

**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH & EXCHANGES BOARD  
USAID INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT**

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**IPP Technical Evaluation**

**US Partner:** Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB) and others

**NIS Partner:** All-National Fund for Decent and Affordable Housing (ANF)

**Location of site visits:** ANF Offices and Training Facility, Moscow

**Date of Visits:** October 18, 23 and 24, 1996

**Date Report submitted to IREX:** November 12, 1996

Evaluator met with:

Anatoly Basargin, President  
Alexander Rakhlin, Chairman, Board of Directors  
Tatyana Krylova, Chairman of "Our House" housing partnership  
Elena Shomina, Evaluator  
Attendees, Training for Trainers Workshops

A. Discuss the strongest aspects of the technical and professional work being done by this partnership.

1. ANF has been in existence for more than four years and has amassed a track record for organizing citizens to act, providing assistance to communal housing residents, and negotiating with the city government.
2. ANF has respect as an organization among various citizen housing organizations and individual citizens who have benefited from its work. These have been ANF's best advertisements, leading others to seek out its assistance.
3. Training modules developed by ANF and the American partners are generally excellent. This will be discussed further in Training, below.
4. ANF has experienced staff. The President, Anatoly Basargin and Chairman, Alexander Rakhlin, have experience over the past four years in eliminating communal apartments, working

with residents to find new housing, assembling public gatherings and protests, communicating with supporters via informational mailings, and training. They have a practical sense of what they need to do to expand their work and obtain financial support.

5. With the assistance ANF has sought grants from foundations and city government and learned how to approach city officials.

6. ANF has a close relationship with "Home Bank."

7. ANF, with its American partners, has developed a financing concept for housing improvement efforts, such as loans to housing groups to open a laundry in their buildings or make energy saving improvements. They have identified a Swiss bank fund willing to participate, however, the bank wants to guarantee funds that would be lent by USAID or a similar agency.

Discuss the weakest aspects of technical and professional work being done by this partnership.

1. With the end of financial support from this grant, ANF will be without any significant outside funding. As stated above, some efforts have been made by the American partners to build relationships between ANF and possible funding sources but little success has occurred to date. Too little attention was paid to developing a realistic financial development plan, cognizant the realities of the Russian economy and culture for giving. In addition, too little time remains for the Citizen Academy to achieve a sufficiently broad exposure to generate sufficient revenue to sustain the partner organizations. In their visits to the US, the Russian participants noted that they were told about the importance of fundraising and foundation support. They noted that the nonprofit organizations they visited receive corporate and foundation support, but, a majority of their funds come from government. They do not see a level of government support akin to what American nonprofit organizations receive. The ANF officers told the evaluator that when they take an American partner with them to meet with city officials, they also provide the "medicine" for when the meeting is over.

2. ANF has had a successful past as a public advocacy organization. It was actively involved in organizing citizens, assisting them with relocating to their own apartments, and converting communal flats to single unit housing. Today, the organization is evolving into a new form that is by necessity different from the "protest years" and therefore lacks the fire and energy the youthful organization possessed.

3. ANF is unclear as to its mission. Certainly conversion of communal housing is one. And training is seen as its major focus for the future. But how to serve the market, and finding the niche in the market for ANF has been a problem.

4. ANF, like CF, sees the Citizens Academy becoming a national training center. However, they have not been offered training in how to plan for and pursue that goal.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. Financial stability recommendations will be addressed under Part F., sustainability.
2. The American partners should assist ANF in holding a strategic planning workshop for its Board of Directors staff, and active volunteers to examine where ANF should be headed in the next three to five years. For example, should it seek to provide national service or continue its Moscow focus, and what other housing issues should it pursue. Should it change its focus from communal unit elimination to building privatization? These questions need to be explored, and then ANF must map out a plan for the future that it can follow.
4. The American partners should utilize USAID to help ANF establish a stronger relationship with the city. Certainly ANF can assist the city in its privatization and resident management efforts. Also, its training function could be of assistance. Both USAID and the American partners need to help the city ANF as a possible ally and resource. They need to help the city see the need to financially support ANF.
4. The Citizen's Academy is in need of a marketing plan to take it to a level where it is self sufficient and able to carry the costs of support from both organizations. This plan must identify a city, regional or national approach.

B. What do the Russian partners see as the "criteria for success" for their partnership project activities? How close are they to attaining them?

1. ANF sees the criteria as setting up a three-sided program. This would include training, legislative lobbying, and direct technical assistance to clients.
  - a. The Citizens Academy is now up and running. The Academy now has quality training facilities, qualified trainers but no marketing plan.
  - b. The American partners have worked with ANF in working with and influencing the city. As stated above, more assistance is needed in this area.
  - c. ANF is successfully offering technical assistance to clients and the new office space provides better space for that to occur. As stated above, ANF now needs help in determining which direction it will move in, in housing assistance.
2. ANF sees sustainability through financial support as a primary criterion. This is not in place, and ANF does not believe it can operate beyond its funding termination date under this program in the Spring of 1997. American partners have attempted to attract foundation support, but a more holistic fundraising plan needs to be developed. This will be discussed in more detail under Part F., Sustainability.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. The American partners should assist ANF and CF in developing a marketing plan for the Citizens Academy. This marketing plan should address increasing the market for the Academy, assembling mailing lists, scheduling the dates for market expansion throughout European and then Asian Russia. It should also include some level of surveying to determine what the market wants and is willing to pay. Then a budget should be developed.

2. As stated above, ANF needs help in establishing a higher ethos with the city, and learning techniques for dealing with elected officials and bureaucrats.

C. Describe the technical merit and appropriateness of the following program components:

### 1. Training

As reported under the Citizens Fund Report, Evaluator observed the Training for Trainers workshop and the subsequent sessions delivered by the newly trained trainers.

The American training specialists, Gillian Kaye and Susan Wefald, presented the four-day workshop. They trained through an interpreter. They utilized a 3-part method: hear, see, do. That is teaching a lesson, providing examples or anecdotes, and offering opportunity for class participation or practice. This is one of the most successful methods in training and worked very successfully in this workshop.

Both Gillian and Susan, though utilizing very different personal delivery styles, were able to relate well with the trainees. Though they were speaking through an interpreter, they were able to communicate effectively through body language, parables, and an understanding of the Russian context. Despite the language barrier, they were able to encourage and achieve give-and-take class participation.

Participants were divided into small groups and even sat in groups during the presentations. This is far superior to a classroom setup, with rows of chairs. It allows for a more relaxed environment and greater participation.

This participatory approach is relatively new to Russia, and has been very well received throughout the country.

The use of varied teaching methods, skits, puzzles, drawing, brainstorming, and quizzes energized the participants and the presenters. The use and posting of newsprint paper for recording the class's collective work enabled the class to refer back to previous work at any time, just by looking around the room for the information they need.

The training materials were thorough and provided detailed, accurate training theory and practical information for the participants. More graphics would have enhanced the package, however, and it was a bit heavy with material. Sometimes less can be better.

At the beginning of the workshop, one highly successful step was identifying ground rules with the group. This was popular and helped to avoid wasting time or misunderstandings.

One key rule in training is to know your audience and adapt your presentation accordingly. Gillian and Susan were able to do this with little or no visible disruption.

When the participants got their turn to train, after 3 and + days of instruction, they were prepared. They followed the example and lessons they had learned. They encountered some confusion on the part of participants from time to time that was largely caused by their inexperience. However the new trainers recovered gracefully and moved on.

At times the trainers reverted to old ways, lecturing a little too long, not encouraging participation, but this was more the exception than the rule.

One element of the "hear, see, do" method, seeing or telling an illustrative story or parable, was missing. This was due primarily to inexperience, but should have been emphasized more in the training.

The new trainers, however demonstrated an understanding of the principles and techniques of training they had been taught. They utilized newsprint, divided the class into groups, set up ground rules at the beginning, conducted an icebreaker to get people interacting, and stimulated active participation once the group was comfortable with them.

#### Recommendations for Improvement

The training sessions were excellent. The recommendations offered here are relatively minor though helpful observations.

a. the use of audio-video materials can enhance a presentation, make it possible to present certain kinds of materials and break up the routine of newsprint. This, of course is not essential, just more effective.

b. one technique that is helpful is to have a class "parking lot." What that means is that if anyone wants to bring up or suggest a topic or discussion at a time that may not be appropriate, it can be put in the parking lot for later consideration. The parking lot is simply a page of newsprint taped to the wall and labeled parking lot. It is also helpful when a discussion has taken too much time, but several members of the group want to continue it. The topic can be placed in the parking lot to remind and assure the group that it will not be ignored or forgotten.

c. Voice training is helpful. When you are feeling stressed, the pitch of your voice goes up. This can be more of a problem for women trainers than men, but affects both. Breathing deeply several times can help relax the vocal cords and lower the pitch. Also, lowering the head slightly slackens the vocal chords and lowers the pitch. Several of the new trainers, men and women, had this pitch problem.

d. As was stated, though not emphatically enough in the Trainer Training, whenever you can draw a picture, draw a picture to explain something or present an example. A picture is worth a thousand words. When we all see the picture, we all see basically the same thing, unlike words and expressions, that can often conjure different images among a group of people hearing the same message.

## 2. Products

Training Session Handouts / How-to manuals:

The first draft of these materials has been completed. The anticipated publication date is January 1997. Included are:

How to Set Up a Housing Organization

How to Maintain a Building

How to Manage Finances

How to Manage a Building

Initially, 1,000 copies of each will be published. The print galley will be retained so that more copies can be printed in the future if needed. These are comprehensive and based largely on the training materials. The manuals seemed to contain an excessive amount of information and lacked graphics and layout style that would make them easy to read and understand.

ANF has also developed 60 short, topical exercises for training sessions. 300 copies of each have been printed. These utilize a workbook approach, where the participant answers questions by selecting the right answer or writing it in. The general approach they follow in a training session is:

- a. case study and questions
- b. discussion, sharing experiences
- c. informational materials - present main principles
- d. exercises, based on the case study, and questions

The exercises are worked on in a group and therefore stress group cooperation as a technique in problem solving. Role playing exercises are also incorporated into the training sessions.

## Housing Training Module

The housing module was well written and structured. The approach to teaching the concept made sense, and the materials to be presented were comprehensive. The training design incorporated

many of the successful techniques mentioned above. It provides succinct and relevant advice to the trainer in each section of the module. The essential elements of housing are touched upon. This module could be adapted to other organizations and utilized in other areas of Russia and the NIS if adapted to replace the specific Moscow conditions with those in the new locale.

#### Recommendations for Improvement

1. The workbook approach is effective with readers. It prompts questions, such as filling in a list of items, checking the appropriate responses, and answering questions that prompt written responses regarding one's own situation. The use of graphics, diagrams and drawings would greatly enhance the effectiveness of the manual not only to hold the interest of the reader, but also to communicate the information in a more understandable format.

2. A missing element in the module, and one the evaluator considers critically important, is discussing privatization of resident buildings to cooperative or condominium ownership. This would give residents true control of their living environment.

#### 3. Resource and Learning Centers

ANF has developed a fine training room. It is large enough for training and is equipped with enough tables and chairs to allow for a flexible arrangement in presentations and for break out groups. Unfortunately, access to the room is from the front. Therefore is a visual disturbance whenever someone enters or leaves the room.

#### Recommendations for Improvement

There is an office adjacent to the training room which can be a distraction, as people come and go, and noises are heard. Also, the wall clock should be moved to the back of the room. That way it will not be distracting the class, but will be visible to the trainers, helping them to stay on schedule. The clock chimes on the hour and ten minutes after the hour. This causes a definite disruption to the group.

#### 4. Consulting Services

N/A

#### Recommendations for Improvement

D. What additional technical assistance do you believe the Russian side could use to improve their work in general?

As mentioned above, ANF definitely needs additional technical assistance to:

a. Hold a strategic planning workshop for its Board of Directors, staff, and active volunteers to examine where ANF should be headed in the next three to five years. For example, should it seek

to provide national service or continue its Moscow focus, and what other housing issues should it pursue. Should it change its focus from communal unit elimination to building privatization? These questions need to be explored, and then ANF must map out a plan for the future that it can follow.

b. develop a marketing plan, with CF, for the Citizens Academy. This marketing plan should address increasing the market for the Academy, assembling mailing lists, scheduling the dates for market expansion throughout European and then Asian Russia. It should also include some level of surveying to determine what the market wants and is willing to pay. Then a budget should be developed.

c. obtain basic fundraising training for its Board of Directors staff, and key volunteers. E. What new directions do you see as a natural follow-up for this project? Are there others working in this sector that this group might contact and/or collaborate with?

1. ANF should consider advocating for condominium creation, lobbying the city for more supportive legislation, and educating the city about the financial benefits it will see through privatization. This will contribute greatly to resident empowerment, a major concern of the organization. It will also provide a stronger revenue source, as the Citizens Academy can teach property management, bookkeeping, and the organization can assist groups in organizing for a fee. USAID could put ANF and CF in touch with other organizations advocating privatization.

2. ANF and CF should consider expanding its training to serve other cities in Russia. This would expand its work to the national level and provide financial benefits to the organizations.

F. How do you assess the partnership's sustainability plan? What is your sense of how close the partners will be to meeting these goals?

The ANF sustainability plan basically includes:

1. increase the quality of professionalism
2. design services and find customers for them.
3. find sponsors (including the city)

The American partner UHAB helped ANF with writing grants, and training them in how to ask for money. They also helped them increase staff professionalism. Unfortunately, the reality is:

- a. customers are unable to pay for services
- b. there are few NGO sponsors in Russia
- c. the city government is unwilling to provide funds

Revenue from workshops will be inadequate to support the Citizens Academy

ANF, or CF. This may change as the Academy's reputation grows and the national economy improves, but at present the Academy has little market exposure and the attendees are generally lower income and lack the ability to pay very much for the training.

Charging fees for client consultation is also problematic. Few clients have the financial capacity to pay much for the assistance.

Grants are few and come primarily from Western nations. The Russian tradition of charitable giving has been crippled by 70 years of Soviet rule. Reestablishing this tradition will take time and much work. ANF will need to nurture this effort before it can benefit from it.

During discussions, the organizational administrators expressed to the evaluator that the US AID funding had enabled them to hire and train staff to carry out the work of the organization. However once that funding is terminated, they do not see a way to pay for the additional staff and will be forced to terminate their employment. In light of this, and the above-mentioned factors, the evaluator warns that ANF will be unable to continue carrying out its mission as presently constituted once funding is concluded unless alternative funding sources can be tapped in the next several months. Loss of the staff would significantly reduce the scope of work the organization can perform, which could lead to the collapse of the organization.

The design of this program, to fund and set up Russian organizations without, at the same time, preparing them for financial stability after the grant support ends, is ill conceived and potentially damaging to the original goals of the program. USAID should take an active role in persuading the city leaders of Moscow to provide some level of support for the organizations fostered by American assistance and financial support. The national government should also be encouraged to do the same. When similar groups in America must rely on government support for upwards of 80% of their funds, it is unrealistic to expect these similar organizations in Russia to survive without a significant financial infusion from the public sector.

In light of this reality, and the lack of fundraising planning to date, ANF must act immediately.

With the assistance of its American partners, develop a "Russia sensitive" fundraising plan to include:

1. Developing a large network, nationally if possible, of dues paying members.
2. publishing a newsletter to be sent to members.
3. Developing sales of printed materials it has produced. It should assemble a catalog of materials with a price list and easy ordering instructions.
4. Selling, to non-members, subscriptions to its newsletter.
5. Developing fundraising events and strategies that will build a base of givers from the small pool of charitable givers that ANF can reach. Also ANF should begin to nurture charitable giving, and expand its universe of givers on a regular basis.

6. Exploring the feasibility of obtaining ownership of real estate or venturing into a for-profit subsidiary that would generate funds for ANF.
7. Applying for grants from the numerous foundations, corporations and foreign government agencies that are funding Russian efforts.
8. Further utilizing the president and chairman as fund-raisers.
9. Persuading the American Partners to set up a fundraising effort in the US for the Citizens Academy. There should be many individuals and institutions that would contribute funds to promote grassroots democracy and housing privatization in Russia.
10. Providing condominium organization and registration training for a fee. This could tap into the more affluent Russians living in newer buildings who are privatizing their buildings faster than others. In addition, then provide specialized training for their property managers, bookkeepers and boards.

New York City-based nonprofit community housing and organizing groups depend more heavily on government support than similar nonprofit organizations in cities and states that do not provide such a high level of financial support. These organizations, particularly those in the Southern United States, may be better fundraising models for Russian NGOs. I would suggest the American partners contact the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, at 804-371-7100 for examples.

#### G. Other Comments:

1. ANF sees their project as one that could be an effective model for other communities. The evaluator agrees. However, most other cities in the NIS do not have the communal housing problems that Moscow faces. Many of these countries, however, are faced with addressing the problems of government owned housing. And all need NGOs to assist the government in educating citizens and assisting them in their housing and community needs.

Most of the how-to manuals could be adapted to other countries as well. They would need to be adapted for the local situation, with Moscow-centered aspects removed. The housing training module is more heavily Moscow focused and may not adapt well to other cities without being rewritten.

2. Part of ANF's work has been helping people find single family units outside of their communal units. A logical expansion for ANF may be a real estate subsidiary company. This company could locate units at a fee to the landlord, and evolve into the sale of privatized units. This could be a profitable venture and source of income for ANF. NGOs are allowed to own subsidiary companies in Russia, as in the US.

3. If conditions remain unchanged, ANF may collapse financially when the grant program ends in the Spring, 1997. Fundraising planning and training must be the top priority for the remainder of the grant period.