



Christian Children's Fund - Belarus

“COMMUNITY SERVICES TO VULNERABLE GROUPS”

YEAR 1 PROGRAM REPORT

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Component II “HIV/AIDS NGO Capacity Building in Belarus”

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The “HIV/AIDS NGO Capacity Building in Belarus” is aimed at reducing the transmission of HIV within Belarus by strengthening the capacity of local NGOs and community groups to deliver effective HIV/AIDS services that target high-risk populations, as well as educate the general public.

The project has three main objectives:

- To strengthen the organizational and managerial capacity of Belarusian NGOs/CSOs working in HIV/AIDS sector to deliver effective and sustainable community managed HIV/AIDS services.
- To improve the technical capacity of Belarusian NGOs/CSOs to deliver HIV prevention and care interventions effectively.
- To enhance the networking capacity of Belarusian NGOs and CSOs, working on HIV/AIDS, inter-and-cross sector relationships and cooperation.

B. PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

In the first Year CCF has achieved the challenging objectives it set out to accomplish. Project activities were implemented within budget and time frames and included office mobilization and remodeling; project staff recruitment; development of Annual Implementation Plans, PMEP and base-line reports; NGOs/CSOs needs assessment and specific training activities; small grant competition and disbursement; and networking development at the community, national and international levels.

These activities resulted in increased of numbers of NGOs involved in project implementation from 15 at the beginning of the Year 1 to 60 by the end of the year. Some of these organizations have never been involved in HIV/AIDS work before. New services were introduced within small grants for vulnerable groups such as HIV-positive women, men who have sex with men (MSM), youth, injecting drug users (IDU) and their families etc. The total number of direct beneficiaries increased beyond our expectations and reached 21,700 people versus the 18,500 planned. Fifteen (15) geographic locations from 5 regions of Belarus were included in HIV/AIDS prevention and care activities.

Creation of national trainers team made a significant contribution to development of national human resources in HIV/AIDS. The team was trained and begun multiplication activities (trainings, workshops, presentations) for peer organizations, volunteers and professionals in their targeted communities.

The level of participation of *Belarusian AIDS Network* member NGOs in the project activities exceeded our expectations. BAN members demonstrated a high level of ownership and support for all of the developmental activities initiated by CCF. For example, the three strongest BAN member NGOs hosted the first round of experience exchange visits for less developed local HIV/AIDS NGOs, and organized Belarus’ first national campaign to honor the memory of those

lost to AIDS. The BAN Steering Committee has started the process of legal registration and planned several activities on behalf of Belarusian HIV/AIDS NGOs to advocate for and promote their role to the Ministry of Health and the UN.

The figures below illustrate the main accomplishment of the 1st Year period:

- Over **60** NGOs from all over Belarus (Minsk, Mogilev, Grodno, Gomel, Vitebsk, Brest regions) were involved in the different project activities.
- About **600** participants representing **52** organizations took part in **45** workshops.
- The national trainers teams started multiplication training on HIV/AIDS in **7** communities.
- About **\$60,000** (*i.e.* 10 grants) were awarded in small grants; 7 of them were registered and started in Year 1
- **17** new HIV/AIDS services were established as a result of capacity building and micro-grants programs; **21,700** representatives of the vulnerable groups benefited from these services
- **16** new NGO-NGO and NGO-Government joint activities were conducted including experience exchange visits, a national NGO campaign dedicated to International Candlelight Memorial Day, BAN working meetings, BAN Bulletin and preparation of 7 partner projects.
- **3** in-country experience exchange visits for **13** local HIV/AIDS NGOs were conducted.
- At least **150** Belarusian HIV/AIDS NGOs, agencies and state-sponsored services received regularly distributed BAN Bulletin *Vmeste!* (Together). Estimated minimum number of readers (NGO members, representatives of vulnerable groups, stakeholders) reached by each issue is **1,000**. And there were over **40** downloads of the electronic version of the bulletin located on BAN website www.beluids.net.
- Information on BAN web-site was regularly updated. For the last two months (August-September 2006) **548** web-site visits were registered

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES' IMPACT

OBJECTIVE 1: “To strengthen the organizational and managerial capacity of Belarusian NGOs/CSOs working in HIV/AIDS sector to deliver effective and sustainable community managed HIV/AIDS services”.

CCF's flexible and need-oriented approach to capacity building met specific needs of targeted NGO staff, volunteers and managers. The NGO Capacity Building component was implemented using a **5 step training coordination and provision system:**

- Pre-training assessment of NGOs organizational development level and determination of training needs;
- Coordination and preparation of the training;
- Implementation of the training;
- Provision of additional follow-up assistance/interventions;
- Evaluation of the training results.

The training covered issues of strategic planning, project design and proposal writing, project management, M&E, human resources. **Approximately 250 participants** from 43 NGOs improved their knowledge and skills on these subjects within the training and follow-up interventions.

As the result:

- 67% of NGOs participating in training program improved its strategic and operational planning

- 80% of NGOs demonstrated improved project management and HR management
- 87% of NGOs developed M&E plans/ procedures

Participant Feedback:

“My colleagues (project managers, leaders of regional branches) and I participated in series of CCF trainings on organizational development and management. This worked up all our NGO, as we discovered how many developments we can do to make us stronger. Now, my team speaks the common language and supports each other managing the organization in development”.

*Elena Pisarenko,
Director NGO “Mothers Against Drugs”*

Needs Assessment of Belarusian HIV/AIDS NGOs

Description: The project started with a needs assessment of Belarusian HIV/AIDS NGOs related to trainings, technical assistance and capacity building. Formal survey of more than **20** NGOs was conducted in December 2005 – January 2006. CCF-Belarus considers **needs assessment and ongoing process** of communication and dialog with project stakeholders regarding the quality of project activities and practical applicability of offered methodologies. Each training includes a session where participants provide their feedback. To get participants’ ideas or concerns after-trainings, a specially designed questionnaire is used.

Conclusion: During the 1st Year this demand driven approach helped CCF to adjust multiple project interventions and make them more relevant to stakeholders’ expectations. CCF-Belarus introduced requested training topics and promoted applicable methodologies in organizational management and service provision. This Capacity building tier was accompanied by building awareness of NGOs regarding the importance of self-development and consolidation within the civil society sector.

Strengthening NGO organizational capacity – Strategic Planning

Description: CCF-Belarus recognizes Strategic Planning as an important tool for understanding the previous NGO experience in HIV/AIDS and defining priorities for the future. The project provided targeted NGOs with the topical training (in April, 2006) and series of **9** follow-up workshops with individual NGOs. Twenty NGO participants improved their knowledge and skills in operational and strategic planning (defining NGO mission statement; identification of key priorities to support implementation of the mission; SWOT analysis; developing appropriate strategies for programs and management and setting measurable and realistic targets under each strategy).

During the training participants produced the template of Strategic Planning Document and created action plans for Strategic Planning process in their organizations.

Conclusion: As a result of the 1st year **67 %** of enrolled NGOs applied better planning skills in their practice. Different organizations applied different aspects of planning, but as CCF partner NGOs pointed out, one common impact happened as a result of project interventions – HIV/AIDS NGOs put in place a participatory planning process for their stakeholders (NGO members, representatives of regional branches, clients and partner organizations), who otherwise were excluded.

✍ NGO “*Vstrecha*” conducted in-depth follow-up Strategic Planning workshop with broad participation of NGO management, staff, stakeholders and volunteers including representatives of all NGO’s regional branches in Vitebsk, Gomel, Mogilev, Brest and Grodno. As a result the mission was revised and agreed with all the delegates; common future vision of NGO “*Vstrecha*” was created; the Strategic Planning Work Group was established to ensure further steps of strategic plan development. HIV/AIDS is a priority issue for this group, thus they elaborated detailed annual plan (strategy) of working with MSM as primary NGO target group.

✍ NGO “*Belarus Young Men’s Christian Association*” created a Strategic Planning Task Group as a subdivision of the NGO’s governing body. Facilitating the process of NGO strategic planning, Olga Sviderskaya (shared knowledge and methodologies learned at CCF training and helped her colleagues and counterparts in the analysis of the organization’s services, identification of key program priorities for 2006-2007, and development of NGO Strategic Plan for 2006-2009.

Project Design and Proposal Writing

Description: During the 1st Year CCF-Belarus conducted a series of **3** trainings on *Project Design and Proposal Writing* to support two rounds of micro-grants program in February 2006 and in September 2006. The trainings and more than **60** individual follow-up consultations were provided to Belarusian NGOs as technical assistance in creating projects on HIV/AIDS prevention care and support.

Fort- five (45) NGOs participated in the trainings and as a result **26** project proposals were submitted to CCF-Belarus in February 2006 and **23** in September 2006. Trainings and consultations of CCF specialists resulted in better quality of submitted proposals and their compliance with criteria of the announcement. The training improved skills in project design and encouraged NGOs to apply to other donors as well (for example Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation).

Conclusion: The 1st year showed that HIV/AIDS NGOs still lack experience in project design and require additional trainings of such basic skills as defining goals and objectives, creating a work plan, budgeting, building project logic, etc. The reason for that is the background of HIV/AIDS NGOs, many started as self-help groups (e.g. groups of people living with HIV/AIDS, relatives of drug users, or MSM self-help groups) which are more focused at providing their members with social support and humanitarian aid than developing themselves organizationally. Only recently have these groups started envisioning their work as projects or programs.

Project management

Description: *Two* workshops on project management (April 2006 and July 2006) were provided to **13** AIDS service NGOs with the purpose of supporting effective and responsible management of projects financed by CCF-Belarus. NGO directors and key managers were trained on project management and every-day application of managerial tools for project team roles and responsibilities; staff motivation, recognition and control; information flow management; short-term planning; documents circulation/reporting.

Conclusion: After the 1st year, the NGOs who actively participated in project implementation incorporated the theoretically grounded approach towards project management. The key finding in this section is that CCF targeted NGOs recognized the importance of staff and NGO member involvement in organization and project management. Through briefings, working groups, delegation of responsibilities, these NGOs encourage *shared leadership and built de-centralized /participatory management*.

✍ Student volunteer group “Miloserdie”, Minsk, conducted a series of in-house workshops on project management. Being an informal entity, which functions as volunteer club, the group had not previously used project management principles in their activities. After the training they applied short-term planning in their practice and started using regular briefings and presentations to involve volunteers in information exchange process.

Empowerment of junior staff and volunteers – NGO Basics

Description: This training was done to meet HIV/AIDS NGOs needs in empowering their volunteers and newcomers through “soft skills” training on NGO basics. Staff members and volunteers of 7 NGOs were trained. Participants were trained on effective conflict resolution and communication methods; they analyzed different types of NGOs and learned general features about organizational lifecycle and human resources in NGOs.

Conclusion: When resources available for NGO operations in Belarus are decreasing, volunteers may provide relevant support if motivated and managed properly. In addition to their enthusiasm and willingness to support an NGO, volunteers and newcomers require ongoing trainings that build awareness and develop basic administrative and programmatic skills. Thus, if treated carefully volunteers build up a resource of NGO specialists and managers.

✍ “This basic-level training gave me a steam to become an agent of positive changes in my NGO” – Anastasia Sheluto (NGO “Belarusian Children’s Hospice”) said soon after the training on NGO Basics. She was empowered to make some important developments in the NGO and in her own life. She tested herself as a project manager for a small 6-month project dealing with issues of PLWHA. Knowledge in NGO basics acquired at CCF trainings, practical experience in project management, and intention to become highly

professional in social issues encouraged Anastasia to enter the Moscow Institute of Social Work.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Description: CCF-Belarus considers monitoring and evaluation as a key tool for improvement of organizational and project performance of HIV/AIDS NGOs. A systematic approach to M&E is a bridge to result-based management. A topical training (May, 2006) and a series of **4** follow-up workshops were provided to targeted NGOs. At least **19** NGO-participants improved their knowledge and skills in various aspects of monitoring and evaluation: data collection methods, indicators selection, and evaluation tools.

During the training participants developed sets of measurement indicators for HIV/AIDS projects/programs; created M&E tools for their projects – focus group scenario, questionnaires evaluating effectiveness of self-help groups and seminars; and drafted M&E plans.

Conclusion: As a result of the 1st year **87%** of enrolled NGOs applied skills in their practice. After intensive interventions focused on improvement of M&E systems and practices in NGOs, all CCF grantees elaborated sets of performance measurement indicators for their HIV/AIDS projects, identified appropriate methods for data collection and analysis. This was the first and most important step towards integration of M&E into every-day NGO operations and management.

The 1st year proved that Belarusian NGOs in general and AIDS-service NGOs in particular are focused more on service provision process than measuring and analyzing gained results. It is a real challenge for them to learn by results and create new services or methods of work. Sometimes NGOs keep providing the same service from year to year, not able to effectively respond to the changing needs of their clients. The significant progress CCF achieved in promotion of M&E among targeted NGOs will be reinforced in the 2nd year of the project. This will help NGOs to develop as learning structures and create and offer new client oriented services.

Participant Feedback:

“Such interactive trainings help vulnerable groups to analyze and discuss their problems, modify their behavior patterns. In our medical institutions such programs are normally not provided. This is why creating a team of trainers serves to expand spectrum of HIV/AIDS prevention services in community”

Larisa Kryukova,
Trainer of HIV/AIDS National Team,

Re: CCF trainings established HIV/AIDS course for patients of Mogilev STI Clinic

OBJECTIVE 2: “To improve the technical capacity of Belarusian NGOs/CSOs to deliver HIV prevention and care interventions effectively”.

There is an evident gap between scope of HIV/AIDS epidemic in Belarus and resources available to combat it.

In Year 1 CCF-Belarus focused its efforts on improvement of technical capacity of NGOs to deliver appropriate interventions and creation of HIV/AIDS trainers' team. A series of training of trainers (TOT) workshops was held in partnership with leading regional and international experts. These trainings helped the Belarusian trainer's team to develop its own training modules and start multiplication seminars. Sixteen (**16**) multiplication workshops on HIV/AIDS were conducted by the trainers of national HIV/AIDS team in seven (7) communities including Mogilev, Vitebsk, Brest, Pinsk, Orsha, Mozyr, Baran.

The result:

- **Three hundred people** representing regional NGOs, state-sponsored services, and vulnerable groups were involved in education on HIV/AIDS.
- **Seventeen (17) new HIV/AIDS services** were established due to capacity building and micro-grant program in 15 geographic locations all over Belarus
- **Seven (7) new projects** providing prevention and support services to MSM, youth, PLHIV, women, IVDU and their family members were developed through micro-grants and registered by NGOs
- **A total of 21,700** representatives of vulnerable groups directly benefited from NGO services

Creating local resources in HIV/AIDS – National Trainers Team

Description: The group of 17 NGOs and state service specialists was selected for further training as National HIV/AIDS Trainers Team. The group represented **10** different communities from all over Belarus, including cities of Minsk, Mogilev, Vitebsk, Svetlogorsk (Gomel region), towns of Rechitsa, Baran, Orsha (Vitebsk region), Pinsk (Brest region), Gorki, Machulischi (Minsk). The training methodology used for the HIV/AIDS trainers team combines theory, group interaction techniques, case studies and exchange of experience and practices among participants. To reinforce the training course, regional and international experts from Ukraine (AIDS Foundation East West – AFEW/Ukraine) and from Canada (McGill University) were involved in its design and implementation.

▪ **Training of Trainers** (February 2006)

Seventeen (17) members of national HIV/AIDS trainers team upgraded their theoretical knowledge and developed skills on experimental learning model, group interaction and roles, working with different types of training participants, strengths and weaknesses of the different training techniques, development and adaptation of interactive methods of teaching, team work, phases of group dynamic in the training process, phases of trainer's professional growth, organizing education as an ongoing process, organizing educational process at the training.

▪ **Training “General HIV/AIDS Education”** (March 2006).

During the training participants systematized general information about HIV/AIDS and immune system; discussed stages of HIV infection and got updated information

on HIV/AIDS epidemic in Belarus and in the world; analyzed risk reduction strategies in HIV/AIDS prevention, biological and psychosocial factors; got better understanding on safe behavior, HIV testing and treatment; identified voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) as an efficient and pivotal strategy for both HIV/AIDS prevention and care.

- **Training “Sexually Transmitted Infections as a co-risk factor for HIV/AIDS”** (April 2006).

Participants improved theoretical knowledge re: STI in the HIV/AIDS context and upgraded their trainer’s and facilitator’s skills.

- **Training “Substance Abuse as a co-risk factor for HIV/AIDS”** (May 2006).

Participants improved their knowledge about Substance Abuse in relation to the HIV/AIDS problem and upgraded their trainer and facilitator skills.

- **Training “Life after diagnosis. Care and support for PLWHA”** (July 2006, by AIDS Foundation East West in Ukraine).

At the training participants discussed needs of PLWHA; learned methods of care and support for PLWHA based on their needs in different periods of life; applied techniques to train specialist and activists from PLWHA on care and psychosocial support for PLWHA. During the training participants were trained on designing trainings for different target groups (specialists and care providers, NGOs, PLWHA, and their relatives, youth); analyzing different aspects and needs of living with HIV/AIDS, identifying key issues and planning appropriate care and support activities.

- **Training “Participatory needs assessment tools for the effective design of an HIV/AIDS project”** (August 2006, by McGill University professor William Ryan, Canada).

At the training participants learned terminology, concept and tools of planning, implementation and use of Participatory Needs Assessment (PNA) in design of HIV/AIDS projects. Participants discussed the main principles and ethics considering PNA with different vulnerable groups; applied methods of information collection and analysis, identification and work with key informants and focus groups.

Conclusion:

As a result of series of HIV/AIDS trainings the group of Belarusian trainers increased theoretical knowledge and upgraded their training and facilitation skills. One of the main results of the course is that group of participants now recognizes themselves as a team. They act as a team doing ongoing information exchange with each other, working in small groups on training modules, organizing joint trainings and seminars.

At present four (4) training modules are developed by the team to be *standardized methodological guidelines* in follow-up and multiplication activities. In parallel with

this CCF-Belarus conducts testing training sessions on each topic to assess trainers' readiness to conduct multiplication activities and ensure quality standards.

Multiplication workshops – support local NGOs and communities in HIV/AIDS

Description: **Sixteen (16)** multiplication workshops on HIV/AIDS were conducted by the national HIV/AIDS trainer team in seven (7) communities including Mogilev, Vitebsk, Brest, Pinsk, Orsha, Mozyr, Baran. Three hundred (**300**) people representing regional NGOs, state-sponsored services, and vulnerable groups were involved in education on HIV/AIDS.

Conclusion: The cascade of multiplication workshops on HIV/AIDS topics resulted in improvements of programs and services of twenty-one (21) participating NGOs.

- ✍ *NGO “Real World”, Svetlogorsk* improved its HIV/AIDS prevention programs for school students. CCF trainings helped them to make topical materials and methods of their dissemination more sensitive to specific needs and peculiarities of young people. The overall NGO's approach towards prevention activities was changed from short-term awareness building seminars to trainings focused on long-term changes in knowledge of young people and promotion of safer behavior patterns.
- ✍ *NGO “Belarusian Association of Young Christian Women”* revised approach and agenda of HIV/AIDS training sessions for female teenagers. Thus, interactive and experiential learning methodologies were incorporated and applied in practice.
- ✍ One of the trainers *Natalia Prosolovich* representative of *Mogilev AIDS Prevention Center (state entity)* added a special session to the regular educational program of AIDS Prevention Center for the local health care providers. Within this session she promoted new interactive teaching methodologies in order to review their approaches and ensure better and more active inclusion of vulnerable groups in HIV/AIDS education.
- ✍ Based on knowledge and skills received on CCF trainings *Anzhela Pchelkina (NGO “Rostan”, Vitebsk)* initiated new project on HIV/AIDS prevention and healthy life style among school students. Now she has become a methodological expert in her organization responsible for design of NGO's educational events/seminars and supervision of peer-educators.
- ✍ *NGO “Fialta”, Minsk* conducted in-house workshops and shared obtained knowledge and methodology within its members and volunteers. Using new training modules and materials, NGOs increased number and quality of educational activities on prevention of substance abuse and sexually transmitted infections. Doing multiplication activities with other trainers “Fialta” enhanced its professional relationships within the sector.

Micro-grants

Description: In the reported period two rounds of proposals on HIV/AIDS were requested by CCF-Belarus (February 2006, September 2006). Twenty-six (**26**) project proposals were submitted to CCF-Belarus in February 2006 and **23** in September 2006. In February 2006 **10** projects were selected by CCF-Belarus to be awarded based on the recommendations of external experts on the project's *Evaluation Committee*. Project proposals submitted in September 2006 are being reviewed currently.

Conclusion: In the reported period CCF-Belarus awarded 10 micro-projects submitted by Belarusian NGOs. In accordance with Belarusian law they must be registered in the Department of Humanitarian Aid of the Presidential Administration. To date seven (**7**) out of ten micro-grants have been registered and exempted from taxation. Three projects were not registered. The NGOs started CCF financed projects in the 1st year, but the implementation phase will be done in 2nd year because of delay with registration procedure. The registration process is highly bureaucratic and time-consuming (it could take three months or even more and is a difficult obstacle for NGOs to address. The rules and reasons for being not registered are unclear. However, registration is possible and the result depends on NGOs reputation and ability to present the project as beneficial for the government.

Participant Feedback:

"Vmeste is a great presentation tool for us. I wish I had enough copies to hand out at each meeting, especially with government officials"

Alexander Khodanovich
NGO *Alternative*, Svetlogorsk

"I was able to compare the approaches and techniques used in prevention programs with those we use and see what I can do differently to increase the quality of our educational programs"

Maria Scherbina, NGO "Real World", Svetlogorsk,
participant of the exchange visit to the NGO *Mothers Against Drugs*

OBJECTIVE 3: "To enhance the networking capacity of Belarusian NGOs and CSOs, working on HIV/AIDS, inter-and-cross sector relationships and cooperation".

The level of cooperation and networking of Belarusian NGOs working in the HIV/AIDS sector is still rather low. This significantly hampers their access to the existing locally developed and adapted effective approaches, practices and methodologies, thus limiting the capacity to effectively deliver services to the vulnerable groups. This is why creating opportunities for experience exchange; information sharing and networking between NGOs are some of the key objectives of the CCF-Belarus project.

Thus, two *issues* of quarterly bulletin "Vmeste" (Together) were published and distributed among Belarusian AIDS-service NGO, government agencies and state supported services and

international organizations. Three (3) in-country experience exchange visits were organized for NGOs to share practical HIV/AIDS methodologies and working with different vulnerable groups.

Special attention was paid to strengthening Belarusian AIDS Network as a national resource for HIV/AIDS NGOs in building common ground, promoting solidarity and leading effective advocacy and PR activities.

Delivering information materials and sharing information resources

Description: CCF-Belarus used two main tools for sharing informational resources among the project stakeholders: BAN Information Bulletin “Vmeste” (Together) and BAN Website “Together Against AIDS”. Thus, two (2) issues of BAN Information Bulletin “Vmeste” (Together) were published, in April and August 2006. The Bulletin was distributed among app. 1000 organizations and groups engaged in HIV/AIDS programming. BAN Website was redesigned and its information was updated.

Accurate and objective information on HIV/AIDS (services, NGO practices and best cases) as well as better access to such information is one of the strongest needs among Belarusian NGOs. The shared information creates a common language among NGOs and improves their communication/discussions re burning issues. The bulletin and website inform about important events in the HIV/AIDS sector in Belarus, CIS and other countries; advocate for rights and interests of PLHA and other vulnerable groups; highlights BAN events, activities and projects as well as describes the main CCF-Belarus project activities in the period.

Conclusion: To encourage NGOs and other HIV/AIDS agencies sharing information the project team increased their role and participation in creating the information bulletin and website. NGOs and partner organizations (National AIDS Prevention Center, Global Fund office) provided app. 80% of the materials for the bulletin. It became an output of collaborative/joint work made together by counterparts working in HIV/AIDS sector. For the last two months (August-September 2006) 548 attendances were registered at BAN website. Articles from BAN Information Bulletin “Vmeste” (Together) were published in 9 regional and national media.

Experience Exchange in HIV/AIDS methodologies and practices

Description: Project information activities resulted in stronger understanding of the need for sharing experience and methodologies of work among NGOs. Three strongest NGO-member of Belarusian AIDS Network hosted experience exchange visits for less developed local NGOs.

✍ January 2006. NGO “*Mothers Against Drugs*” organized a one day experience exchange visit for representatives of five (5) NGOs and shared with visitors its methodology of the development and facilitation of 12-step program-based self-help groups; methodology and effectiveness of HIV/AIDS/drug use primary prevention programs for high school students; effective approaches and techniques of outreach work and counseling/referral aid to IDU. The participants took part in the regular meeting of IDU parent’s self-support group, training for high school students.

✍ May 2006. NGO “*Belarusian Association of UNESCO Clubs*” hosted six (6) NGOs and shared its methodology of HIV/AIDS primary prevention for high school students; education/information activities delivered within the Global Fund project; video and publications produced for information campaigns; outreach programs for commercial sex workers with visitors.

✍ August 2006. NGO “*Alternative*” (Svetlogorsk) presented HIV/AIDS services based in most affected by the epidemic region of Belarus and made presentation about history, methodology and challenges that meet one of the first community-based rehabilitation centers for IDU and PLWHA-IDU.

Conclusion: Mutual experience exchange provides Belarusian HIV/AIDS NGOs with better knowledge about effective methods of work, locally developed and adapted approaches in service provision. As an immediate result 5 small joint initiatives (e.g. Round Table discussion, use of shared information materials) were done by enrolled NGOs. In the long-term perspective exchange of experience *promotes common language, ethics and standards of quality* in service delivery to vulnerable groups.

Training on Networking and Public Relations

Description: To reinforce NGOs skills and knowledge in networking and PR, a specialized training was conducted in June 2006. Fourteen (14) NGO managers and PR staff upgraded their knowledge and obtained skills in planning, implementation and evaluation of PR and Public Awareness (PA) campaigns; in using PR/PA tools (news releases, leaflets, presentations, newsletters, and posters). Three (3) of the participants developed information materials. Two (2) of the participants started developing a PR strategy for their NGO.

Conclusion: CCF-Belarus trainings are effective methods of education and capacity building, and provide NGOs with additional possibility to establish professional contacts, exchange ideas and resources in management and service provision. Sixteen (**16**) new NGO-NGO and NGO-government joint activities were conducted.

The training on PR/Networking emphasized that purposeful efforts to make NGO more visible and recognized by key stakeholders and general public is crucial in Belarus, where NGOs public image is weak. NGOs here do few well-designed and effectively implemented PR campaigns promoting the role of civil society organizations. The reason is lack of professionalism and resources available for PR among local NGOs.

Facilitation of Belarusian AIDS Network (BAN) development

Description: CCF-Belarus recognizes BAN as one of the strongest consolidating forces in HIV/AIDS sector to use in project as a platform for development cooperative relationships and agreement among NGOs. During the 1st year the project team was facilitating the process of creation the common vision and values in BAN. Due to this series of BAN Steering Committee Meetings were conducted in December 2006, March 2006 and August 2006. And BAN Full Membership Meeting was organized in April 2006. It was decided to register BAN as official entity (in form of association of HIV/AIDS sector NGOs). It lays foundation for further joint national-level efforts of Belarusian AIDS service NGOs in responding to HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Candlelight Memorial event organized by BAN in May 2006 was a first consolidated campaign and good example of coordination of efforts in building public awareness and advocacy on behalf of PLWHA. The aim of the campaign was to honor the memory of those lost of AIDS and to show support for those living with HIV and AIDS. The first campaign organized in **4** Belarusian communities provided each of the **11** participating NGOs with practical experience of participatory planning, coordinating and conducting a joint program.

Conclusion: The first year activities aimed at strengthening of BAN have enabled it to become stronger in mutual support, experience exchange, public relations and advocacy.

III. CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

Based on the experience gained from the 1st year of the project implementation CCF-Belarus has learned a great deal about the role of Belarusian NGOs and other actors in combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Belarus. In particular the project encouraged establishment and strengthened linkages and partnerships between various stakeholders (Government and NGOs) as well as involved wide range of stakeholders in consolidated and coordinated response to HIV/AIDS in Belarus. **As a result of consistent support and integrated approach to development CCF and its in-country team have gained the trust and confidence of project beneficiaries and stakeholders**

From this experience, CCF has identified some key lessons learned.

- Most of NGOs lack strategies for the development of HIV/AIDS work/services and staff capacity. Their approach is rather sporadic and donor driven

CCF will develop and conduct a new workshop focused on HIV/AIDS strategic planning. The proposed approach will include an assessment of community need and the local context (including epidemiological data, key vulnerable groups, and available services) analysis of organizational capacity, identification of possible niche in service provision, and action planning for implementation. The planning process will include revisions in project management, volunteer and finance management, building strategic partnerships, etc.

- Multiplication activities of national HIV/AIDS trainer teams establish new services for vulnerable groups and help reach more people in local communities.

Multiplication effect allows in comparatively short time involve in HIV/AIDS programs a greater number of stakeholders and beneficiaries. They are also a referral links to NGOs or state-sponsored services that may offer people more regular and consistent support. By doing regular seminars on HIV/AIDS for the patients of Mogilev STI Clinic Larisa Kryukova established such new type of prevention services there. The next year project will continue providing methodological and information assistance to the national trainers team as well as monitor trainers' performance.

- Routine and time-consuming procedure of grant registration.

This resulted in delay of implementation of 10 micro-grants financed by CCF-Belarus and blocked implementation of 3 projects approved by CCF. The registration takes time, but the positive result is possible and depends on NGOs reputation and ability to present the project as beneficial for the government.

Trying to overcome or mitigate this obstacle in the second round of Call for Proposals (September 2006) CCF-Belarus made the following steps:

- All the applicants were recommended to include in description of their project proposals an additional section explaining how this micro-grant will complement national strategies/programs in HIV/AIDS.
- Two two-day training sessions and series of follow-up individual consultations were offered to NGO-applicants in order to put their projects proposal on-line with the requirements of Department of Humanitarian Aid
- Case study and lessons learned from previous Call for Proposals (February 2006) and registration of micro-grants was shared with NGO-applicants.

- Motivation for NGO/NGO partnership is rather low.

In situation of the limited resources for AIDS work some NGOs try to monopolize a particular area of work (for example, PLWHA care and support) and become the main recipient of resources available for such programs. This attitude evokes NGO self-isolation and decrease ability and motivation to share resources, promote better practices and methodologies. Within the last Call for Proposals the total number of NGO/NGO partnerships were in three times less than number of GO/ NGO collaborations. Through the topical trainings, experience

exchanges and joint initiatives CCF will transfer to targeted NGO a collaborative approach, advantages, values and principles of responsible partnership

IV. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

CCF-Belarus has held regular project review meetings in Minsk. These meetings strengthened project management, performance and integration leading to enhanced cooperation and communication between project staff. CCF-Belarus and CCF HQ coordinated their efforts in engaging international experts for advanced-level HIV/AIDS training program in Belarus.

In April 8-12 William Fleming, HIV/AIDS specialist from CCF HQ visited Minsk and had series of meetings with CCF-Belarus project staff in order to discuss progress achieved and further project development.

Coordination with USAID

28 October 2005 key CCF-Belarus staff participated in *Post Award Meeting* in USAID Mission in Minsk. Thanks to that we have got a clear advice and guidance on how to proceed with the project with regard to *Cooperative Agreement* requirements and other related USAID roles and regulations.

CCF Country Director and Project Manager met on a regular basis with USAID CTO Marina Abrosimova and her replacement Jahor Novikau, as well as USAID Program Development Specialist Larisa Komarova. Their assistance and input in preparation of the PMEP and baseline report was greatly appreciated. Mr. Chuck Howell, USAID Country Coordinator in Belarus participated in the meetings and discussed project progress, challenges and highlights.

CCF Country Director Irina Mironova and USAID CTO Jahor Novikau met with USAID Regional top authorities in Kiev in July to discuss project progress and future plans.

In-country coordination: Building strategic partnerships with stakeholders.

Specialists from the different agencies like Global Fund project office in Belarus, Ministry of Education, UNFPA, health care institution, NGO “Christian Social Services” participated in the selection of the proposals submitted to the first micro-grant contest. Their participation was greatly appreciated and contributed to better coordination with other agencies, working in HIV/AIDS sector.

National AIDS Prevention Center (NAPC)

Regular meetings with Dr. Lilia Meleshko, Head of National AIDS Prevention Center (NAPC) and Dr. Bykova were held in the reporting period. These meetings helped to improve the micro-grants project proposals according to the recommendations of the AIDS Center specialists. At the same time these meeting helped to promote NGOs work and made it more visible for the state authorities. NAPC expressed its support to further development of NGO AIDS network in Belarus and increasing number of NGOs involved in AIDS work. Through these meetings and joint activities the project staff promotes a bilateral dialog with state authorities and transfer participatory and collaborative practices to them.

V. PROJECT MANAGEMENT & STAFF DEVELOPMENT

List of the project staff and their responsibilities:

Irina Mironova, Country Director – overall leadership, strategic planning and management, evaluation and reporting, donor relationships, strategic alliances with stakeholders, HR management and development, budget control, payments approval

Project Manager, Alexei Golontsov - ensures successful program implementation. This position has primary responsibility to oversight of the program, and reports directly to Chief of Party.

Finance Manager, Natalia Kovalchuk – Key responsibilities of this position includes monitoring program accounts, records and book-keeping, making sure financial reports are developed and sent to the donor every quarter, and verification of timely liquidation of justified program expenses.

Organizational development coordinator, Svetlana Zinkevich – This specialist coordinates intensive training and follow-up technical assistance interventions focused on NGO organizational and managerial capacity building. This position is responsible for conceptualizing the training program, developing the training modules, as well as the implementation and monitoring of the training modules.

Technical capacity building coordinator, Katerina Kostychenko – This specialist coordinates intensive training, and providing technical follow-up assistance to NGOs focused on capacity building to deliver appropriate HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support services. This position is responsible for the conceptualization and development of training programs as well as for implementation, coordination, and monitoring.

Networking coordinator/information manager, Alexander Novikov – This specialist organizes and manages network and information activities: exchanges, web-site, newsletter, etc. This position works in close cooperation with organizational development coordinator and technical capacity building coordinator, and also assists the program manager in networking with major partner NGOs.

Accountant, Maria Zakharova – This position is responsible for bookkeeping and maintaining detailed financial accounts for the program. This employee works closely with Financial Manager.

Monitoring and Evaluation specialist, Vladimir Korzh – this position supports monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities as well as provides relevant assistance to program manager.

Micro-grants manager, Anna Arhangelskaya – devotes 50% of his/her time to the project and is responsible for preparation, implementation and follow-up activities related to micro-grants.

Driver/Logistic, Youri Rusanov – is employed on half – time to ensure ease of transportation and logistics, as well as the security of all personnel, from Minsk to the districts, and within and between districts.

Staff capacity building:

- CCF-Belarus Country Director *Irina Mironova* took part in international training program “Community Based Prevention, Management and Treatment of AIDS (10-28 Nov, Israel,

Galilee College). Accommodation and travel expenses were covered by CCF Inc. and Galilee College scholarship.

- On March 16 CCF-Belarus specialist on M&E conducted a one-day session for CCF-Belarus staff. They discussed M&E theory and practice, process of data collection, analyses of indicators, expected project outputs and outcomes. All the participants found it very useful and suggested to conduct similar trainings for partner NGOs.
- In June 6-11 in Moscow (Russia) Svetlana Zinkevich, Organizational Capacity Building specialist and Vladimir Korzh, M&E specialist participated in the workshop and conference “Appreciative Inquire”. The workshop and conference were devoted to the approach in Organizational Change and Development, which is based on building the organization’s future using its strengths and best qualities. Training expenses were covered by the host organization.
- CCF-Belarus Finance Manager Natalia Kovalchuk completed a two-month **training course** “Fundamental Training in International Financial Reporting Standards” (IFRS). The Deloitte Audit Company and the School of Business and Management of Technology delivered this Eighty hour (80) IFRS (IAS) training program. CCF covered training expenses.
- CCF-Belarus Project Manager Alexei Golontsov participated in training “USAID Rules and Regulations” by Association of PVO Financial Managers (APVOFM) in Brighton (UK) in June 2006. The training was valuable for project management due to helped better compliance of project implementation process and donor’s rules and regulations. Training expenses were covered by CCF-HQ
- CCF-Belarus PR/Networking Coordinator participated in PR training organized in Antwerp (Belgium) by AIDS Action Europe. Knowledge and materials received at the training as well as professional contacts established will help to improve project’s information, PR and networking activities. Training expenses were covered by AIDS Action Europe.

Administrative systems developed in the reported period:

▪ *Project Management Guidelines*

Guidelines for CCF-Belarus management team are developed. Key project staff as well as project team has been trained on how to use the guidelines in day-to-day operations to support effective project’s planning, coordination, implementation and evaluation activities.

▪ *Micro-grants Management Guidelines*

CCF-Belarus staff developed a management system for the small grants. All the procedures regarding the micro-grant management are described in Micro-grants Management Guidelines. This document covers issues of the transparent selection and evaluation processes of the proposals, proper documentation, reporting and M&E of the small grants awarded within the CCF project.

VI. BUDGET

SF-272 (this report is will be submitted under separate cover by CCF’s Headquarters).



CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S FUND, Inc.
Representative Office in Belarus

List of sub-awards within the framework of "HIV/AIDS NGO Capacity Building in Belarus" project

NGO Name	Project name	Project description	Amount (\$)	Status	Duration
<p style="text-align: center;">"Social Projects"</p> <p>Contact info: 9 Knizhnaya str., Gomel, Belarus; phone: +375 232 57 12 48, e-mail: comdevpro@server.by Irina Kekuh – manager</p>	"Gomel-Info-AIDS"	The project will provide young people of Gomel region with better access to information on community-based HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support services. This will be done through creation and function of complex information and referral system. As project results, information web-site "GomelInfoAIDS" and telephone information and referral service will be created and function.	5,975.00	Registered in Department of Humanitarian Aid on 30.06.2006	From June'2006 to December'2006
<p style="text-align: center;">"Pinsk branch of Republican NGO "Mothers against drugs"</p> <p>Contact info: 3-70 Tsentralnaya str., 225710 Pinsk, Brest region, Belarus phone: +375 165 33 64 77, Irina Klimashenok – manager</p>	"Anonymous helpline "With open heart"	The project will improve HIV/AIDS prevention and care and support services for drug users (IDU) and people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Pinsk (Brest region).	6,000.00	Registered in Department of Humanitarian Aid on 25.07.2006	From July'2006 to January'2006
<p style="text-align: center;">"Belarusian Children's Hospice"</p> <p>Contact info: 100A Berezovaya roscha str., 223053 Borovliany, Minsk reion, Belarus phone: +375 17 5052746; e-mail: hospicepall@mail.belpak.by Anastasia Sheluto - manager</p>	"Establishment of self-help group of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)"	The project will increase social integration and activism of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) by creation of self-help group. Not less than 20 people will be integrated within the self-help group in Minsk City Infection Clinic.	6,000.00	Registered in Department of Humanitarian Aid on 23.05.2006	From May'2006 to November '2006
<p style="text-align: center;">"Mogilev women center of support and self-education"</p> <p>Contact info: 32-25 Ostrovskogo str., 212029 Mogilev, Belarus; phone: +375 222 27 26 08; e-mail: gvozdevav@tut.by Valantina Gvozdeva – manager</p>	"Creation of self-help groups of women and girls at risk"	The project activities will involve women/girls at risk behavior in the process of joint discussion and finding solution of the problems, related with HIV/AIDS and health issues. This will be achieved through creation of self-help groups and activities for social integration and adaptation of women and girls enrolled into the project.	5,820.00	Registration is not allowed	

<p>“Smorgon social agency” Contact info: 31-42 Yubileynaya str., Smorgon, Belarus Tel/fax: +375 1592 53 733, e-mail: csv78omak@rambler.ru Sergei Chekun – manager</p>	<p>“Youth center of HIV/AIDS prevention”</p>	<p>The project will involve school students in HIV/AIDS prevention among young people through creation of school-based Peer Education Center.</p>	<p>5,685.00</p>	<p>Registration is not allowed</p>	
<p>“Republican NGO “Mothers against drugs” Contact info: p/b 214, 200005 Minsk, Belarus; phone: +375 17 293 07 59, e-mail: mothersaginstdrugs@tut.by Elena Pisarenko – manager</p>	<p>“Tough love”</p>	<p>The project will improve psychological and emotional state of family members of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and drug users (DU) by means integrating self-help groups and providing with consultations of psychological and social service professionals.</p>	<p>5,988.00</p>	<p>Registered in Department of Humanitarian Aid on 28.06.2006</p>	<p>From June’2006 to December’2006</p>
<p>“Republican Youth NGO “Vstrecha” Contact info: p/b 139, 200050 Minsk, Belarus; phone/fax: +375 17 288 36 08 e-mail: info@vstrecha.by Oleg Eremin – manager</p>	<p>“Information handbook”</p>	<p>The project will improve the access to information about HIV/AIDS, sexual-transmitted diseases, safe sexual behavior, and HIV/AIDS-related services available for vulnerable groups for men having sex with men (MSM) through publishing of topical handbook.</p>	<p>5,500.00</p>	<p>Registered in Department of Humanitarian Aid on 21.09.2006</p>	<p>From September’ 2006 to March’ 2007</p>
<p>“Youth NGO “New Faces” Contact info: 17G-600 Masherov ave., 220029 Minsk, Belarus; phone: +375 17 284 73 65 e-mail: newfaces@newfaces-belarus.org Elena Yourkovska – manager</p>	<p>“If you know, then do it”</p>	<p>The project will improve HIV/AIDS-related knowledge among school students in Minsk, Krichev and Gantsevichi by means of creation and showing the series of topical performances of interactive forum-theatre.</p>	<p>5,820.00</p>	<p>Registration is not allowed</p>	
<p>“Local Charitable Foundation “Zemliachestvo” Contacts info: 2-35 Druzhba str., 247434 Svetlogorsk, Gomel region, Belarus phone: +375 296 56 73 99; e-mail: zemlyachestvo@mail.ru Vladimir Reva - manager</p>	<p>“First step”</p>	<p>The project will help to involve more people living with HIV/AIDS, including women in care and support programs and self-help groups’ activities through creation of topical information bulletin which will provide organizations with overview of best experience and practices in self-help group creation and management and promote this service among vulnerable groups. Besides, a social advertisement documentary about people living with HIV/AIDS will be filmed and broadcasted on a local TV.</p>	<p>5,992.00</p>	<p>Registered in Department of Humanitarian Aid on 20.06.2006</p>	<p>From June’2006 to September’2006</p>
<p>“Youth educational center “Crossroads” Contact info: p/b 79, 210015 Vitebsk, Belarus; phone/fax: +375 297 12 40 07 e-mail: rostan@tut.by Tatiana Plisynova - manager</p>	<p>“Youth movement against AIDS”</p>	<p>The project will improve HIV/AIDS-related knowledge of school students through prevention activities, public information campaigns and creative actions. Wide-area HIV/AIDS prevention campaign, which includes information and creative actions will be organized in the schools.</p>	<p>5,850.00</p>	<p>Registered in Department of Humanitarian Aid on 01.09.2006</p>	<p>From September’ 2006 to March’ 2007</p>



CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S FUND, Inc. Representative Office in Belarus

BAN presents an alternative opinion on HIV/AIDS situation at a meeting with top level UN official

One of key objectives of Belarusian AIDS Network (BAN) is to present to the government the opinion of civil society organizations about the HIV/AIDS situation and the effectiveness of measures being taken. In Belarus today this is not easy to do, but BAN continues to function as a voice of AIDS-service NGOs and reach top level policy makers with a message different to the dominating official position.



During the meeting with Lars Kallings

October 3, BAN members met with **Professor Lars O. Kallings, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe** who had arrived in Belarus for a three-day visit to review with the government the national progress in ensuring universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care services.

The meeting organized by UNAIDS was attended by Ms Gihan Sultanoglu, Head of UN Office in Minsk, and national coordinators of several UN agencies. BAN was represented by the leaders of its most active members including NGOs *Positive Movement, Alternative (Svetlogorsk), Mothers Against Drugs, Belarusian Association of UNESCO Clubs, Vstrecha, Social Aid, and CCF-Belarus.*

During the discussion, the leaders of BAN member-NGOs presented to Mr. Kallings and to Ms Gihan Sultanoglu a list of most acute concerns about HIV/AIDS situation in Belarus including:

- ⚡ inadequate cooperation of government agencies and NGOs in planning and implementation of HIV/AIDS national program;
- ⚡ low level of involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS in planning and implementation of national programs on HIV/AIDS;
- ⚡ sustainability of ARV treatment program after the completion of Global Fund project;
- ⚡ need of independent assessment of the spread of HIV/AIDS epidemic in Belarus.
- ⚡ lack of services for injecting drugs users and absence of adequate state drug rehabilitation services.



Lars Kallings (right): *"I urge political leaders to step forward and talk openly about HIV and AIDS. I speak for the strengthening of partnership of civil society organizations to ensure universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care."*

Mr. Kallings thanked BAN for pointing out to these issues and promised to address them during his meetings with government officials. And Head of UN Office in Belarus stated that the issues brought up by BAN will be seriously considered by the UN office. Soon after the meeting, she invited BAN to delegate a representative to take part in the meetings UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS on a regular basis.

As all BAN members agreed, the meeting was very productive. For the first time, a consolidated and agreed position of 15 AIDS-service NGOs was presented at such high level. And more importantly, BAN was able to get across a message which was different to the official one. Coming from those who deal with the epidemic in the field and not in the offices, it was less optimistic and more objective.



CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S FUND, Inc. Representative Office in Belarus

CCF encouraged Belarusian NGOs to make HIV/AIDS as one of the priorities of their work



Lack of care and support services for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) is an acute problem in Belarus. In Minsk there are more than 1000 PLWHA, but the level of their acceptance of state-sponsored services is rather low. Only 430 of them registered as clients of City Infectious Clinic, which offer medical care to PLWHA, but does not deal with psycho-social issues. Few NGOs directly work with PLWHA addressing their strong need in socialization, adaptation and support.

NGO “*Belarusian Children’s Hospice*” has more than 10-year experience in care and support to children suffered from various diseases and their family members. The NGO is one of the recognized in Belarus experts in palliative medicine and psycho-social support to the hopeless cases. HIV/AIDS was a perspective, but not applied area of work for Belarusian Children’s Hospice before this group was involved in “*HIV/AIDS NGO Capacity Building Project*” by CCF-Belarus.

Anna Gorchakova, director of *Belarusian Children’s Hospice* and key managers became regular participants of CCF-Belarus trainings on organizational development and HIV/AIDS. Thanks to that they learned a great deal of theory and methodology in HIV/AIDS as well as took a closer look at practices and approaches used by more experienced in HIV/AIDS NGO – members of Belarusian AIDS Network. In particular *NGO Mothers Against Drugs* shared its experience in self-help group methodology for IDU and their parents.



“...this was an impulse for us to understand how we can help to PLWHA and decide that Hospice have a good potential to establish HIV/AIDS services in forms of individual consultations and self-help group in City Infectious Clinic”.

The group started implementation of this plan from partnership agreements with Minsk Health Care Committee, City Infectious Clinic and Russian Public Foundation “Steps” (expert NGO in HIV/AIDS). CCF-Belarus awarded a small grant of about \$ 6,000 to support this partnership initiative financially.

At present time *Belarusian Hospice* runs psycho-social consultative services and facilitates self-help group of people living with HIV/AIDS. As Anastasia Sheluto the manager of this project pointed out that the impact made on the Clinic became even more substantial as it was previously planned. The NGO has done a really hard work to establish services and train medical staff, health care providers and administration on palliative medicine and ethical principles of working with PLWHA. This demonstrated to Clinic administration a new more comprehensive approach in service delivery considering needs of PLWHA.

At present Clinic and Belarusian Hospice developed a regulation paper and submitted it to Ministry of Health to get approval to include those services in Clinic’s scope of work after CCF project will be accomplished.