

Following Up and Following On The BEARR 2003 Annual Conference

What does the future hold for partnerships between UK NGOs and NGOs in the former Soviet Union (FSU)?

How can we make sure projects last beyond our own involvement? How can information about project outcomes be preserved and passed on? These were some of the questions at the forefront of delegates' minds when they met at London's Charity Centre on Friday 28th November for BEARR's 2003 Annual Conference.

The Conference drew together over ninety specialists and representatives from institutions as diverse as the Metropolitan Police, Amnesty International and the Yaroslavl Hospice Trust to discuss the issues surrounding sustainability, dissemination and learning from others across Russia, the FSU and the UK.

Although the third sector in the FSU has grown dramatically over the last ten years, many analysts believe it is still relatively isolated and, as a consequence of the mutual suspicion existing between governments and NGOs, is actually struggling to survive. Moreover, the shift in global political priorities after September 11th has created new obstacles for the development of NGOs in the FSU. In particular, funding from the West is becoming increasingly hard to secure. In his welcome speech, BEARR Chairman Michael McCulloch suggested that sustainability should be approached from the point of view of building on existing foundations, making use of local expertise and developing new models of partnership.

by Natasha Sturgeon and Sabina Tringalas



Professor Andrew Coyle, ICPS (International School for Prison Studies) delivers keynote speech, alongside Michael McCulloch, Chair of The BEARR Trust.

Photo: Michael Holman

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CONFERENCE

Partnerships must be two-way

It was the idea of information exchange which Professor Andrew Coyle, Director of the International Centre for Prison Studies at King's College London, highlighted in his keynote speech: 'International Working: Transferring Know How or Genuine Partnerships?' He argued for a radical change in the West's attitude towards its work with Russian NGOs. The days of condescendingly imparting knowledge and 'know how' from the West are over. As with democracy, former Soviet states must develop their own brand of NGO sector. He stressed the importance of identifying and supporting the catalyst for change: in the case of penal reform, for example, this had been Yuri Ivanovich Kalinin, Head of the Prison Service. Professor Coyle saw it as his duty not to establish his own system of prison reform in Russia, but rather to help convince the Russian procurator service, the public and media that Kalinin's modernised strategy to reduce the prison population was a viable approach and one worth supporting. To highlight the value of a successful two-way partnership, Professor Coyle drew on his recent experience of twinning four run-down, old inner-city jails in the UK with the Moscow pre-trial detention prisons (SIZOs).

Bridging the gap between the state and the NGO sector

In the second keynote speech, Dr. Elena Kozhevnikova, member of the Board of the Health and Social Care Partnerships Scheme (HSCP), spoke about 'Dissemination in Practice' from the perspective of HSCP schemes to promote physiotherapy in Russia. Dr. Kozhevnikova set out some strategies to promote the exchange of knowledge and experience between organisations: facilitating cross-project activities, training transfers, capacity building and creating resource centres. Equally important in assuring the longevity of NGO projects is the involvement of the state bodies.

A breath of fresh air: OZON's awareness-raising strategy

Professor Tamara Safonova, founder of the Moscow OZON Centre, and Tatiana Zhuravleva, Director of the Child Abuse and Protection Foundation, jointly presented the first case study, 'Is

OZON a viable model?' Founded seven years ago, the OZON Centre aims to prevent child abuse and neglect by offering medical, psychological, social and legal help to create a safe environment for child and family. Support for the scheme has developed thanks to the partnership developed between OZON, international organisations and the Russian establishment, which has shown an increasing will to change. The media has also helped by raising awareness of child protection issues. BEARR has worked with OZON to disseminate jointly-produced distance learning packs in Moscow, Togliatti and Chelyabinsk, thereby actively engaging professionals from other large industrial centres.

The dissemination project and materials have proved hugely successful and the issue of child abuse has been firmly placed on both the public and political agendas. One of OZON's greatest achievements came in 2002 when President Putin signed a resolution raising the minimum age of marriage from 14 to 16 years.

Making changes the Our Family way: improving childcare from the inside out

The second case study was introduced by the Director of The Our Family Centre in Moscow, Maria Ternovskaya. She spoke about approaches to the long-term change of the Russian child protection system which, in its current state, she saw as fragmented. At present, an orphanage is simply a place of refuge that cannot provide for the complete social reintegration of children.

Recognising the need to operate within the established system, the Our Family Centre was legally set up as an orphanage in 1994, but it is an organisation that aims to reform childcare by developing orphanages into a system of supportive services. These services include residential shelter units for street children, a rehabilitation service for emotionally and mentally disturbed children, a family support service preventing the removal of children from their families, and a family placement service offering fostering and adoption centres.

Progress over the last seven years has been astounding. The Centre has helped over 300 children and, thanks to an extensive network of dissemination supporters, has greatly increased the number of training courses and consultations. Similar projects have also been established in

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eighteen other regions in Russia. Once again, the key to success has been support from governmental agencies. The focus is now on de-institutionalisation and developing local authority services on site, i.e. within the orphanages themselves. The future of the scheme lies in further dissemination – getting local people and local resources involved in keeping such an inspiring project afloat.

A chance to share personal experiences

For the afternoon session, conference participants divided into four groups for more detailed discussions on children, the elderly, healthcare and issues of human rights and justice.

The forum on children was addressed by child psychiatrist Dr. Dorothea Holman. BEARR Trustee Nicola Ramsden underlined the three elements which were considered central to creating a sustainable project: first, making use of advice and knowledge of local experts; second, developing local government systems; and third, having co-operation between the NGO and state sectors. There was no consensus over whether top-down or bottom-up approaches worked best; rather, all agreed that the project should be deeply rooted within a community.

Bill Seary, rapporteur for the group on the elderly echoed these priorities but also highlighted the importance of a trading arm to make a project self-financing. This strategy had been proved a success by Age Concern, as Jacqui Spradbery had revealed in her presentation. It was argued that much of the dissemination within the sector was going on 'underground' and that new methods of getting the message across were needed: video, theatre and radio, for example. It is crucial that local people are involved in the work that concerns them, from early planning to ultimate execution.

Megan Bick's report on the healthcare group noted that NGO projects usually receive widespread community support. This was illustrated by Patricia Cockrell in her work with the Yaroslavl Hospice Trust, where local citizens continue to volunteer and offer gifts in kind. Clarifying aims and terms from the start was seen as important in establishing a good partnership. It was noted that local authorities often have money set aside for healthcare purposes and do benefit from work that is done on their behalf.



Photo: Michael Holman

Maria Ternovskaya, Director of the 'Our Family' Centre, Moscow

Michael Holman, BEARR Trustee, brought out the key points from the joint presentation by Detective Chief Inspector Mike Kellett and Sergeant Richard Farmery on human rights. He underlined the importance of getting to know as much as possible about the partner organisation at the very start of a project. Maintaining flexibility was also paramount if the objectives of funders were to align with the needs of the target group. The development of the NGO sector is, however, greatly hampered by the fact that organisations find themselves in an unfamiliar environment and in competition with each other for funding. In countries such as Russia, the information crucial to setting up a good project still equates with power and is therefore not easily given away.

Bringing the Conference to a close, Michael McCulloch stressed that sustainability can be developed by: bringing about positive changes within organisations; encouraging political support as the champion of change; and founding new models and institutions in order to achieve national standards. Future dissemination, he believed, lies far beyond Western involvement. Indeed, as delegates had pointed out, it is not a question of transferring the 'ownership' of projects to the partner organisation in the FSU, but of ownership resting

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Pursuing the will for change

In this first BEARR Newsletter of 2004, I would like to wish all readers a very happy new year and to express the hope that your projects and programmes in Russia and the Republics will continue to flourish.

Certainly, with the rapid withdrawal of the major part of DfID funding in our Region, many of us will be asking ourselves 'What next?', in terms of both the future of existing projects and the opportunities for developing new ones.

Surveying the inspiring projects represented at our recent Annual Conference and the array of interesting articles in this Newsletter, it seems to me that we must try to answer, in our own activity, the question Professor Andrew Coyle posed at our conference: 'Is there a will for change?'

Last October, on a visit to Russia, I was greatly impressed by the achievements of BEARR's first project partner in Moscow, the NGO 'Sostradanie'. This small organisation has adapted the UK know-how it received in the early stage of our partnership, and has now become an award-winning NGO running a volunteer-based care of the elderly service in one of the capital's boroughs. The key stages in the development of this organisation were first to identify problems and then to address them, using Russian expertise with adapted UK 'know-how' to create a happy merger of Russian and UK approaches. Critical to the continuing success of the project has been its ability not only to sell the agreed solution to the local

and federal authorities, the Russian sponsors and the public – including, vitally, the elderly themselves – but also to involve them all in its subsequent delivery.

The will for change within local government has provided 'Sostradanie' with new premises. The will for change within Russian society has now produced Russian sponsors to fund this project. Together they have ensured the future of services to the elderly in one Moscow borough.

The will for change has to come from the top as well as from the grass roots. President Putin's comment last November on the AIDS situation in Russia is the starter motor for just such a change. It is encouraging to see that the Head of the Training and Human Resources Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs is co-operating closely with the EU and FCO-funded Ethnic Minorities and Access to Justice project in Ekaterinburg (see p.6). Likewise, it is heartening to read that a third hospice is now opening in the Kuzbass region of Siberia – in a country which but a few years ago had never heard the expression 'palliative care' (see p.8).

We read in Esther Pallot's article (see p.9) that Perm Social Services hosted the launch of the Perm Autistic Society, thus giving that project its official blessing. As Esther makes clear, it is imperative that Russian NGOs now unite with other organisations and individuals in order to create stronger organisational and lobbying units. Professor William Butler's study on HIV/AIDS is a thorough and

*by Daryl Hardman,
Director, The BEARR Trust*

informative piece of research, but it too can only become a useful tool if it is widely circulated and the knowledge it contains is applied.

In a country the size of Russia, circulation takes place through networks created by individuals and organisations coming together. The crucial importance of this was highlighted at BEARR's seminar in St Petersburg in October 2003, (run in association with the Russian Agency for Social Information), at which agencies offering services to the elderly came together to share their own Russian experience in the field. The conclusion was that a Russian umbrella organisation should be formed to support all elderly care organisations – many of whom, although perhaps even operating within the same borough, had not known about each other before coming to the seminar.

The will for change needs to be exhibited by UK partners too. They must move beyond seeing themselves merely as the funders and managers of projects in Russia (or the seekers of Western funds), and reinvent their own personae to become partners of Russian organisations seeking funding within Russia for work in Russia. This means a shift in emphasis from knocking on the doors of UK grant givers to developing a strategy for persuading Russian society to take on as its own the solutions that our Russian partners develop.

Giving Ekaterinburg's young people a voice

by Sarah Roberts

The Ekaterinburg-based NGO 'Global Family' works in a variety of fields related to health, the family and women's issues. Here, Sarah Roberts describes the exciting new project that Global Family has been developing in the Kirovsky district of Ekaterinburg over the past year.

The Global Family project is a three-pronged effort that aims to encourage and motivate young people aged 13-30 to think about issues that directly affect them. It also aims to give these people a voice by creating a final report for use by the City Administration in its 2015 Strategic Plan. So far, funding from a municipal grant competition and DfID has made this idea possible.

Calling all volunteers!

Global Family started to put together a team of dedicated and motivated volunteers early in 2002 to work on the project. Many of those involved were young people who had responded to adverts in universities and schools. Psychologists, teachers and other specialists also lent their support. The main project activities comprised an information campaign in local schools, a series of consultations and questionnaires for the general public, and the collation, review and production of the results, which are to be presented to schools, committees and local government.

Back to school

The information campaign in schools consisted of a series of lessons, workshops, round table discussions and teacher training sessions on the subjects of health, family and human rights. The campaign used a variety of visual methods and games to help those involved get a better understanding of these issues. Although the schools were very keen to take part in the project, Global Family often came up against problems such as timetable constrictions and inflexibility. Organisers put this down to the often 'closed' culture of many schools and the obvious demands of curriculum and examinations. Despite these problems, however, this section of the project was successfully completed.

The word on the street

While the work was being done in the schools, groups of volunteers were going out onto the streets and conducting consultations with the public. The questions asked, under the three topics of health, family and city, had been developed and adapted by the group of specialists and young volunteers. This had been a very difficult process, for the group had to be particularly aware of cultural and moral sensitivities. The main aim of the consultations was to find out what factors young people felt affected their health, family and city, both negatively and positively. People were then asked to consider how they themselves could affect these areas and what changes they would like to see to improve these matters for them. Everyone taking part was given information leaflets about the project and about issues concerning young people, health and the family.

The final stage of the project, still in progress, is the collation of all the results and the production of reports for local newspapers, schools, local committees and the City Administration. What is clear from immediate findings is that many of the ideas for improvement in all three topic areas overlap. The demand for a clean, drinkable water supply, for example, headed the list in all three topics.

The future looks bright

Global Family's director, Larissa Leonova, is extremely pleased with the outcomes of the project so far and has many ideas for possible continuations and extensions in other areas of the city. She is keen to point out that the results for the Kirovsky District of Ekaterinburg only provide part of the picture, for the district has a large student population. Other districts, for example the

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Giving young people a voice *continued*

Uralmash factory region, have a higher density of workers, particularly those employed by the factory itself. A comparison of results from both these areas would, therefore, provide a more rounded picture of the needs and demands of Ekaterinburg's next generation. Of course, as with all things, the possibility of extending the project will depend on

future funding. Nevertheless, judging by the successful achievements so far, this may not be so difficult to find.

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Community policing in Russia

Nicky Torode reports on the launch of a project on developing community policing amongst ethnic minorities in Russia

‘How do you translate the word ‘policing’?’ asked my Russian translator, faced with a pile of documents eulogising the advances made in community policing. This was a poignant question. It was not about finding the Russian equivalent of the word but a lack of understanding of the concept itself. This is not so surprising for, even in Britain, the term has undergone a shift in meaning. Traditionally it encompassed the idea of a police force. Now it refers to a more accountable police service. In Russia, however, according to testimony from ethnic minority groups, which make up nearly 20% of the overall population, policing predominantly refers to force and lawlessness. Legendary is the intrusiveness of the Russian stop and search policy. The system of registration, *propiska*, has become the prerequisite for discriminatory policing. In large cities members of those minorities which have a

so-called ‘Caucasian appearance’ are routinely stopped and searched on the pretext of national security. Furthermore, certain ethnic minority groups are automatically associated by the police with criminal activities, which prejudices any police investigation or action.

Creating space for co-operation

It is this climate of mutual misunderstanding, prejudice and fear which the recently launched British-Russian project Ethnic Minorities and Access to Justice in the Russian Federation seeks to address. The project is funded by the European Commission and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Over the next two years it will provide the physical and intellectual space to facilitate co-operation between ethnic minority organisations and the police with a view to improving community policing practices.

Project partners pool their experience

The project seeks to provide training for both militia and representatives of ethnic communities. It will take place in Ekaterinburg, Samara, Moscow and Krasnodar, cities that have diverse experiences regarding ethnic communities and the police. There will also be a study visit to the UK by both groups, micro-grants for implementing joint, small-scale community policing projects and ongoing technical support from British consultants.

The consultants working for the British partner, European Dialogue, have extensive first hand experience of the issues. Two trainers are from the Greenwich Council for Racial Equality. Following the Stephen Lawrence case they have been implementing a model of community policing known as the Greenwich Accord. In addition, there are former officers of the London Metropolitan Police and an expert

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advisor, who have been developing community policing models with the police and the Roma community in the Czech Republic.

The experience and expertise of the two Russian NGO partners is also vital. The Moscow partner, the Centre for Interethnic Cooperation, has numerous projects aimed at facilitating cooperation between local authorities and minority groups. The Ekaterinburg-based partner, Roma Ural, has also carried out several projects, which assist the Roma community in representing their concerns to local governmental bodies.

Progress so far

The project was launched by a visit from the Russian delegation to London in September 2003 to find out more about successful models of community policing. This was followed by the first round of training in Ekaterinburg at the beginning of a – thankfully – relatively mild December. The rationale was to work with both groups separately for two days, so as to allow an open, frank discussion of the issues amongst colleagues, after which both groups would be brought together at the joint training session.

Ekaterinburg sets the example

Seeing 30 uniformed militia men enter the training hall on the first day was certainly, for me, quite a daunting experience, but also a very positive confirmation of our Russian colleagues' willingness to participate in the project. The Head of the Training and Human Resources Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs had in fact worked closely with the Ekaterinburg City Ministry in assuring cooperation. Police training topics focused on methods and principles of co-operation, policing and human rights. Training for the ethnic minority organisations was well attended by Chechens, as well as by Ingush, Georgian, Armenian, Tajik, Tatar, Jewish, German, Kyrgyz and Roma representatives. Participants carried out an in-depth analysis of the existing problems in police and ethnic community relations and heard about various mechanisms which have been established in Greenwich for consulting and cooperating with ethnic groups and the police. Although such examples were a long way from the current practice in Russia, learning about the possibilities encouraged participants to

understand that change is possible despite the prevalence of discriminatory attitudes. On the day of joint training a really positive atmosphere was created between the two parties and small mixed group work resulted in a flow of ideas on potential methods of future cooperation.

Challenging stereotypes

The 3-day training event was very well-received with particular expressions of appreciation from one of the Chechen representatives and a police officer, who felt their stereotypes had been challenged and changed as a result. This elicited a loud round of applause from everyone. A small step, perhaps, but certainly one in the right direction.

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Organisers of the community policing training at the project launch in London

PALLIATIVE CARE

Challenging frontiers in palliative care: a new hospice in Siberia

BEARR Newsletter No. 32 (February 2001), featured Maureen's article on developing a palliative care service in Siberia. She now reports on developments over the last 3 years which have led to the opening, in April 2003, of the third hospice in the Kuzbass Region.

by Maureen Gill

Situated in the mining town of Prokopyviesk, this 25-bedded unit will serve a population of around 250,000 and will primarily be treating cancer patients. The initial concept for the unit came from Nadya Adamova, Chief Nurse at the town's home for the marginalised, elderly and homeless. Support from the Mayor of Prokopyviesk, Mr. Garanin, was also vital. Numerous planning meetings took place between the Head of Public Health Services, Dr. Nikolay Zinevsky, Dr. Olga Usenko of the Regional Hospice in Kemerovo and myself, a Specialist Nurse Consultant in Palliative Care in the UK. The planning stage was long and arduous, but the result is a hospice building that has been tastefully adapted for end of life care. Criteria for admission have been carefully set, and staff training has been identified as a priority.

It was exciting and gratifying for me to attend the opening ceremonies this year as guest of the Mayor and Dr. Zinevsky. From my tour of the completed hospice it was evident that the planning team had adapted many British concepts of palliative care to suit the culture of Siberia. This will hopefully mean that for those patients in the hospice with life-threatening illnesses the quality of life can be enhanced.

The Facilities

The hospice has access to specialists from a variety of backgrounds. It provides two-bedded rooms with comfortable mattresses and luxuries such as televisions and refrigerators. The building, situated in the grounds of a general hospital, was adapted from an old gynaecological unit and is spacious and light. There is overnight accommodation for relatives free of charge and a rest room for staff who must often work round the clock. A beautiful Russian Orthodox Chapel is on site for those patients and families who wish to use it. The bathing and toilet arrangements are of a higher standard than usual and there are separate areas for admission and dressings, and also for the care of the body following death. Whilst many of these facilities may seem usual here in the UK, they are dramatic changes for hospices in some areas of Russia and Eastern Europe.

The Future

The main issue now is how to provide immediate training for staff hungry for knowledge. I was recently awarded a travel fellowship from the International Association of Hospice and Palliative Care and this will enable such training to take place early in 2004. Sadly, though, there remain many problems facing the development of hospice care in



Maureen Gill with a patient at the hospice in Prokopyviesk

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Autism: Setting the stage for a network of charities

by *Esther Pallot*

On Thursday 11 December 2003 a celebratory 'launch' evening dedicated to the establishment of the Perm Autistic Society was held at the city's Social Services Department in Perm's industrial district. Amongst those attending were parents of children with autism, psychiatrists, teachers of special education and representatives from other local charities such as the Russian Disabled Society. Esther Pallot, the Society's Director, reports how the stage is now being set for the development of a network of autistic charities in Russia.



Photo: Esther Pallot

Sharing bitter experience

In April 2003, together with a group of parents of children with autism, we took the initiative to register as a charity. A group of us had been meeting in Perm on a regular basis for 3 years. At these meetings I would deliver seminars and give up-to-date information in my professional capacity as a special educational needs teacher. The meetings also provided an opportunity for parents to meet and share with each other the huge impact that having an autistic child has on family life.

Parents of autistic children are, without doubt, among the most highly qualified to support others along similar life journeys. They

also have a huge amount of insight and experience to share with other professional experts. They are also highly motivated to deepen their understanding of autism and are often very adept at gathering information, as the already impressive Perm Autistic Society library of books, information and articles testifies. The benefits gained from these meetings was apparent to us all and gave us the impetus to want to raise our profile and offer other families the same access to information and emotional support. We were also driven by our belief that the needs of autistic children were not being properly addressed.

Members of the Board with Director, Esther Pallot, (third from the left) at the opening launch of the Perm Autistic Society.

Autism leads the way

Certainly, in terms of meeting the needs of those with a physical disability, much progress has been made in Perm. However, judging by the accounts of parents of children with a 'not so visible' disability, such as learning difficulties and/or psychiatric disorders, wider society still has some way to go before reaching the same level of empathy, let alone understanding. Parents are still frequently criticised for having 'brought up their child badly', or the child is accused, for example, of substance abuse. So, although

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primarily identified with autism, the charity has been designed to raise awareness of other childhood developmental disorders too.

Common ground

Setting up a charity is no small affair, even in Great Britain where the voluntary (or third) sector, has long been established. In Russia, where there is limited appreciation and understanding, sadly even amongst some in the voluntary sector, establishing a charity is an altogether greater challenge. We initially made contact with a Moscow-based NGO for families of children with autism, for, with the exception of Izhevsk, we knew of no other NGO representing similar interests in the Ural region. On a more positive note, we eventually discovered that, after Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tomsk, Novosibirsk, Khabarovsk, Izhevsk and Pskov, Perm was actually the eighth city in Russia to be taking an interest in autism.

Establishing a local base for wider co-operation

Another incentive for forming a charity, rather than merely remaining an informal parental support group, was the potential I could see for advancing our cause at higher levels through a network of autistic organisations. Sergei Morozov of the Moscow NGO shared my view that only by strengthening associations between other NGOs working in this area could sustainable change be made at inter-regional and national levels.

Now is the time to unite, but for this it is imperative that our society operates as part of a greater 'whole', that whole being not just the wider voluntary sector but society itself. I was therefore delighted to welcome at our celebratory launch representatives from both the private and public sectors as well as members of our organisation. It is essential that we work

together and make contact with other interested parties. Judging by the interest taken in our organisation, its plans and activities and the feedback we received at the launch, if we join forces we may build a brighter future for people with autism in Russia.

Note: Autism (including Asperger syndrome) is a lifelong developmental disability occurring in varying degrees of severity. It is characterised by a triad of impairments which involve difficulties forming social relationships, problems with verbal and non-verbal communication and lack of imagination.

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Annual conference *continued from page 3*

with the FSU partner right from the start to ensure that these projects are 'home grown' within the target country.

In her closing remarks, Daryl Hardman reflected on the profound influence of Western NGOs on the third sector in Russia and the FSU. Reduced external funding will undoubtedly affect sustainability and dissemination but, she suggested, before attempting to generate change in another country, we should first examine our own system of working. Echoing the recurring theme of the day's discussions, she concluded that the key to sustainability and dissemination in both the West and in Russia lies in

coming together and pooling information, ideas and experience in order to learn from each other and build for the future on successful past and present partnerships.

The authors of this report, Natasha Sturgeon and Sabina Tringalas, are active volunteers at BEARR.

The BEARR Trust would like to thank the DfID-funded Health & Social Care Partnerships Scheme for their generous support of this year's conference.

HIV/AIDS prevention in Russia

by Charlotte Jackson

International Family Health (IFH) is an international NGO, set up in 1991, that has been working on HIV/AIDS prevention in Russia since 1998. The nature of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Russia means that the focus of this work has been on providing clean needles and syringes to injecting drug users, as well as information and counselling on safe injecting practices and safe sex. Here, Charlotte Jackson reports on the successes and obstacles encountered by IFH in developing harm reduction programmes with local Russian partners in the Sverdlovsk Oblast.

In November 1998, in response to a request from the Head of the Sverdlovsk Health Department for an HIV/AIDS prevention project with drug users, IFH began implementing the DfID Project 'Prevention of HIV/AIDS Amongst Injecting Drug Users in Sverdlovsk Oblast' in collaboration with University College of London Medical School. The objective of the project was to reduce the transmission of HIV amongst injecting drug users in the Sverdlovsk Oblast and to incorporate harm reduction into the Oblast's HIV strategy.

A series of harm reduction interventions were co-ordinated and three sites set up. These sites provided a syringe exchange service, distributed written health promotion materials and condoms, and promoted the use of the service. Alongside the project was an integrated research component conducted by the Urals State Medical Academy, which monitored the use of the sites and the effect the exchanges had on the injecting behaviour of drug users. Throughout the project, IFH worked closely with the local partners to ensure that their work was disseminated within Russia at national conferences as well as internationally. At the end of the project, a total of eight needle exchange sites had been established, serving over 9,000 clients.

Working with the police

Legal constraints presented huge problems for our work. They limited the scale of harm reduction programmes and the involvement of certain key

agencies, particularly the police. International experience has shown that the police play a crucial role in the effective implementation of harm reduction activities amongst injecting drug users. It was in 2001 that IFH began work with Detective Sergeant Geoff Monaghan of New Scotland Yard on 'Building Police Support for Harm Reduction'. The goal of this project was to raise awareness and understanding among members of the Russian Police Service, with the aim of building their support for harm reduction activities across Russia.

Problems with the law

While increased knowledge about harm reduction amongst regional police officers was important, it was unlikely to lead to the achievement of the project purpose, as the police were bound to enforce Russian law on drugs control. Since current drugs law was adopted prior to the explosion of HIV/AIDS in Russia, harm reduction does not feature; in fact, it would appear to be on the very margins of legality. Some Russian police officers believe that harm reduction activities are illegal in Russia and, as a result, their active involvement in them is out of the question. Given this situation, IFH agreed with DfID to reorient the project to focus on the legal basis for harm reduction in Russia. In February 2003, IFH commissioned Professor William Butler, an international expert in Russian law and a practising lawyer in Russia, to conduct a review of this legal basis.

Some Russian police officers believe that harm reduction activities are illegal in Russia.

HIV/AIDS / OPINION

Professor Butler's book* breaks new ground in HIV/AIDS prevention literature by reviewing harm reduction initiatives in the context of Russian and international law. He pays particular attention to key legal aspects that Russian commentators appear to have overlooked, such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the United Nations Drugs Conventions, and his report makes a series of recommendations for changes to Russian law or the interpretation of existing laws. UNAIDS has agreed to organise a meeting to address these recommendations and IFH has been in discussion with the Russian police to look at possible further training in harm reduction.

* William E Butler, *HIV/AIDS and Drug Misuse in Russia: Harm Reduction Programmes and the Russian Legal System*, London, 2003.

In the future, IFH hopes to scale up its harm reduction work in the region and is looking to set up projects, focusing on sexual health, which will be developed with new or existing partners in the FSU.

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Combating HIV and AIDS in Russia

Mike Titterton, keynote speaker at BEARR Conference 2002, is an expert in long-term health education and promotion. Below, in the context of his current work on the project 'EU Tacis Preventive Health Education in Schools in Russia', Mike describes how problems relating to AIDS are compounded by slow and unrealistic responses to the crisis.

by Mike Titterton

Complacency is hard to maintain when one is confronted with the startling facts of HIV infection in Russia. While 200,000 people are registered officially, others estimate that between one and two million are actually infected. It has been further estimated that 10% of Russia's workforce, or up to eight million people, will have a new HIV infection in the next decade. When considered alongside the falling birth rate and the alarming drop in life expectancy, it is clear that the current AIDS epidemic will have profound demographic and economic consequences for the country.

Another disease, however, is stalking Russia. It comprises a

deadly mix of inertia, bureaucracy and lack of respect for human rights in the government's response to AIDS. The lack of political urgency has only been matched by the failure to develop a robust public health approach to the issue.

Misconceived government strategies

The current strategy of mass and mandatory testing is a waste of time and scarce resources. It constitutes a violation of human rights and it creates expectations about treatment that are not fulfilled. It is pointless and unethical to conduct these tests without a meaningful intervention

to help those afflicted and without a long-term strategy based on well-attested principles of prevention.

Diverse approaches are needed

It is also based on a failure to come to terms with the epidemiology of the epidemic and the diversity of risk groups affected. Any approach to combating AIDS in Russia has to take into account the risk-taking behaviour and adverse health lifestyles of diverse groups. A homogeneity has been assumed which is not borne out by the reality.

Consider first the example of male truck drivers visiting commercial sex workers at *ad hoc*

sites that spring up at the roadside. Experience from other continents such as Africa has revealed that there are few more deadly transmission engines for sexual diseases

than a roving truck driver. Mass testing is irrelevant here. Instead, imaginative health education schemes are needed, to reach the drivers and the sex workers, their pimps and other customers in city and countryside alike.

Now consider a less mobile population at risk: young men in prisons, of whom Russia has no shortage. It is harder to imagine a more effective way of spreading infectious diseases among young men than herding them together in overcrowded cells. Prisons need to be health promoting, not health damaging, places. This literally captive audience requires not more testing but individual needs assessments, medical and social support and skills development.

Inadequate back-up

Harm reduction measures, such as needle exchange schemes, remain controversial in Russia, as

they are seen by their opponents as pandering to the problem. However, the effectiveness of these approaches is well established in practice and in research. One problem is

'Russian HIV transmission rates are possibly the highest in the world, with as many as 1–2 million people now infected'

that, even where such measures exist, there are insufficient services to provide support and back-up, particularly in the regional areas. For example, in the Pskov region in the north of the country, the outlying towns such as Velikie Luki are facing a severe problem, due to a sharp increase in incidence combined with a reliance on badly stretched resources based far away in the main town of Pskov.

Promoting awareness

Such approaches are not, of course, dealing with the root of the problem. This is where a broader programme of preventive health education is needed. A key issue is challenging the widespread perception among the Russian public that diseases such as AIDS are a problem just for risk groups such as injecting drug users. One of the most depressing features is the neglect of valuable

international experience such as that of Scotland, which faced a similar challenge and which can lay claim to containing one of the very earliest outbreaks in the West.

Hopes and fears

There are signs that the administration is starting to wake up to the problem of AIDS. Last spring, President Putin referred publicly to the situation in his 'state of the nation' speech. At last, a National Advisory Council has been set up. Anti-AIDS programmes are going ahead with a lot of funding from the UK and the EU.

However, there remains a lack of co-ordination, leading to a duplication of effort and the compartmentalising of projects. The absence of a strategic public health approach makes the task of co-ordination harder. Efforts to help Russia develop such an approach must now become a top priority.

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Challenging frontiers in palliative care *from page 5*

Siberia. These include a lack of available opiates, unwieldy bureaucracy, and low levels of education and public awareness, all combined with insufficient money and staff. Hopefully, however, the seeds of change have now been well sown, and the concept of end of life care and its relevance to dignity, hope and indeed humanity will take firm root in Siberia.

For more information, or a copy of the paper, 'Challenging Frontiers', delivered at the First Siberian Palliative Care Conference, Novosibirsk, 2002, contact Maureen Gill.

– CONTACT –

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FUNDRAISING AT BEARR

Topsham in tune with the Konevets Quartet

by Myra Green and Philippe Oboussier

On Thursday 16 October 2003, the internationally acclaimed Konevets Vocal Quartet performed in Topsham, Devon, as part of the tercentenary celebrations of the founding of St. Petersburg. Topsham has its own historic trading links with St. Petersburg, and the concert took place in Riversmeet House, whose architect, Francis Davy (1810-96), was a member of a well-known shipbuilding family and traded as a merchant in Baltic commodities.

The quartet takes its name from the Konevets Monastery on Lake Ladoga, North of St. Petersburg, where, after the collapse of the Soviet system, its members provided and restored sung Orthodox liturgy.

Our programme in Topsham was made up of two very different halves, but the overall standard of the recital was high and totally professional. The first half comprised fourteen pieces of sacred music, mainly from the nineteenth century, sung unaccompanied in the polyphonic Russian tradition. The second, 'secular' half provided more variety in a series of romantic ballads, tsarist hymns and traditional folk songs, featuring solos from all the voices. The quartet relaxed in the last few pieces, which included 'Evening Bells', a song with a 'ding-dong' accompaniment, an accordion song and, as



Photo: Myra Green

The Quartet in front of Riversmeet House: Dimitry Mednikov (tenor I), Alexander Nikanov (tenor II), Mikhail Trifonov (baritone), Igor Dmitriev (bass and director).

an encore, 'One for my master and one for my slave', a text happily inappropriate to the Russia of today!

Many thanks to former Director and patron of BEARR, Myra Green, for organising the concert, which raised £704 in aid of The BEARR Trust.



On the run

Daryl Hardman, Director of The BEARR Trust, races ahead in the Flora Fun Run 2003, held in London's Hyde Park on Sunday 14th September. Daryl raised over £1000 for BEARR.

FUNDING CLOSING DATES**ALLAVIDA**

Allavida is currently running grants programmes in two of its three focal regions: South East Europe and East Africa. The youthEXchange.SEE programme was launched in November 2002, and covers Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia. The fund's objective is to promote regional partnership-building and the transfer of skills and knowledge between grass-roots youth NGOs which have not previously had access to cross-border opportunities. Allavida is also about to pilot a small grants scheme in Kenya.

For further information, please contact
info@allavida.org
 or see their website: www.allavida.org

THE COMMUNITY FUND, INTERNATIONAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

A new International Grants Programme was launched in July 2002 for UK-based organisations working with partners abroad. The programme has new funding priorities and application forms: see www.community-fund.org.uk for more information. Because this programme is continuous, there are no closing dates for applications. Electronic application forms (EAF) can be downloaded from their website: www.community-fund.org.uk, or by calling 0845 791 9191. CD-ROMs are also available. International enquiry line: 020 7747 5294.

DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES MEMORIAL FUND INTERNATIONAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

No grants are currently available.
 Enquiries on: 020 7902 5530.

DFID HEALTH AND SOCIAL PARTNERSHIPS SCHEME (HSCP)

DfID has extended the HSCP Scheme until October 2004. This phase will concentrate on emphasising the achievements of project outputs, lesson learning, sharing experiences and managing dissemination. The Scheme Management Team will continue to provide management support, monitoring and quality

assurance to the projects. To increase impact on service delivery and the projects' sustainability, a dissemination programme will aim to facilitate the exchange of good practice materials and relevant expertise as well as to support and encourage the involvement of governmental bodies.

TACIS INSTITUTION BUILDING PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME: SUPPORT TO CIVIL SOCIETY AND LOCAL INITIATIVES

This programme is a follow-up of the previous Tacis Lien and City Twinning Programmes. The new IBPP Call for Proposals has been published on the EuropeAid Website under reference: EuropeAid/117824/C/G/Multi. Deadline: April 2004. Proposals can be submitted by eligible organisations from the EU, Tacis or Phare countries. Website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/index_en.htm

THE SMALL ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS SCHEME (SEPS)

Managed by the British Council on behalf of DfID, SEPS aims to improve the sustainability of Russian environmental policy and practice by strengthening the role of NGOs and local government departments. Grants are available for Russian-British partnerships addressing environmental management and planning, waste management and environmental monitoring and pollution control. For more information, visit www.britishcouncil.ru/work/woseps.htm or contact 0161 957 7828. SEPS is part of DEFRA's Environment for Europe Fund (020 7944 6225).

WESTMINSTER FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY

Forthcoming rounds of grants are as follows:

Deadlines for applications	Board meetings
11 May 2004	6 July 2004
17 August 2004	19 October 2004

Enquiries: 020 7930 0408 – ask to be put through to the 'Europe team' – or visit their website: www.wfd.org

October 2003

14th–15th: 2-day seminar ‘Multi-agency Care for the Elderly’ in St Petersburg, funded by the Linbury Trust and co-ordinated by BEARR in association with ASI (Agency of Social Information), Moscow.

November 2003

Friday 28th: Over 90 delegates attend The BEARR Trust Annual Conference *Following up and Following on’: Sustainability, Dissemination and Learning from Others in Russia and the FSU* in partnership with HSCP at The Charity Centre, London.

December 2003

‘Development of strategic partnership between non-governmental and governmental organisations in Samara Oblast’: final conference at ‘Povolzhe’ NGO, Samara. The project is financed by DISPS and run by Bill Seary, a BEARR Trust consultant.

January 2004

28th–29th: Adult Mental Health Centre in Pervouralsk: Official opening of Centre and final conference uniting two projects – Community Fund-financed Adult Mental Health Centre and HSCP-financed programme of seminars on Work-Based Mental Health. Both projects are run by The BEARR Trust.

February 2004

3rd–4th: Final seminar and dissemination event at the OZON Centre, Moscow, for BEARR’s project Developing a Child Protection Network in Russia. Attendees include visitors from St Petersburg, Chelyabinsk and Togliatti hoping to set up child protection centres, using expertise and material developed by this project. Funded by HSCP.

9th–13th: Study visit for BEARR-Nordis HSCP project ‘Opening School Doors to Deaf Children’. Delegates, including the Head of the municipal Department of Education, Nizhnii Novgorod and the Deputy Minister of Education for the Nizhnii Novgorod Region, visit the Sensory Impaired Services, schools with units for deaf children, and the National Deaf Children’s Society.

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

About The BEARR Trust

Patrons: The Duchess of Abercorn, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Elena Bashkirova Barenboim, Lady Fall, Myra Green OBE, Professor Geoffrey Hosking, Lady Hurd, HE Sir Roderick Lyne KBE CMG, Dr 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 Union (FSU). It has four main aims:

- to collaborate with British organisations working with the voluntary, social welfare and health sectors in the FSU, particularly in order to provide information and advice;
- to be a clearing house for information about British activities in the FSU and, where appropriate, to make this information public;
- to bring British and FSU organisations together for the transfer of information, skills and material aid;
- to initiate projects that will strengthen the FSU’s voluntary, social welfare and health sectors.

Trustees: Michael McCulloch (Chairman), John Church, Professor Michael Holman, Marcia Levy, Ann Lewis CMG, Nicola Ramsden

Staff: Director: Daryl Hardman; Information and Projects Officer: Rachel Watson; Finance Officer: John Kidd

Volunteers: Neville Collins, Asya Gefter, David Gower, Amy Hanton, Galina Keene, Tamar Lordkipanidze, Natalya Miroevskaya, Fiona Paterson, Sara Pfaffenhoefer, Stephanie Reardon, Alena Ryzhikova, Natasha Sturgeon, Sabina Tringalas, Imogen Wade, Vaughan Webber, Tim Woodhead

Editorial Board: Leila Carlyle, Michael Holman, Rachel Watson
 Registered charity no: 1011086

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- I wish to renew my Friend’s subscription and enclose a cheque for £30.
- I wish to make a donation and enclose a cheque for £.....(pay to The BEARR Trust).
- I wish to make a regular donation by banker’s order.

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Contact details may be made available to other voluntary organisations working in the former Soviet Union, unless you tick this box to indicate that this information is confidential.

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