



WOMEN IN KAZAKHSTAN

WONDER FOUNDATION INSIGHT REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Wonder Foundation is a charity that works to empower vulnerable women and girls through education. We partner with locally-rooted organisations in the UK and overseas to achieve this. Our partners share our vision that empowerment means giving women the tools to make informed decisions about their own lives, as well as the importance of engaging those around them, especially their families, in supporting each woman's personal and professional development. This is possible because each project offers women in education programmes a personal mentor who can help her to raise her aspirations and negotiate her challenges in order to achieve them.

One of these partners is the Kazakhstan Foundation for Cultural, Social and Educational Development* (KFCSED). Since 2005 KFCSED has been reaching out to disadvantaged women in low-income regions remote from urban centres and opened Kumbel Training Centre in 2012 as a response to the few opportunities open to many young women, so that they could learn skills for entry into the growing hospitality sector, where there is a shortage of skilled workers.

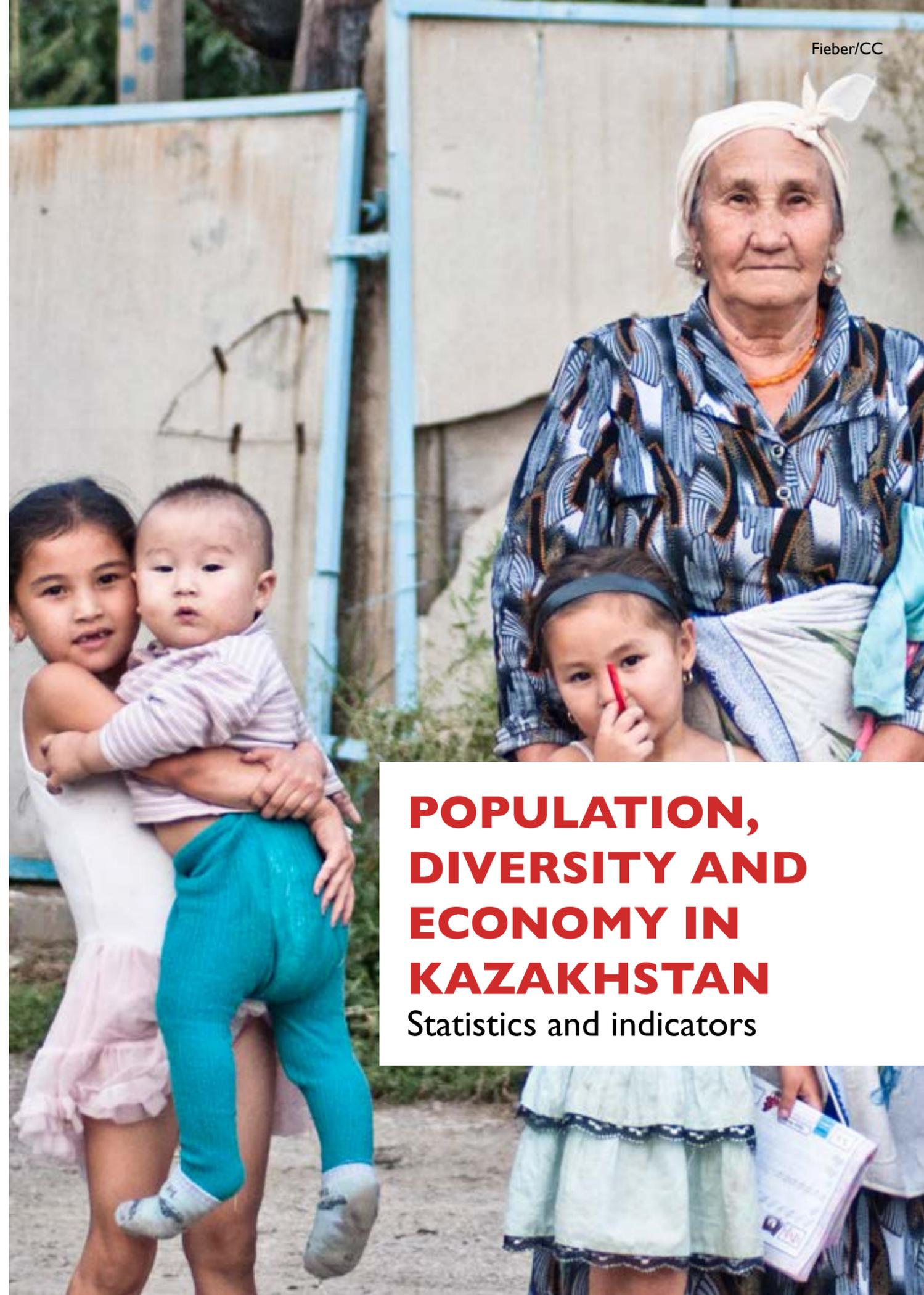
This report provides an insight into the situation for women in Kazakhstan, a diverse country with huge resources and great potential as well as more specifically into the country's hospitality sector.

We believe that supporting Kazakhstan's women to reach their potential and make informed choices about their futures will be a great investment in the economic, social and cultural future of the country.

*КФКСОР Казахстанский Фонд Культурного, Социального и Образовательного Развития

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MAP OF KAZAKHSTAN



**POPULATION,
DIVERSITY AND
ECONOMY IN
KAZAKHSTAN**
Statistics and indicators

1.1 STATISTICS ON ETHNIC, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

The population of Kazakhstan has been growing slowly but steadily in the past 10 years, totalling 17.7 million in February 2016¹. Kazakhstan is a multi-ethnic country with 140 ethnic and 17 religious groups living on the territory of the Republic. Kazakhs are the largest ethnic group, comprising 66% of the country's population. They are followed by ethnic Russians, who constitute around 21%. Notably, Russians are the majority ethnic group in North Kazakhstan and Kostanay regions, where they comprise 49.76% and 41.58% of the population respectively. Other ethnic groups found across Kazakhstan include Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Tatars, Germans, Koreans and many more².

Within the framework of current demographic and migration trends in Kazakhstan, populations of Kazakhs, Uzbeks and Uyghurs are growing. As of February 2016, 957,772 ethnic Kazakhs have immigrated to their historical homeland, receiving returnee ("oralman") status³. In contrast,

1 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), "Демографические показатели за 2007 - февраль 2016 года," <http://stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT107388>.

2 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), "Численность населения Республики Казахстан по отдельным этносам на начало 2016 года," <http://www.stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT118979>.

3 Bruce Pannier, "The Reasons Kazakhs Are Protesting," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, May 22, 2016, <http://www.rferl.org/content/qishloq-ovozi-kazakhstan-reasons-behind-protests/27750185.html>.

Kazakhstan's populations of Russians, Ukrainians, Tatars and Germans have been shrinking since independence⁴. In 2014, for instance, 20,287 ethnic Russians, 2,075 Ukrainians and 2,330 Germans emigrated from Kazakhstan, mostly to other CIS countries⁵. Women tend to comprise a larger proportion of all emigrants from Kazakhstan, although the number of male emigrants is rising. The number of female immigrants is roughly equal to that of male immigrants⁶.

Incidence of inter-ethnic marriage in Kazakhstan as a whole has fallen since 2011. In 2014, 25,364 inter-ethnic marriages were registered. Russians were found to be the ethnic group most likely to marry individuals of ethnicities other than their own. Among Kazakhs, more men marry outside their ethnic group than women⁷.

Islam, practiced by 70.2% of the population, is the majority religion in the Republic. It is followed by Christianity, which accounts for 26.3%⁸. As the UN's Special Rapporteur on

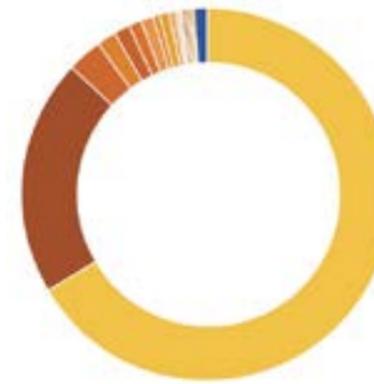
4 Министерство Экономики и Бюджетного Планирования Республики Казахстан, *Демографический Прогноз Республики Казахстан: Основные Тренды, Вызовы, Практические Рекомендации* (Astana: 2014), http://www.akorda.kz/upload/nac_komissiya_po_delam_zhenshin/Демографическая%20политика/4.2%20рус.pdf

5 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК, *Демографический ежегодник Казахстана*, Table 9.4 Внешняя миграция по этносам.

6 Ibid., Table 9.5 Внешняя миграция населения по полу.

7 Ibid., Table 5.4 Interethnic Marriage.

8 Агентство Республики Казахстан по статистике, *Национальный состав, вероисповедание и владение языками в Республике Казахстан: Итоги национальной переписи населения 2009 года в Республике Казахстан* (Astana: 2010), <http://stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=WC16200032705>.



Ethnic group	% of total population
Kazakhs	66.48
Russians	20.61
Uzbeks	3.11
Ukrainians	1.64
Uyghurs	1.45
Tatars	1.15
Germans	1.03
Koreans	0.61
Turks	0.61
Azeris	0.59
Dungans	0.37
Belorusians	0.33
Kurds	0.25
Tajiks	0.25
Poles	0.18
Chechens	0.19
Bashkirs	0.10
Others	1.05

TABLE I
Ethnic
Composition of
the Republic of
Kazakhstan (as of
January 2016)

freedom of religion or belief observes, religious and ethnic pluralism is "almost inextricably intertwined" in Kazakhstan – religion often serves as a proxy for ethnicity and vice versa⁹. For instance, a 2009 national census revealed that 98.3% of ethnic Kazakhs identified as Muslim (predominantly Sunni Islam of the Hanafi school), while 91.6% of ethnic Russians and 90.7% of Ukrainians were Christians (predominantly Russian Orthodox). 28.5% of Koreans and 14% of Germans were non-believers. 11.4% of Koreans practiced Buddhism¹⁰.

The *Assembly of People of Kazakhstan*, headed by the President and convened at least once a year, reflects this ethno-religious pluralism by representing the interests of Kazakhstan's ethnic minorities at national level¹¹. Established

9 Human Rights Council (HRC), *Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Heiner Bielefeldt – Mission to Kazakhstan, December 23, 2014*, A/HRC/28/66/Add.1, para. 5, http://ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session28/Documents/A_HRC_28_66_Add_1_ENG.doc.

10 Агентство Республики Казахстан по статистике, *Национальный состав, вероисповедание и владение языками в Республике Казахстан*.

11 HRC, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Heiner Bielefeldt – Mission to Kazakhstan*.

in 1995, the Assembly consists of 384 representatives of all ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan and is an important element of Kazakhstan's political system. Its work is aimed at implementing the state's ethnicities policy, ensuring social and political stability, and providing for more effective interaction between state and civil society in the area of inter-ethnic relations. The Assembly elects 9 of its members to the lower house of Parliament, the *Mazhilis*, to represent the interests of all ethnic groups across Kazakhstan in the country's Parliament¹².

Kazakhstan takes pride in the multicultural and multi-confessional character of its population and inter-ethnic peace are deemed essential for internal stability of the Republic. The principles of equality and national self-expression are guaranteed by the *Constitution*, and cultural diversity is safeguarded through policy initiatives such as the establishment of ethnic minority language schools, religious institutions, cultural centres, and media outlets. The government maintains that

12 Assembly of People of Kazakhstan, "Activities of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan," <http://assembly.kz/en/activities-assembly-people-kazakhstan>.



Evgeni Zotov/CC

its policy, based on the principle of unity in variety, enjoys popular support¹³. For President Nazarbayev, harmony between Kazakhstan's 140 ethnic groups is "our life-giving oxygen", while the state language, Kazakh, is described as the key factor "cementing" the nation¹⁴. Internationally, Kazakhstan has been cited as an example of inter-ethnic accord and sustainable development of a multi-ethnic society, including by the late Pope John-Paul II and former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan¹⁵.

Some have questioned the true extent of ethnic harmony in

13 Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United States, "Ethnic Diversity," <http://www.kazakhembus.com/content/ethnic-diversity>.

14 Ренат Ташкинбаев, "Молодежь Казахстана должна обеспечить межнациональное согласие – Назарбаев," *TengriNews*, November 11, 2014, https://tengri-news.kz/kazakhstan_news/molodej-kazahstana-doljna-obespechit-mejnatsionalnoe-265003/; Выступление Президента Республики Казахстан Н.А.Назарбаева на XX Сессии Ассамблеи Народа Казахстана, 2013, <http://assembly.kz/ru/vystuplenie-prezidenta-respubliki-kazakhstan-nanazarbaeva-na-xx-sessii-assamblei-naroda-kazahstana>.

15 Colin Stevens, "Kazakhstan: Religious tolerance model," *EU Reporter*, February 20, 2015, <https://www.eureporter.co/world/2015/02/20/kazakhstan-religious-tolerance-model/>.

Kazakhstan¹⁶. For instance *International Crisis Group* observes a persistent belief among non-Kazakhs that ethnic Kazakhs enjoy undue advantages¹⁷. Language continues to be one of the most contentious issues. Kazakh is the official state language, but local organizations may use Russian on an equal basis with Kazakh. The law does not require the ability to speak Kazakh for entry into the civil service and prohibits linguistic discrimination. Nonetheless, Kazakh language ability is looked upon favourably, which non-Kazakh speakers protest is discriminatory¹⁸. According to *Crisis Group*, language policies such as the practice of replacing Russian place names with Kazakh ones, and the perception that government and business are largely closed to non-Kazakhs, cause offence¹⁹. The government, on the other hand, has previously explained the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in the civil service as reflecting minorities' preference for work in business and the services sector, where earnings are higher than in the civil service²⁰. In April 2016, President Nazarbayev noted that

16 International Crisis Group, "Stress Tests for Kazakhstan," *Crisis Group Europe and Central Asia Briefing N°74*, May 13, 2015, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/central-asia/kazakhstan/b074-stress-tests-for-kazakhstan.pdf>.

17 Выступление Президента Республики Казахстан Н.А.Назарбаева на XXI сессии Ассамблеи Народа Казахстана, April 18, 2014, <http://assembly.kz/ru/vystuplenie-prezidenta-respubliki-kazakhstan-nanazarbaeva-na-xxi-sessii-assamblei-naroda-kazahstana>; International Crisis Group, "Stress Tests for Kazakhstan".

18 United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 – Kazakhstan*.

19 International Crisis Group, "Stress Tests for Kazakhstan".

20 UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), *Sixth and seventh periodic reports of States parties due in 2012: Kazakhstan*, August 5, 2013, CERD/C/KAZ/6-7, para. 308, <http://bit.ly/1NiEnqR>.

45 ethnicities are already represented in the civil service, and promised that Kazakhstan will work to ensure ethnic diversity within state institutions²¹. Government policy plays an important role in maintaining peaceful coexistence in Kazakhstan.

1.2 STATISTICS AND INDICATORS ON THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhstan is an upper-middle-income country with GDP per capita of around USD 10,500 in 2015²². Since 2000, the economy of Kazakhstan has been one of the ten highest performing economies in the world and is often cited as an example for other CIS states²³. Thanks to a post-2009 recovery in the price of oil and substantial foreign currency reserves accumulated since 2000 in the *National Oil Fund*, Kazakhstan weathered the financial crisis rather well, experiencing sustained growth in spite of the global recession²⁴.

However, in 2015 Kazakhstan's economy decelerated substantially, expanding by just 1.2% (compared to

21 Мурат Жакеев, "Лидер нации: В Казахстане в корпусе госслужащих представлено 45 этносов," *Kazinform*, April 26, 2016, <http://www.inform.kz/rus/article/2897065>.

22 World Bank, "Kazakhstan"; Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан, Динамика основных социально-экономических показателей, "Основные социально-экономические показатели Республики Казахстан," <http://bit.ly/1QyEhG2> [Accessed May 20, 2016].

23 Knox and Yessimova, "State-Society Relations: NGOs in Kazakhstan".

24 Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2016 — *Kazakhstan Country Report*.

4.1% in 2014)²⁵. GDP in 2015 stood at 40,878 billion tenge (USD 184.4 billion)²⁶. The economic slowdown was caused by the recent decline in global commodity prices and economic downturn in Russia and China, Kazakhstan's major trade partners. Kazakhstan devalued its currency, the tenge, by 19% in February 2014, and in November 2014 the government announced a stimulus package to cope with the economic challenges. In spring 2015, Kazakhstan embarked on an ambitious reform agenda to modernize its economy and improve its institutions. However, in the face of further decline in the Russian rouble, falling oil prices, and the regional economic slowdown, Kazakhstan announced in August 2015 that it would cancel its currency band in favour of a floating exchange rate, which sparked further depreciation in the value of the tenge²⁷. Whilst halting the depletion of Kazakhstan's foreign currency reserves, the depreciation resulted in a drop in the hard currency value of citizen's earnings, a rise in the local currency cost of dollar-denominated debts that many people hold, and a rise in the cost of imports. This negatively affected private domestic demand and intensified inflationary pressures. The pass-through effect of the August depreciation caused inflation

25 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан, Динамика основных социально-экономических показателей, "Основные социально-экономические показатели Республики Казахстан".

26 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан, "Валовой внутренний продукт методом производства за 2015 год," *Экспресс-информация* № Э-41-02/148 от 21 апреля 2016 года, <http://stat.gov.kz/getImage?id=ESTAT110960>.

27 "Kazakhstan," *The World Factbook* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency), updated March 23, 2016, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kz.html> [Accessed April 28, 2016].

to spike, reaching 15.7% in March 2016.²⁸

The economic downturn has worsened living standards across Kazakhstan and the government is attempting to soften the impact of the slowing economy by protecting social spending and increasing pensions. However, the *World Bank* observes that pro-poor transfer programs are still relatively undeveloped, leaving low-income households vulnerable to rising food prices, falling real wages and diminished employment opportunities²⁹. A recent report by *Ranking.kz* found that the number of individuals above pension age in employment has doubled in 2015, indicating that more people are choosing to keep working instead of relying on pensions³⁰. According to real-estate news service *Krysha*, nearly a quarter of all mortgage holders across the country are now three months behind with repayments³¹. In January 2016, mortgage holders even held a protest outside a major bank in Almaty, calling for a recalculation of their loans³². Mental health professionals in the country note that the recent economic downturn has proven particularly traumatic for men, who are under significant pressure to

28 Ricardo Aceves, "Inflation continues to surge in March," *Focus Economics*, April 1, 2016, <http://www.focus-economics.com/countries/kazakhstan/news/inflation/inflation-continues-to-surge-in-march>.

29 World Bank, "Kazakhstan".

30 Анна Платонова, "Казахстанские пенсионеры из-за кризиса стали чаще выходить на работу," *ИНФОРМБЮРО*, April 5, 2016, <http://informburo.kz/novosti/kazhstanskije-pensionery-iz-za-krizisa-stali-chashche-vyhodit-na-rabotu.html>.

31 Инна Пчелянская, "Казахстанцам всё сложнее платить по кредитам," *Крыша*, February 26, 2016, <http://krisha.kz/content/news/2016/kazhstancam-vsyo-slozhnee-platit-po-kreditam>.

32 "Kazakh 'Gray Mass' Protests Bank Loan Policies," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, January 20, 2016, <http://www.rferl.org/media/video/kazakhstan-bank-protest-almaty/27499447.html>.

provide for their families, leading to an increase in numbers of men seeking psychological help³³.

The economy is expected to slow even further this year. According to *Focus Economics*, the spillover effects from a protracted recession in Russia along with still-low commodities prices will weigh on economic growth. As of May 2016, analysts expect the economy to expand only 0.3% in 2016³⁴. According to *Bertelsmann Stiftung*, a considerable number of self-employed persons remain particularly vulnerable to the worsening macroeconomic outlook³⁵. In 2017-2018, growth should pick up with the Kashagan offshore oil field coming online and Russia's economy improving³⁶. Next year, Kazakhstan's economy is expected to grow by 2.1%³⁷. However, weak domestic demand may limit industrial and services growth, as households seek to restore savings, firms endeavour to strengthen balance sheets, and the government moves to consolidate fiscal accounts. External demand may also remain weak, as non-commodity trade volumes are subdued. Consequently, the *World Bank* predicts

33 Tatiana Em, "Economic Crisis Shakes Kazakhstan's Macho Culture," *Institute for War & Peace Reporting*, April 12, 2016, <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/economic-crisis-shakes-kazakhstan-macho>.

34 "Kazakhstan Economic Growth", *Focus Economics*, May 10, 2016, <http://www.focus-economics.com/countries/kazakhstan> [Accessed May 20, 2015].

35 Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2016 — *Kazakhstan Country Report*, 24.

36 World Bank Group, *Global Economic Prospects, January 2016: Spillovers amid Weak Growth* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2016), 88, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/pubdocs/publicdoc/2016/1/697191452035053704/Global-Economic-Prospects-January-2016-Spillovers-amid-weak-growth.pdf>.

37 Kazakhstan Economic Growth", *Focus Economics*.

that growth is likely to be far below the 8.3% rate averaged between 2000 and 2010³⁸.

Rural and Urban Disparities

According to official data, the subsistence minimum across Kazakhstan currently amounts to 20,431 tenge per capita³⁹. Also known as the poverty line, this represents the income level people require to afford life's basic necessities (such as food, clothing, housing), and satisfy their most important sociocultural needs. As of March 2016, the subsistence minimum was lowest in Pavlodar region, where it amounted to 18,349 tenge per capita, followed by Kyzylorda region (18,429 tenge) and Zhambyl region (18,678 tenge). On the other hand, the subsistence minimum was highest in Mangystau region (24,846 tenge per capita), Almaty city (23,100 tenge) and Astana city (23,020 tenge)⁴⁰.

At the end of 2015, the percentage of Kazakhstan's population living on incomes below subsistence level was 2.3%. In cities, only 1% lived on incomes below the poverty line, but in rural areas the proportion was over four times higher at 4.1%. Particularly alarming was the rural-urban disparity in South Kazakhstan region, where 7.5% of the rural population lived on incomes below subsistence level, compared to only 1.7% of the urban population⁴¹. The

38 World Bank Group, *Global Economic Prospects, January 2016*, 88.

39 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан, *Социально-экономическое развитие Республики Казахстан за январь-март 2016 года*, 68.

40 Ibid.

41 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан, "Доля населения, имеющего доходы ниже величины прожиточного минимума (квартальные

divide between urban and rural areas is very substantial in Kazakhstan. Not only are incomes and consumption expenditures higher in urban areas, but rural households also tend to be larger – they have on average four members in rural areas compared to 3.1 in urban areas. Moreover, social services in rural areas are weaker so that public transfers reach urban households more than rural households⁴². Indeed, despite rural areas representing 43% of the population and having much higher poverty rates, only about a quarter of rural households receive social assistance transfers, compared to over 40% in the large cities of Astana and Almaty⁴³.

Labour Market

The flagship labour policy programme *Employment Roadmap 2020* includes a number of active policies to provide training, job matching and facilitating regional mobility of workers⁴⁴. Over 130,000 of the self-employed, part-time employed and unemployed have participated in the programme in 2015, almost half of whom were women⁴⁵.

данние), " <http://bit.ly/1XPlllz>.

42 Babken Babajanian, Jessica Hagen-Zanker and Heiner Salomon, *Analysis of Social Transfers for Children and their Families in Kazakhstan* (2015), UNICEF in the Republic of Kazakhstan, <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9448.pdf>.

43 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), "Динамика численности населения," <http://stat.gov.kz/getImage?id=ESTAT101386>; OECD, *Multi-dimensional Review of Kazakhstan*, 54.

44 OECD, *Multi-dimensional Review of Kazakhstan*, 59.

45 Министерство здравоохранения и социального развития Республики Казахстан, "О реализации Дорожной карты занятости в 2015 году (инфографика)," <http://dkz.mzsr.gov.kz/sites/default/files/user1/dkz2015.pdf>.

However, the recent economic downturn is hampering progress in this area, with many workers being laid off and few new jobs being created.

Kazakhstan's economically active population currently consists of 8.9 million people; and the level of unemployment has steadily decreased from 13.5% in 1999 to 5.2% in 2013, despite the crisis of 2007-2009⁴⁶. However, since 2013 employment growth rates have fallen below 1% due to the economic slowdown. In the first quarter of 2016, the level of unemployment was recorded at 5%, largely unchanged since 2014⁴⁷. The social stigma attached to unemployment deters many people, particularly men who are traditionally expected to be the main breadwinners in the family, from registering with the government⁴⁸. Nevertheless, statistics from the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development show that the number of individuals officially registered as unemployed in March 2016 was 23% higher than in March 2015 and currently exceeds 69,000⁴⁹. Up to 60% of those registered unemployed are women⁵⁰.

46 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан, Динамическая таблица "Основные индикаторы рынка труда за 2001-2015 гг.", <http://www.stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT099069>; OECD, *Multi-dimensional Review of Kazakhstan*, 55.

47 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), "О ситуации на рынке труда в I квартале 2016 года," Экспресс-информация № 41-08/174 11 мая 2016 года, <http://stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT121175>.

48 Tatiana Em, "Economic Crisis Shakes Kazakhstan's Macho Culture".

49 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан, *Социально-экономическое развитие Республики Казахстан за январь-март 2016 года*, 9-10; 70-71.

50 Министерство здравоохранения и

Across Kazakhstan, the proportion of the economically active population who were registered as unemployed was highest in Kyzylorda region (2.7%), followed by Atyrau region (1.9%). The regions with the lowest percentage of registered unemployed were Almaty city and Akmola region (both 0.3%), followed by Aktobe region and Almaty region (both 0.4%)⁵¹.

In the last quarter of 2015, the average monthly nominal earnings in the whole of Kazakhstan amounted to 136,094 tenge⁵². Wages were highest in Atyrau region (254,178 tenge/month), Mangystau region (236,372 tenge/month), and Astana city (221,009 tenge/month). By contrast, workers in North Kazakhstan region, Zhambyl region and South Kazakhstan region earned, on average, as little as 87,341 tenge/month, 87,778 tenge/month and 88,785 tenge/month respectively⁵³.

Self-employment has decreased since 2001, largely because of shifts in employment from agriculture to services, structural transformation of Kazakhstan's economy and the growth of other sectors such as education, which is almost entirely composed of salaried workers⁵⁴. However, the number of self-employed has grown during the

.....
социального развития Республики Казахстан, "Основные показатели рынка труда на 1 января 2016 г.", February 18, 2016, <http://www.mzsr.gov.kz/content/основные-показатели-рынка-труда-на-1-января-2016-г>.

51 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан, *Социально-экономическое развитие Республики Казахстан за январь-март 2016 года*, 70-71.

52 Ibid., 71-72.

53 Ibid.

54 OECD, *Multi-dimensional Review of Kazakhstan*, 57.

2008-2009 economic crisis⁵⁵. 2.4 million individuals are currently self-employed in Kazakhstan, up to a half of them are women⁵⁶. 65.4% of the total self-employed population live in rural areas. Almost half of the self-employed are concentrated in the southern regions of the country: South Kazakhstan, Zhambyl and Almaty region are home to 48% of the self-employed⁵⁷. Today, a significant proportion of the self-employed work in sectors including agriculture (45.2%), trade (25%), construction (9%) and transportation services (10.4%)⁵⁸. According to a joint report by the government and the UN Country Team, many of the self-employed are involved in market and retail trade because such activities "do not require long-term training, work experience, additional training and allows them to have comparatively stable income."⁵⁹

According to the *Statistics Committee* under the Ministry of the National Economy, in 2014 the country's informal

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55 ADB, *Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment*, 42.

56 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), "Численность самостоятельно занятых," <http://stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT075730>.

57 OECD, *Multi-dimensional Review of Kazakhstan*, 57.

58 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), "О ситуации на рынке труда в Республике Казахстан в 4 квартале 2015 года," Экспресс-информация № 41-08/66 10 февраля 2016 года, <http://stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT110211>.

59 The Government of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Country Team, *Millennium Development Goals in Kazakhstan* (Astana: Kuik Printing House, 2010), 56, <http://www.undp.org/content/unct/kazakhstan/en/home/mdgs-sdgs/mdgs-in-kazakhstan0/2010-millennium-development-goals-in-kazakhstan-report.html>.

economy totalled 27.3% of GDP, of which 0.6% was illegal activity⁶⁰. Informal employment includes those self-employed workers whose enterprises are informal and all contributing family workers, but also employees who are undeclared, not covered by labour law or do not receive basic labour and employment-linked social rights⁶¹. Around 23% of all employed persons in Kazakhstan worked in the informal sector in 2015. Women are slightly more likely than men to be engaged as workers in the informal sector or to be unpaid family workers (as opposed to self-employed businesspeople who hire others), particularly in rural areas⁶². According to the *Asian Development Bank*, women find informal businesses to be an attractive form of work because it allows them to combine work and care of children and other household matters. In addition, they can resolve any issues concerning their businesses themselves, are not subject to inspections by tax authorities, and are not required to file tax returns⁶³. However, informal sector work is characterized by lower wages and lack of unemployment protection and other benefits. As Gavrilovic and

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60 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), "Доля ненаблюдаемой экономики в ВВП," <http://stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT103402>.

61 OECD, *Multi-dimensional Review of Kazakhstan*, 57.

62 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), *Занятость населения и оплата труда: Численность неформально занятого населения в Республике Казахстан 19 (2015)*, "9. Структура занятого населения по типу производственной единицы, рабочего места и полу," 36, <http://www.stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT114562>.

63 ADB, *Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment*, 42.

colleagues found, the self-employed and informal workers were the most vulnerable groups during the 2008–2009 global economic crisis⁶⁴. Moreover, according to a 2015 study, minority women (mainly Uzbeks and Uighurs) have markedly higher informality rates in times of recession than Kazakh and European women⁶⁵.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE ECONOMY OF KAZAKHSTAN

The largest economy in Central Asia, Kazakhstan possesses substantial fossil fuel reserves and other minerals and metals, such as uranium, copper, and zinc. Kazakhstan's industrial sector makes up 36.3% of the country's GDP⁶⁶. It rests on the extraction and processing of these natural resources as well as a relatively large machine building sector specializing in construction equipment, tractors, agricultural machinery, and some military items. Kazakhstan's economy has a large agricultural sector featuring livestock and grain but, despite employing almost a fifth of the working population, agriculture only accounts for 4.7% of GDP⁶⁷. Meanwhile, services comprise

64 Maja Gavrilovic, Caroline Harper, Nicola Jones, Rachel Marcus, Paola Perezniato, *Impact of the Economic Crisis and Food and Fuel Price Volatility on Children and Women in Kazakhstan* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2009), <http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/5827.pdf>.

65 Altay Mussurov and G Reza Arabsheibani, "Informal self-employment in Kazakhstan," *IZA Journal of Labor & Development* 4, no. 19 (2015), <http://izajold.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40175-015-0031-9#CR19>.

66 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан, *Социально-экономическое развитие Республики Казахстан за январь-март 2016 года*, 14.

67 Ibid.

56.8% of the GDP⁶⁸.

There are 98,830 private enterprises involved in wholesale and retail trade, contributing 17% to Kazakhstan's GDP⁶⁹. According to the World Bank, exports of goods and services comprise 39.1% of GDP, while imports amount to 25.9%⁷⁰. In 2015, foreign trade turnover was USD 75,911.6 million, of which the volume of Kazakhstan's exports was USD 45,752.6 million and imports USD 30,186 million. Overall, 73% of Kazakhstan's trade in 2015 took place with non-CIS countries⁷¹.

Kazakhstan has an export-oriented economy, highly dependent on shipments of oil and related products, which make up nearly three quarters of total exports⁷². In 2015, over 80% of exports went to non-CIS countries⁷³. Kazakhstan's main export partners are Italy (18% of total exports), China (12%), the Netherlands (11%), Russia (10%) and France (6%). Others include Switzerland, Ukraine and Canada⁷⁴.

Among Kazakhstan's key imports are

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid., 32; 14.

70 World Development Indicators, Kazakhstan, Imports of goods and services (% of GDP) 2014, and Exports of goods and services (% of GDP) 2014, World DataBank, <http://bit.ly/1SvdUpZ> [Accessed April 28, 2016].

71 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан, *Социально-экономическое развитие Республики Казахстан за январь-март 2016 года*, 37-38.

72 Trading Economics, "Kazakhstan Exports," updated May 2016, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/kazakhstan/exports> [Accessed May 20, 2016].

73 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), *Статистические показатели No1 2016* (Astana: 2016), 47, <http://www.stat.gov.kz/getImage?id=ESTAT111591>.

74 Trading Economics, "Kazakhstan Exports".

electronics, machinery and mechanical appliances (25% of total imports); mineral products (15%); transport equipment (12%); base metals and related products (10%); chemicals and related products (8%) and foodstuffs and beverages (6%)⁷⁵. In 2015, around 58% of imports came from non-CIS countries⁷⁶. Nevertheless, Russia remains Kazakhstan's largest import partner, accounting for 34% of total imports. It is followed by China (17%), Germany (6.6%), United States (4.4%) and Italy (3.9%)⁷⁷.

Kazakhstan's economy is heavily dependent on the hydrocarbon sector – oil production accounts for up to 40% of aggregate budget revenues⁷⁸. The government recognises that its economy suffers from an overreliance on oil and extractive industries so it has embarked on an ambitious diversification program, aimed at developing targeted sectors like transport, pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, petrochemicals and food processing⁷⁹. In order to address concerns regarding unemployment and poverty, the government launched several national programs, including *Employment Roadmap 2020*, *Business Roadmap 2020* and *Nurly Zhol*. These programs provide professional training courses, subsidize interest rates on credits for SMEs,

75 Trading Economics, "Kazakhstan Imports," updated May 2016, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/kazakhstan/imports> [Accessed May 20, 2016].

76 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК, *Статистические показатели No1 2016*, 47.

77 Trading Economics, "Kazakhstan Imports".

78 Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2016 — *Kazakhstan Country Report*.

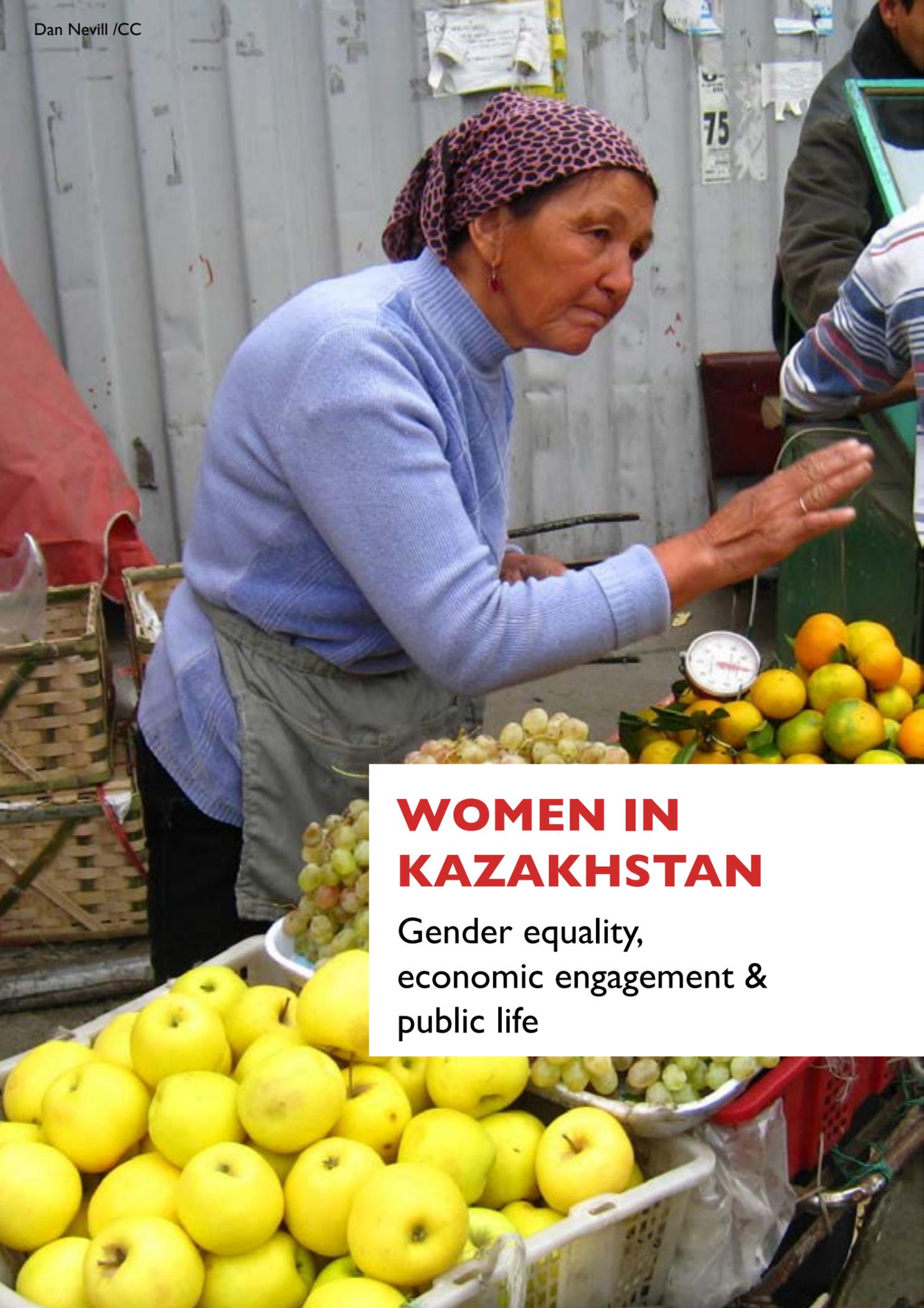
79 "Kazakhstan," *The World Factbook* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency), updated March 23, 2016, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kz.html> [Accessed April 28, 2016].

and help to launch industrial projects creating new jobs⁸⁰. In an attempt to promote diversified economic growth outside the energy sector, regulatory reforms have aimed at streamlining the business start-up process. However, progress has been modest so far. SMEs' contribution to GDP currently amounts to only 20%, and 30% to employment. In January 2016, the number of registered small enterprises (small companies, individual entrepreneurs, and farmers) reached 1.3 million; however, only about half were economically active, and the majority (over 70%) were in the form of individual entrepreneurship without the creation of a legal entity⁸¹. Although positive reforms have been achieved, enterprises continue to face a variety of obstacles. According to Bertelsmann Stiftung, the private sector continues to be dependent on the state sector for access to funds and SMEs face the politicization of business, as well as a stifling bureaucracy⁸². Successful implementation of key institutional reforms outlined in the new "100 Concrete Steps" programme will facilitate Kazakhstan's long-term economic growth.

80 United States Department of State, *Kazakhstan Investment Climate Statement 2015*, 25.

81 World Bank Group, *World Bank – Kazakhstan Partnership Program Snapshot*, April 2016, 4, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/pubdocs/publicdoc/2016/4/220651460698981308/Kazakhstan-Snapshot-s2016-en.pdf>.

82 Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2016 — *Kazakhstan Country Report*, 21.



WOMEN IN KAZAKHSTAN

Gender equality, economic engagement & public life

2.1 STATISTICS AND INDICATORS ON GENDER EQUALITY

- Kazakhstan ranks **47/145** on the Gender Gap Index and **52/155** on the Gender Inequality Index;
- Women's health and education levels are **high**, but women's **political empowerment lowers** the score;
- Women's **economic engagement** is now **falling**;
- Men and boys predominate in technical fields of study, **women and girls in traditionally "feminine" areas**;
- The **workforce is heavily gendered**, men are overrepresented in industry, women in the public sector;
- The **gender wage gap is growing**, it is widest in Western Kazakhstan where oil production is concentrated;
- Women are **actively involved in SMEs**, however, very few large firms are led by women.

As of January 2016, women make up 51.6% of Kazakhstan's population.⁸³ The World Economic Forum's latest *Global Gender Gap Report* ranks the Republic of Kazakhstan 47th out of a total 145 countries, scoring 0.719 on the Gender Gap Index. The Index aims to measure the relative gaps between

83 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), "Численность населения Республики Казахстан по полу на 1 января 2016 года," <http://stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT111164>.

women and men across four key areas: health, education, economy and politics. Kazakhstan's gender gap has seen a steady, albeit slow, improvement over the last decade, its overall score rising by 0.026 indices in the period from 2006 to 2015. Rather high scores are attached to women's health and survival (a measure of the sex ratio at birth and healthy life expectancy), as well as educational attainment (a measure of the literacy rate and enrolment in primary, secondary, and tertiary education). Nevertheless, the country scores lower in women's political empowerment (which measures women in parliament, ministerial positions, and as heads of state). In addition, Kazakhstani women's economic participation and opportunity (based on labour force participation, wage equality, numbers of women in senior positions, etc.) has fallen in the two years since 2013.⁸⁴

Women's political participation has improved significantly in the last ten years, however women are still underrepresented in public and political life and in decision-making positions, including in Parliament, local representative bodies, the executive bodies, local government, as well as in diplomacy. For instance, there are only 3 women among 47 members of the *Senate*, the upper house of Parliament (6.4%).⁸⁵ Meanwhile, the number of women deputies in the lower house of Parliament, the *Mazhilis*, has only increased by one following the most

84 World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2015* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2015), <http://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2015>.

85 World Bank Group, *Women, Business and the Law 2016* (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2015), <http://wbl.worldbank.org/~media/WBG/WBL/Documents/Reports/2016/Women-Business-and-the-Law-2016.pdf>.

recent elections held in 2016. Women MPs currently make up 27.1% of the *Mazhilis* (29 out of 107 deputies)⁸⁶. An average 12.6% of the membership of local representative bodies in Kazakhstan's regions is female and only 1 out of a total 7 justices on the *Constitutional Council of Kazakhstan* is a woman. As at January 2016, 55% of all public servants are women, of whom 9.7% are in political appointments. Women make up 36.6% of the diplomatic service, however only 6% hold decision-making posts.⁸⁷

Female participation in the labour market is 65.4% compared to 76.7% for men⁸⁸, and 38.6% of Kazakhstan's GDP is generated by women.⁸⁹ 25.1% of working women in Kazakhstan are self-employed,⁹⁰ comprising 50% of all self-employed individuals in cities and 46% in rural areas.⁹¹ However, more

86 Асемгуль Касенова, "Утвержден новый состав Мажилиса Парламента РК," *Tengrinews.kz*, March 24, 2016, http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/utverjden-novyy-sostav-majilisa-parlamentarka-291352/.

87 UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), *Replies from the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the list of issues in relation to the second periodic report of Kazakhstan*, April 14, 2016, CCPR/C/KAZ/Q/2/Add.1, <http://bit.ly/23rHtQs>.

88 HRC, *Replies from the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the list of issues in relation to the second periodic report of Kazakhstan*.

89 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), "Доля женщин и мужчин в формировании валового внутреннего продукта (ВВП)," <http://stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT075734>.

90 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), "О ситуации на рынке труда в Республике Казахстан в 4 квартале 2015 года", Экспресс-информация № 41-08/66 10 февраля 2016 года, <http://stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT110211>.

91 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства

women than men are self-employed or underemployed relative to their education level.⁹²

The formal labour market in Kazakhstan exhibits occupational segregation, with women representing over 70% of all employees in traditionally "women's" spheres, such as education and health care. Other sectors – such as food services, the hospitality industry, financial services, and insurance – also show a high proportion of female workers. The sectors where men are highly represented tend to be the most profitable, with the highest-paying jobs. Men predominate in the industrial sector, which in 2015 accounted for 36.3% of Kazakhstan's GDP⁹³. They represent over three-quarters of employees in mining, transport and storage, and construction – sectors where average wages in the last quarter of 2015 stood at 295,696 tenge/month (approx. GBP 590), 173,470 tenge/month (approx. GBP 350) and 166,993 tenge/month (approx. GBP 330) respectively.⁹⁴ In contrast, education accounted for 2.9% of GDP last year with an average wage

национальной экономики РК), "Численность самостоятельно занятых," <http://stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT075730>.

92 Altay Mussurov and G Reza Arabsheibani, "Informal self-employment in Kazakhstan," *IZA Journal of Labor & Development* 4, no. 19 (2015): 1-19, <http://izajold.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40175-015-0031-9>.

93 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан), *Социально-экономическое развитие Республики Казахстан за январь-март 2016 года* (Astana: March 2016), 14, <http://bit.ly/1ralqtO>.

94 ADB, *Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment*, 20; Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан, *Социально-экономическое развитие Республики Казахстан за январь-март 2016 года*, 48; Exchange rate on December 31, 2015.

of 80,320 tenge/month (approx. GBP 160).⁹⁵ Meanwhile, workers in health care and social services received 96,165 tenge/month (approx. GBP 190) on average, and the sector made up 1.8% of GDP.⁹⁶

In 2012 women's wages as a proportion of men's were calculated at 69.5%. Since then, the gender wage gap has widened so that in 2014, the female-to-male earnings ratio stood at 0.67, meaning Kazakhstani women were earning 33% less than their male counterparts every month.⁹⁷ The worst performers are the oil-producing Atyrau and Mangystau regions, where women earn only 48.6% and 43.8% of men's wages, respectively. In its reply to the list of issues put forward by the *Human Rights Committee* in December 2015, the government attributed the gender pay gap to lower rates of labour force participation among women compared to that among men.⁹⁸ However, there is evidence of gender-based discrimination in employment, including hiring practices.

In addition, women are prohibited from 299 jobs in sectors such as construction and transport. In the labour market, they are overly represented in

95 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан, *Социально-экономическое развитие Республики Казахстан за январь-март 2016 года*, 14-15; 48-49; Exchange rate on December 31, 2015.

96 Ibid.

97 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), "Показатели достижения гендерного равенства в динамике за 2000 – 2013 гг., а также с разбивкой по областям/полу/типу местности: Соотношение заработной платы женщин и мужчин," <http://stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT075726>.

98 HRC, *Replies from the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the list of issues in relation to the second periodic report of Kazakhstan*, para. 5.

public sector jobs like health care and education, which offer the lowest salaries and fewer opportunities for career advancement, while men predominate in the higher-paying technical fields. A number of factors account for women's low representation in the more lucrative professions. For instance, public sector jobs are considered more flexible in terms of combining work and family responsibilities. Gender-based stereotypes also play a role, and few women enrol in technical programs of study at the post-secondary level. Additionally, Kazakhstan's measures to respond to the financial crisis prioritized job creation in male-dominated sectors without adopting measures that would allow greater access for women to such fields. The Asian Development Bank maintains that this occupational segregation, along with the persistence of workplace discrimination, contributes directly to the gender wage gap and impedes inclusive growth in the Republic.⁹⁹

Women in Kazakhstan are actively involved in the sphere of small and medium-sized business. As of May 2016, women comprise 47% of individual entrepreneurs.¹⁰⁰ According to official data, women run 697,355 SMEs in the country – 42% of all registered small and medium-sized companies.¹⁰¹ The largest

99 ADB, *Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment*, xi

100 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), "Зарегистрированные индивидуальные предприниматели по видам деятельности и гендерному отношению на 1 мая 2016 года," <http://www.stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT110203>.

101 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), "Количество



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number of women-run SMEs is found in Kostanay (48%), Karaganda (48%) and Pavlodar (46%) regions. Areas with the lowest number of women-run SMEs include South Kazakhstan (33%), Almaty (37%) and Zhambyl (38%) regions.¹⁰² However, this is not the case with larger firms, where women are considerably underrepresented in leadership and managerial positions. According to the *World Bank*, only 4.2% of large enterprises had top female managers in 2013, lowering the overall proportion of women-led Kazakhstani firms to 18.8%.¹⁰³ In addition to the fact that

зарегистрированных субъектов МСП по состоянию на 1 января 2015 года," <http://stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT099244>.

¹⁰² Damu Entrepreneurship Development Fund, *Report on the status of development of small and medium enterprises in Kazakhstan and its regions, 2014* (Almaty: Damu Entrepreneurship Development Fund, 2015), 7th ed, 20, <http://www.damu.kz/20664>.

¹⁰³ World Bank Group, *Enterprise Surveys: Kazakhstan Country Profile 2013* (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2014), <http://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/19771>.

women's businesses tend to be small or even micro in size, they are concentrated in specific sectors – primarily small-scale trade and services.¹⁰⁴ For instance, over half of all female individual entrepreneurs in the country were engaged in trade in May 2016.¹⁰⁵

Official statistics from 2015 show that women represent 56% of the total unemployed population. The level of unemployment among women is 5.7%, compared to 4.3% among men. Meanwhile, long-term unemployment is estimated at 3.1% among women and 1.8% among men.¹⁰⁶ Across Kazakhstan's regions, the gender gap is widest in the Mangystau region, where 2.6% of economically active men are unemployed compared to 7.9% of women.¹⁰⁷ Levels of unemployment are equal for men and women in Akmola region, while in Atyrau region 1,555 more men than women are unemployed. Unemployment trends are discussed in greater detail in section 4.1 Statistics and indicators on the economic situation of Kazakhstan.

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¹⁰⁴ ADB, *Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment*, 42.

¹⁰⁵ Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК, "Зарегистрированные индивидуальные предприниматели по видам деятельности и гендерному отношению на 1 мая 2016 года".

¹⁰⁶ Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), "Основные индикаторы рынка труда в гендерном аспекте," <http://stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT099070>.

¹⁰⁷ Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), "Основные индикаторы рынка труда в гендерном аспекте по регионам РК," <http://stat.gov.kz/getimg?id=ESTAT099071>.

2.2 ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

According to the state's 2011 report to CEDAW, women living in Kazakhstan's rural areas tend to work in plants that produce baked goods, canned vegetables and meats, and in repair shops and clothing stores. They are employed in the "handicraft trades", including sewing and embroidering national dress and fabrics, knitting fine wool kerchiefs, weaving rugs, producing national dishware, and manufacturing jewellery¹⁰⁸. In the non-commodity sphere, rural women are particularly active in the services sector. Hairdressing and cosmetic salons, garment makers, food services (cafes, restaurants and cafeterias), articles for trade and tourism, medical and dental offices, and pharmacies are described as "purely women's businesses", since women account for more than 90% of all personnel and managers in these sectors¹⁰⁹.

However, the *Asian Development Bank* reports that deficiencies in basic services and the burden of household work on rural women are considerable obstacles to their economic engagement¹¹⁰. Observers maintain that women in rural areas of Kazakhstan face greater discrimination than women in urban areas, suffering from higher incidence of domestic violence, limited education and employment opportunities, limited

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¹⁰⁸ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), *Combined third and fourth periodic reports: Kazakhstan*, March 22, 2012, CEDAW/C/KAZ/3-4, para. 484, <http://bit.ly/1riArvH>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, para. 458.

¹¹⁰ ADB, *Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment*.



Roy Berman/CC

access to information, and discrimination in their land and property rights¹¹. Living standards in Kazakhstan's rural areas are significantly lower than in cities, in part due to lack of infrastructure and social services. For example, access to water remains an issue for some rural households¹². Although government programs claim to have improved access to clean drinking water in rural areas, the *World Health Organization* and *UNICEF* found that nearly 15% of rural households did not have access to improved water sources in 2015 (compared to 11.5% in 2000)¹³. Meanwhile, only 28% of the rural population have access to water piped into their homes¹⁴. In turn, a survey conducted in Aktobe region showed that women living in small and more remote villages with high female unemployment and limited supplies of gas and water spend 90-100% of their time on household chores¹⁵. A large part of their time is spent collecting, transporting and treating water (i.e. for cleaning, laundry, bathing, cooking, drinking and livestock), and collecting fuel to use for home heating.

In addition, the rural population,

111 United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 – Kazakhstan*.

112 OECD, *Multi-dimensional Review of Kazakhstan*, 60.

113 WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, *Country and Regional Drinking Water and Sanitation Coverage Estimates for 1990, 2000 and 2015*, <http://www.wssinfo.org/data-estimates/tables/>.

114 WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, *Kazakhstan: Estimates on the use of water sources and sanitation facilities (1980 - 2015)*, updated June 2015, http://www.wssinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/resources/Kazakhstan.xls.

115 OSCE and the Feminist League of Kazakhstan, *Monitoring Respect for Women's Rights in the Republic of Kazakhstan* (Astana: 2010), 78, in ADB, *Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment*, 14.

especially in southern Kazakhstan, is generally more conservative and tends to hold more traditional views on the roles of women and men. Women are typically expected to take care of their families, primarily as wives and mothers. Restrictive attitudes such as a fear that women will grow “too independent” and not fulfil their household obligations work to inhibit rural women's participation in the economy¹⁶. As *USAID* found, in southern Kazakhstan, even educated women do not actively seek employment outside the home¹⁷. Meanwhile, employment opportunities in oil-rich rural areas are concentrated in the oil and gas sectors, predominantly employing men. In Mangystau region, for example, women contributed as little as 24.8% to GDP in 2014¹⁸. According to official statistics, a third of all unemployed women in Kazakhstan live in rural areas¹⁹.

That said, rural women should not be presumed to be passive. On the contrary, gender roles have shifted as a result of privatisation of agricultural production since Kazakhstan's independence, and women are increasingly becoming the main breadwinners for their families²⁰. Fewer formal employment

116 Susan Somach and Deborah Rubin, *Gender Assessment: USAID/Central Asian Republics* (Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development, 2010), 18, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnads880.pdf.

117 Ibid.

118 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), “Доля женщин и мужчин в формировании валового внутреннего продукта (ВВП),” <http://stat.gov.kz/getImg?id=ESTAT075734>.

119 Али Аскар, “Сельские женщины вынуждены идти на заработки в город,” *Radio Azattyk*, October 15, 2013, <http://rus.azattyq.org/al-kazakhstan-rural-women-earning-city/25137017.html>.

120 Мара Сеитова, “Гендерные аспекты

opportunities in rural areas mean that a higher proportion of women engage in informal work, setting up informal businesses such as making sweets, baking, and selling home-produced goods (e.g., meat, milk, fruit, and vegetables). Most women travel to cities and district centres to trade their products at the local market²¹. Statistics cited by the *Asian Development Bank* suggest that women made up nearly 60% of the informal sector among the economically active rural population in 2009²².

However, wages in the informal economy tend to be much lower, and self-employed and informal workers do not pay into the pension system or receive social insurance. As is characteristic of informal work worldwide, they have little security and no legal protection in terms of workplace safety, regulation of working conditions, or maternity, childcare, or sick leave. One rural woman selling dairy products in Aktobe city interviewed by *Radio Azattyk* said that she has to sleep no more than 5 hours per night in order to have time to process the milk, travel to and from the city to sell it, take care of her cattle, and prepare for the next day. In addition, women selling produce in city markets are often targeted by local authorities and the police, who try to force informal traders to officially register as self-employed and pay taxes, which would further diminish their income. Fearing fines, women avoid giving out their names to the police. As one woman

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сельского развития,” Центрально-Азиатская Сеть по гендерным исследованиям (ЦАСГИ), 2002, http://d1019822.idhost.kz/site03/econom/g_soc_econ1.pdf.

121 Али Аскар, “Сельские женщины вынуждены идти на заработки в город”.

122 ADB, *Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment*, 23.

put it,

“as soon as we see a police officer, we grab our goods and run in different directions. Yesterday one of them chased me all the way to the hostel in Akhtanov street”¹²³.

The proportion of economically active women who are self-employed is lower in Kazakhstan's rural areas than in cities²⁴. Although both urban and rural women can face constraints in trying to sustain and develop their businesses due to insufficient financing as a result of gender gaps in the distribution of microcredit, land and other economic assets, rural women experience additional difficulties in starting a business²⁵. The financial constraints on their entrepreneurial activities include lack of collateral (i.e., property is often registered in the name of the husband or male head of household), refusals of loans by banks, complicated banking procedures, fear of taking on debt, and the lack of skills and knowledge necessary for creating a business plan (a requirement for obtaining loans)²⁶.

The government is actively trying

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123 Али Аскар, “Сельские женщины вынуждены идти на заработки в город”.

124 Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Committee on Statistics (Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК), “Численность самостоятельно занятых,” <http://stat.gov.kz/getImg?id=ESTAT075730>.

125 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), *Mainstreaming Gender into Economic Policies: Trends and Challenges for Central Asian and Caucasian Countries* (Geneva: United Nations, 2009), 16, http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/publication/UNECE_2009_UNDA_Mainstreaming%20gender%20equality.pdf.

126 OSCE and the Feminist League of Kazakhstan, *Monitoring Respect for Women's Rights in the Republic of Kazakhstan*, 80, in ADB, *Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment*, 43.

to encourage entrepreneurship among women in rural areas; programmes to improve their business and management skills and increase the number of women setting up small- and medium-sized enterprises have been established. In 2014, CEDAW heard that a business road map had been drawn up and guidance on setting up a business had been given to 31,000 women, 80% of whom lived in rural areas¹²⁷. The *Damu Entrepreneurship Development Fund* provides microcredit loans targeted towards rural and poor women. Since 2010, 1,469 female entrepreneurs received microcredit loans for a total of 10.6 billion tenge. The programme has shown positive results in increasing women's share of small and medium-sized enterprises¹²⁸.

Kazakhstan is becoming increasingly urbanized and its largest cities, particularly Almaty and Astana, have experienced considerable population growth in recent years. No sociological studies have been conducted on the professional and career aspirations of women from rural areas, but findings suggest that young women are among the many young people migrating to the country's urban centres in search of employment. According to the *Asian Development Bank*, the primary motivation for migration to larger cities is the deterioration of living conditions in rural areas and the lack of economic opportunities, primarily because of

127 UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Fifty-seventh session, Summary record (partial) of the 1194th meeting, February 27, 2014, CEDAW/C/SR.1194, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fSR.1194&Lang=en.

128 Damu Entrepreneurship Development Fund, *Report on the status of development of small and medium enterprises in Kazakhstan and its regions*, 2014, 121.

declining agricultural production¹²⁹.

2.3 THE SERVICES SECTOR LABOUR MARKET AND THE ROLE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN IMPROVING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

Kazakhstan has an educated workforce, although the proportion of highly technically competent workers is fairly small. Demand for skilled labour generally exceeds local supply¹³⁰. Technical skills, management expertise, and marketing skills are all in short supply. Many large investors therefore rely on foreign workers and engineers, however, employers' reliance on foreign labour in the face of poverty in rural Kazakhstan has become a political issue in recent years¹³¹. The government is committed to improving the skills of Kazakhstan's workforce, as demonstrated by initiatives such as the training programmes of *Damu Entrepreneurship Development Fund* or the *Employment Roadmap 2020*, adopted in 2007.

More recently, there have been efforts to improve the quality of education, particularly of vocational training. In September 2011, non-commercial JSC *Holding Kasipkor* was

129 ADB, *Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment*.

130 Информационно-аналитический центр по проблемам занятости (ИАЦ ПЗ), "Аналитики МЗСР РК провели опрос 6 тыс. работодателей для определения потребности в кадрах," March 11, 2016, <https://iac.enbek.kz/ru/node/328>.

131 United States Department of State, *Kazakhstan Investment Climate Statement 2015*, May 2015, 25, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/241825.pdf>.

set up under the Ministry of Education with the goal of developing a network of leading vocational educational institutions capable of educating the workforce to a high standard and in line with the needs of employers. The new technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system aims to create two world-class colleges between 2015 and 2017 that will train 3,060 students in tourism and hospitality, construction and utility services, computing, the energy industry, and engineering and design. In conjunction, four new inter-regional centres with a capacity of 2,800 students will be opened. The idea of these colleges is to combine classroom and applied learning (a "dual system"). They aim to engage employers at every stage of the creation and operation of the colleges to ensure that syllabuses are designed with the needs of the labour market in mind. By 2020, the expertise developed in these leading colleges will be transferred to 278 state colleges (Kazakhstan has a total of 467 state colleges)¹³². Effective implementation of these plans is essential for Kazakhstan's long-term competitiveness.

Gender segregation is evident in technical and vocational education in Kazakhstan. According to official data, young men predominate in technical and vocational colleges, while young women are more likely to attend universities – 57% of all university students are female¹³³. So far, limited

132 OECD, *Multi-dimensional Review of Kazakhstan*, 148.

133 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК, Женщины и Мужчины Казахстана 2009-2013, Table 6.12; Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan National Centre of Educational Statistics and Assessment (Национальный центр образовательной статистики и оценки Министерства образования и науки РК),

information is available on TVET graduate employment, especially its quality. However, the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development* (OECD) finds that in many fields, Kazakhstani TVET graduates now have better employment prospects and can earn higher salaries than university graduates¹³⁴. In fact, the sector of employment appears to play a more important role than education in the determination of wages. Unsurprisingly, young women are concentrated in traditional female fields of study such as education, health care, and the services sector, while young men predominate among those receiving higher education and technical training in fields that are experiencing growth and higher wages: the hydrocarbon, transport, and energy industries. The patterns of educational enrolment correspond closely to patterns of labour market segregation¹³⁵. Therefore, vocational training in sectors where women are underrepresented could help redress the gender imbalance and expand women's employment prospects and participation in the workforce. However, large-scale reform would be required for women to have equal access to employment in such fields¹³⁶.

In 2015, Kazakhstan's services sector employed around 5.2 million individuals (61%) out of a total 8.6

Статистика системы образования Республики Казахстан (Astana: 2014), Table 2.7.7, <http://www.edu.gov.kz/kk/analytics/kazakhstan-respublikasy-bilim-beru-zhu>.

134 OECD, *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Secondary Education in Kazakhstan* (OECD Publishing, 2014), 326, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264205208-en>.

135 ADB, *Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment*.

136 ADB, *Kazakhstan Country Gender Assessment*, 27.



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million in employment¹³⁷. Meanwhile, 18% worked in the agricultural sector, while around 20% were employed in industry and construction. Employment in the services sector went up by 3% last year¹³⁸. In contrast, employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing fell by more than half a million workers in the two years since 2013¹³⁹. Compared to other middle-income economies, self-employment is less widespread in Kazakhstan's services sector – only 997,710 (19%) of services workers are self-employed¹⁴⁰.

137 Информационно-аналитическая система «Талдау» Комитета по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК, Основные Показатели Республики Казахстан, 2015, <http://taldau.stat.gov.kz/ru/Home> [Accessed May 9, 2016].

138 Информационно-аналитическая система «Талдау» Комитета по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК, Занятое население в секторе “сфера услуг”, <http://bit.ly/24HwMty>.

139 Информационно-аналитическая система «Талдау» Комитета по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК, Занятое население в секторе “сельское, лесное и рыбное хозяйство”, <http://bit.ly/1WWW7vFT>.

140 OECD, *Multi-dimensional Review of Kazakhstan*, 57; Информационно-аналитическая система «Талдау» Комитета по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК, Самостоятельно занятые работники в секторе “сфера услуг”, <http://taldau.stat.gov.kz/ru/NewIndex/GetIndex/702940>.

Between 2010 and 2013, employment expanded considerably in manufacturing and some knowledge-intensive service sectors – job creation was fastest in transport equipment manufacturing, finance and insurance, and hospitality sectors. Annual growth in employment in hotels in restaurants stood at around 10%, compared to an average of 2% across all sectors of the economy¹⁴¹. However, the hospitality industry was negatively affected by the recent economic downturn and in 2015 HEADHUNTER.KZ found that demand for labour was highest in the sales sector (25.9% of total demand), followed by accounting (10.4%), and management and administration (9.8%). Nearly half of all jobs advertised on the HEADHUNTER.KZ portal were based in Almaty, although the number of vacancies in other cities including Astana and Atyrau is rising.

Tourism and the hospitality industry were among the less competitive in the services sector last year, with around eight job seekers per vacancy¹⁴². Nevertheless, employment in the sector is expected to grow with the advent of Expo 2017 and Kazakhstan's hotels are increasingly investing in technology, equipment, and training to improve staff efficiency. Technical and vocational education and training can play an important role in improving the skill level of the labour force as it can fill the gap between basic education and occupation-specific training provided by employers. TVET is also valuable in allowing workers to upgrade their skills or move into more relevant industries

141 OECD, *Multi-dimensional Review of Kazakhstan*, 123.

142 “Казахстанский рынок труда в 2015 году,” HEADHUNTER.KZ, January 8, 2016, <https://hh.kz/article/18086>.

in response to shifts in labour market demand¹⁴³.

The Council of Businesswomen of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan (Совет деловых женщин Национальной палаты предпринимателей Республики Казахстан «Атамекен») maintains that rural areas are in particular need of services development, however, rural women often lack the skills necessary to enter employment or develop their own enterprise¹⁴⁴. For example, women's unemployment levels in Aksai, a city in West Kazakhstan where British oil and gas company *BG Group* used to operate, are very high. While the oil and gas sector has developed rapidly and helped the town grow, other sectors have not caught up; the West Kazakhstan region is remote and small business development has been relatively slow. This problem was exacerbated when the more skilled labour in the area migrated away from other sectors into oil and gas. Consequently, the town lacks certain basic local services like dry cleaning, or a bakery. Yet, only 175 out of a total 849 colleges providing technical and vocational education and training in Kazakhstan are based in rural areas¹⁴⁵. Improving the availability of TVET in relevant service sector industries could therefore benefit rural women's economic engagement. At

143 OECD, *Multi-dimensional Review of Kazakhstan*, 148.

144 “Совет деловых женщин Казахстана намерен развивать предпринимательство на селе,” 24.kz, March 5, 2016, <http://24.kz/ru/news/social/item/109379-sovet-delovykh-zhenshchin-kazakhstanana-nameren-razvivat-predprinimatelstvo-na-sele>.

145 Национальный центр образовательной статистики и оценки Министерства образования и науки РК, *Статистика системы образования Республики Казахстан*, Table 2.6.1; Table 2.6.18.



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the same time, having more of these local services available would make the town more attractive for incoming workers from international companies such as *BG Group*¹⁴⁶. The private sector offers important opportunities for empowering women economically and promoting gender equality.

Although sex- and gender-based discrimination is prohibited by law, labour practices in the services sector do not always accord with the principles of gender equality. Women employed in services routinely face discrimination in the recruiting, hiring, promotion, and other processes. Workplace sexual harassment is not criminalised and Kazakhstan's law does not mandate equal pay for equal work.

146 *BG Group*, “*BG Group helps communities in Western Kazakhstan build services and jobs*,” September 17, 2013, <http://www.bg-group.com/~tiles/?tiletype=news&id=541>.

KAZAKHSTAN'S HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Statistics and Indicators

- Kazakhstan's hospitality industry was **negatively affected by the fall in demand** as a result of economic downturn and by the recent depreciation in value of the tenge.
- This led the country's hotels to focus on **increasing efficiency**, including **improving staff training**;
- **Women predominate in the hospitality industry** but tend to be paid less than men;
- Working conditions are poorer in national hotels and restaurants located outside of major cities;

The hospitality sector in Kazakhstan has expanded rapidly in the last five years, with nearly 52,000 hotel rooms available across the country in 2015.¹⁴⁷ As of April 1, 2016, there are 4,721 registered enterprises working in the accommodation and catering services, 4,414 of which are privately owned and 280 owned by foreign companies.¹⁴⁸ Accommodation and catering services accounted for 1% of total GDP in 2015 (406 billion out of 40,761 billion tenge).¹⁴⁹ The hospitality sector has experienced negative wage growth in the period 2010-2013.¹⁵⁰ In the last quarter of 2015, the average nominal wage in the accommodation and catering services industry was 124,179

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147 "В Казахстане ожидается закрытие нескольких отелей в 2016," Forbes Kazakhstan, March 9, 2016, http://forbes.kz/finances/markets/v_2016_v_kazahstane_ojidaetsya_zakrytie_neskolko_oteley.

148 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан, Социально-экономическое развитие Республики Казахстан за январь-март 2016 года, 32-33.

149 Ibid., 14-15.

150 OECD, Multi-dimensional Review of Kazakhstan: Volume 1. Initial Assessment (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2016), OECD Development Pathways, 124, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264246768-en>.

tenge/month (approx. GBP 250), lower than the average wage of 136,094 tenge/month (approx. GBP 270) across all sectors of the economy.¹⁵¹ However, in the last quarter of 2015 real incomes in accommodation and catering were 1.1% higher than in the period July-September 2015.¹⁵²

The two leading cities in the hospitality industry are Almaty and Astana. The former currently attracts more visitors, however, the capital Astana is growing as a travel destination and already accommodates seven international hotel chains¹⁵³. Most clients of the country's hotel industry are business travellers, around half visiting from abroad.¹⁵⁴ Large four- and five-star hotels and cheaper, uncategorised establishments accommodate most guests, however, there are relatively few quality three-star hotels.¹⁵⁵

The recent economic downturn as a result of falling oil prices has caused a decrease in the number of guests – it is estimated that Kazakhstan's five star hotels currently have an excess of more than 1,000 rooms. This led to a significant lowering of prices charged

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151 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан, Социально-экономическое развитие Республики Казахстан за январь-март 2016 года, 48; Exchange rate on December 31, 2015.

152 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики Республики Казахстан, Социально-экономическое развитие Республики Казахстан за январь-март 2016 года, 48.

153 "Stay in comfort," Kazakhstan 2015, The Business Year, <https://www.thebusinessyear.com/kazakhstan-2015/stay-in-comfort/forum>.

154 "В Казахстане ожидается закрытие нескольких отелей в 2016," Forbes Kazakhstan.

155 "Почему в Казахстане мало недорогих уютных гостиниц?," Forbes Kazakhstan, August 10, 2015, http://forbes.kz/finances/markets/pochemu_v_kazahstane_malo_nedorogih_horoshih_gostinits.

by hotels around the country, as well as the freezing and closures of several planned projects. At the same time, the recent depreciation in value of the tenge has considerably increased the costs faced by national hotels, which have been worse hit than international hotel chains. As such, few new hotels are likely to open in the next 3-5 years.¹⁵⁶ National hotels are currently aiming to lower costs and increase staff efficiency, which requires investment in new hotel technology, equipment and training.¹⁵⁷ The *Kazakhstan Association of Hotels and Restaurants* (Казахстанская Ассоциация Гостиниц и Ресторанов), for instance, has recently opened a training centre, *Housekeeping School* in Almaty, which will train professionals in the hospitality industry. The centre accepts individual applicants, as well as applicants referred by firms.¹⁵⁸

On the bright side, however, an influx of visitors is expected in connection with Expo 2017, which will take place in Astana from June 10 to September 10, 2017.¹⁵⁹ ¹⁶⁰ The new visa regime launched

156 "В Казахстане ожидается закрытие нескольких отелей в 2016," Forbes Kazakhstan.

157 Казахстанская Ассоциация Гостиниц и Ресторанов (КАГИР), Презентация к докладу Р.Шайкеновой, президента КАГИР, "Особенности гостиничного рынка в Казахстане," II Международный гостиничный форум, г. Алматы, 23-24 июня 2015, http://www.kagir.kz/forum/forum_2015/forum_2015_doklad_kagir.pdf.

158 Казахстанская Ассоциация Гостиниц и Ресторанов (КАГИР), "КАГИР отрывает «Школу Хаускиперов»," February 25, 2016, <http://www.kagir.kz/index.html>.

159 Казахстанская Ассоциация Гостиниц и Ресторанов (КАГИР), Презентация к сообщению Р.Асанбаевой, консультанта АО НК "Астана ЭКСПО-2017", "Новые проекты, влияющие на увеличение турпотока в Республику Казахстан," II Международный гостиничный форум, г. Алматы, 23-24 июня 2015, http://www.kagir.kz/forum/forum_2015/forum_2015_message_assanbayeva.pdf.

160 "Гостиничный бизнес РК: низкий уровень сервиса," Kapital, August 8, 2015, <https://>

by Kazakhstan in 2015 is also said to be helping the country to attract new investors as a developing and promising country for the hotel industry.¹⁶¹ In 2017, a luxury hotel *The Ritz-Carlton* is expected to open in Astana.¹⁶² Yet, although the hotel industry in large cities will likely recover, the outlook for rural areas and smaller cities is worse. As the *Kazakhstan Association of Hotels and Restaurants* reports, hospitality standards in rural areas tend to lag behind and hotels are characterised by technological backwardness, badly trained personnel, lack of comfort and limited provision of services.¹⁶³

A study of Almaty hotels and restaurants conducted by the Association in 2015 showed that at least 90% of businesses surveyed provided some short-term training for their employees, 30% offered packages including free lunch, transportation, and discounts on hotel services, 60% only paid for employees' lunch, while 10% offered their staff lunch at half-price. Notably, only a quarter of the hotels and restaurants surveyed confirmed that employees were paid for overtime work, whilst 75% chose not to respond.¹⁶⁴

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kapital.kz/gosudarstvo/42617/gostinichnyj-biznes-rk-nizkij-uroven-servisa.html.

161 Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, "Updates on Visa-Free Regime," <http://www.kazembassy.org.uk/en/pages/page/74>; КАГИР, "Особенности гостиничного рынка в Казахстане".

162 "Ritz-Carlton to open new hotel in Kazakhstan," Hospitality ON, June 26, 2014, <http://hospitality-on.com/en/news/2014/06/26/ritz-carlton-to-open-new-hotel-in-kazakhstan/>.

163 КАГИР, "Особенности гостиничного рынка в Казахстане."

164 Казахстанская Ассоциация Гостиниц и Ресторанов (КАГИР), Результаты маркетингового исследования по уровню заработных плат гостиничного и ресторанного бизнеса в 2015 году, http://www.kagir.kz/new/13012016_marke-

Women predominate in Kazakhstan's hospitality sector, comprising 75% of the workforce.¹⁶⁵ Nonetheless, in 2013, women employed in accommodation and catering services earned on average 79,447 tenge per month, whereas men's average income in the industry was around 30% higher at 116,998 tenge per month.¹⁶⁶

No data is available on the incidence of prostitution on hotel premises; however, it is widely known that various hotels have traditionally been used to facilitate prostitution. Notably, in December 2015, a large number of Almaty hotels announced that they will no longer allow hotel grounds to be used by sex workers and their clients. The move is, reportedly, a response to improved policing of hotel premises, which resulted in Almaty establishments being fined a total of 16 million tenge since the start of 2015.¹⁶⁷

TESTIMONIES FROM KUMBEL STUDENTS

Anastasya received her certificate from Kumbel Training Center on June 2014. She is currently working at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Almaty:

"One of the unforgettable lessons I've learned in Kumbel Training Center is that, even though many people at work will tell you many negative things about working

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165 Комитет по статистике Министерства национальной экономики РК, Женщины и Мужчины Казахстана 2009-2013, Table 7.3.

166 Ibid., Table 7.19.

167 "ДВД: Алматинские отели перестают предоставлять посетителям услуги путан," ИА Новости-Казахстан, December 10, 2015, <http://newskaz.ru/incidents/20151210/10476249.html>.

in the hospitality industry, one shouldn't listen to them, because you have your own way of life. I've experience that very same thing at my work in a hotel, since many of my colleagues tell me that working here doesn't make sense, that I will never achieve anything. This somehow motivates me, because the fact that they haven't achieved anything doesn't mean that the same will happen with me. I have my own life goals and I strive for them, I work in the hospitality industry because I like my profession."

Fatima has also recently graduated from Kumbel Training Center:

"At first, my Mom didn't give me permission to apply for technical school and study. She wanted me to get married, thinking that it will solve everything in my life. But I'm not that kind of person. I applied to Kumbel and my mum thought it was nonsense, but thanks to what I've learned here, I've been able to find a job. I earn my own salary, buy my own cell phone, got my driver's license, and buy proper clothes. And when I brought some money home, I felt that my Mom felt proud of me for the first time. At Kumbel I've learned many things. There is one training I'll never forget. Our trainer explained that he helped people identify their life goals and to ask oneself: who am I and what am I here for? After that I began to ask myself: what is my goal and what should I do?"



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