





IREX/ASSISTANCE TO RUSSIAN ORPHANS (ARO) PROGRAM



Family Intervention Seminar in Barnaul

Two ARO expert consultants conducted a seminar on early family intervention services for families at risk of abandoning their children in Barnaul on February 5-7.

Twenty-seven administrators and specialists from governmental social welfare agencies and organizations in the Zheleznodorozhny district of Barnaul gathered to learn about services designed to identify and begin work with families in crisis at the earliest stages possible. At the close of the seminar, the participants drafted and agreed on a plan for the implementation of a system of early family intervention for at-risk families in Barnaul.



Participants at the family intervention seminar in Barnaul.

Summary:

ARO expert consultants led seminars and trainings on child psychology, family intervention, emergency psychological assistance to children by telephone, support services for foster families, and early intervention for children between the ages of 0-4 for specialists in Barnaul, Komsomol'sk-na-Amure, Novosibirsk, and Tambov in February.

The ARO Team provided valuable administrative training to ARO partner organizations during grant management seminars held in Novosibirsk and St. Petersburg and a project management seminar in Tomsk. ARO experts also carried out supervision of child abandonment prevention services in Tambov and Novosibirsk.

The National Foundation for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NFPCC), the key implementing partner of the ARO Program, and the Tomsk Oblast Department of Family and Children's Issues announced the winners of a joint grant competition for social services, which will be implemented as part of the Tomsk region's "Children of the Tomsk Oblast" Program.



Activities • Activities

Supervisory Visit and Workshop in Tambov

On February 11-13, six ARO expert consultants conducted supervision of work with children with severe disabilities at Tambov Oblast Baby Home to monitor the quality of care provided to special needs children living in state institutions. Following the supervision, ARO consultants held a workshop for employees from Tambov Oblast Baby Home to discuss affective regulation, psychological defense mechanisms, and problematic behavior from the point of view of a child's personal defense mechanisms. ARO experts also consulted the baby home employees on how to properly use the materials available at the *lekoteka* (a library of developmental toys and materials for special needs children), which was financed by the Tambov Oblast Administration.

Grant Management Seminars in Novosibirsk

On February 13-15, ARO Grants Coordinator Olga Loburets, ARO Grant Department Head Julia Monakhova, and ARO Regional Coordinator Inna Oranova conducted a grant management seminar for 20 managers and accountants from organizations that received grants in the framework of the ARO Program in the Iskitimsk district of Novosibirsk, the Leninskiy region, and the Kuybyshevk region. The ARO representatives went over the terms and conditions of the grant agreement, as well as financial and reporting regulations for grant recipients.

Child Helpline Seminar and Supervision in Novosibirsk

Fifteen helpline consultants and psychologists from Novosibirsk and Barnaul attended a five-day training seminar on the provision of emergency psychological assistance to children and adolescents by telephone in Novosibirsk on February 12-16. ARO Regional Coordinator Marina Betretdinova, ARO Co-Director and NFPCC President Marina Egorova, and ARO Regional Coordinator Inna Oranova explained the importance of helplines as a means of identifying children and families in crisis at the earliest stages possible and introduced the most common types of calls to helplines and how to handle them.

Over the course of the seminar, the ARO team discussed the organizational and administrative aspects of opening a child helpline and provided each participant with individual recommendations on how to improve his or her consulting techniques. The ARO team ultimately created two teams of specialists ready to work at the child helpline in the Iskitimsk district of Novosibirsk, where they provided supervisory assistance during the helpline's first day of work on February 27.

Seminar on Support Services for Foster Families

On February 19-22, Head of the ARO Expert Consultant Group Antonina Shepina led an educational seminar on support services for foster families in the Far Eastern city of Komsomol'sk-na-Amure. Specialists from Komsomol'sk Orphanage #1, Amursk Orphanage #2, and Komsomol'sk Boarding School #2 joined administrators from the Komsomol'sk-na-Amure Department of Education as participants.

Antonina Shepina highlighted the ways support services for foster families, which include screening of potential families, group and individual counseling, and regular monitoring of the families' progress, increase the success rates of foster family pairings with orphaned and abandoned children. The seminar also introduced participants to the basic administrative and methodological processes involved in the implementation of such services at institutions for orphaned and abandoned children.



Participants at the seminar on support services for foster families in Komsomol'sk-na-Amure.



Early Intervention Training in Vladivostok

In February, ARO, in cooperation with Firefly, conducted two training seminars in Vladivostok on early intervention services for young children with special needs. ARO experts in early intervention introduced the fundamental principles of this service as an effective means of child abandonment prevention to specialists and representatives from baby homes, children's polyclinics, rehabilitation centers, maternity hospitals, universities, and the Library for the Blind in Vladivostok.

Early Intervention Research Presentations

Dr. Dana Johnson presented the results of the eightyear Bucharest Early Intervention Project (BEIP), which demonstrate the benefits of early intervention services for children between the ages of 0-4, to approximately 200 specialists and administrators at the Vladivostok Medical University in February. As part of the ARO/Firefly early intervention training program, Dr. Johnson also shared her research with approximately 60 specialists in Khabarovsk, an ARO early intervention training site, during a presentation hosted by the Khabarovsk Department of Health.

Tomsk Oblast Grant Recipients Announced

The Tomsk Department of Child and Family Issues and the National Foundation for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NFPCC), the key implementing partner of the ARO Program, announced the winners of four joint grant competitions held in the Tomsk Oblast on February 26. Sixteen projects out of 60 applicants will be financed in four key areas of interest as part of the "Children of the Tomsk Oblast" Program: 4 projects providing innovative psychological support services for foster families, 3 projects providing early intervention services for children with developmental delays, 4 projects providing independent living services for children who have aged out of the orphanage system, and 5 projects providing social services for families with special-needs children.

Family Intervention Seminar in Novosibirsk

On February 26-29, six ARO expert consultants conducted a seminar in Novosibirsk on early family intervention services to families at risk of child abandonment for over 30 administrators and specialists from social welfare organizations in three ARO pilot regions: the Leninskiy district of Novosibirsk City and the Iskitimsk and Kuybyshevsk regions of the Novosibirsk Oblast. The participants studied techniques involved in the identification of at-risk families at the earliest stages possible. ARO expert consultants helped the participants review and rework their projects, which are scheduled to be officially launched on March 15.



Specialists at the family intervention seminar held in Novosibirsk on February 26-29.

Project Management Seminar in Tomsk

ARO Program Director Dmitry Lisitcyn and Head of the ARO Information Department Alexander Spivak led a project management seminar for 15 representatives of the Tomsk Department of Child and Family Issues on February 27-28. The participants discussed the realization of a new guardianship law recently passed in the Tomsk Oblast in December 2007. They also reviewed plans for events organized in the framework of the "Children of the Tomsk Oblast" Program and plans to reprofile orphanages and juvenile social rehabilitation centers for children from at-risk families to include support services for foster families and families at risk of abandoning their children.



Grant Management Seminar and Monitoring in St. Petersburg

On February 27-28, ARO Chief Financial Officer Alexander Blinkov and ARO Grant Coordinator Olga Loburets visited three grant recipient organizations (Bethany, Stellit, and Doctors to Children) implementing projects in the framework of the "Child Abandonment Prevention for Children Born to HIV-Positive Mothers" program component in St. Petersburg.

On February 27, the ARO representatives conducted a grant management seminar for administrators and key staff at Bethany, a first-time ARO grant recipient. The ARO team reviewed Bethany's office systems and procedures before introducing the financial and reporting procedures and regulations of ARO. The staff at Bethany also received detailed information regarding ARO grant agreements. On February 28, the ARO representatives met with administrators and key staff at both Stellit and Doctors to Children to monitor their financial activities. During their visit, the ARO team informed the grant recipients of recent changes in ARO reporting and financial procedures.

Upcoming Activities:

March 12-14 (Tambov):

Seminar on family forms of care for orphaned and abandoned children.

March 13-17 (Krasnoyarsk):

Training for staff at baby homes on early intervention for children between the ages of 0-4.

March 15-19 (Komsomol'sk-na-Amure):

Seminar on case management and work with at-risk families at the earliest stages of crisis.

March 17-27 (Khabarovsk):

Series of seminars on organizing after-school activities for at-risk children at schools, organizing after-school activities for at-risk children at libraries, and providing support services to families at risk of abandoning their children.

March 29-31 (Tomsk):

Study tour for Krasnoyarsk specialists to the Tomsk Hobby Center.







