Working across Eurasia

**CHALLENGE:** Develop an approach to address common healthcare problems throughout an enormous region.

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<th>PRO</th>
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<td>Shared history with Post Soviet healthcare system</td>
<td>Enormous geographic area from east to west</td>
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<td>Common language (Russian) shared by a highly literate population</td>
<td>Different economies with different financial capacities (some highly developed, others undeveloped)</td>
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RPX Approach

Target a specific healthcare issue (e.g. breast cancer treatment) and work with locals to simultaneously develop relevant capacities at 3 different levels:

1. **Policy Level** (Elected Representatives, Ministry of Health, high level technical experts)
   - Formulate rules & guidelines using evidence based information, cultural knowledge and local contacts

2. **Service Delivery Level** (Hospitals, doctors, nurses)
   - Guideline training and implementation, deliver resources (medicine) to address needs and provide incentive

3. **Grassroots Level** (Community groups, NGOs, general public)
   - Advocacy training, public education, conferences, public events
Secrets to Success at all Levels:

• Promote respect for Evidence Based Information
• Deliver resources (GIK) to accompany training
• Leverage contacts and diaspora to gain influence
• Understand and work within existing system (e.g. post-Soviet) and culture
• Understand the failures and local perceptions of the efforts made by other development groups and corporations
RPX Capacity Building Process

Provide information treatment, tools and training to local leaders and organizations (example shown for NGO capacity building)

Information Treatment
Develop and distribute Patient Guidelines that are evidence based and appropriate to each country

Tools
Low Tech: Educational beads, bracelets, stamps, cards, etc.
Medium Tech: Patient Advocacy Group Training, Civic Events, Mass Media
High Tech: Website with Patient Navigation System, News, Referrals

Training
Develop Advocacy skills for patient groups and Communication skills to improve patient doctor interaction
Case Study of RPX Approach:  
Breast Cancer Early Detection and Advocacy Program  
Belarus vs. Kyrgyzstan

**Program Objective**: Raise breast cancer awareness by providing evidence based information and developing local capacities at the policy, service delivery and grassroots levels. RPX uses Breast Health Global Initiative guidelines in Belarus and Kyrgyz programs.

**Results Summary**: RPX’s approach of addressing the specific healthcare objective at 3 different levels has proven successful in both Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, despite their very diverse cultures and economic conditions,

- **Rapid advancements at policy and grassroots level**
- **Service delivery level continues to struggle with limited resources (lack of medicines/money for treatments)**
  - **Progress improves with delivery of GLK medicines**
Belarus

- Belarus is an upper-middle-income country with 10 million population.
- Breast cancer incidence rate is 70.3 per 100,000.
- Breast cancer death rate is 23.7 per 100,000.
- Belarus was affected by Chernobyl 23 years ago and has a contaminated radiation zone (1/4 of its territory with Strontium, Cesium, and Plutonium).
- Belarus has preserved its Soviet health care system with elements of private health care services:
  - Universal health care coverage (basic level)
  - National cancer registry
  - Specialized breast cancer departments in 6 regions
- Belarus has not identified breast cancer as a priority disease:
  - Does not have mammography screening
Breast Cancer Early Detection and Advocacy Program
(RPX in Belarus, 2001- current)

• Developed Standard Operational Procedures for clinical breast examinations and trained gynecologists to perform standardized CBE
• Developed Standard Operational Procedures for FNA
• Developed capacity of local women’s non governmental groups in breast cancer awareness campaign organization, breast cancer education, information management, grant management,
• Provided evidence based translated materials for doctors and patients, policy makers
• Developed local website to for women advocates
• Coordinated exchange visits for doctors and policy makers to US universities and conferences
• Spearheaded advocacy campaign for national mammography screening (currently working with parliament, politicians and women grassroots groups)
Delivering laptops with advocacy training has activated women’s group leaders to petition for changes in breast cancer treatment policy in Belarus

Tamara Serzhan (Program Coordinator)

Oxana Korkina, Mozyr

Irina Frenchel, Smorgon

Irina Negreeva, Minsk
Kyrgyzstan

- Kyrgyzstan is a low income country, 5 mln population
- Breast cancer incidence rate is 9 per 100,000 women per year in all country, in capital is 22 per 100,000 per 100,000
- Breast cancer [death rate is 8.5 per 100,000]
- Kyrgyzstan has a high tuberculosis rate (121 per 100,000) with high rate of multi resistant tuberculosis (13.4% among all new TB cases) and maternal mortality rate (109.7 per 100,000). These are national priorities
- Kyrgyzstan has a health care reform and has Mandatory Health Insurance Fund, which covers very basic level of care with co-payments.
  - Cancer services are not covered by health insurance fund and treatment often is not affordable and available.
- Kyrgyzstan does not have breast cancer as a priority disease and does not have mammography screening
Breast Cancer Early Detection and Advocacy Program  
(RPX in Kyrgyzstan, 2007- current)

• Education of family doctors education in Clinical Breast Examination Standardized Procedures
• Mobile mammography and ultrasound project - started nationwide early detection program
• Coordinated regional conference for policy makers, healthcare providers and activists
• Engaged local women groups to research and address myths about breast cancer
• Developed women’s groups skills in advocacy, information provision, patient education
• Coordinated US exchange visits for local specialists
Advocacy training coupled with public events have raised awareness for women’s health in Kyrgyzstan.
Resource & Policy Exchange (RPX)

RPX is a U.S. nonprofit organization dedicated to equalizing standards of health care, information access, and participation in government around the world.

RPX believes that access to factual information and healthcare treatment is a human right

Relevant Expertise

• Global success with NGO and patient group capacity building
• Collaboration with regional patient advocacy groups since 1993
• Recognized leader in the region for breast cancer advocacy work
• Familiar with regional culture, healthcare systems and regulations
• Experienced in working with pharmaceutical companies to deliver International patient assistance