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One of the entries in a children's drawing competition on the theme of disability organised by an NGO in Ukraine (see Newsletter No 55).

The BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2011

The BEARR Small Grants Scheme 2011 will pick up the theme of the 2010 Annual Conference, that of young people in our region in trouble or liable to be in trouble with the law.

The Scheme has two segments:

- A. Helping young people involved with the law or emerging from detention centres to reintegrate into society, in Russia or Kazakhstan.
- B. Helping young people involved with the law or emerging from detention centres to reintegrate into society in the countries of the South Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan) or other countries in Central Asia (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan).

What are the aims and criteria of the Scheme?

The 2011 Small Grants Scheme aims to support activities that involve one or more of the following:

- Encourage sharing of 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, influence policy, or engage public institutions in addressing the relevant issues
- Propose other, imaginative, ways of achieving the Scheme's aims.

Who can apply?

European NGOs active in the region and/or NGOs from the countries covered by the scheme can apply for a grant. Priority will be given to projects involving partnerships.

How much money is available?

The BEARR Trust expects to have available about \$20,000 for segment A and 7,000 Euros for segment B. Grants may be disbursed in instalments or as one-off grants. The Trust will probably wish to support more than one initiative under each segment, so proposals for smaller amounts are encouraged. Preference will be given to projects which are also funded from other sources and in which the BEARR grant does not exceed 50 per cent of the overall cost.

How does an organisation apply for a grant under the Scheme?

Send an application to The BEARR Trust **by 15 February 2011**. The application must be in English and should be **not more than two pages of A4** in length. It should have the costings in dollars for A and euros for B (except UK NGOs, which should use sterling). Send the application by email to info@barr.org, mentioning the Small Grants Scheme in the email subject line.

What information is required in the application?

The application should include information on:

- The NGO applying for a grant, its address including email, and its mission and objectives
- Any partner organisation, and its mission and objectives
- Objectives, short and long term, of the project proposed, and a brief description of the activities to be supported
- Why the NGO needs a grant from The BEARR Trust, what it will be used for, and how it meets the criteria for the 2011 Small Grant Scheme, set out above
- The proposed total project budget, showing separately the amount requested from BEARR and the contributions to be made by the applicant NGO and other sponsors.

What happens after an application is received by the BEARR Trust?

The Trust will acknowledge applications as they are received. The Trust will contact applicants for any further information or clarification it needs. Trustees will review shortlisted proposals at their meeting in April. The Trust will announce which proposals have been successful soon thereafter.

Segment A of The BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2011 is funded by a grant from the Moscow office of the law firm Baker Botts.

A report of one of the grants under the Small Grants Scheme 2009, Votum in Ukraine, can be found on [page 12](#)

Young People in Trouble

The BEARR Trust Annual Conference, 2010

Report by Janet Gunn, BEARR Trustee

This year's conference focused on young people in trouble with the law. BEARR Chairman Tony Longrigg welcomed a distinguished panel of speakers from Britain, Russia, Ukraine and Georgia, all of whom had direct experience of working to help children and young people who fall foul of the law, and in very many cases come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Tony Longrigg expressed gratitude to CEELBAS for its continued cooperation, which is particularly helpful given BEARR's small budget and the difficult times all NGOs are experiencing. The conference programme, as always, provided an excellent opportunity for networking.

The presentations conveyed, as usual, a mixed picture of progress, with some countries or regions within countries developing innovative practice and good cooperation between the state and third sectors. Others still struggle to overcome old stereotypes and mechanisms, or show little interest in doing so, either due to lack of funds or for other reasons. And, as usual, the evidence provided by speakers of the dedication and imagination of the NGOs in the region, supported and encouraged by international NGOs, was both striking and edifying. Where real progress was identified, the reasons were likely to be the existence of inspirational individuals in the bureaucracy and judiciary and the ability of more prosperous regions to set up new mechanisms. Encouraging examples were cited where real reform and compliance with international conventions were making significant progress, improving the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in these societies. One participant asked 'how much are we helping?' The responses were 'a drop in the ocean' and 'one child...' – a strong signal for all concerned to continue their work and to try to help the countries of the region to step up their own efforts.

The conference was opened by **Dr Mary McAuley, Associate of the International Centre for Prison Studies, King's College, London**, with a presentation on young people who fall foul of the law in four countries: Russia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The four countries represent the two largest and two of the smallest countries in the region. Russia and Ukraine have ageing and falling populations, while the two Central Asian states are young and growing, with the 0–17 cohort accounting for 35–40 per cent of the total population. All four have large numbers of unsupervised or homeless young people and – especially in Central Asia – high levels of unemployment and hence absent parents

working abroad. The first two countries and the last two differ considerably in societal and cultural ways, and in their ethnic make-up. But in all four, as everywhere else, homeless children are over-represented in places of detention. The age of criminal responsibility is, in most cases, 14 to 16 (depending on the gravity of the crime). The way young offenders are handled by the authorities depends most of all, as elsewhere, on the police, and whether they 'book' the young person or simply give them a warning. The relevant UN and other international conventions, which all four states have signed up to, call for the use of juvenile courts, and for detention to be used only as a last resort and to be brief.

Dr McAuley explained that compliance with international obligations requires new methods, all of which need staff and investment. In 2001–5 efforts were made to amend criminal codes to soften sentences for young people, to use remand less, and to use alternatives such as fines or community service. Much tends to depend on the local judge, and whether alternative mechanisms have actually been established. Probation is not yet developed as a service, so children often have to report to the police. Suspended sentences are used a lot, in the absence of alternatives. In Kyrgyzstan there have been experiments, and progress has been made, with, for example, panels set up to support young people. Tajikistan has also made progress. But in many projects, especially where local and international NGOs are providing much of the inspiration and funding, sustainability cannot be guaranteed.

Dr Boris Altshuler, Director, Rights of the Child, Moscow, spoke with great authority, having been an active human rights campaigner in Russia since the 1970s. He and some colleagues organised a children's rights group in 1996 because, despite the existence of new laws, they realised that the treatment of young offenders had not changed.



Conference: Young People in Trouble

Their methodology was the same as for dissidents – writing letters and appeals to senior political and government leaders, as the lower bureaucratic echelons simply ignored their appeals. Dr Altshuler welcomed the involvement of new institutions such as the Public Chamber, and the appointment of central and regional Ombudsmen, which have helped to draw the attention of the President to the issues.

Dr Altshuler was enthusiastic about the possibilities opened up by the internet and the new media, especially Twitter, as these have been instrumental in bringing issues to the very top political level, and have resulted in orders to those in positions of responsibility to take action, as well as provoking a rash of voluntary action.

In 2006 (then) President Putin called for fewer children to be sent to institutions. Some improvements have been noted, but there are still 100,000 new 'orphans' every year. In 2009 President Medvedev organised a meeting on violence against children, and called for a modern system of child protection. The new institution of Children's Ombudsman in 2009 has been beneficial, but the bureaucracy remains resistant to change. However, there are grounds for hope – the number of juveniles in custody is falling in Russia, and more reforms are planned.

In the next session, looking at *Crime, Justice and Prisons*, **Yuliana Nikitina of the St Vasil's Centre, St Petersburg**, took forward the theme of non-custodial sentences. The Centre works with boys who have been given suspended sentences, hoping to discourage re-offending. It works with psychologists and social workers, but also needs cooperation from the police, courts and other officials. The basis of the work is partnership and personal responsibility – an open social contract is agreed with the young offender, who has to agree to attend the Centre for 100 days and to obey the rules. The Centre has set up a social club and other facilities. Of 92 teenagers who have attended the Centre since 2004, only eighteen have re-offended, while fifty are leading a



Yuliana Nikitina, Masha Karp (interpreter), Marcia Levy (chair), Tsira Chanturia

normal life and the rest have returned to their previous lifestyle. Funding remains problematic for NGOs working in this field, and the state finds it difficult to take on such projects itself as it is unused to working with young people on the basis of equality and partnership.

Tsira Chanturia, Director of the South Caucasus Regional Office of Penal Reform International (PRI), in Tbilisi, described efforts to promote non-custodial sentences in Georgia. Despite a recent drop in juvenile crime the number of prosecutions has increased, resulting in prison overcrowding. Since 2009 there has been a major reform of the criminal justice system in Georgia, with EU funding and PRI support. For example, there is now mandatory training for people involved in criminal justice, as well as community policing, proper interview techniques, and a requirement that all young offenders have a defence lawyer. A plan is developed by professionals for each child offender, and first-time offenders are diverted into the care of social workers. Family and school counselling services are being developed, and offenders are introduced to positive role models. Out of 75 young people with whom the project has worked over two years, only two have re-offended. PRI works at policy level, with the government and justice agencies. ([See page 6.](#))

Paola Pavlenko, of AIDS Alliance, Ukraine, was the first speaker in the next session, on *Drugs, Alcohol and AIDS*. AIDS Alliance used to be part of a large international NGO, but now stands alone, with international funding. Alliance works with large numbers of local government and non-governmental organisations around Ukraine. It is responsible for 45 per cent of the national HIV/AIDS programme. There have been positive recent developments in HIV/AIDS policy and practice in Ukraine. New legislation adopted in 1999 is liberal, providing for voluntary testing, confidentiality, and small monthly benefits for those diagnosed positive. At the same time, drug control policy in Ukraine remains punitive. The incidence of HIV/AIDS in people aged 15–24 is falling, but 1.3 per cent (360,000 people) of the age group 15–49 is infected. Drug use as a channel for HIV/AIDS transmission is falling. Among street children in Kyiv, 19 per cent are HIV positive – and in Odessa the figure is even higher, at 25 per cent. The tendency is still to stigmatise the victims of drug trafficking, not the traffickers.

Dr Elena Rydalevskaya, Director of Diakonia in St Petersburg, talked about the organisation's work. It was set up in the early 1990s by a number of churches. Diakonia runs a rehabilitation centre for boys, with a garden and farm animals. It helps 45 people annually. In Russia

30–40,000 people die every year from the use of heroin, and there are estimated to be about 2.5 million drug addicts in the Russian Federation. The majority (about 90 per cent) are heroin addicts. The first contact with drug users is by hot line: callers can be given information on treatment centres. Many parents in Russia complain that the police know who sells the drugs, but punish the users instead. In Russia 70,000 people also die every year directly from alcohol-related causes, and many more indirectly. In rural areas especially, alcoholism and social problems are closely linked.

In the last session we looked at *Life on the Street: Homelessness and Prostitution*. **Hamish Heald, from Love's Bridge**, an American NGO working in Perm Region since 2005, described its work with underprivileged children – many of them homeless. The number of children living and sleeping on the streets and in cellars in Perm has fallen: most now sleep at home or with friends, and are only on the streets in the daytime. Love's Bridge runs centres and activities for them.

There are an estimated 27 million children in Russia, and six million of them live in poverty. Two million are illiterate, and 2,000 die every year as a result of domestic violence. Many more run away from home. The police don't see domestic violence as an issue for them, and are often corrupt. Social services are limited. There are only twenty shelters for women and children who are victims of domestic violence in the whole of Russia. So children stay on the streets by day, and are susceptible to drink, drugs, and exploitation. The state only takes an interest when they break the law.

Such children are sexually active from a young age. It is estimated that 25 per cent of sex workers in Moscow are under 18. Many are exploited for pornography. There is also child trafficking and sex tourism to Russia. In Perm the local authorities have provided centres where NGOs can work, and have opened their own centres. Love's Bridge is also working in children's homes, providing activities such as sports and computers. Overall, the authorities in Perm region are making good progress. They are encouraging fostering so as to reduce reliance on children's homes.

Krikor Krikorian, Board Member and adviser of Orran (meaning Shelter in Armenian), followed on with his own experience of helping street children in Armenia. Armenia is a small country with high unemployment and widespread poverty. Orran's mission is to prevent the spread of destitution and begging among Armenia's children and elderly, to fight the phenomenon of children being the principal bread winners of their families through begging, to divert children from the streets and engage them in academic, cultural, and extra-curricular activities, to identify



Megan Bick, Krikor Krikorian, Hamish Heald

and develop children's interests and talents toward a working career, and to help families in crisis. The project started in 2000 and provides 200 meals a day and bath facilities for walk-ins, and has helped a number of talented children to pursue their studies instead of begging on the streets.

The BEARR Trust is grateful for support for this conference from the academic consortium CEELBAS and the Great Britain – Russia Society.

A longer version of this report is available on the BEARR website at <http://www.bearr.org/node/2351>. The slides/notes/photos used by speakers can be accessed as follows.

Dr Mary McCauley http://www.bearr.org/en/Resource/Conference_2010/Mary_McAuley

Dr Boris Altshuler http://www.bearr.org/en/resource/conference_2010/Altshuler

Yuliana Nikitina http://www.bearr.org/en/Resource/Conference_2010/Yuliana_Nikitina

Tsira Chanturia http://www.bearr.org/en/Resource/Conference_2010/Chanturia

Paola Pavlenko http://www.bearr.org/en/Resource/conference_2010/Paola_pavlenko

Dr Elena Rydalevskaya http://www.bearr.org/en/Resource/conference_2010/Rydalevskaya

Hamish Heald http://www.bearr.org/en/Resource/conference_2010/Heald

Krikor Krikorian http://www.bearr.org/en/Resource/conference_2010/Krikor_krikorian

Annual Conference 2011

This will be held on Friday 18 November 2011 at BEARR's premises in Southwark, London. Put the date in your diary now! The theme will be announced in due course. To make any suggestions, or join our mailing list, please email info@bearr.org.

more conference photos on the back cover

Children in the justice system in Georgia

by Tsira Chanturia, Regional Director, South Caucasus Regional Office, Penal Reform International (PRI)

PRI has been working in the South Caucasus since 2000. Its juvenile justice programme in Georgia aims to ensure that the best interests of the child are met and that international standards on children's rights are implemented. PRI's activities focus on diverting children away from the criminal justice system, promoting non-custodial community-based measures and sanctions and promoting the use of prison as a last resort. Where imprisonment is used, PRI works to improve conditions of detention.

Georgia gained its independence from the Commonwealth of Independent States in 1991. Since then it has begun to develop its juvenile justice system.

Georgia has been a party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child since 1994 and to the European Convention on Human Rights since 2000, and has been a member of the Council of Europe since 1999. Georgia thus has an obligation to develop a comprehensive juvenile justice system respecting children's best interests and UN and European standards.

Georgia has a population of 4.4 million (as of January, 2010), with approximately one million people below the age of 18. The minimum age of criminal responsibility is 14.

In 2008, following punitive criminal justice policies, and contrary to the requirements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the authorities lowered the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 12 years for grave crimes. This was partly due to an increase in violent crimes committed by young people, exaggerated media stories, and politicians calling for tougher measures for children. In February 2010, following an advocacy campaign by both international and local actors, the authorities reinstated the minimum age of criminal responsibility at 14.

Many children who offend come from socially vulnerable families where most of their basic needs are not met. About 25 per cent of the population live below subsistence level and there are over 300,000 persons displaced internally as a result of ethnic conflicts. Violent crimes resulting in murder or severe injuries are partly attributable to behavioural problems and to the so-called 'street culture' influenced by the criminal underworld. Children who display violent behaviour have often themselves been witnesses



Young probationers after a match against local policemen, designed to assist social skills

or victims of violence. Drug misuse and addiction also play their role. Children in conflict with the law with whom we have worked are often illiterate and lack social values. High unemployment and few possibilities for purposeful engagement often contribute to offending by youngsters and are exacerbated by the lack of state funding for extra-curricular activities.

The number of recorded crimes by children fell between 2006 and 2009, while paradoxically the prosecution of juveniles grew by almost 50 per cent. There was a 123 per cent increase in convictions and a 325 per cent increase in custodial sentences. This was a reflection of the 'zero tolerance' policy announced by the authorities towards all crimes in Georgia. These punitive policies resulted in prison overcrowding; children did not have enough space or adequate access to healthcare and education, and other entitlements were also restricted.

PRI has helped to persuade the authorities to shift to a more liberal approach with regard to children, including raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility and piloting rehabilitation schemes for juvenile offenders.

A comprehensive juvenile justice strategy and action plan were drafted and adopted by the government in 2009, in which important reforms were made, including: mandatory training for criminal justice actors dealing with

children; the mandatory presence of a defence lawyer during the interrogation of a child; police training in interviewing juveniles; and specialised judges, prosecutors and prison and probation officers trained in child psychology and juvenile justice issues. More re-socialisation activities are provided for juvenile prisoners in addition to better schooling. Children who have committed minor crimes are diverted from the criminal justice system.

Besides its policy and advocacy work, PRI has focused on providing pilot rehabilitation schemes for children, with a view to designing community-based alternatives to incarceration as well as preventing re-offending and

demonstrating innovative ways of achieving this. The pilot schemes have improved the social integration of children and provided the government with a successful and replicable model.

There is momentum and support for reforming the juvenile justice system in Georgia which should be harnessed and developed.

PRI's two-year juvenile justice project was undertaken with the financial support of the Netherlands government.

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The post-communist mortality controversy

Since January 2009, when the *Lancet* published a controversial article claiming that policies of mass privatisation had been a 'crucial determinant' in understanding the male mortality crisis in the post-communist world (see figure), there has been a heated debate (see <http://tinyurl.com/3ylg42x>) conducted across the media, the world wide web and academic outlets.

In January 2009, the *Economist* ran with a headline, 'Mass murder and the market'; the University of Oxford issued a media release stating that 'one million working-age men died due to the economic shock of mass privatisation policies' and there were multiple exchanges in the *Financial Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Lancet* itself and across the web.

Since that time, scholars and commentators from the United States, Russia, Sweden, UK and elsewhere have called into question these headline grabbing findings and, writing in the *Guardian* newspaper, philosopher Jonathan Wolff (2010) recently observed, 'The journals are full of great studies, but can we believe the statistics?' In November 2010, participating in a major conference at Oxford University (<http://tinyurl.com/37c9lqy>), UCL scholar and BEARR Trustee, Dr Christopher J Gerry, revisited this debate and concluded, like many others, that there is no evidence for this finding and that Wolff is indeed right to approach bold claims with a degree of caution.

In particular, Gerry notes that, where mass privatisation was implemented, male mortality rates had long since been increasing and that the experiences long after any mass privatisation effect had disappeared (e.g. in Russia, life expectancy collapsed again from 1999) further complicate any attempt to establish this tenuous link between mass

privatisation and mortality. Addressing Wolff directly, Gerry concludes that studies which fail to explore the statistical properties of the temporal aspect of their data, which ignore issues relating to causality, and which fail to think about the actual underlying data-generating process are likely to produce misleading results. Indeed, he argued, this is precisely what happened in the case of the debate about whether mass privatisation was a crucial determinant of male mortality in the post-communist world.

More work is therefore needed before we can really understand what drives the fluctuating and worrisome mortality patterns we observe in the post-communist region. What has become increasingly clear, though, is that there is no evidence to be found linking mass privatisation policies (themselves implemented so differently across countries) with fluctuations in male deaths. Like the drunk, looking for his lost car keys under the street light, scholars should learn that the answers aren't always to be found in the most convenient places.



Women in Central Asia

by Megan Bick, BEARR Trustee

Women's rights in Central Asia in the 21st century were the focus of a seminar I mediated in Brussels. The 100+ participants came from Europe and all five Central Asian states, with government officials, academics and NGO representatives covering the range of activities performed by women's NGOs.

The 'EU–Central Asia Civil Seminar on Women's Rights' was the latest in a series under the 'EU Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia'. Earlier seminars had looked at media liberalisation and children's and prisoners' rights.

Covering the full range of women's rights in three days was a challenge, not least because it coincided with conflict and bloodshed on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border, with the fear that this could spread across Central Asia. So it was a good time to consider how to bring more equality and justice to the region as an essential part of sustainable development. We held an extra workshop on the needs of women in conflict, and were introduced to 'Violence Against Women and Girls in Conflict' (VAWIC)¹. A central aspect of VAWIC's message is that violence against women is not just a medical or health issue. They have produced fact sheets on issues including health, education, justice and human rights, and the seminar agreed a partnership to translate these into Russian.

Other key themes were the current economic hardship, property ownership, and access to education for girls. Labour migration is ruining families and communities, leaving women unprotected, children in the care of elderly grandmothers, and often no financial help from abroad. One speaker outlined a project to reduce social marginalisation and empower vulnerable women, combining psychological support for the most vulnerable with practical activities such as network development, time banks and sensitisation workshops for civil servants.

Economic transition harms women more than men, with a greater rise in female unemployment, reduced social assistance and healthcare, more family care and growing gender violence. Leaders of local initiatives spoke about their work on improving legislation and service provision for victims of domestic violence. They also concluded that increased trafficking in human beings required more information sharing across the region, e.g. with a regional 'observatory' to monitor, document and share information on trafficking routes and operations.



This poster was produced by the Coalition of Civil Society Organisations 'From Equality in Law to Equality in Practice'.

The international network Women of Europe for a Common Future (WECF) aims to promote a healthy environment for all, with access to safe and affordable water and sanitation, and safe, regional and diverse food. For them the gender perspective is key: women have specific responsibilities for future generations, see different priorities and value sustainability, specifically in health and livelihoods. In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, WECF aims to improve sanitary facilities in rural schools and turn some into mini social enterprises run by women. They are also working on awareness of hazardous chemicals and on innovative models of safe, affordable and renewable energy such as solar collectors and fruit dryers.

The seminar put to the EU both regional and individual country priorities, including cross-border initiatives and ways of involving partner organisations. A major request was for a consistent attitude to Central Asian states regardless of their natural resources or strategic position: support for what is right and condemnation of what is wrong. Only then will international interventions build a stable, safer environment in which activists can promote non-discriminatory enforcement of economic, social and cultural laws, raising awareness of women's rights and promoting women's well-being and thus the welfare of children and peaceful communities.

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¹ The Brussels Ad Hoc Working Group on Violence Against Women in Conflict

NGO leadership in a cold climate

by Charles Buxton, INTRAC Central Asia

During 2009–10, INTRAC¹ has been a partner in two leadership development programmes that show the different external situations facing civil society in the ex-Soviet countries of Central Asia.

In Kyrgyzstan, a community leadership programme focused on the needs of women and young people within development projects using a self-help methodology. There are almost 1000 such groups in Kyrgyzstan, mainly in rural areas and the squatter settlements around Bishkek. The groups have an internal savings fund, provide mutual psychological support, organise cultural events in the community, and most important – develop economic or trading activity often with the support of micro-credits arranged by local NGOs. While women make up 75 per cent of group members and most of their leaders, the model of leadership and the roles performed by women are mostly traditional, family and survival-oriented.



INTRAC trainer Kulnaraa Djamankulova (centre) and participants in the leadership programme for women with disabilities, Atyrau, Western Kazakhstan, August 2010.

Kyrgyzstan experienced its second revolution in April 2010, preceded by a popular mobilisation in which young people played an active role. The poorer groups in society protested energetically against rising food prices, the privatisation of energy companies and the corruption of the political elite. Self-help groups represent a potentially important social movement for marginalised and vulnerable groups. Many group members and leaders are active in

politics but the movement itself has been unable to find a collective identity and make demands on government. The community leadership project raised issues around traditional and democratic leadership and used new media (photography, video, internet and blogging – all of which are in short supply in remote rural areas) to enhance the ‘voice’ of participants.

What were the results? First, a number of mini-projects carried out by participants at community level (campaigns, exhibitions and activities organised for young people and children); second, raising awareness of issues around gender, power and diversity; third, the slow development of a core of self-help and NGO activists who may be able in the future to bring the self-help movement together. Activists face a difficult time, however: the April revolution and June inter-ethnic conflict in Kyrgyzstan has led to an economic downturn, the departure of yet more migrants to Russia and further popular disillusionment. These are factors that the new parliamentary coalition will have to deal with urgently.

In January 2010, INTRAC began a project on leadership for women with disabilities with NGO Shyrak, Almaty. (Readers may remember its director, Lyazzat Kaltaeva, who spoke at the BEARR conference in November 2008). Shyrak had got involved in lobbying on gender issues within the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities – a document which Kazakhstan has undertaken to ratify. Human rights issues have become controversial in Kazakhstan during the country’s presidency of the OSCE (Organisation for Security & Cooperation in Europe) in 2010. Support was gained from the European Union, UNDP and the British Embassy to enable a project on capacity-building for women leaders and 14 NGOs from all around Kazakhstan, with the eventual aim of strengthening the advocacy effort for people with disabilities.

With its oil and gas resources, Kazakhstan is a much richer country than Kyrgyzstan, though this is not always evident outside the main cities. The challenges in organising a leadership programme related first to the participants (travelling long distances to workshops, with problems of disabled access everywhere) and to their NGOs (usually with a large and often passive membership/target group). In Kazakhstan, the withdrawal of foreign donors has been followed by government funding via ‘social contracting’ on the Russian model. Disabled people’s organizations are major

1 International NGO Training and Research Centre

beneficiaries of social contracting, and the project showed some of the pluses and minuses of this. On the positive side, the government funds temporary jobs for helpers, social workers and some activity costs – and links with local government, health and employment services are quite strong. On the other hand, the yearly funding mechanisms are very inadequate in relation to need and, worse, we heard several stories of new NGOs (not led by or representing disabled people) being set up by government officials to gain money from the contracting process. Private charitable giving is slowly increasing in Kazakhstan, but promoting the ‘social model’ of disability or gender issues is new and difficult.

Interim results of the programme include access to new skills and ideas for over 40 women with disabilities from west, north-east and south Kazakhstan, the beginnings of

joint lobbying around the UN Convention, and strategic planning work with individual NGOs. Civil society in Kazakhstan, like Kyrgyzstan, is quite divided into pro- and anti-government camps and it will be interesting to see what the balance sheet of its year as OSCE chair turns out to be.

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The Struggle for Civil Society in Central Asia: Conflict and Transformation by Charles Buxton will be published by Kumarian Press, USA.

Health care reforms in Tajikistan

Bernard Mathivet, Health Policy Advisor, WHO Country Office in Tajikistan, International Advisor to the Health Policy Analysis Unit of the Ministry of Health of Tajikistan (hpau.tajikistan@gmail.com)

‘Every country can do something...’ to improve access to quality healthcare, especially for the most vulnerable groups of the population (2010 World Health Report, WHO). The extent to which Tajikistan, one of the poorest countries in the region, beset by poor and often declining health outcomes and scarce financial resources, is facing up to this challenge is seen in its National Health Strategy for 2010-2020.

Although health is stated to be a national priority, in Tajikistan public health expenditure accounted for 5 per cent of total government expenditure in 2008¹, just 1.4 per cent of GDP, compared to the CIS² average of 8.6 per cent and the European average of 15.3 per cent. This amounts to per capita public spending of 23 \$US (adjusted for prices), most of which goes on salaries in the under-utilized, over-sized, hospital sector inherited from the Soviet period. As a result, private health care is the main funding source for the Tajik system (72.3 per cent in 2008, compared to the CIS average of 51.7 per cent), mainly by means of informal out-of-pocket payments made at the point of delivery. This is widespread in both primary health care (PHC) and in the hospital sector, where approximately three-quarters of patients report

having paid staff informally³. This inevitably leaves the most vulnerable members of the population exposed.

The Tajik government (and development partners) has attempted health care reform in recent years, both in funding and service delivery. One reform, launched in 2007, is the Basic Benefit Package (BBP), currently applied in eight pilot districts and largely financed by donors. It provides for free basic PHC services for all, and free hospital services (including medicines) for certain vulnerable groups (e.g. war veterans, TB patients). There is a formal co-payment system for hospital care for other patients, based on the average cost of the category of intervention needed by the patient. The income from co-payments is intended to finance free care for vulnerable categories, bonuses for staff and funds for investment. In practice, however, the resources generated are insufficient, resulting in little additional investment, while doctors’ salaries remain reliant on informal payments. Patients feel that they are paying twice, and are increasingly dissatisfied with the BBP scheme. To generate more revenue, the Government has promoted fee paid schemes (especially for diagnostic services), resulting in even more private payment at the point of delivery.

BBP has failed to reallocate resources from hospitals to PHC and so the gate-keeping role of the PHC remains unfulfilled and public trust in PHC and family medicine remains weak. Reform of family medicine started in the late 1990s, to increase access to and the quality of PHC services, replacing the Soviet polyclinics with units comprising one

continues next page

¹ Marne S., Zver E., Prevolnik Rupel V. (Project Report Dushanbe 2010).

² Commonwealth of Independent States

³ Bobokhajaeva Z., Mathivet B., Miraliev S., Egamov F. (Project Report, Dushanbe 2009)

Country Profile 2: Tajikistan¹

Lying on the western slopes of the Pamirs in Central Asia, with the Ferghana valley to the north, Tajikistan, which regained independence in September 1991, covers an area of approximately 143,000 square kilometres.

Economy

Tajikistan is the poorest of the CIS countries and one of the poorest in the world in 112th place with GDP per capita of 2,065 US dollars (PPP). External revenue is highly dependent upon exports of cotton and aluminium, and on remittances from Tajik migrant workers abroad (as many as half of all working age males seek jobs abroad). This renders the economy highly vulnerable to external shocks; although Tajikistan managed modest growth during the recent crisis, around half of the population lives below the official poverty line.

Human development

Even with an improving record since 2000, Tajikistan lies 99th (out of 182) in the UN Human Development Index. Life expectancy stands at 67 years (112th). The education infrastructure has been in steep decline and functional literacy is thought to be somewhat lower than official estimates (97%) suggest. There are severe electricity shortages, particularly during the winter, when the majority receive little or no electricity for weeks at a time. The construction of the Roghun hydroelectric dam is seen as the long-term solution, but has been the source of increasing friction with Uzbekistan.

Key facts and figures

Official name: Republic of Tajikistan

Capital city: Dushanbe

Population (2009/1991): 6,952,225 / 5,443,302

GDP equivalent per head: (2010): \$2065

Democracy index²: 6.14 (2009)

Percentage living below poverty line: 53.5% (2007)

Health and welfare

The widespread poverty, low standards of living, and deteriorating infrastructure frame a population with exceptional health needs. This is reflected in the high rates of infant (51.8 per 1,000 live births) and maternal (64 per 100,000 live births) mortality and by the high prevalence of infectious diseases such as TB.

Although health is claimed to be a 'national priority', this is only very weakly reflected in government investment in health, which constitutes only 1.4% of GDP, compared to a CIS average of 8.6%. This resource is spent principally covering the costs of salaries and leaves little to improve the increasingly obsolete health infrastructure and equipment.

The main causes of death (around two-thirds) are non-communicable diseases (especially cardiovascular) driven largely by poor health behaviours relating to poor diet (obesity is a growing problem), the absence of physical activity and tobacco use (a new law comes in to force in 2011, banning smoking in public places).

Health facts and figures (2007–8, or latest)

	Taj.	CIS	EU
Crude death rate*	4.2	13.0	9.7
Deaths, circulatory disease**	561	757	246
TB incidence**	93.5	88.3	14.1
Cancer incidence**	31	271	476
Infant deaths*	14.1	12.7	4.5
Death rate diarrhoeal disease under 5 years**	59.6	12.9	0.4
Abortions*	54	492	238
Fertility Rate	3.5	1.7	1.5
Public % of health spending	26	59	77
* per 1,000 ** per 100,000			

1 Data comes from UN Health-for-all database and the WHO (<http://www.who.int/countries/en/>).

2 The (Freedom House) index ranges from 1–7, where higher numbers indicate less democracy.

family doctor and two nurses. Doctors and nurses are being retrained in pilot schemes, funded by donors. This leaves much of the Tajik population, especially in remote and mountainous regions, needing to rely on health units staffed by feldshers (solo nurse practitioners), whose training has not been upgraded for years.

The new National Health Strategy aims to increase the share of the state budget allocated to health over the next decade. Seven per cent of the state budget for 2011 has been allocated to health. By establishing regional funding pools, the focus is on sharing risk across the population and developing mechanisms for reallocation between different

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Small Grants Scheme 2009

Combating people trafficking in Ukraine

by Inna Tymchuk, Head of Votum and project organiser

This project, by Votum, Odessa, aimed to develop mechanisms of cooperation between governmental structures and NGOs in Odessa, educate police, other specialists and the public at large in trafficking issues, and create experience exchange groups for dealing with this complex issue.

The project focused on five districts in the Odessa region bordering on Moldova. Multidisciplinary commands were created there, comprising managers dealing with families and youth, children's services, social welfare, education, health protection, employment, plus two from the militia, thus eight persons from every district.

Before the project started, we signed an agreement with the Department of Youth and Family in Odessa, Odessa Regional Centre of Social Services, the Department of Children's Affairs for the Odessa region and the regional Criminal Police dealing with children. We organised and conducted training courses for staff of the planned structures in close collaboration with government agencies.

During the project we did encounter some difficulties. The main one was the weather conditions. Between November and February the Odessa region was constantly beset by storm warnings and heavy snow, and training sessions had to be rescheduled several times because it was not possible for participants to reach the venue.

But at the end of February and in early March, the project was working flat out, and the whole project was completed between October 2009 and March 2010.

The project showed very good results and successes:

- We created a mechanism for collaboration among governmental structures and NGOs in the Odessa region with the aim of guaranteeing help, support and protection for victims of trafficking.
- We motivated and trained specialists from the governmental structures and militia, and set up five multidisciplinary commands to ensure effective implementation of activities directed at warning against trafficking and helping and supporting victims.
- We provided relevant information for the members of multidisciplinary commands, and permanent contacts with districts for providing technical help.

- We published informative literature on people trafficking, and a list of NGO and governmental structures working on these questions in Ukraine.
- We raised popular awareness of people trafficking and understanding of how to remain safe abroad.



Contact

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In addition, at the request of the multidisciplinary teams, we held lectures and short training courses for high school students on combating trafficking. In total, 18 courses were organised, attended by more than 400 children and students. All members of the multidisciplinary teams received printed modules and standards for dealing with victims of trafficking, and were provided with information materials developed by our organisation and partner organisations for distribution among potential victims of trafficking. In order to carry out these preventive activities among young people we also trained school staff and distributed information materials, bookmarks and stickers with relevant information.

The project also had useful long-term effects. In five districts in Odessa, work with the victims of trafficking has been redirected. Trained employees of governmental institutions (on a professional basis) and NGOs (on a voluntary basis) will continue preventive training among potential victims of trafficking. Skills acquired during training sessions and the multidisciplinary teams which have been set up will help government agencies to identify and rehabilitate victims of trafficking. Thus, the general population's knowledge of issues such as legal residence abroad, scope for legal employment in Ukraine and safety abroad will increase, which in turn will reduce the level of involvement of potential victims of trafficking in labour and sexual exploitation.

One reason for the project's success was the fact that when we met course participants during training sessions in the framework of activities dedicated to the annual campaign '16 Days against Violence', we found a lot of them had been involved in courses held under the project. They recognised us, and told us that now they always take part in such activities and actively participate in the public life of their cities.

Family care for every child

by Hope and Homes for Children

In Central and Eastern Europe there are almost one million children growing up in institutions, despite extensive research demonstrating that this form of childcare is in fact harmful to children and halts their physical and emotional development. Hope and Homes for Children is committed to ending the institutionalisation of children and ensuring that all children have the opportunity to grow up in a family environment.



When we were founded in 1994 our initial aim was to build orphanages for children who were orphaned or abandoned as a result of the conflict in the Balkans. It soon became clear that providing a building for them to live in was not sufficient. The children wanted a home and to be part of a family. For the last decade our work has concentrated on de-institutionalisation.

De-institutionalisation is not only the process of closing an institution but of reforming childcare systems – establishing services which support family based care and those which prevent family breakdown and child abandonment in the first place. Services include mother and baby units and emergency reception centres, reintegration programmes, foster care and small family homes. Our model for closing institutions is recognised by UNICEF and the World Health Organisation as best practice and is influencing work in this field right across Central and Eastern Europe.

We currently have de-institutionalisation programmes in six Central and Eastern European countries: Ukraine, Belarus, Romania, Moldova and Transnistria, Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as two in Africa: Rwanda and Sudan.

When closing institutions we work in partnership with regional and national governments, local authorities and other NGOs. In many of the countries in which we work closing institutions is still a sensitive issue, even in countries where there is a national strategy on de-institutionalisation. Therefore it is vital that we work in collaboration to overcome people's fears and suspicions of the process, as well as build the skills and capacity of local childcare professionals. We also require a financial commitment towards the institution closure from the local or national authority as well as a commitment to running any services established in the long term, so that we can ensure that the new childcare system will be sustainable. Finance issues and budgetary constraints have traditionally been a barrier to closing institutions and have even been used as an argument against closures. However we have proven that in the long term it is cheaper to have a childcare system based on family rather than institutional care.

As no two institution closure projects are the same, the first step of de-institutionalisation is to identify what services are needed to replace the role of the institution and to prevent children being placed in similar establishments. Furthermore, we establish how existing financial resources can be used to support newly developed services which will replace the institution. To address these issues we assess the circumstances of the children and young people we are working with and design the services based on their individual needs. We then work with local authorities to secure agreement on a strategy to implement the changes required. These changes include developing sustainable community networks and services to encourage changes in attitude and approaches to childcare. When closing

Recent publications

institutions it is also vital that children living there are consulted at every stage of the closure as it is essential that they feel involved in the process to allay any fears they may



A Mother and Baby Unit – Ukraine

have. Through this we are able to ensure the needs and rights of children are safeguarded and that each child is found the best possible family-based placement.

Our approach is sustainable, far reaching and proven. We have directly closed 22 institutions and through our training programmes and technical assistance we have influenced the closure of a further 25. We have supported 7,000 children leaving institutions and prevented 14,000 from entering them by providing assistance to their families. We believe that every child deserves to grow up within the love of a family. Through reuniting families, or preventing their breakdown, we are confident that we can achieve this aim for many more children across Central and Eastern Europe.

Contact

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‘Youth and social change in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union’

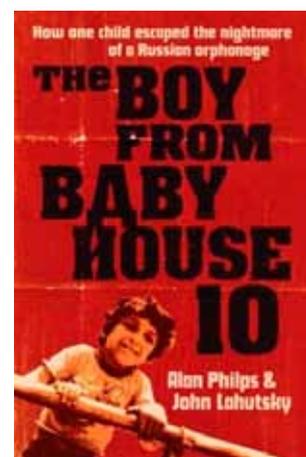
A special issue of the *Journal of Youth Studies*, ‘Youth and social change in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union’, edited by Charles Walker and Svetlana Stephenson, was published in October 2010 (Vol. 13 Issue 5). The issue explores the ways in which young people in post-socialist Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union negotiate a range of identities and transitions in their personal lives against a backdrop of thoroughgoing transformation in their societies.

In the introductory chapter, Charles Walker and Svetlana Stephenson analyse the key developments and divergences emerging across the region, which re-shape different aspects of young people’s lives. Several articles explore issues of social inequality and change, which point variously to individualisation and risk processes, as well as re-embedding of some traditional class and gender divisions. Michaela Pyšňáková and Steven Miles discuss young people’s experience of consumption in the Czech Republic. Rosie Read shows the changing ideologies underpinning youth volunteering in the Czech context, while Anne White analyses why young people try to migrate to Britain. Pamela Abbott, Claire Wallace, Marianna Mascauteanu and Roger Sapsford look at the experiences of young people in Moldova in a context of social and system disintegration. Two articles discuss youth and political participation. Antonina Tereshchenko highlights the potential of young Ukrainians

to engage in various forms of democratic participation. Donnacha Ó Beachain and Abel Polese explore the social change and political engagement witnessed in several former socialist countries, devoting special attention to youth (or student) movements in Georgia and Ukraine.

‘The Boy from Babyhouse 10’

This book by Alan Philps and John Lahutsky, which was reviewed in BEARR Newsletter No 55, has now come out in paperback in the UK. It has an introduction by Natalia Vodianova, the supermodel, who has a sister with cerebral palsy and was so moved by the book she is sponsoring a Russian translation, as well as campaigning more widely against the institutionalisation



of children with disabilities. She says: ‘When I read *The Boy from Babyhouse 10*, I was shocked and in great pain. It taught me how children with disabilities are treated in my country, and also what would have happened to my sister if she had been abandoned by my mother to an institution’. She continues, ‘We must all examine our attitudes to people with disabilities and help them adapt to society. But above all we must not be indifferent to the injustices they suffer.’

NBC will be showing a TV documentary based on the life of John Lahutsky, the subject and co-author of the book.

Health care reforms in Tajikistan (from page 11)

pools and health strata. If successful, then more efficient and increased budgetary funding, channelled to facilities, should focus the BBP on its primary function of providing free, well-defined and transparent care to a growing number of the population. The new financial incentives are intended to facilitate many currently contested reforms, including closure of much of the under-used and obsolete hospital capacity remaining from the Soviet era.

Conclusion – the role of foreign assistance?

Foreign assistance and expertise will be necessary. While the Tajik authorities drive reforms, development partners will provide the capacity to implement them. This will include better training for doctors and the creation of real managers of health facilities. Better coordination between all actors, including central local authorities, international agencies and donors, and local and international NGOs, will be essential.

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 work in the UK, Russia and Eurasia. The BEARR Trust cannot be held responsible for the views expressed by authors in their articles.

About The BEARR Trust

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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 is:

- to promote and support cooperation between the third sector in the United Kingdom and appropriate partners in Russia and Eurasia, especially in health and social welfare, with a view to strengthening civil society.

The Trust will do this 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
- lobbying with and on behalf of organisations that share our objectives.

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BEARR News

New Trustee

The BEARR Trust is delighted to welcome Janet Gunn as a new Trustee. She brings a wide range of experience to our efforts, as well as extensive contacts and enormous energy.



Janet studied Russian, French and Politics at Bradford University, and then joined the FCO as a research analyst on Soviet and East European affairs. Her work involved analysis and reporting on a wide range of issues including political and economic developments, human rights, foreign and security policy, and regional issues. She undertook postings to British embassies

in the USSR and Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, Tajikistan, and Ukraine. During postings in Bulgaria and Ukraine she was closely involved with UK-funded projects on issues such as trafficking in human beings, arms export controls, community policing in ethnic minority areas, and political party development. She also focused on the restart of efforts to resolve the 'frozen conflict' in Transnistria. After leaving the FCO, she worked from 2007–2010 in two EU missions concerned with post-conflict stabilisation and strengthening the rule of law, the first along the border between Ukraine and Moldova, and more recently in Kosovo. While in Kosovo she contributed to BEARR and kept up her Russian language skills by translating news items from Russian for the BEARR website

Trustee news

Dr Christopher Gerry has been successful in a joint application to the Open Society Foundations (Soros) for establishing a 'Regional Seminar for Excellence in Teaching' (ReSET). Chris will serve as Academic Director (jointly with Dr Yulia Vymyatnina from European University St Petersburg) in a three-year project, involving leading international scholars, which seeks to promote the development of health economics within universities across the CIS countries. The ReSET scheme aims to promote the systematic redevelopment and internationalisation of the undergraduate curriculum in support of building free and open societies (<http://www.soros.org/initiatives/hesp/focus/reset>).

More conference photos

all photos by Steve Essex

