PARENT SUMMIT

2026

Astana, Kazakhstan
23–24 October 2026

REPAIRING BROKEN EDUCATION ECOSYSTEMS TOGETHER

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REPAIRING BROKEN EDUCATION ECOSYSTEMS TOGETHER

The Parent Summit is always a special moment for us: an opportunity for our international team to meet, strengthen relationships, learn from one another and build new connections with partners and participants from different countries.

This year's Summit, held in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 23–24 October 2026, was particularly meaningful. We celebrated ten years of Parents International, reflected on our achievements and introduced the strategic priorities that will guide our next five years. Under the theme Repairing Broken Education Ecosystems Together, we also addressed one of the central challenges facing education today: the growing fragmentation of the relationships and responsibilities surrounding children.

The first day combined our anniversary retrospective and future direction with Johanne Olaussen's personal testimony, João Costa's keynote on inclusive education, and four workshops on children's and parents' rights, trauma-conscious approaches, teacher bullying and expectations of education.

On the second day, participants explored our four strategic priorities through practical activities, challenging assumptions and examining how different educational contexts shape possible solutions.

We have the knowledge, skills and determination to act. By strengthening partnerships, sharing evidence and learning from one another, we can make a real difference.

OUR HOST:
BINOM SCHOOLS

Our partner BINOM Schools is part of Kazakhstan's response to the growing demand for educational infrastructure, particularly in expanding urban areas. Under public–private partnership agreements, BI Group builds and manages state-funded schools in cooperation with local authorities. After five years of operation, the schools are transferred to state management.

BINOM operates several schools within this model. A distinctive feature is their organisation into two shifts, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. This allows the same infrastructure to serve twice as many pupils as a comparable single-shift school. Facilities designed for 2,000 pupils per shift can therefore accommodate up to 4,000 students across the school day.

The model extends beyond the construction and management of buildings. BINOM places considerable emphasis on the continuous professional development of its teachers, combining different training approaches, practical workshops, specialist programmes and contributions from international experts.

Our cooperation with BINOM Schools began in 2024, when we delivered our first teacher training activities in Astana. Since then, we have continued working together through professional development initiatives and exchanges, building a relationship grounded in our shared commitment to supporting professional educators and strengthening education through collaboration.

This ongoing partnership also provided the foundation for BINOM Schools' involvement in hosting Parent Summit 2026.



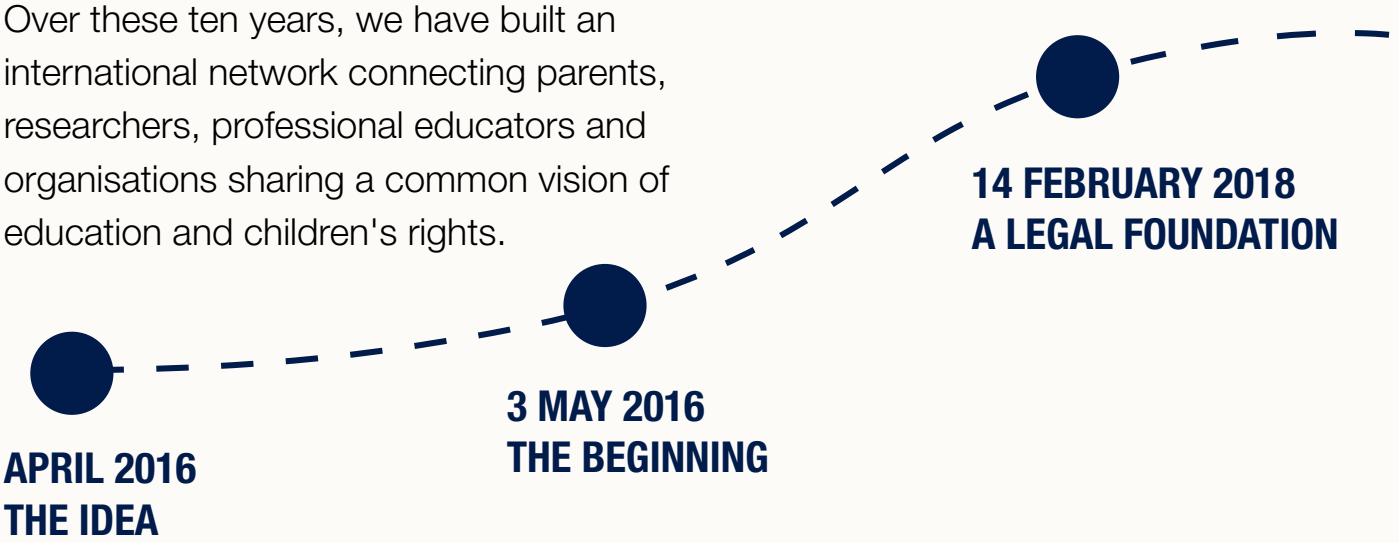
DAY 1

THE FIRST 10 YEARS

The idea that led to Parents International took shape in Dubrovnik in April 2016. On 3 May, Herminio Corrêa, Christian Hellevang and Brigitte Haider founded the informal International Parents Network. On 14 February 2018, Stichting International Parents Alliance was registered as a Dutch legal entity.

Initially focused on advocacy and training, we gradually identified research gaps unlikely to be addressed elsewhere. We expanded into independent research, using the evidence we generate to inform policy initiatives, develop practical resources and strengthen professional development.

Over these ten years, we have built an international network connecting parents, researchers, professional educators and organisations sharing a common vision of education and children's rights.



RESEARCH, RESOURCES, ACTION

Beginning with Mente Futura in Peru, our network spread across countries and continents. Our flagship event, the Parent Summit, has taken place in Vienna (2019), Amsterdam (2022), Telavi (2024) and Astana (2026).

Our first decade also brought important milestones. **Parent'R'Us** was selected as one of twelve of the world's most impactful and scalable parent engagement innovations. We established the **Parent Help Library** to make research and practical resources accessible, **chaired the Child Rights Committee** at the Conference of INGOs, and developed internationally recognised **training programmes** for parent leaders, professional educators and school leaders. These achievements reflect our work across advocacy, research, knowledge-sharing and professional development.

2019, VIENNA (Austria) 1ST PARENT SUMMIT



2022, AMSTERDAM (The Netherlands) 2ND PARENT SUMMIT



2024, TELAVI (Georgia) 3RD PARENT SUMMIT



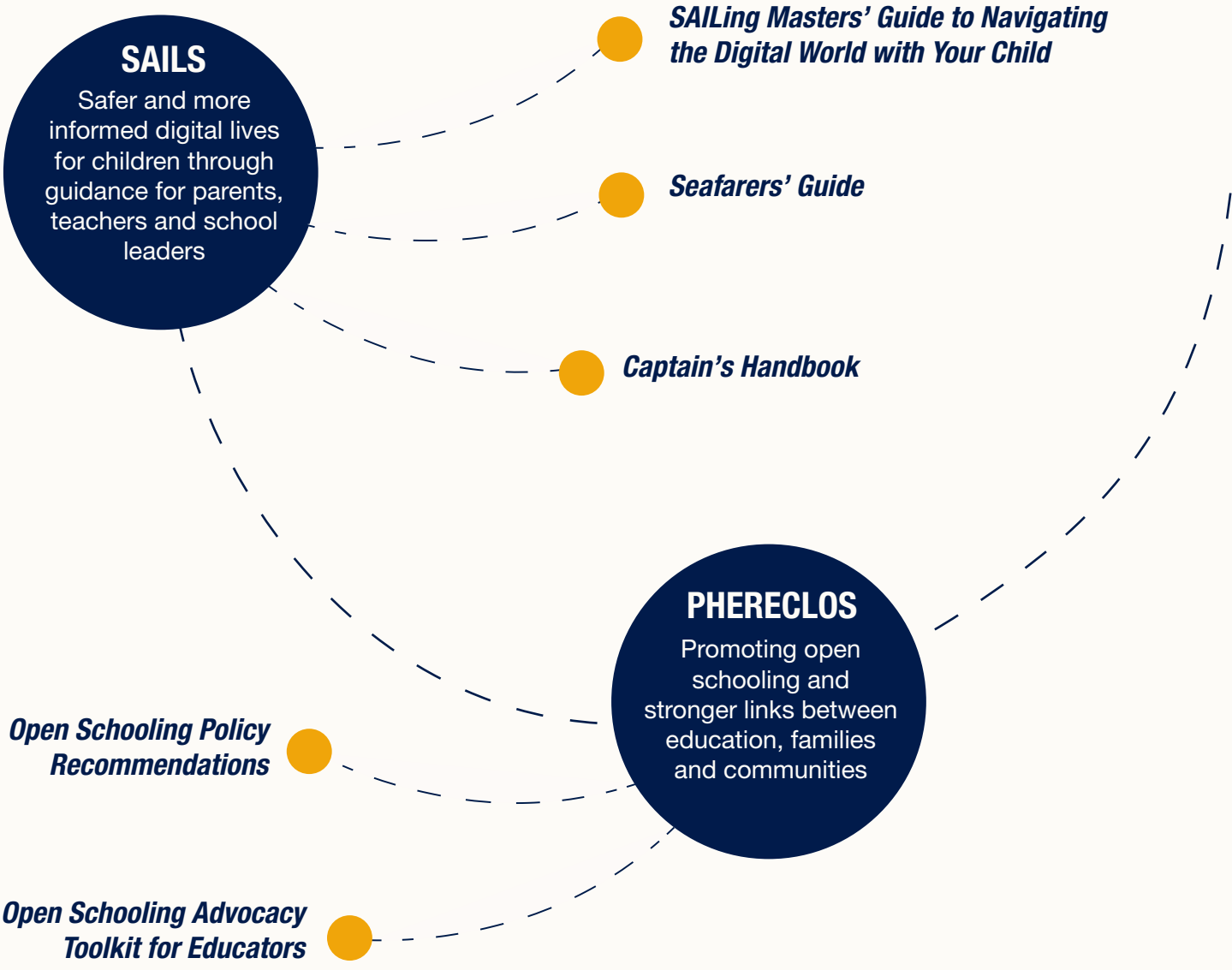
2026, ASTANA (Kazakhstan) 4th PARENT SUMMIT

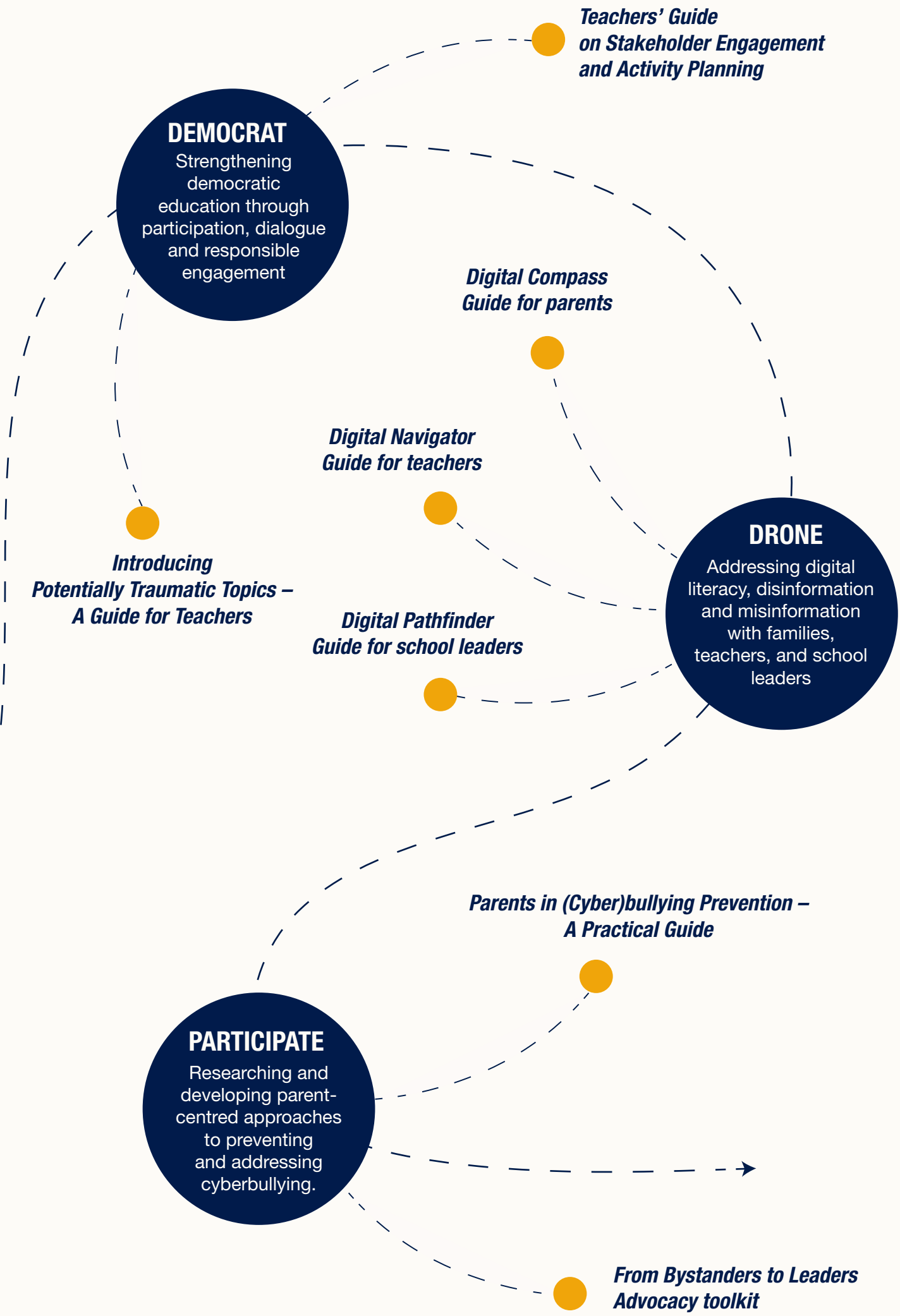


FROM RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

Over the past ten years, we have contributed to numerous international research and education projects, working with partners across countries and disciplines and translating research into practical resources, professional development and policy recommendations to support children, families and professional educators.

Click on the title to access some of our best resources.




Teachers' Guide
on Stakeholder Engagement
and Activity Planning
DEMOCRAT
Strengthening democratic education through participation, dialogue and responsible engagement
Digital Compass
Guide for parents
Digital Navigator
Guide for teachers
Introducing
Potentially Traumatic Topics –
A Guide for Teachers
DRONE
Addressing digital literacy, disinformation and misinformation with families, teachers, and school leaders
Digital Pathfinder
Guide for school leaders
Parents in (Cyber)bullying Prevention –
A Practical Guide
PARTICIPATE
Researching and developing parent-centred approaches to preventing and addressing cyberbullying.
From Bystanders to Leaders
Advocacy toolkit

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Our first ten years saw Parents International grow from an advocacy and training network into an organisation combining independent research, professional development and policy work.

During our team training in Budapest in April 2026, we asked ourselves which areas should guide our future work. Those discussions, developed further over the following months, led us to four connected strategic pillars: the School of Tomorrow, the Family of Tomorrow, Growing Up in a Hybrid World, and Wellbeing in a Changing World.

We introduced these priorities on Day 1. The Day 2 workshops gave participants an opportunity to explore their practical implications, drawing on different experiences and educational contexts.

Each pillar is already supported by a dedicated training course. All four courses have been developed, tested and are ready for deployment across our network and beyond.






1. THE SCHOOL OF TOMORROW

Schools should become attractive, inclusive, democratic and collaborative learning ecosystems. Children must be active participants in their education, parents recognised as equal educational partners, and professional educators supported in their role as learning facilitators.

This requires rethinking established school structures, responsibilities and curricula, while promoting learner-centred education, participatory leadership and meaningful family engagement.

We aim to develop an evidence-informed framework through research and co-creation, testing and refining it through pilot initiatives and professional development.



2. THE FAMILY OF TOMORROW

Parents are their children's primary educators, and families are essential environments for learning, development, wellbeing and participation. Their roles are evolving, but support should begin with their rights, strengths and capacities rather than perceived deficiencies.

The Family of Tomorrow seeks to strengthen parental agency, recognise children's evolving capacities and encourage intergenerational learning. We will develop a shared vision supported by practical resources and training, promoting meaningful cooperation between families, educational institutions and communities.



3. GROWING UP IN A HYBRID WORLD

Children grow, learn and build relationships across interconnected online and offline environments. Supporting them requires digital literacy, critical thinking, resilience and responsible participation, rather than relying on restrictions and blanket bans.

This pillar addresses emerging challenges including artificial intelligence, misinformation, cybersecurity and online relationships, while recognising children's rights and agency.

Through research-informed training, practical tools and international partnerships, we aim to strengthen the competences of children and adults, with particular attention to the professional development of teachers.



4. WELLBEING IN A CHANGING WORLD

Wellbeing is not solely an individual responsibility. Physical and mental health are shaped by family relationships, educational environments, social conditions and experiences across online and offline life.

This pillar builds on research into resilience, inclusion, bullying, belonging and participation, while challenging institutional practices that undermine wellbeing.

We aim to strengthen environments where children, families and professional educators experience safety, agency and trusted relationships. Our dedicated six-module training course translates this holistic approach into practical insights for families and schools.



THE TEAM AROUND THE CHILD

Johanne Olaussen, a mother from Norway's Indigenous Sámi community, researcher and Vice-Chair of Norway's National Parents' Committee for Primary and Secondary Education (FUG), brought a personal perspective to the challenges of inclusive education.

Sharing her son's experience, she described the difficulties he encountered in a school environment that offered insufficient support. Moving to a more inclusive, student-centred school, where parental engagement was valued, made a profound difference. With the right support and relationships, her son developed the confidence to face challenges and overcome obstacles that had previously seemed insurmountable.

Her story illustrated a fundamental principle: children's difficulties cannot be understood independently of their educational environment. Meaningful inclusion requires schools, families and professional educators to work together, recognising children's individual needs, strengths and potential.

KEYNOTE: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

João Costa, Director of the **European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE)**, former Portuguese Minister of Education and member of our Scientific Advisory Board, delivered the Summit's keynote on bridging the gap between inclusive education policies and their implementation.

Inclusive education requires more than access. It demands participation, belonging and genuine opportunities to achieve. Rather than categorising learners, João emphasised the responsibility of education systems to identify and remove barriers.

He introduced EASNIE's **Ten Pillars Shaping the Future of Inclusive Education**, addressing interconnected priorities such as family and community participation, learner wellbeing, professional development, governance and equitable funding.

The message was clear: meaningful inclusion requires collective responsibility and sustained cooperation across the education ecosystem.

3 DIMENSIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



CHILD RIGHTS THROUGH PARENTS' RIGHTS LENSES

Children's rights and parents' rights are often presented as competing interests. But the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises their interdependence. Using practical scenarios, participants examined how parental guidance, children's evolving capacities and school responsibilities interact. They discussed who should participate in educational decisions, whose voices are sometimes overlooked, and how schools can respect children's rights without marginalising parents. The workshop focused on moving from competing claims of authority towards meaningful partnership.

UNCRC Articles

5

PARENTAL GUIDANCE

Parents guide children in exercising their rights, according to their evolving capacities.

12

RIGHT TO BE HEARD

Children's views must be given due weight according to their age and maturity.

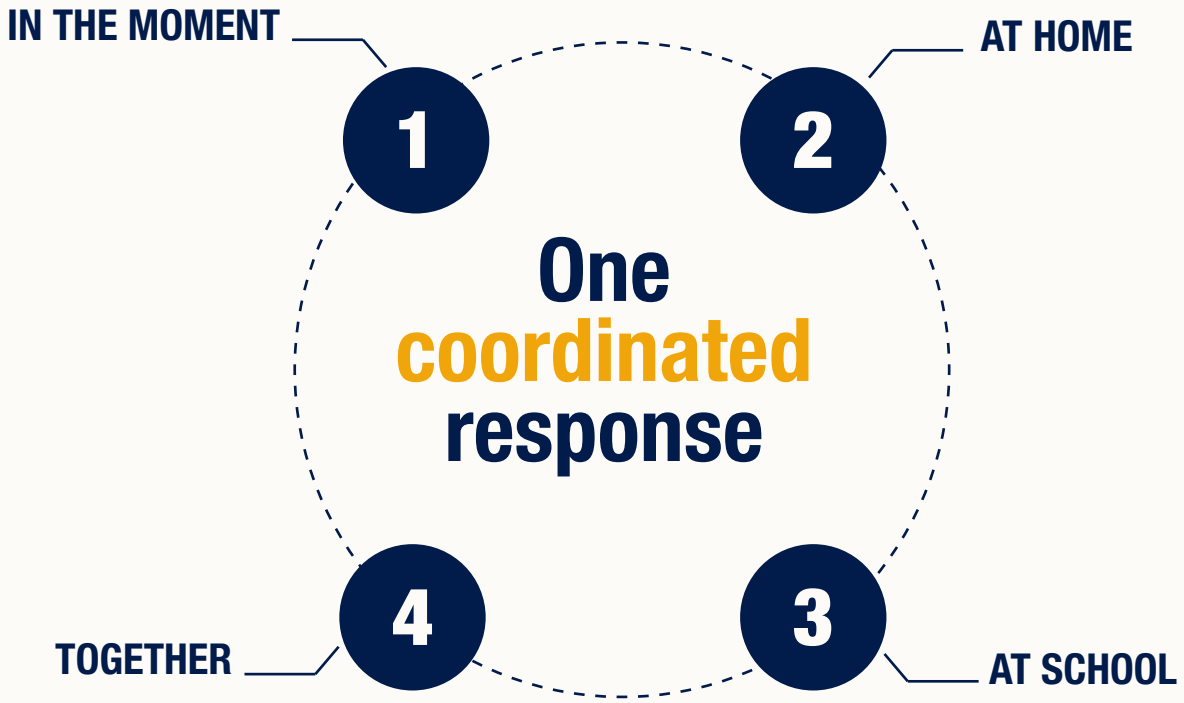
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PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parents have primary responsibility for their children's upbringing; states must support them.

TRAUMA-CONSCIOUS WAYS IN FAMILY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Children's behaviour does not always reveal its causes. Stress, difficult experiences and unmet needs can influence everyday responses, but adults should avoid assumptions. Through fictional scenarios, participants explored how to observe rather than judge, offer support without demanding personal disclosures, and create predictable, supportive environments. They also considered how parents and professional educators can coordinate their responses to strengthen children's safety, trust and participation.



TEACHER BULLYING: RECOGNISING HARM, UNDERSTANDING POWER AND PREVENTING ABUSE

Bullying is not always a problem between children. Professional educators are also role models: how they exercise authority teaches children what respect, responsibility and appropriate behaviour look like. Using classroom scenarios, participants examined the differences between acceptable professional conduct, inappropriate behaviour and bullying. They assessed situations individually, compared their reasoning and reconsidered their initial judgements, reflecting on how power, repetition, intention and context influence these assessments. The workshop then turned to prevention and accountability, emphasising the responsibility of adults to model the conduct they expect from children.

ASSESSING TEACHER CONDUCT

01

ACCEPTABLE

Professional behaviour

02

INAPPROPRIATE

Harmful conduct, but not bullying

03

BULLYING

Meets the definition of bullying

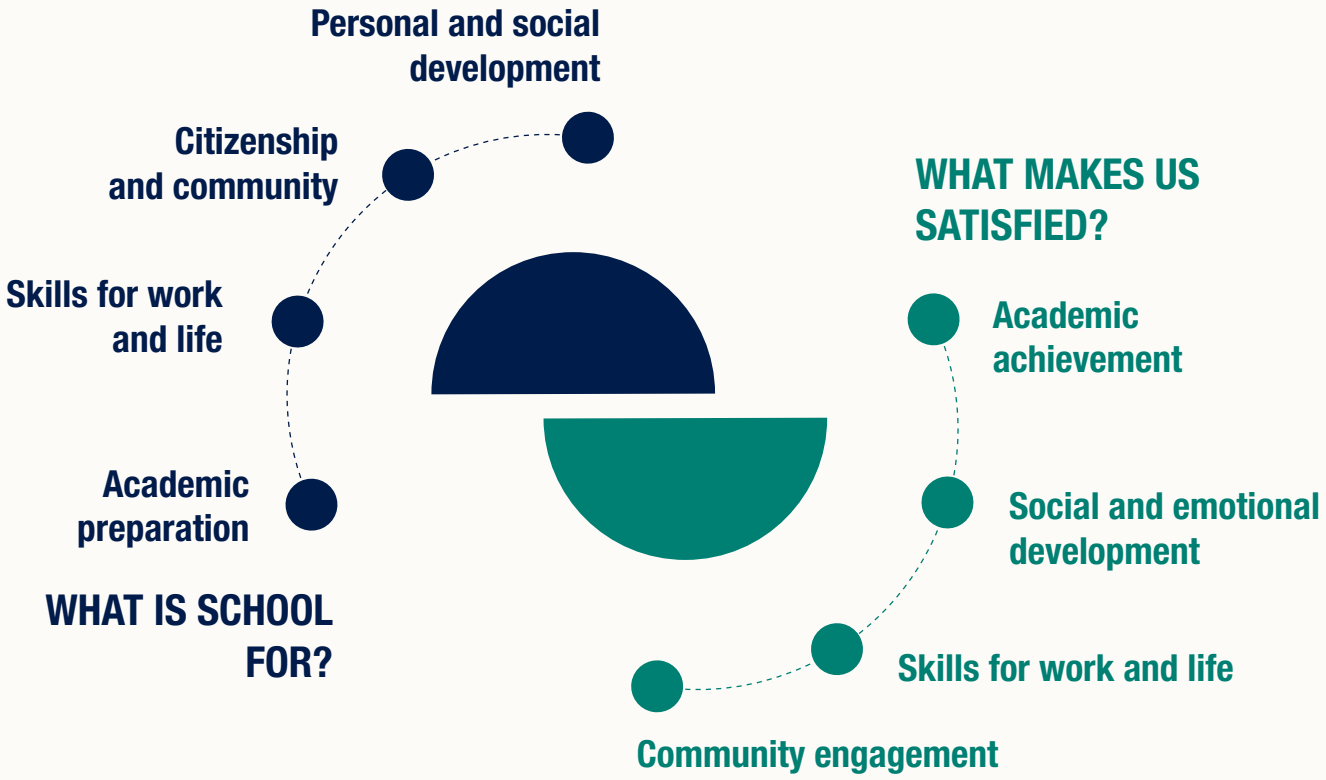
04

UNCERTAIN

More context is needed

EXPECTATIONS AND SATISFACTION: HOW THE DIFFERENT PLAYERS SEE IT

Students, parents and professional educators do not necessarily expect the same things from schools or judge their success in the same way Drawing on research conducted by Parents International in Kazakhstan in collaboration with the Brookings Institution's Center for Universal Education, Maral Nuridin invited participants to consider two questions: what makes us satisfied with education, and what do we believe school should achieve? Through individual choices and group discussions, participants compared priorities and explored how different perspectives can become a starting point for dialogue.



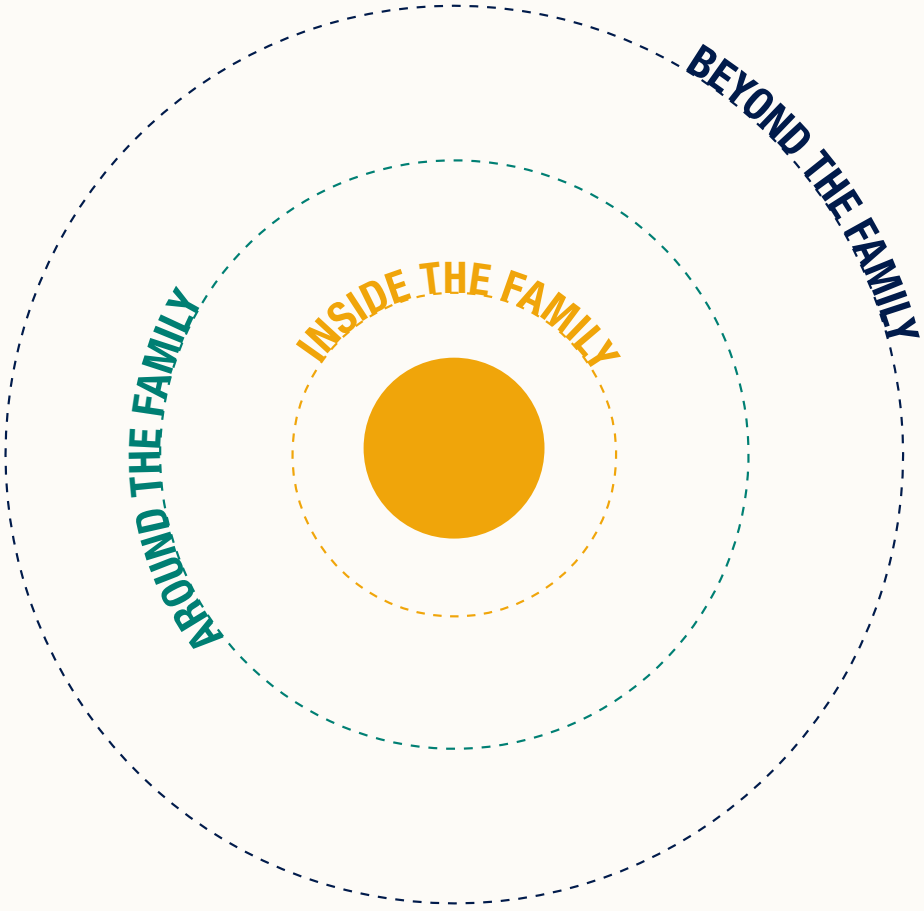
DAY 2


2-КҮН
ІС-ШАРАНЫҢ АТАУЫ
ҰАҚЫТЫ
09:00
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17:30

BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR FAMILIES

STRATEGIC PILLAR: THE FAMILY OF TOMORROW

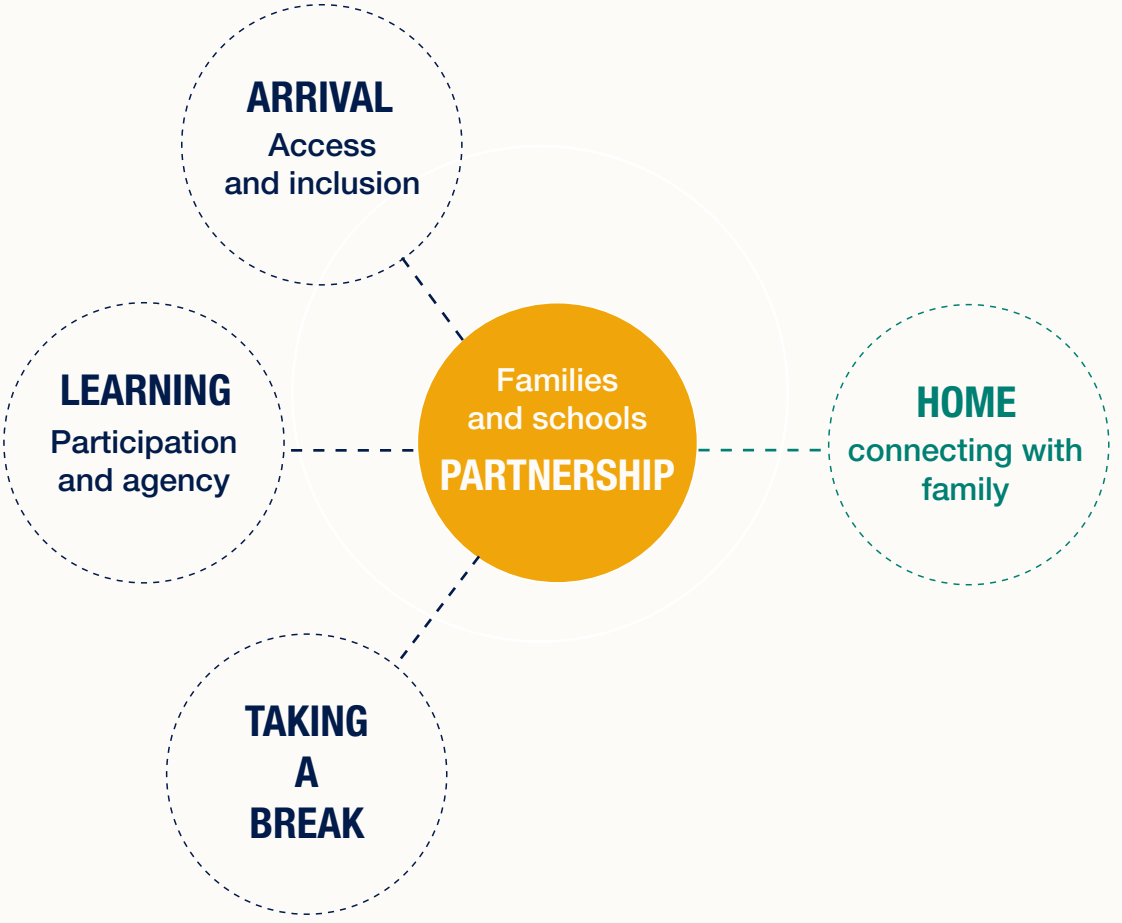
Families are changing, but no single model defines what they should become. Participants explored what is worth preserving, what needs to change, and what new forms of support could be created. Working with fictional family scenarios, they considered the different experiences of children and adults, identified existing strengths and missing resources, and imagined a better future. The workshop then focused on practical changes at three levels: within families, through communities, and through institutions and public policy.



DESIGNING A SCHOOL THAT WELCOMES EVERYONE

STRATEGIC PILLAR: THE SCHOOL OF TOMORROW

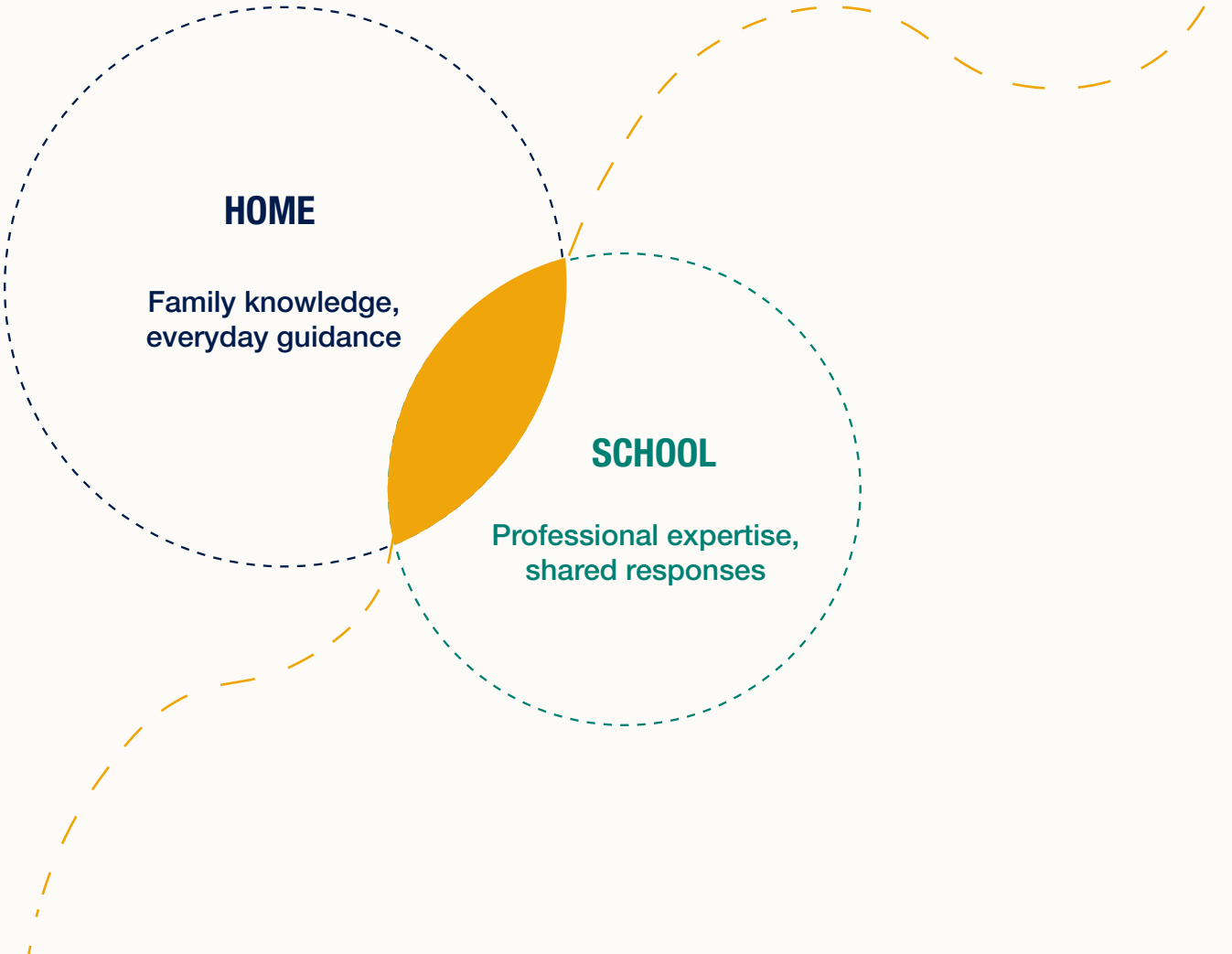
What would a school of tomorrow actually look like? Participants imagined an ordinary school day through four moments: arriving, learning together, taking a break, and going home to connect with families. Their drawings explored children's participation, adult support and family engagement. When a new child and caregiver entered the scenario, groups reconsidered how their schools could welcome newcomers and help them belong. They then turned their ideas into practical proposals, identifying steps schools could take and support needed from families, communities and institutions.



DIGITAL LIFE: FROM BLAME TO PARTNERSHIP

STRATEGIC PILLAR: GROWING UP IN A HYBRID WORLD

Children's lives do not divide neatly into online and offline experiences, nor do their challenges remain confined to home or school. Through practical dilemmas involving gaming, social media, digital learning and AI, participants explored how families and professional educators can respond together. Parents need not be technical experts to remain their children's primary educators: they need opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills, while schools must recognise the experience they bring. The workshop challenged one-way advice, favouring mutual learning, dialogue and practical initiatives shaped together with parents.



REIMAGINING WELLBEING: KAZAKHSTAN ON MARS

STRATEGIC PILLAR: WELLBEING IN A CHANGING WORLD

What would children need to thrive in a completely new world? Imagining a Kazakh colony on Mars, participants explored six interconnected dimensions of wellbeing: physical health and confidence; emotions and resilience; relationships and belonging; digital life and critical thinking; sustainability and our relationship with nature; and the skills needed to shape the future. They considered how children could grow up feeling safe, capable and supported, with parents as primary educators and schools as partners.



AFTER THE SUMMIT: THE WAY FORWARD

We did not always agree in Astana, nor did we expect to. Participants brought different experiences, perspectives and ideas about how to improve education. Some proposals revealed how much work remains to translate evidence, children's rights and sound educational principles into everyday practice.

Yet the discussions reinforced something important: the four strategic priorities we have identified address some of the most pressing questions facing children, families and education systems today. The need for research, dialogue, professional development and meaningful cooperation remains central.

Our position is clear: **children are rights-holders; parents are their primary educators; schools and professional educators have essential responsibilities**. Education must be organised **around children**, with **families**, **professional educators** and **institutions** working in **partnership**.

After ten years, we know that repairing education ecosystems requires listening, challenging ineffective practices and translating evidence into action.

This is the work we are committed to. **Together**.

JOIN US

Our work continues through research, advocacy, professional development and international cooperation.

Explore our publications and training programmes, follow our activities, or contact us to discuss opportunities for collaboration.

PARENTS INTERNATIONAL

Website: https://parentsinternational.org/

Parent Help Library: https://library.parenthelp.eu/

Email: info@parentsinternational.org

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