

Appendix 6.2

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Echo of Moscow radio in Perm

Perm

October 12, 2005

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PRESENTS

Song: "Let mother hear me, let mother come, let mother find me, don't let her fail. It cannot be that children are lost; children cannot be lost..."

LOST CHILDREN

This program production is supported by the Transatlantic Partners Against AIDS NGO and the Kaiser Family Foundation

GD: Summer morning in June. Mommy and I are taking a walk. I am riding in my pram, calm and happy, because I am with the person closest and dearest to me – my mother; I am strongly attached to her and I need her very much.

...My pram stopped, but it did not worry me, because that happened before: I would sleep in my pram, and Mom would go to a store or chat with her girlfriends somewhere around. I stayed there quietly and waited for my mother, but she was not coming back.

A stranger looked into my pram. I got scared and started crying, but she took me out carefully and cuddled in her arms. I was scared anyway and worried a lot – where is my Mom? What is going on? They take me into a place I already know; I was there before to see doctors. A lady in white coat comes to me and calls my name, and takes me to the ward where I recently stayed with my Mom.

Grown-ups were coming to look at me and they were saying unfamiliar words: "foundling", "orphan", "abandoned".

And after a while I got a new, warm, cozy home with many brothers and sisters of mine.

MG: The story of 18-month old Andrey was told by the staff of the Children's Home #2. He was brought to the admission of the Regional Children's Hospital by a woman who found him on the steps of the hospital in a pram, with no documents. A hospital physician recognized the child and told his name and date of birth because a short time ago he stayed in hospital with his mother for treatment.

One in five children born in Russia to HIV-positive mothers becomes parentless. Sometimes parents who are drug users abandon their children; sometimes parents simply are not ready to bring up and provide for their child. According to Russia's official statistics, since 1997 some 10 thousand HIV-positive women in Russia became mothers. In Perm region there are 540 children born to HIV-positive mothers; 23 of them diagnosed with HIV too. 101 cases of children born to HIV-positive mothers are registered since the start of 2005.

In fact, the government provides certain guarantees to children born to HIV-positive mothers and children with HIV. For example, a child and his/her family have priority in being provided municipal housing.

Liudmila Ufimskaya, social worker from the Children's House #2, the only one with a ward for HIV-infected children, tells us about this.

(Natural Sound Insert.)

03-21 We put children on the waiting list for city housing; this is a priority list, municipal, their place on the waiting list remains even if a child is adopted or transferred to a foster family. When a child turns 18, he or she can – if it is their turn – receive this housing. 03-48

The Children's Home administration also works to make parents who abandoned this child pay alimony. Unfortunately, this is rarely successful, because most often parents of these children are unemployed. Children with established HIV or AIDS diagnosis are officially qualified as disabled. They receive a pension and also all benefits stipulated by law.

Several Russian Federation laws provide for such guarantees as prohibition to deny a child with HIV admission to public schools or public medical services. The law also provides certain guarantees for parents or other legal representatives of a child. They are allowed to stay with children under 15 affected by the epidemic in hospitals on a paid leave. If one of the parents or guardians of an under-age child has to leave his/her job in order to take care of the child, the continuity of service too is guaranteed by law. The period of care for underage HIV-infected child is included in employment record. Besides, according to Larissa Soboleva, acting chair of the regional governmental committee for protection of the rights of the child, additional financial assistance in the amount of 20 thousand rubles, is provided to those who adopt HIV-positive children.

Luidmila Ufimskaya points out that amendments to the Family Code give adoptive parents more freedom, but at the same time might lower children's social status.

(Natural Sound Insert.)

00-44 Recent amendments to the Family Code, I think, limit the child's rights, because they ignore financial status or age of adoptive parents or guardians or their housing conditions, so it may be that a child's living conditions will worsen and in material sense her situation will be less comfortable than here, in the Children's Home. Clearly, a child needs a family, but everything must be taken into account so as not to limit her rights. 01-16

But each reasonable person understands that a child needs a family. Particularly a sick child needs motherly care and warmth, comfort and love given by his or her own family. Treatment, food, medication – all these things can be available in hospitals too, but sufficient care and kindness can hardly be expected from a hospital nurse who must take care of twenty children at the same time. And without tenderness and attention a child usually grows up inhibited and emotionally underdeveloped.

Yulia Lunegova, social worker with the Anti-AIDS Center, comments on this.

(Natural Sound Insert.)

03-55 I believe and any child needs to grow up in a family, and that HIV-positive children must not be separated from healthy ones. So the best conditions for a child are in the family, and no orphanage, regardless of how wonderful it is, cannot replace parents, parental care, and I believe that this point of view is shared by the majority. 04-21

STORY OF A CHILD – TWO

DG: My brother and I lived with Grandma and Mom. Granny took care of us, but she had to work a lot so that we would not be hungry. We have not seen much of our Mother, and we never felt her love and care. She would live home often and for long, and when she was back, she would abuse me and my brother, fight with Granny, and disappear again.

When summer came, Mom came back again, and we had very happy days, because she was calm, did not fight with Grandma, and did not hurt us. And we all went to the dacha, as Granny said, to gain some health. My brother and I basked in the sun, ate berries, and Granny with Mom worked in the garden. The summer was almost over, and one day Granny said that it's time for her to go back to

work, and it's time for us to go back to town. But Mom talked her into leaving me and my brother at the dacha, and said that she would take care of us. Granny was worried, but she believed Mom, and we stayed at the dacha.

Everything was great at first, and then we got some guests coming, and later Mom went to see them off, and did not come back for a long time, we waited and waited for her, and finally we fell asleep, we were scared and cold. We woke in the morning and started crying because we were cold and hungry. Mommy was back home, but she stayed in bed and did not want to get up and cursed us for not letting her sleep on. In the evening Mommy got up and left again, and forgot about us. We cried all the time, we would go out alone, stop by the neighbors, they were sorry for us, gave us food and promised to call our Granny.

When our Granny came back in a week, she saw us and started crying. She washed us, fed us, it was so yummy that I could not stop eating and kept asking for more. Then I got stomach ache and could not sleep. Granny packed out things and we went to the city. I could not walk on my own because my feet were swollen and all covered in scabs. And Granny had to carry me all the way.

MF: Three year old Yulia's story can be told in five lines. The girl was transferred to the Children's Home upon a request filed by her grandmother stating that the child's mother is a drunkard, a transient, does not foster nor care for her two little children. Grandmother discovered sick and starving kids at the dacha where they stayed without their mother's oversight for a period of one week.

SIGN-OFF TUNE – "Baby Mammoth"

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