

# EUROPEAN SERIES

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Social Assessment of the Formerly Deported  
Population in the Autonomous Republic of  
Crimea: A Participatory Rapid Appraisal

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**UNHCR**

REGIONAL BUREAU FOR EUROPE

Social Assessment of the Formerly  
Deported Population in the Autonomous  
Republic of Crimea:

A Participatory Rapid Appraisal



*The Return*, by Mamut Yusufovich Churlu







Over the last few years about 250,000 Crimean Tatars and other minorities, deported *en masse* during the Stalinist period, have returned to the Crimean peninsula after some 50 years of exile in Central Asia. Despite the commitment and goodwill of the authorities of Ukraine to find a remedy to this wrong committed during the Soviet area, the return of the Crimean Tatars took place in a difficult economic and legal environment, not conducive to easy integration. In particular, the Law on Citizenship of Ukraine imposed strict conditions for naturalisation which could not be met by the overwhelming majority, rendering almost impossible their access to basic social benefits, the privatisation process, the rights to vote and to be elected to bodies with political representation, and indeed, to longer-term integration.

A number of international organisations, including the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), have expressed concern about the security risk that might arise from an increase in inter-ethnic tension if formerly deported peoples remain marginalized. Existing tensions, competition for meagre resources, and the sensitivity of political issues surrounding citizenship and representation in political organs, combine to make friction and internal instability a possibility.

In response to a request from the Government of Ukraine to assist in addressing problems associated with the return of formerly deported peoples, UNHCR sent two assessment missions to the region in 1996. The missions confirmed that the majority of formerly deported peoples face great social and economic hardships, and underlined the complexity of the legal and political questions surrounding the issue of citizenship in Ukraine.

Following the findings of the assessment missions, UNHCR has assumed a *catalytic* role in promoting the integration of the formerly deported peoples in Crimea, and has adopted a threefold strategy:

*1) To promote the reduction of statelessness and the acquisition of Ukrainian citizenship (the citizenship of the country where they have genuine effective links), as citizenship is considered one of the most important preconditions for successful legal and social integration of the formerly deported persons.*

*2) To support an inter-agency approach to assist the Government in raising international awareness of the integration needs of returnees, including legal, political, and socio-economic requirements; and thereby to contribute to the solution of a problem which may otherwise have a destabilising effect in the region.*

*3) To directly address the basic legal and material needs of the most vulnerable returnees, within existing resource constraints.*

This issue of the European Series contains a report commissioned by UNHCR on Crimea, entitled: *Social Assessment of the Formerly Deported Population in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea: A Participatory Rapid Appraisal*. UNHCR considers the report to be the most comprehensive, in-depth study to date on the situation of formerly deported peoples and other ethnic groups in the Crimean peninsula. It confirms earlier findings regarding the most pressing needs of formerly deported peoples and offers useful recommendations to promote their peaceful integration.

It is hoped that the information contained in this report will provide an objective basis for all concerned actors to share data and agree on the parameters of the problems described. The publication of the report in UNHCR's European Series is designed to raise the awareness of the international community about these problems, and to provide food for thought, through its recommendations, for further action to alleviate the plight of the formerly deported peoples returning to Crimea. UNHCR hopes that better understanding of the situation in the peninsula will elicit much needed support for the Ukrainian Government in tackling these issues.

**Hasim Utkan**  
Acting Director  
Bureau for Europe

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### PURPOSE OF THE SOCIAL ASSESSMENT

The Government of Ukraine approached the United Nations agencies and among them UNHCR in an effort to assist with issues related to the resettlement and re-integration of an estimated 250,000 Crimean Tatars. In response, the UNHCR contracted a Social Assessment of the Formerly Deported People (FDP), focusing on identifying the most vulnerable, prioritizing needs and making concrete program recommendations for assistance programs. Early on in the Assessment, it became obvious that because the other deported people had been allowed to return some twenty or thirty years prior to the break up of the former Soviet Union, their current socio-economic is similar to that of the rest of the Crimean population rather than to the recently resettled Crimean Tatars.

### WHAT IS A SOCIAL ASSESSMENT?

A Social Assessment presents the views that are least commonly heard by policy makers – those at the grassroots. As such it presents the view from below, and in this case, attempts to describe and explain the perspective of the Crimean Tatar population, by contrasting views of different stakeholders groups within this population. It is the first step in establishing a participatory development process.

### PARTICIPATORY RAPID APPRAISAL (PRA)

**In total, two hundred individual and household interviews were conducted, 20 focus groups and 9 community meetings.** Individual interviews were conducted with Crimean Tatars, Russian and Ukrainians and key informants – such as local officials, specialists and informal leaders. Focus groups provided insight into differences in priorities between ethnic groups, genders, and age groups. The research also included feed-back sessions during community meetings when the community was invited to comment on findings, discuss priorities and make suggestions for programs design and implementation. The **sampling method** adopted was the snowball technique whereby informants identify other respondents fitting criteria defined by the scope of the Assessment. **Site selection:** nine sites were selected for the purpose of the Social Assessment. Each site was selected for its defining characteristics and their implications for the situation of FDPs. **Field workers** included Crimean Tatars from different regions through out Crimea, refugees and one Russian woman. (See Appendix 1: Methodology).



**CHAPTER 1:**  
**SETTING**

**I. Background**

**1. Geography and Climate**

The Autonomous Republic of Crimea is part of the territory of Ukraine. It is a small peninsula of 26,000 square kilometers jutting out into the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Its territory is commonly divided into four geo-climatic zones: a mild maritime southern coastal zone; a humid – in winter windy and cold – mountainous zone from Sevastopol to Feodosiia; an arid and dry steppe zone further to the north; and the eastern peninsula of Kerch which benefits from irrigation, and higher levels of industrialization.

**2. Demography and Ethnicity**

The total population of Crimea was 2.69 million in 1996. **The ethnic make-up of the peninsula differs greatly from the mainland of Ukraine.** (See Figure 1.1). In Crimea, in 1993, Russians represented the major ethnic group with 61.6 percent of the population, Ukrainians only 23.6 percent, and Crimean Tatars 9.6 percent. By the end of 1996, Crimean Tatars represented already over 11.9 percent of the population and is expected to grow to 17 percent by the year 2005.<sup>1</sup> (See Table 1.1).

**Ethnicity in Crimea is shaped by the political and economic environment created by centuries of competing interests between the Crimean Tatar Khanate, and the Russian and Ottoman Empires. The Crimean Tatar population is overwhelmingly rural (73 percent) and young (an estimated 16 percent is aged 0-16; 51 percent are capable of working, and only 16 percent are pensioners).<sup>2</sup> Only the Crimean Tatar population is experiencing a positive level of population growth of 6 per thousand in 1994, compared to a national average of minus 5.8 per**

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<sup>1</sup> Goskonnats.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Nariman Ibadulaev, Representative of the City Council, Member of the Plan-Budget Committee. The figures do not add up because two are age groups (0 to 16 and pensioners) and the third is a status: "capable of work" which excludes invalids, etc.

**thousand**<sup>3</sup> because of higher fertility rates among the Tatars (4.5 per thousand) more than double those of Russians and Ukrainians (1.6 in 1993)<sup>4</sup>; Crimean Tatar population younger than the Crimean average; a continued inflow of Crimean Tatars from Central Asia, and emigration of the Russian and Ukrainian population. (See **Migration** below).

### 3. History

Why are the Tatars returning to Crimea now? **The 250,000 Crimean Tatars returning to Crimea after forty five years of exile are not motivated by a desire to better their economic situation but one to return the homeland.** Crimean Tatars distinguish themselves from the other ethnic minorities on the peninsula by their claim to a status of indigenous people. On May 18, 1944 an estimated 200,000 Crimean Tatars were forcibly deported to the Central Asian republics for allegedly collaborating with the Germans during World War II. Within four years of deportation, according to Crimean Tatar sources, half of the deported Crimean Tatars perished<sup>5</sup> from inadequate housing and food, insufficient infrastructure, and a hostile climate.

**Other nationalities were also deported.** A few years earlier, in August 1941, 61,000 Crimean residents, mostly ethnic Germans, had also been sent into internal exile. Crimean communities of Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Bulgarians were also affected by Stalin's deportations.

As opposed to the other Crimean nationalities deported by Stalin who were rehabilitated by Khrushchev in 1957, the Crimean Tatars had to wait until 1989 to be granted the right to return. This opened the gates for **approximately 250,000 of the estimated 500,000 Tatars living in Central Asia to return to Crimea.**

**Since independence in 1991, Ukraine has been financing a resettlement program for the Crimean Tatars largely unassisted.** However, the real value of the program totaled only 14 million dollars by mid-1996. Today, Goskomnats programs are limited to housing subsidies, health care emergency subsidies, and the reimbursement of travel and shipping costs from the country of exile. (See Chapter 3).

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<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Health of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, 1996, Information Bulletin; Health of the Deported People, 1996:2, Republican Medical Center for Serving the Deported People, Simferopol.

<sup>4</sup> UNDP, 1996, "Ukraine Human Development Report: Looking Beyond the Triple Transition," p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> In Open Society Institute, 1996, p. 14. The author also notes: "Russian-dominated Crimean State Committee on Nationality Affairs and Deported People maintains about 45,000 persons died between 1944-48".

**For households, the return was for the most part a planned, gradual process, not a spontaneous rush.** Most of the time, the head of the family was sent ahead of the rest of the family to buy or build a temporary home, to find employment (for himself and sometimes for his wife), and most important, to agree with local authorities regarding a local residence permit. **Those who were not established by 1992 are likely to live until today in sub-standard conditions.** Many families have been stuck for the last five years in housing conditions they believed were temporary, without easy access to basic infrastructure and social services. **As a result, the process of return has been slowed because of the poor living and economic conditions.**

**Resettlement and Internal Migration:**

Settlement patterns are shaped by:

- a desire among the returning Crimean Tatar to return to the village of their ancestors;
- affordability of homes relative to receipts from sales of homes in Central Asia;
- obstacles placed by local authorities, e.g. pressures on local sellers, refusal to formalize a purchase of a home, refusal to grant propiska, and refusal to grant employment;
- a formal ban on Tatars settling on the southern coast which was only repealed recently; and
- slow implementation of municipal decisions to distribute household plots for construction.

**As a result, the Tatar population is well above the Crimean average of the population in many rural regions and in the steppe zone of Crimea.** Meanwhile, **many historically Crimean Tatar regions which were closed to resettlement such as the southern coast still have a very small Crimean Tatar population in 1997.** For instance, only 0.9 percent of the population was Tatar in the city of Yalta (compared to 50 percent in 1939); and the City and region of Sudak combined – 15 percent (compared to 70 percent in 1939).<sup>6</sup> See Table 1.1.

**There are two distinct migratory trends which are already affecting the demographic distribution: these are a rural-urban current and a north-south current.** The first trend is due to poor socio-economic conditions in the countryside due to exceedingly low and unpaid wages, and isolation from markets. This rural-urban trend is likely to be greatest among Tatars because they have settled disproportionately in rural areas in the steppe regions, relative to (1) their respective residence in rural or urban Uzbekistan where the population was approximately two-thirds urban and (2) their region of origin. The second is a movement from villages in

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<sup>6</sup> Goskonnats archives.

the steppes to the southern regions and especially the southern coast as administrative and political obstacles are lifted. **However, both of these internal migration trends are weak because of low incomes, depleted savings, and comparatively high real estate values on the southern coast which limit relocation.**

**The return of the estimated 250,000 remaining Crimean Tatars in Central Asia is slowed by the economic crisis affecting Crimea and the static living conditions in compact settlements.** Immigration slowed from approximately 60,000 persons in 1989 to only 14,000 in 1995. According to interviewees, those who are likely to remain in Central Asia are urban residents, the elderly and the second generation of Crimean Tatars born in Central Asia. In contrast, the first generation of able-bodied, foreign-born adults were brought up in the heyday of Tatar political activism are likely to strive to return to Crimea.<sup>7</sup>

**There is also a small number of Crimean Tatars returning to Central Asia – estimated at 2 percent of the Crimean Tatar population.** Emigrants are mostly dependents returning to live with relatives in Central Asia. On the other hand, there are also cases of able-bodied men and their families who return because they are discouraged.

#### 4. Economic Situation

**Peaceful re-integration of the formerly deported people depends greatly on the country's ability to generate economic prosperity and opportunities accessible to the newcomers.** Crimea is arguably the hardest hit region by the economic transition in Ukraine in terms of GDP levels, decreased industrial growth and unemployment. Crimea is mainly a one sector economy with tourism the main profitable but seasonal activity. This lack of a wide spectrum of activities makes the country more vulnerable to an economic crisis. To make things worse, Crimea is perceived as a “dead-end”, i.e., it is at the end of distribution lines for most inputs, and, in particular, for energy, and irrigation water. **Hyper-inflation, and the collapse of industry, and trade links has had an immediate impact on the income levels of Ukrainian households.** A survey conducted in mid-1995 found that 31.7 percent of households were poor, and that a majority are heavily concentrated just below the poverty line. Households with more pensioners, and children were more likely to be poor.

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<sup>7</sup> The International Organization on Migration has recently completed a survey on migration from Central Asia. The study asked Crimean Tatars who remain in Central Asia what were their migration intentions. Preliminary results of the study could not be obtained for this report. Contact Dr. Frank Laczlo, IOM Budapest.

## II. Situation Analysis

**The seeds for civil and ethnic conflict remain.** Undeniably, inter-ethnic relations remain strained. Yet it should be recognized that conflict is highly politicized, and often fueled by mis-perceptions, and lack of complete information on both sides.

From the Crimean Tatars point of view, their communities are being ghettoized:

– **Geographically:** Living conditions in the compact settlements and in the hostels are sub-standard. Families live without basic infrastructure – water, electricity, roads. Reduced incomes also result in greater isolation.

– **Politically:** Because of under-representation at the local level (due in part to the boycott of local elections by the Mejlis in 1995) and regional (rayon) level, the Crimean Tatars are under represented. In the Crimean Parliament, the Mejlis<sup>8</sup> have obtained a quota of 14 parliamentarians sitting in the 96 member Crimean parliament – a privilege which may be taken away in 1998. “The cattle prod method,”<sup>9</sup> employed by the Mejlis, which includes self-settlement, mass demonstrations, and the closing of roads and railroads, to obtain concessions from the government reveal a necessity to adopt a threatening stance, rather than an ability to work through mainstream political institutions. As recently as this summer, residents of Stroganovka blocked the road to Yalta to demand attention to the lack of infrastructure in their settlement.

– **Administratively:** There is also a dearth of Crimean Tatars occupying management posts in administrative, executive, judicial, and other government bodies. In addition, municipal and regional departments tend to segregate out all FDP-related issues to the now under-funded Goskomnats. Another indicator is that sites did not have an integrated municipal plan for meeting the needs of all its population inclusive of the Crimean Tatar compact settlements which depend on the municipality.

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<sup>8</sup> The Mejlis is structured with a 33-member executive board, the Kurultai. Each town, village and compact settlement where Crimean Tatars reside also has a local representative of a Mejlis. A representative also coordinates activities of local Mejlis at the district (rayon) level. The Mejlis was formed in 1991 and has since served as the primary organization advocating for the Tatar community’s interests. It is linked to a political party – the Organization of the Crimean Tatar National Movement (OKND) – which has roots that extend back to 1967. Another party which has been relegated to a secondary role – and in particular since the murder of its leader in 1996 – is the National Movement of the Crimean Tatars (NDKT), which is contrary to the OKND more conciliatory with the Russian authorities. The present leader of the Mejlis Mustafa Jemilev formerly served in the highest echelons of the OKND and enjoys much authority due to his dissident activity and imprisonment. [for more information on the Mejlis, see Open Society, 1996, p. 51].

<sup>9</sup> Mr. Mustafa Jemilev is quoted in Christian Science Monitor, March 9, 1995.



– **Legally:** Many Crimean Tatars lived for years and continue to live without propiska. An estimated 40 percent of Crimean Tatars do not have Ukrainian citizenship.<sup>10</sup> They also complain of being treated as second class citizens harassed by the police for their lack of permanent residence permits and their “Caucasian features.”

– **Economically:** An estimated 50 percent are unemployed and many more are employed in menial jobs or jobs not corresponding to their professional specialization or experience. Also workers are too often relegated to low-paid, menial jobs below their level of qualification.

– **Socially:** There is widespread discrimination against the Crimean Tatars who are still called “traitors” referring to their alleged collaboration with the Germans in World War II. There is very little inter-ethnic socializing among adults and much misinformation about assistance programs.

– **Culturally:** The knowledge of the language and culture has been eroded by 70 years of russianization and 40 years in exile. After deportation, the Crimean Tatar religious sites, monuments, literature, administrative documents were destroyed by the Soviets.

**Many Ukrainians and Russians said that they fear that Crimean Tatars, as a growing percentage of the population, will reclaim their homes, and establish their own government in Crimea.** While the Mejlis sidesteps these incendiary issues and focusses its demands on legal reform and cultural revival, the bulk of the Crimean Tatars are concerned with immediate needs. At each site, some respondents cautioned that with the continued decline in the economic situation, self-government and return of property may be the best means for resolving issues of housing, discrimination, unemployment, lack of social and legal protection. It is difficult to assess to what extent the difference between the demands of the Mejlis reveal a growing gulf between the Mejlis and the Crimean Tatar population – as many respondents claimed – or positive leadership.

**To complicate further, some Crimean Tatar respondents believe that intermittent conflicts are likely to erupt pitting minorities against each other especially on the Southern coast where resources are more tightly controlled – pitting Armenians, Azeris and Jews against the Crimean Tatars.**

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<sup>10</sup> This is an unofficial estimate made by an official working at OVIR, the passport agency, in Simferopol. There are 245,624 registered Tatars in Crimea and 147,279 Tatars (60 percent) have citizenship. This estimate may be higher than the migration figures would suggest because many Tatars in interviews said that they had problems obtaining formal proof of residence on November 13, 1991. People who have sought to apply earlier do not have information about new regulations which might encourage them to re-apply. Other estimates vary from 60,000 to 120,000 Crimean Tatars without citizenship. See Chapter 2.

## CHAPTER 2: CITIZENSHIP AND OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

**The difficulties related to citizenship are one example of the legal difficulties experienced by the FDPs.**

With regard to citizenship, the Ukrainian government has made great strides in simplifying the citizenship application procedure. The main goal of UNHCR is to prevent statelessness among the FDPs. A multi-pronged program is being implemented at this time. The main obstacle to obtaining Ukrainian citizenship for FDPs who returned after the deadline of November 13, 1991 remains the cost of the renunciation of a second citizenship.

**Difficulties in obtaining citizenship are linked mostly to a very low rate of application for the Ukrainian citizenship.** During the period from 1991 to 1995, 97 persons were restored to the Ukrainian citizenship and two persons received Ukrainian citizenship.

The main obstacles to **applying** for citizenship are:

- **a lack of understanding of the importance of citizenship** – as distinguished from nationality;
- **a lack of up-to-date and accurate information** being communicated by word of mouth in the Crimean Tatar communities as well as by officials of Goskomnats, NGOs, and the Mejlis;
- **the lack of an outreach approach to disseminating information regarding citizenship;**
- mistaken expectation that a simplification of the citizenship law would result in granting Crimean Tatars automatic citizenship; and
- anticipated costs and other difficulties linked to obtaining citizenship.

The main obstacles to **obtaining** citizenship are:

- **the cost of obtaining citizenship**, in particular for those who need to relinquish Uzbek citizenship;
- **a confusing process** because many administrators have inaccurate or out-of-date information misleading applicants;

- difficulty in locating documents which might have been destroyed during exile or by Soviet troops; and
- lack of cash for obtaining documents, and to cover transportation among the poorest.

### **Consequences of Lack of Citizenship**

The implications of not having citizenship at this time can be important. These are that non-citizens are restricted from:

- **employment in a broadly defined civil service (tax department, courts, local government, etc.);**
- **higher education is more expensive and certain faculties are closed (e.g. law school); and**
- **privatisation of household plots and enterprises;**
- **travel abroad to Russia especially is restricted to those with new (non-Soviet) passports; and**
- **voting in national and regional elections.**

### **Other Legal Issues**

Many interviewees had problems upon arrival especially in the early years formalizing their residence, purchase of homes, and then their completed homes. This creates a feeling of temporariness and insecurity among those who cannot obtain these documents. Crimean Tatar sources estimate that as many as 100,000 Tatars may reside in Crimea without propiska. Police harassment is another continuing problem even though some claim that the problem has diminished recently.

## CHAPTER 3: SOCIO-ECONOMIC NEEDS

### I. Level of Poverty

#### 1. Definition of Poverty

**Poverty in Crimea is relative over time and within communities.** Most of the population has been affected negatively by the transition, and has felt at least a temporary drop in living standards. The first drop occurred in 1992. Within communities, respondents distinguished between themselves, Crimean Tatars, and the Ukrainian and Russian majority. They explained their lower standard of living as a function of lower levels of employment, lower paying jobs, poor housing, lower access to amenities, infrastructure and social services. While our assessment supports this perception, similar levels of need can be found among young families starting with no assets with regard to housing, and pensioners with limited support networks.

**A broad distinction can be made between those Crimean Tatars who settled and had secured housing before 1992 and those who were not settled by 1992.** The distinction can be made at the level of the household as well as that of the compact settlement. Households are likely to have sub-standard housing conditions, and low levels of savings. Compact settlements that were settled late tend to be less built, less populated, and have less infrastructure.

**Respondents distinguished three more groups based mostly on diet.** The absolute poorest who can afford only bread; the poor who eat only bread and potatoes; the not so poor who can afford some oil, sugar, vegetables and fruits in season. The majority of our respondents fell in the last category – where food was the major expense of the household and reported very few other expenses – clothing, health, school and transport. And no expenses related to leisure.

**Absolute poverty exists in both urban and rural areas among Crimean Tatars but varies in its definition. In villages, the definition of poverty is often limited to seasonal hunger, reflecting long-standing shortages in consumer goods and services.** Thus a second indicator of poverty may need to be applied – such as access to heating for winter, availability of children’s shoes, foregoing medical treatment and school attendance in order to obtain a better comparison among urban and rural areas. **Among villagers, distinctions can be made between families that**

**have recurrent cash expenditures such as families with school-age children, or with chronically or seriously ill family members versus families with grown children and healthy working adults.** There were tragic cases of rural families foregoing emergency medical treatment because of unpaid salaries.

**In cities, respondents also measure their poverty in terms of quantity but also quality of food, housing, adequate clothing, access to social services, and cultural activities.** While most families were poor according to these criteria, access to production from a household plot – of relatives in villages – has kept many poor families from falling into complete destitution.

**Housing has become a poverty criteria because of overcrowding, incomplete construction and lack of basic amenities.** Housing is a liability in terms of a drain on resources (utility charges) and reduced real estate value in steppe villages where the majority Crimean Tatar own homes.

## 2. Who Are the Poor?

**The poor cannot be easily categorized into social groups.** For each traditional vulnerable group category there is a counter-example.

### Characteristics of the Poor

However, poor households tend to share one or more of the following characteristics:

- **arrival in Crimea after 1991**, without an ability to guarantee housing, and having lost savings to inflation, and/or being unable to sell assets for amounts allowing the household to guarantee housing once in Crimea;
- **starting up again in a new location at this time** are likely to be struggling – rural-urban migrants, migrants to the southern coast;
- **a high ratio of dependents** (school-age children, invalids, elderly) compared to providers (especially men), in particular, households headed by single, divorced or widowed mothers, and pensioners without support of children;
- **over-dependence on small salaries and pensions;**
- **chronic medical expenditures, depleting cash resources;**
- **living in isolated villages without easy access to markets;**
- **rural and urban households without access to land for subsistence farming**, such as residents of hostels who do not have rural relatives living in proximity;
- **alcoholism** – while less widespread among Crimean Tatars than the Russian population – is also a drain on household resources through unmet basic needs, foregone income opportunities, and depleted assets.

**Vulnerable groups:** although there are exceptions, interviews suggest that the social groups that are likely to meet the above characteristics are:

- refugees;
- pensioners;
- large families (with young children);
- single and divorced mothers.

Certain professions were also most hard hit by layoffs, unpaid leaves, and irregular payment of salaries:

- collective farm workers;
- light industry factory workers;
- engineers;
- construction workers;
- medical workers; and
- school and kindergarten teachers.

**Even the non-poor have spells of poverty because of instability of incomes.**

A first drop in living standards for the FDPs who arrived after 1992 occurred when they moved to Crimea. Few had employment upon arrival, or permanent housing. As noted previously, many were reduced to eating only bread. The second, more uniform drop took place in 1992-3 with hyper-inflation which eliminated cash savings, and the budgetary crisis which reduced the value of salaries and pensions, and began a series of layoffs and forced unpaid leave of workers. For the last five years, the living standards of families has remained notably unstable. **Seasonal poverty affects urban and rural families.** The summer brings increased access to food, and incomes from sales in the tourist areas. The winter, and the late spring often brings shortages of food because of lower incomes, exhaustion of food stocks and lower productivity of cattle because of insufficient stored feed.

### **3. Coping Strategies**

There are three main types of coping strategies; reductive, productive, and collaborative strategies. Reductive strategies include subsistence farming, reduction of food consumption (quality and quantity), reducing cash expenditures (reducing use of fuel, utilities, not buying new clothes, foregoing medical treatment and opting for home remedies and folk healers) and even giving up cigarettes, foregoing long-term basic needs (housing) for immediate needs (food). Productive strategies include selling produce, stealing goods and produce, borrowing, self-employment, taking multiple salaried jobs, private enterprises, and renting land. Collaborative strategies rely on family and ethnic networks to access and pool resources such as pooling incomes of many heads of households to build one home, crowding many households into one home to reduce housing costs, and pooling labor for construction and income generation.

#### **4. Social Consequences of Poverty**

For the Crimean Tatars, poverty has taken an important toll on their community. Households are overworked, and there are few venues for socializing, and creating a cohesive community. There is less cooperation between households than in Central Asia. Also, resettlement has meant the disintegration of families. Because of difficulties in providing for their families, a surprisingly large number of female respondents said that their husbands had left them for better off women or returned to Central Asia. Criminal activities (vandalism, theft, racketeering, prostitution) are also on the rise. Interviews with youths revealed that because of the lack of employment opportunities and the general inaccessibility of recreational activities, they are faced with the temptations of hooliganism, alcoholism and drug use.

## **II. Priorities**

### **1. Ranking of Needs**

According to individual and group interviews and community meetings the following are the main problems affecting returning populations and impeding peaceful integration:

- infrastructure in compact settlements;
- housing;
- employment/income generation activities;
- legal status (citizenship);
- support for language and culture; and
- social services (health and education facilities).

### **2. Infrastructure**

At the community level, the top priority of residents of the compact settlements is the provision of basic infrastructure. The lack of basic amenities – water, electricity and roads – creates sub-standard living conditions for residents, and in turn impedes the settlement as well as the completion of homes in 200 compact settlements.<sup>11</sup> These problems affect the majority of the estimated 130,000 people (25,000 families) who live in these compact settlements throughout the country.

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<sup>11</sup> The number of compact settlements (and their inhabitants) vary widely from 200 to 240 depending on the source. This may be due to the fact that these are difficult to track of. Many times these compact settlements began with Crimean Tatars squatting on land and starting to build without official approval, and were progressively formalized as settlements. However, some of these settlements still lack formal approval.

**A majority of compact settlements do not have the infrastructure to provide basic living conditions. As of 1997, of the compact settlements and residential neighborhoods:**

- **20 percent have electricity;**
- **30 percent have water;**
- **15 percent have tarmac roads;**
- **4 percent have gas (heating); and**
- **none have sewers.**<sup>12</sup>

Those compact settlements which were formalized late (after 1991) or never were, are likely to have the least infrastructure.

The Ukrainian government financed capital investments in the compact settlements between 1989 and 1996 (see Table 3.1). In 1996, financing virtually terminated of capital investments. **Goskonnats estimates that 148 million dollars are needed to complete all the infrastructure for the compact settlements.**<sup>13</sup>

- *Consequences of Lack of Infrastructure*

**The main consequences of the lack of infrastructure are (1) the low standard of living in the compact settlements** (see Table 3.2), and **(2) the over-burdening existing infrastructure. A secondary impact is ethnic tension** between newly settled Crimean Tatars, and Russian and Ukrainian residents who see their ability to rely on existing infrastructure diminished by overloading.

Infrastructure in the communal shelters is also poor, seldom maintained and overloaded. Some of these hostels are converted facilities – such a summer hotels, kindergartens, etc. – not designed for long-term, year-round residence. **Sustainability of repairs and maintenance** in hostels are problematic and threaten the success of such programs. **Heating is the main issue** for residents because it can only be solved at the centralized level and requires large sums of cash.

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<sup>12</sup> Conversation with Deputy of Supreme Soviet of Crimea, Mr. Mustafayev.

<sup>13</sup> Vadim Petrov of the Mejlis estimates that between one and two billion dollars are required for restoring living conditions for the Crimean Tatars [in Open society institute, 1996, 55].



### 3. Housing

The FDPs were met with an already tight housing and infrastructure situation in Ukraine, which was worsened significantly by the economic crisis accompanying the break up of the Soviet Union. The rate of construction of new units at the national level declined in 1995 to 20 % of 1990 levels. In 1995, one Ukrainian family in seven lacked separate or permanent housing, living with relatives, in temporarily rented apartments or in hostels.

**Considering 50,000 Crimean Tatar families,<sup>14</sup>**

- 45,500 household plots have been given out;<sup>15</sup>
- 21,307 families live in unfinished homes or vremiankas;
- 6,500 families live with relatives, in hostels or in rented flats;
- about 16,000 families are in queue for municipal housing;
- 3,500 families are in homes built by the state; and
- 3,500 live in homes for which Ukraine received grants.

**Through Goskomnats programs, a total of 196.8 thousand square meters of private housing were built over five years between 1991-5** within the framework of the program to support the resettlement of the Crimean Tatar (Table 3.3). According to government norms requiring 13,56 square meters per person, housing construction would be sufficient theoretically for 14,513 persons. **The government of Ukraine also provided subsidies for housing construction** for FDPs – not only Crimean Tatars. But the value of these one-time grants was reduced by delays in payment and hyper-inflation. Last year approximately 200 houses and apartments were purchased mainly in rural areas to households belonging to the most vulnerable groups including households with many children; disabled people, the elderly, etc.

**Today, housing construction has all but terminated at many of the sites visited.** Instead of building a home in one to two years, construction has dragged on for more than five years. **Families who had not already built their home by 1992 are particularly affected because their savings were wiped out by currency reform and hyper-inflation.** The end of construction has meant that a temporary situation has become long-term. But now even the poor conditions that were guaranteed until now are being threatened by requirements that residents pay a greater share of the rent and utilities formerly covered by Goskomnats. (Also see discussion on hostels and Table 3.5).

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<sup>14</sup> Figures are from UNHCR, 1996, p. 3, if not noted otherwise.

<sup>15</sup> Figures are from the Head of the Department for the return and shelter of Crimean Tatars, as of January 1997.

**Who has a completed home?** At the outset, in the late 1980s, families could count on their incomes from sale of assets in Central Asia and their savings to meet their housing needs in Crimea (Table 3.4). The first wave of immigrants from Central Asia are also remembered as the wealthier than the later immigrants.

**Who continued to build after 1992?** Families who continued to built after 1992 have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Plans for the home were realistic.
- Cash income is sufficient to cover more than basic needs.
- Opportunities to pool savings and incomes at the level of the extended family.
- A large, healthy labor force, and relatively few dependents – e.g. children, elderly, invalids – at the household level.
- Time to build. Seasonal employment and odd jobs provide the flexibility to also build a home.
- Small or medium private business (not micro-business or self-employment) provide higher incomes than salaries when they are successful.
- Access to large sums from seasonal or contract work in Russia.

Outsiders are commonly struck by the uneven housing conditions of compact settlements. The most common explanations for the large homes in compact settlements which stand out against unfinished homes, and *vremiankas* were: (1) the household was well-off in Central Asia (in terms of savings and receipts from sale of assets) and finished construction before 1992; (2) the home belongs to an entrepreneur; (3) the family is composed of numerous grown sons; and (4) the family lives in Russia where they save enough money to invest in construction.

**Consequences of building:** There are two main consequences to families spending time on building themselves which impacts their socio-economic status. One consequence is foregone labor and income for construction. The second is a foregone savings buffer making families more vulnerable in critical situations.

**Technical consequences of building homes themselves is that the quality of the construction (1) may not meet government standards, and (2) may not be appropriate for the terrain.** As a result, many households said that they had trouble formalizing their homes, and a number of homes crumbled on their own, and others had to be destroyed because of serious technical weaknesses.

**Hostels/Communal housing:** Traditionally, families awaiting to be placed in municipal apartments have been placed in hostels. However, **because of their late arrival in the country, Crimean Tatars are likely to represent a larger share of the hostel population.** The conditions in the hostels vary greatly. Some are very crowded. In general, the infrastructure is poor and overburdened. Sustainability of repairs is jeopardized by poor maintenance and vandalism.

**A very important issue for many residents in hostels is that they are increasingly being asked to pay for the rooms they occupy (Table 3.5).** Many respondents said that they will either need to leave the hostel or re-group into a smaller number of rooms. It is unclear how widespread enforcement of these fees will be and whether tenants risk being evicted if they do not pay. There were already cases, however, of residents being expelled from a hostel in Simferopol because they were unable to pay.

#### **4. Employment and Income Generation**

The economic crisis in Crimea has engendered financial insecurity at the household level, requiring a shift away from pensions and government salaries. Limitations of salaried employment are:

- **Low salaries:** To many, unemployment is not the main issue but the fact that salaries are so low that they are insufficient to support a family adequately. The problem is compounded by the fact that, according to Crimean Tatars, the FDPs are locked out of better-paid skilled positions, and are limited to physical labor.
- **Unreliable Salaries:** Increasingly, salaried employment is losing its stable, reliable character. Employees are asked to agree to short-term contracts and seasonal work. Even full-time employees say that salaried are paid with a delay of months.
- **Unpaid Salaries:** Sometimes salaries are not paid, paid only in part or paid in kind. This affects in particular industrial workers and collective farm workers.

Crimean Tatars claim that unemployment affects their ethnic group more than other groups. According to Crimean Tatar sources, **an estimated 40 percent of the work-capable population is unemployed.** These figures do not reflect the fact, according to Crimean Tatar officials and interview respondents, that Crimean Tatars are seldom offered jobs which correspond with their qualifications and experience.

Respondents explained that low employment rates among Crimean Tatars are caused by a number of re-enforcing factors.

- **Discrimination** is perceived as the most important obstacle to employment. Examples abound when employers retracted offers once they realized the applicant was Crimean Tatar. Also there is a perception that discrimination contributes to being offered only low-level jobs.
- **The lack of legal documentation** – propiska and citizenship – impedes employment.

- **Personal ties and nepotism are very important in obtaining job placement.** Thus, those who have more history in an area and more links (including ethnic and political allegiances) are more likely to obtain placement.
- **Seniority:** FDPs who were the last hired, are the first to be down-sized in the economic crisis.
- **Unemployment is also due to a mismatch of specialization:** de-urbanization of the Crimean Tatar population and differences in industrial activities in central Asia and Crimea.

**Self-employment, Micro and Small Enterprises:** Many households have shifted their reliance on incomes from salaries, pensions and other government benefits to private sector income. The large majority of persons involved in the private sector are self-employed, or micro-entrepreneurs or involved in subsistence farming. These activities are characterized by low levels of investment, seasonal fluctuations in income and activities and high levels of informality. The same characteristics that make them flexible also make them vulnerable. Incomes per day are very small, and can therefore be wiped out by increased costs or seasonal price fluctuations. Another very important requirement is access to markets and in particular access to transportation since much of these activities are related to trade and marketing.

Main obstacles to business are:

- **high tax rate (30 percent on profits and 52 percent on the salary fund);**
- **other official fees required for operating, (e.g. trade license 200 gr. per year);**
- mafia (*racket*) payments (approximately 10 to 20 percent of profits) and other related costs;
- privatisation of small enterprises is less accessible to returning populations because it is limited to permanent employees and Ukrainian citizens;
- locales are difficult to rent from the municipality in profitable places. Once the renter has refurbished the locale, it can be repossessed by the municipality without compensation for improvements;
- lack of a “roof”, or protection agreement with a well-placed official;
- mentality of some employees and business partners who see nothing wrong in stealing;
- lack of (working and start up) capital. For Crimean Tatars savings have been spent on housing;
- lack of ideas;
- lack of understanding of management, accounting, tax and legal issues;
- lack of knowledge of appropriate technologies; and
- low status of self-employment and trade.

**The costs of running a business are perceived to be increasing. Tax rates are believed to be too high. All enterprises pay 30 percent on profits and 52 percent on the salary fund.** Enterprises that act as “intermediaries”, i.e., procurement agents, pay a 45 percent tax on their income from their services. A VAT-type tax also adds 20 percent to the cost of items. The law does not provide any tax breaks for start-up enterprises or small enterprises.<sup>16</sup>

## 5. Language and Culture

*“Without our national language, we are not Tatar. If we are not Tatar, we are nothing. If this is not my homeland and I am not Tatar, then why am I putting up with this [these living conditions]?”*

(Female respondent, community meeting in Ismail Bey)

To the Tatars, the importance of language should not be underestimated. It is commonly stated that language is at the core of nationality and nationality gives meaning to the current difficulties.

**However, within the Crimean Tatar community, there is clearly no consensus on how to address the issue of revitalization of Crimean Tatar language and culture.** On the one hand, the Mejlis backed by some parents request that Crimean Tatar schools be set up. On the other hand, some parents and especially those expecting their children to go to university are ambivalent about an all-Tatar education which they believe would result in generations of second-rate university applicants. Other respondents underline that mixed schools are the sole environment where ethnic groups truly co-exist.

## 6. Social Services

Social services were not seen as a priority when compared to other needs. However, the Crimean Tatars with their distinct demography have placed new demands on the existing social services. The main obstacle to access to social services is low incomes. The formal costs (transportation, medicines, supplies) and informal costs (bribes and other presents to doctors to guarantee good treatment have increased.

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<sup>16</sup> One respondent said that a law in 1991 provided a tax break for start ups but that it is no longer implemented.

## CHAPTER 4: PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

### Overall Recommendations

In accordance with the findings of the Social Assessment, the goal of the programs should be to enhance re-integration of the recent returnees and refugees into the Ukrainian and Crimean social, political, legal and economic mainstream. Funding of programs should be **focused on those households that arrived after 1991** because they are most likely to be vulnerable and under-served.

Programs should support development of livable and lively communities by financing programs to develop basic infrastructure (supply of drinking water, electricity, roads, drainage, reforestation); support the economic development of these populations through micro-business credits so that they can meet basic daily needs, political integration of these returnees through increasing access to citizenship; and support cultural and linguistic revival through formal and informal education programs. Respondents – households and officials – emphasized the importance of adopting a **self-help** approach, stressing the negative impact on their community of hand-outs in terms of dependency.

**Feasibility studies should be conducted by implementing agencies in order to refine the recommendations listed below.** Outputs of a stakeholder workshop could be an evaluation of the proposal and recommendations, a common action plan laying out stakeholder responsibilities and commitments for implementation.

### I. Program Recommendations

#### 1. Infrastructure

Main recommendations are:

- Focus on basic infrastructure – water, electricity, roads, drainage systems, soil erosion walls, reforestation – in the compact settlements in the periphery of cities.
- Always provide mechanisms for beneficiaries (not only their representatives) to participate in program design, implementation and management – including technical decisions such as the selection of appropriate technology.

- Require contributions from the beneficiaries – in kind, cash, or labor. While the project may want to set minimum standards, the community should, to the extent feasible, be able to organize their participation and contributions in a manner that seems fair and realistic to them (see example of Krasnokamenka below).
- Identify opportunities to create short-term skilled and unskilled labor opportunities for local residents. Potential for misunderstandings and ways to overcome it regarding community contributions and paid labor opportunities should be addressed in the feasibility study.
- Maintenance issues and user fees should be part of the initial discussions with the communities and should also be discussed in the context of choice of project and technology.
- **A follow-up feasibility study** should be conducted to design a detailed project proposal based on these recommendations. Specific questions for the feasibility study should include: identification of pilot sites; criteria for setting a ceiling cost for a community project; refine community-based methodology for selecting and implementing a project; identify means for setting user fees and other community contributions; maintenance responsibilities and contracts; and local labor opportunities. A stakeholder’s workshop is essential early on to develop a common action plan between stakeholders.

## 2. Housing

Main recommendations are:

- Buy existing homes and apartments instead of building homes.
- Donors should consider other assisted self-help programs, which could include labor contributions from the beneficiary household or building brigades made up of neighbors and friends of vulnerable households, subsidized loans for finishing or buying homes, etc.
- Any loans on construction should postpone repayment for a reasonable amount of time to allow completion of construction.
- The beneficiaries should be consulted in determining housing criteria.
- Focus on residents of overcrowded hostels, and year-round residents of shipping containers who have no other housing options.

- Site selection and preparatory stages of projects for the repair and construction of infrastructure in hostels should be **driven by** the community development component. Successful resolution of user fee and maintenance issues in a formal contract form should be a pre-requisite for beginning work in a hostel.
- Clarification of ownership of hostels and payment requirements by residents should also be taken into consideration for site selection because of their implications on whether FDPs can be expected to benefit from the repairs for a reasonable amount of time.
- **A feasibility study** could identify and evaluate other assisted self-help options; community development methods for setting user fees and maintenance contracts; and ownership issues in hostels.

### 3. Employment and Income Generation

Main recommendations are:

- Small credits should be provided to support the development of micro-enterprises and self-employment activities.
- Credits should begin very small. Individuals can qualify for larger amounts in a stepped process.
- The target group is FDPs and other residents of the compact settlements.
- Means for selecting recipients (either revolving credit groups, community committee, or business plans) need to be assessed.
- Training and information dissemination can be provided regarding: procurement of appropriate mini-equipment; case studies of successful micro- and small businesses in the former Soviet Union; and management (planning, accounting, and tax laws).
- **A feasibility study** should be conducted to produce a detailed project proposal. Additional information to be gathered through the feasibility study includes: loan size; size of fund; interest rate; credit experience; collateral issues; accountability; local partner and capacity building needs; legal and tax framework for credit fund; ways of protecting small businesses from mafia and other threats; lessons learned from other NGOs and IOs. A stakeholder workshop should be held to ensure close collaboration and develop an action plan.



#### 4. Citizenship

UNHCR pursues a policy which ultimately aims for the result that any former citizen of the Soviet Union will be attributed the citizenship of one of the successor states and that no one remains stateless.

Main recommendations are:

- Focus on assisting those who are most likely to be stateless; i.e. those who have arrived after November 1991.
- Implement an information campaign that targets the laymen and local officials not only regional and national level managers in Kyiv and Simferopol.
- Make use of the mass media and its attention to the arts and culture program to disseminate information.
- However, because of power cuts, expensive electricity, lack of leisure time, etc., most respondents said that the best way to disseminate information is **not** through newspapers, television, or radio. Use informal means to disseminate information: through posters and leaflets in shops, bus stops, schools, local passport offices, etc.
- Design documentation for laymen – brief, simple language in Russian. The target audience should include not only potential applicants but their local government and community representatives – Mejlis, Representatives of the State Committee on International Relations, and passport agency workers.
- Design information campaign to raise the number of applicants – explain why citizenship is important, define citizenship versus nationality, describe application process.
- A system for disseminating up-to-date information in an ongoing manner to the local level needs to be improved so that local officials can provide accurate up-to-date information to potential applicants.
- An intermediary status for those waiting for citizenship which is used at the local level by officials to grant citizen's rights to Crimean Tatars (for higher education and privatisation) can be discussed more widely, and perhaps formalized by officials.
- Continue to build capacity of local implementing partner in designing an effective and responsive outreach program.
- Set concrete goals, objectives and indicators to track the progress of the program.

## **5. Language and Culture**

Main recommendations are:

- Continue to encourage revival of language and culture through formal and informal education, artistic and recreational activities.
- Focus on laymen and youths in particular, and involve them in projects with the artistic elite.
- Design programs for different ethnic groups to work together rather than in parallel.
- Monitor the impact of the ethnic tolerance message – to what extent is it delivered, heard and accepted by participants of the program; do participants say there is a change in their perception of other groups after they have taken part in the program and so forth.

## **II. Program Considerations**

Each program should bear in mind the three following considerations.

### **Information Dissemination**

Incomplete information regarding programs leads to suspicions and rumors of mismanagement. A very effective public information campaign – regarding the program's goals, target population, resources to be provided, and conditionalities – needs to accompany each phase of the program. Though these suspicions may be inevitable because of local history, openness and accountability need to be core values of the program.

### **Mistrust of Existing Government and Non-Governmental Structures**

At each site, the mistrust of existing government and non-government representatives was expressed loudly. The mistrust is born of recent scandals regarding the misuse of funds. It is also due to the misunderstanding of the impact of inflation and the economic hardship on central and local budgets. Consequently, financing should not be handed over to local counterparts or entities without close supervision, accounting, and monitoring.

### **Community Leadership**

**Many communities visited have active informal leaders, such as council of elders, capable of mobilizing resources in the community and resolving conflicts.** These are valuable resources into which a development program can tap for support. By requiring local participation and contributions, programs can enhance these informal structures rather than inhibit them.

## **SETTING**

### **I. Background**

#### **1. Geography and Climate**

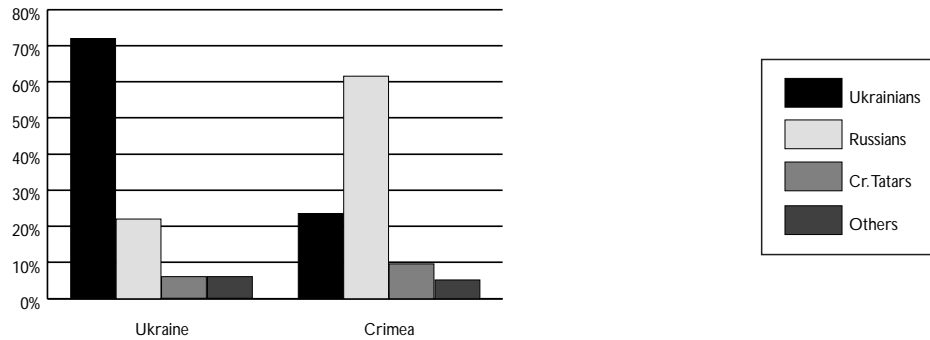
The Autonomous Republic of Crimea is part of the territory of Ukraine. It consists of a peninsula jutting out into the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov to the northeast and attached to southern Ukraine. Its territory consists of a total area of 26,000 square kilometers. At its maximum points, Crimea is 305 kilometers from north to south and 325 kilometers from east to west, with 2500 kilometers of coastline.

Crimea has three main climatic zones. The first, the southern mountainous region, is 150 kilometers long and 50 kilometers wide and consists of three consecutive mountain ranges rising out of the sea from Sevastopol to Feodosiia. The second, the northern steppe area, is flat, dry, and in some regions benefits from fertile black soils (*tchernoziom*). The eastern part of this zone benefits from irrigation from mainland Ukraine. The third area is the Kerch peninsula, the eastern most point of Crimea, where large mineral deposits can be found, including oil in the bay of the Sea of Azov.

The first zone is blessed with a maritime climate, milder but also more humid. Average winter temperature of the continental climate is minus 2 degrees Celsius, with an absolute minimum of minus 33 degrees. The maritime region averages 4 degrees Celsius with an absolute minimum of minus 15 degrees. However, the maritime region can be divided into two regions – mountainous and coastal. The climate in the mountainous region is more humid because of higher rainfall (600 to 1000 mm annually compared to 3 to 400 for the country on average), and colder – with extremes of minus 37 degrees in winter and winds twice as strong as along the coast. The steppes also experience dust storms during dry and cold winter spells. The average summer temperature of the peninsula is 23 degrees Celsius.

#### **2. Demography and Ethnicity**

The total population of Crimea is approximately 2,193,000 (in 1997). The ethnic make-up of the peninsula differs greatly from that of the mainland of Ukraine, where 72 percent are Ukrainian, 22 percent are Russian, and 6 percent belong to other groups (including Tatars, a mere 3 percent). (Figure 1.1).



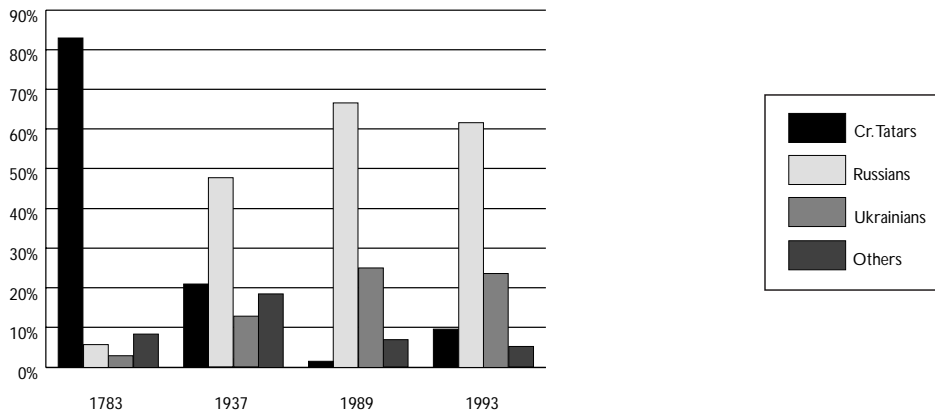
*Figure 1.1: Ethnic composition in Ukraine and Crimea*

**Ethnicity in Crimea has been shaped by the political and economic environment created in the peninsula by the competing Russian and Ottoman empires and the Crimean Tatar Khanate.** In 1783, at the time of the annexation of the peninsula by Russia (which followed the defeat of the Crimean Tatar Khanate of 1774), Crimean Tatars represented 83 percent of the total population of Crimea, with Russians and Ukrainians comprising respectively 5.7 percent and 2.9 percent of the population. Once controlled by the Russians, Crimean Tatars were systematically deprived of power and resources – namely land – which led to massive emigration. Emigration and deportations of the Crimean Tatar population which lasted until the 1860s, succeeded in changing dramatically the demographics of the peninsula in the favor of the colonizing Russians. By 1937, the Russian population represented 47.7 percent, the Tatars, 21 percent; and the Ukrainians, 12.8 percent. After deportation in 1944, and until 1989, the Crimean Tatars represented a minuscule minority – 1.5 percent of the population, with the Russians making up two thirds of the population and the Ukrainians one quarter.<sup>1</sup> In 1993, Russians represented a decreasing majority of the population (61.6 percent), followed by Ukrainians (23.6 percent), and Crimean Tatars (9.6 percent)<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1.2). By the end of 1996, Tatars already made up 11.9 percent of the population.<sup>3</sup> (Table 1.1).

<sup>1</sup> For more information about demographics and history, also see De Zwager, Nicholas, 1996, “Crimea: A Programme for the Future in Ukraine: Donor Consultation on Ukraine,” Crimea Integration and Development Programme, Geneva; Open Society, 1996; and Ovod, 1997 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> In Open Society Institute, 1996, “Crimean Tatars: Repatriation and Conflict Resolution,” p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Goskonnats archives.



*Figure 1.2: Changing Ethnic Composition in Crimea (1783-1993)*<sup>4</sup>

**The Crimean Tatar population is overwhelmingly young and rural.** Only 27 percent of the Crimean Tatar population lives in cities, while 73 percent lives in rural areas. An estimated 16 percent of the registered Crimean Tatar population is composed of children aged 0-16, 51 percent are capable of working, and only 16 percent are pensioners.<sup>5</sup>

**The Crimean Tatar population is likely to grow faster than other nationalities in Crimea.** The government committee on nationalities estimates that, by 2005, the Tatar share of the population is expected to jump to 17.2 percent.

This is due to:

- fertility rates among the Tatars (4.5 per thousand) more than double those of Russians and Ukrainians (1.6 in 1993)<sup>6</sup>;
- a Crimean Tatar population younger than the Crimean average;
- a continued inflow of Crimean Tatars from Central Asia; and
- out-migration of the Russian and Ukrainian populations.

<sup>4</sup> Open Society, 1996, p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Nariman Ibadulaev, Representative of the City Council, Member of the Plan-Budget Committee. The figures do not add up because two are age groups (0 to 16 and pensioners) and the third is a status: “capable of work,” which excludes invalids, etc.

<sup>6</sup> UNDP, 1996, “Ukraine Human Development Report: Looking Beyond the Triple Transition,” p. 91.

Russian respondents explained that Russians are leaving for better jobs, educational opportunities, and higher retirement pensions in Russia. Vulnerable households (pensioners and families with invalids or chronically ill patients) explained that they need to be close to other family members in order to cope with the economic crisis. Interestingly, migration figures show that 75 percent of the Russian population leaving Crimea is work capable.<sup>7</sup>

**As a result, only the Crimean Tatar population is experiencing a positive level of population growth, of 6 per thousand in 1994, compared to a national average of minus 5.8 per thousand.**<sup>8</sup> In 1995, Russians and Ukrainians represented respectively 46 percent and 22.7 percent of immigrants and 59.2 percent and 24.8 percent of emigrants, while Crimean Tatars represented 21 percent of immigrants and only 7 percent of emigrants.<sup>9</sup>

### 3. History: Why are the Tatars returning to Crimea now?

Many Russians and Ukrainians still ask: “*They had houses and jobs in Uzbekistan. Why are they returning now and demanding special treatment?*” This question reflects a misunderstanding of the priorities and motives of the Crimean Tatar people. For the Crimean Tatars, the return is motivated not by a desire to better their economic situation but to return to the homeland. Indeed, many respondents explained that since birth in Central Asia, they have been dreaming, talking and hoping for one thing: the return to Crimea. In many families, the longing for the homeland was a central theme during exile. One respondent explained with a smile:

*My mother told me so much about Simferopol that when I came here on my own, I could find my way around – I could recognize the streets, monuments from what she had told me. I had a mental map.*

Crimean Tatars distinguish themselves from the other ethnic minorities on the peninsula. They claim to be (and are seeking the special status of) indigenous people. As Shevket Ramazov told the Christian Science Monitor in 1995,<sup>10</sup> “*We are not guests here. We are masters.*”

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<sup>7</sup> Ovod, 1997, “Migration Processes in Crimea: History, Problems and Prospects,” Migration Department of the Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Simferopol (in Russian), pp. 39-41.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Health of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, 1996, Information Bulletin; Health of the Deported People, 1996:2, Republican Medical Center for Serving the Deported People, Simferopol.

<sup>9</sup> Ovod, 1997, p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> Christian Science Monitor, “Unlike Chechens, The Tatars May Get Rights without War,” March 9, 1995, by Brian Humphreys.

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- **Deportation**

The night of May 18, 1944 an estimated 200,000 Crimean Tatars were forcibly deported to Russia and the Central Asian republics for allegedly collaborating with the Germans during World War II. The deportation of the Crimean Tatars distinguishes itself in its efficiency and scale. As one interviewee explained:

*The Soviet army learned from the deportation of the Chechens. In Chechnya, they tried to deport everyone at once, but the men offered armed resistance to the deportation, causing numerous casualties. So in Crimea in 1944, the Soviet Army sent all able-bodied Tatar men to serve on the front in Ukraine. The deportation consisted mostly of women, children, and the elderly. On the night of the deportation, my mother was awoken by a young Russian soldier. She grabbed her children protectively. He said she'd better let go of them and gather some warm clothes, her documents, and some money. She put a bundle together but in the bustle her children got put into one truck and her bundle thrown into another. She had to choose which to follow, of course she chose her children. But the whole way to the train station she kept an eye on the other truck. When they got to the station, she wasn't even allowed to look for it. They were packed into cattle cars and began a trip that lasted two months through the steppes of Russia. There was no air, no toilets, no food or water. From time to time, they would unload the passengers and feed them a black oily soup. Many got sick and died during the trip. When she arrived in Uzbekistan she was given a shovel and told to dig. Dig what? A hole, where she and her children would live. She dug the hole and huddled her children under one big coat. Meanwhile, on the Ukrainian front, the men heard of the deportation of their families. There was a massive desertion. They heard that some family members had been sent to the Urals, others to Central Asia. My father jumped into freight trains and made his way first to the Urals. He looked for his sister and mother, whom he heard had been sent there, but could not find them. Then he came to find us in Uzbekistan. He ran into an acquaintance at a market who had seen us. After a few weeks, the men were rounded up and sent to prison for desertion. Six months later, after a general amnesty was declared, they returned. My father, who had been big man, returned a mere skeleton weighing no more than 60 kilograms. My mother nursed him back to health on the small amount of rationed food they were given.*

Within four years of deportation, according to Crimean Tatar sources, half of the estimated 200,000 deported Crimean Tatars perished.<sup>11</sup> Inadequate housing and food, insufficient infrastructure, and a hostile climate contributed to high morbidity and mortality rates. The Crimean Tatars were required to report weekly to the local

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<sup>11</sup> In Open Society Institute, 1996, p. 14. The author also notes: "Russian-dominated Crimean State Committee on Nationality Affairs and Deported People maintains about 45,000 persons died between 1944-48."



administration. They were not allowed to leave the immediate area. They were barred from higher education and management posts. Meanwhile, in the Crimean peninsula, the Soviet authorities, after removing the Tatar population and confiscating their property, strove to eradicate evidence of Tatar culture: they resettled the area with Russians, destroyed Tatar religious sites, cultural monuments, burned Tatar literature and Russianized the names of towns and villages.

**Other nationalities were also deported.** A few years earlier, in August 1941, 61,000 Crimean residents, mostly ethnic Germans, had also been sent into internal exile. Crimean communities of Jews, Armenians, Greeks, and Bulgarians were also affected by Stalin's deportations. However, because these were smaller communities, they found themselves dispersed throughout the Soviet Republics. As isolated families living outside of their communities, many were assimilated in their place of deportation and did not seek to return to Crimea. The majority of those who chose to return did so in the 1950s and 60s, so that at the breakup of the Soviet Union, they had the benefit of networks, jobs, and housing. **Today, in contrast with the Crimean Tatar community which shares the experience of deportation, members of other ethnic minorities residing in Crimea are not necessarily formerly deported.** For example, some Armenians came to Crimea as refugees from Baku and Nagorno Karabakh but also as economic refugees from their home country.

- *Struggle for the Return*

**Progressively, conditions improved in particular from 1954 to 1957, after Stalin's death.** A series of decrees were passed freeing the entire population from restrictions. However, collective guilt for collaboration was not lifted, blocking the Tatars' return to Crimea. **In 1957, Khrushchev's famous 20th Congress speech cleared 10 of 13 nationalities that had been deported under Stalin – giving them the right to return – but not the Crimean Tatars, the Volga Germans, and the Meshketian Turks.** Needless to say, the Crimean Tatars were angered by this decree. **The failure gave rise to a grassroots political movement focused on the “right to return” for the Crimean Tatars.** Political activism became commonplace in the Tatar community. In the words of one respondent:

*“I myself did not go to Moscow to protest, but I collected signatures, collected money to send others to Moscow and keep them there. Most of us were involved to some extent in the fight. We succeeded in keeping Crimean Tatars in Moscow for over twenty years: from 1964 to 1987.”*

**In 1967, the Crimean Tatars were rehabilitated, removing the collective guilt accusation, but they were still expressly barred from resettlement.** However, many families tried to return and were driven out forcefully. Between 1967 and 1977, only 577 families received a residence permit (*propiska*). Many families moved to Kuban

in Russia and Ukrainian cities on the coast of the Sea of Azov, trying to get as close to Crimea as possible.

According to some activists, the movement survived because of two main strategies. The first was that it never opposed the Communist regime or questioned its values. It limited its demands to the right to return. The second was that the movement was grassroots, with many informal leaders, and therefore survived attacks to its structure, and increasing harassment and imprisonment of leaders. In fact, the movement adopted Lenin as its hero for having created in the 1920s a short-lived Tatar Autonomous Republic. This led to humorous situations where Soviet officials were in the ironic situation of trying to limit the cult of Lenin among the Tatars. In one town in Uzbekistan, a respondent said that the local officials were reduced to *hiding* the statue of Lenin on the official holiday celebrating his birthday in order to avoid large meetings of Crimean Tatars around the monument.

- *The Return*

**In 1987, after a famous protest on the Red Square in Moscow, the Gorbachev government showed conciliation by forming a commission to study the Tatar issue. By 1989, the commission concluded that the Tatars should be given the right to return.** This decision gave way to huge migration flows that continue today. Approximately 250,000 of the estimated 500,000 Tatars living in Central Asia have returned to Crimea in the last eight years.

**For households, the return was for the most part a planned, gradual process, not a spontaneous rush.** Interviewees said that, most of the time, the head of the family is sent ahead of the rest of the family to buy or build a temporary home, to find employment (for himself and sometimes for his wife), and most important, to agree with local authorities regarding a local residence permit. Some said that their return took place only after a number of summers building their home, while they continued to live in Russia or Central Asia. In the early years, between 1987 and 1990, those who returned were those who had assets to sell and/or savings which allowed them to buy a home in Crimea. Many Crimean Tatars had done comparatively well in Central Asia accumulating savings commonly reaching 20,000 RR. Most of the early immigrants settled in villages because of residence permit restrictions, the housing shortages in cities, and the lack of household plots for construction in the periphery of cities. Often the village home was meant to serve as a temporary home until a larger home could be built on the family's savings and labor. The second wave of those who returned was that of poorer rural families and urban residents who had only small homes or apartments to sell. Some were able to buy small homes in villages. Others received homes or apartments through the collective farms or enterprise where they found work. The government had started responding more positively to the self-settlement movements, granting more household plots to allow for construction of homes.

Families started building. By 1992, growing nationalism in Central Asian countries and civil conflict propelled a new type of less-well off families to return to Crimea. These not only include refugees but also those who, because of growing hostility in their communities, were compelled to leave behind homes and assets unsold.

**This cautious, progressive strategy proved to be the demise of families when hyper-inflation struck in 1992.** According to traditions in Central Asia and in a non-inflationary context, it was reasonable for families to build slowly, since construction needs compete with the demands of daily basic needs. Cash savings, enough to buy or build a very comfortable home, that had been placed in the bank were wiped out by currency reform and hyper-inflation. Those who, by the end of 1991, had placed their savings in construction materials or bought homes instead of hoping to build were rewarded for their hastiness. As a result, compact settlements often look like boxes – homes without a roof – sitting on a naked hill (see cover photo). Families have been stuck for the last five years in situations they believed were temporary – crammed in small apartments, living in *vremiankas*,<sup>12</sup> hostels or other communal housing,<sup>13</sup> or uncompleted homes, without easy access to basic infrastructure and social services. Another implication is that the process of return has been slowed. Families are divided between Central Asia and Crimea, with most having little prospect in the near future for returning to Crimea in a positive environment.

- ***Government Assistance Programs***

In 1989, a repatriation program financed by the Former Soviet Union began, allowing the repatriation of 50,000 persons per year. Since independence in 1991, Ukraine, largely unassisted, has been financing a resettlement program for the Crimean Tatars. The real value of the program totaled only 14 million dollars by mid-1996. Throughout its existence, the program chronically failed to meet its construction targets and is now mostly reduced to a trickle. Financing of capital investments (construction of new housing and infrastructure) was interrupted by the end of 1996. Today, Goskomnats<sup>14</sup> programs are limited to funding apartment and communal housing (*obshejtie*) rental subsidies (50 percent of cost of private

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<sup>12</sup> Small, temporary home. (See List of Terms and Acronyms).

<sup>13</sup> Families who were unable to find housing upon arrival were provided with one room in a hotel, university hostel, kindergarten, etc., as temporary housing while they awaited their turn for an apartment to be provided by the city or by an enterprise where they are/were employed. More details are provided below in Chapter 3.

<sup>14</sup> The State Committee on Nationalities (Goskomnats), funded by the Ukrainian budget, was and remains the single funder of capital improvement projects benefiting the FDPs and in particular the Tatars – city, district and village budgets were and are still not commonly used to meet these needs.

apartment below a set norm); *ad hoc* emergency health subsidies to vulnerable families; and reimbursement of transport costs associated with resettlement from the country of exile (i.e., third class train ticket and leasing of one container). Needless to say, the program is not perceived as meeting local needs. Even with regard to health subsidies, in Evpatoria, the representative of Goskomnats said that he was able to provide assistance (for health costs) to 30 of 265 applicants.

- **Regional Settlement**

Settlement patterns (Table 1.1) are shaped by:

- **ancestry:** Crimean Tatars said that their primary criteria was to return to the village of their ancestors, however, in reality returning families have met with a more complex set of issues;
- **affordability of homes** compared to receipts from sales of homes in Central Asia;
- **receptivity of local authorities:** e.g., pressures on local sellers, refusal to formalize a purchase of a home, refusal to grant propiska, refusals to grant employment;
- **legal obstacles to settlement:** A formal ban on Tatars settling on the southern coast was only repealed recently; including persisting requirements that Tatars wanting to settle in Yalta demonstrate ancestry in the region. For many, however, proof of ancestry was destroyed when the Soviet army burnt the mosques where birth records were kept for Tatars born before 1928;
- **slow implementation of municipal decisions to distribute household plots** for construction. For example, in Yalta, 3,288 household plots had been planned, but only 1,002, or 31 percent, had actually been distributed by September 1997.<sup>15</sup>

As a result, the Tatar population is well above the Crimean average of the population in many rural regions and in the steppe zone of Crimea (Table 1.1) – such as:

- Belogorskii region<sup>16</sup> (32 percent of the total population of the region);
- Sovietskii region (26 percent);
- Pervomaiskii region (24.8 percent); and
- Simferopolskii region (22.2 percent).

<sup>15</sup> Source: Interview with the municipal Department for deported Citizen's affairs, September 1997.

<sup>16</sup> "Region" (*Rayon* in Russian) commonly denotes an geo-administrative unit. The statistics for the rayon commonly exclude the main administrative center of the rayon and include only the rural settlements.

City or Region	1939 Total Population	1939 Cr. Tatar Population	1939 Percentage of Cr. Tatars	1989 Cr. Tatar Population	1992 Cr. Tatar Population	1996 Total Population	1996 Cr. Tatar Population	1996 Percentage of Cr. Tatars	1999-2005 Projected Percentage of Cr. Tatars
City of Simferopol	142,600	17,400	12.2	1,940	8,780	372,500	17,500	4.6	11.7
Simferopol Region	41,300	5,700	13.8	4,100	15,910	146,900	30,050	22.2	34.7
City of Bakhchisarai	27,740	18,060	65.1	1,020	5,340	102,000	21,442	21.0	38.5
Bakhchisarai Region	36,760	23,940	65.1	3,240	11,000	*	*	*	39.3
City of Belogorsk	17,690	6,255	35.4	1,085	6,745	74,254	23,749	32.0	36.3
Belogorskii Region	21,610	7,645	35.4	1,420	8,420	*	*	*	37.0
City of Alushta	26,000	16,400	63.0	155	1,480	63,625	2,664	4.3	17.3
City of Yalta	32,000	15,900	49.7	54	780	168,700	1,521	0.9	10.2
Dzhanskoii Region	63,300	5,100	8.1	1,250	14,610	145,080	21,448	14.8	17.7
Kirovskii Region	21,300	6,200	29.1	1,444	8,665	83,181	17,827	21.4	36.0
Krasnovardeiskii R.	41,000	5,000	12.2	2,100	13,065	105,750	16,145	15.3	22.0
Krasnoperekopskii R.	23,500	1,600	6.8	1,920	5,725	31,830	5,800	18.2	7.8
City of Saki	14,050	1,800	12.8	223	1,080	32,700	1,810	5.5	15.8
Sakskii Region	42,150	5,400	12.8	2,220	8,945	86,700	14,925	17.2	28.1
City of Evpatoria	47,000	7,900	16.8	210	3,125	110,000	7,561	6.8	15.2
City of Sevastopol	112,000	17,600	15.7	8	9,900	—	6,000	—	4.3

City of Sudak	10,800	7,670	71.0	1,165	4,310	35,500	5,526	15.6	41.6
Sudakskii Region	9,200	6,530	71.0	*	*	*	*	*	42.2
City of Kerch	104,400	5,300	5.0	100	987	182,500	1,714	0.9	3.8
Leninskii Region	23,600	7,600	32.2	2,125	9,775	85,827	14,789	17.2	23.3
Sovietskii Region	20,700	2,300	11.1	1,540	5,080	42,824	11,257	26.2	32.2
Razdolnenskii Region	14,700	4,600	31.3	1,060	4,100	40,354	5,104	12.6	24.4
Pervomaiskii Region	14,300	1,900	13.3	890	7,245	45,164	11,210	24.8	33.1
Nizhnegorskii Region	25,000	3,900	15.6	1,040	6,240	61,000	9,250	15.2	18.6
Tchernomorskii R.	15,900	5,000	31.5	1,060	3,910	36,800	5,680	15.4	18.4
City of Feodosia	45,000	3,400	7.6	265	3,250	117,800	6,600	5.6	13.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>993,600</b>	<b>210,100</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>31,634</b>	<b>162,467</b>	<b>2,193,000</b>	<b>261,617</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>17.2</b>

**Notes:** (\*) denotes that figures for the region and the city are combined in the row above this sign. Figures are for January 1, of the following year.  
For example "1989" figures in the table are figures for January 1, 1990

**Source:** Goskonnats archives

*Table 1.1: Distribution of Crimean Tatar Population by Region in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (1939-2005)*

Meanwhile, certain historically Tatar regions which were closed to resettlement, such as the Southern coast, still have maintained a very low Crimean Tatar population in 1997 (Table 1.1). For instance:

- only 0.9 percent of the population was Tatar in the city of Yalta (compared to 50 percent in 1939);
- for the city of Alushta – 4.3 percent Crimean Tatar (compared to 63 percent in 1939); and
- for the city and region of Sudak combined – 15 percent Crimean Tatar (compared to 70 percent in 1939).

• *Internal Migration*

**There are two distinct migratory trends which are already affecting the demographic distribution of the Crimean Tatars: a rural-urban current and a north-south current.** The first is due to poor socio-economic conditions in the countryside because of exceedingly low and unpaid wages and isolation from markets. The trend is understated in official statistics because it is very difficult for a rural resident to obtain a residence permit in town without a permanent address and formal employment. During the assessment, rural residents without a propiska for the city of Evpatoria said they work on the market of Evpatoria year-round and rent apartments without water or electricity in order to earn minimal incomes to support their children left behind in villages under supervision of other relatives. This rural-urban trend is likely to be greatest among Tatars because they have settled disproportionately in rural areas in the steppe regions, in comparison to their residence in Central Asia. Approximately two-thirds of the Tatars lived in urban areas, while today in Crimea two-thirds have settled in rural areas where residence permits were more easily approved, creating an employment and living standard mismatch.

As administrative and political obstacles have lifted, the second migratory trend is a movement from villages in the steppes to the southern coast which has been a zone where historically Crimean Tatar have been the major ethnic group (Table 1.1) and offers economic opportunities from tourism. However, because of low incomes and depleted savings which limit relocation to comparatively expensive housing in cities or on the southern coast, both of these internal migration trends are weak.

Since 1991, the return of the estimated 250,000 remaining FDPs in Central Asia has been slowed by the economic crisis affecting Crimea and the static living conditions in compact settlements.<sup>17</sup> Approximately 60,000 persons returned in 1989

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<sup>17</sup> The International Organization on Migration (IOM) has recently completed a study of the Crimean Tatars who remain in Central Asia. While preliminary results could not be obtained for this report, more information about the intentions of the Crimean Tatars should be available in time from Dr. Frank Laczlo at IOM-Budapest.

but declining to only 14,000 in 1995. Respondents explained that there are many more family members who would like to be able to come to Crimea but they cannot afford the move. In addition, the economic crisis has been more severe in Crimea than in Uzbekistan. According to interviewees, those who are likely to remain in Central Asia are urban residents, the elderly and the second generation of Tatars borne in Central Asia. Urban residents can expect for their housing in Central Asia, usually apartments, only a fraction of what they would need to secure similar accommodations in an urban area in Crimea. They have been warned that living in a village would most likely entail giving up their profession and changing their living standards. The elderly may not be able to withstand the trip to Crimea, and they can expect to be a burden on already struggling families because they receive only a minuscule pension and have high health needs. Youths are also less likely to move because, after two generations in Uzbekistan, they feel assimilated to the life in Central Asia. The first generation of able-bodied, foreign-born adults brought up in the heyday of Tatar political activism, are likely to strive to return to Crimea.

**There is also a small number of families or individuals returning to Central Asia.** This trend affects an estimated 2 percent of the Crimean Tatar population, according to Crimean Tatar leaders. This estimate is coherent with the Crimean Government's estimate that in 1995, 5,075 Crimean Tatars emigrated<sup>18</sup> or approximately 2.5 percent of the Crimean Tatar population in the country at the time. The outflow does seem to have increased from 1990 when Crimean Tatars constituted only 3.2 percent of emigrants and after 1991 doubled to remain between 5.8 and 7.1 percent until 1995.<sup>19</sup>

Interviews suggest that emigrants are mostly dependents (such as the elderly, single women or families without male labor force) returning to live with relatives in Central Asia. On the other hand, there are also able-bodied men and families who return because they are discouraged. For most, these are temporary measures – until a house is finished or infrastructure is set up in a compact settlement and the economic situation in Crimea improves. Since the situation in Uzbekistan has worsened in the last year,<sup>20</sup> the lure of a better life in Central Asia has weakened. Many more Tatars, especially those living in Russia, come to Crimea for short periods to build homes, then leave again when they run out of money, or when winter comes they must leave because of the lack of infrastructure.

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<sup>18</sup> Ovod, 1997, p. 41.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 18-19. Figures not available after 1995 in this source.

<sup>20</sup> Relatives of interview respondents left behind in Uzbekistan have written complaining that pensions are not paid on time, government salaries are also very small, workers in collective farms are paid sporadically, health care is expensive, and currency convertibility controls have put a damper on once thriving commercial activities.



#### 4. Economic Situation

A peaceful re-integration of the formerly deported people depends greatly on the country's ability to generate economic prosperity and opportunities accessible to the newcomers. However, Ukraine's economy has been hit hard by the break up of the Soviet Union, and Crimea is arguably the hardest hit region.

A number of indicators paint a desperate picture of the situation in Crimea. Adjusted GDP per capita is \$ 3,330 for Ukraine while it is only \$ 1,971 for Crimea,<sup>21</sup> that is only 59 percent of the national average.<sup>22</sup> The World Bank estimates that overall production rates fell by 21 % in Crimea in 1995 compared to 14 % in Ukraine overall. By mid-1997, production in Crimea had declined by 31 percent compared to 1996.

Unemployment is officially under 2.4 percent according to the unemployment office. However, official statistics understate the current level of unemployment since numerous employees are on forced unpaid leave or have not received salaries in months. Some industries have been particularly hard hit: light industry had 30 percent of workers on unpaid or partially paid leave; and construction materials, engineering, metal, food production and "other industries" all registered between 10 and 20 percent of workers on unpaid or partially paid forced leave in 1995.<sup>23</sup>

Further, Crimea is mainly a one sector economy with tourism the main profitable but seasonal activity. This lack of a wide spectrum of activities makes Crimea more vulnerable to an economic crisis. The agricultural sector remains unprofitable, with no move toward privatisation and very few individuals able to rent land providing few incentives for improving profitability. In fact, with low salaries, unpaid salaries, and bankrupt farms unable to procure inputs, the main source of income for workers is the sale of stolen produce – further reducing profitability at the farm level. There is a dearth of processing technology for produced goods. On farms visited where canning and preserving workshops exist, they are closed for lack of inputs and markets. To make things worse, Crimea is energy dependent, throwing many production industries into chaos as trading ties between former Soviet republics are loosened.

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<sup>21</sup> Figures are for 1994. In UNDP, 1996, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> For comparison, the adjusted GDP per capita for Russia is \$ 4,950; Belarus \$ 4962; and Moldova \$ 2215. [Source: UNDP, 1996, p. 8].

<sup>23</sup> UNDP, 1996, pp. 17-18.

Industry is limited. During Soviet times, because of a reluctance to invest in a geo-strategic area, few factories were built. Those that exist are located far from traditional markets, in strategic positions at the border in the cities of Krasnoperekopsk to the north, and Kerch, across the bay from the Russian city of Kuban. To make things worse, Crimea is perceived as a “dead-end,” i.e., it is at the end of distribution lines, relies on the mainland for irrigation water, energy, and all other imports and input supplies. Thus input prices are more expensive which in turn increases production and living costs.

Hyper-inflation and the collapse of industry and trade links have had an immediate impact on the income levels of Ukrainian households. Their earning power from salaries has declined, the value of social benefits has been eroded, social services costs have increased, and savings have virtually disappeared. A survey, conducted in mid-1995, found a poverty head-count index of 29.5 percent of households and 31.7 percent of individuals.<sup>24</sup> The poverty gap for households was 9.6 percent, showing that poor households are heavily concentrated just below the poverty line; thus, raising the incomes of poor households just a little could have the impact of raising them out of poverty. Another finding was that there is a correlation between poor households and the number of elderly and the number of children. This is not surprising, and it underlines the importance of using a dependency ratio in identifying beneficiaries and targeting assistance.

## II. Situation Analysis

**The seeds for civil and ethnic conflict remain.** From the Crimean Tatars point of view, their communities are being ghettoized:

- **Geographically:** Living conditions in the compact settlements and in the hostels are sub-standard. In the compact settlements on the periphery of cities, families live without basic infrastructure – water, electricity, roads – and those who have physical access may lack the means to pay utility fees. Reduced incomes also result in greater isolation because the cost of transportation, even public transportation, becomes prohibitive.

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<sup>24</sup> In UNDP, 1996, p. 27. Poverty studies include: Browne, Stephen, 1996, “Measuring Poverty”, note prepared for the UNDP Ukraine Human Development Report, Mimeo. World Bank, 1996, “Poverty Assessment Report-Excerpts,” Washington.

- **Politically:** At the local (due in part to the boycott of local elections by the Mejlis in 1995) and regional levels the Tatars are under represented. In contrast, in the Crimean Parliament, the Mejlis<sup>25</sup> have obtained a quota of 14 parliamentarians sitting at the 96-member body. This privileged representation may be lost under new election laws in 1998. Also, “the cattle prod method”<sup>26</sup> employed by the Mejlis to obtain concessions from the government reveals a perceived necessity to adopt a threatening stance for expeditious results, rather than an ability to obtain fair distribution of resources through mainstream political institutions. This method includes closing railroads, mass demonstrations acts of self-settlement. As recently as the summer of 1997, residents of Stroganovka blocked the road to Yalta to demand attention to the lack of infrastructure in their settlement. The local representative of the Mejlis explained that their action, which had been strategically timed with the lucrative tourist season, scared the local authorities into providing materials for roads in the settlement.
- **Administratively:** There is a dearth of Crimean Tatars occupying management posts in administrative, executive and implementing government bodies. Having allies within the system at the implementing level is very important with regard to access to information and services. In addition, municipal and regional departments tend to segregate out all FDP-related issues to the now under-funded Goskomnats. One indicator is the fact that sites visited did not have an integrated municipal plan for meeting the needs of the population, which included the Crimean Tatar compact settlements though they are part of the same municipality.

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<sup>25</sup> The Mejlis is structured with a 33-member executive board, the Kurultai. Each town, village and compact settlement where Crimean Tatars reside has a local representative of a Mejlis. A representative also coordinates activities of local Mejlis at the district (rayon) level. The Mejlis was formed in 1991 and has since served as the primary organization advocating for the Tatar community’s interests. It is linked to a political party – the Organization of the Crimean Tatar National Movement (OKND) – which has roots that extend back to 1967 and the dissident movement in Central Asia. The present leader of the Mejlis, Mustafa Jemilev, formerly served in the highest echelons of the OKND and enjoys much authority due to his dissident activity and years of imprisonment. Another party, which has been relegated to a secondary role, particularly since the murder of its leader in 1996, is the National Movement of the Crimean Tatars (NDKT). The NDKT is more conciliatory with the Russian authorities and therefore viewed with more suspicion from Kyiv. [See Open Society, 1996, pp. 46-51].

<sup>26</sup> Mr. Mustafa Jemilev is quoted in Christian Science Monitor, March 9, 1995.

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- **Legally:** Because of their temporary housing situation and lack of official employment, many Crimean Tatars have lived for years and continue to live without a *propiska*. An estimated 98,345 of 245,624 registered Crimean Tatars (40 percent) do not have Ukrainian citizenship.<sup>27</sup> A few who were even born in Crimea before 1944 have not qualified for citizenship because birth certificates were kept in mosques which were destroyed by Soviet troops after deportation, leaving them unable to prove their place of birth and their children unable to prove ancestry. Crimean Tatars claim that they continue to be treated as second class citizens and harassed by the police for their lack of documentation and their “Caucasian features.”
  - **Economically:** An estimated 40 percent are unemployed, and others are employed in menial jobs not corresponding to their level of professional experience. In addition, because much of their assets were in cash or savings accounts during hyper-inflation and currency conversion reforms, they suffered a greater blow to these liquid assets.
  - **Socially:** There continues to be widespread discrimination against the Crimean Tatars, who are still called “traitors” in reference to their alleged collaboration with the Germans; called “blacks” and relegated to menial jobs. Many Russians and Ukrainians were said to be at best disinterested in the plight of the Crimean Tatars. Misperceptions are fed by continued segregation: there is very little inter-ethnic socializing among adults and, therefore, little exchange of information regarding the living conditions in the compact settlements and much misinformation passed by word of mouth about assistance programs.
  - **Culturally:** The knowledge of the language and culture has been eroded by 70 years of Russianization and over 40 years in exile. While most are conversational in Tatar, very few Tatars read the more sophisticated literary Tatar. The national literature was burnt after deportation. There are only a handful of literary classics in print today. In addition, the language is out of date. It does not reflect modern day life, nor does it provide contemporary vocabulary for scientific and technological advances. The knowledge of Islam has also been lost during Soviet times.

Undeniably, inter-ethnic relations remain complex. Yet it should be recognized that they are highly politicized and often fueled by misperceptions and lack of complete information. Many of Russian and Ukrainian respondents were

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<sup>27</sup> This is an unofficial estimate made by an official working at OVIR, the passport agency, in Simferopol. There are 245,624 Crimean Tatars with *propiskas* in Crimea, and 147,279 Tatars (60 percent) have citizenship. This estimate may be higher than the migration figures would suggest because many Tatars in interviews said that they had problems obtaining formal proof of residence on November 13, 1991. People who have sought to apply earlier do not have information about new regulations which might encourage them to re-apply. See Chapter 2 and Chapter 4.

resentful of the attention the FDPs are getting from international agencies. These respondents do not make a distinction between the first wave of relatively well-off Crimean Tatars who arrived with large sums to purchase homes and those who arrived later and lost their savings to inflation. Few have Crimean Tatar neighbors or friends. Crimean Tatars too have an incomplete view of the situation. Many hesitate to acknowledge that economic difficulties have affected all Crimeans.

**Relations are strained by years of Soviet propaganda against Tatars accused of being enemies of the state.** Even official representatives dealing with migration and nationality issues refer to the Crimean Tatars' collective guilt in collaboration to rationalize the exile to Central Asia. The following experience of the author is illustrative of this tension: at an informal dinner in Evpatoria, a number of Russian and Ukrainian city officials and entrepreneurs refused to raise their glasses to a toast "to peaceful re-integration of the Tatars."

**Many Ukrainians and Russians said that they fear that Crimean Tatars, as a growing percentage of the population, will reclaim their homes and establish their own government in Crimea.** During the recent interviews with Crimean Tatars, some respondents cautioned that with the continued decline in the economic situation, the perceived indifference of local officials and the lack of perspective for rapid improvements, these claims for self-government and return of property may come back to the forefront. Indeed, at a number of community meetings held within the context of the assessment, self-government was identified as the best means for resolving issues of housing, discrimination, unemployment, lack of social and legal protection. The fact that the Tatar leadership has succeeded in side-stepping these demands shows remarkable restraint and, possibly, positive leadership. As Mustafa Jemilev, the leader of the Mejlis, explained: *"We do not want handouts. If we had what was taken away from us [in 1944], we would be in fine shape. But this [restitution and compensation] won't happen and we realize this. What we want is a mechanism to defend our rights. We do not want to dictate to anyone, but neither do we want to be dictated to."*<sup>28</sup>

However, it is difficult to assess whether in fact this decision to pursue legal issues is supported at the local level or, as some respondents claim, whether the Mejlis is losing touch with the fundamental needs of the bulk of the Crimean Tatar population – infrastructure, housing and higher incomes.

**To complicate matters further, some Crimean Tatar respondents predict that conflict is likely to erupt on the southern coast where economic resources are more tightly controlled and promise higher returns, pitting ethnic minorities against each other – i.e. Armenians, Azeris and Jews against the Crimean Tatars.**

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<sup>28</sup> In Open Society, 1996, p. 55.

## CITIZENSHIP AND OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

The difficulties related to citizenship are just another example of the legal difficulties experienced by the FDPs. Since their return to Crimea, the FDPs have been involved in what has often seemed an uphill battle to formalize their situation, whether with regard to obtaining documents related to being granted permanent propiska, formalizing their new homes, or to obtaining citizenship. Citizenship was discussed in the context of discrimination, harassment by officials and police, and other unpleasant encounters with local administrators and officials.

### 1. The Citizenship Issue: Background and Legislation<sup>1</sup>

The dissolution of the former Soviet Union in December 1991 which made Soviet citizenship moot, brought up the challenge of securing that all previous Soviet citizens will receive the citizenship of one of the successor states to avoid mass statelessness. In the absence of a desirable international “Treaty on the transfer of citizenship and on prevention of statelessness as consequence of the dissolution of the Soviet Union,” national citizenship legislation is the prevailing instrument to meet this challenge.

The issue of citizenship and prevention of statelessness is further complicated by the consequences of large-scale forceful and voluntary migration which took place during the Soviet times. This had led to many persons living outside of Crimea, the country which they consider their motherland, resulting in spontaneous return movements. Additional legal instruments would allow such people who, in line with the international legal requirement, claim a “genuine link” to Crimea.

In a first stage, in defining its initial body of citizens, Ukraine granted citizenship to all persons residing in Ukraine on 13 November 1991 and were not citizens of other states, regardless of ethnicity, confession or language ability. However, for those thousands of Crimeans who arrived after that date, the requirements for citizenship left many in a legal limbo. For those who arrived after this date, the most problematic requirements until early 1997 were: Ukrainian language proficiency test, requirement of proof of lawful means of employment, an AIDS test, and proof of having relinquished other citizenship.

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<sup>1</sup> Information adapted from UNHCR briefing paper, Prevention of Statelessness in the Context of Ukraine, August 1997.

Those formerly deported persons who have returned to Ukraine after 13 November, 1991 were not automatically granted Ukrainian citizenship as had been demanded by the political leaders of the Crimean Tatars as an act of reparation of historic injustice. Ukrainian government does not only argue that its state is not identical with the Soviet Union responsible for the deportations, but emphasizes the outstanding importance of the prevention of dual citizenship in particular for a very young state which still needs to consolidate its identity and independence. Different sources refer to the 60,000 (government sources) to 120,000 persons (Crimean Tatars sources) belonging to the returning formerly deported peoples who have not yet received Ukrainian citizenship.

While some of them are *de jure* stateless as they had left their country of previous residence before the respective Law on Citizenship was adopted (e.g., the Law on Citizenship of Uzbekistan, to where the Crimean Tatars were mainly deported and from where they returned, became effective 28 July 1992 only), the majority of persons concerned had received citizenship before departure, but may forfeit it due to non-registration with the respective Consulates and therefore are threatened to become *de jure* stateless in the forthcoming years. As the Uzbek Embassy in Kyiv did not experience a single case of a Crimean Tatar actually asking for diplomatic protection, it must be understood that those returnees who *de jure* still possess citizenship of their previous country of residence frequently do not actively refer to and benefit from it and therefore may be considered *de facto* stateless.

**The Ukrainian Parliament achieved consensus on the revision of the Law on Citizenship of Ukraine. The revisions, “On the Introduction of Amendments and Additions to the Law On Citizenship of Ukraine,” were published and entered into force on 20 May 1997.**

Art. 2 para. 3 states that citizens of Ukraine shall be “persons, who were born or resided permanently on the territory of Ukraine, as well as their descendants (children, grandchildren), if they resided beyond the borders of Ukraine as of November 13, 1991, do not hold citizenship of other states, and before December 31, 1999 submitted an application on determining their affiliation to Ukrainian citizenship in accordance with the procedure established under the present Law”. Access to Ukrainian citizenship is granted through affiliation to persons and their first and second-grade descendants who during Soviet times were forcefully transferred from Ukraine, provided they do not hold the citizenship of another state. Furthermore, the revised wording of the article permits affiliation to Ukrainian citizenship even of those persons who have not yet returned to Ukraine. The timeframe for submitting an application for affiliation to Ukrainian citizenship has now been prolonged until 31 December 1999. Once this transition period is discontinued, persons belonging to the formerly deported peoples remain privileged as individual naturalization will only be subject to 1) availability of legal sources of subsistence, 2) recognition of and compliance with the Constitution and the laws of Ukraine and 3) absence of any foreign citizenship.

An often misunderstood third requirement was introduced: "...If a person, who has all the grounds legislatively stipulated by this state for receiving such a document but for valid reasons beyond his control cannot receive it, he/she shall submit a notarially confirmed declaration on the absence or renunciation of foreign citizenship. The said documents shall not be required in case when the legislation of the state, of which the person had been a citizen, foresees automatic loss of citizenship of the respective state in case of voluntary acquisition of foreign citizenship."

**It has to be pointed out that sentence 2 does not foresee a waiver of the material requirement of not holding a foreign citizenship and is not a substitute for a renunciation procedure,** if another citizenship had been obtained after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The term "for valid reasons beyond his control" permits however a wide range of interpretations and the actual relevance of this provision can only be established once administrative orders or by-laws have been issued.

**No regulations or directives to implementing agencies were developed by the deadline of June 3, 1997 set forth in the decree.** As a result, the implementation of the new decree has been delayed indefinitely because the implementing agencies can not implement the new conditions until regulations outlining procedures and responsibilities are issued.

The UNHCR Brief concluded: "The new legislation brings about major improvements and significantly reduces the risk of statelessness. It does not, however, at its present stage comprehensively solve the question of transfer of citizenship of persons belonging to the formerly deported peoples who returned to Ukraine or intend to do so in the future. The norms will ease affiliation to Ukrainian citizenship and respectively naturalization through the introduced waivers of certain naturalization requirements, but interim statelessness cannot be avoided under present mechanisms. **Release from Uzbek citizenship remains the most problematic and crucial element,** as the Ukrainian legislator for understandable reasons and in line with the legal framework provided for in its Constitution could not deviate from the principle of single citizenship. The new legislation will, however, allow immediate affiliation to Ukrainian citizenship for members of those smaller but significant caseload who are presently *de jure* stateless, i.e. those persons who arrived in Ukraine after 13 November 1991 but left Uzbekistan before July 1992."

Crimean Tatars are the ethnic group<sup>2</sup> the most affected by the citizenship law because they arrived in large numbers in the early 1990s and continued arriving after November 1991. The figures for citizenship among the Crimean Tatars differ greatly

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<sup>2</sup> Russians on the other hand were not affected en masse because Crimean Russians were residents prior to November 13, 1991. As noted previously, other ethnic groups – Armenians, Bulgarians, Jews, and Germans – were not impeded from return to Crimea after the mid-1960s, while the Tatars were expressly barred until 1987.



between sources. According to the Ministry of Interior of the Crimea, 73,981 Crimean Tatars (of an estimated 220,555 in Crimea on January 9, 1996) had a residence permit in November 1991 and became citizens automatically. The Ukrainian State Committee on the Affairs of Nationalities and Deported persons estimates that of 240,000 Crimean Tatars by April 1996, 236,000 had a residence permit and 76,000 arrived after 1992. It has been suggested that the discrepancy between sources could be due to different counting assumptions. However, if return figures are true, then it is likely that 31.6 percent of Crimean Tatars do not have citizenship.

## 2. Obstacles to Obtaining Citizenship

Difficulties in obtaining citizenship are linked mostly to a very low rate of application for the Ukrainian citizenship. During the period from 1991 to 1995, 97 persons were restored to the Ukrainian citizenship and two persons received Ukrainian citizenship. The Simferopol office of non-governmental organization “Assistance” funded by UNHCR said that they get on average 2 applicants per day, with a spread of none to five.

### Main Obstacles to Applying and Obtaining Citizenship

The main obstacles to **applying** for citizenship are:

- **a lack of understanding of the importance of citizenship** – as distinguished from nationality;
- **a lack of up-to-date and accurate information** being communicated by word of mouth in the Crimean Tatar communities as well as by officials of Goskomnats, NGOs and the Mejlis;
- **the lack of an outreach approach to disseminating information regarding citizenship;**
- **mistaken expectation that a simplification in the citizenship laws will grant automatic citizenship to Crimean Tatars.** The Mejlis has taken up this demand as part of their main platform, raising hopes among applicants that a less costly alternative may be offered soon;
- anticipated costs and other difficulties linked to obtaining citizenship.

The main obstacles to **obtaining** citizenship are:

- **the cost of obtaining citizenship**, in particular for those who need to relinquish Uzbek citizenship;
- a confusing process because many administrators have inaccurate or out-of-date information misleading applicants;

- difficulty in locating documents which might have been destroyed during exile or by soviet troops; and
- lack of cash for obtaining documents and to cover transportation among the poorest.

**Information about the importance and the process of obtaining citizenship is not readily understood at the local level.** Many residents (Russian and Crimean Tatar) do not understand the concept of citizenship. One interviewer asked a rural resident, a Crimean Tatar woman:

“What is your citizenship?”

She answered, with a look of surprise, “Tatar.”

**Local knowledge of the application process and legal requirements is poor and contributes to the prolonged confusion.** Indeed, most information about the process of obtaining citizenship is obtained through word of mouth. As a result, it tends to be inaccurate and out of date. Those who have tried in the last year to obtain citizenship are not aware that the process may have been simplified, and they are not trying again.

**This lack of information among laymen is exacerbated by the inaccurate and out of date information being provided by the local representatives of the Committees of Inter-ethnic Relations and Mejlis.** At none of the sites outside of Simferopol were these representatives able to explain the process of application, nor were they aware of any recent simplification of the law. This is important because most Crimean Tatars are referred to these two offices for most matters. The situation is worse in certain isolated villages where information was communicated verbally from the regional officials to the district officials, who then met with the management of the individual collective farms, who in turn called a meeting to announce the regulations.

***Incomplete information provided to households:***

*A Crimean Tatar interviewee residing in Vodopolnoe, a village in Tchernomorskoe region, retained from a village meeting where citizenship was discussed only that she had to change her passport and was required to pay four grivnas for the new photo to be taken. She remembered no mention of a costly process for relinquishing her Uzbek citizenship, or the consequences of not obtaining citizenship. Another interviewee who had taken part in the management meeting prior to the village meeting said that she remembered the regional officials providing more ample information, but she could not recall what specifically. The two respondents confirmed that a representative of the village council had visited each household to explain the procedure for privatising land plots. Unfortunately, the representative did not mention that those who do not have citizenship cannot take part in privatisation.*

**The process is complicated and not uniformly applied.** To complicate matters, the local passport office which handles the applications is commonly depicted as unhelpful. Interviewees said that the employees were unable to provide a complete list of documents up front, and alternative procedures if these could not be produced. In another case, a Tatar woman asked for a translation into Russian of a form written in Ukrainian. The passport agency's employee rebuffed her, reminding her that she is not paid to translate. One interviewee explained that the passport office reports to the police department and therefore their organizational culture is to implement rules and to fine people who do not follow them; it does not correspond with the task of assisting people in solving legal problems. During the assessment, respondents reported variations in the actual implementation of requirements for applications for citizenship. For example, some passport offices accept temporary residence permits as proof of residence on November 13, 1991, while others do not. In another case, the passport office did not accept as proof of ancestry the parents' Soviet passport which shows the birth place as Crimea. Other passport offices did accept them.

**In addition, at the time of the assessment, there was no effective dissemination campaign regarding citizenship in Crimea.** The UNHCR-funded NGO was limiting its information campaign to posting information in the municipal offices regarding the organization's activities. As the assessment has shown, potential applicants do not know that they are misinformed or the importance of applying. Therefore, offering legal assistance in a process in which potential applicants have decided not to take part is moot. The NGO's information dissemination is passive rather than active: it expects the applicant to come to the office to gain more information rather than providing the information so that the applicant can decide to come to the office for assistance. (See Chapter 4: Program Recommendations and Considerations).

**The cost of the procedure is seen as the main impediment to those who wish to apply for Ukrainian citizenship.** The greatest single expense is that of relinquishing a second nationality (Table 2.1). And the cost is highest for rejecting Uzbek citizenship, the country of exile for the majority of Crimean Tatars. It costs \$100 up front<sup>3</sup> to reject Uzbek citizenship and then each applicant must travel (by train, cost is 34 grivnas plus accommodation) to the Uzbek Embassy in Kyiv to validate the documents. A review process of 12 months then begins before a reply can be expected. According to the legal advisors at the NGO Assistance in Simferopol,

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<sup>3</sup> In the past, the Embassy of Uzbekistan required a payment of only \$3 upon application, and \$97 upon approval. This has now changed.

among those who came to them for legal advice, only two applicants did not give up their quest for Ukrainian citizenship after hearing of the cost of relinquishing Uzbek citizenship – a business man wanting to travel abroad and a woman who needed the citizenship for a job she had been offered. Until 1995, FDPs could obtain a document from local officials in Uzbekistan stating that they reject Uzbek nationality. However, the Embassy claiming they are not legal, no longer accepts these documents.

Country of citizenship	Processing Price (in US\$)
Kyrgyzstan	25
Belarus	32.4 (60 gr.)
Kazakhstan	35
Georgia	50
Russia	64
Uzbekistan	100

*Table 2.1: Cost of obtaining release from a second citizenship*

The cost for a Crimean Tatar who has Uzbek citizenship would therefore be a minimum of 18.1 gr. for documentation, \$100 for relinquishing the Uzbek citizenship, and two trips to Kyiv for drop off and pick up of documents, or a **total estimated cost of \$147** (Tables 2.1 and 2.2). According to respondents, other legal requirements can be surmounted. The language requirement can be circumvented with a small bribe.

Documents	Cost
Proof of residence	0.5 gr.
Government seal	1.4 gr.
Application form	2.7 gr.
Photo	6 gr. (for 4, though only 1 is needed)
Birth certificate of deported person to demonstrate ancestry.	19 gr. for same day processing or 5 gr. for a 2- to 3-week delay
Photocopies	2.5 gr.
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.1 gr. to 32.1 gr.</b>

*Table 2.2: Cost of applying for Ukrainian citizenship for an applicant claiming residence on November 13, 1991*

### 3. Consequences of Lack of Citizenship

The implications of not having citizenship at this time can be important. These are that non-citizens are restricted from:

- employment in a broadly defined civil service (tax department, courts, local government, etc.);
- higher education is more expensive, and certain faculties are closed (e.g. law school);
- privatisation of household plots and enterprises;
- travel abroad, and most importantly to Russia, is restricted to those with new (non-Soviet) passports; and
- voting in national and regional elections.

**The most commonly noted cost is the difficulty in being hired in a state agency.** Some government agencies, such as the tax department, have a stated policy of not hiring non-citizens. In Yalta, Kerch, and Simferopol, interviewees said that non-citizen government employees have been warned through an official letter that they are required to obtain citizenship to continue their employment. However, the strength of this warning was in doubt: the initial deadline for obtaining citizenship had already been postponed. Another implication is the cost of higher education triples for non-citizens in some higher education facilities. Without citizenship, some higher education paths are closed entirely, such as the law faculty. In Simferopol, interviewees said that some faculty directors can be understanding and allow students to complete their degrees at the lower rate. In Yalta, a faculty director had agreed to accept documents demonstrating the refugee status of a student so that he could qualify for the lower, citizen price. However, there were also cases where students were forced to drop out because they could not afford the higher rates.

**Most pressing is the inability of non-citizens to privatise their household plot or take part in privatisation of enterprises.** The deadline for free privatisation of household plots is January 1, 1998 – though it is expected to be extended since only approximately one third of the plots in Ukraine have been privatised.

**Another implication is that without the new Ukrainian passport, Ukrainian residents can no longer travel abroad on their Soviet passports.** Interviewees said that Russian border guards no longer recognize the old Soviet passports. Given the economic crisis in Ukraine, seasonal work abroad is a main source of funds among unemployed and under-employed able-bodied men. Ironically, this avenue is closed to those families especially in need of infusions of cash – i.e., those who arrived after November 1991 and are most likely to have lost their savings to inflation.

#### 4. Other Legal Issues

Many interviewees had problems upon arrival, especially in the early years, with formalizing their residence, purchase of homes, and then their completed homes. These problems foster feelings of bitterness and insecurity.

**Propiska or Residence Permit:** Crimean Tatar sources estimate that as many as 100,000 Tatars may reside in Crimea without *propiska*. A residence permit requires a formal home (i.e. one that has a “home book”) which in turn requires, among other things, that the home has passed a formal inspection according to improbable construction norms; and that the home has a formal address (not only a household plot number which is the case in many compact settlements).

In order to claim a home or apartment as a residence, each person registered in the home needs to have a minimum of 13.56 square feet per person (Table 2.3). While there is some flexibility at the local level in implementing this requirement, the residents’ *propiskas* depend on the cooperation and support of the local authorities. This suggests a high level of informality of temporary guests arriving in the country as they seek formal residence. In addition, a room in communal housing is not a formal home, and residents can only obtain a temporary residence permit. Without a residence permit, one can be barred from formal employment and is questioned and fined by the local police. As a result, persons living in hostels and in the compact settlements are often without permanent *propiskas* and sometimes without any *propiska* at all.

Government Norm	Private Homes	Government Norm for Hostel	Rural Hostel
13.56 square feet per person registered <sup>1</sup>	8-10 sq. ft. <sup>2</sup>	6 square feet per person	Varies <sup>3</sup>

**Table 2.3:** Government norm for square footage per person for granting a *propiska*

<sup>1</sup> Government norm for *propiska* in apartment is 13.56 square meters per person.

<sup>2</sup> The same norm applies for a private home. However, the regional authorities (*rayispolkom*) have the authority to reduce the requirement if there is not enough area available per person for obtaining a *propiska*. The authorities, by bending the rules, need to be sure that the family will not in future complain that they don’t have enough living space and apply for an apartment. In every case a special decision of *Rayispolkom* is needed.

<sup>3</sup> In a hostel (*obshejtie*), the norm for obtaining a *temporary propiska* is 6 square meters per person, but in rural areas this norm is not followed consistently.

Even when these requirements are met, obtaining a residence permit (*propiska*) is not a straightforward process for many respondents who had to negotiate with local officials and circumvent obstacles placed in their path.

### *Legal Obstacles to Resettlement*

*In August 1987, right after the decision of the TASS commission, the respondent came to Crimea to assess the situation. He then returned to Uzbekistan to borrow 17,000 RR and came back with his sister's husband in October. They went to Bakhchisarai – his father was born in this region – to stay with his second cousin. The three of them lived together while they looked for a home to purchase. His cousin had not been granted a residence permit in Bakhchisarai. A number of times, he had been dragged from his own home to the police station where he was openly told that Crimean Tatars cannot live in Bakhchisarai. The police demanded that he repeatedly pay fines. After two months, his cousin's wife and two children arrived and they were again called to the police station. They were told to leave immediately. After two years of constant harassment, the family was given propiskas.*

*During that time, the respondent continued looking for a home in Bakhchisarai region. But potential sellers openly stated that they would not sell to a Crimean Tatar. The respondent decided to look instead for a home in Simferopol. He found two homes for his family and his relatives: an old home from an old Russian woman and a new unfinished home. He bought the homes and went back to Uzbekistan because his wife would not be released from her job as a teacher until the end of the school semester.*

*On January 10th, he came back to Simferopol to find that the old woman had changed her mind. She gave him back the money explaining that the police had come to see her to warn that the local authorities would not approve the purchase and would not grant a residence permit to the buyers. He went to the police where he was told that it was still prohibited for Crimean Tatars to live in the city. He then met a friend on the street who recommended that he go talk to the management of the collective farm in a village in Belogorsk region. A bribe of 100 RR would facilitate an agreement, the friend suggested. Indeed, the farm manager promptly helped him find a home and provided him with a residence permit.*

- ***Formalization of Homes***

The process of formalization of homes is another example of the legal status of Crimean Tatars being held hostage by the system. In some towns, the household plots were distributed to the new owners at the same time as the *dom knigi* (literally home books, i.e. official documents on the home). In other towns, the *dom knigi* were withheld because a formal address was not given to the streets in the compact settlement. In Ismail Bey, the Goskonnats said that the local government required that the recipients of household plots finish their homes in three years. They were granted a temporary *propiska* until then “to encourage their finishing their homes.” The local town executive committee (*Gorispolkom*) has the right to take the land away if the home is not completed.

- ***Police Harassment***

Even though some claim that harassment has decreased, harassment remains a salient issue for respondents eight years after the initial wave of immigration.

***Police harassment of “blacks” and other “people with Caucasian features”:***  
*One of the field workers working on the assessment was fined of 17 grivnas in Yalta. His mistake? Standing outside the hotel without his propiska in his pocket. He had left it in room. He asked the police officer to be given the chance to go and get his papers. The officer refused and explained that the police has a daily quota to fill each day for rounding up “people with Caucasian features.”*





## SOCIO-ECONOMIC NEEDS

### I. Level of Need

#### 1. Defining Poverty

Although poverty was not unknown in Soviet times, the dimensions and definitions of poverty have changed. Respondents generally define their living standards in two ways: over time and comparatively within their community. When living in Central Asia during the Soviet period and afterwards, most FDPs did not consider themselves poor. They were able to afford housing and had enough money to cover basic purchases – food, clothing, utilities, education and medical care. Leisure was a right of the worker and most took vacations. City residents went to cultural events. Many had summer homes. In contrast, today in Crimea, the majority of Crimean Tatar households said that they spend most of their income on food and very little on other basic needs. A poor family is one that does not have enough money to eat.

**Within their own communities, respondents used criteria in both urban and rural settings based on diet.** This stepped criteria provides an important window into the depth of poverty. The poorest are those families that can afford only bread. Many families who arrived after 1992, especially refugees, reported going through a period of complete destitution upon arrival or once their small savings were depleted. A second category, the poor, consists of families that are limited to eating the cheapest food staples – potatoes, onions and bread mostly. In rural areas, families at a comparable level may also be able to have access to limited amounts of milk. A third group was composed of those not so poor families that can afford some oil, sugar, vegetables and fruits in season, but have very little other cash expenses. Clothing, social services (basic health and education), and vacations are not easily accessible without foregoing other basic needs.

When comparing themselves to other communities, the Crimean Tatars consider themselves poorer than Russians and Ukrainians because:

- they lack permanent housing;
- they live in crowded, unfinished or temporary construction;
- they have lower access to infrastructure, transportation and social services;
- many lack formal employment or have had to accept menial, low-paid jobs;
- and
- they have less effective networks and local representatives.

**When comparing the priorities of Russian, Ukrainian, and Crimean Tatar households, it becomes evident that, as a group, Crimean Tatars are in a more precarious socio-economic situation.** However, individual households of all ethnic groups are likely to be in similar situations with regard to incomes, but only a minority – those living in hostels – is subject to the poor housing conditions. Within the general population, young families starting with no assets find themselves in a similar housing crunch as the Tatars. Pensioners and families with weak or limited support networks also suffer disproportionately from the lack of effective social net.

*A Russian family of three, living in two-rooms in an obshejtie: Vera, her husband Oleg and their five year old son live in an obshejtie, along with Crimean Tatars. Two years ago Oleg and Vera decided to live independently from Oleg's parents. They moved into the obshejtie "Perekomkhimstroy." To get two rooms instead of one, they gave a bribe to the superintendent. They are not thinking of buying or building a home. They expect that the factory where Oleg works will provide him with an apartment. The factory usually gives out apartments in priority to those workers living in hostels. Oleg's salary from the factory is 150 grivnas (\$82). On weekends, he repairs cars and earns another \$50-100 per month. Vera earns another 150 grivnas as an accountant plus another \$50 for doing the accounting for a private store. Their salaries allow them to eat well, buy clothes (\$40 per month), pay for kindergarten fees, buy furniture, and pay the rent of their two rooms (40 grivnas each). Their priority is to buy a car according to Oleg, while for Vera the most important thing is to get an apartment. Though their neighbors are Tatars, they do not socialize with them, even though their neighbors have invited them for coffee.*

**A comparison between Crimean Tatar communities also reveals relative poverty. Compact settlements settled late (after 1991) reflect the sudden decline in a household's ability to meet basic needs as well as the government's reduced budgetary capacity.** The settlements have more incomplete homes and are more sparsely populated. The later compact settlements are also more likely to have the least infrastructure – no piped drinking water supply, electricity, roads, let alone heating, drainage and sewers.

**According to our research, absolute poverty exists in both urban and rural areas among Crimean Tatars but varies in its definition. In villages, the definition of poverty was often limited to seasonal hunger.** Poor and very poor families run out of food in the late winter and early spring. Seasonal hunger exists because of isolation from markets, lack of cash salaries and unpaid salaries. As a result, families reported routinely eating animal feed in the late spring (April and May when food supplies are exhausted) and stealing for survival. In a village in Belogorskii region, only 26 kilometers from Simferopol, a group of respondents estimated that 20-25

households of a total of 300 Crimean Tatar families eat *otrub*<sup>1</sup> in the spring time. In Vodopolnoe, Tchernomorskii Region, families said that they and their neighbors feed *otrub* to their children because they run out of wheat flour and other grains. One mother said she had received only 5 percent of her salary from the collective farm that is 13-15 grivnas to live on the entire winter. As a result, her family went without salt for two months because her husband forbade her to ask her neighbors for handouts and she could not afford to buy it.

This poverty criteria based on food availability reflects lower expectations than urban residents because of long-standing shortages of medical, transportation and educational services as well as acute deficits of consumer goods. In order to compare more accurately urban and rural families, a second indicator – other than food – should be used such as shoes for children, foregoing medical treatment and school absenteeism. Rural families commonly lack access to those goods that require cash payment, such as school supplies, medicines, public transportation, utilities (water and electric fees, rent) and government certificates and documents. In Belogorskii region, the head of the collective farm estimated that 20 children (out of 630 children residing in the village) do not attend school regularly because of lack of clothes. He estimated that a family needs to spend approximately 200 grivnas to prepare a child for the first day of school.

**Among villagers, distinctions can be made between families that have recurrent cash expenditures, such as families with school-age children or with chronically or seriously ill family members, versus families with grown children and healthy working adults.** In Vodopolnoe, parents of school children were significantly worse off than parents of grown children. Parents with school children had regular expenses – shoes, supplies – while others could save these small amounts for a rainy day or use it on transportation. As a result, seven-year-old children<sup>2</sup> were not sent to the first grade because parents did not have the cash for shoes, clothes and other supplies. Village workers on the collective farms commonly forego treatment even of fatal diseases because of their lack of access to cash incomes.

*Cancer patient foregoes treatment: Jena, a mother of three children between six and fifteen years old has breast cancer. She was told last week that she needs at least 150 grivnas for an operation. Her only hope was to turn to the director of the collective farm where she works and ask for her back pay. The collective farm owes her and her husband over 300 grivnas in unpaid salaries. The director refused, saying that the farm could not afford to pay back salaries.*

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<sup>1</sup> “Otrub,” used as animal feed, is unprocessed bran left over after milling wheat flour.

<sup>2</sup> In the FSU, children start primary school at seven years old.

***Burnt victim foregoes treatment:** In the hostel Zvezdotchka, a child was badly burnt when a burning kettle spilled over in a crowded room. Again, the director of the collective farm said he was unable to pay back salaries. The child now has deep scars because the mother was unable to obtain timely assistance to treat her child.*

**In cities, respondents measure their poverty in terms of quantity but also quality of food, housing, adequate clothing, access to social services, and cultural activities.** Most families were poor according to these criteria. Access to production from a household plot – of relatives in villages – has kept many from falling into complete destitution. Cash from self-employment (selling vegetables in the market, frying tchibureki) also provided minimal sums sufficient to meet basic food and education needs.

**Housing has become a poverty criteria because of overcrowding, incomplete construction and lack of basic amenities.** Crowding not only creates family tensions but also drains the family's resources and limits storage capacity for the winter months. Crowding affects charges – water, electricity, and rent. These expenses commonly take up 10 percent of the family budget in the average household and up to 50 percent in poor households. Often vulnerable families with a high dependent/provider ratio are disproportionately affected by the charges because the number of residents drives up the charges and ultimately renders them impracticable. Given the cold climate in Crimea, it is difficult to meaningfully reduce electricity and heating use. When such utilities are cut off for non-payment or are non-existent, the family's health is immediately affected.

**Housing is a liability in terms of a drain on resources (utility charges) and reduced value in villages.** The housing market is appreciating in cities and on the Southern coast, and depreciating where the majority of Crimean Tatars currently hold assets. Rents are high compared to salaries and other incomes. Therefore, families – especially young couples – remain in hostels and in overcrowded apartments with relatives. Housing can be an asset for those who can rent it out. However, very few Crimean Tatars own apartments in areas where they can be rented because of bans for resettlement on the southern coast and pre-existing housing shortages in cities.

## **2. Who Are the Poor?**

**The poor cannot be easily categorized into social groups.** Because of the importance of connections and support networks, household plots for subsistence, dramatic differences in housing access to social services, and households' adaptability, poverty can take on many faces. Pensioners, while they receive minuscule pensions (54 grivnas a month), and invalids that are traditionally perceived

as vulnerable may be employed or receiving salaries or may benefit from a strong family network, and thus may be living far better than more isolated households. Single mothers may get support from relatives in the countryside who can provide child care and food, and earn income from trading in fruits and vegetables in bulk.

### Characteristics of the Poor

However, poor households tend to share one or more of the following characteristics:

- **arrival in Crimea after 1991**, without an ability to guarantee housing, and having lost savings to inflation and/or not been able to sell assets for amounts allowing the household to guarantee housing once in Crimea;
- **starting up again in a new location at this time** and are likely to be struggling (e.g. refugees, rural-urban migrants, and migrants to the Southern coast);
- **households with a high ratio of dependents** (school-age children, invalids, elderly) compared to providers (especially men), in particular single, divorced, or widowed mothers, or pensioners without support of male children;
- **households that are overly dependence on small salaries and pensions;**
- **households with chronic medical expenditures, depleting cash resources;**
- **households in isolated villages without easy access to markets** (infrequent public transportation);
- **rural and urban households without access to land for subsistence farming**, such as residents of hostels who do not have rural relatives living in proximity;
- **alcoholism** – while less widespread among Crimean Tatars than the Russian population – is also a drain on household resources through unmet basic needs, forgone income opportunities, and depleted assets.

***Refugees returning without assets and chronic medical costs:** In Belogorsk town, residing in the Belaya Skala hostel, a family of refugees from Tadjikistan have seen their level of life dip once in 1994 and then stabilize slightly in 1997. After fleeing Tadjikistan in 1994, where they were able to sell their home in exchange for train tickets and one five-metric-ton container, they arrived in Crimea with no savings or assets. Upon arrival in Belogorsk, they negotiated a room in a hotel for 5 people and were reimbursed for their travel costs. Once this money was spent, their level of life deteriorated quickly. The family lived mostly on “occasional” income – fluttering on the edge of destitution. To make things worse, the illness of one of three children grew more desperate, straining the family budget. The mother is highly educated – she has a degree in economics. For two years she was unable to find work because she had only a temporary*

*residence permit. In January 1997, the mother finally was hired as a cleaner, earning 50 grivnas per month. She tried to work in the market buying cheap produce in the morning and selling it for a few kopeks more per kilogram but gave up, unable to make a profit. Her husband earns an average of 50 grivnas per month on odd jobs – construction mostly. The son's student stipend is seven grivnas. The total income of the family is 153 grivnas. The family estimates that 50 percent of this income is spent on food and close to 40 percent goes to buying medicines. Other expenses include cigarettes (3 percent of expenses), transportation (2 percent), and school supplies (7 percent).*

**Vulnerable groups:** Although there are exceptions, interviews suggest that the social groups that are likely to meet the above characteristics are:

- refugees;
- pensioners;
- large families (with young children); and
- single and divorced mothers.

*A **single mother** living in Kerch with two young children and her mother estimates that her family of four has had an income of 145 grivnas (\$78.3) this month. The main sources of income remain her mother's pensions (55 grivnas), government child support (10.5 grivnas), the sale of assets (40-50 grivnas), and assistance from a family friend. Each month, the friend gives 20 to 30 grivnas in cash each month as well as food. In emergencies, he has also provided cash for health expenses (450 grivnas). The mother remains unemployed, having been struck from the roster of the unemployment office. She tried selling fruits and vegetables in the market but was unable to make a profit. The gas has already been cut off because she cannot pay. Food constitutes the bulk of expenses (100-120 grivnas/ month). School-related expenses are the second largest expense and then medicines for her elderly mother.*

**Refugees:** *Until 1992, Selite's family lived in Kurgan-Tyube, Tadjikistan. Though her mother, a Crimean Tatar, was married to a Tadjik, relations with her neighbors and management of the collective farm became very strained. Selite was the first to leave. She stayed with relatives in Dzhanskoi region, and earned a bit of money working on construction, but never got a residence permit. Then she heard from the Mejlis in Simferopol that refugees from Kurgan-Tyube had been sent to a hostel in Krasnoperekopsk. She found the rest of her family had been living in the hostel, not knowing how to contact her. Selite is a professional dancer but took a job as a cleaner with a salary of 70 grivnas per month. Her sister is a pharmacist and has also accepted a job as a cleaner. The worst years were 1992-1994. Her father could not withstand the conditions, fell ill and died. Her mother was also ill and had an operation. To cover operating costs, they sold*

*everything they could. In 1994, Selite married and continued living with her husband in the hostel. But after only a few months, her husband left her for a Russian woman who lives in a private home and owns a car. Shortly after he left, Selite gave birth to a son, and has had to quit her job and stay home to look after her child. Life became a little easier after her brother started buying cigarettes in bulk in Odessa and selling them in Krasnoperekopsk. The income for the two households is 300 grivnas for six persons. Selite spends the 20 grivnas she receives in child subsidies from the government on food for the toddler – mostly milk and butter, at the expense of the food needs of the elder children in the family. But her brother and his wife understand that the child needs protein to grow strong. According to her criteria, from 1992 until 94, they lived very poorly eating only bread. From 1994 until 1996, they were poor eating only bread and potatoes. For 1997, the situation has improved because the family can now afford some sugar, oil, and fruits and vegetables in season.*

Certain professions have been most hard hit by layoffs, unpaid leaves, and irregular payment of salaries:

- collective farm workers;
- light industry factory workers;
- engineers;
- construction workers;
- medical workers; and
- school and kindergarten teachers.

An interesting moment in the history of the return to Crimea is the heavy reliance on employment in the construction sector. Crimean Tatars were recruited as construction workers both in Crimea and in Central Asia by the Goskomnats-funded construction companies and “trusts.” As a result, many families moved to Crimea relying on these companies to provide both salaries and housing. In recent years, they have been let down on both counts by the end of financing.

***Construction worker:*** *Sever was recruited from his town in Uzbekistan in 1991 to work on construction projects for the Crimean construction company (PMK). A large number of Crimean Tatars were recruited along with him into construction brigades. A very attractive advantage of this work was that they were promised housing – like many enterprises in the FSU which promised their employees housing. In 1995, Sever was fired and the family of four live on his wife Rubia’s salary alone. The Goskomnats which used to pay for the hostel rooms they occupy has warned that the residents now must pay for the rooms they occupy – 25 grivnas a month per bed. The family has therefore decided to move out on October first into a small vremianka in the compact settlement of Stroganovka where his parents already live. Sever estimates that without the income from sales of vegetables they produce, their children would not have had*



*school supplies or new shoes for the new school year. The first priority of the family is to meet basic food needs and to cover educational costs. Finishing the home in which they invested 10,000 RR in 1991 is not realistic without assistance.*

**Even the non-poor have spells of poverty because of instability of incomes.**

For the last five years, the standard of living of families has remained notably unstable. A first drop in the standard of living for the FDPs occurred when they moved to Crimea. Few had employment or permanent housing upon arrival. The second, more uniform drop took place in 1992-93 when hyper-inflation eliminated cash savings, the budgetary crisis reduced the value of salaries and pensions, and initiated a series of layoffs and forced unpaid leave.

***Fluttering at the edge of destitution:** In Leninskii, on a Tatar collective farm, a Crimean Tatar couple said that the worst years were 1994-95, because families were taken by surprise and had not invested yet in their household plots. The husband arrived in 1990 and was followed by his wife and five children in 1991. Salaries were meager but reliable. They lived in a hostel and then in a rented apartment. They had enough money to buy coal. In 1993, they received a home in the village from Goskomnats. The Goskomnats only provided the bare bones of a structure. Four years later, the home still has only concrete floors, no internal plaster or paint, or glass on the window frames. The ceiling which helps to insulate the home has also not been finished. 1994 marked the beginning of problems with late and unpaid salaries. Unprepared, the household fell into poverty that winter. There were no other sources of income than the salaries that never came. The family had spent its time and cash on finishing the construction rather than buying cattle or exploiting the household plot. The house went without heating that winter because they could not afford coal or gas. The following year, the household tried to increase its household plot production but the drought of 1995 ruined the harvest of food staples such as potatoes. In 1996, the father was able to find seasonal work on construction, for which he was paid in kind (a calf). In September, they received the last child pensions. In 1997, the calf, now a milk cow, is contributing to the family's improved situation in providing milk, the only daily source of protein for the children. The family's diet consists mainly of potatoes, bread and dairy products. Cash income remains very scarce. The mother sells potatoes when cash is needed for school supplies and shoes. In a recent health emergency – the head of the family had bronchitis – the family reduced consumption of basic food (potatoes and milk) and sold it in the market to buy medicines.*

**Seasonal poverty also creates variations in the depth and breadth of poverty.**

Some respondents said that they go hungry in the winter and spring in particular. For rural areas, this time corresponds with the depletion of food stored for the winter, and low productivity of cattle because of insufficient feed. For urban residents this period corresponds with slow market sales and depletion of cash savings and food stored from the previous summer.

### 3. Coping Strategies

There are three main types of coping strategies: reductive, productive, and collaborative strategies. Reductive strategies include subsistence farming, reduction of food consumption (quality and quantity), reducing cash expenditures (reducing use of fuel, utilities, not buying new clothes, foregoing medical treatment and opting for home remedies and folk healers, even giving up cigarettes), and foregoing long-term basic needs (housing) for immediate needs (food). Productive strategies include selling produce, stealing goods and produce, borrowing, self-employment, taking multiple salaried jobs, private enterprises, and renting land. Collaborative strategies rely on family and ethnic networks to access and pool resources, such as pooling incomes of a number of relatives to build one common home, crowding many households into one home to reduce housing costs, and pooling labor for construction and income generation.

***Reliance on household plot:** Demira, her husband, and four children (ages 2, 15, 18, and 19) live in Zarechnoe village in Simferopol region. Her family has no stable income. Her husband has been disabled in an accident but has not had the strength to obtain documentation to receive disability allowances. The children's allowances were last paid in spring of 1997 to cover the first half of 1996. The main income of the family is the household plot and two cows. Demira sells milk to bulk traders who come to her village three times a week, making 4.5 grivnas each time during the tourist season (on average 13.5 grivnas per week for eight weeks). The rest of the year there is little demand for milk. From September to May, she needs to go to the market herself – incurring transportation and other market related costs. Many times there are not enough customers and she can't sell all the milk she has brought; other times the milk turns sour and cannot be sold. The family cannot count on income from milk year-round.*

*At the end of the winter and in early spring, the family runs low on feed for animals and the cows stop producing milk. To make ends meet in the winter, Demira sells bread in the market that she has baked at home. When the family runs low on money, they can exchange some of their milk products for other foods produced by their neighbors in the village. But everyone in the village is in a similar condition and produces similar products. Sometimes the family can buy staples at the village store for credit. The store manager will sometimes accept eggs as payment for small necessities such as soap. Demira's elder son earns money on odd jobs during the fall and spring – cutting wood, carrying coal, construction. Her daughter is a trained seamstress but she gets only 4 or 5 orders a year because most households in the village do not have resources to order new clothes.*

#### 4. Social Consequences of Poverty

**Less community spirit:** For the Crimean Tatars, poverty has taken an important toll on their community. Some respondents said that since 1992-93, each household has been focused on construction and its own household problems. Indeed, unlike in Central Asia, it is rare to see a group of neighbors volunteering to help each other build a home. Today, men and women are over-worked. Men work all day, arrive at home, and in the evening and weekends work again on construction if there is any money left over. In compact settlements, we saw men hurrying to finish the walls before the winter and working by flashlight when the night has already fallen. In addition, the lack of infrastructure increases the workload of women. It is common for women to work both at a salaried job (teaching, for example) and in the market early in the morning or after work so that they can buy food staples each day. Neighbors have little opportunity to meet because of the lack of leisure time, recreational centers, shops, and social services in the compact settlements.

**Divorced, separated and abandoned families:** The resettlement process and ensuing poverty have also taken on a toll on family integrity. There were considerable numbers of single and divorced mothers among the respondents. The women explained that the men's inability to provide for the family's needs had driven them to abandon their needy, impoverished families. Some had left to remarry more well-to-do women who already had a home, a car, etc. In one case the husband gave up and returned to live with his mother in Uzbekistan. The resettlement has also led to families splitting up because spouses could not agree whether to return to Crimea or stay in Central Asia. Sometimes the husband left to prospect opportunities in Crimea, started a second family, and was not heard of again. Cases where mothers left their spouse and children for better prospects seemed more rare.

**Criminal activities** (theft, racketeering, prostitution) are also on the rise. Interviews with youths revealed that because of the lack of employment opportunities and the general inaccessibility of recreational activities, they are faced with the temptations of vandalism, alcoholism and drug use. Youths said that, among their friends, most people had smoked "soft" drugs, like marijuana. However, they knew of no one in the community who shot up "hard" drugs. Prostitution was also said to be widespread among girls – mostly Russian girls. In Yalta, for example, key informants and youths estimated that 80% of girls<sup>3</sup> are to some degree involved in prostitution. In addition, interviewees explained that youths are encouraged to engage in criminal behavior because of the gap between the socio-economic level of tourists and the low level of economic opportunity of the residents. One respondent explained: "They see the result – money – not the effort."

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<sup>3</sup> Admittedly, this figure seems high. However, the perception that prostitution is widespread should not be discounted. It is likely that these 80 percent include professional and occasional prostitution.

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## II. Priorities

### 1. Ranking<sup>4</sup> of Needs

According to individual and group interviews and community meetings, the following are the main problems affecting returning populations and impeding peaceful integration:

- infrastructure in compact settlements;
- housing;
- employment/income generation activities;
- legal status (citizenship);
- support for language and culture; and
- social services (health and education facilities).

During community meetings, a ranking of priorities was discussed. The ranking varied according to living conditions, economic opportunities and major obstacles to meeting basic needs. While the ranking varied, the needs expressed were mostly recurrent. Infrastructure was seen as paramount by residents of compact settlements. Without water, roads and electricity, a community will not form in the compact settlements because people will not want to build or live in the settlements. Infrastructure eases the life of all residents alike.

Housing is a priority for those living in crowded apartments and hostels who assume that they will be able to receive housing from the municipality. Housing is considered not a community issue but one that is solved by each family according to its resources.

The problems of housing and infrastructure are recognized as linked to the lack of income. However, when asked which were tantamount, in areas where the living conditions were below the norm (e.g., in the obshejtie in Yalta, and for residents in the compact settlements who had no water such as Sputnik outside of Evpatoria), residents said that infrastructure should come first, then housing and then only work. Without housing or proper living condition, “a roof over one’s head,” one cannot work.

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<sup>4</sup> One important exercise of the assessment was the ranking of priorities using PRA techniques. The technique is more an instrument to elicit a discussion comparing the various priorities. Its results cannot always be taken literally since these can be manipulated by certain groups participating. Also see Appendix 1: Methodology.

At sites where infrastructure and housing problems were perceived to be secondary – such as Kerch or Upper Kamenka<sup>5</sup> – employment, cultural, and legal issues took the forefront. In villages, where expectations for infrastructure are lower, the priority was cash income. However, this was not true for those former urban residents now compelled to live in rural areas. These residents valued easy access to transportation, good schools, health facilities, and cultural activities.

The revival of Tatar language and culture is consistently seen as an important priority. It often rated as high as employment and rated sometimes higher than citizenship/legal status and social services.

Social services, such as a polyclinic or a school, were considered important because access is impractical. However, in the ranking process, the facilities were consistently eclipsed by other issues and sometimes were not mentioned at all. Education was mentioned mostly in the context of national education (i.e., language and culture). In villages, the issue of the lack of medical services was more pressing, since isolation from adequately equipped medical facilities is compounded by the lack of cash income to cover transportation and medical expenses.

Citizenship is one example of the difficulties of the Crimean Tatar population in formalizing their situation in Crimea. In interviews with the local Mejlis representatives and in community meetings, citizenship was mentioned as a priority of the population in the contexts of continued employment in government agencies and discrimination.

Other issues mentioned included the necessity of obtaining an autonomous status for the Crimean Tatars, political rehabilitation, elimination of discrimination and harassment, the lack of cash for adequate heating of homes, and appropriate recreational activities for youths.

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<sup>5</sup> A compact settlement on the outskirts of Simferopol. Part of the settlement has a high percentage (estimated at 90 percent) of completed homes.

## 2. Infrastructure

### • *Goskonnats Programs*

**Goskonnats estimates that 148 million dollars are needed to complete all the infrastructure for the compact settlements.**<sup>6</sup> Because of the economic crisis, budgetary delays, and inflation, the capital investment program has failed to meet its targets year after year. In 1991, the program completed 65 percent of its planned target for home construction and 66 percent of the planned water supply.

By 1996, only 18 percent of the planned water and electric supply lines were completed. In 1996, the program met with serious difficulties because of further decreases in allocated funds and major delays in their transfer to the Goskonnats. By early 1996, only one-fifth of the money allocated for the capital investment projects (28 million grivnas) had reached Goskonnats. This brought about a virtual termination of the program, cessation of activities, and workers placed on forced unpaid leave or laid off.

Completed Construction	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	Total
Water supply lines (km)	7	18.7	55.5	71.3	142.7	14.4	309.6
Electric supply (km)	46.2	80.2	159.16	135.9	217.7	23.7	662.8
Roads (km)	22	29	15	0	14.5	0	80.5

*Source:* Goskonnats 1991-1996

*Note:* For 1997, by 7/7/97, of 97 km of electric supply planned, 2.5 km were completed; of 54.6 km of water supply, none were completed

**Table 3.1:** Completed construction by Goskonnats-financed firms, in the context of the capital investment program in support of the return of Crimean Tatars, 1991-1996

<sup>6</sup> Vadim Petrov of the Mejlis estimates that between one and two billion dollars are required for restoring living conditions for the Crimean Tatars. [in Open Society Institute, 1996, 55].

- ***Current Situation***

At the community level, the top priority for residents of the compact settlements is the provision of basic infrastructure. The lack of basic amenities – water, electricity, and roads – creates sub-standard living conditions for residents and in turn impedes the settlement as well as the completion of homes in the 200 compact settlements.<sup>7</sup> These problems affect the majority of the estimated 130,000 people (25,000 families) who live in these compact settlements throughout the country.

**A majority of compact settlements do not have the infrastructure to provide basic living conditions. As of 1997, of the compact settlements and residential neighborhoods:**

- **20 percent have electricity;**
- **30 percent have water;**
- **15 percent have tarmac roads;**
- **4 percent have gas (heating);**
- **none have sewers.**<sup>8</sup>

Those compact settlements which were formalized late (after 1991) or remain unofficial settlements are likely to have the least infrastructure.

Life for residents of compact settlements can be very difficult. The winter is especially grim. An icy wind gusts through the settlements in the barren steppe regions where there are few trees to protect homes and passers-by from dust and cold. The roads are transformed first into muddy rivers, then ice sheets cover them, making them impassable. On the worst days, parents keep their children from school and mothers need to stay behind instead of going to earn a few grivnas in the market. With the decline in incomes, many families are unable to buy coal to heat their homes and rely on collected firewood or an overburdened and unreliable electric supply system. Electric supply cuts become more common each day with the municipality's attempt to ration energy resources. A few families still reside in shipping containers they had used for transporting their belongings from Central Asia. Others live in the basements of their unfinished homes. Comparatively well-off families reside in one or two rooms of an incomplete homes and *vremiankas*. To protect against the strong winds and humidity, residents cover up the windows, roof, and doors with plastic. The problem with water also worsens in winter because of frozen pipes, dry wells, and impracticable roads limiting access of water trucks.

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<sup>7</sup> The number of compact settlements varies widely from 200 to 240 depending on the source. This may be due to the fact that many were formalized over time and some remain informal.

<sup>8</sup> Conversation with Deputy of Supreme Soviet of Crimea, Mr. Mustafayev.

**Water:** In 70 percent of settlements where there is no water supply, inhabitants cope with the imperfections of water trucked in and rationed. In Ismail Bey and Sputnik, water is trucked in each week. Each household receives a ration of 100 liters regardless of the household size. For lack of better water containers, the water is stored in old oil bins covered with cardboard sheets to keep the dust out. Residents said that the quality of the water trucked in is not being checked by city or sanitation officials. Recent tests of the water by the government laboratory found fecal elements and ammonia.

**Roads:** Only 15 percent of the settlements have tarmac roads. As a result, complaints about the lack of roads are widespread. In a temperate country where rain and snow are common, the lack of roads takes on an important meaning for urban residents used to tarmac streets and sidewalks. In other ‘sub-urban’ (non-FDP) settlements and villages near towns, sidewalks and tarmac roads are the rule. Whereas in isolate villages tarmac roads are not. In some compact settlements in the steppe areas, the lack of roads can mean that streets are impassable in the rain or ice. In the mountainous coastal area, the lack of roads is even more spectacular. Indeed, in Ay-Vasil, there was simply no road to the compact settlement. There was a gap in the greenery along the main roads, and cars had to go up 10 meters of uncleared road at an incline of close to 45 degrees. Residents estimated that the lack of roads can add 100 grivnas to the cost of transporting one truck load of sand, simply to drive up from Yalta to the settlement. Mothers also complained that without roads children get dirty on their way to school – a shameful state that is remarked upon by teachers and fellow students. In some cases, children stay at home on rainy days because they do not have appropriate boots for getting to school or do not have a second pair of clean shoes to change into once they arrive.

**Heating:** Local officials and residents often mention the problem of heating. In the past, some villages and certainly sub-urban areas were heated by the town’s very inefficient central heating system. Since the energy crisis, heating has been discontinued in most neighborhoods. Residents have shifted over to coal, wood, or electricity. As a result, most families heat their homes with electric plates and radiators, having “fixed” their electric meter so as not to pay high electricity charges. This reliance on the electric system for heating overburdens the system creating additional power cuts and breakdown of equipment. In addition, the municipality rations the electricity supply by cutting off the supply several hours each day in different neighborhoods. Families are then left without heating or cooking facilities for hours on end. Coal is the preferred fuel for heating individual homes and some buildings but it is very expensive. The price of coal is 200 gr. / MT and a family needs an estimated 3 MT to heat one room for the winter, making this a great drain on cash resources. The high cost of coal has meant that families have shifted to using other fuels, such as firewood. The shift to firewood has had considerable environmental impact over the last five years on the wooded areas of Crimea. In just seven years, the residents of Ismail Bey and Sputnik said they had cut down 12 hectares of orchards for fire wood.



**Drainage and sewerage systems** were not once mentioned at the community or local government levels as needs in communities. None of the compact settlements are equipped with sewerage systems. However, according to Western engineering standards, these systems are requirements, especially where the water table is high and well water is used for drinking.

- *Consequences of Lack of Infrastructure*

**The main consequence of the lack of infrastructure is the low standard of living in the settlement.** This in turns contributes to the **slowing settlement of compact settlements and return of families, and to over-burdening the existing infrastructure.**

**Slow settlement:** The impact of the lack of infrastructure on occupancy of the settlements is evident. One husband who was living with relatives over the summer while building in Ay-Vasil, a sparsely populated compact settlement outside of Yalta, said that when his wife came from Russia to see the home, she cried and asked: “Where are the neighbors? Who will we socialize with?” Interviewees stated that in order to move into a home the following requirements had to be met: there is a source (legal or illegal) of electricity, there is water, and roads allow access to the home throughout the year. Should these conditions not be guaranteed, only those families which have no other options move to the settlements.

The impact of the lack of infrastructure on occupancy is illustrated in Table 3.2. Two adjunct compact settlements, Ismail Bey and Sputnik, can be easily compared. They are both located outside of the city of Evpatoria, on either side of the main road. Three hundred persons (33 percent of residents) in Ismail Bey and 600 people (100 percent) in Sputnik are without drinking water, relying on water trucked in (unreliably) by the city and on the generosity of residents nearby who have water – sometimes as far as 2 kilometers away. The plots that had water were fully built and inhabited, while those that did not have water were only partly built – with some families struggling to complete homes by mixing cement with rationed water. Even nearly completed homes were uninhabited because owners preferred to live in crowded apartments and the homes of relatives. Another consequence of the lack of infrastructure is the continued separation of families. Mothers and young children remain in Central Asia or in Russia until basic infrastructure is set up.

Compact settlement	Number of household plots	Number of families residing	Number of homes finished	Basic infrastructure available
Upper Kamenka, Simferopol			90% *	Water, electricity, roads, school
Lower Kamenka, Simferopol			60% *	Electricity
Stroganovka, Simferopol	1,500	120	approx. 30	Electricity in part of settlement only
Sputnik, Evpatoria	150	28	8 and 30 unfinished	Electricity hooked up to phone lines
Ismail Bey 1991, Evpatoria	2,217	1,814	403 homes, plus 311 containers	School, medical point, water, electricity
Kapkan, Kerch	200	60	60 homes and vremiankas, another 60-70 homes in construction	No water, medical point, school
Krasnokamenka, Yalta	120	20 families, including 4 in living in containers	None	None, water wells
Ay-Vasil, Yalta	200	25	7	Wells only on top of village only, school in adjoining village
<i>Sources: Interviews with local mejlis and representatives of the municipal committees for inter-ethnic relations</i>				

*Table 3.2: Availability of Infrastructure and Occupancy of Compact Settlements, in 1997*

**Over-burdening of Existing Infrastructure:** The insufficient capacity of basic infrastructure is compounded by the overcrowding of families in homes. In Sputnik, each household is entitled to a ration of 100 liters of water per week, yet completed homes are often overcrowded. One household included three families or a total of 16 people.

**Overloading of the existing infrastructure can cause tension between Russian and Ukrainian residents and FDPs.** In Krasnokamenka, a compact settlement outside of Yalta, newly settled FDP households depend on the adjunct village – an old Tatar village now inhabited by Russians and Ukrainians – for

electricity and water. Fortunately there are wells, but for drinking water they depend on the adjunct village. To solve the electricity problem, many residents had hooked up an illegal line to the main electric line serving the old part of the village. Unfortunately, the transformer was too weak to support the increased demand of new settlers. As a result, the current was weakened and the overloading risked to damage the existing system as well as to electric appliances. Frustrated, the residents in the old village cut off the illegal lines. Needless to say, this situation has led to conflicts. To complicate matters further, many FDPs in Krasnokamenka hold property documents for homes in the adjunct village. Some residents said that reclaiming these old ancestral homes would solve their housing and infrastructure problems.

- *Infrastructure in Hostels*

**Infrastructure in the hostels** is also poor, is seldom maintained, and is over-loaded. Some of these hostels are converted facilities – such as summer hotels, kindergartens, etc. – not designed for long-term, year-round residence. Households explained that they rely primarily on the water and electricity supply in their rooms for all their needs – bathing, washing, heating, cooking, etc. The communal infrastructure (toilettes, showers, common kitchens) is generally so poorly maintained that it is seldom used. Sometimes it has been repaired and broken again. There is very little visible effort at maintenance. **Heating is the main issue** for residents because it can only be solved at the centralized level.

### 3. Housing

- *Nation-Wide Chronic Housing Shortage*

The FDPs were met with an already tight housing and infrastructure situation in Crimea. The chronic housing shortage was exacerbated by the budgetary crisis which has caused government-financed construction of new housing units to decline in 1995 to 20 % of 1990 levels. According to the UNDP Human Development Report of 1996, Ukraine faces acute housing shortages. Multiple generations of families and separate families are crammed into small apartments. In 1995, one in seven Ukrainian family lacked separate or permanent housing, and lived with relatives, in temporarily rented apartments, or in hostels.

- *Goskomnats Program*

**Through the program to support the return of Crimean Tatars, a total of 196.8 thousand square meters of private housing were built over five years between 1991-96** (Table 3.3). According to government norms of 13,56 square meters per person, housing construction would be sufficient theoretically for 14,513 persons.

Completed Construction	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	Total
Housing (thousands of sq. m.) <sup>9</sup>	30.5	46.2	51.2	22.5	38.7	7.7	196.8
<i>Source: Goskonnats 1991-1996</i>							
<i>Note: For 1997, by 7/7/97, of 1124 sq. m. planned housing area, 510 sq. m. were completed</i>							

**Table 3.3:** Completed housing financed by Goskonnats, 1991-1996

The government of Ukraine also provided subsidies for housing construction for FDPs – not only for Crimean Tatars. At first, these funds were available as financial assistance for finishing construction. However, because of delay in payment of the subsidies, respondents said that these were of little help. They were able to buy wood planks or a truck of cement (\$100) but certainly not complete their home. When the Goskonnats realized that it was cheaper to buy a house than to assist with construction, it developed a purchase mechanism. The selection of beneficiaries takes place at the level of the regional departments on inter-ethnic relations. Assistance, however, is very limited. **Last year approximately 200 houses and apartments were purchased mainly in rural areas. Recipients were households belonging to the most vulnerable groups** – including households with many children, disabled people, the elderly, etc. The cost per house varied between 2 thousand and 7 thousand grivnas.

• *Current Situation*

**Yet, owing to the continued arrival of FDPs and the number of residential units purchased or built, the situation remains critical.**

Considering 50,000 Crimean Tatar families,<sup>10</sup>

- 45,500 household plots have been given out;<sup>11</sup>
- 21,307 families live in unfinished homes or *vremiankas*;
- 6,500 families live with relatives, in hostels, or in rented flats;
- about 16,000 families are in the queue for municipal housing;
- 3,500 families are in homes built by the state; and
- 3,500 live in homes for which Ukraine received grants.

<sup>9</sup> See Table 2.3: Government norms for square footage per person.

<sup>10</sup> Figures are from UNHCR, 1996, p. 3, if not noted otherwise.

<sup>11</sup> Figures are from the Head of the Department for the Return and Shelter of Crimean Tatars, as of January 1997.

- *Home Construction*

**Today, housing construction has all but terminated at many of the sites visited** (in particular in rural areas – where cash for the purchase of materials is scarce – and the South where the cost of materials is inflated by some 200 percent because of additional transport costs and impractical roads). Instead of building a home in 1 to 2 years, construction has dragged on for more than five years. Some families have said that they believe that there is no hope to finish without an economic turnaround. **Especially affected are those families who had not already built their home by 1992 saw their ability to meet their own housing needs dramatically reduced by hyper-inflation which wiped out savings.**

**The end of construction has meant that a temporary situation has become long-term. But now, even the poor conditions that were previously guaranteed are being threatened** by requirements that residents pay rent and utilities formerly covered by the Goskonnats. (Also see discussion on hostels and Table 3.5).

*300 residents of basements in Evpatoria: In Evpatoria, approximately 75 families of workers of the construction firm, SPMK-50, currently live in the “refurbished” basements of five buildings. In 1992, an agreement was reached between the company and the municipal residential management agency (JEK), whereby the company would rent out these basements and conduct some rehabilitation to make the basements inhabitable. Electric lines were hooked up, sanitation facilities and doors were installed, and rooms were painted. The SPMK also agreed to pay for maintenance and utility fees for residents. If SPMK reneges on any of these duties, the JEK has the right to reclaim these dwellings.*

*In reality, the residents live in very poor conditions. As one descends into the basement, one is hit with the smell of mold mixed with that of cooking food and the unmistakable stink of broken toilets. The ventilation in the toilettes is blocked by garbage. The water and canalization pipes line the ceiling of the corridor. Residents said that more than once a canalization pipe broke, flooding the corridor and their rooms – where families cook, eat, and sleep. The families are crowded into small spaces. In one basement the average was 2.3 square feet per person. As the field worker concluded: “That is 0.3 square meters more than a grave.” There is also only an ad hoc lighting system, whereby torches are hooked up to the main system. To heat the rooms, families need to rely solely on electricity. But they have been warned that if they do not pay, it will be cut off. Many of the belongings of residents have been ruined by the mold, humidity, and repeated leaks.*

*These dwellings were meant to be temporary until construction of homes for the workers was completed. However, only 16 homes out of the 120 to 130 planned were completed in the six years of operation of the enterprise. Foundations were*

*built on all household plots and walls added to fifty percent of these. However, while workers know which plot was meant for them, they do not have any property documents on the household plot or the construction. Legally, the company is still the owner, although it is bankrupt and unlikely to ever finish the homes.*

*SPMK has warned the residents of these basements that starting in October 1997, the company will no longer be able to cover utility and other costs related to the basements. The residents expect that the electricity will be cut off – their sole source of energy for cooking, heating, and lighting. Because of breach of contract by SPMK, the JEK will have the right to repossess the dwellings.*

Other families are left in limbo with incomplete homes and nowhere to live.

***House-sitting:*** *In 1995, Fatma, a widow, and her two grown children, sold her apartment in Uzbekistan for \$3000. She spent \$1,000 on the move to Crimea and another \$1000 for laying the foundation of her home. Since fall 1995, they have been trying to live on the other \$1000 and her pension of 54 grivnas (\$29) a month. They use her son's income from short-term construction jobs to buy construction materials. Over the summer he made 500 grivnas which they spent on bricks. For now, they live in someone else's home, as house-sitters, but anguish over the day when the owner will return.*

Some families only had time to build *vremiankas* by 1992 when their money lost its value. The cost of building a two-room *vremianka* varies, but these can generally be completed on 2000 grivnas through cost saving such as using half-bricks. After realizing in 1992 that these were now permanent homes, some households tried to improve these structures by adding thicker walls, a porch, etc. Therefore, living standards in *vremiankas* vary greatly, depending on the ability of the family to expand and upgrade the structure.

***Living in a vremianka:*** *In 1994, Ilias left Samarqand for Crimea. He lived with his son for a year until 1995 when he got a household plot in Krasnokamenka, near Yalta, where he was born. In 1997, he was still working on a 9 square feet 'vremianka.' His resources consist only of his retirement pensions (54 grivnas) that he saved while living with his son and sporadic material help from his children.*

***Nine people crowded in a container:*** *In 1995, it became dangerous to live in Uzbekistan, we were afraid to let our two children out in the street. Our neighbors would ask us what were we waiting for since all the other Crimean Tatars had left. Though we lived well, had a car and savings in the bank, we decided to leave. When we arrived in Simferopol, our family moved in with my cousin, his wife, his mother, and his two children in their container. We asked to*

*be put on a waiting list for a hostel or apartment. But the local government refused, saying that our family was deported from Evpatoria and should expect nothing from the Simferopol administration. My cousin is trying to quickly close the roof of his home so that he can move his family out of the container by the winter. All our savings have been spent on food for the last two years. I have not been able to find any work or even get a permanent residence permit.*

- ***Who has a home?***

- Importance of receipts from sale of homes in Central Asia***

**At the outset, in the late 1980s, families could count on their incomes from sale of assets in Central Asia and their savings to meet their housing needs in Crimea (Table 3.4).** Upon arrival in the late 1980s, many families settled where they were able to afford a home and were provided with a residence permit. At the time, this generally meant settling in villages in the steppe area of Crimea. Prices for homes in Crimea were inflated by the high level of demand generated by the rush of hundreds of thousands of Tatars returning to Crimea in just a few years. There would be multiple buyers for a modest home in a village in Belogorsk, a rural district 30 kilometers from Simferopol, at a price of 30,000 RR, more than the cost of a large home in Uzbekistan. (See Table 3.4). This discrepancy has only increased over the years.

**Today, buying a home is cheaper than building one.** If the owner can find a buyer, a three-room home with 0.15 hectare in Belogorsk might be sold for no more than \$ 5,000 while a modest, 3-room home would cost to build (US \$ 12,000).<sup>12</sup> Many respondents said that if they were to do things over, they would have bought a home because they can't finish building today. On the southern coast, apartments and homes are expensive. In Yalta, a one-room apartment costs \$ 8,000, in Simferopol a one-room apartment centrally located costs \$ 5000, while in Kerch a one-room apartment costs only \$ 1500. However, some respondents also said that they had no choice but to build because they had no other option because it allows for a progressive process. A household plot can be comparatively cheap. A household plot in a compact settlement outside of Yalta costs \$ 2000.

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<sup>12</sup> Estimate by the Danish Refugee Council in 1997.

Date of sale	Type of home sold and site	Price received	Date	Type of Home in Crimea	Cost	Current sale price of home
1989	Large home in Fergana valley	26,000 RR	1989	30 sq. feet home in village Belogorsk	23,000 RR	Worth 8,000 gr. in 1997 (approx. 1/8th of price paid)
1989			1989	home w/ amenities, 40 km from Simferopol	30,000 RR	Sold for \$10,000 in 1997. Bought home for \$17,000 in Simferopol
1990	4 room apt, Samarqand, Uzbekistan	10,000 RR	1990	House in Glazovka, a village near Kerch 14 hec. of land	23,000 RR	Sold for \$5000 including 1 cow, and old car after 2 years on the market
1991	2-room apt. in outskirts of Tashkent	could not sell it	1991	Bought construction materials for 14,000 RR (Belogorsk)		
1992	Home in Uzbekistan	\$1,500	1992	Could not buy Lives in hostel		
1994	Apt. in Dushanbe	2,000 RR	1997	Could not buy: - 1 room apt. in Yalta, w/no amenities - w/amenities - 3 room apt. - 0.4 hec. of land	\$8,000 \$12,000 \$40,000 \$2,000	

*Table 3.4: Use of Receipts from Sale of Homes in Central Asia*

**Internal migration is hindered by the drop in the value of real estate – especially homes in villages in the steppes.** Examples abound from the study of households wishing to move, but seeing very few potential buyers. In a village near Kerch, it took two years to sell a home for \$5000 – which they had bought for approximately \$20,000 in 1989. In Belogorsk, a family was trying to sell a home for 2 years. Three people have looked at the home, but made no offers. In Tchernomorskoe, families wanted to move but believed that there would be no buyers for their homes. Another case in point was a family now living in a container in a compact settlement outside of Yalta. In 1993, they sold their home in a village in the Northern steppe region of Dzhanskoi for \$500. The money and their accumulated savings were sufficient to cover the purchase of a container and expenses related to their move to their new household plot. But they were not able to buy any construction materials. They are pessimistic about the future. They do not see being able to build without assistance.



### Who continued building after 1992?

Based on the interviews, those families who continued to built after 1992 have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Plans for the home were realistic. Large homes have often gone unfinished because the owner ran out of money.
- Cash income is sufficient to cover basic food needs. Building is a sign of savings.
- Incomes from the sale of homes in Central Asia and current incomes are pooled at the level of the extended family.
- The household has a large, healthy labor force and few dependents.
- Time to build. Seasonal employment and odd jobs provide the flexibility to also build a home.
- Small or medium private business (not micro-business or self-employment) provide higher incomes than salaries when they are successful.
- Access to large sums from seasonal or contract work in Russia.

**Ambitious projects planned on the basis of expected incomes at the end of the Soviet era are often unfinished.** The budgetary crisis of the government of Ukraine reduced the real value of salaries and started a series of forced unpaid leaves and layoffs, affecting the household's ability to match former income levels and rely on government salaries.

*Ambitious plans and unmatched income levels.* Between 1986 and 1989, Betchik lived with his wife and three children and worked in the Krasnodar region of Russia. In 1989, he sold his home in Russia for 60,000 RR, moved to Crimea, and bought construction materials with part of his savings. In 1991, when inflation began, he could not find work and his savings lost their value. In 1993, he received a household plot near Yalta. He began a very ambitious three-story home based on a professional architect's design and complete with central heating and running water. He used his own stock of materials and borrowed \$2000 from friends and relatives. In 1993, he laid the foundation. In 1994, he was able to raise the walls and roof. The last year of construction was in 1995 when he plastered the interior and finished the ceilings. In 1997, the home remains unfinished and the owner has exhausted all private sources of financing construction.

**Pooling of incomes and labor is the main coping mechanism to continue building.** The more able-bodied men and less dependents, the more income the family can pool.

*Five siblings pooling income from sale of five homes, incomes from six couples:* In Sputnik, respondents who live in a relatively large home – one floor, four large rooms, with finished facade but no internal comforts – were continuing to put money into construction with difficulty. The head of the household explained that five couples (all relatives) had pooled their receipts from home sales in Uzbekistan and built one 4-room home in Sputnik. Four of the couples are now living in the house. His grown son lives with his young wife's parents and her relatives in a crowded (eight persons) two-room apartment in Evpatoria. The head of the household also explained that income from these six couples continues to be pooled to finish the home. There are two regular salaries plus income from odd jobs. The wives also work in the market, earning 5 to 25 grivnas a day depending on the season. The five-year-old child of the head of the household stayed in Uzbekistan with his grandmother because without water, kindergarten, roads, or heat, living conditions are too poor for bringing him up.

The situations of two families that arrived in 1990 in Simferopol and received household plots at the same time illustrate the need to build quickly, and optimize the use of labor in the household as well as receipts from sale of real estate in the country of exile.

*Pooling and immediate investment in home construction:* Both families have only two working adults providing for a total of five people. One family was able to build their home using income from the sale of their home in Uzbekistan and savings. They attribute their success to their willingness to focus entirely on construction upon arrival in 1990. The husband received help from his brother and father with the construction. Then until 1995, both the husband and wife were employed earning decent salaries thanks to higher education.

*Dividing proceeds from sale and late construction:* The second family split the money from the sale of a parental home in Uzbekistan with a second brother. The family started building only in 1991. There was no one to help the husband with the construction because his brother was also working on a separate home. Since their arrival in Crimea neither husband nor wife has been able to find work. Consequently, their home is far from being finished.

A multitude of sources of income and a male labor force not formally employed is also important because it provides time flexibility as well as cash.

**Flexible employment:** Another extended family in Kerch – three men, three women, and two children – are still building after 9 years. The 56 square meter home was begun in 1991 on the receipts from sale of a home in Uzbekistan. They ran out of money and could not buy materials for the roof, internal finishings, windows, or doors. From 1989 to 1991, the head of the household held a good position which allowed him to buy and store construction materials, but he had no time to work on construction. After being “down-sized” in 1991, he started working in earnest on the household plot, and built a greenhouse. In 1992, he opened a small enterprise. The head of household explains that about half his income is from his small business and the other half from odd jobs. He also grows vegetables in a greenhouse and on the household plot. The food they produce is a lot of help. His family, his brother, and his parents live on income from his business (300 grivnas per month, i.e., 50 grivnas per person). The income from the household plot goes to buy construction materials. Without his brother and father working on the household plot and construction with him, he would not have been able to build.

An ability to adapt to the current economic situation by making a profit in small business is essential. Stroganovka, on the periphery of Simferopol, is a case in point. The majority of homes are unfinished and humble. Yet there are a handful of ostentatious, two- and three-floored homes. These homes were reportedly built by a Russian entrepreneur – one of the wealthiest in Simferopol – married to a Crimean Tatar.

**Talent for private sector and hired labor:** Aishe, a 40-year-old divorcee, lives with her aunt and her daughter in Kamenka. She now has a beautiful home. Unlike most homes, it has central heating, new furniture, and imported appliances. However, it still lacks internal plaster and paint. Aishe came to Crimea in 1990 and received a household plot in Kamenka the same year. In 1991, the foundation was laid and walls built. Before she knew it, Aishe had spent the 40,000 RR she had received from selling her home in Uzbekistan. In 1992, someone recommended that she become involved in business, so she started exporting fruits and vegetables and selling them in Moscow. But the profits were too meager, and she quit after the second year. Little construction took place at that time. In 1995 and 1996, to finish her home, she decided to get involved in trade once again, but this time she imported goods from Turkey and sold them in the market in Simferopol. Her business was very profitable for a time. But this year, with the tightening of customs and tax laws, she gave up once again.

**Choosing risk and higher income for construction over food and stable minimal income:** Marlen started building the family home in 1991 and 1992 with the money from the sale of his apartment and his car in Uzbekistan. In 1992, he took a job as a guard in a food warehouse. While the family did not have any problems with food at the time (he was able to take what he wanted), his salary

*was too small (72 grivnas) to continue building and he had no time. The family lived in a small, 16 square feet container. In 1996, Marlen quit his job and started working for himself: he now drives a rented truck, transporting construction materials. Each day he can take home between 30 and 50 grivnas, enough to buy food and slowly start building again.*

**Outsiders are commonly struck by the uneven housing conditions of compact settlements.** The most common explanations for the large homes in compact settlements which stand out against unfinished homes, and *vremiankas* were:

- (1) the household was well-off in Central Asia (in terms of savings and receipts from sale of assets) and finished construction before 1992;
- (2) the home belongs to entrepreneurs;
- (3) the family is composed of numerous grown sons; and
- (4) the family lives in Russia where they save enough money to invest in construction.

- ***Consequences of Building***

There are two main consequences of building that have an impact on the socio-economic status of families. First, **construction has a high opportunity cost in terms of labor time and foregone income opportunities.**

***Building as a liability:*** *The head of a six person household – himself and his wife, her father, and their three children, including a grown son – explained that between 1991 and 1995 they lived very poorly. They had only one source of income – the salary of his wife’s father. All children were in school, and the father was building full-time. In 1995, when the home was finished, he and his eldest son started trading meat in the market. Their level of life increased immediately.*

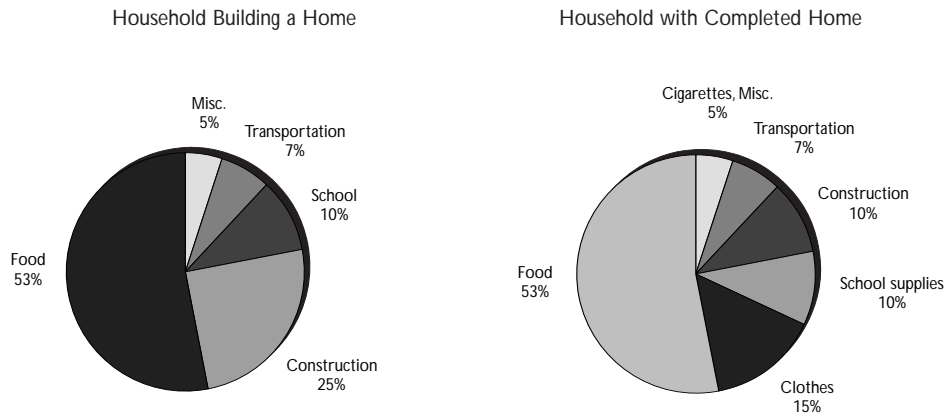
Rural families building homes also saw their income levels drop during construction. Respondents attributed the decline in their standard of living to labor used for construction instead of exploitation of the household plot, marketing of produce and cattle raising.

**Second, construction diverts resources (incomes and savings) from basic daily needs of the household.** Some respondents said that they spend 25 percent of their income on construction materials. In addition, savings are depleted, and the family becomes vulnerable should cash needs increase suddenly.

**Construction versus building up a savings buffer:** *The government construction company built homes for a dozen of its employees in Sputnik. The difference in reported expenditures between these families with completed homes and those still building highlights the vulnerability of the latter. Expenditures of the family that had received a home included:*

- 53 percent of income spent on food;*
- 15 percent on clothes;*
- 10 percent on school supplies;*
- 10 percent on construction materials;*
- 7 percent on transportation;*
- 5 percent on cigarettes and miscellaneous.*

*For the family that was still building in earnest, 55 percent of income went to food, but 25 percent of income went to construction materials at the expense of clothing (for which the household reported no expenditures). The other expenditure levels were similar to the first household. In a third household, while 57 percent of income went to food, 20 percent went to treatment of a child's illness, and again other expenditure levels were similar. Health expenses took up resources otherwise set aside for construction.*



**Figure 3.1:** *Expenses of household involved in construction compared to a household putting finishing touches on home received by Goskomnats.*

***Construction versus education:** A small family in Kamenka spent all its money on laying the foundation for their home and buying construction materials. Since then, the parents have not laid a single brick. They spend their days at the market selling fruits and vegetables. They made the decision that their income should go to the higher education of their two children, so for the past five years they have been living in the foundation of their home.*

**The technical consequences of laymen building homes for themselves are that the quality of the construction (1) may not meet government standards and (2) may not be appropriate for the terrain.** As a result, many households said that they had trouble formalizing their homes once they were finished because the government requires that homes meet certain technical standards. In addition, inadequate construction has led to homes collapsing. The most frequent problems occur where the homes are built on a slope. In the four compact settlements surrounding Yalta, by September 1997, 30 homes had collapsed, slid down the hill, or will have to be destroyed and rebuilt because of dangerous technical problems.

- ***Hostels and Communal Housing***

Traditionally, throughout the Soviet period which was marked by housing shortages, families waiting to be placed in municipal apartments were placed in hostels. This practice continues today in Crimea. However, **because of their late arrival in the country, Crimean Tatars are likely to represent a larger share of the hostel population.**

**The conditions in the hostels vary greatly. Some are very crowded.** In Zvezdotcha, a hostel in Yalta, residents explained that the lack of municipal apartments, of sufficient income to build on the household plots, and of infrastructure in the compact settlements means that there has been very little change in the occupancy of the hostel. An estimated five new families have arrived and been placed in the hotel, while only one or two have left. Sometimes more than one generation of relatives share one small, nine-square-meter room.

***Over-crowding in a hostel:** A couple in Zvezdotcha hostel shares one room with their school-age child. In the evening, as dinner simmers on the stove, the mother irons on the bed, the only free flat surface. The daughter sits at the table doing her homework. Early morning, while her spouse and child sleep, the mother gets up to prepare tchibureki to sell in the market.*

In other hostels (e.g., Hostel No. 4 in Krasnoperekopsk, Belaya Skala in Belogorsk, and Berezovka), families have been able to spread out into numerous rooms because the hostels have not been full. For example, one family of 14 persons repaired seven rooms in one hostel, taking doors and windows from other vacant rooms.

• *Rent Payment for Hostel Rooms*

A very important issue for many residents in hostels is that they are increasingly being asked to pay for the rooms they occupy. Currently, housing in these shelters is paid at least in part by Goskomnats. However, as government funding for the Goskomnats programs dwindles, some residents have been warned that they will have to pay for their rooms. This trend of passing on the cost to the tenants was found throughout the country. Rental of one room costs between 25 and 50 grivnas per person per month. (See Table 3.5).

Name of communal housing	Location	Price of one room / month in grivnas	Payment conditions
103 B Russkaya Street	Simferopol	25	Mandatory and enforced
Communal housing for factory workers	Evpatoria	50	Factory pays 25 gr., and Goskomnats pays 13.71 gr., since 6/97 tenant pays 11.29 gr.
—	Evpatoria	42	Tenant to pay full amount
Berezovka	Tchekhovo village, Razdolinskii region	40	Tenant to pay 42 gr.
Hostel No. 4	Krasnoperekopsk	42	Tenant to pay 42 gr. Same price for Russian residents and Refugees
<i>Source: Interviews with residents of the hostels</i>			

*Table 3.5: Price of room in hostels in September, 1997*

Many respondents said that they are unable to pay rent for the hostel rooms. They will either need to leave the hostel or re-group into a smaller number of rooms. This is likely to result in increased crowding of apartments and homes receiving former hostel residents.

**It is unclear whether these fees will be enforced and whether tenants risk being evicted if they do not pay.** However, examples of expulsions were reported during the assessment. In a hostel in Simferopol, the residents who said that their residence is not regularized said that the superintendent is enforcing the payment requirement.

**Enforcement of hostel fees.** Sever is a former PMK construction employee. A very attractive advantage of his work was that employees were promised housing – as many enterprises in the FSU provided their employees with housing as a benefit. Until 1993, when Sever’s family came to join him, Sever lived with his colleagues in a hostel for single men. Then he paid a \$100 bribe to the local superintendent (“commandant”) of the hostel in Simferopol so that he could illegally settle his family in a room in the hostel. Why “illegally”? Because officially – according to the number of residence permits – the hostel is full. They obtained one room – officially for two people, but they added a bed and a fold-out for their two children. Another reason that they are illegal is that the family has a household plot for construction. Sever estimates that all the 25 families living in the hostel are in a similar position. To avoid being discovered during passport checks in the hostel, the superintendent runs through the hallways to warn them not to open their doors and not make a noise so that the police will not see how many people live in the rooms. Rubia, Sever’s wife, meanwhile bakes cookies and bread in the hostel and sells them in the market. But the superintendent has put an end to that by threatening to throw residents out or to take away the stoves. This year, Goskomnats has warned that it will pay only 5 months of rent for the hostel. The family has therefore decided to move out. The superintendent has begun to require payment from residents by the 10th of the month. They have witnessed other families being thrown out unceremoniously, with their belongings carried out on the street and nowhere for them to go. Some residents have even fled during the night because they were afraid of retributions from the superintendent. The superintendent now constantly checks that people are not planning to disappear. As a result of these unpleasant conditions, many families are trying to leave the hostel. Because they are illegal residents, they have nowhere to turn for assistance.

#### 4. Employment and Income Generation

- **Limitations of Salaried Employment**

The economic crisis in Crimea has engendered financial insecurity at the household level. Until 1991, and the fall of the Former Soviet Union, the majority of people were salaried government employees. Government employment in the past provided stability through steady though low monthly incomes. To explain this shift, one must examine the limitations of salaried employment.

**Low salaries:** To many, unemployment is not the main issue, but rather the fact that salaries are so low that they are insufficient to support a family adequately. The problem is compounded by the fact that, according to Crimean Tatars, the FDPs are locked out of better-paid skilled positions and are limited to physical labor. Indeed, during the social assessment, we met with educated people with years of work



experience who are employed as cleaners and watchmen. The salary for a cleaner can be as low as 50 grivnas a month, while a watchman can make 70 grivnas.<sup>13</sup> The opportunity cost of taking such a position is weighed with other household priorities: construction, child care, exploitation of household plot, and potential short-term jobs. Households decide not to take these positions because of the opportunity costs, opting for higher incomes in the private sector but also higher risk levels because incomes are not as reliable.

**Unreliable salaries:** Increasingly, salaried employment is losing its stable, reliable character. Employees are asked to agree to short-term contracts and seasonal work. Men commonly work on construction, and women work in tourist hostels during the summer. Enterprises trying to dodge taxes on the salary fund also propose contracts that state a low official salary while they promise a higher salary under the table. Respondents said that these agreements are not in their favor because they have no recourse if the employer reneges on his/her promise.

**Unpaid salaries:** Sometimes salaries are not paid, are paid only in part or paid in kind. In all three collective farms the management was unable to pay these salaries in full. Some workers accumulate back pay without being able to receive it in kind or cash. In Vodopolnoe, workers receive only 5 percent of their salaries in cash. The farm then pays another portion of the salary in kind – mostly food staples. Collective farm workers are sometimes paid in wheat, or meat products that they consume themselves. In some cases, workers find in-kind payment beneficial. For example, a worker in Evpatoria agreed with her employer to be paid in construction materials, which the company's clients then arrange to drop off at the building site of her home. However, for another respondent who was not building, the agreement was not attractive.

*A trained economist believed that she had finally found her dream job. It was a position for which she was qualified and had years of experience, and it was well remunerated (400 grivnas per month). After months of unemployment, she could not believe her luck. Rightly so. To her chagrin, the manager mentioned that salaries had not been paid for the last four months. Employees are welcome to take the equivalent of her salary in bricks which the enterprise produces. But since the applicant was not building, she could not imagine herself moonlighting selling construction materials.*

Thus, it is generally less beneficial to the worker when the enterprise passes on the cost of marketing to the worker. If the goods can be consumed at the household level at slightly lower than market cost, then the arrangement may be beneficial.

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<sup>13</sup> Respondents estimated needing 100 grivnas a month per person in urban areas to meet basic food needs.

**Unemployment:** Officially, unemployment is low, with 2.4 percent of workers registered at the unemployment office. Registered candidates are kept on the roster for a maximum of 12 months, with benefits decreasing each quarter by 25 percent of the previous salary. However, the candidate is also struck from the roster once s/he has rejected two positions provided by the placement service. These official statistics understate the actual unemployment situation of workers in Crimea. It is estimated that the real unemployment rate, if defined in western standards, would be closer to 45 percent of the labor force.

#### The Case of Kerch<sup>14</sup>

In Kerch, an industrial city on the extreme eastern point of Crimea, 6.4 percent of the population is registered at the unemployment office. In addition, 200 enterprises (including the largest industrial complexes in the city, some with a labor force in excess of 2,000 workers) have stopped working this year and are not paying salaries. Another 60 enterprises (17,700 employees) have sent their employees on forced unpaid leave. These employees do not qualify for unemployment benefits since officially they are employed. Some 75 percent of the working population has lost its jobs in the government or private sectors in the last three years. As a result, there are on average 109 potential applicants for each job opening.

Crimean Tatars claim that unemployment affects their ethnic group more than other groups. According to Crimean Tatar sources, among 250,000 Tatars in Crimea, 77,600 are capable of work, and some 46,700 (60 percent) are employed by state and private firms. By deduction, an estimated **40 percent of the work-capable population is unemployed.**

**The figures do not reflect the fact, according to Crimean Tatar officials and interview respondents, that Crimean Tatars are seldom offered jobs which correspond to their qualifications and experience.** This discrepancy is illustrated by comparing figures for the general population and employment figures for important government positions. While Crimean Tatars represent over 10 percent of the Crimean population, they comprise only 0.5 percent of employees in the Ministry of interior, zero percent of the security forces, 5.9 percent of the procuracy, 1.7 percent of the courts, and 0.5 percent of the local administration.

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<sup>14</sup> Source: Interview with the officials of the Unemployment Bureau in Kerch.

**Respondents explained that low employment rates among Crimean Tatars are caused by a number of re-enforcing factors:**

– **Discrimination** is perceived as the most important obstacle to employment. Examples abound where employers retracted an offer once the Crimean Tatar applicant presented their old Soviet passport where their nationality is stated. These cases were encountered all around the country: in villages, in cities in the steppe regions, and along the coast. As a result, workers either give up and accept lower paying menial jobs or turn to self-employment.

*Discrimination leads to unemployment: In 1988, Zeide arrived from Tashkent to a small village in Belogorsk region. She had over ten years of experience working as a teacher in city schools. Upon her arrival in the village, she went to see the school director who told her: “Excuse us, there are no vacant posts, and there won’t be any.” Shortly thereafter, the school hired a teacher, a Greek woman, not formerly deported. When she went to another village school nearby, the director asked incredulously: “How can a Tatar teach in Russian?”*

– **The lack of legal documentation** – residence permit or citizenship – impedes employment. Permanent employment is difficult to obtain without a permanent resident permit, which is difficult to obtain for residents of hostels and compact settlements. In addition, this year, non-citizens are no longer hired by some government agencies, and non-citizens working in government agencies have been formally advised to seek other employment. However, even though the deadline for their obtaining citizenship had passed, none had been fired at the time of the assessment.

– **Personal ties and nepotism** are the predominant means of obtaining job placement. Thus those who have more history in an area and more links (including ethnic allegiances) are more likely to obtain placement.

*One respondent said that he regretted not adopting his cousin’s tactics. Upon arrival in the village, to ensure that his wife would not be turned away from a vacant post in the local kindergarten, his cousin had paid a bribe of \$100 and invited the local head of the village council to Uzbekistan, all expenses paid.*

*In another case, a respondent explained how in 1988, after six months of struggling with his residence permit and employment, he decided to use his ties as a communist party member to resolve these issues. He went to the city council and met with the party representative who called up the village council to resolve his residence permit. He also called up the local fish factory to provide him with a well-paying job and the central city hospital to hire his wife, a doctor.*

*On two of three collective farms visited, residents complained that the relatives of the farm managers – also Crimean Tatars – were placed in the best work*

*brigades, i.e., those which provide an opportunity to steal the most lucrative produce, such as vegetables.*

*On a mixed collective farm, a Tatar watermelon brigade was created. But the farm then let them fend for themselves. They were not provided with equipment or water on time. They were also charged with selling the produce themselves. In the end, the workers had wasted money and time and decided to quit the collective farm en masse.*

– **Seniority:** Returnees who were the last hired are the first to be down-sized. For example, in Evpatoria, the tax department fired 24 persons in the last month. Four were Crimean Tatar (close to 17 percent), in a city where Crimean Tatars represent 6.8 percent of the population.

– **A mismatch between specializations and place of residence:** Unemployment is linked to de-urbanization of the Crimean Tatars which results in too many city-trained specialists living in villages. In addition, Crimea and Central Asia do not share industrial specializations so that, for example, a valuable cotton production specialist in Central Asia has no future in Crimea.

### **Self-employment, Micro- and Small Enterprises**

Thus, many households have shifted their reliance on incomes from salaries, pensions and other government benefits to private sector income. Many of those who are faring well are successful entrepreneurs. In some cases, when incomes are stable, the private sector provides a high level of income. The large majority of persons involved in the private sector are self-employed micro-entrepreneurs. These include market sellers of local and imported goods, truck drivers, growers of produce, and producers of ethnic foods such as *tchibureki* and *bakhlava*.

These micro and small enterprises are relatively easy to start up since they require very small amounts of start-up capital and little to no equipment. In the best of cases, self-employment can serve as a building block for other, more ambitious activities.

***Micro-enterprise as building block to small trade:*** *Lutfie, a refugee from Kyrgyzstan living in Zvezdotchka hostel in Yalta, said that she turned to self-employment after having been turned away for a job because, she believes, of discrimination. Like the majority of residents of the hostel she started frying tchibureki and doughnuts and selling them in the market. She then befriended some people who work in the market who helped her get a spot selling vegetables and fruits in the market.*

The same characteristics that make the venture flexible – low level of formality, low level of investment and liquidity – also make it vulnerable. Incomes per day are very small and can therefore be wiped out by increased costs or seasonal price fluctuations.

**Seasonal income:** *Seiran bakes cakes and doughnuts which he sells in the market in Yalta during tourist season only. In May, his income from sales is only an estimated \$300. It increases to \$700 in June and \$900 in July and August. Then, as the tourist season nears its end, his income declines to \$700 in September and \$250 in October.*

**Multiple short-lived activities:** *Riza and his wife and two children live in Simferopol. Over the last year they have been involved in three types of self-employment activities adapted to the season. From February until April, they sold greenhouse cucumbers in the market. For the three months, they made between \$250 and \$350. By May, the price of cucumbers had decreased by 50 percent in Simferopol. In May, Riza's wife and brother went to Odessa to sell cucumbers. In one month, they made \$500. After two trips, the car broke down, putting a premature end to the cucumber trade. Meanwhile, Riza started working as a taxi driver, earning approximately 10 grivnas a day. In August, he and his wife and children made 2000 grivnas selling corn which they cooked at home in Simferopol and sold on the southern coast.*

Because the bulk of these enterprises focus on trade and marketing, a very important requirement is access to markets and, in particular, access to transportation. The majority of residents of isolated villages are not able to translate production into income because they lack transportation.

**Importance of private transportation:** *In Vodopolnoe, only five families own a car. According to residents, these families are able to buy up local produce and make \$500 a month during the summertime by taking it to sell in bulk in Evpatoria. In contrast, those who have no cars said that they do not bother going to the market because marketing costs (bus fare, spot in the market, etc.) are too high (5 to 8 grivnas) compared to expected revenues.*

*In Ay-Vasil, a compact settlement near Yalta, a young resident travels each day to the milk factory near Simferopol where he buys milk at an agreed upon price (informally agreed). He then sells the milk in the market in Yalta. His business is entirely dependent on his ability to transport cheap milk from the factory to the southern coast.*

*Marlen provides transportation for construction materials. He does not own his truck, but rents it for 200 grivnas a month. Today, he had two customers. The first asked him to transport wood planks to a village 20 kilometers from Simferopol.*

*Estimated expenses on gas are 35 liters per 100 kilometers. Gas costs 0.5 grivnas per liter. Expenses for this trip were a total of 18.50 grivnas – i.e., 3.5 grivnas for fuel, 5 grivnas for the spot where he waits for customers, 5 grivnas to the racket, and 5 grivnas to the police. He was paid 50 grivnas by his customer for the trip, an income of 32.5 grivnas. His second customer wanted 10 MT of sand transported 10 kilometers away. This time his income was 21 grivnas. In one day, he earned 53 grivnas but brought home only 30 grivnas after paying for an oil change, cigarettes, and lunch.*

**Importance of public transportation:** *A single mother living in a rural hostel decided to stay in the city after her husband left her and her two children without any source of income. She wants her son to be able to attend the better city schools. The younger daughter lives with the mother's parents in the village so that the mother can work. The mother spends three to five days each month traveling by bus (fare is 1 to 1.5 grivnas one way) to the villages, buying up produce. She spends the rest of her time in the market selling the produce. She can sell her produce for 200 percent of the price that she paid for it in the village. Her expenses include bribes to the tax inspectors (because she does not have a trade license), the sanitation department, maintenance for the market, and her spot in the market, but no payment to the racket. She estimates she makes 10 to 15 grivnas per day, or up to \$200 over the tourist season.*

• **Obstacles to Business**

According to respondents, the main obstacles and difficulties for small businesses are:

- **high tax rate (30 percent on profits and 52 percent on the salary fund);**
- **other official fees required for operating, (e.g., the trade license which costs 200 gr. per year);**
- **Mafia (racket) payments (approximately 10 to 20 percent of profits) and other less predictable costs;**
- privatization of small enterprises being less accessible to returning populations because it is limited to permanent employees and Ukrainian citizens;
- locales are difficult to rent from the municipality in profitable places. Once the renter has refurbished the locale, it can be repossessed by the municipality without compensation for improvements;
- lack of a "roof", or protection agreement with a well-placed official;
- the mentality of some employees and business partners who see nothing wrong in stealing from inventories;
- lack of (working and start up) capital. For Crimean Tatars savings have been spent on housing;
- lack of ideas;
- lack of understanding of management, accounting, tax and legal issues;
- lack of knowledge of appropriate technologies; and
- low status of self-employment and trade.

**The costs of running a business are perceived to be increasing. The three top issues are the tax rates, other government fees, and Mafia dues and pressures.** Tax rates are believed to be too high. All enterprises pay 30 percent on profits and 52 percent on the salary fund. Enterprises that act as “intermediaries”, i.e., procurement agents, pay a 45 percent tax on their income from their services. A VAT-type tax also adds 20 percent to the cost of items. The law does not provide any tax breaks for start-up enterprises or small enterprises.<sup>15</sup>

Enterprises also feel the increased pressure from the tax inspectors in collecting taxes. The tax department has increased its number of employees and, thereby, its capacity to track tax collection from enterprises. In Yalta, for example, businessmen refer to the change in terms of the premises of the tax agency which has gone from a one-floor department within the town council to a separate six-floor building. A new law requiring that all market traders use an electronic cash machine to facilitate tracking of incomes has generated fury in the markets in Simferopol, Yalta, and other cities, and led to a three-day strike which closed the central markets in these towns. The fines incurred can be frighteningly high. A tax inspector in Yalta said that the fines vary from a percentage of the undeclared income to a flat fine of 17 to 1700 grivnas (or 1 to 100 times the minimum wage).

The cost of operating is further increased by the licensing and other fees that must be paid to local officials and departments – the sanitation department, the city council, etc. The trade licensing fees – unlike systems in other countries which operate like a flat tax – are commonly in addition to income taxes. Therefore, businesses rely on varying levels of informality to escape these high costs of doing business.

*Avoiding the trade license: In Yalta, Lutfie gets up at six in the morning and buys produce from bulk traders and producers. For each type of produce, she pays 2 grivnas for laboratory analysis. She also pays 10 grivnas per day for her table, and the market administration takes another 3 grivnas. The racket gets 50 grivnas per month. Though she resides in town, she has a document from Pervomaiskii region stating that she is selling her own produce. This allows her to avoid the 200 grivna trade license. The tax inspectors also constantly come by and take a kilogram or two of fruit. In exchange, they don't bother her. She says that other traders also cheat customers by fixing their scales by 200 to 300 grams. In the summer, she can make up to 40 grivnas a day, while in the winter months her income drops to an average of 8 grivnas.*

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<sup>15</sup> One respondent said that a law in 1991 provided a tax break for start ups, but it is no longer implemented.

**Avoiding the trade license and sanitation department permit:** *After being fired in 1991 from a good position, Timur opened a small enterprise. He bought two places in the market where he sells imported and other food stuffs. He lives on income from his business (300 grivnas per month, i.e., 50 grivnas per person) and uses income from the household plot to buy construction materials. Over the lifetime of the business, he says that making a profit has become more and more difficult. The most important problem is taxes, then the Mafia which takes approximately 10 to 20% of profits. Taxes on profits are 30 percent, plus salary fund taxes of 52 percent. In addition, a trade license costs 200 grivnas per year. Timur pays another 180 grivnas per year to get a permit from the sanitation department. But these add up so that he would not be able to make a profit. This year he did not buy a permit or a license; it costs him less to pay bribes.*

**While respondents said that it is increasingly difficult to reach an agreement (read: bribe) with tax officials, the racket (or Mafia) at least can be reasonable.**

It is very rare that an entrepreneur does not pay the racket. A common saying illustrates this: “If you are not giving, you are taking [bribes].” Payment to the racket can be a flat fee for kiosk owners and market sellers and depends on their location. As a rule, the racket takes 10 to 20 percent of profits of an enterprise to allow it to operate. For example, a kiosk selling imported food stuffs (such as canned food, cookies, candy and alcohol) in Simferopol will pay between \$100 to \$500 a month to the racket depending on its location. Sometimes the entrepreneur pays for protection – from other racket groups – or from the tax officials. For example, in the market there are numerous sellers who operate without a trade license. They pay the racket each month and in exchange are warned in advance when a tax raid will occur in the market.

Even for the small entrepreneur, ties – formal and informal – to the local government are essential. Without this advantage, one may not be able to make a profit.

**Formal representative in government:** *The local sellers in Evpatoria benefit from the activism of their local Crimean Tatar representative at the City Council. He has secured 30 to 40 free places in the market, saving these sellers 5 grivnas a day. This is an important sum since they estimate that they make from 5 to 10 grivnas a day in winter and up to 25 grivnas in the summer. The Representative also recommended that they refuse to pay the 200 grivnas for the trading license or the fines of 3000 to 5000 grivnas imposed for not having a license. As he takes on this issue with local officials, his constituents are able to continue working in the market.*

**Connections ease access to resources:** *On a collective farm in Sovietskii region, the only resident leasing land is the former deputy farm manager. This year the leaseholder will need to find another piece of land because the collective farm took back the land he had been using two years in a row. This year he expects to*



*use land near Evpatoria. Why Evpatoria? Because his former boss now runs a collective farm there, and he can agree with him on equipment, storage, and land rental.*

**It is common knowledge that registered enterprise operates thanks to a roof** – i.e., a helpful local official who is compensated for twisting the law in the favor of the enterprise and who intervenes in case problems arise. This chronic illegality creates a situation in which the entrepreneurs are perpetually indebted to the official and thereby vulnerable to both prosecution and exploitation. As one entrepreneur explained: “I understand that I operate thanks to their help. But I also know that they can put an end to this arrangement when they choose.”

***Vulnerable to exploitation:*** *After seeing his salary decline to absurd levels, a mechanic in Belogorsk tried to open a private repair shop, but soon local officials and racketeers were coming to his shop expecting free servicing. After a couple of weeks he closed his shop explaining that the road-side business requires being too visible and therefore vulnerable to excesses.*

**The lack of access to affordable financial resources is another obstacle** to the development of further income and employment generating activities. This problem is compounded for the Crimean Tatars by the fact that commonly they have depleted their savings and assets on securing housing in Crimea. In contrast, with adequate financing, Crimean Tatar businesses have been able to grow over the last seven years.

***Investment in business instead of housing:*** *Hairie arrived in Crimea in 1990. The money she and her husband had from the sale of their home in Uzbekistan (8,000 RR) was not sufficient to buy a home in Kerch, so they rented an apartment and organized a cooperative in which they invested their money. Over seven years, they have spent nearly \$4000 on repairs and construction of an extension to a centrally-located shop. In 1994, they started producing doughnuts and tchibureki in the back of the shop. Today they also have five spots in the market. They would like to purchase equipment to process raw materials but do not have access to loans.*

- ***Privatisation***

Improved effectiveness of privatised enterprises is also slowed by privatisation conditionalities. Privatised enterprises are required to retain the same production profile for two to five years and are not allowed to fire employees. These conditions slow the development of the competitiveness and new sectors.

Advantages are given only to full-time employees of enterprises engaged in the privatisation process. Therefore, Crimean Tatars are likely to be less well placed for

privatisation because a greater percentage are not 1) employed full-time or 2) excluded from management positions where they can make important decisions guiding privatisation.

### 5. Language and Culture

For the Crimean Tatars, the importance of language should not be underestimated. It is commonly stated that language is at the core of nationality, and nationality gives meaning to the current difficulties. As one respondent explained:

*“Without our national language, we are not Tatar. If we are not Tatar, we are nothing. If this is not my homeland and I am not Tatar, then why am I putting up with this [these living conditions]?”*

Language and culture of the deported has suffered from the exile and the lack of promotion by Soviet authorities. Most Tatar families say that they speak Russian at home. There is also a dearth of Tatar literature accessible to children and adults.

In contrast, the other deported minorities (Armenian, Bulgarian, German and Greek) show less concern as communities in maintaining their national language. During our interviews, they showed signs of a higher degree of assimilation than the Crimean Tatars – living in mixed settlements, mostly in cities, accepting mixed marriages, ratifying their names, and rarely expressing with the same intensity an interest in national language and culture education for their children. In Yalta for example, there were only six children attending Sunday school classes in the Armenian church.

**The language issue has been politicized, pitting local officials against each other along ethnic lines.** To support their demands for government support for national education, respondents cited both Article 10 of the Ukrainian Constitution, adopted June 28, 1996, which states “In Ukraine, the free development, use, and protection of Russian, and other languages of national minorities of Ukraine, is guaranteed;” and the unapproved Crimean constitution which states that the Autonomous Republic of Crimea has three official languages – Russian, Ukrainian, and Tatar.

**However, within the Crimean Tatar community, there is clearly no consensus on how to address the issue of revitalization of Crimean Tatar language and culture.** On the one hand, the Mejlis, backed by some parents, have requested that Crimean Tatar schools be opened. Many parents complained that Crimean Tatar language is being taught as an optional course not a requirement. These optional courses take place at the end of the school day with children of different ages and levels. At the end of the day, children are tired and hungry and therefore unmotivated to take these classes. In other schools the language is taught as a requirement but

other students are able to take additional advanced classes in other important subjects during those same hours. Some parents are concerned that this would put their children at a disadvantage academically.

On the other hand, some parents, especially those expecting their children to go to university, are ambivalent about an all-Tatar education which would result they believe in generations second-rate university applicants. They explain that without attending Russian or Ukrainian schools, their children will not be able to compete in higher education exams. In addition, they suspect that Tatar schools may be inferior to other schools, just as national language schools were often not as prestigious as Russian language schools in the Soviet education system.

**Other respondents emphasize that schools are the sole environment where ethnic groups truly mix.** While ethnic disputes arise among students, parents said that they value the fact that their children's generation already has Russian and Ukrainian friends, something that parents rarely have. They expect that through these friendships their children will build a network that will allow them to be truly integrated into Crimean society. According to some respondents, assimilation is inevitable: it will take place in Crimea as it did in Uzbekistan.

## **6. Social Services**

Interestingly, social services are not seen as a priority when compared to other needs. However, they – kindergarten, health points – were consistently mentioned as one of the needs of communities. The FDPs have placed new demands on the existing social services. In rural areas, especially, the FDP population has different needs in terms of kindergartens, schools, and health points because of the differences in demography between the Crimean Tatars and the other ethnic groups. The Russian and Ukrainian population in villages tends to be composed overwhelmingly of pensioners, often living alone, with few young families. In contrast, the Crimean Tatars are arriving with multigenerational families, and with more children per couple than the Russian population.

The main obstacle to access to social services is low incomes. The formal costs (transportation, medicines, supplies) and informal costs (bribes and other presents to doctors to guarantee good treatment) have increased dramatically. An operation can cost upwards of 150 grivnas, and pharmaceuticals add up quickly in a duplicative treatment and prescription system. Costs are an obstacle to those with low levels of cash incomes and eroded levels of savings and assets – such as the FDPs, especially in villages. The compact settlements located at the periphery of towns commonly use the social services in the city. In villages, educational and health facilities are under-supplied. There are very few medicines being provided at the health point, limiting the local supply of services.

## PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

In accordance with the findings of the Social Assessment, the goal of the programs should be to enhance re-integration of the recent returnees and refugees into the Ukrainian and Crimean social, political, legal, and economic mainstream. Funding of programs should be **focused on those households that arrived after 1991** because they are most likely to be vulnerable and underserved.

Programs should support development of livable and lively communities by financing programs to develop basic infrastructure (supply of drinking water, electricity, roads, drainage, reforestation); support the economic development of these populations through micro-business credits so that they can meet basic daily needs; encourage political integration of the returnees through simplifying access to citizenship; and financing cultural and linguistic revival through formal and informal education programs.

Respondents – households and officials – emphasized the importance of adopting a **self-help** approach, stressing the negative impact on their community of hand-outs in terms of dependency.

**Implementing agencies should conduct feasibility studies in order to refine the recommendations listed below.** Outputs of a stakeholder workshop could include an evaluation of the proposal and recommendations, a common action plan laying out stakeholder responsibilities, and commitments for implementation.

### I. Program Recommendations

#### 1. Infrastructure

- *Recommendations*

- Focus on basic infrastructure – water, electricity, roads, drainage systems, soil erosion walls, reforestation – in the compact settlements in the periphery of cities. Repair and building of schools, medical points, and shops can also be considered.
- Always provide mechanisms for beneficiaries (not only their representatives) to participate in program design, implementation and management – including technical decisions such as the selection of appropriate technology.

- Require contributions from the beneficiaries – in kind, cash, or labor. While the project may want to set minimum standards, the community should, to the extent feasible, be able to organize their participation and contributions in a manner that seems fair and realistic to them (see example of Krasnokamenka below).
- Identify opportunities to create short-term skilled and unskilled labor opportunities for local residents. Potential for misunderstandings and ways to overcome it regarding community contributions and paid labor opportunities should be addressed in the feasibility study.
- Maintenance issues and user fees should be part of the initial discussions with the communities and should also be discussed in the context of choice of project and technology.
- **A follow-up feasibility study** should be conducted to design a detailed project proposal based on these recommendations. Specific questions for the feasibility study should include: identification of pilot sites; criteria for setting a ceiling cost for a community project; refine community-based methodology for selecting and implementing a project; identify means for setting user fees and other community contributions; maintenance responsibilities and contracts; and local labor opportunities. A stakeholder's workshop is essential early on to develop a common action plan between stakeholders.

Because of the dramatic decline in financing of Goskomnats, there is almost no capital investment in the compact settlements today. By funding infrastructure projects in the compact settlements, the program can support the development of these settlements as well as the improvement of the standard of living of close to half the Crimean Tatar population. By funding communal services, the project will also support the growth of livable and lively communities in areas which now look more like naked plains sprinkled with half-built homes.

Each community should be involved in the process of determining which is the most pressing infrastructure need. The social assessment experimented with ranking methodologies which proved useful in the context of community meetings to identify and discuss priorities. As a rule of thumb, communities tend to consider water, roads, and electricity as basic needs, followed by gas (heating), and social services (health and education). Drainage systems, soil erosion walls or reforestation programs may also be appropriate.

The project should consider beneficiaries as active participants. Participation and contributions to the project are essential components of the project. The project should require that the community contribute resources to it – labor, cash or

materials.<sup>1</sup> There is already a history of participation in infrastructure projects in these communities. For example, under Soviet rule, the main pipes were brought to the village and each household was responsible for buying and setting up pipes to their yard.

There is also a beginning of a system of user fees for electricity, gas, etc. However, user fees should be discussed with the community so that they can cover maintenance costs without barring access to the majority of potential users. This should be a topic for a follow-up feasibility study.

**Example of community mobilizing in Krasnokamenka,  
a compact settlement near Yalta:**

A recent example demonstrates how the community can mobilize resources and organize its participation in a manner that is feasible and realistic. In May 1997, in Krasnokamenka, a settlement near Yalta, the local government agreed with the local residents that if the residents built a cement foundation for a transformer, the local government would then purchase the transformer. A respected member of the council of elders then organized collecting money, procuring the cement, transporting it to the settlement, and building the foundation. Each family contributed as much construction materials or money as they could – with some not contributing anything depending on their socio-economic situation. Some contributed sand, others bricks, money, the use of their car, etc. They bought 48 grivnas-worth of cement on the money collected. Men aged 25 to 45 depending on their availability provided the labor.<sup>2</sup>

Opportunities to create short-term employment for local residents was an idea that was strongly supported by households, community representatives and officials. Though misunderstandings may arise between those who are working for wages on the project and those contributing labor as part of their “community contribution” to the program, ways to address these problems need to be identified.

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<sup>1</sup> In other community-based projects, ownership has ensured a higher level of ownership of the project and therefore sustainability in the long run through an increased sense of responsibility. The selection process of the project is therefore very important because if the project is not a priority then the population will be reluctant to spend time on it. In Moldova, methods to ensure community review and feedback of technical proposals for drinking water supply were piloted in 1997 in a World Bank pilot program. They were evaluated by local technicians as very useful.

<sup>2</sup> The government had not yet provided the transformer at the time of the assessment. The resulting lack of trust in outsiders is something the project may have to contend with.

A follow-up feasibility study should be conducted to design a detailed project proposal based on these recommendations. The feasibility study should, among other proposal-related tasks, identify pilot sites, determine criteria for selecting a ceiling cost for a community project, test and refine community-based methodology for selecting and implementing a project, and identify means for setting user fees and other community contributions. Once a site is identified, building a network with local stakeholders will facilitate the implementation of the project. Early in the feasibility study, stakeholders need to be consulted for feedback regarding the preliminary findings of the social assessment and implications for the design of the feasibility study. Once a draft proposal is produced, stakeholders can be convened in a workshop to develop a common plan of action and feedback mechanisms that will carry through program implementation and beyond. This is particularly important where maintenance agencies are outsiders to the community they serve.

## 2. Housing

- *Recommendations*

- Buy existing homes and apartments instead of building homes.
- Donors should consider other assisted self-help programs, which could include labor contributions from the beneficiary household or building brigades made up of neighbors and friends of vulnerable households, subsidized loans for finishing or buying homes, etc.
- Any loans on construction should postpone repayment for a reasonable amount of time to allow completion of construction.
- The beneficiaries should be consulted in determining housing criteria.
- Focus on residents of overcrowded hostels, and year-round residents of shipping containers who have no other housing options.
- Site selection and preparatory stages of projects for the repair and construction of infrastructure in hostels should be **driven by** the community development component. Successful resolution of user fee and maintenance issues in a formal contract form should be a pre-requisite for beginning work in a hostel.
- Clarification of ownership of hostels and payment requirements by residents should also be taken into consideration for site selection because of their implications on whether FDPs can be expected to benefit from the repairs for a reasonable amount of time.
- A **feasibility study** could identify and evaluate other assisted self-help options; community development methods for setting user fees and maintenance contracts; and ownership issues in hostels.

Any housing program should focus on the purchase of existing homes and apartments for subsidized credit because construction is more costly. A modest 3-room home would cost US \$12,000<sup>3</sup> to build, while depending on the region, such a home could cost as little as \$4,000. Small traditional Tatar homes in Belogorsk are sold for only \$500 – although they are often perceived as undesirable. The purchase of homes is likely to be more appropriate for vulnerable households which, according to criteria listed in Chapter 1, are short in labor capacity and therefore cannot build. The focus should be on relieving crowded communal shelters where more than one generation share one room such as in Berezovka hostel in Yalta. Hostel residents, who are commonly on the waiting list for an apartment are also likely to prefer receiving an urban apartment than having to build a home.

Again, local residents should be consulted in choosing between homes and apartments, their location and the priority families to be placed. However, program managers for self-help programs should be aware that there is considerable bitterness among returnees regarding their housing situation. Some said that they would refuse to pay back housing loans because they have not been effectively compensated for homes lost to deportation, have been promised housing from municipal authorities and therefore the government owes them housing.

Respondents also pointed out that loans for construction, to be realistic, should be repaid only after the construction is finished. Indeed, the labor force in families is already overstretched with providing for daily needs and then building on their days off and in the evenings. Therefore it is unreasonable to expect that they can increase their incomes while they are building in order to repay a loan. However, once the home is completed, they would feasibly be able to take on more work to repay a loan.

Concentrating on improving the living standards in hostels is a reasonable medium-term objective. However, site selection should be driven by a social/community development component which should in preliminary stages address and resolve issues of user fees, maintenance and other issues threatening the project's sustainability.

In addition, hostel ownership issues should be studied further. The repair of hostels is often a controversial topic for residents. In Yalta for example, the residents said that they would rather see funds go to construction of new housing or buying apartments than repairing a hostel. They explained that they have been promised apartments for five years and were told that their residence in the hostel is temporary. Therefore, they believe, investments in repairs of hostels will not benefit them but the owners of the hostel in the long-run.

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<sup>3</sup> Estimate by the Danish Refugee Council in 1997.



### 3. Employment and Income Generation

- *Recommendations*

- Small credits should be provided to support the development of micro-enterprises and self-employment activities.
- Credits should begin very small. Individuals can qualify for larger amounts in a stepped process.
- The target group is FDPs and other residents of the compact settlements.
- Means for selecting recipients (either revolving credit groups, community committee, or business plans) need to be assessed.
- Training and information dissemination can be provided regarding: procurement of appropriate mini-equipment; case studies of successful micro-and small businesses in the former Soviet Union; and management (planning, accounting, and tax laws).
- **A feasibility study** should be conducted to produce a detailed project proposal. Additional information to be gathered through the feasibility study includes: loan size; size of fund; interest rate; credit experience; collateral issues; accountability; local partner and capacity building needs; legal and tax framework for credit fund; ways of protecting small businesses from mafia and other threats; lessons learned from other NGOs and IOs. A stakeholder workshop should be held to ensure close collaboration and develop an action plan.

Self-employment continues to provide an important source of additional income at the household level. Small credits could enable the poorest residents to increase their incomes sufficiently to meet basic needs. The credits need to remain small in order for the businesses to retain sufficient informality and flexibility. Examples of micro-business activities are: trade in food sales; food preparation; processing of agricultural production; small kiosks, etc.

The loan sizes need to be kept very small (probably between \$ 50 and \$ 100, the equivalent of one or two months' salary) for two reasons:

- (1) to encourage self-selection of the poorest; and
- (2) medium-sized loans would generate a scale of activity that would be too visible and costly if formalized because of high costs of operation such as taxes, licensing fees, Mafia dues, etc.

Larger credits for medium enterprises could theoretically provide incomes sufficient for completing unfinished homes. They are unrealistic in the current tax and legal climate. Without tax reform, the private sector will not successfully fill the gap of the declining government sector. Tax legislation needs to be revised to offer relief to start-up and small enterprises. Decreased tax rates could in theory increase the level of formalization, and registration of enterprise and therefore decrease the cost of tax enforcement and increase the effective amount of tax collected by increasing the number of enterprises which can profitably operate within the formal sector. When these problems are addressed, a medium-sized credit program could focus on mini-equipment and leasing opportunities for production and processing of raw materials. Such a program should not exclude trade since trade is most likely to generate quick profits and therefore easy repayment.

Information dissemination and training activities could be provided to entrepreneurs. Topics covered could include: procurement options for appropriate mini-equipment (including leasing options); case studies in other former Soviet countries to provide ideas for self-employment and small businesses; tax and legal consultation; and management principles including design of business plans.

The local inexperience with credits is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, few people have ever had credits. On the other hand, people expect credits to be heavily subsidized. Some individuals had taken out loans which were not fixed to the rate of inflation. The issue of collateral also needs to be addressed to assess whether default penalties are enforceable.

A more focused micro-credit assessment should be carried out in order to generate a detailed project proposal which would answer questions regarding: exact loan size, interest rates, legal and tax constraints, default policy, and organizational set-up including identification of an implementing partner. In addition, once sites for the pilot phase are identified, a series of meetings culminating in a workshop would bring together stakeholders so that they can provide feedback on options. This step will be very important for sharing knowledge and building support for the program.

#### **4. Citizenship**

- ***Recommendations***

- Focus on assisting those who are most likely to be stateless; i.e. those who have arrived after November 1991.
- Implement an information campaign that targets the laymen and local officials not only regional and national level managers in Kyiv and Simferopol.

- Make use of the mass media and its attention to the arts and culture program to disseminate information.
- However, because of power cuts, expensive electricity, lack of leisure time, etc., most respondents said that the best way to disseminate information is **not** through newspapers, television, or radio. Use informal means to disseminate information: through posters and leaflets in shops, bus stops, schools, local passport offices, etc.
- Design documentation for laymen – brief, simple language in Russian. The target audience should include not only potential applicants but their local government and community representatives – Mejlis, Representatives of the State Committee on International Relations, and passport agency workers.
- Design information campaign to raise the number of applicants – explain why citizenship is important, define citizenship versus nationality, describe application process.
- A system for disseminating up-to-date information in an ongoing manner to the local level needs to be improved so that local officials can provide accurate up-to-date information to potential applicants.
- An intermediary status for those waiting for citizenship which is used at the local level by officials to grant citizen's rights to Crimean Tatars (for higher education and privatisation) can be discussed more widely, and perhaps formalized by officials.
- Continue to build capacity of local implementing partner in designing an effective and responsive outreach program.
- Set concrete goals, objectives and indicators to track the progress of the program.

The UN and other international agencies are working with the Government of Ukraine to obtain further simplification of the process, and with other governments to obtain a reduction in the processing fee for relinquishing citizenship. UNHCR has already developed an action plan which addresses some of the major issues. The challenge will be to turn a program that is currently strong at the center into an effective and responsive outreach program managed by a local NGO.

The assessment has shown that information regarding revisions to the citizenship law is not reaching the population or their local representatives. Local representatives are (mostly in good faith) passing on out-of-date, inaccurate information regarding citizenship. To strengthen the capacity of officials, UNHCR has planned two seminars

in Kyiv on citizenship issues and procedures for relevant field officers to take place before the end of 1997. It will be essential to see that these seminars are conducted to enable participants to then train their subordinates and colleagues who will actually implement the regulations. Information conveyed to them needs to then be accurately passed on to the local levels. Simple, up-to-date information pamphlets and posters can be distributed at that time in amounts sufficient for them to pass on to others. The target audience for information should include local representatives and implementors – Mejlis, local Committee for Nationalities, and passport agency workers.

Information dissemination methods need to be revised so that information can be accessible to the population. At this time, information dissemination relies too much on the mass media. Because many respondents said that they do not read newspapers, and rarely watch television or listen to the radio, any campaign should not expect to reach beneficiaries exclusively through the mass media. This is particularly important in rural areas and in the compact settlements where electric supply is less reliable. To reach a broader audience, respondents suggested that documentation be available on posters posted not only centrally in municipal buildings (at the local committee of nationalities in the village or town government building and in the office of the Mejlis) but also in the local shops, at the bus stop in towns and villages, and in the local passport office. Leaflets can be handed out through schools to children to bring home to their parents; to neighborhood representatives; the local Mejlis and other community organizations including the council of elders. That said, for reaching youths and the elderly in Simferopol and some major cities, the arts and culture program is an ideal vehicle for communicating information about citizenship and other UN programs through the mass media. Formal linkages between these two programs are planned.

Existing documentation does not address the main information needs. Posters and other promotional materials currently prepared by the UNHCR-funded NGO Assistance Foundation focus on explaining the NGO's goal and activities. Respondents suggested that posters and leaflets be prepared explaining (1) the importance of citizenship and (2) the process of obtaining citizenship. In addition, respondents said that the language of other UNHCR documentation on citizenship needs to be revised, shortened, and made accessible to laymen.

To improve the outreach capacity of the NGO Assistance, instead of expecting that the legal advisors cover the needs themselves in a number of regions,<sup>4</sup> they could be expected to train and then only supervise local counterparts in communities.

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<sup>4</sup> The Director of Assistance in Simferopol estimates that because of travel time, the legal advisors cannot effectively cover the 2-3 regions for which they are responsible. She has requested cars for the legal advisors to travel between the districts that they cover which UNHCR is expected to provide.

In each locality, a local person (salaried or paid through a fee system) could be trained to provide information, call community meetings, pass out and explain information and seek out non-citizens to support their application process. These residents already have a lot of information and links in the community that can facilitate this work. Their activities can include assisting in completing applications, gathering applications and travel to the local passport (OVIR) office, communicate with the office in Simferopol which can coordinate with Embassies in Kyiv in necessary.

Concrete goals, objectives (target numbers) and indicators need to be set in order to track and motivate the progress. These indicators should include: percentage of Crimean Tatars residing in the region who have citizenship; percentage of those who arrived after November 13, 1991 who have obtained citizenship; number of people assisted; number of people assisted who successfully applied for citizenship; number of those who were rejected.

An intermediary legal status could be formalized for those Crimean Tatars who have submitted their applications for citizenship and whose applications have been accepted in order to allow them to benefit from lower rates for higher education, employment opportunities, and privatisation. A Crimean Tatar refugee from Tadjikistan living in Yalta said that she has been provided with a document that allows her to keep her job and her son to attend university paying the rate a citizen would pay. In another case that illustrates the flexibility of some local officials, during a legal seminar in Simferopol, the Deputy Representative of the Land Resources Committee suggested a similar resolution. He encouraged jurists to advise that those wanting to privatise their land plot submit a request which can be registered so that later, when and if they get citizenship, they may qualify for free privatisation based on the date of registration of their application.<sup>5</sup> However, without an information campaign for local administrators and to inform interested individuals, this flexible approach will benefit a minuscule minority.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: interview Legal Advisor with NGO Assistance, Simferopol.

## 5. Language and Culture

### • *Recommendations*

- Continue to encourage revival of language and culture through formal and informal education, artistic and recreational activities.
- Focus on laymen and youths in particular, and involve them in projects with the artistic elite.
- Design programs for different ethnic groups to work together rather than in parallel.
- Monitor the impact of the ethnic tolerance message – to what extent is it delivered, heard and accepted by participants of the program; do participants say there is a change in their perception of other groups after they have taken part in the program and so forth.

Language study through schools and informal education needs to be supported. The program should focus on the publication and dissemination of textbooks for language study, children's newspapers, children's books, literary classics, and other secular literature. UNHCR is already planning to finance publishing books in Crimean Tatar.

Already, through its arts and culture activities, UNHCR has recognized that arts are an ideal medium for conveying essential messages of tolerance and reintegration. Based on the findings of the study, these messages could focus on:

- (1) promoting values such as tolerance and reintegration in Crimean society;
- (2) creating an informed debate regarding reintegration; and
- (3) providing information regarding international donor assistance goals and programs. Many of the information campaigns – such as that of the citizenship campaign – can ride on the coat-tails of a well-thought-out arts and culture program.

The arts and culture program is essential for drawing out the positive aspects of a diverse society. As noted in previous chapters, at this time in Crimea, ethnic groups tend to live separate lives, with very little occasion to meet, exchange information or build linkages. As a result, there is a high level of suspicion, disinterest, and misinformation. These programs can focus on involving the artists and laymen of different ethnic backgrounds to work together jointly on projects.

The programs should also include a monitoring component to assess the impact of these activities. While it would be unrealistic to expect rapid dramatic changes in attitudes, realistic short-term indicators can be selected to measure the impact of the ethnic tolerance message: for example: to what extent is the message delivered, heard and accepted by participants of the program; do participants say there is a change in their perception of other groups after they have taken part in the program and so forth.

A special focus on youths is appropriate because they are the most likely generation to integrate successfully. The program can provide resources to open or refurbish community recreational facilities to keep youths interested in positive, interactive, and creative activities. Youths need to be directly involved in developing plans for these activities.

## **II. Program Considerations**

Each program should bear in mind the following considerations:

### **Information Dissemination**

Incomplete information regarding programs leads to suspicions and rumors of mismanagement. A very effective public information campaign – regarding the program’s goals, target population, resources to be provided and conditionalities – needs to accompany each phase of the program. Though these suspicions may be inevitable because of local history, openness and accountability need to be core values of the program.

### **Mistrust of Existing Government and Non-Government Structures**

At each site, the mistrust of existing government and non-government representatives was expressed loudly. The mistrust is born of recent scandals regarding the misuse of funds. It is also due to the misunderstanding of the impact of inflation and the economic hardship on central and local budgets. Consequently, financing should not be handed over to local counterparts or entities without close supervision, accountability, and monitoring.

### **Community Resources**

Many communities visited have active informal leaders, such as the council of elders, capable of mobilizing resources in the community and resolving conflicts. For example, the council of elders in Kamenka resolved issues surrounding a thief who

was believed to be stealing out of need. The council decided not to hand over the thief to the police but to give him a warning and a job as a watchman at the mosque. In Ismail Bey, the council of elders organized the collection of electricity fees. In Krasnokamenka, the elders organized the work, community contributions and procurement for building a foundation for a transformer promised by the municipality.

These are valuable resources into which a development program can tap for support. By requiring local participation and contributions, programs can enhance these informal structures rather than inhibit them.

**However, any one group regardless of its mobilization capabilities is a stakeholder with its own bias and interest distinct from those of the community.** In some cases, the council of elders was controlled by the Mejlis or other political groups making its position more radical and politicized than the more concrete interests expressed by the rest of the population.





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## TERMS AND ACRONYMS

**Crimean Tatar:** “Crimean Tatar” is preferred to “Tatar” by Crimean Tatars. The attribute “Crimean” recognizes the Crimean Tatar’s claim to being an indigenous people of Crimea. There are Tatars in Russia for example who are not Crimean Tatars.

**FDP:** Formerly Deported People.

**FSU:** Former Soviet Union.

**GDP:** Gross Domestic Product.

**Goskonnats:** Russian abbreviation for the State Committee on Nationalities funded by the Ukrainian budget, was and remains the single funder of capital improvement projects benefiting the FDPs and in particular the Tatars – city, district and village budgets were and are still not commonly used to meet these needs.

**Gryvna(s):** Ukrainian currency.

**JEK:** Russian acronym for the municipal department which handles maintenance, rent, utilities in urban areas.

**Mejlis:** The Mejlis is structured with a 33-member executive board, the Kurultai. Each town, village and compact settlement where Crimean Tatars reside has a local representative of a Mejlis. A representative also coordinates activities of local Mejlis at the district (rayon) level. The Mejlis was formed in 1991 and has since served as the primary organization advocating for the Tatar community’s interests. It is linked to a political party – the Organization of the Crimean Tatar National Movement (OKND) – which has roots that extend back to 1967 and the dissident movement in Central Asia. The present leader of the Mejlis, Mustafa Jemilev [see Open Society, 1996, pp. 46-51].

**Propiska:** Residence permit, part of the inherited Soviet internal passport system.

**Rayon:** Russian term translated as region in this paper. It is an administrative unit below that of the oblast or Autonomous Republic levels.

**SPMK and PMK:** are construction companies or trusts funded through Goskonnats.

**Vremianka:** Russian term for the small (commonly two-room, 4 by 8 meters), temporary homes that are built on the household plot in order to claim the plot and house the builder and his family during a period of construction.



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## METHODOLOGY

### Choice of Methodology

Development programs have often failed to address felt needs and take into consideration local realities of a country situation. To address this weakness, international agencies have begun to explore at the design stage, the local social and economic situation in order to reflect it in programming. A Social Assessment combines social analysis and participation of the beneficiaries. It is a process which provides a framework for prioritizing, gathering, analyzing, and incorporating social information and participation into the design and delivery of development operations.

There are many variables which potentially affect the impact and success of projects and policies – such as gender, age, language, displacement, and socio-economic status. Through data collection and analysis, social assessments enable project planners, in consultation with stakeholders, to prioritize critical issues and determine how to address them.

In particular, a Social Assessment can help in situations of transition and conflict-resolution such as the one in Crimea, where solutions, needs, and priorities of the stakeholders are unclear at the outset. The Social Assessment assists in identifying stakeholders and vulnerable groups; their priorities, local vulnerabilities and capacities and enables planners to adapt models to local realities. It is the first step in creating an interactive process of flexible planning where the beneficiaries are participants, not passive recipients, of programs.

**Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA):** PRA methodology was developed in the 1980s by adapting sociological and anthropological methods and tools to the needs of the development field. The fundamental principals of the methodology are: a multi-disciplinary team, a mix of techniques, flexibility and informality, optimal ignorance and appropriate level of precision, and on the spot analysis and participation.<sup>1</sup> Creating opportunities for participation of the beneficiaries is essential to accurately reflect local knowledge, practices, and beliefs. The team of field workers therefore should make use of key informants to guide the research design – in terms of themes, and selection of respondents. Insiders and outsiders come together to take part in the data collection and analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Theis, Joachim and Grady, Heather M., 1991, "Participatory Rapid Appraisal: A Training Manual Based on experiences in the Middle East and North Africa," Save the Children/US, Westport, CT. A useful source for more information on PRA.

The Social Assessment used secondary sources, individual interviews, focus group interviews, and community meetings. Individual interviews were conducted with Crimean Tatars, Russians, and Ukrainians, and key informants – such as local officials, specialists, and informal leaders. As in anthropology, the sampling method of the respondents was a snowball method whereby informants identify interesting respondents according to characteristics set forth in the scope of work of the Assessment. Focus groups provided insight into differences in priorities between ethnic groups, genders, and age groups. The research also included feedback sessions during community meetings when the community was invited to comment on findings, discuss its priorities, and make suggestions for programs design and implementation.

**Site selection:** Nine sites were selected for the purpose of the Social Assessment. Each site was selected for its defining characteristics and their implications for the situation of FDPs.

Sites	Main Characteristics
Simferopol hostel and compact settlements – Kamenka, Stroganovka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Capital</li> <li>– Large concentration of FDPs</li> <li>– Large compact settlements</li> <li>– Central steppes</li> </ul>
Yalta, hostel Zvezdotchka, compact settlements: Krasnokamenka, Ay-Vasil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Southern coast: tourist zone and geo-strategic zone</li> <li>– Mountainous</li> <li>– Few FDPs in the city</li> <li>– Local government perceived as obstacle to return</li> <li>– New migrants from steppes</li> </ul>
Kerch city and compact settlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Industrial city</li> <li>– Very few Crimean Tatars</li> <li>– Coastal city but villages are in steppe</li> </ul>
Leninskii region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Rural district</li> <li>– Many Crimean Tatars</li> <li>– Eastern steppes</li> </ul>
Belogorskii region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Rural district</li> <li>– Close to Simferopol</li> <li>– Large percentage of FDPs</li> <li>– Central steppes</li> </ul>
Evpatoria and compact settlements – Sputnik, Ismail Bey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Secondary city</li> <li>– Tourist zone</li> <li>– Large compact settlement</li> <li>– Western steppe area</li> </ul>

Krasnoperekopsk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hostel with refugees</li> <li>- Free industrial zone</li> <li>- Isolated, northern steppe</li> </ul>
Vodopolnoe, Tchernomorskii Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rural district</li> <li>- Very isolated</li> </ul>
Berezovka in Tchekhovov village, Razdolnenskii Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rural hostel</li> <li>- Northern steppes</li> </ul>

**Field workers:** The team was composed of eight field workers, one local supervisor and an international consultant. Eight of the local hires were Crimean Tatars, one was Russian. There were three women and six men on the team. There was also a spread within the team in terms of age-groups, with five being between 35 and 45 years old.

**Training:** The field workers were trained over a period of seven days in Simferopol and the compact settlement of Kamenka. The training focused on Participatory Rapid Appraisal tools, interview techniques and refining the interview topic guide.

**Timing:** The field work was conducted in August-September 1997. The fall season probably presented a more optimistic view of the situation than an assessment of the situation would in winter where fuel shortages and housing issues would be evident or the late spring when food is scarce in many households.

- *Limitations*

There are two main limitations of the methodology:

**(1) The team was overwhelmingly Crimean Tatar. Even though we tried to include other nationalities, applicants were not forthcoming.** This may have resulted at times in consensus where it was not warranted. To overcome this, this propensity was discussed at the training stage, and field workers were encouraged to challenge their own assumptions, and those of their colleagues.

In addition, de-briefing sessions focused on bringing out nuances, testing assumptions, and challenging stereotypes. To obtain the view of other ethnic groups, a few of the Crimean Tatars who could pass as Russian and others who passed as Armenian were assigned interviews with these groups.



**(2) Community meetings can be easily dominated by the more vociferous and politically motivated members.** It took the field workers some experience with moderating these debates before these meetings revealed a more balanced view of the communities' needs. This is an important lesson for the community development component of any project.