

OPEN WORLD PROGRAM 2019

HOSTING THEMES

ARMENIA THEMES

Civic Education (February 13th):

According to Transparency International's Corruption Barometer Data (2017), Armenians have a very high tolerance level toward corruption, with 67% stating they will not report corruption. The political transition following the May 2018 "Velvet Revolution" has brought about a government crackdown on high-level corruption; however, it is yet to be seen how this will affect behavioral practices at the individual level. One way to address this challenge in the long term is through civic education with a targeted focus on raising awareness on and instilling intolerance toward corruption among youth during high school and university. Open World civic education programming designed for civics teachers, education faculty and policy makers and implementers, as well as civil society representatives, is very timely and can expose such leaders to different models and effective approaches of addressing corruption-related issues through education curricula. Supporting the development of an anti-corruption curriculum that can be tailored to different school age groups as well as outside classroom environments (e.g. summer camps), together with the Ministry of Education's commitment to institutionalize such a curriculum, can have a long-term impact on decreasing Armenians' tolerance toward corrupt practices.

Public Broadcasting and Governance (February 13th):

Armenia's Public TV and Radio for years were a mouthpiece for the ruling regime. With the 2018 "Velvet Revolution," their news departments were suddenly free to be more independent and professional. Given its reach as one of the few truly nationwide networks, developing an independent public broadcaster in Armenia will help cement the democratic advances seen since the installation of a new government in May and will provide an alternative to Russian-language media that too often dominates the airwaves in Armenia. This program would be designed for Public Radio and TV leadership and news professionals and relevant government officials. Meeting with U.S. Congress members and staff, they would learn about how a government can support public broadcasting while allowing it to maintain its independence. Speaking with the Broadcasting Board of Governors, they could learn about how to receive public funding but remaining objective despite being government funded. In meetings with local public broadcasters, they could explore ways to engage the local community and raise funding from donors to increase public broadcasters' financial independence from any one source. Through sessions with academics and think tank experts, they could explore the importance of independent public broadcasting and development of new media voices.

AZERBAIJAN THEMES

Community Nursing and Administration (September 11th):

Nursing in Azerbaijan is not viewed as a skilled profession, with the health care system not utilizing nurses the way the American health care system does. The Azerbaijan Medical University is in the process of developing its first nursing curriculum, and the medical community in Azerbaijan needs to understand the roles and functions strong nurses can provide. This Open World program would focus on best practices in nursing care and in health care administration in general, particularly for rural or underserved communities. Members of

the medical community and government officials would observe both large-scale hospital operations and community programs where nurses play a vital role in patient care.

Community Pre-School Education (October 9th):

Azerbaijan is interested in expanding its pre-school programs and exploring how to get the broader community interested in education. The education model in Azerbaijan has not provided support to parents and other community leaders who want input in the education process. This OpenWorld program would take Ministry of Education and community officials and explore the role of government, business, and the community providing well-rounded pre-school education. Such a program could highlight public-private partnerships and collaborations within local communities, particularly in rural or other low-income communities. It could also demonstrate the ways the U.S. pre-school education model provides greater access to pre-school education, examine best practices in pre-school education, experiential learning, internship programs and teachers' professional development.

Climate-Smart Agriculture (October 30th):

Agriculture is critical to Azerbaijan's stability and economic growth and it accounts for a significant portion of employment, food security, and rural development. The sector is highly climate sensitive and adverse changes in temperature, precipitation, and frequency of extreme events (droughts, heat waves, floods) can have a devastating effect. This Open World program for government agriculture officials, small farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs should focus on the application of climate-smart practices and technologies, and would examine ways to increase agriculture productivity, maintain soil fertility and increase environmental investment in the agriculture sector.

BELARUS THEMES

News and Media Literacy (March 20th):

Belarusian journalists, bloggers, and digital media managers will examine the impact of digital and social media on the availability and veracity of news. Participants will discuss the economic, political, and social impact of disinformation. They will also explore the importance of fact checking and myth busting, as well as the critical role and responsibility of journalists in ensuring accurate reporting in a complex digital media environment.

Tourism Development (October 30th):

Tourism professionals, including tourism officials, tour operators, and NGOs active in tourism from Belarus will examine strategies used to promote tourism in the U.S., paying particular attention to tourism marketing on a local, regional, and national level. Participants will explore trends in tourism such as adventure tourism, cultural tourism, food tourism, family tourism, heritage tourism and eco-tourism; examine concepts of sustainable and responsible tourism and the role of small business in the tourism industry; and will also assess the link between tourism and local economic development.

Entrepreneurship in Small and Medium Enterprises (December 4th):

Representatives of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Belarus, both private and state-owned, will be provided with an overview of current economic, political, and social factors influencing and encouraging the development of small business and entrepreneurship in the U.S. through an Open World program. Participants will examine programs and incentives that support small businesses, learn about the impact of U.S. small businesses on local, national, and

global economies, and explore theoretical concepts and practical applications to operating successful small businesses.

GEORGIA THEMES

Rural Tourism Development (September 4th)

The government of Georgia has placed a high priority on economic development, and developing tourism in particular. The Georgian National Tourism Administration is focused on developing the country's image and promoting Georgia as a tourism destination worldwide. There is tremendous potential in the mountain regions. Challenges include outmigration and a need for capacity building in infrastructure, marketing, and how to work with government at various levels to form public-private partnerships in support of tourism development. Open World provides an excellent opportunity to help Georgian professionals learn best practices on management and protection of public lands and parks and examine the use of education programs with a focus on tourism development, improvement and management.

KAZAKHSTAN THEMES

U.S. Libraries/Community Centers (June 12th)

Program Objectives include studying the role and functions of libraries and information specialists in the United States, examining the wide variety of U.S. libraries, exploring the latest information technology applied by libraries, including online and digital services, and studying policy-making for programs and activities in American libraries.

KOSOVO THEMES

Integrating Renewable Energy into the Power Supply (June 5th)

Kosovo produces 98 percent of its energy from two aged coal fired power plants. As part of its diversification efforts and obligations under European Union's Energy Community, Kosovo has committed to pursuing an aggressive renewable program with a target of producing 30% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020. With very little experience in integrating renewables into the grid, this target will pose a serious challenge to both the Kosovo Energy Transmission and Market Operator (KOSTT) and other stakeholders in the energy sector in both balancing the grid and attracting investment. The intermittency of renewables, particularly wind, becomes even more of a challenge for Kosovo given its small size and lack of grid balancing mechanisms such as large hydropower plants. Additionally, the policies for attracting investment in renewables might result in serious consequences, such as higher energy tariffs. The aim of the project is for officials in Kosovo and energy stakeholders to the European Union's better understand the U.S. best practices in integrating renewables into the energy mix. Upon their return to Kosovo, participants will be encouraged to use their gained knowledge to reform current policies and practices in an attempt to integrate renewables in the most efficient manner.

KYRGYZSTAN THEMES

Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (March 27th):

Accession by the Kyrgyz Republic to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (or Hague Abduction Convention) would protect children from the harmful effects of international abduction by a parent, by encouraging the prompt return of abducted children to their country of habitual residence, and to organize or secure the effective rights of access to a child. Although currently not a party to the Convention, the Kyrgyz Republic responds to international child abduction allegations through the combined efforts of the following governmental entities: Ministry of Justice, General Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Labor and Social Development, Judicial Department of the Supreme Court, State Migration Service, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An Open World program on the civil aspects of international child abduction would provide the Kyrgyz government and other interested parties with a framework to create a unified, functional central authority where concerted efforts to process international child abduction cases can be expediently coordinated, leading ultimately to the institutional capacity necessary for future Convention accession.

Banking Sector Reform (March 27th):

Since its 2014 graduation from the Financial Action Task Force's monitoring process, the Kyrgyz Republic has consistently worked to improve compliance with Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Finance of Terrorism requirements. Despite these sincere efforts, however, significant challenges remain in both commercial banking and government oversight. In mid-2017, every Kyrgyz bank saw the closure of correspondence accounts with U.S. financial institutions. In 2018, the country's long-standing program with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) abruptly ended after the Kyrgyz Parliament rejected IMF-suggested amendments to banking laws that would promote transparency in banking governance and oversight. An Open World program on banking sector reform would provide Kyrgyz government and commercial banking experts the opportunity to observe internationally-accepted banking practices and legislation, leading ultimately to adoption and implementation of appropriate legislation and measures to improve the banking industry and reintegrate the Kyrgyz financial network with global partners.

RUSSIA THEMES

Local Legislators (February 13th)

Elections for local Mayors/legislators (mayors are the head of local legislators) in Russia have been one area that the opposition has had some success; a quiet voice. Local leaders in Russia are faced with the great demands of their citizenry, and there are numerous young leaders that are making a name for themselves by trying to make government work. Open World plans to host four (4) groups of delegates that understand the importance of the legislative process and how local legislators respond to their constituent needs. For hosting in this theme, we would prefer locations in which the State legislator will be in session so that our visitors will be able to spend some time observing the legislative process and can gain from seeing all aspects of the legislative process.

Women in STEM (March 6th):

A Russian-American initiative began at a Graduate Women International Conference in Cape Town, South Africa in August 2016 aimed at expanding women's professional contribution in the STEM fields. Changing societal norms and increasing women's ability and representation in technical fields will help to ensure the application of technological thinking to the exercise of finding solutions for issues that particularly affect women, and the development of opportunities that would particularly benefit them. These Open World programs will look at U.S. programs designed to create opportunities and encourage girls/women to participate in STEM education and careers and would be targeted to government officials and civic leaders charged with development of school curriculums and outside activities, youth leaders, and advocates of increased opportunities for girls and women.

Media/Journalism (March 20th):

The nationalistic tone of the dominant Russian media continues to drown out independent and critical journalism, stressing patriotic themes associated with Russia's 2014 military incursions into Ukraine and the launch of air strikes in Syria. Russian leaders and pro-government media outlets also seek public support and to suppress any dissent in the face of an economic downturn linked to falling oil prices, and Ukraine and U.S. elections meddling-related sanctions. Deterrents to independent reporting and commentary have included draconian laws and extralegal intimidation. At the same time, Russia has waged an aggressive media campaign aimed at weakening the institutions in the West. This Open World programming is aimed at reviewing journalistic practices and turning down the volume a bit so that professional journalists can compare best practices and find best ways to investigate.

Children's Librarians (April 24th)

Based on a successful 2018 program, Open World will invite a delegation of Children's Librarians to participate in the program to ensure continuing relations between U.S. libraries and libraries in Russia, particularly in how they serve children and families. Such a program will provide a broad overview of how libraries are funded and governed in the United States. This is in addition to looking at best practices and use of advanced technologies.

National Parks (April 24th)

Russian protected areas can potentially serve as a source for both revenue and environmental education within Russia. Some Russians that live in protected areas worry that expanded use of national parks and nature preserves can only be detrimental. Russian protected area managers see the U.S. system of national parks as a model and many Russians are working to create a culture change within their system in relation to how public lands are maintained and enjoyed. Younger Russian park managers are seeking to help the Russian national park system better develop its outreach and visitor education programs, including the use of visitor centers. This program will support the goal of developing environmental/green tourism in and around national parks in Russia. The program will also help support Russian civil society, by fostering the establishment of "friends of parks" associations and societies, which are organized to assist national parks and nature reserves through volunteer work and the collection of private donations. This program should demonstrate hands on training in environmental education, proper ways to develop new trails and infrastructure. This visit would give Russian experts a better understanding of how U.S. park management works. It is recommend that the hosting location be situated near a national park/refuge/reserve with recognized excellence in outreach and visitor support activities, and ecotourism, especially parks that have established partnerships with "friends" societies and other NGOs that support them.

Partnerships (Civic Activism, NGO, Community Development) (April 24th)

Agreements, both formal and informal, between American and Russian sister cities/regions/clubs have long existed, and these relationships are waning in the current environment of worsening relations between the United States and Russia. Many of the cities/clubs that still maintain such relations were formed during the Soviet era, and in the early days of the Russian Federation (1990s). As these partnerships matured, the focus changed to sustainable development of economic and human resources, and the promotion of trade. These Open World programs will be aimed at hosts that either have ongoing partnerships with these cities/region/clubs or indicate that they are able to sustain such relationships. These projects must be clearly defined and be goal oriented and the partnership representative(s) from Russia that will participate much be integral to the future ability to sustain and grow the partnership, as well as be a leader in the proposed partnership activity under the grant.

Legal Mediation (May 15th)

The Government of Russia is extending the use of mediation for administrative and public trust violations and will introduce a paid “mediator” in the court system. Much of the details of the potential expanded mediation practice in Russia is still being developed. An Open World program providing leaders in the development of mediation practices within the Russian judiciary would be extremely beneficial in this regard and will provide great insight into many aspects of mediation practices, including costs and benefits.

Public Defenders (May 15th)

In Russia, there are large numbers of arrests and people who face prison time because they lack information about their rights as accused. Additionally, Russian often faces a shortage of lawyers who are able to represent these people. While there is an NGO that has a “public defender school” which offers a weeklong course, leaders of Civil Society Organizations in Russia could benefit from exposure to the functions of the U.S. legal system, as well as how lawyers and non-lawyers are trained on the role of public defenders. Such a program would be important in the effort to educate people on their rights as defendants.

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Demographics and Epidemiology (September 11th)

This program is aimed at familiarizing young demographers – future leaders from Russian universities and research centers - with the system of research and higher professional education in the United States in the fields of demographics and epidemiology. The program will provide an overview of the state statistics, the system of funding for research and professional training in demographics and epidemiology. The group will include 5-7 young demographers, post doctorates or PhD students as well as those, who already work in the field of statistical data collection and analyze epidemiological and demographic data.

Nelson Fellows - Oncology (September 11th)

Open World’s Board of Trustees created the Senator Ben Nelson Fellows program to honor Senator Nelson's contribution to Open World and improve ties between the U.S. and Russia in the medical field. Open World has hosted six annual delegations of Senator Ben Nelson Fellows. The 2019 program focus will be on oncology. Throughout the program, delegates will gain insight into recent development, and treatment options for in the field of oncology and will further working relations with their American peers. The delegation will consist of leaders in the field of oncology from Russia.

Pediatric Palliative Care (September 11th)

Palliative care was non-existent in Russia until recently. After adoption of the law on Palliative care in 2013, the Center of Palliative care was established in Moscow in 2015, along with hospices in other regions and with Open World programming in this area. Pediatric palliative

care is only starting to develop. According to Moscow Palliative Care Center's director, 200 thousand Russian children are in need of palliative care. There is not enough expertise and this field and there is a big need in training pediatric palliative care experts. A visit by a group of experts to the U.S. will help further advance this field of care in Russia.

Smart Cities (September 25th)

Smart city technologies and practices such as the use of innovative systems for controlling urban infrastructure/transport not only improves a population's quality of life, but also helps in forming a comprehensive strategy of urbanization. Russia has made great strides in developing smart cities/technologies as has various locations in the United States. Such programming will be aimed at sharing experiences and developing joint plans for future collaboration in the field.

Alternative Energy (September 25th)

Russia is one of the world's largest producers of energy, most of which it obtains from oil, natural gas, and coal. The country's focus on those resources for production and export, which constitute more than 60% of foreign trade earnings, means it has paid little attention to renewable energy, except for hydropower as part of the legacy of the Soviet Union. However, as the costs of fossil fuels rise and the use of new renewable technologies brings the cost of electricity down, Russia has recognized a need to develop alternative energy source, especially for internal consumption, if it wishes to continue to export its fossil fuels. Delegation of renewable experts from Russia will learn a lot from such a program regarding new technologies and new economies of renewable use and development and a dialogue will be open between the delegates and their hosts as to energy policy in the modern world.

Watershed Management (September 25th)

The goal of the program is to familiarize young professionals from Russian universities, research centers, NGOs, and private enterprises with the U.S. approaches to integrated watershed management. This exchange is proposed to focus on the Chesapeake Bay Program, a unique regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. The program serves as a model of successful cooperation of the federal, local, and municipal governments with private companies, research centers, and local communities to solve environmental, social, and economic issues of the watershed region. According to the Russian Federal Service of State Statistics, 35.4% of wastewater is discharged into natural waters in Russia without any treatment. Municipal sewage and industrial wastewater contaminate the environment in urban areas, resulting in drinking water that does not comply with many of Russia's legal standards. Long-term water quality data demonstrates that water pollution in Russia is increasing. Poor water quality contributes to the degradation of environmental conditions, loss of biodiversity as well as in economic losses and public health decline in the watershed areas. Currently, municipal governments and sewage enterprises are responsible for local water issues. However, many of local governments and these enterprises do not have adequate resources to insure water purity. The situation is worsened by poor coordination of efforts to improve water quality and lack of communication between federal, local governments, private companies, and local communities. In this context, improving watershed management is of critical importance to addressing the most pressing environmental, economic, social, and public health issues associated with poor water quality. The proposed program would provide a group of environmental specialists, water engineers, public administration practitioners, educators, and NGOs representatives with experience and contacts at the leading U.S. institutions that shape and implement integrated watershed management programs aimed to improve water quality and solve economic and health issues associated with poor water management.

Judicial Academy (October 17th)

In October 2018, Open World will host judicial/legal educator delegation from the Russian Academy of Justice under the Supreme Court. If this program is successful, tentative plans will be made at that time to host other groups aimed at cooperative efforts between the United States and Russia on partnering legal faculties and/or courts. Such programming will be aimed at finding common ground between the judiciaries of the United States and Russia for further mutual development of ties between countries in all spheres; the rule of law being a critical component.

Combatting Violent Extremism (October 30th)

Although Russia's Muslim community is large, Muslim faithful have limited access to mosques and moderate Islamic teachings, even in Moscow. Leaders of the Russian Muslim community are concerned, therefore, that young men in the Muslim community are turning to radical sources for religious inspiration. An Open World program would allow them to learn from the practical experience of American Muslim leaders in countering violent extremism and also give them perspective on the American Muslim experience in the 21st century. One preferred location for this program is the greater Manhattan region, but hosting requests are not required for that area (some geographic preference will be given to a strong Manhattan-based proposal though).

Disaster Response (non-governmental) (October 30th)

The Russian government's approach to disaster response can be at times inadequate, leaving disaster victims vulnerable. This was evidenced by the large number of appeals or calls made to President Putin during his annual "direct line" regarding victims of recent flooding or the conflict in the Donbas. Absent government assistance, victims turn to civil society, NGOs, faith-based groups, or charities for assistance. These groups are often under-resourced and piecemeal. Such grassroots organization will learn a lot from U.S. disaster response groups like the American Red Cross and other volunteer-based organizations, both faith-based or not.

Identifying/Treating Domestic Violence (October 30th)

According to the Russian Public Opinion Research Center, one woman among four has experienced domestic violence in Russia. In spite of this fact, in 2017 the Russian State Duma shifted the legal status of violence committed by family members from a criminal offense to an administrative offense. In the past year, news sources reported a significant increase of domestic violence. The Open World program will focus on how to reveal cases of domestic violence when a woman or a child first resorts to consultation at the level of the general practitioners, gynecologists, or social workers. USG health institutions and NGOs will share their experience creating interviews and questionnaires that allow doctors or social workers to uncover domestic violence if a doctor or a social worker suspects it may have taken place, without crossing privacy borders or traumatizing a client. The participants can also learn how to help victims deal with the shame and social stigma, and where to refer them for further help. Target audience would be health care practitioners, social workers, and NGOs working with high risk female groups, including HIV positive or drug-dependent women.

Internally Displaced Persons (October 30th)

The Southern Federal Region of Russia is the third busiest migration hub in Russia (after the metropolitan centers of Moscow and St. Petersburg). Following Russia-supported separatist conflict in Eastern Ukraine, the flow of migrants and displaced persons to Rostov (the largest city in the Region) has intensified. Responding to the associated public health challenge of connecting to care people who are undocumented has fallen to the local NGOs. The undocumented in the region include people who are homeless, undocumented immigrants, and displaced and stateless individuals. Such people face extreme challenges in accessing healthcare

in Russia while also being at risk or already living with HIV or viral Hepatitis. Migrants are marginalized and they are often blamed for transmission of infectious and communicable diseases and other social ills. The goal of the program is to educate a core cadre of dedicated activists who will become experts in working with migrants across the region. The project is being proposed in collaboration with the NGO “Kovcheg”, which serves as a training hub for the region and operates in Rostov, its largest population center.

Entrepreneurship (December 4th)

Entrepreneurship and small business development are vital to promoting economic growth and social stability in Russia. This program will focus on the strategic goal of economic growth and business development. The program will highlight the critical role entrepreneurship plays in the U.S. economy and examine U.S. interests in promoting entrepreneurship worldwide to foster economic development and contribute to the development of free and open societies.

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (December 4th)

Small and medium sized business in Russia is experiencing a long-term crisis and Russian cities and towns see closing shops and businesses with little optimism from their owners for improvements in the near future. Developing e-commerce might be a way out for many small and medium sized companies. The participants in the program, consisting of policy makers and business/technology leaders, will learn about American best practices supporting the development and sustainability of small and medium enterprises as the backbone of the U.S. economy and way to further regional economic growth and improve the standard of living for a population. Such a program will include information on establishing an online presence and marketing it through social media, as well as cover the logistics, tax regulations and other related issues with commerce in the SME sector.

SERBIA THEMES

Renewable Energy – Auction System – Transition to Market Competition (February 27th)

Current Serbian legislation to incentivize renewable energy production in Serbia is based on a feed-in tariff scheme. The Serbian Government, in line with Energy Community recommendations, plans to transition to an incentive system based more firmly on market principles, through an auction system. Serbia is currently preparing a “hybrid system” that will combine the long-term stability of a feed-in tariff system with the pricing advantage of an auction system, but it does not reflect true market principles because it is based on the state-owned power company EPS as the sole buyer of power. In the coming years, Serbia will need to create a fully competitive market to support its future developments in renewable energy. Market-based regimes for renewable energy pricing are highly developed in the United States, and U.S. expertise in this area is well regarded.

Participants in this program will learn about renewable energy auction mechanisms from practices in place in the United States, both from a market and a regulatory perspective. They will also learn how the U.S. system works to thwart collusive behavior and price manipulation among bidders and sellers, especially when competition is limited. Delegates will be chosen from the Ministry of Mining and Energy, Energy Agency of the Republic of Serbia, the South East European Power Exchange (SEEPEX), and state-owned power company EPS and academia.

Anti-corruption (May 15th):

The main goal of this program is to strengthen civil society in its efforts to engage citizens in holding public institutions accountable and transparent. The purpose of this program is to

learn more about how federal and state institutions in the United States interact with citizen groups, and to learn about successful civic initiatives and models of citizen engagement aimed at increasing the accountability of elected officials and/or local and federal authorities. The program will demonstrate what strategies/tactics/resources that local agents of change (CSOs, activists, journalists) use to generate interest and support for their initiatives in the areas of anti-corruption, transparency of state/local institutions, accountability of elected representatives, freedom of speech, and other areas related to government accountability. This program is aimed at gaining a better understanding of the relationship between citizen demand for accountable governance, and institutional responses to this demand.

U.S. Wastewater Treatment and Management with Linkage to Solid Waste Management System (September 25th):

Because large-scale construction of wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) is a precondition for Serbia's EU accession, this program will directly support the U.S. Embassy in Serbia's Integrated Country Strategy goal of "Serbia Better Integrated into Euro-Atlantic Institutions." This program will focus on (WWTPs) and management with linkage to solid waste management systems. Belgrade, a city of approximately 2 million people, does not have a WWTP. Presently, it disposes thousands of tons of sewage sludge, including industrial sewage, directly and untreated into the Danube and Sava Rivers. For potential participants, this program would provide an ideal opportunity to visit new and cutting-edge WWTPs in the U.S. Many of these plants are more energy efficient, comply with stringent emission standards, and are integrated with solid waste treatment plants that produce power and/or heat for residential or commercial consumption. Learning how these such plants in the United States are financed will also benefit the participants in this program, such as city planners. Beyond financing, the group will with project development teams that work on successful new WWTPs, and learn more about how U.S. municipalities conduct technical and feasibility studies. In addition, this program will provide an opportunity for participants to interact with U.S. companies that work in this field, and learn about the benefits of their technologies, thus providing a potential business opportunity for U.S. firms. Participants will include senior representatives from the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the public company Belgrade Waterworks and Sewerage Company, the City Secretariat for Communal and Residential Services, the City Secretariat for Environmental Protection and the Mayor's Office. Belgrade could serve as a model for the rest of the country, and participants could serve as mentors to their colleagues in other Serbian cities.

TAJKISTAN THEMES

Women Leaders (March 6th):

The Government of Tajikistan has prioritized the development of sports programs aimed to benefit women and girls. It recently established a Committee on Youth Affairs and Sports to manage sports facilities and health/exercise activities. The purpose of this Open World program would be for the delegates to learn how to use sports to encourage young people, especially girls, to focus on improving their lives and communities by incorporating sports and healthy lifestyles into their lives. Delegates will discuss and observe programs aimed at involving more females in sports activities, and will learn about programs that emphasize how sporting activities inspire youth and others to stay away from extremism, drugs and crime.

Innovation in Education (October 9th):

This program will focus on strengthening and enhancing the knowledge and capacity of Tajik educators, and will demonstrate best practices of the education system in the United States. The program will also provide examples of the use of innovation to improve education and will

provide extensive discussion on how curriculum and texts/textbooks are developed and chosen. Participants will include top educators and Government and Ministerial officials (Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan), representatives of educational institutions, and NGO implementers of the “Access Microscholarship” program.

UKRAINE THEMES

Energy Efficiency (February 27th)

Ukraine is facing unprecedented energy security challenges because of ongoing geopolitical and financial crises. Improving energy efficiency across the economy will strengthen energy security by decreasing the country’s reliance on fossil-fuel imports (although great advances have already been made in this regard), reduce pressure on public budgets that have historically shouldered billions of euros a year in energy subsidies (although some energy subsidies are now being phased out), reduce costs to consumers and improve the comfort and health of its residents. There is a large potential for energy efficiency gains in Ukraine. Recent studies have suggested tapping Ukraine’s energy efficiency potential through the widespread rollout of residential building envelope refurbishments, installation of building energy control systems and meters, replacement of inefficient appliances and equipment (including motors), information campaigns to reduce wasteful energy consumption and other cross-sectoral programs. Open World programming in his sphere would focus on providing a broad series of options and best practices in furthering efficient energy practices.

Renewable Energy (February 27th)

In 2017, the new law, *On Electricity Market*, was adopted, which improved the outlook for the country’s renewable energy industry and stabilized the legal framework, having enshrined all key components of the support mechanism introduced for power production from renewable energy sources (RES). This support mechanism, and the guaranteed channels for the sale of electricity, provide additional security and protection against the market challenges relating to the search for buyers and sale markets, as well as against currency and/or price fluctuations. With the introduction of market-based incentives for renewable energy production, more complex, Ukraine renewable energy producers to take advantage of these opportunities are exploring diversified and flexible approaches. In Ukraine, there are already proposals to consider new approaches to selling electricity produced from RES, such as power sale auctions, which are increasingly coming into focus, or feed-in premiums. It can be foreseen that incentives for power production from RES will become more diversified in Ukraine in the years to come, and will not be solely limited to a feed-in tariff (FIT). With these development, Ukraine renewable energy experts will learn of energy market opportunities and development to further the profitability and use of renewable fuels in Ukraine, further moving towards complete energy independence

Anti-Trafficking in Persons (March 27th)

Ukraine is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking, and human trafficking remains an acute problem in the country. The problem is addressed in numerous laws and implementing regulations. The Ministry of Social Policy is the government agency that coordinates the activities of national and regional (local) government bodies working to combat human trafficking. The Ministry reviews all human trafficking cases, decides whether to grant an individual the status of a human trafficking victim, and runs rehabilitation facilities for the victims. Because of the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, over 2 million people have been displaced since March 1, 2014. According to experts, these people are especially vulnerable to exploitation. There have been reports of

kidnappings from conflict-affected areas for the purpose of sex and labor trafficking, as well as employing minors as soldiers and informants or using them as human shields. Ukraine has declared its adherence to international standards for combatting human trafficking and these delegations will assist it as it better develops its ability to prevent such actions. One of these two delegations will focus on anti-trafficking in women and the other will look at the broader issues involving sex and labor trafficking. Although both programs should provide broad exposure to all cases.

Anti-Narcotics (March 27th)

Ukraine's harsh criminalization of drugs is stopping drug users from accessing (opioid substitution treatment) OST and fueling the country's HIV epidemic. Low drug thresholds for incarceration – compared to Western Europe – have led to an extraordinarily high amount of drug users being sentenced to prison, where they cannot access OST and other harm reduction measures, such as clean needle exchanges. Ukraine – after Russia – has the largest HIV epidemic in Eastern Europe and Central Asia with a prevalence of 0.9 per cent, or 240,000 people – infection rates doubled between 2010 and 2016. Throughout the Soviet Union drug, addiction was considered criminally and morally degenerative, as opposed to a medical issue, reinforcing the government's predilection for a punitive drug policy. The notion of rehabilitation was absent. Tolerance toward drug users is low in Ukraine. A 2017 poll by the Razumkov Center, a Kiev-based think tank, showed that out of 2,000 respondents, tolerance was lowest toward drug users, alcoholics and homosexual people. Open World programming focused on promoting effective anti-narcotics policy should emphasize constructive and modern ways of fighting addiction in light of the Ukrainian government's and society's unenlightened understanding of drug abuse.

Persons with Disabilities/Autism (March 27th)

More than 6% of Ukrainian citizens (more than 2.7 million people) are people with disabilities. Ukrainians get disabilities not only congenitally, due to different health disorders or different events in their life, but also due to the war of aggression against Ukraine since 2014. This segment of the population remains underserved and even marginalized. People with disabilities encounter barriers that limit their access to education and employment, and prevent their full participation in society. This program will allow the U.S. Mission in Ukraine to further support disability rights in that country, an important area in the human rights spectrum. This delegation will consist of activists, lawyers and experts working on disability issues with the goal of learning about the U.S. experience related to disability advocacy and reform. Upon their return, program participants will be better prepared to raise the profile of disability related issues and actively promote legislative and policy reforms in this sector. This delegation is expected to be a dynamic group of individuals that are already enthusiastically working to improve the lives of the disabled.

Decentralization of Health Care (June 5th)

Ukraine is in the midst of undergoing significant reform of its healthcare system. One of the main goals of this reform is an efficient allocation of funds. Therefore, through late 2017– early 2018, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine plans to introduce a new National Health Service, which will focus specifically on procurement. The current reforms envision a healthcare system that reforms primary, emergency, and palliative care simultaneously. The new National Health Service would be an independent body in the executive branch under the Cabinet of Ministers. The new reforms also aim to introduce medical insurance into the daily life of Ukrainians. Such a radical transformation of the healthcare system in Ukraine will benefit if healthcare managers and practitioners have an opportunity to learn from the American experience and current health care debate to see what works best for Ukraine. In addition, a great majority of Ukrainian clinics

and hospitals are state owned. Due to complications in Ukraine's economy, medical enterprises often have to use old or even outdated equipment and practitioners have little opportunity to develop new skills. Medical workers lack opportunities to obtain new knowledge and keep up with changes in global health care. With health care reform underway in Ukraine, now is a critical time for Ukrainian health professionals (managers, practitioners, and government officials) to familiarize themselves with the experiences of their American counterparts.

Local Governance - Regional Economic Development (June 5th)

In its economic history, Ukraine has evolved first from an agricultural to an industrialized, and then to a service-oriented country. Major industries include coal, electric power, machinery, chemicals, food processing, woodworking, and tourism. The industrialization of Ukraine started in 1930s when it was a part of the Soviet Union. Having inherited a huge industrial potential from the USSR, Ukraine, as an independent country, has lost part of its industrial capacity due to ongoing inner political and economic crises. Dependence on Russian energy supplies is also a problem as are non-economic, social factors, including an under-developed institutional and social infrastructure and corruption, which have further delayed Ukraine's transition to a fully developed industrial/service economy. In recent years, Ukraine has made progress in allowing budgeting/expenditures to be done at the local level so that municipalities could control more of the tax revenue that they process. This has led to uneven regional economic development, with wealthier and more sophisticated regions benefitting and making economic progress, much of this is the agricultural sector. This Open World programming will empathize how municipalities/states plan for regional economic development and how to use their resources effectively to promote regional growth.

Access to Public Information (September 4th)

The Ministry of information policy of Ukraine works to ensure equal access for all to information relying on the European standards of openness and transparency in the work of public authorities. The purpose of the Law of Ukraine "*On Access to Public Information*" is to ensure transparency and openness of public authorities and creates mechanisms for the realization of the right of everyone to access to public information. While this law is on the books, public information is not readily available in Ukraine. This program will explore issues relating to making public information readily available, reviewing best Freedom of Information (FOIA) practices, and other aspects of making public information available with the use of advanced technologies.

Labor Protection (September 4th)

Ukraine has a well-educated and skilled labor force of about 26 million people with a nearly 100 percent literacy rate. As of October 2016, the unemployment rate of the population of working age individuals (ILO methodology) averaged 9.5 percent. As of December 2016, the State Employment Service registered 390,800 unemployed people and 317,100 unemployed people received state assistance. According to official statistics, which count only those registered to receive unemployment benefits, unemployment was only 1.5 percent in December 2016. Throughout 2016 unemployment continued, increasing in the industrial eastern regions and many big enterprises faced lay-offs due to severe economic challenges, including the loss of access to Russian and CIS markets. In addition, some enterprises were destroyed, robbed, dismantled, and shipped to Russian territory. Within classic sectors of the economy, sector-specific collective bargaining agreements involve representative employers' associations (e.g., chemical employers), sector trade unions, and some participation of the government through the Ministry of Social Policy. Such agreements can also take place at the regional level. According to Ukraine's Statistics Service, 79.8 percent of employees were covered by collective bargaining agreements in 2014. The independence of unions from government or employer

control, however, was disputed. During 2016, the State Labor Service and its predecessor, the State Labor Inspectorate, was responsible for enforcing labor laws. Inspectors were limited in number and funding. Although the Government of Ukraine renewed planned and unplanned labor inspections in 2016, the number of completed inspections continued to fall, and experts assessed the number to be inadequate relative to the size of the Ukrainian economy. So, while Ukraine has labor protection on the books, very rarely are labor's interests and concerns listened to by the government and/or industry and there are not enough resources available for the proper protection of all workers' rights. Open World's programming in this theme will demonstrate how labor is organized in the United States and what protections' workers in the United States have, as well as debates as to unionization and worker's rights.

Inclusive Education (October 9th)

The Ukrainian Constitution declares that "The state guarantees free access to pre-school, secondary, vocational and high education", but in practice, a very small percentage of children with disabilities are provided for. According to government statistics, in 2016 out of 50,000 children with disabilities in Ukraine, only 2,520 of them have access to inclusive education. In 2017, changes to the *Law on Education* were approved stating that people with special needs have the right and should be able to get an education in any given educational establishment, both at the secondary and higher levels of education. Because of this change, any school might have to be in a position to teach the disabled and many other disabled students are expected in the classroom. Open World programs in this theme will demonstrate how effectively disabled or challenged students are integrated into schools in the United States, and should provide some methodology as to how classes are taught with a disabled person(s). In addition, such programming should emphasize how "special" students are valued and treated with dignity.

Medical Education (October 9th)

The Ministry of Health of Ukraine has recently made a statement that changes in the national health care system are not possible without changes in the field of medical education. The Ministry has already implement a minimum passing grade for medical specialties and also offered tools for quality control of educational processes: continuous professional development, a single state qualification examination and international monitoring of the quality of higher medical education, all of which start as of calendar year 2018. Therefore, two Open World delegations of practicing university professors, university administrators and civil society activists would benefit greatly from programs that demonstrate their American counterparts' experiences in terms of new innovative approaches of teaching and learning in the medical field, including overall curriculum development.

UZBEKISTAN THEMES

Accountability in Government (May 15th):

This program will explore the United States' commitment to transparency, ethics, and accountability at all levels of its government. Delegates will examine the methods employed by the public sector to prevent corruption, encourage ethical leadership and transparency, and ensure accountability and responsibility to the public. They will explore the critical role that NGOs, advocacy groups, and the media play as "watchdogs" as well as how social media monitors/acts as a check on good governance and transparent practices. Participants will also look at "whistleblower" legislation and protections as well as the impact of the Freedom of Information Act.

Science and Technology Entrepreneurship (September 25th):

The delegates will explore the role of government, private enterprise, professional organizations, and universities in fostering entrepreneurship and supporting innovation. Delegates will meet with investors and entrepreneurs/business advocates involved in recognizing, promoting, and developing science and technology start-ups. The program will explain how innovations are adopted and diffused into diverse sectors such as medicine, agriculture, manufacturing, and communications, and also in non-traditional fields or less economically vibrant areas.

Energy and Water Resources Management (December 4th):

This program will examine how the United States has implemented more efficient and equitable resource management policies and practices. Delegates will assess U.S. efforts to balance competing sectors' demands for energy and water use through technological innovations, recycling water, and watershed and other management approaches. They will also examine regional and trans-boundary challenges and cooperative efforts to share energy and water resources.