



University  
of Glasgow

Kay, R. (2006) *Men in crisis or in critical need of support? insights from Russia and the UK*. *Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 22 (1). pp. 90-114. ISSN 0268-4535

<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/6681/>

Deposited on: 04 August 2008

# **Men in crisis or in critical need of support? insights from Russia and the UK**

## **Rebecca Kay**

A view of men 'in crisis' has become an increasingly widespread feature of media representations, popular understanding and academic literature in many countries of the world, including both Russia and the UK, over the past 20 years.<sup>1</sup> In both these countries there is clear evidence of growing labour market detachment, poor health and low life expectancy, alongside problems with personal and social wellbeing, and a flourishing of destructive patterns of social behaviour among men. Clearly the realities of men's lives, as well as understandings of male roles and identities, are conditioned by socio-cultural contexts which vary significantly across time and place. None the less, there appear to be striking Transnational similarities between some of the evidence for and interpretations of male 'crisis' which deserve further exploration.

The concept of 'Transnationalism' as used in this article is based on discussions that took place during the seminar series from which this collection arose: 'Transnational Issues, Local Concerns: Insights from Russia, Central and Eastern Europe and the UK'.<sup>2</sup> Many of the issues discussed during that series, and indeed addressed in this collection of articles, transcend national boundaries and artificial 'East-West' divisions. As outlined above, the question of men's experience of 'crisis' is no exception. The term 'Transnational' was employed throughout the seminar series as a means to capture this wider shared experience and thus to avoid essentialist explanations that reduce issues such as low male life expectancy or a culture of heavy drinking among men to the level of specifically 'Russian' or 'post-socialist' phenomena. Yet the importance of avoiding homogenizing tendencies was also recognized. The term 'Transnational' was therefore employed to allow an exploration of the tension between, on the one hand, an understanding that many social, economic and environmental issues are not unique to any one region, nation or locality and, on the other hand, an awareness of the importance of locally-specific historical, cultural and socio-economic characteristics that shape people's understandings and experiences of such issues, and also their responses to them. A recognition of this tension and the importance of exploring both a wider experience of dislocation and 'crisis' among men and the local specifics of these issues in the post-Soviet Russian context is central to the arguments of this article.

The article is based on a combination of academic and applied research and practitioner experience. Rebecca Kay has conducted research on the development of gender relations and both men's and women's experiences of and responses to social, economic and cultural change in Russia over the past 12 years. Her most recent project, 'Understanding Men, Masculinity and Identity in post-Soviet Russia', funded by the Leverhulme Trust, explored men's experiences of social, economic and cultural developments in post-Soviet Russia, and their responses.<sup>3</sup> Ethnographic fieldwork for the project was conducted during 2002-3 in two provincial centres: a small district town and its surrounding villages in Kaluga region, southwest of and bordering Moscow region, and the city of Barnaul in the Altai region. In both areas ethnographic interviews and participant observation were conducted among local men and their families. In addition expert interviews were carried out both in these two centres and in Moscow, notably with those involved in policy-making and in the delivery of social services and support services specifically designed for men. In Barnaul this included extensive interviews with the staff of the Altai Regional Crisis Centre for Men and those supporting its work from within the local administration. A follow-up visit to Altai in 2005 focused on the expansion and further development of the Crisis Centre, in particular the opening of district branches and attempts to reach men from rural areas and small towns. Maksim Kostenko has undertaken extensive applied research into men's experiences of crisis and the provision of social support to men in Altai Region, particularly within the framework of the Altai Regional Crisis Centre for Men, where he has worked as a psychologist and support-group leader and of which he was director during 1997-2002. His research has

focused, in particular, on issues of male violence, post-traumatic stress, fatherhood, divorce and single fathers, and in each area a key concern has been to feed research findings into the development of a coherent system of social support for working-age men in Altai region. This article draws on the findings of both authors' research, and also on Maxim Kostenko's considerable experience in working to provide support to men in crisis.

The article begins with a review of some of the common areas in which men in both Russia and the UK are seen to be experiencing 'crisis', focusing particularly on the changing world of employment and issues relating to male health and mortality. This includes an exploration of the ways in which such issues are interpreted and sometimes reinforced through locally and historically bounded discourses of gender that represent men as insufficiently adaptable or responsible and frame risk-taking behaviour as inherently male. This is followed by a discussion of the pressure men experience to respond to challenges and crises in a gender-specific manner, which may exacerbate rather than resolve existing problems, and also makes it harder for men to accept help and support where this is offered.

One purpose of the kind of Transnational perspective outlined above, and one that was also discussed extensively in the course of the seminars, is to reiterate that a need to find positive solutions to a wide range of issues is not unique to any given society. Many countries continue to search for effective and lasting responses to issues of male violence, substance abuse, ill-health and long-term unemployment, for example. Yet there is also growing evidence of positive initiatives and projects emerging both within Russia and in the UK, especially at the local level. Agencies and organizations working to provide support to men and to expand gender equality programmes to incorporate work with men, have emphasized the need to learn from and share international best practice.<sup>4</sup> They have also highlighted the need to develop more coherent programmes of support for men that take clear account of gendered experiences of and responses to crisis, many of which are, at least in part, locally grounded.<sup>5</sup> Thus, in developing Transnational research and sharing examples of good practice across cultures and societies, it is crucial to acknowledge that specific cultural, socio-economic and historical factors shape local discourses of male crisis and men's responses to these, as well as playing a part in defining the appropriate models and methods for providing support to men 'in crisis'. In the second part of this article, we describe in some detail the development of the Altai Regional Crisis Centre for Men in Western Siberia and its attempts to elaborate a coherent system of social support for working-age men. Through this work the Centre seeks to prevent a further exacerbation of a dynamic of crisis in men's individual and social roles and identities - and indeed perhaps to reverse negative tendencies towards such a development.

In both Russia and the UK some of the most positive examples of such work illustrate clearly the importance of combining research with practice. The development of structures and delivery of programmes of support that are relevant, accessible and attractive to men is crucial. However, this appears, at least in part, to depend on deeper understandings of socially and culturally defined constructions of male 'crisis', the ways in which men respond to these and the extent to which even positive representations of manhood may leave men vulnerable to 'crisis' and also make it particularly hard for them to accept help and support, where this is offered. Practitioners working on these issues have found that some of the most important factors that need to be taken into account when developing local responses therefore include the level of resources available within the region; a locally acceptable combination of traditional and innovative methods and forms of social support; the socio-economic situation in the region; and the adaptation of international experience. While recognizing the crucial significance of local contexts, experiences and expertise, it is also clear that a sharing of the successes and difficulties experienced in developing local strategies for supporting men might lead to fruitful trans-local and Transnational collaboration and exchange.

### **Men in Russia and the UK: What evidence is there of a crisis?**

## Employment

Fears about men as a potential source of problems, and discussions of a 'crisis of masculinity' have appeared regularly in the British media, popular culture, policy making and academic analysis since the 1980s.<sup>6</sup> The loss of traditional patterns of male employment as a result of the decline in heavy industry forms a common backdrop to these discussions.<sup>7</sup> Shifts in the economy away from heavy industry and manufacturing towards jobs in the service sector and marketing have changed the gender balance in employment, and men now predominate among the unemployed and particularly amongst the long-term unemployed.<sup>8</sup> The end of guaranteed life-long, full-time employment and the loss of the role of sole breadwinner has created a situation which is 'problematic, not just because of its economic impact, but also because it affects male identity'.<sup>9</sup> A report on the impact of de-industrialization in Middlesbrough, for example, notes: 'down in the town centre, you can feel the lethargy and latent power of the unworked male, hanging about, jumping from foot to foot, scanning the boards for jobs that aren't there. ... [The] problem of male unemployment ... preoccupies everybody, a negative cloud, much more than the positive fact that women are at work'.<sup>10</sup> In 1996 a Labour Party consultation paper entitled 'Boys will be boys (Closing the gender gap)' appeared to blame men and boys for their increasing insecurity in the British labour market:

The changes in our society are here to stay. Too many boys are failing to adapt to them. They need to be more aware of the implications of a changing labour market and changing family patterns. They need to be better equipped to respond constructively to the challenges they face.<sup>11</sup>

The economic and political background to such changes has been very different in the UK from what it is in Russia. Yet in both countries the denationalization of state industries and the dismantling of large-scale, heavy industries, which had traditionally employed a high proportion of male labour in relatively well-paid, well-respected and secure jobs, has been a starting-point for the uncomfortable changes to follow. Moreover, a broader analysis of the impact of change, particularly as it is applied to the position of men in society, and to a view of men as insufficiently adaptable and therefore potentially threatening, is strikingly similar.

In the Russian context such arguments are amplified in proportion to the scale of the economic, ideological and structural change which that society has faced over a relatively short time. These changes have also been specifically interpreted as linked to a shift in gender roles, a change that has been promoted as desirable for men, women and society as a whole. The dismantling of paternalistic state support structures accompanied by a questioning of Soviet gender policies, particularly with regard to their emphasis on women's equal involvement in paid labour, has led to a strong emphasis on the centrality of 'provider' roles to male identities and duties.<sup>12</sup> This premise has led to even sharper criticism of men for failing to shape up to their new circumstances and to meet new demands. Thanks to their weakness and inflexibility, it is argued, men are failing to provide for their families. As a result they have not only lost the secure employment and work-based identities guaranteed to them under the Soviet system, they also face the risk of marginalization in, and even potential exclusion from, the private sphere of home and family.<sup>13</sup>

Ethnographic research conducted by Rebecca Kay has revealed that in post-Soviet Russia both women and men tend overwhelmingly to support the notion that a man's duty is to provide for his family and protect his wife and children from hardship by resolving problems and difficulties himself.<sup>14</sup> As one woman, interviewed in Moscow in 1995, put it, 'a man in social life should be the main figure, playing a leading role. In the family he should be a reliable partner, the stronger one when circumstances call for it.' Male respondents interviewed in 2002 in both Kaluga and Altai regions described unemployment and family poverty as a male failing, asking 'What kind of a man can't provide for his family?', or arguing that 'A man should always understand that he has a responsibility ... to feed his family ... a man shouldn't just be answerable for his actions, he should act'. Yet, in a country where between a quarter and a third of families have remained below the poverty line for over a decade and many more are struggling to remain above it, such emphasis on providing and

problem-solving as essentially male roles and the mark of a 'real' man seems designed to condemn large numbers of men to a label of 'failure'. None the less, sociological studies by both Russian and Western researchers, as well as widespread social and media discourses within Russia, have tended to support the idea that male inflexibility and a refusal to accept the loss of traditional patterns of male employment are among the primary causes of many men's problems in the new labour market.<sup>15</sup>

Similar arguments have been made about the high incidence of long-term unemployment among British men in regions where traditional male industries have collapsed. However, it has also been pointed out that structural changes in the British labour market present very real barriers to employment for some men, and simply blaming men for their 'inflexibility' is neither helpful nor necessarily accurate:

Unemployment is not just a consequence of a lack of basic or specific skills and a lack of 'flexibility' on the part of individuals. It is also the consequence of changing global and domestic markets, domestic economic policies, industrial and organizational restructuring and rampant ageism in the labour market. ... Many unemployed men are highly trained, skilled and experienced workers who are not to blame for the restructuring, downsizing or overall scaling-down of industries that have destroyed their jobs. The implication that they are not sufficiently 'employable' can be insulting.<sup>16</sup>

In view of the national scale and acute impact of economic restructuring in Russia, it would seem that similar issues might apply to understanding male unemployment in this context. Yet relatively little attention has been paid to exploring the broader issues behind male unemployment or to developing mechanisms to support men and to assist them in adapting to and reintegrating into new labour markets and employment structures. An interview conducted with key staff of a district employment centre in Kaluga region in 2002, for example, revealed that they too viewed men's 'inability' to adapt and 'failure' to cope positively with redundancy as the key to male unemployment:

Men are much more difficult [than women]. If they lose their job then psychologically they take it much harder. They find it much harder to go for some kind of retraining. That is, to change their profession. ... Also men, well, in the first place numerically there are far fewer of them registered [as unemployed] than women. For them it is a form of psychological stress, even the simple fact of declaring themselves unemployed. That's one thing. And so they try as hard as they can to get another job in their area of specialism.

Such explanations might perhaps be useful if they were used as a basis for exploring the intersection of gendered expectations regarding male roles and work-based identities, on the one hand, and men's experiences of and responses to unemployment, on the other. In the UK, projects specifically designed to support unemployed men have developed on a local basis in some areas, especially those experiencing severe de-industrialization. Here, practitioners have found that a gendered analysis of men's experiences is the key to the development of support structures and working methods that are both effective and accessible to men.<sup>17</sup> Ruxton, in particular, distinguishes between gender-blind policies and approaches 'which fail to make any distinction between the sexes, and thereby entrench existing biases' and gender-aware policies and approaches 'which recognise that men and women have differing and sometimes conflicting needs, interests and priorities', and he finds that the second are more likely to be effective.<sup>18</sup>

The Employment Centre in Kaluga region, however, like many UK job centres, had no special programmes for unemployed men. On the contrary, staff supported the views previously expressed by male respondents that any 'normal' man would find employment for himself one way or another:

If the circumstances are such that there is no work to be had here, well then of course a 'normal' man will travel if necessary to search and find work

there. ... Sometimes they are afraid of difficulties and give up in the face of them. But, well, those aren't 'normal' men. That means they are abnormal.

## Health

In Russia, health issues figure high on any list of male problems and the evidence of crisis here seems particularly compelling. Changes in male and female life expectancy over the reform period offer some of the most indisputable evidence that men have been less able than women to cope with post-Soviet change and the pressures and challenges it has brought. Whilst male life expectancy has fallen by some five years from 63.8 in the mid-1980s, to 59 in 2000, female life expectancy in the same period has fallen by just under two years from 74 to 72.2.<sup>19</sup> A review of the major causes of death show lifestyle-related illnesses and those linked to high levels of physical and psychological stress topping the list. Research has also shown that increased mortality rates are due primarily to deaths in the young and middle-aged population (25-64 years).<sup>20</sup> Cardio-vascular diseases are the biggest killers, especially of middle-aged men, while deaths from injury, accident and poisoning take second place, claiming some 300,000-400,000 lives each year.<sup>21</sup> More than 100,000 deaths annually are the result of suicide or murder,<sup>22</sup> with men over seven times more likely to commit suicide and six times more likely to be murdered than women.<sup>23</sup>

In the UK also, men's health is a cause for concern. While the picture here may be a muted version of that which has developed in Russia over the past two decades, the basic shape of the problem shows marked similarities. Heart disease is the most prevalent cause of death in men aged 35-74, while suicide, which is three times more common among young men than young women, accounts for 25 per cent of deaths among men aged 16-34.<sup>24</sup> In both countries, risk-taking behaviour, stress, heavy drinking and smoking, combined with poor diet, insufficient exercise and a reluctance to visit the doctor in response to early symptoms of physical or emotional problems, lie at the root of many cases of male ill-health and mortality.<sup>25</sup> This would therefore suggest that considerable progress could be made through targeted programmes and structures designed to provide information and support to men on health issues, to challenge stereotypical notions of appropriate male behaviour in this regard, and to empower men to take better care of their health.

As noted above with regard to employment issues, UK and international experience suggests that such programmes work best where they are 'gender aware', that is, where they are based on a careful analysis of men's experiences of and attitudes towards health issues combined with sensitivity to local culture and traditions.<sup>26</sup> In fact, employment and health issues are often closely linked, in both countries, and programmes of support in either area may well have positive repercussions in the other. In the UK,

Strong links have been shown to exist between poverty, unemployment and health, particularly amongst men, suggesting that issues of self-esteem, feelings of powerlessness and loss of control, as well as material deprivation may influence men's health. Indeed, one study has suggested that full-employment would save some 2,500 lives, of which 83 per cent would be male.<sup>27</sup>

In Russia, plummeting male life expectancy and serious health issues, particularly among men of working age, suggest that similar trends may be apparent.

Yet it is not only a lack of employment that can damage men's health. Ethnographic research among Russian men conducted in 2002-3 found many men responding to the loss of former employment through a combination of informal and formal work, often in semi-skilled or unskilled labour and frequently involving extremely long hours, often at multiple places of work or long distances from home.<sup>28</sup> Working at this kind of a pace is bound to take its toll on men, both physically and emotionally. Many men insisted that tireless striving was a marker of positive male identity and behaviour. Yet they also spoke of feelings of acute exhaustion and often shared concerns that if their health were to fail they would lose everything. The stressful nature of the work that many men were involved in, combined with their own desire constantly to try to do more, contributed to psychological as well as physical

tensions and in some cases the two might be mutually reinforcing. A self-employed man, in his early forties, interviewed in Kaluga region in 2002, said:

Sometimes as you are starting to fall asleep you get to thinking about all the stuff you have to do and this and that, and then you don't sleep half the night. And then in the morning you get up in just as terrible a state as if you had drunk yourself silly the night before. ... It would be great if there was some tablet you could take and not have to sleep at all and you wouldn't feel tired and work and work and work. I don't know. I don't know how to relax.

As some Russian media commentators have begun to point out, the causes of premature death and ill-health among Russian men may well be closely related to overwork and excessive stress as well as to unemployment or a tendency to seek relaxation in unhealthy activities:

Although the view that our 'Soviet' men don't like to work is bandied about a lot, I don't agree with it. There are plenty of hard-workers among us, it's just that, to be honest, we don't know how to work. We have got used to sweating it out to the point of exhaustion, often without much clear result, but with the highest possible input of effort. Is it surprising if we end up with back problems and hernias or keeling over before our time? And then of course I don't have to tell you how the average man cures his various aches and pains: in the *banya* [bath-house] with a stiff drink. And then after all of that, how could you not light up? Of course not expensive cigarettes like 'Parlament', but those stinking 'Primas'. And what is the point of doctors telling us blokes to be calm, not to rush around so much, to be sensible and to keep an even temper? How can you be 'sensible' with a family on your shoulders and when everyday you have to think about how to bring home a few extra pennies?[29](#)

In both Russia and the UK, advertisements for alcohol and cigarettes play strongly to a male audience and emphasize the imagined link between alcohol and tobacco consumption and strong masculine identities. In 2001 a new brand of cigarette appeared on the Russian market, called quite simply *Muzhik* ['bloke' or 'fellow']. Large hoardings around St. Petersburg carried advertisements for the brand with the slogan 'It's just a man thing'. In the summer of 2002 among the most common street hoardings advertising beer were those of Tolstyak beer, the slogan for which proclaimed, 'Freedom of choice for real men'. Such aggressive marketing of alcohol and cigarettes to men, which is strongly reminiscent of a long history of similar advertising campaigns by brands such as Marlboro or Castlemain XXXX in the UK, appears particularly anachronistic in a country struggling to cope with exceptionally elevated rates of male ill-health and premature death. As one newspaper article pointed out:

[A man] just wants to be himself, but the avalanche of advertising on the streets and on television, the pretty pictures in magazines literally cry out: a real man doesn't give a damn about anything or anyone, he drinks vodka and prefers to smoke the strongest brands of cigarette.[30](#)

Such advertising strategies clearly seek to cash in on widespread essentialist gender discourses that link alcohol consumption and other risk-taking behaviour to an image of strong, virile masculinity.

Legislation was introduced in Russia in January 2005 with the intention of limiting such advertising: advertisements for strong spirits were banned from television and street hoardings, while advertisements for beer have been restricted to night-time viewing and are banned from being placed in close proximity to certain educational, leisure and healthcare establishments. There are also restrictions on the use of images of people and animals in such advertisements, and on suggestions that the consumption of alcohol 'improves physical

or emotional wellbeing or quenches thirst'.<sup>31</sup> Yet by the summer of 2005 companies producing alcohol were clearly finding ways around these restrictions. In Altai region, for example, one of the most popular brands of vodka is called *Sibiryachka*, meaning 'Siberian girl', and carries on its label a particular image of a young woman. Unable any longer to advertise its vodka on street hoardings, the company in question began to produce sweets with the same image on their wrapper and to advertise them with the slogan 'A true Siberian man will never betray his Siberian girl'. Thus not only the advertising of spirits but its gender-specific implications remained intact.

### **The backlash to 'women's emancipation' and its repercussions for men**

In both Russia and the UK, the past two decades have seen considerable shifts in popular understandings of gender and attitudes towards the phenomenon. In both countries, for rather different reasons, one aspect of this has been the revival of 'macho' or 'laddish' cultures, which, while they appear superficially to empower men, may in fact harm their health, their relationships and their social and personal wellbeing. In the UK, this 'laddish' culture has been interpreted as a backlash in response both to changed socio-economic realities and to socio-cultural shifts in acceptable attitudes towards gender. British men have witnessed various challenges to male power in both the public and the private spheres, brought about, at least in part, by over 30 years of feminist research and activism. It has been suggested in some quarters that this has left men disempowered, struggling to maintain their self-respect and forced into 'unmanly' behaviour and roles which, it is argued, are ultimately unattractive to men and women alike.<sup>32</sup> Some men have responded by rejecting principles of gender equality and identifying strongly with essentialist understandings of gender difference. This has frequently manifested itself in the 'acting out' of some of the more negative attributes often defined as 'inherently' male: aggression, egocentrism, irresponsibility, and a taste for excess. A 1998 Home Office consultation document on supporting families states:

Increasingly boys and young men seem to have difficulty maturing into responsible citizens and fathers. Declining educational performance, loss of traditional 'male' jobs, the growth of 'laddish' anti-social culture, greater use of drugs, irresponsible teenage fatherhood, and the rising suicide rate may all show rising insecurity and uncertainty among young men. This has worrying implications for the stability of family life and wider society.<sup>33</sup>

Tempting as it may be simply to hold men responsible for such developments and to blame them for any negative consequences, if a backlash is taking place it is also fuelled by underlying expectations relating to male roles and attributes that remain widespread in both British and Russian societies. Studies of men and employment have found that a 'breadwinner' ethic continues to be central to British men's self-image,<sup>34</sup> while within the family 'cultural stereotypes of fathers as "providers" and "breadwinners" continue to exert a strong influence over men, women and children's attitudes to parenthood' and 'most unemployed fathers who do the childcare regard themselves as "failed providers" rather than successful child carers'.<sup>35</sup> The increasingly stark contradictions between persistent stereotypical expectations, on the one hand, and calls for men to adapt to new realities, on the other, undoubtedly contribute to a sense of frustration, anxiety and impotence for some men. Those who work closely with men have argued that such dual pressures on men have resulted in rising rates of depression and suicide, as well as violent and aggressive behaviour.<sup>36</sup>

In Russia, a key aspect of post-Soviet change, as it has been presented to the Russian population through the media and in the words of policy-makers and other public figures, is that Soviet notions of female 'emancipation' and gender equality should be replaced with a return to 'natural' differences and a reassertion of traditional gender roles. Critiques of the Soviet approach to gender equality, which had already begun to surface in the late 1960s, were re-emphasized through the Gorbachev reform period as the problematic consequences of women's 'over-emancipation' were voiced in countless letters to the Soviet press.<sup>37</sup>



Pronouncements about the need to 'return women to their purely womanly mission' focused primarily on a reversal of women's high levels of participation in public-sphere activities and yet were couched, at least initially, in a 'liberatory' rhetoric of increased freedom of choice and support for women's family roles.<sup>38</sup> Yet, like the 'laddish' backlash against gender equality in the UK, this reversal of Soviet 'emancipatory' policies and ideologies on gender has brought with it additional pressures for men and often unattainable expectations of 'appropriate male behaviour'.

Through the late Soviet period and into the post-Soviet 1990s, discussions of Russian men's so-called 'emasculatation' often focused on the idea that their self-esteem and sense of purpose had 'been damaged by the fact that many of the tasks which once fell to them [had] been taken over by the state or by women'.<sup>39</sup> For men, then, the changes occurring in the early 1990s seemed to imply a return to the roles of provider and protector which the Soviet system was alleged to have usurped. Moreover, as discussed above, these roles were increasingly described as the markers of 'real men' and healthy masculine identities. Yet the realities of the post-Soviet economy, as well as increasingly high rates of family breakdown and divorce, put such roles beyond the reach of many men, resulting in a recourse to more negative assertions of masculinity for some.

Thus, programmes and structures of support for men, if they are to be effective, need simultaneously to focus on those issues and themes that most frequently contribute to locally-grounded male experiences of 'crisis'; to base their methods and approaches on a gendered analysis of men's experiences and responses; to contribute to the construction of alternative models of acceptable male roles and behaviour; and to challenge rigid gender stereotypes as these are applied to both sexes.

### **Support for men in crisis: The example of the altai regional crisis centre for men**

Within Russia, one of the few organizations specifically aiming to develop a framework for the delivery of support services to men is the Altai Regional Crisis Centre for Men. When the Centre was first established in 1995 it was the only organization of its kind in the Russian Federation.<sup>40</sup> The Centre began from a focus on research and practically-oriented activity aiming to create an infrastructure of social support for men of working age. In fact, the original idea of establishing a crisis centre specifically for men of working age emerged from academic interest and research at the Department of Sociology, Psychology and Social Work at Altai State University.<sup>41</sup> Men in this age range were recognized as being at the highest risk of experiencing the kinds of employment and health crises outlined above. Yet this group of men also tends to be 'screened out' of Russian social service provision.<sup>42</sup> In part as a result of Soviet traditions, Russian government bodies and institutional frameworks for the provision of social services and the development of social policy have tended to list in their titles the socio-economic groups deemed most in need of protection and support. Throughout the Soviet era the most typically identified groups were women and children. However, as attention to social problems and economic insecurities increased through the late Soviet period, the categories multiplied to include young people, pensioners, families and the disabled. As pointed out by Professor S. Grigorenko, dean of the faculty of sociology at Altai State University and one of the original proponents of the Crisis Centre and its work, this meant that 'until recently men have been outside the field of vision of specialists working in the social sphere'.<sup>43</sup> Interviews and conversations conducted by Rebecca Kay in 2002 and 2005 with those responsible for the provision of social services to the population of Altai, often through family centres or territorially defined social service centres, confirm that this view persists even where specific socio-economic groups are no longer incorporated in service providers' titles. Women, young people, the disabled and pensioners continue to be mentioned most frequently as key clients or target groups for such centres' work.

The Altai Regional Crisis Centre for Men was established on an inter-institutional basis incorporating the faculty of sociology at Altai State University and the Altai Regional Administration Committees for Social Protection and Public Health. Its present status is that of a regional-government-funded social service provider. Since 2002 the Centre has also enjoyed federal status as a 'primary experimental establishment' under the auspices of the ministry for labour and social development, reflecting the emphasis that continues to be

placed on research and innovative and experimental practice within the Centre. The Centre's administrative staff point out that such federal recognition is extremely helpful in ensuring continuing support from the regional administration.

The Crisis Centre offers a model of innovative social service support, bringing together preventive and rehabilitative work. The principles defining its activities are humanity, targeted social support, local access, efficiency and non-bureaucratic approaches.<sup>44</sup> Within this framework a number of research and social projects have been initiated. The core service provided by the Centre is a counselling and consultancy service provided by a range of professionals including psychologists, psychotherapists, social workers, educational specialists, lawyers, and medical professionals specializing in men's sexual and reproductive health. In addition, a number of targeted social projects are run by the Centre's staff, including 'Social Work with Single Father Families', 'Psychological and Social Support for Men Who Have Suffered Severe Heart Attacks', 'Psychological and Social Work with Veterans of Armed Conflict', 'Divorce Counselling', a 24-hour crisis telephone hotline, 'Men Overcoming Violence', 'Self- and Mutual-Support Groups for Adolescents with Behavioural Problems', and 'Preparation of Youth for Family Life'.<sup>45</sup>

Many of these projects have developed as a result of continuing research at the Centre into local men's experiences of crisis aimed at identifying those areas where there is a particular need for intervention in the Altai region. Yet, once again, as the above list shows, many of these areas are also clearly of broader Transnational relevance. In this sense, the professional expertise, working methods and materials developed at the Centre may provide interesting models for international comparison and exchange.

### **Overcoming men's reluctance to accept help**

In all of its work the Centre has had to pay considerable attention to overcoming the psychological and cultural barriers that men experience in accessing and accepting support. Ideas about what it means to be a 'real man' make men reluctant to turn to such a centre for support, and necessitate an extremely active outreach approach in all the Centre's work. Many men, even (or perhaps especially) when they find themselves in extreme situations, avoid all forms of social support, including welfare services and benefit agencies. The observations of Crisis Centre staff suggest that this reluctance to seek help is the result of a combination of factors, including the gender bias of many support agencies; the negative experiences of many men in dealing with support agencies, which they feel undermine their dignity and may interfere in living, working or family arrangements that they have established; and men's own views of their roles as men, as husbands, and as fathers as being incompatible with a reliance on help and support from any quarter. On the one hand, these responses clearly resonate with studies that show a particular reluctance among men in many countries, including Russia and the UK, to admit a need for help and to seek support even when they are clearly struggling to cope with a set of circumstances.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, a tendency to avoid seeking external help and support among Russian men may well also be part of a broader, culturally-specific and non-gendered process of withdrawal from the state and a tendency to rely on personal resources and networks of friends and kin that has been noted in many post-socialist societies, including Russia.<sup>47</sup> As one single father, interviewed in 2002, who had been visiting the Altai Centre for several years put it:

I don't expect help from anyone. ... I always try to cope by myself. I'm not dependent on anyone and I don't want to stress anyone else by putting my problems on to their shoulders. My problems are my own problems and their problems are theirs. So I don't expect help from anyone, and in fact, nobody really helps us.

In order to combat such attitudes, the work of the Centre is based on an absolutely explicit gender analysis of the 'crises' men face and the responses they develop. Centre staff recognize that the idea that men must be strong, that they should not express their emotions freely or seek external support, contributes to some of the most extreme manifestations of

male crisis discussed earlier in this article. An alternative view of such attitudes as unhelpful is publicized by the Centre through its work with local media:

One of the specifics of the male psyche is that where women bend, men break. Women are helped to a considerable degree in 'resolving' problems by the fact that they are able simply to cry, to complain, to talk things through. Men bottle everything up inside themselves and as a result they have heart attacks and strokes or turn to the oldest of tranquillisers, alcohol.<sup>48</sup>

The Centre also actively seeks to avoid many of the more off-putting characteristics that have tended to be typical of Soviet and post-Soviet public institutions. The Centre's premises are freely accessible and both existing and potential new clients are encouraged either to drop in unannounced or to call ahead for a specific appointment. Staff are friendly and welcoming and formalities and paperwork are kept to a minimum. Clients are not obliged to divulge personal information about themselves and may use the Centre and its services on an anonymous basis if they wish.<sup>49</sup> The Centre is also willing to act as intermediary and to coordinate access to and support from a range of other local social service providers where appropriate.

### **Establishing a working relationship with male clients**

In its work with each client, the Centre places great emphasis on establishing a two-way relationship between the practitioner(s) and the client. This close relationship is designed to engender trust, to ensure that the support offered is carefully adapted to meet each man's needs, and to overcome some of the fears and reticence that men experience in accessing and accepting help. The first stage of this relationship is based on a conversation, usually by telephone, between a staff member and the client. The purpose of this conversation is, first, to collect primary social information about the client, and, second, to find out the reasons for his 'crisis'. The second stage of the 'Centre-client' relationship is contact between a specific practitioner and the client, usually on a face-to-face basis. At this stage the practitioner's approach is defined by the information that has been previously gathered and analysed. The practitioner is thus able to come to some conclusions about the nature of the client's problem, and together they can develop a plan for resolving the problem and providing necessary support.

The Centre offers five basic kinds of social support and the practitioner will direct the client towards those programmes that are most appropriate for him, depending on the sort of problems or crises he is experiencing. The basic forms of social support offered are:

- i. social-psychological support. This entails co-operation between the client, his family members and the Centre's social worker, psychologist and psychotherapist. Such support is designed to help men and their families understand and come to terms with the roots of a crisis and to identify the individual and shared resources they have available in order to develop an acceptable and workable solution. This may well involve confronting stereotypical attitudes towards and expectations of gender, rethinking the ways in which roles are divided and allocated within the family, or establishing new patterns of behaviour and relations among family members;
- ii. social-intermediary support, whereby the client is directed to and supported through his dealings with other relevant social and medical services and organizations. The Centre provides information and advice to men on their rights and facilitates access to the necessary professionals and services. This is complemented by the Centre's activities in providing training and methodological guides and raising awareness of men's issues among other support services and professionals. In this way the Centre seeks to combat the processes by which men are both 'screened out' and may 'screen themselves out' of such support structures;
- iii. social-medical support, characterized by a focus on preventive medicine and educational projects that seek to promote healthy lifestyle choices, including those relating to men's sexual and reproductive health;

- iv. social-juridical support, which includes social advocacy on behalf of a client in pursuit of his rights and entitlements, along with the provision of up-to-date information on relevant legislation.

Internal monitoring of the Centre's work has shown that in approximately 70 per cent of cases the Centre's specialists are presented with a complex set of problems and therefore clients are most often provided with a range of forms of help and support, including the involvement of experts from other services where necessary.

The third stage in the 'Centre-client' relationship focuses on the development of long-term structures of communication between the client and the practitioner. In this way the practitioner is able to provide continuing support and help to preserve the positive effects of their previous work with a client. These structures may include follow-up sessions at the Centre, home visits, or telephone consultations. A key feature of the Centre's activity is that it is the client who chooses when to terminate his relationship with the Centre, and the practitioner will maintain contact and support until that time.

### **Analysing and developing the centre's work**

Empirical research is conducted by the Centre as an integral part of its work and makes an important contribution to the development of the Centre's activities in crisis support and prevention. One of the purposes of this research is to establish the extent to which local men need the services offered by the Centre and to investigate whether or not the forms of social work and support currently available are appropriate to the specific experiences and living conditions of men in different parts of the region. Each year the Centre produces detailed annual reports showing the number of clients consulted and providing an analysis of the age groups, rural and urban residence, and the marital and employment status of clients, where this information is available. An analysis of these reports for the years 1995-2002 shows that over 14,000 individuals received help, support and advice from the Centre in its first seven years. There has also been a steady growth in the number of clients from one year to the next: the number of applications in 2002 was about three times higher than in 2000, for example. A similar situation is seen in relation to the pattern of growth in repeat applications by the Centre's clients during the period of analysis: here we see a steady growth over the years to a level of 68 per cent.

In addition to collecting such quantitative data regarding client numbers and socio-economic or demographic profile, clients are also regularly asked to participate in qualitative studies regarding the usefulness and effectiveness of the Centre, its projects and work. Once every six months, over a two-week period an anonymous questionnaire survey is conducted with all clients visiting the Centre. Clients are asked amongst other things to comment on the effectiveness of the Centre's work, their degree of satisfaction with the services provided, their intentions regarding further contact with the Centre, and referral of friends or relatives. About 70 per cent of clients involved in such studies have stated unequivocally that there is a clear need for the Centre's activities. Positive aspects indicated by clients have included the concern and thoughtfulness of the staff, sincere support and willingness to help, style of communication, high levels of professionalism, pleasant surroundings, a warm and confidential atmosphere, trainings and lectures, and techniques of individual and group work. Absolutely all the clients surveyed stated that both men and women need a Centre of this kind, as anyone may be in need of professional help and support at some point. This ties in closely with the definition of crisis adopted by the Centre itself and put forward in its information materials and bulletins: 'Any person can face life crises and problems. Any person needs solid family and societal support to realize their potential in life'.<sup>50</sup> Thus, while recognizing the importance of a gender-aware approach to dealing with men's experiences of crisis, the Centre deliberately avoids essentialist explanations of crisis as inherently male. It also strives to present crisis as a potential starting-point for positive change, rather than as an intractable problem. The Centre's motto is 'He who has never fallen has never got back up again'.

As well as providing feedback and evaluation of the Centre's existing work, research conducted with clients is also designed to reveal areas where support is particularly needed

and to aid in the development of new targeted projects and working methods, as appropriate. One of the aims of such research is to discover in which areas of their lives working-age men experience and are able to verbalize a sense of conflict between what they wish to achieve, or feel is expected of them, and what they are able to achieve in reality. The use of questions such as 'What in your life gives you a positive sense of energy and well-being?' and 'What is lacking from your life?' have been revealing in this sense. Although virtually all the life values indicated as possible answers to the first question were chosen by a high number of respondents, it is none the less possible to identify dominant elements in men's understandings of what gives life meaning. These include emotional well-being, love and understanding of a partner, friends or both, and a need to continue their family line through children and to fulfil the function of 'breadwinner', combined with professional satisfaction. The most common source of conflict in this sphere is seen in relation to fulfilment of the role of 'man as the breadwinner'. In terms of emotional comfort and professional satisfaction, one-third of those respondents who indicated that these were significant factors for them also indicated that they were not able to achieve them as they desired.

More than 40 per cent of men noted that stress is a regular phenomenon for them. The majority answered the question: 'How do you relieve stress as a rule?' in a traditional way: by spending time with (male) friends and, as a rule, drinking alcohol; spending time with my wife (partner); work; sports. Fifteen per cent of respondents prefer to allow a stressful situation simply to resolve itself over time, while only two per cent of men said that they would try to find a way out of stress by introspection.<sup>51</sup> In spite of being clients of the Crisis Centre themselves, none of the men who took part in these surveys said that they would seek help or support from professionals. This reluctance to seek professional help is clearly something that the Centre still has to work hard to overcome. The fact that many of the services offered appear at least to have a more practical orientation - for example, in providing information on rights or facilitating access to other services and benefits - is one way in which the Centre is able to make initial contact with clients who may in fact turn out to need psychological and emotional support above all.<sup>52</sup>

### **Consciousness-raising and campaigning for social change**

In some areas of the Centre's work, continuing contact with former clients, particularly where this has occurred within the context of a themed project, has led to the development of broader awareness-raising activities. This broader work has developed in recognition of the fact that many men's crises result from more than simply personal experiences or interpersonal relations. The Centre has identified certain key areas where wider socially- and culturally-embedded attitudes and practices reinforce a particular view of men's abilities or rigid expectations of male roles. These have been found to be unhelpful and to contribute significantly to crisis scenarios often presented by clients. This has been the case, for example, with the programme of work with single fathers. A broad set of campaigning and consciousness-raising activities has emerged from this project, leading to the development of a new programme entitled 'Responsible Fatherhood'. As a result Father's Day has been celebrated on a city-wide basis since 2002 as an annual event organized by the Crisis Centre in conjunction with a range of other administrative structures, schools, health clinics, social organizations and community-based initiatives. The programme has attracted considerable support from within the Regional Committee for Social Protection and this has allowed in subsequent years for the production of a range of colourful and informative leaflets and posters displayed and distributed at Father's Day events and through schools and clinics.

Another area of the Centre's work that has developed into prominent campaigning activities revolves round the theme of violence. This issue has also emerged particularly strongly in several of the Centre's projects, most notably those working with men who have participated in military action or with adolescents with behavioural problems. Within both these projects men are encouraged to take responsibility for their violent behaviour. Staff seek to help them analyse and understand the roots of their anger and offer training and support for the development of non-violent forms of behaviour and better interpersonal and communication skills. In 2002-3 the Centre embarked on a project entitled 'Men Overcoming Violence', aimed

primarily at raising public awareness of domestic violence issues. A range of leaflets and brochures was produced, explaining and debunking common myths about domestic violence, discussing the various manifestations of verbal, physical, sexual and economic violence, and encouraging men to scrutinize their own behaviour and relationships with both women and children and to eliminate forms of violence from their lives. On 10 December 2002, International Human Rights Day, a large public demonstration against violence was organized. Participants at the demonstration were asked to sign a petition against violence, including a request that a law be passed to combat and prevent domestic violence. This was sent to the regional governor's office and the regional council of people's deputies. Local media were invited to the event and various reports of the campaign appeared in the local press and broadcast media.<sup>53</sup> As a result of the raised profile of domestic violence the Centre's 24-hour crisis line recorded some 40 calls per day on this issue over the following weeks.

### **Current and future developments in the crisis centre's work**

The data gathered by the Crisis Centre, some of which are outlined above, provide evidence of a demand among local men for the services, and of an increasing level of awareness among the local population about the Centre and its activities. They also indicate the complexity of the problems addressed by the Centre's work. Using such empirical data in conjunction with their practical experience and working knowledge, staff of the Centre have sought to develop its work further through the creation of new projects and structures and the recruitment of new staff with expertise in those areas most commonly found pertinent to the crises presented by clients.

In 1996 the staff consisted of only one psychologist and one social worker. In 1997 three additional specialists were taken on as core staff: a lawyer, a doctor specializing in men's sexual and reproductive health, and a psychotherapist; and in 1999 an educational specialist joined the staff. Clients work most often with the social worker, the psychologist and psychotherapist, which indicates a consistent need for social-psychological support amongst men. There has also been a steady growth in the demand for the psychologist, the psychotherapist and the lawyer, particularly in post-divorce crises. In addition, in 2001 the Centre set up a 24-hour telephone crisis line. During an interview conducted in 2002, Lyubov' Skovoronskaya, the staff member responsible for the development of this hotline, explained its origins and functions as follows:

This was something where the demand just kind of arose. People began to phone us and ask for a telephone consultation. Then of course it would often work out that we'd say: 'Come in for a face-to-face session', but of course not every man will come for a face-to-face session, because they are trying, well, not to be too obvious about it. It's hard for them to come here. Its much simpler just to phone and so we set up this project.

As illustrated in this statement, the vast majority of developments in the Centre's staffing, projects and structures are motivated primarily by an analysis of clients' needs and by a concern to reach men who might otherwise remain isolated and unable to gain access to support. This has also been reflected in one of the most recent developments in the Centre's structure: the opening of three district branches in outlying areas of Altai region. This decision was taken primarily as a result of continuing analysis of clients' place of residence, which showed consistently that the majority of clients live in the region's capital city, Barnaul. Rural men from villages located close to the city and men living in other towns of the region have been much less likely to use the Centre's services. Monitoring of the Centre's client base since the district branches were opened has indicated that this development has significantly raised the numbers of such men reached.<sup>54</sup>

This ethos ensures that many of the Centre's projects and working methods are adapted to deal with the specific needs of its local setting and client base: the particular reluctance of Russian men to seek help or to engage with social service providers; the geographical size of Altai region and relatively high proportion of its population living in far-flung villages and

small towns; the need for flexible support and an ability to deal with a complex combination of social, economic and personal concerns as well as health issues, to name but a few. Yet, as we saw in the first part of this article, while such needs are certainly shaped by the specific situation that has developed in the region and in the wider Russian Federation over the past 10-15 years, they also share much in common with the experiences of men in other countries and societies.

### **Conclusions: International developments and the altai regional crisis centre for men as a model of good practice**

In Russia and in the UK there is clear evidence of a need for a combination of continuing research and the strengthening and further development of practical initiatives and projects aimed at delivering effective support services to men. Understanding not only of the challenges faced by men, but also of their responses to these challenges, is crucial to the development of services that will be acceptable and attractive to male users. Therefore, a gender-based analysis of men's experiences of situations of crisis and responses to them is needed, and this will certainly be affected by locally defined issues of economic, cultural, social and political context. None the less, there is evidence of common features, both in understanding and experiences of male 'crisis' and in the development of successful initiatives in Russia and in the UK.<sup>55</sup> This suggests that a sharing of research findings and practical experience may be both useful and supportive for all involved. For example, while UK projects tend to be issue-led,<sup>56</sup> the Altai Crisis Centre has adopted a holistic approach, which brings together diverse projects and general services under a single umbrella. A dialogue about the respective advantages and disadvantages of these different approaches might be fruitful. In addition the Altai Centre has produced a range of information brochures, leaflets and posters, published methodological guides and developed working methods that might be of interest to practitioners from other localities, countries and regions.<sup>57</sup>

Clearly, projects and initiatives designed to work with and support men need to be developed and established in ways that are complementary to, rather than in competition with, projects supporting women. None the less, there is a need for increased recognition of the fact that excluding men and men's issues from programmes seeking to achieve gender equality is counterproductive. In the UK, for example, attempts to develop work with male abusers and perpetrators of domestic violence have come under particular attack, both because of fears that they might divert funds from the more 'deserving' cause of work supporting the victims of violence and abuse, and quite simply because they are viewed as 'working with the enemy'. However, as practitioners involved in pioneering projects have pointed out, working exclusively with victims is

[a] sticking plaster solution to the problem of domestic violence. ... Assisting the partner of a violent man might help that specific woman but does nothing for any of the abuser's future partners or their children ... The costs of domestic violence to society are so enormous and varied that helping to change the perpetrators themselves is the only realistic way forward.<sup>58</sup>

Women and children have much to gain, both directly and indirectly, from improvements in men's health, or a reduction in anti-social and violent behaviour, as well as from a lasting re-evaluation and reworking of gender stereotypes that can be achieved only if men's perspectives and concerns are also taken into account. In both Russia and the UK, tentative steps are being taken towards developing local initiatives and broader theoretical, practical and institutional frameworks for the provision of support services to men. While this work is at a relatively early stage in both countries, examples of good practice are developing and locally based findings and experiences might usefully be shared, always bearing in mind the importance of respect for - and the need to adapt to - different socio-economic, cultural and political contexts.

### **Notes**

1. Michael Kimmel, 'The Contemporary "Crisis" of Masculinity in Historical Perspective', in Harry Brod (ed.), *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1987), pp.121-54; Robert Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000); M. O'Donnell and S. Sharpe, *Uncertain Masculinities: Youth, Ethnicity and Class in Contemporary Britain* (London: Routledge, 2000); Sandy Ruxton (ed.), *Gender Equality and Men: Learning from Practice* (Oxford: Oxfam GB, 2004).
2. See Moya Flynn and Jonathan Oldfield's introduction to this collection for a more detailed discussion of the concept of Transnationalism and its relevance to and role in the discussions of this series of seminars.
3. For a full discussion of this project and its findings see Rebecca Kay, *Men in Contemporary Russia: The Fallen Heroes of Post-Soviet Change?* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). For details of earlier research with women, some of the data from which is drawn on in this article, see Rebecca Kay, *Russian Women and their Organizations: Gender, Discrimination and Grassroots Women's Organizations 1991-96* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).
4. Sandy Ruxton, 'Introduction', in Ruxton (ed.), *Gender Equality and Men*, p.1.
5. Sandy Ruxton, *Men, Masculinities and Poverty in the UK* (Oxford: Oxfam, 2002); Helen Buhaenko, Vikki Butler, Charlotte Flower and Sue Smith, *What Men and Women Want: A Practical Guide to Gender and Participation* (Oxford: Oxfam GB, 2004).
6. Kimmel, 'The Contemporary "Crisis" of Masculinity'; Veronica McGivney, *Excluded Men: Men Who are Missing from Education and Training* (Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, 1999); Julia Hartley-Brewer, "'Laddish Ideal" Helps Drive Men to Suicide as More Women Turn to Drink', *The Guardian*, 19 April 2000, p.9; Ruxton, *Men, Masculinities and Poverty*.
7. Andrew Buncombe and Sheldon Miller, 'Hopes Rise in Village Where Life is the Pits', *The Independent*, 2 Dec. 1998, p.4; Pete Alcock, Christine Beatty, Stephen Fothergill, Rob Macmillan and Sue Yeandle, *Work to Welfare: How Men Became Detached from the Labour Force* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
8. Ruxton, *Men, Masculinities and Poverty*, p.10.
9. Sue Yeandle, 'The International Context', in Alcock et al., *Work to Welfare*, pp.25-56 (p.55).
10. Melissa Benn, 'The Future is Female', *The Guardian Saturday Review*, 8 Aug. 1998, pp.1-2.
11. Ruxton, *Men, Masculinities and Poverty*, p.35.
12. Kay, *Men in Contemporary Russia*.
13. Sarah Ashwin and Tatyana Lytkina, 'Men in Crisis in Russia: The Role of Domestic Marginalization', *Gender and Society*, Vol.18, No.2 (2004), pp.189-206.
14. Kay, *Russian Women and their Organizations*, pp.47-50; Kay, *Men in Contemporary Russia*.
15. Sarah Ashwin, 'Introduction: Gender, State and Society in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia', in Sarah Ashwin (ed.), *Gender, State and Society in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp.1-29 (pp.20-21); Marina Kiblitckaya "'Once We Were Kings": Male Experiences of Loss of Status at Work in Post-Communist Russia', in Ashwin (ed.), *Gender, State and Society*, pp.90-104 (pp.96-103); Elena Meshcherkina, 'Bytie muzhskogo soznaniya:



opyt rekonstruktsii maskulinnoi identichnosti srednogo i rabocheho klassa', in Sergei Ushakin (ed.), *O Muzhe(N)stvennosti* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2002), pp.268-87; Ol'ga Shchevchenko, "'Eсли ty takoi umnyi, to pochemu takoi bednyi?'" Utverzhdaya muzhestvennost' tekhnicheskoi intelligentsii', in Ushakin (ed.), *O Muzhe(N)stvennosti*, pp.288-302.

16. McGivney, *Excluded Men*.

17. Sue Smith, 'Tackling Male Exclusion in Post-Industrialised Settings: Lessons from the UK', in Caroline Sweetman (ed.), *Beyond Rhetoric: Men's Involvement in Gender and Development Policy and Practice* (Oxford: Oxfam GB, 2001), pp.56-8; Ruxton, *Men, Masculinities and Poverty*.

18. Ruxton, *Men, Masculinities and Poverty*, p.17.

19. F.C. Notzon, Y.M. Komarov, S.P. Ermakov et al., 'Vital and Health Statistics: Russian Federation and United States, Selected Years 1985-2000 with an Overview of Russian Mortality in the 1990s', *National Centre for Health Statistics. Vital Health Statistics, Series 5, No. 11* (2003), p.47.

20. Ibid., p.10.

21. Nikolai Gerasimenko, 'Pochemu my tak malo zhivem?', *Moskovskii komsomolets na Altae*, 9-16 Aug. 2001, p.12.

22. Ibid.

23. Notzon et al., 'Vital and Health Statistics: Russian Federation and United States', pp.50-51.

24. Office for National Statistics, *Social Focus on Men* (London: The Stationery Office, 2001).

25. Nina Fedorova and Eduard Fomin, 'The Quality of Life and Health', *Idaentutkimus: The Finnish Review of East European Studies*, Vol.7, No.2 (2000), pp.23-34 (p.27); Ruxton, *Men, Masculinities and Poverty*, pp.48-9.

26. Ruxton, *Men, Masculinities and Poverty*; Gaetane Le Grange, 'Taking the Bull by the Horns: Working with Young Men on HIV/AIDS in South Africa', in Sandy Ruxton (ed.), *Gender Equality and Men*, pp.101-12.

27. Richard Mitchell, Mary Shaw and Danny Dorling, *Inequalities in Life and Death: What if Britain Were More Equal?* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2000).

28. Kay, *Men in Contemporary Russia*.

29. Vladimir Kuzin, 'Ne umirajte, muzhiki, ne umirajte! ... ', *Sel'skaya nov'*, 2003, No.11, p.11.

30. Tatyana Polyakova, "I snova o tom, chto muzhchin nado berech", *Nadezhda plyus*, 21 Jan. 1999, p.1.

31. Mikhail Vorobyov, 'Beer Ads are Going into the Night', *Vremya novostei*, 2 Aug. 2004, p.2, translated in *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Vol.56, No.31 (2004).

32. India Knight, 'The Price of Girl Power', *The Sunday Times*, 10 Sept. 2000, p.3.

33. Home Office, 'Supporting Families: A Consultation Document' (1998), cited in Ruxton, *Men, Masculinities and Poverty*, p.5.

34. Ruxton, *Men, Masculinities and Poverty*, pp.79-82.
35. Charlie Lewis, *A Man's Place in the Home: Fathers and Families in the UK*, Foundations 440 (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2000), at <[www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/foundations/440.htm](http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/foundations/440.htm)>, accessed 20 June 2000.
36. Hartley-Brewer, "Laddish Ideal"; Ruxton, *Men, Masculinities and Poverty*, p.69.
37. James Riordan and Susan Bridger, *Dear Comrade Editor: Readers' Letters to the Soviet Press under Perestroika* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992).
38. Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika. New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (London: Fontana, 1988), p.117.
39. Lynne Attwood, *The New Soviet Man and Woman: Sex-role Socialization in the USSR* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), p.167.
40. More recently a handful of similar projects have been set up in cities as diverse as St. Petersburg, Murmansk in the Far North and Petrozavodsk in the Republic of Karelia.
41. For a more detailed description of the origins and development of the Crisis Centre see Kay, *Men in Contemporary Russia*.
42. The term 'screening out' has been used in analyses of UK social service provision, particularly family services, where practitioners and policies are found to focus primarily on women's roles and needs, thus making men's contributions and requirements invisible: see Jeanette Edwards, 'Screening Out Men or "Has Mum Changed her Washing Powder Recently"', in Jennie Popay, Jeff Hearn and Jeanette Edwards (eds.), *Men, Gender Divisions and Welfare* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp.259-86.
43. Maksim Kostenko, '... Tol'ko dlya muzhchin!', *Altaiskaya Pravda*, 7 Oct. 1997, p.7.
44. 'My rabotaem ... ', *Kraevoi krizisnyi tsentr dlya muzhchin: Vestnik*, 2001, No.10 (Oct.), pp.2-4 (p.2).
45. Details of the Crisis Centre's current projects are regularly updated and made available on its website: <<http://www.amitel.ru/criscentr>>.
46. Maksim Kostenko, *Sotsial'naya rabota s muzhchinami* (Barnaul: publisher unidentified, 2003), pp.68-71; Ruxton (ed.), *Gender Equality and Men*, pp.10, 211.
47. Moya Flynn, *Migrant Resettlement in the Russian Federation: Reconstructing Homes and Homelands* (London: Anthem, 2004), p.130.
48. 'Oni ne gnutsya, oni lomayutsya', *Vechernyi Barnaul*, 24 Feb. 2001, p.4.
49. The 24-hour crisis line offers an opportunity for even more anonymous consultations with counsellors and specialists and was established in response to the Centre's findings that some groups of men were reluctant to come to the Centre at all for any kind of face-to-face interaction.
50. 'My rabotaem ... ', p.2.
51. Research of this nature is conducted regularly by Centre staff. Findings are used as a form of internal monitoring and as a knowledge base from which to develop the Centre's work further. In some cases findings are published externally: see for example Kostenko, *Sotsial'naya rabota s muzhchinami*; however, this is not always the case.

52. Previous research with Russian grassroots women's organizations has suggested that this phenomenon may not only be based on understandings and identities of gender, but may also have more general social and cultural roots in post-Soviet Russia. Women involved in such groups in the mid-1990s frequently stressed their desire for pragmatic support and information and described emotional issues, introspection and consciousness-raising activities as something that only more affluent western women would have time for: see Kay, *Russian Women and their Organizations*, p.119.

53. Ol'ga Pol'shchikova, "Muzhskoi razgovor" - protiv nasiliya', *Altaiskaya pravda*, 6 March 2003, p.9; Ol'ga Pol'shchikova, 'Vmeste s batyushkoi i uchastkovym', *Altaiskaya pravda*, 29 May 2003, p.5.

54. In 2001, prior to the opening of the first provincial branch, 371 of the Centre's 2,476 clients lived in provincial towns and 223 in villages. In 2002, with the opening of the first branch, of the total 6,662 clients served by all branches and departments of the Centre, 799 were from provincial towns and 533 from villages. The opening of two more branches in 2003 saw the numbers of provincial men using the Centre's services rise to 2,791, with 598 rural men also amongst its 9,967 clients: see <<http://www.amitel.ru/□criscentr/Obrashen.htm>> (accessed 17 Nov. 2005).

55. See Ruxton, *Men, Masculinities and Poverty*, for an overview of a range of locally based UK projects and initiative set up to support men in relation to a variety of specific issues.

56. Ruxton, *Men, Masculinities and Poverty*.

57. In 2004-05 Oxfam UK's 'Gender Equality and Men' project, for example, was particularly concerned to gather working materials and practical resources from projects working with men. This was undertaken with a view to producing a central resource of practical tools and guidance on male involvement programming in order to convert theoretical concepts and local insight and experience into practical programme strategies at a wider international level: personal communication with Jake Grout-Smith, Gender Consultant and Programme and Policy Researcher, Gender Equity and Men Policy Department, Oxfam GB.

58. Amelia Hill, 'When It's Not Just Women Who are Victims', *The Observer*, 7 Dec. 2003, p.16.