



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■



Bolashak Scholars at LSE

Government Policy Challenges:
Review and Analysis of Contemporary Issues
and Debates Across Social Sciences 2012-13



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LSE Enterprise Limited
The London School of Economics
and Political Science,
Eighth Floor, Tower Three,
Houghton Street,
London, WC2A 2AZ

Tel: +44 (0)20 7955 7128
Fax: +44 (0)20 7955 7980

Email: enterprise@lse.ac.uk
Web: lse.ac.uk/enterprise
Twitter: @lseenterprise



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About the programme



Bolashak, a translation of the Kazakh word 'Future', has been Kazakhstan's testament of the importance of investment in education. It allows its best and brightest, via a competitive application and selection process, a chance to study in leading universities around the world. Since 1993, the Government of Kazakhstan has provided full scholarships and bursaries to thousands of students – and since 2011 also researchers and scientists – to undertake study, research and continued education at world renowned universities, enabling them to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to facilitate the country's development.



Over the years LSE has been home to a number of students from Kazakhstan who came here thanks to the Bolashak funding. In 2011, Bolashak expressed interest in expanding the connection, to allow a number of scientific workers and researchers to come to LSE to tap into its research excellence, to be exposed to the latest thinking and teaching across a wide range of social sciences, and to absorb the spirit of 'understanding the causes of things'.

LSE Executive Education designed a customised programme for the Kazakh scholars who came over as part of the Bolashak. A group of eleven individuals spent a year in London, dedicating themselves to the rigorous research and study of contemporary issues and debates across a number of topics in social sciences. Each one had a unique topic, if not a research driven quest, but all had a common thread – a social sciences approach, a structured methodology, and dedication to enhance their research while at LSE.



It was not an easy journey. The custom programme's components included streams of private seminars and workshops, the audit of appropriate lectures, regular written assignments, and attendance of assigned public lectures and events. LSE academics and experts from across the School, including the Departments of Social Policy, Law, Government and Anthropology, as well as the European Institute, the Centre for Economic Performance and the Language Centre, took part in giving the Bolashak participants tutoring and research advice.



The following pages offer a few glimpses of the programme, namely about the participants, where they came from before arriving at LSE, and short narratives about their capstone research papers. We trust that this short introduction shows that university-based education does not have to stop with university degrees, that investment in life-long learning and continued education is important, and that in the case of countries like Kazakhstan it is a matter of national priority.

Kydyrbek Alkhozhayev



Kydyrbek was Head of Department of State Language Development at the Supreme Court of Kazakhstan before joining the programme. As part of his research at LSE he was interested in theories surrounding the study of languages and how these relate to society, law, and government policy, specifically the social implications of policy choices.



Legal Basis of Language Construction in Society

Providing a legal basis for the use of a language can help preserve the cultural heritage of a linguistic group and promote its role in society more generally, and bears some similarity – in terms of broad implications – to policies that give legal recognition to religions. It also provides greater access to national systems, procedures and practices that in turn promote greater participation in the economy, society, and national debates and deliberations. At the same time, language policy needs to take the regional and global context into account and to consider how global integration can be promoted through the selection of an appropriate language policy. Comparisons between Kazakhstan's situation and those of Ireland and Wales, within the UK, and the policies of the EU bring out many of the challenges that need to be met while designing a language policy. This whole area needs more study and analysis because of the sensitivity and complexity of the issues involved.

Aigul Demeuova

Aigul was Deputy Director in charge of Science, Experimental Work and New Technologies at the Mangistau Regional Institute of Advanced Training for Employees of Educational Organisations before coming to LSE. Her interests included a comparative review of current debates and practices related to government policies concerning religion.



Religion in the Process of Modernisation in Contemporary Kazakh Society: a foreign experience

Aigul asserts that in the modern condition of modernisation, in particular that of Kazakh society, the status of religion is defined by the process of secularisation and de-secularisation – and a re-sacralisation and a religious deconstruction, as well as a religious individualisation. Religion has not become obsolete in modern Kazakhstan, but on the contrary is being transformed, modified and finally modernised. So while Kazakhstan is a secular state without an official religion, the role of religion in society is constantly evolving and changing. The European model for dealing with religion is pyramidal, which simultaneously provides for the formal separation of church and state, with full individual religious freedom, and limited areas of institutional cooperation between the state and religious orders. This model provides important and relevant lessons for Kazakhstan.

Talgat Dossayev



Before joining the programme Talgat was Deputy Head of the Law Institute at the Academy of the Penal System Committee of the Ministry of Justice. He was interested in learning more about best practices across European countries in the areas of penal system reform and policies relating to prosecution of criminal acts.

Prison Policy in England and Wales

Comparing the experiences of prison reform in England and Wales with the requirements for prison reform and modernisation in Kazakhstan forms the core of this essay/project. While the Kazakhstan system is attempting comprehensive reform and a move to a system based on international standards and best practice, in reality many features of the old Soviet system remain. Creating a new policy framework and implementing basic changes will be complex, expensive and time consuming (in England and Wales it has taken four centuries), but will be effective in the long run. Drawing on English and Welsh experience shows that an effective prison system needs an independent agency with comprehensive monitoring powers, a review and inspection regime to guarantee basic standards and prisoners' rights, and an effective system of rehabilitation to reduce reoffending rates. At the same time, prison and probation officers need constant training and skills improvement to deal with emerging and complex issues. Talgat also emphasises the importance of accommodating an increasingly diverse and ethnically mixed prison population in a humane system of respect and rehabilitation.



Baurzhan Kassymbergebayev

Baurzhan occupied the position of Senior Scientist at the Karaganda State Technical University before coming to LSE. His area of expertise is education, with interests ranging from the fundamentals of education system to budgeting and management to strategic planning. He was able to conduct a comparative review of relevant institutions in the UK and Europe to better understand both theory and practice.



Strategic Development of Higher Education Institutions in Kazakhstan in Accordance with International Standards

The higher education system in Kazakhstan is currently unable to meet the expectations of society and to help in the socio-economic development of the country. Attempts to raise standards to international levels through the Bologna process and other initiatives have not succeeded so far, with a few exceptions. This is partly because of an inherent conservatism amongst the teaching staff, poor motivation amongst many students (partly because of poor infrastructure, IT, library, hostel and teaching facilities), and a variety of institutional and supervisory problems. Emphasis thus needs to be placed on a comprehensive and strategic development of institutions in line with international quality standards. Aligning undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate programmes with these standards, and further linking this process with the needs of society and the economy, needs to be phased in over the long term to create a sustainable and competitive system.



Lyazat Nurkatova



Before joining the programme Lyazat was Head of the Social Technologies Department at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Kazakhstan, where she was also Professor of Sociology. She was specifically interested in issues relating to social workers in healthcare and government policies to support the most vulnerable members of society.

Social Services Provision for Children in Britain: policy lessons for Kazakhstan

In her research and project work, Lyazat has identified specific elements of the British system of providing social services to various categories of vulnerable children that could be adapted for use in Kazakhstan. This would form an integral part of a system to improve child protection within a larger structure for improved social service provision. It would further incorporate measures for groups with special needs, such as those with low incomes, unemployed and the homeless. Lyazat's main finding is that children and young people must have a voice in the policy process, and here she draws on the UK example of a Children's Commissioner with an independent status and budget and suggests that the National Commission for Women in Kazakhstan could be given this task. She thereafter highlights the importance of integrated policy delivery that incorporates concerns of family members, carers and NGOs working in support of government strategies.



Yerbol Nurkatov



Yerbol was Director of the Astana Mental Health Centre prior to coming to LSE. Specialising in mental health, he wanted to conduct a comparative study of government policies in this area, how priorities are assigned, and how decisions are made when implementing policies relating to certain mental illnesses.

Reforming Mental Health Services in Kazakhstan: lessons from the UK

Four critical areas of policy reform have been identified through Yerbol's research and project work for the improved treatment of organic mental disorders (schizophrenia and similar disorders) in Kazakhstan. If fully funded and implemented, these measures would help deliver transformational improvements in the overall approach of the government to managing the mental health agenda, which in turn would dramatically improve the coverage, quality and standard of care, rehabilitation and treatment for patients of schizophrenia. It would further align Kazakhstan's policies with global best practice through applying the principles of 'care in the community' and thereby reducing the use of institutional arrangements. Drawing on the experiences of the UK, Yerbol has identified clear social and personal benefits that could flow from the implementation of the appropriate policies and strategies, in addition to economic benefits for society more generally. Some of these measures would enable schizophrenics to resume normal and productive lives as full and responsible members of the community.

Aitugan Omarov



Before joining the programme Aitugan was a Senior Scientist at Semey State University. His interests were in the area of education – how education policies are designed, implemented, and evaluated. He was also keen to review systems and procedures of evaluation and audit in higher education.

Public Policy in Higher Education

Building an appropriate, effective, efficient and productive system of higher education in Kazakhstan has been beset by a variety of problems and policy challenges. As a result of an opening of the system to international ideas, a number of practices have developed that lack overall coherence; the current system has particularly serious problems with standards and corruption. Furthermore, regulatory structures are very weak, teaching standards inconsistent and often very poor, and the relevance of education to the requirements of the economy (especially in science and technology) very limited. Comparisons with the UK bring out the importance of a strong regulator (OFSTED) and the vital role played by decentralised management. However, the UK system cannot be a model for Kazakhstan because of other significant differences. Drawing on the experiences of Columbia in raising standards in higher education is considered more relevant to Kazakhstan's immediate requirements. Taken together, and with the ministries of labour and higher education working together, these two simple measures would help begin the process of improving the system and relevance of higher education.



Elmira Orazaliyeva

Elmira was Deputy Director at the National School of Public Policy at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Kazakhstan before coming to LSE. She is interested in languages and linguistics, including language policies and analytical review of best practice in developed countries.



Efficiency of State Language Policy in Society

Managing a diversity of languages in an ethnically diverse and mixed population poses significant policy challenges. A comparison of Kazakhstan's situation with that of the UK and the EU forms the core of this project. A comparative analysis of language policy in the UK and how it accommodates the language aspirations of Ireland, Scotland and Wales is provided, together with a survey of the European Union's experience in developing policies and principles relating to languages. Establishing a connection between an effective language policy and promoting social cohesion and national identity thus constitutes the basis for this research project. Elmira's findings confirm that an effective language policy can indeed help ethnic and linguistic minorities integrate and participate, provided also that these policies are handled correctly and with sensitivity with respect to the importance of a national language. Hence the importance of language planning as part of any strategy for national development.

Anar Sagidan



Prior to joining the programme, Anar was a Chief Researcher at the Department of International Law, International Relations and Comparative Law at the Legislation Research Institute of Kazakhstan. With her key interests centring around international law, she specialised in a comparative review of international standards and related legislation.



Harmonisation of National Legislation with International Standards: the EU experience

Anar's research and project work examines in some detail the experience of the EU in harmonising legislation across EU member states. The process is complex and very sensitive, but is extremely relevant to Kazakhstan as it aligns national legislation with international treaty obligations and other international commitments, especially with respect to the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) and the Customs Union. She has in particular identified three positive points from the EU's experience that are useful and relevant for Kazakhstan. Of the three, the most important will be for the prospective EurAsEC Parliament (due for 2015) to play a leading role in driving the consultation and harmonisation process. The second is for a flexible and inclusive drafting process that uses ideas generated during consultation to combine the use of hard and soft laws in pursuit of policy objectives. And the third measure looks at effective implementation and monitoring measures. By combining these features, Anar concludes that the process of harmonisation of domestic legislation with international agreements and intergovernmental organisations can be effectively delivered.

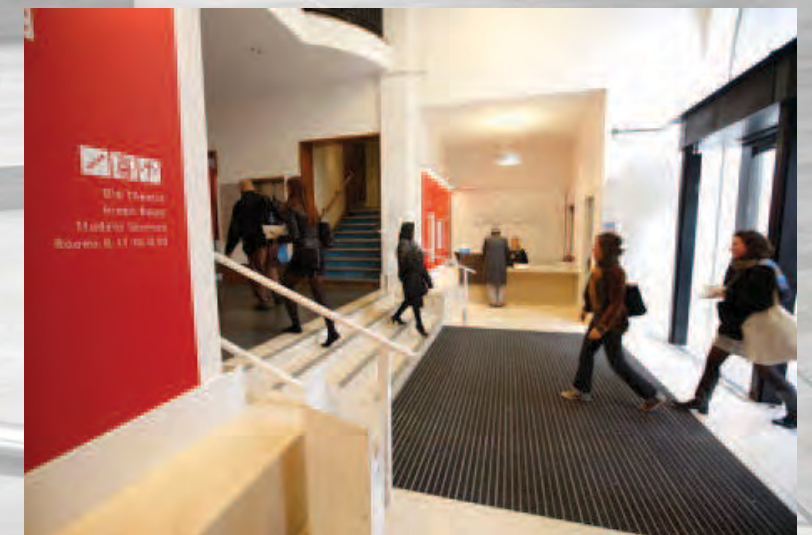
Azat Zholdybayev

European Responses to Youth Unemployment: any lessons for Kazakhstan?

The study shows that Kazakhstan has the same – if not a greater – problem with youth unemployment than the EU, and should learn from their policy experience. Kazakhstan's Employment Programme 2020 does not address the full range of issues associated with youth unemployment when compared to the European approach. Kazakhstan particularly lacks a monitoring system, and further needs to develop mechanisms to encourage employers to accept young people. The gap between education and employment needs to be bridged, together with an improved system of training and retraining. While the experience of Germany is often used to guide Kazakh policy, consideration should be given to policy ideas from elsewhere in the EU, including the UK. Finally, employers need to be included in the consultation process.



Azat was Head of Public Administration Sector Research at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Kazakhstan before coming to LSE. He was interested in learning more about the regulatory and legal frameworks of social protection, as well as law enforcement practices related to social protection.



Gulnar Zhaxybayeva



Before joining the programme Gulnar was Deputy Head of the Academic and Methodology Centre at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Kazakhstan. Her top research priorities at LSE included the principles of education policies, systems for evaluation and audit in higher education, and best practice in policy implementation in education.



Monitoring and Assessing Quality Control in Higher Education in the UK: policy relevance for Kazakhstan

Examining the monitoring and assessment system for quality control in higher education in the UK reveals a significant degree of decentralisation and institutional autonomy, together with regional differences between England and Scotland. Indeed, there is no common legal framework for higher educational institutions (HEIs) in the UK. At the same time, quality control measures and higher standards are delivered through a combination of external consultants, independent monitoring, formal quality and teaching assessment procedures, and agency reviews. This is a very different structure to the system in Kazakhstan and provides some useful examples of different models. One particular example that could be of relevance to Kazakhstan is the use of national student surveys (NSS) as an additional means of assessing standards, performance and quality control.

LSE: gaining a global perspective

LSE is a specialist university with an international intake and a global reach. Its research and teaching span the full breadth of the social sciences, from economics, politics and law to sociology, anthropology, accounting and finance. Founded in 1895 by Beatrice and Sidney Webb, the School has an outstanding reputation for academic excellence. Sixteen Nobel prize winners have been LSE staff or alumni.

LSE is a world leader in social science research. The School protects and encourages theoretical and “blue skies” research while promoting dynamic engagement with wider society. The latest UK Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), in 2008, revealed LSE to have the highest percentage of world-leading research of any university in the country, topping or coming close to the top of a number of rankings of research excellence.

LSE staff advise policymakers in governments, non-governmental organisations and businesses around the world. Thirty-four past or present world leaders have studied or taught at LSE. Its public events have attracted such speakers as Nelson Mandela, Bill Clinton, Alan Greenspan, Ben Bernanke, Aung San Suu Kyi and the Dalai Lama.

The School has about 10,000 current students from 145 countries. An influential network of over 100,000 LSE alumni spans the world, with active alumni groups in over 70 countries, including Kazakhstan.

LSE's position at the heart of London, one of the world's political, legal and financial hubs gives executive education participants a unique perspective on international government and business.

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