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Component III "Expanding Participation of People with Disabilities"

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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 high in Belarus - while adults are often excluded from social and economic life, and decision-making practices, children with disabilities suffer from limited access to education, health and social services and are excluded from community participation.

In October 2009 – 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. This component aimed to include Belarusian people with disabilities into mainstream society and to strengthen capacity of organizations of persons with disabilities. In October 2012, ChildFund-Belarus entered the first phase of the three-year project. The People with Disabilities project is aimed to increase the integration and inclusion of people with disabilities (PWD) through development of innovative services and strengthening the capacity of PWD grassroots 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 of introduction and development of inclusive education of children and young people with disabilities.

II. PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter, ChildFund focused its efforts on the final evaluation, analyses of the project achievements, lessons learned and long-term sustainability in particular with the educational system. One highlight from this quarter includes two national level events coordinated by ChildFund and its counterparts that aimed to ensure further development of inclusive education in Belarus:

- finalization of the Concept on inclusive education in Belarus and
- national round table on inclusive education conducted in partnership with Baranovichi University

This quarter the Multidisciplinary Expert group of the Ministry of Education completed the **Concept on Inclusive Education in Belarus**. ChildFund and its partner organizations, NGO “Open World,” the Academy of Post-Diploma Education and Baranovichi University, were invited to join the expert group and were able to directly influence policy development in the country. ChildFund and partners provided suggestions to ensure that the Concept is well justified and reflects the fundamental principles of inclusion, and that it highlights the specific components of the education system that need to be changed in order to be truly inclusive for people with disabilities. In May 2015 the final version of the Concept was shared with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Protection, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice and other key stakeholders for the official approval. The creation of the Multidisciplinary Expert group and the inclusion of other NGO representatives was the result of successful advocacy efforts by ChildFund and its partner NGOs. This was the first time when the Ministry of Education benefited from a multidisciplinary expert group to develop a policy document. According to the Ministry of Education, this collaborative approach with experts from NGOs, universities, re-training institutes and social services proved to be effective and is a model that will likely be replicated in the future. In addition to promoting the rights of children with disabilities to have access to quality and inclusive education, this project also helped catalyze a public dialogue towards policy development and strengthening civil society around inclusive education in Belarus.

Baranovichi University, a long-term partner of ChildFund, is a national leader in inclusive education in Belarus and hosted a national roundtable on inclusive education. Forty participants representing universities, re-training institutes, NGOs working with children with disabilities and their families, and the Ministry of Education were all in attendance. ChildFund provided logistical and financial support to Baranovichi University. The roundtable participants consolidated and

assessed resources on inclusive education in Belarus and discussed its utilization by all interested parties and issued a Resolution. The Resolution addressed to the Ministry of Education that stated the following recommendations:

(1) recommends using curriculum on inclusive education developed by Baranovichi University (the result of sub-grant supported by ChildFund) and Belarusian State Pedagogic University in programs of teacher training and retraining, (2) advises the trainer manual '*Inclusive education*' developed by ChildFund for sensitization workshops for education authorities, educators, children and parents, (3) support further development of methodology resources that will ensure the quality of inclusive education.

Another element of sustainability is **supporting further development of inclusive education in the project sites**. This quarter ChildFund's program specialists completed a series of working meetings with the specialists and organizations from the project sites (i.e. local Habilitation centers, Departments for Education, local parent associations) and discussed continued roll-out of inclusive education in existing and new educational facilities in the targeted communities. The plans for all communities supported by ChildFund (Mozyr, Baranovichi, Zhodino, and Smorgon) were presented to the district Departments for Education in June 2015. It is expected, that the development plans on inclusive education will be incorporated into the Department Working Plan for academic year 2015-2016. ChildFund and its counterparts will continue to support the rollout and implementation of inclusive education plans.

NGO networking and cooperation was enhanced through their joint work on a new proposal funded by the EU that was supported by ChildFund. The objectives and activities of new project reflects priorities for NGO networking and cooperation that ChildFund's partner NGOs identified during the course of the NGO networking meetings conducted last project year. In the event this new project is awarded, the specific project goals and objectives will help to further promote inclusive education in Belarus and strengthen NGO collaboration around inclusive education. Preparation of the concept paper and full proposal for EU was a new process for ChildFund and partners and that allowed everyone to further define their own roles and competencies in building NGO networks and promoting inclusive education. As the result of their joint work on the proposal, the participating NGOs developed trusting and collaborative partnerships that we hope to continue to build upon.

Sustainability of the extended **National trainer's team** on inclusive education was enhanced through series of the working meetings. The trainer team members identified their priority areas for further development and work after the completion of the project. The Final Project Conference convened 80 participants representing project partner organizations including: oblast and rayon Departments for Education, local child protection services, partner universities and re-training institutes. Delegates of international NGOs (UNICEF, Forum Syd), Embassies of USA and Finland, and national mass media enhanced opportunities for networking development among all stakeholders. Scott Ronald, Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of the United States of America opened the Conference and expressed his support of this project and the great work being done in this field. The Conference objectives aimed: (1) to inform the audience on the project outcomes achieved on the local, oblast and national levels, (2) to present the professional resources created within the project and available to them, and (3) to strengthen the networking the project partners.

The figures below illustrate the main outputs of project implementation during the period between April 1 and June 30, 2015:

- One NGO networking meeting was organized by ChildFund;
- One planning meeting was conducted for partners at ChildFund's pilot site
- Two working meetings of the National trainer's team conducted
- Nine training sessions were conducted by National Trainers Team for 298 parents and educators ;
- One national round table on inclusive education conducted
- Concept on Inclusive Education in Belarus finalized and submitted for official approval
- Project Final Conference for 80 specialists from all over Belarus conducted.

III. CHALLENGES/ CONSTRAINTS/OPPORTUNITIES

There were no challenges or opportunities to report during this quarter.

IV. LESSONS LEARNED

- The trainers on inclusive education require specific technical expertise in inclusive education and disability but also on leadership skills that help them to expand their role as both an educator and a community mobilizer.
- The composition of the trainer's team should include the different categories of the participants (parents, NGOs, special education specialists, educators from universities and re-training institute). A broad and diverse range of stakeholders will help increase influence within the different levels.
- Specialists from the local communities need external support and facilitation of their planning sessions and articulation of their priorities.

V. 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 organizations supporting PWD and their families:

- One NGO networking meeting was organized by ChildFund;
- One planning meeting was conducted for partners at ChildFund's pilot site

NGO networking meeting * May 12, 2015	
<i>Actual targets achieved</i>	
<p>In the previous quarter the NGO consortium consisted of 3 NGOs, led by BelApDiMi (Belorussian Association of Assistance to Children and Youth with disabilities) prepared and submitted a Concept paper to the EU on the development of an NGO Alliance on inclusive education. In May, the EU approved the concept paper and invited the Consortium to submit a full project proposal. This quarter, the project team continued to support the NGO consortium in preparation of the full project proposal that was submitted to EU.</p> <p>The objectives and activities in this proposal reflects priorities for NGO networking and cooperation that ChildFund and partner NGOs identified during networking meetings conducted last project year. The project, if awarded aims to further promote inclusive education in Belarus and overcome fragmentation within the NGO sector by strengthening collaboration around inclusive education.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This activity was not included into Annual Implementation Plan. However, considering its importance and effect on project outcomes and sustainability it was agreed in advance that the project could support this strategic activity. 	

Technical support to further develop inclusive education in the pilot sites: planning meeting in Smorgon, (April 29)	
<i>Planned</i>	<i>Actual targets achieved</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ChildFund's program specialists arranged meetings with local habilitation centers, Departments for Education, and parents to develop their plans for inclusive education in their communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One meeting was organized in the pilot site of Smorgon (April 29). * • Community working group comprising 6 specialists mastered new skills of result-based planning through discussions of planning basics, needs assessment of environments and resources, and developing SMART objectives. The group

	<p>developed a plan that prioritizes the creation of interdisciplinary teams to support children with disabilities in inclusive education in every education institution of Smorgon. Smorgon Resource center on inclusive education (that was established within ChildFund’s subgrant in 2014) defined their role as the coordinating center to provide methodological support and supervision to multidisciplinary teams.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the previous quarter ChildFund conducted similar meetings in Mozyr, Baranovichi, Zhodino • <u>Outcomes</u> <p>Draft plans for all communities supported by ChildFund (Mozyr, Baranovichi, Zhodino, and Smorgon) were presented to the district Departments for Education by June 2015. It is expected, that the development plans on inclusive education will be incorporated into the Department Working Plan for academic year 2015-2016.</p>	

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

This quarter the project supported the national-level advocacy efforts focused on further development of inclusive education in Belarus. They were:

- One national round table on inclusive education
- The development of Concept paper on inclusive education in Belarus

Promotion of Inclusive Education among universities

Baranovichi University, a long-term partner of ChildFund and national leader in inclusive education in Belarus hosted a national roundtable on inclusive education. On April 28 the University hosted a national Round table on inclusive education for 40 participants who represented universities, Re-training institutes, NGOs working with children with disabilities and their families, Ministry of Education. ChildFund provide its methodological and financial support to Baranovichi University. The roundtable participants consolidated and assessed resources on inclusive education in Belarus and discussed its utilization by all interested parties and issued a Resolution. The Resolution addressed to the Ministry of Education recommended developing a curriculum on inclusive education utilizing a Belarusian State Pedagogic University in programs of teacher training and retraining, adding 'Inclusive education' in the teacher trainer manual and developing a resources that will ensure the quality of inclusive education.

Project participants influence policy development in area of Inclusive Education

In the previous quarter, ChildFund supported roundtable discussions on a draft Concept paper developed by the Head of Department of Special Education of the Ministry of Education on inclusive education.

The participating NGOs expressed their concerns regarding the quality of this document and advocated for the creation of a multidisciplinary group to include NGO representatives that would help draft revisions to Concept paper. These advocacy efforts were very successful and Ministry of Education agreed to create a Multidisciplinary Expert Group on Inclusive Education. Representatives of ChildFund and members of ChildFund’s Trainer’s group on Inclusive Education (NGO “Open World” , Resource Center on Inclusive Education of Baranovichi University) were officially included in its multidisciplinary group of subject matter experts..

This quarter the Multidisciplinary Expert group of the Ministry of Education ,ChildFund, NGO “Open World” and Baranovichi University shared suggestions to ensure that the Concept is justified and reflects the fundamental principles

of inclusion, In May 2015 the final version of the Concept was submitted to the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Protection, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice and others for approval.

Note: This was the first time the Ministry of Education used multidisciplinary expert group to develop a policy document. Before, it was the sole responsibility of one or two assigned persons from the Ministry. Expertise and opinions from other actors, and civil society representatives were not considered in prior activities surrounding the development of a new policy.. The Ministry of Education believe this method of collaboration with a wide variety of experts from NGOs, universities, re-training institutes, social services proved its effectiveness and is a model that can be used in the future. Thus, the project helped to make one more step towards development of public dialogue and building civil society in Belarus.

Promotion of Inclusive Education throughout the Region

- Olga Svetlakova together with Elena Lemekh (both members of the national Trainer’s team on inclusive education) published an article ‘Social stereotypes as the hindering factor of acceptance in inclusive education’ in a professional reference book (*Kamenets-Podolski National University, Ukraine*).

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, from April 1 to June 30:

- Two working meetings of the National trainer’s team conducted
- Nine training sessions were conducted by National Trainers Team for 298 parents and educators ;
- Project Final Conference for 80 specialists from all over Belarus presented project outcomes and resources created within it.

In order to enhance the communication and sustainable functioning of the extended National Trainers Team, a series of working meetings were organized.

Two (2) Working meetings the National Trainers Team (June 4-5, 2015)	
<i>Planned</i>	<i>Actual targets achieved</i>
<p>Two one-day working meetings with the National Trainers Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Plan for the National Trainer’s team developed • Sustainability plan to continue after the completion of the project developed 	<p>Two one-day meetings were organized. The meeting’s agenda was based on the results of participatory needs assessment.</p> <p>21 national trainers on inclusive education from 15 organizations from five oblasts of the country: 7 institutions of higher education that provide teacher training, 5 institutions of primary and secondary education, and 3 NGOs participated in the one-day working meeting. Following needs assessment the agenda included discussion about specific roles of the trainer on inclusive education: trainer as an educator and trainer as a community leader advocating for inclusion of children with disabilities. Ability to influence was identified as one of the areas of further trainer’s development helping national trainers to gain commitment of different stakeholders, to motivate them to support inclusive education in their respectful communities.</p> <p>The participants mastered this skill within the training session. The participants learned about sources of influence, and how to conduct an assessment of stakeholders’ needs and interests.</p> <p><u>Outcome:</u></p> <p>89% of the participants have a plan to apply the knowledge in their work</p>

	<p>61% of participants will organize trainings in their communities</p> <p>28% will actively apply the new skills in their negotiations with educational authorities and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The working group of five national trainers participated in the one-day meeting to develop sustainability plans. The working group identified four priority areas for the trainers' team development for next three years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the needs of the country's regions with respect to inclusive education development; assess the regions' capacity to implement inclusive education; • Enhance cooperation between state and non-state organizations, raise awareness of all stakeholders on (e.g. education institutions and NGOs, Departments of Education); • Develop an e-resource center to provide a comprehensive, easy to use, and accessible information on current developments in inclusive education for trainers/educators, parents, and the general public. Education research and information are essential to supporting educators and improving, learning, and educational decision-making; • Regularly assess needs of trainers and organize capacity building events for trainers.
<p><u>Next steps:</u> The Working group will develop list of activities / resources under each of priority areas of the sustainability plan and it with the rest of the National trainer's on inclusive education.</p> <p>All participants stressed the importance of such planning meetings to ensure the development of effective cooperation between the trainers that will serve the goal of promotion of inclusive education across the country.</p>	

Training on inclusive education for local stakeholders by National Trainers Team

This quarter, the first training was held for the cohort of 21 trainers. In total, 9 training sessions were conducted for 298 parents and educators were conducted by the National trainer's team.

In order to ensure a "learning –by doing" approach , ChildFund invited "new" trainers to submit proposals for financial support of up to \$200. Six out of 13 trainers submitted applications were offered financial support. The financial support included funds to participate in trainings for school teachers as well as funding to support community outreach in particular with parents. ChildFund encouraged work with parents as a key target groups since in the past, trainers were unlikely to include parents. Through this project, the team has learned that parents are key stakeholders and are the driving force for promoting the change in education. As the result:

- **Six trainings** were conducted in three communities in Baranovichi (Brest oblast), Krichev (Mogilev oblast), and Novopolotsk (Vitebsk oblast) by new generation of trainer's team. The trainings covered the audience of **109 participants**; 73 were parents of children with and without disabilities; 36 were school teachers.

Parents participating in the trainings developed:

- ✓ An understanding of inclusive education, its fundamental values, principles, and advantages;
- ✓ A better understanding of the leading role of parents in promotion of inclusion;
- ✓ A better understanding of the strategies to promote inclusive education; learned to perceive themselves as the agents of change;
- ✓ A better understanding of the value of a teamwork approach, cooperation with other parents and specialists from different institutions (schools, habilitation centers for children with disabilities, departments for education, and NGOs).

Teachers participating in the trainings developed:

- ✓ An understanding of the a teacher’s role of in inclusive education;
- ✓ A better understanding of the importance of cooperation and teamwork for solving everyday challenges;
- ✓ The skills and tools to identify discrimination;
- ✓ The skills to develop a universal design and methods of adjusting learning materials to different learning needs;
- ✓ Skills to develop an individual study plan.

Three trainings were organized by the “first” generation of the trainer’s team, that targeted **189** specialists (educators working with children with disabilities and teachers of a secondary school, university students) from 20 organizations:

- On June 11, 2015 Olga Svetlakova and Elena Lemekh Slutsk by the request of Department for Education conducted training for specialists of primary and secondary education of Slutsk rayon. **25 special education teachers** were sensitized about inclusion and trained on methods of developing an attitude of acceptance and respect between all participants of inclusion. The workshop was based on a training program on inclusive education developed by ChildFund.
- Olga Svetlakova delivered a lecture and a workshop ‘Philosophy of inclusive education’ to 5 groups of **149 students of Belarus State University (Minsk)**.
- On June 16, 2015 trainer Elena Bulyga organized a workshop for specialists of Baranovichi school #13. **15 teachers** participated in a training that was based on the modules developed by ChildFund.

Final conference June 10, 2015	
Expected results	Actual targets achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-day meeting for 60 participants from the Ministry of Education, oblast Departments for Education, local child protection services, representatives of partner universities and re-training institutes • The project outcomes and lessons learned are presented by the project partners and ChildFund • Recommendations for further utilization of the resources discussed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 participants attended a one-day meeting representing project partner organizations and key stakeholders: oblast and rayon Departments for Education, local child protection services, partner universities and re-training institutes. Delegates of international NGOs (UNICEF, Forum Syd), Embassies of USA and Finland to Belarus, and national mass media enhanced opportunities for networking development among all stakeholders. • The meeting served (1) to inform the audience on the project outcomes achieved on the local, oblast and national levels, (2) to present the professional resources created within the project and available to them, (3) to strengthen the networking the project partners. • Methodological materials developed within the project were distributed to every participant both in paper and electronic form.

VI. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

COORDINATION WITH USAID

Regional experience exchange with Ukrainian specialists, participants of USAID Community Connection program

In addition to nationwide efforts, ChildFund and its counterparts also promote inclusive education on the regional level. Upon receiving and invitation from USAID-Minsk office, ChildFund and its partner organizations conducted a series of presentations about the current state of inclusive education in Belarus and facilitated experience exchange dialogue between the participants. The participants included ChildFund, Baranovichi University, Ministry of Education, NGOs Open World, BelApDiMi, Children. Autism. Parents., Zhodino Habilitation Center for Children with disabilities.

Cooperation with ChildFund International Headquarters

On June 15-19, 2015, a team of ChildFund Headquarters specialists visited Belarus. Carmen Madrinan, Senior Child Protection Advisor, and Beth Mayberry, Grant Management Officer, worked with local staff to document the models, approaches and theories of change for the Orphans and Vulnerable Children and Persons with Disabilities project components capitalizing on key project outcomes, promising practices and lessons learned.

Coordination with the other organizations

Advancing Partnership with Baranovichi University

ChildFund organized a meeting with Vassily Kochurko, Rector of Baranovichi State University to discuss opportunities for future partnerships. Both parties decided to build on the achieved successes and continue cooperation in the field of inclusive education development, especially in relation to providing support to trainers who work in Baranovichi communities.

VII. 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.

VIII. BUDGET

This quarter, the project expenses was \$39 506,28 (ICR included); 22% of the annual budget. In the period of October 2014- June 30 2015 the spending \$129 618, i.e. 72% of the annual budget.

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