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**The Child Care  
Subsector  
in Volgograd,  
Russia**

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**GEMINI**

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# **The Child Care Subsector in Volgograd, Russia**

by

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## INTRODUCTION

A team from the Growth and Equity through Microenterprise Investments and Institutions (GEMINI) Project visited Volgograd, Russia, in February 1994 to study the child care subsector and its relationship to the changing economic roles of women. The economic and social transformation in Russia has affected men and women differently. The Soviet system was characterized by an official policy of equality in employment and social participation, but the gender roles built around this formal equality were distinct. With the restructuring of that system, gender differences are being manifested in much higher unemployment rates for women than for men and in an official assertion of women's responsibility for maintenance of home and family.

Child care has been a central constraint to women's participation in the labor force in Western market economies, and GEMINI assessments of opportunities for small enterprise development in the former Soviet Union (in autumn 1992) identified women's child care responsibilities as the principal difference in the problems they face as entrepreneurs compared with men. Reports of the closing of child care centers, the decline in social services, and increased costs to parents parallel an increasing exodus of women from the labor force and a rise in female unemployment.

The purposes of this study were to understand how structural and institutional changes are affecting delivery of child care services and the relationship of these changes to women's roles, and to propose responses to the changes within a market system. The study used a subsector method of analysis to document changes in the child care system and to formulate potential interventions to maintain and improve services. The study began with three hypotheses:

- The adjustment to a privatized economy is forcing child care centers to close;
- The closing of centers is forcing women out of the work force; and
- Opportunities for women exist in the provision of private child care services.

The research was conducted as a case study in Volgograd to allow in-depth collection of data and specific proposals for intervention, as a follow-on to the research.

As the study proceeded, it became clear that our use of the terms "day care center," or "day care subsector," as the subject of analysis reflected a narrow concept of activities and functions in the subsector. In common parlance in the United States, day care centers are one option, among others, for child care. The emphasis in the nomenclature is on care of children, and care outside the home is explicitly cited as a service for parents.

In Russia, the terminology distinguishes between the broad category of child care and the activities in the centers we visited. Literally, the translation of what we refer to in this report as "child care centers" are "centers for children's pre-school training." The purpose of the centers, at least in the ideal, is not *care per se*, but *pre-school education*. The child care centers or pre-schools provide care, which may also be supplied at home (and often is), but they also provide educational services not available outside an institutional setting. The child care centers are analogous to our kindergartens, although they serve a broader age group.

The report is in three parts:

- Description of the child care subsector in Volgograd;
- Analysis of the dynamics affecting the child care subsector in Volgograd including opportunities and constraints faced by child care centers; and
- Identification of possible interventions to be undertaken by local centers, the municipal government, or USAID.

## **SUBSECTOR ANALYTICAL METHOD AND DATA SOURCES**

Although subsector analysis is usually applied to production systems, the basic framework also can be used to understand the relationship among institutions in a service subsector. An economic subsector is defined by the set of firms or individuals engaged in the production or transformation of a like product or the use of a common input to produce a product or service. In the case of child care in Volgograd, the subsector is defined by the enterprise and municipal centers in Volgograd that care for pre-school children. A subsector study of Volgograd drew clear boundaries around the market. Child care services in outlying areas are generally not substitutes for services offered in the municipality.

Any subsector comprises participants linked by contract or transactions in a vertical chain of essential functions, called a channel. Subsector analysis is used to identify competition among firms in the subsector, vertical integration of firms that do business with one another, and coordination among firms to respond to market change. The analysis seeks to identify points, called nodes, where participants interact and an intervention, or leverage, can be applied in a cost-effective manner to affect a maximum number of participants. Subsector analysis proceeds by identifying the participants in the subsector, mapping their relationships, and then identifying and analyzing the forces for change in the system.

The information for this study was collected during a three-week visit to Volgograd in January and February 1994. In addition to reviewing secondary sources on child care and women in Russia, the study team collected data through interviews with local officials, school administrators, and local entrepreneurs, and through visits to child care centers. In collaboration with the Sociology Department of the Polytechnic University, a random sample of 107 mothers of children aged six and under was surveyed to elicit information on the women's child care arrangements and their employment history. Three focus groups were held with mothers of young children to discuss their subjective impressions of the subsector and reasons for choices they have made for care of their children.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The three groups were unemployed women (8 participants), women who have children in day care centers (12 participants), and women who do not send their children to centers (7 respondents). In addition, a discussion was held with a fourth group of 8 preschool staff, including teachers, managers, educators, and a psychologist.

## CHILD CARE IN RUSSIA

Institutional child care was the subject of considerable discussion and criticism in Russia under the Soviet Union. The network of pre-school institutions was instituted by decree immediately after the Bolshevik revolution, in November 1917. The rationale for institutional child care was threefold:

- Communal child care is more economically efficient than private upbringing;
- Institutional child care is essential to women's participation in the industrial labor force; and
- Public childbearing is advantageous for children. The family is not a desirable environment for raising a child. Outside the family, the children are exposed to new attitudes and raised according to scientific principles.

Employment policy encouraged women to bear children and companies to provide for the care of children. This ensured women's availability for the work force. Liberal maternity leave policies and subsidized child care centers, as well as an elaborate set of allowances "to ensure all children an equal start in life," bolstered the full employment policy. The labor force participation rate for women in 1991 was 84 percent, and women outnumbered men in the labor force 52 to 48.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, the ideal of universal child care was never realized or fully accepted. Child care centers were criticized for extreme regimentation and indoctrination in education, and for poor standards of care. Children were often ill. According to H. Smith, writing 20 years ago,<sup>3</sup>

Most preschool children are actually raised at home. The main reason is that although subsidies put the cost of day care centers as low as \$14 a month to the parents, the state had enough spaces in 1974 for only about one-third of the 30 million preschool children from ages one to six. The older three-to-six group is better covered than the one-to-three groups. Cities are about twice as well served as rural areas, through city women frequently have to hunt for spaces and occasionally protest to the press about long crosstown bus rides to distant and inconvenient nurseries.(p. 193)

He also reported that among mothers, home care was seen as preferable to the state nurseries for raising very young children, although "most Soviet mothers are enthusiastic about kindergarten play schools for three-to-six year olds." Mothers who could make the choice, primarily professional and more highly educated women, often dropped out of the labor force for a few years when their children were born. "Blue collar mothers often have no choice but to use the one-to-three year old nurseries to protect their factory jobs." (p. 194)

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<sup>2</sup> Monica Fong, "The Role of Women in Rebuilding the Russian Economy," *Studies of Economies in Transformation*, No. 10. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, pp. 6, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Hedrick Smith, *The Russians*, Ballantine Books. 1976.

The two-tiered system alluded to by Smith operated until 1989. The Ministry of Health administered nurseries for children between the ages of 18 months and three years, and the Ministry of Education oversaw child care centers for children ages three to six. When maternity leave was extended from 18 months to three years, the nurseries were closed.

Although many of the child care centers now have some services for children aged 18 months to three years, relatively few spaces are available. Almost no public services are offered for children under 18 months. Child care administrators say there is little demand for services because mothers choose to stay at home with young children; in focus groups, some mothers argued that slots are not available and their only choice is to stay home.<sup>4</sup> According to our interviews, the lack of care for infants and toddlers is a particular problem for students. The survey data for this study showed a clear pattern of women leaving the labor force at the birth of their child.

The demand for infant and toddler care has dropped not only because women are caring for children at home but more importantly because the birth rate has dropped in Volgograd and throughout Russia. The decline in the birth rate is a response to economic restructuring and individual hardship, but it also may be exacerbated by lack of child care facilities for young children. In discussions, women cited their unwillingness or inability to forego income as a primary reason to delay childbearing.

Under the Soviet government, the system of child care centers (kindergartens) for children ages three to six in Volgograd included centers owned by the municipal government and operated by the districts, and centers owned and operated by state enterprises. Both were centrally funded and subject to state regulation for standards of care, curriculum, staff salaries and qualifications, and purchasing. Various municipal departments like education and health had oversight over all centers.<sup>5</sup>

## VOLGOGRAD

Volgograd is an industrial city with a population of nearly 1 million; it is located about 600 miles south of Moscow. Formerly called Stalingrad, the city was completely destroyed during World War II. It stretches in a long, thin pattern about 50 miles along one side of the Volga River. Politically, Volgograd is considered to be relatively conservative and nationalistic.

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<sup>4</sup> Although, in theory, mothers receive a decreasing subsidy from the state throughout the maternity leave period, because the subsidy is a (declining) proportion of the minimum wage, it is negligible, and several women we questioned were not aware of its existence. The extended maternity leave guarantees the mother that she will be able to return to her job after three years. With economic restructuring, many of these jobs have disappeared, and women on extended maternity leave can appropriately be seen as unemployed.

<sup>5</sup> Day care centers on the collective and state farms were administered by the Department of Agriculture. In Volgograd Oblast II, three day care centers were closed between 1992 and 1993 but three-fourths of these were in rural areas. At the end of 1993, there were 1,324 day care centers in the oblast (46 percent were in rural areas).

Each of its eight districts except the Central District was built around a large state enterprise, and the enterprise constructed and managed the housing and public infrastructure in the district as well as most of the social services like child care centers. Originally, most of the people living in the district worked in the enterprise. The well-being of the city and of the individual districts reflects the fortunes of these key industries. The Central District includes the municipal and oblast administrative offices, the train station, several hotels, a commercial sector, theaters, and the universities.

The population of the city has been declining since 1991. A small amount of in-migration of Russians, primarily from the Caucasus, has been more than offset by the drop in the birth rate (from 14.7/1,000 in 1985, to 11.3 in 1990, to 9.0 in 1992); an increase in infant mortality (152.3/10,000 births in 1990 to 182.7 in 1992); and aging of the population. For the official population, 6.9 percent were under age five in 1980, compared with 6.0 percent in 1992, while the population aged 60 or more increased from 16.8 percent in 1980 to 18.1 percent in 1992.<sup>6</sup>

Similar drops in population growth are found throughout Russia, with more drastic declines in the birth rate in cities than in rural areas. Out-migration from Volgograd is minimal. Not only is Volgograd considered to be a relatively "prosperous" city, but housing constraints throughout Russia make it difficult to migrate in response to new opportunities. Officials cite the importance of continued provision of social services in the city because employment is being cut and pay checks are often months overdue.

The large state industries in Volgograd have become private joint stock companies, but the perception is that little has changed in the way the enterprises are operating or in the individuals making the decisions. Again, according to perceptions, some of the industries are doing well — the oil refinery, the candy company. Some are having problems but continue to operate — a chemical plant processing petroleum products. And, others like the massive agricultural machinery plant, are completely moribund.

### **Reasons for Choice of Volgograd**

Volgograd was selected for the case study because it is a midsized industrial city confronting issues of economic adjustment common to privatization throughout the former Soviet Union. Although the issues are common, however, the responses tend to be increasingly localized. Observations of the child care subsector in Volgograd are not necessarily generalizable to other parts of Russia. Child care in Volgograd is considered a high-priority public good and a social investment in public education. According to our counterparts, the pre school system in Volgograd is better than many in Russia in quality and maintenance of delivery of services.

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<sup>6</sup> Population figures are reported in three ways. The official population includes all people with "passports" as residents of Volgograd. The existing population is a count of people actually living in the city. The average population is the population at the beginning of the year plus the population at the end of the year, divided by two.

In part, the case study is interesting because it broadens the perception of changes in child care in Russia. Most of what has been written about Russian child care has been based on observations in Moscow. Information from a provincial city places a somewhat different cast on issues like the role of municipal finance, the prevalence of private centers, and the responses of the former state industries to changing economic conditions. For our counterparts in Volgograd and the people we interviewed in government and business, the validity of our study rested on their concern that the locally collected data and analysis would generate ideas for solutions to what they perceive as local problems.<sup>7</sup>

### **Child Care Subsector in Volgograd**

The Soviet two-pronged institutional child care system for children aged three to six continues to operate, but *perestroika* has brought two broad patterns of change in the system, causing redefinition of the subsector and an increase in the potential for private enterprise development.

- Privatization of state enterprises has meant that responsibility for running the enterprise day care centers has shifted from the state to the enterprise; and
- Management and supervision of the centers has become decentralized, both in the sense that the local municipality has considerable autonomy in administrative and budgeting decisions, and that day care center directors and faculty have more autonomy than in the past in decisions about services offered, curriculum, and pedagogical methods.

The definition of child care (or pre-school education) as a discrete subsector is part of the process of shifting from a centrally planned to a market economy. Child care services were previously managed and financed as part of the production system. As sectors are being restructured and services are increasingly separated from production, the boundaries of the subsector and the relationships among participants are shifting.

In state enterprises, child care was provided as a part of a bundle of employee services subsidized by the central government. Part of the privatization process is the examination of the parts of the bundle as discrete subsectors with discrete organizational structures and financing mechanisms. Maintenance of child care centers may involve a shift to municipal control, while medical clinics or vacation retreats face a different set of options.

A second part of the definition of the subsector involves the redefinition of formal gender roles, and shifting of functions out of the market and the subsector to private households. The shrinking demand for market services is in part a reflection of this phenomenon. According to our survey of mothers of small children in Volgograd, 20 percent of the mothers had shifted type of care in the last six months.

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<sup>7</sup> The study also received attention in the press because, unlike most of the visits of foreigners to the city, the work of this team focused on issues related to women.

The principal focus of this study is the child care centers operated by the city and the former state enterprises. Children might also be cared for at home by the mother, other relatives (principally a grandmother) or a nanny, or sent to family or private day care centers.

Both the number of centers and the number of children attending pre-school have declined since *perestroika*. According to official statistics for the city, approximately 60 percent of the children age six or younger were in day care centers in 1992. The number of centers and the number of children in centers declined in 1993 to a level of between 50 and 55 percent of children under age seven by early 1994. Most of the remaining 50 percent were cared for at home.

TABLE 1  
NUMBER OF CENTERS AND ENROLLMENT IN VOLGOGRAD

Item	Year		
	Dec. 1986	Dec. 1991	Dec. 1993
Child care centers	407	372	156 (municipal) 177 (enterprise)
Children enrolled	60,000	51,700	40,000

According to Ministry of Education officials, the drop in number of children has been principally in the younger groups. The declining birth rate and parents' belief that it is valuable to send children to pre-school for at least one year as preparation for primary school are reflected in the lower percentage drop among the older groups.

### Home Care

In our survey, mothers reported that two-thirds of their children ages five and six were in child care centers compared with only 26 percent of the younger children. Overall for this sample, 45 percent of the children were in child care centers, 36 percent were cared for by their mothers, and 14 percent by their grandmothers. None of the mothers reported using nannies or family or private day care centers for their children.<sup>8</sup>

The survey shows few demographic differences between women caring for children at home and those who have made other arrangements. Women at home are younger, primarily because children under age three are more often cared for at home. In contrast to what Smith reported in the 1970s, to the extent that there is a relationship between the type of care and mother's education, it is an inverse one. Forty-six percent of the mothers who are high school graduates or less are at home compared with 22 percent of those with higher education. Graduates of technical high schools

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<sup>8</sup> Five percent of the women did not specify the type of care.

(n=41) fall between these two groups, with 37 percent caring for children at home. About a fourth of the mothers providing care at home have never been employed.

## Centers

The decline in the number of child care centers in the city results primarily from the closing of centers attached to the former state enterprises. A much smaller number of municipal centers have been closed, usually because they have not reopened after "remodeling." Neither the city nor the enterprises are building any new centers.

The major industries, as well as smaller plants linked to the primary enterprises, operate centers. For example, we visited a center for an enterprise associated with the agricultural machinery plant (Traktor) that makes screws and other small metal products. For the most part, enterprise centers are being closed because of budget constraints. When an industry is privatized, and budget transfers from the state to the enterprise are decreased, most of the costs of operating expenses are assumed by the enterprise. Operating expenses are included in the budget of the "social fund," and enterprises that are struggling economically simply do not have the revenue to keep the centers open. The closing of municipal centers, on the other hand, may more directly reflect changes in demand.

Although centers are closing, the overall sentiment among the government officials, school administrators, and business people we interviewed is the necessity of maintaining the system of child care centers, both in terms of the quantity and the quality of the service provided. The rationale given is, first, the value of the service for children as pre-school education. Center directors sought to distinguish their centers to us on the basis of the superior educational services offered, or the unique services offered for particular groups of children. Secondly, officials cited the need to preserve the system so that women will have the option to be employed when economic conditions improve.

It is difficult to calculate exactly how many centers have been closed. At the time of our field work, 12 centers of the Traktor plant were not operating, but also were not officially closed. In another enterprise center we visited, classes were meeting and the school was open but the staff had not been paid for the past three months.

About 20 enterprise centers had closed officially during 1992 and 1993. Legally, the buildings cannot be used for purposes other than day care, but 12 of these buildings were being rented by the enterprise for other businesses (for example, law offices and the Salvation Army). Eight buildings were unoccupied in January 1994.

Another option for the enterprises is to turn the child care center buildings and their operation over to the municipality. This alternative is attractive in areas of the city where demand for services is high. Approximately 13 enterprise child care centers moved to municipal control in 1993. The city is eager to assume the management of more schools but is unwilling to pay the enterprises for the buildings.

New private centers, financed through tuition payments, might be a solution to the declining supply of public pre-school services. This alternative has not been a major factor in Volgograd. There were reports of two private centers operating in the city but most private centers in Russia were not legally registered in 1994 to avoid state regulation, and we did not find them. The major constraints to private centers are care cost and the difficulty of acquiring access to adequate space.

### **Operating Costs**

The costs of operating a child care center in Russia are somewhat illusive. Inflation is high and unpredictable. Alternative markets for land, buildings, and labor are underdeveloped, making it hard to calculate the opportunity costs of many of the inputs. Child care center staff receive housing, utility, and food subsidies. The housing subsidy alone is worth 10 times a teacher's salary. Reciprocal arrangements among child care centers, the municipality, and providers of supplies, food, and utilities have become a web so complex that estimating the value of any input would require resources beyond those available in this study.

The budget in Table 2 is an estimate of monthly operating costs, in January 1994 rubles, for an average child care facility in Volgograd. Reciprocal agreements, housing, and nonmonetized benefits for workers are not included. Only social welfare taxes are included because of variability in tax policy. The total cost per child (parents' share plus municipal or enterprise share) — R 138,539 per month — is well beyond the means of all but the wealthiest residents of Volgograd. The cost or rent of the physical facility is the most significant expense for child care centers. Nonmonetary subsidies such as housing and utilities, which are not included in this budget, constitute the second highest expense.

Under current regulations, parents contribute 25 percent of salaries and operating expenses, not including the amortization and capital improvements on facilities.<sup>9</sup> Tuition in the municipal centers is 2,500 rubles (January 1994) per day of which parents pay 20 percent or 500 rubles per day. (In some centers, tuition was set at 600 rubles per day.) In the budget in Table 2, the parents' share is R 14,745 per month.

Tuition and subsidies from the municipality and the enterprises cover basic salaries and operating costs. Increasingly, pre-school directors depend on parents and businesses in the community to act as "sponsors" and make donations to supplement the schools' budgets and to provide extra materials and equipment. The support from parents and sponsors may be cash, in-kind, or volunteered labor. Sponsor allow centers to acquire things like play equipment, toys, carpets, and televisions.

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<sup>9</sup> Buildings are amortized in perpetuity so amortization adds virtually nothing to tuition costs.

TABLE 2  
ESTIMATED MONTHLY BUDGET  
(in rubles, January 1994)

Item	Enterprise Share	Parents' Share	Total
<b>Salaries</b>			
Administrator	52,500	17,500	70,000
Accountant	45,000	15,000	60,000
Teachers (8)	390,000	130,000	520,000
Teachers' Aides (8)	180,000	60,000	240,000
Speech Therapist	60,000	20,000	80,000
Psychologist	60,000	20,000	80,000
Nurse	52,500	17,500	70,000
Kitchen Staff (5)	131,250	43,750	175,000
Maintenance and Custodial Staff (5)	147,000	49,000	196,000
Miscellaneous Staff (10)	262,500	87,500	350,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,380,750</b>	<b>460,250</b>	<b>1,841,000</b>
Payroll Taxes	516,401	172,134	688,534
<b>Total Wags and Emp. Taxes</b>	<b>1,897,151</b>	<b>632,384</b>	<b>2,529,534</b>
<b>Operating Costs</b>			
Meals	4,950,000	1,650,000	6,600,000
Supplies and Equipment	625,000	208,333	833,333
Utilities	625,000	208,333	833,333
Maintenance	750,000	250,000	1,000,000
<b>Total Operating Costs</b>	<b>6,950,000</b>	<b>2,316,667</b>	<b>9,266,666</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Building and Depreciation	15,911,605	0	15,911,605
Property Tax			1,988,951
<b>Fixed Asset Costs</b>			<b>17,900,556</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>24,758,755</b>	<b>2,949,050</b>	<b>29,696,756</b>
<b>Cost per Child</b>	<b>123,794</b>	<b>14,745</b>	<b>148,484</b>
<b>Cost per Child without Building Costs</b>			<b>58,981</b>

### Observations of Survey

In carrying out the research, the team visited three municipal and two enterprise centers, clearly among the best in the city. They are exemplary rather than typical, illustrating the ideal and the standards to which the system aspires. The investment in pre-school education represented by

these centers is apparent as soon as one enters. They are schools, dynamic and creative, rather than merely care facilities. The buildings are large, bright, and clean, providing for between 150 and 300 children each, with a staff of 60 to 100 people (almost all female). Each has a full kitchen, laundry, medical facility, gymnasium/auditorium, and, in some cases, a swimming pool. Each of the schools we visited had an outdoor playground. One school had a room decorated as a garden, with plants and animals, so that children could appreciate and learn about the natural environment. The team saw classrooms with carpets and televisions.

The children are organized in groups of 20, with one lead and one assistant teacher for each group. (Children under age three are in groups of 15.) Each group has two rooms — an activity room and a dormitory. Rooms are attractive and brightly decorated. Most schools are open 12 hours a day, 5 days a week, year-round. The schools visited also have facilities for overnight care for children whose parents work the night shift, but this service is used much less now than in the past.

The teaching staff is well trained. Lead teachers have postsecondary degrees in pre-school education, many from the local teacher's training institute. Many of the directors had master's degrees. In addition to age appropriate instruction in basic skills, children also have classes (and special teachers) in gymnastics, dance, music, art, and, in some cases, foreign language and swimming. Children learn to make their beds, to be orderly, and to use proper table manners.

Each school has a health facility staffed full-time with a doctor. Some have special facilities for children with particular health problems or disabilities. One of the schools we visited had a special group for children who are often sick, with a program of activities to increase their resistance. Each center has at least a part-time speech therapist and school psychologist. In some schools, children with speech problems are segregated in separate groups so that they can receive special instruction.

Children in the schools receive three meals a day, prepared on the premises. The nutritional content of the meals is regulated by the municipal health department and monitored by district health officials. The staff doctor is responsible for meal planning.

Standards of nutrition and cleanliness are regularly enforced by the municipality. All purchases, including food and supplies, must be made through state stores, licensed for this purpose. According to municipal officials, quality of food and goods cannot be guaranteed if they are purchased elsewhere. Legally sanctioned private schools also would be required to purchase through these stores, which enjoy monopoly conditions.

Criticisms of the child care centers in the past focused on the quality of both the educational and care services provided to children. According to administrators and staff, both of these factors have changed considerably with *perestroika*. The 1992 Law of Education reaffirmed the importance of pre-school education for the physical and intellectual development of the child, and gave teachers considerable freedom to experiment with new teaching methods and tools. One of the schools we visited was using Montessori methods, for example. Children usually were working in small groups around a variety of activities. The most explicit political teaching we observed was an emphasis on

Russian and Cossack traditions of dance, art, and music. Few, if any, pictures of political leaders past or present were on the walls.

School officials point to city statistics that show declining numbers of days missed due to illness as evidence of the success of the programs of health care and physical fitness. Attention to cleanliness is striking. The emphasis on smaller group size, cited in many of our conversations, reflects concern for both quality of care and of education.

In the schools visited, there was little outward difference between the municipal and enterprise schools. In the past, enterprise schools were reputed to be better than municipal schools, particularly for prosperous enterprises. This reputation may be shifting because as a group municipal centers have a more secure source of budget support than the enterprise centers. Reputations varied considerably even among municipal centers within a district and among the centers of a particular enterprise. Differences were attributed to staff creativity and parent support. Scarcity of funds and decentralization of the pre-school system (in other words, increased municipal rather than federal control and increased autonomy for the individual schools) are magnifying these differences among the schools, at least for those at the top of the scale.

## **SUBSECTOR ANALYSIS**

### **Participants and Functions**

In mapping the subsector for analysis, the first step is to identify the participants in subsector activities. This information is shown schematically in the box on the next page.

Mothers might be considered both as “producers” in the subsector, since they provide about half of the pre-school child care in the city, and as consumers of institutional child care services. Because the concern in this study is with institutional child care as a public economic activity, in charting the subsector, mothers are shown only as consumers. The other participants are the entities that operate child care centers. Today, in contrast to the past, all of the participants are local with minimal input or control from national level institutions.

<b>Child Care Subsector Participants</b>	
<b>Families</b>	Families have always played a major role in the care of pre-school age children. This role is increasing, particularly for children under age three. The shift toward increasing home care is generating new demands for the day care centers to provide support to mothers and specialized services for children.
<b>Municipality</b>	In 1993, the Volgograd municipal government maintained 156 centers accounting for 47 percent of all day care centers, and 54 percent of children enrolled in centers. The centers are managed by the district administrative offices, and decisions about which students go where are made by district-level commissions. The strength of the municipal centers lies in the level of support in the municipal budget, which administrators argue is high and relatively secure. The city is seeking expansion by assuming operation of enterprise schools, but no new municipal pre-schools are being constructed. Although all centers in Volgograd are acutely aware of the shrinking economy, municipal centers are less hard hit than are the enterprise centers.
<b>Major Enterprises</b>	Major enterprises operate day care centers as part of a bundle of nonmonetary social welfare benefits provided to their employees. The number of centers operating per enterprise is decreasing, although the enterprises are reluctant to close child care centers. The centers are operated to fulfill a paternalistic social obligation to employees, to ensure a contented and productive work force, and to hold on to valuable property. Enterprises close the oldest centers first.
<b>Private Groups</b>	Although private day care centers are widely used in Moscow, they are not a major factor in Volgograd yet. The study team was told that two groups are operating private centers but we were unable to locate them. In Moscow, and presumably in Volgograd, private centers are usually not registered in order to avoid the restrictions of municipal oversight.

A second important component of the subsector map is identification of the functions performed in the subsector. In a production subsector, the functions include raw material supply, production, wholesaling, and retailing. In the child care service subsector, functions include activities related to the direct care of children, as well as indirect activities that support direct care. In Russia, because access to a place to carry out child care activities is an important limiting factor, provision of space is identified as a separate function.

<b>Major Functions of Child Care Subsector</b>	
<b>Direct Care Services</b>	Direct care services are those services associated with daytime care of pre-school children. They include feeding the child, adult supervision in play and work, and teaching of basic social skills. They also include special services offered on a periodic or regular basis to enrolled children. These include speech, physical, and medical therapies, psychological counseling for children and their families, as well as routine medical care.
<b>Indirect Services</b>	Indirect services are those services required for the effective delivery of the direct care services such as laundry, food preparation, cleaning, and maintenance. Indirect services could be contracted on a regular or as-needed basis.
<b>Provision of Space</b>	Space is a crucial input in the provision of child care in a society characterized by a chronic housing shortage and median dwelling size for families with children is 320 square feet. Construction costs prohibit building new child care centers at this time. Some centers closed by enterprises are being rented for other uses. The total space available for child care centers is aging and contracting.

### **The Market for Child Care Services and the Channels for Provision of Services**

Direct services provided in day care centers can be divided between basic services available in full care centers and specialized services. Specialized services are available to full-time students. Increasingly they also are being offered on a for-fee, part-time basis to children cared for at home.

The system of child care centers was established to provide pre-school education and to support a policy of full employment. Under the planned, full-employment economy the "market" for services was for full-day (and around-the-clock) service. In theory, the state assumed a central role in child rearing and education. Schools offered a relatively uniform array of services but differed in the quality of the facilities and the richness of the educational resources.

With the shift to a market economy and drop in women's labor force participation, the market for child care services is shifting. The market for full-care services is shrinking and a new market is emerging based on the specialized programs that schools have developed to distinguish the quality of care and education. The market for special services includes part-time care, enrichment programs, and services for children with special needs.

The basic cost of operating a child care center in Volgograd is, per child, more than twice an average person's salary and is 50 percent higher than the fees charged by the most expensive enterprise centers. Under these conditions, the market for completely private centers is limited.

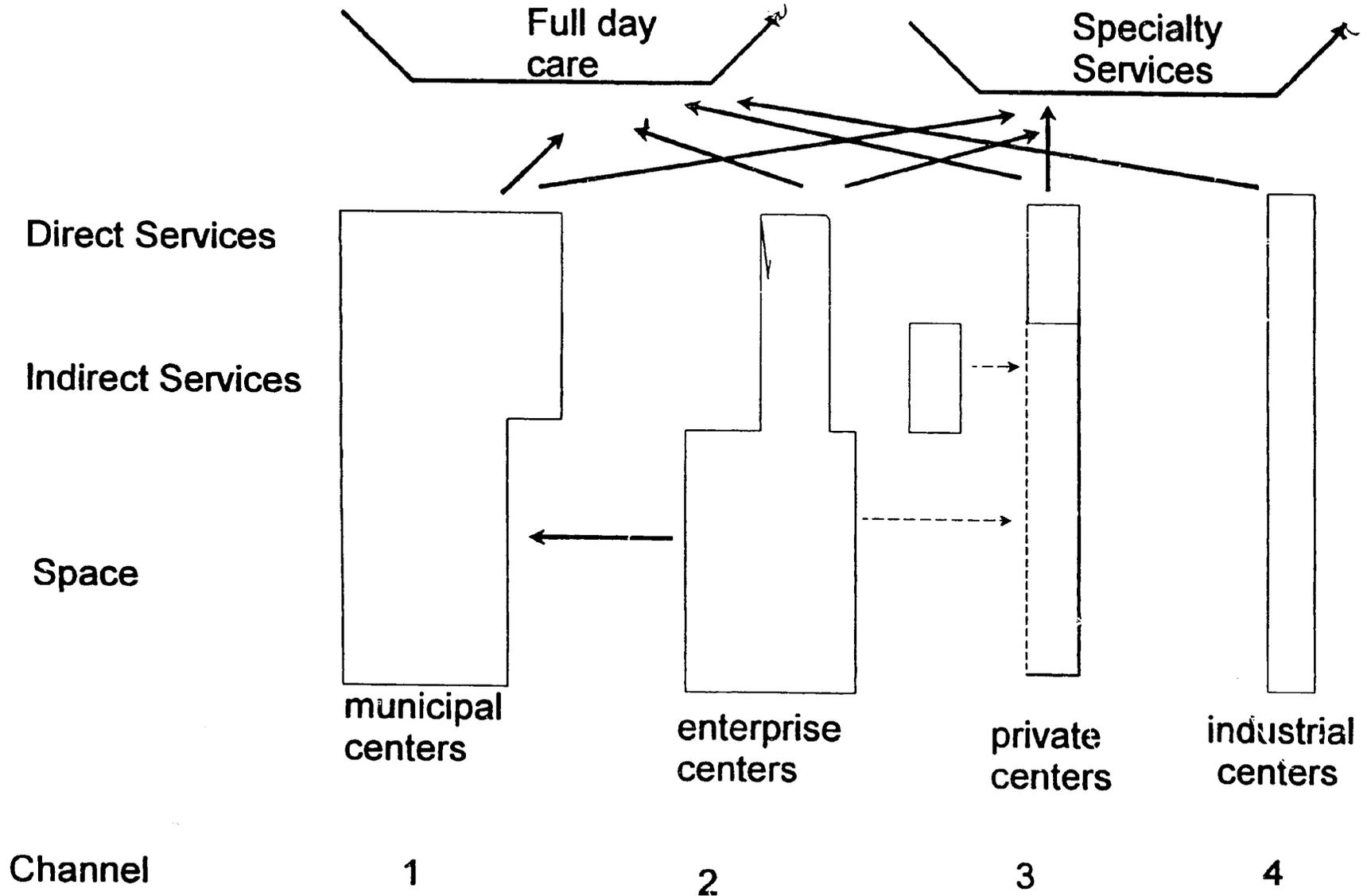
<b>Markets for Child Care Services</b>	
<b>Full Day Care</b>	<p>Full-day services are demanded by parents who are employed and do not have alternative care for pre-school children, and those who want their children to have pre-school institutional training. Children are provided with a bundle of benefits including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured play and learning environment, including special classes like dance, foreign language, art, swimming and physical education.</li> <li>• Health care, speech and other special therapies, including psychological counseling.</li> <li>• Three meals/day.</li> </ul> <p>The market for full day care is shrinking primarily due to factors related to demand.</p>
<b>Specialized Services</b>	<p>The market for specialized services is growing. Young children cared for at home do not have access to the same level of physical and academic stimulation they would receive in a full-day center, and parents appear to be willing to pay for special classes on a fee-for-service basis.</p> <p>Specialized services include language, art, dance, and gymnastics classes, and special education programs for children with disabilities. Centers are beginning to specialize in particular services based on staff skills and center facilities.</p> <p>In focus groups, mothers also expressed an interest in training for effective parenting, and in having drop-in care available for children not enrolled in the center.</p>

In mapping the subsector, the functions carried out by participants to satisfy the markets are defined schematically as market channels. The child care subsector in Volgograd includes two clear channels for provision of services, the systems of municipal and enterprise centers, and a third potential channel, private centers. The municipal and enterprise centers are distinguished as separate channels because of differences in the sources of their funds rather than because of differences in services produced.

The subsector map presented in Figure I summarizes the subsector structure. It identifies the principal functions, participants, and channels, showing what activities are occurring in the subsector, who performs them, and the sets of relationships through which services are produced for the market.

<b>Principal Channels in the Child Care Subsector</b>	
<b>Channel 1: Municipal Center</b>	<p>The system of municipal centers is the largest market channel, and it is growing, because the city is taking over enterprise centers. When the municipality takes over an enterprise center, the enterprise cedes the space used for the child care center, and the municipality provides staff and operating expenses.</p> <p>Municipal centers are less vulnerable to the effects of the economic transition than are the enterprise centers, because the city's revenue base is broader, including local taxes and national transfers. Their vulnerability lies in the city budgeting process and in the priority given to pre-school education in spending. Through January 1994, support was strong.</p>
<b>Channel 2: Enterprise Centers</b>	<p>There are more enterprise centers than municipal centers, but the channel is shrinking. In the last year, 45 enterprise centers have closed. Twenty five of these are being operated as municipal centers. Without a major upswing in the local economy, more enterprise centers will close.</p> <p>When an enterprise closes a center it no longer provides services, but it still controls the space. The city of Volgograd is assuming operation of closed enterprise centers for which demand exists, but it is unclear whether the municipality will continue to do so as fiscal resources tighten.</p> <p>Railroads, the trolley service, and utilities will not be privatized. They operate "industrial child care centers." In January 1994, industrial centers (in Volgograd, run by the railroad) represented a separate channel, with a reputedly high quality of service and high cost (5,000 rubles/day for parents). By presidential decree, all industrial centers will be transferred to the municipality.</p>
<b>Channel 3: Private Centers</b>	<p>The private center channel is incipient in Volgograd. Two private, unregistered centers were supposedly operating in Volgograd at the time of the study.</p> <p>The biggest constraint to growth in this channel is the lack and cost of space. A second constraint is that the municipality maintains considerable discretionary taxation authority. There are no established rules for who will be assessed and who will be exempt, and the uncertainty creates disincentives for private investment.</p> <p>There is a growing interest in public-private, or enterprise-private options. Both municipal and enterprise center directors expressed interest in renting out their facilities to private groups after hours, in providing space and indirect services to private groups, or in having a private group rent or subcontract with an enterprise for a closed center.</p>

FIGURE 1  
 Childcare Subsector in Volgograd  
 (January 1994)



## **Environment**

The next step is to understand the environment in which the subsector operates. What external factors set boundaries on its operation? What are the dynamics of the subsector — the sources of change and the driving forces? What factors affect success or failure among channels, or changes in the map?

### **Demand for Child Care Services**

The major driving force in the market for child care services is demand, both in terms of the number of children seeking care outside the home and in the composition of the demand. First, demand for traditional services, full-day institutional care, is decreasing. Most of the decline in demand over the past five years has occurred among infants and toddlers. The proportion of three to six year olds in child care centers also has declined but at a much slower pace.

The decrease in the absolute number of children in centers is a reflection of decline in the birth rate and shifting demographics in the city. There is no indication from the survey or the focus groups that changes in the cost of the services or the availability of the option for home care are central factors in declining demand. Public child care continues to be perceived as low cost and, in the survey, 40 percent of children aged three to six whose mothers were not employed were in child care centers.

Second, there is a potential growth in demand for special classes, offered on a for-fee basis, to children cared for at home. Directors pointed to the possibility of including children in the neighborhood in certain center activities as a means of covering part of the cost of specialized teachers on the faculty.

A third important factor in defining demand in the child care market is the increasing importance of quality of services. In theory, to gain access to a child care center, a parent presents an application to either a district level commission for the municipal centers or to the managers of the enterprise social fund for the enterprise centers. Applications are matched to vacancies reported by the centers, and then the center directors meet with the parents, and arrange admission.

In practice, some centers are considered much better than others, and parents may manipulate the process to ensure that their children enter the preferred schools.<sup>10</sup> This manipulation has increased with the decentralization of the system. Schools are attempting to distinguish themselves on the basis of quality to attract support and students. Parents may attempt to get themselves on the list for a preferred center when the child is born rather than waiting until he/she is ready to enter. More commonly, parents will give gifts to a particular center, as “sponsors,” to assure that their child will be admitted. Schools have begun to offer specialized programs and services to attract sponsors. Twenty-nine percent of the mothers surveyed were sending their children to enterprise centers even

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<sup>10</sup> The team was told, anecdotally, that some parents make great efforts to get their child into the proper day care center that will lead to acceptance at the proper primary school, and so on.

though the parents were not employed in the enterprise, because of the quality of the services. In addition to parent sponsors, small businesses in the local area, alumni, or other individuals also may give gifts as sponsors. Some small enterprises become sponsors of a local school to insure places for the children of their employees.

In some cases, directors are actively marketing their schools to potential sponsors. One director suggested that training in marketing and fund raising techniques would be useful. Directors reported that as much as half of the center budget comes from donations. The increased importance given to quality of services as a differentiating factor in the market also is related to the increased autonomy of the directors in school management and the potential for participation of parents and sponsors in deciding how the schools should operate and what services they should offer.

The emergence of private child care centers as a third, largely hypothetical channel for institutional care is a logical extension of the demand for quality and parental input. Private elementary and secondary schools in the city differ from public schools in their curricula, class size, and setting. For example, one of the private schools reported that instead of preparing food on the premises, students were served lunch at one of the best restaurants in the city, where they not only receive good food but also learn appropriate behavior.<sup>11</sup> Demand for private schools may reflect a desire for status as well as for quality. It was suggested that for-fee services in an enterprise or municipal center would only be attractive to paying customers if the children were segregated into separate classes.

### **Supply of Child Care Services**

The primary supply issue in the changing child care subsector is distribution, rather than broad availability. Both officials and parents stress the importance of having child care near residences. This factor, combined with the increasing importance of quality in services, affects the decisions made by officials in their attempts to "maintain the system." The gap in services will occur first in poor districts with the oldest buildings and a lack of funds for maintenance, and also in new and growing residential areas, with lagging new construction of centers.

Official statistics show that for the city as a whole, there are more children who could use the child care system than there are available slots, but the distribution is uneven. In some districts, like the Central District, most centers have openings, while in the growing districts on the edge of the city, where new housing is being constructed and young couples predominate, the centers are overcrowded.

Supply is affected by closing of existing centers because of budget constraints (primarily in the case of enterprise centers), and because of deterioration of old buildings (municipal centers). It also is affected by lack of new construction. The child care center building was and continues to be included in the construction plans for housing blocks, but because of skyrocketing construction costs

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<sup>11</sup> The school also presumably bypasses government control of food purchase and preparation in this way.

no new child care centers have been built in recent years.<sup>12</sup> New school construction was programmed in the city budget, but with budget shortfalls, maintenance of existing centers took priority over new construction.

Among municipal centers, supply is reduced as old buildings fall into disrepair and new buildings are not constructed, but the most important factor in supply constraints is the closing of enterprise centers. Enterprises that are forced to cut back on their social fund expenditures and to close child care centers are closing the poorest and oldest centers first. The physical plant of older centers is more costly to maintain than newer buildings, while the cost of providing a higher level of child care and educational service is not significantly higher than the cost of offering a lower level of service. The best centers also more easily attract donations from parents and neighborhood sponsors, and full-tuition students, to supplement their budget support from the enterprise.

### **Taxes and Regulatory Environment**

Three different classes of taxes in Russia directly or indirectly affect child care centers. Federal taxes, which include the value added value tax, excise taxes, and taxes on personal and corporate income; regional taxes, which principally includes tax on property; and local taxes.

Child care centers are exempt from value added taxes but pay employee and social welfare taxes equal to 37.4 percent of salaries (in January 1994). Enterprises do not incur additional taxes for child care centers, and some of their other tax obligations may be partially offset through financial support to child care centers.

Enterprises are eligible to receive deductions in corporate income taxes for supporting the construction and operation of child care centers. If an enterprise builds a child care center it will not have to pay income tax during the first two years of its activity. Unfortunately, the cost of building a center is so high, this deduction does not function as an incentive. If an enterprise spends part of its income to support a child care center, the value of the support is not taxable. State or private enterprises can obtain up to a 3 percent reduction in taxable gross income for "sponsoring" child care centers, schools or selected cultural activities.

Property tax is collected annually at 0.5 percent of the assessed value of the property. Although municipal and enterprise child care centers do not pay this tax, private centers are assessed for the value of their buildings.

The tax incentives that exist to support child care centers do not offset the costs to major enterprises of supporting them. Incentives to promote private sector investment in child care facilities are weak, irregular, and inadequate.

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<sup>12</sup> There was no new construction of child care centers in 1992 or 1993. No information is available on 1994.

## **Lessons from Subsector Analysis: Recommendations for Action**

Subsector analysis is a set of techniques that can be used to identify opportunities for growth in income or employment for large numbers of firms or individuals operating in a like industry. Opportunities are identified through an understanding of the linkages among organizations in a subsector and the dynamics that affect market opportunities for growth .

In Volgograd, we found that the municipality and large enterprises operated most of the child care centers, major public services like utilities and transportation operated a few centers, and there were ostensibly two private centers though we could not find them. It was useful to divide the market into three functions: the provision of space; indirect services such as meals, laundry, and medical care; and direct services associated with the teaching and care of young children.

The analysis in Volgograd showed no major growth opportunities for small businesses in the provision of child care. Overall demand for child care services is declining. Changes in the labor market are forcing women out of the work force and into the home where they are caring for children who might previously have been enrolled in a child care center. Some of these changes are generating new demand for specialized part-time child care services that will enable some centers to maintain their staff and a high quality of service.

Although the prospects for growth in the child care subsector are limited, changes in the existing market channels are likely to create opportunities for at least quasi-private child care centers in those centers closed by enterprises. Currently the municipality is taking over closed enterprise centers, but the city probably will not be able to absorb all the enterprise centers that will close, and the city does not have money to buy child care buildings.

The scarcity of physical space in which to operate a child care center constrains the development of purely private centers. A feasible alternative would be to privatize the direct services for children, while the enterprise continues to provide the space. Service providers could be the current staff of the center, parents who hire staff, or a private group that operates the center on behalf of its members. Technical assistance and training would be useful in organizing the provider groups and structuring new businesses. Many families could afford to support the costs of a private child care center if those costs do not include the building.

The success of this option depends in part on a change in tax laws to allow an enterprise a deduction for providing space that provides a social good like child care. Changing the tax code to allow enterprises to reduce their tax burden by an amount close to the rental value of the building would create considerable opportunity for private sector alternatives to either municipal or enterprise centers.

Increasing decentralization in the child care subsystem and competition among centers for students, for budget support, and for extra-budgetary donations have caused successful existing centers to behave like small businesses. Training in market analysis and fund raising and technical assistance in organizing effective parent boards or associations would strengthen existing centers.

## CONCLUSIONS: ASSESSMENT OF THE HYPOTHESES

The purpose of the study was to understand the changes in the child care subsector and its relationship to women's roles, and to propose potential private sector responses to the new conditions. The hypotheses around which the study was structured indicate two underlying assumptions:

- Child care is provided as a public service to increase women's participation in economic production; and
- Child care services are secondary and discretionary, and therefore among the public functions easily eliminated with privatization.

The experience in Volgograd has shown that although neither assumption is invalid, the link of child care services to children as much as to women, and the underlying cultural drive of the social contract provide a base for maintenance of child care services and a potential for growth, both public and private. Day care is pre-school education and an investment in human capital development.

The experience also showed the importance of examining the responses to social sector restructuring at the local level. In an increasingly decentralized system, local decisionmakers, parents, and entrepreneurs determine whether a system like child care is maintained as a public service, and the level of support for public institutions in the municipal budget and from sponsors.

### Effects of Adjustment on Child Care Centers

Child care centers are closing. The total number of centers in the city has dropped steadily since *perestroika* began, and the number and proportion of children in pre-school child care are declining. However, the closings are more a response to economic hardship than to privatization. The underlying dynamic of the subsector in Volgograd is to attempt to maintain the existing system. Economic hardship has caused a reduced demand for pre-school child care and is reflected in the drop in the proportion of children under three in the centers. The declining birth rate is another factor.

The school buildings and the services provided in them, are assets to the enterprises. The physical structures are valuable because scarcity of space and control of access to space are important limiting factors in business development. When forced to close a center, enterprises are negotiating with the city to take over the building and provide child care services. Enterprises are retaining and continuing to operate the most valuable, newest, and most elaborate, centers.

Less tangibly, the day care centers also are valuable to the enterprises because of the services provided. The historic social contract between workers and the state means that workers expect to receive these services, and employers expect to provide them. Culturally, child care services are more a right than as a privilege and not viewed so clearly as discretionary as they are in the United

States. Further, continuing to provide the service helps diffuse social tensions. With high inflation and frequent delays in paychecks, the social package attached to employment is an important part of compensation. Child care centers support the well-being of the next generation. They also may relieve pressures in the household caused by long days when the factory is not operating and budgets are tight for food and medical care.

### **Effect of the Closing of Centers on Women in the Work Force**

Two parallel processes are occurring as a result of the economic transition in Russia — women are becoming unemployed in large numbers and at much higher rates than men, and child care centers are closing — but there is no clear cause and effect relationship between them. Women were 80 percent of those formally registered as unemployed in Volgograd in January 1994. Many more were not working but are not counted as unemployed because they had never been employed, were on maternity leave, on temporary layoffs, or had been forced into early retirement. Informal surveys suggest that the proportion of women among those who were not working but not unemployed was extremely high also.

Access to child care did affect women's employment in 1989, when the nurseries for infants and toddlers were closed. Our survey showed that young women who had never been employed were caring for their children at home and not entering the job market. Anecdotal information suggests that the decline in the birth rate is also, at least in part, because women cannot afford to leave the work force and give up their incomes. Child care services are not available, maternity payments are not large or reliable enough to replace salaries, and the assurance of returning to their jobs after three years leave is weak under the present economic conditions.

The link between women's employment and availability of child care may become more apparent in the future. If private enterprises must bear the costs of providing services and benefits for women, women of childbearing age will be discriminated against in hiring, or enterprises will discontinue the services. If these services are mandated by law, women's access to the labor market will deteriorate considerably unless child care is provided as a public service. (Fong, 1993)

The child care system developed under the Soviet government was more like the European than the United States system. The approach to child care in the United States is individualistic. Child care is the responsibility of the nuclear family and the ideal care for a young child is at home with the mother. Our day care centers have developed in a decentralized, largely private, and haphazard fashion as a reluctant response to women's entry into the workforce.

In Europe, children are thought to benefit developmentally from the community interaction and group experiences found in a pre-school setting. Further, ensuring optimal care and education of young children is a societal responsibility. The child care system serves children as well as

parents, and the link to mother's employment is only a part of the argument for public support. Centers provide pre-school education as an integral part of the public education system.<sup>13</sup>

In Soviet Russia, this ideology of community responsibility for child care and rearing was manifested in standardized curricula, political indoctrination, and uniformity, in an effort to eliminate differences and defects and create communist citizens. Today in Russia the ideology is being redirected, in the best circumstances, to an emphasis on pedagogy, superior training, beautiful surroundings, and enrichment, as well as public pronouncements of priority for maintenance of the system.

### **Opportunities for Women in the Provision of Private Child Care Services**

Two factors are important to women's business opportunities in the child care subsector. First, women may have an advantage in small business development in this sector because child care and education are "women's jobs." The workforce in Russia is highly segregated by sex, and child care and pre-school education are clearly in women's domain. With few exceptions, all employees at the child care centers, except perhaps a guard or "handyman," were women. Women's dominance throughout the educational system and the social service sector, at all levels of administration and delivery of services, means that women control the networks of information and management.

At the same time, women's opportunities are limited because the problems plaguing the development of private child care centers are precisely those areas in business development in which women are handicapped relative to men — access to space, capital, and alternative supply channels. These essential inputs are usually acquired through connections and networks outside the existing system, and women are less tied to these informal networks than are men.

These two factors might be brought together to enhance women's opportunities through linking the public sector institutions and private businesses to tap women's connections and expertise. Examples drawn from the experience in Volgograd include:

- Parts of existing centers can be privatized to increase parents' share and the private sector's share of costs, and to offer specialized services for children cared for at home. Both municipal and enterprise centers are increasing fees, with parents supporting up to 100 percent of the cost of educational equipment and materials in addition to the 25 percent share of operating expenses. Parents normally pay all the marginal costs of special classes and services. School administrators have requested training in marketing and fund raising, or assistance from firms to market their services and develop new services.
- For those centers where demand exists from employees or from other families in the area, enterprises might encourage privatization of direct services to children, while the enterprise continues to provide the space.

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<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Gail Richardson and Elizabeth Marx, "A Welcome for Every Child. How France Achieves Quality in Child Care," New York: French-American Foundation, 1993.

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