



## « CITY WITHOUT DRUGS »

Ekaterinburg, Russia

*Period of implementation: 1999 (launch) | Study case written in 2011*

Ekaterinburg's 'City without Drugs' is a program operated by an NGO that aims to eliminate the drug dealing business in Ekaterinburg. It consists of several sub-programs: registration and reaction to local residents' information and denunciations received on pager 002 'City without Drugs'; collaboration with municipal police forces and participation in narcotraffic combat operations; a rehabilitation center for drug addicts; a rehabilitation center for problem teenagers; collaboration with media to alert the public of drug addiction problems; a Parents' Council working with the organization; a 'Sober City' fund; and provision of assistance in creation of similar programs elsewhere. The population of Ekaterinburg participates by sending information and denunciations concerning illegal drug dealing to the fund's pager number, which is shared with the municipal police authorities of the region. The program is not officially institutionalized and is financed through undisclosed private donations. Since 1999, over 6500 persons (men, women, and teenagers) have passed through the rehabilitation centres. Soon after the beginning of the program, the total number of overdoses dropped 12-fold: according to the medical emergency services statistics.



The **Inclusive Cities Observatory** was launched in 2008 by the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights with the aim of creating a space for analysis and reflection on local social inclusion policies. The initiative was developed with the scientific support of Professor Yves Cabannes (University College of London) and the Centre for Social Studies (CES) from the University of Coimbra. At present, the Observatory contains more than sixty study cases mostly developed between 2008 and 2010. Even though many of these cases refer to policies that have already come to an end, they still have much to offer: from capitalizing on the learning acquired by other local authorities to discovering suggestive and alternative means to address social inclusion challenges from a local perspective.

## Context

### *City context*

Ekaterinburg, formerly Sverdlovsk, is a major [city](#) in the central part of [Russia](#) and the administrative center of [Sverdlovsk Oblast](#). The city is situated on the border of Europe and Asia, 1,667 km east of Moscow, on the eastern side of the [Ural mountains](#) and on the [Iset](#) river. It is the main [industrial](#) and [cultural](#) center of the [Urals Federal District](#) with a population of 1,401,000, making it Russia's fifth largest city (Federal Statistics Service). The region's industry focuses on [machinery](#), [metal processing](#), and [ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy](#).

### *Decentralization context*

In Russia, the system of local self-government was launched in 1991 by the law 'On Local Self-government in the RSFSR'. Later on, the Constitution of the Russian Federation of 1993 guaranteed local self-government by providing that local self-government bodies shall be separated from the system of state power (Article 12). In 1995, the federal law 'On General Principles of Organization of Local Self-Government' was enacted. It proclaimed democratic fundamentals of local self-government, though they were not fully implemented. Therefore, in 2003 a new law was enacted, 'On General Principles of Organization of Local Self-Government' (Federal Law No. 131), which enlarged the functions of municipal entities in accordance with the requirements of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and transferred some functions from member states to federal state bodies.

Russia, as a federative state, is composed of member states (called 'subjects') such as republics, lands (*krai*), regions (*oblast*), federal cities, autonomous regions, and autonomous circuits (*okrug*). All member states of the Russian Federation have equal status. Local self-government in the Russian Federation is exercised in urban settlements and rural settlements formed as municipalities (*poselenie*), municipal districts (*municipal'nyj rayon*), district cities (*gorodskoi okrug*), and the territories of federal cities (Moscow and St. Petersburg).

Article 12 of the Russian Federal Constitution declares that local self-government is not part of the state; this has been a central reference point in all debates on local government in the Russian Federation. Nowadays in Russia, local self-government is legally autonomous and institutionally separate from the structures of state power, and local government is seen as an institution through which the local community decides on local issues.

**Institutional level of policy:** Municipal

### *Social context*

Due to its geographical situation, Ekaterinburg stands at a crossroads of narcotraffic routes from Asia to Europe. Therefore, it faces serious problems with narcotics trading and drug addiction, especially teenage drug addiction. Statistics on the number of drug addicts are not available, though unofficial sources claim that there were years when it reached 200,000. According to police statistics, up to 90% of street robberies, theft crimes, and house and vehicle robberies are committed by drug addicts.

## Policy development

The policy conducted by the City without Drugs NGO in collaboration with municipal police forces and civil society consists of the following sub-programs or action lines, which altogether form the whole drug addiction combat and prevention program:

- Registration and reaction to local residents' information and denunciations received on pager 002 (also available via SMS) 'City without Drugs';
- Collaboration with police forces and participation in narcotraffic combat operations;
- Rehabilitation centre for drug addicts;
- Rehabilitation centre for problem teenagers;
- Working with media in order to alert for drug addiction problems;
- Parents' Council working with the organization;
- A 'Sober City' fund; and
- Providing assistance for the creation of similar programs elsewhere.

### *Background*

The 'City without Drugs' NGO was created in 1998. At the time, its main activities were concentrated on propagating a healthy lifestyle, editing bulletins about the negative effects of drugs, organizing sports events. In 1999, the spread of drug dealing reached its peak. There were drug selling points almost everywhere: at schools, universities, the police academy, in the streets, even in the city center. The drug dealers even left price lists at residents' doors. Every teenager had access to drugs. Cases of drug addiction were common even among policemen (inspector Elena Smirnova died of a drug overdose in her office, as did prosecutor Andrei Bryzgalov and two officers of the Municipal Drug-dealing Combat Department).

In total, there were 302 cases of drug overdoses during the year. Several trial cases took place where drug dealers were released or received probation. Two notable manifestations took place at Gipsy village (Tsyganskiy poselok) – the well known drug-dealing centre of the city – so the NGO decided to revise its objectives and activities, seeing that the problem could not be solved by simple healthy lifestyle propaganda. Since the 'peaceful' methods brought no results, the idea was to adopt a more 'aggressive' strategy to defeat drug dealers.

### *Policy goals*

The first objective of the policy is to enhance collaboration among the different actors involved in combating and preventing narcotrafficking, such as civil society, municipal police forces, medical services and the municipality. The more specific objectives of the policy are:

- Coordinate institutions' and citizens' actions in order to collect and analyze information about narcotraffic in Ekaterinburg;
- Coordinate and collaborate with medical organizations, municipal police forces, and other institutions in order to achieve a realistic picture of the spread of drug addiction and HIV infection;
- Collaborate with the media in order to attract attention to the problem of the spread of HIV and drug addiction in Ekaterinburg and the Sverdlovsk region;
- Organize non-medical assistance for people suffering from drug addiction;

- Organize necessary psychological and juridical assistance for people suffering from drug addiction and their families;
- Organize events on prevention for children and teenagers; and
- Participate in joint activities with municipal police forces, providing assistance to solve drug crimes and monitoring to prevent corruption.

### *Chronological development*

On 22 September 1999, the NGO registered the pager number 002 'Without Drugs', where people can leave messages about drug-dealing points. These pager messages are transferred in parallel to the Federal Security Service. Since 14 October 1999, this pager line is also accessible by the State Direction on Internal Affairs (municipal police), State Drug Control, and Ural State Customs. The NGO tries to follow all its cases and attract public attention to them.

In December 1999, the first joint operation with municipal police forces took place when a rehabilitation centre was opened. A second rehabilitation centre was opened in March 2000.

In 2001, an NGO-managed program to rehabilitate problem teenagers began. The Parents' Council was created in order to coordinate the actions of co-dependent family members of drug addicts. An information centre was created in order to collect and process statistics on the issue, and the data is frequently used by local government in planning and reporting.

In 2002, the NGO began issuing a quarterly bulletin reporting its work results to the local community. The same year, one of the most powerful drug dealers was arrested. NGO volunteers participated in the case, from collecting information to the court sessions.

In 2003, the NGO's activities continued quite successfully and, in December 2003, the president of the NGO, Evgeniy Roizman, was elected a Member of Parliament in one of the districts of Ekaterinburg. Since then, activities have continued. Recently, the NGO launched a call for donations in order to buy land for the construction of a women's rehabilitation centre. As well, a few important anti-corruption operations are going on.

Since 2006, the program entered into a more stable phase. On one hand, this is due to the lack of funding for further enlargement and facilities building: on the other hand, it is thanks to the confidence level established among the city population and solid contacts with municipal police officers. The program's activities have run as 'smoothly' as they could in the context, conducting joint police operations and denouncing corrupt officials publically

### *Stakeholders, beneficiaries and participatory methodologies*

#### **Agents involved**

'City without Drugs' NGO, local inhabitants, municipal police officers, and municipal paramedics.

#### **Beneficiaries**

Residents of Ekaterinburg, including drug addicts and their families. Municipal police forces benefit by receiving useful information. Judicial and police systems also benefit by gaining more transparency.

#### **Participation processes implemented**

The project represents a sort of public justice. The population of Ekaterinburg participates by sending the information and denunciations concerning illegal drug dealing to the fund's pager

number, which is shared with the police authorities of the region. This permits the NGO to monitor further reactions and inform the population about the results through the media. The NGO's representatives continuously inform the population about their current activities and participate in public discussions online in personal blogs.<sup>1</sup>

### *Institutionalization and financing*

At public institution levels, the program works in an informal way, even after many years of experimentation it has been repeatedly the target of public collaboration. It also has unofficial municipal police and medical emergency services collaboration, which enable the realization of joint operations and permit access to statistical data.

#### **Financing**

The program is financed through undisclosed private donations to the City without Drugs NGO. It was not possible to find any estimates of the overall costs of the program's implementation.

## **Outcomes and reflections**

### *Key results and achievements*

The main result of this program implementation is the unprecedented level of public confidence. Every large city in Russian Federation has its municipal program on drug addiction prevention and combat, but the Ekaterinburg case is unique because of its participative and 'informal' spirit. Numerically, the results of its activities are as follows:

- Since 1999, over 6500 persons (men, women, and teenagers) have passed through the rehabilitation centres provided within the program.
- Over 2148 successful joint operations were held with different municipal police forces, more than 3353 drug dealers were arrested, and most of them consequently went to trial.
- Similar organizations sharing the same name, based on recommendations of Ekaterinburg's 'City without Drugs', have been created in several other cities and towns, particularly in Angarsk<sup>2</sup> and Nizhniy Tagil.<sup>3</sup>
- Soon after the beginning of the program, the total number of overdoses dropped over 12-fold: according to medical emergency services statistics<sup>4</sup>, there were 617 cases of overdoses in July 1999; 337 cases in January 2000; 154 cases in August 2001; and 49 in November 2001.
- During 2009, the 'City without Drugs' had 404 joint operations to arrest drug dealers involving with Federal Security Service, Organized Crime Combat Department, Sverdlovsk Regional National Customs Direction, municipal police stations, and the National Drug control committee. According to medical emergency services statistical data, the number of overdose deaths dropped down 1.5 times (86 cases in 2009 compared to 126 in 2008).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Evgeniy Roizman: <http://roizman.livejournal.com/>; Andrey Kabanov: <http://akabanov.livejournal.com/>; Evgeniy Malyonkin: <http://malenkin.livejournal.com/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.afbn.ru/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://egor-bychkov.livejournal.com/>

<sup>4</sup> Medical emergency service of Ekaterinburg: <http://www.03-ektb.ru/toksikologiya/>, <http://www.03-ektb.ru/novosti-na-03-ektb-ru/pochemu-nuzhno-prodavay-obezbolivayuschie-po-retseptam>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nobf.ru/news/1422/archive/2010/1/>

## *Main obstacles*

The non-existence of any kind of official recognition by the municipality is a great problem for the policy. Also, the policy field – the narcotrafficking environment – raises problems of corruption, municipal police involvement, and all kinds of drug-dealing mafia problems. Programs in other cities are surrounded by rumours and mistrust. There have been several trials against the volunteers, which had great public resonance. Recently, the president of the organization in Nizhniy Tagil was charged with kidnapping.<sup>6</sup>

## *Replicability*

Although Ekaterinburg's 'City without Drugs' keeps encouraging the creation of similar programs in all the Russian settlements, providing assistance, recommendations, and training materials for volunteers on its web page<sup>7</sup>, and has sent those recommendations directly to the Volgograd, Kaliningrad, Chelyabinsk, Perm, Nizhniy Tagil, Kirovograd, and Neviansk municipal administrations, the replicability of the policy remains quite problematic. This is mainly due to the 'original', 'principal' problems of the field mentioned previously.

In order to succeed, the policy should be implemented at a more official level. It would need to distinguish itself from the 'formal' and 'dead' character of existing municipal programs that have no confidence among the cities inhabitants, generally regarded as 'paper programs' of no practical use, and would gain a participatory element lacking in those programs. The 'officialization' of a similar type of program could also help control the numerous volunteer drug-concerning activities.

Although we cannot say there are completely successful cases of the policy's re-implementation, a public discussion on drug-prevention policies in the Russian Federation arose around those re-implementation attempts, which will certainly bring results.

## **Further information**

This case was researched and written by Olena Luchyna under the supervision of Dr. Giovanni Allegretti at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal, in 2010.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.rferl.org/content/Jailed\\_Russian\\_Antidrug\\_Activist\\_Released/2210932.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Jailed_Russian_Antidrug_Activist_Released/2210932.html)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.nobf.ru/about/recommendations/packet/>

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