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# SONGINOKHAIRKHAN DISTRICT

**Rapid Assessment on Population, Migration and Needs**

**September 2022 to February 2023 (Third Phase Data Collection)**



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# INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

This district-level report provides an overview of key thematic areas covered by the Songinokhairkhan district rapid assessment on population, migration and needs between September 2022 and February 2023. Current data collection is the third phase of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Mobility tracking assessment done by IOM Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar.

Similar to phase one, this study explores eight primary themes across Songinokhairkhan district, namely, population baseline figures, registration, internal arrivals and departures (migration), employment, financial situation, mobility-related challenges, and services and infrastructure. Data are collected through key informant interviews with kheseq leaders,<sup>1</sup> who are well-informed about their communities, resources and local context.

Previous IOM studies have found that a combination of complex factors, including land degradation and climate change, are altering traditional migration patterns in Mongolia. More frequent drought and dzuds,<sup>2</sup> insufficient job opportunities, inadequate living conditions, and rural population’s livestock dependency has directly increased the level of migration to urban areas and other aimags.<sup>3</sup>

Understanding the nature of these migration patterns has been hindered by discrepancies between census data, registration data, and the reality of people living in and migrating between different locations across Mongolia. By obtaining data on population and internal migration in within the Songinokhairkhan district, this study aims to bridge the gap in up-to-date data collection and analysis to inform policies and actions on internal migration.

1 Kheseq is the smallest administrative unit in Ulaanbaatar. A kheseq leader usually refer to the governance of a kheseq.

2 Dzuds are extreme winters characterised by freezing temperatures, heavy snow, and frozen ground, with temperatures reaching far below the average. While herders and animals living in Mongolia are resilient to environmental hazards, and are used to hot summers and cold winters, dzuds put an additional strain on the lives of herders.

3 An aimag is a Mongolian province-level administrative subdivision.

4 A khoroo is an administrative subdivision of Ulaanbaatar.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This report utilizes the IOM DTM Mobility Tracking methodology adapted for the Mongolian context. Information is collected at the kheseq level – the smallest administrative unit in Songinokhairkhan district through key informant interviews with kheseq leaders. Kheseq leaders were chosen as key informants due to their in-depth knowledge of their communities, as well as the resources and contacts in their possession and duties providing essential public services to the population. Kheseq leaders were asked to fill out the survey tool composed of seven parts – each outlined into separate sections in this report. Kheseq leaders filled in the data collection form on mobile devices after conducting observation within their respective regions checking new arrivals, departures and the registration status. Moreover, kheseq leaders were thoroughly trained on the survey tool prior to its implementation to ensure accurate and reliable data collection and entry.

After the data entry process, the DTM team conducted a series of quality assurance checks to identify any potential data entry errors, discrepancies or duplicates, and followed up with kheseq leaders for clarification. Data analysis was conducted at the kheseq level and then aggregated at the khoroo,<sup>4</sup> district and city-wide levels. Notably, findings presented in this report at the district or city level are also available at the kheseq level.

## LIMITATIONS

The adopted methodology relies on information provided by key informants and is intended to serve as one data source for triangulation with other available sources.

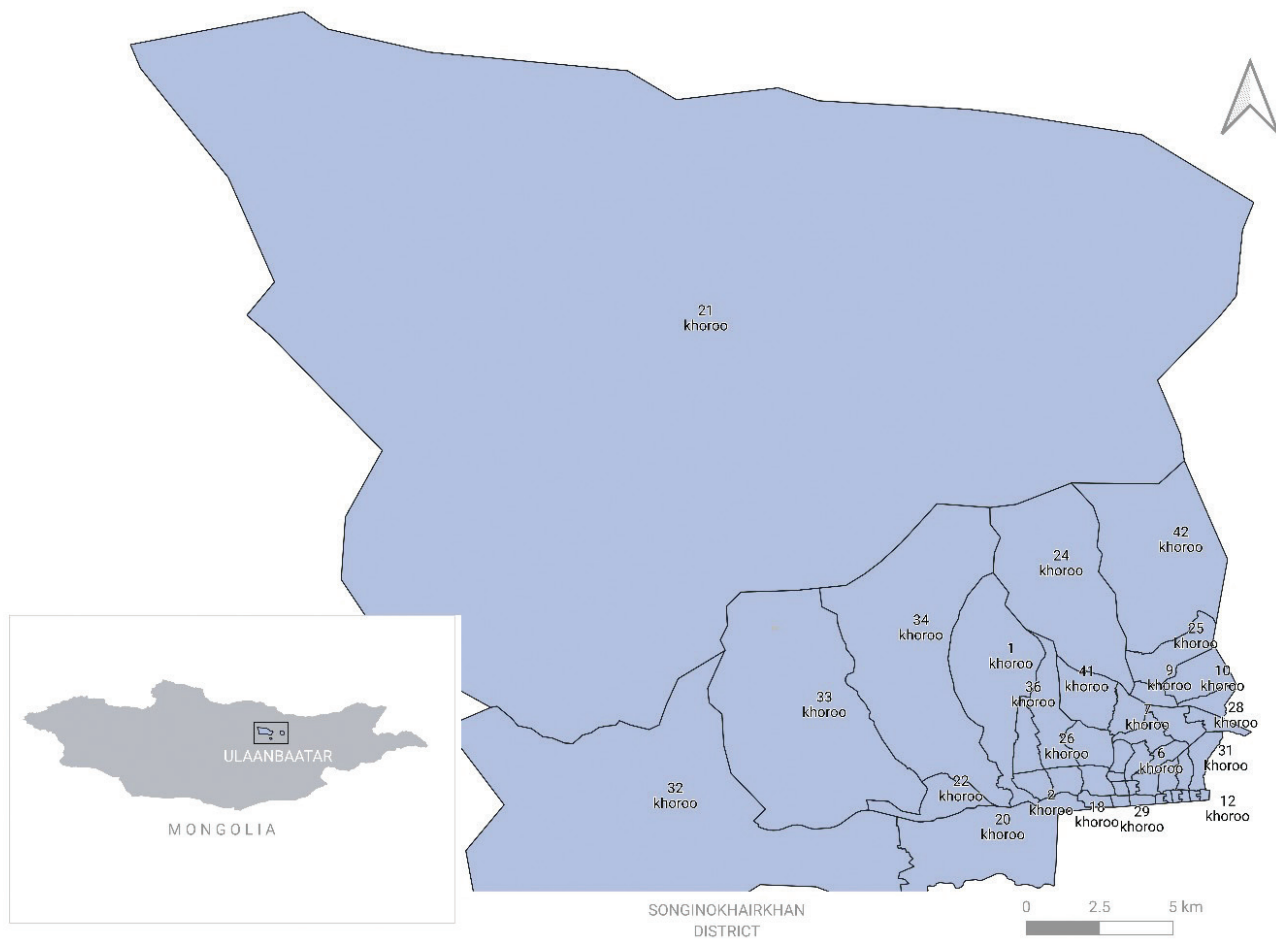
The data collected shows the estimates and perceptions of key informants, which are often subjective. Therefore, the data has limited external and internal validity since the reliability of the data will vary in line with a number of factors, including the size of the observational unit

(i.e. the size and population of the khesege) and the knowledge of the specific key informant, which might depend on the extent to which he or she is engaged with the community.

Additionally, the triangulation of results, which could otherwise serve as a useful counterbalance against biases, was limited by the usage of only one key informant per assessed location..

## GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE BREAKDOWN

**Picture 1. Songinokhairkhan district map with khoroo divisions**



**Table 1. Songinokhairkhan district population**

Districts	Number of Khesege	Total population (Inclusive of unregistered temporary residents)
Songinokhairkhan	370	352,410
Total	370	352,410

## DEFINITIONS

**Baseline population figures:** All residents of the location at the time of the assessment, irrespective of place of origin, document status, registration status, age, or any other socio-demographic characteristic.

**Household:** A group of individuals living under the same roof, sharing expenses and food.

**Arrivals:** individuals who have arrived at a location (both registered and unregistered) with the intention of staying for at least four weeks, regardless of whether they arrived from another location within the same city or outside the city.

**Departures:** Individuals who have left a location and who do not intend to return for at least four weeks, regardless of whether they left for another location within the same city or outside the city.

**Key informant:** An expert source of information, which in this case refers to the kheseg leaders.

**Enumerator:** An individual who collects data. In this assessment the data collection is completed by the key informant, therefore the two terms overlap.

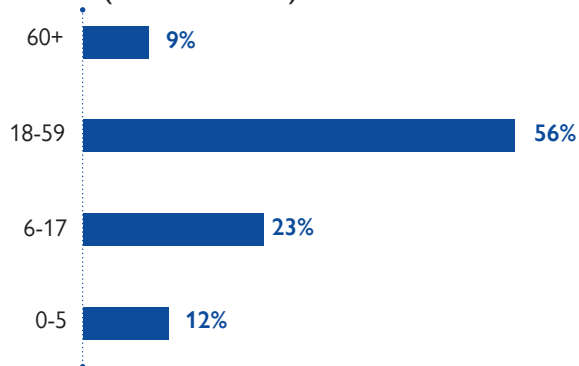
**Ger and apartment mix kheseg:** Ger areas are the traditional Mongolian living arrangement where state heating and water are not provided. In ger areas, residents mostly use transported water and burn wood and coal for heating. In apartment areas, heating and water are provided by the state. Ger and apartment mix khesegs are khesegs where both living arrangements co-exist.

# I. DATA ANALYSIS SONGINOKHAIRKHAN

## 1.1 POPULATION BASELINE AND DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW



**Figure 1. Population disaggregated by age groups (% of individuals)**

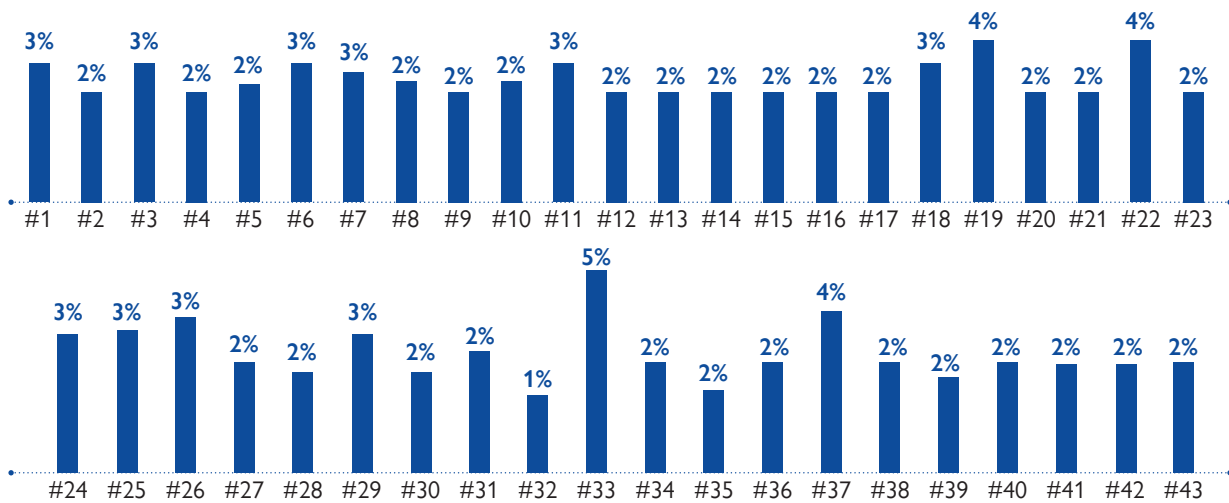


At the time of the assessment — between September 2022 and February 2023 — there were 352,410 individuals and 95,663 households living in Songinokhairkhan district, accounting for 21 per cent of the total population in the city. Of all people, 52 per cent were women. A significant 35 per cent of the population registered as minors: 12 per cent aged 0-5 years, and 23 per cent aged 6-17 years. Adults aged 18-59 years accounted for 56 per cent of the population, whereas the elderly aged 60 years and above accounted for 9 per cent.

Overall, 6,887 individuals were reported with disability, accounting for two per cent of the district population. There were 2,287 women reported being pregnant (1% of the female population), 2,600 elderly reported having no caregivers (9% of all elderly aged 60 years and above), and 3,775 children reported being separated from their mother, father, or both (3% of children under 18 years old). Meanwhile, there were 4,243 single-parent and 10,637 elderly-headed households<sup>5</sup> in this district, representing four and 11 per cent of all households, respectively.

Songinokhairkhan district has 43 khorooos and 387 kheseqs. Khoroo #33 were the most populated, hosting five per cent of the district population, followed by khoroo #22, #37 and #19, with each hosting four per cent of the district population.

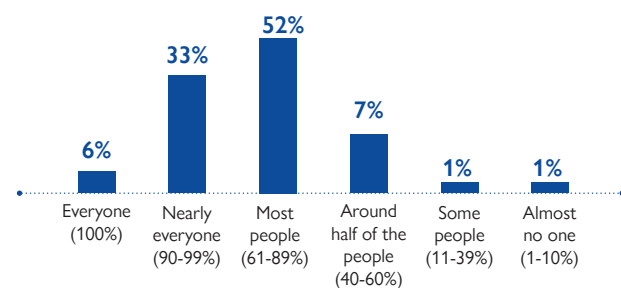
**Figure 2. Population by khoroo (% of individuals)**



## 1.2 REGISTRATION

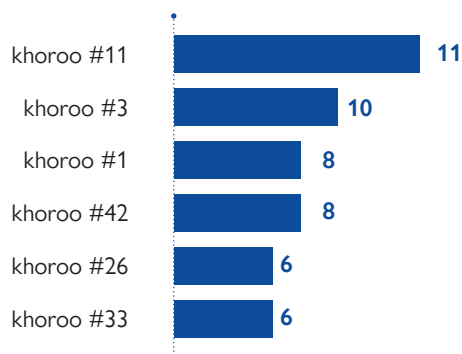
Overall, 39 per cent of kheseqs in the district reported that almost all residents were registered (meaning a registration rate higher than 90%), including six per cent (22 kheseqs) which reported that all residents were registered. An additional 52 per cent of kheseqs reported that most people (61–89% of residents) were registered, seven per cent of the kheseqs reported around half people (40–60% of residents) were registered, and two per cent claimed less than 40 per cent of residents were registered.

**Figure 3. Estimated registration (% of kheseqs)**



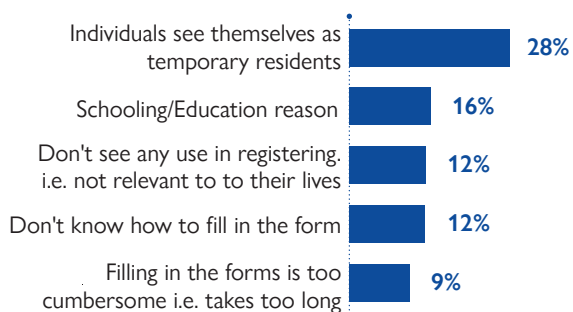
<sup>5</sup> Households which are headed by a person aged 60 and over.

**Figure 4. Top khorooos with more than 90% registration (number of khesegs)**



People considering themselves as temporary residents in the kheseg was the predominant reason for not registering in the district — as 28 per cent of all responses reported this as the driver to non-registration. This phenomenon was especially prevalent in khoroo #6 and #33 (each reported in 12 khesegs).

**Figure 6. Primary reasons for non-registration (% of khesegs)**

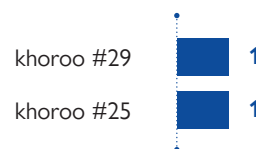


### 1.3 ARRIVAL<sup>6</sup>

A total of 7,214 people arrived in Songinokhairkhan district in the last six months prior to the interview, accounted for 16 per cent of all arrivals across the city. The highest share of arrivals was reported in khoroo #18 (5% of all arrivals in the district). More than half (59%) of the arrivals came from another district in Ulaanbaatar city, 21 per cent came from rural areas, while 20 per cent were from another khoroo/kheseg in the same district.

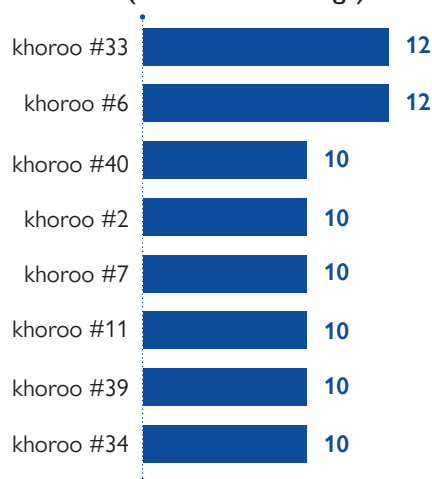
<sup>6</sup> Arrivals refer to all individuals or households who arrived to a location in this district, regardless of whether they arrived from another location within or outside this district.

**Figure 5. Khorooos with less than 10% registration (number of khesegs)**



Other important reasons for non-registration included schooling and educational reasons (16%), followed by residents considering registration was irrelevant to their lives and people not knowing how to fill in the form (each was reported by 12% of responses), and people think filling in the form is too cumbersome (9%).

**Figure 7. Top khorooos for non-registration because people consider themselves as temporary residents (number of khesegs)**



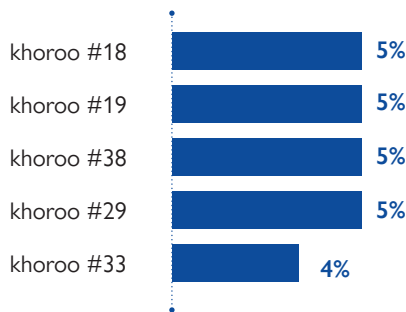
Among those who arrived from Ulaanbaatar area, 62 per cent from ger khesegs, 28 per cent were from apartment khesegs, and 10 per cent from ger and apartment mix khesegs.<sup>7</sup> Among those who arrived from rural areas, 49 per cent were from soum center baghs, followed by 37 per cent from aimag center baghs, and 15 per cent from rural baghs.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Ger areas are the traditional Mongolian living arrangement where state heating and water are not provided. In ger areas, residents mostly use transported water and burn wood and coal for heating. In apartment areas, heating and water are provided by the state. Ger and apartment mix khesegs are khesegs where both living arrangements co-exist.

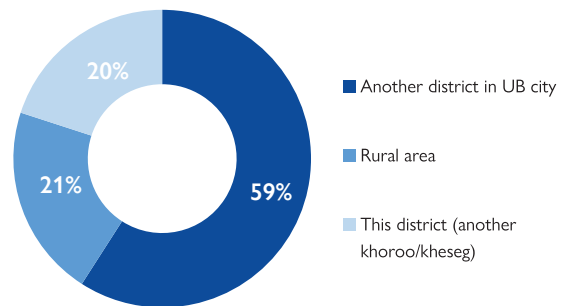
<sup>8</sup> Bagh is the smallest administrative unit in the rural provincial area of Mongolia. Aimag center bagh is the smallest administrative unit located in the center of aimag, while soum center bagh is the second smallest administrative unit in rural Mongolia.



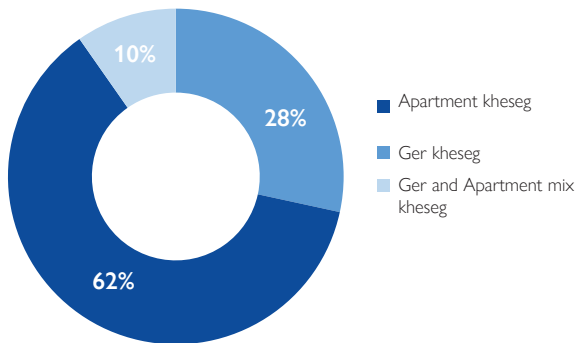
**Figure 8. Top 5 khorooos of arrivals**  
(% of total arrival)



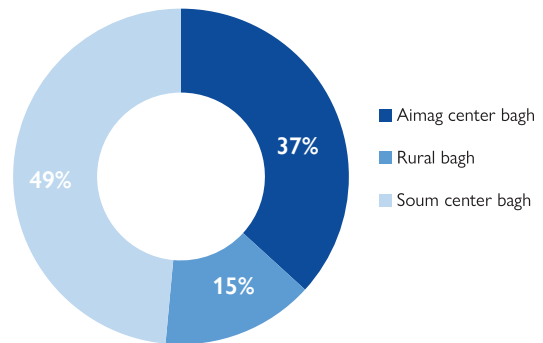
**Chart 1. Arrivals coming from (% of total arrivals)**



**Chart 2. Arrivals coming from**  
(% of total arrivals from Ulaanbaatar area)



**Chart 3 Arrivals coming from**  
(% of total arrivals from rural areas)

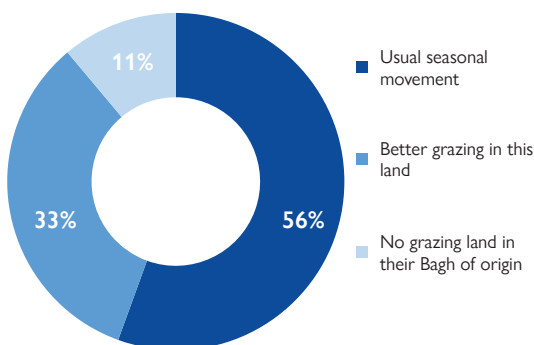


Between September 2022 and February 2023, only 16 individuals arrived in Songinokhairkhan district for otor reasons.<sup>9</sup> These otor arrivals were reported in four

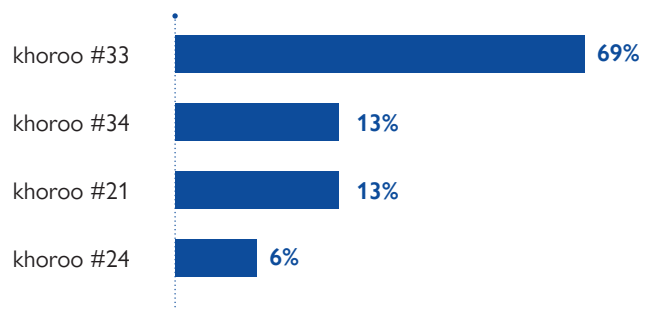
primary cause for those who arrived for otor reasons was linked to usual seasonal move — as reported in 56 per cent of khesegs which received otor arrivals.

khorooos, and khoroo #33 received the majority of them (69%). The

**Chart 4. Reasons for otor arrivals**



**Figure 8. Khorooos with otor arrivals**  
(% of all otor arrivals in the district)

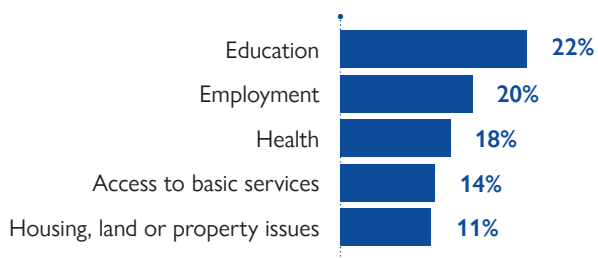


<sup>9</sup> Otor movement is a traditional mobility strategy developed by Mongolian herders when herders follow their livestock to different locations for better grazing land.

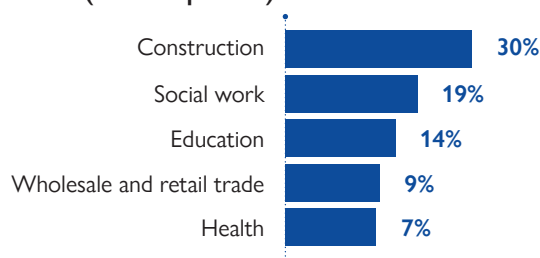
For other arrivals in Songinokhairkhan district (non-otor arrivals), education continued to be the predominant reason (as reported in 22% of all responses) — a finding that is similar to the phase two assessment. Employment reasons was the second major reason for arrivals in the district (20%). For people who arrived in Songinokhairkhan for job opportunities, their employment was

concentrated in construction (30%) and social work sectors (19%). Moreover, there are increasing trend of people arriving in Songinokhairkhan district for health-related reasons (from previously 11% to 18%), while the share of arrivals for housing, land or property issues has decreased from previous findings from 17 per cent to 11 per cent.

**Figure 10. Primary reasons for arrival (non-otor reasons)**



**Figure 11. Main sectors of employment for those who arrived for employment reasons (% of responses)**

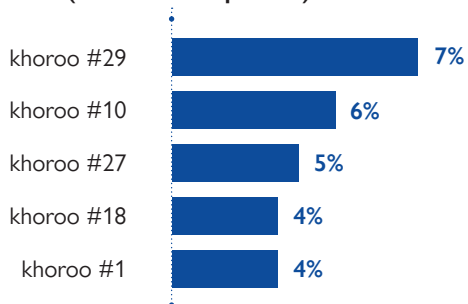


## 1.4 DEPARTURE<sup>10</sup>

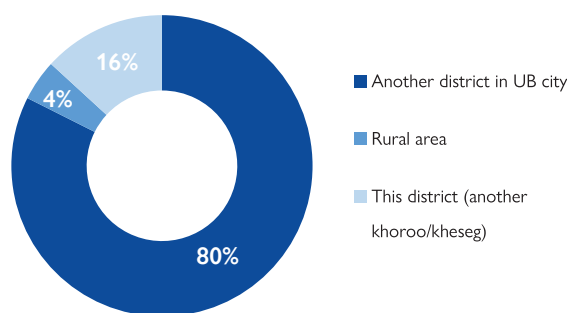
A total of 5,095 people departed from Songinokhairkhan in the last six months prior to the interview, accounting for 20 per cent of all departures in Ulaanbaatar. The highest share of departures reported in khoroo #29 (7% of all departures in the district). Most (80%) people departed to another district in Ulaanbaatar city, 16 per cent to another khoroo/kheseg in the same district, and the remaining four per cent to rural areas.

Among those who departed to Ulaanbaatar areas, 47 per cent left to apartment khesegs, 37 per cent to ger khesegs, and 15 per cent to ger and apartment mixed khesegs. Meanwhile, among those who departed to rural areas, the majority (60%) left to aimag center baghs, followed by 30 per cent to soum center bagh, and 10 per cent to rural baghs.

**Figure 12. Top 5 khoroo of departures (% of total departed)**

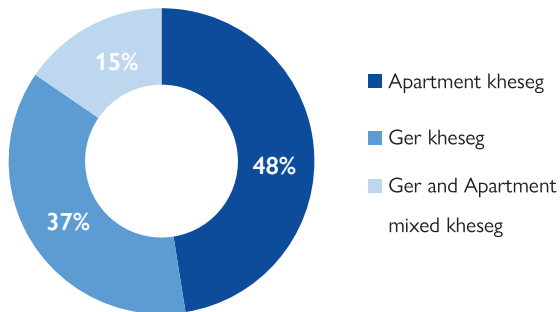


**Chart 5. Departed for (% of total departures)**

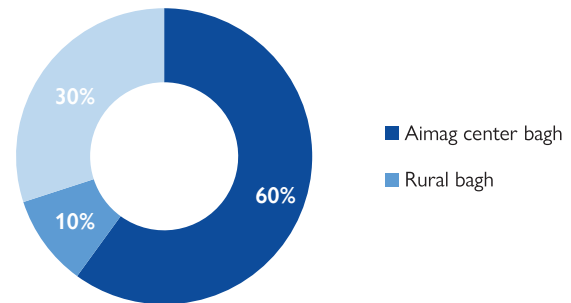


<sup>10</sup> Departures refer to all individuals or households who left a location in Ulaanbaatar city, regardless of whether they left to another location within or outside this district. The number of departures was computed based on the estimate of kheseg leaders who were aware of such information. As such this number is likely underestimated as some of responses could not provide an estimated number of departures in their khesegs

**Chart 6. Departed for**  
(% of total departures to Ulaanbaatar area)

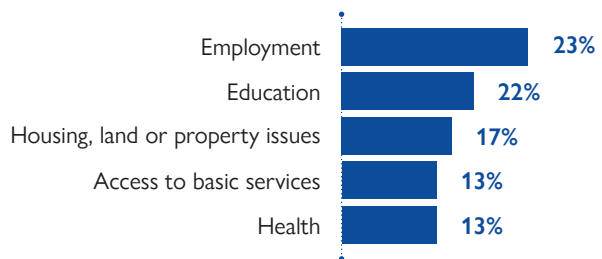


**Chart 7. Departed for**  
(% of total departures to rural areas)



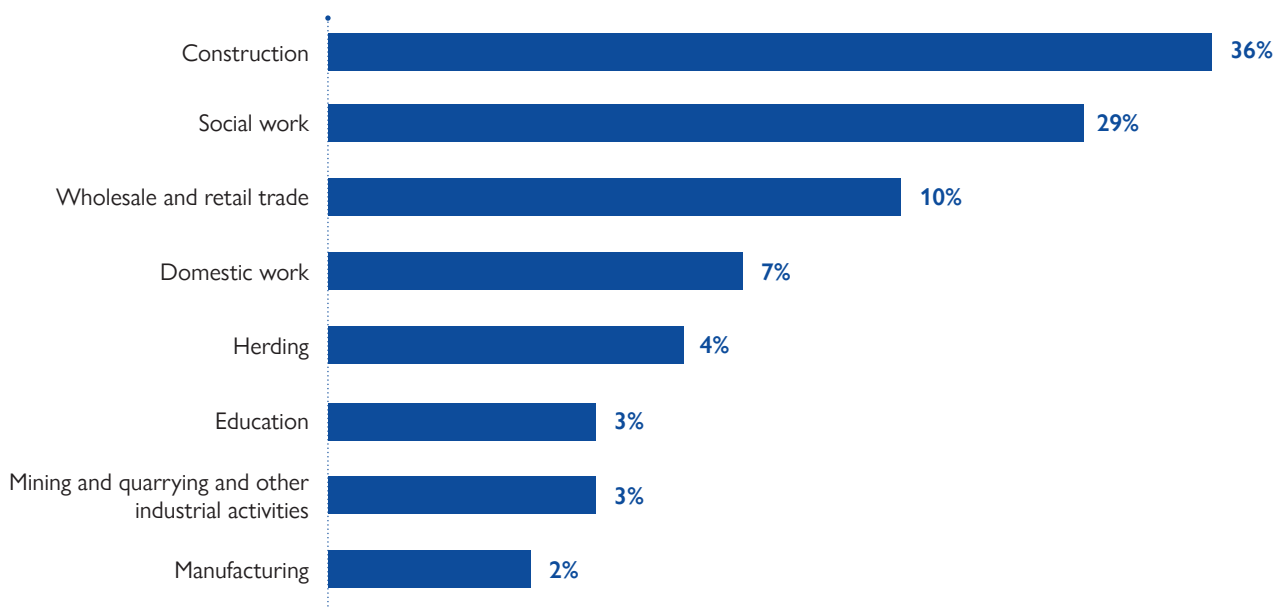
Drivers affected people's decision to depart from the district varied since the previous assessment. Employment has become the predominant driver for departures in Songinokhairkhan district (increased from previously 17% to 23%). Furthermore, access to basic services has also become more important to people, and it dominates 13 per cent of the departures in the past six months. At the same time, family ties and unification, which is 11 per cent of departures in this district, was no longer a key divisive factor according to the current assessment.

**Figure 13. Primary reasons for departure**  
(% of responses)



## 1.5 EMPLOYMENT

**Figure 14. Primary sector of employment** (% of khesegs)



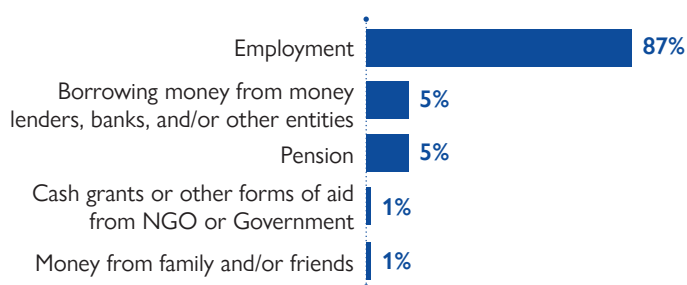
Construction sector continued to be the predominant sector of employment in Songinokhairkhan district (as reported in 36% of khesegs). Social work, which was

counted for only one per cent of employment, has become the second largest sector in the districted, accounting for 29 per cent of the employment.

## 1.6 FINANCIAL SITUATION

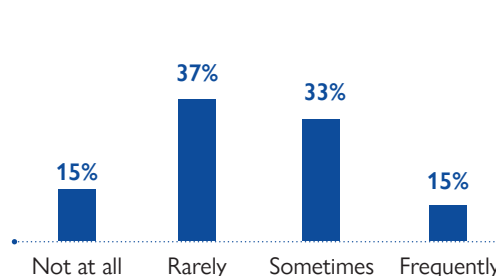
In Songinokhairkhan district, employment was the most important source of income, dominating in 87 per cent of kheseogs. Additionally, five per cent of kheseogs in the district reported loans from bank or other money lenders as the main source of income, while another five per cent reported pension as the predominant source of income.

**Figure 15. Primary source of income (% of kheseogs)**



Significant food consumption reduction had been reported in 85 per cent of kheseogs in the last six months (a slight increase from the previous assessment at 82%). In 59 kheseogs (or 15% of kheseogs), food consumption reduction was frequently reported, impacting nearly 55,000 people (15% of the district population). Khoroo #20 and #35 were most affected — each reported six kheseogs with frequent significant food consumption reduction, followed by khoroo #33 (5 kheseogs).

**Figure 16. Reduced food consumption (% of kheseogs)**



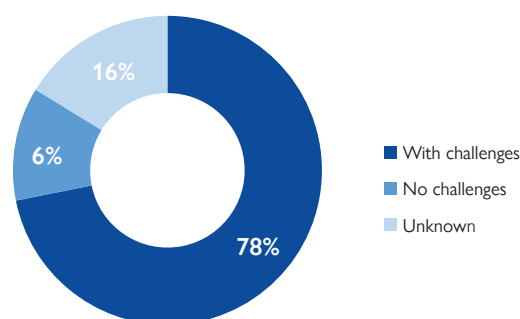
**Table 1. Top khorooos with frequent food consumption reduction**

Overall	Khoroo #20	Khoroo #35	Khoroo #33
59 kheseogs	6 kheseogs	6 kheseogs	5 kheseogs
Khoroo #1 4 kheseogs	Khoroo #21 4 kheseogs		Khoroo #30 4 kheseogs

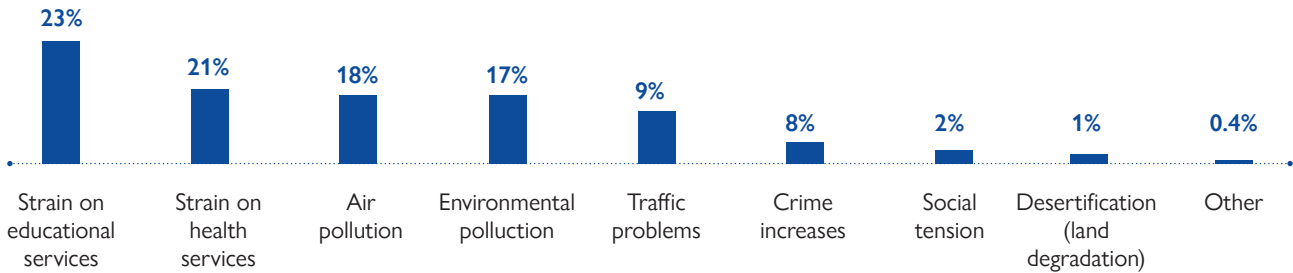
## 1.7 MOBILITY-RELATED CHALLENGES

More than three-quarter (78%) of kheseogs in Songinokhairkhan district reported that they have at least one type of mobility-related challenges. The share of responses which reported the strain on health services increased from previous findings 16 per cent to 23 per cent. This made it the most pressing challenge in the district, affecting 104,000 people (30% of the district population). Furthermore, 21 per cent of the respondents reported the strain on educational services (a slight decreased from by 26%), affecting 105,000 people (30% of the district population). Air pollution and environmental pollution continued to be the another two major mobility-related challenges, respectively, reported 18 and 17 per cent of total responses.

**Graph 8. Kheseogs reported mobility-related challenges (% of kheseogs)**



**Figure 17. Mobility-related challenges (% of responses)**



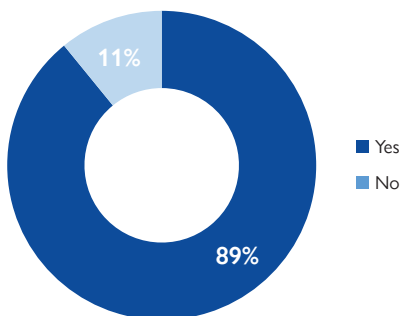
**Table 2. Top khoros reported strains on educational services**

<b>Overall</b> 114 khesegs	<b>Khoroo #22</b> 12 khesegs	<b>Khoroo #33</b> 8 khesegs
<b>Khoroo #11</b> 6 khesegs	<b>Khoroo #29</b> 5 khesegs	<b>Khoroo #42</b> 5 khesegs

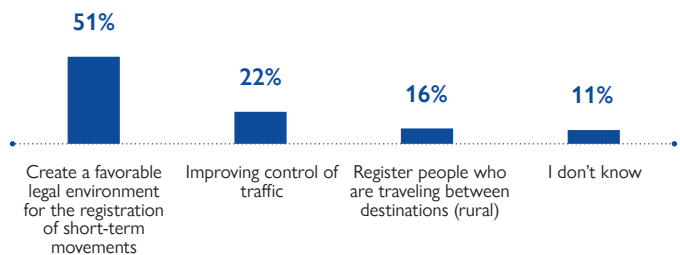
Of all khesegs that reported mobility-related challenges, 89 per cent confirmed that their administrative unit had taken actions to tackle those challenges, while 11 per cent claimed there was no action taken. Apart from measures which were currently taken by the

administration, more than half (51%) of key informants believed that creating favorable legal environment for the migration registration should be considered by authorities, followed by improving the control of traffic to and from the centralized areas (22%).

**Graph 9. Actions taken by administrative (% of khesegs)**



**Figure 18. Other measures to address mobility related challenges (% responses)**

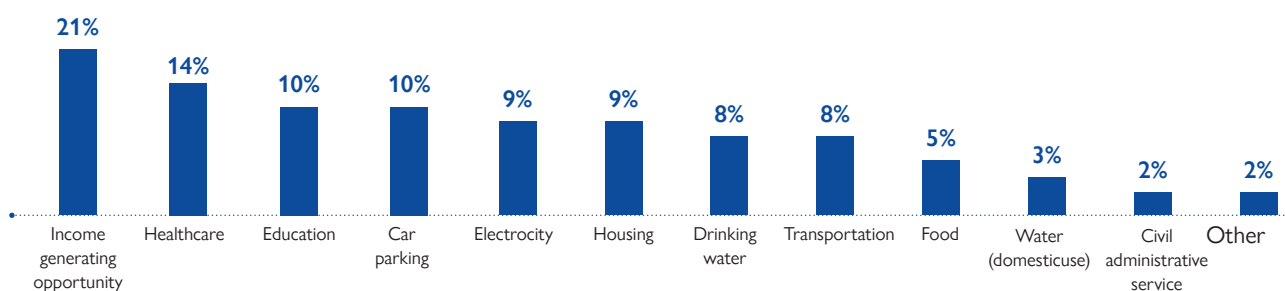


## 1.8 SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In Songinokhairkhan district, people had the most difficulties accessing income-generating opportunities — the share of total responses who reported reported this challenge has increased from previously 16 per cent to 21 per cent in current assessment. Furthermore, 14 per cent of responses reported limited access to

healthcare, 10 per cent reported challenges in accessing educational services and facilities, and another 10 per cent reported challenges in accessing car parks — these findings are highly comparable to findings from the phase two assessment.

**Figure 19. Services that people have difficulties accessing (% of responses)**



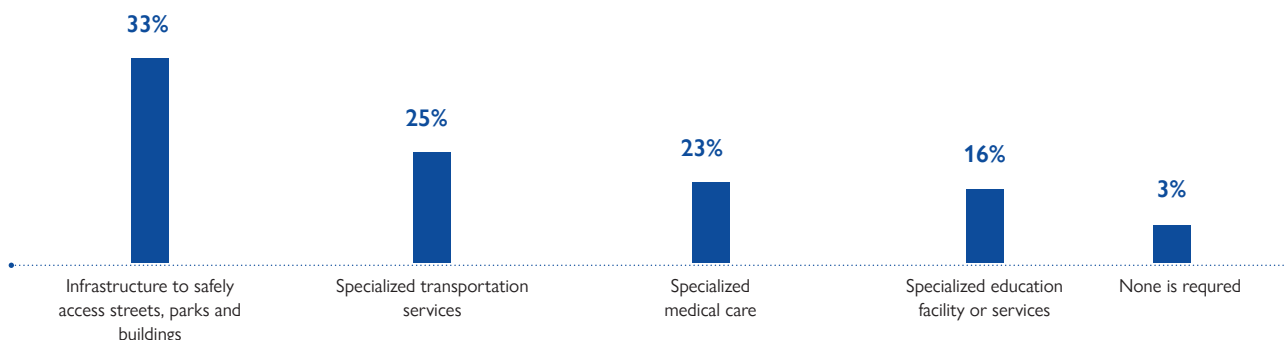
**Table 2. Top khoroods reported strains on health services**

Overall	Khoroo #6	Khoroo #2
231 khesegs	11 khesegs	9 khesegs
Khoroo #8	Khoroo #11	Khoroo #24
9 khesegs	9 khesegs	9 khesegs

For people living with disability, the primary challenges were found to be the lack of infrastructure to safely access public areas — as reported by 33 per cent

of all response, followed by the lack of specialized transportation services (25%) and the lack of specialized medical care (23%).

**Figure 20. Challenges for people living with disability (% of responses)**



## CONCLUSION

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The key findings of the current assessment shows that the challenge of lacking access to healthcare and health services have been intensified in Songinokhairkhan district since the previous assessment. This is likely to affect migration behaviors. According to the data from current assessment, there is an increased share of departures driven by the access to basic services, of which, the health service was an essential one. Difficulties in accessing healthcare and health services can bring negative effects, such as poor health and less social cohesion. Further investigation in the challenges in access to health services and its implication to migrant' wellbeing is, therefore, necessary.

The lack of access to income generating opportunities is another key challenge which have been reported in

current assessment, as well as the previous assessment. This challenge has significant negative impacts on food security — a finding that is reflected by data. Significant food consumption reduction was reported in 85 per cent of khesegs in the district, and it marks an increase from the phase two result.

The limited access to educational services and facilities remained to be an important challenge in this district. Education-related reasons were most important reasons for arrivals and departures in the district. Understanding the connection between the limited resources for education and its impacts on migration are crucial to pinpoint the challenges for further migration-related policy making.



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This report is part of the outputs under the initiative “Understanding and managing internal migration in Mongolia”, which is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and implemented by IOM. The objective of this project is to strengthen the evidence-based formulation and implementation by mainstreaming internal migration and development policy in Mongolia through the use of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). The report was designed by Yamei Du, and National consultant Gereltohtokh Ganbat. Survey questions and designs were designed with key inputs from DTM team and Municipality of Ulaanbaatar. Survey data was collected and analysed using IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) tool, with technical guidance and support from IOM’s Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, and the Global DTM Support Team.



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