

Canada-Russia Health and Social Development Project

In partnership with the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Western Ontario and Disabled Peoples' International.

Dates:	March 1995 to June 2001
Primary sites:	Volgograd and Moscow, Russia
Budget:	\$2,238,079 CAD
Donor:	Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), ICACBR at Queen's University, Disabled Peoples' International, University of Western Ontario

Overview

At the time of the Canada Russia Health and Social Development Project, Russia primarily used an institutionally focused healthcare system. Institutional healthcare systems can isolate people with disabilities as explained on pages 30, 45 and 47.

In the context of Russian healthcare at the time of this project, disability was viewed as an illness or disease that could not be cured, and as such few rehabilitation and support resources were available for people with disabilities. The ICACBR partnered with the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Western Ontario and Disabled Peoples' International to work to improve care for people with disabilities in Russia. The actions of the project included the following:



- The project established an Independent Living Centre in Volgograd in 2001 to provide support and advice to people with disabilities.
- The project worked to develop occupational therapy and nurse management manuals. The project also worked to translate research and other resources into Russian.
- The project worked with faculty from Volgograd Medical College No. 2 and All Russia Society of the Disabled to develop occupational therapy and nurse management curricula. This curriculum was created with people with disabilities in mind and was intended to increase capacity for care.
- The project supported the implementation of three occupational therapy programs and two nurse management programs at the Moscow Medical College (MMC), Moscow State Social University (MSSU) and Volgograd Medical College No. 2 (VMC).
- Educational initiatives implemented in Volgograd were adapted for use in Moscow, increasing the training capacity of occupational therapy and nursing management.
- Canadian members of the project organized a series of educational workshops for continuing professional development for Russian healthcare and rehabilitation science faculty.
- Over 150 individuals representing Russia's senior government officials in Moscow and Volgograd attended a project conference titled "Solutions Through Partnership" in Moscow, in May 1998.

Background

In 1995 when the Canada Russia Health and Social Development Project began, Russia used an institutionally focused healthcare system. As detailed on pages 30, 45 and 47, institutional healthcare can be isolating for people with disabilities. As people with disabilities seek treatment or rehabilitation in institutionally focused settings, they are often removed from their communities as they cannot receive care in a home/community setting. These individuals may have difficulties participating in community life and may have reduced ability to contribute socially or economically. Despite extensive reform of social and healthcare services, people with disabilities were still treated using a medical model –disability was viewed as an incurable illness or disease. In addition to the challenges inherent with an institutional healthcare system, Russia's system was overburdened, and many healthcare professionals were overworked, exacerbating issues. This project sought to improve the experience of people with disabilities as they sought to live in their communities and access rehabilitation services.

Rationale

While healthcare reform at the time of the project could have the secondary effect of improving healthcare and rehabilitation services for people with disabilities in Russia, directly improving services offered to people with disabilities was not a priority for reform. The consequences of impairment, chronic illness and disability were not a policy focus, or a focus for healthcare education reform. In 1994 members of ICACBR and faculty from the University of Western Ontario and Queen's University traveled to Russia to evaluate the healthcare system in the city of Volgograd. This trip led to the Canada Russia Health and Social Development Project, which sought to produce a group of educators that could provide continued clinical education for students in occupational therapy (OT) and nursing management (NM) and subsequently work to improve rehabilitation, healthcare, and social support for people with disabilities.

Actions and Outcomes

The Canada Russia Health and Social Development Project had eight components: non-governmental organization development, Volgograd Medical College No. 2 faculty and curriculum development, teaching resource development, Volgograd Medical College No. 2 education program preparation and implementation, healthcare delivery development, dissemination of the educational model created by the project, continuing professional development, and efforts to combine project activities.

Outputs of the project include:

- The project worked with Disabled Peoples International to **create an Independent Living Centre in Volgograd** in 2001. This centre provided support for people with disabilities.
- The project worked with **faculty from Volgograd Medical College No. 2 and the All Russia Society of the Disabled to develop curriculum for occupational therapy (OT) and nursing management (NM) programs**. Both programs were developed to be culturally appropriate. **Faculty in both fields trained extensively in both Canada and Russia**. NM faculty members studied for four months at the University of Western Ontario, while OT faculty members studied for four months at Queen's University. Thirteen total Russian faculty participated in these study tours. They also received two months of intensive English language training and attended a 64-hour course that was designed and taught by people with disabilities.

- **Moscow Medical College No. 7 joined the project later, and the faculty members went through an accelerated version of the training detailed above.** Curriculum used in Volgograd was modified to fit the situation in Moscow.
- **OT and NM manuals, research, and literature were translated into Russian** to provide a foundation of evidence for occupation therapists and nursing management professionals to use.
- **Three OT programs and two NM programs were implemented at Moscow Medical College, Moscow State Social University, and Volgograd Medical College No. 2.** The Volgograd Medical College No. 2 had 30 OT graduates in 2000 and Moscow Medical College graduated a class of 20 OT students. 35 NM students graduated from Volgograd Medical College No. 2 in 2000, and 50 graduated from Moscow Medical College. This large number of OT/NM graduates significantly increased the capacity of the healthcare system in these cities to aid people with disabilities. Graduates of both programs were able to find employment locally. High levels of enrollment continued at these programs after the project ceased operations.
- Moscow State Social University developed an OT curriculum for their psychology department. **F50 social work and psychology students at Moscow State Social University, and 60 nurses from Volgograd Medical College No. 2 completed courses in OT.** While these individuals did not necessarily directly work as rehabilitation professionals, their expanded skillset allowed them to better serve people with disabilities.
- Canadian project members organized educational workshops for Russian faculty with the goal of providing continuing professional development and developing peer supervision.
- The project created and disseminated newsletters to faculty, students, employment agencies, and government officials to ensure they were aware of project activities.
- **The project increased Russian educators and healthcare professionals' level of interest in developing OT professionals, and worked to change the attitudes of healthcare professionals towards people with disabilities.**
- **Over 150 individuals representing Russia's senior government officials in Moscow and Volgograd attended a Project conference titled "Solutions Through Partnership" in Moscow, in May 1998.**

Conclusion

All project objectives were either met or surpassed. By the creation of educational programs and efforts to increase the interest of healthcare professionals in support of people with disabilities, the project had potential for long lasting effects. The Canada Russia Health and Social Development Project team aided Russian partners and officials in the development of priorities for future initiatives. Strategies were identified to advance social and health sector reform after the project's completion.

Partners

Implementing partners: Faculty of Nursing at the University of Western Ontario and Disabled Peoples' International.

Community collaborators: All Russia Society of the Disabled (ARSD), Moscow Medical College (MMC), Moscow State Social University (MSSU), Solnechny Centre for Social Protection (SCSP), and Volgograd Medical College No. 2 (VMC).

International collaborators: Unknown.

Sources and Project Resources

1. Canada Russia Health and Social Development Project full project details*
2. Canada Russia Health and Social Development Project website archive

*used to generate this report