



**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
JOINT PHD PROGRAM**  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

**Viktor Burlaka**, Joint PhD student (Social Work and Psychology), is conducting research that focuses on understanding substance behaviors among Ukrainian populations particularly youth and their families. With funding from NIH/Fogarty and Ukrainian collaborators, I am conducting research on:

- the emergence of drinking and drinking related problems in families with children ages 9 to 16 years old.
- youth patterns of increased involvement with alcohol and co-occurring problem behaviors and psychopathology
- youth alcohol usage and daily spiritual
- family-level factors that may be co-occurring with increased alcohol use and abuse

Family-level factors include:

- parenting strategies
- alcohol abuse
- mental health problems
- social support system
- parental coping skills
- conflicts in the home
- experiences of trauma
- cohesion and flexibility of family system

**Charity Hoffman**, Joint PhD student (Social Work and Sociology), is studying how intergroup dialogue and the pedagogy developed around it can facilitate cross-cultural communications and help to build relationships and mediate conflict. My interest in dialogue began during my social work internship, where I co-facilitated intergroup dialogue at local high schools in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, Michigan. I have taken this work to Haiti, where I work with Haitian colleagues on adapting the dialogue model to teach Social Work courses at the Enstiti pou Travay Sosyal ak Syans Sosyal (ETS-Institute for Social Work and Social Research) in Petionville, Haiti. Theoretically, my work is influenced by Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and by historical and contemporary events that have affected Haiti.

**Taylor Long**, Joint PhD student (Social Work and Political Science), conducted a survey of four Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. The primary purpose of the survey was to assess the situation and status of Palestinian refugees formerly resident in neighboring Syria, who have fled to the refugee camps in Lebanon as a result of the conflict in Syria.

Because of their status as stateless persons, all residents of the camps must contend with numerous challenges to their well-being in addition to the threat of violence, including restrictions on the right to work and own property, endemic poverty, poor living conditions, and a lack of political representation.

The survey assessed:

- the rate of poverty
- the rate of victimization for human rights violations
- the number of Palestinian refugees from Syria hosted by the camp
- measures of social cohesion and informal social control
- access to relief and assistance
- Palestinian public opinion

This research was part of a larger program of assistance funded by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in Beirut, Lebanon, implemented by the local research, and consulting firm Pursue Ltd.

**Guillermo Sanhueza**, Joint PhD student, (Social Work and Sociology), is working in the Chilean Bureau of Prisons (*Gendarmeria de Chile*, in Spanish) as an evaluator designing, testing and implementing an assessment of the different dimensions of the concept of human rights. The design encompasses in prison contexts, which include material aspects as well as non-material conditions among a representative, nationwide sample of inmates.

Today, Chile has about 45,000 prisoners and is one of the highest incarceration rates in the Americas with about 295 inmates per 100,000 occupying second place in the region just after the United States. A number of international and national reports on human rights have expressed serious concerns about the situation of human rights in Chilean prisons. For example, a recent report from the Chilean Institute of Human Rights [INDH] has revealed:

- inmates fearing for their safety
- lack of appropriate medical assistance
- facilities with very poor sanitary conditions
- virtually no access to drug treatment and rehabilitative activities
- intrusive scrutiny (as well as inmates relatives)
- unnecessary brute force
- exaggerated use of solitary-confinement as a way to deal with prison misconduct

This project expects to serve as a basis for improving decision-making processes regarding specific problems affecting different facilities nationwide, allowing the design of prison-by-prison plans for improvement. Although this project is mostly funded by the Chilean government –through the National Bureau of Prisons—funding has also come from the University of Michigan 2013 *Irene & William Gambrell Fellowship* for integrating practice, research, and ethical issues the 2012 *Graduate Student Research Grant* Rackham Graduate School.

**Maria Wathen**, Joint PhD student (Social Work and Sociology) is conducting a dissertation titled, "*Civic Culture Frameworks, Volunteerism, and Implications for Family and Child Welfare: A case study of Nizhny Novgorod, Russia*", explores the development of voluntary organizations and their impact on social services to families and children in the emerging democracy of Russia. Volunteerism is a new phenomenon in Russia, and because of pressing needs and scarce resources, volunteer organizations are developing and working in innovative ways in the field of social services.

Because the transition from a socialist past to a "managed capitalism" has been tumultuous and contradictory, and because volunteers and volunteer organizations do not have indigenous historical models to draw from, the Russian context provides an ideal setting in which to examine innovations. My research is funded by a Fulbright IIE Fellowship and a Rackham International Research Award.