

'Out of sight, out of mind: will pushing smoking out of public life reduce smoking in Russia?'

'The Myth of the Strong Leader in Russia':  
BEARR Trust Annual Lecture

'Will Russia introduce juvenile courts?'

BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2014: outcome

Project reports:

– The arts for people with disabilities in Armenia:

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– Girls' football in the Urals

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– 2014 Annual Conference, 14 November. 'Stormy Outlook ...'

- Sponsored hike

- New Information Officer

- Translators needed



Arts and crafts made by young people with disabilities as part of a project run by the NGO Pyunic in Armenia, supported by The BEARR Trust (see page 12)

# The BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2014: Outcome

The BEARR Trust received fewer applications for grants this year, especially for Section A, perhaps due to the narrower scope of the areas and regions to be covered. This was itself introduced to ensure there were not too many disappointed applicants. However, some of the applications received were of high quality. Grants were offered as follows:

**Section A:** For projects focused on the reintegration of vulnerable young people (16–25 years old) into society in the Urals Federal Region of Russia.

## BICE International

This project focuses on combating the effects of abuse and sexual violence against young people

This involves training for psychologists and social workers in the Chelyabinsk region on psycho-social assistance to young victims, strengthening professionals' capacities by disseminating best practice, and supporting some 800 victims of abuse.

## New Social Solutions and FC Rodina 66, with Magistral chain stores

The project is to support the Rodina 66 team of socially excluded girls in Novouralsk, to enable them to take part in the Russian football championships for socially excluded people, and to encourage other girls' teams. Football tournaments for these groups are an effective way of raising self-esteem and overcoming societal and self stigmatisation.

Section A is funded through a grant from the Moscow office of the law firm Baker Botts. It will also cover continuing support for students from Kitezh orphan community to assist them with their continuing education.

Reports on projects funded under the BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme can be found on pages 9 to 13.

**Section B:** For projects focused on the reintegration of vulnerable young people (16–25 years old) into society in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova.

## HIAS Kyiv, with HIAS International and UNHCR

HIAS aims to provide legal assistance and counselling to young and vulnerable migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons in Ukraine. The project involves training for government ministries, regional administrations, psychologists and NGOs.

This project is partly funded by the proceeds of Janet Gunn's sponsored hike in Ukraine (see page 14).

## Chernobyl Children's Project and Supporting Children Together, Gomel

The project aims to provide training in child care and development, and to support young people and their families in the Chernobyl-affected region of Belarus at risk of being institutionalised for bad behaviour. And to demonstrate to the Belarus authorities that there is a better way to deal with 'difficult' young people than the current custodial schools.

We send our congratulations and best wishes to all the grantees, and look forward to hearing about their experiences on completion of their projects. In addition to formal assessments, grantees will be asked to contribute a short report for publication in the BEARR Newsletter, so that everyone can learn from their projects.

## The BEARR Trust 2014 Annual Conference

### “Stormy outlook? Challenges facing health and welfare NGOs and their international links”

This all-day conference on 14 November 2014 will look at the constraints – political, legal, bureaucratic, financial – that face NGOs across our region, and consider how they are adapting to cope with, in some of our countries, rapidly changing circumstances.

Overviews will be provided by two keynote speakers:

- Dr Armine Ishkanian, Department of Social Policy, London School of Economics and Political Sciences
- Kate Levine, lawyer, EHRAC, and until recently Sigrid Rausing Foundation

On our panels we shall have NGO leaders from Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Central Asia, covering a wide range of health and welfare issues.

Our Ukrainian participant was until recently head of a youth NGO in Donetsk, and will be able to bring us the latest news of the situation for organisations in eastern Ukraine.

If you would like to attend the conference and are not yet on the BEARR mailing list, please send your contact details to [info@bearr.org](mailto:info@bearr.org), or look for announcements on the website, [www.bearr.org](http://www.bearr.org)

# Out of sight, out of mind: Will pushing smoking out of public life reduce smoking in Russia?

By June 2014 the landscape of smoking had changed dramatically in Russia. With smoking bans already in place in public buildings and on public transport, since June smokers also have to step outside restaurants and at the workplace.

Not only is smoking largely now confined to people's homes and in the street, it is also more difficult to get hold of the daily ration, with the sale of cigarettes being banned from the small retail kiosks that surround the metros, stations and other pedestrian areas. And when smokers do track cigarettes down, they find that increases in excise taxes are cutting ever deeper holes in their pockets. This year saw an increase in the excise tax of 45% compared to 2013, which is to be followed by another 20 and 25% in 2015 and 2016 respectively, with the ultimate goal of reaching the price level of the WHO European region. With these changes, smoking has become much more costly both in terms of money and time. In addition to smoking being pushed out of places of public life, it will also disappear completely from the media due to a full ban on any type of advertising, promotion, or sponsorship.

While tobacco control efforts are not new in Russia, the latest law, without doubt, constitutes the most far-reaching and restrictive attempt so far.

Since the mid-20th century, there have been few if any constraints on smoking in Russia. While the upheavals of the civil and world wars had led to a shortage of and high prices for tobacco products in the first half of the 20th century, the tobacco industry quickly recovered after the Second World War and annual production increased rapidly. Nevertheless, demand continued to exceed supply so that the Soviet Union additionally had to rely on imports, with about one third of yearly cigarette consumption coming from Bulgaria. The domestic industry produced more than 300 different brands for varying price segments, but overall cigarettes were cheap and highly affordable. In contrast to other consumer goods which were often more difficult to obtain, they were widely and easily available and even small kiosks would offer 15–25 brands. As in many countries, the social acceptability of smoking differed strongly by gender: its association with manliness made smoking a 'normal' behaviour for men. For women, by contrast,

by Diana Quirmbach  
School of Slavonic and East  
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smoking was seen as a sign of moral laxity and generally considered an 'unfeminine' behaviour. Surveys suggest that male smoking rates exceeded 50 per cent from the 1960s onwards, while the rate of smoking among women was below five per cent.

Towards the end of the 1960s consumption patterns moved away from the traditional *papirosy* (a thin paper tube with tobacco extended with a hollow cardboard mouthpiece) to filtered cigarettes, which were the international standard at the time.



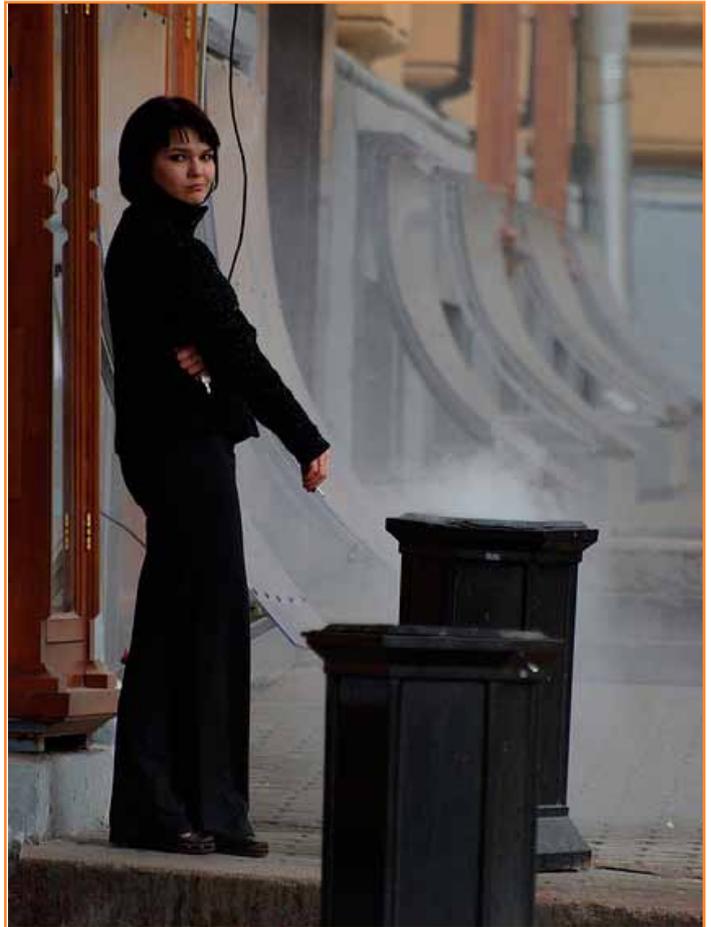
Apart from the filter, Eastern and Western cigarettes contained different types of tobacco. The Soviet Union and Eastern bloc used the Oriental leaf which, while being lower in nicotine, had a much stronger natural flavour compared with the tobacco used in American blends. Thus, although Western cigarettes were actually higher in tar and nicotine content, they were milder in taste compared to *papirosy*, making them attractive to women and younger people. At the beginning of the 1970s the Bulgarian state monopolist Bulgartabac started producing Bulgarian brands based on American tobacco blends, so that although the Soviet Union was formally a closed market for Western tobacco companies, Western-type cigarettes entered the Soviet market in the form of Bulgarian

## Smoking in Russia

cigarettes. The switch to filtered cigarettes, the availability of 'milder' blends, and smoking being increasingly seen as part of a 'modern lifestyle' contributed to the rise in female smoking towards the end of the 1970s.

With the growing economic problems in the Soviet Union from the 1970s onward, the tobacco industry did not remain unaffected and domestic production started declining. Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s the availability of cigarettes declined steadily and by the end of the 1980s at an increasing pace. By 1990 the economic crisis was so severe that the production of cigarettes had ground to a halt. In an attempt to calm down protests by angry smokers marching in the streets in major cities such as Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and other Soviet cities (the so-called 'tobacco rebellion'), President Mikhail Gorbachev sought help from Western tobacco companies. In August 1990 the American tobacco companies Philip Morris and R.J. Reynolds delivered 34 billion cigarettes in return for cash and barter goods, allowing the two companies to get a foothold in the world's third-largest tobacco market at a time when their domestic markets were shrinking. The desire to lead a Western lifestyle, against the backdrop of deteriorating quality of domestically produced cigarettes, fuelled the demand for imported cigarettes.

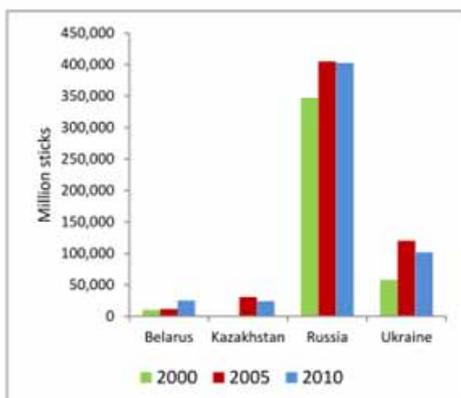
Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the abolition of the state monopoly on tobacco production in 1992, the major transnational tobacco companies invested heavily in Russia, either acquiring domestic producers or setting up their own production facilities to supply the market. Between 1992 and 2000, 8 per cent of foreign direct investment was accounted for by the tobacco industry. Today the Russian tobacco market is unique in that all four major transnational tobacco companies compete for market share, and together control about 90 per cent of the market. Fierce competition and an oversupply of cigarettes exerted downward pressure on prices and prompted companies to invest considerable amounts into the marketing of their products, particularly targeting women, whose smoking rates



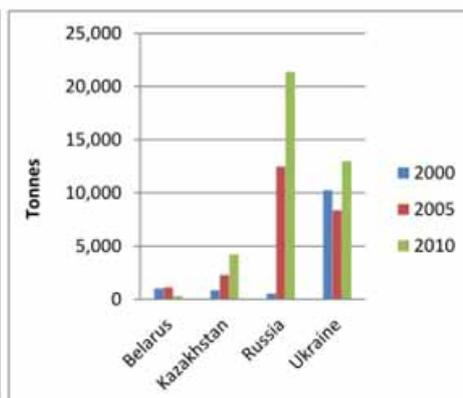
were still much lower than those for women in Western countries. The ubiquity of tobacco advertising, coupled with the psycho-social stresses of the transition period, promoted smoking as a readily available means of relaxation and an inexpensive status symbol. Sharp declines in real cigarette prices against the backdrop of rising incomes made cigarettes even more affordable in the early 2000s, contributing to further growth in consumption. Among men, overall prevalence grew above 60 per cent, with smoking rates in the younger age groups reaching 70 per cent. The habit also spread rapidly among young women, particularly in the large urban centres such as Moscow and St Petersburg, and in 2009 every fourth woman between the age of 25 and 44 smoked.

Given that male smoking has been on levels above 50 per cent for more than four decades, the health consequences have become very visible. In 2009, smoking-related deaths made up 29 per cent of premature deaths among men (i.e. deaths between ages 35 and 69), compared with only two per cent among women. This translates into a 12 year gap in median life expectancy

Cigarette production (million sticks)



Cigarette exports (Volume, tonnes)

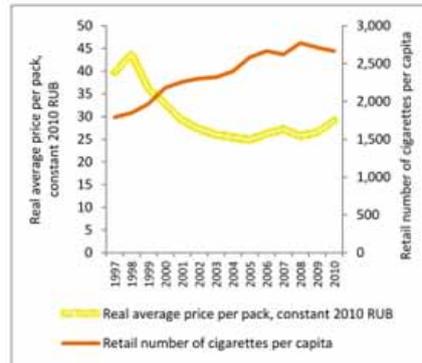


Source: WHO calculations based on Euromonitor International Ltd 2012 and UN Comtrade.

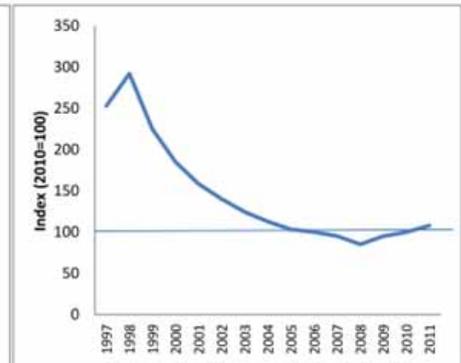
between men who never smoked, and men who smoked 20 cigarettes or more per day, which is the typical consumption profile. Reducing the number of smokers therefore offers a high potential to increase male life expectancy, which at 63 years was 14 years lower than the EU average in 2010. A study simulating the effects of the latest anti-smoking legislation calculated that, if fully implemented and enforced, the combined effect of all policy measures could bring down smoking rates to 20 and 10 per cent for men and women respectively in 2055, preventing 3.7 million premature deaths.

The success of the various control measures hinges on their full implementation and stringent enforcement, which is traditionally the weak spot of Russian legislation. Thus, while throughout the 20th century public health officials have tried to restrict smoking, their efforts were curtailed by the economic interests of the Soviet government as well as successful lobbying by the big tobacco companies in the post-Soviet period, so that Russia had become a more smoker-friendly environment over time. The poor track-record of tobacco control so far could make one feel pessimistic about the prospects of the latest attempt. However, a number of factors give reason to hope that the new law will be more successful than its predecessors. First, in 2008 Russia joined the WHO Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC), a legally binding treaty which obliges the Russian government to implement a wide range of tobacco control measures by 2015. It seems that this external commitment helped to contain industry lobbying and resulted in a law that in some areas is even more restrictive than the minimum FCTC requirement. Second, many stipulations of the law come in the form of bans rather than mere restrictions, for example, the bans on (1) advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, (2) sale in retail kiosks or (3) smoking in public places including restaurants and workplaces, thereby leaving less room for interpretation. Furthermore, public support for the law is relatively high, with surveys showing support at 60–80 per cent for the various measures. Finally, although a major aim of the law is to make life difficult for smokers, efforts to help people quit seem, on the face of it, to go beyond mere lip service, with a free of charge quit line to seek advice and book free consultations in one of the health centres operating throughout Russia, and internet and social media being used actively to disseminate information and engage people, for example in Club 31st May, which currently counts 66,289 members who want to quit smoking.

Cigarette price and per capita retail sale



Affordability index \*



Source: WHO calculations based on Euromonitor International Ltd 2012, IMF World Economic Outlook and World Bank data.

\* Affordability index: Average real cost of buying 100 packs of cigarettes divided by real per capita GDP

However, a potential threat to the supply-side restrictions of the law, particularly the tax measures, come through the customs union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan which is in force since 1 July 2011. Although the stated aim is to harmonise excise duties on tobacco and alcohol in order to avoid their import under grey schemes, as of today there is no agreement between the three countries with respect to unified or harmonised excise duties in the Customs Union.

While the optimistic 2055 scenario is still a distant target, trends are pointing in the right direction: since 2008, smoking rates among men of all age groups have been falling, with the strongest reductions in ages 25–44 and overall prevalence at 53 per cent in 2010. Trends in female smoking are diverse across regions, with prevalence rates in Moscow and St Petersburg going down, while still rising in the rest of the country, particularly in the Urals and Siberian regions.

Diana, LSE Fellow in Health Economics/Health Policy at The London School of Economics and Political Science, specialises in the economics of health behaviours in Russia. Her PhD thesis examines the influence of factors such as habit formation, price, income or education on cigarette consumption in Russia. She uses individual-level panel data from the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey and regional-level government statistics and is particularly interested in the potential effects of the currently implemented 'smoking tax' increases.

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# The BEARR Trust Annual Lecture 2014

## 'The Myth of the Strong Leader in Russia'

This year's lecture was given by Archie Brown, Emeritus Professor of Politics at Oxford University and Emeritus Fellow of St Antony's, at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development on 10 June 2014. The Trust is very grateful to EBRD for hosting the event. Professor Brown's book 'The Myth of the Strong Leader: Political Leadership in the Modern Age' was published in April.

There is a widespread tendency to admire a 'strong leader', and not only in Russia. But there are problems in equating successful leadership with an individual maximising power in his or her hands and dominating a political party, the cabinet and the policy process. The more decisions are taken by one individual leader, the less time that person has for thinking through the policy and weighing up the evidence. The more one leader is elevated above all others, the greater the loss of informed criticism and collective consideration within the government, as ministers stifle their objections to policy emanating from the top.

A head of government accustomed to prevailing comes to believe in his or her exceptional judgement and leadership qualities. Yet the very possession of institutional power means that this is not exercise of leadership in its purest form. That is to be found among individuals who do not have any patronage to dispense. Outstanding examples include Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and, in contemporary Britain, the 16-year-old Malala Yousafzai from the Swat valley of Pakistan.

ascendancy (from the late 1950s to his death in 1976) and the Soviet Union in the 1920s and after Stalin's death, as compared with the years of Stalin's dictatorship from the early 1930s to 1953, illustrate the point.

Russia has over the years been especially prone to rule by over-mighty leaders. Enormous power wielded by one ruler has not only been accepted but even admired. In public opinion surveys Peter the Great more often than not emerges as the ruler Russians venerate above all others, whereas the tsar who ended serfdom, Alexander II, fares poorly. When in 2000 a survey led by Yuri Levada asked Russians who were the most outstanding leaders of their country in the 20th century, the top five who emerged were different personalities in many ways, but the one thing they had in common was hostility to democracy. Stalin came top, followed by Lenin, Andropov, Brezhnev and Nicholas II in that order.

Mikhail Gorbachev came sixth although, whereas only 7 per cent of all respondents rated him as the most outstanding leader of the century, that rose to 14 per cent among citizens with higher education, the same percentage from that highly educated section of the population who chose Stalin as the greatest. Gorbachev in power neither did nor could dictate policy. For his first five years as party leader (until the creation of an executive presidency in March 1990) he could have been replaced at a moment's notice by the Politburo, followed by a vote in the Central Committee. Within the leadership, although he constantly broke new ground, he had to carry other members of the Politburo with him. He often succeeded but, as the transcripts of Politburo meetings show, he also had to compromise and sometimes make tactical retreats. The former head of Soviet space research, Roald Sagdeev, noted that even within groups outside the inner circle of the political leadership, Gorbachev attempted to persuade his interlocutors. This, said Sagdeev, was a break with tradition, for hitherto the bosses had 'never tried to change people's genuine opinions or beliefs but simply issued an instruction and demanded that it be followed'.

Gorbachev's close aide, Georgiy Shakhnazarov, has argued that it was precisely Gorbachev's deviation from the Russian notion of a strong leader which precipitated from 1989 a loss



Prof Brown, Jonathan Charles (EBRD), Robert Brinkley (BEARR Chairman)

In authoritarian systems, collective leadership is generally preferable to personal dictatorship. Oligarchy, in other words, is a lesser evil than autocracy. China both before and especially after the years of Mao Zedong's overwhelming personal

of his earlier popularity. He dates the decline in Gorbachev's authority to his chairing the new legislature, in effect acting as its speaker, from the spring of 1989. Millions of people saw on their television screens Gorbachev being criticised by unknown young deputies and taking this in his stride. They concluded, said Shakhnazarov, that nothing good lay in store for the country, since in Russia 'from time immemorial people have admired and even loved severe rulers'.

Yeltsin's initial popularity owed something to the fact that his commanding presence and impulsive political style fitted well with Russian notions of a strong leader. He was vastly more ruthless than was Gorbachev (who was averse to bloodshed), as he showed with the shelling of his own parliament in 1993 and in the prosecution of the war in Chechnya in 1994–96 and, again, in late 1999. He had to be talked out of cancelling the 1996 presidential election at a time when it looked unlikely that he could win. Yeltsin's rule was personalistic and he had no interest in democratic institution-building. His early popularity did not last and before the end of his presidency he had done more harm than good to the advance of democracy in Russia.

If the popularity of a country's leader were to be the main criterion of democracy, there would be few more democratic states today than Russia. At the beginning of June 2014 a Levada Centre survey showed that Putin's approval rating as president had reached a remarkable 83 per cent. Russia's response to the Ukrainian crisis (including the annexation of Crimea) has given a great boost to Putin's popularity. It is easier, however, to be popular if those who would point to the possible downside of your actions are given little or no access to the mass media and if political opposition is severely restricted. A regime of personalised power has been

re-established in post-Soviet Russia. It began under Yeltsin and has become more pronounced in recent years.

Russia today remains far freer than the pre-perestroika Soviet state, but in some respects less free and democratic than in the last three years of the Soviet Union when political pluralism existed de facto and de jure from March 1990. Western policy is not entirely blameless for Russia's trajectory over the post-Soviet period. We, too, have pinned our hopes on the 'strong leader' – 'ol' Boris' as President



Photo: Dermot Doorly, courtesy of EBRD

Clinton affectionately referred to Yeltsin in the 1990s, and the early Putin – rather than paying close attention to what was and was not happening with Russian institutions and to Russian perceptions of our actions. Meantime, many Russians – including some who enthusiastically embraced democratic ideals just a quarter of a century ago – have once again placed their faith in the false god of the strongman.

## Will Russia introduce juvenile courts?

**The idea of setting up juvenile courts is under active discussion today in the Russian Federation (RF).**

The first reason for this is the increase in juvenile delinquency. Experts estimate that juvenile delinquency is growing seven times faster than the age group as a whole, or by approximately 14–17% every five years. This actual figure is 3–4 times higher than that shown in official crime statistics.<sup>1</sup> According to Ministry of Internal Affairs data, over 300,000 crimes are committed by children under 14 in Russia every year.<sup>2</sup> 21,639 offences by minors were registered in the period January–May 2014. The total number of crimes was 423,869 over the same period.<sup>3</sup>

**Tatyana V. Ivleva**

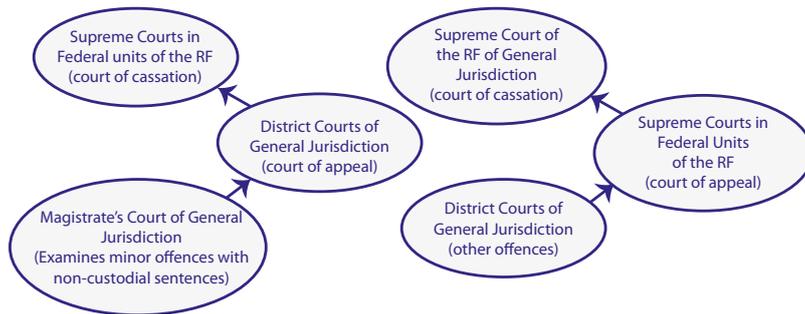
**Associate Professor of International Law and International Relations, Bashkir State University**

The second reason is Russia's attempts to reform the existing system of justice.

The need for reform of the Russian judicial system stems from the principles of international law (article 40 (3) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child): 'States Parties shall seek to promote the establishment of laws, procedures, authorities and institutions specifically applicable to children alleged as, accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law'.

## Juvenile courts in Russia

### The criminal court system in Russia



A draft law on the creation of juvenile courts went through parliamentary hearings in 2002 and 2010. Unfortunately, it was not passed. Thus, as of now there is no special law on juvenile courts in Russia. All criminal cases, including proceedings involving children, are considered by Courts of General Jurisdiction.

Court procedures, including in cases involving children, are governed by the Federal Constitutional Act 'The Judicial System of the Russian Federation' (1996), The Code of Criminal Procedure (Chapter 50), and the Resolution of the Plenum of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation №1. The last is in force just as a recommendation document.<sup>4</sup>

The minimum age of criminal responsibility in Russia is 14 years.

So, what happens in court in a case involving a child (by which I mean in a criminal court)?

First, I should note that the trial is closed to the public if the child is under 16 years old (article 241, Code of Criminal Procedure). But unlike in England, there is no court welfare officer or youth offending team present. The participation of a lawyer is mandatory, as in England. There are no special requirements regarding the child's lawyer. Lawyers all have the same professional specialisation. Participation by an educationalist, psychologist, parent and/or guardian is possible but not essential.

In general, a trial involving a child is little different from any other trial. The case is heard by a single judge (except in appeal and cassation trials). There are no special requirements regarding the judge: it can be either a man or a woman. Requirements for all judges in Russia are the same (article 3, Federal Law 'On the Status of Judges in the Russian Federation').

The Resolution of the Plenum of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation №1 (2011) envisages additional requirements regarding a judge hearing cases involving children: These should be the most experienced judges, and they should constantly improve their professional qualifications. Their training should be not only in law but also

on issues of pedagogy, sociology, adolescent psychology, criminology, victimology, and juvenile technologies. In this context I should reiterate that the Resolution applies only as a set of recommendations.

Despite the fact that the legislative base for the creation of juvenile courts does not exist, in some regions there are attempts to create such courts (Republic of Bashkortostan, Rostov region).

The first model of a juvenile court was established in 2006 in the Rostov region. General characteristics: a separate courtroom in the Court of General Jurisdiction (if possible on a separate floor) with a separate room for mediation. The judges are mostly female. Pre-trial consultations include the participation of a psychologist.

Despite the good intentions of the regions, these juvenile courts have no legal basis and are in conflict with the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

In short, there is some prospect of the establishment of a juvenile court system in Russia, but it needs more work on the process of reforming the judicial and legal system, and to take account of the experience of Western colleagues as well as the positive experience of pre-revolutionary Russia.<sup>5</sup>



Standard layout for a courtroom in Russia

### Notes

1. Kozlova N. 'The prison sentence is cancelled', *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* – 2010. – №5369. – p.1.
2. Kozlova N. 'Kids in the cage', *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* – 2012. – №5723.
3. Federal statistics. / [crimestat.ru/21](http://crimestat.ru/21)
4. Judicial precedent is not a source of law in Russia
5. The first juvenile court appeared in Russia in 1910 and operated until the October Revolution (1918).

# BEARR Small Grants Scheme: project reports

## Agate: where all are equal and all have equal opportunities

Theatre is a reflection of life. It was created to tell people the truth about life and the social situation. And a lot of performances and plays have been put on to present to the public very urgent and important issues, to make them ponder and reflect on them, and later find a reasonable solution. For centuries, theatrical art has proved that it can make everyone and everything equal, creating similar opportunities for all people without any discrimination.

The Agate Centre for Women with Special Needs NGO has had a definite goal since it was founded in 2007: to promote equal rights and opportunities for all, whether they have a disability or not. After winning the BEARR Trust small grant, Agate embarked on a new project. The goal of the project was to set up a theatre group with the participation of young people with disabilities and show social problems through body language, sign language and the art of theatre. So the centre started to cooperate with the Armenian Centre for Contemporary Experimental Art (NPAK) to create a Theatre Group for people with hearing and other special needs.

The director-specialist from the NPAK centre was invited to Gyumri to find talented young people with special needs. These youngsters were to perform in the Balloon Tale Show. This fun performance covered the following issues – the rights of people with disabilities, equal opportunities for everybody, digital inequality, social justice and others. The director of the play held special interviews and conducted investigations, and among the applicants selected seven young people with special needs to take part in the performance.

'At the beginning of the project we had planned to organise rehearsals three times a week, each two hours long, but as the project's theatre specialists had to come from Erevan, which is 120 km away, we had to have a six-hour rehearsal once a week', says the president of the Agate centre, Karine Grigoryan.

According to the project proposal, the performance was to be 'silent theatre', but during the rehearsals it was clear that the performers who weren't deaf faced difficulties performing in mime, and in the end the director decided to change the type of play and make it a 'spoken word' performance. After three months of hard work the Balloon Tale Show was ready to put on for the public. The first performance took place on 3 December 2013 in Gyumri Cinema Hall, on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. It was a great success and was greeted with an ovation and warm applause. Five



performances were put on in different regions and cities of Armenia: Erevan, Vanadzor, Spitak, Sevan.

More than 200 children and young people with disabilities took part in the project, and there were also more than 100 indirect beneficiaries: organisations dealing with disability issues, members of local self-governing bodies, representatives from regional authorities and municipalities, individuals with special needs, and other interested people. The main goal of the performance was to bring to the fore the different social problems that people with disabilities have, through art, to make everyone understand that all people should have equal rights and opportunities.

After each performance painting supplies were distributed to more than 150 children with disabilities and their peers, so that they could paint their impressions and express their ideas on the topics raised by the play. The performance gave both actors/actresses with disabilities and the audience the chance to talk about a single issue and to work together on a single topic. The best paintings were chosen and shown at the theatre's final performance, and were later posted on the Agate website and Facebook page.

This wonderful project resulted in the formation of a theatre group with trained and more or less experienced performers. Agate aims to enlarge and develop the group, and to put on other performances within the framework of other projects.

### Contact

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# Girls' football to the rescue!

Social life in Russia's small towns is sadly dominated nowadays by unemployment, poverty, aimlessness, alcohol and drug addiction, and violence towards vulnerable social groups. Young girls of 16–21 are one such group – and they are even more vulnerable than old people and most boys of the same age. All of this applies to the small town of Novouralsk, not far from Ekaterinburg in the Urals region covered by the The BEARR Trust's Small Grants Scheme 2014.

Football is possibly the best analogy for human life. Football, like life, is a team effort; there are always uphill struggles and the need to overcome them. Football will bring you pain and

happiness; equality before the rules of the game and respect for one's opponent; childhood recollections and adult triumphs. There will always be a place for football. It has proved to be an extremely effective means of integrating socially excluded groups back into society. Taking part in sport is not just a means of keeping fit and leading a healthier lifestyle. It is an opportunity to acquire the habit of working systematically and as part of a team. In the process one establishes new social contacts and a more positive outlook on life, resulting in the restoration of self-esteem. Sometimes a few minutes of a football game can produce a greater change in the participant than a few weeks of therapy with psychologists and other specialists...

New Social Solutions (NSS) has been running its programme 'Social rehabilitation through football' since 2003, when it became Russia's official representative at the Homeless World Cup ([www.homelessworldcup.org](http://www.homelessworldcup.org)). A national football tournament for socially excluded people has been an annual event since 2006. In 2007

NSS created a street football league of 20 teams of homeless people, refugees, alcohol and drug addicts, and representatives of other vulnerable groups, backed by an information campaign involving a brochure of 48 colour pages about football for socially excluded people published by NSS under The BEARR Trust's Small Grants Scheme 2007. The league had 24 teams by 2009 and has more than 30 today.

The ninth tournament took place in Berdsk (50 km from Novosibirsk) on 30 May – 1 June 2014 and brought together 17 football teams of socially excluded people from many corners of Russia, from Angarsk in the east to St Petersburg in the west. For the first time ever, a team of girls took part in this competition. The decision to invite girls into a historically male project (including in mixed-sex matches) was inspired by the book *Znowu w grze* (In the Game Again) by the Polish author Agnieszka Żądło-Jadczak, launched in Poznan (Poland) during the Homeless World Cup of 2013. The book tells the story of Poland's national team of socially excluded girls.

The amateur football team Rodina 66 (*rodina* means motherland, and 66 is the region's code) was created in 2009 in the small (85,000 people)



Vyacheslav Filippov



Tatyana Filatova

Mixed football for Rodina 66

town of Novouralsk in the Urals region to give groups of problem girls – incomplete families, domestic abuse, unemployment, poverty, drugs, criminal records – with the opportunity to adopt a healthy lifestyle and positive aims. It has proved a very good sports project. Teams are encouraged to take part in various local and national sports competitions and participants gain the potential to develop socially. It achieves long-term goals such as: combating the negative stereotype of socially excluded people which is common in society; exchanging ideas and experiences with other national and international organisations solving similar problems; creating new tools to reduce the problem of social exclusion; and, most importantly, influencing socially excluded people and motivating them to kick-start changes in their lives. Participation in national football tournaments for socially excluded people has become a very important step towards achieving all these goals.

For many years all the costs of Russia's national football tournament for socially excluded people – traditionally called Homeless Russia Open – have been shared among the organiser-in-chief New Social Solutions and its partners. (Life, like football, is a team effort). Almost all these partners are small and medium-sized businesses belonging to stabilised alcoholics and drug addicts who understand the value of life and happiness and their own social responsibility. This fact has allowed the state information agency ITAR-TASS to announce officially that the financial basis for socially excluded football in Russia is money from alcoholics and drug addicts. And this is true. It is also true that nothing is guaranteed. Despite all the experience and skills of the organisers of Homeless Russia Open, raising funds remains the most important problem to be solved each year.

Luckily the Urals region was covered by The BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2014. A grant made under this scheme (supported by Baker Botts in Moscow) covered 50% of the travel costs and 100% of the accommodation and meals costs for the football team Rodina 66, and let girls from at-risk social groups in the Urals region spend three days basking in the warm atmosphere of Homeless Russia Open's friendship and fun, playing football, walking along the river Berd, attending Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings if necessary, sharing experiences and hopes, inspiring each other and themselves. At the same time the Rodina 66 coach and manager experienced a 'deep dive' into the 12-year-old NSS project 'Social rehabilitation through football'.

And that was just the beginning. Because immediately after coming back from Homeless Russia Open, Rodina 66 created its own statutes and applied for registration as an NGO in order to be an official partner in the 'Social rehabilitation through football' project. Coach Alexey Voronov was invited to take part as a player in the European Homeless Football Championship, giving him his first experience of international social football and enabling

him to begin to prepare his team for the Homeless World Cup 2015 in Amsterdam. (New Social Solutions has already asked Homeless World Cup about the possibility of a Russian girls' team participating in the Amsterdam tournament.) Now Rodina 66 is thinking of hosting Homeless Russia Open next year, and local TV is making a documentary about the project.

'The pain you feel today is the power you will feel tomorrow', one of the Rodina 66 players posted on her social network account after the Siberian tournament. Is there a better description anywhere of the purpose and outcome of socially excluded football?

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# Our Future is in our Hands

Pyunic, the Armenian Association for the Disabled, is an NGO which was founded just after the disastrous earthquake in Armenia in 1998. Its mission is to promote the integration of people with disabilities into society through the physical, social and psychological rehabilitation of the disabled, helping them create income-generating businesses, assisting them with their health and educational issues, the protection of disability rights, and the development of national sports for the disabled.

The Association reaches its goals through different projects and services. It implements many educational, recreational, public education and vocational training projects for people with disabilities – such as Art & Crafts Training, Early Intervention Project, marathons from the Opera House up to the Residence of the Apostolicos of all Armenians, Ascent to the Mountain Aragats etc. Pyunic also develops sports for people with disabilities, as various projects run by the Association have shown this to be the best form of recreation for them. Its athletes have participated in World and European Championships, and summer and winter Paralympic Games. The beneficiaries of the Association's programmes include children and young adults with different disabilities: missing limbs, cerebral palsy, autism, and hearing, visual and mental impairment.

From August to December 1913, with the support of the BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme, Pyunic implemented the project 'We are Different but we are Able'.

The aim of the project was to involve young people with disabilities in the cultural life of Armenia and Georgia, assisting in their integration into society. The specific objectives were to establish cooperation with regional NGOs that deal with disability issues; to share experience, learning and best practice; to introduce works of art to people with disabilities and help them to study art; and to organise professional training, and raise the competitiveness of disabled young people in the job market

The project was implemented in cooperation with the Association for People in Need of Special Care (APNSC), a Georgian NGO established in 1990. The mission of this organisation is to apply social therapy to help mentally impaired adults to pursue their individual physical, mental and spiritual development, to foster their social integration, to help them lead a worthwhile life, and to get society to acknowledge their contribution to social life. The organisation works to establish labour-residential communities, and organises personal development training, public relations and lobbying. It puts on artistic and cultural activities, develops social relationships of equal rights, and fosters local and international collaboration.



Within the framework of this project, Pyunic and ANPSC organised art & crafts training for young people with disabilities. Cooperation was established between regional NGOs and disabled individuals, and these continue to share experiences, enlarging the circle of cooperation. More than 40 individuals with disabilities in each organisation participated in the art and crafts lessons. They gained skills in embroidery, wood carving, pottery, candle making and making handmade cards. In Georgia they learned to make gift bags, candle holders and vases using recycled paper, and our Georgian partners are ready to share their experience with us.

Art and craft works were prepared and collected during the project in both organisations, and two outreach exhibitions were mounted in November and December, one in Georgia and the other in Armenia. The exhibition in Georgia was held in Hayartun, where the NGO representatives and guests witnessed the great potential that both organisations were able to demonstrate thanks to the project. In Armenia the exhibition took place in the splendid foyer of the Erevan City Council building, where the deputy mayor, many prominent guests, NGO representatives and beneficiaries, and representatives of the mass media learned about the project and enjoyed the exhibition. The deputy mayor presented those participating in the exhibition from Armenia and Georgia with certificates and gifts.



Pyunic project brochure

The cover photo of this Newsletter shows another scene from the exhibition in Erevan.

The exhibitions were an exciting opportunity for young people with disabilities to demonstrate their abilities and to show the public at large that they are able and are full and productive members of their communities. A brochure about the project and its activities was published and disseminated.

On behalf of Pyunic, the Armenian Association for the Disabled, and APNSC, and their beneficiaries, we would like to express our gratitude to the BEARR Trust for supporting our project and giving young people with disabilities an opportunity to showcase their excellence.

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# Disabled = Differently-Abled: Theatre for Changes

**Early childhood interventions and informal education can play a vital role in promoting children's development and in preparing them for adult life as active participants in their local community. They help raise children's awareness of their rights and overcome prejudice and discrimination. Through art forms and creative methods such as participatory theatre, children acquire the skills necessary to reach their full potential, both as individuals and as citizens.**

From July to September 2013, in collaboration with The BEARR Trust and several child-oriented institutions located in distant regional communities in Armenia, the NGO Theatre for Changes successfully implemented an interactive theatre project, 'Disabled = Differently-Abled', aimed at using creative theatre techniques to support efforts in Armenia to reduce prejudice against children with disabilities. As a result of this initiative, over 2,000 schoolchildren aged 7–13 from 16 remote parts of Armenia were stimulated to modify their attitudes towards their peers with disabilities, as well as gain a better knowledge of children's rights and their own responsibilities.

Theatre for Changes put on 16 performances of two colourful plays, performed by young actors from local theatres and



specially written by a professional scriptwriter in collaboration with an experienced child psychologist. Usually, the performances last 40–45 minutes. Discussions, interviews and brainstorming sessions with disabled children are always an integral part of the production process. In most cases, the plays are interactive between actors and audience. Sometimes there is interaction between disabled and non-disabled children as well. As the story unfolds, the audience members (disabled children and their families and non-disabled families) help and/or encourage the disabled characters in the play to solve different issues (say, to rescue a situation) in a new or different way. This shows that 'disabled' doesn't mean unable.

## Sponsored hike for BEARR

It means just differently-abled. Specially designed posters and flyers with the educational and motivational messages of the plays were handed out to the audience.

According to the final evaluation by the child psychologist involved in the project from the Child Development Foundation (Armenia), the project played a significant role in promoting change in the perception of children with disabilities: from 'objects' in need of charity and medical treatment to subjects with rights, fully entitled to claim those rights and actively participate in society.

The only obstacle met by the project was the high degree of stigma associated with disability in certain communities. In some places, families were reluctant to bring their child to public events. This factor perpetuates the negative perception of a child with a disability as a 'problem' and reinforces mechanisms of discrimination. Nevertheless, most of the parents were eventually persuaded by the directors of the host institutions to bring their children, to enable them to experience and benefit from the diversity projected by the plays.

Experience in different countries shows that many children with disabilities who would previously have been automatically referred to special schools can be satisfactorily educated in mainstream schools, given support tailored to their individual needs. Success however depends on the expansion of early intervention programmes based on 'edutainment', which give

children a flying start. Unlike traditional approaches, arts and creative methods reach the heart and mind of a child in a way that listening to a speech rarely does. The emotions children feel while participating in an interactive show strike them in a unique way, allowing educational messages and dramatic situations to make a long-lasting impact.

The project also gave Theatre for Changes a great chance to promote a mutual interest in non-formal education with its regional partners and explore new avenues to increase children's participation in decision-making processes. Many of the host institutions expressed willingness to re-stage the same interactive plays with their students, in order to reach more children in their area.

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## Sponsored hike for BEARR

BEARR Trustee Janet Gunn spent a month in Kyiv in the spring supporting an OSCE project, mostly from behind a desk, so decided to spend her last Sunday doing something more active which would also support a good cause. She decided to go on a 10 km sponsored hike in and around Kyiv, exploring various sites of historical interest with friend and expert Sasha Kovalchuk, the proceeds to go to HIAS Kyiv, a BEARR Small Grants Scheme sponsored project supporting vulnerable young people in Ukraine.

As a gesture of solidarity and support, Arkady Tyurin, from the St Petersburg NGO for homeless people Put Domoi (The Way Home), did a 10 km run in St. Petersburg at exactly the same time on 13 April.

Despite the hastily-made arrangements, the hike raised more than £700.

A detailed account of the hike can be found at <http://www.bearr.org/sponsored-walk-in-kyiv-for-bearr-grants-in-ukraine-13-april/>

We are most grateful to all those who gave generously to sponsor Janet's hike, and to Janet for both her imagination and her energy.



Arkady Tyurin on his St Petersburg run, and Janet Gunn on her hike in Kyiv

# New Information Officer for BEARR

The Trustees are sorry to report that Renate Wright, Information Officer for 9 years and a volunteer before that, has had to resign because of family commitments. We shall miss her, and wish her all the best for the future.

Our new Information Officer, from September 2014, is Anna Lukanina-Morgan. Anna has a Master's degree in Law from Kyiv's Taras Shevchenko University. She has worked for a USAID-funded Organizational Development Support Programme covering Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus; the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour; and as Legal

Assistant to the Executive Director of the Commercial Law Center, a USAID-funded NGO focusing on legal reform in Ukraine.

Since joining her husband in the UK earlier this year Anna has been working part-time with Dash Arts, including on a programme involving the arts in Eastern Europe. She is also volunteering for the Ukrainian community project 'Ukrainian events in London' which aims to popularise Ukrainian culture in the UK.

The Trustees are delighted to welcome Anna to the BEARR team, and look forward to working with her.



## Translators needed!

The BEARR Trust has a continuing need for volunteer Russian-English translators to translate news items supplied weekly by ASI in Moscow. We have been very lucky with our translators, who have generously given their time and expertise to BEARR. But they have a habit of going off into full-time jobs or gaining paid work which must of course take precedence, and we wish them well in their new endeavours.

The work provides a useful opportunity for anyone who wants to keep up her/his Russian while helping a good and interesting cause. The texts are mostly about health, welfare and NGO issues, and normally not technical. Each batch is on average two pages of A4. Anyone who could contemplate doing a batch say once a month should please write to [info@bearr.org](mailto:info@bearr.org). All translators will be asked to do a try-out before joining the regular roster of translators.

## Become a Friend of BEARR

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

Please subscribe and pay through our website at [www.bearr.org](http://www.bearr.org), or fill in the form below and send it to The BEARR Trust office. Ideally, please pay by Banker's/Standing Order or direct transfer – this eases our administrative burden.

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Armenia, Theatre for Changes project, "Disabled = Differently-Abled (see page 13)

## About The BEARR Trust

Patrons: The Duchess of Abercorn, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Elena Bashkirova Barenboim, Lady Ellen Dahrendorf, Myra Green OBE, Professor Geoffrey Hosking, Sir Roderic Lyne KBE CMG, Sir Jonathan Miller CBE, 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 now is to help children and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in Russia, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the South Caucasus. We believe the best way to do this is to help small NGOs working in health and social welfare to build knowledge, know-how, skills and contacts including with those doing similar work in the UK.

We pursue our aims by:

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

Trustees: Robert Brinkley (Chairman), Megan Bick, Janet Gunn, Marcia Levy, Ann Lewis, Nicola Ramsden, Michael Rasell, Robert Scallon, Mike Simmonds

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Newsletter: Editor: Ann Lewis; layout: Leila Carlyle

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