

Stichting SKOSH Annual Report 2022



THE WAR AND ADAPTATION TO NEW REALITIES

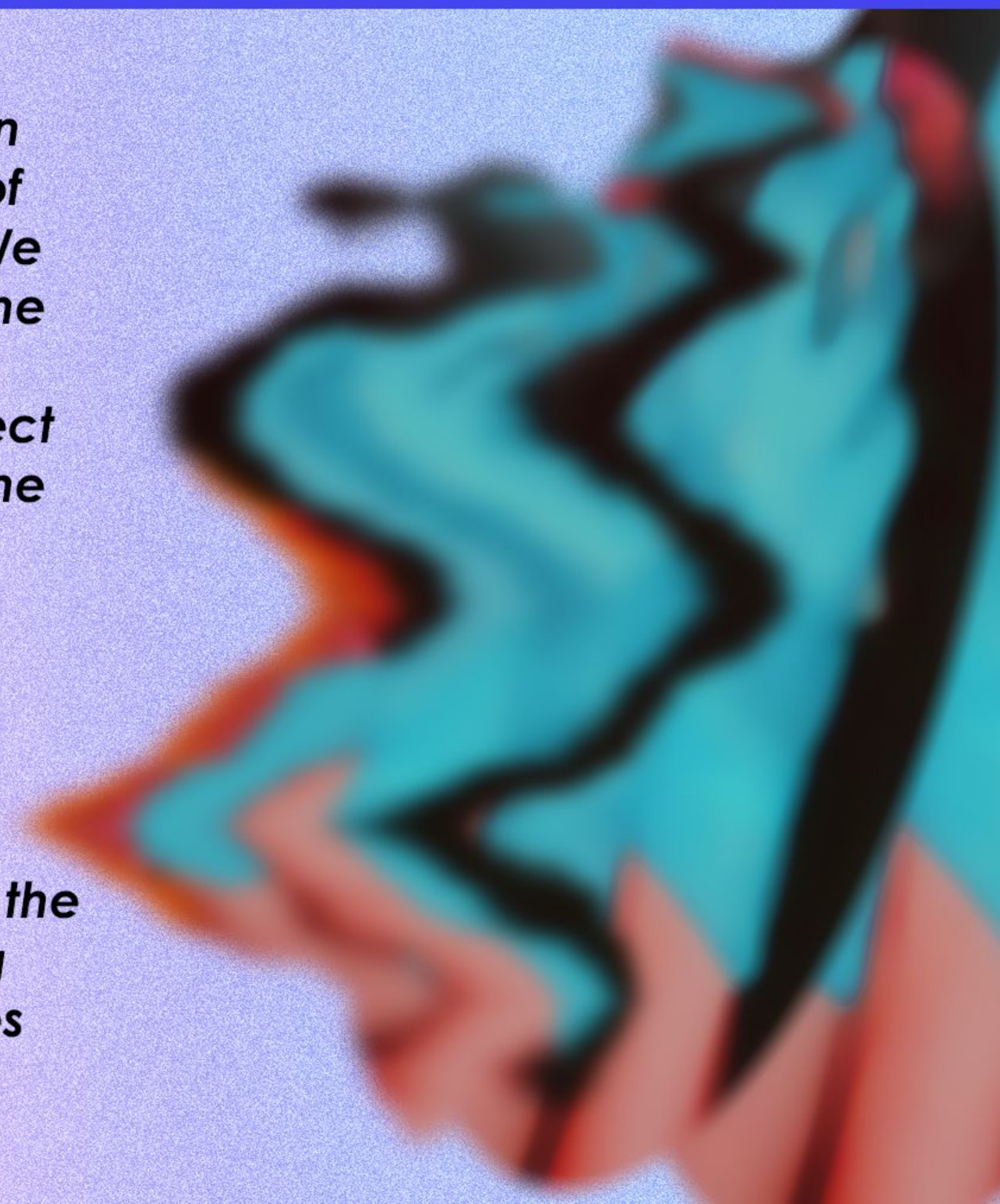
On February 24th, Russia initiated a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, an event that has divided the lives of millions in both nations into 'before' and 'after.' This act of aggression swiftly reverberated across Russia's domestic policies, ushering in heightened political repressions against civil society, the rapid implementation of military censorship laws, and a disturbing normalization of authoritarianism within the country's governance. Many people, especially young men facing the prospect of being drafted into the army, were forced to abandon their homes. Young men and women found themselves in urgent situations, leaving behind their homes, severing ties with their parents and communities, and embarking on entirely new lives, all amidst a backdrop of significant stress and upheaval.

SKOSH encountered two primary challenges: the need to overhaul ARF's operations in Russia, with a particular emphasis on ensuring the safety of ARF personnel, and the imperative to devise mechanisms for aiding our communities and the vulnerable individuals who were compelled to swiftly depart the country due to the imminent threat of military conscription.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE: TEAM SAFETY

We organized an emergency strategic process in March - a meeting with the Board and a series of consultations with the ARF staff and supporters. We managed to refine emergency safety plans for the organization and involved individuals. With the support of a flexible LSF grant and additional direct support to individuals on ARF staff coming from the Frontline defenders, we contributed to the relocation process for 8 people. Several staff members were relocated to Georgia, and temporarily Turkey.

With a strong focus on people's safety at the beginning of the year, we were able to maintain the spirit, enhance capacity, keep the team working on the ground in Moscow, and adjust our services to the new, challenging circumstances.



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES

In response to the crisis, ARF and SKOSH have decided to considerably extend their mental health services. We enhanced the team of mental health specialists, including professionally trained psychologists as well as 'para-psychologists' - people from the community who have completed the basic psychology training, and several psychiatrists offering consultations to both our team members and our clients/communities.

**IN 2022
WE CONDUCTED**

76

self-help
groups for women

111

para-psychological
consultations

88

self-help
groups

305

psychological
consultations

COMMUNITY CENTER IN TBILISI

We established the Community Center in Tbilisi. A lot of young Russian-speaking people, who have mental health/substance abuse problems, had to move to Georgia because of the war. There was a significant demand for a place where these people could get access to psychological and psychiatric help. The Community Center was conceived and launched as an emergency response to these changes.

The Community Center prioritizes a community-based approach to mental health problems and facilitates individual and group work to empower community-level changes. It helps to get access to basic services for a disenfranchised population in need.

The Community Center showed itself as a good practice model of alternative sustainability for NGOs as by the end of the first year; it became almost self-sustainable. However, seed support from SKOSH has been vital.



COMMUNITY CENTER IN TBILISI

6

THERAPISTS

4

PEER-TO-PEER
CONSULTANTS

2

PSYCHIATRISTS

P2P
STUDYING
GROUPS

HALLOWEEN
PARTY

During its first year of operation, the Center proved its need for the newly emerged Russian-speaking community. People are not only going there for individual psychotherapy sessions, but they are gathering for public lectures, yoga and bodywork classes, support groups, thematic events, and much more.

Moreover, the Community Center has established cooperation with Georgian harm reduction NGOs: Mandala and Alternative Georgia.

YOGA

BODYWORK
PRACTICES

DANCING
PRACTICES

MASSAGE

SUPPORT
GROUPS

LIVE
STORIES
CIRCLE

SPEAKING
CLUB

CHARITY
MARKET

LECTURES

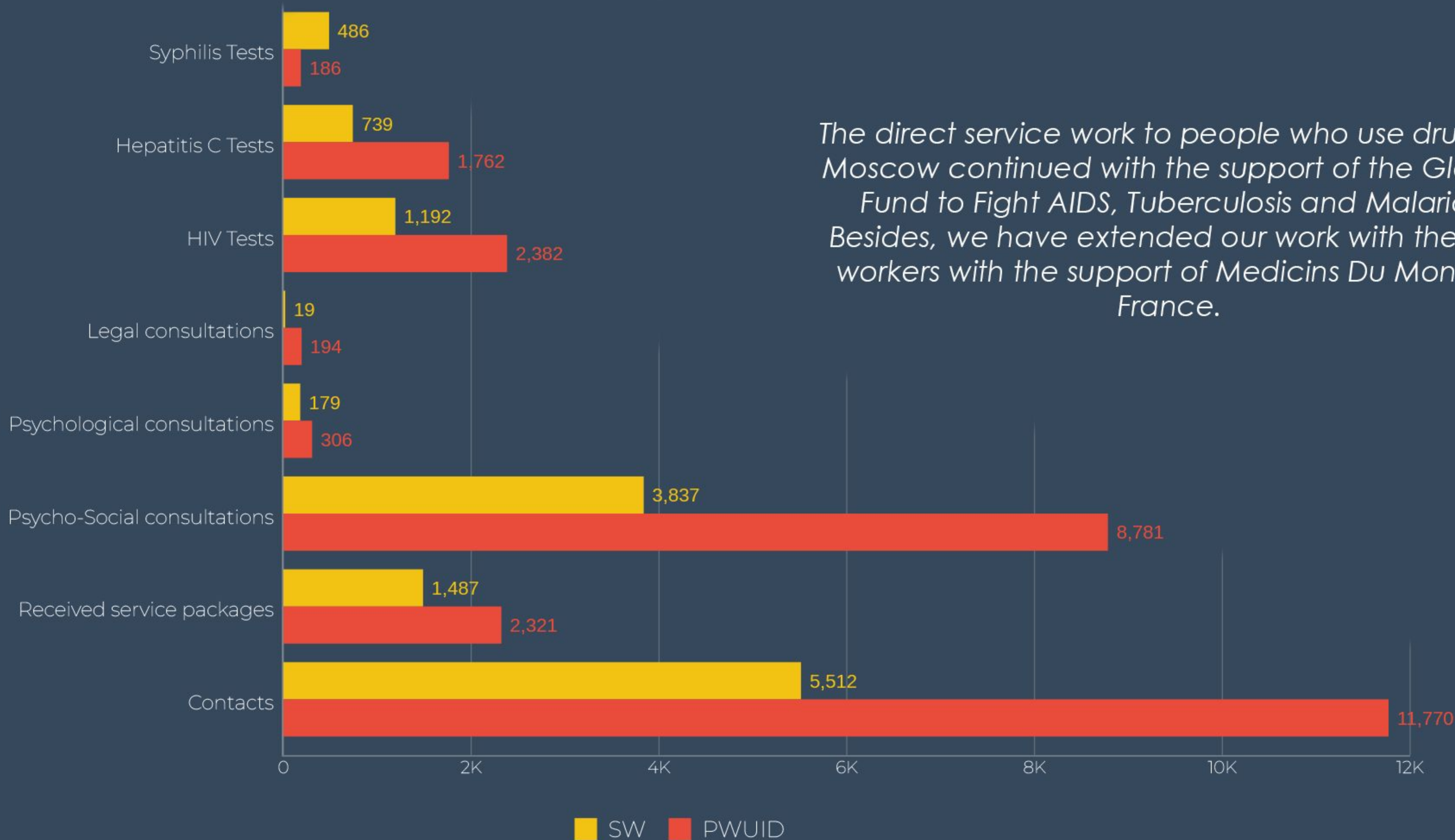
SUPPORT OF THE ANDREI RYLKOV FOUNDATION

Despite the new challenges, Andrey Rylkov Foundation continued and expanded its work in all the main directions throughout the year: direct service to people who use drugs, human rights work, advocacy, and stigma-reduction through developing humane and scientific discourse on HIV/AIDS and drugs. However, due to political shifts, the advocacy work has largely shifted to SKOSH.

288 LIVES

we saved in 2022

DIRECT SERVICE WORK IN MOSCOW



The direct service work to people who use drugs in Moscow continued with the support of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Besides, we have extended our work with the sex workers with the support of Mediciens Du Monde, France.

STRATEGIC LITIGATION

We manage strategic litigation cases, mostly to the level of the European Court on Human Rights and several binding UN Committees with the aim of improving the legal environment for the health protection of people who use drugs. This includes filing complaints and individual appeals to the ECHR and UN Committees with binding decisions. In 2022 there were 8 running case.

SUPPORT OF THE NGO «APRIL»

The non-profit organization “Project April” is the only harm reduction organization in Togliatti, Russia. It has been founded and is run by people who use drugs.

In July 2021, the court imposed a fine on the organization itself and its director, Tatyana Kochetkova. The amount of the fine was 400,000 rubles (~5,000 €). In 2022, with the financial help of LOTM, we supported the director of April, who had to undergo multiple local court trials, and a lawyer who helped April make two applications to the European Court of Human Rights.

We strongly believe that we, as a part of civil society, should use any available legal means to protect each other. While it is unlikely for the Russian state to admit its crimes in the near future, it is still important to show the illegality of its acts.

RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WWUD

In 2022 we helped to sustain support for women who use drugs in Moscow, establishing contacts with women's crisis centers in Moscow and nearby cities and successfully arranging cooperation with two of them.

Besides that, we also provided mentoring services to an initiative group in Estonia, and promoted women's shelters in Dushanbe, Tajikistan through the involvement in the preparation of the Funding Request to the Global Fund.

In spring 2022 Anya Sarang collaborated with the Eurasian Harm Reduction Association to write a best practice collection for the EECA region "Integrating assistance to women affected by violence into harm reduction programs". Best Practices from the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia".

INTEGRATING ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE INTO HARM REDUCTION PROGRAMS

Best Practices from the Central
and Eastern Europe and Central Asia



ehra ©

Alliance
for Public Health

SOS-
PROJECT

EHRA 2022

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS

We had to decrease our activity in international advocacy in 2022 because of emergent war-related changes at the beginning of the year and intensive work on the Community Center development later throughout the year.

Nevertheless, there still was a significant success in the autumn of 2022: ARF received ECOSOC consultative status after 6 years of sabotage and misuse of procedure by the Russian state's representatives in the ECOSOC NGO Committee.

Voting Started	
E/2023/L.6 - Application of the no status with the Economic and Soci	
AFGHANISTAN	KAZAKHSTAN
✘ ARGENTINA	✘ LATVIA
✘ AUSTRIA	✘ LIBERIA
✘ BANGLADESH	✘ LIBYA
✘ BELGIUM	✘ MADAGASCAR
✘ BELIZE	✘ MAURITIUS
✘ BENIN	✘ MEXICO
✘ BOLIVIA	✘ MONTENEGRO
✘ BOTSWANA	✘ NEW ZEALAND
✘ BULGARIA	✘ NICARAGUA
✘ CANADA	✘ NIGERIA
✘ CHILE	✘ OMAN
✘ CHINA	✘ PANAMA
✘ COLOMBIA	✘ PERU
✘ CONGO	✘ PORTUGAL
✘ COTE D'IVOIRE	✘ REP OF KOREA
✘ CROATIA	✘ RUSSIAN FED...
✘ CZECHIA	✘ SOLOMON IS...
✘ DENMARK	✘ THAILAND
✘ ESWATINI	✘ TUNISIA
✘ FINLAND	✘ UNITED KING...
✘ FRANCE	✘ UNITED REP T...
✘ GABON	✘ UNITED STAT...
✘ GREECE	✘ ZIMBABWE
✘ GUATEMALA	
✘ INDIA	
✘ INDONESIA	
✘ ISRAEL	
✘ ITALY	
✘ JAPAN	

✘ N FAVOUR: 24

ECOSOC CONSULTATIVE STATUS OF THE ARF

ARF applied for the ECOSOC consultative status for the first time in May 2015. Between 2016 and 2021 ARF's application for the consultative status was deferred 11 times because of the actions of particular UN member states, such as Russia and China. They misused the UN procedures in order to defer the application indefinitely.

In April 2022 together with IDPC, the director of SKOSH/ARF Anya Sarang delivered a presentation to ECOSOC member countries on ARF experience in applying for the ECOSOC status. Shortly after, Russia was not re-elected to serve on the NGO Committee for the first time in many years.

In December the UN Committee on NGOs once again voted against accrediting ARF the consultative status. However, the US delegation together with like-minded members of the UN managed to pass the accreditation of the consultative status to several NGOs, including ARF, on the ECOSOC vote on December 7th.

NARCOPHOBIA PROJECT AND MASS MEDIA

In 2022 the work on the Narcophobia project has been paused due to urgent war-related pressures.

At the same time, we decided to shift our focus from fighting the War on Drugs narratives mainly in Russia to raising awareness of the European and international audience on the devastating situation of the people who use drugs in Russia and the occupied territories of Ukraine.

With every new repressive law, it is getting more and more difficult for Russian civil society to influence the inhumane unscientific drug policies of the Russian state. This is why it is so important to reach the European decision-making bodies and ask for their reaction to the unfolding crimes against people who use drugs.

