

REGIONAL NGOS IN RUSSIA:

**Charitable Foundations, Social Service, and Policy-Advocacy
Organizations**

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Executive Summary

The Working Paper reports mainly on two groups of NGOs: Charitable Foundations and Social Service NGO's; and Policy-Advocacy Organizations. It draws on more than seventy interviews with NGO and political leaders in Tula and Samara Regions and the Chuvash Republic during 2004 to assess the contribution of these NGOs to the development of civil society and formulation of social policy. We find that in all three regions, NGOs have developed domestic sources of financing, mainly from business, and improved personnel. Institutional infrastructure for access to state executive and legislative authorities (i.e., round tables, councils, etc.) have been built. They provide for some participation of NGOs in social policy, but not (yet) a systematic or effective role in policy formulation. Rights-Defense Organizations and Resource Centers show the strongest potential for establishing civil society and governmental accountability. The NGO community should build on current achievements, though new restrictive legislation complicates this task.

Introduction

The present report continues the analysis of research materials collected for the project “Formulation of Social Policy in Russia’s Regions: Is There Evidence of Civil Society’s Participation?” It looks at two main groups of NGOs: Social Service, Charitable, and Ecological/Cultural Preservation NGOs; and Policy-Advocacy Organizations.¹ The focus of the research is on the behavior of these organizations in the sphere of social policy: their projects and programs, political priorities, and role in the formulation of social policy. The report covers NGOs’ relations with legislative and executive authorities, political parties and trade unions, as well as other civil society organizations. It also discusses social sector NGOs’ functions, financing, structure and personnel. Our assessment draws on more than 70 interviews with NGO, trade union, political party, and governmental leaders, carried out in Tula and Samara Regions and the Chuvash Republic during 2004. (Interviews are listed in the appendix.) The main goal of the project is to analyze the behavior of Russian NGOs in terms of their contribution to the building of civil society, and their influence on social policy.

NGOs are classified according to their basic function. The first main group, Social Service, Charitable, and Ecological/Cultural Preservation NGOs, which we designate as Grass Roots 2, engage in activities that are related to the social needs of defined groups of people or the resolution of specific social problems. Surveyed social service and charitable organizations include those that work with the elderly, orphans, children from poor families, people affected by AIDS, substance abuse, and domestic violence. Ecological/cultural organizations seek to preserve the environment or Russia’s historical-cultural heritage. The second main group, Policy-Advocacy NGOs, are concerned with defense of legal and political rights, and

¹ The first report to the National Council, “NGOs, Civil Society, and Social Policy in Russia’s Regions,” discussed findings about self-help and self-organized NGOs, those with activities that are directly related to the problems and needs of their members. (designated Grass Roots I).

development of the third (i.e., non-governmental) sector. We divide them into organizations that are mainly committed to protecting basic rights, including human and social rights, election monitoring, etc; and “Infrastructural” NGOs, including resource centers for other NGOs, groups defending the legal rights of civil society, and organizations for civic initiative. (see Table 1)

Grass Roots 2 NGOs vary in their relation to politics, from those that consciously refuse to participate, to those whose leaders use the NGO primarily as a path or stepping-stone to political office. Policy-Advocacy NGOs are generally oriented toward participating in the legislative process, and developing civil society itself.

Grass-Roots 2 NGOs

NGOs providing charity and social services were surveyed at all three research sites. Interviews showed that Charitable Funds and Social Service NGOs often represent corporate philanthropy. They are organized by businesspeople or boards of businesses, industrialists, political or religious leaders, with activities reflecting the particular goals or priorities of these leaders. Sponsorship of the NGO is often associated with an individual (‘under a concrete name’) or small group of leaders, local notables who focus on particular goals in their communities and publicize their charitable activities. Their relationship to politics depends not mainly on financial resource constraints (as was the case with Grass Roots 1, see NC Report # 1), but on the orientations and interests of their organizers or leaders, and those leaders’ experiences in promoting the goals of the NGO. Some stay out of politics. Others turn to regional and local authorities for resources and cooperation, or help clients to realize their legal social rights in dealings with regional and local administrations. Some leaders have attempted to use the NGO as a base to launch political campaigns or careers. Ecological and cultural

preservation NGOs generally confine themselves to concern with a single issue area (i.e., pollution, opposing construction in preserved areas.) They generally avoid associations with broader political programs or parties, seeing such politics as incompatible with their humanitarian goals.²

Resources and Financing

We have identified (in Report # 1) three main sources for funding of Russian NGOs: domestic private contributions, foreign grants, and budget financing. Of these, private grants and corporate sponsorship play a large role in funding Grass Roots 2 NGOs, and appear to be the major source of financing for many charitable and social service organizations. Some operate predominantly or exclusively with funding from domestic grants and sponsors. (Interview # 1, 34) For example, the “Open Russia” Foundation, financed by Mikhail Khodorkovsky, was established as a charitable foundation for educational and cultural projects, though it later broadened into programs to development of civil society and grants to rights-defense organizations.³

Most of these NGOs do not seek budget financing, though they may benefit from reduced rents for office space and other social ‘privileges.’ Some organizations do receive income from budget sources; for example, an ecological education center for adolescents in Cheboksary received funding from the local Education Committee. (Interview # 37). But this is rare, especially in comparison with self-help organizations (Grass Roots 1). Thus, Grass Roots 2

²The Yabloko Party had a special section in its program concerning ecology, and some ecological NGOs worked with the party on these issues.

³ http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Open_Russia_Foundation

Table 1
Main Types of Russian NGOs: Grass-Roots and Policy/Advocacy

<p>1.Grass Roots organizations –</p> <p>Mass organizations reflecting the needs of members or a focused group</p>	<p>1.1 Grass Roots 1</p> <p>NGOs with activities that are directly related to the resolution of problems or satisfaction of needs of members of the organizations themselves</p>	<p>1.1.1. Basic organizations of mutual help, for example, associations of invalids, veterans, families with ill children, gender-based</p>
		<p>1.1.2. Organizations of a Club Type; Associations according to interest, etc.</p>
	<p>1.2. Grass Roots 2</p> <p>NGOs with activities related not to their own members' needs, but to the needs of a defined group of people and/or to the resolution of some specific social problem</p>	<p>1.2.1. Social Service NGOs and Charitable Organizations, the activities of which are directed to resolving the problems of certain population categories (i.e., elderly, families with many children); or to resolving some social problem (i.e., homelessness, narcotic addiction, etc.)</p>
		<p>1.2.2. NGOs with ecological and historical-cultural concerns- defense of the environment, cultural monuments, etc.</p>
<p>2. Policy/Advocacy Organizations</p> <p>Organizations directed To the formation and Realization of policy, or To the defense of interests Of some social group</p>	<p>2.1 Rights Defense Organizations traditional human rights organizations also comparatively new types – groups of civil control, including control over the activities of executive structures; control over election procedures</p>	
	<p>2.2. “Infrastructural” NGOs the mission of which is to aid development of the third sector; including Groups of legal/ rights defense/ guarantees NGOs; Centers for research and educational activities; Resource Centers (for support of NGOs) Organizations of civic initiative, with the goal of aiding the Growth of civil society, partnerships of society and power</p>	

NGOs generally have fewer problems of dependence on budgetary allocations and on local political authorities, and less of a tendency toward clientelism or political subordination. The extent of foreign assistance in financing these NGOs is somewhat controversial. Some Russian studies have concluded the most funding comes from domestic sources, and only about 10% from abroad.⁴ But some of our respondents pointed to the predominant role of foreign sources in funding their activities, and claimed that the exit or prohibition of foreign assistance would lead to degradation of their activities. (Interview # 2)

Structure and Personnel

Grass-roots 2 NGOs have formal structures and permanent staffs as well as specialists and volunteers. The levels of training of staff members vary widely, but in recent years there have been unconditional improvements. The professionalism of workers has been raised with the help of both foreign funds such as the Soros Foundation, Russian foundations such as “Open Russia” and various organizations such as “schools of parliamentarism,” etc. Many NGO staff are now better-trained and informed for participation in round tables, commissions, and other consultative meetings for discussion of social policy measures. At the same time, their level of preparation does not allow them to function as full partners in the legislative, and in particular the budget, process. They generally lack the necessary juridical or legal expertise on social policy. Deficits of knowledge about budget questions is especially problematic. (Interview # 71)

⁴ A study by the Urban Institute in Moscow concluded that a little more than 10% of financing came from abroad. The President of the Center for development of democracy and law also cites research claiming that about 10% of financing for Russia NGOs comes from abroad. See: http://www.urbaneconomics.ru/publications.pho?folder_id=105&mat_id=528

Respondents were divided in their assessments about future development of human resources in the third sector. Some emphasized the tendency for growth of skills, and were optimistic that such growth would continue in the future. (Interview # 31, 61) Others saw the beginnings of a decline, connected particularly with a fall in foreign support. According to one NGO leader, for example, “Many specialists leave social organizations. When we got financing from Western funds, social organizations were rich and were able to attract strong specialists. But in a number of regions organizations have now weakened, and people go into the professional sector.” (Interview # 2)

Some Grass Roots 2 NGOs also rely on volunteers. The volunteer movement in Russia is in its early stages. The motivations of the majority are not especially altruistic, as is more the case in countries with developed third sectors and more prosperous populations. Many volunteers are young people who are going into a profession related to the NGO’s activity and want professional practice or experience, i.e., student-jurists, social workers, ecologists. Another pool of volunteers consists of family members of the NGOs’ clients (for example, of the elderly, of child-invalids.)

Relationship to Politics: 3 Types of Behavior

Following Principles of Non-Participation in Politics

Some of the NGOs in this group make a conscious decision to stay away from politics. This behavior is mostly characteristic of charitable funds, those with sponsorship from business enterprises and private individuals. Non-involvement in politics is a broad principle of their work. At the same time, quite often such funds actively distribute information and publicity

about their sponsors, founders, trustees. The key question relating to such ‘apolitical’ organizations is whether their activities respond to genuine social interests and needs, or whether they are largely decorative, designed not so much to serve the most important social needs as for their public relations potential. (Interview # 34)

Charitable foundations may also be formed by local administrations, in order to raise money from local businesses for social programs. Such organizations have certain features in common with the “marionette behavior” of some Grass-Roots I organizations (discussed in Report # 1): presentable leaders are selected by political authorities to provide a good ‘front’ for the NGO, and the authorities themselves control the use of funds with the goal of improving their own reputation and public standing. However, these charitable foundations are used to fulfill genuine social needs in the community, to supplement tax revenues or inadequate transfers from the center.⁵ Such organizations are not really initiated by society, and cannot independently articulate social needs, but they do contribute to the government’s ability to address real problems.

Other NGOs among those surveyed come a step closer to politics. They generally take a position of political neutrality, but may be drawn into political campaigns in order to support individuals who share the priorities or goals of their organizations. The leader of one women’s NGO in Tula, for example, explained, “It is our firm position that we should not depend on political opinions and decisions. But here in Tula, when women run in elections, we support them. But as separate candidates, without relation to parties. We are for the feminist movements. One of our goals is to raise women . . . to the level of taking decisions.” (Interview

⁵ This type of behavior was more important in the Yeltsin period, when governors were elected and were under more pressure to provide for their regions, while the center controlled and manipulated most tax revenues. Because governors did not manage adequate financial resources, some used such foundations to provide necessary social services and benefits.

8) Ecological organizations also work with parties that have ecological programs or demands. For example, an ecological NGO in the Chuvash Republic cooperated with Yabloko to support that party's ecological platform. (Interview # 36)

Search for Political Partners

A significant part of NGO leaders recognize the need for contacts with political actors in order to achieve their goals. Some organizations search for party allies that share their broad political sympathies, others make pragmatic connections with the 'party of power.' One characteristic response is to promote NGO leaders as independent candidates in regional and municipal elections. Respondents often spoke of such attempts. (Interview # 6, 7, 57)

The overwhelming direction of political influence-seeking, however, was toward non-party structures, toward legislative and executive authorities. In all the researched regions, many institutions have been created for contacts between NGOs and legislative and executive powers. These include, for example, a system of permanent 'round tables' in Samara, political-consultative councils under the Governor in Tula, so-called 'Youth Parliaments' in Chuvashia and Samara, and some other institutions. A well-informed government official in Samara Region gave a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of this institutional structure. In her opinion, "There is dialogue, but no real interaction." (Interview # 71) Actually, most often what takes place within these institutions is not even dialogue, but more a monologue of representatives of power directed toward representatives of the NGO who, as a rule, cannot even make a real proposal.

In all three regions there exist many institutions for carrying on contacts between NGOs and power, but they are often poorly-coordinated and not adapted for taking decisions, for

solving problems. Many have similar functions, while in other important areas there are none. It would, however, be incorrect to say that they accomplish nothing. Both the administration, which must somehow justify its own position, and the NGO, which must work off its grants, need somehow to be occupied with resolution of social issues, to show some activity. But these activities do not have a systematic character to make them correspond to the real needs of people, or at least do not reflect the priorities of these needs. Neither the authorities, nor the NGO, has carried through systematic study of social needs, of the range of problems according to their importance, of the possibilities for their solution.

The absence of a systematic approach characterizes Russian social policy as a whole, and the participation of NGOs in the work of various 'round tables,' 'consultative councils,' commissions and other organs does not change the situation too substantively. The problem of transition from separate projects 'under grant' to systematic joint (combining various NGOs and authorities) work in resolving social problems of the regions has not been adequately realized. But they are moving in the direction of gaining understanding of the key problems. At the first stage the majority of organizations viewed positively the possibilities to hold meetings with high-level authorities, to participate in councils, etc. Now many have begun to experience dissatisfaction with these contacts, to understand the need for mutuality and feed-back.

Use of NGO to Penetrate to Power

Finally, there is a type of behavior in which NGOs' activity in the social sphere is simply part of a strategy for gaining political office, a means of paving the leader's path to power, and this aim is subordinated to all other goals. Basically, for these NGOs taking social initiatives is

part of the pre-election struggle, in the well-known sense of “shopping for” the votes of people. The strategy may include also searching for political partners. (Interview # 35)

Rights-Defense NGOs

Rights-Defense NGOs are comparatively fewer in number and less active than other groups. Respondents at all three research sites commented on their relative weakness. According to the leader of a resource center in Samara, for example, there are so few rights-defense organizations in the region that “it is possible to count them on the fingers of one hand.” (Interview # 61) Interviews reflected an analogous situation in Tula and Cheboksary. A number of these organizations were nevertheless present in our sample. (Interview # 31, 61)

Relationship with Civil Society and with Politics

The behavior of Rights-Defense NGOs, their civic activeness, protest potential and capacity for cooperation, vary quite broadly and depend on a complex combination of objective and subjective factors. The position of the leadership and members, as well as the behavior of legislative and executive authorities, matter for their behavior. Some have conformist behavior, and are oriented toward contact and non-confrontation with authorities. Others are obstructionist, refuse any contact, and carry out a sweeping critique. A third group strives for independence and civil control, particularly over law enforcement agencies. These are the organizations with the strongest potential to become the basis for formation of civil society in Russia.

Conformist Behavior

Many NGOs with conformist behavior are conscious of their dependence on authorities both for resources and for resolving problems of rights-defense for the entire group. Therefore, most strive to be ‘in contact,’ or ‘not in a quarrel’ with authorities. According to a leader of the Tula regional branch of a well-known rights-defense organization, for example, “All these years we have worked directly in contact with local authorities, changing our relations when they (the authorities) are good, and when they become worse. Some in our organization think that our dialogue with the authorities should be harsh . . . that we should go out to meetings and picket. But the majority of our members conclude . . . that it is better to have contacts with the authorities, because we depend on them for access to offices to receive people, etc. We are always worried about not harming ourselves, appearing in the mass media, or associating with representatives of other organizations like ours.” (Interview # 4) According to some respondents, a majority of rights-defense organizations in Samara Region are similarly “non-protesting,” confining their activities mainly to making complaints, writing petitions, etc. (Interview # 61)

Obstructionist Behavior

A second behavior type of rights-defense NGOs completely refuses any kind of contact with authorities, and engages in a sweeping critique. Examples of this behavior, particularly during preparations for the Civic Forum,⁶ were reported in interviews in Cheboksary. Representatives of these radical organizations demanded that repressive measures be taken against several representatives of power (in particular, the Procurator.) This made it practically

⁶On the Civic Forum, see Report # 1; Marcia Weigle, “On the Road to Civic Forum: State and Society from Yeltsin to Putin, *Demokratizatsiya*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2002.

impossible to continue any kind of constructive work. Preparations for the Civic Forum were supposed to be a starting point for negotiations and a collaboration process between NGOs and the authorities, but those with positive intentions could not cooperate with the obstructionist.

(Interview # 27)

Independence and Civil Control

The type of behavior is the most important from the perspective of civil society formation, i.e., the building of intermediate institutions from society that can hold governmental authorities accountable. These organizations strive toward independent behavior, toward exercising control in the interests of society over the activities of powerful institutions, particularly law enforcement agencies (i.e., prisons, police stations, bull-pens, etc.) Such NGOs are few, but they exist. Several are regional branches of federal rights-defense organizations, others were created in the regions. One such NGO in the city of Togliatti in Samara Region acts effectively as a registered representative for people in relations with law enforcement institutions. It has a juridical clinic and provides legal help. Another Federation-wide organization has initiated a federal project on the use of measures of physical force in arrests carried out by law enforcement institutions. (Interview # 71)

Other NGOs in this sub-group work to defend voters' rights. One such organization in Samara that participated in our survey worked to monitor the course of the election campaign and election (observation of polling places), monitor the activities of elected deputies, and carry out educational work among the population. (Interview # 51) Others are involved in defense of consumer, social, and labor rights. These organizations work mainly through the courts, helping

citizens to prepare appeals, consulting on legal questions, and carrying out legal education among citizens on a broad scale. (Interviews # 50)

Representatives of these more constructively-oriented rights-defense NGOs generally have a pessimistic assessment of their future possibilities. Their pessimism is connected with the low value not only of “supply” in the observance of civil, social, and labor rights, but also the “demand” for defense of these rights, the low level of people’s information about their legal guarantees, the unpreparedness to undertake any kind of individual or collective action. Taken together, this gives a picture of a very low legal and civic culture in the country. (Interviews # 7, 49). The leaders of rights-defense NGOs assign the main responsibility for poor compliance with social and civil rights to various institutions and organs of the state. Laws are ignored at all levels, there is bureaucratic formalism, concrete cases of violations of law are common, and the general situation in the country deprives organizations as well as individuals of any stimulus toward legal-defense actions.

In the view of these NGO leaders, one of the most important obstacles to their effectiveness is the situation with state institutions, for example, the practically catastrophic state of the court system. According to one NGO leader in Samara, “Why do people not go to court? The reason is that, in court, first they are confronted with a disgraceful attitude toward themselves on the part of the court, and second, . . . they are confronted with complete ignorance of the law. People are not stupid, they see that they are in fact scoffed at in courts. . . . they are convinced that the court will not in any case take decisions on their behalf. We have helped organize more than 1200 (cases), prepared documents, often participated ourselves. Of these 1200 cases, which concern defense of citizen’s interests, only in 12 were all norms of the law fully observed. Public trust in justice is to a very large extent undermined, because courts are

mainly defending ‘social order,’ defending organizations and violating individual rights..”

(Interview # 49, 51)

Leaders of rights-defense NGOs spoke negatively about the potential for authorities to respond to their messages. At the local level the situation was practically scandalous. According to one NGO leader in Samara, “In one of the rural districts we tried to explain to the citizens how their local budget worked. They met to ask the district head a question: “What is the budget of our district, and to whom is it distributed, in what proportions.” The district head was stunned, and replied that the budget was “a commercial secret.” (Interview # 51)

Even in the more politically-advanced, democratically-administered regions, authorities often give a hostile reception to calls for greater openness, pressures for a higher level of accountability. One NGO in Samara analyzed the information on the web site of the district legislature, and found that it was mostly self-serving reports of individual constituency favors. The NGO asked for more information on representatives’ legislative activity, work in commissions, decision-making and other professional work. In response, the deputies stopped allowing people from the NGO to attend Duma events, and even to enter the building.

(Interview # 51) In many rights-defense organizations, there is a growing recognition of the need to combine work for raising civic culture in society with work for control over authorities. These tendencies remain rather weak, but at the first stage of reconstruction they were generally absent. Such work is carried out on a very limited scale, but it proceeds both on the level of general control over authorities, and on the level of resolution of everyday problems of the population. (Interview # 49)

Infrastructural NGOs: Resource Centers

The last group of NGOs are organizations of an infrastructural type, centers that provide various resources for other NGOs, what might be called ‘NGOs for NGOs.’ Their most important functions are to mediate the movement of financial resources from grant-givers to NGOs, and to provide information and intellectual support. They also work for the development of legal guarantees for NGOs, lobbying for laws and normative acts that are necessary to the third sector.. Infrastructural NGOs are active in working with the media and as mediators, helping to establish partnership relations between NGOs and governing structures. The activity of these organizations is exceptionally important both for development of the third sector and for the advancement of participatory policymaking.

Because infrastructural NGOs constitute a comparatively small group, and the number interviewed in each region was small compared to other types, research in three regions is not sufficient to provide a full picture of their behavior. This would require a broader regional sample. Nevertheless we did include in our sample two resource centers, one in Chuvashia and one in Samara Region, that are well-known in their regions and recognized at the federal level. (Interview # 27, 61) These centers have made their own analyses of the third sector. We interviewed their leaders and specialists not only as representatives of their own organizations, but also (possibly mainly) as experts commanding broad knowledge and competent opinions about the situation of the third sector in the region.

Functions of Resource Centers

Informational and Intellectual Support of NGOs

This work includes help in preparing documents for the establishment and registration of NGOs, seminars, training, individual consultations on various aspects of the organizations' activities, on holding fundraisers, on various forms of receiving and collecting resources. Our interview with leaders from one of the largest resource centers in Samara showed that it administers the movement of significant financial means coming into the third sector of the region from both Russian and foreign sources.

Resource centers initiate and support various forms of communication between NGOs, including among themselves. In Samara, for example, a 'round table' of resource centers was organized. (Interview # 61) A resource center in Cheboksary initiated a consortium of NGOs with the goal of developing corporate philanthropy and social investment in the republic. According to its leader: "We formed a small coalition of organizations . . . several leaders of organizations joined . . . some were specialists in business, others in strategic planning. In this consortium we were able to give concrete advice on the situation in Chuvashia". (Interview # 27)

Aiding Establishment of Partnerships between the Community of NGOs and Power Structures

Samara Region is one of the more advanced in establishing dialogue between the NGO community and political authorities. Relations between social organizations and legislative and executive organs has a fairly long history and solid institutional basis: social meetings, a network of round tables on various issues of regional development, commissions, a Youth

Parliament. The creation of much of this infrastructure, including the signing of a “Contract of cooperation between the NGO community and the Samara District Duma,” was the result of the resource center’s efforts. The most important factor here is the democratic orientation of the regional authorities. According to the leader of a major resource center in Samara, “For us as an organization, from the first day relations with the authorities were remarkably good. The composition of the administration changed four times, but our relations have never gotten worse. When each of the new teams began to work with particular issues, their people inevitably came across our materials, documents concerning our cooperation, etc., and they got in touch with us. We achieved this institutionalized partnership. This is what we wanted to achieve, because it changes the situation in general.” (Interview # 61) In Chuvashia as well, the President, one of the more prominent figures of the democratic movement, has a reputation for effective leadership. In the Republic there is an infrastructure of mutual ties between social organizations and the authorities, i.e., round tables, commissions, a youth parliament, etc.

The activities of infrastructural NGOs or resource centers in the organizational sphere have produced quite positive results. But if we look more deeply, the evaluation is notably worse. Representatives of resource centers understand the difference between decorative or superficial communication. They realize that, while there has been progress, cooperation with political authorities in general is not as deep or systematic as it needs to be for their effective participation in policy-making.

Cooperation with Political Society: Pre-Election Campaigns, Relations with Parties

Many infrastructural NGOs prefer to maintain a politically neutral position. At the same time, it is neither realistic nor desirable for most to fully remove themselves from the political

sphere. There are several reasons for this. First, many consider their mission as work with the population for raising participation in elections, and in some cases to support concrete candidates. Secondly many, having broad information on the social situation in the region, consider it useful to consult with parties about the social blocs of their programs. Thirdly, many NGO leaders promote their own candidacies in single-member districts, to be elected as independent deputies, for example, in regional legislative organs. In this case, NGOs support “their own.” Finally, a number of party functionaries and activists come out of NGOs. The continuation of personal contacts sometimes translates into more substantive cooperation between representatives of political society and NGOs. According to the leader of one NGO, “There are two situations in which our organization may, should, and even must work with political parties. The first is to work with the population so that they will vote. The second is formation of the social bloc of the party’s program. We know what is needed, we can provide information on every aspect of formation of the social program.” (Interview # 61)

Work with Grant-Givers, Benefactors, Aiding Development of Corporate Philanthropy.

Representatives of resource centers confirm that corporate philanthropy is growing in Russia, though much of the early growth has had an unprofessional character. Informational and organizational support is required to achieve the realization of charitable programs. Work in this direction is only at the beginning stages of development. (Interview # 61)

Conclusion

How should we assess the contribution of these social sector NGOs to the development of civil society and the formulation of social policy in the three regions studied? On the one hand there are real improvements and achievements in comparison with the early transition period. In all three regions, non-governmental organizations and networks connected with social policy have been established. Social sector NGOs have developed sources of domestic funding, mainly from business, and have improved personnel skills. Institutional infrastructure for a relationship between these NGOs and state executive and legislative authorities has been built. In some regions this infrastructure is better-designed and more effective than in others. In Samara, for example, NGOs appear to have established a stable institutional partnership with political authorities.

If we look more deeply, at the content of NGOs activity, however, we find that there is thus far little real, regularized participation in policy-making. Some good and important outcomes result from NGO-governmental contacts, but this does not yet amount to systematic political influence. There are two major reasons. The first is that political authorities themselves generally fail to pursue systematic social policy. The second is that many NGOs are not prepared to play a mediating role between the state and society. Many remain preoccupied with sustaining their organizations, getting adequate funding and other resources to operate. But the behavior of some provides hope that they are beginning to understand and to play an intermediary role. The most important factor impeding the development of NGOs and civil society is the low level of civic culture in the general population.

New legislation on NGOs passing through the Duma at the end of 2005 will make it more difficult for Russian NGOs to operate, and for Western organizations to support and collaborate

with them. Despite the obstacles placed by this legislation, the NGO sector and its supporters should continue to build on the basis that has been established. The most important direction should be support of projects to develop civic culture, projects to explain to people their rights, interests, and how to promote these through organizational and political activism. The democratic infrastructure that has begun to develop in the NGO sector should be sustained and developed as much as possible under the current political administration.

Appendix
List of Interviews with NGOs

Tula NGOs

Interviews #1-25 were conducted in Tula Region, in the city of Tula unless otherwise indicated, March 15-19, 2004

- #1 Charitable Fund, General Director, individual interview
- #2 Organization against Alcoholism and Narcotics, Assistant Director, individual interview
- #3 Women's Organization, Chairperson, individual interview
- #4 Human Rights Organization, Chairperson, individual interview
- #5 Organization for Mutual Psychological Support, Leader, individual interview
- #6 Charitable Fund, Uzlovsky District, Tula Region, Director, individual interview
- #7 Organization of Intellectuals, Tula Region, Chairman, individual interview
- #8 Organization for Support of Women, Tula Region, Director, individual interview
- #9 Movement for Support of Social Initiatives, Tula Oblast, Leader, individual interview
- #10 Association for Mothers with Invalid Children, Leader, individual interview
- #11 Women's Organization, Tula Region, Chair, individual interview
- #12 Charitable Organization, Tula Region, Co-Chair, individual interview
- #13 Organization for Social Justice, Chair, individual interview
- #14 Political Consultative Council, Tula Region, Co-Chair, individual interview
- #15 Discussion Group of NGOs, Tula Region

(Interviews # 16-25 were with Tula Region Trade Union, Political Party, and Governmental Leaders, and will be listed in Report # 3)

Cheboksary NGOs

Interviews # 26-38 were conducted in city of Cheboksary, Chuvash Republic, November 24-26, 2004

- #26 Consumer Protection Organization, Chairperson, individual interview
- #27 Organization for Support of Social Initiatives, Director, individual interview
- #28 Jewish Social-Cultural Center, Director, individual interview
- #29 Chuvash Social-Cultural Center, President, individual interview
- #30 Afghanistan Veterans' Organization, Chairperson, individual interview
- #31 Student and Youth Organization, Chairperson, individual interview
- #32 Organization to Support Women in Business, Leader, group discussion
- #33 Women's Organization, Leader, group discussion
- #34 Fund for Support of Social and Cultural Programs, Director, individual interview
- #35 Charitable Fund, Chairperson, individual interview
- #36 Youth Ecological Movement, Leader, group discussion
- #37 Youth Social Organization, Director, individual interview
- #38 Association for Gender Equality in Education and Employment, chairperson, group discussion
- #38a Young Invalids with Cerebral Palsy, Director, individual interview

(Interviews #39-48 were with Chuvash Region Trade Union, Political Party, and Governmental Leaders, and will be listed in Report # 3)

Samara NGOs

Interviews # 49-61 were conducted in Samara Region, in the City of Samara unless otherwise indicated, December 14-16, 2004

- #49 Association for Legal Rights, Deputy Chairperson, group discussion
- #50 Policy Group, Chairperson, individual interview
- #51 Organization for Defense of Voters' Rights, Chair of Board group discussion
- #52 Consumers' Rights Organization, Chair of Board, group discussion
- #53 Charitable Organization for AIDS-infected, Chair of Board, group discussion
- #54 Social-Ecological Organization, Coordinator, group discussion
- #55 Children's Fund, Deputy Chair, group discussion
- #56 Women's Association, President, group discussion
- #57 Invalids' Social Organization, Chair of Regional Organization, group discussion
- #58 Association of Invalids, Press-Secretary, group interview
- #59 Ecological Organization, Coordinator, group interview
- #60 Organization of Veterans of Cultural Work, Chair of Committee, group interview
- #61 Regional Social Organization, Deputy Director, individual interview

71 Government official, Samara Region, individual interview

(Interviews # 62-74 were with Samara Region Trade Union, Political Party, and Governmental Leaders, and will be listed in Report # 3)