

## Community-Based Welfare Provision in the Caucasus and Central Asia

**Investigator** Dr Babken V. Babajanian

### Aims and objectives of the work programme

My post-doctoral work programme will address the issue of the effectiveness, accountability and legitimacy of community-based actors in delivering social welfare within the political, social and institutional context of the Caucasus (Armenia) and Central Asia (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan). I expect to consolidate, expand and publicise my doctoral research and to introduce a comparative perspective to my topic.

### Key research questions and methods

My post-doctoral work will examine how community-based formal and informal institutions mediate access to important public infrastructure and services, resources and opportunities and will draw implications for broader poverty reduction strategies.

My work programme will largely draw upon my doctoral research. In my doctoral fieldwork in 2002-2004, I gathered rich qualitative data on various aspects of institutional and social organisation in rural communities in post-Soviet Armenia. I plan to carry out further fieldwork in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in order to gather additional data and strengthen the comparative aspect of my work. In my fieldwork, I will mostly use qualitative research techniques.

### Relation to the programme

My work programme will produce new empirical evidence on the effectiveness, legitimacy and accountability of community-based institutions in delivering social welfare in the Caucasus and Central Asia. It will help in making theoretical generalisations and 'lesson-drawing' about community-based institutions in post-Soviet transition. It will also expand the boundaries of 'non-governmental actors' beyond the commonly accepted 'Western model' of civil society to the informal sector.

### Relevance of this research to user groups

My work programme will be of immediate relevance for academics, policy-makers, civil society organisations and external donors supporting poverty reduction efforts in the Caucasus and Central Asia. It will provide important empirical knowledge and analysis for improving our understanding of the voluntary/informal sector and its poverty reduction role in the region.

### Contact details

Dr Babken V. Babajanian, Department of Social Policy, London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2 2AE; Tel: 0207 955 7364; Fax: 0207 955 7415

E-mail: [B.V.Babajanian@lse.ac.uk](mailto:B.V.Babajanian@lse.ac.uk)