашаққа қарай: мемлекеттік басқару, құқықтық реформалар және Қазақстандағы білім беру

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Бұл зерттеу Қазақстандағы құқықтық және әкімшілік жүйелердің инклюзивті білім беруді іске асыруына ықпалын талдайды. Инклюзивті білім беру барлық оқушыларға, оның ішінде мүгедектігі бар балаларға, теңдік пен адам құқықтары қағидаттарына негізделген сапалы оқуға қол жеткізуді қамтамасыз етуге бағытталған. Зерттеу аралас әдісті қолданды: мектептердің қолжетімділігі мен мүгедектігі бар адамдардың қамтылуы жөніндегі сандық деректер ұлттық және халықаралық заңнамалық негіздердің сапалық талдауымен үйлестірілді. Білім беру саласындағы сарапшылармен сұхбаттар жергілікті деңгейдегі іске асырудағы қиындықтар мен жүйелік кедергілерді анықтады. Нәтижелер саясатты әзірлеу мен оны практикада қолдану арасындағы елеулі алшақтықты көрсетеді. Қазақстанның халықаралық келісімдерге адалдығына қарамастан, инклюзияның ілгерілеуіне басқарудың орталықтандырылуы, қаржыландырудың жеткіліксіздігі және әсіресе ауылдық жерлердегі мәдени стигма кедергі келтіреді. Финляндия, Германия және Ресей тәжірибесін салыстырмалы талдау децентрализацияның, жергілікті қауымдастықтардың қатысуының және мұғалімдерді сапалы даярлаудың маңыздылығын дәлелдейді. Шынайы инклюзияға қол жеткізу үшін заңнамалық тілдің анықтығы мен инклюзивтілігін арттыру, жергілікті қауымдастықтарға білім беруде көбірек дербестік беру, мұғалімдерді әртүрлі оқушылармен тиімді жұмысқа даярлауды күшейту және қаржылық әрі мәдени кедергілерді жою қажет. Бұл реформалар барлық оқушыларға тең құқық пен әділ қатынасты қамтамасыз етеді.

Кілт сөздер: инклюзивті білім беру, мемлекеттік басқару, құқықтық реформалар, саясатты іске асыру, орталықсыздандыру, мұғалімдерді даярлау.

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К инклюзивному будущему: государственное управление, правовые реформы и образование в Казахстане

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Аннотация

Данное исследование анализирует влияние правовых и административных систем Казахстана на реализацию инклюзивного образования. Инклюзивное образование направлено на обеспечение всем учащимся, включая детей с инвалидностью, качественного обучения на основе принципов равенства и прав человека. Применён смешанный метод исследования, объединяющий количественные данные о доступности школ и включённости лиц с инвалидностью с качественным анализом национальных и международных законодательных рамок. Интервью с экспертами в сфере образования дополнительно выявили проблемы локальной реализации и системные барьеры. Результаты показывают значительный разрыв между разработкой политики и её практическим воплощением. Несмотря на приверженность Казахстана международным соглашениям, продвижению инклюзии препятствуют централизация управления, ограниченное финансирование и устойчивая культурная стигматизация, особенно в сельской местности. Сравнительный анализ Финляндии, Германии и России подтверждает важность децентрализации, участия местных сообществ и качественной подготовки педагогов. Для достижения подлинной инклюзии необходимо сделать юридический язык более чётким и инклюзивным, расширить автономию местных сообществ

в образовании, усилить подготовку учителей к работе с разнообразными обучающимися и устранить финансовые и культурные барьеры. Эти реформы обеспечат равные права и справедливое отношение ко всем учащимся.

Ключевые слова: инклюзивное образование, государственное управление, правовые реформы, реализация политики, децентрализация, подготовка учителей