COIL with Petrozavodsk, Russia

Leveraging Community and University Relationships for a Transformative Experience
Presenters:

• Dr. Lynn Amerman-Goerdt, EdD, MSW, University of Wisconsin-Superior, Assistant Professor of Social Work

• Dr. Dan Nolan, PhD, University of Minnesota-Duluth, Assistant Professor of German and Russian Studies

• Michelle Robertson, MSW, LGSW, College of St. Scholastica, Duluth, Assistant Professor - Undergraduate Field Director-Social Work
Remote Presenters:

• **Alexandra Smirnova** – Lecturer, Department of Foreign History, Political Science and International Relations, Petrozavodsk State University

• **Anna Shchetinina** - Civil Law and Medical Law Student, Russian Academy of Law, Petrozavodsk

• **Gleb Kolos** - Civil Law and Medical Law Student, Russian Academy of Law, Petrozavodsk

• **Elizabeth Brown**, Criminology and Russian Area Studies Student, University of Minnesota, Duluth

• **Marin Ekstrom** - Russian Studies Student, The College of St. Scholastica
Presentation Themes

• Increasing the impact: global citizenship & social justice
• Virtual exchange & telecollaboration: lessons learnt & evolving practices
• Vector for increased participation in study abroad & internationalization initiatives
New Steps International:

• Project Introduction
• Peer-to-peer diplomacy
• Background of the grant
• Sister Cities organizations
• Northwestern Russia, and the city of Petrozavodsk
• Longstanding partnerships with a focus on children’s welfare
New Steps: Beginnings and Project Trajectory

• Initial conversation around which a group would later coalesce
• Best practices exchange in Social Work and related fields
• Partners in Petrozavodsk and Duluth both confident in the direction of the project, even while it changed significantly in the first months
• Online collaboration offered a competitive advantage, especially when used to pool expertise at local universities, and bring international engagement to local community organizations
• The project that emerged was grounded in the practice of several local community organizations in each city, which in turn offered valuable case studies to faculty and students
• In extending the reach of local organizations, Social Work students, International Studies students and Russian Area Studies students, each got the opportunity to observe locally developed practices as they were framed for an international audience
New Steps: Project Goals at Outset

Areas of focus:
• Sex Trafficking
• Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
• Domestic Abuse
• Child Abuse
• Raising Emotionally Healthy Children

Intended Outcomes
• Collaborative Research Project, initiate application for second round of funding
• Student Presentations, at local and regional conferences
## PROJECT TIMELINE

<table>
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<tr>
<th>COIL and Video Conferences</th>
<th>Discuss and plan exchange</th>
<th>Introduce university and community delegation</th>
<th>Introduce student delegation</th>
<th>Share Fond du Lac: Tribal Working with women with addictions</th>
<th>Share Duluth: Restorative Justice Practices</th>
<th>Share Russian model of social work education to Twin Ports Social Work Training</th>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>September 2014</td>
<td>October 2014</td>
<td>November 2014</td>
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<td>U.S. to Russia</td>
<td>Russia to U.S.</td>
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<td>Russian Students to U.S.</td>
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<td>U.S. Students to Russia</td>
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New Steps: Challenges faced

- Well-worked out timeline, but difficulty arranging all meetings
- Translation work, availability of multiple microphones
- Consistency in student participation on the US side
- Failure to arrange multiple formats for interaction between US and Russian students
- Difficulty developing capacity for organizing presentations from partners
New Steps: Format of Online Meetings

- Synchronous
- Webex and Google hangouts
- Getting good sound, here and abroad
- University partners
New Steps: Translation, support, time

- Need for translation in a timely manner
- Network of volunteers
- Presenters who can adapt to a sometime hard to reach audience
- Failure to arrange multiple formats for interaction between US and Russian students
New Steps: Three campuses working together

• Collaboration across campuses
• Resources and expertise
• Local partner networks associated with different campuses
Russian Partners

Government

Republic Of Karelia
- Ministry of Health and Social Development
- Petrozavodsk Hospitals and Clinics
- Petrozavodsk City
- Program for Minors: Nadezda "hope"

University
- Department of Social Work and Sociology
- Law School
- International Relations

NGO
- Mother's Heart
- Karelian Center for Gender Studies
- Department of Pediatrics
- External Relations
Russian Partners

Photos, titles and biographies were available on New Steps International Website
Russian Students

Photos, titles and biographies were available on New Steps International Website
U.S. Partners

Photos, titles and biographies were available on New Steps International Website

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Board Member and Certified Trainer
Minnesota Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (MOFAS)

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Director
Office of International Programs
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Duluth - Petrozavodsk Open World
U.S. Students

Photos, titles and biographies were available on New Steps International Website
Reflections on partners and systems

Dominance of Russian Government sponsored services and representatives

• Demonstrated strong investment of resources into priorities for supporting needs of families and young children.

• This investment permeated their discussion and interests and was impressive to US delegation.

• Demonstrated close relationship between Government, University, and Services which could support alignment of mission.

Dominance of US organizational services and representatives

• Demonstrated nimbleness and innovation.

• The creativity and innovation in service delivery seemed inspirational.

• Allowed ability to highlight Tribal structure, support and cultural responsive services.

• Demonstrated disconnect between Government, University, and services which could support misalignment of mission.
Impact of COIL on Partner Relationships

Allowed for scaffolding of relationship building

- Relationship building at level not witnessed in previous exchanges
- Enhanced relationship allowed for more in-depth conversations, questions and sharing, and trust
- More in-depth conversations, questions and sharing allowed for content to be more relevant to all partners
- Relevance was enhanced because entire project was planned and developed based upon identified interests and needs, which changed over the 12-month project
Addressing Difficult Life Situations

- Addictions & Recovery
- Disabled Youth & Young Adult Issues
- Domestic Violence & Violence against Children
- Specialty Courts (Drug/Alcohol, Mental Health, Re-entry/Rehabilitation)
- Restorative Justice
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
Culturally Sensitive Material

Existing Relationships
Longtime & New Friends became like Family

Dialogue
Meaningful & Honest Conversations

Approach
Peer-to-Peer Classroom Community Presentation
Culturally Sensitive Material

Tribal Elder
Presenting Model Programs in Addictions & Recovery

Gender Equality
Challenging Cultural Norms

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
Building Understanding
Recipient:  
2015 Sister Cities  
Humanitarian Assistance Award


Sister Cities International Annual Conference, July 2015, Minneapolis, MN

Duluth Sister Cities International: Humanitarian Assistance  
(Cities with Population less than 100,000)
Project partners: