

Kazakhstan has almost 2.5 thousand rural districts. A half of all villages in the country have community centres that have not been repaired for decades: some are privatised, others are abandoned. 500 villages have no community centres at all.

---

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#)

---

Today, Kazakhstan has 7.6 community facilities, which is half as much as in 1995. Rural community centres that used to be the centre of cultural and public life have fell into disrepair, many of them have been closed. The total number of community centres has decreased by 40 per cent.



# Rural Community Centres in Kazakhstan: No One Wants to be Responsible for Culture





The villages of Zhangiz and Bigash are located in the same district and two villages have only one community centre. It was built 40 years ago and has never been repaired since then.

Now it is abandoned. In summer, cows are grazing near it, in winter persons of no fixed abode reside there, according to local resident **Raisa Sarsenova**. The pensioner has lived in the village all her life. She complained that the akimat does not listen to the residents no matter how often they apply to it.

Our children are talented but they don't know where to go. We have a library that is opened only when the regional akim visits our place. This is our culture.

Since 2004, Kazakhstan implements the national programme 'Rukhani Zhangyru' ('Cultural heritage'). Its purpose is to study, renovate and maintain the historical and cultural heritage of the country, to revive the historical and cultural traditions, to promote the cultural heritage of Kazakhstan abroad, to restore rural community centres. However, the programme has omitted many villages.

## Rural Community Centres in Kazakhstan: No One Wants to be Responsible for Culture





*Photo: Lyazzat Karazhanova*

This is a community centre in the village of Mukur, Kyzylkoga district, Atyrau region. It has been closed for more than 10 years. The centre was found unfit in 2009. Now local children play here.

The ministry of culture and sport of Kazakhstan explained that rural community centres are the responsibility of local authorities. According to Nurbol Kapeshov, a press secretary of the agency, community centres were left behind back in the 90s when the cultural sphere fell into decay and was not funded.

But now rural community centres fall within the jurisdiction of local akimats. We cannot interfere in their affairs. Every akim is responsible for their community centre. Many community centres have been privatised.

## Rural Community Centres in Kazakhstan: No One Wants to be Responsible for Culture





*Photo: Galina Katkova*

This is unheated two-storey building is a community centre in the village of Maiskoye, Kostanai region. Twenty-five hundred residents of the village try to find sponsors on their own and to repair the centre.

According to cultural expert **Nurlan Auelkhanov**, 328 community centres across Kazakhstan need major overhaul. Many community centres in villages lie empty because cultural facilities are funded on leftovers from the republican and local budgets.

Even when money is allocated for repair, it does not solve the problem.



Major overhaul started in the village of Azgyr, Atyrau region, five years ago, but was never completed. Budget money was allocated, but now the residents have to appear on this stage.

According to the deputy of Mazhilis of the parliament of Kazakhstan, **Nurtai Sabilyanov**, annual repair of social and cultural facilities has turned into business in some villages.

“In many places, the repair is carried out just for show. Repairs are needed next year after minor repairs this year. Windows must be replaced – they were replaced in part. [...] They perform remedial work,” Sabilianov said.





This is a rural community centre for 48 million tenge (116.58 thousand dollars) in the village of Shamschy, Aktyubinsk region. The building with 150-person capacity should include a library, a concert hall and premises for hobby groups. But when the head of the region saw the building, he said, “This is not a club, this is a stockyard.”

Rural Community Centres in Kazakhstan: No One Wants to be Responsible for Culture



## Rural Community Centres in Kazakhstan: No One Wants to be Responsible for Culture



Only few regions can boast of new community centres. Many villages remain without cultural and community centres.



There are 2,529 persons living in the village of Don, Aktyube region. However, a community centre has never been here. According to the resident of the village, **Aryn Baigaziev**, the recreation of culture in the village remains second priority. Every year rural residents hear the same answer: no money.

“People in villages do not live just to work, they are interested in cultural news, theatre premiers and new movies, concerts just like urban residents. However, no one cares about it. We want to get together, attend some holiday. But we do not have this opportunity,” Baigaziev said.

The similar situation is in Zhambyl and West Kazakhstan regions. Academician **Darya Kozhamzharova** said that there are 377 settlements in Zhambyl region, half of them do not have community centres, and 25 need urgent major overhaul. This question was raised a few times but was neglected.

Public activist **Gulnara Iksanova** said it is time to get back to development of standard projects of rural community centres, cultural centres to make all villages have similar centres of recreation and culture.

“We need to amend the ‘Rukhani Zhangyru’ programme and strengthen responsibility of

local authorities and responsible agency for the condition of cultural centres both in villages and in cities,” Iksanova said.



If you have found a spelling error, please, notify us by selecting that text and pressing *Ctrl+Enter*.