

The BEARR Trust: Supporting vulnerable people in Eastern Europe,  
Russia, Central Asia and the Caucasus

## BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2017

'The Development of  
Health and Welfare NGOs  
in the BEARR Region'  
Report of our 25th  
Anniversary Conference

Enhancing cystic fibrosis  
healthcare in Russia and  
beyond

Autism Spectrum  
Disorder: the case of  
Georgia

### Project reports:

- Countering domestic violence in Central Asia: the battle against the patriarchy
- Skills training for refugees and IDPs
  - New skills for older people in a new community
  - Helping IDPs set up small businesses in Ukraine
- Support for vulnerable older people in Russia
  - Knitting for pleasure and profit

Tbilisi Conference, May  
2017

Country profile: Kyrgyzstan

BEARR News



Child Development Institute, Ilia State University (see page 7). Photo: Giorgi Jokhadze

# The BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2017

**T**he BEARR Trust is pleased to announce its Small Grants Scheme for 2017 and invites applications from NGOs and other organisations. Full details are given below. The deadline for applications is **1 February 2017**.

The fields to be covered by the Scheme in 2017 are:

**Section A: Projects dealing with mental health issues in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. (Mental health issues are defined as follows: mental health issues can affect the way you think, feel and behave. They range from common mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, to problems such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder). This section is linked to the conference on mental health issues BEARR is organising in Tbilisi in May 2017 in partnership with Ilia State University: see page 13.**

**Section B: Projects dealing with mental health issues (defined as above) in other countries in BEARR's region: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan.**

The Trust may wish to support a number of initiatives through the scheme, so proposals for grants of up to £3000 are invited. Awards will be made on a matching basis, and will not exceed 50% of the overall cost of a project.

Applicants must present costings in pounds sterling, but grants may be paid in Sterling, US Dollars or Euros as best suits the recipient (at the exchange rate prevailing on the date of transfer). Recipients will bear the cost of any conversion into local currency.

Projects should normally be completed within six months of receipt of the funds. The BEARR Trust reserves the right to commission an independent evaluation of any project funded.

## The aims of the Scheme

The 2017 Small Grants Scheme aims to support and encourage NGOs to:

- share experience and learning among NGOs with relevant aims
- disseminate good practice more widely
- facilitate cooperation with and/or coordination among NGOs and other organisations working with relevant groups
- improve awareness of, or engage public institutions in addressing the relevant issues
- propose other, imaginative ways of achieving the Scheme's aims.

## Who can apply for the grants?

The scheme is open to applications from NGOs and other organisations active in the areas covered by the Scheme in 2017. (Section A: Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan; Section B: Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan).

## How to apply

See <http://www.bearr.org/small-grants-scheme-2017/> for further information and an application form.

Please send your application in English (with a Russian translation if desired) by email to [info@bearr.org](mailto:info@bearr.org) before **1 February 2017**. You should put in the subject line: SGS 2017 – bid.

The application should be no more than two pages. It should include information about your organisation and any partner organisation(s), and the nature and objectives of your project.

Applications of more than 2 pages will not be considered.

See Application Guidelines and Tips to avoid other widespread mistakes which could make your application ineligible for funding.

## Criteria for selection

Initial selection of applications will be done according to whether or not the application contains all the information asked for, the extent to which it furthers the aims of The BEARR Trust, and the evidence that good use will be made of the resources available.

The BEARR Trust does not give grants for equipment. To make sure your application fits all basic requirements please use the Checklist provided.

## What happens next?

The Trust will acknowledge applications as they are received. If you are submitting your application within the last week of the deadline, please be patient in awaiting this acknowledgement. It might take us up to a week to send it.

A shortlist will be drawn up for further detailed consideration. The Trust will contact applicants for any further information or clarification it needs.

Trustees will review shortlisted proposals and make a final decision at their meeting in April. The Trust will inform applicants whether their proposals have been successful shortly after that, and make the outcome public once all grants have been accepted.

All applicants will receive by email:

- an acknowledgment of receipt of their application;
- notification of whether or not they have been awarded a grant.

## Questions:

Please feel free to ask for clarifications before you submit your application. You can write to [info@bearr.org](mailto:info@bearr.org) in English, Russian or Ukrainian.

*The BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2017 is funded by donations from generous individuals, companies and foundations, to whom the Trust extends its thanks.*

# 25 Years On: The Development of Health and Welfare NGOs in the BEARR Region

## 25th Anniversary Conference, Friday 11 November 2016

**B**EARR's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference was a very happy occasion: the Trust is still going strong after 25 years, as are many of its partners in the region, and the conference brought together old friends as well as new contacts. Speakers came from five of the twelve countries in which BEARR operates, and from NGOs which have survived through difficult times as well as easier ones.

**Robert Brinkley**, Chairman of the BEARR Trust, welcomed old friends and new and highlighted the major changes in the conditions in which NGOs in the region are working now compared with a quarter of a century ago. Their relations with the authorities and with external donors have evolved and new methods and technologies are at their disposal. Populations have new understandings and expectations of the role of NGOs, and volunteering has developed all over the region. The BEARR Trust is in good shape, and has secured new funding. He recommended the 25th anniversary issue of the Newsletter, and expressed warm thanks to BEARR's trustees and volunteers.



ROBERT BRINKLEY

### Session 1 – Overview

**Dr Eleanor Bindman**, of Queen Mary University of London, described her current research on outsourcing of social services in Russia and talked about the current situation for health and social welfare NGOs in the region, levels of trust of the



ELEANOR BINDMAN

population in them, and their interaction with the state. In the early 1990s, NGOs did not even use that name, and were mainly volunteering organisations, concentrating on the environment, ancient buildings, and human rights. Fairly soon, foreign donors – state entities and international NGOs – came on the scene, supporting the embryonic civil society to strengthen democracy and NGOs' independence of the state. At that time NGOs concentrated on topics of interest to the donors – the environment, human rights and women's rights. In the late 1990s there was consolidation and a major expansion of NGO activity.

From the early 2000s, the state began to pay more attention to civil society organisations, not all of it welcome. The adoption of the Foreign Agents' Law (FAL) in Russia caused great concern, but its real effects have yet to be fully assessed. Its implementation has varied from region to region and, while it has been deployed mostly against NGOs dealing with human rights, it is not yet clear whether it will also affect social NGOs, which are, on paper at least, exempt from the law's effects. In Russia it seems that it is now possible to be politically or socially active, but not both. A similar law was adopted in Kazakhstan, and one narrowly failed to be adopted in Kyrgyzstan.

Nevertheless, new ways of working and funding sources are developing, compensating for the loss of foreign funding, including crowdfunding, social enterprises, volunteering, social media and direct donations, including in response to television appeals. In Ukraine civil society played a key role in the 2014 EuroMaidan protests and in coordinating conflict relief efforts through a major increase in volunteering and donations to army and other causes. There has also been increased interest from international donors in funding good governance and civil society development projects.

Dr Bindman mentioned low public trust in NGOs; in Russia only 38% of people trust them, while in Ukraine the level is higher. Attitudes persist in Russia that civil society should support the state and not oppose it or offer an alternative view. This might change, however, now that NGOs are being encouraged to partner the state in providing services. Early signs are that so far recipients of services tend to choose state providers over NGOs.

Next, **Elena Topoleva**, Director of the Agency for Social Information in Moscow, and an old friend of BEARR, spoke about civil society and the state in Russia. She is a member of the Public Chamber, the main body for interface between civil society and the state. She said that while the Ministry of Justice estimates the number of NGOs in Russia in the hundreds of thousands, really not more than 70,000 are active. Almost 80% of the population know of NGOs active in their area, and about 16% have themselves been involved in the voluntary sector. Political elites' attitudes to NGOs' contribution to social welfare have become more positive, with 48% assessing their role as good or satisfactory in 2015. Volunteering has become popular, with 34% of citizens involved.

The scope and range of NGO activity has changed, with more now providing help to older people. In 2015, 50% of the

## 25th Anniversary Conference



population donated to NGOs, often via text messages in TV shows. Donating to individuals is more popular than to NGOs, because of lack of trust and fear of corruption. There are tax incentives for charitable giving and 20 big foundations are funded privately, with a total budget of around £6 million annually.

Importantly, there are new ways for NGOs to work with

government and, maybe, influence policy, via mechanisms like 'Open Government' and the public councils which take part in public scrutiny of state institutions. Since the FAL, most Russian NGOs obtain domestic funding, and many are involved in providing social services, paid from regional budgets.

NGOs see themselves as advocates for vulnerable groups rather than in opposition to the state. While NGOs engaging in social welfare are supposed to be exempt from the FAL, even if they engage in lobbying, they are still affected by it. They find it difficult to secure domestic funding. A participant noted that self-censorship has crept in, with NGOs stopping certain activities despite not having been required to under new legislation. Lack of trust is due partly to low levels of trust in all institutions in Russia, and partly to traditional distrust of non-state activity, concern about corruption, and traditional dependence on the state for social protection.

### Session 2 – 'Staying the Course'

This session looked at how NGOs have survived and evolved over the years. Speakers from Belarus and Russia, both of them long-term NGO activists, demonstrated their enormous tenacity and determination. **Anna Garchakova**, of the Belarusian Children's Hospice in Minsk – the first to be set up in the former Soviet Union – described how in the Perestroika years of the late 1980s, there were no rules, anything was possible and she became a clinical psychologist. At that time 64% of children with leukaemia died. A children's hospital was turned into a hospice. Anna went to the US to study pain control, not taught in the USSR. The hospice provided day care at first, with foreign funding. Palliative care had not been heard of in 1994, so this was a pilot programme.

It later developed other activities, such as a bereavement programme for parents, and volunteering. After getting its own building in 2003, it started training people in palliative care. It now has 32 staff and a palliative care centre funded by the state.

**Arkady Tyurin**, Director of *Put Domoj* in St Peterburg, once homeless himself, was advised ten years ago to contact the BEARR Trust for help with his street newspaper, *Put Domoj* (The Way Home), founded 22 years ago. His NGO, New Social Solutions, works with homeless people and drug addicts. Their watchword is 'Together', and they seek to help people earn honest money, as partners rather than beneficiaries. The project has helped homeless people get registered and thus become eligible for healthcare; it also arranges funerals, so that homeless people have a name rather than just a number on their tombstone. It set up a studio, and film-making led to involvement in an international homeless people's film festival, then to football, and participation by 20 teams from Russia in the Homeless World Cup. From a one-room operation, there are now 200 volunteers, 50 writers and 20 vendors.



In the discussion, Ms Garchakova explained the strict regulation of civil society and charitable giving in Belarus. Companies that donate are subject to constant checks, and foreign funding is liable to tax. Arkady Tyurin said that public attitudes to homeless people have softened in Russia. His NGO's budget is all from domestic sources, with only project money from donors like the BEARR Trust.

### Session 3 – 'Embracing Change'

Then we looked at how civil society is adapting and using new methods. **Anna Bitova**, described how the Center for Curative Pedagogics in Moscow developed alternative ways of looking after children with learning difficulties. Its main role is supporting families. Until ten years ago it received no state aid; now 13% of its funds come from the state.

There has been progress. State institutions (internats) are more numerous, but smaller, with fewer children of pre-school age in them, and many more children now get schooling. They no longer have to share clothes and toys, they are allowed toys in bed and they spend less time in hospital. Many go on holiday in the countryside. However, the state provides no respite care for parents. Staff need better training and smaller units are needed.



ANNA BITOVA AND NINO DVALIDZE

Attitudes still need to change. But the new law on children's internats is good and parents are taking matters into their own hands.

Next, **Nino Dvalidze**, Vice Rector of Ilia State University in Tbilisi, and Director of its Child Development Institute, described programmes focusing on early intervention, and new donor paradigms. Social entrepreneurship is growing with many start-ups, aiming to make a profit while bringing about innovative and long-term, sustainable change. International donors are enthusiastic about these. They need good business plans and also to ensure they do not allow profit-seeking to displace their social focus.

So far 72% of social enterprises are in Tbilisi, but some are appearing in the poorer regions of the country. In the Q&A session, it was acknowledged that outside of major cities in both Russia and Georgia there is very little help for parents of children with disabilities, and legislation against discrimination is not enforced. But parents use social media to find help and set up pressure groups, and television now raises these issues.

#### Session 4 – 'New formats in Central Asia and Ukraine'

**Charles Buxton** of INTRAC spoke about social enterprises in Kyrgyzstan and developments in Central Asia in general. He wondered whether social enterprise was the last chance for civil society in the region, given that weak economies mean funding is scarce. NGO staff leave for better paid jobs. Kyrgyzstan tried to introduce a foreign agents law, which damaged trust in NGOs, as can linking NGO activity to business. In Turkmenistan civil society is banned, and in Tajikistan the situation for NGOs is very fragile. Many NGOs in Kyrgyzstan are looking for a business angle in the interests of longer-term sustainability, hoping to link up with business to secure start-up funding. Other models are cooperatives and microcredit.

INTRAC is a social enterprise (SE) as 85% of its funds come from contracts, not donations; and with a German donor as partner it has supported a women's bakery and a taxi service for people with disabilities. NGOs can be part NGO and part SE, or

fully SE. Public-private partnerships are also possible. SEs have to decide how to manage accounting when they have a dual role (NGO and SE) and the same manager is in charge of both. International donors seem enthusiastic about these start-ups.

**Yaroslav Minkin** of STAN provided an autobiographical overview of the evolution of civil society in Ukraine. His own multiple identities, including Russian and Jewish and as a patriotic Ukrainian, living in Crimea and Luhansk in the Donbas and now in Ivano-Frankivsk in West Ukraine, lent themselves to a variety of protests, through rock, punk, art, and poetry. Civil society in Ukraine has had several surges, in the Orange Revolution, and in 2013, when the Euro-Maidan protests broke out. The third, since 2014, involves a surge in volunteering and other initiatives. Besides political protest, civil society has taken up issues such as health. Recently, his NGO has worked on reconciliation inside the country and with people in Russia, support for IDPs, and diversity.



YAROSLAV MINKIN AND CHARLES BUXTON

BEARR Trustee **Nicola Ramsden's** concluding remarks stressed that the success of governments in the region depends on their ability to provide for the needs of their people. Whether they promote and involve civil society will play a role in that success.

The key theme of the day had been interaction between state and civil society. They need each other, with NGOs short of funds and the state less able to budget for the services required. Progress in areas such as discussion of former taboo subjects like disability, activism rather than pity, volunteering, and greater trust in NGOs, is unlikely to be reversed. NGOs have shown their ability to stay the course, fight for their cause, build bridges and ... survive. Over the next 25 years they will have to adapt to more change.

#### Report by Janet Gunn, BEARR Trustee

All photos by Anna Lukanina-Morgan

Further photos can be seen on the back cover and at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/OB0w-iw1ScDtrdGFJNVNyRVpzOFE>

# Enhancing cystic fibrosis healthcare in Russia and beyond

## Tony Wolstenholme, Former Chairman, Child Health International

**In the same year that the BEARR Trust was formed, 1991, a charity named the International Integrated Health Association (IIHA) was created by Roy Ridgway in Winchester to promote holistic healthcare.**

Roy and his wife Dorothea had had a son, Tony, who had died from cystic fibrosis (CF), aged 28. Roy campaigned against nuclear weapons and, while in Moscow to celebrate winning a Peace prize, visited the Republic Children's Hospital. He was distressed by the treatment of children with CF. IIHA existed, some funding was available (e.g. the Know How Fund) and Roy persuaded Dr Chris Rolles, a CF consultant at Southampton General Hospital (SGH) to explore collaboration between Southampton and Moscow. A 3-year project was agreed (funded by Solvay, a pharmaceutical company, now part of Abbott, and maker of Creon, a key enzyme in CF care) and, interestingly, the key players are still active – Professors Kapranov and Kashirskaya in Moscow and Chris, President of IIHA (renamed Child Health International or CHI), and now retired.

In 1994, a child born with CF in the UK had a life expectancy of 25; in Moscow, 11. The UK emphasises maintaining children's health through out-patient monitoring, whereas funding for care in Russia depended on hospitalisations, reducing the incentive to prevent the disease. Doctors were dominant, and CF families ineffectual in advocating for better standards of care. Care in the UK averaged \$15 000 per year (including e.g. lung transplants); this project set a target of \$1000 per year for Moscow, prioritising early diagnosis (through neonatal screening) and prevention (no passive smoking, regular out-patient clinics, meticulous health records, tailored dietary advice and specialised physiotherapy). This makes it possible to achieve 80-90% 'wellbeing' for less than 10% of UK costs.

CHI disseminates CF experience from the UK, which has a network of specialised adult and paediatric CF clinics, deploying skilled multidisciplinary teams; parent support groups; (arguably) satisfactory funding; and a powerful NGO, the CF Trust – including medical personnel, scientific researchers, those with CF and their families – which looks after around 10,000 people with CF and continuously monitors standards of care. Teams at Royal Brompton Hospital, Southampton University Hospital, the Children's Hospital for Wales and Birmingham Children's Hospital give expertise voluntarily, with 'twinning' between hospitals where possible, e.g. using the internet and by Skype calls to review cases.

In 2013, CHI was invited by the Moscow CF fraternity to celebrate 20 years of the Southampton-Moscow link and to highlight a new collaboration. CHI's patron, Rosie Barnes

OBE, former CEO of the CF Trust, addressed the 4<sup>th</sup> Russian National CF Congress, advocating a single Russian national CF NGO. The new Head of the Russian CF service, Professor Elena Kondratyeva, has visited Royal Brompton Hospital (RBH). A UK CF distance learning course has been translated into Russian, and once regional doctors have completed this, they qualify to undergo further professional training at RBH. In February 2016, CHI led a RBH team to Moscow for a masterclass covering physiotherapy, nutrition, the role of the specialist CF nurse, pregnancy, fertility, diabetes and the transition from paediatric to adult care. Thirty people attended, coming from three CF centres in Moscow, and hospitals in St Petersburg, Stavropol, Yaroslavl, Izhevsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Rostov-on-Don, Arkhangelsk and Smolensk. The film and edited slides from the masterclass will be used for a further symposium in Tomsk for CF centres in Siberia.

There is much that needs reform in Russia, including better pay for most medical staff, the development of specialist skills, and greater recognition of the supporting staff – physiotherapists, dieticians and nurses – so that effective multidisciplinary teams become standard. One welcome development has been the foundation in St Petersburg of Ostrova, an NGO dedicated to CF care, by a compassionate oligarch.

CHI has also run CF projects in Ukraine (now mostly in Lviv), Belarus, Moldova, the Baltic States and the Balkans. In 2006, we held a four-day symposium for a team of senior Indian CF doctors. After hearing the UK/CHI philosophy, they quickly decided to return to India, concentrate on low-cost approaches, design an incredibly cheap sweat-test machine and modify their training to produce CF specialist dieticians and physiotherapists. Add a little turmeric and up goes life expectancy!

To help CHI, or find out more about the charity's work, please contact [charman@childhealthinternational.org](mailto:charman@childhealthinternational.org)



PHYSIOTHERAPY TRAINING IN LVIV

# Autism Spectrum Disorder: the case of Georgia

**Professor Tinatin Chincharauli,  
Head of Child Development Institute,  
Ilia State University, Tbilisi**

**A**utism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder which affects the individual's social interaction and communication abilities. It is characterised by repetitive and restrictive behaviours, interests and activities, and in most cases is apparent from early years. (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

Worldwide, the prevalence of ASD is increasing. Despite the difference in reported numbers (1 in 68 children according to the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2014) or 1 in 160 as estimated by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2016)), it is clear that this increase in numbers imposes completely new demands on society and policy-makers. Better identification and assessment should lead to an appropriate habilitation process and create the foundation for future social integration and independence for people with ASD.

In the case of Georgia, the prevalence of ASD is not known. According to the latest census in 2014, there were 459,400 children aged 0–9 out of a population of 3,729,500 (GeoStat, 2015). If we extrapolate the international prevalence rates to the Georgian population, there should be more than 2,900 children with ASD in this age group alone, not to mention the adolescents and adults we can identify today. It is clear that without knowing how many children and adults have an autism spectrum condition, it is difficult to plan and develop appropriate services and policies. But this is the reality and the question is: what does it mean to be a child or an adult with ASD in Georgia?

Starting from the identification stage and ending with the services required (educational or medical), the capital and regions differ a good deal. If a child is a resident of Tbilisi, capital city of Georgia, he/she will have a better chance of having any development difficulties identified earlier. Pediatricians, pre-school teachers, child neurologists and psychologists are better prepared to catch early signs of developmental delay and start an appropriate assessment process which will result in referral to the available services. For Tbilisi residents there are two different state-funded programmes for children with developmental delays:

- Early intervention programme for children aged 0–7 with any type of development related difficulties; this programme provides 8 sessions per month;
- Autism habilitation programme for children aged 2–16; this programme provides financing for Applied Behavior Analysis based therapy and consists of 20 sessions per month.

Funds are limited so there are waiting lists for both programmes. The latest estimates suggest 600-700 children are receiving these services.

But what about in the regions? The early intervention programme is available in some regions as well, but the regions face huge needs regarding specialists and, as a result, the availability of appropriate services is very limited. In the case of ASD the situation is even worse. In the last year NGOs in some cities (Zugdidi, Kutaisi, Batumi) have started to develop autism centres, but they lack the specialists and also financing, because not all families whose child needs therapy can afford it. There is also a lack of awareness of ASD. This means that in the regions you will meet a 5-year-old who does not speak and does not demonstrate age-appropriate communication skills, yet whose parents and often doctors choose a waiting strategy, assuming that the child will grow up and all his/her development-related difficulties will disappear.

The Child Development Institute established in 2014 at Ilia State University is trying to work in different ways to deal with all the above-mentioned topics. Raising awareness, training specialists, influencing policy and providing services are all activities which serve the main mission of the Institute – to nurture individuals who are independent and happy despite their differences and disabilities.



In the eight years that we have been talking openly about autism in Georgia there have been tremendous changes in education and social policy, but this is only the starting point.

The more we know about this condition, the more we can understand about the needs of the individual child and his/her family, and the more we can try to develop more focused support to create the basis for a happier life for those who are different but still an important part of our society.

photo: Giorgi Jokhadze

Small Grants Scheme 2015: project report

# Countering domestic violence in Central Asia

## The battle against the patriarchy: helping courts of elders to deal with domestic violence

### Grantee: NGO Positive Dialogue in Osh, Kyrgyzstan

**Project: To sensitise courts to women's rights and gender stereotyping and assist victims of domestic violence**

**K**yrgyzstan has the institution of courts of elders, which include in their responsibilities hearing cases of domestic violence against women. Since most members of these courts are, by definition, elderly men, many of their decisions are based on tradition and custom. Often, when women complain to the police about violence against them by their husbands, the cases are passed on to these courts.

The law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Courts of Elders states that the legal basis of their work is the State Constitution and other laws and normative acts. Judges in the courts of elders however tend also to base their decisions on their consciences and personal convictions, and the moral values developed historically in accordance with traditions of the Kyrgyz peoples which are not in conflict with Kyrgyzstan's legislation. This law on the courts of elders allows them to operate on the basis of conviction, social values, and efforts to achieve conciliation between the couple, so as to reach a just decision in accordance with the law.

In carrying out our project we became convinced that most of the time the judges in these courts examine these cases in accordance with social customs, urging counselling and mediation between the couple involved. Thus, a woman brings a complaint about violence perpetrated by her husband and the court engages in a discussion with them, advising them to make peace, because there are children to care for, so the wife should obey her husband, avoid provoking him, be submissive and not 'wash their dirty linen in public'. After such a meeting, the woman feels guilty and returns, hanging her head, to the marital home.

Working with these courts we sensed how strongly their members are convinced that they

are right that the woman is herself responsible for the way she is treated. In society it is still widely held that if a woman is beaten by her husband it is because she has behaved badly, does not cook well, can't bake bread properly, fails to sweep the yard every morning, does not listen to her elders or care for her elderly in-laws or her children. Often, girls are given in marriage at the age of 15 or 16, so where does she gain an understanding of married life?

In recent years we have also observed a tendency towards Islamisation in the south of Kyrgyzstan, and hence a greater tendency towards early marriage, polygamy, unregistered marriages, refusal of fathers to acknowledge children as theirs, and limited access to secular education and vocational training. Girls and women are often left with children but without financial support, education or work to enable them to live independently. The parents of girls become accomplices in their domestic abuse: they push them into marriage early, denying them the opportunity of gaining an education and profession. In Kyrgyzstan's patriarchal society, in which Islamisation is growing, stereotypes and myths about domestic violence are strengthening. There is a need to give people more information, to empower the state authorities responsible for preventing and warning against domestic violence, and to unite the forces of civil society and government to defend women from domestic and gender-based violence.



## Project report: Free People Employment Centre, Ukraine

In our project in Osh we provided information to the public about domestic violence against women, the types of such violence, its myths and consequences. We ran a course for members of courts of elders in the city of Osh on how to implement the laws of Kyrgyzstan with regard to cases of violent attack, providing extracts from criminal and administrative law.

In conducting this work, it was difficult to reach the members of the courts of elders. For example, our lawyer was often unable to take part in a court hearing because the elders did not hold hearings as such. When a case came up, the members would often either deal with it on the spot or invite the person making the complaint to their office for a discussion, calling on the couple to be reconciled – and that would be the end of the case. These courts do not apply standard judicial procedures or the proper legislation, or maintain written records. This is partly because they do not receive state funding or have legal training, and do not have copies of the laws or the materials necessary to maintain records. Despite these factors, members of the courts were willing to cooperate with us. They explained their methods, provided statistics on cases, and sent to us people needing legal advice. During the project we discovered that some women who were victims of domestic violence were

also being radicalised and forced by their husbands to go to Syria with them. Because of their faith and their upbringing they obeyed their husbands.

Our expectations concerning increased cooperation between members of courts of elders and lawyers within the judicial system were not realised in full because the lawyers were not willing to provide their services free of charge. According to the Law on the Provision of State Legal Assistance, legal aid is supposed to be provided gratis to a suspect, a defendant and a person convicted of a crime if they are unable to pay for a lawyer. So the law provides free legal aid to the aggressor but not to the victim.

### Contact

**Mukhaie Abduraupova**

**Chairman of the Board, Positive Dialogue**

**313/5 Lenin Street, Osh city**

**723500 Kyrgyzstan**

**Tel: +996 3222 25952**

[m.abduraupova@gmail.com](mailto:m.abduraupova@gmail.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/Pozitive.Dialogue/>

### Small Grants Scheme 2016: project reports

## Skills training for refugees and IDPs

### New skills for older people in a new community

#### Grantee: Free People Employment Centre (FPEC), Ukraine

**Project: To train 200 IDPs over 45 in IT skills and English, and to provide career guidance**

**T**here is no reason to believe that all good things come to an end with middle age, including decent work. Yet people over 40-45 do start to have difficulty finding work, especially people affected by armed conflict and forced to leave their homes. Our project 'DyvoVik/WonderAge' aimed to assist in the employment of this category of IDPs. The essence of the project was to prepare the successful candidates for interview, through appropriate training, workshops and periodic meetings with successful bosses, so that they can stand up for themselves in their new environment and make a place for themselves in their new community.

We teach people to take the initiative in their own hands, to know their rights in work and self-employment. Besides the direct impact on the target audience, the project will also enhance the competitiveness and economic potential of the host regions.



FPEC's project for older people emerged from our year and a half of active work with displaced people across the territory of Ukraine. Between spring 2014 and May 2016 more than 10,000 people from the east of Ukraine and Crimea sought FPEC's help in finding employment and education, more than 30% over 40-45 and more than half of them women.

Our survey of IDP opinion showed a common belief that with every year that passes people are less and less able to learn or acquire new skills. In Ukrainian society generally, there is an emphasis on education at the beginning of work, although more developed economies emphasise life-long learning.

## Project report: Free People Employment Centre, Ukraine

Our poll also showed that most of FCEP's clients of 50-70, regardless of social status or place of residence, were ready and eager to learn. Against this, both employers and public institutions are reluctant to take seriously their request for education, while the older people often lack confidence that anyone will need them, even with enhanced skills and knowledge. We have to work with the needs and desires of employers, who determine the competencies they require. And Ukrainian employers, according to the statistics, are more likely to provide training for young workers.

Older people are often not even considered as potential candidates. But if we look at the statistics on how long an employee stays in a job, we see that those of 20–30 tend to remain for 3–4 years, those over 45 for 10–15 years or even longer. So investment in education for older people pays, because their longer life in the company will recoup the investment.

An even greater stumbling-block in our society is that older people are stigmatised as deprived, requiring care, treated like children. As a result, they are considered unable to learn or to work. This is not true, and leads to the harsh injustice that older people with a lifetime of experience are simply written out of life.

This analysis led FPEC to decide to run a separate course for older IDPs in July–October 2016, supported by The BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme.

In order to strengthen the position of older people in the labour market and prepare them for employment, the project team conducted a number of activities and consultations in three main areas:

1. Basic IT skills – confident use of Microsoft Office programs, email, internet search and information retrieval in the workplace and at home
2. English language – basics of grammar and conversational English
3. Career guidance – job search, CV, writing applications, preparing for interviews.

We also held monthly psychological workshops covering adaptation to a new place, networking, stress management, behavioural strategies, psychological attitudes and behaviour. This recognised the need not just for knowledge and skills, but also 'soft' skills.

The programme had 413 participants (113 more than expected) from Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhya, Lutsk, Lviv, and Kramatorsk. Of these, 254 were women and 159 men, average age 48. 382 were aged 41-60, and 31 over 60.

Despite the short duration of the project we expect the following long-term results:

- Successful integration of the IDPs in their local community and greater psychological stability and confidence, not only at work but also in everyday life.
- Increased interest from stakeholders in ways of solving the problems of employment and social integration of the senior age group in Ukraine.
- Gradual stabilisation of the labour market for the target age group, which is the main long-term objective of the project.

At the end of the training programme more than 40 participants had already found permanent or temporary jobs. We will report on the final number of participants getting permanent work in the second quarter of 2017.



### Contact

Olga Semenova

[pm.semenova.o@gmail.com](mailto:pm.semenova.o@gmail.com)

Facebook: @czvl.dyvovik

### Small Grants Scheme grants

Number of BEARR grants per country  
out of 58 grants given out in 2006-2016



# Helping IDPs set up small businesses in Ukraine

## Grantee: Business Perspective, Ukraine, with Union of Prospective Entrepreneurs of Krasny Luch

**Project:** Business training for 200 IDPs, to help them open their own business, create jobs and further their socio-economic integration in Kyiv and Zhitomir regions

**T**oday, one of the key problems in Ukraine is the lack of government programmes for assistance to IDPs, whether on social issues like housing, work and identity permits, or psychological factors which affect the people's resilience. Unemployment and lack of means of support affect both regional and state economic development. The NGOs 'Business Perspective' headed by Igor Skachkov, and 'Union of Entrepreneurs of Krasny Luch' headed by Olga Motinova, with BEARR's grant, developed a programme to help with the social and economic adaptation of IDPs in urban areas of Kyiv and Zhytomyr regions.

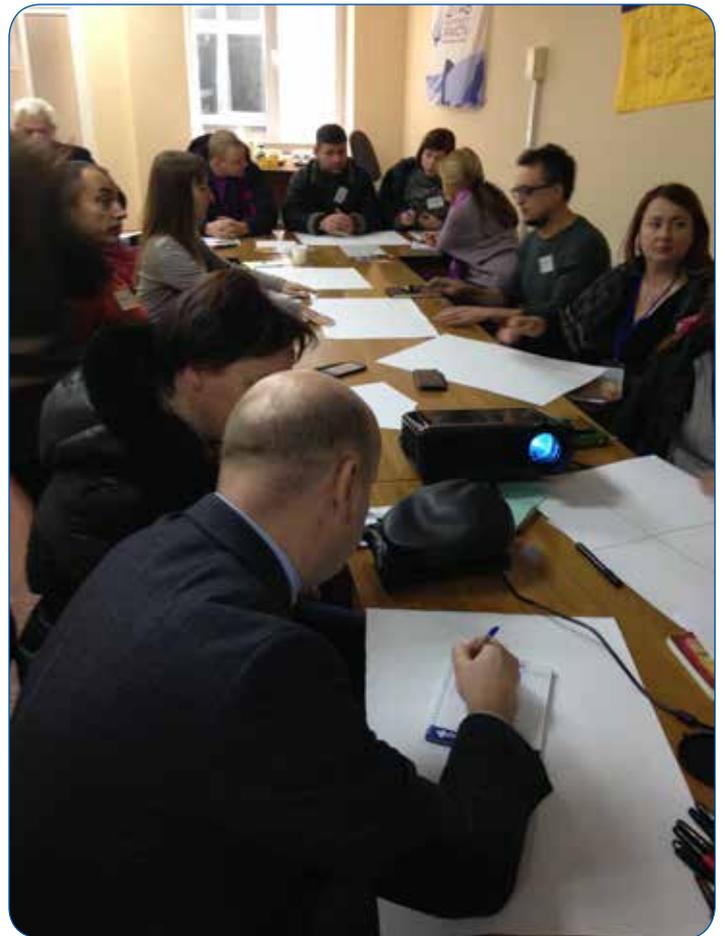
The programme involved seminars and consultations, legal and psychological services, designed to create and expand small businesses and workplaces and promote interaction with local authorities and communities. It reached about 220 people over six months in Kyiv, Irpen, Zhytomyr, and Korostyne. Participants received information on how to identify and give shape to their own business idea, assess its viability, develop a business plan, write grant applications, and complete legal documents to be lodged with local government.

Experts used both telephone and face-to-face consultation, teaching all kinds of skills, from choosing the appropriate tax regime, accommodation and contractors, to pricing products and services. The participants did practical exercises in which they had to persuade a potential investor that their project was innovative, profitable and valuable. In these exercises, participants demonstrated their creative talents very well: 12 IDP participants improved their businesses. These were mostly small businesses already in operation for 6-12 months, delivering services (massage parlour, car repair workshop, clothing repair shop); agriculture (a mini-farm in Zhytomyr region); and retail (coffee shops, construction materials). This enabled the IDPs to employ others from their own region and pay taxes to local municipal budgets.

As a result of the training, a new business idea was launched called Optika Club. An IDP from Donetsk, Elena Datsko, a doctor with extensive experience in ophthalmology, decided to turn her dream into reality. After studying her market and developing her business plan, she took all the start-up risk herself. The idea was to provide optician services, with a range of contact

lenses and spectacles for all segments of the local population, along with lectures and seminars on how to look after one's eye health and prevent eye disease. Dr Datsko said that the training helped her to plan the business, and individual advice sessions with local experts enabled her to assess its viability.

These days you cannot start your own business without capital. There are foundations in Ukraine which give grants to IDPs to open businesses, create employment opportunities, and offer services needed by IDPs. Our seminars covered the need to meet donors' requirements, follow their application process, and defend the bid. 20 events (seminars and consultations) were organised, with 180 participants. Preliminary data indicate that participants submitted some 35 grant applications on a variety of topics from commercial business ventures to social services. The process of evaluation is ongoing and results will be available in early 2017.



We are pleased to report that some IDPs were successful in obtaining grants, having convinced the donors of the viability of their projects. However, some then came up against problems which made it difficult for them to develop their businesses further. Victoria Kot, an entrepreneur from Korostyne, for example, said that a lack of follow-up investment and the

## Project report: Elena Dorunova, Voronezh

---

high cost of materials are making her porcelain dental crowns more expensive, while low incomes in the town are depressing demand. A farmer from the village of Vysokoye in Zhytomyr region, Dmitry Solonychenko, is facing similar problems. A year ago, he and another IDP from Krasny Luch managed to set up their own mini-farm with help from UNDP, establishing their own feed supplies and adding rabbits to their product range. Everything was fine, except that the lack of investment and transport for their products plus intense competition are making it hard for them to develop the farm, which is currently making a loss.

Current local and central government policies do not support small businesses. Donor foundations offer new business grants to people new to business and those who had their own businesses before the conflict. But how do IDPs who already have a business obtain continuing support? Olga Motinova says that these problems can be overcome. Help is needed to develop existing businesses, and not only from donors but also from local government. And such grants should go to IDPs who have shown their ability to produce results, develop their business and create new jobs.

In order to tackle these difficulties, we organised initiative groups of ten IDP entrepreneurs in each region. Round tables were held with local government officials and public organisations to discuss these problems and seek solutions, to lobby and defend the needs of IDPs. Finding land to rent, advertising space in central locations and affordable premises, all matters for the local authorities, are obstacles to setting up businesses.

Unfortunately, the number of IDPs is not declining, and the problem of their socio-economic integration is ever more acute. The lack of finance, inadequate legislation and local regulations, as well as socio-psychological factors, are only making the problem worse. So continued work by our two NGOs, working with foundations and public and state organisations, can help to solve the problems of the target group and improve the business environment where the IDPs have settled.

---

### Contact

Igor Skachkov

Head of NGO Business Perspective

[igskachkov@yandex.ru](mailto:igskachkov@yandex.ru)

---

# Support for vulnerable older people in Russia Knitting for pleasure and profit

## Grantee: Elena Dorunova, Voronezh

**Project: to organise knitting classes for elderly and young people together**

**Just 100 years ago our life was completely different. Most people didn't use machines; they did everything by hand. But progress and computer technology has brought us into an fantastic new world where everything is possible, and everything is expected to flow from live contacts.**

Maybe 80% of young people spend maybe 80% of their time on the internet and in the computer world. Of course technology makes our life better, but there is one great hole in this ever-expanding system: the isolation of older people. For example, a large proportion of people in Russia now over 60 were born when there was no electricity! Can you imagine how difficult it is for them to understand such concepts as Instagram or Facebook. For those over 80 it can be an impossible task.

This situation raises two questions. Is it possible to integrate older people into our virtual world? And is there still a place in this world for handicrafts, made without machines? The second question is easier and the answer is of course 'yes'. Look at Etsy or other services – they are full of handicrafts! And the techniques are the same as thousands of years ago. And probably they won't change for thousands of years to come.

The idea is simple: handicrafts fulfil some inner need of their creators. And they could be a bridge between older and young people. With this idea in my heart, and with the support of The BEARR Trust, I started the project [artfrompeople.com](http://artfrompeople.com), collecting information about older people who can do handicrafts. It was an attempt to answer the first question. But the simple idea of connecting older people with young people via the internet raises another great question: 'How to do it?' Looking for answers, I visited villages around Voronezh in summer 2016. With a small group of volunteers I interviewed older people. I asked questions like 'Can you do handicrafts?' 'Do you want to sell your work?' 'Can you teach young people?'

We visited around 20 villages. Sometimes older people weren't very friendly, didn't trust me and didn't answer my questions. Then I found a solution: I started asking children the same question: 'Can your granny do handicrafts?' Children are very open and usually they answered 'yes', but on one occasion this failed. One girl said to me "Yes! My granny can knit! We can see her if you want!" And we went to their house. A smiling old woman looked at me through the open window.

"What do you want?" she asked.

"Your granddaughter said you can knit. I have a good offer for you ..."

"Oh, please don't say any more! Knitting made me so nervous... all those loops and so much counting. I was so disappointed and

stopped doing it. I'm happy now – and I think you should do whatever makes you happy!”

This old woman is an exception. Usually older people in villages don't look very happy. Their life is full of loneliness, especially as the young people are leaving the villages. And those young people who do still live there have a very different lifestyle: chatting on social networks, drinking beer, etc. When I offer them the chance to learn handicrafts from older people, they are not interested.

Nevertheless I decided to organise a kind of workshop in the village of Peski-Kharkovskie. A meeting was taking place for the dedication of a new well, so people would be gathering there to eat and drink. I invited a few of the older women, gave them the materials and showed them how to do simple knitting.



People came, some just to look, but others to try it out. The older people looked happy to be the centre of attention. And after the knitting session, they all sang songs together.

All this experience of communication with older people proved to me that they have the energy to do things but that they need a channel for harnessing this energy.

By chance, I met a partner willing to test this assumption. He offered the women the chance to 'knit for money' as part of his project 'Hats of the World'. I arranged for the people that I had found over the summer to take part. The result was amazing! In the three weeks before Christmas they earned money by making around 300 knitted items. They asked me about continuing this work but I had no answer to give them because further development of the project requires more real resources, both human and financial, and not just volunteer work.

**Update:** Since this article was written, the knitters have participated in a national crochet competition, and Elena has got funding to continue her classes. Great news, Elena!

## Contact

Elena Derunova

[Derunova-el@mail.ru](mailto:Derunova-el@mail.ru)

[www.artfrompeople.com](http://www.artfrompeople.com)

Photo: Svetlana Yunga

## Tbilisi Conference, May 2017

**F**ollowing the success of BEARR's first regional conference, held in May 2016 in Lviv in partnership with the Catholic University of Ukraine, BEARR is planning another such conference, this time in Tbilisi in May 2017, in partnership with Ilia State University (ISU).

The conference will focus on mental health issues, which are of concern throughout the region. It will cover Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, bringing together up to 100 participants from NGOs and other organisations and institutions. The aim is to exchange ideas and information, expertise and best practice, and to encourage networking among all those working in mental health.

ISU is a relatively new university (founded 2006) based on liberal principles and with a strong commitment to community engagement. It has long been engaged with mental health issues, including mental health care reform, research, and training of practitioners. It has specialist expertise in a number of fields including trauma, addiction and community healthcare.



Further information about the conference will be available in due course on The BEARR Trust's website, [www.bearr.org](http://www.bearr.org)

If you wish to recommend speakers or participants, or could sponsor the conference, please contact [info@bearr.org](mailto:info@bearr.org)

The BEARR Trust's Small Grants Scheme 2017 also focuses on mental health issues, with bids invited from NGOs working in this region – see page 2.

# Country Profile: Kyrgyzstan

**K**yrgyzstan, officially the Kyrgyz Republic, is a mountainous, landlocked country in Central Asia. It is bordered by Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and, to the east, by China. At a little under 200,000 km<sup>2</sup> (slightly smaller than Belarus), it is one of the most sparsely populated countries in the world, with just 6 million inhabitants. Its capital and largest city, with a population of 1 million, is Bishkek.

Over 30% of the population is under the age of 15 and almost two-thirds live in rural areas. The largest ethnic group are the Kyrgyz, a Turkish people, who account for 72% of the population, with the remainder composed mostly of Uzbeks (15%) and Russians (9%), though there are more than 80 different ethnic groups in total.

## Economic development

Being mostly rural, Kyrgyzstan is heavily oriented towards agriculture, though only tobacco and cotton are exported in any quantity, augmenting exports of gold, mercury, uranium, natural gas, and electricity. The economy depends heavily on gold exports (the Kumtor gold mine accounts for over 10% of GDP) and on remittances from migrant workers (generating 30% of GDP). This leaves the economy vulnerable to external shocks and the lack of economic diversity contributes to the persistently high poverty rate of around 30%.

Following independence, Kyrgyzstan was progressive in carrying out market reforms and was the first CIS country to be accepted into the WTO. But there has been significant political, social and economic instability, stemming from corruption and poor governance, and giving rise to major social upheavals in 2005 and 2010. Significant improvements in governance are required and economic activity needs to be diversified through private sector development, and major investment in the human capital of the young and mostly rural labour force.

## Health and welfare

Kyrgyzstan has implemented two sets of wide-ranging health reforms since independence, introducing comprehensive structural changes to the health care delivery system intended to strengthen primary health care, develop family medicine and restructure the hospital sector. These reforms have brought improvements in several key aspects of health, with the most recent (2006-2010) reforms improving access and utilisation, while easing the financial burden for the poorest parts of the population.

However, population health indicators (see table) show the enormous challenges the health system still faces. Life expectancy is still below the level recorded in 1990 and far



below levels in western Europe. Infant and maternal mortality remain very high, and infectious diseases such as TB and HIV remain problematic in scale.

## Health data (2012-15)

|                          | Kyrg | Russ | UK   |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|
| Life expectancy (male)   | 67   | 66   | 79   |
| Life expectancy (female) | 75   | 76   | 83   |
| % deaths: heart disease  | 34   | 37.3 | 17.2 |
| % deaths: stroke         | 15   | 22.6 | 10.6 |
| % deaths: liver disease  | 6.1  | 2.6  | 1.8  |
| % deaths: road accidents | 3.3  | 1.3  | 0.5  |
| Fertility Rate           | 1.3  | 1.5  | 1.8  |
| Infant mortality rate    | 19   | 8    | 4    |
| Maternal mortality rate  | 76   | 25   | 9    |

The main causes of death, though, are behaviour related (linked to poor nutrition, alcohol and drug abuse, and road traffic accidents). For liver and heart disease Kyrgyzstan is among the world's worst performers. Addressing these health challenges requires a dual approach incorporating public health initiatives to change behaviours, while developing the capacity of the health system to screen and treat illnesses more effectively. At least one major component of this must involve significant modernisation of and investment in the health labour force.

The key sources of information and data for this article are: Ibraimova A. et al., 'Kyrgyzstan: Health system review. Health Systems in Transition' (2011) and the WHO (<http://www.who.int/countries/en/>).

## New BEARR Patron

# Bridget Kendall MBE

**T**he Trustees are delighted to welcome **Bridget Kendall MBE** as a Patron of BEARR.

Following a distinguished career at the BBC, Bridget was elected the first female Master of Peterhouse College Cambridge, a post she took up in July 2016.

Bridget read Modern Languages at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, and spent two years in Russia in 1977 and 1982. Her postgraduate studies were at St Antony's College, Oxford, and Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

She joined the BBC in 1983 and was the BBC's Moscow correspondent from 1989 to 1995, covering Gorbachev's struggle to introduce reforms, the break-up of the Soviet Union, the attempted coup of August 1991 and Boris Yeltsin's rise to power. She was subsequently the BBC's Washington correspondent, then diplomatic correspondent from November 1998.

In her new academic post, Bridget will continue to broadcast for the BBC.



## ... and we bid farewell to a Trustee

**R**obert Scallon has retired as a Trustee of the BEARR Trust after many years' sterling service. Colleagues have particularly appreciated his financial expertise and his extensive contacts in the region, and wish him well in his future endeavours. Robert will continue to support BEARR as a Friend and expects to attend our future events.

## Volunteers wanted

**A**t BEARR we have a regular team of volunteers who assist in important ways with our work. But we are always on the lookout for further volunteers with enough free time and the right skills.

In particular we currently need:

- someone to research UK NGOs working in our area so as to enhance our contact list
- additional Russian-English translators to ease the burden on our regular translators
- practical help with arrangements for our annual conference in November.

## Become a Friend of BEARR

Support BEARR's work in health and welfare, get a personal copy of this Newsletter regularly and receive details of all BEARR's activities and other items of interest by becoming a Friend of The BEARR Trust. Your subscription (£30 minimum) will support BEARR's activities throughout the coming year.

Write to [info@bearr.org](mailto:info@bearr.org) for a Friends application form or make a single donation by clicking the '[Donate Today](#)' button, bottom left of our home page.

## Find us on Facebook:



<https://www.facebook.com/BearTrust>

and on Twitter:

[@BEARRTweets](https://twitter.com/BEARRTweets)



and of course on our website [www.bearr.org](http://www.bearr.org)





THE BEARR TRUST 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE (SEE PAGE 3)

## About the BEARR Trust

Patrons: The Duchess of Abercorn, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Elena Bashkistrova Barenboim, Lady Ellen Dahrendorf, Myra Green OBE, Professor Geoffrey Hosking OBE, Bridget Kendall MBE, Sir Roderic Lyne KBE CMG, Sir Jonathan Miller CBE, Mike Simmonds, Rair Simonyan, Dr Robert van Voren, PHD, FRCPSYCH (HON), Sir Andrew Wood GCMG

The BEARR Trust is a British registered charity. It was formed in 1991 to act as a bridge between the welfare and health sectors of Britain and the former Soviet republics. Its mission now is to help children and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in Eastern Europe, Russia, Central Asia and the Caucasus. We believe the best way to do this is to help small NGOs working in health and social welfare to build knowledge, know-how, skills and contacts including with those doing similar work in the UK.

We pursue our aims by:

- supporting organisations committed to reform in the health and social sectors
- facilitating networking and exchange of information
- encouraging sharing of experience and learning
- helping organisations working in the region to identify potential partners
- providing seed funding to assist selected organisations to launch or extend partnerships.

Trustees: Andrea Bennett, Robert Brinkley (Chairman), Megan Bick, Ross Gill, Janet Gunn, Marcia Levy, Ann Lewis, Nicola Ramsden, Michael Rasell, Clare Reilly  
 Hon Treasurer: Carolyn Davis  
 Information Officer: Anna Lukanina-Morgan  
 Moscow Rep: Igor Timoshin

Volunteers: Lucy Buckland, Kate Gardiner, Neil Hailey, Marta Kochetkova, Antony Lewis, Zoryana Mishchiy, Tatiana Mordvinova, Malcolm Mowat, Sabrina Vashisht  
 Newsletter: Editor: Ann Lewis; layout: Leila Carlyle

The BEARR Trust endeavours to include as wide a debate and as broad a range of opinions as possible in the Newsletter to capture the diversity of NGO activity in the region in which it works. The BEARR Trust cannot be held responsible for the views expressed by authors in their articles.