

## **Spring of Hope, Perm**

### **Project completed? No, it's continuing!**

Sergey Maleev, Director, Spring of Hope, Perm

The project "Return" – for help to homeless people – was implemented from August 2010 to January 2011 in the city of Perm with the support of the BEARR Trust's Small Grants Scheme, financed by the Moscow office of Baker Botts.

The aim of the project was to reduce the number of homeless people in Perm, to prevent vagrancy and poverty, and to help people return to an active and full social life. Dealing with these problems relies in our opinion on a range of measures to help and support such people in various spheres of life: social, psychological, medical, and humanitarian – reinstating their civic and legal status and their professional and work capacity.

We chose the method of social accompaniment, which means that together with them we establish a plan for dealing with their problems, and they take action themselves. We are convinced that finding effective and sustainable work and serious change for the better in the lives of long-term homeless people are only possible after they undertake a period of rehabilitation in a centre where they can overcome their addiction to drugs or alcohol, become fit for work, and healthy. Other methods waste time and resources and are ineffective.

Our project demonstrated the importance of helping homeless women, because for a variety of reasons, being homeless is hardest of all for them. We were able to win the confidence and trust of homeless people thanks to the strong communication skills of the volunteers, their capacity to make real contact with homeless people, neither patronising nor rejecting them, but having human empathy, and their ability to help with basic needs: somewhere to sleep, food, and medical assistance. More than 1000 meetings were held, systemic help was given to 210 homeless people, and 20 were signed up for rehabilitation courses.

Since the grant was exhausted, the project has continued and has developed partnerships with other organisations helping the homeless, training volunteers, and exchanging lessons learned and experience gained.

### **Contact**

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