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SUAL URBAN DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

PROMOTING CIVIC INVOLVEMENT IN RUSSIA

THE CHALLENGE

Since the fall of communism and the end of central economic planning, the quality of life in industrial towns throughout Russia has suffered. Less support from the federal government places more responsibility on local governments who lack the resources to provide their citizens with adequate social infrastructure. As many Russians are tempted to seek better standards of living in larger, more prosperous cities, local industries face a shrinking labor market and the prospect of increased operational costs coupled with decreased efficiency. Local governments may turn to local industry for financial help to fund municipal services, but when community members are excluded from the decision-making process, the projects are not as effective as they could be.

THE APPROACH

USAID and Siberian-Urals Aluminum Company (SUAL) collaborated to improve the quality of life in towns in which SUAL, one of Russia's largest companies with over 62,000 employees, is the main industrial presence. The alliance engaged in a comprehensive cross-sector approach to increase civic involvement in all aspects of community life. Programs focused on improving municipal planning and voter registration, modernizing healthcare clinics, and funding educational initiatives. The trial period proved so successful in three of SUAL's major towns that the company now plans to expand the program to all regions in which it operates. The alliance fosters a unique understanding between local factory managers, municipal leaders and politicians, and ordinary citizens. It will continue to be an example of public-private cooperation once Russia has graduated from development assistance.

PARTNERS

Siberian-Urals Aluminum Company, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Colgate Palmolive Company, The Barents Secretariat



RESULTS

- In the initial two years, the alliance attracted additional funding amounting to more than seven times the original budget
- Additional corporations expressed interest in joining or replicating the USAID-SUAL Model
- The “Week of Good Deeds” in the town of Shelekhov included a town clean-up, an anti-drug campaign, free legal and psychological consultations, and fundraising activities for local charities
- Towns simplified the process for business licenses and added courses for business and economics into the local school curricula

