

15TH ANNUAL DONORS FORUM CONFERENCE
TRUST IN PHILANTHROPY: A NEW STRATEGY

The general concept and perspective of the conference:

Trust plays an important role in social interaction. There are areas where it is impossible to be effective if there is no trust between parties.

Charity is a vivid example. Trust is a key element in charity; without it, nothing works. Trust is crucial in charity at every level: personal, organizational, and institutional.

Hence, the professional community needs to maintain and build trust within the charity sector and in dealing with external audiences: society, government, and business.

How do Russian philanthropists address trust issues today, both inside and outside the sector? Which tools do they use? What are the risks and threats that can undermine trust in charity? Is there anything the sector can do collectively to deal with these threats? How do improvements or setbacks in the matter of trust affect the development of the charity culture? What kind of collective actions, tools and mechanisms can be used to preserve and build confidence in charity? These are the issues we want to discuss at the conference.

9:15-10:00

Registration

Morning coffee and tea

10:00-11:30

Trust in charity: a systemic crisis or a new paradigm?

The global professional community has been struggling recently with dwindling public trust in philanthropy as an institution. The questions of protecting the sector's reputation and countering practices which undermine people's trust are high on the agenda in Russia. Being aware of how relevant and important this issue is, we at the Donors Forum have decided to talk about trust at this year's conference.

The opening session will deal with trust as a social phenomenon and a key factor in charity. Our panel will feature public opinion researchers and experts in trust-related issues.

They will discuss the latest studies on the changing level of trust in charity and charitable organizations in Russia and abroad, the nature of trust, trust-building mechanisms and how they are affected by new technology and evolving public institutions.

We will talk about the crisis of trust in some developed countries, discuss its scope and reasons behind it, and ask ourselves whether our community is facing the crisis of trust as well.

11:30-11:45

Coffee break

11:45-13:00

Rules of Trust: Art of Self-Government and Self-Regulation

Interactive group discussion

Collective action has always been the best way of dealing with external challenges. Usually, for it to be effective, a majority of stakeholders should agree not only on goals and values but also on rules and procedures of joint action.

Is the Russian professional community ready to develop norms that would protect and strengthen public trust in charitable organizations? What issues should such norms cover? How should they be formalized? Does the charity sector need self-regulation mechanisms? How should they be developed?

We will listen to recommendations by experts and learn from international experience. We will discuss in groups what kind of rules we need and how we can establish them together, and what procedures would be most effective, adequate and not excessive today.

13:00-14:00

Lunch break

14:00-15:00

The Donor and the Beneficiary: New Trust-Building Tools

Interactive discussion

Building trust within the charity sector is just as important as in dealing with external audiences. The Russian charity community keeps growing; its structure becomes more complex. Our efficiency in many respects depends on the quality of our communications.

How do we build trust between the donor and beneficiary? How do you create an impeccable reputation, and what can destroy it? What mechanisms are available today for finding and selecting partners, and how can we improve them? How do we reduce costs for attracting new partners and verifying their performance?

For this discussion, we have invited the operators of state grant programs, corporate and private donors, representatives of fundraising organizations and resource centers. They will discuss key issues of interaction within the sector, existing problems and future prospects.

We will consider whether existing mechanisms are sufficient for proper communication between the donor and the beneficiary, if we should design universal mechanisms for that and how they should work.

15:00-15:15

Coffee break

15:15-16:30

The Blockchain Era: New Opportunities or the End of Institutional Charity?

Up until recently, only a small number of nerds were aware of the blockchain technology, yet today it is high on the agenda of governments, financial institutions and... charities.

Figuratively speaking, the blockchain technology is an open accounting system where all transactions are recorded and no double entries are allowed. It enables donors to track their donations and cuts reporting costs for beneficiaries. It is a technical

solution that delivers results without any new bans or bureaucratic procedures and without complicating life for ordinary users.

Is it possible to use the blockchain technology in charitable organizations? How would such projects be implemented? Are there any successful examples? What does the future of charity look like in the blockchain era? What new opportunities and challenges does this new era present? How will the landscape of the charity sector change?

16:30-16:45

Coffee break

17:00-18:15

Building Trust: Next Steps

Closing panel discussion:

The final discussion will provide an overview of the conference. We will briefly review all the sessions, talk about the future and draw up a plan for collective action to strengthen trust in the institution of philanthropy and protect the reputation of the charity community.

18:15-19:00

Drinks. Professional mingling