

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARV	Antiretroviral drugs
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEE	Central Eastern Europe
CIS	Commonwealth Independent States
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunisation
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
EU	European Union
FD	Federal District
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
GRP	Gross Regional Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDD	Iodine Deficiency Disease
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
LSE	Life Skills Education
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MHSD	Ministry of Health and Social Development
MTSP	Medium Term Strategic Plan
NAN	NGO No to Alcoholics and Narcotics
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSPSP	National Survey of Prosperity and Participation of the Population in Social Programmes
PISA	Programme International Student Assessment
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission of HIV
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
RAMS	Russian Academy of Medical Sciences
RF	Russian Federation
Rosstat	Federal State Statistics Service
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TB	Tuberculosis
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USE	Uniform State Examination
VTsIOM	All-Union Centre for the Study of Public Opinion
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organisation
WIN	"Women and Infants" Health Project

This Situation Analysis was prepared by the Institute for Urban Economics, Moscow, Russia with contributions from Andrei Dirgin and John Varoli.

Photographs: Unicef Russia

Front Cover photograph: Ludmila Tkhostova

Design and Layout: ilsabrittain@gmail.com

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Foreword

Since its establishment in 1997, UNICEF Russia has sought to contribute to the well-being of young citizens of the Russian Federation. Working closely with federal and local authorities, progress has been made in the protection of children rights, but there are many areas where attention is still needed. For many of these areas, there is no time to lose.

Progress towards eradicating child poverty and reversing the alarming spread of HIV remains an urgent need in Russia. Lack of action could result in heavy consequences, namely the spread of disease, loss of economic opportunities, the unrealised potential of a generation, an abated demographic crisis, as well as social insecurity.

The dramatic days of Beslan have shown once again how vulnerable and unprotected children are in the modern world. It calls on all of us to address the structural issues that lead to violence and conflict, and to promote peace, tolerance, and respect for diversity among children and young people.

This UNICEF Situation Analysis of Children and Women in the Russian Federation strives to assess the progress for children regarding advances towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which address poverty and hunger, child and maternal mortality and HIV and other diseases, while also promoting universal primary education, gender equality, environmental sustainability and a global partnership for development by 2015. The report focuses its attention upon the underlying and structural causes of problems that children face; it indicates how the Government is addressing these problems; and proposes further actions to accelerate progress.

Increased economic growth in Russia stands to improve the state of its almost 30 million children, especially those who have been excluded from adequate social services and basic social protection. Russia is now blessed with unique opportunities and is at a crucial juncture in efforts to pave the way for a better, more secure and peaceful world for all its children.

Rapid social and economic developments in Russia could also pose threats to safe childhoods. Although systematic data does not exist, many children in Russia are still living in especially difficult circumstances. It is our obligation to spare them from poverty and to maximise opportunities for their further optimal development and participation in civil society. They deserve a better world to live in, and with our joint forces we must create it.

Our ultimate goal is to build for every child in the Russian Federation a world filled with opportunities and safety, where he or she could realise his or her full potential. Only by ensuring this right can we create a prosperous, secure, stable and successful society.

Let's act immediately in the best interests of all children!



Carel de Rooy

UNICEF Area Representative in the Russian Federation and Belarus

Introduction

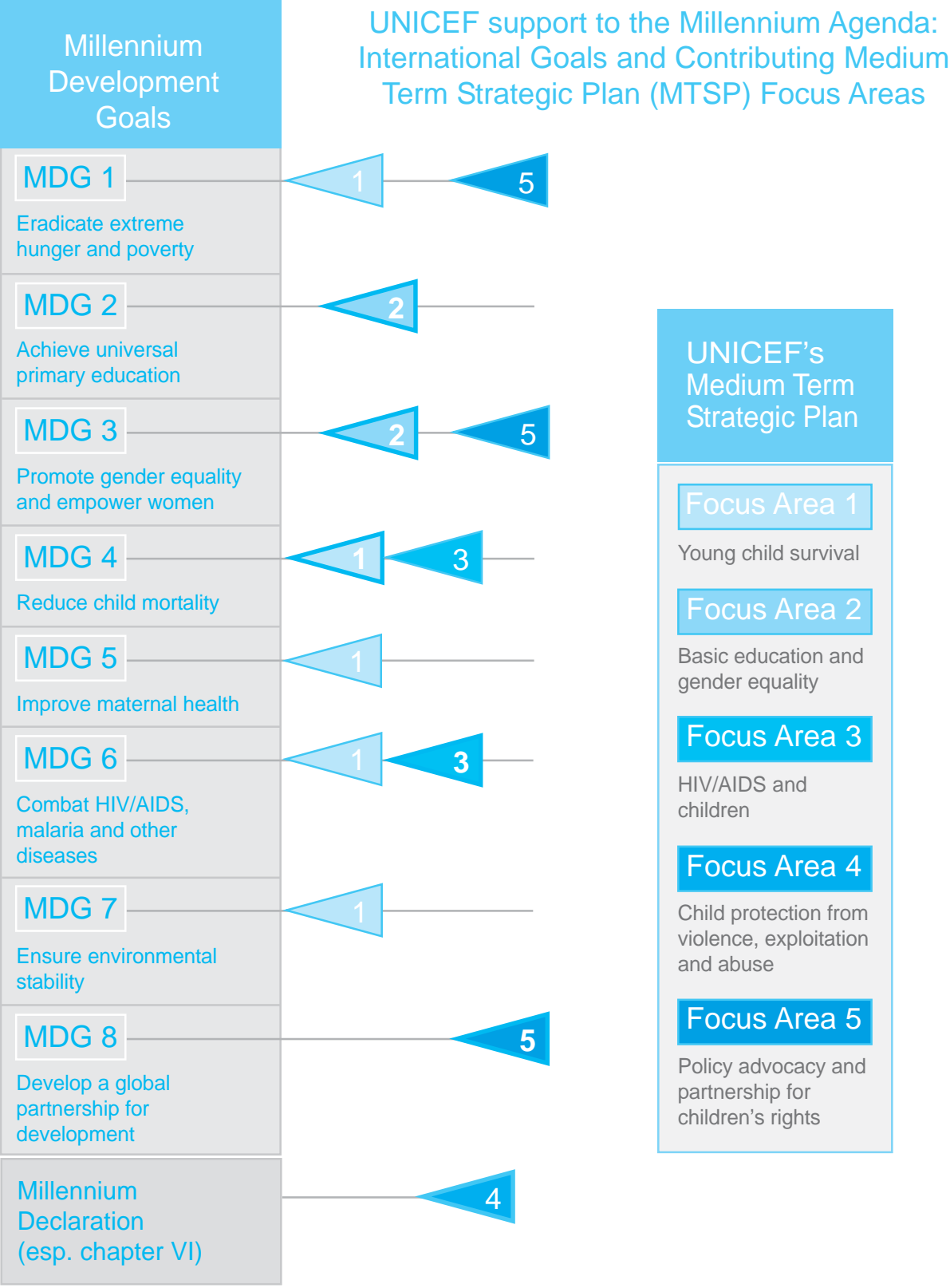
Table 1: Key Statistics – Russian Federation

Total Population (thousands) (2004)	143,899
Population aged under 18 (thousands) (2004)	29,809
GNI per capita US\$	\$3410
Under-5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) (2004)	21/ 14.5*
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) (2004)	17/ 11.6*
Life expectancy at birth (years) (2004)	65
Adult literacy rate (%) (2000 - 2004)	99
Net primary enrolment/ attendance (%) (1996-2004)	90
HIV prevalence: adult prevalence rate (15-49 years), end 2003, estimate (%)	1.1

Data obtained from UNICEF/UN official figures from www.unicef.org.
* Data provided by Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) differs for under-5 mortality rate and infant mortality rate.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history, with its adoption by the UN General Assembly in 1989. The Convention on the Rights of the Child affirms the rights of all children to survival, health and education through the provision of essential goods and services, and recognises the growing need to create an environment that protects children from exploitation, abuse and violence.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is a complementary human rights instrument to the CRC, with the commitment to support the equal rights of women and girls. The right of women to participate in decisions that affect them is central to the realisation of the rights of children.



Through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which arose from the Millennium Declaration, the world has agreed upon a road map for developing a better future. Each of the MDGs is connected to the well-being of children, setting quantitative targets to address extreme poverty and hunger, child and maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS and other diseases, while promoting universal primary education, gender equality, environmental sustainability and a global partnership for development by 2015. The MDGs serve as a catalyst for improved access to essential services, protection and participation for children.

With its adoption of the CRC and UN Millennium Declaration, the Russian Federation has agreed to be bound to provisions of the abovementioned documents. UNICEF's goal in this context is to support the Government in fulfilling its responsibilities.

UNICEF's Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) provides the framework through which UNICEF works to contribute effectively to the international effort to achieve the MDGs by 2015, as well as other commitments made by governments at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children. This work is done through ensuring the achievement of results for children in five focus areas, each of which directly contributes to the Millennium agenda.

Since UNICEF's inception, 60 years ago, the Soviet Union, and the Russian Federation as successor, have made a significant contribution to the protection of child rights around the world. The Russian Federation remains a reliable and indispensable partner of UNICEF and one of the key supporters in its efforts to create a decent childhood for children in Russia and worldwide. Accordingly, UNICEF's mission in the Russian Federation relies heavily on cooperation with the local authorities to successfully carry out its mandate.

Despite these efforts, some of the most basic child rights remain unfulfilled across Russia. Amongst the most significant factors that undermine these rights and prevent children from fulfilling their optimal potential, are poverty, parental neglect, child abuse and HIV/AIDS.

With the Soviet Union's disintegration in 1991, the Russian Federation has faced enormous economic, political, and social changes, which have had significant implications for children's welfare. The improved socio-economic situation for the general population, however, has had limited impact on children as a group. According to research, poverty in Russia has a child's face, with more than half of the families with children living below the poverty line.¹

At the moment Russia's principal task is to overcome key socio-economic challenges and to pave the way to a more stable democratic state with effectively functioning institutions.

Purpose of the Report

A significant number of children in Russia still make their way through life impoverished, abandoned and discriminated against.

¹ *Ovcharova L.N. and Popova D.O. Child Poverty in Russia: Alarming Trends and Policy Options. UNICEF, Independent Institute of Social Policy, Moscow, 2005, p. 12.*

The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the state of children in the Russian Federation and to analyse underlying problems that undermine child rights, taking into consideration the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the widely adopted UN Millennium Development Goals.

The report argues that increased attention to the implementation of child rights and investment in children will create a platform for successful, stable and sustainable development in Russia.

Methodology & Structure of the Report

The principle methodology used for this report's assessment was a causal analysis approach. Existing problems of children's welfare were examined in light of the causes for these trends. Trends or "manifestations" have multiple and inter-linked levels of causation:

1. Immediate causes are those most directly associated with the problem. For instance, young people's lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS contributes to the fact that the majority of HIV-infected are those below the age of 30. These problems are apparent at the individual or household level.
2. Underlying causes are generally seen at the household or community level and may include factors such as an institution's limited capacity. For example, a medical facility's ability to provide services that meet the needs of adolescents most at-risk. Also important are the availability of resources at the household level, as well as inaccurate perceptions in the community.
3. Basic causes are key factors that are seen in the national context. They include the development and allocation of existing and potential resources at the national level, state expenditure and priorities as reflected in national social and economic policies, and belief systems within society.

The report first examines the situation in key areas affecting child rights and welfare, and then analyses the immediate and underlying causes behind trends. The government response to these causes is then discussed, and finally, steps for working together for children are offered as suggestions for a future course of action.

The **first chapter** provides an overview of the situation in Russia, highlighting key areas which are relevant in regards to the welfare of children and women. Two MDG topics, poverty and gender equality, are addressed in this chapter as they are cross-cutting issues which affect all areas – health, education, protection and young people's participation.

Reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and halting the spread of HIV/AIDS in Russia are priority areas for the work of UNICEF in the Russian Federation. **Chapter two** is devoted to an analysis of these **health issues**. This chapter also focuses on existing policy in this sphere and maps possible actions to achieve public

health related goals. The HIV/AIDS epidemic could not only lead to the death of a large number of parents in Russia, but could also affect those who might otherwise provide substitute care for orphans.

Education is a highly relevant and at times difficult issue for Russia today. A structural analysis of the educational system is laid down in the **third chapter**. Actions are required to strengthen all forms of Russia's education system (pre-school, primary and secondary education), and special attention is devoted to the decline of enrollment in the pre-school educational system.

Chapter four, entitled **Child Protection**, is especially important for significantly raising Russia's GDP. Russian authorities are gradually expanding their role in protection-related issues such as neglect and lack of parental care, violence against children, and eradication of child labour. UNICEF's report also analyses here the state of children in the Northern Caucasus. In this context, the most important issue is the creation of long-term strategies in the sphere of child protection.

Finally, **Youth Policy** aims to create favourable conditions for the participation of young people in Russian society. It is no coincidence that the involvement of youth in the political and economic process is a basic development indicator for civil society. **Chapter five** examines young people's participation and policy roles.



1.1 Introduction

In 2005, Russia had a population of 143.5 million, the seventh largest in the world. While ethnic Russians account for about 80 per cent of the total population, the balance is comprised of over 160 nationalities, many of whom live in self-governing areas and preserve their traditional way of life.

About 73 per cent of the population is classified as 'urban,' and live in the country's 1,066 cities and 2,270 urban settlements. The latter

Soviet-era classification, however, can be misleading since these “settlements” often have much in common with rural areas, and lack the level of development usually associated with urban living.

The Russian Federation comprises of 89 self-governing constituent units², including 55 administrative regions, 21 national republics, and 11 autonomous regions. Finally, the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg are treated as territorial units in their own right. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 many of these constituent units succeeded in increasing their authority vis-à-vis Moscow.

The 89 constituent units differ substantially from one another in terms of natural resources, economy, and geography. Moreover, they tend to be extremely diverse within themselves; for example, regional centres often have a developed labour market and infrastructure, while small towns and rural areas have low income levels and much lower living standards.

1.2 Current Situation

1.2.1 Russia's Economy

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Russian economy experienced major changes and upheavals; State assets and entire sectors of the economy were privatised, and prices were set on a free-market footing.

Russia faced the most difficult conditions during the economic collapse of 1991 to 1993, and again in 1998 when the Government defaulted on its debt, setting off a financial crisis. Beginning in 1999, Russia's economy began to rebound and grow. According to the World Bank, the Russian economy grew between 6 and 7 per cent annually from 1999 to 2005. Inflation dropped from 86 per cent in 1999 to about 12 per cent in 2005. The country has paid its foreign debt ahead of schedule, and foreign reserves have been growing.

This progress was in large part due to the devaluation of the rouble in real terms, making Russian manufacturing more competitive versus foreign imports. Even more significant, the rapid rise in prices for natural resources on world markets, especially oil and gas, helped the country build up foreign reserves (including gold) that totalled USD 195.9 billion in February 2006.³ Extraction of mineral resources and their primary manufacturing industry accounted for a significant portion of this growth, while some improvement was witnessed in other sectors of industrial production. However, some experts have suggested that the Russian Government is not taking sufficient strategic actions to maximise on the current oil money to ensure sustainable development.⁴

² *The Russian Federation is in the process of restructuring its regions which will result in the reduction of all regions to 87 self-governing constituent units (“subjects”).*

³ *Russian Economic Report No. 12, World Bank, Moscow Office, April 2006, www.worldbank.org, p.2.*

⁴ *Stephen Boykewich, “Craving Change”, Russian Economic Forum, London April 23-30, 2006, Special Report, The Moscow Times, 24 April 2006, pp, 2-3.*

Over the past few years, the Russian economy growth remained strong, with a registered growth of 6.4 per cent for 2005. The structural composition of economic growth has experienced significant changes. Whereas in 2003 and 2004 economic growth was largely attributed to Russia's oil industry, growth in 2005 was more balanced with substantial contributions from the production of non-tradable services and goods for the domestic market. Construction also witnessed rapid growth. Industrial growth contracted to 4 per cent in 2005.⁵

The 2005 foreign direct investments had a 39 per cent increase relative to 2004, reaching USD 13.1 billion.⁶ Although Russia has experienced double-digit fixed capital investment growth for the third consecutive year, absolute investment levels remain low relative to other emerging market economies that have sustained growth over a number of years.⁷

In terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) and gross domestic product (GDP), Russia ranks among the world's ten largest economies. Still, according to the World Bank, in 2004 Russia's GDP totalled only 12.7 per cent of the United States' GDP, 39 per cent of Japan's, and 60 per cent of Germany's. In 2004, Russia's GDP accounted for 2.5 per cent of the total as a portion of world GDP (which was USD 56 trillion according to the World Bank). By 2005, Russia's per capita GDP (PPP) was USD 10,700 which put it above the global average of USD 8,800.

After years of decline, Russia's strengthened economy has reinforced the Government's efforts to advance lagging structural reforms and raised business and investor confidence in the country. These positive economic trends present a unique opportunity to increase investments on priorities for children and to accelerate social sector reform.

1.2.2 Demographics

The 2002 census calculated Russia's population at 145.8 million. By 2005 that figure declined to 143.5 million. If this figure continues downward, with a net loss of almost 700,000 people each year, it is estimated that by 2050 the population will fall to 104 million. President Putin underscored the severity of Russia's demographic situation in his May 10, 2006 Federal Assembly statement, proposing actions to address this problem.

Following the growth peak in 1987 of 17.2 births per 1,000 people, Russia witnessed a sharp drop in the birth rate to 10.7 births per 1,000 people in 1992, just as economic and social reforms began. The subsequent upheavals strongly impacted reproductive behaviour and the birth rate continued to fall. Only in 2000 did the birth rate start to rise again.

Contributing factors to Russia's demographic situation include a low birth rate and a high mortality rate, especially among working age men. Furthermore, Russia's demographic situation is characterised by

⁵ *Russian Economic Report No. 12, World Bank, Moscow Office, April 2006, www.worldbank.org, p. 5.*

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 6.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 6.

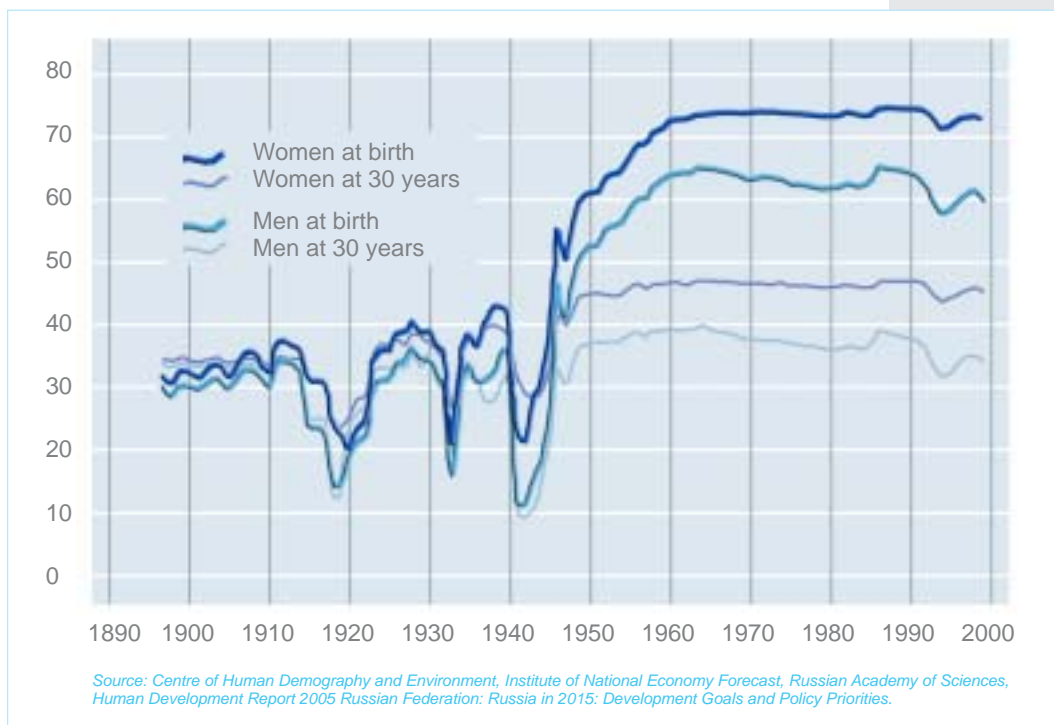
a contradicting trend: while Russia's infant, child and maternal ratios are gradually declining, its life expectancy and fertility rates are also declining. The average Russian male and female lived to 59 and 72 years respectively in 2004. A positive dynamic was experienced in 2004, with a slight increase in the overall life expectancy from 64.3 to 65.8 years, yet this increase only brings the life expectancy to the low level of 2000.⁸ Particularly alarming is that the life expectancy of Russian men at age 30 years has shown no change since World War II, despite significant achievements in modern medicine during this time.

The greatest impact on population levels, however, is the overall mortality rate. In the 1960s and 1970s, the mortality rate began a steady rise, from 7.4 deaths per thousand in 1960, to 11 deaths per thousand by the end of the 1970s. Throughout the 1980s, that figure hovered around 11 deaths per thousand. After 1992, it rose sharply, reaching 15.7 deaths per thousand in 1994. This figure has remained stable since then, and was 16.1 deaths per thousand in 2005 (Rosstat 2005).

The main causes of death in Russia are: 1) cardio-vascular diseases; 2) accidents; and 3) cancer. In 1993, death by accident overtook cancer to occupy second place. Male mortality is particularly alarming. For working age males, the single most frequent cause of death was accidents, many of which were alcohol-related, with almost 40 per cent of deaths occurring in this manner. Rates of alcoholism generally—especially among young people—and drug addiction have increased.

If this trend continues, only 58 per cent of males will live to the official retirement age of 60 years. According to research made by Elizabeth

Figure 1: Change in the Life Expectancy of Men and Women at the age of 0 to 30 years in 1900 to 2000 in the Russian Federation.



⁸ Russian Economic Report No. 12, World Bank, Moscow Office, April 2006, www.worldbank.org, pp. 11 and p.19.

Brainerd of Williams College and David M. Cutler of Harvard University, Russia ranks 122nd in the world for male mortality.

In his 2005 Federal Assembly address, President Putin proposed that lack of healthy lifestyles and effective prevention initiatives were two of the root causes for these contradicting trends. In its third periodic report to the CRC Committee in 2005, the Government also highlighted the acute problem of increasing trends of smoking, drinking, substance abuse and unsafe sex among young people which, if not effectively addressed, could further deteriorate Russia's life-expectancy trends. Figure 1 indicates that the latter have a dramatic recent history. Four major troughs can be found. The first coincides with World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution (1914-1917). The second in the 1930s relates to the collectivisation of agriculture which led to widespread famine. The third corresponds to World War II in the early 1940s, and the last in the 1990s after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

The next potential challenge regarding Russia's life expectancy to be mitigated is its rapidly growing HIV/AIDS epidemic, which has made Russia a new epi-centre of the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. Although HIV/AIDS has largely been limited to injecting drug-users in the past 20 years, it is now rapidly moving into the general population through sexual transmission. Implications of the epidemic upon life expectancy are currently unclear, but suggest negative consequences if pro-active steps to get ahead of the epidemic are not taken.

The migration challenges also contribute to the demographic crisis that Russia faces. According to a migration study of CIS and CEE countries, Russia is a target destination for other former Soviet republic populations.⁹ This migration consists mainly of the Russian diaspora returning to its motherland, and of the indigenous populations from other republics. In addition, more people from outside the former Soviet Union are migrating to Russia. Inside the country, the leading migratory trend has been a massive flow of Russians from Siberia, the Far North and Far East towards the Central European part of the country.

MDG 1

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Targets

1. Halve, between 1999 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 USD a day.
2. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

1.2.3 Living Standards

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in the early 90s resulted in the elimination, privatisation, or reduction of many social services and family supports, which, while varying in quality and quantity, had been widely available and virtually free. Loss of these programmes resulted in deterioration of the standard of living during the 1990s, however, Russia's standard of living has been growing gradually since 2000.

The World Bank's April 2006 Economic Report reported that average real wages and incomes have continued to grow in 2005, at 9.7 and 8.8 percent, respectively, with growth remaining strongly pro-poor in 2005.¹⁰ Real dollar wages grew much more rapidly than real wages in 2005, and averaged USD 302 a month, a 27.4 per cent increase over 2004. Unemployment rates also fell, averaging 7.6 per cent in 2005,

⁹ *Population, Health and Migration in Contemporary Russia*, by Timothy Heleniak.

¹⁰ *Russian Economic Report No. 12*, World Bank, Moscow Office, April 2006, www.worldbank.org, p. 11.

as compared to 8.6 and 8.2 per cent in 2003 and 2004, respectively.¹¹

According to UNDP, the Human Development Index (HDI) for 2003 was highest in Norway, and lowest in Niger.¹² Russia ranked 62nd out of 177 countries. Although Russia has improved its position from 75th in 1995, the main reasons for this poor performance are rooted in the sharp decline in the standard of living and the demographic crisis. The extent to which living standards in the various regions are different can also be measured using HDI regional indices. Over the last four years, these figures show that the gap between the regions with the maximum and the minimum levels has widened. In only three regions did HDI levels match those of developed countries – Moscow, Tyumen Region (the largest oil-producing region) and the Republic of Tatarstan.

Corruption is an on-going issue which impairs Russia's economic development. Surveys of small businesses undertaken by the Centre for Economic and Financial Research (2005), a Russian think tank, indicated that corruption fell from 2001 to 2002 but then worsened again by 2004. Although the "bribe tax" in Russia has reportedly declined as a percentage of revenue from 2002 to 2005, the economy's rapid growth suggests that the magnitude of bribery has nonetheless increased, notably in business licensing and government procurement. While the Russian Government has passed legislation to streamline public administration and to improve tax administration, inconsistent and ineffective implementation, as well as restrictions on civil society's monitoring, has contributed to the gap between reforms and real progress in reducing corruption.¹³

Income and social disparities remain, primarily affecting children and female-headed households. Wealth is disproportionately concentrated in the larger cities and oil producing areas. The economic difficulties of the 1990s led to declining expenditure on basic social services. Although Russia has met most of the Millennium Development Goals at the national level, disparities, particularly interregional ones, underlie these relatively good average rates and trends.

1.2.3.1 Poverty Profile

According to the official Russian methodology, households and individuals are counted as poor if their incomes are below the subsistence minimum. This subsistence level varies across Russia's 89 regions – with the levels by the fourth quarter of 2005 ranging from under 3000 roubles per month (approximately USD 100) to more than 5000 roubles per month (approximately USD 180).

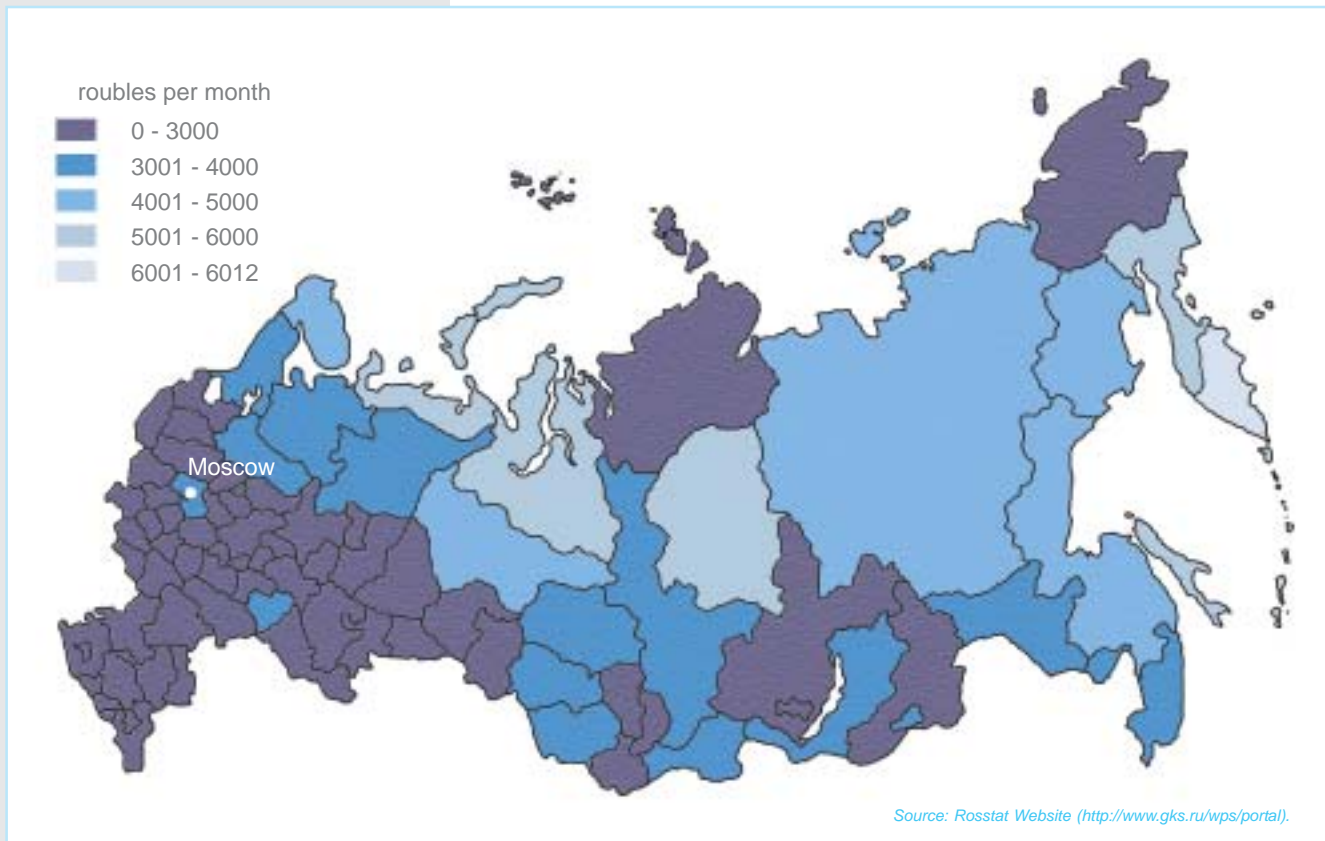
According to official estimates, which many believe understate the situation, when reforms began in 1992 one-third of Russians were living in poverty. Subsequently, the situation improved slightly, and by 1997 the poor made up just over 20 per cent of the population. The 1998 financial crisis, however, led to another sharp deterioration in the population's material well-being, and in 1999 almost 30 per cent had

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 11.

¹² *Human Development Report 2005: International Cooperation at Crossroads: Aid, Trade & Security in an unequal world*, UNDP, 2005, pp. 219-222.

¹³ Information from this paragraph was taken from *Anticorruption in Transition 3: Who is Succeeding ... and Why?*, James H., Gray, Cheryl W., *The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank*, 2006, p.38.

Map 1: Subsistence Minimums at the 4th Quarter of 2005



incomes below the subsistence minimum (Rosstat).

As the economy rebounded, the standard of living has been gradually growing, with a drop to 17.8 per cent of the population living below the poverty line in 2004. Furthermore, the Ministry of Economical Development and Trade projects that the share of the population below the official poverty line declined from 17.8 percent in 2004 to 15.8 percent in 2005.¹⁴

The UN Development Programme's 2005 Human Development Report estimated that 1 to 5 per cent of Russia's population is affected by extreme poverty as defined by the Millennium Declaration (poverty line of USD 1 per day).¹⁵ Many families, however, hover just above the Government's official poverty line and therefore are not registered as poor.

Poverty in Russia today has a child's face, with more than half of the families with children living below the poverty line.¹⁶ Furthermore, families with dependents, especially single-parent families, and families with two or more children under 16 years old, face a high risk of joining the ranks of the poor. Poverty in general and child poverty in particular is linked to labour conditions. In 50 per cent of poor families

¹⁴ *Russian Economic Report No. 12, World Bank, Moscow Office, April 2006, www.worldbank.org, p. 11.*

¹⁵ *Human Development Report 2005 Russian Federation, Russia in 2015: Development Goals and Policy Priorities, UNDP, 2005, p.30.*

¹⁶ *Ovcharova, L.N. and Popova, D.O. Child Poverty in Russia: Alarming Trends and Policy Options. UNICEF, Independent Institute of Social Policy, Moscow, 2005, p. 12.*

with children, there are parents earning wages below the subsistence minimum, while in 45 per cent of all households with children, one of the parents doesn't work.¹⁷

1.2.4 Social Protection System and its Impact on Poverty of Families with Children

Public welfare funds from the state budget, enterprises, and trade unions are used substantially to improve the condition of workers in Russia, both materially and socially. A major portion of public welfare funds goes to free medical service, training, pensions, and scholarships. All workers and professionals in Russia receive paid vacations of up to one month. During much of the Soviet period, advances in health care and material well-being led to a decline in mortality, the control or eradication of the more dangerous infectious diseases, and an increase in the average life span. Although Russia has a large supply of doctors, a number of factors have contributed to a decline in the quality of health care, such as insufficient attention to preventive health care, poor intensive and emergency care, insufficiently trained medical personnel, shortages of medicine, and limited development of specialised services such as maternity and hospice care.

The social protection system's basic provisions consist of: (1) insurance and non-insurance social monetary transfers, (2) benefits for the payment of goods and services granted to certain categories of the population, and (3) social services for vulnerable groups of the population (pensioners, disabled, orphaned children, and others).

The total amount of monetary social transfers in 2003 was equal to 9.4 per cent of the GDP. Monetary payments are an important source of income for Russian citizens and amount to 13 to 15 per cent of monetary incomes, whereby pensions account for 70 to 80 per cent of their total amount. At present, the cost of all social benefits is no higher than 1 per cent of the GDP and amounts to approximately 2 per cent of total monetary income.

The most widespread types of benefits are:

- temporary disability benefits;
- monthly benefits for children until 16 years old and students until 18 years old;
- unemployment benefits.

The decrease in government support of families with children is manifested in a cutback in expenditures on family and maternity benefits¹⁸, to which one-third of the total funds spent on all social benefits is currently allocated. Whereas in 1991 family and maternity benefits had accounted for 77.3 per cent of the total amount of funds, in 1995 this share had dropped to 54 per cent, and by 2003, it was only 32.4 per cent.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁸ *The following benefits are classified as family and maternity benefits: maternity benefits; benefits upon the birth of a child; childcare allowances up to 18 months; childcare benefits for disabled children; monthly benefits for each child.*

This change was prompted by the cancellation of monthly benefits for all children and the shift to payment of benefits only for children in poor families. In contrast to most benefits, which are insurance in nature, monthly child benefits are targeted to those in the greatest need.

In 2004, however, more than 70 per cent of children received them, and the benefit size amounted to 3.3 per cent of the child subsistence minimum. Beginning in 2005, the authority to finance and legislatively regulate this benefit transferred to the level of the Russian Federation constituent entities, as a result of Federal Law 122. It is feared that decentralisation to the regional level will deteriorate children's well being in the more depressed regions.

A major challenge for future actions will be to ensure that the social welfare reforms underway are adequately resourced; are complemented with economic and social policies that address disparities; and are well tailored to the needs of children and young people. Decentralisation of responsibility and accountability of social sectors to the regional level offer opportunities, but also some risks. HIV/AIDS is moving at a pace that requires urgent and specific action. Enhanced roles and support by the private sector and civil society need to be mobilised to broaden societal support for children's well-being.

1.2.5 Gender Issues¹⁹

Under MDG 3, "promote gender equality and empower women," the international community set as the key goal "to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels no later than by 2015." This objective assumes that achieving gender equality in access to all levels of education will eradicate inequality of access to wage employment; level out the gender structure of employment access; and reduce gender asymmetry in political participation.

Russia has a high level of gender equality in access to education, with women generally having higher professional education levels than men. However, experience shows that gender equality in the education system is an essential but not necessarily sufficient condition for gender equality in other aspects of public life. As a result, experts have suggested that the target of ensuring gender equality in access to education needs to be supplemented in Russia by other targets, which can guarantee equal rights and opportunities for men and women in all spheres. Sustainable human and economic development of any country presupposes broader development opportunities for both sexes, and, as a result, problems of gender development are relevant for Russian men as well as Russian women.

The key gender issue for men is the low male life-expectancy which in 2003 was 13.08 years less than women in urban areas and 13.44 years less in rural areas. The main reason for this large discrepancy

¹⁹ *Materials and references for this section come from the Human Development Report 2005 Russian Federation: Russia in 2015: Development Goals and Policy Priorities, UNDP Russia, 2005, pp.58-73.*

MDG 3

Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Target

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.

between men and women is mainly due to high mortality rates in able-bodied age groups of men. This situation in turn results in a disproportionate number of widows to widowers, particularly after 30 years of age, and thus a high level of female single households. This gender asymmetry becomes greater with older generations, among the 50 to 59 years age group the share of married men exceeds that of married women by 1.4 times, and by more than 3 times over 70 years of age.

In regards to employment, gender issues affect women considerably. While women comprise 49 per cent of the wage employment, female employees at large and medium-size enterprises were only paid 64 per cent of the wages of men in 2003. Differences in wage remunerations between men and women are particularly apparent for the 20 to 40 years age group. Furthermore, women generally need higher education in order to secure a significant increment in their earnings, whereas men obtain sufficient economic gains from their education even in blue-collar jobs. It is also true that higher levels of education are still insufficient to bridge the gap between women's labour remuneration and that of men with a comparable level of education.

Regarding employment in harmful labour conditions, men still are more affected, largely due to labour mechanisms regarding maternity protection which remain from the Soviet period. However, the share of workers for both sexes employed in harmful labour conditions has grown. The share of men employed in industry conditions, not complying with sanitary and hygiene standards, rose from 26.4 per cent in 1999 to 28.6 per cent in 2003 and for women from 14.9 per cent to 16.3 per cent.

Women are also not extensively represented in Russia's political structures. As of March 2005, only 5.6 per cent of Federal Council Senators were women. Women's representation in the State Duma is higher (9.8 per cent of all deputies of the current Duma). According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in 2005 Russia ranked 84th out of 125 countries in regards to the number of women representatives in national parliaments.²⁰

The Government has several national plans to improve women's position and role in society. What is missing, however, seems to be the political will, resources and the state mechanisms, including supervision and control that could transform these declarations into effective measures.

1.3 Government Response

Since 2000, the Russian Government has launched a number of initiatives to halve the number of Russians living below the official poverty level to about 10 percent of the total population by 2007. A component of these initiatives is dedicated to combatting the child

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.68.

poverty that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Russia's social services sector has little impact on the poorest segment of the population. Reform of the system requires a transition to targeted social assistance, and towards an increase in competition. One such measure is the conversion of benefits into cash form, i.e. the transformation of non-monetary benefits and subsidies into cash allowances, a process that Russians call "monetisation".

The Government's proposal for the conversion of benefits into cash has allowed World War II veterans, disabled and pensioners to receive monetary compensation in place of their current benefits. The entitled services include free medical care and treatment in health centres, and free travel on the underground and on suburban railways. As of 2006, beneficiaries can choose to receive their social support in cash alone, or partly in cash and partly in benefits in-kind.

With the passage in August 2004 of Federal Law 122, responsibility for the social sector was transferred from the federal level to Russia's 89 constituent entities. While changes of financial responsibility from federal to regional agencies may provide opportunities for a more focused response at the local level, these changes could also threaten implementation of a consistent and effective response nationwide.

Obligatory federal standards and budgetary commitments are necessary to ensure that children throughout the country receive equal opportunities to resources and programmes.

In 2005, President Vladimir Putin unveiled four national projects for a social investment programme to improve the lives of those citizens most at risk. In 2006 alone, the Government will invest almost USD 6 billion on education, health care, agriculture, and housing. Funds for housing and agriculture will rise 30 per cent. For health care, the figure is set to increase 60 per cent, and for new housing the figure will rise 400 per cent.

These four priority national projects in health, education, housing, and agriculture have become an overriding focus of the present economic policy in Russia. These projects directly target the standard of living of the population. Under the plan, 382 billion roubles (USD 14 billion) will be spent from federal and sub-national budgets, while 60 billion roubles (USD 2.2 billion) will be granted in guarantees. According to the breakdown given in Table 2, 76 per cent of the associated expenditures will come from the federal budget - 290 billion roubles (USD 10.6 billion).²¹

These national project priorities provide opportunities to improve child welfare. During Russia's presentation of its Third Periodic report to the CRC Committee in September 2005, the Government cited the national project for health as one of its key strategies to enhance the health of children and youth. Under this project, the Government committed to create six large federal medical centres for children addressing cardiovascular problems and to increase efforts in

²¹ Material for this paragraph taken from *Russian Economic Report No. 12, World Bank, Moscow Office, April 2006, www.worldbank.org, p. 11.*

Table 2: Financing of the National Projects from Federal and Regional Budgets

	2006	2007	Total (06-07)
Health	88.4	120.5	208.9
Education	25.3	31.2	56.5
Housing	35.4	46.2	81.6
<i>Government guarantees</i>	<i>26.5</i>	<i>33.5</i>	<i>60.0</i>
Agriculture	16.2	18.7	34.9
Total (excluding guarantees)	165.3	216.6	381.9

Source: Russian Economic Report No. 12, World Bank, Moscow Office, April 2006, www.worldbank.org, p.11.

providing all children with Hepatitis B vaccination.

Furthermore, recent political momentum has created a unique opportunity for more actively addressing the needs of women, children and families. In his May 2006 Federal Assembly address, President Putin placed children's interests squarely on the political agenda. Specifically, President Putin proposed prioritisation of investment in children and families as a critical part of Russia's social and economic development and instructed the Government to work together with the regions to "create a mechanism that will make it possible to reduce the number of children in institutions." In this address, President Putin proposed additional actions for 2007, including increases in childcare allowances for children under one and a half years; provision of maternity leave for mothers with children under one and a half years, which comprises 40 per cent of previous wages; compensation for expenses families pay to pre-school childcare; and provision of "maternity capital" social support measures, amounting to 250,000 roubles (approximately USD 9,400) for families which give birth to more than one child.



2.1 Introduction

Health issues involve a variety of basic human rights, including the right to health care; the right to receive information concerning the impact on human health of varying activities or products; and the right to timely medical and disease-prevention assistance.

Under the Millennium Declaration, several goals were set in regards to promotion of health, namely:

MDG 4: Reduction of child mortality;

MDG 5: Improvement of maternal health; and

MDG 6: Combatting of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

For Russia, maternal and child health figures are often seen by the Government not so much as indicators of poor health, but as key actions for solving its demographic crisis. Focus on the first two aspects requires particular attention to reducing perinatal deaths, which are the bulk of child mortality cases, as well as to providing better support to women to ensure proper levels of nutrition and healthy behaviours from pre-conception.

While actions to reduce child mortality and to improve maternal health are important factors, they are only a piece of the picture necessary to significantly improve the population's overall health. Prevention of premature adult mortality, particularly for males, is of critical importance to substantially affect the health status of Russia's population. Such actions require activities including promotion of healthy lifestyles and providing age-appropriate health information and services.

Attention to issues such as HIV/AIDS (MDG 6) is also critical for the health status of Russia's population. Russia currently experiences the largest HIV/AIDS epidemic in Europe, with almost 50 per cent of the population living in regions with very high or high HIV prevalence rates. Furthermore, Russia harbours one of the world's youngest HIV/AIDS epidemics, with 80 per cent of those infected being between the ages of 15 to 30 years. If prompt actions are not taken to address Russia's HIV/AIDS epidemic, it will have a lasting impact on the country's demographic situation as well as on its economy and security.

In developing health strategies, it is critical that the Government consider these key factors in tandem.

2.2 Current Situation

2.2.1 Key Health Indicators

2.2.1.1 Maternal Mortality Ratio

Since 1998, Russia's maternal mortality ratio has been gradually declining, at 23.4 deaths of women per 100,000 live births in 2004 (Rosstat).

Russia's maternal mortality rate is still several-fold higher than in advanced EU countries, exceeding the EU²² by a factor of 6.1 in 2002²³, and even most CIS, Central and Eastern European countries.

Causes for maternal mortality have remained practically unchanged over the years, namely, by abortions, haemorrhage, and late toxemia.

²² Comparison was made with the 15 countries in the European Union prior to May 2004.

²³ WHO Regional Office in Europe. Health for All Database.

CRC Article 6(2):

State Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

CRC Committee Concluding Observations to Russian Federation 3rd Periodic Report:

Paragraph 53:
The Committee encourages the State party: (b) To increase public expenditure on health.

MDG 5

Improve Maternal Health

Target

Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio

MDG 4

Reduce Child Mortality

Target

Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five.

Official Russian statistics could potentially be lower than reported figures.²⁴

In Russia, official statistics gathering does not fully comply with the World Health Organisation's (WHO) infant mortality procedures, and thus could result in inaccuracies. Although Russia officially adopted the international live birth registration standard in 1993, the procedures introduced in 1992 by the Ministry of Health and Social Development and the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) are still based on pre-1993 criteria. Babies who weigh less than one kilogram, but who die during the first seven days, are only registered in the hospital and not by local civil authorities. Consequently, they are not considered in official statistics.

2.2.1.2 Infant & Under-5 Mortality (Child Mortality) Ratios

Russia has also experienced a slow but stable decline in its infant and child mortality ratios, at 11.6 per 1,000 births and 14.5 per 1,000 live births in 2004, respectively (Rosstat 2004).

Reduction in infant mortality is largely attributable to a decline in deaths during the first 30 days after birth (neonatal period).

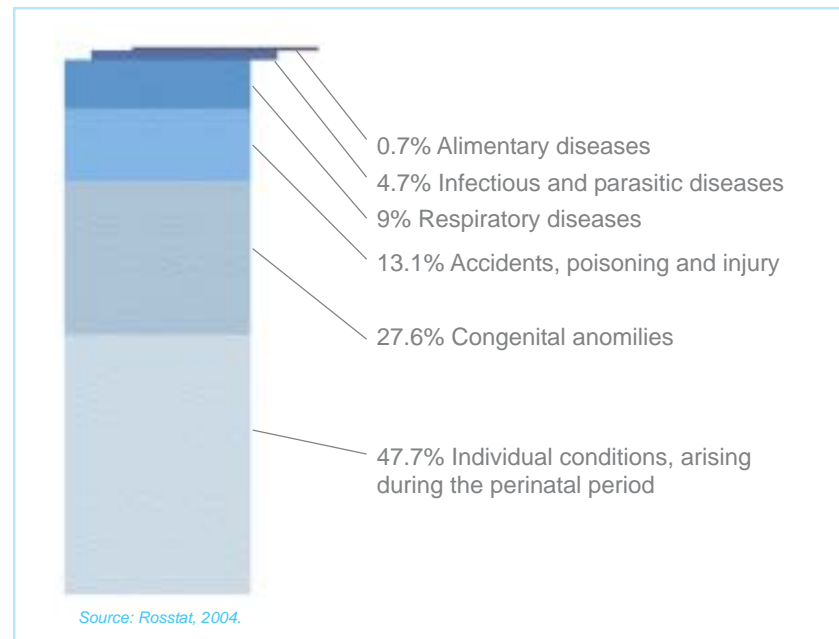
In spite of the positive dynamics, Russia's infant mortality ratio is still 2.7 times higher than the average European level.

Causes for infant mortality have also remained unchanged, with major factors including: individual conditions during perinatal period; congenital defects; respiratory diseases; digestive system diseases; infectious and parasitic diseases; accidents, poisoning and injury.

Infant mortality from respiratory diseases remains a serious problem in rural areas. Despite a 88 per cent decline in respiratory disease deaths for Russia nationally, a number of regions and rural areas have experienced increases.

Recent years have demonstrated a rise in infant deaths due to accidents, poisoning and injury, totaling 13.1 per cent of infant mortality cases in 2004 (Rosstat). This indicator is significant as it may signal unfavourable social environments in families of newborns.

Figure 2: Causes of Infant Mortality (per cent) in 2004



²⁴ See: E.M.Andreev, E.A.Kvasha. *Specifics of the infant mortality rate in Russia. Problems of social hygiene, health care and the history of medicine. 2002. No. 4, pp 15-20.* 40 "How High is Infant Mortality in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS?" Nadezhda Aleshina and Gerry Redmont. Nov, 2003, Innocenti Working paper No. 95.
²⁵ *Specifics of the formation of the reproductive health of girls in Russia today.* V.I.Kulakov, E.V.Udarova. Scientific Centre for Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Perinatology of the RAMS. <http://www.exposystems.ru>

2.2.2 Reproductive Health

Women's and adolescent girls' reproductive health is a strategic issue for maintaining and promoting the health of mothers and children in Russia. Young people, in particular, have experienced deteriorating reproductive health.

Gynaecological disorders among adolescents increased from 8 per cent in 1995 to 14.3 per cent in 2001. Biological and social factors make girls more vulnerable to reproductive health problems. The incidence of health problems among girls is 15 per cent higher than among boys.²⁵ These conditions are occurring against a background of a general deterioration of young women's health.

2.2.2.1 Pregnancy

A) Pre-natal Care:

Since the early 1990s, Russia has seen a rise in the incidence of anaemia, circulatory system diseases, toxæmia (eclampsia), and other ailments among pregnant women. The rise in the number of cases of anaemia is of particular concern.

Pregnant women with anaemia are more likely to have premature deliveries and low birth weight babies. In 2002, women with anaemia accounted for 42.8 per cent of all pregnancies resulting in child birth, up by a factor of 3.5 from 1990 and by a factor of 11.6 from 1980. The causal link between anaemia and low-birth weights is exhibited in the increasing number of underweight newborns in Russia since the mid-1990s; in 1996, 77,500 babies were born with a weight of less than 2.5 kg, whereas in 2000 there was an increase to 82,000 babies in this category.²⁶

Premature childbirth and low-weight newborns are also a result of smoking and alcoholism.²⁷ Smoking during pregnancy can provoke chronic foetal hypoxia, which retards foetal development and causes placental defects and other complications. These problems are major causes for post-natal death.

No reliable data exists regarding the number of pregnant women who smoke in Russia. However, judging from the prevalence of smoking among women of reproductive age, the numbers could be quite high. According to the Russian Economic and Health Monitoring, about 14.5 per cent of women surveyed are smokers, and their numbers are growing rapidly, increasing nearly 100 per cent between 1992 and 2002.

Such unhealthy lifestyles among pregnant women and the high incidence of circulatory system diseases are prime factors contributing to the steady rise in congenital defects and ailments among newborns. If these trends are not addressed, it will be difficult to further improve children's health and reduce infant mortality ratios.

²⁶ "Demoscope". 1 67-68, 20 May-2 June 2002. *Electronic version of the bulletin Population and Society*. <http://demoscope.ru/weekly>.

²⁷ Wilcox A.J. *Birth weight and prenatal mortality: the effect of maternal smoking*. *American Journal of Epidemiology*. 1993 May 15;137(10):1098-104. *Smoking and Premature Birth Study*. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* 1998;179: pp.1051-1055; *Smoking: Effects on Mothers and Babies in West Virginia*. HSC. *Statistical brief*. www.wvdhhr.org.

B) Pregnancy among Adolescents:

The issue of adolescent pregnancy in Russia is a concern. A relatively high proportion of young women between the ages of 15 and 19 years old are having children, and according to Rosstat, 28.2 girls per 1,000 in this category gave birth in 2004. Since pregnancy among adolescents is more frequently accompanied by anaemia, miscarriage, haemorrhaging and other complications, the chance of maternal mortality in this group has grown dramatically. Ministry of Health and Social Development data indicates that maternal mortality among adolescents in Russia is 5 to 6 times higher than in the general population.²⁸

2.2.2.2 Abortions

Even when performed by competent doctors, abortions may lead to irreversible and long-term damage to women's reproductive health, especially for adolescent girls and those pregnant for the first time.

Despite these dangers, abortion remains a common form of birth-control in Russia. Based on Russia's current abortion rates, experts estimate that a woman on average has 1.8 to 2.6 abortions during her reproductive cycle.²⁹ Although the absolute number of abortions has been decreasing, the ratio of abortions to births remains high: 124 per 100 deliveries in 2004, down from 204.9 in 1989.³⁰ The total number of abortions in 2004 was almost 1.8 million. In cases of multiple abortions, this may result in women experiencing acute inflammatory diseases, sterility, and hormonal disorders.

The severity of the problem is obvious when Russia is compared with other countries. Russia occupies first place in the number of per capita abortions, not only among European Union countries, but also among the CIS countries. The level in Russia is 1.6 times higher than the average for the CIS, and 5.6 times higher than for the EU.³¹

A) Abortions among Adolescent Women:

Even when compared to the overall high level of abortions in Russia, the situation regarding abortions among adolescent girls warrants concern. According to Rosstat, in 2004 the number of abortions for 15 to 19 year olds was 29 per 1,000 girls. For under 15 year olds, the figure was 0.1 per 1,000 girls.

Although the number of abortions among 15 to 19 year old girls is falling, in recent years the number of abortions among those under the age of 15 years old has risen.

While there are different estimates, about 10 per cent of abortions are performed on girls under the age of 19. About 88 per cent of pregnancies in girls under 15 years old end in abortion (Rosstat 2004).

²⁸ *Report on the State of Health of Children in the Russian Federation (according to the results of Russian preventive medical examinations in 2002).* Ministry of Health and Social Development. Moscow, 2003. www.mzsrff.ru.

²⁹ V. Sakevich. *Abortion or contraception. Which do Russian women choose?* *Demographic Weekly Demoscope*, 1 123-124, 25 August – 7 September 2003.

³⁰ Data found in *Innocenti Centre. Social Monitoring 2004 as well as Rosstat (2005).*

³¹ Comparison was made with the 15 countries in the European Union prior to May 2004.

2.2.3 Early Childhood Development

2.2.3.1 Immunisation against Infectious Diseases

According to statistics, the number of children under 14 years of age who suffered one or more infectious diseases nearly doubled between 1992 and 2002. At the same time, by 2002 the situation with diseases such as measles, mumps and diphtheria had improved, although significant regional disparities existed. For example, the incidence of measles in the Chechen Republic in 2002 exceeded the national average by nearly 14-fold.³²

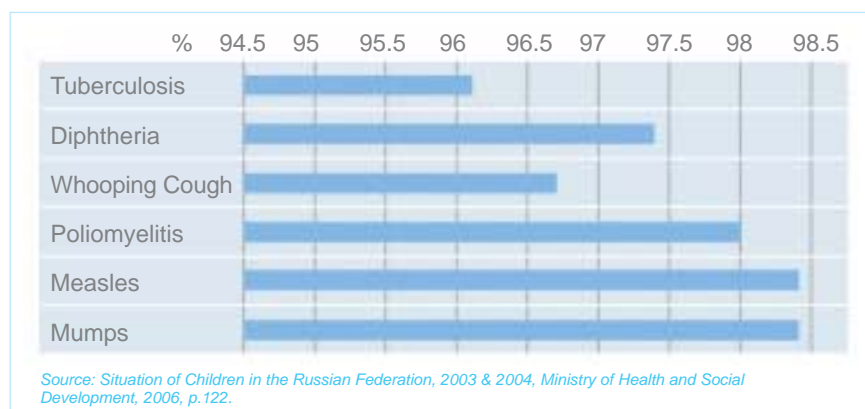
The incidence of German measles remains high, having increased five-fold over the last decade among children under the age of 15 years. Such cases have been particularly high among children in the regions of Khanty-Mansiisk, Mari El, Mordovia, Khakasia and the Primorsky Territory.

Hepatitis A and B are also serious problems. In 2002, 231 outbreaks of Hepatitis A were registered, with 2,257 children infected. Again, regional differences are significant. For instance, in the Bryansk, Tver and Kaliningrad Regions, and the Republic of Dagestan, the levels are more than triple the national average.

Prior to the 1990s, the level of immunisation for such diseases was high in Russia. Immunisation campaigns were not a priority for the health care system during Russia's transitional period in the 1990s, resulting in an increased frequency of outbreaks of diphtheria, German measles and tuberculosis. In 2001, health authorities launched immunisation programmes, which implied a list of mandatory and recommended immunisations.

As of 2005, approximately 95 per cent of children were immunised. This level is on par with other countries in the region. The situation, however, is not so favourable regarding individual types of vaccination.

Figure 3: Immunisation Rate among Children 0 to 2 years old (2004)



³² Government Report on "The Epidemiological Situation in the Russian Federation in 2003", Federal Centre of State Sanitary and Epidemiological Health, Russian Federation Ministry of Health, 2004, p.138.

CRC Article 24(2):

(e): To ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed...[of] the advantages of breastfeeding,...

CRC Committee Concluding Observations to Russian Federation 3rd Periodic Report:

Paragraph 53:
The Committee encourages the State party: (e) To consider creating a national breastfeeding committee, training medical professionals and improving breastfeeding practices.

Type B haemophilic bacillus vaccinations are especially important in the fight against acute forms of pneumonia, laryngotracheitis, and other diseases that are resistant to antibiotics. According to the Ministry of Health and Social Development, the bacillus is responsible for 40 per cent of meningitis cases in children under the age of 6 years old, and for about 10 per cent of pneumonia cases. Since it is an airborne infection, pre-school children are at high risk.

Since 1991, mandatory vaccination in most developed countries has helped eliminate this disease completely. Russia's low level of vaccination against this disease is primarily due to a lack of government financing. An information campaign targeted at parents, highlighting the usefulness and importance of this vaccination might improve the situation substantially.

2.2.3.2 Exclusive Breastfeeding

Breast milk is the only product that combines the three key baby health factors: food, health, and care. Breastfeeding is the safest and the simplest way to protect a baby from respiratory infections, allergies, and other diseases. On average, the proportion of newborns in Russia who are breastfed non-exclusively until six months increased from 27.6 per cent in 1999, to almost 35,1 per cent in 2004.³³ This figure, however, varies widely from region to region. For instance, in 2004 this figure was 12.2 per cent in the Far East's Magadan Region and 12.2 per cent in Moscow; while at the other end of the spectrum, it was 77.8 per cent in the Republic of Kalmykia, and 74.3 per cent in the Volgograd Region.³⁴

A positive trend in breastfeeding is seen in regions of Russia that actively implement WHO and UNICEF guidelines which recommend exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months.

Russian guidelines promote breastfeeding until 6 months, but also consider the ingestion of water and juice as acceptable, which does not comply with WHO/UNICEF international standards. While regional variations have never been properly studied, large differences might be attributed to factors such as local traditions, living conditions, or level of local health authorities' promotion of breastfeeding.

Challenges in promoting breastfeeding are not only attributed to difficulties in determining what works and what does not, but also to the lack of reliable data. Statistics from the Ministry of Health and Social Development's Central Research Institute are grouped according to the following:

Number of children under the age of one year,

Number of children breastfed:

up to three months

up to six months

Only the latter figure provides information on the number of children breastfed at the age of 6 months, while the former indicates the number taken off breast milk before they reached 3 months.

³³ Official data from Ministry of Health and Social Development.

³⁴ Abolyan, L.V. *Medical-Organisational Model for Maintaining and Supporting Breastfeeding in Medical Prevention Institutions of Obstetric and Neonatal Care, Doctoral Dissertation, Moscow, 2006, pp.385-387.*

2.2.3.3 Nutrition

According to the Russian Economic and Health Monitoring, malnourishment levels of children aged from 0 to 2 years increased from 2.4 per cent in 2001 to 5.2 per cent in 2002. For the 2 to 6 year old age group, this figure remained at 3.9 per cent.

The situation becomes more serious as children grow older. It is reported that almost 20 per cent of school students suffer from malnutrition. About 7.5 per cent of those surveyed consume animal protein foods – meat, fish, and eggs – once a week or less. The number of children with fruit and juice intake once a week is almost 20 per cent, and only 33 per cent consume fruit and juices every day.³⁵

According to the Ministry of Health and Social Development, the average height of a child in five of the country's regions is less than international averages.³⁶ Children of low-income families were shorter and weighed less, and almost 20 per cent suffered from chronic malnourishment. While the children of all income groups do not have enough milk and dairy products in their diets, the children of low-income families additionally do not get enough meat, fruit, and vegetables.

In conclusion, a significant number of Russian children in their formative years do not receive sufficient quantities of most vitamins and minerals, especially iron and calcium. Inadequate, poorly balanced, or irregular nutrition can significantly slow overall child development and in more serious cases even lead to chronic ailments.

2.2.3.4 Iodine and Micronutrient Deficiencies

Besides vitamins and minerals, child health also depends on the sufficient intake of micronutrients such as certain polyunsaturated fatty acids required for the proper development of the nervous, endocrine, and reproductive systems. Micronutrient deficiencies sharply reduce the body's resistance to adverse environmental factors, impair anti-oxidant functions, and lead to immunodeficiency conditions.

One of the most common endocrine system disorders is endemic goitre, which is a direct result of iodine deficiency. Child goitre rates remain high, rising on average from 15 to 40 per cent nationwide over the past few years.

While endemic goitre has been thoroughly studied, other iodine deficiency diseases may also lead to grave consequences, including intellectual disability. One study by Russian researchers in those regions with moderate levels of endemic goitre detected some type of cognitive disorder in 70 per cent of reviewed cases, while 30 per cent of the children afflicted had severe cognitive disorders, such as memory impairment.³⁷

³⁵ *A survey conducted by the Development Physiology Research Institute of the Russian Academy of Education, V. A. Sonkin.*

³⁶ *Nutrition and Health in Poor Families. Russian Federation Ministry of Labour and Social Development, Russian Federation Ministry of Health, Nutrition Research Institute of the Russian Academy of Medicine, Russian Social Reform Foundation, – Moscow, Prosveshchenie Publishers, 2002 (in Russian).*

³⁷ *S.V. Balkanskaya (Child Health Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Medicine). Study of Children's Cognitive Capacity in a Iodine-Deficient Region. Report to the Seventh Paediatricians' Congress within the framework of the Satellite Symposium on "Micronutrient Deficiency as a Problem of Practical Paediatrics," February 2003 (in Russian).*

CRC Article 24(2):

(e): To ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition

CRC Committee Concluding Observations to Russian Federation 3rd Periodic Report:

Paragraph 53:

The Committee encourages the State party: (c) To pass the law on universal salt iodisation and ensure its full implementation.

**CRC Committee
Concluding
Observations to
Russian Federation
3rd Periodic Report:**

Paragraph 61:

The Committee recommends that the State party:

(b) Strengthen measures to prevent mother-to-child transmission;

(c) Guarantee antiretroviral treatment to newborns whose mothers are infected with HIV as well as post-natal monitoring of HIV-positive mothers;

(d) Pay particular attention to children infected by HIV or who have become orphans due to the death of their parents from AIDS, by providing adequate medical, psychological and material support that fully respects the principle of nondiscrimination;

(e) Undertake a study on the practice in the State party of segregating children of HIV-positive mothers in hospital wards or separate orphanages and of HIV-positive children being refused access to regular orphanages, medical care and educational facilities.

Special attention should be given to the prevention of iodine deficiency in pregnant women. The latest studies indicate that intellectual development disorders caused by prenatal iodine deficiency cannot be corrected by post-natal use of iodine.

Another serious micronutrient deficiency is the lack of iron. Iron deficiency anaemia is common among pregnant women, and has become a major threat to children's health in Russia. According to Rosstat, between 1992 and 2002, anaemia in children aged 0 to 14 years quadrupled from 452 to 1,821 per 100,000 children. Since then, the figure dropped to 1,599 per 100,000 children in 2004.

Children suffering from anaemia in the first year of their lives are 50 per cent more likely to be less than average in height. In addition, their immune systems are weakened and their physical and cognitive development are impaired.

2.2.4. HIV/AIDS & STIs

By the end of June 2006, the total number of officially registered cases of HIV was 347,222, including 10,586 deaths from AIDS. Some estimates, however, claim that the actual number of HIV infected is closer to 1 million.

From December 2004 to June 30, 2006, the HIV prevalence nationwide increased from 201.4 per 100,000 to 235.4 per 100,000. This figure varies from region to region, however, but in some places nearly 1 per cent of the population lives with HIV.

Since the late 1990s, the number of HIV cases among women in Russia has risen sharply. The proportion of women of reproductive age who are HIV positive is also steadily rising, and has increased from 24 per cent in 2001 to 43 per cent in 2005.

Heterosexual HIV transmission has sharply increased from 2004 to 2005, comprising 33 per cent of persons infected in 2005. In the CEE/CIS Regional HIV/AIDS Conference in May 2006, Gennady Onischenko, Russia's Chief Sanitary Inspector, noted that in 45 regions of Russia, 70 per cent of those infected contracted HIV through sexual contact.³⁸ The HIV prevalence rate among pregnant women reached 116 per 100,000 tested in the end of 2005.³⁹

HIV transmission from mother-to-child is one of the main causes of infection of children under the age of 15 years. The number of children born to HIV-infected mothers has risen dramatically since 2002. In the end of 2005, the Ministry of Health and Social Development reported that more than 25,000 children were born to HIV-infected mothers, and about 2,000 were abandoned at birth.

The Federal AIDS Centre reports 19,016 children born to HIV-infected mothers by the end of 2005 with 1,035 of them tested HIV-positive, 4,266 tested negative, and 14,918 children still under surveillance with unknown HIV-status. In 2004 to 2005, one in ten children of HIV-infected mothers tested positive for the virus.

³⁸ *IA Regnum*, "Gennady Onischenko named 8 regions where a critical situation is occurring with AIDS", <http://pda.regnum.ru/news/medicine/640120.html>.

³⁹ *Official Ministry of Health and Social Development data*.

Pervasive stigmatisation and fear of disclosure of HIV status cause many women, especially in small communities, to stay away from pre-natal services. In 2002, just over 27 per cent of infected mothers failed to receive proper medical attention during their pregnancies. Most were substance abusers, young women from poor families, migrants to big cities, and women without a regular income or permanent home. By the end of 2005, about 69 per cent of HIV-infected pregnant women were treated with antiretroviral (ARV) drugs during pregnancy and during labour; 27 per cent received prophylaxis only during labour; and 4 per cent of women received ARV in the last trimester of their pregnancy, but missed treatment during labour. In the same year, 91 per cent of newborns received ARV to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV.⁴⁰

The total number of children abandoned by HIV mothers rises each year, though as a percentage their number dropped from 11.4 per cent in 2001, to 4.8 per cent in 2003.⁴¹ Such children usually end up in state

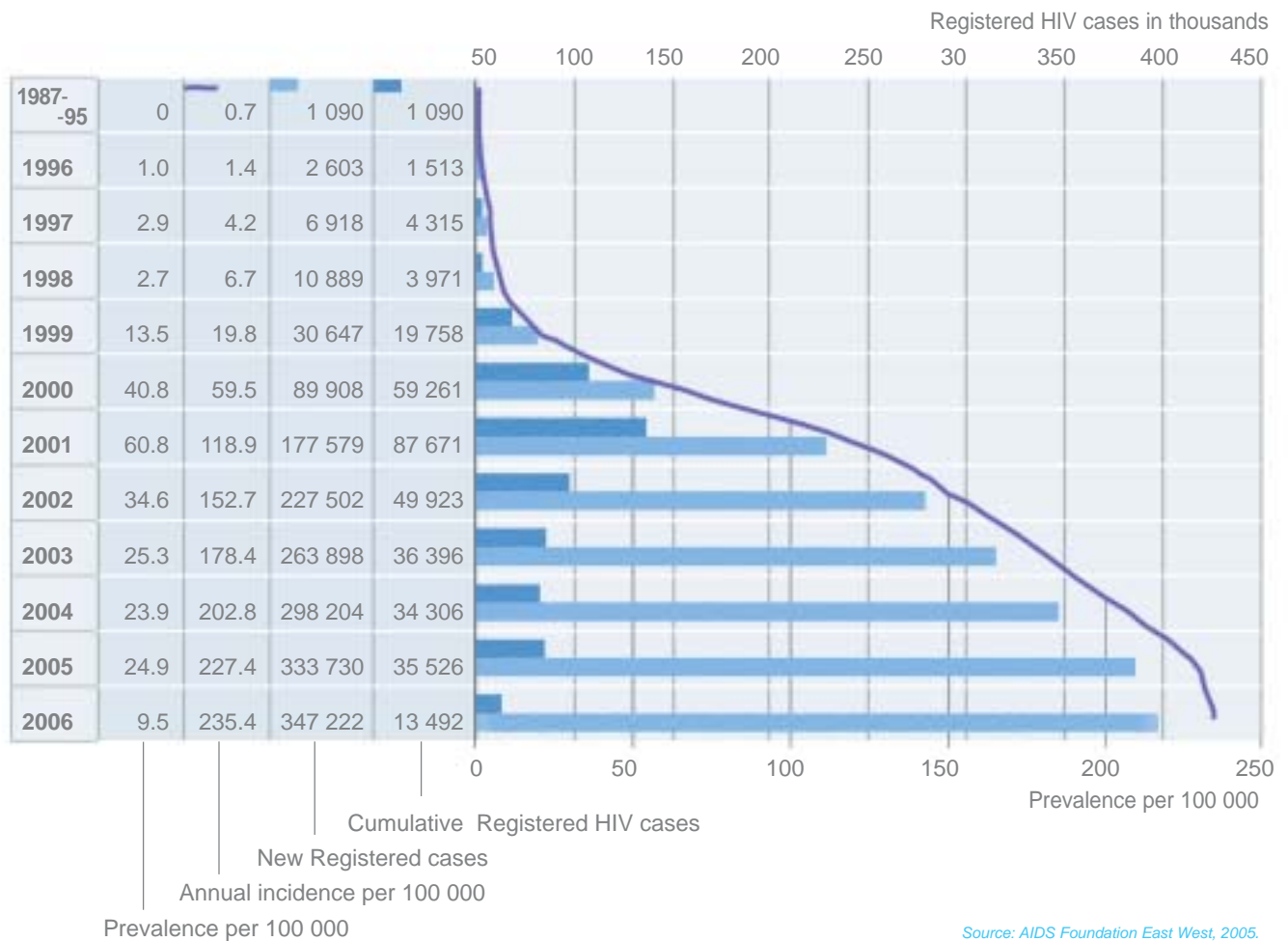
MDG 6

Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Target

Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

Figure 4: HIV Infection Rates and Dates



⁴⁰ Data from Federal Centre for the Prevention and Treatment of HIV-Infection in Pregnant Women and Children, 2006.

⁴¹ Ministry of Health and Social Development data 2005.

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Paragraph 61:
The Committee recommends that the state party: (g) Launch campaigns and programmes to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS among adolescents, particularly those belonging to vulnerable groups as well as the population at large, so as to reduce discrimination against and stigmatisation of children infected with and/or affected by HIV/AIDS.

orphanages where chances of adoption are small. HIV-positive orphans often face discrimination, and are even abandoned by local welfare and educational service workers, who for lack of knowledge fear that the virus can easily spread.

At the end of 2004, 1,543 children under 15 years old were registered as HIV-positive, or 0.49 per cent of the total number of registered cases (315,516).⁴² According to Federal AIDS Centre data, by the end of 2005, the number of HIV-positive children under reached 2,188 or 0,65 per cent of all registered cases (333,332).

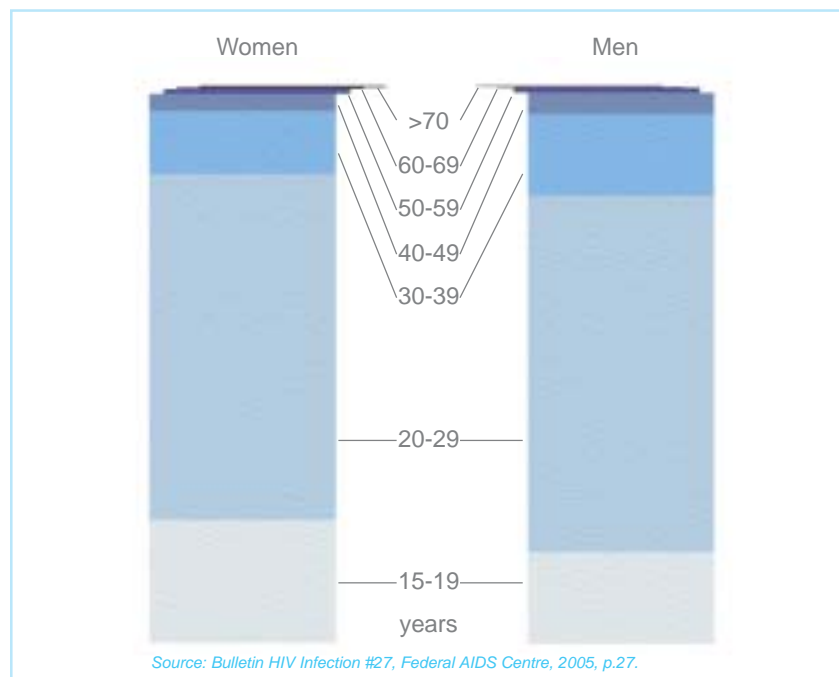
2.2.4.1 HIV among Adolescents

Unlike the rest of Europe, HIV in Russia primarily afflicts those under 30 years old. According to the Federal AIDS Centre, at the end of 2004, 80 per cent of all people HIV-infected were under the age of 30 years old. Women under 30 years old comprised 23 per cent of the total number of cases and men under 30 years old 57 per cent of the cases.⁴³

Adolescents are at high risk of HIV infection because they are becoming sexually active at younger ages. About 48 per cent of sexually active adolescents between the ages of 14 and 20 years old did not use a condom during their last sexual encounter. About 11.6 per cent of young men and 6.5 per cent of young women in this age group had more than one sexual partner over the past year. (Monitoring Sexual Behaviour in the Russian Federation, 2004)

Those at greatest risk are intravenous drug users. According to the Ministry of Health and Social Development, most of those who contracted HIV since 1999 were infected through intravenous drug use, and 70 per cent of those newly-infected were between 15 and 29 years old.

Figure 5: Age of HIV-infected, as of December 2004



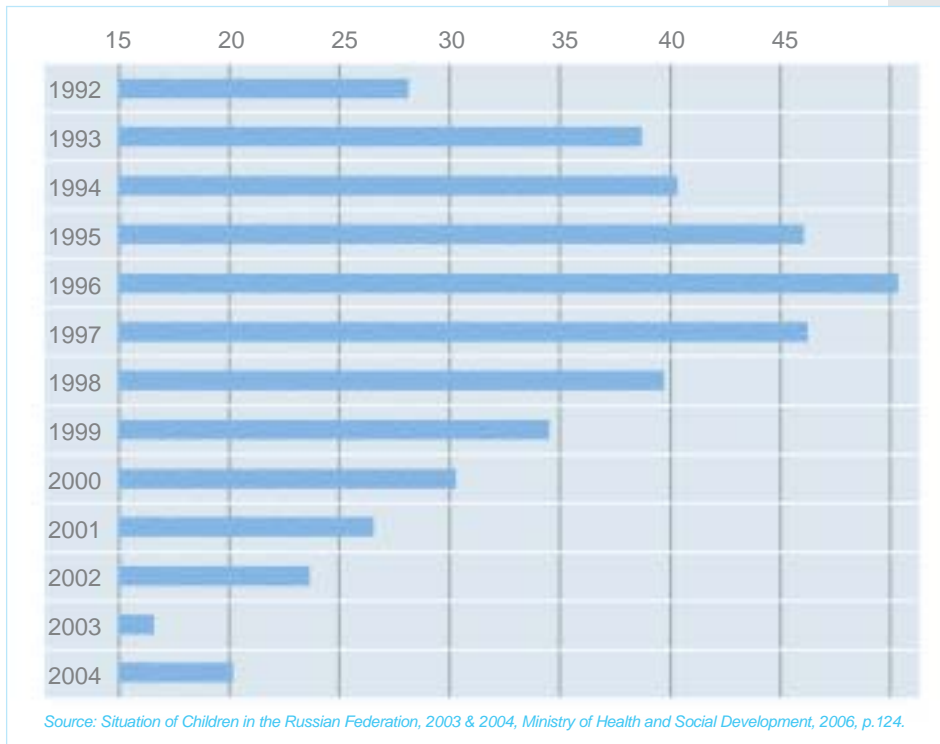
⁴² Bulletin HIV Infection #27, Federal AIDS Centre, p.27.

⁴³ Ibid, p.27.

2.2.4.2 Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

The spread of STIs has also significantly affected children. According to official statistics, a total of more than 52,000 children under the age of 17 years old had sexually transmitted infections by 2002. In 2004 alone 6,291 first time cases of syphilis and 6,940 first time cases of gonorrhea were registered among children under 17 years old. The rate of new infections of STIs increased significantly with a peak in 1996, after which a substantial decrease has been continuously experienced. Sexually transmitted infections negatively impact fertility rates.

Figure 6: Yearly New Infections of STIs among Minors (thousands)



2.2.5 Tuberculosis⁴⁴

From World War II, Russia registered a steady decline in the number of tuberculosis cases. That changed for the worse at the beginning of the 1990s, and in the past decade the rate of tuberculosis, and mortality rates due to the disease, have more than doubled.

While the number of tuberculosis cases has dipped slightly in the past 3 years, Russia continues to rank among the 22 countries in the world with dangerously high tuberculosis rates. Furthermore, Russia has the highest tuberculosis morbidity rate in Europe. One of the most serious concerns is the increasing frequency of multiple drug-resistance forms

⁴⁴ Materials from Human Development Report 2005 Russian Federation: Russia in 2015: Development Goals and Policy Priorities, UNDP Russia, 2005.

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Observations to
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3rd Periodic Report:**

Paragraph 53: The Committee encourages the State party: (d) To continue efforts to reduce morbidity due to tuberculosis.

of the disease, which now comprise up to 9 to 10 per cent of all tuberculosis cases, and up to 20 per cent of all cases in prisons. As a result, tuberculosis is mutating from an easy-to-treat, manageable disease into one that is expensive to treat and which is often fatal.

Tuberculosis is the most virulent infectious disease in Russia. Like HIV/AIDS, it primarily affects working-age males. Even more alarming, tuberculosis is now the major cause of death for those with HIV/AIDS.⁴⁵ Until recently, these two epidemics developed more or less separately. Over the last two years, however, doctors have registered more combined cases of these infections, and by the end of 2004 the number of patients with both pathologies exceeded 7,600. (Data of *Federal Centre for Anti-Tuberculosis Aid to Patients with HIV-infection*.)

2.2.6 Risky Behaviours of Young People

The current generation of young people is living through an unprecedented period with extraordinary changes and uncertainty. They are ill-equipped to deal with the emerging challenges. Risky behaviour reflecting the stress young people are under has led to an increase in the rates of tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse, frequently leading to accidental and violent death, including suicide. For girls risky behaviour frequently results in undesired pregnancies.

The suicide rate among young people potentially reflects the dangers and effects of risky behaviours. Since the early 1990s, the adolescent suicide rate has almost doubled. After peaking in 2002, it dropped slightly to 20.4 per 100,000 in 2004. Young men commit suicide far more often than women (32.8 per 100,000 versus 7.6 per 100,000 in 2004). (Rosstat 2004.)

While the suicide rate among females has been stable, the suicide rate among young men has doubled since 1989. According to the Innocenti Centre Social Monitor report in 2005, the suicide rate among young men and women between the ages of 14 and 24 years in Russia is three times greater than the Western European average.

Between 1988 and 1999, the rate of adolescent drug abuse increased ten-fold. Unsafe drug use remains the main mode of HIV transmission; however, the number of new cases resulting from unprotected sex is rapidly growing, particularly among young women. Though most young people know that HIV/AIDS is transmitted through blood and/or sexual transmission, many still engage in unprotected sex, and try drugs as they perceive their individual risk to be low and lack skills to protect themselves.

Data from the Ministry of Health and Social Development at year's end of 2004 stated that there were 23.7 adolescents (aged 15 to 17 years) per 100,000 individuals of the corresponding age who were registered as drug addicts at preventive and therapeutic institutions.⁴⁶ The Ministry of Health and Social Development's data on these

⁴⁵ Pierpaolo de Colombani, Banatvala N., Zaleskis R., Maher D. «European Strategic Framework for Pregnant Women with TB/HIV (Evropeiskaya bazovaya strategiya bremeniTB/HIV).» *European bureau of WHO, 2003, p. 34.*

adolescents suggest that substantial decreases have occurred in the last three years (at 53.6 per 100,000 in 2002 versus 23.7 in 2004). However, data stated by the Ministry of Interior differs. In a June 1, 2005 statement, the Minister of Interior, Rashid Nurgaliev, quoted statistics from the Ministry of Education and Science, approximately 4 million adolescents use drugs and 1 million are drug dependent. In this same statement, Minister Nurgaliev recognised that the stated figures “significantly differ from the number of drug addicts registered at medical facilities,” which he suggested only represent the “visible one-tenth of the ‘drug iceberg’.”⁴⁷ Minister Nurgaliev also noted that the average age of children starting to use drugs has dropped from 17 years to 11 years of age.⁴⁸

2.3 Immediate & Underlying Causes

2.3.1 State Health Care Policies – Need for Preventative Measures

Even though regional and municipal health care officials have considerable autonomy, federal health care bodies in Moscow still exert substantial influence on the formation of policy at every level throughout the country.

Local authorities are often unwilling to take the initiative on new projects unless they are officially sanctioned, or instructed to do so, by the federal centre. The reasons for this are many — from a fear of challenging the status quo, to a lack of information about the outside world — but the result is that local authorities often fail to take the necessary measures to protect the health of mothers and children.⁴⁹

Until recently, Russia’s health care system was resource-based rather than results-based, which translated into more curative rather than preventive responses. Russia’s health system still today places far less emphasis on preventative health care than it does on curative

⁴⁶ Table: “Drug Addiction among Children and Adolescents”, p.45, *Written Replies by the Government of the Russian Federation concerning the list of issues (CRC/C/Q/RUS3) received by the Committee on the Rights of the Child relating to the consideration of the Third Periodic Report of the Russian Federation (CRC/C/125/Add.5), CRC/C/RESP/92, GE.05-43801 (E) 230905 260905.*

⁴⁷ *Statement of Minister of Interior Rashid Nurgaliev at a Meeting of the RF Ministry of Interior Collegium regarding completed prevention activities towards child neglect and child delinquencies, 1 June 2005, <http://www.mvdinform.ru/news/5777>.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *From experience of implementation of the programmes “Women and Infants (WIN) Health Project” and “Mother and Child” in Russia. TASC Russia Women and Infants (WIN) Health Project. Final Report. John Snow, Inc., The Russian Federation Ministry of Health. 2003.*

CRC Article 24:

(1) State Parties recognise the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilitate for treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health.

(2) State Parties shall take appropriate measures: (f) to develop preventive health care, guidance for parents and family planning education and services.

CRC Committee Concluding Observations to Russian Federation 3rd Periodic Report:

Paragraph 53:
The Committee encourages the State party: (a) To enhance preventative interventions in primary health care.

health care. The development of public health policies and strategies is progressing slowly and remains a challenge. Restructuring Russia's health care system toward increasing out-patient treatment, as well as promoting preventive medicine, is also proceeding slowly. Russia ranks second among the EU and CIS countries in terms of the average length of in-patient treatment. In 2000, this figure was 15.5 days.⁵⁰ In-patient treatment is not only expensive, but if extended too long becomes ineffective.

The lack of skills and resources for preventive care is particularly acute in remote and rural areas. Experience shows that medical consultations are given primarily when a problem has already been diagnosed. Furthermore, there is limited communication outreach focusing on behavioural changes that can increase healthy lifestyles.

The current system's emphasis on treatment is also evident in its limited ability to react promptly to diseases that require attention in the early stages, not to mention active preventive measures; the response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic is the most prominent example of this approach. This approach has likely contributed to a sharp rise in the incidence of infectious diseases. Russia's health care system currently lacks sufficient mechanisms which monitor and assess the quality of services provided and whether patients' needs are effectively met.

Whilst much progress has been made in the area of mental health care in many regions, the diagnosis and classification system often differs significantly from WHO standards and there is sometimes over diagnosis or misdiagnosis.

The diagnosis and treatment of mental and psychological disorders particularly of children in state institutions do not always correspond to accepted international standards.

2.3.2 Infrastructure Limitations for Addressing Micronutrient Deficiencies

Although there is now greater awareness that enriching foods is the most effective means to rectify micronutrient deficiencies, implementation of such measures proceeds slowly. The reasons for this are as follows:

The legal system is inadequate; food enrichment standards have only recently been established for salt iodisation. There are still no regulations to govern independent food testing, and no legal framework to regulate private manufacturers which are fortifying foodstuffs.

There are also institutional barriers. The roles and functions of the main entities - state health authorities, sanitary and epidemiological regulatory agencies, and private companies which produce food additives - have not been clearly defined.

⁵⁰ WHO Regional Office in Europe. *Health for All Database*.

2.3.3 Access to Services

2.3.3.1 Regional and Territorial Differences

Significant regional variations are present in most areas of mother and child health. According to the Independent Institute of Social Policy, each region has its own health care system and financing model that combines elements of financing via the state budget with financing through insurance.

One of the most significant obstacles formulating national policy is the lack of reliable and coherent information about regional differences. Also, there are no effective means to analyse health providers' performance. Overall, it is difficult to assess the regional differences in mother and child health care.

2.3.3.2 Affordability of Services

The last decade has seen an increase in paid medical services, even those provided by state medical institutions. The share of household expenditure on medical needs is growing. A large proportion of such payments are not standardised.

Low-income families in small towns and villages often find themselves in the most difficult position. A large proportion of their budget goes to medical services, and they are more likely to refuse necessary treatment due to its relatively high cost.

Aside from poor families, the growing number of immigrants from the former Soviet republics and other countries are also at risk due to limited access to medical services. According to a 2006 UN report, Russia is now the second most popular destination in the world for immigrants, only surpassed by the United States. Russia's immigrant population, the vast majority of whom came to Russia from other CIS republics following the collapse of the Soviet Union, now stands at about 12.1 million.⁵¹ A significant portion of these people are believed to be in the country illegally,⁵² and thus lack access to proper medical care.

2.3.3.3 Age-Appropriate & Youth-Friendly Services

While the reproductive health of adolescents and the overall population has been recently identified as a priority issue in the Russian Federation, there are still a limited number of age-appropriate and youth-friendly services. Overall, general health and social service professionals lack an understanding about young people's specific needs. Most health services are not youth-friendly, which result in young people failing to seek needed treatment or counselling.

2.3.3.4 Stigma & Discrimination in Access to Services

Many experts also worry that negative attitudes towards people living with HIV/AIDS may lead to discrimination and hinder access to proper

⁵¹ *Inter Press Service News Agency, "World Population Day: US to Hit Demographic Milestone at 300 Million", Thalif Deen, <http://www.ipsnews.net/print.asp?idnews=33936>.*

⁵² *While estimating the scope of illegal migration is difficult in Russia, the consensus estimates are of 3 to 3.5 million illegal migrants, with plausible estimates of up to 6 million. Migration Information Source: Fresh Thought, Authoritative Data, Global Reach, "Migration Dilemmas Haunt Post-Soviet Russia," Timothy Heleniak, October 2002, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/print.cfm?ID=62>.*

CRC Article 24:

(1) State Parties recognise the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services. ...

(3) States Parties shall take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children.

CRC Committee Concluding Observations to Russian Federation 3rd Periodic Report:

Paragraph 53:
The Committee encourages State party: (b) To increase public expenditure on health.

treatment and care.⁵³ This situation is especially relevant for those infected through intravenous drug use, who presently still compromise the majority of people living with HIV/AIDS in Russia. Lack of understanding also results in:

poor quality of counselling, including a fear of pre- and post-testing disclosure of one's HIV-status, which often discourages women to attend pre-natal services;

insufficient technical capacity at maternity clinics, prenatal services and paediatric care relating to Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission, HIV treatment;

failure to coordinate efforts between health care and social support institutions, namely AIDS centres, pre-natal services and social support centres.

People living with HIV/AIDS often have great difficulty exercising their right to free qualified medical care as guaranteed by federal law. The most frequent reason for denial of care is insufficient financing from federal or regional budgets.⁵⁴ Failure to get treatment is also due to irregular and/or insufficient supply of rapid test kits and ARV drugs, especially at smaller birthing facilities in remote regions.

Another problem is discrimination by some medical personnel who think that some patients do not deserve, or are unsuitable for, ARV treatment due to their drug dependency or other forms of socially unacceptable behaviour.

Adolescents' access to quality health care is also limited due to existing attitudes at many health facilities. Afraid of criticism or stigma, adolescents often avoid seeking treatment or counselling. Since there are few confidential consultation services they have few effective health options. For those from vulnerable groups, such as street children, access to medical care is even more limited. Stigma and a lack of proper city registration means that state medical officials often do not treat such children.

2.3.4 Low Level of Awareness

2.3.4.1 Knowledge among General Community about Disease Prevention

Obtaining information and knowledge on disease prevention should be a priority for high risk groups: poor families, inhabitants of rural areas, young single mothers, families with substance dependency, and the homeless. A survey of rural families showed that the majority of families have only a vague idea of the importance of breastfeeding and of micronutrients in a child's diet. For instance, one mother expressed that a diet for her 18-month child of primarily macaroni and rice, with fruit, vegetables, meat or fish only once a week was adequate. Furthermore, women of reproductive age are not properly informed about the risks and consequences resulting from

CRC Article 24(2):

(e): To ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, the advantages of breastfeeding, hygiene and environmental sanitation and the prevention of accidents.

⁵³ *Human Development Report 2005 Russian Federation, Russia in 2015: Development Goals and Policy Priorities, UNDP, 2005, p.96.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid, p.99.*

deficiencies of micronutrients such as iodine, iron, folic acid, zinc, and selenium.

Low level of education is an obstacle to disease prevention among mothers-to-be, as well as all women and children, and raises the overall cost of medical care nationwide.

2.3.4.2 Knowledge among Adolescents regarding Reproductive Health Issues

The general level of awareness and knowledge of reproductive and sexuality issues, especially among children and adolescents, remains low throughout Russia. Studies confirm that not many adolescents have a clear idea of the negative impact of abortions and venereal diseases on reproductive health.

Table 3: Adolescents' Opinions on Factors influencing Reproductive Health

Absence of bad habits	59%
General state of health	52%
Use of protection against STIs	8%
Abortions	6%
Use of contraceptives	3%
Availability of information on reproductive issues	2%

Source: "On Improving the Activities of Youth Centres in Protecting the Reproductive Health of Adolescent Children". Informational letter. Ministry of Health, 2002, p.10.

A critical problem is that Russian adolescents do not receive the necessary information about how to develop healthy lifestyles and how to protect themselves from HIV and STIs. Limited age-appropriate knowledge about basic life skills exist in or out of school. Sex education is virtually absent in schools, and this is further compounded by the fact that parents also fail to provide such information due to communication problems and/or a lack of trust between parents and children regarding these issues.

Together with information about HIV/STI and drug abuse, young people need additional basic life skills such as negotiating, problem-solving, and interpersonal communications in order to make safer choices and to protect themselves from major threats including HIV and substance abuse.

2.3.4.3 Knowledge among General Community and Health Professionals regarding HIV/AIDS and other Infectious Diseases

Stigma and discriminating behaviours relating to HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases are widespread in society, and even among

CRC Committee Concluding Observations to Russian Federation 3rd Periodic Report:

Paragraph 56:

The Committee recommends that the State party pay close attention to adolescent health, ...strengthen its efforts to promote adolescent health, including by providing sexual and reproductive health education in schools and introducing school health services, including youthsensitive and confidential counselling and care.

medical professionals. Insufficient knowledge about HIV/AIDS, fear of the disease, and misinformation within the community often result in HIV-affected individuals finding themselves isolated and forced into the marginal strata of society. For instance, this fear and misinformation has translated into HIV-affected children not having adequate access to services such as pre-school education.

Children who are abandoned at birth by HIV-positive mothers often face long periods (even years) in isolated wards of infectious disease hospitals until their HIV-status is confirmed or not. Lacking access to qualified teachers, psychologists and other professionals, even HIV-negative children (who are in fact the majority) often develop mental and emotional disabilities.

Low levels of training among medical personnel, especially in first aid, is particularly noticeable in relatively new spheres such as HIV prevention, treatment and care and support. For example, despite the creation of medical centres for HIV-positive pregnant women and children, as well as the increased availability of HIV literature, medical personnel are often unable to provide qualified consultations about risk factors and examination results.

2.4 Government Response

The Russian Government's modernisation of health care as a national project priority has the potential to significantly improve children's and young people's health. The programme focuses on making primary health care more accessible and of a higher quality. The federal programme, "Children of Russia," also has a key component on health, "Healthy Generation," for its 2007-2010 plan. Objectives under this project include guaranteeing safe maternity and healthy child births; protection of children's and adolescents' health, including their reproductive health; and prevention and reduction work of child and adolescent illnesses, disabilities and deaths.

2.4.1 Reproductive Health

Russia's rapid population decline has caused the Government's family planning policies to become hotly debated. In 1994, Russia initiated the Family Planning Programme, which made some improvement in the reproductive health of adolescents and reduced their incidence of abortion. In 1997, however, Russia's parliament, the State Duma, cut the programme's funding, and terminated it in 1998. Some parts of the programme reappeared in a new federal programme, Safe Maternity, but its family planning content and scope do not address the full severity of the problem, especially among adolescents.

Since 1999, more youth-friendly services have been established in 20 regions. Youth-friendly services provide age-appropriate, confidential information and services on reproductive health and healthy lifestyles

to young people. National guidelines on standards for youth-friendly services were drafted and submitted to the Government for approval and dissemination to 89 regions of the Russian Federation. This response is critical in addressing Russia's demographic crisis both from the fertility perspective and the life-expectancy component. The focus of this work is for adolescents aged 12 to 18 years old.

2.4.2 Early Childhood Development

As part of its effort to improve child health, breastfeeding has been declared by the Ministry of Health and Social Development as an integral part of its mother and child health national policy. Together in conjunction with UNICEF, the Government has established regional centres on breastfeeding support and promotion in at least 11 regions; developed and disseminated information, education and communication materials on the subject, including the baby-friendly hospital initiative endorsed by the Ministry of Health and Social Development in 2000; and raised awareness and advocacy on breastfeeding support and promotion through organising conferences and meetings at national and regional levels. As of January 2006, 20 per cent of all deliveries occur in Russian baby-friendly hospitals. As of January 2006, 225 hospitals in 41 regions of the Russian Federation were certified as "baby-friendly."⁵⁵

Under the national health project, free immunisation will be increased. Specifically, the project over two years plans to provide immunisation to 25 million people for hepatitis B, 15 million people against German measles, 300,000 to vulnerable children against polio, and 44 million people against flu.

In recent years, the Ministry of Health and Social Development and other agencies have taken major steps to prevent iodine deficiency. With the support of UNICEF and WHO, government programmes have promoted salt iodisation standards, and have published information on preventing iodine deficiency. Despite some successes informing the public, and increasing iodised salt production, the draft law on universal salt iodisation remains to be adopted. Consequently, 15 to 25 per cent of children and adolescents suffer from goitre in central Russia, with some regions being as high as 40 per cent, particularly affecting remote rural areas.⁵⁶

The Ministry of Health and Social Development has entered into a coalition with UNICEF, the National Centre for Iodine Deficiency Disorder Control, salt producers, regional administrations, civic organisations and the mass media to raise awareness and to ensure the legislative framework for Universal Salt Iodisation in Russia, through the adoption of the existing draft law.

⁵⁵ *Abolyan, L.V. Medical-Organisational model for Maintaining and Supporting Breastfeeding in Medical Prevention Institutions of Obstetric and Neonatal Care, Doctoral Dissertation, Moscow, 2006, p.33.*

⁵⁶ *Monitoring Results of the Iodised Deficiency Disease (IDD) in the Russian Federation (2000-2005), Dedov, I.I., Melnichenko, G.A., Troshina, E.A., Platonova, N.M., Abdulkhabirova, F.M., Mazurina, N.V., Russian Federation Ministry of Health and Social Development (MHSD), Russian Academy of Medical Science (RAMS), Government Institution for Scientific Endocrinological Centre of RAMS, Centre for Status of Iodine Deficiency under MHSD, Moscow, 2005, p.30.*

2.4.3 HIV/AIDS

On 27 September 2005, President Putin stated that “in 2006, the funding [for HIV/AIDS] will increase 20-30 fold. Up to 3 billion roubles [USD 105.2 million] will be allocated so that all those who need treatment with expensive drugs will get it.”

In comparison, the combined federal and regional budget for HIV/AIDS in 2004 was roughly USD 19 million. President Putin also said that in 2006 alone 3.1 billion roubles (equivalent of USD 105.2 million) has been allocated as part of the health care national project for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of HIV and hepatitis B. This substantial increase of public funding for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment reflects growing concern by the country’s top leadership over the epidemic’s impact on Russia’s population and economic development.

In 2005, President Putin said HIV/AIDS was a serious threat to national security, and he ordered the Government to prepare a federal HIV/AIDS programme for the period 2007-2011. The focus of the new programme will be on treatment and prevention.

Since 2000, the Government has set up a network of over 100 regional AIDS control, prevention and treatment centres nationwide, including 2 major resource centres: the Federal AIDS Centre, and the Federal Paediatric & PMTCT AIDS Centre.

On 21 April 2006, the State Council Presidium discussed urgent measures to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS in Russia. President Putin said that, “... politicians, teachers, cultural figures and the mass media should all play an active part in [dealing with HIV]. [A] common goal is to promote a healthy way of life and raise awareness of the importance of moral values.”

At this meeting, President Putin created a special Presidential Commission to address HIV. Furthermore, he noted that “we also need to work on information campaigns, which not only need to be far-reaching and multi-layered, but which most importantly must be long-term. ...It is especially important to carry out preventive work among groups most vulnerable to AIDS.”

2.4.4 Youth Policy

While no national, coordinated youth policy exists, government agencies have recently taken important steps to place youth issues higher on the political agenda. In 2006, the Ministry of Education and Science drafted a “Strategy of Government Youth Policy in the Russian Federation,” which could provide a framework for coordinating and developing youth-specific programmes and policies. The Ministry of Education and Science has also taken leadership in strengthening life skills education measures in Russia to advocate that young people need knowledge and skills to enable them to have healthy lifestyles.

In addition, national guidelines for youth-friendly services, introducing a minimum set of standards regarding health services for young

Making a Difference

Doctors believed that tiny Polina would never be able to sit up. Diagnosed with HIV, alcohol syndrome and organic lesions that were resistant to treatment, Polina was abandoned by her mother at birth.

Shortly afterward, Tamara Manannikova read about Polina's plight in a local Kaliningrad newspaper. At the time, she didn't know how she could help. Three weeks later, it became clear how she could make a difference.

"Doctors told me that Polina's case was hopeless, that she was not going to be in this world for very long," recalls Tamara, 57, regarding why she made the decision to become Polina's foster parent. "I imagined her all alone in that hospital ward, seeing only white walls around her, her life without any joy. I decided to do my best to make the little girl feel better."

During their first year together Polina cried incessantly, ate poorly, had trouble falling asleep, and often had fevers. Polina often fell seriously sick and was hospitalised three times. Despite all this, Tamara never left Polina's side. Some three years later, Polina can walk, sit and run like any other girl.

"Polina is okay now thanks to Tamara's care and support," said Tatiana Nikitina, head doctor at the Kaliningrad AIDS Centre.

"The child lives in a family surrounded by love, care and affection. The girl would've died long ago without Tamara."



UNICEF's HIV/AIDS Programme supports activities such as training of medical and social service specialists, support to HIV-affected families and foster parents, and communication and advocacy campaigns to fight stigma and discrimination, enabling more children like Polina to live in a family.

people into all health facilities, are presently awaiting endorsement by the Ministry of Health and Social Development.

A UN Working Group on Youth Policy has been developed with the aim of supporting these government initiatives.

2.5 Working Together for Children in the Future

Implement health programmes with greater focus on preventative rather than curative responses, providing

targeted initiatives for vulnerable groups –poor families, single mothers, young people, including the most-at risk adolescents – which ensure these groups’ equal access to quality primary health care.

Promote child nutrition, child rearing, and child development through enhancement of government programmes such as baby-friendly hospital initiatives and the passing of a federal law on universal salt iodisation.

Channel more public expenditures on health responses, which include monitoring and evaluating initiatives regarding the quality of services for mothers, children, and young people.

Address stigma and discrimination within the community and among professionals towards HIV-infected and affected people. Promote awareness campaigns, and knowledge and skill enhancing training programmes.

Strengthen existing government measures to prevent mother-to-child transmission and to enhance community-based care and support programmes for HIV-infected and affected children and families.

Enhance young people’s access to age-appropriate and youth-friendly information and services that address HIV/AIDS and reproductive health issues.



3.1 Introduction

Access to quality education is a human right. Education affects all types of human development. More than just a source of knowledge, education enables children to realise their full potential as adults.

The basic right to education is at the core of UNICEF's commitment to global education. The international commitment to universal education was first set down in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and later reiterated in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.

CRC Article 28(1):

State Parties recognise the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity,...

CRC Article 29(1):

State Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

- (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- (c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilisations different from his or her own;
- (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality and friendship;
- (e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

MDG 2

Achieve universal primary education

Target

Ensure that by 2015 all children complete a full course of primary schooling.

MDG 3

Promote gender equality and empower women

Target

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.

The importance of education as a key tool for society's development is enshrined in many other international documents, namely in the widely accepted UN Millennium Declaration Goals (MDGs), and numerous UNESCO documents, including the Salamanca Statement.

Analysis of the Russian education system relative to the MDGs provides reason for cautious optimism. According to UNESCO, Russia is one of the most educated nations in the world. While a small decline in enrolment was experienced during the first half of the 1990s, as of 2004 the primary school enrolment was approximately 95 per cent, comparable to similar indices in the most developed countries.⁵⁷ The gender gap in the primary school enrolment between boys and girls is less than 1 per cent and is within the range of statistical error. Girls' engagement in secondary education is even higher than that of boys.⁵⁸

The above mentioned indicators suggest that the Russian Federation has generally met MDGs 2 and 3. However, it is necessary to review the MDGs in a much broader context. The top priorities for Russia, in the spirit of the MDGs, are to include those 4 per cent of children who currently miss out on primary education, as well as to alleviate the disparity in access to education between urban and rural areas.

Although girls' active participation in education at the primary and secondary level is encouraging, Russia's real challenge in regards to MDG 3 is to foster environments and to empower girls with attitudes and skills, which enables them to fully participate in all aspects of society. Educational strategies must not only widely include girls into the process, but also better prepare them to participate as adults in social, political and economic life.

⁵⁷ Human Development Report 2005 Russian Federation, *Russia in 2015: Development Goals and Policy Priorities*, UNDP, 2005, p.46.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 47.

3.2 Current Situation

3.2.1 Overview of the Russian Educational System

Dramatic education policies were implemented by the Soviet Union in the 1930s resulting in an increased percentage of the population having access to a high quality education system. Changes focused on establishing a compulsory four years of education in rural areas and seven years in cities, with a full primary and secondary schooling of ten years.

In the 1950s, the central idea was formulated as “strengthening ties between school and life” at all levels of the educational system. The Khrushchev reforms emphasised the idea of collective education from early childhood. Pre-school education for the age group up to seven years was rapidly developed, and a new type of education, boarding schools (*shkoly-internaty*) that embraced grades one to eight or one to eleven, had been created by 1956.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the number of pre-school education facilities continued to grow, as well as the number of higher education institutions, meeting regional demands. However, the quantitative gains achieved during these years were not matched by corresponding improvements in the education system’s quality. Government authorities, as well as teachers and parents, expressed growing dissatisfaction with student achievement and with student attitudes and behaviour.

By February 1988, Russia’s universal education programme was limited to nine years of “basic education,” with subsequent secondary education divided into various academic and vocational tracks.

Political and socio-economic reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s considerably affected the Russian education system. During this period, colleges and universities enjoyed greater academic autonomy, with the development of a variety of educational programmes as well as a non-governmental education sector. While system-wide challenges of the 1990s slowed down positive developments, Russia’s education system has maintained many of its positive aspects.

Russia’s tradition of quality education was largely supported throughout the 20th century and was generally preserved even during its difficult reform years of the 1990s. Over the past 100 years, Russia has by and large made significant progress in terms of improving of all forms of education and made a significant contribution to scientific and cultural world heritage.

General Description of the Education System in the Russian Federation

Russia inherited from the former Soviet Union many education advantages. During its reform period, Russia's scientific and pedagogical community undertook extensive efforts not only to maintain the positive aspects of the former education system, but to renew the system in accordance with development goals and existing realities and future forecasts.

One of the key documents providing the framework to Russia's education system is the Federal Law "On Education." Article 8 of this federal law provides the guiding concept for Russia's education system, namely, that the education system is a combination of the following interacting factors:

- Successful education curriculum and state educational standards for various education levels and types;

- A network of implementing educational institutions of all organisational and legal forms, types and kinds; and

- A system of education administration, and institutions and organisations under their control (jurisdiction).

In the Russian Federation, two types of educational programmes exist: general educational (primary and secondary); and professional (undergraduate and graduate/post-doctoral).

- General education programmes include pre-school education, primary general education (7 to 10 years old), basic general education (10 to 15 years old, through grade 9), and secondary ("complete") general education (15 to 17 years old, grades 10 and 11).

- Professional education programmes include programmes of higher secondary and postgraduate professional education.

State education standards define the compulsory content of each basic general educational or educational-professional programme. The normative periods of mastering the basic education programmes in state and municipal educational institutions are determined by the Federal Law "On Education," model regulations on educational institutions (for types and kinds) or by appropriate state educational standards.

Institutions in Russia's education system to-date include:

- 60,300 pre-school educational institutions (4,7 million children);

- 66,700 general educational institutions (21,2 million students);

- 4,100 institutions of initial vocational education (1,7 million students);

- 2,600 institutions of secondary professional education (over 2 millions students);

- 880 higher educational institutions (3,04 million students).

3.2.2 Pre-School Education

Providing all children in Russia with an equal educational start is critical, especially given the widening gap of social disparities accruing across Russia. Pre-school education plays an important role in providing children throughout Russia equal learning opportunities.

The pre-school education system was affected early in the on-going economic reforms. Children's enrolment in pre-education institutions has fallen dramatically, mainly due to Russia's significant population decrease, but also because of authorities' lack of attention to this sphere. Over a period of 12 years, 39,000 pre-schools were closed, which amounted to 44.3 per cent of the 1990 total. Today, the reform of the pre-school educational system remains a challenge for Russia.

At the beginning of 2004, 47,200 pre-schools functioned, educating 4.4 million children. In practically all regions of Russia, there has been a marked reduction of pre-schools as well as a decreasing child population.

In 1995, different types of pre-school education institutions were introduced in Russia, with substantial variation of programmes provided at pre-school institutions, such as providing special themes (e.g. English). Since 2001, a significant number of organisations involved in pre-school education have become private, separating from existing government pre-school structures. In this process, there has been a substantial growth in the number of pre-school educational institutions which require payments from families.

Table 4: Pre-School Education Institutions (end of year)

	1993	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Number of pre-school education institutions, (thousands)	78.3	68.6	51.3	50.0	48.9	47.8	47.2
Number of children at pre-school education institutions, (thousands)	6 763	5 584	4 263	4 246	4 267	4 321	4 423
Number of children per 100 places at pre-school education institutions	90	83	81	83	86	88	...
Coverage of children of 1-6 years by pre-school education institutions, percent of total	57.4	55.5	56.0	57.2	58.1	57.6	...

Source: Rosstat 2005.

CRC Article 28(1):

State Parties recognise the right of the child to education, ... they shall, in particular:

- (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
- (e): Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

CRC Committee Concluding Observations to Russian Federation 3rd Periodic Report:

Paragraph 65:

- (a) The Committee recommends that the State Party: Take the necessary measures to ensure that all children have access to primary and secondary education;
- (b) Take all appropriate measures to ensure that primary education is free, taking into account all direct and indirect costs, such as textbooks, renovations and security arrangements.

3.2.3 Primary and Secondary Education

3.2.3.1 Access to Education

The number of state-run primary schools in Russia is also declining gradually, largely as a result of demographic problems. At the same time, the number of available private primary and secondary schools is growing. However, private primary and secondary schools are still a relatively new phenomenon in Russia, with limited numbers.

The decline in primary school enrolment in the 1990s corresponded with the economic collapse that occurred after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Despite this collapse, the 2004 net primary attendance rate in the Russian Federation was estimated to be approximately 95 per cent, with no significant statistical difference between sexes.⁵⁹

While no adequately desegregated data exists that could provide reliable insight into regional or sub-regional disparities, UNDP's 2005 Human Development Report in the Russian Federation estimated that approximately 709,000 children aged 7 to 15 years, or 4 per cent of this population group, were excluded from education in 2003.⁶⁰ Children who comprise this 4 per cent include homeless children, children from disadvantaged families, orphans and children left without parental care. This report also states that comparative analysis of data provided by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Science suggested that about 50 per cent of disabled children aged 7 to 15 years are not enrolled in education.⁶¹

One of the major problems with the education system's regional policy has been the maintenance and development of the system for general educational institutions in rural areas. Such a system is critical to ensure that rural students receive quality education.

The general primary and secondary education system has been expanded and diversified with the institution of gymnasiums, lyceums, and schools with specialised subjects. Until 1996, Russia's educational system experienced an annual increase of day-time schools. However, since this period, a small decrease has been occurring, with the bulk of the decrease involving the closing of primary and secondary schools within rural areas.

Significant modifications have occurred regarding education for evening secondary school students. Before 1993, only working youth (16 years and older) participated in evening secondary school, now the age of evening students is similar to the ages of students in day-time schools.

With the constitutional institution of compulsory basic general education (nine years of education), the reforms of the education system created a variety of general secondary education options. Legislation under these structures allowed for 14 year olds to work, establishing approval of a new standard provision regarding evening general educational institution opportunities for youth 14 years and older.

⁵⁹ *Human Development Report 2005 Russian Federation: Russia in 2015: Development Goals and Policy Priorities*, UNDP, 2005, p.46.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 47.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p.47.

Table 5: Number of General Education Institutions
(at the beginning of academic year)

	1993/94	1995/96	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Number of general education institutions – total	70 355	70 782	68 804	68 594	67 431	66 207	64 908
Day-time	68 478	68 970	67 063	66 833	65 662	64 466	63 182
Type of day-time institutions:							
1) public and municipal	68 110	68 445	66 428	66 171	64 979	63 759	62 474
2) non-public	368	525	635	662	683	707	708
3) public and municipal evening (shift-type)	1 877	1 812	1 741	1 761	1 769	1 741	1 726

Source: RosStat 2005.

3.2.3.2 Quality of Education

The pass rates between grades are important indicators of the quality of primary education. According to the Ministry of Education's 2004 statistics, the pass rates between grades have been rising throughout the decade.

One would expect that high pass rates at the primary level signify that more students are mastering essential materials. However, some experts suggest that the rises are due more to diminished attention to the monitoring of children's achievements due to a deterioration in teachers' moral and working conditions.

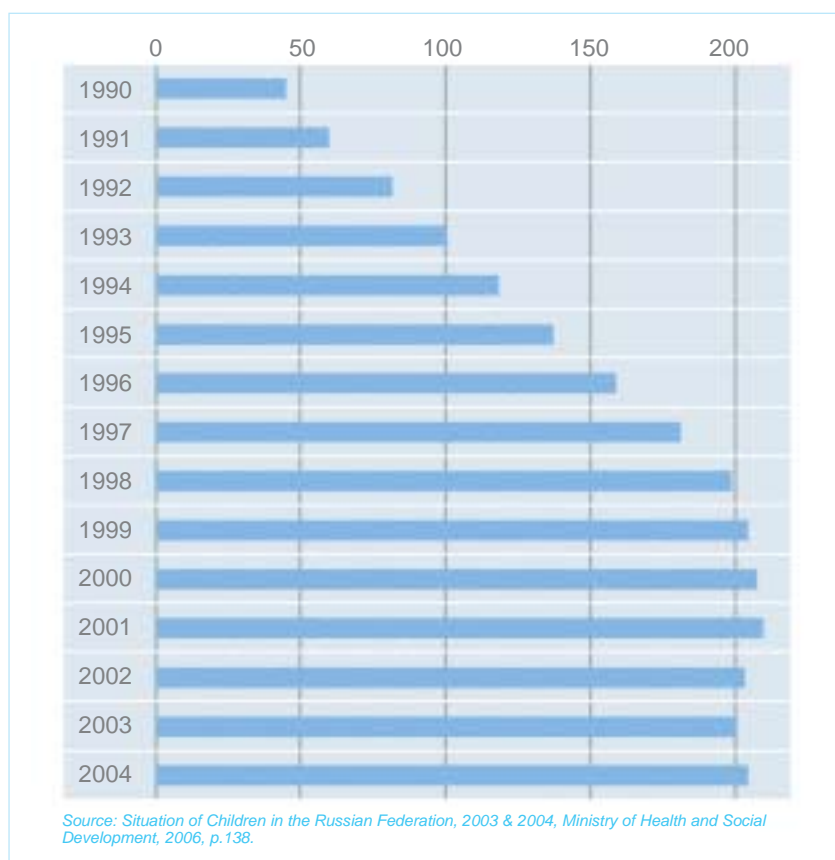
3.2.4 Children with Special Needs

3.2.4.1 Classification of Children with Special Needs

Disabled children are currently classified into two groups in Russia. The first group can be called 'medical', and this term identifies certain physical or mental disabilities as grounds for receiving a state disability allowance. In Russia, only recipients of such an allowance are officially considered to be disabled children. At the end of 2004, there were 593,300 such officially registered children, down from 675,400 at the beginning of 2000.⁶²

⁶² *Situation of Children in the Russian Federation, 2003 & 2004, Ministry of Health and Social Development, 2006, p.138.*

Figure 7: Number of Children Registered with State Social Services as 'Disabled' and Receiving Disability Allowances (per 10,000 children)



Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994):⁶³

We call upon all governments and urge them to:

- Give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve their education systems to enable them to include all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties,
- Adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise, ...

The second group of disabled children can be called 'educational.' This term is used to determine whether a child should study in a general education institution, or a special education institution or class, or be sent to a boarding school for children with serious disabilities.

While there is a lack of detailed data for the entire group, there is a tendency in Russia to view a disabled person as an individual with limited abilities, and not one with special needs.

3.2.4.2 Existing Education Options for Children with Special Needs

Although educational statistics give data on numbers of children with special needs enrolled in education, there is no data on the overall number of such children in the country. Health statistics provide data on the total number of disabled children, but cannot answer the question of how many of them need special training programmes or special education institutions, and how many of them are capable of integration in the education system.⁶⁴

⁶³ Throughout the world, the term "inclusive education" is used, while some authors specify "integrated education" as a broader concept. In Russia, the terms "integrated education" or "inclusive education" are widely used (including in official documents).

⁶⁴ According to estimates of the RF Ministry of Education, "as many as 1.6 million children (or 4.5 per cent of the total children population) currently need special (corrective) education, but only 45 per cent of them have been integrated in the educational environment". Source: web-site of the RF Ministry of Education and Science.

(A) Children in Mainstream Education with Special Needs:

Children with learning disabilities participate in mainstream education programmes, where a large portion of their specific learning needs are not adequately addressed. A mother's comments about her frustrations regarding the school's inability to address her son's special needs and the resulting negative consequences underscore the need for enhanced responses: "Before going to school, my son attended a speech therapy kindergarten. He is now in the third grade. Even though he suffers from dysgraphia, the teacher has been giving him low marks since the first grade and now it looks like he will have to repeat the year."⁶⁵ In an ordinary Russian school, such children often fall behind in their studies, and their potential is unrealised.

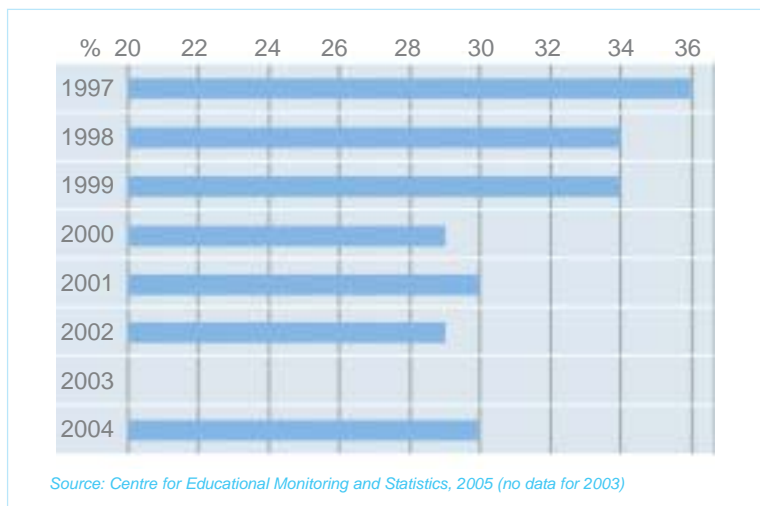
(B) Home School Education or No Education Options:

A second group is comprised of children who are educated at home or do not study at all for medical reasons. These children find themselves totally excluded from the education process, and lack the benefits of socialisation among peers, which occurs in school atmospheres. In 2002, there were more than 68,000 disabled children who participated in home-learning programmes. The issue of these programmes' quality still needs to be studied, and parents may choose this option due to barriers their children could face in ordinary schools. A 2002 study by the Centre for Education Monitoring and Statistics also showed that 21,329 disabled children, or 12 per cent of all Russian disabled children between the ages of 7 and 15 years old, were deemed "incapable" of being educated.⁶⁶

(C) Special Education Institutions:

The third group consists of children in special educational institutions. According to Rosstat, in 2004 there were about 175,000 children in such institutions. A large portion of these children are living in institutions (boarding schools) on a year-round basis. In Russia, institutionalising children with special needs is still common.

Figure 8: Number of Children in Boarding Schools for the Disabled, Per cent of the total number of children identified as 'disabled' by state social services



⁶⁵ S-COOL.RU – "OPEN EDUCATION" fund project.

⁶⁶ Millennium Development Goals in the Context of Russian Education: analysis, adaptation and calculation of performance indicators. L. N. Zharova. Report. Centre for Education Monitoring and Statistics. Moscow, 2003.

CRC Article23:

(1) State Parties recognise that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community...

(3) Recognising the special needs of a disabled child, assistance ... shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child have effective access to and receives education... in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development. ...

CRC Committee Concluding Observations to Russian Federation 3rd Periodic Report:

Paragraph 50:

The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary measures to:

- a) To address the issue of discrimination against children with disabilities;
- b) To ensure that children with disabilities have equal access to services, taking into consideration the Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (General Assembly resolution 48/96);
- c) To review the placement of children with disabilities in boarding schools with a view to limiting such placements only to those cases where they are in the best interests of the child;
- d) To provide equal educational opportunities for children with disabilities, including by abolishing the practice of "corrective" and "auxiliary schools", by providing the necessary support and by ensuring that teachers are trained to educate children with disabilities in regular schools.

3.3 Immediate & Underlying Causes

3.3.1 Limited Access to Mainstream Education

For children with disabilities in Russia, several key obstacles exist to make mainstream education fully available.

3.3.1.1 Physical Barriers

For physically disabled people, the inaccessibility of buildings and streets, and lack of adequate means of transportation limit their access to services. These conditions apply to schools which frequently do not have the needed ramps, elevators, or other physical resources to make them fully accessible. A survey in the southern Russian city of Samara showed that the families of disabled children believed the greatest difficulties were physical inaccessibility at school and lack of the necessary infrastructure.

3.3.1.2 Information/ Knowledge

Lack of knowledge and skills of teachers and schools administrators for creating accessible classrooms is another key barrier. A large proportion of teachers and administrators in schools and universities have little or no understandings of disability issues and are therefore unwilling to accept a disabled child in their classroom. Furthermore, they have not been provided the teaching skills to provide a broader teaching approach which would make the regular classroom more available for children with different learning needs.

Communities and parents of non-disabled children also lack information and knowledge about disability issues. Often these parents have the misconception that the participation of disabled children in the classroom will lower the education quality. The lack of understanding by parents of non-disabled children about the potential advantages of disabled children in the classroom was reflected in the Samara survey: while 83 per cent of the families of disabled children, and 75 per cent of those of non-disabled children, were positive about mainstreaming, about 87 per cent of non-disabled children's families believe general education schools are not yet ready for this step.⁶⁷

Finally, parents of disabled children also lack information about how to defend their children's rights to equal education. These parents are often unwilling to challenge authorities and risk the limited educational support that is provided.

⁶⁷ Project "I love you, school!," implemented with the financial support of the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation). SOOIK. Desnitsa, 2003, <http://www.civnet.samara.ru>.

3.3.1.3 Labelling of Children as “Uneducable”

Another key challenge is the labelling of children, especially those with developmental disabilities, as “uneducable.” Such a labelling is ethically questionable and effectively prevents such children from receiving any educational support and access.

3.3.2 Increased Costs of Education

Russian Legislation on Education

The Russian Constitution provides that each child has the right to an education, and stipulates that education should be equally accessible to all.

Article 43 of the Russian Constitution

1. Everyone shall have the right to education.
2. Guarantees shall be provided for general access to free pre-school, secondary and higher vocational education in state or municipal educational institutions and at work places.
3. Everyone shall have the right to receive, on a competitive basis, a free higher education in a state or municipal educational institution and at work places.
4. The basic general education shall be free-of-charge. Parents or those acting as such shall enable their children to receive a basic general education.
5. The Russian Federation shall establish federal state education standards and support various forms of education and self-education.

The goals of education as stated in this legislation are broadly compatible with Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Russian legislation also stipulates under Federal Law “On Education,” which is the main legislative framework for education in the Russian Federation, that primary and secondary education are compulsory and free.

Considerable differences exist between regions as to participation in secondary education and resources allocated to it, with the latter factor being decisive for the quality of education.

Regional differences in enrolment rates are observed at compulsory education levels (primary and lower secondary), and are even more apparent in upper secondary education.

Inter-regional differences in participation rates are aggravated by differences in resource allocation, leading to uneven quality of education. In 2003, a comparative analysis of adjusted public expenditures on education in different regions, excluding Moscow,

showed differences of nearly 3 times – from 3800 roubles per student in the Magadan Region to 10,400 roubles in the Tyumen Region.⁶⁸

As the Government has cut investment in education, private households have had to take up the burden. Today, fees for education consist of both official and unofficial payments. The problem is critical for pre-school education; according to a national survey in 2003 by the Higher School of Economics, about 80 per cent of families whose children attended kindergarten were paying to some extent. Decreases in pre-school enrolment were also partially explained by the increase in required payments by families.

Furthermore, a 2002 study by the Higher School of Economics and the Public Opinion Foundation found that almost half of families surveyed were aware of the practice of unofficial payments to get a child a place in a good school. The practice was most widespread in Moscow and St. Petersburg (67 per cent) and in regional centres (62 per cent).

It should be noted that state support of education is a significant factor for education quality and does not depend on the level of economic development of the region. In other words, the policy in the sphere of state support of education is determined by priorities of the regional authorities instead of educational needs or the regional potential.

3.3.3 Modernisation of Education Curriculum

There are also many problems related to the education system's curriculum. The content of education needs to be modernised to take into account the changing character of the economic challenges that Russia faces, as well as the country's emerging emphasis on human rights, sustainable development and participation of civil society in public life. Experts have suggested that the Russian secondary education is dominated by an academic approach instead of teaching skills for full participation in public, social and economic life.⁶⁹ These experts also find an unsatisfactory linkage between the structure and content of vocational education and labour market requirements. A key component of the Government's national project on education is addressing the issue of modernising Russia's education system.

Additionally, with the emerging challenges that young people face, they need basic life skills such as negotiating, problem-solving, and interpersonal communications in order to make safer choices and to protect themselves from the major threats posed by HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. Programmes on risky behaviour prevention and healthy lifestyles promotion for young people and professionals working with young people are an important and needed education component. The coverage of young people by existing LSE (Life Skills Education) programmes, including the best peer-to-peer initiatives, remains rather

⁶⁸ *Human Development Report 2005 Russian Federation: Russia in 2015: Development Goals and Policy Priorities*, UNDP, 2005, p. 49.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 54.

limited, reaching a comparatively small number of children and young people.

3.3.4 Teaching Capacities

There is also a problem with sufficient financing of the education sector. Teacher's salaries remain relatively low. The deterioration in the quality of the learning environment - scarce teaching materials, scant libraries, dysfunctional laboratories - is the real picture of modern primary and secondary school institutions in Russia. The career path for a teacher in Russia is also a source of frustration. There is a need for increased professionalism of teaching as a career to attract younger people.

While many teachers have high levels of education and training on paper, in reality their knowledge is often not sufficient to give young people an education that is relevant in the modern world.⁷⁰ There are several reasons for this:

1. *An outdated system of teacher training*, which fails to include the latest advances in child development, and to give a better understanding of individual student needs.
2. *Lack of motivation on the part of teachers*, which is often due to low salaries, and lack of professional prestige.
3. *Lack of continuity and consistency in school reforms*. Teachers are forced to work in a system marked by piecemeal conceptual reforms and a multitude of experiments that are often confusing and disorienting.

3.3.5 Quality of Monitoring Mechanisms⁷¹

In recent years, the quality of higher education has been of paramount concern to both educational authorities and many experts.⁷² However, control of quality of higher education indicators by the Federal Service for Education and Science Surveillance (*Rosobradzor*) and Federal Education Agency (*Rosobrazovanie*) is mostly limited to reviewing the content of curricula, results of state exams and assessing material and technical resources of higher education institutions, i.e. checking compliance with license requirements.⁷³ The practice of in-house control is also widely used but, in addition to checking the compliance with *Rosobrazovanie* formal criteria, it only provides for questioning educators and students of a particular institution. Questioning employers has been applied recently as a method of assessment of

⁷⁰ *Statistics of Russian education*, <http://stat.edu.ru>.

⁷¹ Material taken from *Human Development Report 2005 Russian Federation: Russia in 2015: Development Goals and Policy Priorities*, UNDP, 2005, p.51.

⁷² See, for example, Livni, E. and Polishchuk, L., *The Problem of Quality of Higher Education: Role of the State, Competition and Labor Market*, http://www.eerc.ru/details/download.aspx?file_id=3900.

⁷³ See the list of data collected by *Rosobrazovanie* to perform a rating assessment of higher educational institutions and chairs, http://www.edu.ru/db-mo/mo/Data/d_05/pr1-5.doc.

CRC Committee Concluding Observations to Russian Federation 3rd Periodic Report:

Paragraph 65:

The Committee recommends that the State party: (d) Strengthen efforts at teacher training (before and during their service), and address the issue of teachers' salaries and working conditions (in particular in light of Federal Law No. 122).

higher education quality; however, only selected institutions at regional and municipal levels have been subject to this type of assessment.⁷⁴

Currently, Russia is lacking a reliable assessment of higher education quality. This situation can be in part explained by, firstly, few professional community members are involved in this work and, secondly, no system of indicators for international comparison has been developed (unlike secondary school education quality which has been already assessed for several years within the European PISA, Programme International Student Assessment project).

One of the applicable indicators is the proportion of part-time students (evening courses, distance and non-residency studies departments). In Russia, this proportion of the total number of graduates has been steadily rising and increased from 34.7 per cent in 1993 to 50.1 per cent in 2003. Another indirect indicator of higher education quality is the number of foreign students. This indicator has shown a steady tendency to decline and has decreased from 34,100 in 1993 to 17,300 in 2004. These figures are presumably indicative of a deterioration of the Russian education system, although a reduction in number of foreign students may be in part explained by an apparent growth of xenophobia, racism and chauvinism in the Russian society.

3.3.6 Disparities in Access to Education⁷⁵

Increasing disparity in access to education also proves concern among specialists. At the moment in Russia only primary and secondary education are compulsory and their duration is shorter than in most developed countries. It should be noted that the regional economic differences also create unfavourable conditions for equality in education.

In the absence of a national testing system, only the Uniform State Examination (USE) results provide a slight insight into regional differences in education quality. Given these factors, it must be noted that the Uniform State Examination system is still under trial. This means that neither tools nor procedure have yet matured, and a number of USE-related problems are still unresolved. As a result, USE results can in no way be regarded as a full measure of education quality, especially as applied to some educational institutions. Nevertheless, the USE, as a means for students' knowledge assessment, is reliable enough to reveal common tendencies and features.

⁷⁴ See, for example, studies that were undertaken in Krasnoyarsk (Markova, O.Yu., Petrushina, I.S., and Krasnikova, E.A., *Marketing Studies of Educational Service Market*; <http://www.marketing.spb.ru/conf/2002-01-edu/sbornik-4.htm>) and in the Primorski Krai (Popova, G.G., and Gembatskaya, G.V., *Analysis of the Results of a Sociological Survey of Employers' Opinions on the Quality of Education in Higher Educational Institutions in the Primorski Krai*; and Dotsenko, V.A., *Assessment of the VGUES Graduates Quality Based on Employers Questioning Results*, in *Perspektivnye tekhnologii otsenki i monitoringa kachestva obrazovaniya [Perspective technologies of education quality assessment and monitoring]*, Collection of papers, Vladivostok, Izd-vo Dalnevost. Un-ta, 2003).

⁷⁵ Material from this section is taken from *Human Development Report 2005 Russian Federation: Russia in 2015: Development Goals and Policy Priorities*, UNDP, 2005, pp. 49-50.

Analysis of the USE results shows that quality of educational services is closely related to the level of economic development and state support of secondary education in the region.⁷⁶ A comparative analysis by the Federal Districts (FD) determined a considerable differentiation in quality of educational services (Table 6).

The poor state of Russia’s school infrastructure also has a strong effect on educational opportunities, and inevitably gives rise to differences in quality. The problem is particularly acute for rural areas.

Table 6: USE mean scores in different Federal Districts

	Federal Districts						
	Central	North-Western	Southern	Volga	Ural	Siberian	Far-Eastern
USE mean score (Russian Language and Mathematics)	51.1	52	46.0	51.4	49.1	45.1	46.6
Educational costs per pupil (as adjusted), thousand roubles	4.9	4.7	3.7	4.6	4.7	4.0	2.9
Rural population proportion	28%	24%	41%	31%	30%	35%	47%
GRP per capita (as adjusted), thousand roubles	45.0	43.8	33.0	40.7	64.9	32.3	46.4

Source: Human Development Report 2005 Russian Federation: Russia in 2015: Development Goals and Policy Priorities, UNDP, 2005, p.50.

3.4 Government Responses

As President Putin highlighted in his 2006 annual address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, “Russia needs a competitive education system, otherwise we will end up facing the real threat of having our quality of education not measure up to modern demands.”

⁷⁶ A direct comparison of state support figures per pupil does not allow a true picture to obtain. The fact is that support needs largely depend on where an educational institution is located. To illustrate, educational costs per pupil in rural areas are on the average 3-4 times as high as those in urban areas. For this reason, initial state support figures were adjusted using an index of appreciation of budgetary service standard unit cost (this index takes into account climatic conditions, population settlement pattern, transport network and other factors influencing the regional needs in social support; calculated annually by the RF Ministry of Finance in allocating financial support to regions). Similarly, the Gross Regional Product (GRP) per capita, which is the indicator of economic development of a region, was adjusted based on consumer goods basket.

Important education-related actions for Russia, which must be incorporated as political agenda priorities, include:

Improvement of the existing pre-school educational system;

Gradual increase of financing in education;

Involvement of socially vulnerable groups of children in the educational process;

Adjustment of the education system's content and conformity to better meet current needs of the Russian society and economy; and

Elaboration of a long-term strategy to make education more applicable in the labour market.

In 2006, Russia introduced the Educational National Project. This project focuses on creating favourable conditions to improve the education system, while preserving its best traditions. The state is to stimulate innovative projects in the educational sector, promoting qualified teachers and encouraging successful pupils and students. It will create efficient and result-oriented educational practices and will prepare young citizens to change the world. The Project also will launch new managerial methods, such as the creation in schools and at universities of special development foundations and parent councils to enhance civil control over educational institutions. In this context, authorities are attempting to make education systems more transparent and efficient, becoming more adequate for meeting the needs of Russia's society. Additional financing for education is planned, which will include increases of teacher's salaries and redirected budget funds to educational institutions.

The Government of the Russian Federation is currently implementing measures to ensure rights for education are upheld.

One of the key documents for Russia's education system policy is the National Doctrine for Education through to 2025, which provides the basic principles for its education policy. Russia also committed itself to conform with the Dakar Framework for Action created at the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal which focuses on achieving "Education for All by 2015." The Government's 2001 conception to modernise the Russian education system by 2010 gives impetus for enhanced reform of Russia's education system. This document provides the framework for developing initiatives of Russia's education system, taking into account the National Doctrine and federal legislature in the field of education. Setting education as a key national project further emphasised efforts to modernise Russia's education system.

The national education policy focuses on ensuring quality education that meets present day requirements, while retaining its fundamental nature and its compliance with present and future needs of an individual, society and the State. The ultimate goal of the modernisation process is to create a mechanism for sustainable development of the education system.

Russia's education reform has three phases which will affect every level of the education system, with each phase having its own goals and time limits. In particular, the reform aims at:

renewing the role of the pre-school education available to

Together in Peace

“This is the future of the North Caucasus,” said Mourad Tangiev, UNICEF’s Peace Education Officer in the North Caucasus, referring to 120 youths who gathered in August 2005 and 2006 in Russia’s Republic of Dagestan at a Peace and Tolerance summer camp (organised by the Russian Government and UNICEF).

Hailing from five of Russia’s North Caucasian Republics — Karbardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia-Alaniya, Ingushetia, Chechnya, and Dagestan — these 120 youths spent their days in training sessions learning ideas of tolerance and conflict-resolution.

The peace camp is not a one-shot event to help pass the hot summer days, but rather is one part in a series of events held throughout the year. After the events in Beslan in September 2004, UNICEF quickly realised that the challenge they faced extended far beyond the besieged North Ossetian school.

“They’re going to do some serious conflict resolution here,” said Tangiev. “The camp is only starting, and we’re still introducing basic concepts and ideas. By the end, they’ll have to do some serious thinking and make some serious choices.”

The camp’s location in the Republic of Dagestan, where over 40 nations live together in peace, is already a great example for the children. Though all are different tribes, they still manage to live together peacefully.

“This is what we tell the children; this is what we are trying to prove, that we can all live together in peace,” said Mr. Tangiev. “Dagestan is a great example, and if you don’t believe in these things, then it is very difficult to start down this path.”



In the aftermath of Beslan, UNICEF has been organising activities to promote a culture of peace and tolerance among young people and children in the North Caucasuses. This programme includes activities such as conducting children’s peace theatres, peace education and tolerance communication events, youth conferences, and development of a peace encyclopedia. The summer camp in Dagestan is also one of these activities.

everyone;

modernising the substance of general education as well as improving its structure; and

developing new state standards for primary, special, vocational and higher education.

Improvement of Russia’s higher education as a centre of abstract and applied science is also a key component for the development of society’s intellectual, cultural and professional potential.

As the reform goes on, the Government is working to strengthen its role as a guarantor of quality educational programmes and services, rendered by general education as well as vocational institutions regardless of their organisational structure or legal status.

Reform of the education sector in Russia is being undertaken within the context of a difficult demographic situation, characterised by low fertility rates. Reduction of birth rates will in turn reduce the number of general-education schools graduates, and subsequently the number of college entrants. In this context, one of Russia’s key education goals in the short-term could be to prevent deterioration of the quality of education in various fields due to the decrease in the number of the teachers and students.

Russia recognises the role education plays in the modern world. A top priority in Russia's Programme for Socio-Economic Development is the creation of "a whole system of education, from pre-school to higher professional level, which is reformed to improve educational programmes and standards and to adapt them better to labour market needs."

Only by improving the education system itself and providing access for all to the educational process, will Russia succeed in establishing a competitive economy.

3.5 Working Together for Children in the Future

Expand affordable pre-school education opportunities which are equally accessible throughout Russia's regions.

Promote access to high-quality primary and secondary education, ensuring that quality primary education is free and available equally among rural and urban areas and families of different income levels.

Create a transparent, focused, performance- and results-based system of budgeting and management in education. This will help overcome inefficient resource use, lack of incentives, financial constraints and inflexibility. Even within the existing budget much more can be done to ensure that all children, independent of their family income or geographical location, have sufficient access to educational opportunities. Resources should be targeted to those who need it the most, and who use them most effectively.

Close the large gap in knowledge. At present, there is no in-depth analysis of the socio-economic, ethnic, geographical and other factors that influence access to education. There is also scant objective information on educational results, and the authorities are not able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of educational institutions. It is important to train a community of researchers to work in the field of education and pedagogical science.

Advance developments of integrated education through enhancement of teachers' and school administrators' capacities to develop education programmes that address children's different learning needs and equipping of schools to make them fully accessible for children with varying physical and intellectual needs. This will enable the development of every child to its full potential, as well as encourage a more tolerant and inclusive society.

First Steps towards Inclusion

Artyom Bogiev and Nastya Nesterova have cerebral palsy. Artyom, a 9th grader, uses a wheelchair, while Nastya, a 7th grader, walks with assistance. For that reason, neither child had ever stepped inside their local school.

Thanks to the NGO, Perspektiva, today both children study at one of Moscow's few institutions developing inclusive education initiatives, School # 1961, in their neighbourhood of Southern Butovo.

There are 450,000 disabled school-age children in Russia, the majority of who are either isolated in their homes or segregated in special institutions. Nearly 50 per cent of these children receive no education whatsoever. Many have no social ties beyond their immediate family.

The vast majority of Russian schools are not ready to accept these children. Most teachers have little or no understanding of disability issues, or information about how to include disabled children. Schools are inaccessible, and

the special education school system is rigid and not open to change.

Today, Artyom and Nastya are part of an innovative programme to make School # 1961 a pioneer agency in inclusive education. Improved physical access, disability awareness training, parent empowerment and projects to build bridges between the pupils have all helped get this programme off to a successful start.

Disabled children in Southern Butovo and their families now have hope that they can grow up like all other children, receive a fine education, make friends, participate in school clubs, and make mistakes and succeed - just like their non-disabled peers.

UNICEF's Child Protection Programme works with partners such as Perspektiva to enhance education opportunities for vulnerable children, like Artyom and Nastya, by promoting development of inclusive education methodology and practices.

FOUR

Child Protection



CRC Article 19(1)

State Parties shall take all appropriate ... measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has the care of the child.

4.1 Introduction

Child protection issues draw particularly on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Millennium Declaration, as well as numerous international human rights agreements as the foundation for the response to a broad spectrum of child protection issues.

Protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse is an integral component of protecting their rights to survival, growth and

development, and thus works to achieve several Millennium Development Goals. Yet providing this protection is complex and often sensitive. The factors underlying children's vulnerability differ, and child protection issues often challenge long-held beliefs and practices and can provoke denial and resistance to change.

As the prevalence and severity of child protection issues have become better known over the past decade, governments have responded by ratifying human rights conventions and committing to new standards, such as the Optional Protocols addressing trafficking, child prostitution and pornography, and children in armed conflict. The continued existence of millions of children worldwide exposed to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence, however, demonstrates the grave challenges that remain.

4.2 Current Situation

Russia's transitional period in the 1990s led to an increase in the number of children in need of special protection and support. To respond to this need, the crucial task was to identify and understand those situations that violate a child's rights to proper development: poverty, lack of educational opportunities, parental neglect, and abuse inside and outside the home. These problems all lead to social marginalisation and discrimination. They have not been sufficiently studied in Russia to-date, although the Government is now making this a priority.

4.2.1 Neglect and Lack of Parental Care

The substantial economic and social changes faced during Russia's transitional period placed significant stress on families' abilities to care properly for their children. In January 2002, the Government pledged more attention and resources to fight what it called the "social abandonment of children." By January 1, 2005, the number of children deprived of parental care reached approximately 722,000.⁷⁷ Most of these children are "social orphans," i.e. children with at least one living parent. The number of termination of parental care cases has continued to grow over the last six years. In 1999, the total number of terminations of parental

⁷⁷ Russian Federation Government Presentation by Olga Sharapova, Department Director of the Medico-Social Problems of Families, Motherhood and Childhood, at the 40th Session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Geneva, 28 September 2005, p.7.

CRC Article 9:

(1) States Parties shall ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when competent authorities subject to judicial review determine, in accordance with applicable laws and procedures, that such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child...;

(3) States Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests.

CRC Article 20:

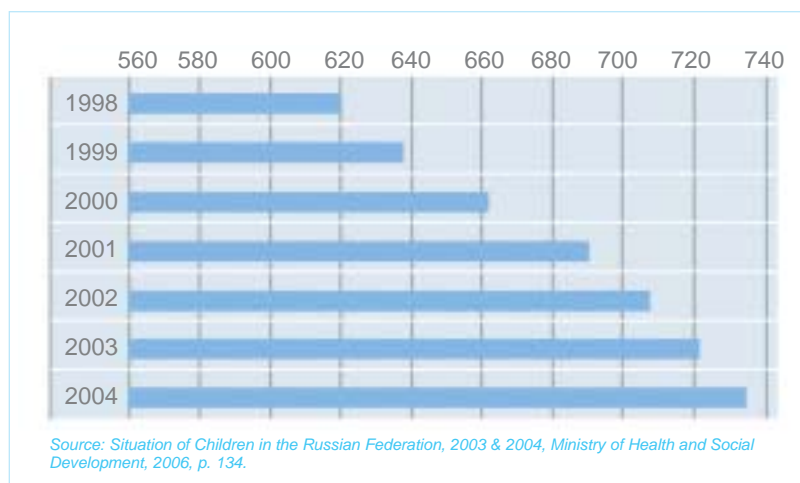
(1) A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State. ...

(3) Such care could include, inter alia, foster placement, kafalah of Islamic law, adoption or, if necessary, placement in suitable institutions for the care of children. When considering solutions, due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity of a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.

CRC Article 25:

States Parties recognise the right of a child who has been placed by the competent authorities for the purposes of care, protection or treatment of his or her physical or mental health, to a periodic review of the treatment provided to the child and all other circumstances relevant to his or her placement.

Figure 9: Total Number of Children Deprived of Parental Care Registered by Guardianship and Trusteeship Agencies (thousands)



rights for the year was 35,454, whereas the number of terminations in 2004 was 56,144 – a 58 per cent increase from 1999.⁷⁸

Child neglect is a key factor for children being deprived of parental care,⁷⁹ often forced to survive on their own and sometimes resorting to living on the street. These children, often referred to as “street children,” face the risk of becoming social outcasts, where they engage in hazardous work and/or join marginal and criminal communities.⁸⁰

The vast majority of children who live or spend most of their time in the streets have living parents. At times, the children spend a substantial portion of their time on the streets and return to their “homes” to sleep or may return to a home on a seasonal basis (e.g. during winters). Reasons vary for why children live or spend most of their lives in the streets: these include family abuse, work, lack of parental supervision, commercial and sexual exploitation, or school drop-out. However, irrelevant of whether a child lives on the street full-time or sometimes returns to a dwelling, the fact remains that after a very short period on the streets, more than half of these children face the risk of being in conflict with the law, not attending school, becoming substance abusers, becoming involved in other risky health behaviours, and/or becoming targets of violence and abuse by those who are older and stronger.⁸¹

Children even in prosperous, two-parent families sometimes lack parental attention, as some parents need to spend the majority of their time at work to maintain their jobs and standard of living. In these

⁷⁸ *Situation of Children in the Russian Federation, 2003 & 2004, Ministry of Health and Social Development, 2006, p.133.*

⁷⁹ *Definitions given according to the report by O.E.Lebedev, E.E.Chepurikh, A.N.Maiorov, V.I.Zolotukhina “Children of the streets. Education and social adaptation of homeless children”. — Moscow: Intellekt-Centre, 2002.*

⁸⁰ *S.A.Stevenson. Street children and shadow urban communities. // Besprizornik, 1, 2003.*

⁸¹ *According to data from Médecins sans Frontières. See the description of the programme “Social and psychological assistance to neglected and homeless children in Moscow” (2004—2006).*

cases, children's needs can be neglected, often resulting in school failure. Parental authority may be replaced by that of classmates, street gangs, or even the mass media. This situation can also push children toward the use of drugs or alcohol and increase their chances of becoming involved in criminal behaviour. The composition and number of street children is a controversial issue. Estimates based on Ministry of Interior data indicate that the number of children living or spending most of their lives in the streets could be somewhere between 100,000 and 150,000.⁸²

According to Médecins Sans Frontières, Moscow has as many as 5,000 abandoned and homeless children, of which nearly 70 per cent are boys between 12 to 15 years old.⁸³ Lack of reliable data is an obstacle that researchers and officials often confront, causing them to rely upon impressions and anecdotes of experienced professionals as a key source of information.

4.2.2 Violence against Children

4.2.2.1 Domestic Violence / Child Abuse

The latency of domestic abuse and violence makes it difficult to provide precise numbers. Identifying the effects of child abuse is also complicated by the fact that a child often does not realise he or she is a victim, and may be too frightened to tell someone. While these challenges exist, some media reports on domestic violence and child abuse do capture the seriousness of the problem.

Domestic violence affects children both as witnesses to violence and as victims. Global statistics suggest that 30 per cent to 50 per cent of domestic violence cases among spouses also involve abuse against the children. Russian statistics regarding abuse towards children also provide some indication about the scale of this problem. According to one report, about two million children under the age of 14 are beaten by their parents.⁸⁴

Domestic violence and other forms of abuse aimed at children result in serious consequences including: development of an excessive sense of fear; lack of self-esteem; and sometimes even a belief of having deserved such treatment. The result is often the child's disillusionment and alienation from his/her parents. Furthermore, when domestic violence occurs within the home, children essentially lose adequate parental care and protection.

There are some important nuances when defining what constitutes

⁸² Andrei Markov, "Child Welfare Policies in Russia: Main Issues and a Reform Agenda", <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/RUSSIANFEDERATIONEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20531627~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:305600,00.html>.

⁸³ These assessments correspond to those obtained from other studies. For comparison, see studies published in the report "Children of the streets." Education and social adaptation of homeless children indicate that 53.3 per cent of homeless children are between the ages of 11 and 14, and 58.2 per cent of all homeless children are boys.

⁸⁴ According to an article "Violence in the home – violence in society" by G.I. Klimantova, deputy head of the department for problems of social policy of the analytical section of the Administration of the Council of the Federation. It is published on the site "Towards social health" www.crisis.ipd.ru.

CRC Committee Concluding Observations to Russian Federation 3rd Periodic Report:

Paragraph 47:

The Committee recommends that the State party continue to strengthen its efforts to provide adequate assistance to children who are exposed to violence within the family and in institutions.

CRC Article 34:

State Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. ...

CRC Article 35:

State Parties shall take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form.

Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography: (Russia has not signed):

Article 2:

- (a) Sale of children means any act or transaction whereby a child is transferred by any person or group of persons to another for remuneration or any other consideration;
- (b) Child prostitution means the use of a child in sexual activities for remuneration or any other consideration;
- (c) Child pornography means any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes.

'violent' or 'abusive' behaviour in Russia. This issue must be addressed, and lawyers and social workers need to be trained to push for the implementation and enforcement of clearer legal criteria, to ensure children's rights are protected.

4.2.2.2 Trafficking and Sexual Abuse

Russia is an origin, transit and destination country for women and children trafficked for sexual exploitation to and from numerous countries within the Gulf States, Europe and North America. Russia has also increasingly become a transit and destination country for labour trafficking, both within the former Soviet Union and from neighbouring countries. Trafficking in children for paedophilia and pornography is also a problem.

Many cities and rural communities continue to face financial hardships which foster an environment for internal trafficking. Child trafficking and other illicit transactions involving minors are a global threat, with Russia and the entire CIS region facing severe challenges. Common forms of child trafficking include commercial sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and begging.

The Russian criminal code specifically addresses crimes against children as (a) sexual relations with children under the age of 16 years, and indecent conduct with children under 14 years old; and (b) soliciting a minor to engage in prostitution. Furthermore, protection to children is also addressed in the general criminal code provisions of (a) the distribution, advertising, or publication of pornographic material; and (b) trafficking in human beings.

According to official statistics, some 64,000 crimes committed against minors were registered in 2004, with one-third of them being grave or particularly serious offences. Every year, about 40,000 minors fall victims to crimes of violence. Since the age of consent was raised from 14 to 16 years old, there has been an increase in the number of minors who suffered from non-violent sexual assaults. Rosstat data clearly shows that sex crimes against children under the age of 16 years are growing, and in 2005 the number of such criminal cases totaled 1,632.

Such statistics do not, however, show the full scale of the problem because many victims are afraid to contact the police. Soliciting a minor to engage in prostitution, for instance, is usually uncovered during arrests made for other crimes, or for child abuse.⁸⁵

Some localised statistics suggest that sex crimes against children are more frequent in single-parent families or where there are step-parents. For instance, in one Russian region nearly 9 per cent of such crimes were committed in two-parent biological families, while families with a step-parent accounted for 68 per cent of cases.⁸⁶

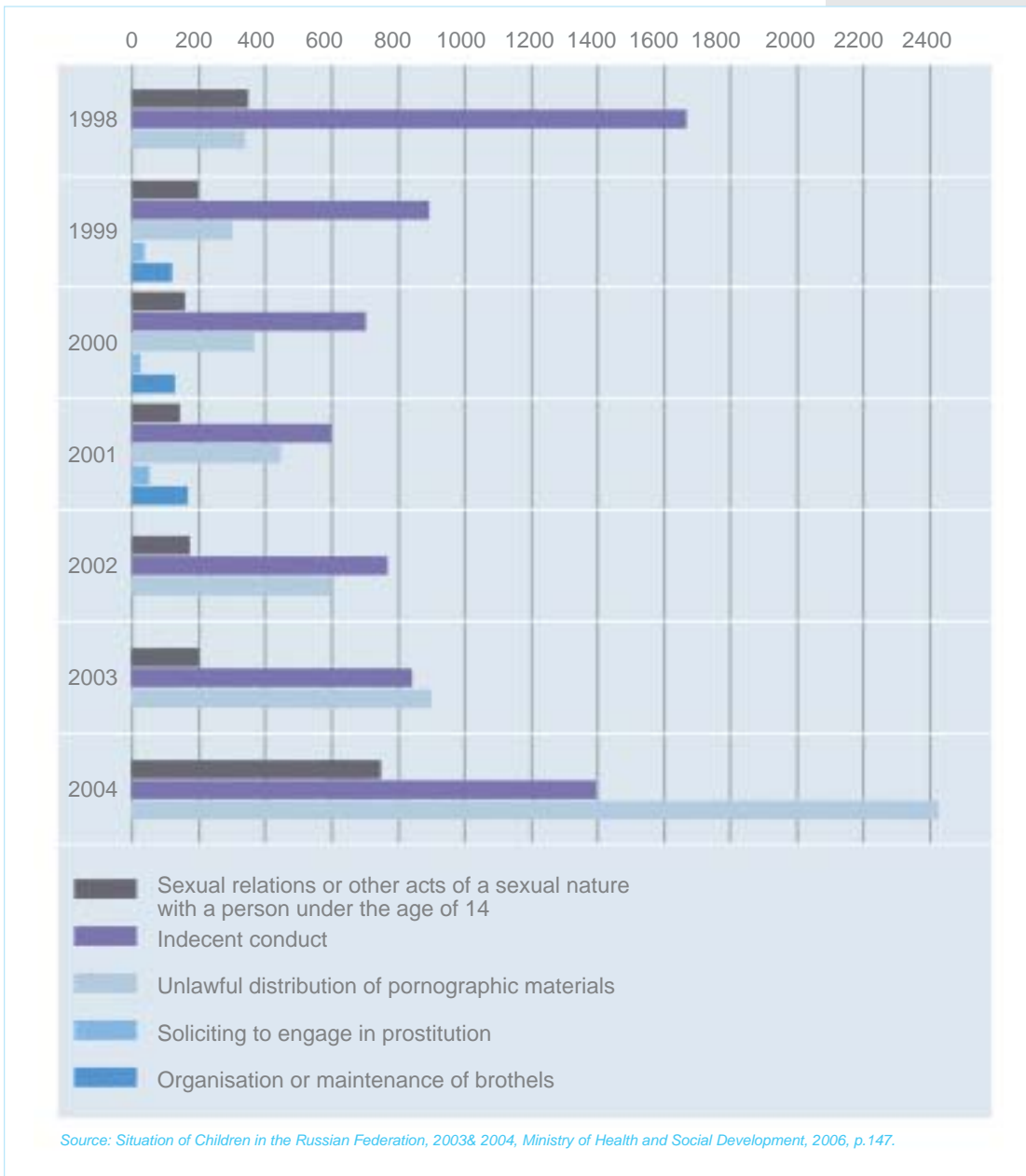
Minors in Russia are increasingly vulnerable to various forms of sexual exploitation, particularly to sex business activities such as prostitution, pornography, sex tourism involving minors, and child sex trafficking (either abroad, or within Russia and the republics of the former Soviet Union). The problem of organised sexual exploitation is significant and can be attributed to changes in sexual behaviour over the past

⁸⁵ See the periodical reports on implementation in Russia of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

⁸⁶ Sudakova, T. & Stoecker, S. "Domestic violence as a factor contributing to child homelessness in Russia."

Figure 10: Number of Sex Crimes against Children and Minors

(There is no data for 1998 and 2002 on soliciting to engage in prostitution, or on the organisation and maintenance of brothels).



decade, and to the increased demand for sexual services in the entertainment and tourism industries.

Involvement of child pornography and use of the internet has also become a growing concern. According to a 2004 report prepared by the UK-based Internet Watch Foundation, 23 per cent of child pornography content originated in Russia. While that figure trails the United States, which produces about 55 per cent of the internet child pornographic industry content, Russia is increasingly a source of material for this market. Owners of the most famous sites claim their

**CRC Committee
Concluding
Observations to
Russian Federation
3rd Periodic Report:**

Paragraph 69:

The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen the measures taken to protect children from the consequences of the conflict in Chechnya and in the Northern Caucasus, in compliance with article 38, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular with regard to their rights to health and education. It also urges the State party to take measures to ensure that abuses committed by the security forces against the personal security of children cease. The Committee further recommends that the State party further its efforts to clear mines and ratify the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

profit amounts to be between 500 to 1000 percent.⁸⁷ Investigatory authorities have uncovered sales of porn films with 8 or even 6 year old children participating.⁸⁸

Limitations in law enforcement work make it difficult to hold organised crime groups liable for the selling of child pornography. Russian legislation lacks a clear legal definition for child pornography, and so these organised crime groups remain largely untouched. However, a clear legal definition does exist in the Convention on the Rights of the Child's Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography,⁸⁹ still to be ratified by the Russian Government.

According to experts from the St. Petersburg NGO Stellit, child trafficking within Russia and to other countries is largely organised.⁹⁰ The current response to child trafficking has not proven effective. With the passing of Criminal Code Article 127.1, the former Criminal Code Article 152 (trafficking in minors) was repealed. Some experts have argued that this action has actually "de-criminalised" child trafficking because under article 152 the process for investigation and court proceedings were "easier," as there was no evidence requirement to provide the existence of exploitation.

The following groups of children face a higher risk to become potential victims of the sex industry:

- Abandoned and homeless children living and working on the streets;
- Children from orphanages;
- Children subject to domestic violence;
- Children and adolescents involved in modeling and show business;
- Refugee children.

4.2.3 Specific Issues for Children in the North Caucasus Region

For the past ten years, the North Caucasus Region has been in an unstable condition which has led to the need for specific protection aspects for children in this region. Slight improvements in the security environment and living conditions have been observed in Chechnya in the second half of 2005 and early 2006. However, general instability continues there and has even increased in neighbouring republics: bombings, ambushes, sweep operations, target killings and

⁸⁷ "The Indecent Office is the Most Profitable", K. Gurdin\Delovaya Chronica. 2002, #24.

⁸⁸ Doctoral dissertation by S.A. Tsyrukun, "Appearance and investigation of crimes linked to brothels for sex work" Ph.D. Law Dissertation, 2004.

⁸⁹ The definition for child pornography under the CRC Optional Protocol is: Article 2(c): "Child pornography means any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes."

⁹⁰ Report on child trafficking in Russia, made within the framework of the project "Joint East West research project on trafficking". St. Petersburg, 2003.

disappearances of civilians have been reported throughout the region.

Humanitarian needs, stemming from two military campaigns conducted over the past decade and severe economic underdevelopment, remain considerable: with an unemployment rate of at least 80 per cent, much of the population of Chechnya continues to depend on humanitarian aid for survival and a significant reduction in needs appears to be at least several years away. Access to basic social services – particularly in the water, education and health sectors – remains problematic for most civilians in Chechnya, especially women and children. Internally displaced persons (IDPs), estimated at over 160,000 in Chechnya, 25,000 in Ingushetia and up to 10,000 in Dagestan, continue to comprise a large portion of the vulnerable population.

A strong and comprehensive approach to effectively protect children from harm and neglect is a priority in the North Caucasus especially in Chechnya. The lack of a strong monitoring and reporting system on the violations of children's rights is a matter of concern, as is the low level of awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) among children and youth as well as among the professionals who work with and for children. The provision of policy support to the authorities so as to improve the quality of social services for the most vulnerable children is also required. Meanwhile, the presence of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) continues to pose a serious threat to civilians, including children, in Chechnya. According to the UNICEF-managed IMSMA (Information Management System for Mine Action) database, 3,037 civilians (including 778 children) have been killed or injured by mines/ERW since 1995.

4.2.4 Children and Adolescents in Conflict with the Law

The collapse of the Soviet Union was accompanied by a rise in the number of legal violations committed by minors. This situation was primarily a result of the increased number of neglected and homeless children, as well as the overall rise in crime. While the Ministry of Interior reported that the number of registered crimes committed by minors has dropped in the past few years, the crime rate remains relatively high. According to Rosstat, in 2005, minors committed or were involved in 154,734 registered crimes, but the real figure may be higher since much street crime goes unreported. The victims of juvenile crime tend to be other children.

The number of serious crimes and felonies committed by minors is quite high. Almost two-thirds of all burglaries, thefts and violent robberies were committed by, or with the participation of, adolescents. The recruitment of minors into criminal gangs is of particular concern. According to the Ministry of the Interior, 50 per cent of all minors who committed crimes in 2002 did so as members of a group acting according to a certain plan.

The proportion of juvenile offenders who do not have a permanent source of income, or who acted under the influence of alcohol, is growing. Attempts at rehabilitating minors with a criminal record have so far yielded few positive results. In spite of the decline in the number of minors committing more than one crime — from 29,500 in 2000 to

CRC Article 37:

State Parties shall ensure that: ...

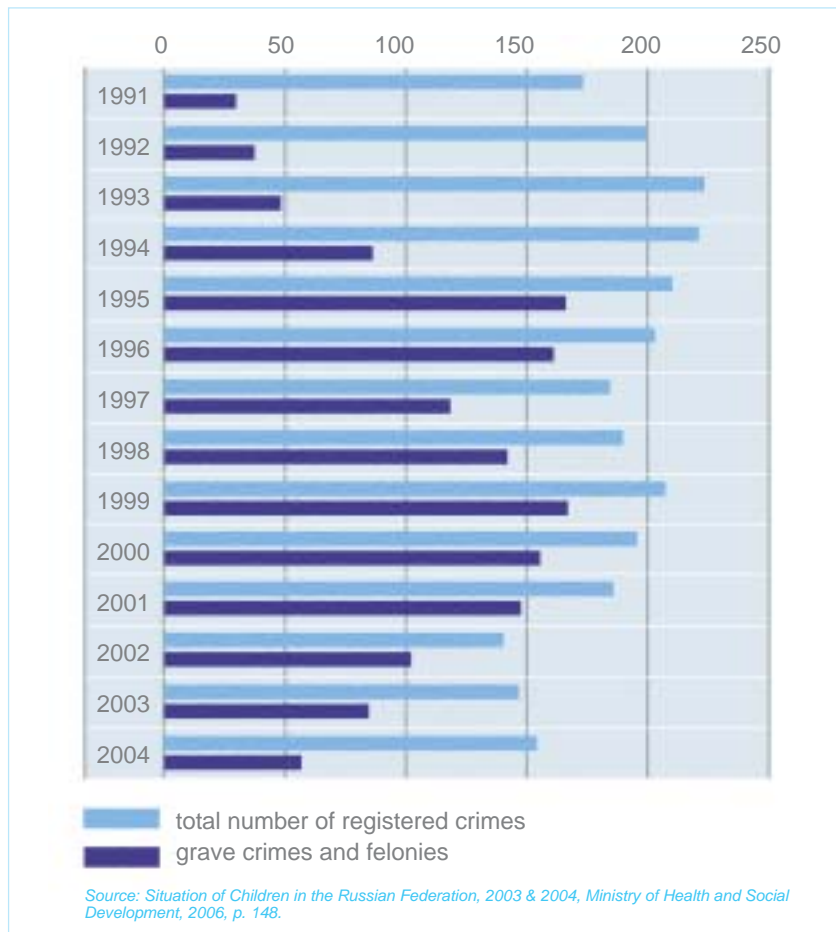
(b) No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time;

(d) Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance...

CRC Article 40(1):

States Parties recognise the right of every child alleged as, accused of, or recognised as having infringed the penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth, which reinforces the child's respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others and which takes into account the child's age and the desirability of promoting the child's reintegration and the child's assuming a constructive role in society.

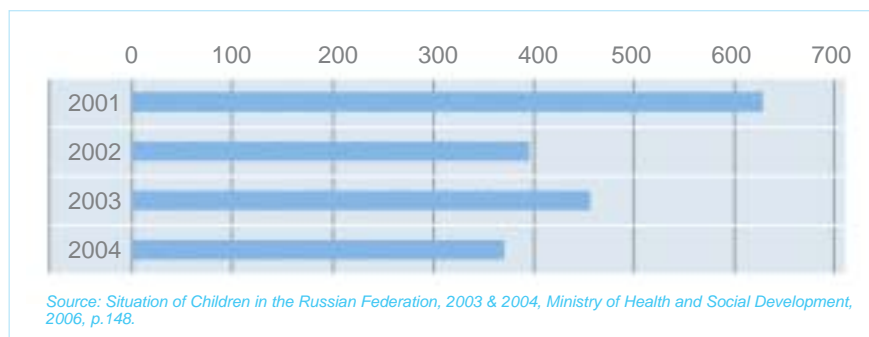
Figure 11: Registered Crime Committed by Minors or with Their Participation (thousands)



25,500 in 2002 — the share of this category among the total number of minors sentenced is rising: from 16.6 per cent in 2000, to 18.1 per cent in 2002.

The rise in juvenile crime is exacerbated by those youth expelled from educational institutions. In 2002, 63,000 minors were registered as unemployed and not studying, including 7,900 with no education at all. Moreover, 47,000 minors had been sentenced for their crimes; 1 in 3 of whom had neither been studying nor working at the time of arrest.

Figure 12: Number of Registered Crimes Committed by Minors, or with Their Participation, and Involving Narcotic Substances



The problem of juvenile crime is closely tied to the spread of drug use among minors, but according to state statistics some positive change has been noted in recent years. According to Rosstat the number of registered crimes committed by minors, or with their participation, and which involved narcotic substances, fell nearly four-fold from 11,179 in 1998 to 3,453 in 2005.

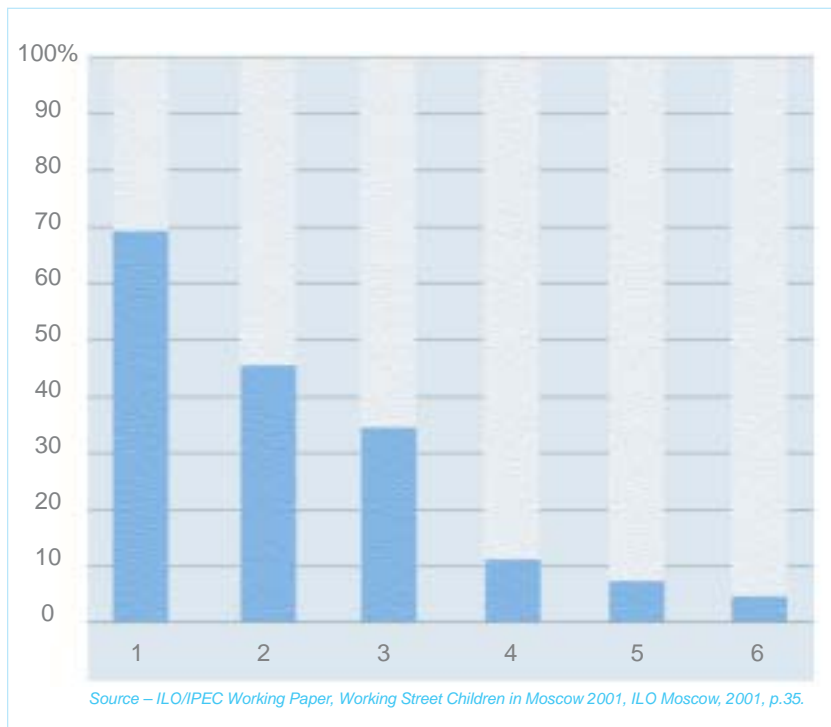
4.2.5 Child Labour

The ILO's 1999 Convention No. 182, "On the Worst Forms of Child Labour", was ratified by Russia in March 2003, and took effect in March 2004. The scale of child labour in Russia cannot be clearly assessed because there is an absence of reliable data. Experts who have studied the problem in St. Petersburg believe that the total number of working children under the age of 13 years ranges from 5,000 to 40,000.⁹¹ However, the majority of working children cannot be considered disadvantaged; for the majority, work is simply a means of obtaining some money for things they want to buy or to get more pocket money.⁹²

CRC Article 32(1):

States Parties recognise the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

Figure 13: Employers' Attitude towards Child Labour



- 1 more positive - the children receive an income
- 2 more positive - the children are occupied and learn how to work
- 3 more positive - the children are supervised
- 4 probably negative
- 5 indifferent
- 6 refuse to answer

⁹¹ ILO/IPEC Working Paper, Working Street Children in St. Petersburg 2000, ILO St. Petersburg, 2000, p.9.

⁹² Ibid, p.9.

A more serious problem is when street children are forced to collect bottles, work at markets, move goods, and wash cars just to pay for the day's meal. Sometimes parents use the child to support the whole family, and in such situations it is very difficult to get a child off the streets and back into school.

According to a 2001 ILO analysis on child labour in Moscow, the majority of employers think positively about working children since they understand the value of labour, and work well. Thus, one reason for the flourishing of child labour is due to the mutual interests of working children and employers: children earn money needed to survive, while employers have a cheap source of labour.

The situation, however, is more difficult for children who officially complete their time at state care institutions, as well as for school drop-outs and runaways, and for children and adolescents from refugee and forced migrant families.⁹³ Since many have no proper parental guidance, or their parents face their own problems trying to survive, these children have a greater tendency to become involved in criminal activities to make ends meet.

At the same time, it's also important to consider that if children are officially prevented from taking a proper job they may be pushed toward illegal activity in order to buy the things that they want. Child labour is a consequence of poverty, and the age of 12 years is when the majority of children surveyed began working. This often leads to partial or total abandonment of their education, which in turn prevents the child from developing his or her potential later on in life.

4.3 Immediate & Underlying Causes

4.3.1 Family Breakdown

Over the past 15 years, families with children have faced greater economic difficulties and stresses, which has resulted in an increased incidence of family breakdown and thus pushed more children into vulnerable situations. Children's increased vulnerability is also fed by a high divorce rate. While the rate decreased to 4.2 per 1,000 people in 2005,⁹⁴ the problem remained traumatic for children.

Families with children, on the whole, face greater risks of poverty with 52 per cent of those in poverty comprising of families with children. Data of the National Survey of Prosperity and Participation of the Population in Social Programmes (NSPSP, 2003) also show that families with three or more children face even greater vulnerabilities,

⁹³ *The ILO defines the worst forms of child labour as those involving abandoned and neglected children, children from asocial families, and children of migrants. See the Convention on preventing the worst forms of child labour (Convention 182), ratified by Russian on 8 February 2003.*

⁹⁴ *Rosstat 2005.*

estimating a 73 per cent risk of being poor.⁹⁵ Like large families, single-parent families also have greater likelihood of experiencing poverty problems. Substance abuse is another factor which contributes to family breakdown. According to a study by the Moscow NGO, No to Alcoholics and Narcotics (NAN), parent alcoholism is the main reason for delinquency in children, comprising of 71 per cent of the two-parent families surveyed.⁹⁶ Moreover, such families often do not accept assistance offered by social workers presenting a serious obstacle in trying to help these families and their children.

4.3.2 Child Welfare Services

Limited state support to families with children has forced them to become more self-reliant and has led to some feeling marginalised and abandoned.

One of the key challenges for the Russian social welfare system is establishing child abandonment and homelessness prevention programmes. Investments in such measures could cut overall social service expenditure by reducing the number of children who become wards of state. To-date, prevention programmes have been more limited.

One of the main reasons for only limited programmes is the lack of reliable information regarding mothers in crisis. The reasons why children are abandoned or leave home have been studied sporadically, and many write off the causes to alcohol abuse. While that is certainly a factor, a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the issue needs to be made.

Another significant factor is the ease with which a mother may abandon a child at birth. Although medical staff are obliged to try to persuade the mother to accept her child, this is not systematically implemented. For example, if the child has a physical problem or disability, in reality a mother's only choice is either to send the child to a state institution or to shoulder the entire burden herself. Maternity wards do not include social workers who might inform mothers of their rights and responsibilities, and who could assist high-risk families and young parents.

4.3.2.1 Use of Institutions for Children in State Care

While the Russian Government has recognised the value of family-based care for all children, irrelevant of whether they are with their birth families or not, the overall paradigm of its child welfare system has been based on maintaining a large network of institutions for childcare and long-term residence.⁹⁷ Like the health sector, public

⁹⁵ *UNICEF Report Summary, Child Poverty in Russia: Alarming Trends and Policy Options*, Ovcharova, L. N. and Popova, D.O. UNICEF, Independent Institute of Social Policy, Moscow, 2005, p.9.

⁹⁶ "Juvenile technologies. Practical instructions for implementing geographic models for rehabilitation centres for minors in risk groups." NAN, 2002.

⁹⁷ Markov, "Child Welfare Policies in Russia: Main Issues and a Reform Agenda", <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/RUSSIANFEDERATIONEXTN/0,,contentMDK20531627~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:305600,00.html>.

resources and efforts in child welfare have focused on a more “curative” rather than preventive response to family crises.

The ineffectiveness of institutional care has been widely researched and reported. The World Bank 2002 analysis of the child welfare system in Russia estimated that the average monthly cost of residential care per child exceeded 6,000 Russian roubles (approximately USD 230) which was significantly higher than the usual budget allocation for any form of family-based care.⁹⁸

Furthermore, children in institutional care often do not develop the appropriate life skills, which are required to function effectively when living independently. Children from institutions often enter society with insufficient knowledge and skills, reducing both their social and labour productivity. Consequently many graduates from institutions have fewer opportunities to break the cycle of poverty, deprivation, and family dysfunction.⁹⁹

Factors that have impeded faster transformation of Russia’s child welfare system from a reactive use of institutions to a more preventive approach include:

- Limited training of childcare providers on preventive (early intervention) work with vulnerable families and children;

- Lack of financing for foster care, which is in part due to the fact that substantial resources are spent to maintain institutions;

- Limited understanding by authorities of the critical need to replace the current institutional system with a family-based care for children;

- Negative media reports which claim that foster care is used by mercantile parents who wish to exploit the children.

In addition, adoption has been used only limitedly. Both national and international adoption has been hindered by lengthy and unnecessarily complex procedures. UNICEF advocates for the removal of such barriers to uphold the best interests of a child which involves living in family settings. While opportunities for national adoption should be sought first, it is important that children are not inhibited from access to family life if the only option is international adoption.

4.3.2.2 Coordination among Responsible Ministries for Child Welfare¹⁰⁰

Slow progress towards more preventative approaches may also be attributed to the fact that responses have been divided among different agencies. On the federal level, responsibility has been divided among the Ministries of Health and Social Development, and of Education and

⁹⁸ *Ibid*

⁹⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*

Science. At the regional and municipal levels, functional responsibilities for various segments of child welfare have been dispersed among a larger number of agencies. Furthermore, no clear mechanisms have existed regarding coordination among these different agencies.

4.4 Government Response

4.4.1 Early Family Intervention/ Alternative Family Care

Over the past ten years, the Government has taken important steps to promote family-based care with greater emphasis on prevention. The passing of the 1995 Family Code created a legal and institutional framework focused on family-based and child-centred approaches to family and child welfare. Under the Code, provisions given priority are to family-based care of vulnerable children, and to development of preventive social work and care services. Furthermore, preventive social welfare practices were initiated with the Government's expansion of locally based care services provided by rehabilitation centres and social shelters.

While these actions have not been sufficient to significantly change the existing child welfare paradigm, President Putin's May 10, 2006 Statement to the Federal Assembly reiterated the Government's commitment to promote these changes. In his statement, he highlighted the "need to work together with the regions to develop a programme providing financial incentives for placing orphans and children whose parents are unable to care for them in family care." Furthermore, he "instructed the Government to work together with the regions to create a mechanism that will make it possible to reduce the number of children in institutions."

The federal programme, Children of Russia 2007-2010, also has a key component, "Children and Families," which provides special attention to unsupervised children, children receiving social rehabilitation in specialised rehabilitation centres for minors; children and families with disabilities, and child orphans and children without parental care.

CRC Committee Concluding Observations to Russian Federation 3rd Periodic Report:

Paragraph. 39:

In light of article 20 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Adopt a comprehensive strategy and take immediate preventive measures to avoid the separation of children from their family environment and to reduce the number of children living in institutions, inter alia by providing assistance and support services to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their childrearing responsibilities, including through education, counselling and community-based programmes for parents;
- (b) Ensure that the placement of children in alternative care is always assessed by a competent, multidisciplinary set of authorities and that the placement is for the shortest period of time and subject to judicial review, and that it is reviewed in accordance with article 25 of the Convention;
- (c) Take measures to create an environment that would allow for fuller development of the child and the protection of children against all forms of abuse. Contacts with the family while the child is institutionalised should also be further encouraged, when this is not contrary to the best interests of the child;
- (d) Strengthen its efforts to develop a traditional foster care system and other family-based alternative care, by paying particular attention to the rights recognised in the Convention, including the principle of the best interests of the child, and strengthen the measures aimed at building the capacities of guardianship and trusteeship agencies;
- (e) Ensure that children participate in the evaluation of alternative care programmes and that complaint mechanisms are created that allow children to submit their complaints.

**CRC Committee
Concluding
Observations to
Russian Federation
3rd Periodic Report:**

Paragraph 14:
The Committee recommends that the State party continue its efforts to establish regional Offices of Ombudsmen for Children's Rights in all regions and ensure that they are provided with sufficient funds and personnel to enable them to function effectively. It also recommends that the State party give further consideration to the establishment of a Federal Office of the Ombudsman for Children's Rights. In this regard, the State party should take into account general comment No. 2 (2002) on the role of independent human rights institutions.

Regional Initiatives¹⁰¹

Samara Region has initiated innovative policies in regards to child welfare reforms. Specifically, the region has developed 48 early identification and rehabilitation "Family" centres (one per municipality), each staffed with social workers, psychologists, education specialists and medical doctors.

Family centres provide on-going services for up to 12,000 families, but if needed, children can be placed in temporary shelters. The region promotes both domestic adoption and alternative family placement which has resulted in the placement of 85 per cent of children without parental supervision in family-based settings, compared to the national average of approximately 70 per cent.

4.4.2 Independent Monitoring Structure for Child Rights

In its concluding observations to Russia's second periodic report to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Committee stressed the need for an independent monitoring structure regarding child rights. The Committee also reiterated this need in its Concluding Observations in September 2005 to Russia's 3rd period report to the Committee on Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 1998, the Government responded with the development of pilot projects which promoted child rights ombudsperson posts. By June 2005, there were 18 child rights ombudsperson posts – 15 posts at Russia's constituent entity (subject) level and 3 at the municipal level. Efforts both among government agencies and civil society organisations exist which continue to support regions interested in developing this structure.

4.4.3 Juvenile Justice System

In 1999, the Government passed the Federal Law "On the Prevention of Child Neglect and Juvenile Delinquency." By the end of 2002, a network of agencies working on child delinquency prevention nationwide had

¹⁰¹ Markov, "Child Welfare Policies in Russia: Main Issues and a Reform Agenda", <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/RUSSIANFEDERATIONEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20531627~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:305600,00.html>.

been developed, including: 1,162 specialised institutions for minors; more than 850 education agencies for children in need of psychological and medical assistance; 1,326 agencies for youth issues, aimed at providing psychological assistance and urgent care to minors in crisis situations; and 1,027 social rehabilitation institutes for minors.

While these actions are important, Russia does not have an autonomous juvenile justice system throughout the country, which would deal only with minors and have its own rules. Approaches specific to legislative response to children in conflict in the law include:¹⁰²

- Provision of extra legal protection for minors, such as dual representation in a court of law;

- Information disclosure about minors' living conditions and upbringing;

- Opportunities for suspended sentencing, or other alternatives to punitive measures; and

- Special procedures when a minor is taken into custody, such as the presence of a teacher during questioning.

A draft juvenile justice law has been produced, and extensive public discussions have been conducted. In March 21, 2006, the Parliament held the second hearing on this draft law.

4.4.4 Legislative Responses to Issues of Violence & Exploitation

Russia has taken several legislative steps to enhance children's and the general population's protection from violence and exploitation.

Specifically, Russia has shown greater political commitment to combat human trafficking, by creating a central state authority to coordinate implementation of anti-trafficking policies, as well as providing support to NGOs which operate anti-trafficking projects.

In December 2003, the criminal code was amended and for the first time ever included Articles 127.1 ("Trafficking in human beings") and 127.2 ("Use of slave labour"). At the same time, however, the criminal code article 152, "Trafficking in Minors," was removed. Some Russian experts have expressed the opinion that repealing this article has "decriminalised" child trafficking, with the number of convictions of "trafficking in apparent minors" dropping sharply.¹⁰³

The Russian Government also recently ratified the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, and the Protocol on Trafficking in Persons ("Palermo Protocol"), and the ILO's Convention 182, "Worst Forms of Child Labour."

CRC Committee Concluding Observations to Russian Federation 3rd Periodic Report:

Paragraph 86:

The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that juvenile justice standards are fully implemented, in particular articles 37, 40 and 39 of the Convention and other United Nations standards in the field of juvenile justice, including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules), the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines), the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty and the Vienna Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System, and in the light of the Committee's 1995 discussion day on the administration of juvenile justice, ...

¹⁰² "Juvenile technologies. Practical instructions for implementing geographic models for rehabilitation centres for minors in risk groups." published by the Moscow NGO, No to Alcoholism and Narcotics addiction, (NAN), 2002

¹⁰³ Human Trafficking in the Russian Federation: Inventory and Analysis of the Current Situation and Responses, Report conducted by E. V. Tiurukanova and the Institute for Urban Economics for the UN/IOM Working Group on Trafficking in Human Beings, p.87.

4.5 Working Together for Children in the Future

Establish coordinated set of policies as part of national child welfare reform strategy to reduce poverty among families with children, reduce the number of children without parental care and develop family environments for children.

Strengthen preventive policies and practices which address vulnerable families' and children's needs to cope with social, health and behavioural risks through use of various social services, incorporation of individual case management for at-risk families in social work activities, and targeted social benefits and child allowances.

Promote transformation of residential institutions into resource centres for alternative family-based care and early intervention services. Transition processes could include providing institutional staff with new skills and the community with information about the overall benefits of family-based care approaches.

Reform the juvenile justice system to include specialised courts, social services to cooperate with them, as well as training for lawyers and social service professionals.

Strengthen legislative actions regarding child trafficking, taking into account the special protection measures that children victims require, both as victims and as children in accordance with their special rights and needs.

Make mine clearance and improved education opportunities for children in Chechnya a priority. School teacher training on mine risk education has to be complemented by risk awareness for the public, as well as by efforts to mark dangerous zones.

The Way Back Home

Masha doesn't like to talk about her previous home life. Today at the age of 8 years, Masha lives in the shelter, The Way Home, into whose care she was trusted in 2005.

When you ask Masha whether she would like to return home, she keeps silent. She brightens up, however, when you ask her about the things she learnt to do at the shelter, such as embroidery. She also likes to colour and to play with dolls. Before, the only way she passed her time was hanging out on the streets while her parents were blacking out after yet another drinking binge.

"When our orphanage started operating it was meant to take care of children from vulnerable families, where parents abuse alcohol or drugs," said Tatiana Kharybina, the shelter's director.

Established in 1992 with the support of the NAN Foundation, The Way Home serves as a temporary shelter for children. Currently, 20 children live there. They attend school classes, and learn a variety of arts and crafts.

The majority of these children, such as Masha, have had no childhood. They are fleeing abusive homes, and prefer to live on the streets or at railway stations. They make their living by stealing and begging. Slowly but surely, however, they start using drugs and alcohol, and face a life much like that of their parents.

The Way Home might be a drop in the bucket in this ocean of need, but it nevertheless remains a beacon of hope to many boys and girls who have lost their way and are searching for the way to a new home where they are safe from violence and distress.



In its Child Protection Programme, UNICEF supports the work of The Way Home Shelter, and other government and civil society agencies to better ensure that children, like Masha, can have a safe and secure childhood – working on ways to enable children to be able to safely return to their birth families or to find new homes in family settings.

CRC Article 12:

The views and voice of children must be heard and taken into account when decisions are made that affect them.

CRC Committee Concluding Observations to Russian Federation 3rd Periodic Report:

Paragraph 31:

The Committee recommends that further efforts be made to ensure the implementation of the principle of respect for the views of the child. In this connection, particular emphasis should be placed on the right of every child, including children who are members of vulnerable and minority groups, to participate in the family, at school, in other institutions and bodies and in society at large. This right should also be incorporated in all laws, judicial and administrative decisions, policies and programmes relating to children.



5.1 Introduction

Having socially active, educated and healthy young people is the dream of any society. Ensuring the rights and well-being of young people is critical for sustainable prosperous development, human security and peace both globally and in modern Russia. Given that approximately 25 per cent of the world's population is young people

aged 15 to 24 years¹⁰⁴, it becomes quickly apparent that they are key players' in any countries' development strategy.¹⁰⁵

The Russian Federation has expressed its commitment and dedication to the Millennium Development Goals, in which a critical component is creation of a healthy, prosperous and secure environment for young people and fulfillment of their potential. Promoting gender equality and equity, improving reproductive health, ensuring human rights, expanding education access on all levels, and providing economic opportunities for Russia's young people offer multiple rewards that can accelerate social and economic progress, with a lasting impact for future generations. Improving education, reproductive health and economic opportunities for young men and women in Russia is particularly important.

International experience demonstrates that simultaneous investments in three areas of youth development and participation can be an effective impetus in progress at a national level: secondary and vocational education; reproductive health information and services; and young people's economic rights.

Millions of young people can play a larger role in Russia's development, and, in turn, create a more secure and prosperous country for themselves and generations to come. Evaluation of young people's well-being requires the review of several key components such as health, education, employment opportunities, and participation in public life. Several of these issues have been addressed in the prior chapters regarding health, education and protection. However, participation is a critical component in ensuring children's and young people's well-being; true rights are not just "provided for" but also rely on the participation of those who are concerned. As a result, this chapter examines the wider social and economic consequences of young peoples' participation for the country's long-term development. It also considers the core issues of education, health and participation of young people in social life in Russia as well as anti-social behaviour.

It is both an ethical obligation and a collective responsibility to meet the MDGs and to create a modern society that empowers young people. This step is particularly important for Russia, in light of its demographic crisis. Only by ensuring a decent and participative society for young people, will Russia be able to build a modern and prosperous society.

5.2 Current Situation

5.2.1 Higher Risks

The younger generation - children of the early 1990s - are often portrayed as the natural winners of the transition. This portrayal is

¹⁰⁴ This estimate is based on review of the 15 to 64 year old population worldwide.

¹⁰⁵ UNESCO, *Youth Development Report: Condition of Russian Youth*, Mark Agranovich, Natalia Korolyova, Andrei Poletaev, Igor Sundiev, Irina Seliverstova, Anna Fateeva, Moscow, 2005, p.50.

partially true, as a newly emerging market-oriented economy and more democratic institutions do offer greater opportunities for the young. However, as the first generation born and raised in modern, post-Soviet Russia they also face higher risks. The transition period has and still is exposing them to both opportunities and challenges.¹⁰⁶

Russia's young people have experienced significant social and behavioural changes as well as rapid, and not always favourable, socio-economic transformation. These conditions have made young people in Russia vulnerable to risks which were largely unknown to their parents and other adults during their youth. Currently, young people in Russia face a wide variety of social, educational and economic challenges for which effective responses are still being found.

These risks are reflected in data for example, the 15 to 24 year old age group, which has experienced the largest increase in deaths due to unnatural causes, including drug abuse and AIDS.¹⁰⁷ The majority of newly detected HIV cases in Russia are among young people under the age of 25 years, with a growing proportion of new infections occurring amongst the 15 to 19 year old age group. The age at which young people start to inject drugs is falling dramatically, and most HIV-positive young people have contracted the infection through intravenous drug injection. The number of heterosexually transmitted cases of HIV is also rising. Ignorance about HIV/AIDS, and about preventive measures, is widespread. The lack of after-school safe spaces and opportunities for organised leisure or sports heightens the risk of becoming engaged in high risk behaviours such as substance use and unprotected sex. Relaxed sexual mores in society mean that young people more than ever today are susceptible to sexually transmitted infections and HIV. Furthermore, health services are frequently not youth-friendly or age-appropriate, nor are they responsive to the risks young people currently face, often resulting in young people not seeking medical treatment or psychological counselling when needed.

While education and employment opportunities are relatively high for young people compared to other developed countries, regional disparities in social and economic development among Russian regions also makes some young people more vulnerable. Regional disparities result in inequality of access to quality education and, in turn, lead to a decrease of the human capital level and competitiveness of the region.

As discussed in previous chapters, there has been a rising trend of criminalisation among young people in Russia. Over the last few years, criminologists have also noted increases in aggressive and violent crimes resulting in a greater number of juveniles sentenced to longer terms of incarceration. Significantly, between 1995 to 2002 this number multiplied by 2.5.¹⁰⁸ Coupled with this is the characteristic that young people are more than twice as likely to commit offences in groups than adults.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ *Young People in Changing Societies, UNICEF Regional Monitoring Report, 2000, p. 1.*

¹⁰⁷ *UNESCO, Youth Development Report: Condition of Russian Youth, Mark Agranovich, Natalia Korolyova, Andrei Poletaev, Igor Sundiev, Irina Seliverstova, Anna Fateeva, Moscow, 2005, p.3.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid, p.108.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid, p.109.*

Unfortunately the lack of creative solutions for rehabilitation, the limited activities available to reintegrate young offenders into community life not only results in the inactivity of youth but also criminal recidivism.

5.2.2 Limited Participation in Political and Social Life

A key component to young people's overall well-being is the level of their participation in political and public life. Too often, children and young people are seen as part of the problem and suffer disproportionately as a result of the world's problems. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, all children and young people have the right to have their say about decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account. UNICEF promotes the active role of young people in changing their own social environment, the development of positive forms of youth culture, and constructive interaction between adolescents and adults.

Youth have a special opportunity to participate in consolidating democracy and developing civil society, which is of particular relevance for Russia as President Putin has identified the development of civil society as a top priority. Young people's participation in the development and strengthening of civil society will contribute to ensuring greater sustainability of the reform process. Through their participation in newly emerging democratic institutions, young people will assist in shaping a society with which they can identify and contribute to change.

Attention to youth problems in the Russian Federation coincides with the international community's growing focus on youth participation in civil society. Young people are increasingly recognised as an economic, political and social force. The rights-based approach to youth participation is, in many ways, an evolution of progress on the rights of children, enshrined in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.

There are four primary settings in which the participation of children and young adults takes place - at home, at school, at work, and in the community - and participation in each area is a positive trend for being active in the others.

Existing data about the level of young people's participation in political and public life is relatively limited and largely drawn from sociological surveys. However, available information suggests that young people demonstrate low levels of interest and participation in political, economic and cultural events and developments.¹¹⁰

5.2.2.1 Political Interest

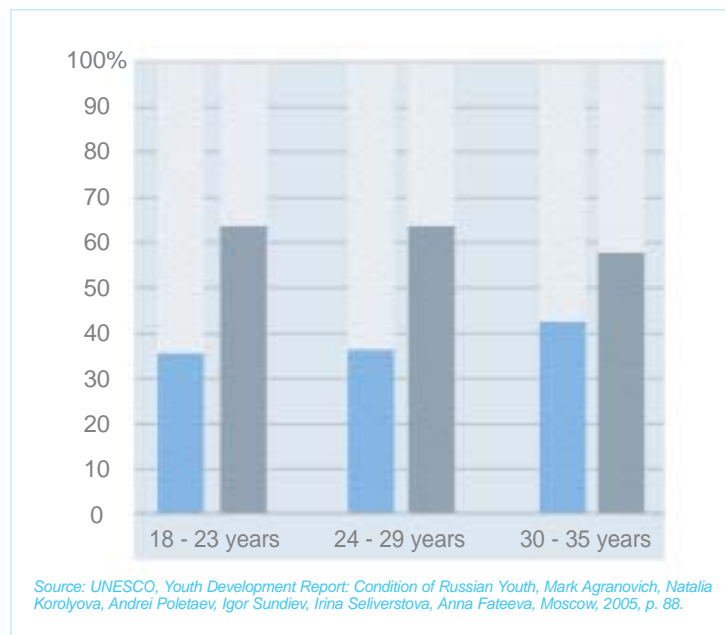
Youth participation in politics can take a variety of forms. One of the most effective gauges of political commitment is examination of voter turnout. Voting is the most basic of democratic acts, and the vigour of a democratic society is often measured by the extent to which its citizens participate in elections.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.3.

There are a number of reasons why young people's participation in the election process is important. First, young people have political interests which can significantly differ from those of older voters and which should be represented. Second, the right to vote is an equaliser in that each person has one vote and thus possesses the same ability as others to exercise influence in political elections. Third, participation in the decision-making process promotes awareness of civic responsibility.

Information from a 2004 opinion polls organised by the Public Opinion Fund¹¹¹ reported that only 37 per cent of young people expressed an interest in politics, while almost 62 per cent did not show any interest at all.¹¹² The passive interest of young people in politics is also reflected in their voting record, for which the age group 18 to 35 years had the lowest participation rate in the March 2004 presidential elections. Fifty-seven per cent of young people participated in comparison to 83 per cent for the age group 55 years and older. The Public Opinion Fund found that young people in Russia are more supportive of market and democratic reforms than older people, but

Figure 14: Level of Young People's Interest in Politics



are less active in voting activities. It should be noted, however, that this trend is common in many democratic societies, with young voters exhibiting lower turnout rates than those of older age groups.

In the Russian Federation, young people's attitudes towards

¹¹¹ The poll conducted by the Public Opinion Fund on January 17, 2004, concerns only 18 to 35 years old respondents. The survey comprised of an All-Russia poll of city and rural population in 100 settlements of 44 regions, territories, and republics of all economical and geographical zones. Survey methodology comprised of home interview, with a statistical error not higher than 3.6 per cent.

¹¹² UNESCO, Youth Development Report: Condition of Russian Youth, Mark Agranovich, Natalia Korolyova, Andrei Poletaev, Igor Sundiev, Irina Seliverstova, Anna Fateeva, Moscow, 2005, p.89.

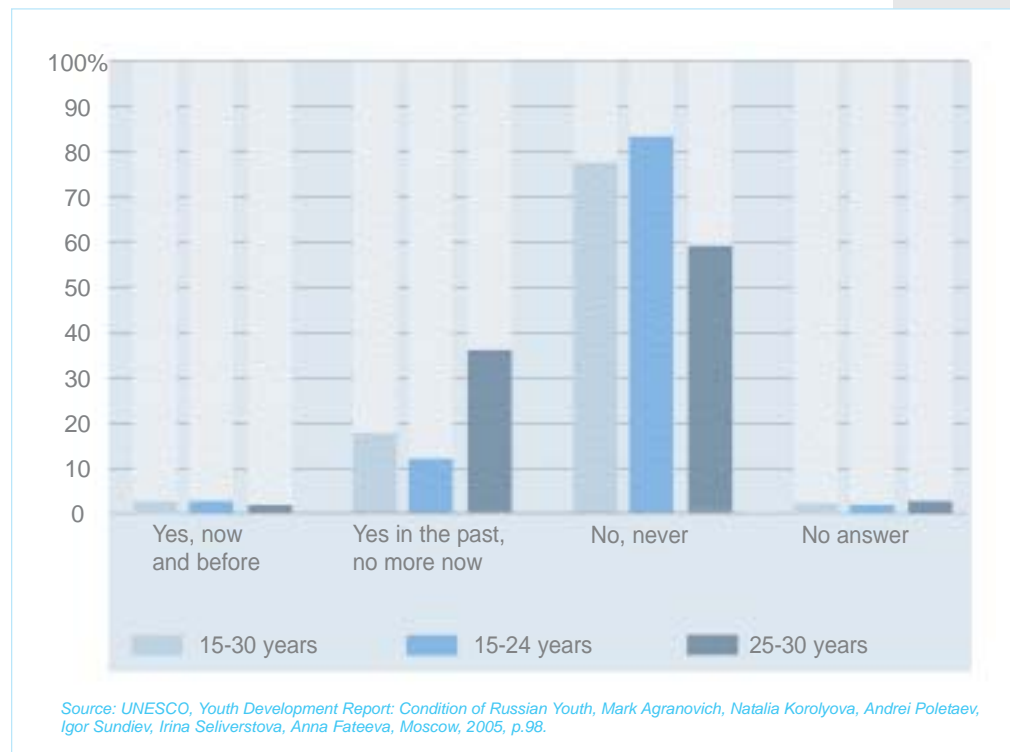
government are stipulated by a lack of trust in the state, and simultaneously, by large expectations for the state to secure them adequate living standards. The questioning attitude typical of youth may make them skeptical or critical towards any authority. A survey entitled “Young Russians” conducted by the Russian Centre for Public Opinion and Market Research among young people between 18 to 29 years old suggests that two out of every three youth in Russia have a highly negative opinion of the primary institutions for the delivery of democracy.¹¹³

5.2.2.2 Participation in Social Activities

Young people participate in society through a wide range of activities, including social organisations, faith-based organisations, sports and recreation clubs, and non-governmental organisations.

In the past, youth belonged to mass organisations like the Young Communist League’s *Pioneers* and *Komsomol*, where membership was not obligatory but strongly encouraged. It is estimated that in the Soviet Union during the late 1980s, 65 per cent of 14 to 28 year olds were *Komsomol* members.¹¹⁴ While the key goal of these institutions were largely defined as vehicles to socialise youth to preserve the political status quo, they did provide structured settings where young people could meet and enjoy sports and other leisure activities. The demise of these organisations has resulted in

Figure 15: Survey Response of Young People “Have you ever taken part in any youth organisation?”



¹¹³ *Young People in Changing Societies, UNICEF Regional Monitoring Report, 2000, p. 109.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid, p. 110.*

diminished access to low-cost sports and leisure facilities. Yet, at the same time, young people have gained opportunities to participate in a broader range of organisations and social activities and to make individual choices about when and how to participate. In 2003, the Federal Register of state-supported Youth and Children Associations included 61 associations (44 youth and 17 children's associations), with 29 having "All-Russia", 30 interregional and 2 international status. Furthermore, a large percentage of youth organisations are not legally registered, with 2003 expert estimations claiming that less than 20 per cent of youth associations are registered.¹¹⁵ However, data from Public Opinion Fund's July 2002 survey of young people reflects the low participation of youth in social activities.

Existence of a youth volunteer movement is also a key indicator of young people's active participation in social, political and economic life. The UN General Assembly noted that "a volunteer movement is one of the basic means, by which people can be active subjects of the social development process".¹¹⁶ In fact, youth volunteer movements might represent one of the most efficient leverages of youth involvement in social activities. Children's and young people's free access to voluntary social activities raises their awareness of social responsibility and instills knowledge and skills.¹¹⁷

While youth volunteer initiatives have begun in Russia, the society still lacks a distinct volunteer movement involved in different aspects of social life. According to the All-Union Centre for the Study of Public Opinion (VTsIOM), over 40 per cent of Russians say that they would take part in socially useful activity on a volunteer basis.¹¹⁸ In reality, however, there are few opportunities in modern Russia for volunteer ambitions to be realised. UNDP's 2005 Human Development Report for the Russian Federation found that only 2 to 4 per cent of the population is involved in voluntary activities, because Russia lacks an infrastructure for encouraging and supporting such activities. Volunteering remains in Russia as a social experiment.¹¹⁹

5.2.3 Participation in Working Life

Youth employment has an important place in the MDG's, as target 16 under MDG 8- "develop a global partnership for development"- which urges cooperation in designing and implementation strategies for decent and productive work for youth.¹²⁰

The transition from school to work is an important phase for young people's development as they prepare themselves for a more

¹¹⁵ UNESCO, *Youth Development Report: Condition of Russian Youth*, Mark Agranovich, Natalia Korolyova, Andrei

Poletaev, Igor Sundiev, Irina Seliverstova, Anna Fateeva, Moscow, 2005, p.96.

¹¹⁶ UN General Assembly Resolutions, A/RES/56/38, January 10, 2002.

¹¹⁷ Human Development Report 2005 Russian Federation, *Russia in 2015: Development Goals and Policy Priorities*, UNDP, 2005, p.181.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 182.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 182.

independent role in the society. Good employment opportunities in the beginning of a young person's working career can create more favourable conditions for personal and professional fulfillment throughout adult life: a poor start in the labour market can seriously damage future prospects.

The post-Soviet changes in economic development created many profound and sometimes severe consequences for the women and men in Russia, with only limited review of specific impact on young people. Today, young people in Russia face somewhat different work prospects than their parents did in the former centrally planned economy. During Soviet times, high school enrolments and full employment were usual, and the entry of youth into the labour market was closely controlled. Young people upon finishing their education were not only granted with a job, but they were also obliged to work, otherwise they faced potential stigma. The collapse of the Soviet Union presented young people in Russia with a changing labour market environment where new opportunities and fresh obstacles abound.

According to UNICEF's Innocenti Research Centre, youth participation in the labour force decreased with the Russian Federation's transitional period.¹²¹ Since the onset of the transition, unemployment has become a reality for many. The "economically active" youth population today includes the employed, as in the past, but also young people who are out of work and actively seeking work.

The decline of economic activity by young people in the Russian Federation can be explained by an overall increase in enrolment to secondary and tertiary education. Young people in Russia decide to obtain more education, both because it is becoming difficult to find work and because acquiring more skills and knowledge increases their chances of eventual career success. Part of the decrease in economic activity among young people is due to the young people's voluntary withdrawal from the labour market by neither working nor looking for legitimate employment.

Wages and benefits are most obvious indicators of individuals' economic well-being, but other less measurable indicators, such as job satisfaction, have important consequences for youth development and their contribution in the labour force, contributing to society's overall development. Different labour force surveys reveal that often a substantial proportion of young people have jobs which do not match their qualifications. This factor is partially explained by the huge gap between wages in state and private sectors.

Another problem in modern Russia is a gap between the aspirations of young people and the realities in the job market. Almost 50 per cent of the employed young people between 15 to 24 years old want a different job than they have, compared to 39 per cent of adults between 24 to 59 years old.¹²²

At the moment, the Russian Federation is experiencing an unprecedented growth in its GDP and industrial production. Russia's economic performance contributes to the creation of new jobs. The international experience proves that economic growth, linked to

MDG 8

Develop a global partnership for development

Target

In cooperation with developing countries, develop decent and productive work for youth.

¹²⁰ *The end of child labour: within reach*, ILO, Geneva, 2006, p.61.

¹²¹ *Young People in Changing Societies*, UNICEF Regional report, 2000, p.64.

¹²² *Ibid*, p70.

consistent economic reform, can benefit young people even more than it does adults and that labour hoarding and protection of existing jobs are relatively less advantageous for young people. The current situation in the Russian labour market proves that fact, although there are some limitations in employment opportunities for the youth population in rural areas, as well as for youth with special needs. It is also necessary to shed light on illicit employment and revise the Russian minimum wage legislation, which leaves much space for black labour relations with young people.

As President Putin stated in his annual 2006 address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Russia must realise its full potential in high-tech sectors such as modern energy technology, transport and communications, space and aircraft building. Our country must become a major exporter of intellectual services.¹²³

Young people who are making the transition from education to the work place could especially benefit from training and self-employment programmes as well as programmes for first time job-seekers. It is also necessary to promote labour mobility within Russia. Authorities need to protect the rights of workers and to increase the capacity to support and provide assistance for the most vulnerable. Greater policy support of the young generation and more intervention for this important age group makes good sense both economically and socially.

5.3 Immediate & Underlying Causes

5.3.1 Lack of Leadership Skills & Limited Effective Engagement

In examining the reasons for young people's low participation in political or public life, experts note two aspects that have had a significant effect. First, that young people frequently lack the skills for the self-organisation, articulation and promotion of their rights and interests. At a roundtable in Voronezh, human rights specialist, Andrey Yurov, noted that students are not only uninterested in the struggle for student's rights (80 per cent), but do not even want to know about them (70 per cent).¹²⁴

Then again there appears to be a failure by society to create regular and continuous fora that encourage children and young people to become socially and politically active. For example, political parties have not actively engaged in the protection and promotion of the interests of young people or encouraged their genuine participation in political and leadership fora.

¹²³ *President Putin's Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, May 10, 2006.*

¹²⁴ *UNESCO, Youth Development Report: Condition of Russian Youth, Mark Agranovich, Natalia Korolyova, Andrei Poletaev, Igor Sundiev, Irina Seliverstova, Anna Fateeva, Moscow, 2005, p.89.*

5.3.2 Lack of Effective Monitoring Systems regarding Youth Participation

Currently, Russia lacks appropriate data or an understanding of the participation and situation of young people. To develop and implement an effective youth policy, a stronger monitoring system is necessary which has key indicators regarding young people's access to health, education, and employment, as well as involvement in political and public life, and juvenile crime.

The Russian national machinery for improving the state of youth includes: the Duma Committee for Women, Family and Children; the Duma Committee for Physical Culture, Sport and Youth; the Federal Council's Commission for Women's Affairs; the Commission for the Status of Women; and the Ministry of Labour and Social Development's Department for Family, Women and Children. The main difficulty faced by Russian institutions in regulation of youth policies is that their mandates and objectives are generally unclear and often overlapping. These structures have only very limited financial resources for investing in youth policies or specific programmes.

5.4 Government Response

In July 2006, the Russian Government under its G8 presidency made history by creating a forum for children. The Junior 8 was convened to enable young people the opportunity to share their views directly with the world's leaders and to influence the outcome of their deliberations. The Junior 8 offered children a platform to share their perspectives and views, and to demonstrate that they are active participants in their own development, empowering them to become agents of change in their own lives, influencing their communities, and the world at large.

Throughout the last decade, youth policy in the Russian Federation as in other European countries has been increasingly influenced by the goal of encouraging youth participation in all aspects of society. Russia's youth policy is four-fold:

- Promotion of participation of young people and provision of the opportunity for them to participate and develop as individuals and citizens;

- Protection of vulnerable youth and prevention of marginalisation and social exclusion of vulnerable youth;

- Prevention and response to anti-social and self-harming behaviour among young people; and

- Guarantee and protection of young people's political, legal and social rights, and creation of legal frameworks and institutional structures necessary to protect young people's rights and provide social services.

The State Duma's Committee for Physical Culture, Sport and Youth approved a new programme of the Ministry of Education and

Speaking Out



UNICEF jointly with the St. Petersburg State University supported the Ministry of Education and Science in organising the Junior 8. Children's voices matter and UNICEF works to have young people's voices heard by decision makers, the media and the rest of the world.

History was made on July 16 at the Konstantin Palace in the St. Petersburg suburb of Strelna when the Junior 8 delegates met with their nation's leaders. What began a year ago as an idea to have eight youth leaders from the Group of Eight spend five minutes with their leaders, turned into a 40-minute discussion that covered HIV, education, tolerance and violence, and energy security.

Only eight delegates, chosen by each national delegation, were allowed to meet with leaders in the palace's ornate and grand hall. The session was carried live nationally on Russian TV.

"All our efforts are being done to guarantee the future potential of mankind," said President Putin, opening the meeting. "And it must be done for those whom it will impact most of all — the youth of our world."

The Junior 8 delegates were enthralled by this chance to meet their leaders and be heard.

"I was nervous, but I was very happy to express my opinion to my leader," said Muneo Saito, the Japanese delegate, at the press conference after the meeting.

"I liked that the leaders appeared to take us seriously, and were listening attentively and taking notes," said James Goodall, a U.K. delegate. "Children are not usually listened to, but I think they will take some of our ideas and use them."

Science, "Strategy for the State's Youth Policy in the Russian Federation from 2006-2016." If passed by the Government, this programme will be considered as the Government's official youth policy. This strategy is being widely discussed in society. The main obstacle to the fulfillment of this programme is how to ensure adequate financing. Experts suggest that such an ambitious programme will cost no less than 30 billion roubles [USD 1 billion] a year¹²⁵, which would represent a considerable jump over previous official federal spending on youth.

The strategy consists of four main projects:

A Russian information network would be created, which consists of websites and television and radio programming;

An advertising campaign called "New View" would be launched to publicise universal human values such as "health, labour, tolerance, and patriotism";

A "Youth in Action" programme would be developed which would promote the role of young people in civil-society institutions and in the "development of functioning services

¹²⁵ *Kommersant Daily*, 10 November 2005.

and affordable places to spend leisure time”;

An All-Russian Construction Brigade — perhaps the most reminiscent of the Soviet Komsomol — would draw youth into work on labour brigades and associations.

Four national projects in the areas of health care, education, agriculture and housing construction launched earlier this year are much about youth. Many signs give cautious optimism that the attainment of the goals laid down in the above mentioned projects could dramatically change the state of life for young people in Russia, resulting in their better participation in political, social and economic life.

In 2006, the Ministry of Education and Science’s Department on State Youth Policies, Upbringing and Social Protection has initiated greater collaboration with the relevant UN agencies on activities such as: the organisation of a roundtable, “Effective youth policies in comparative situations”; support of a new report, “Youth in Russia in 2007”; participation in the projects, “Technologies to attract youth to active community lives” and “Integration of Vulnerable Youth into Society.” The Ministry of Education and Science has also taken the lead role in promoting life skills education programmes in school curricula that will give young people greater access to the knowledge and skills that will enable them to live healthy lifestyles and negotiate high risk behaviours.

Russian authorities have also worked to cope with growing advertising pressure on young people regarding consumption of beer and cigarettes. Cigarette advertising is completely prohibited on TV and partly in print and electronic mass-media. Beer producers cannot advertise on TV before 10 PM. Other restrictions on these issues are being discussed in the Russian Parliament.

5.5 Working Together for Children in the Future

Recognise young people as a distinct group in society, with particular needs and capacities which stem from their formative age, and which are **reflected in child-friendly and youth-friendly policies and programmes.**

Provide platforms and forums for open and meaningful dialogue among children and young people to discuss issues of importance to them and which can have meaningful influence on decision-making and programme development for relevant issues.

Provide structured and accessible leisure activities for young people, particularly those who are vulnerable to high risk behaviours.

Pay particular attention in policy-making and programme design to vulnerable youth, developing policies such as assistance to youth offenders to return to “normal” life.

Create a system of key indicators for monitoring of the effectiveness of youth policy and the participation of young people in the political, public and social life of their communities.

Foster multidisciplinary/intersectoral approaches to issues such as health services for young people, education and employment, which are supported by political will and empirical research.

Foster trust between youth and service providers and policy-makers, with the ability for open dialogues on sensitive areas such as sexual and reproductive health.

