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Russia's First Children's Drone School Opens in Krasnodar as Founder Rejects Militarization Claims

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Authorities in the southern Russian city of Krasnodar have unveiled what they call the country's first school for children dedicated to assembling and operating drones.

The local charity Dobro i Delo ("Kindness and Action") launched the school Dobro i Nebo ("Kindness and Sky") last Friday with support from a regional governor's grant.

The program targets local students in grades 7-11 who will be selected through tests measuring fine motor skills and technical aptitude. The course is expected to last 8-9 months and combine theory, simulator practice and real drone flights, in addition to 3D printing and programming.

The first classes are due to start in about a month.

At the opening ceremony, Krasnodar Mayor Yevgeny Naumov praised the project as

“extremely relevant” given the high demand for drones in both civilian life and war.

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He also said that the school’s mentors included trained instructors as well as those who fought in Russia’s war in Ukraine.

“Today, drones are everywhere: in construction, agriculture and, of course, the military. I sincerely hope peace will come soon, so the skills that children acquire here can benefit them in times of peace,” Naumov wrote on Telegram.

Dobro i Delo head Anna Potynga rejected accusations that the new drone school militarizes teenagers, arguing that they will apply their skills in “cinema, surveying, industry, deliveries.”

“If the Motherland calls, they’ll be ready. But we want them to use this knowledge in civilian life first,” Potynga told the news website Podyom.

She added that demand for drone training among schoolchildren exceeded the school’s initial plan to enroll 80 students.

The charity released a celebratory Instagram video showing the ribbon-cutting ceremony and thanking volunteers and supporters for helping launch the school.

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