



ISAR ANNUAL REPORT

Initiative for Social Action and Renewal *in Eurasia*

Summer 2003

Two Decades of Bringing Citizens Together

The year 2002 was ISAR's twentieth year of building links between citizens in the US and what was once the Soviet Union. Though our focus has remained firmly at the citizen level, our opportunities have changed dramatically over the two decades.

When ISAR began its activities in 1983, our goal was helping diffuse the enmity between the US and the USSR by fostering cooperation between private citizens of both countries. We published a directory of organizations involved in cooperative activities, publicized their efforts in a journal called *Surviving Together* and helped to organize US-USSR satellite events called Space Bridges. A regular feature of the journal was tracking the travel visas granted to Soviets by the US and to Americans by the USSR. As a mark of the Cold War, the total numbers for 1982 were only 8,207 for Soviets and 28,232 for Americans.

In 1990, ISAR began working directly with Soviet partners involved in environmental activities. These NGOs were the obvious group with which to connect since environmental issues were at the leading edge of reform. Environmental activism was also the safest and most popular form of protest in the waning days of the USSR.

Now in 2002, environmentalism is by no means as safe or as popular as it was a decade ago. Natural resource extraction and the nuclear industry, both severely damaging to the environment, are seen as a primary source of income in most of the former republics. As a result, the NGOs who advocate for sustainable resource use, monitor oil drilling, mining and fishing or oppose the import of nuclear waste face opposition not only from their own industry and government but from Western interests as well. They want help in advocating for their causes and seek support from like-minded NGOs in the West.

ISAR's program in 2002 thus included more advocacy-based activities. Along with its traditional grants and trainings, ISAR organized an exchange between Russian and American women activists in the field of nuclear safety, expanded the Living Seas Campaign in the Russian Far East, initiated a project to monitor pipeline routes from Siberia to the Far East, and held a forum and conference on oil extraction issues in the Caspian. Today, when global networks and coalitions are critical to environmental protection, ISAR is continuing to facilitate links among individuals and groups around the world who share the values of environmentalism and stewardship of the earth.

Again this year, we have chosen to turn the summer issue of *ISAR in Focus* into our 2002 Annual Report. Doing so is a good way to combine news of current activities with a report on the financial highlights of the previous year. Inside you will find lists of the institutions and individuals that supported ISAR in 2002 and graphs illustrating how we used the resources they provided. Thank you for your interest in ISAR. Your support, both moral and financial, is an essential part of our success.

Eliza K. Klose, Executive Director

ISAR: Initiative for Social Action and Renewal in Eurasia

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ISAR Mission Statement

ISAR's mission is to strengthen the ability of citizens and social change organizations in Eurasia and their colleagues in the US to influence decision-making, advance social justice and promote environmentally sound stewardship of the earth and its resources.

Founded in 1983, ISAR is a nongovernmental organization that operates as an international association of NGOs. Our nine members work together to build civil society, protect the environment and support local NGOs. We share common values, including a belief in transparency, cooperation and mutual respect. These values guide ISAR members as we choose appropriate strategies to address the needs of the diverse communities we serve. ISAR is funded by public and private sources.

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Become a Member of ISAR!

Your tax-deductible membership of \$35 (\$50 for organizations) supports ISAR's programs and entitles you to one year of ISAR's quarterly publications, *Give & Take: A Journal on Civil Society in Eurasia* and *ISAR in Focus*. For more information, contact the membership coordinator at membership@isar.org or visit www.isar.org.

Supporting Public Participation, ISAR Assists Communities In Influencing Decision-Making, Protecting Environment

ISAR Antinuclear Seminars Reach Out to Russian Regions

In its continuing support of ISAR's outreach to NGO nuclear safety activists, the Ploughshares Fund funded a series of regional environmental seminars. ISAR-Moscow received a two-year grant of \$80,000 in February 2003 to continue seminars it has conducted since 2001. The new project will educate NGOs about effective antinuclear activism. NGOs will learn about issues specific to their regions and will improve their skills in interacting with government officials, industry, and the community. ISAR will build on its role as a facilitator and trainer in conflict resolution techniques, and mini-grants (\$500-\$800) will be made available to seminar participants.

"There is a tremendous need in the NGO community for practical training," said Alice Hengesbach, Russia Program Officer. "Our new series of nuclear safety seminars involves conflict resolution techniques, because NGOs must be able to find constructive ways to make their case. NGOs need to present alternatives and be ready to work with business and government, not just against them. With this grant from Ploughshares we can provide NGOs with the tools to be persuasive and effective."

The first seminar, held May 14-16 just outside the closed nuclear city of Ozersk, included 26 participants from government, business, and environmental and social NGOs. Because Ozersk is a closed city, seminar arrangements were complex—some presenters and facilitators were unable to enter Ozersk, while some Ozersk residents were reluctant to travel outside the city for the event. Yet this obstacle was overcome so that successful cross-sector cooperation could occur. Small groups discussed communications issues and conflict resolution techniques in an attempt to work out differences and jointly solve the environmental problems of a nuclear closed city.

Saving the Forests of the Ob River Basin: ISAR Siberia Leads Local Conservation Effort

ISAR Siberia has long been involved in river conservation and recently became the coordinator of the newly founded Siberian Rivers Network. ISAR Siberia Director Yuri Shirokov said, "The health of rivers is a

concern to many Siberians, as is the deforestation due to illegal logging. ISAR Siberia's seminars this June drew public attention to these two issues."

The Russian Regional Environmental Center (RREC), a Russian-based organization funded in part by the European Union, supported ISAR Siberia's seminars on the Southern Ob River basin, whose river systems are being threatened. "The idea," Shirokov said, "is to address river health by addressing the deforestation issue. Destroying riverine forests hurts the local ecosystem but also the downstream environment. Cutting forested slopes leads to increased erosion, altering the flow of the river and spreading pollutants farther and faster. Without trees holding the soil, contamination problems worsen dramatically." Thirty educators from Novosibirsk and Tomsk Oblasts and Altai Krai learned about deforestation and community activism and planned for joint projects.

In addition to the seminars, the grant covers tree planting events involving 400 people and 6,000 new trees. Community education as well as technical information about forest preservation are part of the project's awareness-raising campaign.

Larisa Blinova, a participant from Novosibirsk Oblast, said, "To do something to stop deforestation, you need to know that others feel as you do and that sources of support exist." In the future, ISAR Siberia plans to provide this support to more communities along the Ob.

ISAR-RFE Chosen as NGO Resource Center For Primorsky Krai

The ISAR Russian Far East office was selected to serve as the local NGO resource center in Primorsky Krai by the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) in a USAID-funded program. ISAR will provide local communities, NGOs, and initiative groups in the region with trainings, information resources, and small grants.

For more information, please visit www.isardvrc.ru, ISAR-RFE's new website designed to inform local communities and highlight their successful activities.



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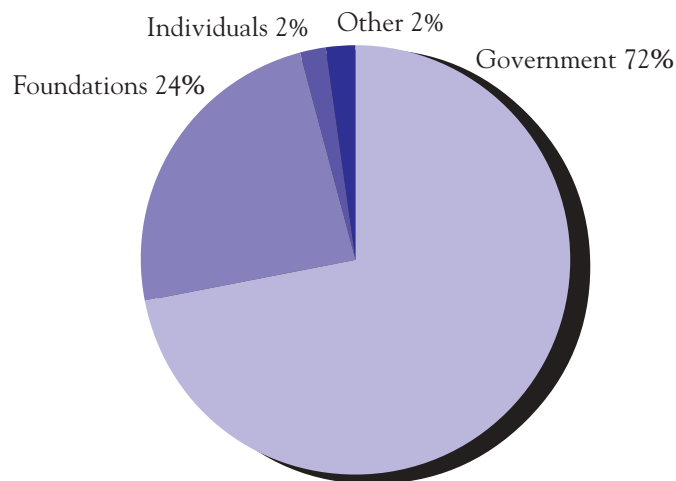
FINANCIAL REPORT

The information shown here is based on financial data for the year 2002. The total revenue, \$2,809,504, represents a decrease of 28 percent from ISAR's income in 2001. The decrease is due to a drop in funding from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and delayed receipt of the second installment of a major grant. The installment was received in early 2003. The majority of ISAR's funding (72 percent) came from US government agencies—USAID and the Department of State—but an increasing percentage comes from private foundations and individual donors. "Other" revenue includes rental income, bank interest, and membership fees.

ISAR's expenses of \$3,278,692 for 2002 exceeded revenue by \$469,188. This was because a number of 2002 activities were covered by two-year grants received in 2001. Twenty-six percent of total 2002 expenses, or \$846,446, was spent on subgrants to nongovernmental organizations in the former Soviet Union. ISAR's grant programs and other activities are currently run out of nine offices, eight based in Eurasia plus the office in Washington, DC. The costs of these programs came to 54 percent of ISAR expenses while administrative, fundraising and PR activities came to 20 percent.

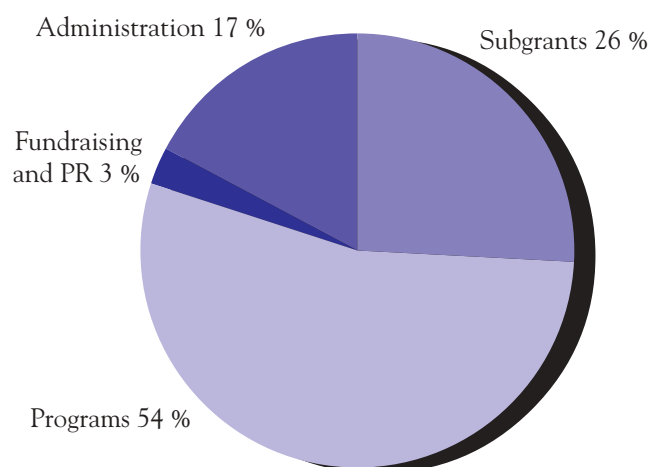
The Miller Group, a DC-based accounting firm that specializes in nonprofit organizations, conducts an annual audit of ISAR's financial records. The audit report for 2002 is available on request.

Revenue



Government	\$ 2,024,576
Foundations	674,135
Individuals	60,077
Other	50,716
TOTAL REVENUES	\$2,809,504

Expenses



Subgrants	\$ 846,446
Programs	1,770,175
Fundraising and PR	100,455
Administration	561,616
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$3,278,692

ISAR 2002 Grant Awards

ISAR-DC

18 subgrants to FSU NGOs \$188,868

ISAR-ALMATY

53 environmental grants \$72,466

ISAR-ATYRAU

7 environmental grants \$8,425

ISAR-AZERBAIJAN

53 NGO support grants \$137,442

4 cooperative NGO support grants \$35,750

ISAR-BELARUS

30 environmental grants \$37,400

ISAR-MOSCOW

63 environmental grants \$112,928

ISAR-SIBERIA

24 environmental grants \$13,430

ISAR-RFE

18 NGO support grants \$22,066

106 NGO support grants \$184,434

ISAR CASPIAN PROGRAM

11 cooperative environmental grants \$33,237

TOTAL GRANTS DISTRIBUTED: \$846,446

TOTAL NUMBER OF GRANTS GIVEN: 387

ISAR-WESTNIS/EDNANNIA

22 environmental grants \$27,179*

*ISAR-WestNIS/Ednannia received a direct grant from the C.S. Mott Foundation to run a grant program for environmental NGOs in Ukraine.

ISAR Partnership Supports Pipeline Monitoring in Russian Far East

A new Russian oil boom is on, and in a rush for profits, multinational oil giants are pouring money into projects designed to bring isolated Russian oil and gas to distant markets, particularly in Asia. ISAR—through its network of environmental activists—is helping to ensure that when Russian petroleum is extracted and transported, the social and environmental concerns of the people living along the new pipelines are heard.

The Foundation for Russian American Economic Cooperation (FRAEC) awarded \$100,000 to ISAR-DC, ISAR-RFE, and the Buryat Regional Department on Lake Baikal (BRD) to partner on a project designed to improve public participation along planned pipeline routes across eight regions of the Russian Federation. The Angarsk-Primorye pipeline proposed by Transneft would begin in Siberia and travel over 3,900 km across permafrost, mountains, and hundreds of rivers to the Pacific coast of the Russian Far East. Unfortunately, communities along its proposed path are ill prepared to hold Russian companies to high environmental and social standards.

Still in the planning stages, the pipeline could take one of two routes. Initial attempts to get complete information about these potential routes from Transneft have largely failed. For example, local NGO requests to see a detailed environmental impact assessment—a step

required by Russian law—have so far not been fulfilled. NGOs were told that they could not have the information they requested because “national security prevented full disclosure.” And so far, the legally required public hearings have not been conducted fairly and openly.

As part of the project, ISAR DC and RFE staff traveled to Alaska with three Russian activists to learn from community, government, and independent representatives about the development of the Trans Alaska Pipeline. ISAR and its partners plan to use the contacts gained in Alaska to help communities in Russia. Activists scoff at the pipeline’s proposed price tag—\$6 billion—given that the Alaska pipeline, which is 2,600 km shorter, cost \$8 billion 30 years ago. Activists worry that the low figure means that Transneft will shortcut many environmental safeguards.

“Everyone knows the oil companies *could* make pipelines that would safely cross streams and fragile permafrost,” said Alice Hengesbach, Russia Program Officer. “The question is, will they take the time and spend the money to do so? With thorough public oversight lacking, Russians have no guarantees that the oil companies will use the safest technologies that are available.”

Of paramount concern is the safety of Lake Baikal and its surrounding park system. One proposed route would cross Tunka National Park, a priceless undeveloped forest region classified as a *zapovednik*, or protected area. According to Russian law, no pipelines may enter

zapovednik territory. Transneft and another oil giant, Yukos—a company planning a separate pipeline from Angarsk to China—are seeking to have the zapovednik's boundaries redrawn. Deploying its immense lobbying power, Yukos would redefine the borders of the park to allow a narrow corridor—just wide enough for a pipeline—to cut directly through the middle of the park.

Other routes are likewise problematic. Any southern route would cross hundreds of rivers and tributaries that feed Lake Baikal, including the vital Selenga River. Many of these rivers are salmon spawning streams, so a spill or small leak could have devastating consequences for the entire region.

The ISAR partnership will collect information, hold seminars, host exchange programs, and conduct informational campaigns in communities that will be affected. The goal of the project is to advocate for environmental protection and to minimize the socio-economic and cultural risks that would result from any oil pipeline construction.

FRAEC chose ISAR in part because of its successful track record building lasting partnerships. For more information on project details, please visit www.fraec.org or www.isarrfe.ru, or email Alice Hengesbach at alice@isar.org.

Kazakhstan Activist on DC Fellowship Spreads the Word about Antinuclear Win

Nuclear safety activist Kaisha Atakhanova spent April and May in the ISAR-DC office as a Contemporary Issues Fellow of IREX (the International Research and Exchanges Board). Arriving in February, fresh from a victorious two-year campaign to stop the commercial import of nuclear waste into Kazakhstan, Atakhanova met with like-minded NGOs on the East and West Coast. She also spoke with officials at the State Department and Department of Energy and told her story to interested audiences in Washington, San Francisco and New York. Atakhanova is founder and director of the Kazakhstan environmental group EcoCenter.

ISAR has the electronic audio file of a presentation she made at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. For more information visit www.isar.org.



ISAR to Be Featured on PBS

ISAR has been selected as one of the US nonprofits to be featured on the 2003-2004 PBS program "The Visionaries." The TV series is dedicated to using the power of the media to tell stories of the people and organizations making positive social change throughout the world.

This year, a Visionaries film crew followed nuclear safety activists involved in a grassroots program in Russia and the US. The 11-minute documentary shows how women, working in international partnership, are calling attention to the deadly legacy of the Cold War.

ISAR will show the film in Washington, DC this fall. Contact your local public television station to learn when the program will be shown in your area. For more information visit www.visionaries.org or write to Lucy Roberts, ISAR's Partnership and Exchange Officer, at lucy@isar.org.

In Follow-Up Action, US and Russian Women Take Environmental Activism to New Groups

In March, as part of ISAR's ongoing Partnerships and Exchanges Program, Russian and American nuclear safety activists continued to expand their information and education campaigns to develop public awareness about nuclear issues.

Cathie Sullivan of New Mexico and Natalya Manzurova of Chelyabinsk spent two weeks in Russia meeting with community groups and displaying a jointly produced exhibit (in both English and Russian) that portrayed the legacy of the nuclear age from a citizen's perspective, addressing many public health concerns. The exhibit presented information about Chernobyl, Los Alamos, Three Mile Island, and Mayak—facilities whose ongoing deleterious effects on the people of both countries are yet to be determined. The PBS television program "The Visionaries" shadowed them during three days of their trip (see box, above).

Cathie and Natalya then participated in "DC Days," the congressional lobbying workshops of the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability. They spoke at an ISAR-DC forum and took their traveling exhibit to community groups in Paducah, Kentucky—another federal site that has suffered from nuclear contamination. They concluded in Santa Fe, near Los Alamos National Laboratory, where nuclear weapons were first developed.

(continued)



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(US-RUSSIA PARTNERSHIP, continued from page 7)

The second pair of activists, Tatiana Schoor and Fannie Ball, also met with many local groups as part of their follow-up exchange. Working with local Russian scientists, Schoor conducted an independent environmental analysis in the village of Ognovo, Russia to determine levels of radiation. She then traveled to Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Together with Ball and US scientists, the activists conducted environmental monitoring activities and addressed public meetings. They encouraged local residents to obtain reliable information for themselves and to hold the nuclear industry accountable for its toxic practices.

“Our competition received seven proposals from activists,” said Lucy Roberts, ISAR’s Partnership and Exchange Program Officer. “Even though we could only fund two projects, all of the activists gained important skills and information through the grant-writing process. The grant projects we funded demonstrated how partnership activities can extend and strengthen the links resulting from an exchange program.”

The March partnership activities represent the last stage of ISAR’s US-Russia Women’s Leadership Nuclear Safety program, funded by the US Department of State and the Trust for Mutual Understanding. For more information please contact Lucy Roberts at lucy@isar.org.

ISAR Belarus Awards Small Grants for 2003

ISAR Belarus completed the third year of its small grants program, “Strengthening NGO Participation in Decision-Making on Environmental Matters.” The project’s goal is to encourage local NGOs to build coalitions and influence environmental policy.

Of the 49 proposals received, ISAR Belarus’ local board of experts chose 16 projects, each of which received up to \$3,000. The total awarded was \$40,000. As just one example, a \$426 grant to the NGO “Baranovichi Environmental Union” enabled it to hold a Bird Week to educate town residents about the city’s dwindling small bird populations. The event inspired the city council to add money for conservation measures to its budget.

In July, ISAR Belarus convened its grantees for a national level meeting to exchange information about their successes and struggles to meaningfully affect environmental decision-making. ISAR Belarus is supported by the Eurasia Foundation.

