

BEARR's 20th Anniversary

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EXHIBITION OF ART WORKS CREATED BY PERSONS WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS



Batumi State University

Opening
01.10.2010 13.00

This project was supported by the BEARR
Trust Small Grants Scheme

20th anniversary issue

The BEARR Trust 20th Anniversary Conference, 18 November 2011

'So much, so little: progress and prospects in health, welfare and the role of NGOs'

The programme:

- **Policy and practice in health and welfare: 20 years of change, and prospects for the future.** Dr Alastair McAuley, Reader, University of Essex
- **Twenty years of development in the third sector.** Elena Topoleva, Agency for Social Information, Moscow
- **Panel: Family matters**
 - **Families with children with HIV.** Marina Gutgarts, Master of Social Work and Social Policy, Ukraine
 - **Women and the family in Central Asia** Surayo Yuldasheva, former Christian Aid director, Dushanbe
- **Panel: Disability**
 - **Between service provision and advocacy: disability NGOs in Russia's regions.** Sergej Ljubownikow, Nottingham Trent University
 - **Art Therapy: rehabilitation for the disabled and their families.** Ana Chakhava, APRA Georgia, Tbilisi
- **Panel: The elderly**
 - **Care of the elderly in Russia: how useful is British experience?** Elizaveta Dzhirikova, Sostradanie (Compassion), Moscow
 - **Elder abuse in Ukraine.** Galina Poliakova, Turbota pro Litnih (Concern for the Elderly), Ukraine

BEARR is grateful to Ukraine International Airways, Age UK and the Great-Britain Russia Society for their support for this conference. Booking facilities will be available shortly on the BEARR website and will be announced in the BEARR Bulletin.

BEARR Trustee News

BEARR is delighted to welcome **Robert Brinkley CMG** as a new Trustee.

Robert is a diplomat who has spent over half his career dealing with the former Soviet Union, Russia and Ukraine. Starting in the Cold War in 1977, he worked in London on nuclear arms control and disarmament and at the negotiations in Geneva on a comprehensive test ban. After Russian language training he did commercial work in the British Embassy in Moscow from 1979 to 1982, at the end of Brezhnev's time as General Secretary. Back in London, he continued the Soviet theme with jobs in the Information, Arms Control & Disarmament and Soviet departments. He learned German and worked on politico-military affairs in the Bonn Embassy from 1988 to 1992, seeing German reunification and the end of the Cold War. Back in London, he worked



on Foreign Office resources and finance, before going back to Moscow as Political Counsellor from 1996 to 1999, during Yeltsin's second term as president. Robert was then appointed the first head of the joint FCO/Home Office unit managing the UK's worldwide visa operation. In 2002 he learned Ukrainian and went to Kiev, where he was Ambassador until 2006, witnessing the Orange Revolution. From 2006 to 2009 Robert was High Commissioner to Pakistan, based in Islamabad.

Since 2010 Robert has been on secondment to Associated British Foods in London. He is a trustee of the Karachi Education Initiative, which supports the establishment of a business school in Karachi.

Robert is married to Mary, who has been an energetic volunteer for BEARR for the last year.

At the same time, Trustees are sorry to report the resignation of **Dr Christopher Gerry** (UCL), a major contributor to

recent conferences and other BEARR activities, for personal and work-related reasons (he now spends much time in Russia). However, he will continue to support BEARR as a Friend and as a key contact with the academic community.

Nick Tesseyman (EBRD) has also had to resign because of other commitments, but remains a Friend of The BEARR Trust.

Trustees are pleased that **Carolyn Davis MBE** has kindly agreed to join BEARR as Honorary Book-keeper to strengthen our financial team.

Carolyn took early retirement from the British Council in October 2010, having worked there for over 30 years, mostly in financial management and related information systems. Her particular achievements were in the design and development of financial planning and reporting systems. In 2002 she was awarded an MBE for services to financial reporting at the British Council.

BEARR at 20: the ripples go on

by Susan Richards

The E in BEARR stands for 'emergency'. BEARR was born of an all-enveloping crisis. Twenty years on, the extent of it is hard to recollect, even for those of us who witnessed it at close quarters. For the internet has changed us. It seems incredible, the notion that Soviet censorship could ever successfully have sealed off Russia and its empire from the rest of the world. But it did. When Gorbachev relaxed censorship in the late 1980s a torrent of suppressed information was released. But the underpinning Soviet outlook remained.

That is why the crisis that followed the ending of communism in 1991 was so cataclysmic. The economic collapse which devastated people's lives was accompanied by nothing less than a collective nervous breakdown. Communist society had enjoyed socialised support mechanisms from cradle to grave. Suddenly, those were gone. The habit of self-help had been discouraged, and there was no voluntary sector to pick up the pieces.

Indeed, people found the very concept of a voluntary sector hard to understand, as BEARR trustee Megan Bick recalls. In the talks she was giving for the British Council in Moscow at the time, Megan used to tell her audience about the voluntary work her mother did in Gloucestershire. 'Society had been so atomised that the idea that people could get together and solve a problem was very strange,' she recalls.

BEARR was the British organisation that picked up on this problem and proceeded to support the emergence of a voluntary sector in Russia and its former republics.

But I am running ahead. The first emergency BEARR faced was more immediate. The Soviet Union's distribution systems broke down in its final years. Shops stood empty. Supplies to hospitals dried up. Rationing was introduced. Independently of one another, various remarkable Britons who felt a close connection with Russia's people started doing what they could to address this crisis. Jill Braithwaite, wife of Britain's ambassador, had started supporting various disabled groups, nuns and hospitals around Moscow. Karen Hewitt pioneered a relationship between the universities of Oxford and the closed city of Perm. The journalist Victor Zorza opened Russia's first hospice in St Petersburg. Theresa Tollemache solicited large donations from Western pharmaceutical companies.



Jill Braithwaite and Megan Bick at the BEARR office, 1991

Lady Braithwaite drew these initiatives together under the organisation she endearingly named BEARR (British Emergency Aid for Russia and the Republics). With her in Moscow and Theresa running BEARR's London office, lorryloads of medical supplies were soon setting off from Felixstowe. Something of the passionate, improvisatory spirit of those early days is captured in Megan's recollection of one such journey: 'We didn't even have a proper map. Terri brought us a Harrods hamper. One of the cab doors didn't lock. We were accompanied by police for part of the way – it was a dangerous time.' This is an understatement: Western aid was being hijacked in massive quantities.

They were carrying a consignment of artificial limbs, surgical sutures, radiation gowns and, of all things, Lemsip. 'That sounds stupid,' adds Megan. 'But Lemsip contains paracetamol – they were desperate for that, so it was actually very important!'

'We were bound for Hospital no 7 in Chelyabinsk, as Jill had heard that because of the nuclear accident people there were in a really bad way.' News of the massive chemical explosion of stored nuclear wastes in the Urals 30 years earlier had only just started leaking out. 'On our first night we could only afford one room, so the men took it while I slept in the cab, to protect our supplies. But on my last night in Russia, back in Moscow, it was very different – I stayed in the embassy, and a maid brought me breakfast in bed!'

That first phase of BEARR's activity did not last long. Quite apart from the danger of handling aid in Russia's piratical period, BEARR's activists were keen to address a deeper

emergency: at a time when state support was collapsing, the most vulnerable social groups needed support in setting up their own self-help groups.

The catalyst was a seminar which first brought Help the Aged staff to Moscow. This was followed by more opportunities for international exchanges, such as the first Women's Forum in Dubno in 1992, when BEARR introduced the Women's Institute to Russia. In a country where abortion had taken the place of contraception, Dr Fay Hutchinson of the Brook Advisory Service was one of those who spoke at this forum and went on to become a regular visitor. So successful was this venture that BEARR was soon bringing in expertise to advise self-help groups on areas ranging from cerebral palsy to diabetes and asthma.

BEARR's evolution into an enabling organisation could not entirely insulate it from the violence of that transitional period. When the organisation set up office in a Moscow basement in 1994, Megan recalls the pervasive smell coming from a cupboard. 'We thought it was rats – it turned out to be a human body. We'd become rather fond of the little chap in the office next door who sold preSoviet memorabilia. But someone said he'd shot the man and stuffed him in there.'

At the same time, the relationship between the universities of Perm and Oxford had also broadened out to embrace the voluntary sector. First, Perm's Association of Disabled People set up a link with Oxford. Then, supported by translators from the university, Oxfordshire's Council for Voluntary Action became involved. Before long, something remarkable happened: the link spread to local government, embracing even the police forces of the two regions. In 1994, Perm's regional government was twinned with Oxfordshire County Council. The following year saw the two cities formally twinned.

Ten years later, as they celebrated the 10th anniversary of Perm-Oxfordshire link, the senior regional officer from Perm acknowledged publicly that 'What Perm knows of democracy we have learned in Oxford and Oxfordshire.' As for Karen Hewitt, her tireless work has continued, and now extends to English departments in provincial universities right across Russia.

These initiatives were always run on a shoestring. For the most part, BEARR visitors, Britons going to Russia, or Russians coming to Britain, stayed with families. So the impact of these exchanges ran deep. 'For a lot of the

British it was the most extraordinary experience of their lives,' recalls Deborah Manley, who initiated the links between Perm and Oxfordshire's voluntary sector. 'It was certainly one of the most important things I ever did.' Talking to those early BEARR activists, I find this feeling echoed again and again. It was shared by the volunteers who rallied to Bookaid, the initiative my husband Roger Graef and I started, which delivered 1.4 million English language books donated by the British people to public libraries right across Russia's old empire.

Over the last ten years, the changed political climate has somewhat dampened the early enthusiasm of these bridge-building activities. One day, when the activities of Western NGOs are regarded with a less suspicious eye by Russia's government, a time may come when people will trace threads of continuity between Russia's voluntary sector today and the activities of those early pioneers on both sides. But for the time being it is enough that BEARR persists with its work of supporting cooperation between the third sectors in our country and Russia and the other new states in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

What is important, as BEARR's founding trustee Lady Dahrendorf puts it, is that we threw a pebble into the water. 'That's all you can do. The ripples spread and although we can never know exactly where they will lead, it is enough to know that they are there.'

Susan Richards, author of *Lost and Found in Russia* (I.B.Tauris) and *Epics of Everyday Life* (Viking/Penguin) and founding editor of *openDemocracy Russia*, was also a founding trustee of BEARR.



Megan Bick helps load the lorry before setting out for Moscow

The BEARR Trust 20th Anniversary Lecture

Dr Bobo Lo: 'Russia and the New World Disorder'

Report by Janet Gunn, BEARR Trustee

The 2011 BEARR Trust Annual Lecture, on 7 June 2011, was given by Dr Bobo Lo, a leading independent expert on Russian and Chinese foreign policy and author of a number of books and articles on Russian foreign policy and, in particular, on the relationships between Russia, the US and China.

The speaker was introduced by Sir Roderic Lyne, KBE CMG, former British Ambassador in Moscow and Patron of BEARR. Jonathan Charles, new Head of Communications at EBRD and formerly at the BBC, welcomed the guests. In his opening words, Sir Roderic observed how Russia's usually consistent foreign policy has altered in the wake of recent changes in the world, in particular the events in North Africa. Its abstention over the UN Security Council Resolution No 1973 on Libya was a major departure from Russia's normal behaviour, which was either to support or veto resolutions, and never to abstain. At this uncertain time in world events, Russia is finding that, apart from its nuclear arsenal, it has few levers of hard or soft power on which to draw to influence the course of events in the world.

Dr Lo addressed Russia's ability to meet the challenges of the new world disorder and its prospects as a centre of influence in the world. He flagged up some wishful thinking in Russian analytical circles about the situation today: for example that Europe is now a negligible force and the US much weakened, while power has shifted to the East. While this is true to some extent, Dr Lo thinks the decline of the West is by no means as great as many believe, and disputed the notion that there is such a thing as 'the East', because the Asian region is very diverse, including important countries such as Japan and Indonesia, as well as China. In the US, there is indeed greater appreciation of the limits of American power, and Europe, as a collective entity, has become a negligible actor in international politics. In addition, the global financial crisis has called into question Western economic and moral leadership and even the notion of a unitary West has become more tenuous.

Despite this, and the relative decline in the influence of the 'great powers', other groupings such as the G20 or the BRICs still wield little collective influence. No power has emerged – nor is likely to emerge anytime soon – to replace the US as global leader or even to share in its leadership responsibilities. China has neither the capacity nor the

inclination to build a Sinocentric world order. Today, the world has never been so interdependent, but regionalism is still stronger than globalism. Dr Lo thought there was unlikely to be a new multi-polar world order for at least two decades, and that tensions will increase, especially between the US and China. By 2030, a US-China bipolarity is likely to emerge. This will constitute a condominium of shared interests as well as rivalry.



Looking at where this leaves Russia, Dr Lo felt that Russia needs to establish a new identity and purpose in the world to ensure its continuing relevance and influence. Russia faces huge challenges: at home a growing brain drain, and the need for innovation and to reduce its dependence on energy; along its borders, how to recalibrate Russian influence in the post-Soviet space, with a less manipulative approach towards the 'frozen conflicts'; to develop a new quality of engagement with Asian countries and organisations, and a regional development strategy for the Russian Far East; and to reconfigure Russia's relations with the West, including cooperation with the US on security in Afghanistan and counter-proliferation in relation to Iran and North Korea.

Dr Lo is not convinced there has been a new strategic direction in Russian foreign policy over the past 12 to 18 months. Moscow continues to see the international system as one defined principally by the relations between the great powers, and is not inclined to accept a second rank status. There are few signs of significant change in Russia's approach to global governance. It is a minor player in the G20; it dislikes the concept of 'responsibility to protect' and is indifferent to larger global issues, such as climate change. Moscow believes strongly in the primacy of national sovereignty and prerogatives, and is ill-disposed towards democracy movements. However, it is more tactically flexible than before – which is why it has been relatively

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The BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2011: Outcome

Grants were awarded as follows, under each segment of the scheme:

A. Helping young people involved with the law or emerging from detention centres to reintegrate into society, in Russia or Kazakhstan.

- **'Rassvet'**, Arkhangelsk, with Municipal Centre for Protection of Minors' Rights, Arkhangelsk offender treatment network, and Arkhangelsk Juvenile Colony.
Project: Develop training for staff of Arkhangelsk Juvenile Colony and other closed institutions, social centres and NGOs dealing with juvenile offenders; and develop training for juvenile offenders to reduce re-offending.
- **Centre for Legal and Judicial Reform**, Moscow, with Friends' House.
Project: Following a national conference on the use of restorative justice/reconciliation with young offenders, contribution to four seminars to introduce best practice, based on the experience of Commissions for Minors and their Rights (CMRs) in Yaroslavl and Konkovo, to the CMRs of Moscow.

- **The Chuvashian NAN Foundation**, with Rights of the Child, Moscow and local partners in the Republic of Mari El and Uyanovsk and Saratov oblasts.
Project: Conference and four regional seminars on the social rehabilitation of minors, achieving wide outreach, and producing materials to achieve wider impact.
- **Community for Children**, with Moscow Youth Committee for Support to Former Inmates of Institutions, Department of Social Protection of the Population.
Project: Helping young people in Moscow and Ryazan Oblasts as they leave detention centres, in particular those from orphanages as they have no family support.

Segment A is funded by a grant from the Moscow office of the law firm Baker Botts.

Reports from last year's Small Grants Scheme-sponsored projects appear on the pages following. See also the back page for additional project photos.

B. Helping young people involved with the law or emerging from detention centres to reintegrate into society in the South Caucasus or other countries in Central Asia

- **The Civil Society Institute**, Erevan, with Armenian Ministry of Justice.
Project: Training in Abovyan Penitentiary Institution for Juveniles and Young Offenders on legal issues, conflict resolution and job-finding, and publication of and information brochure.
- **Reliable Future Youth NGO**, Baku, Azerbaijan, with NGO Alliance for Children's Rights. Ministry of Internal Affairs, Gyandja Police Department, Gyandja Mayor's Office and UNICEF.
Project: Assistance with the costs of the Diversion Centre in Baku, covering Baku and Sumgayit, and organisation of training and seminars to prepare for the opening of a similar centre in Gyandja. The centres provide legal aid to children in conflict with the law. The project also involves advocacy and lobbying to promote reform of the juvenile justice system.

Anniversary Lecture (from page 5)

accommodating over Libya, a secondary priority for Russian foreign policy. Russia seeks partnership with the West in order to modernise, but its success in this project depends overwhelmingly on internal factors; the West can help, but only at the margins. Russia's relations with Europe have not changed fundamentally. Longer-term, Russia seeks association and cooperation, not integration, with Europe. Moscow believes it will be increasingly able to dictate the terms of this interaction.

Summing up, Dr Lo observed that China's rise, and that of Asia more generally, represents a huge challenge to the West, but an even greater challenge to Russia. Russian foreign policy is in transition – but to what is uncertain. What is clear is that Russia's prospects depend more than ever on domestic outcomes. It either has to modernise or risk marginalisation.

BEARR is, as ever, most grateful to EBRD for hosting and supporting this lecture.

Small Grants Scheme 2010: reports

Street magazines: the route to reintegration

Anatoliy Arsenikhin, Head of 'Social Investments' and project organiser

There are more than 3000 homeless citizens in Togliatti, according to research. But there was no programme to help their reintegration into society either in Togliatti or in Samara region. That is why we focused our project on Togliatti, where the problem of homeless people is critical. The project aimed to make a start on solving this problem by helping with the creation of a city street magazine. Non-commercial organisations from other cities who already had experience of developing street magazines lent support to our efforts.

The idea of a street magazine springs from the fact that homeless people cannot find a permanent job if they do not have a residence permit. Once trained, homeless distributors buy the magazine from the distribution service at one price and sell it on the streets at a price 50% higher – the price is fixed. The money obtained in this way counts as fair earnings.

In the first stage of the project we had to gather together a group of professional or amateur journalists who would agree to work voluntarily. We were able to consult and draw on other organisations' useful experience of how to manage the establishment and production of street magazines.

We tried to catch the eyes of citizens with this magazine, and at the same time awaken their interest in the urgent problems of Togliatti.

We did strike some problems. For example, police officers patrolling the city streets and large shopping centres sometimes forbade the street distributors to sell the magazines. In each such case our support service

for homeless distributors resolved the conflict between the homeless person and the police officer, explaining the importance of street magazine and the social orientation of the project.

The project ended in December 2010, with the following results:

1. Three groups of seven homeless people were formed, trained and became distributors of the street magazine.
2. Three issues of the street magazine 'Open City' were produced, and 150 copies of each published.
3. A support service for homeless distributors was organised under the aegis of 'Social Investments'. This service maintains a relationship with magazine distributors and provides any necessary consultations.
4. An editorial group was formed, consisting of volunteers who are experts in the sphere of journalism and the non-profit sector, to consider the further development of the magazine.

We decided that the street magazine should be put together by a professional editorial team and its circulation should be increased to more than 1000 copies, because the number of distributors was higher than planned. This will increase the involvement and independent earnings of homeless people, increase the magazine's attractiveness to businesses, and expand the recognition and popularity of the magazine among readers.

Longer-term benefits will come from sharing our experience with partners and like-minded people, increasing the quality and quantity of publications and the number of distributors among people without residence permits, and informing citizens about the problems of homelessness in Togliatti.



University quiz, 'Your attitude to poverty'

Photo: Albina Mukhametzyanova

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Marginalised women: who are they, and how do we help them?

Anatoliy Arsenikhin, head of 'Open Alternative', Togliatti, and organiser of the project 'Reintegration of homeless women into society'

Among homeless people, the most vulnerable are homeless women. For women without a residence permit it is really difficult to get back into society, to change their situation, because most rehabilitation and social adaptation programmes and projects are focused on men.

The reasons why women and men become homeless are often different. Huge number of homeless women are victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence may consist not only of beatings and rape, but also limitations to women's rights, rough treatment, isolation and psychological stress. Women who are ex-prisoners also suffer discrimination.

Our project plan involved the exchange of experience between organisations working directly with marginalised groups of citizens. It was the first time in Togliatti that NGOs, the authorities and other interested people came together to discuss the most effective methods of working with marginalised groups. The exchange helped to outline a range of problems which participants encounter, and pinpoint successful practices that NGOs can use in their work. Eight women from the target group were interviewed and included in the cycle of training sessions, familiarisation and teaching visits, to help them understand about capacity building and the role of NGOs.

As a result of the work on capacity building, two initiative groups were formed among the target group. One of them submitted documents for the registration of an NGO which plans to render services to women and their children living in difficult circumstances.

We carried out a six-week awareness-raising campaign and a photo exhibition at the Festival of Social Cinema. About 100 young people between 15 and 30 were able to study the photos and information materials on the stands. Five higher education institutions were involved in the campaign. Students, teachers, and also employees of the Department for Social Support of the Population were made aware of the information materials generated by the campaign: the brochures 'Marginalised groups. Who are they?' and 'The situation of marginalised women in Russia'. We also published and distributed 100 copies of our brochure outlining the results of our experience.



Photo: Albina Mukhametzanova

A trainer explains the plight of victims of domestic violence.

Research after the awareness-raising campaign showed that 72% had not known who the marginalised groups were, and heard the terms 'marginal' and 'marginalised' for the first time; 49% had little sympathy for people from marginalised groups; and 41% considered it impossible for marginalised women to protect their rights.

After the project was over it became clear that the mobilisation of marginalised women through initiative groups and non-profit organisations provides a more effective way out of their difficult circumstances than passive help from outside. But before plunging marginalised women into the complexity of NGO activity, it is necessary to prepare them for work in this sector by carrying out training and seminars about different forms of and opportunities for self-help, to prepare women psychologically for the programme of mobilisation.

It's not easy, but it is so important to help every woman feel safe.

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Danger in schools: stop violence!

Irina Malovichko, Project coordinator, UNESCO Club – Dignity of the Child, Volgograd

School is a place where adolescents spend most of their time, where they not only acquire knowledge but also social skills and the ability to tell good from bad. It is a place where characters are formed, with effects on all their future lives. School brings together children from different walks of life and family backgrounds, and so contradictions and conflicts can arise. This is neither good nor bad in itself, as long as the conflicts can be resolved in a constructive way.

Conflicts often take the form of insults, slurs and spiteful behaviour. They stop children from understanding and getting on with each another and, if they persist, can end in blows, fights, group feuds, boycotts, bullying and so on. Bullying is one of the most dangerous phenomena.

Such things have happened in schools in Volgograd too. In a survey which asked the question 'Do you think your school is a safe place and there is no risk of violence and insults in it?', only 40% of students in the 5th to 8th years answered positively. The remaining 60% said they had experienced violence and bullying in some form or other at school. If these things are not tackled, they can become rife in schools. The effects of bullying are very damaging, especially to the victim. But the perpetrators, who at first feel like victors, eventually lose the respect of their peers, and if they are prosecuted they become criminals. Either way, the whole school suffers, as it becomes an unsafe place which neither students nor teaching staff like to be in.

To make schools safer, more welcoming places for children a charitable project called 'Danger in schools: stop violence!' was set up. Its aim was to reduce the level of aggression and violence among schoolchildren in Volgograd, introduce non-violent ways to calm down situations and resolve conflicts, and help children who have been victims of cruelty and bullying.

The project was set up by the Volgograd regional charitable organisation 'UNESCO Club – Dignity of the Child' jointly with the education committee of the Volgograd administration, with support from a German NGO 'Ost-West Trixter e.V.' and The BEARR Trust. Children from three schools in Volgograd took part.

School No 6, a high school (litsei), was the main centre of the project. The beneficiaries were 750 students, about 1000 parents and guardians, and more than 100 specialists. We looked at methods used to combat bullying in Volgograd,



Photo: Irina Malovichko

Teachers from all the schools with Konstanza Stoll developing an anti-bullying programme.

other places in Russia and abroad, and used them to create an information booklet; we conducted a survey among schoolchildren, experts and parents about the extent and seriousness of the problem; and we organised a number of training seminars for teachers, at one of which a German expert, Konstanza Stoll, spoke about what was being done in Germany in this sphere. The teachers jointly produced a plan for action and cooperation with children.

The children were taught ways of dealing with perpetrators and victims, and groups – called the Stop Violence Service, and the School Peace-making Service – were set up within the school. Training events and group workshops were held, along with mediation programmes for both perpetrators and victims. A 'Safe School' forum for schoolchildren was organised as well as a children's writing, painting, games and badge competition.

Children were shown the film 'The Scarecrow' about bullying at school and discussed it afterwards. A round table was organised to discuss the project's results, involving a wide range of participants from government, education and NGOs, and academic experts, at which the experience gained was shared.

The biggest challenge encountered in the project was changing teachers' tendency toward punitive reactions to instances of bullying, and their reluctance to trust children to deal with complex disputes themselves. In fact the creativity, sense of responsibility and sincerity of the children themselves was the main factor in the success of the project.

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Project completed? No, it's continuing!

Sergey Maleev, Director, Spring of Hope, Perm

The project 'Return' – for help to homeless people – was implemented from August 2010 to January 2011 in the city of Perm with the support of The BEARR Trust's Small Grants Scheme, financed by the Moscow office of Baker Botts.

The aim of the project was to reduce the number of homeless people in Perm, to prevent vagrancy and poverty, and to help people return to an active and full social life. Dealing with these problems relies, in our opinion, on a range of measures to help and support such people in various spheres of life: social, psychological, medical, and humanitarian – reinstating their civic and legal status and their professional and work capacity.

We chose the social accompaniment method, which means that, together with the homeless people, we establish a plan for dealing with their problems, and they take action themselves. We are convinced that finding effective and sustainable work and serious change for the better in the lives of long-term homeless people is only possible after they undertake a period of rehabilitation in a centre where they can overcome their addiction to drugs or alcohol, become fit for work and healthy. Other methods waste time and resources and are ineffective.

Our project demonstrated the importance of helping homeless women because, for a variety of reasons, being homeless is hardest of all for them. We were able to win the confidence and trust of homeless people thanks to the strong communication skills of the volunteers, their capacity to make real contact with homeless people, neither patronising nor rejecting them but having human empathy, and their ability to help with basic needs such as somewhere to sleep, food, and medical assistance. More than 1000 meetings were held, systematic help was given to 210 homeless people, and 20 were signed up for rehabilitation courses.

Since the grant was exhausted, the project has continued and has developed partnerships with other organisations helping the homeless, training volunteers, and exchanging lessons learned and experience gained.

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Photo: Dmitry Polynyshev

A volunteer works with clients, delivering meals and supplies.

Danger in schools, continued from page 9

Thanks to this project, for the first time in Volgograd, the attention of government and school management was drawn to the need to make schools safer and deal with the problem of bullying. Teachers' and students' attitudes to and methods of dealing with violence seemed to change as a result. The level of aggression and violence in the schools which took part in the project has declined, and children who have suffered bullying are given help. The work started in the project will continue after the grant has been used up, drawing on resources from within the education system.

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Sticking together to achieve change

Lali Bandzeladze, Project Manager, 'APRA Georgia', Tbilisi

Project: Georgian Network for Family Groups Dealing with Mental Health



'APRA Georgia' was established in April 2006 to bring together the families of people with mental health problems. Its aim is to support and educate families dealing with mental health, develop mutual support groups, influence social opinion and lobby for changes in the mental health system. APRA is the only such organisation in Georgia.

The idea of the project was to disseminate APRA's knowledge and experience and support the establishment of new family groups in Georgia. The project involved developing family support groups in Georgia's regions (Telavi, Batumi); informing families about their rights and about various strategies for coping with stress; publishing and distributing information bulletins; capacity-building for family groups through the training of their members; educating field specialists to change standard methods of dealing with mental health problems; collaborating with media representatives; holding round table discussions and meetings with different social groups; and arranging an art exhibition.

The exhibition of art by people with mental disabilities took place within the project framework. The range of artworks presented was really impressive and showed clearly the creative potential of people with mental disabilities and their rich inner world. All the local media were present and covered the events.

Other events within the project such as workshops, round table discussions and exhibitions gave us the opportunity once more to raise public awareness of mental health

issues, draw the attention of policy-makers to policy reforms and disseminate new knowledge among professionals and families. All these are important to achieve the final goal: the re-integration of people with mental disabilities into society.

As a result of our activities, representatives of the media and local communities are inspired to help transform fear and negativity into respect for human dignity and tolerance for those who are different. The exhibitions attracted public attention to people who can successfully fulfil their potential and be worthy contributors to the creation of socio-cultural values. The media contribution helped to draw the attention of policy-makers and community representatives to the problems of the mentally ill and their families, and motivate them to push for constructive changes to the situation.

Establishing and developing family groups and involving them in mental health care is quite complex in Georgia nowadays. The economic situation and social attitudes make progress difficult. But above all it is the lack of knowledge and experience of working in organisations that hinders the mentally ill and their families in Georgia. During our meetings we tried to show participants various ways of getting involved and developing organisations.

The greatest challenge we encountered during the project was participants' passivity and their family members' unwillingness to participate in self-help groups. Due to the stigma involved, family members feel shame, are irritable and are not very keen to communicate.



Photo: Lali Bandzeladze

Project report: Kitezh students

We expect that the knowledge and information gained will help people with mental health problems and their relatives to increase their sense of responsibility, ability to work in a team, ability to make independent choices about what they like and don't like, and ability to express and defend their own point of view in future discussions.

We hope that the initiative groups of family members will be able to continue its work and create a wider network in future. We found that when we brought together the efforts of several NGOs to force policy-makers and other key stakeholders to change their attitude towards the mental health care and community support we could get the desired results. But it is long process and needs constant efforts from our side.



Photo: Lali Bandzeladze

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Further support for students from Kitezh

Liza Hollingshead

Since 2006, through the BEARR Trust's Small Grants Scheme, Baker Botts has supported thirteen students from the Kitezh orphan village in their higher education. Without this support, Kitezh would have struggled to pay for them to go to universities in Moscow and institutes in Kaluga.

Two students, Valya Kanukhina and Vasily Burdin, benefited from this grant, which covered their whole five years at university in Moscow, their accommodation and fees and a small living allowance. This year, Valya graduated from the Russian State University for Humanities with excellent results. She is now living independently in Moscow, taking care of herself. She is working as an editor with Yandex as well as in the Russian-American department of the university. Her success is a testament to her upbringing in Kitezh. Vasily Burdin is entering his final year at Moscow Academy of Economics and Law and has greatly benefited from his work experience at Baker Botts. He is well adjusted to life in Moscow and this experience will stand him in good stead to realise his ambition to work in the field of contract law.



Valya



Vasily

In the past year, the grant also supported a further six students from Kitezh in their studies. Slava Klimov completed his first year at the Moscow Aviation Institute of Technology in Moscow studying a five-year course in Informatics and Computer Systems. Slava came to Kitezh when he was 14, barely literate. He formed a strong connection with his foster father, Maxim Anikeev, who is director of the Kitezh School,

and his intelligence and desire to learn became immediately apparent. He has a particular flair for computer work and taught himself programming, then developed a passion for making animated cartoons. In the five years he spent at Kitezh he caught up with his school work, passed his final exams and managed to get a place at university. The course is extremely demanding and he has to work very hard, but he passed his first year exams with good results. Lilya Logachova successfully completed her second year at the Institute for Social Work in Kaluga. She has three more years of study before she graduates.



Lilya

In the coming year, the grant will support Vasily to complete his final year of law, Slava in his second year at university, Lilya in her third year, and a new student, Sasha Sinko in his first year of Project Management and Business Studies at university in Moscow.

Kitezh foster parents and teachers are very proud of their graduates. According to the alarming national statistics, out of 30,000 orphans per year who graduate from orphanages, only 10% manage to live successfully in society; 40% are in prison, 40% are homeless drug and alcohol addicts, and 10% commit suicide before they are 25. Without Kitezh's caring environment, none of our young people would have gone further than a basic technical education, and may well have become drug or alcohol addicted, or ended up in prison or dead.

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NGO Focus: HealthProm

Putting disability first

Candice Sly



Thanks to the Kishti team, seven year old Benny has avoided the disabled institution route and is now in a mainstream children's home.

More than one billion people – or about 15 per cent of the world's population – live with a disability. Of these, 80 per cent live in low-income countries. Disability is often a consequence of being poor. It is surprising then that the Millennium Development Goals, specifically designed to address the needs of the world's poorest, still contain no reference to persons with disabilities.

HealthProm, in contrast, places disability at the centre of its work to offer support to families, improve child development and prevent the institutionalisation of babies and small children. HealthProm has taken innovative steps in recent years to develop community-based alternatives to institutional care for disabled children in Russia and Central Asia. Support extends beyond the child to offer hope and support to their families and relieve poverty.

HealthProm's current projects, in addition to its work in the field of maternal healthcare, include an Early Years Support Centre (the Kishti Centre) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, funded by the EU and DFID, and other longstanding work supporting young disabled children and their families in two centres in Kyrgyzstan – initially funded by the Big Lottery and now being replicated in other parts of the country thanks to funding by ICCO (an inter church organisation for development cooperation).

In Kyrgyzstan, HealthProm has supported more than 700 families with children with disabilities since the start of

its work in the country in 2008. This has been achieved by developing a successful model of community-based support for disabled children and their families with a focus on early childhood intervention.

In Tajikistan, HealthProm and partners are leading the way in Early Years care and prevention. The situation faced by people with disabilities is difficult, with government allowances totalling only \$17 a month. In 2006, HealthProm and partners started the 'Babies at Risk' project in Dushanbe and in 2008 opened the Kishti Centre. Kishti's goal is to aid child development, support parents, prevent institutional care and educate professionals in early intervention.

Since then, and guided by the same principles, Kishti has expanded to include the Autism Centre. Autism is still misunderstood and misdiagnosed in post-Soviet countries but Kishti is now leading the way in community-based programming.

Kishti works directly with some of the poorest and most marginalised groups in the capital. With support from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and in partnership with the Eurasia Foundation Central Asia, HealthProm has now started building on Kishti's achievements to provide parents with economic support through skills training and access to small grants. Working closely with mothers at the centre, HealthProm is designing activities that will utilise their skill sets, provide peer-to-peer training and ensure sustainability and viability.

Looking to the future, HealthProm hopes to continue to replicate its successful community-based model of care for children with disabilities and their families. In Kyrgyzstan, HealthProm has already expanded this model to cover a number of new regions in the past year. And in March 2011 HealthProm held a three-day conference in Bishkek, bringing together NGOs, governments, practitioners and parents from across the region to discuss intellectual disability. This was the first of its kind in Kyrgyzstan, with 150 delegates from 15 countries, and has since led to the establishment of a network of ten parent-led NGOs.

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Country Profile 3: Belarus¹

The Republic of Belarus, a landlocked country bordered by Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Latvia and Lithuania, declared independence in 1991. Following this, as a titular democracy, headed since 1994 by Aleksandr Lukashenko, Belarus has maintained closer political and economic ties to Russia than any of the former republics and sustained many more aspects of the pre-independence system.

Economic and social development

Choosing not to go down a path of rapid reform, Belarus avoided many of the social and economic fluctuations experienced elsewhere in the CIS. The more gradual economic 'transformation' has been part sustained by cheap energy supplies from Russia, which has helped contribute to lower levels of poverty, unemployment and inequality than elsewhere in the region as well as smaller fluctuations in mortality. Indeed, Belarus lies 61st in the UN Human Development Index (the highest CIS ranking). Life expectancy stands at 70 years (101st) and GDP per capita 8,713 in purchasing power parity dollars (84th).

Key facts and figures

Official name: Republic of Belarus

Capital city: Minsk

Population (2010/1991): 9,577,552/10,232,900

Ethnicity: 81% Belarus; 11% Russian.

Religion: 80% Eastern Orthodox

Currency: Belarus Ruble

GDP per head (2010/1995): \$5,075 / \$1,747

Democracy index (2011) : 6.5 (not free)

Health and welfare

Although avoiding the extreme fluctuations in health of some of the other CIS countries, Belarus has continued to experience a longer-term deterioration (life expectancy is less than it was in 1970) in health and demographic outcomes. Through falling birth rates and higher death rates, the population is both declining and ageing. The leading causes of death are diseases of the circulatory system; and external causes such as accidents, poisoning, homicide and suicide; and cancer. In coronary heart disease (ranked 4th), poisonings – many of which are alcohol related –

(2nd), suicide (7th) Belarus is a global 'leader'. Accordingly, unhealthy lifestyles are among the main drivers of these leading causes.

Top 10 causes of deaths (2010)

Coronary heart disease (4th)	56,103 (46%)
Stroke	20,736
Lung cancer	3,404
Poisonings (2nd)	3,331
Other injuries	2,950
Stomach cancer	2,784
Suicide (7th)	2,607
Liver disease	2,526
Colon-rectum cancer	2,413
Lung disease	2,404

Although the birth rate is low, and infant/maternal health good, reproductive health remains an important public health issue, with both high abortion rates and with around 7% of live births to women under 20 years. Elsewhere, HIV prevalence is below 0.5% but the transmission mechanism is increasingly through heterosexual activities rather than through injecting drugs. Meanwhile, tuberculosis, particularly drug resistant tuberculosis remains a major concern.

Health facts & figures (2007/10 – latest WHO)

	Bel.	Rus	UK
Life expectancy (male)	65.3	61.4	77.9
Life expectancy (fem)	76.9	73.1	82.1
Crude death rate*	13.8	16.1	9.3
Deaths, circulatory*	5.9	6.8	1.7
Deaths, heart disease*	4.0	3.5	0.8
TB incidence*	0.5	0.9	0.1
Cancer incidence*	4.1	3.3	4.9
Infant deaths*	5.2	8.1	4.7
External cause deaths*	2.4	2.6	0.4
Abortions*	329	950	256
Fertility Rate	1.26	1.42	1.91
* per 1,000			

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.

Book Preview

‘The Struggle for Civil Society in Central Asia: Crisis and Transformation’ by Charles Buxton

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, NGOs and civil society (CS) actors in Central Asia found themselves struggling to set up new organizations that would fight for democracy, sustainable development and social justice. It was a time of great hopes, disappointments and interrupted progress for a region largely neglected by the powerful global actors. *The Struggle for Civil Society in Central Asia*:

- describes the gradual establishment of the CS sector in Central Asia despite the economic and social crises that marked the first decade of independence in the region

- shows how the neo-liberal policies of international agencies failed to spur progress in the 1990s and how national government control gradually re-asserted itself after 2000
- covers the effects of 9/11 on CS, the impact of ‘coloured revolutions’ and the challenges that CS organisations face today.

Charles (Charlie) Buxton of INTRAC is well known to BEARR’s network as a regular attendee and speaker at our Annual Conferences. His book will be reviewed in a future Newsletter.

About The BEARR Trust

Patrons: The Duchess of Abercorn, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Elena Bashkirova Barenboim, Lady Fall, Myra Green OBE, Professor Geoffrey Hosking, HE Sir Roderic Lyne KBE CMG, Sir Jonathan Miller CBE, Anthony Oppenheimer, Rair Simonyan, 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 is:

- to promote and support cooperation between the third sector in the United Kingdom and appropriate partners in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, 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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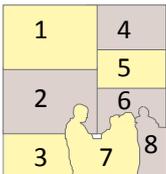
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More project photos

1, 2 and 3: – Togliatti Open Alternative distributing clothes; art therapy; photo exhibition at the Festival of Social Cinema;
 4 and 8 – Perm Spring of Hope, 'Return' project: volunteers and clients;

5 – Healthprom: Project manager Rachel Tainsh working with parents of disabled children in Tajikistan.
 6 – APRA – Georgian Network for Family Groups Dealing with Mental Health: Telavi exhibition;
 7 – Volgograd – Peace making. Mediator Aleksandr K (left) helps long-time enemies Katye M and Vladu F deal with their conflict relationship and make peace;

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.