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promoting personal  
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About BEARR**



Above: Entry in a children's painting competition on the theme of disability organised by Konotop, an NGO in Ukraine (see Newsletter No 55)

# The BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2013

The BEARR Trust is pleased to announce its Small Grants Scheme for 2013 and invites applications from NGOs and other organisations. Full details are given below. **The deadline is 4 February 2013.**

**Section A:** For projects to combat drug dependency among young people in the Volga Federal District of the Russian Federation.

**Section B:** For projects in the field of the arts and disability in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The Trust may wish to support a number of initiatives through the scheme. Proposals for grants of up to £5000 are invited. Awards will be made on a matching basis, and not exceed 50% of the overall cost of a project. Applicants should present costings in pounds sterling, but grants may be paid in sterling, dollars or euros as best suits the recipient, who will bear the cost of currency conversion. Projects should normally be completed within six months of receipt of the funds. The BEARR Trust reserves the right to independent evaluation of any project funded.

## What are the aims of the Scheme?

The 2013 Small Grants Scheme aims to support and encourage NGOs to:

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

## Who can apply for the grants?

The scheme is open to applications from NGOs and other organisations active in the areas covered by the Small Grants Scheme 2013. (Section A: Volga Federal District of the Russian

Federation, Section B: Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan).

## How to apply

There is no standard application form. Please send the information outlined below in English (with a Russian translation if you wish) by email to [info@bearr.org](mailto:info@bearr.org) before **4 February 2013**.

The application should be no more than two pages of A4. It should include:

- The name of the NGO applying for a grant, its address, phone number and email address.
- The name and position of the person dealing with the grant application.
- A brief description of the organisation, its mission and objectives.
- Brief details of any partner organisation, its mission and objectives.
- Objectives, short and long term, of the project proposed, and a brief description of the activities to be supported.
- The hoped-for outcomes and the criteria by which you will judge whether or not they have been met.
- Why the NGO needs a grant from The BEARR Trust and what it will be used for.
- How this work fits in with your organisation's current activities and how it meets BEARR's objectives.
- The proposed total project budget, showing separately the amount requested from BEARR and the contributions to be made by the applicant NGO and other partners.
- Indicate on your budget: the number of people employed on the project, how many are employees of the NGO, whether any are volunteers, the number of days

the project will last, daily rates of pay. The budget must relate to the project activities described above and include salaries set at local levels.

Applications of more than two pages will not be considered.

## Criteria for selecting successful applications

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

The BEARR Trust does not give grants for equipment.

## What happens after an application is received by The BEARR Trust?

The Trust will acknowledge applications as they are received. A shortlist will be drawn up for further detailed consideration. The Trust will contact applicants for any further information or clarification it needs. Applicants who are not shortlisted will be informed by the beginning of April 2013. Trustees will review shortlisted proposals at their meeting in early April 2013. The Trust will announce which proposals have been successful soon thereafter.

All applicants will receive by email: an acknowledgment of the receipt of the application, followed by notification of whether or not their application has been shortlisted. Those on the shortlist will be notified by email whether they have been awarded a grant or not.

[Section A of The BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2013 is funded by a grant from the Moscow office of the law firm Baker Botts.](#)

# BEARR Trust Annual Conference 2012

## Volunteering in the BEARR region: promoting personal and community development?

report by Joanna Hoare, BEARR volunteer

### Session 1: the role of volunteers in the UK and Russia

The conference opened with presentations comparing volunteering in the UK and Russia. **Prof Irene Hardill** of Northumbria University set out the history of the voluntary sector in the UK, noting that organised volunteering began with the development of the philanthropy and mutual aid movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today, volunteering is understood as an activity that is freely chosen, involves no remuneration, and provides help to those who are not immediate family and friends. It encompasses formal volunteering, as well as providing assistance on an ad hoc basis. Volunteering today takes place in a range of institutions, 34% outside the voluntary sector; 72% of organisations could not operate without volunteers. Three quarters of people in the UK take part in some form of volunteering each year.



Irene Hardill

The voluntary sector itself is large and diverse. It grew considerably under New Labour, with funding coming from local and national government for contracts to deliver services, as well as to provide re-training and work experience for the unemployed. Since 2010, voluntary organisations have been called upon to take an even greater role in meeting needs where services have been cut; at the same time, though, they have seen funding fall dramatically.

Volunteers' motivation is complex, and can change over time. Volunteers spoke of personal rewards that they had not anticipated, such as gaining new skills and knowledge, increased confidence and new friends. Overall, volunteering helps to generate social capital, a sense of purpose, but also personal and community well-being.

**Galina Bodrenkova**, Head of the Russian Volunteer Development Centre in Moscow, explained that volunteering

in Russia is relatively recent, only emerging in the 1990s. At first there was great enthusiasm but zero knowledge, so learning from international experience was important. There are no exact figures on the number of volunteers in Russia, but research conducted in 2008 found that only 3.2% of Russians were formally volunteering (through organisations), although a further 30% said they took part in informal volunteer activities, such as helping neighbours. 70% were women; men who volunteered were mostly involved in sports and recreation. Most volunteers had a university education.



Galina Bodrenkova

Ms Bodrenkova talked about some interesting trends in volunteer age and motivation, evidenced in her own organisation's surveys in 1994 and 2007. In 1994, most volunteers were over 50 and acted out of a desire to help others. By 2007, many volunteers were younger, and volunteered to develop new skills and have the chance to develop their initiative. There is also more co-operation between the state and NGOs, with increased state support and funding for volunteering initiatives. Ms Bodrenkova expected state-NGO cooperation to grow. Central to this is establishing a network of local volunteer centres, so that

### Motivation

Motivation	Change over 13 year period	
	1994, %	2007, %
• be useful to society	89	75
• bring about social change	50	67
• use initiative	36	48
• develop own skills	-	40
• meet kindred spirits	36	26
• repay help received earlier	19	3
• use leisure time well	19	14
• solve own problems	10	7

## Annual conference 2012

people who wish to volunteer can be found appropriate placements. These centres would be state-funded but independent. Ms Bodrenkova's organisation has been involved in establishing 10 pilot centres.

The main focus of discussion was on the increasing role of the Russian state in regulating and controlling NGOs, and how this would impact on volunteering. On the new law on NGOs receiving foreign funding (which requires such NGOs to declare themselves 'foreign agents'), Ms Bodrenkova felt this would more be an issue for human rights and opposition organisations than for those in the social sector – President Putin had given assurances these would not be affected – but specific legislation was needed to define the difference between volunteer organisations and NGOs.

On state funding for NGOs and whether that would limit their activities, Ms Bodrenkova argued that the state had a *duty* to provide funding where they were providing social services because they were helping to fulfil commitments under the Constitution. State funding for the volunteer centres would ensure their sustainability. State funding did not necessarily mean an organisation could not speak openly; the Helsinki Foundation had received state money, and this had not affected its activities. On how local laws banning the 'propaganda of homosexuality' would impact on organisations working with the LGBT community, Ms Bodrenkova agreed that these would not be able to access state funding.

### Session 2: Case study: volunteering in Belarus

**Maksim Padbiarozkin**, Deputy Director at the Children's Hospice in Minsk, noted that voluntary organisations first emerged in Belarus in the early 1990s. Official guidelines in 2000 stated that volunteers could provide unpaid social work, and in 2012, a new Law On Social Services included a more comprehensive definition of a volunteer, as someone who works under professionals. Today, there are 2,402 registered NGOs, many of which provide opportunities

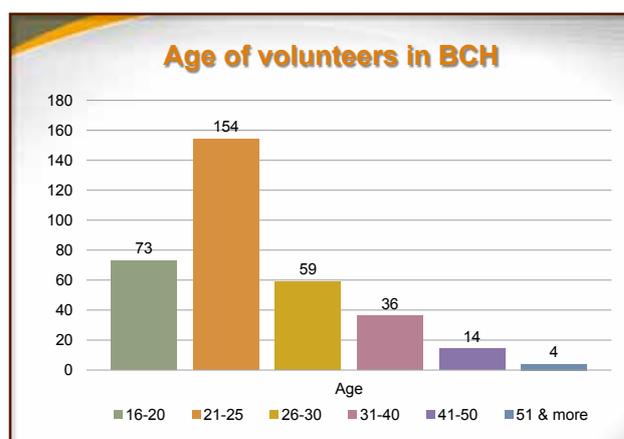
for volunteering. However, other forms of volunteering are difficult, as technically it is illegal to volunteer except through a registered organisation. The government is currently trying to increase official coordination of volunteering activities, in particular through the establishment of the Youth Union of Volunteers. In some cases, young people have



Maksim Padbiarozkin

been compelled to volunteer. International volunteering is underdeveloped, which is a shame as Belarus remains quite a closed country and international volunteering could help address that.

At the Hospice, they work with 340 volunteers, mostly students aged 17-22. A survey of 200 of them found that most people were prompted to volunteer by a desire to help, and to be active in society. Mr Padbiarozkin feels that the Hospice could make better use of the professional skills of its volunteers, and should put more thought into planning strategically to do this. The Hospice is proud, however, that it has the most developed volunteering system in Belarus, and hopes to create a volunteering centre to train other groups.



Responding, **Oscar Franklin** of Age UK lauded the Hospice's volunteer scheme as an example of needs-based volunteer practice in the face of official obstruction, indifference, and a misconstrued idea of volunteering. While in the early years post-1991, most volunteering was through religious organisations, volunteering was now becoming normalised, although with the Hospice and other projects the question always arises as to how to maintain links with young volunteers once they have moved on.

Discussion from the floor centred on social pressure vs. individual motivation, and who exactly counts as a volunteer. Mr Padbiarozkin noted that while some young people in Belarus are compelled to do voluntary work, those at the hospice were all there of their own free will. The volunteer definition in the new Law On Social Services only covers volunteers involved in social work; there is a danger in lobbying for specific legislation on volunteering as this might mean the government exerting even greater control over volunteering.

### Session 3: Managing volunteers

Following lunch and a short film (see below), the focus turned to managing volunteers in different contexts, with input from **Liza Hollingshead** of Ecologia, which sends

volunteers to Kitez Children's Community in Kaluga region; **Galina Poliakova**, who coordinates a network of older volunteers in Ukraine; and **Justin Lyle**, who has volunteered in Russia and Kazakhstan.

**Liza Hollingshead** explained that most of Ecologia's international volunteers are Russian language students



Liza Hollingshead



Galina Poliakova

who gain from being immersed in a Russian speaking environment, while the children gain from being exposed to outside views and have a chance to learn English with native speakers. In the past 15 years, Ecologia has sent more than 250 volunteers to Kitez following a rigorous selection process led by Kitez. Ecologia's role is to prepare the volunteers. Ecologia believe the key in developing an international programme is to work closely with the partner organisation and ensure both sides have realistic expectations and get the maximum from the experience.

In Ukraine, Age Concern has developed a network of 2,000 volunteers (mainly women, all over 55), to support isolated elderly people in 10 cities. As **Galina Poliakova** reported, encouraging people to volunteer was initially difficult. But, starting with a handful of volunteers, news of the project spread by word of mouth, and more and more were recruited as they heard about others' positive

## Motivation

- to be important
- to be loved
- to share the knowledge and experience
- not to lose time
- to fill in the gap

experiences. Many come to share their knowledge and experience and do something productive. One must spend a lot of time with each volunteer to identify her skills and work out what she would like to do, so that she will get the most out of the experience. Government attempts to encourage volunteering in Ukraine have missed what a delicate, time-intensive process it is, and this has led to a very confused understanding of volunteering.

**Justin Lyle** felt that successful international volunteering depends on both sides having a clear view of what they want to get out of the experience, and a structure in place. He contrasted being a volunteer English teacher at a medical college in Kazakhstan with working in a closed institute for adults with learning difficulties in Peterhof, Russia. The former placement did not work, as the medical students were not interested in learning English. The latter was far more successful, as there was a very good structure in place, including a language programme and orientation workshops. But in many post-Soviet contexts, volunteering is seen as foolish and regarded with suspicion; this inevitably shapes attitudes towards volunteers.

Discussion centred on how best to attract younger, local people to volunteering. Mr Lyle thought many young people couldn't afford to spend time volunteering, and that as these societies became wealthier, younger people would be in a better position to volunteer. In the meantime, being imaginative and flexible about volunteering opportunities could draw younger people in. One example cited is a project with disabled children in Ryazan which recruits local students of social work, who value the opportunity to gain professional experience. Overall, though, there was agreement that in each former Soviet country, local institutions and attitudes were playing a role in determining the development of volunteering.

## Session 4: International volunteers: good for both sides?

**Zoe Clements** introduced the work of Stand International, which sends disadvantaged young people aged 16-25 from all over Scotland, often with drug and alcohol problems, low-skilled, and with little education and less self-confidence, on short international volunteer placements, including to Belarus. It is usually the first time these volunteers have been abroad, and they need a huge amount of support



Justin Lyle

## Annual conference 2012

before, during, and after the trip. Multiple risk factors have to be taken into account. With a very high drop-out rate, Stand routinely recruits three people for every place. Volunteers are involved in light construction and repair work, and work with disadvantaged children. Often, the volunteers and the children have been through many of the same experiences, which helps build connections. Volunteers gain immensely from being in a new, alien environment, which gives them the time and space to think, and from the novelty of having people interested in hearing about their experiences, both during the placement and when they return to Scotland.



Zoe Clements

huge growth in national and international NGOs working in Central Asian countries, with large numbers of international volunteers. These volunteers have brought with them new outlooks, social capital, skills and experience. However, international volunteering has been driven by the supply of volunteers, rather than by local demand; they may also deplete local resources, because of the time and money that must be spent on orientation for volunteers, and looking after them. Short-term placements in particular may be of benefit to the volunteers, but not the host communities.

### Concluding session

In the concluding session, BEARR trustee **Nicola Ramsden** drew out the main themes that had emerged during the day's discussions. She noted the importance of traditions



Nicola Ramsden

and the political and cultural context in shaping volunteering, and the assumed dichotomy between 'the volunteer' and 'the professional', with, for instance, the Ukrainian government eager to encourage volunteering because volunteers are 'free'. But volunteers are not 'free': recruiting, training, and managing volunteers absorbs considerable time, money and resources.

Given that volunteers are not free, how can organisations get better value from them, while making volunteering a more rewarding experience? Should organisations already running successful volunteering programmes teach others, as the Belarus Children's Hospice is doing? Or is the desired model one of local, official volunteer centres, as Galina Bodrenkova argued in the context of Russia, implicitly part of a state system, as they are state funded? Elsewhere, Galina Poliakova put the case for centring volunteering on the individual psychology of volunteers, and responding to and meeting their needs first. Overall, though, these are what Ms Ramsden termed 'institutional nuances'; what is clear across the region, as well as in the UK, is the readiness of many people to volunteer, if this is done of their own free will and enables them to meet certain personal needs.

For the PowerPoint presentations used by speakers, and a link to the lunch-time film, about volunteers in a home for adults with severe learning difficulties in Peterhof, Russia, see <http://www.bearr.org/conf2012>.



Bethan Powell

Chernobyl Children's Cancer Care, Cardiff (The 5Cs) also takes young volunteers from the UK (this time, 6<sup>th</sup> formers from Cardiff) on two-week placements to Belarus, to work at a summer camp run by the Minsk Children's Hospice. The 5Cs Chair, **Bethan Powell**, explained that each year there is a huge demand for places, and hence a strict but fair selection process. Each volunteer is expected to pay

his or her individual costs, and to get involved in fundraising. International and Belarusian volunteers work side-by-side, either with the children or on maintaining the summer camp facilities. Working with 17 and 18 year olds does have its challenges, but they also bring enormous enthusiasm, and the Belarusian volunteers and camp leaders really welcome their presence and the positive impact it has on the children.

The final presentation was by **Timur Alexandrov**, who spoke about international volunteering in Central Asia, where civic engagement is very low and volunteering is distrusted. Since the 1990s there has been a



Timur Alexandrov

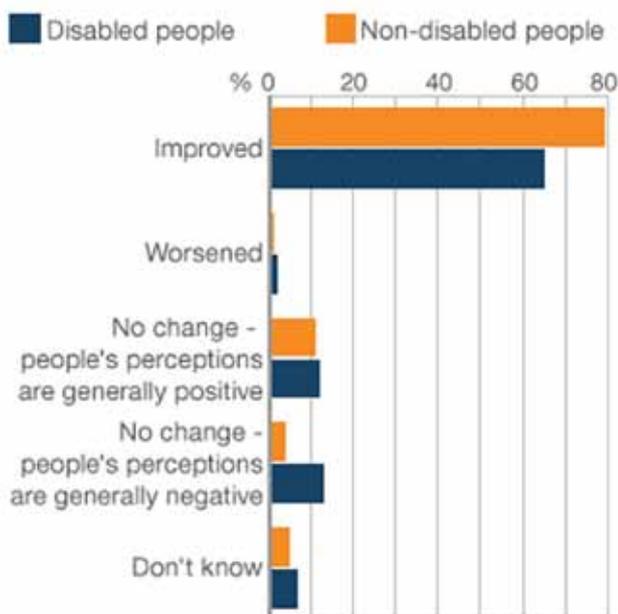
*More conference photos pages 15 and 16*

# The Paralympics:

## has London 2012 changed perceptions of people with disabilities?

A Comres poll for the BBC, held in the UK three months after the Paralympics, found that 75% of non-disabled people thought attitudes to people with disabilities had improved since London 2012, but this view was shared by only 65% of disabled people.

How do you think perceptions of people with disabilities have changed since the Paralympic Games?



Source: ComRes

We thought it would be interesting to see what effect there had been elsewhere, and asked NGOs in two of the most successful Paralympic countries in our region for their views. We asked:

- How do you account for your country's success?
- What kind of media coverage was given to London 2012?
- What effect has it had on disabled people generally?
- How has it affected public attitudes to people with disabilities?

## Russia

Perspektiva, the leading disability NGO, consulted Sergei Valentinovich Shilov, six times Paralympic skiing champion, and member of the Executive Committee of the Russian Paralympic Committee, and also Perepektiva's own staff and partners, with and without disabilities. They reported as follows:

The success of Russian athletes at Paralympic Games is due to:

- the increased attention paid to Paralympic sports by federal and local government
- the rise in general standards of basic sporting abilities
- in many regions, not just Moscow and St Petersburg, facilities for training of Paralympic sportsmen and women have considerably improved.

We should also take account of the fact that winners in the Paralympic Games have had as much moral and material encouragement as athletes without disabilities. Today, medal winners in the Paralympic Games have a much more significant social and political profile than before. For example there are now Paralympic medal-holders in the State Duma.



All those we asked said that our athletes did well because their attitudes and those of their trainers have changed. Professionals have joined the ranks of Paralympic trainers; and the approach to Paralympic sport has become more professional – proper preparation, full financing (both

## Disability: what difference has the Paralympics made?



Ludmila Vasilieva, leader of the Russian fencing pair

from the Sports Ministry and from the regional authorities), training regimes, and equipment. Not least is the role played by the higher salaries and grants now being paid – Paralympic competitors no longer have to worry about money. They can forget about their everyday questions and devote themselves completely to training.

Another important point is the selection process, which now takes in a broader spectrum of sports (classes and disciplines) in which our athletes compete; they are more specialised and compete against each other within the teams. Besides, disabled athletes are very highly motivated compared with other athletes. In Russia, competing in Paralympic sports is practically the only way for them to excel, to prove that their abilities are not limited, and to destroy the popular stereotypes of people with disabilities.

Many consider that the media coverage was inadequate – there was not much reporting and live broadcasts were at inconvenient times. However, when it became clear that Russian Paralympians were winning and outstripping their Olympic counterparts, media, official and public attention increased enormously. Every day, as well as showing the ‘Paralympics diary’ which appeared twice daily, the Russia 1 and Sport 2 channels began to devote more than two hours a day to showing the Games. But it has to be said that the range of sports they showed was not great – mostly athletics and swimming.

Now few people question the need to support Paralympic sports and to offer disabled people opportunities to achieve their potential. The public is beginning to be proud of what our Paralympians have achieved, that they can cock a snook at the Olympic athletes and bring honour to their country. The number of medals won in both Games is a matter of pride for all Russians, and provides the best advertisement for sports and a healthy way of life for people whether or not they have a disability. The sense of pride is twice as strong in people with a disability, and they gain great self-confidence. The Paralympic Games have a particular effect on children,

who see the winners as role models and understand that there are no barriers to achievement – all they need is will and effort.

How does sporting achievement affect people with disabilities? This is a rhetorical question. In some cases it encourages them to try, in others to try even harder; some will feel envy (‘Lucky them – they won lots of money’). But most think ‘Well done’: without their efforts the state would pay no attention to them. Paralympic success has meant that society as a whole pays more attention to the challenges facing people with disabilities. It is no coincidence that on 13 September 2012 television showed a government meeting at which Prime Minister Medvedev offered the government’s congratulations to the Paralympic winners. That government session was a landmark, as it must have been the first to cover the problems of disability in Russia and the need to deal with these issues.

[www.perspektiva.ru](http://www.perspektiva.ru)

## Azerbaijan

UAFA, a leading NGO in Baku, consulted Ilham Zakiyev, Captain of the country’s Paralympics and judo teams, double Paralympic (Athens & Beijing) blind judo champion. His message to people with disabilities: ‘Don’t become a



Ilham Zakiyev

pessimist; life goes on. Whatever happens in your life you must be strong, even if it all goes wrong. You can achieve success in any field, not only in sport, if you just want it’.

Why was the country so successful in London 2012? First of all, government support is very high and it gives us a great sense of enthusiasm. More and more athletes are joining and taking part in our Paralympic team. In comparison with 2004, when Azerbaijan was represented by only one sportsman and was awarded one gold medal, this year (2012) our country showed great progress. It was represented by 21 athletes and awarded 12 medals (4 gold, 5 silver and 3 bronze). In 2008, the Paralympic Complex, which

*Continues on page 11*

# Politics and Society in Russia Today: Lecture by Lilia Shevtsova

On 26 September The BEARR Trust was delighted to welcome Lilia Shevtsova of the Carnegie Moscow Center, who gave the lecture 'Politics and Society in Russia Today' at the conference centre at BEARR's HQ. Lilia was introduced by Robert Brinkley, Chairman of the BEARR Trust. She answered wide-ranging questions after her talk.

Introducing her talk, Lilia said that Russia today is in need of compassion, empathy and understanding for the paradoxes it is living through. A new drama is unfolding in Russia. It could become a new tragedy in Russia's history. Not only liberals in Russia who are not part of the current system of power, but representatives of other political and ideological groups, including some close to the official establishment, are aware that the current system is not sustainable. The system is not capable of delivering progress, economic development and stability. But, as has been the case since the sixteenth century, civil society has not been able to build a political movement capable of replacing the existing system. There is, however, no systemic alternative that would have broader support within the society. Meanwhile the West has its own problems, prefers Russia to keep quiet and not interfere, and shows no interest in creating a benevolent environment for Russia's change.

Painting in what she described as the 'brushstrokes' of this broad canvas, Lilia referred to Toynbee's 'suicidal statecraft' in which the system begins to undermine itself, with the ultimate potential to destroy itself. However, the existing system in Russia still has the potential to survive, she thought, using corruption as its mechanism of survival. The culture of corruption throughout society keeps people generally content, but cracks are beginning to show. It could be a case of 'a Titanic looking for its iceberg'. The opposition has been under state pressure and political parties are mere imitations of parties. Thus the people are pushed onto the streets. The law is becoming increasingly repressive, as is typical of such systems. One new repressive law has followed another over the past summer. One of them requires NGOs which receive foreign funding to register as 'foreign agents' (which in Russian means nothing other than 'spies'). The law on extremism has been strengthened, and another redefines state treason. Rather than keep their heads down, however, people, especially young people, are being radicalised. The young do not have any Soviet genes and are not afraid. Up to thirty thousand are ready to march in the streets – the core

**report by Janet Gunn, BEARR Trustee**

of the protest wave; in 1917 it took only 5,000 to bring about a revolution.

The system keeps looking for enemies, a traditional reaction. It is not able to modernise, which can only lead to decay. But a new Russia is nevertheless emerging. Public opinion surveys show that 68% of the population do not

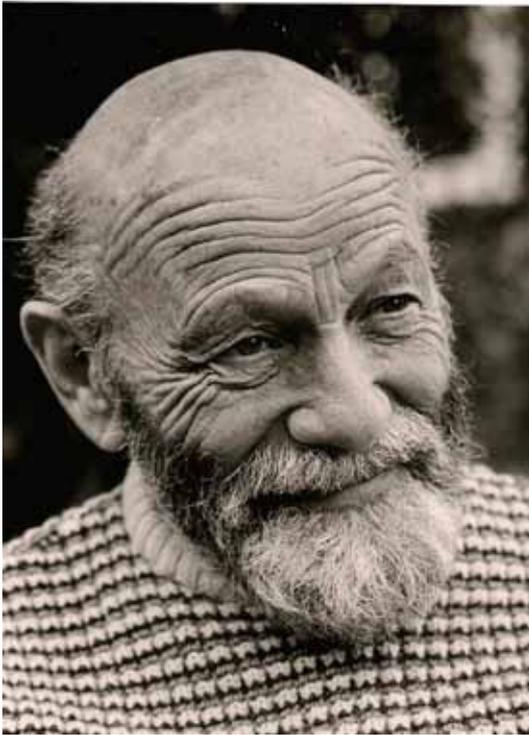


believe that the interests of the authorities coincide with those of Russia. If even 10% of the population take to the streets in protest, it will be the first time in Russia that the 'elite' classes, including the opposition and the intelligentsia, while not yet ready to come up with an alternative, could reject the system and be willing to support new rules of the game.

## NGO profile

# The Victor Zorza Hospice Trust (VZHT)

by Patricia Cockrell, Chairman



**When he died in 1996, Victor Zorza left his money to be used for the development of hospice care in Russia. His partner Eileen Lerche-Thomsen registered a Trust, trustees were identified, meetings organised, guidelines drawn up and relationships made with partners or potential partners in Russia and occasionally in Ukraine and Belarus.**

Victor Zorza was a Polish Jew who fled to Stalin's Russia at the age of 15, and then served in the Polish air force in Britain before becoming an award-winning journalist. Informed by his own experiences, his articles and books on political life in the Soviet Union and East Europe helped to educate a whole generation of British readers.

The death of his daughter Jane at the age of 25 brought him into contact with the hospice movement in

Britain. Inspired by this painful experience and by his pledge to Jane, and as an expression of his lifelong love of the Russian people who had looked after him during the war, he began to work on establishing the hospice ideal in Russia, and in 1990 the Russian hospice movement was founded with the opening of the hospice at Lakhta in Leningrad (now St Petersburg).

Seeking to build long-term sustainability, trustees worked with several UK hospices, teaching establishments, NGOs and individuals who had an interest in hospice development in Russia and who shared our concern always to try to understand the needs of the local group or hospice.

VZHT grants were used for training courses and seminars in many Russian cities, and long-term projects were developed in Moscow, Perm, Samara, St Petersburg, Yaroslavl, and also one in Minsk. By far our largest commitment was to work with the mayor and health department of Nizhny Novgorod to establish a 15-bed unit plus offices for a home care service.

Challenges have included visas, delays and money transfer problems; on a deeper level, the Russian government's

attitude towards the availability of morphine and other drugs is not helpful to the provision of palliative care, and we look forward to a change in policy.

On the other hand, we have been welcomed with huge enthusiasm, and feedback from the workshops has almost always been positive, even when the topics have been new and sometimes disturbing. Many Russians have said that they have difficulty with breaking bad news, or maintaining honest and open relationships with patients or carers; for some, multi-professional teamwork seems strange; for many, role-play is frightening; but all seem to enjoy the interactive learning style, having a say in the agenda and being involved in the evaluation and feedback.

A conference with media interest is often held at the end of a workshop to raise the profile of palliative medicine in Russia, and to encourage discussion of the needs of terminally ill people and their carers.



Nurse training session

Photo: Patricia Cockrell

## The Paralympics: continued from page 8

VZHT has completed its task: we have spent Victor's money and there are now more than 50 hospices in Russia. Trustees would like to thank the many people who have worked with us to develop the hospice movement in Russia.

Elena Vvedenskaia deserves a special mention: her book – *Palliativnaia Pomoshch* – has just been published in Nizhny Novgorod, and her translation of the British online learning resource can be found at [www.pallcare.ru](http://www.pallcare.ru).

### Contact

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Chairman of the Victor Zorza  
Hospice Trust  
[patriciacockrell@talktalk.net](mailto:patriciacockrell@talktalk.net)

is unique on the whole territory of the post-Soviet countries, was presented for the Azerbaijan team's use at the Beijing Paralympic Games by the president of Azerbaijan.

How was London 2012 reported in the media? All Paralympic news was reported in the media indirectly. We wish we could have watched the games live, but access was only available through websites or foreign TV channels.

What effect has it had on people with disabilities in society as a whole? We already have two double Paralympic champions. This triumph has already made everyone aware of athletes with disabilities. Observing the high level of care, progress and success it takes, they have obviously got inspired and applied to the Azerbaijan

Paralympic Committee. We observe their abilities and direct them to appropriate sports. We also plan to go to the regions and look there for young people with disabilities who might achieve great success, to involve them in our programmes.

What needs to be done to change public attitudes? First of all, we should work with parents of children with disabilities; parents must not keep their children at home far from social life: they must make them visible in society. Especially if a child has a talent, he or she has to become involved in that particular area. It is better not to give them money, but teach them how to earn it (not to give fish but teach fishing). Each of them must be approached individually.

[www.uafa.az](http://www.uafa.az)

# 'The Arts and Attitudes to Disability in Eastern Europe'

## 22 March 2013

BEARR is running a half-day forum on this subject in conjunction with the academic consortium CEELBAS.

Speakers will include:

- **Irena Yasina**, high-profile Russian journalist and disability campaigner
- **Denise Roza**, Director of Perspektiva, which runs an annual disability film festival
- **Jose Alaniz** (Seattle), on the portrayal of disability in the visual arts
- **Oliver Ready** (Oxford), on mental disability in modern Russian literature.

The full programme and other information will appear on the BEARR website at: <http://www.bearr.org/arts-disability-forum>.



# The Curious Mr Howard – Legendary Penal Reformer

## by Tessa West

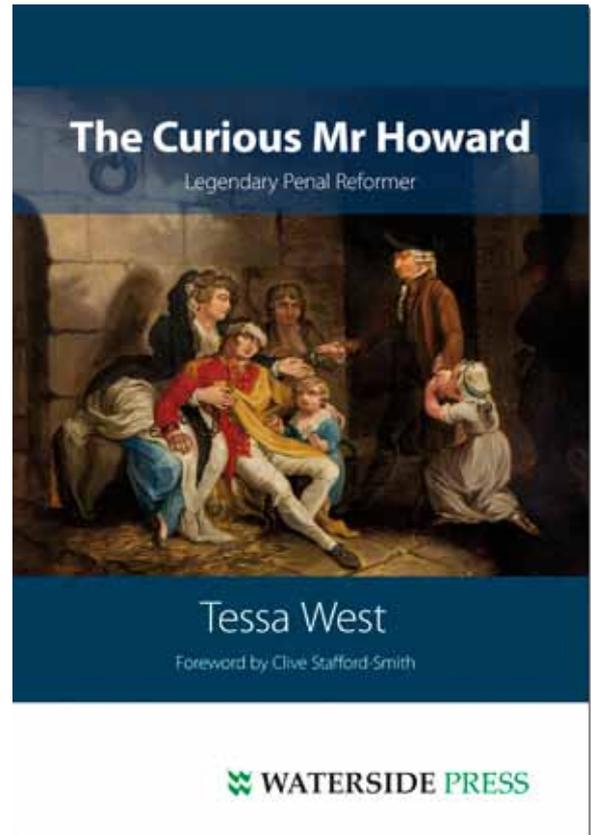
reviewed by Janet Gunn,  
BEARR Trustee

Waterside Press, 2011

*Curious Mr Howard*: it is indeed curious to think that in the second half of the eighteenth century an English gentleman spent most of his life travelling all over the British Isles, Europe, Russia and Turkey inspecting prisons, lazarettos and military hospitals, risking disease and recommending reforms – with varying degrees of success. Sometimes his advice was received graciously and acted upon, sometimes it was received graciously but ignored, and at other times his presence and recommendations were coldly spurned.

This new biography of John Howard, whose name rings a bell with us because of the Howard League for Prison Reform, is highly readable though inclined to leap from topic to topic. Howard was curious in both senses of the word. Apart from his enduring commitment to reform of the treatment of prisoners and the sick, the second most curious fact is that he abandoned his only child Jack, whose mother had died when he was three days old, to the care of others, and took little interest in him. John was a widower and a God-fearing and strict father, somewhat obsessed with obedience and discipline. He sent Jack to boarding school at the age of four. In young adulthood Jack developed fits of wild and unruly behaviour, and was sent to a lunatic asylum at the age of twenty one, his father returning in 1787 from his travels and finding him ‘a raving maniac’. Commentators who knew the family ascribed Jack’s illness either to syphilis (he used to go roistering with a youth called Thomasson, hired to look after him) or to the excessively strict and cold upbringing he had from his father, but John Howard could not see that his own conduct was a cause. Theories that John himself suffered from Asperger’s Syndrome, and that there had been other similar cases in his family, might explain his lack of warmth towards his son, and also the boy’s subsequent illness.

There are two reasons why the book is of interest to readers of this Newsletter: the issues of prison conditions and rehabilitation versus incarceration as punishment, and because he travelled to Russia and died at Kherson in southern Ukraine, at the estuary of the Dnepr river. In the first years of his travels, apart from English, Irish and Scottish prisons, Howard visited Germany, the Netherlands, Italy,



Switzerland, and other countries, often revisiting the same places several times. He found varied conditions – he admired the standards in Dutch prisons but was so appalled by a form of torture used against prisoners in parts of Germany that he refused to describe it. He visited St Petersburg, but not much is written about this apart from his observations on the use of the knout, a particularly cruel form of whip, to flog prisoners in Russia. (Incidentally, the Russian equivalent of ‘carrots and sticks’ is ‘the knout and honey cakes’.)

In late 1786, Howard told the Austrian Emperor in Vienna that conditions in his prisons were appalling. The Emperor listened, then pointed out that England still had capital punishment. Howard responded that execution was surely preferable to a convict than the conditions in an Austrian prison. In 1787 Howard returned to England to check that Jack was reasonably treated in the asylum, undertook a last

round of English, Scottish and Irish prisons, put his affairs in order and bought new clothes and medicines, before setting off for Russia, expecting to be gone for three years. As usual he was accompanied by Mr Thomasson, who had years earlier been so disastrously in charge of Jack (Howard seemed unaware of his negative influence). On the way Howard visited Holland and Germany again, and thence to Riga, St Petersburg, Kronshtadt, Tver, Moscow, Kremenshchuk, and Kherson. On the way he visited Russian military hospitals, and witnessed appalling conditions in them. From that journey he wrote about his dietary beliefs, saying that

‘I am firmly persuaded as to the health of our bodies, herbs and fruits will sustain nature in every respect, far beyond the best fresh meat...The Lord planted a garden for mankind... and replenished it with all manner of fruits and herbs... and if these had still been the food of man, he would not have contracted so many diseases in his body.’

It thus sounds as if Howard was somewhat ahead of his time and possibly a vegetarian. He reportedly sent currants back to the people of his Bedfordshire village from southern Europe, though what they made of them is not recorded.

‘Cherson in Tartary’ was his final port of call. In a letter to Samuel Whitbread, his close friend from their schooldays and the founder of the Whitbread brewery, he described being robbed of his trunk close to his destination. The trunk was, with difficulty, retrieved after Howard, showing a tough side to his character, entered some cottages by force to look for it. Seven apprehended villagers were sentenced to exile in Siberia. He wrote:

‘The wild Cossacks who live underground in the Crimea must look sharp if they rob me, as I will not go to sleep any night on the road and I am well armed.’

Howard stayed in Kherson for nearly three months in the winter of 1789-1790. He is likely to have met Empress Catherine the Great and Prince Potemkin. Catherine is said to have admired Howard’s work and had told Potemkin to follow all the advice Howard gave about prisons and

hospitals. She had only recently founded Kherson, as well as other southern Russian outposts such as Odessa, following their acquisition from Turkey by the Tsarist armies. She invited architects, merchants, doctors, engineers and military leaders from all over western Europe to come and develop the new regions, and there were other Englishmen in Kherson. So Howard became well-known in Kherson and friends with several English officers in the service of Catherine. Because of winter, fighting against the Turks was on hold and instead there were parties and balls with many military officers present. Typhus was also present; Howard supposed that the officers had brought it back with them from the front. Howard carried various medicines with him on his travels, dispensed by his doctor in Bedfordshire, and one of ‘Dr James’s Powders’ was believed to protect him from the plague during his visits to hospitals and lazarettos. Perhaps because of this he was thought to be a physician himself. He was consequently invited to visit a young woman in a count’s household. She was suffering from a fever. On a subsequent visit he appears to have been infected, and was already ill himself when news came that the woman had died.

Howard treated himself for several days with his powders, assisted by Thomasson, before calling for a doctor. It was too late. He died on 20 January 1790. He asked for a Church of England funeral service, which was read by Admiral Priestman, with whom he had become friends, and to be buried very simply in the country in which he died. In fact he had quite a grand and stately funeral and was buried in a village now called Stepankova, on the road to Nikolaev.

This book, by no means the first biography of John Howard, has much to commend it. It includes a lot of family history and contextual social comment, and rather less about his experiences abroad. These are likely to be covered in greater detail in his own three published accounts of prisons in Britain, the plague lazarettos of Europe, and reform of criminal law in Tuscany.

[www.WatersidePress.co.uk](http://www.WatersidePress.co.uk)

## BEARR and social networking

BEARR’s Trustees would like to establish a presence on social networking sites, and especially initially Facebook, in order to increase our profile and reach a wider circle of younger people.

Current Trustees and staff do not however have the right skills or resources to do this to the desired standard. So we are looking for a volunteer, preferably but not necessarily Russian speaking, would like to share their expertise and use it to help promote health and welfare and support civil society in our region, please send your details to [info@barr.org](mailto:info@barr.org).

# Country Profile 6: Ukraine<sup>1</sup>

Bordering Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, Russia, Belarus and the Black Sea, Ukraine is about the size of Spain and Portugal combined, with a population of approximately 46 million (11% of EU total) spread across an area of just over 600,000 km<sup>2</sup> (15% of EU total).

The climate is mostly temperate continental and the terrain largely flat, consisting of fertile steppe lands and plateaux, framed by mountains to the west (Carpathians) and south (Crimean Peninsula). Over half the land is arable, including the rich 'black earth' areas which, along with its diverse heavy industry, made Ukraine the second most important economic entity of the Soviet Union.

## Economic and Social Development

Since independence, an unhelpful combination of stalled economic reform, political instability and a reliance on Russia for energy supplies has rendered Ukraine something of an economic laggard in the region – classified in the 'lower middle income' category. Plagued by a toxic mix of socioeconomic, demographic and health problems, the population has been falling since the mid-1990s, albeit more slowly in recent years. The population is also ageing rapidly, despite slight increases in fertility since 2000 (largely explained by the increase in women of reproductive age, following the 1980s 'baby boom'). Like much of the region, Ukraine's wealth is distributed very unevenly and so even during the economic growth years of the mid-2000s, extreme poverty failed to decline.

## Health and Welfare

While the aggregate health status of the population has risen steadily since the 1990s, adult mortality remains higher than in other lower middle-income countries and exceeds typical EU mortality rates by a factor of between two and four. As in Russia, the main contribution to the elevated mortality rate is from cardiovascular diseases, which account for almost two-thirds of total mortality.

Infectious diseases are also a particular problem in Ukraine where it is estimated that 1.6% of the population is living with HIV/AIDS. This number is growing every year and although injecting drug use remains the main mode of transmission for HIV, the rate of heterosexually transmitted HIV is also growing and so too the numbers of children being born to HIV-positive mothers. Similarly, 1.4% of the population are currently tuberculosis patients and 10,000 people die as a result of TB every year.

## Top 10 causes of deaths (2009/10)

Age standardised, per 100,000 (world ranking)

Coronary heart disease	400 (2)
Stroke	125 (57)
HIV/AIDS	47 (39)
Liver disease	40 (9)
Other injuries	31 (15)
Tuberculosis	23 (63)
Poisonings	20 (4)
Lung cancers	20 (61)
Breast cancer	20 (51)
Road traffic accidents	22 (60)

Also, in common with Russia, the high rates of cardiovascular disease are linked to unhealthy behaviours: poor diets, smoking and alcohol consumption. Around 60% (20%) of the adult male (female) population smoke and alcohol consumption levels are high too. Young female use is increasing in both of these categories. There are systemic problems too, that must bear some of the responsibility for Ukraine's poor health profile, with health care (decentralisation aside) mostly unreformed from the Semashko system and over 70% of the water supply failing to meet required sanitary standards. Without increases in spending alongside meaningful reform the prognosis remains gloomy.

## Health facts & figures (2009)

	Ukr	Pol	UK
Life expectancy (male)	65.2	72.2	78.5
Life expectancy (fem)	75.3	80.8	82.6
Crude death rate*	15.3	9.9	9.1
Deaths, circulatory*	7.3	3.4	1.7
Deaths, heart disease*	4.9	0.9	0.8
Deaths, external cause*	0.9	0.6	0.3
TB incidence*	0.7	0.2	0.1
HIV incidence*	0.4	0.02	0.1
Ratio female / male	1.17	1.07	1.03
Human Dev. Index	0.73	0.81	0.86

\* per 1,000

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



Snapshots from the 2012 Annual Conference

## About The BEARR Trust

**Patrons:** The Duchess of Abercorn, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Elena Bashkirova Barenboim, Myra Green OBE, Professor Geoffrey Hosking, 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 Russia, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the South Caucasus, 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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**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.



Snapshots from the 2012 Annual Conference

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