



IN THIS ISSUE

Making a Difference: Fighting Human Trafficking 3

Postcard From Alabama 4

Alumna Profile: Tatiana Garshenina 5

From the Regions 6

Calendar of Events 7

Announcements and Opportunities 7

Message From the Executive Director

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the U.S. and Russian staff of the Open World Leadership Center, I am pleased to introduce the new *Open World Alumni Bulletin*. We have chosen Project Harmony to help implement a full-fledged and active program for Open World alumni that includes conferences and meetings throughout Russia, online forums that will allow alumni to share ideas with one another or to contact their American hosts, and this alumni bulletin, which will be published on a quarterly basis. Please go to our website, www.openworld.gov, for more information on all of our alumni activities or contact Project Harmony at openworld@projectharmony.ru.



Dr. Geraldine M. Otremba, Executive Director of the Open World Leadership Center

This issue is devoted to the topic of “women as leaders.” Women have always been an important component of Open World, accounting for nearly 45 percent of our delegates over the life of the program. For the past two years, we have put special emphasis on women and the crucial role they play in building a civil society in Russia, and we have made “women as leaders” one of the eight themes used to organize delegations and shape the content of their local programming. Thanks in part to the new women as leaders theme, the percentage of Open World delegates who are women increased to 54 percent in 2002 and is 59 percent so far in 2003.

Each “women as leaders” visit is designed to respond to the delegates’ specific needs and interests and might focus on women’s participation in public policy, women’s entrepreneurship, or domes-

tic violence prevention. Local programs include opportunities for participants to learn about American approaches to business management, administrative capacity-building, leadership development, and grassroots organizing and fundraising. Our goal is for these women leaders to return home with new skills and ideas, as well as new friends and networks that will assist them to bring about change in their communities.

I hope that you will enjoy reading this first issue of the new *Open World Alumni Bulletin*. We look forward to hearing from you!

In the next issue:

Libraries: Opening Worlds
Library Managers Examine the Role of Libraries in Civil Society During Open World 2003

FIRST WORDS FROM PROJECT HARMONY

Since the Open World Program’s inception in 1999, nearly 7,000 Russian citizens have participated in its exchange visits to the United States. Last year, the Open World Leadership Center awarded a grant to the Vermont-based nonprofit organization Project Harmony, Inc., to expand the Center’s work with program alumni. Project Harmony maintains seven offices throughout Russia. All of us at Project Harmony look forward to working with Open World’s alumni network, which includes some of the most dynamic and innovative leaders of the new Russia.

Project Harmony has assembled an experienced, enthusiastic team to oversee the Center’s new Open World Alumni Outreach Program. The team will:

- Maintain and update the database of program alumni
- Expand and maintain a new interactive website with features geared to alumni
- Organize four two-day regional thematic conferences, five two-day professional development workshops, and five two-day computer skills seminars
- Work with 26 regional alumni coordinators, of whom 12 will conduct local training activities for alumni and 14 will facilitate local alumni meetings

FIRST WORDS FROM PROJECT HARMONY

- Issue a dual-language quarterly thematic bulletin
- Conduct a distance learning course for alumni

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the Project Harmony alumni outreach team:

Elena Boukovskaya, Program Manager. Elena served as regional coordinator for Project Harmony's Anti-Domestic Violence Community Partnership Initiative in Irkutsk in 2000–2001. She then worked in Moscow as a foreign trade consultant for an investment company. Elena returns to Project Harmony as the Open World Alumni Outreach Program manager, and is responsible for overall program implementation and, specifically, developing outreach seminars and working with regional alumni coordinators.

Marina Bukharkina, Program Coordinator. Marina comes to Project Harmony from multimedia publishing company Kirill & Mefody, where she was responsible for promoting the company's educational products. Marina brings 23 years of teaching experience and a Ph.D. in education technology to the program, as well as 15 years of administrative experi-

ence. Marina will be in charge of website content and planning.

Olga Evdokimova, Program Assistant. Olga comes to Project Harmony from the American Information Center at Novgorod Regional Library, where she was director. Olga has served as an Open World facilitator and worked with alumni of various U.S.-Russia exchange programs through the Internet Access and Training Program (IATP). Olga will participate in American Councils' pre-departure orientations, develop quarterly alumni bulletins and provide general program support.

Yulia Yevtushok, Program Assistant. Yulia has worked for Project Harmony for two years, first as regional coordinator for the Community Policing Training Initiative and then as coordinator for the Juvenile Drug Prevention Initiative in Irkutsk. As an Open World Alumni Outreach Program assistant, Yulia will act as an online facilitator, translating materials and facilitating communication between alumni and their U.S. host families and colleagues.

Nadezhda Fomina, Program Assistant. Nadya joined Project Harmony in 1999, when she started as a program assistant for the Domestic Violence Community

Partnership Program in Petrozavodsk. She next served as regional coordinator for the Community Policing Training Initiative and Juvenile Drug Prevention and Enforcement Program. After a one-year break, during which she gave birth to her daughter Dasha, Nadya returns to work as an Open World Alumni Outreach Program assistant.

Vadim Pestovnikov, Database Manager. Based in St. Petersburg, Vadim has worked for Project Harmony since 2001, when he began administering websites for several U.S. State Department programs. For Open World, Vadim is responsible for website programming and creating and maintaining a user-friendly interface for the program's expanding alumni database.

Olga Gornovaya, Webmaster. Olga began work with Project Harmony in 2000 as an IATP webmaster. After moving from Moscow to the Boston suburbs, she continued with Project Harmony as a volunteer and then as an employee. Olga is responsible for the overall design of the new Open World website.

Paul Hinshaw
Director
Project Harmony

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Founded by the U.S. Congress in 1999, the Open World Program has enabled nearly 7,000 citizens from all of Russia's 89 regions to see the U.S. democratic process and market economy in action and to exchange ideas with their American counterparts, thereby helping build mutual cooperation between the Russian Federation and the United States. The Open World Program is conducted by the Open World Leadership Center, an independent legislative branch agency, which works cooperatively with the U.S. Department of State and other U.S. executive and judicial branch agencies.

To sign up for free electronic program updates or to be removed from mailout lists, visit www.openworld.gov. In Russia, the *Bulletin* is mailed to alumni without access to e-mail.

Olga Pak

Open World 2002

Theme: Women as Leaders

Host Organization: Vital Voices Global Partnership

Host Community: Washington, D.C.

Editor's note: Each issue of our bulletin will feature the stories of Open World alumni who have not only achieved success in their lives, but who are acting as elements of change in their home communities. Olga Pak heads a nonprofit organization that provides assistance to women who are victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, and other types of abuse. The organization, Clean World, is based in Pak's hometown of Novokuznetsk, in the Kemerovo region in central Siberia.

In September 2002 I was nominated for the Open World Program by Marina Piskalova-Parker, Director of ANNA Moscow Crisis Center for Women, where I began my activities in defense of women's rights. I was very excited about the trip and the opportunity to learn in the country where women have achieved such considerable results in strengthening their civil status. However, I was troubled by the theme of my trip: human trafficking. This topic would seem far removed from our region. Nevertheless, I knew from my colleagues' experience that this topic affected us closer to home and that there were victims of trafficking who had sought help.

My 10 days in Washington were filled with meetings and sharing information and practical experience with American colleagues. During this time, I was introduced to a new topic — the hidden world of organized crime and my countrywomen who become victims of this “business.”

Returning to Novokuznetsk, I shared the trip experience with my fellow female colleagues who had helped found Clean World — Nina Maksimovich, Director of the Novokuznetsk Municipal Center for Assistance for Families and Youth; Natalia Sosnovskaya, Director of the Novokuznetsk Crisis Hotline; and Tatiana Tolkacheva, Head of the Methodological Department of the Prenatal Center of Novokuznetsk.

Today the economic situation in Novokuznetsk and in other cities of the southern Kuzbass region [Kuzbass is an

area extending from Novokuznetsk to the city of Tomsk] is depressed. The switch to a market economy has led to constant downsizing at the cities' largest enterprises: metallurgical works and mines. Women are the first to be dismissed. Thousands are seeking new jobs and, unfortunately, this number grows from year to year.

For a young woman without any work experience, it is much more difficult to find a job. Gender discrimination is rampant. Most newspapers are filled with advertisements like “Employment Abroad,” “Jobs in Other Countries” and “Marry a Foreigner.” As one woman who applied to a marriage agency said, “I am ready to marry even a swine to move out of here.” She was facing a lot of problems in her life — a three-year abusive relationship with her husband, a long job search, sexual harassment from her current boss, and problems with her child caused by her other difficulties. I met this woman when she appealed to our organization to rescue her from domestic violence. Naturally, after receiving information about “modern slavery” from us, her attempts to find her “fortune abroad” became more cautious.

Another woman who escaped from Germany told our organization about overcoming isolation and fright and living without documents and money under the constant psychological abuse of her foreign husband. She didn't know to whom to turn and finally left everything to escape back home. Only here, after getting additional information, did she realize that it was not just an “unfortunate marriage,” but a violation of her rights; her husband was not just an idiot but a criminal. She had enough courage and persistence to secure her own and their common child's safety by a Russian court's decision.

Nina Maksimovich of the Municipal Center for Assistance for Families and Youth conducted an unofficial survey among 45 local 14- to 15-year-old girls who are now receiving a vocational education. All of them declared they would move abroad to work “doing whatever was



Olga Pak

suggested.” The level of their awareness about the potential danger is nil. None of them had heard about trafficking.

A similar survey in a prestigious local school also revealed that a high percentage of respondents (about 50 percent) wanted to leave the country and find work abroad. Yet no one had heard about trafficking and slavery. These results gave us the direction for our future work in preventing trafficking.

Information is distributed among groups of women with a high probability of becoming victims of trafficking. The topic of illegal trafficking and sexual slavery was included in a training program for school psychologists in Novokuznetsk that is annually conducted by the Municipal Center for Assistance for Families and Youth. City hotline consultants were provided with the same information. Unfortunately, due to limited resources, we could not organize larger outreach opportunities, which could attract more attention to this problem. But future plans include the creation of a TV program devoted to women's issues. We hope that a weekly program will appear on one of the local channels.

Listeners tuning in to Alabama Public Radio's "Community Focus" show on Aug. 11 learned that American "super moms" have nothing on Russian professional women when it comes to juggling job, family, home, and volunteer work. Sitting in the interviewee's chair for the pretaped discussion on Russian women today was school principal and local legislator Liliya Bazanova from Samara Region, a member of an Open World women as leaders delegation hosted in July 2003 by the Office of International Programs at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Joining Bazanova for the trip to Alabama was Rashida Sultanova, head of the Registry Offices Board of the Republic of Bashkortostan Cabinet of Ministers and a deputy in Bashkortostan's State Assembly; Lyubov Kostenko, a secondary school principal and two-term member of the Kortkeroskiy District Council in the Komi Republic; and Lyudmila Kharemi, a city council member and lyceum director from Ulyanovsk, the capital of the Ulyanovsk region.

During their weeklong stay, the delegates met with the Alabama secretary of state, the mayors of Huntsville and nearby Madison, a member of the Huntsville City Council, a district court judge, a member of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, and the superintendent of the Huntsville City School System — all of whom also happen to be women.

"The members of the Russian Open World delegation engaged in many fruitful and enlightening discussions with their female counterparts of issues affecting women in both countries," according to Dr. John Pottenger, the director of the Office of International Programs, who also participated in the radio interview that was broadcast on Aug. 11.



U.S. Rep. Bud Cramer (Ala.), center, is flanked by, from left, Huntsville host Dr. John Pottenger, Rashida Sultanova, Liliya Bazanova, facilitator Aleksandra Bukacheva, Lyudmila Kharemi, and Lyubov Kostenko.

"American women perhaps are more emancipated in everything," said Sultanova upon her return to Russia. "What surprised me most was how women are selected for jobs. In Bashkortostan during the hiring process, a person's physical characteristics and age often play a role. Employers don't want to hire women older than 50, out of concern about their ability to complete tasks. In America, no one is shocked by age, physical appearance or skin color. The most important thing is the desire to work."

"And to me, it seems as if we are not differentiated by anything," contradicted Kostenko. "Women throughout the world have the same problems and values. That's work, family and children."

The Russian women were also special guests at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Huntsville headquarters of the National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC), which was officiated by its founder, Rep. Robert E. "Bud" Cramer (Ala.), a member of the U.S. House of

Representatives appointed by the congressional leadership to the Open World Leadership Center Board of Trustees. The NCAC is a national leader in preventing and treating child abuse. "This event was of great interest to them," commented Tammy Paltchikov, the Office of International Programs' assistant director. Both Bazanova and Kharemi serve on local commissions on social issues.

Other highlights included touring the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and being profiled in the *Montgomery Advertiser*, the state capital's major daily newspaper.

"My expectations were met 100 percent," said Sultanova of the visit. "We met with many women who make decisions at different levels and we were lucky enough to meet with politicians." And the Russian women are now honorary citizens of Huntsville and honorary secretaries of state of the state of Alabama.

Open World 2002 alumna Tatiana Garshenina chairs the Sakhalin Association of Business People (www.abp.marketcenter.ru). Tatiana visited Bluefield, W.Va., as part of an economic development delegation hosted by the Academy for Educational Development and its local partner, the Center for International Understanding at Bluefield State College.

Tatiana got acquainted with the work of privately owned businesses and how they operate differently from their Russian counterparts; business management principles; and establishing relations between government authorities and businesses. She also learned about the work of different kinds of U.S. associations and NGOs and their role in business development.

The most unexpected revelation for her was the process by which associations and NGOs receive government funding to implement various projects, such as building a water pipeline. Tatiana applied her newly gained knowledge back home in Sakhalin. As a result, her association was selected to create a regional network of information centers as part of a government program supporting private business.

Tatiana has been elected to second and third terms as chairperson of the association. What does Tatiana's road to success look like?

My grandmother is a wonderful and wise person. She often said to me, "Do your duty honestly and accurately. Love life and the people around you. The achievements of the people close to you are valuable because you contributed to their progress. If they trust you and follow you, it means you are a leader. Fortune favors the daring and wisdom helps you stay up to the mark." These are my life values. They help me reach my goals. In my opinion, my success is due to the success of my co-workers, realizing we achieved it together.

As a child I was taught to be responsible for an assigned task. When local businesses trusted me to temporarily head the newly formed Sakhalin Association of Business People while they searched for a chairman, I perceived this as a mission and began conscientiously fulfilling my duties. Having agreed to the job, it was the furthest thing from my mind that it would become my cause. Soon afterwards, though, I realized that heading the association was difficult, challenging and extremely interesting. It is also the type of business that needs to be run professionally. Only here, the people who trust you and rely on you have more responsibility and can help point you in the right direction during difficult times.

Within my first year as head of the association, I realized that I had to do this work full time. I asked my husband to take over the responsibilities of my business (a small café).

The association unites business representatives from 82 enterprises and six business unions. The types of businesses include construction, trade, auditing, consulting, medical, meteorological, tourist, lumber, hotels, and consumer services. The main directions of our work are as follows: defending members' interests, lobbying, developing new legislation, promoting new contacts, cooperating internationally, sharing information, meeting and working with delegations, promoting business education, participating in the economic development of Sakhalin Region, promoting programs aimed at the support and development of private enterprises, and supporting the establishment of private companies. Women leaders account for about 40 percent of the members in our association.

We are currently implementing two projects:

1. Creation of a regional network of informational and consulting centers for entrepreneurs as part of a governmental program supporting private business;
2. Creation of a resource center for tourism in the Sakhalin region and support



Tatiana Garshenina

for increased tourism to the region as part of the program "Social Projects of Sakhalin and Kurily – 2003" under the patronage of [the late] Sakhalin Governor I.P. Farkhutdinov and with the financial backing of the Sakhalin 21st Century Foundation.

We conduct trainings and consulting sessions during which we cover private ownership issues. For anyone interested in starting a business in Sakhalin, I would advise the following:

- Approach this issue seriously
- Study both federal and local Russian law (or at least receive detailed information from qualified specialists)
- Study the market segment in order to choose the direction in which you will develop
- Be tolerant and patient
- Contact our association in order to get necessary information and assistance

I always tell my daughter the same words my grandmother told me. I add: "Perceive the world. Knowledge is strength. Teach yourself and learn from people. This will bring you success." That is why when there was a chance to visit the USA as part of the Open World Program, I was happy to go. There was a lot to learn from the visit. The Open World Program continues for me because such an exchange of experience and knowledge opens new horizons and makes the world truly open and better.

FROM THE REGIONS

Although the Open World Program has only been in operation since 1999, its alumni number in the thousands and live in every Russian region. In order to address alumni needs more effectively at the local level, Open World has created a network of 26 regional alumni coordinators. The coordinators will facilitate meetings and training programs for alumni in their area and act as the primary contacts in our outreach program. They are an experienced team, having previously worked together as regional coordinators for the Open Society Institute.

The Open World Alumni Outreach Program got under way on June 26, 2003, when the regional alumni coordinators gathered just outside Moscow for a three-day training event. Conference participants learned about project goals and developed work plans for the coming months. The regional alumni coordinators are listed by their home city below.

Barnaul	Irina Semyonova	sem@ic.dcn-asu.ru	Petrozavodsk	Svetlana Shlykova	svesh@psu.karelia.ru
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For more contact information, call (095) 290-00-12 or (095) 290-02-65 (Open World Alumni Outreach Program), or visit www.openworld.gov/alumni/wback.php



Project Harmony staff and regional alumni coordinators attending the June 2003 training session are, from left, front row, Yulia Shadrina (Office Manager), Olga Evdokimova, Yulia Yevtushok, Nadezhda Soshnikova (Chief Accountant), Elena Boukovskaya, and Marina Bukharkina; second row, Sergei Papshev, Marina Makhmutova, Galina Muratova, Irina Semyonova, Vadim Pestovnikov, and Aleksei Stukanov; and third row, Paul Hinshaw, Dmitri Postelnik, Nikolai Potorochenko, Oleg Leikind, Tamara Terekhova, Nikolai Kuznetsov, and Alexander Krasnikov.

OPEN WORLD ALUMNI OUTREACH PROGRAM – CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	City	Event Type*	
September 13–14, 2003	Petrozavodsk	PDW	*PDW – professional development workshop; CSS – computer skills seminar Other events conducted by Regional Alumni Coordinators will take place over the same time period in Rostov, Tomsk, Tver, Vladivostok, Samara, St. Petersburg, Barnaul, Omsk, Ufa, Velikiy Novgorod, Irkutsk and Saratov. Dates will be posted on www.openworld.gov .
September 27–28	Tula	PDW	
October 10–12	Tolyatti	CSS	
October 17–19	Kemerovo	CSS	
October 24–25	Khabarovsk	Conference	
November 14–15	Kaliningrad	PDW	
November 21–22	St. Petersburg	Conference	
November 28–29	Yaroslavl	CSS	
December 5–6	Samara	Conference	
December 19–20	Perm	CSS	
December 19–20	Ekaterinburg	PDW	
January 30–31, 2004	Krasnodar	PDW	
February 20–22	Tomsk	Conference	
February 27–28	Voronezh	CSS	

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Workshops and conferences:

■ **St. Petersburg** October 10–12. Conference “Thirty years of the Fulbright Exchange Program in Russia: The Impact of International Exchanges on National Histories.” Sponsored by the Fulbright Exchange Program. See www.fulbright.amc.ru/russian/alumni/3conference.shtml for more details.

Internships, scholarships, and grants:

■ **The Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP)** announces an individual grants competition for 2005–2006. Applications may be submitted starting in September. The IFP provides support for up to three years of formal graduate-level study leading to a master’s or doctoral degree. Fellows may enroll in an appropriate university program anywhere in the world, including their country of residence, and may pursue any academic discipline or field of study that is consistent with the interests and goals of the Ford Foundation. For details, contact the Institute of International Education, Moscow, Tverskaya ul. 16/2, building 3, office 1; tel. (095) 935-83-53; fax (095) 937-54-18.

■ The Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) is accepting applications for the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Access to Learning Award** for 2004. The award is given annually to a public library or similar organization outside the United States that has shown a commitment to offering to the public free access to information technology through an existing innovative program. The award includes a grant of up to \$1 million. A library offers “free public access” if it allows all members of the public, including children and young people, to use its facilities free of charge (without membership or Internet fees). The application can be downloaded from the CLIR website. (See www.clir.org.fellowships/gates/gates.html for the link and for other options for obtaining the application.) The forms are available only in English and must be completed in English. Applications must be postmarked by February 28, 2004.

■ The U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs manages a variety of academic exchange programs for Eurasia and Central and Eastern Europe. These programs provide various opportunities for study and research at the

undergraduate through postdoctoral levels.

FREEDOM Support Act Contemporary Issues Fellowship Program (CI). The application deadline is October 31, 2003.

FREEDOM Support Act Undergraduate Program (FSAU). The application deadline is October 17, 2003.

Russian Young Leadership Fellows for Public Service Program. The application deadline is October 31, 2003.

Individual Advanced Research Opportunities (IARO). The application deadline is November 1, 2003.

For more information visit www.irex.org or www.irex.ru.

New opportunities for alumni:

■ The U.S. Embassy is planning to open an **American Corner** in **Omsk** in October. American Corners provide the latest information about the United States and offer the public free access to reference materials, databases, the Internet, and video collections. See www.amcorners.ru for more information.