

Young Health Programme in Russia

Orphanhood is currently one of the most topical issues in Russian society. Various expert groups believe that Russian orphans are one of the most unprotected groups facing a wide range of social, psychological and health issues. Adolescents, as compared to younger children, are even more vulnerable as they have fewer chances for adoption and socialization. They are usually schooled in the orphanage with few support programmes and leisure and healthy vacation opportunities available.

There are various factors that have a negative impact on orphans' health and reduce their chances of a healthy future. Federal and regional Russian experts mention an unhealthy way of life and particularly smoking as the most prevalent issue among orphan home residents.

Young Health Programme Russia is a partnership with the Victoria Children Charity Foundation to address the risk and protective factors of marginalised adolescents to reduce their chances of developing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in later life. The Programme is focused on sport as it is one of the most effective ways to prevent and fight unhealthy habits.



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What do we want to achieve through the Programme?

The Programme aims to get adolescents involved in sport both inside and outside the orphanage so that they have an opportunity to socialise and mix with other adolescents whilst participating in healthy activities.

“Sport is not only socialization and expansion of social boundaries but also a positive impact on health. The first requirement of anyone involved in sports is to quit smoking. This is a very strong stimulus that really works. Some children haven’t started smoking because they go in for sports.” Larisa Grishanova, Nizhny Novgorod.

Another area of the Programme is an information campaign promoting a healthy way of life through engagement with healthcare professionals, sports people and young scientists.

In addition to the health benefits of participating in the Programme, adolescents will also develop self discipline, collaboration and communication skills, stress resistance and the positive impact of being able to overcome difficulties and achieve results, all of which leads to better socialization and self-actualization.

What activities are taking place locally?

The Programme started in July 2014 and was rolled out in three pilot orphan houses in the Novosibirsk region in Russia. It is targeting adolescents aged 11 to 18, aiming to reach around 130 adolescents directly and up to 1,500 adolescents indirectly through communication with peer group and supporting activities. A further roll-out of the Programme is expected with support from the regional government and other local partners. AstraZeneca employees are fully engaged with the Programme with football games organised between employees and the orphans, and donations of footballs and other sports materials.

Local partner

AstraZeneca Russia is implementing the Young Health Programme in partnership with Victoria Children Charity Foundation. It is a private non-commercial foundation focused on improving the lives of children and adolescents in hardship: orphan children and adolescents and those without parental support. The mission of the Foundation is to provide such children and adolescents with equal opportunities enabling them to succeed in life and be confident in their future. The priority area of the Foundation’s work is prevention of social orphanhood.

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