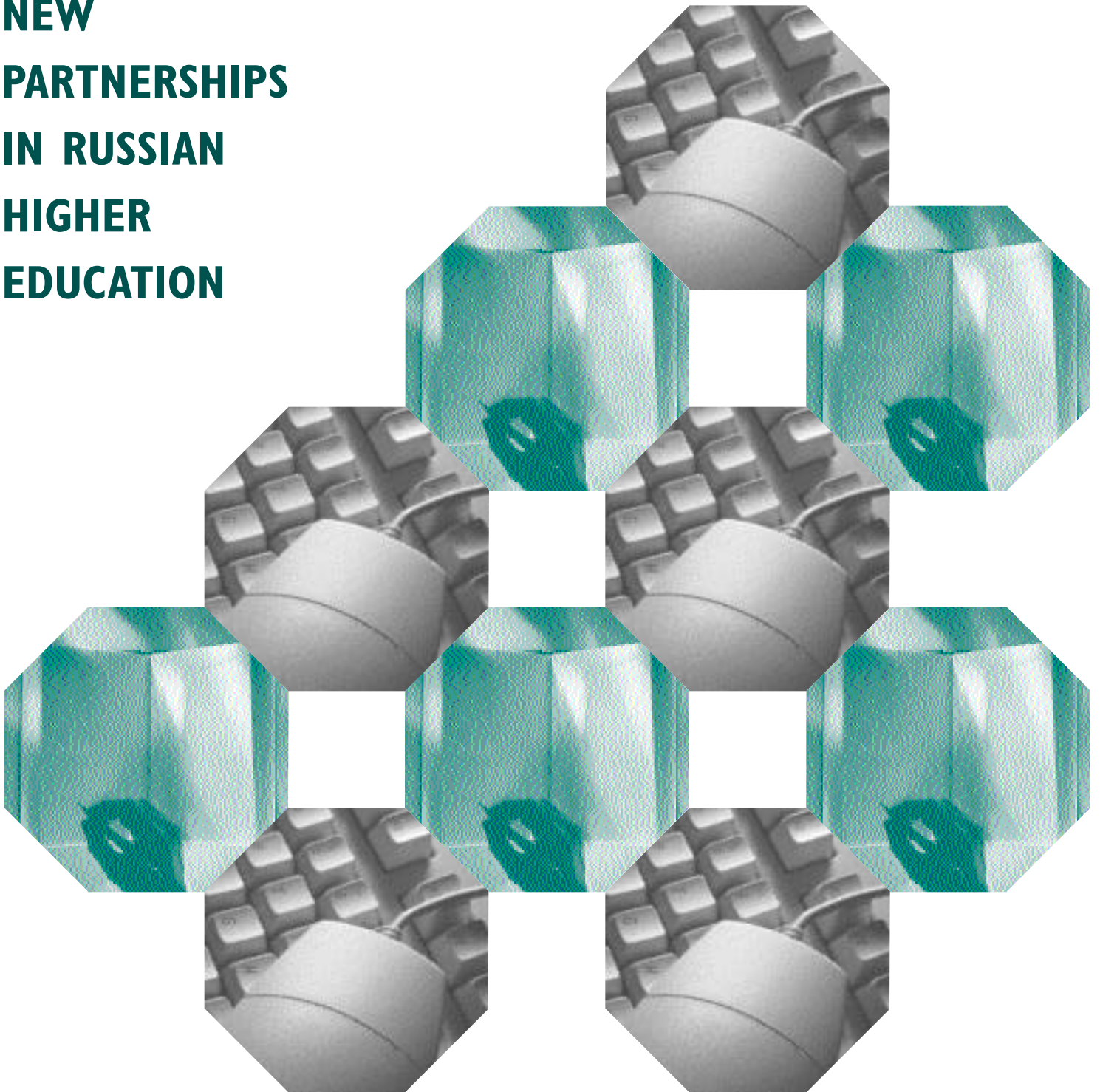


# OPEN SOCIETY NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOROS FOUNDATIONS NETWORK

## NEW PARTNERSHIPS IN RUSSIAN HIGHER EDUCATION



Fall 1999



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he numerous nonprofit foundations established by the philanthropist George Soros are linked together in an informal network called the Soros foundations network. At the heart of this network is a group of autonomous organizations known as "national foundations" that operate in more than 30 countries around the world, primarily in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. These foundations share the common mission of supporting the development and maintenance of open society. To this end, they operate and support an array of initiatives in educational, social, and legal reform. *Open Society News*, published quarterly by the Open Society Institute in New York, reports on the programs and grantees of the foundations in the network. For additional information, see the Soros foundations network website at [www.soros.org](http://www.soros.org) or contact the Open Society Institute, 400 West 59th Street New York, NY 10019 USA; tel: (212) 548-0600; fax: (212) 548-4679; or e-mail: [osnews@sorosny.org](mailto:osnews@sorosny.org)

Cover design by James Pittman

ISSN # 1706-9606

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# Promoting Civil Society in the Baltics

By Todd Diamond

When the United States government's Agency for International Development (USAID) sought local input to support its efforts in promoting civil society in the Baltic countries, it concluded that the most suitable organizations to work with were the Soros-supported foundations in each country.

Early last year, the creation of the Baltic American Partnership Fund (BAPF) was announced at a White House ceremony attended by U.S. President Bill Clinton and the presidents of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. This year, the first grant recipients are beginning to implement a wide variety of programs to support nongovernmental activities in all three countries.

The mission of BAPF, an independent U.S.-based NGO with its own board of directors, is to support the continued development of democratic institutions and market economies in the Baltic countries by enhancing public participation. BAPF also supports initiatives designed to strengthen the legal and regulatory environment in which NGOs function and to increase public awareness of the role and value of civil society actors.

"Our intent was to give the three Baltic countries the means to deepen and sustain civil society while honoring progress made to date," said Harriet C. Babbitt, USAID's deputy administrator and a BAPF ex-officio board member. "For this, we needed to find the most effective and sophisticated indigenous organizations."

USAID and the Open Society Institute each contributed \$7.5 million toward a \$15 million fund that BAPF will use over a ten-year period to complement the efforts of other donors. The implementors of the programs—the Open Estonia Foundation, the Soros Foundation–Latvia, and the Open Society Foundation–Lithuania—have estab-

lished Baltic American Partnership Programs in each country. These programs have their own staff separate from the foundations, and are guided by local experts councils. BAPF makes grants to each of these Programs, which then distribute the funds.

In Lithuania, the program has solicited proposals from municipal governments outside the capital of Vilnius that are willing to contribute \$10,000 in matching funds. This money along with the BAPF funds will finance community-based projects dealing with crime prevention, child care, and the empowerment of women, according to Birute Jatautaite, the program director. The projects, which will begin in October, are initially scheduled to run for six months.

"NGO and municipality cooperation is promising," said Jatautaite. "In Lithuania local governments are just starting to employ the services of NGOs, and we want to encourage that."

To raise public awareness about the value of NGOs, the Lithuanian program will also sponsor conferences, a radio program, and an essay competition for journalism students. The Estonian program is following a similar approach, providing support for a monthly

insert in the Estonian national daily newspaper *Eesti Päevaleht* that describes the activities of existing NGOs and discusses NGO legislation and taxation issues. "The goal of the supplement is to make NGO activity more transparent, thus eliminating the ambiguity and distrust that currently tends to characterize the sector in the public's eyes," said Katrin Enno, the Estonian program director.

A major component of the Latvian program is the promotion of long-term NGO support. To accomplish this, the program chose as a partner the NGO Center, which has provided training and technical and legal assistance to NGOs for three years. "The Center's goal is to enhance public awareness and participation and to further develop a favorable environment for Latvia's 5,000 NGOs," said Kaija Gertnere, the NGO Center director.


Positive results from this partnership would make future collaboration with publicly funded organizations appealing, according to Deborah Harding, OSI's vice president for national foundations and BAPF ex-officio board member. "Hopefully this partnership will take the best of the private foundation and the best of the government funder, and create something new." 



Photo by Janis Dierats

Staff at the NGO Center in Riga, Latvia.

# President's Message:

Since George Soros's philanthropic efforts in the former Soviet bloc began in the mid 1980s, the political, economic and social dynamics of the region have changed, in some countries more dramatically than in others. Accordingly, the strategy and goals of the Soros foundations network have also changed. Here Open Society Institute President Aryeh Neier outlines the long-term future of the network.

**T**he Soros foundations network as it is now constituted will come to an end in the year 2010. With the passage of a decade since the revolutions of 1989 in the region where most of our activities are focused, and with a little more than a decade remaining in the planned life of the network, it seems time to take stock.

Are the foundations achieving their stated goal of helping to develop and maintain open societies? What have we learned during the past decade that can guide our efforts in the next decade? What role can we play in promoting open society globally and in addressing some of the defects of open societies?

Before attempting to answer such questions, it may be well to recall the response of one historian who was asked recently about the impact of the French Revolution. He said it was too soon to tell. Yet that degree of prudence may not be appropriate in the context of an institution such as the Soros foundations network, the lifetime of which has been extended beyond the point initially foreseen and which has given notice that it will end. With only a limited lifespan, it seems important to learn from the network's experience up to now in determining how to go forward.

Some countries of Central and Eastern

Europe have developed politically and economically in ways that make them more akin to the European Union than ten of them are eventually slated to join than to other parts of what was the Soviet empire. That does not mean they have become an earthly paradise. Far from it. To varying degrees, they suffer from such flaws of other open societies as corruption, unfair systems of criminal justice, mistreatment of minorities and the ever-growing dominance of market forces outside the marketplace. Even so, they have made great headway because there is no serious prospect of the return of severely repressive authoritarian government or that they will become embroiled in internal or external armed conflicts, and because individual opportunity has been greatly enhanced.

It is impossible to measure in any scientific way how much the foundations have contributed to their development. However, it is possible to say that the foundations in these countries were at the forefront among the institutions supporting or directly sponsoring programs in education, law, and the arts and in other areas, such as the dissemination of information, that are crucial in opening what were closed societies.

In the decade that lies ahead, a narrower focus may be appropriate for these founda-

# The Middle of the Journey

tions so that they address matters—such as discrimination against Roma and other ethnic minorities, over-reliance on incarceration, and mistreatment of those suffering from physical and mental disabilities—that remain largely unchanged despite the general progress that has been made.

It is possible that the contributions of the Soros foundations have been even greater in the countries of the former Soviet Union and of the Balkans that have made less headway. Many of these countries still suffer from authoritarian rule, and some have suffered or continue to suffer greatly from wars promoted by demagogic leaders. Yet the foundations have provided an alternative vision.

Often, they have been virtually alone in sustaining the efforts of those in such countries who strive to break the state's monopoly on the control of information and of those who attempt to improve the lot of minorities and to promote the rule of law. It seems essential in these countries also to enlist others in supporting those efforts, which will have to be maintained for the foreseeable future.

The expansion of the foundations network to South Africa in 1993, to Haiti in 1995, to the United States in 1996 and to nine additional countries in Southern Africa and to Guatemala in 1998 reflects the recognition that the struggle for open society is global. In extending the network, we have discovered that the resources that we can provide to those engaged in that struggle go beyond the funds that are needed to support particular programs. They include the experience that can be shared as a result of our efforts in the region of the former Soviet empire and, perhaps comparably important, the reputation that the foundations network developed there. This has endowed our efforts in other regions with a symbolic significance that has often magnified the impact of the programs we undertake.

The experience of the foundations network in the region where it was launched has also shaped the manner in which we work elsewhere, as in our reliance on local governance. An example is the United States programs, where a determination was made to focus some of the Open Society Institute's efforts in a city suffering from a variety of urban ills, Baltimore. To guide that effort a Baltimore office was established and a local advisory board was created to guide its work. To our knowledge, this is not an approach that has been followed by any other United States foundation, though it seemed natural for an institution steeped in the practices of the Soros foundations network.

## SUSTAINABILITY


One of the mistakes of the foundations network, we now recognize, is that we have made many institutions overly dependent on our support alone. In the decade ahead, we will avoid creating new dependencies and we have already started doing our best to ensure that organizations that we value and that should endure can survive without us. Ideally, we would like to assist them in sustaining themselves with local resources. Where that is not possible, we are attempting to enlist other international donors in providing support.

One step we took in this direction a few years ago was to provide support for an independent institution, the Media Development Loan Fund (MDLF). Instead of providing direct subsidies to independent media, wherever possible we now refer them to MDLF, from which media outlets can obtain loans and business assistance to become self-sustaining. MDLF has obtained funding from a number of other donors and now actively assists independent media in more than a dozen countries.

We have also recently helped launch the

Southern Africa Media Development Fund (SAMDEF), which collaborates with MDLF and plays a similar role in its region. It too is independent and has support from other donors. Over time, we expect both MDLF and SAMDEF to become self-sustaining. These organization will enable media in a growing number of countries to operate as business ventures that are not dependent on subsidies such as those we provided to many hundreds of newspapers, magazines, and radio and television stations during the past decade.

There are many other shifts that are taking place in the network, as readers of this report may readily see for themselves by comparing it with earlier reports. Our goal of promoting open societies remains the same, but our sense of how we can best achieve that goal has been influenced by the changes that have taken place in the countries where we work and also by the successes and failures of our efforts up to now. On balance, we believe we have achieved a great deal, but we are also mindful of how much more we would like to accomplish in the decade that remains.

The realization that our horizon is limited, I believe, is bringing about the most profound shift in our work. When the foundations were getting started in the latter part of the 1980s and the early 1990s, their general approach was to empower as many people as possible who had ideas for projects that could contribute to the opening of their societies. Now, that is not good enough. With only a decade left, in each country where we operate we have to concentrate on a few areas that we consider particularly important and where we think we can make a difference; and we have to ensure that efforts that must endure can be sustained without us. 

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*This article is reprinted from Building Open Societies: Soros Foundations Network 1998 Report.*

# Lawyers join forces *for* Equal Justice

Photos by China Jorin



Many people in the United States cannot afford access to legal assistance, and many of those who can are frustrated by its enormous costs, lengthy delays, and unpredictable results. There is widespread disdain for the legal profession, which is responsible for safeguarding the administration of justice, and the courts are under intense political attack. In 1997, the Open Society Institute launched the Program on Law & Society, with increasing access to justice as one of its priorities. As part of this strategy, the Program initiated a multimillion-dollar matching grant to enable the National Association for Public Interest Law to expand its Equal Justice Fellowship program.

By Donna Taliercio

After 18 years of living in the Christopher Columbus housing project in Paterson, New Jersey, Karen Brown understands the hardships people face in public housing. “Imagine living in an apartment where roaches are crawling over your newborn baby while he lies in his crib,” she said. “Or being awakened by the screams of your 5-year-old little daughter—to rush into her bedroom to find that she has just been bitten by a gigantic rat.” Brown also knows the frustration and feelings of powerlessness that these conditions can create.

Unlike many, Brown escaped life in public housing to attend college and Rutgers Law School. But during Brown’s third year of law school, her mother, who was still living at Christopher Columbus, received an eviction notice from the Paterson Housing Authority. Her home was slated for demolition. Authorities halted upkeep on the buildings and all residents were told to move out as soon as possible. Brown was able to help her mother find more suitable housing, but other ten-

ants were left without the resources to find new living arrangements.

Without any alternative, many remained as tenants of the buildings as conditions grew even worse. Elevators sat in a state of disrepair, while pregnant women and elderly residents navigated stairways blocked with dead cats, dog feces, pipes, old refrigerator parts, sofas and other debris. Drug dealers and vagrants took control of playgrounds, and random shootings and fires became commonplace. After witnessing the extent to which authorities allowed public housing to deteriorate, Brown grew determined to make a real change in the way these low-income tenants were being treated.

After finishing law school, Brown returned to the community where she grew up, determined to make a difference in the lives of others. As a National Association for Public Interest Law (NAPIL) Equal Justice Fellow, Brown joined Passaic County Legal Aid and the Christopher Columbus Family Development Resident Council in their fight to improve conditions in the housing project where she once lived.

Together, they filed suit in state court for a temporary restraining order, and were victorious. On April 26, 1998, the court ordered the housing authority and the mayor of Paterson to take the actions necessary to clean up the development within 24 hours. While the residents still were required to vacate the buildings, their demands to authorities to maintain safe and habitable conditions until they found new housing were legitimized. This victory, Brown explains, worked toward empowering a group of people whose faith in the system had waned. “That day we finally discovered what it’s like to take control of your life,” she said.

Each year, thousands of young people like Brown graduate from law school eager to use their education to engage in public and community service. Few, however, find it easy to pursue their goals. The number of jobs available in public interest law is limited. The jobs that do exist are found in the nonprofit and public sectors, where salaries are low—and with the accumulation of student loan debts often nearing six figures, new graduates simply cannot afford to pursue their goals.



NAPIL's Equal Justice Fellowship program, established in 1992, enables socially responsible young professionals to contribute their skills to communities that desperately need them. By providing a salary, loan repayment assistance, and training, NAPIL gives attorneys across the country the opportunity to work in areas such as community development, civil rights, protection of children, and access to health care.

In 1997, OSI gave NAPIL a big boost with a large-scale matching grant. This challenged law firms to provide half the funds needed to enable a NAPIL fellow to work with a nonprofit organization. By the summer of 1999, more than 100 law firms, corporations, and other sponsors had responded to OSI's challenge. The fellowship program grew from 14 fellows to 140.

Catherine Samuels, director of the Program on Law & Society, which made the grant, believes NAPIL's Equal Justice Fellowships are crucial for the future development of legal services in the United States. "We see this fellowship program as investing in the next generation of public service lawyers, and in the profession itself, since a vast majority of fellows remain in the field throughout their careers."

NAPIL's Equal Justice Fellows hail from diverse backgrounds, and include a Jesuit priest, a former homeless person, and a female long-haul trucker. They have brought positive change to communities across the country through direct service, education, and advocacy work on a wide range of issues. Other examples of

fellows' work include:

- Helping at-risk kids and juvenile detainees in Maryland, Florida, and Georgia;
- Educating immigrants about their legal rights and advocating for their health and welfare in Connecticut, Minnesota, Arizona, and Washington, DC;
- Supporting the rights of Native Americans in New Mexico, Montana, Wisconsin, and Alaska; and
- Providing essential legal services to victims of domestic violence in Illinois, New Mexico, Texas, California and New York.

### CORPORATE SPONSORS


At a recent breakfast held at OSI offices for NAPIL fellows, hosts, and sponsors, Greg Landis, General Counsel of AT&T Wireless Services, spoke about his company's contribution to NAPIL. "Members of the legal profession have a solemn obligation to promote the cause of equal justice wherever we can." Working with a NAPIL fellow has become a source of pride and inspiration for members of his department. Assisting with a fellowship project can also provide a corporation's in-house legal personnel with useful training in areas of the law to which they would not otherwise be exposed.

The most important beneficiaries of the NAPIL Equal Justice Fellowships, of course, are the nonprofit organizations and the communities they serve. While some fellowship projects are initiated by attorneys such as Brown, other projects frequently emerge from a specific need with-

in an organization involved in legal services. NAPIL works with these groups to find corporate sponsors and create jobs for attorneys who are willing to serve the public and their communities to ensure that a larger number of people have access to justice. One example of this approach is the assistance given to the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem (NDS).

Opened in 1990, NDS focuses on providing better representation to low-income people accused of crimes. Since civil cases often arise from criminal charges, NDS can best help clients by providing representation both for civil and criminal legal needs. By 1998, the NDS civil team had dwindled because the organization had lost major sources of funding. At that time, NAPIL, NDS and the law firm of Cravath, Swaine and Moore joined together to revitalize NDS's civil practice.

Thanks to this partnership, Miriam Gohara joined NDS's civil team as an Equal Justice Fellow to work with clients on family court, police misconduct, and housing cases that arise from clients' criminal charges. Upon graduating from Harvard Law School in 1997, Gohara was heavily recruited by top-notch, high-paying corporations and law firms, but chose to dedicate this stage of her career to community service.

"I did not go to law school so that I could add another ten million dollars to the pockets of some major corporation," she explained. "My heart is not in that kind of work. I studied law so I can work to further civil rights." 

# E A S T O F M A G N U M :



*Musicians in Czechoslovakia play at a Romany music festival in 1966.  
Photo by J.K.*

*By Anthony Richter and Nanette Francia*

The end of the Cold War came—symbolically, at least—on November 9, 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell under the pressure of people hungry for freedom. Ten years later, the vividness of the Cold War has begun to fade. New challenges and opportunities abound, and forgetfulness has begun to distort recollections of events and institutions that were once so central to the old order.

In June 1999, the exhibit *East of Magnum* opened in Yerevan, Armenia, beginning a year-long tour that will travel

to Georgia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Mongolia over the next twelve months. Organized jointly by Magnum Photos, the Open Society Institute's Central Eurasia Project, and the Soros-supported foundations in participating countries, *East of Magnum* features 130 Cold War-era photographs taken by the agency's photographers over five decades.

The events depicted are not new to citizens of the formerly communist bloc. But for the first time, viewers from the countries shown in these photographs may

compare the reality as it was shown in Western galleries and in the Western press with their own experiences and memories.

The exhibit offers viewers several opportunities. It presents an occasion to discuss the past from the perspective of the present, and the present in the context of history. It creates a setting to compare the relative freedom and power of expression of Western photographers who were able to visit the East and record it without the limits that constrained journalists in the East.

The exhibit is also a point of departure



# T H E C O L D W A R



*Life in a Soviet workers' canteen in Moscow in 1954.  
Photo by Henri Cartier-Bresson.*

for photographers in each country as they document the present for future viewers. Finally, the exhibit celebrates the photographic medium and its unique power to tell stories that shape the world we inhabit.

The exhibited photographs in *East of Magnum* represent the work of 41 Magnum photographers, including Werner Bischof, Robert Capa, Elliott Erwitt, Georgi Pinkhassov, Marc Riboud, and Sebastiao Salgado. Their images and reportage are among the most powerful documents of the Cold War era.

In conjunction with the exhibit, the

Central Eurasia Project and the foundations in each country are organizing an array of activities, including a workshop for local photographers (given by Magnum photographers Josef Koudelka, Larry Towell, and Susan Meiselas), parallel photography exhibits by local photographers, a Magnum Photos video program, and showings of the CNN-produced documentary *Cold War*. The exhibit's website is [www.soros.org/eastofmagnum.html](http://www.soros.org/eastofmagnum.html).

The *East of Magnum* schedule is: September 3–October 17, 1999, Georgian

Arts & Cultural Center, Tbilisi, Georgia; November 5–December 19, 1999, Azerbaijan State Fine Arts Museum after Rustam Mustafaev, Baku, Azerbaijan; January 14–February 27, 2000, Ilkhom Theater, Tashkent, Uzbekistan; March 10–April 23, 2000, National Museum of Arts, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; June 2–July 16, 2000, Union of Mongolian Artists, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. ☞

*Richter and Francia are director and deputy director of OSI's Central Eurasia Project.*

# Speaking Out for Children

The Open Society Institute's Child Abuse Prevention and Children's Mental Health Program brings together professionals from various disciplines to respond to the urgent need for child abuse treatment and prevention services in the countries of the formerly communist bloc. With the help of Nobody's Children, Poland has made great progress in addressing this difficult issue.

By Todd Diamond

When the political environment changed in Poland in 1991, Maria Keller-Hamela was excited about the prospect of openly confronting an issue that previously was rarely discussed: child abuse. The greater openness in governmental policy allowed, Keller-Hamela to begin advocating for changes in the procedures for handling child abuse cases in order to better protect the victims and help preserve families.

For the next five years, Keller-Hamela, a Warsaw-based psychologist, sought to bring as much attention as possible to the existence of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect of children. In so doing, she had to change the attitudes of a population that had little interest in reporting such crimes, let alone in treating victims when they were discovered.

Although her advocacy was succeeding in raising awareness, she realized that what Poland really lacked was a clinic where assistance could be offered to those in need.

Keller-Hamela was not alone in her beliefs. She found similar views among the doctors, psychologists, educators, and lawyers who together formed an NGO called Nobody's Children. This NGO focuses not only on abused and neglected children, but also seeks to assist their parents and guardians, as well as individuals who deal professionally with abused children. In 1996, Keller-Hamela joined Nobody's Children to establish the Child and Family Center, which received a grant from the Stefan Batory Foundation, the



Photos courtesy of Nobody's Children

Children play in the Center's garden.

foundation created by George Soros in Poland in 1988.

The Center's ability to provide counseling to children and to train other mental health professionals provided the added dimension to treatment that Keller-Hamela felt was crucial. Even the setting proved beneficial.

"The interrogation of victims used to take place at the police station, which was intimidating to the children," she explained. "So we invited the police officers to do their interviews at the clinic, which was a much more comfortable place to deal with these problems."

Keller-Hamela's nuanced approach

helped her break down barriers to confront an issue that—controversial in every country—was completely taboo in Poland. In the fall, she will begin teaching a class to law students on different aspects of child abuse, including how to interview children and how to analyze their testimony. This dramatic change in attitudes is a credit to both Keller-Hamela and Nobody's Children.

"They have been successful at forcing people to recognize that this problem exists," said Dr. Nicolas Cunningham, a pediatrician and member of the U.S.-based Children's Mental Health Alliance Foundation, who has spent considerable

time in Central and Eastern Europe.

A groundbreaking study by Nobody's Children in 1994 entitled *What Do We Know About Them?* reported that 1 out of every 128 preschool children and 1 out of every 123 school-age children in Poland are severely physically abused. Subsequent research showed that less severe beatings take place more often. For a previously undiscussed topic, the very admission of the problem was a major breakthrough. The 1994 report also concluded, however, that professionals who work with children—doctors, school principals, even directors of orphanages—have little understanding of what child abuse is, and in any case believe its treatment and prevention is not their responsibility.

Such denial is not surprising in any society, according to Cunningham, but it is particularly difficult to overcome in the formerly communist countries.

“Under the Soviet system, the official line was that child abuse did not exist

and multidisciplinary in order to encourage members of all related professions to work together. Participants include police officers, court guardians, pediatricians, nurses, teachers, school administrators, and social workers.

“Child abuse is so complex that the work of one professional can be very difficult without the help of others,” Keller-Hamela said. “We have to teach students and professionals when they are young.”

Keller-Hamela, who now works full-time at Nobody's Children, is also a consultant to the Open Society Institute's Child Abuse Prevention and Children's Mental Health Program. The OSI program was created in 1996 to help professionals in the region develop a multidisciplinary approach to dealing with child abuse prevention and treatment.

“From the first moment we met representatives of Nobody's Children, we knew they were not people we had to teach, but professionals we could use as a

*“Child abuse is so complex that the work of one professional can be very difficult without the help of others.”*

because the social system was perfect,” Cunningham said. “Every country wants to deny they have that problem because it's very embarrassing. But it is tougher to deal with when there is state-sponsored denial.”

In addition to offering direct assistance through the Child and Family Center in Warsaw and another center just outside the city, Nobody's Children also works to create a system of assistance that includes state and municipal institutions and other NGOs. The goal is to integrate as many actors as possible into the effort to preserve and strengthen the family structure.

Keller-Hamela and her colleagues organize training seminars to improve the ability of professionals to diagnose cases of abuse, plan interventions, and provide therapy for abused children and their families. Training seminar topics range from the legal and psychological aspects of child abuse to diagnosis and therapy for sexually abused children. The seminars are mul-

valuable resource in our program,” said Liz Lorant, director of OSI's network programs. “Poland is much farther ahead in this field than most other formerly communist countries.”

Nobody's Children hosts teams from the 11 other countries participating in the OSI program, and Keller-Hamela visits other NGOs in the region to share some of the more successful examples of the work of Nobody's Children. In her travels, she has noticed different levels of institutional response to the problem. Several countries do not have family courts to properly handle the issue, she said, while others have passed mandatory reporting laws.

The short-term goal of her advocacy work in Poland is to use the laws that do exist to obtain as much protection as possible. The passage of new laws—such as a mandatory reporting law, which does not exist in Poland—is a long-term goal.

In the meantime, the strategy among the staff of Nobody's Children is to intervene as early as possible in order to head



*The Child and Family Center in Warsaw.*

off criminal activity. Cases in which there is a non-offending family member are easier to deal with, at least at the outset, according to Keller-Hamela. Nobody's Children first invites the child and the non-offending family member to the center for counseling. “We then invite the offender in, but such counselling is much more difficult,” she said. “That is why we are also lobbying for more treatment for the offender.”

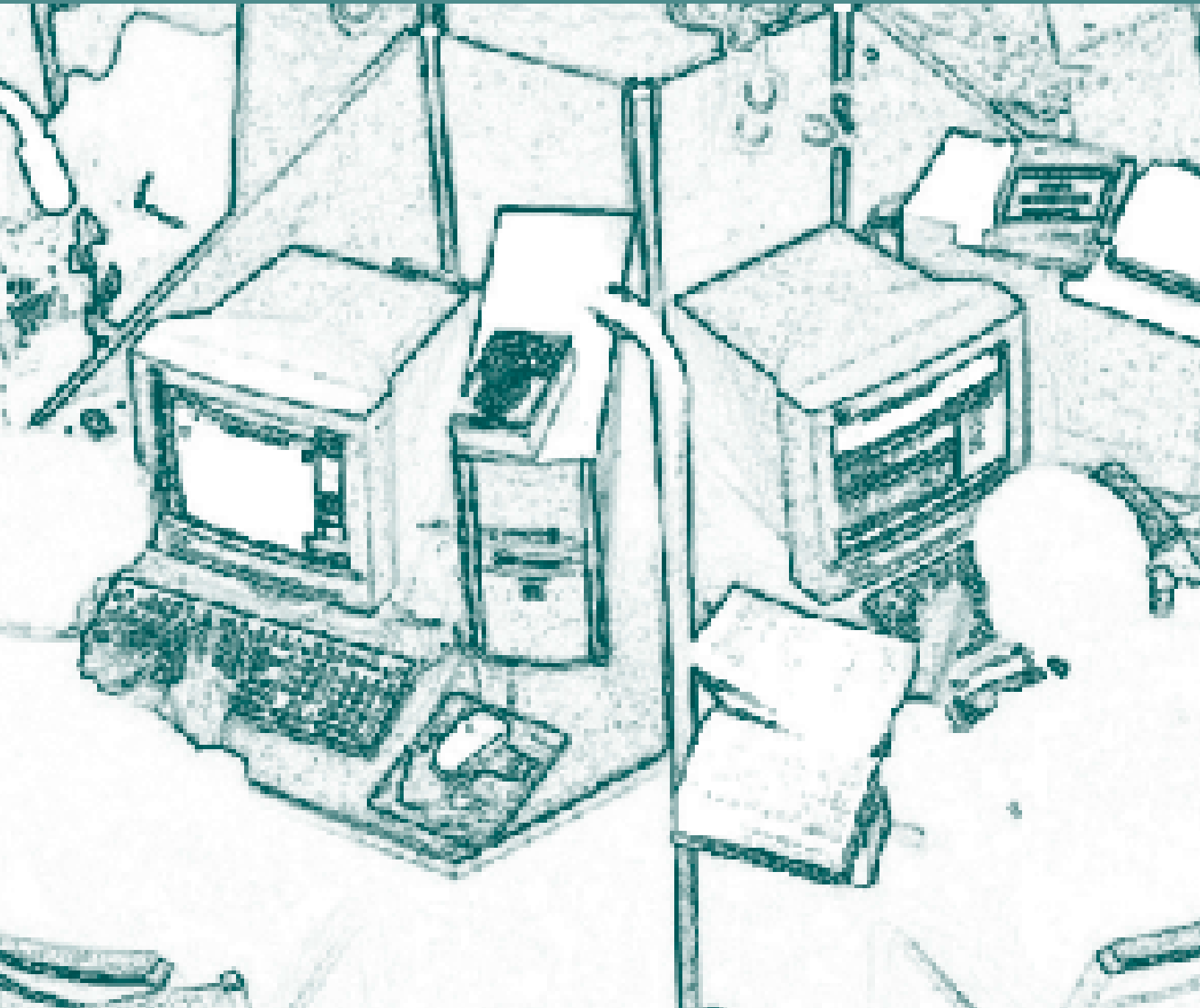
Job retraining programs and other social services are also necessary, according to Keller-Hamela. “Many times, it is the stress of work or other things that causes parents to abuse their children,” she said.

Because most families involved do not have much money, Nobody's Children offers its services for free, and such services are not covered by health insurance. Keller-Hamela is optimistic about the proliferation of other NGOs in the field. She does not envision her organization getting any larger, but would like to see her ideas taken up by other groups with other sources of funding. ■

*Nobody's Children can be reached at ul. Walecznych 59, 03-926 Warsaw, Poland, tel. (48 22) 616 0268, fax (48 22) 616 0314, email: dzieci\_niczyje@supermedia.pl*

# *New Partnerships*

BY LEONARD BENARDO



# in Russian Higher Education

*These photographs show students and faculty at the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences and the New Economic School in Moscow. All photos by Valerie Nistratov.*

Building on a strong Russian tradition of liberal arts education, OSI–Russia recently launched a major program to upgrade and integrate teaching and research skills at the country’s provincial universities.

Russia has a rich tradition of excellence in the humanities and social sciences, but economic uncertainties are driving scarce resources away from these areas of scholarship toward the more lucrative fields of business, banking, and law. The liberal arts departments at Russia’s provincial universities are among the hardest hit. With fewer students and dwindling funds they are struggling to maintain the standards established by such legendary scholars as Kliuchevsky, Likhachev, and Lotman—the giants of 19th and 20th century Russian academia.

To help reinvigorate liberal arts education across the country, the Open Society Institute–Russia recently established the “Development of Chairs and Faculties Program,” a three-year, \$15 million initiative that targets young professors in fields such as history, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology from provincial universities throughout the Russian Federation. The pilot phase of the program was launched in the spring of 1999, and based on early successes is set to triple in size this fall.

For OSI–Russia, the program represents a marked change in strategy. In the past the foundation focused its funding on separate individual projects to publish

textbooks, fund research, hold conferences, or develop new curricula. Now the foundation is attempting to tackle systematically what many experts see as the most urgent task facing Russian academia today: preparing young faculty to meet and maintain international standards in teaching and research.

The heart of the program lies in the inauguration and nurturing of relationships between “resource centers” at universities with highly trained faculty and “chairs” at provincial universities. A “chair,” in the parlance of Russian higher education, is a division of an academic department usually consisting of seven to ten scholars who specialize in a specific branch of a given field, such as ethnology in a history department or international relations in a political science department.

“The program seeks to counter the conservative tendencies of Russia university elite by introducing young faculty and graduate students to new modes of teaching and research,” said Andrei Kortunov, director of OSI–Russia’s education program and president of the Moscow Public Science Foundation. “A systematic effort to train and upgrade the skills of younger scholars will create a new generation of well-trained Russian academics integrat-

ed into an international community of scholars.”

The resource centers—which each consist of a group of professors in a particular department—work to improve the research and teaching qualifications of the chairs, collaborating closely with them to meet international standards in their particular field. The resource centers tend to be in major metropolitan areas such as Moscow and St. Petersburg, or even outside of Russia, as in the case of the Central European University in Budapest, which begins its affiliation with the program this fall.

While the program is designed to improve both teaching and research skills, one of the most important tasks program designers faced was bridging the two areas of activity. As many other European countries, there is a pronounced separation in Russia between the university and the various academy of science institutes. Universities handle most teaching responsibilities and the academies shoulder the bulk of research. By focusing on bringing state-of-the-art research capacity to the university system, the “Development of Chairs and Faculties Program” will attempt to bridge the gap.

Ekaterina Genieva, president of

OSI–Russia and director of Moscow’s renowned Library of Foreign Literature, was active in conceiving the initiative. “University faculty in Russia should be trained in state-of-the-art research methods,” Genieva argued. “This will help put Russian universities back on the map internationally and will allow talented younger scholars gain access to badly needed resources.”

The program’s core activities include workshops and seminars, summer schools, joint research projects, and networking and distance learning programs. Some components of the program are novel to the Russian university system and will be valuable in familiarizing scholars with new pedagogical methods. Teodor Shanin, rector of the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences, one of the pilot resource centers, includes among these his own innovative idea of the master class.

Led by well-known scholars, the master class will become “a biographical lesson



in doing research, as the professor will recount not only his or her successes in research but also the failures,” Shanin said. This process of demystifying the work of eminent scholars will add considerably to an educational system rarely accustomed to hearing from its elite about “how things went wrong.” It is also another way of

breaking down the barrier between professor and student that has long existed in Russian education.

The program is not simply a one-sided training relationship. Participating chairs are expected to offer their own research agendas to be developed collaboratively with the resource center. “This program seeks to create partnerships, rather than mentors,” said William Newton-Smith, a professor at Oxford University and a key advisor to the Soros foundations network on higher education issues. “An interactive learning process is what this is all about. In fact, the program is designed so that the chairs will eventually become resource centers in their own right, serving other provincial universities.”

For the young faculty at provincial chairs, learning contemporary research methods and pedagogy from the resource centers is fundamental, but the opportunity to apply that new knowledge to specific and immediate areas of concern in their native regions is especially appealing.

“Wherever possible we encourage joint research projects that are exciting not only on a theoretical level, but empirically as well,” noted Andrei Melville, dean of the Moscow State Institute for International Relations and the chairman of the board that oversees OSI–Russia’s higher education programs. “Theory and methodology

divorced from practice would ultimately be a waste of time.”

Incentives for participation in the program are reciprocal. For the resource center, the program provides an opportunity to share expertise and to capture scarce funding. For the chairs, which are often isolated from the more cosmopolitan and better-funded universities in Moscow and other big cities, the program provides a vital link to the outside world. Much of OSI–Russia’s work on the program consists of identifying potential productive partnerships.

## SUCCESS IN SIBERIA

In one example of partnership, the chair in regional politics at Tomsk State University has been paired with the political science faculty of the Moscow School of Social and Economics Sciences. Professors at the Moscow School, with the input and recommendation of their colleagues in Tomsk, have worked out a plan for research projects, dissertation training, lectures, seminars, and tutorial classes to be held in both Tomsk and Moscow.

In the first cycle, several Moscow School faculty spent two weeks in Tomsk working with young political scientists on a joint research project concerning elec-

tion modeling in the Tomsk region. Inspired by this research, Leonid Polyakov of the Moscow School collaborated with Tomsk professors to develop a new course for Tomsk's graduate faculty: Data Gathering and Method Analysis.

"I am very pleased that the resource center and chair are interacting together so effectively. Preparation of new syllabi and development of the research project have all developed in a very productive manner," said Melville.

Another of the pilot sites, the chair in pre-revolutionary Russian history at Petrozavodsk State University, has begun close collaboration with its partner resource center—the political science faculty at the European University in St. Petersburg. Together they have begun to focus on specific research questions related to the historical role of the region of Karelia from antiquity through the 20th century.

## INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION

This fall OSI–Russia's program will broaden to encompass 20 chairs and about a dozen resource centers. In addition to the Central European University, the



*Andrei Kortunov, director of OSI–Russia's Education Program*

Alexandrovi Institute in Helsinki is slated to be among the new resource centers. "We fully expect that resource centers from outside Russia will participate in the context of the program," said Kortunov. "Integrating higher educational establishments from abroad only underscores the program's international quality."

Program managers at OSI–Russia use information gleaned from grant applications to identify the particular academic fields areas most in need of support—for

# UNIVERSITY INTERNET CENTERS

The Internet in Russia means a whole lot more than just a computer network. Distances of several hundred kilometers divide neighboring settlements in certain regions of Siberia and the far east, where roads are so undeveloped in many remote areas that some distant villages are most easily reached by helicopter. To residents of these regions, the Internet's ability to establish an immediate connection with another town is perceived as a miracle. The chance to communicate with the whole world through e-mail and get unrestricted access to information is regarded as a great boon following 70 years of isolation.

This is why commitments of \$100 million from the Open Society Institute–Russia and \$30 million from the Russian government to establish University Internet Centers in 33 Russian universities are so valuable.

The most important feature of the three-year-old program is the possibility of setting up local networks using the university centers. Schools, other educational institutions, museums, libraries, and hospitals can get connected to the Internet through these centers, which span 11 time zones—from Kaliningrad in the west to Vladivostok in the east.

One example is the Mihailovskoye museum complex in the region of Pskov (the estate where Pushkin spent two years writing), which obtained equipment with a grant from OSI–Russia, and was connected by the local government of the neighboring Novgorod region. The Internet center of Tver State University maintains the information server of the Prosveshchenie Publishing House. Visitors can look through the new releases of the publisher, put questions to the authors of new textbooks, and comment on the contents of textbooks and teaching aids. Video conferencing will be held with other Russian cities and will be viewed by textbook

authors, publishers, schoolteachers, and students.

"Distance learning via the Internet could revolutionize teaching and research in the world's largest country," said Andrei Kortunov, director of OSI–Russia's Education Program and president of the Moscow Public Science Foundation. "It is also one way of reinvigorating the very successful Soviet model of distance education in which students in remote areas were subsidized by the state and provided with all necessary materials for a semester of study."

The Internet is most actively used in secondary education. Scores of Russia's schools take part in the Garmoniya (Harmony) Interschool Internet Connection Program, suggested by American colleagues. Network projects provide children with a chance to gain knowledge simultaneously in several disciplines. For example, school students from the southern region of Gorno-Altaysk who publish a network news bulletin use the process to improve their proficiency in the English language, literature, and information technology.

The Internet, however, erases not only geographical and social boundaries. A center for eye diseases has recently opened at the Nizhny Novgorod State University with active support of the Internet center in that city. Students with impaired vision can make use of modern computer technologies with the help of special equipment to receive special treatment not previously available.

The first results of the Internet centers' work in the fields of education, culture, and civil society were discussed at an international conference earlier this year in St. Petersburg entitled "Internet. Society. Personality." Representatives of the centers offered their reports on the topic and identified the prospects of further progress in the field.



Teodor Shanin (left) and Elena Soboleva, of the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences.

example historical methodology, quantitative techniques, or case study methodology—and the most adequate partner resource center.

In the pilot stage of the program there were three resource centers: the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences, the New Economic School (also Moscow-based), and the European University in St. Petersburg. All three schools, which are new graduate institutions created since the demise of the Soviet Union, receive funding from, among others, the Ford Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, and the Soros foundations network's region-wide Higher Education Support Program.

The seven public provincial universities participating in the pilot stage come from the regions of Tomsk,

Novosibirsk, Voronezh, Petrozavodsk, Ekaterinburg, Novgorod, and Samara. These seven—and all future chairs—are part of an established network of 33 provincial universities already receiving support from OSI–Russia's University Internet Centers program (see box).


The emphasis on the provincial universities is based on the recognition that the social structure of the Russian Federation is undergoing a profound change. While power and influence in all areas are still concentrated in Moscow and St. Petersburg, a new model is emerging whereby the country's regions and even municipalities—in the Far East, Western Siberia, the Volga, and the South—are developing supra-regional identities and increasing their influence on the direction the country takes as a whole.

Strengthening chairs at a given university that can then serve as an institutional center for several other universities conforms to this new reality. For example, Tomsk, a region in Western Siberia, might eventually serve as an academic center for universities in Novosibirsk, Omsk, Krasnoyarsk, and Barnaul in the fields of sociology and politics. By hosting visiting scholars and conducting region-wide summer schools and other programs, the uni-



versity could help coordinate cost-sharing relationships and act as a repository in Western Siberia for hard-to-find texts and data.

“In the past, one could hardly imagine a grant like this going to a provincial chair,” said Alexander Chvorostov, a young sociologist working on educational policy and management whose experience spans Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. “This program represents a unique and valuable opportunity for young scholars. Now it seems plausible that excellent educational opportunities will exist in every part of the country.”

With developmental support from OSI–Russia, universities all across the country can develop specialties and stimulate the recruitment of graduate students, thus increasing their chances of obtaining research funds from other sources. Eventually the program will help set in place a world class educational infrastructure throughout the Russian Federation. 

*Leonard Benardo, the Open Society Institute's regional director for Russia, has worked extensively on education programs in the United States and Russia.*

## CZECH EDUCATION WORK HONORED

The Open Society Fund–Prague recently received an \$800,000 endowment from the Czech National Investment Fund (NIF) for its work in the field of education.

The NIF was created by the Czech government in 1992 in order to strengthen foundations as a source of independent support for nonprofit activities. A total of 39 Czech foundations, which were selected by the Cabinet of President Vaclav Havel and

approved by the Czech Parliament received the awards.

Among its activities in the field of education, the Open Society Fund–Prague has designed and implemented a comprehensive program to support reform in education. The Education Support Project, developed in 1997 and known by the Czech Acronym PORV, has been operating in schools and other centers of learning in cooperation with central and local governments.



# Gays and Lesbians Struggle for Equal Rights in Ukraine

In this issue's Viewpoint, Andriy Maymulakhin, coordinator of Our World Center in Lugansk, Ukraine, argues that despite a hopeful start when his country gained independence, discrimination against gays and lesbians in Ukraine is widespread. The efforts to block his organization's registration as an NGO is symptomatic of this problem.

Until quite recently in the former Soviet Union, consensual homosexual contact between adults was a crime punishable by imprisonment of up to five years. It was completely out of the question to consider homosexual men and women normal citizens. They could be sent to prison, forcibly "cured" in mental hospitals, or beaten and insulted in the street or by family members. Mainly their existence was kept secret, as if there were not any gays or lesbians in our country at all. Those were the standards of a totalitarian state.

With the beginning of the democratization of social life and the establishment of Ukraine as an independent state, the situation of sexual minorities began slowly changing for the better. At the end of 1991, Ukraine decriminalized homosexuality. Information about gays and lesbians began to appear in the media, and society started to open itself up to this previously forbidden subject.

However, despite the progress in the recognition of human rights in our country, we are still very far from reaching real equal rights for homosexual people. Although it is impossible to say that there is open prosecution on the basis of sexual orientation in Ukraine, nevertheless dis-

crimination against gays and lesbians still exists.

Our laws hardly recognize the existence of gay people, and consequently we are deprived of many rights which other citizens have. Homosexual partners are not considered relatives and thus do not have the same rights as spouses recognized by law. There is no protection against discrimination of gays at work. The Ministry of Education prohibits employment of "persons of obvious homosexual orientation."

The most serious problem is that the authorities do not consider homosexuals as fully equal citizens. All gay problems are regarded as both insignificant and unworthy of attention.

A statement made by the ex-President of Ukraine Leonid Kravchuk in a recent interview with the journal *PiK* reflects the thinking of high-level officials:

"We need to work in the independent state for 500 years, and I think that only then will we discuss the problems of sexual minorities. But now, when the country is going through hard financial and economic crises, when millions of people cannot make ends meet, who considers discussing such things in Parliament? If anyone put such a problem forward, the others would say that this person is mad...."

"For all my respect for human rights, I consider that as a mental deviation.... I still cannot accept [homosexuality] as something normal. It is either an illness or some sort of mental pathology...or maybe the outcome of education by foreign movies....It's disgusting even to speak about it."

The Ukrainian police are viewed very negatively by Ukrainian gays. There is only one known case where the police helped a gay man being harassed, but several known cases of the police disregarding gays' requests for help, overlooking workplace discrimination, and unlawfully collecting information about homosexuals. For example, in the course of a police investigation of the murder of a gay man in my native city of Lugansk last autumn, the police illegally detained gays who knew the victim, demanded from them personal and even intimate information about other homosexuals, and seized personal notebooks. From this they formed files on all of us. Though refraining from physical force, the police resorted to provocation and intimidation.

The attitude of other citizens toward gays and lesbians varies from quite tolerant to distinctly negative. Most people maintain negative stereotypes about us and misunderstand our problems. People may be

ready to put up with our existence, but they do not want us to be visible in public. "Let them live, but I don't want to see them either in the streets or on TV" is the most widespread opinion.

Unfortunately the media promote this. Newspapers and television frequently report on scandals involving gay works of art but do not pay attention to the actual social, legal, or psychological problems of gays and lesbians.

On the other hand, gays and lesbians themselves still live a "double" life. They are afraid to come out of the closet even when such visibility could help shatter stereotypes and show others that we are the

same ordinary people as everyone else.

A small group of people who understand these problems and seek ways to solve them began a project in 1996 entitled "Information and Education on the Matter

*Gays and lesbians...are afraid to come out of the closet even when such visibility could help shatter stereotypes...*

of Homosexuality as an Aspect of Democratization of Society in Ukraine." The mission of this project was to bring objective information about homosexuality into the open and to inspire homosexual people to more actively assert their right to

a legal identity and strive for a more respected social status.

Using financial support from the Dutch embassy in Kiev, we began printing a small magazine called *Nash Mir (Our*

*World)* that became our voice in society and an essential means to accomplish the goals of our work. Before the 1997 parliamentary election, we polled candidates on their attitudes towards gay and lesbian rights. The fact that we received virtually no response at all to our survey was unambiguous evidence that there is still a long way to go before we can have real equality in our society.

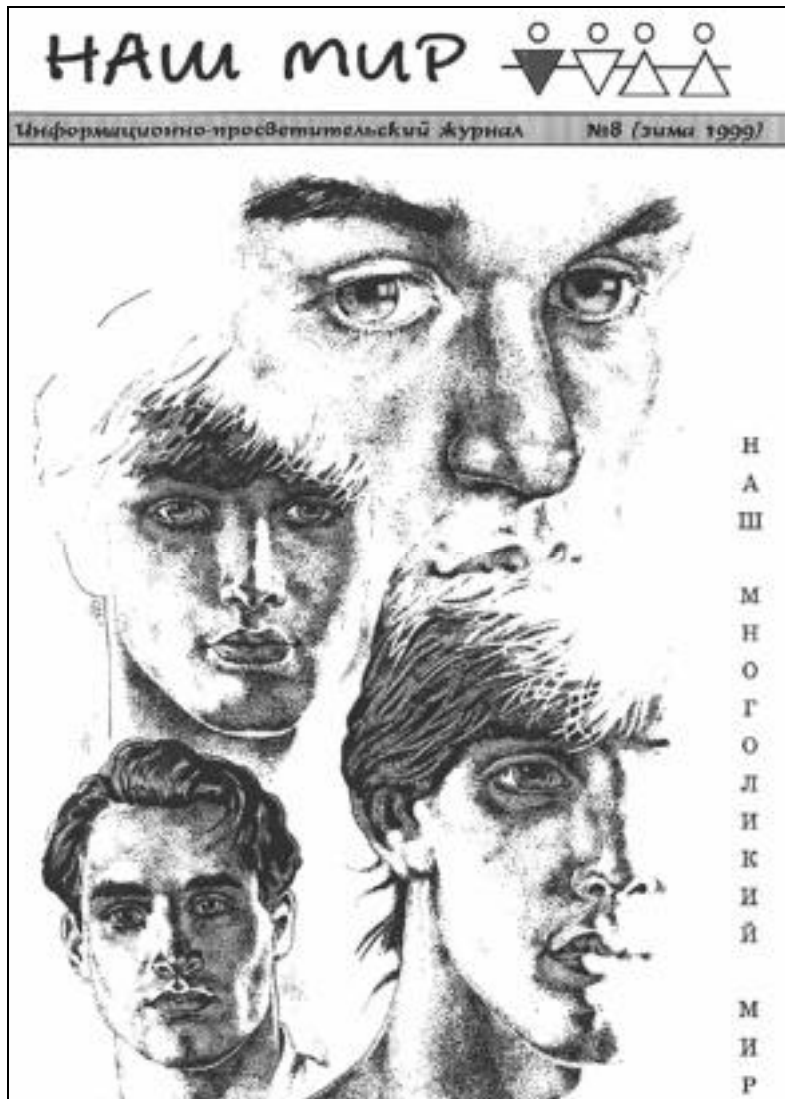
## OUR WORLD GAY AND LESBIAN CENTER

The logical continuation of our efforts was the creation of an information and human rights organization called Our World Gay and Lesbian Center, which held its first constituent assembly at the end of 1998. Its stated goals were:

- the protection of human rights and freedoms for homosexuals and improvement of their legal position in the state by fighting against discrimination based on sexual orientation;
- the improvement of society's attitudes toward homosexuality and people of homosexual orientation by addressing homophobic sentiments in the mass consciousness; and
- the support of gay and lesbian identity as equal and valuable members of society.

Unfortunately, from the very beginning the organization met with the unwillingness of authorities to recognize its right to exist. In the course of applying for legal recognition as an NGO, we were confronted with this unwillingness head on, and so far we have been denied the right to register as an NGO with the state. As independent lawyers have noted, the denial of our registration does not correspond to the letter of the law.

Some of the details of our quest for



The cover of the winter 1999 issue of Our World magazine.

state registration have led us to believe that denial is based on homophobia rather than any actual legal issues. For example, the reasoning of an official of the Department of Justice who was directly involved in consideration of our case was clearly stated in an interview with one of the central Ukrainian newspapers.

“You see, it isn’t that I do not want to legalize them,” he said. “But how is it possible to recognize them on the state level, as a juridical person? A legislative base is absent, though it looks as if this orientation is not forbidden. Precedents [are absent] as well.... I [could] legalize them, but later, sorry, there will come onanists, then someone else.... And what about morality?”

Other startling incidents have occurred during the registration process. For example, a government lawyer consulted with sexopathologists on the implications of registering a gay group as a public organization. In the inquiry to the Ministry of Justice, he even asked “whether the existence of citizens with anomalous sexual orientation is legal.”

To our regret this experience showed once again that people in Ukraine believe that there are no problems with respecting gay and lesbian rights because gay issues are suppressed. Ukrainian gays and lesbians are in fact second-class citizens who

*People now are ready to put up with our existence, but still do not want us to be visible in public.*

are not treated by the standard rules of citizenship of our country. Thus, in the most convincing way, this proves the necessity of organizations such as Our World Gay and Lesbian Center and its information and human rights activities in Ukraine.

Of course, the founders of the Center have not given up and have appealed the registration decision in court. Unfortunately, we have still not found an acceptable solution to our problem. Moreover, we have been told unofficially by representatives of the Ministry of Justice that we will never win our case. Ukraine is not only far from recognizing gay rights, it is not yet



Our World staff, back (from left): Maksym Kasyanchuk, Andriy Maymulakhin, Anatoliy Gribanov, and Oleksandr Zinchenkov. Front (from left): Yuriy Zhilovets, Andriy Kravchuk, and Yevgeniy Leschinskiy.

Photos courtesy of Our World Center

even a state with an independent judicial system; bureaucrats rather than courts make decisions here.

In spite of the fact that the organization has no official status and insufficient financial means, we still continue with our activities. One of our most important research activities is a project called “The Situation of Gays and Lesbians in Modern Ukraine.” We are collecting information that is still generally unknown in our society. Our research will include polling in gay

communities and the analysis of national legislation and articles in the press.

However, this research is not an end in itself. Its findings will provide the basis for further human rights work. We plan to distribute the report among politicians, mass media, human rights organizations, and gay groups. We hope that this information will help advanced forces of society look seriously at the problems of Ukrainian gays and lesbians and undertake steps to improve their social and legal position.

Another important aspect of the organization’s activity in the near future is the dissemination of reliable information

about the lives of local and foreign gay people, human rights questions, and achievements in this field in democratic states.

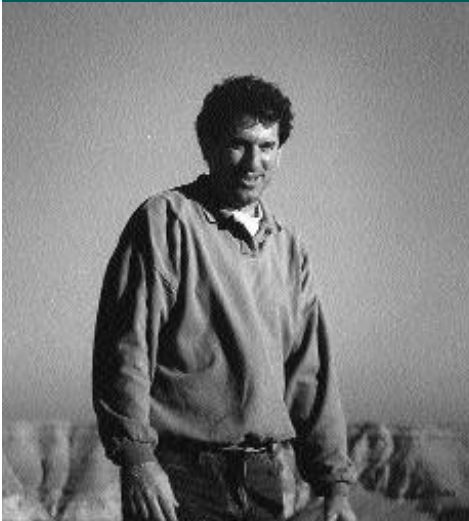
Other programs will deal with legal and human rights, psychological support of gays and lesbians, education, and anti-AIDS campaigns.

This year we plan to conduct a poll of presidential candidates before the fall election. And though we most likely will not receive any answers, we hope that our questions will begin to move these influential people—and the public—toward a recognition of society’s denial of gay and lesbian rights.

Certainly, our voice is still very weak. But it is only the beginning of a long road of reconstruction for our country. A society that for years lived under moral, political, and social double standards will not change in a year. We hope that our activity will promote the progress of the Ukrainian society toward democratic reforms and recognition of the rule of law. We in Ukraine have to respect rights and freedoms for all people without exclusion, including gays and lesbians. ☞

Our World Center can be contacted at: P.O. Box 62, Lugansk, 91051, Ukraine; tel./fax: (38 0642) 479422; E-mail: ourworld@cci.lg.ua; website: www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/2118/

# Lessons in Building Democracy



**W**hile attending law school at the University of California, Berkeley, Brad Adams helped establish a community law center for those without access to legal aid. After graduating, Adams began a career in international human rights advocacy. In 1993 he took a job as a human rights advisor to the newly elected Cambodian Parliament.

Over the next five years, Adams became intimately familiar not only with Cambodian human rights issues but also with the efforts of the interna-

tional community to help rebuild the country after more than 20 years of civil war. And in Adams' view, the international community recorded many more failures than successes in those efforts.

Adams received a 1999 OSI Individual Project Fellowship to write a book about his experiences in Cambodia. In the book, he will argue that the international community needs to be more accountable when it undertakes reconstruction projects in war-torn countries. What happened in Cambodia was "the classic story of people thinking that elections equal democracy, and then thinking that the job was over," Adams said.

In 1993, the United Nations spent \$3 billion in preparation for the first postwar elections in Cambodia. Last year, the European Union invested \$11 million in support of parliamentary elections. "After two elections, there are few if any signs that democracy and representative government have taken hold in Cambodia," Adams said, noting that there is the risk of a similar failure in Kosovo if the international community seeks a

**The OSI Individual Project Fellowships support individuals working to further the development of open societies, especially efforts that will influence public policies and enrich public debate. Fellowships are awarded twice annually for a term of up to 18 months, and range from \$15,000 to \$100,000. For details, visit the website, [www.soros.org/usprograms](http://www.soros.org/usprograms).**

quick fix to building state structures and then loses interest.

Adams spent a year and a half working for the Cambodian Parliament before transferring for three more years to the United Nations human rights field office in Cambodia, the first such office established anywhere by the UN.

With his book, Adams hopes to convince international policymakers that rebuilding governmental structures should not be done at the expense of human rights.

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