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“COMMUNITY SERVICES TO VULNERABLE GROUPS”
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QUARTERLY PROGRAM REPORT
Reporting period: 1 October – 31 December 2014
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 by supporting at-home family care and moving children out of institutions. In pursuit of this goal, the project aims 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 are 'social orphans,' i.e., children whose parents are living, but are unable to provide proper care, or children of parents 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:

- Improve access to and further develop an integrated system of community-based prevention and services for families with institutionalized and at-risk children;
- Improve the quality of training and education available to social service providers;
- Provide technical assistance to social service providers through policy development, methodology consultations, and advocacy efforts.

B. PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter, the project's activities focused on the sustainability of changes introduced within the course of project implementation. The project covered a wide spectrum of activities focused on maintaining strategic partnerships with communities and re-training institutes, expansion of training programs to universities, supporting sustainability of prevention and rehabilitation services, capacity building for specialists, and advocacy.

The implementation of a variety of effective community-based services targeting risk factors for child abuse, neglect and institutionalization continued. These services were supported through community resources, two sub-grants and by alumni of ChildFund's training programs. ChildFund specialists provided targeted consultations and interventions in order to support sustainability of the previously established services such as Parenting Skills Enhancement Program, SafeCare, PRIDE and the reformation of the child protection system through multidisciplinary cooperation and the development of informal child protection mechanisms.

By the end of December 2014, **81 communities** from all over Belarus had specialists trained on the **Family-centered Approach** in child protection services. This quarter, the TOT (Training of Trainers) alumni provided step-down trainings for **237** community specialists from **143** organizations (schools and preschools, social support centers, hospitals and enterprises) in **89** localities. These trainings were conducted using community resources.

Staff turnover in the child protection system is still an issue. It leads to significant losses of trainers' resources in the communities. However, despite the devastating loss of trainers' resources, in **71%** of communities (12 of 17) the reformation in community child protection systems continued due to previously established multidisciplinary teams and quality standards approved by the local oblast authorities.

This quarter, the **Parenting Skills Enhancement Program** was implemented in schools and preschools in **42** geographic locations. **723 parents (67 groups)** attended the Parenting Skills Enhancement Program and **32%** of these parents (**166** people) attending the course were those under the supervision of child protection services or those parenting children with disabilities. **100%** of all parenting groups were carried out with local communities' resources.

The **PRIDE training program** for foster and adoptive parents was implemented in **37** geographic locations in **47 organizations** (please, see Annex 1 Project Map) by the alumni of ChildFund's training program using local community resources.

Through sub-grants, Chaussy and Grodno communities developed a local implementation model of **SafeCare home visitation services** that considers availability and specificities of local resources. Chaussy community was successful in establishing cooperation with health care providers from local hospitals for home visitation. Baranovich implemented a multidisciplinary approach and managed to involve teams of ECD (early childhood development), health care and child protection specialists from kindergartens, local polyclinics, and the socio-pedagogic center, as well as a representative from the Baranovich Department for Education.

Three **Day Care centers (afterschool clubs)** that were piloted within the project by ChildFund in 2013 proved to be sustainable. The local authorities allocated budgets to continue the functioning of the Day Care centers. **50 children** from at risk-families received supportive and rehabilitation services at day care centers in Rogachev, Polotsk, and Zhodino. In Polotsk, the earlier adopted regulatory document on the Day Care center facilitated the budgeting of new positions in Polotsk socio-pedagogic center that were crucial in the face of shrinking community resources.

The goal of improving the quality of training and education available for social service providers was achieved through a partnership with the network of re-training institutes and cooperation with universities that train education and social work students. This quarter, **406** child protection specialists representing **210** organizations participated in capacity building events. The Family-centered Approach course is integrated into the regular curriculum of 100% of universities that supply the system with young qualified workers. A new group of university professors completed TOT on PRIDE methodology and **100%** of them are going to incorporate PRIDE materials into university curriculum. ChildFund will support their efforts next quarter.

The new methodological manual on **Social Rehabilitation of Families at Risk (Parts I and II)** was published and has started being distributed to child protection authorities and specialists as the comprehensive reference for organizations on rehabilitation processes, case management and closing, and the effective assessment of the work carried out.

The figures below illustrate the main outputs of project implementation during the period between October 1 and December 31, 2014:

- **1,267** parents and **124** children accessed community-based prevention and rehabilitation services.
- **643** child protection specialists and local authorities from **353** organizations participated in capacity building events provided by partner re-training institutes, alumni of TOTs and ChildFund specialists.
- **431** specialists previously trained on PRIDE, the Family-centered approach, SafeCare or Parenting education received targeted consultations and support from the project.
- Training on PRIDE methodology for university faculty and community members was conducted to disseminate the program to university curriculum and enhance communities' capacity in the development of alternative family type care (November 3-5 and December 2-4, 2014).

C. CHALLENGES/CONSTRAINTS/OPPORTUNITIES

- This quarter, we witnessed a lot of changes among leadership of education authorities, including the Minister of Education, the Deputy Minister of Education, as well as many replacements within the Ministry of Education departments. It will take time to determine exactly how these changes will impact the project. However, ChildFund will seek new opportunities that these changes may provide.
- Re-training institutes continue providing training courses in the restricted format of 36 hours (one week) instead of former 72 hours (two weeks). In addition, it remains complicated to ensure attendance of the trainings by the communities in need. ChildFund addresses this challenge through participation in organizing training groups and providing information on the communities in oblasts that are in need of particular training to re-training institutes.
- This quarter, ChildFund's program specialist arranged meetings in **5 communities** with local socio-pedagogic centers staff and Departments of Education (Grodno rayon, Lida, Grodno City, Gomel and two rayons of Bobruisk). While the meetings demonstrated that child protection specialists in the communities work in accordance with the principles of the Family-centered Approach in the child protection system, the application of assessment forms to assess child's safety and risk-level is still irregular, as the assessment forms are not legally approved by the Ministry of Education. It will require additional advocacy and lobbying with the new leadership of the Ministry of Education.
- Belarus was selected as the host country for the UNICEF Regional Conference on Child Protection "Strengthening protective mechanisms in area of child protection, exploitation and violence" (November 12-13, 2014). According to the UNICEF Regional Director, this is a sign of recognition of Belarus' achievements in the area of child protection. Government delegates from 20 countries came to Belarus to discuss their challenges and perspectives on child protection. ChildFund Belarus was invited to take part in the conference. This conference helped to attract attention of the political leadership of the country on child protection issues.

D. LESSONS LEARNED

The changes in local child protection systems continue to be sustainable in the communities that participated in sub-grant programs supported by ChildFund. Trainers of these 12 communities acquired trainers' skills under the supervision of ChildFund trainers, and continue to regularly train interdisciplinary teams in their respective communities. The main elements of sustainability were 1) approved regulatory documents (based on quality standards for child protection developed by ChildFund) and 2) availability of training programs on the Family-centered approach through oblast re-training institute that helped to fulfill the gaps caused by high staff turnover. The most sustainable results were achieved in Minsk and Grodno oblasts where regulatory documents (based on ChildFund's quality standards) were adopted at the oblast level. In Minsk, all child protection specialists work in accordance with the paper issued by the Commission on Juvenile Delinquency. In Grodno, specialists must follow methodology guidelines on social investigation approved and recommended by the Grodno Oblast Re-training Institute.

II. ACTIVITIES

OBJECTIVE 1: *Improve access to and further develop an integrated system of community-based prevention and rehabilitation services for families with institutionalized and at-risk children.*

This quarter, the new/improved services were delivered through community resources and with the support of two sub-grant and follow-up activities supported in the previous project year. ChildFund specialists provided targeted consultations and interventions in order to support sustainability of the previously established services such as Parenting Education, SafeCare, PRIDE, and reformation of the child protection system through multidisciplinary cooperation.

In this quarter:

- **1,267 parents** accessed community-based prevention and rehabilitation services;
- **124 children** were covered by community-based prevention and rehabilitation services;
- **431** specialists previously trained on PRIDE, Family-centered approach, SafeCare or Parenting education received targeted consultations and support from the project.
- **6 monitoring visits** to communities were organized by the ChildFund specialist to develop sustainability plans for the de-institutionalization model;
- **Two sub-grant projects** were in the process of implementation to develop home visitation service based on the SafeCare model in Grodno and Chaussy;
- **237 specialists from the communities** participated in step-down trainings by TOT alumni.

SafeCare home visitation services for vulnerable children

SafeCare is a 24-week program providing biweekly home visits for families with children from birth to age 5 that focuses on altering parental behavior in three core domains: (1) health, (2) safety, and (3) parent-child interaction. Home visits focus on training parents to use health reference materials and access appropriate treatment, identify and eliminate safety and health hazards, and increase positive parent-child interactions. The program helps to decrease risk of the different types of child maltreatment. SafeCare home visitation program is focused on families at risk for child abuse and neglect, such as first-time parents, single mothers and adolescent parents raising children 0-5 years old.

This quarter, **21** child protection specialists provided home visitation services for **40 parents with 42 young children** (0-5 years old) from at-risk families in **5 communities** (Baranovich, Chaussy, Borisov, Rogachev, Grodno). Home visitors trained the parents on how to plan and implement activities with their children, respond appropriately to child behaviors, improve home safety, and address health issues.

Development of home visitation services:

Involvement of health care providers

Chaussy community has been successful in establishing cooperation with health care providers from the local hospital. This approach to program implementation is promising for increasing access to the service as: 1) regular home visits to families with young children are part of medical staff job descriptions, so their time is budgeted for this function, and 2) medical staff are perceived by families as competent specialists in the health domain, while at the same time social

workers do not feel confident teaching it. Hence, a combination of efforts of the two sectors brings mutual benefits and promotes greater efficiency of home visitation services.

Involvement of ECD specialists

In Zhodino this quarter, specialists from the Socio-pedagogic center trained ECD specialists from 100% of community kindergartens on the SafeCare home visitation program.

Multidisciplinary teams

100% of practitioners that were trained by Baranovichi Socio-pedagogic Center in partnership with ChildFund in Year 9, provided home visitation services in Baranovichi. This achievement may be attributed to the selection of the initial training participants. The training group included representatives of key stakeholders: specialists and administrative staff from kindergartens, specialists from two local polyclinics, a representative from the the Baranovichi Department for Education, and specialists and administrators from the socio-pedagogic center. The socio-pedagogic center that initiated the development of home visitation in the community now serves as a center that coordinates implementation of the service through primary education institutions and supervises home visitors.

Parenting Skills Enhancement Program

The Parenting Skills Enhancement Program is an 8-10 week program that consists of three training programs according to the age group of children (0-5, 5-13, 13-18 years old). Small groups of parents (10-12 people) take part in weekly training sessions on emotional, physical, psychological and sexual violence and its effects on the development of children and adolescents; reasons for a child's misbehavior; methods and skills for non-violent disciplining of children; and stress management and self-regulation. The participants are encouraged to foster assertive parenting styles that respect the rights of children and parents. The program helps to prevent child abuse and neglect by addressing the risk factors for child maltreatment such as parental knowledge and expectations of child development, parental attitudes and skills regarding discipline, and using non-violent methods of interaction between parent and child.

This quarter, the Parenting Skills Enhancement Program was implemented in **42** geographic locations:

- **723 parents (67 groups)** attended the Parenting Skills Enhancement Program this quarter in schools and preschools in **42** geographic locations.
- **32% of the parents (166 people)** attending the course were those under supervision of child protection services or those parenting children with disabilities.
- **100%** of all parenting groups were carried out with local communities' resources.

Outcomes of Parenting Skills Enhancement Program:

- 79% of parents reported that they demonstrate an assertive parenting style;
- 80% of parents reported that they know the reasons for a child's misbehavior;
- 78% of parents reported that they know and practice non-violent methods of discipline;
- 75% reported that they know about the stages of a child's development;
- 84% reported understanding a child's feelings and emotions and practicing proper reaction.

Family-type Care Development for Orphans (PRIDE model)

The PRIDE model focuses on the development and support of family-type community care and is a resource for families (adoptive and foster parents). PRIDE helps foster and adoptive parents to develop five essential competencies,

including: 1) protecting and nurturing children; 2) meeting children's developmental needs and addressing developmental delays; 3) supporting relationships between children and their biological families; 4) connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime, and 5) working as a member of a professional team.

This quarter, the PRIDE training program was implemented in **37** geographic locations in **47 organizations** (please see Annex 1 Project Map) by the alumni of ChildFund, using local community resources:

- **112 prospective foster/adoptive parents** participated in the **PRIDE pre-service training program** in Brest oblast (Baranovichi, Kobrin, Stolin), Minsk oblast (Zhodino, Slutsk, Borisov, Lyuban, Frunzenski rayon of Minsk city), Grodno oblast (Volkovysk), Mogilev oblast (Bobruisk, Mogilev), Gomel oblast (Gomel), and Vitebsk oblast (Liozno, Senno, Polotsk, Gorodokski rayon). **Fifty (50)** of the participants (**44%**) were prospective adoptive parents, and **52 (46%)** were future foster parents.
- **32 children were provided with family-type care** by the foster/adoptive parents trained this quarter. **Four** of these children (**12.5%**) were adopted and **28 children (87.5%)** were placed into foster care.
- **392 foster/adoptive parents** from all over Belarus mastered their parenting skills through the **PRIDE in-service** program in Brest oblast (Kobrin, Brest and Brest rayon, Baranovichi), Grodno oblast (Grodno rayon), Minsk oblast (Soligorsk, Lyuban, Borisov, Minsk rayon), Vitebsk oblast (Lepel, Liozno, Vitebsk, Orsha, Dubrovenski rayon), Mogilev oblast (Khotimsk, Bykhov, Gorki, Gorodokski rayon), and Gomel oblast (Rogachev, Oktyabr, Gomel, Dobrush).

The Day Care Centers (afterschool clubs): a Community-based Response to Child Maltreatment

Among families at-risk, there are a large proportion of families experiencing periodic deterioration of their capacity to provide adequate care and support to their children. These situations are usually caused by environmental stress factors (loss of jobs, domestic violence, conflicts, health problems, etc.) coupled with parents' inability to control their addiction to alcohol. A child's removal from the family is still considered by many social service workers and child protection specialists as the best option to protect him/her from abuse and neglect. The Day Care Service aims to prevent unnecessary removal of children from the biological family. Day Care Centers help to keep family integrity through building a family-support model that is less traumatic for both children and parents. At the same time, the center reduces the impact of psychological trauma for children's development by providing safety and stability for children aged 10 – 15 years. In addition, the model allows parents to maintain custody and responsibility for their children. The development of Day Care Centers is a project match of the OVC/USAID component supported through a financial contribution received from one of ChildFund's major private sponsors from the USA.

Three Day Care centers (afterschool clubs) that were piloted within the project by ChildFund in 2013 proved their sustainability. The local authorities allocated budgets to ensure the continued functioning of the Day Care centers. **50 children** from at-risk families received supportive and rehabilitation service at day care centers in Rogachev, Polotsk, and Zhodino.

In Polotsk, the earlier-adopted regulatory document on Day Care centers facilitated budgeting of new positions in the Polotsk Socio-pedagogic Center. These specialists lead an afterschool club for **11** at-risk children that is hosted by School #16. The group provides everyday support to children ages 10-12 years old that are at social risk, come from multi-sibling families, or experience financial hardships.

In Rogachev, the afterschool group works at a local school providing the service to teens with risky behavior. The group partners with the local Department of Emergency Services that regularly consults teenagers on safety issues and also discusses career planning with them.

In Zhodino, the group is open to children 10-14 years old and successfully cooperates with the local church community to cover expenses for the meals.

Reformation of the Local Child Protection System

Reformation of Child Protection System includes a shift from uncoordinated work of the different specialists who often duplicate and overlap their efforts, use of subjective and ungrounded decisions about removal of a child from a family and family re-unification, lack of knowledge, skills and services for rehabilitation of risky families, and a perception that institutionalization is the best option for orphaned children to the creation of well-coordinated, multidisciplinary teams trained on a family-centered approach, practicing evidence-based decision making based on professional investigation of child abuse and neglect, planning and implementing rehabilitation services according to the individual needs of each family and providing family-type care for children whose parents were unable to demonstrate visible progress in rehabilitation and unable to provide a safe family environment.

By the end of December 2014, **81 communities** from all over Belarus had specialists trained on Family-centered approach in child protection services. This quarter, the TOT alumni provided step-down trainings for **237** community specialists from **143** organizations (schools and preschools, social support centers, hospitals and enterprises) in **89** localities. These training were conducted using community-allocated resources.

Staff turnover in the child protection system is still the issue. It led to significant losses of trainers' resources in the communities. Out of 123 specialists trained since 2010, **43 trainers** remain active in **27** localities while **17** of 44 (**39%**) communities that started child protection reforms in the previous years lost their trainers this year. However, despite the devastating loss of the trainers' resource, the changes in communities' child protection system in **12** of these 17 communities (71%) persist.

The main elements of sustainability were 1) approved regulatory documents (based on quality standards for child protection developed by ChildFund), and 2) availability of training programs on the Family-centered Approach through oblast re-training institute that helped to fulfill the gaps caused by high staff turnover. The most sustainable results were achieved in Minsk and Grodno oblasts where regulatory documents (based on ChildFund's quality standards) were adopted at the oblast level. In Minsk, all child protection specialists work in accordance with the paper issued by the Commission on Juvenile Delinquency. In Grodno, specialists must follow methodology guidelines on social investigation approved and recommended by the Grodno Oblast Re-training Institute.

Monitoring visits

Promoting sustainability of the project services through networking and experience exchange

To increase motivation of local trainers and ensure information exchange among partner communities, ChildFund provided consultations and support in coordinating and organizing training events in the local communities.

- **431** specialists trained on PRIDE, the Family-centered Approach, SafeCare or Parenting education received targeted consultations and support from the project.

Life Skills for Institutionalized Children

- **Eighty four (84)** institutionalized children continued mastering life skills through life skills education classes in Zhodino, Orsha, Chausy, Volozhin, Divin and Kobrin using equipment purchased for these purposes. They also continued mastering sewing and carpentry skills, repairing old clothes, creating new ones, and practicing cooking.

Targeted consultations and Interventions	
<i>Expected results</i>	<i>Actual targets achieved</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular communication and needs assessment, site visits, a series of individual need-based targeted consultations on the Family-Centered Approach, PRIDE, the Parenting Skills Enhancement Program, SafeCare Home Visitation Model and the Family-Group Conference methodology will be provided by ChildFund project staff. • Information about current needs and anticipated problems will be collected and analyzed in a timely manner. Corrective actions and support will be provided to ensure smooth implementation of the project activities. 	<p>Six (6) site visits to socio-pedagogic centers and Departments of Education in Grodno rayon, Lida, Grodno city, Gomel, two rayons of Bobruisk, Baranovichi were conducted by ChildFund specialists.</p> <p>This quarter, OVC project staff continued providing individual consultations on ChildFund programs at the request of partners from communities.</p> <p>➤ Family-Centered Approach in Child Protection services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 specialists from socio-pedagogic centers were consulted on organizing a 'Family-Centered Approach in Child Protection services' training for a multidisciplinary team in the community. Suggestions for selecting trainers were discussed. • 8 university faculty members were assisted with consultations on methods of undertaking a pre- and post-course survey for students taught the Family-centered Approach. • ChildFund facilitated networking between 27 newly-trained specialists and trainers from the "previous generation" in order to re-build community trainer's teams. <p>➤ PRIDE methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 specialists were consulted on the PRIDE methodology on: issues on training prospective adoptive parents, relationships between foster and biological families, and national statistics on foster parenting. • The 30 most active PRIDE trainers were recognized by ChildFund. They received letters of appreciation and ChildFund-branded day planners. • 46 PRIDE trainers were supported with an information set on alternative family care development: a documentary on institutionalization in Russia "Blef, or Happy New Year", video seminars "Pedagogy of Trauma", and a video of the seminars held at the International Forum "every child deserves a family" (web links, CDs). Trainers were also supported with electronic books on alternative family care

	<p>in order to support the incorporation of PRIDE methodology into the university curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ChildFund provided trainers from Baranovcihi, Grodno University, Bykhov and Gorki socio-pedagogic centers with 58 sets of training materials on PRIDE courses to ensure sustainability of their services • ChildFund assisted a leading PRIDE master trainer in writing an article 'Dyvin orphanage: provision of support and supervision to foster families' that was published in the professional journal <i>Adukacyia i Vykhavanne</i>. <p>➤ Parenting Skills Enhancement Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 124 trainers from 63 organizations received individual consultations on the implementation of Parenting Skills Enhancement Programs in local communities. Of them, 98 were specialists trained in 2014 by partner Re-training Institutes of Brest, Grodno, and Minsk oblasts. Methodological support by ChildFund is critical for them to gain professional confidence in organizing and conducting their first parenting groups. <p>➤ SafeCare home visitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 specialists representing Gomel Retraining Institute and Rogachev Socio-pedagogic center were consulted on the SafeCare home visitation training methodology. • 45 newly-trained specialists in Grodno were provided with a group consultation on methods of implementing the SafeCare home visitation program in preschool education setting.
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OBJECTIVE 2. Improve the quality of training and education available to social service providers.

The goal of improving the quality of training and education available for social service providers was achieved through partnership with the network of re-training institutes and cooperation with universities that train students of education and social work departments.

This quarter:

- **406** child protection specialists representing **210** organizations participated in capacity-building events.
- The Family-centered Approach course was integrated into regular curriculum of **100%** of universities that supply the system with young qualified workers.
- A new group of university faculty members completed the TOT on the PRIDE methodology.

**Training on family type care development for orphans; PRIDE methodology.
November 3-5, 2014, December 2-4, 2014**

<i>Expected results</i>	<i>Actual targets achieved</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 10 university faculty members and 15 specialists from the communities are trained. • 90% of the participants report improvements in specific knowledge and skills. • 75% report practical application of acquired knowledge and skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 11 faculty members from 5 universities and 3 re-training institutes and 15 specialists from 16 communities (22 organizations) participated in the PRIDE methodology trainings: Family Assessment and TOT. 42% of the group was presented by the faculty of 100% of the country's universities that train student in social work. Their enhanced capacity will facilitate quality improvements in education available for social service providers. The new generation of social workers will be properly trained to provide modern services to children and families. ➤ 92% of the participants reported practical application of knowledge. University faculty members use materials during teaching sessions. Staff of the socio-pedagogic centers refer to PRIDE when working with foster parents, prospective adoptive parents, psychologists and educators from community education institutions.
<p>➤ Note: 100% of participating academics report their intent to develop courses in order to incorporate PRIDE methodology into the university curriculum. ChildFund will support their intention through the organization of the experience exchange meeting with university faculty members implementing the Family-centered Approach next quarter.</p>	

Training Program on a Family-Centered Approach in Child Protection Services

Partnership with Re-training institutes

The course on the Family-Centered Approach is incorporated into regular retraining curriculum in all partner re-training institutes (except Minsk city Re-training Institute where the Department of Socio-pedagogic work was shut down). In order to provide quality courses, every re-training institute either uses their own training resources (faculty trained on the Family-Centered Approach) or maintains strong ties with experienced trainers—practical specialists from neighboring communities (Polotsk, Zhodino, Chausy, and Rogachev).

This quarter, trainings and workshops on the Family-Centered Approach program were conducted in Mogilev Re-training Institute by the alumni of the TOTs of the previous project years. **25 child protection specialists** of **25 organizations** participated in the training program on the Family-Centered Approach.

Sustainability of the Family-Centered Approach through Universities

80% of university faculty members trained in the Family-Centered Approach in Year 8 (12 out of 15) continue to integrate the Family-centered Approach into their courses. The course is incorporated into the regular curriculum of six universities and is scheduled for spring semester 2015. This quarter, Grodno State University incorporated a full course 'Family-Centered Approach in Child Protection' into their curriculum for social pedagogues. This training course will be a part of a new academic discipline 'Social-pedagogic work with families'.

PRIDE model

This quarter, a total of **324 specialists** from **135 organizations** participated in trainings held by the alumni of TOTs on the PRIDE Model by ChildFund in socio-pedagogic centers in Dyvin, Kobrin, Smorgon, Grodno rayon, Bykhov, Belynych, Polotsk, and Gorodokski rayon), universities (Mogilev State University, Brest State University, Gomel State University), and Mogilev Re-training Institute.

Also, training courses on the PRIDE model for foster parents were conducted in **two** partner Re-training Institutes (Minsk oblast and Brest oblast) by the alumni of the TOTs conducted by ChildFund in previous project years.

Training Program on social and financial education for children and youth (Aflatoun methodology)

- Grodno Re-training Institute provided the 40-hour course Aflatoun program (social and financial education for children) to **31 specialists** from **28 schools representing 20 communities** of Grodno oblast. The training providers were alumni of the Aflatoun TOT conducted by ChildFund in the previous project year. The course equipped specialists with knowledge, skills and methods of teaching to train children on Aflatoun course in their respective communities.

OBJECTIVE 3: Provide technical assistance to social service providers through policy development, methodology consultations, and advocacy efforts.

Publishing of the manual “Methodological Recommendations for Social Rehabilitation of Families at Risk (Parts I and II)

This quarter, **50** paperback copies of the manual were issued, and started being distributed amongst child protection authorities and specialists as the comprehensive reference for organization of the rehabilitation process, case management and closing, and effective assessment of the work carried out.

Cooperation with the University community

ChildFund participated in the Conference ‘Childhood and family in XXI century: challenges and support to families’ held by Belarus State Pedagogic University in December. ChildFund’s specialist presented the experience of introducing innovative methods of preparing foster and adoptive parents in the child welfare system (PRIDE program). Then, ChildFund held a master-class ‘Building relationships with a child’s biological family’. In addition, ChildFund organized or participated in the following events and meetings.

- **A round table discussion on the experience of SafeCare Model development** was organized within the Grodno sub-grant project that aimed to improve safety for children 0-5 in Grodno through enhancing the professional competencies of local ECD (Early Childhood Development) professionals. The meeting gathered representatives of the Grodno Department of Education, including heads and psychologists of all of Grodno kindergartens, faculty members of Grodno State University, and Grodno Oblast Re-training Institute staff members. Participants were presented with the project results: a model of ensuring child protection through cooperation between child protection services and ECD providers was successfully piloted. The meeting concluded with the decision that the home visiting model should be approved by the Department for Education and the recommendation that all early education institutions of the city use it.
- ChildFund’s Presentation at the **National seminar “Improvement of the effectiveness of the child protection system: the role of non-governmental organizations in working with families and children”**- October 29, 2014.

- ChildFund’s Presentation at the **International conference “Childhood and family in XXI century: challenges and strategic support”** on the topic of alternative family care development - by Belarusian State Pedagogic University, November 13, 2014.
- Julia Popruzhenko, OVC/PWD Project manager, took part in a **question/answer meeting for mass media representatives** organized by the national media newspaper *Zviyazda* (on December 9, 2014). The meeting was focused on family issues and conscious parenting. Based on the results of the meeting, *Zvyazda* prepared an article that will be published next quarter.

III. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

Coordination and Cooperation with USAID

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

- On December 17, Jahor Novikau and Irina Mironova had a coordination meeting with Vlad Velichko, an independent evaluator of Community Services to Vulnerable Groups project, who was hired by USAID. They provided Vlad with project background information and discussed future activities within the project evaluation.
- On November 4, 2014, Irina Mironova took part in an NGO meeting with Alexander Kasanaf, the new Director of the Department of Eastern Europe, USA State Department, November 4, 2014.

Coordination and 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 Regional Director, visited Belarus from November 24-28. He met with Jahor Novikau, USAID AOTR, and visited a project site in Baranovichi.

Coordination and Cooperation with other organizations:

ChildFund-Belarus actively promoted the advancement of children’s rights and building a broad constituency through participation and presentations at the following advocacy events:

- Meeting with Jean-Claude Legrand, UNICEF Regional Advisor, Child Protection, October 2, Minsk.
- Meeting with Ms. Marie-Pierre Poirier, the UNICEF Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (November 11, 2014, Minsk).

IV. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND 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. The project team improved their capacity through the following events:

- Irina Mironova took part in the Regional UNICEF Conference “Strengthening protective mechanisms in area of child protection, exploitation and violence (November 12-13, 2014, Minsk).
- Natalia Smuschuk, Family Support specialist, took part in the International Forum “Every child deserves a family” in Moscow, Russia, in October 20-24, 2014. All of the expenses associated with this trip were covered by the hosting organization in Russia.
- Irina Mironova and Natalia Kovalchuk took part in the ChildFund Regional Leadership Meeting in Mexico, from December 8-12. They mastered their skills in human resource management, finance management and budgeting, modern fundraising, and leadership. All expenses associated with this trip were covered by ChildFund.

There were some changes in Project staffing model:

The suggestion not to hire a new PWD Project manager was approved by Jahor Novikau, USAID AOTR. Julia Popruzhenko was approved by USAID AOTR for the position of OVC/PWD Project Manager.

Elena Karpenko, PR and Communication Specialist, voluntary left her position on October 24, 2014. ChildFund announced this vacancy and conducted a series of interviews with the short-listed candidates. So far, no candidates have met the requirements for this position and ChildFund will continue its search.

The budget shortage and significant decrease of project activities in this fiscal year required coordination for alignment between project workload and staff composition. This led to job cuts in the office and reallocation of job responsibilities between the existing staff. The contract agreement for FY15 was not extended to the following staff members: Natalia Shrub, Project Assistant; Natalia Veko, Program Specialist on SafeCare; Valdimir Nadolsky, Driver; and Maria Babarykina, Office Manager. Olga Kuzmina agreed to take over the combined responsibilities of Office Manager and Project Assistant. Galina Fomenok, Child Protection Specialist, will take responsibility for the SafeCare program.

V. BUDGET

Project expenses for the period between October-December 2014 totaled **\$ 71,164.80 (34%** of the annual budget) including ICR.

The SF-425 report was submitted under separate cover by ChildFund's Headquarters.