

**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH & EXCHANGES BOARD
USAID INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT**

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF THE PROJECT**

**WORLD INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY AND
ALL-RUSSIAN SOCIETY OF THE DISABLED
IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM**

**Novosibirsk, Russia
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EVALUATION REPORT

US Partner: The World Institute on Disability
NIS Partner: The All-Russian Society of the Disabled
Location of site visits: Moscow and Voronovo (Moscow)
Date of visits: 5-10 November and 21-23 November, 1996
Date report submitted to IREX: 10 December, 1996

Project Goal and Objectives:

The main goal of the WID/ARSD partnership is to develop the institutional capacity of the ARSD to provide training applicable to the diverse needs of the ARSD staff through establishing an in-service training program. The in-service training program aims to enhance the professional capability of ARSD staff to work towards the attainment of their organizational goal: integration of disabled people into society—given the unique and changing cultural, economic and social conditions of Russia.

As stated in the project design, specific project objectives were as follows:

1. Train a cadre of trainers that would be able to maintain an in-service training system for ARSD staff. Train twenty trainers (two trainers each from five pilot regions, and five trainers each from the Moscow and Volgograd region) in carrying out all aspects of an in-service training program including training needs assessment, curriculum development, preparation of appropriate training material and design, implementation of training and evaluation.
2. Establish an ARSD in-service training system to be conducted at both the national and regional level. Train 720 Central, Regional, District or City level ARSD staff in one-month in-service training courses; and, train 1,080-1,800 Regional, District or City level ARSD staff in three to five pilot regions in one-week in-service training courses.
3. Develop a solid relationship with the Special Institute for Disabled People in Moscow that would be able to house and supervise training activities.
4. In collaboration with the International Centre for the Advancement of Community Based Rehabilitation (ICACBR - Canada) and its primary collaborating partner in Russia, Disabled People's International (DPI), develop and test a Regional training site in Volgograd.
5. Develop, test, and refine a package of four courses with distinct modules and support materials (i.e. three training video, handouts, etc.).
6. Develop complementary materials and activities to enhance the life-long learning process, i.e. three semi-annual editions of an educational staff bulletin (reaching approximately 7000 ARSD

staff), setting up linkages with international disability organizations through E-mail, participation in U.S.-based training and conferences.

7. Test the process of a decentralized regional training system.

8. Identify methods for maintaining consistent funding for the training program.

Project progress and project modifications:

Training:

At the beginning of the project, a planning workshop took place with all project staff (WID and ARSD), regional chairpeople and two of the current training organizers [note: it was decided to call the trainers “training organizers” (TOs) instead of trainers as they would not necessarily conduct training themselves but would organize and facilitate training]. As of the writing of this report, five training of trainers (TOT) sessions were conducted. After the first TOT in Oct./ Nov. of 1995, an extra meeting was organized for the TOs because there seemed to be significant confusion about the project, the tasks of the TOs, etc.

The TOTs were intended to prepare the TOs to organize and conduct trainings in their regions. The content of the workshops includes discussion of training methods and training techniques focusing on four main areas: disability awareness, management, disability legislation, and public education.

The project initially intended to train ten trainers from five selected pilot regions (2 TOs from each region) but instead ARSD and WID made the decision to include eleven regions with each region providing one TO. This made it possible to include more regions into the in-service training program and increase the impact of the program by including a more diverse audience of participants.

Participant attendance in the first four TOTs varied in numbers and consistency. In the fifth TOT, organizers only invited those TOs (12) who had demonstrated a commitment to organize training in their region and who had attended at least three of the previous TOTs. In addition, a group of 16 new trainees were invited. The participants were together on the first and last days of the training but in the rest of the sessions, senior TOs were separated from new TOs.

The new TOs were chosen based on the newly established “inter-regional teams” or “clusters”. The ARSD decided to establish inter-regional teams (eight) in their annual meeting (late October/early November 1996), partly in lieu of establishing a National Training Center. Although establishment of a National Training Center was in the original project plan, WID and ARSD were unable to develop a satisfactory relationship with the Special Institute for Disabled People in Moscow. Attempts to negotiate with alternative organizations were also unsuccessful. It is WID’s belief that much of the reason for not being able to establish a National Center was due to the fact that it was too large a project to undertake. Consequently, the one-month intensive training

courses for Regional, District or City level ARSD staff—originally planned to be carried out at the National Training Center—will not take place.

The inter-regional teams consist of ARSD regional chairpeople from 8-10 regions. The regional chairpeople will come together twice per year to prioritize and coordinate activities and training in their respective regions. Each cluster of regions includes at least one senior TO and one new TO. The expectation of the ARSD is that the TOs will provide training not only in their own region, but also in neighboring regions, based on priorities and decisions made by the inter-regional teams. WID anticipates that the new TOs would learn enough basic training skills to work with an experienced TO from one of the original 11 pilot regions in order to begin conducting training in their inter-regional cluster.

All senior TOs started conducting training in their regions after the second TOT (January '96). The trainers of the TOTs and WID staff observed several of the regional training sessions. WID decided to hire a third trainer for the fifth TOT so that the trainers would be able to observe the regional trainings more frequently to provide feedback and support to the TOs.

WID and ARSD—in collaboration with DPI—decided not to establish a regional training site in Volgograd but rather to have Volgograd be one of the 11 pilot regions. There are two (senior) TOs in Volgograd who conducted extensive training on disability issues as part of the curriculum for nursing management and occupational therapy students at the Medical College in Volgograd.

As part of the TOTs and in preparation for the regional training sessions, the TOs wrote several design formats for separate training modules related to one of the four focus areas. WID has collected all these design formats and is currently in the process of putting them together into four curricula. The evaluator saw several individual design formats but was unable to review the outlines or content of the curricula.

Information, Education and Communication:

Two issues of the bulletin called “Training Organizer” were prepared and distributed; the first issue had 1,000 copies, the second 2,500 copies. The bulletins contain information about the partnership project and the in-service training program, interviews with ARSD Central Board staff and regional chairpeople, articles written by TOs with information about regional training activities, and information about one of the four focus areas of the in-service training program.

Initial versions of three different training videos were ready in the beginning of November and were shown to the TOs during the second week of the TOT in Voronovo. The videos focus on: the vision of the ARSD; disability awareness; and, social legislation. The evaluator was unable to view the videos, but read and reviewed the transcript of the video on disability awareness.

Although all the regional offices have been provided with a modem, only a few of them are in fact connected to the Internet. This is partly due to technical problems (bad quality of telephone lines), partly to inexperience of the TOs with using computers or e-mail in particular, and partly due to lack of interest from the TOs and ARSD staff. Thus, no electronic communication has yet been

established, neither between the regional offices, nor between the offices and the WID or ARSD Moscow office, nor between the regional offices and other national or international disability organizations.

A. Strongest and weakest aspects of the technical and professional work being done by this partnership. Recommendations for improvement.

The TOTs seem of a very high and professional level. All aspects of organizing and conducting a training are discussed and include: conducting a needs assessment, use of different teaching methods, developing training design formats and curricula, and conducting evaluations. In the course of the project, WID came to rely more and more on two Russian expert training consultants. The TOT observed by the evaluator was conducted entirely by the Russian trainers, with WID staff only involved in the preparation of the curriculum and daily evaluations. The Russian trainers are thoroughly familiar with the interactive methods of teaching and use a wide variety of training methods in their sessions. The major advantage of having Russian trainers is the absence of language and cultural barriers. A possible concern is a lack of disability awareness, since the trainers are non-disabled and had no prior experience in working with disabled people. However, this concern proved ungrounded; the trainers showed a great deal of sensitivity to the participants and to disability related issues. Further, they were very open for feedback and suggestions from WID staff with whom they worked closely together and had daily evaluations during the TOTs.

The TOs seem very much impressed with the adult learning theory and the interactive methods of teaching used during the training. These methods were new for most TOs as they had only been exposed to the lecture method of teaching. Interactive methods of teaching are experienced as very useful; the TOs realize that these methods make use of people's own experiences and stimulate participants to be more involved in the training process. All senior TOs are committed to using this method in their trainings and as far as they already conduct trainings, apply this method in practice.

At the TOT observed by the evaluator, the senior TOs had to write training designs for specific training sessions, which included a detailed description of training objectives, teaching methods used, necessary equipment and materials and amount of time spent on each section. Afterwards, each of them had to conduct the training session with the other TOs and the trainer as audience and observers. The sessions conducted by the TOs were all of high quality, both in terms of content and in terms of teaching techniques used. The TOs clearly incorporated a lot of what was taught in the TOTs and they were very creative in making use of these techniques. After each session the trainer together with the other TOs conducted a detailed analysis and provided constructive feedback. The practice sessions and the feedback were experienced as very useful by the TOs; it became clear that there was just as much potential to learn when they were participants as when they were trainers. In terms of content, the TOs discussed important themes in their sessions, including: working together with people with different disabilities; communication between the ARSD and local authorities; the role of district organizers in including people with disabilities into active life; and the problems of young disabled people in

their integration in society. It is significant to note that these themes were chosen by the TOs themselves. However, it also seems that certain issues still need further attention and follow-up. For instance, integration of the disabled into society is not fully understood, and cooperation with other disability NGOs is an issue that could receive more attention. WID recognized this need and will plan future TOTs accordingly. On the whole, it is clear that the TOs have made a tremendous progress and gained a lot of knowledge and skills from the TOTs; nevertheless, they would still need practice and further assistance in conducting and organizing trainings.

At the outset of the project, WID and the ARSD decided to focus training on four key areas: disability awareness, management, public education, and disability legislation. All four areas were well received and appreciated by the TOs. In particular a topic like “disability awareness” will be of great significance for the in-service training program as only approximately 37% of ARSD staff (nation wide) is disabled.

During the most recent TOT, topics like disability awareness and working with the media created lively and sometimes emotional discussions and participants seemed greatly interested. Other topics, like management and disability legislation were more difficult for participants to grasp, even though management issues were being discussed on an elementary level. Of course, full comprehension of such issues is not necessary as the TOs are not supposed to conduct all training themselves, but rather to facilitate sessions conducted by invited experts. The topic of public education and information seems to focus for a large part on working with the media. Although this is a very important area for ARSD staff to learn about, other target groups for public education should not be forgotten, such as: other NGOs, schools, health and other professionals (for which the experiences of the TOs in Volgograd could be utilized), local authorities, and businesses (possible overlap with the other WID/ARSD project focusing on business development).

The TOTs have also been an opportunity for the TOs to meet, discuss common problems and issues, and share experiences and materials, like training design formats and information and education materials (handouts). This opportunity ends with the end of the project and exemplifies the need for creation of a coordinating body.

By the end of the project, the group of 12 new TOs—who were part of the TOT in Voronovo—will have received only four weeks of training. This is in sharp contrast with the senior TOs who received an average of 10 weeks of training. The question is to what extent the new TOs will be ready for their tasks after the end of the project. This is especially a concern, since the TOTs will not only have to prepare people to be trainers and training organizers, but also will have to cover a lot of content. Some of the content materials are fairly new to participants, like disability awareness or public education. Further, in order for people to use participatory teaching techniques, they should have been exposed to a considerable amount of this kind of training themselves. If this is not the case, there is a big chance that people will fall back on lecture methods. Training of the new TOs beyond the life of the project seems essential. The senior TOs will not be able to do this; they were trained as trainers, not as trainers of trainers. Thus, WID and ARSD should develop strategies for continued support.

The new trainees were all very active and enthusiastic participants in the TOT. Four of them were representatives from other disability NGOs, which provided for some lively discussions during the training. WID took the initiative to invite participants from other NGOs. Although ARSD agreed to this, ARSD would not have taken this initiative themselves. The ARSD does not view cooperation with other disability NGOs as a priority; on the contrary, they seem to view grass-roots organizations as inferior to a big organization like the ARSD, which in their eyes is much more effective (because more visible). Therefore, the initiative of the WID to include other NGOs is seen as a positive development. Also, cooperation with other NGOs was an explicit topic of discussion (and role play) during the TOT for the new TOs. It is recommended that this topic should receive continued attention through: incorporating this topic in the curricula content; allowing representatives of other NGOs to participate in the trainings conducted by the TOs: and, sharing training materials with other NGOs.

Both WID and ARSD staff as well as the TOT trainers noticed that there was a remarkable difference between the group of new TOs and the senior TOs (when they had their first TOT). The new group of TOs seems very active, outspoken and involved in the training process right from the start. Possible reasons for the difference might include: younger participants; inclusion of people from other NGOs; and/or, a higher percentage of participants using wheelchairs. It might be worthwhile to have a closer look at the reasons for the difference as it may help in selecting future TOs.

During the TOTs, WID staff provided excellent logistic and administrative support to the training participants. They produced copies of materials generated from particular sessions almost immediately. This reinforces learning to the participants and validates the participants' work and their contributions.

An important achievement of the project unrelated to training is the stimulus it gave for decentralization of the ARSD, high-lighted by the recent development of inter-regional teams. ARSD activities, like the in-service training program, are now being organized at the regional level. A concern to be wary of with regard to the inter-regional teams is the fact that they consist of regional chairpeople and do not include the TOs. It will be pertinent for the regional chairpeople and the TOs to keep an open and close communication. Inclusion of the TOs in the biannual meetings of the inter-regional teams should also receive consideration.

The lack of a National Training Center is not seen as a major obstacle for the success of the project. In fact, such a center could pose a threat to the decentralization of the ARSD taking place. However, the need for a coordinating body is well realized and should receive considerable attention in the last phase of the project. WID is currently considering the establishment of a permanent office in Russia. In that way, the WID staff could take on this function of coordination and support of the work of the TOs in the regions. Another option might be to transfer (some of) the WID staff to the ARSD; however, the low salaries of the ARSD would be an obstacle to this. It is recommended that WID and ARSD staff further define their respective roles and responsibilities regarding coordination.

A major reason for the success of the project is the high quality and commitment of WID staff. Both the Moscow and US based staff are all very professional in different areas. They are self-critical and have performed extensive evaluations throughout the life of the project which allowed them to make appropriate project design adjustments. The downside of this is that ARSD staff became less involved in the project design and implementation, even though both ARSD (Central level) and WID staff made several attempts to involve specific ARSD staff in the process; none of them seemed qualified or those that did left the ARSD. It should be acknowledged that it is hard to find appropriate staff and that training new staff is time and energy consuming; nevertheless, it is vital to do so. Only in this way will it allow the ARSD to take on more project responsibilities, increase their institutional capabilities and thus, increase project sustainability.

Throughout the life of the project, a lot of attention was given to public information activities, both in terms of working with the mass media as well as in contacting different possible funding sources. Both organizations (WID and ARSD) and their projects received a tremendous amount of media attention in a wide variety of ways, thanks to the efforts of the WID public relations staff person. Unfortunately, again, the brunt of the work was done by WID with only minimal involvement of ARSD staff.

It was noted by one of the WID staff who attended the ARSD Congress of Regional and District chair persons, that the ARSD has changed significantly over the life of the project. The WID staff member said that the meeting was: “lively and interesting in contrast to previous meetings which were usually dull and boring”. This is for a large part due to the influence of WID and the trainings. Some of the teaching techniques taught at the TOTs (interactive methods) were used during the meeting and one of the TOs was allowed to speak about the in-service training program.

B. What does the Russian partner see as the “criteria for success” for the partnership project activities? And how close are they to attaining them? Recommendations for improvement.

The goals and activities of the ARSD focus on four main areas: integration of disabled people in society, business development, disability legislation, and training of staff. Training of staff receives a high priority and is incorporated in the ARSD concept paper for 1997-2001. In this respect, the ARSD views current partnership as very important. They realize that training will allow ARSD staff to develop in all priority areas and they consider it positive that the in-service training allows for an exchange of experience and knowledge with the Regional and District office staff. Further, ARSD feels that the adult learning theory used promotes their main goal, namely that people with disability are not dependent and passive, but take their own capacities and experiences seriously and use those in their daily life as well as in their work with the ARSD.

Although the ARSD feels that the project has been successful, they recognize that the need for training is tremendous: there are 78 regions and each region has several districts with a lot of staff that needs to be trained. The group of current TOs is too small and busy to meet this need. Given the fact that in three months the project will end, the ARSD feels that the project time is too short

to accomplish all the stated goals; additional time is needed to guarantee the sustainability of the in-service program, both in terms of technical requirements (the TOs being ready to conduct and organize trainings on their own; having a coordinating body in place) and financial requirements. Given that the project has only just started its operational phase—i.e. the TOs organizing and conducting their own trainings in the regions—continued support would be necessary. Also, the new group of TOs trained in the last TOT will need even more support and additional training.

Another criteria for success seen by the ARSD is financial feasibility. The ARSD is supposed to increasingly share in the in-service training costs and will have to take complete responsibility after the project ends. The ARSD at the Central level seems committed and willing to provide partial funding for the in-service training. However, a lot also depends on the regions and the regional chairpeople—some of whom have already relayed that they do not have sufficient finances for continuous funding of such a training program. According to Tamara Zolotseva (Vice Deputy Chair person of the ARSD Central Board), it is not so much a lack of funding, but rather a lack of commitment to training: “if they really want it, they will find the money”. This pleads for meetings and/or training of the regional chairpeople, so that they will become convinced of the importance of in-service training.

The ARSD also communicated the need for a coordinating body. Even though the development of the so-called interregional teams is a significant step forwards, they believe in a continued need for overall supervision and coordination of the training and the TOs. To meet this need, the ARSD still hopes to create a National Training Center to oversee all the activities of the TOs, coordinate their activities, create a data base of the regional trainings and training materials and function as a resource center. With the absence of any mechanism at present, it is uncertain how and by whom this coordination will be carried out.

The ARSD spoke highly of the cooperation with the WID staff. They commented, however, that they would have liked more involvement in the project planning and implementation as well as in the development of new grant proposals.

C. Technical merit and appropriateness of program components. Recommendations for improvement.

1. Training:

See also under A. The training provided for the training organizers is of a very high quality, both in terms of content as well as in terms of teaching techniques used. This statement is based upon observation of part of a training session and on its results in terms of the training skills displayed by the senior trainees. The new TOs, however, will receive less training (four weeks maximum). For instance, they will not learn how to write curricula and training design formats or will learn them only to a limited extent. The new TOs will therefore still be in need of follow-up training and supervision after the end of the project.

At times, the level of training might have been set too high. For instance, differences between terms like *lecturette*, *structured learning experience*, *training plan* versus *training cycle*, and *facilitation* are already hard to grasp for people who are familiar with different training techniques. Although the capabilities of the trainees should certainly not be underestimated, caution would be recommended when introducing difficult new concepts.

The methods of teaching are varied and appropriate; they expose trainees—being used to only lecture formats—to a different way of teaching. Materials covered are current and accurate. As mentioned under A, public education could be made broader by including outreach to other NGOs, schools, health and other professionals and businesses. In terms of the latter two, it should be considered to make use of the experiences in Volgograd (training of occupational therapists and nurse managers) and/or to cross-fertilize with the business development project. Further, materials concerning disability awareness are mainly based on the American definition of disability. The Russian definition of disability includes not only mobility impairments (like people using wheelchairs, crutches, or prostheses), visual or hearing impairments, but also a wide variety of chronic diseases, such as asthma, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and chronic kidney problems. This difference should be kept in mind when discussing a topic like disability awareness, and all the different aspects of “disability” and how they affect people’s life should be addressed.

Criteria for selection of trainees at the start of the project were too wide and additional participants were admitted to each successive TOT. This resulted in a high drop-out rate and an inconsistent group of trainees. At the moment a strong and committed core group of TOs (12) are left, though the number is smaller than anticipated. Based on this experience, the ARSD and WID decided to make the selection criteria for the new group of TOs more stringent to prevent drop-out from happening again.

2. *Products:*

The handouts provided to each TO at the time of the training are extensive, informative and current and complement the training sessions. All the curricula and materials of the TOTs would comprise an excellent TOT manual for training of TOs. With small adaptations—concerning specific materials regarding the ARSD—this manual could also be used for training of trainers from other disability NGOs.

Translation was sometimes experienced as an obstacle. This could be prevented by developing materials in close cooperation with Russian counterparts. Also, back translation is a useful tool to prevent misunderstanding and inappropriate and inaccurate information.

The quality of the individual training outlines and design formats developed by the TOs—which are to be collated into four comprehensive curricula—can only be assessed on a limited scale since the evaluator saw only a few of them. Those reviewed by the evaluator seem well developed, comprehensive (concerning the topic to be discussed), and appropriate. One observation is that it seemed as if the TOs’ training goal and objectives had a tendency to be too broad and general. Practice—with constructive feedback—will be the only way to gain more experience in this area. It has been and will be very helpful for the TOs to be able to exchange their experiences, curricula

and other training materials with each other. Over the course of the project, this was mainly done during the TOTs. Ways to continue such an exchange after the end of the project should be explored.

The evaluator was unable to view the first versions of the three training videos, but was able to read the transcript of the video on disability awareness. The video comprises of different scenes each portraying stereotypes regarding people with disabilities, both of ARSD, non-disabled people, as well the disabled themselves. Apparently, the video caused mixed responses among the participants of the TOT in Voronovo where the videos were pre-tested. Although the feedback should be dealt with seriously—as WID plans to do—on the other hand, it shows that the video serves its purpose: it is supposed to be a training video and is meant to stir discussion among trainees. The videos may have limited value for use in non-ARSD settings as all the situations in the above described video dealt with ARSD staff. Also, one of the videos is explicitly about the vision of the ARSD.

As part of the project, WID and ARSD developed and distributed two bulletins—called “Training Organizer”—among the TOs as well as among other ARSD staff; the first issue had 1,000 copies, the second 2,500 copies. These were distributed to TOs at training activities. Most senior TOs had received several copies of both editions; one TO had not received the second issue because he did not attend the fourth TOT during which the bulletin was distributed. The bulletins contain information about the partnership project and the in-service training program, interviews with ARSD Central Board staff and regional chairpeople, articles written by TOs with information about regional training activities, and information about one of the four focus areas of the in-service training program.

The senior TOs who received the bulletin gave a positive evaluation; they thought it was informative and useful. Nevertheless, since TOs meet each other regularly at the TOTs, during which they already receive a wealth of information, the TOs should not be the primary target group. It is unclear who else received a copy of these bulletins and how it was perceived and evaluated by ARSD staff.

The bulletins may serve an important purpose in that it informed ARSD staff about the project and the work of the TOs, but to what extent the bulletin stimulated a wider dialogue among ARSD staff as a professional body is questionable. Also, the bulletins seem to have limited use for distribution among members of other NGOs, especially if they are not allowed to participate in the regional trainings. If such a bulletin is to be continued, it should be made clear who the primary target group is, what its purpose is and what the lines of distribution will be.

3. Resource and Learning Centers:

Establishing a National Training Center will no longer be part of the partnerships project. Nevertheless, the need for a coordinating body is clearly recognized. Such a body would provide coordination and support to the TOs and the regional trainings, create a data base of the regional trainings and training materials and collect and distribute relevant materials to the TOs—such as curricula, training materials and handouts. Having an e-mail connection in place in all the ARSD

offices would be a tremendous help; this would allow for communication and necessary distribution of training materials. It is therefore recommended that this aspect of the project will receive sufficient attention in the last part of the project, so that Internet connections and communication will be established.

4. Consulting Services:

The group of senior TOs started conducting training in their regions after the second TOT (January '96). More than 40 workshops were conducted by the TOs in their own regions, training more than 920 Regional, District and City ARSD staff in training sessions varying from 1 to 10 days. The main topics of the regional trainings thus far were (in order of frequency): disability awareness, management, disability legislation, public education and information, and accounting. Participants consisted mainly of ARSD Regional, District and City chairpeople and their deputies, but included also some business managers and fiscal managers. It might be considered to also include staff members of other NGOs; this would improve the cooperation between the ARSD and such organizations and thus may make their work more effective.

The fact that regional training is being provided is already an enormous step forward. Previously, training for ARSD staff was only provided on a limited scale and infrequently. Also, if training took place it was always in a lecture format. Currently, the TOs use a variety of teaching methods; methods which actively involve participants and stimulate free exchange of information and opinions of participants. Further, the TOs take all the necessary steps in preparing and conducting the training. All TOs performed a needs assessment prior to the training sessions, either in the format of a survey or of a meeting with local ARSD staff. Though all TOs said they performed an evaluation at the end of the training, the evaluations were only oral. The fact that they have not conducted written evaluations yet, is probably because this topic—evaluation—was only being discussed at the most recent TOT (Nov. '96).

To what extent the regional training program improved the knowledge and skills of the ARSD staff who participated in the training is still too early to assess. However, for this reason it would be helpful if the TOs perform some kind of follow-up to their trainings and make themselves accessible for the trainees.

D. Additional technical assistance needed for the ARSD to improve their work in general.

The ARSD would still need technical assistance from the WID in the following areas:

- Setting up a body or a system that would coordinate, supervise and support the TOs in carrying out the in-service training program. If the WID will succeed in establishing an office in Russia and they plan to fulfill this coordinating function themselves, it will be crucial for WID staff to work closely together with ARSD staff. This would involve intensive training of ARSD staff.
- The newly trained TOs need follow-up training or close supervision in carrying out in-service training in their regions.

- ARSD staff should be involved in fund raising activities, contacting funding organizations and writing grant proposals.
- Technical support for establishing Internet connections and training for ARSD staff and the TOs in how to use e-mail services.

E. New directions as a natural follow-on for this project. Others working in the sector that might be contacted or collaborated with.

- Developing a TOT manual and training of new TOs or training of “trainers of trainers”, so that there will be more TOs and the in-service training will be broader-based (geographically).
- Replication of the Volgograd model. The disability training for nurse managers and occupational therapy students in Volgograd is significant in that it helps future health professionals who will be working with people with disabilities to understand the basic principles and ideas of independent living of the disabled as well as the principles of integration of the disabled into social life. Replication of the model in other regions should be considered. It may also have implications for an impact on the Ministry/Departments of Health and Social Protection.
- Overlap with the WID/ARSD business development project. The ARSD has approximately 1,700 businesses. These businesses sustain the ARSD as well as provide significant employment for disabled people. Intensified by the economic crisis affecting all of Russia, business assistance is one of the greatest concerns throughout the ARSD. WID and the ARSD collaborated in another USAID-funded project (through World Learning) to address this concern. This project ended in October 1996 and trained consultants and deputy chief engineers in all aspects of business management and advice. Curricula have been developed as a result of the project. Since the businesses are very important for the sustainability of the ARSD, and training is the common denominator of both projects (the business development project and the in-service training program project), WID and ARSD might consider to merge both projects into one. For instance, the TOs could organize and facilitate training in business management using the consultants trained by the business development project as experts. Also, topics like disability awareness and public education and information could be incorporated in the training plan.

F. Partnerships sustainability plan.

In order to sustain the program beyond the life of the project, it will be essential that the ARSD has the internal capacity to develop and maintain training programs from both a technical and financial perspective.

Technical perspective:

The need for a coordinating body as well as continued supervision of regional trainings is already discussed above. Decentralized training does imply an organized system of supervision and support from the Central level.

In order to expand the pool of TOs and thus the ARSD in-service training program, there should be a system of training new TOs. Also, existing TOs may drop out and should be replaced if necessary. Therefore, developing a TOT manual and training of future TOs is essential. A possible strategy is to train some of the senior TOs in becoming “trainers of trainers”.

Financial perspective:

It is remarkable that the ARSD (Central level) is planning to provide actual funds for the delivery of in-service training in the regions; it shows a great deal of commitment to the in-service training program. This certainly improves the likelihood of the program’s sustainability. However, the ARSD regional offices will also have to be committed and provide additional funding. In this respect it will be important to involve the regional chairpeople in all aspects of the execution of the in-service training program, and to show them the results and importance of the training. One way to ascertain this is to involve the TOs in (part of) the meetings of the inter-regional councils.

Further, both the ARSD central office and the regional offices should receive assistance in finding ways to raise funds. Developing project proposals together with ARSD staff is one way. Also, it is unclear to what extent the ARSD has approached government ministries and local government bodies for potential funding of the in-service training. ARSD should explore his option.

Lastly, since the ARSD businesses form an important source of income for the ARSD, WID and ARSD should consider to involve the ARSD businesses in the in-service training program (see also above).

Conclusion:

Significant progress has been made towards meeting the project objectives, even though WID and ARSD had to make several modifications to the original project design. These modifications have occurred for reasons common to all development projects, but also because the project design was too ambitious and the time-frame too optimistic given the fact that a whole new structure had to be developed.

The main achievement of the project is the high quality of training provided to the regional training organizers, which resulted in a core group of committed and skilled regional trainers. At the end of the project an excellent TOT manual will be available as well as four solid curricula. Further, WID and ARSD have produced a wealth of training materials to complement the regional trainings. The regional trainings are of great significance for the ARSD, both because it allows ARSD staff to improve their skills and knowledge and because it promotes decentralization of the ARSD.

It is recommended that the project grant be extended for another period beyond March’97. The objectives of the project extension would be to: 1) continue providing assistance to the TOs; 2) establish a coordinating body for the regional trainers while training ARSD staff at the Central level to fulfill this function; 3) to merge the project with the business development project.

