



US-Russia Civil Society Summit  
Moscow, Russia  
July 6 – 7, 2009

## Preliminary Priorities, Recommendations and Action Plans

July 7, 2009

## US-Russia Civil Society Summit Preliminary Results

On July 6 and 7, 2009 over 75 civil society leaders from Russia and the United States met in Moscow to exchange views and experience on challenges that confront both countries. The conference aimed to move Russian-American collaboration beyond traditional models of foreign assistance toward more equitable engagement to address issues that have real meaning in the lives of ordinary citizens.

The civil society conference coincided with a summit meeting between the Presidents of Russia and the United States that resulted in agreements that set the bilateral relationship on a firmer and more cooperative footing.

The conference was organized around the following six lines of work:

- Public Health
- Community Development
- Human Rights and Rule of Law
- Youth and Education
- Press and New Media
- Environment

Working groups covering each topic discussed shared challenges, developed recommendations for improved collaboration, and proposed concrete joint projects. During the meeting each group prepared a short summary of preliminary conclusions. These summaries are attached hereto, unedited. A full report of the conference proceedings with detailed recommendations and action plans will be produced in English and Russian in the coming weeks.

# Public Health Working Group

## Summary of Discussions Civil Society Summit, Moscow, Russia, July 6-7, 2009

Principles underlying collaborative efforts and three specific lines of work:

### Underlying principles

- Initiatives should avoid the “assistance” formulation that has characterized so much of US-Russia interaction over the last two decades. Encouraged instead are activities involving genuine partnership, where interventions are implemented in both countries, where both sides learn from one another, and where real benefit is expected to accrue for the health of both populations.
- A long-term outlook is appropriate, with initiatives expected to enjoy lifetimes of at least four years.
- Measurement and evaluation strategies must be an integral part of any joint initiative, so that results can be demonstrated and communicated clearly, and initial efforts can be assessed and scaled up as appropriate.
- Initiatives should focus on the prevention and management of chronic disease, with specific attention to cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, and reproductive health.
- Collaboration with the private sector and with government will be appropriate and necessary.
- It would be useful to create an institutional mechanism to monitor progress and issue periodic reports.

### Lines of work

#### Prevention of unhealthy or risky behaviors, including alcohol and tobacco control, limitations on dietary salt intake, promotion of exercise and nutrition.

- Must involve significant steps in public education and translation of knowledge into behaviors. Will involve joint research into effective social marketing techniques, capitalizing on existing work in both countries, piloting of new programs, scale-up as appropriate.
- May involve private sector expertise in marketing of behavior change messages (advertising industry), use of role models.
- Must involve policy recommendations/implementation on regulation/taxation of alcohol and tobacco.
- Target populations: young and middle-aged men, medical professionals, teachers, pregnant women, youth/students.

- Platforms for communication: mass media, schools, health fairs, workplaces.
- Personnel: Andrey Demin, Elena Dmitrieva, Esther Dyson, Judy Twigg, Donald Zeigler.

Open data initiative focusing on health institutions in the US and Russia, to facilitate meaningful consumer choice of health care providers (data liquidity).

- In both countries, health and health-care information is often inaccessible or simply non-existent. However, in the US that situation is now changing with the new government's push for electronic patient health records in standard formats. In addition, independent websites rating doctors, clinics and dentists are already attracting attention and collecting data from individual patients. The goal is to increase "information liquidity" and to encourage the availability of health data, especially statistics that could support evidence-based medicine, and also measurement of the performance of various health institutions, such as hospitals and clinics.
- Open, public access to data on services offered at various clinics/hospitals, level of performance.
- Creation of consumer-friendly platforms (including internet) for data access.
- Must construct database/indicators with care, to avoid unintended consequences (for example, top hospitals may appear to perform poorly because they accept/treat highest-risk cases).
- Initiative already underway in United States.
- Personnel: Artem Bektemirov, Andrey Demin.

Sharing of information/experience among health care providers and medical professionals.

- Scaling up existing efforts (Balashikha Project on reproductive health in Moscow Oblast; Eurasian Medical Education Program on prevention/management of hypertension/cardiovascular disease in several regions).
- Use exchanges of medical professionals as first step toward building in-country capacity.
- Expansion of systems approach to improving delivery of health care.
- Expansion of use of evidence-based medicine.
- Address legal issues, including medical malpractice, licensing arrangements.
- Surveillance as integral component of effective care, with immediate attention to implementation of national women's health survey in Russia.
- Personnel: Elena Baibarina, Al Brann, Ed Burger, Franz Messerli.

# Community Development Working Group

## Recommendations and Action Plan

Prepared by Thomas Bledsoe, Housing Partnership Network  
On behalf of the Russian/American Delegation

The twelve members of this bi-lateral group had a very engaged and stimulating peer to peer conversation. We identified five broad areas of mutual interest and three specific action steps that could further the exchange. The development of a strong and vital civic society is essential to address the challenges – and seize the opportunities – in each of these areas.

1. Civic and Organizational Engagement: We agreed that fostering civic engagement - and the organizations that can facilitate cooperation between the government, business and NGO sectors - was of paramount importance. This includes practices to involve residents in the management of their housing communities as well as initiatives to support non-governmental organizations that can build public/private partnerships to revitalize communities and housing. We discussed a range of strategies and best practices from both countries that strengthen the effectiveness of NGOs to play this critical brokering and bridge building role.
2. Resources and Financing for Community Development: The group identified resource development for NGOs as critically important to build the sector. This includes strategies to expand philanthropic support for NGOs involved in housing and community development and mortgage financing for homeownership and rental housing.
3. Housing Tools and Strategies: There is a need to exchange and develop best practices around housing management and maintenance, housing rehabilitation, energy efficiency and rental housing development – including steps to create more leased housing to support workforce development and job mobility.
4. Regenerating Distressed Communities: We had extensive discussion about the challenges confronting communities impacted by factory closings and economic relocation – both in Russia and the US. This includes “brownfield” development on land which has environmental pollution from former manufacturing use and developing new sustainable approaches to housing and economic development.
5. Migration, Cultural Inclusion and Skills Building: There was strong interest in a range of people-focused issues that relate to housing and community development, including homeownership education and training, relationships with tenants, integration and cooperation among diverse cultures, and work force retraining.

## **Six-Month Action Plan**

We prioritized three areas where specific actions could be taken over the next six months to deepen the civil society exchange between NGOs in the two countries.

Information and Knowledge Exchange: We recommend that the Eurasia and New Eurasia foundation support the development of an online community and database which allows civil society leaders from both countries to share documents, case studies and best practices. This would include mapping the key issues, stake holders and NGOs in the two countries involved in the issue areas identified above. Also we suggest the networks involved in the civic social summit collect, translate and distribute materials on best practices, case studies, organizational models, and legal structures that support a strong NGO sector in community and housing development.

Working Groups: Building on information assembled – in particular the groups most engaged in the various issue areas – we suggest organizing a few working groups that can hold conference calls and webinars to flesh out these issues. Key areas for potential working groups include civic engagement, housing finance, cultural integration/migration and communities devastated by economic dislocation and plant closings. These working groups could make progress on priority areas in advance of a second Russian-US civil society summit.

In Person Exchanges: Although costly to organize, we felt that focused in-person exchanges between NGOs involved in community development was critically important. Ideas suggested included exchanges and “Sister NGOs” between communities with similar characteristics or challenges and bi-lateral exchanges on specific topics such as homeownership skills training, public-private partnership engagement models, or housing maintenance and finance. The Housing Partnership Network offered to help create connections between NGOs and cities in the US that offered the most valuable opportunities for peer exchange with our Russian colleagues.

## **Human Rights and Rule of Law Working Group**

### **U.S.-Russia Civil Society Summit, Human Rights Working Group Meeting 6 July 2009 25 representatives of leading Russian and American human rights organizations**

Both sides expressed strong desire and the need for cooperation with counterparts and to establish and maintain a permanent dialogue and encourage leaders to emphasize the priority of human rights for the both countries.

Whilst there many common problems and challenges for Russian and American civil society exist (migration, asylum, torture and abuse, NGO work), most Russian participants emphasized that challenges in Russia—such as security, political prisoners, working conditions for NGOs and substantive issues—remain more severe for Russian NGOs than for their American counterparts.

The dialogue should avoid a paternalistic or mentoring tone—it should be structured as an equal partnership aimed at resolving common problems and providing assistance to a partner where assistance is needed. Russian-American relations should not be monopolized by the governments. Civic societies should have a strong voice and an important role in this.

Russian-American dialogue as such should include Russian and American government officials and Russian and American civil society representatives in order to make it work. Additional points, in connection with the dialogue:

- Civic dialogues tied to official summits are welcome but should also occur at other times;
- Do not limit dialogues to trying to put pressure on or lobby the authorities;
- Dialogue should be equal and address priority topics for Russia and the US;
- Dialogue should include a mechanism to allow reactions to immediate challenges.

#### **Specific Recommendations**

1. Collect survey data on American and Russian attitudes to torture and other key human rights issues and use the findings to mobilize the public
2. President Obama must not make himself vulnerable to accusations of applying double standards—he needs to clean up US human rights practices in order to be a credible interlocutor on human rights (in particular, close Guantanamo)
3. Remind the publics in each country of what the other side contributed in World War II through joint research projects, exhibitions, films, books, publications.
4. Create a working group on hate crime [within the Lavrov-Clinton Commission] and include a council of non-governmental experts to advise the group
5. Create a joint Russian-US commission with governmental and non-governmental participation on fighting hate crimes
6. Cooperate to avoid erosion of international human rights protection mechanisms and achieve prioritizations of human rights
7. Recommend that both Russia and US ratify the Optional Protocol to the CAT and the Rome statute of the ICC
8. Recommend that both Russia and the US ratify the Rome Statute of ICC;

9. Create Russia-US civil society working groups on detention, political prisoners and on human rights in penitentiaries
10. Broaden civic society dialogue to make it inclusive of small regional and local groups and promote partnerships between Russian and American joint groups
11. Monitor anti-American propaganda in Russian media and work together to counter anti-American attitudes in the public
12. Russia/US NGO project on developing effective means of fighting and preventing terrorism and Islamic extremism
13. Improve the climate for human rights NGOs and independent reporters in Russia
14. Have Russian and American NGOs test and implement new methods of reaching out to and influencing the public
15. Launch joint projects on corruption and human rights in the both countries
16. Launch joint projects on protection of human rights defenders in Russia

## **Youth and Education Working Group**

### *Youth, Education and Engagement: U.S.-Russian Cooperation in Policy and Practice*

Envision a world that values and supports the welfare of all. Envision a world that advances social progress. Envision a world that is innovative, equitable, mutually-supportive, and economically secure. To enact this vision, educators, advocates, and others who support and provide services to today's youth must ensure that they are equipped with the values, skills, and knowledge to be critical thinkers, ethical decision-makers, and global citizens ready to lead in a society that is plagued by inequality, conflict, and financial instability.

We are living in an unprecedented time where many youth – in both Russia and the United States – are ready, willing, and able to advance the aims of a civil society. In the face of the financial collapse of global markets, increased poverty rates, health care and environmental challenges, growing social alienation, and other potentially divisive problems, we continue to see expressions of commitment emerge from today's youth. To seize this opportunity, we seek to create a sustainable, bilateral cooperation between the US and Russia that will support the exploration of innovative approaches to youth programs and education, with a focus on civic engagement, nation-building, and the promotion of a civil society.

Our working group, which included leaders and advocates for youth from a variety of professional fields (i.e., youth organizations, secondary education, postsecondary education, and policy organizations), have conceptualized a framework for revitalized US – Russian cooperation. Our intentions are to:

- Examine the impact of the economic crisis in both countries on youth and better understand their needs, interests, and aspirations;
- Involve youth as fully empowered participants in the design and implementation of any new cooperative programs;
- Build upon the strengths of successful existing programs aimed at cross-national collaboration;
- Contribute to greater understanding among youth, youth leaders, educators, researchers, and advocates, which the hopes that such efforts will lead to improved cross-national and national policies and practices for the promotion of civil society.

To operationalize this effort, we seek to develop a two-pronged approach aimed at bilateral and national partnerships among US and Russian youth, youth providers, educators, and others. Through this effort, we will engage in cross-national collaborations aimed at fostering dialogue and facilitating the sharing of promising practices related to engagement, activism, and civic leadership. These introspective conversations will help to identify mutually beneficial areas of interest among US-

Russian partners and eventually lead to better understanding and cooperation. Secondly, there will be initiatives aimed at advancing efforts “at home.” Such activities will endeavor to improve the education and services for youth, support efforts that foster engagement, and advance the aims of civil society. Ultimately, these pursuits will aid in the discovery and implementation – at local, national, and international levels – of promising practices and solutions.

In sum, our efforts are designed to not only provide a vision, but also to offer a strategy for achieving this goal – one that will engage all youth, impart a sense of urgency, enhance civic engagement, and increase responsibility to work toward addressing key local, national, and cross-national matters. If done well, this initiative will promote equity among the voices of youth and voices of youth providers and others; inform research and the dissemination of promising practices of youth engagement; engage youth providers, educators, and advocates in innovative thinking and implementation strategies for better serving this population; provide a model for other cross-national collaborations; and promote policy development in support of youth and national service.

## Press and New Media Working Group

Civil Society Summit, July 6 2009

Moderators: Maria Lipman

The Russian media operate in a tightly controlled political environment. Political competition is virtually eliminated, and the power of policy making is confined to a fairly small and closed circle of people whose operation is fully closed from the public eye. This political model effectively built during the years of Vladimir Putin's presidency drives the media incapable of fulfilling its mission: the media cannot serve as a tool of public accountability. The situation is further aggravated by the public apathy. People at large assume that they can't make a difference in national affairs (around 90 percent of the people say this in public opinion polls).

An ultimately aggravating factor is the assassinations of journalists who happen to encroach on important interests – political, business and otherwise. In the atmosphere of lawlessness – or legal nihilism, to use the expression of the Russian president Medvedev – the impunity of both, the assassins and the contractors – has become a grim feature of Russian life.

Which does not mean that the media don't try to perform their public function. While the biggest-audience media, that is national TV channels, are tightly controlled by the Kremlin, smaller audience outlets – print, radio, Web, and sometime even smaller-audience TV - pursue independent editorial lines, though the degree of independence may differ.

The un-free political environment generates peculiar *raison d'être* for the independent media. Rather than a combination of producing public good and drawing profit, the *raison d'être* may be the way a senior editor from *Novaya Gazeta* put it: "we're working for ourselves, because we feel that we have to. We create own islands for survival. And the same happens on other little islands across Russia, where remains of free press are found". This may be true of a relatively high-circulation *NovGaz* as well as small-time municipal newspapers (mostly weeklies)

The working group yesterday discussed the problems arising from tight political controls combined with a mindset of passive compliance. This was how the existing relatively free media were described as "an island" or rather, a set of "islands", an "archipelago" with feedback mechanisms seriously undermined. These media, the discussants indicated, may share western professional standards and liberal values, but they operate in an essentially isolated environment, largely alienated from the much bigger world of loyal or non-political media dominated by national TV. The latter is a one-way communication tube effectively shaping the public opinion in pursuit of the Kremlin interests.

Within this isolated environment, media outlets develop, master professional skills and are highly anxious to do the right thing, professionally, ethically, and commercially. A peculiar product of this environment is a type of new outlets that hardly exist in the western media world: namely, political websites offering news, analyses, opinion etc. An American participants working for Sup new media company, "Online only publications have succeeded in establishing positions and reaching different audiences. By global standards, number of people that buy papers in Russia is fraction of that in other places, even places where papers are declining. Russia in many ways leads world in online only publications. Lots that Russia has to be proud of".

Western models are successfully adopted in Russia and when appropriately adjusted may yield very good results; Russia's business daily Vedomosti or the Russian Newsweek are good examples, both represented at the working group discussion. The Vedomosti op-ed editor spoke about the experience of adjusting to the Russian soil the model of separating opinion from fact. In the existing sociopolitical environment however, even the best model becomes inevitably flawed. Since the Kremlin wouldn't take advice from outside sources, the editor of the Vedomosti op-ed section has to "pretend" that he's unaware of these constraints. "It's like a game", he said. "It's as if we act and live in a society that has a free press". The current economic crisis has benefited the op-ed section. The readers are anxious to hear the opinion of economic experts and academics in order to figure out what is going on. In a peculiar way the current crisis thus opens an opportunity: to take advantage of the new interest and broaden the pool of competent and independent-minded contributors.

Russian Newsweek is another example of cooperation between Russian and American media. The American logo, according to the Newsweek Editor-in-Chief, is not an asset. He spoke about having to "prove" to the reader that "we are not a western publication", not "an American hand in Russian politics". In a matter of a few years Russian Newsweek has successfully achieved this goal and built a reputation of a respectable, independent outlets with a growing readership. (Let me repeat: within the same ghetto, or island; they are as politically irrelevant as their critically-minded audience; "in the quality press there really is a difference between the press for normal thinking people and those not capable of thinking for themselves", the senior editor of Novaya Gazeta remarked .)

The introduction of the new media has effectively broadened the audience of the high-quality independent media. Today the factor of the growing audience alone can hardly make a difference. But it is a matter of top priority to increase the outreach as a way to overcome the constraints of the "life on the island". Eventually it will make a difference; as a factor of political life and a tool of public accountability.

The talk of the new media should not overshadow the broader issue of the rule of law as an indispensable element of a democratic network. Media cannot perform its public mission unless it relies on independent judiciary. Public accountability can only be achieved if independent media is coupled with independent judiciary and parliamentary

oversight. Protection of journalists is another issue of topmost priority if media are expected to perform their public mission

The broad understanding among the discussants was that the capacity of the new media is insufficient and the appropriate skills, technology and specialists are often missing. AS an American participant pointed out, the impression throughout the discussion was that “there are two separate conversations”: one about media independence and the other about the use of the new media, and the two hardly merged. The case of Caucasus Knot (chief editor participated in the discussion; Caucasus Knot offers coverage of the Caucasus and its various problems) is an excellent example of the application of new media, blogging in particular to a non-profit Web outlet? But Caucasus Know appears to be an exception rather than a rule.

More often than not print media tend to do little more than post their content on the Web. The trend is certainly toward taking better advantage of the capacity of the new media, but this process may be facilitated with the help of training, mastering skills and technologies.

This approach appears to be especially promising, since Internet access has steadily grown over the past years, so now it is a matter of how we maximize the advantage of using it for communication purposes. Small regional audiences sometimes show low demand for online communication, so the task it to generate this demand. For the outlets operating in a more urban environment the issue would be to improve their interactive quality; to develop more sophisticated forms and ways, such as the video and audio elements, etc. New media tools can be equally productive in enriching the services of radio stations.

Other projects by Esther Dyson: A training program in new media skills: Anna Kachkaeva, Higher Economics School / Esther Dyson / Other potential experts

This project will use/modify training programs developed in US universities to train experienced journalists in new media schools. It may also incorporate an internship program that would allow journalists to work for limited periods in new-media agencies.

Developing capacity around the new Russian law on access to information to be adopted in 2010: Esther Dyson, Sunlight Foundation / Elena Chernyshkova, Donors Foundation/Dynasty Foundation / Various startups

The project will develop and make available online software tools that will enable journalists and the public to turn the data and content into meaningful information. Some of these will be projects currently funded by the Sunlight Foundation in the US. The tools will include data-mining and visualization capabilities. The goal is to increase the accountability of all institutions, including government, business and civil society organizations, by making their performance and activities more visible and measurable.

Pledges to exchange information: Arleen Getz, Newsweek

## Environment Working Group

### PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS BROADENING OF ENVIRONMENTAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE US: NGO DIALOGUE

#### CIVIL SOCIETY SUMMIT RUSSIA-USA

Moscow, July 6-7, 2009

**Participants in the summit – representatives of nongovernmental, environmental organizations:**

**Bring attention to** the fact that Russia and North America possess some of the largest freshwater reserves and boreal forests in the world, border the North Pacific ocean which is home to the most productive marine fisheries on Earth, and, are among the three main sources of industrial greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere;

**Stress** the importance of the role of nongovernmental and scientific organizations in:

- exchange of scientific and technical information,
- development of management strategies for shared resources, and
- involvement of local populations and civil society in decision-making processes;

**Observe the need** to improve the effectiveness of environmental collaboration and achieve a new level of quality while operating in an absolutely transparent and open manner;

**Urgently call upon the governments of both countries** to universally and openly support the activities of nongovernmental, environmental organizations; and include representatives in a newly established Russian-American Presidential Commission

**Consider the following activities most important** for development by civil societies of both nations:

#### **1. Climate Change and Energy**

We call upon the Presidents of both governments to take the burden of leadership upon themselves in preparing the Copenhagen Climate Agreement, which would limit global warming to 2°C over the next 50 years

We ask environmental nongovernmental organizations to commit to cooperation in the following priority areas:

- raising public awareness of climate change;
- motivating the public and private sectors to limit emissions; and
- together with our governments, encouraging energy efficiency and development of renewable energy alternatives.

## **2. Biodiversity and Protected Areas**

Recognizing the important role of protected areas in conserving biodiversity, we call upon the governments of both nations to halt the loss of biodiversity and develop bilateral protected area networks, emphasizing the shared geography, species and habitat of the North Pacific Region, while taking into account the role of local communities, including indigenous peoples.

## **3. Prioritizing environmental protection in the economic crisis**

We call upon the governments of both nations to ensure that financial responses to the fiscal crisis (e.g., direct and indirect stimulus spending) are directed only toward environmentally-friendly or environmentally-neutral activities, such as investments in renewable energy.

We call upon American and Russian representatives to World Bank Group Board and other multilateral financial institutions to institute comprehensive greenhouse gas accounting for their lending portfolios.

We call for NGO cooperation focused upon introduction and development of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and similar initiatives for other industries.

## **4. Environmental conscience and responsibility**

We call upon nongovernmental organizations in the US and Russia to engage in joint outreach campaigns and share experiences on pressing environmental topics, including climate change, energy, pollution, biodiversity, and protected areas, in order to promote public environmental conscientiousness and responsibility in both nations.

**PANEL PARTICIPANTS** consider it important for the accomplishment of the above-described proposals to develop various types of collaborations between the following Civil Society structures:

- network and local nongovernmental organizations;
- professional nongovernmental organizations;
- private business; and
- government.