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Designing Governance: Western Aid and Civic Development in Contemporary Russia

“You cannot imagine how hard it is to work...and there are so many problems here that we never imagined, so much work...Except for a miserly room and telephone, we have nothing...people are surviving thanks to their dachas.”

Committee of Soldier’s Mothers, unfunded group¹

“We really would like to purchase a new scanner and a better laser printer next...”

Women of the Don, funded group

Few concepts in comparative politics have captured the academic imagination as has the idea of civil society, “that arena of the polity where self-organizing groups, movements, and individuals...attempt to articulate values, create associations and solidarities, and advance their interests” autonomous of the state.² The collapse of authoritarian regimes, particularly in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, has revived the romanticism of the concept: who can forget the televised images of thousands crowding into Wenceslas Square in Prague to cheer on Vaclav Havel; the shots of everyday, average German citizens tearing down the Berlin Wall with a pickax; or the seemingly improbable pictures of Russian babushkas grimly staring

¹ Survey (S) 15.

² Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1996), p. 7. Civil society can include various social movements, such as women’s groups, neighborhood associations, religious groups, and intellectual organizations, as well as civic associations from all social strata (for example, trade unions, entrepreneurial groups such as associations of teachers, doctors, etc.). As I use the term, civil society does not, however, include political organizations, parliaments, or economic firms and associations. See Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), p. ix.

down the tanks used in the attempted coup in Russia in the early 1990s? Civil society, however, is more than a romanticized concept; a vibrant civil society is a necessary, though not sufficient condition for democracy.³ Civic groups are related to democratic stability in two ways: internally, civic groups inspire habits of cooperation, solidarity, public-spiritedness, and trust. Externally, these networks then aggregate interests and articulate demands to ensure the government's accountability to its citizens. It is this dense infrastructure of groups, many argue, that is the key to making democracy work.⁴

As democracy spreads to countries that were once identified as poor candidates for democratic institutions, countries and transnational actors interested in promoting democracy are presented with a puzzling question: to what degree can Western countries "purchase" civic engagement and participation in less developed countries that do not share the Western liberal tradition? The third wave of democratization encouraged a surge of euphoria for "people power" and fostered the belief that the institutionalization of democracy can be supported by the assistance of external forces if domestic actors are lacking or weak.⁵ Larry Diamond maintains that there is a place

³ For example, see Goran Hyden, "Civil Society, Social Capital, and Development: Dissection of a Complex Discourse," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 32 (Spring 1997), pp. 3-30; Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Changes in 43 Societies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Newton Kenneth, "Social Capital and Democracy," *American Behavioral Scientist* 40 (March-April 1997), pp. 575-586; Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, pgs. 3-15; Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, J. P. Mayer, ed., George Lawrence, trans. (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1969).

⁴ The most prominent of these arguments is Putnam's *Making Democracy Work*.

⁵ For example, see Laurence Whitehead, "The Imposition of Democracy: The Caribbean" in Laurence Whitehead, ed., *The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Larry Diamond, *Promoting Democracy in the 1990s: Actors and Instruments, Issues and Imperatives* (New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1995).

for international actors in democratic development, for they can help “create an atmosphere in which ideals are meaningful and worth striving for even though they are hard to attain.”⁶ Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink contend that international and Western NGOs play a crucial role in facilitating “transnational advocacy networks,” which in turn are able to significantly strengthen local NGOs capacities to alter and shape domestic political discourse. This eventually facilitates the emergence of a “global civil society.”⁷

This recent enthusiasm for civil society, both global and domestic, has also been expressed in increased funding for programs that foster civic development; a significant component of foreign assistance has channeled money to Russian NGOs as a means to foster grassroots civic development. Western governments, nonprofit organizations, and international organizations have provided funding for various programs under the rubric of “building civil society,” with the assumption that this is a crucial aspect of the transition to and consolidation of democracy.

⁶ Diamond, *Promoting Democracy in the 1990s*, p. vi.

⁷ Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998). Also, for more on the “global civil society” argument, see Anne Marie Clark, Elisabeth J. Friedman, and Kathryn Hochstetler, “The Sovereign Limits of Global Civil Society: A Comparison of NGO Participation in UN World Conferences on the Environment, Human Rights, and Women,” *World Politics* 51 (October 1998), pp. 1-35.

How, and to what degree, does foreign assistance affect domestic civic development? What does aid “purchase”? Do groups that have received foreign aid behave differently than groups that are shut off from contact with Western and international donor agencies? Is aid able to ensure organizational survival, encourage a set of goals and activities, or inculcate patterns of cooperation and mutual assistance?

By using women’s groups as a prism of the NGO sector, this paper presents findings from quantitative survey data collected from almost 200 organizations. I compare organizations that have received aid (what I refer to as “funded” organizations) with those that have not (“unfunded” organizations).⁸ The women’s movement is an ideal case study for illustrating the larger impact of foreign aid. Women’s groups have attracted the entire gamut of foreign aid; increasingly, they have been targeted by a large variety of private foundations,⁹ Western governments,¹⁰ and smaller nonprofit organizations.¹¹

⁸ It is important to note that for the duration of this chapter, I refer to “funded” and “unfunded” groups. “Funded” groups are those groups that have received monetary assistance in the form of a grant from a Western or international agency. In addition, groups that have won a competition from a Western or international agency to travel to a sponsored seminar are also categorized as “funded.” “Unfunded” is actually a misnomer. “Unfunded” groups still may have received financial support, but from solely Russian (domestic) sources, such as local businesses, local government, etc. I refer to them as “unfunded,” not because they receive no monetary support, but because in comparison to Western amounts, their domestic base of financial support is more tenuous. I am trying to isolate the benefits and effects of Western aid; this does not necessarily mean that “unfunded” groups are totally without financial sources of support.

⁹ In addition to those listed above in the chart, the Mott Foundation was also mentioned by a few groups.

¹⁰ The British Embassy, the Canadian Embassy, the Canadian Agency for International Development, and the Northern European embassies were also sources of monetary support. In addition, several groups had developed ties with a department of the German Green Party (FrauenAnstiftung) and had received financial assistance. However, that department has since been reorganized.

¹¹ Some examples are ISAR, the Institute of International Collaboration of Germany, the Heinrich Boll Foundation, the Center for Citizen’s Initiatives, the Liberty Road Association, the Austrian Foundation “Karitas,” Women, Law and Development, and various sister city projects.

Table 1: Most prolific sources of foreign assistance¹²

Funding agency	Number of organizations	Percentage¹³
Soros Foundation	30	32.6
Eurasia Foundation	26	28.3
Ford Foundation	22	23.9
Global Fund for Women	13	14.1
USAID	10	10.9
TACIS	7	7.6
MacArthur Foundation	7	7.6

Funding of women’s NGOs has been due, in part, to the desire to foster “Western style” gender equality, as well as to bolster women’s sagging status in Russian society in the wake of serious economic hardships brought about by the transition to democracy. In addition, women’s groups represent a significant portion of NGO activism overall, and have been identified as a key component to a healthy and flourishing civil society. Thus, they are a microcosm of larger issues confronting the third sector.

Aid is not merely a small drop in the bucket for women’s groups; almost one half (49.5%) of the women’s groups I surveyed had received aid from a Western source.¹⁴ Although the nature and frequency of aid varied tremendously from group to

¹² Of course, this does not represent the totality of grants given by these organizations. Many groups, in interviews, were very secretive about their sources of money, or would avoid listing all the sources of their funding. A more accurate idea of the grant sizes and number given to women’s groups can be found by poring through the records of annual reports and records for the past 8 years for the major foundations. However, by asking the groups to list the organizations from which they had received funding, I was able to widen my knowledge of grant making institutions that focus on women’s projects.

¹³ The percentage is out of those women’s groups that had received foreign assistance (92 groups) rather than the total 186. The percentages total more than 100 because many women’s groups had received grants from more than one foundation.

¹⁴ In her interviews of 40 women’s groups in Moscow, Valerie Sperling also found that just over half had received a foreign grant. See Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia*, p. 228. In a separate study, the authors find that 63% of women’s groups had received assistance from the West. See N. I. Abubikirova, T. A. Klimenkova, E. V. Kotchkina, M. A. Regentova, T. G. Troinova, *Spravochnik: Zhenskiye Nepravitel'svenniye Organizatsii Rossii i SNG* (Moscow: Aslan, 1998), p.16.

group, nonetheless, this figure was astounding; imagine if half of all the women's groups in the United States received aid from an outside country. Doubtless, the women's movement would look profoundly different given this external influence. If this money is changing the landscape of fledgling civic activism, then it is crucial we understand how this shapes the direction of this activism, as well as the NGO sector as a whole.

Findings

The data culled from the surveys leads me to conclude that funders' impact has primarily been in improving groups' capacity. In trying to capture the dynamics of foreign aid to civic development, I looked at three factors; sustainability, activeness, and networking capabilities.

(1) Groups that had received funding were more likely to have a more formalized office structure with paid full time and part time workers, office space, and some office equipment, such as computers, faxes, etc. Organizational infrastructure is important in that it helps ensure long-term sustainability, essential for developing stability as well as presence among a social movement.¹⁵

(2) Groups that had received funding were more active; they did more things because they had a greater income at their disposal. In addition, groups that had received funding engaged in them with greater frequency and regularity than groups without financial resources from the West. Activities are important because in order for a civil

¹⁵ This idea is most explicitly expressed in the "resource mobilization" research paradigm, which focuses on the formal organizational manifestations of social movements. Social movements achieve force and influence through the organizations they spawn. See John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 82,6 (1977), pp. 1212-41.

society to be effective, it must “do something;” groups cannot have an impact unless they are distributing information, having meetings, or providing a service.

(3) Groups that had received funding also networked with other organizations more often. Networking is important in the sense that it is a function of civil society’s “governance” capacities; groups relay demands from private citizen to public realm, and amongst each other.¹⁶

Judging from the survey responses, aid has had a significant impact on organizations. In this paper, I present a quick snapshot of women’s activism. Next, I discuss the results of my survey research, drawing on the quantitative tallies as well as the commentary and letters that accompanied the survey answers. Focusing on three aspects of women’s groups - structure, goals and activities, and networking - I trace the emerging divide between women’s groups. I conclude with a discussion of the significance of my findings.

Exporting democracy

In the 1990s, Russian civil society was in desperate need of assistance. While groups were numerous (over 60,000 as of 1997), they were young; the vast majority of the NGO community formed after 1990, following on the heels of legislation granting organizations legal status. In addition, despite the enthusiasm of the emerging nonprofit sector, it was nonetheless debilitated by a variety of factors. First, many of individuals in these new groups had grown up with the practices of Soviet era mass associations. They had relatively little knowledge of how to act like a voluntary sector. Furthermore,

¹⁶ I chose to focus on networking because of the importance ascribed to a dense structure of horizontal networks in cementing democratic impulses in countries. This thesis has been most ardently defended in Putnam’s *Making Democracy Work*.

because previous civic traditions were steeped in the experiences of Soviet “forced voluntarism,” the public was also wary and distrustful of the concept of voluntary organizations. Finally, in a society where “checkbook activism,” or even checkbooks, was nonexistent, groups faced a daily battle for survival. Given the economic crisis, many groups survived off of the enthusiasm and charisma of the leader, who often worked tirelessly for little or no pay, when time permitted.

Thus, there was a real and obvious need for assistance; fledgling civic groups faced serious hurdles in their struggle to build voluntary organizations in the years following Gorbachev’s ascension to power. In response to these obstacles, funding from foreign agencies to the NGO community started to arrive in the early 1990s, and was specifically targeted towards constructing civil society. From 1992-98, USAID distributed approximately \$92 million on civic initiatives and NGO sector support projects. In 1997 alone, George Soros’ Open Society Institute-Russia funneled more than \$61 million to organizations in order to create a lasting civil society.¹⁷ From 1991-1998, the MacArthur Foundation approved over \$17 million in grants to support initiatives in the former Soviet Union.¹⁸ Ford Foundation also was a significant player; in the fiscal year 1996/97, the Moscow office of the Ford Foundation made more than \$4 million in grants to nonprofit organizations.¹⁹

Foreign assistance was extremely valuable to a civic sector battling upstream in a time of political, economic, and social chaos. Grants often supplied such

¹⁷ *Soros Foundation 1997 Annual Report.*

¹⁸ “The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Initiative in the Independent States of the Former Soviet Union: Grants Approved from 1991 through June 1998.”

¹⁹ Figure obtained from Christopher Kedzie of the Moscow office of the Ford Foundation.

organizational basics as computer equipment, money for salaried employees, or office space. Funding provides access to conferences, seminars, and opportunities for travel, both within Russia, as well as abroad. It supports research, as well as publishing costs, which often could not have been done without external financial support. Western organizations also provide moral support and a sympathetic and appreciative ear to activists who feel harried and undersupported by their own domestic audience. Given the challenges facing the third sector in Russia, aid has tremendous potential to alleviate the constant travails which plague the civic sector as a whole. For many, they quickly became the primary monetary lifeline.

Women's groups as part of the NGO sector

The women's movement, like many other groups in the NGO sector, is a conglomeration of old and new; the movement is a mixture of Soviet era activists and "independent" groups that have formed in the 1990s. As late as 1985, there was only one "official" women's organization in an empire spanning 11 time zones and encompassing a land mass two and half times the size of the continental US - the Soviet Women's Committee, which in turn was bolstered by local women's councils, or *zhensovety*. Their networks were substantial; in 1989, this monolithic structure encompassed about 230,000 *zhensovety*, representing over two million members.²⁰ However, despite their large numbers, the Soviet Women's Committee and networks of *zhensovety* were notable more for their rhetorical flourishes than their actual substantive activities; as was the case for many Soviet sanctioned organizations,

²⁰ Richter, "Citizens or Professionals."

women's interests and issues were located within parameters defined by the state.²¹

Covert groups not sanctioned by the state were limited to a small collection of self-proclaimed feminists who met in secret in Leningrad in the fall of 1979, as well as some "consciousness raising" groups in the cities of Moscow and Petersburg.²²

The first large scale attempt at legally organizing women's efforts outside of the Soviet Women's Committee culminated in two crucial conferences in the early 1990s.²³ In the ensuing years, alternative organizations to those defined by the Soviet era have mushroomed; however, Soviet era women's organizations still form a substantial bulk

²¹ For a more extensive treatment of women's lives under the Soviet era, see Linda Racioppi and Katherine O'Sullivan See, "Women's Activism in Historical Context," in Racioppi and O'Sullivan See, eds., *Women's Activism in Contemporary Russia*. Also, see Lynn Attwood, *The New Soviet Man and Woman: Sex Role Socialization in the USSR* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Sue Bridger, *Women in the Soviet Countryside: Women's Roles in Rural Development in the Soviet Union* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Genia K. Browning, *Women and Politics in the USSR: Consciousness Raising and the Soviet Women's Groups* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); Mary Buckley, ed. *Perestroika and the Soviet Woman* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Gail W. Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development, and Social Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

²² The result of these efforts was the publication of ten samizdat copies of "Woman and Russia: Almanach." The journal discussed such taboo topics as the conditions of working women, women's complaints about every day life, discussions on women, birth, and the family, even an article on drug addicts and women in prison. The results of this endeavor were quickly suppressed; after months of interrogation and intimidation by the KGB, four of the "ringleaders" were finally sent into exile. See Tatiana Mamanova, "Introduction: The Feminist Movement in the Soviet Union," in Mamanova, ed., *Women and Russia: Feminist Writings from the Soviet Union* (Boston: Beacon Hill Press, 1984). Also, small groups such as "Preobrazheniye", LOTUS, and SAFO were active in the late 1980s as discussion groups. See Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia*, pp. 98-145.

²³ The First Independent Women's Forum, held in 1991, was the first independent women's conference in Russia since 1908. 172 women from 48 organizations and 25 cities gathered under the banner "Democracy without Women is No Democracy." Despite KGB attempts to disrupt the conference with charges of lesbianism, the conference managed to bring together a large association of women activists across all spheres and social orientations. The Second Independent Women's Forum, "Problems and Strategies," was held in 1992 and solidified bonds between a small fledgling "independent" women's movement.

of women's organizations in Russia, and are able to maintain an extensive network of contacts that carry over from Soviet days.²⁴

Table 2: Overview of the emergence of women's organizations

Year of Foundation	Number of organizations	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
1972	1	.5	.5
1976	1	.5	1.1
1984	1	.5	1.6
1985	1	.5	2.2
1986	1	.5	2.7
1987	8	4.4	7.1
1988	2	1.1	8.2
1989	6	3.3	11.5
1990	28	15.3	26.8
1991	16	8.7	35.5
1992	11	6.0	41.5
1993	14	7.7	49.2
1994	26	14.2	63.4
1995	30	16.4	79.8
1996	19	10.4	90.2
1997	15	8.2	98.4
1998	3	1.6	100.0

Women's organizations developed in spurts in 1990, 1994 and 1995.

Reflecting broader NGO trends, this could be a reflection of legislation passed in 1990, 1993, and 1995, giving NGOs a legal status.

As with other segments of the NGO sector, while legislation opened up opportunities for women's mobilization, this organization was also hastened by the worsening political, social, and economic conditions brought on by the demands of transition. Women's groups currently cover a large spectrum of issues - a political

²⁴ 37% of the survey respondents stated that they are the product of an older organization; they could have reorganized after the fall of communism, turning old *zhensovet* into viable independent women's organizations. Stimula, in Dubna (a small town outside of Moscow) used to be the Women's Council of the United Institute of Nuclear Research. NeZHDI, an independent organization in Voronezh, also used to be the Women's Council of that town, as did the Women of the Don, of Novochoerkassk. In addition, many activists learned their organizational skills as activists

party (Women of Russia), crisis centers, surviving Soviet era women's councils, business women's groups, charitable associations, and a small feminist contingent. However, the bulk of women's groups reflect a much more pragmatic objective; to survive, and to step in and provide services which the state can no longer secure for women in this period of severe dislocation. While women's groups do span a wide array of issues, some estimate that two thirds of women's groups are involved in issues of "social rights."²⁵

For example, groups such as "Woman and Family" attempt to "raise the level of self-sufficiency of women" in response to state cutbacks on funding for maternity wards and clinics.²⁶ Another group counted as their members women "whose welfare has significantly worsened" regardless of profession.²⁷ One woman who protected the interests of pensioners, noted that "[i]n Tver *oblast'*, 26.9% of the population are pensioners, and in those numbers the predominate majority are women."²⁸ Women activists repeatedly referred back to the economic dislocation of the previous ten years; often, they viewed their mission as one of support in overcoming the hurdles of looming unemployment and occupational irrelevancy. This trend is also visible from perusing the list of groups that responded to my survey; associations of single mothers, mothers of large families, disabled women, and mothers of disabled children abound.

within this Soviet system.

²⁵ The authors of the *Spravochnik* estimate that nine percent of groups have a specifically "feminist" orientation, while two thirds of groups are involved in what they term social rights issues. See Abubikirova, Klimenkova, Kotchkina, Regentova, and Troinova, *Spravochnik*.

²⁶ "Woman and Family," S 111.

²⁷ NEZhDI, S 20.

²⁸ "ONA" (Society of Independent Activists), S 115.

Women certainly are affected by and organize over a wide array of issues. In the realm of economics, women comprise a higher proportion of the unemployed.²⁹ In the political sphere, women's quotas in representative bodies were abolished and women's representation subsequently plummeted in the following elections, from a Soviet high of 33% to 10.2% in 1997.³⁰ Socially, services that have impacted women, such as preschool, day care and health care have shriveled in the face of state penury and spiraling costs.

However, Russian women's groups do not work solely on women's issues that impact only women; rather, many groups are involved in activities that are traditionally perceived as important to women. Thus, women's groups have mobilized on behalf of the population at large, drawing on their roles as "mothers" and "caretakers."

Commenting on women's activism, one respondent wrote:

You are struck by the steadfastness and optimism of our women of various ages and nationalities, ready to unselfishly help one another, taking on their shoulders worries about friends, aged parents, and often unemployed men.³¹

The network of groups that comprise Committees of Soldiers' Mothers have drawn most explicitly on this symbol of women to address larger societal issues. The

²⁹ Women over the age of 45, women with small children, and women of childbearing age who do not have children are at greatest risk for unemployment. See Ludmilla Rzhantsyna, "Women's Attitudes Toward Economic Reforms and the Market Economy" in Valentina Koval, ed., *Women in Contemporary Russia* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1995), pp. 35-36. The widespread anecdotal evidence of discrimination on the job market, in which businesses advertise for women under the age of 25 without inhibitions or "complexes," are legendary in their infamy.

³⁰ The semi-free elections for the newly created Congress of People's Deputies of 1989 showed just how symbolic these quotas were; women's representation tumbled to 15.7%. However, even this was a windfall; the Soviet Women's Committee was allotted 75 seats. See Carol Nechemias, "Equal Players or Back to the Kitchen?," in Noonan and Rule, eds., *Russian women in Politics and Society*, p. 26.

³¹ The Voronezh City Forum of the Women's Independent Democratic Initiative (NeZHDI),

“Mothers,” as they are known throughout Russia, are involved in the struggle to end the practice of military conscription. Thus, wrote one group, “[o]ur women’s organization is concerned especially with men’s problems which worry women/mothers... The basis of our work has lain in the egotistical mother instinct – the protection of our sons.”³²

Another activist originally organized on behalf of women, but broadened her mandate upon witnessing the horrors of war. She wrote:

I founded this organization with the goal of helping women who have fallen on hard times... These are the goals and tasks I set forth when I created this organization, but everything has turned out the opposite. On May 16th, 1992, the organization was founded and on the 14th of August the Georgia-Abkhazia war started. Women of Chechnya, Kabarda, and Cherkassia decided to go by bus to Abkhazia to the city of Gudauta, and I, as a public spirited woman, went with them and saw the horrors of war and the suffering of simple, normal people. Since then... I travel back and forth bringing humanitarian aid.³³

Another woman wrote:

I am the mother of five children. For eight years I have raised them alone... Once, sitting in the kitchen with my friends, we talked a lot of our problems. The children are growing up and need not only clothes and shoes; we need to think about what awaits them tomorrow. They are closing up businesses where the main work force is women. A family without a father and an unemployed mother is a disaster. Many men cannot deal with this and the children end up alone. Orphanages and children’s homes are growing like mushrooms. We decided to found a new organization based on our beliefs, where the primary tasks and goals are the defense of children and underprotected families... We were not alone.³⁴

While women’s groups are active on a wide array of issues, the themes that resonate for them, judging from their own comments, are ones that impact women but are not

S20.

³² Soldiers’ Mothers of the Republic of Komi, S 29.

³³ Letter 1.

³⁴ Severyanka, Letter 3.

solely focused around women.

Who receives aid?

Groups that have received aid are not a representative sample of the broader swathe of women's activism in contemporary Russia. Although women's groups represent a mix of Soviet era and independent organization across a wide array of social causes, groups that have attracted aid tend to be younger, and also tend to focus solely on women's issues.

The majority of groups that have received a grant formed in the mid to late 1990s. While older groups often remain isolated from Western assistance, younger groups have been much more successful, as well as willing, to attract international aid. Fully half of all funded groups have formed since 1994; these groups are receiving financial assistance almost from the cradle.³⁵

Table 3: Year of foundation

Year of foundation	Unfunded groups (%)	Funded groups (%)
Before 1990	19.8	3.3
1990-91	20.2	27.1
1992-93	11.7	15.2
1994-95	20.2	40.2
1996-97	22.4	14.1

In addition, assistance went to women's groups that worked specifically on women's issues; although unfunded women's groups were also concerned about the condition and status of women, they were also more likely to identify the importance of a wider range of community issues.

Table 4: General goals

³⁵ A potential explanation for the difference could be that many of these groups which had formed before the 1990s are remnants of the old Soviet era women's organizations; these groups are much more likely to rely on local administrations for their sources of support.

“Very important” goals	Unfunded groups (%)	Funded groups (%)
Protection of children	57.4	48.9
Protection of the poor	46.8	42.4
Development of religious life	39.4	29.3
Protection of invalids	37.2	21.7
Development of cultural life	27.7	21.7
Economic development in Russia	23.4	12.0
Defense of rights of workers	22.3	12.0
Development of the political system	20.2	12.0
Defense of the environment	18.1	12.0
Defense of ethnicities within Russia	13.8	9.8

Table 5: Goals specifically related to women

“Very important” goals	Unfunded groups (%)	Funded groups (%)
Educate the public about women’s issues	62.3	72.0
Provide services to women	59.2	62.0
Change laws on women’s issues	58.2	52.9
To increase women’s access to political power	38.2	40.4
To increase women’s access to economic power	29.2	27.7

This tendency was reflected in the written comments of the survey respondents. While funded groups wrote in very specific issues relating to the status of women – “elimination of domestic violence,”³⁶ “elimination of discrimination against women”³⁷ - for unfunded groups, they often extended their mandate to a broader constituency.

One woman wrote: “Here, in the heart of the Urals, the functions of organizations are very broad.” She then listed “the protection of children, especially disabled children, orphaned children, legal protection, help to women, especially the elderly, [and] help

³⁶ Lyubava, S 24.

³⁷ Assistance to Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault “Lana,” S 109.

to women in crisis situations...” as constituencies her organization assisted.³⁸ Another unfunded group simply wrote, “protection of the rights of all.”³⁹

Aid’s impact

Reflecting the trends of the larger NGO community, the economic conditions have been, paradoxically, both the facilitator of as well as the impediment to activism among women’s groups. The dominant mantra emerging from all surveys, regardless of whether they had received Western aid or not, was that the economic conditions were the catalyst to organize, as well as the reason why that activism remained sporadic in nature. This struggle to combat the losses incurred by economic dislocation is complicated by organizations’ constant search for resources.

Although resources encompass more than simply money, nonetheless the largest impact of aid in terms of monetary resources is that it provides an influx of cash to struggling groups. Domestically, sources of support tend to be in nonmonetary forms. Groups often rely on local administrations for reduced rent, phones, or office space; businesses often give donations, such as office supplies; and individuals often provide free labor. Although almost one fifth of both funded and unfunded groups rely on membership fees, these are often more symbolic rather than real. Although about one fifth of all groups have membership fees, it was a substantial source of income for only 12 groups out of 186 (7%). Explained one group who relied mainly on Western aid, “fees are insignificant because of the level of life here in Russia.”⁴⁰ Domestically,

³⁸ Coordinating Council, S 106.

³⁹ Committee of Soldier’s Mothers, S 31.

⁴⁰ Soldiers’ Mothers of Saint Petersburg, S 95.

sources of money are few and far between; one group admitted to a novel fundraising technique in which the leader bluntly wrote, “I solicit wealthy people and organizations.”⁴¹

As a result, it is not surprising that without the assistance of foreign aid, over one half (52%) of unfunded groups had no budget, and more than one fourth of unfunded groups reported that their budget was currently smaller than 3-5 years previously.

Wrote one woman from the town of Kamyshin:

You cannot imagine how hard it is to work far from districts and headquarters, and here are so many problems we never imagined, so much work...except for a miserly room and a telephone, we have nothing...we have our own [bank] account, but all the enterprises of our city are standing still...people are surviving thanks to their dachas.⁴²

An activist from Mezhdurechinsk, the site of miner’s strikes in the Gorbachev era, wrote:

Only the chairperson works now because it is not possible for members of the committee to work unpaid. There is no money to buy paper or envelopes...I am refused office space, and communicate with my home phone. I have no resources in general.⁴³

Another unfunded group described their situation:

We do not even have a typewriter...we approach the *oblast*’ administration and they say there is no money. We approach other organizations to print and do Xerox copies. Two years ago we received two thousand envelopes from the first deputy of the federal postal administration from the city of Voronezh.⁴⁴

For unfunded groups, although they may sometimes receive small bits of money here

⁴¹ Council of Mothers “Ny Khasse,” S 1.

⁴² Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers, S 15.

⁴³ Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers “Movement against Violence,” S 27.

and there from local administrations or businesses, many eke out an existence from the work of a few dedicated members, or work off of the leader’s personal savings.⁴⁵

Thus, getting a grant from the West is the event that brings the word “budget” into many groups’ consciousness. This does not necessarily reflect a steady income; one group that had received Western assistance wrote “we do not have a permanent budget, periodically the administration supports us.”⁴⁶ However, over one third of funded groups (36%) reported that their budgets had flourished and grown over the previous 5 years, no easy feat in the midst of Russia’s current economic woes.

In addition, groups that received grants and assistance from abroad were more successful at fundraising and finding support at the domestic level. Although only four groups had received funding from the Russian government, all four had also received Western assistance; none of the unfunded groups received Russian government funding. Women’ groups which had received Western funding also were able to garner grants and support from other Russian NGOs at a much higher rate than unfunded groups.

Table 6: Sources of support

Sources of support	Unfunded groups (%)	Funded groups (%)
Funding from local branches of organization	3.2	3.3
Grants and subsidies from Russian government*** ⁴⁷	0.0	4.3
Funding from an international chapter*	0.0	5.4
Support from foreign business*	0.0	7.6

⁴⁴ Soldiers’ Mothers of Russia, S 17.

⁴⁵ For example, this was the response of the Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers, S 32; Women’s Forum – A New Politics, S 51; Women’s Club of Invalids “Valentina,” S 62, and others.

⁴⁶ Voronezh City Forum Independent Women’s Democratic Initiative (NeZhDI), S20.

⁴⁷ Difference of means test. *** denotes significance at .05, ** at .01 and *** at .001.

Grants and subsidies from <i>oblast</i> ' government	8.5	12.0
Fees for services	13.8	17.4
Membership fees	18.1	20.7
Grants and subsidies from local administration	21.3	22.8
Grants and support from other Russian NGOs*	12.8	23.9
Grants and support from foreign NGOs***	0.0	31.5
Support from Russian business	29.8	33.7
Grants from foreign governments***	0.0	37.0
Volunteer labor	60.6	63.0
Grants from foreign foundations***	0.0	68.5
Other	26.6	31.5

Tellingly, in no area did unfunded groups outpace funded groups in terms of relying on specific sources of funding; at best, they were able to keep up with Western aid recipients.

When asked to list the three most important sources (not ranked) of support in 1997, women's groups that had received aid were more likely to be able to even name three. Not surprisingly, the Western variants of aid were checked off as the most important sources. One group pointed out, "there is no other source of finances except for grants."⁴⁸

For unfunded women's groups, their array of resources was less diverse as well as less commonly cited; only five (out of 94) unfunded groups could list a third source (25 out of 92 for funded groups). The most important resources are nonmonetary: volunteer labor, followed by support from the local administration.

Table 7: Most important sources of support

Sources of support	Unfunded groups		Funded groups	
	N	%	N	%
Support from foreign business	0	0.0	0	0.0
Funding from an international chapter	0	0.0	2	2.2

⁴⁸ Committee of Soldier's Mothers of the Don, S 24.

Grants from foreign governments	0	0.0	12	13.0
Grants and subsidies from Russian government	1	1.0	1	1.1
Grants and support from foreign NGOs	1	1.0	10	10.9
Grants from foreign foundations	2	2.1	42	45.7
Grants and support from other Russian NGOs	3	3.2	9	9.8
Grants and subsidies from oblast' government	5	5.3	3	3.3
Funding from local branches of organization	6	6.4	2	2.2
Membership fees	7	7.4	5	5.4
Fees for services	10	10.6	7	7.6
Support from Russian business	11	11.7	10	10.9
Grants and subsidies from local administration	14	14.9	15	16.3
Volunteer labor	19	20.2	14	15.2
Other	8	8.5	12	13.0

However, the fact that many groups along both spectrums were hard pressed to name three sources of funding for 1997 indicates that women's groups, in general, experience difficulty in finding a wide foundation of support.

For most groups, this search for support is a constant occupation. For funded groups, the temporary security provided by a grant allows them to focus on other activities related to their organization. In contrast, unfunded groups tend to spend either little or no time, or all of the time, searching for resources.

Table 8: Time spent on finding resources

Percentage of time spent	Unfunded groups (%)	Funded groups (%)
Does not engage in such activity	22.3	0
10%	34.2	22.4
25%	19.2	32.9
50%	16.4	24.7
75%	8.2	11.8
Almost all the time	21.9	8.2

However, the task of searching for funds was a subject of some controversy among women's groups. This was more pronounced among unfunded women's groups; 21 out of 94 (22%) unfunded groups did not look for financial support at all. In fact,

several respondents wrote in angry responses that they did not look for funding, or wrote a decisive NO!! in the margins of the survey.

Many unfunded groups did not want to spend the time in the lengthy process of tracking down funds, whether it be from domestic or foreign sources. Several activists felt that the search for funds was a time consuming, as well as futile, endeavor. Explained the head of the group Mother and Child, “I don’t have the opportunity to search for sources of financing; for this, one also needs time, and I and all of my women are preoccupied with their own jobs.”⁴⁹ One woman from Maikop (Southern Russia) wrote: “The organization survives primarily on my own enthusiasm...Contributions take so much time and energy, plus there is the humiliation of meeting with young rich people.”⁵⁰ The embarrassment factor was also listed by a Committee of Soldier’s Mothers activist, who commented on the “unpleasantness” of searching for funds.⁵¹

Some unfunded groups had previously tried to look for funding but dropped the search because it was not worth their effort. Another activist wrote, “three times we have applied for a grant and for some reasons our ideas are not considered worth supporting; we no longer wish to apply for grants or have the means to.”⁵² Another respondent wrote, “we do not do grants.”⁵³ Lastly, one activist commented, “we do not

⁴⁹ Mother and Child, S 100.

⁵⁰ Letter 1.

⁵¹ Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers of the Chuvash Republic, S 129.

⁵² S 27.

⁵³ Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers, S 31.

even try to look – it is useless.”⁵⁴ Another group explained, “we do not turn to any grant giving organizations, because the bookkeeping and taxes are so great that it does not justify spending the effort.”⁵⁵

Other groups do not even know where to begin; as one activist explained, “we do not write grant applications – we do not even know the addresses and conditions of application, although we very much need information and advice.”⁵⁶ However, many groups felt that foreign organizations were the only source of reliable support. As one activist explained, “we have exhausted all of our resources here in Russia. We need to build bridges on the international level, otherwise we will never build a government based on rights.”⁵⁷ One unfunded group, who was searching for foreign funding, discussed the dangers of relying on domestic sources of support; “the question of getting grants for women’s organizations in the provinces is very important. We consciously do not seek resources from those in the power structure – we don’t want to be dependent on them.”⁵⁸

Providing organizational structure

Given the centrality of grants for organizational sustainability, what are they used for? Grants are crucial in supporting the day to day activities of groups; they are often used for maintaining an office, complete with equipment, staff, etc. As one can see from the table, funding’s most obvious significance is that it provides “things”

⁵⁴ S 51.

⁵⁵ Vera, S 33.

⁵⁶ Home without Loneliness, S 59.

⁵⁷ Women’s Forum – New Politics, S 51.

related to running an office.

Table 9: Grant expenditures

Funded activity	Number of groups⁵⁹	Percentage of groups
Office equipment	59	64.1
Domestic conference or seminar	58	63.0
Salaries	40	43.5
Books	32	34.8
Travel abroad for conferences	28	30.4
Research, publications, newsletter	22	23.9
Protests	4	4.3
Information about upcoming legislation	3	3.3
Other	27	29.3

Given that funding is structured such that the money supports tangibles like office equipment, salaried positions, and conferences, it is not surprising that a large divide separates funded from unfunded groups in terms of organizational infrastructure. Although all organizations, funded and unfunded, had a telephone contact address,⁶⁰ even office space was facilitated by the presence of a foreign grant.⁶¹ In contrast, unfunded women's groups often used their own apartment as an activist base for activities. Office equipment, such as computers, e-mail accounts, and faxes were also common possessions of funded groups, while unfunded groups trailed behind.

Table 10: Organizational infrastructure

Organizational infrastructure	Unfunded groups (%)	Funded groups (%)
Office space	55.3	65.2

⁵⁸ Surgut Women, S 121.

⁵⁹ Out of 92 groups.

⁶⁰ Many are simply personal home numbers.

⁶¹ However, only 38% of unfunded groups who have an office paid rent on their office, implying that many of them use their personal apartments as office space, while 58% of funded groups pay rent.

Computer***	25.6	82.6
Fax***	20.2	57.6
E-mail***	11.7	51.1
Web page*	5.3	14.1

Not surprisingly, funded groups were also more likely to have paid employees; while sources of domestic support may facilitate the acquisition of an office, furniture, or supplies, this rarely includes support for a full time paid employee. Thus, for funded groups, grants ensure that an organization can engage in activities on a relatively regular business. Judging from survey comments, for unfunded groups, work often depends on the enthusiasm and level of resources of the leader. Work for the organization happens at the tail end of long work days, or is snatched during precious free time. Wrote one woman who struggled to find consistent levels of funding, “[w]e are not rich people; we pursue our work in our free time, on weekends, and holidays in trying to help one another.”⁶²

Given that relatively few unfunded groups can afford paid employees, it was surprising that funded groups relied on volunteers more often than unfunded groups. No clear cut reasons for this factor emerged from the survey; however, judging from comments, leaders of unfunded groups did not perceive their labor to be “volunteer.” Rather, many leaders wrote with a somewhat missionary zeal about their work, couching their activism as a “necessity” or moral obligation rather than a choice. One leader of an unfunded group commented that “in the organization, I work unpaid, because in helping others, one helps oneself.”⁶³ Another activist wrote that there is no such thing in her group as a “separate” volunteer; rather, all members are by nature

⁶² Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers Chelyabinsk, S 135.

volunteers. Perhaps funded groups have begun to more clearly delineate between members and volunteers, while for unfunded groups, the distinction remains unmade.

Table 11: Staffing

Office staff	Unfunded groups (%)	Funded groups (%)
Paid employees***	20.2	43.5
Paid full time staff***	17.0	43.5
Paid part time staff*	9.6	30.4
Volunteers***	50.0	72.8

Activities

Do groups that have received funding in turn engage in various activities more frequently than those groups without access to Western assistance? Funded groups outpaced unfunded groups in the scope and frequency of activities, particularly those involving networking and building ties with other segments of the NGO community. Funded groups, no doubt due to their monetary advantage, organized conferences, both for specialists and for citizens more frequently. They also published material, such as their own newsletter or newspaper more often.

Often, in commenting on their activities, unfunded groups attributed their low level of activities to the availability of resources. The Union of Business Owners of Ust'-Ilimsk wrote, "[w]e sit idle due to lack of money."⁶⁴ Another group, who wanted to start a crisis center for women, wrote "We need a crisis center for women, but it is impossible to finance."⁶⁵ Another explained:

⁶³ Letter 4.

⁶⁴ Union of Women Business Owners of Ust'-Ilimsk, S 23.

⁶⁵ Kirov *oblast'* Union of Women, S 28.

In these hard times in Russia, women play an important role in the changes of our country. Unfortunately, many women's organizations in Russia do not have the means to exist, to do things, more interesting activities. In 1996, our organization was invited to the US to a woman's congress in Washington DC, but we couldn't find sponsors. We won a grant – we got a little equipment – but we need more.⁶⁶

Another activist glumly wrote, “The low effectiveness of our activities is due to a lack of money, even small amounts.”⁶⁷ Alternatively, one woman wrote:

Many of our actions do not require material expenses, but the level of work and the effect it would have had would have been many times higher if we could have gotten sponsors...If we had had certain material resources, we could have significantly widened the circle of our activities and given more attention to the solution of the problem of troops and given help to invalids.⁶⁸

For both sets of women's groups, politics was not an avenue that many wanted to pursue. Neither was direct political protest. However, in reading the comments accompanying the surveys, unfunded women's groups acknowledged the importance of women and politics much more frequently than funded women's groups, who ignored the topic. For example, a local Club of Businesswomen, commented that:

This year, in the elections, the Mayor of Kovdor *raion* and the *raion* Duma and our organizations worked for the promotion of women. We elected five women to the *raion* Duma from the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers, a woman from the children's polyclinic, someone from the local kindergarten, and a teacher. We work under the idea that there should be more women in power.⁶⁹

Another woman wrote of the Soviet era groups in her region:

Only owing to the activity of these women was a communist governor elected. These women acted not out of fear but out of conscience!

⁶⁶ Mothers of the Kuban, S 35.

⁶⁷ Apatity department of the Congress of Women of the Kola Peninsula, S 61.

⁶⁸ Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of the Chuvash Republic, S 129.

⁶⁹ Club of Businesswomen, S 61.

Absolutely without compensation and in bitter cold, the women went around to cities and villages and campaigned for their candidate.

Discussing what was important for her organization, she wrote, “Access to education for women on a level equal with men was one achievement of Soviet power. There are more educated women than men in Russia – but the key positions of the power structure are all occupied by men.”⁷⁰ Another activist wrote, “There are many problems, the main being that there are practically no women in government,” although she went on to add, “[f]or that reason, in the sphere of social protection, there has been virtually no improvement.”⁷¹

While neither set of women’s groups are politically active, one possible explanation for unfunded women’s groups discussion of politics is that they are much more dependent on local administrations for organizational basics, such as office space, telephones, etc. Thus, one group commented that “[w]e work to maintain good contacts with the administrative organs of social protection...A large amount of work for members of our clubs takes place during election campaigns.”⁷²

While funded women’s groups doubtless had the resources to engage in more activities, an additional theme which emerged from the written comments of unfunded groups was that their activities often focused inward, in terms of providing services to members within the group, rather than outward, in representing a constituency.

⁷⁰ Letter 3.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Letter 6.

Table 12: Activities

Activities	Does not engage in such activities (%)		Not very often (%)		Often (%)		Unfu
	Unfunded	Funded	Unfunded	Funded	Unfunded	Funded	
Contact with other women's groups***	9.6	2.2	19.1	10.9	40.4	30.4	30
Mobilizing public opinion through the distribution of information*	22.3	10.9	18.1	14.1	36.2	33.7	23
Contact with media	5.3	4.3	16.0	15.2	48.9	39.1	29
Organizing conferences for specialists***	30.9	10.9	41.5	25.0	19.1	33.7	8
Organizing conferences for citizens***	25.5	8.7	38.3	20.7	23.4	43.5	12
Contacts with other NGOs***	16.0	5.4	23.4	16.3	41.5	52.2	19
Building the identity of members	23.4	19.6	10.6	12.0	41.5	42.4	24
Use of courts/judicial system	54.3	52.2	25.5	27.2	13.8	3.3	6
Publishing material***	70.2	43.5	17.0	26.1	8.5	16.3	4
Boosting membership	36.2	23.9	22.3	28.3	29.8	33.7	11
Applying for grants***	60.6	10.9	31.9	42.4	6.4	33.7	1
Conducting research*	41.5	23.9	25.5	29.3	23.4	34.8	9
Contacts with civil servants	35.1	28.3	29.8	32.6	26.6	28.3	8
Fundraising*	48.9	34.8	30.9	29.3	14.9	26.1	5
Contacts with members of the Duma	33.0	17.4	34.0	45.7	23.4	29.3	9
Working to elect individuals	52.1	47.8	19.1	29.3	23.4	16.3	5
Contacts with leaders of political parties	45.7	43.5	31.9	35.9	16.0	15.2	6
Participation in government commissions, advisory councils.	63.8	50.0	19.1	29.3	13.8	15.2	3
Working for needed legislation	44.7	29.3	30.9	45.7	19.1	19.6	5
Organizing demonstrations	72.3	63.0	24.5	28.3	2.1	5.4	1

Establishing networks

Encouragingly, when estimating the dynamics of their contacts with other groups in society, women's groups felt that they had increased contact most with other women's groups (60%), other NGOs (52%) and surprisingly, local administration (48%). Two thirds of all women's groups belong to a coalition or network of nonprofit organizations. Of those groups who belong to a network, most use it to relay information about seminars (86%), or to relay articles, journals, or newsletters (76%).⁷³ Some groups were wary, however, of working with other women's groups. One local women's council member bluntly stated, "I would like there to be one woman's organization in Russia. The Russian Women's Union would have unified goals and tasks in addressing women's issues."⁷⁴ Another group from the Republic of Buryatia said it did not work with any women's groups in Russia, stating that it considered women's groups in Russia "too politicized."⁷⁵

Funded women's groups reported higher levels of networking with other segments of society. Although both groups were equal in terms of rating the frequency with which local media reported on their activities, the few groups who had received national TV coverage had all received grants from the West. In addition, when asked to rate whether their communications had increased or decreased with specific groups, funded groups outranked the unfunded in reporting an increase in their contacts with local news (45% and 30%) and local TV (40% and 26%), although local newspaper

⁷³ It was somewhat surprising to see that 42% of groups said that they shared information about protests, since only six percent of groups admitted to organizing demonstrations "often" or "very often."

⁷⁴ Liski Regional City Women's Council, S 21.

contacts remained even (36% and 34%). Funded groups also reported that their contacts with local administration had increased (53% and 43%), and they were more likely to report an increase in contact with the national government (19% and 5%), although both groups remained even on the dynamics in communication with political parties (21% and 19% reported an increase). Funded groups had the biggest advantage over unfunded groups in terms of their changing communications and contacts with other women's groups (72% and 48%) and other NGOs (63% and 40%).

Table 13: Levels of communication with other organizations

Organizations	Decreased (%)		Stayed the same (%)		Increased (%)	
	Unfunded	Funded	Unfunded	Funded	Unfunded	Funded
Other women's groups	1.1	3.3	22.3	14.1	47.9	71.7
Other NGOs	2.1	2.2	22.3	20.7	40.4	63.0
Local administration	7.4	10.9	23.4	13.0	42.6	53.3
Local news	4.3	5.4	31.9	27.2	29.8	44.6
Local TV	12.8	8.7	28.7	29.3	25.5	40.2
Local radio	8.5	9.8	30.9	34.8	34.0	35.9
Political parties	2.1	3.3	18.1	19.6	19.1	20.7
National government	2.1	2.2	20.2	14.1	5.3	18.5
National TV**	3.2	5.4	12.8	27.2	2.1	12.0
National papers**	4.3	6.5	16.0	29.3	4.3	12.0
Other	0.0	0.0	5.3	1.1	5.3	17.4

Funded groups were also more likely to belong to some sort of coalition (79% and 62%) although both groups reported high membership to some sort of unifying structure.

What does the survey tell us?

⁷⁵ Women's Union of the Republic of Buryatia, S 20.

Funding has made an enormous impact of civic groups' capacity. Funded groups are much more stable (or at least possess the accoutrements of stability) than unfunded groups. Funded groups far outpace unfunded groups in terms of having an operational budget and having reliable and constant office space and office equipment, which is helpful in launching projects, disseminating information, etc. In addition, funded groups engage in a wider variety of activities, and more often, than unfunded groups. They also communicate and network with other NGOs more often than unfunded groups.

In many ways, funding has been a boon for women's groups. Yet, surprisingly, funding has not had an effect in several areas. Although it has allowed groups to network more frequently with one another, this networking usually happens between NGOs that have already received funding, rather than between funded and unfunded organizations. In the survey, when groups were asked to list other groups with whom they networked, funded groups tended to associate with other NGOs that had also received grants; groups out of the purview of Western assistance tended to association within their circles. Thus, the "effects" of money are often being contained within the very circles to which it is distributed. The networking is insular rather than designed for outreach.

In addition, foreign aid also has not encouraged funded groups to radically extend their memberships. Groups remain as small as those that are struggling to provide support through solely domestic sources. For both groups, building the identity of existing members was more important than outreach to potential new ones.

Table 14: Membership

Membership size	Unfunded groups	Funded groups
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	(%)	(%)
Less than 10	8.5	10.9
10-19	18.1	18.5
20-29	8.5	12.0
30-39	6.4	8.7
40-49	7.4	4.3
More than 50	44.7	44.6
N/A, no membership	6.4	1.1

The survey does tell us that money obviously matters. However, the survey was a blunt instrument; it could roughly capture quantity of interactions and activities, but not quality. In other words, I knew which groups had computers, faxes, and offices, but I had no idea how this affected the quality of their work. I could determine how often groups interacted with other groups, but I had no idea of the nature of that interaction. I could catalogue groups' activities, their nature and frequency, but I had no idea whether these projects were effective, or if they met an existing community need. How was the computer, the office, or the hired staff changing their services? How did organizations relate to the populations they claimed to represent? And what were their activities and accomplishments achieving? To what degree does the representation of groups on paper reflect the reality of their dynamics in practice? I could not tell the dilettante opportunist from the impassioned civic practitioner.

Additional research has confirmed that international efforts to foster either global, or domestic civic networks can lead to unintended consequences. Even Keck and Sikkink, despite their optimism, also acknowledge that joining "global civil society" often comes at a price; organizations that had joined the international circuit "neglected their own communities."⁷⁶ Brian Smith's study of foreign assistance to Latin

⁷⁶ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*, p. 188.

American NGOs concludes that groups tend to reflect the agenda and moral concerns of the donor.⁷⁷ Marina Ottoway and Theresa Chung have noted that Western assistance tends to fund projects that are financially unsustainable after the funding ends and, as a result, make no lasting contribution to long term development when aid inevitably dries up.⁷⁸

As Western assistance has spread Eastward, similar concerns have surfaced regarding the large disjuncture between funders' intentions and results. Foreign aid has created mixed results at best. Sarah Mendelson and John Glenn argue that while foreign aid has helped NGOs design and build institutions associated with democratic states, to date it has done little to affect how these institutions actually work.⁷⁹ Valerie Sperling, in her study of the women's movement in Russia, maintains that foreign aid, while instrumental in providing activists with a global language, has nonetheless been more decisive in fostering internal rivalries, jealousies, and overall divisiveness.⁸⁰ Sperling, as well as Mendelson and Glenn, warn that women's groups have become "ghettoized;" they are closer to their transnational partners than the constituents they are

⁷⁷ Brian H. Smith, *More than Altruism: The Politics of Private Foreign Aid* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

⁷⁸ Marina Ottoway and Theresa Chung, "Debating Democracy Assistance: Toward a New Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy* 10, 4 (1999), pp. 99-113.

⁷⁹ Sarah E. Mendelson and John K. Glenn, "Democracy Assistance and NGO Strategies in Post-Communist Societies," working paper no. 8 (New York: The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Democracy and Rule of Law Project, February 2000). Jim Richter also argues that while foreign aid helps groups aggregate interests, it contributes little to groups' abilities to instill habits of cooperation, solidarity, public spiritedness, and trust in Richter, "Promoting Activism or Professionalism in Russia's Civil Society?" Memo no. 51 (Harvard University: Program on New Approaches to Russian Security, November 1998).

⁸⁰ Valerie Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia: Engendering Transition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 220-256.

meant to represent or the governments they claim to be influencing.⁸¹ This observation is not unique to women's organizations and has also been made of other aspects of "democracy aid" to Russia.⁸²

Can transnational groups foster domestic civic development? Perhaps, as James Richter suggests, the external promotion of a domestic civil society is inherently contradictory.⁸³ By definition, the forces capable of creating, developing, and sustaining social forces supportive of a civil society must come from within. If nothing else, however, transnational actors are facilitating the emergence of a nonprofit sector. Perhaps in time, the civil society will follow.

⁸¹ See Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia*, pp. 220-256, and Mendelson and Glenn, "Democracy Assistance and NGO Strategies in Post-Communist Societies." In addition, Mendelson and Glenn base their conclusions on the work of James Richter and Tina Nelson, investigators for the Carnegie Endowment Democracy and Rule of Law Project.

⁸² See Robert Sharlet, "Bringing the Rule of Law to Russia and the Newly Independent States: The Role of the West in the Transformation of the Post-Soviet Legal Systems," and Nancy Lubin, "U.S. Assistance to the Newly Independent States: When Good things Come in Small Packages," in Karen Dawisha, ed., *The International Dimension of Post-Communist Transitions in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1997).

⁸³ James Richter, "Civil Society of the Third Sector?" *Give and Take* 4 (April 1999).