

The ICA in Russia

A report of the September, 1992 and March/April, 1993 visits

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Introduction

Since the late 1960s, when the ICA “gridded” the world to create a graphic picture of nine geo-social continents, China and the former Soviet Union have been places we dreamed about and “prayed” about, but could hardly imagine serving. Now, everything is new. What was unimaginable a few years ago is happening. Members of our network have traveled to Russia and China, making friends, exploring the cultures, and beginning to establish working relationships for the future.

This report is the first of many annual celebrations of the ICA network’s service in the Russian-speaking world. Its purpose is to share news of our work in Russia during the past year and to provoke dialogue about how more ICA colleagues might participate in the vast human revolution which is shaping both Russian society and the lives of people around the world who have become friends of Russia.

How did we get into Russia?

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, with Michael Gorbachev emerging as a hero in the west and *glasnost* and *perestroyka* (openness and structural reformulation) entering the English vocabulary as useful handles on global phenomena, many of us began to pay attention to Russia with new eyes. Stan Crow traveled to an education conference in Moscow, Bob and Muriel Griffin developed connections with Russians. In my work with the Spring Institute in Denver, I met and befriended many Russian refugees. I suspect that many other members of our network have traveled in Russia without our being aware.

I met Dr. Laura Dodson at the Jean Houston Mystery School in Colorado during the spring of 1991 and discovered a practical opportunity for spending two weeks in Russia during August, 1991. Dr. Dodson has been the American catalyst for an important network of American and Russian psychologists, educators and business people interested in professional development and joint Russian-American service in the former Soviet Union. The 1991 “Family Camp”—a week-long cross-cultural conference on family and social health near Moscow which Laura and her Russian colleagues organized—was where I met Alexey Kuzmin and other leaders of Russia’s growing organizational development community.

The full story of this encounter before and during the attempted coup is best left for informal story

telling over hamburgers and beer. I led a brief demonstration of the ICA discussion and workshop methods. Alexey Kuzmin was my translator. When we shared tea and biscuits in his room that evening, we knew an important friendship was beginning. It was not until we were exchanging faxes and our vita early in 1992 that we discovered that we were both born on November 12. It suffices to say here that by a wondrous historical synchronicity, Alexey and I became sufficiently acquainted to know that we wanted to work together in Russia.

This friendship and professional acquaintance led to Alexey’s invitation to come to Russia after the Prague Conference in September, 1992, to demonstrate the ICA’s strategic planning process in Moscow and to help lead a strategic planning workshop in the city of Nefteyougansk in Siberia.

It is important to note that during this same period, Vaughn O’Halloran has been developing a relationship with another organizational development consultant from Moscow, Alexey Morozov, and Tim Karpoff has been working on a degree in Regional Planning and Policy Formation at the University of New Mexico with an eye to doing consulting work in Russia in the future.

What have we accomplished?

Alexey Kuzmin founded his own consulting company with several trusted colleagues last year. They call their firm *Process Consulting Company*—PCC (“Компания Процесс Консалтинг”). The ICA presence in Russia is an evolving strategic partnership with this new professional firm. It has been a collaboration from the start, i.e., a joint labor in which unfolding events influence each partner equally. I have shared the ICA *Technology of Participation* with Alexey and his team and they have used our methods extensively and effectively with their clients. In return, the ICA is carefully developing a public profile and obtaining a priceless cultural orientation to the Russian-speaking world. We are developing a scheme for mentoring and certifying the PCC team as *TOP* trainers.

One of the strong recommendations from Russian participants in the Family Camp in August, 1991, was the admonition to develop small, simple projects, rather than large, complex projects together. Alexey and I have taken this counsel to heart. The following paragraphs briefly describe our projects to date.

During September, 1992, Jean Watts joined me in

leading the first two sessions of the *Basic Group Facilitation Methods* workshop for 20 organization development consultants in Moscow. We also led a strategic planning workshop for Alexey and the members of his Nefteyugansk project team. Alexey and I then spent a week in Siberia, co-leading strategic planning workshops with the Nefteyugansk city Council of Deputies and a group of professional workers concerned with preventing juvenile delinquency. Participants were very affirmative of our leadership but struggled to create concrete follow-up actions for themselves.

Alexey and his colleagues have a long-term contract to help city leaders develop a counseling service to address the emotional and developmental issues of the city's children, youth, and families and the experience materially supported his consultancy with the city. Early in 1993, the Superintendent of Schools requested that Alexey and I work jointly to organize a consultation with the school district for August, 1993, with international participation.

The strong reception given both the Facilitator Methods training and the strategic planning work in Siberia prompted Alexey and me to begin making plans for a facilitator methods training school to be held early in 1993. At a national conference for workers in the social services held in Moscow in January, 1993, however, Alexey's presentation of our work in Nefteyugansk produced interest in two new projects which demanded immediate attention. A woman from the Republic of Tuva (just north of Mongolia and west of Lake Baikal) asked Alexey to lead a strategic planning workshop for officials from the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Defense in the capital city of Kyzyl. Another participant in the January conference, the Director General of the Russian Association of Social Service Workers, asked Alexey to develop a training school for people managing social service projects. These two requests became the agenda of my second visit and the management school was the occasion for inviting Sheryl Nordin-Caruso to join us as a working manager from a human service agency in the U.S.

I began a six-week visit in Moscow March 2nd, and Alexey and I worked in Tuva from March 15 to 19, 1993. 25 republic-wide ministry officials and city leaders attended a three day strategic planning workshop focusing on a social development strategy for the capital city of Kyzyl. Alexey had led several strategic planning workshops with business clients since my

fall, 1992 visit, and I was deeply impressed with his skill and finesse. He was a gifted facilitator before we met and had already begun to make astute modifications and additions to our approach to suit his clients' needs.

The workshop in Tuva went very well and the group developed several practical action plans for follow-up. They expressed their deepest appreciation, however, for the experience of a joint Russian-American leadership team. In negotiations with the Mayor and Ministry officials before we left, plans were made for Alexey to continue a consulting relationship in order to help the city organize a counseling center that can develop, in time, into a consulting service for the Republic. Alexey and I reflected with our local contacts that the Republic of Tuva might be a perfect demonstration site for the use of *Technologies of Participation* to prevent inter-ethnic, e.g., Russian-Tuvenian, conflict.

During the final week of my stay in Moscow, Sheryl Nordin-Caruso joined our team to lead a school for social service managers (Школа Менеджеров Социальных Служб). Alexey and his team had developed a model for a five day training school built around a demonstration of the ICA's strategic planning process. We planned to introduce people to participatory process as an effective tool for defining an organization's mission and for needs analysis on Monday, demonstrate the vision, contradiction, strategy and implementation workshops on Tuesday and Wednesday, give participants tools for budgeting and marketing, and present several case studies on Thursday, and hear reports on planned follow-up projects on Friday.

45 people from 29 cities in the Russian Federation attended the school which was held in a Ministry of Social Defense training center near Moscow. Most were government employees with responsibility for programs for the elderly, handicapped, youth, or other socially disadvantaged citizens. Participants paid 40,000 rubles for the school, usually from their departmental budgets, the equivalent of over two months salary for a well paid professional worker in Russia today. Many of the participants were quite startled by the participatory approach to learning; some were offended at first. Several participants struggled to participate creatively in the demonstration workshops. Others were thrilled from the outset. Sheryl Caruso's presentation of her use of the ICA strategic planning process in her work and her presentation of a sample

budget were turning points for participants' serious acknowledgement of participatory process as a practical tool for their own use.

By the end of the week, the participants reflected that the school had been a stunning success. Many described their journey from skepticism to exhilaration. We had watched the participants come alive, making a transition from being withdrawn, sullen or offended on Monday to delighted, with bright eyes and enthusiastic laughter and creative work by Thursday and Friday. Several expressed gratitude for a rebirth of hope (*"I got new ideas and thoughts, an explosion of desire to work."*), appreciation for an exciting new *"system of education"* (*"I was surprised the first day, then astounded."*), and pride in the leadership of a Russian team working with Americans (*"I'm proud of my country."*) Everyone expressed gratitude for what they had learned: *"...very useful to use such approaches."* *"We got new tools."* *"I didn't know anything before this course; I'll use everything. Thank you."*

Speaking to the group during the final reflection, Natalia Mumladze, Director of Training Programs for the Association said, *"I'm very grateful you all came. I hoped the team would change the way you think. I wanted to watch Oleg; he was the most skeptical. Now our wings work and Oleg is satisfied."* Just after these remarks, Sheryl was made the first foreign member of the Russian Association of Social Service Workers.

The 45 graduates of the School for Social Service Managers have a very tough journey ahead, but participants from at least two cities have asked Alexey for continuing assistance in their work. Both cities are in the region around Nefteyugansk. As other professional associations vie for recognition as leaders in the emerging social work profession in Russia, we see a unique place for this training event, which focuses on management skill development versus professional skill development related to social work. Alexey will market the school with organizations throughout Russia.

What does it mean?

In the context of a society in profound chaos, meaning is a subjective, short-term judgment and the question of the long-range significance and implications of our work in Russia to date deserves the reflection of a much broader sampling of the ICA international network. But several relatively objective comments are possible.

The ICA has a reliable strategic partner in the professional firm Process Consulting Company, i.e., a team with which we share mutual values and with which many of us can work for years to come. Alexey and his team are scrupulously honest, meticulous in handling details of cooperation, and effective communicators. Alexey speaks English fluently, as does the PCC Secretary, Nadia Terentyeva. We have a network of excellent translators in Moscow and Tuva with whom we work. The *Basic Group Facilitation Methods* trainers manual has been translated into Russian, as has Ken Whitney's article, *The Human Factor in Strategic Planning*. We anticipate creating a model agreement for licensing PCC as our certified Russian partner for training in *Technologies of Participation*.

We have created a mutually profitable relationship between the ICA and a Russian consulting firm. Alexey and his colleagues have decided to invest a great deal of time in our strategic collaboration for the value that it adds to their emerging professional practice. My local expenses have been paid and I have received a substantial salary in rubles both times I worked with Alexey. The ICA network has invested several thousands of dollars to reimburse my travel and expenses. Jean Watts and Sheryl Caruso have invested in both travel and in volunteer time in Russia.

A key result of the "fast track" approach to technology transfer which Alexey and I created last September is the use of the ICA strategic planning process in two major Russian companies, Premorsky Sugar, Issuryrsk, and Zostro Corporation, Moscow. These two cases will be presented in the forthcoming book *Participation Works: Business Cases From Around the World*. Alexey and I hope that this growing track record of private sector facilitation and organizational development will make it possible to market our services to multinational firms doing business in Russia. Within the ruble economy, we have a win-win partnership that is helping us to build a strategic track record which can attract projects paying hard currency necessary in the global economy.

A second result of the use of ICA *Technologies of Participation* by Russian consultants is the continuing request by new clients for use of participatory approaches, for ongoing consulting by PCC staff, and additional joint programs with ICA colleagues from outside Russia. Our participatory approaches to training and planning lend themselves to effective joint work by bilingual/bicultural teams and Russian program participants are as impacted by this cooperative



Negotiating future consulting with Ministry staff in the Republic of Tuva



Sheryl Caruso presents a model budget in the Social Services Management School



Our Process Consulting Company colleagues in Moscow



Strategic planning with the PCC team in September, 1992



Alexey leads a workshop with Nefteyugansk Council of Deputies



We will work with Nefteyugansk's principals in August, 1993

approach as they are by the methods themselves or the presence of foreigners. In short, our methods help the Russian people with whom we have worked to address a nagging internal contradiction, i.e., the feeling that they can not do something right on their own and a simultaneous resentment of any foreign intervention on their behalf. The result is pride in themselves and genuine gratitude for tools they can use to move forward on their own terms.

One consequence of all this activity is a carefully emerging presence of the ICA in Russia, in the form of joint Russian-American leadership teams and during this most recent visit, the use of the ICA name and logo on certificates of participation for the program in Tuva (in collaboration with PCC) and the management school in Moscow (in collaboration with PCC and the Russian Association of Social Service Workers).

In the process, we have demonstrated the value of short-term engagement by members of the global ICA network. Because a short-term visit can fit into the strategy of a long-term project led by our Russian partner, it is possible to effectively use a visiting ICA person who is present for as little as three to ten days, e.g., Jean Watt's leadership of a facilitator methods training last fall and Sheryl Caruso's leadership during the social services management school in April, 1993.

A final result of this work and perhaps the consequence of most lasting significance is the establishment of deep friendship and trust. Alexey and his colleagues have met at least three ICA people—David Dunn, Jean Watts, and Sheryl Caruso—and have begun to notice and acknowledge a common posture of openness, honoring, enthusiasm and service. When we sit around the kitchen table after an event, PCC team members often comment, "We couldn't have believed just two years ago that we would be working with American friends." This points to the almost miraculous transformation of attitudes toward foreigners in general and Americans in particular that is taking place among millions of Russians. For all our differences and the horrendous difficulties of life in Russia today, visiting ICA people and their Russian hosts have a profound affinity for each other and many projects in which to make common cause. With careful communication and planning, it will be possible for many more ICA people to visit Moscow and to meet and/or work with our new Russian colleagues.

Next steps and future possibilities

Alexey and his Russian team will continue developing their business, including the use of ICA *Technologies of Participation* with their clients. Major contracts are anticipated with the new contacts in Tuva, and graduates of the management school from Hanti-Manseesk and Tyumen. PCC's revenues are expected to show an increase this year of from 300% to 600% over last year. We will very likely be able to communicate using the EcoNet-GlasNet electronic mail network within a month or so.

Our next major joint project is the consultation with the Nefteyugansk school district, August 15–25, 1993. We hope to take a team of five to ten educators and people interested in education to spend a week in Siberia with teachers and principals from the schools in Nefteyugansk. Two teachers from the Denver area are already committed. The trip, including airfare and sightseeing in Moscow, will cost about \$2,500. Local expenses in Nefteyugansk will be covered by the school district and team members will stay with families in Moscow and Siberia.

Several very striking possibilities for future work seem to have opened because of these first two forays into Russia. There is clearly a market for facilitator methods and a demand for international participation in training teams. We hope to establish a regular schedule of trainings in Moscow and to have at least one international ICA person as a co-trainer each time. We are intrigued with calling this venture the Moscow International Facilitator Methods School and think about inviting facilitative leaders from other organizations to work with us in presenting these trainings.

It has not been lost on Alexey and me that people trained as skilled facilitators will prove to be an invaluable resource for Russian organizations seeking international technical assistance. The presence of a Russian facilitator will materially alter the character of technology transfer, from a foreign intervention to a Russian-guided joint enterprise, an approach which thus has profound cultural and political benefits.

The work in Nefteyugansk has sparked continued interest on the part of officials in the social development of the city. Now, in addition, leaders from neighboring areas are expressing interest as well in the participatory technology being used. The graduates of the Social Services Management School requesting additional consultation and training from Alexey and his team are also from this same area in Siberia, the

Tyumen Oblast. This means that a certain critical mass of experience of participatory technologies is building in this part of Siberia. It is not certain what this means yet, but we will continue to closely watch developments to see what opportunities present themselves for significant demonstration projects and case studies. It is also worth noting that several international oil companies work in this part of Siberia, leading us to think about possible funding for international participation in human development activities in this part of the world.

The work in Tuva is the first at the level of a republic's government in the former Soviet Union and it is the first in a region facing ethnic conflict. This raises the possibility of funding for a demonstration project related to forestalling dysfunctional relations and violence. Tim Karpoff has a contact with the United States Institute for Peace which funds such projects and Tim and I will follow up with a proposal to expand our work with Alexey in Tuva.

The Social Services Management School proved to be a very successful model from several points of view. First, it is a compact program that meets a real need. Second, it is an open training model that can engage almost any visiting person with experience in the social service field. Third, it appears to be unique in its focus on entrepreneurial, strategic management of social service programs. For all of these reasons, it appears to be an extremely important service that should be offered regularly throughout the Russian-speaking world. It is especially interesting to contemplate networking with the other social work organizations in the west whose members are supporting the professional development of Russian colleagues. It would be exciting to jointly develop and organize similar management schools for the other Russian social work organizations emerging as the profession develops in Russia. We note that Nancy Vosler spent time in Moscow this last February, with a program sponsored by one of these other Russian organizations. It might be that shared technologies of participation could speed the process of consolidating the activities of these associations now competing for the loyalty of Russian social work professionals.

There is considerable dissension in Russia today about the proper role of the West in influencing the emerging Russian society. The ICA is uniquely suited to provide opportunities for Russians in business, government and the social services to learn from the experience of colleagues in many non-western nations

as well as from colleagues in Europe and North America. It is quite exciting to contemplate efforts which would help our new Russian colleagues and friends get to Delhi in 1994 and to Nigeria in 1996.

Major Challenges

Several challenges have to be met if this work is to continue in the direction of placing full-time, self-supporting staff in Russia and engaging the international ICA network in projects in Russia.

The first challenge is how to work simultaneously in the ruble economy and the dollar economy. I have been self-supporting within the ruble economy for short periods of time, but it takes a tremendous effort by our Russian colleagues to arrange projects to provide even this level of income. Neither they nor I have developed projects yet that pay in hard currency. The result is a continued reliance on donated funds to cover travel expenses. Depending on how I value my time, I have volunteered services work anywhere from \$4,000 to \$10,000 during the nine weeks I have spent in Russia. The actual accumulated debt, not counting loss of income, amounts to about \$6,000 which I carry on credit cards or as loans from family funds.

The second challenge is how to develop a long-range ICA strategy that takes advantage of our strategic partnership with PCC and the wisdom of the larger network of interested ICA colleagues. It seems like a perfect arena in which to explore new kinds of international cooperation within our own and with other networks. But it is challenging to focus the attention of such a dispersed network on such a distant task. There are two related aspects of this challenge: (1) how can we all use the growing body of experience to encourage and support simultaneous projects in Russia by different members of the ICA network, and, (2) how can we expose members of our Russian network and their clients to the ICA's work and clients in other nations?

The third challenge is how to provide opportunities and funding for deepening the cultural orientation and language capacity of those of us who hope to live and work in Russia. This seems particularly critical because of the growing impatience of Russians with western cultural tyranny and the growing complexity of Russian political and social change.

The fourth challenge is how to harvest the profound insights flowing from the reemergence of the Russian people and from the dialogue which is sparked as Russians and foreigners talk about the future of their

societies and the planet. Russia today is an "X-rated," high energy complex of societies, all exploding with both creative human enterprise and demonic counter forces. Observing these revolutions first hand and participating in the conceptualization of these new societies is one of the most important tasks of the next generation.

Developing a service strategy

It is my deepest hope that many who read about this work in Russia will begin to closely watch our work and look for ways to share in the adventure. I don't think that it is necessary to move to Russia to be of profound service to Russians. I hope that many will visit, tell others about our work, help us introduce ourselves to organizations for whom we can work, and continue to contribute financially to our projects.

Our work in Siberia in August, 1993, is the next specific event to which international guests may contribute. We are looking for educators or people interested in education to work for a week with teachers and principals in Nefteyugansk. The focus question: "How can we create an innovative educational system adequate to the future of our city and nation?" We will be in Russia from about August 15 to 25, 1993. The cost of airfare and related expenses will be about \$2,500.

Sending Tim Karpoff, Vaughn O'Halloran and me articles on Russia and the newly independent states of eastern Europe, greatly multiplies our attention and knowledge. Sending names of contacts and references helps build a database of potentially important connections.

In short, our whole movement can contribute in many ways to recreating Russian society and in the process add to the energy being released in each of the nations from which we come. It is a peculiar historical gift that helping Russians address the challenges in their lives gives life and releases energy in our own lives.

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