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Frequently Asked Questions (F.A. Q)

about

Intercountry Committees (ICCs) and the US-Russia ICC

Basic Topics

1. What is an Intercountry Committee (ICC) and how is it structured?
2. What is the mission of an ICC? How does it complement the traditional Rotary relationships that clubs and districts may already have with foreign clubs ?
3. How can this mission be achieved?
4. How is Rotary organized in Russia?
5. Why establish relationships of the ICC type between the United States and Russia?
6. What are the steps in the establishment of this relationship?
7. What are the annual costs of the US-Russia ICC?

1. What is an intercountry committee (ICC) and how is it structured?

If you are not familiar with the concept of intercountry committees, background information on this subject may be found in the following references:

1. Manual of Procedure, 2004 issue (page 86) and 2001 issue (pages 90-91, with more details).
2. Code of Policies, June, 2008, paragraph 37.030. Intercountry Committee Guidelines, pp. 264-267.
3. "The ABCs of Rotary" by PRIP Cliff Dochterman, page 24, Intercountry Committees.

You will particularly notice in these documents the developments concerning:

-the purpose of an ICC to be: ***the promotion of intercultural understanding among the Rotarians of 2 countries.***

The organization of an ICC:

1. The creation of an ICC between two countries should be composed of a national section that is tied to their respective countries and districts. The membership of each section is composed of founding Districts, Clubs, Rotarians, Rotaractors, spouses of Rotarians, and possibly non-Rotarian associated members.
2. Both sections are autonomous and shall meet at a general meeting once a year, alternating countries.
3. Each district representative shall have a term of three years. Members representing districts act as advisors to the sitting District Governor on matters dealing with the relations between the two countries.
4. National Sections must conform to the laws governing associations in their countries.

2. What is the mission of an ICC? How does it complement the traditional Rotary relationships that clubs and districts may already have with foreign clubs?

Cliff Dochterman was perfectly right when he said that "The ICCs provide an additional means for Rotary clubs and Rotarians to fulfill the responsibilities of the Fourth Avenue of Service—international understanding, goodwill and peace."

The mission of ICCs must be understood ***as a complement to the relationships*** already established by clubs and districts to educational, humanitarian or professional projects (whether local, national or international).

Here is an example of how the United States section of the US-Russia ICC proposes its goal:

-the promotion of intercultural understanding between the Rotarians of the United States and Russia in order to contribute to the establishment of peace in the world, by encouraging them to visit each other's country and homes,

-the promotion of professional, friendship and cultural exchanges particularly emphasizing the youth of the two countries,

-the strengthening of friendship so formed by encouraging clubs and districts of both countries to link with each other and/or with clubs and districts of other countries by jointly participating in WCS or other international projects.

So, this mission is about promotion amongst clubs (in the form of sensitizing, sharing experiences, and possibly coordination) of attitudes and actions recommended by Rotary International, much more than conception and management of totally original initiatives.

In fact an ICC puts the emphasis on the development of relationships between 2 Rotarian countries. Its mission consists of building up in those countries a support force to encourage

Rotarians of both countries to visit each other's homes, and to strengthen friendships so formed by incenting clubs and districts to link with clubs and districts in other countries in order to undertake club twinning, sponsorships of new clubs or simply informal international contacts, and eventually World Community Service(W.C.S.) projects. "The role of an ICC is that of an open embassy in friendly countries."

3. How can this mission be achieved?

The ICC serves as a coordinating body to pursue common interests of its members through joint projects in each country. This could take the form of a 3-H Grant to aggregate funds to assist orphanages. One such example is the 3-H Grant sponsored by District 5010 and several other US districts to expand the Health Fair Centers throughout Russia.

Another possible way is through the assistance to identify future cities and districts willing to sponsor Open World Delegation visits by Russian leaders and business entrepreneurs. Five Rotary clubs in Fort Bend County (close to Houston, Texas) sponsored a visiting Dental Delegation for 2 1/2 weeks in April 2006. This delegation visited a Dental School, several different dental clinics, the Dental Society, medical supply companies, a dental lab, and visited 7 Rotary meetings, 2 Rotary fundraisers and stayed with 13 different Rotary families during their stay. Several of these dentists expressed an interest in starting a Rotary club in their home community. Over 10,000 visiting Russian entrepreneurs and government leaders have come to the United States through various programs largely underwritten by the U.S. State Department. The ICC could serve as a coordinating body to identify clubs in the United States that are willing to act as sponsors for new clubs in Russia. Over 25 clubs have been started by entrepreneurs returning to Russia after their experience in the United States.

Rotary Districts are also interested in Group Study Exchanges between their districts and the Russian districts. Houston has had a GSE between St. Petersburg and Houston. This first exchange between Houston and St. Petersburg coordinated the establishment of a "telemedicine link" between the medical centers of the two cities which still exists today.

Another great opportunity for cross cultural collaboration by an ICC is through other exchanges such as the Rotary Youth Exchange which sends high school students abroad to study for a year in schools of the other country. That is a growing program between the United States and Russia which could easily be expanded into areas of the U.S. and Russia formerly not represented. Friendship exchanges offer another way for an active ICC to help by organizing exchanges between Rotarians of the two countries to home host small groups for short periods of time.

Possibilities for joint projects between member districts and their clubs to expand the internationality of their clubs and districts by joining together with clubs in Russia to complete joint projects, visits, education and fellowship are limited only by the imagination of the Rotary leaders involved. The end result of this is the promotion of world peace and understanding between nations using Rotary as the catalyst.

4. How is Rotary organized in Russia?

Rotary in Russia began in 1990 with the chartering of the Moscow Rotary Club, with St. Petersburg following soon thereafter in western Russia. Irkutsk was the first club organized in Russia, East of the Urals (six time zones away). Growth in the number of clubs has been rapid, totalling 38 clubs with 642 members in eastern Russia and 48 clubs with 1004

members in western Russia, according to the 2007-08 Official Directory of Rotary International. Due to the expanse of the territory of the Russian Federation, the Rotary clubs in Russia were split at the Ural Mountains. Those clubs east of the Urals were paired for administrative purposes into District 5010 (with Alaska and the Yukon Territory). The clubs in western Russia were grouped in three geographic areas and paired with European districts: The 10 clubs around St. Petersburg in the northwest were grouped with Finland's District 1430, 19 clubs in the central region around Moscow were grouped with the Sweden's District 2350, and the 17 clubs in the southwest were grouped around Sweden's District 2370. At the November, 2005 meeting of the Rotary International Board of Directors, all of the Rotary clubs west of the Ural Mountains were assembled into a new District 2220, which was installed in June, 2006 by President Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammar. Leadership of the new district will rotate among the three geographical areas for the first three years: the 2006-07 District Governor was Andrei Danilenko from the Moscow-Rossica Rotary Club, the DG for 2007-08 is Anatoli Voloshin from the Togliatti Rotary Club in the southwest, and the DG for 2008-09 will be Vladimir Vasilkov of the St. Petersburg-Neva Club in the northwest. The DG recently selected to serve for 2009-10 is Nadezhda Papp of the Moscow-East Club.

5. Why establish relationships of the ICC type between the United States and Russia?

a. The creation of a new district poses an enormous set of challenges to a new governor and his/her leadership team. These challenges are accentuated even more in Russia due to the size of the country. The new Rotary District 2220 and the geographic area of the clubs in eastern Russia is immense. While the clubs are grouped generally around major population centers, the distances between clubs is considerable. The clubs in the west occupy an area of roughly three time zones and the clubs in the east occupy a territory of about eight time zones. The challenges facing District Leadership are significant and will require long hours at both the district and club levels to become stronger and more effective. The Rotary organization in the United States has a wealth of experienced Past Governors and others that are knowledgeable in managing service oriented organizations. These experienced Rotarians could be utilized as a resource in training, personnel management and leadership development.

b. Americans have held a fascination with Russia, especially since the fall of Communism. The development of a market economy, spurred by an emphasis on travel and tourism, has placed Russia in a priority position for vacations and service opportunities in both directions. Many Rotarians, clubs and districts in the United States have long standing relationships with clubs in Russia. An ICC will complement these club and district activities to provide assistance to the Rotary clubs in Russia through coordination of friendship, youth, GSE and professional exchanges between the two countries.

c. Membership in Rotary clubs throughout Russia is small. Of the 38 clubs in Russia, East of the Urals 28 have 20 or less members, and of the remaining 10 clubs only 4 are larger than 25 members—none are larger than 27 members. Of the 48 clubs in Russia, West of the Urals (the new District 2220), 24 have 20 or less members, and only 4 are larger than 40 members. The largest club in all of Russia has 44 members. With a low average monthly wage for professionals in Russia, membership in a Rotary club is very expensive. An ICC could provide resources in manpower, training and experience in Club Extension to help the districts grow in numbers of clubs and membership.

d. The knowledge of Rotary and the concepts associated with Rotary as a service organization is in a developmental stage at the grass roots level. Even the efforts by the closeness of Sweden and Finland to help with training and education was hampered by cultural and language differences. However, a dramatic growth of membership in Rotaract Clubs coupled with an increase in participation in the Rotary Youth Exchange Program has been a great help in passing on the mores of Rotary to the average Russian Rotarian. The

ICC could act as a catalyst to expand the youth exchange program in Russia. The successful Russian Rotaract program could serve as a model to help increase the effectiveness of Rotaract in the United States.

e. Understanding of English is widespread in Russia with signage, posters and billboards appearing in both Russian and English. The relaxation of travel restrictions finds a significant increase in travel between the two countries. Establishing twin club ties offers a great opportunity for both American and Russian Rotarians at the club and district levels to fellowship through exchanges and joint projects.

6. What are the steps in the establishment of these relationships?

The formation of an ICC then requires, in each partner country, the following stages for those who want to initiate this project:

1. *To obtain from the acting Governor of one (minimum) district in each country the authorization to establish a section of an ICC between some Rotarians and clubs (and hopefully also their own districts), with the intention afterwards that these 2 sections meet in an ICC. **On June 8, 2007, 9 districts in the United States and both of the districts representing Russia joined together as Charter Districts in the US-Russia ICC. By the end of the 2007-08 Rotary year, the size of this ICC will be 15 Rotary districts making it the largest ICC in the Rotary world.***

2. *To identify at the beginning in each district, a certain number of clubs, and individuals, who are interested in this kind of friendly and instructive contacts,*

3. *To develop an agreement about the topics of common interest which will form the basis of the relationships between the two sections of the ICC, for example:*

- * reciprocal annual visits by groups of up to ten couples (it is easy at the level of a district)
- * discussions on main current issues that affect each country (excluding strictly religious, or political ones).
- * supporting the younger generations by supporting cultural meetings and exchanges between them (such as professional, educational and fellowship exchanges).

4. *To sign a letter of agreement (protocol) between the 2 districts which will formalize their mutual intent to establish an ICC. This was done in Evanston by representatives of Charter Districts at the Rotary in Russia Conference, June 8-10, 2007.*

5. *To establish bylaws for each local section of the ICC (for example: a US-Russia ICC would have an American section and a Russian section, each one with their own bylaws respecting the local legislation).*

6. *To determine the operating costs and the operational expenses of the local section (identify annual assessment for individuals, clubs, and or districts).*

7. *To form officially each of the two sections (general assembly meeting, publications, etc)*

8. *To proceed officially to the presentation of the charter of the ICC.*

9. *To start developing the topics of common interest that they have selected in stage 2.*

10. *To start communicating about their intentions and immediate actions... and to recruit new members, hopefully.*

11. *To join together each year in a general meeting (held alternatively one year in one*

country and the next one in the other) which makes the synthesis of the actions carried out by the adherent clubs of the two countries, in the above-mentioned spirit. The first meeting was held in June, 2007 in the United States and the meeting site for the 2008 meeting will be in Los Angeles.

12. And to participate in a common project,

7. What are the costs for administration of the US-Russia I.C.C?

a. Contributions from several sources will cover the ICC's costs of operation.

1. Rotarians on a purely individual basis, who wish to become members of the ICC, because of its social object, its projects, etc., and not a member of a member district or member club, will pay an annual fee of \$20 per capita. But this concerns only the Rotarians who voluntarily become members on a purely personal basis.

2. Clubs not affiliated with a member district. Each club will pay an annual fee of \$100 per annum. It is important to stress that when a club affiliates with an ICC (it is then often represented by its president or by another of its members). It is not necessary for all members to belong. The budget of the club is thus only charged \$100 per annum, (according to the type of management of the ICC and of its number of adherents), and only when the club wants to be itself a member of the ICC.

3. Districts, and particularly the districts who become Charter Districts of the ICC. The sitting governor of a district that desires to become a member, shall appoint a Rotarian to serve as that district's representative to the ICC. It is recommended that this appointment initially be for a period of three years to assure continuity. It is further recommended that each district, in addition, form a District Intercountry Committee, composed of 3-5 interested Rotarians, that will meet regularly for the purpose of follow through of projects and to identify future goals and projects that the district is interested in pursuing. The Charter Districts have supported the ICC financially by a contribution in their first year of membership amounting to \$2,000 to cover the operational costs for the establishment of the ICC. some of the operational expenses of the annual conference in 2007 and to build a Reserve Fund for unanticipated expenses. The annual district membership fee after the first year will be \$200 and this fee will be reviewed each year at the annual meeting.

b. Structure

1. The structure of the ICC. A National Section will be formed to coordinate the activities connected with the realization of established objectives of the ICC. This section shall be run by a board, elected for a period of three years and shall consist of a president, secretary and treasurer as a minimum. As the ICC grows in numbers, the national section may be divided into geographic regions, organized in a similar manner to the previous national section. Officers of the national and/or regional sections of the ICC will be selected at the annual meeting of the ICC. The ICC and the duly appointed representatives act as advisors to the sitting governors of the member districts.

2. National Coordinator When there are more than one ICC within the country, a National Coordinator shall be appointed by the Executive Council of ICCs to serve for a period of three years. The National Coordinator shall oversee the activities of the ICCs within that country and shall collect annual reports from each of the National Chairs in the country to forward to the Executive Council. Administrative costs for the National Coordinator shall be supported by the member districts of the ICCs within that country.