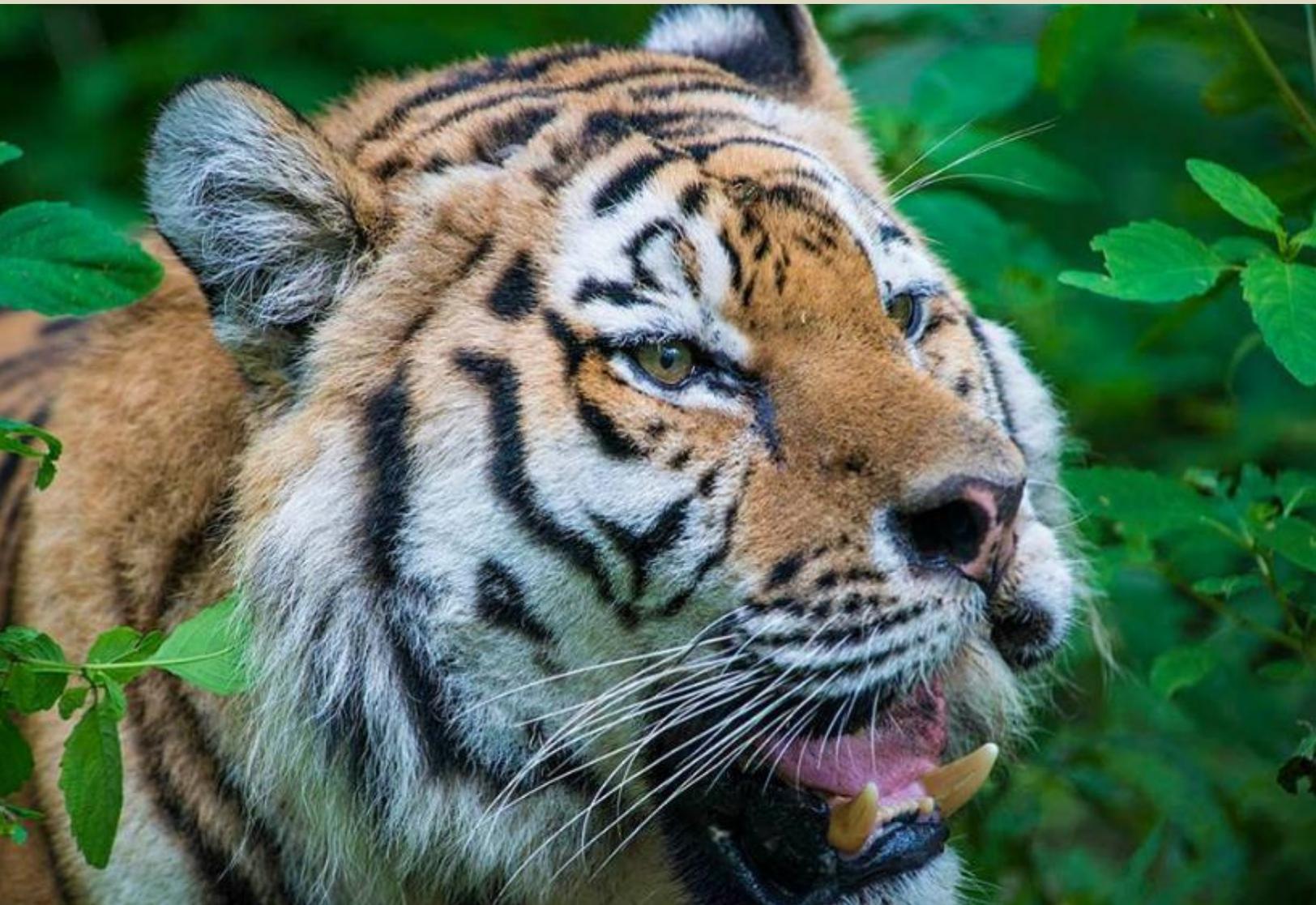




# Big Hearts Foundation

## ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

Charity Commission registration 1145269



# WHAT WE DO

**OUR VISION:** *To transform the society in former Soviet countries into the one where animal welfare is understood, respected by everyone and protected by effective legislation.*

**Big Hearts Foundation** is the first animal welfare organization working on a regional level in former Soviet countries. We are active in 27 cities across Russia, the Ukraine and Belarus. We strive to incrementally increase animal welfare in Russia and the surrounding countries. After the fall of communism animal welfare has been neglected by the government and most people of the country. The situation is critical and animal suffering is rife. We are changing this by bringing the Western expertise and experience in animal welfare to Russia, the Ukraine and Belarus to start with, and we plan to expand our reach to the surrounding countries in the future.

## OUR PROGRAMMES:

- Raising Awareness Programme: raising awareness and promoting responsible pet ownership, thus stopping animals from being abused and abandoned. Improving the work of animal shelters.
- Spaying and Neutering Programme: providing affordable or free spay/neutering services for disadvantaged and low-income families, pensioners and shelter animals by working closely with the local vet practices.
- Humane Education Programme: teaching the young generation to respect nature and animals.
- Government Lobbying Programme: lobbying the Russian government to help them write effective animal welfare laws.
- Wildlife Conservation Programme: improving the plight of wild animals and animals in captivity and enable their rehabilitation back into the wild where possible.

Our Founder and Trustees do not receive any financial benefit from the charity's activities. Instead, they invest their time, energy and money in improving the plight of stray and wild animals that need our help. Our overheads and employee costs are kept to respectable 23% of our income, with a vast part of the overheads being

covered by the Founder. This means that every pound or dollar that gets donated to us is directly spent on saving an animal from a cruel and painful death.

## WHAT WE DO

### ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

#### IMPROVING LEGISLATION

- Big Hearts Foundation continues to lobby the Russian government for the legislation that increases punishment for animal cruelty and makes Article 245, which deals with punishment for cruelty to animals, usable. Currently only 15 cases on charges of animal cruelty are opened in Russia per year and most of them are left unresolved by the police due to the lack of political will and effective laws.
- We take part in a number of working groups in the Russian government and continue to lobby [several legislative bills](#):
  - Ketamine law: easing off the rules and restrictions for vets to be able to use Ketamine again as a general anaesthetic after the ban was introduced in 2012.
  - Law on Responsible Treatment of Animals comprising of such issues such as mandatory registration, government stray animal policies, and practice regulation in pet shops. Over the year we wrote and submitted a bill proposing a ban on using animals in cosmetics testing in Russia from 2020. The Bill is the first of its kind in Russia and its purpose is to protect animals in Russia from the outdated and cruel practices of animal testing. After twelve months of intensive lobbying, consultation and drafting from the Big Hearts Foundation and Cruelty Free International, senior Duma Parliament members Sergei Doronin and Igor Igoshin, the Bill was finally published in August 2015. The Bill has already sparked a lively debate with extensive coverage in the mainstream Russian press and amongst high profile public figures.



*Figure 1. A meeting of the working group on the Russian animal welfare: Russian Duma Members, Big Hearts Foundation and Cruelty Free International, January 2015*

- We have submitted a proposal for legislation at the regional level in Moscow, which bans begging with animals in the street. This cruel practice in Russia is called ‘korobochniki’, meaning “people with boxes”. These fraudsters pose as homeless and sit in the streets with boxes full of kittens and puppies and beg for money to feed them. In the end the animals die from neglect and disease and their bodies usually end up being discarded in the woods or by the side of the road.



*Figure 2. Kittens in the “prison” of “korobochniki” and the fraudsters themselves*

- With the help from our volunteers we have translated more than 20 documents in English containing foreign legislation on exotic pets, pet sales, zoos, circuses, veterinary controlled substances and wild animal welfare. All of this is highly needed to draft future legislation to benefit animals.

- The President of Big Hearts Foundation Russia, Anastasia Komagina, is a trained lawyer. She provided legal counselling to the veterinarian Dr Shpak, who had been jailed for 8 years for using the general anaesthetic drug Ketamine on animals in his practice in Russia in 2012. He was freed in August 2015. Dr Shpak now cooperates with Big Hearts Foundation on our veterinarian and legislative work in Russia.



*Figure 3. Our team in Russia attending a government meeting in the city of Tambov, discussing stray animal practices and providing recommendations on regional law*

## RAISING COMPANION ANIMAL WELFARE

Neutering projects across **10 cities**-the **total of 1046 cats** and **123 dogs** neutered  
**= 1169 animals in 2014-15 alone.**

This gives shelter animals a chance to be rehomed and an opportunity for individuals on low income to neuter their pets, hence preventing the suffering of thousands of their offspring.



*Figure 4. Cats spayed in the project sponsored by The Persula Foundation*

- In October 2014 we visited an overpopulated animal shelter in Gusj Hrustalnij city, and wrote a report with a full analysis of the situation highlighting the 5 freedoms of Animal welfare:
  - freedom from hunger or thirst;
  - freedom from thermal or physical discomfort;
  - freedom from pain, injury and disease;
  - freedom from fear and distress;
  - freedom to indulge in normal behaviour patterns.

Based on our findings we made suggestions for improvements to the shelter to the local authorities and the shelter director.



*Figure 5. Animals at the Gusj Hrustalnij city*

- In April 2015 we started the improvement works and creating of a vet room at in the Suoyarvi City shelter. The heating and chimney installation are underway, and we are currently raising funds for the completion of the veterinary room.



*Figure 6. Animals of the Suoyarvi City shelter*

- We are helping a shelter in the Republic of Dagestan with our expertise and costs of spaying and neutering.



Figure 7. Animals of the shelter in the Republic of Dagestan

- We also ventured out of Russia for a bit, to Liberia. [LAWCS](#) approached us asking for our expertise and materials in humane education. We were very impressed with their work progress, especially since they are constrained by operating in one of the poorest countries in the world and dealing with Ebola. We realized that we could make a big difference with a relatively small amount of money. Big Hearts Foundation paid for the first vet in Liberia to receive proper training and to acquire skills and materials for animal neutering/spaying. We also bought a video projector which allows the classes of as many as 200 students to view humane cartoons and movies. This is being moved around schools now. The feedback from the charity has been amazing:

*“The training sponsorship provided by Big Hearts to LAWCS for vet Abraham is making tremendous impact in Liberia. After the training, LAWCS is now embarked on organizing dog owners and training them on responsible dog ownership including the importance of spay/neuter program. LAWCS is also providing free veterinary care and encouraging dog owners to build a safe haven for their dogs. We are so grateful to you for your tremendous assistance toward LAWCS` activities*

*in Liberia.*

*We received the funds sent and bought the projector. During the first two days of using the projector, we gone over 1,000 children who were interested in the program. The program attracted more children than before. We started by explaining to the children the plight of animals followed by the cartoon movie. We are trying to identify some groups who might help us with small funds for vegan food during the presentation. The program can sometimes last for three to four hours so providing little vegan meal for the children will be good.”- Morris Darbo, Director of LAWCS.*



*Figure 8. Children watching the humane cartoons and the vet Abraham at work.*

## IMPROVING WILD AND CAPTIVE ANIMAL WELFARE

- After our team's visit to UTYOS Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre in Khabarovsk, Russia, in March 2015 we saw that for them to do their yearly bear cub rehabilitation work effectively, they need to equip the bear enclosure with an electric fence and CCTV cameras. The new fence with electricity and CCTV cameras were funded by Big Hearts Foundation. This will allow for the rescued bear cubs that are usually found after their mothers have been killed, to be rehabilitated back into the wild.
- In February-May 2015 we paid for some of the food for 3 rescued bear cubs and an Amur tiger. The tiger was released back in the wild in May 2015.
- We continue to work closely with UTYOS and look for ways to help them to use their expertise and land to their full potential to rehabilitate Brown and Himalayan bears and Amur tigers, and protect their habitat in the wild.



*Figure 9. Top to bottom: Anna Kogan, Founder, helping with the camera trap installation; the bear enclosure with the new fence and CCTV; bear cubs being released; the resident Amur tiger at UTYOS.*

- We are currently funding construction of enclosures for a Himalayan bear and puma at the wild animal centre in Tomsk city, Russia. The centre had lived through a tragic death of their founder and director, Maria Vtorushina, in July 2015, when they approached us to help them raise the emergency funds to keep the centre going. We are working hard to provide continued support in finding sponsorships to improve other animals' enclosures as well.



*Figure 10. The bear Manya and puma Atos in their current inadequate enclosures.*

- In March 2015, in cooperation with World Animal Protection we campaigned, successfully rescued and re-homed two “Sochi bears” from an abusive restaurant owner: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-31622170>
- Our campaign for release of two orcas held at the VDNH pavilion in Moscow and two beluga whales living in a travelling dolphinarium carried on in 2015. We continue a dialogue and correspondence with the local authorities on these matters. Moreover, Big Hearts Foundation participated in the making of an eye-opening film about orcas in captivity and dolphin shows in Russia.



*Figure 11. The orcas in captivity in Moscow*

- We gathered valuable material on captive animal welfare in zoos and entertainment industry from the Western experts, and translated it into Russian. These materials form an invaluable resource for our future work on improving Russian animal welfare legislation.
- After an investigative visit to Kazan and Rostov-on-Don zoos, we created an independent report on the welfare of their animals and condition of the enclosures. We presented the analysis and improvement recommendations to the management of the zoos. The management of both zoos have agreed to cooperate with Big Hearts Foundation and use our expertise to improve the conditions the animals are kept in



*Figure 12. Animals in the enclosures at Kazan and Rostov-on-Don zoos during the investigation*

## HUMANE EDUCATION AND RAISING AWARENESS

- We are working together with an expert on humane education in the Ukraine - Sasha Bogachyk, who has 15 years of experience in the field. Our joint cooperation has proven to be effective in bringing humane education to Russia. We have translated a full educational course created by Bogachyk from Ukrainian to Russian and adapted it for the Russian-speaking audience. We promoted this teaching material and the course syllabus created by us at a large Teacher Fair in Moscow earlier this year. Irina Alisova and Anastasia Komagina, our colleagues in Moscow, distributed over 200 copies of the materials to the teachers attending the event. A report on the event can be found here. Our presentation at the fair attracted a lot of interest and 38 teachers from all over Russia signed up for email updates. The materials have been emailed to animal welfare organizations and independent activist across 42 cities in Russia. The latest feedback is that the materials are being used in schools, library events and to approach other teachers to implement them in other schools in their cities. As the result of these efforts 5 schools have adopted humane education classes on a permanent basis.



*Figure 13. Humane education materials are being introduced to other teachers in schools and at the Teacher Fair*

- We received a grant from the Persula Foundation to develop an online course in Humane Education in Russian and Ukrainian languages for teachers and activists. The course is due to be ready in autumn 2015. Once launched, the course will allow teachers and activists in remote areas to get certified in Humane Education and teach it in primary and secondary schools, thus spreading the knowledge across a vast geographical area.

- Big Hearts Foundation creates a variety of humane education materials and makes them available on our Russian website, blog and newsletters to help animal welfare volunteers, animal shelters and concerned individuals to raise awareness:
  - [Leaflets for responsible pet ownership](#) are distributed by us in pet shops, vet clinics and animal shelters.
  - [Social ads on a variety of topics](#), such as photo business with exotic animals, neutering, dangers of letting dogs roam free and ‘animal markets’.
  - [Custom-made humane education materials](#) for the Russian speakers.



*Figure 14. Big Hearts Foundation volunteers distributing awareness leaflets in Russia*

- Big Hearts Foundation volunteers have so far distributed 14,000 leaflets on beaches in Sochi, Russia, warning tourists about the evils of the trade in exotic animals and how they might be contributing to the animal suffering and criminal activities by paying to take pictures with the animals.
- As and when the need arises, time permitting, we provide advice and support to animal shelters and volunteers on:
  - a. Negotiations with the local government authorities;
  - b. Raising funds and becoming self-sustainable;
  - c. Effective animal care and re-homing;
  - d. Legal advice and cruelty prosecution.

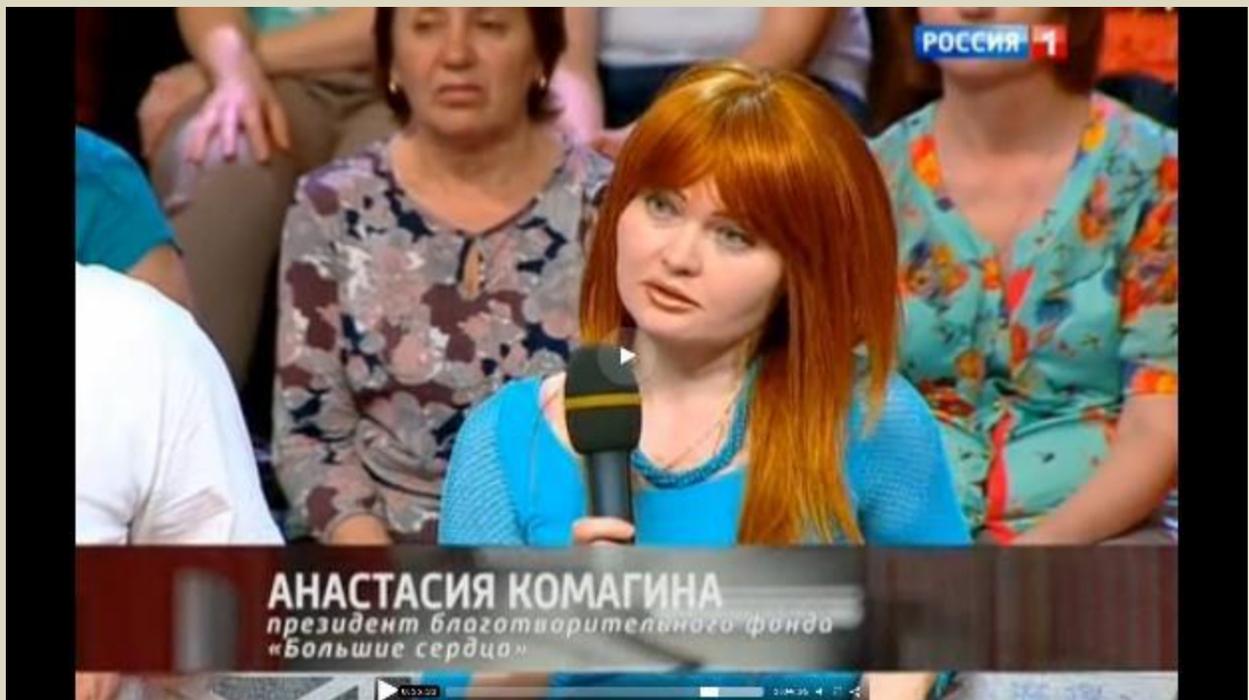


*Figure 15. The animal shelters we are working with*

- Articles in Russian press and appearance on TV programs are a vital part of our raising awareness campaign in Russia, shedding light on a variety of animal welfare issues and offering realistic humane solutions. Some of them can be found on our Russian and English websites:

[www.bolshieserdca.ru](http://www.bolshieserdca.ru)

[www.bigheartsfoundation.org](http://www.bigheartsfoundation.org)



*Figure 16. Anastasia Komagina, President of Big Hearts Foundation Russia, taking part in a televised discussion on animal welfare in Russia, Russia 1 channel*

- We held a children’s drawing competition as part of our Humane Education Lessons in Belarus and the city of Petrozavodsk, Russia. A calendar was created using the winning drawings. All proceeds from the sale of these calendars will go towards projects that save animal lives. Humane Education lessons will continue to be taught at these schools.



*Figure 17. Humane Education lessons in schools in Russia and Belarus*

- We’ve completed production of the first episodes of a Humane Education cartoon:  
 In cooperation with the most influential animation studio in Russia, Big Hearts Foundation has developed a cartoon series, aimed at children aged 6-11 years. On completion of 10 episodes, the series is guaranteed to be broadcasted on at least 3 different national TV channels and posted on several online streaming websites. After having done a cost-benefit analysis of the different means of delivering humane education to children and research into the reach of social advertisement, we found that a cartoon made in Russia and shown on the country’s national TV could be the most effective way to make a large impact on a generation of children who would grow up watching it. Earlier this year we ran a crowdfunding campaign to raise funds for the remainder of the series, but we did not manage to reach the target amount. We continue our search for donors who would share our passion of this idea.

**WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE COOPERATION WITH,  
MATERIALS & EXPERTISE FROM:**

Cruelty free International

The Persula Foundation

World Animal Protection

AnimalsAsia.org

Naturewatch.org

Brigitte Bardot Foundation

Mayhew International

Charitytranslators.org

## **GOVERNANCE IN PLACE**

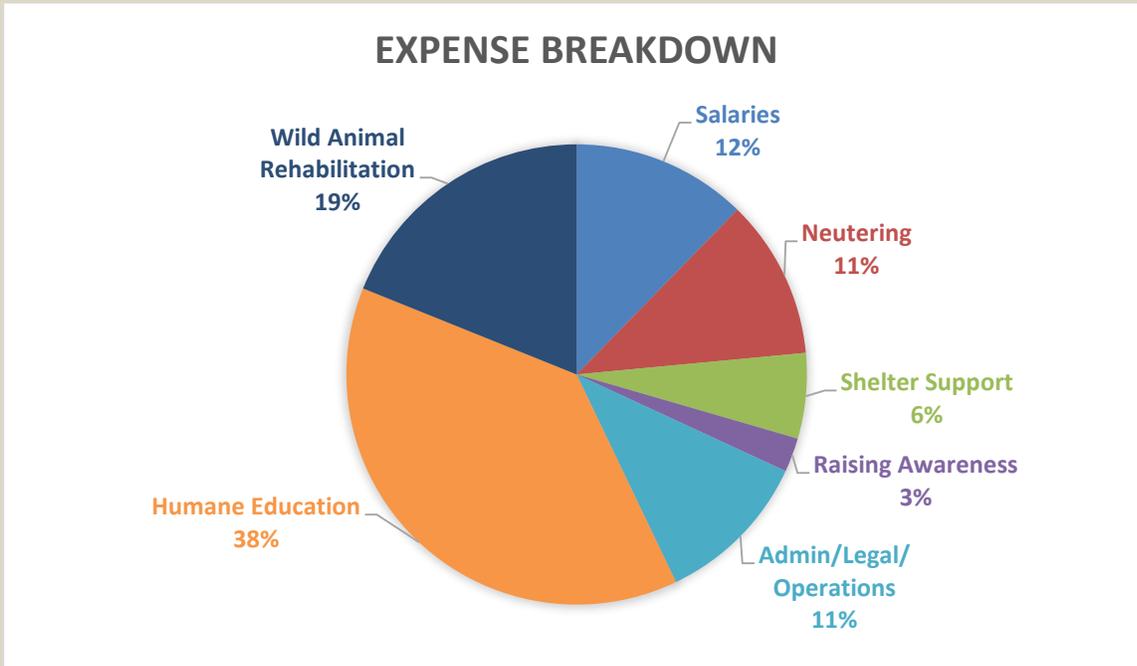
All neutering projects are verified by means of receiving receipts and photos of surgeries from the project leads and volunteers.

All other project expenses are verified by receipts, pictures and videos from the projects.

Our volunteers also regularly visit projects we are involved in.

All projects provide income/expenses reports.

# FINANCIALS



## Comments on reserves and funds sources:

Currently the principal source of our income is the donations from the founder with additional funds raised through fundraising campaigns and trust foundation grants.

Any funding received has allowed us to relive and prevent animal suffering, run our spay/neuter projects, rescue and rehabilitate wild animals, and raise awareness about these issues in the society. None of this would be possible without the donations and grants we receive.



Big Hearts Foundation No (if any)

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from 02/09/2014 To 01/09/2015

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Founder contribution	50,000	-	-	50,000	-
Partners and Grants	5,194	-	-	5,194	-
Paypal donations	2,448	-	-	2,448	-
Other donors	1,338	-	-	1,338	-
Justgiving donations	262	-	-	262	-
Everyclick	125	-	-	125	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sub total(Gross income for AR)</i>	<b>59,367</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>59,367</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	22,236	-	-	22,236	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sub total</i>	<b>22,236</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>22,236.00</b>	<b>-</b>
<i>Total receipts</i>	<b>81,603</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>81,603</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Neutering	8,648	-	-	8,648	-
Shelter support	4,383	-	-	4,383	-
Salaries	9,722	-	-	9,722	-
Humane Education	29,515	-	-	29,515	-
admin: transfer costs/ book keeping/ justgiving/ web / postage/ transportand travel	5,660	-	-	5,660	-
Wild animal rehabilitation	14,612	-	-	14,612	-
Raising awareness	1,832	-	-	1,832	-
Fundraising and Team Training	2,838	-	-	2,838	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sub total</i>	<b>77,210</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>77,210</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sub total</i>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<i>Total payments</i>	<b>77,210</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>77,210</b>	<b>-</b>
<i>Net of receipts/(payments)</i>	<b>4,393</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,393</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Cash funds this year end</i>	<b>4,393</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,393</b>	<b>-</b>

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	cash in bank	4,394	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<i>Total cash funds</i>	<b>4,394</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

Agreement Error

OK

OK

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

Akogan

Anna Kogan

10/09/2015

# THE FUTURE

## Big Hearts Foundation Goals, September 2015/2016

### Neutering and local animal welfare development

- To neuter 3000 cats and dogs in most deprived regions of Russia.
- To continue counselling and cooperation with the existing cities and shelters. To help them become self-sustainable, improve their contacts with the local authorities, and raise their PR profile. To arrange for two Russian veterinarian surgeons to attend training courses abroad and improve their knowledge base and skills. To complete veterinary and quarantine area in Suoyarvi shelter. To remain a sounding board and advice centre (including legal advice where possible) for various animal emergencies and local animal abuse issues.

### Wild and Captive Wild Animal Welfare

- To secure funding for rehabilitation of twelve bear cubs rescued by UTYOS Wildlife Centre back into the wild in 2016 To secure funding for construction of an enclosure for wild antelope at the UTYOS centre.
- To secure funding for larger and enriched enclosures for the puma and leopard at Totem Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre, Tomsk, Russia.
- To launch an active anti – petting zoo campaign in Russia, exposing the ongoing animal cruelty in them and shutting some of these places down with legal means.
- To see through the recommended enclosure updates at Kazan and Rostov-on-Don zoos, thus improving the conditions for their animals.
- To investigate and provide recommendations to and establish relationships with three other Russian zoos.
- To transfer a Himalayan bear that cannot be rehabilitated by UTYOS to a Western zoo.

## **Humane Education**

- To complete the online Humane Education course in the Ukrainian and Russian language and to teach it to 200 teachers and activists in Russia, the Ukraine and Belarus.
- To continue expanding the Kindness Lessons to 10 more Russian schools and in institutions like children's foster homes and centres for disadvantaged families.
- To publish articles in the largest parenting magazine in Russia on various themes of raising children to be humane.
- To attend teacher conferences and professional development events for tutors and teachers across Russia, presenting and promoting our materials and online course in humane education.

## **Raising Awareness**

- To complete a country-wide survey, using a respected survey centre Levada, educating people about realistic options on stray animal population control and asking for their opinions on what should and could be done to reduce the numbers of stray animals. How to deal with the problem of strays basically.
- To print 30,000 Big Hearts booklets on responsible pet ownership and such issues as neutering, declawing of cats, animal allergy and many others. To distribute the booklets in pet shops, vet clinics and animal shelters.
- To continue empowering local animal welfare advocates: organize non-companion animal activists, vegetarian and wild animal advocates into interest groups and forums. To give them tools that would allow them to structure and increase their activities, for example by translating the English guide for Animal Activists, adapting it to for the Russian audience and making it available online.

## **Animal Welfare Legislation**

- To continue our lobbying work on anti- cruelty law and for the increase in levels of punishment for animal cruelty offences. We have resubmitted our earlier proposal rejected by the government by providing new statistical data on the reasons why current law is not functioning properly.

- To continue our campaign in the Russian press about the anti-animal cruelty law not functioning properly by highlighting regularly occurring cases of animal cruelty.
- To carry on with our participation in the working group on Ketamine drug law, pushing for further relaxation of the rules on its use in the veterinary practice.
- To keep raising the discussion in the Duma (Russian Parliament) on current roadblocks preventing the stray population control law from moving forward.– To continue our joint lobbying work on the ban for testing cosmetics on animals, with the Russian politicians and Cruelty Free International. Our goal is to have this law accepted in the Duma by end of 2015/ early 2016, with the ban starting in 2020. In the meantime, we will cooperate with medical and science students and companies to make the alternative in-vitro testing methods available in Russia. To get the ministers in Duma to restart the working groups on our proposed laws on exotic pets, wild animal welfare and hunting. These proposals were shelved by Duma in early 2015.
- To continue attending regional government meetings and ensuring regional laws and stray animal practices are moving in the right direction.

**IN GENERAL:** To further increase our cooperation with international animal welfare charities, trust foundations and advocates. To raise awareness worldwide about the dire situation with animal cruelty and neglect in Russia and solutions for improving it.

# STRUCTURE / GOVERNANCE

## OUR TEAM IN EUROPE:

Anna Kogan - Founder and CEO

Olga Odarchenko – Social Ads and Social Media Manager

Nelly Mihill – Fundraising Manager

Marija Musja – Fundraising Consultant

Ekaterina Kochegurova – Regional Development and Raising Awareness- based in Italy.

Katarzyna Smorag – Translator

## OUR TRUSTEES:

Alla Furmanova

Yelena Fedotova

## OUR TEAM IN RUSSIA:

Anastasia Komagina, Legal Director and President of Big Hearts Foundation Russia

Leisan Shavaliyeva – Captive Animal Welfare Director

Irina Alisova – Scientist and Teacher, Expert on Alternative to Animals Testing Technologies

Vladimir Rybalko – Biologist, Shelter Director, Expert on Effective Stray Animal Practices and Founder of the 5 Freedoms movement in Russia

And 39 other volunteers across various regions.

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<https://www.facebook.com/bolshieserca>



[https://instagram.com/big\\_hearts\\_foundation/](https://instagram.com/big_hearts_foundation/)