

THE BEARR TRUST Newsletter

Information about UK NGO links with Russia and Eurasia

The CIS: Growing old rapidly

by Dr Christopher J Gerry
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Like much of the rest of the world, the populations of the countries now collectively referred to as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), are facing the challenges wrought by rapidly ageing populations. Among these challenges come pressures on social, health and welfare systems alongside a declining productive workforce with the resource to support those in retirement. In Russia and elsewhere in the region this touches on a hot topic. As recently as June, Alexei Kudrin, the Russian Finance Minister indicated that the retirement age in Russia would be increased to relieve the pressure on the Pension Fund and increase the monthly pension above its current 7,300 Ruble (£150 approx.) minimum.

Population ageing is a complex phenomenon determined by the long-run development of society through stages of declining infant mortality, lower fertility rates and then declining late-life mortality. The dual effect of declining fertility and old-age mortality produces what is known as the 'double ageing' process. The CIS countries now find themselves at diverse stages along this demographic and developmental path.

As is clear from table 1, the proportion of elderly people varies considerably, though in all cases has increased since 1991. In fact, the region can broadly be conceived of as forming two 'age' groups: the 'young' CIS (Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan)

with high fertility rates and relatively low proportion of elderly people and the 'old' CIS, characterised by elderly populations either already above or projected to move above the crude 10% threshold that defines a society as relatively old. Russia and Ukraine, even without yet having experienced rapid mortality decline at older ages, have the largest proportion of elderly people and are now converging on Western European patterns. Indeed, the right hand side of table 1 suggests that across much of the region, where population ageing is progressing most rapidly, it stems from declining fertility – the first stage of the cycle of economic development. This being so, the double ageing process lies ahead for the CIS. Correspondingly, the health and welfare needs of the elderly will become more pressing as time goes by.

Table 1: Double Ageing in the CIS?

	% of population 65+			Total Fertility Rate**		
	1991	2001	2007/8	1991	2001	2007/8
Armenia	6.01	9.69	10.6	2.58	1.02	1.44
Azerbaijan	4.83	6.11	7.03	2.9	1.8	2.3
Belarus	11.08	13.63	14.3	1.8	1.27	1.42
Georgia	9.53	14.15	n/a	2.1	1.4	1.67
Kazakhstan	6.08	6.79	7.6	2.72	1.84	2.68
Kyrgyz Rep.	5.06	5.49	5.13	3.6	2.4	2.8
Moldova	8.34	9.54	10.29	2.26	1.25	1.3
Russia	10.4	12.77	14.02	1.7	1.2	1.3*
Tajikistan	3.89	3.8	4.41	5.0	3.1	3.5*
Turkmenistan	3.76	3.85	n/a	4.1	3.3	2.6*
Ukraine	12.45	14.13	16.09	1.7	1.1	1.46
Uzbekistan	3.99	4.25	4.60	4.1	2.46	2.64
EU-25	11.28	13.58	14.62	1.89	1.25	1.35

* Refers to the latest available data, 2005.

** 2.1 represents the population replacement rate of fertility

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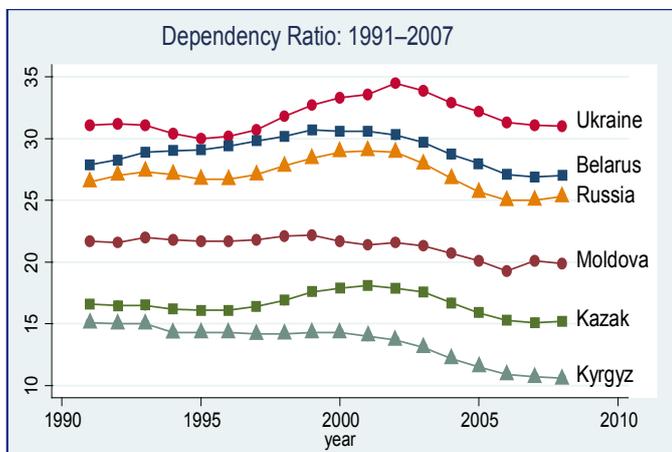
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An ageing CIS

A further useful indicator of the age structure and ageing of a population comes in the form of the dependency ratio, defined as the ratio of elderly to working age population. A glance at the graph below makes it ever more clear that the political, economic and social challenges associated with ageing populations facing Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, with dependency ratios of over 25% and set to rise, sets them apart from the high-fertility countries of Central Asia and to a lesser extent the South Caucasus. The pressures on these countries will be further exacerbated in the next decade as the high post-war fertility period gets washed out of the system and economic development brings with it declining mortality for the elderly.



So, the greying of the population (what the World Bank has termed the 'third transition', following political and economic transition) will pose increasingly tricky challenges for public policy, particularly where there are trade-offs involved in relation to families, working people and the young, versus the elderly. Indeed, concerns are mounting that population ageing will exert ultimately intolerable pressures on public spending, particularly where pensions and health care are concerned. These challenges are particularly acute for the CIS countries, since they find themselves only part way through the crucial institutional reforms associated with the political and economic transition towards market economies. Top-heavy public sector hospitals and pension systems that combine generous coverage with an inadequate tax base are hardly the foundations from which to make the hard choices necessary for the longer term. There really are no other countries in the world which must face up to this dual challenge of rapid population ageing and a partial, sometimes stalled, adoption of the market democracy institutions required to deal effectively with the likely adverse social and economic consequences of a society growing old.

Poverty

It may surprise some that, during the last 20 years, most of the CIS poor in the region have come to comprise working-age adults and children, who between them account for approximately two-thirds of the poor. The elderly, in contrast, have faced a progressively lower risk of poverty over time across most of the region. This is particularly the case in the last decade where better macroeconomic and fiscal performance following the 1998-9 crisis has helped to address the prevailing gaps in financing pension and social benefit payments. However, while the proportion of the poor who are elderly may be low and declining this does not mean that there is not a substantial number of elderly people who face severe poverty. Indeed, through the early 2000s, Moldova, Georgia, Tajikistan and Armenia reported rates of poverty for the elderly in excess of 50%. The elderly in these countries and elsewhere remain acutely vulnerable to poverty and ever more so in the wake of the recent financial crisis and the increasingly binding budget constraints.

Pensions

The primary objective of any pension system has to be to prevent poverty within the elderly population. The elderly of the CIS however are increasingly likely to be confronted by the reality of insufficient pensions. As populations age, the pool of benefits available to a growing elderly population, provided from a shrinking workforce, will necessarily diminish.

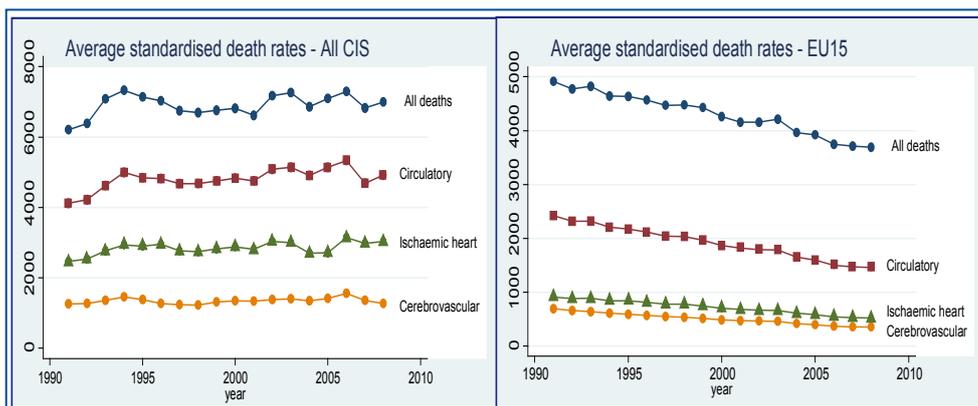
The current pension systems in place across the region, based on a mix of contributory provisions and current tax receipts, will not provide adequate support for the growing number of claimants and may face insolvency in this regard. Those most disenfranchised, perhaps the very elderly, or those living alone, are likely to require special interventions through the public sector and/or civil society organisations and community based groups. Indeed, non-governmental organisations will surely have a role to play in identifying and supporting marginalised groups of the elderly and lobbying policy makers to adopt appropriate policies.

To this end, awareness of the demographic and economic landscape and the plausible policy responses is crucial. The most probable (inevitable?) reforms are likely to centre on: (i) raising and equalising the retirement age, to lower the dependency ratio and increase the proportion of contributors to the pension pool; and (ii) linking pension increases to the general level of inflation rather than to the level of wage inflation. For many, this may leave the basic pension short of the poverty line. Confronted by this reality, imaginative solutions, such as the (non-

contributory) social pension, may need exploring and lobbying for.

Health

Aside from the impact on the pension system, the ageing of the CIS populations will place greater stress on health systems largely because, in all countries, the greatest demand for medical care occurs in the later years of life. Of particular importance to the CIS region will be the new demands of long-term care for the very old. This is a major cause for concern because the CIS welfare budgets are not equipped to absorb the expenditure shock arising from long-term care needs as distinct from clinical health needs. Most long-term care in the region is provided informally by families or in hospitals, and access to long-term institutional community or regional care facilities is limited. Non-governmental organisations are increasingly active in the region as providers of hospices, care in the community and long-term residential care. Yet much of this activity remains ad hoc, uncoordinated and unrelated to policy-making.



The reality of the future burden is also related to the health of the elderly as they arrive at old age. The graphs below compare the chief causes of elderly deaths in the CIS with the EU 15. In both cases the major killers are the non-communicable diseases (cerebrovascular, circulatory and ischaemic heart disease). However, while for the EU15, overall deaths as well as deaths through these causes have declined over time, for the CIS, the mortality rate for the elderly has increased over time (double ageing is yet to kick in) and so too have deaths due to heart disease, which is by far and away the main cause of death for the elderly in this region.

A large number of deaths are therefore related to lifestyle factors including smoking, diet, alcohol,

psychosocial stress and inactive lifestyles. The fact that in parts of the region – Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan in particular - the health behaviours of young and middle-aged adults is so poor in this regard flags up an additional concern. Those that survive to old age from the most recent cohorts of middle-aged adults are likely to arrive there with a yet higher vulnerability to non-communicable disorders. In other words, outside of the ageing process itself, the unhealthy lifestyles that dominate some population groups in some countries of this region are likely to result in inordinately high fiscal and physical capacity pressures that will further extend the space within which non-governmental organisations will be required to operate.

Conclusion

The CIS region is facing unprecedented challenges to its public policy, its economy and its civil society in the face of rapidly ageing populations. There are no countries in the world at equivalent levels of income that face this

situation in combination with the ongoing experiences of adopting the political, economic and social institutions required of countries aspiring to become modern, market economies or of countries operating within the global system. The interaction of these complex socioeconomic, political and demographic dynamics serves to make the CIS region unique.

There is pressing need for reforms to the pension and benefit systems as well as to the financing and provision of health care. As important, for the future well-being of the elderly, is that these countries use active public policy now to improve the health of the non-elderly population, targeting unhealthy lifestyles and behaviours among those of working age. Even with sensible reform, the public sector will not be able to bear this burden any time soon, so the space within which non-governmental organisations are required to become key players to protect marginalised and vulnerable populations will grow in the coming decades across this entire region. Understanding the challenges that lie ahead in complex areas such as this could not be more important.

The data used in this paper comes from the August 2010 version of the WHO Health for All Database and the April 2009 version of Unicef's TransMonee database.

Annual Lecture 2010

The BEARR Trust Annual Lecture 2010 Russia and Islam

Anatol Lieven, Professor of International Relations and Terrorism Studies at King's College London, gave the 2010 BEARR Trust Annual Lecture on 25 May. The lecture was again hosted by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, whose President, Thomas Mirow, welcomed the guests and explained how the EBRD's banking activities are increasingly influenced by NGOs – a welcome indicator of the development of civil society in the region.



It was appropriate that the lecturer was introduced by Geoffrey Hosking, Patron of BEARR and Emeritus Professor of History at UCL SSEES, for Lieven put the subject of 'Russia and Islam', one that seems a most pressing contemporary issue, into a historical framework stretching back at least one thousand years. The perspectives and insights afforded by this approach were fascinating, especially when he drew comparisons between the experiences of Russia and Western Europe, in particular Great Britain.

Did a clear forecast or obvious policy prescriptions emerge? Judging by the searching questions put to Lieven at the end of the lecture, and his thoughtful replies, it is easier to understand the historical context than it is to predict the future. Both Britain and Russia have Muslims in senior positions in their governments; the question common to each country is whether these leaders will carry the moderate majority of their rapidly growing Muslim populations, or whether a radicalised minority will prevail. And Russia already has messy problems to deal with in the North Caucasus and, potentially, in former Republics where the Muslim population is the majority. Lieven's predictions were more certain here: Russia has no choice but to remain in the North Caucasus for the long term, chipping away at corruption, relying on local division, and trying to consolidate loyalty where it can. As for former Republics, the last thing Russia wants to do is recreate the former Soviet Union – good relations with the new leaders, and negative influence, in the sense of keeping other countries at bay, are the objectives. Deep political control and financial commitments are to be avoided.

Several questions from the audience touched on the extent to which impressions of extreme racism in parts of Russia, often directed against people of North Caucasian and Central Asian appearance, can be generalised. Lieven, while warning that no country can be complacent about 'skinhead racism', felt that racial attitudes in Russia must be carefully unpicked with reference to their historical roots. Racial intermixing has been a central

*Report by Nicola Ramsden,
BEARR Trustee*

feature of Russian life for so long that discrimination by appearance is difficult. Partly this reflects the fact that the Russian empire was land-based, making it harder to run on lines of racial exclusivity than the Western European sea-based empires. Russians have been inter-reacting with Muslims for more than one thousand years. The Tatars converted to Islam at about the same time the Russians converted to Orthodoxy, but the intermixing of the two groups gave rise to the observation 'Scratch a Russian and find a Tatar'. The significant presence of Tatars, as well as North Caucasians, in the Russian elite since the 16th century, when Ivan the Terrible switched from persecuting Muslims to more formal management of the relationship, has left a legacy of well-known names in Russian public life, such as Yusupov and Turgenev. Many converted to Orthodoxy to facilitate their rise in state service, but not always: Lieven's own great-uncle had a Muslim commander in the Russian Guards, and in 1914 the Guards had Muslim as well as Christian clerics. Ethnic Russians often resented the recruitment of 'outsiders' (including Finns and Germans) by the Tsar, but never managed to block it.

Britain is learning to follow in Ivan the Terrible's footsteps. He could be seen as a pioneer of the policy of engaging in formal, orderly partnerships with selected representatives of Islam, building up official bodies where they might not yet exist. These partners are intended to be the state's allies in suppressing, or at least marginalising, informal

Annual Lecture 2010

and radical extremists. Britain is obliged to catch up in a hurry, and with greater adjustments to make, lacking Russia's centuries of exposure to and assimilation of Muslims. The shock to Britain and other Western European countries is greater still for having to accommodate large numbers of people from more economically backward and socially conservative areas, a contrast with the urbanised and relatively well-off Volga Tatars. The reaction in Western Europe has been sharp: Lieven noted the Swiss referendum on the building of minarets, and commented that only the most extreme and marginalised of Russians would have shared that attitude.

So Russia has some advantages in its relationship with Islam compared to other European countries, but it also has disadvantages, notably in the intractable position in the North Caucasus. It has, in Lieven's view, no choice but to remain there, despite some popular feeling in Russia that the state would be stronger divested of the region. Russia willingly shuffled off responsibility for the Muslim-majority former republics in Central Asia when the Soviet Union dissolved, but there are still six autonomous republics within the country that have a Muslim majority, as well as many smaller territories. Withdrawing from the North Caucasus would cause chaos (memories of post-93 terrorism and banditry are still strong) and could risk inspiring thoughts of secession among Tatars in the Volga, the largest of the autonomous Muslim regions. Losing the Volga region would cut Russia off from the heartlands of industrial Europe.

Not that the Tatars, part of Russia for many centuries more than the North Caucasians, show signs of rebellion. Tatarstan is home to some interesting attempts to redefine the identity of Russia. A revisiting of old

ideas that, according to Lieven, cover a spectrum from 'mystical loopiness to banal pragmatism' has produced the 'Eurasianism' that has become the official ideology of Tatarstan and Kazakhstan, albeit a rather thin one. What does this mean? Eurasianism is an attempt to provide a cultural identity for people who feel partly European, but excluded from the mainstream, or who feel partly but not entirely Asian. It recognises that much Russian territory is in Asia, and that Asian traditions are alive in Russia. It has echoes of an old Russian resentment at being regarded as second-class Europeans. It tries to answer a yearning for a leader and guide, and, for Muslims in the region, it is becoming a means of identifying a bridge to Europe that will differentiate them from poorer, backward Muslims elsewhere. As in Turkey, it is the search for an identity that bridges Europe and Asia and avoids being left on the periphery of economic development and political influence.

The Russian leadership has a slightly different, pragmatic concept of the relationship between Europe and Asia, based on the idea of Russia as a different sort of European country – the 'Third West'. Lieven detected

growing openness towards defining Russia as a multicultural society. The Orthodox church appreciates Islamic hostility towards America, source of many of the 'sects' that irritate the political and religious establishments, while moderate Muslims seek to defuse the importing of radicalism.

Russia's strongest card in winning the loyalty of moderate Muslims, Lieven believes, is the cultural hegemony that follows from higher living standards – a factor in the liberation of women in the Central Asian republics, and something that encourages the needed migration of workers into Russia. It is possible that Russia may succeed in developing an accepted joint Russian-Muslim identity that excludes both ethnic Russian chauvinism and radical Islamism. But it is not a foregone conclusion that it will, and the greatest threat to this vision would be an intensification of terrorist activity in the North Caucasus.

The BEARR Trust is most grateful to EBRD for supporting and hosting this lecture.



Tony Longrigg, Prof Anatol Lieven, Prof Geoffrey Hosking

Focus on the Caucasus

The Development of Social Work in Georgia and the Caucasus

by Jo Lucas, BEARR Trustee
and Kastanja Consulting

One premise of the Soviet system was that if you couldn't work, you couldn't contribute to society. You were of no value, and therefore should be looked after in an institution, away from society.

Many shadows of this system persist. Mothers of children born with disabilities are still advised to leave their babies to be sent to institutions. Many women rejected this advice in the 90s, kept their children at home, and got involved in NGOs to ensure they had some services. Under the Soviet system, there were people called 'social workers' whose role was to visit babushkas and help them with their cooking and housework. There was no need for professional social workers: people were either actively part of society, or in institutions, or looked after by their families.

Independence has brought some government recognition that this role may be important, although there is still little state funding. The development of NGOs, the input of international NGOs like UNICEF, and the work of organisations like Everychild have forced the state to take social work seriously. Social work is recognised as having a key role in supporting people in crisis, enabling families to stay together and work through problems, supporting people with disabilities and mental health problems to remain active in society, and countering social exclusion. The role and function of social workers differs between countries, but the profession has begun to develop in post-Soviet countries including in the Caucasus.

University-level social work education was introduced to Armenia in the early 90s after the earthquake, and in Georgia in 2004 and Azerbaijan in 2005. In Georgia this was greatly helped by the Open Society Institute's university education programme, which supported two or three people a year to gain their Masters in Social Work in America. All those young people have returned to Georgia and are active in various education programmes. The Georgian government has begun to employ social workers in child care, with significant input from Everychild, though not as yet in any other sector. The EU and Georgian government adopted social policy as a priority in 1994 and we were able to secure Tempus funding to introduce social work education at Bachelor level in Tbilisi State University. A second grant will complete the process with the introduction of a PhD in social work and a new academic journal. (See page 7)

The Georgian government is committed to closing children's homes, especially for children who are social orphans and can be reunited with their families or fostered or adopted by other families. The lack of services for children with disabilities is partly mitigated by the NGO sector. This has developed significantly in the last 10 years and there are a number of services for children, many supported by international funding. Their stated priority is children and families as the future of the nation. This leaves adults and older people relying on NGOs and international programmes. A few organisations employ social workers, the first being the Georgian Association for Mental Health more than 10 years ago.



The management team for ACES, the Tempus-funded project to develop higher education in social work (Jo Lucas in pink jacket)

Health Ministers have changed practically every year since the early 90s, so while I have had many discussions about the importance of social work there seems to have been little real action. The decision that the state will have a commissioning role rather than being a provider of services seems to have been maintained, though it is still far from clear who the Ministry will commission services from, how they will identify needs, how they will be accountable and how they will assure the quality of those services.

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Country Profile: Azerbaijan¹

Located in the heart of the Caucasus, bordering the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan covers an area of over 86,000 square kilometres. With a majority Turkic and Muslim population, Azerbaijan regained independence, as a Presidential Republic, in 1991.

Economy

In 2009, economic growth remained above 9% even with lower oil prices and a slowing construction sector. The economy is dominated by minerals, especially oil. In 2009 the government continued to rely on financial transfers from the State Oil Fund to bridge its budget shortfalls.

Human development

While there has been some progress in tackling poverty and improving welfare, the prospect of widespread wealth and greater equality stemming from the continued development of the energy sector remains elusive. Azerbaijan lies 86th (out of 182) in the UN Human Development Index. Life Expectancy stands at 70 years (101st) and GDP per capita 8,713 in PPP dollars (84th).

Key facts and figures

Official name: Republic of Azerbaijan

Capital city: Baku

Population (2009/1991): 8,832,175 / 7,174,997

Currency: Manat

GDP per head: (2008/1995): \$8713 / \$1492

Democracy index²: 6.39 (2010)

Health and welfare

The health sector faces severe budgetary constraints and the state budget for health is among the lowest in the region. The health system remains highly centralised and largely unreformed, continuing to respond principally to centrally-driven demands. Primary care services are poorly developed, lacking core infrastructure and with poorly trained staff.

Non-communicable diseases (circulatory disease, cancer, external injuries and poisoning) are the main causes of death and are related to lifestyle factors. Deaths from tuberculosis are 10 times the European average and sexually transmitted diseases, particularly HIV infections, are steadily increasing. There has been little by way of health promotion policy and medical knowledge on AIDS prevention is poor. Almost a quarter of the population does not have access to safe water or sewage facilities, with rural areas particularly disadvantaged.

Health facts and figures (2007-8)

	Az.	CIS	EU
Life expectancy at birth (m)	71.3	62.7	76.2
Life expectancy at birth (f)	76.3	73.6	82.3
Crude death rate*	5.9	13.0	9.7
Deaths, circulatory disease**	552	757	246
TB incidence**	72.6	88.3	14.1
Cancer incidence**	84	271	476
Infant deaths*	9.8	12.7	4.5
Death rate diarrhoeal disease under 5 years**	22.4	12.9	0.4
Abortions*	166	492	238
Fertility Rate	2.3	1.7	1.5
Public % of health spending	24	59	77

* per 1,000 ** per 100,000

- 1 Data comes from UN Health-for-all database and the WHO (<http://www.who.int/countries/en/>).
- 2 The (Freedom House) index ranges from 1 to 7, where higher numbers indicate less democracy.

Social work as a profession is developing slowly and steadily in these three countries, mostly in the NGO sector. Social work courses are creating a pool of professionally qualified people looking to work in this sector, but their impact will only be identifiable in the next five to 10 years.

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Social Policy and Social Work in Transition

A new peer reviewed journal has been launched focusing on social work and social policy in countries in transition. It is edited in Ukraine, published in Georgia, and features articles from academics and practitioners across Central and Eastern Europe. The first two years are supported by the EU Tempus programme. For details see <http://xr.com/50m1>



Focus on the Caucasus

NGO Development in Azerbaijan

United Aid for Azerbaijan (UAFA) was founded in 1998 with a mission to 'aid long-term development of life in Azerbaijan, with particular focus on children, health and education'. UAFA embeds best practices in child care, education and development in a framework of advocacy, civil society development and reform.

All staff start working voluntarily with UAFA, learning how to work with vulnerable and disabled children from both moral and technical perspectives. They develop as experts in child care, education and development, using their expertise to teach parents, volunteers, government staff and NGOs. Our practical skills and experience are used to advocate policy recommendations that suit the political, social and economic situation in Azerbaijan.

I first visited an institution for children with disabilities in 1998. I was shocked at the conditions – despite my awareness of conditions in similar Romanian institutions, nothing prepares you for seeing it for yourself. After spending time with these children, I wanted to know what conditions were like in other institutions around the country, so I designed a survey and spent seven months visiting them all to learn more about this hidden welfare problem. The most heart-breaking institutions were, of course, those for children with disabilities – all the children were kept in bed, following the medical model of care, displaying all the usual self-stimulating behaviours, grabbing you for hugs when you passed by. We followed the advice of an NGO working in Romania and brought two occupational therapists to Azerbaijan, to teach us and institutional care-givers how to work with disabled children, to improve their independent living skills. This was the most urgent priority because, with so

many children dependent on too few staff, the more children could learn to feed themselves, the more would survive. As our skills developed, we created child development programmes in the one institution for disabled children aged 0-7 years, to which children came from the whole country, and the two institutions to which the children moved at 7 years of age. We wanted to provide continuity in their care and development.

One of the main gaps we found, in a post-Soviet environment, is a lack of awareness in society about rights and entitlements, child development and disability, and modern approaches to rehabilitation. Alongside our service provision in institutions and communities, we have made a concerted effort to raise awareness through many different channels of communication – training courses, leaflets and manuals, and mass media – to reach thousands of people. We have also set up Parents' Unions in seven regions of Azerbaijan, self-help groups of parents and family of children with disabilities, and we have empowered them to campaign for their needs. Part of the advocacy process includes training in children's rights and entitlements; and as these Parents' Unions become more confident, they are meeting with their local authorities, national authorities and Members of Parliament to lobby on behalf of their children. For example, we organised a programme of visits by 15 MPs to their constituencies to meet parents of children with disabilities. This has resulted in greater awareness amongst policy-makers of the needs of these most vulnerable of families, and this awareness is being translated into better policy-making.

by *Gwendolyn Burchell*,
Director, UAFA



Photo: David Levene

Community-based rehabilitation centre

I think that the main obstacle in a post-Soviet environment is the lack of cooperation within the NGO community, due to competition for funds and a legacy of the Soviet era. Lack of cooperation can lead to duplication of activities and mixed messages to government, and underline the often negative perception of NGOs by the state authorities. To overcome this, UAFA facilitates networks and supports all efforts at cooperation with the NGO community. This shows in the network of Parents' Unions we set up, the network of Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Centres we facilitate, and the joint campaigning we promote within the child protection NGO community.

UAFA has built up a good body of long-term support amongst the expatriate community in Azerbaijan and has won grants from international

donor organisations, enabling us to further develop our work. We have worked towards the same objectives for over 10 years, building up a strong body of research, expertise and practical skills to make our team the leading child development specialists in the country. The challenge now is to make this support sustainable through local funding – and we are working closely with the NGO community to urge

government to place contracts with NGO service providers.

One of the key factors in future policy reform is the Ministry of Finance – he who holds the purse-strings holds the power! We are strongly urging this ministry to invest in services for disabled children. I am positive; it takes time to make the transition from the Soviet attitude to one of inclusion, participation and equal opportunity,

and the work of UAFA and our partners will help to shift that attitude.

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NGO Profile: Russian Children's Welfare Society has finally landed in London

by *Eugenia Makhlin*
RCWS Board Member, London

The Russian Children's Welfare Society (RCWS) will establish a presence in London this autumn with a kick-off event to support the Society's efforts to aid disadvantaged children in Russia by funding orphanages, schools, rehabilitation centres and hospitals. I aim to connect the Society's charitable endeavours in Russia to London's vibrant Russian community.

RCWS relies on local support in New York and Moscow to fund its charitable projects, which include the treatment of children with maxillofacial deformities, a scholarship programme enabling orphans to attain higher education, and an annual New Year party in Moscow for Russian orphans. Fundraising events in New York City include the Annual Petroushka Ball and 'A Night of Fashion – Russian Style'. RCWS is excited about the opportunities London presents for similar fundraising events and local support.

RCWS hopes to establish partnerships with London charities and corporations dedicated to assisting the vulnerable youth of Russia. Sponsorship is an opportunity to gain corporate visibility and network with prominent Russian-American businesses.



Before and after children's surgery

Founded in 1926 by Russian immigrants in New York, the RCWS has since distributed over \$13 million in aid to charities supporting Russian children. The founders originally intended RCWS to aid Russian youths outside the USSR; since 2002, however, all aid has been directed to Russia.

To improve Russia's future, RCWS supports a range of projects and initiatives for children. Current areas of focus are:

1. Scholarship Program

In Pskov, Yaroslavl, Moscow, and Velikiy Novgorod Regions, RCWS provides financial aid and moral support to help orphans attain higher education and make a successful transition to independent adulthood. For \$100 per month

per child, lives are changed for the better.

2. Give Beauty Back to the Children

Funds raised provide children with maxillofacial disorders with corrective treatment at the Moscow Centre for Maxillofacial Surgery. The Centre performs surgery that gives children the confidence to embrace their future. As one mother says: 'After the surgery my daughter could breathe better and her face looks much better as well. Thank you for not leaving us alone to cope with this problem.'

3. Pskov Orphanages

RCWS's support improves living conditions and increases recreational, educational, and

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Small Grants Scheme report

Small Grants Scheme 2009: project reports

A. Helping the homeless reintegrate into society

Grants in this field are sponsored by the Moscow office of the law firm Baker Botts.

The world through the eyes of homeless people: Caritas, Moscow

Marina Perminova reports on this project which aimed to facilitate creative therapy for the re-socialisation of homeless people by organising a city-wide photographic project and establishing a day care centre in Moscow. (An interim report on this project was included in Newsletter 54.)

The project is finished. The result is 250 good photos taken by the homeless. The exhibition took place on May 25 in the exhibition centre 'Artplay on the Yauza river'. The exhibition had help from volunteers from the organisation 'CloudWatcher', who suggested an exhibition plus round-table discussion. During this discussion questions were asked about the homeless people who had taken the pictures, and what could be done to help them.

After the exhibition a young TV journalist, Alexander Malyshev, made a film for RIA-news called 'Do the homeless need to be creative?' Another was about a young man called Alexander who spent his childhood in an orphanage and then found himself on the streets in Moscow. There he was caught and sent to Dagestan, where he worked in a factory in exchange for food and cigarettes. Then he managed to break free and hitchhike to Moscow, and finally came to 'Marfino'. He loved taking pictures. See the RIA story at: <http://www.rian.ru/society/20100608/243933766.html>

The project was in three stages – autumn, winter, spring. So we got three different sets of pictures: one each from the halfway houses for the homeless 'Marfino' and 'Lublino' and

one from the Salvation Army day centre for homeless youths. Many took photos of Red Square, other historic places, and New Year decorations. There is an interesting set showing various religious centres:

Orthodox churches, Catholic churches, a mosque, a synagogue and some Krishnaites. There are lots of portraits – with people smiling! And many homeless dogs. Looking at the pictures you can see where the homeless spend their time, what they see and how they see it. Some of the young people's photos are very animated. You can trace their day from dawn till dark. They like pictures of themselves. They are having fun in the subway, or in a shop sitting on bikes like cool bikers, or just eating, playing with a dog, sleeping on dirty mattresses... What is surprising is that they are smiling, laughing. They are happy. They are young.

Valery is an older homeless man. He's taken a lot of good pictures: nature, urban sites etc. Valery has problems with registration documents; he has had to wait for years. He has no pension and he lives in a social hostel. He was the only one of the homeless people who came to the exhibition. And it emerged he knew English very well, so some of the roundtable participants offered him work as a teacher and translator. Valery was happy – now he could earn some money.

Some cameras were distributed to homeless women. They were very



Photo: Irina Arme

pleased, but took only a few shots. The women liked to photograph themselves with soft toys in their hands.

The homeless disabled from the social adaptation centre 'Lublino' took pictures of what was around them, as they were immobile. So they took what they saw through the window: dogs, flowers, the things they use.

A slide show of selected photos was shown at the conference 'How we see the homeless in the contemporary world' and during the round-table discussion 'Where can a homeless person have a shower?'

The exhibition was very popular, and we are planning to stage it wherever we are allowed. It has been suggested that we take it to parts of Siberia.

We look at the homeless, but we forget they look at us as well and they see the universe as picturesque as we do. And the main thing is they are able to see the beauty of our world. The homeless people's photos are the testimonies of real people about real life. And these testimonies are worthy of respect and acceptance.

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New hope for the homeless and marginalised:

Institute of Practice Lawyers, Togliatti

Veronika Konshina describes this project which aimed to bring together all active NGOs and relevant local authority departments to look at a more comprehensive way of helping the homeless and marginalised.

More than 600 people participated in the project, among them the homeless, ex-prisoners, people without registration, labour migrants, forced immigrants, and refugees. Twenty NGOs working with marginalised groups participated in the project.

Main results:

- The first specialised consulting centre to provide professional legal services to the homeless was set up in Togliatti.
- A coalition was formed to reduce the number of homeless in the Samara region.
- Some NGOs, and in particular the Togliatti Social Centre for the Homeless, have included in their work methods of mobilising young homeless people. For example, 'I am my own advocate' and 'Art-studio'. 'I am my own advocate' is a training cycle for young marginalised activists. These activists receive training in the use of peer-to-peer social and legal

counselling techniques, and begin to counsel other marginalised people. 'Art-studio' is a training cycle with a psychologist to help a homeless person understand what his problem is, consider possible ways out and then choose the optimum one.

- 342 persons benefited individually from the legal services (street homeless – 72; people without registration – 108; former prisoners – 86; labour migrants – 53; forced immigrants – 13; refugees – 10)
- Free professional legal services were provided on family, labour, civil and housing rights.
- During an information campaign 100 copies of the manual 'Protect your human rights', 300 leaflets 'Who to turn to if your rights are infringed', and 100 copies of the brochure 'Know your human rights' were issued and distributed among target groups.
- More than half the target groups distributed the information from our publications among their friends, acquaintances and relatives.
- Four seminars were held on 'Experience exchange and coalition-building' for 20 NGOs working with marginalised groups.

Stories of success:

We asked several clients of the centre, 'Has your life changed in any way after using our legal services?'

Natalia Ustinova, homeless, 45 years old: *'I have been homeless for eight years. My ex-husband threw me out of our home. I have no children. Recently I got a new passport and your lawyer helped me to stay at the Togliatti Social Centre longer than usual. Now I have no problem with knowing where to sleep and I have time to try to get other state services such as a pension and free medical care. (I am disabled). Tatiana (the lawyer) even helped me to get a medical examination to confirm my disability and then to get a pension. You know how difficult it is, I should say almost impossible, to get services without a residence permit. Today I have plans; I feel power. I know it won't be easy but thanks for these feelings. Thanks for hope.'*

Sasha Ilin, homeless, 23 years old: *'I grew up in hostel in Samara. When I left the hostel the state should have given me an apartment. But nothing was done. Now I am 23, I live in Togliatti and I have no apartment or permanent job and there is no-one to help me. In this centre my lawyer and I started the process of getting a state apartment for me. It's the first time I have got any serious help. My case is not easy. I could not cope with it by myself. Now I believe in success!'*



Art-Studio

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Small Grants Scheme report

High hopes for orphans

Ecologia Youth Trust

Liza Hollingshead reports on ongoing support for higher education for young people leaving Kitezh Children's Community, Kaluga

Valentina Kanukhina (22) and Vasily Burdin (20) are two orphans who went from the same Children's Home in Kaluga to join families at Kitezh when

they were very young. They are both studying at universities in Moscow.

Their success is a testament to the care and therapeutic environment at Kitezh that continues to be an inspiration and a practical alternative to institutional care for orphans in Russia.

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Vasily writes:

This is my third year in Moscow. I am studying and working, and also I have time for my personal interests like composing songs. This year was harder than other two, because I had a lot of activities and I had to learn a lot of information and how to use it. I go to university from 8am to 3pm, and then work at Baker Botts until 8pm.

At university my specialisation is Civil Law. I've passed all my exams with no problems! I also helped organise a conference with Korean diplomats and I attended seminars on how to be successful in business and in life. Working at Baker Botts legal office, I'm always in action. When Steve, my boss, has some free time he helps me to understand things like drafting agreements, about business and other interesting things. I feel important when I'm asked to search for or check documents and understand what I'm doing. But I also clear rubbish baskets and carry boxes: it is all useful experience. At weekends I have time to do my favourite thing – making up songs. I've recorded two songs in a professional studio and I'm planning to record three more. My songs are not for everybody. They are mostly serious, or sad. In summer I go to Kitezh for a change of scene and to live with nature and mosquitoes.

Valentina writes:

This year was a very happy and successful one. My studies are going well. I finished my 4th year so I have only one year left. It makes me a bit worried but thrilled at the same time. I'm not sure yet what I'm going to do next. This year I finished both my examination sessions with best results.

This year my friend and I made up an educational project about studying science fiction at school and put it into practice in Kitezh. Then we talked at a students conference about our experience. We also started working with the professor responsible for students' practice and participated in several events on studying literature in school.

I still work in the Russian-American academic centre in the Russian State University for Humanities. I resumed my fireshow training, and I also started singing lessons. Next year I'm going to take up dancing classes. I'm going to visit Kitezh in August to help with the second summer camp.



The BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2010: Outcome

Grants were awarded as follows:

A. Helping the homeless and institutionalised reintegrate into society

- **Open Alternative**, Togliatti, for a project to exchange experience among all those working with homeless and socially marginalised women.
- **Social Investments**, Togliatti, to introduce a street magazine to Togliatti.
- **UNESCO Club Dignity of the Child**, Volgograd, to reduce bullying and violence in orphanages.

- **The Source of Hope**, Perm, to provide food, shelter, medical and social support to the homeless, and to help with job-seeking.
- **Kitezh** will continue to receive support for orphans going into higher education.

B. Support networks for young mental health sufferers

- **Apra**, Georgia, to develop family support groups in Georgia.
- **Shapagat**, Kazakhstan, to establish a rehabilitation information centre for families.

C. Changing attitudes to disability

Grants in this field are supported by Q'straint, manufacturers of seatbelts for wheelchair-users

Learning through fun in the kitchen

Speranță și Sănătate (Hope and Health), Moldova

Tatiana Roscovan reports on Hope and Health, an association of parents with adult children suffering from mental disability. Their project aimed to teach cooking to adult mentally disabled people, to increase their independence, help their integration into society and provide some assistance to their carers.

The three-month training, for 23 men and 14 women, included theoretical and practical household management, safety and first aid in the kitchen, and cooking processes. Trainees learned to shop at market stalls, check quality, and choose the right products for different purposes. They learned to work with electrical

kitchen, to clear up and wash dishes. More than half learned to make simple dishes, some even unattended. Most importantly they gained an interest in the household and learned to take more responsibility for themselves and their loved ones. Sharing the work in a team, they have become more tolerant towards each other and towards work in general.

The first problem we faced was the lack of equipment. We had dishes, but not enough – a lot of plates and cups got smashed. Without other sponsors, we tried to solve this problem as best we could. For example half the trainees prepared or cooked, while the others watched and commented.

where they could engage happily in complex and important work.

The greatest surprise for us and for the parents is that these people can be trained. For example Sasha. When he started the course he could not even make himself a sandwich and was not allowed to pick up a knife. His mother was later amazed to see him cutting up lettuce. At first she was frightened, but then she realised that his motor skills could be improved and that Sasha could help in the home.

At the beginning of the project, we assumed that only some beneficiaries would remember how to cook all the meals. But we were pleasantly surprised that at the end of the third month (November), when asked what they learned in early September, all were able to respond with details of the cooking.

The most important thing that we learned is that if one tries to understand and engage with these people constantly, they can be trained, although it requires a lot of work and great patience.

The project was not without its lighter moments. When we were learning to make pie dough, the dough got everywhere, even on the trainees' heads; the whole kitchen seemed to be under a blanket of snow, the trainees looking like big snowmen. What a pity there was no camera to hand!

Another interesting incident occurred when the trainees were preparing soup. Someone accidentally dropped a spoon into the pot of boiling soup and did not know how to get it out. They had to think long and hard about how to resolve this problem; it was fascinating to watch.



appliances and other kitchen equipment. They prepared and served many dishes. Simple cooking is not very difficult, but three months is a short time, especially for such people. But we hope to be able to continue the project because we believe their families benefit most of all. Not every trainee will remember how to cook, but all can learn how to behave in the

The second problem is that these people need a lot of individual time, so the project involved the whole staff of the organisation plus other volunteers. Usually adults with mental disabilities find it hard to overcome idleness; it is very difficult to get them to do anything. So the whole project was like a game of Mothers and Daughters,

Small Grants Scheme report

The long-term goal of our organisation is to integrate these people into society. When they work with their hands (whether it be pottery, embroidery or cooking), they improve their motor skills and at the same time gain an occupation and an interest.

The biggest problem of the mentally disabled is their dependence

on parents or relatives. They cannot look after themselves or earn a living. If they can learn to be just a little more independent, then their life will improve significantly and their parents will be able to do other work. The cooking project was a very big step towards our primary goal.

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My recipe for success

New Life, youth organisation for disabled children

Artur Kocharyan writes about the seminars organised by New Life in Konotop, Ukraine, part of a campaign to reduce the stigma of disability and further a more positive public attitude towards disability.

Konotop is a small industrial town in Sumy Oblast with a population of 100,000, including some 175 families who are raising children with disabilities. Every child undoubtedly has talent, and these children are no exception. But society does not know this. Moreover, there is a stigma attached to these people. For some reason there is a general belief that people with disabilities are limited in resources and abilities. Society, unfortunately, perceives such people as limited in all respects.

We want to show the opposite. We believe that every person is unique and that absolutely everyone has great

potential, which must be sought out and fulfilled.

So we decided to show the general public the lives of people who may have their limitations, but have already accomplished a great deal; to present these people to society as living examples of what can be done.

We believe that in this way we can reduce the stigma of disability in our society.

To do this, first we conducted training sessions for our project volunteers. We taught them the special characteristics, in psychology and human relations, of those with limited capacity.

We then set about gathering together a group of people with disabilities who would agree to participate in the project. We wanted to hear not just the standard recipes for success but their own personal recipe, so we could pass this on, to tell everybody in society. We invited each to be involved in making a video film called 'My Recipe for Success'. It was hard to get people to take part in the films. They did not believe anyone would be interested.

So, to motivate them we organised a children's drawing competition on the theme of 'Disability – no life sentence'. A lot of entries were received for this competition. We chose as the winner a child's drawing of a boy demonstrating



Training session at New Life. The other pictures show a selection of entries in the children's drawing competition, including the winning entry made into a poster.



very clearly his way of solving his problem. We placed large billboards around the city showing this picture. This got people talking about the problem of stigmatisation of persons with disabilities.

Only when we had done all this were people with disabilities willing to participate in the shooting of the five videos. Each film presents the story of another life. The main character is a real person with a disability who has achieved a great deal in his or her life. Though these were largely amateur films, we were able to get them shown on television screens in our town. Staff from our local children's television and

Small Grants Scheme report



'I am ashamed that I, with full use of my hands and feet, do not achieve what people with disabilities can do. I want to achieve the same goals as they do.'

Thus, we are confident that this project has not only helped reduce the problem of stigmatisation of people with disabilities, but also motivated ordinary people to take a more active role in life.

radio studio 'Contact' helped us to create and broadcast the movies.

After that, the studio started to contact colleagues, and so the idea arose of creating a series of programmes entitled 'My Recipe for Success'. Today, those involved in these broadcasts are all sorts of ordinary inhabitants of Konotop. But it all started with our initiative for people with limited opportunities. As one participant in the training session said:

Of course, there were difficulties. People who did not know us were sometimes not very positive about our ideas, and did not want to get involved in the project. They were too shy to talk to the camera. But now, after the project, they too have become more self-confident. They all know the city better. And we know their recipe for success – never give up!



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More photos back page

Innovative Portage training: ThePromise

Alison Payne reports on ThePromise, Ryazan, whose project concluded with a 'train-the-trainers' two-day workshop on Portage, and translation of the final five training modules into Russian.

ThePromise, a UK-based NGO, has been delivering Portage to disabled children in the Ryazan region of Russia since 2004. Portage is an early intervention model designed to support the progress of pre-school children presenting delays in their overall development. Following observation of the child a programme is tailored to meet their individual requirements. Activities are designed to boost the child's development in those areas where help is needed – from very early motor skills to the more complex task of using language. It breaks down developmental steps into minute sub-

sections, devising games and activities around each small step to help the child learn.

Although practised in many countries, Portage was unheard of in Ryazan when Sarah Settelen, founder of ThePromise, first visited. Having persuaded the director of the Ryazan baby home that there was a method of working with disabled children that would enhance their skills and improve their lives, individuals who could deliver this service had to be found and trained. So began the work of ThePromise.

As there were no specialist Portage professionals in Russia, Mollie White, a member of the team that introduced Portage to the UK in the 1970s, agreed to run training workshops in Ryazan through an interpreter. The first courses were run in English, but since September 2007 ThePromise has



Participants in role-play session

Small Grants Scheme report

run an annual worship in English and Russian. In the long run, the aim was to train Russian Portage trainers to run workshops in Russian and translate all the materials into Russian. Thanks to The BEARR Trust our goal was finally achieved in June this year, when the first basic Portage workshop run by Russian trainers with Russian materials was held at Ryazan State University.

In Russian the course ran over 3 days instead of 5-6 days when working through an interpreter. More people could attend as it meant taking less time off work or study. 40 participants and trainers took part in the course, 28 receiving certificates (having attended the full three days). The majority were students from Ryazan State University (both the psychology and medical faculties) and people interested in becoming Portage workers for ThePromise's three main projects. It also included participants from the Yasenova Centre in Moscow, the Moscow Institute of Open Education, Our Home centre in Moscow and the Radnic Centre in Shilova. Our Home and the Radnic Centre are very keen to

establish their own Portage services. All those trained will use the skills learnt in their jobs and share their knowledge at their place of work or study.

The workshop consisted of 15 modules including the Portage model, teaching structures, designing activities, working with parents and professionals, managing behaviour and monitoring and supervision. All the trainers work for ThePromise apart from Elvira Samarina, a university professor in the Pedagogical Department. They all drew on their own experiences to illustrate the points they were covering, making it very relevant to those attending. Interaction between trainers and trainees was easier without an interpreter. Apparently it was an unusual experience for the trainers as in Russia courses tend to be very formal and run by one person. For many attendees this was their first experience of attending a participative training event with case studies and role plays. This course showed how effective working together can be.

As this was the first workshop run by Russian trainers, Mollie White

supervised the course. She said: 'The workshop was very well received. Input from the range of presenters, each with differing backgrounds and expertise, contributed to high levels of engagement throughout. Delivery of modules was good with all presenters drawing on their own experience to illustrate points covered. Active participation by every individual in group work was supported, good practice was illustrated and reinforced in role plays.'

The participants were not used to giving feedback but comments of those who did included '*Portage training has got a very friendly and positive atmosphere, you feel that you are learning with support rather than someone is preaching to you*'.

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Russian Children's Welfare Society continued

cultural opportunities for 11 orphanages and over 1,500 orphans in the region. The Belsko-Ustinsky Orphanage for children with specialised needs was the subject of a documentary that won the Grand Prix at a Russia Film Festival for short films on the topic 'Families in Russia.' This reveals the hardships experienced by orphans and their yearning for family life. In the last couple of years, orphanage administration has tried to improve the physical health of the children by renovating the gym and organising sporting competitions.

4. Annual New Year Party

RCWS sponsors a show in Moscow, gifts, and visits to children in hospital during an annual New Year Party.

5. Babushka (Grandmother) Program

Families in Moscow region stay together through this programme, which provides support to non-traditional families struggling to care for orphaned children.

6. Equine Therapy

RCWS supports programmes in two regions to improve children's behaviour and motor skills through interaction with horses.

For a complete list of projects and programme areas, visit www.rcws.org.

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Before and after children's surgery

BEARR News

New Trustee

BEARR is delighted to welcome Nick Tesseyman, who joined the Trustees this summer. He brings with him a wealth of useful financial and project experience in our region.



Nick studied Russian at Oxford and joined Barclays Bank after graduation in 1991. He left in 1994 to join the Russia Small Business Fund, a groundbreaking programme of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to introduce lending to small businesses in Nizhny Novgorod, which had been a closed city until the collapse of the Soviet Union.

He joined EBRD in 1996 to develop the Bank's activities in supporting micro- enterprises in the FSU. He spent six years working in Moscow on projects in the financial sector, returning to London to survive two years as an investment banker at Merrill Lynch before rejoining the world of development banking as Head of Financial Institutions at EBRD.

Following the global financial crisis, much of Nick's work is focused on working with banks to develop sustainable business models to support lending to the real economy, particularly the SME sector, to improve corporate governance and to help financial systems to become more self-dependent. He travels extensively throughout Central Europe and the FSU.

Honorary Treasurer

We are also delighted to welcome our first Honorary Treasurer, Patricia (Trish) Wright. After a career in the British Council, much of it dealing with Eastern Europe, Trish has worked as company secretary of a small business and treasurer of various charities. She has also been a member of Cambridge City Council.



Trish has a Diploma in Management (not for profit sector) from the Open Business School, and brings a wealth of expertise and experience to BEARR.

BEARR website

We are currently engaged in a complete revamping of the BEARR Trust website (www.bearr.org). The result should be a clearer and livelier site, with information more easily located and used. We shall be dropping some of the interactive features which have not proved popular with users, but keeping some of the key features, notably the searchable databases of NGOs and funding sources.

If you have any suggestions on what should be retained, excluded or introduced, we would be glad to have them.

Please email info@bearr.org.

We hope to launch the new website at the time of the Annual Conference in November.

The BEARR Trust Annual Conference 2010: Young People in Trouble

Morning

Welcome and Introduction

Setting the scene

Dr Mary McAuley, Associate of the International Centre for Prison Studies, King's College, London

A Russian perspective

Dr Boris Altshuler, Director, Rights of the Child, Moscow

Crime, justice and prisons

Yuliana Nikitina, St Basil's Centre, St Petersburg

Tsira Chanturia, PRI Tbilisi

Nikhil Roy, Programme Development Director, Penal Reform International

Buffet lunch

Afternoon

Drugs, alcohol and AIDS

Paola Pavlenko, AIDS Alliance, Ukraine

Elena Rydalevskaya, Director, Diakonia, St Petersburg

Life on the street: homelessness and prostitution

Hamish Heald, Love's Bridge, Perm

Dr Armine Hovannisian, Founder and Chairman of Board, Orran, Erevan

Concluding session

All are welcome. Registration for the conference will begin in the autumn. See the BEARR website at <http://www.bearr.org/en/event/conf/2010>

Obituary

Obituary: Maria Fairweather

All those associated with BEARR were greatly saddened by the recent death of one of their founders and long-term Trustees.

Myra Green writes:

I first met Maria Fairweather in 1996 when I became part-time Director and Maria was a BEARR Trustee. It was a great privilege to have had the opportunity of working with her during the six years that I was with the organisation.

In spite of her busy, eventful life in London, she came to Trustee meetings whenever she could. This was appreciated as at the time she was undertaking extensive research in Paris and London for her forthcoming biography of Madame de Stael.

She was always so ready to share her knowledge of Russia and her great interest in the country with Trustees and staff. She was very reticent about her earlier experiences as a diplomat's wife and as a professional interpreter, which included working for Downing Street and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. During Mikhail Gorbachev's visit in 1984, Maria was assigned to interpret for Raisa Gorbachev.

Her role in BEARR'S history was a crucial one as she was one of the founders of the organisation. In fact, the first meeting of the organisation took place in 1991 in the Fairweathers' sitting room in their home in South Kensington. Those who met were Jill Braithwaite, Terri Tollemache, Valerie Solti, Ellen Dahrendorf and Maria herself. Both Terri and Ellen have spoken recently to me expressing great admiration and affection for Maria's vital contribution in those early days.

Her enthusiasm and her gift with people were invaluable in creating interest and support for the fledgling organisation. She persuaded De Beers to provide free offices in one of their buildings, which they continued to do for several years. Later when Jill was in Moscow, Maria was a key member of the volunteer team organising the collection and dispatch of urgently needed medical supplies, prosthetic equipment and wheel chairs, which Maria persuaded British Airways to fly free to Moscow where Jill distributed them to the needy organisations that she had identified.

Subsequently, BEARR moved on from being an emergency relief organisation to the one we know today. Maria was the founder who remained with the organisation, serving as a Trustee for many years. Her loyalty to the organisation was admirable. When I was on the staff she gave great support to BEARR fundraising initiatives, always being ready to use her influence and charm to encourage friends and potential supporters to attend these events, and was ready to come into the office to undertake some of the routine tasks that such events require. She also enjoyed meeting some of the Russian visitors who came over on BEARR study visits – often entertaining them and welcoming them to her home.

Maria will be remembered for her great charm, infectious enthusiasm and optimism. BEARR owes her a tremendous amount for her initiative, loyalty and support. Those of us who worked with her as Trustees and staff will each have treasured memories of the time we knew her.



'The Boy From Baby House 10'

By Alan Philps
and John Lahutsky

Weidenfeld & Nicholson 2010

When I lived in Moscow in the early 1990s, my neighbour Sarah Philps often told me about the baby houses and children's homes where she volunteered as an interpreter. She described a regime of systematic indifference and squalid deprivation of abandoned babies and young children. Some of them suffered from disabilities: others were labelled as 'incurable imbeciles', because they were born prematurely or because their mothers abused alcohol or drugs. Most were kept indoors, imprisoned in a 'permanent bed regime'; immobilised, unstimulated and unloved, they developed disabilities as a result of their treatment in the state care system. Many died.

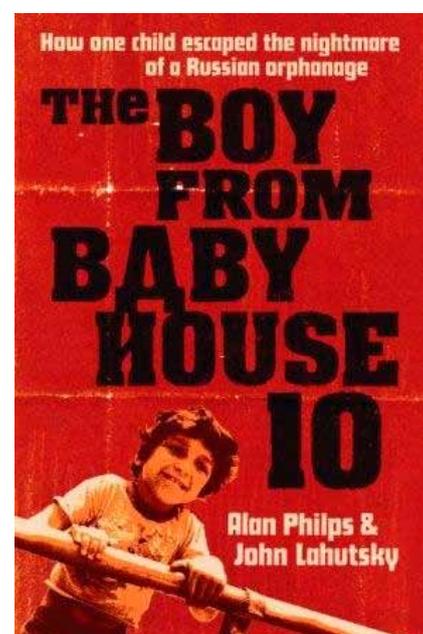
I remember in particular Sarah's account of a woman 'carer' who cried because her grandson had a cold, while she ignored the basic needs of the children in her care.

Vanya was placed in baby house 10 where Sarah and another volunteer, Vika, met and befriended him. At the age of six he was assessed, labelled 'ineducable' and moved to an adult mental asylum where the conditions were as hellish as anything Dickens described. As 'a talker' he was sedated: he lost confidence and became unable to speak or move.

Reviewed by Marcia Levy

But this is a story of an indomitable spirit: a child who smiled, asked questions and would not give up. Visitors, a teenage boy in the asylum and on rare occasions staff, responded and moved bureaucratic mountains. At the age of nine Vanya was adopted and now lives with his mother in the USA where he attends high school and is a keen boy scout.

Alan Philps wrote 'The Boy from Baby House 10' in partnership with Vanya, now John Lahutsky, to fill in the gaps in his life story. They also tell us that there are 800,000 in the care of the Russian state and 5000 living under the permanent bed regime. In telling John's story they have illuminated the workings of an appalling child care system.



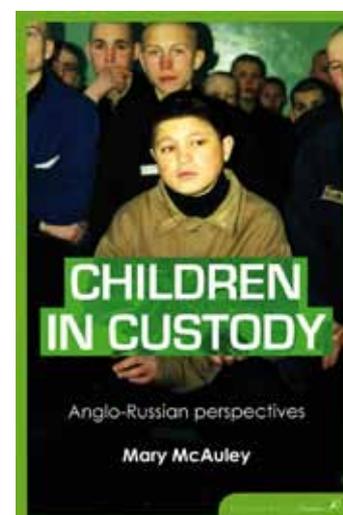
Children in Custody: Anglo-Russian Perspectives

by Mary McAuley

In this innovative book Mary McAuley looks at how attitudes to youth crime and criminal justice, and the political environment in the UK and Russia, have defined each country's approach towards treatment of young offenders. It also puts Russia's and the UK's rather punitive approach in a European context, to study how other countries manage to put far fewer young people behind bars.

Dr McAuley is an Associate of the International Centre for Prison Studies at King's College, London.

Dr McAuley's book was originally written for a Russian readership and was published in 2008 in Russian (OGI publishers) without the comparative element. This new version, published in English for the first time, is published by Bloomsbury Academic at £50 hardback, or can be downloaded free from the Bloomsbury Academic website (www.bloomsburyacademic.com).



More of the children's posters, from New Life, Konotop (see page 14)



The BEARR Trust endeavours to include as wide a debate and as broad a range of opinions as possible in the Newsletter to capture the diversity of NGO work in the UK, Russia and Eurasia. The BEARR Trust cannot be held responsible for the views expressed by authors in their articles.

About The BEARR Trust

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

The BEARR Trust is a British registered charity. It was formed in 1991 to act as a bridge between the welfare and health sectors of Britain and the former Soviet republics. Its mission is:

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

The Trust will do this by:

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

Trustees: Megan Bick, Christopher Gerry, Daryl Hardman, Marcia Levy, Ann Lewis CMG, Tony Longrigg CMG (Chairman), Jo Lucas, Jenny Norton, Nicola Ramsden, Robert Scallon, Nick Tesseyman

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Newsletter: Editor: Ann Lewis; layout: Leila Carlyle

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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, or fill in the form below and send your cheque and form 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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