

Speakers' biographies

Dr Evgeniya Alekseeva

Evgeniya Alekseeva graduated from the 2nd Moscow Medical State University named after N.I. Pirogov, specialising in pediatric medicine. In 1977-1990 she worked as a pediatric surgeon and later, after a 2- year course in resuscitation and anesthesiology, as a resuscitation specialist in clinical hospitals in Moscow.

Since 1986 Dr Alekseeva has been committed to working for achieving democratic change in Russian society. She has founded several NGOs, and is currently Director of the Public Health and Social Development Foundation FOCUS-MEDIA, a Russian non-profit, non-governmental organisation founded in Moscow in 1996. The Foundation carries out non-profit projects in the sphere of public health, preventative medicine and healthy life styles, as well as in development, youth education and job placement.

Evgeniya is a member of the Trusteeship Council at the Government of the Russian Federation and a member of the Coordination Council on HIV/AIDS at the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation. She is an expert of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation.

Aisuluu Bolotbaeva

Aisuluu Bolotbaeva is a longstanding advocate and civil society activist working to promote access to quality health care services for the most marginalised populations in Central Asia. In her many years of work on public health issues, Aisuluu has been an important force in Kyrgyzstan in helping shape a response to HIV that is recognised as exemplary in the region, including prison-based needle exchange and opioid substitution therapy, reform of overly punitive criminal penalties against people who use drugs, and effective community mobilisation of key populations affected by the HIV epidemic. In 2008 she was awarded a Gold Medal from the Ministry of Justice for her remarkable contribution in improving public health services in the penitentiary system of Kyrgyzstan. She also represents the Eastern European and Central Asian region in the Steering Committees of Policy and Hepatitis C Working Groups of European AIDS Treatment Group.

Aisuluu is the cofounder and Executive Director of Central Asian HIV Foundation, a social enterprise that provides consultancy assistance to governmental and NGO-based HIV service providers on wide variety of issues related to HIV prevention, treatment and most common co-infections.

Gwen Burchell MBE

With 17 years' experience in Azerbaijan, preceded by experience in various UK charities, Gwen has have built up a leading development NGO that is focused on the long-term development of life in Azerbaijan, with a particular focus on children, health and education.

Her academic background is a BSc in Management Science, followed by an MSc in Social Policy & Planning, awarded in 2009 after 11 years of practice in Azerbaijan. Her thesis explored the issue of democratic development from a social rights perspective.

Her role in United Aid for Azerbaijan (UAFA) ranges from fundraising, personnel development, project development and implementation, to lobbying at policy-maker level and public campaigning. She has recently been shifting into the social enterprise sector, establishing a private paediatric rehabilitation centre and soon an inclusive, private day-care centre. She believes that social enterprise is the way forwards for NGOs in the health, education and social welfare sectors.

Charles Buxton

Charles Buxton is Programme Manager in Central Asia for INTRAC (International NGO Training & Research Centre), working as a consultant, trainer and researcher across the CA region and wider FSU. He worked for over 15 years in London's voluntary sector before joining VSO as regional programme manager in EE/FSU in 1995, and since 2001 has been based in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Valentyna Diomkina

Valentyna graduated from Donetsk National University. In 1997 she initiated the establishment of the NGO Donetsk Youth Debate Centre and became its director. She studied NGO management on specialised courses and during internships in Poland, Russia, the UK, USA, Hungary, Lithuania and Sweden. She organised and implemented over 300 events of different level including national and international seminars and conferences involving MPs of Ukraine, representatives of Ministries, state and international institutions.

She has 16 years' experience of managing projects advocating the interests and protecting the rights of children and young people; encouraging and supporting civic initiatives; developing knowledge and life skills. The projects were supported by a wide range of international organisations including DFID, USAID and UNICEF, and by local governments. She participated in the process of developing mechanisms for monitoring the worst forms of child labour in Ukraine, piloted it in Donetsk region, and contributed to the development of the regional action plans for combating WFCL.

She is the co-author of several training courses for children and young people – «Development of life skills for orphan children», «Learn to be tolerant», «Combating corruption», etc.

Valentyna is the member of advisory councils at the regional penitentiary department in the Donetsk region and the regional police department.

Dr Armine Ishkanian

Armine Ishkanian is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Policy, London School of Economics. Her research examines the relationship between civil society and social transformation as well as how civil society organisations and social movements engage in policy processes. Her main research interests include citizenship, democracy, gender, inequality, and poverty. She is the author of numerous academic articles and two books: *Democracy Building and Civil Society in Armenia* (2008) and *The Big Society Debate: A New Agenda for Social Welfare?* [co-edited with Simon Szreter] (2012). Her most recent publications include, "Surreptitious Symbiosis: Engagement between activists and NGOs" co-written with Marlies Glasius (forthcoming in *Voluntas*); "Neoliberalism and Violence: the Big Society and the changing politics of domestic violence in England" in *Critical Social Policy* (2014); and "Engineered Civil Society: the impact of 20 years of democracy promotion on civil society development in the former Soviet countries" in *Democracy Promotion and Civil Society in Post-Socialist Europe* (2014).

Kate Levine

Kate Levine is a UK qualified lawyer, and is currently the Legal Officer for the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre (EHRAC). Kate's work at EHRAC involves partnering with lawyers in Russia, Ukraine and the South Caucasus in bringing strategic cases to the European Court of Human Rights, conducting training and capacity building, and raising awareness of human rights violations in these countries. Prior to joining EHRAC, Kate worked as a Human Rights Programme Officer at the Sigrid Rausing Trust, where she engaged in grant making and capacity building for NGOs focused on strategic litigation, torture prevention, and the protection of human rights defenders. At the Trust Kate worked with civil society organisations in Russia, Georgia, and Armenia, as well as in southern and east Africa and in the Middle East. Previously Kate practiced law in the litigation team of a top tier global firm in London. She has worked on cases before international and regional human rights

bodies and conducted research for NGOs on a range of human rights issues. Kate holds an LLM (Distinction) in Public International Law from the London School of Economics, an LLB, and a BA Hons (First) Philosophy and Politics.

Nikhil Roy

Nikhil Roy is Programme Development Director with Penal Reform International (PRI), working on criminal justice reform worldwide. He has extensive experience in human rights issues, including on access to justice, detention conditions and prison improvements, alternatives to imprisonment and juvenile justice and has worked on projects in these areas across the world including Central and Eastern Europe, South and Central Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Prior to joining PRI in 2009, he was Head of Rights and Economic Justice at Save the Children UK, and has previously worked at the International Secretariat of Amnesty International and as Head of Programmes at Anti-Slavery International. He has been a guest lecturer for the University of East Anglia's MA course on International Child Welfare and is the author of *Juvenile Justice: Modern Concepts in Dealing with Children in Conflict with the Law* (2004, Save the Children UK).