

The BEARR Trust Annual Conference 2009 Twenty Years On: Children and NGOs in Russia and the Region

The 2009 Conference (like this Newsletter) marked the 20th anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child. The conference theme also reflected

the historic importance of child welfare in the projects supported by BEARR in Russia and the Region.

BEARR Chairman Tony Longrigg welcomed a distinguished panel of speakers from Britain, Russia and Belarus, leaders of NGOs that have survived the past two decades, who are now in an unparalleled position to reflect on recent experience and future directions. As Tony Longrigg pointed out, the quality of this year's conference programme also demonstrated the effectiveness of the networks built up through BEARR's conferences and seminars, particularly during the recent collaboration with academics from CEELBAS, which it is hoped will continue.

Throughout the day, both speakers and participants described a path of progress towards better child welfare that is highly variable throughout the region, and that in Russia has sometimes taken a circular course as different parts of the administration battle for control of policy and implementation. Nevertheless, the general trend measured by economic indicators of child welfare is positive – with important exceptions. Furthermore, there is evidence that child welfare policy is modernising in Russia, and that the state is slowly moving towards the inclusion of NGOs in the mix of policy-making and service provision, albeit having

*Report by Nicola Ramsden,
BEARR Trustee*



failed to recognise and incorporate some of the most effective experiments in deinstitutionalisation. The task for NGOs now is to document at Federal level the accumulated experience of the last 20 years in order to demonstrate convincingly the best practices – no mean feat given that many good models of care are only known in regional networks that do not necessarily communicate with each other. The need for collaboration between NGOs to make advocacy more effective was, not surprisingly, a recurring theme.

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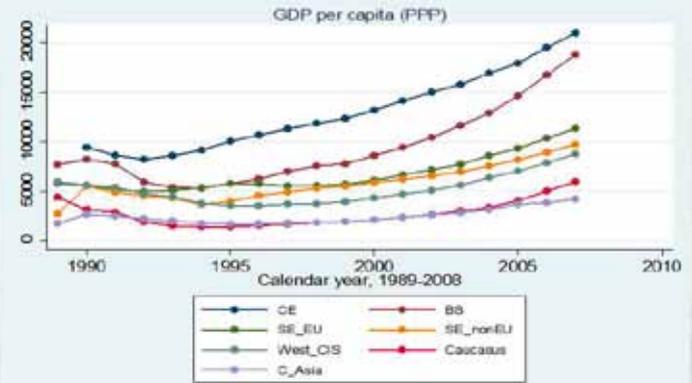
Dr Chris Gerry, BEARR Trustee and Senior Lecturer in Political Economy at UCL, looked at 'How children have fared over the past twenty years'. Gerry examined trends in child well-being across two decades, 28 'transition' countries and five welfare indicators: income, health, education, housing and family. In general, the trends have been favourable and economic progress has had a positive impact on key outcomes such as infant and maternal mortality, although with two caveats. First, there is much diversity both within countries and across the region. Second, economic progress can also have deleterious effects on health outcomes. Indeed, Gerry noted that adolescent mortality, particularly that associated with accidents and suicides, was highest and increasing in some of the 'best' economic performers. This hints at the importance of social cohesion and policy, and to this end Gerry speculated that the recent financial crisis may serve to undo some of the positive progress made in recent years in the social policy sphere.

Joanna Rogers, EveryChild Russia Programme Director described some strategies for 'Advocating children's rights and spreading good practice'. Effective advocacy rests on partnership and cooperation, and EveryChild has produced a directory as a resource to encourage this. A campaign of advocacy needs a strategy, a structure, and indicators and goals, just like a project to deliver services. Without these underpinnings there is a risk of producing words but no action. Spreading good practice can only be done by documenting what has happened already – the problem is that experience is embodied in different networks that are not aware of each other's practice and are reluctant to advertise what they do. The institutional framework in Russia is fragmented, and there is no unified childcare policy. (For more on EveryChild's approach see pages 4–5.)

We then heard contrasting tales of two initiatives in childcare. Both were started in 1994, one in Belarus and one in Russia, and their founders had very different perceptions of their impact and prospects. **Anna Garchakova, Director of the Belarusian Children's Hospice**, felt that the hospice had achieved recognition by the authorities and transformed the public's understanding of what NGOs can do. It had introduced the new concept of palliative care, and established new standards in that area. However, it had also been forced to adapt to a changing environment for NGOs in Belarus. In the early days the hospice had enjoyed much material support (including provision of a building) from the local authorities. As time went on, formal regulation increased, and power shifted from the local authorities to the centre. The hospice had to find money to buy its own building, but responded by becoming the first NGO in the country to employ a professional PR officer and fundraiser – he had already raised a healthy multiple of his salary. Garchakova believed that the hospice could be funded entirely from

Economic growth in transition

- So economic growth is a good place to start?



Economic progress is but part of the story behind child well-being

domestic sources within five years. (For an article by the PR officer mentioned above see page 10.)

In contrast, **Dr Maria Ternovskaya, founder and Director of Our Family in Moscow**, talked about the 'hidden meaning' behind the title of her presentation, 'Deinstitutionalisation – an ongoing argument'. Our Family, including the Moscow government orphanage No 19 Foster Care Centre, had previously been mentioned by Joanna Rogers as probably the pre-eminent model of foster care and child support services in Russia. But Ternovskaya felt that, having built up a method of providing child and family welfare services under one roof, she now faced the prospect of having to start all over again, thanks to the 2008 Law on Guardianship. In her view, the law had set back progress in child welfare by retaining decision-making within ministries and removing decisions concerning children from carers – a triumph for administrative interests over professionals. There seems to be no mechanism for professionals to advise the administration about a child's needs. One consequence has been a dramatic fall in children taken into foster care in the past two years. In discussion it became clearer that the law was needed to fill a gap in the legislation (which remains fragmented with relation to child welfare), but its flaws are recognised and it is likely to be amended as the system continues to evolve.

While the Belarusian Children's Hospice had recently discovered the power of PR and professional fundraising, **Irina Menshenina, Development Director of Downside Up in Russia** had won an award for her achievements in changing public attitudes to children with Down's Syndrome. Her account of 'Using the media and influencing public opinion' described how families and celebrities were used to highlight the normal family lives of children with Down's Syndrome, as well as their achievements as adults in spheres such as drama and sport. Menshenina said that embedded attitudes in the

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medical profession would be harder to tackle, but media companies had discovered that TV programmes featuring these children improved their ratings, and they were therefore keen to do more. The next phase of her work will be to carry out professional research on attitudes, and to investigate raising awareness through new social media. (For more on Downside Up's approach see page 6.)

Downside Up is a Russian-British charitable foundation, while **ARC (Action for Russia's Children)**, co-founded by **Sarah Philps** in 1995, is a UK-registered charity. Together with her colleagues **Rachel Smith**, ARC's Secretary, and **Shona McGrahan**, the Moscow Director, Sarah Philps described how ARC has evolved, and how it has faced the challenges of '**Adapting to a changing NGO environment**'. Philps charted ARC's development from a group of expatriates wanting to put something back into their host country, rapidly moving from giving aid to baby houses to supporting new community-based initiatives in childcare. In order to sustain ARC's activities in the framework of a transient group of volunteers and unpredictable finances, the group does not run its own projects, but supports local groups and initiatives in Moscow – thus creating an extensive network of contacts and local knowledge. Its UK registration avoids the onerous administration that would be needed to sustain a Russian registration, and no assets or obligations are kept in Russia. However, it sticks to the principle of keeping its membership and director located in Moscow.

The final talk, '**The next 20 years**', was given by **Marina Egorova, Head of the National Foundation for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children** in Moscow. Looking forward, she made it clear that progress would not be linear. Developments in the last two years (picking up on Ternovskaya's criticism of the 2008 Guardianship Law) had resulted in approaches to childcare being sent full circle before coming back to Medvedev's declared intention in 2007 of keeping children in their birth family wherever possible. She regretted that although the ill-conceived law had provoked a crisis (with newly fostered children being handed back to the authorities because professional support had been withdrawn) which would lead to further reform, the government was still unlikely to take account of the accumulated experience in fostering and caring for children within families.



Irina Menshenina, Alan Philps (Chair) and the ARC team

Projects such as Our Family may only survive as one among a number of different approaches.

Egorova ended on an optimistic note, pointing to evidence that concern about Russia's demographic problems is forcing the administration to be more open to a system of childcare that includes NGOs alongside state organisations. She cited three positive developments: the creation of independent regional ombudsmen for children's rights; the creation in 2008 of the Foundation for the Support of Children in Difficult Life Circumstances; and finally, earlier in November, Medvedev's annual speech to the Federal Council, which referred to the need to strengthen NGOs as part of civil society. Egorova predicted that the Civil Code would now be amended to create a more stable environment for charities.



Chris Gerry and Marina Egorova discuss Marina's presentation

Photos by Charlotte Wright and Agnes Gramoth

The slides used in speakers' presentations can be accessed on the BEARR website:

Chris Gerry	http://www.bearr.org/en/resource/Gerry/conf_Nov_09
Joanna Rogers	http://www.bearr.org/en/resource/Rogers/conf_Nov_09
Anna Garchakova	http://www.bearr.org/en/resource/Garchakova/conf_Nov_09
Marina Ternovskaya	http://www.bearr.org/en/node/2132
Irina Menshenina	http://www.bearr.org/en/resource/Menshenina/conf_Nov_09

SUPPORTING CHILDREN

EveryChild in Russia and the Region – 1990 to 2030?

by Joanna Rogers
Programme Director,
EveryChild Russia

EveryChild has been working in Russia and the former Soviet Union as well as eastern Europe since 1990. Like many British NGOs, our initial responses to the problems facing children and families in these countries were focused largely on providing humanitarian aid, training and other direct support to children's homes and to families. In the mid-nineties, as the need for food, clothing and direct support reduced, EveryChild focused increasingly on trying to support systemic changes to the way in which the governments of the region met their responsibilities to fulfil children's rights as laid out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This important convention underpins all our work and we take a rights-based approach to our programming which ensures that is based on practical actions, advocacy and constituency building.

Since 2004 EveryChild has been focused particularly on the issue of loss of parental care, since children who do not have parental care are exponentially more vulnerable to having their other rights violated. As we noted in our recent report, *Missing – Children without Parental Care in International Development*, there are at least 24 million children growing up without parental care around the world today. (http://www.everychild.org.uk/docs/EvC_Missing_final.pdf)

In Russia, over the last 18 years, we have succeeded in introducing practical, locally-sustainable models of community-based child and family support services that have helped to ensure that thousands of children are brought up in safe, secure families wherever possible. In the last five years, we have tried to scale up the impact of these models by working on advocacy and constituency building. Our film 'The Road Home',

which was made together with HealthProm and the St Petersburg Early Intervention Institute, has been widely seen by thousands of child welfare professionals and decision makers and has proven to be a powerful instrument in changing the perceptions of professionals about the needs of very young children and professionals' attitudes to mothers who might be considering abandoning their baby.

'I feel that the irritation and irony I usually feel about the attempts of mothers to visit children in our institution during holidays are leaving me. Now I start to understand that not all of them are hard drinkers but each had her own misfortune which she could not overcome alone' – educational specialist at a children's home in Tomsk.

A short version of the film can be seen on Youtube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8JeCCHvOrk>

We have had some success in building a constituency of child welfare professionals, from both NGOs and the state sector, who are committed to ensuring the right of every child to grow up in a secure family environment, by creating a network of over 80 organisations and an 'advocacy group'.

The challenge ahead is to ensure that the numbers of children living in inappropriate or harmful institutional care drops, both in real and relative terms. We estimate that well over 50 per cent of children currently in institutional care in Russia could be living with their own families if the right kind of effective family support services were available. The majority of the remainder could be living in alternative families but, again, only



Veniamin (not his real name), 8, who was taken into care two years ago as both his parents were alcoholics and neglecting their children.

He spent two months living in a residential home. After receiving support from EveryChild, Veniamin's parents sought treatment for their alcoholism and were able to prove they could care for their children.

if the right kind of effective and professional foster care and adoption support services were available. A small minority are likely to require specialized small scale residential care services. EveryChild has worked with a range of partners to introduce models of these services and the challenge now is to scale up the reform at the federal and regional levels to ensure that they can be replicated as part of a systemic reform process.

In other countries of the region some highlights of EveryChild's work over the last 20 years include:

- Supporting the introduction of wide-reaching systemic changes to the child welfare systems of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia –

ANNUAL LECTURE

they have helped to stem the flow of thousands of children entering care and to ensure that many hundreds are more likely to leave large-scale institutional care for family care that can better meet their needs.

- Developing community-based family support services for children with disabilities and other vulnerable children in Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Georgia.

The next 20 years?

Looking ahead to the next twenty years, the challenges that face British NGOs such as EveryChild that work with children in Russia and the Region, include:

- Ensuring international NGOs working in the region leave behind strong local NGOs, funded by healthy local, regional and international funding streams, which can take forward the mission focused on preventing loss of parental care or addressing its consequences. A feature of the countries in this region is their strong governments and weak civil society sectors (in contrast to Africa, Latin America and Asia where many countries have weak governments and strong civil society). The governments alone are not going to be able to continue addressing this issue without the innovation and community responses that tend to be introduced by NGOs.

- Ensuring that very young children, children with disabilities, and other groups of children with particular needs – such as children affected by HIV/AIDs, hepatitis or tuberculosis, or children who live on the streets – are explicitly included in child welfare reform planning. Reforms so far have mainly affected ‘mainstream’ able-bodied children.
- Ensuring that the UNCRC and other international conventions (for example on disability), guidelines (for example on alternative care) and standards (such as the Better Care Network/UNICEF Indicators in Formal Care) are widely known about, understood and embedded in the child welfare system of the countries of the region.

Within these various international instruments a common thread,

which is invariably ignored and/or downplayed in the countries of the region, is the right of the child to be heard. Ensuring child participation in the creation of the policies and legislation that affect them most closely, ensuring child participation in the decisions that affect their day-to-day lives and ensuring meaningful empowerment of children to play a role in public oversight of policy implementation, is surely one of the greatest challenges for children’s NGOs working in the region in the coming 20 years.

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Children at an unreformed state institution in Georgia. EveryChild in Georgia is finding new homes for the children in this institution and campaigning to close it down.

The 2010 BEARR Trust Annual Lecture

‘Russia and Islam’

This year’s Annual Lecture will be given by Professor Anatol Lieven of King’s College, London, who is a formidable expert on both Russia and the Islamic world. His lecture will concentrate on the internal impact of Islam in Russia but touch also on related external issues.

The lecture will take place at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) at 6pm on 24 May 2010. Further information will appear in due course on the BEARR Trust website at www.bearr.org, and be sent to those on the BEARR Trust mailing list. To be added to this list please contact info@bearr.org.

DOWNSIDE UP

Changing attitudes, changing lives

by *Elena Lyubovina and
Irina Menshenina*

Downside Up, a British–Russian charity, provides support and advice for families raising children with Down syndrome (or Down’s syndrome), developing innovative forms of training for children and support for parents, disseminating knowledge and experience among Russian professionals, and working to raise public awareness about Down syndrome with the aim of changing attitudes. Downside Up provides all its programmes free of charge.

Downside Up holds the Serebrianny Luchnik 2007 Russian National Award for public relations development.

About 2500 children with Down syndrome are born in Russia every year. This is one of the most vulnerable

social groups; the very diagnosis amounts almost to a social curse. Across Russia, about 85 per cent of families reject children diagnosed with Down syndrome on the advice of medical staff. Doctors who make such diagnoses often truly believe that these children are incapable of learning and need to be kept in specialised care throughout their lives.

Those children with Down syndrome who are raised in the family are often excluded from society. They cannot lead a full life, develop their potential, study or work. In today’s Russia there are few examples of people with Down syndrome who are integrated into the daily life of the community.

Changing attitudes

To change the public attitude towards people with Down syndrome, Downside Up runs awareness raising campaigns aimed at fighting pre-existing myths and stereotypes about the syndrome, and about the abilities and capabilities of these people.

The foundation’s goals include securing a flow of information into the mass media, designed to capture a broad target audience, as well as securing the attention of Moscow’s business and artistic elite.

New principles are being established to help journalists interpret information on Down syndrome: they are gaining a new vision of the problem, free from any ‘tragic’ connotations, through the creation of a positive image of an individual with Down syndrome. From this perspective, a family raising a child with Down syndrome will be shown as an ordinary family, and the child seen as unique and loved, with his own role in life despite the particularities of his development. His thoughts, feelings,

and achievements in sport, music and art are of special value.

A new audience is being targeted, including mass media contacts, which marks a move from specialised sources to more general socio-political publications: women’s magazines, top TV channels, leisure publications, radio stations and internet news sources. These channels, usually with little initial knowledge of the problem, receive and disseminate reliable information about Down syndrome, thus joining Downside Up in its educational mission.

Awareness raising

Downside Up runs a variety of social and sport events, involving not-for-profit organisations and both state and business bodies, to draw attention to the problems of disabled people. Thus the annual Charity Red Square Bike Ride attracts about 500 people, raising funds and awareness of the issue.

One of the key factors is the involvement of well-known figures from a variety of different professional spheres, such as famous cultural and sport stars, photographers, film directors, advertising designers and journalists, who take on promotional and educational work free of charge.

For instance, the ‘Just people with Down syndrome’ poster exhibition brought together 20 top graphic designers from six countries and is on display for the third year running in various cities in Russia and Europe. It has proved extremely popular and been covered extensively by the media.

The ‘All you need is love’ calendar brought together famous Russian sportsmen and celebrities and children with Down syndrome.

continues on page 14



Photo from the ‘All you need is love’ calendar showing Tatiana Lazareva, TV presenter, and Yura Aristov, a boy with Down syndrome

The BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2010

The BEARR Small Grants Scheme 2010 will continue with our long-standing theme of homelessness, focusing on projects seeking to achieve a wider impact on work with young people who are homeless or in institutions.

And we will have a new segment reflecting a theme and a need highlighted at the 2009 BEARR Trust Annual Conference: '20 Years On: Children and NGOs in Russia and the Region'.

The Scheme thus has two segments:

- A. Helping the homeless or people in institutions reintegrate into society (Russia only)
- B. Encouraging mutual support networks for families and professionals dealing with child and young adult mental health (Russia and other countries formerly part of the Soviet Union, excluding the Baltic States)

Aims and criteria

The 2010 Small Grants Scheme aims to support activities that involve one or more of the following:

- Encourage sharing of experience and learning among NGOs with relevant aims
- Disseminate good practice more widely
- Facilitate cooperation with and/or coordination among NGOs and other organisations working with relevant groups
- Improve awareness, influence policy, or engage public institutions in addressing the relevant issues
- Propose other, imaginative, ways of achieving the Scheme's aims.

Who can apply?

European NGOs active in the region and/or NGOs from the former USSR region. Priority will be given to projects involving partnerships.

How much money is available?

The BEARR Trust expects to have available about 10,000 dollars during 2010 for A and 2,500 euros for B. Grants may be disbursed in instalments or as one-off grants. The Trust may wish to support more than one initiative under A, so proposals for smaller amounts are encouraged. Preference will be given to projects which are also funded from other sources and in which the BEARR grant does not exceed 50 per cent of the overall cost.

How does an organisation apply for a grant?

Send an application to The BEARR Trust by the end of February 2010. The application, which must be in English and have the costings in dollars for A and euros for B, should be sent by email to info@bearr.org

What information is required?

The application should be not more than two pages of A4. It should include information on:

- The NGO applying for a grant, its mission and objectives
- Any partner organisation, its mission and objectives
- Objectives, short and long term, of the project proposed, and a brief description of the activities to be supported
- Why the NGO needs a grant from The BEARR Trust, what it will be used for, and how it meets the criteria for the 2010 Small Grant Scheme, set out above
- The proposed total project budget, showing separately the amount requested from BEARR and the contributions to be made by the applicant NGO and other sponsors.

What happens after an application is received by the BEARR Trust?

The Trust will acknowledge applications as they are received. The Trust will contact applicants for any further information or clarification it needs. Trustees will review shortlisted proposals at their meeting in April. The Trust will announce which proposals have been successful soon thereafter.

Part A of The BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2010 is funded by a grant from the Moscow Office of the law firm Baker Botts.

SMALL GRANTS SCHEME PROJECTS

The BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2009 Grant to the Institute of Practice Lawyers, Togliatti

This project was directed at an exchange of experience between NGOs working with the homeless in Togliatti and the Samara region, and the development of new methods of mobilising young homeless people.

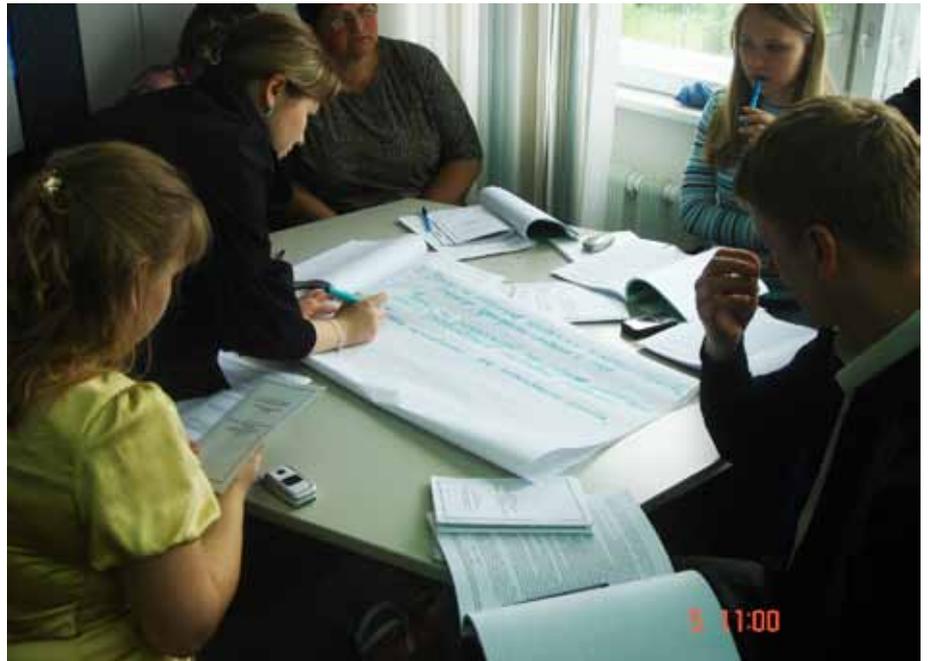
The project has three elements:

1. Exchanging experience, education and uniting our efforts

Four seminars on 'Experience exchange and coalition-building' were held for 20 NGOs working with marginalised groups. This was the first time that Togliatti NGOs had come together to exchange experiences and try to create a unified body to work to reduce the number of homeless in the Samara region. An 'initiative group' consisting of participants in the seminars proposed the establishment of an open, voluntary Coalition for this purpose. They developed a mission and worked out priority directions for future activity and appropriate forms of cooperation and mutual aid. The present status of the Coalition is that of a framework; its final version will be discussed in further meetings of the initiative group.

A conference for 30 participants was held on 'The legal community's role in socially important activity and services to the population through NGOs, the authorities and business'. This covered: the regional and federal authorities' activities to improve the lot of marginalised groups; other possible ways of improving the current position of marginalised people; and a systematic approach to providing marginalised communities with free legal services.

Report by Veronika Konshina



Planning the Coalition

2. Provision of free legal consultations for marginalised people

At the end of the aforementioned conference, the Institute of Practice Lawyers concluded four agreements to set up specialised consulting centres to provide professional legal services to the homeless.

Professional lawyers offer consultations to the homeless (street and latent), former convicts (young men and women), labour migrants, forced immigrants, and refugees. The service is available every day. The lawyers receive on average three to five clients a day.

3. Information campaign

The information campaign involves street actions and the distribution

of leaflets, posters and brochures among at-risk groups of young people, including young ex-offenders, telling them of their rights and the various organisations available to help them.

The campaign 'Bez bumashki ty bukashka!' (Without a piece of paper you are a little insect!) aimed to draw official and public attention to the plight of the many homeless people who lack registration permits, without which they cannot get a job officially, access health care, receive benefits or other social security services or participate in elections. Obtaining a residence permit is very complicated. Thus, from a legal point of view, a citizen without such a permit has practically ceased to exist.

Opposite the city administration building, people wearing costumes painted with ladybirds sang and

SMALL GRANTS SCHEME PROJECTS

danced in a ring and shouted, 'Without a piece of paper you are a little insect; with a piece of paper you are a person!' The campaign also involved distributing leaflets about the problem of homelessness, its scope and main causes, the practical difficulties facing homeless people, and useful organisations.

In Samara region there are more than 10,000 homeless citizens. The project has improved the NGOs' work in this sphere, giving marginalised people access to legal services and information on their human rights, and has led to cooperation and partnership among the local authorities, NGOs and businesses.

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The BEARR Trust Small Grants Scheme 2009 Caritas, Moscow

Marina Perminova reports on the initial stage of the Caritas project in which single-use cameras were given to homeless and disabled people.

The universe through the eyes of those whom nobody sees...

The main idea of the project is to show the universe through the eyes of those whom nobody sees. What is it like? What do homeless people look at? What exactly do the handicapped see, they who are young, in the world of homelessness?

For this purpose we bought 100 one-time cameras. The cameras were distributed at the halfway house Marfino and the Salvation Army day centre. Teenagers who sleep on the street come to the day centre. Eleven of them were asked to take pictures of whatever they liked. They brought in the films they had shot after one week.

It is interesting that all the homeless provided with cameras approached the idea quite thoughtfully. We were sure they would take lots of pictures very quickly, but we were wrong: our charges took the project very seriously. Many of them said they took pictures slowly because they wanted to choose nice shots. One elderly man said: 'New Year is coming – I want to take pictures of the celebrations. I'm not going to waste a single shot.'

We have only just started our project, but already there is a result we want to tell you about.

Ilgiz, 21

'When I was taking a picture of a woman sweeping the street, I remembered my mum' says Ilgiz.

Ilgiz had lost his memory. He had no memory of his parents or his home. He didn't remember what had happened to him or why he had found himself on the street. The only thing he still remembered was that he lived in Uzbekistan and then in Bashkiria.

He came upon the halfway house for homeless people, Marfino, through the TV show 'Wait for me'. This is a Russian show which helps those who are lost to find their relatives. Staff on the show helped Ilgiz to lodge at Marfino.

Ilgiz came to a meeting at Marfino on exactly the day when the one-time cameras were being distributed by Caritas staff. He took one. 'I'll give it a try', he said. He took 27 pictures in two weeks. And then the miracle happened – as he took his photo of a woman, he suddenly remembered his mum and other relatives, and now they are coming to take him home!

'Your camera project helped someone remember! Could you imagine it? You were planning an exhibition but succeeded in helping the man!', the director of 'Wait for me' said to me on the phone. 'We have found Ilgiz's relatives! And we'll tell everyone about your project during the show!'

The 'Wait for me' programme with the story of Ilgiz will be broadcast on the 1st TV channel in Russia at the end of January. The cameraman who made the film about Ilgiz asked us a lot of questions about homeless people, about their life and how they happened to become homeless. Many of the facts he heard impressed him very much. He now says he is planning to make a movie about the homeless. So our project has, at its very beginning, awakened an echo in men's hearts and in society.



BELARUS: NGO PR AND FUNDRAISING

Sergey, 60

Sergey is a post-operative cancer patient. Currently he is registering with a disability group. But he is optimistic and has a sense of humour. He lives in different halfway houses and says 'I live where God wants me to!' He was very glad to get a camera, but he asked if he could NOT take pictures of 'bums'. 'Sure, as you wish!' was our answer. And he said 'I have a goal now: I am going to look for nice shots'. Here you see one of the photographs he took in Vladimir, where he is now

living in a homeless hostel. We hope the exhibition will be able to open up to outsiders, even if only slightly, the invisible inner world of the homeless, and that it will raise an, echo in people's hearts. The pictures we have received already show that the homeless can see the beauty around them, and those who can see beauty are worthy of respect – no matter who they are and where they live.



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Breaking New Ground: PR and fundraising for NGOs in Belarus

Belarus is unusual in that the children's hospice appeared well before any adult hospice. In fact, the Belarusian Children's Hospice was founded in 1994 and was therefore one of the first non-governmental organisations to be created here and certainly one of very few that have survived until today. Until 2007 the children's hospice existed only quasi-legally, because there was no law which recognised the status of a hospice. It was not an unusual situation for NGOs during the 1990s and in the early part of this century, as Belarus had retained many of its Soviet era structures and ways of thinking, which meant that the emerging third sector, which had not existed before 1992, had a difficult time carving out a place for itself.

Today the situation is changing for the better. Although the Belarusian Children's Hospice still receives no financial support from the government, we have welcomed the opening of a state-supported adult hospice. This shows that the authorities have recognised palliative care.

Since I joined the hospice in April 2009, as its first dedicated PR manager and fundraiser (and possibly the first such in Belarus), we have been engaged in raising public awareness about the hospice movement because we are convinced that public awareness is a necessary precondition for successful fundraising. You cannot expect people to make donations to an organisation about which they know nothing or, worse still, an organisation that has a negative public image. The position was so bad in Belarus that not even all doctors understood what palliative care was.

by Maxim Padbiarozkin

The general public were afraid of the hospice because the papers used to depict it as an awfully gloomy place where children go to die. To counter this, we started running seminars for Belarusian medics. Our latest was an international palliative medicine seminar held on 22-23 October 2009, run collaboratively with the Ministry of Health. We have also started taking students studying medicine at the university for in-house experience.

We have come to the conclusion that one extremely effective way of raising public awareness about the hospice is to develop our volunteer networks. Ideally, children should grow up with the idea of volunteering. This is why we go into schools to work with children between 10 and 17 years old. We send current volunteers to tell the children what it means to be a volunteer, what the hospice children are like, how one can help them.

Another good way of raising awareness about the hospice is through public events. On 17 October 2009 we held our first fundraising concert in the Palace of the Republic concert hall, in celebration of the hospice's 15th anniversary. Eleven well-known Belarusian groups performed free to an audience of 500. The performers had expected this would, in usual Soviet style, be a concert aimed at, and attended free by, hospice children. It came as a shock to some of them to learn that this was to be a western-style charity concert for which the public would

BELARUS: PR AND FUNDRAISING

pay a decent price for tickets. It was a sell-out. In addition to the positive publicity we got from the event, we also made 2,200 euros for the hospice. Exactly one month later the Yanka Kupala National Academic Theatre put on an evening for us. We were allowed to hand out information about the hospice in the foyer before the performance. We also ensured that it got good coverage in the newspapers. It was even mentioned on the television news. In addition to all of this publicity we made 600 euros.

From 23 December to 17 January we held a New Year's photographic exhibition together with the NGO Belarusian Union of Artists, in the Palace of Art. As part of this event the hospice contributed an exhibit entitled 'A World of Fairy Tales' which was a series of photographs of hospice children taken by a professional photographer in which the children are dressed as their heroes from fairy tales. The exhibition was staffed by our volunteers, who were available to talk to visitors about volunteering. We also invited Miss Belarus 2008 to visit the exhibition as well as Belarusian musicians, writers and artists. In the same building we put on a musical performed by hospice children and volunteers, followed by a press conference. I would like to add that it was our volunteers who raised the 300 euros to pay for the professionally-taken photographs.

We are trying to make the widest use we can of the media to get our message across to the public. On 14 October we took part in a press conference on children's palliative care in Belarus. It was attended by, amongst others, people from the Belarusian Ministry of Health.

Unfortunately, there are strict limits on the ways in which one can raise money for charity within Belarus. For example, we are not allowed to receive cash in any form whatsoever; all donations have to be made via our current account. All types of commercial activity are forbidden to us. We are not able to sell souvenirs or gifts or to organise raffles and prize draws. The difficulty of actually making a donation is one of the main factors influencing the amount of money we can raise from the public because, as you can well imagine, not everyone is willing or has the time to make a special trip to the bank to fill in a donation form. We are trying to make the process easier for people by handing out leaflets on the reverse; all the donor has to do is to fill in his or her details and take them to the bank. We are handing out these forms in all sorts of places, in supermarkets, on the street and in colleges and universities.

A valuable ally in recruiting volunteers has been our website www.hospice.by on which we regularly update information about the hospice. There is a section which explains how to make a donation via the bank. Unfortunately there are no internet donations in Belarus as Visa and MasterCard are not very widely used and the

other plastic cards in use are not accepted for internet transactions.

All of the events and PR campaigns that I have detailed in this article are new for Belarus. We are the first to have dipped our toes in the water. I am pleased to say that the water is warmer than it used to be. The government and the public are becoming more used to the idea of a third sector. There are still problems and restrictions that hamper our work, but I am very hopeful that the process, once started, will gradually speed up, and that we will be able to make a significant contribution to creating better conditions in Belarus for civil society.

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2010 **Январь**

понедельник	4	11	18	25	
вторник	5	12	19	26	
среда	6	13	20	27	
четверг	7	14	21	28	
пятница	1	8	15	22	29
суббота	2	9	16	23	30
воскресенье	3	10	17	24	31

Паллиативная помощь - (palliative care - WHO 2002) активная и всесторонняя помощь пациентам, страдающим длительно развивающимися заболеваниями, основными задачами которой являются купирование боли и других симптомов, решение психологических, социальных и духовных проблем. Цель паллиативной помощи - достижение максимально возможного качества жизни больного и членов его семьи.



2010 **Февраль**

понедельник	1	8	15	22
вторник	2	9	16	23
среда	3	10	17	24
четверг	4	11	18	25
пятница	5	12	19	26
суббота	6	13	20	27
воскресенье	7	14	21	28

Паллиативная помощь - (palliative care - WHO 2002) активная и всесторонняя помощь пациентам, страдающим длительно развивающимися заболеваниями, основными задачами которой являются купирование боли и других симптомов, решение психологических, социальных и духовных проблем. Цель паллиативной помощи - достижение максимально возможного качества жизни больного и членов его семьи.



2010 **Март**

понедельник	1	8	15	22	29
вторник	2	9	16	23	30
среда	3	10	17	24	31
четверг	4	11	18	25	
пятница	5	12	19	26	
суббота	6	13	20	27	
воскресенье	7	14	21	28	

Паллиативная помощь - (palliative care - WHO 2002) активная и всесторонняя помощь пациентам, страдающим длительно развивающимися заболеваниями, основными задачами которой являются купирование боли и других симптомов, решение психологических, социальных и духовных проблем. Цель паллиативной помощи - достижение максимально возможного качества жизни больного и членов его семьи.

Hospice calendar

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering in Irkutsk

by Candice Sly

Last year I spent six months in Irkutsk as an EVS (European Voluntary Service) volunteer. I found there's a lot this scheme has to offer any NGO or volunteer keen to bridge the gap...

My train pulled into Irkutsk station after six long days on the train from London. I was in Irkutsk as part of the European Commission's Youth in Action Programme – a programme that provides initiatives and opportunities for young people under thirty. It was one of their schemes, the European Voluntary Service (EVS), that funded my placement.

I'd known about the work of my host NGO, Baikal Environmental Wave (<http://www.baikalwave.eu.org>) for some time. Founded by a group of Irkutsk residents in the early nineties, the NGO has long been regarded as a stalwart defender of Lake Baikal and natural Siberia. In 2008 its co-founder, Marina Rikhvanova, travelled to the US to accept the prestigious 'Green Nobel' Goldman Environmental Prize for her work defending the lake.

The EVS scheme is project-oriented and requires the volunteer to find a 'sending' and a 'hosting' organisation. Baikal Environmental Wave, or 'The Wave', has been hosting EVS volunteers from across the world for over a decade, and has also acted as an EVS sending organisation, helping young Siberian volunteers to go to the UK. This scheme has helped the NGO foster new international partnerships and strengthen existing ones.

My UK sending organisation, Look East Wild Earth (LEWE), works closely with The Wave and has helped a number of UK volunteers go to Irkutsk and, more recently, Novosibirsk. LEWE (<http://www.lookeast.org.uk/>) has also organised study visits to the UK for East European partners and in the summer, thanks to Youth in Action funding, plans to help run a training course in Siberia on running EVS projects and creating more sustained legacies for local people out of the scheme.

Many volunteers who have taken part in EVS in Russia and the CIS have good relevant knowledge and are keen to bring fresh perspectives and energy. Applying to the scheme is time-consuming, and applicants are usually highly motivated, open-minded and keen to learn. The fact that the minimum length for volunteering is six months means that real relationships can be built up between a volunteer and an NGO, some of which last for many years after the project has ended. The founders of LEWE were both former EVS volunteers in Irkutsk.

Like many before me, I found volunteering at the Wave truly rewarding. I was absorbed into day-to-day life and inspired by my Russian colleagues' determination and good spirit. I came to gain a far greater awareness of the tremendous dedication and resilience required to work at such an NGO and also the lessons we, as Europeans, can learn from

Siberian attitudes towards sustainability and the natural environment.

My project, focused on the issue of climate change, including the making of a short documentary film. This is a critical time for the region: the Baikal area is currently warming three times more rapidly than global average air temperatures and Putin now plans to reopen the polluting Baikalsk Paper and Pulp Mill on the shores of Lake Baikal. Dwindling pools of potential funding, a lack of support and frequent hostility from the local authorities mean NGOs such as The Wave are suffering. The Wave fights on but it remains an uphill struggle.

Yet through experiences such as EVS, young people with an awareness of the social and environmental injustices we face can deepen their motivation for action through a more defined understanding of regional issues. It can help to develop lasting relationships with Russian/UK NGOs and give voice to new causes while building sustained loyalties. Since volunteers must find hosting and sending organisations, NGOs gain new contacts and opportunities, such as participating in training events where they can further network and learn new skills.

I for one now try to keep as up to date as I can with the current situation at Baikal and The Wave and I'm an active member of LEWE. Through the Internet we share news, information on activities and the latest campaigns and funding opportunities. Russia, especially Siberia, now really does feel that little bit closer.

For more information on the Youth in Action programme visit the British Council site: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/connectyouth-programmes-youth-in-action.htm>



'For a Clean Baikal' – Baikal Wave members protest outside the Irkutsk Oblast Administrative Building

Candice Sly

MOLDOVA: DISABILITY SUPPORT

'Hope and Health' for disabled young adults in Moldova

*by Ludmila Andreiciuc
and Tatiana Roscovan*

The association of parents with mentally disabled children, Speranta si Sanatate (Hope and Health), was founded on 14 October 2001 on the initiative of a group of parents who had in their families children over 16 with mental disabilities.

With their disabilities and the poor level of education available to them in Moldova, these young people cannot function by themselves; they do not understand real life. Because of this, conflicts arise with those around them on the streets: neighbours, citizens and relations. They are subject to humiliation and insults. They can easily be used by those with ill intentions, often by criminal elements. There are cases when they do not go outside the house for years on end, and are fearful of the outside world.

The association is the first and so far only open kind of organisation in Moldova which works on changing attitudes in the surrounding society, and the neglected education of adults with mental and psychological disabilities. Taking account of the number of such people in Moldova (more than 15,000 in Chisinau alone), you can see the magnitude and complexity of the problems we are trying to solve.

The activities of the association, providing social services for young people with mental and psychological disabilities, who constitute the poorest and least defended layer of society, are accomplished on a charitable basis.

Hope and Health aims to:

- change attitudes in society towards people with mental and psychological disabilities
- work with disabled young adults to give them important life skills to enable them to participate in everyday family and social life
- give mentally disabled young people professional and vocational skills in accordance with their level of development, capability and ability to cope
- provide help to parents concerned about the care of their children, and give moral support to the family.

The process of teaching mentally ill people is complicated and laborious, and requires substantial moral and material resources, specially trained staff, specialist equipment and so on. The work is demanding, but mentally disabled young people can be taught if one devotes the time and relates to them to with love and understanding.

The activities of our organisation, after its nine years of existence, demonstrate that society's attitudes can, with a good deal of effort, be changed. However, given the complexity of the economic problems facing our country, the opportunities for us to receive help are shrinking, while the problems we face do not, alas, get smaller. Another of our organisation's activities is hampered by the burden of repair work – we were given a collapsing building which

needs fundamental renovation. Unfortunately, we are today forced to admit that, in order to continue and develop, we need sponsors. Hope and Health is in acute need of help. We have written many project proposals, but the language barrier hampers our efforts to find sponsors, and our government institutions have no power to help us.

More information about us can be found on our website www.modlovahope.org



Marina, one of the people supported by Hope and Health in Moldova, has learned cooking, dance and embroidery.

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The BEARR Trust made a grant to Hope and Health under its Small Grants Scheme 2009 to enable it to provide cookery lessons for people with mental disabilities to teach them greater independence in life, while freeing their carers from some domestic duties so that they can go to work. A report on this project will appear in a future Newsletter.

NEW BEARR TRUSTEE

New BEARR Trustee

We are delighted to welcome Jo Lucas as a new trustee of The BEARR Trust.

Jo Lucas has been working in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe since the early 1990s. She lived for three years in Kiev in the mid 90s, establishing the first School of Social Work at the Kiev Mohyla Academy and working closely with NGOs and the relevant ministries. She then came back to the UK to run a small NGO, Hamlet Trust, for six years. Hamlet Trust worked with people with mental health problems, focusing on self-help advocacy and employment and ensuring the voice of the user is involved in policy developments across the former soviet block. While she worked there, the Trust established a network of some 52 NGOs across 18 countries, all of whom were active in providing services and involved in local policy development.

More recently, Jo has been working extensively in Georgia to support the establishment of social work education there. Currently she is managing a large project, funded by the EU, completing the process of academic

development by establishing a PhD programme in social work as well as an academic journal and other related activities.

Her fascination with this part of the world, which was fuelled by reading Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and Bulgakov as a teenager, only really began with an initial trip to Slovenia to do some teaching there straight after the war. The opportunity to go to Ukraine came up shortly afterwards and seemed too good an offer to miss. Having scoffed at the opportunity to learn Russian as an academic language aged 11 (When I am ever going to be able to use that?), aged 40 she was suddenly forced into the situation of having to learn as she went along, while doing a full time job. Thus her grasp of the language is limited and not very grammatical, being able to understand a lot about social work and restaurant menus but not much else.

As a freelancer, running her own small business, Jo combines working internationally and in the



Jo at last year's CEELBAS/BEARR conference

UK, a balance that is not always easy to achieve. The friends and the opportunities that working with colleagues in these countries has given her, and the insight into a completely different system, have been fascinating and had a huge impact on both her career and social life.

Changing attitudes, changing lives

continued from page 6

The children took part in a photo-session with Vladimir Spivakov, Vladimir Pozner, Ivan Urgant, Andrey Makarevitch and others. The project leader, photographer Vladimir Mishukov, received a special award in the Moscow administration's Serebriannaya Camera photo competition.

The positive results are obvious: the number of stories and publications has gone up, hundreds of publications are covering the issues, and journalists are becoming more accurate with the facts and terminology in their

reporting. Interaction with the mass media is becoming dependable and constructive, which undoubtedly has a positive influence on the public's attitude to disabled people.

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Poster from the 'Just people with Down syndrome' exhibition

Erken Kagarov

Book preview: The Boy from Baby House 10

by Alan Philps

Many NGOs have highlighted the abuse and neglect suffered by children brought up in state institutions in Russia. Research in the west shows that the institutionalisation of infants retards their mental, social and physical development. Children brought up by the state tend, on release into the world, to succumb to drink, drugs, petty crime and prostitution, leading to prison and early death.

In 2006 Vladimir Putin, then President of Russia, called on local authorities to reduce the number of children in institutions and promote fostering. Unfortunately the number of infants aged 0–3 in state care has remained constant since 1989. Officially there are still 334,000 children in the care of the state – double that number according to campaigners.

What does it feel to be like to be one of these children? The answer comes in *The Boy from Baby House 10*, a book I wrote with John Lahutsky, whom I met when I was Moscow correspondent for *The Daily Telegraph* in the 1990s.

John was born premature in 1990. At the age of 18 months his parents abandoned him, and he was sent to a baby house, an orphanage for the under-fives. Deprived of the care he needed, John did not meet his milestones. When he turned two, doctors put him in a room for the ‘incurables’ – silent children who spent their lives in bed or lying in the communal playpen.

His spirit refused to give in. Somehow he taught himself to speak. He persuaded the staff to let him sit at a table. He filled the empty hours listening to the staff gossiping, trying to make sense of an outside world he had never seen.

Just before his sixth birthday, he was assessed as an ineducable ‘imbecile’ and sent to a psycho-neurological internat, an adult mental asylum. Here he was to spend the rest of his childhood in ‘permanent bed regime’ – lying on a plastic mattress.

Thanks to his precocious networking ability, he recruited a group of supporters who managed to save him from this fate. Now he is completing his high school education in the US, and enjoys an active life as a scout leader, despite mobility problems. John hopes the book will hasten the end of these institutions.

The Boy from Baby House 10, by Alan Philps and John Lahutsky, is published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, price £18.99



John and Alan

Sarah Philps

The BEARR Trust endeavours to include as wide a debate and as broad a range of opinions as possible in the Newsletter to capture the diversity of NGO work in the UK, Russia and Eurasia. The BEARR Trust cannot be held responsible for the views expressed by authors in their articles.



The BEARR Trust Annual Conference 2009

About The BEARR Trust

Patrons: The Duchess of Abercorn, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Elena Bashkistrova Barenboim, Lady Fall, Myra Green OBE, Professor Geoffrey Hosking, HE Sir Roderic Lyne KBE CMG, Sir Jonathan Miller CBE, Anthony Oppenheimer, Rair Simonyan, Sir Andrew Wood GCMG

The BEARR Trust is a British registered charity. It was formed in 1991 to act as a bridge between the welfare and health sectors of Britain and the former Soviet republics. Its mission is:

- to promote and support cooperation between the third sector in the United Kingdom and appropriate partners in Russia and Eurasia, especially in health and social welfare, with a view to strengthening civil society.

The Trust will do this by:

- supporting organisations committed to reform in the health and social sectors
- facilitating networking and exchange of information
- encouraging sharing of experience and learning
- helping organisations working in the region to identify potential partners
- providing seed funding to assist selected organisations to launch or extend partnerships
- lobbying with and on behalf of organisations that share our objectives.

Trustees: Megan Bick, Christopher Gerry, Daryl Hardman, Marcia Levy, Ann Lewis CMG, Tony Longrigg CMG (Chairman), Jo Lucas, Jenny Norton, Nicola Ramsden, Robert Scallon

Staff: Information Officer: Renate Wright

Volunteers: Ute Chatterjee, Martin Edwards, Agnes Granroth, Janet Gunn, Antony Lewis, Philip Michaelson, Candice Sly, Charlotte Wright

Newsletter: Editor: Ann Lewis; layout: Leila Carlyle

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Support BEARR's work in health and welfare, get this Newsletter regularly and receive details of all BEARR's activities and other items of interest by becoming a Friend of The BEARR Trust. Your subscription (£30 minimum) will support BEARR's activities throughout the coming year.

Please subscribe and pay through our website at www.bearr.org, or fill in the form below and send your cheque and form to The BEARR Trust office. Ideally, please pay by Banker's/Standing Order or direct transfer – this eases our administrative burden.

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