



STATUS OF ORALMANS IN KAZAKHSTAN

OVERVIEW

Almaty, 2006

ABBREVIATIONS

AMD	Agency for Migration and Demography
CST	Center for Social Technology
GDP	Gross domestic product
IHE	Institute of Higher Education
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ILO	International Labour Organization
KRCS	Kazakhstan Red Crescent Society
KZT	Kazakhstan tenge
MCR	monthly calculation rate
NGO	Non-governmental organization
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
RoK	Republic of Kazakhstan
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CST	Center for Social Technologies
SSEE	Specialized secondary educational establishment
USA	United States of America

CONTENTS

FOREWORD BY THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION.....	4
FOREWORD BY THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.....	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	6
INTRODUCTION	7
CHAPTER I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNIC IMMIGRATION POLICIES	7
CHAPTER II. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	13
CHAPTER III. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF ORALMANS.....	15
CHAPTER IV. CULTURAL INTEGRATION	23
CHAPTER V. EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE TO ORALMANS	26
RECOMMENDATIONS	28
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	29
ANNEXES	31

FOREWORD BY THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION

IOM has the honour to introduce the discussion paper on the status of ethnic Kazakhs (oralmans in Kazakh language) returned to Kazakhstan after the country's independence.

The oralmans from Uzbekistan, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey and other countries belong to the same ethnic group and they managed to keep their national language and customs while spending 70 and sometimes more years outside Kazakhstan. At the same time, due to the differences in the realities of living in different foreign countries, the oralmans brought to Kazakhstan the legacy of other cultures and subcultures other than the local ones.

The integration of oralmans into contemporary communities in Kazakhstan is a topic of many discussions at the government, mass media, and public levels in Kazakhstan. Some oralmans integrated more or less successfully to local communities, while the others

faced problems, which made some of them return to the countries, from which they came.

Local communities in Kazakhstan, which generally demonstrated tolerance to newcomers in the 19th and 20th centuries, demonstrated different attitude to the oralmans. These attitudes, as well as the needs and problems of the newcomers, needed to be researched, in order to come up with recommendations regarding the immigration policy. This study is also important from the point of discussion on various approaches to immigration and re-immigration in newly independent countries.

IOM highly appreciates UNDP's interest in addressing the challenges of migrants in Kazakhstan and especially the interest to further research the situation of oralmans. I hope that this discussion paper in hand will open one more page in successful cooperation between UNDP and IOM in the field of study of migration problems and development of solutions for them.

Katerina Badikova
Chief of Mission a.i. in Kazakhstan

FOREWORD BY THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Located in the heart of Eurasia, Kazakhstan has been affected by powerful migration and demographic processes for over centuries. Kazakhstan is home to over 100 ethnicities, of which 53.4% are Kazakhs and 30% Russians. All ethnic groups live in tolerance and respect toward each other's traditions and customs.

As we enter the 21st century, issues of population migration are of great importance globally. While based on such general trends as migration from less developed countries to developed ones, from less democratic to more democratic countries, migration processes in the world may also be explained by people's ethnic and cultural linkages. Kazakhstan is an example of such processes. Under conditions of globalization, when there is an unlimited exchange of information and technology all over the world, and the borders for using languages are blended, migration policies in these countries pursue very specific aims. On the one hand, such policies seek to preserve national identity and pay tribute to the past and, on the other, consider

social, economic, and cultural factors. After independence, Kazakhstan's diasporal policy has focused on bringing ethnic Kazakhs to the territory of Kazakhstan, which is considered as a factor of national stability seeking to preserve national identity.

The paper provides insights into the country's migration policies regarding Oralmans as well as the actual situation with their social, economic, and cultural integration. While focusing mainly on the findings of the survey, at the same time the report describes government activities and schemes pertaining to Oralmans. The value of this paper is that it raises questions rather than giving answers or proposes remedies and invites the concerned parties to discuss them.

I truly hope that this paper will stimulate and serve as a basis for further larger-scale research on the subject that will feed into revised and improved Oralman policies.

Yuriko Shoji
Resident Representative in Kazakhstan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since independence, Kazakhstan has become home to more than 1.1 million immigrants, of which over 464,000 are ethnic Kazakhs or “oralmans”¹. Similar to ethnic-based immigration policies in other countries, for example Germany and Israel, the repatriation of co-ethnics has been an important way to reconcile past injustices, increase internal stability and conserve national identity.

While much has been done to encourage oralman to return to their ethnic homeland, the economic and social integration of oralman once resettled in the country remains a significant challenge. Despite relatively high economic growth experienced in Kazakhstan, oralman face considerable challenges as one of the country’s most vulnerable groups. This discussion paper attempts to provide a first view of the current situation faced by oralman and problems faced in their integration process.

Findings are based on a sociological survey conducted in five regions of Kazakhstan (Almaty, Mangistau, South Kazakhstan, Pavlodar and Karagandy oblasts). The survey was conducted in 2004, from mid-April to mid-June, to extract opinions of oralman and local population through questionnaires, one focus group discussion and 20 in-depth interviews with various involved actors. The survey sample included 600 oralman and 300 local residents.

Following a general overview of the historical development of ethnic immigration policies and framework regulating the return and integration process, general characteristics of the oralman population are provided. This overview is based on official statistics and survey data and includes information regarding age and sex ratios, geographical settlement patterns and secondary migration trends.

In chapter three and four, the main findings of the survey are presented according to selected indicators. Through the survey, it was found that a particular problem for oralman, especially for those who arrived outside of the quota, is adequate housing. Among those who arrived by early 2004, only 51.2 percent of oralman households were provided with housing.

The survey showed that most oralman (78.5 percent), both within and outside of the quota, use medical services in out-patient public hospitals. Every sixth oralman receives treatment at home, primarily as a cost-saving mechanism. Most oralman (80 percent) do not pay for treatment.

In addition to health services, the government guarantees free general secondary education for oralman. Moreover, there are special quotas for oralman to study in post-secondary institutions. As the survey showed, oralman’s children study well at school. There are, however, problems that are mainly caused by differences in written language between oralman’s previous countries and Kazakhstan. There are high rates of absenteeism among oralman children, with 23 percent of oralman children reporting absences, mainly due to sickness and economic reasons.

The issues of the successful integration of oralman into Kazakhstani society strongly depend on and are related to linguistic, psychological, and cultural adaptation. Oralman arriving from countries outside of the CIS often face problems related to widespread use of Russian in public life. This is especially evident for northern regions of the country. Cultural and ethnic adaptation in southern and eastern regions, in mono-ethnic western, northern, and central regions is much easier because people have better preserved their national traditions, including language.

Chapter five gives an overview of external assistance to migrants by NGOs and IGOs (international governmental organizations). A number of organizations provide legal support (advice in legislation, social protection for oralman, translation and preparation of documents for registration and for naturalization); organize conferences, workshops, and round table discussions; and protect oralman’s rights. There is no clear linkage between them and government structures as well as other public organizations.

The final section provides some recommendations for the improvement of oralman integration. In general, the study shows a need to transform the government’s economic and social policies regarding oralman. There is a need to develop the Government Program for Oralman’s Adaptation in Kazakhstan. This program, which would be based on the new re-distributive financial mechanism, would equalize oralman who arrive within and outside of the quota and will contain such sections as economic adaptation including employment, self-employment, etc.; social adaptation to solve the issues of housing, medical services, education, etc.; and cultural and language adaptation.

With greater economic development in Kazakhstan, oralman resettlement will remain an important aspect in Kazakhstan’s demographic, social and economic landscape. In this setting, the importance of appropriate mechanisms of integration will be increasingly important.

¹ The term “oralman” means returnee in Kazakh and it is generally taken that oralman are returning to their ethnic homeland. This figure includes oralman arriving between 1991 and 2005.

INTRODUCTION

This discussion paper was commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme in Kazakhstan with the aim to provide a first overview of oralman overall integration in Kazakhstan. Reflecting the reality that migrants show a greater degree of economic and social vulnerability, this study attempts to give a more detailed view of the status of oralman and their position within Kazakh society.

Specifically, the objectives set out were as follows:

- Determine the level of access to and quality of social services by oralman;
- Determine the main sources of household incomes and employment levels among oralman in each region;
- Establish basic poverty indicators by type of housing and health;
- Establish main barriers to employment, access to social and health services among oralman.

Methodology

The analysis of oralman social and economic integration and cultural adaptation are based on a sociological survey (hereinafter referred to as the Survey) conducted in five oblasts of Kazakhstan (Almaty, Mangistau, South Kazakhstan, Pavlodar and Karaganda), which represent five different geographic regions of the country and follow the pattern of oralman settlement. The survey was conducted in 2004, from mid-April to mid-June by research agency 'Sange' and contains opinions of oralman and local population obtained through survey questionnaires, one focus group discussion and 20 in-depth interviews through special questionnaires. The survey sample, which included 600 oralman² and 300 local residents, was based on the following three criteria: whether a respondent held the Kazakh citizenship and has arrived under the quota (and how long ago) as well as the country of departure. In each oblast residents of the respective city and several villages were interviewed. In-depth interviews covered specialists from local departments of the Committee on Migration, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education and Science, as well as doctors, teachers, NGO leaders and other involved actors.

The study focused on the following indicators to measure the level of integration achieved by oralman.

Language is fundamental for any interaction to occur and therefore language integration is essential and the proficiency of migrants in the language of the host country is an important indicator of this integration.

Social integration relates to the well being and the participation of migrants in the social systems of the host society, for example access to health services of the host country.

Education level is also indicative of the success of the integration process and can be an important precondition for future economic integration. School performance, the choice of schools and universities, and degrees attained offer a basis for comparison with native pupils.

Economic integration refers to the participation of migrants in the labour market and economic life in general. This may be measured by the participation rate of immigrants and the unemployment rate of migrants as a share of the total unemployment rate. Household income relative to the national average is also revealing.

The type and location of housing indicates the level of residential integration of migrants and may show the degree of separation between migrants and the host community.

Structure of the report

The structure of the report is divided as follows. The first part of the report analyzes the historical background of ethnic immigration in Kazakhstan. This section describes government policies regarding oralman in the country as well as the measures to encourage their arrival and to provide integration assistance. The second part of the report provides general information about oralman in Kazakhstan, including demographic characteristics, main source countries and geographical distribution in Kazakhstan. Following this description of the focus population, the third and the fourth parts of the report describe oralman's integration in Kazakhstan. Specific chapters are organized according to main indicators, namely employment, housing, health, and education. The analysis of cultural integration and language acquisition is the theme of chapter four. The fifth part covers existing external assistance in the area of oralman integration.

² 150 oralman included into quota, 300 not included into quota and 150 oralman who have been granted citizenship in the recent two years.

CHAPTER I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNIC IMMIGRATION POLICIES

The economic and social transformation together with the massive emigration flows that characterized the early 1990s played a decisive role in determining Kazakhstan's ethnic immigration policy. Seen as a way to correct past injustices of exile and repression, ethnic immigration policies were also critical in countering significant population loss. In this way, the promotion of ethnic Kazakh immigration is closely linked to the process of nation building, preservation of national identity and culture as well as internal stability.

1.1. Historical roots

It is estimated that roughly five million ethnic Kazakhs live outside Kazakhstan, in more than 40 countries. Of this figure, it is estimated that roughly 1.5 million Kazakhs are in Uzbekistan, 1.5 million in China, 1 million in Russia, 100,000 in Turkmenistan, 80,000 in Mongolia and 45,000 in Kyrgyzstan. Other countries with significant Kazakh diaspora populations are Turkey, Afghanistan and Iran³. Kazakhs have also settled in other countries in Western Europe, Asia and North and South America.

The largest percentage of ethnic Kazakhs abroad are descendants of those who were forced out of the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s or who fled political turmoil, repression, forced collectivization, and hunger

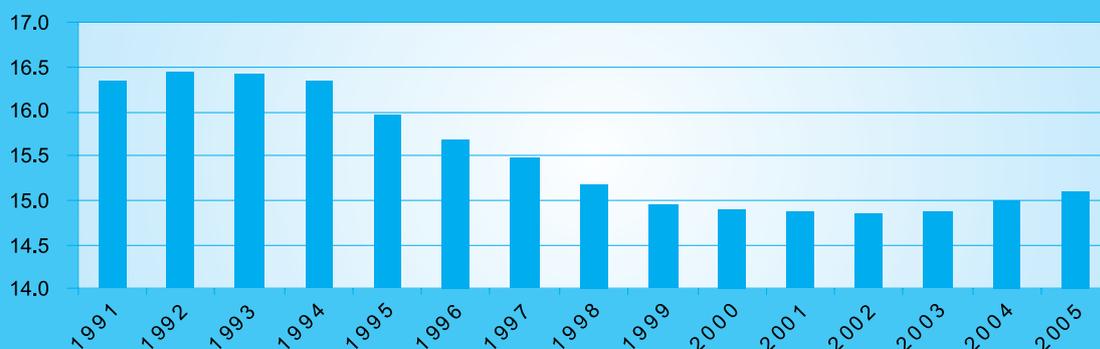
crises that effected a large segment of the Kazakh population⁴. It is estimated that some 200,000 Kazakhs left the Soviet Union, primarily to China, Mongolia, India, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey, whereas the number of Kazakhs in neighbouring Soviet republics increased by 2.5 times from 1926 to 1939, totalling over 794,000 persons.

With Slavic immigration that began in the 18th and 19th centuries and continued into the Soviet period, and with mass expulsions and forced migration, Kazakhs gradually became a minority in their own homeland. By 1959, Russians outnumbered Kazakhs in the republic. While the trend reversed to some degree in the following years, by 1989 Kazakhs exceeded Russians only by a small margin⁵.

1.2. The post-Soviet period

Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan experienced significant population loss resulting from the massive emigration of ethnic Russians and Germans. Between 1991 and 2004, more than 3,158,400 people emigrated from the country. With large flows of emigrants leaving the country, Kazakhstan also faced a significant decline in fertility and a reduction in immigration. Estimates suggest that Kazakhstan's population shrank from 16.5 million to under 15 million between 1989 and 1999⁶.

Figure 1.1. Population in Kazakhstan 1991-2005 (mln. people)



Source: Agency for Statistics, Kazakhstan 1991-2005.

³ President Nazarbayev speech at the Third World Summit of Kazakhs held in Astana on September 25, 2005.

⁴ The Kazakh population in Kazakhstan decreased from 3.63 million in 1926 to 2.31 million in 1939 while the ethnic Russian population increased from 1.26 million to 2.45 million during the same period (official figures of the census 1926 and 1939).

⁵ At that time Kazakhs constituted 39.7 percent of the population, and Russians made up 37.8 percent.

⁶ According to latest data of the Agency for Statistics, the population of Kazakhstan as of 1 December 2005 was 15,205,100.

On 18 November 1991, a month before Kazakhstan gained independence, Kazakhstan passed the Resolution On the Procedures and Conditions of the Relocation to Kazakh SSR for Persons of Kazakh Ethnicity from Other Republics and Abroad Willing to Work in Rural Areas aimed not only to regulate the immigration of Kazakhs to Kazakhstan, but also to develop the Kazakh *aul* (village) and agricultural industry complex, which was then facing a deep crisis. As a result, 61,609 ethnic Kazakhs arrived in Kazakhstan between 1991 and 1992.

This was followed by the Law on Immigration, adopted in June 1992. According to Article 1 of the law, ethnic Kazakhs were given the right to return to their “historic homeland”. In order to regulate the expected large flow of oralmans, the law also provided for the establishment of a special immigration quota and the creation of a dedicated agency to deal with the issue of ethnic immigration.

For economic and historic reasons, the return of ethnic Kazakhs aims to preserve the national identity of the country and promote internal stability. During the Soviet period, many Kazakh customs declined; particularly usage of the Kazakh language, which was reduced not only in formal but also in informal settings. Because of this the Kazakh language and many elements of Kazakh culture were in danger of dying out. Thus the return of Kazakh oralmans is one of the major elements of government migration policies that aims to preserve and develop Kazakh culture.

1.3. The development of the oralman quota

The above laws and regulations provide for the establishment of a quota for ethnic Kazakh immigrants. The oralman quota is determined on an annual basis and reflects population, economic and budgetary considerations. It is established each year by Presidential decree. The first annual quota was set in 1993 and provided for the arrival or repatriation of 10,000 families (or approximately 40,000 persons). During the 1990s, the quota level fluctuated dramatically, falling to 500 households in 1999 and 2000. With the improved economic conditions in Kazakhstan beginning in 2002, the quota was gradually increased, reaching 15,000 families in 2005.

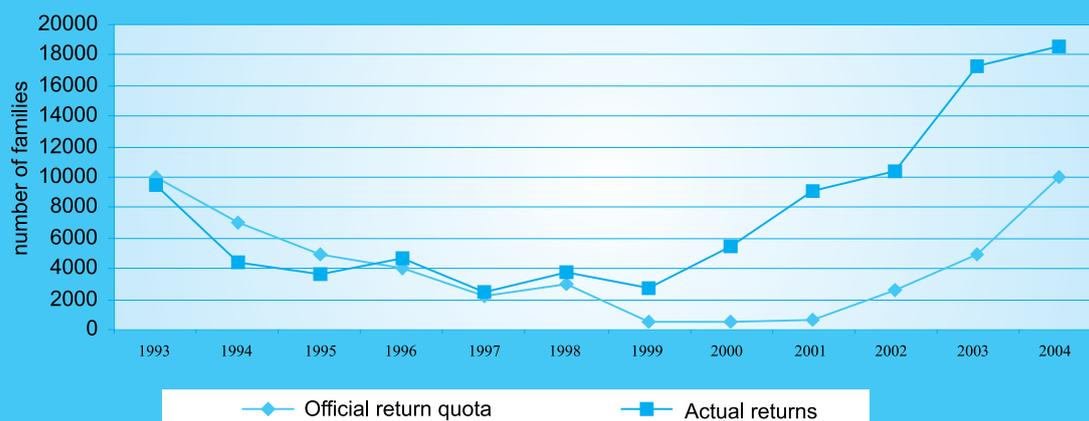
Quota for repatriation of Ethnic Kazakhs	
Year	Households
1993	10,000
1994	7,000
1995	5,000
1996	4,000
1997	2,200
1998	3,000
1999	500
2000	500
2001	600
2002	2,655
2003	5,000
2004	10,000
2005	15,000

Application to the quota system can be done either before arrival (through consular or diplomatic offices) or once in Kazakhstan. Applications by individuals already in the country must be done through the Committee on Migration under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection through its office in Astana or local departments. The legal criteria for including immigrant families into the quota were not clearly fixed in the Law on Population Migration, nor have they been clearly elaborated in supplementary legal acts. This has made the quota system less transparent and predictable and therefore more susceptible to favoritism and corruption.

The quota system aims to control arrivals to some degree. However, unlike quota policies in other countries, such as Germany, the quota system in Kazakhstan is not the only avenue for ethnic Kazakhs to enter or remain in Kazakhstan. In recent years, there has been an intensification of immigration of ethnic Kazakhs outside of the quota system, largely as a result of ethnic Kazakhs moving from neighbouring Uzbekistan, particularly from disaster areas south of the Aral Sea (Karakalpakistan and Navoy regions). This creates a situation in which two groups of oralmans exist: those included in the quota and those arriving independently. Figure 1.2 details the large gap between the quota and total ethnic Kazakh immigration.

As can be seen from the above graph, the number of oralmans arriving in the country before 1995 did not even fill the quota. However, starting in 1996, the number of oralmans arriving surpassed quota allowances and, by 2001, the total number of returnees

Figure 1.2. Oralman returns, 1993-2004



Source: Official Statistics of the Committee on Migration

exceeded the quota by a factor of 15. In 2002, despite an increase to the quota of more than 2,000 families, total immigration exceeded the quota by almost four times. Even in 2004, when the quota had been raised to 10,000 families, total immigration still exceeded the quota by 86 percent.

The gap between quota and non-quota arrivals can be attributed to rapid economic growth and rising standards of living in Kazakhstan (particularly in comparison with neighbouring countries) and an increased

awareness of oralman policies by ethnic Kazakhs living outside of Kazakhstan.

1.4. Government assistance to oralmans

The legal framework supporting oralman integration is based on the 1997 Law on Population Migration, which provides for a series of integration measures intended for all oralmans returning to Kazakhstan. The Law on Population Migration has been completed with several legal acts⁷.

Governmental assistance to all oralmans	Additional benefits granted to oralmans included into the quota
Pension payments	Exemption from custom duties while crossing the border
Payment of allowances (disablement allowance, allowance for loss of breadwinner, pension age allowance)	Free transportation to permanent residence place and free transportation of oralman belongings ⁹
Payment of special state allowances	Payment of a lump sum allowance at the amount of 15 MCR (monthly calculation rate) to the family head and 10 MCR to each family member.
Payment of special compensations according to the Law on Rehabilitation of Mass Political Repression Victims	Housing assistance in the form of a lump-sum grant ²
Grants for oralmans entering post- secondary institutions	
Exemption from consular fees for required visas	
Deferred military service	
Provision of guaranteed free medical services	
Provision of targeted social assistance	
Provision of employment assistance and vocational training	
Assistance in entering schools, preschools and social protection institutions	
Assistance in learning Kazakh and Russian.	

⁷ Rules on targeted spending of the funds allocated from budget of the Republic of Kazakhstan to oralmans (approved by Governmental Decree); Rules on distribution of land plots to oralmans for the construction of housing (approved by Governmental Decree); Regulations on the sojourn of resettled persons in adaptation centers (approved by Decree of the Head of the Agency for Migration and Demography); Regulations on adaptation centers for oralmans and other migrants in the RK (approved by Decree of the Head of the Agency for Migration and Demography); and Instruction on procedures for determining the oralman status and inclusion into the oralmans' immigration quota (approved by Decree of the Head of the Agency for Migration and Demography).

⁸ Laws "On State Budget" for 2003-2006.

⁹ Free baggage allowance for one oralman family is 1000 kg. Transportation costs are reimbursed upon arrival on the basis of travel documents (except airplane ticket), but not exceeding 10 MCR (monthly calculation rate) per person. In 2006 the MCR amounted to KZT 971. Transportation costs of personal belongings are reimbursed on the basis of transportation documents, but not exceeding 50 MCR per oralman family. These allowances include the transportation of livestock.

An annual budget is dedicated to oralman integration, which in 2005 amounted to KZT 8 billion. This constitutes a progressive increase in government allotments to oralmans. For example, in 2002 the state budget for integration was fixed at KZT 375 million. In 2003 this rose to approximately KZT 2.0 billion, while in 2004 the budget allocation was as much as 5 billion tenge. In 2006, the expected budget is estimated at KZT 11.1 billion⁸. Budgetary expenditures go in large part to housing and reintegration allowances for those included in the quota.

In addition to housing and reintegration allowances, oralmans included in the quota can benefit from additional benefits including transportation subsidies or free travel and an exception from custom duties. Those not included can still apply for Kazakhstani citizenship in order to receive a more limited number of benefits; however, these are clearly not comparable to those received by immigrants under the quota system.

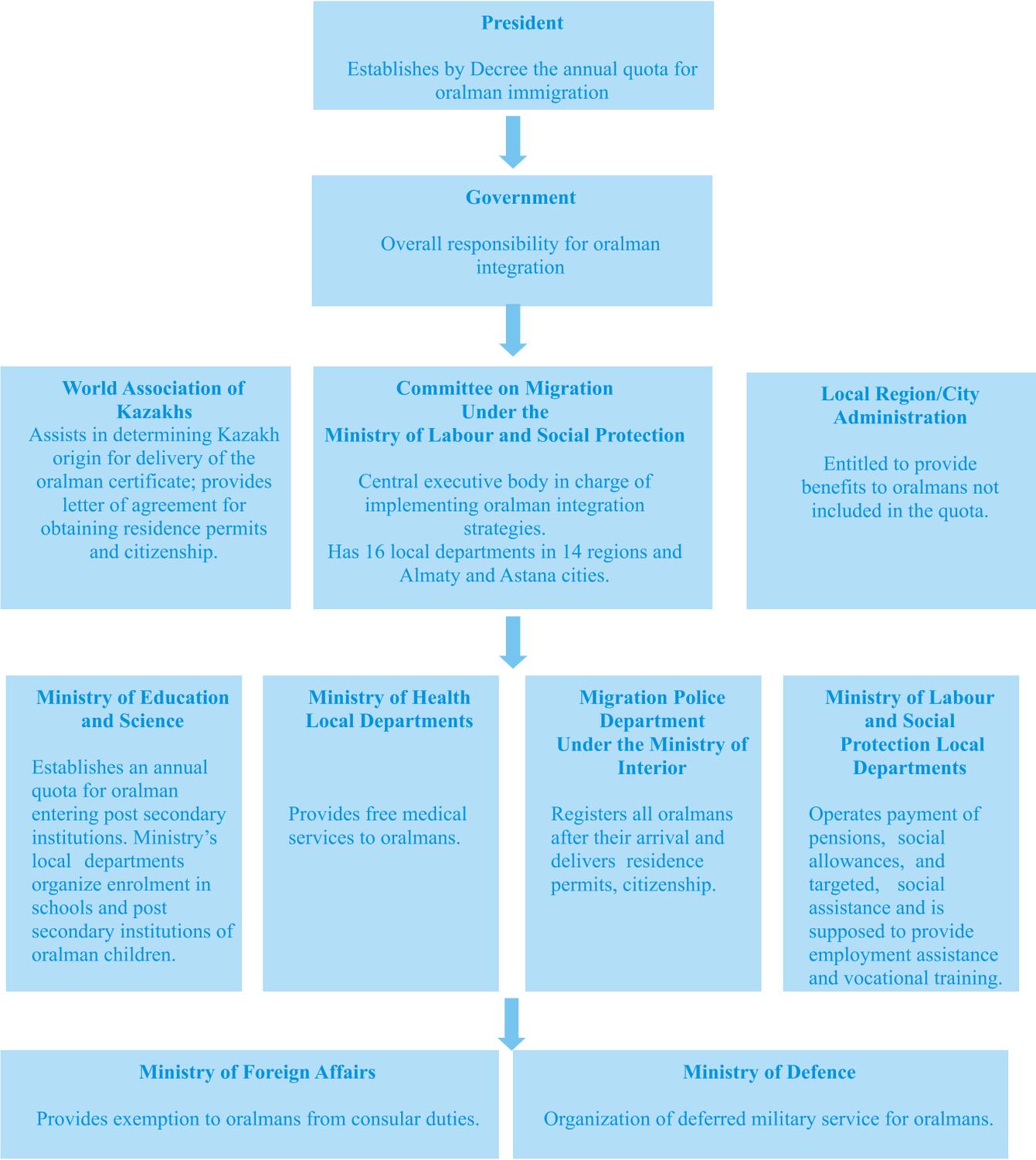
Although legislation provides for employment assistance, vocational training and language acquisition, no specific integration programmes such as language courses, information and referral services, employment assistance or vocational training exist. Current legislation also provides for the establishment of adaptation centers for oralmans. However, according to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the majority of these centers do not fulfill their mandate.

1.5. Institutional framework

Originally tasked to the Department of Migration under the Ministry of Labour, the implementation of the quota system and responsibility for oralman return and integration was transferred to a special governmental body in 1997, the Agency for Migration and Demography (AMD). The AMD, with headquarters in Astana and 16 local departments in 14 regions, was supervised directly by the Presidential Administration.

In November 2004, the AMD became the Committee on Migration under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. This transfer also shifted the supervision of the AMD from the President to the Minister of Labour; however additional agencies still remained active in the area of oralman immigration and integration.

There are a number of state agencies active in the area of oralman arrival and resettlement. Procedures relating to registering, being included in the quota system and obtaining residence permits or citizenship are often highly bureaucratic and are not in the mandate of only one agency. The complexity of the legal procedures generated by each agency and a general lack of interagency coordination represent a considerable obstacle in the integration process.



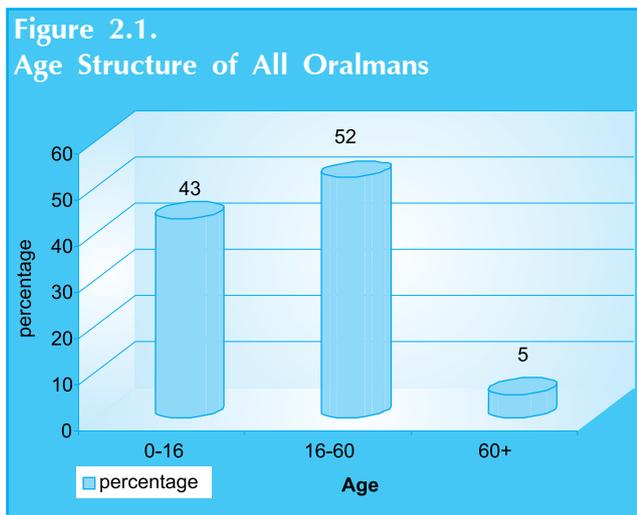
CHAPTER II.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

This chapter provides basic quantitative data on the oralman population including demographic characteristics, geographical patterns of resettlement and secondary migration tendencies. Statistics are taken from both official sources as well as the sample population.

2.1. Demographic characteristics

As of October 2005, the total number of oralman living in Kazakhstan was 464,426 individuals representing 117,698 households¹¹. A breakdown by age reveals that roughly 43 percent are younger than the active working age, 52 percent are of active working age (between 16 and pension age according to national legislation) and five percent are counted as pensioners¹².



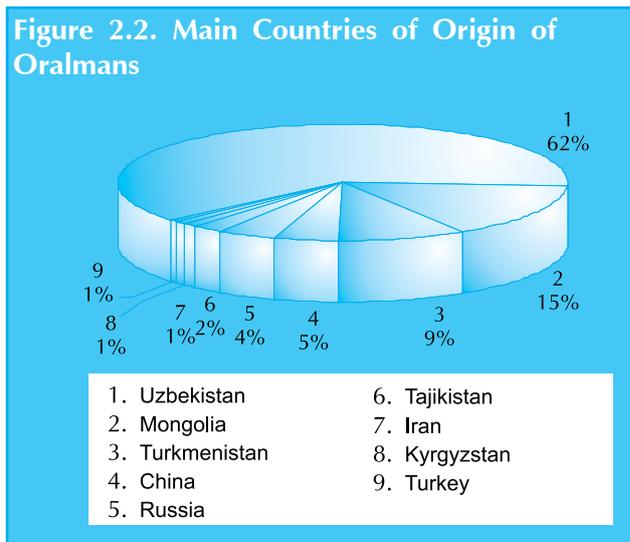
The sex ratio of oralman is similar to the Kazakh population with males accounting for 48 and females accounting for 52 percent¹³. This is compared to the 49 percent male and 51 percent female ratio found in the general population¹⁴. According to the Committee on Migration, 163,376 or 35 percent are married.

Roughly 76 percent of all oralman who have arrived since 1992 have obtained citizenship. Another 21 percent of oralman are awaiting citizenship or in the process of applying for citizenship. The remaining three percent are either those who have permanent resident status or who do not wish to gain citizenship.

As a share of the total immigrant population, oralman represent approximately 33 percent of all immigrants in Kazakhstan. In 2005, oralman arrivals constituted nearly 80 percent of all immigrants to the country.

2.2. Main source countries

The major source countries of oralman are varied and extend from East Asia to the Middle East and Western Europe. During the period 1991-2005, the main countries of origin for oralman were Uzbekistan (285,409), Mongolia (71,507), Turkmenistan (41,787), China (22,117) and Russia (18,632). Other significant countries of origin are Tajikistan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Afghanistan and Pakistan with marginal numbers from other CIS and Eastern European countries, Denmark and Israel.



While limited data exists on annual arrivals by country over the past ten years, it is possible to observe the annual inflow of oralman from Uzbekistan over the last five years. In 2001, there were 24,859 arrivals from Uzbekistan, which jumped to 87,596 in 2002. In 2004 the number was 46,787 and as of October 2005, the number again rose dramatically to 78,123. The largely unpredictable nature of arrivals can be attributed primarily to push factors, such as unstable economic conditions in source countries compared with growth in Kazakhstan.

¹¹ This includes oralman arriving within and outside of the quota between 1991 and 2005. Data taken from the Agency for Statistics dated 1 October 2005.

¹² The official retirement age in Kazakhstan is 58 for women and 63 for men.

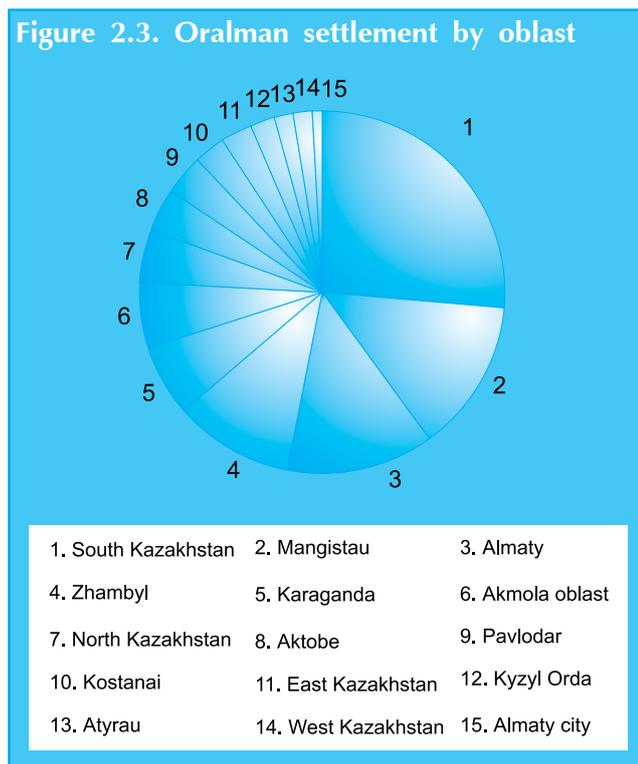
¹³ Statistics gathered by the Committee on Migration as of 01 October 2005

¹⁴ Taken from UNDP Kazakhstan InfoBase.

2.3. Oralman settlement patterns

Oralmans are found in all regions in Kazakhstan. The region with the highest number of oralmans is South Kazakhstan oblast with a total of 122,131 individuals. This represents approximately 26 percent of all oralmans currently settled in Kazakhstan. Mangistau oblast is the second largest with 61,737 people or 13 percent of the oralman population, followed by Almaty and Zhambyl oblasts with 60,770 and 49,365 oralmans respectively. Among regions with fewer oralmans are Western Kazakhstan and Atyrau oblasts and the cities of Almaty and Astana.

Figure 2.3. Oralman settlement by oblast



Settlement patterns are determined by a number of factors. Firstly, the quota serves to structure regional distribution of oralmans and therefore inclusion under the quota system limits individual choice of residence. In the early 1990s, the quota was primarily allocated in northern Kazakhstan. This was done in order to counter massive emigration flows resulting in significant population loss in the northern and central regions. Reflecting changing migration patterns, the quota more recently has focused on southern regions in order to reflect the actual settlement patterns of arriving oralmans. For instance, in 2005, nearly 73 percent of oralmans included in the quota (10,885 out of 15,000 families) were from Uzbekistan and resettled in South Kazakhstan oblast.

While applicants to the quota system can specify their preferred region, regional committees responsible for the selection make the final decision on applications, taking into consideration quota limitations. However, an oralman who has applied to be included in the quo-

ta of a particular region cannot then be settled under the quota in another region. If he is not included in one region, he is left out of quota altogether that year. In such cases, those who are not successful in being included in the quota must wait until the subsequent year to make another request.

Variables affecting geographic resettlement for oralmans not included in the quota include: proximity to country of origin, language, climate and employment opportunities. For example, many oralmans in southern Kazakhstan arrive from bordering areas in Uzbekistan. Similarly, southern Kazakhstan receives oralmans from Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey, due in part to a warmer climate and nearness to previous communities. Non-Russian speaking oralmans may also prefer areas where the Kazakh language is widespread, such as southern Kazakhstan. Additional reasons for settlement are also found in historical linkages and the presence of relatives.

Mangistau oblast with the second largest oralman population mostly attracts populations from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, particularly from the autonomous republic of Karakalpakistan. Oralmans from these two countries account for nearly 95 percent of all oralmans living in the oblast. The main reasons for such settlement patterns are proximity to Turkmenistan and Tajikistan and historical roots. Mangistau oblast also attracts a higher number of oralmans as a result of higher salary levels. In 2002, average monthly salaries in Mangistau exceeded the national average by 91.1 percent.

2.4. Secondary migration

Secondary migration, or relocation to a different region or area, is frequent among oralmans. According to the survey results, some 24 percent of respondents have changed their place or residence at least one time. The most frequent secondary migration was reported by those oralmans settled under the quota in rural areas. Relocation from northern to southern regions, a phenomenon that was particularly evident during the 1990s, has subsided as a result of changes made to the quota's geographical distribution of oralmans.

However, rural-urban migration still continues to be widespread. The main factors contributing to high rates of rural-urban migration are: insufficient employment in rural areas resulting in part from the collapse of *kolkhozes* or collective farms; lack of schools, educational opportunities and hospitals in some rural areas; high transportation costs between rural areas and nearby cities; and poor rural infrastructure. Oralmans in central and northern regions are more likely to migrate between rural and urban areas. Conversely, quite a few respondents in Mangistau and South Kazakhstan oblasts reported changing their initial places of residence.

CHAPTER III. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF ORALMANS

3.1. Employment

As a key element of general integration into the new society, participation in the labour market is a fundamental indicator. The results of the study show that the degree to which oralman have achieved economic integration in Kazakhstan remains low.

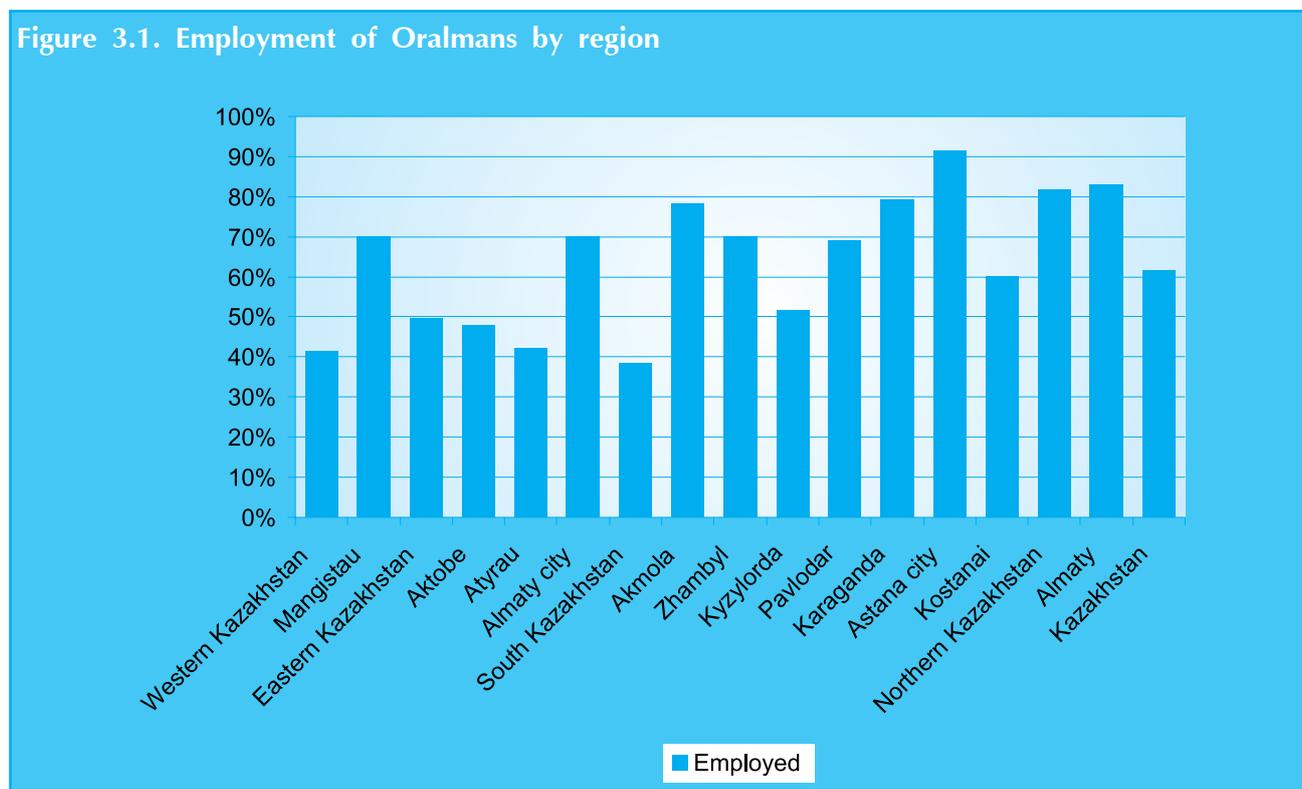
According to official statistics of the Committee on Migration, only 61.5 percent of oralman of working age are actively employed¹⁵. While this represents an increase from 2000, when the employment rate was only 32 percent, it remains significantly lower than the employment rate amongst the general population, which was 91.6 percent in 2004.

Unemployment among oralman in comparison to the national unemployment level of 8.4 percent in 2004 shows that oralman are significantly more likely to be unemployed.

Considerable regional differences are noted in oralman employment levels. For example, in Astana, roughly 91 percent of oralman are employed. This is followed by Almaty oblast, where approximately 83 percent of oralman surveyed reported to have work. In North Kazakhstan oblast, 79 percent of oralman in the survey sample were employed. The rate of employment was significantly lower in southern regions. Only 38 percent of oralman surveyed in South Kazakhstan oblast were found to be employed. Similarly, the findings for West Kazakhstan oblast were also low with only 41 percent of surveyed oralman reporting to be working.

The high level of unemployment experienced by oralman can be explained by a number of variables. Firstly, legal obstacles have an impact on oralman's ability to gain employment. Although the Law on Population Migration does provide a definition of oralman status,

Figure 3.1. Employment of Oralman by region



¹⁵ Data gathered by the Committee on Migration taken January 1, 2005.

it does not define the rights or responsibilities entitled through such distinction, thus precluding the application of other laws. For example, the Labour Code of Kazakhstan distinguishes between two categories of workers: residents and non-residents. As no special legal regime exists for oralmans, oralmans who have not yet received citizenship are generally classified under the latter category. Non-resident status requires that a special license be acquired by the employer from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. This procedure is highly complicated and can take a significant amount of time, thereby deterring employers from hiring oralmans lacking citizenship status.

A similar legal obstacle relates to proof of residency. In order to be legally employed in Kazakhstan, oralmans must receive citizenship, or at least residency, in order to receive equal rights of Kazakhstani citizens. However, in order to receive citizenship or a residence permit, proof of residence or a *propiska* must be obtained. Those who do not have temporary or permanent accommodations must find someone who will accept to register him¹⁶.

A second factor in low economic integration relates to language barriers. Oralmans who do not speak Russian or have a limited command of Russian may face challenges finding employment, particular in northern regions. In southern regions where the Kazakh language is more widely used, linguistic barriers may be less prohibiting. However, in these areas linguistic difficulties may still arise. For example, oralmans from China, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan write in Ancient Kazakh (which is based on the Arabic alphabet) and in Turkey Kazakh is written using the Latin alphabet. Oralman arriving from these countries face the difficulty of not being able to read or write Kazakh. In this way, having insufficient skills in both languages creates a situation in which it is nearly impossible to find employment.

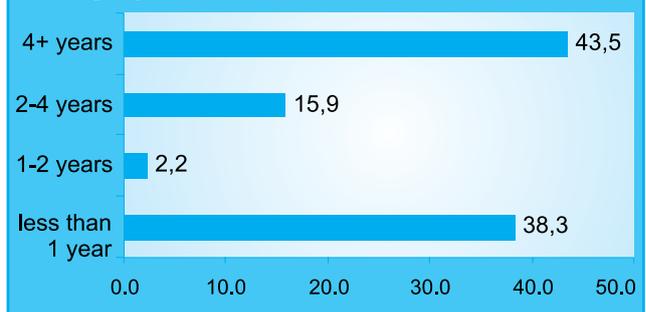
Differences in education systems in source countries also may affect employability. An oralman who possesses a diploma from an institute of higher education may have difficulties gaining employment if his previous credentials are not recognized¹⁷. In some cases, oralmans are unable to find employment in their field of proficiency. This is true for both oralmans with higher education (engineers, technology specialists, doctors, economists) and those with technical backgrounds (i.e., tradesmen).

Interviews found that nearly 20 percent of oralmans

were employed in Government-funded sectors (education, health, science, etc.) prior to coming to Kazakhstan, but only 7.2 percent were able to find employment in similar structures after resettling in Kazakhstan. The number of people working as manual labourers increased from approximately two percent to almost five percent after relocating. Similarly, the number of individuals engaged in small-scale trade increased more than two times (1.9 percent before moving and 4.9 percent after relocating). Conversely, the percentage of oralmans working in the agricultural sector before coming to Kazakhstan reduced from four percent to just over one percent.

Among survey respondents, the number of oralmans who are unemployed has increased. Before moving 8.3 percent of oralmans were unemployed; however, after immigrating this figure reached the level of 24.4 percent. An analysis of unemployment among oralmans shows that the majority of unemployed oralmans are chronically unemployed.

Figure 3.2. Duration of Oralmans' Unemployment



According to the Law on Population Migration (art.29-3) state authorities are to provide employment assistance to oralmans, including vocational training. However, no integration programmes are in place to provide employment assistance to oralmans. Local agencies in charge of employment assistance to oralmans¹⁸ can only advise oralmans to become registered at local employment centers or propose temporary employment through “community works” schemes¹⁹.

In addition to proposing low-wage, temporary employment, local employment centers also conduct vocational training. However, such trainings are conducted only in Russian, thus limiting the participation of those lacking Russian-language proficiency. The scope of training programmes also remains limited. For example, employment centers in Almaty provide training in the fields of accounting, security and driving. One Almaty employment center indicated that voca-

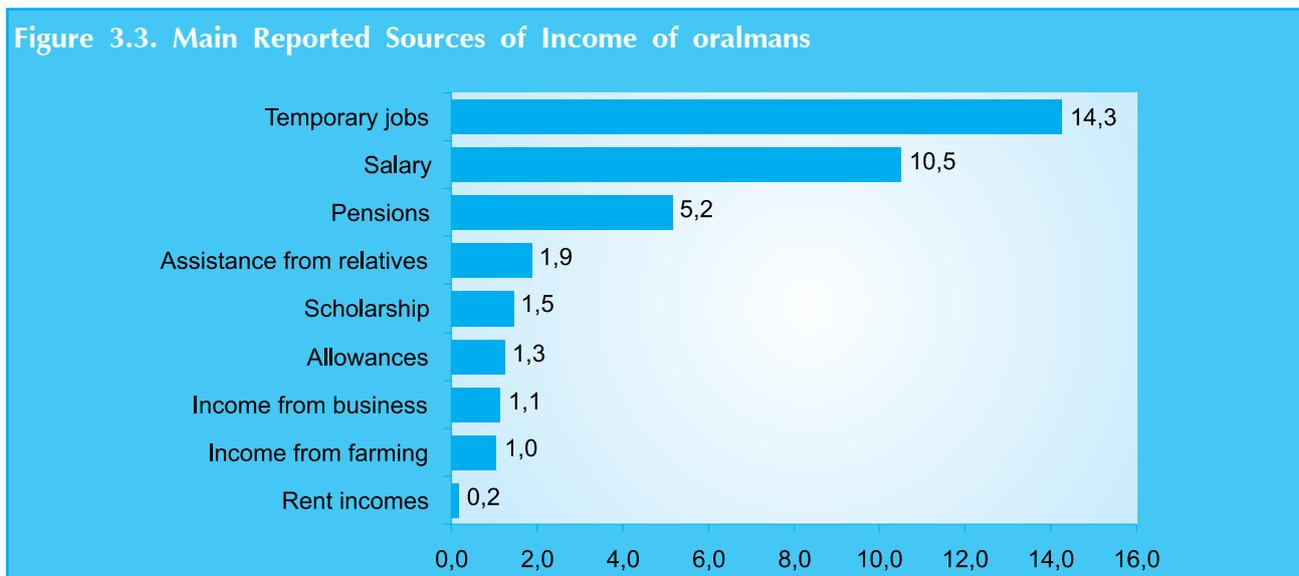
¹⁶ Interviews with one NGO revealed that three are reported cases of individuals accepting to register oralmans for a fee.

¹⁷ For example, Chinese diplomas are not recognized in Kazakhstan.

¹⁸ Local departments on employment and social protection.

¹⁹ Community works are temporary jobs for salaries of approximately KZT 10,000 a month.

Figure 3.3. Main Reported Sources of Income of oralmans



tional trainings are not very popular among job seekers, including oralmans.

As shown in the survey, only one out of ten oralmans has a steady income in Kazakhstan, whereas before moving to Kazakhstan almost one-quarter (23.9 per cent) had steady income. The number of oralmans who rely on occasional jobs and occasional earnings has doubled. The number of oralmans receiving pensions and other allowances has also doubled.

Figure 3.4. Oralman's monthly household monetary income

Income	Percent of oralmans
No monetary income	2.1
Less than 5,000 KZT	13.7
5,000-10,000	23.4
10,000-15,000	21.4
15,000-20,000	16.2
20,000-30,000	12.8
30,000-40,000	6.5
40,000-60,000	3.2
60,000 and over	0.7

The minimum subsistence level in Kazakhstan in 2003 was estimated by UNDP at KZT 5,128 per person²⁰. As shown in the above table, according to the survey, 45 percent of oralmans have monthly monetary incomes between KZT 5,000 and 15,000. Therefore oralman wages per family is not much higher than the national basic subsistence income.

According to Kazakhstani law, oralmans are eligible to receive a number of benefits including disability in-

surance, unemployment insurance, pensions and targeted social welfare. While the condition for receiving such benefits is proof of "oralman status", in practice it is reported that local authorities require the applicant's proof of residency or *propiska*, thus making it difficult for some oralmans to collect benefits. For pension benefits, the legislation states that all oralmans are eligible to receive a government pension²¹. However, oralmans are only entitled to receive the minimum amount regardless of the length of service or position held in their previous countries. In this regard, some oralmans, particularly from China and Russia, prefer not to obtain citizenship in Kazakhstan, but rather retain their previous citizenship²².

3.2. Housing

The issue of housing has been a consistent challenge for government agencies dealing with the integration of oralmans. As entrance into the quota includes the provision of state funded housing, fiscal and logistical difficulties are considerable, particularly with the increase of quota oralmans. To date, the majority of government allocation for oralman integration has been spent on housing for those included in the quota²³. Conversely, those not included in the quota receive no assistance in finding temporary or permanent accommodation.

According to the Committee on Migration, 48.3 percent of oralmans have housing²⁴. The breakdown by region shows the housing situation throughout Kazakhstan.

²⁰ UNDP Kazakhstan Infobase.

²¹ According to the Committee on Migration, the total number of retired oralmans in 2005 was recorded as 23,988 or 5.17 % of all oralmans.

²² The minimum pension was KZT 6,200 as of 1 January 2005.

²³ The total state budget for housing assistance to oralmans under quota in 2005 was KZT 8,044,223.

²⁴ This equals 45,635 oralman families as of 1 January 2005. The remaining 51.7 percent may live in dormitories, mosques, adaptation centres or with family or friends.

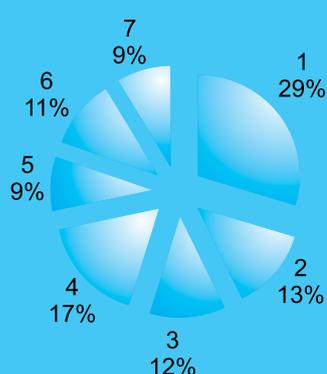
Figure 3.5. Percentage of Oralman with housing by region (as of 1 January 2005)

Region	Percentage of oralman with housing (families)	Region	Percentage of oralman with housing (families)
Akmola	97.3	Kyzylorda	66.9
Aktobe	72.6	Kostanai	79
Almaty	76.9	Pavlodar	86
Atyrau	82.0	North Kazakhstan	95
East Kazakhstan	90.1	Manghistau	32
West Kazakhstan	50.5	South Kazakhstan	12
Zhambyl	49.1	Astana city	66
Karaganda	93.7	Almaty city	47
		Total	48

As Table 3.5 shows, the problem of inadequate housing is the most visible in regions with the highest density of oralman: South Kazakhstan oblast (11.9 percent), Mangistau oblast (31.9 percent), Almaty city (47.1 percent) and Zhambyl oblast (49.1 percent). Southern regions of Kazakhstan attract high numbers of oralman not included in the quota system as well as secondary migrants. Moreover, these regions have also become receiving regions for greater numbers of oralman covered under the quota.

According to the results of the survey, within the sample population, 29 percent of respondents own their housing, 17 percent share accommodations with private owners and 12 percent rent their accommodations.

Figure 3.6. Types of Ownership of Oralman's Housing



1. Owned as being purchased
2. Constructed themselves
3. Leased
4. Owned by relatives
5. State-owned (service housing)
6. Received under the quota
7. Other

The study revealed considerable variance of housing conditions according to region and location. While oralman living in urban areas generally live in owned or rented apartments, which can be in adequate or good conditions, those living in rural areas frequently live in temporary constructions in poor conditions. Houses allocated for oralman families under the quota were reported to be in need of repair in almost every region²⁵. Many houses were found to be lacking basic amenities and, in some cases, unfit for habitation. Road access in these villages is often unpaved, making intercity travel difficult.

As oralman are often unable to afford housing improvements and as government assistance is not available for such improvements, individuals can spend long periods of time living in sub-standard conditions. In addition, the lack of tap water, electricity or gas in some rural areas affects entire settlements or villages inhabited by oralman²⁶. According to the study, 45 percent of oralman in rural areas have cold water, 10.6 percent have hot water, and 17.3 percent have gas. Over 71 percent of respondents use liquid petroleum gas (LPG) canisters. Central heating is available for only 11 percent of respondents' houses, while only 11 percent have access to sanitation systems.

Oralman together with village residents who do not have central water supply usually get water from a few water-pumps, wells and sometimes even from outflows coming from cities, consequently increasing the risk of disease in such settlements²⁷.

In February 2004, the initial mechanism providing housing assistance to oralman included under the quota system was replaced²⁸. According to the new procedures, the local department of the Committee on Migration no longer buys flats for oralman but instead provides a fixed sum to each family member, which

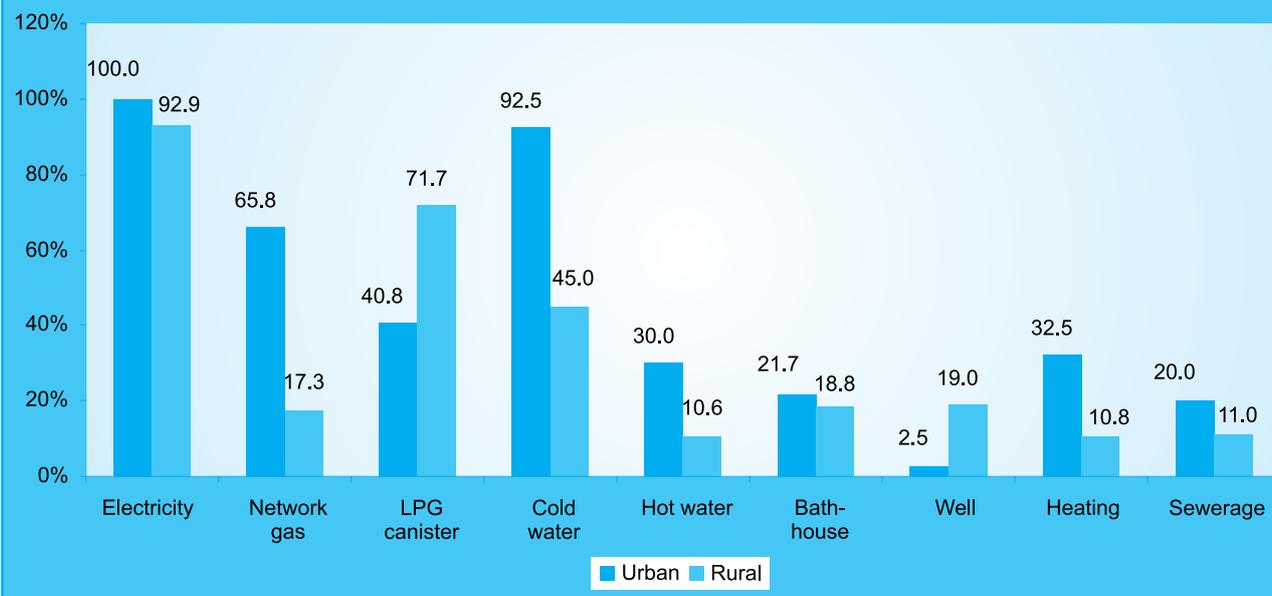
²⁵ Houses abandoned by previous owners who were leaving their village to move to the city or emigrate were generally given to oralman.

²⁶ This observation was made during field visits made to oralman settlements of Baibesik and Dastan in Saryagash.

²⁷ Oralman from Baibesik village situated on the outskirts of Almaty used to get water from a polluted outflow coming from the city until 2004 when IOM provided them with a well. Local authorities later provided a centralized water supply system.

²⁸ Previously, local departments of the AMD were responsible for purchasing and allocating housing to arriving oralman. In partial reaction to mismanagement and as a result of rising housing prices and the growing numbers of oralman, the Decree on Targeted Spending of the Funds Allocated from the Budget of the RK to Oralman was amended on 25 February 2004.

Figure 3.7. Oralman's Housing Conditions, percentage of Households



represents 100 times the monthly rate index (MCR), or approximately KZT 97,200 (approximately USD 730). Oralman must now find and arrange their own accommodations, negotiating with the seller and signing the contract independently. No government assistance is provided during this process²⁹.

The allowance amount per individual is approximately USD 730 and increases by the same amount with each additional family member. Due to rapidly increasing housing prices throughout Kazakhstan, the per person allocation of USD 730 is generally insufficient both in urban and rural areas³⁰. Those who can contribute personal savings to the funding received from the state do so. However, those without personal savings who cannot find suitable accommodations using the government grant often use the funds for other purchases, often a vehicle or farm machinery. Some families borrow supplementary funds from relatives or close friends.

In addition, local residents are reluctant to sell housing to oralman as the latter usually have no citizenship and may not be able to make timely payments. According to state auditors from the Accounts Committee the new housing scheme does not contribute to effectively assist oralman to solve the housing problem.

Whereas those included under the quota system receive some assistance, those arriving outside the quota must arrange housing independently. Local authorities (*akimats*) can provide them with some finan-

cial assistance; however, resources are largely insufficient. Local authorities in some regions have in the past provided land plots for the construction of oralman houses (e.g., in Almaty city, South Kazakhstan oblast and Mangistau oblast). In some cases oralman have built houses without receiving permission from local authorities.

Housing or at least temporary housing is doubtless the first problem oralman face upon their arrival in Kazakhstan. According to the Law on Population Migration and other legal acts, oralman should be placed in "temporary settlement" or adaptation centers upon their arrival. However, as shown through IOM monitoring conducted in spring 2004 the majority of these centers are not functioning properly. Oralman often do not know of the existence of these centers. There are no criteria as to who can gain assistance from or accommodations in these centres. There is a limit of 20 days for those using the centres; however, these often become permanent dwellings for some oralman.

3.3. Health

No official statistics exist pertaining to the overall health conditions of oralman. Guaranteed by law to receive the same state-funded medical services as Kazakhstani citizens, disaggregating between oralman patients and the general population is rarely done³¹.

Upon arrival in Kazakhstan, oralman are required to undergo a full medical examination, a process over-

²⁹ Funds are transferred to the oralman once he brings a notarized copy of the sales contract and has provided proof that he has opened a bank account.

³⁰ The minimum cost for a house according to one NGO working in the area of oralman housing is approximately USD 7000-8000.

³¹ According to the article 29-3 of the Law on Population Migration

seen by regional departments of the Committee on Migration³². Medical screenings differ according to locality, ranging from simple medical screenings to more throughout examinations. As no official procedure exists on medical screening for oralmen, individual clinics and/or medical professionals are free to determine the scope and timeframe of oralman examinations³³. Once the initial examination is completed, oralmen are eligible to receive full medical care from government-run clinics.

Through interviews with medical practitioners in all regions, it was found that oralmen often delay medical treatment, sometimes do not follow medical advice and take prescriptions, and often fail to undergo follow-up examinations³⁴. Those interviewed also indicated that some oralmen do not possess elementary knowledge of basic sanitary and hygienic practices. In poor living conditions, particularly settlements lacking basic needs such as safe water and electricity, infections can quickly spread among family members.

The most frequent reasons reported by respondents for not seeking timely medical advice were suspicious attitudes towards conventional or modern medicine, the lack of funds and/or time, and the use of other methods of healing. Being familiar with other medical treatment methods, some oralmen surveyed reported to prefer self-treatment or medical treatment from a doctor from their country of origin or a local healer³⁵. As a result, many only visit a doctor when their situation becomes critical.

In terms of methods of medical treatment used by oralmen, the study found that the majority of oralmen, nearly 79 percent receive medical treatment through public clinics. Twelve percent prefer to receive home treatment, nearly four percent prefer treatment in private medical centers and two percent choose treatment from a healer.

Oralmen are found to be at higher risk from a number of illnesses. While data is still limited to compare oralman health conditions to the general population, interviews with health authorities in all regions revealed a greater vulnerability to some diseases. In Mangistau oblast, oralmen suffer to a larger degree than the general population from arthritis, heart diseases and anemia (especially women). According to the chief medical doctor of Zhanaozen city, it is estimated that over 90 percent of all pregnant women examined suf-

fer from anemia, 50 percent of which are complicated forms. In Pavlodar oblast, doctors mentioned anemia, osteoporosis and arthritis. In South Kazakhstan, oralmen are seen to suffer more often from cardio-vascular diseases and anemia in women. Doctors interviewed in Karaganda and Almaty oblasts, however, reported no major differences in oralman health compared with general population.

3.4. Education

According to article 29-2 of the Law on Population Migration, the Ministry of Education and Science has the lead role in developing and implementing a quota system for oralmen entering higher education or professional training institutions. Local departments of the Ministry of Education and Science are responsible for providing assistance to oralmen in entering schools and pre-school systems. In general, both central and regional departments of the Ministry of Education and Science are active in facilitating oralmen's access to education.

According to statistics gathered by the Committee on Migration, in 2005, 95.3 percent of oralman school-aged children were enrolled in primary education³⁶.

Upon arrival in Kazakhstan oralman families generally face few problems enrolling their children in schools. Preference is generally given to Kazakh language schools as opposed to Russian language schools³⁷. Although a high majority speak Kazakh, reading and writing problems do arise as a result of not knowing the Cyrillic alphabet. In both Russian and Kazakh schools, oralmen initially find significant differences in the educational system in Kazakhstan compared to that of their countries of origin.

According to education providers interviewed, oralman children generally have lower education levels in comparison with the general population. When found not to be at the same level, teachers may organize additional classes, set up consultations with parents and have children undergo special transition programmes as well as enrol in Kazakh and Russian language courses. Some teachers reported that in addition group discussions are sometimes organised with the aim to bring together oralman children and the general population to build linkages and overcome differences.

As parents of oralman children cannot always assist their children in homework tasks due to differences in

³² The local department provides oralmen with a "referral"- "napravlenie".

³³ From interview with the Deputy Chief of the region health department conducted under the UNDP survey.

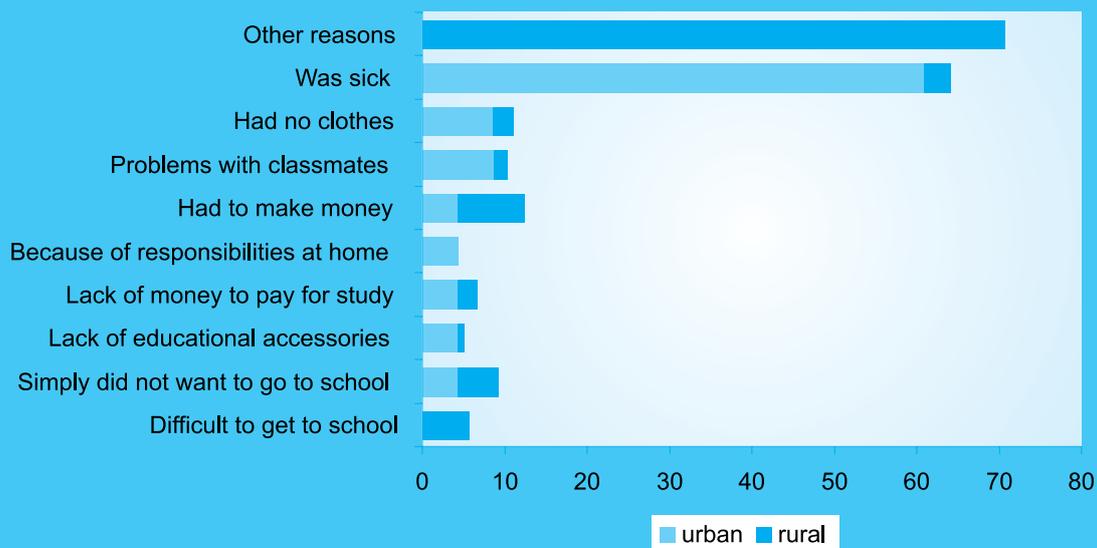
³⁴ From interviews with local medical authorities and doctors

³⁵ This is particularly relevant for oralmen from China.

³⁶ Statistics gathered up to 1 October 2005. This amounts to 89,025 out of 93,363 school-aged oralman children.

³⁷ There are no official statistical data on the percentage of oralman children going to Kazakh or Russian schools.

Figure 3.8. Main Reasons for Absenteeism



written Kazakh, difference in curricula, lack of time or sometimes low educational levels, some school districts also try to organize evening schools and courses for parents.

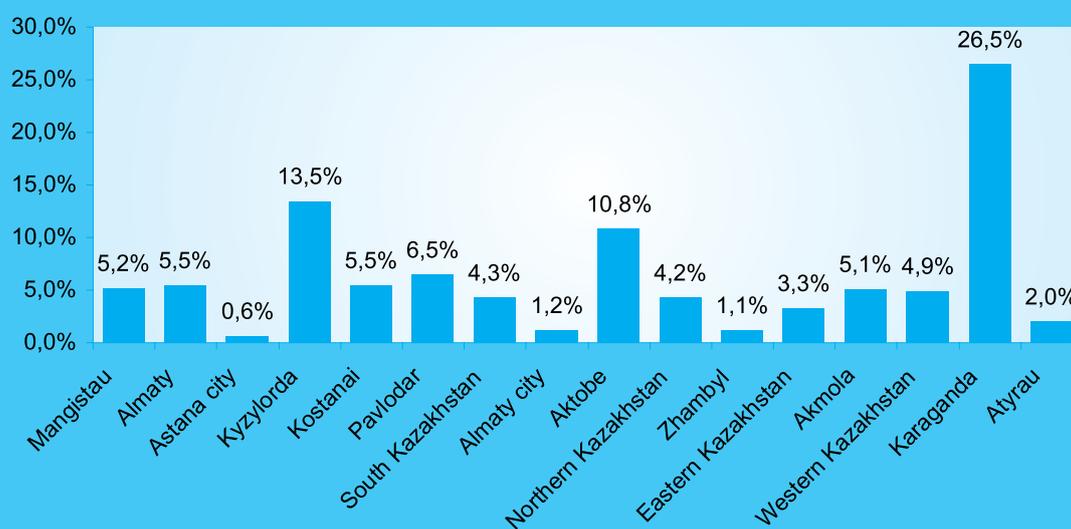
In terms of attendance patterns among oralman school children, the majority of parents interviewed have a high interest in their children going to school. The exception is families experiencing financial difficulties. This is particularly the case for parents of older children who can work inside or outside of the home. Interviewed teachers from South Kazakhstan oblast revealed that initially oralmans (mainly those coming from Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan) did not want their daughters attending co-education classes due to cul-

tural and religious beliefs. In some cases, girls do not continue studies past the age of 13 or 14 as parents prepare them for marriage.

According to data collected during the study, reasons for absenteeism ranged from illness to lack of school supplies or disinterest. As shown by the figures below, the main reason for absenteeism is illness. Another important reason for non-attendance is lack of clothes, which is tied to the economic vulnerability of oralman families. The need to gain money is the reason of non-attendance for 4.3 percent of oralman children in urban areas and 2.4 percent in rural.

Regarding secondary education, according to the survey carried out by the Educational Center Bilim-Cen-

Table 3.9. Enrollment in Post-secondary Institutions by Region



tral Asia³⁸, 46 percent of high school graduates wish to pursue a university degree, with 40 percent undecided and 14 percent wishing to continue their education through professional or technical colleges. Of parents surveyed, 54 percent responded that they did not wish their children to pursue a university education, the main reasons being distance from family and limited financial resources to support children in university.

It should be noted that the Ministry of Education and Science has attempted to encourage greater enroll-

ment of oralman in post-secondary education through privileged access to state funding. The Ministry of Education and Science reserves two percent of all government student loans and grants for oralman. In the 2003-2004, a total of 183,000 students entered higher education institutions including: 153,000 self-funded students, 16,000 students funded by state educational grants and 10,000 students who received state educational loans³⁹. Thus the total number of those assisted by the state were 26,000, of which 520 were oralman.

³⁸ Survey on Oralman's access to quality education conducted in Almaty and South Kazakhstan oblasts by Bilim-Central Asia in 2005.

³⁹ UNDP Human Development Report 2004.

CHAPTER IV.

CULTURAL INTEGRATION

4.1. Language issues

Language is fundamental for any interaction to occur and therefore language integration is among the first deemed to be necessary. The proficiency of migrants in the language of the receiving country, in oral and written form, is an important indicator of their successful integration. A sufficient knowledge of the language of the receiving country is also an essential precondition for integration into labour, social and cultural domains. All migrant receiving states make language a central focus of their integration agendas, although states have different views on the level of choice granted to immigrants in their process of language acquisition.

One of the main motivations of individuals choosing to immigrate to Kazakhstan is the desire to preserve Kazakh identity, language, culture and traditions. Once in Kazakhstan, they often face difficulties adapting to the public use of both Kazakh and Russian. Given the status of Russian as an officially recognized language and its wide use throughout the country, oralmen may have difficulty in successfully integrating into the labour market. The integration into social and cultural domains is also hampered by insufficient Russian language skills, which still prevails since the country is multiethnic and is needed for everyday communication.

Differences in written Kazakh can also be major obstacle. Currently three Kazakh alphabets are in use around the world: Cyrillic in Kazakhstan, Russia and some other CIS countries; Latin in Turkey and Western Europe; and Ancient Kazakh (based on the Arabic alphabet) in China, Iran and Pakistan. As result oralmen from China, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkey cannot read or write Kazakh once in Kazakhstan. Upon their arrival they almost immediately face problems in not being able to complete needed processes, for example, to apply for oralman status.

Despite the above-mentioned challenges, there are no measures currently in place to provide oralmen with language training. School and university administrations usually organise Kazakh and Russian language courses independently since no government programmes are in operation.

4.2. Cultural adaptation

As part of the Kazakh diaspora, oralmen for the most part have conserved traditional aspects of Kazakh culture, traditions and lifestyle. This situation may or may not foster cultural integration. Two variables are particularly noteworthy in this respect: country of origin and region of resettlement. This is evident for example in southern Kazakhstan (South Kazakhstan, Zhambyl, Kyzylorda and Manghystau oblasts), which demonstrates a greater adherence to national Kazakh culture and traditions. In these regions, oralmen's socio-cultural adaptation appears to occur more easily than in northern and central regions.

Oralmen are found to face greater difficulties integrating into northern and central regions. This can be explained by the more pluralistic cultural landscape. Dating from the Soviet period, Kazakh culture in these areas was significantly impacted by the presence of other cultural and ethnic groups. In particular, the prevalence of the Russian language and culture in these regions means that oralmen who are settled there in general require more time to adapt to the local environment.

While oralmen do share the same cultural roots as Kazakhs in Kazakhstan, differences in cultural practices and norms do exist. This stems from the fact that oralmen have conserved the traditional Kazakh culture and lifestyle whereas Kazakhs in Kazakhstan have adapted, first to influences brought about during the Soviet period, and more recently to changes occurring through the transition to a market economy. Oralmen, particularly those coming from non-CIS countries, are for the most part more religious than local Kazakhs.

Another important variable affecting the level of cultural adaptation among oralmen is country of origin. This is clearly observed with regard to clothing and practices in the home. Oralman women, particularly in southern regions, wear traditional clothes, including a long high-necked dress covered with a camisole and a kerchief to cover their heads. Most Kazakh women coming from Turkmenistan, Iran, and Afghanistan do not adopt the clothing styles of local Kazakh women,

as they consider such styles to be too loud or immodest. Men often hold a similar view. Men who came from Uzbekistan wear a skull-cap (*tuybeteika*), while men who came from Iran and Pakistan (mainly seen among old people) usually wear a turban (*chalma*).

There are some differences in everyday life. Most oralmen do not purchase furniture as they use *korpe*, which are hand-made patchwork quilts, pillows and rugs. Some of them prefer living in a yurt, which is a nomad's tent. At mealtimes, they sit at low tables. Before coming back to Kazakhstan, they used hand-made accessories and some pieces of such were brought to Kazakhstan. When changing occupations or locations or in becoming more urbanized, the production of home accessories decreased particularly among Kazakhs from Mongolia. This may be explained by the absence of materials required for such production as well as the fact that some of these items ceased to be useful. Thus, it is evident that the culture of oralmen (especially of oralmen from Mongolia) has changed and has modernized substantially.

Cultural differences were not found to be a source of tension between oralmen and the general population.

The attitude of the local population towards oralmen is however not always so tolerable. According to a

survey conducted by the independent analytical Center for Social Technologies (CST) in 2005, the attitude of the general population towards oralmen is divided as follows⁴⁰:

Figure 4.1. Attitudes of the general population towards oralmen

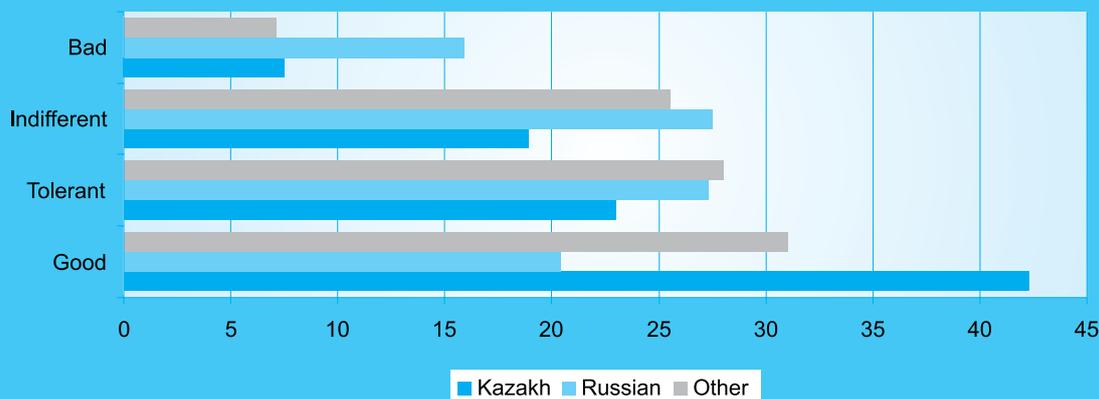
Good	34 %
Tolerably	25 %
Indifferent	22.5 %
Bad	10.1 %

Source: Publication of the CST "Oralmen: realities, problems and perspectives"

The perception of oralmen by the Kazakhstani population is also found to be controversial. On the one hand, considerable respect is expressed for oralmen wishing to return to their ethnic roots, and benefits brought to the receiving country are recognized. However, suspicion is also high, particularly with regard to abuses of social welfare programmes and targeted benefits.

Local population attitude towards oralmen by nationality breakdown is as follows:

Figure 4.2. What is your attitude towards Oralmen? (in %)



Source: CST survey: total number of surveyed local population is 1800 in 60 regions.

⁴⁰ Survey was conducted in 6 sub regions of the country: North, South, East, West, Center, Almaty city

Kazakhs and representative of other non-Russian ethnic groups expressed a more or less supportive attitude towards oralmans. However, a negative attitude among Russians (the second largest ethnic group in the country) was expressed by 15%, or every sixth respondent. The survey also showed, however, that this negative attitude is not necessarily an expression of complete disapproval, but rather of caution towards

potential threats in terms of employment and housing.

Research done by CST also showed that respondents in the higher income brackets had more tolerance towards oralmans, whereas people in the lower income brackets had more negative attitudes.

Local population attitude by geographic location breakdown is as follows:

Figure 4.3. Local population attitude by region, %

Regions:	Good	Tolerant	Indifferent	Bad
North	28,8	34,6	24,2	5,6
South	42,5	19,7	15,4	7,4
West	46,4	13,7	23,7	4,8
East	26,2	18,4	24,6	17,2
Central Kazakhstan	31	28,4	29	10,6
Almaty city	28,2	33,6	18,1	16,1
National figure	34	25	22,5	10,1

CHAPTER V.

EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE TO ORALMANS

At present, there are around 20 NGOs throughout the country dealing with oralman integration. The main scope of activities of these NGOs includes:

- Providing informational and referral services;
 - Providing legal assistance to oralman (advice, consultation and assistance with registration, application for obtaining of oralman status, inclusion into quota, citizenship, obtaining of social allowances);
 - Providing translation services;
 - Assisting children to enter schools and universities;
 - Conducting courses on language, history and culture of Kazakhstan, basic legislation, and opening small businesses;
 - Organizing vocational training;
 - Protecting oralman's rights in local areas and discussing legal and social issues;
 - Providing humanitarian aid;
 - Providing housing assistance;
 - Assisting in starting small enterprises and preparing business plans;
 - Drafting project proposals for local and international donor agencies;
 - Organizing meetings, seminars, roundtables and conferences to discuss oralman issues;
 - Drafting proposals to improve the legal standards on oralman and presenting them to the Parliament, government, and local authorities.
- providing housing assistance to 183 oralman families not included under the quota by obtaining land for housing construction;
 - undertaking a project with IOM on infrastructure in these settlements⁴²;
 - organizing courses for oralman in six regions of Kazakhstan;
 - obtaining land for similar oralman settlements in several regions of the country;
 - opening an oralman business support center;
 - launching a newspaper for oralman "Kosh";
 - developing a one-hour live TV show on a weekly basis on Rakhat TV; and
 - organizing many cultural events.

A special aspect of these NGOs is that they have for the most part been created by oralman themselves. There is a considerable range of activities and scope among the NGOs, with differences also apparent in funding structures and focus on oralman issues⁴¹.

The two most experienced and well known are the NGO Asar and the National Red Crescent Committee. The NGO Asar was created in 1998 by oralman from Mongolia with the aim to assist oralman not included under the quota system and in need of housing in Almaty oblast. Asar has 12 field offices throughout the country and counts among its more successful activities:

The National Red Crescent Society, particularly three of its 18 field offices⁴³, has been working with oralman since 2000. Under the joint IOM-KRCS project, 9 support centers for oralman women were opened in three regions of Kazakhstan. KRCS local field offices have since then continued providing assistance to oralman including free vocational trainings and legal, medical, material and humanitarian assistance.

Although the role of NGOs in Kazakhstan is being slowly growing, state authorities, especially at the local level, are still mostly reticent towards these NGOs and not very eager to cooperate with them.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is the only intergovernmental agency active in the area of oralman integration. Since 1997, IOM has implemented numerous project activities to improve the integration of oralman and to solve their social problems. These activities were carried out in coordination with national and local authorities and in close cooperation with oralman and non-governmental partners.

The main IOM fields of activities in this sphere have been:

- Improving housing conditions of oralman: infrastructure for a settlement of oralman in Saryagash, South Kazakhstan oblast; renovation of the Shymkent adaptation center,

⁴¹ Some are donor-funded while others operate with no external sources of funding. Some NGOs are oralman focused, while others also focus on assistance to other vulnerable groups such as single mothers, refugees, orphans.

⁴² Baibesik settlement situated in the outskirts of Almaty.

⁴³ Almaty, Akmola and Zhambyl regions

- South Kazakhstan oblast; assistance in planning the Baibesik settlement for oralman in the outskirts of Almaty; infrastructure for the Baibesik settlement.
- Providing training courses for oralman: training courses for oralman in six regions of Kazakhstan on Russian language, business development and legislation (together with NGO Asar).
 - Assisting in legal procedures: support in obtaining residence permits and citizenship for oralman in Nurly village (Almaty oblast) through printing 300,000 application forms; printing and distributing 500,000 application forms needed for registration; obtaining residence permits and citizenship among NGOs working in Almaty region and relevant local state authorities.
 - Providing start-up assistance for oralman women income generating activities: joint project with Kazakhstan Red Crescent Society on opening of nine community centers in three regions of Kazakhstan and granting them with micro-grants.
- Organizing a number of workshops, trainings, roundtables, conferences and study tours.
 - Supporting NGOs working with oralman.
 - Providing legal assistance to oralman through a partner organization (the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law) under an IOM project on legal assistance to migrants.
 - Conducting research and publishing: *Comparative Analytical Note on Integration of Immigrants in Kazakhstan and Abroad, Research on Migrants in the New Capital of Kazakhstan*, and an informational brochure for oralman.

In addition to the above-mentioned activities IOM initiated the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Elaboration and Implementation of Migration Policy (IWGMP). This inter-agency working group is headed by the First Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and is conducted at the level of heads and deputy heads of government agencies. It is a good arena for collaboration on the whole spectrum of migration issues, among which oralman integration is a key.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to improve the social and economic position of oralmans, the Government of Kazakhstan should start discussing the possibility to revisit the quota system, which is the cornerstone of the oralman integration policy. Clear criteria for inclusion into the quota system should be legislated in the Law on Population Migration to allow for a more transparent process. Governmental assistance provided under the quota system (transportation subsidies, initial one-time paid allowances, exemptions from custom taxes, housing allowances) should be re-oriented to cater to those in need of assistance.

It is also recommended to enhance the capacities of the Committee on Migration and its local departments in order to more efficiently manage oralman return and integration. While the number of oralmans as well as allocated budget funds are increasing, the committee's structure, staff number and technical capacities remain at the same level as in 1997, when the agency was created. The Government should increase the number of the Committee's staff, provide staff trainings and improve its working conditions.

Although legislation provides for employment assistance, vocational training, language acquisition, specific integration programmes – such as language courses, information and referral services, employment assistance and vocational training – do not exist. Thus, in the field of employment a special integration programme should include the provision of vocational and retraining courses for oralmans in both Kazakh and Russian. In order to allow oralmans quicker access the labour market in Kazakhstan, the government should consider the possibility to legislate the right for an oralman to be employed after obtaining oralman status (after receiving an oralman certificate)⁴⁴. Oralmans formal and informal qualifications (including diplomas) should also be properly assessed and officially recognized.

⁴⁴ Without waiting for obtaining either a residence permit or citizenship requiring for an oralman to have a "propiska".

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