

INFORMATION BULLITIN No.37*It is published in Azeri, Russian and English***August-September, 2001***Information and news on NGO Sector development in Azerbaijan***Included In this issue:****ISAR News and Programs:**

<i>Letter from Editor.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Old Laws, Eternal Problems, A New Viewpoint.....</i>	<i>2</i>

NGO Sector Development:

<i>Making Computers Accessible.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Do Not Ask, " How Can I Help? " Just Help As You Can!.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Nothing is Better Than a Mountain, Except a Mountain You Haven't Yet Visited.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Azerbaijan's Young Ecologists Show Their Talent.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>How Do You Live: Mothers, Sisters, Wives and Daughters?.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>NGO Behind a Barbed Wire.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Women for Legal Reforms.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Life in Silence.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Anyone Can Fall Victim to Torture.....</i>	<i>8</i>

NGO-Business Cooperation in Azerbaijan:

<i>Marketing? Philanthropy? Partnership?.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Research on NGO-Business Relations in Azerbaijan.....</i>	<i>10</i>

Announcements.....11

We are proud to present our August- September edition of the Third Sector News. As always, in the pages of the bulletin, you can find information about the activities of nongovernmental organizations in Azerbaijan. As many of you already know, our bulletin is a forum for NGOs of Azerbaijan. The Third Sector News provides information not only about the activity of NGOs in Azerbaijan, but also about the work of ISAR-Azerbaijan. September 2001 saw the opening of ISAR-Azerbaijan's new Resource Center for Local NGOs in Ganja. The opening ceremony on September 7 was attended by

representatives of the local government, international organizations, local NGOs and the mass media. ISAR-Azerbaijan Information and Outreach Program Director Sara Feinstein made a presentation about the work of ISAR in Azerbaijan, with an emphasis on the services that will be offered by the Ganja Center. Through the Center, local NGO representatives will have access to library materials, computers with Internet and e-mail, consultations, meetings, and other services. Those of us who work at ISAR are very happy to see this Center open to better serve the needs of NGOs in Ganja and the surrounding region. I had planned to end this letter on this positive note. But then, just as we were going to print, such tragic events happened in the United States. We, just as many people throughout the world, were struck by the gravity of the death of so many innocent people through terrorist acts. Our colleague John Deever, from ISAR-DC, sent us a letter right after the tragedy. In it, he writes, "We know that ISAR exists in order to create peace, although that is very difficult, but it is the most important work that any person can do. You all are working for peace, just like we are. And we will keep on working, because we know that in the end, peace is always better than conflict."

"It is very sad for us today, but we know that our colleagues in each ISAR office are working for the future, a future in which we can hope for peace"

Elmira Abdullayeva
Editor

NGO Regional Meeting: Old Laws, Eternal Problems, A New Viewpoint...

*Ulvi Akhundli
ISAR-Azerbaijan*

Arthur Conan Doyle bestowed some eternally wise and true thoughts on Sherlock Holmes, the hero he created. In answer to a question posed by Dr. Watson about the reason behind Holmes's philosophical calmness and life success, he answered, "Elementary, My Dear Watson! It is because I have a doctor who can heal me whenever I need to be healed, and a priest who can alleviate me of my sins if need be, and a good lawyer who can provide stability in all that is happening in my life." It has been many years since those words were written, and the legal profession is still held in high esteem, and Holmes' words have even more resonance for us today than when Doyle put pen to paper. These words are especially true when we think about the regulation of non-governmental organizations.

"Holding such seminars is very important for the development of NGOs in the regions. It is important that representatives of regional NGOs can receive advice from real professionals."

Many people believe that any individual or legal entity finds itself under the pressure of an uncountable number of laws and normative acts. It is as if every little thing we do is regulated by many different laws. Without exception, this is the case with non-governmental organizations. It is extremely difficult, because in order to receive an adequate and correct answer to a legal question, it is necessary to look through mountains of laws, instructions, decrees, and related documents. For many NGOs, who do not have the resources to hire a qualified lawyer, the complexity of the legal system can cause problems.

With this problem in mind, ISAR-Azerbaijan organized a meeting in Mingechevir in August, to try to help NGOs learn more about crucial legal issues that can affect their work. Two experts on legal issues for NGOs were invited to make presentations at the meeting, including Intigam Aliev, the President of the Legal Education Society, and Samir Isayev, Director of the local NGO Ecolex. Thirty-three organizations from Ganja, Mingechevir, and Sheki took part in the meeting. The participants took part in four interrelated sessions on registration for NGOs, forms, NGOs and taxation issues, and the responsibility of NGOs.

"We are very satisfied with this meeting, first because we discussed those questions and problems which we face every day."

During each of the sessions, experts touched on the most important issues for NGOs today. The sessions on registration and taxation issues were especially welcomed by the participants. As one participating NGO representative said, this meeting was like a huge consultation because NGO representatives gave examples of their difficulties and of the problems which they have encountered in practice and received advice from qualified specialists. The meeting was especially useful for the participants, as they were able to ask related questions, and here the answers to others' questions.

"We prepared a packet of registration documents to give to the Ministry of Justice. But thanks to this meeting, I realized that I made some small mistakes, which could become a reason for the Ministry to return the documents to us. And it is possible that we made some of these mistakes because we did not know the law. And it is possible that if we did not

understand that we ourselves had made mistakes, that we could have mistakenly viewed the Ministry's action as an arbitrary decision of government officials."

In addition to the structured section of the meeting, the gathering provided NGO leaders from Ganja, Sheki, and Mingechevir with the opportunity to get to know each other, to build relationships, and to exchange information about the work of their NGOs. It was extremely moving to watch the representatives of organizations from different regions, who had met each other at the Second Annual Local NGO Fair in Baku, greeting each other warmly, showing lively interest in The news of each other's NGOs, and discussing possibilities for future cooperation. It was interesting to note that groups of meeting participants continued their discussions even during the lunch break. Samir Isayev from Ecolex noted that this is a clear indicator of success of the event itself, when the participants become so engaged in the process that they continue discussion even outside the framework of the official program. He noted that this shows that there is demand for more such meetings both in Baku and in the regions.

Making Computers Accessible

With support from ISAR-Azerbaijan and the humanitarian organization United Aid for Azerbaijan, Galadjak Namina (For the Sake of the Future) is implementing a project entitled "Children are Our Future". The project aims to provide high schools in Ismailli, Mingechevir, Sumgait and Shuvelan (a settlement of Baku) with personal computers and appropriate software including Basic, Pascal, and Windows. The project will provide great opportunities for the schoolchildren to study the computer information systems, and to learn how to actually apply computer use to other types of work. Computers and software have already been installed at school ? 1 in Ismailli, ? 11 in Sumgait and ? 3 in Mingechevir. In July of this year, the Galadjak Namina staff carried out seminars and trainings for schoolteachers. Each school was supplied with 6 personal computers. They are placed in the classrooms and will be used in accordance with the to the school program.

This equipment will be used for the following purposes:

- Practical training in computer science.
- School-wide and regional olympiads in computer information systems.

Free training in elementary computer skills for children from vulnerable families, as well as for refugees and the disabled.

Do Not Ask, "How Can I Help?" Just Help As You Can!

*Akif Akmedov,
Director, Ufug*

A foundling is an infant that has been abandoned by its parents. At one time, I used to think that we could never have such children in Azerbaijan, because our society respected families with many children. Unfortunately, however, today infants are abandoned in our country. The "lucky" ones are left on the doorsteps of a hospital or some other public building where they are bound to be found; the unlucky ones are thrown into trash dumpsters, public toilets, wells, transformer and gas distributor boxes. Mothers and fathers put these small human beings into a bag or into a box and just leave them-- destining them, at best, to a life without a permanent home. Every year the number of abandoned children grows. According to official statistics, more than 100 infants have arrived in children's hospitals and in state orphanages in the year 2000. But this figure is far from a reality.

Actually the number of abandoned babies is much greater. Many of the infants simply do not survive, left without appropriate care and food. When you hear the sad stories of these infants, it makes you intolerably sick. People often try to justify the irresponsible behavior of their parents by saying that the economic difficulties in our country today push people to take this horrible step. But the truth is that there is no justification for such an attitude, no reason for any adult to treat any child in this way. We, the healthy and strong people of Azerbaijan, those of us whose children are surrounded by care and attention, have a responsibility to make sure that all of the children in our country are well taken care of. We should solve the problems of these children.

I hope that Ufug's Foundlings Support Center will bring life to some of these children, who otherwise might not have survived. With financial support from ISAR- Azerbaijan and World Vision, this Center is currently taking care of seven babies. These children are being cared for at the Foundlings Support Center, and are receiving outpatient treatment at

the Garayev Children's Hospital. Within the framework of this project, a telephone hotline has been set up. Anyone can call the hotline to report the whereabouts of an abandoned child. The idea is that as soon as the Center receives a call, the staff of the Center will pick up the child and bring it to the Center, where it will receive attention, food, and necessary care. Later, the children will be placed in a state orphanage.

We hope that this project will enjoy the support of ordinary citizens, as well as international and humanitarian organizations. We shall be glad to accept any help. Remember, it is a matter of kindness, generosity, and parental duty.

Nothing is Better Than a Mountain, Except a Mountain You Haven't Yet Visited

*Tarlan Ramazanov,
Director, Mountain Sports Club*

A while ago, an article appeared in the newspaper *Ezhednevniye Novosti*, under the title "Mixed Accents". The authors of the article focused on how the economy should be developed in Azerbaijan, and noted that "the government could organize a tender for financing of appropriate tourism programs". In the opinion of the authors, it would be useful to develop beach tourism, excursions to cultural monuments, and activities for children. The basic idea of the publication is that tourism should be developed in Azerbaijan. It is difficult to not agree with the authors.

Tourism, and ecotourism in particular, is developing in many countries throughout the world. This trend is understandable. Ecotourism is one of the most accessible and effective forms of relaxation and enjoyment. Correct and well-organized ecotourism can have positive influences on health, as it helps strengthen the body. At the same time, it develops a person's will, initiative, and aspiration to overcome difficulties, and encourages patriotism and love for one's country.

From an environmental point of view, ecotourism allows us to raise the general level of ecological literacy, to involve young people in environmental awareness activities and nature protection efforts, to familiarize the population with the ecological situation in different climatic zones, and to witness the results of the negative influence of man on nature, including cutting down trees, harming animals and their habitats, and irrational use of water resources.

Azerbaijan has large, but little used potential for the development of ecotourism. The existence of a unique variety of natural climate zones, less explored and remote areas in Azerbaijan makes such tourism attractive for all who love the outdoors. But ecotourism without the competent staff can mean tragedy rather than a pleasant holiday. The leader of an ecotourism expedition should know about ecology, geography, and psychology, and be able to provide first aid, to train expedition participants in outdoors survival skills, and to make correct decisions in extreme situations.

At the moment we have qualified outdoors instructors in Azerbaijan. But, unfortunately, if the tourism situation does not improve in the next few years, we will lose much of the accumulated experience we currently have in our country. In order to avoid this fate, the members of The Mountain Sports Club have decided to implement a project entitled "Edvis", which aims to popularize and encourage the development of ecotourism in Azerbaijan. Through the project, The Mountain Sports Club is training sixty young people from 11 high schools in the skills necessary to lead ecotourism trips. We hope that in addition to the knowledge and various skills, which the students have gained from the project, the participants have also gotten an opportunity to spend their summer vacations better.

The first stage of the project included two months of training in ecology, engineering and tactics of tourism, outdoor safety strategies, and formation and management of initiative groups.

Following the two-month training, participants began preparation for a multi-day outdoors expedition. And, at last, on July 3, participants escaped the Baku heat, and with anticipation of both the pleasure and difficulties of their upcoming travel, 40 students set out to the Guba region. Under the leadership of skilled instructors, the group established a base camp 10 kilometers from the foothill village of Alich. In the early morning of the next day the participants broke into three groups. Each group set out on its own route, through rich, dark woods, up to the edge of the forest. By evening, they managed to leave the forests and mountain-meadow zone. Here, at the mouth of the Agchay River, the groups joined up with one another.

The first two groups then continued their trek in a high mountainous zone, moving on toward Khinalik, a small mountain village. To reach the village, they had to climb over the Gizil Gaya ("golden rock") mountain peak (3700 meters), and then continue across the Kudyalchay River gorge and down to the Kusar plain.

The third group continued from the mountain meadow zone toward the ancient village Budug, located high in the mountains. As one of the participants told us, "All day we had to move on mountain meadows covered with ferns and

nettles as tall as a person. We felt as if we were walking along a savannah. The sun ruthlessly burned in the sky above our heads and there was not even a small stream or brook where we could cool off or drink. The tall grasses meant we could only move at slow speeds. But, we needed to go faster. We wanted to reach the place where the grass is not so high, under the slopes where there should be water. In the evening, we approached the village Budug and from there descended abruptly to the beginning of a canyon at the Garachay River. We planned to walk past the canyon the next day.

The natural beauty of the canyon of the Garachay River was astounding, with abrupt 300- meter rocky slopes, with numerous waterfalls cascading above a river channel.

At the widest spot of the canyon, it is possible to walk along the bank of the river. In the middle of the canyon, you can walk along the river channel, following along the rocky coast, helping each other to keep from falling into the river. It would be unsafe to spend the night in the canyon. So, we walk along without stopping, and after 12 hours, we are finally past the canyon. We will remember this day for a long time-- for we were the first people to walk the who distance of the canyon, from beginning to end.

After resting up for a day, we again head off, this time through the Yeddilar mountain range, to the ruins of the ancient Albanian fortress. The fortress is unique. It was constructed in the beginning of our millennium on a rock. Its three sides are inverted outwards. Only one side has a break, which leads to a narrow passage to a sentry tower, via a small footbridge. This unique construction is also of historical significance.

On July 11, after spending 8 days on the excursion, all of the groups arrived back in the base camp. And on July 12, we were back home in Baku.

But our return to Baku did not mean an end to this project. Now we need to analyze the work we have carried out. Each group will prepare reports about their excursions and will prepare detailed description of their hiking routes, so that these routes can be used by future ecotourists.

In end, I would like to thank ISAR-Azerbaijan for financing this project.

Azerbaijan's Young Ecologists Show Their Talent

*U. Chertovskikh
L. Stativina*

The Children's Ecological Police of Azerbaijan recently took part in an international ecology tournament in Georgia. The Soros Foundation in Georgia and the World Wildlife Fund organized the event. Young people from Georgia, Armenia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Ukraine gathered together from August 17-25 at the WWF summer camp, located in a picturesque place near the Kura River, on the outskirts of the Borjomi-Kharagauski National Park. The result was not only increased environmental knowledge, but also new friendships, and unforgettable memories of hospitality and professional cooperation.

Within the framework of tournament, the teams competed in three kinds of competitions. The first competition was an "environmental battle". Each team had to complete 16 different tasks, all in English. Depending on the draw, the team played either the role of lecturer, opponent, or reviewer.

The Azerbaijan team did not succumb to the pressure of these competitions and, in fact, came through in third place. Azerbaijan team captain Rufat Alekperov was voted the best reviewer of the tournament.

The second stage of the competition was a practical exercise, to see which team could best identify the pollution levels in area rivers. Participants used bio-indicators in their pursuit for the truth and the first place prize. Participants were lucky to have as head judge Birte Zimmerman, a professional with significant experience in water pollution issues, having headed the UNESCO Baltic Sea project from 1997- 2000. The Azerbaijan team was proud to be presented with prizes and diplomas, upon winning this section of the competition

The third kind of competition, and favorite of the participants, was entitled "This is my country!". During this competition, the young ecologists told stories about the history, geography, economy, ecology, culture, literature, international relations, and national traditions of their countries. In their presentation, the Azerbaijan team paid special attention to the damage that the Karabakh war caused to the natural environment. The leaders of the Children's Ecological Police expressed their gratitude to the Azerbaijani team for their hard work in this competition. At the end of the conference, the judges gave all of the participants a letter of honor, recognizing their participation.

The article has been adapted from an article published in the newspaper Ekho.

How Do You Live: Mothers, Sisters, Wives and Daughters?

Some years ago, when I worked as a journalist, I had a conversation with a woman who was living in a reformatory prison. Zeynab* was serving a sentence there for murdering her husband. During a long conversation, she told me her life story. It is all very simple. She got married under her parents' insistence, and she thought that everything would be okay-- that there would be normal problems and normal pleasures. But, in truth, she found everything but happiness. Her husband did not work and was always drunk. And he vented all of his anger on his wife and children. Zeynab's story is hard to stomach. Choking back tears, she told me how her husband beat her, and pushed her near starvation when he lost all his money gambling.

But for Zeynab, the last straw was when her husband wagered her in a game of cards and lost. Then the 32-year-old woman felt obliged to take the matter into her own hands with a knife. When I asked her why she did not try to change the situation, she answered that she didn't want to air her dirty laundry. When we said goodbye to each other, Zeynab said: "I do not regret that I have killed him. I pity only my children and worry what will happen when I leave this place."

Such a sad story. Every time we hear such stories, we wonder what should be done. It is with this question that we began our conversation with director of the AREAT Center, Yelena Gasumova.

According to statistics, in one out of every four families, the wife becomes victim to a monster husband. Most of these husbands remain unpunished. The stresses that modern men face in their outside lives are brought into the family, where the husband unloads his aggression on his family. In addition to facing violence in their families, women also come up against an infringement of their rights in social, economic, political, psychological, and humanitarian spheres.

In May of this year a book entitled Gender Problems of Violence was published in Georgia and Azerbaijan. This book presents the results of gender and sociological research which was carried out as part of a project entitled "Problems of Violence in the Southern Caucasus: Gender Aspects". The research was carried out by two non-governmental organizations: "AREAT" (Azerbaijan) and "Woman and Society" (Georgia), with financial support from ISAR-Azerbaijan and Horizonti in Georgia. During the research, 600 respondents from Baku, Khachmas, Tbilisi and Gori were questioned. Detailed, focused interviews were carried out with all the respondents.

This research revealed that in addition to habitual physical violence, many women face other types of abuse, which are ingrained in society, and are not seen as violations of their rights. Many women feel that they are subject to sneers, groundless criticisms, and insults to their social values, religious feelings, and outlooks, and that they face isolation from those close to them, and are forced to quit their jobs once they marry. Quite often, in the mind of the husband, the wife is seen as a defective family member, especially when she does not bring in a material contribution toward the family budget. It is natural that all this creates uneasiness and leads women to look down on themselves, lose their self-respect, feel depressed and think that their futures are uncertain. More than 85% of the women questioned believe that "equal social rights" is a utopian slogan; 93 % are convinced that it is the woman's job to preserve the psychological balance and comfort in the family-- meaning that many women hide family violence from those who are closest to them

Thus, we feel it is necessary to organize and carry out trainings on social issues for women survivors of violence, with a special focus on how to overcome the psychological trauma that is caused by violence. Residents of Baku, Khachmas, and Khudat in Azerbaijan and Tbilisi, Gori and Gardabani in Georgia took part in the trainings. We hope that our training will help the women to learn how to survive in crisis situations. In my opinion, it is even more important that many women now know how to behave in difficult situations. Our trainers have learned that it is possible for different people to have a different degree of sensitivity to violence-- that is, one person may consider normal the same behavior that another person sees as violence. But it is necessary to keep in mind that any kind of violence can cause people harm, even if it is seen as "normal behavior".

The name has been changed to protect this woman's privacy.

NGO Behind a Barbed Wire

On September 4, at the head office of legal decisions at the Ministry of Justice, a protocol was signed in cooperation with Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan, the initiative group Amnesty International in Azerbaijan, and the EI Center for

Program Development. The signed protocols will allow non-governmental organizations to play a role in reforming the penitentiary system according to Article 20 of the Executive Code.

In particular, the Human Rights Center and this office of the Ministry of Justice have agreed that the opportunities for the Human Rights Center to prepare prison personnel, and to provide education and social rehabilitation of the prisoners. In addition, the Human Rights Center will work to develop prison libraries, to publish books on prisoners' rights, and to carry out seminars on these topics in cooperation with officials. Direct monitoring of the situation in the prison system will be carried out with official permission from the head office of legal decisions at the Ministry of Justice.

Based on this monitoring, the Human Rights Center will develop recommendations for improving the prison system according to international standards and local legislation. We should point out that the Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan has been monitoring prisons since 1995. Since 1996, Center staff has regularly visited five correctional institutions. Dozens of press releases, articles, and reports have been written and published. Hundreds of photos and videos about these prison visits are now available in the Center's archives.

However, until December 1999, these activities were carried out without any official sanction from the government of Azerbaijan. In fact, the Human Rights Center was not even registered.

" The signed agreements mean that the head office for legal issues of the Department of Justice has officially recognized NGOs as partners with equal rights in reforming the penitentiary system. I think this will have a positive effect on the situation in Azerbaijan. The protocol opens an opportunity for our organizations to proceed from simple fact-gathering and criticism to regular activities aimed at improving the general situation in correctional facilities."- noted Eldar Zeynalov, the Director of the Human Rights Center.

Women for Legal Reforms

*Arzu Iskenderova,
Women Lawyers for Legal Reforms*

The NGO Women Lawyers for Legal Reforms was established in December of 1999. The organization's work is aimed at creating, by means of legal reforms, a democratic state, strengthening the rule of law and educating people about legal matters.

Members of this NGO include more than 30 women lawyers, university teachers, human rights defenders and others. The union closely cooperates with local and international organizations and carries out research concerning the development of legal reforms.

The organization has determined five main issues it wishes to address:

- Public education in the legal sphere;
- Positive development of the legislature and government and the establishment of a basis for implementing legal reforms;
- To support people's basic rights and freedoms;
- To support nongovernmental organizations and independent media;
- To create a forum for female lawyers and law students involved in various branches of law, thereby establishing closer contacts among the female law community and promoting their professional and public activity.

The Union invites all local and international organizations to work with us.

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The information was taken from the Information -analytical agency "Saniya".

Life in Silence

In a recent issue of our bulletin, we spoke about the problems experienced by the blind and those who are severely vision-impaired. In this issue, we would like to speak about the difficulties and problems of those people in Azerbaijan who cannot hear or speak. Elman Abbasov, the Director of the Society of the Deaf and Mute spoke about the current situation. We met him at the ISAR-Azerbaijan Resource Center in Mingchevir.

A deaf person does not seem to differ from other people. Only a group of deaf people gesturing to each other in public may attract the attention of some curious people. Their appearance does not give any indication that they have any physical disabilities. Their lives differ from ours only because their life passes in mute silence.

Many of them can speak and are taught to read lips and pronounce words without hearing them. Such artificially acquired speech sounds unusual, but it helps them not to feel lonely. When they are talking amongst themselves, you can not hear a word. You cannot distinguish between a pleasant conversation and a bitter dispute. When you converse with deaf and mute people, it might seem odd that they grimace so much. This is because they cannot express their emotions with the intonation of their voices and therefore express themselves with exaggerated facial expressions.

The deaf have their own theatre and dance groups. It is an unusual spectacle. Just imagine that music is performed and singers are singing but without any voice, only with gestures. Perhaps an absolutely deaf actor is dancing a waltz. It is not clear how she catches the rhythm. Then it becomes clear that her interpreters stand behind the curtains and prompt her.

Despite all their achievements they are still people with disabilities and of course, need care. They have many difficulties in education because not all towns and regions have special boarding schools that address their needs. Some years ago, deaf people could continue their education in the Leningrad Rehabilitation Center. Now they do not have this opportunity. There are not enough qualified specialists for providing them with secondary education. These days few people are interested in working with these children because such work is poorly paid.

Also, there are not enough interpreters for deaf and mute people. Many interpreters are self-taught and many of them are the children of deaf and mute people. They have learned the language of deaf and mute people by communicating with their parents. At the same time, many deaf and mute parents are obliged to move from their apartments in towns to private houses with a yard so their children can hear the speech of neighbors. I have seen all of these things with my own eyes.

Many people are inclined to regard the deaf and mute as feeble-minded. This is simply not so. They are ordinary people as we are. They do not need pity. What they need is compassion and support.

It should be noted that not all people with hearing disabilities are completely deaf. A good hearing aid would solve the problems of many. Unfortunately, too many of them cannot afford to buy them.

The Society of the Deaf and Mute, a local Azerbaijani NGO, does what it can to help these people. They help them study in the Baku boarding school and help them materially when there is an urgent need. This is the present situation of deaf and mute people here in Azerbaijan.

Anyone Can Fall Victim to Torture

Zaliha Tagirova,
Coordinator of the Initiative Group Amnesty International in Azerbaijan

The campaign "Anyone can Fall Victim to Torture" is based on the nearly 40-years experience of Amnesty International in fighting torture. Amnesty International's first campaign aimed at eliminating torture, carried out in 1973, focused on the causes of torture and the application of torture. The second campaign, in 1984-85, focused on torture prevention. Both campaigns were carried out with notable results, including the creation of international conventions and the establishment of mechanisms to fight torture on the UN and local levels, increased activeness of health professionals in recording incidents of application of torture and in working to rehabilitate victims, and the formation of international and national NGOs fighting against torture.

In the process of preparing for this campaign, the International Secretariat of Amnesty International in London selected those problems, which require immediate attention. With this goal, a series of meetings with invited experts were organized, culminating in an international convention on torture, ratified in Stockholm in October 1996.

The result of this convention was that the attention of the campaign should focus on four major issues:

- Torture and its strict interpretations (beating, electric shock).
- Conditions of being held under guard, which can be considered torture or cruel treatment.
- Types of punishment, both torture and cruel treatment, as well as amputation and beating
- Torture by armed political groups

Torture happens on a daily basis. Despite international agreements which prohibit torture, it is clear that torture is being carried out by governments throughout the world. Reports of torture come in from many countries, no matter their political ideological or economic system.

Various methods of torture are used in the modern world, including not only archaic instruments, such as whips, clubs, and vices, but also modern technology, such as electricity, psychological torture, and drugs which can induce fear, hallucinations, muscle spasms, and paralysis. Victims of such torture suffer greatly.

People from any level of society, any social group, age, or profession can become victims of torture. People may be tortured because they have committed a crime, or possibly for political reasons. Men often use sexual abuse as a form of torture for women. In some instances even children are tortured, or they may be forced to watch their parents' being tortured.

But the understanding of torture includes not only the infliction of physical pain, but also threatening a person, cheating a person, and even suggesting various temptations to him. And if an individual is threatened with torture, Amnesty International will speak out against it, without exception. In addition to torture, Amnesty International deals with "cruel, inhumane or humiliating behavior or punishment". The term "torture" includes any rough treatment which could harm the physical or psychological health of a prisoner or any punishment which has the goal of making a person suffer. In contrast, cruel treatment is any type of harassment, which is not aimed at getting a person to divulge information, etc.

Even a well-developed legal system cannot itself provide a guarantee against torture. Therefore the degree to which society is willing to view such behavior as a violation is extremely important.

As an initiative group (a group which has not been registered with the Ministry of Justice), Amnesty International in Azerbaijan does not have the right to carry out individual actions in its own country. The group takes part in the International Campaign Against Torture in an effort to change society's outlook on this issue.

Towards this aim, the group plans to hold seminars for NGOs and to provide the Azerbaijani parliament, mass media, and others with Amnesty International materials developed in the Campaign Against Torture, with the goal of changing public opinion and raising public involvement in working actively against torture.

Marketing? Philanthropy? Partnership!

Ulvi Akhundli, ISAR-Azerbaijan

The number of people in the world with diabetes is increasing every year. And, unfortunately, this is also the case in Azerbaijan. In recent years, the disease has been diagnosed increasingly amongst children and young adults. A discussion of the potential reasons is enough information for a whole article on its own-- most diabetics in Azerbaijan have had to rely on themselves for solutions to the problems which face them on a daily basis. Treatment of diabetics is expensive. But out of fairness, we should note that diabetics are not alone in their fight for a normal life: in Azerbaijan, several local NGOs are working to help those with diabetes.

Diabetes mellitus is a chronic disease caused by inherited and/or acquired deficiency in production of insulin by the pancreas, or by ineffectiveness of the insulin produced. Such a deficiency results in increased concentrations of glucose in blood which in turn leads to damage of many of the body's systems, especially the blood vessels and nerves. Diabetes mellitus is a hereditary disease. It is estimated that the number of people with diabetes will double over the next 25 years.
- World Health Organization

One of these organizations is the Sheki Balakan Regional Branch of the Azerbaijan Diabetics Association. According to Tehran Jafarov, the director of this non-governmental organization, currently about 3000 diabetics live in the Sheki-Balakan region of northwestern Azerbaijan. About one-fourth of them receive assistance from Jafarov's organization. "Our organization is only three years old, but during this time period, we have managed to do a lot," says Jafarov. We have successfully carried out several projects to provide both moral and material support to diabetics. But that is not all. The organization was able to attract the attention of several international companies to the plight of diabetics in our region, including Eli Lilly and Novo Nordisk. It should be noted that in the regions of Azerbaijan, it is extremely rare for an NGO to receive support from the business sector.

Eli Lilly was founded in 1876 in the United States by Colonel Eli Lilly. With the goal of improving the quality of medicines, the Eli Lilly Company was the first to institute laboratory quality controls for all of its production on a regular basis. The company was the first in the world to distribute insulin. Today, Eli Lilly is considered the world leader in diabetes care.

Tehran Jafarov told us how he managed to get such support: "When we first created our organization, we didn't even know how to present ourselves, we didn't know how difficult it would be to carry out our work on a regular basis, and not just from project to project. We cannot work that way, providing support to diabetics just periodically. Diabetes is not a disease that you can treat occasionally, or that goes into remission. Rather, diabetics require constant care. And after a given period, we found ourselves facing a problem of funding and lack of medicines. We thought of a solution right away-- it took us a while to carry out, but, in the end, we were successful.

"We sent letters, proposals, and requests to many pharmaceutical companies. We also called them, to explain our problem. And it worked. Two companies decided to help us out-- Eli Lilly and Novo Nordisk, both of whom now provide us with support on a regular basis.

"We never asked for money. We tried to learn about the companies' charitable policies, and then, taking into account the specific ways in which these companies work, we asked the companies to provide us with insulin, syringes, vitamins, and other medicines that diabetics need. In April 2000 with financial support from ISAR-Azerbaijan, we created a School for Diabetics, where diabetics learn how to live normal lives, despite the difficulties they face.

"Three highly qualified nurses work in the school, giving injections and teaching diabetics how to give themselves injections. The salary of these nurses is paid by the Azerbaijan office of Eli Lilly. We are very thankful for their support in this."

So, you are wondering, why would a private company do this kind of thing? Why, when dozens of NGOs ask businesses for support, did this organization, the Sheki Balakan Branch of the Azerbaijan Diabetics

The Sheki-Balakan Regional Branch of the Azerbaijan Diabetics Association was founded in 1998. The main mission of the organization is providing moral and material assistance to diabetics, and raising public understanding of the disease. The organization has carried out projects such as "Care for Diabetics", "All of Us are Particles of the Sun", "Strength is Knowledge" and others. The organization has created a Diabetics School in Sheki.

Association, succeed in receiving such support?

We talked to Mursal Shiraliyev, representative of the US company Eli Lilly, here in Azerbaijan to get some answers to these questions:

"Whether we like it or not, we all form part of a large mosaic which we call the world. All of us our intertwined with one another. If you take care of the person who needs help today, tomorrow this will come back to you, like a boomerang. Most business people have accepted the idea of socially responsible business. And we are no exception. Our company has significant experience in philanthropy. Our first experience in Azerbaijan was with the Sheki Balakan regional branch of the Azerbaijan Diabetics Association. Why did we choose to work with them? Well, we had several reasons for accepting their proposal for support. First of all, organization representatives followed the standards of business etiquette when they approached us-- this clearly stood out as a plus. We were explained the needs of the organization and were given printed materials to look over. Even after just that, we were almost ready to give our approval. What happened afterwards just served to strengthen our resolve to move forward. The head of the organization did not ask for money, but rather for concrete help for the sick. Additionally, he suggested to use that we ourselves coordinate the distribution of medicines to diabetics. And, in the end, we found out that the director of the organization was himself a diabetic, that is, that he himself understands the problem from within. We gave him a positive response and we have been working together now for two years. Our first experience of working with this organization has shown that it is possible, and indeed necessary, to work with them. We receive all of the required reports from the NGO on time, and the press regularly provides positive press coverage about Eli Lilly's work with the diabetics in the Sheki Balakan region. This creates a positive image for Eli Lilly, which is an important factor in the company's activity in Azerbaijan. We are convinced that philanthropy is part of business, but with an emotional bent. It is one of the most important achievements of modern society."

Research on NGO-Business Relations in Azerbaijan

Recently much research has been carried out about the relationship between businesses and NGOs in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The research has shown that, for the most part, the activities that are supported by business are those causes which the manager or director of the company is interested in supporting. So, for example, a manager who has a disabled child is likely to funnel his company's support to an organization which is supporting disabled children. Additionally, business representatives overwhelmingly report that they are unlikely to support those organizations that tell them that businesses have an "obligation" support the community. It has also been noted that philanthropy is more effective on the local level, rather than on national or international levels.

ISAR-Azerbaijan published a study about NGO-Business relations in Azerbaijan in Fall 2000, and has recently carried out follow-up research on the topic. A report is expected in October 2001.

If you would like to receive a copy of this report (available in Azeri or English) please contact the ISAR-Azerbaijan Information and Outreach Program in October.

Announcements

Regional School on Forced Migration

What? 10-day Southwest Asian Regional School on Forced Migration, organized by the Oxford University Center for Refugee Research, in cooperation with the Asian Center for Research on Migration at the Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.

Where? Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

When? December 3-13, 2001

Who? Managers of non-governmental organizations, international governmental organizations, and religious organizations working on humanitarian issues; government representatives and researchers working on migration issues.

Contact Information:

Shannon Stephen or Jane Cuning

Southeast Asia Regional School

Refugee Studies Center

Queen Elizabeth House

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30th Annual Conference on Research of the Non-Profit Sector Miami, Florida, USA

The Association for Research of Non-Profit Organizations (ARNOVA) is organizing the 30th Annual Conference on the topic of The Effect of Civil Society and Public Policy on Non-Governmental Organizations, November 29- December 1 in Miami, FL.

Application deadline is October 15, 2001.

For more information, please contact ARNOVA.

Tel.: (1-317) 684-2120, Fax: (1-317)684-8900

{ HYPERLINK "<http://www.arnova.org>" }

Conference

What? Conference: Priorities for Financing

Environmental Protection Projects for the

Caspian: The Position of NGOs

Where? Astrakhan (Russia)

When? March 2002

Who? Representatives of environmental NGOs from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkmenistan.

How? To apply, please submit a completed application form (available from ISAR) to ISAR-Central Asia at: { HYPERLINK "<mailto:root@isar.almaty.kz>" }.

Seminar on Psychotherapy

Workshop with Betty Alice Erickson (USA)

Organized by The Azerbaijan Psychologists Association

October 2001 in Baku

Betty Alice Erickson is a daughter of Dr. Milton H. Erickson, founder of the Ericksonian hypnotherapy method. Erickson is the author and editor of various books, articles and newsletters. For many years she has given workshops and lectures about psychotherapy and consulting all around the world.

Workshop topics include:
basic techniques of the Ericksonian hypnosis
basics of Neuro-Linguistic Programming
(NLP)
work with images, dreams and metaphors
other various issues of psychotherapy and consulting.

The workshop will be in English with translation into Russian.

Approximate dates are October 25-27.
Application deadline: October 10.

If you have any questions, please contact:
Ph.: (850) 3320186
E-mail: { HYPERLINK "mailto:alexcherpsy@yahoo.com" }

Grants

Regional Environmental Center (REC) for the Caucasus
REC for the Caucasus is accepting applications for grants in the categories listed below. Only environmental NGOs from Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia are eligible to apply.

Grants offered on a continuous basis (up to 1500 USD)

1. Grants for Registration small grants to support NGOs in covering registration costs.
2. Subscription Grants small grants for subscriptions.
3. Urgent Grants for necessary and urgent projects.
4. Travel Grants for participation in international events.

More information is available at: { HYPERLINK "http://rec.caucasus.net" }

News

ISAR-Azerbaijan is proud to announce the opening of the new ISAR-Azerbaijan NGO Resource Center in Ganja. The Resource Center in Ganja will provide similar services to those provided in the Baku and Mingechevir Centers, including access to library materials and computers, consultations, meetings, and trainings.

We would like to request that local and international NGOs who have published books or other materials which might be of interest to other organizations please bring copies of these publications to the ISAR office, for inclusion in our Resource Center Libraries.

Representatives of businesses in Azerbaijan have already submitted the first applications to the NGO-Business Volunteer Program. As many of you already know, through the ISAR-Azerbaijan/ International Alert NGO-Business Volunteer Program, company representatives will have the chance to learn more about local NGOs first-hand, while sharing their skills. The first volunteers will begin their assignments in late September. How can you take part, or learn more about the program? For more information, please contact the ISAR-Azerbaijan Information and Outreach Program.

Have you encountered any difficulties or problems in working with the mass media? If your local NGO needs some advice on this topic, we would like to invite you to take part in a consultation on working with the mass media, conducted by ISAR-Azerbaijan's Information Program Coordinator. These consultations can help you learn how to establish a friendly working relationship with editors and journalists, how to make your publications interesting to the editor, and how to most effectively use your space in the newspaper or your time on the airwaves.

Consultations about all of these topics will be held every Tuesday from 11:00-13:00, beginning on October 16..

About ISAR-Azerbaijan

For the past five years, ISAR has been working as a Support Center for local NGOs in Azerbaijan, helping non-governmental, non-religious, non-commercial organizations to have a broader impact on society.

ISAR's Training Program offers:

A basic training course covering NGOs, their management and structure, financing, proposal writing, and public relations; advanced courses on fundraising, conflict resolution, project management, financial management and structural development; consulting on organizational development.

ISAR's Information and Outreach Program offers:

Information: A NGO reference library, computer access, and information about conferences and grants; a directory of local NGOs, monthly bulletin on NGO activity, and periodic research reports and booklets; monthly general information sessions and sectoral meetings for environmental, health, and children's NGOs.

Outreach: Helping NGOs work with the mass media, training students about the local NGO sector, facilitating student involvement in local NGOs, introducing the business community to the local NGO sector, producing documentary films, organizing conferences, seminars, and the annual NGO Fair.

ISAR's Grant Program offers:

Small grants of \$2000-\$4000 for social and environmental projects; Large grants of up to \$10,000 for projects addressing social, environmental, education, and civil society issues; Travel grants and cooperative grants, all designed to help local NGOs carry out their activity and learn to manage their projects more effectively.

ISAR's Regional Program brings the services of ISAR's other programs to the regions of Azerbaijan, including Mingechevir, Ganja, Sheki, Guba, Lenkoran, Salyan, and Ali-Bayramli. ISAR operates NGO Resource Centers in Mingechevir and Ganja.