

Архангельская Региональная Общественная Благотворительная Организация «Рассвет»

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Rehabilitating young offenders

Grantee: Arkhangelsk Regional Public Charitable Organisation "Rassvet"

Project: To develop training for staff of Arkhangelsk Juvenile Colony and other closed institutions, social centres and NGOs dealing with minor offenders; and develop training for juvenile offenders to reduce re-offending.

"Rassvet" was established in August 2000 with the following aims:

- ✱Aid to needy children. Priority - support for minor offenders.
- ✱Aid to people who have broken the law, homeless people and people excluded from society.
- ✱Education in the field of human rights.
- ✱Countering drug addiction and HIV/AIDS.

Since 2009 Rassvet staff have sat on the Monitoring Committee for Human Rights in detention places in Arkhangelsk region.

Rassvet has long-term joint cooperation projects with the prison and police system in Arkhangelsk region and often visits closed juvenile institutions. Our experience has shown that minor offenders in many cases come from at-risk families, have lost their families and social contacts, and lack basic social skills.

The problem is that after being in closed institutions and with limited education they return to former social environment.

The goal of the project "The Way Home" was to prepare minor offenders for release from juvenile institutions: to teach them communication and domestic skills and to deal with conflict and aggression; to motivate them to lead a healthy and independent way of life; to increase their self-awareness and give them new values; to help them overcome challenges and teach them how to say "no".

As part of the project experienced experts in social assistance to minors from Arkhangelsk region ran a training programme for 18 trainers. These came from Arkhangelsk Juvenile Colony, Severoonezhsk (closed) College, the Municipal Centre for Protection of the Rights of Minors (Arkhangelsk), the centre for the temporary isolation of minors who have committed crimes, the internat for minors in Severodvinsk, children's homes and NGOs dealing with minor offenders. These participants will absorb the programme into their daily work of helping to integrate minors into society. During the training course the lecturers also presented case-management studies and practical exercises in social assistance to minors under the programmes "My future without crime" and "My welfare without crime". The training course was held in September 2011.

The newly educated trainers in October 2011 ran two "pilot" cycles of training for minor offenders. For many of these minors it was the first time they gained any awareness of the reasons for their criminal behavior. All those teenagers were taking under the welfare programme and supervision of the Municipal Centre for the Protection of the Rights of Minors (Arkhangelsk).

But we now see that the problem for the Arkhangelsk region, which is very extensive, is the inadequate number of social centres for minors which can assist them after their release and provide support under the “case management” system. This should improve in time.

Increasing the professional level of specialists working with minor offenders and the exchange of experience among them influence directly how we deal with reducing the extent of crime committed by minors. The NGO “Rassvet” has new ideas for further projects to improve the competence of specialists, so combating crime among minors, and disseminate the project results among other municipalities in the Arkhangelsk region.

Grants such as that from the BEARR Trust can be a great stimulus to the development of new activities, and NGOs are a powerful force for achieving this.

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