

**Review of Educational Programs
on HIV Prevention in Russia**

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Opinions expressed in this document reflect the authors' point of view
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Preface

The analytical study is based on the materials of the International seminar “Challenges of XXI century. HIV/AIDS prevention in educational programs for children and youth” that was organized by the UNESCO Moscow Office and Moscow Department of Education on 5 July 2004 in Moscow.

Representatives of UNESCO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNAIDS, Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, departments and committees of Moscow Government, international and Russian NGOs, as well as scientists, heads of education and health protection institutions, psychologist and teachers. Among 85 participants of the seminar there were representatives of 14 cities of the Russian Federation – Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Tomsk, Barnaul, Vladivostok, Irkutsk, Toliatti, Saratov, Elista, Novgorod, Nizhny Novgorod, Kaliningrad, Novosibirsk, Yaroslavl.

Participants have underlined in their presentations that in many counties of the world including Russia the HIV/AIDS epidemics mainly affects population that is capable of working. And it can inevitably result in economic, social and cultural problems. That is why it is so important to teach children and teenagers safe behavior while they are young.

The great attention was paid to the questions of complex approach to the struggle with HIV, combination of medical and education programs, support to abandoned HIV-positive children. Many participants underlined that informational and educational programs should be guided by the work with children and youth. In order to achieve this goal practical capacity and organizational potential of the Russian education system should be analyzed in view of HIV/AIDS prevention through retraining of educators, introduction of educational programs and dissemination of information.

UNESCO supposes the preventive education to be of great importance, since not only individuals, but the whole society is threatened by the HIV epidemic. Its spread has not been curbed – on the contrary, the epidemic is expanding to new regions and spreading in some areas even more rapidly. It primarily affects youth. It strikes hardest where lack of education, illness, malnutrition, violence, armed conflicts and discrimination are already well entrenched. Children are at risk on an unparalleled scale. In some countries more than a third of 15-year-olds are infected.

The epidemic hampers the social development; it destroys productive capacity and widens the gap between rich and poor. It affects the whole society by undermining all aspects of sustainable development – guarantees of human rights, securing of education for all, reduction of poverty, advancing of equity, improvement of health and access to new technologies. Without these aspects the society becomes more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

Unfortunately, much is still not known about the epidemic. But enough is known to act immediately and everywhere – to undertake massive prevention efforts, to offer treatment, to provide care and secure human rights.



Director of the UNESCO Moscow Office
Philippe`Queau

Review of Educational Programs on HIV Prevention in Russia

*(Based on materials of the international seminar entitled
“Challenges of XXI century. HIV/AIDS Prevention in Educational
Programs for Children and Youth”, held in July 2004)*

The HIV/AIDS epidemic at the current time can be regarded as a biosocial anomaly that is difficult to control, and the epidemiological situation is developing in a way that has become threatening. According to experts, the actual number of HIV-positive people in Russia is as high as between 1.5 and 2 million, although the official figure is less than 300 000. People of working age constitute 64% of those affected. The growth of injecting drug use is speeding up the spread of HIV – in 2003, 70% of newly registered HIV cases in the CIS were linked to this mode of transmission. Drug use is therefore one of the core reasons for the spread of HIV.

According to data from January 2004, around 1% of the population between the ages of 15 and 49 were registered as HIV-positive in 10 regions of Russia. In the view of Professor V. G. Akimov, this percentage exceeds similar indicators not just in Western Europe and North America, but also in North Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America.

The regions with the highest number of HIV-positive people (in descending order) are Moscow Oblast; Saint Petersburg city; Sverdlovsk, Samara and Irkutsk Oblasts; Moscow city; Orenburg Oblast; Khanty-Mansiisk Autonomous Region; Leningrad, Tyumen, Ulyanovsk and Kaliningrad Oblasts.

According to data from the Moscow Federal AIDS Center, until 1999 the spread of HIV was relatively slow, however from 1999 onwards there has been a sharp increase in the number of newly detected HIV cases. Since then, HIV has been spreading rapidly among injecting drug users. As of 1 January 2003, there were 20 475 registered cases of HIV in the Moscow city area, 17 694 of these being residents of Moscow.

The implementation of the “*Anti-HIV/AIDS Targeted Program to Prevent the Spread of the Illness Caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in*

Moscow, 2001-2003” has had a definite effect in curbing the epidemic. The incidence rate of HIV in Moscow decreased by 43.7% between 1999 and 2002, while in Russia as a whole it continues to rise. At the present time, more than half of those affected are young people between 21 and 30 years of age, and around a quarter are under the age of 20.

During the last few years, the main routes of transmission of the HIV virus have changed. Despite the fact that the majority of new cases are still injecting drug users, statistics show that the role of sexual (heterosexual) transmission has increased. The proportion of HIV cases resulting from sexual transmission increased fourfold between 1999 and 2002, and this is an indicator that the epidemic is spreading into broad sections of the population and is no longer confined to traditional risk groups.

The data above was set forth in presentations given by participants to the international seminar (see below), especially in that of V. G. Akimov, a professor of the Russian State Medical University. More detailed statistical information can be found in a special publication – *HIV/AIDS in Russia: Trends, Problems and Reactions*, prepared for the international conference on “HIV/AIDS in Developing Countries” (Moscow, October 2004).

The most effective method of preventing HIV among young people is through education and information. With sufficient intellectual, methodological and informational capacity, preventive educational work can not only lower the risk of the transmission of dangerous infections, but also create the psychological basis among the new generation for healthy lifestyles and good physical health, level out stereotypes of antisocial behavior, and promote more traditional spiritual values among young people.

The methodology of Russian organizations and governmental departments in this area fully matches UNESCO’s strategy, which agrees that “prevention is the most practicable and effective form of fighting HIV/AIDS, as it works to change behavioral patterns through the dissemination of information, the introduction of new approaches, and the apportioning of skills through effective communication and discussion based on the local culture context.”

This position was affirmed by an international seminar that took place on 5 July 2004 in Moscow, which was entitled “Challenges of XXI Century: HIV/AIDS Prevention in Educational Programs for Children and Youth”. The seminar was carried out on the initiative, and under the aegis, of the UNESCO Moscow Office, in conjunction with the Moscow Department of Education. The program of the seminar was organized by the Etnosphera Center for International Education.

At the seminar it was emphasized that although there are three main branches involved in the fight to prevent HIV/AIDS – medical, social and educational – the educational approach is the one that is most appropriate to preventive activities, and that most fully answers the crucial preventive objectives set forth by K. Matsuura, the UNESCO Director-General, who said in 2003 that there should be “informational campaigns at all levels, objective-oriented campaigns, facilitation of changes in dangerous behavioral patterns”.

Assessments have shown that in the Russian Federation, preventive work on HIV/AIDS through educational programs is carried out both by governmental organizations and by various non-governmental organizations. This means that different approaches and methods are used in pursuit of the goals of the fight against HIV/AIDS.

One example of an integrated approach to the problem is the step taken by the Moscow Government in 2003 to introduce the “*Anti-HIV/AIDS Targeted Program to Prevent the Spread of the Illness Caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in Moscow, 2004-2006*” (henceforth referred to as the “Moscow Program”). This was developed as part of the federal program on the “Prevention of and Fight against Social Illnesses 2002-2006”, and is a continuation of the Moscow Program, which was carried out between 2001 and 2003. The document has an interdisciplinary and intersectoral character, and allows for effective control and coordination of its implementation as part of the Working Group under the chairmanship of the First Deputy Mayor of Moscow L. I. Shevtsova.

It should be noted that issues relating to HIV prevention, including those in regional documents, have a legal basis in Federal Law 38-FZ of 24 February

1995, entitled “On Preventing the Spread of the Illness Caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in the Russian Federation”. The above-mentioned Moscow Program is fully based on this law, as can be seen even from the similarity of their titles.

Preventive educational work on HIV/AIDS is coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, and in Moscow by the Moscow Department of Education.

In addition to the organizational aspect of this work, **the conceptual approach of organs of educational policy and governmental educational organizations at federal and Moscow levels should be emphasized. We feel that this is successfully formulated in the Moscow Program: “The most appropriate and effective method of HIV prevention at a basic and fundamental level is to give the population, and especially young people, a moral upbringing, with the aim of instilling socially safe models of behavior. In contemporary educational terminology, it is a case of promoting a healthy lifestyle. This conception of a “healthy lifestyle” in relation to HIV/AIDS should include a utilitarian, practical, but also a moral element, which takes into account Russian social mores and philosophical traditions, including the ethical and spiritual attitudes of all the traditional Russian faiths.**

The position of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and the Moscow Department of Education is that preventive work aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle should be organized using an integrated approach to dealing with educational, moral, psychological and medical issues in all major spheres of life for children and young people.

“Positive prevention” is generally seen as a good term to describe this position. This term was set forth and defined in one of the works of the Special Psychology Faculty of St. Petersburg State University. In accordance with this understanding, the aim of work that prevents drug use and HIV/AIDS by the abovementioned methods is the “upbringing of harmonious, moral, well-adapted individuals, who are able to fulfill the fundamental demands made of them without

resorting to the use of psychoactive substances or other forms of antisocial or unhealthy behavior”.

This approach guarantees a coordination of action by educational institutions at different levels, and an engagement of educational, scientific and parental concerns with the problems of engendering a healthy lifestyle. It also ensures the creation of conditions conducive to the development and implementation of contemporary educational methods and technology, and the development of educational systems in the regions, taking into account specific local conditions.

This position is reflected by specific parts of the Moscow Program for 2004-2006, especially Point 1.8, which is a “Guarantee that educational facilities in Moscow (comprehensive schools, middle-professional and higher education institutions) will provide differentiated programs for the moral education of children and young people.”

It should also be noted that in preparing the “Guidelines for Introducing Special Lessons Dedicated to World AIDS Day for Schoolchildren of the 9th-11th grades” in 2003, the Moscow Department of Education, together with the other authors of the document, cited one of the fundamental tasks in the prevention of HIV as “introducing thematic topics of moral and sexual behavior into the study programs of middle and high schools”.

Moscow is the first place in the Russian Federation where, as part of the municipal Anti-HIV/AIDS program, a full-scale informational advertising campaign was carried out. Video clips entitled “You don’t need to be scared, you need to be informed” and “What you should know about AIDS” were broadcast on leading television channels. These clips presented young people with carefully thought out information about the dangers of HIV/AIDS and recommended looking at the specially created Internet site www.spid.ru. On this website, full information is available about the routes of transmission of HIV and prevention measures, and there is also the possibility of real-time consultations with specialists from the Moscow Federal AIDS Center.

It is fundamentally important that over the last few years, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation has been paying more attention to the necessity of increasing the status of this kind of holistic educational work, and is taking concrete steps in this direction. It is clear that only the presence in educational institutions of a range of staff – including qualified social teachers, psychologists, teachers of extracurricular activities, and classroom teachers of morally and physically healthy ways of life – will be effective to the degree required. **Moreover, it is important to understand that instilling the psychological basis of physical and moral health in young people is a single methodological process, and the successful resolution of this most important area of upbringing can only be guaranteed by using this kind of approach.** When educational bodies in other regions of the country are deciding on their fundamental directions and plans of action for programs aimed at facilitating the successful upbringing of young people in their educational institutions, the work undertaken in Moscow by the Federal Ministry and the Moscow Department of Education should be looked on as a good example. As an example of this kind of work, Moscow can point in particular to the “Hygiene in Your Life” program for 11-14 year old pupils, which has been introduced over the course of four years into the capital’s educational institutions, with the cooperation of the Scientific Research Institute on the Hygiene and Healthcare of Children of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences. More than 160 000 schoolchildren and over 70 000 of their parents have taken part in this program.

Moscow educational institutions also use a range of additional programs, recommended at both federal and local levels, to help promote a healthy way of life and prevent HIV. These include the program “Health” for students of the 1st-11th grades, edited by V. N. Kasatkin and L. S. Vygotsky; “A secret that the Whole World Knows” which was developed by the Scientific-Methodological Center “Diagnostics. Adaptation. Development. after L. S. Vygotsky”; a manual on the social aspects of preventing drug use and HIV among young people, authored by S. B. Volkova, L. I. Babenko and Yu. N. Rossiiskaya; “Life’s Path” for students of the 1st-11th grades, developed by staff of the *Nadezhda* Center of Diagnostics and Counseling of the Moscow

Department of Education, authored by A. G. Zhilyaev and T. I. Palacheva; and others. Training programs on the prevention of harmful behavior, developed by the Moscow University of Psychology and Pedagogy, have a special place in the preventive work of educational institutions.

Special programs aimed at the prevention of antisocial behavior and HIV have been implemented in a number of schools in Moscow – including in UNESCO-associated schools – particularly as part of student projects. A few examples of these are listed below.

School No. 618	“Health”, “Behavioral Cultures” “A Healthy Lifestyle” “Drugs – Shooting Yourself in the Foot”
School No. 1251	“We are the Generation who Will Choose... What?”
School No. 1287	“A World Without Drugs”
School No. 1289	“Healthy Teenagers are the Future of Russia!”
School No. 1527	“Drug Problems and School”
Kozhukovo – Educational Center No. 1804	“Health Monitoring” “No thanks!” (anti-drugs program)
School No.1938	“World AIDS Day”
etc.	

One of the most successful examples of “positive prevention” is the inclusion of the chapter on “The Foundations of a Healthy Lifestyle” in the study programs of A. T. Smirnov and B. I. Mishin, which have been approved by the Federal Ministry. These are “foundations of safe living” for students of the 5th-11th grades of comprehensive schools, and “foundations of medical knowledge and a healthy lifestyle” for middle-level professional institutions. In these essentially self-supporting textbooks, topics connected with instilling the basis for physical and moral health as a condition of a successful and

psychologically adapted life in modern society are developed. The conception of the moral-educational approach characteristically taken by the authors of this program can be emphasized by looking at the lesson on the theme of “The Role of Women in Contemporary Society”, from the specialist study program for students of middle-level professional institutions:

“... 1.2 The social role of women in contemporary society and the well-being of the nation: spiritual and physical attractiveness, a high level of morals and intellect, participation in public life, creation of solid family units.”

“... 2.1 Forms of interaction between people, the expression of feelings and emotions, demonstrations of friendship and love. Respect for the other person and their personal feelings, the ability to respect the decisions of others. Friendly relations, sympathy, love and intimacy. The ability to express one’s feelings and emotions. Demonstration of friendship and love, the ability to express sincere appreciation to one another.”

However, the practical experience of using these programs in the capital poses ever more urgently the challenge of developing a single conception of a similar integrated program, but one that takes into account the specifics and peculiarities of the situation in the megalopolis that is Moscow. This is one of the challenges for specialists from the Moscow Department of Education and their colleagues in other departments and organizations.

One important area of work to promote the prevention of drug use and HIV in educational institutions, in accordance with the position of the Ministry and Moscow Department of Education, is the organization of the free time and study time of young people, and the promotion of participation in sport and physical education activities. This area relates in particular to the work of the interdepartmental Program for the Development of Extra-curricular Education for Children (2002-2005).

At the heart of this program is a clear understanding of the need to instill panhuman values such as physical and psychological health and well-being among young people. Furthermore, as part of the practical work of educational institutions, including as part of this program, the challenge of preventing antisocial behavior through physical education and sport has been set. This can be seen in the Moscow Program, for example at point 11 – “The organization of the city-wide sports event «Sport against Drugs and AIDS»”. Under the aegis of the Department of Education, a network of health schools (45 institutions) and a network of schools using international health programs (200 institutions) have been created. These institutions are working on the issue of creating the basis for a healthy lifestyle, including through an integrated implementation of physical education and sports events, using specialist psychologists and medics. This is guaranteed by relevant funding, including the provision of specialist medical equipment, a range of additional staff, and so on. In every educational region of Moscow, programs are in force, which allow for the provision of this work throughout the year, including the organization of summer holidays for children.

It should be emphasized that the Federal Ministry and the Moscow educational administration see the role of physical education and sport in the prevention of drug use and HIV not just as an effective way for young people to spend their free time (although this is also very important in preventing antisocial behavior), but also as a “moral tool” that can help to create the basis of a healthy lifestyle.

A few more programs based on the philosophy of the “positive prevention” of HIV can be mentioned here. Of the international projects implemented using these methods in Moscow, together with governmental educational institutions, the Russian-Swedish project “The School of Living Together” should be given particular attention. This project aims to strengthen and support family structures, develop communication skills in small groups, instill the values needed to make moral judgments on situations that may arise in life, and so on. The Russian part of the project has been based in secondary school No. 1605 in Moscow; a number of other schools are currently discussing joining the program.

It is significant that the methodology of this project, which has been successfully implemented and is well known in Moscow, contains moral concepts such as love, sexual ethics, sexual responsibility, recognition and expression of feelings, and so on. Within an ethical framework, young people are able to discuss almost all the fundamental problems of establishing and developing their personality, and of psychological and social adaptation to contemporary society. Within this framework, which is spiritual and moral, but also practical, the issues of preventing alcoholism, drug use and HIV are considered.

This program, like all well-known programs based on the methods of “positive prevention”, attempts to create **not simply a “healthy lifestyle” in its most basic form, but a “morally healthy lifestyle”**, and in this it fundamentally differs from programs which aim to achieve simply utilitarian goals in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

As far as the use of this kind of approach among state institutions in other regions of Russia is concerned, one of the most convincing examples is the set of programs of the *Doverie* Center for Psychological, Methodological and Social Support, a municipal educational institution in the city of Yaroslavl. These programs were discussed at the Moscow international seminar.

The “Health and Safety” program to prevent “social illnesses”, including HIV/AIDS, which is being implemented by *Doverie*, consists of a number of subprograms with titles characteristic of “positive prevention”: “Teenager in a World of Values”, “Caring for your Health”, “The Art of Personal Growth”, and so on.

These programs allow young people to:

- Raise the level of information they possess regarding the problems;
- Accept personal responsibility for their own decisions;
- Develop skills and abilities to deal with problems constructively;
- Create the conditions for personal growth;
- Enjoy broadened access to social, medical and legal services; and,
- Be offered help and support when facing these problems.

Four main aspects of work to prevent the sexual transmission of HIV can be outlined:

- Reliable, up-to-date information about the issues relating to HIV/AIDS;
- Mutual trust and discourse between partners;
- Difficulties and personal responsibility in the sexual behavior of young people; and,
- Societal attitudes towards people living with HIV/AIDS.

Since 1993, the Doverie Center has been carrying out the “Heart-to-heart” project, which is based on interaction between teenagers and their peers: “teenagers teach other teenagers; teenagers help other teenagers”. The project consists of four fundamental components:

- “Confidential Phone Line for Teenagers”, as part of which a special training course of between 60 and 64 hours is given to older teenagers to prepare them for work as confidential telephone consultants.
- The “Leader” Program – training leaders to be able to organize and regulate social interaction in educational institutions.
- The “Themis” Program – information on legal issues and provision of legal help to young people.
- The *Stupeni* Youth Theater – offers help to young people through the theatrical staging of real-life problems that they face, followed by feedback from the audience.

One of the practical results of HIV prevention work in Yaroslavl was the development in 2003 of the educational program “Step to Good Health” for municipal comprehensive institutions, which aims to teach students about living a healthy lifestyle. It was important that this program was approved by the Educational Authority of the Mayor of Yaroslavl.

What stands out about this program is the fact that it is oriented toward creating the basis and skills required for a healthy lifestyle in a holistic manner, and HIV prevention does not have any special place in its text. However, the contents and structure of the program are such that the problems of HIV prevention can actually be an important part of it. The key component of the

Yaroslavl program is the clearly expressed value-oriented approach to instilling the motivation to lead a healthy lifestyle, through a deep and multifaceted methodological study of the didactic aspects of teaching. The program directs a lot of attention to questions of “social health”, by which is meant not just communication and behavioral norms, but also personal and ethical aspects, making it necessary to talk of a healthy personality, about moral and spiritual health, and about healthy families. Although it is difficult to lay down clear and unambiguous criteria for a healthy and mature personality, it is possible to state the most important characteristics. These include the conscious ability to control one’s emotions and actions; a sense of responsibility to oneself and others; and a striving for self-realization, personal growth, and the establishment of benevolent relationships with other people.

Doctors, teachers and psychologists at all levels give particular emphasis to the mutual influences of the different aspects of health; the unity of the physical, mental and spiritual characteristics of a person.

The program is mainly implemented through lessons, and partially through faculty study and consultations. Different methods of learning are used in the lessons: discussions, role plays, psychological testing, situational analysis, group work and training. To illustrate some of the methodological specifics of the program, some of the titles of its themes, reflecting the adherence of its authors to the philosophy of “positive prevention”, are listed below.

7th Grade	“I Am an Individual” “What Constitutes a Real Friend?” “Ethics and Health” and others
9th Grade	“Get to Know Yourself” “Self-development as a Way to Creating your Personality” “How to Become the Master of your Own Fate” “Your Appearance, and Secrets of Beauty” and others

10th Grade

“On the Road to Adulthood: Personal and Moral Aspects of Health”
 “Strategies for Overcoming Stress”
 and others

At the same time, the program fully deals with the medical and psychological aspects of leading a healthy lifestyle, for example (as relevant to HIV/AIDS), “Toxic Substance and Drug Use, and its Consequences” in the 7th grade, “The Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections” in the 9th and 10th grades, “Alcoholism and Drug Use” in the 9th grade, and “Preventing Dependence” in the 10th grade. For example, the lesson on “Preventing Sexually Transmitted Infections”, for students of the 9th and 10th grades includes the theme “Sensible, Moral Behavior – The Foundation of Prevention”.

The approach and methods of the Yaroslavl authors appear to be one of the most integrated and consistent examples of “positive prevention”, and deserve to be studied both as a generalized example of regional experience, and as a practical example of HIV prevention in educational institutions.

The innovative training methods used by secondary school No. 43 in Rostov-on-Don are also of interest here. The training is part of a partner project between the European Union and the Russian Ministries of Education and Science, and Health. The European Union project can be considered as contributing to the fundamental goal of instilling an attitude among the young generation that regards health as one of the fundamental values in life. The main topics covered by the project are peaceful communication; tolerance; prevention of drug use, tobacco smoking and alcoholism; anti-AIDS information; information to promote safe behavior; media literacy; the problem of violence; society and the individual; physical health as a basis for developing an identity; sexual education and etiquette; gender relations; and the motivational nature of personal success.

It should be noted that **the methodological approach of the majority of these programs is predominantly informational and educational. In a number of cases, the project as a whole is clearly of an informational and educational character.** As part of this kind of program, various theater performances, exhibitions, concerts and interactive shows take place; printed materials are distributed; seminars, conferences and debates are held; and methodological aids are developed and disseminated.

Currently, the most pertinent aspect of these projects is widely held to be their application of the well-known principle of peer-to-peer interaction, whereby students volunteer to undertake educational work with their peers. Many organizations have developed techniques for preparing volunteers, including relevant training.

One example of an effective informational-educational approach to the prevention of HIV, which falls into the category of “positive prevention” and uses the “peer-to-peer” principle as one of its foundations, is the work of The Center for International Understanding, based in Saratov. The strategy of the peer-to-peer program being implemented by this organization is based on the creation of a self-evolving system of preventive services. This uses a “cascading” method of learning, whereby specialists train the young volunteer-trainers, and then in turn the volunteers themselves prepare their peers to be trainers, under the leadership of the specialists. Furthermore, the program developers have put in place an informal mechanism for young people to disseminate information among their peers – during school breaks, at clubs and parties, and in other situations where spontaneous on-the-spot discussion is possible. The value of this program also lies in the fact that the interactive methods of learning used, such as role plays and elements of psychological training, involve the young people and mean that they themselves become participants in preventive work.

The Saratov authors believe that in order for their program and similar programs aimed at forming a conscious and responsible attitude towards health among young people to succeed, there needs to be a methodological foundation that ensures the attractiveness of the study materials, target groups need to have access to the information, the course materials need to allow self-evaluation and be suitable for repeated use, learning should be interac-

tive, intellectual and material resources should be regularly monitored and evaluated, preventive educational measures should be systematic, and there should be constructive cooperation between different government departments.

A further example of an informational-educational approach is the Program to Prevent Socially Significant Diseases among Young People in the Kaliningrad Region, which is being implemented by the Kaliningrad-based organization The Army of Young Leaders (AYL), with the support of the Finnish National Committee of UNICEF. The program has the symbolic title “Caring for Tomorrow’s Adults”, and is mainly based on informational-educational activities, the implementation of which is regulated by an agreement between school administrations and the directors of the program. Their activities can range from one-day programs to programs for a full month. An example program structure is given below:

- Informational-educational section
- Training for school activists (optional)
- Training for young trainers (optional)
- Training for parents (optional)
- Interactive show
- Consultations with specialists
- Debates involving students and teachers
- Exhibitions of photos and thematic posters
- Dissemination of printed materials
- Informal peer-to-peer discussions

AYL include detailed data in their materials that provide evidence of the effectiveness of these methods in preventing HIV.

Currently, informational-educational programs are mainly implemented by non-governmental organizations, many of which were represented at the international seminar held in Moscow. These include the charitable organization *Sibir” SPID Pomoshcb* (Siberian AIDS Help), Tomsk; *Sibirskaya*

Initsiyativa (Siberian Initiative), Barnaul; the Humanitarian Project in Novosibirsk; the Moscow Representative Office of the HOPE Project (USA); the *Beregi Sebya* (Take Care of Yourself) foundation, Chelyabinsk; the Youth Information Center, St. Petersburg; the Center for Developing Citizens' Initiatives, Vladivostok; The St. Petersburg, Irkutsk, and Novgorod Regional and the Komi Republican Departments of the Russian Red Cross; and others. These projects were created using a reasonably consistent methodology, the details of which can be found in the materials of the major projects.

In these circumstances, attention is drawn to examples of original work, such as the "Social Theater: Performance Plus", created by the St. Petersburg Youth Information Theater. The project allows for the active participation of groups of young people in theater, "playing through" dangerous situations with the aim of developing suggestions on how they might be resolved. The project is composed of two important parts: a performance based around a given social topic, and an "educational session", which happens directly after the performance. The performance directs the audience towards the particular theme in question, gets them interested, and evokes emotions. During the educational session, the audience has the chance to reflect upon what they have just seen, compare opinions, and receive the necessary objective information about the theme that is being discussed.

An important aspect of the project is its mobility, flexibility, and its ability to reach a wide audience and involve different groups of young people, from the socially advantaged to the most neglected. The project could be implemented in schools, in youth clubs and youth organizations, in summer health camps, and so on.

Based on the experience of implementing this project, a manual for specialists was produced, with the support of UNICEF and the Danish Consul General in St. Petersburg. It contains generalizations of the main mechanisms involved and specifics on the implementation of projects combining methods of theatrical improvisation and informal interactive learning.

It is worth noting that the majority of the HIV-prevention projects of non-governmental organizations, including in the area of education, are implemented with the support of international and foreign – usually European –

organizations. Data provided by the Humanitarian Project in Novosibirsk can serve as an example: the programs carried out by this organization between 2002 and 2004 were supported by the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation), UNICEF, German Technological Cooperation (GTZ), USAID, the Democracy Commission of the Embassy of the USA in the Russian Federation, and others.

Returning to the issue of the advisability of using a morals-based approach as “positive prevention”, it can be seen that there are indeed elements of this approach in the programs and projects of the majority of organizations. Nevertheless, what comes over most strongly in a number of major projects is an “alternative”, more or less “utilitarian” approach, based on campaigning among young people on the subjects of hygienic habits and safe sex. Moreover, in some cases, especially in video – and even more so in televisual – campaigns, this campaigning takes on an aggressive character, suggesting that any psychological barrier against antisocial behavior in a young person should only be a result of fear of the possibilities of drug dependence or HIV infection. This conception becomes the foundation of educational and informational work in these kinds of projects.

The most pertinent example of this kind of “utilitarian” approach can, in our view, be seen in the work of the FOCUS-MEDIA Foundation for Social Development and Health Promotion, where the prevention of HIV to a significant extent is seen as synonymous with campaigning for safe sex.

The main area of the Foundation’s HIV-prevention work is the implementation of educational campaigns through the mass media. This kind of approach uses a very specific methodology of implementation, which, as far as can be seen, is very effective. However the main subject of controversy in this and similar programs (as was demonstrated at the international seminar in Moscow), is the inclusion of campaign materials that essentially entail campaigning for safer sex. This particular goal is seen by the program authors as the fundamental goal – or at least one of the fundamental goals – of informational campaigns. Given that the mass media has such an influence on the public that – especially among young people – it surpasses any other influence, and given that the work of FOCUS-MEDIA is particularly rel-

evant and well-known in this area, some of the fundamental informational and methodological characteristics of their projects are laid out below.

The position of the authors, with which it is impossible to disagree, is that an educational campaign in the mass media is essentially an informational campaign presented as a set of measures designed to initiate a change in the knowledge, attitudes and behavior of target groups in a particular area. Informational campaigns in HIV prevention have the global goal of slowing the rate at which the infection is spreading, through improving young people's knowledge about the routes of HIV transmission, and through instigating more informed attitudes and responsible behavior towards the issue of sexual health.

Informational campaigns include a range of elements and measures:

- Video clips for TV broadcast
- Audio clips for radio broadcast
- Outdoor advertisements (billboards and/or posters in the metro and the streets, advertisements on overground transport and larger street advertisements)
- Advertisements in magazines
- Internet
- Articles in magazines and newspapers
- Postcards with tests and quizzes
- Dissemination of specialized informational materials, such as posters and brochures, through medical and educational institutions and networks of non-governmental organizations
- Mass events (press conferences, festivals, concerts, parties and so on)

When developing campaigns, FOCUS-MEDIA takes a multifaceted approach: outdoor advertisements and video clips attract the attention of members of the target groups, and create the desire among them to find out more about the problem. At the same time, brochures and other printed materials carry accurate and detailed information about HIV/AIDS and ways to prevent infection.

It should be noted, however, that the although authors consider almost exclusively sexual problems in the implementation of informational campaigns, they do take a multifaceted approach, which promotes safer and responsible sexual behavior, as opposed to programs which narrowly focus only on HIV prevention. They also use a positive approach, and take into account the specifics of the Russian context and of particular target groups (including their cultural norms and tendencies, modes of communication and way of life). Nevertheless, what is striking is that the authors step away from principles of the ethical upbringing of young people in favor of “pure” information on safer sex. Special attention, in our view, should be paid to the principle declared by the authors (which seems to us to be far too “innovative”) of “promoting modern means of protection, as opposed to calling for abstinence or monogamy”.

It almost goes without saying that this understanding of relations between the sexes is highly controversial, and entirely contradicts not only Russian but also worldwide social standards and civilized traditions. By neglecting to reinforce moral criteria, safer sex campaigns effectively give moral legitimacy to casual sexual contact, which in Russian conditions could lead not to a reduction, but actually to growth in the spread of HIV. Thus, in our view, serious doubts exist over advocating the use of these methods in the educational programs of state educational institutions.

A similar approach to that of FOCUS-MEDIA lies at the heart of the work carried out in St. Petersburg’s educational institutions by the *Stellit* organization of social projects, which since 1998 has been implementing the “Healthy Lifestyle and Sexual Health for Schoolchildren” project, published in the collection entitled *Public Educational Resources* (Moscow, 2004). The program contains a preparation for teachers for the “Sex in the Context of a Healthy Lifestyle” course (120 hours); and related courses for students as part of biology, psychology, or other school subjects, or as separate courses. The authors’ methods direct attention to what they feel are the most necessary components of a study program, namely love and sexuality, sexual behavior, homosexuality, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV/AIDS.

The Kalmyk Republic AIDS Center, in the city of Elista, which gave a detailed presentation at the international seminar in Moscow, bases its work to a significant degree on the same principles. The Center's projects are implemented in cooperation with the Kalmyk Ministry of Education and Ministry of Youth, Tourism and Sport; the Kalmyk Republic Center for Improving the Professional Skills of Educational Staff; and others.

The approach aims to develop and put into practice study programs on "The Prevention of HIV Among Schoolchildren" for students of the 6th to 11th grades in the Kalmyk Republic's educational institutions.

It should be stated that this program seems to be one of the best in terms of breadth of scope and didactic consistency in informing and teaching schoolchildren. The program is marked by its informational breadth and insightful discussion of the issues related to these problems – issues that are psychologically difficult for young people to digest. Discussion of HIV prevention is strictly limited to studying the reasons for infection – drug use and casual sexual contact. Young people learn about responsible social behavior – how to avoid using psychoactive substances, safe sex, and so on – in a detailed and systematic way (for example, beginning with the 7th and 8th grades, special classes are devoted to the question of delaying the start of sexual activity; in the 9th and 10th grades there are classes on alternatives to sexual contact and safe sex).

However, as with the abovementioned informational campaigns of FOCUS-MEDIA, this program, which is of considerable size, does not focus at all on the moral criteria of a mentally and physically healthy lifestyle. This is despite the fact that such a focus would be in line with the approach of the Federal Ministry. This program, as with any other program with a similar focus, grossly oversimplifies the problem, and whilst its goals are undoubtedly important, they are nevertheless utilitarian goals. They aim for young people to develop the skills of appropriate social behavior and physical hygiene only on the basis of a psychological fear of drug use and HIV/AIDS.

It should be emphasized that this position has many supporters, who justifiably point out that a lack of knowledge of the "rules of sexual safety", or contempt for them, increases the risk of HIV transmission. However, as both presentations and discussions at the international seminar showed, the opinion of the delegates on this question was far from unanimous. Many of them felt

that the key to this work should be discussions with young people – teenagers especially – not about how to use condoms, but about the immorality of casual sexual contact. They felt that aggressive campaigning about simply mechanical and “hygienic” responses to the problem would act as a psychological stimulus that would essentially promote this kind of casual contact.

A key problem in the state educational system is that of how to improve the skills of educational staff as related to the issues surrounding HIV prevention. Here, the joint work of the Nizhegorod Institute for Educational Development and the Privolzhskii Regional AIDS Center is of interest. The authors of this work believe that it is methodologically important that preventive action as part of the educational process is implemented mainly by teachers of individual subjects. This can be achieved by integrating preventive themes into the curricula of subjects such as biology, environmental biology, social studies, lifestyle classes, physical education, and so on. However, research has shown that less than a quarter of teachers surveyed use contemporary educational techniques in HIV prevention activities. It will be necessary to teach these techniques as part of courses to improve skills, seminars, training, and so on.

In particular, these issues will have to be considered by the Moscow Department of Education. Course modules on improving healthcare skills among students have been developed by the Moscow Institute of Open Education, and between 2001 and 2003 there were seven municipal conferences on this themes. At the same time, however, it is clear that the scope of this kind of work, even in Moscow, is insufficient. This is first and foremost due to a lack of the necessary funding. **Current Russian and international experience can only be assimilated into teaching practice by developing and implementing a systematic set of courses on skills building that takes into account local conditions.** In order to develop these courses, not only teachers should be involved, but also doctors, psychologists, experts in gender studies, sociologists, and so on.

It is clear, even from such a brief look at some informational and educational programs with differing foci, that the development and implementation of these programs in the HIV prevention area has reached such a level that **effective coordination of the work in this field has become essential.**

It was with this kind of coordination in mind, among other things, that the abovementioned federal program “The Prevention of and Fight Against Social Diseases (2002-2006)” (a subprogram of the *Anti-HIV/AIDS* program) was developed and implemented. As has already been noted, in Moscow the coordination of education is managed by the Moscow Department of Education, which is clearly reflected in the Moscow Program. Moscow’s educational system is essentially a “pyramid” structure, with the Department of Education at the top, followed by district educational administrations, and then the educational institutions themselves. This set-up is conducive not only to an effective coordination of steps to prevent HIV through educational programs, but also to the actual creation of educational institutions based on the practical results of such a coordination. Thus, over the last few years, the Department of Education has set up 35 educational institutions for children in need of psychological, social and medical support, five of which have “Anti-Crisis Centers” as sub-units. The implementation of the “Health” program in every educational district will promote the successful creation of these health schools, the mission of which is to solve these issues in an integrated way, and also of a network of full-day schools. These will allow the study, upbringing and development of young people to be organized into a learning system of extended influence, achieved through a broadening of the spectrum of extra-curricular learning through educational, informational and sports events.

As far as the coordination of HIV-prevention work at federal level is concerned, it should be reemphasized that the approach of the Federal Ministry (and of the Moscow municipal organs of education administration) in no way rules out other approaches and methodologies, including those that on these issues fundamentally differ from the position of the Ministry itself. Moreover, giving students broad information about the real dangers of drug use and HIV infection, and teaching them about safe sex (for example, using

the methods of the Kalmyk authors), could be an effective addition to “positive prevention” programs – as a relevant section of the Yaroslavl program on “Foundations of a Safe Life”, or of other similar programs.

So far, informational and educational methods of prevention have been spoken of as fundamentally about methodologies of teaching. However, as has been said, the content of such work cannot be looked at in isolation from its medical aspects, and – in a broader sense – its social aspects. This work is linked especially closely with the work of medical organizations, and with the medical sphere more generally. **It is important to emphasize that the delineation of medical and educational spheres, as applied to HIV prevention, is not clear-cut. Many medically oriented organizations, such as the International Red Cross and its regional organizations in Russia, undertake significant work in the field of HIV prevention using educational and informational means. There is no doubt about the effectiveness of such an integrated approach, nor of its suitability given the real dangers of the spread of HIV in contemporary conditions.**

Given that this danger grows along with the spread of drug use, and that knowledge levels about the necessity of a healthy lifestyle among Russians are clearly not high enough, cooperation between educational and health organizations, a fusing of their methods, and an integrated response to the problems of fighting the HIV infection are all necessary at both regional and federal levels ¹.

Furthermore, an up-to-date conception of the HIV epidemic as a biosocial anomaly requires close cooperation in preventive work not just between health and educational organizations, but also with those working in the social sphere, especially those who work with young people, and with legal organs, sports organizations, the mass media, and so on.

Cooperation between the health and education spheres is also essential for the preparation and training of staff. As is indicated in particular by the above-mentioned work of the Nizhegorod authors, the development of a preventive program for educational institutions consists first and foremost of applying qualified medical specialists to developing the content of the program, and applying qualified educational specialists to the questions of

¹ Given this, the Moscow Department of Health is taking part in all the activities of the above mentioned Anti-HIV/AIDS Moscow Program for 2004-2006.

its implementation. **If this kind of cooperation between so-called “medical” and “educational” approaches to the training of staff is used, the expected educational result can be achieved.**

To reemphasize: the full participation of medical doctors in HIV-prevention work both in comprehensive schools and in specialized institutions (for example, in the Moscow health schools) could increase significantly the effectiveness of preventive work as a whole. In Moscow, cooperation of this kind does exist in practice, but is limited by insufficient means to create an educational infrastructure for HIV prevention that corresponds to the scale of the problem. To an even greater degree, this applies to the situation in the regions, although many regions are nevertheless putting much effort into dealing with the problems.

The situation with regards to migration in Russia should also be noted at this point. This is an important and problematic factor, which is having a significant effect on the spread of HIV in the country. It is clear that the conditions in which the majority of “economic” migrants – and even more so illegal migrants – find themselves in are conducive to drug use and casual sexual contact. Preventing HIV through education and information becomes more difficult in these circumstances, and indeed is often impossible. However, this only makes the role of informational and educational methodologies more important. From the wide variety of existing forms and methods of work, programs can be specially designed to take into account the particular migration situation in any given region, and most importantly, the cultural and religious specifics of the migrant groups.

A well thought out and efficient approach will realize that it is exactly these specifics that could spell the difference between the success or failure of preventive work among migrants, and the level of its effectiveness with regards to men and women of different ages. Moreover, this is not just relevant to purely practical behavior, skills and stereotypes, but is also about broad psychological differences, such as interaction and sexual contact between the sexes in different cultures. It could be said that limitations, or even taboos, related to cultural or religious background must be respected when undertaking HIV prevention work. This is especially important when working with

the Muslim cultural tradition, which sets out many rules about people's behavior and the relations between different people. Given that many migrants are part of this cultural tradition to a greater or lesser extent, if – and this is very important – it is used correctly and appropriately, it can be an key factor in the effectiveness of HIV prevention work.

It should be pointed out that the above relates not only to work with migrants, but also to educational and informational HIV prevention approaches in areas with populations of mixed ethnic, cultural or religious affiliations.

A summary of the results of this analysis leads to the following MAIN CONCLUSIONS.

1. The position of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, the Moscow Department of Education, and organs of educational administration and state educational institutions of other regions is as follows: **from the point of view of their likely effectiveness in HIV prevention, the approaches of various organizations can complement each other. The most productive approach is one using regional educational programs that aim to instill among young people both moral values and the practical skills needed to live a healthy lifestyle – known as “positive prevention” programs.** Utilitarian approaches (especially campaigns based on safer sex), if sensibly and persuasively “built in” to positive prevention programs, may gain parental support (which is very important), and may on the whole lead to positive results in the Russian setting.

2. **What is needed in the long term seems to be the creation of an integrated methodology for HIV prevention in educational institutions, the main currents of which could become a new self-sufficient program, and be based on a specially developed base study program developed at federal level.**

The opinion of a number of specialists is that this base program should be specifically oriented towards the simple prevention of HIV transmission. However, the most profitable approach would seem to be the interdisciplinary approach that has been laid out above, whereby the problem of HIV prevention becomes just one part of the creation in young people of the basis for leading a healthy lifestyle in a holistic sense.

The base study program should take into account all the main approaches and achievements in this field, including the regional programs mentioned in this document and those discussed in the work of higher educational establishments and research centers engaged in developing programs aimed at creating the basis for leading a healthy lifestyle. The base program should be considered as a set of recommendations and frameworks for the development of new programs and the improvement of existing programs at a regional level.

It is important that the development of this kind of base program is undertaken with the participation of academics and educational specialists from the regions of Russia most active in this field.

In order to develop the optimal methodological solutions to these problems, it would be advisable when creating the base (framework) program to have discussion about the different aspects involved – in the form of specially organized seminars, round tables, and so on. One of the key questions to be discussed at these seminars will be at what age it is appropriate for students to study HIV prevention in educational institutions, and here the social, ethnic and cultural specifics of different regions will have to be taken into account.

3. A self-contained study course in any given educational institution can only be effective if accompanied by an integrated set of related educational, sport, informational, cultural and leisure activities that are also aimed at achieving the same preventive results. Moreover, the most important aspects of this kind of work should be designed not just for students but also for their parents. It is advisable also to pay attention to cultural, ethnic, religious and gender issues in this kind of work – these may determine how far the methods of learning should differ depending on the

psychological specifics and behavioral stereotypes of boys and girls, and of people affiliated to different cultural traditions. Overall, this would create the necessary atmosphere in educational institutions of interest and attention to the dangers of the spread of drug use and HIV/AIDS, and could well lead – ultimately – to positive results.

4. As far as possible, non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to undertake this kind of work, but their projects should be coordinated and should take into account the specifics of the region in question. This kind of work will be most productive if it is aimed not at one or even at several of the most “progressive” educational institutions, but instead at the whole educational system of a particular region. As the experience of, for example, Moscow shows, a governmental infrastructure and organizational system to fight HIV in educational institutions that corresponds to the stated goals should be created at a regional level. The relevant experience not only of governmental institutions, but also of the large number of domestic and international organizations working in this field, should be utilized to the maximum.

5. One of the key requirements for this kind of system to be effective is the presence of interdisciplinary cooperation and its coordination at federal level. Solving the problems of drug use and HIV infection is essentially a question of developing an integrated medical and educational approach throughout the country, the regional activity of which should be based on federal-level government organs and constituent entities of the Federation, which should be given appropriate powers that reflect the leading role of education in the prevention of the spread of HIV.

It does seem, however, that even given a comprehensive and clearly-defined coordination at federal level, the real effectiveness of this kind of work is to a great extent determined by regional organizations and organs of power, who are in possession of more detailed information about the situation on the ground and the possibilities of making positive changes to it. Thus the most productive approach is one where regional programs and projects use

hands-on experience from the regions to adjust and improve on the overall national HIV-prevention approach.

6. It is necessary to create a well-coordinated, budget-funded, and government-supported system that will guarantee training and an improvement in professional skills for people working in the implementation of HIV prevention work; both those in the field of education itself, and those more broadly using educational and informational means. This work should be interdisciplinary and should be developed as part of the integrated medical and educational preventive system outlined above, at both federal and regional levels.

7. A systematic interregional and international exchange of practical experience and the development of practical recommendations in this sphere should be organized jointly by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and the Moscow Department of Education, under the aegis of the UNESCO Moscow Office. One of the most effective ways of doing this may be to create an Internet portal with a database accessible to all, about educational and information programs throughout the Russian Federation that focus on teaching the skills necessary for a healthy lifestyle, especially for the prevention of HIV, and also operational information about the implementation of these programs. One idea that could prove productive would be to hold an international seminar, similar to the one held in Moscow in June 2004, annually, and to publish the materials presented to it.