

PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM



Change the World...

Never doubt
that a small group
of thoughtful, committed citizens
can change the world.
Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

—Margaret Mead

PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP), operated by the Center for Citizen Initiatives, is a variant of the historic Marshall Plan Technical Assistance Program. From 1949 to 1960 the Marshall Plan trained 24,000 non-English-speaking foreign nationals in management principles and production concepts at US firms and manufacturing sites. Making up only a fraction of the entire Marshall Plan, it is now hailed as possibly the most effective part of the entire postwar effort.

Russia is in the midst of an enormously difficult transition: from a centrally-planned economy to a free market; from cradle-to-grave security to personal responsibility for all aspects of life. The outcome of this unparalleled process will impact future generations—not only in Russia, but also here in the United States and around the world.

PEP's goal for Russia in the twenty-first century is the same as the Marshall Plan's goal for Europe in the '40s and '50s: to stimulate domestic manufacturing, production, and services to ensure economic and political stability vital to America's future trade relations and strategic welfare.

Congressional members, Democrats and Republicans alike, agree that it is in America's highest national interest to equip Russian citizens with the skills and technologies necessary to stabilize their economy. The ability of Russian citizens to purchase food and consumer goods will determine their support for the difficult changes needed for their country to become a democracy.

US Communities Can Help!

Read below to learn how your community can participate in this historic effort to transfer crucial business management information to Russian business managers of small and medium sized businesses on the front lines of Russia's economic transition.

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Implementing PEP

CIVIC CLUB SPONSOR

Russian delegations are sponsored in US communities by civic clubs. Members of these clubs are some of the most dynamic, active, and well-connected residents of the community. Civic clubs, such as Rotary and Kiwanis, find the international aspect of PEP is perfectly suited to their organizational mandate for involvement in international affairs.

Committees composed of club members arrange for the delegation's local training, housing and cultural activities, publicize the delegation's visit, and reach out to the community.



LOCAL COORDINATOR

Civic clubs select a Local Coordinator who organizes committees to arrange for the delegation's training, housing, transportation and social activities, and then oversees their work. This role is definitely for the person in the civic club or community who loves people, thrives on challenge, knows how to call and how to get things done!

Ultimately, it is the Local Coordinator who ensures that all pieces of the puzzle come together. However, CCI's experienced staff works closely with the Local Coordinator by phone to help support the entire effort from start to finish.

BUSINESS TRAINING

Business training is the primary goal of this program. Training is provided by local businesses and professionals who host the group for a half day, a day or even two days to share their expertise on specific business topics. The time commitment is minimal, but the collective efforts of the presenters from various businesses and departments add up to a wealth of knowledge.

The schedule of site visits and seminars is developed by a committee from the sponsoring civic club, based on guidelines and a list of topics provided by CCI. Civic club members are perfectly positioned to secure the participation of prominent local businesses.



CENTER FOR CITIZEN INITIATIVES

The Center for Citizen Initiatives (CCI) has run complex, multi-year programs between the US and the former USSR since 1983. Weathering border searches, visa denials, and interrogations by the KGB in the early '80s, CCI leaders continued to pursue their mission to establish citizen-to-citizen networks in Russia and the US.

CCI believes that if you want a job done well, ask the citizens to do it! All CCI programs empower ordinary people to take responsibility for societal change. American citizens want to help Russians develop

a flourishing democracy—but seldom are they offered a way to participate. PEP provides a terrific opportunity to influence Russia's historic transition without ever leaving our own communities.

Through the years, CCI has relied heavily on

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American volunteerism and in-kind contributions to implement all of its programs. Volunteers in 50 states have provided pro bono business management training to Russians and Ukrainians. Thousands of families have opened their homes and hearts to Russian visitors for more than a decade. CCI's volunteer business consultants have donated on-site management consulting in Russia since 1993. Leading US seed companies have donated 106 tons of vegetable seeds to CCI, which have been distributed to disadvantaged people across Russia.

CCI currently operates several programs dedicated to economic reform in Russia, in addition to the Productivity Enhancement Program. Thanks to generous financial assistance and in-kind contributions from US citizens, American foundations, USAID and the US State Department, CCI continues to design and run innovative programs which will help shape Russia's future.

CCI is well known for its cost effective programs which are not only made possible by the enormous contributions of in-kind services from American volunteers but are also cost-shared by Russian participants.

In Your Community

HOME HOSTING

Home hosting is the heart and soul of the PEP experience. Friendships are forged and cultures are shared. Delegates are paired two to a household so that they can help each other communicate, and also relax and speak Russian after the long training day.

The Local Coordinator organizes a committee to recruit home hosts from the club and the community at large. CCI provides advice to local organizers about how to recruit home hosts, as well as a handbook for first-time international hosts.

Home hosting is a delightful experience that both volunteers and visitors will never forget!

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to and from training sites is usually provided by one or more vehicles donated by local rental agencies, auto dealers, congregations, schools or businesses. These organizations receive free publicity and increased business as a result of their highly visible contribution to this international effort.

The Local Coordinator works with the civic club to establish a committee, which arranges all transportation.

Delegates are often home-hosted in one neighborhood or region of a city to facilitate daily transportation to and from worksites.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

PEP can be an event for the entire community, and broad-based support makes the delegation's experience much richer. Getting the word out to the local government, universities, business associations, civic groups and schools is the work of another committee set up by the Local Coordinator.

Civic clubs are often surprised at how many Americans turn out to do their part to build relationships with Russians, and offer support for the delegation. There is a special affinity between American and Russian citizens even after (or perhaps because of) decades of the Cold War. The result: The best of America springs forth when PEP comes to town!





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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How is PEP funded?

A: PEP is made possible in part by a generous grant from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs which supports 48% of its operating costs. The remaining portion of PEP is funded by the Russian participants (15%) and in-kind contributions by US volunteers, civic clubs, business trainers, home hosts, and various other organizations (37%).

Q: What is the cost of participating?

A: PEP costs clubs almost nothing!! Clubs pay no fees to CCI to participate, and PEP can be implemented entirely through donations and volunteer efforts.

Home and business hosts work on a volunteer basis, providing lodging, training and meals. For local transportation most clubs secure donated vans and gas. Social activities, such as potluck parties, can be very inexpensive. While some clubs choose to splurge on their guests, PEP does not need to be expensive to be effective and rewarding.

Q: How can we find home hosts?

A: Unlike other exchanges which require that home hosts be club members, PEP home hosts have been recruited from many sources, such as friends, family and neighbors. Congregations, schools, Sister City organizations, former AFS hosts, and Peace Corps alumni groups also are good places to find hosts. In fact, sponsoring clubs have found that PEP can be a great way to expand membership.

Q: Is the language barrier a problem?

A: No, the language barrier is surprisingly easy to overcome. Business training and group functions are translated by either the interpreter or bilingual group facilitator. In the home, there are many ways to communicate. CCI recommends that the Russians be housed in pairs, matching stronger English speakers with less-fluent delegates. CCI provides survival-English training to delegates and gives home hosts Russian glossaries. Also, the delegates come armed with dictionaries, flash cards, and sometimes even electronic translators.

Most of all, home hosts report that a "universal language" allows friendships to develop. Pictures, food, music, gestures, games, smiles and laughter transcend all boundaries.

PEP is a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
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