

EVALUATION SUMMARY



Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of Policy and Evaluation

RUSSIA-U.S. Young Leadership Fellows For Public Service Program

The purpose of the evaluation was to document the outcomes and impact of the YLF Program and to assess its success in providing participants with the academic knowledge, practical experience, and personal skills necessary for eventual leadership in public and community service. To do so, the evaluators surveyed alumni, held discussion groups with Russian alumni and semi-finalists, and conducted interviews with program officers, and other key informants.

Key Findings by Program Goal

Note: Each percentage is reported with Russian alumni first, followed by American alumni.

Understanding civil society and the special importance of public service and volunteerism.

- Alumni continue their participation in public service after completing the program (80%, 72%).
- Alumni are significantly more active in community service than before the program (80%, 70%).
- Alumni support equal rights for all citizens regardless of ethnicity or circumstance (84%, 82%).

Developing leadership skills to help attain educational, professional and civic goals

- Alumni believe the program improves their leadership abilities (91%, 81%).
- Alumni believe the program helps them acquire new skills for professional development (95%, 82%).

Mutual appreciation of Russian/American culture

- Almost all alumni agreed that they better understand the host country's culture as a result of the program (100%, 97%).

Forging enduring ties between Americans and Russians

- Alumni have monthly or more frequent emails with friends in the other country (90%, 95%).

Demonstrating responsibility to their communities and countries after returning home

- Most alumni remained in their home countries after the program, though 42% of Russians and 45% of the Americans moved to other communities. Some Russian alumni maintain contact and have sponsored community-building projects.

Project Information: Aguirre International conducted the evaluation between July and December 2002, with assistance from the Institute for Comparative Social Research (CESSI) in Russia. Because the YLF is a small program, Aguirre International chose to do a census and attempted to have all alumni participate in the survey. In total, the survey teams completed interviews with 88 Russian alumni (65% response rate) and 38 American alumni (a 78% response rate). The evaluation team also held discussion groups with Russian alumni and semi-finalists and interviewed program officers and other key informants.

Program Information: The Russia – U.S. Young Leadership Fellows for Public Service Program is a year-long academic exchange program for university graduates from Russia and the U.S. who intend to pursue careers in public service. Since the program's inception, 136 students from Russia and 49 students from the U.S. have participated, attending universities, undertaking internships and pursuing community service activities. The primary goal of the program, supported by the FREEDOM Support Act of 1992, is to contribute to economic and democratic reform and development in the former Soviet Union.

Contact Information: For more information regarding this evaluation, or to request a copy of the report, please contact the Office of Policy and Evaluation at (202) 632-6325, email ECAevaluation@state.gov, or by mail at State Annex 5, 2200 C Street NW, Washington, DC 22301. Additional program information may be found at <http://exchanges.state.gov>.