



## 'Crossroads Retreat' for a Women's Centre in Bishkek

On 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> May 2011, etc4CA was invited by a Women's Centre in Bishkek to deliver a seminar using techniques drawn from the Crossroads Retreat ([www.crossroadsretreats.co.uk](http://www.crossroadsretreats.co.uk)) course in the UK. It was held on the outskirts of the city in a private house and garden, and was attended by sixteen women, four leaders, a translator and some helpers.

The practical seminar worked through a number of key questions to help the women review issues from their past, what they want out of their lives today, the things they have available to help them move forward as well as the things that might be stopping them, and concluded with them defining their vision. They were encouraged to use retreat practices such as: silence, listening to each other and to themselves, noticing things, questioning whilst working in community and respecting differences, maintaining confidences and sharing openly with one another.

The women came from a wide range of different backgrounds and experiences – some had very troubled pasts, some were unemployed, some had nowhere to live, others had issues with their families or were looking for guidance on how to realise their dreams. By the end of the second day they all said they had made progress and for some there were real breakthroughs that will make significant changes to their lives.

A representative from the leadership team at the women's centre thanked etc4CA's facilitator for sharing such valuable tools with the group. The intention is for the women's centre to follow up with the participants to provide additional support and encouragement in the future. They also intend to deliver similar seminars for other women at the centre and utilise some of the resources for regular small group sessions.

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