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## The Citi Foundation and the Fund for Sustainable Development announced the results of a two-year program entitled **Local Communities: Changing Life for The Better!**

### Success stories from small businessmen in the Nizhny Novgorod and Sverdlov regions

The aim of the program is to foster sustainable development in local communities by supporting small businesses. The program began in November 2008 in the Volga and Ural federal districts: in the Gorodetsky area of the Nizhny Novgorod region and the Nevyansky area of the Sverdlov region. The program was carried out with support from the Citi Foundation. The total budget was over USD 150,000.

#### Local communities: Changing life for the better Success stories from the program

- **Marina Koryakina, a private entrepreneur from Gorodets**, was able to make her dream come true with support from the Citi Foundation as she opened her own mini tailoring shop. Thanks to Marina's initiative, women on maternity leave were given the opportunity to work from home, while Gorodets residents can now enjoy the shop's high-quality services.
- With support from Citi, **Aleksan Saruhanyan, an entrepreneur from Nevyansk**, opened a mini-workshop to produce 'self-stretching' paper napkins. His dream is to give confidence to people with disabilities so that they feel they are not forgotten by society, but accepted as fully-fledged citizens. "My employees are very responsible about their job and we have even implemented a quality control system. My employees no longer have disabilities; they are just like every other employee in a small firm. We can achieve anything because we are together," commented Saruhanyan.

As part of the program, over three hundred residents from the Gorodetsky and Nevyansky areas were trained in entrepreneurship. Local residents were then given the opportunity to present their business plans in a selection competition. Six winners from the Gorodetsky area and five winners from the Nevyansky area were awarded grants for a total of USD 35,000 and USD 30,000 respectively. The new businesses that were launched created over 50 jobs. Among those hired were village residents and people with disabilities.

"We were very pleased to see how willingly people participated in the training sessions and selection competitions. We believe that there is huge potential in the Russian regions for the development of small businesses. People are ready to work and take responsibility for their own companies. Small businesses are traditionally considered to be the driver of economic development in Russia and the Citi Foundation will continue to support such programs in other regions," said Tatiana Avramenko, Corporate Social Responsibility Manager at Citi Russia.

In addition to achieving social and economic goals, the program helps people feel part of the community. People recognize the good they can bring to their towns and villages, while also preserving Russia's cultural heritage.

For instance, with support from Citi, Sergey Maslikov, an entrepreneur from the Nizhnie Tavolgi village in the Nevyansk area opened a unique workshop for manufacturing ceramic tiles — the only workshop of its kind in the region. "There is a problem in our village — young people do not want to stay here. But there really are no jobs. My son just returned from the army. I will pass my experience on to him; I want to see my village and Russia's cultural traditions revived. If it was not for support from the Citi Foundation, there is no way we would have been able to revive the new 'old' ceramic tile works. Just look at the business now — everyone is working hard and enjoying the work. Now village residents can work close to their homes," noted Sergey Maslikov.

As part of the program, the Gorodets Center for Small Business Development, an autonomous non-commercial organization, helped local craftsmen establish an open-air museum by decorating buildings on two streets in the tourist part of the city with traditional dymniki — decorations on chimneys. The project helped revive the forgotten traditional craft of the Gorodets craftsmen. The Center for the Development of Crafts, Arts, Sculpture and Architecture, another autonomous non-commercial organization, implemented a project to revive traditional metal forgery as part of an initiative to establish the Knyazhyi Gorod (Prince Town) tourist complex. For the first time in the past ten years, a blacksmith shop opened its doors in Gorodets again, creating two new jobs.

"We would like to thank the Citi Foundation for its support throughout the project. We believe that such projects help people realize that by taking the initiative and being willing to take responsibility, they can change their lives for the

better. Moreover, as entrepreneurs develop their businesses, they serve as role models in the community, demonstrating that people don't necessarily have to move to a big city to do the job they want to do. It is possible to develop your business in your region and make a substantial contribution to the development of your local community," remarked Oleg Fokin, Executive Director of the Fund for Sustainable Development.

**Citi Foundation** supports organizations that help people advance their living standards, promote business development and prosperity of communities throughout the world. Citi Foundation is focused on programs in the following areas: 1) development of microfinance and microentrepreneurship; promotion of financial freedom; 2) support to small and developing businesses that contribute to economic development and job creation; 3) education that promotes personal and professional success of young people; 4) financial education that helps make responsible financial decisions; 4) environmental protection through support of sustainable businesses that create jobs and contribute to economic development while being environmentally friendly. For more information, visit [www.citifoundation.com](http://www.citifoundation.com)

**Fund for Sustainable Development (FSD)** — an independent, nongovernmental and noncommercial Russian fund, created for support to sustainable development of Russian territories and local communities by implementation of projects that help to solve ecological, social and economical problems of municipal bodies all around Russia.

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