

# THE U.S.- BALTIC FOUNDATION

SUPPORTING DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM IN ESTONIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA SINCE 1990

## *USBF Resumé*

### A Record of Accomplishment

The U.S.- Baltic Foundation (USBF) was founded in 1990, prior to Baltic independence, to support democratic and free market reforms in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Under challenging circumstances and with a modest budget, **USBF has leveraged individual contributions into more than \$8 million and established 11 local democratic institutions in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.**

USBF's professional educational and training programs have improved and strengthened local public administration, independent media and NGO development. USBF managed the \$2.9 million USAID-funded Democracy Network Program – which later served as the model for the \$15 million Baltic American Partnership Fund. The Foundation established Municipal Training Centers, Schools of Public Administration and journalist training/advocacy institutes, which today are training the next generation of Baltic leaders, in all three countries. **Thousands of future Baltic leaders** have participated in and benefited from the USBF programs described in this resumé.

The **Pew Charitable Trusts** selected USBF as one of only four “**Pew All-Stars**” in Central and East Europe in 1997. Pew awarded four grants to USBF for a total of nearly \$1,000,000 for public administration education programs. Other private foundations, including the **Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation** and the **National Endowment for Democracy**, have provided over \$250,000 for USBF programs.

USBF has organized 12 dinners and luncheons with Baltic Presidents and Prime Ministers in Washington and New York, and dozens of special events with Baltic leaders and U.S. Ambassadors in cities around the U.S.

In 1998, USBF helped introduce millions of Americans to Baltic history and culture by assisting in the 3-year production of the public television documentary ***One World: The Baltic States*** hosted by distinguished journalist Charles Osgood. USBF organized the national broadcast premiere event at the **Newseum**.

In 2000, USBF sponsored the first-ever tour of Baltic art in the United States; USBF organized exhibitions at prominent venues in New York, Washington, DC, Houston, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

Today, the Foundation continues to pursue its mission of linking American people and financial and in-kind resources with Baltic citizens and institutions to meet political, economic, cultural and social development needs through programs that emphasize the trans-Atlantic movement of people and resources.

**The Role of the Program Advisory Board:** To achieve and maintain the highest quality programs, USBF has developed Program Advisory Boards (PAB's) of distinguished experts in areas critical to the future development of the Baltic States. The boards consist of recognized experts in the U.S., and respected professionals of Baltic heritage who bring special language and cultural skills to USBF. Moreover, the PAB's are an important network to leverage USBF resources, and identify new sources of in-kind support for programs.

**Professional relationships with U.S. institutions:** USBF seeks guidance and input from leading professional organizations, academic institutions and public agencies in the U.S. USBF has hosted and participated in several national conferences of NGO's working in the Baltic States.

**Public outreach:** USBF publishes *U.S.- Baltic Foundation News*. Articles by USBF Board members have been published in the **Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, International Herald Tribune, Houston Chronicle** and **Des Moines Register**. Hundreds of articles have appeared on USBF and its programs in Baltic and Baltic American publications. USBF board members and staff have been interviewed on **C-Span, NBC** and **National Public Radio** and numerous TV and radio programs in the Baltics. USBF experts have testified before numerous Congressional hearings. For two years, USBF produced a weekly segment broadcast on public radio in Chicago. In Lithuania, USBF established a similar weekly public affairs radio program that continues today.

***One World: the Baltic States*** is a public television documentary produced by Ward Television. In 1998, the documentary, hosted by the distinguished American television journalist Charles Osgood, introduced millions of Americans to Baltic history, current challenges, and future potential. USBF provided editorial and fundraising support for the production and is featured prominently in the opening credits of the on-hour program.

**Programs:** The Foundation has achieved remarkable program accomplishments. USBF's programs include: educational and technical training seminars in the Baltics and the U.S., establishing permanent training and education institutions in all three Baltic countries; lectures and panels in the U.S. by Baltic leaders; and student and mid-career internships and exchanges, grant-making and professional development for local non governmental organizations, and technical assessments by U.S. experts.

USBF has successfully leveraged its resources into the following accomplishments:

### **Civil Society Program**

#### **Democracy Network Program: \$2,900,000 from USAID/\$400,000 from USBF In-Kind Contributions**

In the fall of 1995, USBF initiated this U.S. Agency for International Development-funded three-year program to strengthen nonprofit organizations (also called non governmental organizations or "NGOs") in the Baltic States. The program targeted NGOs working in the fields of democracy, free markets, environment and social safety nets, especially groups with a public policy advocacy mission. The program included professional training, full-time technical assistance specialists and direct grants to NGOs. By September 1998, USBF had awarded more than ***\$1,100,000 in grants to more than 100 organizations*** throughout the Baltics. Hundreds of USBF donors and nearly a dozen full-time American volunteers -- who spent up to nine months at a time in the Baltics -- contributed to the success of this program.

In 1997, USBF selected twenty NGOs in Latvia and Lithuania (Estonia graduated from the U.S. assistance program in 1996) as the focus of additional grant support and intensive on-going professional training. With the objective of developing a cadre of well-managed, professional organizations capable of leading the sector and setting public policy, the Foundation engaged local and national government officials (including Lithuanian Prime Minister Vagnorius) and private sector leaders to promote the value of a strong NGO sector.

In 1998, President Clinton signed the U.S.- Baltic Charter in the White House and, in a ceremony with the three Baltic Presidents, announced the establishment of the \$15 million Baltic American Partnership Fund to continue the work of this program through a new partnership with the Soros Foundations. At that time, USBF won a new \$300,000 grant to transition USBF's local offices into fully independent national NGO's in each country.

## Public Administration Programs (chronological order)

- Funded U.S. visit of **Mart Laar**, then a Member of the Congress of Estonia and the Supreme Soviet of Estonia, and participants from Latvia and Lithuania to attend the **George Marshall Foundation** Public Service Leadership Conference on Developments in the USSR and Eastern Europe, September 1990, *prior to independence*. Funding: Individual USBF donors.
- Established the **U.S.- Baltic Classroom**, an electronic telephone classroom link between the University of California at Los Angeles, Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania and the University of Latvia in Riga, Winter 1991. Funding: Individual USBF donors and in-kind contributions
- Organized training seminars and conferences for more than 800 local government officials in 1991-1992:
  - **Municipal Government in a Democratic, Free Market Society Conference**, 300 participants from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the U.S., Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Poland met in Vilnius, Lithuania, co-sponsored by the City Council of Vilnius, Lithuania, June 1991. **Topics**: municipal management practices, transportation, environment, revenues and financing, tourism, municipal government ethics, and municipal organization. Funding: Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) and National Endowment for Democracy (NED). *The American flag flew over Vilnius for the first time since independence on the City Council headquarters during the conference.*
  - **Municipal Privatization Conference**, 180 participants met in Parnu, Estonia, November 1991. **Topics**: property rights and dispute settlement, privatization of property and municipal services contracts, reduction of municipal bureaucracy, raising municipal revenue through privatization, property valuation, removing barriers and red tape, and the role of contracts in privatization. Funding: Pew, NED, Lincoln Institute for Land Policy, and Institute for Human Studies
  - **Municipal Administration Seminar**, 240 participants met in Jurmala, Latvia, March 1992. **Topics**: municipal decision-making; impact of national policy on local budgetary practices; basic budget planning and program implementation; developing an effective intergovernmental system; ethics in government; and unemployment and job retention. Funding: Pew, NED, Institute for Humane Studies and Scandinavian Airlines
  - **Employment Services Workshop**, 18 participants in Vilnius, Lithuania, co-sponsored by the Vilnius Municipal Labor Exchange Office, March 1992. Funding: Pew, NED
  - **Public/Private Ethics and Conflict of Interest Seminar**, 120 public and private sector leaders, Jurmala, Latvia, November 1992. Funding: Pew, NED
- Established the **Baltic Municipal Initiative** to provide technical assistance to Baltic municipalities, November 1991.
- Created the **Baltic Municipal Fellows** program that funded eight-week education and training programs in American cities for nine Baltic municipal leaders, January-March 1993. Funding: U.S. Information Agency.
- Established **Municipal Training Centers at universities in Kaunas, Riga and Tartu** to provide long-term education and training for municipal government officials through courses, resource centers, seminars, and internships, October 1993. **Courses**: budgeting and finance, intergovernmental relations, personnel administration, management and behavior, negotiation and conflict resolution, municipal accounting, ethics in government, strategic planning, economic development, and environmental policy. Funding: Pew, NED, Open Lithuania Fund, and Soros Foundation Latvia
- Organized the **Lithuanian Municipal Reform Summit**, 240 participants, including a delegation of elected officials from Minnesota, met in Druskininkai, Lithuania, November 5-6 1993. Funding: Open Lithuania Fund, and supported by the Municipal Training Center at Kaunas Technological University.
- Established the **Gruss Fellows Program** to bring four municipal officials from for three-month internships with city governments in the U.S., 1994. Funding: USBF Board Member Audrey Gruss (Martin and Audrey Gruss Foundation)
- Organized, at the request of Estonian Prime Minister Mart Laar, **“Introduction to Municipal Administration in a Democratic, Free Market Society” Seminar**, Narva, Estonia, May 18-19, 1994. Funding: Pew, NED

- Brought five **Gruss Foundation Fellows** from local governments in Lithuania to Minnesota and Georgia for internships with municipal and state governments, January-March 1995. Funding: USBF Board Member Audrey Gruss (Martin and Audrey Gruss Foundation)
- **Former mayor of New Carrollton, MD Jordan Harding** advises cities, towns, and rural municipalities on municipal reform through the USBF Baltic Municipal Initiative. 4 months, Spring 1995
- Established **Latvia's and Lithuania's first Masters in Public Administration degree programs** in partnership with the University of Latvia and Kaunas Technical University, September 1994. More than 200 students, including five elected mayors holding office at the time, have earned graduate degrees from the two-year programs since inception, and many hold prominent government positions today. Funding: Pew, NED, Open Lithuania Fund and individual USBF donors
- Re-founded (last meeting held in 1942) the **Association of Baltic Municipalities** Funding by Pew Charitable Trusts, the National Endowment for Democracy, U.S. Information Agency, Martin Gruss Foundation and the members of USBF. (August 1996)
- To be continued...

### Independent Media (*chronological order*)

- In partnership with the National Newspaper Association, organized **Journalist Training Program** that brought journalists from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to the US for **two-month professional training internships with American newspapers**. Funded by the Knight Foundation and the National Newspaper Association With the National Newspaper Association organized a summer internship program in the U.S. for journalists and publication managers from the Baltic States \$15,000 from the Knight Foundation for a USBF Journalist Training Program (1991)
- September 6-November 10 1992 (10 week fellowship) **Independent Media training with American newspapers**
- **Operation Free Speech** development of modern, decentralized printing networks in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in conjunction with the Rochester Institute of Technology funded by the Freedom Forum November 1992
- September 1992 **Business management for independent Lithuanian publishers Seminar** funded by the US Information Agency
- 1994 **Independent Media Program** initiated to strengthen and support independent print and electronic media in the Baltics. Funded by the National Endowment for Democracy and the International Media Fund. Establishment of Independent Media Centers in Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius
- May 1994 with the International Media Fund organized a **media management seminar** in Latvia
- July 1994 in a program co-sponsored by USBF and the University of Missouri School of Journalism, Brought professor Halliki Harro from the University of Tartu School of Journalism in Estonia to attend a **workshop on journalist ethics** at the University of Missouri School of Journalism. Prof. Harro, an expert in the field of media ethics and law, is the author of Estonia's first textbook addressing the subject of media regulation.
- September 1994 The International Media Fund, the Freedom Forum and the USBF co-sponsored a workshop for small and regional independent Baltic newspapers on **media business management** in Jurmala, Latvia, 25 independent newspaper managers from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Funded through grants from the International Media Fund and the National Endowment of Democracy
- April 1995, assisted in the founding of the **Latvian Media Professional Training Center**, Jurmala
- April 1995, assisted in the founding of the **Lithuanian Free Speech Center**, Vilnius. **Center** was responsible for the drafting and passage of Lithuania's free speech protection laws.
- May 1995 USBF provided seed money and training in order to open the **Estonian Media College Foundation**, Tallinn

### U.S.- Baltic Forums (*chronological order*)

USBF has hosted a series of U.S.- Baltic Forums, luncheons, briefings, lectures and receptions designed to give leaders from the Baltics and the U.S. an opportunity to discuss current issues with representatives from the government, business and policy communities in Washington, DC and other U.S. cities (as noted). In 2001, USBF launched a new series of events as part of the **USBF Ambassadors Council** program.

- **Tunne Kellam**, President, Congress of Estonia, September 1990  
“From Central Planning to Free Markets; the Economic Policies of the congress of Estonia”  
Co-sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- **Vytautas Landsbergis**, President of Lithuania, May 1991  
Co-sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Chamber Foundation
- **Arnold Ruutel**, President of Estonia, July 1991  
Co-sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Central European Development Corporation and National Chamber Foundation
- **Stasys Kropas**, Chairman of the Lithuanian Parliament Committee on Local Authorities, and Member of the Commission drafting the new Lithuanian Constitution, January 1992
- **Paul Lettens**, Director of the Estonian Public Health Center in Tallinn, Estonia, January 1992
- **Pers Sternins**, Deputy State Minister of Latvia, February 1992
- **Valdis Pavlovskis**, Deputy Minister of Defense of Latvia, March 1992
- **Jonas Birziskis**, Minister of Transportation of Lithuania, April 1992
- **Aivars Millers**, Minister of Industry and Energy of Latvia, July 1992
- **Iveta Stepite**, Head Nurse of Latvia, August 1992  
Co-sponsored by the American Red Cross and American Nursing Association
- **Aleksandras Abisala**, Prime Minister of Lithuania, with **Stasys Lozoraitis**, Lithuanian Ambassador to U.S., November 1992
- **Gvido Zemribo**, Latvian Supreme Court Chief Justice, March 1993
- **Vytautas Landsbergis**, Former President of Lithuania, April 1993
- **Ojars Kalnins**, Latvian Ambassador to the U.S., May 1993
- **Robert C. Frasure**, U.S. Ambassador to Estonia, May 1993
- **Adolfas Slezevicius**, Prime Minister of Lithuania, June 1993
- **Vygintas Grinis**, Kaunas City Council Chairman, October 1993
- **Maris Gailis**, Latvia’s Minister of Government Reform, November 1993
- **Egidius Bickauskas**, Vice Chairman of Parliament of Lithuania and Chairman of the Presidential Commission on Organized Crime and Government Corruption, November 1993
- **Povilas Gylis**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania April 1994
- **Lennart Meri, President of Estonia; Guntis Ulmanis, President of Latvia; Algirdas Brazauskas, President of Lithuania** June 1996
- **Lennart Meri, President of Estonia; Guntis Ulmanis, President of Latvia; Algirdas Brazauskas, President of Lithuania** January 1998 Co-sponsored by the Institute for EastWest Studies
- **Brian Carlson, U.S. Ambassador to Latvia** and **Joseph DeThomas, U.S. Ambassador to Estonia** (November 2001)
- **Vaira Vike Freiberga, President of Latvia** February 2002 Co-sponsored by the Baltic American Freedom League and the Joint Baltic American National Committee
- **Inese Voika, President of DELNA (Latvian arm of Transparency International)** February 2002

### Economic Development (*chronological order*)

- **USBF Trade and Investment Mission to the Baltic States** (October 11-21, 1993; 12 U.S. business representatives)
- Good Design is Good Business, exhibit by award winning U.S. manufacturers; Riga, Latvia in spring 1993, Vilnius, Lithuania in fall 1993)
- **Second USBF Baltic Trade and Investment Mission** (May 1994)
- **“The future of U.S. private sector support for the Baltic States” seminar.** (October 1991) Hosted as part of the Hudson Institute’s International Baltic Economic Commission (IBEC). Co-sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.
- **Citibank Investors Forum** (September 1996, New York, NY) Organized seminar with Directors of the three Baltics Privatization Agencies for more than 150 business leaders at Citibank’s New York headquarters.
- **EastWest Institute Investors Forum** (September 1997, New York, NY) Co-hosted breakfast meeting with Latvian President Ulmanis for more than 100 business leaders at the Union League Club in New York.

### Public Health Program

- Public Health Education Awareness Program (Fall 1991) **Translating, printed and distributed preventive health brochures into Baltic languages**
- Health Statistics Seminar (summer 1991) With the National center of Health Statistics (NCHS), and Georgetown University help to develop a **health statistics collections strategy for the Baltics.** Conducted a pan-Baltic health statistics survey

### Cultural Exchange

In 2000, USBF sponsored the first-ever tour of Baltic art in the U.S. The Baltic Art Exhibition debuted at New York’s National Arts Club on January 25, 2000 and presented more than 70 contemporary paintings and sculptures from the Baltics. The Exhibition provided many viewers their first glimpse of Baltic art’s irrepressible expression before and after regaining independence. USBF organized the exhibition tour to the International Monetary Fund’s headquarters in Washington, DC, and prominent venues in Houston, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

### Other

- **English Language Program** (Fall 1992) USBF brought 36 English language teachers to the Baltics (12 in each country) in cooperation with the Experiment in International Living.
- **Survey of U.S. Private sector assistance to the Baltics** An assessment of the capacity and interest of Private U.S. voluntary organizations and non-governmental organization to support development programs in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. This resulted in the U.S.- *Baltic Partnerships* volume of American private sector, non-governmental organizations with a commitment to Baltic interests. Funded by a \$27,000 grant from USAID.
- **Citizens’ Ambassador Program** (May 1993) co-sponsored by USBF, the Citizens Ambassador Program and the Ministries of Justice of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. A program whereby American and Canadian legal experts work side by side with lawmakers in each of the three Baltic countries (Banking law, civil and criminal law, municipal law human rights law, insurance law, Constitutional law)
- 21 Baltic high school students October 10, 1993 for a Fall semester 1993 **student exchange program** sponsored by USBF with the Governors Office of the State of Maryland and the Maryland Department of Education. Funded by the Samantha Smith Program of the U.S. Information Agency
- December 1994 Co-sponsored with the Estonian American National Council, **the Estonian Ferry Victim Relief Fund** providing **\$60,000 in assistance**
- Participated in the **White House preparations of President Bill Clinton’s 1994 visit to the Baltics**
- 1997 USBF provided a grant to establish **Junior Achievement** economics education programs in rural Estonian schools for grades K-12.

- Summer 1996 USBF and **Stanford's Students for Eastern European Development SEED** sponsored and coordinated eight students from Stanford University to spend two months teaching English as a second language in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
- **U.S.- Baltic Partnerships** (survey of 11,000 U.S. private sector organizations to establish data base for exchange programs; completed in October 1992)

### About USBF

The Foundation is uniquely suited to play a critical role in the Baltics, for the following reasons:

- USBF has a **limited, singular mission** -- to promote democratic and economic development and international integration of the Baltic States -- consistent with democratic, pluralistic and free market principles -- through the organization and implementation of education and technical training programs.
- USBF's programs promote **intra-Baltic cooperation**. All programs are designed to foster cooperation of native Baltic institutions, especially at the grass roots level. All programs are designed to benefit each country equally or proportionately.
- USBF's programs foster improved **intra-ethnic relations** by promoting **civic and human rights and improve the quality of life of all Baltic citizens** regardless of nationality, religion or sex.
- USBF is a **501(c)(3)** not-for-profit organization.
- USBF's boards, staff and members offer a broad range of distinguished **professional, academic, foreign and public service, linguistic and program administration expertise** to achieve the Foundation's mission.
- USBF builds **partnerships** with American private sector trade, professional, academic and other institutions for both program development and implementation and resource generation.
- USBF is **respected and supported** by Baltic national and local governmental leaders, as well as by individuals and emerging non-governmental institutions.
- USBF has an excellent working relationship with the **Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Embassies** in the U.S. and **Baltic American organizations and leaders**, as well as a national **database** of experts in critical program fields.

### Private Grants to USBF

Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation  
 Forbes Foundation  
 Audrey and Martin Gruss Foundation  
 Knight Foundation  
 Lincoln Institute for Land Policy  
 J.J. Medveckis Foundation  
 National Endowment for Democracy  
 Pew Charitable Trusts

### U.S. Government Grants to USBF

U.S. Agency for International Development  
 U.S. Information Agency

### Corporate Sponsors

ARCO  
 Baltic Fund 1, LLC  
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 Caterpillar  
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 NRG Energy  
 Omnitel  
 PBN Company  
 Pfizer  
 Philip Morris  
 Price Waterhouse  
 Raytheon  
 SAIC  
 Scandinavian Airlines  
 Williams

**Corporate Program Participants**

American League of Exports and Securities

APCO

American Public Power Association

Arter and Hadden

Association of Oil Pipe Lines

Black & Decker

Brown & Root

Charles Percy and Associates

Coal Exporters Association of the U.S.

Ernst & Young

Hewlett Packard

John Deere & Company

Lockheed Corporation

Morrison & Knudson

Moss Tents

O'Conner and Hannan

Rubbermaid

San Diego Gas & Electric

Southeast Consortium for International  
Development

Tucker & Associates

U.S. Council for Energy Awareness

United Technologies Corporation

Westinghouse