

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2012 5:35 AM
To: H
Subject: Re: TECHCAMP KYIV: BUILDING A BRIDGE BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND TECHNOLOGY

Great read

From: Ross, Alec J
Sent: Tuesday, October 09, 2012 12:50 PM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: Fw: TECHCAMP KYIV: BUILDING A BRIDGE BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND TECHNOLOGY

Angela Baker + Katie Dowd did this.

Alec Ross
Senior Advisor for Innovation
Office of the Secretary of State

From: SMART Core
Sent: Tuesday, October 09, 2012 12:46 PM
To: Evans, Arthur T
Cc: Mailbox| KYIV-SMARTS; Ross, Alec J; Dickover, Noel T; Dowd, Katie W; Buravkina, Svetlana; Milentey, Alexandra A (Minsk); Sofia-SMARTS; Abisellan, Ernest J; Conway, Craig M; Horton, Wilma L; Hunt, Baxter; Mack-Wilson, Joslyn G; Pirnot, Anthony V; Veron-Reville, Claude
Subject: TECHCAMP KYIV: BUILDING A BRIDGE BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND TECHNOLOGY

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From: AMEMBASSY KYIV
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Subject: TECHCAMP KYIV: BUILDING A BRIDGE BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND TECHNOLOGY

1. (U) Summary. Over one hundred civil society leaders from across Ukraine and Belarus received hands-on training from U.S. as well as international technology experts as part of TechCamp Kyiv held September 12-13, 2012. Participants focused first on identifying the major problems that they face in their work and then

creating concrete proposals using technology to solve them. Ukrainian media positively covered both the overall goals and concrete results of the event. We hope that TechCamp Kyiv will be just the start of a movement connecting technology with civil society activists. Ambassador Tefft and Alec Ross, Senior Advisor for Innovation, opened the TechCamp on the morning of September 12. End Summary.

Creating a Global Citizen: Building Schools Without Walls

2. (U) TechCamp Kyiv was built around the theme of “Creating a Global Citizen: Building Schools without Walls.” During the two-day training session, the State Department paired leaders in the technology community with civil society organizations to provide training, resources and assistance to enable these organizations to harness the latest technologies in order to build their capacity and advance their missions. TechCamp Kyiv brought together over 100 educators, librarians, youth advocates, and community organizers who are interested in education and capacity building among the next generation of Ukrainians and Belarusians so that they can help them become true global citizens.

3. (U) Technology experts from companies such as Frontline SMS, Ushahidi, Facebook and the BBC were joined by Ukrainian and Belarusian technology trainers and offered interactive small-group training on low-cost, easy-to-implement technology based tools and approaches. Civil society leaders received hands-on training in a variety of areas including using Facebook for social media engagement, increasing outreach through online collaborative learning, filming low cost video for outreach and engagement, creating effective websites for NGOs, making use of mapping data to advocate for change, and encouraging transparent governance to improve education.

4. (U) Most importantly, TechCamp participants created new communication tools and social media networks as they discussed their shared challenges face-to-face such as problems with the current educational system, lack of development programs for youth, implementation of unconventional approaches to education, and equal access to information. Working with technology experts, TechCamp participants first brainstormed and then identified the specific problems that they faced and wanted to tackle. The formulations of these problems included such questions as: “How do you generate public interest in the activities of NGOs in Ukraine and Belarus?” and “How can you use a simple online interface to help people understand where to invest their resources or limited funds, and then show them the results of these projects?” After identifying their problems, participants split into small groups to develop solutions. Each small group created a concrete action plan to solve their problem using technology and then presented their proposal – or problem solution – in front of all the participants on the final day.

Journalism Without Borders

5. (U) One group noted that neither Ukraine nor Belarus currently has a unified online space or platform where journalists and citizen journalists can share information and network with one another. They also complained of an absence of transparent news and information in both countries. (Embassy Minsk Comment: The Lukashenka regime completely monopolizes electronic media, which has become nothing more than a propaganda arm of his rule as is the state-subsidized print media. While there are some independent print outlets which challenge official policies and ideology, they face serious obstacles such as: denial of accreditation; seizure of computer and other office equipment; lack of access to official press conferences; officials who refuse to talk to them; and even detentions and arrests. End Comment.) This Ukrainian-Belarusian group proposed creating an online forum called “Journalism Without Borders.” Their proposal called for the creation of an online space which independent and citizen journalists could use to network with each other, share and source content, as well publish reports for distribution to the general public.

6. (U) This citizen journalist group developed a concrete action plan comprised of four main steps making use of existing low cost and easily accessible technologies. First, they plan to create a Facebook page for all

TechCamp participants from their breakout group in order to communicate and coordinate the creation of a network of citizen journalists. Second, using email, Facebook, Twitter, Skype, V Kontakte and Google +, they will contact journalists all across Belarus and Ukraine informing them of the initiative and asking them to contribute. Third, they will build a "Journalism Without Borders" website using Wordpress.com in order to give them the ability to create a multi-page website with tabbed content from journalists and other contributors. This site would become the main host for the "Journalism Without Borders" online project. However, their plans also call for a complimentary "Journalism Without Borders" Facebook page and a "Journalism Without Borders" Twitter page. Finally, they plan to use Facebook, Twitter, and other social media in order to promote their "Journalism Without Borders" project, asking journalists to get involved in promoting the website and spreading its message. The group has already completed the first step, creating a Facebook page where the six journalists from the six different regions that attended TechCamp can fine tune their plans and continue to implement their proposal. "Journalism Without Borders" is just one of 17 participant-created proposals to come out of TechCamp Kyiv.

Ukrainian Media Offers Positive Coverage

7. (U) Media outlets in Ukraine offered wide and positive coverage of TechCamp Kyiv. Embassy Kyiv's Press Office organized press coverage of the TechCamp opening, including remarks by – and interviews with – Ambassador John F. Tefft and Senior Advisor for Innovation to the Secretary of State, Alec Ross. All told, nineteen (19) different media outlets – including the television stations ICTV/FAKTY, Channel 24, UBR, and UTR; radio stations National Radio Ukraina, Radio Svoboda, and Radio Era; and online and wire services Forbes.ua, Gazeta.ua, Golos.ua, Liga, RBK Ukraina, Ukrainskie Novosti, Ukrainsky Natsionalny Novyny, Ukrinform, and Ekonomichiskie Izvestia – covered the event.

8. (U) Several TV and radio outlets quoted Ambassador Tefft as he expressed the U.S. Government's commitment to youth outreach as well as the support and development of civil society. Many of the wire services and newspapers subsequently ran stories on Ambassador Tefft stating that he had been impressed by the work of Ukrainian NGOs, particularly those that are engaged in the fight against HIV/AIDS and those who are fighting against trafficking in persons (TIP). The Ambassador was quoted as stating that: "Our focus is to ensure that their work is effective."

Turning TechCamp Kyiv Into a Sustainable Movement

9. (U) TechCamp Kyiv was not just a two-day event. It was also an opportunity to bring together civil society leaders from Ukraine and Belarus connecting them with each other while building bridges to U.S. technology experts. Our follow-up mission will be to transform TechCamp into a sustainable movement that brings civil society together with the technology that they need. Embassy Kyiv has already reached beyond the technology and civil society sectors by inviting private corporations and philanthropic foundations to interact with participants at TechCamp and share information about the resources that they have available for NGOs. Representatives from Microsoft Ukraine, Intel Ukraine Microelectronics, Coca Cola, the Pinchuk Foundation, Hot Source LLC, Softjourn Inc, Soft-Rating Consult, WorldAPP Inc, and MediaNext attended parts of TechCamp Kyiv. Microsoft, in particular, was very generous in their support of civil society organizations offering free software and interacting with TechCamp participants via social media platforms.

10. (U) Embassy Kyiv also conducted follow-on events in order to put the expertise of visiting U.S. technology experts to use in order to expand our audience beyond the 100 civil society leaders that we were able to invite to Kyiv. Thanks to IREX' Bibliomist program which offered free use of their technology training centers in the cities of Donetsk and Kharkiv, TechCamp trainers were able to provide hands-on training for 40 additional NGO activists and librarians the following weekend. Three TechCamp trainers joined us "on the road" to share their ideas on using online games for social causes; made presentations on FrontlineSMS as a way to

conduct two-way communication without the use of an internet connection; and discussed new advocacy techniques for expanding the impact and reach of each participant's program and message.

11. (U) The TechCamp Kyiv Facebook group is another good example of how we are using technology and social media platforms in order to engage TechCamp participants, giving them a platform to engage in ongoing communication. This Facebook group now has 151 members including nearly all of the participants from Techcamp Kyiv, our local private sector partners, and participants from our follow-on events in the regions. New people continue to join our group each day. In the two weeks since TechCamp, participants have posted over 40 announcements about different programs – including opportunities for NGOs – with links to concrete and useful information, as well as sharing their success stories, experiences or opinions. For example, one participant posted his new digital map project inspired by his time at TechCamp and asked other participants to contribute information. This post received 43 comments and 119 views, an astonishing level of interaction for a group of just 151. Embassy Kyiv continues to actively encourage, engage, and contribute to these conversations.

12. (U) Embassy Kyiv plans to use these new technologies and social media to further the development of NGOs and promote sustainability. We also plan to host an event in Kyiv in three to six months where civil society organizers can come together to share their best practices, success stories and progress working on the proposals that they developed at TechCamp. We are also in contact with Microsoft Ukraine about this proposed event and hope to involve other private sector partners. We also plan to bring in U.S. technology experts in order to share their expertise, specifically pertaining to the funding and implementation of new projects.

CONCLUSION

13. (U) TechCamp Kyiv's 100 participants built new networks with like-minded civil society leaders, developed new skills, and most importantly, drafted proposals to combat real social problems. These leaders and organizations are now poised to use new technologies and social media in order to increase their reach, grow their organizations, communicate their messages more efficiently and tackle some of today's most vexing social challenges. At the end of TechCamp Kyiv, each participant was empowered to put technology to work for the benefit of civil society in Ukraine and Belarus. Participants also left with a better understanding of the role that the U.S. Government can play. As Ambassador Tefft said: "We all are working towards the same goal. I hope that you look to the United States as your partner as you educate the next generation." As part of our follow-on efforts, Embassy Kyiv will keep in contact with our TechCamp participants and encourage them to apply to our grant programs designed to promote democracy, media freedom, and social networking.

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Action Post:

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