

Data Initiative Survey for Azerbaijan announced

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On Nov. 30 in the International Press Center the results of the Caucasus Research Resource Center's (CRRC) 2006 Data Initiative Survey for Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus were unveiled.

CRRC Azerbaijan Director Anar Ahmadov informed journalists about some of the results. The estimated unemployment rates in 2006 were Azerbaijan - 22.5 percent, Georgia - 45.3 percent, and Armenia - 25.2 percent. The estimated unemployment rate in Baku in 2006 was 14.7 percent (in 2004 32, 2 percent). Migrants' primary reasons for leaving their home in 2006 were; Personal reasons - 16.3 percent, not a high enough salary - 9.1 percent and can't find a job - 73.3 percent. The migrant's which leave their country for Russia - in Baku was 100 percent, in Tbilisi - 31.2 percent, and Yerevan - 61.3 percent. 18.4 percent of Azeris, 7.7 percent of Georgians and 23.5 percent of Armenians took loans and debits from other peoples several times. In response to the question "Is the government moving in the right direction?" 41.7 percent of rural Azeris said yes, and 19.5 percent of Azeris believes that in next three years the economy will increase. The number of smokers in Azerbaijan is 22 percent, in Georgia 20.5 percent and in Armenia 22.5 percent.

Jamal Shahverdiyev, the Eurasia Foundation Country Director marked that CRRC opened in 2003 and is a network of resource and training centers in the capital cities of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia. A partnership between the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Eurasian Foundation, the program's aims are to increase the accessibility of high-quality research resources, to strengthen capacity and to increase the dialogue and collaboration between social science researches and policy practitioners. Direct and indirect beneficiaries include social science researchers, faculty from academic institutions, policy practitioners, and other professionals from the nongovernmental, private and public sectors.

Dr. Hans Gutbord, CRRC's Regional Director, said that the CRRC Data Initiative Survey (DIS) is a yearly household survey containing over 120 questions. CRRC conducts the DIS simultaneously in Azerbai-



jan, Georgia and Armenia. The first one was coordinated in 2004, the DIS aims to provide publicly accessible, consistent raw data on a wide range of issues related to demography, education, migration, economic behavior, health, political activities, social institutions and crime. This type of annual data in a format accessible to the public was sorely lacking in the South Caucasus before the creation of the DIS. The DIS is unique because it coordinates three simultaneous surveys and brings together experts from Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia to ensure that all data-collecting methods, polling, interviewing and archiving are in sync. Not only does the DIS promote cooperation and coordination, it also adheres to the highest international standards for household surveys. For instance, unlike most surveys in the South Caucasus, the DIS uses actualization, a process through which the accuracy of residential records is verified by interviewers before surveying begins.

As it was mentioned above, the CRRC began the Data Initiative in 2004. In the first year, CRRC surveyed 4,500 households - 1,500 each in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia. In 2004, the DIS was limited to the capital cities of the South Caucasus countries - Baku, Tbilisi, and Yerevan. In the second year, CRRC again surveyed 1,500 households in each country of South Caucasus.

In 2005, however, CRRC surveyed 750 households in each capital city and

expanded the survey to include 750 households in one region in each country: these regions, each consisting of several administrative districts (rayons), were the Aran Region in Azerbaijan, Kotyakh Region in Armenia and Shida-Kartli Region in Georgia.

In 2006, CRRC expanded the DIS to include over 2,000 households in each country of the South Caucasus, surveying a total of over 6,800 households. Furthermore the survey was expanded to all regions of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia controlled by the central governments (excluding Nakhichevan in Azerbaijan). The number of interviews in each region was allotted proportionally to the population of that region.

The survey now paints a more comprehensive picture of attitudes and behavior throughout the South Caucasus. The data now presents researches and policymakers with a sample size large enough to provide statistically valid comparisons among age groups and between urban and rural populations, genders, capitals and regions.

If additional funding can be raised, CRRC hopes to expand the size of DIS in the future to 4,000 respondents per country in order to be able to provide a sample size large enough to allow for comparisons among regions. CRRC is also looking for new partners interested in adding questions to the DIS.

For more information visit www.crcc.az.