



European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 29, DECEMBER 2023

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Message from the Chair of the Alumni Association



Dear friends and fellow alumni,

The past few weeks have passed in a flurry of activity, as you will notice from the articles in the newsletter. The re-energising of the Alumni Association has been clear, as we resume physical meetings and move on to the next stage of the association's existence. It is amazing what the opportunity to see each other face to face can achieve. This was evident in November, when, in the space of a fortnight, we held a drinks event at the International Finance Corporation (IFC) for our Washington, DC chapter, then our first physical annual reunion since before the pandemic at our new Canary Wharf headquarters. It was nice to see the joy that our alumni obviously felt at being able to greet old friends. I am now in discussion with many regional office heads about holding annual events in the economies where we operate for local alumni.

Both the Washington and London events gave us the chance to discuss how to make the association more tangible for both its members and the Bank, which funds our group. We are almost at the end of the process to draw up a strategy for the next few years, but I can reveal that it includes holding more events, increasing opportunities for alumni to actively support the Bank's work, and drawing on EBRD alumni to enhance its delivery. Once everything has been finalised, I will be sharing more details with you.

Our next stage of work will be to make sure that the Alumni Association Advisory Committee is revamped to make it more representative of all members. We are exploring how to ensure alumni can be put forward by members for service on the committee.

In this edition of the newsletter, you can hear about how one of our alumni, Jelena Madir, is returning to the Bank as Chief Compliance Officer; learn more on Dermot Doorly's haunting visit to Chernobyl; and read Evgenia Evstegneeva's account of how the EBRD shaped her professionally.

Hans Peter Lankes discusses his new role at the Overseas Development Institute; read how Sanzhar Shalkarbekov is making a difference in Kazakhstan; and Nigel Jollands updates us on the journey of a lifetime – all for a good cause. Talking of good causes, hear about the work being done through the EBRD Community Initiative and how you can contribute.

Lastly, if you are interested in becoming a Nominee Director, there's an article on what to do.

This last edition of our newsletter for 2023 also contains updates on what the Bank is doing, including its presence at the recent COP28 climate conference, as it proves it is more important than ever in our challenging world.

It's such a pleasure to be your Chair. Recent weeks have been a reminder of how talented and influential our alumni are.

Wishing you all the very best for the holiday season and for 2024.

Jonathan

BANK NEWS

THE EBRD AT COP28



COP28, Dubai. The largest summit to date, this year's global climate conference was held in a vast, three-year-old expo centre, where avenues of pavilions converged on a giant, lacy dome. It was a sophisticated venue. Everything worked. Participants rushed from one event to another – dressed in business suits, t-shirts or feathery creations, all with their COP passes around their necks – through quiet courtyards fringed with trees or screens of cut metal to shade them from the sun. Every evening, the dome rang with music and lit up with changing patterns and colours. "It's red now!" "Oh, look, camels and palm trees!" murmured tired attendees en route to the exit, stopping to film the latest display.

As with any Conference of the Parties (COP), the sheer number of attendees made a powerful impression: long queues at the entrance and back into the sparkling, modern tube network, more queues for coffee, and everyone in every queue talking (all that coffee). Big concerns (will the Suez Canal dry up as a result of climate change, destroying world trade?) blended with smaller ones (Where is the best coffee? Where is my next meeting? Will I ever have time to find the Tajik café with the carpets?).

Although Greta Thunberg skipped COP28, a lot of global personalities could be glimpsed riding on buggies around the centre, chatting at pavilions or on screens throughout the venue, from Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (otherwise known as Lula) to Britain's King Charles III. My personal highlight was the affectionate banter between World Bank President Ajay Banga and Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley at a meeting in the plenary area, where he told the story of how they had first met in an airport lounge and how, ever since, she'd been persuading him to go further on climate ("That's good, Ajay, but it's not good enough!").

She's right to keep up the pressure, of course. As successive reports by scientists for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) show, climate change is happening faster than anticipated, the impacts and

damage are greater than expected, and the time for remedial action is narrowing rapidly.

COP28 included a global stocktake of climate action so far in a bid to understand how to more rapidly meet the 2015 goal of limiting global warming to within 1.5 °C of pre-industrialised levels by 2050.

COPs have a complex format – two weeks, with multiple tracks: world leaders discussing their action agenda for the first two days, business and activist communities in the parallel Blue and Green Zones in non-stop meetings for 12 days and, throughout, negotiations being held behind closed doors, leading to the meeting's final statement at the end of the fortnight.

As most people leave well before that final statement, there is often a disconnect between it and any personal COP experience. The excitement of actually being there, the sense of purpose engendered by being around so many other people buzzing at the success of a meeting or celebrating the achievement of a goal, can sometimes dissipate on learning of the final read-out – a stark reminder of all the bigger problems still waiting to be solved.

The received wisdom, however, is that, though COPs are often frustrating events, they are also a means of keeping attention focussed on the need to move towards net zero by mid-century. They are also so multifaceted that their outcomes can't be reduced to a single bullet point; they should be seen as a multiplicity of small wins and losses, moving (hopefully) in a good direction overall.

The EBRD delegation in Dubai had a twin agenda: first, to showcase and develop the work of multilateral development banks (MDBs) on climate (they are a major and growing source of climate finance) and, second, the EBRD's own work, given its strategic green focus.





With much attention in recent months on MDBs' role in promoting the green transition, it was interesting to see the energy and enthusiasm of MDB presidents meeting in Dubai. They posed for a group photo for the first time in several years. They issued a strong joint statement outlining their shared ambition to respond to the urgency of the climate agenda. And they launched a Long-Term Strategies programme to provide technical and policy support to countries for climate planning.

The MDB focus was on country platforms – country-led climate programmes that integrate policy reform, investor appetite, donor support and MDB engagement to accelerate systemic change.

The EBRD has plenty to offer on this front, including its success this year with the country platform launched at COP27 in Egypt – the energy pillar of Egypt's Nexus for Food, Water and Energy. The strategy is already delivering on its aim to replace 5 GW of fossil-fuel plants with 10 GW of solar and wind energy by 2028, unlocking at least US\$ 10 billion in private investment. Together with the Green Climate Fund, two of the three projects that will add 1.8 GW of renewable energy originate with the EBRD: a 500-megawatt wind project in the Gulf of Suez area and a 200-megawatt solar power project at Kom Ombo.

The EBRD is now capitalising on this experience by working with other countries on their plans to raise their climate ambition through country-led platforms and similar systemic approaches. At a packed event at COP28, North Macedonia launched a just energy transition investment platform to guide its far-reaching plans for a low-carbon and just transition of the electricity sector – a milestone for a historically coal-dependent country. The EBRD has been supporting the government in developing the platform and will lead coordination with international partners.

Also in Dubai, the EBRD joined other MDBs in announcing plans to include climate-related debt clauses in loan agreements with sovereign, sovereign-guaranteed and municipal clients from lower-middle-income countries. This will enable debt deferral on pre-agreed terms after extreme climate-related events – including floods, droughts and earthquakes – giving clients breathing space to compensate for loss and damage suffered. (The EBRD already offers private-sector partners instruments that deliver similar flexibility).

What is more, in addition to joining with other MDBs to announce shared principles in their work on nature and biodiversity, the EBRD unveiled its own approach to nature during COP28.

The final document of COP28 came on Wednesday 13 December. Following a summit dominated by somewhat fraught discussions on the energy transition, nearly 200 countries agreed to a deal that, for the first time, called on all nations to transition away from fossil fuels to avert the worst effects of climate change (albeit without an explicit commitment to phase out fossil fuels). Countries also backed a call for global renewable energy to be tripled and the rate of energy efficiency improvements to be doubled by 2030. A loss and damage fund was also established to help the most vulnerable nations repair damage caused by climate breakdown, though work remains to be done on building its capacity.

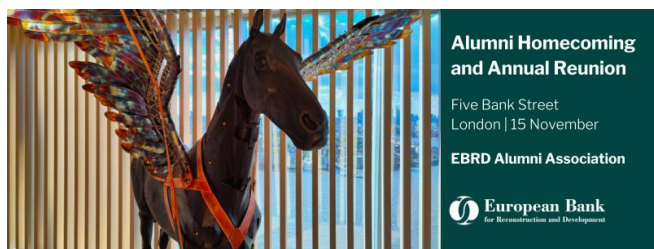
As COP decisions are political ones taken by our shareholder countries, it is beyond the EBRD's remit to comment on the final document. However, as EBRD President Odile Renaud-Basso tweeted, "we stand ready to support our countries in implementing the commitments made, such as tripling renewables, reduction of methane and many others, through financing, policy work and mobilisation of the private sector".

We look forward to finding out more about their progress at COP29, scheduled to take place in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November next year.

Vanora Bennett
Principal, Communications
Media Relations



ALUMNI REUNION



The highly anticipated alumni reunion took place on Wednesday 15 November, bringing together more than 170 former and current staff members for a memorable evening at our new headquarters.

The evening began with a warm welcome from the President, Odile Renaud-Basso, who expressed her gratitude for the continued support and engagement of our alumni and stressed her desire to strengthen the cooperation to benefit both the Bank and alumni.

Alumni also heard remarks from the Honorary Chair of the Association, Jonathan Charles, and the previous Chair, George Krivicky, on cooperation so far and the opportunities ahead.

The event continued with a panel discussion on “Reimagining Ukraine: Charting the course for Ukraine's real economy in wartime”. Alumni and staff heard from Beata Javorcik, EBRD Chief Economist, Artem Shevlev, EBRD Alternate Director for Switzerland, Ukraine, Liechtenstein, Turkmenistan, Serbia, Montenegro and Uzbekistan, and Sevki Acuner, former EBRD Country Director for Ukraine. The discussion delved into the challenges and opportunities facing Ukraine's economy and explored strategies for sustainable growth in the midst of conflict.

Following the panel discussion, alumni and staff got together to network and raise money for our staff fundraising initiatives.

The reception was filled with laughter and animated conversation as former colleagues caught up with each other and forged new connections. The reunion provided a platform for alumni to share their experiences, exchange ideas and explore potential collaborations.

Adding a touch of art and philanthropy to the event, the Kids and Art for Ukraine Exhibition, part of the Community Initiative-backed staff fundraising exercise, offered an opportunity to own paintings and raise funds for the war-torn country. You can view the paintings and choose one or more in exchange for a donation here: <https://lnkd.in/ekfYRRtc>

We would like to thank you all for attending the alumni reunion and look forward to turning it into an event.

Lori Coretchi
Alumni Association Coordinator
Communications Department



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WASHINGTON, DC CHAPTER



It was the start of a new era, a new chapter in the development of the EBRD's Alumni Association, the first step in making it an even more effective advocate for the Bank while delivering more for former employees.

What was this important milestone? A party – though not just any party. Former EBRD staff based in Washington, DC, joined me and Lori Coretchi, Alumni Association Coordinator, for the Alumni Association's first face-to-face event since the pandemic. The wine, canapés and venue were provided by former Deputy General Counsel Ramit Nagpal, now Vice President and General Counsel at the IFC. The gathering was a reminder of how former EBRD employees continue to have significant influence. Among the attendees were Alexia Latortue, US Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Markets (former EBRD Managing Director, Corporate Strategy), World Bank Vice President Lisa Rosen (former EBRD Chief Compliance Officer), a host of other World Bank and IFC senior staff who moved from the EBRD, former EBRD Vice President Phil Bennett, who remains actively involved in various issues, a big fintech investor and many others. They all remain powerful voices, enthusiastic about what the EBRD does.

The renewed activity is all part of a strategy to deliver more tangible benefits from the Association to both former staff and the Bank. It will build on the work done by founding Chair George Krivicky. In my new role as Honorary Chair, I am drawing up a new strategy that will help the Bank to avail much more of the skills and influence of our alumni to advance its mission. In return, the alumni will have more opportunities to engage with both the Bank and each other. The aim is to ensure that our alumni feel part of an extended family and can still contribute to a Bank they believe has a major role to play in an increasingly troubled world.

Jonathan Charles
Honorary Chair
Alumni Association



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ARAIO ANNUAL MEETING



We had the privilege of attending the 45th annual meeting of the Association of Retirees and Alumni of International Organizations (ARAIO) in Washington, DC on 10 November, hosted by Anis Dani, President of the 1818 Society of World Bank Group alumni and Anne Van Wylick, International Monetary Fund Retirees Association (IMFRA) President.

The one-day workshop at International Monetary Fund (IMF) headquarters brought together a diverse group of retiree representatives from various international organisations, such as the Asian Development Bank, the Association of Retirees of the Organization of American States, IDB Bank, IMFRA, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/Association of Former World Health Organization Staff (ASFM), the United Nations Association of International Civil Servants (AFCIS/NY) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Alumni Association. The presence of representatives from these organisations added immense value to the discussions and provided a global perspective on managing alumni networks, benefits, own-managed services and knowledge-sharing among alumni/retiree associations.

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Lori Coretchi
Alumni Association Coordinator
Communications Department



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RECONNECTING WITH THE BANK

Our alumni continue to bring immense value to the Bank through knowledge transfer, volunteering, ambassadorships and consultancy appointments. Their extensive knowledge of the institution and expertise remain highly relevant and beneficial to the organisation. By sharing the experience and insights gained during their tenure at the Bank, alumni offer a unique and deep understanding of the institution's operations, culture and strategic objectives.

Jelena Madir ('19) returns to the Bank as Chief Compliance Officer



After almost 11 years at the EBRD, Jelena Madir left the Bank to work with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, where she led the legal unit for four years. Now she is back. Jelena was recently appointed as the Bank's Chief Compliance Officer. Her decision to return was, first and foremost, the great experience she had working at the Bank and the inspiring role models and mentors she had, such as former General Counsel Marie-Anne Birken ('20); former Vice President of Risk and Compliance Betsy Nelson ('19) and former Chief Compliance Officer Lisa Rosen ('21).

When the role of the Chief Compliance Officer was advertised earlier this year, several colleagues encouraged Jelena to apply. What attracted her to the role was the extremely broad remit of the Office of the Chief Compliance Officer (OCCO).

"It covers investigations in relation to both EBRD staff and projects, ethics, capital markets compliance, integrity due diligence, tax domiciliation and policies related to each of these areas," she says. "I undertook a year-long secondment to OCCO in 2015 and really enjoyed the substance of the work. My primary task at the time was to revise the EBRD's enforcement (sanctions) policy and procedures, which really sparked my interest in this area, and I ended up pursuing a PhD on the sanctions regimes of MDBs."

"I was also lucky that, during that year, OCCO was responsible for several other initiatives, so I got an opportunity to work on the set-up of the EBRD's capital markets compliance function and the revision of procedures for non-executive directors serving on the boards of the EBRD's investee companies," she adds.

"Lastly, I am a transactional lawyer by background, so I am also looking forward to being involved in the EBRD's projects again – this time from the integrity due diligence angle. It is really that breadth of OCCO's scope of work and its pivotal role in ensuring the EBRD's integrity and reputation, coupled with the Bank's unique and important mission that attracted me to this particular role and back to the EBRD."

Jelena's new position aligns with her career goals and aspirations. "This role brings together so many of my areas of interest and expertise – transactional, policy, ethics, staff-related matters, and debarment regimes," she says. "I am also excited to be part of the Bank's Senior Leadership Group and contributing to the strategic direction of the organisation."

Jelena also noted the changes and developments the Bank has gone through since her departure. "I have been gone for four years and, during this time, the Bank has adopted a new Strategic and Capital Framework," she says. "The few developments that stand out are: (1) the increased focus on transformation, (2) the Bank's new Green Economy Transition, which is truly inspiring; and (3) the Bank's support for Ukraine, which extends well beyond pure financing."

Jelena has a clear plan as to how she will contribute to the EBRD's growth and success. "In my new role, I want to ensure that, as a team, OCCO is fully aligned with the Bank's strategic priorities," she says. "In addition, I am someone who is always keen to look for opportunities to optimise processes and achieve efficiencies for the benefit of the organisation as a whole, so that will also be towards the top of my priorities. I am hopeful that, with the increased use of technology, we can generate data to better analyse and communicate information and trends and streamline some of the workflows."

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance was an incredible experience that turned into a much bigger role than Jelena could have ever imagined, "I joined Gavi as General Counsel in November 2019, right before the pandemic," she says. "In the summer of 2020, Gavi assumed a leading role in administering the Covax Facility – the world's largest programme for the production and distribution of Covid-19 vaccines. The enormity of this project cannot be understated: we had to simultaneously negotiate agreements with 200 countries and about 10 vaccine manufacturers. Because this had never been done before, it was unclear what risks each party would take and how residual risks should be mitigated."

"The former Chief Executive Officer of Gavi used to refer to the programme as 'building a ship while sailing in the middle of the pandemic storm'," she says. "The significant legal risks of this programme and eventually the range of complex financing instruments that aided in trying to mitigate residual risks were quite daunting."

When Jelena started at Gavi, she had a team of four lawyers and was severely under-resourced for this kind of task. She therefore had to quickly recruit new people with the requisite skillset (and to make things more difficult, anyone with the experience in the health sector was in high demand at the time), while “keeping the ship afloat” and motivating existing team members who were working around the clock. This experience certainly tested Jelena’s leadership skills and resilience.

Reflecting on the skills and knowledge she gained during her time at Gavi that will be valuable in her new role at the Bank, Jelena cites the variety of her work and her involvement in advisory on a broad variety of legal issues, from employment disputes to complex contractual relationships with vaccine manufacturers, governments and other international organisations.

“This was also the first time that I was part of an organisation’s Senior Management Team, which meant that I participated in decisions pertaining to the running of the organisation – a range of administrative matters and strategic matters in relation to the types of initiatives that the organisation should be pursuing on the programmatic side,” she says.

The governance structure of Gavi is quite complex – it is organised as a public-private partnership, whose board comprises not only government representatives (as in the case of the EBRD), but also representatives of the pharmaceutical industry from both developed and developing countries, research institutions, civil society organisations, the Gates Foundation and three other international organisations (the World Bank, the World Health Organization and UNICEF, the United Nations Children’s Fund).

“As you can imagine, this governance structure presents a number of challenges,” Jelena says. “As Gavi is entirely donor funded, this also requires a delicate balancing of donor and other competing interests on the board, while also ensuring that the interests of Gavi as a corporate entity are adequately protected.”

The key skills Jelena believes will be valuable in her new role at the Bank are diverse stakeholder management and the positioning of control functions such as legal and compliance as true business partners, rather than primarily identifiers of risk.

ALUMNI CALL



EBRD Nominee Director Programme

At the start of the year, the EBRD appointed Justin Robertson as Head of the Board Development and Expert Network to lead on the Nominee Director Programme for the Equity Group.

Under Justin’s stewardship, the EBRD continues to make substantial changes to its Nominee Director programme, including streamlining and centralising processes, adding new training courses and widening its network of quality non-executive directors.

If you or anyone in your network would like to be considered for a Nominee Directorship or to attend the 2024 conference on Tuesday 8 October 2024, please contact Justin Robertson at NomineeDirectors@ebrd.com.

IN FOCUS

Dermot Doorly ('22): “Photographing the Chernobyl project was a haunting symbol of the lives that were disrupted and the innocence that was lost”



Dermot Doorly, our former Head of Photography, a self-taught photographer and graphic designer, had a successful career with Getty Images before joining the EBRD. He was drawn to the EBRD by its reputation as a bank that gives back and does good in the world. He started in 2011 and never expected his maternity cover position to last for 11 years. Recently Dermot was on the panel of judges for the EBRD Staff Photo Competition, an annual competition for avid photographers at the Bank. One of Dermot's most significant projects at the Bank, however, remains his involvement in documenting the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster for the [EBRD Project: Ukraine – Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant](#).

Despite the risks associated with the Chernobyl site, Dermot felt that visiting the plant was an opportunity he could not pass up. He visited Chernobyl multiple times for the project, capturing footage that was used by the BBC and contributing to the understanding of the disaster's impact. Dermot says it was a privilege to be able to contribute to such an important story.



Capturing the essence and impact of the Chernobyl disaster in photographs was a challenge. The technical limitations, such as poor lighting and an inability to use tripods, made it difficult to capture the scenes in the way he envisioned. Instead, Dermot focused on capturing the raw and haunting beauty of the abandoned buildings, the overgrown vegetation and the desolate landscapes.

“I wanted to convey the sense of loss and the lasting impact of the disaster,” he says. “One of the most memorable moments I [captured](#) was when the Sarcophagus was finally complete and I had a sense of closure; its incredible size and contrast to a rusted Ferris wheel in an abandoned amusement park. It was a haunting symbol of the lives that were disrupted and the innocence that was lost.”

“As we walked, I could feel the weight of history and the magnitude of the disaster. It was a sombre and eerie experience, knowing that we were stepping on ground that had been forever changed by the Chernobyl explosion. The ruins and remnants of the power plant were a stark reminder of the devastation that occurred,” he recalls.

Another striking image was a close-up of a decaying gas mask, a chilling reminder of the dangers that lurked in the air. Overall, photographing the Chernobyl project was a humbling and emotional experience for Dermot: “It was a privilege to document the aftermath and contribute to the understanding of the disaster's impact. Through my photographs, I hoped to convey the resilience of the human spirit and the importance of learning from our past mistakes.”

Throughout his time at the EBRD, Dermot had the opportunity to travel to 15 or 16 countries, including Tajikistan and Ukraine. He developed a love for Ukraine and its people and finds speaking about the ongoing war in the country to be heartbreaking. He has a lot of friends who are still in the country.

“Projects that focused on giving a voice to marginalised communities or raising awareness about social issues were the ones that had the most impact on me,” he says. “For example, I worked on a [project](#) documenting the lives of refugees and asylum seekers, highlighting their stories and struggles. This project allowed me to connect with individuals who had experienced unimaginable hardships, but were willing to share their stories with a wider audience.”

Another project that stands out to Dermot is the [Chisinau River Bic Rehabilitation and Flood Protection Project](#), which focused on addressing the priority environmental challenges of climate adaptation and water quality.

During his time at the EBRD, Dermot also had the opportunity to visit remote areas affected by deforestation and witness the devastating consequences on local ecosystems and communities.

These projects reinforced Dermot's belief in the urgency of taking action to protect our planet and the importance of advocating for sustainable practices. "These experiences have shaped my perspective and fuelled my passion for using photography as a tool for positive change," he says.

Dermot's work in Jordan was another highlight for him due to the warm hospitality he experienced there. The [Al Ghabawi solid waste](#) project involved creating methane gas from landfill waste in Amman. This aligned with Dermot's principles of sustainability. "I used to love going to Jordan," he says. "The best projects I did, I think, were in Jordan, because they are such nice people and they always made me feel so welcome. Not that I did not feel the same in other countries too, but I would say especially in somewhere like Jordan, the hospitality was just amazing."

Another memorable trip was to a remote village in Tajikistan near the Afghan border to film the installation of a [Climadapt](#) project solar panel installation. Dermot felt privileged to have visited such unique places and appreciated the EBRD's reach in every corner of the world. These experiences have transformed him, he says, making him feel ingrained in the work and culturally enriched. "Tajikistan was a very memorable trip because, again, it was so different to anything I'd seen before. It was so far away it took us about four hours to drive there and the last an hour and a half were over dirt roads to a village that gets cut off in winter. It was incredible to see. It was just the most beautiful remote village. I'm almost 100 per cent sure that I am the only Irish person that has ever been there. That's one of the real privileges of working at the Bank: the EBRD gets into every corner and every vein of the world. In the countries where we work, we get to the tiniest, tiniest places, helping people who have nothing."

Dermot feels a deep connection to the organisation and its projects; he is now ingrained in the work and it has become a part of him. Working with people from diverse nationalities has enriched his cultural understanding and made him more tolerant and open-minded. He appreciates having had the opportunity to experience different cultures, foods and ways of thinking. He recalls the richness and depth that this diversity brings to the organisation and how it has shaped his own perspective. "I remember one Christmas lunch with the team," he says. "There were about 60 people in our department and we counted 33 different nationalities, eating Georgian food in London. It is just fascinating, because there are not many companies like that in the world."

Dermot fondly remembers moments of cultural exchange and the friendships formed with colleagues from around the world. Whether it was sharing meals together, discussing local customs or celebrating festivals, these experiences have created a sense of camaraderie and unity within the organisation.

He believes that this diversity of nationalities within the EBRD is not only a strength, but also a reflection of the global impact and reach of the organisation. It reinforces the importance of international cooperation and collaboration in addressing global challenges and working towards a more sustainable and inclusive future.

Dermot also acknowledges the immense effort that goes into each project, from the numbers and taxes to the small loans that can change people's lives. He believes that anyone who has the chance to travel and see these projects first-hand should take it, as it provides a profound understanding of the impact being made. He suggests that even those in backroom roles or support staff should have the opportunity to witness the difference they are making.

When asked about the people who have shaped his career, Dermot finds it hard to pick out individuals and says that every single person he came across has shaped him in some form or another. Pushed for names, though, he mentions Marjola Xhunga, Director of Daily Engagement and Operations, who made him feel at ease from the outset and was so welcoming on a nervous first day, and Jane Ross ('22), his first manager, former Head of Editorial and Creative, who taught him the value of loyalty to one's team.

Dermot sees his photography as a way of telling his own life story. He appreciates how photographs capture memories and allow him to look back on his experiences. He wants to create a book of his journeys once he retires, cherishing the memories captured in each photograph.

Dermot has recently relocated to his native Dublin to spend more time with family. He now oversees digital strategy at [Love Your Spot](#), a company he set up with two of his friends.

Read Dermot's Chernobyl experience in his own words: [HERE](#)



Lori Coretchi
Alumni Association Coordinator
Communications Department

ALUMNI NEWS

Evgenia Evstegneeva ('13): “The EBRD shaped me into the professional I am today”



Evgenia Evstegneeva, a passionate events manager and wedding celebrant, started her career as an executive support professional in the Tashkent (Uzbekistan) Resident Office, where she worked for four years. She then moved to the Almaty (Kazakhstan) Resident Office for the next five years, until setting up her wedding management consultancy in 2013. Reflecting on her time at the EBRD, Evgenia considers it a formative period in her life. She describes the organisation as a parental figure and feels a deep connection to it.

When organising her wedding, Evgenia noticed a gap in the market for wedding services in the Commonwealth of Independent States and decided to fill it. In 2009, she set up a wedding blog, which quickly gained attention in the Russian-speaking world. Inspired by Western-style weddings, she offered her services to do-it-yourself brides through online forums and developed a community called the “Girl Tribe”. The community gained in popularity, attracting media attention and expanding its reach. Evgenia decided to pursue her passion for event management and went freelance.

“I was imagining how I would give Martha Stewart a run for her money!” she jokes. “Being an event manager is not just a job; it is a passion. I was waking up every day inspired to create memorable experiences and bring people's visions to life.”

The transition was not without its challenges, and she often sought support from her former colleagues. Evgenia faced a setback when she was banned from The Girl Tribe forum due to a technical error, for instance, and was never able to recover her account. Determined to continue her work, she had an eureka moment and decided to create her own [website](#) and encourage her followers to move to the new channel. Over the next four years, it flourished, offering unique wedding ideas and organising popular events such as bride parades and trash-the-dress traditional events.

“Building a strong community and network is crucial in any industry,” she says. “I've been fortunate to connect with

talented professionals and like-minded individuals who have supported and inspired me throughout my adventure.”

With the rise of Instagram, Evgenia noticed a decline in website traffic. Undeterred, she shifted her focus to organising exhibitions. She successfully gathered wedding vendors for an annual wedding show called Wedding Extravaganza. “Change is inevitable, and it's important to embrace it and adapt. The wedding industry has evolved significantly over the years, and I'm constantly learning and finding new ways to stay ahead of the curve.” Her dedication and ambitious standards were evident, and she was proud to see the exhibition's success relative to similar events in London recently.

During her time in the wedding industry, Evgenia also became editor-in-chief of a wedding magazine and introduced the concept of wedding celebrant to Kazakhstan. This new role allowed her to combine her skills and create personalised and meaningful ceremonies for couples, “Being a wedding celebrant allows me to combine my love for storytelling, creativity and personal connections,” she says. “It's an honour to be a part of a couple's special day and help them to create a ceremony that truly reflects their love and commitment in an authentic way.”

Evgenia attributes 90 per cent of her success to the high standards instilled in her during her time at the EBRD. “My first manager, Kenji Nakazawa ('15), taught me the importance of attention to detail and discipline,” she says. It was at the EBRD that Evgenia also learned valuable skills in communication, correspondence, business planning and project management, which she applied to revolutionise and modernise the wedding industry in Kazakhstan. She also credits her other managers at the Bank, including, Janett Heckman ('19), Andre Küüsvek ('21), Andrej Witak ('08) and Michael Weinstein ('18) with shaping her both professionally and personally. “I'm grateful for the skills and experiences I gained during my time at the EBRD,” she says. “They shaped me into the professional I am today and continue to inspire me to strive for excellence in everything I do. The EBRD school is truly unique; once you complete it, you can succeed everywhere.”

Evgenia currently lives in London with her husband and daughter, Santa. She continues to work as a wedding celebrant, creating unforgettable moments for couples in the UK and documenting her stories on [Instagram](#). “Creativity is key and you have to have the calling for it,” she says. “I love pushing boundaries, thinking outside the box and creating unique experiences that leave a lasting impression on guests.”

Evgenia's story is testament to her resilience, creativity and determination. “Passion is the driving force behind my work,” she says. “I believe that when you're truly passionate about what you do, it shines through in every aspect of your work and leaves a lasting impression on others.”

You can find Evgenia on Instagram
[@weddingcelebrant.london](#)

Lori Coretchi
Alumni Association Coordinator
Communications Department

Hans Peter Lankes ('16): “The Bank has crept into my DNA”



Hans Peter Lankes has worked twice at the EBRD. The first time was in the Bank's early days, as an economist under John Flemming, Nick Stern and Willem Buiter. The second, following a six-year stint at the IMF, saw him take on various senior roles, including Managing Director, Corporate Strategy and overseeing (with Josue Tanaka) the implementation of the Bank's expansion into the southern and eastern Mediterranean region. He left the EBRD for the IFC in 2016, to work as Vice President, Economics and Private Sector Development. His briefs have included economics, strategy, gender, blended finance, advisory, capital market development and climate business.

Hans Peter's life has recently taken a more academic turn. He has joined the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), a London-based think tank, as Managing Director and Deputy Chief Executive Officer. He also serves as a Visiting Professor in Practice at the London School of Economics Grantham Institute (chaired by his former EBRD colleague, Nick Stern, now Lord Stern of Brentford).

“Having been at the EBRD in the pioneering days and then again experiencing it at maturity and in expansion, the Bank has crept into my DNA,” he says.

A focus on the private sector and private finance as powerful drivers of democracy and prosperity has been a consistent thread in Hans Peter's career. He took the

EBRD's focus on impact – which he helped to develop in the 1990s and later reshaped into its current form – with him to the IFC.

While at the IFC, Hans Peter and his colleagues launched the Operating Principles for Impact Management as a way to link public and private impact investors and counter “impact washing”.

“These principles now have 180 signatories and half a trillion under management,” he says. “They're pretty much a direct product of the approaches we developed at the EBRD two decades earlier.”

Since leaving the world of international financial institutions, Hans Peter has focused strongly on climate finance and the interplay between climate and development. He was a member of the G20 panel on MDB capital adequacy and of the Secretariat of the G20 Independent Expert Group on MDB reform.

“My experience at the EBRD and later at the IFC came in quite handy, of course, and interacting with former colleagues was crucial to the practical way we were able to frame the recommendations – which gave us considerable traction.”

Many of these themes and the connection with EBRD will remain central to Hans Peter's new role at the ODI – which now counts half a dozen EBRD alumni among its governance and staff. Like the EBRD, the ODI has both a development and a “political” mandate, and its programmes range from finance to inclusion, development and climate, with fragility and geopolitics mixed in.

“I'm thrilled to be working quite closely again with colleagues at the Bank,” he says. “At some level, it's a third homecoming.”

Read more about Hans Peter Lankes [HERE](#).

Sanzhar Shalkarbekov ('04): Empowering Kazakhstan's youth



After leaving his position as Associate Banker in the EBRD Central Asia Team in 2004, Sanzhar Shalkarbekov embarked on a life-changing journey to pursue an MBA at the London Business School. Little did he know that this decision would shape his future in unimaginable ways. Armed with his newfound knowledge and a thirst for success, Sanzhar delved into the world of consulting, joining McKinsey & Co. His expertise and strategic thinking propelled him to the position of Strategy Director for SISTEMA, based in Moscow. For nine years, he thrived in the corporate world, making significant contributions to the companies he served.

In 2015, Sanzhar felt a calling to make a difference in a more meaningful way. He decided to leave his corporate career behind and embark on a new adventure in Kazakhstan, specifically in the vibrant city of Astana.

“At the EBRD, I learnt the importance of thorough strategic planning and effective risk management,” he says. “This experience taught me to anticipate challenges, plan for various scenarios and manage risks effectively, which are crucial to the growth and stability of the business.” With a vision to empower young minds and foster a passion for technology, he founded a self-funded educational startup called [Robotek](#). Its mission was clear: to provide children with the opportunity to learn robotics in a fun and engaging manner.

What started as a small initiative soon grew into a leading educational institution, focused solely on robotics courses for school kids. Sanzhar and his team were determined to make a lasting impact on the educational landscape of Kazakhstan.

Driven by their passion, Robotek expanded its reach beyond Astana. With the help of donor funds, they launched projects to provide free robotics classes to children in various regions of Kazakhstan. Five towns and 1,450 kids benefited from this initiative, opening doors to a world of possibilities they had never imagined.

Today, Robotek stands as a beacon of innovation and education, impacting the lives of 1,400 kids on a weekly basis. Not only does it educate young minds, but it also empower teachers through lectures and training sessions, reaching over 400 educators. The firm's dedication to advancing education in robotics led it to develop an edtech robotics platform, now used by 55 public schools across the country.

With a team of 50 passionate individuals, Robotek has become a driving force in preparing kids for robotics tournaments, both domestically and internationally. Its commitment to excellence has been rewarded with an impressive collection of 77 prizes won by its students in various competitions.

Recently, at the World Robot Olympiad in Panama City, Robotek proudly secured second and third places, contributing to Kazakhstan's overall success with three medals. Looking ahead, Sanzhar and his team have ambitious plans to nurture more talent in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and robotics.

Robotek aims to bridge the gap between Kazakhstan's educational system and ever-evolving tech trends, ensuring a greater supply of robotics specialists. Its ultimate goal is to bring this transformative technology closer to society, empowering future generations to thrive in the digital age.

Sanzhar's path from the corporate world to the realm of robotics education is a testament to the power of passion and purpose. Through Robotek, he has not only transformed the lives of countless children, but has also left an indelible mark on the educational landscape of Kazakhstan. With each success, Sanzhar and his team are paving the way for a brighter future where technology and education go hand in hand.



Lori Coretchi
Alumni Association Coordinator
Communications Department

Letter from the Novara: Nigel Jollands ('23) takes to the high seas on a journey of a lifetime



The Novara One Planet Project, led by Nigel Jollands, former EBRD Associate Director, Head of Sustainable Infrastructure, Climate Strategy and Delivery, is an ambitious initiative that aims to address pressing environmental challenges and promote sustainable practices worldwide. Sailing home to New Zealand has been a lifelong dream for Nigel. Together with his wife, Veronica, they're combining their adventure with support for coastal community climate action.

"Have you ever visited Barra in the United Kingdom's outer Hebrides? It's an island where the wind whips in from the Atlantic, trees struggle to take hold and people are resourceful and welcoming. And the community is deeply affected by climate change.

Three months after leaving the EBRD, my wife Veronica and I moored our sailing yacht in Barra's main port. We had been invited there to talk about community climate adaptation at their science festival.

Barra was one of the many stops so far on our adventure on board Novara. We're sailing home to New Zealand and combining this dream with supporting coastal communities with their climate action.

Now in Portugal, after sailing nearly 4,000 miles from London, I've had a chance to reflect on what I'm learning. It's very clear to me that the skills I gained while in the EBRD's Energy Efficiency and Climate Change and Climate Strategy and Delivery teams, leading the Green Cities programme, are very relevant and in huge demand wherever I go. Finance, infrastructure investments, insurance and an understanding of how these intersect with climate change are critical for the many communities we visit. And Veronica's executive coaching experience has also been relevant. So far, we've supported eight communities in enhancing their work on climate adaptation and finance. In four of them, we've provided ongoing mentoring and coaching support through our network of volunteers.

Second, it has also been important for me to get out from behind my desk and experience climate impacts directly – to sail the same water as the coastal communities, so to speak.

There's nothing like being on board Novara in a storm to get a first-hand feel for the power of the weather.

And there's nothing like turning up from the sea to a coastal town or village to add credibility to our message and interaction with the community.

Another theme in my reflection is just how critical it is for communities to lead the design and implementation of the climate actions themselves. While visiting the communities on board Novara, it was clear that climate adaptation is strongly rooted in the local, and deeply personal. From discussions about the frequency and location of road damage during storm events to conversations about whether homes will need to be moved away from coastal flood zones, having solutions imposed from a far-away capital city simply is not welcomed. Solutions need to be discussed, argued and resolved in the local community. This lesson about local engagement totally reinforces the approach we took at the EBRD within the Green Cities programme, to support cities in developing their Green City Action Plans for themselves.

Money is an ever-present challenge for coastal community climate action. Many communities in Scotland were fortunate to receive modest grants from the government. The most sensible way to use that grant money would be to leverage other funding and finance. But how? Many communities had no idea that such leveraging was even possible. From my time at the EBRD, I know many climate finance experts who have experience with this approach. Through Novara's networks, we have been able to link some of the coastal communities with climate finance mentors. These mentors are available to other communities on request.

During my time sailing so far, I have identified a number of capacity gaps together with the climate coordinators in the communities. In particular, while the communities are clearly focused on physical climate risk in their planning, they are not accounting for transition risk, that is, the potential impacts that changing policies (for example, a carbon tax) may have on their assets and infrastructure. Also, there was little discussion of the implication of climate change on the ability to insure community assets. The Novara team is preparing to deliver capacity building workshops on these topics.

As we sailed out of Barra harbour back in June, I recall seeing Shona, the local climate coordinator waving us off from the dock. I can't help wondering what she was thinking – perhaps she was hoping for a future where she didn't have to worry about climate change impacts on her island, her family, her community."

Nigel Jollands

To stay updated on the Novara One Planet Project and join the movement for a more sustainable future, follow the journey [online](#).

INCLUSION



Finding a new home in Croatia

As the war on Ukraine has raged on, countless innocent lives have been upended. People have been forced to flee their homes and seek refuge in neighbouring countries. The vast majority are women.

For many Ukrainian refugees, the journey to safety has been long and difficult. They have traveled by train, bus, car and even on foot, often carrying only what they could fit in a backpack or suitcase.

But the journey doesn't end there. When they reach their destinations, they face many challenges, such as language barriers, a lack of jobs, fear of the unknown, and uncertainty about the future. They are also separated from their loved ones back home.

The [One of Us](#) short documentary follows the stories of four Ukrainian refugees who have settled in Croatia, eager to rebuild their lives, contribute to their new communities and reclaim the future stolen from them by war.

The EBRD's refugee response in Croatia is supported by the [TaiwanBusiness-EBRD Technical Cooperation Fund](#).

Cecilia Calatrava
Principal, Communications
Donor Visibility

EBRD IN UKRAINE MONTHLY

Our monthly newsletter on the EBRD in Ukraine focuses on the Bank's ongoing efforts to support the country's economic stability and resilience.



- EBRD Governors approved [paid-in capital of €4 billion](#). This is the third capital increase in the EBRD's history, following similar decisions in 1996 and 2010. It follows the governors' recognition in May 2023 that supporting Ukraine should be the Bank's highest priority – now and in the future – while also ensuring that it can continue to pursue its strategic priorities across all its regions.
- MDBs seek to [harmonise their procurement systems in Ukraine](#)
- EBRD financing in Ukraine reaches €1.2 billion in 2023 as [Bank's President visits Kyiv](#)
- EBRD expands cooperation with [ProCredit Bank Ukraine to support lending](#)
- EBRD finances upgrade of [Lviv-Rava-Ruska road in Ukraine](#)

Subscribe to the [EBRD in Ukraine Monthly Newsletter](#).

Follow the news: [The EBRD in Ukraine](#).

COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

The Community Initiative is a programme that provides a framework for the engagement of staff and the EBRD in philanthropic, social and cultural activities in the regions where the Bank works.



JORDAN – Acting for Change for development and training

Children are the most vulnerable and immediate victims of war and displacement. Millions of them live in staggeringly challenging conditions, facing trauma, poverty and exclusion, often missing out on their right to an education.

Acting For Change International (AFCI) runs a learning centre in Zaatari village, situated in northern Jordan, close to the Syrian border. It provides refugee children with vital literacy skills, enabling them to build better futures for themselves. By providing a safe and supportive environment, the centre also helps to reduce the likelihood of children falling prey to exploitation, including child labour and child marriage, both coping mechanisms used in the face of financial desperation. The organisation was founded by Kotaiba Alabdullah, a refugee from the Syrian city of Palmyra, in October 2016, as a Syrian refugee-led initiative.

AFCI provides vital learning opportunities to young children (aged 5 to 15) with classes in Arabic, Maths, English and information technology. This work helps and complements the local school system, which is under massive pressure, particularly in rural areas.

The centre is currently at risk of closure due to insufficient funding. Funds raised will be used to help maintain classes for the next academic year, including staff payroll, buying furniture, making essential repairs and providing new equipment (computers, connectivity equipment and so on) to continue providing computer courses.

To donate: [Hope for Tomorrow: Empowering Refugee Children | Acting For Change International](#)



KYRGYZ REPUBLIC - the Uplift-Aufwind public foundation

Registered in Germany, Uplift-Aufwind is a social development non-governmental organisation that has been supporting children with disabilities and their families in the Kyrgyz Republic since 2009. It has introduced new methods of therapy in orphanages and other institutions, and works with young mothers to prevent child abandonment.

To date, the foundation has supported more than 10,000 children through its programmes and involved more than 815 families. Currently, 55 children with disabilities are benefitting from therapy and rehabilitation services at the Uplift centre in Tokmok and approximately 95 babies per year are prevented from being institutionalised.

Funds will be used to support the construction of a new building and the purchase of new equipment for the centre.

To donate: [Uplift-Aufwind](#)

USEFUL RESOURCES



EBRD retirement plans (Final Salary Plan and Money Purchase Plan)

The [MyRetirement](#) plan website, hosted by Willis Towers Watson, is the place for alumni to manage their EBRD retirement plan benefits.

[MyRetirement](#) can be used to view details of benefits, run benefit quotes, review investment choices, make investment switches, make withdrawal requests and submit Final Salary Plan to Money Purchase Plan transfer requests.

A frequently asked questions (FAQ) document, which includes information on how to make investment switches and withdrawals, is available in the Help section at the bottom of the website.

You can access the [MyRetirement](#) website using the link and login details provided to you by Willis Towers Watson when you left the Bank (if you left the Bank before 2015, login details will have been provided as part a bulk exercise in May 2015, when Willis Towers Watson took over the administration). If you have misplaced your login details, you should contact Willis Towers Watson.

Queries on EBRD retirement plans should be directed to Willis Towers Watson, as plan administrators.

Contact Willis Towers Watson

Phone: +44 (0) 1737 828 101
E-mail: ebrd@willistowerswatson.com

Cigna Medical Insurance

There are two options for leavers:

Post-leaving medical plan (PLMP): An insured medical plan that enables eligible staff (aged 50 or over with eight years of service) to pay for medical cover for themselves and their dependents after leaving the EBRD.

Twelve-month continuation of cover: If you are not eligible for the PLMP, you have the option to maintain your cover under the Staff Medical Plan for a maximum of 12 months. You will be required to pay the full premiums for yourself and any eligible dependants directly to Cigna.

Contact Cigna Medical Insurance

Phone: + 32 3 217 56 76
E-mail: clientservice1@cigna.com

This service is available only to former staff who submitted their application directly to Cigna before their last contractual day.

EBRD Human Resources (HR)

The Bank does not provide personalised references, but may provide a certificate of employment. The certificate of employment should be requested from AskHR. If you need a professional reference, you may ask a colleague or manager to provide one, but such a letter must clearly state that their reference letter is written on a personal basis and not on behalf of the Bank.

If future employers or authorities have any questions relating to your EBRD employment status and wish to contact someone, please direct them to the Human Resources Department at headquarters.

Please note that the EBRD is unable to provide any taxation advice or information on National Insurance contributions and the UK State Pension.

Contact EBRD HR

E-mail: askhr.helpdesk@ebrd.com

Please note that the Alumni Association is unable to manage any individual cases or to represent alumni in HR matters.

KEY REMINDERS

- ▶ Join the alumni LinkedIn group
- ▶ Access the alumni platform
- ▶ Reminder to request alumni platform access
- ▶ Follow ebrd.com for news about the Bank's latest projects
- ▶ Update your details



Designed and produced by Lori Coretchi
Alumni Association Coordinator
Communications Department

Send us your feedback and any ideas for future features to alumniE@ebrd.com

*The views and opinions expressed by alumni in interviews and articles in this newsletter reflect the views of the author(s)/interviewee(s) and do not necessarily represent those of the Bank or the Association.