

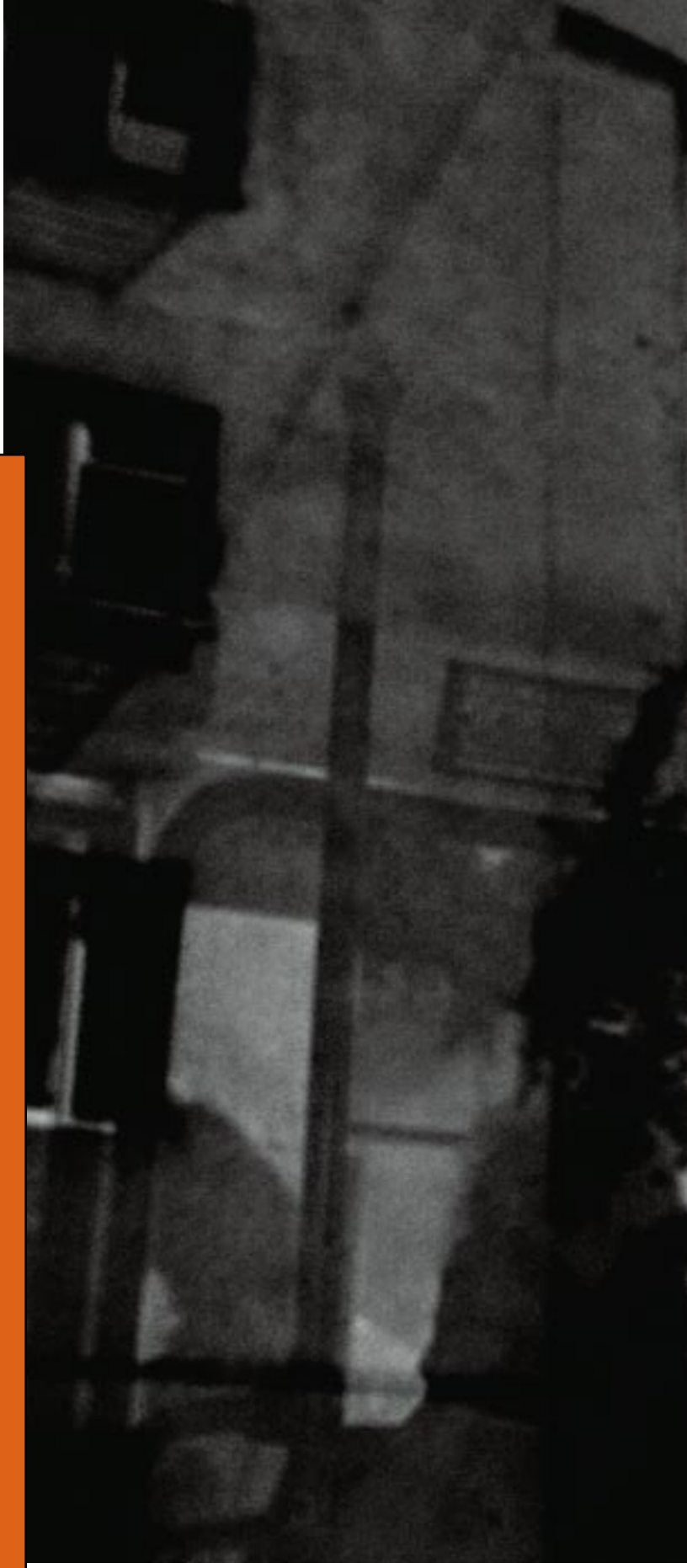
**Human Rights and Justice**  
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# Human Rights and Justice

The protection of human rights and the pursuit of justice are priorities for the Open Society Institute and the Soros foundations network. OSI programs deal with a range of rights issues, working to increase access to information and international justice, prohibit the arbitrary use of pretrial detention, promote the inclusion of Roma, and reduce discrimination and violence against women.

## **Rights and Justice**

Through litigation, legal advocacy, technical assistance, and the dissemination of knowledge, the Open Society Justice Initiative works to advance freedom of information and expression, anticorruption efforts, international justice, equality and citizenship, and national criminal justice.





A woman displaced by fighting in Gori, Georgia | MARCUS BLEASDALE

The Justice Initiative's report *The Price of Silence: The Growing Threat of Soft Censorship in Latin America* found rampant government interference with press freedom in seven Latin American countries, including evidence of direct government payments to journalists in Colombia and Peru. After a four-year campaign by the Justice Initiative and a local partner, Chile adopted a law that recognizes the public's right to information held by government entities and requires officials to respond to requests within 20 days.

In its efforts to uncover resource corruption, the Justice Initiative helped file a complaint in Spain against officials of Equatorial Guinea who used millions of dollars of oil revenues to purchase Spanish real estate while the majority of their country's people live on less than \$1 a day.

The Open Society Institute is a longtime proponent of international justice—the process of prosecuting high level perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and other atrocities. In 2008, the Justice Initiative launched a website to cover the trial of Thomas Lubanga, accused of recruiting child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Lubanga's trial, which began in early 2009, is the first before the International Criminal Court.

On any given day, an estimated 2.5 million people worldwide are held in pretrial detention. The excessive and arbitrary use of pretrial detention violates individual rights and threatens public health, a message that OSI presented at the 2008 International AIDS Conference in Mexico City.

The Justice Initiative continued to combat discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities, including

the increase in government policies denying or stripping away citizenship rights through mass expulsion, arbitrary administrative action, and insurmountable bureaucratic requirements.

Work on criminal justice reform is complemented by Justice Initiative efforts to bolster legal capacity through support for university-based legal aid clinics and national legal aid programs.

## Rights and Governance

The Human Rights and Governance Grants Program in 2008 developed over 150 projects and issued grants that helped promote human rights, accountability, and rule of law in Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and Mongolia. Two grantees, Mental Disability Rights International and the Hungarian Mental Health Interest Forum, worked with disability rights NGOs to draft and prompt the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The convention is the first legally binding document that recognizes the rights to inclusion and nondiscrimination of people with disabilities. Green Salvation, a grantee in Kazakhstan, filed a successful lawsuit in the nation's Supreme Court that gave the NGO access to information about atmospheric emissions at a Kazakh oil and gas field. The court recognized UN standards on access to information, public participation in decision making, and environmental justice matters as mandatory in its ruling.

The rights of people with disabilities, public access to information, and criminal justice are also priority issues for OSI's Special Initiatives Fund, which in 2008 provided funding for groups that

helped promote the ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

OSI's Global Drug Policy program, launched in early 2008, advocates for drug policy reform based on human rights and public health principles. A priority for the program in 2008 was helping grantees participate in policy discussions and conduct advocacy activities, including demonstrations, leading up to the UN High Level Meeting on Drugs in March 2009.

OSI also supported democratic and effective governance through its Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative. The initiative's policy advocacy trainings increased in 2008 and expanded to West Africa. It supported efforts to advance political decentralization in South Eastern Europe and to generate projects for Roma inclusion with EU funding in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovakia.

## Roma

OSI's Roma Initiatives seeks to increase the ability of Roma to participate in public life, to advocate for systemic policy changes prohibiting discrimination, and to challenge negative images and stereotyping of Roma.

Roma Initiatives in 2008 continued to support internships, training, and fellowships to increase the skills of Roma. These included internships at the European Commission and other government entities, policy writing and advocacy trainings, scholarships for English language training, and an arts and culture mentoring project. In Macedonia, a management fellow mentored by foundation staff became an advisor to the country's minister without portfolio for the Decade of

Roma Inclusion.

Work to advance the Decade remained a major priority. Roma Initiatives provided support for DecadeWatch, which issued online monitoring reports that revealed problems in national action plans for Roma inclusion. Funding to increase Roma women's participation in society went to Roma NGOs working on assistance for Roma refugees and displaced women and children, access to health services and reproductive rights, and access to the labor market.

Roma Initiatives supported media, arts, and culture projects to promote dialogue and challenge negative attitudes toward Roma. OSI funded *Looking for My Gypsy Roots*, broadcast by the BBC, and documentaries about Roma issues on Hungary's Duna TV. Five Roma journalists who interned at Hungarian Public Television and Radio received jobs at major Hungarian TV stations as reporters, writers, or anchors.

OSI supported a recruitment drive to increase the number of Roma in law enforcement in Hungary. To draw international attention to the plight of Roma in Italy, OSI and partner organizations documented mistreatment of Roma by Italian authorities at OSCE, European Commission, and European Union meetings.

## Women

The International Women's Program, working mostly in conflict or postconflict countries, seeks to reduce discrimination and violence against women, strengthen women's access to justice, and increase women's role as decision makers and leaders.

In Iraqi Kurdistan, the program supported the creation of the

Women's Law Center to provide legal aid to women affected by the conflict; monitor court trials; and conduct trainings for lawyers, judges, state attorneys, and law enforcement agencies. Women for Women International, a grantee in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, trained men who are influential community leaders to understand their roles in protecting and reintegrating survivors of rape and sexual violence.

Advocacy by KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation, an OSI grantee in Lebanon, helped bring about an unprecedented government statement pledging to end violence against women by working for legislation in favor of women's rights. *The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo*, supported by the program, helped raise international awareness about the issue; a research project helped organizations develop effective policies against sexual violence.

The program also supports initiatives that increase judicial responsiveness to women's rights and reduce the obstacles that prevent women from accessing justice. OSI grantee medica mondiale helped strengthen the interaction of courts, women's groups, and victim organizations to achieve justice for war rape survivors in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To advance the role of women as leaders, OSI supported the participation of women in peace talks for northern Uganda and the attendance of NGO representatives at the annual session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. After a two-year advocacy campaign, the Soros foundation in Kyrgyzstan helped win a parliamentary quota for women, making the legislative body one-quarter female.

## Investigating CIA-run Black Sites in Poland

The Justice Initiative and partner organizations in Europe are using freedom of information requests to investigate rights abuses related to the U.S. "war on terror." In Poland, these efforts paid off in 2008 when the chief prosecutor opened an official investigation into the existence of CIA-run "black sites" in the country and the possible complicity of Polish agents in torture and other rights abuses.

## OSI ONLINE

Read reporting and commentary on the trial of Thomas Lubanga, who is accused of conscripting child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.  
[www.lubangatrial.org](http://www.lubangatrial.org)



HIV-positive patients at temporary treatment shelter in Rangoon, Burma | CHRISTIAN HOLST



## Public Health

The Open Society Institute's Public Health Program seeks to build societies committed to inclusion, human rights, and justice, in which health-related laws, policies, and practices reflect these values and are based on scientific evidence. The program works to advance the health and human rights of people in marginalized communities by strengthening civil society organizations and leaders, and advocating for greater accountability and transparency in health policy and practice.

## Harm Reduction

With nearly one in three new HIV infections outside of Africa resulting from injecting drug use, the International Harm Reduction Development program worked in 20 countries of Eastern Europe and Asia to ensure that drug users have equitable access to HIV prevention and treatment, and protection from abuse at the hands of police or medical personnel. The program has led an international effort to denounce human rights violations committed in the name of drug treatment, such as flogging drug users or chaining them to hospital beds. It supported new projects in Russia to provide people who use illegal drugs with the same standard of AIDS treatment that other HIV-positive people receive.

The program supported national efforts to raise awareness about effective, evidence-based treatment, and conducted trainings and presentations at regional and international AIDS conferences to counter the misconception that HIV-positive drug users are incapable of adhering to antiretroviral medications. With support from the Canadian International Development Agency, the program piloted harm reduction services for women in Georgia, Russia, and Ukraine.

## Palliative Care

The International Palliative Care Initiative worked in resource-poor countries to establish palliative care as a fundamental part of health care and to ensure the availability of essential drugs for pain relief and symptom management. The initiative helped pave the way for national palliative care plans in Romania and Ukraine, and organized a seminar

for nurses from Central and Eastern Europe and workshops in Namibia, Moldova, Tajikistan, and Ukraine.

## Law and Health

The Law and Health Initiative promoted the integration of legal services into diverse health care settings to advance human rights, human dignity, and open society. In collaboration with others, the initiative supported a project in Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda that links palliative care providers with legal experts to ensure that legal barriers facing patients, including restrictions on pain medications, are adequately addressed.

An investigation into patients' rights in Kyrgyzstan, involving interviews with people with physical and mental disabilities, sex workers, and people who use drugs, revealed shocking evidence of widespread human rights violations and abuses in hospitals and clinics. A publication opposing the criminalization of HIV transmission or exposure outlined why criminalization is ineffective, and harmful to public health and the human rights of people living with HIV, especially women.

## Mental Health

In an unprecedented agreement with the Open Society Mental Health Initiative, the government of Macedonia agreed to move people with intellectual disabilities out of institutions and into supported housing to live as equal citizens in local communities. Similarly, in Serbia, the initiative's technical and financial support has helped make community-based housing a viable alternative to institutional placement.

In Moldova, the initiative supported

projects aimed at preventing the institutionalization of children with disabilities by providing inclusive education services and fostering greater community support for families with disabled children, thus creating alternatives to placing children in institutional care. In Romania, the initiative supported the development of a model employment program that has successfully ensured employment on the open market for more than 60 people with intellectual disabilities.

## Roma Health

The Roma Health Project promoted the equal access of Roma to appropriate and quality health care services. Working with the European Roma Rights Centre, the project developed an advocacy training program on the right to health care, and held the first training workshop in Sofia, Bulgaria, focusing on the health rights of Roma women. Responding to the lack of Roma in medical professions, OSI and the Roma Education Fund launched a scholarship program helping Roma students across Central and Eastern Europe to pursue medical and nursing studies. For more on Roma health issues, including the scholarship program, see pages 34–37.

## Sexual Health and Rights

Sex workers in Cambodia joined together to demand an end to police violence and extortion with support from the Sexual Health and Rights Project, which aims to advance the health and health-related rights of sex workers and sexual and gender minorities. The project launched efforts in eastern and southern Africa

to address health and human rights issues critical to sex workers and sexual minorities. It helped produce an HIV prevalence study of men who have sex with men in Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, and South Africa, showing that no resources are allocated to this at-risk population.

### **Tuberculosis and HIV**

The Public Health Watch project worked to strengthen meaningful and sustained engagement by affected communities in the development, implementation, and monitoring of TB, HIV, and TB/HIV policies, programs, and practices. It launched a new grant initiative to support monitoring and advocacy to reduce the burden of TB on people living with HIV in eastern and southern Africa. With project support, migrant workers in southern Africa met with government officials and health experts to press for TB prevention and treatment programs for the mining industry. Public Health Watch participated in the UNAIDS Program Coordinating Board Meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand, which for the first time addressed important links between TB and HIV, and organized a briefing for UN representatives prior to the first-ever HIV-TB Global Leaders Forum.

The Public Health Program also supports efforts to increase access to drugs and diagnostics to treat neglected diseases in developing countries, and works with the media to increase public awareness of health and human rights issues, especially those involving marginalized populations. It supports budget analyses by civil society groups to strengthen advocacy campaigns on mental health, palliative care, Roma health, and harm reduction. It also works to strengthen civil society involvement in the decision-making processes of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and to increase the fund's investments in projects focused on HIV prevention, care, and treatment for women, girls, and sexual minorities.

## **Bringing Human Rights to the Center of the AIDS Response**

**At the 2008 International AIDS Conference in Mexico City, the Public Health Program and its partners raised awareness of the critical need to include human rights in the global AIDS response. OSI and a coalition of human rights and AIDS organizations held the first global rally on human rights and HIV and AIDS, which brought together more than 1,000 activists and people affected by the epidemic. During the rally, the OSI-produced declaration “Human Rights and HIV/AIDS: Now More Than Ever,” endorsed by over 600 organizations worldwide, was presented to high-level officials. The declaration calls on governments and international donors to protect the human rights of stigmatized groups, including sexual minorities, people who use drugs, sex workers, and incarcerated persons.**

### **OSI ONLINE**

*View **A Light in the Dark**, a multimedia piece about a mobile clinic for drug users in St. Petersburg, Russia. [www.soros.org/ar08/light](http://www.soros.org/ar08/light)*



A school teacher reviews student work in Narok, Kenya | MARVILACAR



## **Education, Information, and Media**

Expanding access to education and information and promoting quality, independent journalism are priorities for the Open Society Institute. In 2008, OSI supported debate programs in the Middle East, copyright exemptions for online materials benefiting the visually impaired, and news coverage of Cyclone Nargis in Burma.

## Education

The education programs of the Open Society Institute work to promote the inclusion of children from marginalized communities, advance higher education in the humanities and social sciences, and empower young people to become active citizens.

The Early Childhood Program works globally to promote human development, parent and community engagement, and government accountability in early childhood development. The program continues to work throughout Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States to promote accessibility and quality of services for vulnerable children. In 2008, the program initiated a multiyear evaluation of its *Getting Ready for School* initiative, which has been piloted in 10 countries and seeks to improve home learning environments for children who do not attend formal preschools.

The program launched postgraduate programs in child development at BRAC University in Bangladesh, and supported the analysis and development of policies for young children by the Ministry of Education in Liberia.

The Education Support Program collaborated with Soros foundations to advocate for the special education needs of vulnerable children. The program helped develop standards for curricula that included civic education and human rights in Armenia and produced a guide on inclusive educational practices in Serbia. Soros foundations in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan reviewed national policies on children with special education needs and supported demonstration projects.

A project in Lubombo, Swaziland, helped orphans and vulnerable children, particularly those affected by HIV and AIDS, access education.

The program worked directly with the Ministry of Education in Liberia to assist efforts to reconstruct the primary education system, including the creation of an efficient funding mechanism. In Mongolia, an education center established by the Mongolian Education Alliance provided computer and sign language training to deaf and hard of hearing children and helped launch the country's first college course for educating deaf students and the first curriculum for deaf kindergarten children.

Studies supported by the program revealed how informal payments contribute to educational inequality in seven countries, and highlighted the educational exclusion of migrant and marginalized communities in Europe.

The International Higher Education Support Program, which promotes the advancement of higher education within the humanities and social sciences—primarily across Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and Mongolia—provides financial and technical assistance to a network of institutions, ranging from undergraduate universities to doctoral programs and centers for advanced study. In 2008, the program expanded the work of its Academic Fellowship Program with 64 new returning scholars joining the 105 scholars who had previously renewed their work with the fellowship program. OSI's Network Scholarship Programs and the Higher Education Support Program started an effort to help academic institutions and scholars in Africa respond to climate change.

The Network Scholarship Programs continued to assist outstanding students in pursuing their studies in different academic settings, and then returning to contribute to their home countries. Hossain Ali Ramoz, executive director of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and the program's first Afghan communications grantee, used televised open lectures at the University of Ottawa, Canada, to raise awareness about the human rights situation in Afghanistan. To support the projects of alumni, the program funded social work program graduates Altantsetseg Batsukh and Oyut-Erdene Namdaldagva to correct the lack of recognition of issues related to HIV, AIDS, and other STIs in academic social work programs in Mongolia.

The Open Society Institute Youth Initiative supports debate programs for young people, funds youth-designed projects, and promotes youth as partners in all aspects of OSI's work. The Network Debate Program, which has developed debate programs in over 50 countries, continued to expand its work by targeting Arabic-speaking youth in the Middle East and North Africa and creating a Mandarin debate program for Chinese university students.

The Youth Initiative awarded small grants to projects in Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Moldova, Nepal, Russia, Serbia, and Uganda. In Uganda, funding went to projects ranging from the protection of the country's wetlands to the promotion of technology in remote areas. In Istanbul, Turkey, the program supported an international BarCamp, where participants used the web to discuss issues in an interactive, open

setting. The camp brought together OSI programs, foundations, grantees, consultants, and young activists to share their work on topics such as creating web communities for marginalized youth, and advocating for national youth policies.

### Information

OSI's Information Program works to increase public access to knowledge, facilitate civil society communication, and protect civil liberties and the freedom to communicate in the digital environment. The program gives particular attention to the information needs of disadvantaged groups and less developed parts of the world.

The Information Program helped develop an Access to Knowledge advocacy coalition, which in 2008 concentrated on persuading the World Intellectual Property Organization to establish copyright exemptions that allow the creation of large nonprofit collections of online materials for the benefit of developing nations and disenfranchised populations such as visually impaired people.

The program worked with the Shuttleworth Foundation to launch the Cape Town Open Education Declaration to build a global movement for textbooks and other educational resources that can be freely translated and adapted around the world. It funded BarCamps that brought together social activists and technologists to address the technological needs of NGOs in Central Asia, the Baltics, and the Caucasus. And it promoted open information policies by working with both corporations and human rights groups to create the Global Network Initiative for protecting the rights of information technology users.

### Media

The Media Program continued to promote quality, independent journalism for the crucial role it plays in functioning democracies and for the standards and content it can provide to evolving communications technologies. The Media Program and OSI's Burma Project supported two media outlets that supplied the world with television footage and news stories about the devastating impact of Cyclone Nargis in Burma and the authoritarian government's failed response.

The program also supported emergency legal aid and other forms of protection for Pakistani journalists, and an international press freedom mission and safety training for freelancers in Mexico. In the Philippines and Russia, the program assisted efforts to combat impunity for those who intimidate or kill journalists.

The Media Program supported investigative journalism through a number of regional and international events, including a meeting of Latin American journalists and media support organizations to discuss strengthening investigative journalism, and a meeting of an Arab investigative journalists' network.

A coproduction fund for Roma and non-Roma media outlets generated high quality TV and radio programs on Roma issues that have been seen by approximately 5.5 million viewers since 2007. The Media Program and OSI's EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program issued follow-up reports on nine countries covered in an earlier report, *Television across Europe*. The new reports found an increase in channels but reductions in media independence in almost all the countries examined.

## New Admissions Test in Ukraine Improves Access to University

Ukraine implemented independent testing for university admissions for the first time at the national level, capping years of work by the International Renaissance Foundation and other NGOs to develop independent testing of graduating students' educational achievement. The new system significantly reduces corruption in the admissions process and improves equal access to higher education. Upon completion of the testing, the Ministry of Education and Science decreed that all higher educational institutions will use independent assessment results for admissions.

### OSI ONLINE

Read the personal stories and views of OSI scholars studying abroad in issues of *ScholarForum*.  
[www.soros.org/ar08/scholarforum](http://www.soros.org/ar08/scholarforum)



## Other Programs

A patient at the Louisiana State Penitentiary's hospice program is greeted by a fellow inmate | LORI WASELCHUK

The Open Society Institute operates programs that focus on the roles that art, photography, independent intellectual inquiry, and exchanges of people from different countries can play in establishing tolerant, democratic societies.

The Arts and Culture Network Program supported Roma arts and culture in the Balkans, Central Asia, and Central and Eastern Europe, and helped develop independent cultural activities in Afghanistan, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Mongolia, and Turkey. *Everything's OK*, a film about street children produced by a program grantee in Kyrgyzstan, received positive reviews at the Rotterdam international film festival and then toured the Netherlands. To fight stereotypes and build the self-esteem of young Roma, the program supported Roma painters, musicians, and other cultural professionals who mentored ethnically mixed children and youth groups at schools and community centers.

OSI's Documentary Photography Project uses exhibits, workshops, grantmaking, and public programs to explore how photography can shape public perception and effect social change. The project's Moving Walls exhibition series works to depict societies in transition and promote democratic values. From 2006 to 2008, the project, in partnership with OSI's Middle East and North Africa Initiative, supported a touring exhibition of seven past Moving Walls photographers to cities in the region. At each venue, a local photographer was included in the exhibit and the project organized photography workshops for local professionals and young people. The Documentary Photography Project's various grants supported a number of activities, including the publication of *The Useful Image: Using Images to Change Today's World* and a Louisiana and Mississippi correctional facilities tour of Lori Waselchuk's photographs documenting inmate

volunteers at the Angola Prison hospice program in Louisiana.

To facilitate the sharing of information to further reform and social change, the East East: Partnership Beyond Borders Program uses exchange programs to foster collaboration among civil society organizations in more than one country. A long-term initiative in Poland helped analysts and civil society activists monitor EU member state visa policies toward neighboring non-EU countries. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia, the program brought together civil society activists and organizations to develop strategies to advance the EU accession process in South Eastern Europe. The program worked with Soros foundations in the Czech Republic and Ukraine on reform and European integration issues, and with foundations in Slovakia and Tajikistan to organize exchanges of experts working on housing policy and civic engagement.

The Open Society Fellowship, launched in 2008, supports individuals who develop innovative solutions to pressing social and political challenges. The program aims to shape policy and inspire critical debate among activists, intellectuals, and decision-makers; it also works to sharpen OSI's thinking about significant political and social issues. The program's first seven fellows came from Australia, Belarus, Colombia, South Africa, and the United States and focused on issues ranging from new technologies in authoritarian societies and the AIDS epidemics in Russia and South Africa to the mixed results of international advocacy on Darfur.

OSI's Think Tank Fund supports

independent policy centers that help strengthen democracy by identifying and analyzing policy options, advocating recommendations, and consulting with governments. In 2008, the fund issued 27 institutional grants and 14 project grants in more than 20 countries. In Kosovo, the Institute for Advanced Studies used an institutional grant to support NGOs that organized televised debates on local government policies and priorities in 25 municipalities. The fund's project grants supported 14 initiatives that responded to issues including minority integration in Latvia and Estonia, civil oversight of security agencies in the Czech Republic, and political party financing in Hungary.

## OSI ONLINE

See how six documentary photographers depict abuse of power at Abu Ghraib and in North Korea, HIV education in Lesotho, industrial pollution in Bangladesh, daily life in Azerbaijan, and the separation wall between Mexico and the United States. [www.soros.org/ar08/movingwalls](http://www.soros.org/ar08/movingwalls)

## U.S. Programs

The Open Society Institute's U.S. Programs supports individuals and organizations that nurture the development of a more open society, a society that allows all people to participate actively and equitably in political, economic, and cultural life; encourages diverse opinions and critical debate; protects fundamental human rights, dignity, and the rule of law; and promotes broadly shared prosperity and human security.

The 2008 election process represented a number of advances for open society in America: increased levels of civic engagement, renewed respect for the power of grassroots activism, and a milestone in the struggle for racial justice. Yet much work remains to be done for the United States to live up to its potential as an open society.





Crowd watching U.S. presidential election returns in New York | ERIC BOUVET

## Transparency and Integrity

The Transparency and Integrity Fund seeks to increase government transparency and accountability at the federal and state levels. In 2008, OSI and its grantees strengthened and coordinated the field of nonpartisan organizations working to reform the voting system and protect all votes on and before Election Day. Successes included an executive order in Florida extending the hours for early voting, advocacy that stopped voter suppression in Michigan where voters whose homes had been foreclosed on faced residency challenges, and legal action remedying flawed voter purges in many contested states.

OSI grantees developed a *Change for America* blueprint to help guide the government in a new, more progressive direction, a comprehensive “Right-to-Know Agenda” to enhance transparency and accountability and increase citizen engagement with government, and a Bailout Watch to demand greater fiscal transparency around the government’s bailout of the financial sector.

## Democracy and Power

The Democracy and Power Fund expands on OSI’s longtime support of efforts that inspire and motivate people of color, young people, immigrants, and low-income communities. Over 20 OSI grantees registered more than 1.5 million new and updated voters nationwide before the U.S. presidential election. OSI emphasized support for community-based nonprofit organizations that enfranchised and inspired new voters, such as young people, people of color, and new citizens

from Arab-American, Asian, and Latino communities. Grants made by the fund in 2008 included one to a network promoting an urban agenda on housing, jobs, policing, and gentrification issues, and another to a collaborative project advancing a public investment and equal opportunity agenda.

## Equality and Opportunity

The Equality and Opportunity Fund’s mission is to eliminate barriers that prevent people from participating fully in economic, social, and political life in the United States. Among other objectives, the fund focuses on reversing institutional policies and practices that contribute to racial inequality, strengthening the civil and human rights of immigrants, supporting policies that advance lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights, and elevating women’s issues and leadership within larger progressive movements.

In a legal victory involving an OSI grantee, a U.S. appeals court ruled that federal immigration authorities may not treat simple drug possession offenses, which are misdemeanors under state law, as “drug trafficking” aggravated felonies to secure mandatory deportation of immigrants. In another victory, a district court upheld the constitutionality of the Voting Rights Act, which requires certain states and localities to submit changes in voting procedures to the federal government for approval.

OSI launched its Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative in response to the subprime lending and foreclosure crisis, funding outreach, counseling,

and legal assistance to stem the crisis in New York City.

## Criminal Justice

The Criminal Justice Fund seeks to reverse policies and practices that criminalize race, poverty, mental illness, and drug and alcohol dependency, and confront the destructive and costly impact of these policies on individuals and communities. With help from an OSI grantee, the state of Kansas averted nearly \$80 million in new prison construction and operating costs over the next five years by adopting measures to reduce its prison population. OSI convened advocates to brainstorm litigation strategies to combat the continued plague of racial profiling, and helped host a public forum to discuss how to create a criminal justice system structured neither by race nor by economic inequality.

## Black Male Achievement

The Campaign for Black Male Achievement was launched in 2008 as a three-year, cross-program campaign to provide expanded resources to address, and help reverse, the ways in which African American boys and men are stigmatized, criminalized, and excluded from full participation in economic, cultural, and political life in the United States. In its first year, the program made grants to organizations in the areas of youth media and civic engagement, faith-based organizing and capacity building, education equity and reform, strengthening families through responsible fatherhood, economic opportunity, and community leadership and organizing.

## National Security and Human Rights

With one year remaining of the Bush administration, OSI and The Atlantic Philanthropies launched the National Security and Human Rights Campaign to take advantage of the opportunities that a changed political environment could offer to promote progressive national security policies that respect human rights, civil liberties, and the rule of law.

OSI's grantees mobilized broad opposition to U.S.-sponsored torture, organizing faith-based communities in denouncing the use of torture on moral grounds; building grassroots support on college campuses; enlisting the military, intelligence, law enforcement, and foreign policy communities in the movement against torture; exposing the ethical issues raised by the participation of psychologists in abusive interrogations; and documenting the physical and psychological harms from the use of torture.

## Strategic Opportunities

The Strategic Opportunities Fund enables U.S. Programs to respond quickly to urgent situations, as well as to support grant strategy research and explore emerging areas of interest. OSI prioritized location-based philanthropy, with New Orleans and the broader Gulf Region as a focus of further research and the development of cross-program strategies. Exploratory grantmaking included support for groups that utilize art and culture to advance organizing, advocacy, and social change.

## Open Society Institute–Baltimore

The Open Society Institute–Baltimore made substantial progress on three of the most difficult challenges facing the city—inadequate drug addiction treatment, poorly performing schools, and unacceptably high rates of incarceration.

OSI helped Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, the agency responsible for the city's public drug addiction treatment system, introduce performance-based contracting and use data to change traditional funding allocations, ensuring higher utilization of treatment services. The agency launched a cooperative effort that provided buprenorphine treatment for heroin addiction to over 1,100 patients in 2008. OSI grantees began working to remove barriers for Medicaid patients and providers using buprenorphine. Under the leadership of OSI-Baltimore, a policy team has developed a program that will provide eligible prisoners with addiction treatment in prison and parole them to treatment and support services in the community.

OSI-Baltimore's collaborative initiative to reform school suspension and expulsion practices resulted in the drafting of a new student code of conduct, which the school district is now implementing. The new code supports programs, including several launched by OSI in 2007 as pilots, that teach appropriate behavior, use suspension and expulsion as a last resort, and add enriching and/or physical activities that attract children to school. OSI released three white papers addressing the issue of student absences in public schools with recommendations to remedy the problem.

## Guantánamo Detainees Win Right to Judicial Review

Among the year's most important legal decisions was the Supreme Court's ruling that foreign nationals held as "enemy combatants" at Guantánamo have a constitutional right to file a writ of habeas corpus in U.S. courts requesting release from unlawful detention. The 5-4 ruling speaks to the efforts of OSI's grantees to reverse the Bush administration policy of detaining individuals indefinitely without judicial review. OSI joined an amicus brief filed in the case.

## OSI ONLINE

View *Trouble the Water*, a documentary film codirected and coproduced by OSI fellow Tia Lessin, which was nominated for the 2008 Academy Award for Best Feature Documentary. Lessin was one of six filmmakers who received an OSI Katrina Media Fellowship in 2006. [www.soros.org/ar08/trouble](http://www.soros.org/ar08/trouble)