



Oasis Kyrgyzstan
Annual Report 2014

Preface

Around the world one of the most vulnerable groups of children are those in care. There have been numerous high profile cases in the world's media of children being groomed whilst in care, and then being sexually exploited. UNICEF estimates that there are 11,000 children in care in Kyrgyzstan. One of the key points of vulnerability is when children have to leave these institutions. They move from having their needs met in the largely dependent and secure environments of residential orphanages or reform schools, to being on their own. When they are moved on, the heads of their institutions may place them in some form of vocational training, however that is where the support ends. We know that many of the children find this transition enormously difficult. The sad story of Alan, which Jim details in the report, is illustrative of this. Anecdotally we know of children that have not only been criminalised but who have been disappeared, feared trafficked, or are now commercial sex workers. We also know that these children are susceptible to the destructive ideology of Islamic extremists.

Every year, Oasis works to protect as many children as possible, as they leave institutions. We use a best practice case-work model that has been highly successful. We are very grateful for the support of IYF (with funding from USAID), as well as the British Foreign Schools Society, Dorfred Charitable Trust and the Betty Lawes Foundation for their support. However, as our major grant from IYF comes to an end, the work we have been doing is under threat and the vulnerability of the young people is increased.

We are responding by doing robust research into the situations facing care-leavers. This research we hope will enable us to document the vulnerabilities of these children and to build a platform with Government and institutional funders to work with us to respond to their needs.

As a Board we are very thankful and impressed by the outstanding commitment of the Oasis Kyrgyzstan staff. And we look forward to 2015, knowing the challenge ahead but also with a strategy. The strategy will involve applying for funding on the back of the research, looking into the development of our youth centre for income generation, offering training to other agencies and businesses, as well as looking into an expansion of our work into new areas such as a social enterprise.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Andy Sexton", written over a horizontal line.

Andy Sexton
Board Chairperson

1. Introduction

During 2014 Oasis has continued to build on the work started in the previous year under the 'Care Leavers Support Project', in partnership with IYF. In addition, a new partnership was developed with UNICEF to implement a project at the Belovodskoe Special School for Boys; and a Research Project was started, in partnership with local NGO 'Our Voice' and funded by IYF, to investigate the rights and needs of care leavers in the Kyrgyz Republic. Overall we can look back on a very positive year.

Highlights of the year included our annual summer camp, trips to the mountains with the boys from the Belovodskoe Special School and the creation of a playground in a community as the 'social project' by the boys participating in the 'Passport to Success' life skills training at Belovodskoe Special School.

Alongside the highpoints, there have, of course, been challenges, including one of our key members of staff experiencing a prolonged period of sickness; and as always, although we see many positive changes, we have been disappointed at times with some



Summer Camp Activity

of the decisions made by some of the young people. We also face huge funding challenge with the completion of the IYF grant for the Care Leavers Support Project at the end of the year. Nevertheless, once again, we finish the year in a positive way, having made real progress in achieving our vision for community: a place where everyone is included, making a contribution and achieving their potential.

2. Project Overview

a. Care Leavers Support Project (including work at Belovodskoe Special School, funded by UNICEF)

Aim: to see disadvantaged young people who have been brought up in government institutions make a successful transition to living independently, where they avoid the vulnerabilities of hardship and poverty, are able to continue with their education, are empowered to find worthwhile employment, and where they develop a supportive social base.

Target Group: Boys and Girls brought up in Government (and other) institutions, namely:

- the Belovodskoe Reform School for Boys (16 to summer 2014, plus a further 20 from autumn 2014)
- approximately 70 young people in orphanages and children's centres in the Chui region who are preparing to leave in the coming year(s)
- 55 young people were supported from January to August through case work
- 90 young people were supported through case work from September 2014 (78 who left in the summer 2014, and 12 who left institutions during 2013 and needed further support).

Key Achievements:

- 16 boys completed 'Passport to Success' at the Belovodskoe Reform School, including participation in social project (building playground for local community, and visits to local businesses for 'professional orientation'
- 15 boys completed environmental project at Belovodskoe Special School
- 18 boys started a life skills course (under UNICEF grant) in October at Belovodskoe Special School
- 121 young people have been supported by case-workers



Passport to Success Graduation Party

Key Challenges: The case workers have spent significant periods of time with some of the young people; for example, one young girl who fell pregnant received much help, with one of our case workers accompanying her whilst in hospital, and giving considerable input during the first few critical months. Despite this, and the relationships developed there are still times when young people make disappointing decisions and when they get into trouble fail to contact their case workers because of shame.

At the end of the year our partnership with IYF finished, and despite significant efforts, no further funding has been forthcoming. The support we are providing is crucial for these young people as start to live independently, and our input would be sorely missed – a fact verified by the Care Leavers Research Project (see point ‘b’ below). In order to not ‘drop’ the current care leavers we are supporting, the board have agreed to allow us to operate with a deficit budget and funded almost entirely through unrestricted funds, pending the acceptance of funding proposals submitted.

Illustration of Impact: Oasis knew Alan for a number of years through regular visits to the Belovodskoe Special School. In his last year he joined the Passport to Success course, and was a clear leader in the group. As he came to leave the school, he planned to return to his village to help out relatives in the fields for part of the summer. Oasis also arranged for him to meet the Director of a cookery school on 1st August in order to secure a place for a year and a half on a cookery course there.



Passport to Success class

Unfortunately the time came for this meeting and Alan did not turn up. Rustam, his key worker, heard he was missing and looked around the city but could not find him. At the end of August he turned up at Rustam’s house (a member of the Oasis team), without a job and anywhere to stay. He wanted phone numbers for his friends in Bishkek so that he could stay with them rather than on the street.

It turned out that it had been going well in the village, where he was living with a maternal aunt, until there was some conflict with an uncle and he was beaten, so he had run away. He admitted too that he had not been able to control his own anger which had felt very explosive and that was why he had left so suddenly. He had ended up with a job washing cars at Lake Issyk-Kul.

Rustam and Alan went back to his village to collect his documents and phone and were able to arrange with the Director of the school for Alan to still start the cookery course on September 1st. He was also given a dormitory place. Some weeks later he moved into accommodation with a friend and started some part time work alongside his studies, which, after some weeks, was going really well.

Illustration of Challenge: We used Alan's story on a number of occasions because it illustrated well how with support, a potentially hopeless situation could be turned around. However, after some months, Alan's positive situation changed after he broke into some cars and stole a number of small possessions that were in them. He was soon caught by the police with many of the items still on him and spent 2 months in a prison 'colony' for minors waiting for his case to come to court. This should not have been allowed to happen (he should have been incarcerated for only a matter of days), but embarrassed and ashamed he did not contact Oasis and we were unaware of his situation until too late. Once we did find out we were able to help his case through the courts and he was given a caution, as he had returned the items to the owners who had agreed not to press charges, and because had served enough time. But it was too late and he became used to prison; and not long into 2015 (only a few months after leaving Belovodskoe Special School with such promise), he was sentenced to four years in jail for stealing a car.

b. Care Leavers Research Project

In partnership with the local NGO 'Our Voice', in July we started a research project to determine the vulnerabilities faced by institutional leavers. A local social research expert (Iskander Beinazarov) was engaged to design an appropriate methodology, oversee the process and write up the findings. After developing the methodology, desk



Youth Centre Activities

research was done: this included a comprehensive survey of Kyrgyz laws that relate to care leavers and young people in general; compiling research into issues facing care leavers in other countries; and understanding deinstitutionalisation practices and learning from other countries. Once this was completed, the survey and interview process was started, and was finished by the end of the year. In total 350 young people who had left orphanages and institutions in the previous 5 years

were interviewed in order to build a strong picture of young peoples experiences and needs; 41 ‘experts’ were interviewed, including people from government ministries, directors of institutions, teaching staff and NGO employees; and 2 focus groups took place.

This will be analysed and a report written and presented in the coming year.

c. Key areas of focus for the coming year

As we move into 2015:

- we expect to complete the Care Leavers Support Project, continuing to help 90 young people during their first year of living independently
- we expect to complete the research project and publish a robust report that will enable us to develop work that clearly meets these needs
- we also hope to start to liaise more effectively with the government and other agencies, engaging in advocacy for care leavers and with government plans for de-institutionalisation



New Year Celebration at Youth Centre

3. Governanc

Oasis is accountable to a local board for operational governance, and as a part of the ‘Oasis Global Family’ of organisations, to the Oasis Global Council for organisational ethos and for the achievement of globally agreed goals.

Oasis works in eleven countries around the world, and Oasis in Kyrgyzstan shares globally agreed vision, mission and ethos with the other Oasis family members, and contributes to globally agreed goals. The Oasis Global Council (composed of board chairs from each Oasis ‘base’) meets annually, and the Global Executive (composed of all country directors, the Oasis Global Founder and the Oasis Global Director) meets every six months to provide operational leadership in seeking to maintain cohesion and to achieve agreed goals.

4. Finances

	KGS	USD *
Carried Forward from 2013		
Unrestricted	162,601	2,761
Restricted (IYF)	390,372	6,629
Total Carried forward	552,973	9,390
2014		
Unrestricted Income	2,110,168	35,834
Restricted Income (IYF)	1,381,198	23,455
Restricted Income (UNICEF)	1,311,727	22,276
TOTAL INCOME 2014	4,803,093	81,565
Unrestricted Expenditure	2,162,871	36,730
Restricted Expenditure (IYF)	2,444,700	41,515
TOTAL EXPENDITURE 2014	4,607,571	78,245
Exchange Rate differences**	8,138	138
Total to carry forward into 2015		
Unrestricted	101,760	1,728
Restricted (IYF)	306,168	5,199
Restricted (UNICEF)	332,429	5,645
TOTAL TO CARRY FORWARD	740,357	12,572

*Official Kyrgyz National Bank rate for 31st December 2014: 1 USD to 58.8865 KGS

**The difference between the rate that money was received in forex and noted as income (in KGS), and the rate at which it was later changed into KGS and spent