





IREX/ASSISTANCE TO RUSSIAN ORPHANS (ARO) PROGRAM



Child Welfare Professionals Tackle Child Protection Issues at an International Conference

On June 25-26, over 200 child welfare professionals, including regional government officials and NGO representatives, from across Russia and around the world gathered in Moscow to discuss major issues related to child protection and the institutionalization of child protection policies. The conference, entitled "A Childhood without Cruelty and Abuse: Protection and Assistance," was timed to coincide with the 60th anniversary of International Children's Day and was organized by the Russian Children in Need Fund and the National Foundation for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NFPCC), IREX's implementing partner for the USAIDfunded Assistance to Russian Orphans program (ARO). The conference was supported by USAID, UNICEF, IREX, and the Charity Fund Help Center for Homeless Children of the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Ideas presented at the conference are useful for the federal government. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Zhukov sent a welcome message to the conference, which stressed the importance of working to prevent abuse and cruelty to children as well as steps that need to be taken. In the message, he said, "I believe that the results of the conference will have practical meaning and application in the work of the legislative and executive branches of the federal and regional governments and will promote work on a general concept of protecting the safety of our children and concrete measures for their protection from abuse and cruelty."

Also during the opening of the conference, Marina Gordeeva, the President of the board of the Russian Children in Need Fund, and Marina Egorova, the President of the NFPCC, both stressed the international nature of child abuse and neglect and stated that the goals of the conference were to focus and analyze the issue as well as look to the future and determine the steps that need to be taken to improve child protection in Russia. Marina Gordeeva noted, "This topic is extremely broad and very relevant and acute, and we see this conference as a specific step for future cooperation." Evgeniy Primakov, the President of the Charity Fund Help Center for Homeless Children of the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, also welcomed conference participants and stressed the importance of the work taking place. He noted, "In particular, because of our social trends, these joint actions [in child

protection] must take shape within the goals of the program and become priorities of all countries in the world."

Conference participants had the opportunity to share their successes in implementing the ARO program as well as a chance to learn and improve their skills during master classes. The successful implementation of ARO structures and methods in Tomsk and progress made in other regions provided hope and examples for regions such as Buryatia and Tartarstan working to replicate ARO models and structures. Larisa Sankhyadova, the Head of the Agency for Children and Family Affairs in the Republic of Buryatia, noted, "We have seen what Tomsk Oblast has done and we are following their example."

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Conference participants tackled core issues, including having the prevention of child abuse be a state priority, the early detection of problems and prevention of abuse, the best methods for working with at-risk children and families, problems that arise in protecting orphans, as well as Russian and international NGOs' experience in this field and what the future will hold. At the plenary sessions, participants presented information on everything from examples from specific regions to broader theoretical aspects of and research on child protection.

For the parallel program, participants had the option of attending one of two sections or one of three roundtables. The first section, Early Detection of Family Problems and Violations of Children's Rights to Prevent the Loss of Parental Rights, focused on the managerial side and institutionalization of child protection models. Government officials from various republics shared their experiences in implementing structures and systems for children's welfare, such as structures and systems for early detection, preventing social abandonment, providing social support to families affected by HIV/AIDS and working with at-risk families. Participants agreed on the importance of continuing to share and institutionalize successful models. Participants in the second section, Innovative Technologies for Working with At-Risk Children and Families: Best Practices, heard presentations on specific projects for improving child welfare and protection ranging from working with children with disabilities to combating child prostitution and sexual exploitation.

The first roundtable, Critical Problems in Protecting Orphans, tackled issues such as increasing specialists' professional skills, preparing foster families and developing other forms of family-based care. Round table two, How do We Protect Children from Violence?, focused on preventing child abuse and working with children who have suffered from abuse. The third roundtable, The Results and Outlook for Russian and International Projects in Child Welfare, gave participants the chance to hear about their Russian as well as foreign colleagues' experience in various areas of the child welfare sphere in Russia. The presenters included representatives from international as well as Russian NGOs working to improve children's lives in Russia. The results and recommendations of all the sections and roundtables were shared at the final plenary session.

The five master classes were also very popular with conference participants. The master classes covered psychotherapy for children who have experienced trauma, psycho-social support for families affected by alcoholism, working with disabled children in their homes, assessing foster families, and working with abused children. The master classes were an important part of the conference because they gave participants the chance to actively learn new skills in addition to hearing presentations.

In addition, the book *Field Guide to Child Welfare* by Judith S. Rycus and Ronald K. Hughes was presented and given to all conference participants. The book is particularly helpful because it discuses both theory and putting that theory into practice. Although neither author could attend the conference, Ms. Rycus sent a message expressing her gratitude and the importance of the conference's work.

The winners of the All-Russia Competition for Telephone Helpline Advertising were also acknowledged in the final plenary session, although the results had originally been announced in February. The competition was a partnership between NFPCC and the Dutch Embassy and open to government bodies and NGOs that maintain telephone helplines serving children, teens and families. In total, 21 helpline services from 17 regions throughout Russia submitted their advertising materials, including posters, flyers, stickers and radio announcements to NFPCC. The overall winner of the competition was the telephone helpline "Gavrosh" from Moscow as they had the most innovative and informative advertising. In addition to "Gavrosh," nine other helplines received awards at the conference.

During the final session, Ms. Egorova thanked USAID for their ten years of support for improving child welfare in Russia. Because ARO is entering its final stages, it is important to ensure the sustainability of its models and of the NFPCC. One way to accomplish this is to share experiences in the child welfare sphere and create a stronger community of child welfare specialists, which both took place at the conference. Keith Simmons, Acting Deputy Mission Director of USAID Russia, noted, "This conference demonstrates important achievements to prevent child abandonment and reduce the number of children in institutions. But it also shows that more work must be done to provide a happy and loving home for every child in Russia."

A cooperative spirit was present at the conference and participants enjoyed sharing their experiences with one another. Maxim Kostenko, the Deputy Chief of the Central Administrative Board of Altay Kray for the Social Protection of the Population, noted, "In the past there weren't many platforms for professionals to discuss child protection, but from the conference, we realize that different regions have been working to address this issue for the past 10 years with ARO support."





Conference Roundtable Focus: The Results and Outlook for Russian and International Projects in Child Welfare

The roundtable, The Results and Outlook for Russian and International Projects in Child Welfare, organized in part by the Russian Donor's Forum, captured the international, cooperative spirit of the conference. Nine presenters from around the world shared their organizations' experiences in working with children and youth. Galina Karmanova, ARO Chief of Party, Elena Kupriyanova, Vice President of the Russian Children in Need Fund and Olga Remenets, a Child Protection Officer at UNICEF, moderated the session and helped lead the discussion. Carol Sorrenti, director of the Russian Representative Office of IREX in Moscow, started off the roundtable by summarizing IREX's youth programs in Russia, including the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program (UGRAD), the Youth Development Competencies Program (YDCP), the Youth Initiative for the Promotion of Peace (YIPP) Program, and the Assistance to Russian Orphans (ARO) Program, and how those programs improve young people's lives and contribute to the Russian child welfare sphere. Ms. Sorrenti highlighted particularly successful aspects of the programs, such as the required community service of UGRAD participants, which makes them more likely to become civically involved in Russia, as well as other project successes. She mentioned that through ARO, over 80,000 orphans and abandoned children have been helped, over 500 new services and government standards have been created to help at-risk children and families, over 173 partnerships with NGOs and government agencies have been created to help prevent child abandonment, every year between 1,200-1,500 child welfare professionals receive training, and over 3,500 at-risk youth have improved their knowledge of preventing HIV/AIDS through trainings and the creation of Health Councils. Ms. Sorrenti also stressed that young people need to be thought of as a resource, rather than a problem. By giving youth life skills and helping them to be contributing members of their communities, they are able to take pride in themselves and improve Russia's future.

After listening to all of the presentations and having a short discussion, the roundtable participants proposed the following ideas to be included in the final conference resolution:

- The partnership between NGOs, the government and businesses should be strengthened in order to improve work on child protection issues;
- Public authorities should create an environment that allows social innovations through grant competitions, that has improved communication between agencies and where programs are properly monitored and the necessary research is conducted;
- Create toll-free, three-digit telephone helplines for children in places where helplines that have longer numbers and/or are not free exist, create helplines in regions where none exist, and explore other means, such as the Internet, for children to receive the help and support they need;
- Incorporate the Convention on Children's Rights into the education system and amend the Russian law on children's rights to include parental responsibility and punishments for cruelty and abuse;
- Continue to develop programs that encourage youth development, such as IREX's current youth projects; and

 Make statistics on social abandonment accessible so that organizations and government agencies can improve their programs.

The international roundtable helped create a stronger community of child welfare professionals around the world and allowed people working in more remote areas to see available opportunities. After end of the session, an official from Tajikistan had a conversation with Johan Martens, from Child Helpline International, about the possibility of creating a child helpline in Tajikistan. The two agreed to be in contact and were excited to cooperate with one another. Because of the conference, and specifically the international roundtable, there is a good chance that Tajikistan will be able to set up a child helpline.



Participants at the International Roundtable.

Presentations at the International Roundtable:

- IREX Programs for Children and Youth by Carol Sorrenti, IREX Moscow
- Our Role as a Donor and Collaborating Partner of Russian NGOs within the Child Welfare Sphere by Susanne Drakborg, Word Childhood Foundation, Sweden
- Creation of a Network of Children's Telephone Hotlines: Forces in Unity by Johan Martens, Child Helpline International, Netherlands
- Planning, Decision Making and Gatekeeping in Child Protection by Joanne Rogers, Everychild,
- Keystone Foundation for Children and Families: Giving Opportunities for People with Special Needs and their Families to become Valid and Contributing Members of our Community by Charles Hooker, USA
- Regional Programs to Help Orphans: Cooperation of NGOs and Government Authorities in Russia by Igor Donenko, Spread Your Wings, Moscow
- BOTA Foundation's Work in Child Welfare by Zhanyul Mukashova, BOTA Foundation, Kazakhstan
- What can Large Companies do to Help Solve Big Problems? By Yulia Bogdanova, KPMG, Moscow
- Victoria Fund's Activities in Developing a School for Foster Families by Elvira Garifulina, Victoria Children's Fund, Russia
- Overview of UNICEF Programs for Protecting Children's Rights in Russia by Olga Rements, UNICEF Moscow



NFPCC took part in an International AIDS Conference in Africa



A NFPCC expert and program coordinator traveled to Windhoek Namibia to participate in the International Conference "2009 HIV/AIDS Implementers' Meeting" from June 10-14, 2009. The conference was supported by the Government of

Namibia and organized by: the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR); the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria; the Global Network of People Living with HIV\AIDS; the United Nations Children's Fund; the United Nations Joint Program on HIV/AIDS; the World Bank; and the World Health Organization. During the five days, around 1,500 participants shared their experiences in implementing HIV/AIDS projects.

NFPCC shared the paper "Optimizing the Response: Partnerships for Sustainability" – an abstract on the experience of linking programming for comprehensive support to families affected by HIV at the community level.

The NFPCC expert and coordinator attended sections on topics that related to implementing projects within the ARO framework, specifically:

- Maternal Health and PMTCT
- Effective Community Engagement
- OVC: Care Models and Effectiveness
- Youth and Prevention
- Linking HIV Services with Other Services

Participating in this conference provided invaluable experience for NFPCC. The most useful information and project experience from the conference on effectively providing assistance to HIV-positive people and preventive programs for youth will be shared with ARO implementing partners in St. Petersburg during the next monitoring visit.

General News

Cost Measurement and Analysis of Long-Term Economic Impact of Services in Khabarovsk Kray

NFPCC conducted an expert cost measurement and analysis of the long-term economic impact of five innovative child welfare services for preventing social abandonment developed by the ARO program in the Kray within the broader context of developing an innovative regional system for preventing child abandonment. The collection of documents and necessary data came from meetings and interviews with representatives of the Khabarovsk Kray Government, Khabarovsk City Administration, institutions, service providing agencies, and statistics agencies in order to receive first-hand information.

The analytical report included:

- A calculation of the cost of each of the five services for preventing social abandonment;
- A prediction of the needs of the services dependent on the potential number of users;
- A prediction of the needs of the financial service;
- An estimate of social effects (results) of the services; and
- An estimate of possible budgetary savings as a result of increasing the scope of services and further expanding them.

Cost estimates for the services are necessary in order to give the city and kray leaders responsible for choosing kray/city child protection policy a base estimate of budgetary costs connected with expanding the services, and if they are institutionalized, provide an estimate of what first needs to be spent as well as estimated social-economic effects of the services.

In addition, the findings of this work will be submitted to the administrations of other ARO priority regions (Novosibirsk, Altay Kray, Tambov), other potential regions interested in adopting ARO models, and the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Development, and will continue to make the case for a continued rollout of ARO-developed models, technologies and systems to enhance the dissemination and institutionalization of improved child welfare services at the national level.

Seminars in Tomsk, Novosibirsk and Moscow

Fifty six specialists from the Tomsk Department of Family and Children's Issues (DFCI) and other governmental departments attended two seminars. The first seminar "Work techniques for implementing a complex system of early detection and working with families at risk of social abandonment" was based on the experience of planning and implementing an early detection system and working with at-risk families in Leninsky district in the city of Tomsk, which was a pilot region for the project. During the seminar, participants analyzed in-place systems and discussed aspects to change and ways to improve them. The DFCI presented a methodological plan for implementing a system of early detection and working with atrisk families. The second seminar, "Implementation of an interagency program for developing a system for preventing social abandonment," focused on the development of this program based on Tomsk Oblast's experience. Twenty three specialists from eight institutions, including rehabilitation centers, early assistance services and lekotekas, in Novosibirsk Oblast attended the seminar "Examination of Early Assistance," to become acquainted with ways and methods of early assistance, especially on how to prolong the process with parents.



In Moscow, 16 directors of telephone helplines, who had at least six months of experience and were willing to discuss their work and experience in helping children and teenagers from around Russia, attended the third and final seminar to increase their professional competency in issues of understanding the goals and tasks of supervision; to understand counselors' concerns when working with people in difficult situations; and to define the assessment criteria for the effectiveness of supervision.



Participants at the Novosibirsk Seminar



Discussion at the Novosibirsk Seminar

Roundtables in Tambov

A roundtable on implementing methods for early detection of at-risk families in the city of Tambov took place in June. The Tambov Administration and NFPCC discussed the innovative methods used in Tambov from 2007–2009 and possibilities for continuing cooperation. Participants came away with the opinion that their experiment in implementing a system for early detection was successful and the results show the effectiveness and practical value of the innovative methods necessary to replicate this system in other parts of the oblast.

Participants at another roundtable in Tambov discussed the development of family-based forms of care for orphaned and abandoned children, including the results of the partnership with NFPCC and Tambov Oblast Administration. Other topics of the discussion included improving social workers' skills, the success in developing a family-based form of care system and also the existence of future areas for cooperation. Tambov City representatives praised NFPCC's work in developing family based forms of care for orphaned and abandoned children in Tambov Oblast.

News from Our Partner

NFPCC's Russian Translation of *Field Guide to Child Welfare* is a Success

The Russian version of the four-volume *Field Guide to Child Welfare* by Judith S. Rycus and Roland K. Hughes continues to gain popularity in Russia and the NFPCC has received more and more requests for it from Russian child welfare specialists. The NFPCC, who publishes the book in Russian, released the third and fourth volumes in May and June and distributed it at the conference "A Childhood without Cruelty and Abuse: Protection and Assistance." The four volumes of the collection are:



- Foundations of Child Protective Services;
- Case Planning and Family-Centered Casework;
- Child Development and Child Welfare; and
- Placement and Permanence.

The collection is a valuable resource for Russian child welfare specialists because it provides theory as well as case study examples.

NFPCC Annual Report Released

In order to summarize the results of NFPCC's work, including events and information posted on their website, the NFPCC published a detailed annual report for 2008 in the first half of 2009. The report was distributed at the conference "A Childhood without Cruelty and Abuse: Protection and Assistance," in Moscow, on June 25–26, 2009.





Upcoming Activities:

Tomsk Oblast

July 24

Meeting on standards for specialists from the Department of Family and Children's Issues

July 30-31

Seminar for participants of the oblast-wide child protection program

Tambov Oblast

July 3

Seminar on standards for services developing family-based forms of care

Altay Kray

July 21

Meeting on strengthening partnerships

Republic of Buryatia

July 1

Seminar on monitoring and providing psychological support to at-risk children in educational environments

Moscow

July 29

Expert council on increasing the number of members in the Association of Child Helplines







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