Russia’s adult population views on development aid

Results of Quantitative Study
WB “Russia As A Donor Initiative” Program supported by DFID Trust Fund.

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The RDI Program

- The Russia as a Donor Initiative (RDI) Program
  - Coordinated by GOR Working Group
  - Supported by DFID Trust Fund
  - Components – aid statistics, University curriculum for dev.aid, monitoring aid, communications for dev.aid

- Strategic Communications Component
  - Background paper on International Experience in aid communications
  - Survey of Russian population
  - Small survey of G7 journalists
  - January 2011 Workshop.
Survey Objectives

- To assess perceptions of the Russian population toward overseas development assistance, within the context of their own experiences and lives.
- To create a benchmark study so that the government can track views of the Russian population on issues related to ODA over time.
- To use findings to help drive overall communications strategy moving forward.
- To identify messages that might resonate with the general public related to ODA, and vehicles for delivering these messages.
Methodology

- A total of 1,503 respondents completed the survey in June - July, 2010.

- Levada Analytical Center was hired by the World Bank to field a national survey in Russia.

- The sample is nationally representative of the Russian population. In cases where it is not, Levada has weighted its findings appropriately.

- Full methodology presented by Levada.
I.
The Russian Population on Russia
Russia, rich or poor?

Russia is rather a rich country: 35%
Russia is rather a poor country: 14%
Russia is at some extent a rich country and at some extent a poor country: 49%
Don’t know: 2%

“...you can hear differing opinions about whether Russia is a rich country or not: some say that Russia is more likely to be a rich country, others say that it more likely to be poor, and others, that it at some extent a rich country and at some extent a poor country. What is your personal opinion?” (Respondents chose from a list.)
Russia, rich or poor?

Rich, because...

Rich natural resources: 85%
Large territory: 62%
Cultural heritage: 18%
Developed economy: 5%
High education level: 5%
High trust among people: 2%
Standard of living: 1%
Other: 1%
Don't know: 1%

Poor, because...

Poverty: 50%
Weak economy: 41%
Condition of roads/housing: 28%
Quality of health/education: 20%
Bad environment: 16%
Lower life expectancy: 10%
Decline in culture: 7%
Low trust among people: 6%
Other: 1%
Don't know: 4%

*In your opinion, what characterizes Russia as a RICH country to the greatest extent?* (Respondents chose from a list. Up to two responses combined.)

*In your opinion, what characterizes Russia as a POOR country to the greatest extent?* (Respondents chose from a list. Up to 2 responses combined.)
Poverty

“Speaking about poverty in Russia, how many people in Russia live in poverty, in your opinion?” (Respondents chose from a list.)
How would you evaluate the current economic situation in Russia?

How would you evaluate the government activity to overcome the economic crisis in Russia?

"How would you evaluate the current economic situation in Russia? Please answer using a ten-point scale where 1 means ‘very bad’ and 10 means ‘very good’." 

"How would you evaluate the government activity to overcome the economic crisis in Russia? Please, use a 10-point scale where 1 is ‘completely unsuccessful’ and 10 is ‘completely successful’."
Russia’s Influence

How much influence does Russia have in international affairs?

In your opinion, how much influence does Russia have in international affairs? Please answer using a 10-point scale where 1 means ‘has no influence at all’ and 10 means ‘has very much influence’.

Mean Rating

6.0
II. Russia in the Global Community
Interest in International Affairs

To what extent are you interested in international affairs and Russia's relations with other countries?

Mean Rating: 4.5

To what extent are you interested in information about Russian assistance to poor and developing countries?

Mean Rating: 4.4

"To what extent are you interested in international affairs and Russia's relations with other countries? Please answer using a 10-point scale where 1 means 'completely uninterested' and 10 means 'very interested'."

"To what extent are you interested in information about Russian assistance to poor and developing countries? Please answer using a 10-point scale where 1 means 'completely uninterested' and 10 means 'very interested'."
Yes, I know about this program

Yes, I have heard about this program but know almost nothing about it

No, I know and have heard nothing about it

"In 2000, the UN program, "Millennium Development Goals", was introduced. The program is aimed at eliminating extreme poverty and hunger, reducing child mortality, and infectious diseases in poor countries by the year 2015. Do you know or have you heard anything about this program?" (Respondents chose from a list.)
III. Challenges to Building Support for Russia as a Donor Country
Russia is not so rich

Russia is rich enough in order to help poor countries and enhance well-being of its population

Russia is not so rich in order to both help poor countries, and enhance well-being of its population

Don’t know

Percentage of Respondents (N=1,504)

“Now I will read two pairs of statements about Russia’s assistance to poor countries. Each pair consists of different points of views. Which statement from the first pair to closer to your opinion?”
(Respondents chose from a list.)
Russia should be more concerned with domestic issues

- Be more concerned with its domestic problems: 82%
- Take more active part in international affairs: 10%
- Don’t know: 8%

“Now I will read two pairs of statements about Russia’s assistance to poor countries. Each pair consists of different points of views. Which statement from the first pair to closer to your opinion?” (Respondents chose from a list.)
IV. Building the case for Russian Aid
Most approve of Russia’s aid to poorest countries

In general, do you approve of Russia’s aid to the world’s poorest countries?

- 29% yes
- 46% rather yes
- 11% rather no
- 6% no
- 5% I do not care
don’t know
Russian aid should stay the same or be reduced

In your opinion, how much aid should Russia provide to...

- countries affected by natural disasters?
  - more than now: 8%
  - less than now: 26%
  - the same as now: 57%
  - don't know: 9%

- poor countries of Africa, Latin America, and Asia?
  - more than now: 5%
  - less than now: 36%
  - the same as now: 47%
  - don't know: 12%

- the poorest CIS countries?
  - more than now: 7%
  - less than now: 33%
  - the same as now: 49%
  - don't know: 11%

"Now I will read two pairs of statements about Russia’s assistance to poor countries. Each pair consists of different points of views. Which statement from the first pair do you think is closer to your opinion?" (Respondents chose from a list.)
Priorities for Russian Aid

- Countries seriously affected by natural disasters
  - First Place: 64%
  - Second Place: 18%
  - Third Place: 10%

- Poor CIS countries (former republics of the USSR)
  - First Place: 44%
  - Second Place: 22%
  - Third Place: 20%

- Poor countries neighbor to Russia, which a terrorist threat could come from
  - First Place: 40%
  - Second Place: 19%
  - Third Place: 6%

- The poorest countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America
  - First Place: 21%
  - Second Place: 12%
  - Third Place: 3%

"Which countries should Russia help in the first place? Which countries should Russia help in the second place? And which countries, in your opinion, should Russia help in the third place?" (Respondents chose from a list.)
Russian Aid to Poor Countries

Potential Assistance

- Sending Russian specialists to work there: 58%
- Educating their students at Russian institutions: 51%
- Supplying food & equipment at subsidized prices: 30%
- Construction by Russian specialists: 23%
- Monetary aid to these governments: 14%
- Other: 1%
- Don't know: 5%

Percentage of Respondents (N=1,504)

“Do you agree to the following proposals?” (Respondents chose from a list. Up to 3 responses combined.)

Most Effective Assistance

- Medical care: 65%
- Access to basic education: 24%
- Developing industrial facilities: 22%
- Developing infrastructure: 14%
- Developing agriculture: 14%
- Environmental protection: 8%
- Developing universities: 8%
- Access to new technologies: 6%
- Other: 1%
- Don’t know: 6%

Percentage of Respondents (N=1,504)

“How do you think in which areas could Russia provide assistance to poor countries most effectively?” (Respondents chose from list. Up to 2 responses combined.)
In Collaboration With...

Assistance is more effective...

If Russia participates in international programs in cooperation with international organizations such as the World Bank

If Russia provides it directly to the governments of these countries

Don’t know

"Do you think that the assistance to poor countries is more effective when Russia provides it directly to the government of those countries or when the Russian assistance is channeled through international programs in cooperation with the World Bank, UN?"

Importance of collaboration

To what extent do you believe it is important for Russia to participate with other developed countries in the UN and World Bank aid programs for poor countries?

"Please indicate on a 10-point scale, where 1 is ‘not important at all’ and 10 is ‘very important.’"
V. Potential Messaging
Russia’s Objectives

- To extend the circle of countries friendly to Russia (31%)
- To reduce threat of terrorism and drug trafficking between Russia/neighbor countries (30%)
- To increase its influence and its prestige in the world (30%)
- To create favourable conditions for promoting Russian goods and business (24%)
- To reduce extreme poverty (24%)
- To lay the basis for the long-term sustainable development of poor countries (19%)
- Other aims (1%)
- Don't know (5%)

"Russia may have various objectives in helping poor countries. What objectives listed below do you consider the most important for Russia? Please select no more than two answers." (Respondents chose from a list.)
Outcome of Russian Aid

By helping poor countries, Russia widens the circle of friendly countries and strengthens its influence in the world

No matter how much Russia helps poor countries, they will not become friendly to Russia

Don’t know

49% 41% 10%

Percentage of Respondents (N=1,504)

"Now I will read two pairs of statements about Russia’s assistance to poor countries. Each pair consists of different points of views. And which statement from the second pair is closer to your opinion?" (Respondents chose from a list.)
Support for Russian aid if through international aid programs

Assistance to underdeveloped countries is ineffective due to political instability and corruption in these countries, it does not reach the people who really need it.

To increase its influence Russia should participate in international aid programs for poor countries.

"To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Russia’s assistance to poor countries?"
Moral responsibility to reduce extreme poverty

Do you think that developed countries should hold moral responsibility to reduce extreme poverty in poorest countries?

- 21% Definitely should
- 42% Rather should
- 21% Rather should not
- 8% Definitely should not
- 8% Don’t know

Percentage of Respondents (N=1,504)
Aid to poor countries should benefit Russia in some way

- Making a decision about whether to help poor countries... Russia should put first its own interests
- In the assistance to poor countries Russia should collaborate with other developed countries...
- Feature of a developed country is active providing of aid to poor countries
- Russia should help poor countries because this will promote Russian business in these countries
- Russia should first help neighbouring poor countries - instability in these countries endangers Russia
- Russia should help our poor neighbor countries, because of common history and culture
- Improving living conditions in poor countries at the Russian borders, can reduce the flow of migrants
- Russia should help poor countries regardless of their geographical location

Percentage of Respondents (N=1,504)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completely agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Completely disagree</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Russia’s assistance to poor countries?”
VI.
Overall Communicating: Reaching Citizens
Information Sources

- Russian television broadcasts: 81%
- Articles in the Russian press: 24%
- Internet: 14%
- Russian radio broadcasts: 9%
- Conversations with colleagues, friends, relatives, neighbours: 5%
- Foreign television broadcasts: 2%

"From which sources do you most often get such information?" (Asked only of those respondents who indicated that they had read/heard/seen anything about developed countries’ assistance to poor countries in the last two months. Respondents chose from a list.)
Trust in Information Sources

- Russian television: 17% Completely trust, 50% Somewhat trust, 17% Somewhat distrust, 4% Completely distrust, 4% Don't know
- Information from friends, relatives, acquaintances: 14% Completely trust, 54% Somewhat trust, 4% Somewhat distrust, 11% Completely distrust, 11% Don't know
- National Russian newspapers, journals: 10% Completely trust, 54% Somewhat trust, 24% Somewhat distrust, 4% Completely distrust, 7% Don't know
- Russian radio stations: 10% Completely trust, 52% Somewhat trust, 19% Somewhat distrust, 4% Completely distrust, 15% Don't know
- Local Russian newspapers, journals: 11% Completely trust, 51% Somewhat trust, 25% Somewhat distrust, 6% Completely distrust, 7% Don't know
- Internet: 8% Completely trust, 32% Somewhat trust, 18% Somewhat distrust, 6% Completely distrust, 36% Don't know
- Foreign television: 4% Completely trust, 25% Somewhat trust, 27% Somewhat distrust, 12% Completely distrust, 33% Don't know

*To what extent do you trust the following sources of information?*
Influential Public Figures

No, I don’t need such explanations/I am indifferent 22%

President of the Russian Federation 48%

Head of the Russian Government 29%

Journalists, specialists in international affairs 12%

Region Governor/Republic President/City Mayor 8%

Supreme religious leaders 6%

Head of the political party, that I support 2%

Popular artists, famous sportsmen 1%

Other 1%

Don’t know 5%

“Would you like Russian influential public figures to give explanations about which of the poorest countries Russia will provide assistance to and what kind of assistance it provides? If yes, who would you personally prefer to hear such explanations from?”

(Respondents chose from a list. Up to 3 responses combined)
VII. Conclusions
Summary of Key Findings...

**Challenge:**

- **Overall Mood**
  - Little optimism about current state of affairs in Russia (in particular, the economy)
  - Overwhelming view that Russia needs to focus on Russia

**Challenge:**

- Practically no support for any increase in foreign assistance and high levels of skepticism about use of aid
  - But nearly half of citizens think it should remain at the same level

**Challenge:**

- Little interest in international affairs

**Challenge:**

- A need to move attitudes on the continuum...
Communication (narrative and messaging) needs to emphasize...

- Regardless of Russia’s current economic difficulties, as a developed nation Russia has a responsibility to help the poorest countries. It should do this while demonstrating that it is keeping its eye on its own interests.

- By engaging more internationally at any level (e.g., development assistance), Russia builds and solidifies role and influence.

Russia can’t afford NOT to engage on all levels including increased development assistance.
Communication (narrative and messaging) needs to emphasize...

- Russia’s approach to development assistance is **smart and strategic**.
  - By joining with international partners, it can improve the opportunity for effective aid.
  - Bi-lateral assistance can also be targeted and effective.

- Russia’s assistance program is **strategically targeted globally**
  - Consider emphasizing assistance in areas affected by natural disasters and former CIS/neighbor countries.
    - Building support for ODA to countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America will be very difficult.
  - Consider emphasizing the work done in medical/health sector which is perceived as the area to which Russia brings added value (symbol of Russia’s expertise and human capacity).

- Use television for informing citizens
  - President the most trusted source for information on Russia’s development program.
Polling in the future to measure shifts in attitudes...

- Valuable to track attitudes and perceptions over time to measure the support of citizens toward increased foreign assistance
  - Use this survey as benchmark of citizens’ views of Russia’s development assistance
  - Consider returning to the field in timely fashion (in response to communications strategy and media/campaign activities)
  - Use poll results to refine messaging, communication and programmatic aspects of ODA
- Consider using polling in recipient countries as a way to build support through targeted communication/outreach campaigns
Thank you