

# **2002 Annual Report to the Trustees of Ecologia Trust**

## **Activities of Ecologia Trust during the year October 2001 – September 2002**

### **Social Work and Therapeutic Education Training at Kitezh Children's Community**

The 4-year Social Work and Therapeutic Education Training funded by Charity Know How is now completed. A final evaluation report by Social Worker and Russian specialist Dena Domminney in October is available. This documents the learnings from the entire training programme over 4 years, and is an excellent testimony to the work done by all members of the training team. Her impression was that Kitezh has absorbed most aspects of the training that have become fully integrated into their work with children. Those aspects that were not fully addressed have been added to recommendations for further training and will be implemented in the next phase. Charity Know How accepted our report and released all remaining funds. A further follow-up grant from Charity Know How provides Kitezh with four consultation visits by David Dean OBE. The start of this project begins in Spring 2003.

### **Developing the Capacity of Kitezh Children's Community: a 2-year project funded by the UK Community Fund to run from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.**

The size, scope and responsibility of setting up and managing this large project has made it the focal point of Ecologia Trust's work this year.

The aims, set out in our contract with the Community Fund are as follows:

The project will achieve the following Benefits:

1. By the end of this grant (2 years) 15 families at Kitezh Children's Community will have the capacity to give stable homes to 70 children who have been moved out of existing institutions; in the longer term, 30 families will give stable homes to 200 children.
2. The capacity of the Kitezh Community will be strengthened enabling the expansion of the village. The Information Centre in Moscow will secure funding from within Russia to ensure the long term future of the Kitezh community.
3. As a result of the social work and therapeutic education training, documented by the training manual for foster families, staff at Kitezh will become professional in their work with children. Kitezh will become a leader in this field of care, leading to the establishment of a specialist institute there to provide training for carers from all over Russia.

In the first year, to start on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002 we will achieve the following tasks:

1. Register Kitezh Information centre as the official foreign representative of Ecologia Trust in Moscow, working in close cooperation with Kitezh Children's Community and open an organisational foreign currency bank account in Moscow.
2. Establish the Kitezh Information centre as the public relations, networking and fundraising presence for the Kitezh Children's Community, with its office in Moscow.

3. Produce a promotional video in Russian and English to raise public awareness of conditions in children's institutions with Kitezh as an example of a positive solution, and highlight foreign companies' charitable giving as an incentive to others, particularly to Russian companies.
4. Set up and implement training for Russian staff in public relations and fundraising skills by Russian fundraiser and with training in London at the Directory for Social Change.
5. Continue the social work and therapeutic education training by UK experts concentrating on training the life-story worker, adoptions officer, and social work supervisor; organise 2-week study visit to the UK to learn how UK fostering and therapeutic education organisations work with children in care.
6. Collect and compile, edit and translate materials for the draft of a training manual for foster families living inside and outside Kitezh.

### **Results and opportunities offered by the Community Fund grant:**

The following has been achieved thus far:

1. Kitezh Centre is registered as a Russian Autonomous Non-Profit Organisation, representing the interests of Kitezh Community and Ecologia Trust in Moscow, with a hard currency account in HSBC Bank and Russian roubles bank account. This structure is best suited to the purposes of the Centre and it is allowed to receive and transfer tax-free donations to Kitezh from within Russia and abroad.
2. The Kitezh Centre is established in Moscow with an office and staff. Public Relations work to disseminate information about the work at Kitezh has started with presentations to the public, existing and potential donors, and a monthly Kitezh report in a popular newspaper. Fundraising within the foreign business community has begun, with some success. Significant donations from within Russia were a new minibus from HSBC Bank, Moscow; winter coats for all donated by a Russian clothing distributor; funds to finish the first floor of the Guesthouse from a Moscow company particularly interested in supporting the Kitezh Community in its efforts to generate funds for its own self-sufficiency. The Guesthouse was opened with a celebration in October 2002.
3. A promotion video was completed in English and in Russian, in two versions: 7 minutes and 18 minutes. Both have received positive feedback and are being distributed to interested donors and others in Russia and abroad.
- 4 & 5. Training in Fundraising and further Therapeutic Education training is planned for year 2 of the project in consultation with the Social Work and Therapeutic Education team, according to the needs and opportunities for training as they arise during the course of the project. Community Building Trainings are held annually at Kitezh, and the input of an experienced Therapeutic Education consultant continues to be valued and welcomed by members of Kitezh.
6. Two draft versions of a Guide for Foster Families based on the 10 years work and experience of Kitezh Foster Families were written by Dmitry Morozov and translated into English. Feedback from the UK Training team and Trustees of Ecologia Trust was incorporated into the content. A preliminary edition of 500 copies will be published in Russian to test public and professional response. This forms the basis of a further publication for a wider audience, now in process. This

book forms part of the project's strategy to disseminate information about the work at Kitezh more widely. It replaces the originally planned 'Training Manual' as it serves the needs of foster families more closely.

Progress on the Benefits as set out in the Community Fund contract:

1. Currently 11 families and 45 children live in Kitezh (including the students who study in Moscow and Kaluga). From the 2002 summer camp for orphans 4 new children joined Kitezh families and 3 children are awaiting documents to allow them to move to Kitezh. A new Family House was completed in 2002. With funding from the Build Trust the Pyramid House will be completed in 2003 giving a home for a family of 6 children with a computer classroom and art room. Another Family House for a family of 6 children is planned for 2003 if funds are raised.
2. Even in its early stages, the project has had a beneficial effect on the management structures within the community and has strengthened its management capacity in order to prepare for further expansion. In addition to addressing the stated tasks for this year, this project offered Kitezh the opportunity to develop its management structures in order to come in line with the funders' requirements for accountability and transparency. This has been extremely valuable and has resulted in a more stable, structured financial management system at Kitezh. The assistance of a competent and experienced Accountant, made possible by funds from this project, has enabled Kitezh to plan and budget for the future more accurately.
3. The results of the social work and therapeutic training are set out in the evaluation report of the training. The Guide for Foster Families further documents the results of the training. Interest in Kitezh was expressed by the Minister for Social Welfare, Matveyenko, and her intended visit resulted in the road from Baryatino to Kitezh being paved by the local administration in preparation. Good relations between Kitezh and the Moscow Pedagogical and Psychological Institute and the Moscow University Faculty of Psychology have been established.

**Additional benefits of Kitezh Centre for the children:** the Kitezh Centre has provided a home for a Kitezh student starting her first year at University, and it became the 'home base' for others who are studying in Moscow. Several families made use of the Kitezh Centre to give their children the opportunity to visit Moscow and give them an experience of life in the city. Previously this was difficult to achieve economically and practically.

We look forward to the next 18 months of the project, where the rewards of the hard work put into setting up the project will become evident. The Kitezh Centre staff is enthusiastic, committed, creatively involved and keen to learn and to produce results. They have the full cooperation of the leadership and members of the Kitezh Community.

In addition to raising funds to build Kitezh, the Kitezh Centre aims to raise public awareness of the unique work that is being done with children there and to make this expertise more widely known and available to families who do not live there. Kitezh Centre has plans to develop into a Family Counselling Centre. Here Moscow families may consult with those from Kitezh about problems with their adopted or natural children. A small number of children from Moscow families will be accepted as boarders at Kitezh to take advantage of the therapeutic education opportunities there and who will contribute financially. The Guesthouse will accommodate their parents when they

visit. Kitezh Centre also aims to develop a special form of family ‘ecotourism’ to bring guests and income to Kitezh using the accommodation now available in the Guesthouse.

### **Building work accomplished in 2002:**

1. **The Play House** was completed and furnished (funded by the World Childhood Foundation) with a Play Room dedicated exclusively for Play Therapy sessions and comfortable accommodation for visiting professionals.
2. **The Guest House** interior finishings, bathrooms and furnishings were completed on the first floor. A reception area and 4 double Bedrooms, each with its own shower and toilet, is ready for guests.
3. **The Surakhyan family’s house** was completed and furnished.

Kitezh-Agro, the farming company associated with Kitezh, made a substantial investment in the Farm and gives considerable in kind support to the community. Breeding cattle, pigs and chickens bring free produce for the residents in addition to a small amount of cash income in the first year of operation. This initiative, the impulse towards developing sustainable methods of survival for the community in the long term, is most encouraging.

### **Godparents scheme**

Godparents contributed £4,500 to Kitezh children. Letters, gifts and emails flow freely in both directions, bringing love and interest to the children and to the Godparents and their families. It is a successful and satisfying aspect of our work with Kitezh.

### **Volunteers**

An increased interest in volunteering at Kitezh was shown this year, 25 volunteers in all, indicating that volunteers are becoming a natural part of the society of Kitezh. The volunteers manage to adapt to rural village life and Russian customs remarkably well, and the children’s fluency in English is a tribute to them. A production of My Fair Lady in English was a triumphal testament to the hard work of the volunteers over the past year. Those who came to Kitezh with an interest in improving their Russian language were satisfied to leave speaking quite fluently. There is no better language school than to live and converse with native speakers, especially children.

The system for receiving background checks for all volunteers is now in place. Introduction and Preparation information is constantly updated and improved to increase volunteers’ effectiveness and to enrich their experience in Kitezh.

### **Core Funding**

It is heartening to note that core costs for the year were covered by income from operating activities, with a surplus of £1,642.

### **Funders in 2001/2002:**

Charity Know How	The Community Fund UK
The Build Trust	World Childhood Foundation
The Paget Trust	Margaret Adams Trust

Many individuals in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Europe, Australia and Russia. Our heartfelt thanks to all donors and volunteers for your continued belief in the work of Ecologia Trust with Kitezh Children’s Community in Russia.

Liza Hollingshead  
Executive Director