

UKRAINE

BACKGROUND

- Life expectancy at birth: 72 years
- 25% of the population live below the local poverty line
- 14% of the total population are under 15
- Infant mortality: 13 per 1,000 live births



Many countries in Eastern Europe, including Ukraine are facing a growing problem of drug and alcohol misuse especially amongst young people. The effect of alcoholism among parents generates an additional set of problems; families have been severely affected and many have broken up. In 1995 drug epidemics were registered in the Southern regions of Ukraine (Odessa and Mikolayiv) and in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. One year later all administrative regions of Ukraine reported drug epidemics.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL EDUCATION

Children in Crisis has been working with local Ukrainian NGO, the Oleksandr Feldman Foundation, in the city of Kharkov since 2000. CiC and the Oleksandr Feldman Foundation have developed a drug and alcohol education programme based on our own **d:side** programme operating in Leeds and London.

In November 2000 Children in Crisis organised a study visit to Britain for members of the Oleksandr Feldman Foundation, the Head of the Department of Education and Deputy Mayor of Kharkov. The visitors observed the **d:side** project first hand and assessed its suitability for Ukraine. Following this, two Ukrainian Educators received intensive training in running a **d:side** programme adapted to the Ukrainian context and since 2001 have delivered training sessions to teachers, parents and primary school children in Kharkov city.



Drugs education in Ukraine is also considered so important because of the issue of HIV/ AIDS. According to the UNAIDS epidemic update 2005 Ukraine is the country in Europe worst affected by HIV/AIDS. Ukraine has one of the fastest growing HIV/AIDS epidemics in the world. In 1994 there were only 183 officially registered HIV cases but by the beginning of 2007 this had grown to 104,645. A more worrying statistic is the fact that international experts estimated the actual number of people living with HIV to be around 377,000 in 2005. A significant number of HIV cases are among intravenous drug users (45%) and each year more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of new infections are among young people aged 15-24. With the highest proportion of HIV cases in Eastern Europe and the highest infection rate of Europe as a whole, the spread of HIV/AIDS is a serious problem in Ukraine. Educating and informing children about the dangers of intravenous drug use may help to reduce the increasing rate of infection.

The programme was extended in 2005 and since then it has reached 9,035 primary school children. In 2006 Children in Crisis and Oleksandr Feldman Foundation expanded the programme to include the first two years of secondary school, resulting in an additional 6,880 children receiving drugs and alcohol education. The Ukrainian Educators visited the UK at the end of 2007 to share with the UK **d:side** team how the programme has developed over the last 7 years, their experiences and the lessons learnt.

