







## 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, Moscow
- 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 Remenets, UNICEF Moscow









## 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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