



CEV
European Volunteer Center
Centre Européen du Volontariat

“ *the voice of volunteering in europe* ”

Volunteering in Russia

Facts and Figures Report



July 2010

Written by Ivan Ginga

Edited by Katarína Nikodemová

Proofread by Anne Maria Corbett

Acknowledgements

CEV would like to express its gratitude to all who contributed to this report. We thank particularly Galina Bodrenkova (founder and the president of Volunteering Development Center in Russia), Natalia Kim (SFERA), Sanovich Serge (Laboratory for Institutional Analysis of Economic Reforms) and Giovanni Mozzarelli (UNV Programme Officer) for their help with the resources for this report as well as their contributions and remarks.



© CEV – the European Volunteer Centre

10, rue de la Science

1000 Brussels, Belgium

www.cev.be

TABLE OF CONTENT

<u>I. INTRODUCTION</u>	4
<u>II. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT VOLUNTEERING IN RUSSIA</u>	4
1. BASIC FACTS ON VOLUNTEERING	4
2. EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES	6
PRE-COMMUNIST PHASE – ANCIENT ROOTS OF VOLUNTEERING	6
COMMUNIST PHASE – DETERIORATION OF THE ROOTS OF VOLUNTEERING	6
POST-COMMUNIST PHASE – RENAISSANCE OF VOLUNTEERING	7
<u>III. VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE</u>	8
1. LEGAL DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTEERING STATUTE	8
2. STATE SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERING	12
3. ORGANISATION AND PROMOTION OF VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES	13
4. OBSTACLES TO VOLUNTEERING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	15
<u>IV. CONCLUSIONS</u>	17
<u>V. REFERENCES</u>	18
1. PRIMARY RESOURCES	18
2. SECONDARY RESOURCES	19
<u>VI. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</u>	20
<u>VII. USEFUL LINKS</u>	20

I. Introduction

This report is part of the series “Facts and Figures on Volunteering in Europe”, giving an overview of the volunteering landscape in different European countries. The country reports are available at the European Volunteer Centre website (www.cev.be). The research compiles data about the volunteering landscape and specificities of volunteering in Russia.

The aim of this Facts and Figures Report is to provide comprehensive information on and basic understanding of volunteering landscape in the Russian Federation. The report provides an historical development, what has been done so far and what still needs to be achieved in terms of the legislative background as well as the necessary volunteering infrastructure. The report is based on the available statistics on volunteering and information on organising volunteer activities.

The report consists of two main chapters: General information about volunteering in Russia and Volunteering infrastructure. The first chapter will describe basic facts on volunteering and an overview of the evolution of voluntary activities in Russia – providing a contextual background of volunteering. We cannot avoid talking about how voluntary activity evolved during the transition from communism to democracy – a real milestone in its development. The second chapter will present the basic features of the existing volunteering infrastructure including subchapters on legal developments in the volunteering statute, state support and organisation of voluntary activities and indicating obstacles to volunteering and recommendations for improvement.

The sources of information used for this report can be classified into two categories: primary resources (laws, directives, official messages, etc) and secondary resources (articles, personal testimonies, online resources, etc). The report is also based on data from the materials provided by the President of the Volunteering Development Center in Russia Galina Bodrenkova, several draft reports and other documents and materials received from different organisations and people involved in volunteering activities on a daily basis.

II. General information about volunteering in Russia

1. Basic facts on volunteering

Volunteering in Russia is not well measured and reflected in the official statistical data. This problem comes from the lack of tools to measure voluntary activities, actors involved and its development. This subchapter will give a general overview of the facts and figures on Russian volunteering based on the figures and data collected from primary and secondary resources as mentioned and analysed in the introduction and as listed in the references.

According to the Russian Federation President's Message from 2007 to the Federal Assembly and the report of Public Chamber for 2006¹, in Russia there are approximately 8 million volunteers participating in socially significant activities via NGOs. This makes up about 5 % of the population².

Both the research by the Institute of Public Development on the extent of volunteering and the 2000 World Value Survey (WVS) indicates that majority, 4.8 % of respondents (out of 5% as a total number of volunteers in Russia), are volunteering for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)³. In comparison, according to a study done by Russian Public Opinion Research Center in 2004, the distribution of voluntary activities is as follows: no more than 4 % of Russians participated in institutional forms such as political parties, trade unions, public and religious organizations and institutions of local government while the level of public involvement in NGOs activities varied between 1– 2% per decade⁴. The involvement in volunteering was promoted by purposeful efforts of the non-governmental and non-commercial organizations and real support for voluntary efforts over the past few years coming from governmental bodies and local self-management.

In individual cities the situation varies. Professors and students of Higher School of Economics (SU-HSE) studied volunteering in 5 Russian towns. According to their findings, in Rostov town 50% of the population volunteer for CSOs from which 14% are volunteering regularly and 36% rarely⁵. Those who take part in the events organised by non-governmental, non-profit organisations make only 36%. SU-HSE analysis in Skopin city (Ryazan region) showed that 70 % of the town population was and still is volunteering⁶. Here it should be noted that the majority of respondents used to volunteer during the Soviet era. Data provided by this research shows that despite the low number of volunteers in Russia, in some regions we observe a relatively higher number of people involved in voluntary activities⁷.

Taking the above mentioned data into account, as well as some additional facts provided by the Volunteering Development Center in Russia we can conclude that over the last 3-4 years (2006 – 2009), volunteering in Russia became a noticeable social phenomenon to the public and state sectors. Volunteering became more attractive to young people. The overall trend is that volunteering is becoming a more relevant field of activity. There is a gradual increase in recognition of volunteer organizations in the business sector. New trends can be observed with the development of learning service in educational institutions, corporate volunteering, and programs of family volunteering while online volunteering is also becoming more popular.

¹ Annual Address to the Federal Assembly, Public Chamber report 2006, Kremlin, Moscow, 2006, retrieved 21st April 2010, http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2006/05/10/1823_type70029type82912_105566.shtml
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78835.htm>.

² The total population in Russia amounts approximately to 142 million. Population of Russian Federation, retrieved 16th March 2010, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Russia.

³ World Values Survey 1990 Official Data File v.20090906. World Values Survey Association (www.worldvaluessurvey.org) Aggregate File Producer: ASEP/JDS, Madrid.

⁴ Russian Volunteer Development Center on IYV and IYV+10, 22 January 2010, retrieved 26th March 2010, <http://www.iave.org/content/russian-volunteer-development-center-iyv-and-iyv10>.

⁵ Civicus Civil Society Index Report for the Russian Federation 2005, *An assessment of Russian Civil Society*, St. Petersburg Center for Humanities and Political Studies 'Strategy' in collaboration with the Departments of Public Policy of the Moscow State University – Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg, 2006.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

2. Evolution and development of voluntary activities

Evolution of voluntary activities in Russia can be seen through three determinant phases, which ultimately give an overview of how and when volunteering in Russia started and was developed. Taking into consideration that the communist period denoted a real milestone, the evolution of volunteering in Russia can be structured in the following phases:

- Pre-communist phase
- Communist phase
- Post-communist phase

Pre-communist phase – ancient roots of volunteering

Roots of volunteering in Russia date back to the 18th century⁸. Russia's documented history from the court of Catherine the Great, who reigned from 1762 to 1796, provides a strong example of a prominent figure involved at that time in charitable and voluntary activities. Both Catherine the Great and the Empress Maria Fedorovna, who followed her, encouraged philanthropic activity. They founded numerous charitable institutions and started the Russian system of social charity and orphanage.

Volunteering in Russia started to become a recognized activity in the second half of the 19th century⁹. In the 19th century charity organisations served to provide mercy and at the same time expressed a civic stance of democratic intelligence. It is considered an era when voluntary activity started to develop its roots and to search for suitable status as a third sector part of Russian civil society.

For over a century, much of the charity and volunteering activities before the October Revolution in 1917 had a tradition of civic and democratic leanings. The Russian Female Charitable Society of Mutual Help at the beginning of the 20th century provided vocational training and they had also an employment bureau for women, in addition to a housing advice group. Their activity was recognized and appreciated receiving the Gold Medal for Charities in 1900 at the World Fair in Paris¹⁰.

Communist phase – deterioration of the roots of volunteering

The second phase was complex and significant in what concerns the evolution of volunteering in Russia. It is period under which the development of voluntary activity was paralysed. There are multiple reasons for which the former communist countries developed a non-volunteering culture, in this category including as well Ukraine, Belarus, Rep. Moldova, etc. People used to solve their problems informally, in daily face-to-face relations, not by volunteering under organised structure in formal organizations. Communist modernization was a fake¹¹ and not an emancipatory project. The pervasive state power was promoted, while individuals were just

⁸ Liborakina, M. (1996) 'Women's voluntarism and philanthropy in pre-revolutionary Russia: Building a civil society' in *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Non-profit Organizations*, 7(4), 397-411.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ B. & M. Voicu, *Volunteering in Eastern Europe: one of the missing links? Volunteering in Eastern Europe: one of the missing links*, Paper for the round table 'Globalization, integration and social development in central and ester Europe', Sibiu, 2003.

unimportant particles of a mass. During the last several decades, the state completely discouraged the civic society and individual initiative. Widespread suspicion was the by-product of the best communist industry: one of producing files and frightened vassals, through the repression mechanisms of the political police¹².

Moreover, the meaning of volunteering was completely hollowed by labelling as voluntary what was in fact mandatory participation in the communist political party rituals and doing unpaid voluntary work following the state's orders¹³. Another communist particularity of voluntary activity in Russia was so called 'subbotniks'¹⁴. A *subbotnik* was (and still is in some of the successor states) a day of unpaid work, usually carried out on a Saturday in order to support some sort of public works project or cause. Communist *subbotniks* became obligatory political events in the Soviet Union and its satellite countries, and an annual 'Lenin's subbotnik' was regularly held around Lenin's birthday on 22 April.

During communism, civil society practically did not exist independently of the Communist Party. Youth volunteering only took place in the framework of the huge youth wing of the Soviet Communist Party, Komsomol. All young Russians automatically become "Pioneers"¹⁵ at the age of 9.

Post-communist phase – renaissance of volunteering

The fall of communism opened a new perspective for development of voluntary activities in Russia. Since the mid 90s of the 20th century questions of voluntary resources management, as well as development of volunteering activity through formation of the approach system to support voluntary civil initiatives started to be formulated. The term embraced additional meanings mostly as a result of developments in the social capital field and attention was paid from the authorities concerning its importance in civil society¹⁶.

During this period the attention of the state, society and mass-media on questions about development and support of volunteering activity has noticeably increased. The period between 2006 and 2008 can be safely named a new step in the development of the domestic voluntary movement. Voluntary activity will gradually become an effective practical platform for development of dialogue and association of the socio-government efforts in development for favourable legal conditions¹⁷. In 2006 the Russian Government adopted a strategy on development of youth policy, where youth volunteerism appears to be given major priority¹⁸. The Ministry of Sports, Tourism and Youth Policy of the Russian Federation in the framework of the state youth policy realization actively promotes development of volunteerism as a mechanism of involving youth in realization of socially useful activity.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ The name comes from the Russian word for 'Saturday'.

¹⁵ The Young Pioneer Organization of the Soviet Union was a mass youth organization of the USSR for children of age 10–15 in the Soviet Union between 1922 and 1991.

¹⁶ G. Badescu, E.M. Uslaner, *Social capital and the transition to democracy*, London, 2003.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Youth Policy - A National Focus of Russia, 2006, retrieved 20th April 2010, http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Forum21/Issue_No9/N9_YP_Russia_en.pdf.

Since 2007 the role of volunteers and NGOs has begun to be more visible at the political level and started to gain mention in the annual Messages¹⁹ addressed by the President of the Russian Federation during the Federal Assembly and in annual reports of the Russian Federation's Public chamber '*Statute of civil society in the Russian Federation*'.

The concept of long-term social and economic development of the Russian Federation for the period till 2020 was dedicated to assisting the development and spread of voluntary activity (volunteering), which was approved by the order of the Russian Federation Government, 17th November 2008 and mentioned a number of social and youth policy priority directions²⁰. For the first time in Russia, an official document which defines the basic purpose of state policy in the field of assistance for the development of voluntary activity was approved, stirring up a potential of volunteerism as a source of society development.

III. Volunteering infrastructure

1. Legal development of volunteering statute

In its development, volunteering in Russia has tried to achieve the '*right*' and deserved place in society as a promoter of civil initiatives. Unfortunately, the volunteering statute in Russia has not yet been entirely defined. The legal definition of '*volunteers*' was for the first time mentioned in the Federal Law of the Russian Federation '*About charitable activities and charitable organizations*'²¹ of 11th August 1995. This law defined volunteers as '*being considered citizens carrying out charitable activities in the form of voluntary work in the interests of beneficiaries and as well in benefit of charitable organizations*'²².

In the initial stage of legal development for civil society institutions, the introduction of the term '*volunteers*' was a progressive step. However, the scope of the Law on Charity of 1995 was limited to the traditional approach of volunteering, which considers it as a process of providing charitable and social help to people with special needs. In comparison, the economically developed countries reached a new understanding of volunteering, seeing it more broadly as an instrument for the social, economic, cultural, and ecological uplifting of society²³.

Taking into consideration the specific role and universal nature of volunteering, the potential of the Russian volunteer movement as a catalyst for social initiatives and social-economic reforms cannot be fully realized. It seems that the legal basis for volunteer activity must be built on new

¹⁹ Annual Address to the Federal Assembly, Kremlin, Moscow, 2006, retrieved 21st April 2010, http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2006/05/10/1823_type70029type82912_105566.shtml.

²⁰ The concept of long-term social and economic development of the Russian Federation for the period till 2020, approved by the order of the Russian Federation Government from 17th November, 2008 №1662p, retrieved 21st April 2010, www.economy.gov.ru.

²¹ Law of the Russian Federation On 'Charitable Activity and Charitable Organizations' Federal Law, August 11, 1995, retrieved 21st April 2010, <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/4373>.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

principles. There is a need for a specific legislation on volunteering which aims to develop and support a wide spectrum of voluntary civil initiatives, and does not limit volunteer activity to NGOs.

Former president Vladimir Putin signed two new federal laws at the beginning of August 2001, which both had an impact on civil society organisations. The first one says that, in accordance with Federal Law, from 1st January 2000²⁴ a new chapter of the '*Tax Code on the taxation of profits*' came into force. It sets the tax rate on the profit of organisations at 24 %, but does not provide for any tax concessions, including benefits for donors. The other one deals with the law '*On the state registration of legal entities*'²⁵ which simplifies the process of state registration which came into force on 1st January 2002.

In 2007, the issues of improving the legal framework and the development of effective mechanisms to support volunteer initiatives were discussed at the All-Russian Conference on Social Partnership of Ministry of Economic Development. In January 2008, volunteering was one of the leading themes of the Civil Forum II about 'Role of civil initiatives in the development of Russia in the 21st century', a discussion which took place with participation of key ministries and departments (Ministry of Economic Development, Health Ministry, Education Ministry and experts from civil society).

In 2008, the election of Dimitri Medvedev as President has fuelled hope that the legal framework for civil society in Russia will improve²⁶. In June 2009, the State Duma adopted amendments to Russian Federal Law from 12th January 1996, '*On Non-Commercial Organization*', which came into force on 1st August 2009²⁷. These amendments brought a few enhancements - which visibly changed the legal statute and the position of volunteering in civil society including the following²⁸:

- Small non-commercial organizations (NCOs) that do not receive foreign funding and have no foreign founders will be exempt from formal reporting of annual revenue totalling less than 3 million rubbles, or approximately 74,400 EUR.
- All NCOs may make required reports on their activities publicly available by either posting the reports on their web site or publishing the report in selected media.
- Mandatory government audits of NCOs will no longer take place annually, but rather every three years -- the same as for commercial enterprises.
- If an NCO does not submit all of the documents required for registration or if there are mistakes in the submitted documents; in lieu of an automatic denial of registration, the registration process may be suspended for up to three months, until the applicant completes or corrects the application. The registration body will proceed with registering an NCO once the application file is complete.

²⁴ Ministry of Taxation of the Russian Federation , Tax code on the taxation of profits , from 1st January 2002, retrieved 10th April 2010, http://www.garweb.ru/project/mns/en/law/garweb_law/10900200/10900200.htm.

²⁵ Federal Law N 129 on the state registration of legal entities and individual businessmen from 8th August 2001, retrieved 27th March 2010, <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/4373>.

²⁶ The International Centre for Non-Profit Law, *Russian President's amendments to the NGO Law*, On 17th July 2009, retrieved 20th March 2010, <http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/ngolawmonitor/russia.htm>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

- In considering a registration application, the registration body may only request documents specified in the law.

Immediately after, on 30th July 2009 the decree²⁹ ‘*The concept of assistance for development of charities and voluntary activity in Russian Federation*’ was approved with the aim of long term social and economic development of the Russian Federation until 2020, approved by the order of the Government of the Russian Federation from 17th November 2008.

The Russian Federation recognizes a large number of non-governmental and non-commercial organization forms, resulting in a complex and oftentimes contradictory regulatory framework. The Civil Code and the Federal Law on Non-commercial Organizations establish the primary NCO legal framework and define a variety of NCO forms (approximately 27), including public organizations, foundations, institutions, non-profit partnerships, and autonomous non-governmental organizations. The primary requirements are that NCOs of whatever type do not have as their primary objective to generate revenue and to distribute any such profit among their participants³⁰.

The table below shows data on initiatives taken in the direction of volunteering law implementation. In comparison with other countries from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, Russia still has to work on this segment. In 2005 a national youth strategy was adopted and made public on 18th December 2006³¹, initiative that can be considered as a step towards framing volunteering in legal terms. However, a specific legislation on volunteering in Russia is still missing.

²⁹ Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, ‘The concept of assistance for development of charities and voluntary activity in Russian Federation’, approved on 30th July 2009, retrieved 6th July 2010, http://www.economy.gov.ru/minec/activity/sections/admReform/publicsociety/doc091224_1949.

³⁰ Russian Civil Code, Article 50, Commercial and Non-Profit Organizations, with last amendments on 23rd December 2003, retrieved 15th March 2010, <http://www.russian-civil-code.com/PartI/SectionI/Subsection2/Chapter4.html>.

³¹ Youth Policy - A National Focus of Russia, retrieved 7th April 2010, http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Forum21/Issue_No9/N9_YP_Russia_en.pdf.

Table 1. Volunteering legislative acts and national youth strategies in the South – Eastern European Regions, Caucasus and Central Asia*

Sub-region	Country	Legislative acts on volunteering / date of adoption	National youth strategy or policy / date of adoption
Balkans	Albania	No	yes, since 2007, mentions volunteerism
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	not at state level, various drafts	not at state level
	Croatia	2007	2004
	FYR Macedonia	2007	yes, 2005, mentions volunteerism
	Montenegro		2006
	Kosovo	no	2009
	Serbia	no, various drafts	2008
	Caucasus	Armenia	no, drafts 2004 and 2008
Azerbaijan		no, draft 2008	yes, 2002, mentions volunteerism
Georgia			
Central Asia	Kazakhstan	No	yes, 2004
	Kyrgyzstan	No	
	Tajikistan	No	yes, volunteerism recognized
	Turkmenistan		
	Uzbekistan	No	
Other CIS	Belarus		
	Ukraine	No	
	Moldova	No, draft 2010	2004-9, 2009-13, mentions volunteerism
	Russia	no	2005

* Where cells are blank, information was not available.

Source: Country reports and other information provided by the Local Experts

2. State support for volunteering

There are two main instruments of how any state administration can support the development of volunteering – from policy and financial perspective. This subchapter tries to analyse the different methods how Russian state administration supports volunteering and whether this support is sufficient and effective enough.

Volunteering as a part of society's wellbeing activities has to be supported and sustained by the state in order to be able to realize its goals, purposes and objectives. The explanation of the low development level of volunteering in Russia has its roots in deficient and inadequate connection and communication between state administration and volunteering organisations as a part of civil society.

In 2006, for the first time social voluntary activity was noted at the highest state level – in the annual Message of the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin to Federal Assembly³², recognizing the importance of the role of volunteers in NGOs activity, naming them as important actors in formation of civil society and being considered in strategic plans for development of the country.

An important confirmation of state support for non-profit organizations involved in the development of civil society institutions is provided by the Order of the President of the Russian Federation³³. There is more financial support provided and more projects realized and sustained through the participation of volunteers and voluntary initiatives. The creation of volunteering system in Nizhniy Novgorod district, Republic Komi, Republics Buryatiya, can be considered a good example of this support.

Except these few examples of how the Russian state supports the voluntary sector, one has to remain quite critical towards the limits of the state support for volunteering in Russia. The Russian federal legislation does not support non-profit activities and there is no consistent policy of cooperation between NGOs and the State. The knowledge of the state officers about the legal norms and regulation of NGO activities is rather weak. While laws permitting NGOs to register and operate exist, they are not well-defined or consistently executed. As a result, many NGOs depend on local and

An example of an organization in Russia which receives official government support is the Russian Union of Youth (RUY). Founded in 1990, this NGO now has offices in 75 regions of Russia and more than 200,000 individual members. Over a million young people have participated in its programmes. It also participates in a US – Russian volunteering initiative, the 'Russian-American Volunteer Initiative' (RAVI), which is a bilateral Presidential Initiative that was established by former presidents Vladimir Putin and George Bush. Launched in 2004, RAVI's goal is to strengthen friendship and understanding between the youth of Russia and the US by organizing youth volunteer internships in both countries. The programme has included the following topics: HIV/AIDS prevention, cultural and historical heritage preservation, informational and communication technology for marginalized groups, tobacco and drug addiction prevention, sexual transmitted diseases, sports, healthy nutrition and healthy life style, student self-government, assistance to children with limited abilities, assistance to people from social risks group, and volunteerism development.

(Russian Union of Youth, <http://www.ruy.ru/eng.html>)

³² Annual Address to the Federal Assembly, 10th May 2006, retrieved 15th March 2010, http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2006/05/10/1823_type70029type82912_105566.shtml.

³³ G. Bodrenkova, *Russian Volunteer Development Center on IYV and IYV+10*, Russian Volunteer Development Center National Rep and Board member of IAVE, 2010, retrieved 13 April 2010, <http://www.iave.org/content/russian-volunteer-development-center-iyv-and-iyv10>.

regional administrations, and very often the law is interpreted in different ways. Federal and local tax law does not support the existence of a self-sufficient third sector.

The NGO sector's public image in Russia has improved somewhat, but in general, the public is still uninformed and suspicious regarding NGOs. The perception of volunteering organisations and activities in Russia remains at a low level and doesn't receive enough support and attention.

3. Organisation and promotion of voluntary activities

Without having yet a defined legal statute, volunteering in Russia meets lots of difficulties in organizing voluntary activities and creating a homogenous field of volunteering. The prospect of volunteering becoming a force in Russia after the fall of communism is still poorly developed. Due to lack of state support, organizations of civil society in Russia, together with other international community bodies like the United Nations (UN) and the International Association of Volunteer Efforts (IAVE), have been actively participating in promoting volunteering activities since the 1990s. This trend has been evident especially since 1997, after the decision to organize the International Year of Volunteers, although at that time, Russian Federation had not signed officially the UN resolution on this International Year³⁴.

Over the last few years, there were approximately 350 000 non-commercial organizations registered in Russia³⁵. The largest number was registered in Moscow – about 20 000, followed by developed regions such as Nizhny Novgorod area, St. Petersburg, Siberia.

The Russian voluntary sector is represented by actors which can be divided into the following categories:

- *National volunteer centres and representatives from government bodies* (Russian Volunteer Development Center, Sozidanie Foundation, CAYSI, UCOR, Russian program VSO, IAVE Russian Volunteer Centre - National Coordinator of SWG and GYSD in Russia).
- *NGOs at the national and regional level* (Charity Organization 'Open Heart', Club of Corporate Philanthropists, Center of Philanthropy Development, Centre 'Iniziativa', World4U, Volunteering Vector).
- *International actors* (USAD, UNV, IAVE, etc.) which had and still have a big impact on development of volunteering landscape in Russia.

Since 2000, all regions of the country are on an annual basis organizing the general voluntary actions at national and local levels. Since 2003, voluntary actions like 'Spring Week of Goods' and 'World Day of Youth service' focus on the millennium development goals (MDG)³⁶. For 2003 – 2010, voluntary activity, especially in the youth environment has considerably risen³⁷. The year 2007

³⁴ UN resolution from 1997, retrieved 24th April 2010, http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/fileadmin/docs/old/html/2002/ga_resolution1_fre.htm.

³⁵ Philanthropy in Russia, retrieved 7th April 2010, <http://carnegie.org/publications/carnegie-reporter/single/view/article/item/113/>.

³⁶ Millennium Declaration, Millennium Development Goals, drawn on September 2000, retrieved 17th March 2010, <http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics.shtml>.

³⁷ Ibid.

can be an example of successful campaigns with events such as the 8th annual Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) and the XI annual national volunteer week named ‘Spring Volunteer Week’ (SVW) which mobilized over 1 million volunteers (1,003,740) in an unprecedented show of success. In 43 regions of the Russian Federation throughout the whole country from Primorski Krai and Kaliningrad up to the Arkhangelsk area, were accomplished approximately 16,140 social service projects for GYSD and for the SVW, illustrating the power of youth volunteerism³⁸.

Voluntary actions in Russia are organized in a similar way as in other countries – under different forms of activities such as projects, conferences, round tables, festivals, seminars promoting awareness about the role of volunteering, etc. The organizers vary from associations with a variety of focus on fields with high social concerns. The actions occur at different levels – both national and regional.

Large national, regional and local actions like conferences, seminars and round tables are the effective facilitation mechanism in promoting voluntary activities. As an example, the annual all-Russian conference on volunteering, organized by the Russian Volunteer Development Center and Fund ‘Sozidanie’, which have become a constant platform of social dialogue development on volunteering for mutual training, exchange of experience and acceptance of the common decisions. Other large actions of 2007 were Second International Festival Dobrovolchestva³⁹ organized with support of the Tverskoe area Governor D. Zelenin. Young volunteers from more than 30 regions of Russia participated and have been accepted the Code of volunteers in Russia⁴⁰. There have also been organized actions such as International conference on ‘*Volunteering as the formation factor of youth humanistic orientation for a modern society*’⁴¹, and a round table on ‘*Volunteering as an effective participation factor of citizens and organizations in the decision of social and demographic problems*’, etc.

Motivation of volunteers in Russia is driven by the common will to help society. Data shows that 84% of volunteers – (youth together with elderly) are realizing socially significant projects, united in their service by the general motto ‘*We create our future together!*’⁴². Russian projects like GYSD/SVW 2007, address issues such as health, poverty, civic responsibility and environment. These projects, have received support from bodies of the regional and Republics’ governments, cities administrations, committees on youth affairs, and also donations and assistance from more than 650 companies and organizations⁴³.

Another way of promoting action and popularization of volunteering was realized through attracting attention of mass media to volunteering by illumination of voluntary events during large voluntary actions. For example, events GYSD and SVW attracted significant attention from local and

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Second International Festival Dobrovolchestva, Tverskoe, May, 2007, retrieved 7th April 2010, <http://promo.nasledie.ru/wind.php?ID=343028&soch=1>.

⁴⁰ Code of volunteers in Russia, Second draft adopted at the II International Festival of volunteerism May 19, 2007, retrieved 14th April 2010, <http://gov.cap.ru/hierarchy.asp?page=16/530/561602/727054/727055/727068>.

⁴¹ International Conference on Volunteering, Moscow, 27-29th, 2007, retrieved 15th April 2010, <http://www.ngopravo.ru/news/?action=show&id=180>.

⁴² G. Bodrenkova, *Russian Volunteer Development Center on IYV and IYV+10*, Russian Volunteer Development Center National Rep and Board member of IAVE, 2010, retrieved 13 April 2010, <http://www.iave.org/content/russian-volunteer-development-center-iyv-and-iyv10>.

⁴³ Ibid.

mass media. More than 320 newspaper articles⁴⁴, 80 radio reports, 112 televised reports and 65 web sites⁴⁵ were featuring youth service activities. The volunteering theme started to be broadcasted more often in mass media and generally heard and spoken about in society.

Volunteering is also promoted through the education system. In late 2008, online courses on 'Organization of voluntary work in NGOs' were planned as a part of distance learning Centre of the Moscow State University 'M. V. Lomonosov'. The programme was dealing with such important issues as the motivation of volunteers, methods of organization of the work involving volunteers, realization of volunteer programs, rights and responsibilities of volunteers, monitoring and evaluation of volunteer labour, encouraging volunteers and others. Courses were being organized by Fund 'Sozidanie' together with the charitable society 'Nevsky Angel'⁴⁶.

4. Obstacles to volunteering and recommendations for improvement

From the previous chapters we can conclude that volunteering in Russia, from its affirmation until the present, passed through critical periods. Development of volunteering in Russia was directly and indirectly affected by the socio-economical and political situation, circumstances which have created many obstacles to proper development of volunteering. Specific obstacles relating to Russian volunteering as a "third sector" element have the following characteristics: negative public perception of NGOs; inadequate legislative foundations; low levels of managerial personnel training; and absence of mechanisms for self-organization and mutual training; lack of support from government and other civil society's organisations; inadequate communication tools between significant volunteering actors; low promoting level of voluntary movements; low social trust in public institutions and NGOs on the part of Russian population⁴⁷ etc.

Due to these and other obstacles to volunteering, enormous reserves of voluntary civil initiatives remain untapped. A significant gap between the desire of people to take part in socially useful activities (over 40%) and their actual involvement (2 – 4%), points to absence of a systematic approach in stimulating and supporting voluntary civil initiatives⁴⁸. Experience gained in Russia over the last decade in setting up volunteer centres has unfortunately not yet been developed and supported at the federal level and has remained as a social experiment. Volunteering is not viewed as a strategic resource for state policy and is almost disregarded in national development strategies.

Another barrier to the promotion and development of volunteering is inadequate and insufficient study of volunteering. The volunteering is not being studied enough what results in a serious underestimation (on the state level and in the public image) of its role and place in the

⁴⁴ Youth change the World! April 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 retrieved 15th March 2010, <http://www.fondsozidanie.ru/old/vdms.htm>, <http://www.infogrant.ru/doc/28470.html>, <http://gov.cap.ru/home/13/2006/dobr/cream/index.htm>, <http://www.tpu.ru/php/news/events.php?n=871>.

⁴⁵ GYSD websites, retrieved 15th March 2010, <http://sw.myalmaryk.ru/publ/6-1-0-21>, <http://gyzd.org/events/2010/ru>, <http://vcgs.narod.ru/page7.html>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Human development report for the Russian federation, 2005, p.182.

⁴⁸ Russian Volunteer Development Center on IYV and IYV+10, 22 January 2010, retrieved 26th March 2010, <http://www.iave.org/content/russian-volunteer-development-center-iyv-and-iyv10>.

process of social development, building democracy and formation of civil society.

One concrete example is underestimation of the economic value of volunteering in the Russian society. Calculations made in 1997 showed that, if 10% of Russia's population took part in voluntary activity for average five hours a week, they would create investments in the social sphere worth about EUR 2.2 billion annually⁴⁹. Clearly, therefore, the level of development and support for volunteering in Russia is due to lagging social demand, which prevents volunteer potential from being realized - by trying to involve much more people in voluntary activities, to expand the current figure of 8 million volunteers, which would contribute to the development of Russian civil society.

In addition, other reasons lie at the root of the problem of underdevelopment of volunteering in Russia. All these can be grouped into following categories: external reasons (legal and resource base for the development of the infrastructure for volunteering), inter – sectoral reasons (state, profit, and non-profit sectors), and internal reasons (i.e. inside the sector itself).

Moving from the existing obstacles and its categorisation towards formulation of recommendations that can help development of volunteering in Russia, there are several steps to be taken. From its beginning until the present, volunteering in Russia made progress in some areas but there is always enough room for improvement. Voluntary activity in Russia still needs more and better targeted support and attention in order to contribute to all the different aspects of the development of Russian society.

In order to improve volunteering in Russia, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Taking general measures concerning encouragement and facilitation, preparation, training and recognition of volunteers;
- Encouraging the participation and involvement in voluntary activities of all population groups;
- Defining both the status of volunteering and the support mechanisms and guarantees for its continuance;
- Adding impetus to the development of voluntary movement which is less developed than in other countries;
- Including the promotion of volunteering among the main priorities of state policies;
- Providing support and recognition to volunteering from the governmental bodies;
- Developing and putting into practice a uniform state policy of volunteering support based on domestic and international experience;
- Motivating media to play a supportive role in public awareness raising activities;
- Contributing to the development of 'an enabling infrastructure' for volunteering in the Russian Federation.

There are also several recommendations and proposals gathered at the VI annual all-Russian Conference on volunteering which took place in Moscow on 20 – 21st May 2009 which can be considered a strong impulse to stimulate further development of Russian volunteerism. The recommendations call for the following:

⁴⁹ Human development report for the Russian federation, 2005, p.182.

- To establish a Day of the Russian Volunteers according to the international practice and International Day of Volunteer, founded by the United Nations and celebrated annually on 5th December;
- To proclaim 2011 as the Year of Volunteers in Russia within the framework 10th anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers, held by the United Nations (2001+10);⁵⁰
- To support the public initiative in carrying out the IAVE World Conference on Volunteering in 2012 in Russia;
- To create public and advisory councils for volunteering within the office of the President of the Russian Federation, the Government of the Russian Federation, and in the Russian Federation subjects;
- To support the public initiative of hosting the annual all-Russian conferences on volunteering as well as «Spring Week of Goods» (in April) and “Week of Volunteers” (in December) voluntary actions⁵¹.

At the same Conference, activists from voluntary organizations made a big step forward having the occasion to address some key recommendations to the President of the Russian Federation, about necessity of combining the efforts of authority and civil society institutions and involving NGOs in legislative process. The participants of the Conference addressed the Russian Federation government bodies, local government institutions and all interested organizations to combine efforts for realization of proposals and recommendations.

IV. Conclusions

Volunteers are clearly through their actions demonstrating civic spirit, helping to form models of tolerant behaviour and social partnership, contributing to improving the moral health of society and people’s quality of life, and to reducing material inequities.

As one of the post-communist countries, Russia is an example of a society where volunteerism, while certainly with some development history, is still very weak. Ever since the breakdown of the Soviet Union, volunteerism has been on the rise, even though at uneven rates throughout the years.

A substantial proportion of the Russian population shows a limited involvement in civil society activity. This involvement appears to be difficult to measure, specifically the types and frequency of civic activism. Grassroots activity, including community action, volunteer work and CSO membership remains rather low and should clearly become an area of concern and action for civil society.

Taking into consideration the recommendations mentioned above, big efforts from all concerned institutions of society and government are required. The inclusion of volunteerism in the

⁵⁰ And within the framework of the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship that will take place in 2011.

⁵¹ The final document of All Russian Conference on volunteering ‘*Volunteering – Contribution to Strengthening Mutual Trust and Development of Social Partnership between State and Society. Russian and International Experience*’, May 2009, received from Galina Bodrenkova, March 2010.

strategic plans of social and economic development has an extreme importance in promoting and spreading voluntary activities. Economic, institutional and legal environment should encourage, recognize and sustain voluntary actions and activities in accordance with the recommendations of the UN⁵² (Res. 56/38 and other) and the prevailing positive preconditions in Russia. Raising awareness about the value and importance of volunteering can also positively contribute to the process of creating an enabling environment for volunteering in Russia. Development and adoption of an effective legislative on volunteering hand in hand with continuous elimination of barriers and prejudices towards volunteering in the Russian society will play a key role in boosting voluntary activities and maximising its potential in Russia.

V. References

1. Primary resources

- Federal Law N 129 on the state registration of legal entities and individual businessmen from 8th August 2001, retrieved 27th March 2010, <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/4373>.
- Law of the Russian Federation On 'Charitable Activity and Charitable Organizations' Federal Law, August 11, 1995, retrieved 21st April 2010, <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/4373>.
- Law of the Russian Federation On 'Charitable Activity and Charitable Organizations' Federal Law, August 11, 1995, retrieved 21st April 2010, <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/4373>.
- Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, 'The concept of assistance for development of charities and voluntary activity in Russian Federation', approved on 30th July 2009, retrieved 6th July 2010, http://www.economy.gov.ru/minec/activity/sections/admReform/publicsociety/doc091224_1949.
- Ministry of Taxation of the Russian Federation, Tax code on the taxation of profits, from 1st January 2002, retrieved 10th April 2010, http://www.garweb.ru/project/mns/en/law/garweb_law/10900200/10900200.htm.
- Russian Civil Code, Article 50, Commercial and Non-Profit Organizations, with last amendments on 23rd December 2003, retrieved 15th March 2010, <http://www.russian-civil-code.com/PartI/SectionI/Subsection2/Chapter4.html>.
- The concept of long-term social and economic development of the Russian Federation for the period till 2020, approved by the order of the Russian Federation Government from 17th November, 2008 №1662p, retrieved 21st April 2010, www.economy.gov.ru.
- The International Centre for Non-Profit Law, *Russia, Russian President Medvedev signed amendments to the NGO Law*, On July 17, 2009, retrieved 20th March 2010, <http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/ngolawmonitor/russia.htm>.

⁵² UN recommendations on supporting volunteering, retrieved 21st April 2010, <http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/fileadmin/docdb/pdf/2002/a56r038-e.pdf>.

2. Secondary resources

- Annual Address to the Federal Assembly, Kremlin, Moscow, 2006, retrieved 21st April 2010, http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2006/05/10/1823_type70029type82912_105566.shtml.
- B. & M. Voicu, *Volunteering in Eastern Europe: one of the missing links? Volunteering in Eastern Europe: one of the missing links*, Paper for the round table ‘Globalization, integration and social development in central and ester Europe’, Sibiu, 2003.
- Civicus Civil Society Index Report for the Russian Federation 2005, *An assessment of Russian Civil Society*, St. Petersburg Center for Humanities and Political Studies ‘Strategy’ in collaboration with the Departments of Public Policy of the Moscow State University – Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg, 2006.
- Code of volunteers in Russia, Second draft adopted at the II International Festival of volunteerism May 19, 2007, retrieved 14th April 2010, <http://gov.cap.ru/hierarhy.asp?page=../16/530/561602/727054/727055/727068>.
- G. Bodrenkova, *The International Year of Volunteers 2001: A Russian Perspective*, trans. M. Kim, 2001.
- G. Bodrenkova, *Russian Volunteer Development Center on IYV and IYV+10*, Russian Volunteer Development Center National Rep and Board member of IAVE, 2010, retrieved 13 April 2010, <http://www.iave.org/content/russian-volunteer-development-center-iyv-and-iyv10>.
- I. V. Mersyanova, L. I. Yakobson, *Philanthropy in Russia: Public Attitudes and Participation*, State University — Higher School of Economics, Moscow, 2010.
- International Conference on Volunteering, Moscow, 27-29th, 2007, retrieved 15th April 2010, <http://www.ngopravo.ru/news/?action=show&id=180>.
- M. Illner, *Second thoughts on the transformations in Eastern and Central Europe*, 1999.
- Millennium Declaration, Millennium Development Goals, drawn on September 2000, retrieved 17th March 2010, <http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics.shtml>.
- S. S. Levin, ‘Charity in Russia’2009, retrieved 21 April 2010, <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/149333.html>.
- Second International Festival Dobrovolchestva, Tverskoe, May, 2007, retrieved 7th April 2010, <http://promo.nasledie.ru/wind.php?ID=343028&soch=1>.
- UNDP, *Russia in 2015: Development Goals and Policy Priorities*, Human Development Report 2005 Russian Federation, 2005.
- UNV, *Laws and Policies Affecting Volunteerism Since 2001*, A Research Report for the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme submitted by the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) and the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL), September 2009.
- USAID, *The 2007 NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia*, Developed by United States Agency for International Development Bureau for Europe and Eurasia Office of Democracy, Governance and Social Transition, 2008.

VI. List of abbreviations

CAYSI	Public Organization Children and Youth Social Initiatives
CEV	European Volunteer Centre
CSI	Civil Society Index
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DCVR	Development Centre of Volunteering in Russia
EU	European Union
GYSD	Global Youth Service Day
IAVE	International Association for Volunteer Effort
ICNL	The International Centre for Non-Profit Law
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NCO	Non-Commercial organizations
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
RAVI	Russian-American Volunteer Initiative
SU-HSE	Higher School of Economics
SVW	Spring Volunteer Week
UCOR	Union of Charity Organizations of Russia
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNV	United Nations Volunteer
US	United States
USSR	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VSO	Service Organization abroad
WSO	World Values Survey

VII. Useful links

Centre 'Initsiativa'	http://volunteer.karelia.ru/dobrovol.html
DCVR	http://volunteering.ru/news.php
Electronic Library	http://www.lib.ua-ru.net/diss/cont/214210.html
Foundation Sozidanie	http://www.fondsozidanie.ru/english/
ICNL	http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/ngolawmonitor/russia.htm
Mosblago.ru	http://www.mosblago.ru/about.htm
USRVI	http://www.irex.org/programs/USRVI/index.asp
Volunteering Principles	http://www.volunteersector.ru/rus/gla_str_perehod/269.html
Volunteering Vector	http://www.kdobru.ru/know/events/
World4U	www.world4u.ru