



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ChildFund
International

“COMMUNITY SERVICES TO VULNERABLE GROUPS”

USAID Cooperative Agreement Number: AID-121-A-00-05-00703

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT
Reporting period: 1 October– 31 December 2012

Component III “Expanding Participation of People with Disabilities”

Author’s Name: Irina Mironova, Chief of Party
Name of USAID office: USAID/Ukraine Regional Contracting Office
USAID Regional Mission Representative Office in Belarus

Publication or issuance date of report: January 31, 2013

Organizational Contact Information:

<p>ChildFund International-Belarus:</p> <p>Irina Mironova Chief of Party ChildFund International, Belarus 39 Pushkin Ave., office 16 Minsk 220092 Belarus Phone: 375-172-57-77-08 (09) E-mail: imironova@belarus.childfund.org</p>	<p>USA Headquarters:</p> <p>Rachel Maris-Wolf Project & Grant Management Specialist Infants and Young Children ChildFund International USA 2821 Emerywood Parkway Richmond, Virginia 23294, USA Phone: (804) 545-3619 E-mail: rmaris-wolf@childfund.org</p>
--	---

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.

From October 2008 – September 2012 ChildFund Belarus implemented the four-year project “Expanding Participation of People with Disabilities” funded by USAID in Belarus under the Community Services to Vulnerable Groups cooperative agreement. The project component aimed to include Belarusian people with disabilities into mainstream society and to strengthen the capacity of organizations of persons with disabilities.

In October 2012, ChildFund Belarus entered the next three year project phase with the aim to increase integration of people with disabilities (PWD) through developing innovative services and strengthening the capacity of the grassroots PWD organizations.

The project has three main objectives:

1. Build the organizational, networking, and advocacy capacity of grassroots organizations supporting PWD and their families;
2. Support advocacy efforts by PWD grassroots organizations to promote inclusion;
3. Support the introduction and development of inclusive education of children and young people with disabilities.

II. PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter was the beginning of a new three year extension received from USAID. The project team focused on analyzing the results achieved within the previous three years of project implementation, and planned its further development for the next three-year cycle. The final report and PMP for 2009-2012 were submitted to USAID AOR. The Annual Implementation Plan and the revision of the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for 2012-2015 reflect specifics from Modification #8 and were developed and submitted to USAID. The documents create a solid platform for the next three year phase of project implementation.

Among programmatic priorities was access to inclusive education for children with disabilities. This quarter a trainer’s group on inclusive education was formed which then participated in the TOT workshop. The composition of the trainer’s group included parents of children with disabilities, people with disabilities (representatives of partner DPOs), faculty from the universities, methodologists from the National Institute of Education, and front-line practitioners working with children with disabilities from all over Belarus.

Parents are the main driving force in of the promotion of inclusive education. The next step in mobilization of parents’ communities in remote areas was done through a TOT on self-help groups. Self-help groups will help parents of young children with disabilities overcome isolation and self-isolation, co-dependence, and multiple stresses. Improved emotional status of parents will increase children’s opportunities for development, habilitation, and inclusion.

The right of people with disabilities to education, equality, and non-discrimination were promoted by the alumni of ChildFund’s training courses through 11 advocacy efforts including meetings with authorities and stakeholders, letter writing, and publications. The ChildFund specialist actively used any opportunity to sensitize the public and promote the value of inclusive education either through project events or through events conducted by partner organizations. They include the round table on opportunities of vocational training and job placement for youth with disabilities, the internship

of ECD specialists at Minsk Habilitation Center, the National Conference “Vocational Training for People with Disabilities.” These events were attended by more than 150 parents of children with disabilities, PWD-related specialists, researchers, authorities, and decision-makers. Youth with and without disabilities and their parents, alumni of the *Leadership without Limitations* course for youth, became active actors of changes in their own lives and actively advocated for inclusion. This quarter they initiated and implemented 6 advocacy events supported by ChildFund.

The figures below illustrate the main outputs of project implementation during the period between October 1 and December 31, 2012:

- Two (2) training events, and one (1) working meeting were conducted by ChildFund Belarus;
- 55 (3 men and 52 women) PWD-related specialists from 35 organizations were trained;
- Three (3) inclusive events for youth with and without disabilities and their family members were supported by ChildFund Belarus;
- 73 (30 boys and 43 girls) children with and without disabilities and 29 (3 men and 26 women) parents of children with disabilities participated in these events;:
- 11 advocacy efforts aimed at the introduction of inclusive education were taken;
- 13 organizations were provided with informational support and consultations in order to improve inclusion in preschool and school settings.

III. CHALLENGES/ CONSTRAINTS/OPPORTUNITIES

- Bad weather conditions and the inability of the road service to cope with huge amounts of snow in December created a serious problem with transportation. Some districts in Belarus were cut off from the centers because the roads were completely lost under the snow- the number of car accidents also increased. Considering the fact that trains and buses are not accessible for PWDs and the project participants with disabilities typically use cars in order to get to project events, the snow created additional threats for their safety. As a result, it was determined that the meeting of the Task Group and the first meeting of the Working Group of Experts on Inclusive Education that were originally scheduled for December should be postponed to the next quarter.
- This quarter, two new projects started in Belarus focused on inclusive education. The TEMPUS project supported by the EU and the barrier-free environment supported by the Program of Support to Belarus (Germany) program. There is the need to formulate a joint vision and definition of inclusive education among all actors involved and create a system of information sharing and coordination between the implementing agencies. Next quarter ChildFund will initiate a roundtable discussion on inclusive education with new actors. Among them are Pedagogical State University, Gomel State University, Re-training Institutes of Minsk City, and the Ministry of Education, as well as the TEMPUS project, the NGO “Belarusian Association of People with Disabilities,” and the Office on PWD’s Rights.
- The Zhodino Habilitation Center that successfully completed a sub-grant project on inclusive education in September 2012 has started a new project “Inclusive Social Environment for Everybody” supported by a German donor. It will create additional opportunities for implementation of inclusive educational settings in Zhodino.
- The economic crisis that broke out in Belarus in 2011 continues today. Price spirals for foodstuff, gas, and oil affects the most vulnerable groups of the population, who are ChildFund Belarus’ target groups. Shrinking community resources can jeopardize the sustainability of community based services established within the project and decrease the community’s ability to share costs for training activities.

IV. SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

OBJECTIVE 1: BUILD THE ORGANIZATIONAL, NETWORKING AND ADVOCACY CAPACITY OF GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING PWD AND THEIR FAMILIES

In order to build the organizational, networking and advocacy capacity of grassroots organizations supporting PWD and their families the following inputs were conducted:

- One (1) training on methodology of self-help groups by ChildFund
- One (1) working meeting with an initial group of parents of children with Down Syndrome
- Needs assessment methodology for partner parent's association developed

ACTIVITY: Training on methodology of Self- help Groups (November 16-18, Minsk)	
<i>Planned</i>	<i>Actual targets achieved</i>
25 people – parents of children with disabilities, PWD-related specialists - acquire knowledge on self-help group methodology and group facilitation skills	21 people* (parents of children with disabilities and PWD-related specialists) from Bobruisk, Vitebsk, Minsk, Gomel, and Krichev participated in the event. They explored the co-dependence phenomenon, relationship patterns between parents and children with disabilities and between parents, children and PWD-related specialists. The participants acquired basic knowledge and the skills to set up and run self-help groups in local communities.
At least 75% of the trainees run self-support groups in their communities	13 participants (61%) scheduled self-help groups for parents of children with disabilities for January 2013
<p><i>Notes:</i></p> <p><i>*ChildFund Belarus spread information about the training through all the available resources. All the 21 applicants were accepted to participate.</i></p> <p>The event was highlighted in the electronic media http://www.ngo.by/news/1c036de06a4e.html, http://ngo.by/news/55f92d8f355c.html, on the web-site of partner DPO http://belapdi.org/obyavleniya/trening-po-organizacii-grupp-samopomoshhi-dlya-roditelej-detej-s-invalidnostyu/, and on USAID Belarus' Facebook web-page http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.463820713663807.103970.150482034997678&type=1.</p>	

DEVELOPING GROUP INITIATIVE OF PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DOWN SYNDROME

In November 2012, ChildFund Belarus facilitated a working meeting for the group initiative of parents with children with Down Syndrome (nine (9) people). The participants discussed the problems of including young children with Down Syndrome in mainstream preschool settings and received targeted consultation from ChildFund specialists on specific advocacy interventions to mitigate problems. Within the course of the working meeting the necessity to increase advocacy efforts and strengthen the representation and visibility of this parents' group was discussed. It will require formalization of the group initiative into an NGO in order to be in compliance with local legislation and help to develop more influential relationships with the social environment. Considering problems with registration of new NGOs in Belarus the parents proposed to link up to the existing NGO "Down Syndrome" dealing with adults and to form a branch dealing with young children within this organization. Negotiations with the NGO "Down Syndrome" will be conducted by the group initiative of parents.

A Needs Assessment methodology about specific needs in the area of organizational development was developed by ChildFund specialists. In order to get more reliable data and actively involve the participating organizations in building their own capacities the process of needs assessment will be divided into two phases. The first one will be conducted with the leadership of the organizations using questionnaire templates that would be disseminated among partner organizations before the training course. The questionnaire includes some basic elements and more general questions

that would help to develop an organizational profile and identify institutional capacity to work in alliance with others or to use advocacy. The second phase of the needs assessment will be conducted during the first session of the training course for the Parents' Associations and will include quantitative and qualitative methods to determine scores for capacity indicators and capture more dynamic issues and perceptions of staff. This self- assessment session will encourage better ownership of results.

OBJECTIVE 2: SUPPORT ADVOCACY EFFORTS BY PWD GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS TO PROMOTE INCLUSION

Representatives of Parents' Associations, specialists and educators, youth with and without disabilities who were previously trained by ChildFund became advocates for better inclusion, rooting out stigma, and addressing discrimination against PWDs. During the reported period:

- 11 advocacy efforts were taken (including three (3) efforts by ChildFund Belarus, and eight (8) - by the alumni of the training courses conducted by ChildFund Belarus in Year 4).

PROMOTION OF THE PWDs' RIGHT TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- In November 2012, the Belarusian State University of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering conducted the National Conference "Vocational Training for People with Disabilities". ChildFund-Belarus was invited there to make a presentation on the philosophy, approaches and advantages of inclusive education. The Conference was attended by 50 leading researchers, practitioners, and specialists in the field of providing vocational training to people with disabilities.
- In partnership with Minsk Habilitation Center, a capacity building event for PWD-related specialists from 13 Habilitation Centers from all over Belarus was organized. ChildFund Belarus' specialist on inclusive education led a workshop "Conceptual Basics of Inclusive Education" within this event.
- *Olga Svetlakova*, a faculty member of Minsk State Pedagogical University who graduated from ChildFund International's training course on Inclusive Education in FY12, wrote an article on the indicators of inclusive education. The article was included into the documents of the 3rd International Scientific and Practical Internet conference "Special Education: Traditions and Innovations".

An electronic collection of article can be found at <http://itdset.bspu.unibel.by/ru/content/7/news4/2/>

- *Marina Letoshko* (Gomel Habilitation Center) and *Gennady Zolotaryov* (DPO "Invalidy-Spinalniki"), participants of the Forum "Partnership without Limitations" from Gomel, developed a partnership in order to organize an oblast-level meeting on "Perspectives of inclusive education for people with disabilities." The event leaders aimed to draw the attention of local administrators, authorities, NGOs, and the general public to the violation of young PWD's rights to have access to higher education. The participants discussed possible strategies to provide the PWDs with opportunities to access higher education. Barriers in existing practices of entrance exams were discussed. The participants developed recommendations to improve access of PWD to vocational schools and higher education. Among the most important were:
 - To spread information about vocational schools, colleges and universities that have facilities to provide education to PWDs among all the secondary schools of Gomel oblast;
 - To raise awareness of PWDs about existing opportunities to obtain further education;
 - To develop a series of TV broadcasts about the right of PWDs to education;
 - To create a local newspaper column "Education without Limitations" dedicated to the providing education to PWDs;
 - To set up a coordination committee to inform, educate, assist, and employ young people with disabilities;
 - To continue multidisciplinary cooperation in order to further improve the life of people with disabilities;
 - To post the list of integrated schools and kindergartens on the websites of Gomel Executive Committee and Gomel Habilitation Center.

- *Svetlana Byakova*, from NGO “Otkrovenie”, the mother of a girl with disabilities and alumni of the leadership course for youth with disabilities, organized a round table “Multidisciplinary Cooperation for the Benefit of Children with Disabilities” in Minsk. Forty-eight participants such as parents of youth with disabilities, authorities, and representatives of decision-making bodies discussed needs, requirements, and conditions for getting vocational and higher education by school graduates with disabilities. Parents of youth with disabilities actively advocated for equal access to higher education in universities and colleges for their children with disabilities. Representatives of state bodies presented information about existing opportunities to enter colleges and universities. The participants discussed the necessities of a barrier-free environment, adaptive accessories, resource centers, adjustment of entrance exams in order to eliminate that existing barrier, and increased access to education for children with disabilities. The round table was conducted in partnership with ChildFund.

The event was highlighted on the web-site of partner DPO ‘Otkroveniye’
<http://www.otkrovenie.by/about/shag.html>

Youth with and without Disabilities Alumni of the Leadership without Limitations course for youth with disabilities became active actors of change in their own life and actively advocated for inclusion. They initiated and implemented a number of advocacy events supported by ChildFund:

- *Nataliya Byakova, and Nataliya Susko* (17- year-old girls with disabilities), are graduates from the training course “Leadership without Limitations”. The girls took the lead in conducting a training session “Inclusion or Illusion” for peers without disabilities in Minsk. Nataliya sensitized the participants (28 people) to the problems of children and adults with disabilities in Belarus. They promoted the idea of true inclusion. The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities was introduced to the participants. The event helped children with and without disabilities to understand each other’s problems, become closer, and see ways to make friends with peers with disabilities.

The event was highlighted on the web-site of partner DPO
 ‘Otkroveniye’<http://www.otkrovenie.by/project/integration-help/inklyuziya/>

- *Alex Askerko* (a 19-year-old youth without disabilities) and *Yevgeny Stepuro* (a 16-year-old youth with disabilities), alumni of the training course “Leadership without Limitations”, organized an integrated art festival for children with and without disabilities in Gomel. 30 children took part in the event. The participants improved communication skills, socialized, made friends, and developed creativity. The participants designed a concert program, after a short rehearsal they presented the concert to 50 children from the local orphanage.

The event was highlighted in the local electronic media <http://unesco.gomelpalace.com/news/>

- *Oleg Miroshnikov*, a 15-year-old youth with disabilities, an alumnus of the Leadership without Limitations Training Course challenged prejudices about disability and promoted an equal, non-discriminating attitude towards people with disabilities. He organized 3 exhibitions of his photographs that demonstrated his artistic talent. Due to this intervention about 300 people (Oleg’s peers with and without disabilities, families, and specialists) could look at the world through a person with disabilities’ eyes.

For more information, please see Annex 2: Success story

RESOURCE CENTER FOR INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

In December 2012, partner NGO “Children. Autism. Parents” discussed with ChildFund the idea of a Resource Center focused on the problems of children with autism. At present, the Ministry of Education neither recognizes the existence of such a group of children nor supports them with any special program and interventions. As a result of the discussion with ChildFund, the NGO leader met with Mr. Matskevich, Minister of Education and discussed the opportunity of the creation of the Resource Center to support parents of children with autism as well as specialists from the mainstream education that will work with these children. An official proposal was also sent to the Ministry of Education. According to the law an official reply from the Minister will be issued in one month. ChildFund and the NGO “Children. Autism. Parents.” will monitor the situation.

OBJECTIVE 3 : SUPPORT INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In order to support the introduction and development of inclusive education of children and youth with disabilities, this quarter:

- one (1) TOT was conducted by ChildFund Belarus;
- 13 organizations were assisted with information and consultations.

ACTIVITY: ToT for Trainer’s Group on Inclusive Education (December 12-14, 2012, Minsk)	
<i>Planned</i>	<i>Actual targets achieved</i>
10 graduates of the international training on inclusive education (conducted in FY 2011-2012) acquired knowledge and skills to educate adults in the field of inclusive education	13 people representing five (5) NGOs, five (5) CBOs, the National Institute of Education, and two (2) Pedagogical Universities from seven (7) localities participated in the ToT. Among them were two (2) adults with disabilities and three (3) parents of children with disabilities. All the participants previously graduated from the international training course on Inclusive Education conducted by ChildFund Belarus in 2011-2012. The participants of the TOT acquired knowledge and skills to educate adults in the field of inclusive education (i.e. adult learning theory, learning styles, basic trainer’s competences, training design, quality standards of training delivery, monitoring and assessment of training outcomes). Every participant practiced trainer’s skills by planning and conducting a part of a training. The role play “Introduction of Inclusive Education in a Secondary School” added value to the event. The participants acquired skills to facilitate a multidisciplinary meeting on introducing inclusive education in a secondary school.
<u>Outcomes:</u> All the participants applied for the working group that in January- March 2013 will design two training modules on inclusive education - for parents of children with disabilities and for practitioners and policy makers. Follow-up activities to practice new trainer’s knowledge and skills within follow up activities will be supported by ChildFund next quarter aimed at incorporation of inclusive approaches in local educational settings.	

Information and Consultations from Local Counterparts

- 13 entities (including six (6) secondary schools and seven (7) NGOs in Minsk, Pinsk, Gomel, and Polotsk) applied to ChildFund for informational and consultation support in order to promote better inclusion of children with disabilities locally. ChildFund showed a video about including a child with a very significant disability. All the assisted organizations facilitated discussions about inclusion of children and adults with disabilities into different spheres of life (education, recreational activities, employment, and accessibility).

V. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

COORDINATION WITH USAID

Irina Mironova, ChildFund's Chief of Party, and Jahor Novikau, USAID AOR communicated regularly through meetings, e-mails, and phone calls.

Paul Bode, ChildFund's Regional Director met with Jahor Novikau, USAID AOR during Paul's working visit to Belarus in November 2012

- *Cooperation with ChildFund International Headquarters*

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

Paul Bode, ChildFund's Regional Director, Americas region visited Belarus in November 2012. He trained Belarus staff on new policies/procedures (please, see list of training below) and discussed strategic planning for Belarus for 2013-2016.

VI. PROJECT MANAGEMENT & STAFF DEVELOPMENT

ChildFund Belarus has held weekly project review meetings in Minsk to strengthen project management, performance, and integration leading to enhanced cooperation and communication between project staff.

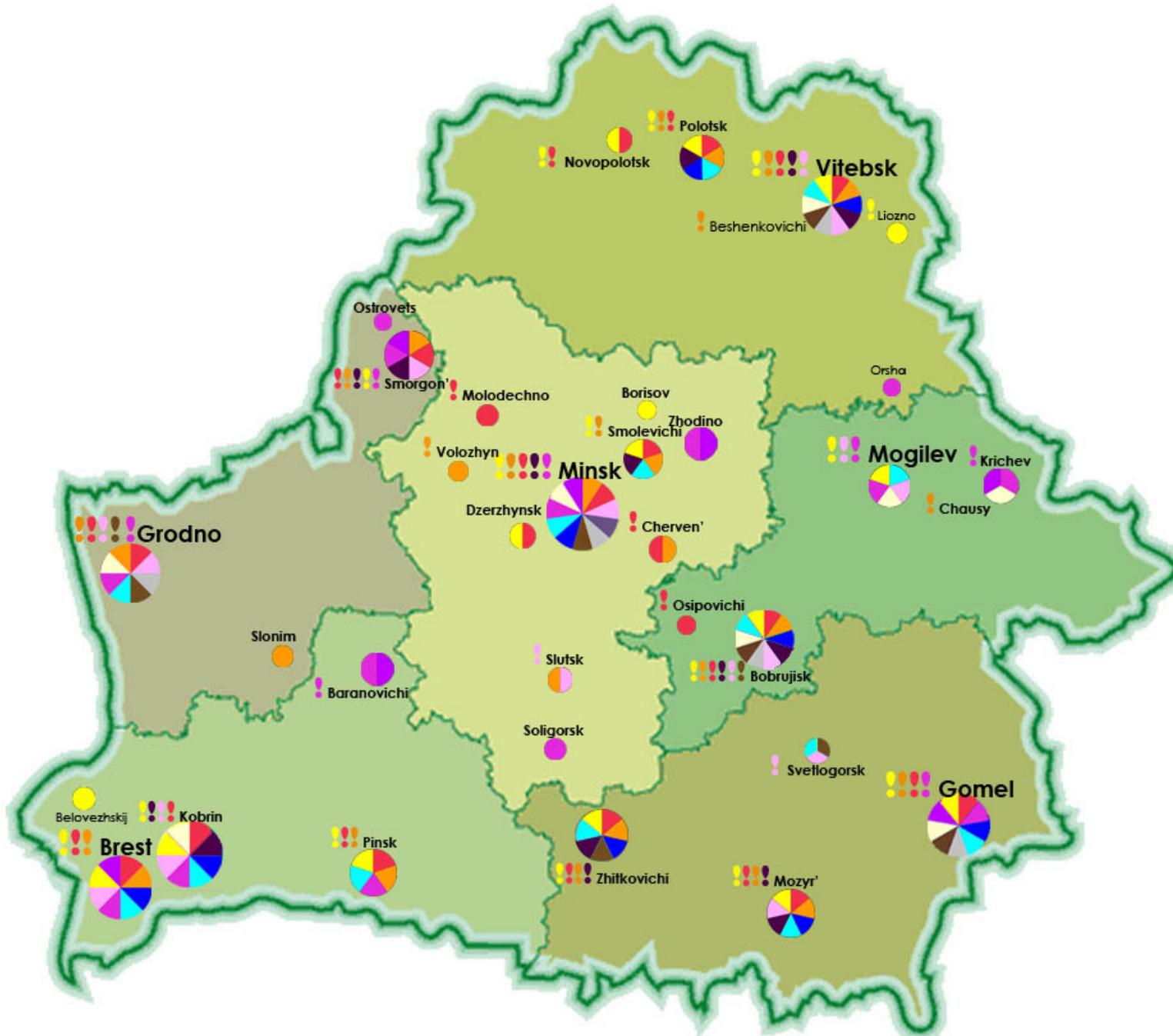
This quarter 2 new specialists joined ChildFund Belarus' team. Elena Karpenko got the position of Public Relations Specialist and replaced Kate Kozlova who left ChildFund for a commercial enterprise in October 2012. Zanna Ovchinnikova was hired for the position of Parenting Specialist and replaced Larisa Morozova who retired from this position on October 1, 2012. Project staff participated in the following capacity building events:

Name of Event	Description	Staff attending
Training on Country Strategic Planning, Enterprise Risk Management and Performance Evaluation processes	Three day training provided by Paul Bode, Americas Regional Director within his visit to Belarus	<i>All ChildFund Belarus staff</i>
Communication training	2 introductory training sessions via Skype conducted by Patricia Toquica, Americas Regional Communication specialist	<i>Elena Karpenko, PR specialist</i>
USAID Rules and Regulations	Two day workshop by InsideNGO on USAID rules and regulations (participation financed by ChildFund International)	<i>Natalia Kovalchuk, Finance manager</i>
Regional training on Resource Mobilization and Grant Acquisition and Management	Three day workshop on innovative methods of resource mobilization in Americas region and training on grant acquisition and management (participation financed by ChildFund Americas Region)	<i>Irina Mironova, Country Director</i>
Introductory training on ChildFund policies and procedures	Obligatory introductory training on ChildFund policies and procedures	<i>Elena Karpenko (PR specialist), Janna Ovchinnikova (Parenting specialist.)</i>

VII. BUDGET

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

Annex 1: PWD Project Map (October 1– December 31, 2012)



- 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. ● Localities covered by TOT on Social Interactive Theatre (SIT) Program
- ⬮ Localities having SIT groups
- V. ● Localities covered by TOT on Parenting Skills Enhancement Program
- ⬮ Localities covered by self help group for parents
- VI. ● Localities covered by Leadership for Youth with Disabilities Training Course
- VII. ● Localities covered by Management of Volunteers Training Course
- VIII. ● ChildFund Belarus' grantees-2009\2012
- IX. ● Localities having councils for disability issues
- X. ● Partner organizations for inclusive education
- XI. ⬮ Localities, covered by replication training on inclusive education
- XII. ● Localities covered by the training of self-help group methodology
- XIII. ● Localities covered by TOT on Inclusive Education

Annex 2. Believe In Your Talents

What do young people at the age of 15 to 17 years old usually seek? They want to learn something new, to try their hand at different types of activities, to interact with people of similar interests, to expand their contacts, to assert themselves in various ways. It is quite simple to do all these things for many people. But if your physical abilities are limited...

Oleg is a boy with serious issues of the musculoskeletal system, it is difficult for him to walk on his own. He spends all his time at home and at school, which he attends thanks to his mother's assistance. He doesn't have a lot of possibilities "to show" himself. Even so, he wants to communicate with other people, to prove to others that his life has meaning.

In 2012 Oleg took part in the ChildFund Belarus training course "Leadership without Limitations". This course was one of the activities within the "Expanding Participation of People with Disabilities" component of the USAID funded project "Community Services to Vulnerable Groups". The course was intended to help young people with disabilities reveal their talents and realize the leadership potential in their lives. Within the follow-up activity of the training course children were given the opportunity to create mini-projects in support of their capacities. The aim of these projects was to change lives of young people with disabilities for the better and transform something in their environment. Many of them were not even aware of their talents or didn't put much trust in their abilities. That was true of Oleg. The boy was very fond of taking pictures, he took great shots. But it never occurred to him that he could make his photos available to the public: Oleg was not sure about his photography talent, moreover he didn't know where to exhibit his photos.



Oleg and his mom

Looking for an idea for his mini-project at first Oleg wrote about a wheelchair ramp, which is necessary for him to get to school. But a more important problem for Oleg was the attitude of his peers and teachers at school who didn't expect a boy with disabilities to have any talents. "...Even if the ramp were installed, it wouldn't change the attitude of these people towards me", Oleg said. He had no idea that his hobby could be an excellent basis for the project. Fortunately, Oleg's mother put forward a proposal: why not make a photo exhibition? ChildFund supported Oleg's project: from buying all the necessary materials such as photo frames to providing him an opportunity to show his photos and assistance in holding his first exhibition.



Oleg really enjoys making shots of winter scenery

First Oleg presented his photos during the National Forum "Partnership without Limitations", that was organized by ChildFund for organizations of people with disabilities and during the Conference on Inclusive Education conducted by the NGO "Otkrovenie". More than 120 people – children with disabilities and their parents, representatives of state institutions and NGOs working for people with disabilities – attended these events and appreciated the boy's capabilities. Oleg's talent was recognized and as the official photographer he took pictures of the show "Fashion on Wheels", where kids who use wheelchairs acted as fashion models. And what is more important, the photo exhibition took place at school. His peers and teachers were really surprised, "Have you shot all these photos using an ordinary camera? Is there really no Photoshop here?! It's so cool!" Now the boy's peers and teachers consider him not as a person with a disability but first of all, as a person with his inner strength, talent, and capabilities. Oleg gained authority among school students and teachers: they appreciated his inner potential, his aspiration to express himself.

"I didn't even think that the exhibition could change my life so much", he says.

Definitely, after the course "Leadership without Limitations" and photo exhibition the boy's life changed, he became more confident and happy, and overcame many fears. He learned to react more quietly to everything that caused anxiety and self-doubt earlier, and became more actively involved in interaction with peers. Oleg is sure, "If I hadn't taken part in the course, I would never have come to the idea of exhibiting my photos".

With the help of ChildFund, Oleg found meaning in life; in the future he would like to attend photography courses. Who knows, maybe in 50 years Oleg's photographs will sell for a "modest" sum.