

## Russia

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### AVP Russia Country Profile and Introduction

In Russia AVP workshops have been held with various groups of people: for example young people, refugees, psychologists, social workers, and more recently with children in orphanages. The AVP Moscow and Lipetsk groups have also built up a working relationship with the military in those cities and workshops are also held with conscripts in the Russian army. Such workshops are necessary and prove to be useful in solving the problem of aggression and violence faced by many in Russian society and in the army.

The high level of poverty and alcoholism in Russia, especially in the provinces, commonly results in a high level of violence. The figures on domestic violence in Russia are alarming: one in four women has suffered from domestic violence at some point in her life, although support groups argue that the real figure is even higher. Children who grow up in a violent family often go on to be violent or abusive.

Russia has national service for men aged between eighteen and twenty-seven. Bullying (or dedovshchina) is what the new conscripts can expect. The second year conscripts abuse the first year conscripts, who then in their second year go on to abuse the new intakes. A recent report by Human Rights Watch described the situation as 'horrific' and reported that hundreds of conscripts are killed or commit suicide because of the bullying, thousands run away and even more are left psychologically scarred.

Children in Russian children's homes often start their independent life with a great disadvantage. The children in the children's homes often have a high level of aggression, a low level of self-esteem and self-confidence and little experience of positive interaction with adults.

### History

A group of AVP-trained Quakers came to Russia in 1994 and trained up the first Russian group of facilitators in Moscow. This group then went on to train up other groups of Russian facilitators in Dzerzhinsk, Lipetsk, Chechnya and in Odessa in the Ukraine.

### Workshops and Training

In 2007 we plan to hold 20 basic workshops, 8 advanced workshops, 7 T4F workshops and 25 one-day workshops. Also we hope to be able to hold 36 workshops at the children's home.

We have 12 facilitators who regularly hold workshops in Moscow Lipetsk and Dzerzhinsk. AVP Russia council decides based on information about interested parties.

By holding Training for Facilitator workshops. Once every four months we hold workshops for new facilitators AVP Russia is currently running programmes on holding workshops with conscripts in the Russian army and with children in Russian orphanages. Last year we started holding AVP-themed workshops with children in children's home. These are AVP workshops which have been adapted to be held with the children. They involve aspects of fairy tale therapy and play therapy using puppets. So far the project is proving very successful and AVP Russian and Friends House Moscow are hoping to raise money so that it becomes a permanent part of AVP Russia's programme.

### Funding

AVP is currently entirely funded by Friends House Moscow (FHM), a Quaker organisation which was established in 1996 by a group of international Quakers. FHM relies on donations from Quakers worldwide.

### Evaluation

AVP workshops are evaluated by the facilitators who held the workshop, this included feedback from the participants. Monthly and final reports are written by the coordinator for Friends House Moscow. Staff and Board members of Friends House Moscow occasionally attend and evaluate the workshops. Evaluations are available but only in Russian!

Report prepared by Natalya Yerokina, National Coordinator, AVP Russia.