



Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2017 Professional Exchange Programs

Open World Leadership Program hosted October 2016 – December 2017

During fiscal year 2017, World Services hosted 20 Open World delegations from: Armenia, Republic of Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine. World Services partnered with volunteers in 18 cities/ 8 states to provide professional and cultural Open World programming for over 120 participants.

World Services partnered with regional cities hosting Open World delegations from Kosovo, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan in Western Wisconsin. In Fall 2016, AAUW La Crosse hosted a “Civic Rule of Law – Domestic Violence” delegation from Kosovo. AAUW organized several opportunities for members and the public to gain an understanding about the history of Kosovo and its efforts to establish an independent national government. UW Extension Juneau County continues to build a vibrant partnership with Open World alumni in Kazakhstan. Rural Mauston in Juneau County has annually hosted Open World delegations since 2012. Exchanges demonstrate rural economic development and in 2017, connected Kazakhstan environmental advocates with the rich array of environment protection and conservation in Wisconsin. First time host, Sparta Area School District, demonstrated that rural towns and villages offer opportunities for youth to prepare for the future through STEM. Sparta demonstrated the partnership with big city resources including Minnesota Science Museum and UW Madison and UW La Crosse to enhance rural development.

Fox Valley Technical College FVTC, Appleton, has established a reputation for exceptional Open World exchanges related to innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship. Open World selected FVTC the past three years to host this theme for delegates from Ukraine, Tajikistan, and Serbia.

October 2016 – December 2017 Open World Exchange

Theme / Host City

Armenia

Accountability and Ethics in Government: E-Freedom of Information	Advisory Commission in International Relations Great Falls, Montana
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Georgia

Media Practices	International Center of Syracuse Syracuse, New York
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Kazakhstan

Maker Spaces	Arvada Kyzlorda Sister Cities Arvada, Colorado
Entrepreneurship in Small Towns	University Wisconsin Extension Juneau County Mauston, Wisconsin
Environmental Education	University Wisconsin Extension Juneau County Mauston, Wisconsin

Kosovo

Domestic/Gender-based Violence: Victim Rights	La Crosse AAUW La Crosse, Wisconsin
Improving Elections Processes / Elections Management	Iowa Sister States Des Moines, Iowa

Kyrgyzstan

Women in STEM Education & Careers	Sparta Area School District Sparta, Wisconsin
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Russia

Social Entrepreneurship for Women	Colleagues International Kalamazoo, Michigan
Sister City Partnership- Women Entrepreneurship	San Diego- Vladivostok Sister Cities San Diego, California
Social Integration – Children & Adults with Disabilities	County of Santa Clara/Moscow Sister County Commission San Jose, California

Serbia

Judicial ROL—Domestic Violence	International Center of Syracuse Syracuse, New York
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Tajikistan

Innovation, Technology, and Start-ups	Dubuque Chamber of Commerce Dubuque, Iowa
Eco-tourism	Boulder-Dushanbe Sister Cities Boulder, Colorado

Turkmenistan

E-Governance in Hospitals	Sanford Health Bemidji Bemidji, Minnesota
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Ukraine

Women Technology Entrepreneurs	Fox Valley Technical College Appleton, Wisconsin
Empowering NGOs/Advocacy: Transparency and Anti-Corruption	Santa Cruz Sister Cities Support Santa Cruz, California
Empowering NGOs/Advocacy: NGO Management	Santa Barbara Sister Cities Santa Barbara, California
Empowering NGOs: Family Services	OPEN (Organization Promoting Everlasting Neighbors) Newton, Iowa
Combating Domestic Violence	Sebastopol World Friends Sebastopol, California

Among the cities hosting Open World delegations with World Services, the exchange has contributed to significant results in sustaining decade's long partnerships as well as cementing new relationships and serving as Open World's resource for Congress. Several examples include:

1) Sparta Area School District – Kyrgyzstan “Women in STEM Education & Careers

The Sparta Area School District welcomed six Open World leaders from Kyrgyzstan to Wisconsin in March. Inspired by their Wisconsin exchange, the delegates are already sharing their Open World “Encouraging STEM (*Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math*) Careers and Education” experience with young girls in Kyrgyzstan through presentations at the US American Corners library. The Kyrgyzstan visitors also introduced this fascinating Central Asia country to Western Wisconsin citizens to home host volunteers; through a public presentation; and joining the Coulee Region's International Women's Day event. Take home ideas included starting a computer programming careers camp; partnering with PBS SciGirls to create school lessons; explore expansion of telemedicine; and launch a STEM conference for secondary students.

2) Colleagues International, Kalamazoo – Russia “Social Entrepreneurship for Women”

Kalamazoo, with a long history of partnership with Sister City Pushkin, Russia and home to former Dubna interpreter and La Crosse friend, Yulia Willoughby, used the Open World

exchange to extend that relationship to other regions of Russia. Note, Kalamazoo celebrates all things Russia during their biennial Russian Festivals; next event November 2018.

Potential projects explored during the 2017 exchange with Open World delegates from Moscow, Voronezh, and Tula include: Moscow's KidsRockFest in 2018 ; Dedicate an entire issue of "Business Russia" to social entrepreneurship; develop a Junior Achievement Chapter in Voronezh ; and establish a toddlers championship in Kalamazoo .

3) San Diego Vladivostok Sister Cities – "Entrepreneurship"

Open World exchanges often energize sister city partnerships such as the San Diego – Vladivostok Sister City Society (SDVSCS). The people-to-people visit by Vladivostok women entrepreneurs put a face to an idea. Exchanges also strengthen connections with community leaders and other organizations as well as raise the visibility of the Sister Cities Society as a leader in international relationships. This exchange reconnected SCVSCS with the San Diego Diplomacy council.

Open World's mission is about mutual understanding, therefore, delegates give presentations in each city. In San Diego, over 60 people attended the multi-media panel discussion and luncheon at the Ahlers Center for International Business at the University of San Diego. The collaborative event (in conjunction with the [Women's International Center](#)) dramatically raised the profile of San Diego's Sister Cities program at USD and opened the door to additional collaborations in the future

Open World delegates on a mission create opportunities. One of the Vladivostok entrepreneurs works with a high tech company making a heating film. During several site visits, the delegate spoke with flooring specialists about potential U.S. market for their product and how to import U.S. technologies to Russia. Since returning to Vladivostok, Alina has taken steps to develop these relationships with assistance by SDVSCS volunteers and the non-profit Cleantech San Diego.

Technology contributes to follow-up connections with Open World alumni in Vladivostok and San Diego citizen diplomacy volunteers. All five delegates participated in a skype call between the San Diego – Vladivostok Sister City Society and counterparts in Vladivostok. A total of 18 people participated in the call on the Vladivostok side. Open World exchanges inspire a new generation of Sister City partners so necessary to sustain Sister City partnerships.

**U.S. Department of State “Peer-to-Peer” Initiative
"Best Practices in Recognition and Response to Child Abuse in Russia"
October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017
Partners: NGO Syostri (Sisters) Sexual Assault Recovery Center (Moscow)
Gundersen National Child Protection Training Center (GNCPTC)**

The goal of this project is to improve the recognition and response to child abuse in Moscow and Vladivostok by offering training in the technique of forensic interview training of child abuse victims. It is further designed to provide an understanding of the impact of abuse on the child and future behavioral outcomes resulting from abuse. Evidence-based practice in the United States has shown the forensic technique increases the number of child abuse cases that are prosecuted successfully. (Forensic interviews are conducted by trained professionals who have a structured conversation with a child to determine if he/she has been maltreated.) Long-term outcomes, beyond the scope of this project, are expected to increase the successful prosecution rates of child abuse cases handled by Sisters Center in Moscow and Vladivostok by implementation of forensic interviewing.

Initiated by “Sisters Center” in Moscow, the project created a partnership with the GNCPTC. In February 2017, six volunteers from the Sisters Center and its affiliated child protection organization in Vladivostok participated in an intense week-long training with GNCPTC staff in La Crosse. Following the training, participants adapted the ChildFirst training and translated materials for training in Russia. Topics specific to forensic interviewing techniques, play therapy, and best practices in therapy working with child abuse victim will be incorporated into five training workshops for Russian child protection volunteers. In order to make the ChildFirst information available in Vladivostok and other regions in Russia, volunteers with the “Sisters Center” and Vladivostok partners will create a website for distribution of the training materials. Curriculum and agendas for five day long workshops based on the ChildFirst model will be developed and launched in Fall 2017.

World Services is the coordinator and administrator for the Department of State grant.

American International Health Alliance - Tanzania Nursing Education Partnership

World Services had a grant from the American International Health Alliance to improve nursing curriculum for pre-service and in-service education provided by the national training schools in Tanzania. The grant was in partnership with the School of Nursing at Winona State University, Winona, MN, and with the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) School of Nursing in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Other Tanzania partners included the Tanzania Nursing Initiative, the Tanzania Nurses Association, the Nurse and Midwifery Council and the Tanzania Ministry of Health, Nursing and Midwifery Services Division.

Effective October 1, 2016, the funding agency, the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief, (PEPFAR) decided to discontinue nursing education as part of its annual plan. As a result the project was no longer funded after September 30, 2016.

Representatives of Winona State University and World Services did receive funding for a final wrap-up session for the project. The trip took place in January 2017. During the visit the U. S. representatives were engaged in the "Stakeholders Workshop for Development of Community Health Nursing Guidelines on HIV and AIDS", which focused on providing input to define Task Sharing criteria for various health professionals in Tanzania.

In addition, a Project Graduation Ceremony was held. All the partners were honored for their participation and work in Tanzania

Administration

Marketing and Public Relations

On September 4, 2017, the La Crosse Tribune published an article "World Services of La Crosse to bow out, hoping network thrives". It described some of the history of World Services including our international visitors program and the consulting program. The goal of the article was to thank our volunteers and to promote the concept that the relationships that were developed through the years will continue to thrive. Equally important is that after having

positive international experiences, people will continue to pursue other opportunities to engage in programs with people and countries throughout the world.

Coulee Region Global Awareness Collaboration

2016 Global Initiatives Week Celebration—November 4 – 11, 2016

World Services staff supported planning for the 2016 & 2017 Global Initiatives Week during the summer and early Fall. Promotional materials were posted on World Services website and Facebook and were distributed through our local email distribution list of approximately 400 Coulee region citizens. Staff participated in the Kick-off event at Myrick Park on November 4, 2016.

2017 International Women’s Day event—March 8, 2017

Once again, World Services joined with other community organizations to plan and host a celebration of international women in our region. International Women’s Day is sponsored by the AAUW-La Crosse Branch; Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration; Gundersen Global Partners; International Women’s Group of La Crosse; League of Women Voters-La Crosse Area; World Services of La Crosse; UWL International Education and Engagement; UWL Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department; Viterbo University-International Student Services; Western Technical College; and YWCA-La Crosse.

The panel presentation at UWL included Coulee Region international women from Bulgaria, China, Iceland, Ukraine, and Syria. Panel members for the “Be Bold for Change” theme discussed how women provide leadership in their country in protecting women’s rights and advocating for development and opportunities in education, government, and employment.

World Services participated in the planning, contributed cash towards the refreshments, and posted announcements on the website and Facebook. An Open World delegation from Kyrgyzstan, hosted by the Sparta Area School District, attended and were introduced at the UWL event.