

Movement against poverty



Steps in Russia

Russia GCAP website: www.protivbed.ru



In July 2006, Russian GCAP —
«Movement against poverty»
was officially launched at the press conference
in Saint-Petersburg. The Movement united
more than 20 Russian national and regional
civil society organisations as well as several
branches of international non-governmental
organisations offering social services
to the poor and/or socially excluded groups
of population, i.e., the homeless, street children,
orphans, single mothers, etc.

There is a general concern about poverty in the country
with rich human and natural resources. In the present day
Russia every fourth person is living below the poverty line
on less than 100 rubles a day. However, poverty
is not only about money. If one takes into account
the experience of Russian civil society organisations
working directly with socially vulnerable and excluded
groups of population, the poverty is also about different
kinds of inequality. Apart from the general economic
growth and rapid emergence of Russian middle class,
which is able to afford access to quality services
such as healthcare and education, there is a marked
deterioration in accessibility and quality of social
services offered to the poor and socially vulnerable.

The main goal of Russian movement against poverty is to ensure access to quality healthcare, education, decent housing and employment for socially and economically vulnerable and poor people living in Russia.

How to achieve this goal?

Each member organisation of the movement is making its unique contribution to poverty reduction and overcoming social inequality. Some of them offer shelters and provide social and legal support for the homeless, others work with orphans and abandoned children trying to bring these children back to their families or find a suitable foster family so that children could have a home. Several organisations are engaged in activities supporting micro-business development and creating additional economic opportunities for people with low income. They all operate within non-commercial sector, which is hardly familiar to the Russians at large. However, this sector plays a crucial role in terms of supporting social stability and providing an opportunity to rehabilitate for those people who fell behind or failed to get adjusted to the new life

conditions in the course of rapid transformation of the socio-economic model in the country. The civic activists are well aware of the situation the poor are facing since they contact their target groups on daily basis. This knowledge and experience deserves and needs to be integrated into the official policy making and priority setting for the development of social programmes.

Nevertheless, the activities and resources of a single organisation are not enough, that is why the civil society organisations have decided to combine their efforts and create a movement against poverty in order to have a possibility to act together and, using their experience and expertise in working with the poor, to help authorities in terms of constructive design and better implementation of programmes aiming at struggle against poverty, e.g., ensuring an access to healthcare, education, decent housing and economic opportunities (to have jobs or be self-employed).

The civil servants in charge of development and implementation of the social policy in Russia are often hardly familiar with solutions of social problems found by civil society organisations. Consultations with the target audiences are still less frequently held. However, participatory approach has already been developed and employed by civic activists by means of their communication and work with people who should be potential target groups for this kind of programmes. The participatory models have already proven their effectiveness as they are demanded by socially excluded groups of population and the poor. That is why our goal is to create a ground for constructive dialogue between representatives of authorities at different levels of power, NGO activists working in the same field (e.g., providing medical treatment or developing self-support programmes for the poor families) and the poor themselves. Making voices of the poor heard is the first but very important step to effective implementation of the poverty reduction programmes in Russia.

Activities of Russian movement against poverty in 2005–2006





In 2005, activists of the nascent Russian movement against poverty actively participated in the global actions timed to international conferences like 2005 G8 Summit in Gleneagles, UN Millennium Development Goals conference, the World Trade Organization summit in Hong Kong and other events. The global movement was urging the world leaders to implement drastic measures against world poverty.

Charitable concerts under the slogan «Future without poverty is in our hands» were organised in the Russian towns of Aleksin and Rybinsk-sites of Oxfam's Urban Livelihoods programme.

More than 3000 people attended the concerts thus expressing their support for the global call to eliminate poverty and suffering in the world.

One of the female spectators of the concert in Aleksin said: «it is very important to organise such kind of events in small towns like Aleksin because local people can learn more about what is going on in the world since they are also part of world community. All big things grow from something small – like flowers growing from seeds – and this is how changes actually occur».

White band — a connecting thread

On December 12, 2005, on the eve of the WTO summit in Hong Kong and in the framework of GCAP's third White Band Day, Russian and British youth joined a videoconference to discuss how Russia can benefit from its accession to this organization.

Participants of the videoconference discussed the prospects for Russia's entry into the WTO, as well as the likely consequences for the low-income population, implications for internal labour market and for young people as future job-seekers.

Around 30 young people involved in various youth projects and pursuing their studies in economics or public administration learnt about the peculiarities of the international trade regime, accession conditionality and the problems that newly acceded countries face.

Videoconference opened with an engaging presentation from Hong Kong by Liz Stuart, Oxfam trade policy expert who took part in the WTO summit to lobby for the interests of the poor countries to be taken into account during the formulation of international trade rules.

Liz described the harsh conditions for liberalizing poor countries' economies as a condition for WTO entry. She demonstrated how difficult it was subsequently for the poor countries to protect their domestic industries, which employ tens of thousands of people, from severe competition with rich countries' industries, once the latter get access to internal markets.

Anna Sidoruk, a consultant from Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, made a presentation on the current status of Russia's WTO negotiations.

David Tarr, the World Bank international trade economist, explained what reforms needed to be implemented in the Russian economy in order to avoid an increase in the number of poor and unemployed people as a consequence of WTO accession. The flurry of questions from London and Moscow followed, as young people were eager to find out more about the likely impacts on domestic industries, employment,



poverty and household incomes. Comparisons with other countries' experiences were debated: such as China's accession to the WTO, comparison with Venezuela and its innovative social programme to invest part of windfall oil money into human capital as the main asset of the country's future. Russian students highlighted the «problematic character of Russia's capital» – it's over-dependence on natural resources and the hugely unequal distribution of benefits in the Russian society. «The more we import from the outside world, the more we have to sell to other countries. There is a risk of becoming a natural resources supplement to the developed countries, unless we learn to export products other than gas and oil!» – said Dmitriy, a participant of the videoconference.

«We, organizers of the videoconference, were delighted to see how intellectually challenging the dialogue was and that it took on a form of brainstorming with senior experts on trade from World Bank, Russia's Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and CEFIR getting really smart questions from young people. One could feel how the atmosphere in the room was charged with ideas, hopes and challenges. Russian youth were eager to discuss the issue of Russia's WTO accession, they would like to see their country gaining a decent place in the world trading regime without losing competitiveness and becoming a simple energy provider.» – says Nichlas Colloff, country programme manager for Oxfam GB in Russia.

Your voice against poverty

The year 2006 turned to be particularly important because of Russia's G8 presidency.

Members of the movement against poverty took active part in the dialogue of global civil society and representatives of G8 leaders at Civil G8 – 2006. As representatives of both Russian movement against poverty and international Global Call for Action against Poverty (GCAP) we expressed our interests and concerns about whether the rich developed countries kept their promises made in Gleneagles. We participated in the process of developing and making civil society mandates to G8 leaders on main issues of G8 Summit agenda. In these mandates we urged the leaders to undertake immediate and decisive measures to eliminate world poverty.



Mobilisation on the eve of G8 Summit in Saint-Petersburg could be considered to be the most significant and successful activity of Russian movement against poverty in 2006. The leading rock bands of Saint-Petersburg participated in the rock concert «Your voice against poverty». Besides, the festival Art-Welfare (*Art-Sobes*) was organised at which Russian civic organisations creatively presented their work in four areas answering four questions which were most important to socially vulnerable people: where to get medical treatment? Where to study? Where to live? Where to work?



More than 5,000 people attended the rock concert and art festival. The visitors put their signatures under the card-call for action «together against poverty» to be sent to G8 leaders. Many visitors expressed their desire to join the movement as volunteers. Both events attracted much attention of local and international mass media coming to Saint-Petersburg to cover the Summit.

During the period from September 12 until October 17, 2006 which GCAP proclaimed the mobilisation month the members of the movement against poverty organised a number of events in Tyumen, Togliatti, Vladimir and Saint-Petersburg. October 17 as International Day against Poverty became the event of the month.

On October 14, there was a city march against poverty from the municipal administration to the local Duma organised in Togliatti.

More than 700 civic activists supporting the Movement against poverty participated in the march. All the participants gathered together at the city central square where different rock bands and artists performed. Free consultations were offered to the poor and the homeless who needed help. Besides, there was a number of other stalls at the same place.



These stalls included but were not limited to:

- a stall «experience being a poor person in Russia»;
- a reception centre «Become a volunteer» organised for those wishing to help the poor and participate in various charitable events;
- a stall «We are against poverty» where signatures were collected under the call for considering the poverty problem at the next G8 Summit. The call was addressed to Russian president Putin and German chancellor Angela Merkel;
- a stall where people could donate their stuff for the poor and the homeless;
- a «Diary» project where everyone could write down their experience of being poor or express their opinion on poverty in the country or in the region.



Among the speakers who took floor at the opening ceremony were the deputies of the city Duma and representatives of different civic organisations and business community of Samara region.

This event was timed to October 17 — the International Day of Struggle against Poverty



It was held under the aegis of GCAP international and Russian movement against poverty which united more than 20 NGOs from different Russian regions working with various groups of socially vulnerable people or the poor.

The participants of the march were united by one idea: poverty is the problem – no one is actually safe from. The participants described this idea on posters and banners in the following ways:

- Where to live? Where to work? Where to study? Where to get medical treatment?
- We are against poverty!
- In Russia every fourth person lives under the poverty line
- Poverty is no crime. Poverty is misfortune
- Your voice against poverty
- Corruption leads to poverty
- Make poverty history

There was a round table «Problems of self-support in the light of regional policy against poverty» held in Tyumen as part of the action «We are against poverty»; besides, people donated cloths and books to the poor families.

On October 17, Russian GCAP organized an event «Raise the livelihood» in Saint-Petersburg.

The movement activists spoke about our activities, future plans and what kind of actions we were calling for in order to overcome poverty in Russia and the rest of the world. Local radio, TV and press have interviewed representatives of the Russian GCAP.



On October 15, the ANCO «Social Assistance to the Homeless» organised a public event «Homo homini...» in Vladimir.



Within this event children's contests, a rock concert and other cultural events were organised at which the poverty problems in the region and in the country were articulated also raising public awareness of the homeless problem in the city. As part of the event, people donated warm cloths to homeless people in Vladimir.

One of the female spectators of the concert when asked about the homeless said:

Elena, cell phones seller:

— I got problems with registration (*propiska*) myself after I moved to the city. It's such a headache; no one forced me out of my house though. People can't live in the streets, it's not Africa here. One can fight bureaucrats only by threatening them. They don't fear the law but they fear when one has important acquaintances.

The problems of poverty and the homeless are often neglected since they are said to be not everyone's concern. In this regard the statement of one of the musicians who performed at the rock concert might be of special interest:

**Andrei «The Puck»,
leader of the band «Dyplodocs»:**

— The problem of the homeless people is a rather serious problem which the authorities prefer to turn their blind eye to. It is actually not a secret that half of rock musicians are children of people who are in power, of the rich people so they could tell their parents: «See, we participated in such a concert, such a support!». It would be terrific, it could be one more way to urge such influential people to act. In this respect a rock concert is also very important. Basically, we are participating [*in this event*] because this problem is everybody's personal concern. Soon it will be cold and people will start dying in the street. In summer they are O. K. but in winter... Yes, of course, some of these people still can get back to the normal life, others already can't but we also would like to do our best to contribute to this action. That is why we have been participating in such kind of events the second successive year. Besides that, we would like to attract everyone's attention to this problem. As I know, this problem is hard to solve globally and especially in our country. That is why one constantly has to do something about that, at least, to get rid of pangs of conscience.





23.5 million people throughout the world participated in GCAP action «Stand Up Against Poverty» which was held on October 16–17. This event was mentioned by the Guinness Book as the most extensive co-ordinated event in the Book's history.



Our plans

At the moment there is a research being conducted on accessibility of healthcare for the poor and underprivileged groups of population. This research aims at collecting statements of the poor people about the problems they encounter when applying for help and presenting these statements in a report. On the basis of this research a comparative analysis of effectiveness of social programmes will be made and recommendations on improving access to healthcare will be developed.

Russian movement against poverty is part of GCAP as the world-wide movement. Since 2005, GCAP has united national coalitions from 100 countries now consisting of more than 150 thousand people from different organisations.

GCAP was created in January 2005 at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil. This is the largest movement in the world calling for elimination of poverty and hunger and implementation of UN Millennium Development Goals. GCAP urges the world leaders and international financial institutions to:

- increase the quality and quantity of financial aid for development programmes in the poorest countries;
- cancel the debts of the poorest countries;
- make international trade rules more fair with regard to interests of the poor countries;
- improve accountability of the governments to their citizens and end corruption.

Civil society organisations and branches of international organisations – members of the Russian movement against poverty:

Arkhangelsk Centre of Social Technologies «Garant».

NGO Support and Promotion Centre (Arkhangelsk)

Providing technical and informational support for NGOs; training programmes, consulting services. System of grant support for NGOs, development of charity culture and social investment principles.

www.ngo-garant.ru

The Independent Non-Profit Organization

«The social help to the homeless»

Providing legal and informational support for the homeless and people vulnerable to homelessness, advocacy activities; holding actions aimed to attract donor resources and funding for the homeless. Setting up the network of specialised organisations assisting socially vulnerable people.

Russian branch of international charitable non-governmental development organisation Oxfam GB (Moscow)

Oxfam operates in more than 70 countries worldwide implementing poverty reduction and community development programmes. It also supports local people – survivors of emergency situations, natural calamities or conflicts. In Russia, Oxfam is implementing small business support and strengthening municipal capacity programme to create favourable environment for small business development in five small towns of Central Russia. Oxfam International is an active member of Global Call to Action Against Poverty urging the world leaders to eliminate poverty globally by means of compliance with their obligations to increase the volume of financial aid and debt cancellation for the poorest countries of the world and revise unfair international trade rules.

www.oxfam.org.uk

Alliance «Civil Society to Children of Russia» (Moscow)

Promoting development of consistent Concept of Family and Children Protection System; implementing social and legal initiatives aimed to preserve and strengthen families; ensuring survival, protection and development of children in Russia; design and implementation of modern social and socio / legal technologies, methods and forms of solving social problems faced by family and children; participation in development and implementation processes of programmes and actions aimed to prevent and overcome problems of children's homelessness and child neglect as well as problems of vagrancy, drug usage and alcoholism; prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against children and child abuse.

www.detirossii.narod.ru

Young Peacemakers and Peace School Movement (Moscow)

It is a community of veterans of peacemaking, teachers and students interested in studying and learning from the experience of UN peacemaking activities. At the moment the Movement unites peace schools, civil society organisations and teams of young peacemakers involved in the implementation projects aiming at social development and spiritual renaissance of Russia. In order to provide an access to Internet for young peacemakers and teachers a Peace Library was open advocating ideas of peace and social equity as spiritual values which are necessary for human survival.

www.un-museum.ru

Russian Civic Organisation «AIDS-Infoshare» (Moscow)

HIV/AIDS prevention and human rights advocacy, health protection; providing full and timely information and necessary services; providing support for motivated organisations and groups of population; supporting effective relevant governmental and NGO projects.

www.infoshare.ru

Center for Environment and Sustainable Development «ECO-Accord» (Moscow)

Promoting transition to sustainable development by means of search for and implementation of new approaches to solution of environmental, economic and social problems globally, nationally and locally; educating the public about environmental protection and sustainable development issues. Eco-Accord works in Russian and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia on environment and sustainable development policies, education and public participation, international trade for sustainable development, energy and climate, chemical safety.

www.ecoaccord.org

Association of Non-Commercial Organisations «Sluzhenye» (Nizhny Novgorod)

Promoting modern social technologies; contributing to professional growth of NGO leaders and social workers; increasing role of civil society organisations in social policy implementation in the region; ensuring NGO participation in policy – and decision making processes; building new models of interaction between business sector, local authorities, mass media and community members; charity culture development.

www.sluzhenye.sandy.ru

Saint-Petersburg Charitable Civil Society Organisation «Centre for Non-Governmental Organisations' Development» (Saint-Petersburg)

Promoting professional knowledge and skills of civil society organisations by means of offering them high quality consulting and training services; social partnership development; setting up cooperation between NGOs, business sector and authorities; design and implementation of participatory mechanisms of decision making at all levels of power; ensuring informational support of NGO activities.

www.crno.ru

Regional Civil Society Organisation German-Russian Exchange (Saint-Petersburg)

Civil society development and NGO support in Russia; implementation of projects aiming at volunteerism development; school and cultural exchange between West European countries and Russia.

www.obmen.org

Saint-Petersburg Civil Society Organisation «Doctors to children» (Saint-Petersburg)

Protection of rights of children deprived of parental care; provision of high quality social, medical and psychological services to children and families in trouble; promotion of family livelihood of children; social orphanhood prevention.

www.vd-spb.ru

Charitable foundation «Korchakovsky centre» (Saint-Petersburg)

Social support for families in trouble where one or both parents are orphanage alumni; organisation of charitable and humanitarian aid (i.e., cloths, home miscellaneous, children's food) for family clients; group work with families aiming at development of parent-child relations; life skills programmes for the orphanage pupils in Saint-Petersburg and Leningrad region; preparation of best methods and technologies toolkit based on accumulated experience and its dissemination between professionals in governmental and non-governmental social and educational spheres.

www.korchakcenter.ru

St. Petersburg Regional Humanitarian Organisation for Aid to Homeless People «Nochlezhka»

Day services for the homeless: legal aid, consultations of social workers, medical services, cloth distribution. Shelter for the homeless; special rehabilitation programmes for homeless alcoholics and people with disabilities. Street social service «Night Bus» offering hot food, social and medical services for the homeless living in the street. Right protection activities: We take part in the drafting of and lobbying for local and federal laws that contribute to solving the problem of homelessness. Development and support of Russian NGO network working with the homeless in six regions of the Russian Federation.

www.homeless.ru

St. Petersburg branch of charitable organization EveryChild (Saint-Petersburg)

As the affiliated office in Russia of the international charity organisation St. Petersburg branch of EveryChild collaborates with the local authorities promoting and implementing a range of programmes of alternative types of social services for children and families in difficult situations. These programmes promote the prevention of children's abandonment and their further institutionalisation, and the social rehabilitation and reintegration of children into their birth families, lobbying an idea of importance of in-family upbringing for child development and promoting integration of modern standards and methods of social work to social policy at municipal and federal levels.

www.everychild.org.uk

Regional Civil Society Organisation «Centre of Women's Initiatives» (Tosno, Leningrad region)

Promoting creation of favourable social and economic environment ensuring development of intellectual and entrepreneurial capacity of women; supporting women's initiatives and projects in the field of culture, science, healthcare, education and social welfare aimed to enhance opportunities in various aspects of life for women and families.

www.terra-tosno.narod.ru

Autonomous Non-Commercial Organisation «Open Alternative» (Togliatti)

Advocating rights and interests of citizens (e.g., people with disabilities, the homeless, ex-prisoners, victims of domestic violence, children and the youth); improving population's access to the information in various spheres of society and power; design and implementation of projects with significant social impact in the field of human rights advocacy and civic education; support of local initiatives (as a resource centre for NGOs); organising and holding educational workshops and trainings; provision of outsourcing services (accounting and audit services, legal support, marketing research, design of NGO development projects), NGO networking and coalition building.

<http://openalt.ru>

Community Foundation Tyumen (Tyumen)

Providing financial support of social projects developed by NGOs, initiative groups of citizens and municipal institutions, basing on the principle of competition.

Educating and informing community about social partnership issues and NGO activities. Offering to commercial organizations services aiming at corporate charity development and implementation of charitable programmes and projects.

www.cftyumen.ru

Tyumen NGO «Special Child» (Tyumen)

Social and medical rehabilitation services, employment and career services for parents and professional orientation for children; legal aid for parents and children with disabilities; environmental protection.

www.osobyi-rebenok.ru

Center for development of voluntary movement (Togliatti)

Purpose of the Center is to strengthen civil society, raising civil responsibility and activity of people as members of society. The center creates opportunities for voluntary participation of people especially the youth in process of social development and solution problems of Togliatti.

It promotes the development of voluntary movement, renders services in the field of education, health care, economy, culture, human rights, employment and social protection. The center facilitates involvement and mobilization of people and other resources for solution of social problems of the Russian society and works to raise awareness about the role and values of volunteers by means of cooperation with mass media.

www.openalt.ru

crd63@mail.ru

The foundation «Social Investments» (Togliatti)

The main purpose of the foundation is to create improved living conditions for the pensioners, invalids and other citizens and to render the necessary social and everyday care services. The foundation supports disabled people in rehabilitation, contributes to solving problems of poor people, renders legal services for socially excluded persons free of charge and helps NGOs in their activities.

Email: fond_socinvest@mail.ru

Autonomous non-profit organization «Institute of practice lawyers» (Togliatti)

Purpose of the Institute is to assist in the formation of civic and legal society by participation in perfection of the current legislation, increase of legal culture of the organizations, businessmen, the population and protection of their rights and legitimate interests.

The organization has established a Legal clinic, conducts advocacy activities on the basis of legal clinics. Members of organization act as public defenders and public prosecutors in special cases that demand public supervision. Its members organize and conduct additional education, raising the level of skills in the field of human rights, management and marketing. The organization participates in working out and realization of regional and federal programmes and projects in the field of human rights, socially-oriented projects. Participation in public examination of bills of Togliatti (Russian Federation) and in public control over execution of the legislation is one of the main activities of the organization.

email: ip_jurist@mail.ru

Coordinators of GCAP in Russia:

in Moscow:

Vitaliy Kartamyshev
tel.: +7-495-246-49-44
email: vkartamyshev@oxfam.org.uk

in St. Petersburg:

Maxim Egorov
tel.: +7-812-931-43-05
email: egorov_m@mail.ru

in Tolyatti:

Anatoliy Arsenihin
tel.: +7-8482-41-68-56
email: alternativa_club@rambler.ru

