

**Strategic Technical Assistance for Results with Training/Russia
START/Russia**

**Contract # EEE-I-801-01-00010-08
Task Order # EEE-I-00-01-00010-00**

Final Program Report

**Submitted to:
Rafail Narinsky
USAID Russia**

**Submitted by:
Susan Fickling
Academy for Educational Development (AED)**

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START Final Program Report

Introduction

The Academy for Educational Development (AED) is pleased to provide USAID/Moscow with the final completion report for the Strategic Technical Assistance for Results through Training (START) Russia Project.

Since 1993, AED has been a part of Russia's transition to market economy through our involvement with USAID/Russia's participant training projects, including NET, GTD and START activities. During the fourteen years of implementing the USAID participant training projects in Russia AED arranged and managed US, third-country, in-country training and follow on interventions for 13,321 Russian professionals who have attended more than 300 programs. More than 2,350 Russians attended 127 programs under the START Russia activity. This included interventions to support alumni of US Government programs (20 events for 435 alumni) including former participants of USAID programs, as well as alumni from training programs supported by the Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), including Business for Russia (BFR), Community Connections (CC), and International Visitors (IV) programs.

The START Russia task order was awarded in September 2001 and focused on developing human capacity and assisting the Russian professionals in adapting modern systems and advanced approaches to their local environment and situation. Initially START interventions supported the following Strategic Objectives (SO):

- 1.3 Accelerated Development and Growth of Private Enterprises. Small and Medium-size Enterprise Sector Strengthened and Expanded
- 1.4 Improved Economic Infrastructure to Support Market Oriented Growth
- 1.6 Increased Environmental Management Capacity to Support Sustainable Economic Growth
- 2.1 Increased, Better Informed Citizens' Participation in Political and Economic Decision-making. A More Open Participatory Society
- 2.2 Strengthened Rule of Law and Respect for Human Rights
- 3.2 Improved Effectiveness of Selected Social Services

However, in the course of project performance and responding to multi-sectoral training needs, USAID amended the strategic framework. In Year 3 the programs increasingly shifted from US-based training to programs implemented in Russia. Under the amended framework, START Russia contributed to successful implementation of a broader range of Mission Strategic Objectives:

1.0	Strengthened Environment for Small and Medium Enterprises (Support Democratic Local Government)
2.0	More Open Democratic Society
3.0	Use of Improved Health and Child Welfare Practices Increased
4.2	Special Initiatives and Cross-Cutting Programs

Evaluation data and analysis indicates that over 90% of the participants were very satisfied with their training experiences. In addition to the benefits to individuals and their respective organizations or institutions, the START project provided an opportunity for a number of Russian organizations to enhance their training capabilities. The use of local training providers for in-country programs increased over the course of the project and while there is still room for expanding this local capacity, AED can now recommend numerous local providers for conducting training.

AED has worked in close collaboration with the USAID Project CTOs and Activity Managers, USAID TA Contractors, local administrations and officials, training providers and participants to implement the START Russia project. This report includes a summary of the six years of the START activity as well as lessons learned and recommendations.

I. Planned Objectives and Outputs

USAID/Russia expectations regarding general training outcomes were that, following training, all trainees should:

- a) acquire new skills and knowledge which would contribute to sustainability of their institutions and improve their organizational performance through adoption or creation of advanced policies, strategies and programs addressing organizational and sector development challenges;
- b) commit themselves to sharing new perceptions, skills and knowledge with their colleagues, maximizing the impact of training and creating the climate of growth and sound learning environment in their work setting;
- c) in the case of US Government alumni, team up with other alumni to enhance their capabilities and leadership and promote reform trends in Russian regions;
- d) work with local institutions to develop timely and effective training opportunities that lead to improved performance of Russian organizations;
- e) contribute to positive changes in Russia through linkages formed between Russia, US and third country individuals and institutions.

As is evidenced by the monitoring and evaluation data (see Section IV), these objectives were met on START. A sampling of program successes include:

- As a result of the training **Broadcast Management for Small and Medium-size TV Stations**, Mikhail Farafonov, Executive Director of the Signal Television Company, introduced new programs for specific target audiences. A television program on automobiles proved to be the most successful, and local automobile companies began buying advertisement time. A previously non-existing advertising market emerged, and the station's revenues from advertising have soared by 300%. The company increased its staff by two to meet the needs of the clients.
- After the training in Poland on **Public Private Partnership (PPP) Building**, Olga Tsvetkova, Chairman of the Committee of Economics and Housing Services Development, Administration of the Tomsk Region, included the materials on PPP building into her speeches and lectures at all meetings, round-tables, seminars and refresher courses which she conducted for local and municipal officials to familiarize them with this new process. As a result, in September 2005, the Governor of the Tomsk region approved the decree "On Cooperation and Partnership Between the Local Self Government Bodies, Organizations and Companies that Render Communal Services" to stimulate collaboration between community stakeholders and encourage the use of private funding in this sector. The decree incorporates a sample of an agreement on public-private partnership developed by Ms. Tsvetkova.
- Mr. Konstantin Tuguz of Alternativa, a Rostov regional public organization and Ms. Svetlana Pluzhnikova of Sudarynya, an NGO organization located in Taganrog and Rostov, successfully integrated their training experience on **Policy Advocacy** into their work. Aiming to remove several of the constraints to civic activism, including a lack of networking opportunities, solidarity with other NGOs, and synergy among diverse groups, they launched an Interregional Advocacy Network in May 2003. At present, the network has 128 members representing 44 public organizations and 35 foundations in the Russian Federation, from Kamchatka in the east to Kaliningrad oblast in the west and has also expanded to include colleagues from Belarus, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Armenia. The network created its own web-site which

provides informational materials about advocacy and will serve as a distance learning tool in a private US/Russian initiative to enhance human rights education in Russia.

II. Management Summary

In August 2001, AED was selected as one of the three IQC holders under the Strategic Technical Assistance for Results with Training (START) Contract. On September 28, 2001, AED was awarded the START Russia Task Order with a ceiling of \$5,667,750 and initial funding of \$1,741,987. The effective dates of the contract were September 28, 2001 to September 27, 2004.

Year 1 (October 2001- September 2002)

During Year 1, reporting and contract monitoring procedures were established with USAID/Moscow. AED hired a Training Development Specialist (TDS) to assist the Mission in identifying training needs and cross-cutting training opportunities, providing training related services and building synergies between activities in support of the Mission's overall strategic objectives. Ms. Irina Sinelina was hired in this position and was responsible for ensuring that START training activities contributed to the maximum extent possible to the Mission's desired results. Programming began in November 2001 after AED received the first nine training requests from the Mission. In April 2002 the contract was modified (*Modification #1*) adding \$1,250,000 in funding.

Year 2 (October 2002 – September 2003)

AED assisted the Mission in developing new strategies and mechanisms for planning and delivering training. Evaluation and assessment of START programs implemented during Year 1 were key activities. In July, 2002 due to restructuring in the AED/Washington office, AED requested, and USAID approved, that Home Office Project Manager for the Russia Task Order, Susan Fickling, be replaced by Michael Halvachs, who was serving as a Senior Program Specialist on START Russia.

In early 2003, in support of the US State Department's establishment of the SEVIS system for application of exchange visitors and student visas, USAID implemented the VCS system, a secure system through which all USAID participants. AED worked closely with devIS (USAID's contractor managing the VCS system) and the Mission on the conversion to VCS, requesting the visa application document (the DS 2019) to develop a smooth and reliable system to obtain J-I visas for participants of US-based programs safely and securely.

In April, 2003 *Modification #2* was issued, adding \$34,386 in funding as a result of USAID CO review of the fee structure in the task order.

In May 2003, AED made the first Mission-wide presentation on the impact of the START/Russia activity. The presentation was attended by USAID senior managers, activity managers from all USAID offices, and representatives of the Economic Affairs and Public Affairs Sections of the US Embassy.

In June, 2003 *Modification 3* added \$1,230,000 in funding. In July 2003, *Modification 4* added incremental funding for a US training program related to HIV/TB co-infection program, which was successfully implemented in Year 4.

Year 3 (October 2003 – September 2004)

AED continued to monitor and evaluate the results of START Russia training programs as evidenced by the activities of program alumni in their workplaces. The impact of Year 2 training interventions was tracked, analyzed and summarized in impact reports and recommendations were developed regarding topics for future programs.

START received two modifications in Year 3:

- *Modification 5* in July 2004 extended the project activities through April 30, 2005 (no-cost extension).

- *Modification 6* in September 2004 added \$9,118 to process two Russian professionals who joined a special initiative US-based Election-Year Political Study Program for young leaders from Russia, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

In August 2004, Susan Fickling, Deputy Director of the AED Center for International Training, made a management visit to Moscow to work with the field staff, review and discuss START project management and procurement issues. Ms. Fickling and the START COP, Galina Sinyavina, met with the Mission Director Terry Myers, senior Mission staff and Activity Managers to discuss the future and direction of training programs in Russia for the next 5 years.

Year 4 (October 2004- September 2005)

As a result of structural changes in the Mission, START Russia was moved from the Office of Democratic Initiatives (ODI), to the Office of Regional Development (ORD), and a new START CTO, Rafail Narinsky, was designated. The START COP, Galina Sinyavina, initiated meetings with Mr. Narinsky and the ORD co-directors to discuss issues such as the future and priority topics for participant training in Russia, using the START project as an instrument to support and strengthen other Mission projects, human and institutional capacity development as the focus of START project, START no-cost extension and funding availability for the year 2005, and the Security Risk Determination Procedure as part of the visa application process for J-1 visas.

During the reporting period AED requested and was granted a no-cost extension of the task order, extending the effective dates of the contract from April 30, 2005 to July 29, 2005 (*Modification 7* in March 2005). In June 2005, *Modification 8* added \$600,000 in funding and extended the completion project date to July 31, 2006.

Year 5 (October 2005- September 2006)

On October 25, 2005 the START CTO provided AED/Russia with a Training Plan with ten in-country training interventions. AED assisted the CTO and USAID Activity Managers with developing and finalizing the Training Requests and initiated the procurement process. Six new local organizations were identified and approved as training providers, which contributed to the development of the local NGO capacity building.

In May 2006, AED/Russia hosted Sean Huff, Deputy Director of the USAID Office of Regional Development. Mr. Huff was introduced to START project activities, procedures used for training program procurement and administration, program monitoring and impact assessment strategies and methodologies employed by AED. During the meeting, Russia regional exchange interventions (or study tours) were discussed regarding their feasibility, cost effectiveness and potential impact results.

In July 2006, USAID/Russia and AED signed *Modification 9*, adding \$650,000 to the obligated budget amount and extending START/Russia through July 31, 2007.

Year 6 (October 2006 – July 2007)

The Mission provided AED with the 2007 training plan, with seven in-country programs and two study tours for implementation. On May 17, 2007 in accordance with the START IQC, Section F.8 Key Personnel, AED requested approval for a change in key personnel that Ms. Susan Fickling replace Michael Halvachs in the position of Project Manager due to Mr. Halvachs's leaving AED. Ms. Susan Fickling was the original Project Manager for START task order until July 2002. AED began close out activities in Spring 2007, with the last program completing in June.

III. Training Operations Summary

More than 2,350 Russian professionals participated in START training programs that focused on democracy and governance, health, environment, and economic growth and restructuring. START training programs were primarily in-country, with a focus on the Russia Far East (RFE), with a small number of US and third country programs. In-country training interventions included series of

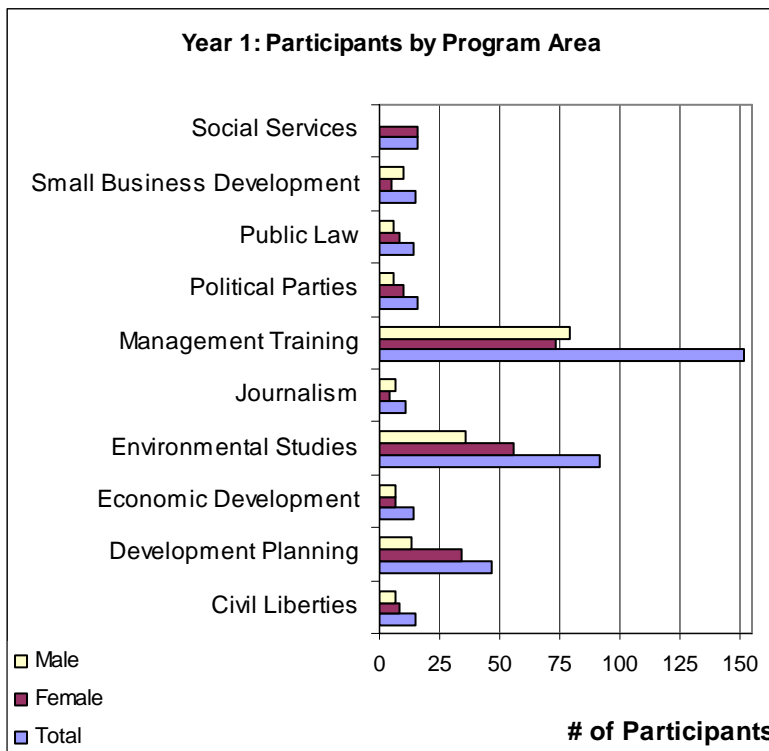
workshops in different regions of Russia, sector specific training, alumni events and study tours. The total number of participants attending in-country programs was 2,057. During the START project AED administered 110 in-country programs, 14 US-based programs and 3 third country events.

Alumni Activities, 2002-2004.

Through START, AED conducted interventions to support alumni of US Government programs. In total, AED conducted 20 events for 435 alumni around Russia. The programs targeted former participants of USAID programs, as well as alumni from training programs supported by the Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), including Business for Russia (BFR), Community Connections (CC), and International Visitors (IV) programs.

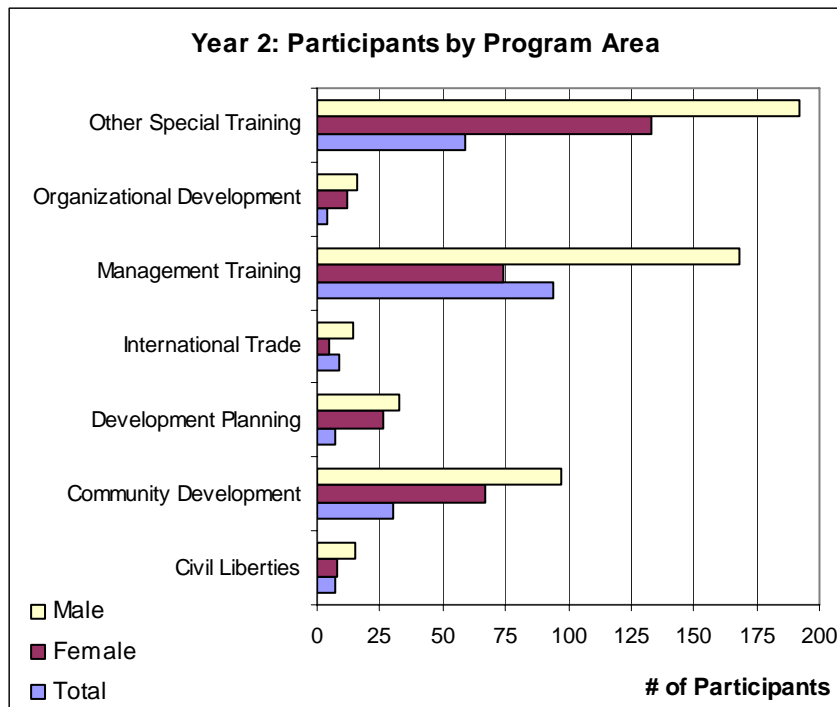
A. Training in Year 1 (October 2001 – September 2002)

Field of Study/Program Area	Participant		Total
	Male	Female	
Development Planning	13	34	47
Economic Development	7	7	14
Environmental Studies	36	56	92
Journalism	7	4	11
Management Training	79	73	152
Political Parties	6	10	16
Public Law	6	8	14
Small Business Development	10	5	15
Social Services		16	16
Total	164	213	377



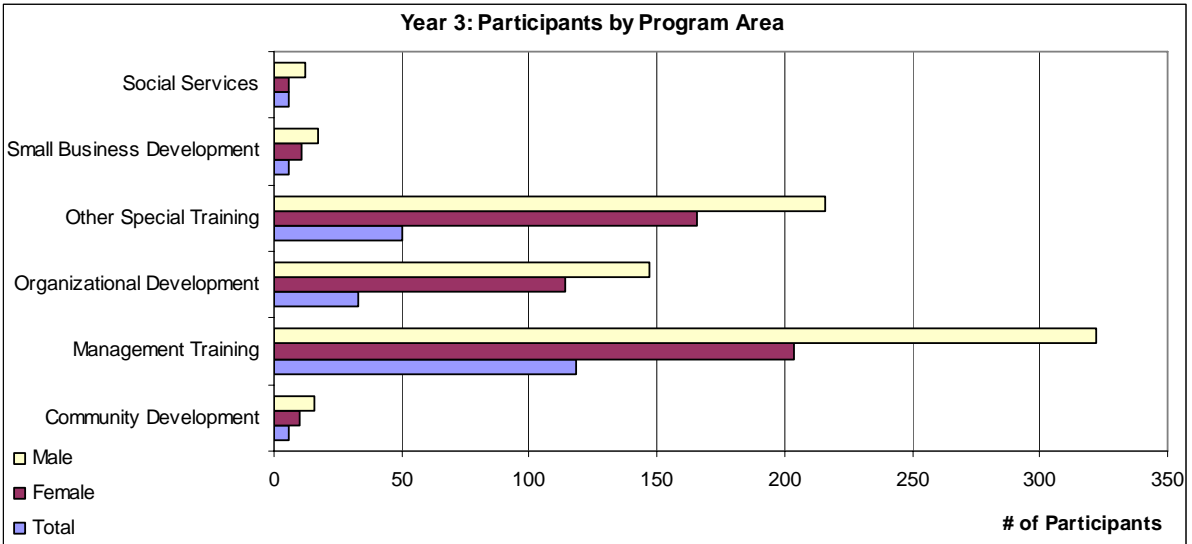
B. Training in Year 2 (October 2002 – September 2003)

Field of Study/Program Area	Participant		
	Male	Female	Total
Civil Liberties	7	8	15
Community Development	30	67	97
Development Planning	7	26	33
International Trade	9	5	14
Management Training	94	74	168
Organizational Development	4	12	16
Other Special Training	59	133	192
Total	210	325	535



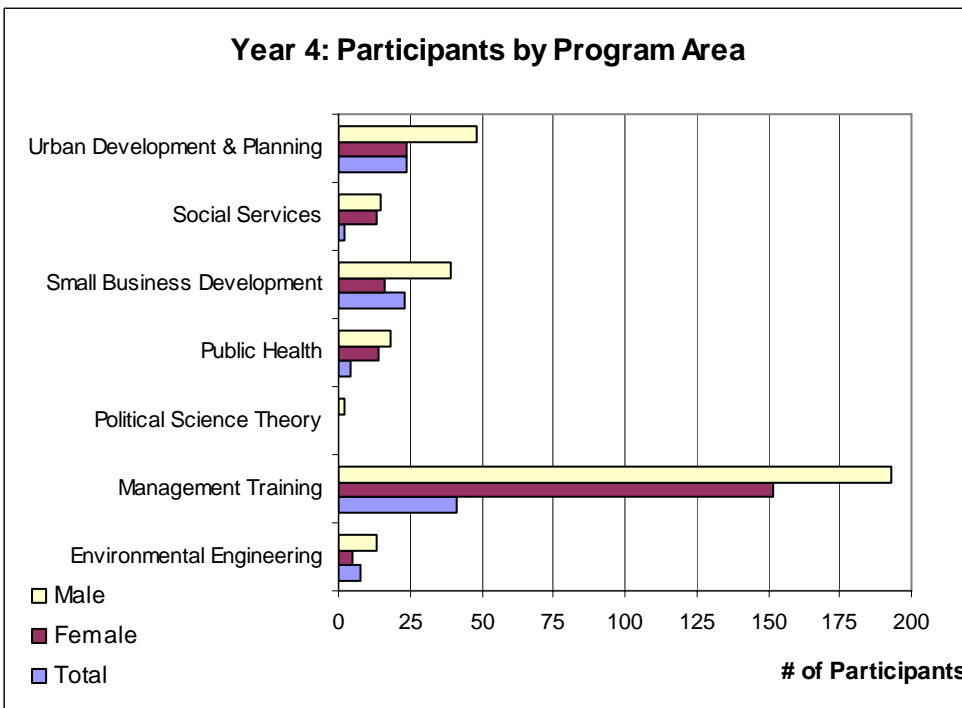
C. Training in Year 3 (October 2003 – September 2004)

Field of Study/Program Area	Participant		
	Male	Female	Total
Community Development	6	10	16
Management Training	118	204	322
Organizational Development	33	114	147
Other Special Training	50	166	216
Small Business Development	6	11	17
Social Services	6	6	12
Total	219	511	730



D. Training in Year 4 (October 2004 – September 2005)

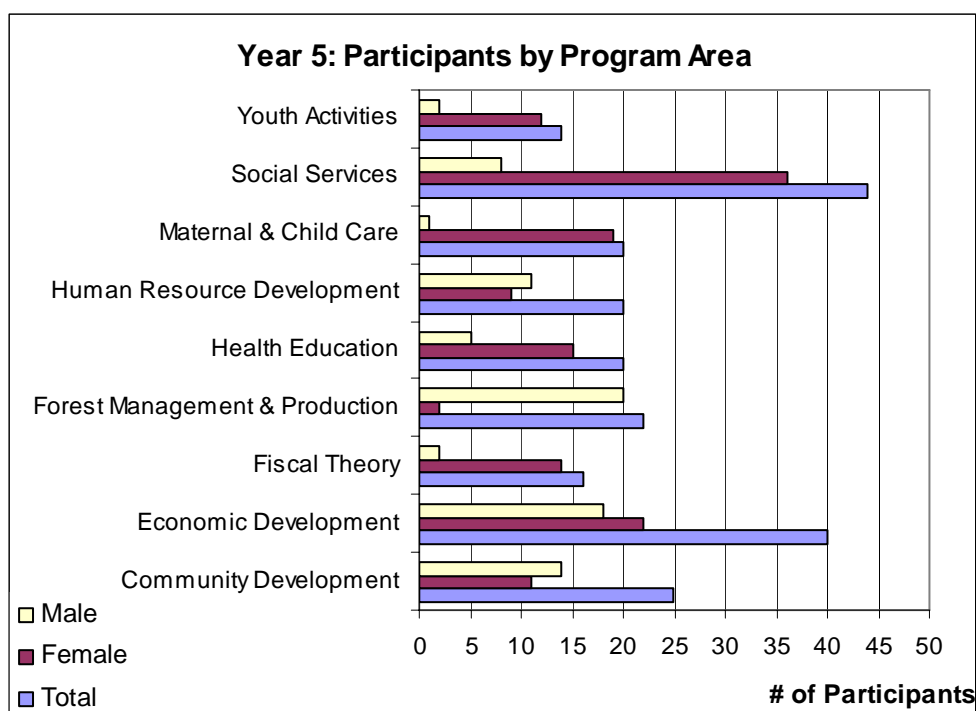
Field of Study/Program Area	Participant		
	Male	Female	Total
Environmental Engineering	8	5	13
Management Training	41	152	193
Political Science Theory	1	1	2
Public Health	4	14	18
Small Business Development	23	16	39
Social Services	2	13	15
Urban Development & Planning	24	24	48
Total	103	225	328



In 2005, due to internal restructuring at USAID/Russia, START Project supervision was delegated to the Office of Regional Development (ORD), which led to changes in the project strategy and training plan. START programs became more targeted to regional development, specifically on local governance and market oriented reforms promotion. In support of local governance reform, START conducted training interventions to familiarize regional and municipal officials working in housing, utility, land use, finance and economic sectors with all aspects of practical implementation of the new legislation.

E. Training in Year 5 (October 2005- September 2006)

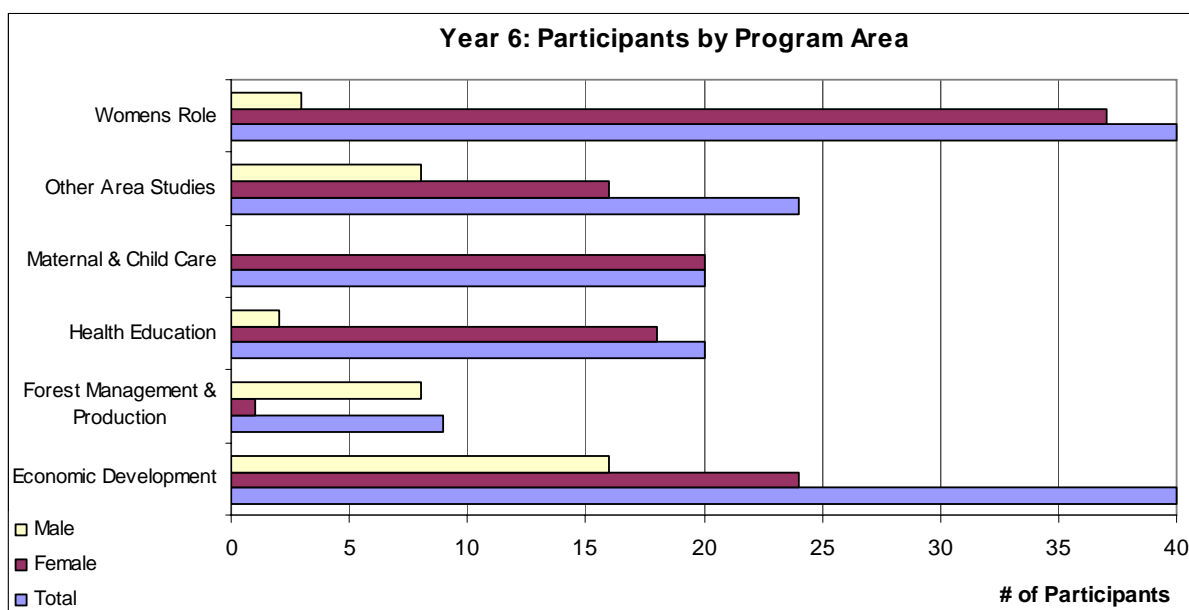
Field of Study/Program Area	Participant		
	Male	Female	Total
Community Development	14	11	25
Economic Development	18	22	40
Fiscal Theory	2	14	16
Forest Management & Production	20	2	22
Health Education	5	15	20
Human Resource Development	11	9	20
Maternal & Child Care	1	19	20
Social Services	8	36	44
Youth Activities	2	12	14
Total	81	140	221



F. Training in Year 6 (October 2006 – July 2007)

Field of Study/Program Area	Participant		
	Male	Female	Total
Economic Development	16	24	40
Forest Management & Production	8	1	9
Health Education	2	18	20
Maternal & Child Care		20	20

Other Area Studies	8	16	24
Women's Role	3	37	40
Total	11	53	64



Annex I includes a complete list of START Russia programs including program SOs and a short description of the programs.

G. Fee-for-Service Participant Support

As part of the START task order contract, AED assisted the Mission in obtaining J-I visas for trainees from other USAID/Russia contracts on a Fee-for-Service (FFS) basis. AED established the FFS program in 1994. The fees charged to other USAID contractors and grantees did not exceed the cost of like services provided as regular START/Russia training activities. During START project implementation, AED processed visas for 1,172 USAID funded participants for more than 45 USAID contractors and grantees in Russia. The following are examples of services provided by AED to support other USAID funded contractors and grantees and their training program participants:

- Preparation of participant documentation (bio-data forms, medical certification for HAC enrollment, and Conditions of Training);
- Provision for free review of participant documentation of USAID/Russia contractors and grantees for Mission approval;
- Provision of free guidance of ADS 253 requirements and review of documents;
- Provision of free submission of participant data for transmission and upload into USAID's TraiNet;
- Provision of health and accident coverage for other contractors, grantees, or interagency agreement fund recipients for final edit and submission to TraiNet;
- Pre-departure and US orientation for participants;
- Detailed reporting submitted as required in ADS 253;
- Placement and monitoring of participants on US-based training programs; and
- Processing participant evaluation documents and compilation of evaluation information.

Responding to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the US State Department implemented a new tracking system called the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). SEVIS, a web-based system, was introduced in January 2003. To support SEVIS for USAID participants,

USAID introduced the Visa Compliance System (VCS) to track all USAID sponsored participants traveling to the USA on J-I visa. AED was designated to coordinate the participant data transmission from AED to TraiNet and further to VCS, so that the information was successfully submitted to SEVIS and DS-2019 forms were issued by EGAT/USAID/DC.

AED was responsible for changing program and participant status, keeping track of in-training and returned participants and reporting on non-returnees as well as working with devIS on solving system glitches, if they occurred. USAID/Russia also requested that AED assist the Mission with implementing the Security Risk Determination Procedure (SRDP), based on ADS 252 and 253, including familiarization of USAID contractors with the new regulations and procedures; assistance to participants in filling out visa application forms, specifically the one in an electronic format; provision of the contractor coordinators with the templates of a Nomination form and a Selection memorandum and drafting a Participant Security Risk Determination Memorandum for the START CTO. AED/Russia developed detailed written guidelines for USAID contractors and project coordinators both in English and in Russian. The guidelines clarified the new procedure requirements, explained the reasons for the increased time line for obtaining J-I visas and provided advice on what participant information was expected by the Mission in order to approve the participant’s participation in a US based training activity. From that time on AED/Russia was working closely with each USAID contractor, striving to make the participants’ processing smoother and to accommodate all USAID/Russia requests for additional participant information on a case-by case basis.

In April 2004 at the USAID Europe and Eurasia Bureau conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia, START COP, Galina Sinyavina, made a presentation on USAID Russia Security Risk Determination procedures. At the Award ceremony on the last day of the conference, AED was awarded with a certificate of appreciation “For Excellence in US Visa Compliance Best Practices for Security Risk Determination Procedures.”

At the end of 2005, AED met with the Project Harmony Country Director, Thomas Hill, and the USAID/START CTO, to share AED’s USAID Security Risk Determination procedures.

The following chart provides an illustrative list of USAID contractors that accessed AED Fee-for-Service (Annex II includes a complete list of contractors that used AED Fee-for-Service):

Contractors	Number of Programs
American International Health Alliance (AIHA)	121
American Russian Center, University of Alaska, Anchorage	15
International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX)	13
Russian American Rule of Law Consortium (RAROLC)	13
United States Telecommunications Training Institute (USTTI)	9
Winrock International	8
International City/County Management Association (ICMA)	6
Bay Area Council for Jewish Rescue and Renewal	4
World Learning	3
Chemonics International	3
Moscow School of Political Studies	3
Urban Institute	3
Association of Oregon Recyclers	2
Holt International Children’s Services	2
Kinderling Center	2
Mercy Corps	2
Points of Light Foundation	2

The following chart summarizes the number of participants processed by year. Some of the processed participants did not ultimately attend the training programs, therefore the number of participants who

completed US-based programs is slightly lower than the number processed and includes one non-returnee:

Years of START Project	Processed		Completed	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Year 1	123	170	122	164
Year 2	50	86	48	84
Year 3	86	72	86	72
Year 4	123	148	122	146
Year 5	86	120	84	117
Year 6	35	93	35	92
Total by gender	503	689	497	675
Total	1192		1172	

Non Returnees

In Year 6, there was one non-returnee under the Fee-for-Service program. Ms. Khava Edieva arrived in the US with 28 other Russian participants on September 21, 2006, to attend the “US-Russia Volunteer Initiative.” Under our Fee-for-Service program, AED was responsible for arranging visas for the IREX program. IREX was the training provider for this program. Toward the end of the program IREX informed AED that Ms. Edieva should be terminated for violating the exchange program regulations as she did not attend the final conference in Washington. The program ended November 23, 2006. IREX informed AED that they contacted Ms. Edieva to discuss her lack of participation, but Ms. Edieva avoided contact with IREX personnel. On May 31, 2007, IREX received an email from an unknown person (s/he is neither a program fellow nor an IREX alumni), who reported that Ms. Edieva was residing in Berkeley, California, and working in a restaurant in San Francisco, using a fake social security card under different name to obtain work. Initial and follow on information was reported to USAID/EGAT as soon as AED received it from IREX.

IV. Program Evaluation and Training Impact Assessment

START Russia emphasized performance improvement and evaluation of programs in order to measure post-training behavior of the participants, to obtain in-depth knowledge on training results in the participants’ work environment, and to help the Mission improve and optimize future programs.

A. The Role of Training Development Specialist

Upon award of START Russia, AED recruited a Training Development Specialist (TDS). The TDS was responsible for improving performance analysis, conducting training needs assessment and planning, identifying follow-up needs, analyzing impact of training, and contributing to the development of local training capacity. The TDS was also responsible for assisting the Mission in making training activities more result oriented, performing gap analysis and analyzing program impact and results.

Redesign of the Participant Training Strategy

At the beginning of the START project, the TDS conducted interviews with USAID Activity Managers and Heads of Offices to discuss their perspective on what constituted an ideal training activity, their recommendations for improving the participant training process, and their ideas for topics for future interventions. The results of TDS interviews revealed that the Activity Managers were not ready to abandon Strategic Objective (SO) specific training, which most found a useful practice, though they were ready to collectively explore a crosscutting approach to training, and discuss potential training topics that would serve more than one SO area. After meeting with USAID Mission Director, Carol Peasley, a decision was made that both accommodated Activity Managers’

need for traditional training programs while designating a portion of the START money to crosscutting or “universal” programs that would be of general appeal to various audiences and contribute to the Mission’s objectives as a whole.

The collaboration between the START CTO, USAID Activity Managers and AED resulted in the development of 10 cross cutting training events, which were implemented as a series of training events in several Russian cities:

- Policy Advocacy in 4 Russian cities
- Public Initiatives and Public Awareness Campaigns in 5 Russian cities
- Resource Mobilization in 6 Russian cities
- Resource Mobilization – a US-based training conducted by Foundation for Enterprise Development, La Jolla, CA
- External Relations in 5 Russian cities
- Managing Civil Society Organizations in 8 Russian cities
- Development of Fee-for-Services for Non-Profits in 8 Russian cities
- Modern Tools and Techniques in Short Term Training programs in 5 cities
- Intersectoral Collaboration on Community Development – a US based training, conducted by Ohio Employee Ownership Center under Kent State University in Kent, OH.
- Advocacy for Public Interests – a follow-on program for the most prominent participants of the Advocacy training in Russia. The event was conducted in Poland by Polish-American Advisory Agency.

Program Evaluation, Training Impact Assessment and Conducting Gap Analysis

Another conclusion from the Activity Manager interviews conducted by the TDS was that the participant training contracts (NET and GTD), were somewhat unique in that the training programs were designed with defined goals, anticipated results, and measurable impacts. This was not always the case with training activities under other technical assistance activities. With START, there was an increased emphasis on designing training activities to be even more results oriented. AED used several means to increase the effectiveness of the training programs and to make the outcomes of the program more evident for all parties involved in the process:

- Participants were engaged early in the training planning process by asking them to outline their expectations in the bio-data forms, which allowed AED to better tailor training events and select a training provider more carefully.
- AED allocated more time at the pre-departure orientation for discussion of the program objectives and USAID expectations of training outcomes and results.
- The importance of Action Planning was raised early on with the participants and training providers. Training providers were requested to allot sufficient time for the development of individual or group plans.
- Activity Managers were asked to thoroughly identify performance measurements and indicators for each sector specific training intervention.
- The participants were informed that AED would contact them upon their return from training to discuss the impact of their training and results.
- If funds were available, program monitoring was conducted by the training provider two month after program completion.

Beginning in Year 2, the Mission required that AED monitor and collect short-term results two months after training completion. The Mission and AED agreed that the training providers would be responsible for this monitoring task, and AED made this a program requirement for selected training providers. The providers’ monitoring reports were analyzed and incorporated into AED final training and impact assessments reports that were prepared six months after program completion. Program analysis demonstrated that monitoring activities, and especially monitoring site-visits conducted two

months after the program, were productive; alumni received additional first-hand consultation from the trainers and AED received initial impact data.

In order to assess trainees' level of satisfaction with their training events, the applicability of the training, the impact of the training on an individual and his/her organization and/or community, and to identify follow-up needs, AED tailored existing tools and developed new tools to assess impact:

- Phone interviews with the participants during the program and upon completion of the training,
- Site-visits by AED program specialists, when funding allowed,
- Participant exit questionnaires,
- Follow up phone interviews, e-mail surveys,
- Impact assessment questionnaires,
- Impact assessment Reports.

The Impact Assessment Questionnaires were administered six months after training completion. These questionnaires attempted to assess whether participants were actually applying new skills, knowledge and attitudes (SKAs), and if new SKAs had benefited their organizations. AED conducted an assessment for 64% of the START programs. AED's task was to gather participant feedback, look for patterns and trends, and through data analysis, seek to determine the relationship between participation in training and actual organizational change that was training-driven.

The Impact Assessment Questionnaire consists of the sections that address the following issues:

- Application of new skills, knowledge and attitudes;
- Information dissemination and transfer of SKA to broader community;
- Obstacles and barriers in SKA application and organizational development;
- Comments, recommendations on training content, design and training needs remaining to be used in further planning of training interventions or other USAID activities.

The original questionnaire was modified in order to better focus it on the kind of outcomes that were expected under each activity, and to obtain information describing participants' achievements and benefits of the training. These modifications helped generate more precise data on the indicators proposed by USAID to track START activity results:

1. Promotion of effective American-Russian networks

1.1 Number of contacts formalized

Definition: number of contacts in agreement, MOU, contracts and joint activities, multilateral partnership, etc., cumulative

1.2. Number of informal contacts

Definition: number of two-way organizational contacts (joint participation in roundtables, seminars, etc.), exchange of information and materials, cumulative

2. Stronger Capacity of Russian Organizations

2.1 Increased clientele

Definition: % of increase in clients served, annual data

2.2 Expanded range of service

Definition: number of new services offered, cumulative

3. Adaptation of Successful Models/Practices and Approaches

3.1 Number of Russian organizations that adopt new models and practices

Definition: number of Russian organizations that follow new models, best practices, approaches, cumulative

3.2. Number of policies and regulations developed or revised

Definition: number of policies and regulations on various government levels developed or revised that are attributable to trainees' efforts, cumulative

4. Magnitude of Impact on Broader Community (or Increased Public Awareness of U.S. Practices and Values)

4.1 Number of beneficiaries of training and education campaigns

Definition: number of people who received formal or informal training (on-the-job, education and outreach campaigns) from the trainees, cumulative

4.2 Number of publications, interviews and presentations to share/introduce new training experience

Definition: number of materials developed and presented to public, cumulative

During each evaluation activity, AED compiled participant feedback on remaining training needs and on the kinds of training interventions that could assist trainees deal with obstacles they encountered in their work. These findings, together with AED recommendations regarding post-training support needed, were summarized in Impact Assessment reports to the Mission.

START Impact

The AED team tracked results over the life of the project and documented examples of training impact and participants' accomplishments. In May 2003, the first results of START activity based on the analysis of Year I and II programs were presented to USAID and partners. Major findings from the impact evaluation of activities were summarized in a 30-minute PowerPoint presentation (Annex III).

AED conducted an impact assessment for 70 training programs of the 110 total START programs (Year 6 programs were not assessed due to Project close out):

Training Venue	Actual Number of Programs in START	Number of programs assessed in START	%
IC programs	73	45	62%
Alumni programs	20	12	60%
US programs	14	11	79%
TC programs	3	2	67%

The average participants' response rate to START impact assessment questionnaires and interviews depended on the training venue. The response rate among the alumni of US and third country programs was higher than that of the 3-5 day in-country/alumni programs. On average, 47% of the respondents replied to the surveys administered after in-country or alumni programs, and 73% of the respondents who attended US or third country programs responded to questionnaires and interviews.

The most fundamental findings were that:

- 100% of the participants apply new models, methods and approaches after the training,
- Close to 100% of the participants believe their organizations benefited from the training,
- On average, each participant shares knowledge with approximately 30 colleagues, and often becomes a trainer him/herself.

A sampling of success stories providing anecdotal evidence is included in Annex IV.

B. The Impact of Participant Training

In this section, we provide samples of impact of START training programs on the following areas:

On Participants' Organizations:

According to Ms. Nikonorova, Director of the Temryk regional public organization Southern Center for Women, the training program, **Development of Fee-for-Services for Non-profits**, was very effective and crucial for the capacity development of her organization. She noted, “Had we not begun to provide fee-for-service, our organization would have ceased to exist by this time.” After the training program, Ms. Nikonorova, and her colleague, Ms. Voropaeva, conducted a solvency analysis and needs assessment of potential clients to determine what services were needed by their community members. These services included IT training services; public access to computers and the Internet; design and development of web-sites; typesetting; and scanning and computer processing of information. Introduction of new services allowed the Center to improve the revenue base and expand their activities, thus making the organization self-sustainable.

Ms. Anna Demeneva, a lawyer and member of the Sutiashnik Public Association in Yekaterinburg, commented on the impact of her training that, “Owing to the training program, **Supporting Human Rights in Russia**, the number of consultations we provide more than doubled since last year. We learned to market our organization and our services. We also revised our legal consultations system and classified it by topics, like we observed in US organizations. For example, when a new topic, such as the Land Code or the European Convention on Human Rights emerges, we immediately arrange training for lawyers and then introduce specialized consultations into our schedule.”

The training program, **Resource Mobilization and Intersectoral Collaboration on Community Development**, helped Marina Shubina, Fundraising Manager for the Togliatti Community Foundation, to restructure the work of her department with the goal of increasing the pool of public and private funding resources available to her organization to be distributed among local non-profits. Ms. Shubina applied new technologies in cultivating donors, energized the Foundation’s board of directors which was previously not involved in fundraising, and engaged municipal authorities in her Foundation’s activities. As a result of the reforms Ms. Shubina introduced, the Togliatti Community Foundation tripled the amount of funds raised from 9 million rubles in 2002 to 31 million rubles in 2003. On the eve of the 60th anniversary of the Second World War, Ms. Shubina launched a fundraising campaign and raised 3,178,000 rubles. The money was collected from 320 commercial companies, more than 1000 individuals, and 7 enterprises and was spent on remodeling war veterans’ apartments and houses, as well as for Victory Day celebrations in Togliatti.

Participation in the training program, **External Relations for Non-profits**, helped Ms. Nelia Golyakova, Chairman, Union for Children Social Protection, Penza Branch of the International Public Organization, revise her approaches in working with volunteers, the mass media, and the authorities. She established a club of young journalists, a club of young florists, and pro bono legal consultations on children’s rights. She recruited 100 new volunteers to run the Union’s actions and events. In addition, the NGO conducted programs for the promotion of children’s rights and self-advocacy for children.

After the training program, **Managing Civil Society Organizations**, Natalia Simonova, Director of the Nizhniy Novgorod regional public charity organization, Zabota, also became a director of the State Rehabilitation Center for Disabled. As a result of the training program, Ms. Simonova introduced changes into organizational performance by structuring the activities of the organization in compliance with the needs of two target groups: disabled people and teenagers. She reported that after the training program, the number of services offered to disabled people increased from 10 to 98, new professional staff was hired, and the number of clients doubled. Among the new services were assistance in employment for the disabled, monitoring and patronage of the labor rights of the disabled, medical services, social patronage, individual training, organization of the leisure time, and delivery of food. These new services and initiatives resulted in the increase of the social activity of the disabled and also led to an increased number finding jobs, thereby improving their quality of life.

As a result of the application of new knowledge and skills acquired during the **Improving Access to Finance for Small Business** training program, the services of Agricultural Credit Cooperative,

headed by Zinaida Vorobieva, was more in demand by local farmers. In the first year following the training program, the number of Cooperative members doubled, the number of loans doubled, and an increase in investments by new members resulted in 60% increase in capital shares. Most importantly, the Credit Cooperative increased the number of credits to small businesses by almost 300% and won the Republican contest to obtain the right to provide loans with the interest rates subsidized from Chuvashia oblast budget.

- **On Local Communities**

After the training program, **Youth Leadership School**, Alena Mikhailova, Deputy Director of the Amur public foundation, Talented Youth of Amur, and her colleagues conducted a number of activities aimed at raising awareness in the community of the needs of young people. As a result of public awareness campaigns, and presentations to decision-makers, the regional funding for youth programs was increased from zero to 2.5 million rubles. Ms. Mikhailova was confident that an active civic position of young people could contribute to further improvement of youth policy in the region.

Upon completion of the training in Poland, **Advocacy for Public Interests**, Svetlana Rozhina, Chief of the “Ecological Self Defense” movement, organized press conferences, round-tables and an international ecological protest camp near the missile plant in Perm to attract public attention to the problem of the illegal disposal of rocket waste products in the area. Ms. Rozhina also raised the issue of the ecological disaster in Pavlovo village in the mass media and enlisted the help of other organizations, such as Greenpeace and a local ecological organization Eikumena in order to draw attention of the local community and the administration to the problem.

The training program, **Strengthening Capacity Building and Methods of Work of Human Rights NGOs**, contributed to collaboration between Russia Far East NGOs for the mutual benefit of their communities. Ms. Tatiana Demicheva, a Lawyer who advocates for the rights of NGO representatives pro bono, and deputy leader of a regional department of the political party, *Freedom and Power of the People*, commented, “Previously, the uncoordinated actions of local NGOs were like a drop in the ocean and, after the training, joint picket lines, meetings, campaigns and appeals, resulted in the following positive outcomes to the community: availability of hot water in all houses of Vladivostok during the year 2006 summer period (during previous years there was no hot water in the city during the summer), reconstruction of the roads in the center of the city and local administration rejected the idea to outlaw vehicles with steering wheels on the right-hand side.”

- **On Policies**

Upon his return from the training program, **Intersectoral Collaboration on Community Development**, Mikhail Savva, Director of Grant Programs, Southern Region Resource Center, developed procedures and regulations for establishing public hearings in Krasnodarsky Kray. The authorities reviewed these regulations and in August 2005, the Governor of Krasnodarsky Kray signed a decree establishing public hearings for discussion of the regional budget, strategic development plans, and other key issues in the region. The first public hearings in Krasnodar took place in October 2005 to discuss the 2006 regional budget.

The training program, **Promoting Transparency and Accountability in Local Public Finance**, helped Ms. Ziablova, Deputy Head of the Economic Forecasting and Regional Policy Committee, Department of Economics and Investment, in the Tomsk City Administration, to identify new directions in her work by successfully overcoming financial and budget obstacles in the planning process and making effective decisions in budgeting practices. As a result of the application of new practices and approaches, her department produced a clearer, detailed, and transparent budget for the new fiscal year and provided Tomsk administration officials with a complete analysis of regional development and well-grounded forecasts for mid-term planning. Her new skills in setting up stable partnerships between the regional government, the private sector and NGOs helped the region to attract more resources for municipal development.

Using the knowledge acquired during the training program, **Protecting the Rights of Disabled Children to Inclusive Education**, Uliana Kosareva, Consultant in the Ministry of Education and Science of Samara region, proposed regulations for the process of integrating education, individual educational curriculum, and special assistance to children with disabilities. The proposed regulations were adopted by the Minister of Education of Samara. The government of the Samara region formed a Multisectoral Commission on the comprehensive rehabilitation of disabled children and youth. The commission consolidated regional and municipal officials, representatives of NGOs and parents of children with disabilities. In view of all these changes, several schools in the Samara region were equipped with special facilities: electronic reading aids for visually impaired and blind children and wireless (radio) equipment for hearing disabled. Two classes for the hearing disabled were opened at Togliatti Social and Teacher Training College. Four mainstream schools of the region were equipped with accessible facilities for wheelchair users.

- **On Individuals**

Gennady Bychnov, PR Director of Sakhalinsvyaz, had to quit his job after the training program on **Modern Managerial Practices**, as he felt he would not be able to apply new knowledge and skills there. He accepted a position of the Editor-in-Chief in Kommerchesky Vestnik Newspaper and managed to make a good use of the knowledge acquired during the training program. In a month time the newspaper format increased 1,5 times from 8 to 12 pages.

After the training program on **Managing Civil Society Organizations**, Ms. Orlova received a bachelor's degree in psychology from Moscow State Humanitarian Academy. The topic of her research work "Comparative Analysis of the Corporate Culture of the Budgetary and Self-Sustainable Departments of a Health Center" was chosen after the training program and was based on the training materials presented by the Partner Foundation on training. In March 2005, Ms. Orlova received a diploma of a psychologist and expert in drug and alcohol rehabilitation and started a new job as the Head of the Self-Sustainable Department.

- **On Culture and Values**

The **Crisis Intervention Practices** US training program made Larisa Samarina, Social Worker, Novgorod Social Center, realize that there is an abundance of research and experience in helping children with developmental problems in the US. Unfortunately, these experiences were not accessible to Ms. Samarina and her colleagues due to their lack of English language skills. This led them to begin taking English lessons. Ms. Samarina and her colleagues can now use materials in English and are better able to work with children.

After US training program on the **Protecting the Rights of Disabled Children to Inclusive Education** program, Svetlana Kaneva, Consultant to the All-Russia Society of Disabled and a wheelchair participant herself, decided to change her life and the lives of other disabled people. She was impressed by the architectural accessibility to buildings in the US which created an environment in which she did not feel helpless or as a burden to the other members of the group. Upon her arrival home, Ms. Kaneva appealed to shops, sales outlets and other public places of Ukhta to provide architectural accessibility to their premises for disabled people. In School #16 a ramp was built for wheelchair children as the first step toward inclusive education.

- **On Participant Networks**

Two months after the completion of the **Modern Practices in Change Management** training program in Kaliningrad for the alumni of US Government programs, participants founded the *Association of Kaliningrad Alumni of USG-sponsored Training, Cultural and Professional Programs* and registered it as a formal organization. The goals of Association are:

- Promote the concepts of social stability, economic transformation, democratic liberties, and human rights and freedoms;
- Develop a system of legal and civil control on business structures, governmental bodies and self-government institutions;
- Provide public support to citizens interested in the adoption of consistent market reforms aimed to improve the living standards of society;
- Establish an information and business forum and to implement public development projects; and
- Build a constructive dialogue between the government and municipal institutions, businesses and non-profit organizations.

The new association provides the alumni with an excellent opportunity to learn from each other, as well as further expand professional and personal linkages between its members and the government, business, and NGOs.

Upon return from the training program **Fee-for Services for Non-profits**, Ms. Pereverzeva, Director of NGO Aridons, initiated the creation of a coalition of Khabarovsk NGOs to advocate for the interests of the non-government sector and its beneficiaries, and to promote collaboration with local authorities and business. In April 2005, eight CSOs of Khabarovsk decided to consolidate their efforts and formed the coalition, *We Are Together*, headed by Ms. Pereverseva. The coalition members represent civil society organizations engaged in assistance programs for the disabled. The majority of Coalition members participated in START training programs where they discussed how they could jointly solve common problems.

According to Vyacheslav Kuznetsov, Director of RIAN Photo Company, the training program **Increasing Regional Competitiveness through Improving Collaboration between Regional Government and Business Community**, convinced him to create an Association of Private Companies and Entrepreneurs Engaged in Photo Services. The Association became an effective tool in promoting and advocating for the interests of the business community and influencing the government decision-making process. The Association became an associated member of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Chuvashia, and Mr. Kuznetsov, as the Association chairman, joined the Entrepreneurship Coordination Council headed by the president of Chuvashia.

- **On US-Russian partnerships**

After the training program, **Supporting Human Rights in Russia**, conducted by Heartland International, Oleg Sharipkov, who is from Penza, joined forces with Heartland on a municipal budget transparency project for the city of Penza that was supported by the USAID “PartNER” Program. The objective of the initiative was to show Penza officials the benefits of an open and transparent budgetary process as used by the city of Chicago. The project worked with the local government to draft legislation establishing public hearings on the municipal budget. In addition, a joint delegation of Penza officials, legislators and NGOs was hosted by Heartland in Chicago to observe first hand how budget decisions were made. The Penza officials were exposed to the benefits of an open and transparent budgetary process used by the city of Chicago.

According to Mr. Sharipkov, the START and PartNER programs, as well as the further collaboration with Heartland’s experts, resulted in relevant changes. The Community Foundation “Civil Unit” headed by Mr. Sharipkov began working with the local government on drafting legislation to establish public hearings on the municipal budget and provide greater government transparency. In 2003, Mr. Sharipkov’s NGO drafted a regional law on philanthropic activities that provided incentives to public organizations and special benefits to those that serve migrants. The law was adopted by the local legislature in the first hearing.

In 2004, Mr. Sharipkov served as a trainer and consultant on public participation mechanisms for a series of workshops held in Irkutsk, Cheboksary and Soci on “Increasing Regional Competitiveness through Improving Collaboration between Regional Government and Business Community.” The workshops were conducted by Heartland International, with Mr. Sharipkov as a trainer, using his experience from Penza.

- **On Local Training Institutions**

START contributed greatly to the development of local training institutions. During the six years of the project, AED expanded our training provider database to include over 200 Russian organizations capable of providing training across a broad array of training topics.

Our experience with local training providers indicates that local training providers are increasing their capacity to deliver short-term training. Over time, providers improved not only their proposals, but also the quality of their programs and their use of training resources.

A feature of START programs was participant diversity. The trainees not only represented different organizations, but also different types of organizations – government, business and NGOs. Programs with participants from different types of organizations require skill and exceptional flexibility on the trainers’ side in order to accommodate diverse interests and levels of expertise of the participants.

The Financial House, which delivered two programs on **Change Management** in Novosibirsk and Kazan, and which also delivered the **Modern Tools and Techniques in Short-term Training Programs** in 5 cities of Russia, had never worked on nonprofit activities sponsored by a government. All of their previous programs had targeted the business sector. The Financial House was proud of the new experience in working with participants from the government and NGOs and was using this experience in its own PR and marketing. The Director believed the experience was adding to Financial House credibility and promoted their image as a flexible training institution capable of delivering very difficult programs for mixed audiences.

The Siberian Civic Initiatives Support Center/Novosibirsk (SCISC) was another new partner for AED when it submitted an unsolicited proposal for the **Policy Advocacy** course in 2003. SCISC was eventually awarded several programs: **Public Initiatives; Capacity Building for Alumni Networking Groups; and Managing Civil Society Organizations and FFS for Non-profits**. The SCISC’s trainers commented: “The training programs helped deepen our understanding of how the Third Sector is developing and improved our ability to support this process. It has given us an opportunity to demonstrate the level of expertise, innovation and experience that is available in the regions. Finally, it has reaffirmed our belief in the importance of practitioner/trainers. The path participants embarked upon after the training with hard work and dedication will yield long term positive results towards mobilizing resources in all of these communities.”

The Partner Foundation (PF) was one of AED’s most reliable partners. Over time, PF made significant progress in improving their proposals for training programs. Their program and monitoring reports were very detailed and included useful and factual data. The Foundation was flexible in accommodating the requests of the participants. PF established its reputation as a highly regarded training provider among USG agencies and their partners; and for example, was recruited by ACIE and IREX to deliver a two-day Strategic Planning course for Moscow USG program alumni in June 2003.

AED worked very closely with the providers to ensure the quality of the training. If needed, AED arranged follow up meetings with providers to discuss problems, results, and areas of improvement. Per AED/Moscow’s recommendation, many Russian training providers (Academy of Management and the Market, Partner Foundation, Institute for Family Health) assisted USAID in Central Asia and the Caucasus Republics with training and expert advice.

Most of the training programs, irrespective of their objectives and topics, enhanced participants' understanding of adult learning methodologies. Many participants acknowledged that they learned from trainers how to teach adults and how to make this process captivating and productive. For example, after the **Modern Tools and Techniques in Short-term Training Programs**, three participants from the NGO Alter Vita launched new training programs for youth clients and for staff, and also delivered training for ombudsman assistants in local towns and villages. They created *Sunday NGO School* to enhance the qualification of staff and partners in nonprofit management and programming. As a result of the new training programs, Alter Vita increased their number of clients by over 300, and established three youth associations. After the training, **FFS for Non-profits**, Alter Vita created a training center to conduct trainings for fee on job placement for Stavropol citizens, and they began organization of internships for students and young specialists to gain practical professional experience.

- **On Civil Society Organizations**

START contributed greatly to the capacity development of Russian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). START programs provided training and consultations to CSOs across Russia on management, resource mobilization, fundraising, development of fee-for-services, public awareness campaigns, and collaboration with other sectors. Training had a positive impact on the managerial competence of CSOs, and contributed to the improvement of professionalism of the third sector specialists.

According to AED training impact assessments, these programs contributed to the following positive changes in community development:

- Improvement of CSO organizational management and performance,
- Identification of new funding sources and strengthening the CSO revenue base,
- Introduction of new services for their direct constituents and services for fee for solvent clients,
- Expansion of the client base and the range of CSO activities,
- Improved collaboration between CSOs, business structures and local authorities,
- Improved networking between CSOs and coalition building,
- Increased awareness of citizens of CSOs and their role in community development.

V. Lessons Learned

In our semi-annual reports, AED has included lessons learned and recommendations. In this report, we provide a summary of the key lessons learned, followed by Section VI reporting on key recommendations.

Program implementation:

1. To increase the potential of reaching new providers, AED began posting all RFPs for training programs on our AED website. As a result, AED received a number of unsolicited proposals from US-based and Russian organizations, and several organizations that submitted unsolicited proposals were selected as training providers.
2. When determining training dates, AED paid careful attention to social and political events, as well as other donors' programs or USAID activities scheduled in the selected city or region, so that programs did not overlap with a local election campaign or other significant events which could hamper or postpone the program implementation and participants' selection.
3. Conducting a series of seminars in various regions proved to be highly effective. After a pilot seminar, the provider was able to adjust the program to the special needs of the audience,

incorporate additional topics, conduct a comparative analysis of the participants, and invite speakers from other regions.

4. AED found that, to cover training topics with sufficient depth, the optimal duration of in-country interventions is 3-4 days and the optimal number of issues for discussion should not exceed 5 topics. For short-term training it is advisable to avoid general theory sessions with little practical application.
5. Conducting training at sites in secluded setting outside of major towns and cities was effective and cost efficient, and permitted sufficient time for networking to promote alumni and trainers' collaboration after program completion.
6. Including a TOT component as part of training programs considerably increases the number of individuals benefiting from a training program, as trainees will share knowledge and skills with colleagues more effectively if they are provided with an understanding of how to do this.
7. In order to improve the selection process, AED expanded the training application forms, requesting additional information from the participants on the organization's mission, its achievements, the date of their organization's registration, and how they planned to use knowledge and skills gained from training.

Program Evaluation and Training Impact Assessment:

1. In comparing the outcomes of US training programs with the outcomes of in-country and alumni programs, AED assessed that:
 - US programs produce a deeper impact that involves changes in sectoral strategies and policies, while in-country programs are more likely to affect internal organizational systems and structures. Policy outcomes are more likely to occur after the US programs.
 - US programs produce stronger links among the participants; 90% of the participants from US programs are maintaining their professional linkages after training as compared to an average of 50% after in-country programs.
 - In-country programs are less expensive and reach a greater number of participants: costs per participant for an in-country program average \$1300 (20 -25 participants in a group), as compared to \$5,000-6,000 for US programs (15 participants in a group).
 - In-country programs offer approaches that are usually easier to implement. These "take it and use it" approaches are tailored to local realities and do not clash with the legislative framework, as is often the case with the US training programs (e.g., participants on the Good Governance program found that many of the municipal budget practices common in the US were not acceptable under Russian federal laws).
2. The evaluation tools developed for impact surveys (questionnaires and phone interviews) allowed AED to collect relevant and ample information from program alumni. AED used phone interviews when the alumni were from small towns and had no access to e-mail or fax machines in their facilities to complete a written questionnaire. Although the telephone interviews increased the response rate, the limited time of such interviews prevented participants from going into greater detail.
3. In order to improve the response rate to the impact assessment surveys, training providers were asked to discuss at the beginning of the program the program's expected results and

inform participants of the impact assessment process employed by AED after program completion. AED developed a comprehensive handout which contained a START project description and goals, as well as a short description of the impact assessment process. The handout was included in the package of documents distributed to participants in preparation for each training program.

4. AED found that six months after the training completion is an optimal time for training impact assessment. By six months, program alumni have had enough time to implement their Action Plans and achieve results.
5. In addition to providing feedback to USAID and other stakeholder on the effectiveness of START programs, monitoring and evaluation combined with impact assessment activities played two other important functions:
 - First, monitoring encouraged the participants to apply the skills they acquired during their START programs by inviting them to reassess their training experience and determine what was, or could be, useful in practice. AED's experience shows that a follow-up questionnaire or a simple telephone call to a trainee was helpful in enhancing the overall impact of training initiatives. These activities demonstrated to trainees that AED and the donor were concerned about the results of the investment of time, energy and funds.
 - Second, follow-up evaluation empowers participants by providing them with a means of communicating with the donor agency to share concerns and make recommendations. Training and evaluation are ideally democratic practices, as opposed to the traditional top-down hierarchic approach to education that has been customary in Russia and that recognizes only one party in the educational process - the instructor - who can grade or evaluate the student. Participatory methodologies and evaluation exercises contribute to the spread of democratic practices.

VI. Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on feedback obtained from the participants and training providers, and include AED's assessments made over the life of the project.

Participants:

1. The content level of training programs is advanced. Given this, AED recommends that participants have a minimum of one-year experience working in their field in order to best benefit from new information and skill building.
2. AED recommends that the number of participants in a group for in-country training not exceed 25 trainees. A larger group size hinders the effectiveness of interactive training methods and opportunities for individual consultations for all participants.
3. The duration of seminars for high level officials (mayors, vice-mayors and chiefs of local administrations) should not exceed three working days to better ensure participant attendance. These officials are not usually able to spend significant time away from their jobs.
4. AED recommends that potential participants be informed about their training event at least one month prior to the program to give them enough time to adjust their work schedule to attend the training.
5. In order to enhance training effectiveness and to help ensure results, AED recommends that two representatives from the same organization are invited to attend the same training: one

involved in the organization's management and decision making, and the other a rank-and-file member responsible for the implementation of the organization's activities.

6. According to participant feedback, successful introduction of acquired knowledge and skills to their home organizations at the conclusion of training requires support of local officials. Therefore, it is advisable to invite representatives of local administrations as program participants, or involve them in program implementation as guest-speakers and consultants to promote support for application of participants knowledge and skills gained from training.
7. Representatives of all sectors (government, NGOs, environment, youth organizations, business and trade associations) should be invited to training seminars to facilitate dialogue between various community stakeholders and better inform local administrators about community needs and concerns.

Training Providers:

8. AED recommends that in-country training providers incorporate a sufficient number of practical case studies, both positive and negative, which are based on local or other Russian regions' experience. The participants often ask for real life cases to be included into the training materials so they are aware of similar problems in their own region and in neighboring regions. In-country training providers should also encourage participants to make presentations based on their organizational experience or on the specifics of their region.
9. Training providers need to carefully select and balance training methodology to ensure that training is interactive, and that appropriate level and quantity of new information or skill development is presented. Participants have commented that they benefit much more when training programs contain more site visits and experts' presentations during which participants can ask questions to receive useful advice and approaches. Others have pointed out that programs containing too many "energizing" exercises, role play, and simulations do not provide them with enough concrete information to take back to their workplace. If such activities are included, they should be based on the subject of training and compliment the training objectives.
10. AED recommends that training providers conduct an initial needs assessment at the beginning of the program and have participants write down their expectations. At the end of the training, the participants may be requested to identify which of their expectations were met. This provides one tool for impact evaluation of the training program.
11. We recommend that in-country providers supply a copy of training materials to the training manager (under START, materials were forwarded to AED) to allow the training manager to ensure that the quality of the materials is high.
12. Training providers should provide participants with an electronic copy of all lectures, presentations and training materials for dissemination of materials to participants' colleagues at their home organizations.
13. As funding permits, AED recommends that in-country providers open a web-site forum (or a listserv) for participants that functions at least two-three months after program completion. Such a forum will provide the opportunity for trainees to maintain contacts with each other and receive on-line consultations from trainers and experts on their action plan implementation.
14. In-country training providers recommend reducing the number of participants or observers who are professional trainers. According to the training providers, this category of participants is more interested in obtaining training methodology and tools, rather than in the

subject of training. They are usually reluctant to participate in interactive activities themselves and prefer to observe the process.

15. AED recommends that training providers include sufficient time for Question and Answer sessions. According to program alumni, these sessions allow participants to learn about problems they have not yet faced and to receive valuable options and strategies for solving them in future.
16. We recommend that training providers provide training materials in “a working notebook” format where there is space for problem descriptions, solutions, and practical assignments or exercises. This allows participants to complete training with the workshop materials accumulated in one place.
17. Based on participant and alumni feedback, and in order to enhance the practical aspect of the program, AED strongly recommends that training providers include, in addition to a team of trainers, at least one or more local experts-practitioners as guest speakers to share their experience in implementing policies and approaches discussed during the training. If local experts are not available, the training should be based on a sufficient number of practical case studies based on the local experience.

Additional Recommendations:

18. If funds are available, AED recommends that follow up workshops be conducted with the purpose of evaluating the impact of the initial training and the alumni’s accomplishments, to identify performance gaps, and to discuss obstacles encountered by the participants in order to receive qualified trainers’ and experts’ advice on how to overcome them.
19. According to many of the training providers, it would be beneficial to conduct an annual cycle of training programs for repeat participants, or conduct follow on events with more specialized tasks and objectives. This would provide an opportunity to test newly acquired knowledge and skills in the local communities, identify possible barriers and constraints, and allow the participants to receive professional advice from trainers as well as master additional skills. In the training providers’ opinion, it would help develop a core of the most prominent and capable professionals who will be able to implement the project tasks more effectively and bring changes into the life of their communities.
20. AED recommends that the need for an intervention in a particular region be thoroughly assessed, and that local authorities be informed about the planned training in advance to prevent conflict with local administration representatives if they disagree with the topic, timing, or nominees for the training.

Recommendations by SO

Based on the impact assessments AED conducted with START participants, we provide the following recommendations by SO:

SO 1.0 - Strengthened Environment for Small and Medium Enterprises (Support Democratic Local Government

- Municipal authorities around Russia, especially in smaller communities, need assistance in small business development. They want change, but lack the knowledge and skills to implement it. Therefore, they remain locked in their situations and are “afraid” to act. They need assistance in developing skills in self-governance and how to make use of community potential and local resources.

- The creation of an Internet Data Bank was suggested by START participants as a way to maintain information on current SME practices, as well as on successfully implemented projects with detailed technical and organizational descriptions. The trainees also suggested launching an Internet-based Public-Private Partnership (PPP) counseling service that would include the services of consultants and practitioners experienced in PPP building in Russia. Such a service would facilitate the circulation of information and educate and raise awareness of community stakeholders on PPP building. A specific body could be established to oversee public-private partnership projects, provide consultation, legal and regulatory support, and information.

SO 2.0 - More Open Democratic Society

- In addition to traditional training, participants request on-the-job training that would allow an immersion into the work of their professional counterparts, insights into the daily routines and engaged observation. Participants expressed a need to understand the nuts and bolts of essentially new service-related activities such as fighting corruption or defending human rights.
- Human rights work is a significant concern of START participants. Participants are interested in the status of human rights work with the public, especially in public relations, public education and lobbying.
- Our experience demonstrates that the earlier young people began to realize their role in public life, develop their leadership skills, and participate actively in their communities, the more benefit it brings to their local community's welfare. Continued programming emphasis on youth will build youth optimism, commitment to bring changes, and innovative ideas that could serve as a leverage to promote new concepts, approaches, and democratic values in the youths' communities.

SO 3.0 - Use of Improved Health and Child Welfare Practices Increased

- Far East region medical officials are interested in the integration of FCMC (Family Centered Maternity Care) technologies. However, due to insufficient funding of local municipal hospitals, there is a risk that the FCMC model can be adopted in local facilities only as a service for fee, accessible only to citizens with high income. For effective integration and a broader dissemination of FCMC in the Far East region, training is needed on antenatal practices for the practitioners from women's counseling centers. Local trainers could be engaged in future training programs.
- For medical facilities serving low-income areas in the Russia Far East, START training on *Rational Antimicrobial Therapy* was essential support to expose practitioners to evidence-based practices, up-to-date approaches to treatment, and familiarization with the modern antimicrobial drugs. More training is needed for medical practitioners to upgrade their knowledge and practices regarding the latest safe models of treatment.

SO 4.0 – Special Initiatives and Cross-Cutting Programs

- There is a need for continued development of collaboration between the government and NGOs. The government and NGO community have difficulty in “hearing each other” and engaging in productive interaction, partly due to Russian history of unchallenged government dominance over the citizens and their organizations. There is a continued need for local governments, parliaments, civil society organizations, businesses, and industries to discuss issues and share solutions, and to learn how to work together to solve local problems. One participant expressed this need most clearly: “It is very difficult for us as an NGO to deal with governmental institutions and local authorities. We need more joint work experience on both sides in order to build mutual understanding.”

- The need for fundraising skills has become more critical, particularly among the non-profit specialists who have become more professional and skilled in grant management and proposal writing. These skills are now even more important as the federal and local governments, businesses, private foundations, and individuals show interest in sponsoring non-profit projects. Therefore, in addition to building fundraising skills in the NGO sector, there is a need for NGOs to gain more knowledge of corporate philanthropy, and skills in building partnerships with local government and businesses.
- More training is needed on strengthening Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to enhance CSO potential and increase their sustainability and capacity. Seminars on advanced management techniques would be beneficial for NGOs, especially from small remote towns. Further development of CSOs will help them to be more accepted by local governments, businesses and the local population, and to provide stronger benefits to their communities. In view of the new NGO legislation, topics such as NGO accounting, taxation and legal aspects would be beneficial.
- More TOT programming is needed in the NGO training community. Trainers value establishing professional linkages with other trainers and as a result of TOT programs, trainers expand their professional networks across regions. Collaboration among trainers increases and trainers gain knowledge of training tools and techniques (such as needs assessments; formulation of concrete objectives and expectations prior to the training; participants' workbooks; and practical role plays and simulations).