

# Mektebim Program in Azerbaijan: empowering women through a social business model for early childhood education

*United Aid for Azerbaijan empowers women entrepreneurs to open inclusive preschools*

## AT A GLANCE

"**Mektebim**" is a women-led, community-based preschool business model from Azerbaijan that empowers women entrepreneurs to manage and sustain inclusive preschool services independently. It supports 24 active Mektebim preschools in several cities and regions, and the project is currently increasing the number of preschools countrywide. The Mektebim program provides high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) training packages under the Mektebim brand name and creates inclusive preschool education opportunities for all children aged two through six years.

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- **Access to early education:** The program creates inclusive preschool education opportunities for all children aged two through six years who do not have access to alternative services, including those who are typically excluded from mainstream society due to location, poverty and disability.
- **High-quality early childhood education and care:** The program provides high-quality ECEC services, including training packages on preschool pedagogy and management under the Mektebim brand name.
- **Women's empowerment:** The program empowers women entrepreneurs to manage and sustain inclusive preschool services independently, providing job opportunities or them and creating a positive impact on the socio-economic situation in the country.
- **Parental engagement:** The program involves parents in their child's education and development, keeping them updated about their child's progress, and engages them in activities that help improve the child's learning outcomes.
- **Community involvement:** The program is community-based and involves local women in establishing preschool education businesses, creating a positive impact on the communities where the program operates.

## UNIQUE FEATURES

1

**Social business model:** The program applies a social business model, which means that it aims to improve the socio-economic situation in the country by creating job opportunities for women entrepreneurs while providing high-quality ECEC services to children who have limited or no access to such services.

2

**Step by Step approach:** The program is inspired by the [Step by Step child-centered approach](#) and is using evidence-based ECEC practices to ensure high-quality services.