Chapter 3

EVALUATING WESTERN ASSISTANCE TO RUSSIAN WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

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A key objective of democracy assistance for Russia is the promotion of civil society. No effort to promote civil society in Russia can be successful, however, without explicitly considering the contribution of women. Most studies estimate that by the late 1990s two thousand to four thousand women's organizations were active in Russia (women's organizations are defined as organizations with mostly women members, working in the interests of women).[1] These organizations include educational groups, consciousness-raising groups, crisis centers, human rights groups, environmental groups, cultural clubs, lesbian support groups, charitable organizations, professional associations, employment retraining centers, and political advocacy groups. Women are also the most active members of many other Russian NGOs: One study found that in 1995 more than 80 percent of the members of St. Petersburg's charitable organizations were women.[2]

In this chapter I examine Western assistance to women's organizations, paying particular attention to organizations that identify themselves as feminist. The mission of these organizations is not simply to improve women's lives in a

I would like to thank Valerie Sperling, Sarah Henderson, and Julie Hemment for their comments on earlier drafts.

practical sense but also to remove the legal, social, and cultural impediments to women's equal access to government and market resources. I also include in this category crisis centers and hot lines directed against domestic abuse and sexual assault. Although feminist activists may or may not run the individual crisis centers, feminist ideals were the basis for the movement in Russia. I concentrate on this subset of women's organizations for two reasons. First, unlike many other women's organizations in Russia, these groups consider themselves to be part of a transnational social movement. Most founders of contemporary Russian feminism drew their inspiration largely from contact with Western feminists and feminist literature.[3] A conceptual framework for a more "authentically Russian" variant of feminism is only now being articulated. Second, feminist organizations receive a disproportionate share of Western assistance among women's organizations, and they are more dependent than other women's organizations on such assistance for their survival.

My central argument is that although Western assistance has strengthened the third sector, it has not helped, and in some ways has hurt, civil society as a whole. *Civil society* and the *third sector* are often used interchangeably, but there is a crucial distinction between the two terms. *Civil society* refers to an overlapping network of autonomous voluntary associations—formal and informal, political and nonpolitical—that creates a space for public action between the individual and the state. In a strong civil society such associations are woven into the fabric of daily life and help structure citizens' relations with each other and with the state. These associations not only aggregate societal demands and articulate them to government officials but also—and, more important, in some scholars' view—instill the habits of cooperation, solidarity, public spiritedness, and respect for legitimate authority necessary for a stable democratic polity.[4]

The *third sector,* on the other hand, refers more narrowly to the formal, functionally differentiated, and frequently professional nonprofit organizations that interact with state and market actors. Strong third-sector organizations have the skills and stability to provide a service consistently and efficiently over time, to get their message out to the public, to articulate their demands to government officials, and to monitor government actions to ensure accountability. But because many such organizations are run along the same lines as state and market actors, they are less equipped to socialize individuals to become good citizens.

Western assistance cannot create the informal structures that make up civil society; at best, it can reach a fraction of the formal organizations that constitute the third sector. Within Russia's women's movement Western assistance has helped institutionalize and strengthen key organizations to ensure the movement's survival in a hostile economic, social, and legal environment. It has helped women's organizations to communicate and maintain extended contact with each other. The result has been the emergence of a small but growing cadre of nonprofit professionals within the women's movement that can manage

their organizations and negotiate with government officials more effectively. However, the real success of civil promotion should be measured not in terms of organizational capacity but in terms of changed institutions and human beings. Such changes happen gradually as a result of the sustained, informal interaction among activists and between activists and the larger society. They often occur not as the expected result of particular projects but as a result of positive externalities, that is, the "benefits that accrue to persons or sectors outside the scope of the immediate organization or program."[5]

Unfortunately, by focusing activists' attention on organizational questions, Western assistance to women's organizations has frequently acted to diminish such positive externalities. In some cases it has widened the gap between the activists and the rest of society. Institutionalizing and professionalizing civic associations frequently transforms them into hierarchical, centralized, and corporate entities that value their own survival more than their social mission. Their dependence on Western assistance often forces them to be more responsive to outside donors than to their constituencies, removes incentives to mobilize new members, and fosters interorganizational competition that discourages open communication. These effects of assistance on third-sector organizations contribute little to the habits of trust, tolerance, and solidarity necessary to civil society. Lacking a firm base in society, the third sector in Russia remains highly vulnerable to political fluctuations, not only in Russia but also in Western countries.

Western donors could partially offset this trend by changing some of their emphases. First, donors should pay closer attention to how decisions are made within organizations to encourage wider participation and transparency. Second, donors should take steps to avoid centralization within the movement as a whole, by spreading out more small grants among a variety of organizations and by increasing their efforts to connect women's organizations with the Internet. Third, and most important, donors should award grants that actively encourage organizations to reach out to their communities with practical services that have immediate, tangible effects on people's lives. Western assistance to crisis centers for abused women, for example, has proved particularly effective in this regard.

These conclusions are based on research trips to Moscow, Nizhni Novgorod, St. Petersburg, and Yekaterinburg during the summers of 1998 and 1999. I interviewed more than forty women's activists and observed a number of conferences, demonstrations, and public lectures. In Moscow I chose my subjects from the list of signatories to a charter for cooperation among women's organizations sponsored by the Movement of Russian Women in April 1997, a group that included both independent and state-sponsored groups, feminist, and some charitable organizations.[6] In Nizhni Novgorod, St. Petersburg, and Yekaterinburg I interviewed women activists whom I identified from local contacts and from a directory of women's organizations published in May 1998.[7] I also interviewed local program officers for several Western granting agencies, as well as

representatives from other sectors of Russia's civil society, particularly environmental organizations. Three earlier trips to study women's organizations and trade unions in the town of Ivanovo, as well as subsequent research into the effect of transnational factors on the Russian third sector, also inform my argument; most of the organizations in Ivanovo did not receive financial assistance from Western donors at that time.[8] I also drew upon on the extensive secondary literature on women's activism in Russia.[9]

Since I completed my field research, the pattern of Western assistance to Russian women's organizations has changed in several respects. Most important, in 1998 the Soros Foundation's Open Society Institute opened an office of the Network Women's Program in Russia. The program's budget of more than $500,000 in 1999 and 2000 quickly made it the single largest donor to women's organizations in Russia.[10] The World Bank, the Gender Equality Fund, and the Canada International Development Agency have also begun programs in Russia devoted to women's issues. In addition, both the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Ford Foundation have made important changes in their approach to issues of gender. USAID has announced a new effort against the trafficking in women for prostitution in Russia and in the former Soviet Union.[11] The Ford Foundation has cut back on its grants to civil society organizations in the Russian feminist movement and concentrated its support on gender studies in higher education, microfinancing of women's small business enterprises, and the campaign against domestic violence.[12]

This chapter begins by outlining the historical and contemporary challenges facing civic activists in Russia, with particular attention to the role that women and women's organizations have played in Russia's civic life. The next section describes the strategies that Western assistance organizations have used to help Russian women's organizations overcome these challenges. Then I analyze the positive and negative effects of these strategies on the movement. I conclude with some lessons this analysis might hold for future strategies.

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

The rapid growth of NGOs in Russia is a rare sign of hope in an otherwise bleak economic and political landscape. A report issued in 1997 by Charities Aid Foundation/Russia notes that more than fifty thousand NGOs had registered with the Ministry of Justice since the collapse of the Soviet Union.[13] Even so, Russia's third sector remains in a precarious situation. The vast majority of the new NGOs have few members and fewer resources; most do not outlive the enthusiasm of their founders. They tend to be little known in their communities, and those that are known often meet with indifference or suspicion. The most effective organizations, as a rule, survive only with the help of state funding or international assistance.

CIVIL SOCIETY IN RUSSIA

Russia has never had a strong civil society. The tsarist autocracy carefully monitored all forms of civic activism, and the Soviet regime banned independent public activism altogether. The social organizations that did exist in the USSR depended upon the regime for funding and personnel and often acted as a means of social control rather than of individual empowerment. Reacting to these efforts by the party-state to dominate all public life, most Russians sought to avoid the public sphere and retreated as much as possible into the sanctuary of their homes, their families, and a small network of trusted friends. The resulting absence of public, horizontal ties among the population left no basis for a coherent civil society when the party collapsed; instead, Russian society consisted of a multitude of small private worlds cultivated in mutual isolation and distrust.

The public activism characteristic of the perestroika period reflected this fragmentation. Though many informal organizations (*neformaly*) emerged when Mikhail Gorbachev relaxed party control, most were small and weak, with few ties to society or to the government. Rather than articulating the interests of particular constituencies, as one might expect in a civil society, these "movement organizations," as Steven Fish has dubbed them, pursued more comprehensive goals of raising public consciousness and transforming society as a whole.[14]

CIVIC ACTIVISM AFTER 1991

The movement organizations did not fare well in the first decade of the post-Soviet era.[15] The economic upheaval of the transition caused most Russians to worry about more immediate, tangible goals than raising public consciousness. A combination of rampant inflation, declining production, and a retreating state created a demand for more practical social welfare organizations, but the response was disappointing. A sense of civic powerlessness dominated society: Many people expected the state to supply their education, employment, housing, health care, and even recreation, as it had under the Soviet regime, and the continued concentration of political and economic power gave them little reason to believe that public action would change anything. Most Russians again retreated into private worlds, relying on their gardens, their networks, and barter to insulate themselves from economic turmoil.[16]

Not all Russians retreated, however; a significant number of activists, mostly women, emerged to fill the gaps left by the retreating state. Unfortunately, few of these organizations had the technical competence to make much of an impact. The new activists had little or no experience in managing independent organizations. Most saw their role as a temporary one of providing services that the

state would provide in more stable times and so did not consider how their activities might fit within a broader, more permanent mission. They were working in a chaotic, even hostile, environment. No law regulating NGOs existed until 1995; Russia has no tradition of private giving, and the existing tax code offers few incentives to begin such a tradition.[17]

The greatest challenge facing Russian NGOs, however, is to overcome the legacy of cynicism and suspicion that many Russians feel toward all public organizations. The task is not an easy one. Many early NGOs fueled such distrust by exhibiting little or no commitment to social change. Even committed social service organizations frequently reproduced the Soviet pattern of small private worlds, where the director and a few other activists—often personal friends or former coworkers—allocated organizational resources according to personal loyalty rather than more disinterested criteria. Such practices reinforced the perception that NGOs exist primarily to enrich the organizers, discouraging others from participating in NGO activities.

The Soviet legacy of small private worlds also made it difficult for the new NGOs to work together: They had no common sense of mission, they had few means of contacting each other, and they distrusted people outside their own circle. Anastasia Posadskaya, an organizer of the First Independent Women's Forum, reported with dismay that many of the representatives at the forum had little interest in closer coordination: "We have our group. You have your center. You have your support group. We have already found each other. Why should we organize this? For whom?"[18]

WOMEN IN RUSSIAN CIVIL SOCIETY

Women had played an active role in Russia's small civil society before the 1917 revolution, but the Soviet regime condemned the independent women's movement as bourgeois, as it did other groups. The women's groups that did emerge under the Soviets were created mostly to mobilize women's support for the new regime. Indeed, in the public realm, at least, the status of Soviet women compared favorably in many ways to that of their sisters in the capitalist countries. But whereas the regime's ideology proclaimed the equality of men and women in the public sphere, it never addressed the additional expectations placed on women in their roles as housekeeper and mother, leaving women with the full burden of domestic responsibilities in addition to their work outside the home. Such unspoken assumptions about women's domestic roles limited their opportunities in the workplace as well. Women were concentrated in less prestigious and less remunerative jobs, such as textiles, retailing, health, and accounting, where, it was thought, their "natural" aptitudes as mothers and housewives could be put to good use. Even in these occupations, women would not receive the promotions that they deserved because most supervisors thought the women

would be distracted by maternal duties. On average, Soviet women earned only 70 percent of Soviet men's earnings.[19]

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS TODAY

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

When the Soviet regime collapsed in 1991, there were two state-sponsored women's organizations (though they had been administered jointly since 1987). First, the Soviet Women's Committee was designed to bolster the Soviet Union's international image as a champion of peace and women's rights. Second, a network of women's councils, or *zhensovety*, was created to mobilize women within Russia and to act as as a social welfare organization.[20] For the most part the *zhensovety* defined their role as helping women to fulfill their duties to the state as wives and mothers. They arranged public lectures, fairs, and other events to encourage the party's family values and provided material and moral support to single mothers, mothers of large families, and other "problem families."[21]

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, this "official" women's movement reconstituted itself as the Union of Russian Women.[22] For the most part the organization maintained its earlier emphases on political mobilization and social welfare and, as before, retained its policy focus on the social problems facing women in their maternal role. In pursuing this agenda under post-Soviet conditions, however, the organization has taken positions more compatible with Western feminism, such as helping women to get elected to positions of power and defending women against discrimination. In 1993, the Union of Russian Women led a coalition of women's organizations to form a political bloc, Women of Russia, that received 8 percent of the vote and the right to be represented in the Duma. Unfortunately, the bloc proved ineffective within the Duma and failed to gain 5 percent in the 1995 elections, the minimum necessary for representation. Soon after that Yekaterina Lakhova, President Boris Yeltsin's adviser on women's questions, left the bloc to found her own organization, the Movement of Russian Women, which was more closely aligned with Yeltsin.[23]

FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS

During perestroika, while official women's organizations still pursued the ideal of Soviet womanhood, a number of activists came together to form the first independent women's movement since the Revolution. Inspired largely by contact with feminists and feminist literature from the West, these new activists formed small associations to raise social consciousness about gender inequality.

Some new activists were able to use existing structures funded by the state as a base for their activities. For example, they created the Moscow Center for Gender Studies (MCGS), within the Institute of the Socioeconomic Study of Population of the Academy of Sciences. But the activists also created a number of *neformaly* outside state structures. In March 1991 more than two hundred women from throughout Russia met in Dubna, outside Moscow, to form the First Independent Women's Forum. A Second Independent Women's Forum in November 1992 drew more than five hundred women.

Like members of other movement organizations created during perestroika, Russia's feminists did not fare well in the transition. In addition to problems with funding, space, and time, the feminists had difficulty finding a constituency in Russian society. The reasons for this difficulty are complicated, but two stand out. First, Russian women often identified the struggle for equal rights with Soviet-style emancipation and so accepted the Soviets' narrow definition of equality. Many Russian women in the post-Soviet era say they feel no discrimination; they also feel that such "equality" has not done them any good. Second, feminism's aim to politicize relations between men and women threatens the sanctity of the household, that sanctuary of privacy that Russians had protected fiercely under Soviet rule.[24]

While Russian feminists found few allies at home, they had little trouble forging ties with women in the United States and Western Europe. Indeed, without help from the West the Russian feminist movement might not have survived.[25] The Moscow Center for Gender Studies, for example, suffered the crippling economic difficulties that afflict all Russian academic institutions until it registered as a nongovernmental organization in 1994 and received an institutional grant from the MacArthur Foundation.[26] Even organizations that have not received much direct international assistance, such as the Feminist Alternative in Moscow and the Society of Independent Activists in Tver', have benefited from the resources and networks created with Western help.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Women have been particularly active in the social welfare groups that emerged after the Soviet Union's collapse.[27] Julia Zelikova, a researcher in St. Petersburg, offers three reasons for the disproportionate activism of women.[28] First, women bore more of the costs of reform than men did. Women were the last hired and first fired from state enterprises, and the state budget offered them little help, such as unemployment benefits. Many women created organizations to find collective remedies for their difficulties, including organizations to help widows or mothers of disabled children, professional organizations for women in defense industries, and organizations to retrain the recently unemployed. Second, many new charitable organizations were linked with the Russian Orthodox

Church, where traditional conceptions of "self-sacrificing" Russian womanhood promoted sympathy for others. Finally, because the reforms had pushed women out of politics and the marketplace, many ambitious, energetic women found no other way to have an active public life. Indeed, many social welfare activists had earlier worked in social organizations sponsored by the old regime, particularly with the trade unions or local chapters of the *zhensovety*, and looked to autonomous social welfare organizations to continue their work (and preserve their social status) under the new conditions. Relying on connections in the regional bureaucracies, these former activists have often been more successful than other groups in getting local government support for their activities.

COMMITTEE OF SOLDIERS' MOTHERS

One of the best-known and most active networks of independent women's organizations in Russia today is the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers. This organization began in 1989 to protect Soviet, and later Russian, conscripts against human rights abuses. The committee's activities have included public protests against the brutality of senior recruits against younger ones (*dedovshchina*) and against the conscription of students. In their most celebrated activity the mothers sponsored a peace march to Chechnya in 1995 and facilitated the exchange of prisoners in that war. They have staged fewer public demonstrations in recent years but continue their efforts to support and advise young men (and their mothers) about how to avoid conscription, defend themselves against charges of desertion, and receive adequate medical care if they are ill.

WESTERN ASSISTANCE STRATEGIES

Western donors to Russian women's organizations selectively help self-identified feminist organizations more than they do other women's organizations. This is true of transnational feminist organizations such as the Global Fund for Women and the Frauenanstiftung of Germany, as well as of donors such as the Ford and MacArthur foundations, that identify women's rights as a priority within larger contexts of human rights and civil society. Because Russian feminists have based their movement on Western ideas, Western donors understood and recognized their mission and priorities. Russian feminists also were more likely than other women's groups to look to the West for assistance. Olga Lipovskaya notes that "feminist organizations are more experienced than nonfeminist groups in cross-cultural relations with Western counterparts, have a better knowledge of foreign languages and were the first to set up projects that cooperated with Western organizations and which benefited from funding."[29]

Whatever their larger missions, all donors to women's organizations identify building a strong third sector as an important objective in its own right. The

strategies that donors use to achieve this goal vary along three dimensions (see table 3.1) that correspond with the different tasks that they seek to accomplish: building NGO infrastructure, public advocacy or community outreach.[30] Needless to say, the boundaries between these tasks are not precise: Assistance to improve relations with the media, for example, may be described either as public advocacy or community outreach.

Grants also differ with respect to their beneficiaries: individuals or organizations. The hope behind grants targeting individuals is the empowerment of women by providing them with the skills and knowledge necessary to pursue their interests more effectively. Examples include training grants to improve organizational capacity, travel grants and exchanges to strengthen networks, and research grants to improve public advocacy. Broadly speaking, grants to organizations are designed to institutionalize the women's NGO sector and preserve a space in which individuals can pursue their interests. The two are often indistinct. For example, representatives of groups providing Internet access to the regions tended to refer to the targets of their efforts as organizations, whereas organizations designed to train activists to use the Internet described their targets as individuals.

A third dimension of variation among assistance strategies concerns their conceptual frameworks and their terms of involvement. Donors pursue proactive strategies when they participate actively in identifying the goals and methods of a particular project, and they use reactive strategies when they respond to local requests and are less committed to a particular goal or strategy. Strategies may be informed by ideas that originated in the West or by ideas generated by domestic actors. Grants may be multidimensional, if they allow organizations to

TABLE 3.1 Typology of Western Assistance Strategies in Russia

Tasks of Assistance		
Infrastructure: organizational capacity and networking / public advocacy / community outreach		
Target of Assistance		
Individual activists, scholars, journalists, NGOs		
Terms of Involvement		
Proactive	vs.	Reactive
Imported Ideas	vs.	Domestically generated ideas
Multidimensional (program based)	vs.	Unidimensional (project based)
Process oriented	vs.	Product oriented

perform a range of services within a particular program, or unidimensional, if they are targeted to accomplish a specific task or project. Finally, grants may facilitate a process, such as training, education, or communication, or fund the creation of a particular product, such as a database or a research paper.

Apart from the differences in their strategies, Western granting organizations also have certain practices in common. For example, agencies often give responsibility for grant money to one person, usually the local NGO director, because of the lack of a reliable banking infrastructure, the complicated and disadvantageous tax codes, and the undeveloped governance of the organizations themselves. Second, granting agencies also tend to give repeat grants to organizations, partly because of a commitment to build long-term partnerships with local organizations, partly because these organizations prove to be good at what they do, and partly out of inertia. By 1998 most assistance agencies had shifted their attention outside Moscow and St. Petersburg to build up women's organizations in the regions. Even Moscow organizations were likely to win grants only if their project entailed some outreach to organizations in the provinces.[31]

NGO INFRASTRUCTURE

In discussing assistance efforts to overcome inexperience, organizational weakness, and mutual isolation within the independent women's movement, donor organizations use four types of strategies: large multidimensional grants to a few select organizations to act as "resource centers" or umbrella organizations; small multidimensional or unidimensional "seed" grants spread out among many organizations; somewhat larger unidimensional grants to organizations for specific products and/or processes; and individual grants for training, travel, and exchange.

RESOURCE CENTERS AND UMBRELLA ORGANIZATIONS

The strategy with perhaps the greatest effect on the independent women's movement in Russia entails multidimensional long-term grants to pay for the salaries, office space, and other operational costs of a few select organizations that in turn are expected to provide a range of services to other organizations in the sector, including training, legal and financial consultations, facilitating and arranging seminars and conferences, and distributing information regarding the activities of other women's organizations in Russia and around the world. Such grants have established three core organizations in Russia's independent women's movement: A Ford Foundation grant helped create the Information Center of the Independent Women's Center (ICIWF); the Consortium of Russian Women's Non-Governmental Organizations grew out of a grant from Win-

rock International, a large international NGO based in the United States; and the St. Petersburg Center for Gender Issues was established with help from the German feminist group, Frauenanstiftung. The Moscow Center for Gender Studies (MCGS), supported since 1994 by a grant from the MacArthur Foundation, performs some of these services as well. Because multidimensional grants established each of these organizations (except the MCGS), they must be considered proactive rather than reactive, though in each case they emerged only as a result of a negotiation with Russian partners.

The Consortium of Russian Women's Non-Governmental Organizations was established as part of the United States—Newly Independent States Women's Consortium sponsored by Winrock International's Women's Leadership Program with funding from USAID's Civic Initiatives Portfolio. The Consortium of Russian Women acts as an umbrella organization to link women's organizations throughout the Russian federation. Under its first director, an American named Martina Vandenberg, the consortium emphasized building coalitions among women's organizations as its chief mission. Under its current director, Yelena Yershova, it has made public advocacy a greater priority, reflecting in part her own strengths and experience. In 1998 the consortium's list of activities included training in leadership, advocacy, fund-raising, governance, and strategic planning; organizing seminars and meetings; distributing a newsletter; helping women's organizations to establish Internet access; and distributing seed grants to smaller women's organizations. More recently, the consortium has added to its priorities the struggles against domestic violence and trafficking in women for prostitution, as well as the support of women's small business enterprises.[32]

Through 1998 the Ford Foundation was the greatest benefactor of women's organizations among the private foundations. Most of the foundation's grants to the women's sector have been long-term, process-oriented, and multidimensional grants.[33] In the early 1990s the foundation's largest beneficiary among women's organizations was the ICIWF, which publishes and distributes a newsletter for women's organizations, helps coordinate lectures and seminars, and offers training programs. Ford grants also funded programs to promote women's studies at the university level as well as efforts to promote crisis centers against violence against women. After an internal review in 1998 the Ford Foundation shifted its strategy toward women's empowerment in Russia. Rather than providing support to feminist resource centers like the ICIWF, Ford has instead tried to introduce a "gender lens" into its programs that would consider more broadly how projects might affect the status of women in society. Ford still funds projects in gender education and the campaign to fight violence against women, however, and has added microfinancing of women's small business enterprises to its list of priorities.[34]

Because Ford Foundation grants usually emerge from extensive negotiations with prospective grantees, characterizing them as either reactive or proactive is

often difficult. The local program officers—native English speakers with long experience in Russia—have a great deal of influence in the setting of local priorities and awarding of grants, and they have tried to listen to local activists. Still, negotiations are complicated. For example, the ICIWF was created in the early 1990s when Anastasia Posadskaya, then director of the MCGS, recommended that the organizations of the Independent Women's Forum approach the Ford Foundation to fund an umbrella organization that would coordinate their work more closely. The organizations came up with a draft proposal that would unite about thirty different projects in a nonhierarchical organization. After yearlong negotiations a somewhat different vision shaped the grant: a more institutionalized, centralized organization that would act as an information and resource center.[35]

Another large donor to the Russian women's sector has been the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. For the most part the MacArthur Foundation awards grants to individuals for nonpartisan research. But it also awards a small number of larger multidimensional grants to select organizations for institutional development, such as the grant that the foundation awarded to the MCGS in 1994. Unlike the other large institutional grants, the grant to the MCGS did not create a new organization but instead allowed an existing organization to continue the activities that it had always considered to be the core of its mission.[36] MCGS members advised government officials during the perestroika period and played a crucial role in organizing the first and second Independent Women's Forums. Though research remains the organization's first priority, MCGS members have been involved in many different projects funded by Western granting agencies, including a USAID-funded "gender expertise" center involved in policy advocacy, training projects for women NGO leaders, and a gender studies summer school funded by the Ford Foundation.

A third donor offering large, long-term, and multidimensional grants to improve networks among women's organizations is the Frauenanstiftung, which is affiliated with the Heinrich Böll Foundation of the German Green Party. The Frauenanstiftung has an explicitly feminist agenda, defining its mission as "the development and support for women's studies and women's education, documentation and consulting centers, and support for communication and networks between women's organizations."[37] It too awards grants after extended negotiations between foundation officials and selected local activists, though the Frauenanstiftung's grants tend to be more reactive and less restrictive than those of the Ford Foundation. Unlike most other donors, furthermore, the Frauenanstiftung sponsors conferences and exchanges designed to keep its beneficiaries in touch with each other; at least one grantee expressed appreciation for the Frauenanstiftung's effort to make its grant recipients feel like partners in a common enterprise.[38] Some Frauenanstiftung grantees in Russia have included the St. Petersburg Center for Gender Issues, which acts as an educational and re-

source center for women's organizations in the region, and the Archive-Database-Library (ADL) project, which grew out of the ICIWF as a central clearinghouse for information regarding the history and status of the Russian independent women's movement. (The ADL did not receive a second grant and has since split into three separate components.)

Finally, the Network Women's Program of the Soros Foundation's Open Society Institute began operating in Russia in 1998 and within a year became the single largest donor to women's organizations in Russia. This program has its headquarters in the United States and is directed by the former head of the MCGS, Anastasia Posadskaya. The director of the Moscow office is also a longtime women's activist, Yelena Kochkina. In its first three years the Network Women's Program in Russia has offered many small grants for a variety of activities, including infrastructural support, gender education, improving the image of women in the mass media, and policy advocacy, among others. Since 1999 it has also provided financial support to four "partner organizations," including the ICIWF and the MCGS, as well as the Tver' Center for Gender Studies and the Interuniversity Program for Women's Studies in Ivanovo.[39]

SEED OR MINIGRANTS

Seed grants and minigrants are designed to help fledgling organizations become established within the third sector. The grants can be unidimensional or multidimensional, product or process oriented, but they are usually reactive rather than proactive. The Global Fund for Women, for example, provides grants of as much as $15,000 with no conditions to small promising organizations. Winrock International and the Eurasia Foundation also sponsored a small grant program through the Consortium of Russian Women. These were unidimensional grants to purchase office technology, gain access to the Internet, organize a conference, conduct policy-related research, and publish a newsletter. Because both Winrock International and the Eurasia Foundation depend heavily upon funding from USAID, the consortium's project was discontinued when USAID priorities shifted away from seed programs and toward funding large resource centers and other infrastructure projects.[40] In 1999 small grants again became available through the Network Women's Program of the Open Society Institute.[41]

UNIDIMENSIONAL GRANTS

Many unidimensional grants awarded to women's organizations are designed to strengthen networks. USAID, for example, offered a grant to the Women's Information Network to create a directory of Russian women's organizations. The Eurasia Foundation too has invited applications for grants to fund training sessions, conferences, brochures, newsletters, and databases.

One of the most common goals of unidimensional infrastructural grants in recent years has been to connect women's organizations to the Internet. Most notably, the Network of East-West Women, with funding from Eurasia, Ford, MacArthur, and World Learning, has connected more than two thousand women from more than thirty countries, including ten groups in different regions of the Russian federation.[42] The network also maintains a number of electronic mailing lists, enabling women throughout Eastern Europe and beyond to gain information about their counterparts in other countries. Both the Frauenanstiftung and the Global Fund for Women have also supported the Women's Innovation Fund "East-West," a small organization of just two or three members that teaches computer and Internet skills to women activists.

INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE

Training programs are designed primarily to teach NGO activists general principles of organizational administration, such as creating a charter, outlining a strategic plan, projecting an image, raising money, and resolving conflicts. Western instructors provided most of the training in the early 1990s, but more recently Russian graduates of "training-of-trainers" courses have done most of this work, funded by Western assistance.

Western agencies also provide travel grants and exchange programs to enable activists to attend conferences or to learn from the practices of other organizations within Russia and abroad. Ford, Eurasia, and other assistance agencies made it possible for representatives from independent women's organizations to take part in the NGO Forum at the 1995 U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women. In recent years the Network Women's Program of the Open Society Institute ran several grant competitions for travel to conferences and exchange programs and in 2001 announced a new "Global Access" competition designed to improve the ability of Russian women activists to understand and gain access to women's transnational advocacy.[43]

PUBLIC ADVOCACY

In order to improve the condition of women while strengthening the accountability of the Russian government, assistance organizations provide grants to help activists improve their ability to articulate their interests to government officials. In general, foreign assistance strategies to improve public advocacy overlapped or resembled strategies to improve infrastructure. The Consortium of Russian Women and the MCGS, for example, have both received grants from Promoting Women in Development to improve public advocacy.[44] MCGS used its grant to support a "gender expertise" program that analyzed upcoming

legislation and its effects on women and organized seminars, press conferences, and publications to disseminate the findings.[45] The Network Women's Program has also made "gender public policy" a priority.

A more unusual form of public advocacy funded by unidimensional grants targets law enforcement officials rather than decision makers. One of the more effective programs for preventing domestic abuse or the trafficking in women and children for prostitution, for example, has been to educate local police about the seriousness of the problem and teach methods of enforcement that have proved effective in other countries.[46]

Finally, the MacArthur Foundation provides indirect support to public advocacy with individual grants for nonpartisan research that "will arm policy advocates with arguments" on issues of national significance.[47] Like the Ford Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation defines its priorities in the United States but awards the individual grants after an open competition judged by a panel of both Russian and American scholars.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Donors have offered relatively little support to efforts to mobilize popular support for a feminist agenda. Some exceptions include the efforts of the Ford Foundation and Frauenanstiftung to fund gender-based education, as well as research funded by the MacArthur Foundation to improve the image of women and the women's movement in the media. The Network Women's Program of the Open Society Institute also has identified as priorities both gender-based education and work with the mass media.

Most prominent has been the assistance given by the Ford Foundation; the American Bar Association; Women, Law, and Development, International; and other donors to crisis centers and hot lines designed to help victims of domestic abuse in Russia. The movement against domestic violence in Russia owes its existence almost entirely to ideas imported from the West. Marina Pisklakova, a researcher at MCGS, started the first hot line in 1993.[48] She had always been aware that domestic abuse existed but, like most Russians at the time, had regarded it as a private matter afflicting individual women. She began to see domestic violence as a social problem requiring a social response only through a colleague familiar with Western literature on the topic. She began the hot line after a trip to Sweden, where she learned how to do it. By 1999 about thirty new organizations had arisen in Russia to help victims of domestic violence. In 1998 funding for Pisklakova's organization in Moscow, Anna, came mostly from a multidimensional grant provided by the Ford Foundation. The grant also provides money to support the Association of Crisis Centers, which links such organizations throughout the country. More unidimensional grants have come

from Women, Law, and Development and others to provide legal advocacy and psychological help for individual victims, as well as to publish pamphlets and leaflets for mass distribution throughout Russia.

One noteworthy program that made outreach to the larger population a priority was a pilot program in the early 1990s funded by the East-West European Network. The program enrolled more than sixty unemployed women in Moscow in a six-month course that offered job retraining and psychological support. The program still existed in 1998 but at that time depended more on the local employment office for financial support.[49]

THE EFFECT OF WESTERN ASSISTANCE

How well has Western assistance helped the Russian independent women's movement overcome the challenges facing Russian NGOs? First, Western support has made it possible for the women's movement to survive at all. Though some independent feminist organizations have carried on without outside assistance, they probably could not have remained sufficiently active and connected to be called a movement had Western funds not sustained a core of organizations.

Also, Western assistance has helped individual grantees overcome the organizational weakness, inexperience, and mutual isolation that plagued the movement in the early 1990s. Most of my interviewees who were activists and had received Western assistance could state clearly and concisely their organization's mission and its role in contemporary Russian society. They were familiar with the personalities and activities of other women's groups throughout the country. They were confident in handling the legal and financial challenges confronting a Russian NGO and skilled at writing grant proposals. More important, organizations funded by the West were somewhat less likely to depend on one person and more likely to survive a change in leadership than organizations without such funding.[50] They were no longer ad hoc organizations.

Yet if Western assistance has helped the independent women's movement become a vigorous participant in Russia's third sector, it has done little to foster the kind of informal connections—the positive externalities—necessary to integrate it more fully into Russian society. Several factors have limited the donors' effectiveness. First, the continued absence of NGO infrastructure in the regions has limited donors' ability to reach beyond a few urban centers. In many cases regional activists are simply not aware of the possibilities for external assistance. Others recognize the possibilities but cannot write successful grant proposals. Indeed, writing proposals for Western donors is a difficult, culture-specific skill. Most funding agencies recognize this problem and offer help in writing grant proposals, but activists who have contacts in the West or in Moscow fare better than those who do not.[51]

One of the greatest limitations facing the independent women's movement and its Western donors, however, remains the profound resistance to feminism in contemporary Russian society. For example, one of the original purposes of the St. Petersburg Center for Gender Issues was to provide open lectures and seminars to attract and educate nonactivists, but attendance was so poor that the organization shifted its emphasis to helping other women's organizations in the surrounding regions.[52] Feminist organizations also face greater challenges than other organizations in working with the media and other institutions of Russian society that could help put their ideas forward. Active environmental groups usually can find sympathetic primary school teachers to distribute material and information to their students; feminist organizations usually cannot.

In some respects Western assistance actually has widened the distance between the Russian women's movement and the rest of society by creating a cadre of professional activists involved in their own networks, with their own norms and practices. At least initially, funding from the West reinforced the feminists' orientation toward the women's movement in the United States and Western Europe rather than toward other women's organizations in Russia. Few assistance agencies provided organizations with the incentives or the opportunity to define their agendas and activities to reflect the needs that Russian women themselves perceive as most urgent.[53] Rather, they usually identified priorities based on the issues, values, and preconceptions of their own local environments, such as the current emphasis on the struggle against domestic violence. One exception to this trend can be seen in the prominent emphasis on women's economic issues found in the Network Women's Program, whose program officers are Russian activists.[54]

Western assistance has further diminished the positive externalities of civic activism by contributing, perhaps inevitably, to the bureaucratization of the movement. Third-sector organizations devote much of their time and energy to routine activities such as preparing reports to donors and Russian tax authorities and writing new grant proposals. This often requires a professional accountant and other staff members, who may or may not share a commitment to the organization's social mission. Such third-sector organizations increasingly resemble corporate entities that pursue their own organizational interest before they pursue their social mission. Though such organizations are often more effective at presenting demands to governmental bodies and coordinating the activities of disparate organizations, they may undermine the informal, open-ended, and horizontal ties that make up an essential part of civil society.[55]

Organizations that depend on grants often lose their initiative. Multidimensional process-oriented grants allow somewhat more flexibility in this respect than do unidimensional grants, but the requirements of even multidimensional grants often mean that core organizations are expected to do too much with too few resources, leaving their efforts scattered and unfocused.[56] This tendency is

further exacerbated by changes in the priorities of donor organizations—"the flavor of the month," as one program officer put it[57]—which make it impossible for organizations to maintain a sustained, focused effort in any one area. Some shifts in priority reflect efforts to broaden and deepen the Russian third sector, such as the new emphasis on reaching out to the regions. Others simply reflect new trends in the West.[58] In either case organizations that depend on grants struggle to keep up. For example, the projects that the Consortium of Russian Women's Non-Governmental Organizations has added to its list of activities since 1998—the struggle against domestic violence and trafficking in women for prostitution, as well as support for microfinance—correspond closely to donors' changing priorities, but member organizations probably have had no time to develop any expertise in these issues.

Third, although Western efforts have succeeded in reducing the isolation of Russian women's NGOs, they have not been as effective at promoting the solidarity and trust associated with civil society. Competition for grants among professional social movement organizations can be divisive in the United States as well, but the mutual mistrust and a near absolute dependence upon a relatively small number of Western donors has magnified the problem among Russian NGOs. Activists in different organizations have become less willing to share ideas with each other; one even swore me to secrecy regarding a project she planned to develop for a grant.[59]

Most damaging, perhaps, has been the common practice of giving one person the responsibility for administering a grant. Whereas Russian feminists, like their counterparts in the West, had sought to avoid hierarchical structures in their movement as much as possible, the donors' practice often forced women's organizations to name a director who then had decisive influence over organizational decisions. In a few cases directors abused this trust to appropriate grants for their own use.[60] But even in the vast majority of cases where directors are truly committed to the cause, the concentration of responsibility and the absence of transparent, participatory procedures feed into the Soviet legacy of mistrust. Rather than instilling habits of compromise and mutual responsibility, the practice has bred ill will and even contributed to rifts in several women's organizations.[61]

Finally, donor practices have had the unfortunate consequence of reinforcing the prevailing belief that assistance resources are distributed according to personal connections rather than merit. As noted, organizations that have competent English speakers or contacts with the West are more likely to win grants. According to the veteran activists Natalya Abubirikova and Maria Regentova, knowledge of English has become "a means of power and control" and "a convertible currency."[62] Western donors also tend to award grants to organizations that have successfully fulfilled grant requirements in the past. Given the extreme importance of personal connections in other parts of contemporary Rus-

sian society, it is not surprising that people regard the NGO community as a closed society into which one can gain access only by knowing someone. One activist who worked for a short time at the Soros Foundation said all her friends began sending their applications to Soros because they believed that she would approve them.[63] More troubling, another acquaintance said she would not submit an application for a research grant because she did not know anyone at the foundation and did not want to waste her time.

NGO INFRASTRUCTURE

RESOURCE CENTERS AND UMBRELLA ORGANIZATIONS

The core organizations have served a particularly valuable service in keeping the women's movement alive by providing focal points for coordinating and institutionalizing contacts between women's organizations, especially with organizations in the regions. In December 1995, for example, a seminar sponsored by the ICIWF and the Archive-Database-Library project produced the new Association of Independent Women's Organizations, which included thirty organizations from seventeen different regions.[64] The Web site of the Consortium of Russian Women lists ninety-nine members in thirty-seven different regions, and, as noted, the Association of Crisis Centers had about thirty members in June 1998.[65] Most important, these two organizations have been able to bring together organizations from different branches within the Russian women's movement, including self-identified feminist organizations, members of the Movement of Russian Women, and some charitable organizations in the regions.[66] The Association of Crisis Centers has been particularly successful in garnering support from more traditional women's organizations in the regions. For example, contacts with an American activist—a visit by Susan Hartman of Connect US-USSR in Minneapolis—inspired the hot lines in Nizhni Novgorod in 1998, but the women running them had been activists during the Soviet era and relied upon their connections with local authorities for operational support.

Unfortunately, many of these links were superficial, based on utilitarian motives rather than ideological commitment. Moscow organizations seek to include regional organizations within their circle to win prestige and grants; regional organizations often rely on connections with Moscow organizations to help them write grants or provide them with recommendations.[67] Links to Moscow also bring local credibility and opportunities for travel.[68] One hot line in Nizhni Novgorod was associated with a shelter for abandoned children. The director clearly regarded the children as her priority and the hot line as a means to gain more resources for it.[69] She admitted to having read little, if any, of the voluminous literature supplied by Western-oriented organizations, and she remained skeptical of their feminist philosophy. She accepted feminism "half and

half," she said, because in Russia, she believed, men were the victims of domestic violence as much as women.

A more serious danger is that funding of resource centers may concentrate access to Western funding within a few powerful organizations. Several activists—nearly all those whom I interviewed in Ivanovo, Nizhni Novgorod, and St. Petersburg—complained that the large core organizations in Moscow tried to protect their privileged access to Western grants and to the informational and organizational resources that they have accumulated as a result of such grants.[70] At least two activists complained that Western assistance had created a new women's *nomenklatura*.[71]

Several activists also expressed a fear that an organization created to serve the women's movement might be confused with the movement itself. In 1995 Abubirikova and Regentova wrote that the ICIWF "began quite actively to substitute itself for the entire IWF [Independent Women's Center], though it never received any such authority."[72] In 1998 several activists raised similar concerns that the director of the Consortium of Russian Women's Non-Governmental Organizations would begin to present herself as representing the women's movement as a whole.[73]

SEED GRANTS

Seed grants seemed to be quite effective at providing critical initial support to women's organizations in Russia. Many people whom I interviewed maintained that small grants from the Eurasia Foundation, the Consortium of Russian Women, or the Global Fund for Women allowed them to buy the office equipment or learn the grant-writing techniques that enabled them to develop further. The greatest limitation on seed grants is that the organizations that receive them often do not know how to use assistance effectively or are so isolated within a region that they have little effect. One activist in Moscow argued that seed grants to regional organizations often result in computer technology that sits unused in empty offices.[74] Even so, small seed grants offer a relatively inexpensive way to offset the centralization and suspicion that arise when too much Western money is concentrated in too few hands. At least one activist appreciated the minigrants precisely because they made Western assistance more accessible to a wider range of organizations and activities than the larger grants to core organizations were.[75]

UNIDIMENSIONAL GRANTS

The strategy least successful in fostering informal connections between organizations, and between organizations and society, are unidimensional grants, especially reactive ones. Such grants often encourage a blinkered efficiency,

where grantees had to worry more about accomplishing a set of discrete tasks than about exploring the best approaches to achieve their overall goal. Several activists complained that unidimensional grants, particularly those funded by government-sponsored organizations, provide little or no flexibility to react to changing conditions.[76] Product-oriented grants were particularly restrictive, but donors' dependence on quantifiable indicators to evaluate process-oriented grants meant that here too activists were more concerned about completing a task than with keeping the process going. Finally, the search for such grants frequently caused organizations to take up projects that fit only tangentially with their mission and that they were ill prepared to fulfill effectively.

One form of unidimensional grant praised by almost everyone with whom I spoke was that designed to link regional organizations with the Internet. In addition to the inherent advantages of rapid communication, participation in electronic mailing lists disseminates information without the need for a coordinating body and so may also help offset some problems of centralization within the movement. Yet these projects also suffered from problems found in other unidimensional grants. In some regions the phone lines needed to support Internet access are expensive and unreliable, yet the grants that helped set up Internet connections did not provide for the maintenance of phone lines. The success of such projects also depended on how they were implemented. For example, Sarah Henderson compared a relatively successful Internet project administered by the Network of East-West Women (NEWW) with a less successful one carried out by the Consortium of Russian Women.[77] As the name implies, NEWW is devoted exclusively to establishing a network among women's organizations. Instructors spent at least a week with personnel from each of ten organizations to introduce them to the new technology and then automatically placed them on an e-mail list, providing them with a ready-made audience and source of information. By contrast, the consortium, which had contracted to provide Internet access to thirty-five organizations, had little previous experience with this sort of project and was running several other projects at the same time. The training sessions were relatively rushed, and the clients were not placed on an e-mail list so that they could immediately take part in discussions among activists. As a result, many of the organizations linked by the consortium often used their electronic mail—if they used it at all—for mostly personal reasons.

INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE

Western-funded training has had considerable success in creating a cadre of NGO professionals in the women's sector, but such training has tended to impart general principles of management without necessarily applying them to specific conditions in Russia. In the most egregious cases trainers used material created for less developed countries with high levels of illiteracy, which insulted

the many women activists in Russia with advanced degrees.[78] The most inappropriate material has largely disappeared with the increasing number of Russian trainers, but much of the training material in 1998 was still informed by Western models that might not be appropriate to Russia. For example, some lessons on fund-raising focus on writing grant proposals rather than finding imaginative techniques for raising money from indigenous sources.

Training that focuses on abstract concepts without explicitly connecting them to the Russian context tends to divide the third sector from the Russian population. Organizations may adopt ideas in a ritualistic manner to demonstrate their professionalism to Western donors, without necessarily thinking of the practical effect in carrying out an organization's mission. One activist, for example, complained that her organization had spent months working on a strategic plan, which resulted in an ambitious agenda that it could never address.[79] Indeed, the very language of third-sector professionals, with such English terms as *capacity building* and *training of trainers*, helps them talk to each other but has no meaning to the rest of the population.

By contrast, travel grants for conferences and exchanges have been effective for establishing personal ties and diffusing ideas among women's activists. Activists spoke particularly enthusiastically about the "gender summer schools," which bring women from all over the country to participate in two-week intensive seminars on gender studies. They also were enthusiastic about long-term exchanges with other organizations that enabled them to interact with other activists for an extended period. They also praised programs that allowed them to learn from the experiences of activists in other countries, whether through an exchange program or through participation in an international conference. The only potential drawback to such grants is that activists may become involved so deeply in the network of women's activists that they have less contact with women outside that network.

PUBLIC ADVOCACY

Women's organizations always enjoyed substantial access to the political process. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the MCGS, as part of the Academy of Sciences, had a hand in drafting laws on the status of women and the family as early as 1990, while Yelena Yershova, director of the Consortium of Russian Women, was a member of the "gender expertise" commission of the Supreme Soviet Presidium.[80] In the Yeltsin era each of the three major power centers of the Russian government—the Duma, the Council of Ministers, and the presidency—had a committee or commission devoted to issues concerning women and families. Activists in the political organizations, rather than members of the independent women's movement, opened these points of entry, but activists in the independent movement used them to gain access as well. They

received political figures at conferences and seminars, attended hearings, and drafted legislation. Valerie Sperling of Clark University argues that such contacts between the independent movement and the political organizations have had a significant influence on the latter's willingness to speak out more forcefully for women's equality.[81] Indeed, a key policy consultant to the Movement of Russian Women is Svetlana Aivazova, who began her activism in the F-1 Klub, an independent organization of the perestroika period.

In 1998 both Yershova and Olga Voronina, the MCGS director, expressed pride that the independent women's movement successfully had introduced the terms *gender* and *domestic abuse* into the country's political lexicon.[82] It is difficult to assess precisely how much Western assistance has contributed to such success, but clearly it has provided the independent women's movement with the stability and financial wherewithal to hold the conferences, seminars, and press conferences at which old contacts are sustained and new contacts are made, and to do the research that makes its arguments more persuasive.[83]

A chief strategy of both the independent and political women's organizations has been to pressure the government to comply with international conventions such as the Convention on the Liquidation of All Forms of Discrimination Toward Women, which the Soviet government ratified in 1981.[84] Western assistance has enabled the women's movement to use this lever more effectively by establishing contacts and disseminating information between the Russian women's movement and women's organizations around the globe.[85] Activists particularly praised the grants that enabled independent activists to participate in the United Nations's 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women.[86] As early as 1993 a presidential decree included NGOs in a national council created to prepare the Russian delegation for the conference.[87] After the conference both Yeltsin and the Chernomyrdin government issued resolutions and decrees formally accepting the conference's results and creating the Interdepartmental Commission on Issues of Improving the Position of Women to coordinate the government's work on women's issues.[88] Activists also took part in an international conference funded by USAID to help the women's movement monitor how well Russia has conformed to these results.[89]

The strategy of appealing to international norms to increase political leverage may help women's activists gain symbolic victories that will shape outcomes in the future. In the short term, however, this strategy can divert activists from the more fundamental work of mobilizing support from below. For example, whereas activists cite international conventions and U.N. conferences seeking to eliminate discrimination against women, many Russian women simply do not think discrimination is their problem. Also, Abubirikova and Regentova note that "the energies directed to writing innumerable proposals" in connection with the U.N. forum at Beijing might have been better directed to "give a powerful push" to work out more effective strategies to mobilize women at home.[90]

Indeed, despite women activists' undoubted access to the political process at the federal level, they have produced few significant, practical results.[91] Even Yershova, director of the Consortium of Russian Women, acknowledged that public advocacy at the federal level can "at best get results on paper."[92] For example, a bill on domestic violence that the Women of Russia bloc introduced in the first Duma was so watered down in subsequent drafts that in 1998 the women's movement no longer supported it.[93] There are three reasons for such failure. The absence of public support and understanding for advocates of women's rights leaves them with relatively little clout in the legislature. Second, state institutions are themselves so fragmented and starved for resources—particularly those institutions concerned with social issues—that they have not yet allocated resources to implement and enforce the resolutions regarding the status of women that have been passed. Finally, because the population is so little involved in matters of politics, particularly concerning women's rights, there has been little effort to monitor government compliance with these resolutions.

Acknowledging the lack of progress at the federal level, Yershova argued that her consortium can teach regional organizations lessons about public advocacy that they can use more effectively at the regional level.[94] However, my own observations are that the success of regional women's groups depends mostly on the personalities in charge of local government, the personalities in charge of local women's organizations, and the connections between the two. In Yekaterinburg a grassroots organization called the Urals Association of Women has become a significant actor in local politics largely because of the energy and political acumen of its former leader, Galina Karelova, who is now first deputy minister for labor and social development. In Ivanovo the women's organizations have received strong support from regional officials, won seats on the city council, and influenced legislation to support impoverished mothers and their families, largely because the Ivanovo *zhensovet* was exceptionally active during Soviet times, and because one of the most active women's advocates in the city had been a high official in the Ivanovo Communist Party organization. Neither group had received substantial help from outside donors.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

As I have noted, feminist organizations continue to have difficulties reaching beyond their own network of activists. Several activists complained that women's activists spend too much time talking to each other.[95] Until recently, Western donors have done little to improve this situation. Even now, most assistance agencies focus on strengthening infrastructure and lobbying efforts. Indeed, by encouraging activists to adopt norms and practices that provide them with privileged access to Western funds, the granting agencies may have created an incentive for Russian women's organizations not to look outside their own

narrow circle for new members. As one participant of a seminar for environmental organizations in Lipetsk argued, "The expenditures on mobilizing human resources don't pay for themselves."[96]

In recent years, however, donors have altered their strategies somewhat to encourage activists to work more directly with the larger community.[97] They have been most successful where they have supported activities that are consonant with existing norms and practices. For example, Western programs to promote women's studies and gender analysis in Russia's universities have benefited greatly from the experience and networks of the many Russian feminists who began their career in academics. A database of Russian scholars working in women's studies published in 2000 has more than 250 entries from more than thirty regions.[98] To a large extent the growth in gender studies can be attributed to a natural diffusion of ideas within a scholarly community that only recently gained open access to scholarship in other countries. But in the academic world, as in public advocacy, Western assistance has provided scholars with the stability and the money to pursue this line of investigation and to share their ideas at conferences throughout the country.

Skeptics might raise several questions regarding these academic efforts. First, such programs reach only a relatively small part of the intellectual elite, and many of the model syllabi in these programs consist almost entirely of literature from the United States and Western Europe. To what extent can these programs affect a wider segment of Russian society? Second, such programs have attracted opportunists more interested in the funding than the ideas. Many featured scholars at one conference that I attended in Ivanovo in 1997 (funded in part by UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) included university officials who formerly taught classes in Marxism-Leninism and whose papers exhibited little knowledge of existing scholarship. Still, the programs have attracted enough students and serious younger scholars to nourish hopes that social awareness about women's issues will grow.

Efforts to overcome public cynicism and bring women into the public sphere also work better when they offer assistance that tangibly improves people's lives in the short term. One moderate success story has been the proliferation of crisis centers dealing with domestic violence. Feminist activists against domestic violence have worked hard to publicize the issue and make people aware of the existence of these facilities. I saw several advertisements on television during my short stays in St. Petersburg and Nizhni Novgorod. In St. Petersburg the local hot line organization staged a demonstration, followed by a press conference. During the demonstration activists asked passersby on Nevsky Prospect, the city's key thoroughfare, to sign a placard with the slogan "There Is No Excuse for Domestic Violence." In the end, however, the campaign against domestic violence has been able to enlist traditional women's activists largely because their activities correspond to the earlier social welfare function of the

zhensovety and other Soviet-era social organizations: helping families in crisis without necessarily challenging traditional conceptions of gender. Indeed, some regional activists who belong to the Association of Crisis Centers do not even understand, much less adhere to, the feminist ideals espoused by the leadership of that association.[99]

The women's organization that has reached outmost successfully to Russian society has been the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers. Like the crisis centers, the committee offers services that tangibly improve women's lives. Unlike the feminist approach to domestic violence, the committee's does not seek to transform society; indeed, the assumption that mothers should put themselves on the line in the interest of their sons conforms well with traditional views of Russian femininity. Yet two active feminists with sons told me that the committee's work affected them more deeply on a practical level than anything the feminist organizations have done. The committee's offices in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Nizhni Novgorod have long lines of petitioners waiting for advice, and weekly open meetings are well attended.

The experience of the committee also offers a sobering lesson about the influence of Western assistance on civil society. The committee pursued a much more aggressive strategy of public demonstrations before 1997, when it received relatively little funding from the United States and Western Europe. Since then, the mothers have held fewer public demonstrations and concentrated more of their resources on individual cases and engaging in public advocacy through conventional channels. This shift resulted in large part from a split within the organization's leadership, precipitated in part by an infusion of money that the organization received as a result of being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. In addition, the organization's opposition to the second war in Chechnya has been less popular than its opposition during the first war. However, at least one member of the organization maintained that a strategy of public demonstrations became less advisable once the organization began receiving substantial assistance from the West, because such support would leave the group vulnerable to the charge that it was a paid agent of a foreign power.[100]

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS

Western assistance to women's organizations has been a mixed blessing for the construction of civil society in Russia. The entire endeavor is built on a contradiction. To serve as a bulwark of democracy, civil society must be embedded within the formal and informal institutions of Russian society. Western assistance can reach only a fraction of the formally registered organizations and runs the risk of drawing these organizations away from their domestic roots and embedding them instead in a network of international NGOs and third-sector professionals. In selecting feminist organizations over other women's organizations,

donors have compounded the problem by assisting organizations whose goals from the beginning were more firmly based in this transnational network than in Russian society.

Does it make sense, then, for assistance agencies to continue funding feminist organizations? I argue that it does. First, the mission of the women's international NGOs and the foundations is not limited to building civil society but also promotes women's rights. This is a laudable goal that only the feminist organizations pursue vigorously. Second, their links to the transnational movement have given them independence from the state in a society where state structures (or their ruins) still dominate. Funding feminist organizations creates an alternative space for women's activism that some of the other, more traditional organizations can also use. Finally, the skilled professionals within the modern Russian feminist movement represent a valuable reservoir of human resources that can serve the third sector more broadly and may engage in other forms of public service.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The strategy of creating strong central organizations to help connect and coordinate the work of regional organizations has generally succeeded in sustaining the movement in a difficult environment. The ability of independent feminist organizations to reach out to activists among the formerly "official" organizations is particularly valuable. Even though such connections may reflect utilitarian calculations rather than ideological commitment, these initial contacts provide a necessary first step toward substantive cooperation. Whatever their motivations, former teachers of Marxism-Leninism are now writing articles about women's experience during the transition; former trade union officials have established a hot line against domestic abuse in Nizhni Novgorod; and former members of the *zhensovety* are attending conferences and meetings where they can talk to feminists. These institutional connections between Moscow and the periphery have caused the independent Moscow activists to take a more active interest in organizations that have roots in domestic institutions and ideologies while providing some traditional activists with a new language (which they may accept at least "half and half") and material resources with which to press their activities more independently of the state.

On the other hand, the tendency of such grants to concentrate power both within organizations and within the movement as a whole is worrisome. Rather than promote the norms and habits of mutual trust, tolerance, and compromise, such centralization fosters distrust and resentment even as it reinforces the hierarchical practices of the Soviet period. To avoid the concentration of power within organizations, assistance agencies should encourage greater initiative and wider participation in the decision making of grantees, even at the cost of

efficiency. The experience of the pilot project by the East-West European Network for retraining unemployed women demonstrates the advantages of such an approach. Rather than asking one person to decide how the money should be distributed, the donors asked the women themselves to decide who should get what. Although this process caused some unpleasantness and even led a few people to leave the project, I interviewed two activists who had participated in the project and who maintained that such discussions increased participants' stake in the organization's success.[101]

Western assistance agencies could also take steps to avoid creating hierarchy and mistrust within the movement as a whole. Funding umbrella organizations like the Consortium of Russian Women's Non-Governmental Organizations remains essential, but donors should insist upon decision-making procedures that encourage participation and accountability to constituent organizations. They should also complement large grants to resource centers with seed grants to smaller organizations. Finally, supporting women activists' access to the Internet will give them the opportunity to gain information without having to rely on a few organizations in the center. (However, because many organizations still do not have access to the Internet, donors should not neglect more traditional means of communication.)

Western donors should also design their grants in ways that could foster the positive externalities, the intangible and unquantifiable results that contribute to a stronger civil society. First, grants should encourage innovative thinking about how to solve problems rather than blinkered efficiencies in meeting targets. In this respect long-term multidimensional grants are preferable to short-term grants designed to implement specific projects. When unidimensional grants are necessary, donors should allow grantees as much flexibility as possible in choosing their methods and rely on qualitative rather than quantitative methods of evaluation. Finally, Western donors should allow Russian activists a greater role in identifying priorities and evaluating results. When Western donors do push their own issues, they should remain as consistent as possible and resist the temptation to embrace new priorities simply because they are fashionable.

Similarly, the training sessions provided by Western donors have proved effective at creating skilled professionals but may have had the unintended consequence of distancing the NGO community from the rest of society. Donors should encourage recent trends in training that emphasize imaginative problem solving within a specifically Russian context.[102] A model might be the project of Peace Corps volunteers in Nizhni Novgorod who set up an NGO incubator. It provided local NGO leaders with a small stipend to enroll in intensive hands-on training during which they were expected to accomplish a number of practical tasks for their organizations. By the end NGO leaders had found a number of ingenious methods of raising money from local business and government officials.

Finally, infrastructure grants should try to foster informal connections between activists and between the activists and other Russian women. Sponsoring conferences is a valuable way to introduce activists to each other, but longer exchanges and summer schools are more effective at fostering the informal networks that would extend beyond utilitarian calculation. Similarly, unidimensional grants should not evaluate projects by examining how many different regions a particular grantee has visited but by looking more closely at how the grantee followed up on these visits.

PUBLIC ADVOCACY

Western assistance in the area of public advocacy has helped independent women's organizations make persistent and effective use of the points of access opened by formerly "official" activists. Such assistance has helped activists familiarize policy makers with such concepts as gender discrimination and domestic abuse, which may shape public discourse in future policy debates.

Beyond that, public advocacy has not accomplished much. The gains that women's organizations have made are largely symbolic: At best, they persuade the government to endorse abstract slogans such as "the elimination of discrimination," but these are divorced from the practical realities facing Russian women today. Moreover, existing strategies cannot mobilize the public support necessary to make the government accountable; these strategies focus on government institutions that most people reasonably distrust and offer only the prospect of long-term benefits when most Russians live in short-term time frames.

One exception has been the efforts to work with local police to enforce existing laws on domestic abuse and trafficking in women for prostitution. Such a strategy promotes concrete, observable, immediate improvements that may encourage greater public trust, both in local police and in NGOs.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Western assistance has failed most significantly in encouraging Russian women's organizations to reach outside the NGO community to the larger Russian society. Western donors have been most successful in this regard when they have funded activities that built upon existing norms and networks within the activist community and the wider society. In addition, the relative success of the crisis centers suggests that even ideas originating outside Russia may find a receptive audience if they offer tangible, observable improvements in women's lives.

In sum, Western assistance was vital to sustaining a small public realm where women activists could participate in public life independent of the state. This

remains true even under the Putin regime, as women's organizations remain almost untouched by pressures placed on environmental and human rights activists.[103]

I have argued here that Western donors might enlarge this realm if they devoted somewhat less attention to the formal aspects of the third sector and more to the informal aspects of organizational life that sustain a movement. In particular, they should examine existing practices that unnecessarily restrict access to Western assistance to a relatively small group of activists, focus activists' attention on organizational administration rather than on outreach to the community, and lead to the pursuit of priorities that do not reflect the perceived needs of Russian women. Fortunately, as donors have acquired more experience in Russia, they have altered their practices somewhat. The new emphases on creating links to more service-oriented organizations in the regions and the introduction of problem-solving approaches to NGO training are significant improvements. The strategies adopted since 1998 by the Ford Foundation and the Network Women's Program of the Open Society Institute also offer cause for hope. Both foundations are trying to integrate a gender lens into all their programs, which may alleviate somewhat the isolating effect that Western assistance has had on overtly feminist organizations. The shift in the Ford Foundation's emphasis toward projects like microfinance and the campaign against domestic violence, which offer clients short-term tangible benefits, has a good chance of bringing more women into the public sphere and overcoming the isolation of Russia's feminists. Similarly, by complementing its support of resource centers with small grants delivered to many organizations, the Network Women's Program will allow additional voices to be heard within the Russian feminist movement, perhaps giving rise to a feminist philosophy that depends less on Western theoretical frameworks and reflects more the experience of Russian women. The program's emphasis on the economic and social problems that pervade Russian women's everyday experience also gives room for hope.

NOTES

1. N. I. Abubirikova, T. A. Klimenkova, E. V. Kochkina, and M. A. Regentova, "Zhenskie organizatsii v Rossii segodnya" (Women's Organizations in Russia Today), in N. I. Abubirikova et al., eds., *Spravochnik: Zhenskie Nepravitel'stvennye organizatsii Rossii I SNG* (Directory of Women's Nongovernmental Organizations in Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States) (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Eslan," 1998), p. 17.

2. Julia Zelikova, "Women's Participation in Charity," in Anna Rotkirch and Elina Haavio-Mannila, eds., *Women's Voices in Russia Today* (Hants, U.K: Dartmouth, 1996), p. 248.

3. Valerie Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia: Engendering Transition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 222–27.

4. Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 86–92.

5. Norman Uphoff, "Why NGOs Are Not a Third Sector: A Sectoral Analysis with Some Thoughts on Accountability, Sustainability, and Evaluation," in Michael Edwards and David Hulme, eds., *Beyond the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post–Cold War World* (West Hartford, Conn.: Kumarian Press, 1996), p. 33. Also see Edwards and Hulme's introduction.

6. A copy of the charter and its signatories can be found in the Movement of Russian Women's newspaper, *Zhenshchina Rossii* (Women of Russia), April 1997, p. 4.

7. The directory is Abubirikova et al., *Spravochnik*.

8. See James Richter, "Promoting Civil Society? Democracy Assistance and Russian Women's Organizations," *Problems of Postcommunism* (forthcoming).

9. Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia*; Rotkirch and Haavio-Mannila, *Women's Voices in Russia Today*; Mary Buckley, ed., *Post-Soviet Women: From the Baltic to Central Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Linda Racciopi and Katherine O'Sullivan See, *Women's Activism in Contemporary Russia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997); Julie Hemment, "Gendered Violence in Crisis: Russian NGOs Help Themselves to Liberal Feminist Discourses," *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, Spring 1999, http://www.depaul.edu/~rrotenbe/aeer/v17n1/Hemment.pdf (October 25, 2001). More recent literature includes Rebecca Kay, *Russian Women and Their Organizations: Gender, Discrimination, and Grassroots Women's Organizations, 1991–1996* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000); Julie Dawn Hemment, "Gender, NGOs, and the Third Sector in Russia: An Ethnography of Postsocialist Civil Society" (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 2000).

10. Yelena Kochkina, "Context for the Development and Results of Activities, 1998–2000" (unpublished report of the Network Women's Program of the Open Society Institute, Moscow, 2001), p. 3.

11. USAID/Russia Democracy Gender Program, Annual Program Statement, July 16, 2001, http://www.usaid.gov/procurement_bus_opp/procurement/annual_pstatements/gender.html (July 30, 2001).

12. I am studying the effect of Ford's new strategies on the Russian women's movement as part of my larger ongoing study tentatively entitled, "Power and Principle: Transnational Advocacy Networks and Russian Activism."

13. This number excludes about 100,000 religious groups, political parties, consumer cooperatives, and professional unions that fall under different legislation. See Paul Legendre, *The Nonprofit Sector in Russia* (Kent, U.K.: Charities Aid Foundation, 1997). My thanks to Lisa Petter for drawing this study to my attention.

14. M. Steven Fish, *Democracy from Scratch* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 61–65.

15. A good discussion of the crisis in the environmental movement appears in Sergei Fomichev, *Raznotsvetnye zelyonye* (Multicolored Greens) (Moscow–Nizhni Novgorod: Izdatel'stvo TsODP SoES–Izdatel'stvo "Tretii put'," 1997).

16. Svetlana Aivazova, long-time activist, interview by author, Moscow, May 14, 1998.

17. Yuri Dzhibladze, "Russian NGOs Fight for Fair Taxation," *Give & Take* 2, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 4–5.

18. Raccioppi and See, *Women's Activism in Contemporary Russia*, p. 144.

19. An excellent discussion of the economic status of women in the Soviet and post-Soviet eras appears in Sue Bridger, Rebecca Kay, and Kathryn Pinnick, *No More Heroines: Russia, Women and the Market* (London: Routledge, 1996). See also Zoya Khotkina, "Women in the Labor Market: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," in Anastasia Posadskaya, ed., *Women in Russia: A New Era in Russian Feminism*, pp. 85–108 (London: Verso, 1994).

20. See Genia Browning, "The *Zhensovety* Revisited," in Mary Buckley, ed., *Perestroika and Soviet Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 99; Mary Buckley, *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989).

21. Browning, "*Zhensovety* Revisited," pp. 106–9.

22. Accounts of the Union of Russian Women can be found in Raccioppi and See, *Women's Activism in Contemporary Russia*, 72–106; and Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia*, pp. 32–33, 37–38, and 111.

23. Aivazova interview.

24. The literature discussing the rejection of feminism in Russia and the rest of Eastern Europe is voluminous. Some of the best discussions appear in Nanette Funk and Magda Mueller, eds., *Gender Politics and Postcommunism* (New York: Routledge, 1993); and Beth Holmgren, "Bug Inspectors and Beauty Queens: The Problems of Translating Feminism into Russian," in Ellen E. Berry, ed., *Postcommunism and the Body Politic*, pp. 18–20 (New York: New York University Press, 1995).

25. Tatianna Klimenkova, activist and scholar at MCGS, interview by author, Moscow, May 12, 1998; Marina Liborakina, long-time NGO activist, interview by author, Moscow, May 19, 1998; Galina Venediktova, women's NGO activist with the Network of East-West Women and Women, Law, and Development, interview by author, Moscow, May 19, 1998.

26. More detailed accounts of MCGS appear in Raccioppi and See, *Women's Activism in Contemporary Russia*, pp. 127–49, and Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia*.

27. Abubirikova et al., "Zhenskie organizatsii v Rossii segodnya," p. 17.

28. Zelikova, "Women's Participation in Charity," pp. 251–53.

29. Olga Lipovskaya, "Women's Groups in Russia," in Buckley, *Post-Soviet Women*, p. 191.

30. See also the chapters by Karen Ballantine and Patrice McMahon in this volume.

31. Chris Kedzie, program director, Ford Foundation, personal e-mail, July 27, 1998; and Kochkina, "Context for the Development and Results of Activities," p. 9.

32. Consortium of Women's Non-Governmental Organizations, n.d., http://www.wcons.org.ru/about/about.en.shtml (July 9, 2001).

33. Mary MacAuley, speech to conference of the Association of Crisis Centers, Moscow, May 21, 1998.

34. Moscow Office of the Ford Foundation, 2000, http://www.fordfound.org/global/office/index.cfm?office = Moscow (June 14, 2001); also Chris Kedzie, personal e-mail, June 22, 2001.

35. Natalya Abubirikova and Maria Regentova, unpublished, untitled manuscript, 1996.

36. More detailed accounts of MCGS appear in Raccioppi and See, *Women's Activism in Contemporary Russia*, pp. 127–49; and Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia*.

37. Frauenanstiftung (The Women's Foundation), "FAS—The Women's Foundation," 1996, http://www.owl.ru/eng/zhif/fas-mirr.htm (October 26, 1998).

38. Galina Grishina, women's NGO activist, interview by author, Moscow, May 8, 1998.

39. Kochkina, "Context for the Development and Results of Activities," p. 9.

40. Bernadine Joselyn, program officer, Eurasia Foundation, interview by author, May 27, 1998; Irina Pirugova, public relations representative, Initiative for Social Action and Renewal, interview by author, May 25, 1998.

41. Kochkina, "Context for the Development and Results of Activities," pp. 14–15.

42. Network of East-West Women, "Organizational History and Program," http://www.inch.com/~shebar/neww/neww1.htm (October 22, 2001).

43. Yelena Kochkina, "Conceptions for 2001" (unpublished report of the Network Women's Program of the Open Society Institute, 2001), p. 2.

44. From October 1995 through May 2000 the International Center for Research on Women and the Centre for Development and Population Activities in Washington, D.C., co-managed a grants program called Promoting Women in Development (PROWID), which was funded by USAID's Office of Women in Development. PROWID sought to improve the lives of women in developing countries and in economies in transition. Its Web site address is http://www.icrw.org/prowid.htm (November 8, 2001).

45. Yelena Kochkina, long-time activist, interview by author, Moscow, May 6, 1998.

46. Lyudmila Yermakova, crisis center activist, interview by author, Yekaterinburg, June 15, 1999.

47. Galina Ustinova, program director, MacArthur Foundation, interview by author, May 19, 1998.

48. Marina Pisklakova, founder of first Russian hot line, interview by author, Moscow, May 27, 1998.

49. Lyusa Kabanova, Russian activist for the East-West European Network, interview by author, Moscow, May 17, 1998.

50. Sarah Henderson, "Importing Civil Society: Western Funding and the Women's Movement in Russia," *Demokratizatsiya* 8, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 65–82.

51. Valentina Konstantinova, activist and scholar at MCGS, interview by author, Moscow, May 15, 1998; Irina Yurna, NGO activist, interview by author, Moscow, May 18, 1998; Yevgeniya Verba, director, NGO resource center, interview by author, Nizhni Novgorod, May 29, 1998.

52. Olga Lipovskaya, author, interview by author, St. Petersburg, June 7, 1998.

53. Anonymous women's NGO activists, interviews by author, Moscow, May 1998.

54. Kochkina, "Conceptions for 2001," p. 5.

55. Richter, "Promoting Civil Society?"

56. Yuliya Zhukova, women's NGO activist, interview by author, St. Petersburg, June 7, 1998; Rosa Khatskelevich, director, NGO resource center, interview by author, St. Petersburg, June 1998. For other accounts of how changing priorities have caused organizations to overextend themselves, see Henderson, "Importing Civil Society"; Aleksander Borovikh, "'Zver' po imeni URTs" (The Beast by the Name of URC [Universal Resource Center]), *Den'gi i blagotvoritel'nost'*, no. 17 (October 1997): 16–17.

57. Bernadine Joselyn, program officer, Eurasia Foundation, interview by author, Moscow, May 26, 1998.

58. Anonymous NGO woman NGO activist, interview by author, Moscow; Joselyn interview.

59. Konstantinova interview; anonymous NGO woman interview. Also see Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia*, 234–36, and Kay, *Russian Women and Their Organizations*, 202–6.

60. Anonymous woman activist, interview by author, St. Petersburg, June 1998.

61. Abubirikova and Regentova, untitled ms.; Konstantinova interview; Zhukova interview; I would add, however, that organizational splits because of resources are also common among organizations that receive less money from Western organizations, such as the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers and the Green Party in St. Petersburg.

62. Abubirikova and Regentova, untitled ms., p. 14.

63. Yurna interview.

64. Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia*, chap. 7. Also see *Vestnik Zhenskogo Informatsionno-obrazovatel'nogo proekta* (Newsletter of the Women's Informational-Educational Project), no. 5 (1996): 1–5.

65. Consortium of Women's Non-Governmental Organizations, "Consortium of Women's Non-Governmental Organizations: About," 1999, http://www.wcons.org.ru/about/about.en.shtml (June 29, 2001).

66. Despite reservations about the centralization of the Consortium of Russian Women, for example, almost all the activists whom I interviewed noted that their interactions with the organization had been positive. This observation fits with Thomas Carothers's discussion of the positive implications of the shift toward "going local" in democracy assistance during the late 1990s. See his *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999), pp. 227–31.

67. Yelena Yershova, director of the Women's Consortium, interview by author, Moscow, May 18, 1998; Tatianna Troinova, women's NGO activist, interview by author, May 22, 1998.

68. Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia*, chap. 7, presents the skeptics' arguments in detail.

69. Galina Kondratenko, director of a children's home and domestic violence hot line, interview by author, May 28, 1998.

70. Women's NGO activists, interviews by author, Ivanovo, June 1996, Nizhni Novgorod, May 28, 1998, and St. Petersburg, June 1998. Also see Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia*, chap. 7; and Kay, *Russian Women and Their Organizations*, pp. 194–206.

71. Interviews of Women's NGO activists, Moscow, May 1998, and St. Petersburg, June 1998. A similar argument is found in Kay, *Russian Women and Their Organizations*, pp. 196–206.

72. Abubirikova and Regentova, untitled ms., p. 24.

73. Interviews of anonymous women NGO activists, Moscow, May 1998, and St. Petersburg, June 1998.

74. Elvira Novikova, long-time women's NGO activist, interview by author, Moscow, May 6, 1998.

75. Natalya Bychkova, women's NGO activist, interview by author, Moscow, May 19, 1998.

76. Aivazova interview; Grishina interview; Zoya Khotkina, author, interview by author, Moscow, May 26, 1998.

77. Sarah Henderson, "Fostering Women's Activism in the Regions: Ford Foundation and the Women's Movement" (paper prepared for the annual conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, St. Louis, Mo., November 18–21, 1999), pp. 18–24.

78. Larisa Fedorova, women's NGO activist, interview by author, Moscow, May 5, 1998; Novikova interview; Natalya Berezhnaya, activist and long-time diplomat, interview by author, Moscow, May 14, 1998.

79. Anonymous women's NGO activist interview, St. Petersburg, June 1998.

80. My thanks to Valerie Sperling for this information.

81. Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia*, chap. 4.

82. Olga Voronina, MCGS director, interview by author, Moscow, May 13, 1998; Yershova interview. Several other activists also made this same claim.

83. An excellent discussion of the women's movement's access to political organizations appears in Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia*, chap. 4.

84. Information Center, Independent Women's Center, "Polozhenie zhenshchin i Natsional'nyi mekhanism: Pozitsiya zhenskikh ne pravitel'stvennykh organizatsii" (The Situation of Women in the National Mechanism: The Position of Women's Nongovernmental Organizations) (paper prepared for the conference Paths to Realizing the Peking Platform of Action on the Status of Women, November 1996).

85. Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia*, chap. 7.

86. Fedorova interview, Moscow, May 15, 1998; Klimenkova interview; Liborakina interview.

87. Information Center, "Polozhenie zhenshchin i Natsional'nyi mekhanism."

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.

90. Abubirikova and Regentova, untitled ms., p. 14. Also see Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia*, chap. 7.

91. It is conceivable that even the women's movement's access to the political process has diminished under the Putin presidency, which has been the experience of other sectors of the Russian NGO community. In two quick visits to Russia since Putin came to power, however, I heard few complaints about his policies toward feminist organizations.

92. Yershova interview.

93. Liborakina interview.

94. Yershova interview.

95. Natalya Abubirikova, author and activist, interview by author, Moscow, May 8, 1998; Nadezhda Azhgikina, journalist and activist, interview by author, Moscow, May 15, 1998.

96. Sergei Fomichev, "Yeshcho raz k voprosu o krizise" (Once More on the Question of Crisis)," *Tretii put'*, no. 29 (1993): 6.

97. This change in donors' strategies was not confined to postcommunist countries. See Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad*, pp. 227–31.

98. Zoya Khotkina, "Gender Research in Russia and the NIS: Who Is Who?" 2000, http://www.owl.ru/win/books/dbras_who_is_who (October 23, 2001).

99. Hemment, "Gendered Violence in Crisis."

100. Anonymous activist, Committee of Soldiers' Mothers, interview by author, Nizhni Novgorod, June 1, 2001. My thanks to Sarah Mendelson and Valerie Sperling, who were also at this interview and asked the right questions.

101. Kabanova interview; Bychkova interview.

102. Thomas Carothers notes that such pedagogical methods have become increasingly common in recent years as a result of the learning curve. See his *Aiding Democracy Abroad*, pp. 231–35.

103. See Sarah E. Mendelson, "The Putin Path: Civil Liberties and Human Rights in Retreat," *Problems of Postcommunism* 47, no. 5 (September–October 2000): 3–12.