



# OPEN WORLD PROGRAM

## HOSTING THEMES 2023

### Armenia

#### **Members of Newly Formed LGBT Organizations** – February 1

There are several new LGBTI+ NGOs recently established in Armenia and conducting active works in the community. However, many of them lack professionalism, skills, and knowledge about NGO operations, and specifically about balancing human rights activism and safety of their members. The program will give them an opportunity to learn operational nuances from U.S. NGOs and make connections with counterparts for future cooperation. The participants will benefit greatly from the experience as there are not many local NGOs working in the field that would be able to mentor and/or support the newly established organizations. Potential candidates are the founders and active members of the new NGOs.

#### **Young Professional Women from Local Governments** – March 8

Women are becoming more prominent in national and Yerevan city politics, but they still lack the skills, experience, and courage to be politically active in the regions. Social stigma, family obligations, and traditional views preventing women from entering politics is more present in the regions than in Yerevan. The program will empower current and prospective women politicians from the regions to be more active, engaged, and ready to take on leadership roles. They will learn best practices from their US counterparts, establish ties, and become stronger voices in their communities. Potential candidates are current and future city council members from the regions.

#### **Technology and the Rule of Law** – September 27

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the glaring need for the Armenian judicial system to possess and utilize alternative operational tools to implement justice – particularly electronic filing and electronic case management processes. Without these electronic tools, Armenian judges, lawyers, and ordinary citizens have to spend significantly more time in person-to-person encounters and have to produce an enormous amount of paperwork. Members of the Armenian judiciary have recognized the need for innovative and proactive digital solutions to solve this problem. Many countries, including the United States in both its federal and state court systems, have already started using electronic filing systems, meaning that physical documents need not pass across physical desks, while saving time and increasing efficiency. Under this program, the Armenian judiciary will study the best practices of e-justice, electronic filing, and electronic case management that have been tried and proven in U.S. jurisdictions. Participants will also study recent legislative changes enacted in the United States that allow for innovative judicial proceedings to minimize the risks presented by transmissible diseases like COVID-19. Participants in this program will return to Armenia armed with solutions to make the Armenian justice system more responsive to future epidemiological crises through technology and more flexible rules and regulations.

emerging leaders selected to go would get first-hand exposure of how local politics works in the United States, how to develop an adaptive strategic framework, to expand the network, to strengthen the institutional capacity, to incorporate an issue-based approach in their planning, and to understand and exercise diverse engagement types for influence and impact. It would be a valuable exposure to issues that started at the local level by citizens or local interest groups and have made it all the way to the state and federal level thanks to strategic collaboration among local actors. This project will examine the emergence and expansion of young influencers in the United States that impact social change, the relationship they cultivate with various stakeholders, and the paths that take them to leadership roles in politics, business, and other spheres of life. Meetings, site visits, and workshops will explore best practices in fostering alliances, leadership development, strategic planning, social entrepreneurship, business innovation, and advocacy, capitalizing on technology and social media, public outreach, and engaging volunteer networks. The end goal would be to equip a group of Armenian emerging voices with new ideas based on their observations and discussions that would help them engage with local politics and develop innovative and practical plans and strategic frameworks to reinforce their engagement and to create meaningful impact in their communities using both digital and non-digital environments. The program would also enable young people to develop professional contacts in the United States, which could provide fruitful partnerships in the future.

## Azerbaijan

### **Coordinated Approaches for Better Public Health Outcomes** – January 18

The COVID-19 pandemic shined a spotlight on Azerbaijan's public health shortcomings. Local partner organizations assessed their response to the emergency and identified a need for significant improvement in this critical area. This program would engage doctors, nurses, and officials from the Ministry of Health and associated agencies, exposing them to American practices in large-scale disease prevention. Participants will gain an understanding of techniques for stopping the spread of infectious disease and managing environmental hazards that threaten public health.

### **Youth Leaders in Civic Engagement and Governance** – February 22

The program will focus on building leadership and networking skills for youth working at the intersection of civil society and government. Participants will comprise of young leaders, activists, and influencers who work in politics, governance, NGOs, community groups, and academia. This program will showcase U.S. models of engaging youth populations to promote public dialogue and strengthen civil society, highlighting best practices in fostering alliances, strategic planning, advocacy, use of technology and social media, public outreach, and engaging volunteer networks.

### **Strengthening Political Think Tanks** – February 22

Building on 2022's highly successful Think Tank program, this iteration will contribute to building the capacity of local organizations working on political analysis. Participants will learn the best practices U.S. think tanks deploy to raise funds and manage organizations, and how to work with the public and craft messaging for a general audience. Participating analysts will acquire a heightened understanding of how to effectively cooperate with different actors of civil society and maximize their ability to influence the government and the public.

### **Gender-Related Activism** – April 5

Promoting women's rights and female empowerment is a top-line goal and increasingly high-profile in Azerbaijan. This program, which would also address issues related to and engage activists from the LGBTQI space, would enable stakeholder groups to learn from practices similar organizations in the United States utilize to draw attention to their issues, gain public understanding, and encourage legislative reform.

### **Community Sports as a Tool for Social Change in the U.S.** – April 5

The program will introduce participants to how U.S. communities use extracurricular youth programming in the areas of art and sports to improve social cohesion and engagement at the local level. The program will include youth leaders in the regions who are actively using various aspects of sports/engaged in sports management in their communities. They will explore community sports programs aimed at empowering women and girls as well as removing the barriers and expanding opportunities for people with disabilities to engage in sports. Participants will gain exposure to community sports programs aimed at empowering women and girls, and such arts-connected platforms as dance and theater that confront social issues connected with such themes as ethnic diversity, sexual orientation, and economic stratification. The program will also explore such practical themes as establishing and administering arts and sports programs, fundraising, and sustainability.

### **Providing Social Services to Vulnerable Children** – May 3

The program will engage workers from government entities, local NGOs, and shelters that work with children, sharing U.S. models for confronting such child-welfare issues as maltreatment, abuse, and pediatric exposure to trauma. The participants will meet with American subject stakeholders to enhance their problem-solving skills and help establish peer-group networks.

### **Public Water Resource Management** – October 4

The program aims to bring a range of water experts to the United States to learn more about inter-agency and inter-state/-nation coordination on water issues. Access to water and consequent conflict between national/regional governments, private/public sector bodies, and industrial groupings is an increasingly

salient issue in Azerbaijan. Understanding how American states and municipalities manage the conflict will be highly valuable in contemporary Azerbaijan. The program would aim to assist professionals from the Ecology Ministry and independent water experts to learn the U.S. best practices in such areas as addressing inter-agency coordination, introducing efficient irrigation and water supply systems, rehabilitation of existing drinking water supply infrastructure and designing and executing other water management reform programs.

## Estonia

### **Transparency in Governance** – September 20

One priority of the U.S. Mission's work in Estonia is to support our Estonian colleagues as they work to improve transparency on their governance. The Estonian government has faced criticism from the public for not having clear rules about lobbying and identifying conflict of interest and improper use of influence. An Open World delegation in this theme would focus on best practices to ensure transparency in governance and efforts that are made to limit leaders from legislating and governing based on personal interest, be they actual or perceived.

### **Municipal Leadership and Community Engagement** – September 20

This program for municipal leaders would focus on effective public administration, sustainability and community engagement. Our Estonian and American communities could learn from one another as to best practices to effectively lead a community and include all stakeholders in satisfactory community life. Such a program would include discussions on how to build a strong and successful community, how to best use resources in this time of drastic climate change, and how to better and more openly serve the citizenry.

## Georgia

### **Youth Engagement – February 1**

Young people (10-29 years old) represent approximately 25% of the population of Georgia. These young people face difficulties in education, employment, inclusion and healthcare. They also face problems with housing, finance and transportation and being able to achieve autonomy due to not having sufficient resources to manage their own lives, fully participate in society and make independent decisions. Georgia suffers from high youth unemployment, significant poverty among young people, and the significant consumption of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs. This Open World program would feature how communities work to engage the young in society and provide meaningful options for young people to gain independence and live autonomously in a constructive way.

### **Inclusivity – February 1**

The landscape of Georgian social norms and culture has been changing quickly, and COIL has identified the support of organizations promoting inclusivity and societal tolerance. The five-member Georgian delegation will take part in a schedule of activities and discussions to improve morale and share best practices among prominent figures with civic organizations advocating for the greater acceptance and support of a variety of marginalized social groups including traditionally underrepresented sexual, ethnic, and ability groups. The program seeks to demonstrate the value of diversity, and highlight the constructive nature of collaboration and cooperation within non-governmental organizations in order to build a more inclusive civil society, as well as expose members to US-based groups that have been successful in advocating for inclusivity initiatives within the United States.

### **NGO Management – May 3**

Georgia has over 16,000 registered non-governmental organizations (NGO) – a very high rate per-capita. Despite a highly saturated market, overall capacity of the NGO sector is strikingly substandard. Recent polling done by the Caucasian Research Resource Center (CRRC) showed that only 28% of respondents trust NGOs. When compared to other Georgian institutions this number is very low. Recognizing the need of a strong civil society in Georgia for ensuring government transparency and accountability, this Open World program will provide insight as to building the capacities of Georgian NGOs, turning them into the credible and well-rounded organization as and impactful in their fields. Programming would cover a wide variety of topics, including: the core concepts and values of a non-governmental organization; organizational strategic planning; project cycle management; fundraising and sustainability; PR and social marketing; financial management; leading and managing people; and carrying out advocacy campaigns.

### **High School Administration/Counseling – May 3**

Quality education is critical for the development of both individuals and societies, helping to pave the way for a successful and productive future. Despite significant achievements in recent years, the Georgian education system continues to face many challenges. Georgia's expenditure on education is lower than that of other countries with the same GDP per capita. The low quality of education is a major challenge for children of Georgia. Georgian students underperform in International Student Assessments, and about two thirds of 15-year old students in Georgia do not meet baseline standards in reading, science and mathematics. Poor student performance can also be seen in the high dropout rate from secondary education and students' difficulties to meet the demands of the labor market later on. The quality of education is especially undermined by the low qualification of teachers and the ineffective system of teacher deployment and management. The Open World program in this theme will demonstrate how effective high schools are managed and how children/young adults are counseled about the educational and professional choices that a good reeducation avails.

### **Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development – June 14**

The main goals of the Projects Management Department of VETCI is the resocialization and rehabilitation of prisoners through vocational education and training, as well as implementation of business and entrepreneurship projects for the purpose of increased employment for inmates and priorees that are released. Projects underway: include a snail farm, a bakery, greenhouses, strawberry,

raspberry, and vegetable production, and the marketing of handmade crafts. VETCI is looking to improve a number of awareness raising projects in all prisons on taxation, and the development of small business management and entrepreneurial skills among inmates. This program will be aimed at providing new skills for prison advocates and trainers and those involved in the work of VETCI, which will positively affect the quality of the implementation of ongoing and new projects.

### **Best Practices in the Publishing Industry** – September 6

The publishing industry is a complex combination of commerce and culture. The Georgian media market, like any other small one, typically faces a number of obstacles. The small number of readers is one primary problem. Georgian readers mostly read classics (western canon) and aren't prone to discover a lot of contemporary literature. Publishers still follow the post-soviet inertia and have not met modern standards, so the lack of expertise among publishers is a huge obstacle. There is no relevant educational institution which trains professional publishers and editors for this profession. Georgian publishers do not utilize the concept of literary agents which is a huge drawback for the development of the Georgian publishing industry. Their recent participation in international fairs and festivals (mostly in European countries) showed how beneficial the international experience is and helps to expand networks. The U.S. market and industry is still distant and unfamiliar for Georgian publishers and an Open World program can provide new perspectives and expertise in the following areas: publishing, editing, copyright and rights selling, marketing, book selling, book design, and book launch/book events management. Georgian publishers will benefit from visiting the large, medium and small publishing houses in U.S. to be introduced to the specifics of their work, best modern practices for the publishing industry, to expand networks for future collaboration, to get to know strategies for managing best sellers, and have a chance to share Georgian publishing culture. Building a cadre of literary agents is a long-term plan for Georgia, so visiting literary agencies and the universities of literary agents will lay a foundation for future educational prospects in this field. Including bookstores in this program will diversify the scope to book distribution, marketing, pricing, and trading.

### **Journalism: Open-Source Investigative Journalism** – September 6

At first glance, Georgia seems to have a thriving and pluralistic media landscape. However, a closer look reveals a lot of underlying problems when it comes to true press freedom, and things are getting worse, not better. A lot of media outlets depend on outside financial aid and public distrust in the media is high. Next to fake-news-campaigns orchestrated by Russia, especially the influence of financial aid from powerful oligarchs, play a big role in shaping the media landscape of Georgia. This influence basically destroys independent reporting and objective journalism. The Open World program is aimed at showing promising independent journalists proper investigative methods, neutrality in reporting and how to effectively use open sources to provide strong and fact-based articles and other contributions through media outlets in all forms.

### **Rule of Law: The U.S. Judicial System** – September 27

This program examines the U.S. commitment to the promotion of transparency, ethics, and judicial independence in a democracy. Meetings and site visits will highlight the judiciary's role in preserving democratic practices such as due process, trial by jury, the right to representation and a fair trial, the role of the public defender, the appeals process, judicial appointments/elections, and governmental accountability. Participants will learn about federal and state judicial systems under the U.S. model of federalism. In examining the workings of an independent judiciary in criminal and civil proceedings, the participants will observe trials and court procedures, meet with judges, prosecutors, public defenders, local law schools and other relevant agencies.

### **Volunteerism and Civic Action** – October 11

The U.S. experience with volunteerism can provide an excellent example for the National Agency for Crime Prevention, Non-Custodial Sentences and Probation and for the Resocialization and Rehabilitation Department of Convicts and Former Prisoners, and the Juvenile Referral Center. Introduction to best practices for supporting, training and encouraging volunteerism will improve the experience and engagement of volunteers in the organization of projects and events aimed to support the resocialization and rehabilitation of these agencies' beneficiaries, and thus foster wider community engagement and the

strengthening public security. Familiarization with successful recruitment and management of volunteers of different profession to implement and support tailored professional orientation/development programs will be an important value for the successful reintegration of these entities' beneficiaries in society.



## Hungary

### **NGO Management and Engagement with Local and National Governments – October 11**

This group of five Hungarian civil society representatives will seek to explore connections to counterparts and local partners in the United States. In addition to general themes and content focusing on civil society, the group will have a special interest in NGO management and engagement with local and national governments, looking in particular to learn lessons that can be applied upon to their return to their home country of approx. 10 million. Civil society is not particularly strong and well-developed in Hungary; civil society representatives face multiple challenges getting their messages out and managing their organizations with limited personnel and financial resources. Exploring potential avenues of cooperation between civil society and the central government and local government partners will also be of interest to the group.

## Kazakhstan

### **Data-Driven Drug Prevention Policy in Public Health – January 18**

This program will examine ways to advance and evaluate decision-making actions to address drug misuse, abuse, and overdose. Participants will learn how to 1) improve data collection and analysis around drug misuse, abuse, and overdose; 2) develop strategies that impact behaviors driving drug dependence and abuse; and 3) work with communities to develop more comprehensive drug prevention programs. Policymakers will be exposed to the evidence-based drug prevention in schools, use of the mass media for information campaigns targeting audience and medicine-evidence treatment practices.

### **Law Enforcement and Social Services Response to Domestic Violence – April 5**

Domestic violence in the Kazakhstan is a major impediment to gender equality, women's economic empowerment, child welfare, and other critical public health and safety issues. It has also been a challenging issue for law enforcement agencies and NGOs to address. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has repeatedly raised his concerns about how domestic violence is addressed in Kazakhstan, calling for tougher measures against perpetrators. While there is a law on prevention of domestic violence, there is no defined criminal offence, and the crime is dealt with primarily by administrative law, which carries lesser penalties. However, civil society and academics report the imposition of administrative penalties amounts to a system of impunity. The IVLP will expose participants to alternative criminal processes; social- service responses to victims' needs; and the impact on society at large of children raised in an abusive home.

### **Multimedia Approaches to Civic and Political Activism – September 6**

In the wake of Kazakhstan's January 2022 political unrest and President Tokayev's recommitment to a path of gradual political and economic reforms, the Kazakhstani public has arguably become more interested in the country's political processes, and the space for public discussion and activism has somewhat expanded. Due to continuing restrictions on the operations of NGOs and in-person rallies, however, much of this discussion and activism takes place online, where a small number of social-media influencers use their platforms to draw attention to issues of public concern. This project will expose Kazakhstani content makers, journalists, and activists to multimedia civic activism strategies, including new ideas for engaging target audiences on human rights, anti-corruption, and political change.

### **Improving the Investment Climate: Strengthening Mechanisms to Resolve Commercial Disputes – November 29**

This program will examine alternative dispute resolutions models, approaches, and best approaches in the U.S. The lack of transparent and effective mechanisms to resolve tax, investment, and commercial disputes has been identified by the Government of Kazakhstan, the Supreme Court, and the private sector as a key constraint to expanding foreign investment. In fact, Kazakhstan's VIII Congress of Judges in late 2020 identified dispute resolution as a top priority and the Supreme Court has requested U.S. assistance in the reform effort. This project will bring together the Government of Kazakhstan and its judiciary, judges, lawyers, and the private sector to jointly discuss required reforms in Kazakhstan while learning from the U.S. experience with alternative dispute resolution inside and outside the court system. The participants will visit federal, state, and local courts specialized on commercial, investment, and tax cases, bar associations, law firms, private sector associations, and other institutions to learn about their views and role in dispute resolution and how these institutions work together and interact.

## Kosovo

### **Improving the Relationship Between Media and Government – September 6**

This program will focus on improving the image of the Kosovo Government and building Kosovan trust in governmental institutions. Currently, media in Kosovo see themselves as ignored by the Government since they consider that the Government is not hosting frequent press conferences and do not see public officials participating frequently in public debates. Consequently, media tend to focus on negative news reporting on Government's work, with the understanding that negative media coverage has more potential to affect political attitudes. Two-way communication between government and media is essential, and information must flow in a timely manner to the public. Currently, the Government does not have sufficient communication with media or citizens, thus creating space for misinformation in institutions. Participants will primarily focus on the government-media relationship and how media and government can work together to build public trust in government institutions. Participants will be exposed to U.S. best practices of collaboration between media and government actors at national, state and local levels from the legislative and executive branch alike. The project will also discuss the roles and responsibilities of media organizations to deliver accurate, timely, and true information to the public about the government's work. This project is important because it will enhance Kosovans' access to accurate information about important international integration processes, including the Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue process, as communication plays an essential role in effective public relations.

### **Best Practices for Citizen Engagement – November 29**

The program will focus on improving local public participation practices which, if functioning well, are a strong incentive for greater transparency and responsiveness of the municipal government as well as a powerful corruption deterrent. Municipalities oversee a vast array of essential services that directly affect people's daily lives including infrastructure, public transportation, health care, and many others. Therefore, municipal administration is often the first line of contact between government and Kosovo citizens and at this level the citizens can have the most noticeable effect on policy. Moreover, the way in which the municipal government communicates with their community and the quality of the municipal services largely determine citizens' perception of and trust in their government writ large. This program will help participants understand how public participation practices in the United States bring value to public officials and citizens and contribute to better local governance. While engaging citizens overall will be the main area of interest, a large part of the project will be dedicated to how local government in the US engages young people in decision-making processes.

### **Economic Development of Small and Medium Sized Municipalities – November 29**

This program will focus on sustainable economic growth, integration of underserved communities and by equipping citizens with the skills needed for a modern economy, and resilient democracy that attracts investment and reduces "brain drain." Participants will focus on local economic development issues related to working with the state/central level authorities and business communities in attracting investors on the local level, such as how to use business to support community-based initiatives, and how to establish/strengthen inter-municipal cooperation with their American counterparts. The objective is to include local government and non-government organizations representatives from small to medium sized municipalities in Gjilan/Gnjilan region, which is composed of both Kosovo-Albanian and Kosovo-Serb run municipalities. These are mostly rural municipalities with incomes depending on agriculture, farming, tourism, and service-based business. Save from Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality, which is considered one of the large municipalities in Kosovo, and to a certain extent Kamenice/a, other municipalities in this region are too small to engage individually on larger infrastructure projects or attract significant investments.

## Kyrgyzstan

### **Human and Civil Rights - February 1**

This program supports advancing human rights, equality, and dignity for all people. It explores the fundamental principles of American democracy to expand equal opportunities in a politically, economically, and socially evolving society. Participants will examine the U.S. history of human and civil rights protections with emphasis on particularly vulnerable groups, including children, women, indigenous groups, immigrants, ethnic and religious minorities, and others. Meetings will illustrate government and NGO advocacy efforts that influence policy decisions and human rights protections at the international, federal, state, and local levels. Think tank experts and academics will discuss contemporary human rights issues related to transitioning governments and societies.

### **Rule of Law: U.S. Judicial System – May 10**

This program examines the U.S. commitment to the promotion of transparency, ethics, and judicial independence in a democracy. Meetings and site visits will highlight the judiciary's role in preserving democratic practices such as due process, trial by jury, the right to representation and a fair trial, the role of the public defender, the appeals process, judicial appointments/elections, and governmental accountability. Participants will learn about federal and state judicial systems under the U.S. model of federalism. In examining the workings of an independent judiciary in criminal and civil proceedings, the participants will observe trials and court procedures and assess new technologies in court administration.

### **Community-Building and Economic Empowerment – November 29**

This program will focus on connecting participants with local government officials, community organizations, and businesses to discuss community building and economic empowerment. The program would aim to equip participants with the skills and knowledge to connect Kyrgyz businesses and community organizations with counterpart organizations in the United States. Building on efforts to foster connections among various Kyrgyz diasporas, the program would also provide participants with an overview of the history of diaspora communities in the United States, including the social, political, economic, and cultural forces that shape modern diaspora movements. Participants would meet with local non-profit, private, and government entities that cater to diaspora communities and help maintain connections between those in the United States and those in home communities. Special attention will be paid to youth programs and businesses or initiatives that generate economic ties between the United States and the Kyrgyz Republic.

## Moldova

### **Medical University Partnerships – January 18**

One of the priorities of the bilateral partnership between the state of North Carolina and the Republic of Moldova is exchange of experience and expertise in the medical field. In June 2022, U.S. Ambassador Logsdon met with Medical University Rector, Emil Ceban and emphasized the university's strong partnerships with American institutions, and the importance of continuing this bilateral exchange for both Moldovan students and university professors in order to exchange best practices. An area of particular interest is the use of technology based therapeutic tools in health services provided to those in need. Priority will be given to hosting organizations in North Carolina.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) – February 1**

The concept that businesses and organizations need to be responsible to society for their direct and indirect impacts on people and the environment has been a theme that has become a priority for both international businesses operating in Moldova as well as local companies. As CSR continues to be a growing practice, local Moldovan companies, especially in the service industry (hotels, restaurants, cell phone and internet services etc.), seem to lack the necessary expertise in order to approach this philanthropic work with the maximum efficiency. An exchange of experience in this field for business leaders, local entrepreneurs and young professionals will give them the opportunity to get familiar with the best practices, create partnerships and synergize their initiatives with American ones in order to ensure the sustainability, and learn from experienced US partners in this field.

### **Local Public Administration (LPA) and Civil Society for Economic Development – February 22**

Moldova remains plagued by political instability and corruption, and emigration is an existential threat. The COVID-19 pandemic, the energy crisis, the war in Ukraine, and the subsequent refugee influx has significantly impacted the country's economic development at the local level. These factors hamper Moldova's efforts to become self-sufficient and make strategic transitions. To achieve agreement on development agendas, Moldova's government, private sector, civil society, and people should strengthen their collaborations. Mayors and LPA decision makers have an important role in supporting and developing the entrepreneurship ecosystem by 1) engaging startup businesses as problem-solvers; 2) building inclusive economic development, and 3) innovating municipal financing to create opportunities for growing businesses. Specialists in economic reforms and investment at the LPA level are the ones who best understand the economic data and metrics at the local level, which is indispensable in developing innovative policies to improve economic outcomes. The local actors also have an important role in helping social and promoting local entrepreneurship, which beyond the capital city of Chisinau, is about 4 entrepreneurs per 1000 residents. LPAs can help entrepreneurs by raising awareness about social problems through data collecting, helping to obtain financial resources, creating programs to promote entrepreneurship locally, and offering assistance and expertise in implementing social programs. Due to the North Carolina-Moldova Bilateral Partnership, priority will be given to hosting organizations in North Carolina.

### **Rural Women's Entrepreneurship – March 8**

This program aims to empower rural women as a precondition for achieving healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable local communities for all. In 2008, the United Nations started to celebrate the critical role and contribution of rural women. The "Profile of Women from Rural Areas" highlighted women, in particular women from rural areas, as being the most affected by social and economic problems in the country. The effects on society of a recognized vulnerable group may be major when it constitutes a significant share of the total population and in the Republic of Moldova, rural women constitute nearly 30% of the total population of the country and 51% of the resident population in rural areas. This program will help participants to develop their leadership, entrepreneurial, and creative skills through capacity building and sharing best practices to overcome discrimination in rural areas. Participants will develop their entrepreneurial mindset and culture of making social change at the local communities. Entrepreneurial and interconnected rural women communities can create impact and shift mindsets with

regard to gender roles, leadership, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. Due to the North Carolina-Moldova Bilateral Partnership, priority will be given to hosting organizations in North Carolina.

#### **Prosecutors – March 15**

Moldova is currently going through many reforms in the justice system, with an emphasis on anti-corruption. This program will provide an overview of the U.S. Judicial system with a focus on the role of the prosecutors, sharing best practices and tools used by both federal and local prosecutors. Meetings should include the local U.S. Attorney's office, as well as local or regional prosecutors. If the community has an Indian Reservation, a meeting on the tribe's judicial system and prosecutor would also be of interest.

#### **Gender Based Violence: Special Victims Unit – April 5**

One of the current priorities in Moldova is combatting domestic violence. This program will provide representatives from the Ministry of Interior, the Prosecutor's Office for Combating Organized Crime and Special Cases, the General Inspectorate of Police, and the Supreme Court of Justice an opportunity to learn from the U.S. experience and policies on women and minorities rights regarding domestic violence and abuse prevention both domestically and in other circumstances. The Moldovan participants would benefit from learning from US experts how to provide investigative support, specialized training, and distributing resources toward the prevention, combating, and offering assistance to the victims or those at risk.

#### **Agritourism – April 19**

Tourism is interconnected with many other economic and social sectors, which means that sustainable tourism should be seen as a whole that encompasses all of them. Integrated tourism planning and development should occur at all levels, so that the regional, national, and international levels are all reflected in development policies. In addressing the shortcomings and problems of the tourism sector in Moldova, there is a need for concrete strategies for improving the competitiveness. Tourism can create value in local communities and change the country, starting bottom-up from rural areas with underdeveloped infrastructure, and enhancing the ability to capitalize on heritage tourism promoting local regional values, and its ability to ensure the welfare of the local population. This program will explore disruptive solutions available to Moldovan agritourist agents to improve their skills in prompting sustainable tourism internally and internationally in order to accomplish local economic development goals. Due to the North Carolina-Moldova Bilateral Partnership, priority will be given to hosting organizations in North Carolina.

#### **Financial Crimes Investigations – June 14**

The exchange of experience in fighting financial crimes and emerging threats in this field will give the opportunity to representatives and investigators from Moldovan law enforcement, especially combating financial crimes units, to learn the best practices in preventing, investigating, preparing cases for trial and gaining expertise for their immediate professional benefit. This program will provide invaluable professional insight on both theoretical and practical resources from U.S. experts in this fast changing and evolving criminal environment.

#### **Anti-Corruption – June 14**

Moldova has embarked on an effort to fight corruption at all levels of government. The culture of corruption in bureaucratic institutions has long been entrenched. This program will share best practices from US government agencies at the federal, state and local level who deal with investigating and prosecuting corruptions. Participants will be from state agencies dedicated to

## Mongolia

### **Prosecutors – March 15**

COIL is happy to continue its partnership with the Mongolian Prosecutor General's Office. This program will provide an overview of the U.S. Judicial system with a focus on the role of the prosecutor, sharing best practices and tools used by both federal and local prosecutors. Meetings should include the local U.S. Attorney's office, as well as local or regional prosecutors. If the community has an Indian Reservation, a meeting on the tribe's judicial system and prosecutor would also be of interest.

### **Rule of Law: Court Administrative Staff – July 19**

In addition to Judges, the partnership with the Mongolian Judicial General Council includes a program for court administrative staff. This program will work closely with the Clerk of Court in a local U.S. District Court to cover all administrative processes of running the operations of a court system. The program will also cover in general the U.S. judicial system.

### **Civil Society Organizations/NGO Management – November 29**

Mongolian civil society organizations are going through a critical time to stay on track in protecting human rights and demanding accountability from the government. They also are trying to be more transparent and ensure they can secure funding for everyday operations. The delegation will explore innovative non-profit management strategies for engaging communities, defending civil rights, and fundraising, as well as strategic planning, use of social media and new technologies, board development, and the effective use of volunteers. The delegation should also look at public-private partnerships. Participants will see how small NGOs obtain local support to ensure sustainability and effectiveness. The program will also highlight examples of successful cooperation with private or government sectors to foster a new generation of NGO managers in Mongolia. Participants would be dynamic and promising managers who are responsible for running NGOs, representing the diverse regions of Mongolia.



## North Macedonia

### **Civil Society Opinion Leaders** – February 1

This program will focus on building leadership and networking skills for influential figures working at the intersection of civil society and government. Participants will comprise of managers, activists, and influencers who work in politics, governance, NGOs, community groups, and academia with a broad reach in forming civic attitudes. This program will showcase U.S. models of engaging populations to promote public dialogue and strengthened civil society, highlighting best practices in fostering alliances, strategic planning, advocacy, use of technology and social media, public outreach, and engaging volunteer networks.

### **Prosecutors** – March 15

As North Macedonia looks to join the European Union, after having recently joined NATO, one of the areas of focus is on judicial reform. This program will provide an overview of the U.S. Judicial system with a focus on the role of the prosecutor, sharing best practices and tools used by both federal and local prosecutors. Meetings should include the local U.S. Attorney's office, as well as local or regional prosecutors. If the community has an Indian Reservation, a meeting on the tribe's judicial system and prosecutor would also be of interest.

### **Local Governance** – November 29

All countries rely upon effective communication between public and private bodies in order to effectively implement change. US local government leaders, due to the federal system, frequently cooperate with federal, state, and private partners on projects. North Macedonian delegates coming to the United States will be Mayors and senior staff on the community level, and will explore the U.S. model of local governance to share best practices. Delegates will also meet with community leaders and local public servants to review and exchange best practices in working with limited resources, disparate partners, encouraging civic engagement within the constituent communities, and other challenges that are uniquely present in the effective management of local government bodies.



## Poland

### **Management of Healthcare Institutions – January 18**

In Poland, a nurse has more duties and responsibilities than a nurse in NYC, yet is paid considerably less, even taking into account the currency conversion and the value of the zloty and dollar in their respective countries. This Open World program will provide Polish hospital administrators and nursing staff the opportunity to meet with their American counterparts and see how the United States medical system works, both federally and locally. They will visit healthcare facilities to see how they work day-to-day. For example, what kind of operations certain hospitals perform in-house and what do they need or choose to outsource. They will learn how and from where hospitals receive funding, and what they do if there is a lack of funds. Along with how hospitals work with insurance companies, and how to ensure a patient is insured and can pay; what kind of government programs exist to support patients on the federal, state, and local levels. They will discuss how payment to hospital staff is determined and what kind of qualifications are required to fulfill certain roles and positions.

### **Social Inclusion: People with Disabilities – February 1**

The Polish people are dedicated to improving the lives of those with disabilities, but currently lack some of the infrastructure and programs available in the United States to do so. This Open World program focuses on advocacy for people with disabilities and will demonstrate how a full and vital life can and should be lived by those with disabilities. The program will highlight innovative methods and practices, and will include a dialogue on what role government, both on the national and local level, can play to support those with disabilities. Another focus of the program will be on the role of NGOs and private sector representatives in working to improve the lives of those with disabilities in response to those advocating for such rights.

### **Women Political, Civic, and Business Leaders in Local Communities – March 8**

Poland is ranked as the best country in the EU for female entrepreneurs. However, an opportunity to share ideas can certainly be beneficial for both nations. This Open World program will focus on women leaders in business, politics and civil society and illustrate the impact of women run/owned businesses and organizations on the U.S. economy.

### **Combatting Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault – April 5**

Although Poland ranks as one of the better countries in Europe for domestic violence statistically, the reality of the story, like in many other places, is hidden due to many social factors. Domestic violence continues to be a problem in Poland with high rates of people indicating abuse and very few willing to prosecute offenders. This issue is not limited to rural areas of typically economically less successful voivodeships near the Russian border where jobs have been more difficult to come by adding more stress to the family unit, but is only further worsened by COVID-19 and inflation throughout the entire country. This Open World program would take delegates to the United States to understand what a victim can look like, how they are cared for, and how criminal proceedings against perpetrators of violence are conducted. Emphasis would be placed on the importance of formal prosecution to achieve justice, changing societal thinking on domestic violence as a “family matter,” and deterring future acts of domestic violence in communities, including programs to curb alcoholism.

### **Green Energy & Energy Security/Transition – April 19**

While Poland committed in 2020 to meet EU climate and energy policies and adopted a national target to increase the use of alternate energy to at least 27% by 2030, in general, adoption of green practices in the business sector and environmental education and consciousness among the public remains relatively low. The Russo-Ukrainian war has brought about inflation and cut Poland off from Russian natural gas, likely making reaching these goals more difficult, but could mean there is a chance to replace it with green energy to better ensure their national energy security. This program seeks candidates from government, civil society, and the private sector who are interested in developing strategies for environmental campaigns such as promoting energy efficiency, fighting against pollution and littering, promotion of recycling, and natural resource conservation. The program would provide models for public-private collaboration in the plan and design of environmental goals and targets; marketing and

media strategies; funding and budget management; and other elements that contribute to formulating successful environmental campaigns.

**Academia and Business – July 26**

This program will demonstrate how U.S. Universities collaborate with the business community to spur innovation and conduct research. The program will explore what kind of relationships exist, how these programs are initiated and funded, to include both public and private universities, as well as technical colleges. The focus would be on the process of how, from the point of view of higher education, to build partnerships with businesses to be effective for both parties. What should education do to encourage companies to invest in programs, and/or sponsor internships, stipends, research projects and provide resources to ideas so as to not lose people's potential.

**NGO Development: Civil Society Development and Civic Engagement Including Urban and Rural NGOs – October 11**

In both rural and urban areas, Poland's robust and independent NGO sector is now maturing to the point where skills in advocacy, sustainability, management, professionalism and goal-setting are needed. This Open World program will emphasize leadership skills and responsibilities including how best to utilize volunteers. There is much to learn from the vibrant public and private initiatives that can be found in communities across the United States as efforts are made to improve the standard of living and conditions for all citizens.

**Social/Civic Engagement for Seniors – October 11**

Although the past few years have seen improved funding and social activities for "75+ Care," many other seniors still need opportunities to be more active and involved in the community.

This Open World program will highlight the role of community centers and other gathering places that are available to the elderly and families in an American community and it will explore the range of services available, as well as best practices in serving this key element of society.

## Romania

### **Human Trafficking – March 22**

Romania is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking, and human trafficking remains an acute problem in the country. Due to the conflict in Ukraine, many more have become victims of human trafficking. Romania has declared its adherence to international standards for combatting human trafficking and these delegations will assist it as it better develops its ability to prevent such actions. This delegation will focus on anti-trafficking in women along with the broader issues involving sex and labor trafficking.

### **Hospital Management/Nursing: Teaching & Practice – May 3**

There are a relatively low number of nurses in Romania in comparison to the country's European counterparts. Although healthcare statistics are improving, they still rank towards the bottom in the European Union. This Open World program will focus on best practices in nursing care and in health care administration in general, particularly for rural or underserved communities. The program will also cover how nursing is taught and explore the various types and levels of nurses and standards in the U.S. system. Members of the medical community will observe both large-scale hospital operations and community programs where nurses play a vital role in patient care.

### **School Management Tools: Pre-School & Kindergarten Principals – July 26**

Although Romania has long since moved past the Soviet education method, adopting a more French style, they still have wide gaps in education access. The quality of education and availability varies greatly from city to rural areas. This Open World program will allow Romanian pre-school & kindergarten principals to connect with their American counterparts to start addressing the systemic issues Romania faces. By experiencing and interacting directly with school systems, these Romanian principals will return to their country better prepared to implement changes, particularly for rural or underserved communities.

### **School Management Tools: High School Principals – July 26**

Although Romania has long since moved past the Soviet education method, adopting a more French style, they still have wide gaps in education access. The quality of education and availability varies greatly from city to rural areas. This Open World program will allow Romanian high school principals to connect with their American counterparts to start addressing the systemic issues Romania faces. By experiencing and interacting directly with school systems, these Romanian principals will return to their country better prepared to implement changes, particularly for rural or underserved communities.

### **Public Libraries as Community Hubs – July 26**

This program will cover the role and functions of libraries and information specialists in the United States, examining the wide variety of U.S. libraries, exploring the latest information technology applied by libraries, including online and digital services, and studying policy-making for programs and activities in American libraries. The program will also focus on the role of community libraries as community hubs.

## Serbia

### **Community Engagement and Risk Communication in the Public Health Sector – May 3**

This Open World exchange program will further support the healthcare sector's assistance in Serbia by increasing capacities to respond to future pandemics. This program will exchange experience, knowledge, and best practices with Serbian public health officials and professionals in addressing challenges related to lack of trust and confidence in vaccination, including use of research and data in planning of public information campaigns, combating disinformation and misinformation, adjusting service delivery to the needs of communities, medical response preparedness, ongoing training for medical and administrative personnel, and strategies for working with international partners during a pandemic. The program will also help further improve U.S. cooperation with the healthcare sector stakeholders in Serbia. Participants will include two groups with five delegates in each group from the National Public Health Institute Batut and its 23 local institutes throughout Serbia.

### **Economic Development through Preservation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage – June 14**

The goal of this Open World program is to expose Serbian participants to the U.S. experience in leveraging cultural heritage, including a country's or region's historical sites and traditions, to attract more visitors of all ages, both domestic and international, to promote an area's economic development, and provide an enriching educational experience. Serbia's rich cultural heritage of rich and vibrant musical and other artistic traditions can be a strategic tool that the country has not fully capitalized on. Locations that attract visitors range from the Neolithic site at Vinča to Roman and medieval ruins to architectural gems from periods of Ottoman and Austrian dominance. Busloads of Serbian students come on school excursions to historic sites each spring. Serbian partners have already recognized its world-class Roman ruins and other historical sites to be of great value in terms of promoting cultural heritage tourism and generating revenue. However, more can be done to increase the number of visitors, and thereby promote local economic growth, as well as improve the educational experience. Target Participants will include Government officials from the Ministry of Culture and Information, the National Tourism Organization of Serbia, representatives of the Serbian cultural institutions, administrators and organizers of cultural festivals, and educators.

### **U.S. STEM and Disability Education in the 21st Century: Trying to Create Engaged Learners, Problem-Solvers, Innovators, and Good Citizens – October 11**

This Open World program aim at sharing best practices in different fields of K-12 education in the U.S. with the aim of strengthening civics education in Serbia and promoting critical-thinking, problem solving, and innovation among Serbian students. We also want to expose Serbian participants to American approaches to other topics, e.g., the inclusion of children with disabilities; use of technology inside and outside the classroom; and extracurricular activities. This Open World program would link the educational goals of Serbia and the United States and advance our goals for Serbia. As we live in an era of constant scientific discovery and technological change, which directly affects our lives and requires our input as citizens, we should recognize that our economies increasingly depend on these revolutionary new advances. Serbia needs to prepare its youth, especially girls, for new jobs that will be created in STEM fields. Fostering the development of STEM skills and competencies for college, career, and will assist in combatting the constant brain drain in Serbia.

## Tajikistan

### **Youth Development** – February 1

Tajikistan has the most rapidly developing population of any former Soviet country. Its population is expected to reach 10 million this year, and within that a “youth bulge” is creating strain on schools and resources. Tajikistan’s fragile economy offers limited prospects for employment. The economic downturn and diminishing employment opportunities leaves the potential for young people to be restless and alienated. Embassy Dushanbe works with youth populations across its educational, cultural, economic, and counter extremism programs and has cultivated a number of promising leaders in the field of youth development. This program would equip these mentors and leaders to address the challenges of a burgeoning youth population by exposing them to strategies that engage youth and educate them in English and U.S. values, giving them first-hand experience of the U.S. culture and values that inform the programs they run in Tajikistan, and connecting them with U.S. community and policy leaders who are experienced in working with youth in challenging environments.

### **Information & Communications Technology (ICT) in Business and Security** – February 1

Tajikistan’s ICT sector is in need of a boost in ideas, technology, and business exchange. This program will establish new opportunities for collaboration between U.S. stakeholders and Tajik ICT professionals, helping to build a stronger network of professionals who adhere to high international and U.S. standards in ICT and business. The program will also illustrate the importance of information and communication technologies to U.S. economic and national security, highlighting how laws and policies on information and communication technologies are made and why they require constant updates to keep up with technological evolution. Participants will explore initiatives aimed at increasing IT security coordination between governmental agencies, the private sector, and academia. They will examine the roles and best practices of each sector in preventing and recovering from cyber-attacks, educating the public in ICT, and ensuring that civil liberties are not jeopardized.

### **Inclusive Education** – July 26

The Government of Tajikistan provides virtually no support for inclusive education or creating functional classroom environments for children with disabilities. Many USG program alumni propose small grant projects in this area, but their scope and impact are usually limited to specific regions or specific groups of children. This project is designed for those who are interested in creating supporting classrooms for children with disabilities as well as developing infrastructure improvements for those students. Many of these can be implemented even in the low-resource environment of Tajikistan. Through this program, participants will exchange ideas and learn about contemporary best practices in the field of inclusive education, discuss with U.S. organizations the challenges disabled and autistic children face in Tajikistan, and increase their expertise in information and community-based inclusive education public-private partnerships.

### **Women in Tech: Educators** – November 29

Technology professions are considered among the most prestigious in Tajikistan, and the demand for technical specialists is growing rapidly. However, men are significantly overrepresented in IT jobs, and cultural beliefs and stereotypes about girls poses significant challenges to equity for women in the field. Embassy Dushanbe actively supports efforts to overcome stereotypes that prevent young women from entering a career in IT, including an alumni-led iCode program for girls. Individual Tajik entrepreneurs have launched technology training centers and academies. This program would build on the efforts of these outstanding mentors by exposing them to educational technology in the United States, online platforms, open online course, and coworking spaces. Participants will explore how technology promotes educational opportunities for disadvantaged students, youth, and rural populations and how policy makers, the private sector, IT academies, and IT experts evaluate, fund, and support technological innovation. This group also could meet web-developers, programmers, IT Hubs and other innovators in the field to look at how this growth could be pursued in Tajikistan.

### **Ecotourism** – November 29

Tajikistan has a visually spectacular landscape, with 90 percent of its land covered by mountains. Despite its potential, the tourism industry here is nascent. Having the group visit tour outfitters, guide

companies, and eco-lodges in the United States could help them learn about how to develop their industry, how to advertise to adventure tourists, and how to develop this industry in a way that is environmentally responsible and protects this country's fragile natural resources, particularly its water resources. This program will underscore the connection between responsible tourism and local economic development by looking at infrastructure and economic considerations necessary to support viable tourism, fostering discussion on sustainable and responsible tourism, and examining strategies and incentives used to promote tourism nationally and regionally. Participants will also discuss how to maintain connections with international organizations and global travel companies to raise awareness of Tajikistan as a tourist destination and increase numbers of foreign travelers. Themes should include cultural and family tourism, adventure and eco-tourism, and ways entrepreneurs and small businesses can successfully engage in the tourism industry.

## Turkmenistan

### **Program for Young Journalists – July 26**

Delegation will consist of up-and-coming journalists. We would like to introduce them to western & up-to-date standards of journalism with an emphasis on digital journalism, storytelling with data and disinformation.

### **Program for Established Journalists – September 6**

Delegation will consist of experienced journalists, who we would like to gain further professional growth. Goal of this program for our Post is to provide these journalists the skills to identify and contend disinformation, learn about ethical and investigative journalism, as well as the standards of data-driven reporting and analysis.



## Ukraine

### **Rebuilding Financial Industry Infrastructure** – February 22

According to a recent RAND report, mobilizing large scale and private investment to rebuild Ukraine is among the most urgent tasks. Ukraine will need to implement deep financial sector reforms to attract the most international reconstruction financing. In a country where corruption and opaque governance have been rampant, reconstruction success may depend more on reform than foreign aid. It is expected that impressive war-time patriotism will lead to greater impatience with corruption and reform of the finance sector. This Open World program will aim to provide participants with the tools to do so.

### **Economic Change & Deindustrialization** – February 22

Ukraine's heroic defense of its sovereignty against a full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022 has inspired the world. But the costs are steep—thousands of Ukrainians have died and Kyiv runs an estimated \$5-7 billion monthly deficit to defend the country. According to the World Bank, Ukraine's economy may contract by 45 percent in 2022; President Zelensky has said economic losses from Russia's war are at least \$600 billion. Kyiv will need substantial financial assistance to sustain its defenses, stabilize its economy, and eventually rebuild the country. The impact of the war will be felt for decades, and this Open World program is focused on working with our Ukrainian colleagues to understand these changes and to plan for a prosperous Ukraine.

### **Management of Healthcare Institutions** – February 22 (TWO DELEGATIONS)

In the context of the war initiated in Ukraine in 2014 and greatly expanded in 2022, the world is responding to the most urgent health care needs of the population and health care professionals of Ukraine. The unprecedented number of attacks on health since 24 February 2022 have also motivated the Government to initiate planning for post-war recovery. COIL is working with Ukraine's Ministry of Health to devise a common vision with common standards to ensure that recovery investments lead to a modernized Ukrainian health system with modern treatment facilities.

### **Rural NGO Management** – March 8

As fighting rages in Ukraine's cities and towns, humanitarian agencies and local NGOs are working to provide life-saving assistance and continue their work developing civil society organizations. Children are a particular vulnerable population in need of assistance throughout this conflict as are members of the LGBTQI population. The disruption caused by the war has interfered with great progress made in this sector, and management and organizational skills are critical at this time.

### **Improvement of Emergency Department/Services** – March 8

During this time of horrific war being waged against Ukraine, studying the principles of emergency department operation, department interaction with emergency care facilities, and the development of patient protocols in healthcare institutions is urgently needed, as well as the development of such departments teamwork.

### **Medical Transfusion Services** – March 8

The hospital segment of the blood system services in Ukraine is undergoing necessary reforms allowing for the improvement of the provision of transfusion care based on best practices, which includes: setting up hospital blood banks and laboratory services that provide transfusions support; blood supply management; and, proper use of blood and its components; introduction of modern computer information systems; and, introduction of hematological surveillance. A separate task of the reform is to organize work under the conditions of insufficient blood supplies, disasters and emergencies.

### **Transplantology Improvement** – March 8

In this theme, our Ukrainian colleagues will look at the improvement of an automated comparison system of donor-recipient matches. Procedures to be reviewed include: algorithms and procedures for specialists from receiving a report of declared brain death to dispatching the anatomical materials will be explored. Also to be explored are the protocols for marking and transporting the anatomical materials. The hospital where the recipient is located: algorithms and procedures from obtaining anatomical



material to discharging the recipient. Also to be reviewed are procedures for examination and provision of medical care to the recipient while on a waiting list. ensuring compliance with the principles of transparency and impartiality in following the "rules of transplantation." The principles of and setting up the laboratory support of transplant processes will also be covered in this program.

### **Advancements in Prosthetics – March 8**

Leading Ukrainian medical experts working on developing prosthetic limbs for amputees say there has been a dramatic surge in demand for artificial arms and legs since Russia invaded Ukraine. According to a leader in this field “with good prosthetics people can come back to life again.” There is currently no official figure for how many people in Ukraine have undergone surgery to remove limbs because of injuries sustained from the war but estimates are that more than 500 people have had limbs amputated since the end of February 2022 (and before) with the majority of those cases being soldiers and around a fifth being civilians. While the number of patients in Ukraine needing artificial limbs has increased, the domestic supply of components to make prosthetic arms and legs has reduced. An Open World program looking at the production and use of prosthetics (and the effective use of donor resources) can help Ukraine make great strides in those injured returning to regular activities.

### **Prevention/Recovery from Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation – March 22**

As millions flee from the conflict in Ukraine, aid agencies are raising the alarm about the risks of sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons. The Assistant High Commissioner for Protection with UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, recently noted that “while the generosity and solidarity towards Ukrainian refugees has been inspiring, states must prevent predatory individuals and criminal networks from exploiting the situation.” More information and services for particularly vulnerable women and children, survivors of gender-based violence and other vulnerable refugees, are in great demand, and an Open World program exploring these issues could be very beneficial in limiting human suffering during this time of crisis.

### **Combating Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children – March 22**

Children fleeing war in Ukraine are at heightened risk of human trafficking and exploitation. Traffickers often seek to exploit the chaos of largescale population movements, and with millions of children fleeing Ukraine since 24 February, and countless others displaced by violence inside the country, the threat facing children is real and growing. According to a recent analysis conducted by UNICEF and the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking (ICAT), 28 per cent of identified victims of trafficking globally are children. In the context of Ukraine, UNICEF child protection experts believe that children would likely account for an even higher proportion of potential trafficking victims given that children and women represent nearly all of the refugees who have fled the country so far. More information and services for particularly vulnerable children are in great demand, and an Open World program exploring these issues could be very beneficial in limiting human suffering during this time of crisis.

### **Child Welfare in Times of War – March 22**

Ukraine's vast state childcare program, a legacy of the government's prominent role in society during Soviet times, is struggling as war forces millions to flee their homes and often makes tracing relatives impossible. Some of the children in Ukraine's network of shelters are orphans, but more often they have been taken from families struggling with drug addiction, alcoholism and domestic abuse. Around half of them have physical or mental disabilities. With the added burden of the war the situation is pretty dire and an Open World delegation can provide insight on ways to relieve this suffering and trauma.

### **Hazardous Waste Management – April 19**

On 20 June 2022 the Ukrainian Parliament adopted a draft of the new Law of Ukraine “On Waste Management.” The purpose of the Waste Management Law is to significantly improve the waste management system in Ukraine, which was poorly regulated and fragmented across municipalities. The new waste management system, among other things, tightens the licensing requirements for the collection and processing of hazardous waste, is expected to considerably improve the state of the environment in Ukraine and help achieve sustainable development goals. This includes tackling the amounts of waste already accumulated in Ukraine and overall making the waste management sector

more attractive for investment. The adoption of the Waste Management Law is an opportunity to initiate the changes that Ukraine needs, among others, to fulfil the European Union membership requirements. This Open World program is aimed at showing our Ukrainian colleagues best practices and a discussion of that country's future development needs in this area.

### **Renewable Energy/Energy Independence – April 19**

Ukraine's law On Electricity Market improved the outlook for the country's renewable energy industry and stabilized its legal framework, having enshrined all key components of the support mechanism introduced for power production from renewable energy sources (RES). This support mechanism, and the guaranteed channels for the sale of electricity, provide additional security and protection against the market challenges relating to the search for buyers and sale markets, as well as against currency and/or price fluctuations. With the introduction of market-based incentives for renewable energy production, more complex, Ukraine renewable energy producers to take advantage of these opportunities are exploring diversified and flexible approaches. In Ukraine, there are already proposals to consider new approaches to selling electricity produced from RES, such as power sale auctions, which are increasingly coming into focus, or feed-in premiums. It can be foreseen that incentives for power production from RES will become more diversified in Ukraine in the years to come, and will not be solely limited to a feed-in tariff (FIT). In light of these developments, Ukraine renewable energy experts participating in the Open World program will learn of energy market opportunities and development to further the profitability and use of renewable fuels in Ukraine, further moving towards complete energy independence.

### **Establishing Family/Children Counseling Networks – May 3**

The situation in Ukraine is leaving deep psychological scars on children and families who remain in Ukraine or who decide to flee. Many of U.S.-based mental health experts are volunteering their services describe their sense of emotional solidarity, their common culture or elements of shared history with Ukrainians. The U.S. has much to offer our Ukrainian colleagues in the field of family/children counseling and this program will be aimed at fostering the development of broader and more impactful networks to assist children and their families in Ukraine.

### **Online Secondary Education – July 26**

Since March 14, 2022, schooling has resumed in most regions of Ukraine with the help of distance learning. Ukrainian students both inside and outside the country can access educational online material in Ukrainian. Ukraine's main platform for distance learning is the All-Ukrainian Online School, featuring lessons in all subjects, for pupils grades 5-11. In regions where Internet access has been disrupted, pupils will be able to watch lessons on Ukrainian television instead. For easier coordination, both the online and televised lessons are integrated into an interactive All-Ukrainian Online Schedule, which includes materials for pupils of grades 1-11. This Open World delegation will explore other online education methodologies and best practices to teach secondary education in a war-time environment.

### **Agricultural Development Using Technology – October 4**

While the agricultural sector pre-war accounted for over 30 percent of Ukraine's exports and 12 percent of its gross domestic product of \$100 billion annually, much of Ukraine's agricultural potential has gone untapped. One way to change this is agritech — bringing advanced information technology to the field. With keen sensors, cheap drones and advances in data management, agritech can vastly increase Ukraine's efficiency and output. Most agritech experts agree that Ukraine could be among the world's agricultural leaders if it applies IT on a large scale. However, they also say Ukraine still has a long way to go in this regard. This Open World program is aimed at closing that gap and improving Ukraine's agricultural production.

### **Agricultural Planning Post War – October 4**

Ukraine has suffered \$4.3 billion in damage to farmland, machinery and livestock as a result of Russia's invasion as of mid-June 2022, according to the Kyiv School of Economics. About half of the immense destruction from the war comes from pollution caused by mines and unharvested crops, Russia is using food security as an economic weapon. Russia's attacks on key agriculture infrastructure hubs have

destroyed large quantities of food. Meanwhile, its blockade of Ukraine's ports has strangled the country's exports, cutting off a key source of revenues and worsening a global food crisis that may spur millions of people to migrate. This Open World program will look at ways to plan for the future of agriculture in Ukraine once hostilities have ceased to ensure a robust market in that country and a strong return to productivity.

#### **Disaster and Emergency Services – October 4**

The State Emergency Service (SES) of Ukraine, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, has the motto "to prevent. To rescue. To help." Using advanced equipment, the SES constantly collects and analyzes data on emergencies that occur throughout Ukraine. It implements state policies in the domain of civil protection, protection of population and territories from emergencies, prevention of emergencies, rectification of emergency consequences, rescue work, fire extinguishing, fire and technogenic safety, accident rescue service activities and hydrometeorologic activities. This Open World program will focus on improving domestic emergency services and comparing systems for improvement on both sides of the ocean.

#### **Revitalization of Water Supply Systems – October 4**

According to UNICEF, war damage to infrastructure has left millions of people without access to piped water across the Ukraine and much of the country is at risk of losing its water supply. The Ukraine Water System Modernization project will address the critical situation in municipal water supply and sewerage in Ukraine due to deteriorating networks and facilities arising from long periods of under-investment. Collaboration with U.S. Veterans Administration/Veterans

#### **Treating Mental Illness in Times of War – November 8**

Millions of people living in Ukraine had to flee their homes after Russia invaded the country in February 2022. They left behind everything they've ever known. Thousands have been killed and injured, including children. Daily pictures and video of atrocities suffered in Ukraine are splashed across the media. The atrocities seem unimaginable—and those pictures alone are traumatic enough. Living in constant fear while struggling to find some measure of safety and security has taken a toll on Ukrainians' mental health. The majority of people who need help for mental health care do not receive the services that could help them. In a situation where they have been uprooted and are in search of safety and security, it is even more difficult to access mental health care. This Open World program is aimed at transferring some skills and know-how at our Ukrainian colleagues face this mental health crisis.

#### **Serving Victims of War: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – November 8**

More than eight years into a totally unforeseen conflict, medical practitioners, psychologists, and social workers are fighting their own battles on two fronts: working to prepare for the long-term psychological effect on this generation with regard to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and struggling to get these professions recognized as important. The problems of PTSD are not confined to individual soldiers' lives. They create a complex psychosocial phenomenon that affects the soldier, the soldier's immediate family, and the community at large. PTSD can result in difficulties with reintegration, securing and keeping jobs, maintaining a normal family life, and taking care of one's health. The problem of psychological rehabilitation for Ukraine's soldiers cannot be put on the back burner. In September 2014, with advice from volunteer groups, the government created its own psychological service and a state agency for veteran affairs and for volunteers from the battles in Crimea and the East of Ukraine. These agencies are working to devise a unified government policy on the subject. Nevertheless, the majority of psychological support provided for soldiers and veterans continues to be shouldered by volunteer psychologists; and Ukraine's ability to serve its demobilized soldiers is hampered by an economic crisis and a shortage of funds. Open World programming is aimed at filling a critical knowledge and practice gap in Ukraine among medical practitioners, social workers (many of whom are volunteers), NGO leaders and activists as they best seek to serve those that have served their country and are now suffering.

#### **Women's Veterans Issues – November 8**

For much of the war, which began in spring 2014, official government forces did not permit women to fight on the front lines; the 17,000 women who served in the military were allowed to work in only

supporting roles, such as medics, engineers and administrators. The hundreds of women who were desperate to fight instead joined nationalist paramilitary groups, which did offer women combat roles. The integration of the militias into the army in July 2015 meant that female fighters suddenly found themselves in an official army that did not permit them to fight. To get around this restriction, many registered on paper as paramedics or support personnel to avoid being sent home. However, they still fought as they had before. In 2017, a new law was adopted that allowed women to enroll in the army as soldiers and fight at the frontline. The women veterans of battle and the role women have played in support of combat has created a new class of veteran, with different needs, although combat related. These delegations will observe how female veterans are treated through the U.S. Veterans Administration and other formal and informal societal support networks for woman veterans from health (disabilities, addictions and PTSD) to other livelihood matters (jobs, safe housing, healthy food).

### **Serving Victims of War: War Injuries Treatment – November 8**

Of the estimated 2.7 million Ukrainians with a documented disability, many are at significant additional risk as a result of the war. There are regular reports of Russian troops actively targeting centers and institutions housing people with disabilities – including children's centers. With a lack of safe evacuation routes, those who cannot flee are in danger of being abandoned. Unfortunately, the country does not yet have a single institution that is responsible for those who served and are currently serving their country. About twenty ministries and public agencies manage a number of programs aimed at assisting Ukrainian veterans and as a result huge sums of money are being spent inefficiently and veterans are not receiving the necessary support. The Committee on Veteran Affairs of the Parliament of Ukraine created the Ministry of Veterans Affairs in late 2018, and initial efforts are being made to create and expand a network of Veterans Hubs, but it will take a long time to consolidate support efforts. In addition, there are many volunteer initiatives and non-government organizations that help injured veterans re-integrate into society and that provide them with physical and psychological help. The participants in this program will benefit greatly from observing and learning about the efforts of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans Health Administration to better serve American veterans, as well as the work of various citizen initiatives to provide support to injured veterans.

### **Treating Battlefield Injuries – November 8**

Operating with skeleton crews, doctors and nurses race to save limbs, and lives. It has been a grim routine for medical personnel often working around the clock. As Russian forces pummel Ukraine with a mix of artillery, airstrikes and rocket attacks, frontline hospitals, many of them in poorer, rural areas, have become overwhelmed. They are severely short-staffed or have been abandoned completely, as doctors and nurses have fled the violence. The situation is pretty dire and Ukraine seeks assistance with skills and with medical efficiencies. This Open World program will be responsive to these critical needs in Ukraine.

## **Uzbekistan**

### **Attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) & the Uzbek Direct Investment Fund (UzDIF) – February 22**

As Uzbekistan becomes increasingly interconnected with the world beyond its Central Asian neighbors, it increases the prominence and promise of opportunities related to foreign direct investment. Uzbekistan would greatly benefit from the influx of cash and commercial connections to businesses, and is strategically placed to compete with some of the largest players in the Eurasian and global economies. Uzbek participants will meet with American representatives from the investment, recipient, and government perspectives, and visit sites of successful FDI programs.

### **Renewable Energy – April 19**

The Uzbek energy market has traditionally depended on fossil-fuels and non-renewable energy sources, but Uzbekistan has begun to pursue alternative fuels as a method of increasing competitiveness in a dynamic sector, as well as the reduction of carbon footprint per capita. In light of these developments, Uzbekistan renewable energy experts participating in the Open World program will learn of energy market opportunities and development to further the profitability and use of renewable fuels in Ukraine, strategically growing the already-robust Uzbek energy sector. Participants will visit active renewable energy sites, and meet with expert science and business groups within the green energy industry.

### **Judicial Rule of Law – May 10**

This program examines the U.S. commitment to the promotion of transparency, ethics, and judicial independence in a democracy. Meetings and site visits will highlight the judiciary's role in preserving democratic practices such as due process, trial by jury, the right to representation and a fair trial, the role of the public defender, the appeals process, judicial appointments/elections, and governmental accountability. Participants will learn about federal and state judicial systems under the U.S. model of federalism. In examining the workings of an independent judiciary in criminal and civil proceedings, the participants will observe trials and court procedures, meet with judges, prosecutors, public defenders, local law schools and other relevant agencies.

### **Education – July 26**

The Uzbek academic scene is robust, with a high literacy rate, and many multi-lingual citizens. This Open World program aims at sharing best practices in the field of K-12 education with the aim of strengthening civics education in Uzbekistan and promoting critical thinking, problem solving, and innovation among students. The program should also expose Uzbek participants to American approaches to other topics such as the inclusion of children with disabilities; use of technology inside and outside the classroom; and, constructive extracurricular activities. US experts will work with delegates to develop an actionable plan to improve the opportunities afforded to Uzbek students, and best equip teachers to discuss civics topics and develop important skills.

### **Local Governance – November 29**

All countries rely upon effective communication between public and private bodies in order to effectively implement change. US local government leaders, due to the federal system, frequently cooperate with federal, state, and private partners on projects. Uzbek delegates coming to the United States will be public servants on the community level, and will review materials on US-style federalism. Delegates will also meet with community leaders and local public servants to review and exchange best practices in working with limited resources, disparate partners, encouraging civic engagement within the constituent communities, and other challenges that are uniquely present in the effective management of local government bodies.