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**"Exploring the Potential of the Israeli Model: A Comparative Analysis of
Azerbaijani and Israeli Diaspora Efficiency and its Implications for the
Azerbaijani Diaspora's Future Activities"**

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I have read ADA's policy on plagiarism and certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the content of this paper, entitled *Comparison of the efficiency of Azerbaijani Diaspora with the similar Israeli experience and possible application of Israeli model in the activities of Azerbaijani diaspora* is all my own work and does not contain any unacknowledged work.

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Abstract

Diasporas play an essential role in shaping global politics, economics, and culture and in light of the development and efficiency improvement of Azerbaijani Diaspora this paper aims to analyze challenges that Azerbaijani Diaspora faces. The study has revealed that Azerbaijan has a great potential to improve its Diaspora through the implementation of world practices. The study poses solutions for each challenge - establishment of an organization, creating a climate for better lobbying, creation of digital tools for awareness purposes. All these solutions are evaluated according to five main criteria such as effectiveness, efficiency, equity, feasibility/implement ability, and flexibility/improvability. The research includes secondary data from various sources and semi-structured interviews with experts in the relevant field. The analysis and assessment show that each problem should be addressed separately and solutions presented in the paper should go in parallel. Each of the solutions elaborates on a specific issue, which can be successful if implemented together. While the creation of a stronger community focuses on the challenges related to absence of legal framework, better lobbying changes address the political issue. Lastly, communication challenges that arise in the globalized world should be dealt with in order to be able to implement the previously mentioned problems.

Keywords: Israeli model, Diaspora, Azerbaijani Diaspora, identity crisis, Diaspora strategy

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Diaspora refers to a group of individuals who are dispersed or scattered around the world, generally due to a similar cultural or ethnic identity. Diasporas can be voluntarily or involuntarily, and they can be caused by a range of variables such as economic, political, or social circumstances. Diasporas have a significant impact on global politics, economy, and culture. One of the largest and most well-known diasporas is the Jewish diaspora. Even the term “diaspora” historically was used to describe Jews that settled in colonies outside Israel-Judea after being exiled from Babylon (Zeitlin, 2012). The long history and practices used by the Jewish diaspora resulted in an Israeli model of diaspora. In this paper, the aim is to analyze both the Azerbaijani and Israeli diaspora and provide policy recommendations derived from world practice that can be implemented in Azerbaijan for the enhancement of the diaspora.

Before starting to analyze the practices of both Israeli and Azerbaijani Diasporas, it is important to define the concept of “diaspora” and understand its importance in global practice. According to Irving M. Zeitlin, diaspora is the “dispersal of an originally homogenous people, often forced or involuntary, into a foreign and frequently hostile environment” (2012). He emphasizes diaspora's historical background, emphasizing that it frequently occurs because of political or economic upheaval, such as war or migration (Zeitlin, 2012). He also mentions a sense of desire for a homeland or a lost community, as well as a sense of connectedness to fellow diaspora members who share a same history and culture (Zeitlin, 2012). In summary, it is clear from the author's description that diaspora is a complex of social, cultural, and historical characteristics that demonstrates how identity has been shaped throughout history. Another prominent scholar who contributed to the literature

on diaspora is Stephane Dufoix. In the book “Diasporas” he defines diaspora as a “social form characterized by a collective identity that is shaped by displacement and the desire for return or connection with homeland” (Dufoix, 2008). Furthermore, he emphasizes the communities' diversity and flexibility, emphasizing that they may take numerous shapes and be influenced by a variety of experiences, such as migration, exile, and displacement (Dufoix, 2008). The distinctive feature of Dufoix's definitions is that he emphasizes the dynamic character of these communities and explains how they are changed by diverse influences.

In order to reveal the challenges that the Azerbaijani diaspora faces, and propose policy options, it is important to understand some unique aspects of a strong diaspora. As a reference point, in this paper the main focus will be on Jewish diaspora as well as global practice. Despite the fact that the Israeli diaspora is relatively new to other ones, it has managed to preserve the sense of community making emphasis on historical circumstances, education, and cultural identity. Irving M. Zeitlin differentiates three distinguishing aspects of the Israeli diaspora in “Jews: The Making of a Diaspora People” book (2012). Firstly, the Israeli diaspora is unique in that it is relatively new, having emerged largely after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 (Zeitlin, 2012). It means that the Israeli Diaspora is not as deeply rooted as some other diaspora communities are, and often maintains strong connections to Israel and Israeli culture. Secondly, the book states that the Israeli diaspora is characterized by a strong sense of national identity; this sense of identity is often reinforced by political and economic ties to Israel, as well as by a desire to support and promote Israeli interests (Zeitlin, 2012). Thirdly, Zeitlin notes that the Israeli diaspora is highly diverse, with members coming from a wide range of cultural and religious background (2012). Despite being diverse, the Israeli diaspora remains one the largest communities and it shows the

success of the Israeli diaspora model. An important force in the Israeli diaspora is the Zionist movement. It is a political and cultural movement that originated in the late 19th century and aims to establish and maintain a Jewish homeland in the historical land of Israel, which is known as Zion. The movement emerged as a response to anti-Semitism and persecution of Jews in Europe and other parts of the world, with the goal of providing a safe haven and a sense of national identity for Jewish people. The term Zion is coming from a biblical term used to refer to the city of Jerusalem and the land of Israel (Zeitlin, 2012).

The Azerbaijani diaspora also refers to the communities of people with Azerbaijani heritage who live outside the country. The population and distribution of the diaspora are not well documented, however it is estimated that more than 30 million Azerbaijanis live overseas (Azerbaijan.az, n.d.). In comparison, it is clear that the Azerbaijani diaspora is much smaller than Israeli. The largest Azerbaijani communities are in Iran, Turkey, Russia, Europe, and North America. Despite its size, the Azerbaijani diaspora has played an important role in promoting Azerbaijani culture and identity, as well as in fostering political and economic ties between Azerbaijan and other countries where they reside. The State Committee on Work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan has implemented different events and programs to encounter and assist Azerbaijanis abroad to overcome their obstacles and difficulties. The organization arranges Summer Camps for Diaspora Youth regularly, to convey cultural heritage, present current developments in Azerbaijan, and increase awareness about Azerbaijani diaspora through media in the world. Despite the fact that the number of participant countries varies year from year, the event is regarded as a great success as it hosts representatives from more than 35 countries including the US, Canada, United Kingdom, Italy, et al (State Committee on Work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan, n.d.)

Another program organized by the Committee is “Karabakh is Azerbaijan!” National Platform. The Platform carries the utmost importance as it aims to create awareness and spread the truth about the Azerbaijan and Karabakh conflict in the media and through other means. The Platform consists of Azerbaijani Diaspora Volunteers and activists that reside abroad. The distinguishing aspect of the platform is that it has an international section that includes Turkey, Canada, Netherlands, Poland, Moldova, and Italy. (State Committee on Work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan, n.d.). Moreover, the Committee launched additional initiatives in order to discuss opportunities related to education such as “E-academy” and “Brain Gain” (State Committee on work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan, n.d.).

While both of the diasporas are relatively new, the Azerbaijani diaspora lags behind the Israeli model. When comparing with the features listed above regarding Jewish diaspora, firstly, Azerbaijani Diaspora despite being new does not maintain strong cultural ties to Azerbaijan. This tendency might be observed from the survey conducted for this study, where more than sixty per cent of respondents indicate that there is a lack of the sense of community and interconnectedness. Secondly, the sense of identity, which is reinforced by political and economic ties to Azerbaijan, is fragile. Expatriates after leaving the borders show low levels of political involvement and awareness about the home country; difficulties related to the economic situation which include difficulties related to employability also increases the assimilation process to new culture, thus failing to preserve the Azerbaijani identity. This creates an issue with weak political representation abroad and difficulties which results in a low level of promotion of Azerbaijani interests. Thirdly, the Israeli model despite being one of the largest and diverse communities is able to maintain its presence in the world.

From statistical information presented online, it was revealed that due to the lack of data on exact number and dispersion of Azerbaijanis, it becomes difficult to solve the first two policy problems listed above. In order to avoid assimilation and weak political and economic presence abroad, Azerbaijan needs to have statistics about its citizens living abroad.

There are stakeholders who are directly affected with the issues presented below are Azerbaijani citizens residing abroad and the Governmental branch of Azerbaijan which is the State Committee on work with the Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Since, if expatriates living out of national borders are not satisfied with the social, economic and political presence of Azerbaijan abroad there will be a high level of assimilation and weakening of Azerbaijani diaspora; this can lead to bigger political problems that Azerbaijani government can face. In this paper, we are going to identify and explore the key problems and controversies that the Azerbaijani diaspora model faces and propose policies regarding the matter focusing on the Israeli model of diaspora in order to create strong communities abroad. The most important point currently is to clearly define what is the current situation for both Azerbaijani Diaspora and the expatriates abroad, what are the possible ways to develop and enhance Azerbaijani political, economic, and social presence abroad, and how to implement the possible policy alternatives for eliminating the current problem.

As already indicated above, the State Committee on Work with the Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan has done several programs to empower Azerbaijani presence across the borders, yet these programs seem insufficient. Moreover, the scarcity of primary and secondary data displays that there is a lack of quality research and investigation about the problem. The key objective of the capstone project is to identify and explore the main reasons

and causes behind the insufficient level of development of the Azerbaijani Diaspora by contributing to the elimination of the problems and improving the current situation by offering effective methods to avoid gradual assimilation and weak political and economic presence abroad. Overall, this capstone project would seek to analyze the current organizations and programs involved in the development of our diaspora and provide the relevant recommendations and solutions to the government of Azerbaijan, precisely to the State Committee on Work with the Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan based on reliable qualitative data.

1.1. Methodology

In order to describe and examine particular details of this policy paper comprehensively, qualitative data types have been acquired. The strategy of data collection methodology incorporates the implementation of structured materials from primary and secondary source data. An interview and survey, which contained qualitative questions, have been conducted to obtain primary data sources. Thus, an interview was held with three various experts and officials from the State Diaspora Committee, Analysis of International Relations Center, and Baku State University who have comprehensive knowledge about the diaspora activities, however considering the time limitation of interviewees, the meeting occurred online through two different digital platforms. Interview questions have contained these questions below:

1. How could the countries benefit from the diaspora in a political sense?
2. How do you assess the activities of the Azerbaijani Diaspora abroad?

3. What do you think about the political activities of the Azerbaijani diaspora members in their host countries?
4. What kind of communication obstacles Azerbaijani diaspora may encounter?
5. Do Azerbaijanis live abroad experience identity issues?
6. What are the major tools used by Jewish diaspora in host countries?

Thus, an interview was conducted with three experts from State Diaspora Committee, AIR Center, and Baku State University who have comprehensive knowledge about the diaspora activities; however, considering the time limitation of them, the meeting occurred online, through Microsoft Teams and Zoom platforms. The first interview was conducted with an official of the Center for the Analysis of International Relations. The interview lasted approximately 20 minutes; however, the respondent answered only three questions in detail. After that, due to the possessing direct relations with Azerbaijan Diasporas in various parts of the world, a second interview was conducted with the official from the Diaspora Committee, and relevant questions were answered accordingly. To obtain objective and neutral responses as possible, the last interview occurred with an independent researcher and Professor at Baku State University in Azerbaijani language through the Zoom platform, and the interview lasted approximately 25 minutes. In addition to the opinions of experts or officials about the activities of the diaspora, it carries significance to study the thoughts of the diaspora member; therefore, a survey was prepared and conveyed to the Azerbaijan community who reside in various countries. The survey was developed based on the Google Docs platform and sent online to the diaspora community via email and social media. Since members of the diaspora are directly involved in this process, their opinion reflects the reality of their own experience. The

survey consists of 13 questions, six of which are open-ended questions and respondents participated in the survey completely anonymously.

As a secondary source methodology, academic articles, interviews of state officials and their interviews with journalists, including verified news portals, were adopted to generate sweeping outcomes. Academic articles were obtained using platforms such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and Research Gate. Furthermore, to improve the quality of the examination, several books about diaspora activities were taken from the library of ADA University and have been referred to.

The essential incentive, which limits the research, is the specificity of the topic, which creates an explicit barrier to explore the necessary materials and sources. At the same time, in the interviews conducted with experts to ascertain their aspects, the shortness of time, and the busy schedule of experts composed an obstacle to asking the follow-up questions, which should be considered as an additional obstacle. Moreover, delivering surveys to the diaspora community on social networks, and observing it constantly have taken enough time to analyze and summarize responses.

The capstone paper will be divided into 5 different chapters, which investigate distinctive sights of policy problems. The first chapter includes an introduction that provides a theoretical background to perceive the problem exhaustively. Besides the introduction, methodology is also included in the first chapter. The second chapter will particularly characterize the challenges that the Azerbaijani diaspora has encountered. The third chapter will focus on policy suggestions to tackle the available troubles. The fourth chapter is going

to consist of an assessment of policy propositions, and the final part portrays an overall conclusion by highlighting the major evidence of the paper.

Chapter 2. Problem Description

Diaspora communities emerge when a group of people from the same country or ethnic group move to various parts of the world. As mentioned before, there are a significant number of Azerbaijanis all over the world. These communities are important in order to preserve and promote Azerbaijani values such as culture, language, and traditions in foreign countries. However, as many nations, Azerbaijanis also face some problems while residing in a foreign country. For instance, due to the new environment, social isolation or feeling of disconnectedness from the Azerbaijani culture might be a problem. Furthermore, Azerbaijani expatriates might experience a ‘cultural identity’ issue. In order to understand the issue, it is instrumental to understand what ‘cultural identity’ means. It is defined by Stuart Hall as “in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self,’ hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (2019, p.223). The issue emerges when people lose connectivity to the each other and gradually forget the culture, history, and traditions, thus creating a ‘cultural identity’ issue. Another challenge that Azerbaijanis face abroad is that there is rather weaker representation and influence of Azerbaijanis in the political situation compared to Israeli presence abroad. Through analysis of Jewish practice and global practices, opportunities are discussed to better the lobbying in foreign countries. Moreover, the creation of awareness is lagging due to the lack of concrete data about Azerbaijani citizens residing outside of the Azerbaijani borders. While it may seem like a minor issue, correct communication immensely affects the first and second issues identified in the study. This chapter analyzes separately each of those social, political, and technical challenges that create

a problem for Azerbaijani expatriates, mentions the world practice and the current status of problems.

2.1. Absence of a legal framework and specific strategy to enhance Azerbaijani Diaspora's efficiency

Azerbaijan is a state while Diaspora communities are groups formed voluntarily in other sovereign states. Each of these states has its specific political, economic, and social agenda and relationship with Azerbaijanis and other ethnic minorities. A crucial value for a state is citizenship, which denotes a relationship of an individual to political life common to all citizens without regard to ethnic or cultural affiliations. In contrast, identity and sense of belonging are related to ethnic, religious, and cultural commitment. It is important to show the complexity of identity by itself to understand the activities and policy problems of the Diaspora. The divide between the Azerbaijani state and Diasporic communities' life is huge; however, the government is not accountable to bridge the gap between these two. As a state, it should play an important role in enhancing Azerbaijani identity in every corner where Azerbaijanis live. The mentioned state is difficult to achieve, yet work should be implemented to try to achieve the aim. Diaspora communities possess great cultural and institutional diversity. To fully grasp the vast range of experiences, organizations and individuals encounter under the name 'Diaspora' one needs to think about Europe, the U.S., Canada, Latin America, South Africa, and post-Soviet space.

The transition away from huge organizations and toward dispersed cross-hatched networks of activity and communication is a new trend in today's society (Mirsky, 2010). This is not to imply that major institutions, such as governmental bodies or Jewish

federations, are in any way becoming unnecessary. However, their function in influencing societal imagination and actual policies is shifting, and they are being called upon to revise their conceptions of themselves and adopt appropriate, practical practices. This is the case when it comes to the Azerbaijani Diaspora and the activities of the relevant branch of government related to the Diaspora.

Institutions that take active participation in Diaspora-related activities and events are varying due to their level. At a ministerial level, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan is in charge of the promotion of the national interests of the Azerbaijani Republic through diaspora activities. At a sub-ministerial level, The State Committee on Work with the Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan takes an active role in the realization and implementation of policies. This governmental body, which is a part of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, is responsible for forging and maintaining ties with the Azerbaijani diaspora abroad and aiding Azerbaijanis all over the world in their efforts to promote national unity. Today's State Committee on Diaspora Affairs is an executive body composed of five departments, each representing a different world region: Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine; EU nations; Asian and Transcaucasian states; USA and Canada; plus a sixth territorial department that deals with Azerbaijanis living in Georgia. The Chairman of the Committee is appointed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to serve in that capacity.

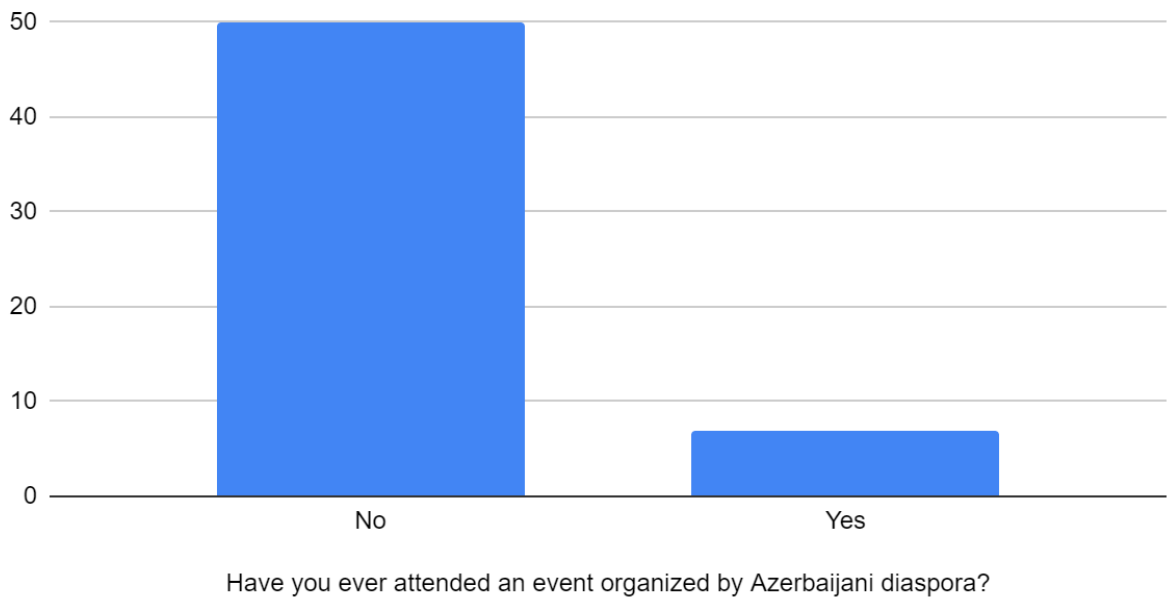
Another actor, which takes a participation in the process, is The State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The organization focuses on the Azerbaijani diaspora's capacity for creativity. The State Agency

for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State Committee for Work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed a Memorandum of Understanding on February 15, 2019. The Memorandum envisions coordinated activities to offer mobile services to Azerbaijanis residing abroad. In order to carry out legal and propaganda work aimed at spreading Azerbaijani realities around the world, the cooperation also entails protecting the rights and legitimate interests of Azerbaijanis who live abroad and coordinating the efforts of ASAN Radio and the Azerbaijani Diaspora Support Fund. A legal organization called the Fund for Support to Azerbaijani Diaspora was established with the goal of educating the world about the reforms and accomplishments made in the Republic of Azerbaijan in order to safeguard the nation's interests and moral and national values. It carries out initiatives aimed at defending the civil and national rights of Azerbaijanis residing abroad, engages in advocacy work, works on associated social projects, and strengthens connections with diaspora organizations.

The place and status of Azerbaijanis within the Azerbaijani existence differ from the Azerbaijani community abroad and other communities in the world. The activities implemented by The State Committee on Work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan generally accord centrality to Azerbaijan, are interested in its contribution to its educational and cultural activities, and expect involvement from expatriates. The general trend is to mobilize an international Azerbaijani diaspora (State Committee on Work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2022). The Karabakh conflict is one of the main factors that drive Azerbaijan's policy to organize and support diaspora activities beyond national borders (State Committee on Work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2022). Moreover, in order to increase network and empower Azerbaijanis abroad, different policy actions are

implemented. The State Committee highlighted in its annual report that a number of activities were held in honor of national holidays such May 28th, October 18th, and November 8th in order to further Azerbaijani culture and interests (2022) Below, a specific occurrence will be examined to determine whether the goal and the actions are consistent with one another. Actions and events related to Novruz festivities abroad were noted in the report of the Azerbaijani Diaspora State Committee to raise awareness and advance cultural interests. Examination of the report reveals that they occur in the following countries: France, Germany, the Russian Federation, Moldova, Lithuania, and others. While it might seem that many events take place, their efficiency and their impact is highly debatable. For instance, in the events that took place in the Netherlands and Sweden, it is noticeable that there is very low participation of our expatriates; photos of the events support the claim. (State Committee on Work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2022) In addition, this is only related to the events of Novruz; Azerbaijani Diaspora organizes a significant number of events related to various holidays in different places of the world. Yet, participation is low when the news and photos are analyzed. Moreover, in the survey a question was asked related to the events of the Diaspora and whether our nationals attend the events. More than 45 of respondents indicated the answer 'No' and only 7 of them have attended events. This very strong evidence displays the inefficiency of the events despite their originality, and importance for the Diaspora.

Have you ever attended an event organized by Azerbaijani diaspora?

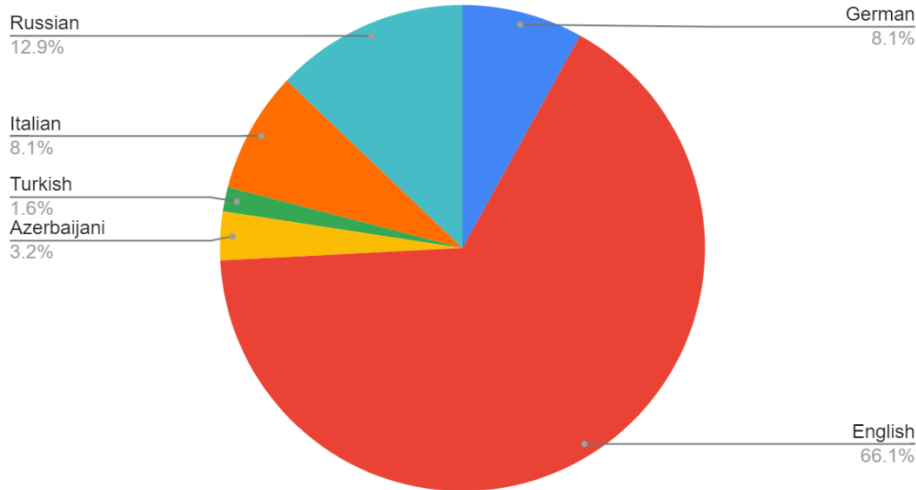


Additionally, the Head of the Department in the AIR Center reports that due to the disparity in political views among our compatriots, they prefer to attend different events despite them serving the same purpose of celebrating one holiday (April, 2023). The mentioned example reveals that the Azerbaijani community struggles to come together and preserve cultural ties together. According to the survey conducted among ethnic Azerbaijanis in the US, several aspects including education level, immigration reason, and English skills are revealed to demonstrate overall condition (Guliyev, 2015). The survey revealed that respondents are inclined towards the US culture; 92% of them actively attend American holidays. All the above-mentioned facts highlight the problem with the efficiency of events organized by the State Committee on Work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijani Diaspora does not only experience the above-mentioned issue; also, the Israeli diaspora faces this challenge. In the article by Y. Mirsky, he mentions the following “Israelis, on the whole, have little knowledge of Diaspora Jewry and its communities, achievements, challenges or huge contribution to the State of Israel throughout the years” (2010, p.40). He also mentions that Jews around the world think that Israel has no interest in the Jewish people who live outside the borders of the State of Israel (Mirsky, 2010, p.40). However, considering the size of the Israeli Diaspora, they are still dealing better than Azerbaijani diaspora. Besides the organization of events and cultural activities, the Israeli Diaspora highly values education. Jewish educational programs are well known and diverse depending on the program’s focus or orientation. While educational goals may vary in different institutions, the basic objective is to foster a sense of Jewishness and make it a central feature of the young generation’s lifestyle. In the official website of Israeli Diaspora services that are provided in the educational sphere are listed; special education programs, programs for adults and children show the importance of education for the Diaspora. This fact can be regarded as one of the main aspects what makes the Israeli Diaspora so strong. In the education process, the Israeli Diaspora and World Zionist Organization value the Hebrew language and promote it through various language courses. Language appears to be another issue when it comes to the Azerbaijanis living abroad. Gradually, our nationals become less exposed to the language and experience alienation from their motherland culture. In the survey conducted, the question was asked which language our expatriates use in everyday life. Only 3.2% of respondents indicated the Azerbaijani language as a means of communication; more than 60 percent of participants indicated the English language as the

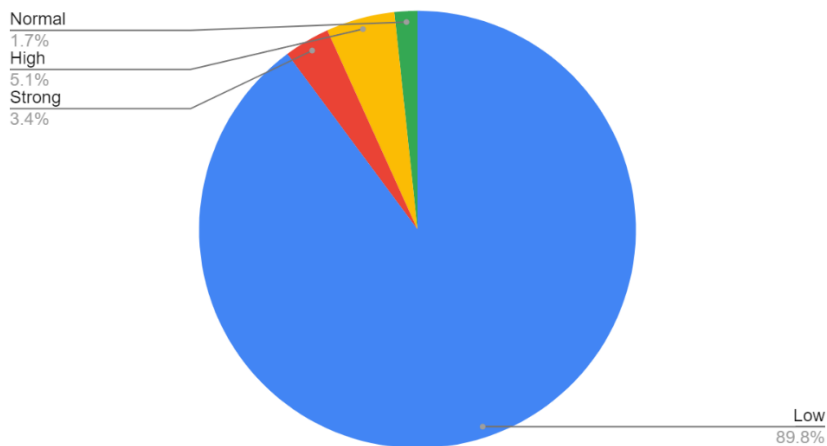
main language of communication.

In which language do you speak in your everyday life?



Since the usage of language where participants reside is a normal event to happen, an extra question was presented to determine how much expatriates are exposed to the Azerbaijani language especially. The statistics show approximately 90 percent of respondents are exposed to the Azerbaijani language at a low level, which is an alarming situation if we consider the importance of the language in the strengthening of the Diaspora.

Please, indicate the level of exposure to Azerbaijani language



Moreover, another explanation for low interest to Azerbaijani history and culture might be obstacles that our nationals face abroad related to fewer opportunities because of their nationality. In the survey, more than a half of respondents when describing obstacles that they face in foreign countries mentioned discrimination. In addition, a report by European Network Against Racism (ENAR) identified that Azerbaijanis in Europe very often encounter harassment and discrimination, specifically in countries with Islamophobia (2019).

All the evidence and statistics presented above show that there is the following obstacle: absence of a legal framework. There is no all-encompassing, long-term diaspora policy. As a means of diaspora involvement, social capital, which includes professional knowledge, skills, and expertise, is still undervalued in Azerbaijan. Absence of a legal framework and strategy results in limited communication and unity: Azerbaijanis residing abroad are diverse and disagree on many issues, making it difficult for them to band together, organize, and act as a single force. Collaboration between organizations and the State of Azerbaijan is hampered by the diversity and fragmentation of Azerbaijani diaspora groups in other nations.

2.2. Insufficient political power of Azerbaijani diaspora in residing countries

According to the research conducted by the State Committee on Diaspora in 2015, the report presented indicates that the number of Azerbaijanis in the world is more than 30 million in Iran, approximately 3 million each in Russia and Turkey, and half a million in the United States (Modern.az, 2015). It should be considered that the number of Azerbaijanis living in the world does not compete with the number of countries mentioned here. However, the fact that the number of diasporas is quite immense raises the question whether it possesses

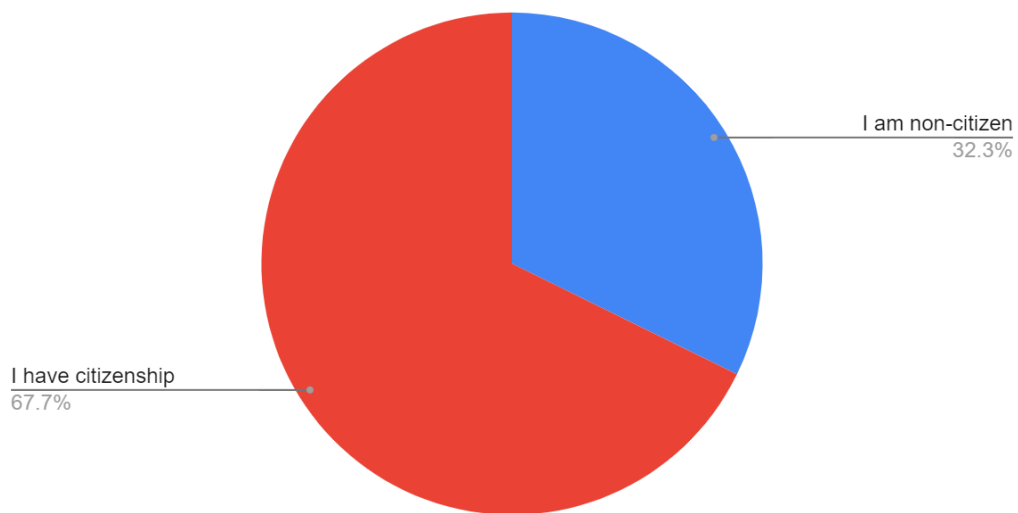
an affirmative influence on the work of the diaspora or not. Diaspora`s activity represents a bridge role which connects homeland to that reside place, therefore, possibility to construct or impact the bilateral relations between two countries is an undeniable occurrence. So, the diaspora can actively participate in the process of propaganda and agitation in accordance with the foreign policy interests of the home country. To influence the policymaking process of politicians in favor of their host country requires immense political efforts from the diaspora community. Building political affairs with policymakers allows citizens to demand their demands and generate ideas to influence the government. Unfortunately, Azerbaijani diaspora communities in certain countries suffer from a lack of political leverage according to the Deputy of Milli Majilis Sabir Rustamkhanli (2016). Especially for the Karabakh problem, although the steps taken by Azerbaijan have possessed conformity with all norms and regulations of international law, executive approaches were not taken to suppress the Armenian aggression. Despite the four resolutions of the UN Security Council, the international arena kept silent towards the aggression of Armenian felonious politicians. Therefore, the biased position of some foreign countries raises the question to discuss the diaspora`s quality and influence capacity. Thus, the unsustainable political engagement of the diaspora in their resident country towards political elites could not attain sufficient repercussions on decisions towards Azerbaijan. In comparison to that, Jews diaspora is known for its uniqueness in terms of competent and influential aptitude. While scattered to various places of the world, they perform in accordance with their interdependence with each other and today, the place where Jews are principally expanding impact scope in politics outside of their homeland is the U.S. (Yetkin, 2014). Even the Jewish diaspora`s role in presidential elections from democratic parties in the US introduced extensive results. Political

activities of Jews diaspora are enriched not only by friendly relations with other policymakers but also by the existence of Jews politicians themselves. In addition, the lobbying activities of the Jewish diaspora compose the propensity of its political image progress. Therefore, the absence of the Azerbaijani diaspora representation in the global political arenas, and the fact that the diaspora does not seek political engagement, jeopardize its productive operation. According to the thoughts of a professor of Baku State University` Political Sciences department, the Azerbaijani diaspora members are less inclined towards participation in political institutions of the countries they live in, and initiation should be planned, coordinated and supported by the Azerbaijan side (2023). The professor added that absence from high political positions contributes to the ignorance about Azerbaijan among the resident country population, because the diaspora plays a source role for information that acts to prevent disinformation. In this substance, the activity not only of the Jewish community, but also the Armenian diaspora is explicitly available, and unfortunately precedes activities of Azerbaijani diaspora as possible. Simultaneously, the politically insufficient activity possesses a deprecating impact on the bilateral relations between resident and origin country.

Moreover, citizenship plays a significant role for compatriots in order to participate in elections in foreign countries and influence political decision making. Regarding the requirements of various countries' legislation, voting of citizens and non-citizens are completely different. In some countries, only citizens are allowed to vote, however, others allow non-citizens to participate in voting procedure. For example, in U.S person is supposed to have citizenship status to participate in elections, but a few territories allow non-citizen population to participate in only local elections. In Poland, according to the Electoral code, citizens are allowed to participate in voting, however, if a non-citizen wants to vote he/she

should have citizenship status of another EU country. In the UK, citizens of other countries are not allowed to participate in Parliamentary elections, as well as for mayor elections legal EU citizens who reside in those territories are allowed to engage. So, certain limitations have been imposed in terms of political engagement (voting and candidacy) of newcomers to the country. According to the survey conducted among diaspora members, the majority has legal citizenship status. Question was asked to reveal whether respondents are citizens in their residing country, 67.7% of answers were “Yes”, however, 32.3% of respondents indicated “No”.

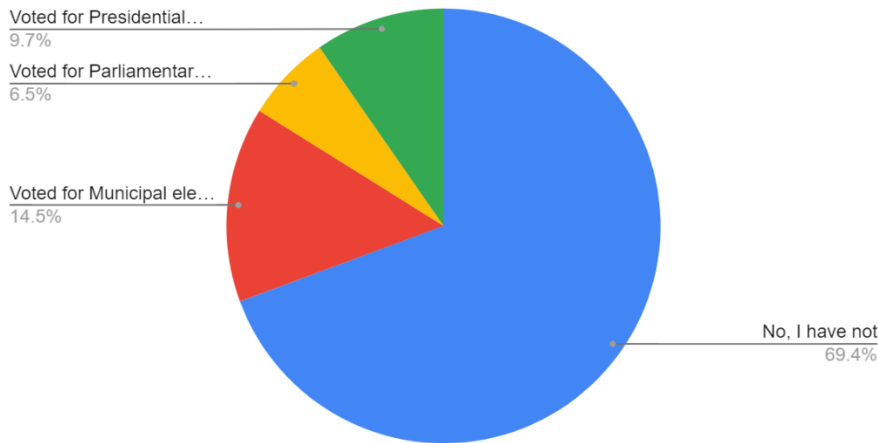
Please indicate your citizenship status in your country of residence



Participating in elections and voting for a candidate who wishes to be in office, should have certain expectations. As mentioned above, political candidates promise to care about the concerns of voters to get their support. In fact, it is not convenient to obtain the votes of the population because of the expectations therefore, the candidates must actually fulfill the demands of the voters. Thus, it is important for the members of the Azerbaijani diaspora to

participate and vote in the political elections in the countries where they live and engage in a dialogue with the candidate beforehand. Survey has been conducted among diaspora members revealed that 69.4% of respondents have not participated in elections, 14.5% indicated that they participated in Municipal elections, 9.7% voted for presidential elections and 6.5% of respondents participated in voting for parliamentary elections. While comparing percentages with previous questions, Azerbaijani diaspora members` activity in the political voting process is not satisfactory.

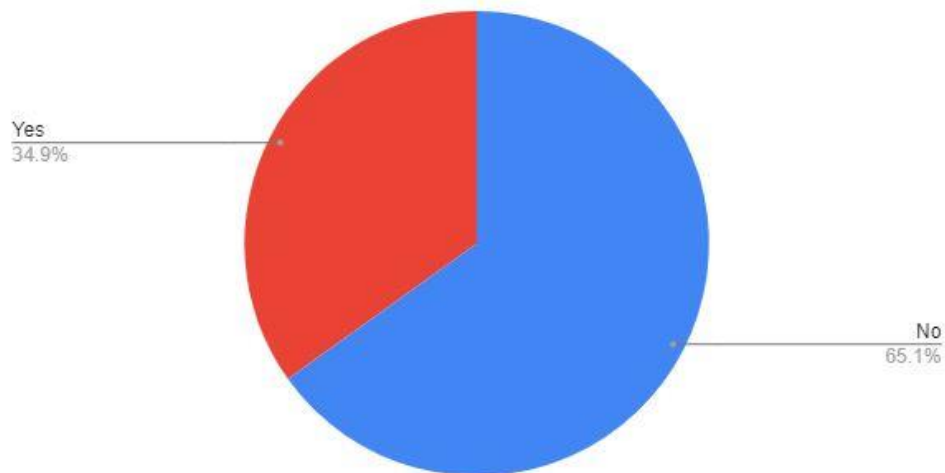
Have you ever voted for a political candidate in any elections in the country where you live? (Municipality, Parliamentary, Pre...



Another important fact is that members of the diaspora put forward demands for political candidacy, which creates an opportunity to represent the country at the political level in the country where they live. This can advance the interests of Azerbaijan and improve the living conditions of other members of the diaspora. Unfortunately, there is no accurate information about the number of Azerbaijanis in political positions in other countries. So, a survey among diaspora members gave the statistical description, and in order to acknowledge their activities about political representation in residing countries, a question was asked to

know whether they are planning to apply for political positions. By choosing "Yes" 34.9% of respondents answered positively to this question, however, 65.1% of respondents chose "No".

In future, do you consider your candidacy for any political position in the country where you reside?



2.3. Lack of effective communication between the diaspora members

Communication and ability to communicate easily is essential feature in a globalized world. The role of communications is also considered key factor in the field of diaspora. A new member of any diaspora recently arrived in foreign country in order to integrate easily and quickly to the society supposedly will find ways to communicate with more people and communications with compatriots who reside there lots of year will actually organize the process of integration in more convenient way.

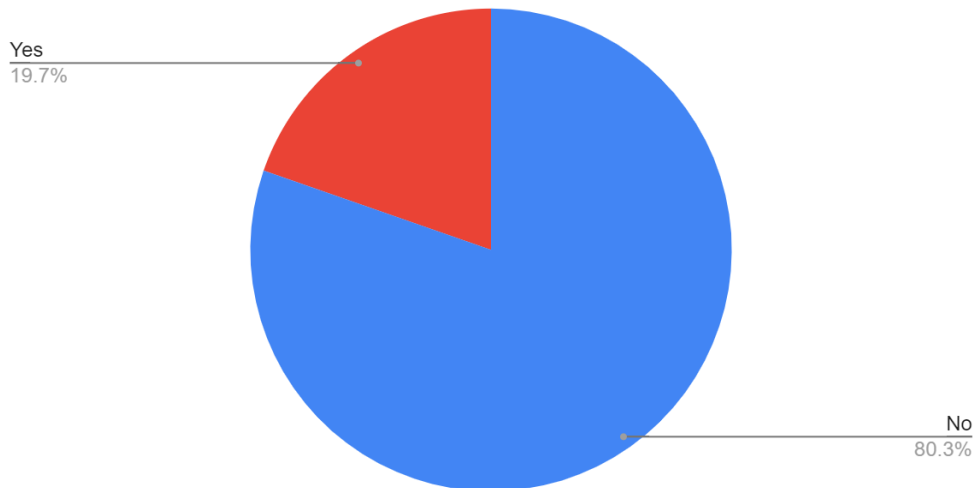
There are two inherent features of diaspora, from the one hand they leave their homeland, from the other hand they try to be in contact with their homeland, moreover social media is a good instrument which helps them to communicate with each other throughout the countries and continents (Karim, 2018). Communication by itself is the process of

construction, conservation, sustenance and reorganization of social realities, therefore, the process of communication not only helps to transfer information between people but also create opportunities for an establishment of a community (Ledeneva, 2021). According to the author, in order to be adapted to the new society, the group of immigrants should be integrated through the communication to their own diaspora, which keep in touch with their motherland (2021). Therefore, it become apparent that communication is important tool for integrating migrants to their own diaspora communities, moreover, to be in touch with their hometown. But there is a question, how the issue and process or organization of communication between individuals and diaspora communities of own countries may influence to the strength and efficiency of diaspora. The answer to that question is very clear; firstly, there is a need to fulfill the process of integration and adaptation of any diaspora member to their own diaspora community, where communication tool plays a vital role as was mentioned before. Consequently, only after the unification of diaspora community as much as possible through the inclusion of every countrymen it is possible to ensure and develop the strength of diaspora. Ilham Aliyev, the president of Republic of Azerbaijan stated that unity makes Azerbaijan stronger and for the development of diasporic organizations people and government should ensure that unity (president.az, 2011). Thus, every countryman living abroad who is able to communicate with its own diaspora union or organization not only helps itself in solving its own issues but also contributes to the strengthening of diaspora.

After reading aforementioned information, it becomes clear that inclusiveness of every person living abroad to the diaspora community is essential for unity which consequently influences the power of diaspora organizations. Yet, in order to guarantee that inclusiveness ensuring the communication between countrymen and diaspora unions is

needed. The next vital question arises: have the Azerbaijanis living abroad experienced difficulties to communicate with organizations or with the members of Azerbaijani diaspora? The survey conducted for this project helps to answer that question. Some important aspects and characteristic diagrams will be illustrated below. Survey was conducted among Azerbaijani diaspora members residing in 10 different countries (Germany, USA, South Korea, Italy, Switzerland, Turkiye, Poland, Netherland, UK and Russia). According to the survey only 19.7% of the respondents know how to get in touch with representative members of Azerbaijani diaspora.

Do you know how to get in touch with representative members of Azerbaijani diaspora in your country of residence?



Considering the fact that we live in the era of social media and new technologies, moreover all the respondents are between 18-35 years old, 12 individuals from 63 respondents is a low result. It might be argued that these respondents don't know to get in touch with representative members of diaspora simply don't have a desire to communicate. However, answers to another question from the survey contradicts that idea. To the question regarding

the recommendations for the enhancement of strength of Azerbaijani diaspora lots of respondents emphasized the essence in solving communication issues, creation and promotion of social media accounts which will aid countrymen to be in touch with each other and inform them about the Azerbaijani community. Moreover, some of these suggestions were made even by the people who are aware how to contact diaspora members. Thus, all this demonstrates that some Azerbaijanis living abroad experience problems with communication.

First of all, it is going to be mentioned what helps diaspora members to communicate easily with each other considering world practice. After that, we will try to mention reasons of the communication problems which our countrymen experience in some cases. Certainly, the work carried out by the State Committee on Work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan will also be considered.

Quickly developing innovative technologies and simultaneous use of social media platforms changed the way of people's communication (Kalantzi, 2021). Applying technologies of communication and information form the organization of diaspora and migrants' communities, furthermore it helps them to communicate with their compatriots in residing countries (Fortunati, Pertierra & Vincent, 2012). Thus, it has become apparent that in the era of information technologies and social media platforms these tools play an important role in ensuring the communication among members of diasporas. Therefore, it can be implied that Azerbaijani diaspora organizations have difficulties in utilization and creation of social media platforms for the communication purposes. Actually, State Committee on work with Diaspora broadly uses the social media platforms, frequently posts

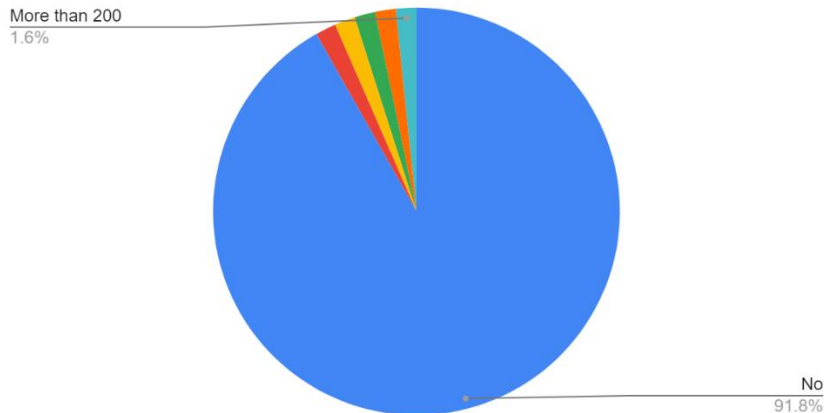
information on these accounts regarding the issues of Azerbaijani diaspora, activities of Azerbaijanis living abroad, moreover the website of the Committee also is used for that purposes (From the personal communications with the State Committee on Work with Diaspora, 2023). It was also stated by the Committee that in order to ensure the strengthening of Azerbaijani diaspora there is a need to use innovative technologies.

In the era of the internet and technological advances the problem of communication is gradually fading (from the personal communication with assistant professor of Baku State University, 2023). According to her statements there is an issue of not using the communication tools properly and in full capacity. Before analyzing in more detailed way the aspects of communication and the level of capacities, there is a need first to consider according to which criteria we should assess it. It is clear that ability to contact and be in touch with representative members of diaspora organizations is one of the important features for ensuring the communication. Second aspect which is essential to mention is knowing the exact number of countrymen residing in a country or better to know that statistic for every city/town particularly. There are also some additional features which will be beneficial for organization a better communication among countrymen. Information about exact regions where diaspora communities live and what is the professions of representatives of these communities actually promote efficient inclusion of diaspora communities to the affairs of the country of residence (Russell, as cited in Lara-Guerrero, 2021). According to that article, digitalized way of communication is the best way to ensure the efficient engagement of diaspora communities.

Considering official website of State Committee on Work with Diaspora, there is a special link in the site where the number of diaspora organizations and the list of the countries where these organizations are established is demonstrated in the interactive map. There is a possibility to click only on the countries where these diaspora organizations operate. By clicking on that, number of Azerbaijanis living in that particular country appears, however, firstly in most cases it is unofficial information, secondly it shows the number in the whole country but not in particular cities, thirdly in most cases it is not mentioned when the last time that information was updated and finally as we stated before it is only possible to know number of residing Azerbaijanis just in 50 countries where diaspora organizations operate. Regarding the ways for contacting the representative members of diaspora organizations, in that case you can click particular cities where diaspora organizations operate and information about the representatives (contact number, name and surname, address of the office) illustrated. However, it is not the same in all cities, there are some cases where all that information is not demonstrated. Thus, it become clear that despite the fact that interactive map could be helpful and illustrates some important information, there is still an opportunity to provide with more specific, updated and broad information which consequently could boost the communication abilities of Azerbaijani countrymen.

It was confirmed by the survey that most of the respondents don't know the exact number of Azerbaijanis residing in the same city/town where they live.

Count of Do you know approximately how many Azerbaijanis live in your city/town of residence?



The question may arise about the purpose of being informed about the number of Azerbaijanis in particular cities. It is always better to know exactly how many compatriots you have in your neighborhood, are you able to contact them when there is a need for help, conversation etc. Recognition of the fact that you have compatriots residing nearby increases the confidence and gives additional support.

Thus, considering all the information mentioned before, a certain unawareness is observed among the Azerbaijani people living abroad, which could possibly be the reason for communication problems. On the one hand, we mentioned that in the website of the Committee there is information, which aimed to raise awareness among Azerbaijani diaspora members and to assist in communication. However, the scale of the information could be increased more. Moreover, it was also mentioned before from the survey that some members of diaspora are unaware of how to get in touch with representative members of diaspora

communities. Therefore, unawareness about the information shared on websites by some diaspora members and limited information are the main reasons of communication problems.

However, it would be wrong to blame either the Committee/diaspora organizations or Azerbaijani people living abroad in difficulties communicating. All this should be ensured by united work including the Committee, diaspora organizations and members of Azerbaijani diaspora. Moreover, from the personal communication with assistant professor of Baku State University it was mentioned that in order to ensure high level of communication every Azerbaijani who decides to move abroad should be officially registered in the State Committee on Work with Diaspora as diaspora member, moreover personal communications with every diaspora member should be ensured (2023). It is clear that in order to maintain personal communications with every diaspora member and be constantly informed about the place of their residing, where they work etc., Committee of diaspora should allocate all their resources, power to ensuring that mission. We know realization of that plan in a mentioned way is not logical, sensible because Committee will turn into the database of diaspora members and will operate as a telephone station. Therefore, we imply innovative solution in order to increase awareness and communication abilities not only for Azerbaijani diaspora but also for Committee on Work with Diaspora. In successful implementation of that innovative solution, each diaspora member will play an active role, which will ease the burden of Committee to ensure all mentioned plans.

Considering the comparison of Jewish diaspora with Azerbaijani one, two aspects were mentioned namely: the experience of Jewish diaspora and the role of Jewish synagogue which ensure the strength of Jewish diaspora (from personal communication with assistant

professor at BSU, 2023). According to her, every Jew living abroad and experiencing difficulties has an opportunity go and address for a help from the synagogue. Thus, it actually reduces the communication issues among the Jewish diaspora members. In the 7th century BC, Jews were already residing in places far from their homeland (current Israel) after the defeat in a battle (Konner, 2005). Synagogues played a role of antique community center, which was developed in many Jewish communities throughout the history and creation of these centers was needed a lot, therefore synagogues operated also as a hall for gatherings of Jewish community (Murray, 2015).

Chapter 3. Policy Alternatives

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are several challenges that may cause impediment in Azerbaijani Diaspora's future activities related to the expatriates living abroad. After analyzing each of the challenges, this chapter is going to provide various policy alternatives, which have come up by considering diaspora practices of different countries focusing on Jewish diaspora in particular. Hence, it will be argued that challenges causing impediment in Azerbaijani Diaspora activities can be solved by establishing new organization to facilitate active engagement of the Azerbaijani diaspora abroad, fostering active presence of Azerbaijani Diaspora increasing the political engagement of diaspora members in residing region in order to generate lobbying groups, and creation of a digital tool for the effective implementation of strategic policies related to Azerbaijani diaspora.

3.1. Establishment of the organization to assemble Azerbaijani diaspora members

One of the policy problems indicated in this paper is the absence of a legal framework and specific strategy to enhance the Azerbaijani Diaspora's efficiency. In order to overcome the obstacle the policy alternative for this policy problem is to establish an organization namely "Center for Azerbaijanis Abroad". The reason why we need this organization is linked to the current activities of Azerbaijani agencies and governmental bodies as well as to world practice. In Chapter 2, it was mentioned that there is a tendency to shift from big governmental organizations towards dispersed crosshatched networks of activity and communication. For instance, despite having offices in countries such as the USA, Canada, and France, Turkey has a specific organization with a smaller scope and higher efficiency. 'Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities' is an organization that deals with

the preservation and promotion of national heritage across the world especially focusing on Europe (Yurtdışı Türkler Ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, n.d.). The organization's main goal is to perform education and culture-related activities for Turkish citizens residing abroad (Yurtdışı Türkler Ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, n.d.). Moreover, the Organization carries out activities related to education. The third main field of activity of YTB is international student mobility. Türkiye Scholarships, carried out in cooperation with relevant institutions and organizations under the coordination of YTB since 2012, is an extremely rich and comprehensive scholarship program offered to qualified international students from different countries of the world who come to Turkey for higher education. (Yurtdışı Türkler Ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, n.d.) The agency's operations demonstrate the applicability of the purpose and objective that they work to realize.

Another example might be the Jerusalem program created by the World Zionist Organization for better Jewish communities. In the document, the following points are indicated as the aim of the organization:

“The unity of the Jewish people, its bond to its historic homeland Eretz Yisrael, and the centrality of the State of Israel and Jerusalem, its capital, in the life of the nation. Nurturing mutual Jewish responsibility, defending the rights of Jews as individuals and as a nation, representing the national Zionist interests of the Jewish people, and struggling against all manifestations of anti-Semitism.” (World Zionist Organization, n.d.)

The World Zionist Organization has managed to establish a community that places significant importance on its history and education, which has helped to foster a sense of connection among Jewish people. Many Jewish organizations have focused on educating people about the history of anti-Semitism. Education is for both Jews and non-Jews.

Despite having multiple organizations on the local level as well as in different countries, the Azerbaijani government lacks effective communication channels with expatriates. Therefore, the new organization “Center for Azerbaijanis Abroad” should have a lesser scope compared to The State Committee on Work with the Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan; it will help to come up with a concrete strategy for strengthening the diaspora’s power abroad. Furthermore, the new organization should focus on cooperation with universities and other Turkic organizations. Despite the programs implemented by The State Committee on Work with the Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the number of programs launched is insignificant. Cooperation with universities, offering classes on Azerbaijani or Turkic states can be an improvement to be implemented by the new organization. Due to the fact that the Azerbaijani diaspora is a minority in most European countries, it might be difficult for Azerbaijan to increase its presence only on its own. Therefore, further cooperation with Turkic organizations can also be a way to increase the influence of the Azerbaijani diaspora abroad. For instance, Azerbaijan is a member of the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY), yet the events or any programs are lacking in cooperation with them. There is a list of events presented online by TURKSOY; however, there are no reports or details on how the events are organized and where. Thus, it is difficult to assess the current cooperation level between the Azerbaijani government and TURKSOY. The new organization should also improve media visibility while implementing events and cooperating with other universities, and organizations. In conclusion, referring to the practice of Turkey and Israel new organization is needed to strengthen Azerbaijani presence abroad and better education opportunities.

3.2. Increasing the level of participation of Azerbaijani community members in the political life of host countries

Inactive political attachment of diaspora in the resident country composes inconvenience to the prospective activities of the community. Since staying neutral does not promise further chances of improving their political image for their own, diaspora members are supposed to choose a political side or establish their own political party to affiliate with the political space of their living place. Jews diaspora members prefer to increase their political influence in their residing region by improving lobbying activities. In the 118th Congress of the United States, which is the legislative branch of government, including both the Senate and the House of Representatives, there are 33 Jewish members, and the number of Jews in the Senate is more than the number of Jews in the House of Representatives (JNS News, 2023). More than participating in elections in the political arena, by presenting a political candidacy, members of the diaspora are able to expand their personal development, be recognized in the area they live in, and simultaneously improve the international image of the native land. Political scope promises political clout to guarantee their own diaspora members. Political participation bears significant specificity because it offers citizens the opportunity to impact on political decisions so people can directly pursue their benefits from this process in favor for themselves. Therefore, compatriots living in foreign countries can progress the native countries` interests in the political arena of their residence countries by adopting a political engagement method. Regarding the conventional forms of political engagement, the diaspora community fosters support for the homeland by participating in elections, running for offices, and lobbying campaigns in the host country to influence towards the origin country (Zapata-Barrero et.al, 2013).

It is a fact that participating in the voting process is one of the unique procedures to protect the curiosity of voters as mentioned above. A candidate who aims to be elected prefers to arrange an agreement with certain communities to collect the necessary votes by promising to consider their desires and in return the candidate achieves acquiring the votes. Voters, in turn, look for a political leader who will realize their wishes, and mutual trust emerges. From that perspective, the members of the Azerbaijani diaspora community can make negotiations with the candidates they want to elect, while participating as voters in the countries where they reside, and highlight the issues of Azerbaijan's interests before the candidate has been elected. The State Diaspora Committee should actively communicate with voters and members of the diaspora community to ensure state interests. Therefore, collective meetings should be organized and the strategy should be explained in detail. Currently, strategy was adopted by the Armenian diaspora in France, in order to guarantee half a million votes. Candidates protect the interests of the Armenian diaspora in order to be elected, so they obtain the votes of the Armenian population easily by promising obligations, which eventually provokes France's biased foreign policy against Azerbaijan (AIR Center, 2021). During racial segregation process in South Africa, in order to support economic well-being of Jews community in those areas, Jews Diaspora in United States influenced policymakers to terminate economic limitations, which gradually generated tensions (Sheffer, 2006). Another example is related to the case about the controversial Falkland Island which is disputed territory between the UK and Argentina. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner administration in Argentina sent mails to powerful compatriots in order to convey and protect the Argentina's position on those dilemmas in other countries. Firstly, diaspora members were invited to Argentina embassies to discuss and being informed about this problem. Further action was

to prepare a special letter to be delivered to the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization. In this process, diaspora members of Argentina in foreign countries demonstrated political engagement by structuring public thought and spreading "state-planned" ideas to the world (Zapata-Barrero et.al, 2013). From that perspective, Azerbaijani diaspora members who have acquired citizenship abroad should intervene in the political arena and support their own and other compatriots.

Furthermore, members of the diaspora community can participate in political elections themselves as a potential candidate for political position which eventually would strengthen the roots of the diaspora and relations between the resident country and Azerbaijan. In this process, the roles of the Azerbaijan state and government are undeniable in promoting political campaigning for a specific candidate. Especially sharing campaigning posts on social networks will bring diaspora members together. Duties such as informing the other members of the diaspora living in the same city or area for voting, and gathering together to support their compatriots in the political arena can be coordinated or managed from the State Committee of Diaspora. In addition, funding from the state budget for the financing of political campaigns can support to achieve this goal. Accordingly, a certain working group should be initiated by the state and the committee for mentoring support should be provided to the candidates. In addition to the state, wealthy Azerbaijani diaspora community and businesspersons, living in other countries should be involved in this project, and if necessary, with their financial support, these political propaganda and campaigning companies should be carried out. In addition to the state, wealthy Azerbaijani diaspora community and businesspersons, living in other countries should be involved in this project, and if necessary, with their financial support, these political propaganda and campaigning

companies should be carried out. In the contemporary world, the Indian government adopted a strategy to support the Indian diaspora to participate in political elections of the host country. Indian Diaspora closely works with people from Indian ethnicity to improve diplomatic consolidation. The government allocates financial assistance to members of the diaspora. The government supports its diaspora members to run for political positions including participating in elections in Singapore. In this country, Indian compatriots participate in elections and apply their candidacy for high level positions including legislation, ministers and parliamentarians as a result of support from their home country's government (Muthu, 2021). As mentioned above, this strategy was adopted by Jewish diaspora as well, for instance; Yevda Abramov, the representative of the Jewish community from Guba - Gusar constituency was elected to the Milli Mejlis 3 times in Azerbaijan from 2005 till 2019, and during parliamentary term he was the chairman of the Israel-Azerbaijani inter-parliamentary affairs working group (Milli Majlis, 2019). His existence in Milli Majlis, promoted the voices and political support of Jewish community in the political arena of Azerbaijan. It is an advantageous method to promote one's own country by participating in political institutions, however it should be taken into account that large countries ascertain political decisions within the framework of their national interests, which may affect the community members of the diaspora. Simultaneously, the political engagement of the diaspora society increases the awareness of both the population and the political elite of the country where they live, about their motherland, and strengthens their mutual relations. During his speech at the III Congress of World Azerbaijanis, the President of Azerbaijan said that our diaspora organizations operating abroad should have an influential strategy in the domestic politics of those countries (Yeni Azərbaycan, 2011). One of the significant factors is the representation

of our compatriots - Azerbaijanis in state and government institutions in the countries where they reside. Chairman of the Committee on Family, Women and Children's Affairs of the Milli Majlis, Professor Hijran Huseynova, once again noted the speech of the Azerbaijan President at the 3rd congress and said that there are great expectations from the 5th congress, and the representation of our compatriots in the political arena of other countries should be one of our main priorities. By highlighting the speech of President she added that, because the stronger the Azerbaijanis are abroad, the more the interests of our state will be protected, therefore, it a very desirable issue for diaspora organizations as a whole and their members to be more actively involved in real politics and real affairs (Huseynova, 2022).

3.3. Introducing new digital platforms to increase the level of communication between the Azerbaijani diaspora members

As we mentioned before information technologies and social media platforms play a crucial role nowadays in transmitting information and in organizing quick and convenient ways of communication. Thus, implementation of these tools for the diaspora organization purposes will have beneficial consequences. However, there are already website and social media accounts of the State Committee on Work with Diaspora where information about the activities of the Committee, some statistical data and contact numbers of representative members of diaspora organizations are represented. In order to differentiate the new proposed idea from the existing communication tools used by the State Committee the following suggestions should be taken into account.

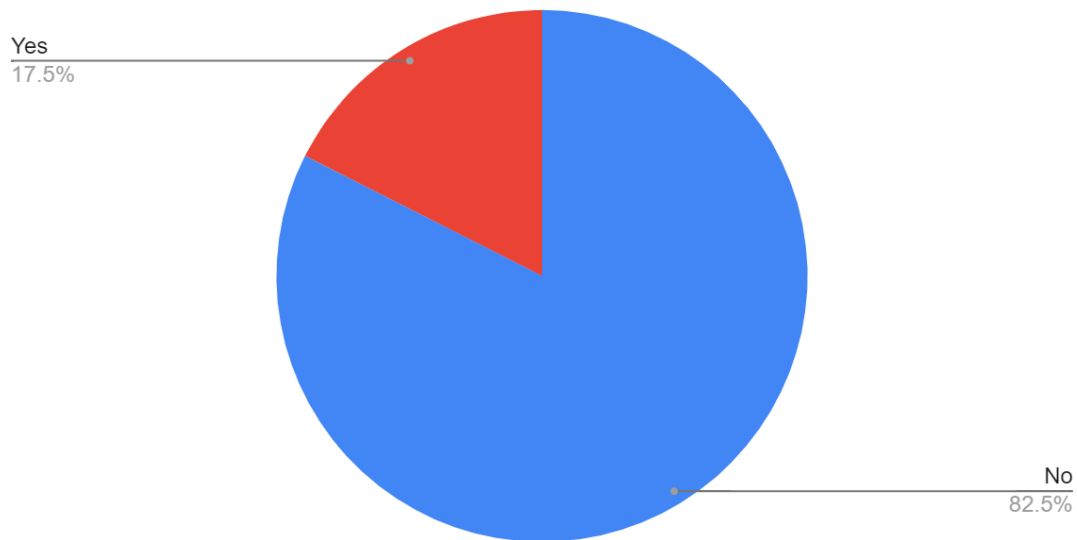
At the initial stage of realization of that project, it is proposed to start from the creation of website and if implementation of that idea meets expected popularity and results in order to make usage of the website more convenient, mobile applications could be created further.

First of all, the aim of that project is to include participation of every diaspora member in the establishment of data about the Azerbaijani diaspora as much as possible. It will assist the State Committee on Work with Diaspora to collect updated, precise information about diaspora, moreover the most important fact is that every diaspora member will be considered in the informative unit of the website. For that purpose, each member of Azerbaijani diaspora regardless of their citizenship will be able to register at the website. During the process of registration there will be a need to fill out the questionnaire answering the questions about city/towns of residing, profession, contact numbers. In order to preserve the confidentiality, there will be a choice to hide contact number from the mass, however it will be always available for the Committee, which actually creates opportunities to contact every diaspora member by the Committee and inform about events or invite them. It is apparent that not only the State Committee will be able to communicate with diaspora members, but also diaspora members will be able to communicate with each other and with the representative members of communities.

Therefore, we can imply that the positive sides of the website which will help to strengthen communications and awareness among diaspora members are that information will be consistently updating, all the necessary information for the Committee, diaspora organizations and members of diaspora will be available at one website or application. It actually prevents dispersion, thus via registration it is possible to find all the important data. Furthermore, considering the fact that through the registration each user creates a personal account it is proposed to organize a chat box, where people would be able to contact each other in a more operative and convenient way. According to a survey conducted by us most of respondents mentioned that they have never been reached out by the Azerbaijani diaspora

organizations and it can be understood considering some communication issue which are not only characteristic to Azerbaijani diaspora communities.

Have you ever been reached out by the members of Azerbaijani diaspora?



Consequently, creation of chat box and mentioning the contact numbers by every registered user could solve that problem.

After describing the policy alternative in details, it is essential to look at the world practice regarding usage of information technologies by other countries in the field of diaspora. As stated, Lara-Guerrero in her article, whereas some diaspora organizations don't have enough fund for the creation of websites and mobile applications for diaspora, however organizations with enough financial resources can afford it which assist members to communicate with each other and to increase awareness about diaspora members, communities and activities (2021). There is a new term - digital diaspora, that creates opportunities for the members of diaspora easily contact with motherland and also with diaspora communities via the usage of information technology platforms (Ponzanesi, 2020).

Finally, it is apparent that many diaspora communities employ digitized tools such as the websites, social media platforms and mobile applications as an instrument supporting their activities. Therefore, our policy alternative is not innovative in its implication, however it has contemporary ideas and characteristics which will dramatically increase the level of coordination and awareness among Azerbaijani diaspora organizations and members.

Chapter 4. Evaluation of policy alternatives

This part of the capstone project intends to investigate and assess each introduced policy option based on five various details as follows: effectiveness, efficiency, equity, feasibility, and flexibility. Evaluation of policy alternatives recommended in this paper serve to contribute to the scrutiny of the positive and negative sides of the policy options and detect the relevant choice in regard to the given benchmark

Establishment of the organization to assemble Azerbaijani diaspora members

Considering the absence of a legal framework and specific strategy to enhance Azerbaijani Diaspora's efficiency, the solution proposed to establish new organization is going to be effective. Since the new organization will focus on specific purposes and have less scope than the Diaspora Committee, there will be more opportunities to specify the issues of expatriates and provide solutions for them. It is obvious that the establishment of a new organization will require financial support not only for the establishment but also further for the organization of events, programs et al. The cost reduction can happen if organization cooperates with other Turkic organizations and implemented reduced number of events by its own. In general, this policy alternative can be regarded as an inefficient one since it requires financing from the government and creates additional costs. The equity criterion is met with this policy as it creates political and social benefits in the international arena and can promote the government's agenda abroad. Thus, the generation of soft power and improvement of the well-being of Azerbaijani expatriates makes this policy viable for the Azerbaijani government. The policy happens to be feasible for the Azerbaijani government, as there are enough financial resources and professionals in this field. Finally, the policy

option is also flexible which means that the Azerbaijani government can change the rules, terms or preferred agenda of the organization. For instance, actions and tools to foster cultural and educational opportunities might be identified and altered by the Azerbaijani government if conditions require.

Increasing the political engagement of diaspora members in residing places

‘Increasing the level of participation of Azerbaijani Community members in the political life of host countries’ as an alternative is proposed to solve the issue of ‘Insufficient political power of Azerbaijani diaspora’. First of all, this policy has some effective sides related to better diplomatic ties between the two countries. Diaspora members who participate in the political processes of the residing country will guarantee the motivation and influence the scope of the diaspora of Azerbaijan. At the same time, considering the disinformation campaigns by Armenians, this method creates the unique opportunity to deliver the information about Karabakh realities into the world. Therefore, officials in Azerbaijan should engage in activities to gather diaspora members together and discuss this initiative. However, this policy may not be efficient, as it is desired. Since, conducting a political campaign to run for office or influence candidates` political promises require enough investment, costs should not exceed the prospective benefit. However, competing in the political arena is dangerous in terms of undesired outcomes such as losing the elections. Therefore, invested financial resources or time can be lost. Based on equity, investment can be financed from the Azerbaijan state or the diaspora members among themselves. Considering the fact that this political instrument will benefit both Azerbaijan diaspora community in resident countries and Azerbaijan state. Diaspora would reach access to politicians for promoting their own requests, and the Azerbaijani state would be more confident about diaspora activities in those

countries, from which it would get support for its foreign policy directions in the future. Unfortunately, feasibility criteria is the main issue for implementing this policy option. Not all countries easily allow all population to participate in the political voting process, there are certain requirements listed to participate in the procedure, such as obtaining citizenship of the host country. In parallel, diaspora members who want to join the political arena should gather enough people and reliable connections around, which is a risky decision. Despite policy requiring enough planning, it fits with the flexibility criteria due to its capacity to be modified in emergency situations. Moreover, by adopting the Israel experience, it is possible to change or develop policy in consultation with the Azerbaijan state at the right time. Azerbaijani diaspora members by organizing meetings with Jewish members, can discuss and acquire their practical methods.

Creation of a new website and application for the increasing the awareness and ensuring better communication opportunities

Establishing of a new website and application for the increasing the awareness and ensuring better communication opportunities is considered as an effective tool. It will be effective as it will ease the tasks of State Committee on Work with Diaspora related to coordination and collection of data. It will be also effective for the diaspora members to find all the necessary and reliable information quickly and conveniently. In order to guarantee the realization of that project allocation of financial resources from the governmental budget is needed, considering the fact that it is planned to create not only the website but also the application. Moreover, website should have a capacity to keep and update consistently data

of millions of Azerbaijanis living abroad which emphasize the need for allocation sufficient financial resources and employment of special staff for maintenance of the operation of platform. Despite all these facts, the realization of that project assessed as efficient. There are three main reason to that statement. Firstly, it is required to allocate significant financial resources only at initial stage of realization, whereas further there will be a need financial support only for maintenance. Moreover, establishment of special working group with relevant specialists during the realization of project will aid to organize it in a very high quality which will reduce future unexpected expenses. Finally, and the most importantly, the benefits from the realization of that project will exceed the costs, considering the opportunities that will be provided to our diaspora from that digital platform. Criterion of equity is also met in that policy alternative, due to the fact that implementation of it will be beneficial not only for the State Committee and diaspora organizations but also for the members of Azerbaijani diaspora who will be informed more about every member of Azerbaijani diaspora and communicate easily with them. Realization of that project is feasible, because from the perspective of technological support it is possible to organize and ensure operation of the website and application. From the financial aspect, our government has a capacity to allocate financial resources for realization of that project considering the results that could be achieved. Finally, that policy option is flexible not only during the creation of such platform but also during the utilization. Any amendments could be done to the software of websites and applications which will determine the framework of operation.

| Solutions & criteria | Effectiveness | Efficiency | Equity | Feasibility | Flexibility |
|--|----------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Establishment of the organization to assemble Azerbaijani diaspora members | + | - | + | + | + |
| Increasing the level of participation of Azerbaijani community members in the political life of host countries | + | - | + | - | + |
| Creation of a new website and application for the increasing the awareness and ensuring better communication opportunities | + | + | + | + | + |

Chapter 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The primary goal of this project is to describe, analyze current situation and propose policy alternatives for strengthened Azerbaijani diaspora on an international level. During the research process primary and secondary data were used for identification of the current situation and further possible improvements related to the field. Several challenges were identified; after careful analysis absence of a legal framework and specific strategy to enhance Azerbaijani Diaspora's efficiency was highlighted as one of the important issues. Secondly, insufficient political power of Azerbaijani diaspora in residing countries was discussed as another challenge that impacts our government in the political arena. Furthermore, lack of effective communication tools impedes the process of data collection and increase of awareness among diaspora members.

To address existing challenges, the capstone project has proposed several policy alternatives according to each challenge by referring to world practice and revealing successful policies implemented in global sphere. Establishment of the organization to assemble Azerbaijani diaspora members is proposed for the first policy problem; strategies are noted for increased efficiency of Diaspora's strategy. When it comes to the second problem, increasing the political engagement of diaspora members in residing places can help to overcome the issue with weak political power of Azerbaijani diaspora abroad. Lastly, creation of the new tool for communication was suggested for data collection and better connection among Azerbaijani expatriates.

In the Chapter 4 all these policy alternatives are evaluated based on five criteria effectiveness, efficiency, equity, feasibility, and flexibility. This was done to understand which policy options should be selected to implement in Azerbaijan for strengthened diaspora

abroad. After the assessment of policy alternatives one of them is selected as most effective one: Creation of a new website and application for the increasing the awareness and ensuring better communication opportunities. Despite this policy initiative require financial funding, the advantages that solution propose outweigh its costs. Execution of this alternative will lead to better living standards for diaspora members and opportunities for promotion of Azerbaijani culture and history abroad.

To conclude, the main purpose of capstone project was to analyze the current situation of Azerbaijani diaspora, the challenges it faces, examine policy solutions to overcome the problems and offer policy options for existing challenges from world practice with a focus on Israeli diaspora.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of world practice related to diaspora activities and strategies, to tackle above mentioned political and communication challenges, following recommendations should be implemented jointly:

1. Initiate discussions with relevant governmental bodies for establishment of a new website and application for Azerbaijani expatriates - working group can be established to propose a strategy and further steps for the implementation of the policy
2. Organizing communications with the Ministry of Finance for financial maintenance of realization of the project
3. Organization of meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of Azerbaijan
4. Recruitment of IT specialists for the creation and maintenance of the website/application

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Appendix

Survey Questions

1. Please indicate your age
 - a) < 18
 - b) 18 – 35
 - c) 35

2. Indicate your gender
 - a) Male
 - b) Female
 - c) Prefer not to say

3. Current region of residence
(Short answer)

4. Please indicate your citizenship status in your country of residence
 - a) I have citizenship
 - b) I am non-citizen

5. What was the purpose of moving abroad?
 - a) Education
 - b) Job
 - c) Better living standards
 - d) Other:

6. How many countrymen do you know personally?
 - a) 1 - 10
 - b) 10 - 25
 - c) 25 - 50
 - d) 50 +

7. In which frequency do you meet with compatriots in a month?

- a) Frequently
- b) Rarely
- c) Never
- d) Other:

8. In which language do you speak when you meet with compatriots?

- a) Azerbaijani
- b) Russian
- c) English
- d) Other:

9. Please, indicate the level of exposure to Azerbaijani language

- a) Low
- b) Normal
- c) High

10. Obstacles which you have faced as a Azerbaijani citizen living abroad:
(Long answer question)

11. Do you know approximately how many Azerbaijanis live in your city/town of residence?

12. Do you know how to get in touch with representative members of Azerbaijani diaspora in your country of residence?

- a) Yes
- b) No

13. Have you ever been reached out by the members of Azerbaijani diaspora? (If yes, please indicate the reason)
(Long answer question)

14. Have you ever attended an event organized by the Azerbaijan diaspora? (If yes, please indicate the name)
(Short answered question)

15. Have you ever voted for a political candidate in any elections in the country where you live? (Municipality, Parliamentary, Presidential)?

- a) Voted for Municipal elections
- b) Voted for Parliamentary elections
- c) Voted for Presidential elections
- d) No, I have not

16. In future, do you consider your candidacy for any political position in the country where you reside?

- a) Yes
- b) No

17. Any recommendations to enhance the strength of Azerbaijan diaspora
(Long Answer question)