

Linda J. Cook and Elena Vinogradova

Regional NGOs in Russia: Charitable Foundations, Social Service, and Policy Advocacy Organizations

March 16, 2006

Abstract

The Working Paper reports mainly on two groups of NGOs: Charitable Foundations and Social Service NGO's; and Policy-Advocacy rganizations. It draws on more than seventy interviews with NGO and political leaders in Tula and Samara Regions and the Chuvash Republic during 2004 to assess the contribution of these NGOs to the development of civil society and formulation of social policy. We find that in all three regions, NGOs have developed domestic sources of financing, mainly from business, and improved personnel. Institutional infrastructure for access to state executive and legislative authorities (i.e., round tables, councils, etc.) have been built. They provide for some participation of NGOs in social policy, but not (yet) a systematic or effective role in policy formulation. Rights-Defense Organizations and Resource Centers show the strongest potential for establishing civil society and governmental accountability. The NGO community should build on current achievements, though new restrictive legislation complicates this task.