

Boosting Russia's childcare blues ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The chief of UNESCO is out to rebuild Russia's battered reputation over childcare as the UN organization comes to Moscow to promote early childhood schemes.

With the country reeling from a recent WHO report which highlighted disturbing levels of youth violence - often derived from a poor early upbringing - the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education was a welcome boost for the country's childcare experts.

And director general Irian Bokova was encouraged by what she had seen on her visit to the Russian capital this week.

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"We are here today to map a course of action that will raise the profile of early childhood programmes on national and international agendas and lead to more and better learning opportunities for young children," Bulgarian-born Bokova said as she opened the conference on Monday alongside mayor Yuri Luzhkov in his last official appearance before his sacking.

Global delegates were also impressed with Moscow's contribution.

"This conference is ground breaking in bringing world leaders who are all deeply committed to creating a more just, peaceful and healthy world for all of our children," delegate and non-profit organisation Hands to Hearts International executive director Laura Peterson told The Moscow News.

"Moscow has been a great host for this event, as they have demonstrated a strong political will, have a cadre of experts and specialists who are all eager to share, and they are very pragmatic in their approach to the complexities of addressing the needs of the youngest children."

"Russia has contributed some of the best thinkers on this issue," director of the Division of Basic Education at UNESCO Mmantsetsa Marope told The Moscow News.

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