

OPENING THE RED DOOR

Curriculum Guides – Discussion Questions



LEADER'S GUIDE

The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) vs. Federal Government Programs

1. What advantages did NGO's have when originally operating in Russia, as opposed to U.S. government officials or business leaders?
 - pp. 63-64 – Deputy Ambassador Collin's comments
2. How would you evaluate the decision of the RACU Board not to accept government funding from either the U.S. government or the Russian government? Would this have been your choice?
 - pp. 110-111 – Goal: create a unique privately-owned school
3. Working in a “low trust” society that characterized most of the post-Communist world, what lessons did the staff and Board of RACU learn about meeting their goal of building a new private school in Moscow?
 - pp. 227-228 – Deep distrust permeated Russian society
 - pp. 237-239 – Changes needed in traditional Russian culture
4. How did political relationships between American and Russian leaders affect the ability of RACU staff to operate in Russia?
 - pp. 181-182 – Government officials follow Putin's approach
 - p. 190 – Bias against private schools
 - pp. 214-215 – Putin becomes increasingly anti-US
 - p. 240 – Putin needs an external enemy
5. When the plans for RACU were being developed, the American Working Group assumed that the new school would begin as a joint Russian-American institution, but would then be taken over and solely owned by the

Russians. The Russian Trustees insisted that the school remained a binational institution. Looking back, would this have made any difference?

- pp. 80-81 – Early discussion of binational or Russian school
- p. 116 – Russian Trustees want a long-term binational school

6. What happened that changed the remarkable openness to Western educators in the 1990s under Boris Yeltsin? The Russian Ministry of Education accredited RACU as the first private Christian university in Russia's history in November 2003, yet five years later the Ministry made it impossible to have this accreditation renewed. From your perspective, why did this happen?

- pp. 175-176 – Remarkable accreditation – first of its kind!
- pp. 190-191 – No history of private education – only suspicions
- pp. 196-200 – Second time around – nothing but roadblocks

7. In a context where the state has historically provided free education, can an NGO overcome this obstacle and build private schools? How can in-country support be raised for a Christian liberal arts college?

- p. 97 – First signs of opposition to private schools
- pp. 154-155 – Explosion of private colleges in Russia
- pp. 205-206 – State schools offer free education to our students
- pp. 227-228 – Russian churches were not supportive