Friends House Moscow is a small non-governmental nonprofit organisation that funds projects for peace and civil society in the former Soviet Union. FHM supports projects which work in such areas as human rights, education, restorative justice and non-violent communication. Each project also furthers social goals such as grass-roots collaboration, equality and non-violence.

The work of Friends House Moscow reflects the deepest values of the Society of Friends (Quakers).
“Peace Is Possible”

Daily news reports can sometimes make us feel those simple words, “Peace is possible,” do not ring true. Sometimes it appears that the world is exploding as we see conflicts all over the globe and as we witness what may be the biggest mass migration of people seeking refuge in since World War II.

We, as Friends, cannot however succumb to the pessimism that the daily news can lead to. We keep trudging on toward peace (and its sibling, justice) because we Friends do believe in the depths of our souls that “Peace is possible.”

Friends House Moscow is premised on the possibility of peace and has continued to work toward peace every day in 2014. Each action Friends House Moscow takes, each project it supports is a candle, a light; and we hope all our single candles, combined with those of others, help make the world a brighter and better place.

• One “candle” we continue to light is in the troubled country, Ukraine, where our valiant friends continue to teach Alternatives to Violence in a country that is seeing too much violence every day. The daily news can be discouraging in this troubled region, but Friends House Moscow continues to support peace-making work with the knowledge that peace is possible there.

• Another “candle” we continue to light is in Moscow, where, through Big Change, we bring light into the lives of Russia’s orphans as they leave the orphanages and enter adulthood. Peace is possible for these young Russians, too.

• Another “candle” we continue to light is our growing stock of translations of Quaker literature for Russian readers, such as The Generals and 21st Century War and Christ in Catastrophe. These many candles cast a growing light all over Russia, where Friends House Moscow shines the light of possible peace.

• Another “candle” we continue to light is continued support for the Alternative (to Military) Service Office in Kazan, where Friends House Moscow casts light on young Russians seeking peace.

• Other “candles” Friends House Moscow continues to light are social work initiatives with families and children in Dzerzhinsk. We are especially pleased that projects we help to start are often taken up and carried on by local city agencies. Peace is possible here too, partially through FHM’s efforts.

Wait! Does it seem like maybe – just maybe – we are creating much more than “one candle” of light in the world?

Maybe...just maybe....we can light up the world! That’s what Friends House Moscow is all about.

Finally, we could not light all these candles and cast all this light without our donors and their monetary support and continued interest in FHM and in project partner work, including, but not limited to: Individuals and Quaker Meetings in Germany, the Netherlands, the U.K., and the USA; the Radley and Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trusts; and The Network for Social Change.

Karen Porter
Clerk (Chair) of the Board, Friends House Moscow

Photo: Joseph Thekkekara / Foter / CC BY
FHM projects

Alternatives to Violence

The Alternatives to Violence project (AVP) is a practical training programme that enables participants to deal with potentially violent situations in new and creative ways. It was originally developed by Quakers in the 1970s in the USA, for use in prison work. The techniques are applicable to many different situations and contexts, and AVP is now an international volunteer movement active in more than 60 countries. FHM funds essential operating costs for AVP work in Russia and Ukraine.

Russia and the Caucasus

In 2014, AVP Russia ran workshops in Moscow and in Arkhyz (Karachaevo-Cherkessia region in the Caucasus). Activities in Moscow included work at the Noah homeless shelter and participation in the Palette of Life festival. In Arkhyz AVP facilitators took part in activities promoting AVP at the Dobrograd volunteers’ gathering.

In April two facilitators visited Georgia to participate in a training exercise for Georgian AVP workers (“training for trainers”). This work was organised by Juergen Menzel of AVP Germany. On this and subsequent visits workshops were given in Sukhumi University (Tbilisi) and in Bakuriany and Ozugreti.

Ukraine

AVP Ukraine is based in Odessa but also works in other cities. They have a well-established programme of work in the Odessa region to train psychologists and social pedagogues in schools and higher education institutions, and employees and volunteers working in social organisations. Another strand of work is with inmates of a remand prison for young offenders, in Kharkiv, and a women’s penal colony in Odessa.

In February 2014 violence erupted in Kiev during the protests that led to the ousting of President Yanukovich. In the days following 18 February at least 82 people were killed and more than 1,000 injured, as live ammunition was used against the “Maidan” protestors. Immediately following the violence, AVP facilitators were able to hold workshops in Independence Square which were instrumental in helping to defuse the tension. An account of the experience can be found here: http://friendshousemoscow.org/?p=1708

Alla Soroka writes:

“After the training sessions all the participants told us that we had arrived at just the right time... Training helped them to retrieve their emotional equilibrium, return to a balanced perception of events and gain strength... There were a lot of words about love. The conversations about the strength within each of us nourished us and made us stronger.

The fact that our role was as facilitators, not experts, helped us. With every group exercise we came closer, so that we felt we were all human beings and had a lot in common. When they asked questions about violence in actual situations that had taken place in Independence Square, we turned to the group and the participants themselves reflected on these. All we had done was help them come out of the cycle of violence.”

Work with displaced persons

In the months following, the conflict in eastern Ukraine has created large numbers of internally displaced people (estimated in July 2015 as at least 1.3 million persons - source: www.internal-displacement.org). AVP Ukraine has started working to help the situation of displaced persons. In September they received an urgent request from Kharkiv to train social workers and psychologists to work with refugees from Lugansk and Donetsk.

Continued on page 4
Alternatives to Violence, continued from page 3

“It was great to hear the participants say ‘I have an insight’ over and over again, confirming another principle not of therapy, but of healing. All the participants showed a desire to continue training in the project, which tells us we’ll be expanding in Kharkiv as well.”

The work continues to thrive. The community of facilitators in Odessa has been enlarged, and volunteers in Kiev, Kharkiv and Dnepropetrovsk are being helped to set up local associations of facilitators to create an AVP Ukraine network. AVP in Odessa has become an active part of a general peacemaking movement within the city and more widely.

FHM Projects

Draft Counselling and Alternative Service

FHM funds the office rent for an advice centre in Kazan (Tatarstan) that provides legal and other advice on alternative service for conscientious objectors, and in cases where there is an illegal attempt to conscript people who are exempt from military service. Also, increasingly, it is providing advice to serving soldiers and their relatives.

The centre deals with about 70 consultations each month, about two thirds of which involve applications to the authorities. People consult them about a wide variety of problems:

For potential conscientious objectors the main problem is difficulty with the paperwork. In Tatarstan there are 12 to 15 applications for alternative service every half year, compared with 2 to 3 in nearby regions: possibly a result of the existence of the advice centre. The Centre considers it a major achievement that as a result of their work, applicants in Tatarstan now get alternative service without problems.

Serving COs doing alternative service can encounter problems with control of their free time, and being forced to do extra work in violation of their contract.

Illegal conscription includes attempts to draft students before they graduate, illegal advance call-ups for examination, and drafting conscripts in spite of them being too ill to serve.

Health issues also form a large part of requests for help from serving soldiers and their parents, often because of winter outbreaks of pneumonia and other respiratory diseases in garrisons. Conditions in military hospitals are a cause for concern. The Centre was instrumental – along with human rights activists, media and the Ombudsman – in getting a prosecutor’s investigation launched into negligence at one hospital.

Recently the Centre has started to get more enquiries from the wives of conscripts who were sent to serve far away from their homes. And since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine, there has been a stream of calls from the parents of soldiers who are trying to trace their sons. Soldiers themselves contact them about being forced to sign professional contracts, or being sent into the conflict zone in Ukraine.

The Centre works in close contact with other human rights organisations (including Soldiers’ Mothers) and ombudsmen. FHM is happy to support this work thanks to a generous grant from The Radley Trust.
Keeping the Family Together

2014 saw the completion of a two year project in Dzerzhinsk, "Let's Keep the Family Together!", to enable some parents to regain parental rights to care for their children, and for some others to successfully retain parental rights when court proceedings were initiated.

There was the usual partnership for projects in Dzerzhinsk, between three organisations: the tiny NGO Family Law, which plans and coordinates the project; the Centre for Psychological, Medical and Social Support for Children and Adolescents, which delivers the programme of teaching, groupwork and personal consultations; and the Department of Guardianship, which initiates court proceedings and is, therefore, able to identify families to receive help.

This project did however extend partnership and liaison: a local children's home participated in the work with some of the children who were their residents, and the city court has started to take into account when parents have engaged with the project and tried to improve their parenting.

Nineteen families were involved in the final year of the project. Twelve completed the course, six families either had their rights restored or their cases were not proceeded with, three families made progress in improving relationships, and two mothers gave up alcohol. In one family there was no positive change in the parents' behaviour.

Support for Larger Families

This was a one year project in Dzerzhinsk, completed in 2014, run by a similar partnership to that described in 'Let's Keep the Family Together'.

The typical family in Russia has one or two children, so "large families" are those with three or more children. In 2014 there were 768 large families in Dzerzhinsk, 669 of these having just three children. The numbers have been growing year on year.

It seems that these families are more likely to have vulnerabilities and need support. There was a high level of mistrust shown by the participating families initially, but this was overcome in the course of the project.

There were 12 regular participants in the project, receiving legal, psychological and social help, which resulted in mothers gaining confidence in their own capacities and ability to solve their own problems.

A number of mothers learnt to use computers. Children participated in some sessions and the psychologists witnessed improved child-parent interactions. In some families there were adjustments of fathers' and mothers' parenting roles. None of the participating families are now at risk of losing custody of their children.

The Administration for Social Protection in the city runs a Rehabilitation Centre in the country called 'Forest Fairy Tales'. Most of the children there are from large families. An unexpected outcome of the project is that administrators have suggested
Support for Larger Families, continued from page 5

working together, and in April 2014 a joint programme of workshops was conducted involving 83 children.

This project dovetails with the 'Let's Keep the Family Together Project', and their efficacy is demonstrated by the numbers: in 2011, 21 large families lost parental rights, in 2012 16 families, in 2013 only 10 families. A brochure entitled 'Lots of Kids? That's Great!' was distributed to large families. As a result of the project the city has now devised a system for support of large families, which will be ongoing.

FHM Projects
The English Club

Towards the end of 2014, Friends House Moscow gave a grant towards the development of an "English Club" - a set of extracurricular activities for students of the nonprofit organisation Big Change.

The Big Change students are young people who were abandoned at birth or removed from unsafe families, and then raised in orphanages. Now aged 14 or older, they are soon to leave the orphanage or have recently "graduated". They face numerous psychological and educational issues when it comes to transitioning into independent living. These include:
- Lack of self-confidence and trust in other people, which hampers their ability to develop and maintain healthy relationships with others.
- A state of constant dependency, after being brought up in an institution where everything was provided and initiatives suppressed, discouraging development of responsibility and proactiveness.
- No exposure to ordinary life experiences: shopping, washing clothes, cooking meals and so on. As a result they don't acquire basic skills required for independent living, from as simple as buying food or finding a doctor to other more complex issues around housing or employment.
  - Low level of education and ability to learn. Many young people did not receive proper education; some learned in patches, missing years of school, changing schools often. Most of these children have never been successful at school, therefore have a lot of perceptions that learning is difficult and not interesting.

The English Club is one of a set of interventions that Big Change uses to help students to learn to communicate with each other and with adults, and develop planning skills and social skills. The programme will run until July 2015.

Conference: Russian Adventures

On 28–30 November Friends House Moscow held a conference entitled "Russian Adventures: Russia, Quakers and Civil Society" at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre (Birmingham, U.K.).

Almost 50 people, both Friends and non-Quakers, participated. Highlights of a varied programme included the keynote speech by Sergei Nikitin, head of Amnesty International in Russia, and a Quaker Meeting for Worship in which Friends at Woodbrooke were joined live by Skype by Friends in Kazan and Moscow.

"Emotion ran high as the spirit led many of us to voice through an interpreter our mutual support" (a participant).

Alternativschik is a newsletter published several times a year, which aims to provide information and support for conscientious objectors.

Friends House Moscow funds the printing and distribution costs for around 1000 copies which are sent throughout Russia, often via protestant churches.

The editor is also active in online publicity; a group on VKontakte, a Russian equivalent of Facebook, has 1500 people in touch with one another who exchange information and advice.
Publishing and Outreach in the Russian Language

In 2014, we continued to translate Quaker texts into Russian. However, we now concentrate on finding readers for the texts. Most of the work is still funded by a grant from The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, but some is now funded from our operating budget, as part of “Outreach”.

We publish some material on paper, booklets that we can give away. The first was The Generals and 21st Century War. We mailed copies to Russian conscientious objectors and to organisations and churches that support them; others went to literature tables at human rights groups’ offices; we gave away our last copies at the September peace march in Moscow. We have ordered a second printing along with a new booklet, Emil Fuchs’ Christ in Catastrophe.

Electronic publishing is replacing print in Russia as in other parts of the world. Our first ebook was a translation of Valiant Friend, a biography of Lucretia Mott. On October 5, “World Quaker Day”, we launched our Russian language web page. One board member described it as “a dream come true”. We added new material three or four times a week. The site attracts 800 to 900 visitors a month. Twice a month we added an entry to Russian Wikipedia. In Russia, mass media are restricted; social networks, therefore, play a crucial role. We can be found on the three main Russian-language services: LiveJournal, VKontakte and Facebook.

The VKontakte group now has 57 members. It is growing rapidly. The Russian-language Facebook page is larger, with 101 members. They contribute actively and from them we learn about the earnest desire for peace in Russia. In June, one member posted a video from a concert in a Moscow park. Boris Grebenschchikov, described as the grandfather of Russian rock and roll, sang an anthem of peace for an imagined child, raised in a dark cupboard, but now set free by the singer’s voice, which declares our world hence-forth nuclear-free. Grebenschchikov said, gently, to his live audience, “You are not the meat to feed their weapons.”

Outreach

“Outreach” is our word for letting people know that Quakers exist, about what we do and what we believe in (for example our testimonies to peace, equality, simplicity, truth and justice). FHM promotes outreach in the Russian-speaking world via Russian language websites, translations of Quaker texts into Russian, and FWCC/Woodbrooke online courses.
Organisational Structure

Friends House Moscow is a collaboration between three organisations, each legally registered in its own home country - the United Kingdom, the United States, and Russia. The organisations in the US and the UK raise funds and awareness at home and conduct charitable activity in Russia and Ukraine. The work is coordinated by an international Board composed of Quakers from Russia, the USA and Europe, including trustees from the US and UK organisations. The Board sets strategy and makes funding decisions for the work as a whole. The British and American charities, who are legally responsible for the charitable work, act in accordance with the decisions of the Board.

Charitable activities in Russia and Ukraine are carried out by commissioning work from a company, OOO Friends House, that provides services in the following areas: developing and maintaining our Russian language website and social media presence; translating and publishing Quaker and other texts in Russian; and managing operational aspects of project work including grant administration, reporting and evaluation. Staff also act in an advisory capacity to the Board.

Home country registrations

The UK organisation (informally known as "FHM British Committee") is a company limited by guarantee and is registered with the Charity Commission under the name Friends House Moscow (Charity registration number 1055965). FHM Support Association in the USA is a 501(c)3 organisation. Their donors may receive a tax deduction, to the extent allowable by US tax laws.

OOO Friends House in the Russian Federation is an independent commercial enterprise that is registered as a limited company. It is run with a not-for-profit ethos, although under Russian law it is technically a for-profit organisation. Its two directors are members of the Society of Friends (Quakers).

Accounting basics

The British and American charities generally raise funds in one year and disburse them to projects in the following year. In this way, we know we can fulfill our promise of funding projects when we approve grant applications. It also results in at least six months of operating funds in reserve.

However, FHM also requests funds from trusts and foundations on behalf of projects. These funds are disbursed to projects according to the guidelines of the trusts.

Financial records of the three FHM organisations undergo audits or examinations as required by local law. The FHM British Committee is required by UK law to maintain accrual accounts; FHM Support Association and OOO Friends House use cash accounting.

Join our work!

Please donate to Friends House Moscow

FHM relies on funds from individuals, foundations and monthly & yearly meetings to support projects that promote peace and civil society in the former Soviet Union.

You may donate online at www.friendshousetmoscow.org or send donations to:

In Europe:
Donations Secretary, Friends House Moscow
Brynmaur, Westbourne Drive
Lancaster LA15EE, U.K.

In North America:
Friends House Moscow Support Association
PO Box 60253
Palo Alto, CA 94306, USA

Donations to the U.S. address or online are tax-deductible on U.S tax returns.
FHM British Committee
fundraising for FHM in the United Kingdom
Statement of Financial Activities
For the year ending December 31, 2014

Income and Expenditures

All figures in British Pounds Sterling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Resources</th>
<th>Restricted funds</th>
<th>Unrestricted funds</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Donations in the U.K.</td>
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<td>Donations from FHMSA (USA)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources Expended</th>
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<td>Grant/programme management in Russia (note 2)</td>
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<td>Translations for outreach</td>
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<td>Administration and cost of generating income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total resources expended</td>
<td>11,135</td>
<td>35,283</td>
<td>46,418</td>
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| Net movement in funds                                  | 8,865            | 2,844              | 11,709 |
| Fund Balance Brought Forward                           | 13,654           | 39,050             | 52,704 |
| Fund Balance Carried Forward                           | 22,519           | 41,894             | 64,413 |

Balance Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Assets</th>
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<th>Unrestricted funds</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>22,519</td>
<td>41,894</td>
<td>64,413</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Current Liabilities                                   | 0                | 0                  | 0      |

Net Assets................................................................| 22,519           | 41,894             | 64,413 |

Notes:
1. The official name of the British charity is 'Friends House Moscow'. To avoid confusion with the rest of the organisation we have used the informal name "Friends House Moscow British Committee" here. These are summary accounts; a more detailed version is filed with the Charity Commission.
2. Grant and programme management is an essential operational part of the charitable work. It does not include any administrative costs for raising funds.
3. For operational purposes the British charity holds some money in roubles. The exchange loss is largely due to sterling revaluation of the rouble account following the collapse of the rouble at the end of 2014. This is a loss on paper only: the money still exists as roubles and has not lost its local value.
4. The Charity has a policy of maintaining reserves equal to six months expense on operational costs in Moscow.
FHM Support Association
fundraising for FHM in the U.S.A.

Statement of Financial Activities
For the Year Ending December 31, 2014

Income and Expenditures

All figures in U.S. Dollars
Balance 1/1/2013........................................................................................................... $20,805

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<td>Supplies ................................................................</td>
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<td>Board Meeting conf. calls ...................................</td>
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Balance 12/31/2014................................................................................................... 16,197

Balance Sheet

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<th>Current Assets</th>
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<tr>
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</table>

| Current Liabilities | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Net Assets ................................................................. 0 16,197 16,197

Notes:
1. FHM Board policy is to raise funds in one year, and use these funds in the next year for charitable work. This ensures that when we accept a project application for funding, we know we can disburse those promised funds.
2. “FHMBC” is the British registered charity Friends House Moscow (also known as “Friends House Moscow British Committee”). For operational efficiency and convenience, all of FHMSA’s charitable expenditure in 2014 was transferred to the rouble account of the British charity prior to being disbursed to recipients. This money appears in the British accounts as charitable income labelled “Donations from FHMSA (USA)”.