



# HealthProm

Ensuring vulnerable children have the best start in life

Annual Review 2015-16

# About us

Established in 1984, HealthProm began as a Medical Exchange Programme between the United Kingdom and the former USSR, set up by doctors and allied health professionals to promote health education and exchange. With a founding emphasis on maternal and child health, our remit today reflects an expanded focus on promoting the health and social inclusion of vulnerable children, women and families, as well as an expanded geographical breadth covering Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Afghanistan and the former Soviet Union.

At HealthProm, we strive to ensure that vulnerable children have the best start in life. Our work is guided by the principles of building local capacity for sustainability, promoting evidence-based practice and working through partnership.

## The Challenges

HealthProm works to address three key challenges where it operates:

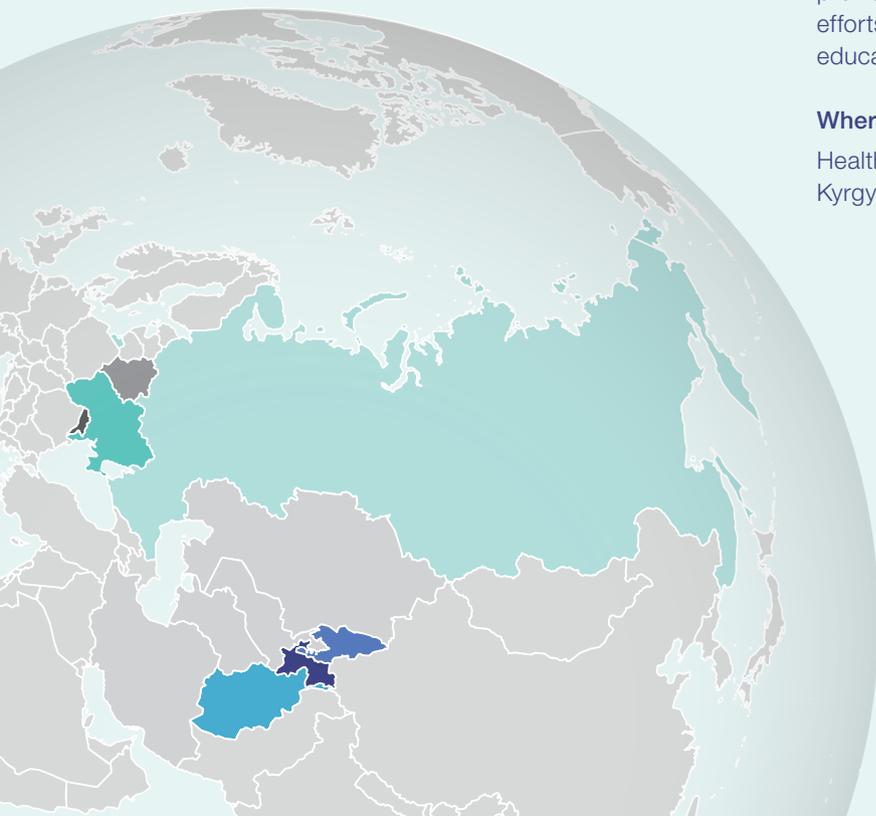
1. Poor maternal and child health (Afghanistan, Central Asia);
2. High levels of child institutionalisation;
3. Social exclusion of children with disabilities.

## What We Do

We support: health and social **services** to improve maternal and child health and better support vulnerable families with complex needs, **schools** to improve inclusive education for children with disabilities, **civil society organisations** and **community groups** to prevent child abandonment and to provide family-based support, and **governments** in their efforts towards de-institutionalisation of care and inclusive education of children.

## Where We Work

HealthProm currently works in Afghanistan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Ukraine.



- AFGHANISTAN
- BELARUS
- KYRGYZSTAN
- MOLDOVA
- RUSSIA
- TAJIKISTAN
- UKRAINE

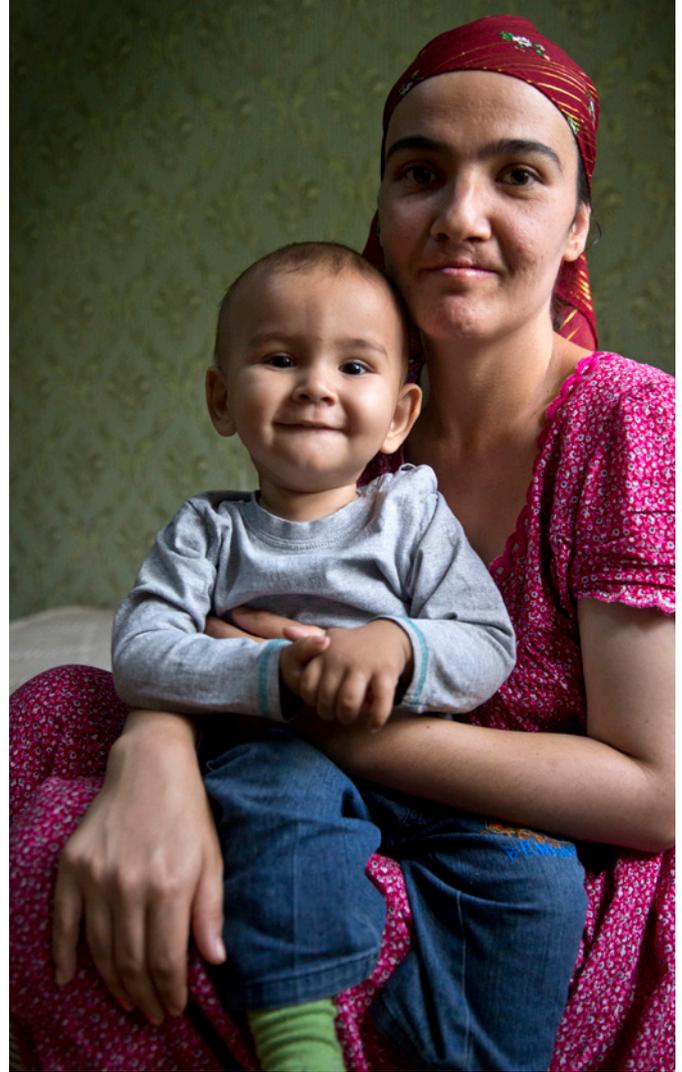
# Foreword

A growing number of local organisations, care providers and parent groups across Eastern Europe and Central Asia are working with their local authorities to open up new ways to ensure vulnerable children get the best start in life.

At an international conference in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in May, representatives of over 200 local bodies, governments and international organisations from some 16 countries met to share experience on their work with children with disabilities to improve early intervention, increase access to education and develop sustainable day care services as an alternative to residential institutions. Whilst progress was noted, the conference highlighted continuing challenges to raise awareness of the rights of children with disabilities, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to change attitudes and to fill the gaps in expertise and resources.

HealthProm has been a long-time champion of these efforts. The issues discussed at the conference are at the heart of our mission and objectives. We have continued to be active in working with local partners to develop alternative models for caring for vulnerable children that keep them in families and not institutions, integrate them better into society, include them in education and give voice to their parents. We also continue to help to improve maternal and child health and give newborn children the best start in life.

This Annual Review tells the stories of what we have been doing and the results we have been able to achieve by supporting local partners and initiatives. We are encouraged by what has been achieved and inspired by the accounts we can tell of how the lives of individuals have been changed. But much still needs to be done. We have expanded our activities over the last year and are currently reviewing our strategy with a view to consolidating and extending our future support to the region so that progress can be sustained in the long-term.



The challenges of mobilising the necessary financial support and in particular coping with the current climate of uncertainty over the future relationship of the UK with the EU do not make this easy. However the staff and Board of HealthProm remain fully committed to playing an active and effective role. We are grateful to all those organisations and individuals whose financing and support have made this possible.

**Simon Ray**  
Chair of the Board of HealthProm

# Afghanistan

HealthProm has been working to improve maternal, newborn and child health in rural areas of Balkh Province, Afghanistan since 2008. Our approach uses a range of community-based initiatives to do this, acknowledging that many factors contribute to the health and well-being of women and children. These include promoting knowledge and skills about health and hygiene, providing transport to health facilities for women in labour and a waiting house for women in late pregnancy living in remote areas, improving links with government health centres and services, facilitating greater access to clean water, and improving nutrition and livelihoods.

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A core feature of our work was facilitating visits from local government midwives to villages every two months, providing basic antenatal care to over 800 women per year.

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In the summer of 2016, our two-year grant from the UK Department for International Development came to a successful end. Much was achieved during the project, and an independent external evaluation commended it for its contributions to local need, particularly in the prevention of maternal and newborn deaths. A core feature of our work was facilitating visits from local government midwives to villages every two months. These visits offered basic antenatal care to over 800 women per year and assisted them in making birth plans, involving husbands wherever possible, to ensure that they were able to travel to a health facility for delivery. This contributed to a rise in the proportion of births attended by a skilled birth attendant in the participating villages, and most likely to the reduction in recorded neonatal deaths observed during the project.

**Local Partners:** HealthProm Afghanistan, Bakhtar Development Network, Balkh Provincial Directorate of Public Health



Our work in Afghanistan will continue with the generous support of other funders, and the tireless efforts of our local partner organisation HealthProm Afghanistan.



In addition to the funders above, this work has been made possible by the generous support of a number of Trusts and Foundations (please see the full list at the end of this report).

## Fatima's Story

Fatima is a young mother from Charkent who might not have survived pregnancy had it not been for our project. During a routine visit to her village by a local government midwife, the midwife was informed by the leader of the village Safe Motherhood Group (supported by the project), that Fatima's mother-in-law and husband had forbidden her to seek antenatal care. The midwife subsequently visited her at home and during her assessment found clear signs of pre-eclampsia, a hypertensive disorder of pregnancy. After some persuasion, the family agreed to let Fatima be taken to a hospital in Mazar, where doctors were able to treat her and deliver her baby safely.



Photo courtesy of HealthProm Afghanistan

# Kyrgyzstan

In the summer of 2016, HealthProm completed a successful three-year project in Kyrgyzstan supported by the Big Lottery Fund. The central aim of this grant was to contribute to the prevention of institutionalisation of children with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan by improving community-based support services for them and their families. This was achieved through supporting eight Day Centres that provide such services across seven regions of the country. These Day Centres were able to improve access to education for more than 600 children with disabilities by providing pre-school educational programmes and support to them and their parents.

The project also strengthened local capacity for parent-led advocacy and raised awareness of the need to include and integrate children with disabilities within local communities. At the grassroots level, the local partners prevented the abandonment of 93 children to institutions during the course of the project. Working closely with the Day Centres and local maternity homes to identify high-risk parents, our partners Kelechek Plus and Uplift provided support services to families to enable them to keep their children.

A particular focus of the project in its last year was empowering parents of children with disabilities and involving them more effectively in the services being provided by the Day Centres. Each Day Centre conducted extensive consultations and developed Parents' Committees, which are now actively involved in their work. These Committees provide an effective mechanism for helping parents to feel better involved in the provision of services to their children.

Ensuring the sustainability of the Day Centres was a key goal. This has been achieved through facilitating partnerships between the Day Centres and local authorities, which now provide financial support through local budget allocations.

**Local Partners:** Kelechek Plus, ICCO, Uplift

A particular focus of the project was empowering parents of children with disabilities and involving them more effectively in the services being provided.



## Tamara's Story

*Tamara's story reflects a remarkable personal journey. The mother of a disabled child, her story inspires our work.*

“ My child was born with a disability. I was a young mother and found myself in a dead end – not knowing who to turn to and having absolutely no information. For me the most important thing was to ‘cure’ my child, but nobody told me that a disability is a life-long condition. Nobody knew about development and education for such children. I assumed that if my son doesn’t walk or talk, it is normal not to learn. Even now, many mothers think similarly.

I spent many years caring only for my son, which led me to a state of depression and isolation. That is how I remained for 22 years, which had a major effect on my family. Years of poverty, unemployment, personal grief, isolation, and the unsettled state of my disabled child – all of this led me to be distant, scared and insecure.

I first learned about the project between Kelechek Plus and HealthProm in 2008. When I first learned about the trainings offered to parents, I rebelled inwardly. I thought ‘Why should so much money be spent on training when our children remain disabled?’ But I came to the training sessions to receive information and socialise with other parents. I then started coming to help as a volunteer. Counselling sessions really helped me, and socialising with other parents allowed me to forget my own problems by focusing on helping them. This is what helped me to overcome my own stress. After six months of volunteering and training, I was offered a paid job with the project.



Above left: Tamara (wearing white). Above right: Tamara's son  
Photos courtesy of Kelechek Plus

“My outlook on life has changed. I have accepted my child as he is, continuing to help him with his condition, rather than trying to change it. This is something I could not accept for many years. My psychological and financial situations have also improved. The empowering of parents was one of the most effective aspects of the project, because I believe active parents can change social policy.”

In 2014, Tamara went on to launch her own association for parents of children with disabilities in her home village of Leninskoye. She founded her association, called “Child’s Dream”, because she says “I believe that every child should receive appropriate services in their local community. This is something we are working on together as parents.” As of 2016, her association now works in partnership with three local authorities.

# Tajikistan

**Local Partners:** Sarchashma, Hayot Dar Oila, Iroda

In Spring 2016, our innovative three-year project in Tajikistan supported by the European Commission came to a close. The project centred upon supporting the transformation of social services for vulnerable children and their families, and helping to turn the tide away from institutionalised care of young children. Implemented in collaboration with local partners, UNICEF and the Government of Tajikistan, the project successfully reformed existing residential institutions, or Baby Homes, to enable them to provide more comprehensive services to children and families. It also created new services such as Family Support Centres, Mobile Outreach Teams, and community-based alternatives to institutional care of young children. The latter took the form of a pilot foster care programme – the first of its kind in the country – that was developed by HealthProm in close collaboration with UNICEF Tajikistan, local authorities, the Government of Tajikistan and partners. During the project, a total of eight children were successfully placed with foster families, which were selected, trained and monitored by local partners and Child Rights Units.

In an independent evaluation of the project, the foster care pilot was commended for its successful generation of support amongst the many parties involved, including social service professionals and local Government. As reported in the evaluation, “it is still ‘early days’ in the development of fostering [in Tajikistan] but there seems no doubt that a strong foundation has been achieved.”



Funded by the European Union

HealthProm has been awarded another grant from the European Commission to continue this valuable work. This new 3.5 year grant will focus on the continued development of the foster care programme. A particular focus will be placed on developing the legal and policy frameworks required to support and successfully embed foster care into Tajikistan’s social services, and completing efforts towards the deinstitutionalisation of the Baby Homes. This will include development of child protection legislation and systems.

## Shah’s Story



In our last Impact Report, we featured the story of Shah, who was abandoned at birth and lived her first fifteen months in a residential institution, or Baby Home, in Khujand, Tajikistan. HealthProm worked with UNICEF, local partners

and authorities to develop and pilot Tajikistan’s first ever foster care programme in the country. Through this pilot programme, Shah was welcomed into a new family led by her foster mother Dilafuz. Nearly one year later, Shah is thriving. She is growing and developing well, being enriched by everyday experiences such as playing games and having bedtime stories read to her by her foster mother. Her speech is also developing well, and with this has come growing independence. This is one of the first times in Tajikistan that a baby without parents has left institutional care to become part of an alternative family. We are very grateful to UNICEF, our local partners, consultants and the Child Rights Unit who have helped make this happen.

Photo courtesy of Sarchashma



In an independent evaluation, our foster care pilot in Tajikistan was commended for its successful generation of support amongst the many parties involved, including social service professionals and local Government.

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## Belarus

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**Local Partner:** Belarusian Children's Hospice

Launched in early 2016, our new project in Belarus aims to protect and promote the rights of children with severe disabilities and terminal conditions, as well as their families. Our local partner, the Belarusian Children's Hospice, is the only national children's palliative care service in Belarus, providing a comprehensive range of medical, social and psychological support to children and their families throughout the country.



Our project will strengthen the capacity of the Belarusian Children's Hospice to develop its role as a leader in advocating for the rights of children with disabilities and terminal conditions at the local, regional and national levels. It will also develop and pilot an innovative model of a community-based advocacy service, which will provide vulnerable families with disabled children access to legal advice and other support services in three areas of Belarus.

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## Moldova

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**Local Partner:** Partnerships for Every Child

In 2016, HealthProm launched a new project in Moldova with support from the European Commission designed to improve access to early-years and preschool support for children with special needs. HealthProm is working alongside Moldovan NGO, Partnerships for Every Child, and UK-based organisation Mellow Parenting to implement this project, which aims to strengthen capacity and cooperation between local authorities and civil society organisations, to improve access to pre-school support services for children with special needs and to test a model of community-based services with a view to informing national policy.

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HealthProm designed and led a mapping exercise to identify existing pre-school support services for children with special needs and to highlight areas of unmet need.

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The project commenced with a study visit to the UK by leading early years professionals and representatives from Moldovan Government to observe and learn more about inclusive education and support services offered in Britain. In summer 2016, a mapping exercise was carried out in the five regions of Moldova targeted in this grant: Cahul, Calarasi, Falesti, Nisporeni and Ungheni. Designed and led by HealthProm, the exercise sought to identify pre-school education and support services currently available for children with special needs in the five regions. It also set out to highlight gaps in the system and areas of unmet need as identified by both professionals working with children with special needs as well as their families.



These projects are made possible through support from the European Commission

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## Russia

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**Local Partner:** Krasnoyarsk Centre for Community Partnerships

Our work in Russia focuses on supporting the development of inclusive education for children with disabilities. In 2016, we were awarded grants by the European Commission and the British and Foreign School Society to develop a large initiative on inclusive education across four regions of Siberia: Krasnoyarsk, Novosibirsk, Tomsk and Altai. This 'Siberian Initiative for Inclusion' will promote the inclusion of children with disabilities into education through developing and strengthening partnerships between local civil society organisations, parents and local government in the four pilot regions.

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*Our Siberian Initiative for Inclusion will promote the inclusion of children with disabilities through strengthening partnerships between civil society organisations, parents and local government.*

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This builds upon work initiated back in 2014, when we implemented a small pilot project 'Opening school doors for disabled children in Krasnoyarsk, Russia'. In collaboration with local partners, we worked with school teachers, social workers, parents and carers of disabled children and relevant non-governmental organisations to raise awareness and understanding of inclusive education and how it can be implemented. The interest and commitment galvanised through this pilot inspired the larger grant started this year.

**British & Foreign School Society**

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## Ukraine

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**Local Partners:** Charity Fund Early Intervention Institute, Kharkiv; National Assembly of People with Disabilities

In Ukraine, we work to support the development of the national agenda on Early Intervention for young children and their families, and to strengthen parent-led advocacy for children with disabilities. In 2016, we secured a grant from the European Commission to develop this work. This new three-year project will focus on enabling parent-led civil society organisations to support the delivery of reforms that address the rights and needs of young children with disabilities in Ukraine. A key feature of this work will be strengthening the capacity of such organisations to better advocate on behalf of these children and to more effectively engage in policy dialogue.

HealthProm began working in Ukraine in 2015, with the launch of a small seed project designed to understand and progress the Early Intervention agenda in the country, and to develop a strategic approach to parent advocacy and peer support for families of children living with disabilities. Working with local partners, HealthProm organised a Parents Advocacy Strategy Meeting in Kiev, for parent leaders from a range of organisations including civil society organisations and Early Intervention centres across ten regions of Ukraine. This event catalysed strong commitment to the development of Early Intervention from all participants and led to the creation of the All-Ukrainian Parents Forum for Early Intervention (AUPFEI), which aims to bring together parent advocates to support the development of Early Intervention across Ukraine, and to enable dialogue with key stakeholders.



These projects are made possible through support from the European Commission

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## Other initiatives

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### Promoting Regional Exchange

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**Local Partners:** Belarusian Children's Hospice (Belarus); Partnerships for Every Child (Moldova); Charity Fund Early Intervention Institute, Kharkiv (Ukraine)

In 2016 we were awarded a small multi-country grant from the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum in collaboration with the European Union, the National Endowment for Democracy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

The project, *Communities, Classrooms and Civil Society: Sharing experience and developing regional approaches to addressing the rights and needs of children with disabilities in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine*, aims to galvanise regional commitment to supporting the rights and needs of children with disabilities and to facilitate the development of regional approaches to this end. Too often, professionals working in child disability do so without the benefit of regular regional exchange and knowledge sharing.

This project will address this challenge by promoting the exchange of experience, skills and practice developed in multiple sectors related to disability in each country and facilitate the creation of a regional professional network.

Working with local partners in each country, the project will carry out assessments of the disability related policy and service climates in each setting and will host a regional forum event bringing together professionals from each country to share innovations, practice and approaches to common challenges.

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Our project *Communities, Classrooms and Civil Society* will promote the exchange of experience, skills and practice developed in multiple sectors related to disability in each country and facilitate the creation of a regional professional network.

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
of the Czech Republic

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## Sharing Expertise

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### Insights from Partners

In March 2016, HealthProm held an event in London entitled *Making Child Rights Real for the Most Vulnerable Children in Ukraine* presented by a team of Ukrainian doctors pioneering innovative approaches to providing care to children living in residential institutions, or Baby Homes. The team included Dr Roman Marabyan, Director of the Kharkiv regional specialised Baby Home No 1, Dr Andrey Penkov, lead paediatrician from the Baby Home No 1 and Professor Olena Riga from the Department of Paediatrics and Neonatology of the Kharkiv National Medical University. They discussed the opportunities and challenges in their work to care for some of the most vulnerable children in Ukraine, as well as innovations made in the provision of palliative care to terminally ill children within the institutional setting. This event and the team's visit to the UK was made possible through support from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ukraine.

In September 2016, we hosted another evening presentation, *Protecting the rights of disabled and terminally ill children in Belarus*. This was a discussion led by our partner, the Belarusian Children's Hospice and four representatives from Belarusian health and education authorities responsible for palliative care and child disability service provision: the National Children's Palliative Care Centre, the Department of Special Education (Ministry of Education), the Maternal and Child Health Department (Ministry of Health) and the Department of Preventive Care from Minsk Regional Health Administration.

### Study Visits

HealthProm has extensive experience facilitating study visits to the UK, Russia and Tajikistan to observe examples of working practice between local government, the education sector, health and social services and parent groups on disability related issues. We believe that observing international examples of best practice is a critical component of participatory learning. As a result, many of our larger projects feature a study visit of some kind. Meeting and interacting with international counterparts not only inspires new ideas, it also highlights important challenges and lessons learned.

Following the visit by the Ukrainian team in March 2016, in May we hosted a one-week study visit by representatives from our Moldovan partner organisation Partnerships for Every Child and high-level delegates from the Moldovan Ministry of Education to learn more about inclusive education practices in the UK. In September, the Belarusian Children's Hospice travelled to the UK accompanied by representatives from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to learn more about our practice in palliative care services. In November, we are welcoming a delegation from Russia.

# Key achievements

Our project in Afghanistan reached over **18,000 people** in Marmul district and three sections of Charkent district.

We provided support to **604 children with disabilities** across seven regions of Kyrgyzstan.

In close collaboration with UNICEF and the Government of Tajikistan, we piloted the **first ever foster care programme** in the country.

**59 children with disabilities** were able to attend mainstream school in Kyrgyzstan as a result of the enhanced services provided by our project supported Day Centres.



## Your support

Over the past year, our generous supporters have contributed their time, skills and money towards HealthProm's work to ensure that vulnerable children have the best start in life. Whether through concerts, one-off donations or the odd pub quiz, we are immensely grateful for your support.

Numerous charitable events were hosted over the past year in support of our work. Several music recitals took place at venues around London featuring choral and classical performances, whilst our sporty champions participated in charitable 'Fun Runs' in our name.

Another form of support we receive is through our Volunteers. We are continuously grateful for their hard work and commitment, which makes our mission possible.



### Betsy's Story:

#### My summer internship with HealthProm

*One of our volunteer interns shares her experience of her summer placement with us*



“My internship with HealthProm has been an incredible experience and I could not be more grateful to have had the opportunity to work with the London team. I had the chance to conduct research for the organisation as well as actively participate in meetings and external events. Planning upcoming charity events was also a great opportunity for me to gain hands on experience with fundraising.

HealthProm's work focuses on implementing sustainable, community driven initiatives. This is what makes their work not only successful, but also unique. Between their conscientiousness for other cultures and their pragmatic approaches, HealthProm has provided me with a work ethic and mission that I hope to emulate in my future career.

I want to thank the staff for their support and guidance, and for welcoming me to such a wonderful organisation. My internship was without a doubt a success and will inevitably influence the decisions I make in the future regarding my studies, career path and life in general. While I am sad to leave, I look forward to continue hearing about the success of HealthProm's work.”

**Elisabeth “Betsy” Yang**

Public Health student

University of Massachusetts Amherst

# How You Can Help

## Make a donation

Regular giving provides essential support to the running of our projects. Please contact us for further information about how you can set up a regular donation.

You can also donate online at: [justgiving.com/health-prom](http://justgiving.com/health-prom). Because any donated amount, no matter how small, helps to support our work helping vulnerable children.

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## Fundraise for us

Check our website for news about our regular fundraising events. You can also be creative and host your own event or take part in a sports challenge to raise funds for our work.

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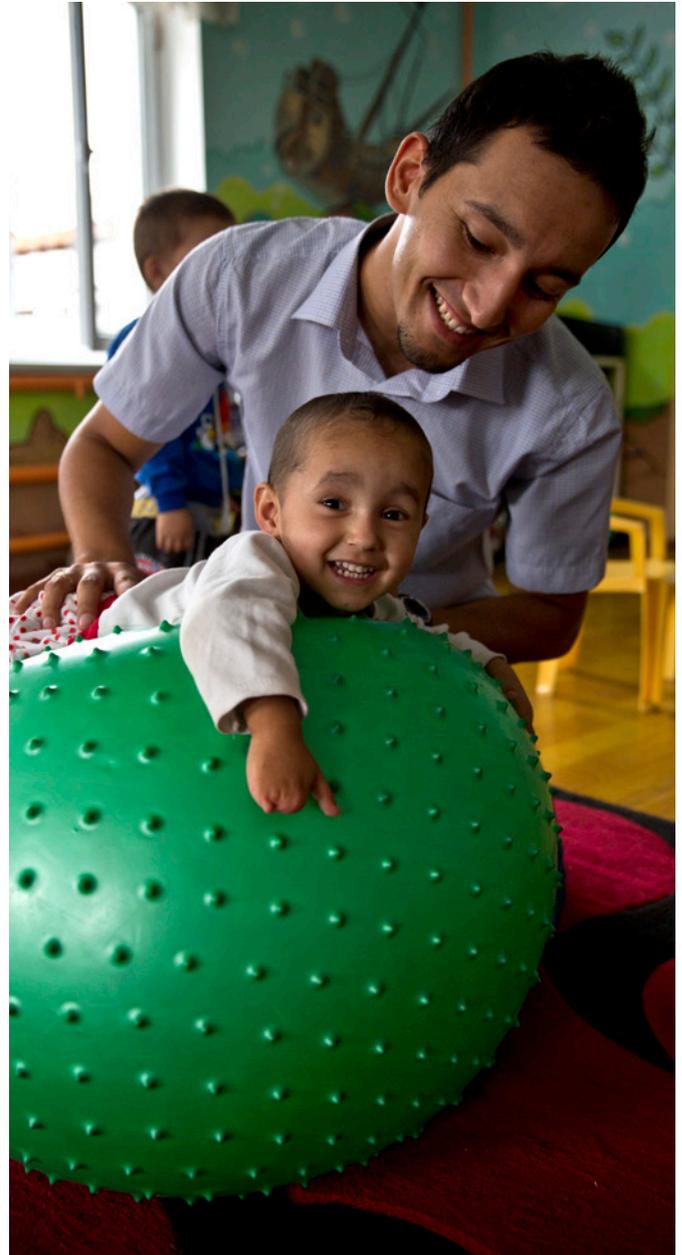
## Corporate involvement

If your company is interested in sponsoring events on our behalf or nominating us as a charity of the year, please get in touch.

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## Legacies

Bequests can provide essential funding for HealthProm. To find out more about how your legacy could help, please contact us.



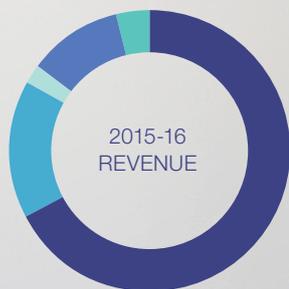
## Contact us

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London N4 2DA, United Kingdom

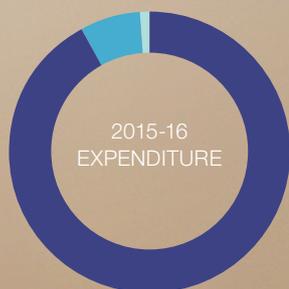
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# Financial summary



- Statutory **£418,514**
- Trusts & Foundations **£97,618**
- Events **£13,412**
- Individuals **£68,495**
- Others **£22,573**



- International activities **£593,511**
- Operational programme support costs **£44,596**
- Cost of generating funds **£5,458**



# Thank You

Our work would not be possible without the generous support of our partners. We would like to thank the following donors:



 STATES OF GUERNSEY



British & Foreign School Society  
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[www.healthprom.org](http://www.healthprom.org)