Women’s Health Empowerment Program
Moscow and Central Russia
Russia after 1985 (Perestroika)

1990s
- End of Communism
- Break-up of the Soviet Union (USSR)
- Crisis in all spheres of society life including healthcare
- Impoverishment of population, struggling to survive physically, psychologically adapting to a new reality

Beginning of the 21st century
- Stable economic growth for 8 years
- Economic situation for many individuals improved
- Growing gap between the rich and poor
- Civil society at first stages of development
Breast Cancer in Russia *

- Every year 50,000 Russian women are newly diagnosed with breast cancer.

- The breast cancer rate has increased at 64% for last 20 years and every 8th woman is at risk of breast cancer.

- It is the most common cause of death among women aged of 45-55 years.

- There are 2150 mammography machines all over the country, but despite this fact there is no effective working national screening program in Russia.

* According to the data provided by Russian Oncological Scientific Centre and Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of RF.
What is Women’s Health Empowerment Program?
WHEP is an innovative public movement which provides:

- psychosocial support services by and for women with breast cancer and their families

- a variety of public education programs to encourage early detection of breast cancer
WHEP in Russia

- Project Kesher
- Hesed «Tikva»
- Stimula
- Hesed Chama
Research Project

Research goals:

- To study the experience of women with breast cancer
- To analyze cultural attitudes and family reactions to breast cancer
- To study the usage and penetration of early detection measures and existing services
Research results:

Breast cancer early detection

- Women associate cancer with the fear of death, hopelessness, despair

- Women are poorly informed about breast cancer related issues, risk factors, prevention and treatment methods.

- Doctors (therapists, gynecologists) have a lack of knowledge about breast cancer and preventative measures
Research results:

Breast cancer survivors experience

• survivors testify to a lack of **social and psychological assistance** in medical institutions, their own families and society

• survivors need **information** on how to overcome the disease, to live on and to preserve their physical confidence

• survivors expressed a need for a **warmer attitude** from healthcare providers and society as well as ongoing social and psychological support
WHEP DIRECTIONS

- Psycho-social support for breast cancer survivors
- Informational and educational interventions to increase the prevalence of early detection
- Strengthening doctor-patient relations and training for healthcare professionals
Peer support groups

Peer support - is special type of psycho-social support groups where, the person who supports and the person who is supported are equal in terms of their personal experience.

Members of peer support group, Tula
What are benefits for members in peer support groups

- Supporting surroundings
- Personal experience of coping with the diagnosis
- Necessary information

Member of peer support group, Kostroma
How can peer support groups and professionals work together?

- Participation of survivors in the self-supporting groups, both within the frames of medical facilities and out of them, can compensate the lack of psychological and social support so essential for newly diagnosed women.

*Doctor Irina Evstegneeva and breast cancer survivor Lyubov Makhnovets, Tver*
Psycho-Social Support

- Today there are **11** peer support groups in 6 locations. 173 women are active in this program.

- Thanks to it **531 women** could get necessary information and psychological support.

- **735 patients** have got support in hospitals

Peer support group meeting, Kostroma
Peer support groups. Necessary steps

• To train peer support group facilitators

• To address medical professionals and to get their support

• To contact local authorities and get their support

• To train local NGOs – program partners

• To supervise permanently the activities of groups

The new model of psycho-social support for women with breast cancer active now in Russia
Informational Campaign

- **Aim**: to increase the rate of early detection
- **Target group**: women aged 30+ at their workplaces

*Educational talk with library staff, Tver*
Educational talks

- 115 educational talks were organised
- More than 3000 women took part in these talks.
- 30% of participants have addressed to specialists
- 80% of participants started self-exam practice

Educational talk, Tver
Educational Materials

- A guide for facilitating peer support groups
- Shower cards with method of self examination
- Brochure aimed for the healty women in order to promote early detection
- A guide for women with breast cancer
Totally WHEP has distributed

- Above 27,000 brochures for the healthy women
- Above 14,000 guides for women with breast cancer
Training Healthcare Professionals

- 3 medical conferences were provided for the doctors not specialised in the field of breast cancer in Kostroma, Briansk, and Tver.

- October 24-25, 2009. WHEP conducted its first training for program activists - medical doctors (oncologists and gynecologists) aimed at professional burnout prevention

*The conference for medical professionals, Kostroma*
The key to success

The most important thing is permanent and close cooperation between all sides of the process:

- NGOs
- Local authorities
- Medical community
- Survivors
Partners

Training Partners:

• Moscow School for NGO Management and Leadership
• Association of Russian Mammologists
• Federal Mammology Center in Moscow
• Russian Medical Academy of Post-Graduate Education
• WHEP Bosnia
• SHARE (New York)

NGO Partners:

• Project Kesher
• Stimula
• Hesed Chama (Moscow)
• Hesed Tikva (Bryansk)

Research Partners:

• Institute for Family Health
• Ministry of Health, Russian Federation

Funding Partners

• Susan G. Komen for the Cure
• The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
Thank you for attention!