

ANNUAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2008

It has been a successful and exciting year for Ecologia Youth Trust as we expanded our work to serve the needs of underprivileged youth in three countries: Russia, Thailand and Georgia.

RUSSIA: Our main achievement was to complete the three year Big Lottery funded project 'Expanding the Impact of the Kitezh Community for Orphans on Therapeutic Education in Russia'. The final grant report was a rich testament to how much Kitezh, with its sister community Orion, has developed and grown in stature amongst childcare practitioners in Russia and abroad.

"The grant has provided great opportunities for Kitezh both to learn and teach," wrote Dr David McNamara, the independent evaluator for the project." It allowed valuable opportunities for training and travel, to share Kitezh's vision and methodology and to learn from other projects. During the period of the grant project, 2005-2008, Kitezh has successfully grown and prospered, meeting the success indicators delineated in the grant proposal. Kitezh is extremely well placed to support itself through its expertise." He emphasised that ongoing training in family therapy is a vital element to this work.

The Kitezh staff has always been committed to professional and academic training and we will continue to seek funding to support this effort.

At the completion of the project, Kitezh and Orion are independent and self-sustaining. Several funding schemes are being planned and implemented. As a result of this project, Kitezh recognised the key role of the Kitezh Centre in Moscow and hired a Russian fundraiser to continue the excellent work done by our British volunteers Dena Fisher, Esther Daniels and Francesca Hewitt. The Children in Crisis programme at Kitezh and Orion is well established and provides income for the communities. It addresses the complex behavioural problems of middle-class, economically privileged youth, brought about by the rapidly changing Russian demographic.

In the past year our volunteer programme at Kitezh and Orion enabled 28 young people to volunteer there. The programme has been re-structured and improved and next year groups of volunteers will arrive together and take part in an induction week. The standard of English teaching has markedly improved with the input of our long-term volunteer, Andrew Aikman.

The founder, Dimitry Morozov's book *KITEZH: a Community Approach to Raising Children in Russia*

(now in its third Russian edition) was published in English this year. It is a compelling insight into why the community was founded and how the foster families learned how to approach the problems of the orphan children they took into their hearts and homes.

THAILAND: In February 2008 Ecologia Youth Trust, in partnership with Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation, embarked on an engaging three year project also funded by the Big Lottery Fund. The project's aim is to support human rights, peace building and self-reliance for migrant workers from Burma living in Southern Thailand. The first half-year reports were encouraging and the project team is committed and enthusiastic to take advantage of this opportunity to improve living conditions for migrants and their children. A peace building youth camp was one of the first project activities that brought youths together across ethnic and religious borders. The project supports teachers in learning centres as well as providing grass-roots leadership training for leaders in the migrant worker communities.

GEORGIA: We have expanded to work with an NGO that is involved with fostering orphans and disabled children at Mamatsi Guli and Temi, two rural community villages not far from the capital, Tbilisi. With Madge Bray, who introduced the concept of social work and therapy for children to Kitezh over ten years ago, we have raised funds to enable a small Georgian boy, Datuna, to receive urgently needed medical treatment in the UK, and we have started to raise funds to support foster families at Mamatsi Guli. Ecologia has joined forces with Mamatsi Guli to offer a volunteers programme through the European Volunteer Service (EVS) for young people with fewer opportunities. Our first volunteer group was due to arrive just as the war between Russia and Georgia broke out. We found ourselves supporting two children's foster family villages in two countries that were engaged in a bitter enmity. We promote peace in all our work, and will support those people who care for their children no matter what position their governments adopt. Our EVS volunteers will now visit Georgia in spring 2009.

As always, we are grateful to our donors and volunteers for their support for our work. In this financial year Ecologia Youth Trust received £46,640 in donations for Kitezh-Orion, £14,450 for the Datuna Appeal and £4,000 for Mamatsi Guli Children's Village in Georgia.

Liza Hollingshead



HOW DOES A SMALL CHARITY COPE WITH A GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS?

Ecologia Youth Trust has given hope and help and support for disadvantaged children in Russia for 15 years. Children are always the first to suffer in political and economic crises. We pledge to constantly support them to develop their greatest potential no matter what. These are difficult times but your money has been well spent. We are proud to report that Kitezh is in a stronger position now to provide solutions for these children. We urge you, our loyal donors, to renew your commitment to support our work in this increasingly uncertain world.

Thanks to your generosity, in 2008 Ecologia Youth Trust helped to:

- Renovate the Kitezh dining hall & kitchen
- Extend a foster family home at Kitezh
- Build and furnish a new foster family house in Orion and the frames of two small guest houses
- Construct a winter greenhouse at Orion
- Provide summer holidays for all children at Kitezh and Orion
- Build and equip the carpentry workshop at Orion.
- Complete the communal dining room and kitchen at Orion
- Support six Kitezh graduates in their studies at University

Sergey Khlopenov writes from Kitezh: "About this crisis, we cannot predict for sure what will happen. Prices are increasing, but the picture is not yet clear. Kitezh and Orion are now almost self-sufficient, but only if the government does not decrease payments for children and teachers' salaries. If this happens, we can simplify our food, but we must preserve education and development, which are essential to the purpose of Kitezh. Whatever happens, we intend to develop and educate our children. We are preparing our future graduates to enter universities in Moscow and Kaluga. We need equipment for the school and for educational trips to Kaluga and Moscow. The cost of medicine is rising and we have to pay for dental care.

"Fortunately, we have managed to build the main buildings in Kitezh and Orion, and the Kaluga government has built the road at Orion. We are now completing the renovated kitchen and dining hall in Kitezh. We are waiting for gas to reach Kitezh. The initial work laying the pipes from Baryatino is already done. Soon we will have a need of \$20-\$30,000 to connect our houses to the pipeline (building, new boilers for each house, licensing and permissions). In Orion we have two minibuses that are old and give more problems than use. Transport is vital for communication between our communities.

"If we can, we want to send two of our teenagers to Britain next year, maybe their last opportunity before they enter university.

"We are looking for a farmer to join us and develop the farm. We have enough land, and we are looking forward to buying cows, sheep and seed to increase our self-sufficiency.

Prices for oil and gas have increased already. This winter we need £1,500 to pay for gas at Orion and at Kitezh we need a further £4,500 for coal and £4,500 for electricity."

ESSENTIAL FUNDING NEEDS FOR 2009

Kitezh:

Gas for Kitezh houses: 14 gas boilers @ £750	£10,500
Tractor with attachments: plough, mover, cart	£6,700
Holidays and education trips for children	£3,500

Orion:

Build a new Foster Family house	£25,000
Equipment for 3 classrooms	£4,500
16-seater Minibus	£10,000
Summer camp for orphans to be held in Orion	£2,300
Plant a vegetable garden and fruit orchard	£3,500
Tractor	£6,700

Other important needs

Continued Training & Consultancy

Art therapy training to bring Kitezh staff to diploma level	£5,450
David Dean's Therapeutic Education Consultancy	£2,720

Annual Support for Volunteers Coordinator & English Teacher at Kitezh

£2,150

Findhorn-Kitezh Youth Exchange 2009:

Youth In Action pays 70% of travel costs.

Matched funds to raise:

July 2009 Scotland to Russia:	£5,000
October 2009 Russia to Scotland:	£5,000

The Findhorn participants are actively involved in fundraising activities to raise at least half of the amount required through their own efforts.

