

7. Democratic development in Veliky Novgorod

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7.1 NEW FORMS OF DEMOCRACY IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

7.1.1 The background – lack of experience

Abolition of the Communist party's monopoly of power resulted in the rapid development of democratic institutions on the territory of the former USSR, including Russia. The initial stage of this process was connected with the borrowing of many ideas from Western democracies. But, principles and methods for realising democracy were inherited from the former economic system, which was basing on centralised planning and the one-party principle.

The lack of people with actual experience and knowledge of democracy and the burden of former non-democratic traditions slowed down the democratisation processes in Russia. This resulted in a growing gap of ignorance and misunderstanding between federal and local authorities, and between local authorities and the society.

An analysis of democratic processes for the last few years reveals a low percentage of citizen participation in the operation of public and political organisations. It is symptomatic that during elections of the representative power bodies, voters obviously preferred non-party deputy candidates, and the total percentage of voter participation in elections was very low.

7.1.2 Developing local democracy and self administration

The activity of authorities, public, and political organisations of Veliky Novgorod attempts to solve these problems and find ways to achieve a sustainable city development. A special role during democratisation in Russia is assigned to partnerships of home owners and bodies of the territorial public self-government. The emphasis in this work has been to attempt to unite the efforts of people in the resolution of problems which are very close to them, in their apartment buildings and residential areas. A reference

Veliky Novgorod

Veliky Novgorod is one of the most ancient cities in Russia, first mentioned in 859. Already in the Middle Ages Novgorod was a large center for international trade and the only Russian city which participated in the Hanseatic Union. The wealth and glory of Novgorod were so great, that the title *Veliky*, The Great, was added to the city name. Today Novgorod is a large cultural center with many architectonic and archeological monuments which were classified by UNESCO as a world heritage site in 1992.

Veliky Novgorod is located in northwest Russia, about three hours drive (190 kilometers/118 miles) south of St. Petersburg. Main highways, railways, air routes, and waterways, which pass through its territory, connect Novgorod with St. Petersburg and Moscow. This is very convenient for doing business with the two largest Russian markets and also with the western parts of Russia, Belarus, the Baltic States, and other countries through the seaports in St. Petersburg and Finland.

The population of Novgorod is 230,556 (2000). It is ethnically quite homogeneous (over 90% are Russians), which may guarantee against any potential national problems or ethnic conflicts. The population of the suburbs of Novgorod within a radius of 25 km is 42,300 people.

Novogord is the capital of the Novgorod region (oblast), in which city dwellers constitute over 20% of the total population. All populated areas are connected to the city by highways. There are public bus routes.

Novgorod is characterized by a high concentration of electronic industry such as instrument-making, precise machine building, and telecommunication's device industries. As a result, there is a highly qualified labor market with work experience from enterprises of the former military and industrial complex. The unemployment rate is 1.7% of the able-bodied population of the city. The average wage in industry is 1,946 rubles per month. At enterprises with foreign investments it is 3,783 rubles (1 ruble is about 0.3 US dollar).

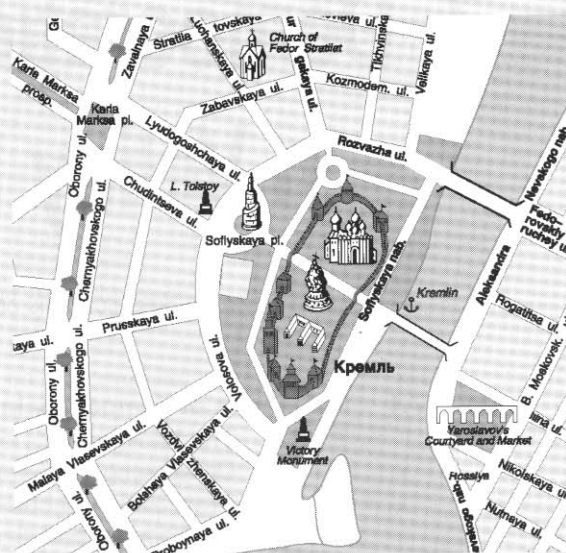


Figure 7.1 The city centre of Veliky Novgorod with the old Kremlin.

The State University of Novgorod was organized in 1993 from the earlier Pedagogical and Polytechnical Institutes. In 1997, the Agricultural Academy also became a part of the University. There are also branches of St. Petersburg University of Economics and Finance and of the Moscow Modern Humanitarian Institute.

The old town is divided by River Volkhov. The right bank is known as the Commercial Side where the merchants lived and the markets were held. The left bank, the Sofia Side, is the area of the kremlin (fortress): the prince once governed from within these walls. Novgorod is an excellent example of an old Russian town with its ancient architecture (over 50 old churches and monasteries remain) paintings (icons, frescoes, and mosaics) and history (birch-bark manuscripts).

In 1998, the Novgorod town lawmakers voted to change the city's name back to Novgorod Veliky or Novgorod the Great, the name which it was bestowed in the 12th century to recognize the town's special status.



Figure 7.2 The monastery outside Veliky Novgorod on the bank of Lake Ilmen.

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Table 7.1 Assuming the long-term property right for land areas with different city-planning systems.

Stages:	Existing domestic system	System based on legal zoning which exists under the conditions of a real estate market
1	Application for allocation of the land area for project development, compilation, coordination, approval of the act of preliminary selection of the particular use; authorisation of project development; cost of using the land area during the period of project development.	Purchase (by means of auction/tender or without them) of land areas with the right of long-term ownership – property, long-term rent.
2	Development of architectural and planning assignments for the object.	
3	Development, coordination, approval of the design estimates; application for allocation of the land area for construction; the decision about granting permission for construction of the land area.	Submission of the project for approval; issuance of the approval for construction.
4	Determination of actual land lot boundaries at the site; the contract for land rent for the period of construction; authorisation for performance of construction work.	
5	Construction.	Construction.
6	Acceptance of the constructed object; registration of object.	Acceptance of the constructed object; registration of object.
7	Issuance of documents concerning the right to ownership of the land area.	

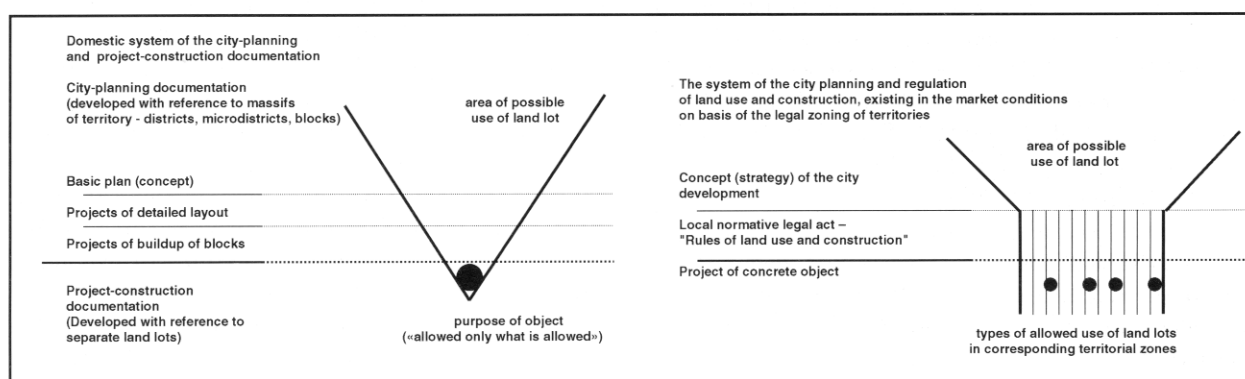


Figure 7.3 Main differences between the existing domestic system of planning, and the system of regulation of land use and construction on the basis of legal zoning

point in this work in Veliky Novgorod were the decisions of the city Duma with regard to territorial public self-government made on 28.02.97. The work has three main directions: teaching people the principles of democracy, assisting home owners' partnerships, and organising bodies of territorial public self-government.

A system for teaching the principles of democracy to adults is thus being organised. The normative and legal base and the order in making decisions are improved with the active participation of citizens, both directly, and through various forms of public associations. Conditions for wide public participation in the life of the city are created.

The Novgorod people's school created with the direct participation of ABF Örebro (Sweden) has played an important role in the organisation of adult education. This democratic project seeks to develop a dialogue between various groups in the population, citizens and companies, in order to enlighten people as to the complexity of the city planning process and the responsibility of each participant in this process.

The authorities in Veliky Novgorod with the participation of experts, representatives of the public and political organisations and city dwellers continue to work for democratisation and development of local self-government.

7.1.3 Privatisation of housing

Since the beginning of the privatisation of housing, authorities have given little thought to the socio-economic and socio-political aspects of this issue. As a result, the process has encountered certain difficulties. The main cause of the sudden slowdown of the privatisation rate is that people do not want to privatise worn-out housing and spend significant sums of money for service and pay for the maintenance of morally and physically worn out municipal systems. Moreover, in a number of cases there is no understanding of the essence of transfer of housing or the process. This, in the first place, is needed for the authorities, who are unable to provide housing for people and maintain existing housing in good condition. Further, the process of privatisation and organisation of home owner partnerships is frequently considered to be a means to replenish the local budget.

The concept of housing privatisation and the transition to partnerships in Veliky Novgorod is considered to be part of the complex program of reforming the housing and municipal services systems of the city and creating a new public structure of the city.

The main underlying principles, which determine a successful outcome in the crisis in the sphere of housing privatisation are described below:

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7.1.4 Economy of privatisation of housing

The main component in stimulating housing privatisation, is the creation of an extremely favourable privatisation climate and optimisation of the privatisation process. The purpose should be to facilitate privatisation for the people, with no connection to replenishing the municipal budget. Payments to the budget will mainly occur later, in the form of taxes. This stimulation is achieved in several ways: by introducing rental payments, which exceed the property tax by 15-20%; by introducing a system of social guarantees in the form of subsidies; or by exchanging housing with a bigger area for smaller area housing within the limits of social norms, for those who are unable to maintain their housing. An important principle is that the increase of payments should not be compensated for by subsidies from the budget. The administration should consider the process of transfer of responsibility for housing to the owners as a joint, bilateral project, and promote this in every possible way by the combined efforts of different administrative divisions of the municipality.

The processes of organisation and registration of partnerships should be supported by the authorities through creation of a special service, department or committee for work with local sites. Registration of the housing partnership should be absolutely free-of-charge, because a person who begins organising a partnership, as a rule, does not have enough money.

It is necessary to organise a special public fund to pay for costs for state and bank registration, and costs for opening a bank account. Apart from that, a public fund will play a role as a buffer between the partnership and the authorities.

Housing partnerships should have the complete set of privileges for local taxes. It is not expedient to try to provide in payments to the local budget, which cannot maintain its own housing in the normal condition. It makes more sense to have people do it better, at their own expense, and it doesn't make sense to complicate their task.

7.1.5 Developing a new competence

The inadequate knowledge by the population of the situation, and of measures taken to organise housing maintenance, etc. is a problem. To attract the attention of the population to privatisation of housing, a program of social advertising is achieved by means of mass media – newspapers and TV.

Another serious problem is the lack of required personnel. To solve this problem, it is necessary to develop local competence, or to outsource the program for training house-managers or chairpersons of the housing partnerships at the expense of the municipal budget. These investments will give a return in the form of new organised workplaces, effective management of the privatised housing, removal of social tension through education of the population. The efficiency of the former staff is usually low due to lack of initiative and skills for working with people. The main and most labour intensive part is holding yard meetings with people. This is not always successful in creating partnerships.

It is necessary to create systems for training personnel for existing repair and building organisations with the

purpose of having them participate in tenders for granting services in the sphere of housing and municipal services, in order to demonopolise the housing services market. It means that by organising housing partnerships, the authorities create a structured consumer market.

7.1.6 Territorial self-government

It is necessary to take into account that a housing partnership actually is an element of territorial self-government, and at that, the most progressive one, as it has as its basis property-based interest and the common problem of increasing or maintaining the price of a property, including the adjacent territory. However, to ensure the systematic development of a system of territorial self-government, it is necessary to clearly localise its structure. To ensure its depolitisation, the area of territorial public self-government should not exceed the real ability of people to solve their problems. Therefore, it should be, as a rule, not more than 2 to 3 buildings located near each other. That is, the territorial public self-government should be organised according to the common yard principle.

To increase the efficiency of territorial public self-government bodies and housing partnerships, a decision to transfer powers for drawing up acts regarding commitment of administrative offences to the heads of territorial public self-government bodies and housing partnerships on the adjacent territory is necessary. Up to 100% of the sums of the fines, set by the administrative commission for improvement of the corresponding territory, should be at the disposal of the appropriate territorial public self-government or housing partnership. Collection of fines will become the "triggering



Figure 7.4 A view from Veliky Novgorod.

mechanism" for expanding the sphere of activity of housing partnerships and territorial public self-government. Definition of the size of these fines will have to be controlled administratively. Each chairperson of the territorial public self-government and housing partnership will be registered as a non-staff employee of the administrative department or committee of housing and municipal services of the city administration, and will get the appropriate certificate.

7.1.7 A new social structure

To develop a management system for public initiatives, it is necessary to create a procedure for the municipal social order. Such a framework should be used by bodies of the territorial public self-government and housing partnerships, and also for public organisations. This will influence the development of initiatives by the population, necessary for the city (for example with grants from foreign funds). However, the city's own interests should be observed in development of city territory.

With the appearance of housing partnerships, and territorial public self-government bodies in "microdistricts" directly connected with schools, territorial-social complexes are created. These will improve the efficiency of use of social welfare real estate objects, which are municipal property (schools and kindergartens), in the interests of the population. The main principle of increasing efficiency can be achieved by competitive placing of the social order on the basis of this objective, taking into consideration the corresponding branch principle:

- for education of a certain number of school children,
- for providing social services to a certain number of socially unprotected people, etc.

Thus, housing privatisation and organisation of housing partnerships has an interbranch character and depend on the joint coordinated actions and the degree of interest of different divisions of administrations and representative authority bodies. The end result is a new social structure for the city administration, which allows an improvement in control and the inhabitants' standard of living.

7.2 HOME OWNER PARTNERSHIPS

7.2.1 Establishing a new form of housing – home owner partnerships

One of the directions in the reform of the city housing and municipal services system was the creation of home owner partnerships. The city administration adopted a regulation about the organisation and registration of home owner partnerships (condominiums) in 1995. In the same year four home owner partnerships were created.

During 1995-97 the required legal basis for the operation of partnerships was formed; the costs connected with registration have been minimised (Decision of the City Duma of 28.02.97), and the tax privileges are provided (Decision of the City Duma of 20.11.97). The city administration signed contracts about subsidies to the home owner partnerships for cost of current repair and

maintenance of apartment houses. By the end of 1997, there were already 18 home owner partnerships in the city.

In 1997 and 1998 potential chairpersons of the new partnerships received a free-of-charge training on "Organisation and functioning of the home owner partnerships" in the municipal science and education centre *Dialogue*. About 600 diplomas were delivered from these courses. In spring 1998, accountants, activists and members of the revision committees of partnerships went through additional special training.

In March 1998, the municipality established a department of assistance to home owner partnerships, as a part of the committee for management of housing, communal services and construction. Its mission was to help creating and running partnerships.

7.2.2 The new form of housing is spreading 1995-2000

The creation of home owner partnerships took place in newly built buildings, in buildings built by the housing cooperatives, and in the available municipal housing. Thus far, the most successful initiative has been the creation of partnerships at the stage of building constructions.

During 1998-2000, 29 meetings to organise partnerships were held in the existing municipal housing. Despite the fact that the initiators organising partnerships had made door-to-door rounds to explain the new concept, less than 20% of the inhabitants visited the meetings. The main reason seems to be that for many years people were used to that the state took care of the technical maintenance of their buildings and they were afraid to change anything.

In spite of these problems the new form of housing has been quite successful. In Veliky Novgorod there are currently 60 home owner partnerships, including 22 cooperatives based on housing construction and 38 cooperatives organised on the basis of newly constructed buildings. The total living area of the partnerships (68 buildings) constitutes 290,6 thousand sq. m. or 6.8% of the available city housing, with a total of 10,200 people - approximately 4.2% of the total population of the city.

7.2.3 Difficulties when creating a new partnership

There are several problems in connection with the formation of new partnerships. Partnerships, established by a customer (builder) at the stage of construction, is mostly lacking the needed economy. After acceptance of a partnership in the uninhabited apartment building, they are not able to pay for the work of allocating the land as common share property for future building owners. Thus there are problems to establish the partnership as a uniform complex of immovable property. Taxation, and registration of the rights for immovable property and accompanying transactions can then not be paid.

There are also often problems to establish the land share in the common property, for the improvement of the land adjacent to the house. The work to define the size and establish boundaries of land sites, including payment and reception of the document establishing rights, then has to be carried out by the State Acceptance Commission.

The law "Concerning home owner partnerships" does not oblige building owners who are not participating in the partnerships (this especially concerns the owners of

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uninhabited premises) to conclude contracts for maintenance service of their share of the common property. This is thus often lacking, especially when common property is to be maintained by several building owners or organisations.

Other questions include: Who should act as the initiator of land allocation if there are several proprietors in a partnership? What is the order for allocation of the land in excess of the normative area for the apartment buildings (partnerships). How should the land area (clean-up areas) between home owner partnerships and other building owners be divided, if no agreement exists between them? All this issues has to be managed with the department of assistance of the municipality.

7.2.4 Administration of the partnerships

Management of the buildings run by a home owner partnership is carried out in several ways: independently in 41 buildings, by the municipal organisation "Customer Service for Housing and Communal Services" in 13 buildings, and by "Zhiltrest" and "Housing centre" companies in 10 and 4 buildings respectively. It should be noted that Zhiltrest and Housing centre were created especially to operate buildings with home owner partnerships. In the year 2000, when the average tariff in municipal housing was 1.51 rubles/sq. m. the cost of operation for 1 sq. m. for a home in a home owner partnership was 1.44 rubles.

It is expedient to provide office premises for management needs in multi-apartment buildings. Partnerships created in newly built buildings have, however, been faced with the problem of equipping the office with suitable materials. The rooms designed for storing baby carriages used in some houses do not meet the sanitary norms. It is also difficult to equip rooms for the bookkeeper-cashier, passport registration office, etc., in such a way that it meets the appropriate norms and rules.

The City Administration carries out the budget financing for 51 home owner partnerships by contract, compensating them for lost income (privileges, grants, subsidies).

Control of local authorities of the activity of home owner partnerships includes the use of the allocated budget money and observance of the current legislation.

The department of assistance to home owner partnerships carries out regular check-ups of the financial and economic activity of the partnerships: bookkeeping, technical operation, organisational, and legal activity. Special attention is paid to registration of the minutes of general meetings, management meetings, and communication of decisions to every home owner. As soon as a chairperson, having assumed authority in a partnership, stops informing and reporting to the members and management of the partnership, a conflict situation may arise (partnerships *The common home*, *Baltika*, *Nikolai*). The more information the tenants receive about the activity of the partnership, the more they trust it. As a result of the check-ups, relevant acts have been compiled and recommendations for elimination of the revealed drawbacks have been provided. When serious infringements are revealed by the department and by the revision committee, in some cases meetings are held as a result of audits (partnership *B.St. -Petersburgskaya*, *III*).

As a consequence of these difficulties a working group for development of proposals about modification and additions to the Federal law "Concerning home owner partnerships" has been formed. It operates under the Gosstroy of the Russian Federation. The municipality department prepares and submits appropriate proposals to this group.

7.2.5 Social activities

It is not only technical functions that home owner partnerships carry out. More and more attention is also paid to work with people. In many partnerships, cultural and popular activities such as holiday celebrations, Veteran's Day, etc., take place.

In the partnership *Lilia*, a tradition known as the Yard holiday court takes place, with performances by building tenants and invited actors. The housing and construction cooperative no.18 celebrated their 30th anniversary last year.

7.2.6 Running a partnership

When a decision concerning the operation of a building is made by the people living in the building, the opportunity to make considerable improvements in living conditions is available, since the tenants are really interested in improvement of their living environment, as well as in the increase in value of their own apartment and the building as a whole.

Members of partnerships control the way money (their payments) is spent. The partnership has a real opportunity to obtain additional higher quality services for its money, as it selects contractors on a competitive basis and establishes relations with them on a contractual basis. Frequently it turns out that the members of the partnership have sufficient experience and ability, and voluntarily offer their services to the partnership. For example, a member of a partnerships may be a good bookkeeper, another one may have several specialities (additional creation of workplaces). In this way, many partnerships save money by accepting voluntary help from their members for free or for insignificant payment. Another variant is also possible, whereby a home owner is exempted from a part of the obligatory payments and fees in exchange for performing services for the partnership without payment.

Partnerships more frequently use their own assets for repairs. There also exists the practice of helping during implementation of work (partnerships *Baltika*, *Diana*, *Nadezhda*). At the expense of the city budget, major overhauls have been carried out in seven buildings, and six buildings were included in the city plan for selective major overhaul.

7.2.7 The result – a better form of housing

An analysis of the organisation and activity of home owner partnerships, performed by the department, indicates that the inhabitants of these buildings treat common property more carefully, make a contribution to improve the entrances and the territory near the buildings, and donate their own money for these purposes. This results in an increase in the service life of constructions and engineering systems. In the home owner partnerships, inhabitants are better at paying for public utilities, crime and vanda-

lism have decreased, and financial, material and human resources are used more effectively.

In 1999 and 2000, five home owner partnerships received prizes in the city competition "the best surrounding area near a building". The partnership *Victoria* and the housing and construction cooperative no. 18 won the competition. The partnership *Antonovo* was placed first in the All-Russia competition "The best housing and construction cooperative."

7.2.8 Conclusions

The foregoing account can be summarised and expressed in the following main purposes which are pursued by home owners during organisation of a partnership:

- effective sharing of common property,
- maintenance of the required technical and sanitary condition of the building,
- maintenance of the original market value of the real estate and increase if possible,
- providing the conditions for safe and convenient residential premises to the home owners,
- minimisation of the cost of maintenance and public utilities,
- raising additional financing through economic activities,
- realisation of a credit and investment policy for maintenance of the condominium in the interests of the members of the partnership,
- rendering of additional services to the tenants,
- representation of the interests of owners in relations with third parties, and
- the joint control for observance of ethical norms of joint residence.

One of the main advantages for the owners of apartments in a home owner partnership is the opportunity to escape from the monopoly of municipal operational organisations. If the quality of service provided by the municipal services organisation suits the owners, a partnership can sign a contract with the company, supervise their work and demand improvements if the work quality is not adequate or the conditions of the contract are not met. The partnership make contracts for delivery of all public utilities, maintenance contracts, outsourcing contracts for some kinds of work, labour contracts with workers and employees. Control of the quality of work and observance of the contract conditions is one of fundamental rights and simultaneously duties of the management of home owner partnerships.

The advantages of home owner partnerships as compared to other forms of housing management are obvious, and the experience of Veliky Novgorod proves this.

7.3 THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY IN VELIKY NOVGOROD

7.3.1 Establishing the people's university

The two regions Örebro County in Sweden and the Novgorod Oblast in Russia have been developing a close cooperation for several years. This was officially registered

in 1994, when an agreement between the regional administrations of Örebro and Novgorod was signed. This agreement covers 10 areas of cooperation:

- politics,
- administration,
- ecology,
- business and economy,
- trade,
- social cooperation,
- agriculture,
- tourism and culture,
- education, and
- health services.

Quite active cooperation is being carried out or is planned in practically all of these areas.

One of the most positive results of this interaction was the creation of the non-state educational institution for further education of adults *People's University* or *Folk High School* in Veliky Novgorod. The People's University was registered by the Department of State Registration on November 12, 1999. The licensing concerned entrepreneurial activity. The contracting parties were the Committee for Management of Municipal Property of Veliky Novgorod and the "Association People's Universities," created on December 15, 1998 as a public association. The association has five founding organisations: the Regional public youth organisation of Novgorod Scandinavists "Molot Tora", the Public Charity Fund "Health and Life", the Regional public organisation "Union of lawyers of the Novgorod region", the College "Economy" and the independent non-profit organisation "The centre for economic development".

7.3.2 Education and democracy

The basic obstacle in the development of democracy in Russia is people's lack of understanding for how they can influence their own life and the life of the community as a whole. Historically a the majority of Russians do not have a deep enough understanding of democracy and its values. In the teaching profession, in businesses, in administrative structures and in associations, a strong, consolidated, authoritarian, hierarchical spirit still dominates. To change the existing stereotypes, effort, patience, and time are required. There is a necessity for teaching democracy and develop the skill to apply the obtained knowledge in practice in various areas of community life. As well, creation of democratic relations in educational institutions is required.

The People's University may play a very important role in the process of democratisation and in the increase of the level of people's education. It carries out three functions: offers education for adults, is a body of the people's movement and is the carrier of culture.

People's education makes a significant contribution to the solution of problems in living together. It works for the benefit of a democratic society, it increases the ability for interaction, solidarity and tolerance. It levels out social distinctions and reduces the number of socially deprived members of society.

People's education also increases people's competence and work efficiency, and also promotes professional mobil-

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ity. It accompanies structural changes in the economy and increases the opportunity for subsequent employment.

It is worth mentioning that people's education increases the ability to maintain dialogue and cooperation, in particular with representatives of other cultures and traditions. Appearance and increase of the cultural level enhances the creative potential, spiritual outlook and independence of a person.

7.3.3 The curriculum

The People's University flexibly responds to current requirements:

- computerisation and introduction of new technologies
- growing needs for studying foreign languages
- education aimed towards employment
- a new demand for education in the areas of culture, public health services and ecology
- demands of the family, collectives and different age groups
- new requirements for political education, etc.

The People's University has chosen three focus areas as the highest priority at this stage of development:

Development of democracy. Apart from the fact that all activity of the People's University in general will be aimed towards developing democracy, here a separate line for developing democracy will be represented. It will be aimed towards preparing professional staff for public associations, trade-union organisations, social security organisations and political parties.

Culture. In traditional education there exists a clear tendency to prioritise the training of intellect. This situation can result in the appearance of problems in interpersonal relations, as well as the occurrence of violence and egoism. Spirituality is the prerequisite for cultivation of humanism, understanding and patience. The means for developing spirituality is culture: music, dance, theatre, painting, etc.

The social sphere. Solution of social issues in society is one of the reasons for development of the civil society.

The People's University organises courses at various levels, starting with general education at the high school level and finishing with special courses, some at the university level. Courses of study can last from one semester to one or more years.

7.3.4 The achievements

Last year two groups of students were trained at the People's University. The education program included the following subject areas: basics of personal computer operation, history of development of democracy, resource study, economy, the Swedish language, the Russian language, literature, psychology. As well, there was training offered in the following specialisations: dance and work in non-profit organisations (social marketing, social management, legal aspects, etc.). In February 2001, the first students graduated from the basic educational program.

Under the auspices of the People's University, a "Theatre of dance" has been organised and is functioning successfully. Computer courses for youth and members of non-profit organisations will be held. In March 2001, a "School of guitar" and a "Literary studio" for beginning writers will open.

In March 2001, new groups were enrolled for the general educational course: unemployed people, people with a low level of educational and people with poorly paid work requiring a low level of skill. Courses were offered for special groups, such as people with various kinds of physical disability, elderly people, unemployed people, and refugees.

At the university there is a "Discussion club" where different issues of importance to society are discussed. The university also organises short-term courses and seminars on various themes involving both Russian and foreign experts during the academic year and the summer months.

Many courses and seminars are offered in collaboration with various organisations and educational institutions.

In the summer of 2001, Russian language courses for foreign citizens were scheduled.

7.3.5 Organisation of the People's University

The board of the People's University is responsible for the selection of the goals and the directions for activity. The People's University is managed by a Rector, but, traditionally, teachers and other personnel have a significant influence on the educational process.

The students of the People's University can influence decisions concerning the internal life of the People's University, as well as the educational process and leisure. Frequently, students taking a course can influence decisions, due to a constant dialogue with teachers.

In this way, democratic relations are realised in practice.