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International

“COMMUNITY SERVICES TO VULNERABLE GROUPS”
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QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT
Reporting period: 1 October– 31 December 2011

Component III “Expanding Participation of People with Disabilities”

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Development objective:

Democracy, human rights and development

I. PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The number of persons with disabilities in Belarus exceeds 500,000. There are 119,000 children with special needs, including about 30,000 children with disabilities among them. Discrimination and marginalization of adults and young people with disabilities is a typical social phenomenon for Belarus - while adults are often excluded from social and economic life, and decision-making practices, children with disabilities suffer from insufficient access to education and appropriate quality of services as well as social exclusion and lack of participation opportunities. The project component aims to include Belarusian people with disabilities into mainstream society and to strengthen the capacity of organizations of persons with disabilities.

The aim of the project component is being accomplished through three main objectives:

1. To support initiatives of people with disabilities and extend the range of services provided by local organizations to PWD in urban and rural areas through small grants;
2. To support advocacy efforts by PWD grassroots organizations to promote rights of people with disabilities and increase public awareness about people with disabilities;
3. To improve the capacity of grassroots organizations that support PWD and their families.

II. PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The project was implemented according to its Annual Implementation Plan.

ChildFund Belarus used a geographically focused approach and provided participating DPOs with new opportunities to improve advocacy practices and expand the range of services available to people with disabilities.

A TOT on the Parenting Skills Enhancement program that was started last year was completed this quarter. Twelve (12) PWDs acquired knowledge of effective parenting and obtained necessary trainer's skills. About 75% of them have already started Parenting Education classes for parents with disabilities or for parents raising children with disabilities. This new service was highly appreciated and demanded by the participants from the different regions of Belarus.

The first of two planned training sessions on Social Interactive Theater was conducted. Twenty-two (22) representatives of 21 PWD-related organizations learned this innovative advocacy tool that effectively helps to change attitudes, educate and model appropriate behavior. Next quarter this training program will be completed.

Three (3) partner DPOs that were awarded financing in Year 3 continued implementation of three small grants. The small grants resulted in the creation of thirteen 13 new services including HIV/AIDS prevention among youth with disabilities, social rehabilitation of people with spinal injury, and inclusion of children in wheelchairs into community life. The new services provided through small grants were appreciated by the project's clients. *(For more information, please see Annex 1 Success Story).* All small grants achieved their planned targets.

The small grant implementers undertook advocacy efforts (a round table, negotiations with decision-makers, a forum) to promote sustainability of the new services. One of the positive results of their advocacy efforts was the decision of the Ministry of Health to create a Task Force on quality improvement of rehabilitation programs for people with disabilities.

Alumni of training courses conducted by ChildFund Belarus in previous years took leadership positions in the different types of training and advocacy activities. Two (2) information campaigns against stigma and discrimination that were started last quarter by the alumni successfully continued. They included a variety of methods and tools such as art festivals, newspaper articles, and TV spots. Alumni of A Leadership Course were involved in the design of the training course on Leadership for children with disabilities (the first session of the course is scheduled for February 2012). Some of the alumni moved to a new level of mastery and developed six projects that were submitted to ChildFund's small grant

competition between November and December 2011. For at least 66% of them (4 of 6 persons) it was their first experience developing project proposals.

In order to maximize project impact and sustainability ChildFund Belarus developed the concept of network development between partner DPOs that received technical assistance from the project in Years 1-3. The concept paper will be discussed next quarter within a Roundtable with alumni of ChildFund training programs and small grant implementers.

The figures below illustrate the main outputs of Project implementation during the period between October 1 and December 31, 2011:

- **three (3)** small grants, awarded in Year 3 for a total amount of **USD 14,977**, continued implementation of small projects;
- **13 services** for PWDs were created within three small grants; **67 adults** with disabilities and **61** children with disabilities accessed new services;
- **two (2)** capacity building events for people with disabilities were conducted by ChildFund Belarus;
- **150** PWD-related specialists were trained by ChildFund Belarus and its partner organizations;
- **13** advocacy efforts were initiated and implemented by participating PWDs or partner DPOs.

III. CHALLENGES/ CONSTRAINTS/OPPORTUNITIES

- In addition to the first devaluation of the national currency that happened in April 2011, in October 2011 another devaluation of the national currency occurred. As a result the annual devaluation rate reached 189%, which resulted in significant losses for ChildFund’s partner DPOs. They adjusted their budgets and were looking for additional resources in order to implement all the planned activities and meet the targets. The situation forced one small grantee - Belarusian Association of People in Wheelchairs (Minsk) – to reduce the number of copies of their handbook for volunteers that they printed within their small grant project by 50%.

IV. LESSONS LEARNED

- The number of advocacy initiatives (10) carried out by participating PWDs proved that the training courses provided in Years 1 – 3 gave strong stimulus to activities of PWD grassroots organizations.

V. SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

OBJECTIVE 1: SUPPORT INITIATIVES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND EXTEND THE RANGE OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS TO PWD IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS THROUGH SMALL GRANTS

In order to support initiatives of people with disabilities and extend the range of services available to them:

- implementation of **three (3) projects** by local DPOs for a total amount of **USD 14,977** that were awarded financing in Year 3 continued.

List of small grant projects

#	NGO NAME	PROJECT NAME	GRANT AMOUNT
1	NGO Belarusian Association of People in Wheelchairs (Minsk branch)	Do as I Do	\$ 4,998.00

2	NGO Special World (Minsk branch) Project	First Step to Independence	\$ 4,980.00
3	NGO Young Men's Christian Association (Vitebsk branch)	Together on the Way to Health	\$ 4,999.00

According to M&E data, this quarter:

- 13 services for PWD were created;
- 67 (41 men and 26 women) adults with disabilities and 61 (24 girls and 37 boys) children with disabilities obtained access to new or improved services;
- 111 family members participated in small project activities.

In October-December 2011 all the small projects were implemented according to the approved time schedules.

ChildFund Belarus' team provided technical assistance, conducted regular site visits, and interviewed the project staff, partners and beneficiaries in order to monitor and assess small project outputs. Whenever necessary ChildFund provided its feedback on improving small grant performance and administrative procedures.

Among new/improved services were: consultations to people with recent spinal injury; habilitation of children in wheelchairs through art, dancing and Healing of Magic therapy; and training of youth with intellectual, emotional and physical disorders on HIV-preventing and life-saving skills.

The partner DPOs used a family-centered approach to create a safe stimulating environment for people with disabilities and to support their families. Thus, 111 family members were involved in needs assessment, obtained access to information and consultations, or participated in self-help groups.

The small grant implementers advocated among local and national-level stakeholders and decision-makers for the right of PWD to primary social rehabilitation and for the right of people with disabilities to independent living. *(Please, see information under Objective 2).*

The small projects will be implemented through May 2012. The final results of the projects' implementation will be reported in June 2012.

(For more information about small grants implementation, please see Annex 2 Small Grant Report).

OBJECTIVE 2: TO SUPPORT ADVOCACY EFFORTS BY PWD GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS TO PROMOTE THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES;

During the reported period:

- 13 advocacy efforts were taken (including 10 efforts by alumni of the training courses by ChildFund Belarus in Years 1- 3; three (3) efforts by small grant implementers);
- one (1) PWD-related decision was taken by local authorities.

Alumni of the Advocacy Course continued with implementation of two information campaigns designed in Year 3:

Public Awareness Campaign "46=47"

Natalya Pronkina (alumni of the Leadership without Limitations Course from NGO Stroumok, Polotsk, Vitebsk region) continued the information campaign "46=47" that was started last quarter. This quarter she further raised public awareness about children with Down syndrome through a series of newspaper articles and interviews on the local TV

channels. The photo exhibition "46=47" that demonstrates portraits of children with Down syndrome living in Polotsk together with local celebrities was very popular among representatives of key local NGOs, DPOs, state organizations and the general public. It was attended by more than 100 visitors. The exhibition contributed to shaping positive attitudes toward equality of people with disabilities by demonstrating photos of local chief executives and well-known persons side-by-side with children with Down syndrome.

This campaign expanded from Vitebsk to Minsk region. Due to good collaboration with another alumni of the Leadership Course, the photo exhibition became part of the Forum of Youth Initiatives "Together to Inclusive Society". The Forum was organized by the First Step to Independence Project by NGO Special World.

Public Awareness Campaign "You Make a Difference"

Within the campaign that aims to overcome PWD's self-isolation and to break stereotypes about disability a National Art Festival "Changes Start with You" was organized this quarter. It brought together 110 artists with disabilities to demonstrate their talents and capacities. The event was attended by family members, local NGOs and DPOs. Its input into creation of equal opportunities for PWD was acknowledged by local authorities. Tatyana Sinkevich (alumna of the Leadership without Limitations Course from Bobruisk, Mogilev region) obtained additional financing from Serafim Sarovsky Fund (Russian Federation) to continue this information campaign.

Promotion of the Right to Rehabilitation

A primary social rehabilitation for people with recent spinal injury is vital to prevent deterioration of their health condition and ensure their psychological and physical adaptation to their new life after the trauma. But access to this essential service is not provided within the state social and health systems. The NGO Belarusian Association of People in Wheelchairs (Minsk branch) successfully carried out a primary social rehabilitation program for people with recent spinal injury in a small grant "Do as I Do". The NGO provides the target group and their family members with information and tools to improve daily living activities and prevent further complications.

In order to ensure sustainability of this service, this quarter, the partner DPO negotiated with the Deputy Minister of Health, Chief Recreation Therapist of the Ministry of Health and other national authorities about the issue of including the primary social rehabilitation of people with recent spinal injury into the state sponsored programs. As a result, the Ministry of Health created a Task Force to improve rehabilitation programs for people with disabilities.

Introduction of personal assistants in Belarus

Personal assistants for PWDs are not available now in Belarus. This creates serious barriers toward full participation of PWDs in community life, introduction of inclusive education, use of public transportation, etc. In 2009 the ChildFund Task Group developed and submitted their proposals re introduction of personal assistants in Belarus. This proposal was considered in the National Program of Social Development for 2010-2015 in which the Ministry of Health and other ministries might realize the appropriateness of including this type of service into the state system.

Continuing this topic the NGO Special World within the small grant project First Step to Independence conducted a round table "Increasing Participation of PWDs in Belarus". The main goal was to further promote the introduction of personal assistants into the different spheres of life. The participants were PWDs, and DPOs, state PWD-service organizations, Ministry of Social Protection, Ministry of Education, and administration of state bodies. Among the topics discussed were: the necessity to introduce personal assistants in schools for better inclusion of children of school age, in the system of public transportation (railways, social taxi, city buses) to ensure access of people with limitation of motor activity; participation of PWD and DPOs in elaboration of job description for a personal assistant; promotion of the social concept of disability versus the widely spread medical concept. All the proposals, ideas and suggestions were sent to the appropriate state bodies and Minsk City Council after the round table.

A Forum of Youth Initiatives "Together to Inclusive Society" (Minsk)

The Forum brought together 30 children with and without disabilities. The event was organized in collaboration with the local school that provides integrated classes for typical children and children with disabilities. The participants demonstrated diverse artistic talents and enjoyed master classes, sports, and creative activities. The event was attended by parents, volunteers, NGOs, and authorities. It was covered by local and national mass media. State bodies'

representatives acknowledged innovative inclusive principles that the Forum broadcast. They declared their commitment to provide support to such events annually.

Developing DPO Network

Within three years of project implementation about 100 PWDs and PWD-related specialists from 35 locations from all over Belarus were trained by ChildFund. While some of them implemented joint efforts within their training “generation” contacts/cooperation between alumnus of the different years and courses were very limited if any. Networking and cooperation between the different “generations” and groups of ChildFund trainees could produce a synergistic effect in promoting the rights of people with disabilities.

ChildFund Belarus carried out a series of consultations with participating PWDs in order to develop ideas for further cooperation and networking between alumni of the Advocacy Course and Leadership without Limitations Course (Years 1 – 3). As a result, a draft concept of networking was developed. The concept will be presented and discussed with participating PWDs at the Round table scheduled for January 27, 2012.

Participation in the Decision Making Process through Local Councils on Disability Issues

During the three years of PWD Project implementation, 22 participating DPOs from 11 localities have gotten membership in local Councils on Disability Issues. This quarter representatives of four (4) participating DPOs reported their participation in the meetings of the local Councils. Two (2) of these DPOs used this opportunity to actively advocate for PWD rights:

- Gennady Zolotaryov (NG Invalidy-Spinalniki, Gomel) successfully promoted new ideas to improve job opportunities for people with disabilities. He presented the plan to carry out an open recruitment fair for people with disabilities in Gomel oblast. The recruitment fair is scheduled for January 2012.
- Elena Strakh (NGO BelAPDIIMI, Zhitkovichi) advocated for better inclusion of children with disabilities. The local youth rehabilitation center is situated on the second floor of a multi-story building. The center clients with motor disorders do not have proper access to the Center as they cannot climb a steep staircase. The local authorities made a plan to install a special elevator at the center by 2015. Elena developed a strategy to expedite the process. As part of the strategy she made a presentation at the council meeting in November 2011.
- Elena Strakh (NGO BelAPDIIMI, Zhitkovichi) successfully advocated for building a ramp at the local drug store.

OBJECTIVE 3 : IMPROVE THE CAPACITY OF GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PWD AND THEIR FAMILIES.

In order to build the capacity of local PWD-service organizations that deliver support to people with disabilities and their family members, from October 1 to December 31:

- **two (2)** capacity building events were conducted by ChildFund Belarus (Session 2 of the ToT of the Parenting Skills Enhancement Program and Session1 of the ToT of the Social Interactive Theater Program);
- **five (5)** training events were supported by ChildFund Belarus as follow up activities of the alumni of the Leadership without Limitations Course (conducted in Year 3) and the alumni of the ToT of the Parenting Skills Enhancement Program;
- **two (2)** training events were conducted by implementing DPOs in the frame of small projects.

According to M&E data:

- **150 (27 men and 123 women)** PWD- related specialists from 34 DPOs were trained (including 79 - within small grants, 31 by ChildFund Belarus; 40 – within follow up activities by alumni of the training course on Parenting Skills Enhancement Program);

ACTIVITY: ToT Session 2 : Parenting Skills Enhancement Program (October 14-16 2011, Minsk)	
<i>Planned</i>	<i>Actual targets achieved</i>

A group of 15 parents with disabilities and parents who have children with disabilities improved parenting skills and acquired the skill to run self-help groups	12 participants* (parents with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities) acquired knowledge and the skill to set up self-help groups in local communities*
<p><i>*Note: Fifteen participants were at the first training sessions in September 2011. Three of them could not attend the 2nd session due to either family or health reasons.</i></p> <p><u>Outcomes:</u></p> <p><i>By December 2011, three (3) participants started parenting training groups (32 participants representing parents with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities) in their home localities</i></p> <p><i>Six (6) participants scheduled Parenting Skills Enhancement Programs within parents' clubs for January 2012.</i></p>	
<p>ACTIVITY:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ToT Session 1 : Social Interactive Theater Program (December 2-4 2011, Minsk)</p>	
Planned	Actual targets achieved
A group of 15 people with disabilities acquired knowledge and skills to set up a social interactive theater	22 participants from 21 PWD-related organizations got knowledge of the basic principles of SIT, the structure and specifics of SIT.
<p><i>Note :</i></p> <p><i>The 2nd session is scheduled for January 20-21, 2012. Participants will acquire skills to set up a social interactive theater in their home localities.</i></p>	

Two (2) DPOs implementing small grants built the capacity of 79 PWD-related specialists. They provided a training for trainers on primary rehabilitation of people with disabilities (NGO Belarusian Association of People in Wheelchairs, Minsk) and trained a group of young volunteers on HIV prevention among children with disabilities (NGO Young Men's Christian Association/ Vitebsk). *(For more information about capacity building within small grants, please see Annex 2 Small Grant Report).*

Follow up Activities of Alumni of Parenting Skills Enhancement Training Course

Egeny Britko (NGO Child's Diabetes, Mozyr) – an alumnus of the Leadership without Limitations Course conducted in Year 3 – carried out training on effective relationships within families with a person with disability for five (5) peers.

Tatyana Lapko (NGO Special World, Minsk) – an alumna of the Leadership without Limitations Course conducted in Year 3 – carried out training on accessibility of the local environment for three (3) members of her organization (

Three (3) alumni of the Parenting Skills Enhancement Program - Andrey Tsybulski (NGO Belarusian Association of People in Wheelchairs, Vitebsk), Tatyana Pukalo (NGO Red Cross, Bobruisk) and Tatyna Fedoruk (NGO BelAPDiMI, Kobrin) - organized five (5) training sessions for the members and clients of their organizations. Thirty two (32) parents either with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities attended the sessions.

OUTCOMES

- **Three (3)** alumni of the Leadership without Limitations Course (Year 3) took leadership in the design of a new training program on Leadership for children and youth with disabilities. The program is to reveal leadership potential, develop independent living skills and promote proactive attitudes of young people with disabilities aged between 15 and 17. From October–December 2011, a series of biweekly working meeting with the alumni were conducted to develop modules, handouts and the agendas of the training sessions. ChildFund Belarus' Training Coordinator provided his/her technical assistance. The first session is scheduled for February 24-26, 2012.

Six (6) alumni of the course moved to a new level of mastery and developed six projects that were submitted to ChildFund's small grant competition in November –December 2011. For at least 66% of them (4 of 6 persons) it was their first experience of developing project proposals.

- Oksana Ukrainets (NGO Child's Diabetes, Mozyr) applied with the Live a Full Life Project that aims to improve quality of life of children with diabetes and their better inclusion into community life;
- Gennady Zolotaryov (NGO Invalidy-Spinalniki, GomeI) applied with the Live and Barriers Project that aims to improve accessibility of local environments and to mobilize the local PWD community;
- Natalya Pronkina (NGO Stroumok, Polotsk) applied with A Tour to the Planet "47" Project that challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about people with Down syndrome;
- Elena Strakh (NGO BelAPDIIMI, Zhitkovichi) applied with the Photography Helps to Be Independent Project that aims to improve independent living skills in youth with disability;
- Yulya Shpakovskaya (Day Care Centre, Smorgon) applied with the Resource Center for People with Disabilities Project that aims to improve access of people with disabilities to training and development and expand their opportunities to participate in community life.
- Lyudmila Tishko (NGO BelAPDIIMI, Smolivichi) applied with the Ray of Hope Project that aims to provide vocational training to youth with disabilities.

VI. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

COORDINATION WITH USAID

Irina Mironova, ChildFund's COP and Jahor Novikau, USAID AOTR communicated regularly through meetings, e-mails and phone calls.

Cooperation with ChildFund International Headquarters –

ChildFund Belarus was in regular communication with ChildFund International's Headquarters in Richmond via e-mail and Skype.

In December 2011 Mary Moran (Sr. Program Specialist – ECD , ChildFund International Headquarters) and Irina Mironova, Chief of Party, visited the DCOF office in Washington, D.C. and shared the success of the project.

Coordination with the other organizations

In December 2011 , Elena Zalutskaya, Project Manager participated at the presentation of the Alternative Report on Enforcement of Rights of People with Disabilities in Belarus prepared by the Office on PWD Rights.

VII. PROJECT MANAGEMENT & STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The vacancy of the Specialist on Inclusive Education was announced and two (2) CVs were received. In January the candidates will be interviewed to fill the position.

In December 2011 Irina Mironova, Chief of Party, successfully completed training on USAID/Federal Rules and Regulations conducted by InsideNGO in Washington, D.C. Travel, accommodation and training fees were charged to the project.

VIII. BUDGET

The SF-425 report will be submitted under separate cover by ChildFund International's Headquarters.

Annex 1: PWD Project Map (October 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011)



- I. ● Localities covered by advocacy training
- ⚡ Localities covered by advocacy follow up activities
- II. ● Localities covered by training on proposal writing
- ⚡ Localities that applied for small grants in calls for proposals
- III. ● Localities covered by Leadership without Limitations Training Course (LLTC)
- ⚡ Localities covered by follow ups by LLTC alumni
- IV. ● ChildFund Belarus' grantees (2009\2010)
- V. ● ChildFund Belarus' small grantees- 2010\2011
- VI. ● Localities having councils for disability issues
- VII. ● Partner organizations for inclusive education
- VIII. ● Localities covered by Social Interactive Theater training
- Localities covered by TOT on Parenting Skills Enhancement Program
- ⚡ Localities covered by Parents' Skills Enhancement program for parents with disabilities

Annex 2: Overview of Small grants supported by ChildFund Belarus under PWD Project Component October 2011–December 2011

List of Small Grant projects awarded financing

#	NGO NAME	PROJECT NAME	Small Grant Amount	STATUS
1	Minsk branch of NGO "Association of people on wheelchairs"	Do as I Do!	\$ 4,998.00	In progress. It is to be completed on May 5, 2012
2	NGO "Special World"	First step to independence	\$ 4,980.00	In progress. It is to be completed on January 10, 2012
3	NGO "Young Men Christian Association"	Together on, the way to health	\$ 4,999.00	In progress. It is to be completed on February 30, 2012

Description of Small Grant projects in operation in the reported period:

NGO name: Minsk branch of NGO "Association of people on wheelchairs"	Small grant amount: \$ 4998.00	Project dates: May 6, 2011 May 5, 2012
Project duration: 12 months		
NGO contact information:	50 Rokossovskogo Prospect, office 209, Minsk, Belarus; tel: +375 17 2911089/2486814; email: inna.digilevich@gmail.com	
Project name:	Do as I Do !	

Brief description:

The project is based on a methodology named "First contact" that was borrowed from Swiss NGO "Rekryterings Gruppen for active rehabilitation" and adopted for Belarus. The "First Contact" focuses on informational service for physical rehabilitation and social adaptation for people with the recently received spinal trauma. The methodology uses a peer approach with consultants who have disabilities caused by the same traumas

Within the project, the members of the "First Contact" group work in 4 medical centers with people who recently faced disability caused by neck-bone trauma and spinal injuries. Additionally to demonstrate independent living skills, the full range of information about employment and education opportunities will be provided. The informational materials about physical rehabilitation and social adaptation will be worked out and distributed among the patients of the city hospitals, their parents, and medical personnel of rehabilitation centers. Two flip information boards are to be placed in the rehabilitation centers in Atolino and Aksakovschina and educational videos on related topics will be shot. Along with this activity trainings will be organized to raise the competency of the "First Contact" group members.

At the end of the project the work group created on the base of "Association of people using wheelchairs" will work out and approve the regulations on "First Contact" program functioning.

Planned services and planned number of beneficiaries:

• People with disabilities caused by cervical trauma get individual and group consultations on self-assistance, social rehabilitation and everyday activities adaptation	40 people
• People with disabilities caused by other spinal injuries get individual and group consultations on self-assistance, social rehabilitation and everyday activities adaptation	40 people
• Consultations for the members of families of people with cervical and spinal injuries on handling the conditions living with someone who has this trauma	80 people
• Trainings for the "First Contact" group consultants	15 consultants
• Flip information boards in the rehabilitation centers in Belarus	2 boards
• The handbook for the First Contact consultants	100 issues
• Educational video that informs how to create an environment for better social rehabilitation and adaptation	7 videos

Established services and number of beneficiaries:	Number of participants:	Total	In the reported period
• Consultations for people with cervical and spinal trauma		62 people (49 males/13 females)	31 people (22 males/9 females)
• Consultations for the members of their families		46 people (7 males/39 females)	12 people (5 males/ 7 females)
• Educational video that informs how to create an environment for better social rehabilitation and adaptation		7 videos	7 videos
• The handbook for the First Contact consultants		50 issues	50 issues
• Trainings for the "First Contact" group consultants		15 consultants (6 males/9 females)	15 consultants (6 males/9 females)
Project modifications The number of the handbooks was modified from 100 to 50 due to the budget shortage. The organization sent an official letter with a request to reallocate the budget cash flow and reduce the number of items printed (request letter dated November 4th, 2011). The request was approved (the approval letter # 313, dated November 5th, 2011).			

NGO name: NGO "Special World" Project duration: 8 months	Small Grant amount: \$ 4,980.00	Project dates: May 10, 2011 Jan 10, 2012
NGO contact information: 2 Rabkorovskaya st, 42, Minsk, Belarus; tel: +375 17 250 24 93; email: special_world@mail.ru		
Project name:	First Step to Independence	
Brief description:	The project is aimed at creating an environment for smooth physical, social, and cultural adaptation for children who use wheelchairs by means of a combination of art-therapeutic methods and various educational activities. In the same line with art studio, dance class, and game therapies, the project embodies Healing of Magic methodology. In combination these provide the wide range of skills and opportunities to children with disabilities to improve their physical condition,	

become more self-confident and develop communication skills with their relatives and peers.

Within the project, children who use wheelchairs participate in various activities planned by the project in joint groups with their siblings and parents. To mobilize parents and increase their awareness about the possibilities for their children to be independent, "School of Independence –the First Step" training (3) will be organized and followed by the parents club meetings(4).

A round table and Children's Initiative Forum will sum up the results of the project and will be the base for sharing experiences with the representatives of local non-profit organizations and public agencies. A brochure "Social and Cultural Adaptation are First Steps to Independence" will be published at the end of the project.

Planned services and planned number of beneficiaries:

• Art-therapy groups ("Children's dreams", Healing of Magic, dance group)	65 people (30 children with disability; 5 siblings, 30 parents)
• "School of Independence –the First Step" training (3 trainings)	20 people (10 children; 10 parents)
• Parents club meetings	20 parents
• A Round Table "Social Adaptation is the basis of an Independent Life for Children with Disability"	20 people
• Children's Initiative Forum	160 people
• Publishing a brochure "Social and Cultural Adaptation as the First Step to Independence"	100 items

Established services and number of beneficiaries:

	Number of participants:	
	Total	In the reported period
• Art-therapy groups for children with disabilities, parents and siblings (children's dreams, Healing Magic, dance group)	61 children (25 males/36 females) 28 parents (7 males/21 females) 6 siblings (3 males/3 females)	57children (22 males/35 females), 10 parents (10 females), 2 siblings (1 male/1 female)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly dance group for children 	20 children (16 males/4 females)	–
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents club meetings (4 meetings 4 hours each) 	23 parents (9 males/14 females)	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School of Independence –the First Step” Training (3 trainings) 	8 children (1 male/7 females) 12 parents (4 males/8 females)	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Round Table “Social Adaptation is the Basis of an Independent Life for Children with Disability” (representatives of Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Healthcare, child protection organizations, and NGOs) 	28 people (4 males/24 females)	28 people (4 males/24 females)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children’s Initiative Forum (children with disabilities, parents, pupils, child protection specialists, volunteers) 	172 persons (39 children PWD, 38 parents and community members, 40 pupils, 35 specialists, volunteers 20)	172 persons (39 children PWD, 38 parents and community members, 40 pupils, 35 specialists, volunteers 20)

NGO name: NGO “Young Men’s Christian Association” Project duration: 7 months	Small Grant amount: \$ 4,999.00	Project dates: August 1, 2011- February 29, 2012
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NGO contact information: 38/2 Chkalova 113, Vitebsk, Belarus; tel: +375 29 5187110; email: nadia_smile@tut.by

Project name: Together on the Way to Health

Brief description:

The project is aimed to expand access to information about HIV/AIDS prevention and reproductive health for children and youth with mental and physical disorders in Lida, Belarus. The uniqueness of the project is the emphasis on specifics of working with the target group addressing such risk factors for HIV/AIDS such as alcohol, drug abuse, and unsafe sex.

Within the project, volunteers of the same age as the target group attend HIV/AIDS prevention and reproductive health trainings (2). These trainings will be worked out with the emphasis of working specifically with children and young people with physical and mental disorders. Work meetings will be organized to involve the parents of children and young people in the project and detect the acute needs and existing problems. The trained volunteers lead the consistent information sessions for children and young people with disabilities.

At the end of the project, a brochure "HIV/AIDS Protection and Reproductive Health for People with Physical and Mental Disorders" will be distributed among public agencies and NGOs that provide services to children and young people with physical and mental disorders.

Planned services and planned number of beneficiaries:

• A seminar for the volunteers on HIV and reproductive health issues (2 two-day seminars)	12 volunteers
• Testing meetings for the volunteers to evaluate their readiness to work with the target group	12 volunteers
• Assessment meetings for the volunteers to review the process of the project realization (2 meetings)	12 volunteers
• Information sessions for young people aged between 18-30 with physical and mental disorders (4 sessions)	30 young people
• Information sessions for children aged 15-18 with physical and mental disorders (4 sessions)	15 children
• Needs assessment meetings with parents in between of the information sessions for children and young people (3 meetings)	Not less than 45 parents
• The collection of materials, design and production of the brochure containing HIV and reproductive health information for specific groups of people with mental and physical impairments	27 public agencies and NGOs that provide service to people with mental and physical impairment

Established services and number of**Number of participants:****Total****In the reported**

beneficiaries:	period	
• Needs assessment meetings with parents in between the information sessions for children and young people (3 meetings)	46 people (4 male/ 42 females)	26 people (3 male/23 females)
• A seminar for the volunteers on HIV and reproductive health issues (2 two-day seminars)	20 people (3 males/17 females)	20 people (3 males/17 females)
• Testing meetings for the volunteers to evaluate their readiness to work with the target group	20 people (3 males/17 females)	20 people (3 males/17 females)
• Assessment meetings for the volunteers to review the process of the project realization (2 meetings)	20 people (3 males/17 females)	20 people (3 males/17 females)
• Information sessions for young people aged between 18-30 with physical and mental disorders (4 sessions)	42 people (23 males/19 females)	42 people (23 males/19 females)
• Information sessions for children aged 15-18 with physical and mental disorders (4 sessions)	4 people (2 males/2 females)	4 people (2 males/2 females)

Annex 3. A starlet in a wheel chair

Nastya was born with a congenital disability that required her to use a wheelchair since her early childhood. She is seven. Since her birth her parents have been afraid of the hostile social environment and limited her interaction with peers. She never went to a kindergarten and did not have opportunities to develop communication skills. She was isolated.

Next year Nastya's parents feel she should be educated however they believe in-home education would probably be the best choice for their daughter, as the social problems she would face at school could be too much for her.

This situation is typical for families having children with disabilities in Belarus. Parents wish to protect their child from discrimination and aggression. This overprotective attitude is one of the major barriers to a child's inclusion into society and participation in community life. As a result the society labels a person with disabilities as weak, vulnerable, unable to make decisions and unable to be independent.

In May 2011, within ChildFund's USAID funded program "Expanding participation of people with disabilities," the NGO Special World started The First Step to Independence Project. Nastya and her parents became project participants along with 30 other families who have children with disabilities.

The project provides tools to enhance the social adaptation of children in wheelchairs and their families. Children enjoy the art studio, dancing and the Healing of Magic class, while parents develop parenting skills, share challenges and talk about successes with their peers at the parents' club. Both children and parents have improved their psychological and physical condition and become more sociable and self-confident. The young participants were inspired by successful adults who use wheelchairs who acted as trainers and leaders during the project events.



Nastya joined dancing classes in June 2011. Everything was new to her. She was shy and passive. She was afraid that everybody would laugh at her if she failed. Step by step with encouraging support from volunteers, peers and her parents, she started to dance.

The project participants demonstrated their talents and achievements during the Youth Forum "Together to Inclusive Society", a unique event that brought together on stage children with disabilities, their typical peers, and young volunteers. Nastya in a team of three other children appeared in a dancing performance "Dance with Us".

"Thanks to ChildFund my daughter opened up and overcame her shyness. I look at the progress Nastya made during the last 6 months. Now my daughter is looking forward to going to school. I am absolutely sure that she will find many friends at school" says Nastya's mom.