This article is based on a study entitled “Educational Migration from Kazakhstan to Russia – one aspect of strategic cooperation within the Customs Union”. The study examined current trends in educational migration from Kazakhstan to Russia. The project was implemented in 2010, with the support from the EDB Technical Assistance Fund’s programme for regional migration studying.

It was not a comparative study of educational migration flows from Kazakhstan to different countries, except where it analyses the students’ reasons for choosing a particular foreign country for their education. The goal of the study was to identify the motivations for and possible future development of educational migration from Kazakhstan to Russia only. The analysis of educational migration tends to be very difficult – the relatively few studies that exist have been based on a relatively small research cohort, there are no points of direct comparison and there are many complex factors affecting each country’s migration policy. However, it is still possible to identify key trends and tendencies. The findings and recommendations in this article apply only to educational migration from Kazakhstan to Russia.

Russian and Kazakh scholars have paid relatively scant attention to the issue of educational migration from Kazakhstan to Russia until now, for a variety of reasons:

- public agencies responsible for attracting foreign students do not have sufficient financial and human resources to implement such studies;

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studies have tended to focus on the possible ‘brain drain’ effect upon the scientific potential of the two countries rather than on analysing the attractiveness of Russian educational institutions for Kazakh students and benefits of educational migrations. These issues are indirectly related to the international educational services market and do not provide an accurate overall picture, which is certainly a necessity if the existing resource base is to be used effectively.

Case studies of educational migration and the analysis of related processes carried out for Kazakhstan and Russia are still relatively rudimentary.

The interpretation of spatial interaction models by D. Harvey (1974) is important to any study of educational migration. According to Harvey, these models do not view linear measures in absolute terms in relation to human activity. Transportation costs are a more significant criterion for assessing the territorial availability of vocational training centres than their distribution by communication links.

We should also mention A.P. Katrovskiy’s study, which examines the influence of political disintegration on the development of higher and secondary education in the post-Soviet space. The study highlights changes in the number and direction of travel of educational migrants, and focuses on educational migration within Russia (Katrovskiy, 1999). Given the rapidly changing situation in Russia, this study, which uses data collated in 1996, is now out of date. A more recent study was carried out in 2002 by Vitkovskaya. It is entitled Immigrants in Regions of Russia: the Availability of Higher Education as a Factor of Adaptation and Social Stability. It is only of oblique interest to the subject addressed in this article in that it analyses a particular aspect of educational migration, i.e., the integration into society of foreign migrants moving to Russia.

L.I. Ledeneva and E.V. Tyuryukanova conducted another study in 2002 and 2003. The methodology of the project, which focused on the Russian students studying abroad can be applied to Kazakh students at Russian universities. However, the analysis can only be applied selectively and in relation to different adaptation strategies.

The Ministry of Education and Science commissioned a new study from the Russian New University (Scientific Research, 2003). It identifies a need for a pro-active migration policy with regard to educational migration from CIS member states based on the similarity of their education systems and knowledge of the Russian language.

Two further studies are worthy of note: Russian Universities on the International Educational Services Market (Arefyev, 2007) and The Scientific and Pedagogical Potential and Export of the Educational Services of Russian Universities (Sheregi, Dmitryev, Arefyev, 2002). The authors
of these studies conducted an in-depth analysis of educational migration to Russia and compared Russia’s experience with a foreign country. These studies closely resemble our own concept, but their conclusions are based on quantitative rather than qualitative analysis.

However, the material collected and analysed by the aforementioned authors in order to find answers to specific questions cannot be used to identify fully the opportunities that educational migration provides for Kazakh citizens moving to Russia, which is the suggested scope of our analysis.

This project aims to identify the problems and benefits of development of strategic cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia by promoting educational migration and finding ways to strengthen relations between the Kazakh and Russian governments in the sphere of education.

In order to achieve this goal, the researchers structured their study as follows:

- a comprehensive analysis of social, economic and cultural incentives and disincentives for Kazakh citizens studying at Russian universities;
- development of recommendations for mutually beneficial cooperation in educational migration between Kazakhstan and Russia in the short-, medium- and long-term, which would help Kazakhstan enrich its workforce, assist in developing Russia’s education system and encourage harmonisation of educational standards;
- suggestions of strategies to resolve, on an international level, issues such as educational migrants’ safety.

Educational migration benefits Kazakhstan and Russia but it has not been included in the list of priorities for cooperation between the two states. Although educational migration is desirable for Kazakh school graduates, Kazakhstan’s Bolashak\(^2\) Programme and Russian universities, certain aspects of legislation in both countries hinder the creation of the necessary conditions and infrastructure which encourage it. Continuous assessment of educational migration, which we recommend in this paper, may help change this situation if the authorities act upon the issues that it identifies.

\(^2\) The Bolashak international scholarship was established by the first President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, on November 5, 1993. The scholarship aims to: 1) educate Kazakh citizens in leading foreign universities on a full-time basis for them to attain a professional qualification or bachelor; masters or doctoral degrees; clinical residency training, and Ph.D. degrees in medical sciences, according to the list of priority disciplines applied to the scholarship; 2) organise traineeships for Kazakh researchers at leading universities, research centres and laboratories around the world according to the list of priority disciplines [http://www.edu-cip.kz/kz/].
It is appropriate to concentrate on educational migration flows from Kazakhstan to Russia: many Kazakh school graduates know the Russian language and are familiar with the Russian way of life and Russian traditions. They adapt to new environment much faster and more successfully than students from more distant foreign countries and students from other CIS countries. Moreover, the economic situation of Kazakhstan in recent years is likely to increase opportunities for Kazakhstani school graduates to move abroad to continue their education, particularly to Russia.

This study analyses available opportunities, the socio-economic impact and the prospects for international cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia in training highly qualified personnel for Kazakhstan and encouraging conformity between the education systems in both countries.

Kazakhstan benefits from this cooperation by educating highly qualified specialists in Russian universities that are highly experienced in teaching many disciplines which are only just starting to be taught in Kazakhstan (qualified specialists are already in short supply in this growing economy). The state planned economy of the USSR had concentrated the best teaching personnel in the largest cities of the RSFSR. Even though Kazakhstan is progressively reducing the inequalities in its existing educational system, the country is still unable to provide the level of training required by Kazakhstan’s economy.

Inward investment into Russia as a result of educational migration is not currently significant, although the potential of its scientific and educational complex is substantial. Attracting Kazakh school graduates does not only allow Russia to bring extra financial resources into the country; as they return home to Kazakhstan, the graduates of Russian universities bring with them a more tolerant attitude towards Russia, formed from their own personal experiences and relationships forged there. This has the strongest impact on intergovernmental relations and cooperation between the two countries. Because of Russia’s aging population, the higher education system is already experiencing a dearth of applicants. It would therefore be more effective not to try and cut back Russia’s existing scientific and educational potential, but to focus on attracting school graduates, undergraduates and postgraduates from Kazakhstan on a paid (contractual) basis. Kazakh students are the second largest contingent of overseas students in Russia (after students from China). Kazakhstan’s adoption of the undergraduate, masters and doctoral degree system in 2010 and abolition of the traditional system of thesis-based degrees (candidate and doctoral) will increase the flow of researchers moving to Russia to defend their dissertations.

Russia’s entry to the international educational services market depends on its ability to compete in terms of the quality of the services it currently provides,
and on the rational expansion of educational migration flows, which Russia is currently neglecting.

The anti-immigration attitudes which have emerged in Russia in recent years, and the absence of any active promotion of educational migration from Kazakhstan, have persuaded many Kazakh school graduates to look towards western Europe and the USA in order to continue their education.

**Research Methodology**

The study was carried out simultaneously in Kazakhstan and Russia (Astana and Moscow) over six months and began by interviewing experts to gain an overview of educational migration from Kazakhstan to Russia. Experts’ interviews were used to formulate theories, which were then tested by a series of in-depth surveys of Kazakh students in Russian universities and Kazakh citizens who graduated from Russian or RSFSR universities and now work in Kazakhstan.

A survey of 200 school graduates was carried out in Astana to find out what was influencing Kazakh would-be students in their choice of university.

The trends identified as a result of the interviews and the student survey has been complemented by an analysis of scientific literature and articles published in local mass media in the two regions under study (Astana and Moscow).
1. 30 interviewees were full-time students from Kazakhstan studying at Moscow universities. Half of the interviewees were young men, half young women. Of the 30 students, 10 are studying at their own expense, 10 are paid for by Kazakhstan and 10 are paid for by Russia.

2. 50 respondents were Kazakh citizens who had graduated from the Russian or RSFSR universities and who are currently living and working in Astana (Kazakhstan). Half of the interviewees were men, while half were women. Out of 50 respondents, 30 had graduated from Russian universities within the last 5 years and 20 had graduated from RSFSR universities before 1991.

3. The experts interviewed (15 in Astana and 15 in Moscow) included scholars, university personnel and administrative and ministerial officials whose work is directly linked to the educational migration of Kazakh students to Russia.

4. Out of 200 surveyed school graduates in Astana, 100 intend to study at Russian universities and another 100 intend to study in other countries. Half of the interviewees were young men, half were young women.

**Results of the survey of Kazakh school graduates in Astana**

According to the survey, Kazakh school graduates consider the UK, the USA, the Czech Republic, Turkey and Japan as the main alternatives to studying in Russia. The choice of country is determined by the availability of good universities (the main selection criterion both for those who intend to study in Russia and those who intend to continue their education in other countries). However, those who plan to study in Russia say culture is the second most important criterion (“an attractive place to live – lots of entertainment and interesting places”), advice from friends as the third and treatment of foreign students as the fourth most important selection criterion. Those who intend to continue their education in other countries put treatment of foreign students in second place when choosing their country of study. Safety is next (“it is safe to live here, no violence, no racism or mistreatment of migrants from other countries”) and culture is again on the list of the most important selection criteria. We should mention that those who intend to study in Russia consider safety as one of the last on the list of important selection criteria.

Those who choose Russia as their country of study favour Moscow, Tomsk and St. Petersburg universities. Those who choose other countries prefer London, Prague and New York. When choosing the country of study, school graduates turn first to advice from relatives, friends and teachers and then the Internet. Radio, TV and newspapers are also used as information sources.
The main reason for studying abroad for both groups of school graduates is simply their wish to study overseas. For those who choose Russia, their other reasons include (in descending order of importance) the higher cost of education in Kazakhstan, more competition for course entry in Kazakhstan and lack of opportunity to study their chosen subject. For those who choose other countries, their decision is based on the worldwide recognition of the university diploma of their country of study, more competition for that course in Kazakhstan and advice from parents or friends.

Those who choose to continue their studies in Russia seemed to have little knowledge of the Bolashak scholarship programme, while many of those who decide to study in other countries plan to take part in the programme.

Kazakh school graduates who plan to study abroad have a better knowledge of the Russian language and much better knowledge of English and other languages than those who intend to study in Russia. Those who choose Russia as their country of study may find it harder to secure employment in Kazakhstan once they graduate. For those who intend to study in another country, this is less of an issue, as is the possibility that their diploma will not be recognised in Kazakhstan.

Many of those wanting to study in Russia plan to settle there, while those who intend to study in other countries want to stay there only for a time. Those
school graduates planning to study in Russia base their plans on the greater job opportunities there, or have relatives living there. For those who choose to study elsewhere, greater employment opportunities were a deciding factor, and also the better standard of living.

The majority of Kazakh school graduates intending to study in Russia had better school results and studied in ordinary secondary schools.

Ethnic Kazakhs account for around 90% of surveyed school graduates who choose to study abroad, and 35% of those who wish to study in Russia, while ethnic Russians account for 53% of this group of would-be students.

In summary, we found that Russia is the preferred country of study among school graduates who are less worried about practicalities, have more trust in their parents’ opinion and are less informed about their educational opportunities. They are less interested in their potential standard of living as a student and have more explicit plans for their education, with the majority viewing their education in Russia as a step to settling there. The majority of those who would prefer to study abroad were keener to achieve higher earnings and to live more comfortably as students. They showed they were less influenced by the stereotypes that prevail in Kazakh society about
studying in Russia. They aim to gain work experience abroad and intend to return to Kazakhstan at some point in the future.

**Results of interviews with Russian experts**

During the Soviet era, educational migration from foreign countries was concentrated in certain institutions (the largest centre being the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia) and pursued primarily geopolitical objectives. For the USSR as a whole, educational migration was a way of presenting a unified ethno-cultural image of this vast country, allowing the student to form a holistic view of a very diverse society. After completing their education, the graduate would return home with a world view shaped by living in the USSR. According to one of the experts interviewed, the Soviet Union used educational and all internal migration as a special “tool for cultivating a Soviet-style man”.

Such measures proved to be effective; quotas were widely applied and very strict. University admission quotas were applied to poor or disabled students and students of different nationalities, including ethnic minority citizens of the Union Republics. Top Soviet universities, such as the Moscow State Institute for International Relations and the Moscow State University, were notorious for corrupt admission practices.

Since 1991, the situation has changed dramatically. In the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, educational migrants from Kazakhstan to Russia were mostly Russians, i.e., children from Russian-speaking families keen to be educated in Russia. Interuniversity communications system as a whole has been upset, but still Kazakhstan was in a better position, since the state had more leading universities. Before Kazakhstan built up its national education system, the country fell significantly short of meeting educational needs, and school graduates continued their migration to Russia, especially because there were no significant restrictions, nor any legal or even cultural barriers. The situation is gradually changing and school graduates from Kazakhstan are now choosing to study elsewhere.

According to the Russian experts interviewed, any discussion of educational migration from Kazakhstan to Russia should take into account the following influences:

- Russia has not kept pace with other CIS countries (e.g., Ukraine and Belarus) that have drastically improved their national education systems and are now competing to attract foreign students from within the CIS;
- Russia has a reputation for xenophobia, racism and nationalism in general and particularly in relation to foreign students;
• Russian society fails to understand the differences between educational and labour migration;
• Russian universities are poorly equipped;
• there has been a lack of investment in the creation of integrated university campuses;
• there is a lack of employment opportunities for university graduates, including foreign ones;
• a regulatory framework needs to be established to allow students from Kazakhstan to take up placements and traineeships;
• students have to acquire a special work permit so it is legal for them to find work in their spare time;
• education needs to be monitored for the value-for-money it represents;
• there should be support for enterprises that employ students, and for student businesses and innovative businesses;
• national educational migration policies are illogical and Kazakhstan and Russia have not been committed to this process.

Results of interviews with Kazakh experts

It is interesting to compare the opinions of Kazakh and Russian experts, since all of them identify the benefits of educational migration, especially for their own countries.

According to Kazakh experts, educational migration provided Kazakhstan’s economy with skilled personnel both in the Soviet era and after the Soviet Union collapsed.

Since 1991, the situation has changed; nevertheless Russia continues to educate qualified professionals who cannot be taught in Kazakhstan either because Kazakh universities do not teach the relevant specialisation or because their training is of a lower quality than Russia’s. Educational migration and Kazakh citizens moving to live in Russia helped strengthen the Kazakh diaspora in Russia by improving business links between Russian and Kazakh entrepreneurs. Kazakh populations in Moscow and St. Petersburg are the result of educational migration in the Soviet period (Rakisheva, 2007). Most of the Kazakh communities in the USA and Canada are made up of physicists, biologists, chemists, artists, pianists, historians and other experts from Russia who migrated before the collapse of the USSR (Rakisheva, 2011).

Kazakh and Russian experts agree that both countries have been somewhat complacent about educational migration. They point out that their ministries of Education and Science view the issue of educational migration only in
terms of the fulfilment of quotas, and pay no attention to those who migrate independently of this system. This is despite the fact that those who travel abroad for their education under their own steam significantly outnumber those students who leave to study as part of a state-arranged programme. While recognising the positive impact of academic mobility (indeed, Kazakhstan advocates its own smooth transition into the Bologna process), Kazakhstan provides inadequate support for it.

Moreover, the practice of issuing dual diplomas (Russian and Kazakh), according to an international agreement, is poorly executed, although this practice is fully justified and effective.

According to Kazakh experts, the country bears no responsibility for employing Kazakh graduates with Russian diplomas or those who studied under the Bolashak programme. Many Kazakh citizens who graduated from Russian universities are forced to find jobs on their own without any state assistance.

Nostrification of diplomas (the acceptance of foreign university degrees as equivalent to native ones) is still a very complicated and lengthy procedure. Kazakh experts are concerned that a brain drain to Russia may result from inadequate state commitment to employing Kazakh educational migrants who are not part of the Bolashak programme.

The main obstacles to educational migration both in the Soviet era and now are the excessive centralisation and bureaucracy that surround the process, as well as the lack of autonomy of Soviet and Russian universities. Then and now, the universities have been ill-equipped technically and financially, and they have not invested in advanced laboratories and campuses which provide comfortable and secure accommodation for Kazakh citizens. The problems inherited from the Soviet era are changing for the better very slowly. Nevertheless, even top Russian universities are gradually losing their international reputation for the elite education they offer.

At present, the educational services Russia can offer to Kazakh students is rather limited, both in terms of the specialisations taught and the number of universities.

For Kazakh students, especially ethnic Kazakhs, there is quite a lengthy list of reasons not to choose to study in Russia: xenophobia is widespread, the police have a reputation for brutal behaviour towards immigrants, public safety is generally poor and Russian media encourage intolerance towards representatives of different nationalities. Anti-immigration attitudes therefore become a subtle characteristic of social behaviour and produce a negative image of the country. Kazakh students and their parents see the rise of skinheads as a sign that they are tacitly encouraged by the authorities, who are powerless against them.
It is perceived that there is a tendency to inflate the marks of Kazakh students in Russian universities, which undermines confidence in the quality of Russian higher education and acts as a disincentive to studying there.

According to the experts, democratisation of contemporary education is necessary for Kazakhstan, both on a societal and on an individual level, and the situation is not changing fast enough. These issues are largely ignored, however, and according to the experts this is the main reason that Kazakhstan faces such difficulty in restructuring its educational system.

The experts noted the absence of innovative technology in Kazakhstan’s educational and scientific sectors, the gap between theory and practice in supporting educational migration, and lack of incentives for business and industry to sponsor overseas education. There are still no opportunities to develop or test alternatives to the ways in which educational migration is currently organised, or to make effective use of the knowledge gained by Kazakh citizens while studying abroad. This situation can only change with government intervention, and particularly with state financial support. Students who studied in Russia do not go on to become scientific leaders, and the academic mobility of students and teachers in Kazakhstan’s universities is not being encouraged. The majority of middle-aged teachers, and those working beyond retirement age, do not speak conversational English but have a good command of Russian and could therefore travel to Russia for retraining courses. However, Russia has no effective short-term teaching resources to train Kazakh teachers in innovative and interactive educational technologies.

The experts also pointed out corruption in Kazakh universities, which is an additional impetus to students to move to Russia and other countries to study.

According to experts, very little is being done to attract private investment in education. For example, tax incentives could be offered to organisations, businesses structures and individuals that provide sponsorships or make charitable donations to educational institutions. This would lift part of the state’s financial burden in supporting education in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan had introduced a system of academic credits based on the American model, but soon afterwards the country joined the Bologna process. This forces Kazakhstan to implement the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). Now, experts say, Kazakhstan needs to choose which system it wants – a credit system or ECTS.

Councils of trustees are considered to be a step forward in the democratisation of university management. The councils are public advisory bodies that help to attract additional funding and oversee the activities of the university, but they have not yet been set up. Certain universities have
alumni associations, but so far these have only acted as social groups, and are not used as a means to provide additional support to Kazakhstan’s universities.

Russia and Kazakhstan have responded poorly to the globalisation of education and are slow in implementing innovative learning techniques; distance learning, for example, is still barely developed.

It is clear that Russia’s manufacturing and scientific infrastructure requires significant government investment to ensure Russian universities attractiveness to foreign students. However, educational migration is hindered by the structural obstacles which exist in Kazakhstan, as mentioned above. Professionals are in demand in Kazakhstan and experts note that it is an achievement in itself that professional education in Russia is universally regarded as being of very high quality.

Kazakh school graduates opting to study in Russia traditionally prefer the universities of Moscow and St. Petersburg, cities closer to the border of Kazakhstan (Novosibirsk, Omsk, Barnaul, Tomsk, Samara) and universities in the Volga region. The experts said that Kazakh citizens who are ethnic Russians use education in Russia as an opportunity to leave Kazakhstan. Ethnic Kazakhs are often interested in, among other things, the relationship between local authorities and the Kazakh diaspora, and the availability of Kazakh cultural centres in the cities where they plan to study. The presence of such centres and good relations between local authorities and Kazakh people tends to make a city more attractive to ethnic Kazakh prospective students and makes their adaptation to the city easier.

Kazakh citizens who successfully graduate from Russian universities are the best propaganda tool for Kazakh school graduates, therefore it would benefit Russian universities to set up branches of their alumni associations in Kazakhstan. The experts also believe that setting up “sister universities” in Russia and Kazakhstan would be very effective. This could be complemented by creating agency services headed by Kazakh alumni of Russian universities (or postgraduate/doctoral students). Establishing an agency network via such service centres, especially in border areas, Astana and Almaty, would also be a good step forward.

The way in which the community runs educational institutions in the Republic of Kazakhstan has, unfortunately, changed very little. Modern managers need a skill set which they do not always possess, including the ability to rationally assess risk in their management decisions, knowledge of the organisation’s development, its strengths and weaknesses, its traditions, the conservatism of the teaching staff, comprehensive knowledge of the university’s activities, the ability to respond rapidly to change and to think strategically. Partly because of the high turnover of staff in educational
management, i.e., among faculty leaders, many are not keen to engage in international cooperation, which, in the opinion of the experts interviewed, is the major stumbling block to enhancing educational migration in the Russian Federation.

Therefore, summing up the opinions of Kazakh experts, we can say that the most important strategy in developing educational migration from Kazakhstan to Russia is governmental support and the return of specialists trained in Russia to Kazakhstan.

**Results of the survey of Kazakh students studying in Russia and Kazakh citizens who have graduated from Russian and RSFSR universities**

**Survey of Kazakh students studying in Russia**

Most of those who took part in the survey are satisfied with the education they received in Russia and would recommend it to their friends. However, it is clear that the consistent and progressive development of educational migration is dependent on the resolution of certain problems. It is important to note that, because the survey group was small, it is impossible to attempt a ‘ranking’ of the issues identified. But the responses allow us to identify certain problematic situations and shortcomings.

Kazakh school graduates choosing to study in Russia do so because they historically have had a positive image of Russian universities as well as because there is no language barrier. The choice of a particular city usually depends on the student’s personal views or advice they have been given by relatives and friends. How a university is rated in internet reviews is also important. The final choice of Russian university will depend on its image and, more importantly, a comparison of the accommodation that is on offer. Incomplete (or withheld?) information on lifestyle and accommodation at the selected university is a particular problem for prospective students.

Other serious weaknesses which respondents criticised include poor technical procedures in universities, and the inadequacy of university support structures and technical staff.

One way to try and prepare students would be provision of adaptation courses in Kazakhstan or various types of training before students leave to take up their courses. Students have even agreed that they themselves could bear the cost. However, acclimatisation courses are so clearly in the interests of the universities and the Russian Ministry of Education they should be free for the students. Bolashak programme staff have often provided pastoral assistance to students finding it difficult to adapt. This extends to students arriving independently or through other programmes, not just to
Bolashak students. There have certainly been cases of employees of Russian educational institutions helping students resolve their problems.

During the first days and months of studying in Russia, psychological pressures can take their toll. Careful planning of admission procedures could help alleviate certain problems. Some new students will benefit from having access to counseling or psychological therapy. The Internet is an important learning resource, but unfortunately it is not always free for students.

Constant changes in teaching methods relating to the introduction of computers did provoke a number of complaints from respondents (poor content and design of Russian universities’ websites). Climate is beyond the control of any institution, but does have a bearing on accommodation. Being housed in a poorly heated room in a cold winter can be a very serious problem. The majority of complaints concerned living conditions. The excessive commercialisation of universities also has a negative influence on their image.

Unfortunately, latent and even overt xenophobia is a widespread phenomenon not only among the local population but also among teachers, and this again detracts significantly from the positive image of Russian universities.

Kazakh students have serious and well-founded complaints against the police, who often mistake male students for migrant workers.

In many respects the quality and format of teaching, and the cost-benefit ratio, meet the expectations of Kazakh students.

Even those Kazakh students who are not satisfied with the quality of Russian education feel that they would have no difficulty finding a job in Kazakhstan because of the good reputation Russian educational standards have in Kazakhstan. However, lack of fluency in the Kazakh language might be a serious obstacle to employment which could have been avoided had they chosen to study at a Kazakh university. Students may also find that there are not many jobs requiring the professional qualifications they acquired in Russia, or find that corruption in Kazakhstan restricts the type of jobs that are available on the open market.

By socialising with other students from Kazakhstan when they arrive in Russia, Kazakh students usually overcome the problems of adapting to their new surroundings. Some ethnic Kazakhs adopt a strategy of mixing with foreigners from countries much further afield, to gain an entirely new social circle and new perspectives. The various cultural activities universities offer actively encourage this process. However universities often provide limited opportunities for leisure activities and most of these are on a fee-paying basis.
Students believe that finding a job will not seriously interfere with their studies, and consider the opportunity to work as a way of obtaining the practical skills required in the profession they are studying towards. If they are prevented from working legally, students can sometimes find that they fall victim to fraudulent employers, are badly paid or are forced to put up with very poor working conditions. As mentioned above, despite all the difficulties, the majority of students surveyed would advise their friends to study in Russia. Of course, for some Kazakh citizens of Russian descent, studying in Russia can be their stepping stone to settling there and is the reason they recommend this path to their friends.

As the students’ responses show, there are problems in Russian universities and almost all of them can be resolved or mitigated by the universities themselves. However, while some universities are keen to address these issues, others are not.

The current situation could be improved by standardising the requirements that universities must meet when they aim to recruit foreign students. The amount that universities are allowed to charge for their courses could depend on their level of compliance with these requirements.

Survey of Kazakh citizens who graduated from Russian and RSFSR universities

By conducting a survey of Kazakh citizens who graduated either from Russian or RSFSR universities, we were able to identify changes in the education of Kazakh citizens in Russia in the Soviet era and the post-Soviet period.

As a rule, university education in the USSR was based on a special distribution system and social quotas. Courses were offered by the leading universities of the RSFSR and included disciplines that were not taught in Kazakhstan.

The image of Russian universities was positive in Soviet times and information about universities was widely available. Indeed, Moscow was very attractive as a cultural centre.

For students in Soviet and post-Soviet periods, the difficulties they faced were generally associated with the higher requirements of Russian universities. For those who studied in the last five years, everyday problems were the most significant, though socialising with their compatriots usually helped them to adapt.

The problem of xenophobia either did not exist in the Soviet era or had no overt signs. One of the respondents who studied in the last five years claimed that some Kazakh students use xenophobia as an excuse for failing their courses. However, xenophobia obviously does exist in modern Russia. Some of the students surveyed also mentioned cases of somewhat brutal treatment at the hands of the police.
Those who studied in the Soviet era were unanimous in evaluating their educational experience positively. Kazakhs who studied in the Soviet era had to take a difficult matriculation examination, which is why the overall level of attainment of those who studied in the RSFSR was very high.

Living conditions in the Soviet era gave Kazakh students little cause for complaint: standards of living were mostly relatively poor in the USSR, although student dormitories were maintained much better than they are now. Because student dormitories have always been central to the student way of life, some of their worse aspects were overlooked.

Those who studied in the last five years voiced more complaints about living conditions because socio-economic conditions in Kazakhstan have changed and alternatives to studying in Russia have emerged.

Views of the quality and cost of education expressed by those who had studied in the past five years in elite universities were mainly positive with some neutral and very few negative comments.

The Soviet diploma awarded by RSFSR universities was a hallmark of quality and guarantee of a good start in life for Kazakh graduates during Soviet times. For those who studied in the last five years, the Russian diploma is an advantage but not a one-hundred-percent guarantee of finding a job.

In Soviet times a scholarship was enough for postgraduates to live on, but students needed extra financial help from their parents. But students of course made some money on the side in the RSFSR as well. Among those who had studied in the last five years, the attitude towards extra earnings is different and being allowed to work legally is an important issue for students from Kazakhstan.

It is important to note that the majority of Kazakh citizens who wanted to stay in the USSR, no longer live in Kazakhstan. Therefore, the survey mostly reflects the views of those who initially planned to return to Kazakhstan and now in many cases see their return to Kazakhstan as an expression of patriotism. Those who studied within the past five years demonstrate various motivations for their migration and their decision is not always an unambiguous one.

The image of Russian education has changed significantly over time. This clearly reflects the dramatic changes that have occurred since the collapse of the Soviet Union and changes in economic conditions in Kazakhstan over the last five or so years.

The prestigious image of a Russian university education remains from Soviet times, and leading Russian universities do still offer teaching of a very high
standard. But the pressure on other institutions to improve the quality of their educational experience is increasing and higher education in Russia generally clearly needs to be reformed if it is to retain its desirable image in the eyes of Kazakh students.

**Short-, medium- and long-term strategies to encourage educational migration from Kazakhstan to Russia**

**Short-term measures:**

- find a way to support universities willing to increase their admission of foreign students; build new campuses and dormitories or refurbish and modernise existing ones;
- develop existing scientific institutions by equipping them with modern technology. This will help strengthen the reputation of Russia as an educational powerhouse;
- develop institutions regionally. Support and modernise metropolitan universities and higher education institutions in Russia’s far east (Krasnoyarsk, Novosibirsk, Tomsk and Irkutsk).

It is obvious that these measures will require a degree of political will and are not just a matter of state funding or co-financing.

**Medium-term measures**

Specialist secondary technical schools, vocational schools and colleges should be created which will help to attract foreign and Russian students.

Secondary vocational education is very important strategically and should be developed in parallel with higher education. Universities that do not meet required higher education standards could be transformed into secondary vocational colleges.

In the medium to long term, there should be a policy of boosting the image of blue-collar occupations. This is an enormous task given that, even in Soviet times, the policy only succeeded with a great deal of difficulty.

The Russian belief that any type of work is worthy of honour needs to be modified. Again, since this can only be achieved in the long term, any near-term initiatives must be closely linked with educational and labour migration policies. A 10-year educational migration programme should incorporate migration to secondary specialised educational institutions. The export of educational services should be a multi-layered initiative. Educational migration from Kazakhstan (and elsewhere) to Russian universities is a way of promoting Russian education, gradually increasing its quality and attracting more students from abroad to Russia’s specialised secondary educational establishments. This engages those who will later work in Russian factories.
Promoting the quality of education provided by universities in the Russian Federation should have a “domino effect” in regard to the export of Russia’s educational system as a whole. By educating young people from other countries and improving its institutions Russia also provides work for its teachers.

Measures to enhance educational migration need to be focused on higher education students from Kazakhstan who intend to go back to their native country once they have completed their education. As graduates return to Kazakhstan, they forge links between the two countries, which cannot be replicated by any political agreement between Russia and Kazakhstan. They also return to Kazakhstan equipped with in-depth knowledge of the special characteristics of the Russian educational system, and, assuming they are happy with and give good account of their education, will encourage a new influx of Kazakh school graduates into Russian universities. If Russia is to maintain the high quality and good image of its educational system, a steady stream of Kazakh school graduates into Russian universities could be boosted with a second flow of educational migrants to its secondary education institutions (not necessarily from Kazakhstan). This will help attract school graduates from around the CIS, who will have the opportunity to stay on and work in Russian industrial enterprises (which face an acute shortage of workers) after they complete their education in Russia’s specialised secondary schools. To secure the inflow of educational migrants from the CIS into the secondary education system, Russia must consider changing its legislation, since 15-year-old college students are considered as children. New laws are required to allow underage foreign citizens to stay in Russia.

Any comprehensive, medium-term (ten-year) programme must include regulatory changes, development planning, research, approbation, and several well-targeted studies (e.g., a study of international practices and region-by-region reviews of the policy implementation). An effective federal policy on educational migration must resist the temptation to adopt new laws once the policy has been implemented – i.e., avoid the process of “filling in holes” in existing legislation.

Russia is not in a position at the moment to implement this legislation, and therefore all initiatives to develop educational migration remain on hold.

Long term goals

Long-term objectives include the establishment of required educational policies alongside the creation of a tolerant society and socio-cultural cohesion. Encouraging an attitude of respect towards migrant workers can be achieved in part through the work of students on campuses in particular, which is one of the long-term goals related to educational migration.
The following measures may help to encourage educational migration to Russia from Kazakhstan:

- investment in the scientific and technical infrastructure of Russia’s educational system;
- the simplification of Russian registration procedures and the elimination of unnecessary bureaucracy;
- the legalisation of employment for Kazakh students, especially during holiday periods;
- international agreement with Kazakhstan to simplify nostrification procedures, and mutual recognition of university diplomas by Russia and Kazakhstan to make postgraduate training and masters courses in Russian universities more accessible to Kazakh citizens;
- government measures to promote greater tolerance of Kazakh students in Russia, using a media campaign in Russia to counteract racism and intolerance towards immigrants;
- a clean up of the police force, removing officers who extort bribes from Kazakh students when verifying documents;
- taking a hard line with criminal skinhead gangs (particularly Nazi skinheads) and similar anti-immigrant groups;
- establishing a tolerant learning environment that eliminates racism towards students from Kazakhstan on the part of Russian students, teaching staff and administrators in educational institutions;
- actively involving Kazakh students in social and cultural activities at university and in Russian student hostels and allowing students from Kazakhstan to travel around the Russian Federation (freedoms that other countries extend to foreign students);
- building and refurbishing dormitories to offer car parking facilities and free access to the internet for all students. Small specialised universities could be allowed to rent a small number of places in large university campuses;
- the Ministry of Education and Science should create an innovative internet-based information system, which would provide a single source of information on public and private higher education institutions. The information must be detailed, clear, multilingual and free;

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3 National Socialist skinheads (or Nazi skinheads) – radical nationalists and racists, who adhere to National Socialist ideology, advocate the idea of race separatism and White Power supremacy, cultivate violence, idealise the Third Reich and collaborationists. The activities of National Socialist skinheads are extremist and in many cases of a terrorist nature.
creating a grant system to support talented school graduates from Kazakhstan, including full reimbursement of all costs;  

- introducing a programme of support for students from Kazakhstan and Russia to find their compatriots abroad; private Russian charity foundations could be involved in setting up pastoral organisations which would use the higher education system as a way of strengthening international relations and supporting expatriates;  

- establishing alumni associations for USSR and Russian universities in Kazakhstan using them to support the activities of Russian higher education institutions in Kazakhstan and to strengthen cultural and scientific relations;  

- creating cultural, educational and job exchange programmes similar to those which exist in Germany, Britain, Australia and the USA. These would promote Russian education and Russian culture in Kazakhstan and attract individuals and organisations to participate in such programmes;  

- promotional activities in Kazakhstan, via the Russian Embassy and cultural institutions (participating and organising educational exhibitions, creating a network of coordinators responsible for educational issues who would disseminate information on Russian educational opportunities to Kazakh school graduates). Existing expatriate associations abroad should be linked together;  

- restoring Russian language teaching in Kazakhstan and news broadcasting in Kazakh on Russia’s national radio stations and TV channels (with the focus on cultural and music programmes for youth).  

There is potential to expand educational migration from Kazakhstan to Russia, facilitated by the shared border, common history and culture, and the establishment of the Customs Union. The education ministries in both countries, their migration and integration agencies can also help promote educational migration.  

References  


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5 Such events are regularly held overseas under the auspices of the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo), but they are very small scale. http://www.rusintercenter.ru/?lang=ru&menu=115.


