

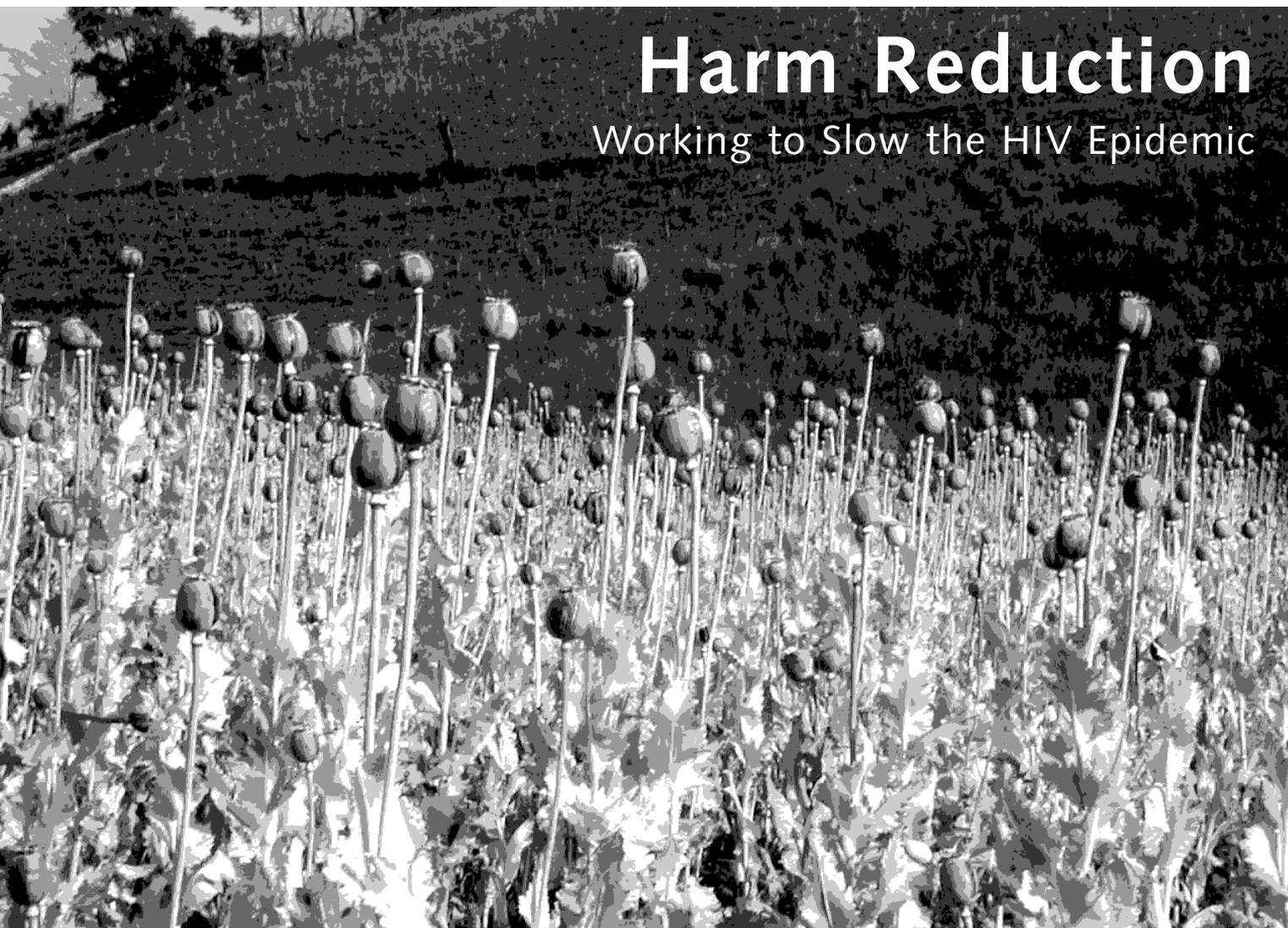
ScholarForum

Number 5 • Fall 2001

The Journal of the Open Society Institute's Network Scholarship Programs

Harm Reduction

Working to Slow the HIV Epidemic



Poppy fields in the Wa Region, Burma

Essays and creative works by NSP Grantees and Alumni

Regional Focus: BURMA
Personal Accounts of Studying Abroad
NSP Alumni – where are they now?

Contents

- 3 Drugs, AIDS, and Harm Reduction
- 12 Regional Focus: BURMA
- 19 Personal Accounts of Grantees
- 24 NSP Alumni: Where are they Now?

Human Dignity and Human Rights

The cover story for this issue of Scholar Forum is drug use, HIV/AIDS and harm reduction in NSP countries. The volume and quality of articles submitted on the topic reflects the gravity and importance of the subject for our grantees and alumni. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has affected all levels of society, from the suffering of individuals and households, to the devastating impact on the social and economic growth of developing nations. The Joint United Nations Program on AIDS (UNAIDS) estimates that 20 million people have died of AIDS globally, and 36 million people are presently infected with HIV. Within this crisis, the countries of the Network Scholarship Programs (NSP) are no exception and face an alarming increase in HIV infection rates, concentrated most heavily among injection drug users.

Responses to the growing incidence of injection drug use have been varied, usually inadequate, and frequently punitive in nature. The philosophy of harm reduction is a departure from the social stigmatization of drug users and is instead aimed at reducing the individual and social harms associated with drug use, especially the risk of HIV infection, through an approach that is both humanistic and practical. Harm reduction encompasses services such as needle and syringe exchange, methadone treatment, health education and social service supports.

In this issue our regional focus section is devoted to Burma, a country that has struggled through decades of strife and human rights violations. The fight for democracy and open society in Burma is ongoing and acute, reflected dramatically in the compelling submissions we received from NSP Burmese scholars.

As always, the personal accounts section of Scholar Forum is a place for works recounting grantee experiences with living and studying abroad, and the alumni section is an important forum in which to investigate and reconnect with friends from NSP programs. Scholar Forum is the voice of NSP grantees and alumni, a space for sharing opinions and experiences, and it is also a method of communicating to all of our readers the range and diversity of perspectives and experiences of NSP scholars.

If you are just beginning your scholarship then welcome to the NSP family! We hope you enjoy this issue of Scholar Forum and invite all readers to contact us with comments and suggestions at scholar@sorosny.org.

The Open Society Institute's **Network Scholarship Programs** fund the participation of students, scholars, and professionals from Eastern and Central Europe, the former Soviet Union, Mongolia, and Burma in rigorous, competitive academic programs outside of their home countries. The goals of these programs are: to revitalize and reform the teaching of the social sciences and humanities at higher education institutions; to provide professional training in fields unavailable or underrepresented at

institutions in the countries served; and to assist outstanding students from a range of backgrounds to pursue their studies in alternative academic and cultural environments.

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tions and organizations active in more than 50 countries worldwide that supports a range of programs. Established in 1993 by investor and philanthropist George Soros, OSI is based in New York City and operates network-wide programs, grantmaking activities in the United States, and other international initiatives. OSI provides support and assistance to Soros foundations in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, Guatemala, Haiti, Mongolia, South, Southern and West Africa.

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Drugs, AIDS, and Harm Reduction



A *Médécins Sans Frontières* outreach worker discusses the harm associated with drug use. Lubyanka Metro Station, Moscow
photo: John RANARD

In many parts of the world – notably Eastern Europe, the countries of the former Soviet Union and parts of South East Asia – HIV epidemics are fueled by the sharing of drug injection equipment. The majority of reported HIV cases in these countries are injecting drug users (IDUs) and, to a lesser extent, their sexual partners.

The selection of papers that follow well illustrate this point. In Georgia, although the number of reported HIV cases are relatively few, 68% are related to injecting drug use. In Russia, where there are an estimated 3 million IDUs, over 60% of HIV cases are IDU related. In Kazakhstan, Karaganda Oblast has become one epicenter of an HIV

epidemic in Central Asia in which 90% of reported cases are IDU related. In neighboring Uzbekistan, although there is a lack of information regarding drug use and HIV infection, the threat of the twin epidemics of drug injection and HIV is real. In Burma, UNAIDS estimates that in 2000 there were more

An International Harm Reduction Development Program (IHRD) publication "Drugs, AIDS and Harm Reduction – how to slow the HIV epidemic in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union" can be found at www.soros.org/harm-reduction.

than 500,000 people with HIV infection. The majority of these were related to injection drug use.

All the countries in the reports share characteristics that make their populations vulnerable to HIV (and also other sexually transmissible infections and TB). All have experienced (or are experiencing) social and economic instability. As a result access to health care and social services is poor. Health expenditure is generally declining and health systems failing. In some of these countries, the poor economic situation of women has contributed to a growing sex industry that further increases vulnerability to HIV.

Drug use and injection – often followed by HIV – typically occurs in drug cultivation areas, or on drug trafficking routes. All these countries either produce drugs (Afghanistan and Burma), are close to drug cultivation areas (Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) or are on trafficking routes. Migration and displacement increases the potential for HIV transmission and also creates difficulties in sustaining community based health programs.

Public health education and HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns (healthy life-styles, other school-based

programs and mass media awareness campaigns) can create the conditions for effective HIV prevention, but alone are not enough. More effective is targeted prevention for young people and high-risk vulnerable populations, such as IDUs. A harm reduction approach, with its emphasis on prag-

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one that integrates a range of interventions appropriate to local circumstances. The most effective strategy for preventing HIV among injecting drug users is to reduce sharing of injection equipment through the provision of sterile injection equipment. In many countries, legal and financial constraints prevent use of methadone, buprenorphine and other drug substitution therapies that are proven to be effective HIV prevention measures. Outreach strategies, which deliver information and services to hard-to-reach populations and establish links between IDUs and health services, are particularly effective in reducing HIV risk behaviors.

As these reports illustrate, the response to HIV has, at best, been inadequate. Some attempts have been made, in Russia and Kazakhstan for example, to provide access to sterile injecting equipment and promote the harm reduction approach. As many of the authors of these reports note, there is a need for education, awareness raising and information. Others go further and suggest that comprehensive harm reduction programs, including counseling, outreach and peer-driven interventions, are needed.

The limitations of the "health belief model" are well known. A desire to change behavior, brought about by information and education, can only succeed if the means to change behavior are available (access to needles, syringes, condoms and substitution therapies, such as methadone). Change in behavior can only be achieved and sustained in supportive environments. This requires public and political support for harm reduction.

Many of the challenges to an effective response are not technical, but political. The public health argument in favor of harm reduction is compelling. However, public and political opposition to harm reduction is based on moral and legal arguments and not on the public health issues. The challenge will be to seek political and public support for effective and sustainable programs that reach the majority of drug injectors and other vulnerable populations. This will involve changing social and political perceptions and norms regarding the nature of drug use and drug users.

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For more information:

www.soros.org/harm-reduction

Harm Reduction in Kazakhstan

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The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Kazakhstan has developed in the midst of an explosion of social problems, in particular that of injecting drug use. Temirtau, a small town in Karaganda

HIV/AIDS in Georgia: Is there an Elephant in the Room?

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The Republic of Georgia is a newly independent state with a population of 5,411,000. Even though Georgia has one of the lowest rates of HIV/AIDS among former Soviet countries, it is still considered to be at high risk for the rapid spread of HIV infection. The first case of HIV/AIDS in the country was identified in 1989. As of April 2001, 216 reported cases had been registered at the Georgian AIDS and Clinical Immunology Research Center, which is the main institution responsible for the development, implementation, and coordination of all activities against the spread of HIV/AIDS in Georgia. However, the number of registered cases definitely does not reflect the actual situation in the country in terms of HIV/AIDS prevalence. The World Health Organization and local experts estimate that, at present, about 1000 people in the country are infected with HIV/AIDS (annual report of the Georgian AIDS and Clinical Immunology Research Center, 2000).

Drug use by way of needle injection accounts for approximately 68% of transmission of HIV/AIDS among registered cases; heterosexual contact is responsible for 24% of transmission; homosexual and/or bisexual contact for 4%; and blood transfusion for 2%. During the last five years the incidence has grown rapidly. In 1996 only 8 cases were registered, while for the year 2000 the number of identified cases reached 79. This has caused many experts to think that unless urgent steps are taken to prevent and monitor the spread of the virus, the epidemic in Georgia will rapidly escalate, particularly because of the existing unfavorable socio-economic conditions (annual report of the Georgian AIDS and Clinical Immunology Research Center, 2000).

The Georgian AIDS and Clinical Immunology Research Center points to a number of factors contributing to the rapid increase in HIV/AIDS transmission, including: the high rate of drug addiction; the spread of HIV/AIDS in neighboring countries like Ukraine, Russia, and Moldova; the growing migration of the population and international contacts; the extreme shortage in sterilizing and other medical equipment; the lack of education about HIV/AIDS; and the low level of condom usage among the population. In Georgia, the individuals most at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, as in many other countries, are injecting drug users. Since drug users tend to inject in groups and share needles, it is possible for only one infected person to spread the virus to all other members of the group.

HIV/AIDS is a problem the whole society needs to address, not only the health care sector. The need for increased education of the population, in general, and among risk-groups, in particular, is more than obvious. Emphasis should be placed on program development to help educate drug users, prostitutes, and other high risk groups about the potential danger of HIV/AIDS, as well as prevention methods. In addition, raising people's awareness is extremely important in order to dispel the myth

“Drug use by way of needle injection accounts for approximately 68% of transmissions of HIV/AIDS”

many lay people hold that HIV/AIDS is a mostly “foreign” disease, and not a danger to Georgia. If all agencies and institutions working on HIV/AIDS find governmental support to access and provide the wider population with relevant information, if schools start educating students at an early age about HIV/AIDS, and if mass media, especially TV, devotes sufficient time and energy to increase the public's awareness of HIV/AIDS and its associated risk factors, it will likely help all of us to quickly realize that even though we can not see it, the elephant is in the room. ■

Oblast of Kazakhstan, is known as the epicenter of this epidemic.

Temirtau was built in the 1960s as the satellite of a large steel-producing plant. More than two hundred thousand people came to Temirtau from other Soviet Republics seeking work and a stable life. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Temirtau steel-producing plant stopped working, and thousands of people became unemployed.

Unemployment brought migration, poverty, demoralization, despair, drug abuse, and, eventually, the HIV epidemic. Moreover, because of Kazakhstan's geopolitical position between Europe and Asia, it has become a route for drug trafficking from Tajikistan and Afghanistan to Russia and other European countries. Therefore, drugs in Temirtau are very cheap and easily available. Jobless, dispirited, and despairing people have

become easy victims of drugs.

Since 1997, Karaganda Oblast has been the epicenter of the HIV epidemics in Kazakhstan. According to Mr Bekzatov, a Vice-Director of the National AIDS Center, there are 1050 cases of HIV infection in Kazakhstan; from which 862 were registered in Karaganda Oblast. Remarkably, 90% of them are injecting drug users (Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, December

2000). The primary method of HIV transmission in Kazakhstan today is injecting drug use.

Harm Reduction is relatively new to the former Soviet countries as an

realistic and effective way to deal with the problems of drug addiction and AIDS. As a result of the persistent and on-going efforts of the Soros Foundation-Kazakhstan, there is a growing under-

of these projects. They are very young; some of them still in their teens. Many of them are malnourished, poorly dressed, and unhealthy looking. Their ordinary day begins and ends with drug injection.

They do not work or study, and are often afraid of other people. The only people they trust are the people from the needle exchange project. This is the only place drug

users can come and ask for help. This is the only place they can get counseling or referrals. This is the only place where people care for them. And this program is the one that can truly slow down the spreading of HIV/AIDS. It might seem easier to force drug users to hide in their basements. But refusing to see and understand a problem will result in that problem never being solved. ■

“Drugs in Temirtau are cheap and easily available. Jobless, dispirited, and despairing people have become easy victims.”

approach to dealing with drug addiction. The traditional anti-drug policy in the region is aimed at abstinence, treating drug addicts as criminals, and attempting to force them to quit drug use. The goal of Harm Reduction is to minimize the negative consequences of drug use, and in particular to slow the spread of HIV/AIDS. The Harm Reduction approach treats drug addicts empathically and respectfully regardless of their readiness to stop drug use.

The Soros Foundation-Kazakhstan began implementing its Harm Reduction program three years ago. In the beginning, even the idea of needle exchange programs and methadone substitution therapy seemed audacious. People would say, “Why should we give syringes and needles to those unworthy people when there are children and the elderly with diabetes who do not receive such support?” There was no simple answer to this question. But Harm reduction is the most

standing and acceptance of the Harm Reduction approach. Today, several needle exchange projects are successfully functioning in Kazakhstan.

Last spring I worked as an assistant for the Public Health Program Coordinator of the Soros Foundation Kazakhstan, and had the opportunity to visit several needle exchange programs in Karaganda and Temirtau. It was painful to see the clients

A *Médécins du Monde* needle exchange bus in St. Petersburg, Russia.
photo: John RANARD



Central Asia and the Drug Trade.

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After the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, the huge Central Asian region, comprising Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, with a population of 55.5 million and an area encompassing four million square km, found itself increasingly exposed and vulnerable to external threats, such as the civil war in neighboring Afghanistan. The large-scale military conflict in Afghanistan, inherited from the Cold War era, has been the most powerful factor affecting Central Asian security since independence.

The Taliban regime, which has been in power since 1996 and now controls 90-95% of Afghan territory, has tolerated (and even taxed) opium cultivation in Afghanistan over the last several years, and has succeeded in turning the country into the world's biggest producer of opium and opiates. In the 1980s, the main narco-traffic from Afghanistan headed to the Balkans via Iran, but after Ayatollah Khomeini imposed the death penalty on drug-traffickers, and the Balkans became increasingly unstable, principal routes were re-orientated through the newly-independent Central Asian states, which were now facing serious economic problems. The civil war in Tajikistan from 1992-97 made it possible to develop a lucrative route from Afghanistan to Gorniy Badakhshan in Tajikistan and further to Kyrgyzstan's Osh province in the Ferghana Valley. Today, the Kyrgyzstan route has become the main transit corridor supplying narcotics to Central Asia, the CIS, Europe and even the USA.

By some estimates the proceeds from narcotics smuggling have grown to a sixth of Tajikistan's gross domestic product (The Times of Central Asia,

Feb. 1, 2001). Tajikistan has become the main route for smuggling drugs to Russia, according to the "Drug-addiction in Russia" report, prepared in April 2001. The report says that between 1993 and 2001, Russian frontier guards confiscated at the Tajik-Afghan border 10 tons of drugs, up to 20% of which was pure heroin. According to the frontier-guards, this was only 10-12% of all the drugs smuggled across the border.

The Afghan economy is in ruins: 200,000 hectares of land

"The proceeds from narcotics smuggling have grown to a sixth of Tajikistan's gross domestic product."

remain uncultivated, millions of livestock have been killed, irrigation systems are leveled, there are few operating roadways, no functioning power systems, and no industrial enterprises. In this dire economic situation the only major source of income for the starving Afghan population has become the cultivation, processing and transit of narcotics.

After the Taliban became the leading power in the country, the production of narcotics soared. Before 1997, a seasonal harvest of poppies in Afghanistan averaged 700 tons. The 1999 record harvest was 4,581 tons, from which 458.1 tons of heroin can be extracted. In 1999, Taliban-ruled Afghanistan was the source of 75 percent of the world's opium, from which 80 percent of the world's heroin was produced. These figures made Afghanistan the world's biggest producer of narcotics in 1999 with overall production, exceeding those of Burma, Laos, Thailand, Columbia and Pakistan, taken together.

In the year 2000, some 82,172 hectares were under poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, down about 10 percent from 1999 due to severe drought but still almost 30 percent more than in 1998, according to a UN Drug Control Program (UNDCP) survey presented in January 2001. Following the April-May harvest in 2000, the Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar issued a decree banning the crop as un-Islamic. Given Afghanistan's severe economic problems, aggravated by draught and recent strict international sanctions, there is no guarantee that poppy cultivation in Afghanistan will not be re-introduced, perhaps on an even greater scale. In a word, there is still little space for optimism in Central Asia, desperately fighting the massive influx of narcotics from neighboring Afghanistan that seriously threatens regional security. ■

This article is part of a paper "The Taliban: Issues of Security and Integration in Central Asia" presented at the conference "Central Asia Palimpsest: (Re)Emerging Identities and New Global Imprints", UC/Berkeley in April 2001

The Drug Issue in Uzbekistan

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In one of my classes at the Institute of Languages, I recently held a discussion on drugs and AIDS in Uzbekistan to hear students' opinions. I was not prepared for the fact that the majority of my students were ignorant about these issues. Some of them were not even sure if we should talk about it at all since they felt that Uzbekistan does not face these sorts of problems.

In fact, Uzbekistan, like the rest of the world, has to deal with alcoholism, drugs, AIDS, and many other related issues. The drug problem is the biggest area of concern for the country. Our

neighbor is Afghanistan, the world's largest opium producer, and Central Asia is a territory through which drugs are transmitted from Afghanistan to Russia and Western Europe. The war on drugs in Uzbekistan is severe. Every year fields of cannabis and opium poppies are destroyed by the air force, although plants in more remote areas are often missed.

Drugs are not new in Uzbekistan. Interestingly, people in Central Asia have been experimenting with drugs for centuries. Since ancient times, old men have smoked "anasha" to relieve pain and children have been given "jvacho" to help them sleep. Drugs are still popular. It is said that improving social conditions will change the drug problem for the better. Nevertheless, as long as drugs are popular among people, they will remain a good

source of income for criminals.

Since Uzbekistan is engaged in a democratic transition, one of the tasks of the educational process is to raise students' awareness about the issues society faces. In fact, it's very difficult to obtain much information on the drug problem in Uzbekistan. I was unable to find even basic statistics on drug use among Uzbekistan people. The media and TV discuss these issues very rarely and then only briefly. There are also not many specialists in Uzbekistan who are qualified to educate youth about the issues. At the same time, there are some non-government organizations that are beginning to be involved in school and community projects that inform and educate youth on the dangers of drugs. Drug education will not eliminate drugs, but it will at least minimize the dangers. ■

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Burma

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Burma is a country of 48 million people from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. At one time it was considered one of the South East Asia's richest Countries with immense natural resources and a highly skilled and literate population. Burma today is a developing country with very poor health standards, a record of human rights violations and an extremely low standard of living. Because of political and ethnic conflicts over one million people are displaced internally and another one million people have been displaced to neighboring countries. Access to education is woefully inadequate and only 25% of all children complete the five basic years of primary school.

The lack of both individual and community awareness of common health problems in Burma is alarming. Reproductive health, narcotics and HIV/AIDS stand out as areas where successive Governments have failed to ensure that the public is properly informed. Health services and health education are grossly under financed. Government censorship and propaganda prevent an accurate picture of the health status of people in Burma.

The director of the United Nations AIDS program (UNAIDS) stated in 1998 that Burma was one of the epicenters of the HIV epidemic in South East Asia. It was estimated that in 1998, Burma had 440,000 HIV positive cases, of which

100,000 were AIDS cases. The HIV epidemic is especially prevalent along the border areas with Thailand, India and China. Migrant workers as well as internally displaced peoples face harsh economic and social conditions in these areas that increase HIV risks.

A UN international Drug Control Program report estimated that HIV infections among Injecting Drug users in Burma was 60-70% in 1994. The HIV epidemic among Injecting Drug users in Burma has also spread quickly to drug users in border nations as India and China. Manipur in India, where many Burmese live has one of the highest HIV infection rates in the world among IDUs. The Burma/China border zone currently has the highest prevalence zone for HIV infection in China. The Chinese ministry of public health reported that 80.4% of all HIV infection and 60% of all confirmed AIDS cases in China were detected in the border province of Yunnan.

Working as a commercial sex worker in Thailand has become common as a method of survival among youth in Burma. There is a high turnover rate among sex-workers, both due to brothel owners attempting to maintain continuous recruitment and because many of the women working as commercial sex workers are married and return home to their husbands across the border. One survey in Southern Thailand reported that 53% of Burmese sex workers tested were infected with HIV.

Although injection drug use and unsafe sex are still the highest risks for HIV infection, there is a growing percentage of pregnant women, newborn babies and blood donors who have been diagnosed with HIV. Data from 1998 showed that 0.9% of pregnant women and blood donors were infected with HIV

among Burmese migrant workers in Mae Sot, a border town.

Effective and sustainable HIV/AIDS prevention and control strategies for Burma should be addressed on two fronts: prevention and control strategies specific to HIV/AIDS, and strategies that tackle the underlying social and economic condition that indirectly favour the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Obstacles

- The duration of school closures has been longer than the duration of

school days in Burma since 1988.

- Discrimination, unemployment, and lack of educational opportunities for women in Burma.
- The access to information on sexual health and reproductive health is culturally prohibited.
- The economic situation has created great hardships for the majority of people in Burma.
- Relocation, displacement and family separation is unhealthy for families and individuals and makes it difficult to sustain community health programs.

- Burma has been isolated from the international community for a long period of time, making it difficult to get reliable and adequate sources of information.
- There is a strong stigma against people with HIV.

The government has still not acknowledged the severity of the situation with the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Burma. We need to search for and work together on prevention and control of the HIV/AIDS epidemic to slow its alarming spread in the region. ■

Harm Reduction and HIV/AIDS Related Websites

General

IHRD:

<http://www.soros.org/harm-reduction>

Central & Eastern European HR Network:

<http://www.ceehrn.org>

Harm Reduction Coalition:

<http://www.harmreduction.org>

International Harm Reduction Association:

<http://www.ihra.net>

HIT:

<http://www.hit.org.uk>

European Opiate Addiction Treatment Association:

<http://www.europad.org>

Chicago Recovery Alliance:

<http://www.anypositivechange.org>

Articles on Needle Exchange from the TLC-DPF Library:

http://www.lindesmith.org/library/syringe_index.html

AIDS Map:

<http://www.aidsmap.com>

HIV/AIDS Treatment Information Service:

<http://www.hivatis.org>

By Country

Burma:

<http://www.soros.org/burma/drugs.html>

Russia:

Medicins Sans Frontieres-Moscow:

http://www.soros.org/harm-reduction/msf_index_eng.htm

AIDS Infoshare:

<http://www.spiral.com/infoshare/home.html>

Organizations involved in anti-AIDS or HR activities:

http://www.spiral.com/infoshare/russian_org_map.html

Slovenia:

Drogart:

<http://www.drogart.org>

Ukraine:

Ukrainian Harm Reduction Network:

<http://harm.reduction.org.ua>

Multilateral Organizations

UNAIDS:

<http://www.unaids.org>

World Health Organization:

<http://who.org>

UN Office for Drug Control & Crime Prevention:

<http://www.undcp.org>

Donor Agencies

UK Dept. for International Development (DfID):

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk>

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA):

<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/index.htm>

US Agency for International Development:

<http://www.usaid.gov>

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ):

<http://www.gtz.de>

Swiss Agency for Development and

Cooperation:

<http://194.230.65.134/dezaweb2/home.asp>

Drug Policy

Lindesmith:

<http://www.drugpolicy.org>

DrugNet:

<http://www.drugnet.net>

Drug Text:

<http://www.drugtext.org>

Overdose

Overdose Tips from MSF-Moscow:

http://www.soros.org/harm-reduction/overdose1_eng.html

Overdose Prevention and Survival:

<http://www.harmreduction.org/od2000.html>

Articles on Overdose from the TLC-DPF Library:

http://www.lindesmith.org/library/overdose_index.html

Methadone

About Methadone:

<http://www.drugpolicy.org/library/about-methadone.html>

UK Methadone Alliance:

<http://www.methadone.org.uk>

EuroMethWork:

<http://www.euromethwork.org>

Methadone Today Newsletter:

<http://www.methadonetoday.org>

Safer Injection

Safer Injection Briefing:

<http://www.drugtext.org/books/needle>

Getting Off Right:

<http://www.harmreduction.org/gor.html>

Responses to the HIV Epidemic in Russia

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Over the past decade, the countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have experienced a rapid increase in injection drug use, with now as many as 3 million injecting drug users (IDUs) in the region.¹ Since independence, Russia has experienced economic instability, poverty, increasing crime rates, and internal wars. These factors have contributed to the pandemic spread of sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis, and HIV infection in the country.^{2,3}

Russia is experiencing an ongoing HIV epidemic among injecting drug users. About 60% of HIV positive individuals in Russia are injecting drug users.⁴ The most significant factors contributing to the rapid spread of HIV are needle and drug sharing.^{6,7} A longitudinal survey provided by the North-Caucasus AIDS Center in Rostov-on-Don recently revealed that the IDUs who participated in the survey had on average shared needles

15 times and had an average of 6 sexual partners.⁵

ing, and treatment.⁸ This emphasis on HIV testing in Russia seems misplaced. First of all, the population groups which are at most risk of HIV transmission, such as IDUs, avoid HIV testing because of fear of possible criminal prosecution for HIV transmission and fear of social stigma.¹¹ Secondly, some marginalized groups, e.g. unemployed people and those who have no residency permit, have limited access to health care and HIV/AIDS treatment.¹² In general, there is a lack of adequate resources for effective antiviral treatment in Russia. Under these conditions, the impact of HIV testing alone is even further diminished, while education, counseling, and harm reduction programs might prevent HIV spread in the population.

Sterile injecting equipment is legally accessible in Russia in pharmacies. Clean syringes are on sale without medical prescription. On average, the price of syringes is only 1.4-2.34% the price of drugs in Russia.^{8,13} This would suggest that drug users should be encouraged to utilize pharmacies as a source of sterile needles and syringes. However, the accessibility of sterile injecting equipment alone has little or nothing to do with the contamination of home-made drugs and a drug user's knowledge and skills regarding HIV prevention. In this case, counseling, education, referrals,

peer norms and peer pressure, but protective HIV-related behavior as well.¹⁴ It has been shown in a number of studies in the US that peer-driven interventions are very successful in terms of influencing peer norms and attitudes toward unsafe behavior.^{16,17}

Peer-led harm reduction interventions should be implemented on a wide scale. Peer-driven involvement in programs has resulted in a more geographically and ethnically diverse set of subjects¹⁶ and it has been demonstrated that peer-driven interventions are more effective in reducing drug-related harm compared to traditional professional staff driven interventions.¹⁷

A Connecticut peer-driven outreach model was implemented in the Russian city of Yaroslavl within a harm reduction project, "Friends Helping Friends", funded by The Lindesmith Society/Open Society Institute.¹⁸ It used a "chain-referral sampling" approach in which drug users were given monetary incentives to educate and recruit their peers to the program. The major strengths of this intervention are that it combined different approaches to influence unsafe behavior: repetitive education, skills building, motivation, monetary incentives, and peer pressure. As a result of this project, HIV risk knowledge increased between the initial and follow-up interviews and needle sharing was reduced by 46%.

The successful implementation of a US-based model in Russia shows that such programs might adequately address HIV spread among the drug using community. Harm reduction programs started to operate in the mid nineties as a response to rapid spread of HIV among IDUs. Most programs were funded by international agencies such as UNAIDS, The Lindesmith Center/Open Society Institute, Doctors of the World, and Doctors Without Borders, and were administered by newly formed NGOs.⁷ However, in order for harm reduction programs to be sustainable NGOs need explicit government support. Clear guidelines and protocols about counsel-

"About 60% of HIV positive individuals in Russia are injecting drug users."

peer support, and peer influence in changing unsafe injecting behavior, provided by comprehensive harm reduction programs, are crucial.

Drug-user behavior is heavily influenced by peer norms and observed peer behavior.¹⁴ "Social injecting" has been found to be a strong correlate of sharing paraphernalia, and IDUs who inject alone are much more successful in terms of risky behavior reduction compared to "social injectors".¹⁵ Not only is unsafe injecting behavior highly influenced by

using community. Harm reduction programs started to operate in the mid nineties as a response to rapid spread of HIV among IDUs. Most programs were funded by international agencies such as UNAIDS, The Lindesmith Center/Open Society Institute, Doctors of the World, and Doctors Without Borders, and were administered by newly formed NGOs.⁷ However, in order for harm reduction programs to be sustainable NGOs need explicit government support. Clear guidelines and protocols about counsel-

ing, and treatment.⁸ This emphasis on HIV testing in Russia seems misplaced. First of all, the population groups which are at most risk of HIV transmission, such as IDUs, avoid HIV testing because of fear of possible criminal prosecution for HIV transmission and fear of social stigma.¹¹ Secondly, some marginalized groups, e.g. unemployed people and those who have no residency permit, have limited access to health care and HIV/AIDS treatment.¹² In general, there is a lack of adequate resources for effective antiviral treatment in Russia. Under these conditions, the impact of HIV testing alone is even further diminished, while education, counseling, and harm reduction programs might prevent HIV spread in the population.

ing, education, support, and referral of HIV positive individuals and people at risk should be given to physicians from the Russian Ministry of Health. The training of physicians and medical students on HIV prevention is crucial. Moreover, sessions on HIV prevention and the harm reduction approach should be included in medical school and medical college curriculum.

The rapid spread of HIV among IDUs in Russia is an urgent public health problem. The sharing of injecting equipment, the contamination of home-made drugs, drug users' denial of their risk of blood-borne diseases, and the Russian Ministry of Health's focus on HIV testing rather than on education and counseling are seen to be the biggest problems contributing to the spread of HIV among IDUs in Russia. Sterile injecting equipment is read-

ily available from pharmacies in Russia, but not utilized by drug users. In these conditions, the co-existence of different types of harm reduction programs is recommended. Harm reduction programs via peer-driven outreach interventions should educate

“The rapid spread of HIV among injecting drug users in Russia is an urgent public health problem.”

IDUs about HIV-related issues, provide counseling, ancillary services, and distribute sterile injecting equipment, or encourage drug users to purchase it from pharmacies. ■

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Regional Focus: BURMA



For many, Burma is a far-off Southeast Asian land of which little is known. Images of shining pagodas, elephants, and flying fish at play along the mighty Irrawaddy River - Rudyard Kipling's famous "Road to Mandalay" - may come to mind. But Burma's reality today has little in common with romantic legends. For most of its modern history following independence from Britain in 1948, Burma has been run by an army-controlled socialist regime that has isolated the country, wrecked its economy, and repressed its ethnically diverse peoples.

In 1988, a massive and peaceful "people power" movement demanded an end to dictatorship. The army reacted fiercely to preserve its rule. On September 18, 1988, a new junta, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) seized direct power to quell the democracy movement. Crowds of peaceful protesters were machine-gunned by troops. Thousands died. For a few days, events in Burma captured world headlines, as they did again in 1990 when the junta stole an open election from the overwhelmingly victorious National League for Democracy (NLD). The spotlight of global attention again shone briefly in December 1991, when detained democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, head of the NLD, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Yet to most of the world, Burma still remains unknown. The SLORC generals changed the country's official name in English to Myanmar, a transliteration of the country's Burmese language name. This change, done by decree and without public consultation, has been rejected by Burma's democratic opposition. By any name, Burma deserves increased attention and global concern.

Today, Burma's citizens are all but excluded from this debate over their future. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi defies the generals by speaking out for democracy. Yet hers is an isolated voice in a land dominated by censorship and fear.

The Burma Project, established by the Open Society Institute in 1994, is dedicated to increasing international awareness of conditions in Burma and to helping the country make the transition from a closed to an open society. To this end, the Burma Project initiates, supports, and administers a range of programs and activities around the globe. An important component of the project lies in providing assistance to the many thousands of Burmese students who are in exile, many of whose education was disrupted in 1988 because of participation in the pro-democracy movement. Every year, the Network Scholarship Programs provides several hundred scholarships to Burmese students studying around the world. The following creative works are from some of those students.

For more information, see <http://burmaproject.org>, from which some of the above text was excerpted.



My Vote Must Count

SANDI, Burma

Supplementary Grant Program – Burma, 1999
George Mason University

The year 2000 was an exciting year for the United States of America. As an outsider without voting rights in the US, I was overwhelmed by the whole presidential election process. Believe it or not, I watched all three presidential debates in addition to reading all available editorials about the election. Had I gone crazy or what?

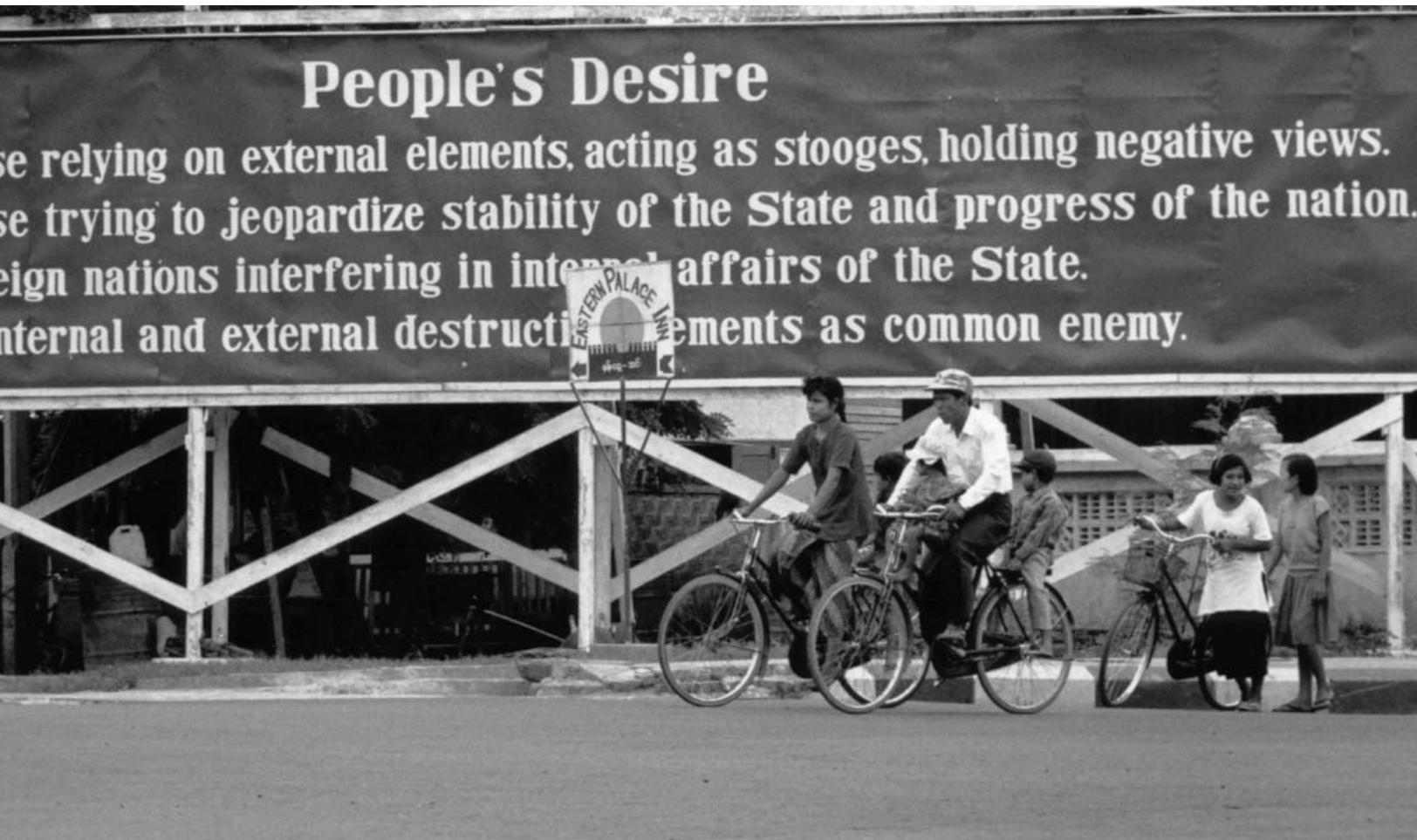
No, I do not think so, since I too have voting experience. It is always in my memory - one fine day in May of 1990. That morning my family got up early enough to get ourselves ready to go to the voting station located in Sanchaung Township in Rangoon. It was election day in Burma. Having no previous voting experience, both my sister and I were quite excited and nervous. For six months, since the elections were scheduled, we

had held daily discussions with my father about all of the things involved in voting.

That morning, our hour-long preparation also included choosing appropriate attire for voting. My father impatiently stopped our debate, "Let's go my daughters, we are going to be late." As our father's proud daughters, we felt patriotic. He complimented us as responsible citizens. Our voices would be heard. We also missed my mother. My mother died in 1980. Had she lived, she would have been with us marching to the voting station.

On the way to the station, our neighbors greeted to us in a very friendly way. I whispered to my father, "Hey Papa, everybody looks happy." He warned me with a finger-on-the-lips saying, "Don't show off." Still my father could not stop our smiles. We were happy indeed hoping the vote would say "so long" to the 26-year-old Ne Win regime.

When we arrived at the station, several of our neighbors were already waiting in line. They said, "you'll be waiting in the



People's Desire
Mandalay, Burma
photo: Nic DUNLOP

line for at least 15 to 20 minutes.” No problem. Having lived under the so-called Burmese Way to Socialism for such a long time, we were used to being in lines for hours at a time. Many of our neighbors were happy to see my father. He was not often out in public because he had been suffering from bronchitis. My father, a veteran of the Burmese Army, which fought against the Japanese occupation in 1945, had great respect for Burma and its independence leaders. Not surprisingly, he was very critical of General Ne Win's military backed rule. That morning, I saw a peaceful smile on his face. It was going to be a happy day

for Burma. The day we would say goodbye to military rule.

It is now ten years since 1990, and a lot of things have changed in my life. My beloved father died in September 1993, three days after the first historic Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement was signed. I still remember, my father screamed with joy listening to the announcement about the agreement from the Voice of America. My father said “Miracles happen...democracy in Burma is inevitable.” At that moment, I was certain that my father knew that the military had betrayed his voting rights.

The experience of May 27, 1990 is always on my mind. I have voted once. Once in my life. Our friends had given their lives to have the elections. Our vote had alerted the world that the people of Burma want democracy. There can be no compromise. I believe we have been entrusted with the duty to fight for our vote no matter what the military says. However long it takes, we will prevail in the end, bringing justice to Burma. When that day comes, I am sure my father will be proud of me for making sure both our votes count. I am a responsible citizen. So are we all, the people of Burma. ■



Salween Camp, Thai-Burma border
photo: Nic DUNLOP

Microcredit and Rural Women in Burma

Hsar PO, Burma

Supplementary Grant Program –
Burma, 2000

Asian Institute of Technology,
Thailand

During the 1990s, the concept of microcredit became increasingly popular as an effective means of poverty reduction. Providing small loans for women has been recognized as a powerful tool for institution building at the grassroots level, and has become a mainstay of NGO efforts in rural areas.

In Burma, microcredit programs are relatively new and have been initiated and supported by NGOs. The microcredit objective is to increase the income of rural women, thereby increasing the wellbeing of the entire family. My research interests lie in assessing the impact of the programs in Burma on women's empowerment, through focusing on the changes created through women's control of credit loans.

The YWCA of Burma (Young Women's Christian Association) is a non-profit organization serving women and girls from all walks of life and from varied religious backgrounds. The YWCA microcredit project is designed to improve the socio-economic status of women and provide skills training for developing microenterprises and keeping simple accounts. The anticipated profits



As part of a microcredit project, Kachin girls carry firewood in handmade baskets. Maymyo, Burma
photo: Hsar PO

city of Mandalay, with the participation of 50 households in each village. The residents of the city are ethnically Kachin, Burman, Danu, Shan and Karen – although a majority of participants in the study are from the Kachin hill tribe people, who originally migrated from

but the group as a whole is responsible to ensure that each member makes the loan repayments. Loans are used for a variety of ventures, such as growing seasonal flowers and vegetables, raising poultry and livestock, and creating small businesses selling firewood or making bricks for construction.

All women are eligible for the program, but priority is given to female-headed or single parent households, households with one or no wage earner,

and those with monthly incomes of less than 3000 Kyats (\$400 US). The program provides skills training for microenterprise development, and also provides training and services covering many aspects of the participants lives. This integrated approach includes programs in

northern Burma.

To qualify for the microcredit project, women were asked to organize themselves into groups of ten, and then follow a monthly savings plan for six months prior to receiving funds. There is no collateral required to receive a loan,

“The microcredit objective is to increase the income of rural women, thereby increasing the well-being of the entire family.”

will enable women to be more self-reliant, self-confident, and be actively involved in financial decision making.

My research was conducted using the YWCA microcredit project. At present, the project is working in three villages in Maymyo, an area 69 km from the

Burma Websites and Organizations

General Information

Burma Project:
<http://burmaproject.org>

Online Magazines
Irrawaddy.org:
<http://irrawaddy.org>

Burma Daily:
<http://www.burmadaily.com>

Burmanet News:
<http://www.burmanet.org>

Activist Groups and NGOs

Free Burma Coalition:
<http://www.freeburmacoalition.org>
The Free Burma Coalition works with student activists at over 100 colleges, universities, and high schools in the US and Canada.

Civil Society for Burma:
<http://www.csburma.org/>

National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma:
<http://www.ncgub.net>

The National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma is a government in exile formed to gather international support for the NLD and Aung San Suu Kyi.

Burma Fund:
<http://www.burmafund.org>

Earthrights International:
<http://www.earthrights.org>

Burma Forum Los Angeles:
<http://www.burmaforumla.org>



Schoolchildren help to collect firewood on weekends as part of a microcredit project. Maymyo, Burma
photo: Hsar PO

nutrition, feeding sessions for malnourished children 2-5 year olds, regular social meetings for the families of participants, parental education workshops, and discussions on health, education and the environment. There are also scholarship funds available to assist talented students who cannot afford to continue their education.

My research found that women in the program maintained steady and significant control over their credit money and their own self-employment activities. The microcredit program broadened the participants' social network both within and outside the community and

provided the women with the opportunity to share their experiences and ideas with other women through their credit groups. The increase in women's income was found to be a great contribution to overall family wellbeing, improving livelihood and enhancing functions such as health, nutrition and educational status of the children and other members of the household. ■



With microcredit funds, a woman makes bricks and sells them to construction sites. Maymyo, Burma
photo: Hsar PO

Education and Exile

Saw Pho KWAR, Burma
Supplementary Grant Program –
Burma, 2000
Singapore Polytechnic

It has been nearly two years since I left my country due to the political unrest that forever changed the direction of my life. The unforgettable ordeal that we Burmese students suffered in 1996 changed our outlook on life and instilled in us the powerful motivation and courage to prevail. Yet I was drifting in a sea of uncertainty and hopelessness after our institute, the Yangon Institute of Technology, was closed down in 1996.

There was no hope that the school would be re-opened in the near future. For this reason, I was forced to leave my country to resume my education abroad - an opportunity that I am so grateful to have.

Our country is still developing, and many reforms and changes have yet to be implemented in the education sphere. The lack of necessary infrastructure and resources has caused Burma to lag behind in education. A major problem is that institutes in Burma are not accessible to information resources due to the government's ban on the use of the internet. While other developing countries are gradually improving, the education system in Burma is quickly deteriorating due to lack of funding and the proper facili-

ties required for a favorable learning environment.

There has also been a gradual brain drain in Burma since the crackdown on students in 1988, as there was suddenly no opportunity for students to pursue their studies locally. The closure of schools is a routine and serves as a tool for the authorities to maintain their grip on power. Each year, hundreds of students leave Burma for various destinations to continue their education. Hopefully, there'll be a brain-gain one day with the returning of these brilliant and educated people, who'll bring along with them the inspiration and unity needed to give birth to a new life in our country. ■



Karen refugee, near Mae Sod, Thai-Burma Border
photo: Nic DUNLOP

MOHINGAR

Rice Noodles in Fish Soup

Recipe contributed by Hsar PO
Supplementary Grant Program-
Burma, 2000
Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)
Thailand.

Mohingar or Mote (as it is known in some regions) is the most typical food of Burma and is served for various social and cultural gatherings. It is said to originate from the Pyu period (1-9 Century AD). Mohinga is a healthy dish and contains no chemicals or fat, only natural ingredients, and is available in shops everywhere in Burma. Nowadays, instant Mohinga, which can be prepared with boiling water, is available in Burma. There are a wide variety of methods of cooking Mohingar. Below is one popular method.

Ingredients

(serves 20 people)
9 lbs. rice noodles
2 _ lbs. cat fish
2 cups coconut milk
14 oz. fish sauce
3 blades lemon grass
2 teaspoon chilli powder
1 teaspoon turmeric powder (curry powder)
_ oz. fresh ginger
2 oz. garlic
1 _ lb. onion, _ finely sliced
3 _ oz. of dahl (lentil powder)
4 oz. roasted rice powder
6 hard boiled eggs
9" banana trunk (tender inner layer)
14 oz. peanut oil/vegetable oil

Directions

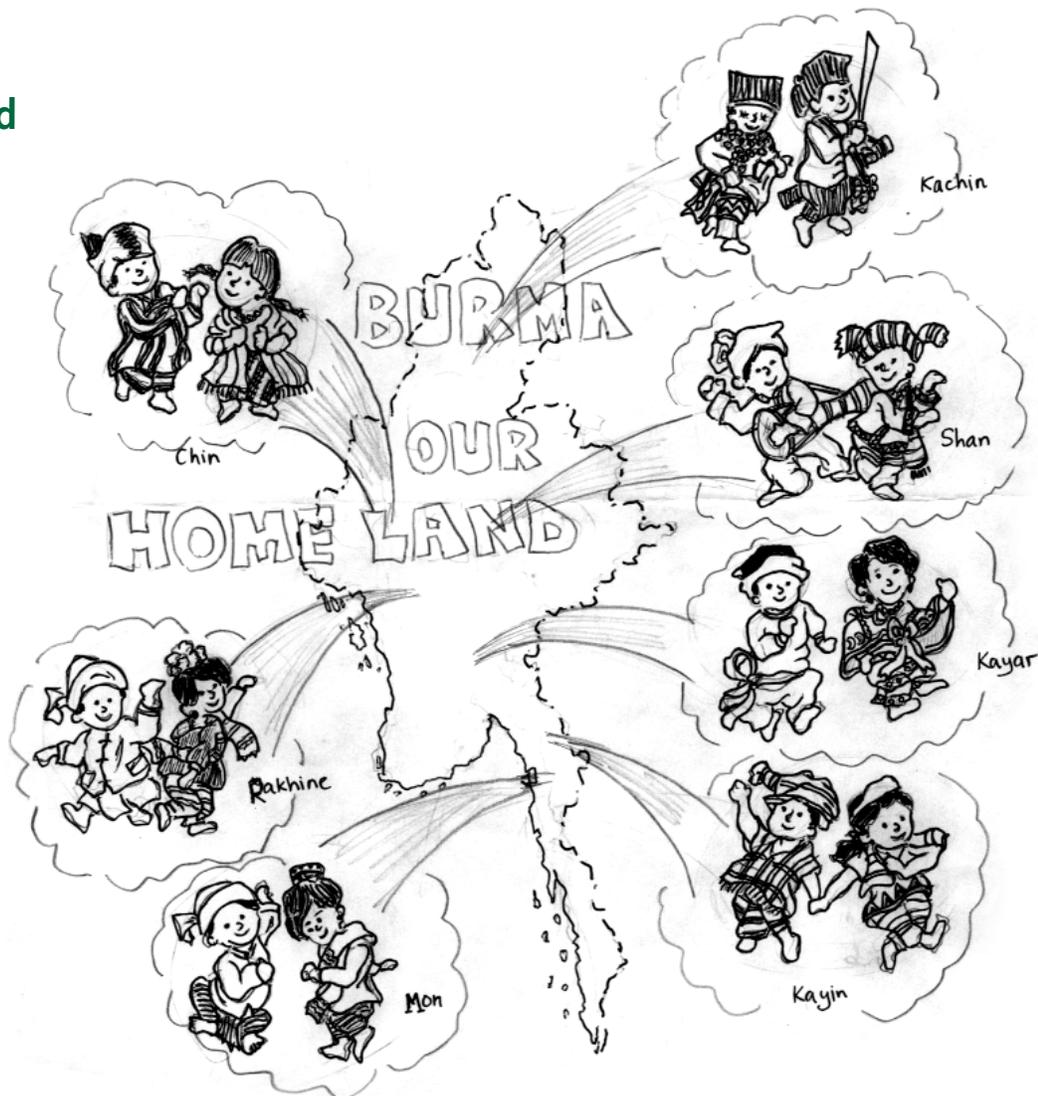
Boil the fish with 2-blades of lemon grass, fish sauce, a teaspoon of chilli powder,

turmeric, with the water just covering the fish. When done, take the fish out and remove the bones. Pound the garlic, ginger and remaining lemon grass and add the remaining chilli powder (if too spicy, add less). Fry the sliced onions till brown. Heat oil, add pounded mixture, when fragrant add the fish. Boil together the coconut milk, fish broth and a gallon water. Mix the rice and dahl powder with a little cold water and add to the liquid mixture. Stir well, let boil, add the prepared fish mix, stirring constantly for a smooth gravy. While boiling, add the sliced banana trunk (only tender layers), and small whole onions if desired. The gravy is "Hinga" and is eaten with the "Mo" or "Nice Noodle". Accompaniments/garnishing can include: chopped coriander leaves, fried sliced onions, chilli powder and sliced eggs, or fish sauce. ■

Our Homeland

Drawing by 2toes
Supplementary Grant Program - Burma
2000
Oxford University

Each of Burma's many ethnic groups has its own costumes and distinct pair-dance.



Personal Accounts

Grantee stories of living and studying abroad

UEP ORIENTATION IN ISTANBUL

This year the Undergraduate Exchange Program held its Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO) in Istanbul Turkey, from July 7-14, 2001. The orientation brought together 76 grantees from 18 countries for a week of academic and cultural programming. The grantees attended open society related classes, learned about American culture and academic life, prepared for their upcoming trip to the US, and socialized with their 75 new colleagues.



Above and top:
Culture Night at
pre-departure
orientation
in Istanbul, 2001
Right: Undergraduate
students at PDO
photos: Alex IRWIN

A Social Work Fellow's Diary

Sophia AN, Kazakhstan

Social Work Fellowship Program, 2000
Columbia University
sophiaan@usa.net

August 2000.

Yesterday, I arrived in New York. I still can't believe that I'm in America. When I was in Almaty, Kazakhstan, these words - America, New York, and Columbia University - sounded like Mars, Venus, and Saturn. I am excited and a little bit frightened. I have a lot of feelings and thoughts, which are difficult to express. It must be culture shock.

August 2000.

I live in the International House. My single room is small, very small, which makes me feel very big, like Gulliver in a Lilliputian country. One disappointment: I still have not met a single American student here. My neighbor told me that I shouldn't expect to meet Americans because there are 700 students from all over the world staying here.

August 2000.

I have spent all day walking the streets. My sharpest impressions are of crowds of people everywhere, dazzling billboards on Times Square, piles of garbage in black plastic bags on every corner, black spots of chewing gum in the subway. I still did not meet any Americans in New York; it seems that most people here are immigrants.

August 2000.

Today one guy, who immigrated to the US seven years ago, told me, "New York is not America just like Moscow is not Russia". So I am not in America.

September 2000.

The campus of Columbia University is so beautiful! I took so many pictures - sitting on the steps of the Law Memorial Library, lying on the lawn in front of the Law School, hugging the Alma Mater. Unfortunately, the School of Social Work is located off the main campus. I won't tell this to my friends.

September 2000.

Classes began. I'm learning to read and write again. English is my second language, and academic English is my third one. I have a question - how will I improve my English if I'm speaking only with foreigners? A friend of mine asked me to send him American slang and idioms that I've learned.

I selected several expressions from the dictionary and e-mailed them to him.

November 2000.

An ordinary day for me: breakfast-library-lunch-school-computer lab-dinner-my room. I am sitting in my single room, which is getting smaller because I am getting bigger (American food!). I am reading a book about poverty. A gusty Manhattan wind is howling behind the window. I am thinking, "New York, where are you?"

January 2001.

My friend and I celebrated New Year's on Times Square. We have been

standing in the frost for four hours. More amazing is that thousands (or maybe millions) of other people were standing too. Among them were Germans, Japanese,

"My room is very small, which makes me feel very big, like Gulliver in Lilliput."

even Americans! I never thought I could be so excited by standing in a crowd of strangers and shouting, "nine, eight, seven...one, hurrah!!!" Now I know that I am very strong.

May 2001.

Cherry blossoms in New York are absolutely fabulous! The weather is great. I learned how to read and how to write. I even work at a social service agency. I have three papers to write, but I am not nervous. As a Russian poet said, "Life is beautiful and amazing" - especially in New York, I would add. I did not find America here. Instead I've found all the world.■



2001 Mongolian Professional Fellowship Program
Celebrating the national holiday "Naadam" at Old Dominion
University ESL Program

My Stay at Oxford

Corina Ana ANGHEL, Romania
UK Scholarship Program, 2000-01
Queen's College, Oxford
corina.anghel@queens.oxford.ac.uk

For the academic year 2000-2001, I was awarded a Chevening-Soros scholarship at Queen's College, Oxford. I had already visited Oxford two years before, but coming to study here has helped me to discover things unknown to the casual visitor.

I discovered the college's impressive cupola, its quad with geometrically arranged flowers, its peaceful cloisters, and its fame as one of the richest and oldest colleges. When I arrived, dragging my two heavy suitcases, I was promptly greeted at the entrance by one of the college porters, cheerfully greeting everyone. A few minutes later I was speaking to the college secretary, who immediately put my messy future in order. "Here are the keys to your room, here is your packet with college information; over there you can pay for your battells (the college invoices), and over there you can purchase the pass for your meals". "Where is the canteen?" I dared ask. "We do not have a canteen - we have a dining hall". As I was to discover later, the dining hall is quite impressive. Eating there, while chatting with friends, became a daily ritual officiated under the careful supervision of an array of famous portraits.

It seemed to me the beginning of *ma vie en rose*. Except for a small detail that gave it a dark nuance. In order to pay for my fees, I needed a bank account into which my fabulous scholarship could be transferred. Slowly, I moved from one bank to another in an endless, tedious pilgrimage. NatWest: "We need a letter from your bank in Romania". Lloyds and HSBC: "We cannot open an account for you if you stay less than one year" (I was supposed to stay for 9 months). Barclays: "We can open one, but we charge you one pound each time you withdraw money". Exhausted, I was about to give in to Barclay's kind offer, when I

Oxford is a place that knows how to keep its secrets from the profane eye."

happened to enter The Royal Bank of Scotland: "Yes, you can open one here. All we need is a letter confirming your status here from the Foreign Office Secretary" - that smiling face gave equal attention to every customer.

With my financial problems solved, I could concentrate on my studies. There was much to be done. My main goal was writing my doctoral dissertation, which I started in 1998, under the helpful supervision of professor Rodica Mihaila. My doctoral thesis - entitled "Polytropic Identities in the American and Canadian Postmodern Novel" - focuses on the way in which the identity of various literary heroes is defined as polytropic.

Easter in Oxford

At this very moment
Our souls are turning to flesh
They stop for a moment at St. Mary's Church
Animated
By the steady pulse of the crowd
Still burning, filtering light
Through the wet-trembling fingers of their halos -

Mementos that last
Animated
Earning to plunge from the Magdalen Tower
Into the first quad -
still invaded by the smell of the sea
Into the second quad -
where memory rests unaccounted
As if I inhabit two places at once
As if I can't breathe caught in-between.

Easter - the sound of the souls turning to flesh
Unadorned
We take the color of land.

Polytropic is a term which I discovered reading Homer and Plato. They give this attribute to Odysseus who is always turning many ways, is versatile, and much traveled. Applying the term to literary characters, I argue that these heroes do not simply have mobile flexible identities, but they are also great deceivers and tricksters, whether they are artists, every-day people, or fighters.

Oxford has revealed itself to me as a city to be discovered little by little, a place that knows how to keep its secrets from the profane eye. Here I was one sunny after-

noon, leaving the Bodleian Library, finding rest in the tiny garden of Brasenose college. There I was in Magdalen Tower, dizzy from climbing the steep stairs. While looking down I made out the half-known topography: the Botanical Gardens heavy with perfume, the elegant shops on High Street, the hills around Oxford, and farther still, the Thames, not seen, but imagined.

Being away from home, I feel as if time has lost its substance and is passing me by. Torn in two, a part of me still moves in familiar places and remembers beloved ones whom I miss, the other lives in the present, creating new associations that I shall later miss. ■

Working as an Au Pair in the US

Viola L. WU, Burma
Supplementary Grant Program –
Burma, 1996-97
University of California at Berkeley
violawu@hotmail.com

Who I am today cannot be separated from my experience as an au pair for an American family for five years. I got the job less than two months after arriving in the U.S. The Stein family and I had to deal with lots of misunderstandings and confusions. They had never met anybody from Burma. It was my first time living with an American family. I took care of Kara and Justin, six and eight respectively.

Within weeks of my arrival, the Steins owned a rice cooker, bought rice, chili pepper, and a new range of spices. I learned to enjoy eating spaghetti with meatballs and pizza. They ate hot and spicy food. I started to understand American idiom and slang. I explained to them about Buddhism, our traditions, and my life in Burma and the reason I left Burma. Kara gave a presentation about Burma to her class. They taught me how to wind surf and ski. I taught them how to swim using new strokes. We had many discussions about American and Burmese cultures including dating, discipline, and cooking. We celebrated all kinds of holidays such as Hanukkah, Burmese New Year, and Christmas.

The most important thing I learned from them was how to say 'no' when necessary. It took me a couple of years to do so. They explained to me that it was all right to say 'no' if I chose to. I became very straightforward. Another thing I learned was to respect others' opinions and differences. The Steins taught me by example, showing great respect for my beliefs, culture, food, and my world-view. They added new and special values to my life and experiences. We influenced each other so deeply that our values seem the same now. ■



2001 Muskie FSA and MPF fellows at summer ESL program at Old Dominion University

Changing my World View

Kyaw Zaw WIN, Burma
Supplementary Grant Program –
Burma, 2000
University of New South Wales
kyawzawwin@hotmail.com

My experience living and studying in Australia provided priceless lessons for me. When I go back to my own country these experiences will be crucial in helping me to contribute to the construction of a democratic society.

When I arrived in Australia, I had the chance to study English at the University of New South Wales and met with many people from other countries. I began to understand the multi-cultural nature of Australia. I learned about government institutions and social welfare. I also witnessed first hand a staff boycott of the university administration. They did not come to work for one day to demonstrate their dissatisfaction and support for other workers. In the end, the staff representatives negotiated with the universi-

ty administration. This was an interesting lesson for me in peaceful dispute resolution.

Through watching TV and reading newspapers, I learned about the role of the media in democratic societies. For example, a private person has the right to sue the media if they feel misrepresented. I also observed that broadcasting debates within parliament helps people to understand democracy and how it works.

I have observed the process of reconciliation between white Australians and aboriginal peoples. This involved an open and productive exchange of points of view. I also witnessed the national referendum in which the people of Australia decided to remain within the British monarchy.

Living in a democratic country has taught me many lessons that I will bring back to my own country. In the modern world globalization is gradually reducing borders and boundaries. With the help of technology we may all soon share the values that I have been exposed to in Australia. ■

“Japanese? Chinese? American? Korean?” “No. Kyrgyz.”

Damira KALYKOVA, Kyrgyzstan
Faculty Development Program, 2001
Yale University
damirakalykova@hotmail.com

While studying in the United States I experienced a common ritual of dialogue when encountering new people. It became as natural to my life in the US as brushing teeth in the mornings and doing food shopping on the weekends.

“Japanese?”

“No.”

“Chinese?”

“No.”

“Korean?”

“No.”

“American?”

“No.”

“But your English...”

“I am a Kyrgyz from Kyrgyzstan.”

“Kurdistan?”

“Kyrgyzstan.”

“Where is that?”

“In Central Asia.”

“Oh, I see.”

At first it was interesting. With so many people from around the world on campus, it was exciting to meet new people. But then I started feeling tired, and then irritated by people’s ignorance. How could they not know about the legendary motherland of Manas and the other baatys (heroes)? What about the beauty of the Kyrgyz mountains, which I saw so many times in my dreams in America, and about one of the deepest high-mountain lakes in the world, the Issyk-Kul, filled with the bitter tears of the Mother-Deer?

So I stopped explaining. “If they don’t know a single thing about your country and culture, then that’s their problem.” This was the American approach I was taught by my American friends.

This advice worked for some time. The busy campus life and work made me forget about my worries. I kept meeting students and faculty members at Yale in the various academic and professional activities I took part in, and kept hearing “oh, I see...” from people. I did not notice that I was apart from the crowd, a visiting fellow who knows what she wants and works according to her planned schedule, but who is just visiting.

Soon I realized that I did not have to stop telling people about my homeland and culture. I realized that it was very important for me to say who I am, why I came to the US, and to talk about my country and culture. So I started explaining again, this time in more detail, showing pictures and web sites about Kyrgyzstan, and by doing this I regained a strong feeling of self-confidence and pride for my country. I felt connected again with my family and my life back in Kyrgyzstan, half way around the world. ■



Undergraduate
Exchange students at
pre-departure
orientation in Istanbul,
July 2001.
photos: Alex IRWIN

NSP Alumni: Where are they Now?

If you want to be included in the next alumni list, e-mail us at airwin@sorosny.org with your name, program and year, host institute and what you've been up to since finishing your program – please put “alumni” as the subject of your message. If you are not included in this issue, look for your information in the next one.

Edmund S. Muskie/ Freedom Support Act (FSA) Graduate Fellowship Program

1995

Lilia TVERDUN (Moldova, Education, New York University) Lilia is working at the Center for Private Business Reform as the manager of the USAID-funded Private Farmers Assistance Program.

1996

Constantin CALANCEA (Moldova, Education, Kent State University) Constantin is the General Services Officer with the US Peace Corps in Moldova, and is also a member of the Advisory Board of the Quality School International in Chisinau.

1997

Irena ALPERYTE (Lithuania, Public Administration, New York University) Irena is head of the Public Relations department at Vilnius Conservatoire, and has recently studied at the Master's in Cultural Management program at Dijon Ecole Supérieure de Commerce, Dijon (France).

1998

Yulia ANDRUSIV (Ukraine, Law, John Marshall Law School) Yulia is an Associate with Baker & McKenzie in Kyiv.

Alla BATCHENKO (Russia, Education, University of Pennsylvania) Alla is currently working to establish a new department, “Management of International Education,” at Rostov State University. She is also an officer and program monitor at Internauka, a center for international academic research and technological cooperation.

Denis LI (Kazakhstan, Public Administration, New York University) Denis is the Deputy Director of the Academy for Educational Development's Global Training for Development program.

Lauri MÄLKSOO (Estonia, Law, Georgetown University) Lauri is a visiting lecturer in international law at the University of Tartu and a PhD student at the Faculty of Law at Humboldt University in Berlin. He has also pub-

lished articles on international law in the Nordic Journal of Int'l Law and the Florida Journal of Int'l Law.

Jeyhoun MAMEDOV (Azerbaijan, Public Administration, New York University) Jeyhoun works as a program coordinator with American International Health Alliance in Baku. jeymamedov@azerin.com

Tamar MIKADZE (Georgia, Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst) Tamar works as a Training Manager at Sibley International on the Georgia Enterprise Support Project, a USAID-funded program that works to develop new business support products and industry-specific associations.

Jolita NORKUNAITE (Lithuania, Education, University of Southern California) Jolita is working as a Graduation Coordinator with the US Peace Corps/Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

1999

Bogdan CIUBOTARU (Moldova, Law, University of Minnesota) Bogdan works as a counsel for “Tara” newspaper and is also a senior consultant to the parliamentary group of the Christian Democratic People's Party.

Marina S. DANILOVA (Russia, Library/Information Science, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign) Marina is working for the development of the National Library of the Republic of Karelia. She is also working on establishing the Association of the American Centers/Corners of the Russian Federation, which will be registered in her home town Petrozavodsk.

Liina ENOK (Estonia, Library/Information Science, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) Liina currently works at the National Library of Estonia.

Inna GLADKOVA (Kyrgyzstan, Law, University of California, Los Angeles) Inna works as a National Protection Officer at UNHCR in Bishkek. She also writes legal articles for the NGO Bureau of Human Rights and the Rule of Law.

Suren KRISTASATIRYAN (Armenia, Law, Vermont Law School) Suren is a bankruptcy lawyer on the Privatization and Bankruptcy Project in the Republic of Armenia at International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc.

Silva KURTISA (Latvia, Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst) Silva will begin working as a project manager and strategic planner in education for Liepaja municipality in August 2001.

Lela NANUASHVILI (Georgia, Library/Information Science, Simmons College) Lela works as a Translator/Information Specialist at the Georgian Research Institute for Scientific and Technical

Information. She is also an instructor at the Regional Training Center for Continuing Education of Librarians and Information Specialists, which was established by Muskie alumni in Library/Information Science.

Aliya SARSEMBINOVA (Kazakhstan, Library/Information Sciences, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign) Aliya has established a “Creative Lab,” which aids in the retraining of librarians and the enhanced cooperation among libraries in East Kazakhstan, with a grant from the Local Initiative Grant Program. She also works as a project coordinator with the Public Legal Information Center and has conducted numerous internet training sessions that were funded by the Open Society Institute. In addition, Aliya manages the Pushkin Library website, which was awarded second place in the Library Web-sites competition among libraries in the NIS by the TACIS Foundation. <http://www.pushkinlibrary.kz>

Anush SHAHVERDYAN (Armenia, Education, Kent State University) Anush is the Human Resources Manager at Epygi Labs Am LLC in Yerevan. She has also received a SCOUT teaching grant for the academic year 2001-2001.

Oksana SHOVKOPLYAS (Ukraine, Washington University in St. Louis, Law) Oksana is currently employed as an in-house legal counsel for “Chumak”, a leading Ukrainian manufacturer of ketchup, mayonnaise, sunflower-seed oil, canned vegetables, fruits and juices. oshovk@yahoo.com, oshovkoplyas@chumak.com

Dmitriy VOLINSKIY (Uzbekistan, Environmental Management, Louisiana State University) Dmitriy works as a consultant for German MVV Consultants and Engineers.

Daiga ZIVTINA (Latvia, Law, University of California, Los Angeles) Daiga is an attorney at the Ilze Baltmane Law Office, a correspondent law firm of Pricewaterhouse Coopers.

Mongolian Professional Fellowship Program

1998

Gaamaa HISHIGSUREN (Mongolia, Indiana University, Master's in Public Affairs) From May to September, 2000, Gaamaa worked as a Banking and Finance Advisor for a Microfinance Institute - XAC/Microstart-UNDP, Mongolia. Gaamaa is currently in the Ph.D program in Community Economic Development at Southern New Hampshire

University, specializing in microfinance. Her current research activities involve conducting impact assessments of microcredit programs and examining issues related to development finance strategies for developing countries, with a focus on women. gaamaah@hotmail.com

1999

Tungalag CHULUUN (Mongolia, University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Work) Tungalag is Director of the Center for Social Development, which has recently become an independent NGO. The organization will focus on social and development issues and will be working closely with the SPU Social Work Department and the National Association of Social Work.

Tumentsogt TSEVEGMID (Mongolia, Indiana University) In July, Tumentsogt started to work for the Fuel and Energy Department of the Ministry of Infrastructure in Mongolia. He also recently passed the exams that qualify him for administrative public service, and has decided to continue working for the Ministry, where he will be in charge of issues related to energy sector restructuring, and privatization. tumentsogt@hotmail.com

UK Scholarship Program

1996

Dmitry NOVIKOV (Belarus, University of Warwick) Dmitry started his Ph.D. in Physics at the California Institute of Technology (Pasadena, CA) in 1998, and then transferred to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cambridge, MA) in 1999. His research interests at MIT focus on the quantum theory of solids and its possible applications to nanotechnology. dima@MIT.EDU

1997

Nebojsa VLADISAVLJEVIC (Yugoslavia, London School of Economics) Since 1998, Nebojsa has been doing a Ph.D. in Government at the LSE focusing on the role of popular mobilization in the disintegration of Yugoslavia (1985-1991).

1999

Fisnik KEPUSKA (London School of Economics) Fisnik is currently working on a project called the Kosovo Business Support (KBS), in Pristina, which is financed by USAID. The project is being implemented by the consulting firm Chemonics, which is based in Washington D.C. Fisnik has been employed with the project since November 2000 as a business consultant, with expertise in marketing, finance and accounting. Fisnik_Kepuska@lsealumni.com

Dace STRELEVICA (Latvia; MPhil in Linguistics at Cambridge University) In 2000, after completing her MPhil, Dace returned home to resume her duties as an editor at Zvaigzne ABC Publishers (one of the biggest book publishers in the Baltic), Foreign Languages department, where she has worked since 1998. She is also enrolled in a Ph.D. in Linguistics program at the University of Latvia. ms80337@lanet.lv

2000

Lidiya GRIGOREVA (Uzbekistan, University of Essex) Lidiya works in Warsaw as a Human Rights Monitoring Officer with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The position involves monitoring the human rights situation in the countries of the former Soviet Union, including Central Asia. lgrigo@essex.ac.uk

Marina OUSSATCHEVA (University of Oxford, St

Antony's College) Marina is a D.Phil student in Social and Cultural Anthropology and continues her research on ethnic diaspora in Russia, particularly the Armenian diaspora. Her studies are supported by the Hill Foundation. marina_ous@yahoo.com

Undergraduate Exchange Program

1995

Liliana DAMIANOV (Romania, Westminster College) Liliana is Project Director of Asset Management with ABN AMRO Bank Romania. She feels that her experience in the States was an important factor in helping her to secure her position with one of Romania's top-rated banks. The openness for debates that she experienced in the US prompted her to join several social clubs, and to co-found an association for social, economic and political debates called LiNK - the Libertarian Network. Liliana.Damianov@ro.abnamro.com

Eva M. FEDOROVA (Slovakia, Indiana University) Eva works in film production, and has enjoyed living in Bratislava and traveling to places such as Prague, USA (FL, CA), and Vancouver. evicka333@gmx.net

Mila LAZAROVA (Bulgaria, Duke University) After returning from the US, Mila finished her Master's in International Economic Relations from the University of National and World Economics, in Sofia. She is now in the fourth year of her Ph.D. program in Industrial Relations and Human Resources at the School of Management and Labor Relations at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ. lazarova@eden.rutgers.edu

Ralitsa Valentinova RAIKOVA (Bulgaria, Florida Atlantic University) After returning home, Ralitsa graduated with a major in English and American Studies. Since then she has been working as a Purchasing Representative in Bulgaria for a multinational company called Goss Graphic Systems, which is the biggest supplier of printing presses in the world. She is in charge of the company's business affairs in Bulgaria. rally@mail.bol.bg

1996

Aivaras CICELIS (Lithuania, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire) Aivaras is the Deputy Director of Financial Institutions and Trade in the finance department of a Vilnius Bank. a.cicelis@vb.lt

Eva DUCKOVA (Slovakia, Trinity College) As a part of her graduate program in European Integration, Eva worked as a trainee for a company in Germany as part of a global sourcing team, which supported relationships with Eastern European businesses. She graduated in June 2000, and remains in Germany working for the company Siemens and taking courses at the University of Karlsruhe. eva.duckova@gmx.net

Piret EHIN (Estonia, University of Arizona) Piret completed his MA in Political Science from the University of Arizona in 2000, and is currently working on his Ph.D. in Political Science, also at the University of Arizona. pirethin@hotmail.com

Vita JAKUBOVSKA (Latvia, Randolph-Macon Woman's College) Vita currently works at Deloitte & Touche. vita@latnet.lv

Anna KWIATKIEWICZ (Poland, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire) Anna graduated from the Warsaw School of Economics in May, 1999 (M.A. in Management and Marketing) and since December, 1999, has worked at the Warsaw School of Economics, Human Resources Department as a Professor Assistant. She started her Ph.D.

("HR Practices in the NGO sector") in October 2000, and is combining this with work as the vice director of the Association for the Forum of Non-Governmental Initiatives, a Polish NGO which works towards federalization of the third sector in Poland. akwiatki@sgh.waw.pl

Mart MAIVÄLI (Estonia, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire) Mart currently works as a Product Line Controller for Elcoteq, an electronics manufacturing company. maivali@yahoo.com

Lutsia MAZITOVA (Kazakhstan, Randolph-Macon Woman's College) Lutsia graduated from the Germanic Philology Department and then spent three years teaching English language and American culture. She has also worked in translation/interpretation. Whenever possible she tries to help Peace Corps volunteers and other Westerners adapt to the customs and traditions of her country; in other words she helps them survive the culture shock that she was once taught to overcome. She recently decided to relocate to Saint Petersburg, Russia, after falling in love with the city. She would be happy to see any UEP alumni who come to the city! mlutsia@mail.ru, mlutsia@hotmail.com

Joanna PRZYBYL (Poland, Duke University) Joanna graduated from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland, and then spent over a year living in Galway, Ireland. After coming back to Poland she worked for two years as an English teacher and translator. asha2@poczta.onet.pl

Mailis RAND (Estonia, Kalamazoo College) Since leaving the US, Mailis graduated from University Nord, Tallinn, with a Bachelor in Law, received a Master of Law degree from the Central European University, Budapest, and received a Master's of European Public Affairs from Maastricht University, in the Netherlands. Currently he is teaching law (public international, European Union and comparative constitutional) at University Nord, in Tallinn, and at the Riga Graduate School of Law, in Latvia. This fall he will begin a doctoral program at Uppsala University, in Sweden, where he will work on comparing the international and regional protection of refugee children.

Kestutis VASKELEVICIUS (Lithuania, Roosevelt University) Kestutis completed his Master's in Comparative Politics at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania. He worked as a teacher at a business college in Kaunas before obtaining his present position as an attache with the Foreign Policy Analysis and Planning Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Lithuania. kestutis.vaskelevicius@urm.lt, kesta2@yahoo.com

Michal ZASEPA (Poland, University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire) After finishing the program, Michal worked as a headhunter and management consultant, studied half a year at the Stockholm School of Economics, traveled across Asia, helped organize the OSI alumni conference in Riga in February 2000, got a masters degree from the Warsaw School of Economics, and then a permanent position with A.T. Kearney, a management consulting firm. mzasep@yahoo.com

1997

Iris CHELARU (Romania, SUNY-Oswego) Iris returned to the US as a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, where she is presently completing a Master's in Communications. As a part of her thesis, she is studying the ways in which censorship, access and privacy are addressed in Internet policies emerging in Yugoslavia, Hungary, Romania and Ukraine, and the role of domestic and international NGOs in shaping media policy in the region. chelaru@comm.umass.edu

Martins JANSONS (Latvia, University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire) Martins has been working at the Latvian Embassy in Vienna, where he has been in charge of consular affairs, press affairs, and finance. This fall he plans to continue with his Masters in International Relations at

Syracuse University. jansonsm@yahoo.com

Helena JÖGI (Estonia, Randolph-Macon Woman's College) Helena is currently working as the International Relations Coordinator at the Estonian Academy of Arts. In September 2001, she will begin her Master's degree at the University of Tartu, Estonia (Dept. of English). Her thesis will focus on contemporary Native American literature, which became a great interest for her since studying in the US. helena@artun.ee

Alexander KUKSA (Belarus, University of Arizona) Alexander is currently the Logistics Executive for Imports in a transportation and forwarding company in Brest, Belarus. He is also a part-time interpreter for a touring agency, and cooperates with the local EAC in both Brest and Minsk. kuksa@brsu.brest.by, concept_a@hotmail.com

Emilian KAVALSKI (Bulgaria, University of Montana) After completing the program, Emilian went back to Bulgaria, where he completed his degree and graduated in 1999. Subsequently he had to fulfill his military service to his country. While in the army he applied to the OSI/Chevening Scholarship program, and was granted one of the scholarships. He was discharged from the army and literally flew the very next day to the UK. At the orientation for the OSI/Chevening Program he was happy to see Maya Muhic (Macedonia) and Dimo Betchev (Bulgaria), alumni from the Undergraduate Exchange program. Presently he is completing his MA in Colonial and Postcolonial Literature at the University of Warwick. He would be happy to have other UEP alumni get in touch with him. emilian_kavalski@hotmail.com

Dagmar KUSA (Slovakia, Bard College) After receiving his MA from Comenius University in 1999, Dagmar worked at the Slovak Helsinki Committee for Human Rights as a Project Manager. Since August 2000 he has been back in the U.S. at Boston University, working towards a Ph.D. and teaching comparative politics. DagmarKusa@aol.com

Mirel PALADA (Romania, Kalamazoo College) Since finishing his studies in sociology, Mirel has worked steadily in his field of statistics. Currently he is the Ad-Interim Manager at the Institutul PRO in Bucharest, where he was recently part of a research team that conducted one of the exit polls for the Romanian election, and (accurately) projected the results. He is married and has a beautiful 8 month old girl named Marta. Mirel writes that he's growing a pot belly (but is still able to climb the Romanian mountains!) and still drives his beat-up Romanian car like crazy around Bucharest. mpalada@universitateamedia.ro, mpalada@yahoo.com

Savina PETROVA (Bulgaria, Montana State University) Savina just completed her MA in English at her home university. She is currently working as an on-line journalist for 123Jump. savina77@yahoo.com

Malgorzata "Gosia" STENCEL (Poland, Roosevelt University) Gosia currently works for the Baltic Sea Cultural Center in Gdansk, an institution which initiates and administers cultural projects within the Baltic Sea region. She also teaches English and performs at an English-speaking theatre, the Maybe Theatre Company (www.mtc.z.pl), and she also just got engaged. gosiastencel@poczta.onet.pl

Arek SYCZ (Poland, University of Wisconsin) In 1998 Arek had an internship with the international law firm Allen & Overy, and then worked for the Siemens Corporation as a corporate lawyer. He has graduated with two master's degrees: one in Law and one in International Relations, both Summa cum laude. Presently he works for Lot Polish Airlines as Sales Manager for the US Midwest Division, and in September he will begin a 2 year program at Northwestern University School of Law, leading to the degree of Juris Doctor (JD). arek_sycz@yahoo.com

Marek TRAVNICEK (Slovakia, University of Washington) Marek did an internship in the Slovak Parliament, sponsored by NDI, the National Democratic Institute.

Currently he works part time for the NDI office in Bratislava as an interpreter, and helps organize seminars with guest speakers on political topics. In October he will be going to Brussels to work as an intern at the European Parliament in the Translation Unit. He will finish his studies in one year. markustravnicek@hotmail.com

Kristina VASILIAUSKAITE (Lithuania, Kalamazoo College) Kristina is working as a Deputy Manager for "In Your Pocket", a company based in Lithuania that publishes city guides for cities such as Vilnius, Riga and Zagreb. She also works as a volunteer coordinator for the annual UNESCO "Africa Days" festival. She would like to be back in touch with students from her year of the UEP. Shinyshoe@email.com

1998

Codrina COZMA (Romania, Valdosta State University) Codrina finished her BA in English and German, and completed international diplomas in French and Spanish from the French and Spanish ministries of education. She is now back at Valdosta State University completing her MA in English. ccozma@valdosta.edu

Vilma GEDGAUDAITE (Lithuania, University of Arkansas) Vilma graduated from Vilnius University in 2000 with a BA in English Philology, and is now studying at the Lithuanian Law University for a Master's Degree in Public administration. She is also working as an office administrator at Ernst & Young. vilmag@takas.lt

Zuzana JASENOVCOVA (Slovakia, Randolph-Macon Woman's College) Zuzana is studying at Constantine the Philosopher University, in the Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Political Science and European Studies, where she is majoring in European Studies. In May she worked for the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs helping to organize a large international conference involving 10 heads of state. She is in regular contact with her UEP friends. zjasenovcova@hotmail.com

Joanna KOWALSKA (Poland, Rutgers University) For a year and a half Joanna worked as a journalist for the Gazeta Wyborcza, the biggest Polish newspaper. Currently she is working for the Polish edition of Newsweek magazine, covering mainly the U.S. She recently graduated from Warsaw University. j_kowalska@yahoo.com

Jozef MULLER (Slovakia, Rutgers University) After returning from Rutgers, Jozef spent one semester at the University of Hamburg, Germany. He is presently finishing his master's thesis in philosophy at Comenius University in Bratislava where he has also organized the Philosophy Club. For Fall 2001 he has been accepted by the Department of Philosophy at Princeton University to join their graduate program. mullerjozef@hotmail.com

Katerina PEJOVSKA (Macedonia, Roosevelt University) Katerina will graduate this fall and is currently working as a Program Assistant for Higher Education and Scholarships at the FOSI-M. She established a local NGO (part of a network for ex-Yugoslavia) called the Postpessimists, Skopje. She is planning to start graduate school in the US at Washington University in St. Louis, MO, towards an MA in creative writing. kpejovska@yahoo.com

1999

Zokir ABDUKHAMEDOV (Tajikistan, Kalamazoo University) Zokir graduated with honors from his university, with a major in law. Presently he is working as a legal assistant at the Institute of Tax and Law in the law department. abl@cada.tajik.net

Aniko KAPORNAKI (Hungary, Bard College) Aniko just finished his Master's in English, and is currently working as a journalist at a major Hungarian newsportal, Internetto. You can find his articles at <http://internetto.hu> (they are in Hungarian). kapornaki@hotmail.com

Marko LEPIK (Estonia, Duke University) Upon returning home, Marko continued his work on the Student Council of the University of Tartu, and in the spring of 2001 he was elected president of the Student Council. He recently started a new position as the Head of the Department of Public Relations in the Estonian Ministry of Justice. marko.lepik@ut.ee

Esen MOMUNKULOV (Kyrgyzstan, University of Washington) Esen is Program Administrator at the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society, a coalition of NGOs. He writes grant proposals, and does translation and computer work. He recently received first prize in the Republic Essay Contest for a paper on Academic Integrity which he wrote in English. esen@mail.auk.kg

Silvia OSUSKA (Slovakia, Randolph Macon Woman's College) Silvia is completing her studies at the University of St Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia, where she is majoring in English and History. She also teaches English at a language school. lesanka78@yahoo.com

Nona ROGAVA (Georgia, Valdosta State University) While in the US, Nona was elected secretary of the Society of International Students at her host university, and this experience inspired her to become President of the Student Council at her home university. She now works at USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and also does volunteer work as an English teacher for IDP (Internally Displaced Person) children from Abkhazia. As an IDP herself, she understands the importance of learning English and receiving a good education. She keeps in touch with many people from her time in the US. nona777@lycos.com

2000

Dilshod ACHILOV (Uzbekistan, University of Arizona) Dilshod worked as a summer intern at U.S. Senator Jon Kyl's office in Arizona, where he did research on U.S.-China relations and the foreign policy objectives of China. a_dilshod@hotmail.com

Saruul BULGAN (Mongolia, Bard College) Saruul spent the summer working as an intern at Human Rights Watch, Europe and Central Asia Division, in New York City. She has now returned home to finish her degree. saruulbulgan@hotmail.com

Alexey KUZNETSOV (Russia, University of Richmond) Alexey is back in his home town where he is composing the overture for a one-act opera. alex_chemorech@pitem.net

Piotr LABENZ (Poland, Duke University) Piotr will be continuing his studies at Warsaw University's College for individual interdepartmental studies in the humanities, where he will soon be working on his MA thesis. He also planned to attend summer school at the European College of Liberal Arts (ECLA) in Berlin. piotr.labenz@ci.zigzag.pl

Majid MAMMADOV (Azerbaijan, Roosevelt University) Majid spent the summer with his family, traveling within and outside of Azerbaijan. He is currently working with friends on a project trying to increase the level of participation of students from outside the capital city in programs like the UEP. mammadov_m@yahoo.com.au

Tatyana ORLENKO (Kazakhstan, Montana State University) After returning home from the US, Tatyana was busy taking her exams at her home university for the year she missed. She managed to pass these exams successfully. She plans to keep in touch with her many new friends from the US and other countries. tatyana_mont@mail.ru

Katsiaryna PADVALKAVA (Belarus, Rutgers University) Katsiaryna completed an internship in survey and research polling at an organization affiliated with the Eagleton Institute, at Rutgers in New Jersey. She plans to continue her studies after returning home. katarinus@usa.net

Contribute to the next Scholar Forum!

Cover Topic: The Internet

Regional Focus: The Baltics

The next issue of Scholar Forum will be published in winter 2002 and submissions are needed from all OSI NSP scholars and alumni. Research papers, personal accounts, photographs, poems, stories, cartoons and drawings are all welcome.

Cover Story: The Internet (max. 750 words)

- How has the internet changed society? How has it failed to live up to its potential?
- Is it possible for governments to control and censor content on the web? Is it desirable to censor content on the web? Is the internet truly a threat to non-democratic regimes?
- What is the role of the internet in political grassroots organizing. How important has it been in the anti-globalization

demonstrations of the last few years?

- What is the relationship between the internet and globalization?
- Who is on-line – who is left out?
- Who profits from the internet? Has it become too commercial or is it the future of global commerce? Should e-commerce be taxed? If not, is this fair to non-internet based commercial ventures?

Personal Accounts: Essays and creative works (Max. 300 words)

A short personal account of your experiences living and studying in a different country - poems, photographs, drawings and cartoons are also welcome.

Regional Focus: The Baltics

Fellows from Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), as well as those who are

familiar with the region, are encouraged to submit stories, poems, photographs, drawings, cartoons, or recipes that are representative of the area.

Alumni

Send us information about your current activities to be printed in the Alumni Section.

Submissions are due in New York by December 15, 2001

Send submissions by e-mail to airwin@sorosny.org (please put "Scholar Forum" in the subject area) or by mail to the attention of Alex Irwin, Open Society Institute, 400 West 59th St., 4th Floor, New York, NY 10019. If you have any questions, please contact Alex at 212-548-0175.

Muskie/FSA Alumni Opportunities

Support for Community Outreach and University Teaching (SCOUT)

The SCOUT Full Time Teaching, Part Time Teaching and Special Projects Grant Programs offer financial, methodological, institutional and informational support to Muskie/FSA alumni who are interested in teaching in institutions of higher education and professional training, or in local communities; in developing projects that promote learning and exchange among students, faculty, and communities; or in facilitating exchange between higher education and professional public and private sector, government, NGOs and other academic and community organizations.

Type of Award

Full Time Teaching
Part Time Teaching

Special Project grants

Application Deadline

1 March 2002 (for teaching assignments in 2002-2003)
1 November 2001 (for teaching assignments in spring 2002), and
1 March 2002 (for teaching assignments in fall 2002)

Special Project grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis

Detailed information, application forms, and contact information for field offices are available from the Civic Education Project web site (www.cep.org.hu/scout), email (scout@osi.hu), or by contacting:

Civic Education Project
Nádor u. 9
Budapest 1051 Hungary
Tel: 36-1-327-3219
Fax: 36-1-327-3221

Civic Education Project
1140 Chapel Street, St 2A
New Haven, CT 06520-5445, USA
Tel: 1-203-781-0263
Fax: 1-203-781-0265

Civic Education Project

Be a part of the reform and development of higher education in your country.

The Civic Education Project (CEP) is a not-for-profit organization promoting reform of higher education in the countries of Central-Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. CEP provides support for promising scholars from Eastern Europe who have graduate training from a Western university and who teach or will be teaching in politics, law, economics, education, sociology, history, political science, international relations, public administration, and policy studies.

Information and applications:

Civic Education Project
H-1051 Budapest
Nador u. 9.
Hungary
Fax: (36-1) 327-3221
E-mail: cep@osi.hu
<http://www.cep.org.hu>

Scholarships and Fellowships with NSP

The Network Scholarship Programs offers the following scholarships and fellowships. Programs are offered only in certain countries; please visit the NSP website for details and for application information.

www.soros.org/netprog.html

American University in Bulgaria:

Each year, NSP funds scholarships for four years of undergraduate liberal arts study at the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG), located in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria.

CNOUS-OSI Program:

Up to 10 awards for students in Uzbekistan to pursue advanced study in certain fields at institutions in France.

DAAD-OSI Program:

A joint scholarship program in Germany for Central Asian graduate students and junior faculty.

Edmund S. Muskie/ Freedom Support Act (FSA)

Graduate Fellowship Program:

Approximately 375 Muskie/FSA fellowships are awarded annually, with fellows from the former Soviet Union placed in one to two-year Master's level professional degree (and non-degree) programs at selected US universities in a variety of fields.

Faculty Development Program:

Each year for up to three years, faculty fellows spend one semester at a US university and one semester teaching at their home universities (social sciences and the humanities only).

Global Supplementary Grant Program:

This program offers supplementary grants to students from selected countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union to pursue Doctoral studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences at accredited universities in Western Europe, Asia, Australia, and North America.

Mongolian Professional Fellowship Program:

This program is designed to provide Masters-level training in education, environmental management, law, public administration, and public health for students from Mongolia.

Soros Supplementary Grant Program:

The program awards grants for one

academic year for undergraduate and post-graduate studies at recognized institutes of higher education outside students' home countries or permanent residence but within East Central Europe and the Newly Independent States.

Social Work Fellowship Program:

This Program is designed to provide graduate training in social work to implement reform, create policy, and foster the development of social work in the participating countries.

Supplementary Grant Program—Burma:

Partial scholarships awarded to Burmese students worldwide who are currently unable to pursue their studies in Burma.

UK Scholarship Program:

UK Scholarship programs include one-year Masters-level awards, generally in the social sciences and humanities, for students and scholars to study at various institutions in the United Kingdom.

Undergraduate Exchange Program:

The Undergraduate Exchange is a one-year, non-degree program for students enrolled in a university in Eastern and Central Europe, parts of the former Soviet Union, and Mongolia.

ScholarForum

Open Society Institute
Network Scholarship Programs
400 West 59th Street
New York, NY 10019 USA