

A little
help - a big
difference



Support for Kids Organization, Inc

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Letter from the founder

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| Georgia up-close: A brief History of Georgian Independence | 4 | Welcome to the June 2013 issue of our quarterly newsletter! Not much had happened in the organization since March except we provided financial support to Re- Life to cover the basic meal expenses for the kids for the next 2 months. I also planned my trip to Georgia and now it's official, I am leaving in the beginning of |
| Our Info | 4 | September for 3 weeks. |

In the previous newsletter, I brought to your attention an idea for the “God Parenting” project. But perhaps I scared you with all the ‘cons’ of it since I have not heard your input or your thoughts about it. I don’t think I can pursue this alone without your approval and support.

During my trip I am planning to establish some new contacts in the government agencies who are in charge of Child Care, revisit several group homes, check with the Mestia kids [the mountain village kids] as I have contact with the lady who ran the orphanage until it closed.

We have been interested in setting up a training program with an agricultural company or farmer who will take some kids at least part of the year as training/work students. We would have to provide transportation and supplement payment to the farm organization. This is still in the “idea” stage as we have not found a farm organization partner interested in taking on the responsibility of the kids.

We have also looked at getting a small plot of land in the city for the kids to plant their own gardens and learn some basic food growing skills. We need access to water for the plot so have yet to find one close to the kids with water available.

I will be checking all these things out to see where we can be of most help directly to the kids as always been our mission and with your continued support we have a chance to continue to make kids lives better where we can.

Thanks as always and have a very Happy Summer!

Sincerely, *Ani Mdivani-Morrow*



Out in the Street

A EurasiaNet Partner Post from: TOL (Transitions Online: Regional Intelligence) March 7, 2013 - 1:27pm, by *Onnik Krikorian* , Tbilisi

After getting thousands of disadvantaged kids out of Soviet-era institutions, Georgia faces an increasingly visible tribe of children living largely on the street.

by [Onnik Krikorian](#) 6 March 2013

TBILISI | In 2004, some 5,200 Georgian children were living in Soviet-era institutions for underprivileged and disabled minors. Today, there are just 100, seemingly a sign that Georgia's ambitious Child Action Plan – which aimed to reintegrate socially vulnerable kids into their biological families or, failing that, get them into foster care or alternative types of support – has worked. By contrast, neighboring Armenia, with a somewhat smaller population, still houses 4,900 kids, most of whom have families, at its aging children's homes.

But there is a flip side to Georgia's seeming success: unlike in Armenia, street children – minors who spend most of their time roaming the cities, in many cases sleeping rough – have become increasingly

Georgia's Street Children



The Re-Life cafe in Tbilisi's fashionable Old Town offers vocational training and employment to street kids from the Gldani center as well as youngsters displaced by Georgia's wars and other at-risk groups.

visible in the capital of Tbilisi and other urban centers like Kutaisi and Batumi.

"The process of de-institutionalization started in 2000 and out of 42 institutions, only five are left today," said Andro Dadiani, Georgia director for international children's rights group EveryChild. "De-institutionalization has obviously contributed to the problem [of street children], and especially ill-prepared reintegration.

"We have some anecdotal examples of cases when the same children taken out of institutions were later seen

begging in the streets, and the main reason was that some social workers were not doing their job well, especially in terms of monitoring," Dadiani added. "As a result, the issue of street children has been totally neglected over the past few years."

Ani's Note: on this picture are kids from Re-Life and as you know, we have been helping these kids for 2 years now



According to UNICEF, there were approximately 1,500 children living or working on the streets of Georgia's biggest cities in 2008. Precise figures are hard to come by because many of these children lack proper documentation, such as birth certificates or passports, which also means they cannot attend school. In recent years their numbers have probably increased, swelled by young children believed to be Roma, Dom, or Kurds from Azerbaijan. Aid groups such as

World Vision and the local Child and Environment attribute the influx to tight restrictions on begging in Azerbaijan.

Many Georgians dismiss the problem as only afflicting minority groups. International organizations are trying to dispel that notion, but the issue remains largely ignored here. That could change with a new two-year, 850,000 euro (\$1.1 million) effort funded by the European Union and UNICEF, called Reaching Vulnerable Children in Georgia. Rolling out in Tbilisi and set to expand next year to Batumi or Kutaisi, the project will use mobile teams of social workers, psychologists, and educators and new transitional and day-care centers to identify some 700 street kids and get them into existing child-protection and social-service systems.

“Children who are on the streets cannot access education [or] proper health care, are often not registered, and can become subject to various forms of violence,” said Sascha Graumann, UNICEF's representative in Georgia, at the launch of the program on 27 February. “This means that they have fewer chances to become active and well-educated citizens that can make a contribution to the development of the country. Addressing this issue requires interventions to restore their human rights.”

Some journalists at the launch were skeptical as to what will happen after the project ends, but Maya Kurtsikidze, UNICEF Georgia's spokeswoman, told TOL that the creation of a “self-sustainable state mechanism” is envisaged, with the Finance Ministry among potential partners who will “ensure financial sustainability” for the effort.

Editor's Note: Onnik Krikorian is a journalist and photographer in the South Caucasus and former Caucasus editor for Global Voices Online.





Support for Kids
Organization, Inc
P.O. Box 3242
La Jolla, CA 92038 USA

Phone/Fax: 858-279-7339
Mobile: 858-344-0808
E-mail: ani@supportforkids.org

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Georgia up-close : A very brief History of Georgian Independence

Much of Georgia's territory was fought over by Persian, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Mongol, and Turkish armies from at least the 1st century B.C. through the 18th century. The zenith of Georgia's power as an independent kingdom came in the 11th and 12th centuries, during the reigns of King David the Builder and Queen Tamara, who still rank among the most celebrated of all Georgian rulers. In 1783 the king of Kartli (in eastern Georgia) signed with the Russians the Treaty of Georgievsk, by which Russia agreed to take the kingdom as its protectorate. In 1801, the Russian empire began the piecemeal process of unifying and annexing Georgian territory, and for most of the next two centuries (1801-1991) Georgia was ruled by Russia from St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Exposed to modern European ideas of nationalism under Russian tutelage, Georgians began calling for greater Georgian independence. In the wake of the collapse of tsarist rule when Bolsheviks took over and war with the Turks, the first Republic of Georgia was established on **May 26, 1918**. The country enjoyed a brief period of independence under the Menshevik president, Noe Zhordania. However, in March 1921, the Russian Red Army re-occupied the country, and Georgia became a republic of the Soviet Union.

In the postwar period, Georgia was perceived as one of the wealthiest and most privileged of Soviet republics, and many Russians treated the country's Black Sea coast as a kind of Soviet Riviera.

On April 9, 1991, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia declared independence from the U.S.S.R. This day is marked as one of the most tragic days in Georgian history - this time the Soviet army used their military power against a peaceful demonstration.



As a kid in a high school, I remember how we secretly were celebrating May 26, and how all of us were dreaming to regain the independence of our country from Russia for once and for all.



Because of the tragedy on April 9th, and the fact that the formation of Georgia as a Republic happened on May 26th 1918, it was decided to mark that very day as Georgian Independence Day.

Let's hope that a new generation will never again experience the totalitarian rule, occupation and wars and will proudly carry on our flags and preserve the independence of Georgia forever and ever.