

Jørn Holm-Hansen, Lars B. Kristofersen  
and Trine Monica Myrvold (eds.)

# Orphans in Russia

Policies for family-like alternatives

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NIBR Report 2003:1

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Abstract: What are the feasible alternatives to  
traditional orphanages in Russia? This  
report from a pilot study presents the  
Russian policies that aim at providing  
orphans with a family-like upbringing.  
Policies consist in preventive measures  
against social orphanhood, alternative  
placement and reforms within the existing  
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# Preface

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The objective of this research project is to contribute to the process of facilitating a more family-like childhood  Russian orphans.

This pilot project is a co-operation between three research institutes in Russia and Norway:

The **Institute for Psychology and Social Work**, (the Pomor State University, Arkhangelsk) the Moscow State Social University (Moscow), and the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR), Oslo.

The project was launched by the researchers Jørn Holm-Hansen, Trine M. Myrvold and Lars B. Kristofersen in NIBR 2000-2001. Co-operation between the Russian and the Norwegian researchers started in the year 2001 and went on through meetings in Arkhangelsk and Moscow in February 2002. Visits to orphanages and group interviews with leaders and other staff of different children institutions and other authorities were conducted in Arkhangelsk by Larissa Malik, Trine Myrvold, Jørn Holm-Hansen and Lars Kristofersen in February 2002.

test call out

NIBR wishes to thank all the persons our researchers met and who contributed to the knowledge in this report during our visits to Arkhangelsk and Moscow in February 2002. We also wish to thank the translator Lev Levit for his excellent translation from Russian to Norwegian and vice versa during field work, and for his translation of parts of the report into Russian. We would also like to thank our secretary Lynne Bolstad at NIBR who has contributed to the technical editing of this report.

The report has been written and edited within four man-months during the period March through December 2002.

The five Russian researchers Anna B. Fedulova, Larissa S. Malik (both at the Institute for Psychology and Social Work at the Pomor University) and Mikhail V. Firsov and Lev V. Mardakhaev (both at the Moscow Social State University) have written outlines for the

chapters in this report. The three Norwegian researchers have edited the chapters and summary and written the conclusion.

The pilot project was financed by a grant from the Norwegian Royal Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, a grant from the Nordic Council of Ministers (Strategic Means from The Nordic Co-operation Ministers) and resources in the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR).

Oslo, March 2003

Sidsel Sverdrup  
Research Director

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# Summary

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Mardakhaev*

## **Orphans in Russia**

Policies for family-like alternatives

NIBR Report 2003:1

This report is based on a pilot study of alternatives to traditional orphanages in Russia. The study is a result of a joint project between the Faculty of Psychology and Social Work at the Pomor University of Arkhangelsk, the Moscow Social State University and the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR), Oslo.

## **The research questions**

Russia takes part in the international trend of preferring family-like units to big institutions of residential care for children who are left without parental care. What is the situation for Russian orphans today, and which alternatives to large, traditional orphanages are being developed? What characterises the sector for child welfare as a policy field in Russia? Based on findings from a preliminary study, this report seeks to discuss these questions. The study comprises a review of legislation, institutional set-up and policy development at federation level in Russia as well as studies of local reforms in the northern town of Arkhangelsk.

We hold two factors to be crucial for the introduction of new methods in dealing with orphans. First, there must be knowledge and support for the idea i.e. there must be epistemic communities or advocacy coalitions willing to exert pressure. Secondly, the institutional surroundings must be able to receive and sustain reform. Alternatives to traditional orphanages have to be introduced into a setting, not from scratch, not on a *tabula rasa* nor in an institutional vacuum. The report constitutes the first part of a larger project elucidating how reforms are

being carried out in the intersection of general principles developed internationally, and the real-life setting of Russia.

### **The scope of the problem of orphanhood in Russia**

The past decade Russia has experienced an increase in the number of children deprived of parental care. The problem remains one of the most acute social problems in Russia, and is closely linked to the relatively high level of poverty. Approximately 90 per cent of the orphans do have at least one living parent, and are called “social orphans”.

The large number of orphans comprises:

- Children without parents or with unknown parents
- Children with parents legally deprived of parental rights or with limited parental rights.
- Children with parents voluntarily renouncing their parental rights, due to their (or the child’s) health condition, poverty etc.

As for Russia in general, Arkhangelsk has experienced a growth in the number of children left without parental care. In the Arkhangelsk region in 2001 4749 orphans were brought up in orphanages. Many of these children came from homes where the parents have alcohol or drug problems, parents with criminal background, or mothers who are prostitutes.

### **Child welfare and orphan policies and legislation: State, regional and town level**

Russia was among the first countries to ratify The UN Convention on the Rights of the Children from 1989. In the wake of this convention, laws, resolutions and programmes have been passed and initiated both at the state, regional and locals levels in Russia.

The Russian Federation has passed a series of laws and resolutions concerning child welfare. Among these the 1991 governmental resolution settling the minimum living conditions for children in orphanages, and a law specifying the orphans’ rights to material benefits and education. Furthermore, orphans have special rights to medical treatment, property and housing as well as to work guarantees.

The past few years have seen a clear focus on children’s rights and needs in several target programmes. Such programmes are important

policy tools in the field of child care, and are carried out on all three levels of government. In 1994 a presidential programme called “Children of Russia” was introduced. Within the framework of this programme, the situation for orphans was emphasised. Moreover, different ministries administer several programmes relating to children. The large number of programmes requires firm co-ordination. This task is entrusted to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

Issues pertaining to orphans are regularly on the agenda of the Arkhangelsk regional assembly of deputies. Several laws and resolutions have been passed. At three occasions during 2001 the regional assembly considered questions directly concerning orphans.

### **Reasons for social orphanhood**

Following from Russia’s dramatic history throughout the twentieth century, large numbers of children were left alone without parents to take care of them. Orphanages were built on a large scale. This coincided with an official ideology in the Soviet era which did not regard the family as the main arena for socialising. Russia has a strong tradition of large institutions not only for orphans, but also for handicapped, retarded and sick children. Specialised institutions are the responsibilities of various ministries: The Ministry of Social Protection and Labour (social institutions); The Ministry of Education (special educational institutions); The Ministry of Health (health-educational institutions); The Ministry of the Interior (correctional institutions). Orphanages became a strong institution within Russia’s educational sector.

The increase in orphanages in Russia during the past decade must be seen in the light of public and private poverty, as well as social difficulties and mentality changes. Even if each of these are important factors in understanding the growth in the number of children left without parental care, special attention must be given to the possible dynamics between the factors.

The interaction of social and economic factors seems particularly close: *alcoholism* may lead to private ruin, and a *strained family economy* may increase the probability of alcoholism. Other relevant risk factors discussed in the report are: Families with many children; handicapped children; parents’ mental illness; criminality; minority background; one-parent families.

### **Social orphans – social background and “careers”**

The current economic and social developments in Russia give birth to a new generation of orphans. Both public and private poverty influence the “careers” of children at risk. The number of children and teenagers belonging to the group of social risk that are brought up in orphanages increases in Russia every year. Since 1992 the total number of children in boarding institutions under the Ministry of Education has grown more than 1.5 times and reached 234 000 children at the end of 1999.

At present, much attention is paid to the situation for the young people “graduating” (this is the expression used in Russian) from orphanages<sup>1</sup>. According to statistics every fifth orphan who “graduates” from orphanages develops a criminal career, every seventh becomes a prostitute. About ten percent of previous orphans commit suicide (Russian statistics referred in: Tobis 2000:33).

### **Orphanages - and the alternatives**

The report divides the policies of providing alternatives to traditional orphanages into three broad categories. First, there are efforts aiming at establishing alternatives *other than* the traditional institutions of residential care inherited from the Soviet epoch. Secondly, there are alternatives *within* the existing orphanages. It has appeared that the experienced staffs in many orphanages is eager to try out alternatives, like dividing the institutions into more family-like units, offering more individual care and the like. These efforts are less conspicuous than those of the former category, but often more feasible in financial terms and as to the actual workforce situation. Thirdly, there are alternatives aiming at *preventing* children from ending up as social orphans. These measures are undertaken with the intention of helping parents and children over the hump in periods of trouble.

Undertaking a conversion of traditional orphanages into alternative types of homes seems to be a difficult task in Russia. Russia has many more orphanages and orphans and less public resources to finance alternatives. Moreover, families living in cramped quarters and experiencing strained private finances will usually be less inclined to take another child into their household. The Family Code stresses the following alternatives to traditional orphanages for placing children deprived of parental care: Adoption, foster families, guardianship and

---

<sup>1</sup> As most orphanages are educational institutions under the Ministry of Education the young people who leave them are graduating pupils (*vypuskniki* in Russian).

family type orphanages. In addition to the forms mentioned explicitly in The Family Code, alternatives to traditional orphanages include patronage families, SOS Children's Villages, family upbringing groups and replacement families.

A relatively large proportion of orphans are taken care of by their own relatives (for instance grandparents). Some of the youngest children are adopted, though the figures from the Arkhangelsk region show that the number of adopted children is decreasing. Only very few get a foster home. The number of foster families in Arkhangelsk is increasing, but still low. In 1997 there were three foster families in the city, whereas this had risen to 19 families in 2001. It is a stated policy of Arkhangelsk city to recruit more foster families, and the local authorities are planning to establish so-called "patron families" for orphaned children. In 1999 there were 506 guardians (or tutors/trustees) in Arkhangelsk.

### **Gender and the politics of child care**

The impression of many women working in the social and child welfare sector is that the social sector generally has a lower political priority in Russia compared to sectors comprising industry, business and infrastructure. Some attribute this to the fact that while almost all the employees in the social sector are women, most of the politicians making the overall political and economic priorities, are men.

The report discusses women's political representation at the Russian federal level and in the region of Arkhangelsk. Data for the Arkhangelsk region from 2001 show that 13% of the total number of the deputies in the regional deputy assembly are women, whereas they comprise 39% of the members of municipal deputy councils in the region. Two women are members of the regional government. As for the national parliament, the *State Duma*, only 7.6% of the representatives are women.

Women are highly over-represented among the employees in the social sector in Arkhangelsk. At the same time, women have very few seats in the local deputy assembly, and practically all the administrative heads are men. This may imply that the vast experience of women working with orphans is not used in the decision-making process, neither on the administrative level nor in the local and regional deputy assemblies.



## Краткое содержание отчета

Настоящий отчет основывается на пробном исследовании альтернатив детским домам в России. Это исследование является результатом совместного проекта, осуществляемого Факультетом психологии и социальной работы Поморского государственного университета в г. Архангельске, Московским государственным социальным университетом и Норвежским институтом городских и региональных исследований (NIBR) в г. Осло.

### *Круг исследуемых проблем*

В работе с детьми, оставшимися без попечения родителей, Россия поддерживает международную линию предпочтения семейного воспитания крупным учреждениям интернатного типа. Какова ситуация с сиротами в России сегодня, и какие разработанные альтернативы традиционным большим детским домам существуют? Что характеризует охрану детства как сферу российской политики? Настоящий отчет призван ответить на эти вопросы, основываясь на открытиях, сделанных в ходе предварительного исследования. Это исследование включает в себя обзор законодательства, институциональной структуры и формирования политики в России на федеральном уровне, а также изучение местных реформ на севере России на примере Архангельска.

Мы полагаем, что при внедрении новых методов работы с сиротами решающее значение имеют два фактора. Во-первых, идея должна пользоваться необходимой известностью и поддержкой, т.е. должны существовать определенные научные круги и организации, готовые оказывать определенное давление на общество в ее защиту. Во-вторых, институциональное окружение должно быть способно принять и поддерживать реформу. Альтернативы традиционным детским домам должны внедряться только в подготовленную среду, а не начинаться «с нуля», с «чистого листа», не проводиться в институциональном вакууме. Настоящий отчет представляет собой первую часть

более крупного проекта, исследующего осуществление реформ согласно выработанным и получившим признание общим международным принципам и реальными условиями России.

### ***Масштаб проблемы сиротства в России***

За последнее десятилетие в России был отмечен стремительный рост числа детей, оставшихся без попечения родителей. Эта проблема остается одной из наиболее острых социальных проблем в России и связывается с проблемой общей бедности. Поскольку примерно 90 процентов детей-сирот имеют одного или обоих живых родителей – таких детей принято называть «социальными сиротами» - основные причины высокого числа детей, оставшихся без попечения родителей, усматриваются в проблемах экономического и социального развития.

К обширной категории детей-сирот относятся:

- Дети, не имеющие живых родителей или не знающие своих родителей.
- Дети, родители которых лишены родительских прав, или ограничены в родительских правах.
- Дети, родители которых добровольно отказались от своих родительских прав по причине тяжелого состояния здоровья родителя или ребенка, бедности, и т.д.

В Архангельске, как и во всей России в целом, отмечается значительный рост детей, оставшихся без попечения родителей. В настоящее время в Архангельской области насчитывается 4749 детей-сирот, воспитывающихся в детских домах. Многие из этих детей поступают из семей, в которых родители страдают алкогольной или наркотической зависимостью, имеют криминальное прошлое, либо их матери занимаются проституцией.

### ***Охрана детства, политика и законодательство о детях-сиротах: федеральный, областной и местный уровень***

Россия стала одной из первых стран, ратифицировавших Конвенцию ООН о правах ребенка 1989 года. В развитие этой Конвенции в России был принят ряд законов, постановлений и программ на государственном, областном и местном уровнях.

В Российской Федерации был принят ряд законов и постановлений в сфере защиты детства. В их числе

Постановление правительства от 1991 г. об установлении минимальных условий проживания в детских домах, и Закон, устанавливающий права детей на материальное обеспечение и образование. Кроме того, сироты обладают дополнительными преимуществами в сфере медицинского обслуживания, прав собственности и жилищных прав, а также дополнительными трудовыми гарантиями.

В последние годы большое внимание было сосредоточено на правах и нуждах детей, что было закреплено в ряде целевых программ. Такие программы являются важными инструментами государственной политики в сфере охраны детства, и проводятся на всех трех уровнях власти. В 1994 г. была принята президентская программа под названием “Дети России”. Особое внимание в этой программе уделяется улучшению положения детей-сирот. Более того, отдельные министерства реализуют различные отраслевые программы, связанные с защитой детства. Большое количество существующих программ ставит требование четкой координации усилий различных ведомств. Эта задача возложена на Министерство труда и социальной защиты.

Проблемы, связанные с сиротством, регулярно включаются в повестку дня Архангельского областного собрания депутатов. Областным собранием было принято несколько законов и резолюций в этой сфере. В течение 2001 года Областным собранием депутатов трижды рассматривались вопросы, непосредственно связанные с детьми-сиротами.

### ***Причины социального сиротства***

Драматическое развитие истории России в двадцатом веке оставило большое количество детей без попечения родителей. Началось масштабное строительство детских домов. Это совпало с официальной идеологией советской эпохи, не признававшей семьи в качестве основной арены социализации. В России сформировалась прочная традиция крупных учреждений не только для детей-сирот, но также для инвалидов, умственно отсталых и больных детей. Специализированные учреждения относятся к ведению различных министерств: Министерства социальной защиты и труда (учреждения социальной защиты); Министерства образования (учреждения специального образования); Министерство здравоохранения (медицинско-образовательные учреждения); Министерство внутренних дел (коррекционные учреждения).

Рост числа детских домов в России за последнее десятилетие должен рассматриваться в свете бедности общества в целом и граждан, а также социальных проблем и изменений менталитета. Хотя каждый из этих факторов, взятый по отдельности, важен для понимания роста числа детей, оставшихся без попечения родителей, особое внимание должно уделяться возможной динамике соотношений между факторами.

Взаимосвязь между социальным и экономическим факторами представляется наиболее очевидной: *алкоголизм* может разрушить личную жизнь, а *ограниченные доходы семьи* могут повысить вероятность *алкоголизма*. В отчете обсуждаются также иные значимые факторы риска: многодетные семьи; дети-инвалиды; душевные заболевания родителей; преступность; происхождение из меньшинств; неполные семьи.

### ***Социальные сироты – социальная история и «карьера»***

Ситуация в России в настоящее время такова, что само общество порождает целое поколение сирот. И общественная, и частная бедность влияет на жизненные «карьеры» детей групп риска. Ежегодно в России растет число детей и подростков, относящихся к группам социального риска. С 1992 г. общее число детей, живущих в интернатных учреждениях Министерства образования, выросло более чем в 1,5 раза и достигло в конце 1999 г. 234,000 человек.

В настоящее время в России большое внимание уделяется жизненной ситуации детей, покидающих воспитательные учреждения для сирот. Согласно статистическим данным, из всех детей-сирот, выходящих из детских домов, каждый пятый начинает вести преступный образ жизни, каждая седьмая девочка – заниматься проституцией. Около десяти процентов бывших сирот совершает самоубийство (Российская статистика цитируется по: Tobis 2000:33).

### ***Детские дома и альтернативы им***

В настоящем отчете направления политики создания альтернатив традиционным детским домам разделяются на три больших категории. Во-первых, имеются попытки установления альтернатив, *значительно отличающихся* от традиционных учреждений интернатного типа, унаследованных от Советской эпохи. Во-вторых, альтернативы существуют и *внутри* существующей системы детских домов. Например, опытные

сотрудники многих детских домов готовы испытывать альтернативные методы работы, как разделение учреждений на единицы, более напоминающие семьи, организация индивидуального ухода за детьми и т.д. Эти меры менее заметны, чем названные выше, однако часто более разумны в финансовом отношении и с точки зрения существующих условий работы. В-третьих, существуют альтернативы, направленные на *профилактику* социального сиротства детей. Эти меры предпринимаются с намерением помочь родителям и детям пережить трудные периоды в их жизни.

Организация перехода от традиционных детских домов к альтернативным типам домов представляется трудной задачей в российских условиях. В России имеется большое количество детских домов и сирот, а общество имеет ограниченные возможности финансирования альтернативных форм устройства детей-сирот. Кроме того, маловероятно, что семьи, живущие в бедных районах и крайне ограниченные в средствах, изъявят желание принять еще одного ребенка. Семейный кодекс РФ предлагает следующие альтернативы традиционным детским домам для устройства детей, оставшихся без попечения родителей: усыновление, приемная семья, опекунов и детский дом семейного типа. В дополнение к этим формам устройства, непосредственно указанным в Семейном кодексе, альтернативы традиционным детским домам включают патронажные семьи, Детские деревни SOS, группы семейного воспитания и временные семьи.

Сравнительно большая часть сирот находится под опекой членов своих семей (например, дедушек и бабушек). Некоторых из самых маленьких детей усыновляют, несмотря на то, что этот показатель по Архангельской области снижается. Лишь немногие дети попадают в приемную семью. Количество приемных семей в Архангельске растет, но все еще остается низким. В 1997 г. в городе насчитывалось три приемных семьи, хотя в 2001 г. их число выросло до 19. В официальную политику города Архангельска входит привлечение новых приемных семей, а местные власти планируют использование так называемых «патронажных семей» в работе с детьми-сиротами.

В 1999 г. в Архангельске было 506 опекунов и попечителей.

### ***Гендер и политика защиты детства***

Многие женщины, работающие в социальном секторе или в сфере охраны детства, полагают, что социальный сектор имеет в

России более низкий политический статус по сравнению с промышленностью, бизнесом и инфраструктурой. Некоторые связывают это с тем фактом, что почти все работники социального сектора – женщины, а большинство политиков, задающих политические и экономические приоритеты – мужчины.

В отчете рассматривается политическое представительство женщин в России на федеральном уровне и в Архангельской области. Данные по Архангельской области за 2001 год показывают, что 13% от общего числа депутатов Областного собрания депутатов - женщины, в то время как они составляют 39% от числа муниципальных собраний депутатов в области. В состав областного правительства входят две женщины. Что касается национального парламента, *Государственной Думы*, женщины составляют всего 7,6% от общего числа депутатов.

Женщины составляют подавляющее большинство среди сотрудников социального сектора в г.Архангельске. В то же время, женщины занимают лишь несколько мест в Городском собрании депутатов, и практически все руководящие должности занимают мужчины. Это может означать, что богатый опыт женщин по работе с сиротами не используется в процессе принятия решений – ни на властном уровне, ни на уровне городского и областного собраний депутатов.

# 1 Children and welfare as a policy field in Russia

## 1.1 The framework of the report

The purpose of this report is to document a Nordic-Russian pilot research project on child welfare in Russia. The report presents federation level trends and policies with in-depth examples from Arkhangelsk town and region in North-West Russia.

The case of Arkhangelsk was chosen because both the Russian and Norwegian researchers found it fruitful to take a closer look at one of the Russian regions. We wanted to study a part of the country that is of particular interest both for Russia and for the Nordic countries – as referred to by the Nordic Council of Ministers in their Survey and Action Plan: Children and Young Adults in the Adjacent Areas (Nygaard Christoffersen 1998).

This report divides the policies of providing alternatives to traditional orphanages in three broad categories. 1) First, there are efforts aiming at establishing alternatives other than the traditional orphanages inherited from the Soviet epoch. Such placement options are adoption, foster homes, various types of guardianship, SOS Children's Villages. 2) Secondly, there are alternatives *within* the existing orphanages. It has turned out that the experienced staff in many orphanages is eager to try out alternatives, like dividing the institutions into more family-like units, offering more individual care and the like. These efforts are less striking than those of the former category, but often more feasible in financial terms and as to the actual workforce situation. 3) Thirdly, there are alternatives aiming at preventing children from ending up as social orphans. These measures are undertaken with the intention of helping parents over the hump in periods of trouble. Such efforts are perhaps even less eye-catching than the former one, but nevertheless

deserve attention because they may save children from entering a care career as an orphan.<sup>2</sup>

In more detail, this report is dealing with the following items:

Chapter one presents numbers and trends regarding children in orphanages in Russia and in Arkhangelsk oblast and city. The reason for choosing Arkhangelsk is that this region for a considerable time has been of interest in the Nordic countries as a neighbouring area for both social welfare and social research cooperation.

Chapter two is dealing with laws and programmes in the field of child welfare and orphanages in Russia. In chapter three federal organs' responsibilities and tasks in the field of child welfare and orphan policies is discussed, and in chapter four the same items regarding regional and town levels are dealt with.

Chapter five addresses the question why children become social orphans. Both social and more family-oriented "causes" are discussed. Chapter six is dealing with the orphans and the orphanage. The placing of orphans and their further care careers are discussed, also different types of orphanages and children's needs in orphanages. Ongoing reforms are shortly discussed at the end of chapter six. In chapter seven alternatives to residential solutions are described and discussed: Adoption for children, foster families, guardianship, family upbringing groups, replacement families, patronage families, SOS' Children Villages and other preventive measures.

In chapter eight the scope is widened: In our search for possible advocacy coalitions for modernizing the child care sector in Russia, we focus on gender and the politics of child care.

Chapter nine discusses the content of this pilot project report in relation to the forthcoming main project, with some references to other Nordic and Russian studies.

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<sup>2</sup> The term "care career" is defined in chapter 6, whereas alternatives to residential institutions are discussed more closely in chapter 7. A practical note: The term "orphan" will be used for simplicity, to mean children without parental care, even if the large majority of Russian orphans have at least one living parent. These children are traditionally called "social orphans". Since this chapter does not aim at a thorough terminological discussion, we will not problematise this further here.



### **The project's objectives**

The larger study, of which this report is the first step, aims at giving a contribution to the development of alternatives to traditional orphanages in Russia. First, the project will strengthen capacity on the Russian side in analysing the policy field with the help of methods and insights drawn from contemporary applied social science. Secondly, the project will strengthen the capacity on the Nordic side in understanding the policy issue of Russian child care. An in-depth understanding of the field will enable well-founded decisions on how to design practical support to Russian child care. The objectives will be achieved by close co-operation between Russian and Nordic researchers working in teams. Good relations with the practitioners in Arkhangelsk have already been established. The project will extend and elaborate on an on-going pilot project conducted by the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) in co-operation with researchers in the Arkhangelsk-based Pomor State University and Moscow State Social University.

## **1.2 The scope of the problem**

### **Background**

Throughout the 1990s Russia has pursued policies of reducing the number of children growing up in residential care, like infant homes and orphanages. Russia was among the first countries to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child stating that children should grow up in family-like settings. At the same time, paradoxically, the number of children deprived of a family upbringing has grown. This chapter presents the development of contemporary Russian policies concerning orphans, in particular those policies aiming at providing alternatives to the larger-scale, traditional orphanages. These policies may be described as a struggle against the tide, but as it will be revealed, not without bright spots.

### **Time trends and figures on orphans**

The past decade Russia has witnessed an increase in the number of children deprived of parental care. The problem remains one of the most acute social problems in Russia. Whereas 49 000 children in Russia became orphans (biologically or socially) in 1990, this number increased to 113 500 in 1996 (Henley and Alexandrova 1999; Dement'eva 2000). In 1999 the number of such children reached 114 000, and the total number of orphans 654 000.

Not all children who live in an institution of residential care stay there on a permanent basis. According to figures from the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection altogether 52 700 children were living in institutions temporarily, of which 2200 had fled from their families.

This is not solely a Russian problem. In the 27 former state socialist countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, more than one million children are taken care of by public authorities (UNICEF 1999:18).

Table 1.1 *Number of Russian children becoming orphans per year*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of children</b>
1991	59 154
1992	67 286
1993	n.a.
1994	102 682
1995	113 296
1996	113 243
1997	105 534
1998	110 930
1999	114 000
2000	123 204

(Source: Dement'eva, 2000:4, and Ministerstvo Obrazovaniia 2001)

Most children in residential care have parents, and are classified as “social orphans”. Their parents may have been deprived of parental rights, they may be chronic alcoholics, drug addicts, imprisoned, or incapable of taking care of their children for health reasons (Dement'eva 2000). Only 10 percent of the children became orphans in consequence of parent's death or invalidism (Annual governmental report, 2001).

In other words, the main reasons for the high number of children in lack of parental care seems to be found in economic and social developments, some would also include cultural and normative developments. These latter factors, however, are more likely to have had an effect on the over all high number of social orphans than on the dramatic increase over the last decade.

The number of children in need of public care – or external assistance – increases with the general poverty in Russia. Child poverty rates have increased one-and-a-half times more than the overall poverty rate (UNICEF 1997). Poverty is particularly widespread among families with many children. According to statistics from the Russian Statistical Committee, Goskomstat, 33 percent of all households with children lived below subsistence minimum in 1997. The same applied for 72 percent of households with four or more children (Henley and Alexandrova 1999:2). This situation is reinforced by the erosion of the system of primary family support (consisting of cash transfers, maternity leave, parental leave, kindergartens). Most probably poverty triggers off other negative mechanisms that eventually leave a certain percentage of children in need of care from adults other than the household members.

Despite the dramatic increase in the number of children in need of public care, the rate of children in residential care (care and dwelling away from biological parents' home) has not grown in Russia. Interestingly, the number of children in residential care has grown considerably in the Baltic states, notably in Latvia, which nevertheless still has a considerably lower rate than Russia.

Table 1.2 *Rate of children in residential care (per hundred thousand 0–17 population)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Russia</b>	<b>Latvia</b>
1989	1254.0	n.a.
1990	1233.6	253.4
1991	1116.0	242.0
1992	1083.4	274.0
1993	1056.7	320.8
1994	1082.8	376.0
1995	1133.4	469.0
1996	1183.5	550.3
1997	1193.2	579.0
1998	1229.1	659.0
1999	1263.3	677.8

(Source: UNICEF, 2001)

The number of children aged 0-3 placed in infant homes increased considerably in Russia: from 206 700 in 1989 to 382 400 in 1999 (UNICEF 2001:151). For this age group, however, the rate is higher for Latvia than for Russia.

Table 1.3 *The rate of children in infant homes (per hundred thousand 0–3 population)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Russia</b>	<b>Latvia</b>
1989	206.7	532.5
1990	209.5	506.5
1991	217.7	473.8
1992	237.2	509.8
1993	264.3	605.8
1994	290.2	695.4
1995	317.3	779.7
1996	337.2	852.2
1997	338.4	917.8
1998	370.1	1033.1
1999	382.4	955.9

(Source: UNICEF, 2001)

#### **The situation in Arkhangelsk region and city**

There are currently 1.5 million inhabitants in Arkhangelsk region, of which 365 000 are children. Lately, there has been a decreasing tendency of revealed orphans (in 2000 – 1560 cases, in 2001 – 1361 cases). This is reflected also at city level, in Arkhangelsk city (Table 1.4).

Table 1.4 *Number of children left without parental care, Arkhangelsk region and Arkhangelsk city*

	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Arkhangelsk region	1077	1294	1410	1560	1361
Arkhangelsk city	282	365	377	440	337

In Arkhangelsk region 83 percent of the total amount of revealed children are social orphans, which means that they are children whose parents are deprived of parental rights (26 percent), parents who have relinquished their children for reasons like unemployment or alcoholism (52 percent), or are convicted (4 percent). 17 percent of children are biological orphans. In orphanages, however, the per cent

tage of biological orphans is lower (about five percent), since these children more easily are adopted when they are new-born<sup>3</sup>.

This figure, however, is not as favourable as it appears, since not only the number of revealed cases decreases. Also the birth rate has been falling considerably for the last seven to eight years. In Arkhangelsk region the percentage rate of children to the total population decreased from 25 percent in 1990 to 20 percent in 1998 (Lund, Solstad et al. 2001).

At the regional level in 2000, 863 children were placed in families for upbringing, and 650 children in orphanages. The number of children who were given for care in 1999 was 473, in 2000 – 656. The term “given for care” refers to ways of placing children in a family.

### 1.3 Becoming orphan in Russia

In Russia, like in most other countries, parents are obliged to provide their children with a place to live, food, and clothes. Parents are expected to let their children grow up under conditions that help them cope with life. The parents also represent their children legally and defend the rights of their children in all kinds of institutions, and see to that they get education. As we have seen above, the number of parents not being able to meet these expectations is increasing in Russia. This means that more and more families are in need of external help to secure the children’s welfare.

The Federal law “On basic guarantees for children’s rights in the Russian Federation” of 24 June 1998 (No. 124-FZ)<sup>4</sup> lists the typical difficult situations in which the State takes responsibility for a child. Such situations occur when:

- a) Parents die
- b) Parents are not allowed to take their children from institutions of social protection, education, health or other
- c) Parents give up parental responsibilities (rights) on their own
- d) Parents are not able to fulfil their parental obligations (because of health or risk of harming children) and give up parental rights
- e) Long-term absence of parents

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<sup>3</sup> Thanks to Valerii Nuromskii, vice-director at the regional Department of Education, for this piece of information.

<sup>4</sup> Article 1 in this law defines the basic rights of children in Russia.

- f) Limiting parental responsibilities (decisions on this are made in court, and may take place in cases where it may be dangerous for the child to stay with one of the parents or both)
- g) Withdrawing parental responsibilities (which is made by court and applies to parents who do not fulfil, or misuse, their parental duties).

These difficult situations may be divided into three main groups of immediate reasons for orphanage: Death of parents, parents voluntarily giving up their parental rights and deprivation of parental rights (not voluntarily). All these reasons for orphanhood have increased during the past decade, but the increase is much larger for parents losing their parental rights and parents evading parental responsibilities. The underlying reasons for orphanhood include:

- Chronic alcoholism of parents
- Parents are found incapable of taking care of their children for reasons of physical or psychological health
- Parents serve in prison
- Abuse or mistreatment of children, including attempts at hampering the education of the child, persuading them to beg, steal, prostitute themselves or use alcohol or drugs
- The family is in crisis, leading to lack of capability to take care of the children (unemployment, poverty)
- Parents refuse to take their children home from institutions
- Children are handicapped or suffer from deficient physical or psychological development and need special care, treatment and training
- Children serve sentences in youth colonies
- Children live in special learning and upbringing institutions <sup>5</sup>
- Children who live in families of refugees or forced re-settlers.

Deprivation of parental responsibilities requires a court decision and aims at protecting children from physical abuse or other types of misuse by parents. Parents who are deprived of parental rights lose all rights connected to their kinship with the child, but may in certain situations still live with the child (for instance if the other parent has parental right to the child). If a parent who has lost his/her parental responsibility behaves in such a way that it is impossible for the child to live

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<sup>5</sup> A special legal process is needed, usually prepared by the social services.

with him/her, the parent may be moved out of the family without being given a new place to live. In case of both parents being deprived of parental responsibilities, the bodies of guardianship will take care of the child. These bodies belong under the Ministry of Education, and are present all over Russia.

The bodies of guardianship are assigned the tasks of:

- discovering the children who find themselves without parental care
- finding ways of solving the problems of these children, first of all by helping within the family framework, or by assisting in setting up foster families
- supervising foster carers, rendering assistance (summer camps, holiday centres, schools, spare time activities) and enabling a normal life in the foster family (help from psychologists, teachers, social pedagogues, and support to improve housing conditions)
- supervising the support, education and upbringing offered by the foster family to the child.

## 1.4 Types of orphanages and responsible authorities

On the Russian state level, there are four main actors developing child care policies: Ministry of Education (MoEd), Ministry of Labour and Social Development (MoLSD), Ministry of the Interior (MoI), Ministry of Health (MoH).

Severely disabled children (traditionally considered “unable to learn”) are placed in *boarding houses* (MoLSD). Physically disabled children are placed in a so-called *spets-internaty*, (*special boarding schools*) whereas mentally disabled children live in psycho-neurological internats.

Street children are placed in temporary centres called police collection and distribution departments. These centres are mostly found in big cities. They are under the Ministry of the Interior.

The most widespread type of orphanages, however, is under the Ministry of Education. Traditionally they have been divided in two according to children’s age. For those less than four years old there are infants’ orphanages (*dom rebënka*), for those between five and 17



there are youth orphanages (*detskii dom* or *internat*). Some of the schools are called corrective schools, and are intended for children with special needs.

## 1.5 The Russian background and how to deal with it

Russia is not alone among the countries of the developed world to carry out sweeping reforms of the educational and welfare sectors. The Russian reforms, however, are relatively dramatic because they are envisaged as elements in a transition from one *type* of society to another. First, transition runs into huge economic obstacles. Most people experience transition as a fall in everyday welfare. This hampers dynamism, and often makes reforms infeasible. This is the case for the policies of reducing the number of children growing up in orphanages. Poverty complicates the policies of reducing input to the orphanages as well as the policies of increasing output (adoption, foster families and other).

Secondly, deeply ingrained habits and world views muddle reforms. Informally, in Russia it is sometimes argued that Russians in general are less reluctant to relinquish their children than most other Europeans. This has been explained by an allegedly stronger sense of the wider collective to the detriment of the nuclear family among Russians. The propensity to hand children over to professional care may, however, have a more material reason, which leads to the third obstacle to placement alternatives. Thirdly, there are institutional and material legacies. Due to Russia's past there are huge networks of orphanages spread all over the country. Probably no country outside the former state socialist world has had a comparable combination of individual poverty (which certainly also was noticeable under Communist rule) and alcoholism on the demand-generating side, and widely available public child care facilities on the supply side.

To sum up, reasons why developing alternatives to traditional orphanages is a difficult task can be identified as economy, mentality and material legacy. In that perspective the Russian policies of developing and offering feasible alternatives to the traditional ways of taking care of orphans are emblematic for the challenges of Russian reform policies in general. A more thorough presentation of the reasons why so many Russian children end up as social orphans is given in chapter 5.

In the section above the historical legacy was pointed out as one of the reasons why it is difficult to establish viable placement options to traditional orphanages in Russia. This seemingly harmless statement goes to the core of one of the theoretical debates about former state socialist countries. The debate centres about the importance of the ways current societies, politics and economies have arrived at current structures.

The path dependency hypothesis holds past institutional arrangements to be a key to the understanding of present days' policy choices. The debate is highly relevant, not only for scholars of the social sciences, but also for doers who want to contribute to reform processes in, for instance, Russia. Therefore, it will – although briefly – be presented here.

The assumption of “path dependency” forms part of a broader theoretical approach that in very general terms sees the past capable of laying the framework for future developments. Margaret R. Somers (Somers 1998) says that path dependency suggests that “earlier institutional processes are “sedimented” into the core of some of our most modern phenomena”. Path dependency limits choices, as summed up by Robert Putnam (Putnam 1993:179): “where you can go is dependent on where you come from, and that somewhere you simply cannot get to from here”. Most often, however, it just consists in “disincentive effects” (Hansen 2002).

Although not necessarily referred to explicitly, the path dependency suggestion has been central in the debates and considerations preceding and following policy reform in Russia. In the first couple of years after 1991, the dominant political alternatives proclaimed an abrupt change from a totalitarian regime to a textbook capitalist democracy. Verbally at least, remnants from the decades of state socialism were to be discarded. These policies were at the time recommended and supported by foreign governments and international institutions. In particular the foreign actors had a feeling of having to do with a *tabula rasa*, and in cases where the past legacies were sifting as far as into the foreigners' radius of action, these latter discarded it as illegitimate. In order not to continue in the state socialist manner – i.e. with an undemocratic political system and an infeasible economy – the institutions from the past had to be discarded, the foreign institutions and national policy-makers claimed. Nonetheless, old institutions went on existing.

Gradually the official view changed into letting things change not always against, but sometimes with the help of inherited institutions.

This, for instance, has been clearly reflected in World Bank policies toward Russia. Sensitivity to the institutional context is no longer a controversial stance, and no longer identified with anti-reform strategies. The new sensitivity to the institutional context is not tantamount to accepting the existing institutional context, but rather to look at it with fresh eyes.

The debate referred to here is, of course, huge, and it usually touches upon the over-arching issues of type of society and of economic system. It may, however, be brought down to the analysis of separate policy fields, like that of child care. Due to the federal character of Russia's political system, regions may to a certain extent choose their own policies. This holds true also for the child care policy issue. One region – Samara – chose to deal radically with the policy issue. Most traditional orphanages were closed, and money was spent on alternative placement. As a result, in the period 1990–1997, the number of children in orphanages declined by about 21 percent. The number of adopted children grew drastically. In 1992 to 1997 altogether 300 children in Samara region were adopted whereas prior to 1990 only 50 children were adopted a year (Henley and Alexandrova 1999:17). However, Arkhangelsk, like most regions, has chosen a more moderate reform strategy making use of the existing institutional set-up, where the orphanages is the physical manifestation of a whole set of habits, attitudes, and expectations.

No matter how sad the orphanages may appear, they are the result of a set of circumstances, not necessarily the result of bad choices. The question then is whether now is the time to say that these circumstances are no longer valid. What are then the circumstances that created the “path” towards the orphanages?

First of all, one must look at the large-scale demographic dislocations due to famine, large-scale Stalinist persecution and the Second World War. Millions of parents died, leaving behind small children in surroundings struck by deep poverty.

Secondly, one must take into account developments prior to the communist regime. In fact, large residential institutions for out-of-home care were established by the authorities as early as under Peter the Great (1682-1725) followed up by Catherine the Great (1762-96). The central orphanage in Moscow received 17,000 children a year in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Tobis 2000:5).

Thirdly, general poverty created large numbers of social orphans. Poverty was so deep that many parents arranged for a place in an orphanage to give their child a better life.

Fourthly, at the same time, the Soviet Union, unlike most countries in a similar situation of widespread poverty and need had the capacity to build and establish policy sectors. Thanks to this capacity orphanages were set up, and the luckiest among the orphans were placed in them. Large crowds of social orphans still wandered about.

Fifthly, after all state socialism was able to modernise the backward agricultural society into an industrial society, even “a complex urban society”, according to the Sovietologist Moshe Lewin (Lewin 1995). With that society comes an individualism that applies also to women. If that is the reason why family structures break up, it applies equally to industrial societies that did not experience state socialism, which endows state socialism as such with a poor explanatory power. Besides, it does not explain why large numbers of Russian children end up as social orphans in orphanages, while the numbers are considerably smaller in other industrialised societies, including those with relatively low living standards.

Sixthly, it is sometimes argued that Communist ideology reduced the sense of living in a family, which made parents abandon their children. This is at best an interesting hypothesis. Several circumstances make the hypothesis not very plausible. First, Communist ideology as construed by the ideology secretaries in the Kremlin ceased to be culturally leftist in the late 1920s and early 1930s. From then on there were no more attacks on “the bourgeois family”. On the contrary the ideal was a strong family unit (Lebina 1999:276). Under Nikita Khushchëv, however, policies were pursued to increase productivity by freeing mothers from the burden of parenthood, and boarding schools for all children were stated as an official goal. In the 1960 and 70s, under Leonid Brezhnev, however, the main concern was the falling birth rate among others caused by the dissolution of the traditional family structure. Family support programmes were introduced (Tobis 2000: 7). It is reason to say that it was more the disruptive *effects* of state socialism that led families to break up than its ideology.

Furthermore, Communism as a political system, as we saw, was based on repression. Above, this was mentioned as a reason why families were broken up. This, however, was mostly a phenomenon during extreme repression, like under Stalin. The tight control might also have had the opposite effect. It may have made informal and immediate ties more relevant than in societies where taking part in formal organisations made more sense. The sociologist Piotr Sztompka (Sztompka 1993) argues that the state socialist inability to create a bond between citizens and the state resulted in a popular

affirmation and idealisation of the “private” (by retreat into the family as an authentic civil society). It is often said that the Russians retreated to the kitchen table where they lived their lives among family members and close friends.

We suggest that the issue of alternative orphan placement be seen in the light of the existing institution of orphanage. By institution of orphanage, then, we imply a set of rules and norms underpinned by physical realities represented by the stock of buildings, the payrolls, and the professions. Before discarding this institution, we argue, it must be analysed. The main questions are: What is wrong and what is good with it? What should be reformed and what should be discarded? With what could it be replaced in feasible terms, i.e. in ways that improves living conditions for the children concerned?

## 1.6 Policy measures to develop alternatives

The expression “difficult life situation” is used in Russia as well as internationally. It covers situations where the welfare is threatened or life-ability is hampered, and it is difficult for the person to find a way out on his own. “Finding a way out on one’s own” is, of course, far more difficult for a child than an adult. Children in troublesome life situations are far more vulnerable than adults and need special attention. This means that children need help to tackle difficult situations. Such help may be offered from the state, the civil society and people close to the child. Most often assistance is rendered in a combination of the three.

Taking care of children in difficult life situations is the task of several authorities in Russia. In Russia, like in other countries, a lot is done by relatives, friends and neighbours to help children in difficulties. When such help is not available, or not sufficient, public authorities must secure the child’s welfare. Traditionally this has been done by institutionalising the upbringing of children without parental care. Today reforms are aiming at bringing in individual actors, and also voluntary associations, as partners to the relevant authorities in offering help to young people and their families. In chapter 7 we discuss more closely some current alternatives to residential care for children who are deprived of family upbringing.

As a reaction to the existing situation in Russia and in accordance to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Russian authorities took the initiative of forming a new policy on children’s rights. The new policy is based on a new attitude to the child. The child is no

longer to be seen as passive object in need of help. Instead the child is to be treated as an active partner in improving his/her own life situation.

In 1993-2000 the Russian law on rights and interests of people was implemented. The Family Code (including rights of the under-aged), the new Civil Code and the Criminal Code were adopted. They give new possibilities for means and ways of care of the under-aged. Several federal laws were passed: "On essential guarantees of the child's rights in the Russian Federation", "On additional guarantee and social care of orphans (without parent's support)", "On the foundation of the system of preventive measures against lawbreaking among under-aged neglected children and young persons at risk" (all in all there are over 100 acts). The most acute problems are regularly discussed at the sessions of inter-department committees of the Russian Federal Government (on under-aged affairs and on co-ordination of work connected with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). The Ministry of Education has worked out principles and guidelines for the prevention of social orphanhood and development of educational institutions for orphans. The objectives are as follows:

- To work out a programme of governmental and state support to families with the aim of preventing social orphanage
- To guarantee family upbringing for orphans and children without parental care
- To set up a system of educating orphans and a system of psychological, pedagogical, medical and social competence to help and care for orphans
- To reduce the number of residential institutions and to establish new forms of family-type institutions
- To develop new programmes of training, re-training and improving the qualification of specialists working with orphans and children without parental care
- To work out new methods of education and upbringing of orphans, stimulating the creation of more effective conditions for their development and socialisation

According to the Family Code the following forms of placing orphans into a family are used in the Russian Federation at present:

- Adoption
- Guardianship

- Foster families
- Orphanage of family type
- Institutions for children who need social support

Besides the forms that were consolidated in the Family Code, other alternatives to traditional orphanages include patronage placing of children, SOS children's villages, boarding schools, various forms of post-orphanage adaptation for orphans who leave the institutions for orphans.

Since 1993 an Annual Report on living conditions of children in Russia has been published. Since 1995 a National Action Plan for Children's Rights has been set up. The main efforts of the Government aim at helping the most socially vulnerable groups of children: invalids, orphans and refugees. The federal programme "Children of Russia" aims at finding a solution to the problems experienced by these groups.

The present-day most acute problem is to help families overcome difficulties – to secure child care in the parent home – and to help younger citizens realise their right to a normal family life. Much has been done lately in this direction.

To prevent social orphanhood institutions have been set up in a relatively large scale in order to help children within the family setting. In 1993 there were 107 institutions of social care of family and child. In 2002 the number grew to 2240 (Pavlova 2000).

A network of institutions helping families with different problems has developed in a sensationally short period of time. During last year 2.5 million children received help. These include disabled children, as well as 167 000 neglected children and children in need of social rehabilitation. Necessary aid (financial, psychological and consultative) was given to 856 000 families with low incomes and to families with many children. It is important that the work of such institutions is seen as an alternative to placement of the child in foster homes. This gives a chance to preserve family relations and prevent problems of development, health and even child's health.

Reducing the number of children who grow up in big institutions of residential care, requires an integrated approach. Orphanages are a part of the competency of the Ministry of Education. In addition, the health service, the social protection sector and the educational sector play an important role. In this research project these institutional

actors are included in the analysis with the aim of analysing their interactions in order to point at possible, integrative measures.

## 1.7 Conclusions

Russia is committed to the principles in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that children should grow up in family-like settings. The legal framework to deal with problems of social orphanhood is in place both at federal and regional level. Heavy institutional actors share the responsibility for developing child care policies: the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Health.

Still, as figures presented in this chapter indicate, the problems of social orphanhood have grown since the early 1990s. Developing viable alternatives to the traditional orphanages has so far proved to be difficult.

In order to develop viable policies for the development and implementation of alternatives to old-fashioned orphanages a careful analysis of Russian realities is required, the chapter argues.



## 2 Laws and programmes on orphans in Russia

In this chapter the legal basis regarding orphans, their families and orphanages is described and discussed. Some of the programmes in this field are also described. We are interested in Russia as a whole, but some weight is also put on the situation on the federal level (oblast) and town level (city) of Arkhangelsk.

### 2.1 The legal basis

Russia pursues policies of reducing the number of children growing up in orphanages. The country was among the first to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that children should grow up in family-like settings. Letting children live in families is one of the basic ideas in the Russian “Convention on the development of a system of preventive measures against neglect and crime among minors”. This Convention was elaborated and confirmed by the inter-ministerial commission on minors under the Government of the Russian Federation (from 7 July 1998 no. 1/1 p. 125). Parallel to the evolution of this public policy, the number of orphans has grown dramatically.

In Russia responsibilities in the field of child care are divided between the three levels of government (central, regional, and municipal).<sup>6</sup>

Russia is a federation in which Arkhangelsk region is one of 89 federation subjects. The Constitution lists the policy issues where the

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<sup>6</sup> This also used to be the case in Norway. From 2004, however, a two-level system will probably be introduced in which tasks pertaining to child care are divided between central and municipal level, cf. Stortingsmelding (Report to the Storting) no. 40 (2001-2002).

federation has exclusive competence and the issues where the federation and the federation subject share the competence.

The joint jurisdiction of the federation and the federation subjects includes general questions of upbringing, education, co-ordination of health issues, protection of family, motherhood, fatherhood and childhood, and social protection including social security. Within these fields of joint legislation, regional legislatures pass a large number of acts, which in practice means that they develop their own policies. This may, in its turn, potentially lead to conflicts between the regional and federal levels of government (Risnes 1999:14). For researchers and analysts, the fact that various federations subject may have divergent policies in a policy field, opens up for comparative analysis. Samara region at the Volga is often referred to as a case of radical reform (Henley and Alexandrova 1999), and well suited for comparisons with regions that have chosen more gradualist strategies for reforming child care policies.

This chapter gives an overview of federal legislation. The legislation at regional level is exemplified by the Arkhangelsk case. The city of Arkhangelsk passes acts at local self-government level. These are also presented below.

## 2.2 Federation level legislation

In the beginning of the 1990s – after four decades of gradually improving living conditions – Russia experienced a decline in the general material standard of living. The disintegration of what used to be a unified social, economic and geopolitical area led to unemployment, forced migration, professional begging, criminality and a fall in the birth rate. The problem of unattended children was particularly grave. The reasons why children were left without care were not only to be found in socio-economic factors, but in the crisis of the family as an institution as well. The family structures are under pressure, the number of single-parent families grows, as does the number of divorces. The conditions for supporting children are deteriorating (Lokshin, Harris et al. 2000). Intentions, however, are good, as they are expressed in public conventions and programmes.

It is in this context that a series of laws and governmental resolutions have been passed in the Russian Federation, aiming at supporting children who have been deprived of care. In 1991 came the governmental resolution (*postanovlenie*) “On urgent measures within social protection for orphans and children without parental care”. This

resolution settles the minimum conditions under which children in orphanages are to live.

In 1992 the federation government passed an ordinance (*rasporiazhenie*) (3 July 1992 no. 1063) where the norms and standards for the social protection of the population were established. In connection to this it was decided to set up centres for social rehabilitation for altogether five to ten thousand children.

On 6 September 1993 the President issued a decree “On prophylactic measures against child neglect and criminality among children and protection of child rights”. This decree served as a legal basis for a host of measures made by the Ministry of Social Protection, in particular the order (*prikaz*) of 1994 “On the endorsement of the standard statutes of the institutions for minors in need of social rehabilitation”. In 1996 (21 December) the federation level law “On supplementary guarantees of social protection for orphans and children without parental care” was passed. According to the law it is up to the federal executive organs and the executive organs of the federation subjects to set up and carry out programmes for the protection of children’s rights all the time taking into consideration the amount of money granted for this purpose. In the law orphans are guaranteed education, i.e. primary and secondary school as well as basic vocational education for free. As long as orphans go to school the state gives them clothes and shoes according to the season. They also get scholarships and earmarked support. Furthermore, orphans have special rights to medical treatment, property and housing as well as work guarantees. The law clarifies what responsibilities the responsible persons in institutions under the government, the federation subject or local self-government have for implementing the regulations (according to disciplinary, administrative, criminal and civic law).

On the basis of this law two important governmental documents were issued in 1996. These were the Governmental Regulation (*postanovlenie*) from 27 July “On federal earmarked programmes on children’s situation in the Russian Federation” and the Governmental Regulation of 13 September “On the confirmation of the standard statute on specialised institutions for minors in need of social rehabilitation”.

In 1998 another important law was passed – “On the basic guarantees for children’s rights in the Russian Federation” (14 July). In the law it is stated that children’s rights is one of the most important policy fields of the government. The competencies of the authorities at the

levels of federation and federation subject are defined in the law. The tasks of the state at federation level is to fix priorities, to establish standard regulations, set minimum standards for social services, to finance federal programmes. The federal level defines a minimum level for benefits (so-called “*l’goty*”) for families with many children (e.g. cheaper tickets in public transport), and to uphold a system of legal protection of children’s rights.

On 14 May 2001 another Governmental Regulation was passed – “On first-line measures to improve the situation of orphans and children without parental care”. In the Regulation new norms and standards for the care of orphans were established. Federation subjects were recommended to give first priority to the building of places to live for orphans, to subsidise the transport of orphans, securing free transport in the period of holidays.

The importance of specialists on children’s rights was also emphasised (for instance there are 68 children right inspectors in Arkhangelsk region, one in each municipality). These inspectors were originally introduced in 1997 as pilot project between the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the UNESCO (Shestakova 2000:18).

### 2.2.1 Regional level legislation (Arkhangelsk oblast)

Issues pertaining to orphans are regularly on the agenda of the Arkhangelsk regional assembly of deputies. Several laws and resolutions have been passed (see Appendix II).

At three occasions during 2001 the regional assembly considered questions directly concerning orphans. First, the regional programme on orphans was passed (see Appendix III and subchapter on regional programmes below). Secondly, the regional law “On the order of payment for the sustenance of orphans who are under public care or in foster families”. Thirdly, the law “On additional guarantees on protection of the rights of orphans in Arkhangelsk region”.

According to the regional law on payment, payments are made from the regional budget. This enables more regularity than previously when it was made from the local budget. In 2001 the payment was 900 rubles (30 euro) a month. In January 1600 rubles (52 euro) and in October 2002 it was at 2114 rubles (68 euro).

These measures are of help for those who have taken an orphan into their family, but it is widely held that the payments are not sufficient.

The allowances are often compared to the costs of having one child in an orphanage, which are about 3500 rubles (115 euro) a month. Although widely used, this is a mere rhetoric argument since expenditures in a family and in an orphanage cannot be nominally juxtaposed for the purpose of comparison.

The second law (on additional guarantees on the protection of rights of orphans) addresses the problems of establishing a good life after orphanage. Therefore the law guarantees that children leaving orphanages in a right way – what in Russian terminology is termed the *graduates* (“*vypuskniki*”) of the orphanages – get a place to live. This is a crucial measure to prevent these children joining the crowds of homeless people.

Laws have also been passed on deprivation of parental rights and on rendering support for families. Although, as the appendices show, a host of legal acts and decisions have been made by the regional assembly practitioners in the field maintain there is still a lack of legal backing for alternatives to traditional orphanages. Therefore a regional act on patron families has been considered. So far it has not been passed. In the meantime, patron family arrangements are being tried out.

### 2.2.2 Legislation at the level of local self-government (Arkhangelsk city)

The section above dealt with the legislation made by the regional self-governmental organ in the vast Arkhangelsk *region*, whereas this section deals with the *local* self-government level in the regional capital, Arkhangelsk city. In Russian texts and parlance municipal decisions and resolutions are often referred to as local legislation. The local legislature must stick to the confines laid out by federal legislation.

The local legislation on revealing and placing orphans must have an eye to three basic acts of federal and regional legislation. First, there is the federal law “On additional guarantees on social care for orphans who are not under parental care” of 21 December 1996. Second, there is the Civil and Family Code of the Russian Federation. Third, there is the regional law “On organising work on guardianship and care in Arkhangelsk region” of 18 December 1996.

The local authorities in Arkhangelsk are generally open to all possible measures to place orphans in families. Improving living conditions for

orphans who find themselves in extremely difficult situations is another priority.

On 18 August 2000 the Regulation on foster families in Arkhangelsk city was passed. Rules were given for how to set up a foster family, how to take an orphan into a foster family as well as how to compensate the foster family financially.

A major reason why children end up in the category of social orphans is that their families' economic situation is critical (see chapter 5). Often quick action is needed while waiting for clear decisions on parental rights, orphanage and the like. On 16 March 2001 the Department of health welfare and social care in the city administration of Arkhangelsk issued an order that those who take care of children without receiving tutor's payment be paid 200 rubles (or 6,50 euro) a month. This kind of payment is made in two cases. First, the child's status may not yet be defined. This may be the result of parents living far away, which makes the processes related to refusal of parental rights take time. Secondly, the 200 rubles may be paid to grandparents who intervene in order to avoid that their son or daughter be deprived of parental rights.

Similar concerns were behind the decree of 17 August 2001 made by Arkhangelsk town head of administration ("Order of providing urgent social help for needy citizens of Arkhangelsk"). Social help, as defined in the decree, consists of financial help, clothes, footwear, hot food and other foodstuff. Since financial difficulties of families are one of the reasons for the increasing number of social orphans (see chapter 5 on reasons why children become orphans), also decrees not directly targeted at families with children may be of importance. This may, for instance, be the case for the decree of the head of administration of Arkhangelsk of 4 September 2001 "On confirmation of Regulations on process of giving subsidies for payment for dwelling and communal services by citizens of Arkhangelsk".

In Arkhangelsk January 2002, 523 children who are under care, were getting payments (this amounts to 78 percent of the total number of orphans under care). Since 1 January 2002, as outlined above, payments are made from the regional budget.

## 2.3 Target programmes

A target programme is an important policy tool in the field of child care, and is carried out on all three levels of government.

### 2.3.1 The presidential programme

In 1994 a presidential programme called “Children of Russia” was introduced. Within the framework of this programme there were several programmes like “Children of Chernobyl”, “Handicapped children”, “Children of the North”, and “Orphans”. The latter was emphasised in particular.

Each programme is anchored in a ministry, which is responsible for its implementation. Table 2.1 gives an overview of ministries and their programmes.

The large number of programmes – and the sums involved – requires firm co-ordination. This task is entrusted to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

Table 2.1 *Ministries and their programmes relating to orphans*

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Handicapped children”</li> <li>• “Preventive measures against lawbreaking and homelessness among under-aged”</li> <li>• “The development of social service for family and children”</li> </ul>
The Ministry of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Orphans”</li> <li>• “Gifted children”</li> <li>• The development of all-Russia’s child centres “Orlenok” and “Ocean”</li> </ul>
The Ministry for Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Safe motherhood”</li> </ul>
The Ministry for civil defence, extraordinary situations and liquidation of calamities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Children of Chernobyl”</li> </ul>
The Ministry for federal affairs, national and migration policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Children of the North”, “Children of refugees and exiles”</li> </ul>

On 19 September 1997 a Governmental regulation was passed “On federal special programmes on improvement of the situation of children in the Russian Federation 1998-2000”. The programme “Orphans”, together with 12 other programmes, was given priority in the implementation of the government’s social politics.

The programme “Orphans” includes a set of measures to prepare children who have been deprived of parental care, for an independent life. Likewise the programme includes several measures to prevent social orphanage, to develop various forms of care in public and private institutions, as well as families, to secure medical care and give orphans equal chances as to education and professional training, including higher education.

In 1998-2000 altogether 2.5 milliard rubles (81 million euro) were assigned to the programme “Children of Russia”. This programme unites the whole scope of directions: orphans, handicapped children, talented children and so forth (Karelova 2000).



In 1999 89.4 percent of the expenses of the programme “orphans” were financed. In 2000 “Orphans” got 9.1 million rubles (295 000 euro).

Institutions caring for orphans have been given a better fundament for offering education. In the period 1998-2000 85 minibuses were given to orphanages. Likewise 27 institutions received sport equipment, two got equipment for car repair, eleven for carpentry, 27 for sewing. Two institutions got miller machines; four of them got equipment for hairdressers. Seven got fully equipped dental surgeries. 18 institutions got special equipment to help children with motor problems.

Several centres for work with children from families in trouble have been opened within the framework of the programme. In orphanages one is working with parents in order to make it possible for children to return home. In many regions (federation subjects) centres are set up to prepare children for life outside the orphanage. Assistance is given to find a job and a place to live.

As a part of the programme “Orphans” a federal data bank about potential adopters, guardians and foster families has been established. Likewise, an inter-ministerial data bank about children living in orphanages has been established.

The presidential programme has existed since 1992, and is adopted on a one-year basis. In order to obtain funding from the programme actors in the field must write an application, which is then considered by a special commission. Control is carried out two times a year by the regional departments of social care.

### 2.3.2 The regional programme for orphans 2001-2003

Arkhangelsk-based institutions of social help for children and teenagers have benefited from the presidential programme through its sub-programmes “Orphans”, “Handicapped children”, “The development of social services for family and children”, “Prophylactic of delinquency” (for an inventory of regional programmes see Appendix III).

The sub-programme “Children of the North” works with small-numbered nationalities and does not carry out activities in Arkhangelsk region. The sub-programme “Handicapped children”, however, has made it possible to buy new medical equipment and a sensor room for orphans in Arkhangelsk. The sub-programme like

wise financed a new building of a rehabilitation centre in Arkhangelsk.

The lack of basic equipment is alleviated through the programmes. Often even small improvements may have palpable effects for those concerned. An example is offered by the sub-programme “Preventive measures against delinquency”. That programme provided two cars, refrigerators, a mini laundry, carpenter’s and mechanic’s equipment for the department of post-internate adaptation. The sub-programme “The development of social services for family and children” has made it possible for orphanages to buy transport, computers, mechanic’s equipment and home hairdresser.

On 16 August 2001 the regional target programme “Orphans” for the period of 2001-2003 was adopted. The main goal of this programme is to enable a positive personal development of orphans, to make them ready for independent life in contemporary society.

The main elements of the programme are:

1. Strengthening of the legal protection of rights of orphans
2. Focus on social orphanage
3. Development of institutions for orphans, including providing them with material and technical support

The programme is financed in a mixed way by four sources: federal budget – 12 499 200 rubles (0.4 million euro), regional budget – 97 785 000 rubles (3.2 million euro) budgets of municipal organs – 33 768 000 rubles (1.1 million euro), extra-budgetary sources (stored sums of money for various special expenditures) – 31 250 000 rubles (1 million euro).

The programme’s implementing institutions are the Department of education; the Department of health care; the Department of social protection; the Committee on women, family and youth affairs; the Committee on Labour; the Department of finances; and finally the administrative organs of local self-government.

The following results are expected:

- improvement of the quality of psychological, medical, pedagogical, social rehabilitation of orphans
- integration of orphans as fully-fledged and valuable members of society

- networks of educational rehabilitation institutions which ensure a complex of conditions for upbringing, development and education of orphans

During the first year of this programme two regional laws on the rights of orphans were adopted. The number of children who are left without parental care decreased from 1561 in 2000 to 1360 in 2001.

### 2.3.3 Arkhangelsk local self-government programme for children

The main local body in the field of child policies in Arkhangelsk is the Department of protection of family and children rights, which forms a part of the city administration. The department works according to the town's target programme "Families and children of Arkhangelsk" for the period of 2001-2003. The policies laid out in the programme were confirmed by Arkhangelsk city council 26 November 2000.

This programme is financed from town and federal budget and by grants. Grants are projects with concrete goals and list of activities, which are financed from Russian and foreign funds. The programme covers a wide variety of tasks:

- Development of social services for families and children
- Handicapped children
- Orphans
- Talented children
- Preventive measures against juvenile delinquency and drug addiction
- Provision of health activities, summer camps, and temporary jobs for teenagers
- Provision of scientific and methodical training for work with family and children
- Safe maternity and childhood
- Family planning
- Children's dental health
- Development of specialised medical help

The programme includes opening new centres for assistance to families, consultative stations in all kindergartens, a system of address

patron help for families (i.e. follow-up schemes for family members over a long period of time, family members become patron upbringers), in short measures to help children stay in the family.

In the work with orphans the following activities are undertaken according to the programme:

- Raising the number of orphans placed in families
- Establishing a data bank of candidates for foster families and foster carers
- Work with foster families and parents
- Work with mass media
- Disbursing payments for tutors and wages for foster carers
- Working out a programme for the upbringing and rehabilitation of orphans in the age from zero to three years old
- Opening a department for post-internate adaptation in the social rehabilitation centre of the city

Poor municipal finances restrain the actual materialisation of these plans.

Arkhangelsk city orphanages no. 1 and no. 2 have got specific reform plans aiming at offering more family-like living conditions for their children. This forms part of the municipal target programme “The development of municipal system of education in Arkhangelsk for the period of 2001-2005”. For the whole period a total amount of 600 000 rubles (19 000 euro) has been allocated for this purpose.

## 2.4 Conclusions

This chapter has given an overview of the wide range of laws and programmes concerning orphans in Russia. The awareness of the problems of children deprived of parental care, and the ambitions to implement active policies to meet the challenges of this sector, seems high on all levels of government.

A series of laws and resolutions have been passed at Russian federal level during the past decade. These policy documents covers a wide selection of issues related to child care, taking into consideration both urgent measures for children without parental care and longer term measures aiming at preventing problems for children and families. The relevant authorities face the challenge of both alleviating the

urgent problems and developing policies for giving orphans a family-like childhood, all the time having to take the limited financial resources into consideration.

In practice, when dealing with the orphan issue legislative bodies at federal, regional and local level focus very much on the financial aspects. At the regional level – as we have observed it in Arkhangelsk oblast – the recent legislation has primarily focused on financial support of families taking in an orphan.

Local level government has great autonomy in formulating local policies, but must have an eye to the federal and regional legislation. Arkhangelsk town is open to different alternative placements of orphans, and has passed regulations on foster families. The local government has also issued orders and decrees aiming at helping the most needy citizens of Arkhangelsk.

On all three levels of government there has been introduced several target programmes relating to children in difficult life situations in general, and on orphans in particular.

### 3 Federal organs' responsibilities and tasks in the field of child welfare and orphan policies

This chapter deals with the responsibility of different federal organs regarding child welfare and orphanage policy. The aim of the chapter is to describe which institutions are taking care of which problems regarding child welfare and orphanage in Arkhangelsk oblast. Examples are the State Duma committee on women, families and youth, the Ministry of Education (the majority of the institutions for children without parental care are parts of this sector), the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (family right issues) and the Ministry of the Interior (child neglect and criminality). In this chapter coordination between different authorities is also discussed.

#### 3.1 The responsibilities of federal organs

Should the term be “orphans” or rather children “without parental care”? The latter has gained foothold over the last years in legal texts as well as everyday practice. The term covers children whose parents are dead as well as children whose parents are not able to take care of them. The phenomenon of children in want of parental care has not been much focused upon in Russia. Therefore, even the language lacks proper words to describe it. There are several reasons for this.

First, there is the communist tradition of upbringing, which existed until the early 1990s and still is making its imprint. Within this framework it was not easy to deal with phenomena that witnessed of a society not conforming with the ascribed perfection of the political system. The fact that children were lacking parental care for social

reasons was entirely accidental and atypical, according to the optimistic communist ideology. Therefore, broad research, debate, and reflection were not required on this issue, it was held. For the same reasons the institutions for orphans were closed to attention from and communication with society at large. The orphans (biological and social) were enjoying certain social rights and price reductions, but were isolated from the surrounding society in order to avoid spreading information about the phenomenon as such.

Secondly, after the fall of communism a wave of capitalist and liberal thought swept over Russia and influenced on the economic as well as the social sphere. New illusions were born and spread on a mass-scale, this time on the automatic relationship between introducing market mechanisms and solving all problems of the society, including those of upbringing children. In this period of euphoria, in 1992, a new Law on Education was passed, according to which any school was allowed to exclude the least successful, most difficult children. The result of this was that a veritable army of children emerged, consisting of somewhere between one and one and a half million individuals. These children had not finished school, they could not get into any other type of schools, and most of them could be classified as having “difficult life conditions”. “Difficult life conditions” is a clue term in the new wave of Russian legislation that was passed in the second half the 1990s.

Thirdly, personal ambitions of Russian politicians and civil servants make them reluctant to admit the speed and the scope of the increase in the number of children living without care from their own parents. As a result of this, no legal acts so far have been passed directly referring to children living without care from their parents. In recent legislation these children are referred to not as being “deprived of parental care”, but as “living under difficult conditions”. In this way the phenomenon is shyly hidden in the legislation, in the local under-programmes of the Presidential Programme “Orphans”. Likewise, mass media cover the issue of children without parental care. There is, however, very little research and prognostics on how to solve the problem.

There are also problems emanating from the fact that Russia consists of no less than 89 federation subjects, which opens up for inconsistencies that hamper the implementation of federal policies aiming at offering assistance to children in need. On one hand, contemporary Russian policies in the field of social protection are developing intensively, which is needed due to the scope and critical character of the present social problems. On the other hand, however,

these policies can not be characterised as being neither balanced nor systematic for the time being. Precisely because of that, subsidiarity as a basic principle for the division of powers between the authorities, the public management and the population is more like a wish and an urge to distribute responsibilities and powers between the state and the society. This leads to contradictions in the legal system and hampers the development of a unified state management system for the protection of children's rights. Nevertheless, the main initiative for developing legal norms lies with the federal level. The federation subjects have little leeway here, although they, and the local self-governments, have the direct task of providing protection to children.

Some problems need to be solved at federal level. Firstly, children without parents are entitled to support from public funds according to their age and place of school, i.e. from they leave secondary school, and as a maximum until they are 18 years old. They benefit from preferential right to all kinds of vocational schools and training. Unfortunately they quite often are kept from entering these schools because the schools are under-financed. Schools are not able to run a hostel, a canteen and other household services needed for orphans to attend the school.

Secondly, the property rights of orphans and other children without parental care are not clearly defined. This holds true for the systems of providing somewhere to live when these children leave orphanage, relatives or foster homes.

Thirdly, as of now the financing of untraditional types of care is insufficient. Patron families, temporary homes for children and the social services following up children suffer from this. In addition, most institutions for children without parental care are directly subordinate to the educational authorities. Only very rarely they are under the authorities for social protection.

Fourthly, and lastly, there are no legal norms as to the minimum sum of money to be spent from governmental funds on one child. Neither has there been developed one approach to secure sufficient assistance to children living in Russia's different regions.

Successful assistance to children living without parental care is dependent on the ability to integrate capabilities and resources of various state organs and the society. Upbringing, education, social assistance to families must be seen as a whole. It has fallen to the lot of the contemporary generation of pedagogues, psychologists, social workers and managers to elaborate an integrated policy for children. Measures to prevent situations where children are left without parental



care must be a central component. Much has already been done over the last few years in systematising the structure and powers of federal organs.

### 3.2 The State Duma committee on women, families and youth

The State Duma is Russia's legislative. Its committee on women, families and youth is an important actor in the field of child protection. Profiled politician Svetlana P. Goriachova heads the committee. The specificity of the Duma committees lies in the fact that their members take direct initiatives to make laws and act as reviewers on legal acts in the field of childhood. As mentioned above, these are the Family Code, the Law on Basic Rights for Children, and the Law on the Basis for the State System to Prevent Child Neglect and Criminality. These laws have been passed in the second half of the 1990s. Notwithstanding their declamatory characteristics and lack of clearly defined mechanisms, these laws are important because they constitute the first real legal basis ever in Russia to protect children's rights.

The Committee tries to catch the public attention to issues related to childhood and family life. It enters into dialogue with various parts of Russian society and arranges parliamentary hearings, round tables, and conferences apart from acting as a mediator between various societal groups and different branches of the authorities. When it comes to the state budget the committee's task is to try and strengthen the financial opportunities of the institutions working with children and families.

### 3.3 Ministerial responsibilities and co-ordination

The implementation of the policies in the field of childhood lies with the following ministries: Education; Labour and Social Protection; Interior; and Health. An inter-ministerial commission on minors and the protection of their rights has been set up according to the Law on the Basis for the State System to Prevent Child Neglect and Criminality. The main task of the commission is to provide co-ordination of the various state organs, institutions and organisations that provide help to children in difficult life situations.

According to the Law on the Basis for the State System to Prevent Child Neglect and Criminality the inter-ministerial commission has been assigned serious possibilities for co-ordinating the efforts. It has got the right to harmonise the positions of the different organs of state power involved in the issue. The commission can also provide resources for common action. The present structures of public administration allows for a dynamic co-operation along the “vertical” structures of state authority as well as “horizontally” between the different services forming part of the system of child protection.

### 3.3.1 The Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education plays a central role in federal policies on children without parental care. In Russia the great majority of institutions for children without parental care are parts of the educational sector, working under the organs of education at state and municipal level. This holds true for orphanages, boarding homes, boarding schools, foster families and patron families. The ministry may, on its own or in co-operation with other federal organs:

- Elaborate and implement measures to protect the interests of young citizens as to their social, economic or housing problems
- Provide education, employment, leisure as well as incentives for a healthy life-style
- Provide specialist assistance in pedagogical matters to and co-operation with the organs of guardianship
- Keep a centralised register of children without parental care
- Take part together with other federal organs in implementing measures to provide socio-psychological, pedagogical, and legal assistance for children in difficult life situations

The Ministry of Education organises a federation-wide network of organs of guardianship. The organs of guardianship exist in all federation subjects and all local self-governments. Their task is to implement federal policies of protecting children’s interests by:

- Allotting and controlling housing
- Organising urgent social help of children
- Placing children without parental in state or municipal institutions of care (based on court decision)

- Temporary placing children who de facto are without parental care in other types of care (waiting for a court decision on the child's status)

### 3.3.2 Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

In the policy field of children without parental care the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection is the main responsible institution for:

- Making sure the federal budget allows for the financing of support and price reductions for children without parental care and those assigned to take care of them
- Elaboration and implementation of special programmes at federal level aiming at providing social help to children (summer camps, health control, material and technical equipment of the social service sector as well as organisations working with children in difficult life situations)
- Organising broad dialogues between all constructive forces in the Russian society as well as internationally with the aim of developing local projects directed at children in difficulties

Within the structures of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection there are services and institutions for children with different types of problems that make them dependent upon substitute care: Orphans, children with serious disturbances in the central nervous system, handicapped children.

Lately a new direction in the development of the institutional set-up under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection has taken place. Shelters and centres take care of children in need of temporary care outside of their homes.

## 3.4 The ministry of the Interior

The Ministry of the Interior answers for the rights and freedoms of people, the constitution of the courts, and security issues. In the field of protection of the rights of minors the Ministry of the Interior has been assigned an important role through the Law on the Basis for the State System to Prevent Child Neglect and Criminality. Discovering the children who have been left without parental care is a main task for the institutions working under the ministry, e.g. the police. The police are also responsible for initiating the process of protecting the rights of these children. This is made by informing the Commission

for minors and the protection of their rights at regional and local level.

The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for centres for identification and temporary support to street-children. It also runs the colonies for children who have committed crimes.

### 3.5 Current tasks

A mass-scale campaign against child neglect took place in 2002. The initiative and the carrying out of the campaign were made by the president. All organs that form a part of the system for preventing neglect of children were involved, which contributes to the concentration and integration of resources in the policy field. The mere urgency of the matter when it comes to street children – whose number increases – makes the relevant institutions and organs enter into co-operation on concrete terms. Solutions must be found quickly to help each child from ending up with problems like homelessness, poverty, risk of ending up in criminal gangs, drug or alcohol addiction, or general lack of abilities to behave.

In 2002 a temporary organ was set up to co-ordinate the activities of all organs working with measures to prevent children from ending up in the streets.

Several undertakings have been identified and given priority. For the Ministry of Education they consist in:

- Developing a regional network of institutions to help children in difficult life situations
- Elaborating methods and technologies to collect reliable information about and to provide help to children who, for one reason or another, do not receive education
- Creating preconditions for specialists to work in the field of social work for children: Pedagogues, social workers, leaders of children clubs and social and leisure centres for children and youth

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection must register needs and provide various types of help in time and according to the gravity of their social situation.

Serious tasks have been assigned to the regional authorities. The fact that powers have been more clearly defined, and that tasks have been concretised, is a positive sign.

### 3.6 Conclusions

Above, we have seen that different federal ministries handle different sides of the policies towards children without parental care. We have seen that the Ministry of Education is taking care of most orphanages, boarding homes, boarding schools, foster families, patron families and guardianship. Together with other federal organs the ministry may deal also with other matters. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection makes sure that the federal budget allows for support and price reductions for children without parental care, implement special programmes (for instance summer camps) and so forth. Also some shelters and centres taking temporary care of children are dependent on budgets from this ministry. The Ministry of the Interior is dealing with protection of the rights of the minors and with criminality (the police are responsible for initiating the process of protecting the rights of these children). This ministry is also responsible for centres of identification and temporary support to street children. In 2002 a temporary organ was set up to co-ordinate the activities of all organs working with measures to prevent children from becoming street-children.

## 4 Child welfare policies at regional and town level: The case of Arkhangelsk

As pointed out in the previous chapter, numerous authorities are involved in making and implementing policies on child care. That is also the case at the regional and local level. This chapter presents child welfare and orphan policies in Arkhangelsk town and region. Here the task of revealing and placing children who are left without parental care, or who live in conditions that are seriously detrimental to their health, is divided between the regional Department of Education and the municipal Department of health welfare and social care. Orphanages and boarding schools are under the competence of different ministries.

The fact that several authorities are engaged in the issue potentially strengthens capacities, under conditions of co-ordination and careful division of labour.

### 4.1 Regional committee on education

In the Department of Education of the Arkhangelsk region there is a special unit that deals with revealing and placing orphans. Altogether 68 children's right inspectors are working in the various districts of the region. Furthermore, in the Department of Education a centre of adoption has been established.

A non-negligible staff and stock of buildings underpin the work with orphans. In Arkhangelsk region there are 31 orphanages, four orphanage-schools, three boarding schools, and 13 corrective boarding schools, bringing up a total number of approximately 4750 children (2001).

## 4.2 Regional committee on social affairs

The Regional Department of Social Welfare bestows financial help for families with children, for lone parents, families with many children, and families having handicapped children. Benefits to pay for housing and costs related to having children are paid in the case when each family member's level of income is below the established minimum living wage. This can be considered to be a preventive measure to counteract social orphanage. Moreover, three boarding schools for children with deep intellectual defects belong under the Regional Department of Social Welfare.

## 4.3 Regional committee on health

The Regional Department of Health is among the actors that take care of orphans, more precisely those between zero and four years old. These children become social orphans for mainly two reasons. Either parents themselves resign from parental responsibilities already at the hospital where the child is born, or parents are deprived of parental rights due to their disability to bring a child up.

## 4.4 Regional committee on woman, family and youth affairs

The Regional committee on women, family and youth affairs was founded within the structures of the administration of Arkhangelsk region in 1999. It works with the public opinion with the aim of raising public awareness of the orphans' problems and needs. For instance, the committee finances a regional festival of orphans, it organises meetings with foster families, and arranges scientific theoretical and practical conferences on problems of children and family. Moreover, the committee takes part in the financing of different grants directed on improvement of conditions of orphans and on prevention of social orphanage.

In 2001, a Centre for social health of the families was established under the committee. The centre helps families in different types of trouble. It is financed within the framework of a joint Russian-Swedish grant.

## 4.5 Town department on social affairs

As of today the municipal Department of Health and Social Protection is the most developed agency for rendering preventive help to families who find themselves in difficult life situations for financial, social, psychological, pedagogical and other reasons. It reveals and finds places to live for children who are left without parental care.

The municipal Department of Health Welfare and Social Protection answers for the Town Child's House and nine units of social welfare, one in each of the city's administrative quarters. In these units 41 specialists on protection of children rights, among them four lawyers, work. Furthermore, the department is responsible authority for several institutions that give various kinds of practical assistance for families and family members. These institutions are: the Family Centre with three subsidiaries, the Centre of Social Rehabilitation of teenagers with a recently opened department of post-internate adaptation, the Centre of help for teenagers with drug problems, and the Centre of Rehabilitation of children with different forms of cerebral paralysis.

### 4.5.1 The Town Infant Orphanage in Arkhangelsk

The Arkhangelsk town infant orphanage takes care of children in the age between zero and three. As indicated in Table 4.1, there are several categories of children in the town's orphanage. Apart from biological orphans and children whose parents are deprived of parental rights, there is a large (most years the largest) group of children who stay in the house as a result of a successful application made by their parents. These children stay in the institution temporarily for 6-12 months while parents hopefully recover from a difficult life situation. Altogether, 78 percent of the children in this latter category came directly from maternity hospitals, where they were left by their mothers. 87 percent come from one-parent families, and as a rule there is no information about the child's father in these cases.



Table 4.1 *Categories of children in the municipal infant orphanage (0-3 years)*

	1999	2000	2001
Social orphans, parents deprived of parental rights	24	37	44
Children whose parents have given up parental rights	30	54	43
Foundlings	-	-	2
Biological orphans	-	1	1
Total number of children	54	91	90

(Source: Department of Social and Health Welfare of Arkhangelsk administration 2001).

The personnel of the orphanage comprise only one specialist on social work. This is apparently too little, and the specialist complains about spending most of the time filling in forms.

Very seldom children in the orphanage return to their biological parent(s). About every second child who is left in the house for a period of time is never taken out by the parents.

## 4.6 Governor's administration

The Commission on human rights acts under the aegis of the governor of Arkhangelsk region, who is the major political figure regionally. The commission has indirect relevance for the promotion of children's rights.

There is also a Commission on under-age affairs, which acts under the governor. Its focus is on young offenders, and it is closely connected with subdivisions of the police. Since, unfortunately, many teenagers who grow up in orphanages tend to get in touch with criminal milieu, the Commission on under-age affairs and the bodies working with orphans are in touch.

## 4.7 Police (militia)

The police are entitled to take a child out of the family if there are threats to the child's life. The police are also responsible for placing delinquent children (living in the streets) in shelters. However, for the

time being this sphere is poorly covered by legal acts. In 1998 the Law on the Basis for the State System to Prevent Child Neglect and Criminality stated that prevention of juvenile delinquency was to be taken over by the system of social protection, and no longer to be the task of the police.

In the sector of social protection it is considered a problem that the police are not obliged to inform the departments of social welfare of cases of violence against children. This means that valuable time is wasted to the disadvantage of the child in question.

## 4.8 Conclusions

Above we have seen that different institutions and administrative bodies in Arkhangelsk take care of different parts of the policies towards social orphans and social orphanage. In the Department of Education in Arkhangelsk region a special unit deals with revealing and placing orphans. A centre of adoption has been established in this centre as well. The Regional Department of Social Welfare ensures financial help for families with children, especially families with many children, lonely parents and families with handicapped children. Also the boarding schools for children are organised under this department.

The Regional Department of Health is among the actors taking responsibility for children orphans, especially those between zero and four years old. The Regional committee on women, family and youth affairs works with the aim of raising public awareness of question of social orphans, takes part in financing grants directed on improvement of conditions of orphans and prevention of social orphanage.

Besides the regional level (Arkhangelsk oblast) we find town (municipality) departments. The municipal Department of Health and Social Protection gives preventive help to families who are in a difficult life situation for financial, social, psychological pedagogical or other reasons. The department finds places to live for children who are left without parental care. The Town Child's Houses and nine units of social welfare (one for each of the city's administrative quarters) are administrated by the Department of Health and Social Protection.

The Governor of the Arkhangelsk region is responsible for the Commission on Human Rights Acts. The police are entitled to take a child out of the family if there are threats to a child's life. The police

have also been responsible for placing children living in the streets in shelters, but this task has been partly taken over by the system of social protection.

## 5 Reasons why children become social orphans

This chapter discusses the reasons for social orphanage with regard to both specific Russian conditions and more general conditions concerning social orphanage. The perspective on social orphanage is somewhat more analytical than in the previous chapters. Arkhangelsk oblast and Arkhangelsk city is a case in this pilot project, and constitutes the case for our more specific discussion. In this way the discussion is kept at two levels: at a nation-level regarding the more general item. Arkhangelsk, as a part of Russia close to the Nordic countries, serves as a “window” which enables us to look into more details regarding social orphanage.

### 5.1 Reasons for orphanhood

Russia has, as we already discussed, a large and increasing number of orphans, many of them living in orphanages. Due to Russia’s dramatic history throughout the twentieth century, including devastating wars and mass repression, large numbers of children were left alone without parents to take care of them. Orphanages were built all over the country on a large scale. This coincided with an official ideology in the Soviet era that did not look upon the family as the main arena for socialising children, although the family was held in high esteem since the cultural policy made a conservative turn under Josef Stalin. Orphanages became a strong institution within Russia’s educational sector.

The increase in the number of orphans in Russia the past decade must be seen in the light of public and private poverty, as well as social difficulties and mentality changes. Even if each of these are important factors in understanding the growth in the number of children left without parental care, special attention must be given to the possible dynamics between the factors. For instance, private poverty does not

necessarily lead to orphanage. Research carried out in Norway shows that changes in traditional family values do not inevitably cause orphanhood if the families have personal and financial resources (Kristofersen and Slettebø 1992). The interaction of social and economic factors seems particularly close: alcoholism may lead to private ruin, and a strained family economy may increase the probability of alcoholism. The sections below discuss different factors explaining orphanhood in Russia. We will, however, underline the importance of the interplay of the factors in understanding the underlying causes of the rise in Russian orphanage.

## 5.2 Care for children without parental care: The case of Arkhangelsk

The number of children left without parental care has increased in the period 1997 – 2000 both in the region of Arkhangelsk and in Arkhangelsk city. In the Arkhangelsk region the number of orphans increased by almost 50 per cent. In 2001, altogether 338 children became orphans (biological and social) in the city of Arkhangelsk. This represented a considerable reduction from 2000, when 452 children were recruited to this group. We must, however, view the reduction in light of the fact that the number of children born each year is substantially reduced in this period. As for Russia generally, most of the Arkhangelsk orphans have a mother and/or father alive, but the parents are not able or willing to take care of their children because of alcoholism, mental illnesses, or poverty.

Table 5.1 *Reasons for orphanage, city of Arkhangelsk*

	Children becoming orphans	Reasons for orphanage, in per cent of children becoming orphans				Total
		Dead parents	Convicted parents	Parents deprived of parental rights	Parents evading parental responsibilities	
1997	282	24 %	n.a.	27 %	n.a.	n.a.
1998	365	14 %	n.a.	58 %	24 %	n.a.
1999	377	17 %	n.a.	28 %	47 %	n.a.
2000	452	19 %	5 %	49 %	27 %	100 %
2001	338	17 %	5 %	26 %	52 %	100 %

(Source: Nadezhda Kokoianina, (Kokoyanina 2002) in interview, and Pomor State University (Department of Social and Health Welfare of Arkhangelsk administration 2001))

In Arkhangelsk 17 percent of the total number of children discovered in 2001 being without parental care were “biological” orphans whose parents are dead. This means that 83 percent of the orphans have living parents. About five percent have convicted parents. In 26 percent of the cases the parents are deprived of parental rights, whereas as much as 52 percent of the children have parents who voluntarily give up their parental responsibilities.

There are no available statistics on the underlying causes of parents being deprived their parental rights. Often several causes will go together, for instance when alcoholism occurs in one-parent families. The following sections will therefore generally discuss the relationship between certain risk factors and children left without parental care, as they are perceived in Russia today. The risk situations (more on risk in chapter 5) discussed here are

- Private poverty
- Families with many children
- Handicapped children
- Alcoholism and drug abuse
- Mental illness
- Criminality
- Minority background

- One-parent families

Before we consider these risk factors, we briefly discuss the importance of the difficult public economic situation in Russia today.

### 5.3 Strained public finances

The extremely strained public finances have indirectly resulted in more and more children being deprived of parental care. In many cases family allowances and wages have not been paid for several years, or at least not paid in full. The system of primary family support (consisting of cash transfers, maternity leave, parental leave, kindergartens) has eroded. The social budgets have been kept at a minimum, in spite of glaring needs for help in the population. In a situation where many families experience very low wages, insufficient wage payment or quite simply unemployment, missing public transfers lead to severe poverty. The financing of more family-like alternatives to the institutions of residential care has also been at a loss.

Russia has a relatively weak tradition of preventive social work, helping children within the family setting. Neglected children have often been taken away from their biological families, without trying out the possibility of family recovery. The benefits of more preventive and contextual strategies to help families in trouble are now becoming evident in Russia, but tight public finances hamper the full realisation of these strategies.

### 5.4 Private poverty

The principal reasons why the number of Russian orphans has grown over the last ten years are probably to be found in the current social and economic situation. The economic situation of most Russian families has deteriorated as a result of the problems making economic reform work. This seems in particular to be the case for households with children.

Reforms that were carried out in the 1990's in the Russian society led to deep changes in the living conditions of the family. Many families that lost previous state support could not adapt to new life conditions. Coping strategies developed from those that emerged during state socialism, but many families have been unable to establish efficient

survival strategies (Kolenikov, Denisova et al. 2000; Lokshin and Yemtsov 2001). Russia has experienced sharp differentiation of family incomes and mass destitution, people's health has become worse, and life expectancy has decreased significantly over the last decade, in particular among males.

Poverty among families implies that some parents are totally unable to provide for their children, and therefore entrust their children to public upbringing. But poverty also seems to trigger off other negative mechanisms, like alcoholism, drug abuse, crime and health problems that eventually leave a certain percentage of children in need of care from adults other than their close family members.

As compared to 1990, Russian real wages in 1998 had halved (Klugman and Kolev 2001). At the same time, family budgets get strained from the fact that what used to be practically free, like payments for housing and municipal services, now must be paid for. Since most families have just enough to keep body and soul together, even minor cut-downs in subsidised housing, energy, schools and kindergartens, may result in significant worsening of living conditions. However, due to difficult public finances and new political ideas, cut-downs in these fields are exactly what happen. This holds particularly true for kindergartens, and other welfare goods that previously were offered by the workplace are now cut down. Often these facilities were exactly what made it possible to keep a one-parent family going.

Over 55% of families with children in the Arkhangelsk region have an income below one half of the survival minimum (Makarova 2001). The danger of stagnant poverty (lasting more than one year) is that it weakens the family as an upbringing unit, and hence leads to worsening of the children's mental and physical health and their capability of social adaptation.

Internationally child welfare and childhood poverty is also discussed from different angles. Some discussion has been on parents substance abuse and child welfare outcomes (Gregoire and Shultz 2001). Other researchers have focused on social exclusion and single motherhood in connection with childhood poverty (Hobcraft and Kiernan 2001).

#### 5.4.1 Problems of families with a large number of children

As we already pointed out, poverty is closely linked to family size in Russia. A large majority of families with four or more children live



below subsistence minimum (Henley and Alexandrova 1999). Twenty per cent of Russian children live in families with a large number of children (in Russia this means three or more children). At the same time about 95 percent of such families have an average income less than the minimum living wage. Especially one-parent families with a large number of children very often find themselves living in unbearable conditions.

In other words, being a child in a family with many children means a high risk of being poor. In fact, having many children in a family is well-established as a recognised reason for being poor, and alongside with low wages accepted as such in Soviet times (McAuley 1996). Therefore, benefits and privileges for those families were elaborate.

On the other hand, in the countries that arose out of the Soviet Union being a child does not seem to increase the likelihood of being poor (Klugman, Micklewright et al. 2002). In these countries children in the age group 0 to 15 years practically do not risk poverty more than the average. The rate is 1.09, whereas the corresponding rate for children in the EU is 1.27.

According to official statistics, there were 14 370 families with a large number of children in the Arkhangelsk region as of 1 January 2000. Among these were 4884 families, about one third, assumed to be of social risk, and 2792 such families live under “unbearable conditions” (Committee on women 2001).

Families with many children are offered help like benefits and privileges (for instance cheaper tickets on public transport) and increased child benefits. This is, however, not enough to meet the needs of these families. Another complicating factor is that because of the severe financial situation in Russia, both on state, oblast and local government level, the child allowances have not been paid according to the accepted rates and on time. As we have already discussed, many public services, which used to be (almost) free of charge, are now being charged.

## 5.5 Social and health problems

Life expectancy has decreased in Russia during the last decade. The life expectancy of Russian males was at a top (65 years) in 1987, in the middle of the perestroika period. Seven years later, in 1994, the life expectancy of males had decreased to 58 years. Life expectancy dropped three years for Russian women during the same period

(Sparén and Vågerö 2000). According to Sparén and Vågerö these changes are astoundingly large, and the Swedish researchers ask whether changes of the same size has occurred in time of peace in any other European country during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Contrasted with the increase in life expectancy in many other European countries during the period 1987-94, the Russian situation seems particularly alarming. The researchers connect the decrease in life expectancy to specific health trends in Eastern European countries (“echoes” from the past); problems with hospital resources; extended use of alcohol; mass poverty/nutrition problems; stress and changes in family and social structures in Russia (Sparén and Vågerö 2000). The mortality of new-born and of children under five is also higher in Russia than in many other European countries (UNICEF 2002). Baranov mentions both these and many other health problems for Russian children and adolescents and discusses the need for preventive strategies and actions concerning school children (Baranov 2000).

### 5.5.1 Handicapped children

Parents with children with defects in physical or mental development may apply for them to be taken care of by state-run social care institutions. In other words, parents of a handicapped child can place him or her at a boarding school. The number of such children has increased considerably the last years. One of the reasons is the slow development of systems of rehabilitation help and day care centres for handicapped children. Many parents have to give their children to state care due to financial and life problems. Having a handicapped child makes it impossible for them to work, and they may lack the competence to help their handicapped children on their own. At the same time due to different circumstances in Russia these children very rarely are adopted.

In the Arkhangelsk region there is a specialized boarding school for children who suffer from cerebral paralysis (184 persons), an orphanage and boarding school for deaf children and children with defects in hearing (180 persons), and three boarding schools for children with severe defects in intellectual development (505 persons).

As of 1 January 2002, 5457 handicapped children were registered in the Arkhangelsk region. This represents a 19 percent increase from 1996 (Roumiantseva 2001). The most frequent problems are illnesses in the nervous system, inborn anomalies, and psychic illnesses. The last three years has seen a growth in the number of handicapped children of 14 per cent. This question requires additional investiga

tion. Relevant factors may be unfavorable financial conditions and insufficient medical development in far districts of the Arkhangelsk region.

So far, this increase is not reflected in the statistics of children in orphanages. Among the 132 “refused” children between one and four years in the orphanage at the present time, only six (that is less than five percent) are handicapped. These figures indicate that in general parents, especially mothers, feel responsibility for their child even when keeping it at home entails a very hard life (Issoupova 2000:85).

### 5.5.2 Alcohol and drug abuse

Alcoholism is a dominant problem in Russia. International literature underline parents’ alcohol and drug abuse on the one side and child neglect on the other as two important reasons for intervention (Bebbington and Miles 1989; Goerge 1990; Lindsey 1992; Little, Leitch et al. 1995; Vinnerljung 1996; Forssén 1998; Backe-Hansen 2000; Kalland and Sinkkonen 2001). Alcoholism and drug addiction also very often goes hand in hand with child neglect, maltreatment and economic problems. Parent’s alcohol problems constitute a specific risk factor for orphanage.

Besides a general health problem connected with both mass poverty and a relatively large alcohol consumption in Russia (Sparén and Vågerö 2000), there is also a problem with drinking among minors (Williams, Grechanaia et al. 2001). An international prevention program to deal with children drinking was launched among fifth grade pupils in 20 Moscow schools. The results demonstrated successful recruitment and retention of pupils and schools to the project, acceptability of programme materials, high participation rates, and changes in student’s knowledge of problems associated with under age drinking and some evidence about increases in parent – child communication about alcohol use. The project also demonstrates that Russian youth, as compared to Americans, begin drinking at earlier ages, receives fewer prevention messages from their parents, and has fewer prevention programmes in schools (Williams, Grechanaia et al. 2001).

### 5.5.3 Mental illnesses

Norwegian and other Nordic studies show a relationship between mother’s health problems and child neglect (Grinde 1989; Kristofersen and Slettebø 1992; Lindsey 1992). This relationship is

particularly clear for mothers with mental illnesses. At the same time, mental disorder is very often correlated with poverty and difficult living conditions. Elisabeth Bache-Hansen (Backe-Hansen 2000) identifies mothers' mental illnesses as a main reason why small children are taken care of by the authorities.

So far, little research has been conducted in Russia regarding the effect on children due to their mother's psychological problems. However, N.A. Khaimovskaia in Moscow is carrying out studies on the effect of mother's psychological deviation on youth. In St. Petersburg children in the age 0.5 to 2.5 years and their mothers are being studied.

#### 5.5.4 Criminality

Imprisonment of parents is always a difficult situation for young children. International studies point to parents' criminality as one possible risk factor for child neglect and abuse (Lindsey 1992). In Russia, imprisonment – especially of the mother – represents a high probability for the child to be taken under public care. In fact, this seems to be the rule in Russia. The body of guardianship and care at the place where the child lives makes a decision on whether to keep the child in a shelter or to hand it over to relatives.

There are legal regulations as to mothers and children in prison. Children are kept separate from their mothers, but are let in once a day for meal and sometimes to play with the mother. Breastfeeding women who are sentenced to imprisonment, may bring their child to the prison. Often the prison term is postponed.

The prisons are usually in a bad state and not designed for maintaining contact between mother and child. Another complicating factor is that the prison may be situated far away from where the child lives. This means that women sentenced to long term imprisonment usually are deprived of parental rights to their children.

### 5.6 Changing family values

In addition to the severe problems in Russian economy, some people point to shaky family values as a reason for high rates of orphanage. In the pre-soviet era, the families constituted a strong element in the Russian society. Although the family was considered a basic social unit in the Soviet system, the actual ways modernisation took in the

Soviet period weakened the role of the family. On the other hand that happened in other industrialised countries as well. The troublesome aspects of everyday life under state socialism might in fact have strengthened the family as an institution as it might have served as a refuge (Sztompka 1993). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, trends from the west, which further weaken family values, have reached Russia.

Like in many other countries, a crisis in traditional family values is being challenged in Russia today. Individualist strategies to happiness do not always fit in with traditional family values, and new values that combine individualism and family life are not easily found in Russia like in the rest of the industrialised world. Concretely it is expressed in a lowering birth rate, raising numbers of divorce, and increasing numbers of single mothers bringing up children. All in all, the role of the family in socialisation of children appears to be considerably weaker today than in previous times in Russia.

Below we discuss one possible risk situation connected with the decay of family values: the increase in the number of one-parent families.

### 5.6.1 One-parent families

#### **Russia**

In Russia, the number of one-parent families is on a sharp rise. This is partly due to women without a (stable) partner giving birth, and partly due to the declining number of registered marriages (a decline of about 10.5 percent in 2000). During the last years the family-marriage relations have changed in Russia. There is a sharp increase in “civil marriages” (cohabitation), especially among young people. Children growing up with parents not living in a registered relationship are considered to be brought up in a “non-full family”, as the Russian expression goes. In 1999, 94 percent of the “incomplete families” were headed by single mothers.

#### **Arkhangelsk region and town**

The number of one-parent families in Arkhangelsk region is about 41 200, which amounts to 16 percent of the total number of families. The corresponding number in Arkhangelsk city was about 8400 in 1998 and 12 400 in 2001. In other words, there has been an increase in the number of one-parent families of almost 50 percent in just three years. One-third of divorces relates to families with minor children.

One-parent families appear to be the principal “suppliers” of orphans. 87 per cent of children who were taken to Arkhangelsk orphanages in 2001, were children from one-parent families. Very often there is no information about the father in these families (Department of Social and Health Welfare of Arkhangelsk administration 2001).

In 2001, 119 actions on deprivation of parental rights were presented to the Arkhangelsk court. Only in six cases parents retained their parental rights. The number of children who are disowned by their own parents upon birth is increasing. The last years there have been only 2-5 such cases per year, whereas in December 2001 and January 2002 altogether 15 babies were abandoned by their parents.

### **Discussion**

The problems of the one-parent families vary. Sometimes there are financial and living problems in these families. Sometimes the life situation of the families becomes difficult because mother re-marries or moves to another town.

Here it is worth noting, however, that single parenthood does not necessarily lead to children being left without parental care. Research conducted in Norway shows that even if children from one-parent families are over-represented in the group of neglected children, a vital factor is the living conditions for single parents (Hamner and Turner 1990). If the public support for lone parents is well developed, and/or individuals involved have personal resources (both in mental and economic terms), status as single parent does not need to represent a risk factor for the child (Kristofersen and Slettebø 1992).

In a statistically based study on poverty among children in Russia Klugman and Kolev (Klugman and Kolev 2001) show that large groups of children over time experience living in a family that falls into the “poor” category. Some children stay there for a period, while others do not get out of the category. This holds particularly true for children with lone-parents, for those living in the countryside, and for the youngest children. Interestingly, Klugman and Kolev show that the main reason single parents end up as being classified as poor is not their lone-parent status, but because most single parents are women, and in consequence suffer from the labour market disadvantages faced by women in general (Klugman and Kolev 2001).

Roumiantseva (2001) points to the problem of feminisation of poverty in Russia. Workers in the educational, health care, social welfare and culture sectors get the lowest pay. In 1999 the average salary in the

social sector was less than half of the average in the manufacturing sector. The wages for women are one third less than men's wages.

## 5.7 Conclusions

There is no single and simple cause to the large increase in the number of Russian orphans. To understand the situation, it is necessary to see the interplay between several factors: strained public finances, extensive private poverty, social problems and a general dissolution of traditional family values. As the analysis of the problem needs an integrated approach, so must be the help of the families experiencing difficulties. Problems of private poverty are probably fundamental in present day Russia. However, on the one side poverty is closely related to other problems, like alcoholism, drug abuse and mental diseases. On the other side, the consequences of private poverty may be alleviated by public transfers and programs.

## 6 What happens to children being left without parental care?

A large majority of Russian orphans, who are not taken care of by relatives, are placed in institutions of residential care. Russia has a strong tradition of large institutions for children, handicapped children, sick children and orphans. Although most experts today agree that children benefit from growing up in a family, and Russia pursues active policies along these lines, most orphans will still have to live in institutions, at least in the short run. Therefore, the most viable option will often be to reform and restructure the orphanages to be more family-like. Reform processes have already started in many places in Russia. This chapter discusses the role of orphanages, and how upbringing in an orphanhood may affect the child's mental and physical state, as well as his or her future prospects. In this way the chapter is more problem-oriented than the previous ones.

### 6.1 State and non-state institutions for orphans and children without parental care

Russia has got considerable experience with specialised institutions that offer social rehabilitation for children without parental care. These institutions are established by the executive power of the Russian federation subjects. Their activities have to conform to the standard statutes (*primernoe polozhenie*) established by the Federation government (13 September 1996, no. 1092).

These institutions are set up by various ministries (see also chapter 3): Ministry of Education (traditional orphanages); The Ministry of Social Protection and Labour (special orphanages for sick children); Ministry



of Health (special schools); Ministry of the Interior (correctional institutions, and police collection and distribution centres).

The *Ministry of Education* is responsible for the major part of institutions for orphans and children who are deprived of a family upbringing. These institutions are regulated through the resolutions made by the federation government<sup>7</sup>. Main types of educational institutions are:

- Orphanages. There are several types of orphanages according to the child's age (one and a half year to three years, pre-school, school age). Some orphanages are mixed as to the children's age. There are also specialised orphanages. In order to make the childhood as family-like as possible, new types of orphanages are being established (more on this in chapter 7).
- Boarding schools. Here children live and go to school within the same institutions. These schools may be public or private.

Some boarding schools are reorganised in order to be more family-like. How this reorganisation is done, will be commented on below.

There are several types of state social institutions for children under the *Ministry of Social Protection and Labour*:

- Social rehabilitation centres
- Social shelters for children and youngsters. The Russian word for shelter is "priiut", and was previously used for children asylums. Today the shelter offers temporary stay for children in trouble. During the stay the child is given assistance in finding a permanent place to live. Today children may stay in the shelter up to one year, whereas earlier 3-6 months was the maximum.
- Centres for help to children.

The *Ministry of Health* is responsible for orphanages for children with certain health-related disabilities.

- For handicapped children and children with retarded development there are special schools. They are regulated through a resolution on federal government level (from 12 March 1997, no 288). These special schools exist on pre-school level as well as school level. Initial vocational

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<sup>7</sup> 14 October 1996 No 1203, 28 August 1997 No 1117, 30 March 1998 No 366

education is also given within this framework. Two ministries co-operate in preparing the programmes for these schools, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Health. The schools are subdivided according to the pathological profile of their pupils. There are special schools for deaf, for partially hearing, for blind, for weak-sighted, for children with serious speech impediments, children suffering from impairment of the organs of movement, and mentally retarded children.

- For children who are in need of long-term medical treatment there are special schools, called curative educational institutions. These sanatorium-like schools aim at helping parents follow up their child's development and education, and offer training that will enable the child among others to function well in the world outside the school and hospital. The activities of these institutions are regulated through the standard statutes passed by the federal government (28 August 1997, no. 1117).

Orphans and children without parental care are welcome to various types of semi-military or military schools. Among these are the cadet schools (some also boarding schools), regulated by the standard statutes (*tipovoe polozhenie*) of 15 November 1997, no. 1427. Boarding schools offering initial pilot training give preference to orphans over 15 years old in physical condition to become pilots, according to the standard statutes of 5 September 1998, No. 1046. Male orphans between 14 and 16 years old may become "foster children" of a military unit. In case the child wants it and the guardianship authority accepts it the local military commissariat may send the child to a military unit. This is founded on the resolution "on enrolment of under-aged citizens to a military unit as foster child" confirmed by the Regulation by the federation level government of 14 February 2000 no. 124, and the resolution on the status of foster children of 21 September 2000, no. 745.

Shelters for orphans are set up in the framework of the monasteries several places in Russia. Here children receive nursing, upbringing and education. They get acquainted with useful work; they learn to take care of themselves and to live in a collective. Attention is paid to the spiritual development of the child based on the traditions of the Orthodox Church.

## 6.2 Placing orphans

The current situation in Russia is that the society itself gives birth to a whole generation of orphans. The previous chapter discussed several reasons for orphanage, whereas this chapter takes a closer look at what happens to children who are discovered as being left without parental care. Where are they placed, and how do they develop? International literature describing people's courses through different treatment or care institutions, often call such courses "care careers".

### Care careers of orphans

The care careers of children receiving child welfare measures differ according to both the global and the local context. Public and private wealth and poverty influence the careers of children at risk. Research on children's "care careers" is conducted world-wide. The concept of "care career" is complex and can give a large number of associations. It is, however, rooted in a research tradition within sociology. According to (Marshall 1998:55) one of the aims of career studies is to uncover the recurrence of typical contingencies and problems awaiting someone who continues in a course of action. A contrast is often made between the objective and the subjective career line. The objective career line is composed of different measures, like orphanages, foster home, guardianship offered to children at different points in time. The subjective career line consist in interpretative acts taken by the involved children, young persons and parents as they move through certain stages (Marshall 1998:55), also referring to Goffman's *Asylums* (Goffman 1968).

### Placing orphans in Russia

As we already described, children may be placed into orphanages when mothers leave them in the maternity hospital soon after giving birth, or when children are born into families of alcoholics or drug abusers who are deprived of parental rights. Many of these children have health problems. Some have psychic traumas, they suffer from different illnesses, and some of them are retarded. Placed into an orphanage they get a "home", nourishment, clothes and education, as well as complex medical, psychological and pedagogical help. The placement may, however, be of a rather brief character. There are data which show that some children have had to change institutions six times (Nazarova 2001).

The number of children and teenagers from the group at social risk growing up in orphanages increases every year. Since 1992 the total

number of children in internate institutions under the Ministry of Education has grown more than 1.5 times. At the end of 1999 they were altogether 234 000 children. During this time the number of orphanages has increased significantly, from 577 orphanages in 1992 to no less than 1276 in 1999 (Chepurnykh 2001).

The number of boarding schools for orphans has reached 155 (1999) as compared to 140 in 1992. The number of boarding schools for orphans who are mentally or physically disabled was 197 (in 1999), an increase from 153 in 1992) (Chepurnykh 2001).

Under the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Russian Federation there are 155 boarding schools for handicapped children, 311 social shelters, 23 centres of help for children, and 400 social rehabilitation centres.

### **The Arkhangelsk case**

In the Arkhangelsk region at present 4749 orphans are brought up in orphanages. As we discussed in the previous chapter, most of these children have parents alive: parents with alcohol or drug problems, parents with criminal background, or mothers who are prostitutes.

Table 6.1 *Where Arkhangelsk city orphans are placed (in percent per year)*

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
In boarding schools	50	70	49	38	39
In families	50	30	51	62	61
Total	100	100	100	100	100

(Chepurnykh 2001).

In 2001 85 children from Arkhangelsk city were adopted by foreign citizens (in 2000 – 58 children, in 1999 – 72 children). Likewise, the number of foster families has increased: in 1999 – 5 foster families, in 2000 – 9, and in 2001 – 19 (Chepurnykh 2001).

## **6.3 The orphanages**

The conditions of the major part of orphanages and its orphans are rather poor. The current public financial support to the orphanages is at present at a minimum level of existence, staff complains. The budget has only two protected articles, which is feeding of the

children and teachers' wages. There is a great lack of means for current maintenance, for medicines, for clothing, for the purchase of stimulating games, toys, and materials for workshops and laboratories, books and sport's articles. The poor financial situation makes it difficult to pay specialists, like speech therapists, psychiatrists, special teachers and psychologists.

Results from the evaluation of the implementation of the International Child Development Programme (ICDP) in an orphanage in Arkhangelsk show that the programme was used to a great or considerable extent. New working methods in the field of care for orphans have been adapted (Arnesen 2000).

The programme implies a considerable change in the staff's view of their possibilities to influence the development of the children according to care and learning. After the implementation of the programme the employees considered that they could affect the development of children to a great or fairly great extent. Before the implementation took place they meant that this was possible to a minimal extent. The future development capacities of children is no longer assessed exclusively on basis of the pathology of a child or congenital malformations or disabilities, but on the basis of the care and contact that the care givers might give the children. The results show large changes within the employee's apprehension of the attachment needs of the children (Arnesen 2000).

## 6.4 What orphanages do to the children in need

International research has plenty of evidence that social orphanhood may be very painful for children. This may be due both to mother's harmful behaviour during pregnancy, to negative social experience during early and pre-school childhood, and to circumstances connected with the placement of the orphan. There seems to be a widespread consensus that large institutions have a clear negative effect on both the physical, mental and social development of the orphans.

Orphanhood often hampers the child's emotional ties with the social environment and with a world of grownups and coevals. This may cause deep second breaches of physical, mental and social development.

Psychological research indicates that social orphanhood may leave the most harmful tracks in the mental life of a child. The majority of children in orphanages develop anxiety and personal uncertainty, and they often have an uninterested attitude to the outside world. They often experience a change for the worse when it comes to emotional regulation and emotional-cognitive interaction with others. The result may be retarding intellectual development. The earlier a child is deprived of his or her parents, and the longer he or she lives in institution, the more expressed are the deformations in all directions of mental development. In addition to delays in intellectual development we can often observe complex of hard emotional breaches: impoverishment of emotional expression, difficulties in communication and more or less complete absence of ability to collaborate, as well as growing passivity (Creuziger 1997).

Specialists of international rights in the organisation “Human Rights Watch”, after investigation of orphanages in Russia, came to the conclusion that the Russian system of bringing up orphans imputes to children reared in governmental institutions an inclination to antisocial behaviour. Many Russian orphanages are characterised by an authoritarian style of upbringing. Teachers experiencing professional ineffectualness sometimes try to suppress children physically and psychologically, and expose them to cruel and humiliating punishments. This may change the children’s personality (Pashkina 2001).

Many children are taken into boarding schools after a long stay in orphanages, in a family with psychosocial problems or in the streets. Sufferings during this time influence on the development of the personality (emotional sphere). According to the psychologists’ investigations of children who are in traditional orphanages, they are characterised by “behavioural disorder and permanent dependence on grown-ups” (Pashkina 2001). In conflicts they tend not to be able to evaluate the situation objectively, or control their mood and behaviour. Difficulties in formation of self-awareness may lead to permanent imitation of others, false feeling and aggressiveness. In attempt to possess self-confidence, a child from an orphanage may demonstrate his independence by giving up submission to rules and moral norms.

As children in orphan institutions are highly subjected to different influences, they quite often get into contact with persons in criminal and semi-criminal groups. Every tenth under-aged offender who is taken into a colony is a youth that has left an orphanage. Very often orphans become victims of crime.

## 6.5 Leaving orphanages – future prospects

At the age of 18 teenagers have to leave the orphanages and find a place to live. When the “graduate” does not have a place to settle down, the status of migrant is added to the status of orphan.

Sometimes the hometown of the orphan provides a place to live for him/her, but even in this case many problems may appear. Taken into account what is already said about the detrimental effects of orphanages, the individuals’ starting point is not a favourable one. And most orphanages have no programme preparing the orphans for a life on their own after leaving the orphanage. The orphanages do not usually have a specialist who could follow up those leaving the institutions to help them adapt to society. The situation of those leaving orphanages is now being paid attention to by the authorities and professionals in the field. Models are developed and finances are sought. Young people from the orphanages are seldom ready to live on their own in communal flats: often they cannot cook, wash their clothes or spend money rationally. Moreover, they do not know their rights. It is difficult for them to manage on their own without being in a social group they are familiar with. Often the worst version is when they go back to their parents’ homes, which means to the unfavourable living conditions, from which they were taken out and placed in orphanages.

The most important problem in socialisation of orphans living in boarding schools or other institutions is related to psychological difficulties, which in turn makes it difficult to integrate them into society. The children may have problems to make new contacts with people, to establish a family, and to bear the responsibility for the upbringing of future children (Baiborodova, Shipitsyna and others, 1997). Orphans often have distorting ideas about social roles, especially about the role of the family father. In this connection the ideal model of family is very often exaggeratedly positive or concretely negative, that also makes opportunities for life perspectives more difficult.

Often the orphans will meet problems in entering and adapting to schools and higher educational institutions after leaving an orphanage. In many cases (85-92 percent), orphans who have left the orphanage are not capable to study on the programme of secondary school, while in the general children population the percentage of persons with delayed mental development does not exceed 8-9 percent. However, there are a lot of exceptions that prove the rules. Not all orphans from orphanages are educational losers. In order to help this category of

children into education, they are given preferential treatment when applying for medium and higher education. They have to pass entrance examination, but will then enter without competing further.

Most children who have spent most of their lives in an institution do take higher education, but seeks vocational and technical training. Most orphanages make efforts to offer introductory courses to prepare the children for vocational and technical schools.

At the same time, young people among orphans are not competitive on the contemporary Russian labour market. Difficulties in getting a job are usually both a result of marginalisation – and a reason for further marginalisation. Very often orphans do not identify themselves as a part of society, but contrast themselves with society.

According to statistics every fifth orphan who leaves an orphanage develops a criminal career, every seventh becomes a prostitute. About 10 percent of the previous orphans commit suicide (Pashkina 2001). Correspondingly, data published in mass media shows that 5000 of 15 000 orphans who left orphanages during one year got imprisoned, 3000 became homeless, and 1500 committed suicide. During the first three years after leaving an orphanage 30 percent of orphans were in contact with anti-criminal organs due to their unsociable behaviour, 8 percent of orphans got into educational and labour colonies, whereas 32 percent took part in street fights. One third of the total number of orphans who left an orphanage, is doing well (Dement'eva 1992).

In order to cope with the problems encountered by young people leaving orphanages, some cities and towns have introduced a position as specialist on following up post-orphanage youth. These specialists work in the local centres for social protection. The adults working in boarding houses and hostels, where former residents of orphanages usually live when completing technical school, also take on follow-up responsibilities.

Unfortunately, the current means and methods in the work with Russian children who are not under parental care do not compensate for unfortunate circumstances of their lives or defects in mental, emotional and personal development. This may imply that many orphans leaving orphanages are unable to cope with “normal” life situations.

The helplessness of those leaving orphan institutions makes law defenders insist on the necessity of developing family type orphanages, and using the possibilities of placing orphans into families.



## 6.6 Ongoing reforms

Nowadays the question of radical changes of the Russian system of state care for orphans is very acute. Reorganisation of existing orphanages and boarding schools is planned. Considerable attention is paid to maintain and to increase the quality of education in these institutions. In Arkhangelsk, the ongoing reform of traditional orphanages consists of several elements, like family and family-type orphanages as well as making orphanages more family-like.

The *family orphanage* is one of the alternatives. Here a family takes on the responsibility for one or more children on a contact-basis. The family orphanage may be approved, reorganised or abolished by organs of the executive power of the federation subject, or by local self-government. The organs of guardianship in the town or community of the family type orphanage controls the living conditions and level of upbringing in each family orphanage. The same organs protect the rights and legal interests of the children in this type of orphanages. The organs likewise train the people who would like to establish this type of orphanage.

There are also *family-type orphanages*. This latter has been regulated by a federation government regulation (postanovlenie) (19 March No 195). This kind of orphanage is established by a married couple willing to bring up no less than five and no more than ten children. Both wife and husband, and children over ten years, must agree. The opinion of other family members (including adopted children) must be taken into consideration before the family orphanage is established. The total number of children in the family should not exceed twelve.

Some *boarding schools* are also reorganised in order to be more *family-like*. For instance they may be organised in small groups of children of different ages. In this case the group shall not have more than eight members. In case the group is set up according to age, and the children in the group are less than four years old, the group can not have more than five children. If all children in a group are over four years old, they can be up to ten in the group. The group is called a "family". There are, however, several aspects of daily life that still is tied to the boarding school, like meals in the canteen, laundry and distribution of new clothes. Boarding-schools of family-type (*internatnoe uchrezhdenie semeinogo tipa*) are a kind of institution where children live like with separate families with separate entrances and their own organisation and way of life. This kind of institution is the one that most resembles a normal family-life.

For the time being the reforms of the orphanages aim at developing a multifunctional system of psychological, pedagogical, medical and social support and protection of rights of the orphans. It aims at preparing children for social self-protection, enabling them to make their own choices and training them to interact with other people.

The efforts are showing results, especially regarding the preparation of orphans to work. Labour training and vocational education are being offered.

### **Arkhangelsk**

In 2001 in Arkhangelsk a social rehabilitation centre for young people was founded. In this centre the following services are offered:

- Temporary living of teenagers between 15 and 23 years old waiting for permanent dwelling
- Professional education or retraining
- Legal assistance
- Patronage at home of “graduates” of orphanages with the purpose of psychological and pedagogical help

The main idea behind the reformation of institutions for orphans is that all Russian children without any exceptions are entitled to the principal equalities of start conditions of life. Reformation of the institutions involves the whole social sphere and will require an active interaction of departments and institutions that relate to policies dealing with the problems of unhappy childhood.

In 2001 the Department of post-internate adaptation was founded in Arkhangelsk, but it still has not begun to work.

## **6.7 Conclusions**

Russia has a strong tradition of large institutions for children, handicapped children, sick children and orphans. Most experts today agree that children benefit from growing up in a family, and Russia has clear ambitions to pursue active policies along these lines. Taking the scope of the orphan problem into consideration, a large amount of Russian orphans will still have to live in institutions, at least in the short run. Reform processes of orphanages and a restructuring of them to be more family-like, have already started many places in Russia.

Russia has considerable experience with specialised institutions that offer social rehabilitation for children without parental care. The activities of these institutions are established by the executive power of the Russian federation subjects. They have to conform to the standard statutes (*primernoe polozhenie*) established by the Federation government (13 September 1996, no. 1092). These institutions are set up by the four ministries mentioned in earlier chapters.

A closer look was given in this chapter on what happens to children who are discovered as being left without parental care. Where are they placed, and how do they develop? A part of the international literature describes people's courses through different treatment or care institutions as "care careers". Public and private wealth and poverty influence the careers of children at risk.

Children may be placed into orphanages when mothers leave them in the maternity hospital soon after giving birth, or they may be placed in orphanage at a later age because of a serious situation at home. Some children live for a long period of their childhood in one institution, while others have had to change institutions a large number of times (up to six times is documented).

In this chapter the role of orphanages, and how upbringing in an institution may affect the child's mental and physical state negatively, were discussed. According to statistics at least every fifth orphan who leaves the orphanage, develops a criminal career. Every seventh orphan becomes a prostitute. In order to cope with the problems encountered by young people leaving orphanages, some cities and towns have introduced a position as specialist on following up post-orphanage youth. Emphasis is being put on assisting orphans in choosing a profession and entering secondary special and higher education.

In the next chapter this discussion will proceed into a discourse on alternatives to residential institutions.

## 7 Alternatives to residential institutions

This chapter will give an account of the use of alternatives to residential institutions in Russia today. We are also interested in government measures to *prevent* social orphanage. Looking for alternative placement entails concentrating not merely on “out-put” of children from traditional orphanages to foster families, reformed orphanages or other. It also requires a focus on the “in-put” side. What makes children end up without parental care, and how to take pre-emptive action to avoid such developments?

### 7.1 Care for orphans – the case of Arkhangelsk city

Again we turn to Arkhangelsk city as an example (in this report a pilot research case) of what is going on in the Northwest part of Russia. A relatively large proportion of children becoming orphans are taken care of by their own families (for instance grandparents) or adopted. Only very few get a foster home. The number of foster families in Arkhangelsk is increasing, but still low. In 1997 there were three foster families in the city, whereas this had risen to 19 families in 2001. Orphanage is clearly the most viable alternative for children when relatives can not take custody, and for older children who become orphans. It is, however, a stated policy of Arkhangelsk city to recruit more foster families, and the local authorities are planning to establish so-called “patron families” for orphaned children.

From 1997 family centres have been established in Arkhangelsk, with a primary task to prevent social orphanhood by helping children within the family setting (Makarova 2001:173). The first centre was, and still is, a 24-hour shelter for children in acute situations. The other

centres provide day-time support for families experiencing difficulties.

Table 7.1 *Care for orphans, city of Arkhangelsk*

	Care for new orphans, in per cent				
	Return to biological parents	Guardianship, adoption, foster family	Orphanages	Other	Total
1997	-	47	53	0	100
1998	14	38	45	3	100
1999	8	34	54	4	100
2000	25	35	38	2	100
2001	10	40	39	11	100

(Source: Nadezhda Kokoianina, (Kokoianina 2002) in interview, and Pomor State University)

Within the municipality of Arkhangelsk there are five orphanages.<sup>8</sup> Four of the orphanages have between 60 and 90 children, whereas one has 235 children. In addition Arkhangelsk has one boarding home for mentally retarded children.

Table 7.1 shows that a high rate of the children discovered to be deprived of parental care are placed in orphanages. The proportion of the orphans placed in foster families or under guardianship (mainly relatives) is also relatively large. Orphans with living parents very seldom keep in contact with their parents, and it rarely happens that children are reunited with their biological parents after living in orphanages for some time.

Russia's strained economy throughout the last decade has gravely affected the social sector, including public care for children. The effects are both *indirect*, because poverty among families leads to greater need of help, and *direct*, meaning that there has been a considerable lack of money within the social sector. The orphanages are greatly dependent on sponsors. According to the director of orphanage no. 1, the municipality of Arkhangelsk pays only about 1/8

<sup>8</sup> The orphanages, belonging to the education sector, take care of children over three years old. Younger children are placed in institutions within the health sector. In 2001 130 children lived in such institutions in Arkhangelsk. Also severely handicapped children are taken care of by health institutions.

of what is needed to run the orphanage in a proper manner. This covers food expenses and teachers' wages, whereas for instance medicines, clothes, shoes and furniture must be paid by sponsor money.

## 7.2 Family-like alternatives to residential institutions for children deprived of family upbringing

### 7.2.1 Adoption of children

In this part of the chapter Russia as a whole will be commented on first and some figures for Arkhangelsk will be discussed below.

In Russia, as well as in most other countries, adoption is given first priority as a solution for children who are left without parental care. Adopted children are legally equal to the non-adopted children in the family. Adopting families voluntarily assume the same responsibilities as any parents have according to the law, with the same rights and obligations (Family Code of the Russian Federation, article 137).

According to article 125 in the Family Code "adoption is made by court according to applications of people (a person) willing to adopt a child". The application to adopt a child is decided upon in court with active participation of the organs of guardianship (Family Code of the Russian Federation, pp. 129-130).

No matter what kind of adoption, it is always submitted to the rules that are established in the Family Code, and its observance is obligatory. This is necessary to guarantee stability of the adoption and the establishment of lasting parental relations. Stability is highly important for orphans, because they do not have parents who can counteract an unhappy adoption. There is no family to which the child may return. Mistakes in adoption may infringe rights and interests both of the child's parents (or other relatives) and persons who are willing to adopt a child (adopters). That's why the law regulates conditions and order of adoption and its cessation in detail.

The fundamental condition of adoption is formulated in part 1 of article 124 in the Family Code: "Adoption is admitted in respect of minors and only of their interests." Adoption is allowed only when it is in the interest of the child itself. When a child has reached ten years it can not be adopted without its own consent.

The interests of a child in adoption are known first of all as making the necessary conditions for the child's full physical, psychological and spiritual development. This means that the interests of a child on no account can be understood in a narrow sense as satisfactory material and living conditions. It's not enough just to house, feed and clothe a child, to provide him or her with conditions for studies and leisure. Although this is also important, the most important for a child is to feel the beneficial influence of a family, to feel parental love, care, and caress. Not everyone is prepared to give a child such conditions. Demands for adoption are established in article 127 in Family Code.

According to article 128 in the Family Code, the difference in the age of adopter and adopted child must not be less than 16 years. The law also admits adoption of a child by a husband or a wife and single persons – man and woman. Both relatives of a child and strangers can be adopters. However article 127 does not allow adoption of a child by two persons who are not married.

In addition to the general conditions of adoption, the Family Code comprises some special conditions concerning the placement of orphans and children who are not under parental care. These include agreement for adoption of:

- The child's parents
- The child, if it has reached the age of 10 years
- The husband or wife of the adopter

According to the part 1 of article 129 in the Family Code, agreement of parents must be expressed in an undoubted and definite way, without any reservations in their personal written application. The signature of the parents must be certified by notary or witnessed by the body of guardianship and care.

There are two types of parental agreement to adoption:

- Agreement that a child should be adopted by a certain person – a specified agreement for adoption
- Agreement on adoption without naming a specified adopter – a general agreement for adoption

In case of a general agreement, the right to choose the adopter belongs to the bodies of guardianship and care, which register children who are adopted according to the law. To secure the child's rights and interests, and to prevent buying and selling of children, the bodies of

guardianship and care must make an investigation and give their conclusion on whether adoption corresponds to the interests of the child. The only exceptions to this rule occur when a child is adopted by his or her stepfather.

The more or less flexible law concerning conditions of adoption meets now and then hardships on its way to realisation. Cases when a minor has brothers or sisters may be troublesome. In these cases, the following order acts: "Disuniting brothers and sisters can be permitted only as an exception in particular circumstances". One such exception occurs when the adopter claims medical reasons for refusing to adopt one of the children.

One of the particularities of adoption is its secrecy, which according to article 139 in Family Code is guarded by law. It is, so to speak, a general order concerning every adoption. Meanwhile, this secrecy is not really an obligatory element of any adoption.

According to the decree of the Russian Federation of 29 March, 2000 No. 275 in order to protect rights and legal interests of adopted children, the body of guardianship and care carries out control on the residence address of an adopted child of the conditions of the child's life and upbringing. Within seven days after a court's decision on adoption has come into effect, the local body of guardianship and care of the child, is obliged to forward confirming information to the body of guardianship and care on the adoptive parents' address. It is the duty of the authorities in this area to organise supervision of the life conditions and upbringing of the adopted child. This control is carried out annually during the first three years after adoption by specialists on guarding of childhood of the body of guardianship and care.

When the first three years are up, the necessity of carrying out further controls is defined by the body of guardianship and care individually depending on the situation that exists in the family of adopter. According to the results of control investigations, the specialist of guarding of childhood who has visited the family makes a report about life conditions and upbringing of the adopted child. In this report information about the child's health, his/her education, emotional and behavioural development, skills of self-serving, appearance and relationships in the family must be reflected.

### **The scope of adoption**

The number of adoptions has grown considerably in Russia. Adoption is primarily an option for children under 1 year in Russia. This is definitely the case for in-Russian adoptions, which constitutes the



dominant part of the adoptions. The same holds for disabled children. Physically or mentally disabled children are as good as never subject to adoption in Russia. In the table below Russia is compared with Latvia, another country with increase in adoption rate.

Table 7.2 *The gross adoption rate (per hundred thousand inhabitants 0–3 years)*

Year	Russia	Latvia
1989	129.9	256.0
1990	141.1	362.2
1991	152.5	415.7
1992	178.6	426.8
1993	215.6	356.5
1994	252.4	354.4
1995	225.5	360.6
1996	213.9	400.2
1997	263.4	466.3
1998	249.8	466.4
1999	258.2	496.2

(Source: UNICEF, 2001)

### **Adoption in Arkhangelsk**

There is a constant *decrease* of number of adopted orphans in the Arkhangelsk region. In 1999, 342 children were adopted, whereas the number of adopted children was 265 in 2000. The number of orphans who were adopted in families of foreign citizens has also declined: in 1999 - 73, in 2000 - 60. The decline is connected with new restrictions made in the Civil Code of the Russian Federation. For the last two years all the adopted children in the Arkhangelsk region were under one year old. This is partly due to the fact that most Russian adoptive parents want to keep the adoption a secret.

### **7.2.2 Foster families**

The conception of foster family in the contemporary meaning was introduced to Russia in the new Family Code. Foster families constitute one way of placing children who are not under parent's care for upbringing. Foster family arrangements are based upon agreements between the foster family and the guardianship authorities.

Everything concerning the establishment of foster families and the securing of their activities is laid down in the Regulations (postanovlenie) of the Government of the Russian Federation (17 July 1996) confirming the Resolution (polozhenie) on foster families.

Citizens – it may be couples or individuals – who would like to establish foster families, cannot as a rule exceed the number of eight children (foster children plus own children). Foster families have the rights and obligations as guardians. The organs of guardianship render the necessary support to the foster families and supervise the living conditions and upbringing of the foster child.

The foster children enjoy the same privileges (price reductions, state support), as do the children living in orphanages or similar institutions. Furthermore, the state pays for the work performed by the foster families. The fact that a child is placed in a foster family does not create new legal relations as to alimony and hereditary issues. The main legal principal of keeping a child in a foster family is his or her equation to children who are in institutions for children, orphanages and children who are left without parental care and are in boarding schools.

The foster family as a form of placing children for upbringing, and the content of this form, are established by the Regulations about foster family. The family and the authorities agree on a preliminary contract on placing children. The contract specifies the conditions of children's keeping, including general regulations, which are typical for any foster family. Additions and changes in the contract can be made in agreement between the two sides. If the contract is infringed, each of the sides has a right to apply to court. According to the contract foster parents are obliged to bring a foster child up on base of mutual respect, to organise a common mode of life, leisure and mutual help. They must make sufficient conditions for a child to get education, care for his or her health and for his or her physical, psychic, spiritual and moral development. The foster parents are also responsible for protecting the child's rights and legal interests. The contract between the authorities and the foster family must specify the foster parents' duty to provide the child with care and treatment, systematic visits to doctors and specialists due to medical recommendations. Just like other parents foster carers must follow up the education of the child.

This type of contract also defines the rate of payment for the foster parents' labour and the privileges, which are given for the work. For the support of the foster child the foster family receives a monthly sum for food, clothes, shoes, furniture, household and hygienic items,

toys, and books. Forms and rates of payment for foster carers, and the privileges they can expect to receive, are defined in the contract according to regional legislation. The compensation depends on the total number of upbringing children, living conditions, age of children (extra payment is to be paid for foster parents of small children), and whether children are handicapped, suffer from developmental retardation or diseases.

The contract between the foster family and the authorities specifies the kinds of help the foster family can expect from local authorities, including psychic and pedagogical assistance. It is also important to clear out questions concerning housing of the foster family and its children. Placing a child in a foster family assumes a long lasting relationship among foster parents and the child. If, however, the foster family situation no longer corresponds to the child's interests, it may be necessary with a mutual pre-term dissolution of the contract. This may also happen if the child returns to parents or is adopted. The conditions and order of such contract dissolution are also specified in the contract.

Parents who take the responsibility as a foster family have the right to choose the child or the children, among children in orphanages, educational and other institutions. The choice is to be made in agreement with these institutions. The foster parents also have the right to get acquainted with the child and his or her history, including the child's health. To give potential foster parents such information enhances the realisation of foster family placement of children, and prevents a future refusal of the child. The aim is to establish long lasting relationships between the foster parents and the child. It is the responsibility of the administration of children institutions to give truthful information about a child according to the order established by law.

The principal conditions of taking a child into a foster family are absence of parental care, and if there are clear indications that this absence carries a constant character or testifies refusal of the child. The following categories of children are taken into a foster family:

- Biological orphans; children with unknown parents
- Children with parents deprived of parental rights or with parents with limited parental rights. Children with parents acknowledged by court as disabled, condemned or absent
- Children with parents who cannot personally take care and bring them up due to their health condition, and also children

who are left without parental care and are in educational or medical prophylactic institutions

The range of children who are to be taken into foster families can be considered by normative acts of regions of Russian Federation with the purpose of providing children who are left without parental care with family upbringing.

As a rule, disuniting biological sisters and brothers is not permitted when children are taken into foster families. Exceptions can be made only when it is in the interests of the children. If a child has reached the age of 10 years while taking him or her into a foster family, his or her agreement – expressed voluntarily without any compulsion and fixed in a legal way – is required.

A child who is taken into a foster family upholds a series of rights he had before. According to the part 4 of article 154, the rights of a child taken into a foster family are foreseen in articles 55, 56, 57 in the Family Code.

### **Foster families in Arkhangelsk**

In 1997, altogether 239 foster families were established in Russia. The same year the number of foster families in the Arkhangelsk region was 10, and in 2001 it rose to 28. It is necessary to mention that placing children into families may encounter obstacles at local level. This is the result both of misunderstanding of the privileges of such forms of placing orphans, and of absence of finances for making a service of co-ordination, guidance and support for foster families.

### **7.2.3 Guardianship**

Placing the child with a guardian family is one alternative for orphans and children without parental care. This arrangement secures the child's support, upbringing and education, and also the protection of his or her rights and interests. The Russian words for guardianship – "*opeka*" and "*popechitel'stvo*" – are identical in meaning, the former, however is used for children up to 14 years whereas the latter refers to children from 14 to 18 years old.

The intention with guardianship, as with adoption, is to give good conditions for upbringing of a minor. At the same time guardianship differs from adoption in the way that legal relationships with the minor's parents do not come to an end. This condition makes the use of such kind of placing children easier and more available. There are, however, regulations concerning guardianship.

Guardianship is arranged within a month after it has been discovered that the child has no parental protection. The aim of such a limit is to reduce the time the child is left without a person who can take the place of his parents. According to a general rule a tutor (guardian) is set by the bodies of guardianship and care in the area of the child's dwelling.

The guardian must fulfil certain requirements as to his/her ability to take care of a child, including moral and personal abilities. The attitude of other family members to the new child is also taken into consideration. If possible the child's own wishes should be taken into consideration (Family Code of the Russian Federation, art. 150-151).

In any circumstances the following persons can not be set as tutors (guardians):

- Persons who have not reached the age of 18
- Persons who are deprived of parental rights
- Persons who are acknowledged by court as being disabled
- Alcoholics and drug abusers

The guardian is not obliged to support the foster child at his own expense. Expenses related to the foster child are compensated according to the principles established by article 37 in the Civil Code. Guardian parents receive economic means from public funds to cover food, clothes, shoes, and furniture for the child according to the price level of the given region. These means are paid according to norms that are established for keeping children in educational institutions, i.e. orphanages. The economic support is given until the child is 16 years old, and in case the child goes to general (not vocational) school – until it is 18 years old. Economic means are not paid for children who have parents able to take care of them, but who leave them with guardians for a while, e.g. in order to be away on a long term for job reasons.

The tutor (guardian) has a series of privileges, such as a right to first turn placement of child into kindergarten, schools with prolonged studying day and boarding schools and health improving complexes, as well as labour privileges which are given to parents by law.

According to the decision of the body of guardianship and care, a guardian can be released of fulfilment of his duties. The guardian's release from his or her duties by the guardian's personal request may be possible if the body of guardianship and care acknowledges that the reasons for this request are good. In other words, circumstances occur

which reduces the opportunity of further fulfilment of the guardian's duties (e.g. illness, changes in financial conditions of his life, family position, regime of work, departure to another place, long business trips, and lack of necessary contact with a child).

### **The scope of foster and guardian families**

Despite the obstacles described above, Russia has seen a steady increase in the number of families taking responsibilities as foster or guardian families. The increase is even stronger in Latvia.

Table 7.3 *Rate of children in the care of foster parents or guardians (per hundred thousand 0–17 population)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Russia</b>	<b>Latvia</b>
1989	433.0	n.a.
1990	425.4	n.a.
1991	452.2	n.a.
1992	482.7	n.a.
1993	518.8	509.3
1994	589.3	733.3
1995	672.2	895.5
1996	757.3	983.8
1997	818.9	1,139.9
1998	870.0	1,366.7
1999	921.2	1,450.7

(Source: UNICEF, 2001)

### **Guardianship in Arkhangelsk**

As for the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1999, there were 506 guardians (or tutors/trustees) in Arkhangelsk (Makarova 2001:174). Most of the guardians have the responsibility only for one child. Among the total of 506 guardians, however, 72 bring up two children, five bring up three and one family takes care of four children.

Most of the guardians are related to the child: 292 are grandparents, 124 are uncles and aunts, and 56 are elder brothers and sisters. Of the 506 guardians in Arkhangelsk, 34 are not related to the child they take care of. The acceptance of relatives as guardians can be a mixed blessing. From one side this is to the benefit of the children because in most cases this means that they experience some sort of continuity, for

instance when moving from their parents to their grandmother. On the other hand, continuity can also represent a problem if it maintains links to the detrimental environment the child had to be removed from.

The guardians are paid a monthly allowance which amounts to 500 roubles for pre-school children and 750 roubles for school-children (1999). There have, however, been considerable delays in the allowance transfers – as for 01.01.99 it was over one-year delay in the payments (Makarova 2001:174).

#### 7.2.4 Family upbringing groups

A process of creating “family upbringing groups” is already going on in Russia. This is a form of social service to minors finding themselves in a socially vulnerable situation. The “family upbringing group” is a subgroup of the specialised institution for minors in need of social rehabilitation. The basis for the establishment of such a group is a real family that takes upon itself the care for a foster child from a specialised institution. Doing this, the family gets active assistance from the institution.

The legal basis for the establishment of a family upbringing group lies in the Family Code (dating from 1995), in a special Regulation and in recommendations made by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. The Family Code (art. 123) states that “Children who are left without parental care should be placed in a family (adoption, guardianship or foster families). Other forms of helping children without parental care may be provided in the laws on federation subject level”.

In the regulation “On the confirmation of the preliminary resolution on specialised institutions for minors in need of social rehabilitation”, the right of the specialised institutions to establish family upbringing groups is stated legally.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection has elaborated recommendations for the specialised institutions in their work with children. These recommendations again are based on the Regulation. The concrete work of the family groups is adapted to local conditions.

Usually the children placed in family groups are those who have shown positive tendencies in the process of social rehabilitation.

Children living in a family upbringing group have the status of foster children, and the tutor (*vospitatel'*) is an employee who is responsible

for the foster child. The responsibility for the progress in the rehabilitation process lies with the educator in the family group as well as the specialised institution. The work of the tutor is contract-based and is to be renewed regularly. The contract is automatically annulled as soon as the tasks defined in the contract are accomplished. The state pays for the support of the child and for the work of one of the family members (the educator) and assists in the social and individual development of the child.

The family upbringing group may change its status, e.g. by becoming a transitional form on the way to becoming a foster family, guardian family or adopting family. If the family group wants to adopt the child, it must be proved that the family meets the requirements of adoption. The child must also have the predisposition to live in a family.

### **Family upbringing groups in Arkhangelsk**

There are family groups in orphanages, where sisters and brothers of different age from one family are united in one group, but so far such groups are recent and few.

## **7.2.5 Replacement families**

Based on experience from other countries, Russia has developed replacement families for children without parents or parental care in order to let the child experience family life. The replacement family hosts a child for a certain period of time. It is based on an agreement with the local authorities for guardianship, which controls the care, nursing and upbringing of the child. The questions pertaining to parental obligations are subject to an agreement between the replacement family and the local authorities. For the child the replacement family offers the experience of living in a family combined with being under surveillance by the authorities. There are, however, potentially negative aspects of the replacement family arrangement. In case the family does not fulfil its tasks as agreed upon with the local authorities, the child may be victim of another traumatic experience consisting in once again being left without parental care.

## **7.2.6 Patronage families**

Patronage families have a long standing in Russia, but nevertheless it is sometimes considered a new form of placing orphans in Russia. In the 1983 edition of the authoritative dictionary of the Russian



language by S. I. Ozhegov it is written under “patronat” that it among others means: “form of upbringing of children, who have lost their parents, in families working on instruction – “po porucheniiu” – of state authorities”.

The essence of the patronage family system is that professional teachers for a definite period of time take the place of a family for orphans and children otherwise deprived of parental care. The main idea of this system is that a child is placed in an ordinary family for some time. This can be a child from an orphanage or a child from an unhappy family who has been temporarily taken out of the family until the situation is cleared up. If the situation in the biological family improves, the child may return to his or her family, after a period of necessary help in the patronage family.

Registration of patron families through labour agreements gives work for patronage teachers. At the same time it guarantees the child’s education and upbringing in a normal family setting.

Families, who wish to be a patron family, go through investigation and preliminary training. The family must be willing to be in permanent contact with a psychologist and social worker who look after the child’s psychological condition. The patron family may have contact with the child’s biological family in order to clear out joint perspectives of the child’s future life. Contacts between patron family and biological parents are made on the condition that a social worker takes part. The institution of patron families is now developing in Russia with a certain success.

Experiences from orphanage number 19 in down-town Moscow, as well as the family centres in the two regions of Vladimir and Perm show that the system of patron families is well suited in Russia’s current economic situation. Several regions (federation subjects) all over Russia have expressed their interest in establishing a system of patron families adapted to regional conditions. Among these regions are the Republic of Karelia, the regions of Vladimir, Perm, Saratov, Kaliningrad, Rostov, as well as Primorsk district. This form of providing a child with a right to live and be brought up in a family may prove to be an important alternative to orphanages. Children in orphanages lack experience of normal family life. To a certain degree patron families can compensate for this, and enable the children to meet the challenges of independent life.

### **Patron families in Arkhangelsk**

Before, families taking on the responsibility of being patron family did it on a voluntary basis. Now a labour agreement is set up. The patron parent has a salary. Children may be placed in patron families on a temporary basis.

### **7.2.7 SOS Children's Villages**

The aim of these villages is to offer a family-like childhood to children without parental care. The first one was set up in 1949 by the Austrian pedagogue, Herman Gmainer. Today there are SOS Children's Villages in 120 countries. The first one in Russia was established in Tomlino in the Moscow region, and now there are children villages several places in the country. SOS Children's Villages Norway is coordinating a project in Murmansk region.

## **7.3 Preventive measures**

Some of the alternatives we have mentioned above, are not only solutions *ex post*, but can also have a preventive effect. For instance, replacement families may give vulnerable children and their families the breathing space needed to sort out their problems and in this way contribute to a process where the child resumes his or her life in the biological family. Most of the alternatives to residential care discussed above do, however, only rarely lead to a situation where the child may return to his or her family.

The family is held to be one of the principal institutes of positive socialisation of children. With this purpose governmental and regional programmes of support of families have been worked out. As a reaction to the existing situation in Russia, the Family Code (1995) of the Russian Federation made the departments of social care responsible for questions pertaining to family rights. Decisions concerning financial questions and living conditions for families are made by the departments of social care. These departments mainly make use of compensation payment and rent allowances. A minimum living standard is defined annually, and families whose income does not reach this figure have a right to get financial compensations from the state. There have been severe delays in these payments the past years. In 1999, the delays amounted to one year (Makarova 2001:174).

Prevention does not only have to do with the family living standard. A highly qualified social and educational sector is also a must. Therefore importance has been attached to strengthening specialists' work on the protection of children's rights as well as on social work in the family centres and its subsidiaries. This work consists, among other things, of identification of families in crisis, to provide help for all members of the family before the situation becomes irreparable, short-term (1-6 months) rehabilitation of a child in the family centre, and placing a child back into the family. But if it is impossible to find priority forms of placement for the child, the child will be placed into a guardian or foster family.

In Russia as of 1 January 2000 altogether 12 900 children lived in centres for social assistance to families and children. In 2000, 446 children were adopted, given to foster families or returned to their original families. Altogether 8669 children and youngsters were sent back to their original families, and 1179 were transferred to public institutions.

The prospects for the child's future depend on the speed and quality of the different specialists' work with the child. A social worker has the responsibility of strengthening the preventive work by interfering in family problems at an early stage, of making corrections of parental behaviour and of working with the relationship between parents and children. A main purpose of this work is to prevent the separation of the child and his or her family.

Researchers and scientists have been commissioned to take part in the development of preventive strategies. The frame below presents the Pomor State University recommendations.

**With the purpose of improving the prevention of orphanage, Institute of Psychology and Social Work at Pomor State University suggests:**

1. to work out effective schemes of support of families
2. to deliver joint seminars with specialists and leaders of orphanages, specialised institutions, schools, criminal bodies for the complex approach to work
3. to create a methodical unit of specialists on protection of children and family rights, to organise exchange of experience and courses to improve qualifications
4. to continue the experiment on giving children to temporary parents for upbringing
5. to organise meetings, conferences, lectures and seminars for guardians and foster parents
6. to continue integration of specialists on social work into medical and children institutions where orphans live
7. to work out a system of support of minors of lone mothers
8. to continue improving a data bank about orphans and to work out a system of information about the possibilities of taking an orphan into a family, through publications, booklets, newspapers, and TV programs
9. to analyse and develop the legal basis on protection of children rights
10. to improve the system of management and supervision of families taking care of orphans
11. to develop priority forms of placing orphans (patronage families, foster families, care, adoption, family children house, SOS-villages)
12. to develop the system of post-institution adaptation for orphans, and to extend their possibilities of getting education

## 7.4 Conclusions

In this chapter different alternatives to residential institutions in Russia were discussed with illustrations from Arkhangelsk. In Arkhangelsk city a relatively large proportion of the children

becoming orphans are taken care of by their own families (for instance grandparents) or adopted.

The rate of adoptions was almost doubled in Russia during the ten-year period 1990-1999 (from 141 to 258 per hundred thousand 0-3 year old population). But there was a *decrease* in adopted orphans in Arkhangelsk city 1999-2000 (from 342 to 265). The number of orphans who were adopted in families of foreign citizens has also declined in Arkhangelsk in this period.

Very few children get a foster home in Arkhangelsk region and Arkhangelsk city (only 28 and 19 during the year 2001). It is a stated policy of Arkhangelsk to recruit more foster families.

Placing the child with a guardian family is one alternative for orphans and children without parental care. This arrangement secures the child's support, upbringing and education, and protection of its rights and interests. As for the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1999 there were 506 guardians (or tutors/trustees) in Arkhangelsk. Most of the guardians are related to the child. Only rarely they have the responsibility for more than one child.

Family upbringing groups also exist in Arkhangelsk. Brothers and sisters of different age groups are brought up together in some orphanages. So far these groups are recent and few. Replacement families are hosting orphans for a certain period of time to give them some experience of living in a family.

The local authorities are further planning to establish so-called "patron families". Patronage families have a long standing in Russia (cf. the institution of *patronat*), but is sometimes considered as a new form of placing orphans (patronage teachers). SOS Children's Villages exist in for instance Moscow and Murmansk region, but so far not in Arkhangelsk region.

In the last part of this chapter different preventive measures were discussed (to prevent children becoming social orphans). Preventive measures, for instance social work, have traditionally had a low standing in Russia, but is now developing in many regions.

The next chapter will turn to the politics of child care. The main question is the place of women in the Russian state, regional and local government.

## 8 Gender and the politics of child care

In this chapter, we will discuss somewhat more closely the women's place in the Russian state, regional and local government with particular attention to the case of Arkhangelsk. It is worth mentioning, however, that the situation in the Arkhangelsk region is perceived as much better than in Russia on the whole (Kudriashova 2000:143). Our main project, of which this report is the first step, investigates possible "advocacy coalitions" for developing policies for family-like care for orphans in Russia. Initially, we discuss the possible relationship between female representation in political bodies and the status of the child care sector. The impression of many women working in the social and child welfare sector is that the social sector generally has a lower political priority in the present situation in Russia compared to the sectors of industry, business and infrastructure. Some attribute this lower priority to the fact that while almost all the employees in the social sector are women, most of the politicians making the overall political and economic priorities, are men.

The reason why we in this report also discuss the topic of gender and politics, is that the development of child welfare politics and its possible success in the area of practice are closely connected. The chapter is placed at the end because it gives a further dimension to the earlier more descriptive, qualitative and indicator oriented approach. One problem, discussed below, is that while most of the employees in this sector are women, a majority of the children in question are boys. This gives a possible problem connected to lack of masculine examples for children in the child care sector. Another problem may be that the practical experiences of women working in the sector to a small degree are known to the male politicians.

## 8.1 Representation of women in state, regional and local political bodies

There is no single or uncomplicated answer to the question of women's influence in Russian politics. It is, however, interesting to see whether women are running as candidates at the elections, and whether they are elected. In several countries it is possible to observe a consistent pattern of women's representation in politics: Women are fairly well represented in local political institutions, whereas the number of women diminishes when we reach the state level<sup>9</sup>.

Let us turn first to statistics in order to ascertain whether the municipal and regional levels of administration stimulate women's participation in politics. If we take the data for the Arkhangelsk region for the beginning of year 2001, then 13.1 percent of total number of the deputies in the regional deputy assembly are women (5 out of 38). Among the deputies of municipal deputy councils in cities and districts of the region women comprise 39.1 percent (230 out of 588). Two women are members of the regional government. As for the national parliament, the *State Duma*, the 3rd convocation, the situation there is much worse – only 7.6 percent of the representatives are women (34 out of 450) (Aivazova and Kertman 2000:175).

### 8.1.1 The elections of 1999 - 2001

The years 1999 to 2001 in the Arkhangelsk region were marked by a number of elections. This period saw the elections of the following political bodies:

- the President of Russia
- the State Duma
- the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation
- the Head of Administration of the Arkhangelsk Region
- the Arkhangelsk regional deputy assembly
- the heads of local administrations

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<sup>9</sup> Norway has traditionally complied with this pattern, but this has now changed. The parties represented in the national parliament pursue a strong norm of nominating women for elections, whereas local parties and lists do not seem to be committed to such a norm. The representation of women in the Norwegian parliament is now higher than the average representation in local political bodies (Hovik, S. and T. M. Myrvold 2001).

- the deputies of local representative bodies

The election campaign of 1999, according to the evaluation of the Central Election Committee, was “the hardest election campaign since the start of the democratic changes”. Political struggle was so heated that it sometimes went over all reasonable limits. All sorts of methods were used to gain seats. The society demanded fair and “clean” elections, whereas the candidates wanted to get to the power structures by every possible way.

As for the representation of women, there were elected 15 women from national lists of different parties and social movements (Table 8.1): Communists – 3, Unity – 3, Fatherland – All Russia – 5, Alliance of the right forces – 2, Liberal-democratic party – 0, Yabloko (Apple) – 2. In one-candidate electoral districts there were elected 20 women. Thus, in the State Duma of the 3rd convocation we have 35 female representatives, which is 7.9 percent of the total number of representatives. But the number of women in the leading positions in the State Duma has increased. The first vice-chairman of the State Duma is a woman, Liubov K. Sliska (Saratov). So is the head of the committee on women, family and youth affairs – Svetlana P. Goriachova (Primorsk district) and the head of the committee on the affairs of the Northern areas – Valentina N. Pivnenko (Karelia).

Table 8.1 *Women representatives in the State Duma*

	Total number of representatives	Women representatives	
		Number	Per cent
Communists	67	3	4,5
Unity	64	3	4,7
Fatherland - All Russia	37	5	13,5
Alliance of the Rightist Forces	24	2	8,3
Liberal-Democratic Party	16	0	0
Yabloko (Apple)	17	2	11,8
Candidates from one-candidate electoral districts	216	20	9,3
Total	441	35	7,9



There were two women among the total of 20 candidates in one-representative election districts in the Arkhangelsk region: Gudima – representative in the State Duma of the 2<sup>nd</sup> convocation (she ran her campaign in the south of the region) and T.S.Podiakova – member of the regional deputy assembly, the head physician of the regional cancer hospital (in the north of the region). Both are members of the Communist party. Neither of the female candidates got the required number of votes to take the representatives' places in the Duma.

In general we can speak of women's defeat at the parliamentary elections of 1999. The difficulty of solving the problems of gender equality in Russia is determined by the conservatism of public opinion, lack of unity in Russian women's movement, and the unwillingness of political parties and movements to work with female voters, and involve female leaders in their work. From the first to the third elections to the State Duma in Russia – the highest legislative body of the Russian Federation – the number of women-representatives steadily decreases. In the 1<sup>st</sup> State Duma there were 13.6 percent women from the total number of the representatives, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 10 percent, and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 7.9 percent. Hence, Russia has reached the level of some Latin American and Islamic states. Women are thus gradually removed from the process of political decision-making, and are unable to decide over their own life and the life of their children through the political processes.

The government of the Russian Federation has only one woman – Valentina I. Matvienko. She has the responsibility for one of the most difficult sectors of work – the social sphere.

### 8.1.2 Women and their participation in the local and regional political bodies

At the elections of the deputies to the Arkhangelsk regional deputy assembly of the 3<sup>rd</sup> convocation (2000/2001) there were 263 candidates in the ballots, of them were 38 women (14.5 percent). Altogether 38 deputies were elected to the regional deputy assembly, of them 5 women (13.1 percent). Just for the comparison – the assembly of the last convocation had 36 deputies; of them were seven women (19.4 percent). All the five elected women have higher education (2 teachers, 1 medical doctor, 1 chemist-engineer, 1 technologist). One female deputy has a doctoral degree in Chemical sciences. Three of the deputies were re-elected. Four of the female deputies were elected in the district municipalities and one in Arkhangelsk city.

At the elections of the Head of Administration of the Arkhangelsk region there was no female candidate among the three candidates registered.

At the elections of the heads of local administrations that took place in 24 towns and districts of the region and in Nenets autonomous area there were eleven female candidates: in Arkhangelsk, Kotlas, in seven district municipalities of the region and in Nenets autonomous area.

As a result of this election, for the first time after the perestroika time two district municipalities got female leaders. They are T. Potekhina who earlier worked as the vice-head of the administration in Vinogradov district, and I. Shabunina, the head of department of the Solovki state museum and sanctuary of nature and architecture.

In June and December 2000 there were elections to the local administrations in the cities and districts of the region. All in all there were 1567 candidates for deputies, of them 589 women (37.6 percent) (Table 8.2). The table below shows that women were active in presenting themselves as candidates in practically all the districts of the Arkhangelsk region. In other words, on the local level, women are willing to run for political posts. However, in the cities of Arkhangelsk, Severodvinsk and Mirnyi, and in the districts of Konosha, Niandoma and Pinega, there were few female candidates.

Table 8.2 shows that female candidates on the average succeed pretty well in the elections. Almost 40 percent of the proposed candidates were women, and so are the elected deputies. This percentage gives by itself a rather optimistic picture of the possibilities of Arkhangelsk women in pursuing their interests through participation in local politics.

A more pessimistic picture is reflected in the fact that there are only four women among 30 deputies (about 13.3 percent) in the Arkhangelsk town deputy assembly. Among 4 vice-heads of Arkhangelsk administration there is no woman at all. Only two women are heads of departments in the administration (i.e. the Department of health and social welfare and the Department of education, culture and sport).

This must be seen on the background that women form the major part of staff of the Arkhangelsk administration. Among 35 specialists working at the departments of social welfare in nine districts of Arkhangelsk there are no men. However, among nine heads of local administrations there is only one woman. In four municipal institutions of the Department of health and social welfare of

Arkhangelsk which render help for family and children, there are only eight men among 270 employees who directly work with families and children (that is less than 3 percent). In orphanages approximately 90 percent of the employees are women, whereas ten directors of orphanages are men.

Table 8.2 *Elections to local authorities, Arkhangelsk region (2000)*

Cities and districts of Arkhangelsk region	Proposed candidates			Elected as deputies		
	Total	Women	%	Total	Women	%
Arkhangelsk	242	57	23,6	30	4	13,3
Velsk	85	26	30,6	38	9	23,7
Verkhnaia Toima	39	14	35,9	17	5	29,4
Viled	34	15	44,1	17	5	29,4
Vinogradov	60	25	41,7	29	12	41,3
Kargopol	49	26	53,1	24	9	37,5
Konosha	56	16	28,6	15	2	13,3
Koriazhma	87	35	40,2	26	10	38,5
Kotlas town	63	22	34,9	19	10	52,6
Kotlas district	33	15	45,5	14	6	42,9
Krasnoborsk	47	19	40,4	18	7	38,9
Lena	60	26	43,3	25	10	40,0
Leshukonskoe	36	16	44,4	20	9	45,0
Mezen	47	17	36,2	25	12	48,0
Mirnyi	60	11	18,3	21	7	33,3
Novodvinsk	64	34	53,1	20	6	30,0
Novaia Zemlia	20	16	80,0	9	6	66,7
Niandoma	34	7	20,6	21	5	23,8
Onega	42	20	47,6	22	11	50,0
Pinega	47	12	25,5	20	6	30,0
Plesetsk	45	16	35,6	21	9	42,9
Primorsk	46	20	43,5	21	13	61,9
Severodvinsk	69	19	27,5	23	9	39,1
Solovki	17	12	70,6	10	8	80,0
Ustia	61	28	45,9	27	13	48,1
Kholmogory	82	51	62,2	32	18	56,3
Shenkursk	44	16	36,4	24	9	37,5
Total:	1567	589	37,6	588	230	39,1

## 8.2 Conclusions

The data presented above let us make three important conclusions:

1. Women are highly over-represented among the employees in the social sector in the city of Arkhangelsk. At the same time, women have only very few seats in the local deputy assembly and most of the administrative heads are men. On the national level, the number of women representatives in political bodies is even lower.
2. The majority of children in orphanages are boys. There is, however, a considerable lack of masculine examples and experience of men's behaviour on the level of interaction with children in the child care sector. This may greatly influence the formation of the personality among orphans.
3. Rich practical and analytical experience of women working with orphans is not used in the decision-making process neither on the level of higher town and regional structures or in the town and regional deputy assembly.

Although women are actively involved in forming the state, regional and local authorities as well as NGOs, it is basically on the levels of the region and the municipality women are represented in political bodies. Women in Russia are only to a limited extent taking part in the process of political decision-making on the national level. The higher the level of power – the less number of women represented in the authorities. By this we do not imply that the local levels of decision-making are less important than the national and the international ones.

It is important for the boys and girls in question that politicians – males and females – can agree upon child welfare politics at different levels. This makes a demand on the politicians: Their use of practical “silent” knowledge imparted from the employees.

## 9 Discussion and conclusion

This exploratory report registers a considerable shift in the ways Russian authorities conceive of, cope with, and support orphans. The keyword in Russia, like in the rest of Europe, is “family-like”. Children should grow up in a family-like setting.

The report shows, broadly and in detail, how this aim is being followed up. Its focus alternates between two levels of policy-making and implementation. The federal level formulates the overall frameworks for policies in the field of child care. Implementation, however, takes place at the local level. It is here that the orphan child and the parents who abandoned it (most orphans are “social orphans”), meet the multifarious bodies of public authority with a part of the responsibility for finding solutions. Arkhangelsk town serves as a case to illustrate what is actually going on in the field.

The report shows that substantial efforts are being made to develop and implement alternatives to the care traditionally offered in the huge institutions of residential care. A wide variety of ministries and public organs take part in the shift.

However, as figures from UNICEF indicate, the task is enormous. In fact, the overall number of children who are left without parental care grew over the 1990s. The rate of children who grow up in orphanages is stable, and for the youngest it is increasing significantly. Here, we witness an *idea* (the need to arrange for family-like upbringing) which is made happen in an unfavourable *setting*. The setting into which the new principles of care for orphans is to be realised is characterised by socio-economic, political/institutional, and cultural/mental factors. This applies for all countries, but in Russia’s case the setting may be defined – among others – as one of former state socialism.

The group of researchers who wrote this report is engaged in designing a larger, analytical research project on the meeting between reform ideas and the actually existing setting in the field of Nordic and Russian strategies to offer orphans a good childhood. Preconditions

for success will be identified and analysed. Likewise obstacles will be pinpointed. For analytical purposes the measures will be divided in two groups – prevention and alternative placement<sup>10</sup>.

The research team is multi-disciplinary (political science, sociology, social work, history, pedagogy). The researchers bring with them insights from the fields where they have been working earlier, like public administration, child care, and post-Soviet reform. The researchers have considerable experience in working directly with practitioners, both learning from them and advising them.

### **Preventive measures**

The bulk of Russian orphans are classified as “social orphans”. Their parents have been deprived of parental rights or have given them up voluntarily.

Preventive measures therefore entail careful attention to the causes that lead parents to loose or relinquish their parental rights. In chapter 5 of this report the main reasons are listed. Like elsewhere in the world, Russian children are at risk when parents abuse alcohol or drugs. In Russia alcohol flows freely and comes almost for free. If parents are mentally or physically ill, children are in peril of becoming orphans. It also appears that risk of social orphanhood increases if the child is physically or mentally disadvantaged. Children also seem to be left without parents as a result of the complex problems emerging from unemployment and poverty. One of the main features of Russia’s transitional period has been a significant downgrading of enterprise-based welfare services, like crèches and kindergartens – and not least housing. When combined with a palpable loss in income among certain groups, more children risk growing up without their biological parents. Deep structural developments go contrary to the objective of making more children grown up in family-like settings. It is simply no wonder that many parents do not manage to take care of their children.

In addition to the causes of orphanhood that stem from economic problems and social maladjustment, some would call attention to institutional factors. They would point at the institutional legacies from state socialism, represented by a countrywide and well entrenched network of orphanages. The country is dotted with orphanages, equipped with thousands and thousands of trained

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<sup>10</sup> A third group of measures is centred on finding more family-like alternatives within the existing orphanages, such as making each unit smaller and contacts with adult staff more permanent. Such measures are of particular interest since they are well adapted to the institutional and economic setting.

personnel, underpinned by a robust bureaucracy, mainly tied to the educational sector. The fact that the orphanages are there naturally makes it easier to make use of them. Moreover, in many cases, children may be expected to fare better in an orphanage than in a run-down family, although this is not officially acknowledged. During interviews that form the basis for this reports, employees and leaders of public bodies and institutions taking care of children, including traditional orphanages, repeatedly referred to “returning to Mum” as the optimal solution.

Some would mention mental structures in addition to economic hardship and institutional legacies as a main source of social orphanage. Allegedly then, the decades of Soviet power have weakened family values in general. As argued in chapter 1 of this report, however, it is not necessarily so that the Soviet system weakened the family as an institution more than did other, and more democratic, versions of modern industrialism. Family cohesion is threatened by certain manifestations of individualism that all industrialised countries have seen, and which came to Russia long before the downfall of one-party rule. Interestingly, pointing at life in the nuclear family as a model seems to be part and parcel with official policies to prevent social orphanage.

In other words, causes may be sought in economic hardship, institutional legacies and mental structures. This must form a backdrop for the authorities and voluntary organisations that have set out to help Russian households in trouble. In the forthcoming research project measures to avert social orphanhood by working with parents and children will be analysed.

*The educational sector (Ministry of Education)* is responsible for the major part of the orphanages, and reforms within them. This sector also answers for preventive measures against social orphanage. The responsible organs for guardianship and care are under the Ministry of Education.

Handicapped children often end up as social orphans. *The Ministry of Health* develops preventive measures aiming at helping parents cope with difficulties emanating from the fact that they have got a child in extra need of care. This ministry also answers for the youngest orphans (up to three years).

According to the Family Code (1995) “family rights” is the domain of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. This means that it is the sector of social protection that is the master of most of the tools that may help households over the worst, and thus avoid social orphanage.



Family right issues are under the *Ministry of Labour and Social Protection*.

Social work as a profession and branch of science is developing dynamically in Russia. The Faculty of Social Work and Psychology at the Pomor State University is the hub of these activities in Arkhangelsk region. At a federal level, the Moscow State Social University is the core of a network of over 100 higher learning institutions spread all over Russia. These two institutions constitute the Russian counterparts of the project.

Three municipal family centres have been established in Arkhangelsk's suburbs. One of the main functions of the centres is to offer short-time stays for children in critical phases of their lives. Furthermore, the centres set up rehabilitation plans in co-operation with the families. One of the centres was visited as a part of the pilot study (see chapter 7) and will be followed up throughout the forthcoming research. The same holds true for two orphanages. Experiences from face-to-face contacts with people seeking assistance to keep the household intact, is a rich source to understanding the character of the problems, which is a prerequisite for successful action. The Faculty of Social Work in Arkhangelsk works closely with family centres and orphanages both in prevention and questions pertaining to alternative placement.

### **Alternative placement**

When family-like upbringing is seen as an ideal nothing is more natural than trying to place orphans in families. Models of family-like alternatives may be placed on a continuum from traditional adoption via patron families and SOS Children's Villages to the establishment of smaller units with a more human, individual touch within existing orphanages. Adoption is a priority, and the federal programme "Orphans" has enabled the establishment of a data bank of possible adopters, foster families or guardians, and of orphans. Adoption is regulated through legal provisions that aim to protect the individual child, and adoption is on the rise. As shown by UNICEF (see chapter 7) adoption has increased from about 130 per hundred thousand in the age group 0–3 in 1989 to nearly 260 ten years later. Despite the increase, which amounts to a redoubling, adoption is not as commonplace in Russia as in most other industrialised countries. In particular children over one year of age practically do not get adoptive parents. Reasons for this will be discussed in the forthcoming project.

Foster families are even less commonplace, but this is probably due to the fact that it was introduced (in its present form) relatively recently,

i.e. through the Family Code (1995). Growing up as a foster child is very similar to being adopted apart from matters concerning alimonies and inheritance. Guardianship by tutors/trustees comes very close to foster families, but in most cases the guardians are related to the orphan. Just like adoption foster families and tutors are on the rise (see chapter 7).

Family upbringing groups are a new set-up to assist socially vulnerable minors. Here tutors take care of a child who usually has made progress in rehabilitation. The task is based on a contract that must be renewed regularly. Likewise, replacement family arrangements are being introduced. Patron families are an old institution that is being renewed. A patron family consists of professional teachers taking the place of a family for a certain period of time.

Interestingly the federation-wide network of organs of guardianship and care forms part of the ramifications of the Ministry of Education, and all in all, the educational sector of Russia is well equipped with legal provisions to place children outside traditional orphanages. Altogether alternatives has gained foothold. As shown in chapter 7, in Arkhangelsk since the late 1990s somewhere between 34 and 47 percent of new orphans are taken care of by adoption, guardianship or foster family arrangements. What characterises the Russian discussion of the subject is a focus on economic issues. How to compensate the families who take in orphans?

### **Links to ongoing research**

Throughout the project the research team will work with, discuss and make use of experiences in Russia and Nordic countries, among others theoretical contributions to the field. Russian and Nordic contributions will be brought together. Scandinavian literature of interest consist of, among others, Marie Sallnäs' (2000) doctoral thesis on "Child welfare institutions – their growth, ideology and structure" gives an overview of the historical growth and development of residential care for children and youth in Sweden. The work also gives an analysis of how residential care today is structured and organised. In Sweden special family homes are tried out, the so called "hybrid homes" (Sallnäs 2000). The different types of institutions and their "hybrid" forms could be of interest for the Russian discussion. Andersson has discussed experiences with the Swedish foster homes in an article (Andersson 1999).

In her doctoral thesis Tine Egelund (1997) discusses problems of communication between the child welfare workers and the parents. Here, making use of critical theory – especially Foucault and

Bourdieu – she analyses the ways social workers construct and interpret reality (Egelund 1997). Her understanding of these questions from Denmark is brought further through dialogue with Swedish and Norwegian researchers (Sundell and Egelund 2000; Egelund and Kvilhaug 2002), lately on the topic of supervision in child protection work.

Mona Sandbæk's interview-based research on children and parents is of great interest for further work in child welfare (Sandbæk 1998; Sandbæk 1999; Sandbæk 1999; Sandbæk 2000; Sandbæk 2002). Here, a main point is that the views of the children and their parents views must be carefully considered when developing – and evaluating – child welfare services. The knowledge base regarding social orphans and their contact with their biological parents, is recently discussed by Oddbjørg Skjær Ulvik (Ulvik 2002).

### **Further research – active participation by practitioners**

As argued above, the general call for offering orphans a family-like upbringing generates a host of research questions. In order to develop feasible policies to arrive at a de-institutionalised childhood for most orphans, more knowledge is required. In order to make alternatives work some analytical work must be done on beforehand. This is the case for the problems of risk, i.e. poverty and other reasons that may lead to social orphanage. Strategies to set up preventive measures against social orphanages require a careful analysis of causes. In what ways can support schemes for families (like transfer of cash to the families, maternity leave, parental leave, kindergartens, and special benefits for families with many children) counteract tendencies that might have led to social orphanage?

There is also need for a more thorough analysis of the institutional set-up to cope with orphanage's needs. This includes both the existing orphanages and the alternatives. How strongly are they underpinned by ministerial support, by professions, by popular expectations and practices, or by voluntary organisations? Here, co-ordination is pivotal. As this report clearly illustrates, there are – and should be – a wide variety of actors taking part in issues regarding orphans. How could co-operation be improved between the sectors of education, police, health and social protection?

This question leads to another issue, which needs study – the possible existence of an “epistemic community” or even “advocacy coalition” to underpin reform. Such a coalition may be traced by analysing debates, identifying major positions and dominant ideas.

Under the condition of sufficient financing a research project should investigate the phenomenon of policy borrowing from other countries. How have they struck roots? How have they been adapted to local conditions? Theories on policy transfer may be applied. These theories highlight the relations between ideas and settings, or policy formulations and institutional contexts.

In order to carry out further analysis several methods can be used. Plans and programmes at federal, regional and local levels, as well as newspaper articles could be read. Interviews could be carried out with main actors in what could be seen as a potential advocacy coalition, i.e. social workers, teachers and other personnel of orphanages, local and federal politicians, voluntary organisations, foreign-based “NGOs”. Likewise, the research team could analyse routine statistics gathered by the authorities.

The research project that follows up this report will have a practical aim. It will strengthen the knowledge-base of those working in day-to-day development and implementation of alternatives to institutional care for orphans. The two Russian research and teaching institutes taking part in the project are central actors in bringing in and diffusing new ideas and practices to Russia. This is achieved through teaching students work and retraining social workers.

Through close interaction and dialogue the project will expose Russian students and practitioners to Nordic experiences in developing and implementing alternatives to institutional care. The diffusion and reinforcing of new ideas will be achieved through *active participation of doers throughout the research process*. Here, methods drawn from formative process research (in Norwegian: *følgeforskning*) will be applied, which is natural since the project addresses an ongoing reform process. In 2004 a workshop will be arranged in Norway for Russian practitioners and project participants. Furthermore, the project will *relate directly to students*. One workshop will be arranged in Arkhangelsk each year of the project’s duration, in which a selection of graduate students will take part. Students writing their diploma thesis on subjects related to the project will be offered supervision from project participants and opportunities to publish within the project on condition that they meet quality specifications. Results from the project will be subject to lectures at the Pomor State University, and its publications will be included in the curriculum of the Faculty.

The project plans and the pilot study have been subject to great and supportive interest from the bodies of public administration and

institutions responsible for developing alternatives to institutionalised care in Arkhangelsk (the regional level Department of education; the Department of health and social protection under the local self-government; the Centre for social protection of families and children; orphanages). All five institutions are ready to take actively part in the project of formative process research. They have already generously shared their time and information with the project team (enabling the pilot study).

In conclusion it is timely to recall the main belief that the whole project bases itself upon: Even if their parents are not around, children should have a family-like childhood. This idea has a lot of implications. One of them is that the knowledge must be developed in order to make the idea strike roots in the actual setting. Then institutional, financial and mental factors are decisive for success.

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## Appendix I: Обсуждение/Заключение

Настоящий аналитический отчет позволяет свидетельствовать о значительном сдвиге в способах восприятия, устройства и поддержки сирот российскими органами власти. Ключевым понятием в России, как и в остальной Европе, является «приближенный к семье». Дети должны воспитываться в условиях, приближенных к семейным.

Настоящий отчет показывает в широкой перспективе и с указанием конкретных обстоятельств, каким путем возможно достижение этой цели. Акцент в нем делается на двух возможных уровнях политики и ее реализации. На центральном, федеральном уровне формулируются основные направления политики в сфере охраны детства. Реализация политики происходит, напротив, на местном уровне. Именно здесь дети-сироты и бросившие их родители (большинство детей-сирот - «социальные сироты»), сталкиваются с различными органами власти в поисках решений своих проблем. Существующая ситуация в этой сфере иллюстрируется на примере города Архангельска.

Настоящий отчет показывает, что предпринимаются значительные попытки по развитию и внедрению альтернативных форм помощи, традиционно оказываемых большими учреждениями интернатного типа. В этом изменении принимает участие целый ряд министерств и органов власти.

Однако, как показывает статистика UNICEF, эта задача является очень масштабной. Действительно, общее количество детей, оставленных без попечения родителей, выросло за 1990-е годы. Доля детей, воспитываемых в детских домах, стабильна, а доля самых младших из них значительно увеличивается. Здесь мы можем наблюдать *идею* (потребность организовать воспитание, приближенное к семейному), реализуемую в неблагоприятных

условиях. Условия, в которых должны реализовываться новые принципы ухода за детьми-сиротами, характеризуются рядом социально-экономических, политических/институциональных факторов, а также фактором культуры/менталитета. Это относится ко всем странам, но в случае с Россией эти условия могут определяться – помимо прочего – государственным социализмом прошлого.

Группа исследователей, составившая этот отчет, участвует в работе над более масштабным аналитическим исследовательским проектом оценки соотношения между идеями реформ и реально существующими возможностями стратегий Северных стран и России по созданию благоприятных условий для жизни детей-сирот. Будут выявлены и проанализированы необходимые условия успеха. Аналогичным образом будут определены и возможные препятствия.

Для целей анализа все формы устройства будут разделены на две группы – профилактические меры и альтернативное устройство<sup>11</sup>.

### ***Профилактические меры***

Большинство российских сирот классифицируются как “социальные сироты”. Их родители были лишены родительских прав либо отказались от них добровольно.

Следовательно, профилактические меры требуют повышенного внимания к причинам, побуждающим родителей ограничить или прекратить себя в родительских правах. В главе 5 этого отчета перечислены основные причины этого. Как и в других странах мира, российские дети находятся в ситуации риска, если их родители злоупотребляют алкоголем или наркотиками. В России продажа алкоголя практически не ограничена, а алкогольные напитки стоят очень дешево. Если родители страдают психическими расстройствами, дети рискуют стать сиротами. Нам также представляется, что риск социального сиротства возрастает, если ребенок имеет задержки психического или умственного развития. Дети также нередко остаются без

<sup>11</sup> Третья группа мер концентрируется на поиске более «семейных» альтернативных форм устройства детей-сирот в рамках существующих детских домов, например, деление учреждения на более мелкие подразделения, установление более тесного контакта с конкретными сотрудниками. Такие меры представляют особый интерес, поскольку они хорошо адаптированы для институциональных и экономических условий. Для изучения этой группы мер была подана отдельная заявка на финансирование.

родителей в результате сложных проблем, происходящих от безработицы и бедности. Одной из главных особенностей переходного периода в России является значительное снижение роли ведомственных учреждений социального сектора, таких, как ясли и детские сады, и в не меньшей степени получение ведомственного жилья. В сочетании с ощутимым снижением доходов среди определенных групп населения все больше детей рискует вырасти без опеки своих биологических родителей. Глубокие структурные изменения идут в разрез с целью воспитания как можно большего количества детей в условиях, приближенных к семейным. В связи с этим неудивительно, что многие родители не могут справиться с задачей ухода за своими собственными детьми.

В дополнение к причинам сиротства, происходящим от экономических проблем и социальной дезадаптации внимание привлекается также к институциональным факторам. В частности, делается указание на институциональное наследие, оставшееся от государственного социализма, представленного широкой сетью детских домов, охватывающей всю страну. Значение имеет уже тот факт, что страна покрыта сетью детских домов, в которых заняты многие тысячи обученных и подготовленных сотрудников, - система, подкрепляемая укоренившейся бюрократией, связанной главным образом со сферой образования. Тот факт, что детские дома уже существуют, делает эту форму устройства наиболее простой для использования. Кроме того, во многих случаях дети могут ожидать более благоприятных условий жизни в детском доме по сравнению с находящейся в бедственном положении семьей, хотя это и не признается официально. Во время интервью, составлявших основу этого отчета, сотрудники и руководители органов власти и учреждений по охране детства, включая традиционные детские дома, неоднократно упоминали возможность «возвращения к маме» как оптимального решения проблемы устройства детей.

Менталитет также признается некоторыми источником социального сиротства, наряду с экономическими трудностями и институциональным наследием. Утверждается, что предположительно тогда, в десятилетия советской власти ею были ослаблены семейные ценности в целом. Как отмечается в главе 1 настоящего отчета, нельзя с уверенностью утверждать, что при советской системе семья была ослаблена как институт в большей степени, чем странах с более демократическим вариантом современного индустриализма. Целостность семьи



ставится под угрозу некоторыми проявлениями индивидуализма, наблюдаемыми во всех индустриализованных странах, и пришедшими в Россию задолго до падения однопартийного правления. Примечательно, что модель нуклеарной семьи считается неотъемлемой частью официальной политики профилактики социального сиротства.

Другими словами, причины следует искать в экономических трудностях, институциональных традициях и менталитете. Это представляет особую сложность для властей и благотворительных организаций, желающих помочь российским семьям, попавшим в беду. В последующем исследовательском проекте будут проанализированы меры по сокращению социального сиротства путем работы с родителями и детьми.

Образовательный сектор (Министерство образования) несет ответственность за большую часть детских домов и реформ, связанных с ними. Этот сектор также отвечает за проведение профилактических мер против возникновения социального сиротства. Органы, отвечающие за опеку и охрану детства, подчиняются Министерству образования.

Дети-инвалиды часто становятся социальными сиротами. Министерство здравоохранения проводит профилактические меры, направленные на помощь родителям в решении проблем, связанных с повышенной потребностью ребенка в уходе. Это министерство также отвечает за самых маленьких детей-сирот (в возрасте до трех лет).

Согласно Семейному кодексу РФ(1995) «семейные права» относятся к компетенции Министерства труда и социальной защиты. Это означает, что социальная защита является основным сектором в работе по помощи семьям, оказавшимся в трудной ситуации, и помогающим живущим в них детям избежать социального сиротства. Вопросы семейного права относятся к компетенции Министерства труда и социальной защиты.

Социальная работа как профессия и отрасль науки динамически развивается в России. Факультет социальной работы и психологии Поморского государственного университета находится в самом центре этой работы, проводимой в Архангельской области. На федеральном уровне центром сети из более чем 100 высших образовательных учреждений, расположенных по всей территории России является Московский государственный университет.

В пригородах Архангельска действует три муниципальных центра семьи. Одной из основных функций центров является организация кратковременного пребывания для детей в критические периоды в их жизни. Кроме того, центры совместно с семьями создают планы реабилитации. В ходе предварительного исследования мы посетили один из этих центров (см. главу 7) и будем проводить за ним дальнейшее наблюдение. Это мы будем делать также и в отношении двух детских домов. Опыт непосредственной работы с людьми, которые хотели бы получить помощь для сохранения своей семьи, является богатым источником для понимания характера проблем и необходимым условием для успешных действий по улучшению ситуации. Факультет социальной работы в Архангельске работает в тесной связи с центрами семьи и детскими домами как в сфере профилактики сиротства, так и по вопросам, относящимся к альтернативным формам устройства.

### *Альтернативное устройство детей*

Когда воспитание, приближенное к семейному, считается идеалом, ничто не может являться более естественным, чем попытки устройства сирот в семьи. Модели альтернативных форм устройства детей являются частью континуума – от традиционного усыновления через патронажные семьи и детские деревни SOS к учреждению более мелких единиц с более гуманным и индивидуализированным подходом в существующих детских домах. Усыновление является приоритетом, и федеральная программа «Дети-сироты» сделала возможным учреждение банка данных возможных усыновителей, приемных семей и детей-сирот. Усыновление регулируется установлениями закона, нацеленными на защиту каждого отдельного ребенка, и переживает подъем. Согласно данным UNICEF (см. главу 7), усыновление детей возрастной группы от 0 до 3 лет выросло с около 130 на сто тысяч населения в 1989 г. до примерно 260 десятью годами позже. Несмотря на этот рост, который скоро должен удвоиться вновь, усыновление не так распространено в России, как в большинстве других индустриализованных стран. В частности, детей старше года практически не усыновляют. Причины этого будут обсуждаться нами в дальнейшем исследовательском проекте.

Приемные семьи еще менее распространены, но это, очевидно, вызвано тем фактом, что они были введены (в их современной форме) сравнительно недавно, т.е. Семейным кодексом РФ(1995). Воспитание ребенка в приемной семье очень похоже на

воспитание усыновленного ребенка, за исключением вопросов уплаты алиментов и наследования. Воспитание, осуществляемое опекунами/попечителями достаточно близко подходит к воспитанию в приемной семье, но в большинстве случаев опекунами являются родственники ребенка-сироты. Так же, как и в случае с усыновлением, наблюдается рост числа приемных семей и опекунов (см. главу 7).

Группы семейного воспитания являются новым средством помощи социально незащищенным детям. Здесь наставники обычно ухаживают за ребенком, делающим успехи в реабилитации. Задача этих групп вытекает из регулярно перезаключаемого контракта. Аналогичным образом начинают использоваться временные семьи. Патронажные семьи – это ранее существовавший институт, получивший свое новое рождение. Патронажная семья состоит из профессиональных воспитателей, выполняющих роль семьи в течение определенного периода времени.

Примечательно, что федеральная сеть органов опеки и попечительства входит в структуру Министерства образования, и сфера образования в России в целом имеет хорошую юридическую базу для устройства детей-сирот в иных формах, отличных от традиционных детских домов. В целом альтернативные формы устройства детей имеют значительную поддержку. Как показано в главе 7, с конца 1990-х годов в Архангельске от 34 до 47 процентов новых детей-сирот усыновляется, помещается под опеку или в приемную семью. Российские дискуссии разворачиваются в основном вокруг экономической стороны этого вопроса. Как производить компенсацию семьям, принявшим на воспитание детей-сирот?

### ***Дальнейшие исследования***

Как утверждалось ранее, общее направление работы по предоставлению каждому ребенку воспитания, приближенного к семейному, поднимает целый ряд вопросов для исследователей. Для разработки разумной политики, способной привести к де-институционализированному детству для большинства сирот требуются дополнительные знания. Для того, чтобы альтернативные формы устройства смогли работать, требуется провести большую подготовительную работу. Это связано с тем, что факторы риска, например, бедность и другие причины могут привести к социальному сиротству. Стратегии по организации профилактических мер против возникновения социального

сиротства требуют тщательного анализа его причин. Каким образом различные формы поддержки семьи (например, перевод денежных средств семьям, отпуск по беременности и родам, отпуск по уходу за ребенком, дополнительные гарантии многодетным семьям) противодействуют тенденциям, формирующим социальное сиротство?

Также имеется потребность в более глубоком анализе институциональных условий для удовлетворения потребностей детей-сирот. Это включает в себя как работу с существующими детскими домами, так и с их альтернативами. Насколько сильной поддержкой они пользуются со стороны министерства, специалистов, общественного мнения и практики, благотворительных организаций? Координация имеет здесь решающее значение. Как точно иллюстрирует данный отчет, существует – и должно существовать большое разнообразие сторон, участвующих в решении проблем, связанных с детьми-сиротами. Как можно улучшить сотрудничество между сферами образования, охраны правопорядка, здравоохранения и социальной защиты?

Этот вопрос приводит к другой проблеме, требующей изучения – необходимости существования «научного сообщества» или даже «коалиции по охране детства», способных поддержать реформу. Эта часть исследования должна включать обобщение и анализ важных дискуссий, выявление основных позиций, анализ доминирующих идей с целью оценки сильных сторон «альтернатив традиционным детским домам».

Другой вопрос исследования касается заимствования политики других стран. Как это происходило? И как они были адаптированы к местным условиям? Здесь применимы теории переноса политики. Они могут прояснить соотношение между идеями и условиями, или формулировками политик и институциональными контекстами.

Для того, чтобы провести анализ, будут использованы следующие методы: будут изучены тексты. Будут изучены планы и программы на федеральном, областном и местном уровнях. Будут проведены интервью с важнейшими руководителями, работающими в сфере возможной коалиции по защите прав детей, т.е. социальные работники, учителя и другой персонал детских домов, местные и федеральные политики, благотворительные организации, неправительственные организации с иностранным участием. Аналогичным образом

исследовательская группа проанализирует текущую статистику, представленную органами власти.

В ходе процесса исследования исследовательская группа будет работать, обсуждать и применять опыт России и Северных стран, в том числе теоретические разработки в этой области. Российские и Северные материалы будут объединены для рассмотрения.

Из скандинавской литературы по этой проблеме следует отметить, в числе прочего, докторскую диссертацию Марие Саллнэс (2000) «Учреждения охраны детства – становление, идеология и структура», в которой дается обзор исторического роста и развития интернатных учреждений для детей и подростков в Швеции. Эта работа также содержит анализ структуризации и организации интернатной опеки в настоящее время. В Швеции испытывается модель специальных семейных домов – так называемых «гибридных домов» (Sallnäs 2000). Различные типы учреждений и их «гибридных» форм могут представлять интерес для обсуждения российского опыта. В статье Андерсон также обсуждается опыт шведских приемных семей (Andersson 1999).

Части докторского диссертационного исследования Тине Эгелунд (1997) «Охрана детства». Эгелунд подробно раскрывает проблемы общения между сотрудниками служб охраны детства и родителями и критически рассматривает присущие социальным работникам конструкт и формы интерпретации реальности (используя критическую теорию, особенно Фуко и Бордо) (Egelund 1997). Ее понимание этих вопросов, как оно существует в Дании, разворачивается в диалоге со шведскими и норвежскими исследователями (Sundell and Egelund 2000; Egelund and Kvilhaug 2002), последнее исследование посвящено работе супервайзеров в сфере охраны детства.

Моной Сандбэк проведено исследование, основанное на интервью родителей и детей, и представляет большой интерес для дальнейшей работы по охране детства (Sandbæk 1998; Sandbæk 1999; Sandbæk 1999; Sandbæk 2000; Sandbæk 2002). Основным моментом здесь является мнение, что видение детей и родителей должно учитываться с особой тщательностью при разработке и оценке служб охраны детства. Вопрос о базе данных о социальных сиротах и их контакте с биологическими родителями обсуждается в недавно вышедшей работе Оддбьерга Шера Ульвика (Ulvik 2002).

В заключение следует еще раз озвучить основную посылку, на которой основывается весь проект: «Даже если родителей нет в живых, дети должны вырасти в условиях семьи». Эта идея имеет множество последствий. Одно из них в том, что знание необходимо развивать для того, чтобы идея смогла укорениться в реальных условиях. Кроме того, решающее значение для успеха имеют институциональные, финансовые факторы и менталитет.

## Appendix II: The list of the main legislative acts of Arkhangelsk region (adopted in 1994-2001) on children's rights

1. Regional law "About education" from 3 April 1996, # 38-22-RL
2. Regional law "About the organisation of the work on guardianship and care in Arkhangelsk region" from 18 December 1996, # 1-5-RL
3. Regional law "About social protection of invalids" from 22 January 1998, # 54-13-RL
4. Regional law "About guarantees of work payment of adopted parents and privileges for adopted family" from 17 April 1998, # 71-15-RL
5. Regional law "About protection of population from tuberculosis and about anti-tuberculosis assistance" from 8 October 1998, # 92-18-RL
6. Regional law "About social protection for some categories of people on the territory of Arkhangelsk region" from 4 March 1999, # 109-21-RL
7. Regional law "About regional budget of 2001" from 25 January 2001, # 13-2-RL (art. 25: financing and payments of state benefits from the regional budget for citizens who have children)
8. Regional law from 20 February 2001, # 16-3-RL "About budget of Arkhangelsk regional fund of obligatory medical insurance for 2001"
9. Regional law "About state social protection on the territory of Arkhangelsk region" from 5 June 2001, # 43
10. Regional law "About the order of means payment on allowance of orphans and children without parents care, who are under

guardianship (care) and in adopted families if Arkhangelsk region” from 6 June 2001, # 41-6-RL (came into force January 2002)

11. Regional law “About consumer basket in Arkhangelsk region” from the 5 July 2001, # 39-6-RL
12. Regional law “About additional guaranties on protection of housing rights of children, orphans and children without parents care in Arkhangelsk region” from 5 July 2001, # 49-7-RL
13. Decree of Arkhangelsk region’s Head of Administration from the 28 December 1994, # 432 “About the target programme “Planning of the family”
14. Decree of Arkhangelsk region’s Head of Administration from the 11 May 2000, # 131 “About the charitable lottery “Family and children”
15. Order of Arkhangelsk region’s Head of Administration from 8 September 1999, # 584 “About state statistic observation of quantity of children 7-15 years old, who do not study in institutions of general education, and children, who do not have a permanent place of living”
16. The Decree of Arkhangelsk regional administration from 14<sup>th</sup> of September 1994, # 327 about the territorial target programme on notice of AIDS spreading in Arkhangelsk region for 1994-1996 (ANTI-AIDS)
17. The Decree of Arkhangelsk regional administration from 28 November 1997, # 434 “About measures on provision of invalid’s free access to objects of social infrastructure”
18. The Decree of regional administration from 17<sup>th</sup> of August 1999, # 240 “About giving address help”
19. The Decree of Arkhangelsk regional administration from 24 April 2000, #119 “About order of giving subsidies to poor families and poor lonely living citizens for paying housing-communal services”
20. The Decree of Arkhangelsk regional administration from 20.07.2001, # 327 “About confirmation the size of living wage in Arkhangelsk region in 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2001”
21. The Decision of Arkhangelsk regional soviet of people’s deputies and executive committee of presidium of regional trade union’s soviet from 28<sup>th</sup> of December 1989, # 160 about rules of calculation of people, being in need of housing and improvement of living conditions in Arkhangelsk region



22. The Decree of the Centre of state sanitary-epidemics control in Arkhangelsk region from 9<sup>th</sup> of August 1999, # 5 “About confirmation of temporary rules and norms” from 2 April 1999 “Hygienic demands of organisation and allowance of educational institutions for orphans and children without parent’s care”

## Appendix III: Regional level programmes on children's rights

1. The regional complex programme "Family and children of Arkhangelsk region 2001"
2. The regional programme "Youth 2001"
3. The programme of social-economic development of Arkhangelsk region for 2001-2005 (from 30 January 2001, # 45/1)
4. The regional complex target programme "Rehabilitation of invalids for 2001-2003" (from 4 December 2000, # 363)
5. The programme of educational development of Arkhangelsk region for 2001-2005 (from 23 August 2000, # 40/1)
6. The regional target programme "Vaccine prophylactic measures for 1999-2000 and for the period till 2005" (from 23 March 1999, # 26/4)
7. The regional target programme "Orphans for 1998-2000"
8. The regional target programme "Secure motherhood for 2001-2003" (from 22 January 2001, # 16)
9. The interdepartmental target programme "Children of refugees and forced migrants families on the territory of Arkhangelsk region for 2000-2001"
10. The programme "The development of the system of social protection in Arkhangelsk region for 2001-2005" (from 6 March 2001, # 03-34)