

Towards a More Inclusive Society: The Evolving Role of NGOs

BEARR Trust Annual Conference 2005

One indication of a good conference is whether the room is still full after lunch. Judging by this, the BEARR Trust's Annual Conference 2005 was a very productive and engaging day.

More than seventy representatives of civil society organisations, the media and think tanks from Europe, Russia and the CIS gathered to discuss current challenges to civil society. These include partnerships with local or national authorities and international donor organisations, relations with government and attitudes of the population to the third sector.

Andrew Jack of the Financial Times summed up in his keynote speech the broader political and economic context of Putin's Russia and the situation regarding NGOs. He ended with five challenges to foreign and Russian NGOs (see page 4). Anna Garchakova, Director of the Belarusian Children's Hospice, followed up with a more grass-roots approach (see page 5). Her presentation was one of two relating to countries other than Russia, and the first about Belarus at a BEARR Conference. Many of the problems faced there are mirrored in other countries.

The second session focused on partnerships and funding, looking at two case studies. Barbara Profeta (Union Pour un Avenir Meilleur, UPAM) discussed the

by Imogen Wade, BEARR volunteer

advantages and drawbacks of working with locally-run NGOs and local authorities (see page 7). Stella Rock and Robina Mallet (Home Farm Trust) presented their projects supporting children with disabilities and their families in Moscow (see page 8). The two case studies underlined the importance of using and developing local staff and knowledge in a foreign partnership. The experience of a non-British NGO added a useful extra dimension to the discussions.

The afternoon opened with a panel discussion on how NGOs can contribute to a more inclusive society. The panel members were: Anton Shelupanov, Research Associate at the International Centre for Prison Studies, King's College, London; Christina Anglès d'Auriac, Project Manager at the International Catholic Child Bureau (ICCB); Jonathan Edwards, Programme Manager for Southeast Europe and Central Asia at Allavida; and Anna Garchakova.

The panellists stimulated a wide-ranging and inspiring discussion on attitudes of the state and the public to marginalised social groups such as street children, mentally or physically disabled people, and prisoners. The discussion revealed the diversity of local, regional and international organisations working to

1	.....	The BEARR Trust 2005 Annual Conference
3	.....	Feedback on the conference
4	.....	Russia, Putin and NGOs
5	.....	Children's hospices in Belarus
6	.....	Meeting disabled children's needs in Russia
8	.....	Supporting inclusive education in Moscow
10	.....	New Russian law on NGOs

11	.....	Chornobyl and after: provincial hospitals in Ukraine
13	.....	Launch party for Sir Norman Wooding's <i>Recollections</i> and a review of the book.
14	.....	Funding
15	.....	BEARR's Strategic Framework
15	.....	BEARR Grant Scheme announced

2005 CONFERENCE

integrate excluded groups into society, not just in Russia but across the region, and highlighted areas needing more attention in future.

Street children

Michael Siggs spoke about a successful St Petersburg Healthcare Trust project which established a school to try to improve the prospects of the estimated 30,000 children living on the streets in the city. Having managed to secure municipal authority financial assistance, they are now planning to open a drug rehabilitation school for street children.

David Maidment (Railway Children) highlighted the lack of any agreement on the definition of a 'street child', and the extent of the problem in Moscow: 500 children run away from home every month and are later picked up by the police. Officially there are 800 000 street children in Russia but NGOs estimate a much higher number. In partnership with NAN, Railway Children are currently conducting action research at six main Moscow railway stations to help children living in and around these stations get off the street and tackle their drug addiction.

Hamish Heald gave an example of a locally based and run organisation in Perm, Love's Bridge, which provides support to young people on the streets to overcome their addictions, resume studies and become self-reliant.

Prisons

Anton Shelupanov highlighted the need to apply a human rights perspective to all aspects of prison management, especially prisoners' health, treatment and pre-trial detention. Children should not be in prison but need alternative systems.

Staff selection and training, still governed by the Soviet militaristic model, is also in need of reform. He stressed that the Russian state must recognise and act on its responsibility to care for the prison population, to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic and chronic prison overcrowding.

Shelupanov acknowledged that the Russian government had made progress in this domain. Putin had publicly recognised that prison reform was a priority during his second term. The total number of prisoners has fallen, due in part to amnesties; indeed, three other countries (headed by the USA) now have a higher number of prisoners than Russia. However, reducing the overall figures did not solve the underlying problems.

Social attitudes

A major theme of the panel session was the need to address public perceptions of exclusion. Changing prejudiced social attitudes was crucial to integrating marginalised groups. Although Andrew Jack had mentioned Putin's attempts to consolidate society, much still needed to be done and NGOs had an important role. As recent research illustrated, even highly-educated, professional Russians often discriminated against disabled people and non-ethnic Russians.

The media also had much influence on public opinion and therefore could do more in future to tackle social injustice. Christina Anglès d'Auriac mentioned a recent documentary about state and church-run Russian orphanages. This had provoked a huge public response when shown on French and German TV, and was later broadcast in Russia, resulting in increased interest in volunteering and adoption.

Volunteering

Another way to counter discrimination against excluded people was by encouraging more people to volunteer. Getting more local or regional volunteers into NGOs in Russia and the region would bring many benefits: more staff, more local knowledge, and a change in attitudes 'from the bottom up.' But how can the profile and status of volunteering in Russia be improved?

Anna Garchakova outlined her mixed experience of volunteers in hospices in Belarus. She had found that only young people were willing to volunteer their time and effort, mainly because



Anton Shelupanov listens as Michael McCulloch, BEARR Chairman, makes a point

2005 CONFERENCE

they had fewer commitments. She had also developed an increasingly successful programme for international volunteers.

Perhaps the understanding of 'volunteer' should be changed? Jonathan Edwards favoured a wider, more inclusive definition of volunteers, to include for example people on study placements, trustees of charities or other organisations, or mothers helping their friends run a day-care centre. Research carried out by the European Volunteer Centre on the legal, political and social status of volunteering in Europe illustrated the importance of cultural specificities and the differences between countries' volunteer traditions.

Whither BEARR?

The day's final discussion looked at how The BEARR Trust could best continue to serve NGOs working in Russia and the region. The ending or reduction in funding for projects in the region, together with proposals to restrict the activities of foreign and domestic civil society organisations, have led to a strategic rethink of BEARR's aims and objectives. Michael McCulloch, Chairman, noted the increased



Jonathan Edwards and Christina Angles d'Auriac at the panel session

photo: Michael Holman

complexity, professionalism and diversity of the Russian NGO sector (often estimated at 500,000 NGOs). BEARR needed to react and adapt to this situation in order to serve its client base. Delegates were invited to suggest what services BEARR should continue, develop or take on.

Michael McCulloch concluded the day by thanking the organisers and all participants for contributing to such a rich and illuminating day of discussions, and providing BEARR with much food for thought about the way forward.

What did you think?

Feedback on the 2005 BEARR Conference

With thanks to those who filled in the evaluation forms, the key findings were:

- You overwhelmingly appreciated the opportunity for networking and the frank and open debate among specialists with common interests.
- You were divided on the desirability of break-out groups and the longer lunch-break.
- You would like more focus on countries other than Russia.
- Subjects suggested for specialist seminars included volunteering, use of the media, fund-raising, and non-UK programmes.
- You saw BEARR's key role for the future as a web-based networking and information organisation.

The Trust appreciated the many favourable comments about the conference (there were remarkably few complaints except about the early start!), of which our favourite was:

'I came away further energised and motivated! It's encouraging and inspiring to see how much the welfare of our client countries genuinely concerns our members.'

The Trust has taken to heart the conference discussion, this feedback and comments from other sources. See the proposed new Strategic Framework on page 15.

Russia: Back to the future or forward to the past?

Andrew Jack

Financial Times correspondent in Moscow, 2000-2004

This is a slightly amended version of Andrew Jack's address to the 2005 BEARR Conference.

When the Charities Aid Foundation and others lobbied for the Kremlin to make 2006 'Year of the Charity', they didn't realise how the idea could be hijacked. The new law on NGOs risks making 2006 the 'year against charity', with restrictions on foreign and domestic organisations' operations and funding.

Plans for re-registration alone – even ignoring any ulterior motives and corruption – will be a bureaucratic nightmare. One NGO head described these ideas as 'either Armageddon or another firm tug on the chain'.

But to understand how we got to this point, let's attempt to understand Russia under Putin. First, it is undeniable that he is popular, albeit with ratings on the wane. Second, he has to be seen in context: he and his support are products of the Yeltsin era. We are observing the 'post post Soviet' thermidor, the counter-revolution.

One can't over-state the contrast between Yeltsin, the drunken, erratic and irascible, and Putin, the teetotal, ascetic, man of few words. Nor should we neglect the Russian context: from a chaotic period in the 1990s of vast poverty, inequalities and the ending of the social safety net, to an era of rising prosperity since 2000.

Gorbachev sowed the seeds of destruction (partly unwittingly) of the Soviet system; Yeltsin demolished the old and offered a new vision; but it was left to Putin to rebuild, on shaky foundations not simply of his own creation.

Putin is a consolidator in his rhetoric, building bridges notably to the Soviet generation alienated by Yeltsin. He has benefited from high commodity prices, and suffered in part through limitations in imposing his will on a corrupt, rotten bureaucracy.

He is best described as a 'liberal authoritarian': a liberal in economic terms, if only pragmatically, because he saw the failures of communism; but also an authoritarian, reflecting his background, culture and the style of his post-Soviet bosses and mentors, Anatoly Sobchak in St Petersburg and Boris Yeltsin in Moscow.

But if 'Putin I' is explicable, there is an increasingly worrying shift in 'Putin II', reflecting his narrow background and rapid ascent while increasingly relying on a small group of trusted acquaintances. These people are coming to power against a backdrop of reduced counterbalances, and ever fewer, less diverse sources of information.

The NGO landscape is a microcosm of these broader issues. As with everything in Russia, the situation is probably 'worse than you hoped, but better than you feared.' There has been a huge explosion in the number of NGOs. And support is coming not only from Russian entrepreneurs, but also from an emerging middle class.

However, NGOs are always under administrative, legal and financial pressure, especially the lower-profile, regional organisations – sometimes for commercial as much as political reasons. The

Khodorkovsky affair has created a fresh reluctance for contributors to support sensitive issues.

The latest rhetoric is partly a response to a perceived 'enemy within', of political challengers like Khodorkovsky. It is also a reaction to the post-Orange Revolution paranoia from without – in part reflecting a reality of provocative western funding and support for 'opposition' organisations.

So what are the challenges for NGOs and for The BEARR Trust in this new environment?

First, there is the need to assist the handover to a new generation of leaders. The dissidents of the 1960s still dominate too many of the NGOs today, locking them into a message focused on the past and discouraging more youthful input.

Second, NGO activities should focus on Russians' needs. In human rights, for example, that might mean the impact of the Chechen conflict on the entire country, not just in Chechnya: hence the success of the Soldiers' Mothers Committee.

Third, NGOs do best in experimentation, implementation and advocacy, rather than explicitly political activities. This is not their main role, reduces their credibility and exposes them to attack.

Fourth, support, including money, should be raised locally. For maximum legitimacy, NGOs need not a handful of donations of millions of dollars from a few big businesses, but roubles and kopecks from thousands of individuals.

continues on page 9

Hospices in Belarus

Innovation in a Closed Environment

Anna Garchakova

Director, Belarusian Children's Hospice

Specialist in Palliative Care

Palliative care is a relatively new concept to many East European countries, which have since the beginning of the 1990s been experiencing profound political and economic changes. Tiny Belarus is no exception. In 1994, using my training at the Children's Hospice International in Washington, I helped establish the Belarusian Children's Hospice (BCH) in Minsk. BCH is a non-state charitable organisation whose main goal is to provide palliative care to children with a life-threatening disease (malignant or non-malignant). BCH was the first children's hospice in the whole of the former Soviet Union.

For the first three years, BCH used an American model of palliative care, providing only home care. The patients were all cancer sufferers. There were four permanent staff plus volunteers. For the first two years we rented a room at the Onco-Haematological Centre, then moved to three rooms in Polyclinic No 11. The rent was very low, and covered by local sponsors. The first foreign sponsors were the Soros Foundation and Hilfswerk Austria.

Meanwhile, the number of patients increased, and in 1996 the programme was expanded to include a small mobile team – consisting of doctor, nurse and driver – which could be rushed to provide pain relief to any patient living within 250 km of Minsk.

In 1997 the hospice team moved to an old kindergarten building. The local authorities treated us with understanding and let us have the premises rent-free, charging only for utilities, and then at a reduced rate. New sponsorship from the Rotary Club and Convoy of Hope enabled us to renovate the building. Now BCH had two rooms able to accommodate in-house sick children with their parents. The children had an individual plan of palliative treatment and their families could relax knowing that medical care was constantly on tap. We also had one room with four beds for children whose parents could not stay.

In 1999 we started having problems. The economy was in a bad state and we lost a lot of volunteers who had to return to full time employment. Then all rent concessions were cancelled, leaving us facing bills that were more than we could afford.



Children at play at Vera's House

Photo: Staff of Belarusian Children's Hospice

In 2000, thanks to the support of Anne's Fund (UK), we bought a building on the outskirts of Minsk. Supporters in the UK, Switzerland and Germany helped us to transform the building into our new home: Vera's House.

We now run 12 main programmes at the hospice. They provide a good quality of life for patients and their families. The programmes include palliative home care, respite care, a day care centre, programmes for parents and siblings, bereavement counselling, and education and publishing.

Financial support for BCH comes from various organisations and private individuals in Belarus and overseas. One of the main sponsors is TACIS which, a couple of years ago, in protest against the lack of progress towards democracy in Belarus, froze all grants to Belarusian projects. This action did not affect the government, but hit us very hard. Desperately, we came back to our friends in the UK who managed to raise enough money to cover our salary bill, and thus keep us going, until TACIS could be persuaded to reverse its decision. Now we are experiencing difficulties in registering new projects, such as our new satellite hospices, with the Belarus authorities. The process is complicated and time-consuming, the law frequently changes and the environment is not friendly to NGOs. At one

MEETING DISABLED CHILDREN'S NEEDS

time we had to employ a full-time lawyer just to keep up with the deluge of new rules – and ask our sponsors to foot another regular salary. We live in the hope that things will change.

Recognising that one hospice could not cover the whole of Belarus, in 2000 we began to think about creating a network of hospices. We found groups who were keen to set up a hospice in their cities, and then we found sponsors for each of these. The new hospices are legally independent, but BCH trains their staff and provides guidance.

Twice a year BCH organises seminars with foreign specialist palliative care speakers, and promotes know-how exchange between Belarusian specialists from different regions.

This year BCH and Hilfswerk Austria, with TACIS support, launched a new venture – the first, urgently-needed, adult hospice in Belarus. The local

authorities reacted to this situation very quickly and in August 2005 they took over responsibility for the new adult hospice. The main purpose of this venture, as of BCH, is not to cure patients but to improve their quality of life in the final stages of serious or incurable disease, so that people can live a full and worthwhile life without pain and suffering for as long as possible.

– CONTACT –

Anna Garchakova, Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education
Borovlyany, Berezovaya Roscha 100 A, Minsk,
Republic of Belarus 223053
Tel: 375 (0) 17 505 27 45 / or 47
Email: hospicepall@mail.belpak.by
www.hospice.by

Day care centres, Russian style: working with NGOs and local authorities

*Barbara Profeta
Russia Project Coordinator, UPAM*

Between 2000 and 2004, the Geneva-based NGO 'UPAM' (Union For a Better Future) helped set up two day care centres for disabled children living with their families in Russia: 'Rodnichok' in Novgorod (North West Russia), and the Crisis Centre for Women and Children in Krasnoyarsk (Siberia). The former was built on the ashes of a suffocating but enthusiastic parents' NGO, the latter implanted into the rigid framework of the public social services. This article presents the story of two very different, but equally successful, local interpretations of an initial single project, aimed at providing Russian disabled children living with their families with an alternative to the orphanage and a chance to become accepted members of their society.

The beginnings: identifying existing resources

Touched, like many other Western NGOs, by the famous videos of former Soviet orphanages shown on European TV shortly after the collapse of the communist regime, UPAM started in 1993, dedicating part of its activity to the increasing problem of disabled children in the region. Circumstances helped in the choice of target

country: it had to be Russia, where we had already acquired some understanding of the specific context of state psychiatric asylums hosting a range of 'social orphans'.

At that time, with both our status and youth¹ limiting our capacity to offer professional help, we brought two skills to this humanitarian challenge: our common sense and our faith in the benefits of personal contacts. As for the latter, we started by establishing a good strategic relationship with the Moscow University of Pedagogy, where the first innovative programmes for the social inclusion and rehabilitation of disabled children were being elaborated in response to the practical problems raised by affected families. This is where it was first suggested to us that we should support disabled children by meeting the needs of their parents (most of them single mothers with no time for themselves or for a job) in order to prevent forced institutionalisation. This link opened the door to the biggest Russian existing network of organisations for the disabled, a national NGO called VOI

1. UPAM was born in Geneva thanks to an enthusiastic group of college students who, disappointed by the disparities within their own society, decided to dedicate part of their time on a voluntary basis to helping some of the most vulnerable groups, first in Geneva and then abroad.

MEETING DISABLED CHILDREN'S NEEDS

(Russian Organisation for the Disabled). VOI helped us to identify our beneficiaries among their most promising (but materially helpless) partners, in Novgorod and Krasnoyarsk. Flexibility and respect for existing local knowledge and experiences soon became our credo, to the extent that our main criterion for identifying local partners was: 'our plan should fit their agenda'! The six-month budgeted challenge became a four-year 'learning by doing' process for all the parties involved (thanks to the very supportive Geneva-based Foundation Pro Victimis).

A delicate balance

A year after the end of these projects, and with a heightened interest in multiplying such alternative structures, our acquired wisdom allows us to weigh up the merits of various forms of collaboration in the context of a persistent dilemma faced by many international partnerships: to support civil society or reinforce state structures?

Our experience has taught us that collaboration with local authorities is vital to guarantee sustainability. In Novgorod, in the current hostile legal framework for charity and non-profit activities, 'Rodnichok' would not have been able to survive without the administrative support of the local authorities, whose participation in the project was sealed from the beginning when they promised unlimited free use of the premises of the future day care centre. In Krasnoyarsk, the running costs of the new centre would not have been covered had the Department of



Photo: Olga Andreeva

'Rodnichok'. The running costs of the day care centre are a constant worry in Novgorod. In order to cover essentials such as utilities and the children's meals, these inspired parents have raised funds locally to set up a hairdressing salon in the large premises refurbished by our project. Cuts are free for children and parents, and charged at a reduced price for locals and friends of the centre. In summer, the premises and the skills of the centre's director are hired out to occasional tourists (with priority for the disabled). 'Rodnichok' also welcomes disabled children from rural areas without social services in groups of ten several times a year. It currently caters for 15-20 regular visitors with severe disabilities.

Social Affairs not been able to obtain official status for this previously unknown structure by taking it under its protection. On the other hand, without the bottom-up input from the parents' groups, the state could not have identified the needs of the children, nor would the project have been cherished in a way that virtually excludes the kind of abuse donors fear.

If this suggests that the weaknesses of NGOs could often be overcome by state institutions in a particular context, and vice versa, it should be noted that proper external support for such projects should not exceed that of a skilled cook: appreciate good ingredients and carefully tailor your contribution to your clients' expected meal!



Photo: Barbara Profeta

Krasnoyarsk, Crisis Centre for Women and Children. Children are cared for in groups of six in two-week shifts by local social services staff. Demand is very high: there are no other centres for disabled children rejected by local schools. Since 2000, more than 140 children have visited the centre on a regular basis. Music and crafts, walks, games and PE, medical and psychological support are all available. The centre has become a meeting point for marginalised parents, particularly at the numerous parties and events organised for them and the local people.

– CONTACT –

Barbara Profeta, UPAM
 c/o Cristaldi
 29, ch. Du Curé-Desclouds
 CH – 1226 Thônex, Switzerland
 Tel (Russia projects):
 +7 3852 62 90 04
 or +7 960 651 71 76 (mobile)
 (other UPAM projects): +41 22 348 49 02
www.upam.org

SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MOSCOW

Supporting inclusive education in Moscow

Stella Rock and Robina Mallet, Home Farm Trust, and Natalia Yakovleva, HPSCF

Russian-British partnership

Humanitarian Programmes Support (HPS, registered as a Russian charity in 1998) established a wheelchair service for children with complex disabilities in partnership with Motivation, a UK charity, but swiftly realised that to maximise the life-chances of these children, they would also need to support and empower their parents.

In 2000, HPS began developing family support with assistance from Home Farm Trust, a British charity providing services to adults with learning disabilities and their relatives. Together we established a telephone helpline and a volunteer befriending service, where parents of older disabled children are trained to support other parents through the difficult stages of adjustment and planning for their child's future. HPS also offers legal advice for parents; a library and resource database; and training for NGOs and professionals working with disabled children.

Supporting disabled children into education

Most families attending the HPS Centre have had grave difficulty accessing any statutory educational provision for their children (of whom 90% have learning disabilities, plus sensory or mobility impairments). Children with even moderate learning disabilities are still dismissed as 'uneducable', and children with moderate or severe disabilities of all types are routinely excluded from the education system. Parents are often told that they must either send their children to an Internat (a boarding school for the disabled) or teach them at home.

Since 2000 HPS has provided a nine-month course of group work and individual counselling for parents, plus therapeutic playgroups for their children. Currently 65 families attend weekly, and many more are seeking a place. Families are very reluctant to move on from this programme, often because of past negative experiences in the education system, or because they have been unable to find a school place for their child, or because they fear that moving from a nurturing playgroup to the more structured statutory environment will distress their child.

'I began to believe in my own strength. ... Without support and an understanding of my rights I could not have asked for [my son] to be allowed to go to school. ... All my acquaintances with disabled children are teaching them at home. They can't believe that, without personal contacts or bribes, a child can study in class with normal children.'

– Mother of Kiril, for whom HPS helped secure a school place in 2005

At the request of the Education Department of Central Moscow, HPS has helped resolve conflicts between teachers and school administrations and the parents of disabled children already studying in mainstream schools. During this process, they learned that teachers frequently lack the confidence and information to support the child appropriately.

Project principles

Empowerment: Rather than imposing our own solutions, we offer families the information and support necessary to find their own solutions and make appropriate choices for their child.

Community ownership: HPS is the lead partner in our current EC-funded programme, and all local potential project participants have identified a need for these new initiatives and participated in programme design.

Inclusion: While we believe that inclusion is an ideal towards which we should always strive, we recognise that currently this is not always possible or appropriate. Where a mainstream school place cannot be secured, we will support transition to special school.

Partnership: A partnership approach ensures that the child's transition to school is a positive experience, with everyone working together: the teacher, the school head, the parents, the NGO staff and volunteers supporting the family.

Child-centred: A child-centred approach says every child is different and 'special', and rather than aiming at some imaginary 'norm', children should be helped to fulfil their potential.

Peer support: The emotional insight and experience of parents who have been through these experiences with their own children inform and support all our practice.

SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MOSCOW

Photo: Natalia Yakovleva



Children at a therapeutic playgroup, part of the 'School for Parents'

Methodology and outputs

Each child moving to statutory education from an HPS playgroup will have a 'child-centred plan', providing key information about appropriate strategies to support their development and learning. This will be developed by: staff observation of the child over a period of 3-9 months in HPS playgroups; where possible, the child's views, facilitated by playworkers and parents; parents' knowledge; and input from a statutory educational psychologist.

The school will be presented with the child's plan and offered a flexible support package negotiated by HPS in partnership with the teachers and parents. This might include:

- in-school support on a short-term, part-time basis from HPS playworkers and befrienders, allowing the child continued contact with a trusted, familiar figure and lessening the immediate pressure on the teacher.

- environmental adaptation where necessary.
- the loan of educational resources including toys and literature.

Best practice guidelines based on our experiences and feedback from all participants, together with a leaflet on the educational rights of disabled children and the responsibilities of schools, will be published, and a training video, showing good inclusive practice in Russian settings, will be produced. In the academic year 2006/7, the project will offer seminars on management and self-evaluation for educational institutions involved in inclusive education, and training on best practice for teachers.

Happily, there are an increasing number of inclusive education projects, as Perspektiva's recent Moscow conference demonstrated. To make the sharing of experience and resources easier, HPS will facilitate an email group and a website, with downloadable resources. In 2006 we will hold a UK seminar on inclusive education in Russia, and in 2007, a Russian conference with representatives from regional projects and education authorities. Please do contact us if you would like to participate in any of these initiatives, or contribute to the work of HPS.

– CONTACT –

HPS Charitable Foundation

Tel: +7 (0)95 2910369

Email: info@fpgp.ru Web: www.fpgp.ru

Home Farm Trust, Family Carer Support Service

Tel: +44 (0)117 9302608

Email: familycarersupport@hft.org.uk

Web: www.hft.org.uk

Russia: back to the future ... *continued from page 4*

Fifth, foreign assistance in new forms will become tougher but ever more essential. NGOs need help because domestic funding is low, and technical support and new ideas (as anywhere) are invaluable. It is imperative while official relations are cooling.

BEARR can help with exchanges: to bring people in and out; to infuse and enthuse staff with different values and ideas; and to maintain links with Russia, whether through visits, materials or the web.

The latest edition of Andrew Jack's 'Inside Putin's Russia' was issued in paperback in 2005, published by Granta Books.

Georgian Exhibition

The Georgian Community in the UK, The British East-West Centre and the Global Initiative on Psychiatry are holding an exhibition of artworks by the users of Tbilisi mental health services, on Saturday, 25th March 2006, from 5-9pm at the Menier Gallery, 51 Southwark Street, London. Proceeds will go to support art therapy units in Tbilisi. Attendance is free although we would welcome your support by buying an artwork or taking part in the raffle or auction.

For further information please contact: Dr. Simon Surguladze Tel: 020 78480363

Email: sphasis@iop.kcl.ac.uk

<http://georgians.co.uk/imagesfromtheedge.htm>

THE NEW LAW ON NGOs IN RUSSIA

Law on NGOs: upping the scrutiny of civil society in Russia

A law on civil society organisations was passed in Russia in January 2006 which raises serious concerns about freedom of association and questions Russia's commitment to a genuinely free and independent civil society. It was not an auspicious start to Russia's G8 presidency. The law was signed by the President on 10 January 2006 and will come into force three months later.

The law is entitled 'On Introducing Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation' and includes amendments to three main laws – the law on closed administrative-territorial entities, the law on public organisations, and the law on non-commercial organisations. Civil society organisations across the board will be affected by these changes.

Its incarnation for the first reading at the State Duma on 23 November 2005 contained alarming provisions which it was feared would at best hamper NGO work, at worst seriously compromise NGOs' independence and possibly result in the closure of some organisations. Amnesty International, together with Russian and international organisations, campaigned hard against it. While it passed its first reading, the campaign against it gathered pace. The Council of Europe conducted a provisional analysis of the law and concluded that, while the stated aims of the law might be legitimate, many of the provisions were not in line with European standards on freedom of association, being disproportionate and too restrictive.

President Putin ordered amendments to the bill, which were incorporated into a second version of the law which passed its second and third reading without much challenge and subsequently was signed into law.

Did the amendments improve the law? Russian experts point out that the question to ask, rather, is: is the new law worse than the law as it previously stood? The answer to that question is, unfortunately, yes. The general thrust of the law remains to increase scrutiny of the financing and activities of Russian and foreign NGOs operating in Russia, and the provisions remain vague and wide open to arbitrary decisions. Both the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the EU have expressed concerns over the law.

Victoria Webb
Researcher, Russian Federation
Amnesty International

Some provisions of particular concern for Russian organisations are:

- The requirements that Russian organisations inform the authorities of their financing and sources of finance, their intended plans for spending, and their actual spending. Rather than setting out a procedure for providing this information, the draft law leaves this task to the Russian government;
- The vague terms of the provisions outlining grounds for refusal of registration: if the name of the organisation offends public decency or ethnic and religious feelings;
- That the authorities can request internal documents of the organisation – a vague term which seems to cover financial as well as management documents – and send state officials to events organised by the organisation without necessarily having reasonable grounds to suspect illegal or unlicensed activity.

Some provisions of particular concern for foreign NGOs are:

- The vague terms of the provision that branches or representative offices of non-commercial NGOs can be refused registration if the aims and objectives of the organisation create a threat to the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, national unity and 'uniqueness', cultural heritage or national interests of the Russian Federation. These terms are open to various interpretations
- Branches and representative offices of foreign NGOs will have to declare to a state agency the amount of financing and other assets they have received, their proposed programmes of work in Russia, and transfers of money and other assets made to other organisations and private individuals. Again, the format of this procedure is not set out in the law but rather to be decided by the government
- The state agency can inform the branch or representative office of a foreign NGO that a

UKRAINE: PROVINCIAL HOSPITALS AFTER CHORNOBYL

planned programme of work is banned; failure to cease activities would result in being struck off the list of registered organisations

- The state agency can ban the transfer of money and other assets by branch or representative offices of foreign NGOs if they consider it necessary to 'defend the constitutional regime, morals, health, rights and interests of others and ensure the defence of the country and national security'.

The few improvements compared to the earlier version of the draft law are: branches and representative offices of foreign non-commercial NGOs no longer have to re-register as Russian organisations, and informal groups without legal status will no longer have to declare their existence to the authorities to avoid being branded illegal.

It remains to be seen how the provisions of the new law play out in practice. Some analysts are reserving judgment until the implementing legislation is passed, which will fill in some of the procedural gaps in the legislation and define more clearly both the administrative burden the law will place on NGOs, and the real extent of the new powers of control over NGOs by state agencies. However, it is clear even now that the law is problematic from the perspective of the right to freedom of association. Russia will have to work hard to convince people that it will not use its new powers to make life even harder for civil society organisations.

– CONTACT –

Amnesty International
www.amnesty.org

Chornobyl and after: provincial hospitals in Ukraine

To mark the 20th Anniversary of the Chornobyl disaster, we print this account of a visit to various hospitals close to Chornobyl by Kalyna Bezchlibnyk-Butler, Director of the Children of Chornobyl Canadian Fund (CCCF) and Head of its Medical Advisory Committee.

We were sitting in a minivan, a bubble-packed ultrasound machine wedged securely behind our seats. We glanced frequently through the windows, surveying the countryside for signs of the Chornobyl desolation – but the villages we passed looked like so many others we had seen throughout Ukraine. We were on our way to Korosten to deliver the ultrasound machine and inspect other medical equipment CCCF had provided.

Korosten

Korosten, in Zhitomir Oblast, is about 75km from Chornobyl; it is designated as a Zone 2 site in regard to the effects of radiation on its inhabitants.



Delivering supplies in Chortkiw

The Medical Diagnostic Centre was involved in a Chornobyl Sasakawa Health and Medical Cooperation Project between 1991 and 2001, funded by Japan, to study the effects of radiation on its population. As the funding for this project ended, they appealed to CCCF for material help in updating their equipment.

As we approached Korosten, we noticed that, despite lush forests, fields were barren and abandoned buildings and homes were scattered throughout the countryside. Our driver told us that there are still high levels of radiation in the soil, and food grown in the Zhytomir oblast is measured for radiation before being sold at the bazaar. Sale of mushrooms and berries is banned as they absorb radiation; despite this, some people continue to consume these products.

The Medical Director at the Centre informed us that the consequences of radiation continue to be seen in people: thyroid cancers, various tumours (e.g. kidneys, mammary glands, prostate), blood and gastric disorders and decreased male fertility.

As a diagnostic centre, Korosten has kept statistics on medical disorders seen in their inhabitants over many years. Blood samples have been preserved to enable further studies of the effects of radiation.

As we toured the Centre, we were surprised by the lack of basic medical equipment and supplies. Equipment received through the Sasakawa Foundation was at least 10 years old – outdated for a

UKRAINE: PROVINCIAL HOSPITALS AFTER CHORNOBYL

facility that is supposed to be the primary diagnostic centre for this region of Ukraine. We were told that since Korosten is located in the peripheral region of Ukraine, they do not receive the same funding for facilities as hospitals in major cities and have to stretch their money to cover basic patient needs.

Ivankiw

35 km from Chornobyl, Ivankiw is the primary site where inhabitants of towns and villages in the Chornobyl region were relocated. We suspected that contamination would be at least as high as that reported in Korosten.

There is one hospital, with 230 beds for the region's 34,722 inhabitants. The surrounding towns have four medical clinics, four ambulatory clinics and 50 nurse practitioners in the villages. Last year saw 959 deaths and 236 births; 129 people newly diagnosed with cancers, 26 with tuberculosis, and an increase in HIV/AIDS. There is no oncologist in the region, and a shortage of physicians. The chief doctor confirmed that the consequences of radiation have become more evident in the last few years, and that the hospital does not have all the necessary equipment to diagnose and treat some of these conditions. Lack of finance is also a major problem in this region. Once again, we were astounded by the lack of basic equipment and facilities: the main hospital, for instance, has no lift.

CCCF has provided support to Ivankiw over the last few years, including drugs and medical supplies to hospitals, medical clinics and schools in this region, and hospital beds, wheelchairs, walkers, blood pressure cuffs, glucometers, drugs and other supplies, with the aid of the Kyiv office of Help Us Help The Children. Those we took with us were received with thanks – but we noted their urgent need for a wide variety of medical supplies and equipment.

Chortkiw

Chorkiw is in Chornobyl Zone 3. Of the 82,000 area residents, 42,000 were relocated from the Chornobyl region; of these, 5631 are children with medical problems associated with exposure to radiation. The chief physician stated that they are seeing a high incidence of pre-cancerous gastrointestinal problems and other oncological disorders in both children and adults; thyroid cancer is on the rise but early diagnosis and treatment has resulted in good outcomes. There are also increases in blood, endocrine, respiratory and genital-urinary system disorders and in psychosocial problems. In the last couple of years, there were about 1200 deaths to only 600 births. The physicians expressed concerns that they are seeing an increased incidence of congenital anomalies and nervous system disorders in babies born to females who were between the ages of 1 and 6 years at the time of the Chornobyl disaster.

A tour of their facility again demonstrated a lack of modern medical and diagnostic equipment; the X-ray machine was 30 years old, their ICU critical care monitors were over 20 years old and the laboratory technician was visually counting blood cells through a microscope. The hospital budget barely covers day-to-day operating costs and leaves no resources for replacing or purchasing equipment.

I cannot begin to describe the impact this eye-opening tour of outlying hospital facilities had on me. I can only try to impart some of the impressions I have to colleagues, and try to convince them of the great needs of these hospitals in Ukraine.

– CONTACT –

2118-A Bloor Street West, Suite 200, Toronto,
Ontario, Canada, M6S 1M8
Tel: (416) 604-4611 Fax: (416) 604-1688
Email: cccf@bellnet.ca

Wanted

Healthprom, a charity in N. London providing training in the care of young mothers and babies in the FSU, needs an administration manager with knowledge of finance, book-keeping, etc, on a part- or full-time basis. Might suit a retired banker/accountant or person returning to the market after a career break. Please contact the Treasurer by email at robert@scallon.co.uk or phone 020 7904 2240.

A Guide to European Union Funding:
Accessing Europe's Largest Donor

What funds are available?

Who should I contact?

A must-have publication at the promotional price of €29:

For more information log on to:
www.ecas.org

where you can also join ECAS and receive the guide with your membership.



Launch party for *Recollections*

Towards the end of his memoirs, *Recollections*, the late Sir Norman Wooding, long-time BEARR Chairman, writes: 'What I have described is one person's journey through an enjoyable and satisfying life; the only lesson that I would draw is that nothing is impossible. My own ambitions were modest, but nonetheless satisfying, and I have been fortunate to know many others who have achieved remarkable success against the odds.'

The reception held on 29 November to launch *Recollections* served as an occasion for many of those Sir Norman knew from different walks of life to remember him with affection and to agree among themselves that his own achievements and successes had been, in fact, anything but modest. The warm and convivial spirit, the enjoyment of the celebration of his life, were surely as he would have wished.

Among the guests were people from many of Sir Norman's spheres of interest: business and industry, the East European Trade Council and Russo-British Chamber of Commerce, the British Association for Central and Eastern Europe, the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, St Antony's College Oxford, his charities The BEARR Trust and St Andrew's Trust, and many others. The BEARR Trust was glad to be able to help in some small way in organising the event.

Guests were delighted to find Lady Dorothy Wooding in good health and spirits after a recent illness. Two of the Woodings' three children and several grandchildren were also present, and their son Richard made a short speech of welcome.

Professor Archie Brown of St Antony's spoke movingly about Sir Norman, commenting in particular on his role at business seminars, where he would sum up. 'He did it brilliantly, encapsulating



photo: Michael Holman

Among the guests: Myra Green, former Director; Natasha Sturgeon, Information Officer; and Michael McCulloch, current BEARR Chairman

the main points of the speakers, and somehow always managing to come down on the bright side. Even if I thought my presentation had been rather pessimistic, Norman was able to pull out the positives for the future of Russia.' He noted Sir Norman's role in chairing a government-sponsored inquiry into Soviet and East European studies, which resulted in the influential 'Wooding Report'. Professor Brown no doubt expressed the feelings of many in remarking on Sir Norman's mix of first-rate intellect and down-to-earth common sense. And his closing comment surely summed up the feelings of all present: 'In many ways fortune shone on him. But we count ourselves fortunate to have known him.'

The BEARR Trust is most grateful for a generous donation from Lady Dorothy Wooding, which will help to further its work in supporting NGOs in Russia and its neighbours, work to which Sir Norman attached so much importance.

Recollections reviewed

Norman Wooding embarked on the writing of this memoir with some reluctance, under pressure from his own family, with initially little thought of reaching a wider public. Later, he became more aware that he had an important story to tell, becoming almost a compulsive writer.

From this stem the book's strengths and weaknesses. For general readers there is much of compelling interest but non-specialists might also find the narrative of his long career with Courtaulds overly-detailed.

The story of his early life, showing how a child born with few material advantages could achieve a

by **Ralph Land, Former Chairman of the Russo-British Chamber of Commerce**

first class education and subsequently an outstanding career based only on his exceptional ability, represents an important piece of British social history. Despite our apparently rigid class structure, there were opportunities for the gifted to transcend the boundaries.

Later, as Wooding progresses from chemical research to general management and the Board of Courtaulds, he shows a keen awareness of the requirements of good management. Clearly, Frank

FUNDING

Kearton, his Chairman and an outstanding and charismatic employer, recognised Wooding's abilities early on.

The story of Wooding's Russian and East European experiences, many of which echo my own, was of particular interest to me. They too represent a key facet of post-war history, which ended with the collapse of communism and the ending of the cold war. It may well be, as Wooding believed, that the contacts of the business community with their opposite numbers played a part in the system's eventual collapse.

Wooding describes how, as a result of these experiences, he became involved with many public and NGO activities dealing with this area, including as Chairman of the BEARR Trust. To these he made a significant and lasting contribution.

The final section, covering the Woodings' adventurous leisure activities, mainly on mountains, including vivid extracts from Dorothy's diary, is in itself a contribution to travel literature.

Recollections, written with modesty, wisdom and humour, is a testament to the man.



Lady Dorothy Wooding at the book launch

Photo: Michael Holman

Copies of *Recollections* may be obtained from The Memoir Club, Stanhope Old Hall, County Durham, DL13 2PF. Tel: 01388 529060. Fax: 01388 527215. Cheques for £19.95 plus £3 postage should be made payable to The Memoir Club.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – CIVIL SOCIETY CHALLENGE FUND.

The first step is to submit a concept note. If successful, you will be invited to submit a full proposal before the end of July. More information at www.dfid.gov.uk/funding/civilsocietycf or from the Deputy Programme Manager, Steve Nally, on +44(0) 1355 843199 or by email to enquiry@dfid.gov.uk

WESTMINSTER FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY

There will be four grant rounds this year. The first deadline is 22 February, with the corresponding Board meeting on 25 April; the following one 10 May and 11 July. Full details on www.wfd.org

THE DIANA PRINCESS OF WALES MEMORIAL FUND

The International Grants programme is due to have another grant round later this year. New information will be posted on the website after March 2006: www.theworkcontinues.org/grants/international_grants.asp

EU FUNDING

Some small EU grants are being disbursed to Central Asian countries through local EC delegations. For human rights projects in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Ukraine select 'grants' at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/cgi/frame12.pl>
Ukraine delegation: www.delukr.cec.eu.int/site/page37669.html

COMMUNITY FUND (NATIONAL LOTTERY)

The International Grants programme is set to re-open in spring. New information from around March at: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

CHARLES STEWART MOTT FOUNDATION

Small grants programme for civil society development in some FSU countries including Russia and Ukraine. There is no standard application form – applicants should write a proposal letter. Applications can be submitted at any time, but those received after 31 August will only be considered for 2007. Detailed guidelines from: www.mott.org

CAF RUSSIA

CAF Russia has several small grants schemes for Russian NGOs working in partnership with British NGOs. Focus on children and orphans, and civil society development more generally. See: www.cafonline.org/cafrussia/r_grantmaking.cfm

THE OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE

The East-East Program: Partnership Beyond Borders is for civil society development and social and healthcare partnerships. Applications are processed through in-country co-ordinators. Covers some FSU countries but not Russia. For co-ordinators see: www.soros.org/initiatives/east/contact/coordinators

BEARR'S STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Whither BEARR?

The BEARR Trust has been rethinking its rationale, in the light of feedback from Friends and supporters, so as best to serve its NGO constituency in the current climate for the third sector in the region in which we work. Our current thinking is set out below. We would welcome feedback from readers.

Mission

To promote and support cooperation between the third sector in the United Kingdom and appropriate partners in Russia and the CIS, especially in the fields of health and social care.

We will achieve this by:

- Concentrating on smaller organisations committed to reform in the health and social sectors
- Facilitating networking and exchange of information
- Encouraging sharing of experience and learning
- Helping organisations working in the region to identify potential partners
- Providing seed funding to assist selected organisations to launch or extend partnerships
- Lobbying and seeking wider support for the role of smaller organisations.

Our objectives for 2006

- Consult, and gain commitment for this framework from, our stakeholders and supporters
- Design, secure funding for, and launch an interactive website
- Run a topical annual conference, with more non-Russia focus, that attracts increased participation and is self-financing
- Organise at least one additional, self-financing, seminar that responds to member/supporter concerns
- Design and launch a pilot small grant scheme
- Attract new money for a sustainable small grant scheme
- Work with other NGOs to help Russian civil society benefit from Russia's chairmanship of the G8.

Please send your comments to info@BEARR.org.uk

BEARR Grant Scheme

The BEARR Trust has pleasure in announcing a small grant scheme for UK NGOs. This will be a pilot for a more-wide-ranging scheme the Trust hopes to launch in due course.

This first scheme will make available £2000 specifically for the benefit of deaf children in Russia. This overall sum will be used for one or more grants to UK NGOs working or intending to work in partnership with Russian NGOs. It is intended as seed-corn funding to help start or further such a partnership.

Applicants should submit an initial one-page application covering the following points:

- Your NGO: its mission and objectives;
- Your partner NGO: its mission and objectives;
- Your project: its objectives, short-term and long-term;
- Why you need the grant and how you propose to use it in support of deaf children in Russia.

Please note that all applications must be accompanied by a funding plan showing matching funds at least equivalent to the sum sought from BEARR.

Applications should be sent to info@BEARR.org.uk **by the end of March 2006.** Short-listed applicants may be asked to provide more detail later.

Final decisions will be made by the Trustees of The BEARR Trust.

Russian National Mail

'... bubbles with ideas ... the translation nicely balances bitterness and wit' – The Times

By Oleg Bogaev

Golden Mask Award (1996), Anti-Booker (1997)
Translated and directed by **Noah Birksted-Breen**

Battersea Arts Centre

(5 mins walk from Clapham Junction)

21 March – 9 April 2006

Tuesday-Saturday 8.30pm, Sunday 6.30pm

Tickets: £10/£6

Box office: 020 7223 2223 www.bac.org.uk

BEARR benefit performance, with pre-show talk: 29 March. Tickets from the box office at normal prices.



Nick Thomas,
Zoe Hunter
and Leila Gray
in *Russian
National Mail*

Photo: Sheila Burnett

Dates for your diary

29 March

'**Russian National Mail**', special BEARR benefit performance, Battersea Arts Centre

26 June

BEARR **Annual Lecture**: Kate Adie

24 November

Annual Conference

Details will be circulated later. If you are interested, and not already on our emailing list, please send your email address to info@BEARR.org.uk

Thank you, Natasha

The BEARR Trust is sorry to record that Natasha Sturgeon has resigned as part-time Information Officer at the Trust. Natasha has been a long-standing friend of BEARR, working for many years as a volunteer in increasingly responsible tasks, until she took over as Information Officer in January 2005.

The good news however is that Natasha has secured a full-time post in the Russia section at Amnesty International, where she was already working on a part-

time basis. We are delighted at this well-merited promotion, and wish Natasha all the very best in her new job. We look forward to remaining in touch with her in years to come.

The further good news is that Noah Birksted-Breen, who worked as Project Manager at BEARR from 2001 to 2003, is returning to take up the part-time Information Officer post. We are delighted to welcome Noah back.

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 Roderic 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, Lesley Dean, Daryl Hardman, Professor Michael Holman, Marcia Levy, Ann Lewis CMG, Nicola Ramsden

Staff: Information Officer: Noah Birksted-Breen

Volunteers: Lina Numan, Imogen Wade

Editorial Board: Ann Lewis, Daryl Hardman, Michael Holman

Registered charity no: 1011086

Subscribe to the BEARR Newsletter

Become a Friend of BEARR and receive the Newsletter as well as details of our events throughout the year.

- I wish to become a Friend of The BEARR Trust. Minimum gift £30 per year.
- 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 £.....(payable to The BEARR Trust).
- I wish to make a regular donation by banker's order.

Name

Organisation:

Address.....

Tel Fax.....

Email.....

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.

**SUBSCRIBE
Now!**