

CREST Residential Fellowship Application Cover Sheet
Academic Year 2013-2014

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Rank Professor

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Previous CREST Residential Fellow? No If yes, give year _____

Title of Research Project: **Developing Tools for Understanding Uzbek Child Rearing as a Mediating Factor in the Government's Reliance on Forced Child Labor**

Application materials:

- a. One copy of proposal narrative of roughly 1,500 words with cover sheet attached. Proposals should describe the project clearly and concisely for a multidisciplinary evaluation panel and address its relevance to current directions of research in the field. Please double-space proposals and use a 12-point type. *Attached.*
- b. One copy of bibliography not to exceed one page. *Attached.*
- c. One copy of *curriculum vitae*. *Attached.*

Note to department heads:

- a. Residential Fellows will be released from one course during the fellowship year.
- b. This semester will tentatively be **Fall 2013** or Spring 2014 (please circle one)

Department Head signature: Please see forwarded email from my department chair, Ann Zak

Printed AnnZak

If appointed in two departments:

Signature of Applicant 

Applications must be received by February 15, 2013

From: ZAK, ANN
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 6:14 PM
To: CROWLEY, KATHLEEN
Subject: RE: Your signature CREST application

This email confirms my signature for your Crest Application.
Ann ZaK

Developing Tools for Understanding Uzbek Child Rearing as a Mediating Factor in the Government's Reliance on Forced Child Labor

1. Scholarly Context and Objectives

The *2011 International Human Rights Report* (U.S. Department of State, 2011) details Uzbekistan's perennial use of forced child labor during the annual cotton harvest as an abuse of human rights. Forced labor in Uzbekistan has been an ongoing concern for the Department of State, the European Union, international labor organizations, and countless human rights organizations (e.g., Human Rights Watch, The Cotton Campaign, and the International Labor Rights Forum) since the country's independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991. In a country where approximately 40% of the population is under 18 (Baykbulova, 2009), child rearing practices are key in determining the future of Uzbekistan—economically, socially, culturally, and internationally. In this proposed project, I will develop a culturally-sensitive questionnaire and interview protocol that will be used in future projects to shed light on how evolving child-rearing practices can inform domestic and international policies to influence the Government of Uzbekistan to end reliance on forced child labor.

a) Research Objectives

Key research questions underpinning the proposed study are: 1) what are current attitudes toward children and parenting practices in Uzbekistan? 2) How do existing cultural norms and child-rearing goals, beliefs, and practices (Hoffman, 1988) affect tolerance of forced child labor? And 3) to what extent are Uzbek parenting practices shifting toward more authoritative styles (Baumrind, 1966; 1975; 1978)? Some recent UNICEF-sponsored educational innovations in the country (McBride, 2012; Baykbulova, 2009) suggest that a shift toward more authoritative parenting practices is underway in Uzbek society. The development

of tools for documenting these shifting attitudes is the first step in providing information that can assist diplomats and international labor organizations in their efforts to develop strategies supporting the evolution of parenting practices and goals that will require their government to end their use of forced child labor.

The idea that cultural norms regarding the rearing of children are instrumental in creating and changing the economic and political order of a society is not new in psychology. Famed developmental psychoanalyst Erik Erikson (1950) made this point compellingly in his own cross-cultural research:

....child-training systems....persist because the cultural ethos continues to consider them "natural" and does not admit alternatives....[b]ut values do not persist unless they work economically, psychologically, and spiritually....child training, to remain consistent, must be embedded in a system of continued economic and cultural synthesis (p. 138).

Erikson's insights provide the overarching framework of the proposed study: Changes in Uzbek child rearing practices will occur as the culture modernizes, and, in turn, will gradually increase parental resistance to forced child labor. Thus, changing attitudes and practices must be documented as they occur. Findings then can be used to create more effective international efforts (especially in terms of educational programming such as that provided by UNICEF) to curb, or even eliminate, the use of forced child labor in Uzbekistan.

Many psychologists have noted that societies that value social order and stability over individual development (Keith, 2008; Hoffman, 1988) often rest upon child rearing practices that emphasize obedience over independent thinking (Rothbaum, Pott, Azuma, Miyake, & Weisz, 2000; Kim & Drolet, 2003). Individuals raised in such cultures have been shown to lack a sense of agency over their lives. Conversely, individuals raised in societies that emphasis autonomy

express greater optimism about their abilities to control events and to change situations affecting their lives (Oettingen & Seligman, 1990).

Oettingen, Little, Lindenberger, and Balter (1994), who compared samples of East and West Berlin citizens three months prior to reunification of the city, found that in the authoritarian, Soviet-style, Eastern portion of the city that "... parents wanted their children to be less autonomous, less self-reliant, less open-minded, and less critical"(p. 590) than those in West Germany. There is substantial evidence that such attributes are deemed desirable in societies that valorize stability and authority, in part, because they reduce the risk of political or economic change. By analogy, Uzbekistan (which has a highly centralized, authoritarian government, rooted in the cult of personality fostered by its President of 21+ years, Islam Karimov) can force the participation of children (and adults) during the annual cotton harvest without significant opposition from its citizens because (in part) obedience to authority is an ideal passed down from generation to generation. There are, of course, a number of coercive measures used by the government to ensure that there is adherence to its demands that everyone heads to the fields to harvest cotton each fall. But virtually all of the dozens of Uzbeks I have met state that they view participation in the harvest to be an acceptable duty, despite enduring often deplorable working conditions, time lost at school, and government retribution should quotas be unmet (U.S. Department of State, 2011).

Efforts designed to promote authoritative child-rearing practices via education, programming, and diplomacy should increase feelings of empowerment among children and young adults in Uzbekistan, and consequently should contribute to changing attitudes that currently tacitly affirm the use of forced labor. Related efforts by international agencies are already underway. For example, Baykabalova (2009) discusses the importance of children's