



ANNUAL REPORT

The Step Up Orphan Opportunity Centre
2015—2016 Academic year



STEP UP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Opening words from the director.....	4
The Centre's mission and values	5
Academic year 2015—2016: key events and results	6
Who do we work for.....	7
The geography of the Centre's work.....	8
Programmes and projects.....	9
Educational support programmes.....	10
Results of the programme and success stories.....	11
Distance Learning Project.....	12
Student Conferences.....	13
The Employment Programme.....	14
Literature Club.....	16
Film Club.....	17
Our day of clubs	18
The HandsOn Workshop.....	19
The Kindergarten Programme.....	20
The Step Up football team.....	21
The MaslomVverh Project.....	22
Our work in the Pskov region.....	24
Summer Volunteer Camp at the Belsky Ustye orphanage.....	25
Winter Volunteer Camp at the Belsky Ustye orphanage.....	27
Family camp for mothers and children.....	28
The Centre's Volunteers.....	29
Calendar of events.....	30
The Step Up Centre in the media.....	33
Our partnerships: joint projects and events.....	34
Our work with professional NGOs: conferences and seminars	35
Partners and sponsors.....	37
Financial results.....	38
Contact information.....	39



All of the photographs contained in this report are taken from the Step Up Orphan Opportunity Centre's archives and reflect the organisation's work in full. The photographs have been provided by Paulina Bikonya and Dina Magnat.



The 2015–2016 academic year marked an important moment in the Centre's history – it was our fifteen-year anniversary and the fifth anniversary of our name, “The Step Up Orphan Opportunity Centre”. This name epitomises our mission, what we are striving for, and why students come to us.

This year, with the help of the Kings and Cabbage club, we also began a new project, MaslomVverh, for our students.

I would like to express great thanks to my colleagues; it is thanks to all of the employees and teachers that such ambitious programmes and projects can come to life and students can fulfil their hopes and dreams. 209 young adults benefited from the help and support of the Step Up Centre, taking part in our programmes, this past academic year. Of course, the end of the year doesn't mean that they have finished their journey, but to begin it is great.

A great thank you to our community of friends and volunteers whose support helps us to find the power to keep moving forwards. A special thank you to our partners and sponsors for holding our work in high esteem, for believing in us, and for giving us care and consideration.

This report will outline the programmes, results and events that have made this academic year so successful, interesting and full of progress. I hope that our work will inspire readers to set off on a new path or to follow their current path to the end.

Olga Tikhomirova
Director and Co-Founder of the Step Up Orphan Opportunity Centre

THE CENTRE'S MISSION AND VALUES

The Centre's mission is to allow all of the young adults that come to us equal opportunities in education and personal development.

For many years, the Centre's work has been developed by a team of employees who have formulated and outlined our own system of values, as outlined below.

RESPECT FOR THE CHOICES AND AIMS of each student and member of staff. We believe that the right to have a choice is tantamount to the right to life and freedom. Therefore, one of the Centre's main tasks is to show the young generation calling on our support that they will always have a choice and that with an education, their range of choice becomes so much wider and more valuable.

BELIEF IN AN INDIVIDUAL. We believe in the power, honour and worth of each individual. We recognise the fact that many of our students have special abilities and talents and for these to come to the fore, all they need is a catalyst or the support of an encouraging adult. The catalyst is education, and these adults are teachers and administrators.

AN INDIVIDUAL APPROACH towards each member of the Step Up community. This is extremely important for our work to be successful, since every orphan has a painful story about losing their family and about life in institutions.

OPENNESS. The Step Up Centre is open about our work; we communicate with our partners, sponsors and, most importantly, our pupils. There is no place for double standards in what we do.

A FRIENDLY, TRUSTING ATMOSPHERE is the best way of developing relationships between students and teachers; friendship and trust between one another are fundamental.

THE VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATION. These two things form the foundation of the Centre's work. Our experience shows that knowledge itself makes our students more determined and self-confident, while communication makes the learning process more exciting and interesting.

CHEERFULNESS is an important characteristic of all our team members; it allows everyone to overcome difficult situations and to solve the most complex problems with ease. Together we celebrate birthdays, go to the theatre, to the cinema and to museums- we learn to find happiness in every day and in every achievement.

TEAMWORK. We value the right that we have earned, thanks to years of experience, to call ourselves a team. But we are even more grateful for the fact that our students and graduates often go on to become members of our team, and that the work of our team brings about successful results.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2015–2016: KEY EVENTS AND RESULTS

Over the course of the year, the Centre has held many interesting events aimed at the development, motivation and organisation of our team, as well as allowing us to spend time with one another.

All of these projects and events are linked to education, and that is exactly what unites us all – students, teachers, volunteers and friends.

209

students

took part in our programmes and projects over the course of the year

151

students

progressed on to the next level of education

in **2015–2016** academic year

THE STEP UP FOOTBALL TEAM

50 our team played friendly matches

29 matches in the Russian Amateur Football League

3rd in the Blitzliga tournament

THE HANDSON WORKSHOP

25 charity fairs and city-wide events

over 70 of our students were involved in the workshop, helping at fairs and preparing for events

BELSKY USTYE VOLUNTEER CAMP

38 volunteers from various cities in Russia and around the world took part in our camp

65 students took part in the 2016 summer camp

5 of our students successfully passed the basic state examinations and received their Year 9 certificate

9 participants of the Distance Learning project finished Year 11

15 participants of the Distance Learning project finished Year 9

11 000 lessons were held
of these **600** were led by volunteers

1 of our graduates finished university

7 of our graduates are continuing to study at college or university, with the support of Step Up teachers

2 student conferences took place

"The history of inventions"
12 presentations were made and 27 students took part in conference

"Foreign Cultures: Brazil"
12 presentations were made and 18 students took part in conference

2 We went on trips: to the Goncharov Estate and Linen-Museum, and to Khmelita, the Griboedov Museum-Reserve



LITERATURE CLUB

8 meetings and discussions on the subject of works of world literature



FILM CLUB

12 sessions and screenings of the best of world cinema

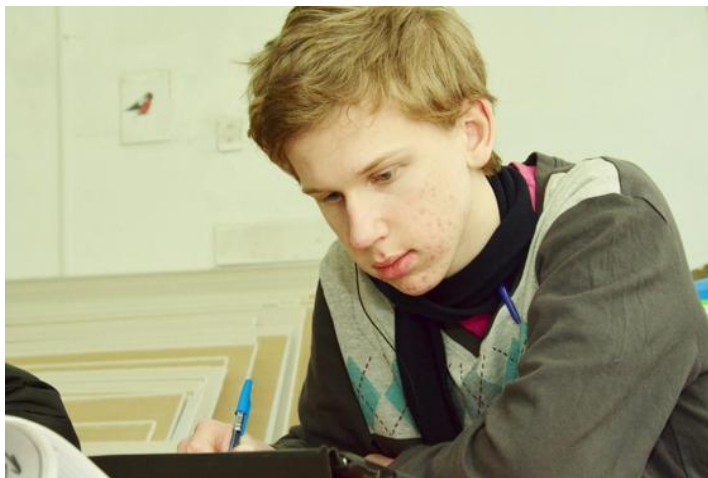
THEATRE

Step Up students prepared and performed the play "The Young Peasant-Woman"

WHO DO WE WORK FOR

Students and graduates of correctional orphanages and institutions take part in the Step Up Orphan Opportunity Centre's programmes. Last year, we expanded, and started providing support for adopted young adults or for those from broken families in complicated living situations.

We also opened our doors to young students who have spent their lives in psychoneurological institutions. They are sent to these closed institutions on the basis of a committee's decision, and they spend their whole lives in isolation from society with the elderly, who are often suffering from psychological illnesses.



Report of the Centre's work, 2015-2016 academic year

OVER **130**

students and graduates of correctional orphanages and psychoneurological institutions between the ages of 16 and 36 take part in our programmes every year

OF WHOM

40%

come from 4 psychoneurological institutions in Moscow

We understand that we can't solve all of the problems associated with orphanage in Russia, but we can raise awareness of the problems, thanks to our work and the success of many of our students who were destined to a life in institutions but have developed into independent, interesting young individuals. We strive for a future where our programmes are available to a greater number of young students, including those living in other regions.



THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE CENTRE'S WORK

8 ||| The geography of the Centre's work

SINCE 2000

BELSKY USTYE, PSKOV REGION

Our volunteer camp at the Belsky Ustye orphanage

3 weeks of summer

Over 60 students
between the ages
of 4 and 28

6 hours of activities a day
6 days a week

Volunteers from all over Russia hold educational activities for students with learning difficulties at the Belsky Ustye orphanage

SINCE 2000

MOSCOW

Primary activity of the Step Up Orphan Opportunity Centre

The promotion of education and social adaptation for students and graduates of orphanages and institutions

MOSCOW REGION

Distance Learning Project

Skype lessons in accordance with the school system, for students of orphanages and institutions in the Moscow region

TO 10 2016

The number of institutions taking part in the Distance Learning programme

SINCE 2014

FROM 6 2015

||| Report of the Centre's work, 2015-2016 academic year

PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

With changes being made to the institution system for child-orphan, and with fewer evening-school classes, more students are coming to the Step Up Centre to broaden their horizons.

Adoptive parents are increasingly coming to us for help and advice on the educational future of their adoptive children, who are graduates of correctional schools.

The Step Up Orphan Opportunity Centre's programmes are designed to help and support young people through their education and social adaptation. Many of these students have spent most of their lives in orphanages or institutions and only begin to learn independently at around 16—18 years of age. We believe that education is the key to socialisation, and this is exactly why the learning process and socialisation programmes are so closely linked at our Centre.

PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS TO PROMOTE EDUCATION and increased cultural awareness

PRIMARY EDUCATION
classes in numeracy, reading and writing for graduates of psychoneurological institutions

HELP IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS
for students studying in supplementary schools or colleges

EXAM PREPARATION FOR YEAR 9 AND 11 STUDENTS
for basic and unified state examinations

UNIVERSITY SUPPORT
for Centre graduates: consultations for specific subjects and help preparing for exams

CONFERENCES

LITERATURE CLUB

FILM CLUB

THE DISTANCE LEARNING PROJECT

The programmes and projects for social adaptation were originally created in response to social problems, at the request of child-orphan studying at the Step Up Centre.

Now, the programmes are solving one of our most pressing tasks — the integration of orphanage graduates into society, and their understanding of social norms and regulations.

Each project is aimed at solving an important problem, for example: employment; the acquisition of communicative and teamwork skills; developing responsibility in working towards an aim; general development and motivation to look for and receive employment; listening skills; accepting mistakes; and new beginnings.

Programmes and projects aimed to help SOCIAL ADAPTATION AND INTEGRATION INTO SOCIETY

THE STEP UP FOOTBALL TEAM

THE HANDSON WORKSHOP

VOLUNTEER CAMP AT THE BELSKY USTYE ORPHANAGE

MASLOMVVERH PROJECT

EVENING KINDERGARTEN GROUP

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME



EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES



The Step Up Orphan Opportunity Centre unites students who recognise the importance and the value of education in contributing to their future. However, this recognition and ambition alone mean little. It is a fact that graduates of correctional schools and institutions have the same level of knowledge as Year 5 students at a comprehensive school, and they therefore need a powerful impulse to drive their future development, and support to help them improve their level of knowledge.

Nowadays, the number of state institutions that provide support for graduates of correctional schools and institutions has dramatically reduced, while comprehensive schools refuse to take action, as it may negatively affect their results and ratings. In this way, a large number of correctional-school graduates become invisible and are never able to achieve their dreams or display their talents.

For over 16 years, the Step Up Orphan Opportunity Centre has been striving to solve problems related to the education of graduates of correctional and psychoneurological institutions. This is dependent on the aims and motivations of students who turn to the Centre for support, and we form an individually-tailored plan for the educational development of each student.

Every young student receives support in improving their level of knowledge and as a result, they successfully pass the basic and general state exams, receiving the certificate that others receive when they leave comprehensive school.

The educational process is at the heart of all of the Centre's programmes. We hold *five or six lessons six days a week*. On average, each student spends around *30 hours* at the Centre, taking part in lessons and events.

Educational support programmes at the Step Up Centre answer to the basic needs of the young adults that come to us.

Primary education — intended for students from psychoneurological institutions. Students study reading, writing, numeracy, computer literacy, how to understand others' thoughts and express their own thoughts.

Preparation for year 9 and year 11 exams — vital for graduates of the VIII group of correctional schools, which only provide educational references — this is not enough for students to progress onto comprehensive colleges or university.

University support — aimed at helping Centre graduates through their education. Our teachers hold consultations and supplementary lessons.



Special subject support — this supports young adults who are experiencing difficulties at school or college. Its aim is to improve their level of knowledge and academic performance.

Distance Learning — created in order to support students of institutions in other regions through their education, helping them to prepare for exams, to get into college or university, or helping them through difficulties in certain subjects.

RESULTS OF THE PROGRAMME: SUCCESS STORIES

One of the most anticipated and important events of the year is graduation — a celebration at the end of the academic year where students receive their certificates and presents. It is a day of pride, happiness and kind farewells.

At the end of this academic year, we celebrated not only the graduates of our Year 9 class, but also graduates of the Centre who have finished university and have become real specialists, equipped with a degree.

At every graduation celebration, students remember why they came to the Centre, the people they have met here, and those who taught and supported them.

Yulia's certificate for completing the comprehensive-school Year 9 class required strength, patience, painstakingly hard work and daily classes in the Centre over the course of three years. She was so happy to receive it!

The photo below shows the remarkable moment when we awarded the Year 9 class with their certificates, something which was once just a dream to them.

The bottom-right photo shows one of the graduates of our Centre, Nikolai. He is holding his baccalaureate degree in heating engineering as he passes some wise words onto our new students. His story of struggle and success began 12 years ago. Nikolai is now thinking about progressing onto his Masters and continuing to work in a specialism.

A tradition has developed over the course of many years where our graduates receive two degrees — one from their alma mater and one from the Centre.



Yulia, a Year 9 graduate

This academic year, a student came to us with a baccalaureate degree from the Plekhanov University.

Vikenty, a graduate of the Art Institute, was an idol for many teachers and students long before he graduated university, as he won the Sokurova short film competition. Kesha tried his hand at directing and hopes to become a director of famous films.

Petr would like to become a teacher, because after finishing Year 9 he went off to our summer volunteer camp to see what it was like to work with students. Our teachers think he did really well and will make a great teacher!

We have so many other success stories and it's lovely to know that the Step Up Centre has been at these students' sides the whole way through their education.



Year 9 graduates



A Step Up graduate who has just finished university, congratulating our students at the start of a new academic year

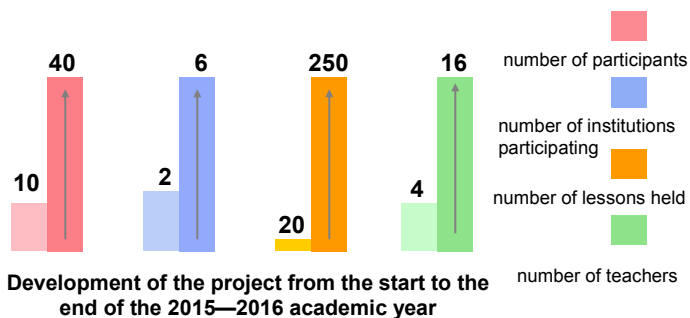
DISTANCE LEARNING PROJECT

Our Distance Learning project is a joint project between the Step Up Centre and the charity foundation “Volunteers helping child-orphans”. It was set up in January 2014 and was so successful in the 2014—2015 academic year that we have continued it since.

The aim of the project is to provide educational help and support for students of correctional and state orphanages and institutions in the Moscow region, or on its outskirts- in other words, students who aren't able to come to the Centre itself.

Our teachers give remote lessons on Skype in Mathematics, Russian, English, History and Social Studies.

As part of the project, Step Up teachers prepare Year 9 students for the basic state examinations.



THE YEAR'S RESULTS

11

students successfully passed their exams and progressed onto college, while the rest of the project's participants will move onto the next stage of their education

This academic year showed how important and vital this project is.



We held a celebration on 24th April at the Hyundai Motorstudio to mark the end of a successful year. We were joined by students from the Dubinsky school-institution and the Zaprudnichesky school-institution, both of which are in the Moscow region. During the celebration, students met their teachers in person as well as Step Up friends, volunteers and students.

Everyone participated in a photo-quest, played “Aircatastrophe in the tundra” and received presents and books.

In the photo you can see students at this celebration, taking part in an intellectual game and trying to help their team to victory.

STUDENT CONFERENCES

Student conferences are some of the most important educational activities for the Step Up Centre. The speakers, our students, are the main participants of the conferences; with the help of their team leader, they choose a theme for their group to present.

The aim of the project is for Step Up students to develop communicative skills and to overcome verbal and psychological barriers to public speaking.

These conferences were first held to help solve the problems that graduates encounter when they take oral examinations, not least the inability to verbalise in the presence of unknown teachers and in an unknown place what they have learnt over the course of the year in a certain subject. In other words, unlike written work or tests, oral answers are often a lot less successful for many students.



The Step Up Centre holds two student conferences per year on the general themes of “The History of Inventions” and “Foreign Cultures”. The latter is dedicated to a country decided by the student council at the start of the academic year.

In 2015—2016, the chosen country was Brazil. Students prepared presentations on cultural, historical, geographical and economic aspects of life in Brazil. The conference was obligatory, like classes.

What is special about the conferences is that they are held in various places, and that the Step Up community and its guests form a large audience for speakers. This year, the conferences took place at the Hyundai Motorstudio and at the “Pokrovsky Gates” cultural centre.



At the “History of Inventions” conference

12 projects from **12 groups** were presented

OVER 70 Step Up students and graduates took part



At the “Foreign Cultures: Brazil” conference

13 projects from **12 groups** were presented

23 students spoke



THE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

The employment programme is aimed at creating and developing a support system for Step Up students looking for employment, also helping them to adapt to the job market.

The programme was set up in 2014 with the following aims:

- to help Step Up students find employment;
- to support currently employed Step Up students keep their jobs while also continuing their education;
- to develop partnership programmes with businesses;
- to increase Step Up students' competitiveness in the job market.



Report of the Centre's work, 2015-2016 academic year

40 Step Up students and graduates took part in the employment programme in the 2015—2016 academic year

12 participants were from psychoneurological institutions



One of the main problems that students face when looking for work is that they have a lack of communicative skills, meaning that they cannot successfully integrate into a team or communicate with management.

Twice a month, as part of the employment programme, we hold communicative training at the Centre. This helps students develop their speaking skills and to overcome psychological barriers and stereotypes.

The photo shows one of these activities; the students are imagining a telephone interview with their manager.



In order to achieve the aims of the programme, we tailor an individual approach for each candidate. In the 2015—2016 academic year, we focussed on preparing candidates to choose an area of work and to actively start looking for work:

- CV writing;
- discussing employment plans;
- preparing for interviews;
- interview support;
- individual psychological consultations;
- administrative support;
- work experience placements.

14 students found a job as a result of the programme

8 participants of the programme have worked at least once with the HandsOn workshop

THE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME



As part of the employment programme in the 2015—2016 academic year, we also carried out important analytical and preparatory work, including:

- compiling a questionnaire for students who would like support in finding employment;
- holding interactive seminars on vocational guidance and interview preparation;
- taking a vocational-guidance trip to the production department of Globus hypermarkets;
- holding a presentation about the programme for potential employers;
- establishing contact with prospective business partners for the programme, including the restaurant network: “Ded Pikhto”, the restaurant network “Bratya Karavaevi”, “Charity Shop”, the business-hotel “Katarina City” and Xleb Nasushchnii.

OVER 15

Step Up students, including those from psychoneurological institutions

regularly helped the HandsOn workshop prepare for fairs, receiving a small payment for the work they carried out.

Every year the HandsOn workshop receives a large number of orders placed for their wooden birdhouses or the birdhouse assembly-kits, as well as other products.

Each programme participant receives a small, but well-earned, payment for the work they have done. After all, the workshop participates in so many fairs that there is always work to do for our students. It teaches them to work as a team and to fulfil a responsibility to their work and its result. These skills are often lacking in our students who are looking for employment.

There is no need to push our students to participate in the workshop: there is an atmosphere of friendship and mutual support, and the result of this is obvious. Students also have freedom in their work and creation — this attracts students and allows them to showcase new skills.

Andrei is a great example of the growth and involvement in the masterclass project — he has now become its coordinator.



LITERATURE CLUB

Literature club is one of the oldest-running Step Up — it is now 14 years old. It is open to all members of the Step Up community and what is most important about the club is that each student makes a conscious choice to take part.

The aim of the club is to broaden cultural and educational horizons in order to learn more about literature and to increase students' cultural knowledge.

8 literature club sessions were held over the course of the 2015—2016 academic year

students, teachers and volunteers taking part

70
OVER

At the club's meetings, participants discuss the works they have previously read, under the leadership of the talented and wise teacher, Mikhail Igorevich Sverdlov.

They try to understand authors' thoughts.

“What is literature? Literature is a way into the world, the real world, an unlimited sphere of the worldly and the everyday. Without literature, personal development would be impossible. We need to talk about culture, otherwise our life will rapidly deteriorate. If we manage to start these conversations — which is not easy — it is a success for everyone: for those who speak, for those who listen, for those who participate, for the leaders and the receivers. But to not manage to begin these conversations — that's reality, because not everyone has the chance take part. So we have to give people this chance — most institutes do not do so. Our students always respect and listen to the club. It is a space where you can come and people will listen to you, they will debate with you or agree with you, but they won't stand at the whiteboard asking you questions like in a test or an exam. A friendly, informal discussion over a cup of tea is not a lesson, and there aren't many of these clubs in Moscow”, — Mikhail Sverdlov, Literature Club leader.

// From an interview about the Step Up Orphan Opportunity Centre and about Literature Club, September 2012.



Mikhail Sverdlov, Literature Club leader



A Literature Club meeting

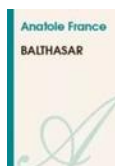
WHAT DID WE READ? Literature Club 2015—2016



Aleksander Pushkin
«Evgeny Onegin»



William Shakespeare
«Antony and Cleopatra»



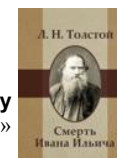
Anatole France
«Valthesar»



Vladimir Odoevsky
«The Living Corpse»



Hans Christian Andersen
«The Ugly Duckling»



Lev Tolstoy
«Three Deaths»



Nikolay Leskov
«A Robbery»



Voltaire
«Candide»

FILM CLUB

Before we watch the film, the club leader talks a little about the techniques used by the film's director, so that we can focus on them as we watch the film. Each participant can give their personal opinion on the film.

At first, we started watching historical films but we no longer limit ourselves to one specific genre.

There is only one condition: it has to be a high-quality, highly-esteemed film. What is important is that the conversations we have about the films' characters and plots allow us to deal with important themes of love, spiritual values, choice, goodness and evil.

Film Club helps to solve a few important problems that young people, including some of our students, are facing nowadays, namely the lack of cultural background and experience that is linked to reading works of world literature and watching films.



Step Up students know of practically no classical cinema, which, just like literature, is an integral part of cultural development.

Besides, many realities of life are reflected in films of the last ten years, and they require commentary and discussion by young people.

This is exactly why Film Club selects films that are worthy of discussion and spark ideas that are hiding somewhere beneath the surface.

We are so proud of our talented Film Club leader, Paulina Bikonya, who is a Step Up graduate.

She has an amazing knowledge of the world of cinema and is wonderful to speak to.

12

Film Club sessions were held in the 2015—2016 academic year

Step Up students took part

20



OUR DAY OF CLUBS

On the 27th February, at the Hyundai Motorstudio, we dedicated a day to our clubs. It was the first time we held such an event, and we invited guests and regular club participants to visit either our Film Club or our Literature Club.

Film Club is a project which has been running for over two years. Meetings are held two Saturdays a month, and it is similar to Literature Club in that participants familiarise themselves with the best works of world cinema.

On our day of clubs, Film Club focused on the film which was presented at the EcoCup Film Festival which was held in Moscow from 25th - 29th February 2016. It is about an ordinary music teacher who manages to change the lives of his students living in the biggest slums in South America.



Anastasia Masturova and Sergei Reshetin led the Film Club; they are the organisers of the EcoCup Film Festival and they provided us with the film. More importantly, they encouraged us to think about how powerful an indifferent person with good intentions can be, and how much one can unexpectedly change the lives of others.

Film Club ended with a round of applause from the participants and they met those who had been at Literature Club, which had focussed on Hans Christian Andersen's *The Ugly Duckling*.

Literature Club is one of the Centre's oldest programmes, and we couldn't ignore the anniversary of its leader; we congratulated Mikhail Igorevich Sverdlov over a cup of tea and a slice of cake before discussing the fairy tale.

The discussion was remarkable; we were so pleased to hear our students talking so seriously and authoritatively about such deep topics. In the words of one student: "This fairy tale is my biography". This is true, the fairy tale really is a multifaceted biography.



THE HANDSON WORKSHOP

The HandsOn workshop was set up in 2012, after taking part in the New Year Heart-to-Heart market. Students and volunteers prepared decorated wooden bird boxes and Christmas-tree decorations for the market.

Participation in the market was an unexpected success, not just in terms of the money we raised (over 140,000 roubles!) but also in terms of the great teamwork that our students demonstrated in preparation for the market.

19 We decided to continue making these wooden gifts, and thus created a new project called the HandsOn workshop.

The aim of the project is to develop the motivation to work and to acquire new professional skills in graduates of orphanages and institutions.

Many Step Up students who are studying at college have already received a carpentry qualification, and one of the workshop's aims is to show them the attraction of the profession.



On 13th December 2015, the HandsOn workshop took part in the Heart-to-Heart market, the fifth annual New Year market. Students led masterclasses on how to make bird boxes and murals for both children and adults.

In the 2015—2016 academic year, the workshop participated in 25 markets, with around 70 students helping with the preparations. Each of them put their heart and soul into their work: one person sanded the boxes and another painted or polished them.

Participation in the markets allowed each participant to earn a little money as they supported the project's development. As the HandsOn workshop has developed, there has been an expansion in our range of products made, purchase of new equipment, increased interest from Step Up students and greater participation in exterior events.

AROUND

300 roubles we have raised by participating in markets and town-wide events

IN **25** markets the HandsOn workshop took part in the 2015—2016 academic year

70 Step Up students helped to prepare the products and helped at the markets
OVER



THE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMME

In September 2014, the Step Up Centre set up a programme for the children of our students. We trialled the project between March and July 2014, and it was held on a regular basis throughout the 2014—2015 academic year.

As part of the programme, we hold activities for the children of Step Up students who come to their parents' lessons.

The aim of the programme is to encourage the intellectual and personal development of children and their parents, who are Step Up students.



Report of the Centre's work, 2015-2016 academic year

What does the programme do?

- Gives Step Up students who have children the opportunity to study in the evenings when nurseries are closed;
- Runs educational activities for children who do not receive enough intellectual and emotional stimulation due to the fact that their parents grew up in orphanages and thus often lack the skills necessary for developing effective relationships with their children;
- Helps parents to develop their parental skills and establish good relationships with their children;
- Holds celebrations and trips for children, and for children and their parents.

25 children of Step Up students took part in the Kindergarten programme during the 2015—2016 academic

5 children over the course of the year regularly took part in the evening group

2-3 of which came every day

3 the Kindergarten programme runs 3 days a week, from 4pm until 9pm



THE STEP UP FOOTBALL TEAM



The fifth season of the Step Up football team was marked by an increase in the number of team members and the number of matches played.

The team continues to play a key role in our work with institution graduates, and with those who are still living in institutions.

In order to be successful on the pitch, team members must show mutual respect, discipline, self-control, the ability to work together and must listen to each other. These are all vital life skills.

42 students played for the team in matches and tournaments

51 matches and friendly games were played

23 matches our team won

The 2015 football season began with a few difficulties: the team paired up with another team, "Shkid", whose players are also institution graduates (the team no longer exists). It took a few months for the players to get to know one another.

At the beginning of last year, the team entered the fourth division of the Russian Amateur Football League. It was great motivation to improve and to start playing better.

The team also took part in the Blitzliga tournament and were victorious against nine other sides.

199 goals were scored by the Step Up team, according to official statistics

goals were conceded **189**

The Step Up football team in the Blitzliga

September-November	January-March	May-July
4 th place	4 th place	3 th place

The Step Up team played friendly matches against corporate teams from MTC, Nike, BNP Paribas and Dow Chemical.

In March 2016, upon invitation from the Peri Foundation, the team played a charity match with stars of world football.



The Step Up football team is moving forward! It's almost the team's fifth season and the players are once again ready for battle: they are ready to take part in the third division of the Russian Amateur Football League as well as Blitzliga.

These plans attract new players and widen the range of players' training exercises — they now include running and athletics.



THE MASLOMVVERH PROJECT

Every week we run culinary activities, each activity lasts an average of 4 hours. Students prepare full meals, receive homework and take tests.

In the 2015—2016 academic year, together with the Kings and Cabbage culinary club, we began a new project called “MaslomVverh”.

It is an educational culinary programme where Step Up students, under the leadership of staff from the Kings and Cabbage club, learn not just to cook homemade meals but also to be responsible for their work and to identify the attractions of the profession.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Recently, orphanages in Moscow have turned into a family-type organisation. Institutions now have open kitchens where students can watch the cooking process. Before this, orphanage graduates had no idea where packaged products came from; they just received the finished product. Kitchens were production spaces, and students only went there to pick up their meals.

However, this meant that once they went on to find a place of their own, they faced problems: confusion, fear, and ready meals.

Of course, over half of those who are learning to cook will not become chefs; they are merely learning how to cook.

Through systematic training we teach them to see the reality of cooking, and to debunk or confirm myths associated with it.

The main thing is that we overcome the fear of cooking together — we overcome failures and learn together.

All of the Step Up students were split into two groups in the 2015—2016 academic year:

Professionals. These students are working towards, or have already received, specialist chef qualifications.

Newbies. These students have little or no culinary knowledge.



RESULTS OF THE MASLOMVVERH PROJECT IN THE 2015—2016 ACADEMIC YEAR

96 STUDENTS
TOOK PART



60%



40%

+1 extra
bonus lesson

29

LESSONS WERE
HELD

15

THEMES WERE
TACKLED

57

DISHES WERE
PREPARED



FROM
20.10.2015
TO
13.06.2016
every
Monday
for 4 hours

**By the end of the academic year,
students had studied a lot and had
some great results**

- There was a large number of Step Up students and volunteers who were interested in the general theme and the process of cooking.
- Students stopped being afraid of kitchen accessories, slowly mastering their names and uses. This led to a decrease in the number of traumatic situations that arose in the kitchen.
- Students became more independent: they had to prepare and clean their workspaces as well as the kitchen in general — there was a minimum number of volunteers allowed to help.
- Students were hugely interested in the process and the development of their professional skills in the culinary world.

We studied for tests

14 students passed their tests and progressed onto the next level

7 from the group of
“professionals”
7 from the group of “newbies”

9 students passed 2 of 3 tests, giving them the chance to retake them next academic year

OUR WORK IN THE PSKOV REGION

Over 10 years ago, a group of our volunteers (most of whom were from abroad) travelled to a little village in the Pskov region. They went to spend time with students of the Belsky Ustye orphanage, an institution for students with learning difficulties. There, they led activities, learnt from one another, sparked wonderful conversations, and enjoyed the summer.

From then on, the summer volunteer camp has become a tradition, and students at the orphanage have made friends from all over the world. The trips continued and after a short break, resumed — with particular interest from young people from all over Russia and even from abroad. In addition to the summer volunteer camp, they celebrated Christmas and New Year in Belsky Ustye. Thus began the winter camps.

Now, we can talk about our work in the Pskov region on a larger scale. In 2016, in addition to our winter and summer camps, we organised a long-awaited event: a family camp for mums (Step Up graduates and students) and their children who are living in Moscow.

The problem with developing new projects in the Pskov region was the lack of a base for our volunteers — somewhere they could live, prepare for classes and relax. However, our dream is coming true and a large two-storey house in Novopetrovskoye will be waiting for us when our summer camp comes around; volunteers will spend the month there.

We are really excited to have the chance to tell you about our magical dreams and projects coming to life, and we can't wait to continue them!



SUMMER VOLUNTEER CAMP AT THE BELSKY USTYE ORPHANAGE

We have been running our summer camp at the Belsky Ustye orphanage for students with learning difficulties since 2000.

In order for students of closed institutions to overcome isolation, they need a stimulus for development and something to make the summer holidays in the orphanage interesting. So, a group of volunteers from towns in Russia and further afield travel to a little village in the Pskov region to do exactly this.

Over the years, the workers at the orphanage have changed greatly in terms of their attitudes towards their work; they have been pushed to develop their graduate support system.

Our summer camp was held from 2nd to 24th July 2016. Volunteers led activities for students 6 hours a day, 6 days a week

The camp gives each student, regardless of their difficulties, the chance to take part in educational activities and projects and, on a more fundamental level, to speak to new people.



SUMMER CAMP IN 2016

38 volunteers from various Russian cities led camp activities

FOR

72 students of the Belsky Ustye orphanage for students with learning difficulties, aged between 4 and 28

AS RESULT

2675 hours at the camp volunteers spent, working with the students

THE CAMP PROGRAMME



Competitions and relay races



Walks



Diskos



Educational activities and walks



Festivals and carnivals



SUMMER VOLUNTEER CAMP AT THE BELSKY USTYE ORPHANAGE



SUCCESSES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE 2016 SUMMER CAMP

The 2016 summer camp was bigger and better than ever before, in terms of the number of volunteers and in terms of the programme.

Here are our main achievements of the camp:

- **Completion of the entire planned programme**

Volunteers did not only complete the programme they had finalised with the orphanage staff, but they did even more: masterclasses, themed days and activities, festivals, and carnivals.

- **Improving communication and socialisation skills**

Conversing with volunteers allows students to acquire new communicative skills and greater knowledge of the outside world.

- **Establishing relationships with orphanage staff**

The orphanage staff actively participate in the camp programme and leave positive reviews about the project. Many of them have said that they are able to use the volunteers' programme in their own work.

- **Greater number of locals participating in the camp programme**

Citizens of the Belsky Ustye village took part in some of the themed days and discos at the orphanage.



ABOUT THE PROBLEM

Despite the general discussions that take place on the subject of the problems associated with orphanage in Russia, institutions for students with developmental needs continue to be forgotten. Students are sent to closed institutions based on decisions made by the medical-psychological commission, depending on whether specialists think that the student is unable to live independently.

For these students, this often means that from that moment, their whole life will be spent in isolation in a closed institution.

In Russia there are over 100 orphanages and institutions for students with physical or learning difficulties. Around 23,000 students live in them

Students from psychoneurological institutions rarely have the chance to take part in educational or socialisation programmes that match their ability level.

At a certain age, they have to move into adult institutions, where they live with elderly individuals who suffer from mental illness.

The camp and our volunteers' work allows discussions to be triggered society about the problem, by raising awareness.

More information about the camp- reports and video materials, can be found on the camp page of the Step Up website:

<http://vverh.su/activity/projects/letnij-lager/>

WINTER VOLUNTEER CAMP AT THE BELSKY USTYE ORPHANAGE



VOLUNTEERS' REVIEW OF THE WINTER CAMP



I was really lucky to have the chance to work with a group of young kids at the camp. I was glad to finally have the chance to work with them. We held creative and active activities, such as yoga. When it came to students who are unable to move, we worked tactfully: gave them massages, tickled them, shook their sleeping bags, read fairy tales, and listened to the sounds of nature. This was just as peaceful for them, as it is a kind of meditation — but I didn't feel tired!

Inna Kulagina, personnel manager.

In my opinion, the most important thing to take away from the camp is that there is nothing to be afraid of. You can do body-orientated work with older students (i.e. yoga), and with students who cannot move their body, you can do these activities on a one-on-one basis; they will still be effective. If you have the choice between engaging the whole group and maximising its creativity, or directing your lesson towards and dealing with just one child, sometimes you can — and should — choose the latter.

Elena Zakirova, teacher.

WHY DO WE DO IT?

The New Year period is traditionally a time of silence at the orphanage, as most of the staff are on holiday.

We organised a winter camp to fill the emptiness of the festive period and to make the New Year holidays more exciting and unpredictable for the students.

From 31st December 2015 to 8th January 2016, we held our winter volunteer camp.

18 volunteers took part, along with over 60 students and 10 members of orphanage staff.

Each volunteer was designated a group for the 2016 winter camp.

The camp was organised by a team of volunteers, most of whom first visited the orphanage-institution when they took part in last year's summer camp. The volunteers faced a difficult task: preparing a programme which wouldn't overload students.

The winter camp programme included: invasion of the Fathers Frost; the "Big Bear" interactive show; a Winter Olympics acting masterclass; the "Christmas Stories" show; and much more.

As well as running the winter camp, volunteers celebrated the New Year together with students of the orphanage.



FAMILY CAMP FOR MOTHERS AND CHILDREN



With each day at the camp, mums and their children got to know each other better, but the girls also began to see themselves differently; they discovered new abilities and talents.

In the evenings, everyone would gather by the fireplace and play board games or watch films, nostalgically recalling their studies at the Step Up centre: their first lessons, teachers, failures and successes.

The family camp was a great idea and we plan to repeat such a successful experience once again next year.

In 2016, our dream came true. In our new Novopetrovskoe house, we held our first family camp for mothers (Step Up students and graduates) and their children.

After our volunteers, who had just spent three weeks leading activities at the Belsky Ustye orphanage, had left, the house was once again full — this time, of mums and children.

Young mothers, naturally, do not have the opportunity to go beyond Moscow in the summer; their free time is devoted to themselves and their children.

The family camp lasted for 10 days and was held for 12 mums and their children, as well as teachers and volunteers

The programme was designed for children and their mothers. The morning activities were divided: until lunchtime, they had separate classes. Mothers did yoga while their children discovered a real Ray Bradbury summer.

They collected flowers, beetles and butterflies; swam in the rivers; went on their first real hike; jumped in puddles; played street games; went on excursions; and much more.

The programme included a theatre day and a cooking day, where the children prepared multi-coloured dumplings in family teams; while their mothers did yoga, the children baked cookies to treat their mums afterwards.



THE CENTRE'S VOLUNTEERS

A large and very important part of the Step Up Centre's work is carried out by volunteers. It is thanks to their help that the Centre can begin new projects, and allow volunteers' pre-existing projects to develop. Volunteers lead educational activities, help to organise events, and make our annual winter and summer camps at the Belsky Ustye orphanage possible.

It is impossible to list every single person who is always there to work with us and help the Centre, but we can express our great thanks to all of you — your work helps the Centre develop and achieve success.

VOLUNTEERS' REVIEWS OF THE SUMMER CAMP



I finished at the Step Up Centre and decided to go to the camp as a volunteer for the first time. The three weeks I spent there were extremely interesting. Something changed in me there: I became an adult. I really enjoyed doing 3D puzzles and paper maché with the students; the theatre of shadows was amazing. I really liked my group and the OMI girls. I would like to visit the camp again. Best of luck to you all!

Petr Polenov, a Step Up student

The camp was absolutely unbelievable, it exceeded all of my expectations. That's not just in terms of the external factors, such as organisation, the approach to work and so on, but it also made a colossal impression on me, on my person...

Denis Simigin, musician



You can never know how children will react to you. If you go to the winter camp, you might be happily embraced by Lesha, who in the summer, greeted us very reservedly...

Alexandra Natarova, engineer



Now that I'm back, I can say that I had a great time and really enjoyed the camp. It sounds a little selfish though- after all, we're there for the children! J But it really was lovely to come, tired and all wrapped up, and find some cherry pie in the kitchen wrapped in cling film. I would definitely like to do it all again. The first time is better for you than for the children, but if you do it again, you are already acquainted with the process and can better prepare for the activities. At least, I hope so.

Ekaterina Selivanova, journalist

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Step Up Orphan Opportunity Centre has a very active life, full to the brim with events. For many years, the Step Up community has been growing in terms of friends, volunteers, partners, graduates, teachers, and those who support us online, i.e. on social networks. Our events are open to anyone who wishes to join us; we are always happy to receive guests. Our calendar of events reflects the life and traditions of our organisation.



6th September 2015
Good Moscow Festival



13th September 2015
Nike Run — We Run Moscow



22nd September 2015
Moscow Marathon



14th September 2015
The start of the 2015—2016 academic year



27th September 2015
WorkOut masterclass



26th October 2015
Launch of the MaslomVverh project



1st November 2015
Art activities at the Matita studio



11th November 2015
5th anniversary of the Step Up Centre



12th November 2015
Step Up staff held a seminar at CAF



2nd December 2015
The Merck company visits the Step Up Centre



2nd December 2015
The student conference on "The history of inventions"



13th December 2015
We went to the Heart-to-Heart market

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



19th December 2015
A New Year tree for children of
Step Up graduates



**31st December 2015—
8th January 2016**
Winter camp at Belsky Ustye



27th January 2016
“Debates”, an intellectual game



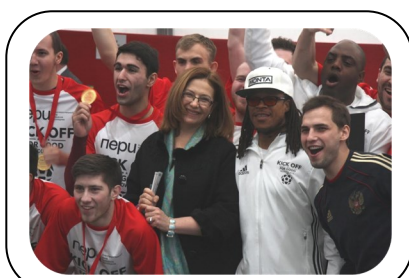
27th February 2016
A day of clubs at the Hyundai
Motorstudio



7th March 2016
A trip to Kaluga



10th March 2016
Pancake Day at the Step
Up Centre



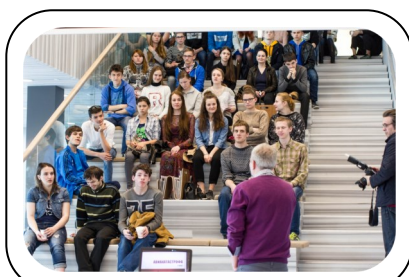
24th March 2016
Football match with stars of
world football



13th April 2016
A trip to the Globus
production department



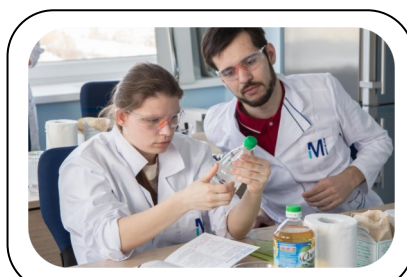
23rd April 2016
Step Up students took part in a
cooking competition



24th April 2016
Meeting the participants of the
Distance Learning project



27th April 2016
The student conference on
“Foreign Cultures: Brazil”



28th April 2016
Visiting the Merck laboratory

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



1st—5th May 2016

A group of Step Up students took part in a seminar in Murmansk



5th May 2016

Easter at the Step Up Centre



13th May 2016

"A young peasant-woman": the show



21st May 2016

Screening of "Spirit in Motion" and a meeting with the director



30th May 2016

Vladimir Spivakov Foundation Sponsors' Charity Concert



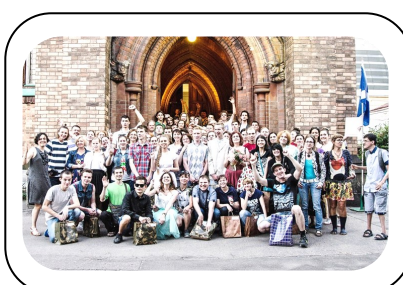
1st June 2016

Student walk around Moscow on Children's Day



13th June 2016

Activities to celebrate the end of a MaslomVverh season



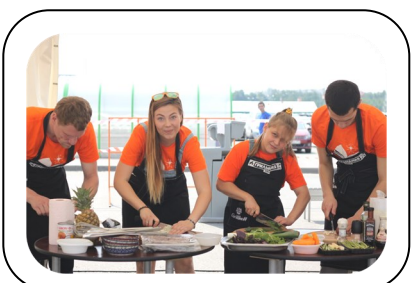
22nd June 2016

Graduation at the Step Up Centre



25th June 2016

Trip to the Khmelita Museum-Reserve



3rd July 2016

We took part in the Grillmania competition



4th—23rd July 2016

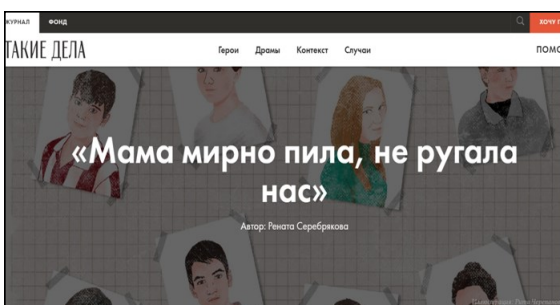
Summer volunteer camp at Belsky Ustye



2015—2016 academic year

Yoga classes

THE STEP UP CENTRE IN THE MEDIA



Takie Dela, 26th May 2016

“Takie Dela” newspaper published a long article on the Step Up Centre’s Distance Learning Project, which was set up in 2014 in partnership with the charity foundation “Volunteers helping child-orphans”.

The articles included short stories and reviews from students of the orphanages and institutions that take part in the Distance Learning project. They spoke about how education is changing their lives for the better.

Follow this link for the full text: <https://a.ru/2016/05/mama-mirno-pila-ne-rugala-nas/>

CHARITY HEROES

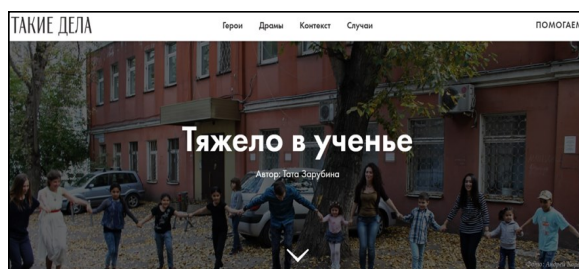


Veter Magazine, February 2016

In the February edition of Veter Magazine, you can find an interview with Olga Vladimirovna Tikhomirova, the director of the Step Up Centre. She speaks about how she came up with the idea to set up the Centre; why and how we work; who we help; the problems that our students face; and which projects have been set up to solve these problems, all the while supporting students and graduates of orphanages and institutions.

Turn to page 112 to read about the Step Up Orphan Opportunity Centre.

Full interview: <http://magazine.veterproject.ru/2016/february/>



Takie Dela, 8th October 2015

On Teachers’ Day, “Takie Dela” newspaper spoke to our teachers who work with children and young adults who, for various reasons, cannot study in ordinary schools. The interview speaks about the Centre for the Adaptation and Education of Children of Refugees; the methods they use; the classes that are held at the St George the Victorious Centre for Continuing Education; resource classes at “The Ark” school; and what it really means to start learning at the age of 25 or 30.

Follow this link for the full text: <http://takiedela.ru/2015/10/teachers/>

Дюжина лучших фондов				
Фонд	Год основания	Директор/президент	Основные направления	Бюджет 2014 г. (млн руб.)
Русфонд	2009*	Лев Албиндер	помощь тяжелобольным детям, сиротам и инвалидам	1709
Подари жизнь	2006	Екатерина Чистикова	помощь тяжелобольным детям	1066
Наше будущее	2007	Наталья Зверева	социальное предпринимательство	976,2
САФ России	1993	Мария Черток	развитие филантропии	685,7
Фонд Тимченко	2010	Мария Морозова	культура, спорт, семья и дети, старшее поколение	444,3
Вольное дело	1998	Тамара Рунцидзе	образование, культура, территориальное развитие	441,7
БФ В. Потанина	2001	Оксана Орачева	образование и культура	336,5
Вера	2006	Ната Федернерссер	помощь хосписам	224,8
ЦЛП	1989	Анна Битова	помощь людям с нарушениями развития	105,1
Старость в радость	2011	Елизавета Олескина	помощь престарелым	14,2
Вверх	1998	Ольга Тихомирова	образование для выпускников детдомов	13,4
Живой	2010	Виктория Агаджанова	помощь взрослым	2,4

* 1996 году работал как благотворительная программа ИД «Коммерсантъ»

Источник: отчетность фондов, Forbes

Forbes, 30th May 2016

Forbes magazine published a list of a dozen of the best charity foundations, according to the charity community—the Step Up Centre made the list! The article reveals many interesting facts: Forbes spoke to the founders and directors of large foundations and NGOs about how Russian support of charity programmes are changing, the trends that are observed today, and which new projects marked a milestone in the development of charity.

Follow this link for the full text: <http://www.forbes.ru/forbes-woman/321301-dobrye-ruki-blagotvoritelnost-v-rossii-stanovitsya-demokratchnee-i-professional>

OUR PARTNERSHIPS: JOINT PROJECTS AND EVENTS



“Volunteers helping child-orphans” Charity Foundation

Since 2013, the Step Up Centre has been partnering with Volunteers helping child-orphans and running a Distance Learning project for six orphanages in the Moscow region. As part of the project, joint events are held — Step Up students and students from other participating institutions celebrate the end of the academic year.



Belsky Ustye orphanage-institution

For almost 10 years, the Step Up Centre has been running volunteer summer and winter camps for students of the Belsky Ustye orphanage. It is an institution for children with learning difficulties, for whom our camp volunteers lead exciting, educational activities.



Kings and Cabbage culinary club

Since 2015, the Step Up Centre has been running MaslomVverh in partnership with the culinary club. Every Monday, two groups of students take part in culinary activities, guided by leaders and volunteers. They learn to prepare home-made meals and overcome their fear of cooking.



Centre for Curative Pedagogy

Each year, specialists from the Centre for Curative Pedagogy come to our summer camp and run an introductory lecture course for our volunteers. They speak about their experiences communicating with students with severe disabilities, and about the possible difficulties with and rules of their behaviour.



Charity event “Everyone Together”

Since 2013, the Step Up Centre has been attending the charity event “Everyone Together”; it is a unifying charity organisation created by local citizens.



Bikram Yoga studio MSK

Since 2015, Step Up students and teachers have been attending yoga classes at the Bikram Yoga studio. Lessons are held every Sunday and are free of charge. We are extremely grateful to the studio’s management and teachers for giving up their free time, spending it with us.



The New Year Heart-to-Heart market

Since 2010, the Step Up Centre has been participating in the annual Heart-to-Heart market. It is thanks to our participation in the market that the HandsOn workshop was born. We meet extremely interesting people at the markets, as well as recruiting new volunteers and partners. Each year, as we prepare for the market, new ideas are born.



Blitzliga

The Step Up football team takes part in the Blitzliga football tournament every year, playing against strong sides, including teams from big companies and expat communities.

OUR WORK WITH PROFESSIONAL NGOS: CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

The Step Up Orphan Opportunity Centre regularly participates in important conferences, seminars and round-table meetings that approach the problem of the education and socialisation of orphanage graduates. Our staff lead discussions and speak about their own quality research, thus displaying the effectiveness of the Centre's work.

In the 2015—2016 academic year, we participated in a number of interesting conferences with our partners, and we were invited to CAF to speak about our experience.



“Business discussion of charitable work towards the development of society. Conference and project fair, 11th April 2016

One of the most important events in the charity community is the conference and project fair held by DobroMail.ru.

The Step Up Centre is one of the reliable foundations attracting private donations on the DobroMail platform, which was launched in August 2013.

On 11th April 2016, the Step Up Centre's external communications manager, Yulia Naumova, attended the conference along with MegaFon and the Mail.ru Group. She introduced our new project, MaslomVverh.



Seminar: The JP Morgan Chase “New Opportunities” programme

Step Up staff spoke at the Pro Bono seminars which were organised by CAF, and took part in the “Points of Growth” programme, aimed at aiding the organisational development of NGOs.

On 12th November, Step Up staff led a 4-hour seminar on the following theme: “How to create a support system: the role of administrators, teachers and employers in the lives of orphanage graduates”.



**“Improving post-institutional support and increasing the role of NGOs”.
Inter-regional conference
at the Public Chamber**

Staff from the Murmansk Centre for Family Development and Children's Arrangements invited Step Up staff to participate in their inter-regional conference, “Improving post-institutional support and increasing the role of NGOs”.

5 members of staff presented a report at the conference, covering almost all aspects of our work. One of our graduates also spoke, giving a report on the organisation of our volunteer camp at Belsky Ustye.

OUR WORK WITH PROFESSIONAL NGOs: CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS



МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ
НАУЧНО-ПРАКТИЧЕСКАЯ КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ
"ИНКЛЮЗИВНОЕ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ" 2015

**"Inclusive professional education".
International scientific and
practical conference,
RGSU, 28th November 2015**

Our external communications manager gave a report about the Centre's employment programme and about the HandsOn workshop during the third part of the conference, "The work of NGOs supporting the education and promotion of employment for students with disabilities".



Ekaterina Kurdyukova, one of our English teachers and a member of our management team, wrote a book on the results of the Step Up Centre's participation in the CAF programme "Points of Growth".

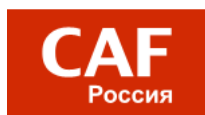
The book contains interviews with Step Up teachers, administrators and students. It contains interesting material about how the Centre was set up and why our work attracts students and teachers. The language is extremely lively and the book will be interesting to specialists who work in the charity or social sphere.

It is also interesting for those who look for materials on modern approaches to the education and social adaptation of graduates of orphanages and institutions.

PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

Partners and sponsors

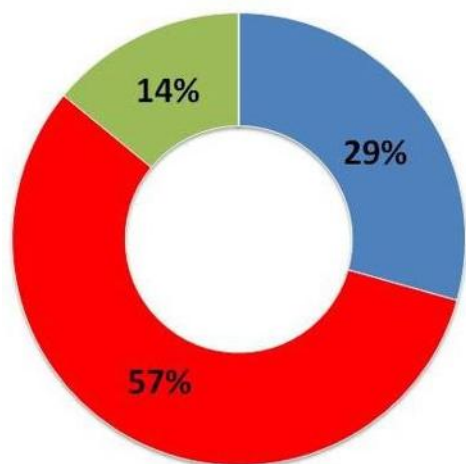
37



Report of the Centre's work, 2015-2016 academic year

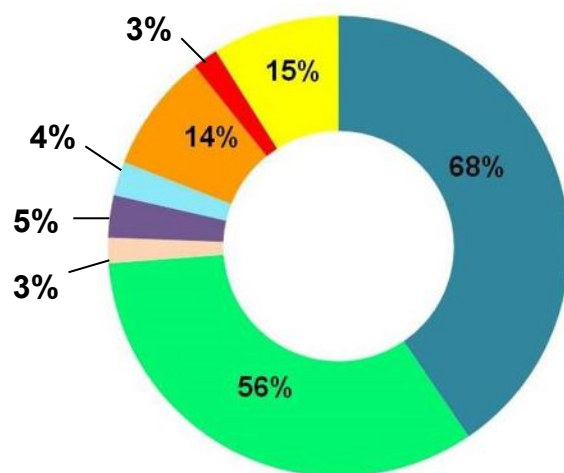
FINANCIAL RESULTS

38 ||| Financial results



TYPES OF DONATIONS (ROUBLES)

SOURCE	AMOUNT (ROUBLES)
Foundations	5 389 400
Corporate donations	10 390 800
Private donations	2 577 600
TOTAL	18 357 800



EXPENDITURE (ROUBLES)

Programmes	9 346 700
Cost of activities	7 729 300
Lesson provision	459 900
Personal development programmes	624 100
"Camp" projects	533 400
Administrative expenditure	1 989 600
Social deductions	2 046 700
Other expenditure	369 800
TOTAL	13 752 900

||| Report of the Centre's work, 2015-2016 academic year



www.facebook.com/CentreStepUP



www.instagram.com/step_up_centre



vk.com/centrevverh



The Step Up Orphan Opportunity Centre

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The Step Up Orphan Opportunity Centre is an independent
non-commercial organisation

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Current account 40703810438040005125
Correspondent account 30101810400000000225
OAO Sberbank Russia, Moscow
BIC 044525225

Director
O.V. Tikhomirova