

# Caucasus Research Resource Centers



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A partnership between the Carnegie Corporation of New York and Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF), CRRC's objectives are to increase the accessibility of high-quality research resources, to strengthen local capacity and to increase the dialogue and collaboration between social science researchers and policy practitioners. Since the opening of the Centers in 2003, CRRC has become a nexus of activity for the South Caucasus social science community by providing open access to fundamental literature, data and professional training for social science researchers. The centers allow researchers to pursue original work, to base their research on actual data and to participate in the growing domestic policy research community.

Direct and indirect CRRC beneficiaries include social science researchers, faculty members from academic institutions, policy practitioners and other professionals from non-governmental, private and public sectors.

## *The Data Initiative*

Data is a critically important foundation for social research, but in the South Caucasus reliable, up-to-date and accessible data on social, political and economic issues is in short supply. Too often, decisions are made based on anecdote rather than comprehensive information. Providing and maintaining access to sound data is a priority for CRRC. Moving beyond their function as collection points for existing information, the Centers conduct the Data Initiative – a yearly survey of household attitudes and behavior covering all regions in all three countries of the South Caucasus. The Data Initiative is the largest comparable survey of its kind in the South Caucasus, providing a wide range of social, economic and political variables.

To increase the ability for cross-comparison of regional social and economic dynamics, the centers began a coordinated data gathering effort in the fall of 2003 to obtain reliable, comparable data on household knowledge, attitudes and practices across the South Caucasus. The CRRC teams in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have been collecting

data on the region on an annual basis since 2004. Since 2006, the survey has been carried out nationwide in both urban and rural areas in all three countries.

The survey questionnaires, show cards, detailed sampling methodology, the survey databases (in SPSS format), preliminary findings and tutorials in accessing data through SPSS are available on CRRC's regional website: [www.crrccenters.org](http://www.crrccenters.org)

## *Fellowship Program*

The CRRC Fellowship Program was launched in 2004 to support outstanding researchers in the South Caucasus interested in pursuing original policy-oriented research. CRRC provides grants to research fellows to analyze policy relevant issues in economics, sociology, demography and other social science related fields. Fellows often use data gathered under the **CRRC Data Initiative** as well as new and existing data sources to complete their research. Fellows are selected through a competitive process of both peer review and a selection committee of leading practitioners and researchers.

In 2007, a series of new and innovative changes were made to the Fellowship Program. With great success, the Fellowship Program was brought online. Now fellows use an online learning platform called Moodle to increase their application skills before they apply. Moodle also provides an interactive environment for applicants to communicate with each other and CRRC staff during the application process, which has significantly improved the quality of applications.

Selected fellows for 2008 will participate in a series of trainings facilitated through Moodle. Fellows are also now required to submit their publications to a peer-reviewed journal in the English language, which CRRC sees as critical to integrating researchers in the Caucasus into global academic dialogue and discourse.

Each year, CRRC also awards fellowships to researchers to analyze the results of the Data Initiative.

The Caucasus Research Resource Centers program (CRRC) is a network of resource and training centers established in the capital cities of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia with the goal of strengthening social science research and public policy analysis in the South Caucasus.

*For more information  
please contact:*

**CRRC Regional Office**  
3, Kavsadze Street  
Tbilisi, Georgia 0179

995 32 25 27 78/82 *phone*  
995 32 25 39 42/43 *fax*  
[www.crrccenters.org](http://www.crrccenters.org)  
[www.epfound.org](http://www.epfound.org)



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## *Engaging Citizens, Empowering Communities*

### *Training and Lecture Series*

Each center in Baku, Tbilisi and Yerevan offers a constant set of training courses, seminars and lectures on a variety of social science topics led by both local and foreign experts. Methodological trainings focus on modernizing the skill sets of local researchers and providing hands-on opportunities in using relevant statistical software packages. These programs help strengthen research production and promote direct examination of what is really happening in today's economic and social transformation in the South Caucasus.

CRRC draws researchers, public administrators, and other policy practitioners together for conferences and roundtables to discuss and debate key public policy issues and cross-border trends. These events encourage interdisciplinary dialogue among researchers and practitioners. CRRC conducts basic orientation trainings

for those interested in exploring the range of research resource materials available at the Center.

### *In-House Research and Surveys*

In addition to supporting local capacity for social science research and policy formation, CRRC's own experts set the standard in survey and research work in the South Caucasus and frequently consult with international organizations in these fields. Recently, CRRC has run surveys and focus groups focusing on pre- and post-election attitudes in Armenia and Georgia, and on migration issues.

In addition, the **CRRC blog** summarizes the most interesting research being done on the South Caucasus and provides useful insights and commentary. Visit it at <http://crrc-caucasus.blogspot.com>

EPF is a proud member of the EF Network: five local foundations supporting civil society and based in Russia, Central Asia, the South Caucasus, Eastern Europe and Washington, DC. For more information, please visit: [www.eurasia.org](http://www.eurasia.org)