

## Report

My name is Olga Mironova. I am a Sverker Astrom's (Foundation for the Furtherance of Swedish-Russian Relations) alumna in 2007. I am currently working for a British-based international children's development charity, which realizes projects for vulnerable children separated, or at risk of being separated, from their families.

### **Why did I wish to undertake the Sverker Astrom's Fellowship?**

First of all, it was a good opportunity for my professional development. I work with Federal government representatives in Moscow, the State Duma and the Moscow Child Ombudsman. I was looking for new information about successful communication between non-profit organizations, the mass media and the government.

Secondly, I wanted to improve my skills in advocacy for family-based childcare and to get new ideas in PR and FR support of NGO projects in my "own" organization EveryChild.

Thirdly, I wanted an opportunity to visit Sweden to gain an insight into the work of Swedish based children's organizations and the work that they carry out in these three areas – advocacy, fundraising and networking. I decided, that it would be valuable experience for me, and of great benefit to the EveryChild programme in Russia, if I could gain an understanding of the contribution, that NGOs in Sweden make to policy-making in the child care and social sectors.

### ***My placement***

My choice of Save the Children Sweden was not random. I researched the yearly reports of institutions and government structures that manage social services in Sweden, and the numerous Internet sources of relevant professional information, and I was thoroughly impressed with the advanced level of Advocacy and Fundraising in Save the Children Sweden.

*Save the Children Sweden is one of the oldest charities in Sweden. Save the Children Sweden works both nationally and internationally, with its own work and in cooperation with other organisations. We support national projects and make use of people's own will to improve their situation. Save the Children works for:*

- *a world which respects and values each child*
- *a world where all children participate and have influence*
- *a world where all children have hope and opportunity*



*The International Save the Children Alliance adopted this vision in 1996. The International Save the Children Alliance is an association of 27 Save the Children organisations around the world (number of members as of 2007).*

With the support of Sverker Astrom Foundation, I did an internship in Stockholm in summer 2007. For the 2,5 months I was there, I worked as an intern in Save the Children Sweden.

I did a research project on inclusive education in Russia for my colleagues from the European department of Save the Children Sweden.

My study included a general overview of the policy on Inclusive Education in Russia and a short description of laws that support or hinder it.

I also considered the general debate in Russia on inclusive education – are there any differences of views between the professional world ( i.e. education specialists) and parents of discriminated groups or other organisations? One part of my study was an identification of various organisations or networks working on the topic in Russia with examples of what they are doing. I collected contact details from more than 20 NGOs in Russia that work with disabled children, children of migrants and minorities, asylum seekers and refugees.

Besides that, I met with colleagues from SCS's European and domestic programme, UNICEF Sweden , Red Cross, SHIA (Solidarity, Human Rights, Inclusion), RFSU, HIV-Serge, Kvinnocirkeln Sverige, Noah's Ark and Fundraising Company.

Every day I met with different people, shared information about EveryChild's projects in Russia, and made small presentations.

### ***My cultural life***

I went to museums, walked on the narrow streets of Gamla stan and took boat trips.

I visited Vasamuseet, the National Museum, Livrustkammaren, Junibacken (this is the best children's museum in Sweden), Stockholm's Stadshus and Moderna museet.



I visited Sigtuna, Uppsala and crossed Sweden to go to Goteborg.

I was also involved in the cultural life of Stockholm. It was easy for me, because I lived in Sodermalm, in the "heart" of Stockholm (My lively Hornsgatan street, I miss you so much!). Stockholm is an amazing place. Every day something interesting happens, it's never boring. For example, you can see the Tall Ships Race, Gay Pride's weeklong festival, Sport events or celebrations for the birthday of Princess Victoria.



Thanks to Disa Hastad , I took part in the Mid-Sommar holiday on Solsidan. I sold raffle tickets to people during the holiday. It was really fun for me and, I guess, for Swedish people too.



To be honest, I had a lot of myths about Sweden (sex, suicides and “Swedish family”) before my visit to Sweden, but my Swedish colleagues knew very little about Russia, too. I tried to tell them about contemporary Russia and wrote a special paper “Analysis of trends and problems relating to children's conditions in Russia” for my colleagues.

On the other hand, I was surprised that Astrom Sverker, Disa Hastad and everyone from Sverker Astrom's Foundation could speak Russian fluently. As a result, I decided to continue studying Swedish.

I was impressed by the level of social care for children in Sweden. The standard of living is very high. I have been to the UK, Austria and the USA, but Sweden was for me a country that has «achieved socialism».

### ***My Swedish friends***

Every day in SCS was planned. I was involved in all staff activities and discussions. I was surprised when my colleagues gave a farewell party for me and prepared a present.

Disa Hastad gave special parties for all interns at her summer house. She invited her friends to meet with us. It was a good chance to see how family-oriented Swedish people are and how they spend their free time.

### **How did the fellowship program help me?**

The internship helped me to get a lot of new information about advocacy and fundraising, to share information and personal experience with colleagues from Sweden and to make useful new contacts. I am convinced that the internship abroad was a great help to me in my work.

I intend to use what I have learned during the internship in my current job. I am sure that my new knowledge in combination with my professional background will help to raise the level of high quality services for children in Moscow.

### **What I have already done after the fellowship program**

After my fellowship program, I made a presentation about my internship at EveryChild Russia's Country Planning meeting. Also I shared information with my colleagues from Moscow, St Petersburg and Ekaterinburg. I am so glad that two of my colleagues from St Petersburg and Ekaterinburg are going to Save the Children Sweden for training in the next month. It means that the collaboration between our two countries is continuing. Also I see myself as a “networker” between Russian NGOs and Swedish NGOs now, trying to build useful links between our two countries.