

# Student Company



## Final Report Year of Operation 2009/2010

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**Name of the company: "LEARNING IN THE SPOTLIGHT"**

**Date of foundation:** October 3, 2009

**Date of liquidation:** May 20, 2010

**Mission of the Company:** To establish and successfully manage a school theatre with a purpose to gain practical knowledge and experience of both business operations and art production and provide ourselves and our schoolmates opportunity to learn and perfect a variety of skills in an engaging and creative way by 'learning through acting.' Our aims are to express and share our passion to theatre, stimulate imagination and creativity, make learning fun, gain appreciation and profit from a high-quality product, have lasting positive impact on our consumers, shareholders and community, practice and apply developed ideas, insights, values and learned skills.

**Product:** Direction, production and performance of theatrical activities designed to motivate and engage students - both as participants and auditors – to learn enjoy learning through artistic experience in an informative, creative and entertaining fashion. Our innovative product enriches and extends traditional school courses, provides stimulating experiences and strong incentives to learn and discover, increases motivation and satisfaction and improves performance at school.

**Summary of financial results:** Share capital – 24 €  
Proceeds from realization of our product – 445 €  
Net profit — 54.23 €  
Dividends — 101 %

**Summary statement of Company performance:**

Our major achievements:

- Successful implementation of our business idea and plans into practice;
- Better understanding of major trends and opportunities for founding and running an art business enterprise;
- Satisfaction of our clients and shareholders;
- First place at the 'Ideas Fair' at south west district of Moscow organized by Education Department of Moscow;
- Participation in the UNESCO Contest in Dzerzhinsk;
- JA Russia's Company of the Year 2010.

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# Organizing and Managing the Company

*All the world's a stage (from As You Like it by William Shakespeare)*

These famous words by William Shakespeare have a special meaning for “Learning in the Spotlight” Company. All members of the Company are passionate fans of theatre – a powerful source of imagination, aesthetic experience and opportunity to communicate with art and through art enabling people better understand themselves and their heritage, human behavior, values, and cultural diversity.

School is a part of the world and an important part of each person’s life, and it is important to make school interesting and engaging for students. Unfortunately, the recent research undertaken by the All-Russia Foundation "Public Opinion" demonstrated that many students regard studying at school as too difficult (55%) and/or boring (53%). How to tackle this problem? Our innovative solution is based on introduction of theatre activities at school as a springboard for more active engagement of our peers and younger students in their learning to increase motivation and satisfaction and improve performance at school.

“Learning in the Spotlight” Company started and managed a school theatre with a primary objective throughout the course of the project to create a more creative learning environment and offer our schoolmates theatrical activities of both educational and entertainment value providing a rare opportunity to learn through acting on stage and/or attending performances.

To achieve this aim our Company developed drama games and skits to enrich traditional classes and directed plays production, facilitating the learning activities with theatre techniques to support and complement classroom curriculum and make it more communicative and ‘alive’.

Our school theatre served as a laboratory where Company members could gain practical experience of business operations and our clients – both actors and auditors - were able to fulfill and improve requirements of academic disciplines and extend their knowledge and a variety of skills.

Our Company’s activities were intended to supplement and enrich English language courses for elementary school students and Russian Language and Literature classes at middle school. Our intentions included promotion of arts and language learning, reinforcement of comprehension and appreciation of Russian classic literature, fostering literacy and communication skills, providing opportunities for creativity and self-expression, building confidence, and exploration of professional options and possible career paths.

We directed a play based on a short story by Anton Pavlovich Chekhov whose jubilee Russia is celebrating in 2010, for and with participation of middle school students, and organized an excursion to Melikhovo where famous Russian dramatist lived and worked until 1899 and created over 40 of his masterpieces. For younger students learning (and often struggling) the basics of English language we offered a selection of drama games and skits to perform at classrooms, as well as 3 full-scale staged nursery tales designed to help kids learn new words and grammar, improve understanding, reading, writing, speaking and listening skills, master pronunciation and spoken communication in the target language.

Our plans and decisions were based on research and calculations. We worked as a team to generate and evaluate our business idea, develop business plan, specify details of managing a successful and profitable company that applies modern business practices, techniques and tools and principles of responsibility.

Our product is innovative and has significant competitive advantages. It is enjoyed by students, is available and appealing for varied audiences, provides novelty, excitement, strong motivation and engagement at any stage of development and delivery process, at a cost and benefit balance, which makes it possible for students to do some catching up and improve performance, including those kids who cannot take additional courses because of financial or other reasons. It proved to be an interesting and entertaining tool that has many positive effects and supports many aspects of learning in selected areas

## **Management Team and Structure of the Company**

Company management team was elected in October 2009. One of the tasks we had ahead of us was to decide on the Company and management structure, and each team member's responsibilities.

Theatre happens when actors perform on stage, and the audience is listening and watching. When all the elements: actors, audience, stage and performance are put together theatre brings to life various experiences and educates all participants. Opportunities to participate are numerous and all Company members and the entire school were actively involved, including our team, and our clients – actors and spectators.

Production and direction of theatrical activities required lots of time, various skills and efforts and ensemble work. Distribution of different tasks was based on the personal skills, strengths and talents and provided each member opportunity and support to accomplish and enjoy his or her part of work. However we eventually found that to be successful as a team in our business project each individual member of the company has to become involved in various activities, such as selection or development plays, games and skits, writing scripts and creating technical designs, dealing with stage settings and scenery, auditions, rehearsals, developing ideas and designs of costumes and makeup, promotion and sales. Of major importance was to identify who was interested in and had expertise to do all that and more... It was extremely helpful that each of us already had some experience in theatrical experience and was eager to collaborate with others, share experience with teammates and participating schoolmates as well as keen on learning and practicing new skills. We learned a lot and enjoyed it.

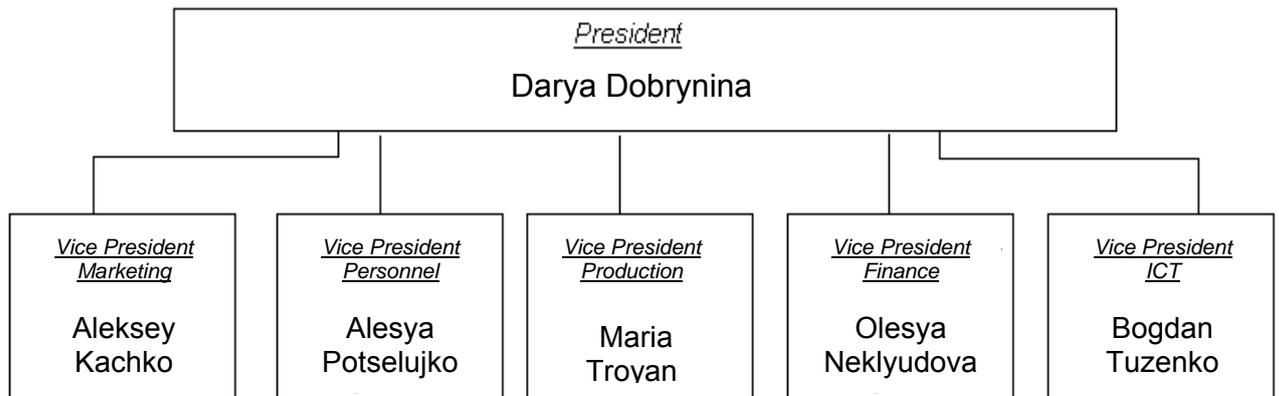
Coordination, good communication, training, monitoring and support were the major tasks we need to keep going. The most important lessons learned were the importance of listening to others and respecting other people's opinions, the need to motivate and be a role model. Company program experience also helped us better understand entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial skills, mindset and behavior.

Company members had no fixed wages. However each person's engagement and efficiency were awarded through bonuses and each accomplishment had its own financial and educational value.

We met on a weekly basis to discuss plans and to update and evaluate results. Plays production required additional time dedicated to writing script materials, rehearsals,

managing light, color, sound and other stage settings. In the majority of plays we staged a few props were all that were necessary, and we were able to focus on the major task – provide experience of learning through acting, and helping younger students to excel.

## Company Structure



## Values and Priorities

- Collaboration and Support
- Enthusiasm and Leadership
- Innovation and improvement
- Dedication and Responsibility
- Learning and Achievement

## Company Operations

“Learning in the Spotlight” Company product was presented by:

- Production of drama games and skits performed at English language elementary school classes or as additional classroom activities in order to add excitement and fun to learning foreign language, introduce new words and grammar, improve understanding, listening, reading, writing and communication skills, mastering pronunciation and intonation and help students to overcome language barriers and obtain confidence through interaction and artistic experience.
- Direction of short one-act plays with participation of young students-actors staged and performed for larger audience of elementary school students–spectators, providing students in addition to those experiences listed above, motivation to explore and build skills involved in performance for the audience.



- Dramatization and direction of a short story “Kashtanka” by Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, a world-known Russian writer and dramatist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century on occasion of Chekhov’s jubilee in 2010 and with a purpose fostering interest of the middle school students to Chekhov’s creative work and Russian cultural heritage.
- Organization of the guided excursion at Melikhovo – estate-museum near Moscow where Anton Pavlovich Chekhov lived several years working on over 40 of his masterpieces. This activity was design to broaden students’ knowledge and comprehension of famous Russian classic, and expanded classroom experience.



Company’s operations were focused on the following:

- Analysis of the content of literature and language courses for middle and elementary school classes to link the elements of students’ studies with artistic experience provided by our Company in order to enrich and extend students’ experiences;
- Research and selection of sources for drama games, skits and play production<sup>1</sup>;
- Writing scripts, development of educational drama games and skits;
- Delivery of drama games and skits to elementary school students during their classroom sessions or as after-school activities;
- Production activities referring to the development, rehearsal and performing of plays for an audience;
- Promotion of the product
- Identifying and recruiting actors
- Marketing and ticket sales
- Rehearsals, direction of performance
- Organizing activities at school.

Throughout the period of the Company’s operations we provided 9 classroom and after school activities and staged 3 nursery tales in English language for younger students, 1 play based on dramatization of Chekhov’s “Kashtanka” and organized 1 excursion at Melikhovo, Chekhov’s residence in late 1890s.

Production facilities and equipment were provided by school administration as well as space for rehearsals and staging public performances. Scripts were written by Company members, designs and production of costumes, makeup and stage sets – as well. We used simple materials and were not keen on fancy props and costumes, encouraging ourselves and others to concentrate on performance, variety of learning experiences and styles of productions, and meeting safety and performance standards.



<sup>1</sup> The English language resources – Russian folk-tales translated to English were obtained at free web-resources

Putting together improvised and prepared scenes, role-plays, games and skits, and direction stage performances by actors for auditors of specific ages and purposes were tailored to suit the target audiences, offer opportunities to benefit from this experience and foster skills learned at classrooms.

### **Details of Plays Production**

Russian nursery tale «Turnip»: materials for costumes and props – 24 €; time of performance – 35 minutes; venue – school # 108; audience – 200 elementary school students; tickets – 0.5 € per. person.

Russian nursery tale «Roly-Poly» : materials for costumes and props – 37,5 €; time of performance - 45 minutes; venue – school # 108; audience – 200 elementary school students; tickets – 0.5 € per. person.

Nursery tale «Little Bears»: materials for costumes and props – 37,5 €; time of performance - 45 minutes; venue – school # 108; audience – 200 elementary school students; tickets – 0.5 € per. person.

Dramatization of Chekov's story «Kashtanka»: materials for costumes and props – 37,5 €; time of performance - 45 minutes; venue – school # 108; audience – 200 middle school students; tickets – 0.5 € per. person.

Guided Excursion at Melikhovo («Life and Creative Work of Anton Chekhov): time of excursion - 90 minutes; costs per participant - 0.5 € (includes organization of excursion and guides' services by Alesya Potselujko and Maria Troyan). Free transportation and meals were provided by school administration.



## **Marketing Report**

### **Marketing Research**

Marketing research conducted to learn about potential demand encouraged us to start the business project. 82% our schoolmates were interested and willing to use our product either as actors or as spectators. 61 % parents and 89% teachers approved and supported our idea.

**Target market:** students age 7-12

**Method of distribution:** tickets were distributed through the Parental Council of our school. Cash was kept in the safe in the Council office at school.

### **Price Policy**

Our innovative and exclusive product filled a unique niche. We did not have competitors and, according to our research the majority of our schoolmates were willing to buy it. Our intention was to provide our services to as many students as possible at a cost and benefit balance favorable to them. We made a decision to charge our customers at 0.5 € rate for attendance at 1 stage performance. 80% of our target audience was able and willing to buy our services at average price. We decided to provide pro bono classroom and after-classes theatrical activities for elementary school students. Also, we did not charge students-actors participating in the plays stage performance or pay them for their performance – since they were not employed by us. In fact student-actors were our Company's clients – we educated, entertained and enlightened them through interactive theatric activities in a simulating and enriching way, making learning experience more enjoyable and effective for them and their peers – students-auditors who also gained new learning and artistic experience, but unlike the actors, were charged for participation.

Our calculations ensured us that we can keep our business going, and still provide stockholder dividend and plan a charitable donation if only we shall be as inventive and cost effective as possible. Situation provided stimulation and incentive to think 'out of box' to keep production costs low. Firstly, we used as much creativity, imagination, Company members' technology and handicraft skills and recycled materials as possible. Secondly, our choice of nursery tales being staged in English for elementary school students was wise, not only because it provided lots of fun and satisfaction to students, but also, because small groups of students were involved in performance and needed costumes. Thirdly, we solicited in-kind support (spaces, facilities, equipment, transportation, meals), and school administration was responsive and supportive to our requests.

To inform and attract our customers we used advertising and promotion. We designed and distributed colorful and attractive booklets and fliers with basic information about our Company, contact information and full list of our products. We arranged presentations and announcements, and printed programs to distribute at school and help our schoolmates learn the latest news and benefit from becoming involved. To maintain the quality service and improve customer care we carried out surveys to find out our clients' opinion about our work after every activity and performance.

In addition to 4 staged performances at our school, we directed pro bono 2 nursery tales performances for kids at kindergarten and orphanage, and got loads of appreciation and admiration from our audiences. We donated all costumes and other materials to the orphanage, and trained kids on play production and stage setting. We are planning to attend and enjoy their performance shortly.

# Finance Report

Below are our financial data and results of the year.

## «Learning in the Spotlight» company balance sheet 05.15.2010

		€
<b>Current Assets:</b>		
Stock		€ 24,00
Debtors		-
Cash at Bank		-
Cash in Hand		€ 63,80
<b>TOTAL A</b>		<b>€ 87,80</b>
<i>Less:</i>		
<b>Current Liabilities:</b>		
Bank Overdraft		
Loans		
Creditors		
Tax	€ 9,57	
<b>TOTAL B</b>	€ 9,57	
	<b>BALANCE (C)</b>	<b>€ 78,23</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>		
Issued Share Capital: _96_ shares at 0,25€		€ 24,00
Profit & Loss Account		€ 54,23
Shareholders' Funds		€ 78,23

*Note: The total at C should equal the total at D*



# Conclusions

Our Company accomplished its major objectives and was overall successful. We were keen on high quality performance and improvement of our services and operations. We developed and promoted innovative learning tool promoting and educating about languages and literature and offered rewarding theatrical experiences to our schoolmates. Our clients were receptive to the offered 'learn through acting' experience, especially younger students, who are closer to 'make-believe' type of activities. Our research showed an average 20% growth of interest and engagement in Russian literature and language classes at middle school, and in English language courses at elementary school. We have many positive feedbacks from students, teachers and parents. More students expressed their interest in being actively involved in various stages and elements of production and direction of stage performances, including development scripts and stage settings and acting at stage rather just watching. Our peers at high school, inspired by our example, are planning to start their own Student companies next academic year. Our Company team had a valuable experience of starting and running an enterprise project and testing our capability in arts and entertainment industry, quite appealing to us as a potential professional area. We had a great chance to experiment and explore by performing various business operations, and enjoyed cooperation and teamwork, as well as considerable success in all our endeavors, including our obligation to provide a stockholder dividend and opportunity to give back to our community and provide volunteer services. We learned invaluable business lessons and better comprehended the concept of responsibility – not through a textbook, but through our own experience. Our greatest asset was what we were able to learn and practice and apply today and in the future.

If *All the world's a stage*, it takes a good idea, and a vision, lots of skills, team efforts, enthusiasm and persistence to write a really good script and to direct an excellent production and performance. We tried doing it as a student company that organized a school theatre because we wanted to make a difference, become more actively involved and responsible for the way we are learning, and help ourselves and our schoolmates learn enjoying learning. Now we feel really proud that we have.

## Teacher's Note

Company "Learning in the Spotlight" started and managed its project at school # 108 in Moscow on the base of and with a use of major principles of JA-YE European network. Participating students had a unique opportunity to gain practical experience and knowledge of business operations and are now better educated and prepared, as well as motivated and encouraged to be entrepreneurial and enterprising, innovative and creative in their study and lives, and future careers. They are better prepared to make a wise professional choice, enjoy accomplishments and contribute to the well-being and sustainability of their communities.

Each Company member could interact and collaborate and each from their supervisors and each other. This atmosphere provided incentives for opening of potential and personal growth.

The members of the "Learning in the Spotlight" Company made a decision regarding their future as responsible and innovative entrepreneurs.