

BFSS ANNUAL REPORT

Date of report: July 2014

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Project and country: Vulnerable Youth Program, Kyrgyzstan

A. Outputs achieved against outputs proposed

Outputs proposed	Outputs achieved between August 2013 and July 2014
<p>Phase 1: 55 eleven to sixteen year old boys (dependent on how many boys there are at the Reform School this year) will participate in professional orientation, life skills, character education and a sports programme</p> <p>Phase 2: 14 sixteen to nineteen year old young people (boys and girls) will be</p>	<p>Phase 1: Over the course of the year there have been 47 boys at the Refrom School. Of these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 boys started and completed a 54 session life skills course and professional orientation course • a further 15 took certain units to enable them to complete the course that they had started in the previous year • An average of 15 boys participated in weekly English Clubs and sports programmes from August – September and then March - June • All boys at the school have participated in 'one off' events conducted by Oasis (specifically a sports tournament and a trip to the mountains) (a total of 42 boys at the time of these events 70 young people in other institutions) • Phase 2: 18 sixteen to nineteen year old young people (boys and girls) • Phase 3: 45 sixteen to twenty-one years old young people (boys and girls) <p>In addition we visited 5 other orphanages twice each to start to build relationships with approximately 70 young people who will be leaving in summer 2014</p> <p>Phase 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 young people were helped to access schools and helped to settle in dormitories in August – September

<p>helped to access technical / vocational schools through obtaining documentation, will have been helped to settle into new educational settings, and will have participated in life skills courses</p> <p>Phase 3: 50 sixteen to twenty-one years old young people (boys and girls) will have been helped to access technical / vocational schools, including help with necessary documentation, had life skills training, participated in extra-curricular programmes, and received mentoring and help with internships and vocational training.</p>	<p>2013; of these, 2 dropped out of studying within 2 months, but were helped to find employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In June 2014 a five day summer camp was held for care leavers in order to build relationships and be ready to help them to enroll in schools and access appropriate support in August – September 2014. <p>Phase 3: Between August 2013 and June 2014 we have accompanied 49 young people. This 'accompaniment' has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular calls and meetings with nominated case worker (at least 2 calls / meetings a month with each young person (and more as necessary) between August – January, at least one call (and more as necessary) February – July) • Assistance in talking to school administration when there have been problems • Assistance with finding housing and accommodation • Assistance with finding internships, employment opportunities and support to stick with these • Help to apply for and receive documentation (necessary for enrolment in school and legitimate employment, and also necessary in order to receive social benefits). Since August 2013 we have helped approximately 20 young people; some processes are on-going, but we have so far received: 6 x i.d. cards; 7 x international passports; 7 x social benefits allowance documents; 4 x birth certificates; 1 x paternity certificate • Running regular sessions and events at the youth centre including: 10 session cookery course (average attendance 12 people); monthly life skills course (average attendance 10 people); fortnightly sports events (average attendance 15 people); film nights once / twice a month (average attendance 12 people); games nights once / twice a month (average attendance 8 people)
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B. Outcomes/benefits

Phase 1

Over the course of the year we have noticed a definite change in the attitude and behavior of the boys at the Belovodskoe Reform School; by the end of the course they were displaying gratitude to the teachers and respect for the staff that was previously absent; by way of example, in June a group of 19 boys were taken to a café which the staff of the Reform School had never done

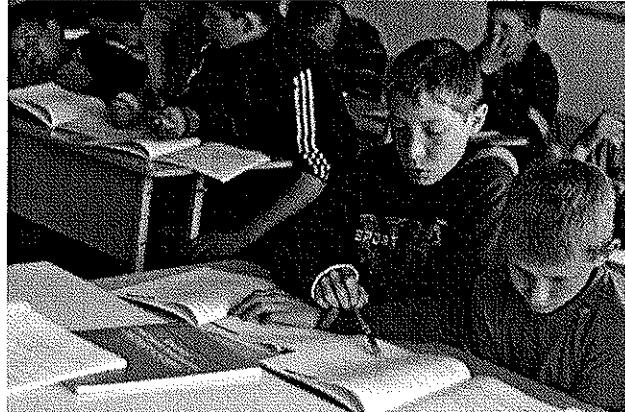


Reform School Boys with their certificates at the Life Skills course graduation

and expected there to be some trouble. However, the boys' behavior was exemplary, they all said 'thank you' and the staff of the school were amazed!

We have also noticed a shift in attitude towards learning; in previous years we had not seen much enthusiasm for learning in the boys, but over the course of the year (starting with basic English lessons) we observed enthusiasm for learning in the boys, manifest by their doing additional work and study in their own time.

Another outcome, wider than the change in the boys, is the change in the staff; two of the staff from the school were trained to deliver the life skills course, and through this have learnt to both engage the boys in new ways and to see their potential (whereas previously they had not expected very much of these boys). As a result they are increasingly positive about their work at the school and seeing it as more than simply a job. Visiting orphanages was an addition to the programme as a result of evaluation during 2013, which showed that in order for young people to know us and trust us to help with their transition; we needed to



Boys at the Reform School studying life skills

build relationships with them before they left their institutions. These visits have been very positive and the 30 new leavers who attended the camp in June 2014 demonstrate that there is a level of trust that has been developed both with the young people and also the administration of the institutions (i.e. because they are willing to let the young people come on the camp).

Phase 2

As noted, of the 18 supported through their transition, 16 have continued in their education, and have been able to complete the year and all expect to continue in the coming year. There have certainly been challenges along the way (as noted below in Phase 3 Outcomes), but all have continued.

The two young people who dropped out of education have been supported as they found work and helped to maintain this; both have subsequently done brief courses and are keen to try to enroll in school in the coming year.

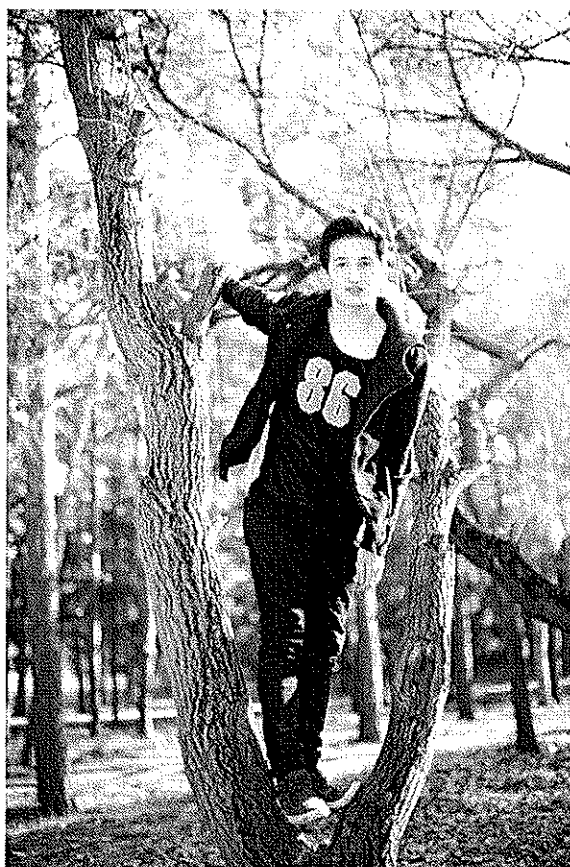
Phase 3

Through appointing a case worker to each young person, issues have been addressed as soon as they have arisen, and each young person has had someone to turn to when they needed help. The outcomes for each young person are different, but the story of Cholpon (name changed) provides a good example...

She had no knowledge of her parents and upon leaving the institution where she had been brought up in the summer of 2013 she planned to move to Bishkek to study. Over that summer she went to work in a holiday resort in another province and during this time, through some extraordinary connections, she found her mother! Cholpon was excited to be able to move in

with her mother (who lives in Bishkek), and indeed, as she struggles with mental health issues, it was great that she was able to find a family member who would be able to look after her. However, the arrangement did not work for long, and the case-worker who has been linked with her received a call from Cholpon to say that her mother had thrown her out and she was about to start living on the streets. We called her mother to try to mediate but were met with abuse and so started to help Cholpon look for alternative accommodation. Fortunately we were able to find her temporary accommodation at a children's centre so she did not need to spend any nights living rough. After some time there we were able to help her to get more permanent accommodation at a recently opened hostel, and just recently have accompanied her on visits to higher education establishments to find a place for her to continue with her education in the coming year.

Another story concerns Artiom (name changed). He was brought up in an orphanage with his brother and with no knowledge of his parents, but a couple of years ago, and with the help of Oasis, discovered that his mother is alive and living in Russia, and that he has a sister there too. Artiom has been keen to join his mother, but even keener to complete his education and has been accompanied by Oasis through for a number of years, and in particular through 'phase three' of the Care Leavers Support Project since August 2013. Artiom is also a very talented dancer and has won a number of local competitions, and has participated in international dance festivals. Over the year we have seen his self-confidence and sense of initiative really increase, to the extent that in January, when his mother sent some money to enable his brother (who had no fixed address and no work) to move to Russia, Artiom was able to achieve this in remarkably few days; he went out and found him, cleaned him up, bought him an air ticket and arranged the appropriate documents, and even took him for a meal on the way to the airport with the remaining money that his mother had sent, and got home in time to take his girl friend to the cinema. His case worker was extremely impressed! Artiom has now completed his education and will move to Russia this summer.



C. Lessons learned, both positive and negative.

- The umbrella term 'Government institutions' comprises both orphanages and government-run boarding schools for economically disadvantaged children. Within these we have observed that there are three 'categories' of young person: those who truly don't have anyone (UNICEF reports that this is just 10% of the children brought up in these institutions); the remaining 90% either have some family who are not willing or able to care for them, or are those who have families (sometimes even well off) but are sent to these boarding school because their parent(s) work in shifts / abroad or travel for work, or perceive that there is a better opportunity for their child in the government boarding school.

We have learnt through experience that typically, fewer children from government-run boarding schools have significant abandonment type issues compared to those in orphanages or the Reform school system.

Additionally, we have discovered the value of not separating the 'groups', because the 'groups' are able to help each other and learn from each other. Therefore, we have realised the importance of not simply restricting our work to the most vulnerable.

- Over the summer (2013) we learnt the importance of all staff going to each institution to get to know the young people. Last year only some staff visited institutions, which meant that for the young people allocated to these case-workers, there were no relationships or trust, and this then had to be built from scratch and slowed the process. This has meant that over 2013 / 2014 all staff have made intentional visits, and all staff were at the summer camp. It seems that relationships are in a much better place with the young people as the staff start their 'case work'.
- In the summer of 2013, through evaluating the support being offered by the youth centre and individual support, that we needed to change staff working hours and the hours that the youth centre is open. Staff now work 11.00 to 19.30, and the youth centre is open Monday – Friday from 15.00 to 19.00.
- Behaviour at the youth centre was very good for the initial months after its re-opening, but during February some of the young people started to show little respect for the staff and display inappropriate behaviour. The staff felt challenged about how to deal with this in a fair way that would not exclude the individuals, but the sanctions used proved to be ineffective (e.g. time out or restricted access to resources) It was realised that these are not much of a sanction when compared with the harsh discipline and regimes that



Discussing rules at the opening of the Youth Centre

they have been used to at the institutions where they grew up. Realising that exclusion from the youth centre for a period is a possibility (and does not mean that an individual is excluded from the programme as a whole) has been a helpful lesson. The team are still working on the area of discipline and appropriate sanctions.

- Initially young people were very interested to attend Life Skills sessions run at the youth centre, however we noticed a dropoff of numbers as the year progressed. It was a voluntary course and, understandably, many young people found better alternatives to a session on, say, hygiene! We will be looking to develop more interesting ways to discuss the issues and lessons with young people over the coming year.
- The need for empowerment. In an institution, everything is done for a young person, which is very disempowering – they simply have not had the opportunity to learn and experience some basic things. Therefore continually trying to enable opportunities for them to do stuff themselves has been helpful – including being a part of standing in queues to get documents.
- We have realised that for young people in institutions, there is a limited awareness of the opportunities that exist for them in terms of work; often children emulate parents or other adults whom they know and for these young people, these role models are absent. This highlights to us the importance of the professional orientation programme, and simply helping the young people to dream.

D. Future activities and any significant changes likely to affect the funded work

Phase 1 – Reform School

We will continue to work at the Government Reform School throughout the coming year. We are changing the life skills course and working with a local organisation to develop a course that will be new, useful and fun for the boys (as most have now completed the 'Passport to Success' course that we have run there over the last couple of years). We will also continue with weekly sports events. In terms of changes and challenges:

- The Government Reform School has recently experienced a change of leadership (the previous director suddenly died in April 2014). The new director has some experience at the school; no large changes are expected, but it is early days.
- The decision was taken that 22 out of the 42 boys would leave in the summer of 2014; this is significantly more boys than was expected (in October the administration had been expecting that about 9 boys would be leaving) and will significantly change the make up of the school in the coming year. It is not yet clear how many new boys will be entering. We will walk with all the boys who have left and who remain in the Bishkek area as a part of 'phases 2 and 3'.



Phase 2

As planned, we will be assisting new leavers over the summer of 2014 to get established in their educational institution, in accommodation and in employment. We will help with documentation and once term starts, will seek to walk with them to ensure that they make a good start and stick with the plans that they have made.

Other than the increase in numbers of leavers we already know (because of the numbers leaving Reform School, as noted above) there are no significant changes anticipated, and the programme is able to absorb these additional boys.

Phase 3

Over the coming year we will continue with case work; we are currently 'allocating' new young people to case workers, and deciding which of the young people who have been accompanied through the previous year will benefit from continued involvement in the programme. For those who are not in need, we will be developing an 'alumni programme' so that they are still involved in some way with Oasis over the coming year, and not simply 'dropped'.

We will continue to run activities at the Youth Centre through the coming year and do not expect to be making any significant changes to these activities.

E. Sustainability

The Vulnerable Youth Project builds on Oasis' previous experience with young people in Kyrgyzstan, including work with street children and young people at the youth prison, providing skills training for boys living in the Reform School (a 'closed' government institution), providing transitional care for leavers from institutions through two transition homes, and providing a youth centre for leavers from government institutions.

A thorough evaluation of this previous work (in early 2013) enabled the Vulnerable Youth Project to be developed with sustainability at its core:

- Young people are empowered to live independently from the outset of the project; their accommodation and education is already funded / supported by the government or through college scholarships. Where this is not the case we work with an individual to ensure that they receive all appropriate benefits.
- The project is based around the development of relationships with Oasis staff and between young people, providing a supportive community that is not ultimately dependent on one specific person or place.
- The youth centre is now situated in a building that Oasis owns, so there are no rental expenses.

Nevertheless, there are obviously expenses, especially in terms of staff, and to cover these:

- we have developed a partnership with UNICEF that will enable us to continue to work at the Reform School until next year, and will look to continue this partnership in other ways
- we have been submitting proposals to UK based trusts and foundations for funding for 2015
- We are seeking to become involved in government discussions that will be taking place in the autumn of 2014 regarding care leavers and their support, which enables us both to give

input into government policy, and also to be involved in solutions that are developed and funding that is offered.

- We are developing partnerships with locally based donor organisations and embassies
- Finally, in early 2014, we had some initial discussions about the development of social enterprises for young people leaving government institutions; these discussions were unable to go further at the time, but we expect to pick these up later in 2014 / 2015 in consultation with the Oasis Social Enterprise Director



Floorball with care leavers - a fortnightly sports event

F. Financial Report

Included below on page 10.

Note on variances:

Rent and utilities 1,312 GBP under budget; educational expenses and equipment GBP 1,312 over budget. When the proposal was submitted, we expected to rent premises for the youth centre, but in September 2013 the decision was made to move the centre to premises owned by Oasis and recently vacated by the Boys Transition home. This has been a very positive move for the activities of the centre; in addition, it has meant that we have no longer needed to pay rent. This money was instead used to support additional educational expenses and equipment, and in particular for the support of the boys and girls who had moved from the transition homes.

Expense	Annual GBP budget	Notes on budget	August-November 2013	December 2013 -- March 2014	April – June 2014	TOTAL
Salaries	1,850	50% of project leaders salary for year (including taxes)	617 (1/3 rd of annual budget)	616 (1/3 rd of annual budget)	617	1,850
Educational Expenses and Equipment	1,180	Materials, resources, vocational tools etc.	611 (total spent Aug – Nov)	1,375	506	2,492
Transport	200	For staff visits - to Reform School, young people living independently	67 (1/3 of annual budget)	84	49	200
Rent & utilities	2,050	Contribution to cost of youth centre (rent and utilities) where educational activities take place (approx. 40% of annual costs)	183 (Significantly lower than expected because rent payments no longer necessary as Youth Centre has moved to Oasis owned property. Utilities expenses will increase markedly over winter).	513	42	738
Management Costs	720	Cost to Oasis Kg and Oasis International oversight	720 (Contributions allocated in August)	0	0	720
TOTAL	6,000		2,198	2,588	1,214	6,000