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**“COMMUNITY SERVICES TO VULNERABLE GROUPS”
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**QUARTERLY PROGRAM REPORT
Reporting period: 1 October 2009 - 31 December 2009**

Component I “Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Belarus”

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Orphans and Vulnerable Children component is to reduce the number of children in Belarus being institutionalized in state-administered orphanages and boarding schools. In pursuit of this goal, the project will aim to foster a cultural environment conducive to family-based care, and move children from institutions into less restrictive environments when prior circumstances necessitate removal from their family home. The project targets 'social orphans,' i.e., children whose parents are living, but are unable to provide proper care, or children who have been denied parental rights. The project's activities focus on working with families and social service professionals to maintain and reintegrate children within their original family units.

The project has three main objectives:

- improving access to and furthering development of an integrated system of community-based prevention and rehabilitation services for families as well as institutionalized and at-risk children;
- improving the quality of training and education available to social service providers and building awareness of community members surrounding the development of favorable family environments for children;
- promoting de-institutionalization of children through the technical assistance to the national child welfare agencies in strengthening the national regulatory and methodological base; disseminating key findings of the project throughout Belarus to build a foundation for replication and sustainability.

B. PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter the project was focused on analyzing the results achieved within the first four-years of project implementation, and planning its further development.

The final report and PMP for four years of project implementation were submitted to ChildFund's AORT at USAID. Together with DCOF/USAID the project team conducted a series of evaluation and needs assessment visits to the targeted communities. The DCOF experts appreciated project achievements. The formal DCOF report containing the evaluation results and needs assessment is still being written.

This quarter ChildFund developed and submitted to USAID the project's Annual Implementation Plan, and Performance Measurement Plan for 2010-2012. To maximize impact and ensure proper use of shrinking resources the project team had a series of working meetings and discussions on building new strategic partnerships, cost-share mechanisms, sustainability, and effective ways to encourage or motivate volunteerism. As the result each project component was supplied with a result-oriented 3-year strategic framework that incorporated the staff's creative ideas.

Reasonable efforts were undertaken in order to build new partnerships and integrate new methods of work in the country's child protection system. A strategic planning meeting with the Ministry of Education resulted in the development of an action plan for legalization and getting official approval of PRIDE and other project methodological components in the country. A series of meetings with re-training institutes from the regions and Minsk resulted in elaboration of work plans and partnership agreements with 3 re-training institutes located in Mogilev, Vitebsk, Grodno, and the Academy of Post-Diploma Education.

The previously assisted communities demonstrated sustainability of project interventions. They continued implementation of the Parenting enhancement program, Life Skills for orphans and PRIDE based on the buy-in and support of their communities. To guarantee the quality of service provision ChildFund-Belarus staff provided regular monitoring and evaluation.

In total

- *3 small grants* were in the process of implementation this quarter.

- 727 people (including parents, orphans, prospective and active foster/adoptive parents) benefited from the services.
- Life Skills and Parenting Skills Enhancement Programs were implemented within local community resources in 4 local communities such as Zhodino, Chausy, Kobrin, Orsha.
- 202 orphans and children at risk mastered Life Skills in social apartment.
- 286 institutions from 87 geographic locations gained access to information resources developed within the project.

C. CHALLENGES/ CONSTRAINTS

- Retention of qualified, experienced, and trained staff has been a challenge as new and attractive positions are being posted by new agencies. This quarter the Monitoring and Evaluation specialist left his position and joined UNDP's new project financed by the E.U. – The vacancy was immediately widely announced. Applications for this position were collected and short-listed candidates were interviewed. It is expected this vacancy will be filled in the coming quarter.
- Changes in leadership in Orsha's Department of Education caused some obstacles to further development and successful functioning of the multidisciplinary computer database. ChildFund is planning to collect more facts and data on the issues, meet with all local stakeholders, and facilitate creation of an action plan to resolve the problem as soon as possible.
- In November-December 2009 there was an influenza epidemic in Belarus. It resulted in postponing project activities that required traveling and gathering people together such as the Training Program on Child protection, Task Group meetings, as well as the project's Initial Round Table. – These activities will be conducted next quarter.

II. ACTIVITIES

OBJECTIVE 1: *Improve access to and furthering development of an integrated system of community-based prevention and rehabilitation services for families as well as institutionalized and at-risk children.*

The previously assisted communities demonstrated sustainability of project interventions. They continued implementation of the Parenting enhancement program, Life Skills for orphans, and PRIDE for prospective and active foster parents due to the buy-in and support of their communities.

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- 727 people (including parents, orphans, prospective and active foster/adoptive parents) benefited from the services.
- Life Skills and Parenting Skills Enhancement Programs were implemented within their local community resources in 4 local communities.
- 202 orphans and at-risk children mastered Life Skills in social apartment.

Parenting Skills Enhancement Program

The Parenting Skills Enhancement Program has continued to develop in Orsha, Brest, and Chausy communities using administrative support and allocated local resources. ChildFund Belarus' specialist on Parenting monitored the quality of the program implementation.

As a result:

- 50 people have been participating in the Parenting Skills Enhancement Program in schools and kindergartens in the 3 communities.
- Approximately 40% of parents attending the course were from an at-risk group.

Trainers on Parenting say:

Svetlana K., Orsha:

"I had been working with a group of parents from an at-risk group and families where children were removed. They were assigned by the Municipal Committee on Young Offenders cases for participation in the program. Parents attending the

course had a low educational background, alcohol addiction, and neglected the needs of their children. At the same time an atmosphere of support, active listening, and respect was fostered which helped them to recognize existing family strengths and problem solve. The program helped participating parents to develop and master parenting skills and resulted in reunification of 62% of families attending the course."

Life Skills Program

Activity: Life Skills Program for institutionalized children	
<i>Expected results</i>	<i>Actual targets achieved</i>
<p>At least one group of orphaned, sheltered and at-risk children (12 children) took part in the Life Skills Program.</p> <p>65% of enrolled orphaned children reporting improvements of specific knowledge and skills related to trainings topic.</p> <p>Approximately 200 institutionalized children will practice life skills in social apartments, sewing and carpentry workshops in Orsha, Zhodino, Chausy, Volozhin and Kobrin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Twelve orphans</i> are participating in the Life Skills Program in Divin Children's House (Kobrin region) this quarter. Local community resources were allocated for implementation of the program. <p>The results will be available next quarter after the completion of the lifeskills program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Two hundred and two (202) institutionalized children</i> have mastered life skills through developmental classes in Zhodino, Orsha, Chausy, Volozhin and Kobrin this quarter using equipment purchased for these purposes. They improved sewing and carpentry skills, repaired old clothes, created new ones, and practiced cooking.

Family type care for orphans

In general **163 prospective and active foster and adoptive parents** from Chaussy, Zhodino, Kobrin, Brest, Baranovic, Bobruysk participated in PRIDE training programs this quarter. To date, **197 people** trained on the PRIDE model have been providing family type care including foster care, guardianship, or adoption for **115 orphans** from boarding schools or shelters.

Specialists say:

Irina B., Minsk oblast:

"We have started implementation of the PRIDE in-service program for parents providing care in family-style group homes. Participants were extremely impressed by the topic regarding the need to support relationships between children and their biological parents. It was the first time they had started thinking about the importance of this contact. They had never thought about the possibility of family reunification. This session was a "break-through" towards understanding the importance of a child's connections to his/her birth family, as well as respect and support of this relationship."

Dissemination of PRIDE training programs

The Minsk Retraining Institute in partnership with ChildFund Belarus' training team started using the PRIDE model to train prospective foster/adoptive parents. Along with the Academy of Post-Diploma Education it became the second educational institution, engaged in retraining of child protection specialists that piloted the PRIDE model. The first group of **13 foster parents from Minsk** learned about using discipline to protect, nurture, and meet developmental needs of foster/adoptive children.

Facility based database

Last year's small grants which supported the development of the facility-based computer database have been continued. This quarter the software developed by the IT Firm INISSOFT was installed in the Social-Pedagogic centers in Zhodino and Chausy communities. It is available in a network format and unites five child protection institutions involved in social investigation and rehabilitation. The IT Firm INISSOFT carried out trainings for Zhodino and Chausy multidisciplinary stakeholders. The participants were provided with a Database User's Manual. Zhodino's Local Executive Committee has already passed the Procedure of network operation for the Database.

For more information, please, see Annex 1 to the report.

OBJECTIVE 2: *Improve the quality of training and education available to social service providers and raise awareness of community members surrounding the development of favorable family environments for children.*

This quarter ChildFund Belarus successfully completed a preparatory phase aimed at creating the platform for further dissemination of the Parenting skills enhancement program, PRIDE, and a program on a family-centered approach to child protection services. These programs proved to be the most demanded and effective in national child protection practice. To guarantee sustainability of the interventions a series of meetings were conducted with four Retraining institutions from the regions and Minsk. These meetings resulted in the elaboration of work plans and the development of partnership agreements with Mogilev, Vitebsk, and Grodno re-training institutes, and the Academy of post-Diploma Education. Retraining institutions are considered to be methodological centers at the oblast level responsible for improving proficiency of oblast child protection specialists. Understanding the importance of the above-mentioned programs for national child protection practice, local retraining institutions agreed to cost-share the expenses for implementation of training programs. Partnership agreements and work plans were prepared and discussed. The five agreements will be signed early next quarter.

OBJECTIVE 3: *Promoting de-institutionalization of children through the technical assistance to the national child welfare agencies in strengthening the national regulatory and methodological base and disseminating key findings of the project throughout Belarus to build a foundation for replication and sustainability.*

Advocacy for development of national legislation in child protection

This quarter ChildFund-Belarus focused its efforts on elaboration of a scheme for nation-wide expansion of developed methodological and regulatory documents.

On October 2009, as a member of the national governmental delegation, Irina Mironova, Chief of Party, took part in the UNICEF Regional Conference on Reforming Child Protection Systems that took place in Moldova. High level authorities from the Belarus Ministry of Education, Belarus Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Protection and UNICEF were other members of this delegation. Belarus' Ministry of Education reported on child protection system reforms in the country and expressed gratitude to ChildFund Belarus for its achievements and input in the nationwide process. They also promised to pass the Standards on Social Investigation and Social Rehabilitation developed within ChildFund's project in the beginning of 2010. Participation in the Conference provided ChildFund with a great opportunity to establish new contacts with national authorities and discuss further steps and cooperation. Some follow-up meetings were scheduled. A series of meetings with Belarus' Ministry of Education were carried out and aimed at strategic planning for the next three years of the project. The needs and areas of partnership required at the different levels were identified.

Dissemination of informational resources

A great number of information resources were produced last year by ChildFund Belarus and its small grantees. To develop capacity of local child protection specialists a Report on National Adoption development, a brochure "Safe Parenting," and a set of books for specialists working with traumatized children were distributed to 286 institutions in 87 geographic locations. Inquiries for the materials for specialists working with traumatized children have exceeded the existing circulation and there is a need to publish an extra set of these unique materials for Belarusian specialists.

III. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

• *Coordination with USAID*

On the 2nd of October, 2009 ChildFund-Belarus' team (Chief of the Party, PWD and OVC project managers) had a meeting with Daniel Rosenblum, Coordinator for U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia of U.S. Department of State (Washington DC), Michael Scanlan, USA Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of the United States of America in Belarus, Janina Jaruzelski, Mission Director of USAID Regional Mission for Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, Larissa Komarova, USAID/Belarus Program Development Specialist, and Jahor Novikau, USAID/Belarus Project Management Specialist, to discuss the project highlights, challenges/constraints and future plans.

In November, Irina Mironova, Chief of Party, Alexei Golontsov, PWD Project Manager, and Marina Ananenko, OVC Project Manager had a meeting with John Riordan, the new USAID Country Representative and Jahor Novikau, USAID/Belarus Project Management Specialist In which ChildFund-Belarus presented OVC and PWD program achievements.

On 18-24th of October 2009, Catherine Savino, USAID Contractor, and Sue Eitel, USAID Contractor and Rehabilitation Advisor, conducted a DCOF/USAID visit on needs assessment of the target audiences of the project.

- *Cooperation with ChildFund International Headquarters*

ChildFund Belarus kept regular communication via e-mail and conference calls with its headquarters in Richmond. Mary Moran, ChildFund International's Sr. Specialist in Early Childhood Development visited Belarus in October 2009 and participated in the DCOF/USAID evaluation and needs assessment visit.

IV. PROJECT MANAGEMENT & STAFF DEVELOPMENT

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

Polina Mironova, PR specialist, Vladimir Korzh, Monitoring and Evaluation specialist, and Olga Ziuzkevich, Office Manager, left ChildFund-Belarus. ChildFund-Belarus conducted a series of interviews with short-listed candidates for these positions and identified qualified candidates to fill some of the open vacancies. These people will be hired next quarter, in January 2010.

V. BUDGET

SF-425 report will be submitted under separate cover by ChildFund Headquarters.



SMALL GRANTS implemented in October-December 2009

I. Creation of network database on child protection:

- Educational department of Zhodino Executive committee:
 1. "Zhodino social network";
- Educational department of Orsha executive committee:
 2. "Creation of network database on child protection in Orsha";
- Educational Department of Chausy executive committee:
 3. "Cross-sector cooperation on child and family protection through creation of unified informational record system".

I. Creation of network database on child protection:

<i>Grantee Name:</i>	<i>Project name:</i>	<i>Project duration:</i>
Educational department of Zhodino executive committee	Zhodino Social Network	13.12.2007
Address: per. Molodezhnyi 3, Zhodino, Minsk Region		01.10.2009
Amount: \$15,371.08		
<i>Brief description:</i>	The goal of the project is to strengthen cross-sector cooperation of Zhodino child protection	

	organizations through creation of a computer network with access to an electronic database on disadvantaged families and children at risk
OUTPUTS: The network, that connected 5 organizations of Zhodino's child protection system, has been formed. The software is installed. 10 specialists of Zhodino child protection organizations were trained to use the electronic database. The document defining the database access levels was approved by Zhodino's Executive Council.	

<i>Grantee Name/address:</i>	<i>Project name:</i>	<i>Project duration:</i>
Educational department of Chausy executive committee	Cross-sector cooperation on child and family protection through creation of unified informational and referral system	26.03.2008 15.10.2009
Address: Leninskaya Str., 17, Chausy, Mogilyov Region		
Amount: \$24,851		
<i>Brief description:</i>	The goal of the project is to strengthen cross-sector cooperation of community child protection organizations in Chausy through creation of a computer network with access to an electronic data-base on disadvantaged families and children at risk	
OUTPUTS: The network formation is in process. The network has connected 6 organizations of the local child protection system. The software is installed. 15 specialists of child protection organizations were trained to use the electronic database on disadvantaged families and children at risk.		

<i>Grantee Name:</i>	<i>Project name:</i>	<i>Project duration:</i>
Educational department of Orsha executive committee	Creation of network database on child protection in Orsha	26.10.2007 30.09.2009
Address: Zamkovaya Str., 11, Orsha, Vitebsk Region		
Amount: \$19,862		
<i>Brief description:</i>	The goal of the project is to strengthen cross-sector cooperation of community child protection organizations in Orsha through creation of a computer network with access to an electronic database on disadvantaged families and children at risk.	
OUTPUTS: The network formation is still in process. The software has been developed. Creation of computer network, uniting 5 child protection agencies, is still in progress.		